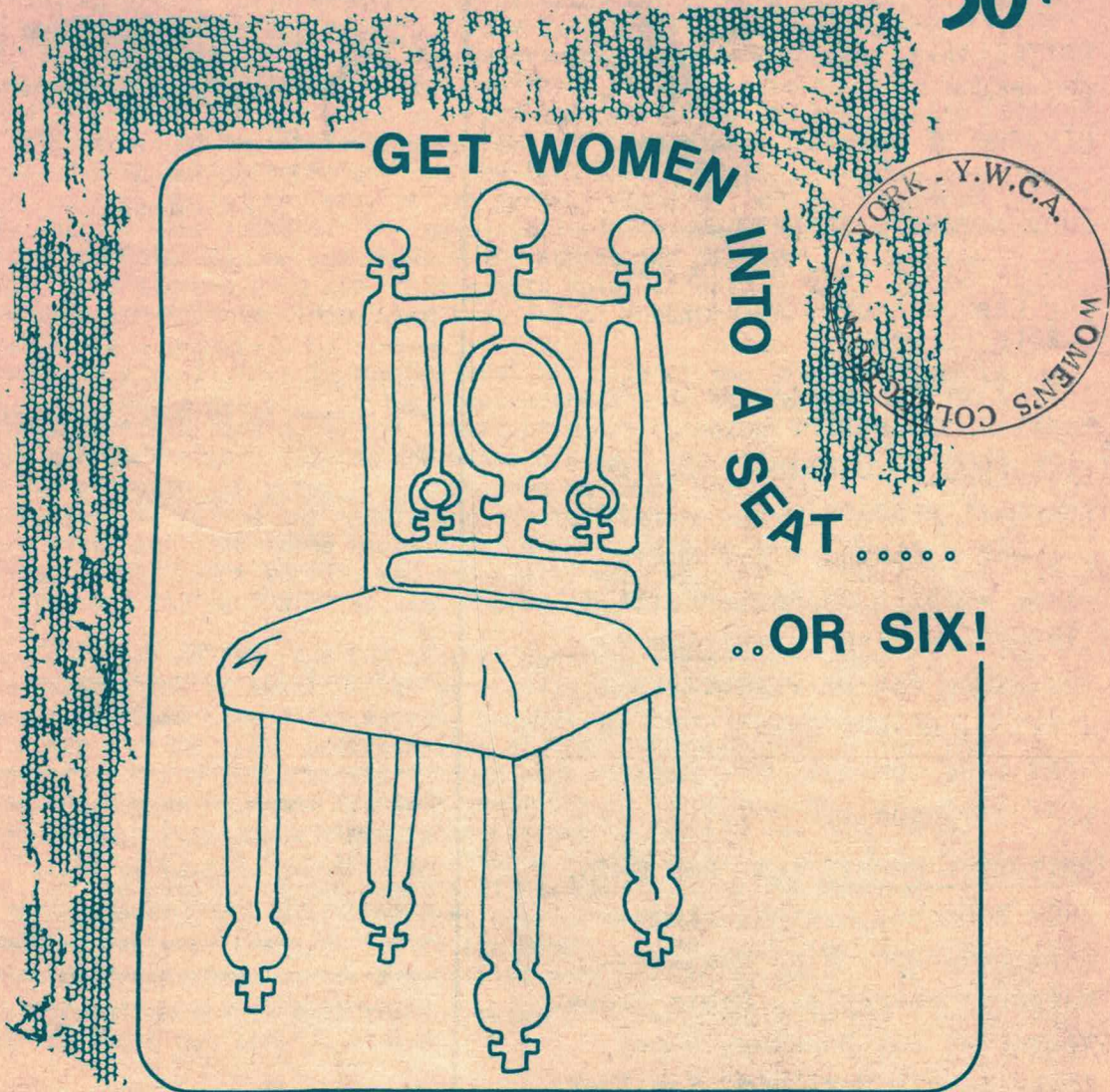


# PRIORITIES

VOLUME 5 No. 3

MARCH 1977

50¢



A Publication of the  
NDP Women's Committee

A FEMINIST SOCIALIST PERSPECTIVE

\* \* \*

# IN THIS ISSUE

EDITORIAL.....3  
 LETTERS.....4  
 MINUTES OF THE FEB. CONF.  
 ..N. Carey & B. Campbell...10  
 JUDY PATERSON REPLIES.....16  
 ..A critical look at the NDP  
 THE LABOUR CAUCUS AND THE  
 ROLE OF WOMEN  
 ..M. Storm.....18  
 TAKE 'EM TO KNAPPS  
 ...SORWUC Resolution.....19  
 REGIONAL REPORTS.....20  
 ..Lower Mainland & the North  
 DIANE RUSSELL ON RAPE RELIEF  
 .Interview with Priorities.22  
 YOU, TOO, CAN DO PRIORITIES  
 ..Flood, Love & Zech.....28  
 GARY LAUK COMES TO PT. GREY  
 ..J. Davidson.....29  
 EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: Ros Zech,  
 Judy McManus, Cynthia Flood,  
 Jill Davidson, Nina Westaway,  
 Margaret Beardsley, Robin Geary,  
 Victoria, Pat Hunking, Nancy  
 Love, Dannie McArthur, Sam Lyons,  
 Astrid Davidson, Ann Thomson,  
 Candace Hanson.  
 Cover by Margaret Corrigall

If you would like to work on Priorities, please call Ros at 738-1497 or Judy at 327-8875.

Priorities is published monthly by the Standing Committee on Women's Rights of the B.C. New Democratic Party. Its intent is to provide a means of communication and discussion for NDP women in order to further the interests of the women's movement and of democratic socialism.

Publication Date: the 15th of each month.

Copy Deadline: one week prior to publication.

Subscription: \$5 individual per year  
 \$10 institutional per year  
 12 issues prepaid

Single Issue: \$ .50

Priorities welcomes submissions from its readers. All such submissions must be signed, although names will be withheld on request. Where necessary the editorial committee will edit for clarity, brevity and taste.

Correspondence and subscriptions to:

Priorities,  
 c/o 3485 West 15th Ave.,  
 Vancouver, B.C.

All unsigned articles are the collective responsibility of the Editorial Committee

\*\*\*\*\*

"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)

\*\*\*\*\*

Priorities has been typed and laid out by volunteer labour and is printed by Press Gang, 821 E. Hastings, Vancouver, B.C.

# EDITORIAL

by Robin Geary, Chairperson  
NDP Women's Rights Committee

As I write this, it is the week of International Women's Day - a week of reflection and action. NDP Women participated in some of the action commemorating International Women's Day in Vancouver - we picketed the Anti-Inflation Board offices, mindful of the fact that not only do we receive less pay than our male counterparts, but also that the gap is widening; we picketed the Unemployment Insurance Offices where pregnant women are blatantly discriminated against in receiving maternity leave benefits; we picketed the Daycare Information Centre where women on welfare are no longer able to get childcare; we picketed Family Court, the Department of Labour, the Department of Human Resources, City Hall, Vancouver General Hospital etc. etc. In fact, all of the agencies in our society which discriminate against women were publicly criticised by the women's movement this week. At the Conference on Family Violence in a speech on "Wife Battering" Gene Errington focused on the fact that "no one will help the wife, not the police, social workers, social service agencies, and particularly not Family Court". She spoke of the socialization - the education which reinforces the accepted roles of men and women - the aggressive male and the passive female. This stereotyping and locking into roles affects us all, but even worse is the fear and intimidation of breaking out of these roles.

I grew up in a small town in New Zealand, the site of the landing of one of the Maori canoes which was part of the great migration to New Zealand in 1350 A.D. The legend of that landing is still part of Maori mythology - the canoe landed and the men went ashore leaving the women behind. The canoe began to drift from shore and although the women were forbidden to touch the paddles, the Chief's daughter Wairaka seized the paddle and shouted "Let me act like a man". Are we very different from those Maori women when we dare to enter the field of politics, that "man's world", and especially when we question the hierarchical structures and the manipulative use of power in this "man's world".

For me, recognizing the fear and lack of confidence that many women feel, and having experienced it myself makes me realize the great importance of the NDP Womens Rights Committee - the warmth, support, solidarity and experience of other women and the clear understanding of the interconnection of feminism and socialism. And yet, reading through back issues of Priorities since 1973 and sensing the despair and frustrations makes it so obvious how far we still have to go to make all the other feminists and socialists see this interconnection, that they are inseparable. Sharon Yandle in Priorities (September 1974) said after the passing of the Women's Rights Manifesto at the Kamloops Convention (perhaps our most important resolution because it attempted to educate the Party to the position of the Women's Committee) "But I wonder whether that understanding was a socialist recognition, or whether it stemmed from a liberal desire to ease the suffering of others, which is not seen as related to one's own life".

It is true that during the last year many of us in the Lower Mainland were suffering from feelings of depression and despair - however I believe we have reached a plateau, maybe a level of realism, for never again will we believe that the passage of a resolution at convention promises implementation until we truly have a commitment to policy and a commitment to accountability. WE understand that we must continue the discussions around the questions that Judy Paterson and other sisters raised, one being the dilemma we face of being feminist/socialists within a social democratic party. We must continue to be honest with each other and be supportive of each other. We are battle scarred, but we are strong, and we are determined that next time the NDP is government not only will our policy be understood but it will be implemented.

