

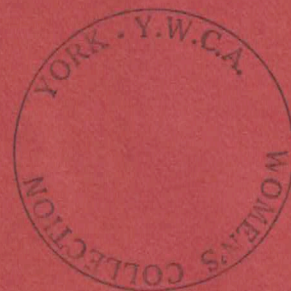
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Y. W. C. A.
RESOURCE CENTRE

PRIORITIES

Vol. III No. 2

February, 1975



"Feminism, like socialism, calls for a new human community based on the creative and co-operative use of power to create new economic, social and political forms."

-Rosemary Brown

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.

Publication Date: the 15th of each month
Copy Deadline: one week prior to publication
Subscription: \$3.00 per year, 12 issues prepaid
Single Issue: .35¢

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

Correspondence and subscriptions to: Priorities,
c/o 3485 West 15th Avenue,
Vancouver, B.C.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Margaret Beardsley, Jill Brown, Melodie Corrigall, Shelly Dillon, Cynthia Flood, Marilyn Webb, Sharon Yandle, Linda Storey, Judy Patterson, Ruth Houle, Marianne Gilbert, Sam Lyons, Terri Ash.

All unsigned articles are the collective responsibility of the editorial committee.

If you are willing and able to help on Priorities please phone Shelly at 253-7521 or Melodie at 733-5990.

We especially need help on work weekends which fall roughly the mid-week end of each month.

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* * * * *

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

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

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

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EDITORIAL

For some months now the Priorities' editorial staff have thought about the possibility of getting down to some serious discussion on socialism, feminism, the history of the Women's Movement, why things are like they are and why not? In short, we would like to really begin to grapple with the question of where we're at and where we're going.

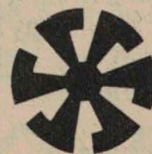
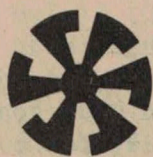
It's no use pretending that things are going to change without long term effort. There are a lot of vested interests in the status quo and we have to have all our wits about us if we hope to keep ourselves on the right track or even if we hope to recognize where the track goes. And so Priorities would like to act as a catalyst for discussion. We don't have all the answers, we don't even have all the questions. However, we would like to explore with you the information and insights we have and what we think they mean in terms of our struggle for equality and socialism. We hope that interested groups or individuals will respond to issues as they come up or suggest issues we may miss.

Hopefully, we will encourage discussion on a local level. To even define what we mean by terms such as sexism or socialism may help us to understand how and why they affect our lives.

In future issues, we hope to feature articles on the relationship of feminism and socialism; major theories of social change - how to get from here to there; history and significance of the Women's Movement and the major theorists of the Women's Movement.

This month we're starting with an historical introduction and brief explanation to that much misunderstood term 'capitalism' - a little on what it is, why it is and what that means to our struggle for equal rights and socialism. We also have a 'Day in the Life' article which reflects the economic system as it affects us as unpaid homemakers, cheap labour, consumers, etc.

We are confident that together, sharing our experiences and our knowledge, we can come to a better understanding of what's what and equip ourselves on an on-going basis to dealing with problems and challenges facing the movement and hassling our lives. Lets hear from you.



LETTERS

Women's Minister

Dear Sisters:

How does one become a socialist? Besides being concerned for one's fellow human beings there is little being offered to us to educate ourselves on Socialism. That makes Priorities especially important to our members as a vehicle of education on socialist thoughts and action.

France has a Minister for Women in Françoise Giroud. I am sure that the work of this dynamic, tireless woman will have repercussions all over our world. France has recently legalized abortion. A nation wide opinion poll showed that almost 60% both men and women are in favour of abortion on demand during the first 10 weeks of pregnancy. This new law was introduced by the French Health Minister Simone Veil. French women were having 300,000 illegal abortions a year. It may be putting the horse before the cart but I am sure that a minister of Women's Affairs would do a lot to improve the women's situation in B.C. as it already does in France.

Our project for International Women's Year of the B.C. Federation of Women is certainly a priority. I would like to see every Province in Canada signing the Human Rights Declaration so that it could be certified.

