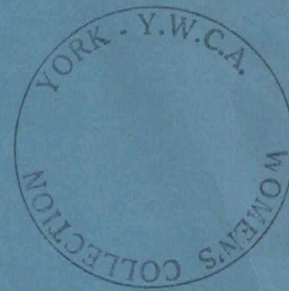


PRIORITIES



Vol. 2 Nb. 9

September, 1974



"We, as women, as feminists,
and as socialists are stronger
now than ever before; stronger
in numbers and in our personal
commitment."

(Terri Ash, new chairwoman of
the B.C. NDP Women's Committee)

A Publication of the
N. D. P. Women's Committee

Priorities*****in this issue

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

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Correspondence: send to Priorities
c/o #8 - 2295 W. 1st Ave.
Vancouver, B.C.
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Margaret Beardsley, Jill Brown, Melodie Corrigall, Cynthia Flood, Andre Lugsdin, Sheila Perret, Marilyn Webb, Sharon Yandle, with help from: Sam Lyons, Judy McManus and Anne Kowan.

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

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

PRIORITIES has been typed and laid out entirely by volunteer labour and is printed in a union shop.



UP YOURS

PRIORITIES IN A NEW DIRECTION

EDITORIAL

Convention time is one of reflection and evaluation, as well as a time to set new goals and directions, not only for the Women's Committee, but for Priorities as well. Therefore, the Priorities staff got together not long ago over coffee and cognac (cognac yet!) to discuss the past year: to pat ourselves on the back for the good things we've done, to criticize ourselves for the things we feel we have not done, and to discuss the direction that we would like to see Priorities heading toward in the next year.

Looking over the past year we did find things to pat ourselves on the back for. Priorities continues to provide lots of information to women that they couldn't find elsewhere a service we feel to be a vital part of our work. The year has seen the introduction of special supplements written by NDP women's groups throughout the province. This way of involving more women in Priorities has proved to be exciting for readers, as well as challenging to the groups that have taken on the task. We hope that groups which haven't yet contributed in this way will, and that new groups forming will keep in mind the possibility that they might contribute a supplement in the future. In addition, the past year saw the end of the old (and much loved) mimeographed format, and the introduction of the new (and now equally loved) printed magazine. This enables us to begin to use photographs, cartoons, drawings, etc., and to spend more time on the contents of the magazine and less in the process of putting it together.

While it is always nice to congratulate ourselves, we spent most of our time talking about the things we felt were still lacking in Priorities, and how we might go about incorporating them. The response of readers to the July supplement on Feminism and Socialism was so enthusiastic and thought provoking that we felt it would be important to begin to raise such issues more often. In deciding that, however, we realized that most of us did not feel entirely

confident about our own analysis and understanding of some theoretical questions. That fact itself struck us as extremely important.

The complexities of this issue are enormous, and there does not seem to have been a theoretician before us who has set it out in black and white to read and understand. It is one of those issues which is still in the formation stage. Rather than letting this fact make us shy away from the issues, we decided that we would try to take them on anyway, with the understanding that many of the articles we write will only be the beginning of our search to understand precisely how the oppression of women manifests itself in a capitalist society, and vice-versa (i.e. what role does free domestic labour play under capitalism). We felt there would be little harm in printing articles which we were not entirely sure contained "correct" socialist analysis, as long as readers were forewarned about that. And, we felt that such articles might produce a deluge of responses from our readers which would become a continuing continuing conversation for us while we try together to work out these complicated questions.

This does not mean that Priorities is going to become a heavy and unreadable magazine. WE don't want to stop printing the kinds of ingormative and personal articles that have always been part of our magazine. We envision trying to print one article of this nature each month, or one every other month. We hope that readers will be able to use these articles as a starting points for working through the questions, and that they will contribute responding articles or letters which will extend the debates.

In addition, and in line with the recent suggestion from the women's caucus meeting at the convention that we try to extend our base of issues, we decided that we would also begin to include some articles (maybe one each month) on topics not obviously related to women. Our hope is to begin to understand more clearly how these topics do relate what the implication for women is in areas we presently see as very separate from us.

We would like to increase the number of book reviews, movie reviews, and the like, as well. These have always been well received by readers, and seem to be particulary useful. We again encourage readers to submit reviews to us whenever the mood strikes you!

We are looking forward to the coming year, and to the challenges that these new directions present to us. We hope that you will find them challenges too, and will send in your own thoughts through letters, articles, reviews, or whatever. Good luck to us all in the coming year!

**come to Priorities
work nights!**

CALL JILL: 733-4063

LETTERS

ABOUT THE JULY ISSUE

Dear Priorities,

How could I have neglected to notify you of my change of address? It was mailed to me, however, so I've had time to read, argue and reflect on the articles by Cathy Stewart and Joan Fletcher - July 'Priorities'.

As I am not a member of the NDP, nor politically socialist, I found myself annoyed with Joan Fletcher's aggressively anti-liberal attitude. Her article is very good, but I resist her idea that the feminist movement is valid only in the larger context of social change. I do admit, though, she has made me aware that I do not really belong in the category of a 'liberal feminist! Such is my dilemma!

Cathy Stewart's article intuitively appealed to me; I am going to re-read it in the light of considerable discussion, mostly negative, so I prefer to leave my comment at that.

I am pleased to read that the new format of 'Priorities' lightens the load on the Editorial Committee - from my view, the new layout is fine.

Have a good September.

Regards,
Sheridan Cooper,
Victoria, B.C.

Dear Priorities,

Enclosed you will find \$1 for a back issue No. 7, June/74. I lent my copy to a friend who gave it to someone else and I don't expect to ever get it back. The contents are politically usefull to me and I would like the copy as soon as possible. Would you please send it airmail. I seem to enjoy each issue more than the last. The article "Why Nurses Should be Feminists" was particularly interesting to me because I am a nurse and because the nurses of Ontario have just gone through an experience of finding out how powerful they can be united in a union situation. The threat of a province wide strike brought about a reasonable contract settlement. But it was the participation in meetings and demonstrations that gave the women a better picture of just what their role in society was and probably will be for a long time. Unless of course women assume their proper role in this society. Unionization of women workers is only one step. Many lack the experience of ever standing up for what they believe is rightfully theirs.

I always get the impression that the women of B.C. are more involved in things, but it's probably because you're letting people know what is happening. It's a great paper - keep it coming.

In solidarity,
Linda Dohoo,
Toronto, Ontario.

Dear Priorities,

Congratulations on your July issue, and especially the article Liberal Feminism, by Joan Fletcher. That article helped clarify and explain some points which I had been confused about. It also made me realize that the women's movement which we hear the most about, is that of liberal feminism. It seems to me, that if socialist feminism could be more widely publicized, there might be more public sympathy and understanding towards it.

Your magazine is excellent, and intelligently produced. I only wish that women other than feminists or budding feminists would read it and be educated! I look forward with great pleasure to each issue, from my point halfway around the world. The problems of womankind are, of course, much more acute here, where women are considered even less than second-class citizens.

Please let me know when my subscription runs out, as I don't want to miss a single issue. Enclosed is a donation to help out.

Sincerely,
Margaret Anderson,
Tehran, Iran.

P.S. You wanted opinions as to layout, printing, etc. I think 'P.' is great the way it is. Other women's magazines are sugar-coated with comics, recipes, and 'cutsie-poo' advertising - this one needs to come out and "tell it like it is". Women who are sincerely interested don't need sugar-coating - keep Priorities the way it is.



Dear Priorities,

I am very happy to renew my subscription to Priorities.

Here are some comments and suggestions:-

Cathy Stewart and Joan Fletcher echo many of my own thoughts on feminism and at the same time they show me new facets of truth. However, I am somewhat uncomfortable with Joan's comparison of the liberal and socialist feminist. I believe that many liberal women have initiated valid action against various aspects of women's oppression. Perhaps they do not yet perceive the logical consequences of much of their thinking ...it takes time. It takes time for all of us. None of us know where this revolution will lead. It is new. Old goals are not enough. We must continually think and rethink our ideology. All has not yet been said about the family, about voluntarism, about equality, etc. And weaknesses...as traits of a new politics.

Cathy's statement that "the women's movement is potentially the most powerful of all movements" reminds me of Berit As. A number of women in Toronto were fortunate to spend a couple of hours with her several months ago. Berit is the Norwegian delegate to the UN. She is also a socialist and a feminist. She kept us enthralled. There is a tape available of the talk she gave. If anyone is interested, please write to WPA, Box 1213, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario.

Would it be possible to have some discussions of Federal-NDP Women's policy in future issues? And what can NDP women do on the municipal level? On school boards?

V. Thompson,
Toronto, Ontario.

Dear Priorities,

Congratulations to Joan Fletcher for her article "Liberal Feminism" in your July issue. It was one of the most clear-thinking and perceptive I have read anywhere. Her analysis of the differences between liberal and socialist feminism clearly exposes the manner in which many feminists - including some contributors to your magazine - subscribe to the goals of a materialistic society and make them their own.

As Joan Fletcher says, the women's movement is exploited by today's value system and it is unfortunate that so many of us seem unable to clearly differentiate between the goals that will truly liberate and those that will continue to exploit.

Our aim must be to build a social structure that enhances the quality of life and embraces a value system that will put an end to the commercial exploitation of both women and men.

If we fail in this, we will find to our cost that our efforts have achieved little else than the assurance that women are exploited in exactly the same manner and to the same degree as are men.

Sincerely,
Peggy Prowse,
Halifax, N. S.

P.S. My subscription must be nearly due - I enclose cheque for same plus a small donation.

SUPPORT

Dear Priorities and the N.D.P. Women's Committee,

I consider it a real privilege to have been able to support you at the recent N.D.P. convention in Kamloops. Soon after getting to the convention on Friday evening, I felt, after talking to some delegates, that your motion would pass. Although it took two days of real struggle, the delegates finally had their say. (It was a revelation of sorts to see how many MLA's and supposed power people actively opposed you, although this opposition did not seem to extend to the six microphones available on the convention floor.)

For our side, it was exhilarating to see the strong, vocal and virtually unanimous support we received from Labour, as well as from many of the people holding office in the various riding associations. I would guess that after this convention that all the vocal, erudite, and up-front people in the ridings are now committed to our cause. I am far more happier fighting for an issue than defending one. Housing, Women's Rights, and Daycare will be the major vote issues of the next provincial election. I have talked to several young couples since the convention, and they will all be joining the NDP to ensure that in future conventions and in riding elections, the people we elect, and the people we send to the conventions support these issues. Next time around should be even better.

con't....