# LETTERS

We are writing to inform you of our decision to cancel our telephone answering service with TASCOS and our reasons for so doing. For almost a year, workers at TASCOS have been attempting to win certification as members of Local 580 of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union. They have faced harassment from their employer and bureaucratic roadblocks thrown up by both the Provincial and Federal Labour Relations Boards.

On April 26th, 1976 they applied to the B.C. Labour Relations Board for certification for TASCOS's main branch. Shortly thereafter they made application for TASCOS's remaining lower mainland offices. They received no decision on their application until October 7th, 1976. The decision was not much. The B.C. Labour Relations Board decided that the application should have been made to the Canada Labour Relations Board. In the near six months that it took the Provincial Labour Relations Board to reach their momentous decision, the TASCOS workers had been subjected to an anti-union campaign on the part of their employer. Individual workers were questioned about their involvement with the union. They were threatened with assignment to undesirable shifts if they supported the union and some were promised 25% wage increases if they stayed out of the union.

The union did as they were advised and applied to the Canada Labour Relations Board. This Board was no more responsible. Far from considering the union application, the Board has not yet decided whether it is in their jurisdiction. This leaves the union in limbo. As a result, TASCOS employees have no legal protection from company intimidation. During the organizational drive, one union activist has been fired and one laid off out of seniority.

While government inaction aids the company's anti-union campaign, the workers must still work under the conditions which moved them to unionize in the first place.

We urge everyone to join us in supporting the TASCOS workers.

Stephanie Tipple,  
President,  
Vancouver Burrard N.D.P.

## WAGES FOR HOMEMAKERS

I'm very interested in your debate on wages for housewives--it seems to me I read of a proposal the then N.D.P. B.C. Government was thinking of implementing--as a matter of fact, I read about it in a 1975 issue of Priorities. Could you direct me to this paper as it would make interesting reading and would be helpful in our study of the issue.

I have just read "All Work and No Pay--Women, Housework, and the Wages Due", published by the Power of Women Collective and the Falling Wall Press (79 Richmond Rd., Montpelier, Bristol BS6 5EP, England). If you like, I could review it in the next couple of months for Priorities.

If you know of any more literature on the subject or a bibliography, please send it to me.

Anne Packer,  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Priorities:

First I'd like to thank the organizers of the recent Women's Policy Conference for a very stimulating and informative weekend. The major topic--the relationship of socialists to a social democratic party--is one which has been on my mind for several years. I would like to elaborate on several points which were raised.

Working within the NDP makes sense if you believe in the power of an elected government to eventually influence the corporate and financial elite of Canada, if you believe that a social democratic party can be transformed into a socialist party, and if you want to have contact with the large numbers of people across Canada who belong to the NDP. Working within the NDP does not make sense if you put more faith in people's movements to effect change, than in the legislative electoral process, if you don't think the NDP will ever be a socialist party, or if you prefer to work with smaller groups of people on a community basis.

To me, this is the reality of the situation, and I admire people who face it openly. Cynthia Flood did when she clearly outlined her reasons for staying within the party, and presented three very valid tasks for socialists within a social democratic party. But people, especially socialists, who can only repeat, "The NDP is the only place to work. Where else is there to go? Look what happened to the Waffle! etc., etc.," as justification for the absolute validity of "working from within" make me suspicious.

To imply, as these people do, that leaving the NDP is an act of despair, a stepping out into isolation and oblivion, is simply not true. There are many socialists, former NDP'ers, who are working effectively and very hard outside the party. In Ontario, former Wafflers publish a newsmagazine, ONTARIO REPORT (Box 6851, Station A, Toronto) and have done research on the de-industrialization of Canada. In Winnipeg, Former NDP MLA Cy Gonick and others publish CANADIAN DIMENSION (Box 1413, Winnipeg) and

have produced two very important books, Inflation and Wage Controls, and Inflation or Depression (both available from DIMENSION). In Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Waffle is alive and deeply involved in the labour movement. I think it is safe to say that the Waffle was in part responsible for Saskatchewan's immediate and militant labour opposition to wage controls. The Waffle publishes an excellent newsmagazine, NEXT YEAR COUNTRY (Box 3446, Regina). And in Alberta, a small collective of people publishes an alternative newspaper, THE PRAIRIE STAR (10737 - 95 Street, Edmonton). In northern B.C. THE NORTHERN TIMES (3210 A Kalum Street, Terrace) provides a consistent left analysis to the news.

Socialists outside the NDP are a force to be reckoned with in the political life of our country. They are not drifting aimlessly, cut off from the NDP. In fact, now that they no longer have to fight within a hostile structure for the very right to express their ideas, they have a lot of energy to devote to the real task -- building socialism.

Let us work within the NDP if we so choose, but let us be honest about our reasons for doing so. The NDP is not the only place to work. The NDP is one place to work towards the ultimate goal of liberating ourselves from capitalism.

Sincerely,

Barbara Campbell,  
Prince George



Dear Priorities:

After much thought and discussion with other sisters I have decided to write to you about Ronni Holtby's article.

Although I consider the topic, sisterhood, of great importance and one which needs to be discussed, I disagree very strongly with your decision to print the paragraph of her article which refers to two unnamed women. Only one side of the story was given in the article and yet for either of these women to reply would be to cause them more public embarrass-

ment. I consider the paragraph libelous and I am appalled at Priorities' decision to publish it.

Surely we don't want to carry on a witch-hunt to purge out sisters who some consider have not followed the true feminist line. Instead I feel we should talk with each other honestly about our anger, not print it in Priorities.

In sisterhood,

Rosemary Gray,  
Victoria

## A NON-UNION EXPERIENCE

Dear Priorities:

It was with interest that I read Opal Skillings' article on organizing the unorganized. I have just become unemployed because of not being in a union. Today we hear on all sides the remark that "unions are too strong", that we would be better off without unions which are holding back free enterprise and taking away people's willingness to work; but consider this.

I started work for a freight company in Kamloops in 1969, and for 3 years invoiced the freight going out to Vancouver and other terminals, and did general office duties. I resigned in June 1972 as I was unhappy with certain working conditions. Then in October of that year I was asked to come back and help out until they trained another woman. They were having trouble getting someone to stay. I went back, part-time. Then things changed and the woman who was in charge of the office left. She also was in charge of the bond warehouse and I took over this department from her. This entailed working with Canada Customs and Kamloops customs brokers. I also did payroll and some accounting, so when there were a lot of bond shipments coming in and being released it would be quite hectic. This was a responsible posi-

tion, as there is a \$100.00 fine if a shipment is released without being cleared by Customs. I had my own office, and 3 other women worked in another office doing invoicing and accounting. One woman transferred from the Vancouver office about two years ago and has worked for the company a little longer than I have. The two others have been there 3½ years.

So when the manager phoned me at 4:30 pm on February 15, 1977 and asked to see me before I went home, the last thing I thought of was of being laid off. But that is what happened. He explained that he had been told by Head Office that they were cutting staff, and they were giving my work to the other women. My office would be closed. He explained that this was due to economic conditions; this means money, and so it's not hard to figure out that they cut the paycheque that saved them the most money. So after 8 years I am looking for another job and starting over, at the bottom again, and for an older woman that's not too easy these days.

This could not happen under a union agreement, but without a union they can point a finger at anyone and say, "You go." You have no defense. Women are especially vulnerable as, for some reason, they do not feel the need to organize. It is time for women to realize that when economic depression hits B.C., North America and the rest of the world, and business fights back, the women are the ones who will be the hardest hit as they leave themselves open to injustice. It is only by all of us joining together that we will beat this sort of injustice.

I want other women to know what happened to me, as I find that so many women feel that for some reason they don't need a union. We tried to form one a few years ago, but our Vancouver office didn't want it; we couldn't get it unless they went too. The reason I have heard given for not having a union is, "If you join a union the employer will have to pay higher wages and then he will cut back on staff and the girls left will have more work to do." Exactly what happened to me, and we didn't have a union, and now three girls are doing the work of four. And women accept this garbage. They are afraid of unions, afraid they will make

their boss mad at them, afraid they will lose their jobs. And it is hard, as this can happen, and it's not easy to get another job these days.

So Opal and others who are working to organize the unorganized really have their work cut out for them. But it is good to know that there are people doing this, and I hope that as more become organized more women will see the need to become unionized.

I feel it is ironic that Social Credit campaigned on the platform that they would get this province moving again. They have. They have moved me out of a job and on to Unemployment Insurance.

I had just come back from the NDP Women's Conference at Douglas College the weekend before I lost my job. I had a great feeling of women working together to try and make this a better world to fight the injustices done to people. To feel the support of other women has made me come up fighting again. And I hope the next time I am employed, it will be in a union shop.

If there are other women out there who have lost their jobs unfairly, I think it would be interesting to hear from them too.

Joyce Harrison,  
Kamloops.

