

EDITORIAL

"GENUINE EQUALITY BETWEEN THE SEXES CAN ONLY BE REALIZED IN THE SOCIALIST TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY AS A WHOLE"

- MAO TSE TUNG, 1955

The Women's Programme Centre asked the staff of ON OUR WAY to let us put out an issue of the paper for two reasons:

1. To clarify to ourselves, by means of actually writing down our ideas, some of the things we have been thinking about and which are of major concern to us, both as individuals and as a group.
2. To present to the community a perspective on the women's movement which we consider to be correct and which has been too long ignored and buried under a mass of bourgeois ideology.

We are Socialists, Communists and Marxists - all those various kinds of people that the mass media has been telling us are "evil, wicked, mean and nasty". They tell us that for good reason too (at least from the point of view of the ruling class). Socialists and Communists are the greatest threat to the power of the bosses because we advocate that our class - the working class - take their power from them and establish control of the society in our own interests.

The mass media is controlled by the ruling class and they use it to misrepresent us in any and all ways they can. In this issue of ON OUR WAY, we hope to present our ideas clearly and free from distortion.

Because Communist ideas are repressed, you will encounter, as you read the paper, several terms which may be unfamiliar to you. For this reason we have included a glossary of these terms, many of which we took from an issue of Progressive Worker, a quarterly published in B.C. which is now defunct.

You will also find on this page an article from the History of the Party of Labour in Albania. We have included this because we believe it demonstrates the concrete ways in which a people's government can deal with the whole question of the liberation of women.

We hope that you will be willing to share your responses to and criticisms and ideas about this issue of ON OUR WAY. Write us! Our address is:

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FROM:

History Of The Party Of Labor Of Albania

Viewing the complete emancipation of women as an extraordinarily great social problem without the solution of which "the freedom of the people or of anybody, the progress of the country and the attainment of our goals, cannot be thought of", the plenum of the party central committee examined this problem at a special meeting it held in June, 1967.

The plenum defined the directions for the further deepening of the movement for the complete emancipation of women and for enhancing their role in our socialist society.

The party central committee emphasized once again that the main way to insure the complete emancipation of women is to draw them on as broad a scale as possible, into productive labor and into the political, social and cultural life of the country.

Instructions were issued to remove all obstacles and restrictions impeding the drawing of women into every sector of the economy and culture, into all political, social and cultural activities, into the work of the party and state administration. It was especially stressed that a turn should be made in appointing women to posts of responsibility so as to insure a greater and more perceptible participation of women in the organization and direction of production and of political, social and cultural activities.

Great importance was attached to increasing the ranks of the party with women comrades with a view to stimulating the life of the party organizations and to raising their fighting capacity.

To attain these goals, the central committee of the party regarded it indispensable, in the first place, to combat more persistently, more sternly and more systematically all alien concepts about women, which have their roots deep in the people's consciousness, more so among the men, but also among the women themselves....

The full participation of women in production and in political and social life, the plenum stressed, depends to a large extent on the development of socialist relations in the family, as well as on relieving the women of the heavy burden of household chores.

The liberation of workers from class oppression and exploitation, the abolition of private ownership and the establishment of social ownership of the means of production as well as the special rights won by Albanian women under the leadership of the party, have been the heaviest blow ever dealt to the old family relations which kept the woman a slave, and have created the conditions for the setting up of the new socialist family. Nevertheless, the feeling of private ownership had not been eliminated and many traditions and backward customs which hindered the establishment of new family relations were still preserved.

"For this reason," the central committee pointed out, "the changes in the field of family relations, the creation of new socialist relations demand a long, persistent and all-round struggle in a complicated and difficult field, against the ideology, psychology, morality and customs inherited from the old society."

(continued p. 2)



For the creation and the consolidation of the new socialist family the central committee indicated as the main direction the uprooting of old relations in the conclusion of marriages and in conjugal life; the establishment of new matrimonial relations, as well as of correct relations between husband and wife and between the wife and other members of the family, relations divested of the feelings of private ownership, of religious norms, of backward customs and viewpoints..."

Another very important road to ensure the complete equality between husband and wife in everyday life would be the struggle to free women from the slavery of household chores. As foreseen by the classics of Marxism-Leninism, this can be attained completely only with the socialization of the household economy, with the changing of this economy into a branch of the socialist production. But this is a complicated job requiring a very highly developed material-technical base of socialism and such great material and financial means that for a time the socialist state is not able to cope long with them all. Without waiting for the socialization of the household economy to be accomplished, to relieve the woman of the heavy burden of the housework more persistent work was to be done in two directions. First, every husband was called upon to take part in the

household work together with his wife, to relieve her of the great burden of this work which had fallen only on the woman's shoulders. It was necessary that the idea that household work is not only the woman's job, but that of the man, too, and of all the members of the family as well, should be brought home to every husband and inculcated deep into the minds of the children at the earliest age. In the family and at school no differentiation should be made between boys and girls in regard to involving them in the household economy. Second, the party laid down the task that the network of social services should be extended more rapidly and utilized better. Orders were given to increase the capacity of the creches and of the kindergartens beyond the envisaged targets, to set up public dining halls, laundries and so on, and to produce and put on the market means to facilitate the household work.

The tasks laid down by the central committee for the further deepening of the movement for the complete emancipation of women had the result that the movement did not stop halfway: the problem of the emancipation of women was understood more profoundly as one of decisive importance to the complete construction of socialist society, this major problem of the party becoming the concern of our society as a whole.

women and revolution



Why is work within the women's movement an important thing for socialist women to be doing?

In What Is To Be Done Lenin points out the necessity for communists to work with all progressives, and on behalf of all oppressed groups. There are two reasons for this which immediately come to mind. One is the need to mobilize as great a section of the population as possible to fight the ruling class. The other is the necessity to politicize the working class and its party, to extend consciousness and show that apparently isolated problems have a common source. The proletariat is the only class thus far which does not have an ultimate interest in the oppression of another class (or classes). But in a pre-revolutionary situation some effort must be made to ensure that the proletariat develops an awareness of its role as liberator.

The next question is perhaps one of whether or not women really are an oppressed group; and whether or not the women's movement really is a mass movement? Let's take the first question first. It is a concrete fact that in this society women are oppressed, categorically, "as women". This is a social problem and one which has undergone a qualitative change since the rise of capitalism. Women are engaged in a specific set of social relations; to each other, to men, to children, to work, etc. and cannot be looked at in isolation, or simply examined as biological or psychological specimens. And yes, we are oppressed.

Unfortunately there has been a tendency on the part of many people, including some feminists, to define certain questions incorrectly, to see the women's movement in isolation, and to ignore the potential role of such a movement in anti-imperialist alliances. Also, until quite recently only a few women were attempting to clarify the relationship between women's oppression and exploitation and the larger struggle, i.e. that of opposing classes; bourgeoisie and proletariat...

A Product of History...

The oppression of women has sources which are both pre-capitalist and capitalist. The former are not very prevalent (there are few vestiges of feudal production) and exist largely as super-structural forces (which affect women of all classes). The latter springs from capitalist production and is primarily necessary in the working class, to ensure the production, maintenance, and reproduction of labor power. (The initial use in 19th Century England for example, of women and children in industrial work, a use which Engels perceived as a potential advantage for women's liberation; was later replaced by the stabilization of the nuclear family which would provide a source of healthy, trained workers; which would in fact, breed them.) This also affected the situation of women, "in general". Today we have the nuclear family as a social institution, with its sexism of "roles" and its stress on keeping women separated from the mainstream of social production. So while the source of the oppression of women is the capital/labour contradiction; it manifests itself in the oppression of all women, to varying degrees. Since women are not seen as doing their share in the production of surplus value, they are often perceived as parasitic; and the ultimate bourgeois fantasy is a dream in which we appear as decorations, social accessories, seminal spittoons! (It is worth remembering that the "dominant values of an epoch are those of its Ruling Class!") One notes also that even struggles of upper-class women have sometimes been of benefit to women in general (suffragism, for example), and despite the fact that women are oppressed fundamentally as proletarians, for many women the primary form in which this oppression is encountered is oppression as women.

Myth or Movement?

But how is the women's movement related to the objective conditions of female oppression in a specific time and place, i.e. here, now, and under capitalism? To a large extent the women's movement has been a vehicle of self-expression, an agitator for reforms, an amazing mixture of often contradictory questions. Is it perhaps nothing more than a falsification -- an attempt on the part of a few relatively privileged women to acquire more privileges? Or does it have genuine social importance?

Despite the presence of a variety of ideological trends within the women's movement (not all of which are progressive) the very presence and survival of such a movement is an indication that a large number of women who would never dream of calling themselves "women's liberationists"; are becoming more aware of their common problems. This nascent consciousness amongst the broad masses of women is the material towards which revolutionary ideas must reach.

It is therefore necessary to make sure that this process of politicization actually does occur. What Is To Be Done is a useful reference here as well. Lenin places great stress on the importance of theory: "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement". There will be movement to be sure, but spontaneous popular struggles will be unable to find a way out of the maze of bourgeois ideology. It is the responsibility of those who call themselves communists to participate in ideological struggle; to apply their politics to current problems. This is a large task, and one which involves more than shouting slogans. It's safe to say that the women's movement, particularly here in Canada, has suffered from a distinct lack of correct political leadership.

The Working Class is Central

For example, the particular role of working class women is hardly ever talked about. No special effort is made to attack their problems. This is a mistake, it is very important to raise the political consciousness of proletarian women as they have the most to gain by fighting capitalism and sometimes don't realize this, especially housewives who are not engaged directly in struggles at the point of production. These women tend to be the most cautious and conservative element of the class. They confront unarmed (i.e. unemployed and frequently unskilled) the fear of poverty, loss of work, etc ... whatever may jeopardize the family or threaten the security of the wage that supports it. (Poker, booze, and politics, all on one level and not for them, thank you!) Juliet Mitchell was quite right in pointing out that sexual contradictions play a large role in the "conservatism" of women!

Also proletarian women should be prepared to combat sexism within the class, for it is important that the members of the working class be united, and at present all forms of women's oppression work to divide them. Some feel that struggle over this question causes division. Our position is the opposite; true unity can only be achieved by recognizing problems which are phenomenally there and attempting to deal with them consciously and correctly. It must be stressed that sexism is not innate in working men, nor even the preserve of men of their particular class. Remember that society as a whole is permeated by bourgeois values. Sexism much more than feminism is a manifestation of this ideology, a distorted, exploitive Picture of Life. Feminism is merely a response to this, quite valid in spirit and intention, but sometimes unclear or mistaken about who the enemy really is.

The structural factors mentioned earlier in regard to the nuclear family tend not only to bind and deform the housewife but also to isolate her socially and cause her to perceive her husband as her jailor. Domestic "division of labor"

dictates different types of work and hence different life experiences. Ten years later, two people have very little in common. (Except of course, their children, the "legal heirs" to whom workers have nothing to bequeath other than the dubious pleasure of growing up to be the wage-slaves of Tomorrow!). The family under capitalism is an institution of bondage, and domestic antagonisms turn wife against husband, parent against child.

One can ask at this point which working class women are most able to confront the overall contradictions of their position? Women who work outside the home, particularly those who work with men, have definite advantages. They are allowed to be productive and self-sufficient, and they can relate to men as equals-before-the-boss. They have the potential to be perceived as sisters and comrades, rather than as Tits-and-Ass. Also, working women, particularly those who are married, lead a dual existence. None of their "womanly tasks" disappear simply because they take a job. Thus they must approach the problems of women, of workers, and of women-workers. They can perhaps provide a connection between the worker-husband and the women who are "just housewives".

The Struggle for Socialism

If we are going to talk about liberation for everyone, then socialist revolution is a precondition to true liberation. Women within the movement should know that under specific conditions it will be necessary to unite with men in order to attack capitalism. For some this will mean working within "male dominated" (?) organizations; for others this will not be the case. Men aren't the problem, and neither sex will independently find the solution. The women's movement has work to do. It has a progressive role to play.

In conclusion, I must add that those of us who are Marxist Leninists see as a first priority the development of a new communist party. Work within the women's movement is not a substitute for this, nor is the movement something which obstructs or contradicts our attempts at party building. Since political parties do not, after all, fall from the skies, the presence of large and active mass movements, in conjunction with a high level of political struggle and debate, can only facilitate the development of such an organization. The party is a tool, it is not an end in itself. It is used to make revolutions. This is a real task which cannot be allowed to remain a rootless intentionality in the minds of a few self-proclaimed "vanguards".



Bringing It All Back Home

Birth:

The decisive moments are the arrival of the children and their absorption into the labour market. In monopoly capitalism that is the timespan of the family. And from the moment of its birth the family is incessantly eroded to prevent it from reverting to a 'backward' peasant-like independence from capitalist society. When the children leave, the process of reintegration into the workforce is complete.

The capitalist system can reproduce commodities but it cannot breed people. That went out with slavery. It is 'free' women that produce people.

The family is set up as a relationship between a free woman and other adults and adult institutions. The baby is but the date of that relationship. The adults and institutions are dominated by capital; capital which at every point contains, penetrates and controls the family, until at last, the parents, impoverished or affluent, are frozen into loneliness while the offspring take over the powering of the productive system.

"You're a mother". The future is dependent flesh.. Before the child speaks its first words, the adults bathing and feeding it become mother and father. Not because the child says so, but because friends say so, because grandparents say so, because corporations and institutions specializing in baby care say so, because banks and insurance companies who profit by protecting your child's future say so. Within the home new chores evolve: the medical profession comes into focus. Food and clothing corporations become super-real.

Home:

"The home is the point at which humans breed and watch TV".. "home is his castle".. "a woman's work is never done".

The home is already a corporate living machine. The media sell the image of the proper family. On the other channel news, violence, crime and images of personal collapse enforce the vulnerability, isolation and insignificance of the individual family. The commodities they peddle - the car, the cleaners, the food, the toothpaste - shape the minds, actions and desires. They are terminals of consumption that must continually be repurchased, replenished and repaired on terms dictated by corporate capital.

But there is no PROFIT to be made out of the making of the home. At the door of the house the commodities are officially used up - consumed. They have performed their mercantile role; got through the Bumstead front door. They are no longer counted among commodities. In times of poverty, the parent(s) may wheel and deal in the market for second-hand furnishings, but the home cannot

accumulate capital in that way. Equally, work in the home is without official value - officially 'unproductive'. There is, within the home, no bonus, no accumulatable surplus, to be squeezed from throwing a better diaper, a healthier cookie or a sexier scene.

The community in which the family is situated sets the level of affluence aspired to. The child moves among material possessions which reflect the particular social position of the family. It lives with adults shaped by their work outside the home, and shaped within the home by the degree to which they must do endless repetitive chores.

The child looks at the life presented on T.V. and almost always it is at variance with the life the child knows. Girls undress and dress dolls with breasts and wigs; boys play war games with GI Joe; people drink Pepsi, drive cars, wear underarm deodorants and are happy, healthy and popular. The world of T.V. is a world for the wealthy, but that is never made clear to the child.

Children and the Outside World

"Watch out for strange men".. "Up the high school dropouts".. "Don't come back home until you can support yourself".

The production of labour power for capitalism is exacting. Compulsory attendance at school is for the inspection of the production of a respectful and useful child. But survival is taught by the family: the correct uses of objects, buying and selling commodities, cooperation and work.

The family wants its young to survive and teaches them what it knows of the world and attempts to instill the qualities which it believes are necessary. Watching daddy and mummy go to work five days a week for most of the year, the child grows to understand the virtues of reliability and punctuality. She learns to become receptive to direction.. and to give directions. Watching housework, seeing the rewards, following the adult behaviour in

public places, the child picks up on the minutiae of relationships and develops a world view. The family is where the children are brought up to see and hear some things and to be blind and deaf to others.

Children Inside

"The child is a work of art".. "What if she gets pregnant?".. "Why don't you wear a dress and look like a girl for a change?".. "My mummy says I can't play with you 'cause I might get a rash".

Children live with parents and absorb what it is to be adult through them; their conceptions of love, death, sex emerge from the family and their understanding of what they should and what they should not do, and of whom they must obey, come from it.

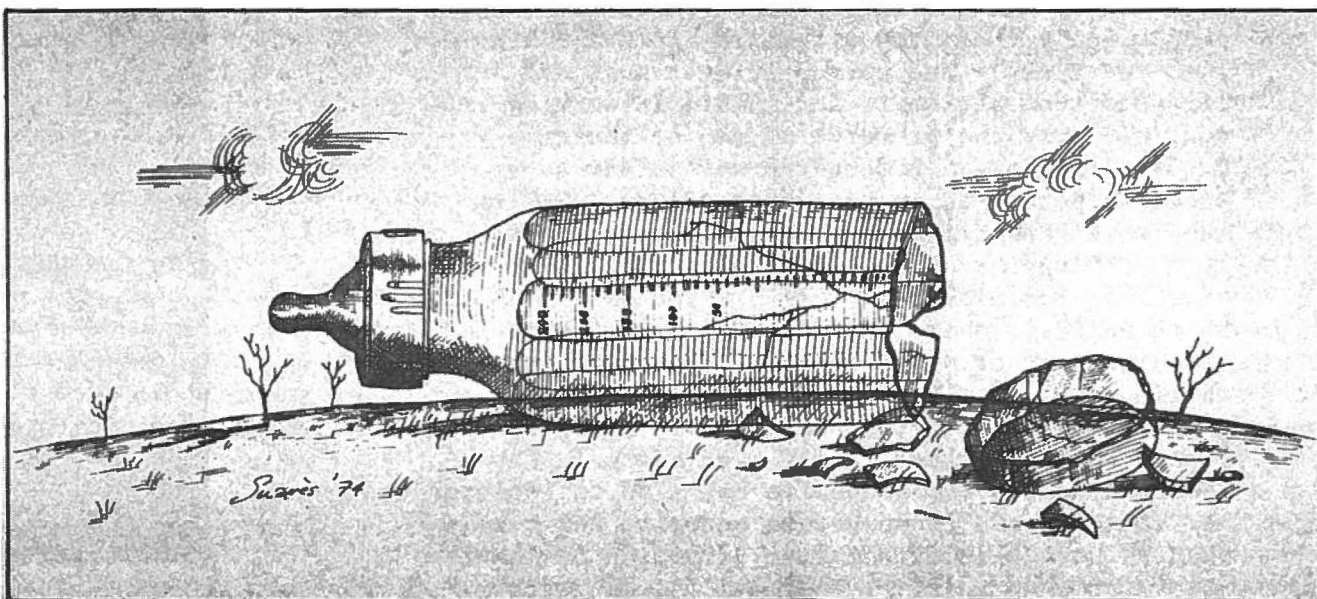
Where parents have leisure, patience and security within the outside system, the children learn through sanctions - love and disapproval. At the other end of the spectrum, the policing of children is done more nakedly, more publicly, by child-care centres, foster homes, welfare workers and policemen.

