

PRAIRIE WOMAN



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A NEWSLETTER OF SASKATOON WOMENS' LIBERATION



The delivery of this issue of Prairie Woman into your cozy home marks the final exhausted efforts of a struggling newsletter collective. Our aim over the past few months has been to keep in contact with those of you who have soaked up the sun, played golf ad nauseum, and literally taken the summer off from any mental and physical strains of political activity. (All hail Martyrdom! It helps us when all other efforts at recruitment fail!)

But we've gained much experience in our collective drudgery. The strains of commitment have never ceased to broaden our creative observations.

For instance, sisterly avoidance. It does exist. It occurs every Monday contact night before a Tuesday meeting, not to mention every Tuesday meeting after a Monday contact night, even, may we add, every Wednesday night when a meeting has been switched from Tuesday.

Another example is that of the locked door. We are constantly finding ourselves either locked in or locked out of our meeting places. Murphy's law on locked doors states that "whichever side of the door one is on, the layout sheets which are absolutely essential to have delivered by 8 o'clock the next morning are on the other side and the key has been eaten by someone's constipated dog."

And another thing: limitations of space. Controlled experiments have demonstrated conclusively that space limitations cause shortness of breath, shortness of copy and shortness of temper. Uncontrolled experiments, such as those going on tonight leave us short of words.

Not that everything is the pits.

Heaven forbid that we leave you with the impression that Tuesday nights are a vale of tears.

Prairie Woman Collective
September, 1978

The Collective would like to express a sincere apology to Lorna Boschman and Laurienne Ring for the careless layout of their respective article and letter in the June/July issue of Prairie Woman. The Collective appreciates and values all contributions from our readers and in the future will try not to repeat such glaring blunders.

SOLIDARITY IN THE FACE OF REPRESSION

by Wiesia

The recent National Gay Rights Coalition conference (now officially known as the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition--CLGRC) held in Halifax has generated a lot of discussion in the prairie lesbian and gay communities. Many prairie delegates came away from the conference saddened, frustrated, and angry. For lesbians, it was yet another painful reminder that sexism is everywhere, including the gay movement, that once again, lesbians' concerns and needs are low on the lists of priorities. For gay youth, it was a frustrating confrontation with blatant ageism.

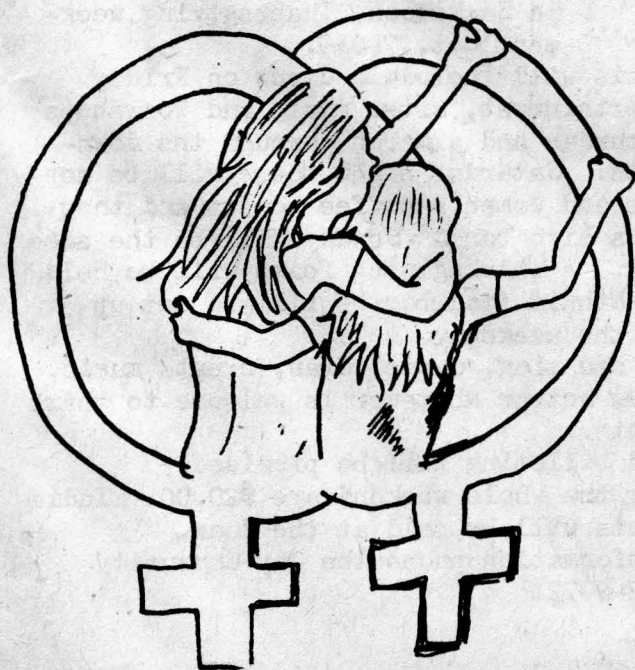
For prairie activists, dedicated to gay and women's liberation, it was positive proof of eastern chauvinism--the attitude that the male-dominated central Canadian organization is the only national coalition possible. Because we weren't convinced that a bureaucratic, conservative civil rights organization is the answer to our problems, and because we believed it possible to have a national coalition that was

responsive to the diverse lesbian and gay communities, we were viciously attacked. "You are confused!" they said. "You are disruptive!"

The Prairie Gay Conference held in Saskatoon last May, attracted over 60 representatives of gay groups from Edmonton, Alberta to Flin Flon, Manitoba. A resolution calling for reorganization of the national coalition to make it more reflective of, and more responsive to, the needs of various regional communities, was passed unanimously. Ironically enough, this resolution was responsible for most of the "confused" attacks, as well as being one of the most discussed and seriously taken resolutions of the national conference, with many of our suggestions for re-organization being passed and adopted by the CLGRC (and we are confused?)

The Prairie Gay Conference also passed a strongly-worded motion demanding implementation of last year's resolution guaranteeing lesbians at least 50% of the decision-making power within the CLGRC (only one person voted against the motion, not because of opposition to the intent, but because he felt the resolution was worded too strongly!)

The issue of lesbian power (or lack of it in the male-dominated national coalition), was of major concern to all Prairie Conference participants. Both the Gay Community Centre of Saskatoon and the Saskatchewan Gay Coalition operate and function on the principle of lesbian parity--and both the Centre and the SGC have been successful in building a sense of community and solidarity amongst the women and men. We wanted to see it start to become a reality in the national coalition as well--but it didn't happen that way. It seems that while the CLGRC happily passes paper resolutions pledging solidarity and support of feminist issues, it has no intention whatsoever of following through in concrete ways. Implementation of the resolution would have been an act of good faith on the

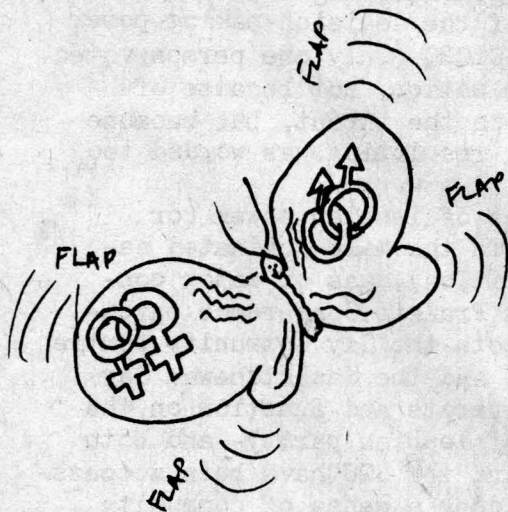


part of those who swear "we do want lesbian participation." Instead, the national conference made it perfectly clear that the lesbians who are welcome in the coalition are those who buy the conservative, bureaucratic, civil rights package, and not lesbians who want to talk about lesbian needs, concerns and ideas. The Prairie 50% resolution was killed in a very calculated "well-prepared-for-in-advance" way.

The lack of understanding and concern for lesbians, youth, rural lesbians and gays, was painfully obvious to us all. For those of us in the movement, both women and men, committed to fight-

ing for our liberation, the national conference has forced a period of serious consideration of where we go from here. Can we possibly continue to support a national coalition which is moving in a direction of direct conflict with all our principles, with all that we stand for and hope to accomplish? Do we want to continue expending our energy in fighting for a chance to be heard and taken seriously? Or do we utilize our energy in positive ways, in continuing to build communities, in real solidarity, born of mutual understanding and respect?

