

# THE OTHER WOMAN

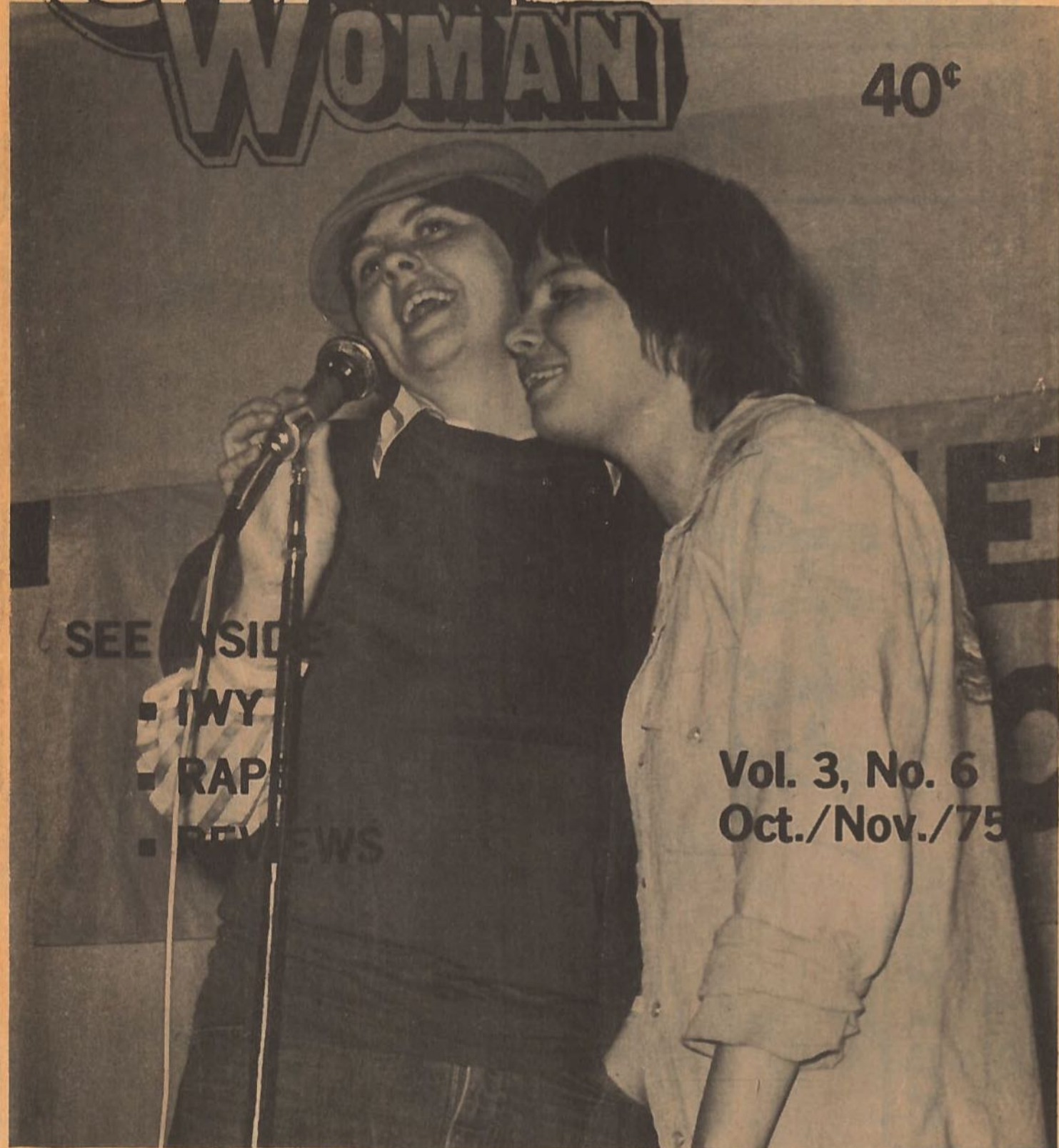
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SEE INSIDE

- IWY
- RAPS
- REVIEWS

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Oct./Nov./75





# ① OUR OUTSIDE EDITORIAL: "A FEMINIST IS A MANY-SPLENDoured WOMAN"

October 25th is the last big day for IWY Conferences. World governments will evaluate their programmes for International Women's Year. As an alternative, the women's movement in Toronto and other centres held a demonstration on this day in opposition to the inaction of our Canadian government. Our demands are: equal pay for work of equal value, equal job opportunities, equal rights in marriage and property law, safe effective birth control available for all, access to free quality childcare for all, removal of abortion from the Criminal Code, and Free Dr. Henry Morgentaler.

This issue features 2 pages on the Mexico City I.W.Y. Conference June 19-July 2. The official body was attended by women appointed by their respective governments such as ruling class women like the wife of the Shah of Iran. The other conference was a UN-organized Tribunal attended by feminists such as Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem. This is not to say that these 2 kinds of women were the only ones present because there were U.S. and third world caucuses against imperialism. But the conference was dominated by those women who were not interested in political and economic change for all.

One woman who attended the conference wrote: "The political overtones were probably the most disruptive forces at the conference, creating more factions among the delegates than had originally existed. Much to my disappointment, most of the delegates or at least the most vocal ones were more concerned with solving the political and economic problems in their own countries than they were with solving the problems specific to women." (Julie Bubnick, Status of Women News, Page 10) Separating politics from the women's movement is not only absurd but dangerous because it fits right into the state's in-

ternational plans. Only the sheltered existence of middle-class feminists could lead them to condemn topics of most interest to third world women because they weren't "women's issues" (i.e., abortion or daycare). We must ask why there is no money for daycare and why we must flee from our homes as refugees in war-torn countries.

While we live in an imperialist country which puts us in a privileged position, we must not let this stop us from saying that women should come first. We are not, however, female separatists as this way of opting out entirely also plays into the hands of the system. Feminist must begin to deal with imperialism on an international basis to form an alternative to the rhetoric of the male left and the wives of princes who are only mouthpieces for their husbands. Only in keeping an international perspective and solidarity can we avoid an imperialist mentality. We fight in many countries and on many fronts. Out of an international women's movement should develop a common basis of unity to fight a common enemy-- which is both international capital and the patriarchy.

One example of thinking internationally is the issue of abortion and birth control and its adverse effects on third world

women who are victims of Western medical experiments. The October 25th demonstration demand to repeal the abortion law becomes a narrow perspective when one does not talk about the right to control one's whole sexuality and the enforced sterilization of poor and third world women (which goes on right here in Canada with native women).

To date all state-organized IWY programmes merely give the appearance that real change is happening. The government spent \$5 million on an advertising campaign dealing with attitudes, only a symptom of women's oppression, and on conferences which were not action oriented. Feminist demands cannot be met within the present structure. For example, we have received promotional material from Gulf Oil Corporation. Their press release described a Woman-bus, with 'a woman's place is in the world' painted on the side, which would take woman employees on tours of oil refineries. Gulf Oil, one of the many imperialist multinational corporations, thinks it has found a way to coopt the women's movement by using IWY in their propaganda campaign to present themselves as concerned members of the community. They encourage their women employees to take higher positions in management (though even this is questionable). ~~But~~ ~~the~~ ~~imperialist~~ ~~and~~ ~~oppressive~~ ~~role~~ ~~that~~ ~~corporations~~ ~~such~~ ~~as~~ ~~Gulf~~ ~~Oil~~ ~~have~~ ~~in~~ ~~countries~~ ~~around~~ ~~the~~ ~~world~~.

This is why we have consistently printed articles challenging our present structure and suggesting alternatives. Voting is one of the ways in which a "liberal democracy" can give us the illusion of control (Page 11). Gay Rights is just one example of an issue that cannot be settled within the present structure (Page 14).

If you can't join them, beat them!

## "WHO IS THE OTHER WOMAN?" CONTEST

tow has always made a policy of featuring many different kinds of women on our front cover. There is a reason for this. Since it may not be that apparent, let us explain. The Other Woman is the other woman and you are the other woman just as we all are the other woman. We come in many colours, sizes, ages, etc. "The other woman" is all over the world; we are mothers, peasants, students, lesbians, working women, etc. Send us your photos of what you think is "The Other Woman" and you will receive a free sub. to go to your mother/friend/sister. The best "other woman" will be printed with photo credit. (Actually, what it really means is: we're running out of graphics!)

MARGARET RANDALL -- Author of Cuban Women Now and the 1974 Afterward printed and distributed by Canadian Women's Educational Press is doing a cross-country speaking tour. She will be participating in the Annual Meeting of CUSO in Ottawa at the end of November.

There will be a public meeting on November 14th at OISE and workshops with a panel on November 15th. There is a good possibility that she will bring with her a recent Cuban documentary on Cuban women which would be shown on the 15th, the panel would include discussion of themes dealing third world women, immigrant women, native women and Canadian women. For more information, phone Donna at Women's Press 962-3904 or Sheila at 533-4221.

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# ② OUR INSIDE EDITORIAL: A FEMINIST FAIRY-TALE



## The Background

Once upon a time (around October 74), a good fairy feminist named Sister Sarah, who believed in free and open discussion, approached a member of the newly-formed collective Wages for Housework, the majority of whom had broken away from the New Left Tendency in Toronto. Then along came Wages Due, a group of lesbians who were trying to integrate a class analysis into lesbian-feminism. They felt the need to come out of the lesbian ghetto which isolates them from other women. The Other Woman had struggled through a long, hot, hard summer and we, too, were looking for a direction. At this time, the perspective of Wages for Housework had not been integrated into the politics of the paper.

The snow was falling. While everyone else was off in Miami, Sister Sarah thought about Wages for Housework. An interview took place between Sister Sarah and 5 members of the Wages for Housework Collective. After several editings and broken tape recorders (not important politically but as a "fairy-tale"), we published a 2 1/2 page interview, probably the first material published in Canada on Wages for Housework (what a scoop for The Other Woman!) This appeared in Vol. 3, No. 2. (See chronological note here, the Wages Due Collective "came out" in February at the Montreal Wages for Housework Conference.

Three months later, everybody else was in Vancouver. Sister Sarah, however, was thinking about the relationship between Wages for Housework and The Other

Woman because we were now sharing some office facilities. They asked us: "Would we do a special issue on Wages for Housework?" This was last winter. As an intermediate decision, we featured a 4-page pullout on Wages for Housework in Vol. 3, No. 4.

Then The Other Woman panicked. There were now only 2 other women on the collective. One houseworker suggested that the Wages for Housework Committee put out an issue of the paper as a temporary solution to our people problem and the future of the paper. The Other Woman had reservations. We didn't believe collectively in the Wages For Housework perspective at this time--we still don't. So we started a series of internal meetings to synthesize our politics in relation to wages for housework.

We feel that Wages for Housework is an issue that women should be aware of and discuss. We can't pretend that this controversial topic does not exist. It's high time, however, that we clarified for our readers and ourselves our own position on the wages for housework perspective.

## The Politics

So why have we decided to give you a special issue on wages for housework?

- 1--to counteract the straight media's distortion of wages for housework.
- 2--to present the issue as a whole-not in little pieces here and there or newsy items.

- 3--from our standpoint: we want to communicate new trends within the women's movement.
- 4--The Other Woman has some political perspective of her own despite divisive, irresponsible remarks like: "Is The Other Woman becoming an organ of Wages for Housework?" Whether or not we totally and collectively agree with the Wages for Housework perspective, we feel that they are engaged in a productive struggle to find new ways of making a revolution. (See article last issue on Struggle.)

## The Method

This "special issue" will be on the newstands and in your mailbox sometime in December. It will not be Vol. 4, No. 1. It will be an extra, added bonus to those women who subscribe to The Other Woman. After you have had time to think over the contents of this particular issue, please write in your comments or questions. Vol. 4, No. 1 will contain The Other Woman's collective viewpoint on the whole wages for housework perspective so please send us yours.

THE "FAIRY-TALE" MORAL OF THE STORY (take your pick):

- NEVER LIVE NEXT DOOR TO WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK
- EVERYBODY IS ALWAYS LOOKING FOR SOMETHING
- THE WHOLE SUBJECT OF A SPECIAL ISSUE HAS BECOME MORE COMPLICATED THAN THE PARIS PEACE TALKS.

With this issue, The Other Woman has, at long last, found a way to put into practice our solidarity with the American women's movement and this was done over the layout table. Much thanks go to two really fine women, Linda Fowler and Carol Lease, both from Big Mama Rag, Denver, Colorado's feminist paper. Linda and Carol paid a visit to their Canadian journalist sisters in order to open up lines of communication between those of us engaged in productive struggle.

## F.N.S. ON NEXT PAGE

Get your first herstoric Canadian newspacket (a collector's item) at only \$1.50 from F.N.S., P.O. Box 928, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario. It is a 32-page booklet of news, articles, graphics, photos, poetry and fiction.

FNS was conceived at a meeting of Canadian women's publications in December of 1974. At a second meeting, at Easter of 1974, a news-gathering system was worked out, regional FNS representatives chosen and a deadline set. There are 24 original members of the news service, all from independent women's publications (newspapers and newsletters).

FNS publishes and distributes to individuals and women's publications feature articles, news, graphics, and poetry written from a feminist viewpoint by Canadian women. This is a news service which will help us to communicate better with each other across the country by sharing both news and feminist theory. To subscribe, to submit material, or for more information, write to the above address.





# NATIONAL NEWS

Orillia (FNS)--Cora, the Women's Liberation Bookmobile, faced a few problems here when they stopped for a short time. A man in the town made a complaint to the police that the bookmobile was distributing pornographic material (The Other Woman and the Birth Control and V.D. Handbooks.) The officers concerned found nothing wrong with the material in question, however, the bookmobile was parked illegally in a one-hour parking space and had to move.

The media reported that the bookmobile had been "driven out of town" and a newscaster on CBC on the national news held up the Lesbian Issue of The Other Woman and then showed a picture of two women making love WHICH WAS NOT IN THE OTHER WOMAN, citing it as an example of the pornographic material carried on the bus. Once again the patriarchal press spreads its lies.

Parry Sound, Ont. (FNS)--A young native woman was raped by sons of the Mason Lodge here. First, they pounded salt into her vagina, then they gangbanged her. Nothing was done after the incident since she is a native woman and the men were sons of Masonic Lodge members!

Winnipeg (FNS)--The Woman's Place here went through a great deal of red tape earlier this year concerning the prioritization of LIP projects. The Woman's Place was rated 14th out of a field of 22 projects.

Woman's Place workers were concerned about the grounds on which their project was prioritized by the committee. A memorandum written by a Manpower worker attending the meeting attributes the following comments to some of the members: "We are not going to fund lesbians"; "Aren't these women all communists?"; "These women are just creating jobs for themselves." Other women's projects were not prioritized on similarly questionable grounds. An

after-school lunch programme of particular benefit to working women was not recommended for funding because "working mothers do not make good mothers" and "mothers supporting children alone are better off on welfare". Projects which encouraged women in untraditional roles seemed generally to be regarded by the CAG as threatening. One committee member was quoted as saying that such women (feminists) were going to "spoil things" for those women who are content with the status quo.

The IWY section of the Ontario Women's Bureau was looking for nominations for a Woman of the Year Award. They received one letter from a 13 year old Toronto woman in response.

"My name is Beth Freedman. I am writing to you to enter my mother in the outstanding woman contest. I think my mother is the outstanding woman of the year because she takes special care of two some-

Kitchener (FNS)--"Racism in Ontario is like the fine whiskers on your chin, you know they're there but you can't see them," said Vern Harper at the multimedia presentation of native people's struggles held on June 3rd in Kitchener by the Toronto Warrior Society. "The problem is coming to a head and now the native movement is at the stage where we must reach people and offer realistic alternatives. We must show our people that resistance and struggle can achieve these goals."

The programme which featured batiks, a film "The Hudson's Bay Company: The Other Side of the Ledger", folk music and an oration on native history is aimed at bringing native culture out of the museums and focusing on problems presently faced by the majority of native people.

"Our struggle is one for self-determination and our own community; we need part of the economy but we have been affected by the attitudes of the European male. In the 40's and 50's, we were treated like dirt and scorned by our men; but now this is changing," said Sandy Harris. They have found that the only way to deal with sexism is to constantly confront it and by encouraging more women to get involved and to stand by their rights.

"We should demand the right to self-government and to maintain our own culture," said Flora Conroy of the Kitchener Metis and Non-status Indian Association.

The women within the native movement are also battling against the sexism that is within their ranks. The warriors societies, which are defense groups formed during times of hardship, are now open to both men and women and the tasks involved are divided according to the individual capabilities and experiences. "Many of the native groups are not aware of their sexism, and don't consider it important."

Women are very active in the Toronto group and are discovering their power and their heritage. But there are still many problems to fight against. "Native women are scored on I.Q. tests that are designed by white middle-class men and when they fail them due to lack of understanding English (which is a second language to them), they are treated like morons. Until as recently as 1971 in Alberta, native women who got low scores were sterilized against their will. These issues should concern native people and all women," said Conroy.

times rotten children and a husband. When I say my brother and I are rotten, I mean we're not all that good all the time. My mother takes care of us under any situation, i.e. after a hard day's work she can solve an argument between me and my brother. She can (also after a hard day's work) come home and listen to my father complain about a hard day at the office. She can be bothered to make a lunch every day of the

Montreal (FNS)--60 non-status native women and 240 children were evicted from their homes on the Caughnawaga reserve near Montreal, because of, according to a Montreal newspaper, "an excessively literal application of the Indian Act."