The small child, in its efforts to master its growing body, its desire to talk and play with others, will learn, by trial and error to conform to the spoken and unspoken rules of the society into which it will be ejected as an adult.

In the home, it is the mother who is most continuously teaching, implicitly or explicitly. It is she who shows the children how to look after their bodies, how to speak, and it is she who instills the sensitivity which will enable them to meet other people on an immediate and longer term basis.

Support:

"To each according to his need".. "Give two references to establish you and your spouse's credit-worthiness".. "I see him when he comes to see the kids".. "Can't you feed them on less than that?".. "A family pins you down".



Single Parent Families

Before the child arrived, the parent worked. The rest of her time was her own. After the child, the mother with little or no income is forced into one of two positions: she can go on welfare or she can work. On welfare she will live on very little money. She will live predominantly within her home since the money allotted for transportation is hardly sufficient for trips to the doctor, let alone trips to the zoo; her shopping will be restricted to Safeway and the Army and Navy, the only places her vouchers are accepted; her main relationship will be with the child since she is dependent on the good will of friends and parents for babysitting and entertainment; and she will be watched by welfare to ensure that she forms no sexual relationships, and that she receives neither money nor valuable goods from other people.

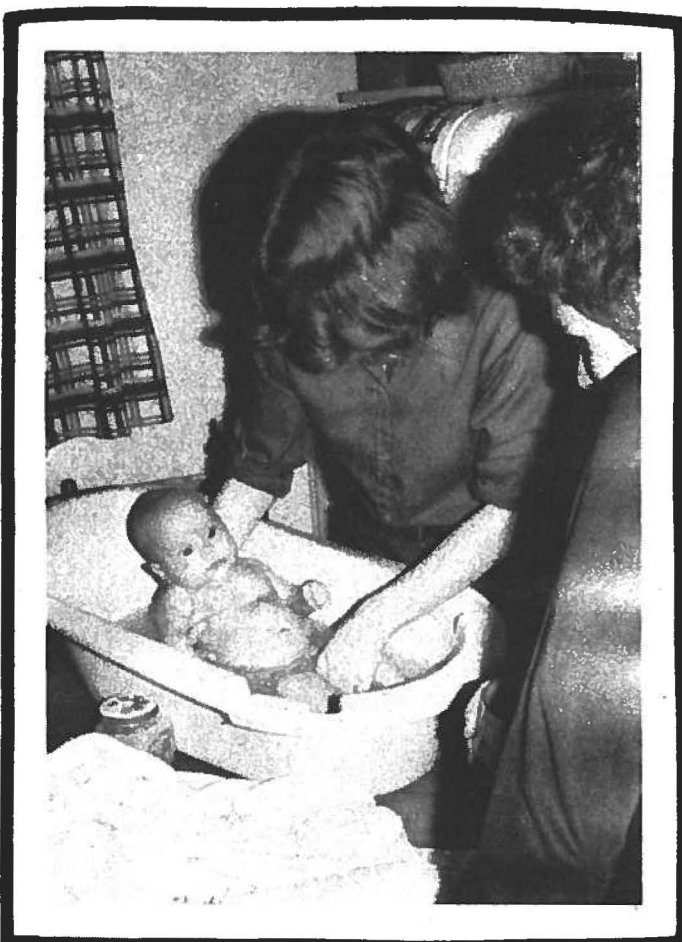
She can go to work. The situation is scarcely better. Because she needs a job, and because most jobs open to women are ill-paid, she will earn, after she has paid her babysitter, the same amount or less than she would if she were on welfare. In addition, the rearing of her child will be in the hands of another. But she will be able to form relationships with adults during lunch hours and coffee breaks. Furthermore her life within the home will not be spied upon.

As the children grow up they may be found fighting, dealing and stealing in their efforts to master the system; problems with authorities abound.

When an adult becomes a parent, his or her life alters radically; there is a discontinuity between former activities, relationships and needs and present ones; the content and meaning of work changes especially in the case of women, and the relationship to work changes. The survival of the family depends on its taking seriously those institutions which pay it, and so it becomes increasingly important to obey the explicit and implicit rules of society. The limits of the family's control over itself are revealed.

Two Parents Work...

Before the arrival of the child both parents may have worked. A continuity between one's former life as a single person and life as a married person will have been maintained. After a child, this continuity is broken. When the parents return from work there is the cooking, shopping and repairing to do for not one but three people, and there is the child to look after. Typically the household chores are left to the woman. There are several reasons for this: the man's job may be more physically exhausting than the woman's; her job will not provide the family with



a living wage while his will, therefore his needs for relaxation and companionship come before hers; time is at a premium and typically the woman, because she has been trained as a child, is more efficient than the man at housework; this same childhood training also means that generally, she assumes this body of chores to be hers rather than his.

When the woman is at home her relationships are largely limited to other women also at home and also looking after children. These women share her immediate interests and problems. Those who share her other interests work, and after work, even should they be interested in seeing her and having their homes invaded by noisy and messy children, there are the difficulties involved in transportation. Her housework is repetitive and prepared food, prepared clothing and labour-saving devices drive her to previously unheard of levels of cleanliness. The dissolution of community life in urban areas means that she and her children are together for long periods of each day without the relief of other adults and children.

The woman is isolated from the world in which her husband exists. She does not receive an independent wage; she shares the wage her husband earns. Her services and the products embodying her labour are valuable because they are useful within the family not outside.

Her husband's work gives the family the means by which to survive; at this level it is like her work. But his work is important outside the family as well: it is socially productive labour. In our society that means that that which he produces can be exchanged by those who hire him, for profit. In his work what is considered valuable is what brings in profit; in her work 'value' means something different.

The System as a Whole

"People like children, so they have them. Children are the parents' responsibility. If the adults can't hack the situation, too bad for them".

It is the function of the family in our present system to reproduce the human race - to reproduce workers and consumers, and not only to reproduce them, but to educate and maintain them in such a way that when they finally enter the workforce, or become mothers, they will be tractable, accepting the existing society.

The shape of the family is determined by the needs of the particular productive system within which it exists. Today's system uses advanced and diversified technologies, engages in mass production, requires high mobility between occupations and regions. It is made possible - indeed it is essential - for the individual to be extracted like raw material from the family and live isolated in laundromats, supermarkets, high rises etc., for long periods of time. Yesterday's was a society in which the family produced, to a far larger extent, the goods needed for survival. Then it was extremely difficult to live outside the family; now it is possible and even 'attractive'.

With the introduction of machinery and factories in which mass production of articles takes place, cheap labour was needed. The factory inspectors in Britain in the 19th century testify to the fact of large numbers of women and children employed 14 or more hours per day, 7 days a week, year in and year out. The total wages the family received could not buy the survival of its members. For the working class in the early industrial revolution, the family was torn apart, brutalised and then gradually remoulded into its present shape when it was finally appreciated that capital was devouring the race upon which its exploitation depended.

The Future

The question is how the family can be used to liberate people - in particular women - from a situation in which they get so little for their work; from a society in which their role is denigrated and reduced; in which they have so little power to combat the deterioration in quality and safety of the products they must use to survive; and in which they see their efforts to bring up intelligent, healthy, self-reliant, honest and happy children thwarted by the values and practices of monopoly capitalist society where conformity, conspicuous consumption, unfair competition, corruption, exploitation and alienation are rife.

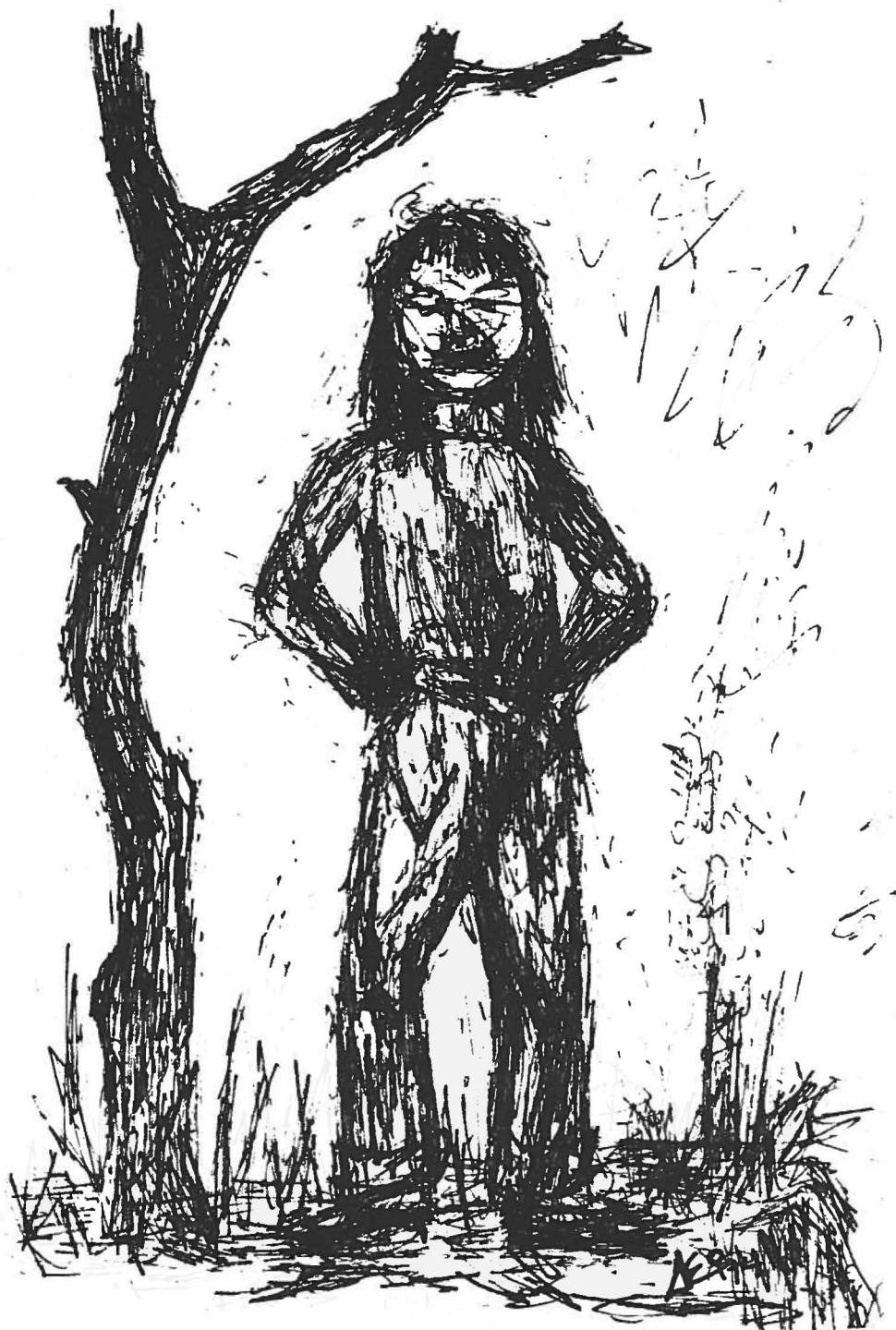
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**... "When an adult becomes a parent,
his or her life alters radically" ...**

There are limited 'economist' moves towards co-operation against the situation: baby-sitting co-operatives; food and housing co-operatives, communal living arrangements; men and women sharing the housework; various forms of cottage-type industries: sewing and selling clothes to each other; mending cars etc. Groups of people work on problems which involve them directly and in the process of making decisions and attempting to implement them they discover how little room they have to maneuver in a world in which most of the land and almost all of the technology is concentrated in the hands of a few large corporations.

From these anarchic and simple co-operative motions, emerge, in embryo and chaotically, some of the liberties and strengths which will be part of a society repossessed by its working people. But, within this social framework, they are constantly reverting to forms of private advancement or collapsing under the opposition of capitalist institutions. The revolutionary capacity of the family can only be let loose when the political and corporate institutions have been deprived of their power.

When the family works to strengthen and sustain the worker who refuses to fight in imperialist wars, who refuses to be party to the production of profitable but dangerous products, who fights for control over the place of work so that racism, sexism, corruption and exploitation are rooted out, then the family is objectively revolutionary.



On March 10 and 11, the Women's Programme Centre, in cooperation with the Anthropology Department of the University of Alberta and the Angela Davis Club, sponsored 2 lectures by the well-known anthropologist, Eleanor Leacock, who is presently teaching at City College in New York City. The topic of Dr. Leacock's lectures was the history of the status of women.

The following is a summary of her first lecture.

Dr. Leacock began by pointing out some of the misconceptions we hold about our history. She stated that the media and the educational institutions continually promote the idea that the problems of our society - racism, poverty, sexism, war etc., - are a result of our 'human nature' and not problems that arise out of the structure of our society, problems which we can deal with by changing that structure.

'Human nature' has usually been defined as aggressiveness, competition, dominance. Leacock pointed out that this is quite untrue, that the essential characteristics of our 'human nature' are sociability, curiosity and cooperativeness; and that without these characteristics we could never have survived as a species.

She used examples from her work among the Montagnais Naskapi, a tribe of eastern Canada to illustrate that egalitarian relationships between the sexes are possible, that dominance of the male is not inherent. She pointed out that it is when the care of children becomes the responsibility of the nuclear family and not the responsibility of the community that unequal relationships arise.

Dr. Leacock also discussed the problems faced by anthropologists when examining other cultures, with particular reference to sex roles. At this point in time it would be incorrect to assume that there are many cultures that are free from European influence. The European countries have been colonizing the rest of the world for hundreds of years and have had a great effect on other cultures. She used the example of European explorers refusing to deal with female chiefs and thereby causing their power and status to become lessened.

Dr. Leacock also pointed out that since the majority of anthropologists have been men, it has been difficult for them to talk to the women of other cultures and they have therefore described the male part of these cultures and have no true picture of the culture as a whole and the part that women play in decision-making etc.

As well, Dr. Leacock talked about the division of labour and seemed to conclude that in a communalistic society, this depended, to a greater degree than we have assumed, far more on individual capabilities than on sex.

For those interested in hearing Dr. Leacock's lecture in its entirety a tape is available from the Women's Programme Centre library, Room 276, Students' Union Building

ELEANOR LEACOCK



Ask any high school student why he or she is at school and you'll generally get these answers: "So I can get a job when I get out"; "My parents and the law make me attend"; "to see my friends".

Seldom, if ever, does a student say, "I like learning; I'm interested in my classes".

Our schools are failures at stimulating students. This is hardly a new insight: it's one criticism that's been around for years.

In many ways, however, this criticism is misdirected - it blames the wrong structure.

Socialization

One of the primary purposes of any school system in any society is socialization - the teaching of values, goals, and role behaviours needed for the survival of that society.

Within our society, this socialization function can only undercut the school's other function - developing the learning potential of the student.

To learn effectively, you must be a self-directed individual, curious and critical, able to take responsibility for your own learning, behaviour and life. The requirements of our system leave little room for this type of individual. Too many misfits like this might lead to social change. So the school concentrates instead on programming (socializing) students to cope with and accept the limited and destructive life styles available to them under capitalism.

The demands of this socialization process shape all aspects of the school - the form and content of the lessons, the rules and structure of the school, even the way people relate to one another.

The values taught subliminally by the school structure and rules affect everyone. One of the most important rules in this socialization process is compulsory attendance. When this rule was first introduced in the school, it actually served a real purpose - to protect kids from being placed in the workforce at an early age. Today its only purpose is that of socialization, or as one of my students put it, "to train you in the junior rat race for the real rat race".

Expulsion, or placement in a detention home may seem ridiculously disproportionate punishment for those who flout this rule, but these punishments only reflect the real significance of the rule.

Teacher Domination

The rule of compulsory attendance reputedly teaches students "responsibility". In fact, it has the opposite effect. It teaches acceptance of the life they will live as adults, where they will have little power to make real decision over their own lives in any area, from the kind of thread used in mass produced clothes, the kinds of movies they get to see, to the rules and goals of their place of work. This rule leads students to the passive acceptance of another's authority to plan their lives.

One aspect of the learning situation which reinforces this lesson is teacher domination of the classroom. Kids learn early that there is only one right answer, the answer the authority has. By the time they're in senior high school, they've mastered the art of figuring out what the teachers want. I notice this especially in the first few weeks of a new semester. By about the third class, the questions start- "how much does

education

spelling count, what kind of format do you want essays in, what happens if I interpret a story differently, if I can back up my opinion, will you accept it, even if it's differently from yours etc. etc. These questions always make me sad, but there's another experience that occurs from time to time within my classroom that frustrates me because I realize I've fallen into this trap too. It usually occurs when I've finished marking a set of questions, and I'm feeling good because the students grasped the point of the story so well. I sit there glowing, and then I visualize the classroom and the students' questions that afternoon and the glow fades. I realize I've been conned again, that they just sat there playing dumb, waiting patiently through my series of explanations until I finally gave them what they had been waiting for - a pointed lead to the answer I wanted.

A waste of time and potential

What a waste of time and human potential - learning a slave mentality, how to con and hustle, how to succeed at goals set by others. These are, however, handy skills for post-school life.

Most kids have more autonomy, more curiosity, more ability to learn from their experiences, more critical ability, more honesty at age five than they have at age eighteen when the schools have finished teaching them not how to learn, but how to live unquestioning lives within a capitalist system.

The schools have another related socialization function - reinforcing the sex roles learned already at home. Again this socialization function diminishes the potential of all - both male and female. It tends to be most destructive to the female, however, since within adult society, her role will be even less satisfying than the male's.

These roles are taught in various ways, some subtle, some not.

One of the most blatant methods is the content of textbooks. The female pronouns - she, her etc. - don't occur until the third reader in some series and the women's roles in elementary books always are supportive ones - wife to husband, nurse to doctor, secretary to boss. Even in junior and senior high, there are very few strong women characters. In an informal survey done of junior high English books in one American school, there were 47 female characters to 191 male characters. Only 12 of the women were major characters in the stories. Of these 12, five were spinster school teachers, five were historical characters (ie. Queen Elizabeth and Madame Curie) and the rest were black, Chicana and Indian. I guess strong women in powerless groups aren't as threatening.