METAMORPHOSIS



Metamorphosis: A Prairie celebration of lesbians and gay men.

Metamorphosis: A change in form by magic or by natural development as in the change from larva to butterfly.

Metamorphosis: A symbol for coming out as individuals and as a community.

Metamorphosis: A major cultural event to be held in Saskatoon, Thanksgiving weekend, Oct. 7, 8 & 9.

Metamorphosis will include a disco on Friday night, entertainment, arts, music and workshops all day Saturday and a march through the downtown streets. Saturday night there will be separate men's and women's coffee houses and then a dance to a live band. Sunday will be the same as Saturday. A Thanksgiving feast will be held on Monday. Ethnic food booths will be set up throughout the weekend.

Anyone who can sing, dance, draw, create music, make crafts, act or whatever is welcome to share their talents.

Daycare and billeting will be provided.

Tickets for the whole weekend are \$20.00. Individual tickets will be sold at the door.

For more information phone the Gay Community Centre, 652-0972.

SUPPORT THE BANKWORKERS FIGHT
FOR DECENT WAGES and WORKING CONDITIONS

SORWUC

BENEFIT

featuring
THE KEITH BARTLETT REVUE
& HUMPHREY DUMPTRUCK

September 23, 9 p.m. - 1 a.m.
Indian-Metis Friendship Centre
refreshments

by Julie Wilson

Why a SORWUC benefit, you ask? Obviously, to raise money, and hopefully, have a good time while doing so. Right. But why for SORWUC? Well, it's that time of year again. The last fund-raising pitch was done in order to pay a full-time organizer for a six-month period. That six-month period will be over, come the end of September and since we haven't signed a contract yet, we need more money to keep on keepin' on. And that is exactly what we intend to do, contrary to any rumors you may have heard.

Yes, it is true that SORWUC in B.C. decided to stop negotiating for their certified branches (more about that later) but our members feel strongly that we should continue. At this point we are still in negotiations for both the Royal Bank in Melfort and the main branch of the Toronto-Dominion in Regina and we are confident that we will eventually sign a contract.

We are also certain that the banks will fight us every inch of the way as, predictably, they've done so far. But our members, most of whom have been involved since the beginning and have withstood an amazing amount of pressure at work, are committed to seeing this through.

We expect that the recent decision in B.C. will probably have an adverse effect on our situation but they felt there was no other course.

They had been operating on a shoe-string budget or no budget at all for months but intended to raise enough money to support a strike in one of the banks and do a province-wide boycott of that bank. However, just at the time they began to approach other unions, the CLC began sending their representative to the affiliates, advising them not to support SORWUC financially. Since SORWUC felt that the only way to win a good contract for bank employees was to strike, this was quite a blow. Combined with the logistical problems of trying to negotiate 24 contracts for 24 branches scattered through B.C. without resources, they reluctantly and painfully reached the conclusion that it was impossible to fight both the CLC and the banks at once. They intend to continue organizing bank employees but on a provincial basis, rather than a branch by branch one.

Our circumstances here are different in that we have had excellent support from other unions and we have not been under the same direct pressure from the CLC. And we don't expect this to change. We intend to continue the fight to obtain decent wages and working conditions for bank employees. We are counting on your support to help us do that.

THE POLITICS OF PERSONAL LIFE

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST CONFERENCE

The Politics of Personal Life: Women, Sexuality and the Family
--review of an educational weekend

Last fall, the women's caucus of the International Socialists began to discuss the relation between production and reproduction, our matriarchal past, our patriarchal present and our aspirations for genuine freedom. We dug into books. We explored our experiences. We presented each other with questions. Our meeting grew as more interested women joined in the process of discovery.

There was so much interest, that we decided to hold an educational weekend to present our ideas and draw more women into ongoing discussion. We knew that we didn't have all of the answers, but we wanted to offer what we had--a beginning. We divided the material into five areas: Women, the Family and Women's Work; Women's Sexuality and Personal Relations; Women and Socialism: A Revolutionary Feminist Perspective; Abortion, Reproduction and Childrearing; and Our History: Women's Struggles for Liberation in Canada. In addition to having a presentation and discussion on each area, we arranged separate women's and men's workshops for more in-depth sharing of ideas and experiences. So that no woman would have to develop a presentation all by herself, we held a series of meetings to further explore each area and develop the presentations collectively. I.S. men were enlisted to book rooms, run off invitations and generally do the administrative "housework" so that all of the women would be free to work on the presentations and the development of ideas.

Finally, May 6th rolled around and over one hundred people had registered for the weekend.

"It was women's work which laid the foundation for elevating humanity out of savagery, through barbarism and into civilization."

We began with a look at society before the family, before private property and before classes--the matriarchal period more than 6000 years ago. We saw how sex and reproduction were completely separate with women in control of both, how love and sex between women was a normal part of life, how work and personal relations were integrated and how people collectively organized their lives.

We discussed how the family arose with private property and class structure, how women were separated and sex and reproduction combined under the control of men. We talked about how the need to control the reproduction of both workers (slaves, peasants) and rulers led to the vicious repression of any sexual expression other than genital heterosexuality, how the persecution and oppression of lesbians has always been an attack on the sexual choices of ALL women and how sexual repression works today.

We traced women's work through the ages, how reproductive work was separated from productive work with the rise of industrial capitalism in the 17th century, how the split between economics and the personal life arose when production was socialized while the isolated family unit was strengthened, how women were increasingly excluded from productive work and cloistered at home.

"Our window on the world is looked through with our hands in the sink."

We explored how capitalism socializes, then re-privatizes reproduction when

it needs to pull women out of or back into the home.

We reviewed our history of rebellion, our fight for reproductive self-determination, the persecution of women healers and the birth control movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

We saw how the socialist revolution in Russia was destroyed and the gains of women reversed, as Stalin rebuilt capitalism in Russia, reinstating the family as the basic unit of society and reviving the cult of motherhood. We discussed how the defeat of socialism in Russia led to the split between feminism and socialism, how so-called women's liberation in Russia, China, Cuba, Mozambique etc. is a result of so-called socialism which is nothing more than capitalism with a red face (state capitalism).

We talked about the current economic crisis, the rise of the anti-woman, pro-family right wing and the growing fightback. We learned how and why the oppression of woman lies at the very heart of private property and class society and why the independent organization of woman is central to the struggle against sexism, sexual repression and class exploitation.

We explored how capitalism is, above all, a social system, how we have no more control over our personal and sexual lives than we have over our work

lives and how the struggle against sexism and sexual repression is a struggle for the right of all people to control their lives, their bodies, their work and to freely make their own sexual choices.

We shared our aspirations for freedom, a genuine socialist society where human need and pleasure come first, where production is directly and democratically organized by and for the vast majority of people, where every person can explore their full potential for creative work, love and sensuality.

Everywhere women were talking, in large groups and small, in doorways and out on the lawns. We were excited and high with ideas and a renewed confidence in the strength and power of women exploring together.

