

# PRIORITIES

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FEMINIST  
SOCIALIST  
PERSPECTIVE

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We've decided  
to call it the neutron  
chip. It eliminates  
Jobs but leaves the  
factory intact.



DRAWING: PAT GANGNON

## Investigating the effects of technological change on women



PRIORITIES is published six times a year by the Standing Committee on Women's Rights of the British Columbia New Democratic Party.

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*"The issues and demands raised by the Women's Liberation Movement are integral to the development of a democratic socialist society. The NDP actively encourages and provides support for women organizing around the demands of the Women's Liberation Movement and commits an NDP government to creating the legislation necessary to realize these demands."*

— NDP Policy on Women's Rights

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*Thanks to all the workers who have made the production and distribution of this magazine possible.*



## EDITORIAL

# The future women must face

In the lives of individuals and of societies there occur certain 'moments' which call for decisive action—which signify, in effect, a 'parting-of-the-ways.' At such moments there is, as George Lukacs noted, a "crucial sharpening of personal circumstances" and an individual or a social system may be called to account for the accumulated consequences of past actions.

It seems fair to say that such a 'moment' has arrived in B.C., and that two quite separate paths are opening before us not only here, but in all of North America and even throughout the globe.

The elements at work in this process are enormously complex. It would be absurd to suggest that they can be laid out and assembled like the pieces of a pyjama pattern. Nevertheless, some parts can be traced in a way that makes it easier to see the whole.

First, corporate capitalism has in the past several decades been able to meet the specific needs of conflicting interest groups by achieving high levels of employment and growth without hindering the primary objective—the maximization of profit.

Secondly, the general needs of people in the developed world have been satisfied to the extent required to maintain a level, if not of mass loyalty, at least of apathetic conformity to the existing system.

Finally, external threats to the system, whether political, economic or military, have been manipulated in the interest of the existing power structure. Hence, the arms race is justified by the spectre of international communism, and so forth.

All three legs of this corporate milking stool have now become extremely shaky, to the point where the whole system threatens to collapse. World-wide unemployment ricochets against declining production. Vital needs such as housing, health, education, and transportation go unsatisfied. The claims of oppressed groups such as women, gays, and ethnic minorities are denied, and established standards of civil order and social justice begin to crumble.

At the same time, thousands are becoming aware that the danger of nuclear holocaust transcends all national or ideological conflicts and that unless the arms race is halted, it will terminate in the destruction of civilization—perhaps even of the planet.

The arms race displays with utter clarity the role played by technological change in determining the course of human affairs. This issue of *Priorities* addresses some of the social and economic consequences of technological change. Every serious discussion of the micro-chip revolution stresses the fact that two roads are opening before us. One holds out a Utopian vision of a "world free from drudgery and danger" in which the satisfaction of real needs and the freeing of creative powers will become the goals of a harmonious global community.

The other leads to a society in which the majority compete for places in a segmented and segregated workforce administered by a self-seeking technological elite. In order to install this new regime, the claims of liberal democracy to social justice and equality will first have to be abandoned. A society of atomized individuals, frightened and divided, deprived of the protections afforded by social institutions, and struggling for personal survival, is required to serve the interests of this Brave New World.

In the language of the new right, this scenario is often represented as a return to traditional morality. It throws the burden of caring for the

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## CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT



by  
Joan Smallwood

# Getting women into politics

What do community organizing, technological change, women's rights, agricultural land use, municipal politics, and the provincial budget have to do with one another? As we in the Women's Rights Committee map out a strategy for confronting the technological revolution our society is now undergoing, I would like to take this opportunity to tie all those topics together and suggest ways in which we can enlist women who usually remain outside the political process in our fight to make technology serve the interests of people, not corporations.

I would like to tell you the story of a group of suburban women—mostly apolitical homemakers with young children—who began to ask fundamental questions about the society in which they live.

In the past few years, most communities in B.C. have been given the task of developing a Community Plan. This plan was to guide administrators in industrial/commercial and residential land use. In my own community of Surrey this process got off to a rocky start. Without any consultation with the community, our municipal council decided that each of our five identifiable town sites should have its own industrial park. They assured us that these parks would be environmentally safe and clean, rather like university campuses. Their main selling point to the community was the opportunity to be close to one's place of work. No more commuting!

### Questions arise

Doubts and questions began to arise in our minds. What industries? What environmental controls? How many jobs? What types of jobs? What will these jobs pay? Would this grandiose scheme provide real opportunities for

Continued on page 19



*"We meet in stirring  
and critical times  
in which great masses of people  
are bewildered and frustrated."*

*T.C. Douglas  
"That Freedom May Flourish"  
1958*

The speed with which our world and work is changing is indeed bewildering and frustrating to many. It has gradually become clear that the technological revolution will have an impact on workers as profound as that of the industrial revolution.

This concern prompted a resolution at the 1981 B.C. NDP convention. As a result, the Technological Change Committee was formed, under the auspices of the Women's Rights Committee.

Our first task on convening in May, 1982 was to set ourselves some clear goals. Generally, we concluded that we wanted to explore and expose some of the social, political, educational and economic consequences of the rapid changes in technology occurring now. Specifically, and in keeping with our mandate, our concern was the impact of these changes on the present and future position of women in the work force. Ultimately, we trust that our work will help the New Democratic Party plan for people in the future.

#### Modelled on Older Women Task Force

The Task Force on Older Women served as our initial model. With the intent of compiling some research data, we drew up and circulated a questionnaire, first through the *Democrat* and then to a larger group, including the conventions of the B.C. Federation of Labour and of the NDP.

The returns told us several basic things:

1. Technological change and the magnitude of its implications had not really been understood or considered by most to be a critical issue.
2. The public discussion still centered around whether it was "good" or "bad."
3. People tended to be "for it" or "against it."
4. Questions about the direction, planning and control of new technologies were not being asked or answered.

Our work, to this point, had been geared toward information gathering. From the questionnaire we learned that we had to receive and give out information as well as broaden our inquiry to encompass all of the province.

We decided that the most effective

## Tech change hearings set for September

by Beatrice Anderson



way to proceed would be to hold forums, visiting communities and hearing from interested groups and helping to establish a flow of information on the subject.

#### February workshop

A workshop held in February resulted in the expansion of the size of the committee and the creation of a Community Forum Planning Group.

A second workshop held in March saw the preparation of a list of fourteen communities covering all five regions of B.C. We also prepared a timetable and a budget.

The intervention of the election has caused some changes in our work. At a workshop held on July 25, 1983, the chairperson, Beatrice Anderson stepped down and was replaced by Fran Moffatt and Judy Schipper.

Joan Smallwood reported on the conference on technological change held by the Telecommunications Workers Union held in June. She advised that tech change, along with Cultural Affairs, would be a major area of policy discussion at the NDP convention in May, 1984. She also reported on the federal convention in Regina where a resolution on tech change (G-3) proposed by the federal riding of Broadview-Greenwood was referred to Federal Council with instructions to develop an industrial strategy for Canada with the help of labour and women's groups.

The B.C. Women's contingent, with help from labour, effected this referral because it was felt that while the resolution had some worthwhile elements,

the section on an industrial strategy for microtechnology needed more work.

#### On the road in September

A budget is to be presented to the September provincial council meeting. Since the Task Force on Cultural Affairs is also planning to hold community forums during the next six months, the Tech Change Committee will meet with the Cultural Affairs Policy Committee to talk over their program.

Because of time restrictions, it has been decided to lower the number of communities to be visited to eight. The committee will start to book MP's and MLA's for help with the forums. A final planning workshop, to be scheduled, will precede the first public forum to be held in mid-September.

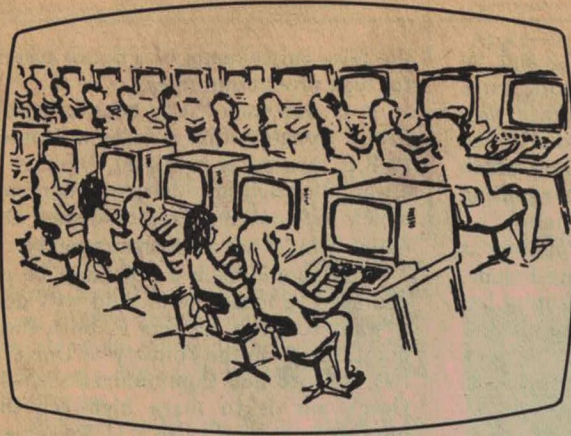
The Technological Change Committee is open to any woman who is a member of the NDP. The Community Forum Planning Group is open to all. We need more help to assure that planning for people takes precedence over planning for efficiency, productivity and competitiveness.

For information about any of the above please contact Beatrice Anderson (929-7180) or the Women's Organizer, Margaret Birrell (879-4601). ♀

*"We can find ways to use  
new technology to liberate,  
to create a more humane  
social order."*

*Ed Broadbent  
1983 NDP Federal Convention*





# Telecommunications Workers hold conference on technological change

by Hilda L. Thomas

In the words of Lenny Siegal, Director of the Pacific Studies Centre, "Semi-conductors have replaced prunes as the major product of Mountain View, California. And if Pat McGeer has his way, silicon—or gallium arsenide—chips will replace wood chips as a major product of British Columbia. An article in *B.C. Business Magazine* quotes McGeer, Minister of Universities, Science and Communications, as saying that "his government intends to do as much as it can to create an intellectual 'Philippines' in B.C.

In the next 20 or 25 years, declares McGeer, "Instead of forestry being (the) number-one (industry of B.C.), high technology (will be). I think we will be beginning to see the major employment impact in three to five years from now."

What that impact will mean in economic, social, and political terms was the subject of a conference on technological change organized by the Telecommunications Workers Union in Vancouver, June 13-15.

## Weapon for the multi-nationals

In three days of speakers, films, workshops and discussion, the conference provided a comprehensive view of the effects of the micro-chip revolution on industry and on the service and information sectors since the silicon chip was invented in the 1950's. The speakers at the conference agreed that automation can have a liberating effect on human life, freeing people from the oppression of back-breaking labour or boring, mechanical tasks. But they also issued a clear warning that left in the hands of multi-national corporations, the chip can mean massive unemployment on a global scale, environmental degradation, and continued segregation and segmentation of the labour market.

Once their skills have been appropriated by automation, workers will be increasingly monitored and controlled in dehumanized jobs. Women will be used, as they were in the initial stages of

*Now the genius  
has all been put in the machines  
and all that's required  
of the worker  
is a kind of dumb obedience.  
There's been a loss of scale,  
of human scale  
but if you try to talk about it  
they just look at you  
like you were crazy.*

— Howard White

the industrial revolution, as a cheap, unorganized labour pool without benefits, health and safety protection, or job security.

A gloomy scenario? Yes, but one which is already being rehearsed in the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Malaysia, in industry, banks and offices in Japan, Europe and North America and, of course, in the centre and source of the chip industry itself, Silicon Valley, California.

## Telidon developer's view

In the opening address at the TWU conference, Dr. John Madden, developer of Telidon, offered the concept of "synergy" as a solution to the problems posed by the chip. In Madden's view, happy societies are those in which conflict is reduced, selfish and unselfish behaviours modified and reconciled by means of "non-adversarial" structures. In a paper reproduced in the conference kit, Madden looks forward to "fundamental shifts in perception" which will accompany the increasing use of electronic devices. The office of the future will be decentralized, with an "increasing fraction of [the] work. . . conducted from the home"—"an ideal occupation for women with family obligations or,

for that matter, for men in similar circumstances."

Unhappily, Madden was unable to provide convincing answers to questions about deskilling, unemployment, and the health hazards associated with the introduction of computers, nor did he explain how to ensure a fair division of the benefits in an economic system based on profitability and private ownership. His suggestion that North America should imitate the Japanese model to achieve "social synergy" was not encouraging.

## Benston sketches negative effects

Dr. Margaret Benston, the second speaker, placed the subject in a somewhat different light. The information revolution, she said, has great potential for the creation of "a world free from drudgery and danger."

But she also warned against loss of privacy, increased control on the job, and degradation of skills. In the next decade, faced with the possibility of greater and greater productivity and less and less work, we will have to re-examine all our old assumptions about the nature of work, the uses to which new technology is put, and the way in which the wealth is distributed. Benston, a professor of Computer Studies and Women's Studies, was more than a little conscious of the powerful impact of electronic equipment in the sales and service sectors where most women can be found. She predicted a loss of 40% in office jobs coupled with changes which would reduce much of the work to mere drudgery.

Her claim is borne out by the women interviewed in the film *Good Monday Morning* screened at the conference. It was further confirmed by Professor Theodore Sterling, SFU Computer Studies, who warned that corporate planning for technological change is often visible only through the end result. Citing the



PATCO strike which culminated in the complete destruction of the U.S. air traffic controllers' union, Sterling claimed that management can take advantage of strikes to introduce new systems which make thousands of jobs instantly "redundant." Communications workers are especially susceptible to what a TWU study calls "aggravated attrition"—the disappearance of traditional jobs and job skills leads workers to quit rather than continue in a job that has become boring and trivial; or, as

wages, frequent mass layoffs, and inadequate child care. Piece-work rates and production quotas encourage workers to neglect safety protections on the job such as gloves and masks, which slow down their work. Improper venting leads to workplace contamination by toxic fumes, and careless containment of wastes such as tri-chlorethylene, gallium arsenide, and metallic sludge has resulted in ground water contamination.

In 1982, Siegal claims, solvents were discovered to be leaching into the local

the false enticements of a bonus system for high production rates.