(continued p. 9)

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Role Stereotyping Evident Even in Math

Stereotyping is even evident in supposedly neutral texts like math books; Arithmetic problems show sex role stereotyping - where Jane added $2+2+2+2$ to get 8, Tom multiplied 4×2 to get 8. Or where mother went to the store and figured how many apples and oranges she could buy for 25¢, father built a garage and had to figure out how much wood to buy.

One of the more subtle ways students are trained in sex roles is the role models they have at school. Men are the administrators, women are the elementary school teachers. At the senior high level, female teachers are in the humanities, male teachers in the sciences. These things put a very subtle pressure on a girl - she may not be conscious of why she loses interest in math, but there certainly isn't much support in what she sees around her to carry on.

The results of this sex-role stereotyping are multiple. By senior high, bright girls have learned to adjust their goals to a lower level. If they intend to have a career, it will be secondary. They keep their mouths shut in class. Even when they do fight back at a particularly demeaning remark, they usually lose, for their aggressiveness has been socialized out of them. Those girls that refuse to accept this secondary position, who try to achieve their full potential, have been shown in psychological studies, to work under extremely high anxiety levels.

Because of pressure by the women's movement, some of these things have been changing. Text-book manufacturers are eliminating sex-role stereotyping in their books, more women are attaining administrative positions, girls are setting up women's liberation clubs, invading the autobody shop classes and arguing in the classroom.

With more pressure, it's probably possible to eliminate the special burdens girls now face at school. This would be beautiful for every little bit helps. But even as a strong supporter of the women's movement, I can't see this type of progress as particularly significant. Equal treatment of females and males within our schools won't change the destructive nature of the school's socialization processes. This won't change the school's methodology and rules. And most important, it won't change the class bias of our schools.

Anyone can make it?

In our society, there is a myth that most of us have grown up with. We all know it, we've heard it before; it's the one about how we live in a classless society where anyone, rich or poor, can make it big - the main ingredient for success is determination. There is also a reality. It takes this form: whether a kid drops out after grade eight, finishes high school, goes to university, chooses vocational or academic training, depends largely on his or her class background.

Our schools help to inculcate both this myth and this reality.

First - the myth. Our schools teach middle class values. They set up becoming or staying middle class as the criterion for success. To have a middle class job and lifestyle is to make it. This course is available to anyone - if you fail to attain this goal or reject it - you're a failure, inferior. The perpetuation of this myth covers up two essential facts. First - that there is little class mobility within our society. No matter what you do you'll probably remain in the class you were born into. And, secondly, and most importantly - what's so great about being middle class? There is absolutely no critical examination of the life of the middle class person - you just learn that this is the way to live happily ever after.

This myth is really important for it keeps people from examining the unsatisfactory life styles available to them as adults (and maybe rejecting the whole thing) and it leaves working class students with the illusion that to be working class is to be inferior.



Working class kids, exposed to these values for the first time at school, are at an immediate disadvantage. Schools are geared to the docile middle class child, whose background is similar to his teacher's and who has had the verbal and cultural training--through books, playthings and parental attitudes--necessary to do well in the primary grades. Because of this, working class children seldom do as well in the primary grades as do middle class children.

They must be dumb

By the time working class students have entered high school, they've internalized this failure - to get good grades - and see this as a sign of personal inadequacy. They choose the vocational stream - another admission of failure. They know they're not preparing themselves for the middle class job that the school system has subtly taught them is everything.

On one level, they have consciously rejected these middle class values - because of values taught at home and their own knowledge of reality. I see this all the time in my English students who are in the vocational stream. They just aren't pliable the way academic students are. They want stuff that is immediately useful and relevant - not material that might help them in college work three years later. They are much more outspoken critics of bullshit - much more honest, open and independent.

On another level, they do see their position as failure. It would be almost impossible not to - when faced with the snobbish social system within the school, where social status is, to a large degree, based on the courses you take. Vocational and academic students have little to do with each other. Even within voc.ed. there's a hierarchy with autobody and aircraft maintenance students at the top and food prep students at the bottom. Nothing about teaching within our system makes me sadder than to watch the chippy defensiveness of my vocational English students - set off by the conflict between their own sense of self-respect and their feeling that they screwed up somewhere, their feeling that since they've had school problems, they must be dumb. This dual viewpoint is very important because it makes criticism and change of the society we live in very difficult.

Our schools' socialization processes operate most harshly on working class students, since they, as adults, will be the most openly exploited under capitalism; but they affect everyone.

What we need is...

A couple of weeks ago, I was sitting around talking with a bunch of students. The discussion - as it often does - turned into a bitch session about education in general and some aspects of the particular school. One student, bothered by the lack of 'constructive' criticism, asked the most vocal critic, what could be done to improve the situation. He replied, "What we need is a violent political revolution".

I couldn't agree more. You can bitch all you want about the schools, but there will be no real change. Our schools will still function as inhibitors of everyone's human potential until people recognize that they must strike at the root of the schools' problem - capitalism.

the three MARIAS



Three Portuguese women went on trial on January 31 of this year to face charges of offending decency and public morals, and for publishing pornography. The women are commonly referred to as The Three Marias. All three are educated, middle-class working women in their mid-thirties with children.

Maria Teresa Horta is a literary critic for the Express of Lisbon; Maria Velho Da Costa works for I.N.I.I., a market research institute connected with the Ministry of Economics; Maria Isabel Varreno is a writer.

The Charges

The charges against these three women arose after their joint publication of the book, Novas Cartas Portuguesas (New Portuguese Letters). The book was published in April of 1972, and by May 1, the DGS (Portuguese political police) had seized copies of the book. On June 1 of the same year, the government's Committee of Censorship recommended that the authors be sued for offending public morals and decency. Subsequently, Novas Cartas Portuguesas was banned from sale (not before 3,000 copies had been sold). The three women were assigned a bail fee of \$600 each - a large amount of money in Portugal. Assigning bail was quite unprecedented; for although books are commonly seized in Portugal, suits are not common, and assigning bail is even rarer.

Their trial was to be held July 3, 1973 but was delayed for some obscure reason. At that time, however, much support arose - nationally from the writers and intellectuals and internationally from the women's movement. This support was mainly in the form of demonstrations at Portuguese embassies and telegrams to Prime Minister Caetano.

The Book

New Portuguese Letters is a book of 389 pages, and contains poetry, letters, criticism of the family, husbands, sexuality and authority. It deals with lesbianism, abortion and other topics which are taboo in Portuguese publications. Essentially, it is probably similar to much of the feminist writing which is published in Europe and North America. The book has not been completely translated - only a few sections have been translated and published. According to Effe, an Italian magazine, the most scandalous sentence in the book is: "It doesn't matter what they call us, prostitutes or lesbians. What matters is to fight and to win...Enough, it's time to shout: Enough!"

The trial presumably is continuing from its starting date of January 31. No news seems to be out on the progress of the trial. It is known that there will be many writers, both men and women, who will act as witnesses for the defense, and many telegrams demanding that the women be freed have been sent to the prime minister from Italy, France and the United States. If convicted, The Three Marias risk a sentence of 6 months to 2 years in prison.

The following interview with The Three Marias was published in Effe, December, 1973, pp. 30-31. The translation was made by a member of the Women's Programme Centre.

The Three Marias - The Socialism We Want

Effe: What is it like to be a woman in a country with a fascist government like Portugal?

Isabel: Women are bound in the interests of the family, and are thus discriminated against. Some examples: only women are obligated to do housework (by law). A husband can obtain a divorce if his wife uses contraceptives without his permission. Women do not have the right to make decisions about the raising of children, but can only participate under the husband's supervision. Besides these discriminatory laws, there is a "machismo" mentality.

Isabel: Probably the same as in Italy.

Catholicism is the major means by which women are conditioned to passively accept their role of wives and mothers. The Church promotes resignation and it gives women false compensations, like the cult of the Virgin, which is typically Portuguese (Fatima). It gives women the illusion that they are respected.

Effe: Do you think there is a difference between women's emancipation and women's liberation? Is a 'cultural revolution' necessary to free us?

Teresa: I don't like the word 'emancipation' because I don't think women have to emancipate themselves from men. Women must find their own way, a way different from the one that men have created. We have to break down man-made structures and create a different world. Women will free themselves and create the world differently - without competition if possible. Women are richer than men - less childish; men like to play, while women grow. But men do not want women to grow, just as a master does not want to lose his slave. I live under a dictatorship and I know that a dictator does not give in spontaneously. Because of this, we must fight a guerilla war. Here, I use a male term because there is not another available.

Effe: What is the relationship between feminism and culture; is it possible for us to create a culture of our own in the same way that minorities are trying to recover theirs?

Isabel: The prevailing culture is male and bourgeois. The image of woman has been created by ruling class men. The male bourgeois is the model. His 'values' are competition and rationality. We must free ourselves intellectually and emotionally in order to express a different culture. Naturally there are limitations and dangers if we become extreme. Although now it is necessary to organize separately from men, later we must look forward to uniting together with men on a new basis. In Portugal, we want to try consciousness-raising groups. Then we will have to act. The great difficulty here is that women are crushed and without hope.

Working women are already awakening though: they are becoming conscious of unequal salaries (sometimes less than half the men's). However, becoming conscious of a problem is not enough - women must learn to change their perspective, which is now controlled by men. Then we shall have to act, and this will be the hardest thing, particularly because of Portugal's regime.

Effe: How much do Portuguese feminists participate in the fight against the regime?

Teresa: This year I did not support CDE*, while I did in 1969. I don't think it represents my interests for two reasons: First, not all of the left is in the CDE, but only those who are willing to participate in the electoral campaign, thus playing according to the rules set by the regime. The second reason: in 1969 when I was an activist in the CDE, I realized that the women's role was to entertain visitors, hand out leaflets and make coffee, while the men would meet and make the decisions. Men inside discussing - women outside preparing coffee and sandwiches.

* CDE - Democratic Electoral Commission. The only legitimate opposition group under the fascist Caetano government. This political group is allowed to exist every 4 years during the month prior to an election. It is not allowed to have a central organization. There are 2 main currents within the CDE: Socialist and Communists, and Catholic independents.

Isabel: In the left movement, women are left outside. At most, the CDE can go as far as 'emancipation' in traditional terms, but not as far as women's 'liberation'. An example: sexual problems are taboo, thus, I cannot be a CDE activist. However I think right now the CDE has a function. We feminists must seek dialogue and alliance with the CDE, in order to establish a common platform of objectives. It is clear though that their fight does not replace ours.

Fatima: I have signed CDE's manifestos and petitions. The struggle of women is fundamental for the opposition (to the regime). The essential problems particularly concern women. Emigration and war have resulted in one million 'white widows'*. At this point in time, women not only have a role to play, but a fundamental and essential role. Some of our ideas, such as refusing a culture based on competition and violence, are profoundly revolutionary. We must change the day-to-day roles of men and women. This is why it is necessary to fight together.

Teresa: To those who say that our objectives are not fundamental, I answer that our book has served to show that in this country there is no freedom of expression. Thus, we have posed a political problem. To those who say that ours is a 'sophisticated' need, I would answer, would you say the same to black people?

Fatima: The socialism I want in Portugal should bring about women's liberation along with men's.

Teresa: Our movement, although just beginning, has the highest revolutionary potential. The regime does not want and forbids people from meeting and forming groups. Particularly women's groups.

* White Widows - women whose husbands have emigrated or are fighting in colonial wars. They have no means of support and may or may not be able to obtain a divorce.

ACCORDING TO THE CIVIL CODE OF 1967 --

- a wife must share in the expense of the household, but it is only she who is obligated to do housework.
- a woman participates in the raising of children, only under the supervision of her husband.
- To do business with a bank or commercial establishment, a woman must have her husband's signature.
- If a woman is using birth control without her husband's consent, he has grounds for divorce.

Portugal is not only oppressing its women, but it is oppressing its whole working class. It is the European country with the lowest annual income (\$600). It has the highest illiteracy and infant mortality rates in Europe. Military service is compulsory and is a total of 4 years - 2 years of training and 2 years in the African colonial wars.

BE
MY

SILICONE

Spray her in the morning, shave her in the evening, paint her at supper-time. Be my silicone sweet heart and love me all the time.

Advertisements often urge products upon us by saying that if we use them we will become more successful as women. "Want him to be more of a man? Try being more of a woman?" How can anyone be more or less of a woman? Even women who have undergone surgery can't change their degree of womanliness. As to becoming more of a woman, the process of becoming an adult human is quite independent of the perfume one wears.

The quality for sale here is that of femininity. What is femininity? How is a standard established and why?

Femininity is a set of specific traits embodied in a mythical woman. Various characteristics such as breast size, leg length, or hair colour go in and out of style but the basic idea of one fashionable set of attributes remains the same. That a feminine ideal should have existed so consistently through history gives rise to questions as to why 'she' would be invented.

A historical look at fashion may reveal some motives. Chinese women had their feet bound from the time that they were very young. This was not only agonizingly painful but crippling as well. For the duration of her life she would be dependent upon other people for every physical action. In the 1400's, young women particularly dressed in gowns that fell loosely over their torsos making them look pregnant. In one's young unmarried daughters, fruitfulness was always a good selling asset. This fashion at least was much more comfortable and healthy than the tiny-waisted ones that followed. Corsettes of all descriptions, metal, whale bone, laced, lycra, have been in common use since Elizabethan times. The problem that arose was that human bodies are not intended to be cinched in the middle to the size of a man's hand span. Under continual pressure, the internal organs (primarily the reproductive organs) were forced down into unnatural positions. Death in childbirth was common not because women are inherently frail and fragile but partially because their bodies were damaged and malformed. Victorian ladies were permanently sway-backed and not only could not walk but they couldn't breathe. Fashionable women were suffocating in the subways in Paris, a big sacrifice to be what someone else says is beautiful.

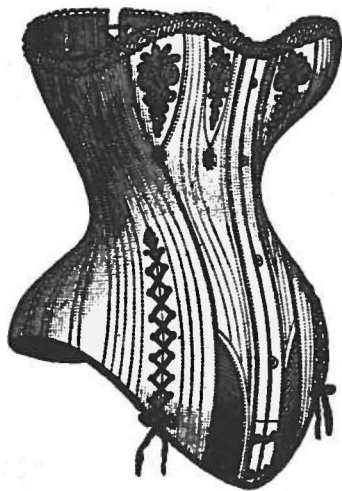
It seems fairly evident that femininity is and was being used as a means of control. A woman who can't breathe or move because of the way she is dressed can't work and consequently can't accumulate money which (in this society) is power. For a long time a woman's only marketable good was her face and body. If she was lucky (and rich) she married well, if she wasn't she did menial work or became a prostitute.

But, I hear, these historical horror stories can't apply to us. Our clothes are hardly the controlling agents they once were. True, however



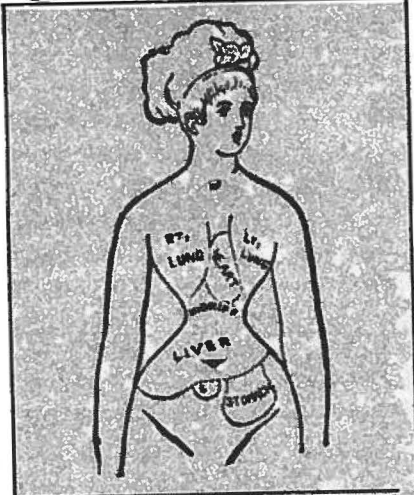
a closer examination of the modern (post industrial revolution) femininity will expose that the things controlling us and what that does to our bodies and our minds are even uglier, bigger and more frightening.

After the industrial revolution the gap between what the ruling class was wearing (which is what I've been talking about up until now) and what the working class was wearing, narrowed down. The woman maintained by her husband as a decorative knick-knack, symbol of his affluence and prosperity was of a very different nature when the bourgeoisie began to rise to power. More and more women were working either in the home or outside of it. The number of women that had no domestic duties was diminishing.

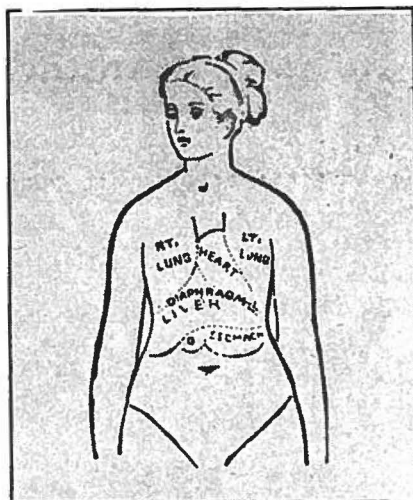


DR. WARNER'S

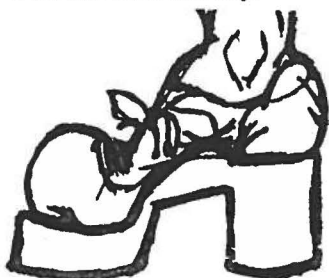
Gorline Abdominal Corset.



This is how they looked inside.



This is how they should have looked. With more room for their livers and stomachs, corsetless women fainted a lot less often this way.



During the second world war when with the shortage of men, women were recruited to work in vast numbers there was a corresponding change in fashion. Women began wearing pants, jackets with padded shoulders, shoulder bags to keep their hands free and garments with a lot of pockets. After the war when the men came home and took over jobs that women had been doing fashion changed again to the phenomena of the fifties. This was the era of the spike heel and the tight skirt and sweater, there was also a trend towards more frills and flare, the feminine look.

Now that the majority of us don't have servants to do the work and the time needed to prepare a face and body for the world just doesn't exist, it seems logical that the importance of how we look would change or decline. Not the case. Now with mass relatively cheap production everyone is pressured into trying to look as if they never washed a dish or typed a letter, long fingernails and soft hands testify to that. Even in this country of short summers we all try to wring some tan out of it. Sure to look healthy, but also to look like we spent the summer lounging. The controlling factor here which ambivalently takes our time and tries to get us to look like we have lots of it is monopoly capitalism. They get us through our most vulnerable spot. Our insecurity about our bodies. It is not an inborn thing for women to feel fear and disgust about their bodies. This is a product of alienation (a term much bandied about these days). This is in fact inherent in a society not your own. In a capitalist society people are alienated from their work, the product they produce, and other people. Alienation is an objective result of capitalism but because there is no external recognition of this it is made into a subjective problem and internalized. Consequently a kind of schizophrenia results - a mind-body split where one sees one's body as a self different from the mind. Women will continue to hate their bodies, see themselves as alone in this, and despair about it searching cosmetic solutions that don't work unless a clear analysis is made of the cause of the disgust.