It was a great beginning - but only a beginning. Many women have requested that the talks be published so that they and other women can develop and build on what we began. But we need help in raising the \$300 we need to publish the talks. If you are interested in contributing some money, in receiving a copy of the talks or in finding out more about the International Socialists, we would love to hear from you.

We can be reached at Box 339, Station E, Toronto.

Susan Tybourne

PRESS RELEASE

CHILD CARE CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN
OCTOBER -- ASSOCIATION MAY BE
FORMED

The Saskatchewan Child Care Conference Committee has announced plans for its annual conference, "Learning, Caring, Growing", to be held Oct. 27-29, 1978 at the Saskatoon Centennial Auditorium. A major feature of the Conference will be 20 concurrent workshops on topics such as Child Abuse, Working with Handicapped Children, Puppetry and Drama, and Helping the Day Care Child Adjust to School.

Along with the workshops, there will

be an Open Forum, the purpose being to provide time for child care workers to meet together in hopes of forming a Provincial Child Care Association. The need for an Association was clearly demonstrated at the 1977 conference when many workers expressed concern about the lack of public awareness of Day Care issues and a need for unified action by workers in bringing about positive changes in the direction of Day Care in the province.

For more information contact:
Chris O'Neill (Saskatoon) 244-4939
Terry Kokotailo (Regina) 522-5747

-8- INTERNATIONAL FEMINIST NETWORK

by Susan Woolway

Prairie Woman has received communication from the Canadian Branch of the International Feminist Network that the latest request for global support is for the Canadian case of Dalila Zeghar Maschino. The Advisory Council on the Status of Women in Quebec has also undertaken a campaign to effect pressure on the government regarding the kidnapping of Zeghar Maschino.

Dalila Zeghar Maschino was kidnapped by her eldest brother, Messaoud Zeghar, on the night of April 24, 1978. The Montreal Urban Community Police Department has established substantial evidence that Dalila, a young Algerian student with landed immigrant status in Canada since August, 1975, was drugged and taken back to her native village in a private jet owned by her brother. Messaoud Zeghar is a politically and economically powerful figure in Algeria and since Algeria won its final independence from France in 1962 has purchased a considerable quantity of physical and financial assets in Western Europe. Denis Maschino, Dalila's husband, reports that Zeghar was incensed by their marriage which took place in France in March 1975, since Maschino was not the husband of his choosing. Since their marriage Zeghar has repeatedly threatened to get Dalila back and as it stands at this moment, he has. Reports from Algeria also suggest that the forced marriage has already taken place and Dalila is being held incommunicado.

No public action has been taken by the Canadian government in this case although there are supposedly laws protecting landed immigrants. Both Denis and Dalila have only a few months of residency requirements left before being accorded full Canadian citizenship.

The second and more deplorable issue is that once again a woman has become the victim of feudal and patriarchal practices and denied basic human rights to choose where she will live and whom she will marry.

The Canadian government must be urged to take immediate and effective action toward the Algerian government to procure the return of Dalila Zeghar Maschino to her chosen home and husband in Montreal.

The action required is:

1. Send letters or telegrams to:
 - Prime Minister Trudeau
 - The Hon. Donald Jamieson, Secretary of State for External Affairs
 - The Hon. Otto Lang, Minister of Justice
 - The Hon. Bud Cullen, Minister of Employment and Immigration
 - House of Commons, Ottawa, Ont.
 - Mr. Marc-Andre Bedard, Minister of Justice, Quebec National Assembly, Québec.
 - President Honari Boumediene, Palais du Gouvernement, Place de l'Afrique, Alger, Algerie
 - Madame Helvi Sipila, Assistant Secretary General, Centre for Social Development & Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Building, Room DC 1022 New York, N.Y., U.S.A.

Please send copies of all your letters and telegrams to:

La Fédération des Femmes du Québec
1600 Berri St., Suite 3115
Montreal, Québec.
H2L 4E4

Further information can be obtained from:

- Sheila Finestone, Fédération des Femmes du Québec, Montreal.
- Mair Verthuy, Concordia University, Montreal, Québec.

The INTERNATIONAL FEMINIST NETWORK (with headquarters in Switzerland) is an organization dedicated to massing global support for women's concerns and for the plight of individual women who have fallen victim to sexist social injustice or patriarchal violence. Prairie Woman warmly endorses the efforts of this much needed network and will continue to pass on to our readers any communication and/or support requests which we receive from I.F.N.



UPDATE

The following is a press release from the B.C. Status of Women.

The report of the Royal Commission of the Status of Women, published in 1970, made 167 recommendations for change in Canada. Sixty eight of those recommendations were directed toward provincial governments. The B.C. Women's Research Team was formed in June of 1977 in order to investigate the degree of implementation of those recommendations in their province. Of the 68 recommendations investigated, only 16 have been fully implemented and those 16 are, for the most part, of minor significance.

The comprehensive report of the Women's Research Team, Update on the Status of Women in British Columbia, discusses the issues involved with each of the Royal Commission's recommendations, assesses action or inaction in B.C., and makes new recommendations in many instances.

The issues covered in Update fall into four main categories: Labour, Education, Social Services, and Family Law. Some of the findings of the Women's Research Team are summarized below.

LABOUR

EQUAL PAY

The equal pay provision of the B.C. Human Rights Code has proved to be distinctly unworkable because of its restrictive wording. It does not allow comparison of the wage rates of men and women in most instances, because the labour force remains highly segregated. The Code should be changed to read "equal pay for work of equal value".

MATERNITY RIGHTS

Women have the right to be pregnant and to work. B.C.'s maternity protection legislation does little to ensure either right and needs to be greatly strengthened.

EDUCATION

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

Family Life Education, which includes sex education, has taken a step backward since 1970. Responsibility for courses now rests with local school boards, and some areas have completely eliminated family life programmes.

IMMIGRANT WOMEN

The needs of immigrant women for English language training and Canadian orientation are not being met.

SOCIAL SERVICES

DAY CARE

Day care facilities continue to be grossly inadequate. Although there is a daycare subsidy available on a sliding scale, it is not tied to the cost of living in any way, and many people who need the subsidy earn too much to receive it. Funding for day care centres needs to be increased and divorced from enrollment.

FAMILY LAW

DOMICILE

Women in British Columbia still lose their independent domicile at the time of marriage. No attempt has been made to change this situation.