And that's the understatement of the year. The Indian Act, which has not been changed in 101 years, gives status automatically to white women who marry native men, and to the children. But, if a native woman marries a non-Indian she loses her status and her children are considered to be non-Indians. Chief Ron Kirby, who has already evicted whites from the reserve and refused to allow the burial of non-status children in family plots in the reserve's cemetery, had made the issue a personal one between himself and 2 native women who have spoken out against him, Mary Two-Axe Early, 64, and Mary Tobin, a 72-year-old widow.

There are many women in the same position--widows whose husbands have died and who have no other home to go to. Indian Affairs Minister Judd Buchanan gave women over 60 special permission to stay on the reserve some time around June 22 but Kirby denied it.

"We're not against Chief Kirby, but we're against the Indian Act. We're fighting it because it's not fair to Indian women. And it isn't fair! It says that the reserves are for Indians, and then it makes us non-status Indians, and at the same time white women who marry Indian men become full-status Indians."

It was while Mary Two-Axe was in Mexico at the IWY Tribunal that she and Mary Tobin received their eviction notices. "Mary was terribly upset when she first got the news, but everyone really rallied around and supported her." stated Joan Anne Gordon of the women's committee for the rights of immigrants, "and the next day, she made a speech at the Tribunal, and everyone cheered, and the Tribunal sent telegrams to Trudeau, Marc Lalonde and Judd Buchanan."

"I think that was the breaking point. We were able to get a resolution passed in the Tribunal. One of the Quebec delegates was really behind us, though the other Canadian delegates didn't really support it, and the resolution was supported by 3,000 women delegates from 160 nations. From that time the issue has really picked up a lot of publicity, and I'm really delighted."

week and then go off to work. One time we had 27 people over for dinner and she made it and served it to them without any hassle or complaint. She always manages to have a smile on her face no matter what situation. She works 3 days a week and keeps up the house and family. I hope you choose her to be one of the women of the year, and even if you don't I think she will always be the woman of every year!



## feedback on 'meditation and prayer'

# women and spirituality — two viewpoints



### 0 t.o.w writes:

I do not believe that Boo Watson's song, 'Meditation and Prayer' (with a funky beat) was meant as a personal attack on any of the several feminist ashrams. Instead, it levels criticism on certain attitudes of feminists who choose a personal solution, through spirituality, to their oppression as women.

Boo's song begins, "There's a brand new craze around the town". So often, our attempts to seek spiritual and self knowledge are nothing but crazes or fads. Last year, someone you know was into natural foods, this year it's transcendental meditation and the year after this it will be witchcraft. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with any of these systems but, under capitalism, even our spiritual needs are turned into material fads. We have a pathetic belief that salvation lies in being an infinite consumer, not just of cars and TVs, but of religions and philosophies. Under capitalism, there are always people who will try to make a buck even out of cosmic consciousness. This cannot be fought on an individual basis alone. The right to seek spiritual knowledge is political, and must be fought for on those grounds.

Boo's song shows the absurdity of fighting oppression on an individual basis. No, the world will not take care of itself, nor will it change, if one simply "gets one's own head together." Our sister from the feminist ashram writes, "If enough of us are healthy the culture will reflect it." Well, that's

Editor's Note:- In Vol. 3, No. 4 of *The Other Woman*, we published a song, 'Meditation and Prayer' (with a funky beat), by Boo Watson. As a result, we received a letter and four responses to Boo's song from the Guru Ram Das Ashram in Toronto. Because of space limitations, we are publishing one of the four responses. In addition, *The Other Woman Collective* is publishing an article stating our position on women and spirituality.

a lovely idea, but it will not happen spontaneously out of nowhere. It reminds me of what the established church is always saying, "If we all followed Christ's teachings, the world would be a better place." And it probably would be, but the point is that it won't happen without a lot of work and struggle and it won't happen without collectivity and political activity. The reality is that mystics throughout the ages have been killed, tortured, broken because what they knew and believed was heresy. These days we are somewhat more subtle. Heretics are deprived of their will and dignity in mental hospitals. The forces of negativity as embodied by the patriarchy are very strong, though not so strong as to be invincible. They must be challenged politically and this means a collective effort. The "individual solution" the "private odyssey" the "personal growth", as Robin Morgan describes it, ultimately will not be strong enough.

The feminist movement is the first political movement in history to stress the importance of integrating the inner and outer worlds. "The personal is political" is a major tenet of feminism. Therefore, feminists are in an interesting position to try and connect spirituality with their politics.

Women have been traditionally delegated the quality of intuition, whereas men have been accorded reason. Naturally, in our society it is socially acceptable to approach the world in terms of pure reason. Anybody who announces that he/she is a mystic risks being thought a "fake" or a "nut" or even "psychotic". But as feminists we know that the application of pure reason does not result in much except the repression of women, technological tyranny and dehumanization. Likewise, pure intuition is apt to be dangerous. Now, traditional politics approaches the world

on "rational" terms, or at least attempts to; mysticism represents the intuitive or feminine approach to life. We need to make a political recognition of the fact that splitting the world into two halves--the Rational vs. Non-rational, the Classic vs. Romantic, the Technological vs. Aesthetic, the Masculine vs. Feminine, the Inner vs. Outer--is false and destructive. We must make it our goal to unite the two, in our personalities and in our world. The duality is tyranny. Plurality is freedom.

Politics must not be an end in itself. It is a means, a means to freedom. It should be a goal of feminists to work for spiritual freedom--or at least work for a world where spiritual freedom can be driven for by everybody. Mystics have traditionally been certain kinds of people--men who have cut themselves off from their families, practised celibacy, owned few possessions, been taken care of by monasteries or women so that they needn't worry about working for their daily bread. Few women these days are economically free to pursue spiritual goals. They have little time, energy and money after they've finished their daily routine tasks. For those rare individuals who do attain mystic states there is still the deep problem of integrating their inner and outer worlds. How do you reconcile the beauty of your inner world with your routine plastic-doll existence? A mystic who tries to escape this question will only become isolated, detached, alienated and very alone.

As human beings, however, we are entitled to experience fully both inner and outer worlds. Simone Weil is an example of a woman who struggled all her life to achieve a balance between the two. Did she succeed? Well yes, I think so to a certain extent. But then, Simone Weil had money, was alone for all her life, did not seek love, did not have any close friends, and was possessed with a will and intelligence far greater than most. Most of us must say with Robin Morgan, in a poem from her book, *Monster*:

*I want a woman's revolution like  
a lover.  
I lust for it, I want so much  
this freedom,  
this end to struggle and fear  
and lies  
we all exhale, that I could die  
just  
with the passionate uttering of  
that desire. (cont. p. 5)*



# ② working in a feminist ashram

As a woman living and working in an ashram, it appears that I am truly the 'other' as defined by Simone de Beauvoir in the *Second Sex*. I am referring, of course, to your page long spread on Meditation and Prayer (with a funky beat) by Boo Watson. It appears that it is not only men who have a divide and conquer-philosophy concerning women, but that this has been internalized into the very structure of the Other Woman Collective. As men out of ignorance have projected their fear and insecurity onto women, thereby turning us into receptacles for their own self-hatred, you too out of ignorance have perpetuated the very same technique on your sisters. Justified of course by the obvious fact that we are bourgeois, right wing, racist, spaced out misogynists and if we miss out on any of those counts we at least support it in someone else. The wonderful difference between men and yourselves however is that men have the power structure behind them to make sure that women believe themselves to be what men have decided they are. We are grateful to be dealing with sisters, we don't believe ourselves to be what you think we are, in the least.

If we as women are all struggling for a uniquely female consciousness and if we as women wish to have that consciousness materialized as a viable force in world culture, then we cannot allow fear and negativity, which are not life-motivated reactions, to be part of ourselves. Women are the creative, life-giving principle as

manifested on the human plane. (This creative principle takes many forms depending on the relationship it is in ie. mother earth to the creations living thereon, the moon in relationship to the sun, night in relationship to day etc. etc.) Women are centred on life. The world is definitely not life-culture oriented. It deals largely in fear and repression. All those aspects which reflect the life force are brutalized. Women being the personification of life are brutalized. The earth is brutalized ecologically. They shoot penises at the moon and how many of us are afraid of the dark? We are in the process of changing all of this. Its implications are enormous and there is an infinite number of places to which we can apply our energy. But it will all be band aids until we can deal with the real cause--those things which are antithetical to the flow of life--on a subtle plane negativity or a misunderstanding of how life energy works on a more physical plane. This is reflected in the male dominated power hierarchy which perpetuates most of the physical atrocities to women in one way or another.

The place that I have chosen to work on and with is at the very core and root of the problem. Misunderstanding the life process and the negativity which results from misunderstanding. The process that I have chosen to be a part of is as far as I can ascertain centred on vitality, positivity, and the creative

use of life energy. By this very fact it is undermining the existing social structure. Just by breathing, eating and living Life instead of death, I am taking part in creating a woman's revolution. My sisters and myself reach out to other women to teach them the same process. We give women tools with which they can become a stronger life force: yoga, meditation, massage, self-help. We need no longer be at the mercy of our subconscious in which as we all know lies the sexist, negative conditioning that we as women have been saturated with. Dealing with and releasing this death oriented conditioning leaves space for life energy to flow through--which is in fact the healing process in a nutshell. We are giving women a process by which we can heal ourselves and others. If enough of us are healthy the culture will reflect it. Think of what will happen to the primary health care system alone. The foundations of that monstrosity can be undermined in a very real way.

I have rambled from the point. You were acting out of negativity, fearfulness and doubt concerning the efforts of your sisters in making a new human consciousness. In doing so, you are no better and no worse than the very structures that we have all agreed must go. Instead, unite with us truly as the 'Other' in a clear understanding of Life and Women. There is room in this revolution for all of us.

## ♀ & spirituality (cont.)

*Just once in this my only lifetime to dance  
all alone on a high cliff  
under cypress trees  
with no fear of where I place my feet.  
To even glimpse what I might have been and never never  
will become, had I not had to  
"waste my life" fighting  
for what my lack of freedom keeps me from glimpsing.*

Further, the danger that I see in the writings of the women from the feminist ashram is that they assign women the role of being creative, positive, life-giving earth-mothers which has also been, curiously enough, dumped upon us by male chauvinists. We must ask ourselves--how can we be sure that we are of that nature? We may believe it, but is it so? We won't know until we question every hidden belief held about women's 'natural' role, until we can see the world with as little internal qualification as possible. We will only know when sex distinctions are blurred and that's a long way off.

**IMPORTANT!!!!**  
As we go to press, Boo Watson 'confessed' that Judy Q wrote M & P (with a funky beat). However, Boo did write the chords. Carry on.

Finally, your letter says, "May we keep in mind that we are all sisters, working in the same direction, regardless of the different ways we have chosen to do so." Yes, but the fact is that process is also important. The process of the revolution is just as important as the final goals. Therefore, one cannot say "regardless of the different ways." We must take a look at our different ways. Aren't some ways more effective and useful than others?

*Mystical fervour, like love and even narcissism, can be integrated with a life of activity and independence. But in themselves these attempts at individual salvation are bound to meet with failure: either a woman puts herself into relation with an unreality: her double, or God; or she creates an unreal relation with a real being. In both cases she lacks any grasp on the world; she does not escape her subjectivity; her liberty remains frustrated. There's only one way to employ her liberty authentically, and that is to project it through positive action into human society.*

(Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*)

cindy wright

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** We are constantly reviewing why we have a Canadian priority in content and politics. Therefore, in solidarity, we have printed the above ad for an American women's paper.



# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

## The Mexico Conference

Mexico City, June 19, 1975: Luis Echeverria, the president of Mexico, opened the first United Nations conference on women, declaring:

"There is no woman more discriminated against than the woman who does not have bread, school or medicines for her children. Only critical, radical effort will make possible the true liberation of women, that is, the liberation of humanity and transformation of the world economic order."

Outside the conference hall, one hundred women factory workers asked to be admitted to the conference. Military police pushed them away.<sup>1</sup>

The scene illustrates some of the contradictions and dynamics surrounding the conference whose purpose was to promote peace, equality and development. The fact that working class women from Mexico were barred from the conference simply highlights the reality that not all women have equal opportunities to participate in public international forums to discuss their concerns.

While Echeverria and many other Third World delegates insisted on radical changes to solve the problem of the oppression of women, delegations from Europe and North America proposed a "development" strategy. The difference in these positions is significant. The first position assumes that the present economic, political and social order is the cause of women's oppression. That order must be radically changed if women are to gain equality. The developmentalist position is, basically, reformist. It recognizes that women are marginalized and seeks to bring them into the system rather than to change the system.

### THE CONTEXT:

International conferences have multiplied in recent years. In 1974 alone, two such forums occurred. Bucharest last summer was the site of a conference on population. Rome hosted a conference on food in November. Divisions between developed and developing nations surfaced sharply at those meetings as they did at the women's conference. Press reporting on the earlier conferences blamed Third World delegates for diverting attention away from the real issues and rapped their knuckles for being "political". What the press failed to see and present to their North American readers was the point of view of Third World nations concerning population, food and women. It is a serious failure. Conditioned to see problems as issues, we find it difficult to see the interconnections between these problems, underestimate their gravity and miss their causes. The solutions proposed are very often crisis-inspired responses which in no way challenge the present order. For example, on the population issue, countries like Canada and the United States proposed population control as the solution to hunger and poverty for millions of people in the so-called Third World. Although consumption patterns in the rich nations have put intolerable pressure on the world's resources, there was no offer to cut back in that area.

At the food conference too, the rich nations refused to consider structural causes as central to the problem of hunger. Canada and the United States with a great show of generosity offered food aid to solve the problem. They refused to entertain major changes in international trade, agrarian reform or forms of agricultural production less wasteful than North American methods.

### WHY HOLD A CONFERENCE ON WOMEN?

-Helvi Sipila, a Finnish lawyer, who headed the Women's Conference, gave one explanation:

"The promotion of equal rights for all, irrespective of sex, is one of the purposes and principles of the U.N. (In preparation for the conference) ... the obstacles preventing women's full participation in development as well as the reasons which keep women from benefiting from development should be identified. This should lead to an action plan with short and long term measures, according to the needs of each country."<sup>2</sup>

Members of Mexico's women's liberation movement felt the conference had much more insidious aims:

"By conceding us a year, a politically

inoffensive and innocuous character is given to our actions and needs. This manipulation of our abilities, our energies and our lives is taking place with the creation of a year whose main objective is to channel our political and physical potential towards the continuation of the capitalist system."<sup>3</sup>

In fact, an examination of the earlier U.N. population conference in Bucharest would lead one to speculate that the Mexico conference was just one more attempt to bolster up the failing family planning programs in developing countries. The U.N. and agencies devoted to population control (such as the Rockefeller Foundation) have therefore seemingly shifted their attention to women's rights, having recognized that without the support of women, their programs were doomed to failure.

### SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONFERENCE:

The Chilean junta's treatment of women was condemned along with its delegation: "Massive unemployment, hyper-inflation and the dismantling of the health and education systems have hit and pauperized all the people, but especially the women and children of Chile", declared Antonio Fernandez, vice-president of the World Federation of Democratic Youth. "Alicia Romo Roman has no right to represent Chilean women at this conference because she has witnessed and justified physical torture in the jails of her country", he concluded.<sup>4</sup> Shortly afterwards, Alicia was removed.

Vilma Espin, head of the Cuban Women's Federation, addressed the conference and described the progress Cuban women have made since the revolution:

"Cuban women have the right to work; to receive a free education and free medical care; to have their children receive a comprehensive education; to exercise their political rights fully; to participate in the defence of their country and to hold a position in any field and at any level of the country's economic and political and social life. Today both men and women are striving to wipe out all residues of discrimination based on sex. It is obvious that the situation of women and the place they hold in the society to which they belong are closely related to their country's economic, political and social situation. Therefore, the struggle for women's equality is a part of the peoples' struggles for their most treasured aspirations."<sup>5</sup>

As at Bucharest and Rome, the Canadian delegation tried to appear concerned about Third World problems and sympathetic to their demands. The rhetoric was not matched by actions. One non-governmental delegate, Jean Woodsworth, representing the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, had this to say:

"Our Canadian exhibit was a pathetic thing - the Why Not? poster series."<sup>6</sup> The posters are, however, representative of the Canadian government's attitude towards International Women's Year, - a good example of flippant disregard for improving the position of women within Canada and internationally. Jean Woodsworth reported that the Canadian delegation was not prepared to be sensitive to Third World women or to native women in Canada. Small wonder. The press in our country makes little attempt to educate us or ever keep us informed about such concerns. During the conference there was a condemnation of Canada's policy relating to native women who lose their Indian status when they marry a non-Indian. Only Le Jour reported on the issue to the Canadian public.

