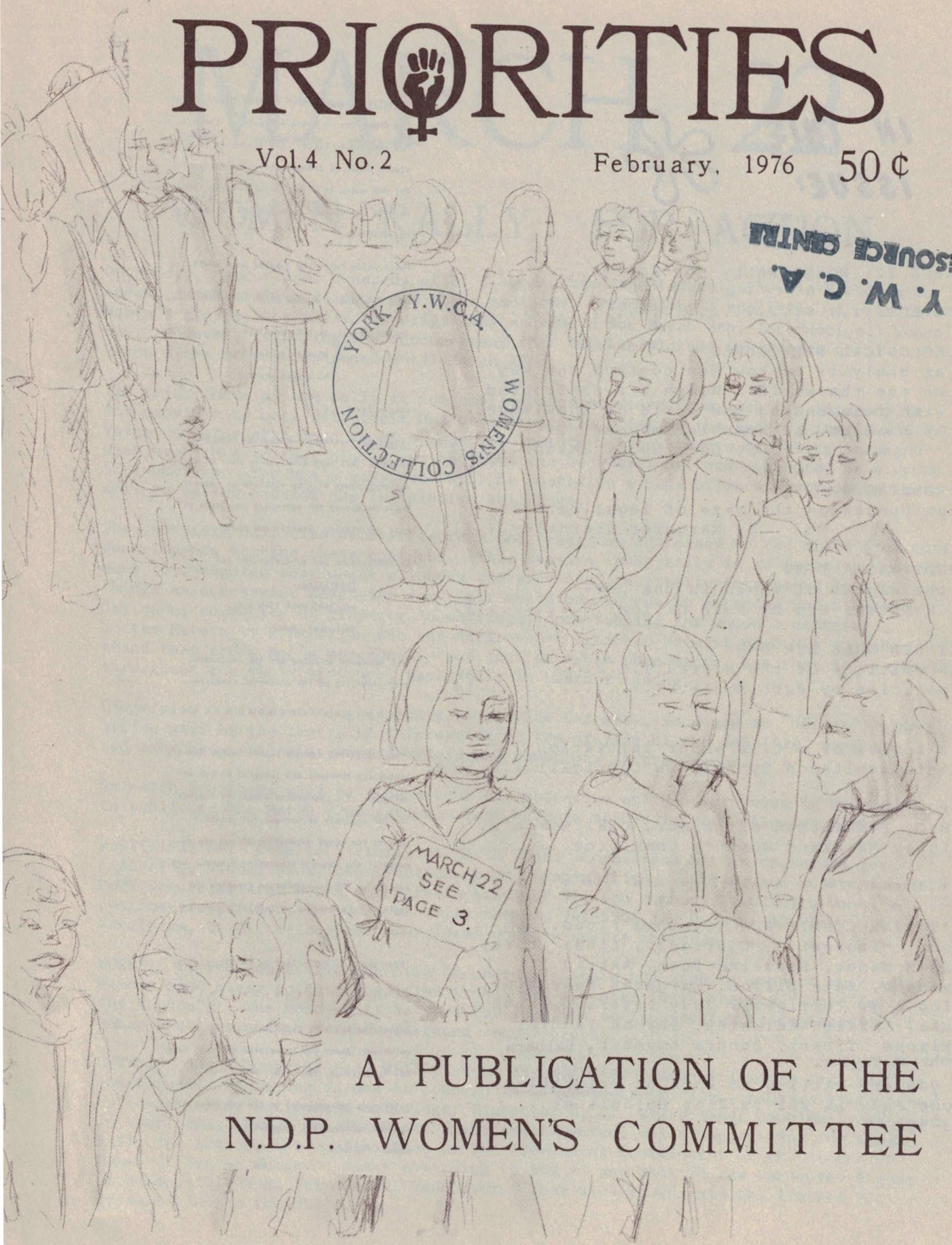


PRIORITIES

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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."

(From the B.C. NDP policy on Women's Rights)

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MARCH 22

WOMEN RALLY FOR ACTION

On Monday, March 22nd, hundreds of B. C. women are expected to gather in Victoria to speak, demonstrate and lobby for their concerns. Planned by a coalition of over thirty women's groups, the rally was originally scheduled for March 8th, International Women's Day. However, following the announcement that the Legislature won't open until March 17th, it was postponed until March 22nd.

The major focus of the rally is for small groups of women from each constituency in the province to meet with their MLA's to present a brief on the general issues and to voice concerns of a more local or specific nature. Appointments are being arranged with every MLA so that his or her position can be questioned and evaluated by a group of lobbyists. The MLA's responses will be posted on a huge billboard structure that will be set up outside the legislative buildings.

The lobbyists will also deliver letters and telegrams addressed to the MLA's from their constituents stating their concerns. This massive lobby-rally is to force the government to recognize that women all over the province are vitally interested in such things as non-sexist education for their children, access to expanded and flexible day care, community of property in marriage, core funding for women's centres, a better Maternity Protection Act and Affirmative Action. We want each MLA to understand that the women's movement is not just an urban phenomenon, but that it is growing throughout the whole province, especially in his/her riding.

Plans also include setting up tents to provide for kids, food and an "office". The office will be the centre of information on the program of the day (i.e. speakers and entertainment) and provide briefs and pamphlets on the issues.

On March 8th there will be a noon-hour demonstration at the Courthouse in Vancouver to publicize the March 22nd Action. Your help is needed in the following ways:

PARTICIPATION: Come to Victoria on March 22nd. Committees have been struck for billeting, visual aids, construction, food, transportation, lobbying and entertainment. Port Coquitlam Area Women's Centre is handling all the communication with women's centres/groups in B. C. Call or write them at 941-6311, P. O. Box 243, Port Coquitlam, B. C., or contact your local women's centre or group.

MONEY: If you don't have the time or energy to spare but wish to support this action, please send money to Port Coquitlam Area Women's Centre (mark cheques "Women Rally for Action"). The money will be used for supplies and to pay for transportation of women who live a considerable distance from Victoria.

LETTERS: Each lobbying team will present the MLA with boxes of letters from his/her constituents regarding issues of concern to women in the riding. Address your letter to (name), MLA, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B. C. Write about problems women have in your area, things you think are important to women; voice support for the Women Rally for Action, for continuation of the Provincial Coordinator of the Status of Women Office -- whatever means something to you -- and MAIL TO the Vancouver Status of Women, 2029 West 4th Avenue, Vancouver. They will coordinate the letters for presentation to the MLA's.

LETTERS

Dear Priorities:

Both Joe and I really enjoy Priorities and read it from cover to cover. It is a good link with what is happening in B.C., as well as a consistent and thoughtful comment on the women's movement and on other topics. Congratulations.

The only article of 1975 which I was disappointed in was the one by Gene Errington on the IWY Congress in Mexico City. The article suggested strongly that the third world women and their attempt to focus discussion on the economic relationship of their countries to the industrial bloc, had been divisive, and had taken valuable time away from the important topic--that of women's issues. I don't think this does them justice! Surely they were trying to define women's issues in the larger context of an exploitive capitalist relationship between countries and ultimately, between people.

At the upcoming Habitat meeting in June, you will have a golden opportunity to meet with third world delegations since it is likely that the same "blocs" will be present. Why doesn't Priorities organize some forums or meetings with third world women who will be at Habitat to try and determine what their concerns are, and how they are fighting exploitation? I think this might clear up some misunderstandings and would probably be informative and fun.

Here in Winnipeg, we're fighting wage controls. Enclosed is a

pamphlet an ad hoc committee printed to unite people against the program. The real test will be in April when provincial government employees bargain with Schreyer and his government. As you know, he supports the controls! And as you also know, the women in the Civil Service are lowest paid and stand to lose the most through controls.

Keep up the good work! Standing by your principles is the only way to rebuild in B.C.

In sisterhood and solidarity,
Barbara Campbell, Winnipeg.

Please send me my very own copy of Priorities every month--the one at my office keeps disappearing every month.

D. Bissell, Vancouver.

I wanted to write to you for such a long time. Yet petty things kept creeping up. Three things I wanted to let you know.

1. My utmost admiration for the standard, the perseverance and the amount of articles i.e. work that go and have gone in so many issues of Priorities. As someone acquainted with voluntary efforts, I can't help feel your publication must be based on super human efforts.

2. That you are still supporting the NDP in spite of the again and again made obvious, long uphill battle, is an immense political achievement too. So many have given up in the face of some of the setbacks we have suffered only to start rotating around their own axis in a socio-political vacuum.

3. A suggestion. Why don't you set up a committee which would produce a set of resolutions which you feel most important at a given time and which you could suggest to all subscribing NDP women to propose

to their ridings for submission to Conventions. This would not only apply at the federal level but even provincially. Much of what you feel is valid in B.C. may also be applied to other provinces. In this way a far more unified pressure is applied as far as women's issues is concerned. Besides if a whole series of ridings endorse the same resolutions, it is difficult to ignore them.

