

PRAIRIE WOMAN



MARCH
1978
VOL II
No 3

POST CONFERENCE
EVALUATION
AND
INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S DAY
GREETINGS!

A NEWSLETTER OF SASKATOON WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Announcements

Feb. 26, March 12, March 26, Sunday 7pm
Saskatoon Women's Liberation general
meetings will be held at the School of
Social Work 233-22nd Street East. Topics
to be discussed at meeting will include
the constitutional proposal, conference
evaluation and suggestions for a gen-
eral position paper. All women are in-
vited to find out what we are all about.

March 8, Wednesday INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S DAY! Celebration and meeting.
Open to men and women. At the Public
Library, at 8pm. Bring your friends.
Watch for further details.

March 10 Friday 9-2 Benefit dance for
the Saskatchewan Gay Coalition at the
Saskatoon Gay Community Centre. Ad-
mission \$3.00 Open to all.

March 11 Saturday at 11--General meeting
of the Saskatchewan Gay Coalition at the
Saskatoon Gay Community Centre.

March 20 Monday 10am-2pm Women's Rally
for Action at the Legislative Building,
sponsored the Status of Women Saskatchewan
Action Committee. For further information
contact Pay Keyser, P.O. 253, Landis, Sask.

April 21-23. A conference on "Women in
Violent Society" will be held in Cal-
gary, sponsored by the Calgary Status
of Women Action Committee. Well known
feminists such as Robin Morgan and Dr.
Diana Russel will speak. For further
information ore registration contact
Status of Women Action Committee,
223-12th Ave. s.w., Calgary.

Family Planning Birth Control Clinic
is held every Thursday, 7-9 pm at City
Hall in the Public Health Dept. No
appointments are necessary and counsel-
lors and a doctor will be on hand. For
further information call 244-7989.

General meetings of the U.S.S.U. Wo-
men's Directorate are held Mondays at
5 pm in Room 14--Lower M.U.B.

IT'S TRUE! Anita Bryant is coming to
Saskatchewan! She is expected in Regina
April 25 or thereabouts. Saskatoon Women's
Liberation, Saskatchewan Gay Coalition and
the Gay Community Centre will be planning
activities to welcome her. Watch for
details.



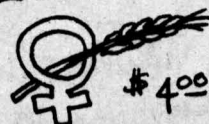
SUBSCRIPTION FORM

PLEASE SEND ME A YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION OF
PRAIRIE WOMAN TO:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PLEASE MAKE
CHEQUES PAYABLE *please* _____
TO SASKATOON
WOMENS LIBERATION
P.O. BOX 4021 SASKATOON
SASK

 \$4.00/YR.

EDITORIAL

Saskatoon Women's Liberation organized the first Prairie Women's Socialist-Feminist Conference on the weekend of February 17th. In our evaluation the Conference was a success and organizers were especially gratified by the overwhelming turnout and by the feminist discussion which ensued. We originally had planned in terms of sixty delegates; over one hundred and thirty women had registered by the end of the weekend. The Conference, however, did draw criticism. This was mainly directed at the content and quality of a couple of the workshops. Apologies and explanations have been expressed and we can only trust that next year's sponsors will learn from the shared experiences of the First Prairie Women Socialist-Feminist Conference.

Warmth and honesty pervaded the Conference as Prairie women met and talked. By maintaining communication channels we can ensure that this feeling lasts and that some of the many suggestions and ideas expressed will meet with a constructive end.

In exhaustion and sisterhood,
Editorial Collective
on behalf of Saskatoon Women's
Liberation
March, 1978



INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY

A HISTORY

by Frances Mundy

Introduction

As we approach the 67th anniversary of the first official International Women's Day, it is important to remember not only the historic circumstances but also the spirit from which this day was born. Women throughout Eurasia and North America were involved in militant struggles, struggles for their own emancipation and for the general improvement of society. At the turn of the century there were two major issues of international concern; universal suffrage and the ending of militarism. The struggle for peace was of immediate importance to the working class. During the late 1890's there had been wars by Germany, France, Britain, Japan and Russia against China, the war of United States monopoly capital against Spain, and the war conducted against the Boers by the English.