We are all caught between two conflicting poles. One tells us that the way we look is what we must rely on to fulfill our function and the other which says that most of us should be dissatisfied with the way that we look. The myths of motherhood and marriage as the only viable successful thing to do with your life, incorporate the advantage of good looks. Women are expected to be passively beautiful and to be watched. One only has to try to get a table in a crowded bar to understand that. The glamorous professions for women, modelling and acting exemplify the same thing. There you can display your beauty to its best advantage. It is quite an accepted thing that a woman can make it on good looks. But achieving through skill training or talent is quite another thing. We heard a story from a woman who had excellent qualifications as a legal secretary but when she went to apply for a job was told to lose some weight and get some better clothes. This is not an isolated example. Recently in the secretarial course at A.V.C. the students were required to take a course on dress and grooming; that in itself only reflects the demands of employers. (See Get Your Own Damn Coffee, Mr. Jones)

While it is so important to be feminine and beautiful for getting approval, self-esteem, jobs, women are taught to dislike their bodies and to try to conform to something they are not, that mass manufactures ideal of a feminine woman.

Anything that reminds us of our humanness or our animalness goes. Hair, odour, blemishes, moles, stretchmarks, eyebrows are removed. Breasts are increased, hips are decreased, eyelashes, lips skin, hair and nails change colour daily. If a woman has enough fear, insecurity and money she can have her entire body overhauled. Breast size operations, face lifts, ears and nose changed, eyecolour changed with contacts. Even your face shape can be changed. Most of us saw the story about Jane Fonda being asked to have her jaw broken and reset and her back molars removed to give her the sunken cheek look.

All this work, time, energy, and money spent to make us look more and more like that Playboy perfection lady, and she's everywhere staring us in the face. Cosmetic ads, and clothing ads are all designed to keep us running and running, changing from product to product, spending more and more money keeping the ruling class in its position of power.

But what are we chasing? A mythical, dehumanized, desexed woman who lives in a tinsle Pepsi commercial world. While we're wearing ourselves out trying to be her, close behind us are our fears of ugliness, age, loneliness and being unloved.

But what's the point? Why is this happening? Who's behind it? One thing that this constant chasing does is take up a lot of our time and energy and divert our attentions. If you can get the office women really worried about the way that they look how much time do they have to organize? What kind of solidarity is there in an office where your enemy is the woman at the next desk? Get women competing with each other, it's a good trick to keep them from finding and fighting the real enemy.

What else is behind a manipulation becoming a survival necessity? It should be clear by now it's to make money. Women spend fantastic amounts of money on make-up and clothes. We're convinced that is essential to our happiness, well being, self confidence, love, and most important of all our economic security, to be right on top of all the new fashions. Huge monopoly clothing and make-up industries are making a bundle off of our insecurity and self-contempt. The profit couldn't be made however, unless the advertisement agencies made us believe we really needed their stuff to be real, happy, vibrant, loved women and people.

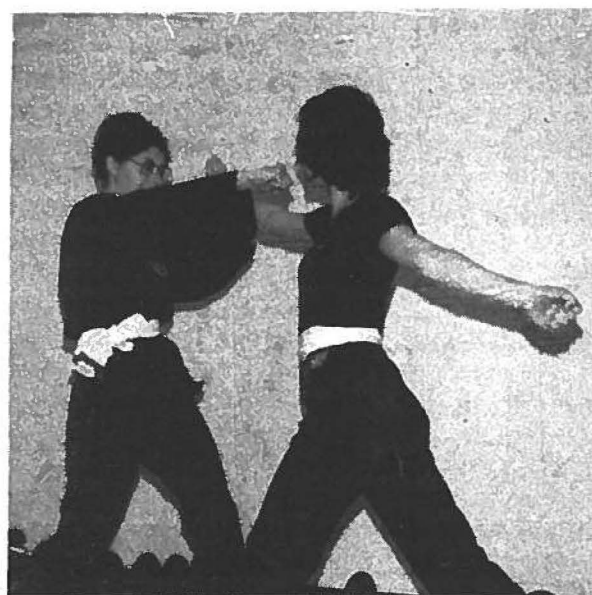
We are sold products that not only damage our minds but our bodies too. Platform shoes are an excellent example. The muscles in the calves of your legs tighten up and next summer you can't put your foot down flat. They have been nicknamed suicide boots and that isn't too far wrong. Twisted ankles are common, and your mobility and speed are reduced. Make-up is another villain. It doesn't come under the Food and Drug Act so the producers don't have to list the ingredients or even do tests to see if the product does what they claim it does.

Admittedly most of these things are not killing us, but why should we hurt to make fortunes for somebody else?

self~ defense for women

There are 2 reasons why I think the study of a self-defense art is important for women. First, such study will make a person feel as one with her body; in other words, it will begin to eliminate the alienation from her body as object and make it subject. Secondly, there is the benefit that a woman who knows self-defense will have the skill, strength, and confidence to repulse a would-be attacker. Women are often assaulted because of their assumed weakness, passivity and vulnerability. I would like to now go over the first reason in detail so as to encourage women reading this article to take up the study of karate, gung-fu or judo.

Self-defense training is not only learning blocks, punches and kicks. It is not, under the proper masters, meant to develop one to use maiming and killing blows. Usually when one begins training, the first thing done is to learn to stretch out - the legs, shoulders and arms. Stretching hurts a bit, but is done gently, so that when using your body, the muscles won't be pulled during moves the body normally doesn't do. After this, the basics are taught, the basics being punches, kicks and blocks. Then these basics are put into combinations and this leads into the study of the arts - a set sequence of moves in a definite order and rhythm. At this point sparring may be done. This is the refereed fighting between two individuals, and this is the only way one can learn to use the moves against an opponent.



During all of this physical exercise, it is inevitable that you must continually force your body to move or stand in certain positions which strain your muscles, and thus develop them. You must learn to punch, to direct your power at a target. You must put your mind in your fists, your mind in your legs - you learn to 'think' the power where you want it.

This is a good thing for women to learn. So often women see their bodies as they imagine other see them - as child bearers, sex objects, something to be admired for their softness and delicacy. To get out of this alienation situation, a woman must see her body as herself - she must know what it can do and train herself to be strong.

One word of advice, choose the school you will study at carefully. Do not hesitate to ask about their attitudes towards women and whether they will put you in separate classes. It is better to be in a class with men because one learns to block the blows of men which are usually much stronger. It is good to make sure there will be some other women in the class for encouragement and support.

One last word of advice - beware of signing contracts which commit you to long-term payment. There are schools which make more flexible arrangements.

What Is Most Hoped and - or Most Feared in the Matter: THE JUDGEMENT

-Marge Piercy

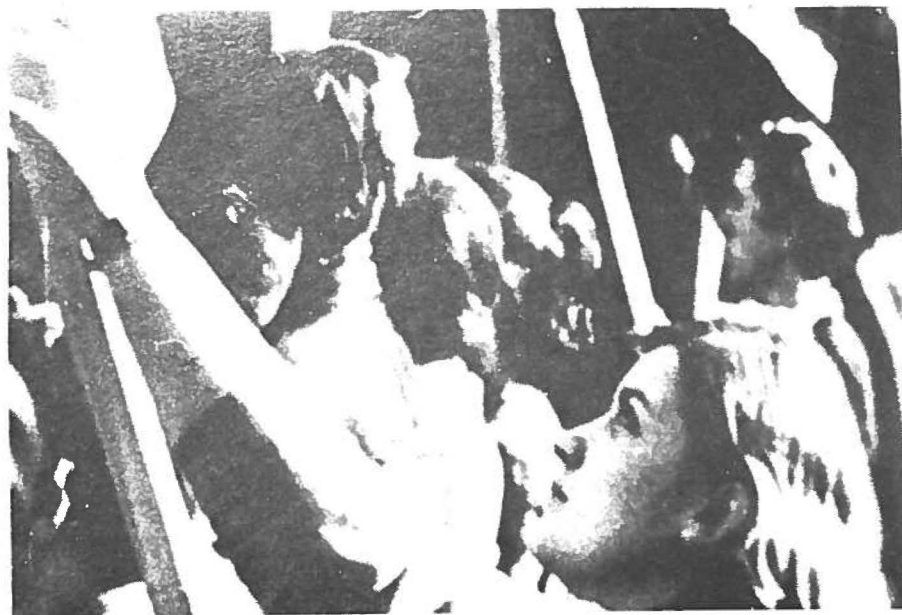
I call on the dead, I call on the defeated, on the starved,
the sold, the tortured, the executed, the robbed:
Indian women bayoneted before their children at Sand Creek,
miners who choked on the black lung,
strikers shot down at Pullman and Republic Steel,
women bled to death of abortions men made illegal,
sold, penned in asylums, lobotomized, raped and torn open,
every black killed by police, national guard, mobs and armies.
Live in us: give us your strength, give us your counsel,
give us your rage and your will to come at last into the light.

I fear the trial, I fear the struggle, it parches and withers me.
I fear the violence into whose teeth we march.
I long for the outcome with every cheated cell.
We shall all waken finally to being human.

I was trained to be numb, I was born to be numbered and pegged,
I was bred and conditioned to passivity, like a milk cow.
Waking is the sharpest pain I have ever known.
Every barrier that goes down takes part of my flesh
leaving me bloody. How can I live wide open?

Why must I think of you and you before I take a bite?
Why must I look to my sister before I scratch my itch?
Before, I shuffled and giggled and kept my eyes down,
tucking my shoulders in so I would not rub the walls
of the rut, the place, the role.
Now anger blisters me.
My pride rumbles, sputtering lava.
Every day is dangerous and glad.

"Why do you choose to be noisy, to fight, to make trouble?"
you ask me, not understanding I have been born raw and new.
I can be killed with ease, I can be cut right down,
but I cannot crawl back in the cavern
where I lay with my neck bowed.
I have grown. I am not by myself.
I am too many.



GLOSSARY

BOURGEOIS: used to denote a member of the ruling class in capitalist society. The word is also used as an adjective, as in **BOURGEOIS IDEOLOGY**, the ideology which serves the economic and social interest of the ruling class. A person does not have to be a member of the ruling class to maintain and put forward such ideas. **BOURGEOISIE:** This class gave the leadership in the development of the capitalist economic system. When feudalism was overthrown and capitalism established as the dominant economic system, the bourgeoisie established itself as the new ruling class, replacing the old feudal nobility. In capitalist society, the bourgeoisie owns the **MEANS OF PRODUCTION**: that is, the resources, raw materials, factories, machinery, transportation systems, etc., by which goods are produced. They also control the political machinery and institutions of the capitalist state: that is, the government, the educational system, the media, the police, the courts, the army, etc., and exercise this political control in order to maintain their economic rule.

CAPITALISM: the social and economic system which is based on the private ownership of the means of production. Capitalism is based on industrial production. The extraction of **SURPLUS VALUE**; that is, the ability and the right of the capitalist to make a profit on the work performed for him by others, is the basic law of capitalist production. In theory, unhindered competition, so-called 'free enterprise' characterizes capitalist economies, but in practice the development of monopolies has greatly restricted and all but eliminated competition in all important areas of production. Lack of social planning of economic development, periodic crises - recessions, depressions, inflation etc. - unemployment, poverty, and war are characteristic features of capitalism.

CLASSES: large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a particular social-economic system; by their relation to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labour, and consequently by their ability to acquire for themselves a share in the wealth produced by society. The role and social position of a given class varies with each historical period. E.g. in feudal society, the bourgeoisie was the middle class but became the ruling class in capitalist society. Similarly, the relationship of one class to another and the degree of antagonism between them varies with each historical and political situation. E.g. under feudalism,

the bourgeoisie and the working class had antagonistic interests because the former made its wealth off the labour of the latter, but they also shared a unity of interest in the sense that both faced the necessity of overthrowing feudalism.

CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS: The recognition and identification with the interests of one's own class.

COMMUNISM AND SOCIALISM: Socialism is a transitional stage when the proletariat and its allies (farmers, native people etc.) have seized the means of production, smashed the bourgeois state and replaced it by a proletarian state. During the period of socialism the economy must be reorganized and developed to serve the people and capitalist culture and attitudes must be eliminated. When all bourgeois remnants have disappeared and there is an abundance of all necessities, everyone is a member of the proletariat. Class society disappears and the proletarian state 'withers away'. This is the stage of communism.

ECONOMISM: A political trend among socialists which narrows the class struggle to a struggle of simple economics (ie. more money for us) and minimizes the fact that we must overthrow the capitalist class to achieve our ends.

IMPERIALISM: In general, imperialism is the domination and exploitation of peoples, nations and countries by a foreign empire. When we speak of imperialism today, we mean the highest, monopolistic stage of capitalism which began shortly before the turn of the century. The transition of capitalism to the monopoly stage turns it into decaying, parasitic capitalism.

PROLETARIAT: "...that class of society whose means of livelihood entirely depends on the sale of its labour and not on the profits derived from capital; whose wealth and woe, whose life and death, whose whole existence, depend upon the demand for labour, depend upon the alternations of good times and bad, upon the fluctuations which are the outcome of unbridled competition..." Fred Engels. Those who work for a wage in order to live.

SOCIALIZATION: eg. of housework. The transition from a single worker producing a commodity to a group of workers dividing the different aspects of the work among them. The impetus towards socialization in the early development of capitalism was the development of technology. The workers are no longer independent artisans but workers in a factory and eventually on an assembly line. They lose control of their product to the capitalist who owns the machinery, but they are also in a position to realize their common interests as a class and to unite to eventually overthrow the capitalist class and regain control of the means of production and the product of their labour.

Socialization increases productivity both through the division of labour and through the possibility of mechanization on a larger scale. The socialization of housework under socialism will free large numbers of workers for other work, speeding up the development of socialism, and will also release houseworkers from their position as unpaid drudges.



UNION MAID

Words by Woody Guthrie
Music: Redwing

Verse

There once was a union maid, Who nev - er was a -

fraid Of the goons and ginks and the com - pan - y finks, And the

dep - u - ty sher - iffs who made the raids. She went to the un - ion

hall When a meet - ing it was called, And when the com - pan - y

boys came 'round, She al - ways stood her ground. Oh, you can't scare

me, I'm stick - ing to the un - ion, I'm stick - ing to the un - ion,

I'm stick - ing to the un - ion. Oh, you can't scare

me, I'm stick - ing to the un - ion, I'm stick - ing to the

un - ion Till the day I dic.

This union maid was wise
To the tricks of company spies,
She couldn't be fooled by company stools
She'd always organize
She'd always get her way
When she asked for higher pay
She'd show her card to the National Guard
And this is what she'd say.
Chorus.

SOLIDARITY FOREVER

Ralph Chaplin

(tune - "John Brown's Body")

When the union's inspiration
through the workers' blood shall run,
There can be no power greater
anywhere beneath the sun.
Yet what force on earth is weaker
than the feeble strength of one?
But the union makes us strong.

Chorus: Solidarity Forever!
Solidarity Forever!
Solidarity Forever!
For the union makes us strong.

Is there aught we hold in common
with the greedy parasite
Who would lash us into serfdom
and would crush us with his might?
Is there anything left for us
but to organize and fight?
For the union makes us strong.
(Chorus)

They have taken untold millions
that they never toiled to earn.
But without our brain and muscle
not a single wheel can turn.
We can break their haughty power;
gain our freedom when we learn
That the union makes us strong.
(Chorus)

In our hands is placed a power
greater than their hoarded gold;
Greater than the might of armies
magnified a thousand-fold.
We can bring to birth the new world
from the ashes of the old.
For the union makes us strong.
(Chorus)

BREAD AND ROSES

New Year's Day, 1912, ushered in one of the most historic struggles in the history of the American working class. On that cold January first, the textile workers of Lawrence, Massachusetts, began a nine-week strike which shook the very foundations of the Bay State and had national repercussions. In its last session, the Massachusetts State Legislature, after tremendous pressure from the workers, had finally passed a law limiting the working hours of children under the age of 18 to 54 hours a week. Needless to say, the huge textile corporations had viciously opposed the law. As an act of retaliation, the employers cut the working hours of all employees to 54 hours a week, with a commensurate cut in wages, of course. The workers in the Lawrence factories, some 35,000 of them, answered this with a complete walk out. . . . During a parade through Lawrence, a group of women workers carried banners proclaiming "Bread and Roses!"

Words by James Oppenheim
Music by Martha Coleman

As we come march - ing, march - ing, in the beau - ty of the

day, A mil - lion dark - ened kitch - ens, a thou - sand mill lofts

gray, Are touched with all the ra - diance that a sud - den sun dis -

clo - ses, For the peo - ple hear us sing - ing, "Bread and Ros - es, Bread and Ros - es."

As we come marching, marching, we battle too, for men,
For they are women's children and we mother them again
Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes
Hearts starve as well as bodies:
Give us bread, but give us roses.

As we come marching, marching, unnumbered women dead
Go crying through our singing their ancient song of bread
Small art and love and beauty their drudging spirits knew.
Yes, it is bread that we fight for
But we fight for roses too.

As we come marching, marching, we bring the greater days
The rising of the women means the rising of the race.
No more the drudge and idler, ten that toil where one reposes,
But a sharing of life's glories,
Bread and Roses, Bread and Roses.



It is we who plowed the prairies;
built the cities where they trade;
Dug the mines and built the workshops;
endless miles of railroad laid.
Now we stand outcasts and starving,
'mid the wonders we have made;
But the union makes us strong.
(Chorus)

All the world that's owned by idle drones
is ours and ours alone.
We have laid the wide foundations;
built it skyward stone by stone.
It is ours, not to slave in,
but to master and to own,
While the union makes us strong.
(Chorus)

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I Am A Union Woman

These Lost Creek miners
Claim they love their wives so dear
That they can't keep from giving them
A baby or two every year.

Aunt Molly Jackson, Kentucky coal miner's daughter, sister, and wife, helped organize the miners during the bloody, violent days of the early 1930s. She also wrote songs—songs which captured the spirit of the terrible struggles the men and women of the coal country lived through every day of their lives. Her song titles themselves tell the dreadful story: *Hard Times in Coleman's Mines*, *Poor Miner's Farewell*, *Lonesome Jailhouse Blues*, *Hungry Ragged Blues*, *East Ohio Miners' Strike*, *The Death of Harry Simms*, *Dreadful Memories*, *I Am A Union Woman* . . .

"When I was organizing the miners around Bell and Harlan Counties in 19 and 31 I sang this song. I used it in my organizational work. I always sang this song before giving my speech. In those days it was 'Join the NMU.' But later on, John L. Lewis started a real democratic organization, so I changed it to 'Join the CIO.'"

Words by Aunt Molly Jackson
Music: Traditional



I was raised in old Kentucky
In Kentucky born and bred
And when I joined the union
They called me a Rooshian Red.
Chorus.