Our resolution to the 1974 Provincial Convention is a great educative document. Would it be possible to make copies of it so that each interested person could have their own copy? Thank you again for making Priorities a most welcomed magazine.

Marielle Demorest
Education Chairperson
Richmond NDP

Praises

Dear Sisters:

Keep up the good work. I especially enjoy Cynthia's book reviews and find them useful.

Best of luck to all,

Sara McKinnon
Aldergrove

Dear Sisters:

Over the past year I have become an avid reader of Priorities which I got at the North Shore Women's Centre. As I plan to keep my own copies for reference in future, I'm buying a second subscription so I can give copies of it to various people who haven't discovered Priorities yet. Please start my subscription with the December 1974 edition as I particularly enjoyed the articles on women writers.

Wishing you continued success in 1975.

Andrea Kiss
West Vancouver

Dear Priorities:

Keep this great publication rolling off the press, sisters.

Iris Reamsbottom
Victoria

Priorities:

Please send me a copy of July and August issues and keep the change so you will be able to keep up the good work you're doing.

E. Miller, Victoria

Priorities:

Enclosed please find a subscription to your fantastic magazine Priorities.

Lorraine Pommen
Victoria

* * * * *

Dear Priorities:

A letter of appreciation is long overdue for the quality and service of Priorities - and especially the December issue. The local BCTF Status of Women (Trail and District Teachers), the Status of Women (Trail-Castlegar-Nelson) and the Canadian Federation of University Women (Cariboo-Okanagan-West Kootenay) have recommended Priorities at the top of their reading lists of periodicals for women as "extremely informative and not particularly political in outlook", in case you are not aware of your influence and potential.

I distributed the dozen extra copies Shelly Dillon, the Women's Organizer, left me for local women here in the NDP who in general do not all seem to be aware of what they are missing - though it is no fault of yours or theirs - unfortunately.

Yours Sincerely,
Brenda Balaam
Provincial Director
B.C. East. Canadian Federation
of University Women

* * * * *

Reviews

Dear Editors:

I am enclosing a response to Shelly Dillon's piece on women's magazines. It was going to be a letter but it turned into an article! I would have liked her to range more widely: the ex-woman's pages of the Sun and Province for instance print many articles of interest to everyone as well as the standard female stuff. A review of Kinesis, and other Canadian feminist journalism e.g.

Branching Out, would be appreciated too.

And more book reviews please - Cynthia Flood has sent me back to Persuasion, but there are so many more.

Going back to September: I've just re-discovered Jill Brown's review of "Tell Me Where It Hurts" - the only printed response I've seen to the programme though everyone I know who has seen it was most impressed. I agree that a sequel would be good - a series might be even better. If only there were more programmes like it.

I really enjoy Priorities - keep it going.

Angela Page
Port Moody

* * * * *

Liberalism

Dear Friends:

I sent away for the free pamphlets about Women that Priorities mentioned in the last issue. Today I received two of the pamphlets (one is on order), and a copy of Interaction, the newsletter sent out by the office of Equal Opportunities for Women. I am forwarding the newsletter to you -- it is such a good example of wishy-washy liberalism; and a forceful reminder of how much work we have to do to change attitudes about ourselves. I was particularly struck by the gung-ho feeling for IWY, so contrary to feedback I've picked up from women in B.C.

Yours Truly,
Pat Nelson

* * * * *

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SUBSCRIBE
* * * * *
DO IT NOW.
* * * * *

BCGEU REPLIES

Dear Priorities:

In your January issue of Priorities you published a letter to me from Dianne Bagigent in which she outlined her reasons for withdrawing her application for a job with the B. C. Government Employee's Union.

It is unfortunate that Diane misunderstood the requirements of the job, but any union representative must be prepared to travel when necessary. Servicing our members is our first responsibility and there are times when a crisis situation occurs and it is impossible to give any travel notice. We presently have single parents on staff who have been able to accommodate their child-care responsibilities to the peculiar nature of the job.