It is one such "jelly bean assembly firm," Dynatek, that is being welcomed to B.C. According to Siegal, Dynatek is a wholly-owned subsidiary of a combine which includes the Filipino-owned Dynetics firm. It has no design capacity.

Why should such a company be encouraged to locate here? And why does it want to? The answers to both these questions lie in the Ministry of Universities, Science and Communications. McGeer's aim is to make high-tech the number one industry in B.C. To achieve this dubious end, B.C. must compete with dozens of U.S. cities and states which have jumped on what *Business Week* calls "a great bandwagon business." Says McGeer, "... those firms are growing so rapidly they have to find places to go. This is why I've paid so

\* EDITOR \* ERROR MESSAGE  
 \* FLOWCHART  
 \* INPUT \* INPUT DEVICE  
 \* INTERACTIVE \* INTERFAC  
 \* KEYBOARD \* LARGE-SCALE I  
 \* LSI \* MACHINE LANGUAGE \*  
 \* MEMORY CAPACITY \* MENU \* MIC  
 \* FLOPPY DISK \* MODEM \* MON  
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 \* PROGRAM \* PROGRAMMIN  
 \* SCRATCH-PAD MEMORY \* SEMI  
 \* STORAGE \* STRING \* SYNT

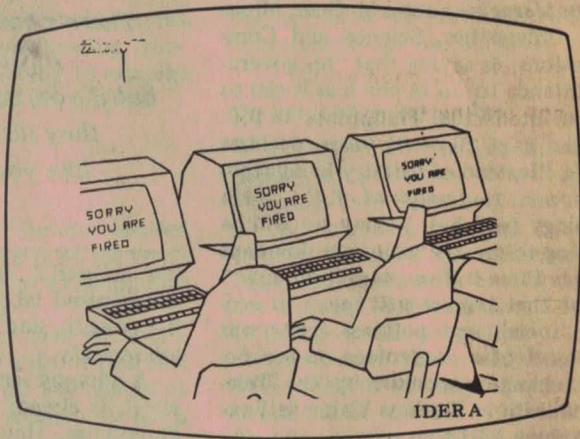
happened in Vernon, B.C., the closure of a whole centre gives workers the choice of accepting a transfer to a new city, or resigning their jobs. They can then be replaced by excluded (i.e. non-union) employees, with the result that the union's power is eroded.

#### TWU on front line

TWU has been on the front line in the struggle to safeguard workers from the negative effects of tech change, along with the established industrial unions. But in the new high-tech industries most workers have no such protection. To quote Pat McGeer once more: "Protection in a high-technology industry is growth. You don't need protection, you just need opportunity. So that's why you find the classic labour union is just anathema to the high-technology entrepreneur. He just can't function unless he and his whole firm retain flexibility of operation."

"So, you may find, in the future, an entirely different type of labour-management model developing in these high-technology growth industries. In Silicon Valley, unions are almost unknown."

They are indeed! But far from enjoying either job security or profit-sharing, as McGeer claims they do, the majority of the more than 200,000 workers in Silicon Valley suffer from minimal



water supply.

Steps are being taken to correct these problems, largely because the industry does not want to lose its reputation for being "clean," and because it is difficult to get highly skilled technicians to come to an area that is not pleasant to live in.

#### Philippine example

For off-shore countries, the situation is worse. In countries like the Philippines, where the labour-intensive work of assembly is done, special labour laws and labour standards are applied to ensure a constantly available supply of cheap labour. Tax breaks, ownership privileges in specially developed export zones, and special tariff codes guarantee the maximum profit for corporations. Production workers, 99% of whom are in the 18-25 year age bracket, are discouraged from organizing by the threat of layoffs or shut-downs, and the firing of workers favourable to unions, or by

many visits to Silicon Valley, I want to get to know the fellas down there and I want to tell them about British Columbia. . . There will be great firms in the future. . . I want a share of them here in British Columbia."

#### Technology Assistance Act

McGeer is putting his money (and ours) on gallium arsenide, a by-product of the smelting of lead-zinc and aluminum which is available in large quantities in B.C., and which could replace silicon in the manufacture of micro-chips. "As surely as we're here, there's going to be a Gallium-Arsenide Hill that looms over Silicon Valley," says McGeer.

What looms over B.C. workers is even more frightening. It is the Technology Assistance Act, a bill drafted for McGeer in 1982, which would provide \$50 million in subsidies for high-tech firms willing to locate in B.C., while at the same time exempting them from the provisions of the Labour Code.



## TWU CONFERENCE ON TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

In McGeer's plan, a grandfather clause would be used to decertify workers already covered by collective agreements in the event that a firm was designated as a high-tech industry as defined by the act.

McGeer's advisors, in an attempt to "anticipate some of the political problems which may be inherent in the proposed Bill" have urged that stress be laid on the fact that "the type of industry is 'environmentally clean,' personnel intensive, and information rich." It is, indeed, for the elite layer of technicians and managers (mostly male) McGeer would like to attract to Super Natural B.C.

### For the female production workers?

But not for the largely female production workers who make up the majority in the industry. In order to persuade high-tech industries to locate in this province, the government must offer them the same incentives that have been used elsewhere: tax breaks and loan guarantees; the promise of an affluent life-style in an attractive environment for the skilled professionals; a disciplined, English-speaking work force, preferably made up of young, relatively well-educated women uncontaminated by trade union notions about equal pay, seniority, benefits, health and safety provisions, parental leave, protection from sexual harassment—you name it.

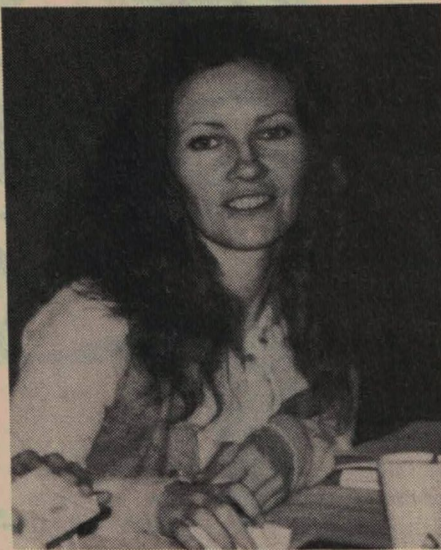
In the concluding speech of the TWU conference, W. Leontief noted that wages, benefits, and social services have been the traditional methods of distributing income in industrial democracies. The recent attacks by the Socred government on health care, education, people services and human rights sound an alarming note. They may be merely preliminary to a blitzkrieg destined to destroy the very basis of collective bargaining in B.C., with disastrous consequences for women. At such a moment, the women's movement must link arms with the trade union movement in collective resistance.

The TWU is to be warmly congratulated for inviting broad participation in its illuminating and important conference. Through such sharing of knowledge and ideas, they have helped to arm us all for the fight ahead. ♀

In September 1980, members of the Telecommunications Workers Union presented testimony to the hearings of the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission examining an application by the B.C. Telephone Company for a rate increase.

The testimony following was given by Linda Rolufs [Hiebert] who was, at that time, an employee of the Telephone Company.

Excerpts from testimony given by other employees are included also.



"... We actually had one operator called down for being too nice to the customers."

— Linda Rolufs [Hiebert]

Q. What is your name?

A. Linda Rolufs.

Q. What is your job?

A. I have been an operator with the B.C. Tel. for 5 years. In addition I served as a Classified Supervisor of Operators in Prince George for 3 years.

Q. Over the last 8 years what changes have you seen in operating services?

A. When I began working at B.C. Tel I enjoyed my job and took pride in my work. Operators were given the flexibility to handle customers' problems when they arose. The emphasis was on meeting customers' needs.

Q. Is this not the case today?

A. No, it isn't. When I transferred from the cord board office in Prince George to the TSPS [computerized consol replacing cord boards] office in Vancouver, I saw a big difference in the way calls are handled. On the cord board an Operator decided when she would plug into an incoming call. With TSPS the computer connects the Operator to a new call as soon as her other customer is off the line.

Q. Doesn't this serve to increase the productivity of Operators?

A. If your desire is to process as many

calls as possible in the shortest possible time, then I guess you could say that this is an increase in productivity. But the increased pace, combined with the fact that the machine is now in control means that what used to be a human work environment has become like an assembly line. Now drudgery and stress dominate the Operator's work life.

Q. What effect does this have on customers?

A. In addition to dehumanizing of our work, the Company has also changed the policy on how we are allowed to handle non-revenue calls. \*Emergency verify calls used to be performed for life-and-death matters, urgent situations and plant trouble. Now we only verify in life-and-death situations. The existing TSPS system in New Westminster cannot verify calls. If we want to verify, we have to go through the old FW-1 in Vancouver.

\*Emergency verify call: when a phoner is trying to reach someone with an emergency message and finds the line busy, the phoner may ask the operator to break into the line to request that the line be cleared. This the operator can do only through another operator working out of a central facility.



# B.C. Tel workers describe high tech innovations

This is bad enough, but to make matters worse, the FW-1 in Vancouver is not being used full-time to handle emergency verifications. On Friday, October 10, 1980, I dealt with a customer who wanted a line cleared because of a family emergency. I dialed the Vancouver FW-1 Operator, who answered "Verify! Hold," and put the call on hold. The customer asked "Operator, what is going on? This is an emergency!" I told him that I didn't know and dialed again. Again, the Vancouver Operator answered "Verify! Hold!" Eventually, it took me a minute and a half to process what should have taken several seconds. Because this has happened to me four times in the past month, I decided to check on the matter. After being given a run-around by my Supervisors, I finally discovered why there was this delay in processing the verification calls; the same Operators who were doing the verification were being made to handle long distance calls at the same time, due to staffing shortages.

Q. Do you have further evidence of staffing shortages?

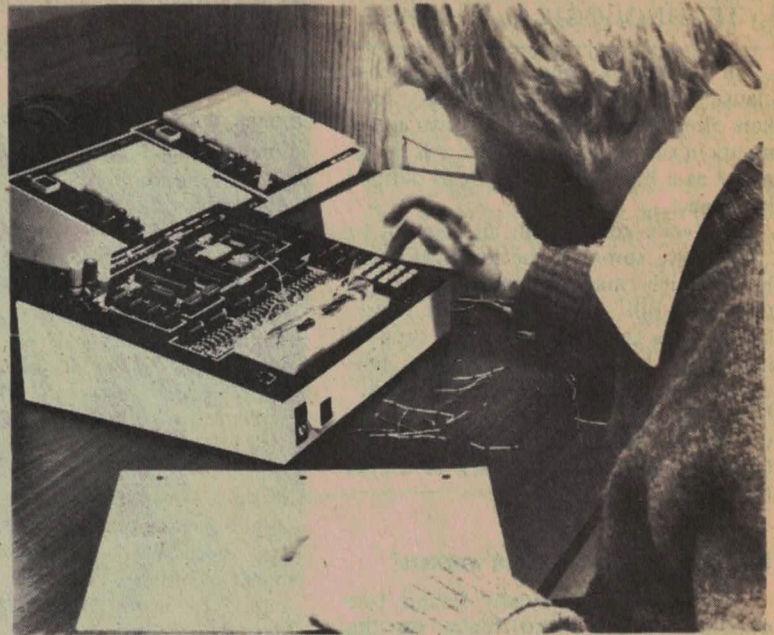
A. Yes. If there is a sufficient back-up of calls, a Senior Supervisor in Network Control puts Traffic Offices on speed-up.

Q. What effect does this have?

A. Operators do not give dialing instructions to customers, they do not use the TSPS display to check whether the customer is properly connected and each customer is allowed only one Operator attempt to get his call through. Furthermore, if average response time is below the desired average, offices may be left on speed-up even after the back-up of calls has been cleared. This helps Supervisors meet their target level of productivity. It also means inferior service to customers. If the Company hired enough staff to handle calls, none of this would be necessary.

Q. So customers are being short-changed?

A. Yes. Operators are constantly pushed to speed up and to handle calls as



fast as possible. When you are monitored or evaluated you are admonished to keep customer contact to a minimum. We actually had one Operator called down for being too nice to the customers. I can't believe that the Company has the nerve to say that service is a priority when it is doing things like this to its customers.

*From the testimony of Bill Brewer, Central Office maintenance man in Port Alberni:*

"Let's take a simple example. A customer used to call the private line board and say something like "My machine is smoking!" The technician receiving this call would immediately dispatch a repair person to check on the situation. The repair person would take a spare machine with him. Now, however, the SSRC clerk merely writes down the fact that the machine is smoking and types this information into the computer. The computer adds this trouble to the queue of troubles. This list sits there until a repair man interrogates the machine for specific details on the trouble. The direct contact between the technician and the customer is delayed, sometimes by as much as several hours."