P.S. I have been asked by another terminal here to do part-time for them -- and it's a Union shop!



Dear Folks,

I work at the Provincial Office here in Alberta (I edit the Party's monthly paper and do miscellaneous other print medium chores and assorted propaganda tasks). It is here that I have encountered your excellent publication, as two copies at least that I have seen have made their way here in the last few months.

The most recent issue I've seen (I believe it was the Jan. 1977 issue) con-

tained two articles on why feminists (and specifically those feminists involved in producing and reading Priorities) should remain in the NDP. I found both articles to be of good quality and agree wholeheartedly with what, I assume, by extension I can infer as being the main reasons for the left generally to join and be active in the Party.

I am currently living with a woman who is both a committed feminist and an unwavering Marxist. To say nothing of being a strong, open and sometimes startlingly original person. She remains adamant in her rejection of the NDP as a viable means of pursuing Marxist aims. This causes less friction between us than it might under other circumstances because I, too, remain less than thoroughly convinced of the efficacy of working through the NDP. Because of my own doubts in this regard (and because, both with her and most of the rest of our left-wing friends and acquaintances, I usually find myself very much on the defensive), I have been thus far unable to muster any convincing arguments in favour of working in the NDP.

So, in one sense, I find myself subscribing to Priorities in the hopes that it will help equip me with some valid arguments I can use to, if not convince her, at least bring her to the point of acknowledging that working through the NDP may offer one alternative for political action.

Before sitting down to write this letter, I tried to come up with a list of feminist contacts in Alberta within the NDP with whom you may wish to correspond. I am afraid I haven't been overwhelmingly successful as most of the feminists I know maintain a position similar to that of the woman with whom I live.

If I can be of any other assistance at some point in the future, please do not hesitate to let me know.

I think Priorities is an excellent journal, especially coming from within the NDP, and wish you the best of luck for its continued success.

Fraternally,  
Ross Harvey.

Dear Priorities,

This is the 5th year I've been getting Priorities and each year its value increases. To those of us living outside the Lower Mainland it is a life-line that we can't do without.

Publish less if you must or raise the rates again, but don't fold. Your hard work is appreciated by, and necessary to, your rural sisters.

Diane Edmondson  
Trail, B. C.

## SPARE COPIES

Dear Priorities,

Do you or any of your readers have spare copies of the following 3 vintage issues of Priorities: Sept. '73; March '74 and June '74? I've lost those three and would dearly love to replace them; will pay cold cash, no questions asked.

Sincerely,  
Candace Hanson  
151 East 8th Avenue  
Vancouver, B. C.

## HOMESICK

Dear Priorities,

I get so homesick every time the issue arrives. I love Ottawa and I'm learning many lessons, including some I'd never anticipated, as well as those I intended to learn during my year here.

One lesson I've learned and re-learned is how important - indeed how necessary, crucially necessary - it is to be with women whom I love and respect. For me to be

my best self, I must be in a feminist community. (Also, I want to come home again.) So I look forward to seeing many of you in August. I'm hoping to relocate in Vancouver again and if I do, want to put myself where my mouth (and some of my money) is - to contribute concretely to Priorities.

Staying or get out? The past record of women's attempts to bring about real social change as a pressure group is not a very hopeful one. The changes that've gotten made have often been merely affordable concessions and often in ways that are inimical to our original hopes (e.g. the vote). Of course, pressure-group tactics have worked at times but it's not enough. I reluctantly conclude that Cynthia is right. The NDP is the most appropriate vehicle, at the moment. And we must get more women like Rosemary into elected and appointed positions. More of us who think we can't or shouldn't, must do it, and prepare ourselves and each other to do so. The NDP isn't the only game in town but because of its pretenses to a socialist base, it's rigged less than the others. I choose, with equal amounts of despair and hope, to stay in. But let's speak out personally more.

I'm not often this incoherent. I am so moved by Ronni Holtby's experience and, more, by her sharing it. So far I lack the courage to reciprocate. Thank you all. And thanks for being part of my lifeline when I've needed one, this harrowing year.

With love and in sisterhood,

Barbara Roberts  
Dept. of History  
University of Ottawa



### Priorities' Meetings

March 29, April 12 - 8 pm  
1020 Commercial  
April 15, 16, 17 - Work weekend  
64-8th St. N. West.



# CONCERN

Dear Priorities:

After reading Cynthia Flood's comment on B.C.F.W. Conference, I share her concern with regard for the necessity of involvement of new women.

Taking this a step further, I am concerned that in many instances party bureaucrats are discouraging the participation of our many new members. In any case, new members seldom come out to meetings and if they should do so, they are often treated with suspicion or as strangers, not welcomed, nor drawn into general discussion.

Secondly, I like Cynthia's emphasis on the necessity to struggle to achieve the guaranteed provision and funding of services under women's control.

Thirdly, I, too, am concerned about the increasing interest and concern with feminist theory. I am 54 years old, a point in time which was not achieved without many bumps, bruises and put-downs to my female ego. I do appreciate the necessity for ongoing struggle and my backing is unquestionable. I, too, believe that much more action is needed if we are to achieve sizeable and permanent gains.

These comments are not made in criticism of the B.C.F.W. Conferend, since I did not attend, but I feel that women who decry the system and its inequities should really 'get into the fray'...run for Council School Board, get on Credit Union and Union Executives, etc. and, of course, run at Provincial and Federal levels where possible.

This party boasts many of the very best brains in Canada and a good

part of that braintrust belongs to the women in this party. I think it is most important to become knowledgeable on local, provincial and federal issues and how these relate to Socialist policy.

While I have the greatest faith in most of our elected members, there can only be proper recognition of women's issues and an approach to equality when we elect more women members to the Legislature and to Parliament.

Marjorie Houghton,  
Ruskin, B.C.

P.S. My congratulations to Priorities' staff for the good work they are doing!!

\*\*\*\*\*

# WOMENS STUDIES INSTRUCTOR

VANCOUVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE, LANGARA, requires an Instructor in Women's Studies. The appointment is part-time for the semester 1 September 1977 to 31 December 1977, with possible extension to the semester 1 January 1978 to 30 April 1978. Qualifications: a degree in Women's Studies and/or a Master's degree (or in final stages) in Anthropology, Sociology, History, English or Political Science. Teaching experience highly desirable. Special qualifications: a demonstrated interest and active involvement in Women's Studies. Salary: placement on the 1976/77 Langara Faculty Salary Scale (\$15,420-\$25,398) according to qualifications and experience. Applications to be submitted no later than 15 April 1977 to: Personnel Department, Vancouver Community College, 675 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC, V6B 1N2.

\*\*\*\*\*

# MINUTES OF NDP WOMEN'S

## CONFERENCE

NORMA CAREY

BARBARA CAMPBELL

This policy conference was attended by about 120 women from about 30 constituencies, including the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island (Courtenay-Comox, Nanaimo, Victoria, Port Hardy), the Interior (Kamloops, Revelstoke, Slokan Valley), and the North (Francois Lake, Prince George).

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 12

### I. THREE SPEAKERS

Hilda Thomas "The History of the NDP Women's Committee"

- a women's committee existed in the 1960's, but lapsed into relative inactivity after 1968.
- committee reactivated in 1971, to respond to the Federal Task Force Report on the Status of Women. First NDP Women's conference held in Vancouver in September 1971.
- August 1972 - NDP elected provincially.
- Fall 1972 Provincial NDP convention. A resolution calling for a Women's Ministry to be established passed with a 2/3 majority. Premier Barrett announced publicly that he was against the creation of such a Ministry.
- Jan. 1973 - The first issue of Priorities is published. Much serious policy development within women's committee on sexism in schools, health care etc.
- Sept. 1974, NDP convention, Kamloops. An 8 page Manifesto on Women's Rights passed by a 2/3 majority, but only after a fierce debate. Manifesto was seen as a challenge to the party leadership. A convention resolution also called for funds for a provincial Women's organizer. Shelley Dillon was hired.
- 1975. Women's organizer's position was split into three part-time jobs (North, Vancouver Island, Interior). Convention passed policy on affirmative action, and a Women's Economic Rights Branch.
- Dec. 1975 - NDP government defeated.
- March 1976. Women's Committee participated in Rally for Action.

Hilda's conclusion: "We must push for all possible reforms until they are out of the way; until it is obvious that a reformed capitalist system cannot liberate women - and so move to change the system."

Cynthia Flood "The Women's Committee and the NDP"

- Cynthia tackled head-on the question of whether feminists/socialists should work within the NDP. Her opinion was yes, definitely.
- she saw three tasks within the NDP for feminists/socialists:
  - be active in policy discussion
  - contest, with other groups within the party, undemocratic practices, the tendency to suppress ideas and discussion within the party.
  - encourage NDP participation in extraparliamentary forms of action - boycotts, street demonstrations etc.

-she recognized that there had been a slump in the B.C. women's movement since the Rally for Action, March 1976.