In my reply to Diane I stated, "I read your letter very very carefully and sincerely appreciate the comments. You are quite correct that our Union, as do most others, has a long way to go adjusting its attitudes when it comes to not only the female rank-and-file membership but also female officers and staff members. It is, however, my sincere hope and commitment that we actively pursue a positive course of action. It is in this spirit that your views are sincerely taken and I thank you in addition for your good wishes."

The BCGEU is committed to making genuine advances towards equality for women. We have instituted a program, run by and for women, to determine the needs and bargaining goals of our women members and to encourage women to play a more active role in the BCGEU. We realize the changes that are necessary in our own attitudes and we are trying to develop the awareness required to offer equality to all our members, officers and staff.

Yours sincerely,
M. Headley per
John Fryer
General Secretary

OTHER LETTERS

WOMEN'S ORGANIZER

The following letter was sent to the Provincial Secretary from the women's committee, urging that the women's organizer be re-hired.

Dear Beth:

On behalf of the NDP Women's Committee I would like to urge you to recommend the continuance of the position of women's organizer for the NDP in 1975.

The task of organizing women within the NDP and encouraging them to play more active roles in the party structures, to take a greater part in discussions of policy, to run for party office, and for public office, is one which has long been neglected and which the Women's Committee sees as vital to the growth and success of the NDP.

We feel that Shelly Dillon has made an excellent start in this difficult job. But it is just a start. If the position is continued her task will become easier because of the extensive groundwork she has done.

For these reasons we feel it is necessary for the position of women's organizer to continue in 1975.

Please advise us whether it is necessary to write separately to the Provincial Executive.

In Sisterhood,

Terri Ash,
Chairwoman

FIRE-ARMS

Justice Minister Otto Lang
Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Sir:

We refer to the murder of Edward Burtishaw in December 1974 by a 13 year old boy in Woodwards who used a gun stolen from that store.

It is our hope that you will consider without delay the implementation of laws to ensure removal of firearms from department stores and other such outlets. We consider licensing and registration should be mandatory in a civilized country.

We understand that you are concerned with life at one end of the scale. We refer of course, to abortion which, in our view, should be removed from the Criminal Code. Therefore, it would follow that laws regulating the sale of firearms should have your priority. In fact, why such laws have not already been enacted brings into question the sincerity of your remarks concerning the preservation of life.

We trust that we will soon see some action in this regard.

Yours Truly,
Margaret and David Cook
Coquitlam

ABORTION

Dear Priorities:

I am enclosing a photostat copy of a letter to me from Otto Lang, Minister of Justice on the abortion issue.

I hope you'll be able to print it in one of your issues because I'd like as many people as possible to read it. I think it represents one of the most blatant anti-abortion stands I've seen in some time. What makes this so frightening and upsetting is that it comes from none other

than the Minister of Justice of this country.

Where do we go from here? It looks to me like we're back at square one.

Sincerely,
Valerie Blair
Vancouver

Dear Miss Blair:

I am writing in response to your letter to me of October 14th in which you express support for the recommendation by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women that the Criminal Code be amended to permit abortion by a qualified medical practitioner on the sole request of the woman.

As you know the Criminal Code presently makes it a crime to take the life of an unborn child except where the continuation of a pregnancy endangers the life or health of the mother. If a committee of physicians in an accredited hospital certifies that in their opinion the continuation of the pregnancy of the expectant mother endangers her life or health, the pregnancy may be terminated otherwise, it may not.

Our government is not prepared to remove abortion from the Criminal Law; nor do we intend to widen the law to allow abortion except where the continuation of the pregnancy is a real threat to the woman's life or health. It is our belief that abortion involves interest other than that of the prospective mother and that this is the interest of the unborn child. It is our obligation to respect and protect that interest.

Thank you for writing to me with your views.

Yours Sincerely,
Otto Lang

SUBSCRIBE!

