

# Winnipeg Women's Liberation Newsletter

JULY 76



**THE STRUGGLE HAS JUST BEGUN**



The monthly Newsletter is published by Winnipeg Women's Liberation office at a WOMAN'S PLACE, 143 Walnut Street, phone 786-4581

If you have any letters, articles, announcements, poems, literary articles to submit, send them to the above address.

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Brought to you this month by:

Bridgette, Marlyn, Heather, Lynda and Susan



# Summer Is Finally Here!!!

IT'S SUMMER - time to relax, suntan and catch up on our reading - the time of the year when everything slows down - right? WRONG! Women's Liberation is forging ahead with more enthusiasm than ever. Many new Winnipeg women are getting involved in ongoing and ad-hoc activities around the house.

The Socialist Collective began its 2nd session with 20 members, many of whom are new. The program worked out for the summer session tackles many of the the issues basic to an understanding of women's oppression that are so often forgotten about in the heat of action. Taking a step back in an effort to strengthen our analysis is something many of us were feeling an urgency about, so it's little wonder that the groups's generated considerable excitement.

As well, the abortion coalition is moving full steam ahead. Formed about a month ago, to counteract a Right to Life Demonstration, the group, under the umbrella of C.A.R.A.L., have (by the time you read this) hosted a public meeting with Eleanor Pelrine as guest speaker. We hope it is/was a success.

And you - you 300 women (and men) out there - you have been busy too. We've received lots of encouragement (money too) in response to our financial appeal. But as always, we need more. So if you've forgotten to send in you subscription renewal we'd love to hear from you.

We've also been trying to come up with other ways of raising money. Our idea of having a men's auxiliary sell watermelon at the folk festival fell through but nevertheless we still want to get an auxiliary out there working. Our 2nd annual Women's Liberation Social is in the planning stages and promises to combine the best of both worlds - fun and funds. At our next co-ordinating meeting we'll be firming up dates, place, etc. Come and join us in the planning. We would love to have you come down and join in or just come down and visit. Remember it's your house too.....

*OUR BODIES OURSELVES, BOSTON*  
*Women's Health Book Collective,*  
*Musson, 1976. Second ed.*  
*revised and expanded \$5.75*

As I started to read the second edition of *Our Bodies Ourselves*, I was convinced that the honesty and supportiveness of the first book could never be repeated. It was a product of the glowing part of the second wave of feminism and I was almost sorry that they had tried to re-capture that glow.

Completely wrong --the new edition of the all time best book by women for women, about women is actually and incredibly better. The collective has managed to update and reflect new trends and ideas without losing their person to person warmth.

There is too much new to discuss but one of the best additions is the information about menopause and aging. The Nutrition chapter is now more complete and the total health care system analysis more succinct. The section on choosing not to parent is a much needed and useful one. I can only think of superlatives. They have done it again only better than ever.

KATHY GALLAGHER...  
(reprinted from  
Emergency Librarian)

Seriously, we have a large stock still left and are sure that they would be of use to many of you. There are still lots of days left in the year and it's packed with useful info.

REPORT FROM.....

WOMEN FOR NON-SEXIST EDUCATION

WOMEN FOR NON-SEXIST EDUCATION IS A group of dedicated women whose ambition is to improve the standard of education for our children and future children. We hope to make learning more interesting, realistic, non-racist, non-biased, and ofcourse, non-sexist.

We realize this type of challenge in changing the texts used in schools now will not happen overnight but will take years to be effective. Therefore, we are producing a book for primary grades on sexism in textbooks and how to deal with these problems. In this way, educators may look to our book for insight and answers on sexism. If you find that you are dissatisfied with what your children are being taught, please consider joining our concentrated effort.

EILEEN BARDAL.....

DO

YOU

SOMETIMES

WISH

YOU

WERE

BETTER ORGANIZED?

WHAT JUST MIGHT HELP YOU OUT IS  
YOUR VERY OWN COPY (AVAILABLE AT  
WOMEN'S PLACE) OF.....

EVERY WOMAN'S ALMANAC - APPOINTMENT  
CALENDAR AND HANDBOOK \$2.95



WAGE CONTROLS: WOMEN FACE ANOTHER OBSTACLE

BARBARA CAMPBELL

WE ARE NOW INTO THE 9TH MONTH OF TRUDEAU'S SO CALLED ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM. WHAT IS BECOMING CLEARER WITH EVERY NEW WAGE ROLL BACK IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS MORE BLATANTLY THAN EVER BEFORE, INTERVENING IN THE ECONOMY DIRECTLY ON BEHALF OF BIG BUSINESS. BARBARA CAMPBELL IS AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE MANITOBA COMMON FRONT AGAINST WAGE CONTROLS.