### Judy Paterson "An Alternative View"

- Judy presented her reasons for resigning as Chairperson of the NDP Women's Rights Committee:
- the general hardening of the party's position with regards to traditional sources of support. ie. labour. "If labour can't influence the party, how can women?"
- Women are still too much in the kitchen in most NDP activities.
- Party researchers were unwilling to develop an active critical stance regarding current Socred welfare cutbacks, for fear of identifying the NDP as a "welfare party".
- Women who become active within the NDP are caught up in the party structures, which are essentially undemocratic.
- The loyalty of feminist NDP women to the party is questioned, and they are cut off from necessary information.
- Few women can be effectively active at both the constituency level and the Women's Committee level, through sheer demands of time and energy.

Judy's conclusion: Women should shift their focus away from the legislative process. She did not advocate that the Women's Committee leave the party, but rather urged individual feminist/socialist women to re-evaluate where they put their energy.

#### 2. BUZZ GROUPS OF 5-8 PEOPLE.

#### 3. PLENARY DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUES RAISED BY THE SPEAKERS

There was a strong majority opinion (almost a concensus ) that while the NDP is a social democratic party, and while we are feminists and socialists trying to function within it, the NDP remains the only political vehicle within which to work.

Another opinion was expressed - that for those who chose to leave the NDP, the lines of communication will remain open with those still inside the party.

## SATURDAY AFTERNOON

#### 4. PRESENTATION OF THE NEEDS OF RURAL WOMEN--BY VAN. ISLAND WOMEN

- skit entitled 'Rural Nucleosus', and discussion led by 5 women who are active in the Vancouver Island and Mackenzie Regional Women's Committee. The main points raised were:
- lack of public transportation isolates rural women; thus transportation is a "women's issue".
- absence of job opportunities is a limiting and depressing fact of life for many women.
- lack of basic social services creates great demands on women to volunteer their time. Women become burned out.
- Rural women have a closeness to each other, which seems to differ from the "business and politics" attitude of women in the city.
- Feminists and socialists are very visible in rural areas, and there-

fore are likely to be isolated, even within the NDP.  
-Many women and men in isolated communities have limited education, reflecting the limited education opportunities, and thus limited inner resources with which to fight for survival in the system.

#### 5. WORKSHOPS ON THE FOLLOWING TOPICS

- Organizing in the Constituency.
- Electoral Politics.
- Collective Decision Making in the NDP Women's Committee.
- Priorities and the BC Democrat.
- NDP Women's Committee and the Women's Movement.

#### 6. PLENARY

-reporting back from the workshops. See Sunday morning Resolutions for a discussion of the issues raised.

## SATURDAY EVENING

A social was held at Hillcrest Hall in Vancouver. Rousing socialist songs led by Hilda Thomas and Peter Dent. Great fun!

## SUNDAY MORNING

#### 7. RESOLUTIONS ARISING FROM SATURDAY WORKSHOPS

- 1). Priorities--editorial staff is exhausted; (typist's note: How TRUE!) poor communication recently between Priorities and the Provincial Women's Steering Committee (to be corrected).
  - M/S/C That feedback workshops on the effectiveness and future direction of Priorities be held in the regions, to be co-ordinated by the editorial board.
  - much appreciation expressed for the hard work and leadership given by the Priorities staff--"the lifeline of the women's committee".
- 2). M/S/C That all constituencies present sign up to take a regular consignment of Priorities to sell in their areas.
- 3). M/S/C That the Democrat Women's page publish existing party policy requiring NDP constituencies to provide day care at constituency meetings.
- 4). Need for a Long Term Strategy to elect feminist/socialist candidates.
  - M/S/C That a committee of 4 be formed to look into the feasibility of electing women to 6 provincial seats (Six Safe Seats), and 2 federal seats, and that the committee report to the March 27 Prov. Steering Committee meeting.
  - Committee consists of: Hilda Thomas, Margaret Birrell, Ruth Anis, Robin Geary. Comm. solicits suggestions from all ridings.
- 5). Literature tables at NDP meetings are to be encouraged. Alet McLeod to write an article for Priorities to this end.

6). Part time Women's organizer positions.

It was recommended that the next Provincial Steering Committee consider the suggestion that the Chairperson of the committee should be one of the part time organizers. Strong reservations were expressed regarding this suggestion - it excludes women with a full time job from becoming Chairperson, by Provincial Council decision the positions are regional in nature.

-Problem: Jerri Scull, Vancouver Island women's organizer, is not yet covered by the RWDSU collective agreement that covers other party organizers.

-Request: That Northern women submit suggested names for a part time northern women's organizer, to the Provincial Steering Committee.

7). Funding for all NDP Policy Committees: The Women's committee, like all policy committees, is hampered in its efforts to promote regional participation by a lack of financial resources.

M/S/C That the matter of funding for policy committees be referred to the Steering Committee, and that a motion regarding funding be presented to the provincial convention.

8). M/S/C That a committee of the provincial steering committee, including ex-chairpersons, be struck to define the role of the chairperson of the Women's Committee.

9). Regional representation on the Steering Committee: Provision for regional participation does exist--eg. regional women's committees in the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, Kamloops regularly send representatives to the Provincial Steering Committee meetings every 2nd month.

-Structure is not generally understood. Lack of money hampers travel.

-M/S/C That Priorities publish an article and an on-going ad on the structure of the Steering Committee, regional committees, and the contact person in each constituency.

-the relationship of a constituency women's representative to the constituency executive is something which must be worked out in each constituency.

10). M/S/C That sub-committees of the Provincial Steering Committee be struck to share the work load of the committee.

11). Need for long term planning, setting goals etc.:

M/S/C That the regional committees discuss strategies for the Women's Committee, that the August issue of Priorities be devoted to long term strategies, and that a conference be held in the fall on strategy and long term direction.

12). M/S/C That a watchdog (or 'watchbitch') committee of 2 be formed to monitor proposed constitutional changes to the NDP constitution, and that this committee report to the first Women's Caucus meeting at the convention. Committee consists of Joyce Meissenheimer and Hilda Thomas.

13). International Women's Day - March 8.

-M/S/C That the women's committee publish the NDP Manifesto on women's rights to be sold on March 8, and that the NDP Women's Committee support and publicize International Women's Day. Joyce offered to print the Manifesto.

14). M/S/C That the steering committee undertake immediately to seek

out women who want to run for office at the provincial convention.

15). M/S/C That this conference issue a press release urging the NDP caucus to take strong action to defend women and other oppressed groups, in light of the vicious Sacred attacks.

## CONVENTION STRATEGY

Candace Hanson presented her impressions of the 1976 convention, and described the slate and caucus system. Women's caucus proposes 8 people ( $\frac{1}{2}$  slate) and tries to get support for these candidates from other groups in the party.

### RELATIONSHIP OF WOMEN'S CAUCUS TO OTHER CAUCUSES

#### a. Open Caucus

Sally Hunter described the Open Caucus, as it emerged at the 1976 convention--5 principles: Democratic decision making within the party, NDP participation in municipal politics, support for labour, support for women's rights, commitment to education within the party. The Women's Caucus voted to enter the Open Caucus in 1976 provided there would be full support for the women's slate.

#### b. Labour Caucus

Marge Storm, IWA, reported on the structure and function of the labour caucus. "All trade unionists whose union is affiliated with the B.C. Federation of Labour and who are delegates to convention are eligible to be part of the labour caucus."

#### c. Regional Caucuses

Ruth Anis (Van. Is.) reported that the Vancouver Island Regional NDP caucus is inactive. She suggested that candidates endorsed by regional caucuses should be presented to convention as a partial slate, rather than as part of the official slate as was the case with their regional candidates. She pointed out that when the Van. Island candidates were put on the official slate, a feminist socialist who had regional support was dropped!

New Democrats North. It was pointed out that the people endorsed by the northern caucus also appeared on the official slate.

#### d. Discussion of the Open Caucus

M/S/D That this conference recommend that the Women's Caucus at the convention in 1977 support the Open Caucus, with the proviso that the Open Caucus accepts the women's slate.

In defeating this motion, speakers said endorsement of the open caucus should be an individual decision, or should be left until convention, and that the women's committee should preserve its integrity.

## ELECTION

Nominated: Sally Hunter, Robin Geary. Hunter declined. Geary accepted. Geary acclaimed. Much applause!

## ROSEMARY BROWN'S SPEECH

Rosemary spoke well and with conviction, making the following points:  
-our dilemma as socialists/feminists is trying to survive within a social democratic structure.

- we keep attacking the party regarding accountability, but it is really the caucus that is not accountable.
- we must elect feminists.
- by the yardstick of the Third World, Africa - the world is moving to the left. eg. Jamaica re-elected a socialist government.
- beware the politics of despair. Despair can be used to wreck a movement. The women's movement is alive and strong.

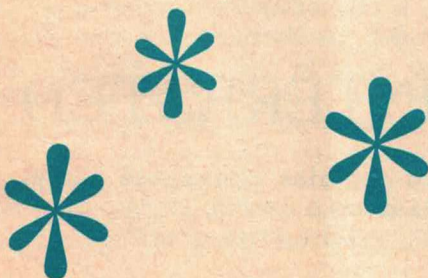
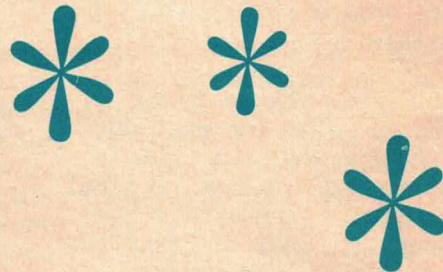
## RESOLUTIONS

Convention resolutions from the constituencies were presented for information.