Enclosed is a cheque and a couple of new subscriptions to Priorities. At present I am driving one person to work with me, but I am going to try and increase that to three people. The money so raised will be going into our fight, and others. (A dollar a head a day, if it works out.) I have PAC, but I feel for the next year or so I will be happier with a little more personal direction as to where my money goes.

You know, Dave mentioned after the last election that he knew what was happening because of changes he detected in attitudes in the Interior. This convention was held in Kamloops. The Women's Caucus of the N.D.P. received pretty damn good support from the Interior ridings. This issue is not localized to some supposed radical Vancouver fringes. It is a major issue throughout the province. Dave might be well advised to take another reading on attitudes in the Interior.

"THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING".

Sincerely,
Barry Hemenway,
Clearwater, B.C.

Transition Houses

Dear Priorities,

I'm writing this letter to ask some information from you. During the N.D.P. Women's convention in Winnipeg, a woman from B.C. spoke about a project presently operating in Vancouver. The project dealt with the

philosophy of providing a hostel for women who wish to leave their husbands. I think she referred to the hostel as a Transition House. I did not get her name.

A few of us in London think the idea of a Transition House really meets some very specific needs of women and would like to introduce such a place to the City of London. We would appreciate if the women responsible for the program in Vancouver could share with us their project philosophy; their proposal; how they started; the response; the pitfalls and how the House is working. If you happen to have this information available, could you please forward it to me and if you don't, could you please pass this request to the individual who would have this information? We have a number of ideas but feel we are operating in a vacuum and any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

I have been following with interest the reporting of the happenings of your provincial convention. It seems that the feelings the B.C. women expressed at the women's convention are widespread amongst the members in B.C. A number of people I have talked to in London since the elections and the convention have expressed much dissatisfaction with the party. I only hope this dissatisfaction proves to be constructive but then maybe the party needs more than just construction.

Anyway, I'm slowly running out of space and have some reading to do before I go to bed.

I would appreciate whatever you can do. Thank you.

In sisterhood,
Rosanne Biocehi,
London, Ontario.

more letters

Dear Members of Priorities:

Thank you for printing my letter and the answer that I received from Mr. Gorby of Victoria.

This, of course, was in the April issue and so I am wondering if you have received letters of comment since then in regards to those letters printed, and if so would you care to print them as well, or let me know the general trend of peoples feelings in regards to this.

Also I feel you do an excellant job of enlightening people with all your information etc., etc.

Nevertheless I am wondering why you left Ms. X's name out of the letter, as she was mentioned by Mr. Gorby as having gone behind my back, without my consent, to discuss personal, private matters regarding me.

So you think that the general public or those on Social Assistance should be made aware of what takes place behind the scenes, so that they can protect themselves and know who the guilty social worker is (guilty culprits).

Please would you now mention Ms. X in your next issue, otherwise I will take it that you are protecting people guilty of breaking ethics who are in the professions.

Thanking you sincerely,

Amy Pollen
Vancouver

Ed. Note: Priorities prints almost every letter it receives. We have not received responses to your letters. Regarding Ms. X, we do

not feel that we can print the name since we only have the information provided by you on the case. We do feel, however, that the main point of your dealinngs with Mr. Gorby and Ms. X, has been expressed, and that readers in similar situations can be forwarned by your experiences.

Dear Priorities:

Included is a donation. Wish it could be more. The mag is great and makes me feel a hell of a lot better each time I read it. Thanks.

Love,
June Dunlop
Vancouver

SUBSCRIBE!
to
Priorities!

OUR NEW CHAIRWOMAN

Terri Ash is the new chairwoman of the BC NDP Standing Committee on Women's Rights. She was elected by acclamation at the final women's caucus meeting at the convention. Members of the Women's Committee, and particularly our past chairwomen, Marianne Gilbert, Melodie Corrigall, and Sharon Yandle, are among the hardest workers in the party. Terri follows in this tradition of dedicated labour for the party, her constituency, and the Women's Committee. In the past year she was member-at-large on the Provincial Executive, Assistant Convention Arrangements Convenor, constituency secretary, and Kamloops women's caucus representative to the Steering Committee. In addition she is actively involved in the Kamloops environmental group, specifically food co-ops and recycling. Terri was also elected second alternate to the Executive at this past convention.

Terri and the Kamloops women's caucus are a vital and energetic group in the party. They organized the 1973 South Central Interior NDP Regional Conference, the Women's Conference and dinner at the convention, two constituency meetings to discuss the Women's Resolution, and a series of NDP sponsored public seminars.

In the the past year the Women's Committee has come to realize that our needs and solutions are integral to the building of a socialist society Terri expressed this collective understanding in a letter to the August issues of Priorities and The Democrat. She

She spoke of the struggles of socialist-feminists as leading to changes that would result in a just and equitable society for all. Terri has the confidence and trust of all the Women's Committee. Now Sisters, we must actively extend our love and support to her in the coming year of continued struggle.

Jill Brown

INTRODUCING THE WOMEN'S ORGANIZER

Having worked on Priorities for so many months, it seems strange to be writing an article to introduce myself to Priorities readers....but that's exactly what I'm doing. I have been hired by the British Columbia N.D.P. as the Women's Organizer. I want to let you know that I am here, and I am ready, willing, and eager to come to your area to work with you "organize" the women of your club or constituency to play a more active role in the party, or to become involved in areas of the party where women are now under-represented.

I can't outline here the specific solutions or suggestions on how to tackle this goal because they differ from place to place, just as the activities of women in the N.D.P. differ from place to place. One constituency may have a need to bring many more women members into the N.D.P., another may need to bring women into active roles in the party, still another may need to broaden the roles that women presently play in their constituency. All of these things, as well as a need to bring issues

concerning women to the constituency, may need to be done.

If you are active in the N.D.P. and want to help bring more women into active roles, or if you are not active but want to be and don't know how, we can sit down and talk about how to go about doing it. Chances are very good that you are not the only woman in your constituency who is concerned, and it only takes a few interested women to begin to have a significant effect. The first step is to begin to talk about your concerns, and from there to figure out ways to deal with them that suit your area.

I can share with you the experiences that other women have had, make suggestions, or help you to find new ways to involve women. In this way we can make the N.D.P. a stronger and more vital party for all of us.

If you would like me to visit your area, give me a call at 253-7521, or write to me at 1881 East Hastings, Vancouver, B.C. and I will arrange with you a time to come.

.....Shelly Dillon,
Women's Organizer.

Report from Fraser Valley

You have no idea how glad I am to be able to report a sudden burgeoning of energy in the Fraser Valley Chapter of the NDP Women's Committee. The passing of the Resolution by the party, combined with certain personal changes undergone by some of us during the past week, together with a lot of other magic factors too subtle

and elusive and complex to describe in detail, have all resulted in a burst of enthusiasm, a deepened commitment, a spate of new ideas, a heightened sense of unity, and, perhaps most significant and exhilarating, an increased awareness of strength. Because all this has happened right on the heels of a period of demoralization and cynicism, there's also a feeling of relief: not only have we survived, but we're more alive than ever as well!

Our first project this fall will be Phase II of the membership drive begun over the summer. Our objective is to double our numbers again by Christmas. We will also be spending some energy on specific constituency work, and on interviews with women who have been in the party for a long time; not only do we wish to help preserve the her-story of women in the CCF and NDP, but we also need closer contact with long-standing women members.

We extend our warmest support of and confidence in Terri Ash as the new Chairwoman of the Steering Committee. (It's so damned hard to express that properly; what I'm trying to say, Terri, is that I'm glad, and I believe you'll do it well.) We also want to express our deep affection and respect for Sharon, whose courage, honesty, strength and gentleness is nothing short of inspiring.

In sisterhood,
Esther Robertson,
Fraser Valley.



CHANGES

A television review.

On August 27 and September 4, CBS rebroadcast a GE Theatre special from last season. It won two Emmy awards for screen writer Fay Kanin. The drama was titled 'Tell Me Where It Hurts', and starred Maureen Stapleton. The advertisements billed it as 'magnificent', 'not to be missed' 'a sensitive look at a housewife and her awakening as an individual'. Being a total cynic about television, I was immediately suspicious. 'Ho-hum', I yawned, another example of the media distorting and cashing in on the women's movement; more of 'publicity is a substitute for change!' I couldn't have been more wrong. Within five minutes I gasping at the homesty and power of the show. This was about real change. It was absolutely superb! The finest TV I have ever seen. Not only was the acting and writing excellent, but every character and scene emphasized the real concerns of the women's movement: the intense fundamental, and pervasive effect sexism has on our lives. Furthermore, they did it without jargon, slogans, rhetoric, or ridicule. No one watching this program could have been unaffected or unmoved by the struggles of the women to change their lives and by implication the very roots of society. It was clear that learning of their common oppression caused pain, but it also caused very positive growth.

The story concerns six middle-aged women, who have been neighbours for years. They decide to dispense with the traditional pretenses for getting together--- Wonderwear, Tupperwear, and Avon

demonstration parties. Instead, terrified as they are of the prospect, they agree to meet once a week to talk about their lives and feelings. At first they are very tentative about such meetings, indeed even about the need for such meetings; they say: "Women everywhere are getting together to talk about themselves." "You mean 'Women's Lib'?!?!" "We've all got husbands and aren't looking for divorces so what is there so terrible to talk about?" However, as the weeks go by they begin to trust and support one another, and more importantly, realize that they are all suffering from common problems.

The individual members of the group and their families, suffer drastic changes in their lives and attitudes. One woman drops out of the group; she is too threatened by beginnings of self and collective knowlege to continue. She says: "This is dangerous and wrong--It's like taking a watch apart that is working; how do I know if I can put it back together?" None of her sisters can, at that point, reassure her; they only know that they can't go back, so they vote to continue. She leaves the group, in obvious conflict, saying forlornly, "I guess I'll see you--- at the supermarket?!?"

Another woman, appalled by her husband's blatant refusal to allow her to attend the meetings, finally decides to move away on her own; she says: "Something exploded inside me; it had been building up for years. I don't know what will happen. I'm scared but for the first time in my life I feel responsible for myself."