In Canada in 1974, 3,324,000 women were working. This number represented 34.4% of the total outside the home labour force. 1,119,000 of these working women (or 34.4%) held clerical jobs. Only 86,000 or 2.7% of the women were in managerial or administrative jobs. While the number of women in the labour force has increased over the years, the wage gap between men and women has progressively widened. Largely because of two findings:

1. Women have become increasingly concentrated in "women jobs". In 1974, 73.4% of all employed women worked in clerical, sales or service jobs. These are low paid often non union jobs. A cafeteria attendant in Winnipeg in 1973 earned an average weekly salary of \$77.00 or \$1.93 per hour.
2. Percentage wage increases only widen the gap between low paid and high paid workers. A case study of rates of pay in 1975 in a Manitoba Provincial government office will show this clearly.

The 1975 MGEA settlement sounded pretty good: a flat \$1000 & 6% for everyone. In reality though, it widened the gap between the Senior officer and the clerk typist from \$15,936 to \$16,892. Why? Because of the 6%. Six percent of the Senior Officer's salary worked out to \$1351. Six percent of the clerk's salary was \$395. And even though her increase was 25% of her previous salary, she ended up taking home a smaller dollar increase than her male

boss, and still earning less than 1/3 of what he did.

*Wage controls, by limiting wage increases to a low percentage like 8% or 10%, will only worsen this female employee's position. If she gets 10% in this year's negotiations, she will take home \$699 extra dollars in 1976, while her boss will take home \$2,388. An the gap will have widened further.*

The wage control guidelines do not include wage increases necessary to eliminate wage differences based on the sex of the employee. However, a woman's job must be almost the same before she has grounds to qualify for equal pay. And as we have seen, over 70% of women are concentrated in "women's jobs".

And while the guidelines warn that job evaluation must not be used to circumvent controls, job reclassification undertaken as part of a "new plan" will be acceptable. Job evaluation, which will force unions and employers to examine why some work is valued at a much lower price than others, will certainly raise the rates of pay in women's job ghettos like clerical positions.

To fight against wage controls, and against their double oppression, working women should:

1. Take an active part in the union and fight within the union for wage settlements based on constant dollars, not percentages.
2. Fight for job evaluation schemes in any contracts.
3. Organize into a union, if in non-union jobs.
4. Learn the facts about working women and teach others.



# Women in the Unions

● Wage controls and cutbacks--an offensive against the entire working class-- have hit women especially hard. Women's wages are now frozen--into the lowest paid job categories--with no possibility of equalization. Public sector lay-offs threaten women workers most, concentrated as they are in the public sector. Reduction in health, welfare, daycare and education expenditures will have the effect of forcing poor and working class women to work that much harder in the home to compensate for reduced social services. Women will have to spend more time taking care of children and the sick. They will also have more work because students will be thrown back into the family due to less money for their living expenditures. Abortion is becoming even more difficult to obtain.

## WOMEN IN THE UNIONS

Under heavy attack, women find themselves almost defenseless, with no organizations that really fight for them. Despite the major and permanent place that they occupy in the work force, they are barely represented by the unions. (Approximately 35% of male workers are unionized; for female workers the figure is closer to 17%).

At the leadership level, few women serve on regional bodies and union executives. There are few women shop stewards. At the base of the unions, most women are not active participants.

There is no doubt that for many women their life experience tends to reinforce their view of themselves as wives and mothers first, workers second. But this is not the whole story--indeed, the story is much more grim than this. A study conducted in BC a few years ago produced some very telling results. It concluded that among unorganized workers more women than men favoured unionization. But after unionization just the reverse was true.

Women's experience in the unions is largely a negative one. They are not encouraged to participate--daycare is almost never available. Union meetings are often intimidating places to speak, especially when it's expected that you don't know how to and have nothing new to say, and that your real job is at home.

Women workers look at the union movement's record and draw some realistic conclusions. In the last decade, the rhetoric has improved--there are more resolutions in favour of daycare, equal pay, and so on than ever before. But the record in practice is abysmal. The wage differential between men and women workers continues to expand. The ACTE campaign to organize office workers was a pathetic flop and nothing has happened since. The union movement remains indifferent to struggles for abortion--it had nothing to say about the plight of Dr. Henry Morgenthaler.

It's no wonder that women do not identify with the unions as their fighting organizations. As long as this situation exists, the union movement and the working class as a whole will be severely weakened.

- \*Equal pay and equal work--against unfair hiring practices;
- \*Maternity or paternity leave (so that parents can share the responsibility of child-rearing) with no loss of seniority;
- \*Full support, demonstrated in action, for free, universal daycare and free abortion on demand
- \*Against all cuts in social expenditure
- \*Against all wage controls.