*From the testimony of Rod Hiebert:*

Q. Mr. Hiebert, are you convinced that B.C. Tel's technological advances have improved service to the customers?

A. No. The technology which B.C. Tel is now installing puts all of the Company's eggs in one basket. In these Stored Program Control offices, certain switching functions are directed by a common on-line central processing unit or computer. If one integral part of the computer fails, or if a program fault exists, or if there is a major cable outage, entire switching offices can go completely out of service for hours. This disconnects entire cities from all phone service. For example, the Dilworth telephone exchange now serving approximately 24,000 customers in Kelowna, had numerous total outages ranging in duration up to twenty hours at a time. In addition to the disruption suffered by local phone users, long distance dialing was almost completely severed for an additional 24,000 customers in offices from Winfield to Oliver. In 1981 Vernon, Kamloops, Cranbrook, Nelson and many other small communities will become subject to the same vulnerability in their long distance dialing. ♀





# The Dynatek venture: high (tech) hopes for super natural B.C.

by Sheila McFadzean

*"It could be the spark plug for B.C.'s own Silicon Island"*

*Technology West  
Summer 1983*

*"We support companies like Dynatek because we don't have the expertise to start up a company such as this. We are ready to fund the start of other components of the micro-electronics industry."*

*B.C. Science Minister Pat McGeer  
The Sun, June 24, 1983*

The centre of this attention is the Dynatek Electronics Corporation which plans to establish a \$49-\$51 million automated micro-electronics assembly plant in Sidney, Vancouver Island. Dynatek plans to assemble integrated circuits—the silicon "chips" which are the basic components in such micro-electronic technology as calculators, computers, and telecommunications equipment.

Plans are to begin sometime in 1983 with 565 workers increasing to 1147 by 1986. 80-85% of plant production is destined for export to the U.S. although Dynatek vice-president Gerry Cheney has said: "We don't need a Canadian market, but of course we would be happy to serve one."—*The Province*, May 18, 1983.

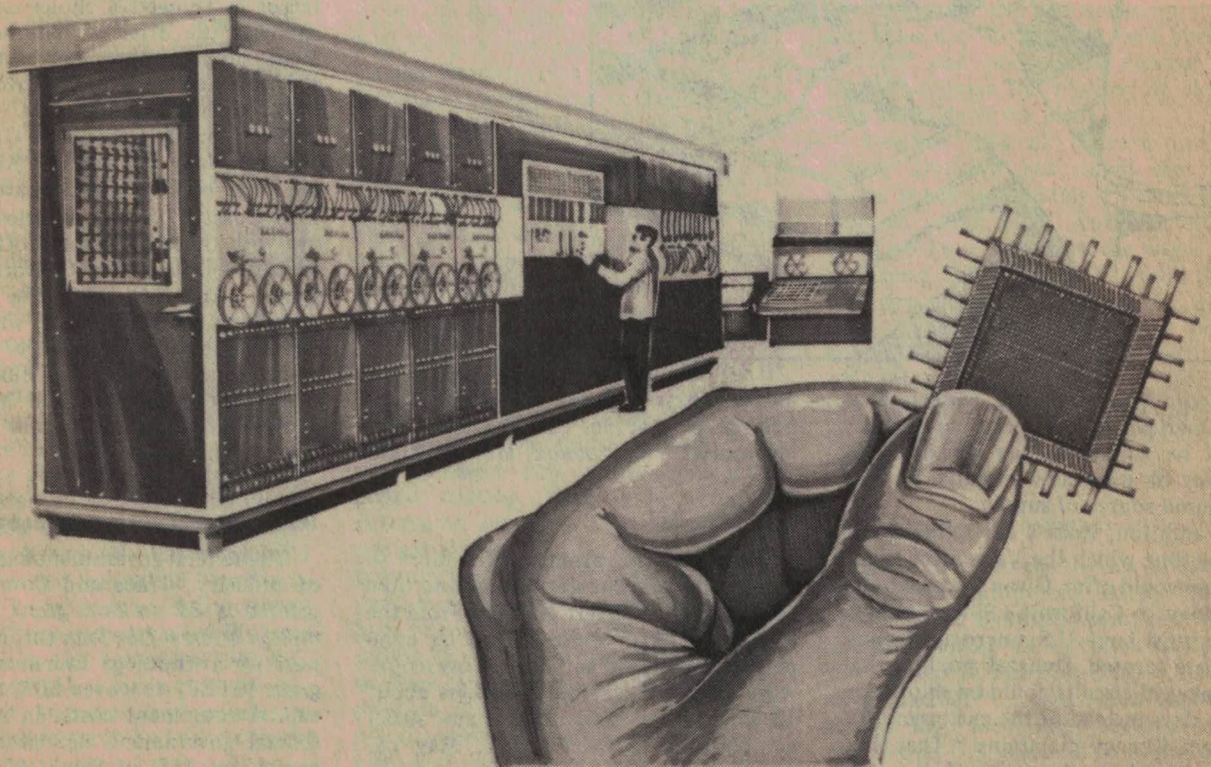
## A first for North America

This Dynatek plant will be the first circuit assembly plant in North America.

ca. At present, 80% of world circuit assembly is conducted in countries like the Philippines (which supplies over 20% of the world's assembled circuits), South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore. The availability of cheap labour and the absence of labour protection has enabled primarily U.S.-based companies to employ thousands of manual workers at wages as low as 40 cents per hour.

Why, then, would Dynatek choose to locate in B.C. and how would it hope to compete with the low-wage "off-shore" plants?

The decision to locate in B.C. was apparently prompted by two factors: the micro-electronics industry's desire to reduce its dependence on southeast Asian supplies, and the generous incentives offered by the Canadian and B.C. governments.



University Mark III mechanical brain, Harvard University, 1949

Microprocessor



## Vancouver Island—an international competitor?

In acknowledging the industry's nervousness about the concentration of circuit assembly in southeast Asia, Dynatek vice-president Cheney was quoted in *Technology West*: "a typhoon [hitting Manila] could wipe out 25% of the world's assembly capacity. . . ." " . . . that could bring this country and the U.S. to a screeching halt. It's a very nervous condition the industry is in because of this dependence on Asia," Cheney told *The Province* (May 18, 1983). Not to mention the vulnerability of some of these regions to civil strife.

*Automation can now make a plant located on the West Coast of North America competitive with those in Asia and offer greater security of supply to California customers. . . And B.C. offers the only location along the Pacific Coast where Dynatek can get subsidies to cover the added costs of that equipment. . . Sure Asia has cheap labour, but we will have cheap equipment—some of it paid for in advance with subsidies.*



Accordingly, Dynatek expects that the American micro-electronic industry would be willing to pay an additional 15% for its integrated circuits, to have an assured source of supply.

In addition, there's the reduced turnaround time which the Vancouver Island location could offer. Given the proximity of Sidney to California's Silicon Valley, where most large U.S. micro-electronics firms are located, Dynatek predicts that its packaged circuits could be shipped in 10-15 days instead of the customary 32-34 days. Cheney maintains: "That time saving is an incentive in itself—it would save a major customer (buying about 20

million chips a year) around \$12-\$13 million a year in carrying costs on inventory." *The Province*, May 18, 1983.

### Labour costs

However, the promise of a more secure supply and shorter turnaround time could not alone divert purchase from the lower-cost Asian sources. "To be competitive, a B.C. plant has to overcome wage rates for assembly workers about 13 times those paid in its major Asian competitors." (*The Province*, May 18, 1983).

To reduce the assembly costs of the

North American chips, Dynatek plans to use highly-automated production techniques to raise productivity levels five times higher than Asian plants relying on cheap human labour. Such production "efficiencies" are expected to trim the "cost disadvantage" of paying higher wages to about six times.

The resulting greater output per worker and the replacement of an army of Asian clerks by computerized business systems and production control are expected to produce an overall product cost only twice that of Dynatek's Asian rivals.

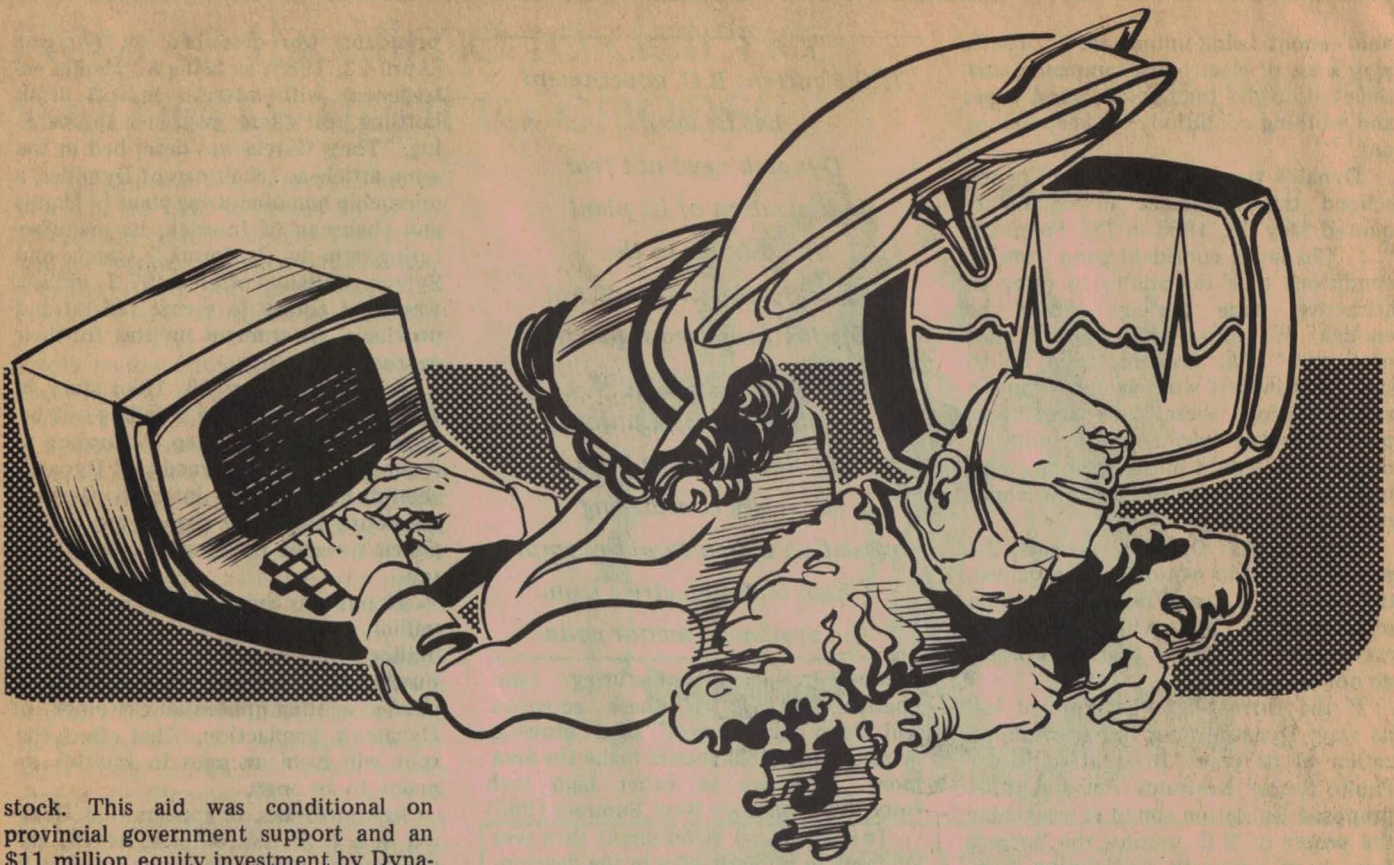
Dynatek believes that American firms are prepared to pay that higher cost in exchange for assured supplies and the shorter turnaround time. The deciding factor in Dynatek's choice of the B.C. site was the offer of generous government support—particularly the federal government's offer of an outright grant to cover certain capital costs.

Said Dynatek president Gus Syjuco (*Province* May 18, 1983): "Automation can now make a plant located on the West Coast of North America competitive with those in Asia and offer greater security of supply to California customers. . . And B.C. offers the only location along the Pacific coast where Dynatek can get subsidies to cover the added costs of that equipment. . . Sure Asia has cheap labour, but we will have cheap equipment—some of it paid for in advance with subsidies."

### Public financing = public debt

The federal government's department of Industry, Trade and Commerce has offered a \$7 million grant and a \$4 million interest-free loan through its Support for Technology Enhancement Program (STEP) to cover 50% of certain capital equipment costs. In return, the federal government can later claim an option on 15% of Dynatek's common





stock. This aid was conditional on provincial government support and an \$11 million equity investment by Dynatek.

The B.C. government, through the B.C. Development Corporation, is providing \$8 million in "rental and renovation aid" for the conversion of the never-used Trident aircraft plant adjacent to Victoria Airport. Dynatek will rent the building from the province which will refund rent payments as long as Dynatek meets the province's terms (*The Sun*, March 31, 1983):

- Employment for more than 500 in the plant;
- Secure [an additional] \$17 million in term financing from conventional sources such as banks;
- Commit a minimum of 5% of annual sales revenue after four years to research and development in B.C.;
- Satisfactorily fulfill a series of unspecified conditions 'designed to protect' the province's interest.

Thus, the public financing from both levels of government totals \$19 million. This, our tax money, represents about 38% of Dynatek's total costs of \$49-\$51 million. What are the public benefits to be derived from such extensive public financing? Three primary benefits have been cited by the Canadian and B.C. governments: job creation, economic development, and increased private expenditures for research and development in B.C.

#### The promise of jobs

Dynatek has projected that its own workforce will grow from 565 people in the first year, to 1027 in the second, and 1147 by the third year of operation. Following a company request to the Canada Employment Centre in Victoria to register prospective employees, 1500 workers have already registered to work at the plant. Given B.C.'s growing unemployment rate, new job prospects are welcomed by workers and governments alike. (Should Dynatek be successful, its need for equipment and services could stimulate additional jobs in other local businesses supplying the plant).