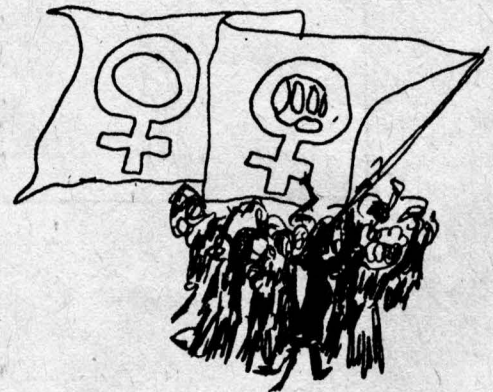
Universal suffrage threatened the capitalists, since it meant a vast increase in power for the working class. All women, along with a majority of unskilled workers throughout England, France and Germany, and Blacks and immigrants in the United States were not allowed to vote. The vote, it was believed, would mean the involvement of more women in politics and would therefore facilitate the ending of capitalist exploitation and militarism.

These were two of many issues around which socialist women were organizing at the turn of century. And it was this organizing combined with a sense of urgency to politicize women and win their emancipation which preceded the birth of International Women's Day.

The Beginning of IWD

Clara Zetkin, a leader in the German Socialist Movement, attended an International Worker's Congress in 1889 in Paris, where, as a delegate of the Berlin working women, she made her first speech on a woman's right to work and to have economic independence. A priority for Zetkin was the equal participation of women in the socialist party. Later, in 1900, she and Rosa Luxemburg attended another International Workers' conference, this time calling for the building of an inter-

national protest movement against militarism and war; a movement which must include women and youth. It was an international issue, which in effect encompassed a struggle against capitalism and an issue which necessitated world wide organization and solidarity. The socialist women at the turn of the century followed Luxemburg's and Zetkin's advice, using every opportunity to organize women. Women workers and housewives formed study groups, shop floor grievance committees, child welfare committees and distributed leaflets. Women workers formed strike committees, and wives and workers walked picket lines, with baby carriages and children when necessary. The struggle grew into a fight for equality, peace, democracy and social change.



In 1907, the First International Conference of Socialist Women was held in Stuttgart and led to the formation of the International Women's Secretariat under Clara Zetkin. Three years later in August 1910, a much expanded Second International Conference of Socialist Women was held in Copenhagen, with submissions on working women from fourteen countries. A strategy to achieve universal suffrage, mother and child welfare services, and the continued struggle for peace were debated. But most memorable for women throughout the world was the unanimous adoption of a resolution submitted by

Clara Zetkin, Kate Duncker (a German social Democrat) and others which ended: *"That in agreement with the class-conscious political and trade union organizations of the proletariat in their countries, the socialist women of all countries every year arrange a Women's Day serving the primary purpose of agitation for women's suffrage. The claim must be elucidated in its interconnections with the whole women's question in accordance with the socialist approach. Women's Day must have an international character and be painstakingly prepared."*

Thus was the birth of an official International Women's Day. But roots for an IWD also came from the United States as a direct result of militant action taken by the women there. Three years earlier a massive day of protest was organized by socialist women, mostly garment workers, who had been involved in a series of long, bitter and brutally fought strikes for decent working conditions and union recognition. On March 8, they marched under banners demanding equal pay for equal work, an end to sweatshop working conditions, child care centres and the right to vote. It was this day in America which served as an example and inspiration for the women at the Second International Conference of Socialist Women.

The first IWD was planned for March 11, 1911. It was a day picked because of its historical importance to the German proletariat; for on that day in 1848, the Prussian king backed down to the strength of the armed working class, and among the many promises he made but never kept was the introduction of the vote for women. Early in 1911, preparations for IWD began. Publications in Austria and Germany included articles such as: Women and Parliament, The Working Women and Municipal Affairs, and What Has the Housewife Got to do with Politics. The role of women in government and society was analysed thoroughly with specific emphasis on the need to extend the franchise to women. In total, about a million men and women, throughout Denmark, Austria, Germany and Switzerland participated. In 1912, these countries were joined by Holland and Sweden.

Russia first participated in IWD in 1913. Under Tsarism, illegal meetings, publicized by word of mouth and through the Bolshevik and Menshevik press, were well attended but soon broken up by police. 1914 demonstrations were never held due to the arrest of most of the organizers. It was not until 1917, that hunger, cold and the trials of war pressed women workers and peasants into action. On the streets of Petrograd, they demanded, "Bread for our children", and "The return of our husbands from the trenches". This 1917 IWD in Russia was most important because it was considered the catalyst in the movement towards the successful overthrow of Tsarist regime in Russia.

Conclusion

Since its beginnings in the early years of this century, International Women's Day has focused the attention of millions of women on social and political issues affecting their own emancipation and that of their brothers and sons. It has raised banners against imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, racism, fascism and sexism. IWD has been a day of solidarity for working class women in their sometimes dangerous struggle against exploitation.