As the labour movement moves into struggle against wage controls, it is finding that it needs to strengthen itself and to unify its ranks, by fighting for the interests of many whose needs it has largely ignored in the past. This is the only way that it can present itself to the people as a whole as the force providing a different solution than Trudeau's to the crisis of capitalism. But as long as sexist practices continue in the unions, it will be extremely difficult for the labour movement to unite all workers--women and men

## THE FIGHT IS ON

In the last year, hundreds of women union militants have concluded that they must organize themselves to fight for their interests in the unions. They understand that the struggle to make the unions responsive to women's needs is an integral part of strengthening the whole working class to fight wage controls and cutbacks. On March 26 in Toronto, 175 trade union women gathered to launch a new and potentially very important organization--Organized Working Women (Toronto Area). Their action stands as an example to all women unionists who want to respond to the labour movement's failure to deal with women's oppression inside and outside of the unions.

The OWW is new, and still working out its perspectives. If it succeeds in integrating more rank and file women, and adopting a clear, militant and comprehensive action perspective, the labour movement will gain an added strength and OWW is sure to find a receptive response in the huge pools of women workers who are being drawn into the labour movement through PSAC and CUPE.

Inside the unions, women can fight for measures which will ensure their integration and participation:

- \*Child care at union functions in the evening;
- \*Union meetings to be held during the day;
- \*Organization of women's caucuses to help women to formulate and fight for their needs;

And women will also have to struggle against indifference and sexism to ensure that the unions take up their interests against the employer and the state.

The focal points for struggle can centre around the following demands:

- \*Against sex-typing of jobs--the major factor responsible for the increasing wage gap between men and women;



.....  
WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR ?

THERE HAS BEEN MUCH INFORMAL DISCUSSION ABOUT THE FAILURES AND SOMEWHAT LESS ABOUT THE SUCCESSES OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR. WHILE THE GOVERNMENT HAS OFCOURSE SENT AROUND IT'S USUAL QUESTIONNAIRE, THERE HAS BEEN NO SYSTEMATIC ATTEMPT TO LOOK AT WHAT HAPPENED AND WHY , FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT.

THE WOMEN'S CENTRE IN KINGSTON HAS BEGUN THE TASK OF ATTEMPTING TO PUT TOGETHER SUCH AN ACCOUNT AND THEY'VE REQUESTED OUR INPUT. WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES AND IDEAS? WRITE YOUR THOUGHTS DOWN AND SEND THEM TO US OR LET US KNOW IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GET TOGETHER WITH OTHER WOMEN AND RESPOND TO THE WOMEN IN KINGSTON. IF THERE IS INTEREST WE WILL CALL A MEETING OVER THE SUMMER.

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.....  
WOMEN'S PLACE IS YOU.....

NEXT CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING TUESDAY JULY 6TH. WE WILL BE PLANNING OUR FALL SOCIAL AND SPENDING TIME CLEANING UP AND ORGANIZING THE LIBRARY.

COME AND GET INVOLVED AND HAVE SOME FUN TOO!!!!

.....

\*\*\*\*\*

ACTION COALITION ON FAMILY LAW

NEXT MEETING AT THE YWCA - TUESDAY JULY 20TH. 7PM

PROPOSALS WILL BE MADE FOR CONFERENCE IN THE FALL AS WELL AS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL STRATEGY.

\*\*\*\*\*

A N N O U N C E M E N T S

\*\*\*\*\*

HEATHER FLETCHER WILL BE SPEAKING ON ABORTION ON TUESDAY JUNE 29TH , 8:00 in room L107 Lockhart Hall University of Winnipeg. Sponsored by the RMG.

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Recently to wind up the first session,  
the Women's Socialist Collective got  
together for an evening of feminist  
poetry and music.

Another highlight was the potluck sup-  
per; followed by 'Baked Alaska'. YUM!!

One of the poems read was MONSTER by  
Robin Morgan. It is as powerful as  
ever and we want to share it with you.


# MONSTER

LISTEN. I'm really slowing dying  
inside myself tonight.  
And I'm not about to run down the list  
of rapes and burnings and beatings and smiles  
and sulks and rages and all the other crap  
you've laid on women throughout your history  
(we had no part in it—although god knows we tried)  
together with your thick, demanding bodies laid on ours,  
while your proud sweat, like liquid arrogance,  
suffocated our very pores—  
not tonight.

I'm tired of listing your triumph, our oppression,  
especially tonight, while two men whom I like—  
one of whom I live with, father of my child, and  
claim to be in life-giving, death-serious struggle with—  
while you two sit at the kitchen table dancing  
an ornate ritual of what you think passes for struggle  
which fools nobody. Your shared oppression, grief,  
and love as effeminists in a burning patriarchal world  
still cannot cut through power plays of maleness.

The baby is asleep a room away. White.Male.American.  
Potentially the most powerful, deadly creature  
of the species.  
His hair, oh pain, curls into fragrant tendrils damp  
with the sweat of his summery sleep. Not yet, and on my life  
if I can help it never will be "quite a man".  
But just two days ago on seeing me naked for what must be the  
five-thousandth time in his not-yet two years, he suddenly  
thought of the furry creature who yawns through  
his favorite television program:  
connected that image with my genitals; laughed,  
and said, "Monster".