This is the worst time on earth
That I have ever saw,
To get killed out by gun thugs
And framed up by the law.
Chorus.

When my husband asked the boss for a job,
This is the words he said:
"Bill Jackson, I can't work you, sir
Your wife's a Rooshian Red."
Chorus.

The bosses ride big fine horses,
While we walk in the mud
Their banner is the dollar sign
While ours is striped with blood.
Chorus.

OF STRUGGLE



We want no condescending saviours
To rule us from their judgement hall
We workers ask not for their favors
Let us consult for all.
To make the thief disgorge his booty
To free the spirit from its cell
We must ourselves decide our duty
We must decide and do it well.
Chorus.

The law oppresses us and tricks us,
The wage slave system drains our blood
The rich are free from obligations
The laws the poor delude.
Too long we've languished in subjection,
Equality has other laws;
"No rights" says she "without their duty
No claims on equals without cause"
Chorus.
Behold them seated in their glory
The kings of mine and rail and soil
What have you read in all their story
But how they plundered toil?
Fruits of the workers toil are buried
In strongholds of the idle few
In working for their restitution
The people will only claim their due.
Chorus

We toilers from all fields united
Join hand in hand with all who work;
The earth belongs to us, the workers
No room here for the shirk
How many on our flesh have fattened
But if the notsome birds of prey
Shall vanish from the sky some morning
The blessed sunlight then will stay.
Chorus.

Which Side Are You On?

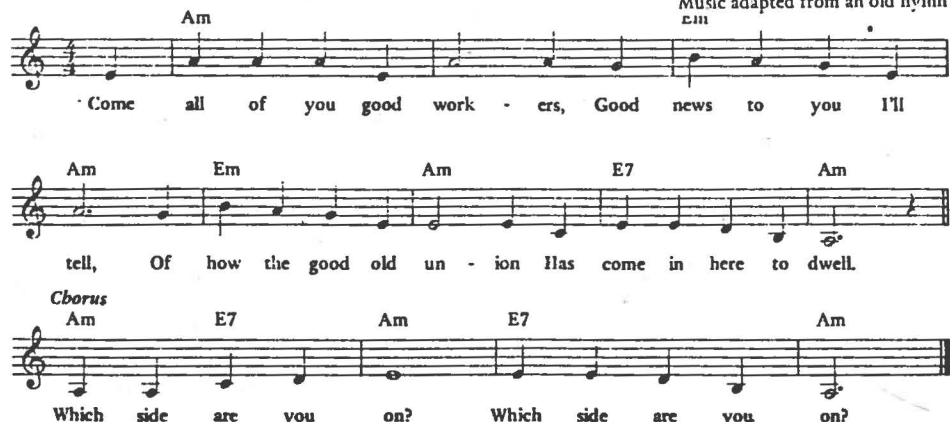
In the spring of 1931 the coal miners of Harlan County, Kentucky, were on strike, along with thousands of other members of the National Miners' Union throughout the United States. Led by High Sheriff J. H. Blair, company gun thugs terrorized the countryside, searching miners' homes with the intent of beating up or murdering the rank and file union leaders. Florence Reece's husband, Sam, was one of the sought men, and the thugs came to her home when she was alone with her seven children.

"What are you after?" she said. "You know there's nothing but a lot of little hungry children here."
"We're not after them."

They poked their shotguns through everything in the house . . . they had guns set up around the hollow ready to shoot Sam down like a rabbit. Florence got word to him not to return, though.

One day she tore an old calendar off the wall and wrote the words of the song. Then she and her eldest daughter put it to the tune of an old hardshell Baptist hymn. (*People's Songs*, Vol. 2, No. 1)

Words by Florence Reece
Music adapted from an old hymn



Don't scab for the bosses,
Don't listen to their lies.
Us poor folks haven't got a chance
Unless we organize.
Chorus.

to Be of Use

- Marge Piercy

The people I love the best
jump into work head first
without dallying in the shallows
and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight.
They seem to become natives of that element,
the black sleek heads of seals
bouncing like half-submerged balls.

I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart,
who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience,
who strain in the mud and the muck to move things forward,
who do what has to be done, again and again.

I want to be with people who submerge
in the task, who go into the fields to harvest
and work in a row and pass the bags along,
who stand in the line and haul in their places,
who are not parlor generals and field deserters
but move in a common rhythm
when the food must come in or the fire be put out.

The work of the world is common as mud.
Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust.
But the thing worth doing well done
has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident.
Greek amphoras for wine or oil,
Hopi vases that held corn, are put in museums
but you know they were made to be used.
The pitcher cries for water to carry
and a person for work that is real.

East meets West

I bin 'wonder woman' for truckers,
Mackenzie River captains
Plow jockeys Pipe fitters.
I came among them
with long strides
wild hair
flashing hands.
They climbed my pale mountain body
with violent fists
unabashed lust
roaring laughter,
Reveled in the warmth of my flesh,
Paid and left.

Your thermostat eye,
melts my paper-mache face
dissolves my vulgar smile.
Then I stand naked awkward child
betrayed by puberty

Erupting
Interrupting
volcanically.
Huge uneasy hands,
Self-conscious heavy feet,
Both mutinous to my stern commands.
I see you swallow bile
Silently noting bush trails I blazed
with stains
fingerprints
ash
bruises and broken crystal,
hurly-burly through your tidy English garden.

-Heather

Butterfly Collection

Christman tree decorations,
Smashed by your hands,
Exploded glass flying shrapnel
Shattered piece pierced my eye,
Pinned my shoulder to the wall.

-Heather

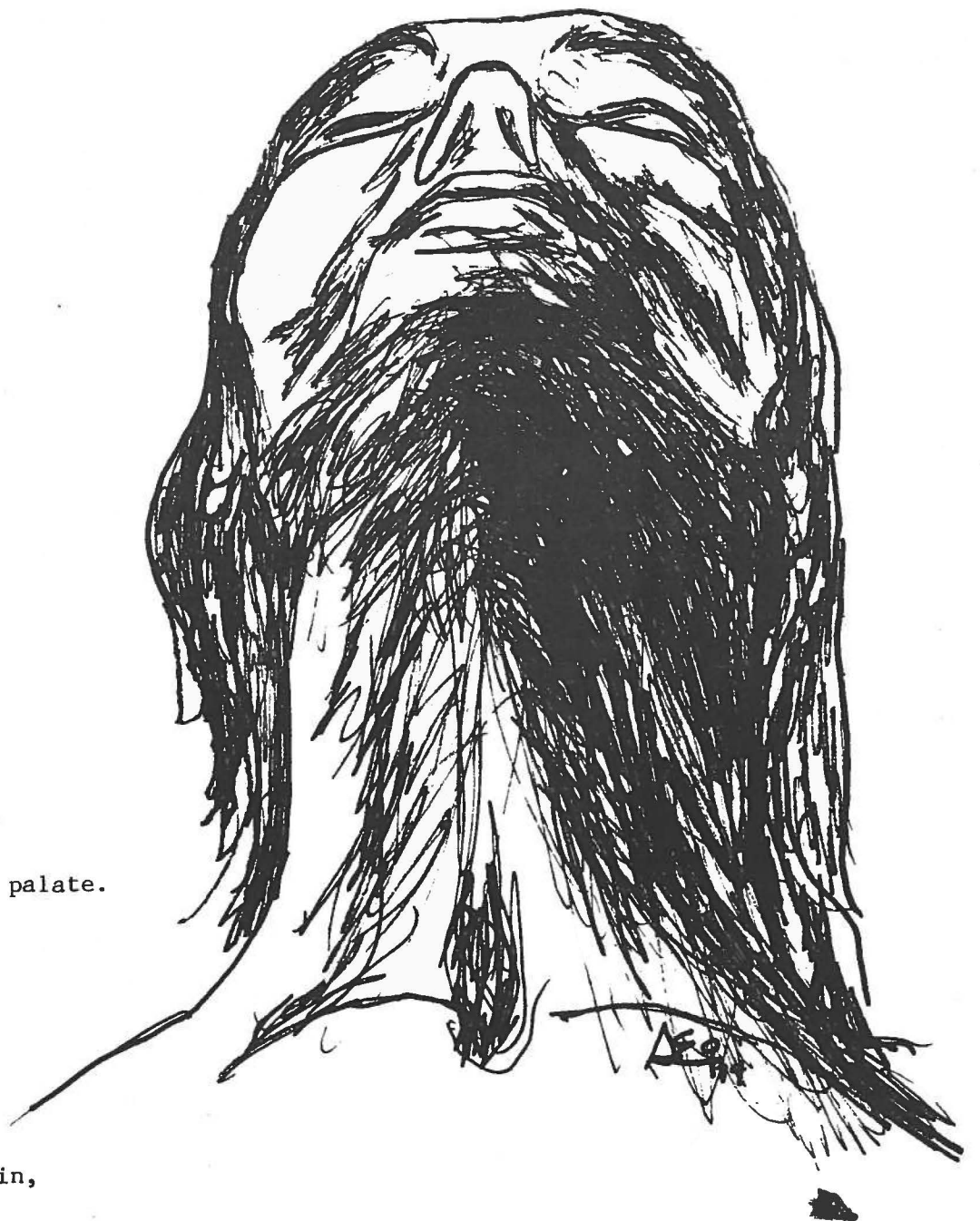
Virgin Prairie, New Plow

Here, your body lies young and bristled beneath mine,
Long winter brown grasses
Tiny green at the root.
I greet you with wild celebration dances!
Tuneless throbbing of music washes my body clean,
My feet leap and spin.
I shout your ancient sound making the waves into chant.

A rear and churning.
His swift keen blade slits your flesh from clitoris to palate.
Clean-edged cut through firm flesh.
Smooth knife slid,
up your belly
between your breasts
under the spongy rise of your chin.
Sinewed layers turned back on themselves,
Hair entangled with hair,
Naked tendons and tissue.

Oh, deer woman, you have secreted your pulse deep within,
I cannot hear.
I crouch in the back of the truck,
Rocking, holding my own body together with both arms,
Am I still too young that I forget there is no reaping without raping?
My father wants to 'farm' you, 'work' you, make you into something 'useful'.
I want to stroke your forehead,
And listen slow to the beat of your heart.

- Heather



Upon Pondering the Mysteries that
Come to Play between my thoughts
and Yours

Your eyes
do not possess
the grandeur of a
canyon
They do not
hide beneath the cover of a shadowed growth wild
promises
of
great
depths

They have surfaced.

Your eyes are not pools of graduating lights and depths and distances
They do not draw me
down
into
an offer of cool coolness
They do not unfold a mirage
beyond my desert realm

They strike direct.

Your eyes do not cut through my strangeness
like a cat
knowing in the night
They do not slant into my soul
some spent light
-exposing

They look at me.

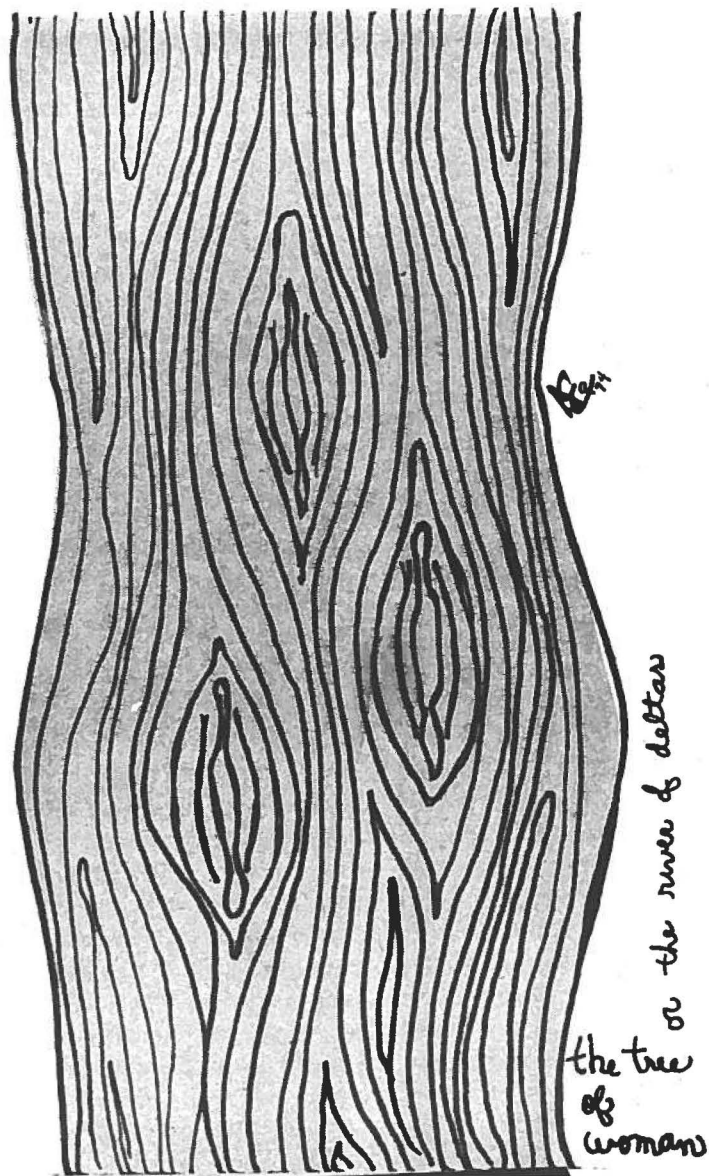
They open like your arms as if expecting me
to answer.

- Sharon

You speak to me of dappled roses and
goddesses and rain
and I answer with sticks and stones.

You raise up ovals of images on the
smoothness of my shoulders
and I bite back.

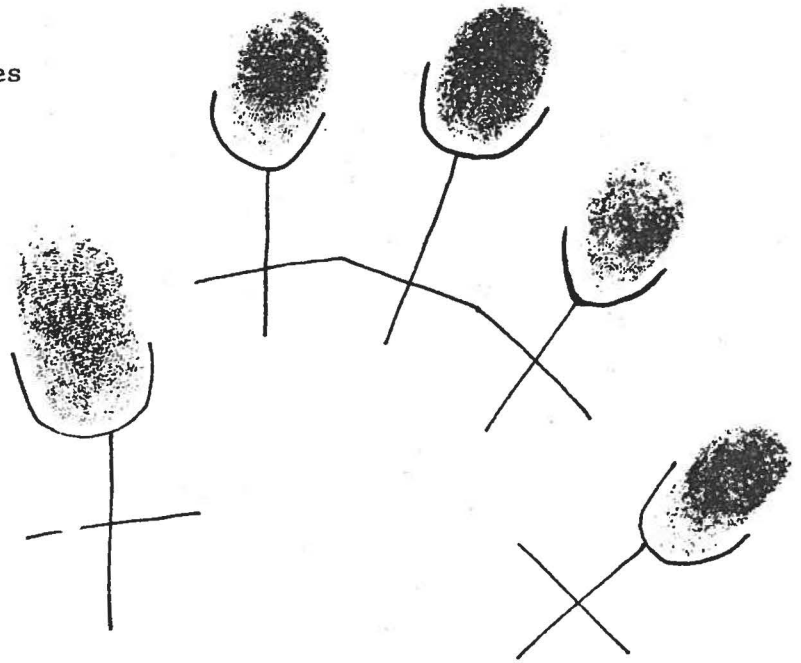
- Sharon



From: That Which is Now Behind, Previous Condition:
THE EIGHT OF SWORDS

- Marge Piercy

Despair is the worst betrayal, the coldest seduction:
to believe at last that the enemy will prevail.
Hush, the heart's drum, my life, my breath.
There is finally a bone in the heart that does not break
when we remember we are still part of each other,
the muscle of hope that goes on in the dark
pumping the blood that feeds us.



The Woman In The Ordinary

- Marge Piercy

The woman in the ordinary pudgy downcast girl
is crouching with eyes and muscles clenched.
Round and pebble smooth she effaces herself
under ripples of conversation and debate.
The woman in the block of ivory soap
has massive thighs that neigh,
great breasts that blare and strong arms that trumpet.
The woman of the golden fleece
laughs uproariously from the belly
inside the girl who imitates
a Christmas card virgin with glued hands,
who fishes for herself in other's eyes,
who stoops and creeps to make herself smaller.
In her bottled up is a woman peppery as curry,
a yam of a woman of butter and brass,
compounded of acid and sweet like a pineapple,
like a handgrenade set to explode
like goldenrod ready to bloom.

All poems by Marge Piercy, unless otherwise indicated have been
taken from TO BE OF USE - Poems by Marge Piercy published by
Doubleday.

There are two kinds of work that women do - paid and unpaid. We all know what paid work is; unpaid work is housework. I'd like to deal mainly with paid work--

Everyone is probably aware of the kinds of jobs that the majority of women are in and what position of the economic scale we occupy. Women are in poorly paid, supportive service jobs. We are waitresses, clerks, nurses, secretaries, cleaning women, sales clerks etc. and we are poor.

Total Labour Force in Selected Occupational Categories, By Sex
- ALBERTA 1971-72

Occupation	Females	Males	% Distribution of all Women Workers	Women As % of all Workers
Clerical, (i.e. clerk	11,998	2,590	40%	82%
Other Clerical, (i.e. Key punch)	1,422	435	4%	77%
Sales Personnel	1,776	414	10%	81%
Maids & Related Positions	2,366	593	8%	80%
Nurses	3,851	28	16%	99%
Telephone Operators	521	0	2%	100%
Bank Tellers	1,094	0	4%	100%
Hospital Attendants, Aides, Orderlies	3,380	1,127	11%	75%
TOTAL	26,408	5,187	95%	87%

Source: Women in the Alberta Labour Force.

We are concentrated in the lowest paid jobs with the least power. An article in a 1969 Chatelaine estimated that approximately one-half of Canadian women are poor: poor' being defined at that time as an annual income of \$3,000 or less. It stated that if one considered the number of women on welfare; the number of women, who, as head of the family make less than \$3,000 a year; all single women who get less than \$3000 a year and elderly poor women, the total number of that group is five times as large as the total of all poverty-stricken racial groups put together. It also stated that these figures were growing rapidly. That was 5 years ago. To brighten up your day further - 10% of working women make more than \$5,000 a year and 33% of single working women make less than \$1700 a year. Again, these are 1969 statistics. We probably make more money now in terms of dollars, but, given the increase in the cost of living, the buying power of those dollars has not increased.