(This report was prepared for the Fort George Constituency, February 21, 1977, by Barbara Campbell and Norma Carey.)



New Chairwoman Robin Geary  
hooping it up at the Federal  
Convention, July, 1976.



# JUDY PATERSON

## REPLIES

This is an attempt to explain why I have resigned as chairperson of the Women's Committee, and why I believe that women should not focus their energy on the N.D.P. I'm not advocating the burning of party cards, but I do think we must look critically at our situation within the party.

I'm sorry that this change in my political thinking has happened during my term as Chairperson, but that is also why it happened. I have no final answers but I and a number of other women are grappling with the problems and trying to work out solutions together.

As I came more in contact with the party apparatus, I was appalled at its undemocratic and sexist nature. To hear Barrett, Lauk, Lea, Levi, and Wallace at the New Democrats North meeting in Terrace, one would think the party had no feminist or socialist policy. While the women slaved all day in the kitchen preparing a "Barrett dinner", the MLA's defended the former N.D.P. government. They defended Bill 146 and denied that the labour movement had contributed to the election campaign. Gary Lauk talked so much about the party's historical links with small businessmen, and the common bond between the shopkeeper and his customer that people probably began to believe it. Relationships between the labour movement and the N.D.P. have deteriorated in the rest of the country as well. Since the N.D.P. governments in Saskatchewan and Manitoba have reaffirmed support for the Trudeau wage controls, their trade union affiliates are talking about quitting the party. The trade union movement has more financial

resources and clout than women. Yet it cannot get the party leadership to support party policy.

## WELFARE PARTY

Look at the Sacred cutbacks in the Human Resources Department. One reason we have heard little opposition from the N.D.P. is that according to a caucus researcher the leadership doesn't want it to be identified as the party of welfare recipients. So is the N.D.P. really representing "all the people" as Barrett claims? Now we have a membership fee of \$15.00 with some constituencies refusing to accept members who cannot afford that much. Some working class party!

So where does that leave us as women? Still in the kitchen with no power and little chance of getting any. We have produced good policy in most areas yet it means nothing to the leadership. Feminists have struggled hard inside the N.D.P. over the last six or seven years, only to slowly fade away exhausted and burnt out.

Even if we began to gain some power, in all likelihood the party establishment would use any means to destroy the Women's Committee just as they did to the Vancouver Area Council. They wouldn't let a constitution or party policy get in their way.

## NOT INTERESTED

The N.D.P. is a social democratic party, not a socialist or a labour party. It is not interested in grass-roots



organizing or in educating its members. As the last election campaign showed, the N.D.P. is a party of the media which will use the slickest personal hype to get votes.

## EXCLUSION OF WOMEN

As a social democratic party, the N.D.P. is set up in the traditional male-dominated, hierarchical fashion. There is some pretense at democracy but most decisions are made by a few who have access to what's going on. Any woman who gets near the top must be loyal to the men who call the shots or she won't have access to information--and therefore no power. The pyramid structure prevents any possibility of feminist or collective operating principle.

The exclusion of women results not only from the structures but also from the old boys network. A lot of power surrounds the evening drinking and power games when crucial discussions and decisions happen. Usually women who are involved in these events are allowed to play either the daughter or prospective bed partner role. They are not accepted as equals.

Most people would agree with much of what I have said but would draw different conclusions. For instance some people say it's the leadership; we have to get rid of Barrett or the right-wing establishment. However my contention is that whether we replace Barrett with Gary Lauk, Stu Leggatt or any other male who could make it, there will be no substantial change in the party. We should not expect any more from them because when we start to gain real power they know their position will be threatened. Any man who could become the leader at this time would be someone who operates in an elitist, top-down, personality type, power politics way. The process of reaching the top of that system would have corrupted him, as it would a woman. The leader would only yield to feminist demands if he thought it would help him, and only for as long as he thought it would be useful to him.

## EXHAUSTED OR ISOLATED

Other N.D.P.ers will tell us that we just have to organize at the constituency level. But again that is not so easy as many women who have been doing that for years will agree. The women end up providing all the services to keep the party machinery functioning until election time when the men take over. Women are not earning respect by doing all the shit work in constituencies. Most women find being involved in both the constituency and the women's committee an intolerable load. So they either become exhausted or isolated.

Furthermore I don't think the answer at this time is to get more women elected to the Legislature. Even if that were possible, the power structure will only tolerate a certain number of women and those women will be under incredible pressures to conform. We have not yet built up the support mechanisms to allow feminists to survive long in that system.

The argument that we should not walk away from the potential support of the large numbers of politically active women within the N.D.P. seems to me to be a questionable one. I believe we can reach those women if we establish something viable for and by women, something recognizably ours, something that doesn't have us picking our way through bureaucratic fiefdoms carved out by the male leadership. And we will not have party structures to inhibit our organizing. We will be able to talk about socialism and feminism to those women around the province who are vitally interested but are aware of how little the N.D.P. government did for them.

## POWER BASE

We must develop our own power base as women and practise feminist-socialism within our organization. It seems necessary for us to remove ourselves from traditional power structures before we can begin to figure out new ways

# THE LABOUR CAUCUS AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN

MARGE STORM

1. The Labour Caucus consists of mainly labour delegates, although it is open to all union members at the convention

2. Labour caucuses elect nominees for the positions of a Vice-President and two members at large.

3. It has been tradition that the position of Second Vice-President be filled by the Secretary Manager or President of the B.C. Federation of Labour.

4. It has also been tradition that these positions are accepted by the official slate with of course wheeling and dealing taking place.

5. Traditions can be broken such as the B.C.FED boycotting the 1975 convention.

6. The constitution provides for three labour delegates on the provincial council, and these positions are elected at the caucus.

7. An elected labour person on the executive becomes Chairperson of the NDP labour policy committee, with representatives from various unions. They meet five or six times through the year to deal with resolutions and to set out policy. The Chairperson acts as liason person between the committee and the NDP caucus.

8. Labour consistently takes a strong position in support of the NDP Women's Committee Caucus. That was quite evident when in 1973 the women's caucus approached labour and asked for support for their candidates to executive positions.

9. The labour caucus is not a monolithic structure, so not all strongly support women's rights, but the only way to get support is to be heard.

I personally feel that it would be advantageous to the women's committee if they would approach labour for their support and possibly request the opportunity to say a few words to the labour delegates.

This should be arranged well in advance of the NDP Convention to set the mood and trend of the convention. This could be done with the officers of the B.C. Fed.

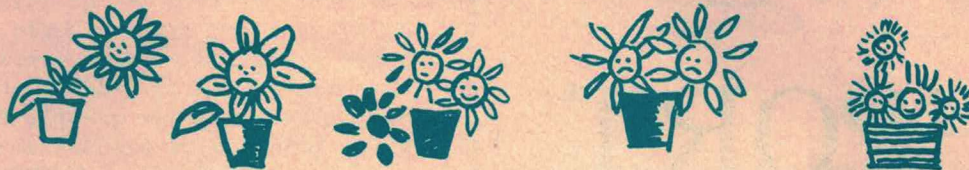
10. From an Ad Hoc committee of interested union women possibly posing as a threat, the B.C. Fed formulated a women's committee. The Federation sponsored annual delegated conferences of trade union women arranged by the women's committee. Resolutions emanating from the conferences were dealt with by the committee and appeared as recommendations in the report of the B.C. Fed's committee on women's rights.

11. They have always been adopted and become policy of the B.C. Federation of Labour.

12. It was at such a conference that the women demanded a full time women's organizer on the staff of the B.C. Fed. and it was through these demands that Gail Borst became that organizer. Through Gail, women in various unions have set up their own women's committees to deal with their own specific problems. In 1976 Gail arranged regional women's conferences in order to reach more trade union women and they were very successful.

13. The women's committee has been successful in arranging for classes for trade union women at the C.L.C. winter school for the past two years which has kept Gail busy. The seminars sponsored by the Vancouver and New Westminster and District Labour Councils have also included courses for women.

# TAKE EM TO KNAPPS' NURSERIES



The following resolution from the National Convention of SORWUC was forwarded to Vander Zalm:

WHEREAS this Union supports the right of access by all to free 24 hour child care;

AND WHEREAS the present Provincial Government has shown itself to be completely unconcerned with the problems of working mothers by:

1. Altering its subsidy policies so that fewer women are eligible for subsidies and thus resulting in a decline in the demand for child care and,
2. Allocating, in its 77/78 budget, a much smaller amount of money for child care, justified by the lower enrollment;

AND WHEREAS child care workers are underpaid and yet unable to demand more money because of funding and subsidy arrangements which place the responsibility for wages with the parent boards;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Union demands:

1. That the Provincial Government fund child care on a basis similar to that of the public school system, with supervision from community boards, and
2. That the program of the child care centres be designed by the staff in consultation with the community board.