The struggle is not yet over. As Clara Zetkin wrote in 1892:

"In view of the class situation, it is not enough for women to be emancipated from the male. A glance at the conditions of their male comrades tells the women proletarians that social liberation does not come merely through the possession of social and political rights, and that these rights are only a means to an end, not the end in itself, of their struggle for emancipation. The liberation of women workers does not consist merely in obtaining equality with the male world within the present society. Rather, the existing social order must be abolished in its entirety, for the economic and property relations of this society are the root of both class and sexual slavery."

We must once again take up the spirit of our sisters in 1911, and make March 8, 1978 a day of international solidarity and struggle for the emancipation of working class women and men.

Sexism on Campus

by Sheila Crampton and Wiesia Kolasinska

The Red Eye. These three words have become the source of much anger, and action, on the University of Sask. campus.

At a meeting of the Women's Directorate in early February, a member brought to our attention a copy of the January 30th issue of The Red Eye, published by the Engineering Students' Society. The twelve page paper was filled with such gems as: a graphic of "The Perfect Woman": breasts, buttocks, pubic hair and legs, minus head; a take-off of the Peanuts comic strip depicting Linus raping Lucy; examples of graffiti including "They should declare open season on faggots"...

It was clear to the Women's Directorate that these were blatant examples of sexism. Since one of the main functions of the Directorate is education and consciousness-raising around the issue of sexism, it was decided that immediate action was called for against the publishers and staff the The Red Eye.

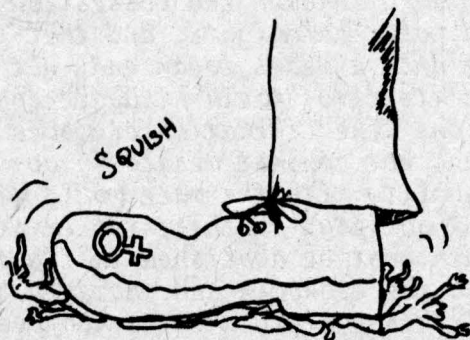
Plans were quickly made for a public meeting in order to gauge campus response. And response there was - over seventy people attended, most exhibit-

ing both anger and a desire for action, with a few defenders of The Red Eye also present. Armed with support, another public meeting was held, this time in the Directorate. The press and a number of supporters attended, as well as the editor and staff of The Red Eye, who, it is interesting to note, boycotted the first public meeting. An explanation of our position was read by the Director, and the seriousness of the offence pointed out to the staff. Glen Parker, editor, replied with apologies, justifications, and the overall tone of "boys will be boys". Directorate members were not satisfied with justifications, and decided to file a group complaint with the Sask. Human Rights Commission in order to achieve adequate retribution.

Because the Women's Directorate is directly responsible to the University Students' Council, a motion was presented at the February 23 Council meeting, asking for permission to file as a group. The motion was defeated, thus preventing the Directorate from taking any further action as a group.

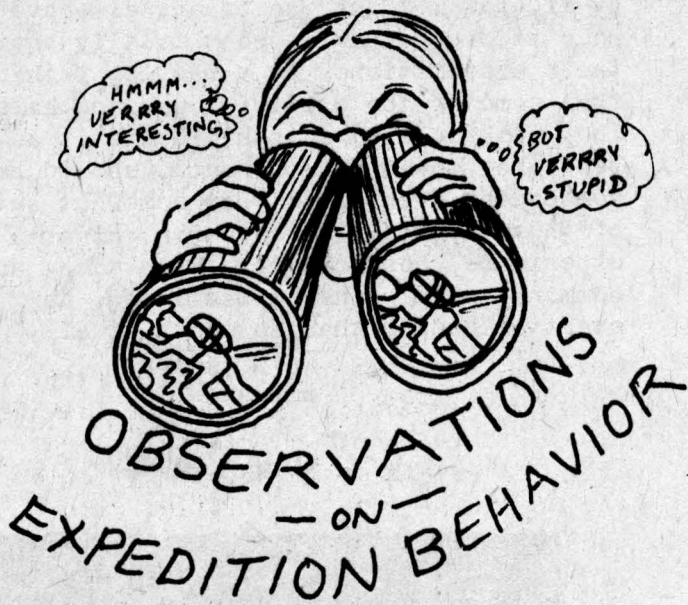
This decision demonstrated to us that the function of the Directorate was being undermined, and we were powerless to act in the interests of women on campus. It was also clear that the President's Committee on the Status of Women did not take the issue of sexism seriously, as they were not willing to discuss the matter when it was introduced at their meeting.