Due to the efforts of the women's movement, there has been a great hue and cry from various levels of government about sex discrimination and there has been some legislation passed to supposedly eliminate this. For example, legislation was passed in Alberta forbidding jobs to be advertised on the basis of sex and also stating that equal wages must be paid for equal work. Which is all very nice but isn't very effective. Employers get by the advertising legislation by using key words, ie. saying 'aggressive' personality when they want a man and 'attractive' personality when they want a woman. As for equal pay for equal work, they will describe a job, which is substantially the same, differently and give it two titles and can thus get away with paying different wages.

So that's it - we comprise about 33% of the total workforce and most of that 33% is at the bottom of the pay scale.

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Many women have professional aspirations and believe that one way or another they can escape this trap. But there aren't many of us who will make it. Professional and managerial jobs are limited and even if 50% of them were held by women who were equally paid the situation for the majority would not be changed. Most of us will find ourselves in low-paying, alienating powerless work. The other aspect that arises here is that if you individually make it into the financial or status big time, you must achieve this by crawling over someone else - such is the nature of a competitive rather than a cooperative system. The point, therefore, is not to get more women into top positions, but to change the nature of all work so that it is the people who do the work who have the control over it. The goal is not to struggle alone for one's own ends, but to change the situation by uniting with one's fellow workers, both men and women, to overcome the source of our shared oppression and exploitation, which is capitalism.

Women - source of cheap labour

The question that comes up, of course, is why is it necessary to capitalism for women to be in these kinds of jobs? The major reason is because women provide a source of cheap labour which can be used and dismissed as necessary. For example, during both world wars, women entered the labour force in great numbers and did every kind of job that had previously been closed to them. When the wars were over, they were sent back home in spite of the fact that most of them didn't want to go home.

Another reason is the old 'divide and conquer' principle. Women are an easily identifiable group which male workers see as a threat to their jobs - women are willing to take jobs for lower wages (there's not much else available to us and we have to eat too) and this threatens the job security and the accessibility of jobs to men(so they think). Hence the propaganda concerning women's inability to do certain jobs ie. lack of muscle, rationality, intellect etc. As long as men continue to see women as being a threat in the labour market, working men and women will not unite to fight their common exploitation as a class.

Women's position within the nuclear family is also significant. We are responsible for the rearing of children and the maintenance of the home and the 'main' workers. This limits our opportunities in the work force in that we often simply don't have the time for full-time employment. We therefore often take part-time or casual employment. Which again is advantageous to the employer, because he is not compelled by law to provide fringe benefits and can usually pay a lower wage to non-full-time employees. Women who work full-time outside the home and continue to be the main worker inside the home are in an even worse position. One thing that should be brought up here is that women who are married, have children and also work full or part-time do so because they have to. The income of their husband is usually insufficient to meet the demands of existence. I would also include here the fact that many women need to get out of their house, either for some adult human companionship or just to reaffirm the reality of the world outside the four walls of their house. This is as much a necessity as money is.

Two jobs for the price of one

I'd like to discuss briefly the unpaid labour that almost all women are engaged in - housework. What are the jobs that houseworkers do? If they are in the nuclear family, they maintain and care for their husbands, if they have children, either in a nuclear family or not, they care for them, teach them how to take their place in society, respect authority etc. What is significant here is that the employer is assured that the labour power he hires is cared for and he doesn't have to pay for it. Two jobs are done for the price of one. If the capitalists had

The Edmonton Social Planning Council recently completed a task force on "Women in the Alberta Labour Force". It shows by means of some very impressive statistics, just what "women's work" is.

If you are at all interested in the reality that women face when they leave their homes to work, then get a copy of this publication and share it with your friends.

Copies are available from:

The Edmonton Social Planning Council
10006 - 107 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 1J2
Phone: 4240331

worker's council - new union

WORK continued from page 20

to pay for child-care, food preparation - all the things a houseworker does - they'd be really upset - more of their profit would be going back to the people who created it and that just must not happen.

Union Organization

Another significant fact about the way housework is organized, is that it separates people into little individualized units. It isolates people. If you're isolated, you don't organize. 'Divide and conquer' again.

In order for women to get themselves out of the situation they are in in the paid labour force, it is necessary for them to organize into unions. The union is the only strength that the workers have in the workplace under capitalism.

Only 17% of the female labor force unionized - a pretty meaningful figure which accounts to a large extent for our poor wages and working conditions. But it is very difficult to organize a union where the majority of the employees are women; and for good reason.

Most women do not see their jobs as being central to their lives - their focus is on their home and personal worlds. They don't have time for the large amount of work that organizing entails. A lot of young women believe that their jobs are temporary and that once they get married, they won't have to work, ignoring the fact that 58% of the female workforce is married. Also, considering the kinds of occupations that women are in, who can blame us for not wanting to concentrate our lives and energies on something that is generally boring, leads nowhere and is low-paying.

You can see what a vicious circle it is - it's a lousy job so you don't focus on it, and change it and so it remains a lousy job.

We must learn to overcome this. Unionizing is important not only because it is the only way in which we can gain concessions from the capitalists but because it is also one way of fostering unity among the workers, which is necessary if we are to struggle for our ultimate aim - the establishment of a socialist state.

The Service, Office and Retail Workers Union of Canada (SORWUC) is an independent Canadian union which was formed in October, 1972 by a group of working women in Vancouver. On October 1, 1973 they signed their first contract with a legal office in Vancouver. Some of the terms of the agreement are as follows:

- 3 weeks paid holidays in the first two years, and 4 weeks in the third year
- substantial benefits for all part-time workers
- double time for any overtime
- a wage rate effective October 1, 1974 of \$3.83/hr. or \$675.00/month
- a medical plan and extended benefits completely paid for by the employer
- the employer pays half of all employees' contributions to the Canada Pension Plan
- The employer must give two weeks notice of lay-off with employees placed on a recall list for a period of one year
- 1 1/2 days per month paid sick leave
- a grievance procedure to ensure fair and equal treatment for all employees
- and other basic workers' rights

While SORWUC was organized by women and attempts to organize in those areas of the economy where female workers predominate, it is not a "women's union". There are men who are members of the union as well.

At the present time there is no fulltime paid staff in the union. According to the SORWUC constitution, anyone who takes a paid position in the union must be elected to that office, and any paid position in the union can only be held for two years. At that point the member must return to work. SORWUC doesn't want trade union bureaucrats who haven't been on the job for ten years telling the workers what their needs are.

As well, each local elects all its own officers. There are no professional negotiators or organizers. "As workers on the job and in the union we can talk for ourselves."

If you or your fellow workers would like more information about SORWUC or would like to know how to join, write to 72 East 18th, Vancouver, B.C. All correspondence is confidential.



GET YOUR OWN DAMN COFFEE, MR. JONES

by Sara Gunnard

Reprinted from the UBYSSEY, the University of British Columbia Student Newspaper.

GIRLS! are you looking for a fulfilling job, a job with a future, guaranteed to eliminate your self respect distort your value, reduce you to a mindless, servile, lowly blob or a simpering sweet dolly?

Then become a secretary!

And if you want a job that eliminates any fear that you might actually be a human being, then become a secretary in a university department! Perhaps you thought that lowly freshmen held the bottom rung of the university status ladder - wrong, even lower than the freshmen are the clerical staff: the paper typers, the messengers, the coffee makers, the file keepers of the world.

Let's drink to the hardworking people, to the salt of the earth... how frustrated I get when so many students and professors - some of them freaks and supposedly so hip to the troubled state of the world - run around the department I work in, look through me, oblivious to the fact that I am more than just an extension of my typewriter, or a producer of letters and other academic bullshit, who recognize my existence only and tokenly when they have some minor clerical problem that falls within my limited range of ability. Charity begins at home.

You are either treated like a retard or a child and have every word spelled out to you with microscopically detailed instructions, or you are expected to be a mind reader and to know what you're supposed to do by telepathy.

Behind the typewriter

There is only a stock approach to secretaries, a standard method of relating to the girl behind the typewriter - nobody acknowledges the fact that you're different or an individual, nobody relates to you as you are, you are only approached by the standard secretary approach method.

We musn't let our bosses down, we must play out the role. You start off compromising and playing the obliging, simpering secretary role because you want to keep your job and your pay cheque, and before too long, you really believe in keeping them happy and earning that rewarding little pat on the head from time to time.

At home their wives wait on them -- and in the office, their secretaries do. And how many secretaries really believe in it and lovingly regard their bosses as some sort of surrogate husband/father/lover figure?

We love our masters, we crave their approval, we sell ourselves out to oblige, because we have so well assimilated the values that keep us in our lowly position with our negative expectations. Happy, happy niggers.

Willingly we rush out to get him his coffee and cigarettes, obligingly we sit in gaggles over coffee break and giggle and act cute and simple, discussing our ailments, husbands and/or boy-friends, recipes and other trivia, so that the brilliant scholars can talk academia and feel so clever and superior. Nothing like a secretary to lift a jaded male ego.



My eyes have seen the professor who complains that he could do a better job on keeping files, or the professor who can also type who sneers because he can do my job in his stide, I have no special or secret talents, I am just a greater convenience, and besides, he had more demanding things to do, and of course it's not work an intelligent person would like to do anyway.

But it's my job, it's what I'm given to do, to fill one-third of my day, five days a week.

Or the secretary that works overtime, unrewarded for it, because it's expected of her, she's supposed to be dedicated.

Or meeting Professor Schmuckatella at a movie downtown, who's all smiles and hellos and leering looks in the office in the daytime, but who doesn't see or acknowledge my existence out of the office context.

Or the first name business, where right from the first day on the job, I am addressed by my first name, not out of friendship or familiarity or even by my consent, but because of my position in the hierarchy. You can work for so someone for 50 years but he will still be Mr. Smith or Dr. Jones.

There is no room for satisfaction or pride in our work, or any feeling of achievement whatsoever, no fruits to our labour. I tediously type and type, only to have what I've done returned to me for retyping when I'm finished

because the professor made a mistake or changes his mind and wants to substitute 'nevertheless' for 'but'.

Not a thought that it might discourage you to see your work returned on a whimsical change of mind. There is no concept in his mind that this is my handicraft, my product.

"Just a typist"

Why should I even expect that at all? Am I not just the typist? I am not part of the creative process, I am just part of the replication process.

Why are typists rarely, if ever mentioned in the acknowledgements of a paper, regardless of what they've put into that paper, in terms of time and labour and care, in producing a perfectly neat copy, reading illegible handwriting, correcting spelling and grammar mistakes, etc.?

And what of all the sad little delusions the typist might have about her own importance, about putting her best into her work, about having pride in doing a job well?

The small lower-case initials at the end of a letter stand as a silent, tiny plea for recognition of her individuality as a typist. Who cares anyway?

Dare anybody seek satisfaction in the things they do for a wage, or are we all supposed to accept our alienation and estrangement from our labour as part of the whole picture, as a necessary drawback to being a wage-earner in society?

Some of us actually don't want a man to support us, we want to be self-sufficient.

Working Conditions

And then there are the working conditions. A woman can work for years and years in her job - but she will gain only years, no promotion, no official recognition, no increased remuneration other than her annual \$10 raise.

Quoted from the Office and Technical Employees Union, in comparing the grades of secretaries, taken from the UBC scales:

"Secretary 11, Stenographer 11, Department secretary - preferred qualifications: high school graduation plus business training, ability to type 60 w.p.m., and to take a and transcribe shorthand at 110 w.p.m.

Four years experience at the University or its equivalent - salary: \$401 - \$495.

A CLEANER (NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE) IN THE B.C. GOVERNMENT SERVICE IS PAID \$490 - \$533 A MONTH"

What can be done, short of eliminating the secretarial role altogether?

A secretary with the ability should be given greater responsibility and independence and respect - and remuneration (continued p.23)

tion - as is the case with other capable intelligent workers in business.

Secretaries need not be supervised like children or have their wrists slapped because they are a few minutes late or because they did not follow office procedures to the letter. Moreover it would surely help

it would surely help if they were treated as separate individual human beings, with different natures, abilities, personalities, etc.

Of course secretaries themselves need to develop a better attitude towards their profession, and towards themselves - they should not feel so subservient, they need to be less compromising and pliable, less satisfied with what they have at present, they should be more assertive, more sure of themselves, more demanding and have more respect.

They should organize together, not just for better conditions and wages, but also to help develop a stronger, more affirmative attitude towards themselves as workers and women.



In Alberta...

I would like to add a footnote to the above article. I am a secretary as well and have worked in a variety of places over the past few years. And nowhere was I made more aware of all the conditions described by Ms. Gunnard than when I worked in a department of the University of Alberta. Within a couple of weeks I knew the names and the faces they belonged to of more than 30 people. Yet many of them never bothered to learn mine; I was referred to as 'the Girl' or 'the Secretary'. I quit after a month.

However, it would be unfair to leave the impression that this occurs only in the universities. It's like that everywhere. A couple more examples from my own experience to illustrate:

One woman I worked with had been at the job for several years in the provincial government, when she applied for another job in a different department which would have meant more money and responsibility. Her boss (a biggie) said to the other biggie who would have been her new boss "you can't take my best girl" and she didn't get the job. The wouldn't reclassify her in her original position either because they already had their quota of secretaries in that classification. She was penalized for her exceptional ability.

Another office where I worked, again in the provincial government, had the formula down pat. The big boss had all the clerks and stenographers who worked for him spying on the others in the office to make sure they were working hard enough and sticking to the rules. He arranged things so that the spies got a higher salary than they normally would have. They couldn't refuse to spy and still keep their jobs. This tactic of his really divided us because we couldn't trust each other.



Another woman I know applied for a job as a legal steno, was looked over like a piece of meat and told she would have to dress more smartly and lose some weight. No comments about her exceptional skills.

And of course we all know about 'rug-ranking' and 'red-circling' in the federal civil service. This was brought to everyone's attention on Valentine's Day of this year when 1,000 secretaries demonstrated on Parliament Hill. Rug-ranking is the practice of determining a secretary's position by the status of her boss; while red-circling is a freeze on employee pay until it matches that of a lower classification.

So you see how it goes - we are oppressed and exploited in all facets of our work - psychologically, intellectually and economically.

Yet the work has certain advantages at the moment; it's extremely mobile, there's always a job available, maybe not the best, but one never worries about survival like a lot of better educated people, especially female B.A.'s do. This availability of work is due partly to the fact that there is a great demand for secretaries at present while the supply is dwindling and partly due to the high turnover rate in this kind of work. Why are there fewer secretaries and why the high turnover rate? Read Ms. Gunnard's article again.

Another thing we have to face is this: because our sector of the workforce is one of the most poorly organized in the country, the only means most of us have of getting decent wages (or at least better) and better working conditions is to quit one job and find another. If there were a union bargaining for us we wouldn't be faced with this. I've quit at least one job that I liked because I was tired of getting ripped off for my only commodity that ensures survival - my labour power.

I work temporary right now. I can often get a better wage than the person just starting out permanently in the same job. This does not make me blind to the fact that temporary workers are probably more exploited. No one is compelled by law to provide any fringe benefits

for us. We can be fired on a day's notice. We have no protection basically. But there are advantages - since I am single and have no one else to support, I can work 2 months and take off 3. My time is more my own than if I were working permanently. Sure I could get a permanent job and work my way up the wage scale, but who wants to tie herself down to a job that will probably lose all interest in 6 months, that will literally numb your brain if you stay at it too long? Change provides a form of stimulation.

Although I think Ms. Gunnard's article is pretty accurate about the things we have to face as secretaries, I would like to make one criticism with regard to the comparison of wages with the cleaners in the B.C. government. I think her attitude may imply that people who work at this job shouldn't get that much money and I would disagree with this. They should get as much money for their labour power as they can but the point is so should we. It is important that we establish solidarity with other workers and not resent them for making more money. This divides us and we need unity.

I would also like to expand the conclusion in the article. Not only must we organize for the reasons cited but also to mould ourselves into an effective force to destroy capitalism, to destroy the whole system which forces us to sell ourselves in order to live. Unions can't do it alone or completely but they're a start and a means of uniting ourselves and learning our power. It is only with the establishment of socialism that we will be able to determine the nature of our work and control it. And if we don't accept that as fact, we'll get shafted. Every time.

The Secretary Chant - Marge Piercy

My hips are a desk.
From my ears hang
chains of paper clips.
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 naval is a reject button.
From my mouth issue canceled 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.

HOUSEWORK AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

THE POWER OF WOMEN AND THE
SUBVERSION OF THE COMMUNITY by
Selma James and Mariarosa Dalla
Costa; Falling Wall Press, 79
Richmond Road, Montpelier, Bristol
B56 5EP, England; October, 1972;
February, 1973; \$1.00

The essay, Women and the Subversion of the Community by Maria Rosa Dalla Costa, is stimulating reading, but unfortunately is both inconsistent and misleading in its basic statement. The article deals specifically with role of the housewife. Dalla Costa asserts that women engaged in domestic work have great political power (a potential they are unaware of) and that this power is theirs because their work in the home produces surplus value. She first describes this work as "essential" to the production of surplus value, but clarifies this by stating:

"...What we meant precisely is that housework as work is productive in the Marxian sense, that is, is producing surplus value"
...p. 52.

Here working class housewives are seen as central. She goes on to claim that if they refuse to do this work, women will not only free themselves to participate "as individuals" (?) in struggles outside of the home; but will also by withdrawing their labor, sabotage the existing social order. First let's look at her analysis, and later make some comments on her implicit strategy.

Analytically, this article is a mare's nest. It is true that work done in the home is socially necessary. It is one thing to recognize this, and to agree that this work is not acknowledged by any money or status granted to the housewife as an individual person, apart from the family as a whole. It does not follow from this that the housewife either produces surplus value or derives political power from the kind of work she does.

The argument that the housewife produces surplus value is based on two things. First, that labor power under capitalism is a commodity, that is, we sell our work for a wage. Second, that the family is responsible for the production, maintenance, and reproduction of labor power, and the nuclear family seems to be the most efficient structure to do this job at present, i.e. under capitalism (The nuclear family, like capitalism, did not always exist, nor, like capitalism, will it always exist!) Dalla Costa tends to confuse the role of the housewife with the more general role of the family, and this in turn confuses the reader. Granted they have "overlapping" functions, but the working class family also includes the husband (invariably a wage-earner) and the children (the workers of tomorrow). The former must sell his labor power to capital (work at a job) in an ongoing way. The latter must be provided with material support -- food, clothing, care, love, discipline, education -- to ensure that they will grow up and be able to work. The work that the housewife does helps make sure that this labor power is there when capital needs it (and needs it, and needs it).