Well so much for now. I hope that this does not sound patronizing because it sure is not meant that way. And I look forward to the next convention to working with you and supporting your efforts again. This time 30 lbs and one baby-boy lighter.

Warmest sisterly greetings
Regula Modlich, Toronto.

In Manitoba last weekend we had our provincial convention. Four important resolutions for women were passed: A resolution calling for full and immediate community of property and income rights in marriage; a resolution calling for the implementation of a parent income security plan to recognize the productive work done in the home by women raising children; a strong resolution on day care criticizing in depth the current provincial government's program; and a resolution calling for the enactment of Human Rights Legislation as Primacy Legislation to ensure that on the provincial level at least there would be no conflict as exists on the Federal Level between the Indian Act and the Bill of Rights.

But perhaps the battle we lost was on the issue of wage and price controls. This issue is directly related to women since we remain at the bottom income levels and thus have the greatest chance of living in poverty. We, along with others in the party, hoped that at our convention the party would unite in a strong condemnation of

the federal program and urge our government to express these feelings. This did not happen. We instead passed a resolution that expressed reservation but realized that the provincial government was in fact doing all it could at this time.

Our NDP Status of Women group has taken a strong stand against the Wage and Price Control Program and endorsed the federal NDP program. Some within the group have become involved with the Common Front Against Wage Controls which will continue to fight the program.

In sisterhood,
Lynda Yanz, Winnipeg.

Priorities is interesting and challenging reading...a donation to further the cause of feminism (socialism). We are trying to get articles for the Commonwealth that are of interest to women (and a challenge to them) and badly need contributions from women all over Saskatchewan.

Gail Powell, Regina.

In her recent article (January 76 Priorities "Defeat by Attitude") Sharon Yandle says:

"Barrett has been wrongly criticized for calling the election at a bad time. Wrongly, because given that the government would not and did not change its attitudes, any time would have been a bad time."

I don't quite agree. First, because with almost two years that the Government could have stayed in office, the first fact to recognize is that there would be an NDP Government sitting in Victoria today...except that Mr. Barrett for what esoteric reasons are still not clear, decided to call it for December 11! In my opinion, after only three years, with many

programs still shaking down (like ICBC), if there was the faintest probability of defeat, Mr.Barrett and his advisors (whoever they were), was not only very mistaken, but gravely irresponsible to call this election. Since Mr.Barrett and his associates took upon themselves this serious responsibility they deserve to be held to account before the bar of the Party for so huge an error in judgement.

At times many of us may feel that Mr.Barrett and the Government were so subversive of the principles of socialism, so anti-labour, so anti-women etc. that it is no loss; however, most of us are not likely to go quite that far.

A second reason is that there were considerable lack of principle and even dishonesty in calling an election after only three years. You will recall that a staple criticism of the NDP, including Mr.Barrett, of WAC Bennett's regime was his calling snap elections, after three years in office instead of running out at least a four year term. Wacky's tactics seemed to be to keep his opponents on the ropes all the time. No doubt Mr.Barrett believed he could pull the same stunt. It was my understanding that a reform in election practice that the NDP had committed itself to institute was the regularization of periods in office, so that everyone knew where they stood, especially working people; i.e. a definite minimum four year term. Instead, Mr. Barrett opted for the traditional semi-conning approach of British parliamentary tradition.

A third reason is that Mr.Barrett could hardly have chosen a more unfavourable time. It is elementary for any "socialist" politician that you never call an election during bad weather especially just before Christmas, when people have their minds on anything but elections. It is your opponents who set elections for late fall

or mid-winter, since they know that working-people are less likely to get out to vote than during good weather. This is basic.

The time was particularly unfavourable too because in demanding "a mandate," surely many people must have wondered, after only three years, and nearly two to go, why Mr.Barrett needed a mandate? What was he trying to hide? There were rumours of financial mismanagement in government and his opponents were highlighting these charges. Many voters must have concluded that there must be some truth to them, and perhaps voted for Socred party so they could find out what the government was trying to hide

I agree with Sharon's "...anytime would have been a bad time" in a sense, and yet it is apparent that given the improved financial management of Dave Stupich, shake-down of certain programs, etc. I believe the NDP might have made it in 1976 or early summer of 1977.

For critics of the NDP Establishment like ourselves, naturally, the defeat of the NDP Establishment (for that is what it was...they had everything their own way and did what they pleased, uncontrolled by any loyalty to the Party and totally uncontrollable) of course represents an unexpected opportunity to build an honest, non-mercenary, collective leadership, integrated in and directed by a mass party of the working people.

Incidentally the demographic make-up of the 40% NDP vote was different than 1972. The NDP lost both organized and unorganized workers, youth, women, Indians, teachers... it picked up votes among old age pensioners and the handicapped, and the civil servants.

Yours fraternally,
K.E. Grieve,
Vancouver

* * * * *

IDEOLOGICAL STRUCTURES

AND HOW WOMEN ARE EXCLUDED

In this society, men to a large extent appropriate the positions from which it is governed, administered, and managed. I use these three terms because I want to focus on the general processes by which the ruling of the society gets done. Men hold the positions from which the work of organizing the society is initiated and controlled. One distinctive feature is that this work or organizing is done largely in symbols; it is done to a very large extent on paper. This is part of a total process in society in which things are done in words, on telephone, in mathematical symbols, and on computer cards. These are not empty forms, they are forms of action. They are ideological forms of action. Images, vocabularies, concepts, knowledges, and methods of knowing the world are integral to the practice of power in this society.

The work of creating the concepts of categories, developing the knowledge and the skills which transform the actualities of the experienced world (the everyday world, the world where we are physically in our bodies)--the work of transforming these into forms in which they may be governed is an ideological work. It is a work of putting things into the form in which they can be represented on paper. Universities, schools, systems of broadcasting, publishing companies, and the like are the specifically ideological institutions of the society. They are not the only ones for, as I have stressed, the general work of organizing the society is done in

ideological modes. But these kinds of organizations produce, distribute, and socialize people into the ideological forms upon which this social organization depends.

This mode of organizing society has its origins perhaps most distinctly some four or five hundred years ago in western Europe. It is from this work--the work of producing the forms of thought and the images which order and express society--that women have been excluded.

Throughout this period in which ideologies became of increasing importance first, as a mode of thinking, legitimating, and sanctioning a social order and then, as integral to the organization of society as they are now, women have been deprived of the means to participate in creating the forms of thought relevant to or adequate to express their own experience, or to define and make socially conscious their situation and concerns. They have never controlled the material or social means to the making of a tradition among themselves. They have had no economic status independent of men. They have never controlled the material or social means to act as equals in the ongoing discourse of intellectuals. They have not had until very recently access to the educational skills necessary to develop, sustain, and participate in it. Their scope of action has indeed over time been increasingly narrowed to the domestic.

This of course doesn't mean that there hasn't been a zone of ideological work that women have had--

coinciding more or less with the domestic. This is the one that we are familiar with--the ideological ghetto, if you like, of T.V., soap operas, women's novels, poetry etc. Not that I am knocking it but it is limited; it is a confined zone that belongs to women while the "real," "important" problems belong somewhere else.

The universe of ideas, images and feelings--the symbolic modes which are the general currency of thought have been either produced by men or controlled by men. And in so far as the work of women has entered into it, it has been on terms decided by men and because it has been approved by men. This applies in fact to many of the writings of the women's movement.

THE CONCEPT OF IDEOLOGY

Ideology is ordinarily used to talk about people's political beliefs as a distinct set of ideas, or to insult people with respect to the objectivity of what they are saying. I'm not going to use the term ideology in either of those ways. I am going to use the term as Marx and Engels did in "The German Ideology." I would like to stress three aspects of their concept which help to make observable to us some of the distinct aspects of this mode of organization, although it is one that has been developed more since the period in which they wrote.

Marx and Engels were concerned with ideology as a means through which the class which rules a society orders and sanctions the social relations which support its hegemony (that is, its control and authority). First of all then, the concept of ideology focuses on the social forms of consciousness. By this it is important to understand that we are not talking just about how people think. We are talking rather about what becomes social in the sense that it is talked about, so that it becomes part of the substance of what is between

people as an objective social reality. These are the forms which formulate and organize action. That is what is meant by being social, by social form of consciousness--the ways in which people think and talk with one another.

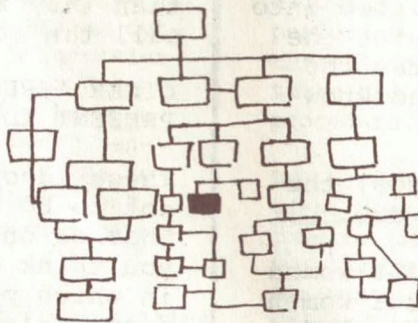
Secondly, these systems of ideas which originate in and are part of a practise of ruling the society. They are located in and originate from definite positions of dominance in society. In other words they are not to be equated with the neutral term "a culture." When you are talking about ideology you are talking about systems of ideas, ways of talking, images and symbols that are created by some people for other people's uses as part of a practice of ruling.