I want a women's revolution like a lover.  
I lust for it, I want so much this freedom,  
this end to struggle and fear and lies  
we all exhale, that I could die just  
with the passionate uttering of that desire.



Just once in this my only lifetime to dance  
all alone and bare on a high cliff under the cypress trees  
with no fear of where I place my feet.  
To even glimpse what I might have been and never never  
will become, had I not had to "waste my life" fighting  
for what my lack of freedom keeps me from glimpsing.  
Those who abhor violence refuse to admit they are already  
experiencing it, committing it.  
Those who lie in the arms of the "individual solution",  
the "private odyssey," the "personal growth",  
are the most conformist of all,  
because to admit suffering is to begin  
the creation of freedom.  
Those who fear dying refuse to admit they are already dead.  
Well, I am dying, suffocating from this hopelessness tonight,  
from this dead weight of struggling with  
even those few men I love and care less about  
each day they kill me.

Do you understand? Dying. Going crazy.  
Really. No poetic metaphor.  
Hallucinating thin rainbow-colored nets  
like cobwebs all over my skin  
and dreaming more and more when I can sleep  
of being killed or killing.  
Sweet revolution, how I wish the female tears  
rolling silently down my face this second were each a bullet,  
each word I write, each character on my typewriter bullets  
to kill whatever it is in men that built this empire,  
colonized my very body,  
then named the colony Monster.

I am one of the "man-haters", some have said.  
I don't have time or patience here to say again why and how  
I hate not men but what it is men do in this culture, or  
how the system of sexism, power dominance, and competition  
is the enemy-not people, but how men, still, create that system  
and preserve it and reap concrete benefits from it.  
Words and rhetoric that merely  
gush from my arteries when grazed  
by the razoredge of humanistic love. Enough.  
I will say, however, that you, men, will have to be freed,  
as well, though we women may have to kick and kill you  
into freedom  
since most of you will embrace death quite gladly  
rather than give up your power to hold power.

Compassion for the suicidal impulse in our killers? Well,  
on a plane ride once, the man across the aisle,  
who was a World War Two paraplegic,  
dead totally from the waist down,  
wheeled in and out of the cabin, spent the whole trip avidly  
devouring first newspaper sports pages  
and then sports magazines,  
loudly pointing out to anyone who would listen  
(mostly the stewardesses) which athlete was a "real man".  
Two men in the seats directly behind me talked the whole time  
about which Caribbean islands were the best for whoring, and  
which color of ass was hotter and more pliant.

The stewardess smiled and served them coffee.  
I gripped the arms of my seat more than once  
to stop my getting up and screaming to the entire planeload  
of human beings what was torturing us all--stopped  
because I knew they'd take me for a crazy, an incipient  
hijacker perhaps, and wrestle me down until Bellevue Hospital  
could receive me at our landing in New York.  
(No hijacker, I understood then, ever really wants to take  
the plane. She/he wants to take the passengers' minds, to turn  
them inside out, to create the revolution  
35,000 feet above sea level  
and return to the takeoff country with a magical flying cadre  
and, oh yes, to win.)  
Stopping myself is becoming a tactical luxury,  
going fast.

My hives rise more frequently, stigmata of my passion.  
Someday You'll take away my baby, one way or the other.  
And the man I've loved, one way or the other.  
Why should that nauseate me with terror?  
You've already taken me away from myself  
with my only road back to go forward  
into more madness, monsters, cobwebs, nausea,  
in order to free you-men-from killing us, killing us.  
No colonized people so isolated one from the other  
for so long as women.  
None craped with compassion for the oppressor  
who brathes on the next pillow each night.  
No people so old who, having, we now discover, invented  
agriculture, weaving, pottery, language, cooking  
with fire, and healing medicine, must now invent a revolution  
so total as to destroy maleness, femaleness, death.

Oh mother, I am tired and sick.  
One sister, new to this pain called feminist consciousness  
for want of a scream to name it, asked me last week  
"But how do you stop from going crazy?"  
No way, myssister.  
No way.  
This is pore war, I thought once, on acid.

And you, men. Lovers, brothers, fathers, sons,  
I have loved you and love you still, if for no other reason  
than that you came wailing from the monster  
while the monster hunched in pain to give you the power  
to break her spell.  
Well, we must break it ourselves, at last.  
And I will speak less and less and less to you  
and more and more in crazy gibberish you cannot understand:  
witches' incantations, poetry, old women's mutterings,  
schizophrenic code, accents, keening, firebombs,  
poison, knives, bullets, and whatever else will invent  
this freedom.