MORE

FREELY AVAILABLE INFO

Each year since 1969 the Women's Bureau of the Federal Department of Labour has published a booklet comprised of papers delivered by the Director, Sylva M. Gelber, during the previous year. Following is a list of contents of the booklets entitled Women's Bureau since 1970. They may be obtained free by writing to:-

Information Canada,
800 Granville Street,
Vancouver, B.C. (single copies)

or
Information Canada,
Ottawa, Ontario. (bulk
requests mailed free of
charge)

WOMEN'S BUREAU '70

1. "What do Women Want? - a study of laws and practices in Canada which discriminate against women.
2. "Discriminatory Practices in the Universities and a Proposed Role for the Canadian Federation of University Women."
3. "The Labour Force; The G.N.P.; and unpaid Housekeeping Services."

'71

1. "The Underemployed, Underpaid Third of the Labour Force."
2. "The Importance of Perseverance."
3. "A Year After the Report: Where Are We Now?"
4. "Canada's International Posture on the Status of Women."

'72

1. "Which Side Are You On?" - an examination of women's roles in the labour unions.
2. "Sex Ghettos in the Health Professions."
3. "Women's Responsibility in the Search for Equality of Rights." - an historical perspective.
4. "Injustice to One - Injustice to All" - the position of minority women - Metis, Indian, Doukhobor, Japanese and Chinese in Canada.
5. "Communicating with the Press."

'73

1. "Social Workers and The Status of Women."
2. "Organized Labour And The Working Woman."
3. "The Rights of Man And The Status of Women."
4. "Equality in Pensions For Working Women."
5. "Quebec's Contribution To The Status of Women In Canada."

MOVING??

DON'T KEEP IT A SECRET.

THE KEEPER-OF-THE-BOOKS FOR PRIORITIES
GETS VERY UPSET TO GET COPIES RETURNED!

NDP FEDERAL COUNCIL

on I W Y

The following resolution on International Women's Year was passed by the NDP Federal Council meeting in Montreal on Jan. 19th. We hope that this is just an initial response and that both the Party and the M.P.'s will take the opportunity to urge the Federal Government to mark International Women's Year by legislation not short-term grants and conferences.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

WHEREAS the government has allotted \$5 million for International Women's Year 1975 and

WHEREAS administration and advertising have been allotted approximately 50% of the total budget and

WHEREAS the balance of the budget has been arbitrarily allotted primarily for conferences and banquets and

WHEREAS the present program for I.W.Y. in Canada does not provide for the widest possible participation of women,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Federal Council of the NDP strongly urge its caucus in the House of Commons to protest the arbitrary allocation of funds for International Women's Year, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in allocating monies, consideration must be given to appropriate programs and projects for I.W.Y. planned by local or provincial women's organizations, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NDP caucus push for further substantial funding to be provided with the thrust toward ongoing women's projects.

* * * -- -- --

on women's rights

The following is the statement on Women's Rights which was discussed at the Jan. NDP Federal Council meeting and accepted by Council as a policy statement.

The Federal Council of the New Democratic Party regrets that, despite the Report on the Status of Women and commitments by politicians, progress toward equality for Canadian women continues to be slow and inadequate, on both the Federal and Provincial levels of government. Basic facts about women's conditions in present society continue to be ignored.

The role in which women are usually obliged to find their fulfilment is narrow, restricted and onerous. Women in the home are isolated from each other and from society at large. Their loneliness leads them to live vicariously, to experience life through the achievements of husband and children rather than to participate themselves. The social responsibilities they bear are heavy. They provide cooking, cleaning, laundering and home repair services for each household. They act as emotional service stations for their families. They carry the responsibility for the endless care of children and for what kind of adults those children become. Any attempts they make to expand their activities into outside employment, or further education, are frustrated by the lack of child care facilities, by the criticism heaped on the 'neglectful' mother and by the fact that it costs money to work.

Women are poor, Many work a lifetime in the home for no pay and, in their old age, no pension. Many are on welfare; sixty percent of those on welfare

in Canada are women. Still, many women do work outside the home. One-third of Canada's labour force is female and one-third of all married women work away from home. Women's average wages are less than half of men's. And because women's special function is defined as that of wives and mothers only, they are seen as peripheral to the real work force. Women form a reserve pool of cheap labour. They are dropped in and kicked out of the labour market as the twists and turns of the present economy require. Cheap and available female labour is used for employers to blackmail male employees into accepting poor wages and to nourish hostility between men and women on the job market.