Finally, these are the terms in which experience becomes actionable and in which if it is to become actionable it must be expressed. The ideological forms are crucial to making your experience something which can be spoken of and acted upon. Otherwise it is just sort of stuck back there (in your head) where you are in a form that does not take on a social character. It is of this that women have been deprived--of the participation in the making of the social forms in which experience, interests, concerns become actionable in this form of society.

One of the ways in which ideology is often talked about is as if there is manipulation going on from behind the scenes. That is not what I'm addressing here. I'm not talking about propaganda. This is a more fundamental process. Those people who are involved in the process of constructing ideologies--those who work in universities, in the media, those who write, who create T.V. scripts, people who in various ways are concerned with the writing of the laws and the development of systems of management--these people are involved in ideological practices which begin with processes of planning and processes of

developing concepts (ways of thinking about things). The work of producing them is a specialized work that is done by people with specific kinds of training--the training for living in what you might describe as a head world, that is, a world where your primary mode of action is on paper and in words. These powers of creating an ideological universe are located with people in particular positions in the society, with people who have particular kinds of interests, and particular experiences and ways of looking at the world. It is not that they go about to set people up and to deceive, it is that this is the way in which they see it, how it makes sense to them.

This is a class phenomena. Of the members of the class represented in creating the ideological forms of the society, it is the men who occupy the key positions which control the production of ideologies. Therefore the world that they have put together, is made up from the perspective of men and not from the perspective of women. Women participate very minimally in this process and they participate largely on conditions that are made by men. It is important to see that the way in which men occupy the positions which largely monopolize the production of ideology is consequential because that is how they see the world. They see the world, you see the world, from a particular position in it. Because you see the world from that position it appears to you as if that is how it is. Those moments when we encounter the world as different, as other than the way we see it, are when somebody else confronts us with a different seeing, from a different position. So long as that somebody else is silent, as women have been silent, that other version of the world does not confront it.



I want to emphasize that this exclusion of women has not been the result of biological impairment. Women in the past have suffered in upholding the rights of women to speak and to speak with authority and to present their own version of the world. These are women who have been, as Sheila Rowbotham says, "hidden from history" because women's history has only in the last three or four years begun to be written. Women until this time have had no history precisely because they have been excluded from the means to write it and to create it. There has been in the past a process of active suppression of women who attempted to claim for themselves and for women the right to speak and to participate in the ideological processes of society. These women have in the past been burned, guillotined, exiled, and incarcerated in mental institutions, and in the present they have been ridiculed, reviled and insulted because they claimed the right to speak as women, for women. Let's be quite clear that this exclusion is not first of all biologically based, but that it has been an active exclusion. It has not been something that women have chosen but it is something that has been chosen for them.

Of course in this kind of society the exclusion of women from actively making and creating the forms under which social relations are thought and spoken of has not in general had to be so violently suppressed. The ordinary socially organized processes of socialization education, work, and communication perform more routine, generalized and effective practice. The education system is an important aspect of this practice because it trains people in the skills they need in order at various levels to participate in these ideological forms of control. It trains people in the images and forms of what the ideology sanctions

as real, it trains them in the appropriate relations and in how to identify the authoritative ideological sources--which books are the OK books to read, who to credit and who to discredit, what kind of people are to be listened to as authorities and what kind are not. It is part of a system which distributes ideas and ensures the dissemination of new ideological forms as these are produced. The education system is also active itself in producing the forms in which the society is thought.

As we go up the scale of the education system, starting with primary school and going up through various levels of the university, we find decreasing percentages of women at each level up in this hierarchy. I want this to be seen now not as an issue of equality of opportunity for women; I want to draw attention to the significance of these inequalities, of how women are located in processes of setting standards, producing social knowledge, and acting as the gatekeepers over what is admitted into the system which distributes the ideas and which distributes the innovations in thought and knowledge in the society.

In eight Canadian provinces, the percentages for 1969-70 were:

Primary school teachers	75% women
Secondary teachers	34% women
School principals	23.6% "
Community college educational staff	18.6% "
University faculty (all ranks)	12.5% "

The last figure represents only six universities.

It is important when we look at these structures to see that they are rather powerful structures of professional control. It is through these structures of ranks and the procedures by which people are advanced from one to another that the professions and bureaucracies maintain control over the nature and quality of work that is done,

over the kinds of people who are admitted to the ranks and who become those who share in this process of control. Looking at the universities specifically, we can see the concentration of women in the non-tenured ranks. In 1972 at the University of British Columbia women had 30.3% of the non-tenured positions and 6.35% of tenured positions. If you look at them as if they were votes, that means that at the tenured level there were 6.35 in every 100 votes which represent women and might represent women's interests. There is this minimal voting power in the university. Women are effectively not represented.

The faculties, such as commerce and law which are concerned with the ideological forms which are most intimately connected with the process of ruling the society, had no women members in 1972. What this means is that as you get closer to the effective business of the society, women are more markedly excluded than they are from what you might call the softer forms of control.

OTHER ASPECTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF PRESENT IDEOLOGICAL STRUCTURES

These ideological structures are not to be seen merely as things that go on in people's heads. When you think of them as the forms in which people talk and get things done it is important to see them as features of a social organization and not just things that are sort of floating around there, in the books, safely tucked up in the library without consequences. I want to talk about how some of these processes work as we encounter them on a day to day basis in the course of our work. I want you to begin to see them as an intimate part of your working world.

Continued p.27

MORGENTALER

"Where does the daring end?
Where does it have to lead?
A jail cell?
A wall of execution by a firing squad?"

From a poem written by Dr. Henry Morgentaler - 1972.

On January 26, 1976 Dr. Henry Morgentaler was released from the Mount Royal Rest Home where he had been confined since last June when he suffered a mild heart attack. Previous to June he had been a prisoner at the Waterloo detention center 45 miles east of Montreal. Dr. Morgentaler's 18 month sentence began March 27, 1975 when he was imprisoned in the Bordeaux jail in Montreal - Bordeaux - a huge, mediaeval structure where conditions are even worse than the B.C. Penitentiary in New Westminster. His cell was small, barren, contained an uncovered toilet, a rusty sink, no reading material.... He was permitted a one hour visit per week. There was an outcry from Canadians and Dr. Morgentaler was transferred to the Waterloo detention center. Dr. Morgentaler has now served 10 months of the 18 month sentence imposed July 25, 1974 as the result of the appeal to a Quebec Court which reversed the jury decision to acquit him.

And now? After the maze of legal battles in which the Quebec authorities and the Federal Cabinet have been determined "to get this doctor"? And now? Justice Minister Ron Basford has ordered a new trial because he says "of exceptional circumstances."

Many of us and thousands of other Canadians have been shocked at this "national scandal" - when a jury acquittal was reversed, when the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the appeal of the Quebec Court in a 5-3 decision and when a doctor was imprisoned for performing medically safe abortions in a modern well-run clinic in Montreal. Doctors, social agencies and hospitals referred desperate, poor women to Dr. Morgentaler's clinic for

abortions because they could not get help elsewhere.

Since 1967, since 1969, and especially since 1973 the hundreds of people working to remove abortion from the criminal code and thousands of others have worked to defend Dr. Morgentaler and the stand he took on behalf of Canadian women. Letters, petitions, appeals for a pardon and for dropping the charges against him and other doctors - all to no avail. We all know that Federal cabinet members have been criticized for their cruelty to Dr. Morgentaler.

Dr. Morgentaler's release followed the January 21, 1976 decision by the Quebec Court of Appeal to unanimously uphold the June 1975 jury verdict acquitting him. Claude-Armand Sheppard based his defence before the appeal court on the common law defense of necessity which allows an act prohibited by law to be performed in a case of dire need. The three judges in this appeal found that there had been no errors of judicial procedure in the original case.

Dr. Morgentaler was quoted in the Montreal Star, "I had no idea it would all come to this. And after all the suffering I've been through, I'm not sure it was worth it personally. I know, though, it was worth it for the principle"....

"Humane decent laws for women will triumph in the long run. And my sacrifice will be worth it."

On March 1st Dr. Morgentaler will appear in court and a date will be set for a new trial.

Eleanor Pelrine's new book Morgentaler, The Doctor Who Couldn't Turn Away has been published by Gage. It is available in bookstores.

Margaret Beardsley
Port Moody

THERE WAS

A TIME

By

Kate Dillon

I enjoyed Hilda's speech on Feminism and Socialism in the November issue of Priorities. I agreed with all her major points but I would like to dispute her statements concerning the position of women in Greco-Roman society and Germanic society.

Women of classical Greece did not lose the power and prestige they had until after the Dorian conquest and even then their position remained high until Rome succeeded in Christianising Greece in the 5th century A.D. Under Athenian law women enjoyed rights which until quite recently were denied Canadian women.

1. The right of abortion and birth control. Plato in the "Laws" recommends that Greek women should bear two children "the number regarded as adequate by law" to maintain the population. In "Politics" Aristotle advised women practicing abortion to do so "before the foetus receives life," that is before the sixth month.