May my hives bloom bravely until my flesh is aflame  
and burns through the cobwebs.  
May we go mad together, my sisters.  
May our labor agony in bringing forth this revolution  
be the death of all pain.

May we comprehend that we cannot be stopped.

May I learn how to survive until my part is finished.

May I realize that I  
am a  
monster. I am

a  
monster.  
I am a monster.

And I am proud.



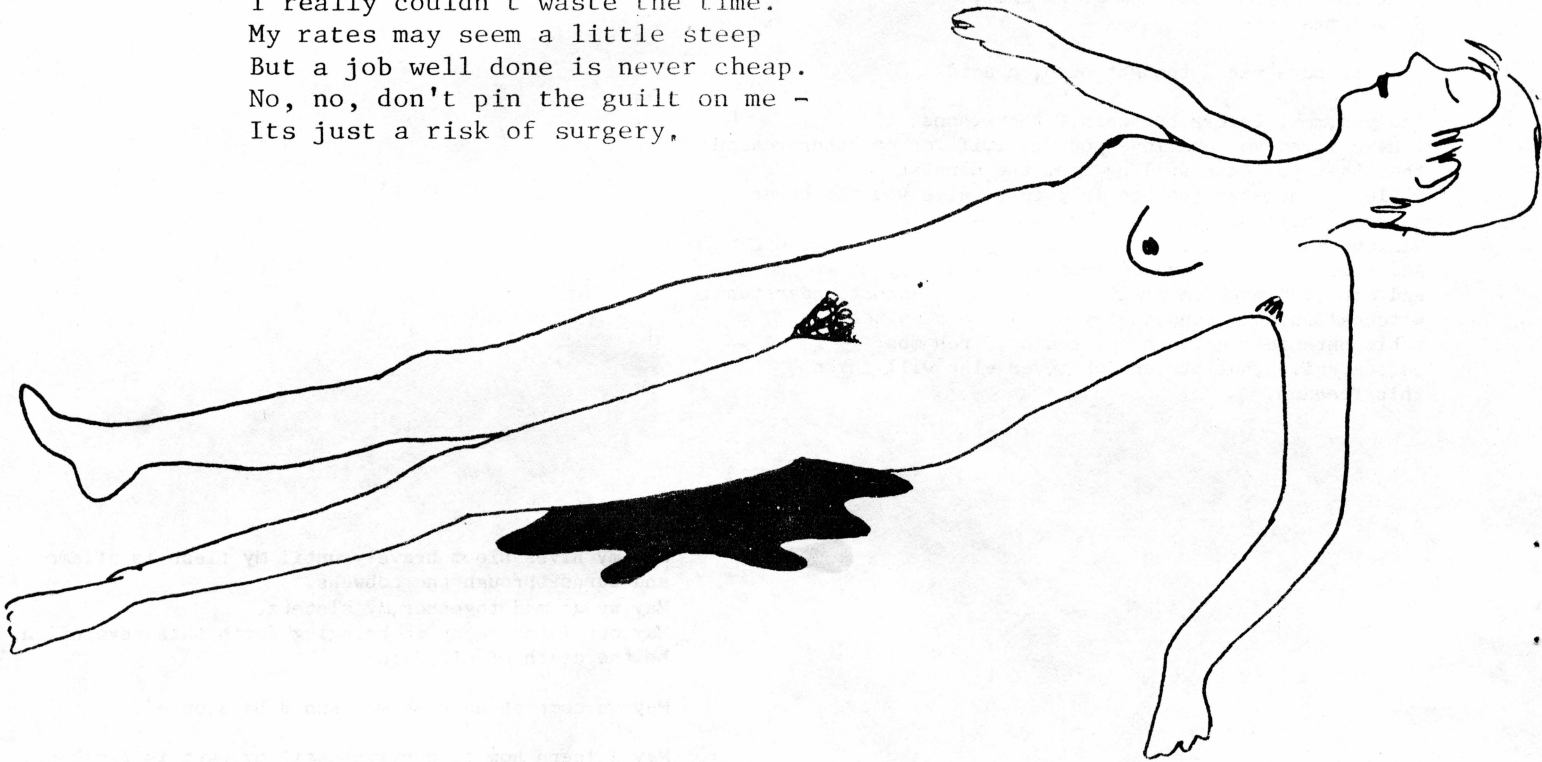
This poem was performed by the Women's Theatre Group at the public meeting on abortion with Eleanor Pelrine. In case you missed that meeting, or even if you didn't - here's some militant poetry for you. (To be spoken or sung to the tune or in the style of Who Killed Willie Moore? or Who Killed Norma Jean?)

## Who Killed This Woman?

by MILLIE LAMB

Who killed this woman?  
How come she had to die  
And what's the reason why?