Yet we know that the labor power of the housewife herself is not sold, that she receives no wages for her work. Nor is the commodity she helps produce (i.e. the labor power of her husband and children, now and in the future) sold at a profit. Granted it is sold at its market value. This fact remains: the worker's wage is less than the value produced by his work, he produces something extra, and this is the "surplus value" referred to; which is appropriated by the capitalist. Wage can be most usefully equated to the amount of money needed to maintain and reproduce the working class at a socially determined standard of living which is generally as low as capitalism can keep it.

Wages must therefore support the family. Even if the husband and wife are both employed and wage(s) enter the family discreetly (that is, as specific payments to specific individuals) they must first be spent on the basic needs of the family as a whole. Husbands and wives may dispute priorities -- a vacuum or a power lawn mower, a lipstick or a pipe-rack -- first they must all eat! Thus to the extent that the housewife indirectly produces surplus value, she is likewise indirectly paid a wage. But we must repeat, she does not enter into a relationship in which she is paid a wage by an employer, who then sells the product of her labor at a profit. This means she does not produce surplus value. She is not a worker like other workers.

Different work, same class

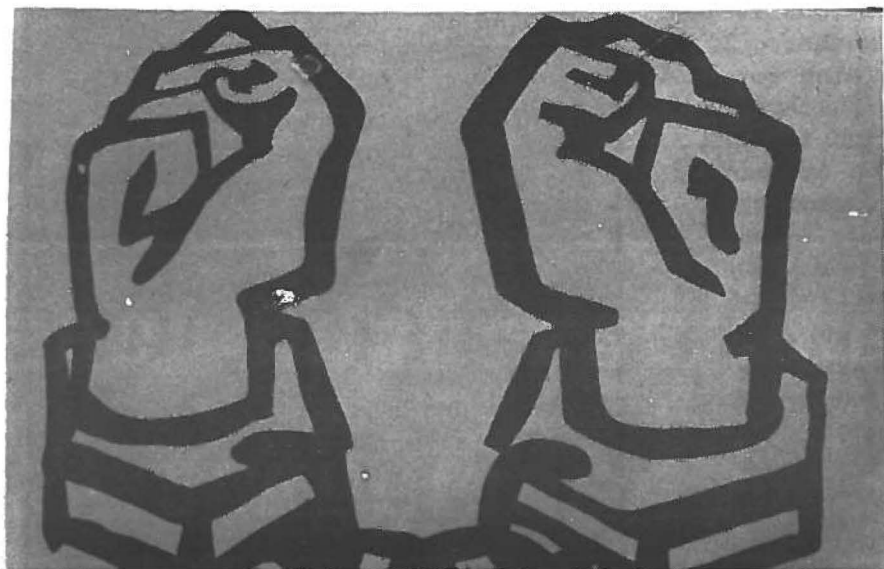
It also means that the relationship between wife and husband is not a relationship between members of different classes. To go on to say, as does Dalla Costa, that:

...."Man as the wage-earner and head of the family is the specific instrument of the specific exploitation which is the exploitation of women"....

is to talk nonsense. Does the husband extract surplus value from the wife's work? No. Does he separate his wife from the product of her labor? Again no. The working class husband does not join forces with the boss at the expense of his wife. It is true that the wage that she receives (unless she is employed) must be a portion of her husband's wage and therefore she must negotiate with him to receive money. It can be personally degrading to have to beg for an allowance. But we've pointed out that this money is not intended as a personal reward which the wage-earner may spend as he pleases. True, a working man without dependents can enjoy his wage more freely than one who has domestic responsibilities. So can a working woman!

Part of the confusion results from Dalla Costa's continual shifts back and forth from, on the one hand, describing how the housewife perceives her

(continued p.25)



oppression within the family; to the more general, more objective problems experienced by the family (including the housewife, for certainly her oppression is not something she has imagined). Yet at other times the author is quite clear in contrasting appearances with the underlying social realities. On pp. 26, 33, she points out that the argument that housewives are oppressed because their husbands are male chauvinists, can arise precisely because work in the home appears to be a "personal service" rather than real work. But even here she does not go far enough. If you admit that the husband can be perceived as a "foreman" (p.33) you are only raising half the question, and the half that is most mystifying. One must go on to point out that he is not a foreman, or else be guilty of irresponsible analysis.

This relates to a second problem which is Dalla Costa's habit of borrowing language. Class, race and sex are topics which do not lend their categories well to analogical rather than analytical use. Thus when Dalla Costa describes housewives as "colonized" (p.44), and compare them to nations under absentee rule, or says they are "underdeveloped" (as the third world is underdeveloped, p.48); she is mixing pears with apples. She doesn't go so far as to actually state that women are a class. (But she does say that if Marxists deny that house work produces surplus value then they are in fact excluding housewives from the working class. This is incorrect and would seem to be based on some grimly deterministic vision of classes as strictly economic entities. Classes are also real people living out real struggles in real life. Furthermore it's not Marxism that denies the "productivity" of domestic labour, it is capitalist social relations which do this. Marxism is the attempt to understand these relations and through struggle, negate them.)

Isolation A Problem...

On the positive side, Dalla Costa's article provides us with extremely accurate and sensitive descriptions of the various ways in which isolation, both personal and social, affects the housewife:

...."to the extent that women were cut off from socialized production and isolated in the home, all possibilities of social life outside the neighbourhood were denied them, and hence they were deprived of social knowledge and social education" (pp. 27,28)

And ---

..."We repeat: never had such a stunting of the ... integrity of women taken place, affecting everything from the brains to the uterus. Participating with others in the production of a train, a car, or an airplane is not the same thing as using in isolation the same broom in the same few square feet of kitchen for centuries ... (p.29)

And finally ---

..."they don't see beyond their own four walls ... the 'femininity' imposed on her makes her see the world, the others, and the entire organisation of work as something which is obscure ... not lives; perceived only as a shadow behind the shoulders of the husband who goes out each day and meets something ... (p.36)

Also she quite correctly describes a phenomenon which she calls the "homosexuality of the division of labor" (eg. the steno pool and the steel mill), a problem which results from sexist ideas about who can or should do

which kinds of work, and which often finds a reflection in our social and recreational habits as well. (At large gatherings men will frequently cluster in one corner and women in the other; men will go to the bar and women will coffee, or phone each other -- we've all seen it a lot). Dalla Costa wants to get rid of the nuclear family, a Good Idea, and generally put an end to the isolation that women must, at present, suffer. As a housewife and a Marxist I couldn't agree with her more. (She even talks about "socialising the struggle of the isolated laborer"!)

But how, concretely, is this to be done? In terms of specific tactics the concluding portion of the article is weak, but Dalla Costa does lay out some "do's" and "don'ts". She rejects the idea that women should take paying jobs. She declares that "liberation through work" is a "myth" and is adamant in her statement that:

..."we have worked enough. We have chopped billions of tons of cotton, washed billions of dishes, scrubbed billions of floors, typed billions of words, wired billions of radio sets, washed billions of nappies"... (p. 47,48)

And so on. Therefore, don't work anymore(?!). Rather force society to acknowledge that the work you are presently doing is productive. This seems to imply the demand for a discreet wage for Housewifery, but this is never stated. It is unclear as to what form such an acknowledgement would take if wages are not the issue ... a public proclamation perhaps? Of course such an acknowledgement is a good idea, more in terms of its social consequences than its economic ones. But the task is to change the conditions under which domestic work is done, not to refuse to do it. Dalla Costa seems to want to revolutionize the family without a revolution. Thus in her search for "modes of struggle" she has already made several mistakes.



... "Classes are also real people, living out real struggles, in real life" ...

Her attitude towards work is distorted. She seems to fall back on saying "Work is Work is Work". Earlier she agrees that there are distinctions between work which is considered to be productive and work which is not. Alienated labor --- productive work under capitalism --- is bad in many, many ways but it is socialized. The woman works at a job, gets out of the house, experiences working with others instead of just working alone, receives discreet wages, and most importantly can develop her consciousness. She can get beyond the image of herself as a screwed-around individual and develop a more constructive picture in which she is one of many workers with common problems but also with great social impact. United, they really are strong. It is paradoxical! Dalla Costa has previously displayed her awareness of how social isolation as well as personal loneliness, deforms the domestic woman and leaves her ignorant, frightened and frequently miserable. Work in production is such an obvious help in this regard, though certainly it is not a complete solution.

But, as we mentioned before, it is not just conventional job work that Dalla Costa claims women should refuse. They should also refuse to do their domestic work. Thus the housewife will have time on her hands to socialize herself (?) by going to meetings or community activities, interacting with other rebellious women and youth, and confronting her own husband and/or children as an independent, free-thinking individual. This is a somewhat foreshortened version of what Dalla Costa seems to be saying, but we're forced to be somewhat deductive since How women are going to be persuaded to leave the home, and what sorts of organizations or activities they should engage in, is never made clear. What is advanced is the theory that by heading in these general directions, the housewives will subvert the community.

First of all, it probably wouldn't work. And even if it worked, it wouldn't work. It is the strategy of the General Strike under highly improbable conditions. Housewives are amongst the most socially atomized people of the world. They are asked to detach themselves from those closest to them, i.e. their families, and voluntaristically and without any form of organised unity, Resist! This resistance to the extent that it might be effective would threaten Capital. Capital would hit back and how would this spontaneous housewife's movement defend itself? Surely not by passive resistance, by shouting "I don't care what you do to me, I won't change another diaper or pick up that broom!" Fortunately such a situation is unlikely to ever arise.

Family Conflicts...

There are other problems as well. Earlier on we mentioned that the worker-husband, as wage-earner, stands between the housewife and Capital. We repeat that he does not, as Dalla Costa implies, represent Capital, except perhaps in some symbolic sense inside Dalla Costa's head. Nonetheless he is the wage slave, and this means several things. It means that a housewives' strike (or wobble!) could not affect the economy in the way that a strike of organised workers could. It means that the effects of the housewives refusal to work would hit the family first, and raise contradictions there. Dalla Costa's naivete about what this would mean to the people involved again reflects her crude view of the family (and for that matter, the class) as simply economic structures. Such an act on the part of the housewives would threaten Capital only indirectly and after a prolonged period. Meanwhile the working class (i.e. men, women and children) would be tearing itself apart and the real enemy could sit back and laugh!

The contradiction within the family is a crucial contradiction amongst the people. This means that it cannot be ignored or swept under the rug as some have accused "Marxists" of doing. It also means that this contradiction can be resolved through discussion and principled struggle. On the other hand, the contradiction between labour



that divides husband and wife at precisely the point when they should be strongest, that is, they may be called upon to defend themselves against capitalist repression.

It is important, if we are seriously considering challenging the role of capital, to unite as great a number of the people as is possible at a given historical moment. Dalla Costa's suggestions are not only unrealistic and short-sighted, they are dangerously irresponsible as well. There seem to be a preoccupation with the act, viewed in isolation and regardless of consequence, which smacks of anarchism. Also distressing is the extent to which Marxism appears to be primarily a set of theoretical premises, which she misapplies and presses into the service of an adventurist strategy. This kind of thing tends to discredit feminism in the eyes of the politically committed.

Conclusion:

Dalla Costa's article is one of a series of attempts to apply Marxist ideas to the problems of women. I think she fails to do so correctly, but I also think that she was correct to try. We'll learn from our mistakes if we are not afraid to make them.

Secondly, Women and the Subversion of the Community deals with working class housewives and that includes a lot of women. Somehow, our movement has really not written as much about the situation of these women as it has about a variety of other matters. Some problems are shared by all women, and some women have other problems as well. Some women are opposed to our movement not because they are backward, but because they correctly perceive a threat to their class privileges. The relationship between sex and class must always be made. And please, let's talk more about housewives, hopefully even with housewives.



A LUTA CONTINUA

The Women's Programme Centre and the Student Christian Movement will be showing the film Sambizanga at various locations in Edmonton during the week beginning May 20. The film was directed by Sarah Muldoror in Angola in 1972. It is 104 minutes in length, in colour, and in French with English subtitles. It is distributed by Faroun films in Montreal. Below is a description of the film taken from the Women and Film handbook printed in 1973.



"Domingos Xavier, a worker who is arrested by the police, is one of those exemplary characters among the anonymous militants of the dark colonial night who forge and temper revolutionary hope. Though the story brutally highlights prison conditions in Angola, it is above all a sociological portrait of Angolais resistance in Luanda just before armed fighting breaks out against Portuguese domination.

The core of the film is not only the story of Domingos Xavier, a prisoner who like many others dies as a result of being tortured, but it is essentially that of his wife who is kept, as are numerous African women, in total ignorance of her husband's political activities, not even realized he was a militant. She searches for him, going from village to village, garrison to garrison.

After film school in Moscow and working with Pontecorvo on The Battle of Algiers, Sambizanga is Muldoror's first major film. It is based on a novel by Luandino Vieira, a revolutionary who was arrested in 1961 and condemned to fourteen years in prison."

The Organisation of Angolan Women (OMA) wishes to inform all friendly organisations and all friends of the Angolan people that it is planning to build a Centre for training women cadres who will be sent to work in the liberated areas of Angola. This centre will be called the "Deolinda Centre".

We shall be grateful for all donations. Money donations can be sent to the following address:

MPLA -OMA
National Bank of Commerce
Bank House Branch
P.O. Box 9031
Dar es Salaam
TANZANIA

Gifts in kind can be sent to the address below:

Organisation of Angolan Women
P.O. Box 20604
Dar es Salaam
TANZANIA

Admission will be charged and the proceeds will be donated to the Organization of Angolan Women. The OMA (Organizacao Da Mulher De Angola) operates within the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola).

Women increasingly figure in the activities of the liberation movement. Under colonial rule women were merely childbearers and were even ashamed to have any education. Today they are fulfilling a much wider role and participate in cultivating fields, transporting supplies, feeding guerillas, nursing, teaching, and some are undergoing military training.

Its first responsibility is to conduct literacy classes in Portuguese and feed the guerillas going to and from the front. The OMA also takes care of the older children, tho' infants are initially cared for by their mothers. The militia organizes the women who are able to engage in military combat.

Books on revolutionary struggles are circulated to the OMA and all members have to spend some time in military training for defence purposes after attending Centres for Revolutionary instruction (CIR) and literacy classes. There are also increasingly large numbers of women nurses, doctors, pharmacists and radiologists.

There is also a strong feeling among the OMA of unity and identity with all women in revolutionary struggles who are fighting for their emancipation.

Anyone interested in helping with the planning and publicity should come to or call the Women's Programme Centre Office, Room 276 in S.U.B. at the University of Alberta. Office hours are 12-1, Monday-Friday. The Phone Number is 432-1190.

Angola is a colony of Portugal in Africa. There is a war going on between the Portuguese army and the people's liberation movement (MPLA). Canada is participating in Portugal's repression of the people of Angola. This is obvious from the facts listed below.

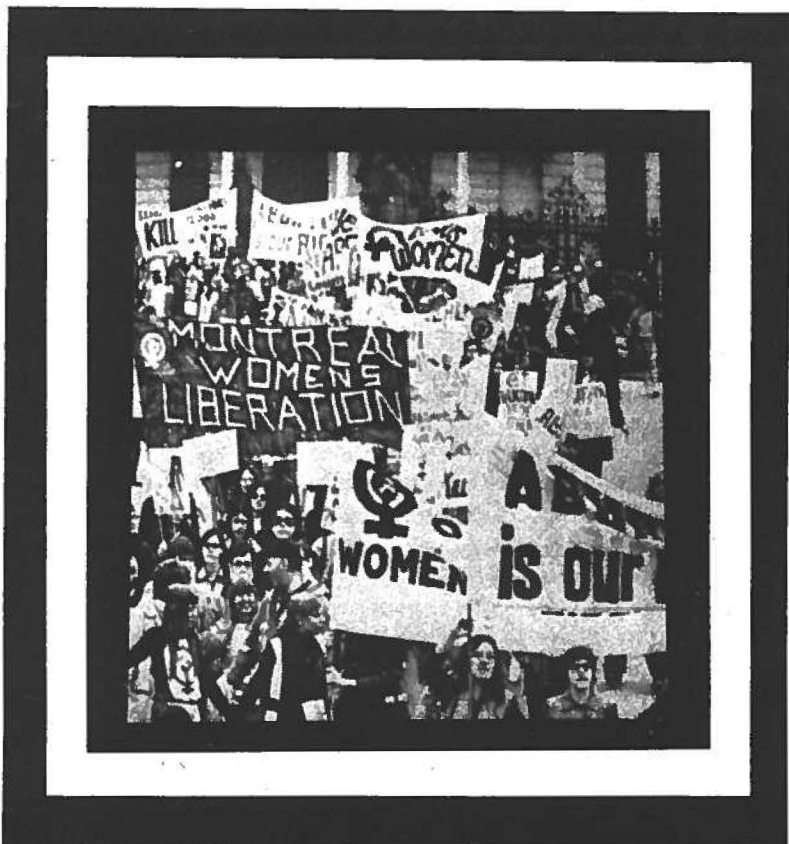
1) Certain large Canadian food corporations import large amounts of Angolan coffee. The coffee plantations employ forced labour at low wages and very bad working conditions.

2) Canada is the largest importer of Angolan oil. The profits from this oil do not go to the people of Angola, but to Portugal and the oil corporations.

3) Portugal is the most underdeveloped and poorest country in Europe, yet more than half of its annual budget is spent on its colonial wars in Guinea-Bissau, Angola, and Mozambique. It receives military equipment and training from other NATO countries, and Canada is one of these.

4) Military arms are not manufactured in Portugal itself. For example, some of the napalm used in Angola is produced in Alberta.

The Canadian government has signed UN agreements supporting popular liberation movements in colonial states; however, when it comes to doing anything concrete, the government backs down. They claim that they cannot support the work of terrorists. Thus the MPLA of Angola and Frelimo of Mozambique do not receive aid from the Canadian government. Our government will continue to protect the investments of the corporations whose interests they serve.



The Movement

Though we talk about "the Movement" as if it were a single organization with goals all laid out and agreed upon, it is in fact a very mixed bag indeed of different and often contradictory ideas.

First, there are those who think that women's problems can all be solved by a sufficient number of women attaining positions of power and/or influence. This idea comes in two main variants. One is that the special oppression of women has not been remedied simply because there have never been women in a position to initiate the remedies; the other is that the lack of women in the ruling clique is the problem to be remedied. This view is usually put forward by women who have professional training and who are therefore the ones who would most immediately benefit from the great equalizing campaign. It takes such forms as women lawyers giving their opinion that equal opportunity for promotion is more important than equal pay for equal work. Or the sporadic attempts of various groups to nominate women in provincial or federal elections.