2. The right to unilateral divorce. Athenian law gave the right of repudiation without penalty to the woman. But for a man to repudiate his wife he had to hand over one half of his wealth to his wife.

3. The right to own and administer her own property.

In Ionian Athens and Doric Sparta girls and women ran, wrestled, hunted and competed in games with boys and men and Plato in the Republic says "No calling in the life of the city belongs to woman as a

woman or to a man as a man; by nature the woman has a share in all practices as has the man. For a woman to hold the guardianship she will not need special education. We will be dealing with the same nature in woman as in the man and the same education will be required of both."

In Rome voluntary birth control and legal abortion were practiced by women and a Roman law of 485 B.C. required that all children be educated equally regardless of sex or social condition. Divorce laws were favourable to women in Rome also. Grounds for divorce were numerous including old age, poor health and even absence on army duty. Women attained great power and influence in the Roman Empire. They enjoyed freedom of intercourse in society; they studied literature and philosophy; they took part in political affairs; they defended their own law cases if they wished; and they engaged in the government of provinces and the writing of books. But all this was swept away with the rising tide of Christianity.

When Tacitus refers to "Germani," he is referring to a Celtic tribe of that name. The Teutonic people we know as the Germans of today did not emerge into historical view until the 5th century A.D. Then they emerged as the Goths and Vandals. The Celtic people in the third century B.C. stretched from Galatia in Asia Minor to Scotland and Ireland and south to Spain, and although all the written records we have of these people originated with men whose countries were

enemies of the Celts, they all speak admiringly of the Celtic women... their nobility, pride, courage and independence. Caesar recorded in the Gallic wars in 58 B.C.... "it was for the matrons to decide when troops should attack and when withdraw." In the treaty drawn up between the Celts and Carthaginians in the third century B.C. it was stipulated that "If the Celtae have any complaints against the Carthaginian soldiers, the Carthaginians commander shall judge it. But if the Carthaginians have anything to lay to the charge of the Celtae, it shall be brought before the Celtic women." In England we have the warrior Celtic Queen Boadicea who routed the armies of Rome and captured the Roman cities of London, Colchester and St. Albans.

The Brehon Laws, a body of laws handed down since pre-historic times to the Celts of Ireland, are an example of the just and intelligent laws of the Celtic people.



(M₂76)

Pertaining to women the Laws gave them the right to inherit landed estates and titles. Husband and wife were equal and had equal rights under the Laws. The wife not only remained sole owner of her own property on marriage (as in Greek and Roman law before Christianity) but also acquired an equal share of her husbands. They could represent themselves in court and sue even their own husbands to recover debts. With cause she could divorce her husband and on separation she could retain her own property as well as her husbands dowry and other marriage gifts. In addition she could demand from one third to one half of her husband's wealth.

The Brehon Laws concerning women were challenged by the Christian Church and were gradually whittled away, to be replaced by the repressive Christian doctrine of "Wives submit yourselves to your husbands, for the husband is the head of the wife (Ephesians 5: 22-23)." Originally in the Celtic parts of Europe Christianity had no popular appeal and it was only when the Virgin Mary was dug out of oblivion that this religion became acceptable to the masses of the Goddess worshipping Celtic peoples. St. Patrick, who is supposed to have been a Celt and who would then have understood their needs is the central figure in many folk tales, one of which concerns his arrival in Ireland. There he found a group worshipping Brigante, the mother of the gods, and he convinced them that Brigante and the Virgin Mary were the same person. And to this day Ireland is a Mary-centred rather than a Jesus-centred land, as are all the remnants of the Celtic peoples throughout Europe.

So in the old Celtic world and in pre-Christian Greece and Rome women were freer than in the last 1000 years. The advent of Christianity started the long downward journey. Hopefully we are now starting to climb again.

LET HER SELL HER CAR !

By now most B.C. residents know what they will have to pay for car insurance this year. Hardest hit are the under 25 year olds who have all been judged guilty of wreckless driving and must expiate their sins with new rates of around \$500 to as high as \$1,300. It is true that the under 25 women come off better than men but, in most cases, her earning power is about 60% of the male. Many people in this group are students who need cars to drive long distances to classes and who are usually as poor as church mice.

Single parents, usually women, face equal difficulties. Confronted with double to triple ICBC rates in a period of so-called "price controls" she is apt to throw up her hands and give up. Like the young mother from North Vancouver who wrote to the Vancouver-Sun and stated that she would have to sell her car. Selling it meant she wouldn't be able to look for employment opportunities wherever they were offered, she wouldn't be able to take her sons on weekend outings during good weather nor would she be able to help out the elderly members of her family when they needed a ride.

Women who live in the suburbs and isolated areas and who stay at home with young children will suffer. They usually drive the clunker, the second car, but it gets them around--to the store, to visit friends, to a few classes or hobbies, maybe, even, to look for a part-time job. Father drives

the good car to work. He has to have a good vehicle and, since insurance rates are now too high for two cars, the clunker is sacrificed. Mother will be housebound unless she takes a bus--a pretty difficult thing to do in many places. True, the NDP government made an attempt to service the province with a good public transit system but there is still much to be done. The Socreds have never been committed to public transit. The whole system will deteriorate and with it the minds of many suburban women. The incidence of "housewife's syndrome" will increase and those who pontificate from Victoria will wonder why these women cannot be contented in their beautiful homes surrounded by their beautiful gardens and children and there will be nasty remarks about feminism making women discontented with their natural functions.

For women in isolated Northern areas of B.C. the situation will be even worse. Elimination of territorial equalization grants makes their insurance rates more costly. Their husbands often work at jobs in mines, lumbering and construction that take them away for long periods of time and with them will go the only vehicle they can afford to drive.

Now, of course, the reasoning behind this treachery handed to us by the car dealers in Victoria is that ICBC must "pay its own way." ICBC was originally introduced by the NDP as a social service. Car insurance was and is a necessity

if one drives and private American insurance companies should not make a profit (to be reinvested in the States and not in B.C.) on something people were compelled by law to purchase. If ICBC must pay its way is Bennett suggesting that all social services must "pay their way?" Do our education and health and welfare systems really pay their way? Do the roads that are built for the cars that are insured pay their way? Would Mr. McGeer please tell us how he proposed to keep roads out of the red? Perhaps by an extra premium tacked on to ICBC, by an increase in our sales tax, gasoline tax, income tax or a super-tax on those who use the roads the most.

The other fallacy that Social Credit is pedalling is that high risk drivers must pay accordingly. Dennis Cocke recently said that if the government applied the same reasoning to health care as ICBC-- that those who cost the system more should pay more--"look at the rates you'd have to charge old people." And, one might add, the rates you'd have to charge drug addicts, the mentally ill, alcoholics or those with chronic lengthy illnesses like multiple sclerosis. Perhaps, also, the family that sends five children to school should pay more school tax than the family that sends one.

The real purpose of McGeer and company is to attempt to discredit public auto insurance and the NDP and to pave the way for the private companies to step in next year with prices slightly below the '76 rates and they'll all look like good people. The projected deficit was a fallacy. Gas tax money was earmarked by Barrett to cover projected overspending in 1976. The Bennett government has refused to use this money.

A few years ago Pat McGeer wrote a book about the W.A.C. Bennett regime called "Politics in Paradise". Now that he has joined forces with his former "enemies" it appears

that he and his government are determined to make politics into a "paradise" for all the women in the province starting with ICBC, the firing of Gene Errington, and her department.

RUTH HOULE
Delta

TEST CASE

A case of considerable importance concerning the authority and jurisdiction of the human rights legislation brought in by the N.D.P. government will come before the B.C. Supreme Court later this spring. At issue is the right of the Vancouver Sun to refuse a classified ad submitted by a gay liberation paper, Gay Tide. In January, a Human Rights Board ruled that the Sun's refusal constituted discrimination in that it denied a service customarily available to the public (access to the widely-circulated classifieds) to a member of a minority group, for no reasonable cause. The Ruling ordered the Sun to cease the discriminatory practice and to pay a fine of \$500.00. The Sun has appealed the Ruling to the courts, claiming it contravenes "freedom of the press". The Ruling itself is something of a landmark. A good deal of its argumentation is based on the analysis of homosexual and lesbian oppression in this society put forward for many years now by the gay liberation movement, and on the movement's demand for recognition of gay people as a minority group entitled to fully equal civil rights. All those interested in human rights, and in the question of the extent of the jurisdiction of the B.C. Human Rights Code, will watch the fate of this test case closely.

In every life that reaches maturity there is a moment--brief or extended--between the time of childhood and the time of adulthood. The transition from dependence to independence. In our culture we have extended that moment into years--the teenage years--so that there is a long period of uncertainty partly adult, partly child. In addition there is no definite end to this period. There is no ceremony to take one across the river to adulthood. Women are discouraged from ever crossing over. Those who do often find themselves on a treacherous, uncharted journey.