Since then, the Directorate has been working full-time, informing societies and groups on campus and in the Saskatoon community of our actions and urging their support. The battle is far from over. Approximately twenty people have filed complaints with the Sask.



Human Rights Commission as individuals, claiming that the sexism evident in The Red Eye infringes on their human rights. The final decision now rests with S.H.R.C.

We are determined to take a stand against such publications, in spite of the accusations of vindictiveness, hysteria and over-reaction being thrown our way. Women are no longer content to sit back and be the butt of sexist jokes and crude sexual stereotyping.



Colleen Gerwing spent 3½ months at an outdoor education class in Wyoming

What can a woman expect when she sets out with twenty other men and women on a series of wilderness expeditions that is to cover miles of rugged terrain over a period of three and a half months? Aside from the many technical intricacies involved, fundamentals still stand out in everyone's expectations: will I be accepted by this group, will I make close friends with anyone, what will be the nature of the group? Suddenly, everyday life is thought of in terms of "the group", who have now become extensions of your own body and personality. For a woman, this may be a special experience. Inevitably, you are faced with questions in your mind as to how you should conduct yourself in certain situations, and even how you should dress. What will be the reaction when I menstruate and have to make extra stops on the trail, will I be the only woman with hairy legs, can I express my physical strength without embarrassment? Alas, but men have their

problems of showing physical prowess, crying when it hurts and admitting their fears.

After much thoughtful experience, this expedition behavior is evident to me: that although we have come to the point where men and women are expected to carry the same loads, experience the same circumstances and share the chores, something is still amiss. Several times I saw both men and women straining under the load. Menstrual cramps twice caused me to be very weary on the trail, and twice it was women who offered to take some weight off my back. A man who was weakened by stomach problems finally consented to empty part of his pack. Five women shared his load. I had fallen ten feet off a rock face, and it was a woman who took off her gear and tended my injury. Too often, a fallen skier was passed by until a woman stopped to offer help. If on a day when a woman was leading or being "endman", I learned to expect more concern for the health, safety and morale of the group. Always, no questions asked, no big deal.

The difference appears to be one of awareness and sensitivity that I don't think was peculiar to this group. Less than twenty years ago, an expedition would have been much different indeed. Recently, progress in examining and altering sex role patterns has diminished. There are those who say that we are returning to scenes of the 50's era, and that today's youth are adopting a conservatism that echoes the past.

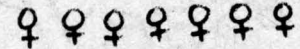
I've always maintained that wilderness living is the most intimate experience. Therefore, the expeditions mentioned in the light of observed group behavior have served to gauge some trends in how men and women are relating.

CONFERENCE

Prairie Woman Collective asked several women, chosen at random, from a number of geographical locations, to give us their immediate impressions of the conference. Most of these comments were written on the Sunday afternoon after the conference; perhaps the views would be changed or tempered with the perspective of time. We present these remarks, along with the more candid impressions of the camera, invite further reactions, and promise a more detailed analysis with the next newsletter.

by it, but I think the organizers have made it clear that it went totally against their expectations. As a result, I think that some of the criticism was too harsh. They took on a hard task and did it as best they could and, as such, should be commended, even if it went somewhat out of their control. It's been a valuable experience, contacts have been made, and communication links established. Any start is better than no start at all.

Barb Wolter
Edmonton

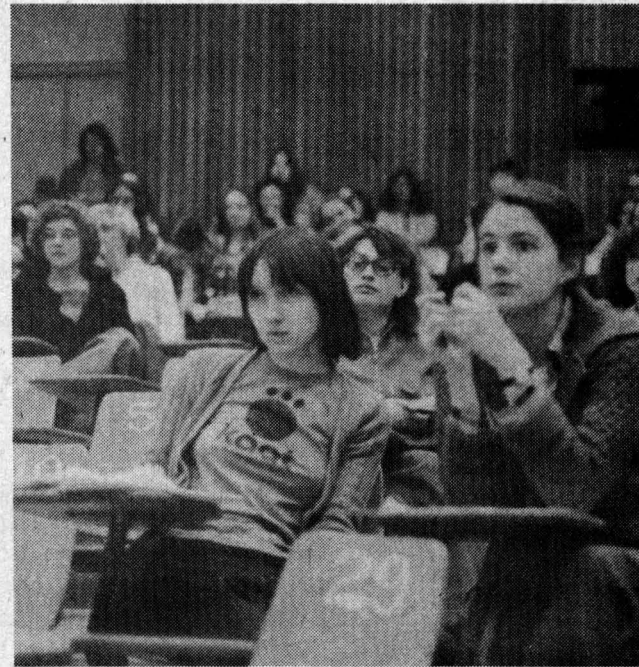


I didn't have concrete expectations from this conference when I came, but I did hope to gain some sort of political clarification and direction. I'm not sure if any of this has happened. But I have met some really dynamic women, and perhaps a basis has been laid.