But what can we expect from Dynatek jobs? Most workers at the plant will be assemblers, who will take the silicon chips (imported from California), solder gold wires to the chips, and then cover the packaged chip with a protective plastic coating. Working in a highly-automated assembly line, these assemblers are expected to produce 1200 components per hour—ten times the hourly output of strictly manual production lines in the Asian assembly plants. Consequently, Dynatek expects its 1150 workers, and automated equipment, to produce the same output as Philippine plants employing 5000 people. Given historical precedents with automated

assembly lines, and Dynatek's interest in minimizing its production costs to compete with lower Asian assembly costs, the Dynatek jobs could well be subject to high stress and to "speed-up." Further, the use of computerized business systems and production control will likely minimize the number of clerical jobs available in the plant.

Another area of concern involves wages. Dynatek has stated that B.C. wages are approximately 13 times those paid to Asian plant workers, and 50 cents per hour more than the wages paid in Silicon Valley plants. It would therefore appear likely that Dynatek would want to keep its B.C. wages down, arguing its need to compete with the offshore chip supply. However, Dynatek has other interests which exert pressure on the company to keep its B.C. wages higher.

#### Resistance to unionization

The U.S. micro-electronics industry is notoriously anti-union. Drew Gibson, president of a California company which markets Silicon Valley research space, was quoted in *The Sun* (May 9, 1983), as saying that "... any region hoping to attract high technology research must realize that U.S. research firms are 'para-



noid' about being unionized. . . 'That's why a lot of electronics companies bust their tails to give their people good wages and working conditions—to keep unions out.' ”

Dynatek vice-president Gerry Cheney echoed this sentiment in comments quoted May 18, 1983 in *The Province*: “. . . Cheney is confident good working conditions plus the ability to offer an attractive wage package should be enough to ensure the plant is not unionized.” *The Province* went on to say: “But even if workers opt for union representation, these same attractions plus potential productivity improvements that would allow periodic wage increases should ensure peaceful labour relations.”

Thus, while Dynatek accepts the possibility that its workers may organize, the company is clearly resistant to union representation, and will likely make every effort to ensure that its workers do not unionize.

If the current B.C. government has its way, Dynatek need not fear unionization of its plant. In addition to the Public Sector Restraint Act and other proposed legislation aimed at weakening the power of B.C. unions, the Socreds have been seriously considering legislation which would exempt high tech industries from the provincial labour code. It appears that Science Minister Pat McGeer—not noted for being a “friend” of labour—is easily persuaded by high tech spokespeople like Drew Gibson, who urge: “Exempting high technology industries from the provincial labour code would be a ‘very major help’ in attracting research facilities to B.C.” Obviously, such legislation would also serve the interests of manufacturing companies like Dynatek.

#### **The promise of Economic Development and support for research and development**

By the time Dynatek is fully operational (estimated to take three years), “the company expects to spend a minimum of \$11 million annually on repair, maintenance and service, raw materials and industrial supplies. . . About \$1.5 million will be spent locally for equipment maintenance services and a further \$3 to \$4 million will go to local business and industrial suppliers for products ranging from work benches to nitrogen gas. . . Initially, much of the \$2 million raw materials budget will be spent out of the province, but suppliers of products such as pattern recognition and other equipment will eventually train and set up Canadian representatives, possibly

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followed by local manufacturing—(emphasis added). All of these activities will form the nucleus of a growing infrastructure that should make the area more attractive to other high tech firms.” (*Technology West*, Summer 1983)

The provincial government thus sees Dynatek as an early step in the development of B.C.’s high tech industry. If successful, the company could act as a stimulus to the expansion of existing support industries, to the development of new enterprises (many affiliated with large U.S. parent companies), and to increased private investment in further research and development (R & D) in B.C.

However, those perceived benefits are all long-range prospects and are these high hopes realistic?

#### **Dynatek — a high risk venture**

Referring to a recent meeting between Dynatek officials and members of the Electronics Manufacturers Association of B.C. EAMBC president Gordon English commented that association members had been favourably impressed by the Dynatek presentation. However, he also indicated to *Technology West* “. . . that there are concerns about the project’s economic viability and, should it fail, the effect on the industry’s future credibility and prospects.” While the *Technology West* article didn’t elaborate on the association’s concerns, it is worth noting that those concerns were apparently expressed prior to a major shake-up in Dynatek’s organizational structure.

Initially, Dynatek was formed by two Filipino businessmen, Augusto Syjuco and Antonio Garcia. Syjuco, Dynatek’s

president, was described by *The Sun* (April 23, 1983) as being a “Manila entrepreneur with interests in soft drink bottling, real estate, insurance and banking.” Tony Garcia was described in the same article as “chairman of Dynetics, a microchip manufacturing plant in Manila and chairman of Interlek, its manufacturing arm in California.” Garcia and Syjuco initially offered \$7.2 million worth of equity to secure federal and provincial government support for their venture.

However, a May 29, 1983 story in *The Province* reported a falling out between Garcia and Syjuco. According to Syjuco, Garcia had argued that Dynatek should merge with Interlek, Garcia’s marketing firm. The dispute resulted in Garcia’s recent withdrawal from Dynatek.

This means Syjuco has to secure \$13 million rather than the earlier \$7.8 million through the sale of public shares. Furthermore, Garcia’s Interlek has been cited as a “major potential customer” of Dynatek’s production. What effect the split will have on sales to Interlek remains to be seen.

In conclusion, it appears that Dynatek is a high risk venture, heavily dependent on public financing to meet its initial capital costs and to attract private capital. The company projects employment opportunities for at least 500 people, but its highly automated production line and resistance to unionization raise serious concerns about the kinds of jobs and the worker protection which will be available for employees at the Sidney plant. Despite Socred government predictions that Dynatek could stimulate the development of high tech industry in B.C., the perceived benefits will accrue, at best, in the distant future, and at this point are highly speculative. Even if Dynatek should succeed, and the federal government should pick up its option on 15% of the company’s shares, the considerable public investment in Dynatek will not result in public control over the enterprise.

As an early federal-provincial “experiment” in encouraging B.C.’s high tech industry, using public financing without public control, the Dynatek project will be an important one for us to monitor. At the same time, we in the New Democratic Party should be asking ourselves:

— What is the role of high tech industry in B.C.’s economic development and the employment of B.C. workers?

— What should be the *direction* of high tech industrial development?

— Where should the control for that development lie?



# Now is the time to defend women's right to choose

by Joyce Meissenheimer

This fall will see a cross-Canada renewal of the fight to defend Dr. Henry Morgentaler against charges laid against him, co-workers and patients of his free-standing clinics for the provision of medically safe abortions in Winnipeg and Toronto.

- Polls continue to confirm the fact that the majority of Canadians support a woman's right to choose.
- 5,000 protesters — called out at a moment's notice — rallied to condemn police raids and arrests conducted against the Toronto clinic in July. The scope of this action was unprecedented in the history of the fight for abortion rights. Prominent among the speakers were Ontario NDP leader, Bob Rae, and spokespeople for the labour movement.
- The federal NDP, at its convention in Regina at the end of June, passed—by a 95% majority—two important resolutions. One condemned police actions against the Winnipeg clinic; the other reaffirmed long-standing NDP policy for abortion rights and opposed prosecution under existing Criminal Code provisions.

## Charges faced

Dr. Morgentaler faces two counts of "conspiracy to procure a miscarriage" in Winnipeg. Eight members of the staff have been charged with conspiracy and/or procuring a miscarriage.

In Toronto, he has been charged with "conspiracy to procure a miscarriage" and "conspiracy to commit an indictable offence." Similar charges have been laid against co-workers.

There seems to be no end to the viciousness with which opponents of the right to choose are pursuing their vendetta against pro-choice activists. A member of the Winnipeg clinic staff—a Catholic—has been refused permission to marry in church and has been threatened with excommunication.

Dr. Morgentaler has been forced to borrow money to keep the Winnipeg clinic open. An appeal to the courts for the return of medical equipment seized in the June 25 raid has been lost.

The latest news is that police have been engaging in interrogation of women alleged to have used the services of the clinic in one way or another.

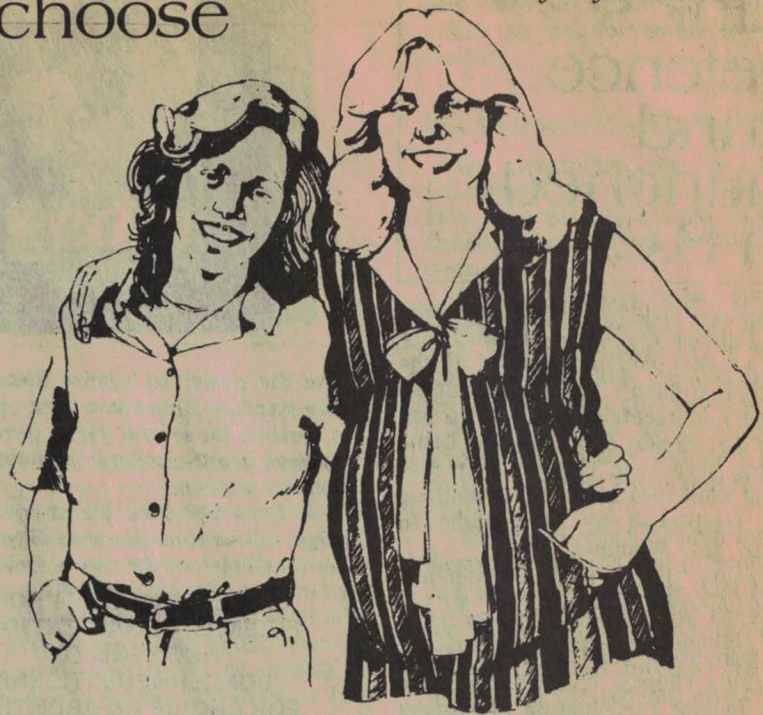
## Premier Pawley's response

Readers of *Priorities* will recall that strongly-worded letters of protest have

gone to Manitoba Premier Howard Pawley from many sources. These include the federal NDP Participation of Women Committee and the B.C. NDP which called on the Manitoba NDP government to legalize the clinic and stay proceedings against its staff.

In the following pages we publish a form letter from Premier Pawley, received by the B.C. NDP.

Also published are details of a B.C. campaign to raise funds for defence needs, and of the activities of the Winnipeg Coalition for Reproductive Choice. Readers are also reminded of the cross-Canada Day of Action for Abortion Rights (initiated by the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League) to be held on October 1.



- DEFEND A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE
- REPEAL ALL ABORTION LAWS
- LEGALIZE FREE-STANDING ABORTION CLINICS

CANADIAN ABORTION RIGHTS ACTION LEAGUE (CARAL)  
has called for

**A DAY OF ACTION FOR ABORTION RIGHTS — OCTOBER 1**

All organizations supporting the above demands should aim to participate in this action which is a matter of urgent necessity.

IN BRITISH COLUMBIA CONTACT:  
CONCERNED CITIZENS FOR CHOICE ON ABORTION  
BOX 24617, POSTAL STATION C., VANCOUVER, B.C. V5T 4E1

It should also be recalled that this fall will see judgment in the Borowski bid to have all abortions declared criminal acts.

Also on the agenda is the CARAL court action to establish that restrictions on abortion rights violate the Canadian Charter of Rights.

As never before, the active support of every defender of the right to choose must be mobilized to protest, to raise money, to win repeal of abortion laws. Details of what needs to be done are highlighted in articles following.

We hope that all our readers will rally to the cause and, in addition, enlist others they can reach in their communities and organizations, including NDP ridings and labour unions. ♀



## Morgentaler Clinics Defence Fund launched in B.C.

The B.C. Chapter of the Morgentaler Clinic Defence Fund was launched July 12 at a media conference called by the B.C. NDP Women's Rights Committee. Dr. Henry Morgentaler and his two colleagues Dr. Robert Scott and Dr. Leslie Smolling have been charged with performing abortions at two free-standing clinics established by Morgentaler in Toronto and Winnipeg.

Speakers at the media conference included Margaret Mitchell, NDP MP for Vancouver East and the federal caucus critic responsible for the status of women; Hilda Thomas, chairwoman of the NDP's federal Participation of Women Committee; Joan Smallwood, chairwoman of the B.C. NDP Women's Rights Committee, and Marva Blackmore, representing Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion.

### Mitchell urges support

Mitchell called for British Columbians to join with other women and men across Canada who support freedom of choice.

"The freedom of women includes the right to control over reproduction. Medically safe abortions are only one of a range of essential health services that should be available to women through hospitals and clinics," said Mitchell.

She pointed out that the federal NDP had re-affirmed its commitment to a woman's right to choose at its recent national convention.

### CCCA to co-ordinate fund-raising

CCCA representative Blackmore informed the conference that the B.C. fund-raising campaign is part of a nationwide effort being co-ordinated by the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL). Approximately \$500,000 will be needed to fight the charges laid by the Manitoba and Ontario governments against the doctors and staffs of the

# CHOICE

## A Campaign for

have the power to legalize these clinics. Free-standing clinics have been operating in Quebec for several years, providing a range of health services, including abortion, for women.

A focal point of the support campaign will be a nation-wide Day of Action for Choice on Abortion, October 1.

**COLLECT MONEY FROM  
FRIENDS, ORGANIZATIONS  
AND SEND TO  
CONCERNED CITIZENS  
FOR CHOICE ON ABORTION  
P.O. BOX 24617  
STATION C, VANCOUVER, B.C.  
V5T 4E1**

## CCCA to raise and build Oct.

At the media conference reported on in the first column, the following statement was presented by Marva Blackmore on behalf of Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion.