MATRIMONIAL PROPERTY

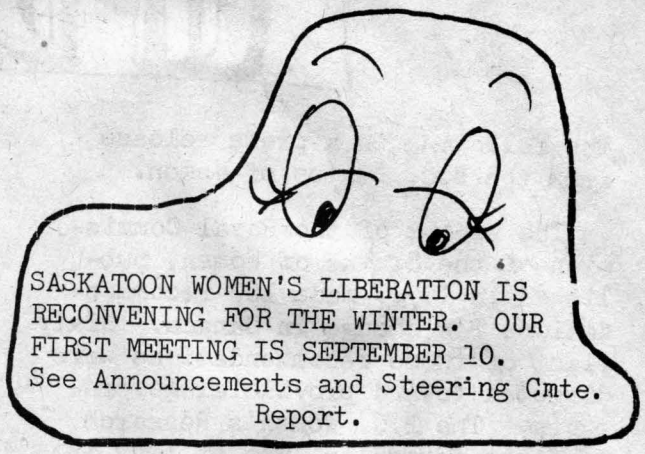
The concept of equal partnership in marriage has not been recognized in B.C. Women do not have a right to half of matrimonial property at the time of dissolution of marriage, despite the recommendations of the B.C. Royal Commission of Family and Children's Law in 1975. The Commission recommended "full and immediate" community of property for British Columbia. Lack of action on this issue perpetuates the lack of value attributed to the role of the spouse who assumes the household and child rearing responsibilities in a marriage.

SINGLE MOTHERS

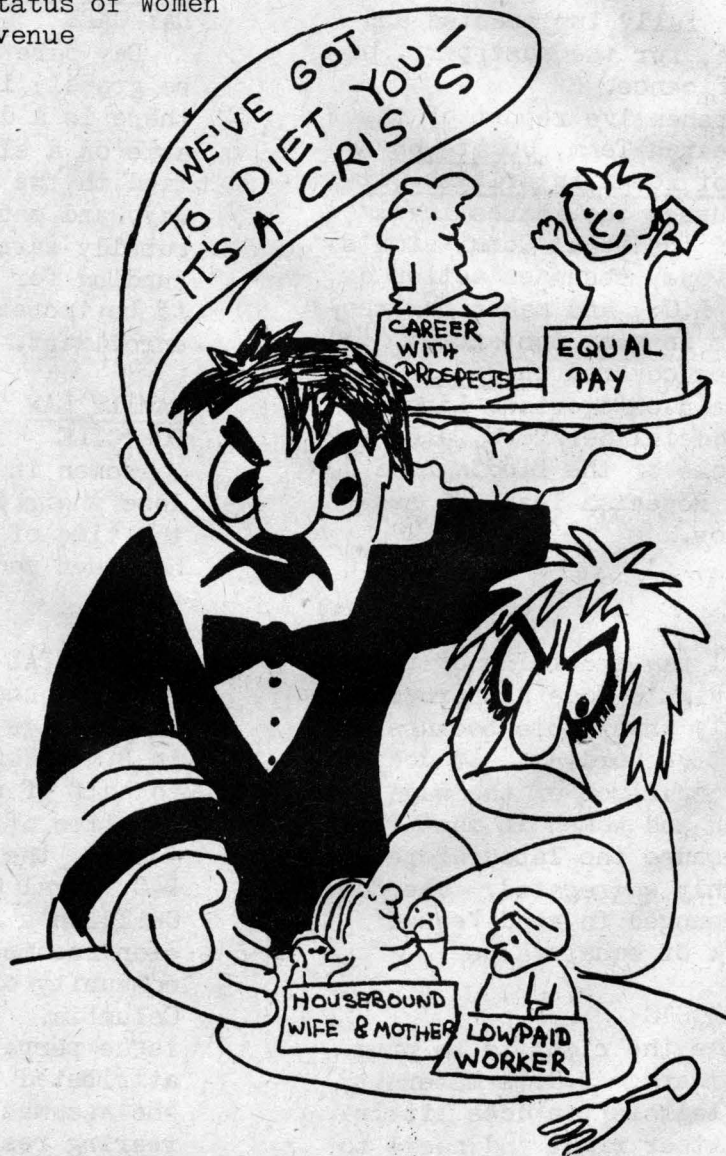
The time has come for the abolition of the status of illegitimacy, as recommended by the B.C. Royal Commission on Family and Children's Law in 1975.

Update concludes that there has been a negligible response to the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women by the B.C. government in all areas. Unfortunately we realize that this provincial government has fared no better.

For further information contact:
Storme Bourget
Women's Research Team
c/o Vancouver Status of Women
2029 West 4th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C.



SASKATOON WOMEN'S LIBERATION IS RECONVENING FOR THE WINTER. OUR FIRST MEETING IS SEPTEMBER 10. See Announcements and Steering Cmte. Report.



"Get thee to a nunnery!!"

by lynda shepherdsor

Lynda Shepherdson is a member of the Prairie Woman Collective and here she presents some views on an issue which the women's movement has sometimes found difficult to come to terms with. We invite further comments and discussion on prostitution.

An obnoxious advertisement in the July issue of "Briarpatch" prompts me to expound on the subject of prostitution.

The offensive ad is part of the "Feelin' Good" campaign sponsored by the Saskatchewan Dept. of Health. The caption "Sugar Mae Kill Ya" relates to a cartoon caricature of a female "hooker". The accompanying text worsens the situation by utilizing sexual innuendoes and discriminatory put downs of a typically derogatory nature. It is unfortunate that much of what passes for "humor" in our society is based upon ridiculing a minority group and/or oppressed segment of the population.

Prostitutes have long been victimized by a repressive, patriarchal and hypocritical society. The technique of scapegoating serves to remove the focus from the capitalistic social order where it rightfully belongs.

The causes of female prostitution lie in the economic position of women, together with the psychological damage inflicted upon them through the system of sex-role conditioning in patriarchal society.

There is a serious problem in our society, when women must sell their bodies because there is no other way that they can earn fifteen thousand a year. There is a serious problem in our society when men think that access to the female body is, if not divine right, at least a monetary right.

Prostitution is generally regarded as humorous, inevitable or convenient. The prostitute is prosecuted, pariahed, derided or romanticized.

In any case, the victim, the prostitute, rather than the institution that victimizes her, is condemned.

It is a further irony that our legal ethic prosecutes those who are forced (economically or psychologically) to offer themselves for sale as objects, but condones the act of buying persons as objects! Yet the system of exploited labor called voluntary servitude would never be permitted today and was outlawed even before the abolition of slavery.

Suggestions as to extending the definition of government controlled meat to the sale of human flesh by controlling prostitution by the issuing of licenses, granting medical assurances to patrons is no solution. This serves to foster and acknowledge the prostitution of women as a privilege of the state.

The answer lies in another direction: namely, in removing prostitution from the criminal code altogether. This would in no way increase the incidence or availability of female prostitution, but it would frustrate the exploitation of prostitutes by the two classes of men who are now their chief predators: pimps and the police.

Prostitution will not end in this country until men see women as equals.

Prostitution is somehow paradigmatic, somehow the very core of the female's social condition. It not only declares her subjection right in the open, with the cash nexus between the sexes announced in currency, rather than through the subtlety of a marriage contract (which still recog-

WANTED



Sugar Mae Killya

also known as "Minnie Caries" or "Lotta Blemish".

Wanted for hooking people on poor eating habits, spoiling appetites and causing unsightly weight gain. Also charged with several cases of diabétes.

General description: Height - 5'2". Weight - 190 lbs. Size - ex. large. Distinguishing features are dimples all over, double chin, flabby arms, poor teeth and complexion.