On the abortion issue there was a clash at the non-governmental conference. Betty Friedan, an American feminist, introduced a motion demanding universal abortion legislation. For Third World women, enforced abortion has been part of a program of genocide against



## Are WOMEN an "ISSUE"?

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# ARE YOU LISTENING SISTERS?

## CANADIAN WOMEN SPEAK UP--JULY 1ST

As Canadian women we wish to dissociate ourselves from the so-called "Unified Statement" of amendments to the World Plan of Action which was transmitted to the UN Conference on IWY on June 25th, 1975. This statement is now being represented by the U.S. Embassy in Mexico as "having been approved at an open Plenary Session of the IWY Tribunal" and "including a summary of positions of Latin American women representing all Central and South American countries present at the Tribunal".

We note that on 2 occasions, Friday noon and Monday noon, Latin American women from 11 countries have tried to voice their opposition to this document at meetings of the so-called "Global Speakout" to say that it does not include their concerns with the exploitation of women in their countries, and the imposition of economic conditions on their people which prevent women in their countries seeking their liberation in ways which stem from their own cultures and traditions.

Unfortunately, these voices have not been heard because:

- 1) They have not been represented on the panels of the so-called Global Speakout,

- 2) There has been a persistent campaign to deny their validity as women because they are trying to speak of "political conditions" in their countries although the frame of reference of-Committee 11 for the IWY Conference clearly includes, "the involvement of women in eliminating...alien domination and the acquisition of territories by force."

WE DECRY the use of these techniques to divide women at this Tribunal, particularly the women of Mexico, and to attempt to close the ears of many of our U.S. sisters here to the suffering of their sisters in Latin America caused by "alien domination", in this case U.S. domination or imperialism--while all the time calling for unity around a U.S.-oriented document.

As women of Canada who have become aware of the extent of U.S. domination of our country, we understand and support our unre-presented sisters from Latin America in their struggles which are more advanced than ours in Canada.

Our Quebecois sisters have been emerging from the long winters' ice long celebrated by Quebec poets, and there is a

growing realization among English-speaking women of Canada of how our culture, our education, our industries, our foreign policy, our military, our diplomatic service, our resources (nickel, iron, oil, gas, our water even), our forests and our labour unions have been increasingly taken over by the U.S. military-industrial-cultural machine and are even now on the point of complete integration into that machine.

We have a different cultural tradition in Canada, stemming in part from a difference in early immigration patterns in Canada and U.S., which has led to an appreciation of the value of community, and to a mixed economy, balancing free enterprise with government-controlled enterprise, such as Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Canadian National Railways, Air Canada and the Bank of Canada.

We therefore reject the emphasis on individual satisfaction in the statement under question, because we feel that a woman's satisfaction should come from her liberation to contribute to the well-being of all her sisters in her own community, in her own country, and in the whole world.

The individualistic concept we see as a U.S. cultural import which we decry.

Charlotte McEwen-Ottawa  
Margueritta Kluensch-Kingston  
Helen Ralston-Halifax

them. The Puerto Rican delegation told the conference that 340,000 women there had been sterilized "in accordance with the horrible methods of the capitalist powers to reduce the populations of oppressed peoples".<sup>7</sup> The issue is one good example of the difficulty of trying to get universal resolutions passed. The situations differ from country to country. What North American feminists see as a progressive, liberating measure may be quite the opposite or in some cases irrelevant) to Third World women.

Carmela Oviedo de Sarmiento of Peru spoke on a theme that was echoed over and over again at the conference - imperialism.

"We are expressing an undeniable process of qualitative change in the course of history which manifests itself in the national revolutions meant to surmount the relationship of dominance and dependence brought into existence by the imperialist power centers."<sup>8</sup>

Her view was repeated by the Vietnamese, Chinese and several African delegations. Why talk about imperialism at a conference on women? Salimatu Diallo, delegate of the Organization of African Unity gave her answer: "We cannot talk about peace (one of the slogans of the conference) so long as parts of the African continent are still under colonial bondage and foreign economic exploitation."<sup>9</sup> This theme surfaced towards the close of the conference.

### THE RESULTS OF THE CONFERENCE:

The conference passed a ten-year plan of action which called on national governments to:

"guarantee women equal education and job opportunities, adequate health care, an end to child marriages, and a diet equivalent to that of males in families, a revision of textbooks to promote a positive, participatory image of women and adequate family planning facilities".<sup>10</sup>

The recommendations of the 10 year plan were primarily developmentalist in orientation. There were no specific strategies passed to change radically the present economic and political order. The major political resolution passed was the Declaration of Mexico which specifically condemned zionism, racism and apartheid as obstacles to peace, equality and development. The United States and Israel voted against the declaration; Canada abstained.

What  
common  
issues  
affect  
these  
women?

### CONCLUSION:

For anyone convinced of the need for international cooperation to achieve human liberation, the women's conference contains many important lessons for reflection.

The U.N. conference on women has no authority to make governments adhere to its recommendations. That is one of the major limitations of such a conference. As in earlier conferences, the divisions between rich and poor nations were not resolved. The structure of the conference, centered on the issue of women does not seem an appropriate vehicle for promoting real international solidarity among women. Most of the delegates represent tiny, privileged elites in their countries and not the majority of the world's women. The United States and Canadian delegations, notably, had few representatives from among the poor and racially exploited in their own countries present.

Until the factory-worker women in Mexico and their counterparts in other countries are able to meet together to work on the serious problems which they commonly face, real international solidarity remains impossible.

The reflection of Jean Woodsworth seems one of the most positive and important recognitions to come out of the conference among North American commentators.

"In spite of all its limitations, the impact of the conference was tremendous. Many of us became much broader in our interests and sympathies. I was particularly impressed with the Spanish-speaking women, in fact by all the third world women, who are facing daily struggles which put us to shame. I'm sure we appear strident, pampered and isolated from the suffering and deprivation of great masses of women in the world."<sup>11</sup>

### FOOTNOTES:

1. Free Press, June 20, 1975, p.15
2. Salimatu Diallo, "The role of women in development", Demographic Impact, 1975/2
3. Latin America, July 11, 1975, p.211
4. Latin American Roundup, nos. 515, 516.
5. Granma, July 16, 1975, p.10
6. An unpublished report by Jean Woodsworth
7. Western Voice, July 9-22, 1975, p.5
8. The Guardian, July 16, 1975, p.12
9. Ibid., July 16, 1975, p.12
10. Latin America, July 11, 1975, p.211
11. From the report by Jean Woodsworth



# DIVISIONS WITHIN

## AMERICAN

This overview of two related developments within the American women's movement is done for two reasons: 1) Canadian readers would not otherwise know because of the inavailability of American feminist papers in Canada and 2) to relate it to our own situation with all its political implications.

1. Diana Press, a Baltimore feminist publishing house, was hit by fire in December.
2. A Woman's Place, the only women's centre in St. Louis, Missouri, was firebombed in January.
3. Majority Report, a New York feminist newspaper with a circulation of 60,000, was vandalized and robbed in February.
4. Big Mama Rag, a strong feminist newspaper from Denver, Colorado, was vandalized on August 3. (From BMR press release: "It is obvious to us that this attempt to destroy our office is a deliberate political attack.")

All of these incidents having a common denominator is not so remote when we remember that the same thing happened to a Toronto women's building this past summer. (See Vol. 3, No. 5) All of us as individuals have constantly been put in our place by either ridicule or harrassment but how can a whole movement still in its infancy possibly be considered a danger to the State? Does capital see something we, from the inside, don't? Do they see "an army of lovers" or "a woman's revolution" as a threat? There is another possibility as shown below.

5. In the fall of 1973, Jane Alpert surfaced from several years in the Weather Underground (long seen as the most extreme faction in the New Left for its terrorist bombings against the State). An article was reprinted in many feminist papers which denounced the Male Left and her involvement in it and also her commitment to feminism. Along with this came her theory of "mother-right", one of the more extreme (and reactionary) forms of feminism. "Mother-right" is so pro-woman that it believes we are naturally superior to men because of our biological function of reproduction. "All women can potentially be a mother." (One can begin to see how easily the "sides" were drawn and that, as the Weather people would say, was the single spark that started the fire.)
6. About a year and a half later, in the winter of 74, Alpert voluntarily surrendered to the FBI in order to cut all ties with the Male Left and, as she said, to devote all of her energy to the women's movement which could only be possible above ground.
7. The next thing we hear is that Alpert is "cooperating" with the FBI which would give her a shorter sentence since she did not want to serve her full prison term for a political act in which she no longer believed. This comes from both the Male Left and the commercial media. The fact is, however, that Jane Alpert received 27 months for armed robbery and refused to testify against Pat Swinton after Pat's arrest.
8. Shortly thereafter, in the months following, two feminists who had been involved in the Weatherwoman collective and, like Alpert, had been underground were arrested: Pat Swinton in Vermont and Susan Saxe in Philadelphia.

Alpert's 1973 open letter to both movements started controversy but not until news had spread of her surrender and "collaboration" did the mass of statements and letters and articles for one side or the other grow out of all proportion. There were at least 3 statements originally circulated and, in all the others that followed, these 3 were always made reference to. Then came the arrest of Susan Saxe. It was Saxe that, however much she had changed, stated that "Feminism is not collaboration". There were women who had initially supported Alpert who saw their "mistake" on examining Saxe's two statements after her arrest, and there were those who criticized Saxe for making a statement of support to the lesbian-feminist community



which brought even more pressure down upon the women's community in various cities and some also felt that Saxe was offering herself as the first feminist martyr. Another element is the reaction of the Male Left itself. On a matter of principle, they slandered and endangered Alpert's life by ensuring that her fellow prisoners would believe she was an informer. There has never been any evidence at all to prove this accusation. The whole question of talking to police at all is debated since there is the added complication of the American Grand Jury system which has so often been used against the people. One can go to jail for 2 years for refusing to speak and, once you have told them something, you are legally obligated to continue. Even Canadian papers have carried accounts of CIA influence which proves, again, that we must not underestimate our enemy which is obviously capable of fitting together pieces of information.

So, that old bogeyman, the Male Left, has come to life again. Now, this is the real reason the State

has been cracking down on feminists. It knows that radical women have found a haven among feminist and lesbian-feminist communities throughout the States and it also knows that many radical feminists have expressed either solidarity with the Left against a common enemy or politics that are strongly socialist-feminist.

9. To further fan the flame, a statement was read last May by Redstockings in which they attacked Gloria Steinem and MS. as tools of the CIA.

For three years now, the women's movement, with very few exceptions, has refused to tackle the questions raised by the politics of MS. magazine. In Canada and the States feminists have found all kinds of excuses to justify a nominal support of MS. It reaches more women than all of the other feminist papers combined could possibly hope to reach. But the women it reaches who would not know of our papers are encouraged to integrate into the system, the whole theme of the magazine being personal liberation. As an introduction to what feminism is really all about, it is counter-productive.

To quote from Off Our Backs: "Although MS. occasionally deals with women's issues in a feminist context, we feel that it is basically a capitalist, commercial enterprise....It might be a legitimate journal growing out of the liberal wing of the movement, a media counterpart to NOW...we think that MS. would have undergone more political development in the past 3 years. NOW and most other liberal or reformist organizations are more progressive than they were 3 years ago....The only reasonable conclusion is that MS. is



# THE MOVEMENT

## CANADIAN

### The Anti-Harrassment Campaign (A Woman's Place, Montreal)

#### A Perspective on some of the problems and issues

When I first began attending meetings at A Woman's Place in the summer of 1973, it was as a member of a small group of women who got together to study some of the issues raised by Selma James and other women at the Feminist Symposium held in Montreal in June 1973. At that time a lot of energy at meetings was being wasted in bad-tempered arguments and petty politicking. My perception of the group that participated in the Sunday night general meetings was that it was divided into a number of factions (mothers and non-mothers, women who wanted men in the centre and women who didn't etc) and that personality conflicts were robbing the group of its strength.

That summer I had heard of several cases of serious physical harrassment of women in the community in which the Woman's Place was located. There seemed to be gangs of young boys prowling around, assaulting and even robbing women in the area at night; and there were two reported cases of attempted rape involving women that I knew personally. I suggested the idea of an anti-harrassment campaign at one Sunday meeting at A Woman's Place. I proposed that we begin by posting a notice in the community requesting that women phone the Woman's Place to report all serious cases of harrassment: I suggested this as a first step, to create awareness of the problems among the general population of St. Louis-St. Jacques, and to provide us with some basic information on how widespread street violence against women really was, which women were most affected by it, and who was committing these various acts of harrassment and assault.

St. Louis-St. Jacques is an ethnically mixed community, with a high percentage of immigrant families (Portuguese, Greek, Spanish Chinese), a sizeable French population and relatively few English people. Not only was it important that any organizing around street harrassment be addressed to immigrant women in their own language, but it was important to define just how much of our experience (as young English women) with harrassment was the result of cultural and social differences between us and Portuguese, Greek and Spanish people. It was extremely important to determine whether our experiences on the street were common to other groups of women--or did it have to do with our being young, English, middle-class, bra-less and "hip"? Were all women bothered to the same extent on the street, or were we special targets for immigrant men? Another issue that came out of this discussion arose from the fact that women in Mediterranean cultures are kept in the home before and after marriage, and that in those cultures only prostitutes and "loose women" walk around openly on the street at night. Some of us saw this as an example of how our oppression as women differed from that of many immigrant women, and wondered how this difference could be resolved.

It was evident that our approach would have to be defined carefully in discussion before we could get together a coherent action. The women at the general meeting were enthusiastic about doing something around harrassment, and the Women's Information and Referral Centre offered its telephone line as a phone-in number for calls about street harrassment.

A few days after the first discussion on the anti-harrassment campaign, I was given some posters which had been printed up for posting in the neighbourhood. The posters were exclusively in English and said, in essence: "We are sick of being grabbed and whistled at on the street. We are getting organized to fight back. We are setting up an anti-rape squad, we are making videotapes of street harrassment, we are organizing self-defense classes, we are equipping ourselves with

whistles which we will blow to call for help in cases of attack on the street". There was a number to call where women were asked to report any instance of harrassment by men--from a leer to a gang-rape.

The poster was designed to appeal only to women who were already conscious, angry, and prepared to do something about harrassment. At the next general meeting, I talked about why we needed a different kind of poster, one that would appeal to a cross-section of women in the community, and which would be non-threatening to women who weren't feminists. I proposed a different message, read it to the group, and suggested that we start by posting it in English and French.

I thought the poster should explain that we wanted to document cases of physical harrassment of women in order to determine how frequently it was happening, where, and to whom. I felt it important to stress that a woman would not have to give her name or join any group--just to give a report of what had happened and, if possible, a description of her attacker. People at the meeting agreed.

Shortly afterwards it began to appear that the group which came to general meetings at Woman's Place was too amorphous and preoccupied with internal conflicts to be able to unite around an action--particularly not a project which would require strong commitment, a sustained, thoughtful effort and a clear perception of the surrounding community and its needs and idiosyncrasies.

I realized that my concept of the project was basically along the lines of community organizing. I saw working around the harrassment of women as a community-based project which would serve as a means of getting to know the experiences and problems of the women living in the St. Louis-St. Jacques area. I saw it as progressing from initial contacts with women, and gradually evolving as our understanding of the community grew. I also saw it as a stepping-stone to other kinds of organizing, and a way of showing solidarity with the women in the area whose oppression (as "cheap immigrant labour" and domestic prisoners within their families) was greater than our own. My concern, therefore, was more with those women than with other young English middle-class women. I tried to explain this but apparently did not get it across very clearly.

Other women saw an anti-harrassment campaign as taking place largely in the media. We would notify women that there was a problem with street harrassment, get a lot of publicity, and somehow change the situation that way. Then we would organize ourselves into self-defence groups and anti-rape squads, operating on the assumption that our own experience was representative of the interests of all the other women downtown, although in fact we didn't know if that was true. We would fight back against the immigrant men who stood on street corners whistling at us as we walked past, without attempting to find out about their feelings towards us, or the feelings of their wives towards women who defied codes of behaviour which were fundamental to their morality and way of life.

I felt that some of the implications of this sort of action were potentially racist and anti-working class, and could alienate us even more from women we might otherwise have been able to learn from. I could not support a campaign if it were conducted in that manner.

I typed up my preferred version of the poster, the version that the general meeting had approved, and had it translated by a woman at Women's Information and Referral. I had no money to get it printed, so I left

TURN OVER



## CANADIAN

it in a folder at Woman's Place. I began to feel it was no use talking about my concept of the campaign at Woman's Place because a new wave of internal conflicts once again had the limelight, and because that particular group did not seem at all ready to get involved in the community in a serious and effective way. There was also a serious problem with political differences over how the thing should be approached, and I felt it was inevitable that Women's Information and Referral would take it on and do it through the media, since they had time, resources, and media contacts. At that stage I decided to abandon my original proposal and let things work themselves out.