The issue we are facing is not one of pro- or anti-abortion. The issue we are facing is choice—pro-choice or no-choice. The choice to have an abortion is a difficult one for any woman. A woman faced with the decision whether or not to con-

## NDP federal convention takes

*The following resolutions relevant to the current situation regarding abortion rights were passed by a 95% majority at the July federal convention of the NDP in Regina. The emergency resolution was prepared by the Participation of Women Committee and approved by the federal council for submission to the convention.*

*Strong support was expressed by leading figures in the NDP and labour movement who led the debate in convention. These included Margaret Mitchell MP and women's rights critic in Ottawa and Cliff Pilkey, head of the Ontario Federation of Labour.*

RESOLUTION F-16 submitted by the Spadina NDP Federal Riding Association:

WHEREAS the NDP recognizes that it is a basic right for every woman to make her own decisions about maternity,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NDP reaffirm the existing Family Planning Resolution (1971) which asserts that an NDP government would:

- (a) remove Sections 251 and 252 from the Criminal Code;
- (b) pardon all qualified medical practitioners convicted under Sections 251 and 252 of the Criminal Code of Canada and drop prosecutions under these sections;
- (c) provide adequate facilities in hospitals or special clinics for sterilization and abortion procedures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NDP act on this resolution by supporting campaigns launched by coalitions in Manitoba, Ontario and other provinces to establish free-standing medical clinics providing a wide range of services including birth control counselling and abortions, fully covered by provincial health insurance plans.



# RE

## Reproductive Freedom

### money 1 Day of Action

by Marva Blackmore

tinue an unwanted pregnancy must have access to all the counselling and support she needs and wants. She needs to have her rights as an individual and the right to the security of her person recognized. She needs a law that will provide her the dignity to choose whether or not to bring a new life into the world. She needs to have abortion removed from the Criminal Code.

She also needs access to abortion ser-

vices—preferably in her own community where her own personal support network also exists. A practical answer to the acute need for accessible abortion services is free-standing clinics. These clinics can offer a supportive environment, in contrast to the trauma of seeking the approval of a therapeutic abortion committee. They can provide thorough counselling and follow-up birth control information.

## stand on abortion rights

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION submitted by the NDP Federal Council:

WHEREAS the Federal New Democratic Party is committed to the decriminalization of therapeutic abortion, by removing Sections 251 and 252 from the Criminal Code of Canada; and

WHEREAS the clinics recently opened in Manitoba and Ontario provide safe, needed medical services to women faced with unwanted pregnancies; and

WHEREAS the clinic in Winnipeg has, in its four weeks of operation, been raided by the police on two occasions, interrupting medical procedures and thus endangering the health of patients; and

WHEREAS the legal counsel of the Baya Corporation even before the clinic opened, offered the police complete access to medical charts, thus eliminating the need for police raids to obtain evidence; and

WHEREAS all nine Winnipeg staff members are currently facing criminal charges, comprising 9 charges of conspiracy to procure an illegal abortion and 3 charges of procuring an illegal abortion,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Federal New Democratic Party:

- 1) condemn the use of conspiracy charges against the doctors, nurses, counsellors and clerical staff involved in the provision of medically safe therapeutic abortions;
- 2) deplore the police harassment against the employees and patients of those non-hospital facilities providing safe therapeutic abortions. We especially condemn the unnecessary raids and the interrogation of these women, already doubly victimized by existing Canadian abortion law and inadequate hospital therapeutic facilities. ♀

Studies in the U.S. and Europe have repeatedly shown that first trimester abortions are as safe or safer than those performed in a hospital and are less costly to provide under government funding.

### CCCA supports Morgentaler efforts

Dr. Morgentaler and his colleagues, Dr. Robert Scott and Dr. Leslie Smolling have courageously set out to establish free-standing abortion clinics across Canada.

We in CCCA support and applaud the efforts of these doctors and the clinics' staff. We are outraged at the continued harassment of these individuals. We call on the provincial governments of Manitoba and Ontario to drop the charges against the doctors and staff members and to legalize free-standing abortion clinics.

Mark McGuigan, federal minister of Justice, has stated that provincial ministers of health presently have the power to legalize these clinics. They could be declared "approved" facilities under the present law. An approved clinic would be eligible for coverage under the provincial medical health insurance schemes and there would be no grounds for prosecuting the staff. In fact, the only thing illegal about free-standing clinics is that they are not governed by a hospital nor by the restrictions of a therapeutic abortion committee.

Clinics already exist in Canada. In Quebec, medically-insured abortions are available from government-funded community health clinics despite federal law. In the mid-70's, the government of Quebec found the present law unworkable because no jury would convict Dr. Morgentaler. He was acquitted three times by three different juries of operating an illegal abortion clinic in Montreal.

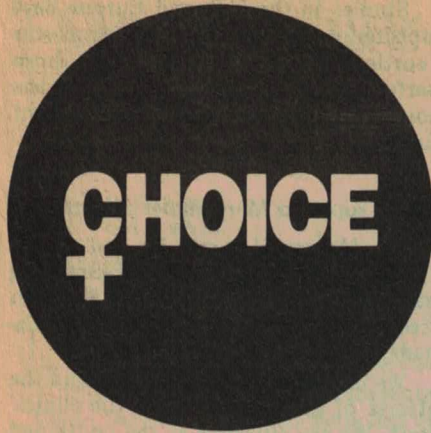
### Fight not limited to Manitoba and Ontario

The question Dr. Morgentaler is now putting before the Canadian public and the Canadian courts is: Why, if the law is unenforceable, should abortion services be more available to the women of Quebec?

The present fight against the abortion laws is not limited to Manitoba and Ontario. Women and men across Canada are uniting in support of the Morgentaler clinics. We in B.C. are no exception.

To demonstrate Canada-wide support for the clinics and for the right to choose we are participating in the Day of Action for Choice on Abortion. Co-ordinated





## CCCA PROPOSALS

events will take place across the country on October 1. The Day of Action is being sponsored by the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League and dozens of pro-choice groups and coalitions across the country.

We encourage all individuals and groups who are pro-choice to join with us on that day to make their support for choice visible.

### Morgentaler Clinics Defence Fund

Today we are also announcing the existence of the British Columbia Morgentaler Clinics Defence Fund. Monies donated to this fund through CCCA will be sent to the legal defence committees in Manitoba and Ontario to help pay the legal expenses resulting from government prosecution. This fight will be expensive and we are appealing to all individuals who are pro-choice—who want to see abortions made available to all women who want and need them—to contribute to that fund.

Dr. Morgentaler, Dr. Scott and Dr. Smolling have taken this action on behalf of a woman's right to choose. It is imperative that the majority of women and men who believe in that right support their actions. ♀

Marva Blackmore has informed *Priorities* that there was a most encouraging response to the media conference in the form of donations sent in to the fund. A similar response is needed to build

**THE OCT. 1 DAY OF ACTION  
FOR CHOICE ON ABORTION  
GET INVOLVED, INVOLVE OTHERS  
YOU CAN BUILD OCT. 1  
BY BUILDING CCCA  
PHONE 272-1026**

# What has been happening in Manitoba

*from the Winnipeg Coalition for Reproductive Choice*

Long before the Morgentaler Clinic opened its doors in May, anti-choice organizations and individuals in Winnipeg demanded that the government prevent the Clinic from opening. Once the Clinic doors opened, the same people demanded that the provincial NDP government close the facility and charge those who worked there.

They got their wish on June 3, when police raided the building. Within a week, Dr. Morgentaler and seven other Clinic staff members were charged with conspiracy to procure abortions. Although the police took some equipment and most of its records, the Clinic re-opened shortly. A second police raid took place two weeks later, on June 25. The police confiscated most of the equipment and all its records and took the people on the premises in for questioning. Several patients were released but the staff was again charged with conspiracy, and three staff members were charged with performing an abortion (one charged being the counsellor). These abortions are alleged to have taken place June 18, a week before the raid.

This time all but one of the staff members spent two nights in jail, rather than comply with the bail condition that they not go within one block of the Clinic. They were released when a second judge overturned that condition on June 27, emphasizing the need to avoid pre-judgement of the individuals involved.

### Rally after second raid

At the rally following the second raid, the Coalition demanded that the government send a representative to respond to our concerns. Deputy Premier Muriel Smith came and repeated the government's position that the police are only enforcing the law, while the government is doing all it can to improve reproductive health care facilities for Manitoba women. (So far, that consists of a promise to expand abortion facilities in hospitals now doing the procedure).

The Clinic is now trying to acquire new equipment but it continues to provide counselling and other reproductive health care services. Preparations are now being made to provide primary health care services) such as blood tests

and pap smears) which can be billed to medicare and contribute to the economic viability of the Clinic. Despite the raids, women still telephone for appointments. Until they can be provided at the Clinic, appointments are made at North Dakota clinics and Coalition members drive women from Winnipeg to Grand Forks once a week.

### Reaction of NDP members

Meanwhile, the Manitoba NDP members have voiced their displeasure with the government's position. At a recent meeting of the Provincial Council (the party's governing body between conventions), members and the Party executive voted in favour of a women's right to choose and urged the provincial government to repeal the abortion law, Section 251 of the federal Criminal Code. The Council also expressed its "regrets" about the conspiracy charges. Several weeks later, NDP members attending the party's federal convention in Regina, condemned the Manitoba government's actions. They voted overwhelmingly in support of a woman's right to choose and supported a motion to drop the charges against the Clinic staff.

### \$250,000 needed for defence

The situation in Manitoba is now desperate. Estimates of Clinic defence have reached \$250,000. The Coalition for Reproductive Choice has launched a civil suit challenging the constitutionality of Section 251 of the Criminal Code. This suit, while legal services are being provided at drastically reduced rates, will cost approximately \$15,000. Education and publicity have been severely hampered by lack of funds. Fund-raising has become an urgent priority. The Coalition appeals for support from across the country. It is not a Manitoba struggle. It is a national struggle. Defending our rights costs money.

Meanwhile, the organization continues to pressure the government. The Coalition believes the government can and should:

1. Drop the charges of conspiracy against the Clinic staff and proceed with



# Manitoba Premier answers critics

June 29, 1983

Dear Friend:

I thought it would be useful to communicate to you the principles which have guided the actions of this government on the abortion issue.

The Manitoba government recognizes that with respect to reproductive health care, as in other areas of health, it has a clear responsibility to see that services are adequate to meet the need, and that it should strive to provide reasonable access to such services for persons

## WINNIPEG COALITION

the prosecution on substantive charges of procuring an abortion;

2. Approve the Clinic as a hospital so that it can set up a three-person committee, as required under federal law (until the law is changed);

3. Take Dr. Morgentaler up on his offer to buy the Clinic and operate it as the first reproductive health care facility in the province with services covered under medicare.

The Coalition also believes that the government could have decided not to prosecute Dr. Morgentaler and the Clinic staff members, because three Quebec juries have acquitted Dr. Morgentaler of the same offence. His Montreal Clinic operates with provincial approval and he has trained other doctors following provincial government requests.

Finally, court cases involving the Clinic staff and the Coalition will likely start this autumn. The staff members have elected to go directly to trial, rather than through a preliminary hearing, to speed up court proceedings.

### Further information from Coalition

For more information, telephone the Coalition for Reproductive Choice at (204) 775-7774.

Note: New associations of the Coalition since the printing of its pamphlet include: Wolesely NDP Constituency Association, Osborne NDP Constituency Association, Manitoba Socialist Coalition, YWCA, Nurses for Choice, CUPE 2722 (Oxfam National), Lawyers for Reproductive Choice, Physicians for Choice, Labour People in Support of Choice, Native Policy Committee of the NDP, Nurse Practitioners of Manitoba and Parents for Choice. ♀

throughout the Province. The government also recognizes that much more needs to be done to provide the reproductive and post-natal health care services we wish for all Manitobans.

To begin to address this problem the government announced on June 7, 1983, that the Advisory Committee on the Maternal and Child Health Directorate of the Department of Health has been directed to prepare specific recommendations for the introduction of a comprehensive counselling and information program on family planning. This program is to be available to all Manitobans and will focus on the provision of education, information, counselling and medical services.

### Abortions

To deal immediately with the problem of women seeking therapeutic abortions outside the Province, Larry Desjardins, the Minister of Health, has instructed the Manitoba Health Services Commission to ensure that approved or accredited facilities in Manitoba are able to provide safe, therapeutic, legal abortions as required by federal law. The physical capability to meet or exceed the need, based on information available to us from out-of-province and from clinicians in the field, should be in place in the near future. As well, I can assure you that this program will be carefully monitored on an ongoing basis.

These steps we have taken are an indication of our commitment to improving the health status of Manitoba women. We are committed to adequate reproductive health care services as part

of our broader health care priorities—a commitment which no other government appears to have made.

With respect to Dr. Morgentaler's clinic, we have said from the beginning that such facilities must operate within the law and that we will not give our support to the privatization of health care. While Dr. Morgentaler has every right to challenge the law, the Manitoba government has no intention nor, indeed, the constitutional right, to interfere with the due process of law by granting anyone immunity from prosecution. If we were to accept this as an expedient way of dealing with particular problems, that would mean in effect the end of criminal law in Canada. The application of the criminal law would depend on the political bias of each provincial government and on the personal bias of each Attorney-General.

There are clearly two separate and distinct aspects to the abortion issue: the provision of adequate reproductive and post-natal health care; and the requirements of the current law. With respect to the latter the law is federal and cannot be changed by provincial legislation. Provincial governments have a clear responsibility to see that services are adequate to meet the need, and that responsibility is being taken most seriously by the Manitoba government.