Another woman decides to return

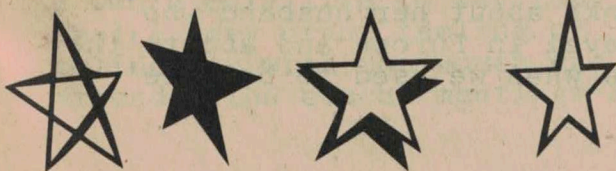
to school; she says: "We must attempt to change our lives or what is the point of all our talking? Misery loves company? Its not enough; something more has to come of all this."

Another woman is hospitalized and faces the trauma of a mastectomy. Through the support of the women she is able to talk to them and her husband about not only her fear of dying, but also the physical mutilation of her body and what that means to a woman in this society.

Two other women admit their unhappiness and depression which shows itself in overeating and compulsive 'creative home-making'. They make a beginning by recognizing and labelling these reflections of their learned feelings of inadequacy.

The central character, Connie, realizes with the growth of her children, that she has been fired from all her jobs. In spite of her husband's opposition, she applies for and gets a job in the complaint department of a toy manufacturing company.

The stories are all about change and the conflict that accompanies it. Connie is torn between two generations of women. She is challenged daily by her 20 year old daughter, a feminist and university student. She is guilted daily by her mother-in-law, an 80 year old woman, living upstairs, unseen, but clearly heard as she sends missives of hot lasagna down the dumb waiter, and waits to die. She is reminded daily by her taxi-driver husband that men too are oppressed in this exploitative and sexist society.



The women first admit that they do hurt. Their weekly meetings help them define how and then why. Finally, some of them attempt to alleviate that pain. The process of understanding that we do hurt, collectively, the task of facing it, and then working collectively to eradicate it, is what the women's movement is all about. It is also what socialism is all about. This is why we talk of struggle; this is why we so struggle.

FOOTNOTES:

1. I realized that my reactions to this program were a mixture of superlative praise and anger. Praise because the show was a glaring exception to television's usual treatment of women. Anger because television so seldom uses its potential to reflect and affect social change.
2. The Priorities staff had a long discussion about this show. We agreed we would like to see a sequel, specifically dealing with Connie's reactions once she began her new job. We were sure she would become even more radicalized as she recognized that her new job as Complaint Clerk was simply a mirror of her old job of mother and wife i.e., nurturing, organizing and soothing others lives. Therefore we felt certain she would realize the need for political action to truly change women's lives; individual solutions are not sufficient. Women must work within a socialist analysis so that no one will be stunted by sacrifice to others needs---so all human needs will be equal in claim.
3. The program will be rebroadcast in the Fall and in the Spring. Watch for it and send us your reactions.

Jill Brown

JOY OF COOKING

A music review

Sisters, you deserve a treat, and if you haven't heard the Joy of of Cooking yet, you're in for one

The Joy of Cooking (the name's ironical) is two San Francisco women, who though they clearly had not worked through a rigorous feminist analysis two years ago when they were here, (Iheard an interview with Terry Garthwaite on CKLG FM and she made several remarks that were tainted with a residue of sexism, the inevitable leftover of incomplete analysis), sing fine songs that they write themselves, songs that spring from women's experience and express women's feelings with tenderness, humour, strength, and honesty. There are three Joy of Cooking albums, all excellent, one album called Toni and Terry, which the two women put out without the three men who do back-up on the first three, and most recently, a beautiful album called Good For You, Too, by Toni Brown, which could be described by a series of adjectives that Margaret Drabble uses in The Needle's Eye: "crystalline, golden, clear."

Their sound is unique, unlike any other group; complex, melodious, satisfying not only to the ear hungry for pleasure but also to that critical demanding faculty that requires space in which to move. The lyrics as as the music are written by Toni and Terry, and they also delight:

In the long warm night
With only the stars for light
Even so I can see you

Even so I can feel you
Loving me all around
the sun and the moon.

xx

Don't the moon look
fat and lonesome
Shining down through
the trees
I'm gonna take my lovin
Give it to whoever I please

(This last is delivered in a wonderfully wicked, frankly sexual, cheerfully defiant style.)

There's also a song about a "Lady called Love" who is brawled over by two men, Ace and Jack. Ace guns Jack down but when he goes to collect the spoils, Love has split. Jack laments:

"Cryin', come back,
come back lady,
Oh, come back love.
I shot a man,
I'd even die for your lovin'
Isn't that enough?"

But this lady,
she had a vision,
She had a life to maintain
She went out to the airport
She caught a westboundplane
Sayin', I dont want your
lovin'
I ain't your goodtime girl
I'm gonna find myselfsome
freedom
If I have to go around
the world.

There's also a sad painful song about a young housewife caught in her home with her children; she thinks about her husband who 'travel in Europe and about 'the days when we used to be free'.

Then two lines of the chorus tell what the song is about: "White wine in the morning sun, red wine at noon." In another song a young housewife celebrates her departure: "Now I'm throwin' out the dirty dishes...rollin' up the carpet from the floor, You can cook your TV dinners, livin' off your racetrack winnings, I don't want to live here anymore".

This is strong and joyful stuff; you owe it to yourselves.

Esther Robertson

Words from our new Chairwoman

I would like to thank the NDP women who have shown their confidence in me by making me their chairwoman for the coming year.

This is the first time that a chair woman has been elected from outside the Lower Mainland. This is significant in that it represents a broadening of the regional base of the Women's Committee. We can say now that the Women's Committee is truly representative of large numbers of NDP women who live in every part of the province.

Since the time pressures on me at the time of writing this report are great, I will not be giving a lengthy report on my feelings about the passage of our resolution or the convention generally, or about the directions I would like to see us take in the coming year.

I would only like to say that I feel a very great feeling of solidarity with the women who attended the caucus meetings at

the convention. I also feel very excited, still, about the passage of our resolution, but I feel that we must examine the politics of the affirmative vote.

Each of the NDP women's local groups should discuss their reactions to the debate and then representatives to the Steering Committee should come to the next meeting prepared to participate in an analysis of the convention and a discussion of how that affects the directions we take now.

We, as women, as feminists, and as socialists are stronger now than ever before; stronger in numbers and in our personal commitment.

I believe that the passage of our resolution represents the culmination of our efforts to work through convention to establish women's rights policy and to attach to that policy a high priority.

I now feel that we must begin to work to establish a good socialist-feminist policy in other areas. We already have health and childcare subcommittees.

The Steering Committee has asked Hilda Thomas to chair an education policy subcommittee.

There are other areas of policy where we should be beginning to work on reviewing existing policy and suggesting the amendments and additions which will make sure sure that that policy takes into account the socialist-feminist viewpoint.

I attended an September 13-14 the founding convention of the BC Federation of Women. As those of you who attended know, it was both frustrating and exciting.

Over all, our NDP women were outstanding in the quality of their participation. I feel confident that through the BCFW we will have contact with even greater numbers of feminists and will be able to work with these women to present an even stronger voice to government.

I thank you again for your support and ask for your help. This is a new experience for me and I feel I can rise to the task if I have the expertise and experience of other women to draw on.

Terri Ash
Chairwoman

NO COMMENT!

(Verbatim from a James Nesbitt column in the Vancouver Sun):

"I'm glad our Premier, the Hon. David Barrett, is holding out against further inroads of women. He steadfastly refuses a ministry of women's rights. He knows such a ministry could well rule that half our legislature MUST be composed of women, that half the mayors of British Columbia MUST be women. There seem to be no more militant females than the women of the NDP. Reading of their recent goings-on in Kamloops, I developed a very serious case of the shudders. Worse, I became quite terrified, and wanted to run away and hide."

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PRIORITIES PARTY

CUM MEETING

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We know you're out there -- all you women who would be delighted to do even just ONE THING every month to help Priorities get from the idea stage to your front door.

Putting out Priorities is a lot of work and we need a lot of people on a regular basis. We're open to suggestion: as much or as little as you want to do. And this party is a way of bringing us all together.

PLEASE COME: We are seriously short of staff.

WED ~ OCT. 9 ~ 8pm.

Provincial Office,

1881 E. Hastings.

SUPPLEMENT:



the NDP convention

RESOLUTION '74

The women's resolution passed.
And none of us expected it.

Even in the hurried Sunday noon hour meeting of the women's caucus, called to prepare ourselves for that afternoon's debate, none of us really believed that the resolution we had organized around would actually succeed.

We had come prepared to lose. Before the convention the steering committee had tried to develop some means by which we could pull together in the face of an anticipated defeat on the floor. The caucus meeting agreed: After the vote we would all raise posters prepared in advance that read: "THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING". We would stand for one minute with these signs as a show of solidarity and an indication that one defeat would not chase us away. And we agreed to pass our posters out to anyone, male or female, who wanted one. We arranged our floor leadership, discussed the importance of a broad, cross-representation of speakers, including men, and

fanned out to distribute our signs and sell our buttons ("NDP WOMEN'S COMMITTEE: THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING").

And then we waited. We were scheduled for 2:20 p.m. and because the resolutions committee had named the women's resolution a priority, had been assured of a full hour's debate compared to the standard 20 minutes for other areas. 2:20 came and went. Other business still on the floor. More waiting. Resolutions chairwoman Joyce Nash and I hurriedly conferred: Did we want to split the debate, half before the honorary life member presentations and half after? No. So we postponed it again. And again. Finally at 5:15 with our stomachs turning over from the delays, we were on. We were promised an hour and we got it. A procedural hassle interrupted us at 6 o'clock and Yvonne Cocke moved to refer the resolution back to the resolutions committee with instructions to cut out the fifth section and to change the conclusion. A couple of men

argued against on procedural grounds but the chair held firm. I stupidly challenged the chair and lost. (One of these days we must come to terms with these procedural hassles. They are inevitably means to avoid the real issue and we are insane to fall into that trap). Cynthia Flood made it perfectly clear: this referral, she said, is clearly intended to kill the resolution and kill the debate. She was right and the convention agreed.

As at other conventions, the ending of the debate on women's issues brought with it expressions of amazement by many delegates over our organizational abilities and the visible effect of our numbers. And from where I sat at the head table it was pretty impressive. While the usual coterie of hard-core sexist pigs had vacated to the bar (a number that is happily decreasing each year) the convention had to recognize the fact that 20% of the delegates were actually on their feet and at the mikes.