I felt quite frustrated with much of the conference, as did others. It started with Saturday morning's plenary, where the speakers refused to define their terms. I can't see how we can have valid discussions when we haven't even made clear what we're talking about. As a result, I'm not sure that the conference defined socialist feminism for any of us.

The conference organizers received a lot of criticism, primarily in regard to RWL attendance. I think they naively believed that these women would come as themselves, and not as organizers for their group. I hope that they've learned that that is not, and probably never will be, the case. I think that a good deal of the tensions and frustrations in this conference stemmed from the RWL people, as they presented the only organized force.

The other major criticism directed at the planners was the disastrous Bourgeois v.s. Socialist Feminism workshop. I attended this workshop and got very frustrated



Although tired, I'm impressed with the amount I've had crammed into my head at this conference—a clarification of political differences which is healthy to express and some new ideas—but most of all I'm glad about a feeling that all these great women will continue to strug-

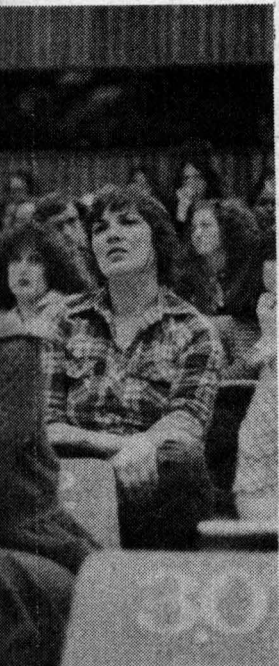
-9-

COMMENTS

gle for each other as well as with each other. It was important to bring out in the open fears and criticism which are operating below the surface anyway. Most of all I personally realized how much work in WACH has demanded my growth of self confidence.

Judy Eichhorst
Regina

♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀



On a personal level, as an independent and geographically isolated farm woman, the conference was, for me, immensely valuable. Although I have been out of direct touch with the women's movement for nearly three years, it has remained a part of me and I of it. My involvement in Ontario from 1969 to 1975 in a variety of ways and to varying degrees, is of course, an indelible part of what I am now.

In response to the PWFSC, I would say that the attendance (without widespread advance publicity) is adequate indication of the felt need for such a gathering—both the individual need for women-oriented women to create spaces for themselves apart from day to day organizing tasks and the need politically-conscious women have for intellectual stimulation and the opportunity to discuss and learn on a broader basis than may be possible in their

home situations.

In retrospect, I have only two major regrets about the PWFSC. The first is that the Wages for Housework issue was not clarified and debated to the extent that should have been possible. It is a growing focus for organizing, but very little critical and evaluative new literature has been generated by the campaign. Keeping women up to date on what's happening with Wages for Housework to permit criticism of the theory and practice must necessarily be through direct dialogue with it's activists.

My second regret was the lack of a coherent means of building ongoing links among groups and individuals who participated in the PWSFC. Individuals will simply have to find the time and energy to read and respond to any literature coming out of the conference. Specific suggestions and criticisms should be made to the organizing committee so that they can be compiled and held for input for the initiators of the next such gathering.

With regard to the content of the conference, I would have to prioritize the Autonomy debate. The options put forward for socialist feminist women will be an important focus for debate for a long time to come:



--a revolutionary wing of the broader movement be developed with options open in the area of formal alignments, informal links or complete autonomy with relations to established left groups;
---a revolutionary women's party, an avenue almost totally unexplored so far by most of us;
-----development of revolutionary politics within an autonomous women's movement is diversionary and divisive of the working class struggle as the only avenue for overthrow of the capitalist state. (This option received the least response, probably because the socialist women present saw development of their own anti-capitalist politics as limited by the all-pervasiveness of patriarchy and sexism outside the supportive framework of the movement.)

The formulation of these possibilities, however sketchy, was one of the crucial functions of the conference, and local debate in the interim before another such gathering will help to pull prairie women activists together in a more focused and detailed manner next time.