Walkabout is an Australian film that tells of the initiation of two young people--a boy and a girl--of diverse cultures. The Walkabout is the journey a young Australian aborigine makes as an initiation into manhood. He goes alone into the desert, armed with tools he has made himself, eats and drinks what he can find and meets and relates to the spiritual of his world.

Usually a white Australian girl would not have such an experience. Responding to time-tables, ethics and rationale of school, family and social life she moves from one environment to another with no period at which to look inside, and hence outside herself, to understand what and why she is.

A bizarre happening takes the heroine of Walkabout out of this usual scenario. The girl is picnicing with her father and young brother in a deserted spot off the main road. Without warning the father pulls out a gun and begins to shoot at the children. The girl quickly responds to the danger and pulls her brother to safety. The father seemingly intent on killing the children accidentally shoots himself and the car in which he is sitting bursts into flame.

Suddenly the heroine finds herself an urban teenager dressed in a school tunic with limited supplies-

WALK ABOUT

a film review



in a strange deserted land responsible for the safety of herself and her brother.

She packs up the few picnic things and with encouraging words to her little brother leads him in search of civilization. After days of sleeping out, sweating and walking in the noon heat, hungry and thirsty the two meet up with an aboriginal boy on his walkabout. They join him and share the water and food he finds. The three remain together until in their wandering they find a house (deserted) and a road.

The innocent and idyllic time they shared is ending. The boy, part of a culture strange and unfathomable to the white children, completes his vigil in a night long dance. Unhappily his walkabout has been desecrated by the appearance of the other two children. Apparently he has no choice but suicide.

The white children have found the road. However their lives have also been touched. The glimpse at innocence, at living with nature and with themselves has changed them. They follow the road back to property, radio, sexual restrictions, consumer goods. The response when they knock on the first door is a cranky old man telling them to go away and not to destroy private property.

The structure of the story is ordered and simple. The straight forward symbolism of innocence and adulthood, the natural and the "civilized" binds one as a fairy tale does. There is a rhythm and sensitivity seldom offered in film. A feeling of time and time passing --of the sounds and power of nature and the discordant noise and movement of the urban society.

Film is, above all, a visual experience. A good film should be understandable without a sound track. In this sense Walkabout is excellent. It makes use of sound but with care as in the noise of

an insect in the desert. The dialogue is sparse--just what cannot be expressed otherwise, enough to show the barrier between the white and aborigine is more a cultural than linguistic one, enough to give the feel of a small boy's voice in an empty land.

At the end of this film the heroine has returned to her own culture no longer innocent, but haunted by the memory of another possibility. She has a new strength. She has become an adult. She has gone her walkabout and she has survived.

Melodie J. Corrigan - text
Margaret J. Corrigan - illus.

Money

In December Priorities had herself a Christmas Party. A hat (or reasonable facsimile--actually a trashcan-lid) was passed, and \$131.00 were collected.

THANKS TO ALL!

Dorothy E. Smith

Dorothy E. Smith is associate professor of sociology at the University of British Columbia, where she helped a large group of women organize the Women's Action Group on campus, and was instrumental in initiating the Women's Studies Credit Courses program. Her complete article on "Ideological Structures and How Women Are Excluded" was published in the Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, November 1975, Part I. (The whole issue is on women in Canada, and includes a good article on women in the labour force by Hugh and Pat Armstrong.)

Priorities appreciates this opportunity to print Dorothy Smith's insightful speech.

Unionism For Women

I wanted to say hello and tell you that the B.C. Federation of Labour now has an office and a full-time director for Women's Programs. Our mandate from the November 1975 Convention of the B.C. Federation of Labour (BCFL) says that the program and duties of the staff person shall include "encouraging the formation of Women's Rights Committees in each local, meeting with those committees regularly, organizing regional Women's Conferences, a newsletter, a bureau of information on courses available through the B.C.F.L. and the Canadian Labour Congress (C.L.C.) and advising and assisting women to become active in their union affairs."

There are Women's Rights Committees now in various unions in B.C. and more beginning all the time. The B.C.F.L. itself has had an active Women's Rights Committee since 1970 and has begun to link up with Women's Committees forming on national and provincial union levels.

We are holding Women in the Work Force Courses through the C.L.C. at Labour Council Weekend Labour Schools in many areas of the province, and will hold a week-long course at the Harrison Hot Springs Winter Labour School (it used to be in Parksville) from March 28-April 2. Through these courses and other methods we hope to have contact with women in most areas of the province by the end of the year.

We're excited about what we're doing, the possibilities of it, the support we're finding within the

labour movement of B.C. for women and hope that we can have some space in Priorities regularly to tell you what's happening at greater length.

At present we are starting with the same concept of a Women's Rights Committee but groups in different unions are moving in totally different direction in their exploration of how they want to change their lives on a personal level and within their unions. Some unions have developed new contract languages concerning maternity leave, flex-time, affirmative action etc. You might be interested in hearing about these and other aspects of our program experience.

We want to be involved with the NDP Women's Committee and with as many of you as possible and be involved in ways that will help you and the women in your area or workplace accomplish the goals that you have set for yourself. If we can be a resource for you please let us know through your local or call me at the B.C. Federation office, Vancouver 879-3568 or at home 736-0904.

We have a button which says "Solidarity--Women for Unionism, Unionism for Women" and we believe in that solidarity and want it to exist between us and want to work with you to achieve it.

In sisterhood,
Gail Borst,
Director of Women's Program,
B.C. Federation of Labour,
517 East Broadway,
Vancouver.

CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

Many concrete plans for strengthening the scope of the NDP Women's Committee were made at our last Central Steering Committee meeting, held on Feb. 1 in Vancouver. Running a not-unusual 5 ½ hours, we had a chance to discuss a variety of items.

1. Betty McClurg gave a report on the work-to-date of the Federal Participation of Women (P.O.W.) Committee. The P.O.W. Committee is composed of 6 or 7 women from the Federal Council of the Party. The first meeting since the Federal Council was elected was held in January. The P.O.W. is planning its first meeting at the end of February, probably in Sault St. Marie, but Betty's report was primarily on recent action taken at the Federal Council meeting. Those of us who were in Winnipeg for the Federal Convention will recall that a composite resolution on rape was referred to the Policy Review Committee with instructions to take it to the Federal Council. The resolution dealt with treating rape as a form of assault, disallowing the present practice of cross-examination into the complainant's past sexual history, and doing away with the present "privileged" position of husbands vis-a-vis rape charges from their wives.

Well, you'll never believe what happened! Federal Council added an amendment to the resolution to the effect that complainants will not have to answer questions about their past sexual experiences, except with the consent of the judge! This distortion of the intent of the resolution, as it was debated on the floor of the convention, is now Federal Party Policy! Raped women won't have to talk about their previously virginal or non-virginal status unless the judge says it's

relevant. Great. Another amendment, to exempt husbands living with their wives from rape charges, did not pass the Council meeting.

The Steering Committee passed a motion to request a copy of the composite resolution, minutes of the debate on the floor, and the recommendation of the Policy Review Committee, so that the action by the Federal Council can be reviewed. We also voted to ask that a report from the Federal Council be given at the next Provincial Council meeting. It seems quite incredible to me that the Council would so flagrantly defy the intent of the resolution as debated, after all the bad feeling at Winnipeg over composite resolutions being brought forward for debate that were completely at odds with the spirit of the resolutions submitted by constituencies.

2. Representatives to the Steering Committee were delighted to hear that a women's rights committee in Nanaimo constituency is now being formed. Jess Dutchak, 1040 Strathmore Street, Nanaimo, is presently acting as a contact for this group. Can Coquitlam be far behind?

3. In the hope of improving communication between all the constituencies and the Women's Committee, I have written a letter to each of the constituency presidents asking that a "contact person" be designated for each constituency to receive information from the women's committee on our ongoing activities. We will inform the contact person of all Steering Committee meetings and expect the person to communicate such information throughout the constituency via newsletters and general meetings. The suggestion was made,

at the last regional steering committee meeting of the Island and Mackenzie region, that sometimes clubs do not receive adequate information, so I have asked for a "contact person" from each of the areas where there is a functioning club, as well.

4. With brand-new representatives to the Steering Committee meeting, there were a lot of questions about the structure of the Women's Committee. This comes up repeatedly as more and more women from areas where there has never been a local NDP women's group become interested in the Women's Committee. We decided to try to answer this need by pulling together some facts for the Organizers' Manual, which is currently being revised and expanded by Marj Cragg, Provincial NDP Organizer. Copies of the Manual will be sent to each constituency when it is completed. The Women's Committee decided to send the following items for inclusion in the Manual: (1) Astrid Davidson's excellent article on "How To Start Your Own Women's Group," from Priorities September 1975; (2) a diagram that Leni Hoover is making up showing the relationship of the NDP Women's Committee to the Provincial Council, local constituencies, etc.; and (3) a list of all the functioning NDP Women's Groups and contact people in the various constituencies.