GOOD THINGS

Lots of good things happened. We had elected Joyce Meissenheimer as our floor manager with the understanding that she had full authority; the rest of us got up and stand down, spoke or were silent, whatever she asked us to do. And that was really fine: in open caucus we had democratically decided how to discipline ourselves -- and on the floor of the convention we were nothing if not disciplined. Many women who would gladly slash their wrists rather than speak to more than six people at a time were lined up, praying for the end of our time allotment before their turn came, but there anyway and determined to speak -- even if they

passed out afterwards. One male delegate told me after that he had come prepared to vote against us but was so impressed by our numbers that he voted for it. "Anybody who's that well-organized", he said, "has got to be right." Other men who had flatly rejected our posters asked for them while the debate was going on. Diane Baigent sent the convention into prolonged and warm applause with what I would never have thought anyone could get away with: a short, hard-hitting speech delivered in the unmistakable style and phrasing of one Dave Barrett. Only better. Most fun of all: when the standing vote on the motion to refer came the first double row of 60 or so was asked to stand if in favour. Five or six stood up. The chairman repeated the request thinking he had not been heard. Finally at the head table we understood what the laughing was about as the shout came through, loud and clear, "They ARE standing!"

All this is the stuff euphoria is made of and we had our share when the resolution passed by a good two-thirds majority. We congratulated each other on our organization. We congratulated ourselves on what we felt was the magnificent tone of the debate -- not the screaming hysteria expected by some but systematic explanations of what it is like to be women under capitalism, calmly delivered. And we congratulated ourselves for the fact that with a solid hour's debate and with only a few delegates against, speaker after speaker approached the mikes and each one added something new.

We were proud of ourselves and

rightly so. But it isn't enough to be proud. We must also be critical of ourselves and ask: Despite our victory, did we handle it right? Did we do what we had come to do -- not to pass a resolution but to educate the Party on what the hell it is we are talking about? We understand the intent of the resolution: to put the issue of sexism on the agenda and to discuss the question of sexism and socialism. But did we succeed? And did we even try?

ONE QUESTION

I began to worry about just this question even before I had finished my own opening remarks. Close to the end of my presentation I said something to the effect that the issue before the convention was essentially one question: Are sexism and socialism compatible or are they mutually exclusive? Yet even as the words were coming out, I realized that nothing I had said in the previous five minutes had had anything at all to do with just that question. And whatever I said was bound to be significant in that it could not help but set the tone to the debate. As our women rose to speak it also occurred to me that in all of our organizing for the debate we never once discussed what it was we were actually going to say.

The women who spoke were excellent; of that there is no doubt. Yet none of us actually addressed ourselves to explaining our central position: that what we understand as socialism must contain systematic, energetic assaults on sexism -- or it is not socialism. Worse, none of us, including myself, ever addressed herself to the reso-

lution and contents therein. We knew that resolution; we knew what it was saying. But when the debate was over, did anyone else?

Let me backtrack a bit. There was one section in our resolution that we did discuss -- that was the section that attempted to explain and define precisely how sexism affects us through our entire lives. What we said to the convention was: Listen to us and we will try to explain, so you will understand, why we are so intensely committed to this question. That was the understanding we asked for -- and the only understanding.

UNDERSTANDING LIMITED

Because of this when anyone (especially men) showed the faintest glimmer of understanding only this question, we felt great and showed it. This was true even when the understanding was limited to the recognition that women are not equal and should be "raised" to the level of men. Period.

I have no argument with any step forward in understanding that anyone makes, and we should welcome any steps forward. The problem is that for some time we have come face to face with a limited understanding which we have not tried to take any further. In not doing more than welcoming support, in not responding to the very question of the limited nature of that support, we tend to convey the impression that that understanding is what we're talking about. And it is not, as our resolution clearly expresses.

Much of the support of men that we have is based on the under-

standing that women are getting a raw deal by "the system" -- but not that they are involved in perpetuating that raw deal. They may even see themselves as oppressed by sexism to the extent that their own development as men is also distorted. But many sympathetic men do not realize that one central way in which sexism affects them is in their own role as oppressors of women. Consequently what are clearly genuine expressions of support can sometimes be quite patronizing, not qualitatively removed from the old give-the-little-lady-a-hand-because-she-has-a-problem-and-she-needs-our-help.

YOUR PROBLEM, TOO!

We are going to have to come to terms with this. I think the time has come for us to respond, something like this:

"Listen. We are trying to explain that sexism affects us in every aspect of our lives and while we welcome your support, it isn't just our problem. It's your problem too. We are trying to come to terms with what it means to be on the receiving end of sexism. YOU have to come to terms with what it means to be on the giving end. YOU have to recognize that within a sexist society, you oppress women. You have been taught to regard women as domestic servants, chattels, sex objects and generally sub-human and unless you continually struggle against that training you are going to treat women in exactly that way. You make claim to socialism yet you are an oppressor. Now what are you going to do about that?" We should say, "What do you mean, UP to your level? From where we

stand it's DOWN because we have gotten somewhere you haven't, and that is to an understanding of what is happening here and what we're going to do about it. What are YOU going to do about it?"

THE RESOLUTION

I also think it was very wrong of us not to refer specifically to the resolution, section by section. Not doing so meant that our debate was weaker than the resolution itself. We should have organized ourselves better so that at least six of us would have addressed ourselves to each of the six sections.

For example: Our first section attempted to explain what a movement is. This was because many people in the Party are so far removed from their own roots that they don't understand what we mean when we talk about an actual movement of people, nor can they relate the women's movement to what to them must be a very dim concept of a socialist movement -- yet we identify with that very strongly.

Our second section -- the attempt to explain how sexism takes form in day-to-day life -- was one we handled well.

The third section explained what the women's liberation movement is and what its connection is with socialism. We should have been able to discuss this inter-connection and to clearly defend in specifics what in the resolution is only an assertion: that women's liberation and socialism depend upon each other to succeed.

The fourth section deals with

what we believe to be a socialist response from governments to women's liberation. Here we could have spelled out exactly what we want and why we want it and how each act of a socialist government could strengthen both the women's movement and the government itself.

Our fifth section was the most crucial of all. It is here that we itemized what is not socialist about government actions. We should have been able to expand upon each one of them and explain in the course of it the profound difference between top-down actions, even if benevolent in intent, and truly socialist actions from the bottom up. In this section we should have discussed not sexism per se but socialism.

Finally, our last section, which is a simple reiteration of Party policy, afforded us the opportunity to explain exactly why our policy is so central to the liberation of women -- child care, for example, and what that means to both parents and children, and why a Ministry of Women's Rights would be an important planning agency for the systematic combatting of sexism.

At the same time we would have included -- surely as our main point -- the issues that we did raise. But it not raising the other issues I am concerned that we did not succeed in what we had intended: to raise consciousness about sexism and socialism. As it now stands I am unsure as to what motivated people to vote for the resolution. (For example, Alex Macdonald, Norm Levi, Peter Rolston, Colin Gabelmann, Graham Lea and Stu Leggatt all voted for. Why? And for the same reasons?) I think that most people voted in favour because they

did make some leap in understanding and because they wanted to show their support for US. But I wonder whether that understanding was a socialist recognition or whether it largely stemmed from a liberal desire to ease the suffering of others, which is not seen as related to one's own life.

A SIGNIFICANT LEAP!

Since the convention I have talked with several women about these things. Some have agreed and said they have the same feelings. Others agree in part but say I am wrong to be upset about the debate. They feel that while it is true we did not raise the question of sexism and socialism, which we may well have done, that the Party did make a significant leap in understanding, and if delegates are only now recognizing a part of what sexism is, it would be too much to expect that they can come to terms with it at the same time. They say that the real point is how little they understood before.

There are certainly merits to that point of view (and I, who am always wagging my finger at everyone on the long term nature of our struggle feel a little sheepish when sisters tell me to be patient). I do recognize a shift in understanding. For example, before the convention one male member explained that he favoured abortion, child care, equal pay etc. as long as we didn't let these things interfere with our responsibility to keep our houses neat and our husbands happy. (This was from a man who had always supported us in the past). I am sure that

those who supported us this year understand that we are talking about changes much more fundamental than they had imagined and we should take heart in their support for that.

WE ARE RIGHT!!

We should also take heart in the fact that we won our resolution at the Kamloops convention, which was not our convention. Every other issue that we supported, including our candidates, lost on a 60-40 vote. Somehow in the women's resolution debate we swung over, at least with some degree of understanding, another 25%. A convention largely hostile to us in which we and the government were at opposite ends of the pole, nevertheless said loudly and clearly that we are in the right and that they support us. That is an important victory for us and one that strengthens our movement considerably.

However, I do believe that we erred in our approach, that our debate was weaker than our resolution, and unnecessarily so. I agree wholeheartedly with the sentiment expressed at the last women's caucus meeting, that now is the time to begin real debate on our resolution, among ourselves and, where possible, in the constituencies. Many feel our resolution is a milestone in our own development and should not be filed away.

I would like to hear from Priorities readers on the questions I raise here. A debate in our pages would be a very healthy thing for us because we have much to learn and we must learn it collectively. In this

sense, I very much hope that our resolution really is just the beginning.

- Sharon Yandle
Vancouver-East

Dr. Henry Morgentaler
will speak in
Vancouver - Thursday
10th October
at the Unitarian
Church 40th & Oak
8:00 pm
Come to hear and
to give support.



Remove abortion
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AT THE CONVENTION

BARRETT'S RESPONSE TO WOMEN

"There is no magic formula."

"Words never changed anything".

"You must change people's attitudes first".

These three pronouncements, made by Premier Barrett in panel sessions at the Convention in Kamloops on Labour Day weekend, generally met with nods of agreement from the delegates. It may be worthwhile to examine the unspoken assumptions underlying each of these statements to discover whether they are unassailable, and ask whether such statements are made with the conscious or unconscious intention of manipulating the response in an area which arouses deep-seated feelings of anxiety and fear - sexism.

MAGIC FORMULA

To begin with the first statement: there is no magic formula. The words themselves have powerful connotations. Magic suggests the world of fairytales, of rabbits-out-of-hats, of illusion - in short the illogical and irrational realm of childhood. Formula, on the other hand, belongs to science or mathematics, to logic, reason, and empirical verification. Couple 'formula' with 'magic' and the result is clearly an internal contradiction. What is happening here?