An important conference dynamic to consider was the role of the RWL women within the conference which was out of proportion to their numbers there or within the broader movement. It created some contention. I'd argue that the problem in this case was neither the Trotskyist women nor the conference organization. The situation rather reflects a vacuum within the women's movement as a whole. So far, we have been unable to build the links regionally, nationally and internationally to debate and learn about the complex strategic questions facing those who seek fundamental social and economic change. The RWL women have the advantage of an organization with a focused, discipline and continuous emphasis on that development

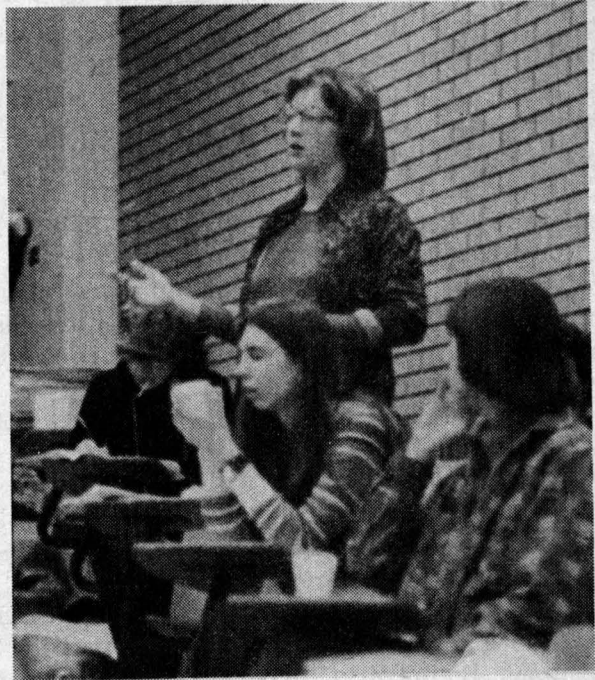
However, at some point, we will have to come to grips with the potentially thorny question of whether there are not viable alternatives to a Leninist/vanguard approach to revolution. It is difficult for me to imagine that there will not eventually be a contradiction with members of democratic centralist groups choosing also to work within an auto-

mous women's movement.

A final comment. I know I'm not alone in feeling that women tend to be brighter, more sensitive, stronger, more creative and more energetic together than we are in our day to day lives if we are normally outside a women's community. We are attempting to create some unique approaches to politics which must be nurtured. Simultaneously, we seem able to create alternatives to 'normal' social relations. It is a positive thing we do when we create these women-oriented spaces for ourselves.

So, my personal thanks to all PWSFC women whom I talked to or listened to or just got off on looking at together. We are all important to each other.

In Sisterhood and Struggle
Liz Willick
Oxbow, Sask.



♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀

As a member of the Conference Planning Committee, I do not wish to make anymore apologies for the serious oversights that we made in regard to the conference. Apart from being a huge learning experience for me politically, it has been a tremendous experience to be part of the organizing force behind the conference.

Critically, my greatest regret in terms of the content of the discussion was the lack of an organized workshop examining the role of socialist feminists in left politics and defining socialism-feminism. Perhaps future sponsors (and I dare you) will see the validity of such a discussion in light of opinions of presently self-defined socialist-feminists.

Maylynn Woo

♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀

Was very glad to see so many women, especially younger women, willing to gather to discuss women's issues or just issues, as it is only by meeting and debating that issues can be formed and acted on. Was a little disappointed with the Bourgeois Feminism vs. Socialist Feminism workshop as I didn't feel there was any comparison to be drawn with the African situation and bourgeois feminism and socialist feminism in Canada. I penned this part before the discussion on the above workshop so now know others were a bit frustrated with this workshop. However there has been good discussion at this Conference and as one of the Saskatoon Women's group said they will learn from the mistakes made at this Conference.

Cathie Cox
Grenfell, Sask.

Houston Women's Conference

Houston, Texas was the site of the American National Women's Conference held late last year. It brought together almost 1500 delegates who discussed and voted on resolutions. On the other side of the city, 15,000 people from the right-to-life movement, the anti ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) group, and homophobic Evangelical christianity under the name "Pro-Family" were gathered. With prayers and hymns, speeches and sermons, they presented the right-wing woman-hating positions. They were frightening in their display of strength, in their conservatism, and in the mindless ecstasy that the speakers inspired.

Despite the obstacles presented by the "Pro-Family" rally and the delegates representing anti groups, a number of important resolutions were passed. Resolutions dealing with Arts and Humanities, Business, Education, Elective and Appointive Office, Employment, International Affairs and Media called for measures allowing for a more equitable representation of women in these areas. The Conference also passed resolutions calling for funding and support to stop child abuse and to provide assistance for battered women.