Helpful, too, will be a transcript of Marianne Gilbert's speech on the history of the NDP Women's Committee given at the regional meeting in Kamloops. A new member from Campbell River has promised to transcribe the speech for publication in a future edition of Priorities.

5. Further discussion of a memorial for Pat Lowther led to a motion that we ask the Provincial Council to donate \$500 in Pat's memory, to be matched by \$500 raised by the NDP Women's Committee, to a sustaining fund, the annual interest to be used for grants to women poets, in Pat's memory. The matter will be discussed at the next Council meeting, in Victoria on March 13 and 14.

6. The relationship of the NDP Women's Committee to other feminist groups was discussed. We passed a motion to become

an Associate Member of the B.C. Federation of Women. The Second Annual Convention of the BCFW was reported on in the November 1975 Priorities; the Federation unites women's groups with a general objective of improving communications between the numerous organizations in BC and providing the basis for action directed at improving women's conditions. A donation of \$25 will be sent with our application for Associate Membership; we are prohibited from taking out Affiliate Membership by the terms of the NDP provincial constitution.

A more immediate opportunity to work together with other feminist groups is provided by the March 22 Action at the Parliament Buildings (see the Editorial in this issue). The Lower Island Socialist NDP Women's Group will be looking after billets for the March 22 legislature Action. Contact Betty Miller at 385-5998 (Victoria) if you'll need a place to stay.

7. At the next Steering Committee meeting, at the end of March, we will discuss the possibility of holding some regional meetings in preparation for the 1976 Provincial Convention. Please notify Judy McManus, secretary to the Steering Committee, at 2277 Upland Dr., Vancouver, if you are not receiving notices of Steering Committee meetings but would like to. All NDP women are welcome.

CANDACE HANSON, Chairwoman
Victoria

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* Regular Priorities readers may note that the headings, titles etc. in this issue are startlingly clear...straight...neat... & generally orderly in comparison to former productions. For this improvement Priorities is very grateful to Joyce Meissenheimer of North Vancouver/Seymour and the loan of her fantastic "Headliner" equipment!
* * * * *

LOWER MAINLAND Women's Committee

A Friday night, (January 30/76), 7:45 p.m. and Gail Borst and I are the only ones at 517 East Broadway. We put on the coffee and discuss how we'll arrange the tables. We can't decide so we think we'll ask the meeting. At 7:55 two more women come in. They look about disappointed. It's the first NDP Lower Mainland Women's Committee meeting and I had called a lot of people about it. I too am disappointed. I apologize because these women are new.

...8:15, where did they all come from. Women from everywhere. At least 40 and most of them new. The seating arrangement was never arranged but the meeting begins enthusiastically nevertheless.

Various ridings were heard from. We were told what was happening and what was not happening. The election was a focal point, of course and then the discussion got on to where do we go from here. One of the decisions the group made was to have one meeting a month. We decided that Friday was a bad night but it appeared that that was one night that everyone sometimes had free. So, the next meeting is on Friday, February 27, 8:00 p.m., 517 East Broadway.

...Meanwhile, the volunteer steering committee has been meeting and the agenda is all set. There will be a three member panel discussing 1) What were our demands and how effective were we, 2) What were our achievements, 3) Why are we in the NDP. A discussion will follow. The second part of the

meeting will deal with our participation in the March 8 and 22 actions being planned by various women's groups all across the province.

We're trying to call as many women as possible to let you know about the Lower Mainland Women's meetings but if you're being missed, please call Astrid 325-2313.

'CANADIAN NOVEL BANNED'

LAKEFIELD, Ont. (CP) — The Diviners, a best-selling novel by Canadian writer Margaret Laurence, has been banned from classrooms in Peterborough County, a local school teacher says.

Robert Buchanan, head of the English department at Lakefield Secondary School, said Saturday he was told he could not teach the book in class, although it was on the course list.

Buchanan said his principal told him the book was banned from the list of approved texts and the decision was made by the administration of the Peterborough County board of education.

The book has been approved as a text book last year for use this year.

Joe Hogan, chairman of the board's textbook review committee, which examines material of a controversial nature, said he did not know the book was suspended.

Miss Laurence, a local resident, said she was extremely distressed and saddened by the withdrawal of her book from the curriculum list.

She said she thought the book had been banned "because it has some four letter words and sexual scenes, but they are very necessary to the book."

-- Vancouver Sun, Feb. 9, 1976

ISLAND NEWS

A meeting of the Island and MacKenzie Regional Women's Steering Committee was held in Nanaimo on January 24-25th.

We convened at 2:00 pm Saturday. Marg Cragg, Lower Mainland organizer, spoke to us on the structure of the party. Her talk was informative and easy to understand. Marg cleared up some misunderstandings people had held for years. This was a valuable part of the weekend.

We reconvened close to 10:00 am Sunday morning. Gail Clague gave a report as regional women's organizer. She requested assistance in developing a job description. If anyone has ideas on this subject please write to Gail at: 1111 Ash Street, Campbell River, B.C.

This was followed by reports from individuals and women's groups on the Island. Chairwoman Betty Miller gave a report on activities in the Lower Island Socialist NDP Women's Caucus. Most of their energy had gone into the campaign for the last two months. At their meeting on January 12th it was decided to increase the meetings to twice a month, one a business meeting, one an educational. Members were also urged to become active in their constituency and seek office in the upcoming elections. A motion was passed to combine the irregular "pub night" with that of the regular one of the Victoria Women's Centre once a month. Also the group will carry on a letter writing campaign in regards to the closure of the Status of Women Co-ordinators office and the Advisory Committee on Sex Discrimination in the Schools.

Betty H'Looghoff reported that each member in the Courtenay group is involved in a number of community groups including the Comox Valley Women's Group in which they are raising socialist issues.

A few people from Nanaimo spoke of their feelings and common desire to begin a women's group in the area. Though only a fledgling idea at this time, it was a highlight of the weekend. We all expres-

sed encouragement and offered assistance in anyway possible. Contact person is Jess: 1040 Strathmore St., Nanaimo, B.C.

Parksville-Alberni have no functioning women's groups at this time, but small education things about women are incorporated into constituency meetings. There is a feeling of hope for a women's group.

The Campbell River Women's Caucus held their first meeting in October. Members are interested in working with the education sub-committee. Women attending the regional meeting were encouraged to participate in committees so there will be input from feminists in all policy areas.

After lunch we agreed to participate in the letter writing campaign suggested by the Lower Island women. Candace Hansen gave a report of the NDP Women's Steering Committee meeting held in Kamloops in October.

The problem of communications between the Women's Committee and the constituencies was discussed. Candace, will request that Provincial Office send a letter out asking for a contact person in each constituency. This person could act as a liason, informing the constituency of what the Women's groups are doing. This would remove any mystery of "our activities" and also facilitate the passage of information. The importance of Priorities and our women's page in The Democrat was reaffirmed. (We love you Priorities!) Gloria Williams has volunteered to take over the job as Democrat page editor. Any submissions should be sent to her at: 1033 Princess Street, Victoria, B.C.

Astrid Davidson arrived from Vancouver to give us a brief report on the Berger Commission on Family and Children's Law. This was followed by Gail Clague discussing the Foulke's Report.

Our meeting ended with an evaluation. A special thank you to Marg, Gail and Astrid for sharing their knowledge with us.

Kathleen Orton, Victoria-Oakbay



Clockwise from the top:-
Winnie Henderson, Candice
Hanson, Marilyn Callahan,
Gail Clague, Astrid Davidson,
Marnie Drael, Rita MacDonald,
Centre:- Jessie Dutchuk.

MANITOBA

more on probe

Last month we had a report on some activities of the Status of Women Committee of the Manitoba NDP, and in particular the PROBE subcommittee. We covered only their criticism and recommendations in the area of family and property law reform. New legislation has been promised in this area in the 1976 session of the Legislature.

Other areas that PROBE members have been concerned with, and about which they have been measuring MLA's and Ministers awareness, are the areas of day care, labour legislation, the government's Affirmative Action program and strengthening the Human Rights Act.

The following is excerpted from reports sent to us by Mary Jo Quarry, and briefly covers the committee's proposals in these areas which we did not look at last month. For an update from Manitoba, see the Letters section in this issue. Lynda Yanz mentions the resolutions on these issues that were passed at their recent Convention, and notes some more concerns of the Status of Women Committee.

Work of Equal Value

PROBE members applauded the NDP government's recent step in implementing the Affirmative Action Program within the Manitoba Civil Service, as called for in the January 1971 Task Force Report on Equal Opportunities in the Civil Service and by NDP policy.

They acknowledged that the "equal pay for equal work" principle is becoming more generally implemented, but pointed out that the average income for Canadian women in 1974 was \$4,222, while the average income for men during the same period was \$9,961.

With these figures in mind, PROBE members maintained that extending the requirement for affirmative action programs to areas of industry where job ghettos of predominantly low-paid female labour have been created must be treated as a priority issue.