The hidden assumption goes as follows: 1) Women are looking for a magic formula to solve their problems. 2) Women believe that a Women's Ministry is such a magic formula. 3) Those who believe in magic formulae are childish, il-

logical, and irrational, 4) therefore, those who support the Women's Ministry (or substitute Affirmative Action or any other major demand of the women's movement) are childish, illogical, and irrational.

Of course the initial assumption is entirely false. Women are not looking for a magic formula; nor do they regard the Women's Ministry (or Affirmative Action, etc) as an instant solution to their problems. They see it rather as an instrument, a power base from which they can tackle the myriads forms of discrimination which oppress them every day of their lives. They have no illusions that a Ministry will effect an immediate solution to these problems - any more than the labour movement believes that the Labour Ministry, or Bill 11, will magically solve all the problems of the Labour Movement. Why then are women accused by implication of holding such a naively simplistic view? The answer to this question, unlike the original proposition, is self-evident.

WORDS DO CHANGE THINGS

The second statement, words never change anything, seems at first to be a truism. And if words never change anything, the words "words never change anything" were better left unsaid. But if words really are ineffectual, what avenue for change is there? Direct action - perhaps in the form of a silent demonstration? - seems the only alternative, and one which the Women's Movement might well consider. In all seriousness, though, the propo-

sition "Words never changed anything" is nonsense. Ideas are conveyed in words. Laws are couched in words. Conversation, dialogue, the political process, every form of social interaction which distinguishes human beings from other living creatures is based on their ability to communicate new concepts and new ways of perceiving, and the chief (although not the only) mode of communication is language. When the Premier says, as he did repeatedly in his opening address to the Convention, "I didn't know that", he is saying "Nobody told me - nobody gave me the word." Words do change things. Efforts to remove racist and sexist words from the language have changed things ---witness the symbolic and much appreciated substitution of "fireperson" for "fireman" by George Johnston during the debate on Bill 164, or the failure of Premier Barrett to say Worker's Compensation instead of Workmen's Compensation, which had to be called to his attention by a delegate from the floor of the convention.

ATTITUDES FIRST ?

Proposition three, you must change people's attitudes first, led the Premier into an interesting contradiction during the first panel session. In response to repeated questions about his priorities for women, the Premier expressed his passionate and, I think, sincere concern about the oppression of children. He said that one of his first actions on becoming Premier was to close Willingdon Schools for girls. He also referred to the outlawing of the strap in the Public Schools. The closing of Willingdon was, in his words "a dramatic change" which was made in spite of the fact

that a lot of people have not changed their attitudes, that they still believe "delinquent" children should be incarcerated. The same is true of the removal of the strap. According to the Premier, the evidence is that most people wanted the strap retained, and that they would support its reintroduction. Why then did he not wait until their attitudes changed before changing the law? He did not wait because he is fully aware that in some cases a change in the law is the only way to bring about a change in attitude and at the same time provide protection for the victims.

ONLY A BEGINNING

The Government has introduced some legislation to protect women: the new Human Rights Code (not yet proclaimed); an increase in the minimum wage (which helps women by virtue of the fact that so many working women are clustered together in the lowest-paying jobs); changes in the Worker's Compensation Act (including a change in the name - words, words, words, - although even here there is evidence of unconscious sexism in the provisions for survivors benefits); and most important the efforts of Eileen Dailly to tackle the problem of sexist material in the public school curriculum, and of Jack Radford to provide equal opportunity for young women and girls in sports programmes. These actions represent a beginning. They are not, however, sufficient to justify the Government's claim that it has done more for women than any other government in North America. In fact, such piecemeal legislation is open to the charge of tokenism unless it is accompanied by a genuine understanding that sexism is an integral feature of capitalist socie-

ty, and a commitment to effect fundamental structural changes. The Premier, and most of his colleagues in the government, have not shown themselves willing to make such a commitment, nor indeed have they demonstrated an understanding of the problem.

The oppression of women can only be ended by concerted effort employing every available means, from public statements and discussion, which means words of support from those in positions of leadership, to legislation to ensure equal opportunity and protection against discrimination. The Women's Movement will continue to work to bring about changes in attitudes. The united effort of the Women's Caucus, and their splendid and moving expression of their ongoing commitment to the struggle, changed the attitudes of many delegates at the Convention, and resulted in the strong vote in favour of the Women's Resolution. But we are clear about one thing, and the government should know it: this is only the beginning!

- Hilda Thomas

CONVENTION ELECTIONS ---

THE INS AND OUTS OF OUR DEFEAT

(AND WHY IT WAS A VICTORY)

The steamroller moved in on the last convention.

Even from within the euphoria of the women's caucus that followed the successful passage of our major policy statement, it was

obvious to many of us that the scene we had witnessed during four days in Kamloops was vicious, malicious--and organized.

Beginning At The Beginning-----

What was different about this convention compared to those of the previous few years was the extent of polarization. There were essentially two camps, and what they were (according to government spokespersons at least) was this: you are either for the government or agin it--no in-betweens allowed.

Of course, there are many in-betweens--probably the majority of the Party falls into this category. Still, it was clean house time for the government and what had to go was what was quite openly referred to as "enemies of the Party". The outgoing Executive was one (that was the Executive where we had one-third representation: the highest since the Party began, and all feminists). The DEMOCRAT was another. It is popular in the Party, printing letters and articles that are critical as well as those that praise. But as Dave Stupich told the convention, the DEMOCRAT has hurt the Party more than anything else; it is more dangerous to the government than Pat Burns, the influential fascist of the Vancouver hot lines. And of course there were the Women's Committee crazies, the Vancouver Area Council crazies and the unaligned crazies such as the environmentalists, most of the policy committees, etc.

What we saw at the convention

was what a lot of us already knew. The government's response to criticisms that it is unresponsive to Party Policy and arrogant towards the Party has not been to establish mechanisms to resolve differences. Its response is to make up an enemies list, add to it daily, then try to wipe them out. That's what happened at the convention. There were, of course, organized efforts to defeat certain resolutions, especially the women's resolution, and the government was none too happy to see the convention come out in favour of Indian land claims and to watch the fourth convention in a row call for a Ministry of the Environment. But all that's just policy and policy can be ignored. What counts to the controlling forces is to maintain control. Thus the question of who was or was not elected to the executive was central.

For readers who may not know the ins and outs of conventions, candidates for the Party's Executive rarely run as individuals. They normally run on one slate or another--that is, people unite around an issue or set of principles, present a number of candidates and ask delegates to vote for all of them. (It's very much like general elections where people are asked to vote for the principles and program of a Party instead of for individuals.) But there is also the phenomenon of the "official" slate (in this case, the government slate) presented by the controlling forces of the Party. This slate traditionally says nothing at all--just a list of names, and delegates friendly to that group are quietly informed that this is it.

Electing the Party's Executive is not an administrative act. It is a political act, and if we didn't know that before we should know it now. All stops were out in organizing against the "enemies" and to ensure the election of the government slate (which for some reason was called "the Party's slate".)

The government slate was a long time in the making. (Nothing is secret in this Party.) Efforts to oust the last Executive began almost immediately after it was elected. For at least four months prior to the Kamloops convention the government slate was being systematically organized. (And in case any

think it was a response to the Women's Committee public criticisms of the government, rest easy. This slate was well on its way long before that time.)

The government slate came from the top and filtered down. It was essentially a product of the Premier and Cabinet, wound its way through the backbench and rested squarely on Coquitlam, Nanaimo and most of Delta--the ridings with the largest membership (and therefore lots of delegates) and the ridings which are the most conservative. And along the way it made a few good, old-fashioned backroom deals.

For example: the original government slate was all-out war against just about everybody. But through a little wheeling and dealing it was agreed to include on the slate three representatives chosen by the labour caucus in the Party. In

**'What Counts To The
Controlling Forces Is
To Maintain Control...'**

return, labour was to support the entire slate. But the deal was more than that. It was a deal to combine forces against us.

So it was polarized. And every possible manoeuvre was made to maintain that polarization and to name all those who opposed the slate as--guess what? Enemies of the Party. Tactics varied from honey to vinegar. Throughout the convention the Premier and cabinet tried their best to convince delegates that they were moving hard and fast on Women's rights and that we don't know what we're talking about. (A variation on this theme was that we know they're doing good work for women but have unnamed and probably insidious motives for being critical). Attacks on the Democrat were sneaked into this speech and that speech in the time-honoured fashion of smear and innuendo. (The issue of the Democrat was never put on the floor for debate and therefore there was no chance at all to actually discuss it). Individuals were the subject of personal attack and insult. All sorts of procedural hassles were made to try to prevent debate or to create a situation favourable to the government slate. Examples: an agenda amendment from Coquitlam, prepared with the advance agreement of the chair, tried to ensure that all officers were elected at once in order to ram through the entire slate. A ruling from the chair to elect two alternates to the Executive separately from the regular election was made because only ten members were to be elected at that time and the government slate had 12 on it. A motion defeating a question period after the Premier's opening speech was justified on the grounds that the

Premier would entertain questions later in the Convention. But, surprising to no-one, the Premier later made a quick sum-up jolly good fellow speech and left the convention, no questions asked. And on and on.

All of these things happened not because of principles or policy or anything else. It was strictly a numbers game. They had organized for the convention and we had not. They had the numbers and we didn't. So it was no shock to see the entire government slate elected except for two, who lost to Alan Artibise of Kamloops, who squeaked through on a combined women-labour-left men-regional vote, and Terri Ash, who went through six ballots for the honour of being elected second alternate. (This means that if two executive members resign, Terri is moved up. She has voice on the Executive but no vote.) All of our women on last year's executive were defeated and so were all of the men who support us, with the exception of Artibise, and of George Johnston and Roger Howard, who were elected by acclamation.

What Do These Results Mean?

First, it means that the new Executive, because it totally excludes candidates from the women's movement, is entirely unrepresentative of the single most important and one of the largest blocs in the Party--the Women's Committee. We now have no input into the Executive, and because Executive members are also members of Provincial Council (which is the highest governing body of the Party outside of the convention), we have

lost several voices and votes on Council. Two of the five members of the Democrat editorial board were from the Women's Committee and very likely there will soon be none. (Very soon there may be no Democrat at all).