Quack: Not I, said the man, whose knife  
Had shed her blood and stopped her life,  
I'm just trying to make a buck,  
Don't blame me for her bad luck.  
Medical school was such a grind  
I really couldn't waste the time.  
My rates may seem a little steep  
But a job well done is never cheap.  
No, no, don't pin the guilt on me -  
Its just a risk of surgery,



Medical Committee; Not we, said the medical committee,  
We are guided by reason, not pity  
By her pleas of poverty and anguish undaunted,  
The Act does not say a child must be wanted.

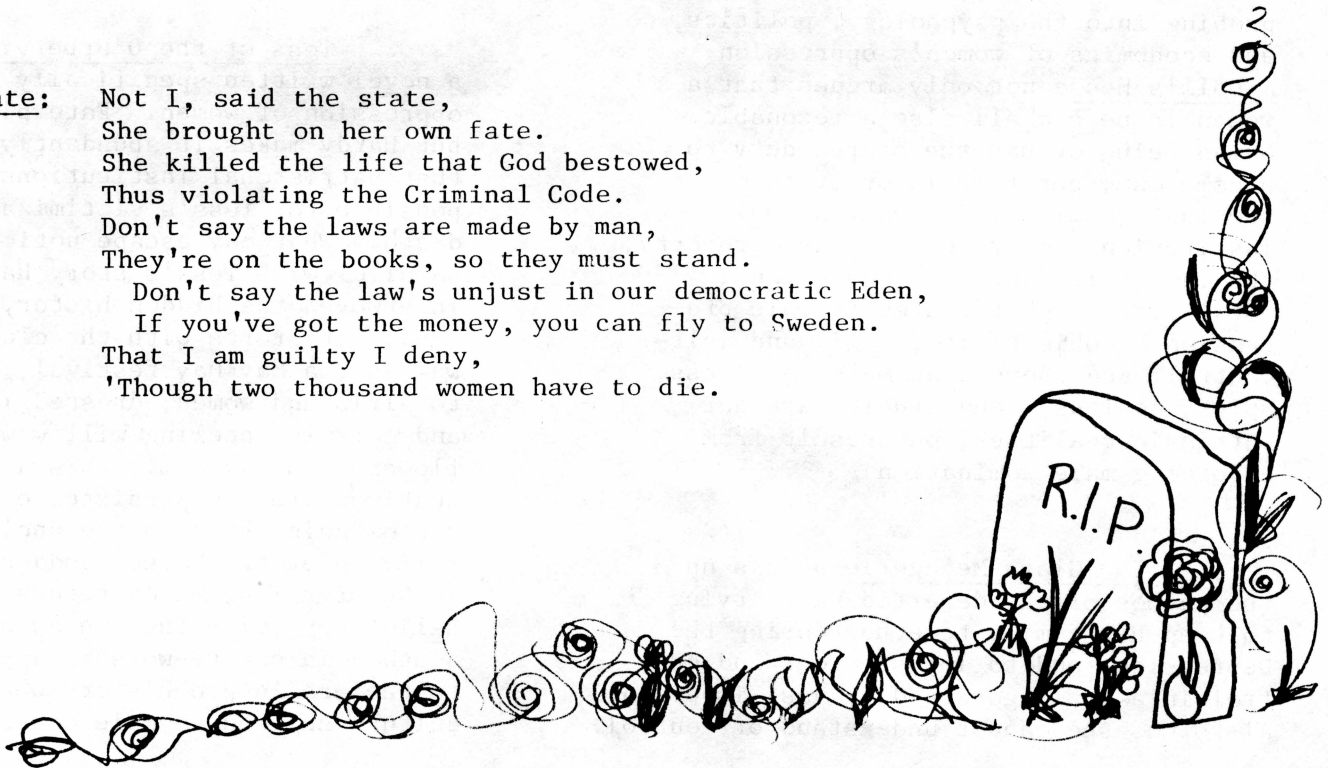
And who should know better if a child should be brought  
into this world?

We, the wise and mighty, or this hysterical girl?  
And if she got herself pregnant noy knowing the facts,  
She must learn to accept the consequences of her acts.  
We know illegal abortions can kill or maim,  
She made her choice - we're not to blame.

School Administration: Not we, said the school administration,  
Don't say we didn'y provide for sex education.  
Couldn't she have learned from the films of salmon mating?  
Or from live hamsters in their cages procreating?  
But sexuality's off course when it comes to human kind  
For sex is filth and corrupts the youthful mind.  
Why should a sixteen-year-old know about the pill?  
If her parents won't inform her, her classmates will.  
Don't blame the school because she died,  
Our hands are clean - what's more - they're tied.

Church (chant): Not I, said the church  
Don't say I left her in the lurch  
I officiated at her grave  
And did my best her soul to save.  
Since birth is God's most sacred blessin'  
Her death points up a moral lesson.  
No: it wasn't me who made her fall,  
She chose to heed the serpent's call.  
So don't blame me - we're sinners all! Amen.