A couple of people are saying that I "sabotaged" the campaign. I think we're in a dangerous situation when people can't distinguish between a disagreement and a case of sabotage. I was open about my feelings and reported my reaction to the posters at the very next general meeting. When I made alternative suggestions no one openly disagreed, and I was led to believe that the disagreement over the posters was just a minor misunderstanding which had been settled and forgotten about. Women's Information was very keen all along about doing the campaign their own way, and while I couldn't go along with that at first and said so, I later came to accept it as inevitable. Lack of woman-power and lack of unity were two problems at Woman's Place which affected everything we tried to do there, and I quickly perceived that I was in an isolated position in terms of being able to find a strong group to

## AMERICAN

not a legitimate voice of the liberal part of the feminist movement...In any case, radical feminists as a whole have been guilty of doing little to reach outside our own groups and of just leaving these women to MS...Radical women should correct this mistake by making reaching out a more fundamental part of our activities."

The issues involved found all American feminists in the dilemma of being pressured to make political choices for which they were in no way prepared. Organizationally, the women's movement in North America has always maintained a "do your own thing" philosophy--what's right for one woman isn't necessarily right for another--that we all grow at different speeds. Even so-called radical feminists turn out to be liberals or out-right reactionary when it comes to definitive analysis. This pertains not just to the Male Left but to many issues which face us daily: how to relate to immigrant women on specific issues; an international strategy; or the patriarchy and the theory of female superiority. We play right into the State's hands when we allow ourselves to be caught in the traditional female role of gossiping and rumour-mongering instead of putting our anger or frustration back on to the level to which it belongs. We hear of yet another women's project being attacked by the State machine and we turn that fear inward, by putting our fear of who will be next back onto the Left in general and women who have a marxist-feminist analysis in particular. We also turn that fear inward by attacking anyone who disagrees with us, but doing it in such a manner that the accused has no basis for a political justification.

Who is our real enemy? The Male Left, the State, Male Supremacy? Three guesses and the first three don't count. We are our own worst enemy. I think we all know where we come from. Not even the women's movement is infallible. We are as much a product of international capital than the worst man; no better and no worse. It is a bigger thing we fight than even sex-role conditioning. What has become the real issue surrounding all the controversy is not so much whether feminists support and ally themselves with the Male Left or against CIA activity but how there is only one right way to struggle over political differences.

To quote from KNOW: "There is real danger to our movement in allowing what should be ideological struggles to be experienced as personal attacks. And of course, continuing analysis of political philosophies is growth producing and can help us to move toward our common goals...The tactic is a bitter one, and one we have learned from men...One level, the personal

work with on the issue of harrassment as I saw it.

I have written this in order to clarify a few misconceptions about the anti-harrassment campaign and my role in it. Hopefully we can someday get beyond this pattern of endlessly placing the blame on individuals when things get screwed up, and can begin examining the different approaches to feminism which are the real political issues dividing us.

Hopefully too, when women raise questions of class in discussions within the women's movement, they will not be accused of being anti-feminist and anti-women. Like so many other things, it's a question of sensitivity, of being able to recognize differences based on class, race, national origin, or political perspective, to accept these differences, and to work from there to resolve them. There's no point in talking about an illusory "sisterhood of all women" when all around us is evidence that there is no unity in the women's movement. Our differences don't mean we can't get together, but we certainly can't get together before we understand what our differences are about.

Anne.

level, is safe, hard to define and ultimately destroys the target. On the other level, the ideological level, a person who becomes the focus of the attack retains personal dignity and can respond with issues, opening a forum for decision making. It is time for all of us in the movement to better understand our differences and to learn to separate the personal from the political, as well as learning that the personal is political. We do have differences. They can be healthy if we make the assumptions about the goodness of others motivations as we do about our own. It is how we handle them that may destroy us."

Only through unity can the women's movement define and then fight a common enemy and only through unity can we define our allies--those groups or ideologies which share common goals with us--and to what extent. Only in realizing a common basis of unity among all women can we begin to form a strategy for all women. Sometimes it seems like all we can ever manage to do is to agree to disagree. Only in defining our divisions first (external and internal) can we get to where we want to go.

It could be so easy for some of us, here in Canada, safely away from the timeless emotion to weigh, to ponder and, yes, to reason also. How could we even attempt to pass judgement on either "side" when we know what should be seen as ideological struggles have become vicious personal attacks. But, from a political perspective, not to pass judgement at all is the trap of a liberal, forever seeing both sides. And that judgement comes after a long and thoughtful deliberation free from hysteria and paranoia. The moral of the whole story, however, is to remind you all not to say-- It Can't Happen Here. All the elements, the conditions, are here waiting for us to choose the right path which is, of course, that of principled struggle and how we should be dealing with differences within the movement.

In certain parts of Canada, the seeds of division are already sown. (It is happening now as another article in this issue points out.) Those who talk too much of "the left" are vulnerable to attacks from self-righteous feminists that are too subtle to be answered on a political level. All the situation needs is a flag to rally round and the sides are even more clearly drawn and no longer quite so subtle. The State uses our weaknesses to pit us against each other but so do we. As long as we allow women, through our own political indecision, to get away with using male power games of pitting women against each other, we are, in the final analysis, our own worst enemy. One idea that has proven to be counter-productive is that of Sisterhood Is Powerful ("universal sisterhood", "power of women-loving-women") by glossing over our differences. The points on which we are vulnerable are intensified and come to the surface during times of repression. It is time to define our divisions in Canada and to do it now before the State forces us any further. "Sisterhood Is Powerful" is a lie, a slogan so often used against us--by ourselves.

Pat Leslie.





# ON NOT VOTING



This is the fourth in what has turned into a series of arguments against voting. I want to have a woman-to-woman talk with you, just you and me. Last summer of 1974 we had a federal election, last winter we had a city election and now we had a provincial election recently. There's always an election happening somewhere. I am still in the same riding as I was for the City of Toronto election last December which was the first time that I exercised my "right to vote" by going to the poll station and registering my refusal to vote.

Not one Party (just to show how democratic they are by giving us all our options) will come forward at election time to inform the public that, of course, if you don't like any of the candidates running in your riding, then, by all means, you are entitled to have your name recorded as refusing to vote--which makes you no longer a nameless statistic. Why, if more people did that, then the statistics would show that not everybody is merely too apathetic or too drunk to vote. Check the records sometime for the last Toronto election and then tell me that our City government is "representative of the people".

At the last Toronto Feminist Network meeting, which was focusing on how women should support other women candidates during our election, I had the opportunity to tell my NDP candidate Barbara Beardsley why I would not be voting for her. I gathered up my courage because, you know, I don't make public political statements every day. I told about 30 women from various women's groups in the city that "I will register at the polling station my refusal to exercise my right to vote". I also told them that I considered the NDP (New Democratic Party) to be no less a male power structure than any other Party or government and that I will fight against the hierarchical structure and bureaucracy inherent in any formal party that thinks it can "win" my vote.

When I tell people why I am not voting I am invariably answered with: "Well, then, don't complain if you don't like what the government does. You had your chance to voice your opinion and to change things"--yeah, every five years, every two years, every time they decide they need a popular mandate to continue refusing more money for day care, refusing to change rape and abortion laws. It reminds me of Trudeau's now-famous spring statement: "The trouble with the ladies is that they are always bitching after the fact". It is the same game as it was then or do we forget so easily the feminist outcry surrounding IWY Government consultation time? Nobody ever consults us!

Political parties can promise us all they want but they also have to be willing to fight for us. Once a

government changes hands, the new party in power wants to stay there so, of course, they want to please everybody. No party within a capitalist inflationary system has the power to give everybody decent housing or reasonable food prices. It is out of their hands and in the hands of big business monopolies. At least the NDP is realistic. They actually tell you that they can't make inflation go away, they can only help you "stretch your dollar".

I want us as women to try and de-mystify the NDP party structure. I have voted once in my six years of "maturity" and that was, of course, for the Party that has its own campaign songs and pretends to have a grassroots organization--the NDP. That was before I knew what I was doing and what the State was doing to me. There are still a lot of young radical people who fervently believe that the NDP is the only party that can save us from the evils of capitalist free enterprise. All women should be aware that there is always a party platform and also party priorities. Check to see how many women's issues that the NDP support are actually party priority. When one reads through all the election literature that I have accumulated, I can see how tempting it is to see the NDP as the only alternative. I don't want to sound as if I am "picking on" only the NDP Party because all parties, though they have the best intentions in the world, only give us the illusion of some control over our environment. It was called a great victory for the hard-working women in the NDP when Rosemary Brown came second in the national leadership convention in Winnipeg this past summer. Women for the first time were voting in a single bloc turning a black woman into a serious contender for Leader of Canada's official third party. (You will note, however, that members of this same Party have formed an anti-abortion group to try changing the Party's pro-abortion stand.) The appearance of sexual equality is a force to be reckoned with but it is still only a single plank in a political platform.


I am reminded this time of the long, hard struggle our mothers fought over the suffrage issue. It was a single issue, an end in itself, but it was more than that. It was faith in the existing system and now, more than 50 years later, we have the vote and we still have faith in the system. If only we could get more women into power, we could help to change things, with a feminist emphasis, of course. If only we had the vote, if only we had more women nominated, if only we had more women candidates, if only we had more women in power, if only...O.K., taking it to its logical extreme, what if there really were 264 woman members of Parliament? How much of the system could be changed? What policies would satisfy immigrants, native peoples, welfare recipients, single mothers, working women, doctors, lawyers, teachers, nurses (and all of us who do unpaid housework) all at the same time?

Every minority--gay, native, black, or women (with the exception of children because, of course, they aren't "mature" enough to vote)--believes it can make things better for itself by either getting elected or voting for the right person. By making our own separate demands and failing to make connections between our struggles and all other oppressed minorities, it leaves us all weak and divided. Instead we should be linking ourselves together and making very clear statements to that effect so we can fight our one common enemy. (It has been pointed out that gay men should be concerned with the issue of abortion as it is only one part of the sexism that capital uses against us all. This, I believe, is called a perspective.) In trying to achieve equal rights within the status quo, we fail to see that our society is based on a whole power relationship that needs to be changed. We'll "make it" together or not at all.

If you must vote, vote for an NDP woman. But don't vote for a woman just because she is a woman! You can't separate the person from the Party. Sisterhood is not that powerful.

Pat Leslie.

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# ① GAY VIEWS

## NATIONAL GAY RIGHTS CONFERENCE



The third annual bi-national gay liberation conference took place in Ottawa between June 28 and July 1. The 4 day conference with a theme of 'Gay Rights Now' showed a qualitative step forward for the gay liberation movement in this country with the formation of the National Gay Rights Coalition (NGRC). 27 delegations totaling upwards of 170 individuals and ranging from St. John's to Vancouver participated in the conference.

This development took place at a time when the ruling class of this country, in trying to cope with growing social and economic crises, is attacking the oppressed sectors of our society. The gay community is no exception to this. Increased police harassment and entrapment of gay men in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Vancouver; recent persecution of lesbian mothers in the fields of child custody and subsidized housing; the firing of John Damien; the case of John Kyper (the only known recent application of the anti-gay section of the immigration act); and harassment of the Body Politic (a gay liberation publication) are some recent examples. The Ontario Tories' efforts to divert the provincial election away from burning political questions and on to their "decency" campaign is another indication of this pattern. An organization such as NGRC represents an excellent potential means of defending gays in Canada and Quebec from such attacks and, as such, is a very precious acquisition for our movement.

Up to 30 women were involved in the caucus throughout the 4 days from Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Guelph, Saskatoon, Hamilton and Montreal. The caucus was able to meet several times, hear reports on the developments and problems in each area, and share ideas and experiences.

Two projects which were successfully undertaken by the women present included 1) a written guarantee of a permanent lesbian caucus of NGRC with voice and vote at all gatherings of the coalition and 2) the holding of a discussion about the concerns of lesbians in the gay movement with a number of the men present who expressed interest in attending. Although it did not accomplish anything concrete, it was felt to have been a worthwhile endeavour. It was decided by the caucus that in preparing for future conferences of NGRC and future bi-national or regional gatherings of the gay movement, a provision would be made for a liaison between the lesbian groups, caucuses and individuals and the rest of the movement. The caucus also considered possible discussions and courses of action to be put forward at the next cross-country lesbian conference.

Although the number of lesbians in the gay movement remains small

and the difficulties of involving women great, participants in the caucus were very committed women, all of whom went away feeling stronger and optimistic.

The interests of gay women were also reflected in the demands adopted as the programme of the national coalition. Many of these demands pertain to lesbians insofar as they pertain to all gays such as the demand for equal protection under the law vis a vis the Canadian Bill of Rights and removal of the anti-gay sections of the Immigration Act. The demand that homosexual parents not be denied custody of their children is one which is of particular concern to many lesbians.

These demands were not merely put forward and quietly adopted in a meeting of the conference. They were also dramatically presented to the Canadian government in a militant demonstration that converged on Parliament Hill on June 29, one of the evenings of the conference. The 250 marchers chanting 'Gay Rights Now' and 'Gais Exigions Nous Droits' created sufficient furor to merit a spot on CBS national news that evening. The demonstration represented a concrete application of the newly adopted NGRC strategy of public action as the primary means of winning its demands and raising the general consciousness of gays and straights alike.

Of the conference demands, the one which raised the most controversy was the one which called for abolition of the 'age of consent' laws. The main reason for adopting this demand as it now stands was the responsibility most conference participants felt to defend the rights of young people among us. The comments of two young lesbians (age 16 and 18) after the workshop that dealt with this discussion are very instructive in understanding the question. They felt that people over 21, if they wanted to aid younger gays (which they felt was very necessary at this time) should base their decision of what demand to put forward on the recommendation of those under 21. No one who identified themselves as under 21 spoke in opposition to the abolition of 'age of consent' laws.

In addition to the formation of NGRC, the conference included many different workshops and several caucuses. The final plenary passed a number of resolutions that arose from these bodies including: a solidarity resolution with the Quebec movement, to set up chapters of the Committee to Defend John Damien wherever possible, to send a telegram of support to Dr. Morgentaler and demanding his release, and that a public action strategy was the only way for the gay liberation movement to carry its struggle forward at this time.

NGRC has also adopted this perspective and, consequently, has the potential to eventually involve large numbers of lesbians and gay men in a struggle for our rights through a variety of activities from demonstrations and picket lines to debates and election efforts. The discussion at the conference underlined the fact that we must always be prepared to respond to specific instances of discrimination as they occur, to reach out to and involve as much of the gay community as possible. Activities that draw people into struggle for their rights inevitably also bring them into conflict with the system that denies those rights and therefore have enormous educational value in exposing the nature of that system to many who have a major interest in changing it.

A statement from the women's caucus to the final plenary concluded the conference on an optimistic note. It noted the slight but definite increased participation of women in the conference, and the unanimous passage of the lesbian caucus proposal to NGRC as indicators of the growing unity between gay women and men. It acknowledged that there were many problems to overcome, but stated that the challenge to involve increasing numbers of lesbians in the movement was one which gave us all a great deal of hope for future collaboration and common victories.

Chris Bearchall.

### GAY RIGHTS DEMONSTRATION

This had been promoted as the "biggest gay rights demonstration this country had ever seen". The 350 people who marched from Queens Park to Toronto's City Hall did make it the biggest ever which was particularly significant considering the late development of the Gay Liberation Movement here. About 1/3 of the participants were women who helped to make the lesbian presence in the movement a strongly identifiable force. There were 35 people from Ottawa and others from Guelph, Kingston and Smiths Falls, and about 25 men from the Francophone organization in Montreal.

Chris Bearchall, a GATE Toronto member and chief organizer on the John Damien Defense Committee, was the one token woman speaker. She started, "Queen Victoria refused to make legislation against lesbians because she refused to believe that they existed." The point being made was that the Gay Liberation Movement, both internally and from the outside, so often forgets about women. Chris reminded the audience of the very real facts for many lesbians; some of which are custody rights and housing discrimination.



GAY RIGHTS WITH RESERVATIONS



We know we want our rights but somehow it's not easy to decide to fight for gay rights. The difficulty comes not in refusing the repression but in accepting the ideology that seems to be attached to the gay rights movement. We know that to have the laws set against you is to have no power, but does that make the reverse true? Is a legal sexuality the same as sexual freedom? No, it is not. To be gay at home, in private is 'legal' but we are not free, even there. The repression of our sexuality forms itself on the TV screen, sneaks in with our library books and leaps at us off the cereal boxes. The state has enough ways of "entering the bedrooms of the nation" without having to have the police in through the door.

The ideology of gay rights is a move to integrate us into society. It is to diffuse our struggles. Now, there are those of us who think we were born homosexual while others are naturally straight. For those who follow this train of thought, the solution is to integrate us into society. They expect to change some headspaces, switch some laws and presto.... LIBERATION. This can't be our prescription for change unless we want to believe that we are only queers, that we're just different somehow. But we are much more than a bunch of queers. We are a movement to control our sexuality.

If gayness is a struggle we can't cry natural. None of our sexualities can be natural, under capitalism. Our sexuality is something we learn and accept, we wrestle with or we try to reject but it is never something we come by naturally. People will come out if a gay life gives them more free time, more energy, strength and peace of mind. If the lesbian ghetto offers only hassles, frustrations and bad relationships, then you can just forget it.

The article 'Gay Rights', in giving the rundown of the founding conference of NGRC, does an excellent job of exposing the direction and sentiments of the gay rights movement. From the paternalism and ageism, to the insensitivities to lesbian struggles, carrying us right on through the demands we are better able to understand what co-option is all about. By looking at the bits and pieces that are left we are able to remember the whole we are fighting for.