However, none of this should be a cause for alarm. We knew in advance of the convention what our probable losses would be and so are prepared to accept them. Despite the government's careful attempts to defeat our resolution, which we had prepared in strong and uncompromising terms, the Convention endorsed it by a very substantial majority. Our movement has grown considerably in the past year and we emerged from the convention with increased numbers, united and strong in the knowledge that the government organizes against us at its peril, not ours. The very clarity of the situation has released enormous energy in us that for the past year was becoming depleted in the demoralizing exercise of trying to convince a hostile government to enact Party policy. Most important of all is the fact that even in the face of determined and openly vicious attacks on us all down the line, and despite the deals made by various manipulators who think they speak for labour, they could not deliver the labour vote which went to us, and they could not cut into a firm 40% of the delegates who were unimpressed by the enemies list.

And that, sisters, is the stuff to build on.



women/
and/
film/



ISIS/Women and Film will be on a 3-day film festival tour in each of 13 B.C. towns. The tour started Sept. 5th and will continue through to Oct. 31st.

The tour consists of films, video and other material by women or on topics concerning women, with discussions after the films.

Written information is being provided by such women's groups in Vancouver as the Childcare Federation, the Women's Health Collective, the Birth Centre and Rape Relief. The Women's Book Store will send a selection of books.

Some of the films: "It Happens To Us" (abortion); Nellie Kaplan's "A Very Curious Girl", "Growing Up Female" and other NFB "Working Mothers" Series. The festival is also featuring an exhibit of works by B.C. women artists and photographers.

In October the tour will cover Penticton, Oliver, Powell River, Courtenay, Nanaimo, Lilloet, Hope and Aldergrove.

Further information from 1520 W. 6th Ave., Vancouver, 733-9713.



health care at the convention

The experience of the Health Subcommittee at the Kamloops convention reflected in many ways the process of the Women's Committee on that weekend: there were good moments and bad moments, and a sense of moving in the right direction with more strength and support than before.

ABORTION

The good moment, (the best moment) was on Sunday afternoon in the plenary when the convention passed a motion instructing Health Minister Cocke to make a public statement indicating that he supports a women's right to abortion and that he is endeavoring to provide facilities for abortion up to 20 weeks of pregnancy. When Shelly Dillon made the original motion in the third Health panel on Saturday, Mr. Cocke explained his intention to "avoid public debate" on the issue. Women delegates in the panel responded by describing the hardship on women imposed by the Minister's earlier public statement (in May 1974) in which he asked doctors to limit abortion to 12-14 weeks of pregnancy. The panel then passed Shelly's motion which came to the convention floor.

Although news of the passage of the motion by the convention did make it into some television and newspaper reports, the Minister has yet to make his public statement as resolved by the convention.

Our struggle to have policy im-

plemented will continue. (Documentation of the hassles and delays experienced by women who are seeking abortion provides both the reason and strength for our argument. Women who live in areas away from the major population centres in the province suffer the most. Please inform the Health Subcommittee of any situations concerning abortion to supplement the material we already have.

FOULKES REPORT

The more difficult time at the convention was that spent in the Health panels on other issues. The Minister's report outlined a series of new programmes and plans, many of them (emergency ambulance service, birth control clinics) desirable additions to health care in British Columbia. However, we have learned that new services and programmes do not solve the problems of a fragmented, centrally-controlled treatment-oriented health system. For example, a re-orientation towards prevention in health care will simply not happen unless changes are made in the province's cost-sharing plan with the federal government so that new services will be financially covered; equally required are dramatic changes in the education, practice and status of physicians and health administrators and planners so that users of the services can be involved on every level.

Our enthusiasm for the Foulkes Report has been based on its presentation of the health care system in such a way that we can

understand the obstacles to a systematic implementation of party policy. References to the Fouldes Report were sprinkled liberally throughout the Minister's report to the panels, and persistent attempts were made by us to point out the Minister's inattention to the 'Spirit' of the Foulkes Report: regionalization of the province, decentralization of the power to plan, budget for and delivery of services, and integration of services as guidelines for a comprehensive health system with the user-controlled community clinic as its heart.

A motion requiring the Minister to prepare a critique of the Foulkes Report so as to make clear his response to this important document was defeated in the first two panels. A motion in the third panel asking the convention to support the principles (as outlined above) in the Foulkes Report was also defeated, although there was substantial lively discussion.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Several things emerged as a result of this experience. We discovered that when ordinary women (as people, as party-members) attempt to involve themselves in responsible participation in government planning we are perceived as challenging or attacking the government. Many delegates in the panel sessions, as well as the Minister, were defensive of government actions and attempted to discredit and demean our arguments rather than to deal openly with the issues.

We also learned that despite the opposition to our attempts to raise radical issues such

as the reorganization of the Health Department, we maintained our confidence in our ability to analyze the situation, and to make pertinent recommendations.

And finally, it was more clear than ever at the convention that people are reluctant to move into forbidden territory of the experts (doctors, Health Ministers, etc.) We need to continue to educate ourselves in the process of eliminating the mystery from 'health care' so that there will be many strong voices at the next convention.

Melanie Conn
Chairwoman
Health Subcommittee



PARTY!!

lower mainland
NDP women....
3182 w26 -Van.
Friday, Oct. 4

WE'RE RESPONDING TO A GROUNDSWELL: WOMEN IN THE LOWER MAINLAND AREA WANT TO REGENERATE OUR LOWER MAINLAND WOMEN'S COMMITTEE -- AND THIS IS OUR JUMPING OFF POINT. LOTS OF IDEAS ARE CIRCULATING -- COME AND BRING YOUR OWN. (ALSO BRING YOUR OWN BEER AND WINE IF YOU CAN AFFORD IT). SEE YOU THERE!

THE WOMEN'S SLATE

& CONVENTION ELECTIONS

Following the format established last year, the women's caucus fielded its own candidates at the 1974 convention. The only difference this year is that we only elected one of them--and she doesn't get a vote.

One of our caucus meetings saw unanimous support for the motion to run a half-slate of candidates representative of the NDP women's movement. (Prior to last year, we had not run any slates but simply had endorsed any woman who asked for our support.)

A simple decision in itself, our caucus agonized for a time over the problem posed by Joyce Nash, whom several members believed to be sympathetic to the women's movement, but who was a candidate on the government slate and whose name was put forward for endorsement by the women's caucus.

In other years this would have posed no problem. Last year, for example, we named our own candidates and asked the convention to support them all as our representatives. At the same time we invited other slates to endorse any or all of them if they chose. This year however, our caucus felt strongly that the situation was polarized, that the intent of the government slate was clearly against us, that involvement of any woman with that slate would add credibility to it and that she would be in the position of running against the women's movement.

Much discussion took place on this

issue, including an offer by Women's Committee chairwoman Sharon Yandle to withdraw in Joyce's favour if, receiving the endorsement of the women's caucus, she withdrew from the government slate. However, women in close touch with Joyce indicated that such a withdrawal would not occur.

In the face of this it was moved that we endorse no candidate running on the government slate. In moving this motion Hilda Thomas said that because of her personal knowledge of Joyce's support for women's rights she presented this resolution with some reluctance. However, she felt that issues were clear and that the politics of the situation must take precedence over her or anyone's personal assessment of any candidate. Several speakers echoed this sentiment. Marge Storm pointed out that she had refused a nomination from the labour caucus in order to run as a women's candidate if we so desired and for whatever office we chose, and that she expected all other women who support the women's movement to do likewise. Other delegates said that while they did not call into question Joyce's motives or intent, they felt she had made an error in judgement for which the women's movement would suffer, and that we had to maintain our right to name our own candidates. The motion passed with only a few dissenting votes.

Subsequently, Marge Storm (Surrey) Sharon Yandle (Vancouver) Terri

Ash (Kamloops) and Hilda Thomas (Point-Grey) were nominated to contest three table officer positions with Marge, Sharon and Hilda receiving the highest votes. At a candidates meeting later, however, Hilda withdrew in favour of Terri in order to present a more regionally balanced slate.

The question then arose of what positions to contest. We had to choose three out of six: President four vice-presidents, and treasurer. We decided not to run a presidential candidate as another candidate for that position, Alan Artibise of Kamloops, was running on a half slate of men who had endorsed our candidates, and because he had been vocal in his support for us in the past. We also did not challenge Roger Howard for treasurer, and for the same reasons. This left three positions to choose out of four vice-presidents. After much discussion it was decided not to run a candidate for second vice-president against George Johnston, even though his name was put forward by the government slate, because several discussions with him convinced us that he had not authorized that slate to include him and because he had consistently supported us in the past. Consequently it was agreed to run Marge Storm for first vice president (a position she held last year), Sharon Yandle for third and Terri Ash for fourth.

At the next women's caucus meeting held before the table officer balloting results were known, Hilda Thomas was elected unopposed as our candidate for federal council. Five other women were nominated as our half-slate for executive members-at-large on the understanding that if our table off-

icer candidates were not elected the three who received the lowest vote from our caucus would withdraw in their favour.

Nominated in order of votes received were: Ellen Williams (Omineca), Melodie Corrigall (Burrard), Diane Baigent (North Van-Capilano), Margaret Beardsley (Coquitlam) and Nick Phillips (Comox). When it was learned that none of our table officer candidates were elected, our slate for members-at large consisted of: Marge Storm, Sharon Yandle, Terri Ash, Ellen Williams and Melodie Corrigall.

When the first ballot was over, eight members-at-large had received a clear majority (50%+1) and were declared elected. All were on the government slate. Hilda Thomas had also been defeated for federal council.

With only two seats

slates candidates elections

left to fill on the new executive, women's caucus met again to decide if we should field two, one or no candidates for the second ballot. Although Alan Artibise (who had been defeated for president and run for member-at large) received the highest number of votes of anyone (male or female) sympathetic to us, the slate which supported him gave us the choice of how many we wanted to run with the understanding that their remaining candidates would withdraw in our favour if we so chose. Our meeting decided that because of his support and because he had the best chance of being elected, we would withdraw all but one of our candidates in Alan's favour. Our own choice for the one position remaining was Terri, who had polled more

votes than our other representatives, but we felt we could not run her since both she and Alan are from Kamloops. It was then decided that Terri would withdraw in favour of Sharon, as did all our other candidates.

On the second ballot Alan was elected, but no other received a clear majority. The third ballot, to elect the last member-at-large also did not produce a clear choice but narrowed the contest to Sharon and Lloyd Fedewa of the government slate. Sharon came within ten votes of winning on the third ballot, but lost Fedewa by about 30 votes on the fourth.