Proposals dealing with the special needs of homemakers, older women, minority women, and poor and welfare women were passed by delegates. The most controversial resolutions dealt with reproductive freedom and sexual preference. Although there was a large organized opposition, especially to these resolutions, the conference as a whole passed even these resolutions.

We may scoff at the importance of the National Women's Conference. They passed no revolutionary resolutions calling for the overthrow of the state. There was not even an underlying principle that the position of women can be improved through drastic social change. Nor was there a hint of the word "socialism". Yes, the resolutions were entirely reformist. But they represented an important coming-together of women representing the state conferences held before the national confer

Below are excerpts from the January 1978 issue of "Off Our Backs," an American Women's paper.

The National Women's Conference held in Houston on Nov. 18-21 was the largest most diverse gathering of women ever assembled in the United States. It was the culmination of a year-long series of conferences in all the states and imperial territories. It cost \$5 million and the energies of 130,000 women. This sounds impressive until you consider that it was done to produce a set of resolutions to be presented to the President for his edification and enjoyment. A very expensive memo.

Although the "on paper" design of the conference was a piece of obvious handwaving--nobody really expects Jimmy Carter to go to bat for such things as independently practising midwives and the federal minimum wage for farmworkers--the actual even had results which may surprise many people, particularly in Congress.

For years the radical wing of the women's movement has been pointing out that the power of the white patriarchy is dependent on keeping oppressed people separate from each other, isolated and apart. During this conference women were not isolated. For four days 1442 delegates from all the states and territories came together to argue, wrangle, and support each others' interests. These delegates were from 16 to 84, from welfare households and from mansions, gay and straight, mothers and non-mothers, "walkies" (as Lily Tomlin would say) and handicapped, of every skin colour. During a brief time in Houston they discovered that they could (mostly) work together, that more connected them than separated them, that they had definite ideas about how to fix what is wrong with this country.

For the first time "women's issues" were covered with respect by the straight press, not with just a single paragraph, but for days on end.

For the first time many of these women had the experience of a massive conference run by and for women.

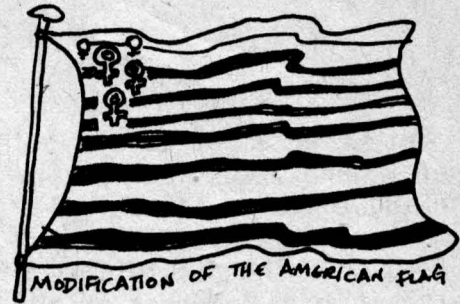
For the first time in the history of this country a conference was held which accurately reflected our racial diversity.

And for the first time, despite exhaustion and confusion, acrimony over lost hotel reservations, thousands of American women felt that sisterhood could indeed be powerful.

The most moving event was the passage of the resolution on minority women. Although the conservative, anti-abortion, anti-ERA, anti-lesbian delegates had been voting against all the resolutions, nearly all of them supported this one. This was a point of incredible unity and the strongest evidence we've seen that women in this country are sick of racism. Although the delegates were split on almost everything else, on this they were almost unanimous. After the vote there was silence, and then a sense of uplift, a sort of breathing out, followed by cheers, conga dancing in the aisles, and the long-unheard strains of "We shall overcome" echoing from delegation to delegation. It was a splendid moment and made us feel that, although we have a long way to go, we have made progress on something in the last ten years.

The resolutions on reproductive freedom, sexual preference, and welfare were the most controversial. Bear in mind that few of these resolutions were in any danger of failure, since they had already been through the state conferences. Although some delegates feared that the conservatives would either disrupt the meeting or tie up discussion with endless procedural maneuvers, this did not happen. After the resolutions passed, the "Pro-Family" forces mounted their only big demonstration of the conference, complete with huge banners with colour pictures of aborted fetuses and slogans such as "This aborted baby won't keep his mother awake at night."

The disorganization of the abortion



supporters was in sharp contrast to the smooth strategy of the Lesbian Caucus delegates. The tactics went off like clockwork, with speakers prepared and in place to peak as microphones were picked in order. The helium filled balloons stating "We Are Everywhere" held by supporters in the observers' gallery echoed the theme that ran through most of the speeches-- that sexual preference is a matter of civil liberties and that lesbians are not an isolated group but are everywhere, "...your sisters, daughters, mothers, aunts, and grandmothers." Betty Friedan, long known for her objection to including lesbianism in the goals of the women's movement, made a dramatic show of unity by speaking in favour of the resolution and saying, "I have had trouble with this issue... We have all made mistakes, but we have all learned. Because I know, as you know, that there is nothing in the ERA that will give any protection to homosexuals, we must pass this resolution." It did pass, by a larger majority than had been expected, and there were cheers and balloons everywhere.