The demands presented by NGRC are not at all unusual. They are the type that suggest bargaining and compromise even before we get started. They are partial demands in that they express only part of our needs. They are our rights made palatable. Our demands must insist that gayness is not reduced to an alternative, a stop gap measure in a repressive society. In our struggles we must make demands that are not co-optable by being only part of what we want.

It seems, from the conference report, that the gay rights movement has forgotten the significance of being young. Ageism is all pervasive. It surrounds us and we embody it. Ageism doesn't have to be nasty and it doesn't necessarily hurt but it always ties us to the powerlessness and dependency of being young. Being younger isn't a natural affliction that we all get over eventually. It's a time when decisions are made 'for your own good' when we aren't allowed to figure out what 'our own good' is. As a 'youngster' I need the age of

consent laws changed as desperately as anyone else does. But to demand that 'right' and not the end to ageist society boggles my mind. How can these two be separate. For young people defined as dependent and powerless, in school and therefore wageless, the right to 'be legal' becomes a cruel joke. It is for all intents and purposes only a carrot on a stick.

The gay rights movement is unable to understand the intricacies of ageism as they see the struggle of young people as a minor offshoot of gay rights. In a movement that supposedly represents our interest, the understanding of age/power relations is as crucial as the understanding of sex/power relations.

When we look at their attitudes to lesbianism we have yet another clue in unmasking this mystery. Gay rights sees lesbianism as the flip side of male homosexuality. In this, the particular explosiveness of lesbian struggles is defused. Lesbianism becomes a personal quirk rather than the refusal of our role.

Gay rights once was our movement. We are fast losing control of this vehicle. In order to use this movement, we must know for sure what our goals and aspirations are. Partial demands may be fine for vanguard parties. They will sell the present in hopes of a bigger and better future. But for us we want our rights because we need our rights.

Patrice Simister.

COME OUT - ALL THE WAY OUT

I just came out. Not because I never wanted to before, but I did not think any time felt as right as this year, International Women's Year. Before I did come out, I felt sure that when I did, it would be all the way out. Not only the closet, but the whole house, out into the streets. I am a 'public lesbian'. My lover and I have chosen to show our affections as openly and honestly as anyone else. By doing this, we have paved the way for ostracism and ridicule from society. On one particular weekday evening, of late, we underwent sexual harassment from about one out of every two men who passed us on the street. It hurts deeply, as I'm sure you know, to be the object of obscene language and uncalled for comments. I realize that a straight man's ego is at stake and we threaten his machismo. It is not the fault of the average straight male, but their societal conditioning. They must be educated. Seeing more gays open up on the street would definitely help. You will be hassled and you will bleed a little each time, but we must support each other in our feelings for our lovers. Are we going to let society closet our feelings forever? Do you enjoy not being able to be touched or kissed in public? Or is fear your leader instead of love? Society has forced us into ghettos. The only time we are really 'gay' is at the Saturday night bars, if we can afford them. Can you afford to live this way? What I am saying, in fact, is 'come out-all the way out'.

Charlene D.  
July 5, 1975.



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# Rape Conference Proposes Changes

The following recommendations for changes in the criminal code were made at a Conference of Rape Crisis Centres, held June, 1975 in Ottawa.

1. Consider rape and other forms of sexual assault as crimes of violence that brutalize and de-grade the person and integrity of the individual. Eliminate the tragic confusion of sexual assault with healthy sexual union.
2. Abolish all the exceptions to the general rule that the evidence of a single competent witness is sufficient in law to support a verdict. Abolish the mandatory caution.
3. Delete the phrase "of previously chaste character" from all sections of the criminal code.
4. Define clearly and specifically the acts which constitute sexual assault, in language which describes the behaviour of the offender only. It should not be the victim that is on trial. The victim's sexual behaviour should not be used as a defense of the offender in court. Such harassment discourages most women from even reporting the crime.
5. Delay in reporting a rape until some form of mental composure has been reached, or a sympathetic person is located, should not be construed as deceit or consent.
6. Protect the married, separated and divorcing person from sexual assault, by the spouse. The inherent principle of this right should not be influenced by the anticipated difficulties in prosecution.
7. Extend protection from sexual abuse to all young people over 14, whether they be male or female, and prevent the possibilities of false charges by third parties ....Ensure full protection from sexual abuse to children under the age of 14, the infirm and the mentally incapable.
8. Define the crime of sexual assault in non-sex specific terms. The capacity for mental anguish and physical pain is equal in men and women.

9. Institute degrees of the crime of sexual assault according to the severity and type of coercion and violence, including threats, misuse of authority, false pretenses, and confinement, committed by the offender. Included in these degrees should be a consideration of the seriousness of personal injury and mental suffering to the victim as a result of the crime.
10. Include in the definition of these sexual assaults all forms of assaultive and compelling sexual contact or penetration. Abolish specific laws on attempted rape, indecent assault, sodomy, seduction, etc., to simplify and equalize law enforcement.
11. The victim should have the right to counsel when testifying. This right is given to any witness by the Canadian Bill of Rights 2(d). The victim is entitled to the same protection as the accused.
12. In the event that the victim inflicts more harm on the attacker as a result of a successful defense, the victim should be protected by the law.

Otto Lang, former Minister of Justice, has presented a bill in the Commons which is intended to protect rape victims from embarrassment and harassment in the courts. Briefly, the bill included the following proposals:

1. restricting questions on the victims sexual background during the trial.
2. not reporting the victim's name
3. reduce public access to rape trials.
4. encourage transferring of rape trials to centres outside the victim's hometown.

As you can see, the only proposal which coincides with the recommendations of the women's groups, is no. 1. The others serve only to perpetuate the idea that the victim is somehow guilty and has something to hide.

Mr. Lang, alas, has sadly missed the point.

Judy Bowering

# RAPE & PRIVACY

Under the patriarchal code, a woman's body is not her own property. Her name is that of her father or her husband. She must conceal her body according to the dictates of law and custom, suffering disapproval or imprisonment if she refuses. Social pressure demands that she marry, and the law demands that she contract her body to her husband, for his sexual satisfaction. If she does not comply with his sexual demands, he may forcibly rape her with impunity. Her reproductive system is carefully controlled by legislation (anti-abortion, sterilization laws, birth control restrictions), and she is always a readily available object for medical research. Her sexuality is marketed through prostitution, burlesque, advertising use, beauty contests. All men assume the right to look upon her body as a more or less pleasing piece of flesh for their judgment. No woman is free from jeers, catcalls, propositions on the streets.

Within this code, rape is only the logical extension of the assumed male right to a woman's body. The way that the law restricts rape is to see it as an infringement of one man on another man's property. A married man cannot rape his wife, because he already owns her. The concept of statutory rape is based on the principle that up to a certain age a woman is automatically subject to the "protection" of her father. Because of this, she is not able to choose to have sexual intercourse with a man. If she does, the father is likely to insist on their marriage. Or in more modern times, if she gets pregnant, she must marry.

If a woman has acted in any way that does not show her ownership by a man, she cannot be raped in the eyes of the law. In other words, if she has already had voluntary sexual intercourse with a man, if she is walking down the street in a free and easy manner, if she doesn't dress according to the restricted code, if she doesn't struggle hard enough to fend off her attacker (this means that she must bear the marks of a struggle, i.e., her purity must be important enough to her that she would risk her life to maintain it), or if she is a young woman taking any sort of birth control, the law will seldom uphold her right to "protection" from sexual assault. In other words, she will never get a rape charge to

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# RAPE & PRIVATE PROPERTY

Under the patriarchal code, a woman's body is not her own property. Her name is that of her father or her husband. She must conceal her body according to the dictates of law and custom, suffering disapproval or imprisonment if she refuses. Social pressure demands that she marry, and the law demands that she contract her body to her husband, for his sexual satisfaction. If she does not comply with his sexual demands, he may forcibly rape her with impunity. Her reproductive system is carefully controlled by legislation (anti-abortion, sterilization laws, birth control restrictions), and she is always a readily available object for medical research. Her sexuality is marketed through prostitution, burlesque, advertising use, beauty contests. All men assume the right to look upon her body as a more or less pleasing piece of flesh for their judgment. No woman is free from jeers, catcalls, propositions on the streets.

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will stop  
rape.*

*Women will stop rape!*



stick, and the court will probably tell her that it is her own fault that she was raped, or that she is lying in the first place. At this point I would like to dispel the myth of the hysterical female who cries rape. It just doesn't happen. The social taboo against a woman who has been raped, and the treatment of the courts make it absolutely ludicrous to consider the possibility that any woman would want to try and claim a rape that didn't really happen. This myth is maintained as a legal loophole for the sexist courts.

And as a psychological rationalization for all men to place the guilt elsewhere for their own sadistic sexual fantasies.

The threat of rape then becomes an effective tool to manipulate women and force women to conform to the unwritten laws of the patriarchal code. If she steps out of line, she risks being left to fend for herself in the open world that is male, where every man has a right to her body. A woman who learns this fact often takes advantage of it by charging for her services. The point of prostitution is that if the prostitute didn't charge, she would still be used freely by men.

But most women learn to walk with their arms and tummies tucked in, their legs close together, their eyes straight ahead, and their hair, face and clothes cosmetically correct. And

if men still hassle them, then they must be in the wrong neighborhood, or out too late at night alone, or dressed wrong, or just too attractive for the men to resist, in which case they should feel complimented.

All classes of men are rapists. However, the small majority of rapists who are actually convicted are usually lower class men - Indians, derelicts, ex-convicts. This is partly because of the prejudice of the courts which in the case of such men is almost as great as the prejudice against women, and partly because these men have not learned the rules of legal rape, i.e., never rape another man's woman, or be rich enough to have your own.

If we expand the definition of rape to mean all forced sexual encounters, then there are very few women who have not been raped. The force may be social pressure, guilt, a feeling of duty, or intimidation, or physical threats.

Sexual relations with a man under any of these conditions is rape. If we expand the definition of sexual relations to include all encounters of a sexual nature, then a woman is raped every time a man looks at her body as if undressing it, every time her breasts are touched in a crowd, every time her ass is pinched, every time a man comments on her body in an objectifying way. All these things are an expression of the first premise - that a woman's body is not her own private property, but is the private or public property of a man or of all men.

This fact is the real fact of rape. And this fact is the fact of the patriarchal world we live in. Rape is only the logical extension of sexism in any form. Rape is the condition of all women's lives as long as we must submit to humiliation from our husbands, our sons, our bosses, or strangers on the street. Every woman is being raped constantly by the very existence of male supremacy. And ultimately the only real solution to rape is the destruction and replacement of the patriarchal system.

Judith

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## What To Do

# If You Want To Report A Rape

1. Preserve the evidence- until you've had a medical examination, DO NOT WASH, change clothes, or douche. Do save torn clothing, articles which may have fingerprints or any weapon used by the rapist. Try to remember a license plate number, description of the rapist his car, etc.

2. Call the Police Immediately- This will help them find the suspect. They will take down a statement and take you to the emergency ward of a hospital for a medical examination to obtain evidence. Take a change of clothing with you.

Within the next day or two, detectives will contact you for a more detailed interview. Some of the questions may seem irrelevant, or even humiliating; don't hesitate to ask for an explanation.

3. Call a friend or relative- Should you decide to prosecute, the first person you talk to after the rape will be a key witness in your case. Therefore, it is legally essential that a complaint be made to someone at the first reasonable opportunity (This can be the police) There is also the value of having someone with you through the

ordeal.

4. Write down details of the rape- It may take some time before the rapist is apprehended and the case brought to trial. Your immediate recollection of particulars concerning the rapist and the circumstances surrounding the rape will help you at this time.

5. Get Medical Attention- For legal evidence, the doctor should 1) check the whole body for injuries, 2) Check for torn or stained clothing; 3) do a pelvic examination to check for internal injuries and take samples of vaginal fluid for semen tests. In any case, the doctor should: 1) make sure all injuries are treated, 2) take cultures for

gonorrhoea from your throat, vagina and/or anus if the rapist's penis was in contact with any of these areas, 3) do a routine bloodtest for syphilis, 4) ensure follow-up testing for gonorrhoea, syphilis and possible pregnancy. The woman should return for a follow-up examination within 12 - 48 hours after the initial medical examination. This is because bruising may not be noticeable immediately following the assault.

## Women Resist!!

If you are aware of a situation which is possibly threatening BE PREPARED TO RUN AND SCREAM. "Fire!" seems to be the most effective.

Practice memorising licence plates and being aware of the people and cars around you.

Self-defense tactics can be used to give you an opportunity to escape:

- do not carry a weapon; IT COULD BE USED AGAINST YOU;
- poke at eyes, clap both hands hard over the ears, throw anything available in his face;
- kick kneecap and scrape your foot down his shin and stamp hard on his instep;
- a cheap heavy ring can be worn with heavy part inside, now slap his face hard and scrape down;
- slap his face with keys, slice his face with comb;
- a lit cigarette can be useful as a defense;
- carry a loud whistle.

Remember hitchhiking is a very risky way of travelling. Many men consider sticking out your thumb a symbol of soliciting. If

you do hitch:

- know the licence number of the car;
- check the back seat before entering; never get in the back of a two-door car;
- know where the door handle is and get out if necessary; don't wait to be polite;
- never accept a ride with more than one man in the car;
- don't feel embarrassed about refusing a ride if you don't feel comfortable about a situation.

Report to the police the licence number of any car which follows or harrasses 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 car unlocked.

TAKE A SELF-DEFENSE COURSE.

ALWAYS TRY TO BE IN CONTROL OF SITUATIONS WHERE A SEXUAL CONFRONTATION COULD HAPPEN -ON ALL LEVELS FROM CASUAL TO INTIMATE.

-Become more aware of your right to defend your own body.



## ③ GAY VIEWS COMMUNITY WORKER

I've been looking at the gay scene for women both from a position of involvement and a position of objectivity for some time now. Having been deeply involved in trying to find out just what is missing in the lives of many gay women and trying to find ways of filling those gaps I have had many opportunities to sit back and wonder. I hoped initially to understand myself more and to think of how I, as a lesbian, a woman, a person, could work for the betterment of myself and my fellow lesbians.

I have discovered what I believe to be the major flaw in our attempts to improve our lives and our status. Before we worry about conquering the rest of society I think we must first look into ourselves and the world we have chosen to live in. In short, before we can live with the rest of the world we must live with ourselves. This is exactly what we are not doing.

In spite of our efforts to unite in a strong front we have maintained far too many divisions between various factions of the lesbian population. All too often we find ourselves in one group or another viewing our sisters with distrust, hostility, lack of understanding and even fear. This leads us farther from our ultimate goal--that of unification and strength.

We are not only faced with problems of straights oppressing us and men oppressing us-- we often oppress each other. The non-political lesbian fears the radical lesbian feminist because of the aggression she encounters. She is subjected to criticism over hair style, dress style, life style and lack of political objectives and feels alienated from a cause which should involve all women. She needs support instead of criticism. This is especially true during the nebulous stages of the "coming out" process. On the other hand, the lesbian feminist is fighting a cause for women who are indifferent to the fight while desiring its results. This causes the lesbian feminist to view the non-political sister with condescension and mistrust. A valid argument for both sides.

Between these two poles we have other divisions. The avid club goer often appears indifferent to the plight of her sisters. She is a socializer pure and simple. Subject to criticism from all sides she withdraws into the "I'm gay so where else can I go" syndrome. This person really believes that she has no alternatives. Trying to help is the lesbian community worker such as you will find at CHAT. She has political feelings mingled with compassion for the club goer and the non-political lesbian. Therefore she takes her position up in the middle of the fight. She appears obsequious to males in



the eyes of radical lesbian feminists and a not wanted "do gooder" to the others. Occasionally she manages to help someone but all too often her well intended efforts fall by the wayside. She is suppressed by the men who solicit her help in the gay community. They are, for the most part, paying lip service to the cause to enhance the business of running dances and making money for the patriarchal social group. Any efforts which suggest going beyond social functions are swept aside. In all fairness I must say that there are some men who genuinely do want to help women get together and make a meaningful effort at improving their status in the community. It is unfortunate that these few males are in a minority situation from all sides and cannot effectively help the women's cause.

I often wonder how many women just stay there hidden away in the proverbial closet rather than enter what must appear to them a milieu of conflicts. Fear of each other is often what keeps us apart.

Lesbian feminists and the community worker lesbian tend to place themselves in theoretic ivory towers. "Wouldn't it be nice if...." "...if only people would..." We phrase and talk ourselves so far away from each other that our only common ground is a battlefield--against each other.

The lesbian feminist who really cares about all of her sisters must come to terms with the differences. She is in many ways in the best position to do so. The community oriented lesbian works hand in hand with males in the homosexual community because it is very often the vantage point which most serves her purpose. She feels that she cannot work with her feminist sisters because the type of women she encounters would be frightened off by the heavy political aspects of the feminist community. She feels that the lesbian feminist is oblivious to the hardships of self-acceptance which many non-political lesbians must face.