I hope that through this letter I have been able to clarify the Manitoban government's role in dealing with the abortion issue.

Yours sincerely,  
Howard R. Pawley

♀

## EDITORIAL (Continued from page 1)

elderly, the disabled, and the ill back on to charitable organizations, or on to the nuclear family, and it insists that women accept their proper "feminine" (as opposed to feminist) role in society, with unmistakable echoes of "kinder, kirche, kuchen."

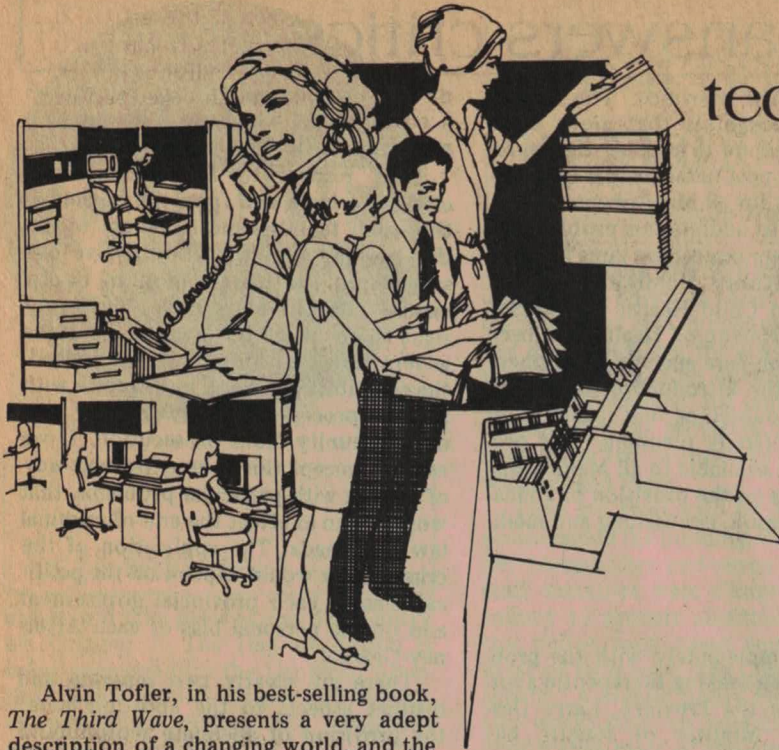
Seen in this light, the actions of the Social Credit government, which on the surface appears merely mean-spirited, vindictive, and stupid, become more intelligible. They also appear more frightening in their implications, especially for women.

By grasping the significance of the technological revolution, we may be able to gain a greater understanding of the forces now at work, and to exert some control over the chain of events. But the pressure required to defeat those forces can only come through the strength of the many acting together. At this crucial moment, the women's movement, born out of oppression, accustomed to risks and danger, dedicated to the ideal of collective action, has a vital role to play in determining the path of the future. ♀



# Negotiating technological change clauses

by Del Myles



Alvin Tofler, in his best-selling book, *The Third Wave*, presents a very adept description of a changing world, and the difficulties encountered by such change. From a global viewpoint, he recognizes change as both desirable and necessary, but acknowledges the turmoil and human panic that accompanies it. In the workplace, the fears accompanying 'technological change' exemplify the message in Tofler's book.

No one can deny that computer technology is here to stay, that even greater advances and public demand will further revolutionize the industry and thus cause greater concern in the workforce. To watch jobs disappear for the sake of advancing civilization presents a 'Catch 22' . . . or does it?

## B.C. Labour Code inadequate

While unions exist, they must continue to negotiate the very best possible working conditions for their members, and build in measures to protect jobs. This they will attempt to do in the best contract language.

The Labour Code of British Columbia is woefully inadequate in its attempts to deal with its clauses concerning technological change (article 76). To begin with, it lacks a definition of what constitutes tech change, and without a definition it becomes impossible for any union to defend itself on this issue. Considering that union contracts are expected to spell out working conditions and terms of employment in order to avoid misunderstandings and lengthy, costly arbitration, the need for such a

definition is of prime importance.

The nature of the workplace will determine how such a definition is written. As an example, however, let me illustrate the wording which appeared in one college contract. Originally, no definition existed, but was subsumed under a meaningless clause as follows: "During the term of this Agreement, any disputes arising in relation to adjustment to technological change shall be discussed between the bargaining representatives of the two parties to this Collective Agreement." This was replaced by the following which, for the purposes of the college faculty, offered better protection and clarification.

## "Definition

For the purposes of this agreement, "technological change" is a change in the instructional use of equipment or material which *significantly* affects the terms and conditions of employment of members of the bargaining unit or alters the basis on which this agreement was negotiated. Layoffs caused by budget restrictions, decreases in enrolment or elimination of programs shall not be interpreted as being the result of technological change."

Note the underlining of the word "significantly" in the above definition. This is the most abusive word in any contract, and must be used with great care. In Article 76.1.a/b of the Labour Code, we have the following: "Where an

employer introduces or intends to introduce a technological change that affects the terms, conditions, or security of employment of a *significant number* of employees to whom a collective agreement applies, and alters *significantly* the basis on which a collective agreement was negotiated, . . . The question of just what is 'significant' is not addressed. Without clarification, the inclusion of the word in contracts can result in wholesale layoffs and lengthy arbitration. Management can erase entire departments from the workplace, and a substantial number of employees dismissed overall, with no recourse to contract protection.

## Layoffs a breach of contract

Managements are loathe to remove such arbitrary words from contracts, but in the college contract mentioned earlier, the contract language states "which significantly affects the terms and conditions of employment of members of the bargaining unit." The laying off of even one member of this bargaining unit due to technological change would definitely be affecting his/her terms of employment and hence be a breach of contract.

It is understood that the introduction of new technologies in the workplace will change the character of some jobs. Such change may be absolutely necessary if by its omission a company falls behind its competitors. Just as typewriters replaced scribes and is the form in which communication is usually handled, so does the use of word processors and computers rightfully deserve a position in today's work world. And a similar parallel can be made for the use of the chip in industry. It is the method used as we approach the twenty-first century. It becomes important, therefore, that workers become computer literate.

## Satisfactory retraining clause

With this in mind, one must check the union contract to see if a satisfactory retraining clause is included in the agreement. It might resemble something like the following:



# A negotiating checklist

by Elaine Bernard

## Some contract considerations on technological change

Effects of the new technology on your workplace will vary with the speed of its introduction, the nature of the work you presently do, and your ability to negotiate protection and power in the workplace. There is no such thing as a perfect technological change agreement, nor a perfect contract. Here is a checklist of some clauses that you will want to consider for inclusion in a technological change section of a contract.

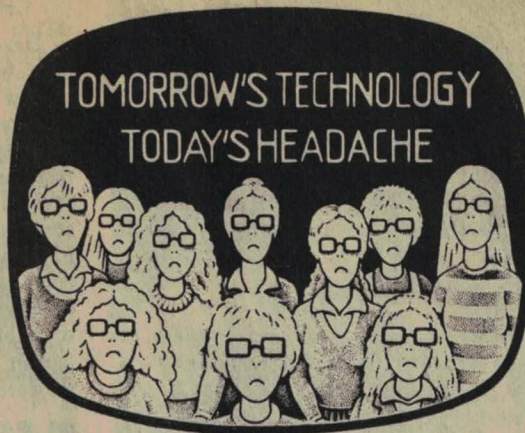
### 1. NOTICE

Your goal in negotiating a notice clause is to ensure that the union

## NEGOTIATING TECH CHANGE CLAUSES

"Where technological change may require additional knowledge and skill on the part of the employee, such employee shall be given the opportunity to study, practice and train to acquire the knowledge and skill necessary to retain their employment, provided that the employee can qualify for the new work within a reasonable training period. The (name of workplace) agrees to pay the employee at the employee's present rate of pay, and to continue all existing benefits during such training period."

Given a good contract with contract language that adequately covers the topic of technological change; given a willingness on the part of a worker to upgrade his or her skills in keeping with the electronic age; and given a government that honours unions and contractual agreements, one should have little fear of the introduction of technological change in their work area. We can control the first two. The next provincial election will take care of the other. ♀



is involved at the design and planning stage when technological changes in the workplace are being contemplated. A notice clause should stipulate that the union is to be notified when such change is being considered and before any contracts with consultants or suppliers are signed and agreements to purchase equipment are made.

### 2. DEFINITION

Contract language should seek the widest possible definition of technological change since employers will attempt to attribute layoffs to economic causes, market conditions, or plant closures rather than to technological change. The definition should apply to changes in working methods, procedures, organization of work, quantity of work, as well as to the introduction of new machinery. Even changes in software should be spelled out explicitly. An additional clause should also specify that technological change is change "affecting one or more persons." Employers often attempt to use the definition found in the labour code which terms technological change as that affecting "a significant number of employees." This wording allows employers to introduce technological change in a pilot or piecemeal manner.

### 3. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The contract should specify that all information relevant to decision-making, planning, or implementation of technological change will be made available to the union before new equipment is ordered or changes implemented. Such information should include the nature of the change, the date on which the employer proposes to effect the change, the approximate number, type and location of employees

likely to be affected, the effects the change may be expected to have on the employees' working conditions and terms of employment, and all other pertinent data relating to the anticipated effects.

### 4. ONGOING CONSULTATION

The contract should provide for an ongoing consultative body on the issue of technological change, following the model of some health and safety committees.

### 5. ONGOING ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Require management to provide sufficient information to the union so that it would be able to:

- monitor developments such as changes in work flow, in working methods and in numbers of jobs;
- control any proposed introduction or extension of computer-based systems;
- analyze effects on the health and safety of workers and on the general work environment.

This information should include management's long-term plans relating to the introduction of new technology. The contract should then specify that the information is to be provided on a regular basis (e.g. annually, semi-annually or quarterly) and as requested by the union when specific proposals are under consideration.

### 6. GUARANTEED EMPLOYMENT

Ensure in the collective agreement that no layoffs will occur as a result of the introduction of new technologies. The employer is to guarantee continuous employment to all employees covered by the agreement.

### 7. GUARANTEED CLASSIFICATION

The contract should also ensure that an employee will retain his/her classification and corresponding wage scale, regardless of any reassignment to other duties or any reclassification of the employee's duties at a lower level in the job hierarchy.

### 8. INCOME PROTECTION

Require the employer to guarantee full pay and benefits for normal working hours as defined in the collective agreement for the full period of continuous employment. This is particularly important when an employer will not agree to guaranteed hours of work per week. If technological changes result in reduced hours of work, this clause ensures continued income and benefits.



## 9. STAFFING LEVELS

Specify in the contract that there be no changes in staffing levels without consent of the union.

## 10. PENALTY CLAUSE

A penalty assessed on the employer for reduction in the workforce removes the financial advantage to management of refusing to hire a full staff complement. Such a clause sets the number of employees at existing or projected levels, and if the staffing levels fall below this level, a fine (or wage equivalent) is placed in a special union-controlled fund.

## 11. SHIFTWORK

As computer technology is introduced, round-the-clock operation has become possible in workplaces such as white collar offices which have not previously experienced shift work. Such changes can be fought with a contract provision stating that shift work shall not be introduced, until agreement is reached, to personnel in occupations where shift work is not currently accepted.

## 12. RETRAINING

The contract can stipulate that any employee, either re-assigned or re-classified as a result of changes, shall be provided with whatever retraining he/she requires during working hours with full pay from the employer and at no additional cost to the employee. Any employee unable to undertake a retraining course shall maintain his/her classification, or its equivalent, in the bargaining unit. Specify also that such retraining programs must be reviewed on a regular basis. This is necessary to ensure the relevance of the training to changes in the use of a particular system or piece of equipment.

## 13. WORK ENVIRONMENT

Particularly important now for office workers is a clause requiring the employer to maintain practical, safe conditions to avoid injury to employees or damage to their attire. Also include a provision allowing the union to make recommendations for change in the work environment. This is termed an "ergonomics" (the science of work) clause.

## 14. RELOCATION

Stipulate that no employee can be relocated without his/her written consent. Any expenses incurred by an employee as a result of relocation should be reimbursed in full by the employer.

## 15. CONTRACTING OUT

Employers attempt to circumvent terms of the collective agreement by contracting work out to non-union workers or companies. Computer terminals located out of the shop and in people's homes makes contracting out easy and unobtrusive. Therefore, the contract must specify that no work (including clerical work) will be contracted out without prior agreement of the union.

## 16. TRIAL PERIOD

Insist that any proposed changes in the workplace first be implemented on a trial basis in a small area for a set period of time at the end of which the equipment or system would cease to be used until final agreement is reached.

## 17. PRODUCTIVITY MEASURES AND AUTOMATIC CONTROL

*Control*—one of the major advantages to management of computerizing work is that constant electronic monitoring of workers' speed and output becomes possible. The contract must declare unacceptable all management attempts to introduce programmed productivity measurement, workplace controls, and disciplinary systems. Specifically, it must reject simplistic productivity measures such as key depressions, lines, and pages typed per hour.

This technology also allows management to pay workers for bits of work produced, such as a line or a page. Pay on this basis is piece work. Piece work results in workers producing as fast as humanly possible, with disastrous consequences for their health and safety.

It was opposed early in this century by women in the sweatshops of the garment industry. It must again be opposed by women working in today's modern offices.