State: Not I, said the state,  
She brought on her own fate.  
She killed the life that God bestowed,  
Thus violating the Criminal Code.  
Don't say the laws are made by man,  
They're on the books, so they must stand.  
Don't say the law's unjust in our democratic Eden,  
If you've got the money, you can fly to Sweden.  
That I am guilty I deny,  
'Though two thousand women have to die.





# Women In Literature

---

AT LONG LAST!!! HERE IS THE LONG-AWAITED INSTALLMENT NUMBER FIVE.

So far I've dealt with specific writings, we're apt to overlook in discussing the role of women with our classes. Let's turn briefly to plays and novels which address themselves specifically to feminine experience or protest. Because most students have little or no experience with books that question the position of women, and have been accustomed both in life and in literature to see women playing a peripheral, dependent, or inferior role, their interest in the problems projected in these books needs stimulation through news stories, films, debates, guest speakers. They should be encouraged to read, to explore their own attitudes, and to understand the interplay of social forces, events, and character, revealed in the novel or play. It is not enough to dismiss the problems of women in Tess of the D'Urbervilles with a discussion of the double standard, and in A Doll's House by debating the wisdom of Nora's leaving her husband and children. These books call for a deeper probing into the psychology, politics, and economics of women's oppression. A Doll's House not only argues that a woman is before all else a reasonable human being or has the sacred duty to become one, but that in order to do so she must examine every patriarchal institution - marriage, private property, the law, religion, and conventional morality. It shatters every male pretension to objectivity, logic and self-control; and shows that male pettiness, spite, jealousy, and cruelty are not intrinsic qualities, but result from enforcing male domination.

The Glass Menagerie points up the pathos of the deserted wife trying to keep her family together during the Depression, and to impose order and control in a world governed by vast impersonal forces she cannot understand or control.

She is completely unaware of the economic forces motivated by greed and selfishness that have condemned millions to starvation, and are moving the world into Fascism and war. Obsessed with nostalgic memories of her carefree youth, she is the victim of her sheltered girlhood in the South, and its code of chivalry, which pays lip service to white womanhood, but compels spinsters and dependent women to eat "the crust of humility."<sup>1</sup> Amanda is confined to a narrow round of house, church, and DAR, and cannot break through the illusions of the American Dream of success for young men through self-improvement and drive, and happiness for young women through the feminine charm and wiles that trap men into marriage. Unable to learn from her experiences in trying to help her children, she seems condemned to a compulsive pattern of nagging and wheedling that leads to estrangement and failure.

Tess of the D'Urbervilles is a novel written specifically about the oppression of women. Fate plays a part, but Hardy makes it abundantly clear that patriarchal institutions are responsible for Tess's victimization and death. What may escape notice is that parallel with Tess's story Hardy has interwoven the hidden history of woman-kind. It starts with the club-walking, a May Day festival, limited to girls and women, dressed in white and carrying peeling willow wands and flowers. Hardy calls this a Cerealia, testimony to the persistence of a custom going back to the ancient pagan religion of the Mother goddess. Later in Chapter XIV, Hardy refers to heliolatry, with the sun as a male god, a stage in nature-worship appropriate to the era in pre-history when agriculture shifted to male control. This

allusion is consistent with the scene Hardy is describing in which Tess, after the birth of her baby, hires out to work as a harvest-hand in the landlord's fields. The lot of women under feudalism is disclosed in Hardy's ironic comment on Alec's rape of Tess:

" Doubtless some o Tess D'Urberville's mailed ancestors ... had dealt the same measure even more ruthlessly towards peasant girls of their time." <sup>2</sup>

The decline of the feudal families and the rise of the bourgeoisie are symbolized by the appropriation of the D'Urberville name by a northern money-lender, and the rape of Tess by his son. Capitalist relations in the countryside impose crushing burdens on the women, turning them into beasts of burden toiling for mere subsistence in the fields of absentee owners. As independent tradesmen and small proprietors like John Durbeyfield are driven to the wall and evicted from their homes, the women are left with hopeless task of finding food and shelter for their children. Tess, with all her potential for intellectual and spiritual growth, is denied education, humiliated and exploited, like millions of working women in her generation and later. Bourgeois marriage for women demands the double standard, or the purchase of sex in return for security. Appropriately Hardy often uses phallic symbolism, along with that of the hunter and the hunted. At Flintcomb Ash Tess

and Marion hack away at the half-eaten turnips among "myriads of loose white flints in bulbous, cusped, and phallic shapes." At Stonehenge, Tess lies down on the stone altar, like a living sacrifice, among the monoliths, where Angel tells her the ancient ones once sacrificed to the sun. In the final scene, before the black flag is raised to signal Tess's execution, Hardy draws our attention to the towers of Cathedral, College, and prison, the institutions through which patriarchal society exercises its control.