Sugar's usual hideouts are soft drinks, most dry cereals, drink crystals, cake, candy bars and ice cream. Unusual hideouts - ketchup, alcohol, and canned fruit.

Warning - do not be taken in by sweet talk. Read the label.

Reward for efforts leading to arrest of "Sugar": clear skin, lower weight, fewer cavities, and Feelin' Good.



*A way to change the shape we're in,
from Saskatchewan Health*

nizes the principle of sex in return for commodities and historically has insisted upon it), but the very act of prostitution is itself a declaration of our value, our reification. It is not sex the prostitute is ready made to sell; it is degradation. And the buyer, the "john" is not buying sexuality, but POWER, power over another human being.

As Levi-Strauss emphasizes, men have traded in women throughout most of human history and have regarded her as currency in every country of the world, in societies where a monetary system was never arrived at. Little wonder that the origins of prostitution lie in temples converted from fertility rites to the cult of patriarchy. (Prostitution: A Quartet for Female Voices by Kate Millet)

Vancouver, Edmonton and Toronto police have publicly bemoaned a Feb. 7/78 Supreme Court of Canada decision which has made it almost impossible to arrest prostitutes.

That decision involved a woman who was arrested for soliciting after entering a plainclothes officer's unmarked car. Court ruled that accepting the policeman's unspoken invitation to enter the car did not fit the legal definition of soliciting. The court also ruled that a police car is not a public place.

Police have interpreted the decision to mean that prostitutes must vigorously harass prospective clients before they can be convicted.

Toronto police are making use of other charges - including loitering, causing a disturbance, performing an indecent act, and common assault - to keep the "problem" under control.

Citizens of Vancouver and Toronto have lodged complaints regarding the increased number of prostitutes visible on the streets in the past few months.

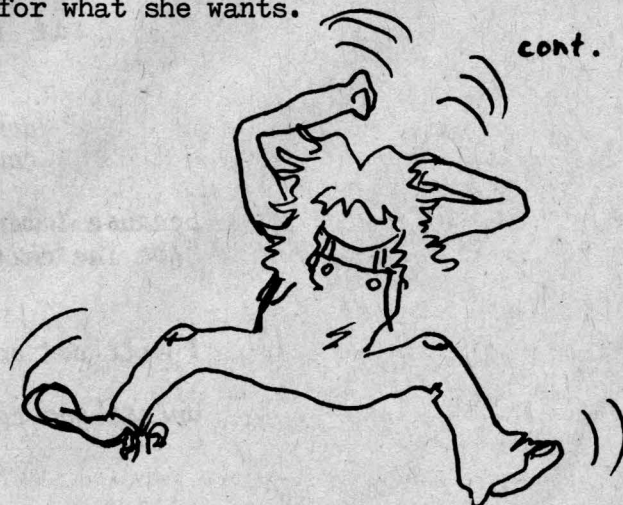
Changes within the legal system will do little to alleviate the source of such exploitation. Radical social and political changes are the only solution. A recent court ruling has extended soliciting for the purpose of prostitution to apply to males as well as females. Not exactly the type of equality between the sexes that is needed!

Band-aid approaches and superficial solutions do little except shore up a system that should be eradicated.

The most painful thing about the attitude that a woman is little more than a receptacle for a man's semen is that many women believe it as well. Rather than sharing love and sex, we have been taught to use it.

Using her body as a commodity, or a medium of exchange, enables the man to define himself as superior, but it also services a need in the woman. She is able to trade on her "fragility" and her sex to receive all those goodies she has been taught to want and value. If she ever should, for whatever reason, begin to assert herself and find it frightening, she can always retreat into her weak and delicate number and find some big, strong man to protect her. All the prostitute has done is eliminate the bullshit.

Without the games, she will trade what is regarded as a commodity anyway, for what she wants.



The following poem is food for thought and a reflection of a perspective that a really fine woman helped me to see and understand.

To Beda:

I will not call you whore
sister

Last night
with roast beef and potatoes
I earned the dress I'm wearing.

I moaned especially loud
in bed

when Johnny
needed retainers.

I whined piteously, cutely, coyly
until the floors were
carpeted
and
matching custom drapes were hung
from
windows of a mortgage.

I did not challenge
though knowing I was right
but
sat quietly

demurely
cowardly

because I wanted peace
"for the children's sake".

I will not call you whore
sister
Unless you call me wife.

VANCOUVER ABORTION STRUGGLE

Anti-abortion groups in the Vancouver area have been actively and violently campaigning against the Vancouver General Hospital in recent months. The aim of their efforts is to stop therapeutic abortions at Vancouver General Hospital. The strategy of Pro-Life is simply: sign up thousands of members to VGH, nominate a slate of people who are anti-abortion, and eliminate abortions as a hospital procedure.

Every year VGH has an annual general meeting at which several new trustees are elected to the Board. For the past three years, anti-abortion groups have packed the annual general meeting in attempts to elect their own trustees.

To combat anti-abortionist strength at this year's annual general meeting, a group calling themselves Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion are also organizing a VGH membership campaign.

Forty thousand applications for membership have gone out this year.

It is a numbers game. The Criminal Code, as we have seen, makes abortion a legal procedure - but does nothing to guarantee its availability. Only 40% of hospitals in Canada are eligible, under provincial law, to perform therapeutic abortions.

Both groups in the Vancouver area have held huge public rallies over the summer. The turnout and support for both groups has been tremendous.

Abortion has not been such a major public issue since Dr. Henry Morgenthauer's persecution by our "Justice" system in 1974.

Proponents of the Pro Choice view often remain the silent majority. It is exciting to see a resurgence of activity and action in the Women's Movement.

Last week the Minister of Health in B.C. appointed a public administrator to replace the Board of Trustees at VGH. The Annual Meeting and a voting in of a Board of Trustees is therefore cancelled.

The present hospital administrator was replaced in response to public allegations by the Registered Nurses' Association of B.C.

An investigation is underway to determine the Nurses' grievances regarding poor quality care for patients due to inefficient administration. They attribute nursing problems to a policy which excludes nurses in high-level decisions.

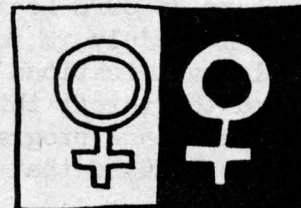
This action comes at a rather convenient time for the Board of Trustees and Provincial Government. The whole issue of "stacking" the Board gone public must have caused considerable consternation in certain circles. This new focus and crisis sidesteps that issue for the present.

In the meantime, threats of violence continue against the employees of VGH (particularly counsellors in the Abortion Counselling area of the hospital). There have been bomb and fire threats similar to attacks on abortion clinics in the United States.

The Concerned Citizens for Choice have incurred costs over the past few months that are difficult to meet. Contributions and support would be welcomed. For further information write:

CCCA
115 N. Kootenay St.
Vancouver, B.C.