## 18. SHORTER WORK TIME

Since use of the new systems will result in increased productivity, the union should try to get the company to agree to negotiate on the reduction of work time without loss of pay. This can be accomplished through improvements in holiday entitlement, a lowering of retirement age on full pension, and accumulated time off. For example, the contract can stipulate that employees shall accumulate paid time off on the basis of five hours for each work week for which full compensation was received.

## 19. TECHNOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIVE OR TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE COMMITTEE

Develop a system within the union to deal with technological change issues similar to those developed by unions in response to health and safety issues. Appoint special representatives who will be responsible for technological change issues in the union office. Appoint shop stewards on job sites who will specialize in technological change and who will receive all the powers to investigate (including time off) that health and safety or other stewards receive. Special education must then be provided to these stewards and union representatives.

## 20. PAID EDUCATIONAL LEAVE

To ensure that workers can retrain to deal with the new technology, provide in the contract for a sabbatical for workers. Lost wages as well as tuition is to be paid by the employer.

## 21. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Because legislated occupational standards are inadequate, it is important to insert protective clauses in the collective agreement based on health and safety standards until better legislation is passed. For example, the federal government task force on microchip technology recommends workers spend only 5 hours on VDT's per day.

## 22. RIGHT TO PRIVACY

By changing to computers, employers are now able to accumulate extensive files on their employees. In fact, there are now data banks which sell medical and other information to employers. Therefore, it is important that the contract explicitly forbid companies from using such records to discriminate against workers.

## 23. UNION RIGHT TO AUDIT COMPUTER SYSTEMS

Since most computer operating systems have monitoring programs, the only way a union can assure that extensive records are not being kept on workers is through the right of union auditors to make periodic, no-warning inspections of the system.

## 24. SEVERANCE PAY

Severance pay and other cushioning measures are poor substitutes for a job. Severance pay should be set as high as possible, making it a type of penalty clause for employers depriving workers of jobs. ♀



## GETTING WOMEN INTO POLITICS

Continued from page 1

the community or would these parks just become job ghettos, trapping people in low-paid, low-skilled jobs with no way up or out?

These suburbs had filled rapidly over the past few years with families looking for an affordable refuge from the city and their urban work places. Many people in the community were not prepared to sacrifice their new-found peace and quiet in semi-rural surroundings for the sake of industrial development. The decision-makers never acknowledged these concerns, and they never answered our questions.

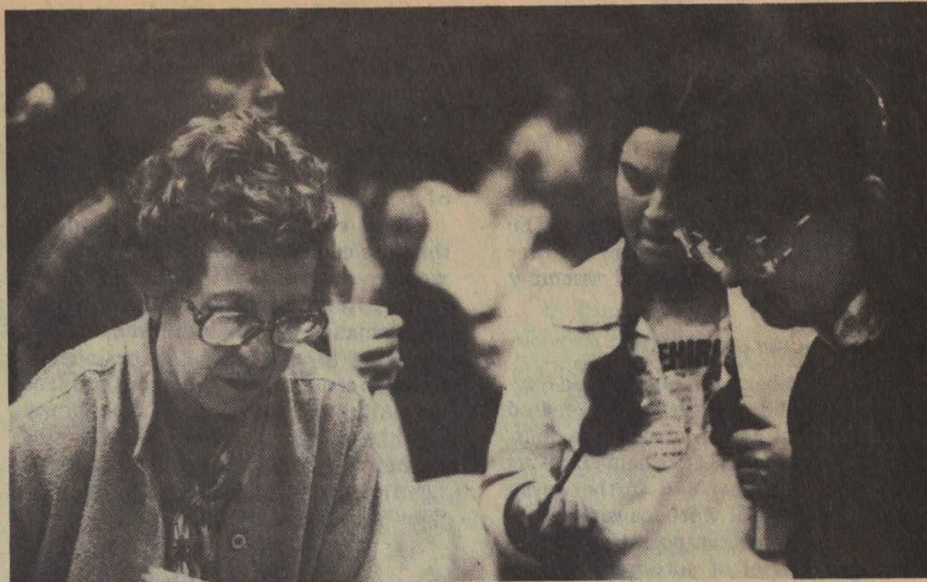
It was a real eye-opener when I, as part of a delegation to the Greater Vancouver Regional District, asked the chief planner to tell us on what information the GVRD had based its industrial strategy. I will never forget his reply. The planners had simply consulted the industrialists, he said, and the industrialists had told them what they wanted. We had naively assumed that the first priority of those entrusted with planning for the future of our communities was the best interests of the people who lived in those communities. It therefore came as quite a shock to discover that the planners were taking direction from industrialists whose first priority was, of course, profit maximization.

Like other community associations, we began to send watchdogs to each of the council meetings. At one such meeting we became aware of discussions between our municipal economic development committee and the B.C. Development Corporation regarding Discovery Parks. These parks, we learned, were designed to lure micro-electronics firms to B.C. They were central to the Economic Development Plan for the province being put forward by Dr. Pat McGeer, Socred Minister of Universities, Science and Communications.

A planner had once referred to our community as the "Los Angeles of the North" because of its uncontrolled sprawl. Now we realized that if the planners had their way, we would become the "Silicon Valley of the North" (referring to the Santa Clara Valley of California where micro-electronics industries have concentrated).

### Site picked out

We soon learned that the site designated for a Discovery Park in our community was the Hazelmere Valley, which consists of some 3,000 acres of dairy



Joan Smallwood, Sharon Hazelwood, Hilda Thomas and Margaret Birrell planning debate strategy for a technological change resolution at the federal convention.

PHOTO LES STOREY (DEMOCRAT)

farms, hay fields, and vegetable gardens. It borders on the U.S. and would provide good access for high tech industries. In fact, this site would fulfill most of the requirements of the industry:

- large, open land with room for expansion;
- prestigious locations for executive homes;
- an accessible labour market.

Again, clean, safe and labour intensive industry was promised by spokespeople like Pat McGeer and by the industries themselves.

With a little digging, however, we discovered the other side of the picture. The initial uncontrolled growth of high tech industries in Santa Clara Valley had spawned a number of citizens' "watchdog" groups. The foremost of these groups is the Pacific Studies Centre, whose director, Leonard Siegal, addressed a conference on technological change sponsored by the Telecommunications Workers Union in Vancouver this June.

With information gathered from these California public interest groups, community organizations like ours in Surrey were able to challenge the rosy picture painted by the industrialists and the politicians. We were able to raise such issues as:

### 1. Hazardous chemicals

The electronics industry uses 10% of all the chemicals in the U.S., including some of the most dangerous, such as corrosive hydrochloric and hydrofluoric acids, toxic solvents such as xylene,

dangerous poisons including arsine gas and cyanide, and known and suspected carcinogens like vinyl chloride and trichloroethelene.

### 2. Increased demands on emergency services

Evacuations, chemical spills, acid burns, and fires occur in Silicon Valley on a regular basis. Our community's mainly volunteer fire department is not adequately trained or equipped to cope with such emergencies.

### 3. Nature of the work

High tech industries have been promoted as a source of well-paid, trendy jobs which would train people in advanced technological skills. Such jobs have been promised as the answer to layoffs in the traditional manufacturing sector of the economy.

In Silicon Valley, however, 85% of the workers are women and 50% are women from third world countries. You can be sure that most of these women do not perform engineers' or skilled technicians' jobs. A survey of 5 semiconductor plants classified the jobs into the following categories, noting the number of workers and the number of men and women in each category:

	Total	Male	Female
Total	2837	1282	1555
Professionals & Managers	811	786	25
Technicians & Craftspeople	434	327	107
Clericals	389	67	322
Assemblers	1106	52	1054



Recent U.S. Bureau of Labour statistics forecast that over the next 10 years high tech will create fewer than half the two million jobs lost in manufacturing. Further, fewer than a third of the estimated 750,000 to one million jobs created will be for engineers and high level technicians. The rest will be for engineers and high level technicians. The rest will be for either managers or lower level operatives, clericals and assembly personnel.

#### 4. Impact on the community

Large numbers of poorly-paid employees in Silicon Valley have created fierce competition for low-income housing. Competition for affordable housing sends people further and further away from their place of work, causing a subsequent strain on transportation and increasing the level of automobile pollution. It is only the highly-paid managers and engineers who are able to afford the high-priced executive housing near the workplace.

As a result of raising these concerns, we were assured that municipal council was not really considering these industries. Opposition from community groups also resulted in the eventual defeat of the proposed industrial parks in each of the 5 town centres. And, in the next election, those council members who had been vocal in their support of the plan lost their seats.

#### Experiences of community groups

Through these experiences, organized community groups began to feel their own power. We demanded the right to participate in all future decisions affecting our communities. And, some of us were started down the road to questioning the costs and benefits of development and asking whose interests were being served by the established process of decision-making.

Surrey's community associations were finally awarded the right to participate in the democratic process, and local area planning committees were struck. After two years of work on the part of these local committees in each neighbourhood, the master community plan was finally to be adopted.

In the process, however, much healthy community activism has been frustrated, and people have become disillusioned. The council which replaced the previous Social Credit council is predominantly liberal in policy (same commitments, differing strategies). The municipality's master plan is essentially a clever compromise between monied

interests and the need to disarm community groups by throwing them a bone or two. The final death-blow is that all community plans have now been abolished by the Social Credit government's provincial budget which takes many decision-making powers out of the hands of local government altogether.

These events have meant the end, for the time being, of afternoon meetings of women around a kitchen table over coffee, frequently being interrupted by the demands of small children, but attempting to deal with the business of Surrey's economic development and land use. Although the work of community organizing has certainly slowed, the women learned real skills, undertook significant research, and began to alter their perceptions of our society.

#### Strategy to control and direct

This brings me now to our current task: developing a strategy to control and direct the technological revolution which threatens to overwhelm us.

The trade unions have done a great of work in trying to come to grips with technological change, and they have developed a great deal of expertise in the process. The labour movement has defended workers against the negative impact of technological change by writing protections into collective agreements and by pushing for such protections in labour legislation. The importance of unions in this fight cannot be understated.

At the same time, however, no group can or should try to deal with this enormous task alone. If we leave the battle to organized labour, we will have ruled out the participation of most women. If current trends continue, up to one million Canadian women will be unemployed by 1990. The majority of these women do not have the protection afforded by a collective agreement. We cannot afford to ignore any potential allies in developing our strategy. One of the ways we can activate women at the local community level is through municipal politics. This is the level where women can organize and educate other women around concrete issues important to their everyday lives. This is where women can get their political feet wet as organizers and candidates.

#### NDP in municipal politics

Some members of our party have begun to recognize the importance of municipal politics. At the federal convention this summer, the Metro Toronto

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NDP, the Winnipeg municipal NDP, and the Labour Council of Metro Toronto sponsored a caucus for municipal activists. This caucus emphasized the great untapped potential of the municipal arena.

NDP involvement at the municipal level would engage women in the political process. It could educate them about power and about their rights. It could build grass roots support for the NDP. It could help people ensure that their communities remain liveable and meet the needs of people. And, it could enlist a broader segment of society in attacking the social problems created by technological change. In immediate terms it could even broaden the fight against the Sacred budget.

I would like to urge the party to develop comprehensive municipal policies so that NDP candidates at the municipal level will be able to demonstrate to the people in their communities that they are accountable to written policies democratically established. I would also urge that an increasing number of ridings look to implementing NDP principles at the municipal level by running NDP candidates. In this way we can build solid trust in our party and stimulate an eagerness to participate in the political process which will strengthen us at the provincial and federal levels in the future.



# Computers on the job: surviving Canada's microcomputer revolution

by Heather Menzies (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1982) 161 pp.

Reviewed by Irene Howard

## NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA CO-ORDINATOR OF WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

### JOB DESCRIPTION

The New Democratic Party is seeking a Co-ordinator of Women's Activities. The Co-ordinator is a member of the Federal Party staff in Ottawa, serves under the direction of, and is responsible to, the Federal Secretary, and is charged with the responsibility of increasing the participation of women in the NDP across Canada.

The successful applicant will be a member of the NDP and will be thoroughly familiar with the history, policy and structure of the Party. Experience in electoral organization at the constituency level, in both federal and provincial politics, is a prerequisite. Experience of non-electoral administration of a constituency association will be an asset.

The priority areas of activity are:

#### A. During pre-election and election periods

1. Preparation of materials on women's issues and women in the NDP during the pre-election and election period, and advising the Election Planning Committee on strategies related to women in the election.
2. In co-operation with provincial/territorial Federal Election Planning Committees, encouraging women to run for nomination.
3. Working closely with the Director of Organization in the pre-election and election periods on organizational schools and other projects connected with women and the campaign.

#### B. Other Periods

1. Staff person assigned to the Participation of Women Committee and to the Federal Affirmative Action Committee (to be struck in Fall 1983).
2. Increasing the participation of women inside and outside the Party through NDP women's groups and women's organizations outside the Party.
3. Liaison with the provincial/territorial sections in the organization of women in the Party.
4. Liaison with the Federal Caucus to monitor legislation which is of interest to women.
5. Depending upon time commitments, the Co-ordinator may be assigned to provincial/territorial or federal campaigns—with emphasis on priority ridings where women are candidates.

The successful applicant will have demonstrated leadership abilities, competence in both public speaking and written communication, and will be willing to travel extensively.

Salary and benefits will be commensurate with experience.

Applications will be accepted until September 2, 1983 and should be sent to Gerry Caplan, Federal Secretary, New Democratic Party, 301 Metcalfe Street, Ottawa, Ont. K2P 1R9.