CUPE & Steel workers Criteria

They said that both CUPE and the Steelworkers were currently developing job evaluation criteria, and discussed a resolution to be introduced at the 1976 NDP Convention to amend the Equal Pay Act to require job evaluation on the basis of skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions.

PROBE is requesting that a committee be struck to examine and make recommendations in this area so that the government can proceed to implement legislation establishing a job evaluation board, specifically charged to appraise jobs on the basis outlined.

Critical Day Care Needs

PROBE's concerns over the Provincial Day Care program centre in four areas which they consider critical:

- 1) structure - while cooperative community involvement is a desirable component of the program, there is considerable evidence to suggest that the people in greatest need of day care - the working poor and those on social welfare - are the very people least likely to translate their need into a demand for service because they lack the time, energy and resources to deal with the bureaucratic requirements of organizing their own centres, as they are presently required to do;

2) subsidization - the so-called working poor cannot afford to participate because they are excluded from full subsidy if their incomes are even slightly above welfare levels;

3) capitalization - many day care centres are finding it impossible to operate under the budgets allowed them under the program unless they have access to rent-free premises and substantial volunteer labour;

4) incompleteness of the program - lunch, after school and holiday care is not provided; family day care is inadequate and there is some indication that the service operated by Family Bureau was cancelled because of difficulties with Provincial regulations; part-time workers cannot make use of day care centres because the grant and fee structure requires such tight budgeting that all spaces must be filled full time; there is no provision for shift workers or others working outside the regular nine-to-five pattern.

The committee's position paper says, in part: "As members of the New Democratic Party of Manitoba -- a party which established policy on day care long ago, and a party which fought the 1973 election with day care as an election promise, we find it incredible that we should, once more, be approaching our government, to attempt to convince them of the need to see day care as something other than a minimal service for working parents. Good quality, universally available day care must be a high priority for any socialist government."

PROBE members pointed out, in this connection, the provision of quality day care was an excellent way to redistribute income, to support parents in their responsibility for child care, and to equalize opportunity for children so that the vast gap between rich and poor in our society need not have a debilitating effect on children.

PROBE requested that the program not be restricted to the narrow parameters set down by federal Liberal government cost sharing guidelines, that it should be removed from the Canada Assistance Plan except for the subsidization, and brought into a departmental structure which utilizes the resources of the departments of

Education and Recreation in addition to Health and Social Development, and that a committee be set up to study this restructuring.

Human Rights

PROBE members plan to bring to the government's attention several areas in which the Human Rights Act has got to be strengthened to reflect party policy, including:

- 1) inclusion of "marital status" in prohibited grounds for discrimination in public places and in housing;
- 2) inclusion of "source of income" in prohibited grounds in notices and advertising;
- 3) strengthening of the Human Rights Commission's involvement with Affirmative Action programs to allow it to show initiative rather than simply responding to requests;
- 4) eliminating discrimination in employment in regard to fringe benefits.

Submitted by Mary Jo Quarry
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Deadline

To avoid undue harassment for Priorities workers, we now require that all...yes, ALL copy be IN by the Monday before the production weekend. Since the production weekend is mid-month, this means your letter or article MUST be IN OUR HANDS by the Monday before mid-month. All copy should be TYPED, IF POSSIBLE, and should be marked with the approximate number of Words Per Page.

ALL CLEAR? GOOD!

B C Fed

News Release...

Press Gang

The B.C. Federation of Labour today attacked the Socred Government's abrupt closure of the Status of Women Co-ordinator's office. Federation Secretary-Treasurer Len Guy stated:

"We are extremely disturbed by this announcement. Ms. Errington's office had started a number of important projects, such as the Equal Employment Opportunities program in the public service. Our Federation's Women's Rights Committee has strongly supported the establishment of Ms. Errington's office as offering real hope for working women.

"This is just another indication of the Socred Government trying to turn back the clock and put a stop to many worthwhile and progressive developments initiated during the three years of NDP Government. Our fears that this will be Canada's most reactionary provincial Government are, unfortunately, proving to be well-founded."

NO COMMENT

Members of the NDP Labour Committee had lunch break in a strip joint, February 7, 1976.

In April 1974, Priorities changed its method of production from Geste-tner to offset printing. We chose a large printing firm, which was a union shop. Almost immediately we began to encounter problems, which seemed partly due to the traditional hierarchical structure of the shop, partly to the fact that it was entirely staffed by men except for a secretary, and partly to the small (unimportant?!) size of our account. When paper was in short supply last fall we waited for Priorities to be printed for weeks. As this problem of poor service came to a head some of us became aware of the work and goals of Press Gang which is a women's printing collective. In discussions with the women who were part of the Press Gang collective we found they were interested in printing Priorities, could offer assistance in layout and would encourage our participation in the process. We agreed to give it a try. The results so far have been very encouraging.

Some Priorities workers and supporters recently have expressed strong disapproval of this action on the grounds that the Press Gang as a collective is not a union shop.

In the March issue we intend to address the question of union and/or collective and/or cooperative organization. We'll talk about what Press Gang is, why some of us are excited about the move and others are opposed. We'll look forward to your comments.

(Continued from p. 10)

It is important to see the way in which men come to hold authority. The control by men of the ideological forms that regulate social relations in this form of society is structured socially; that is structured in the context where one meets people in the social relations, by an authority they hold as individuals by virtue of their membership in a class. Authority is a form of power which is a distinctive capacity to get things done in words. What is said or written merely means what the words mean until and unless it is given force by the authority attributed to its form. Men are invested with authority not as individuals because they have special competences or expertise but because as men they appear as representatives of the power and authority of the institutionalized structures which govern the society. Their authority as individuals in actual situations of action is generated by that social organization and they do not appear as themselves alone. They are those whose words count both for each other and for those who are not members of this class.

One study strikingly illustrates this point. Philip Goldberg, an American psychologist produced two sets of booklets containing six identical professional articles. The articles were identical but the names of the authors were not. In one set an article would carry the name of John T. McKay say and in the other, the same article would carry the name Joan T. McKay. Each booklet contained three articles by "men" and three articles by "women". The subjects in this experiment were asked to rate the articles on their value, their credibility, their persuasiveness, their profundity, and on their writing style properties. The "male" authors fared better in every field. What was clear was

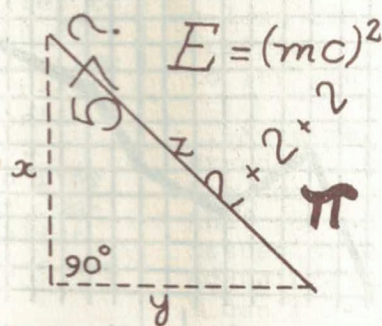
that it was the sex of the writer which counted in rendering the article persuasive, competent, valuable, and profound rather than the article itself. It was the sex of the speaker which added weight rather than the inherent content of what was said. It is as if there is a plus factor attached to what men say and a minus factor attached to what women say.

What we can see happening here is the way in which a circle is constructed. It is a socially organized circle of those who can speak and be heard, those who have authority for others, those who will be listened to and those who count for one another. The problem that we face is that under the existing forms of social organization, this circle consists of men. A circle is constructed so that men attend to what men say, they listen to what men say when they look back into the past and form the members of their tradition. What has been lacking for women is the basis for the

creation of a tradition among women, let alone a tradition among women and men, because there has been lacking this basis on which what women say can count for women, let alone can count for men.

We can see this in the daily context of our

work. This circle is put together not just in terms of the written word but in terms of the ordinary business of talk. There is this familiar scene where there is a meeting among women and men, of perhaps ten people with four or five being men. They are talking to one another and the women are sitting around, listening, facilitating, throwing a word in here or there but they are not part of carrying forward the topic which the men are shaping among themselves. If you sit in a meeting and a man is the chairperson, does he see you when you want to ask a question?



There are patterns of interaction among men and women which exhibit precisely the same sorts of processes of control, the same ways in which women are excluded from participating in the making of the subject matter of meetings, conversation and intellectual discourse. There is evidence for example that in mixed groups men talk more than women. There is even some indication that the kinds of norms that apply to men's and women's talk are different, so that it is expected that women should talk less than men and if they talk more they are seen, well!, in various ways. There are ways in which how women talk is complementary to the way in which men expect to carry the topic. Women for example quite typically throw what they have to say to somebody else to complete. Women tend not to complete sentences and to leave it to somebody else to finish them. You can fail to name the thing that you are talking about and leave it to the other person to define it for you. There are a variety of ways in which women's statements are introduced by defining them as subjective: "I think..." "it seems to me," "it's my opinion," "I feel." These are ways in which women's statements are deprived of the objective force which lays them out in front of you as something that has a right to be part of what is happening and what is being said.

A study by Candace West at the University of California shows that men tend to give minimal responses to topics initiated and carried by women and to interrupt without being sanctioned. She gives one example from a transcribed conversation which went as follows:

After thirty lines of talk during which the female lays out the problem she is having and the male responds minimally on every

occasion as his turn of speaking arises, a twenty-five second pause ensues. Then he commenced to discuss a paper that he is working on, without ever semantically having acknowledged her subject.