ABORTION



WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

CUTBACKS CUTBACKS AND MORE CUTBACKS

by Gail Wartman and Lynda Shepherdson

Effective August 31, the Saskatoon Legal Assistance Clinic, which has been serving Saskatoon and district for some seven years, is to close its doors. The fate of some other urban Clinics has not yet been decided. The Legal Assistance program in Saskatchewan is just one more area in which heavy blows are being dealt to a group of people who can least defend themselves.

Last year some extra funds available to the Legal Services Commission were used to create a number of temporary positions in the Clinics around the province. All these new employees were desperately needed: the Clinics have been, by and large, overworked at the best of times. However, the Treasury Board suddenly declared it had not authorized these positions, and caused the Commission to issue lay-off notices to these people late last winter.

"Farm-outs" of criminal cases to private lawyers were halted. And the Clinic was faced with having to carry the full load of legal aid work, both criminal and civil matters.

Then came announcements of budget cuts. The Clinics were seen to have been spending too much in the first part of the year and an 8.9% cut-back was ordered.

The Clinic's Board of Directors decided to shut down the office, rather than provide inefficient and poor-quality service. The drastic move of closing shop was the only way to publically indicate that a critical situation exists.

Members of CUPE Local 1949 met in Regina on July 12 to consider the possible ramifications of the lay-offs and the threat this poses to the Legal Assistance program. The Union members concluded that the results

of this action will create an intolerable situation. The membership passed further resolutions calling for the retention of those fifteen staff presently being laid off, an inquiry into the Legal Assistance system, and the resignation of the present Commission.

Psychological damage now done to Legal Assistance staff has caused many to doubt that any rational process of administration exists at the Commission level as well as to question the NDP government's commitment to the Legal Assistance program. Once again, the workers are being made to bear the brunt of irresponsible politicians' actions.

According to the Saskatchewan Legal Services Commission, the cost of providing legal services by the Legal Assistance Clinic is \$ 112 a case, compared to private bar referrals costing \$ 200 a case. This alone should convince the government to hire more Legal Assistance workers rather than cut back. In 1974/75, the case load was over 7,000 with only two Clinics in operation. In 1977/78 the caseload grew to over 27,000 with thirteen Clinics in operation. And according to a very recent survey conducted by a consulting firm, the real need for assistance is still not being fully met. The study calls for a doubling of Legal Assistance within the next ten years.

The only responsible and acceptable approach the government can make is to provide funds for the fifteen threatened positions, ensure the maintenance of Legal Assistance services to Saskatchewan people and order a full-scale inquiry into the Legal Services operation.

Under the act that set up Legal Aid in our province, each Clinic is to be governed by a community board,

and the boards are to have a mandate to set priorities on how the Clinics should operate. So for the Saskatoon board to decide its best course of action would be to send most criminal cases to private lawyers, who would in turn receive their fees from the Legal Assistance system, was not unreasonable, especially considering the Clinic's huge workload and the difficulty it would therefore have in developing expertise in criminal matters.

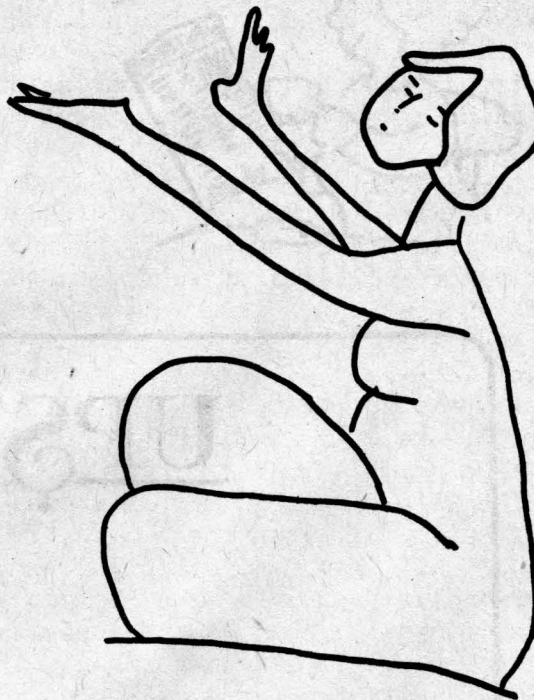
However, the government has suddenly reacted quite strongly to this mode of operation. Romanow quotes a 17 % increase this year, and tells us Legal Assistance has been fortunate. This figure is misleading, because, in the first place it took into account only the permanent positions in the system, and not the fifteen temporary ones, which are just as real and just as needed. Furthermore, most of that "17 % increase" went to the private lawyers who were doing Legal Aid work, not to the Clinic staffs where it was badly needed.

It would seem that all these developments should be a triumph for the private bar. The president of the Law Society, R.H. McKercher, has stated that the Clinics' practice of getting into civil matters has been an infringement on the private bar. It seems that these chores should be left for young, inexperienced private lawyers to do. (None of the "high-classed" lawyers would set their fees within reach of poor people, and had developed a habit of shipping "distasteful" clients--whether poor or not--down to the Clinic.) In one way the private bar may be in a negative position due to the Clinic's demise--because having the Clinic there allowed poor people to get representation and caused their opponents to seek help

from the private bar. Nonetheless, there has been little love lost between the Clinic and most of the private bar, and many of the latter may be grateful to see the Clinic close.

The Saskatoon Clinic's board could not see fit to carry on, but the government has decided to maintain the semblance of Legal Assistance Services in Saskatoon.

The board lost its authority to run the Clinic, and the Legal Services Commission is being given the job of trying to take over. The former Clinic's staff are to be laid off effective August 31, and the Commission will be hiring staff. There will probably be few or none of the former staff going to work for the Commission. It is going to try to provide



criminal legal services, and if it has "spare time", to do some civil matters, with the greatest emphasis there on family matters. But chances are that there will just be too much work, as has been found in the past, and it will be the civil matters that will be neglected.

And in many ways, it is the civil matters that really go to the roots of the poverty that causes so many of the problems in the first place. True, in criminal matters, a person's liberty is at stake, but in, for example, a family law case involving the enforcement of a maintenance order, a person's way of life is very much dependent on the outcome. It is interesting to note that things that will be of lowest priority will be matters like bureaucratic hassles--unemployment insurance, for example. So if you're poor, and you need to challenge a government agency... forget it.



Women are suffering the worst in this situation. Not only were they, as clerical staff and paralegals, among the first to be laid off in every Clinic, but they are also the clients who are suffering the most. Most criminal cases involve male clients. They will likely be helped. Most Clinic clients needing help in matrimonial matters are women. And they likely won't be helped. They may not be able to get a divorce. They may not have help in custody proceedings. They may not be able to have the court order for maintenance against their husband enforced. Even if the new Commission Clinic cannot handle the criminal matters, private lawyers may possibly take some on "for interest's sake." But family cases are generally regarded as the most unpopular kind of case to undertake: if poor women are going to get help in family matters, it will generally have to be through Legal Assistance.

This particular government cut-back, then, has been extra-effective in oppressing the "weak." Not only does it concentrate on the poor as a class, but it hurts women in particular.