The last election of the day was for alternate members-at-large---people who are elected to fill any vacancies that may arise on the executive and who have voice but no vote. We decided to run Terri and Sharon. After one ballot, Doug Kelly of the government slate was elected---but no other candidate received a clear for the second slot. Sharon, who polled less votes than Terri on that ballot, then withdrew in her favour, and the final ballot showed Terri elected as second alternate.

All of this may be confusing to people who havent attended conventions before. It was confusing to many of us who were there, as was shown by the fact that some of our women were not present for the third and fourth ballots. This may have easily affected the results. In retrospect, it also seems clear that we should have run Terri instead of Sharon when that choice first had to be made. Regional sentiments in the Party run high, and while Lower Mainland men are prepared to vote for our representatives from the regions, many regionla people are

not prepared to vote for Lower Mainland candidates. Thus Terris vote was consistently higher than any of our candidates because she was able to add to our standard women-labour-left men vote the extra component of a regional vote. And because voting was so strongly by slate on either side, delegates would probably have had no difficulty in supporting both Alan and Terri, even though both are from the same riding. Terri's early election, too would have freed up another space in the election for alternates, and while we still would probably not have elected Sharon, we may easily have elected one of the men favourable to us who withdrew in order to support us.

RESULTS...

President: Frank Murphy
1st vice-president: Joyce Nash
3rd vice-president: Ted Maclatchey
4th vice-president: Shannon O'Neal
(all of the government slate)

George Johnston was elected 2nd vice-president and Roger Howard treasurer, both by acclamation.

Members-at-large: Ken Antifaev, Monica Davis, Lloyd Fedewa, Lyle Kristiansen, Dorothy Leggett, Carl Liden, Janette Pesklevits, Karen Sanford, and Red Visser
(all of the government slate)
and Alan Artibise.

Alternates: Doug Kelly (govt. slate) and Terri Ash

Federal council: Mark Rose and Hans Brown (govt. slate)

Footnote: 6 of the 20 elected are women who ran on the govt. slate. As one of that slate's organizers said, "We aren't running any of those crazy women's libbers!"

New Directions

The final women's caucus meeting was held at the close of the convention in Kamloops on September 2nd. There was wide regional representation and an age span of three generations. Some women explained that they had come to the convention either uncommitted or prepared to vote against the Women's Resolution. The negative reactions of the Premier to women's issues and the openness and sisterhood of the women's caucus changed their minds.

Although delegates were pressed for time, there was a consensus that we needed to discuss directions for the coming year. There was strong agreement on the necessity for continued struggle. Several recommendations were made for the Steering Committee to explore.

We agreed that our future direction should be toward broadening the base of issues within the women's movement and the party. Last year the strongest sentiment expressed in our caucus meetings was solidarity on women's rights. This year, based on our collective experience and understanding of the integral connections between socialism and feminism, there was recognition that in order to encompass the needs and solutions of the women's movement, we must deal with broader issues leading to a socialist society for all. The unanimous desire was expressed for us to work intensively in the next year, possibly producing a document on a wide range of issues.

One thing apparent at the caucus meetings was the large numbers of women struggling alone or in small groups in isolated constituencies and regions. Two proposals were made to explore ways of ensuring these sisters information, support, and voice in the coming year.

- a) broaden the base of representatives to the Steering Committee.
- b) hold two or three conferences of the NDP Women's Committee.

Other suggestions for the Steering Committee were:

- a) consideration of future dealings with the government.
- b) study and recommend a new format for NDP conventions which would better serve the needs of delegates.
- c) establish a committee to study the mechanics of electing women candidates at all levels of government.

All sisters were urged to attend the Founding Convention of the Federation of B.C. Women in Vancouver, September 13th - 15th.

The last caucus meeting ending with women rushing off to organize rides home, weary but elated, feeling truly, 'this is just the beginning'.

Jill Brown,
Vancouver-Burrard.



NO COMMENT !

The following exchange of letters was sent to Priorities by Nancy Caldwell (formerly Nancy LeMaistre), who has been a member of the Priorities editorial board over the last year.

Dear Sirs:

Re: Account with Nancy W. LeMaistre
Number: _____

This is to advise you that as of immediately, I shall be changing my name back to my maiden name. As such I would appreciate it if you would alter your account records and issue me a new card in the appropriate name. My new name will be:

Nancy W. Caldwell

I prefer the title Ms. to Mrs. or Miss.

Trusting this is satisfactory, I remain,
Yours very truly,

Nancy W. (LeMaistre) Caldwell

Mrs. N. W. Caldwell
1202 - 1842 Barclay
Vancouver, B. C.

Dear Mrs. Caldwell:

Re: Account No.

Please accept our congratulations and best wishes on your recent marriage and change of name.

To bring our records up to date, would you please be good enough to have your husband complete the enclosed application form and indicate whether or not you would like two cards, one for each of you, or just one in your own name. Your request will be processed as quickly as possible.

Since all our accounts are filed in alpha-numeric system, your change of name will also require a change in account number. Would you please, therefore, enclose your present credit card for cancellation when returning the enclosed application.

33

Your very truly,
(Miss) M. Blackburn
Home Oil Distributors Ltd.

BCFW

Founding Convention

The Founding Convention of the BC Federation of Women ended a little over 24 hours before the writing of this article. There has really not been time to make a Full And Considered Analysis of the event, and therefore these comments should be seen as an interim assessment as it were.

Coming Together

About 350 sisters came to the UBC convention site over the weekend of 13-15 September. They came from Pouce Coupe, Coquitlam, Vancouver, Langley, Heriot Bay, Dawson Creek, Kamloops, Kelowna, Prince George, Courtenay...and so on. I think that virtually every area of the province was represented. As well, the women there were members of a very wide range of groups: Voice of Women, NDP Women's Committee, Status of Women, a dozen different women's centres, Health Collective, Liberal Women's Association, BC Committee to Defend Dr. Morgentaler, Women In Teaching, UBC and UVic Women's Action Groups, Women of the Peace, IWA, OTEU, AUCE, Kootenay Council, Federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women -- and there were probably more that I don't remember. And there were of course many women unaffiliated to any particular organization.

So: all these sisters came together to try to construct an

organization capable of focusing and drawing together the strength of the women's movement in BC. Political views at the Convention ranged from right to very left; ages ranged from 14 to over 60; backgrounds and personal lifestyles of 350 different varieties were there. That in itself is quite an achievement. In no other part of Canada or Quebec has the women's movement held such a convention for such a purpose.

Problems

The Convention had some problems, all right, and I'd like to deal with those and then get on to what I see as its achievements. In the Saturday plenary session to discuss the Goals and Policy for the Federation -- obviously a crucial discussion -- we ran into heavy procedural turbulence. The origin of these problems lay in the agenda, which was revealed by the harsh light of reality to be totally inadequate in terms of its proposed time allotment for this important debate. This situation was exacerbated by a too-rigid adherence to the letter rather than the spirit of Robert's Rules by the chair, and by the in-experience of many sisters in combatting the restrictiveness of those Rules. Confusion, frustration, and feelings of being hopelessly boxed-in resulted. At one point the plenary had to be adjourned in order for the Steering Committee to come up with new agenda proposals to clear the air and enable the Convention to conduct its business. Unfortunately a number of women were so turned off by this experience that they left and didn't come back. Note for the future: allot plenty of time for policy discussion (it's after all the most important), and don't be afraid to allot still more if necessary.

However, in one way or another the Convention managed on Saturday to do the following: to have extensive workshop sessions on 4 areas of policy (Health, Education, Childcare and Employment); to pass general policy statements and several specific demands related to each of these; to vote in favour of participating in International Women's Year and in favour of calling on the Canadian government to celebrate it by removing abortion from the Criminal Code; to vote support to a demonstration being held that day by native groups from Cache Creek; to begin discussion of a proposed structure for the Federation; and to vote the Federation into existence. A summary of the policy adopted will be printed in the next issue of Priorities. On the whole I think it's good, and that most members of the NDP Women's Committee will react positively to it.

Rally & Party

On Saturday evening the tensions and anger and frustrations of the day were dissolved in the happiness and enthusiasm of one of the best rallies I've been at in a long time. About 200 gathered at Vancouver's Courthouse. On the steps stood -- or rather, floated -- a 30-ft-high and 16-ft-wide replica of the women's liberation symbol, composed of scarlet and white balloons. This remarkable object, created for the occasion by the Royal Canadian Aerial Theatre group, was floodlit from behind and formed a brilliant backdrop for the speakers. Women from 15 or so groups, representing all parts of the province, came up to the mike one after another to give greetings to the new Federation and to wish it Happy Birthday and Many Happy Returns. Then we marched on the

streets, the balloon-symbol at the head of the procession, and carrying an enormous banner beautifully inscribed with the Federation's name. In front of the YWCA, where our celebration party was to be held, we formed a circle around the balloons; their restraining ropes were cut, and the women's symbol soared up into the light and darkness of the city evening, accompanied by cheers and songs. Then, simply, we went to the party and drank a lot of beer.

Structure

Sunday morning we concluded the discussion on structure. The Federation will welcome both group memberships and individual memberships. Groups may join by declaring their support for the Federation's aims and giving a donation, and individuals in the same manner. We then elected a Standing Committee, or executive. It includes regional representatives, elected by women from 12 regions of BC, and 10 members elected by the Convention as a whole, seven for specific tasks and three as members at large. A full list of the Standing Committee members, complete with addresses and phones, will appear in next month's Priorities.

Victoria Action

Discussion on the proposed Women's Parliament came next. The proposal from the Steering Committee was for a Parliament in a very literal sense -- for a Lieutenant-Governor (or Governess), women military personnel in the House, representation by ridings, bills written out in correct legalese, adherence to all rules of Parliament, etc. Many women pointed out the narrowness of such an approach, and questioned

the value to the women's movement of going through such a process. The proposal was defeated, and a substitute motion passed. This called for the BCFW to assemble the largest possible number of women together in Victoria early in 1975, to present the goals & demands of the Federation as decided in Convention, and to call upon federal and provincial levels of government to implement them immediately. This proposal obviously gives us much greater scope, and the possibility of attracting larger numbers of women to the action. It's also going to require a lot of thought and planning to ensure that the event has an effective and forceful political direction. Ideas are invited from Priorities readers. This is potentially the kind of action that can build the BCFW, the women's movement as a whole, and which can offer great opportunities for the NDP Women's Committee as well.