There is, too, the age-old problem of money. Where do the funds come from to provide additional necessary space and services for women? Where do we get money to provide space for women in the arts? Who provides the funds to establish centres where we can meet to discuss our differences and, more important, our similarities? Men will not help us here. As much as they are sometimes willing to assist gay women in the general community they certainly will never be supportive of any mutual venture of the lesbian feminist and the community oriented lesbian.

This is precisely why we must get together and work together. If our differences are great so are our similarities. Just as our various struggles alienate us, so should they unite us. We may never all be able to meet on one continuous level but we could certainly learn to help one another move closer to the midway point which is perhaps where our answer lies. As long as we stand scattered in our cliques and let our differences place us in opposition to one another we all lose. We are all limited in how much we can do for each other and for those too afraid to fight their own oppression. We cannot afford to allow women to feel oppressed by their sisters. We must overcome oppression from males, (even those who appear to be trying to help) and from society. But first we must stop oppressing each other. We have to realize that the length of someone's hair does not indicate subservience or toughness. We must understand that women must be permitted to expand without giving up their freedom to choose their own image--be it feminist or feminine. We must stop seeing each other in a peripheral sense and look deeper into each other.

Only when we have united our forces in mutual understanding and respect can we stand together and fight the oppression we face now as women and as lesbians. Once the groundwork is laid we can start the real struggle together.

Sandy.



# Abortion Clinic

## Break-in

MONTREAL (FNS)--Police raided a Quebec abortion and birth-control information and referral centre and arrested 6 women and 1 man on June 25th. It may be 3 months before the centre can recover address books, files and literature important to the operation of the centre, which were seized during the raid.

Police came into the offices of the "Comite de Lutte pour l'Avortement et la Contraception Libre et Gratuit" (Committee for Struggle for Free Abortion Contraception) at noon on Wednesday June 25th with a search warrant that gave them wide powers. According to a statement released by the Comite, it gave the police permission to gather up everything in their path, including the 6 women who were working in the office.

"They barged in the door saying they were looking for information concerning an illegal abortion.", said one of the women arrested.

The women were unclear about the exact contents of the warrant. "The police read the warrant to just two people then demanded that everyone sit down quietly and not cause trouble. Their warrant authorized the seizure of all books, documents, registers, etc., in connection with an illegal abortion last July and was signed by Judge Bourdon."

"They made a clean sweep of all the material we use most often in our work--work we do openly and legally.", the statement continued. "This seizure is a serious setback in our work. They seized a card-file of Quebec women and groups, our correspondence files, a portion of the petitions for free abortions and contraception that we've signed, video reels on contraception and abortion, and copies of a booklet about the activities of Centre des Femmes that were in the office, without promising us that they would return them."

"They took files which contained the names of women who came to us in the past for information and referrals. We don't feel that the police should have the right to bother women who came to us in the strictest confidence."

After searching the office thoroughly, police took the 7 people who were in the office to Police Station #4. There the women were put into separate rooms and interrogated for more than 3 hours. The police and detectives asked very personal questions that had nothing to do with the abortion that they were investigating.

To one woman, they said, "You're divorced, eh?...and then you studied sexology?...You live alone...How long have you been so interested in sex?"

Another woman was questioned. "You've been married four years?... You're quite sure you're not separated or divorced?...You still have no children after 4 years of marriage! What are you thinking of then?...What method of birth control do you use?...If you got



### Do-it-yourself kit

pregnant would you get an abortion?"

"They accused us of complicity in an illegal abortion performed by a Montreal doctor last summer, but we had nothing whatsoever to do with that.", one woman stated.

Members of the Comite said that they had made referrals to Dr. Henry Morgentaler and then other doctors in Montreal for illegal abortions, but denied having had anything to do with the abortion the police were investigating, alleged to have taken place in July last year.

"We stopped referring women for illegal abortions before last July," says a member of the Comite. "Since then our referrals have been to New York clinics or to therapeutic abortion committees in Montreal hospitals."

The Comite has demanded that their books, films, literature and files be returned but so far the police have been unwilling to discuss the matter in detail.

Comite member Juline stated, "We were unable to continue our work with all our documents and records gone. In fact, one of our clients missed her abortion appointment that Thursday because the police took a file which contained her phone number. We had no way of contacting her."

Police still have not returned anything seized in the raid. "Legally," Burch said, "they can keep everything for 3 months. After that, they're supposed to give anything back that they're not going to use as evidence."

No charges have been laid yet so, logically, the materials are not to be used as evidence and should be returned. However, according to Claire Brassard, the

police confiscated material during the 1973 raid, when they were searching for medial instruments used to perform abortions. Those items have not been returned, even though police found nothing and did not lay charges.

Several Montreal action groups and women's centres issued statements of support for the Comite as soon as the news of the arrests and seizure spread. One of the strongest was issued by the Confederation des Syndicats Nationaux, which pointed out that police had approached some of militant members of the unions, under the guise of "Olympic security", hoping to bribe them or get information about other

trade union activists. Police repression, the statement said, has intensified since 1970, and police actions have only proved that justice and the law serve only those who are actually in power.

However, the statement said, repression never accomplishes what the police intend it to--instead, the repression promotes "a greater solidarity among the militants, and a wider political conscience which makes their struggles more and more just, and mobilizes them against a common enemy."

The Comite has moved to new offices on Henri Julien Street, adding to the slow down caused by the seizures. The move was planned in advance, and the new office is larger and more modern. When the phones are connected the Comite hopes to be functioning again.

Beth Blackmore.

**SOME  
OF MY  
BEST  
FRIENDS  
ARE MEN**



A magazine series  
with a female bias  
with host  
Maxine Samuels

Thursdays at 10:30 p.m. on CBC-TV



CBC-TV



# WORKING WOMEN'S STRUGGLES

## MESSAGE FROM THUNDER BAY

august 15, 1975

This is urgent. It is of the utmost importance to all Canadian women and other workers. It concerns a strike that is happening in Thunder Bay and is presently in its seventh week. Over fifty members of the Service Employees International Union, local 268 in Thunder Bay, all of them women and workers at the Port Arthur Clinic are striking for the following demands:

1. Currently the Clinic pays nothing toward hospitalization coverage. The workers want 50% paid by the clinic.
2. Clinic employers have offered a 4% raise to all workers. This gives the employees an average raise of \$6 to \$30 a month. The workers are asking for a 15% wage increase. In contrast to this very modest demand, most unions have settled or are trying for, 30% wage increases. Even with a 15% increase, which the Clinic has refused, the workers would still be paid approx. \$100

less than hospital employees doing similar work.

3. The employees are asking for complete Union Security. As early as December of last year, a negotiating committee with representatives from Administration and employees has tried to agree on a workable collective agreement. Until now, the women's demands have not been met, and on occasion, the women have felt they were not taken seriously enough. Many women now believe a union would give them greater strength and effectiveness. If a collective agreement is not reached by the end of October, there is a possibility that the Union may lose certification.

The clinic owners have a Toronto based lawyer with a reputation for strike breaking. The wives of the doctors (who are the clinic owners) are the scab labourers. Picketers have been knocked down several times by

cars and there has been undue police harrassment and arrests. The women are losing support and morale is getting low. The establishment is angry that these women are "acting like animals" and feel that they don't have the right to strike. They are getting support from other unions, support which is much-needed but is also undermining the fact that this is also a WOMEN'S strike. These women need support nationally from other women and other SEIU locals. Please send telegrams and letters of support of the strikers to: SEIU local 268, 929 Fort William Road, Thunder Bay, Ontario. Send letters stating your dissatisfaction with the Clinic owners to Port Arthur Clinic, 194 N. Court St., Thunder Bay. Notify your local SEIU offices to check with the Thunder Bay local, about the strike situation.

NORTHERN WOMEN'S CENTRE

## AND NOW FOR THE GOOD NEWS...

5 women are back on the job at a paper mill in Northern Ontario after successfully fighting a case of sex discrimination by their union.

The 5 were originally hired to work last fall, while labour was in short supply. The men in that part of the province like to take their vacations in the fall, during the hunting season. No women had worked on the paper making machine before the 5 women were hired to fill the vacancies.

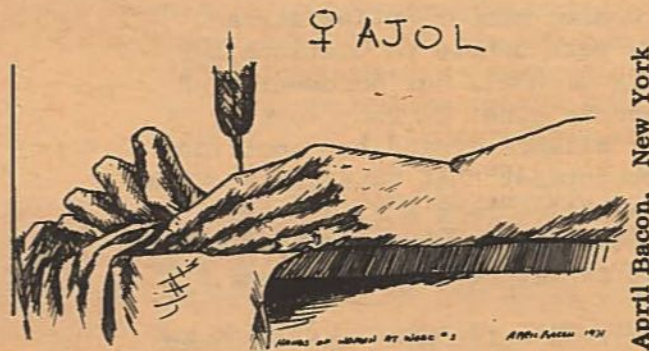
According to the union's arrangement with the paper company, a mill worker must be admitted to the appropriate local of the union after 15 days on the job. The 5 women worked for the company for 8 weeks but their applications for union membership were repeatedly rejected. One union leader was reported to have said that women will become members of his local over his dead body.

At the end of the hunting season, the men returned to their jobs and since the company was obliged by the collective agreement to give first priority to union members in hiring, the non-unionized women were laid off. They took their case to the Human Rights Officer in their district who put them in touch with the Labour Relations Board. A representative of the Board negotiated an agreement to admit the women into the union after their next 15 days at work. The women, in return, would withdraw their discrimination charges. After signing the agreement, the women discovered that the local had just admitted many new members so that there now was a large pool of

union men available for work who would have to be given priority for hiring. It would take at least 6 months of waiting before the women could accumulate a further 15 days of work to become eligible for union membership.

The women remained united and refused to abandon their fight which was by now in its 5th month. They asked the Human Rights Officer who originally helped them to reopen their case. Another round of negotiations took place. This time the women held out for retro-active union membership and got it.

All 5 are now back in the paper mill where they received a friendly reception from their co-workers. The hatchet has apparently been buried. "Before this happened, I wouldn't say boo to anyone," says one of the women. "Now I have learned to stand up for myself."



April Bacon, New York

KINGSTON...On Monday, July 21st several women from the Women's Centre demonstrated in front of Bell Telephone. We were demonstrating in support of Janice McClelland, a woman who has been very active in the Centre over the last few years. Janice feels that she was fired unjustly from her job as a long-distance operator because of her involvement with Union activities at Bell.

Recently Janice filed a grievance against a new company rule which aimed at preventing the trading of "straight cama" without asking permission first. Straight cama is a monotonous job--consisting of sitting at a board and recording rural customers' telephone numbers. Janice felt that having to ask "permission" was childish. It is a well known fact that most women are forced to work at dull, boring jobs. Most women in such jobs are not unionized or belong to unions that are little more than organizations and exercise little or no bargaining power or support to the workers.

As long as women are considered a "reserve labour force" and relegated to garbage jobs and working conditions such unjust dismissals will keep occurring. Janice is not the only one to have lost her job at Bell under "suspect" conditions. Most of the major department stores in town exploit their female staff to a disgusting extent.

Support Janice and the thousands of other women who find themselves in similar predicaments. Write to your M.P. Write to Bell. Write to your local paper. Fight back!

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

LAST MINUTE NEWS: Janice McClelland has won an important victory for women and the operators at Bell Canada. Yes, at the 3rd step of grievance procedure Bell Canada decided to rehire her with backpay except for one week suspension. She has already started work and feels the protest march held by some women from the Women's Centre was worthwhile.



## THE FORGOTTEN WOMEN

1975--International Women's Year--but the thousands of women populating Chile's prisons, torture chambers, slums and shanty towns are not holding conferences nor attending celebrations. These and millions more are the forgotten women of the Third World who live under regimes which rule by torture and terror.

## POLITICAL ECONOMY OF TERROR

The destruction of human rights in Chile has been denounced by such international organizations as Amnesty International, the Bertrand Russell Tribunal and the International Commission of Human Rights of the OAS. Constant house searches, imprisonment with no charges laid and systematic torture are every day occurrences. Repression has been increased in recent months, as the junta imposes a policy of terror intended to discourage militants from any political activity. In effect, it is attempting to eliminate any opposition to its policies. The repressive apparatus is indiscriminate and crosses all party and sex barriers, except that women militants who find themselves incarcerated undergo particular forms of torture, diverse forms of sexual abuse and repeated rape. In their search for information about the location of arms or names of other militants, the sadism of the torturers is particularly incited by the fact that their victims are women who resist fitting into the traditional docile feminine role.

Women are in prison because of their work in the clandestine organizations fighting to overthrow the junta, or they have hidden fugitives or perhaps just because they are related to a suspected leftist militant. Entire families are arrested to-

WOMEN IN CHILE

gether. Mothers, wives, sisters and children are routinely tortured and raped in the presence of militants to encourage them to give information. If the militant has not been captured, they are held as hostages so he/she will turn themselves in.

## SURVIVAL IS SUBVERSIVE

The simple act of survival becomes subversive for the families of the vast slum and shanty towns where many of the breadwinners are either in prison or unemployed. (The official rate of unemployment is 15%.) Women, who traditionally have been the caretakers of the family, are faced with the impossible task of feeding, clothing and educating their dependents. Watching your children die of starvation is a very slow method of torture. Here the women are devising such methods of survival as pooling their resources, setting up soup kitchens, developing cottage industries and making clothing.

## WOMEN IN STRUGGLE

Resistance and struggle are not new phenomena for Chilean women. During the lengthy strikes at the northern mines at the turn of the century, women or-

ganized 'housewives committees' in support of their miner-husbands' demands for pay increases. This was the cradle of the working class movement in Chile, encompassing struggles against the English mining companies that ran mining monopolies in the area.

As class struggle developed over the years, women's participation also grew. Peasant women took part in land takeovers, the only way to acquire the terrain on which to construct a dwelling to house their families.

In 1970 when Allende was elected president, only 12.8% of all Chilean women were economically active, representing 23.4% of the total work force. Almost half were domestics or employed by their families in small businesses, while the majority of women remained in the home. There has traditionally been a strong reluctance on the part of Chilean society to allow women to enter the work force and become economically independent. One of the programs of the government of the Popular Unity was to create the infrastructure necessary (such as day care centres, laundry services, workers' dining rooms) which would allow women to do so.

The brutal coup of 1973 put a temporary end to the reforms and services begun under the Popular Unity government. At the same time it postponed the liberation of proletarian women to become economically active and their potential participation in the construction of a socialist society in Chile. The media is once again encouraging women to return to the kitchen. The empty pots are emptier than ever before for the majority of Chilean women.

Reprinted from LAWG LETTER  
VOL. III, NO. I, Sept-Oct.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

(NWL)--International Tribunal of Crimes Against Women: Planning Conference was held in Paris in April. Tribunal will be held in Brussels in November or December 1975--the Belgian government has given a grant and the use of a conference hall with simultaneous translation facilities. Purpose of Tribunal is to provide accurate, up to date information on the social and economic disadvantages suffered by women throughout the world and to disseminate these facts as widely as possible. Underlying purpose is to create international solidarity and to draw attention to hypocrisy of Western Governments who maintain that all is right with their world, thus ignoring the position of women in their own countries and in particular turning a blind eye to the often extreme suffering of women in the 'third world'. Evidence will be presented in two ways: 1) written reports in at least 3 languages, made available to public and journalists and 2) personal evidence, i.e., 'witnesses' who will illustrate the specific

cases of general conditions. Material will be in 4 main categories: sexual, reproduction and medical, family and law, production (economic) and political.

(NWL)--Peru: At a women's conference in Lima, the use of Sa., the Spanish women's title that, like Ms., denotes female and nothing else, was promoted. The International Transport Workers Federation will henceforth use Sa. on all official correspondence in Spanish. (Women's Report)

(NWL)--Argentina: 30 women political prisoners were freed from the women's prison at Cordoba by supporters who used chains and grappling hooks connected to lorries to rip out iron window bars. The women then slid down ropes to freedom.

...The estimated half million gay people in Argentina are the victims of government attacks. The February issue of El Caudillo, paper of the Ministry of Social Welfare, had an article urging 'an end to homosexuals'.

(NWL)--Italy: Nuns in Palestrina are being used to make clothing for a local firm which has recently laid off workers. The nuns allegedly are being paid a lower rate than regular workers. Police and a magistrate who entered the cloister to investigate were excommunicated for violating the nun's seclusion.

(NWL)--Italy: Women of the Wages for Housework Committee in Padova have produced a phonograph record, Canti di Donne in Lotta (Songs of Women in Struggle), with music, lyrics and performances by women of the Committee. The songs are an ironic commentary on women's lives. From Centre della Donna, Piazza Eremitani, Padova.

(NWL)--Japan: "Japanese Women Speak Out", a booklet giving an overview of the situation of women in Japan. \$2 from "White Paper on Sexism--Japan" Task Force, c/o PARC, P.O. Box 5250, Tokyo International, Japan. Highly recommended by The Other Woman.



# POETRY

## IDENTITY

Call me Mrs. Miss, Ms.

It doesn't mean

A damn.

I am what I am.

I do not need

To pose.

To quote G. Stein:

"A rose, is a rose,

Is a rose".