UPSTREAM

A WOMEN'S PUBLICATION
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- Published 10 times a year by Feminist Publications of Ottawa.
- A 24-page tabloid newspaper with a circulation of 4,000.
- Sold at newsstands, variety stores, and bookstores in Ottawa and out of town locations. It is also mailed to our subscribers.

A woman is born

This night I crawled from my womb
dragging placenta
red ribbons in my hair
comfortable conformity
struggling to pull me
back inside.

Through dialectics of pain
my blood gives rise to rich hues
as I taste my new life
and my colour surrounds the night.

A new voice speaks my words.
My poems bloom naked as roses
I greet sweet womankind
and visions roll with the beating of wings

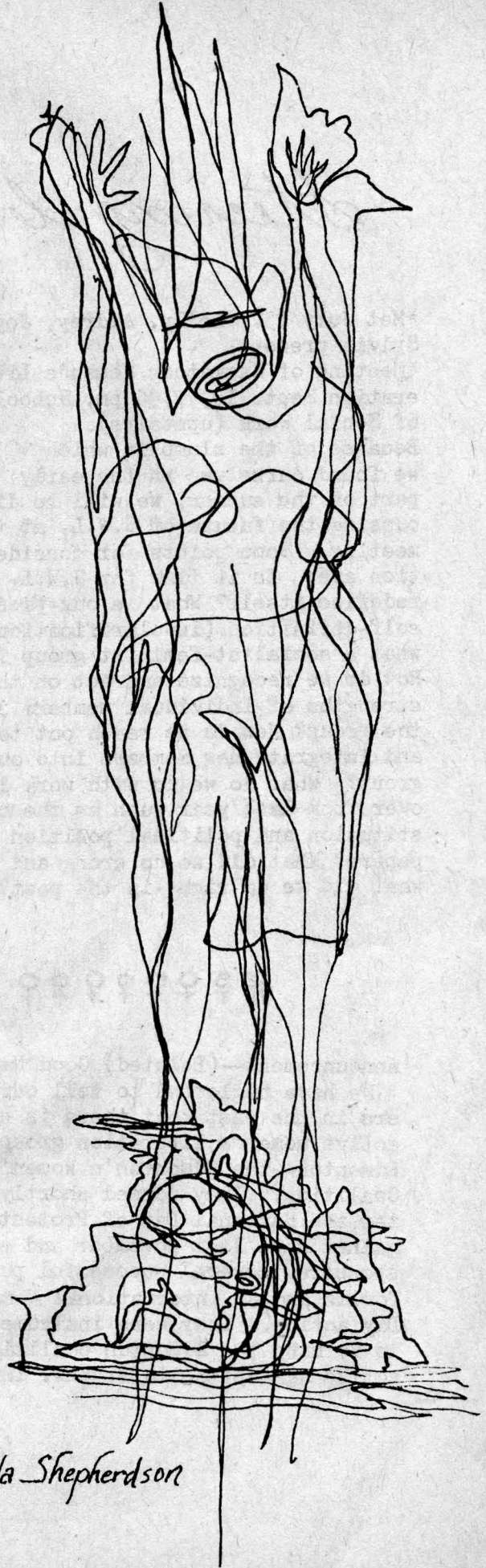
For from alienation and pain
comes anger
and from anger comes power

Reborn

To ride the stellar winds
that becry fierce newfound pride
for the falcon/woman heart
that bursts through sky

from existence to being.

~ by Lynda Shepherdson



Steering Committee Report

*Met July 23. Shelly, Audrey, Joyce, Sylvia present.

*Meeting of Saskatoon Women's Liberation Sept. 10, 7:30 pm, School of Social Work (upstairs).

Because of the slump in which we found ourselves in the early part of the summer, we will be discussing the future of S.W.L. at this meeting. Some points for consideration are: Is it time for S.W.L. to redefine itself? What is our present self-definition (ie-clarification of what a socialist-feminist group is)? How do we recognize and act on the strengths of individual members in the group? How do we reach out to and integrate new members into our group? What do we do with work left over from last year such as the constitution and political position papers? What did we do wrong and what did we do right in the past?

*The "Feeling Good" campaign ad that is shown elsewhere in this issue was brought to our attention. It was decided to send letters protesting the ad to Briarpatch and to the Minister of Health and Welfare.

*It was also brought to our attention that Prairie Woman is now being printed by a non-union shop. With the agreement of the Prairie Woman Collective, we will be switching over to a union shop as soon as we get prices and format straightened out.

*We needed a new delegate to the Saskatchewan Gay Coalition and Maylynn was asked to take on this responsibility for now.

*Joyce has resigned from the Steering Committee because she moved to Toronto. Thanks for your help Joyce. Good luck. This leaves two vacancies on the Steering Committee.



Announcement--(Belated) Good News!!

We have neglected to tell our readers in the past that there is now an active women's liberation group in Edmonton--the Edmonton's Women's Coalition. They formed shortly after the National Day of Protest Against Rape last November and since sponsored several successful public forums and an International Women's Day action. They were instrumental in forming the Edmonton coalition active against Anita Bryant. They

can be contacted at this address:

Edmonton Women's Coalition
Box 771, Sub Stn. 11
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta

Out of the E.W.C. and the action around Anita Bryant, a new lesbian and gay group has also emerged:

The Edmonton Lesbian and Gay Rights Organization
P.O. Box 837, Sub. Stn. 11
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta



REVIEWS

WHERE THERE'S A WOMAN THERE'S A WAY

book review by s. molec

The Revolt of Mother and Other Stories

by Mary E. Wilkins Freeman

with an afterword by Michele Clark

The Feminist Press, 1974 pp.211

This is a collection of eight stories written in the late nineteenth century, when the women's movement was still in its beginnings, and when suffrage for women was just becoming a fashionable idea. Support for women's legal, economic, and political independence was "in vogue" but the cultural facets of feminism was largely ignored. Literary portrayals of women a common, everyday people was then not a popular idea.

The strong influence fictitious "models" have over their audience can shape personalities: we realize this today, but a century ago, when women in books were stereotyped to the hilt, it was not recognized how powerful identification with role-models can be. Writers who took a step away from the two-dimensional patriarchally-created Ophelia/Little Red Riding Hood character, were writers who came a step closer to giving their readers someone human to identify with.

Freeman did just that.

She wrote about the women in New England of her time: a post-war era when women far out-numbered men, and the U.S. was still a "new land" to be settled by hardy souls. And her characters display an admirable psychological liberation from existing opinions that women should be passive, acceptant, and marriage-bound. However, her characters are not what would specifically be called "political". Still less could they be dubbed

"suffragettes"--or, worse yet, "women's libbers."

Take Harriet and Emily, for example. They are the two old sister-spinsters who are carted off to the old folks' home in the book's first story. "Do you think women should have societal freedoms equal to that of men?" would be met with silence from both Harriet and Emily. They had likely never consciously considered the question before. Yet it is they who provide us modern, educated, women-of-raised-consciousness with the example when they resolutely hang up the tiny, frilled and lace-bedecked caps "nice old ladies" were required to wear then. They journey out to their old ramshackle house to spend the rest of their days, acting with a spirit rarely admired in old women.