We make this resolution with the aims of:

1. Increasing the number of child care centres and so allowing all children to have access to quality day care, and to allow all women who choose to work outside the home to do so;
2. Improving the equipment in child care centres; and
3. Increasing staff wages to reflect the level of skill, training and labour involved.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The following reply was received:

February 17, 1977

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of February 9th, containing a resolution to pass at your National Convention on Saturday, February 5th, in Vancouver.

Since I completely reject the position you have taken in relation to policies of this Ministry regarding Day Care services, I must respectfully reject your Union demands on Day Care policy.

The policy of this Ministry is now and will continue to be that we subsidize individuals for Day Care services and not the centres or staffs of these services.

Sincerely,

William N. Vander Zalm,  
MINISTER

\*Ed: Owner of Knapp's Garden Centres

# LOWER MAINLAND REPORT

By Ann Thomson

Enthusiasm generated by the Conference was felt within the Lower Mainland Women's Committee, which held a productive meeting on February 25 in Vancouver.

Sharing the chair were Jill Davidson and Helen Pinsky, who had prepared the agenda together with Johanna den Hertog and Sally Hunter. This committee will continue to plan LMWC meetings until the convention.

## CONFERENCE DISCUSSION

In a round table discussion, we assessed the conference held at Douglas College. Many points were made about its general excellence. It was felt that the first session, on Why We Are In the NDP, set the tone for the conference. The decisive outcome of that discussion was that the struggle for women's rights is indissoluble from the struggle for socialism, and that feminist socialists are correct to organize within the NDP.

It was noted that the conference was very representative, that women from many parts of the province attended. Between one-third to one-half of them were new members of the NDP. The high political calibre of the contributions was noted by several speakers. One woman at the meeting reported that she had reached her decision to join the party on the strength of the conference.

## SAFE SEATS

An important decision of the conference was that the NDP Women's Rights Committee will work seriously toward electing feminists to office. A report was given to the meeting by Hilda Thomas from the Safe Seats Committee. The search is on for candidates for six provincial and two federal seats.

Many serious questions were raised in the discussion of this issue. It was

pointed out that not all women are feminists, and the argument was made that candidates supported by the Women's Committee may be called upon to run against women, both inside and out of the NDP, who are not feminists. Further, candidates supported by the Women's Committee must be both feminists and socialists. An example was cited of a woman candidate who recruited feminists to work in her campaign but who, once elected, betrayed socialist principles by voting for Bill 146 against the labour movement. It was strongly felt by the meeting that the candidates we seek and will support must represent the Women's Committee of the NDP and must be accountable to the collective decisions of the Committee.

The result of this discussion was a motion to draft a program, based on party policy, and that women candidates will be asked to support this program, to run on it, and to be accountable to the Women's Committee before we shall endorse them. This motion was carried and referred to the 'Six and Two Safe Seats' Committee, struck off at the conference. A proposed program will be drafted by this group, which includes Robin Geary, Hilda Thomas, Margaret Birrell, and Ruth Annis. It will be sent around the province for revisions and brought to the Women's Caucus at the May provincial convention.

## GOALS

The chairpersons had given thought to the goals and priorities of the Lower Mainland Women's Committee and reported on these. They proposed a three-month agenda for meetings up to the convention.

The March 25 meeting will discuss the Women's Committee's role and relations with the constituencies. In April, a workshop to prepare for the convention will be held, similar to the one held last year. The May meeting will devote part of its dis-

cussion to the structure of the party. In addition, eight suggestions for discussions and activities, made at the conference, were reported on.

Earlier in the meeting, a report had been given on preparations for the International Women's Day rally being organized by the B.C. Federation of Women. A sign-up sheet was circulated, and several members volunteered to sell our new pamphlet, The Women's Rights Manifesto of the B.C. NDP, at the various March 8 events. This pamphlet is now available for sale at constituency and other events for 75¢ a copy.

Discussion of the Women's Committee page in the Democrat and of Priorities concluded the meeting. Plans for the May issue of Priorities, to be produced by women of the North Shore, are well underway.

It was stressed that help is needed each month for the production weekend for Priorities. Volunteers need not be experienced; guides are available and it is easy to learn layout and the other skills needed. Good typists, however, are also needed. Production weekends include the Friday evening and during the day on Saturday and Sunday. Volunteers may help out for as much time as they can--an evening, a morning, or an afternoon, for example--or longer. Rides are being arranged to Provincial Office where the work is done. If you can help, please look for the schedule of editorial and production meetings elsewhere in this issue and phone the numbers listed.

The LMWC meets on the last Friday of each month at 8 pm, usually at the offices of the B.C. Federation of Labour, 517 E. Broadway, Vancouver. All NDP women are welcome.

NEXT LOWER MAINLAND WOMEN'S

COMMITTEE MEETING WILL BE

APRIL 29 - 8:00 P.M.

TOPIC: PARTY STRUCTURE

B.C. FED. BUILDING - VANCOUVER

## NORTHERN NDP WOMENS MEETING

Four northern NDP women attended the recent Women's Policy Conference sponsored by the BC NDP Women's Rights Committee in Vancouver. They were Elsie Langmaid (Francois Lake), Caroline Hilbert (Quesnel), Norma Carey (Prince George) and Barbara Campbell (Prince George). We came back with new insights into the workings of the Women's Committee and into the problems we face as feminists and socialists, and with renewed enthusiasm to take up the task!

The next logical step would seem to be a meeting of Northern NDP women. So ...

WE ARE ENCOURAGING ALL INTERESTED WOMEN TO ATTEND THE NEW DEMOCRATS NORTH CONFERENCE APRIL 9-10 IN PRINCE GEORGE, AND TO COME TO THE WOMEN'S MEETING.

Some suggested topics for discussion:

- feasibility of a Northern Regional Women's Committee or Committees
- program of action for such a Committee
- participation and communication; how do we lick the distance/travel problem within the North, and with regard to the Provincial Women's Steering Ctee.
- part-time Northern Women's Organizer job -- how do we want to make use of this position?

THE WOMEN'S MEETING WILL BE HELD

SATURDAY 9 APRIL 1977, AT 5 P.M.  
DUCHESS PARK HIGH SCHOOL  
2371 ROSS CRESCENT, PRINCE GEORGE

For suggestions re the agenda, etc., please contact

Barbara Campbell                      Anne Hogan  
563-5561                                      or              NDP Office  
Prince George                                      562-5668

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

# RAPE RELIEF

The following is an interview with Diane Russell,  
of Rape Relief, conducted by Dannie McArthur  
and Nancy Love of Priorities

PRIORITIES: Could you tell us how Rape Relief came to be started  
in B. C.?

Diane: A Canadian named Johanna Den Hertog had observed some  
Rape Relief Centres in the States and decided to help  
out in one in B.C. on her return to this province. She found,  
however, that there were no functioning centres in Canada, so  
she did the legwork to set up this Centre. That was three years  
ago. It was really the first such centre in Canada exclusively  
for rape relief, with government funding for that purpose.

PRIORITIES: Who makes up the staff of the centre...what are their  
qualifications....and how did they become involved?

Diane: We had expanded to six staff but because of the recent cutbacks  
we are now down to five. These women have gone through our  
training programme and have been volunteers for a least six months  
to be eligible for staff position. There are many ways of coming into  
Rape Relief. For example one of the staff was a rape victim and after  
she had worked through her rape, she decided to work here to try to  
help other women. Another woman was very angry and upset about the  
laws concerning women and rape. She came in here to scream about it  
and stayed on as staff.

PRIORITIES: Is Rape Relief an unique service for rape victims in B.C.  
or are there other such services?

Diane: There really isn't any other social service that covers the  
areas that we do. The main difference is that with us there is  
a continuity with the rape victim from the time the rape occurs to  
the end of the entire process which takes about a year and a half if  
she decides to go to court. Previous to this the rape victim would  
go to the police who would investigate and then she would get a  
prosecutor and go to preliminary court. She would later on get another  
prosecutor and go to supreme court. There was no one person giving  
her support throughout the whole process who knew all aspects of  
the system.

PRIORITIES: What services are you providing?

Diane: We are a crisis oriented centre for rape victims--available  
on a 24 hour basis through our crisis line. We do accompaniment  
services. If the woman desires we will accompany her to the hospital  
and make sure she gets follow-up treatment. We will also go through

the police investigation and the court proceedings with her--right up to the supreme court. We provide medical and therapeutic referrals if the woman needs help we are not able to provide. Public education is a VERY important part of what we do. From the information we get through dealing with the system and from the victims...and the rapists, we are able to educate the public on rape prevention. For example, three of our staff go up to Mountain Prison once a month at the request of rapists and child molesters. The men talk about their feelings...what the rape meant to them, how it came about, and why they picked a particular victim. This information gives us a better profile of rapists and their potential victims.

A lot of women that come to us would never go to the police so we get a profile of the casual acquaintance rape... (which is how most rapes occur). We are now compiling all our information and the police information to get a better overall view of the rapists and the victims and this helps us in rape prevention.