Women are heavily represented in all the occupations which are the worst-paid, the most menial and boring, and in which working conditions are the most miserable. Most women are not unionized. Those who are often find the same discrimination there as elsewhere. There are few trades, professions or occupations in which women's training, qualifications and abilities are recognized on an equal basis as those of men. Even in the fields numerically dominated by women, men hold top jobs and top salaries. Women face all the problems of men workers in the existing system; and women face specific and particular forms of suffering simply because they are women.

Our school system enforces society's discriminatory attitudes towards women and trains women to accept second-rate status. Women are steered away from academic and particularly scientific programs and into home economics and commercial courses. "Guidance" classes encourage women not to set their career goals too high. Women entering traditionally male fields of learning, from auto mechanics to higher math, are harrassed and laughed at by instructors and fellow students. Young women are encouraged to compete with one another for male attention and therefore to downplay their intelligence. They learn nothing of the history of women or of women's contribution to the development of civilization

and culture.

Women's liberation is not created by a stroke of the pen. It is a movement that necessarily arises out of conditions created by society, and the efforts to change those conditions must take form and grow within the existing system. The women's movement represents a process that can produce not only specific changes in laws but also produces a consciousness among women and men that changes them. It encourages them to recognize and resist situations imposed upon them and to demand new laws that can take the struggle to a new and higher level.

The Federal Council of the NDP therefore fully supports the movement for the liberation of women in our society. It recognizes that progress within the NDP itself has been inadequate and that much more needs to be done. It is in this spirit that the Federal Council reaffirms the following principles and policies:-

- laws prohibiting discrimination because of sex or marital status in the recruitment, classification, promotion, dismissal and advertising of jobs;

- provision of child care centres for children of all ages which are free, community controlled and available 24 hours a day;

- tough laws, strictly enforced, to provide equal pay for work of equal value and provide incentives to achieve this goal;

- provision of maternity leave with pay of whatever duration the woman and her doctor deem necessary and at the end of that time, the right to return to her position without penalty as to seniority or salary;

- changes in labour laws wherever required to provide collective bargaining rights and fringe benefits for domestic and part-time workers; an exploration of the concept of greater individual

choice in the work week and work year;

-amendment of pension laws to give all women, including those who work at home, the same rights to join and to draw benefits as enjoyed by men;

-establishment of comprehensive sex education programs in the schools;

-guarantees that male and female students are equally entitled to enroll in any course of their choosing. The concept of back-to-work training is implicit in this recommendation;

- elimination of sex stereotyping in all text books;

-action to ban advertising which exploits sex and demeans the role and place of women in society;

- amendments to take abortion out of the Criminal Code so that women are free to act in accordance with their conscience and on qualified medical advice;

-establishment of sex education and birth control centres adequately equipped to advise on family planning, birth control methods, abortion, pre- and post-natal care, and ways and means of caring for a child in the case of an unplanned pregnancy;

-community programs to encourage and assist women to take their full part in the political and cultural life of our country.

The above proposals are essential steps in removing the oppression and inequalities from which women suffer. The Party in its internal workings shall set the example through the encouragement and development of women in the Party at all levels. The Federal Council urges therefore that every section of our party implement these policies, particularly provincial NDP Governments because they are in a position to lead the way.

January 1975. Montreal.

KAMLOOPS REPORTS ❁

Right after I'd written my last report on how women were afraid to get involved in the Kamloops Caucus, I was glad to see how wrong I was. The next meeting was very well attended with lots of new faces present. I think the few meetings I had been to myself were unusual in their poor attendance, and I don't think there is as much alienation as I had previously thought.

Our Health Conference in December was a great success. Although the attendance was not enough to pay for expenses, there was enough interest generated to get a Kamloops Health Collective started. It is in the formative stage right now, and we will try to keep informed on how it is progressing.