What is wrong with these ideas? For one thing it is assumed that there is a common interest being sought by all women and that women will use the positions they attain to further the great humanitarian cause of all women. This as anyone but embittered Business Administration degree holders can see, is bunk. If a woman is qualified to act as a personnel manager, for example, she will hire other women on the basis of company policy on the hiring of women. That is what being qualified as a personnel manager means. She will only get the job and keep it if she is prepared to perform it in keeping with the company's policy. The purpose of executives in capitalist companies is managing profits extracted by exploiting productive workers. Women executives fulfill exactly the same function. If they happen to smile more sweetly while laying you off or refusing to concede better working conditions, the situation hasn't changed.

Women Politicians?

Another main argument of this tendency is that we need women politicians to ensure legislation for women's rights. The record of male and female MP's and MLA's shows that it's quite probable that more legislative reforms would be passed if there were more women in legislatures, and any reforms are welcome. However the problems in electing our reforming candidates are extensive.

SISTERHOOD IS NOT ENOUGH

Women could run on a strictly feminist platform, but they are unlikely to be elected. There are many legitimate interests that representatives have to take a stand on besides "Women's Issues". Only a candidate with an all round program could hope to be elected. More importantly, only an elected representative who was a member of an organization with a program could be held accountable to the electorate or any part thereof.

Which brings us round to running for the a) PC's b) Liberals c) NDP d) etc. I have actually spoken with women who thought that one or another of these parties could be induced by its loyal supporters to really push feminist reforms. Their records so far indicate otherwise. What gains have come to Canadian women through parliamentary reforms have always been due to the pressure of mass movements. The major parties in Canada are committed to capitalism. Any improvement in the lives of ordinary working people must be extracted from them just as higher wages must be extracted from the bosses they serve.

Reform

Which brings us to the question of reform. This is important because obviously the majority of women in the movement are in some ways involved in trying to organize pressure on legislatures to pass legislation. And of course there are many reforms that can and must be made. How many of them can be accorded by a capitalist parliament?

A whole series of reforms such as government funding for day care, abortion, communal ownership of property in marriage, etc. may very well be passed by Liberal, Conservative or NDP Governments. But certain basic facts of capitalist life they cannot tamper with, because those basic facts are necessary for the maintenance of capitalism. There must be unemployment, there must be a pool of unskilled labour which capital can draw on and dismiss as needed, people must live in small groups that require duplication of purchases and services. We may win equal pay for equal work, but not decent pay for "women's" jobs. Women may gain access to industrial work that has been closed to them. But this work will remain unhealthy, unsafe and exploited. Housewives may be covered by various social welfare schemes, but the level of unemployment insurance or old age pension payments will remain inadequate.

The best we can hope for under capitalism is to partially exchange the kinds of oppression and exploitation that women now suffer for the kinds that men now suffer. Under capitalism the great majority of working people must struggle continuously just to maintain their present standard of livelihood. As long as this is at issue other problems cannot be solved.

Women vs. Men

One common mistake is the assumption that any gains made by women must be at the expense of men. Whether it's inherent nastiness in men or socialized into them, men will never accept women's equality and so must be boycotted altogether. This is put forward vigorously and apparently seriously by some lesbian feminists.

Of course the sort of things that can change in our lives if we merely abandon half our social relationships are rather limited. The men will have to do their own housework, true, and they'll

have to limit their sexual activity to homosexuality and rape if we refuse to live or sleep with them, but will our wages go up? Will day care centres be opened? Will those men who view women with hostility cease to do so? Probably not.

To give them their due, the proponents of separatism don't claim that kind of results for their strategy. They claim that in living with women they learn to "feel good". (Check the Lesbian issue of On Our Way. That's in fact its central theme.) Well, we're glad they feel good, except we wonder why. Still faced with job discrimination, unequal pay, no day care, legal non-recognition, their "feeling good" doesn't seem any less illusory than the straight housewives' "self fulfillment".

A less extreme variant of this is the notion that women, in the course of being socialized as "feminine" have retained some precious characteristics that men have lost in being socialized as "masculine". Notably we are gentler, more capable of expressing emotion rather than bottling it up inside, less egotistical, in short, nicer. Those holding this view caution us to avoid falling into the trap of "playing men's games" lest we lose our purity. Politics should be avoided, since obviously men are involved in it. So should unions. In short, it's the old argument that women shouldn't have the vote because it would sully their feminine delicacy. The fact that women are subjected to the brutality of capitalism and therefore must learn to defend themselves from it, and eventually attack it has no bearing on the subject for our frail sisters.



What is the alternative to All these approaches?

It must be one that will ultimately unite men and women on the basis of equals with common interests. The struggle against the ruling class, which controls all aspects of the state and can only lose by the improvement in the lives of working people, is a long and bitter one. We cannot hope to win it without the support and solidarity of everyone who has interests different from those of the capitalists. This means working men, among others.

It must be one that does not refrain from any kind of political activity on the basis of qualms about politics. We must fight the capitalists on every front on which they attack. The kind of struggle that goes on must be dictated by strategic considerations, not by any kind of sentimental preference for one aspect of the struggle. Union work, parliamentary work, educational work, are all insufficient in themselves, but necessary to the struggle as a whole.

Finally, the struggle must have as its goal the overthrow of the present ruling class, and its replacement by the working people, women and men whose interests will not be served by the capitalists and who therefore must serve their own interests.

WOMEN:

"In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces.

"The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or - what is but a legal expression for the same thing - with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution."

Karl Marx

"...My dream may run ahead of the natural march of events or may fly off at a tangent in a direction in which no natural march of events will ever proceed. In the first case my dream will not cause any harm; it may even support and augment the energy of the working men... There is nothing in such dreams that would distort or paralyse labour-power. On the contrary, if man were completely deprived of the ability to dream in this way, if he could not from time to time run ahead and mentally conceive, in an entire and completed picture, the product to which his hands are only just beginning to lend shape, then I cannot at all imagine what stimulus there would be to induce man to undertake and complete extensive and strenuous work in the sphere of art, science, and practical endeavour... The rift between dreams and reality causes no harm if only the person dreaming believes seriously in his dream, if he attentively observes life, compares his observations with his castles in the air, and if, generally speaking, he works conscientiously for the achievement of his fantasies. If there is some connection between dreams and life then all is well." - Pisarev.

"Of this kind of dreaming there is unfortunately too little in our movement. And the people most responsible for this are those who boast of their sober views, their 'closeness' to the 'concrete'..."

V.I. Lenin

"The first class antagonism which appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression with that of the female sex by the male." F. Engels.

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HERSTORY — 1975

Since most of you, we are sure, have got a copy of "Herstory" and are glad you do, we are even more sure that you will be glad to hear that a second calendar is being planned for 1975.

Read on:--

"Five Saskatoon women have compiled an historical calendar on Canadian women and are collecting information for a second calendar on Canadian women. The layout of the calendar is such that each page contains a week of dates with each date recording a significant event in the life of a Canadian woman. The opposing pages contain photographs, graphics, songs, poetry and biographies on Canadian women.

Because so little of the history of Canadian women has been published most of our information must come from primary sources. We want to know of the achievements of women in all areas and professions (ie: sport, medicine, the arts politics, education, etc.). We also want to know more of the ordinary woman (e.g. farm women) who has largely been ignored in history. We know little of the women of the many and various ethnic groups in Canada such as Indian, Ukrainian and French women. Our list of names is growing and any suggestions or names you can offer would be well appreciated. Information in the form of photographs, songs, or poetry on and by women a hundred years ago or today is needed.

We don't expect to use all the information we collect, but it will be kept and filed for future reference by ourselves or other women interested in the history of Canadian women.

We look forward to your partici-

pation. Information can be sent to: Saskatoon Women's Calendar Collective 416 5th Avenue North Saskatoon, Saskatchewan"

PS. If you don't have a copy of the 1974 calendar, you can get one by contacting Sharon Ellingsen, phone 429-1678.

Credit Courses on Women at U. of A.

The University of Alberta in the 1973-74 year has incorporated in its calendar three courses specifically concerned with the role of women. These courses are: Sociology of Women, Psychology of Women and History of Women.

Sociology

The women professors teaching these courses are bringing into the classroom basic and relevant information to which the students have never been exposed before. Dr. R. Sydie, who has one section of the Sociology of Women, (with 100 people in it, 90% women) lays stress on a socio-historical view of women and their relation to the family institution.

Ms. M. Archer, who teaches some 50 people in the other section of Sociology of Women, emphasized the implications of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. Here, students are beginning to find out just what the Canadian scene looks like - and how widespread are the present non-opportunities for women in work and education.

Psychology

The Psychology of Women is taught by Dr. C. Ladan. Last term there were 4 women and one man (a reflection of students' general dislike for making oral presentations) which made for an open and easy exchange of knowledge. Dr. Ladan's main emphases were on developmental psychology (how much your masculinity/femininity is dependent on how others have interacted with you - sex is physiological, gender is psychological), the fallacy of masculine-feminine scales, the legal difficulties women face, and the clinical definition of a healthy, mature woman (which compared to the clinical definition of a healthy, mature adult is sick).

History

The history course taught by Dr. P. Prestwick is entitled Women in Modern European History. It's a 400 level course with 14 people in it. Dr. Prestwick is mainly concerned with what was happening among the French women especially in the literary and intellectual circles from the 18th century onwards. She hopes to open up this era and the more ancient heritage of women to more people in the form of a 200 level (1st year) half year course next year.

Anthropology

The Anthropology department is offering a new course about women. It's a cross-cultural look at the sex roles. Ms. Sydney Sharpe-Frucht is teaching it in the summer session of this year. Unless the department signs her on for the fall session, her husband, Richard Frucht, will be teaching it then.

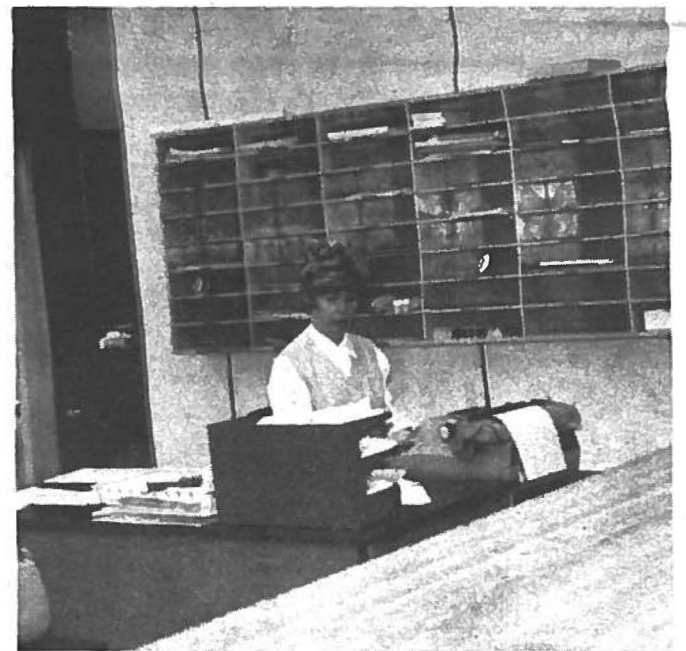
Potrebenko went on to say that she did not believe that liberation could be achieved through reforms. "A few more women gaining ruling class positions is not what we're after," she said. She added that reforms were useful if they helped the day to day struggle of working people as long as these reforms were not seen as the ultimate solution to the problems of the class.

SORWUC and the AUCE came out of the Vancouver Working Women's Association, a militant strike support group with a notable history of struggle within the last few years. Though it helped win the three year long Cunningham Drug strike, the VWWA ultimately collapsed under the pressure of harassment and legal oppression.

Such set-backs proved temporary, and women from the VWWA went on to help form new organizations, one of which, the AUCE, has recently succeeded in organizing the clerical staff of UBC, Simon Fraser University, and Nelson College.

"It's important to remember one thing. The workers are always stronger than the bosses, and they'd win every strike if the so-called impartial courts didn't interfere," said Ms. Potrebenko, who narrowly avoided going to jail for violating an anti-picketing injunction during the Denny's Restaurant strike.

Potrebenko is also a fighter for trade union democracy. She pointed out that her group had succeeded in



SORWUC Rep Speaks

A woman, (Pauline Jewett) the next president of SFU? According to Helen Potrebenko, who spoke at the Women's Programme Centre course in March, this is really beside the point. It won't improve conditions for most working women, the stenos and the waitresses, said Ms. Potrebenko, and she's right!

Helen Potrebenko is a member of SORWUC (the Service, Office, and Retail Workers Union of Canada). SORWUC and its sister union the Association of University and College Employees (both B.C. based) are new, independent and directed towards the organization of women workers. Not that they refuse to organize men (both have male members) but they focus on the specific job areas, such as office work, where female employees predominate.

shops where CUPE had failed largely due to the fact that they had gained the confidence of women, who as a group feel left out and badly represented by existing unions. Concerning the problem of "bureaucratization" she stressed the need for a strong rank and file base and an accessible executive. "Trade union activists should never go beyond shop steward," she said, "otherwise they are in danger of either being bought off by Management, or of losing touch with the people they should be working for."

She characterized the fight between international (in her words "American dominated") and independent unions as "unfortunate", but often necessary if Canadian workers are to have any say in what happens to them.

At present, Helen Potrebenko is employed as a taxi-driver in Vancouver. A former Albertan, she is also engaged in writing a book on the early Ukrainian settlement in this province. Her visit was sponsored by the Women's Programme Centre.



About the Women's Programme Centre

The Women's Programme Centre has been operating under that name for 2 years now and during that time we have been funded by the University of Alberta Students' Union.

We have an office and library in Room 276 in the Students' Union Building on the university campus where all are welcome to drop in and talk, drink coffee, borrow books etc. Our phone number is 432-1190. Because only half our members are on campus and the other half works, we are able to keep the office open only for limited times during the day, usually from 12 to 1. Office hours will be changing in May, however.

Our function? It seems to be working out to providing a focus for discussion through series of presentations about women.

While we believe that it is very important that ideas be exchanged and that people learn from each other, we wonder if the way in which we have been attempting to facilitate such exchange has been adequate.

For this reason we want to reconsider our role and the part we can play in the women's movement and move on from there. To do this we need new people. If you are interested in becoming part of the Women's Programme Centre write or phone us at:

Room 276, SUB
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
Phone 4321190 from 12 - 1 weekdays.

Suggested Books:

Women Unite! - Women's Press
Marxism and Feminism - "
Man's Worldly Goods - L. Huberman
Klee Wyck - Emily Carr

Swamp Angel - Ethel Wilson
The Tin Flute - Gabrielle Roy
Stone - Sharon Stevenson
The Origin of the Family,
Private Property and the State -
F. Engels
Surfacing - Margaret Atwood
Works of Margaret Laurence
The Edible Woman - Margaret
Atwood
On Marxism - V.I. Lenin
On the Emancipation of Women -
V.I. Lenin
Women's Estate - Juliet Mitchell
To Be of Use - Marge Piercy

BOOK REVIEW

MARXISM AND FEMINISM by
Charnie Guettel; Canadian Women's
Educational Press; 1974; Toronto;
\$1.00

More goodies from the Women's
Press!

MARXISM AND FEMINISM is a short, concise examination of the major questions facing the women's movement today - the relationship of the women's movement to the struggle for socialism and strategy for the movement.

The ideas of some of the major theorists of the women's movement - Juliet Mitchell, Shulamith Firestone and Kate Millet - are examined and criticized. Guettel's major thesis is that the oppression of women is a consequence of capitalism and she makes an excellent case for this position.

On liberalism: "It's reactionary side emphasizes that capitalism is not a system where one class exploits another, but it is rather a collection of individuals any one of whom can succeed if he or she so decides".

On the question of whether sex or class is the primary contradiction: "Sex would be the primary contradiction if all males owned the means of production and all females worked for them. But almost all males and females, under capitalism, work for some males, not by virtue of the latter's maleness, but because they own property".

In addition, Guettel discusses briefly psychology, sexuality, culture etc.; all from a Marxist perspective.

This is an exciting and important book and one that should be read by all those persons involved or interested in the women's movement and/or Marxism. The Canadian Women's Educational Press is offering aggroup discount of 40% on this book which applies to prepaid order of five or more books sent to one address. The books can be obtained from:

Canadian Women's Educational Press
Suite 305, 280 Bloor Street W.
TORONTO, Ontario

Also available from the Women's Press:

Women Unite!, (an excellent anthology)
The Day Care Book, (the day care book)
Herstory: A Canadian Women's Calendar,
1974, (learn our herstory)

For kids:

Fresh Fish ... and Chips
Mandy and the Flying Map
The Adventures of Ms. Beaver
I'm a Child of the City

Future publications:

Born a Woman: The Rita MacNeil Songbook
Cuban Women Now
Canadian Women at Work, 1867-1940

Free brochures are available from the
above address

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OPTIONS FOR WOMEN — SOURCE

Options for Women, in association with the Alberta Women's Bureau, recently received a Priority Employment grant to establish a newsletter, SOURCE: Alberta Women's Newsletter. The newsletter will focus on issues of vital importance to women and their status and will carry information about activities and concerns of Alberta women. The primary source of information and opinion will be women living outside the major urban centres of the province.

If you can contribute any information about what women are doing in your community, or articles to the newsletter, or if you know of women who would be interested in working to prepare an issue, or if you have any comments on this project, please write to:

Source
Alberta Women's Newsletter
10006 - 107 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 1J2

Phone 424-2202

— A Woman's Centre

The Options for Women organization has been advised of funding possibly being made available by the federal department of the Secretary of State for the establishment of a women's centre in Edmonton.

A number of other women's organizations have been invited to help organize such a centre for the city. Some suggestions with regard to the services the centre could provide are:

- information and referral centre
- drop in centre
- meeting place for women and women's groups
- child care
- ombudswoman service
- library
- research projects
- speakers bureau
- education programmes for public awareness
- parent resource centre
- workshops on special issues
- clearing house for adult education information
- media explorations
- outreach to women in the community
- employment counselling
- newsletter communications
- women on their own employment cooperative
- legal aid
- and any other suggestions you may have.

There will be a meeting on
Tuesday, April 9 at 7:30 p.m. at
9917 - 116 Street. Come if you
are interested in becoming in-
volved in the setting up of such
a centre or contact Erica Bell or
Anne Lambert, 10006 - 107 Street.

ON OUR WAY

A WOMEN'S NEWSPAPER

There are two things
you've got to remember
about the revolution—
one is that we're
gonna get our asses
kicked
the other is that we're
gonna win



vol. 2 no. 2

april 1974

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