Another important service is the phone-in report (third party report). If women don't want to report a case in person they can phone us and give us a description of the rapists or the name if they have it....and then we can give this information to the police so they know who to keep an eye on.

PRIORITIES: Where does most of your Funding come from....and how have the recent cutbacks affected you?

Diane: The Department of Health gives us most of our money. Our budget went in last year for \$155,000 dollars and that was for the four rape centres in B.C. which form the B.C. coalition. What we came up with was \$75,000 dollars. Later on Human Resources stepped in and said that they would match up to \$25,000 dollars on a dollar to dollar basis if we can raise the same. That is not very useful to us because we would have to put someone into a full-time fund-raising position and that takes away from the work that we do here. The average week for a woman here is about 70 hours a week right now. Last summer when we first got cut we dropped from a staff of six to a staff of three. We were working about 100 hours a week because we have to have the phone lines open at all times and we always work in twos. It got to the point where we had to start refusing speaking engagements and when you are a rape center and you have to refuse to give people a rape prevention programme it is really sad. Now we have managed to get two women in here from LIP and they cover some of the speaking engagements.

PRIORITIES: Are many of the cases referrals from other agencies?

Diane: We do get quite a few referrals from the hospitals, from psychiatrists and some from the police.

PRIORITIES: What is the attitude of the police towards you?

Diane: Some of them are very receptive to us but we still have a bit of a problem with those that aren't quite clear on what our purpose is and with those that see us only as a bandage service. Some of the police feel that we are going to stop rape victims from reporting to them and that we want the victims to come to us instead. But in actual fact we never make a decision for the victim as to whether to report it or not. We do try to destroy many of the myths that prevent women from reporting the rape, thereby being a liaison

for the police. We don't want to take away from their work...we want to complement it. Many feel threatened by our knowledge about rape.

PRIORITIES: What is the attitude, in general, of the police to the victim?

Diane: Usually they are sympathetic but they often won't show it. Because of their "line of duty" they can't afford to get emotionally involved in every crime...it is sort of their professional attitude but some of them have become very receptive and the women are pleased. But we still have a lot of work to do in that area.

PRIORITIES: Are there no policewomen assigned to rape cases?

Diane: There are often not enough women on the force available but if the victim requests a policewoman they will often try and do it...but that is not always possible.

PRIORITIES: Have you, yourself, noticed a change in the attitudes since you came on staff a year and a half ago?

Diane: I definitely do believe there has been a change but every so often we run into someone who kind of sets us back. But for the most part there is a change in society and the requests to have us speak have at least doubled if not tripled in this period, which I feel is significant.

PRIORITIES: If a woman decides to go to court or attempts to, how much success is there in prosecuting?

Diane: It still isn't very successful which is basically because of the many myths still in existence and because of the way the rape laws are written. If you have a jury full of people with their minds full of ideas about rape being a sexual assault ( and thereby view the rapist as not been able to control his sexual impulse ) they are less likely to hold the man as responsible and therefore more likely to acquit him. Most crime cases when they get to the supreme court have about a 85% chance ( or better ) of getting a conviction whereas rape has a 56% chance of conviction. Rape is still the hardest crime to get a conviction on.

PRIORITIES: How many of the women that you come into contact with are willing to prosecute?

Diane: Approximately 40% of the victims that use our service also are involved with the police. Quite often they won't go to the police because it is a neighbour or a good friend or someone that they haven't had any reason not to trust. A lot of women are afraid of retaliation. But, if they don't come forward and we don't get more women going through the courts nothing is going to change.. we are not going to get the rapists off the street or the laws changed.

PRIORITIES: Is there a 'type' of woman who is more likely to get a conviction i.e., do you have a better chance if you have had a super-virtuous past as opposed to someone that might have had a few relationships?



Diane: A study done recently in Toronto showed that the rape cases that made it through the court with a conviction had particular things in common. They were middle class women between the ages of twenty-two and thirty-five, they were married and living with their spouses, they had children, they had been raped anally as well as vaginally, and they had bruises and cuts on them. I guess if you wanted to assure getting through court you would ideally have all that and a witness. The rapists' background is important too because people don't expect rapists to be university professors, doctors, lawyers or good looking (or the victims for that matter ).

PRIORITIES: How about the rapist...is there a 'typical rapist'?

Diane: In psychological testing between rapists and non-rapists there was no difference. There seems to be varying degrees of rapists. ie. street rapists being more psychotic, the casual acquaintance rapists being more neurotic and then there's the schizos..but these are the very small percentage of the extremely dangerous. The street rapist had basically learned to channel his aggression and anger towards women although the anger is not necessarily caused by women. In the casual acquaintance or 'neurotic' rape it is usually just a man over-playing his 'macho' image.. he usually is not that violent but is just going one step too far in his role playing. This type of rapist usually won't admit it's rape but protests " she wanted it".

PRIORITIES: What about bill C71...has it made any significant changes?

Diane: It came through about a year ago and it was one of the first changes in years ( most of the laws refer back to the 1700's) and it is a step forward but so much more is needed. It still doesn't give the woman nearly as much protection as she needs.. but it is good in that they can no longer cross-examine the woman's past sexual history and the woman can ask for a closed court, but there are still a lot of loopholes.

PRIORITIES: Could you tell us a little about the changes that you would like to see and are fighting for at the moment?

Diane; I would like to have the word 'rape' taken out of the criminal code because of the myths of sexual connotation that surround it, and put the crime into varying degrees of assault.. to make the sentencing of the accused more realistic. Right now the jury is told that if convicted the rapist could go to jail for life which makes them less likely to convict yet in fact, the average rapist goes to jail for 2 to 4 years...but the jury doesn't know that.

PRIORITIES: In your speaking engagements what are you saying about rape prevention?

Diane: We have basic tactics that are logical ie. don't walk in bad areas; don't hitchhike; whenever possible wear non-restrictive clothing so you can run; yell loudly if attacked, "Fire" seems to be the most effective; practice memorizing license plates and being aware of the people and cars around you; take an emotional-physical self defense course; report to the police the license number of any car which follows or harasses you; when driving alone, make sure all doors are locked; Check the back seat if the car has been parked and don't leave your doors unlocked; and always try to be in control

---

of situations where a sexual confrontation could happen - on all levels from the casual to the intimate. Mainly we talk about assertiveness because if we can get women to be more assertive they are going to be able to stop a rape situation before it ever happens. Rapists are looking for passivity in a victim. I am in favour of women using their intelligence and knowing their own physical capabilities. If women take self-defence courses they will at least be in touch with their own bodies and know how much strength they have. Also we counsel high-school girls to be aware of the heavy seduction scene. We stress the point that to avoid the casual acquaintance type rape the lines of communications must be cleared. If you mean "NO" make it clear. If necessary be aggressive and rude but at all times be assertive and use physical force if necessary to get the message through.

PRIORITIES: What can women, the 'non-victims' do to help put pressure on government and courts to change the existing situation?

Diane Basically the best idea right now is to write letters in support of the centers across the country...letters to us, to their MLAs, to community groups, doctors, lawyers...anyone they meet. Letters are very effective. Also for the first time the 27 rape relief centers across Canada got together nationally...we have a national 'sister' or co-ordinator and as a national organization we hope to exert more pressure for changes.

PRIORITIES: Is there a move to set up centers in other parts of B.C?

Diane: There are two new centers so far this year and we formed a coalition to get funding for all of us. But originally the new centers get their own funding. They do this by proving there is a need for a center in the community, get community support, run as a volunteer center for awhile and then join up with the coalition.

PRIORITIES: Do you offer some sort of training course for groups that want to set up a center in their community?

Diane: Yes. What we do is go into the community for three intensive weekends giving the women in the community all the information necessary for setting up their own programme. All we require from the interested group is minimal funding for transportation costs and billeting while we're there. The group is then left on their own for awhile but we're always here as a resource center for anyone who needs us. If the new rape center gets going and wants to join up with the coalition they only have to become a society (which is just a formality). The more centers we have in our coalition, the larger body we become and the more power we have in demanding funding.

PRIORITIES: So, basically, if a group of women in Trail, for example, want to start a rape relief center, they just have to contact you, provide expenses, and set up a time when you can come and train them.

Diane: Yes.

PRIORITIES: What about women who live in areas where centers are already in existence...do you want more volunteers...and are there training programmes for them also?

Diane: At the moment we have 12 volunteers, but most of them are working or are students and can't go out during the day to court, speaking engagements etc. so we are always looking for more. We run about 3 training sessions a year..one night a week for 7 weeks, and then there's a weekend workshop when we have police, prosecutors, therapists etc. who give us more counselling techniques.

PRIORITIES: When is your next training session and how do people go about getting involved in it?

Diane: We just started one last week and there won't be another until the end of summer, but if anyone is interested they can phone us, leave their name and number, and we'll give them a call a few weeks in advance of the course.