Both of us found that it was a long four days, and we were glad to get out of the Convention Center. We were glad not to be harangued by street preachers at every corner. (They shouted about how if we would repent we could improve our unhappy lives, oblivious to the fact that we were very happy indeed.) We were glad to be free of the hassle of arranging to get "media floor passes" so that one of us could be on the convention floor at all times, and of listening to people like Phyllis Schlafly and Eldridge ("Born Again") Cleaver giving interviews in hallways.

But we were not at all tired of the energy generated by this many women working together, chaotically, and sometimes even hostilely, but always moving on. The resolutions will probably not spur Congress or the Pres. on to any great leaps of conscious-

ness, but all that energy is going to change some things, particularly when it is directed by women who are beginning to know what they want and who have adopted and carried home the slogan "Failure is Impossible."

by ah and jk

Saskatchewan Gay Coalition

By Kay Bierwiler

-The first general meeting of the Saskatchewan Gay Coalition, a provincial group for lesbians, gay men and gay organizations was held January 28 at the Gay Community Centre of Saskatoon. The Coalition will concern itself with all discrimination against gay people and building a community on a provincial basis. Efforts will be made to bring Gay people in rural areas and small urban centres into contact with each other and with the Centres in Saskatoon and Regina.

The meeting approved a statement of purpose and adopted a structure for the coalition. A steering committee was elected to direct the operations of the Coalition. Members of the steering committee are: Chester McCallum, North Battleford; Warren Caron, Prince Albert, Terry Nelson, Regina; Lynn Mcleod, Kay Bierwiler and Doug Wilson of Saskatoon. It was agreed that the steering committee would meet monthly with a general membership meeting every second month.

The following is the statement of purpose, strategies and goals adopted by the coalition:

The Saskatchewan Gay Coalition:
Statement of Purpose

As lesbians and gay men we believe we must work for liberation as a means for change in our lives

and in the communities in which we find ourselves. We choose to do this collectively, as a coalition, for we know that no single gay community can achieve liberation in isolation while others remain oppressed.

The present society perpetuates oppression because its survival depends on the exploitation of minorities which it defines and isolates. Our primary purpose is to oppose all forms of oppression directed at us by this system. Therefore our tasks are:

- a) to oppose all forms of discrimination against gay men and lesbians;
- b) to oppose all forms of discrimination against all women;
- c) to foster the growth of Gay Community on a province-wide basis;
- d) to articulate our lifestyle to the general public and to raise consciousness within our own community.

We seek simultaneously to foster our collective consciousness and thereby generate our self-awareness as individuals. Our hope is that by pooling the resources and energies of our communities we will challenge the sexist myths that now dominate public discourse and influence private association.

Strategies and Goals

We will:

attempt to use the media to convey our point of view;
provide support for rural gay people by fostering the formation of groups in smaller centres and facilitating a communication network through a provincial newsletter;
confront politicians with our demands and compel them to take a stand on the question of gay rights;
promote the inclusion of "sexual orientation" in labour contracts;
be prepared to protest any social or political event which militates against us;
forge alliances with other oppressed peoples.

The meeting adopted the principle that women should have at least 50% of the decision making power in the

Coalition.

The first issue of the monthly Coalition newsletter "Gay Saskatchewan" has been distributed throughout the province.

Membership is open to any gay individuals or organizations in Saskatchewan. Membership fees are \$1.00 per year. The steering committee will meet Feb. 25, 1:00 p.m. at the Gay Community Centre of Saskatoon (upstairs 310-20th St., E.). A general meeting of the coalition will be held March 11, 1 p.m. also at the Saskatoon Centre. Meetings are open to all members and other interested individuals. An open dance to benefit the Coalition will be held March 10, Friday, 9 p.m. - 2 a.m. at the Gay Community Centre of Saskatoon.



A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR DAYCARE WORKERS!!

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:

Sheila Crampton	Colleen MacMillan
Linda Charlton	Rosemarie Rupps
Maggie Dykes	Maylynn Woo
Wiesia Kolasinska	Susan Woolway
Gail Osachoff	
Original graphics and headlines by Maylynn Woo	

PRAIRIE WOMAN is published monthly. The deadline for all material is the 20th of each month. Submissions are welcome, but are subject to editing.

If undelivered, return to:
Prairie Woman
P.O. Box 4021
Saskatoon, Sask.