Janet Craig-James.



we are not lost  
among shattered endings  
that were never  
real  
but only someone else's dreams  
it was not us  
that came crashing to the floor  
to be destroyed like glass  
it was their conception of us  
we are alive  
we have found within us  
the seed  
and held it in our hands  
we have made it  
our own  
and grasped onto our reality

Rosalind Place  
Canadian Copyright Sept/75



sometimes  
the room of my own  
shakes around me  
its walls want to be pushed away  
falling over  
into other rooms  
more space  
other boundaries  
entrances  
without any welcome mats  
exits  
without any exclusive keys  
open doors  
without any enclosing latches

(Ms.) Sarah M.L. Gerry  
40 words  
first North American  
Serial rights only

My mother was a workaholic  
When I was small.  
I can still see her now  
Sitting, hour upon hour  
Her heavy shoulders hunched  
(Old Faithful I'd call it.)  
Treading patiently  
Back and forth  
Back and forth  
Stopping, only for a moment or so  
Biting a thread  
Snipping a corner  
Finally calling out,  
"Let's see how your dress fits now."  
I'd lift my long thin arms and  
I'd wiggle carefully into  
A nest of needles and  
Gingham that made you scratch.  
I'd shiver as the cold silver scissors  
Made their way across my legs.  
I loved every minute of it!  
I often wonder if she did.  
Far into the night I could smell  
The 1-2-3 oil she used  
And I would fall asleep,  
Warm and snug,  
To the clicking of the bobbin.  
Then morning would come  
And I'd find my new crisp pinafore,  
Pressed and proudly hanging  
Like a butterfly with  
Open wings.  
My Mom.  
She was always there.  
I used to think she  
Made miracles.  
I still do.

Gay D. Allison

they  
sit there  
contrived smiles  
stilted mannerisms  
waiting for something to happen  
waiting for someone to grab them  
squatting together

they  
look like an overstuffed comforter with embroidered happy faces  
cozy acquaintances

wanting  
to see  
the seams burst  
to examine  
the threads unravelling  
realizing..  
a decorative pattern

and  
not wanting  
to be a part of their designs

(Ms.) Sarah M.L. Gerry  
50 words  
first North American  
serial Rights only



# REVIEWS

## woman to woman

WOMAN TO WOMAN: EUROPEAN  
FEMINISTS

BY BONNIE CHARLES BLUH  
\$3.95

Available at Toronto Women's  
Bookstore.

The author of this book originally went to Europe in order to "get away" and write a novel; upon landing in Ireland, she decided to write a book on the feminists she meets instead. On returning to the United States a year later (1972), she finds that no one will publish it. Whether she looked solely for a big name publisher or for small movement presses as well, I can't say; however, I think that printing it herself was a great solution.

Her family and her consciousness-raising group were all involved in the production of *WOMAN TO WOMAN*, which is quite thick--more than 300 pages. They did a fairly good job of it, too, except for a few things so minor as not to merit mention.

However, I calculate that it was two years from the time Bluh returned from Spain that it was released. This is most unfortunate since our movement is changing very rapidly, especially overseas; thus, the first real problem of this book is that it's out-of-date.

The second problem is Bluh's writing. Not that she's a bad writer because she's not. But her writing style is more suitable for fiction, where all her previous training has been. This shows in her reluctance to provide information such as dates of events and sources of statistics. The former is particularly important since the book is a documentation of herstory. She also tends to abruptly introduce elements such as people or events without explaining their signi-

ficance. She usually does this at some later point, but in the meantime the reader is confused and wondering if she's missed something.

But the worst problem of the book by far is that there is no political analysis. As a matter of fact, the book is anti-political: the line that "feminism isn't political" keeps recurring throughout. Bluh is obviously among the growing group of pantsuit feminists who believe that Sisterhood is Powerful to an extreme degree, such that anything a woman does or says is okay because she's female. This is evidenced by the way she refers to all women as feminists (this was quite monotonous; some variety would have been appreciated, especially where the woman in question is hardly feminist). This attitude is not only ridiculous, it is also dangerous. After all, our aim is the liberation of all people, not the integration of women into the power positions of this decadent and oppressive capitalist society.

Not only is Bluh anti-political (which is extremely political), she is also sexist. This is focused directly at men. It is shown in two distinct fashions. The first is simple-minded generalizations, which run along the line of "women are smarter because their minds are flexible whereas men's minds are rigid."<sup>2</sup> The second is the attitude that men can go get lost in the woods for all she cares. For instance, she seriously believes it's a waste of time to talk to men about our oppression and to convince them of the value of the women's liberation movement. She obviously does not see that men are just as oppressed as women in this society except in different ways. She, nevertheless, holds each man personally

responsible for the repression of women. This form of sexism is just as debilitating as that level against us and should not be condoned.

Too many of us consider women's liberation to be strictly American.<sup>3</sup> *WOMAN TO WOMAN* goes a long way to dispelling this notion, as it gives us an idea of what's happening in Europe. Bluh has helped to prove that women everywhere are struggling for a better world. Unfortunately, since the book is out-of-date, it is very hard to predict what the movement overseas might be like now, after 3 years, especially since the book is hardly a complete documentation.

*WOMAN TO WOMAN* is a good size for the price. It is easy to read and is in places quite humorous; however, it does have some serious drawbacks, as I've outlined above. Any immediate relevance this book has expired in 1973. And don't let the title fool you.

### Footnotes

1. A phrase aptly coined by Frances Chapman in *oob*
2. paraphrased from page 141
3. I say American rather than North American as I've noticed a considerable degree of chauvinism against the Canadian women's movement.

Barbara Von Aka

### EREWHON BOOKS

FEMINIST AND RADICAL BOOKS.  
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## women's theatre

A locally based theatre group, TOMORROW'S EVE THEATRE BY WOMEN, has been travelling around Southern Ontario this summer performing two plays. One is specifically for kids. We had the chance to review the company when they brought *FIRST PERSON FEMALE* to Toronto on August 11,12,13.

The play was a series of skits about women; our strength and humour, our struggles to be free. They were all quite powerful. There was a new strength and confidence in the characters' decisions and reactions that evidently came from women moving together. This shows the influence of women's struggles on the theatre arts if not on women's lives.

The characters all had quite different personalities and were in a variety of situations, but

they fed off each other's power and frolicked in a newly won freedom. What a relief from "the liberated woman" as she has been presented in the theatre; the strong individual who pulls herself up by the bootstraps and fights off "the woman's role" single handed. The superwoman we're all supposed to want to be. On the other hand the women in *FIRST PERSON FEMALE* were women as we know them. The characters' responses were as complicated as we ourselves are.

The performance presented women on a number of levels. Some skits were light and very funny, others were quite heavy. A couple of points that impressed me come up several times. They were the times when we know our strength but feel overwhelmed by our weakness and as individuals. The result is that we are immobilized by defeatism.

The other thing that struck me was the schizoid situation of knowing that your periods of clarity, those times when you come to realize what's happening to you, are considered by others to be moments of madness.

Art is often something we watch for a few hours a week, in our leisure time, only a distraction from work. If it is meant only to relax us, to pacify us, there is no need to have it speak to our struggles. It is the carrot on the stick that teases us along but gives no real relief. If art is to mean something to us, if it is to be an inspiration, it must be political. *FIRST PERSON FEMALE* is political as it expresses women needing and getting more power, learning to love ourselves and other women and getting to be free.

Patrice Simister



# REVIEWS

## herstory

A VERY ORDINARY LIFE - As Told  
To Rolf Knight  
New Star Books 1974  
\$3.95  
Available at the Toronto  
Women's Bookstore

As the Preface says: "A Very Ordinary Life is not a nostalgic story of the Depression nor is it a morality tale of immigrant incorporation into the Canadian mosaic." Instead, it is the personal account of 70 years in the life of a woman from the German working-class who maintains that "I always lived a very ordinary life." Knight's mother insists that she is not really political but all of the major events that shaped her life were, in fact, political. She tells us: "I don't want anybody reading this thinking it's a tale from some dried up past. I and the people I grew up weren't part of some dark age. We were part of modern times. And to tell the truth I think that some of the things we knew and did and appreciated were ahead of a lot of things that are in vogue today." This is a comment on our own generation where we have tendency to view our parents' lives as really quite ordinary when not seen in the context of the social and political events of their time. (How will our children view our lives?) Revolutions, depressions, war--are they all really so much in the past?

Born in Berlin in 1901 into a family of five, she traces her life through many periods, both

as a woman, and as a person trying to survive economically. Like most working class children, her childhood was full of work with little schooling. We catch a rare glimpse of what it was like for the working person living under German militarism during the First War and she tells of her individual participation in the mass demonstrations during the 1918 Revolution which was only part of the revolutionary upsurge at that time.

She married in 1926 and followed her husband to Canada in 1929. Like immigrants everywhere, they were going to Canada to escape a life of hard work which brought them no returns, and saw a great opportunity in a new land which was undeveloped, yet civilized at the same time. ("Of course, we didn't figure on the depression.")

Immigration is an age-old "problem" both for those emigrating and for those already here. Two differing languages and cultures to be either tolerated or learned on both sides. In this respect, 1929 is not so far away from 1975. Many things to get used to: she discovered the North American variety of capitalism when she, as a "foreigner" from a country with a long tradition of socialism, tried to demand the minimum wage but met only apathy from the other woman workers. She also found that Canada then, as now, did not promote culture for the working person. ("Always some-

took very sick as I was in a family way suffering from so many disease I started to loose my eyesight. And which the Doctor told my husband it was through weakness. So finally on the 16 of Jan when my baby Girl was born I was in real darkness I wasent able to see no one around my bed. And I stayed in bed 3 month Jan Feb & March without no treatment whatever because my husband was without work and which he has been for several years. So the first part of April I started to get up for the first time. On which I wasent able to see nothing with very little food in the house & 6 children it was very hard for me to get better so on the 11 of June my baby got a bad cold and she died...we had no money to get even a doctor. So I half blind & losing a child made it worse for my health. So about the month of Aug it was a Doctor in town so my husband brought him home to examine my eyes. So he told me that he could not do me nothing whatever as I have to go through an eye specialiste. And which I have no money to preciede to the destination which it will be to Toronto or Ottawa so please have mercy on me as I'm only a young mother age 32 and the condition I am I cannot attend to my house-work....

body would say, "If you don't like it here, why don't you go back to where you came from," or something like that."...."As if things were so perfect here, or any place else, that they couldn't stand a lot of improvement." ....Looking for domestic work in Toronto, "Oh, you're German. I wouldn't dream of hiring a German girl. I don't forget the war that easily.")

Taking a trip back home to Germany to see her mother, she experienced the powerlessness of the people under Nazi rule and also the small, individual ways in which they tried to fight back. Our Canadian working-class history became a part of her life just as it has in Germany when she helped out during the 1938 unemployed sit-in at the Vancouver Post Office. During the Second War, she discovered what it meant to be a German through the use of reactionary nationalism. Going through the Depression and the Second War in Vancouver, they were constantly losing their meager savings through crisis after crisis. Struggling to raise a child and keep her life together around a husband whose responsibility is directed towards his own selfish ends. Keeping a home for the three of them while her husband worked as a cook in logging camps and construction camps in the B.C. Interior--"I started to feel that all my life I was going to lead a drab existence."...."I was becoming more and more a grass widow."...."I knew he still cared; thirty years living together can't be changed. But I was completely at loose ends. It was too late for me to start anything new in my life."

"Besides, there wasn't anything in my life, that happened to me personally that was extraordinary. At least nothing that millions and tens of millions of other people didn't experience themselves." After reading this book, I could agree with her that, while she lived a full life indeed, she lived a life no different from anyone else. Many autobiographies have given us a sense of what a person was all about but very seldom do we find one that puts the personal into a political perspective.

Pat Leslie.

Ed. Note: The following are only a few of the letters sent to R.B. Bennett, our Prime Minister during the Depression. The illiteracy speaks for itself--and the suffering.

Excerpt from a letter from Red Deer, Alberta, March 1935:

I am the mother of thirteen children age 50 yrs., old enough, to know better to do what I am doing by writing you my troubles when you no doubt have plenty to worry about, but as a mother who fights for her children I am coming to you to see if I can get a little help. I am not out of my head only don't know which way to turn. We have been on relief for two years and get only \$10.00 a month to live on until this last month I beg them for \$12.50 and I only get it in food no cash to buy any thing we need and have to buy everything from the store we eat. We have been able to work out our rent until the past six months and can't pay that so we are ordered out on the 21st of this month.....

Angliers, Quebec, 1935

...I am the wife of a return soldier who has served 4 years overseas under the Canadian army and I am a mother of 5 children living. On the 6 of Jan 1934 I



"Mother, what is a Feminist?"  
"A Feminist, my daughter,  
Is any woman now who cares  
To think about her own affairs  
As men don't think she oughter."

- Alice Duer Miller, 1915



## REVIEWS

### books

Conversations with Bibi is worth buying for the cover art alone. It's beautiful. This is Alexa DeWiel's first book. Her poetry is about women--women working in sweatshops, women together, women in so-called "liberated" marriages, angry women, women day-dreaming--all kinds of women.

She makes excellent use of sounds and repetition to convey feelings of closeness, confusion, dreaminess. And it's not all "pretty" poetry--there are poems about the boredom of secretaries, the facade of the "liberated" marriage, the lives of women in other countries.

It's a sensitive book--sometimes you can judge a book by its cover.

cindy wright

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*Conversations with Bibi*  
Alexa DeWiel



Conversations with Bibi

#### WOMEN AND THEIR WRITING

Women and their writing vol. II reminds me of a grade five composition assignment: Choose one of the following and write a short story or poem about your experiences: 1. What is your most thrilling moment? or 2. What did you do this summer?

There is a great deal of stilted sentences, questionable grammar and little or no plot structure.

The Flight of the Mad Bull by Sheila Hill and The Interview by C.J. Taylor are just plain boring. The Unintentional Kidnapping by E. Cook deserves honourable mention but falls short of good because of combining the format of a short story with that of a newspaper account. Also the ending falls off, leaving the reader bored.

The redeeming feature is the poetry. On the whole it is moving and well written. My favourite is Gay D. Allison's:

morning slips quietly  
into me  
yawning  
stretching  
rubbing my nose  
scratching  
then unwinding  
slowly  
uncurling  
springing lightly  
to my toes  
warm wood  
rough rug  
padding through the hall  
the bathroom  
splashing my face  
gently  
with cool water  
my eyes open  
green.

This is only the second anthology of the Women and Their Collective. For the women involved; it is a chance to express

#### ATLANTIS: A WOMEN'S STUDIES JOURNAL

The first edition will be published in the fall of 1975. Any scholarly articles concerning "women's issues" or creative writing by women authors should be sent to:

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Coordinating Editor  
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\$5 per year for two issues. Money order or cheque made out to "ATLANTIS".

#### ARE YOU CRAZY???

Maybe you can help. "Just Echoes" is an anthology of writings by former "mental patients" who are speaking out against their "treatment" in Canada's "mental hospitals". Do you have something to say about your hospitalization?

Editors  
Just Echoes  
Box 7251, Stn. A  
Toronto, Ontario  
Attention: Susan Uilkema

their feelings in a congenial atmosphere along with providing constructive criticism and support.

For more information contact Elizabeth Boreman, YWCA, Adult Education - 925-3137.

Grace Scott.

Lesbian Images, by Jane Rule, Doubleday, 312 pages, \$9.95 cloth. Available at the Toronto Women's Bookstore, 85 Harbord St., Toronto.

Jane Rule is a strong, proud lesbian. She has made a tremendous contribution to lesbian literature. And for once, here is a book on lesbianism written by a Canadian lesbian. Lesbian Images is mostly an examination of the ways lesbians are portrayed in the writings of twelve writers, all lesbian, although in very diverse ways. They include writers such as Radclyffe Hall, Gertrude Stein, Violette Leduc, Colette and Vita Sackville-West. This is the main substance of her book. She makes literary criticism interesting even for those not familiar with the works she analyses. The book includes a personal introduction; Jane Rule discusses her own writing, her development as a lesbian, and her long-term relationship with her lover, Helen. The next two chapters trace the herstory and long oppression of lesbianism. She talks about lesbianism and the church, lesbianism and psychiatry. Most of this material will be familiar to those who have read Sappho Was a Right-On Woman, Women and Madness or Woman Plus Woman. The final chapter, "Recent Nonfiction", is a discussion of books such as Lesbian/Woman and Lesbian Nation, and of the struggle of lesbians within the National Organization of Women, again herstory familiar to readers of Sappho Was a Right-On Woman. Rule criticizes the divisiveness of the women's movement, between heterosexual and lesbian women, and between lesbian feminists themselves.

Lesbian Images is a beautifully written book. Buy it, read it, share it, read it again. Lesbian Images will make you feel, as Jane Rule does: "I am proud to be in such company, to share such a risk and such a heritage."

cyn wright

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# MUSIC REVIEWS : SARA AND RITA



## INTERVIEW WITH SARA ELLEN DUNLOP

Sara Ellen Dunlop released an extended play record in June 1975.

Not an unusual event for some but for Sara it meant the formation of her own record company "Sara Ellen's Homemade Records."