#### IF YOU WANT TO REPORT A RAPE:

PRESERVE THE EVIDENCE  
CALL THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY  
CALL A FRIEND AND/OR RAPE RELIEF FOR SUPPORT  
GET MEDICAL ATTENTION  
WRITE DOWN THE DETAILS OF THE RAPE

#### CENTERS AND CRISIS LINES

KAMLOOPS	374 - 6671
NANAIMO	753 - 0022
VANCOUVER	732 - 1613
VICTORIA	383 - 3232

#### TWO-YEAR JOB LEAVE FOR MOMS

Reprinted from the Province,  
March 10, 1977.

PARIS (Reuter) - Working mothers will receive a two-year leave of absence from their jobs when they bear a child under a new Mother's Charter approved by the government on Wednesday.

More than two million mothers also will qualify for higher family allowances totalling 340 francs (about \$70) a month

under the reform sponsored by President Valery Giscard d'Estaing, who called it as one of the major social reforms planned by the government in 1977.

It will cost the state an additional 2.6 billion francs (about \$500 million) a year if approved by parliament.

Employers will be required to give women two years leave of absence when they have a child and then take them back on the payroll. Practice now is to give a one-year leave period.

# YOU TOO CAN DO PRIORITIES

CYNTHIA FLOOD

NANCY LOVE

ROS ZECH

If you think you or your group would like to undertake an issue of Priorities, start planning several months ahead. This will allow time to do it well, and to be in touch with Priorities staff for consultation on any problems that crop up. It may be possible either for one of you to come to Vancouver for a meeting, or for a Priorities staffer to attend one of your meetings to assist you.

What is involved in producing the copy for an issue of Priorities?

## SUBJECTS

First of all it means writing 18 to 20 pages of Priorities, average articles are 2-3 pages long, approximately 600 words to a page, the remaining pages to be used for letters and announcements, etc.

Priorities is a magazine with a socialist/feminist perspective and listed below are subjects that we have used. Very often an "outside" group elects to use a theme from their particular area, and this has in the past proved very popular with our readers.

1. Editorial
2. Interviews
3. Personal viewpoints, both reaction to events and analysis.
4. Personal experience articles.
5. Analysis of current legislation.
6. Book, movie and play reviews.
7. News from NDP women in other provinces.

8. Reports of activities in the Women's Movement.
9. Speeches from conferences.
10. Historical articles (local history of women).
11. Articles on women from other cultures and countries.
12. Illustrations.
13. Photographs (black and white).
14. Biographies on women active in politics.

In general we don't print creative writing or poetry.

### Equipment you will need:

Typewriter in good working condition with carbon ribbon.

Blue pencils for proof-reading.

Correction fluid (lots!)

Black construction paper for indicating photos.

Priorities typing sheets.

## EDITORIAL MEETINGS

We would suggest at least three editorial meetings and at the first one choose someone to co-ordinate to take care of phoning people, to ask them to write articles, to set up meetings, and to remind the group of these meetings 2 or 3 days ahead, to obtain supplies, and to check that articles are going to be ready on time -- it is best if this person does not have to do any writing! The first meeting can be quite informal, a chance for the group to sound out ideas, and decide a theme if this is the way you decide to handle it.

Arrange who is going to write what, and who must be phoned and begged or bullied into producing an article on their pet subject. Plan your Editorial at this meeting; this can pull the theme of your issue together, or be on a non-relating subject. Deadlines are important, and should be arranged at this point between your group and Priorities staff. As a guideline, if you are going to do the typing, all copy should be with Priorities by the last editorial meeting before the production weekend. If we will be doing the typing, all copy should be with Priorities at least 2 weeks before the work weekend.

#### Second Meeting:

Get as much copy as possible brought to this meeting, allowing for women who have promised to write to have moved out of town, produced twins, etc., etc. Read and discuss copy, this can be a scan process, especially if you are not used to writing and find it hard. It is really difficult to read your article aloud: to wait for comments after you have finished, and to listen and really hear criticism. Your feelings may be hurt, and if the criticism is positive, you may think, "They're just saying that to make me feel good!" But everyone is in the same boat, and you will find the process of sharing and commenting and trying to help each other improve the articles, will do good things for your group and everyone in it.-- This collective process does work. Discuss photos --who is going to take them and where. If some articles are approved, arrange for typing to be done; we will send typed pages from previous issues as samples for you to see.

## FINAL APPROVAL

#### Third Meeting:

Final approval of all copy. Typed articles should be proofread; it is important this is done carefully, preferably not by the typist. Mark errors in blue pencil. When they are corrected, put a tick at the top of the page. Consider what order you want your articles to appear in. It is preferable to have, say, a book review appear between two rather similar factual articles, or a short article between two longer ones. If your copy does not quite fill a page, don't worry. We can insert a filler or announcement in extra space. Photographs should be sent separately with black paper slightly smaller than size of photo placed in spot where photo is to go. Photos can be blown up or reduced if required.

Please provide us with a list of titles for articles and sub-headings where needed.

If your group would like to do an issue, we will send you samples and will be glad to answer any questions not mentioned here.

Good luck.

Judy Paterson  
continued from p 17

of operating. I believe that we should stop focusing on the legislative process which generally just reacts to or follows changes which have already happened in society. Women are developing different types of organizing which hopefully will be based on collective decision-making. If we are not clear about the importance of that process we are doomed to build the same type of organizations we are trying to destroy. Only when we build our own power base outside of the present coopting system will we be able to really challenge society.

I appreciate the support I've received from the N.D.P. women and hope we will continue to work together in the long haul to gain collective power.

# GARY LAUK COMES TO

## PT. GREY

by Jill Davidson

At the March monthly meeting of the Point Grey constituency, members had the opportunity of having Gary Lauk speak and answer some questions. Although his talk gave the audience a humorous and critical view of the Social Credit government, as an NDP member looking for a discussion of policy and action, I was disappointed.

The entirety of Lauk's speech was taken up with description of the current government hopping from one crisis to another. The events leading up to several of the inquiries now underway were explained, the high unemployment rate and cutbacks in social services were criticized and the gutting of the land commission was condemned. Nowhere was NDP policy mentioned. From Lauk's speech I learned a few politically irrelevant opinions such as that Jim Chabot is a good father, and some Socred MLA's think that the United Way is a Communist front. Although Mr. Lauk suggested that we should attempt to convince friends to join the Party, from his talk I found myself in a position only to tell people why they shouldn't vote for the Socreds. No reasons were put forward as to why a voter would want to elect an NDP government.

During the question period that followed, Lauk was grilled on his view toward women's rights. When asked what changes he felt an NDP government should encourage, he replied that "harder" policy was needed with more analysis from an economic viewpoint. Specifically he thought that efforts should be made to show the private sector that women are as capable as men and therefore should be hired. In addition, he felt special training courses should be initiated to provide women with employable skills.

Lauk was asked what his opinion was on the NDP policy of establishing a Ministry of Women's Rights. He answered that such a Ministry would be inconsistent with the principles of democratic socialism. As for the problem of how to implement accountability, not surprisingly Lauk felt he couldn't answer that question. However, he felt that a review of the Barrett administration would show that they had done very well.

Lauk went on to say that he was of the opinion that the Party had too many philosophers and not enough soldiers. One woman pointed out that she was one of the soldiers in the Party who spends time knocking on doors encouraging people to vote for and join the NDP. She reported she was having real difficulties answering people's questions about why the NDP has not implemented some Party policy and particularly the Women's Rights policy.

Although Lauk's talk was a disappointing surprise to me, who had never before heard him, some positive things did surface. First, he stated that he thoroughly agreed with the major conclusions of the Berger Commission. Second, the talk gave several Point Grey women the opportunity to let both Lauk and the constituency realize their concerns on women's issues. Third, at least during the question and answer period, Lauk was straightforward about his position on issues that concern women.



# THANKS



to the following persons who have sent donations to Priorities:

Marielle Demorest, Richmond

Linda Dohoo, Toronto

Anne Donaldson, Thunder Bay

Diane Edmondson, Trail

Ruth Fedewa, Burnaby

Robin Geary, Vancouver

Anne Gilbert, North Vancouver

Ross Harvey, Edmonton

R. Ward, Vancouver

Sharon Kelly, Burnaby

Simonne Lyons, Vancouver

Elizabeth Miller, Victoria

Ina Miller, Perdue, Sask.

Gertrude Nesbitt, Surrey

Harold Rittberg, Vancouver

Carole Anne Soong, Vancouver

Hilda Thomas, Vancouver

*Memoirs Prog  
1980-1981  
1982-1983  
1984-1985  
1986-1987  
1988-1989  
1990-1991  
1992-1993  
1994-1995  
1996-1997  
1998-1999  
2000-2001  
2002-2003  
2004-2005  
2006-2007  
2008-2009  
2010-2011  
2012-2013  
2014-2015  
2016-2017  
2018-2019  
2020-2021  
2022-2023  
2024-2025*

\*\*\*\*\*

SUBSCRIPTION FORM: \$5.00 per year -- \$10.00 Commercial. Send to  
3485 West 15th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6R 2Z2.

Name:.....	Name:.....
Address:.....	Address:.....
City:.....	City:.....
Postal Code:.....	Postal Code:.....
Renewal:.....	Renewal:.....
New:.....	New:.....
Gift:.....	Gift:.....