In *Computers on the Job*, Heather Menzies describes how the "chip" or microprocessor is revolutionizing the way things are done in offices and factories across Canada. The work is broken down into tiny units, none requiring any decision-making, so that each task is part of a routine assembly line. The microprocessor is then programmed to perform these tasks, sometimes making the worker redundant—at the very least "deskilling her."

Take banks for example. Cheques used to be processed by sending them from place to place. Now, automatic cheque processors working twenty-four hours a day relay data electronically. Part of the work of a bank teller used to be to stay on after the bank closed at three to summarize the transactions for the day. These reports, checked by a supervisor, were then sent to a computer centre where a data-entry clerk stowed the information in the data bank. Now, with computer terminals installed in the branch bank, the teller records the transactions at the terminal, i.e. "keys" it in, while the customer is standing at the counter. Thus a three-person job for teller, supervisor and data-entry clerk has become a one-person job, even part-time if the teller goes home at three. The teller can even be dispensed with altogether, as anyone knows who has fed a personal-identity card into the wall of a bank to withdraw cash for the weekend groceries, for inside that automated teller machine is an optical scanner which "reads" the magnetic code strip on the card and gives you entry to your bank account without any assistance at all from the teller.

#### All service industries

Similar things are happening in all the service industries: in insurance and telephone companies, in supermarkets and hospitals, in libraries and hotels—all places where women make up a large percentage of the workforce. The author devotes a section to each and a chapter on factory workers as well, describing the different phases of automation, the



# Good Monday Morning

Produced and directed by Laura Sky  
for the National Union of Provincial Government Employees, 1982

Reviewed by Irene Howard

In *Good Monday Morning*, a film about office workers, women from across Canada, from B.C. to Newfoundland, tell how they've been downgraded and de-skilled by the computer and how this makes them feel.

"You don't have to think," says one. "You look at your watch—half an hour has gone by. You don't remember anything. Your mind's been gone."

Another prepares papers in bundles

of 100 for filming. She takes out the staples, sorts the papers and does some cutting and taping to make them all a standard size. "I had such high expectations when I graduated from high school. Now I have a feeling of uselessness," she says. "I'm ashamed to talk about my job. My relationship with my husband is suffering."

They all feel they're being watched. They're not allowed to talk. They're

told to be conscious of time spent going to the washroom. Ever higher productivity is urged on them. If they key in 6,000 one week, they're expected to do even more the next. Computer training? For some of them, about half an hour.

## Hitting the bricks

That's the first half of the film. The second half moves to the picket line.

## BOOK REVIEW

effects in each industry on the workers, and the major employment trends. She predicts that it will be especially difficult for women to escape the female job ghettoes and enter the ranks of professionals.

The picture is rather gloomy, for, as Heather Menzies says, "If we don't master (sic) this technology as a tool, we will be mastered by its ends and subjugated to its techniques." Her book is intended as a survival manual urging "computer-literacy" on everyone in the workforce. This doesn't mean that we have to learn about the electronic innards of computers. But she thinks we do need to learn the sort of "thinking" possible for a computer; to learn the process by which it makes logical deductions, not judgements, for only humans can do that. The implications of this kind of learning for school curricula are obvious: high school students must all, including girls, get a thorough grounding in mathematics and language, subjects requiring analytic thinking and logic. Workers will also have to become aware of influences the new technology will have on their lives: of the degrading of individuals to the capacity of mere robots; of the loss of privacy incurred by the centralization of information; of the danger that intuitive modes of thinking may be devalued.

But it's equally important, concludes Heather Menzies, to stand up for your rights in the workplace, demanding the right to participate in implementing technological change and protection against its harmful effects.

### Women and the chip

*Computers on the Job* is based on Heather Menzies' case studies of large companies reported in an earlier book,

---

... stand up for your rights  
in the workplace,  
demanding the right to participate  
in implementing  
technological change,  
and protection against  
its harmful effects.

---

*Women and the Chip*, an academic treatise offering original Canadian data which has already been put to good use by other social scientists. I, however, found *Women and the Chip* quite incomprehensible, as, I suspect, will most general readers. The title is misleading: there are no women in this book, or at least none that you can recognize as actual people sitting at word processors and being bored out of their minds. They've become functions and components and aspects and factors, as befits, unfortunately, a certain academic thesis style.

*Computers on the Job* appears to be a popularization, even a translation, of *Women and the Chip*. You can actually follow the transformation of the bloodless sentences of the original formal treatise into informal language which, if not vivid and dynamic, is at least fairly comprehensible. Redundant noun-heavy sentences are honed down and given sentence-moving verbs, an imprecise metaphor is reworked, an historical account of the development of the computer is added to the beginning. An early chapter even dramatizes a day in the life of an intermediate level employee in the office of the future.

### Shortcomings of the book

It would be pleasant to report that this rewriting has produced an interesting

and absorbing book. Sadly, this is not so. There are sections, like the chapter on automation in factories, in which the sheer wonder of technical wizardry grabs you. Here Heather Menzies is at her best, writing beautiful graphic sentences like this: "They [the simplest robots] look like pieces of machinery, often consisting of moveable arms and claw-like 'hands' with welding torches or spray-paint nozzles clenched in their grip."

But the writing is uneven. The computer seems to have got hold of the author's mind and made her think in a stiff, mechanical way, listing three reasons here and four trends there, a general statement for this paragraph and then a "for instance" and then on to the next. Where is the real Heather Menzies who, one imagines, must be the journalist and sometime freelancer for *Maclean's*, *Week Magazine* and the CBC?

It is possible to write quite clearly and interestingly about computers for the non-scientific reader. Paul and Erin Phillips in *Women and Work* (James Lorimer and Co., 1983) have an excellent chapter on women and technological change. They use the same language as Heather Menzies, but the writing, instead of being pressed into an arbitrary form, is moved by the dynamics of the thought. They understand that you can let one thought lead to another and still achieve coherence.

I suspect that the only way most of us are going to be able to fully understand and appreciate books and articles about computers is to take one of those introductory courses that Heather Menzies describes in *Computers on the Job*. Until then, her book can give us a start towards computer-literacy and help us prepare ourselves and our daughters for the vast and unsettling changes to come. ◻





## Letters to 'Priorities'

### FILM REVIEW

Fifty-eight women from a local of the Newfoundland Association of Public Employees are on strike. They're harassed by the police and arrested on the picket line, but they sing "We shall not be moved." And they aren't, and after four months they win.

Back at work they recall the struggle, exulting in their victory. Their faces are radiant. And listening to those confident voices with their engaging Newfoundland inflections, the viewer wants to stand up and shout Bravo!

The film is a great morale booster and can be borrowed free of charge from any area office of the National Union of Provincial Government Employees.

In Vancouver contact Margaret Burns at the BCGEU office, 4911 Canada Way, Burnaby V5G 3W3, Phone 292-9611. ♀

### FURTHER READING ABOUT THE CHIP AND YOU

H. Dominic Covey, Neil H. McAlister, *Computer Consciousness: Surviving the Automated 80's* (Don Mills, Ont.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1980)

Ken Marsh, *The Way the New Technology Works* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

Adam Osborne, *Running Wild: the Next Industrial Revolution* (Berkeley, Calif.: Osborne/McGraw-Hill, 1979).

Gary B. Shelly, Thomas J. Cashman, *Introduction to Computers and Data Processing* (Anaheim Pub. Co., 1980).

Jerry Willis, *Peanut Butter and Jelly Guide to Computers* (P.O. Box 606, Beaverton, Oregon: Dilithium Press, no date).

*The Techno/Peasant Survival Manual* (Bantam Books, 1980).

### Canadian Abortion Rights Action League appeal for membership support

When the history of the fight to give every woman in Canada free access to abortion is written, 1983 may prove the decisive year. It will be the year the Borowski case is heard. The year Dr. Morgentaler's free standing clinics in Toronto will open amid government threats to prosecute. The year hospital abortions will again be offered in Moncton, despite anti-abortion pressure.

We cannot predict how these battles will go. But we do know history will show they hinged on the answers to several crucial questions: were the Freedom of Choice advocates able to match the organization and zeal of those determined to prevent abortions? Did public opinion, overwhelmingly favoring freedom of choice, make its weight felt? Did the newly opened free standing clinics outside Quebec receive the assistance they needed to continue functioning?

As the major organized group standing against the determined and well financed forces that oppose abortion, the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League has a key role to play. Indeed, our strength could well tip the balance.

But we are only as strong as the collective strength of our membership and it's now time to renew yours. Stand with us again this year just as you have in the past. CARAL will be in the thick of the challenges that lie ahead, and with your help we'll prevail.

With your membership fees we'll pay the phone bills and the office rent and hopefully even hire full time staff. We'll research the opposition, lobby legislatures and keep our cause in the public eye. We'll pay the legal fees when we make our case in court. We'll lend support to free standing clinics. And we'll put out our newsletter to keep you posted as events unfold.

Your membership fees and your contributions to CARAL have always been important. *But because 1983 promises to be so crucial*, your support this year

is more important than ever. Please give generously.

Please send membership donations (minimum \$10, limited income \$3) to CARAL, 40 St. Clair Ave. E., Suite 310, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1M9

Yours sincerely,  
Norma Scarborough  
President

### Subscriptions renewed by long-time supporters

Dear Sisters of *Priorities*:

Have I let my sub lapse or have you been unable to continue—just when we need you the most?

Looking back through past issues I am struck by how pertinent and contemporary many of the articles are, right back to 1977 when the sub-heading was: "MORGENTALER IS FREE" and a picture of the man, looking much younger than he does now. (My story, too!)

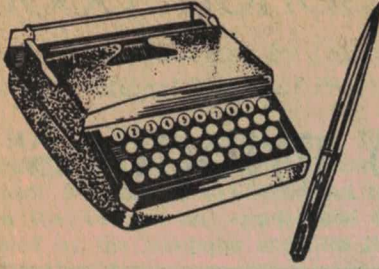
Further back still, I find Vol. 2, No. 6 June 1974, dealing with the NDP and the status of women. Not old stuff at all.

Nevertheless, there have been major changes in style and focus, as experience and fresh approaches contribute to growth, strength of conviction and realistic assessment of our situation, both within and outside of the Party.

An article in *Monthly Review*, April 1983, "Women's Self-Organization" by Brenner and Holstrom is one that I hope Hilda Thomas will see, and others as well who enter the debates on correct analysis and timely strategy. I do hope to be seeing *Priorities* again—cheque enclosed—or to 'be with' whatever out-growth may follow its demise.

Yours in trust and appreciation,  
Dorcas (Dee) Blair  
Bowser, B.C.





## Letters to 'Priorities'

Dear *Priorities*:

Enclosed please find a cheque for a new subscription. I suppose it's been about seven years since I last had one—ten since I began working on it. Then, at the ripe old age of 23, unmarried, with no children, full of energy, vigor, commitment, time and a certainty that I knew what was right and wrong, just and unjust, important and unimportant. Active participation in the women's movement and the NDP seemed a clear and trouble-free choice.

Now, at the very "old" age of 34, married, with four young children, I find myself in what must be for many women the "grey" period of life. Seldom is it clear what is important, right, or just. Almost always what is right, important and just for one family member is the opposite for one or all of the others. A continued belief in the basic values of feminism and socialism is, unfortunately, rarely of value in the decisions I am called upon as homemaker to make. Surely, this cannot all be blamed on the nuclear family as we/I so pompously once believed. More certainly, it must be because the issues are simply more complicated than we wanted to believe.

The growth of the women's movement in the seventies had the freshness and hope of a newly planted and germinating garden in the spring. The eighties should be full of the work, commitment and struggle with unforeseen but inevitable problems that growing gardens require to flourish—what we yield will depend entirely on how fervently we attack and examine our problems. If I knew what they were (and thought my kids would nap another two hours) I might suggest some issues to deal with—but I don't (and they won't).

After the last five years of reading and doing little in active participation, I am ordering this subscription to see what is being thought about and worked

on now. Are we still talking about the same old stuff in the same old way, or are we learning more? I know we're getting older, but are we really getting better?

Hoping to receive some invigorating reading in *Priorities*. I wonder if there are any other *Priorities* drop-outs out there with anything to say?

Sincerely,  
Shelly Adey (formerly Dillon)  
Slocan, B.C.

### Single blessedness!

Dear Sisters:

In the feminist movement we are constantly waging a war against stereotypes of women that would hold us back. As a feminist and a single woman I would like to fight some stereotypes of single women.

The stereotype of single women, years ago, used to be that of the embittered dried prune of a woman who lived on the edge of society—the spinster teacher or librarian. While single women did face many disadvantages and discriminations, then, I doubt whether this stereotype was true even then. Nowadays the stereo-

types have changed and some of the discrimination has lessened but we are still sometimes stereotyped. Two stereotypes that I have run across are two opposites. One says that we are man hungry men chasers and another says that if we don't have a man we must be gay. Doubtless there are a few of us who are men chasers and a few of us who are gay but the vast majority of us single women are neither of that!

I, for one, am not ashamed of being single; I enjoy my single independence. I like having my cosy little apartment to myself. Of course, there are times when I want friends and company around me. But I am too busy to bother worrying whether my life will always be like this. There is so much to do and so many causes to support and a career to work on. I am leading a busy, happy life as I am. Let's get rid of the stereotypes that fail to see us as individuals!

I would like to hear from other single women about their experiences.

Yours truly,  
Sharon Catherine Hager  
510-7th Ave. No. 307  
New Westminster, B.C.

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