Sarah Penn is "mother" in the title story "The Revolt of Mother". Her husband promised for 40 band promised for forty years to move the Penn family from a crowded one-room shack to a new home. When he continues to build barn after barn, without honoring his promise, Sarah moves the household into a brand-new barn, much to the consternation of local folk. Ask Sarah if women should be allowed to vote, and chances are, she won't have much of an opinion, of, if she says, "well, I guess they ought to, if they really wanted to mess around with such darned-fool things," she would not be able to defend that answer well.

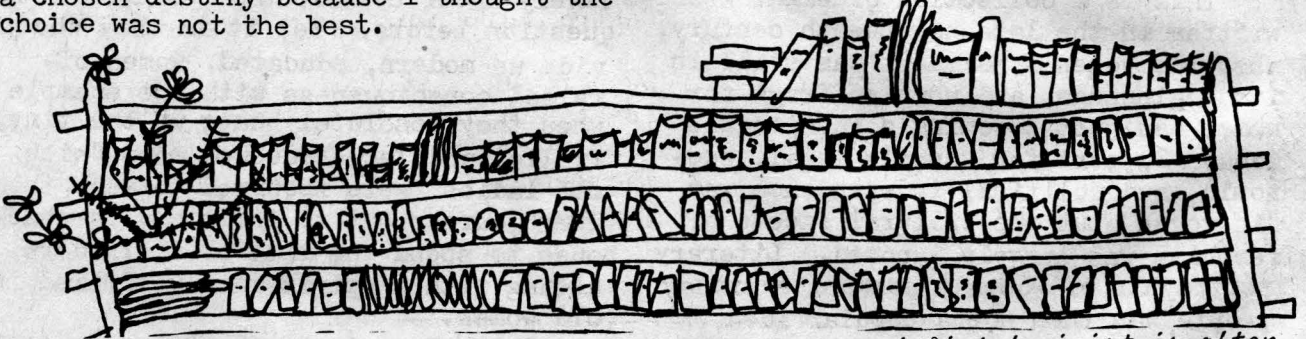
Freeman did not write about women for the women's movement; few of her characters would fit in with the current notion of feminism. She just wrote about typical women as she saw them, wrote good and clear and true and sharp. Let the women's movement recognize a good thing if it saw this; or let it lose its appreciation for its heritage of strong albeit "non-conscious" women.

"Where there's a woman and a will, there's a way." The stories share a common thread of strong women, be these women young or old, married or single. In all stories a woman is portrayed as doing what she feels is right, or resisting that which she feels is wrong, or "just not to her likin'."

What the heroines choose, the reader may not necessarily agree with. In the story "A New England Nun," I wish the main protagonist had chosen to relinquish her kingdom of false security and fastidious order. I begrudged my admiration for her persistence in following a chosen destiny because I thought the choice was not the best.

But I think Freeman's message was exactly that: that even if outsiders (or parents or husbands) do not think a woman's choice is wise, the woman must still have the right to choose for herself. And is not the choice of one's own destiny and the freedom to control one's life, the essence of feminism?

Freeman's writings represent an important step in women's rights. She began to give the "male" characteristics of persistence and strength back to women. She began. We still see women accepting their conditioned roles of passive, meek ineffectuality. Freeman began; it is up to us to continue



Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism -

by Zillah Eisenstein

Monthly Review Press

1978

The significance of these articles is their consistent attempt to interweave the threads of feminist and socialist theories, to more clearly understand women's reality. Their framework recognizes the dynamics of power that affect women. By drawing on class relations and those of sexual hierarchy, the reader is forced to consider the multifaceted nature of the oppression of women, rather than smugly toting a Marxist or a Feminist perspective.

This volume contains a collection of articles that utilize the tools of Marxist-Feminism to analyze the position of women in society. Theoretical premises, historical development and a dialectical approach characterize this book's treatment of women's work, reproduction, and the relationships between patriarchy and women's role in society.

The term socialist-feminist is often used, but its tools of analysis are frequently hazy. This book begins to unfold an integrated analysis of the world and power within it. The authors present the articles as a step in the clarification of what socialist-feminism embodies. The articles are followed by explanatory notes and good bibliographies of sources worth reading.

The style of writing is seldom cumbersome. However, the book is not written from an inexperienced position. Many of its contributors have been active in the women's movement and leftist groups for many years. Some articles are reprints from smaller publications, while others are works presented at socialist-feminist conferences and in study groups. These articles contribute to a clearer understanding of the oppression of women and strategies to develop from it. This book makes for thoughtful reading. I highly recommend it.

donna

Announcements

GENERAL MEETING
 SASKATOON WOMEN'S LIBERATION
 OUR FIRST ONE FOR THE NEW SEASON!!!
 Sept. 10. 7:30 p.m.
 School of Social Work
 Upstairs 233, 22nd St. E.
 All women welcome.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD BIRTH CONTROL CLINIC
 440 2nd Ave. N. (2nd floor)
 (Dept. of Health)
 Thursday evenings - 7 - 9 p.m.
 No appointments are necessary.
 Counsellors and a doctor will be on
 hand each week. For further infor-
 mation call 244-7989.

Saskatoon Lesbian Society Meeting
 Sunday, Sept. 10th, 3:00 p.m.
 Gay Community Centre, 310 - 20th St. W.
 Community Dinner to Follow.
 We'll be planning our fall agenda,
 as well as ideas for our contribu-
 tion to Metamorphosis.

Doris Tijerino - Autobiography of a
 Revolutionary Nicaraguan Woman.
 Doris Tijerino, a leader of the Frente
 Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional
 (FSLN) - a revolutionary socialist
 organization struggling against the
 dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza -
 was captured and imprisoned in Nicar-
 agua last April. All proceeds from
 the sale of this book will go to the
 FSLN. It is available now from Onion
 Books, \$5.25 paperback.

SORWUC BENEFIT
 Sept. 23, Indian-Metis Friendship
 Centre, 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. \$4.00.

Support the Chilean Struggle. Attend
 Isable and Angel Parra from Chile
 singing in the Confederation Room in
 the Centennial Auditorium. Sept. 14,
 Thursday, 8:00 p.m.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

PLEASE SEND ME A YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION OF PRAIRIE WOMAN

To:

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PRAIRIE WOMAN is a newsletter of Saskatoon Women's Liberation. Contributions in the form of articles, news items, poetry, graphics, cartoons, and photographs are welcomed from women. Interested men are invited to contribute letters or funds. Because the newsletter is put out by voluntary labour, financial donations are encouraged.

PRAIRIE WOMAN is run as a collective. Writers have had their efforts acknowledged with their articles. Others working on the paper are:

Lynda Shepherdson
Vicki Barclay
Susan Woolway
Julie Wilson

Rosemarie Rupps
Debbie Woolway
Maylynn Woo
Wiesia Kolasinska

Original graphics and headlines by Maylynn Woo and Vicki Barclay

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