The Convention voted to add the name of the BCFW to the list of sponsors for the upcoming tour of Dr. Henry Morgentaler, who will be speaking in Vancouver on Thursday 10 October, at the Public Library. His case goes to the Supreme Court earlier in the month.

A Financial Report from the Steering Committee came next, which presented the inevitable news of a desperate need for funds. Various ways of raising funds were considered, and two which were endorsed for consideration by the new Standing Committee were applications for government grants and holding a lottery. The Convention concluded with meetings of women interested in various policy areas, and finally the new Standing Committee met with the press.

Now What ?

Altogether it was quite a weekend, and the final results are obviously yet to emerge. The enthusiasm for such a Federation I think endured through the difficulties of the Convention, and most women left feeling that a reasonably good start had been made. Now comes the hard part -- making it work. The job ahead is enormous: to find ways of communicating the BCFW's aims and activities around the province, to keep such a heterogeneous group united around certain basic aims, to focus its work in a public and clear fashion. The responsibilities of the new Standing Committee are great.

I also think that NDP women have a particular responsibility. We played an important role both in preparing for the Convention and in the gathering itself, and I think this must be continued. We should also remember that we ourselves have a hell of a lot to learn from the experiences which this new Federation goes through. The BCFW, given the wide range of political views which it encompasses, is far more representative of the women's movement as a whole than is our own Women's Committee within the NDP. Such an organization is a challenge to us as socialist women -- to work in it, to present our ideas and fight for them within it, to share in its efforts, and to win women to the goals of socialism. The first opportunity to do all this will be in the planning and carrying out of the action in Victoria in 1975. I'd like to see all chapters of the Committee consider this in the near future.

CYNTHIA FLOOD
Vancouver-Centre

Labour & Justice Hearings

The Provincial Government has set up a Labour and Justice Committee to "examine the exclusion of those employees who are engaged in agricultural or domestic service from the Labour Code, from workers compensation coverage, and from other labour standards legislation, to determine if there is a need for reform of the status of agricultural workers and domestic workers under Provincial legislation.."

The Committee members are: Colin Gabelman, Chairperson, Rosemary Brown, Secretary, Anderson, Barnes, D'Arcy, Dent, King, MacDonald, Smith, Richter, and Anderson.

The Committee will be holding public hearings throughout the province beginning October 9th. NDP party policy on this issue states "that an NDP government would permit collective bargaining for all employees including agricultural and professional workers and domestic workers". We would encourage women in all areas to attend the hearings to make your views known and to press for the implementation of this policy. The schedule of the committees public hearings is as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Time</u>
October 9	Birch Room, #339, Parliament Bldgs. <u>Victoria</u>	2 - 6p.m.
October 10	Island Hall, <u>Parksville</u>	10a.m. - 4p.m.
October 15	Billy Barker Hotel, <u>Quesnel</u>	8 - 11p.m.
October 16	McKenzie Inn, <u>Fort St. John</u>	3 - 5p.m.
October 17	Park Inn, <u>Dawson Creek</u>	9 - 2p.m.
October 18	Terrace Hotel, <u>Terrace</u>	1 - 6p.m.
October 22	Kootenay Hotel, <u>Creston</u>	2 - 9p.m.
October 23	Penticton Inn, <u>Penticton</u>	2 - 9p.m.
October 24	Armstrong Legion Hall, <u>Armstrong</u>	2 - 9p.m.
October 25	Grasslands Motor Hotel, <u>Merritt</u>	2 - 6p.m.
October 29	Beach Gardens Resort Hotel, <u>Powell River</u>	2 - 9p.m.
October 30	Empress Hotel, <u>Chilliwack</u>	2 - 9p.m.
October 31	Biltmore Hotel, <u>Vancouver</u>	10a.m. - 4p.m.

The Politics Of Housework

(Excerpts from a pamphlet of the same name by Pat Mainardi).

Liberated women -- very different from women's liberation. The first signals all kinds of goodies to warm the hearts (not to mention the other parts) of the most radical men. The other signals -- housework. The first brings sex without marriage, sex before marriage, cozy housekeeping arrangements ("You see, I'm living with this chick") and the self-content of knowing that you're not the kind of man who wants a doormat for a woman. That will come later.

On the other hand is Women's Liberation -- and housework. What? You say this is all trivial? Wonderful! That's what I thought. It seems perfectly reasonable. We both had careers, we both had to work a couple of days a week to earn enough to live on, so why shouldn't we share the housework? So I suggested it to my mate and he agreed--most men are too hip to turn you down flat. You're right, he said. It's only fair.

IT STINKS

Then an interesting thing happened. I can only explain it by stating that we women have been brainwashed more than even we can imagine. Probably too many years of seeing media-women coming over their shiny waxed floors or breaking down over dirty shirt collars. Men have no such conditioning. They recognize the essential fact of housework right from the beginning. Which is that it stinks.

Housework trivial? Not on your life! Just try to share the burden.

THE "DIALOGUE"

So ensued a dialogue that's been going on for many years. Here are some of the high points:

"I don't mind sharing the housework, but I don't do it very well. We should each do the things we're best at."

Meaning: Unfortunately I'm no good at things like washing dishes and cooking. What I do best is a little light carpentry, changing light bulbs, moving furniture. (How often do you move furniture?)

Also meaning: Historically the lower classes (blacks and women) have had hundreds of years doing menial jobs. It would be a waste of manpower to train someone else to do them now.

Also meaning: I don't like the dull stupid boring jobs, so you should do them.

***** ❀ *****

"I don't mind sharing the work, but you'll have to show me how to do it."

Meaning: I ask a lot of questions and you'll have to show me everything, every time I do it because I don't remember so good. Also, don't try to sit down and read while I'm doing my jobs because I'm going to annoy hell out of you until it's easier to

do them yourself.

***** ❀ *****

"We used to be so happy!" (said whenever it was his turn to do something).

Meaning: I used to be so happy.

Meaning: Life without housework is bliss. No quarrel here. Perfect agreement.

***** ❀ *****

"We have different standards, and why should I have to work to your standards. That's unfair."

Meaning: If I begin to get bugged by the dirt and crap, I will say, "This place sure is a sty" or "How can anyone live like this?" and wait for your reactions. I know that all women have a sore called guilt over a messy house or housework is ultimately my responsibility. If I rub this sore long and hard enough it'll bleed and you'll do the work. I can outwait you.

Also meaning: I can provoke innumerable scenes over the housework issue. Eventually, doing all the housework yourself will be less painful to you than trying to get me to do half.

***** ❀ *****

"I've got nothing against sharing the housework, but you can't make me do it on your schedule."

Meaning: passive resistance. I'll do it when I damn well please, if at all. If my job is doing dishes, it's easier to do them once a week. If taking out laundry, once a month. If washing the floors, once a year. If you don't like it, do it yourself oftener, and then I won't do it at all.

"I hate it more than you. You don't mind it so much."

Meaning: Housework is shitwork. It's the worst crap I've ever done. It's degrading and humiliating for someone of my intelligence to do it. But for someone of your intelligence...

***** ❀ *****

"Housework is too trivial to even talk about."

Meaning: It's even more trivial to do. Housework is beneath my status. My purpose in life is to deal with matters of significance. Yours is to deal with matters of insignificance. You should do the housework.

***** ❀ *****

"In animal societies, wolves, for example, the top animal is usually a male even where he is not chosen for brute strength but on the basis of cunning and intelligence. Isn't that interesting?"

Meaning: I have historical, psychological, anthropological and biological justification for keeping you down. How can you ask the top wolf to be equal?

***** ❀ *****

"Women's Liberation isn't really a political movement."

Meaning: The Revolution is coming too close to home.

Also meaning: I am only interested in how I am oppressed, not how I oppress others...

***** ❀ *****

"Man's accomplishments have always depended on getting help from other people, mostly women. What great man would have accom-

plished what he did if he had to do his own housework?"

Meaning: Oppression is built into the system and I...receive the benefits of this system. I don't want to give them up.

post-script...

1. He is feeling it'more than you. He's losing some leisure and you're gaining it. The measure of your oppression is his resistance.

2. Men have always had servants (you) to take care of the bottom stratum of life while he has confined his efforts to the rarefied upper regions. It is thus ironic when they ask of women: Where are your great painters, statesmen, etc. Mrs. Matisse ran a millinery shop so he could paint. Mrs. Martin Luther King kept his house and raised his babies.

3. It is a traumatizing experience for someone who has always thought of himself as being against any oppression or exploitation of one human being by another to realize that in his daily life he has been accepting and implementing (and benefitting from) this exploitation.

4. Arm yourself with some knowledge of the psychology of oppressed peoples everywhere and a few facts about the animal kingdom. I admit playing top wolf or who runs the gorillas is silly but as a last resort men bring it up all the time. Talk about bees...The psychology of oppressed peoples is not silly. Blacks, women and immigrants have all employed the same psychological mechanisms to survive. Admiring the oppressor, glorifying the oppressor, wanting to be like the oppressor, wa

wanting the oppressor to like them.

5. One hour a day is a low estimate of the amount of time one has to spend "keeping" oneself. By foisting this off on others, man has seven hours a week--one working day--more to play with his mind and not his human needs.

6. Life changes but it goes on. Don't fall for any crap about the death of everything if men take a turn at the dishes. They will imply that you are holding back the Revolution (their Revolution). But you are advancing it.

7. Keep checking up; These things have a way of backsliding so that a year later once again the woman is doing everything

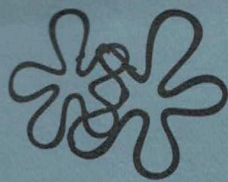
8. Beware of the double whammy. He won't do the little things he always did because you're now a "Liberated Woman", right? Of course, he won't do anything else either...

Oh Me-gawd!!

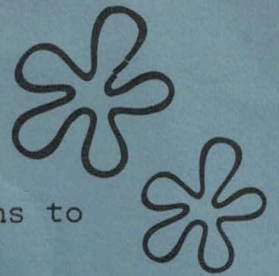
I was just finishing this when my husband came in and asked what I was doing. Writing a paper on housework. Housework? he said. Housework? Oh my god how trivial can you get. A paper on housework.

PRIORITIES NEEDS

OPINIONS ----- DRAWINGS ----
ARTICLES ----- LETTERS -----
----- ANYTHING -----



THANKS



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