In Tess's last journey Hardy retraces that hidden history to its beginnings. Tess leaves the fashionable resort where she has been living with Alec, and where women like Tess are bought like any other commodity. She and Angel proceed through the New Forest, a reminder of feudal cruelty and injustice, and finally arrive at Stonehenge. But Tess's roots go further back. Previously we had read of her father's ancestors, the feudal D'Urbervilles, but Tess recalls that one of her mother's people was a shepherd here, and says to Angel, "And you used to say at Talbothays that I was a heathen. So now I am at home."<sup>4</sup> She has come home to her peasant ancestors, the pagan women who worshipped the Mother goddess, and tended the fields before they were devastated to create the New Forest for the Lords of creation. Once more it is May, the lovers are united, and we are back in time to the Cerealia, before patriarchal society has subjugated women, and prostituted love.

MILLIE LAMB

WATCH NEXT MONTH FOR INSTALLMENT  
6

- FOOTNOTES
1. Williams, Tennessee, The Glass Menagerie (New Directions Publishing Corp., Toronto) scene ii, page 19.
  2. Hardy, Thomas Tess of the D'Urbervilles (MacMillan and Co. Ltd., London, 1963) p. 91.
  3. Ibid., p.363.
  4. Ibid., p. 502.



Wages Due Lesbians (Toronto) Invites All Women To A Conference On  
Lesbians And The Wages For Housework Campaign

# TOWARD A STRATEGY FOR THE LESBIAN MOVEMENT

TORONTO: JULY 23-25

INTERNATIONAL SPEAKERS: WILMETTE BROWN - FROM SAFIRE: BLACK WOMEN'S GROUP (NEW YORK)  
RUTH HALL - FROM WAGES DUE LESBIANS (LONDON, ENGLAND)

IT WILL BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONFRONT THE MOST CRITICAL QUESTIONS NOW FACING US AND OUR MOVEMENT:

## WHY WE WANT AUTONOMY

An international panel of lesbian women from Canada, England and the United States, on why we need autonomy from men - including gay men, and from straight women, so we don't subordinate our own interests to those who have more power than us. Our own organizations are necessary in order to guarantee that we won't have to hide our lesbianism, and that more and more women will have the power to choose whether to be lesbian or not. Lesbian autonomy is in the interest of everyone fighting for sexual choices and full human liberation.

## SEXUALITY

Our fight as lesbian women for control over our sexuality, within the context of all women's fight for sexual choices.

What does it do to our sex lives to always be thinking about having to go to work in the kitchen, the typing pool, or on the assembly line the next morning?

Is it our fault if our sex lives aren't what we think they should be?

How the state organizes our sexuality through abortion laws, population control, and wagelessness, and how our fight against it explodes the separation between "personal" and "political".

## OUR LIVES AS LESBIANS

Informal rap sessions on areas like:

Closets: Problems of coming out and staying out -- What's at stake?

Lesbians in smaller towns

Younger lesbians, older lesbians

Relationships

Conflict with straight women

## CHILD CUSTODY / THE CUTBACKS

To be "a fit mother" a woman is supposed to sleep with and depend financially on a man. One of the most important fights we are making is to be able to be lesbian without losing either our children or the possibility of having children.

The government cutbacks, by imposing more poverty on women, threaten to impose the status of unfit mother on any woman who is struggling for her independence, especially lesbian women, prostitutes, women on welfare, native women, and women prisoners.

How can we organize against our poverty for the power:

To have and keep the children we might want

To live where and with whom we wish

To no longer have to hide our lesbianism



We urge individuals and groups to write statements for the conference on any or all of the above areas, for the discussion which we hope will be as open and as full as possible. These papers, and any other materials, should be sent to:

Wages Due Lesbians  
P.O. Box 38, Station E  
Toronto, Ontario (416-466-7457 / 465-6822)

Conference details, registration forms, and a complete agenda will follow in a few weeks.



# July

					Thurs	1	Fri	2	Sat	3			
					RMG, AIM Chilean Info C. Social- Plug In Gallery Pellitier/ support + Fund Raising								
Sun	4	Mon	5	Tues	6	Wed	7	Thurs	8	Fri	9	Sat	10
		W.W.S.C. 7:30		Co-ordinating Cmt. 8:00									
Sun	11	Mon	12	Tues	13	Wed	14	Thurs	15	Fri	16	Sat	17
		W.W.S.C. 7:30											
Sun	18	Mon	19	Tues	20	Wed	21	Thurs	22	Fri	23	Sat.	24
		W.W.S.C. 7:30		Family Law Coalition - 7 P.M. YWCA		Co-ordinating Cmt. (newsletter) 7:30							
Sun	25	Mon	26	Tues	27	Wed	28	Thurs	29	Fri	30	Sat	31
		W.W.S.C. 7:30											