We can identify the devices which may be used to control women's participation in what Candace West has called "topic development." What women want to get into the conversation has to be first sanctioned by a man before it enters into the topic. One typical experience that women have is that they will have made a suggestion in a meeting which is later reattributed to a man. Another one is that it is simply not noticed but later on a man says it and then it becomes part of the topic. Or in the academic context a fairly typical device is, after a woman has spoken, "What Dorothy really means is..." It is important to understand that these are not things that are simply imposed by men upon women but they are complementary social processes which women know how to do as well as men. We therefore cooperate in some sense in our own suppression, in our knowledge of how to perform in these kinds of ways.



Modes of thinking and imaging our experience are produced for us by others who do not share our experience or position in the world. They are produced by those who hold the superordinate positions in the society and whose consciousness extends into the world as a reflection of the structures of power within which they act upon and know. One important consequence of this is that the deprivation of authority and the ways in which women have been trained to practice the complement of this male control of topic development have the effect of making it difficult for women to treat one another as relevant figures. We have difficulty in setting

authority for ourselves and by authority I do not mean here the right or ability to command. I mean merely the fundamental authority in which we vest in other individuals and indeed in ourselves the possibility of being heard, the possibility of hearing ourselves and having what we say count; to make use of what others say as something that is to be listened to, thought of and perhaps even used for thinking with. We have been deprived as women of the essential bases for developing the discourse out of which the symbolic structures, concepts, images, and knowledges might develop which would be adequate to our experiences and to devising forms of organization and action relevant to our situations and interests.

I am not convinced that matters are improved simply by including women in the professional and academic positions of influence, although this is an essential step. The professional discourse has by now a momentum of its own. Structures which have been developed have become the criteria and standards of proper professional performance. Being a professional involves knowing how to do it this way and doing it this way is how we recognize ourselves as professionals. The perspective of men is not apparent as such for it has become institutionalized as the "field" or the "discipline" and the relevancies of men have become the relevancies that are built into the practice of the field or the discipline. So we cannot be content with working within the box created by the male monopoly of artistic, ideological and other symbolic resources, so that what we do in relation to women and arising out of our interests and experience as women is defined as "women's business" and confined in the same way as women's novels and women's programs. Because when you see that label on something, you know already in the terms in which I have described it that it

does not count, that it does not matter, that it is not commensurate with those things which are merely novels, with those things which are the serious problems of the world.

We have to begin a critique of how women are constituted as other in these ideological formations which have established the hegemony of male consciousness. In particular there is a responsibility for academic women in developing forms of thought and knowledge for women. They must offer a major critique of the major systems and theoretical frames because we are confronted virtually with the problems of reinventing the world of knowledge, of thought, of symbols and images--not of course by repudiating everything that has been done but by subjecting it to exacting scrutiny and criticism from the position of women as knowers. This means for example, claiming the right to examine literature from the perspective of women and that is to do much more than to establish the right of women to honour and examine the work of women novelists and poets or to study of the role of women in fiction. In sociology it means constructing sociology for women rather than the sociology of women and by this I mean a sociology which will analyze and count women's position in society and is capable of examining social structure from the perspective of women as someone's. . . . I have learned from colleagues with whom I share the interdisciplinary course in women's studies what it means to examine anthropology and psychology in this way. I have begun to have a sense of the extraordinary depth and extent of what remains to be discovered by women working from the perspective and experiences of women, but insisting that they are not bound by that.

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For further reference see page. 17

APPEAL

JA399A

Priorities

was originally born of the need for B.C. NDP women to establish ongoing communications on concerns and strategies raised at the 1972 Provincial convention. The newsletter hoped to act as a catalyst for the growing movement for feminism and socialism developing in B.C.

In this we have had some success. However, we have never broken out of the very limited edition syndrome acceptable to expensive poetry volumes bound in snake skin, but unacceptable to a publication striving for revolution in our time.

Much energy goes into Priorities and we must ask ourselves if we are putting these energies to the best use. Unless we can get our subs up and our publication out to more women we feel we are not achieving this. At this stage we've decided to gamble. We would like to hire a woman for five months. Her job would be to move, shake, threaten, deal, in fact do everything but cajole in an attempt to get Priorities out to NDP women and other feminists all over B.C. and further afield if possible. A sub in every town! After five months we hope to have consolidated our present support and expanded our readership immensely.

WE NEED MONEY TO CARRY OUT OUR PLAN. The salary at a living wage, UIC, Medical, travelling expenses and additional office supplies will come to about \$1000 per month. That means one generous donor of \$5000 or five at \$1000 or more possibly 50 of us at \$20 a month.

If you can and will be one of the 50 or just want to contribute, please send lump sum, post-dated cheques or donation.

If the plan falls through, we'll know in a month, and not cash the cheques.

THANKS

to the following people who have
sent in donations to help keep
Priorities going:

Doreen Boal, Vancouver
Ruth Bullock, Vancouver
Jan Cornflower, Vancouver
Marielle Demorest, Richmond
Arlene Gropper, Vancouver
Penny Haggarty, Vancouver
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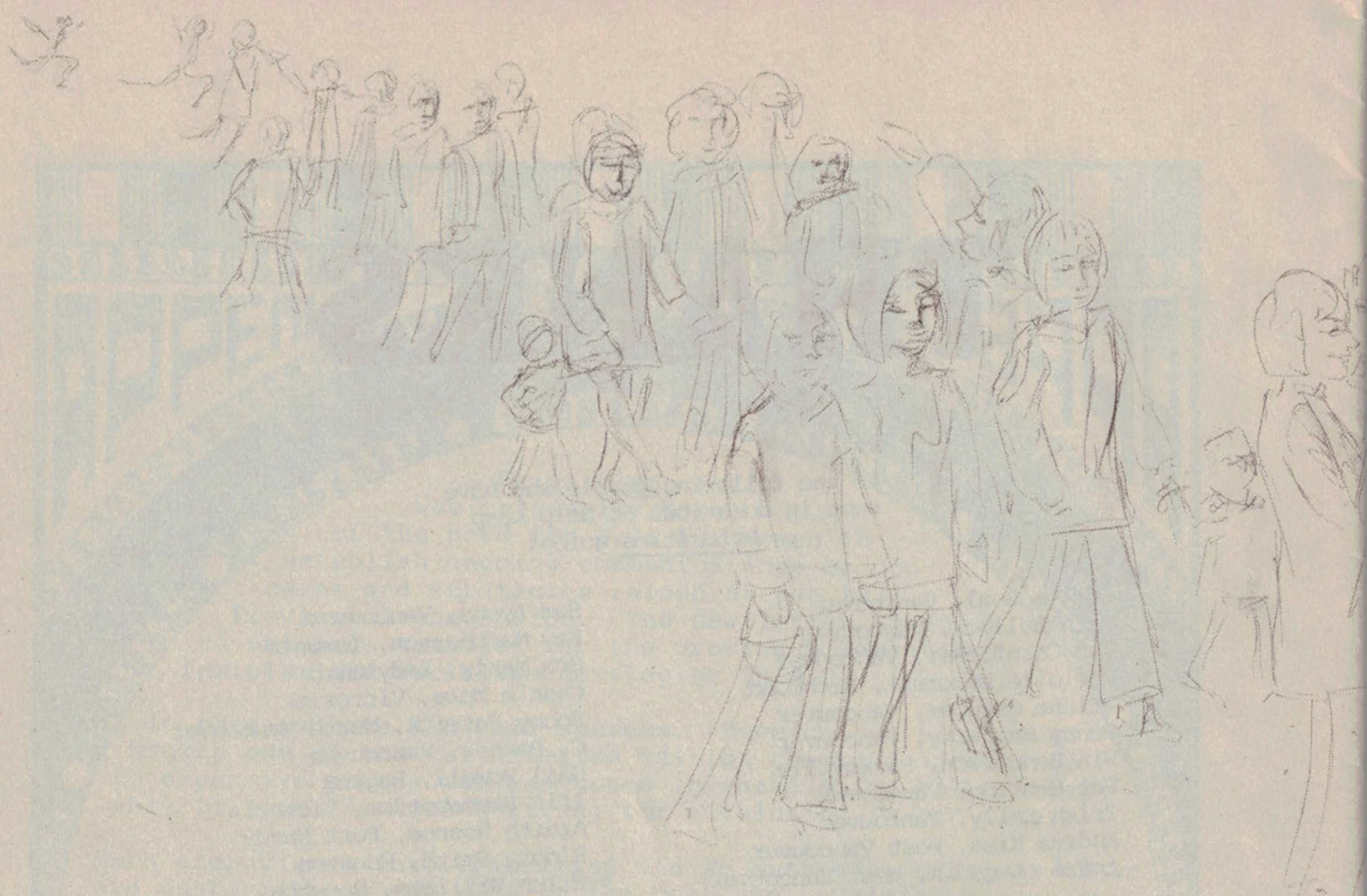
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