Previous to this Sara had done a variety of engagements under the name Sara Delrai. The name was chosen from the telephone book because an agent said "Dunlop wasn't showbiz."

Fed up with the whole business Sara worked for a few months as a driver for a dental laboratory--delivering teeth.

Sara eventually dropped her stage name; as she became more involved in writing music and doing original material.

After an unsuccessful single release she spent four years living in the country, learning to play the piano and writing and arranging the music for the record that was just released.

The record includes four songs: "Working on a Strong Foundation" which was especially written for International Women's Year; "Singing Oh Canada", "Closer to My Mind", and "Children of Darkness."

T.O.W. talked with Sara about her new record, the music industry, feminism and just about anything else she had on her mind.

**T.O.W.:** What is a homemade record and why did you choose forming your own company to release it?

**SARA:** When you ask stations to play a homemade record, people don't know how to react. They don't realize that the record was pressed in the normal way. The difference is that myself and friends did everything else--production etc.--ourselves. That is why it's called a homemade record not because it's made out of stone or something. ...What we made was an extended

record. It is only seven inches in diameter the same as a 45 single but instead you play it at 33 1/3 and have four songs on the record. It is very economical. The larger companies do not use this because they have the public believing it is more economical to buy an lp for roughly \$6.50 than an extended record for \$2.99.

**T.O.W.:** Did you approach any record companies?

**SARA:** There is just no way we would go through a record company. They are much too commercial; out to make a profit rather than anything else. I didn't even approach any; there was just no point because they are only interested in profit.

**T.O.W.:** What do you think of the Canadian music industry?

**SARA:** The music industry of Canada is as pathetic as the film industry. There just isn't any. Most people think Canadian music is Anne Murry and Gordon Lightfoot and this is only because these two people have become internationally known. Most of the radio stations that play my record are American. There is a great deal of apathy towards Canadian music. If it is Canadian then it is logical that the record is not good and even more so if the singer is a woman.

Although music is my major concern I have to drive a delivery truck to make ends meet. It's the price you pay for living in Canada and trying to make it in their music world.

**T.O.W.:** What do you think of feminism and the women's movement?

**SARA:** Sure, I am all for women and their liberation. I think women are alright; and you can tell your readers that Sara Ellen says "Women are alright." But it shouldn't matter whether you're heterosexual, homosexual or whatever; everyone should work together for the liberation of all mankind. Like my song says "I feel my sisterly love of woman and my brotherly love of man."

**T.O.W.:** Anything else on your mind?

**SARA:** Some people ask me if I am a lesbian. Really it is my own business and has nothing to do with my music or the way I sing so no one should give a shit either way.

Lili Tomlin was asked once by a reporter whether or not she was a lesbian. She just replied that it was a question not worth answering. How true! It is your own business. No one would ask if they thought you were living with a man.

Grace Scott.

RECORD REVIEW: SARA ELLEN  
DUNLOP'S "IN THE LIGHT"

The lack of a record-player is never felt until you have to review a record. Then it becomes a task requiring skill and tact.

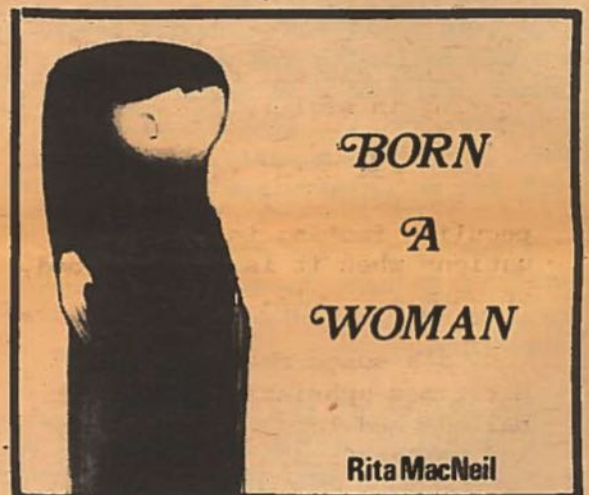
At first mention of Sara Ellen's homemade record "In The Light" some stereo owners think you want to play a record made out of clay. After careful inspection they are somewhat assured but are insistent on not listening to it themselves. The somewhat unbiased opinion is since it's Canadian and by a woman it can't be good.

The playing of the record lasts roughly 15 minutes, so I play it again and again; enjoying and savouring the easy listening quality and superb music arrangement.

Sara's voice compliments the music, although she is drowned out at times, the limitless energy she emits in life comes through on the record.

An unusual mixture of folk and rock and roll makes the record well worth buying.

Grace Scott.



RECORD REVIEW: BORN A WOMAN BY  
RITA MACNEIL.

For some of us, it has been a long wait since the appearance of the songbook: "Born a Woman" and the promise of a record under the same title by Rita MacNeil.

The songbook cannot compare to hearing the words sung in Rita's strong voice.

Her lead song "Born a Woman" aptly describes the position of women in our society.

"And the media they've done so fine,  
exploited our bodies and they buried our minds.

Follow their line and you're sure to be another brain-washed member in society.

With a wonder bra to improve your figure,

And girdles designed to make you five pounds slimmer,  
oh don't offend the male population."

Her first song "Need for Restoration" was written after attending a meeting. The meeting became the catalyst that persuaded her to put her feelings into words and music. At



the next meeting, "quaking like a bowl of jelly", she sang "Need for Restoration." Her popularity grew as she wrote more songs and performed them at festivals.

#### Need for Restoration

1. Society made the rules and regulations showing women how to sit stand and walk, how to wear their hair, catch them a good man, and keep him ever by their side. So I found me a man in the good old tradition, being conditioned as I was, but when it came down to making big decisions, I found he overlooked my mind.

2. And when you hear them talk about women's liberation be sure you understand, that these are women, they're fighting for changes, to benefit you and me-- And if you take the time, look all around you, examine possibilities. Of how you could become more independent and be the woman you could be.

#### Chorus

And there was unrest and a need for restoration, to fill the needs in me, To take command of my mind and my body, and be the woman I could be.

And we share unrest and a need for restoration, to set our talents free, to take command of our minds and our bodies, fully sharing in society."

"Warm and Cold" is another of my favourites. It reveals that peculiar feeling in some situations when it is good and bad, or warm and cold.

Rita's songs reflects her Maritimes upbringing: Scottish ballads and late night country and western radio shows.

If you want to know what "Born a Woman" is all about--buy this record.

Grace Scott.

#### IN THE TRADITION OF THE LONG-SUFFERING WOMAN. JANIS.

I haven't always been in love with Janis Joplin. There was a time, in 1969, when I thought her style was screaming, howling, whorish. And I, back then, was a restrained hippy chick--sashaying around in the clothes I had bought during my short and barely successful years in fashion modelling, refusing to work full-time at any business shit, getting my money by means of very short typing jobs. Those were the days. But, as I indicated, I had my standards. I still curled my hair and wore deftly painted faces and knew all the hip bars. I thought Joplin had no "finesse", very important to my image of women then. I had heard "Piece of My Heart" sung many times by a black woman with much finesse, much control, well-produced Motown back-up. To me the Joplin version was undisciplined, and far too wild. Not ladylike.

The film "Monterey Pop" changed my feeling about this woman whose popularity had so sud-

## JANIS JOPLIN



denly surprised the patriarchal rock world. I don't even remember who else was at that damn festival. I only remember Janis Joplin, stomping her feet, shaking her entire body, pleading, creating energy that I could feel with an incredible immediacy. She sang "Ball and Chain". I was a believer.

That woman up there was me. I knew what it was like to be walked all over by a man and come back for more, to beg for more. I knew what it was like to define my strength not by my ability to say no, fuck off, but by my ability to take more of the same again; from the same man, or from a new man--it all became the same, since the roles never changed. Yup. I fell in love with Janis in that theatre.

I don't want to sound like this changed my life, like a new product is supposed to. It didn't. I certainly didn't have much of an analysis back then and I went on doing my same numbers. But Janis Joplin was one of the people who made me think more about what it means to be a woman. She sang about women as losers, and I was beginning to articulate for myself some ideas along that line, albeit in a fairly vague way.

Joplin sang about women the way most of us unfortunately still are. "A woman left lonely is just a victim of her man". She sang about a world where "men always seem to end up on top". She thought women (not men) should "try just a little harder". She was willing to wait forever; "oh, if I could pray, and I try, dear, you might come back to me, maybe, I guess I might have done something wrong and I'd be glad to admit it." She was giving "everything a woman possibly can" and still love was "like a ball and chain". Knowing it was "unfair", wanting it not to be "in vain", wanting only to love a man, one man. ("I need a man to love me.") What she wanted to offer in love was taken in domination.

She vindicated her pain and the pain of all women. It seemed to turn a lot of men on. Men

thought she was sexy, "ballsy", earthy, funky. She was all those things, I guess, but she could only afford to have this so-called "ballsy" image because the men knew, they could see, that she was a whore with a vulnerable virgin heart. She wasn't really tough at all. She wasn't setting any of the terms of her pain.

Joplin embodied the current idea of sexual liberation for women, with her vibrant sexuality, her sweaty face, her defiant expression of female explosion. It was alright for Joplin to talk about men as a piece of action, as long as what she really wanted was one man to love her. Thus she made herself available to men on their terms, daring to offer and ask no more. Sexual liberation in the service of men is no real sexual liberation at all.

She presented no contradiction to the ideology of the rock world. The only difference between her and the groupies was that she was a star and they weren't. Groupies were held in contempt; Janis sang about the pain of that contempt. And because her genius couldn't be ignored she was the equal of Mick Jagger, Jimi Hendrix, and the other men who defined the parameters of rock music

This is a rather long introduction to my impressions of the film "Janis". I have presented my biases.

I felt from the moment she was shown on the screen the desire to rip the screen away and find her actually standing there, alive. Whereas the first I saw her on film, I was totally overwhelmed by her energy, her power; this time, having read some of the books on her life, having listened to her records, I was overwhelmed by my response to her. Never having seen her perform live, I felt some sadness and impatience at the inadequacy of a one-dimensional screen. Her performances were absolutely cathartic. She purged herself, and she purged her audience. As best it can, the film does her justice.

She's up there giving herself to us like she gave herself to her man; aching, making promises she intends to keep, and does keep. She's up there showing us how to give everything to the work you love and not hold back. Singing her voice to its limits and not caring how profitable the return is on capital so precious, not looking to a long-term investment for her genius.

There are few of us who allow ourselves to experience life with such intensity. Janis Joplin showed us the way to do it, and burned out at her zenith. Or perhaps it wasn't her zenith; maybe she could have burned even more brightly; sadly, we will never know.

Adelyn Bowland



# B.C. WOMEN'S FESTIVAL

## impressions

- sitting around the campfire Friday night, beautiful woman faces glowing in the firelight, Nancy lost to Charlotte's massaging touch. Jane and Judy strumming their guitars and singing, gentleness and power. Leaning back against the gravel bank meeting a woman from Ottawa.

- Saturday morning women lining up in front of our book display, discovering so many women novelists, poets, activists, so much, how to choose, new material chosen for the Kootenay Womens Reading Theatre, good strong woman-loving-woman words.

- dancing in the sunshine, rhythms and joy of our energy connecting, holding hands moving softly through the grass.

- Rita McNeil singing, apologizing for a sore throat, Born A Woman, Tell It Like It Is Sisters, our delight in our sisterhood soaring. Clapping, singing with her, thinking of Nicki as she sings her dedication to her mother, fine strong women around me.

- lonely for the women who were with me, around me all day, they've left for the night to camp several miles away. Quiet, empty grounds.

- sitting behind our display, listening to the gentle persistent drumming of rain on the canvas tent, drone of female voices around me, Suma and Jane singing on the stage almost levitated the joy I/we all were feeling.

- lesbian workshop, sitting under the willows, so many women in a deep circle, open with a play about a woman 'coming out' to her parents--painful yet, excruciating funny--split into smaller discussion groups, sharing our spaces, our lives, understanding yet a gnawing frustration at being in a group with so many women who had no awareness of what it is to be a lesbian, or why, or how.

## sunday

- set up our book display again, preparing myself for the few men that would probably show up. In no way was I expecting so many men to arrive, the Women's Festival seemed to be over, it was a Kootenay Freaks Music Arts and Crafts Festival, which had its merits I suppose.

- many women leaving today, small group of us feeling quite isolated in the male-directed energy.

- hot day, men walking around without their shirts, we decided to confront them on their privilege

they were so blatantly exposing."As there is a no nudity regulation on the campgrounds, and we women will be busted if we take our shirts off, we are asking all men--in the interest of equality for all--to keep their shirts on." Some men sheepishly put theirs back on, some are incredulous, then at our insistence did so. The clincher of the split, apparent Sunday, was when 8 women and I were walking down to the lake and we passed a large group of men who had been involved in a 'males consciousness raising' session--lots of men involved. About 6 men were shirtless so we decided to confront them on the issue, expecting a certain measure of understanding from these men. Except for one man, who admitted that he'd wondered about taking off his shirt in the first place, we were met with anger, condescension and hostility.

- swimming in the lake, screaming my anger, and tension and frustration into the water. So aware of the splits, so angry that I should be feeling angry, aching for the good warm woman energy we'd shared Saturday, and now had to leave the festival grounds to create.

- back up to the stage for Rita McNeil, god she's a tremendous singer, Born in Cape Breton, last 10 years in Toronto, involved in the women's liberation movement for 3 years (walked 12 miles to her first meeting). She gives us our energy back immediately. We're hugging and dancing and laughing and clapping, she finished her set, but came back at our insistence with Tell It Like It Is Sisters, a simple rhythmic chant that had us immediately holding each other and singing. More and more women joined us, the line grew into a circle of women dancing around the stage, all of us entranced by our power, a very magic time. The men just cleared right out of the way jaws agape.

- Arleita came on stage after Rita with her harmonica, high energy sensual music that had us whirling and flying in a mad, joyous dance.

- Sunday night I spent at the campsite, sat around the campfire with the women from the Reading Theatre group. Talking, singing, sharing. Reach a consensus about the presence of men in the future--no 'scratch a man, and you'll find a man'.

We learned a lot, came home with inspirations for an all women's festival next year here on the island. The Kootenay women are preparing a document on monies budgeted and spent and their ideas on how the festival went. Looking forward to meeting again with many women I met that weekend, keeping as much of that sister-energy we shared, with me. Soon we'll all be singing "Tell It Like It Is Sisters".

Lynn Greenhough  
Victoria Women's Centre Newsletter

## WINNIPEG FOLK FESTIVAL

The Winnipeg Folk Festival, held July 20-22, was an artistic if not a financial success. Despite intermittent rain, cool weather and one evening of high winds, some 4,000 turned out each evening for the night concerts, while around 1,000 attended the wide variety of workshops held during the day. The festival was held in Bird's Hill Park, several miles north-east of Winnipeg. The park provided camping for festival-goers, many of whom had travelled from Ontario, Saskatchewan, and the U. S. to attend.

The roster of artists was impressive. "Name" performers such as The Good Brothers, Bruce Cockburn, John Allen Cameron, Sylvia Tyson, Mimi Farina, Ramblin' Jack Elliot, Steve Goodman, Roosevelt Sykes, David Amram and Angele Arseneault were interspersed with lesser known artists, many of whom were local.

There were several areas that I hope to see improved next year. I felt the topics for the workshops were rather unimaginative, and that the sequence of the performers in

the evening concerts was poorly planned. It was difficult to appreciate the fingerpicking of veteran bluesman Sam Chatman after Steve Goodman had led some twenty excellent musicians in a rousing chorus of "Mama Don' Allow". I was also very disappointed at the scarcity of female performers. Women made up fewer than 10% of the performers at the festival.

There were some highlights for feminists. Alice Gerrard's rendition of the Hazel Dickens song "Don't Put Her Down, You Helped Put Her There" was moving. Angele Arseneault's performances in French and English described the life of the common woman. Several songs were performed concerning the incident in California last year where a high school woman, attending her school's Miss California try-outs, pulled out a tape measure and demanded to be told the mayor's measurements. Kathy Fink and Duck Donald's "Show Us The Length of Your Cock" was my favourite. The Winnipeg Women's Liberation group turned out to sell Wonder Woman T-shirts. Vera Johnson, an unscheduled performer, stood on a

picnic table and played primarily political songs to an ever-growing crowd. Margaret Christl, of Toronto, sang traditional British songs with a clear, beautiful voice. Her repertoire consists mainly of working people's songs, whether they be sea chanteys, miners' songs, or songs of the garment industry. There were two women's workshops: "Women in Traditional Song" and "The Changing Role of Women". There were also incidents that angered me. Alice Gerrard and Mike Seeger were consistently introduced as, "Mike Seeger and his wife, Alice Gerrard." Tam Kearney, of Friends of Fiddler's Green, consistently put down women in his songs, his jokes, and his theatrics. He seems to have adopted the attitude of "I'm a chauvinist pig and I'm proud of it."

I spoke with Elaine Sawatzky, one of the organizers of the festival, about the lack of women performers. She indicated to me that it was an oversight in planning, and that she hoped the situation would be remedied for next year's festival. Ruth



# spreading across the land

N.B. If you would like to be listed, please send us your address.

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