At our next meeting, we are having three women from the Kamloops media in to speak. It should be an interesting panel discussion, and I'll get a report in for the next Priorities.

The women of the Kamloops Women's Caucus would like to wish everyone a fruitful International Womens Year, and the stamina with which to keep up our struggle.

Kathy Hemenway,
Kamloops Women's Group.

ANNOUNCING:

THE LOWER MAINLAND

NDP WOMEN'S GROUP

Over the past months women in the Lower Mainland have been expressing the desire and need for a Lower Mainland Women's Group, to be formed. Sooooo, this meeting is being arbitrarily called to form such a group.

Any and every NDP woman who is interested in attending or becoming active in the group should come to this first meeting where we can discuss the form the group should take, the function it should play, the regularity of meetings, etc. Any ideas you can bring to the group will help to assure that the form it takes will serve the needs that you feel need to be met.

Any woman who is interested in joining the NDP, who wants to know more about what women in the NDP are doing, is welcome to attend.

We hope to see many women there.....

for further information call Cynthia Flood, 255 7820

APRIL 2nd at 7:30 pm

1881 EAST HASTINGS, VANCOUVER

In Rebuttal

As an avid magazine reader I fell upon Shelley Dillon's review in the last issue and was suprised at my strong reaction to it. I do not see Redbook and Homemakers regularly, but I have subscribed to Chatelaine for ten years and make a point of picking up Ms. from the newsstands. I too had had the impression--mainly from stand-up reads at supermarket check-out counters-- that Redbook, along with Family Circle and Women's Day was publishing a higher percentage of serious articles of interest to men as well as women. I found myself angrily defending their right to print "boring articles on child rearing" whether by men or women. Although I may be almost beyond the stage of needing them myself there are thousands of women with younger children or grandchildren who do need this kind of article, will learn something from them and would not necessarily read a book to get the information in them. Someone is always at the stage you may have passed through--and perhaps their rate of progress is slower than yours, but this doesn't mean that they are wrong. This also applies to articles on decorating, food, fashion, etc; surely it is possible to be liberated and still take an interest in these things. I personally share Shelley Dillon's hostility to "How To" articles, lacking the inclination or the ability, and certainly if their main object is to be less bored at home. But they don't have to be abolished for everyone--there must be some feminists of either sex who enjoy being creative.

Reacting to the article, I found that I was far more identified with both Chatelaine and Ms. than I had realized. Chatelaine was almost my only link with Canada during periods in other countries. There is practically no Canadian news in the U.S. or in Britain and it is as

though B.C. did not exist. I still feel a great deal of what it prints readable, informative, helpful about the Canadian scene. Knowing of its schizoid tendencies--though there are few articles about what the Queen has for breakfast these days--I have always been selective about reading it. But I do respect its editorials and its Hotline on Women, and it seems to me to be moving in the right direction. I agree that "analysis about the system we live in" is badly needed, but perhaps it has never been suggested to the editors, and this is up to us. The January issue encourages contributions from readers, so Shelley Dillon might like to send an article on the subject.

Ms. of course is a horse of a different colour. I have felt from the first issue, like Kate Millett, that this is "our" magazine--with the reservation that it was not Canadian. I think when it first came out we may have had the sort of warm reaction to it that parents had to Sesame Street on T.V., simply because it was the first of its kind. Now there are competitors in the field and we are free to criticize. But both were pioneering ventures and for that we should be grateful.

In the case of Ms., as with Chatelaine, I agree that some sort of analysis, as well as character sketches would be helpful. In the January issue, why do we have a piece of fiction from Ghana with absolutely no background information? I too, found the article on East Indian women frustrating and unsatisfying: again presumably nothing was contributed to bring it all together, but it should have been demanded editorially.

Maybe Ms. is "becoming a magazine of women worship" but is that altogether a bad thing? At least it is worshipping women for what they are doing and not for the way they look.

Perhaps it is inevitable that Ms. is geared to a capitalist system--I do not think its editors pretend to be socialists and so inevitably are tied to the

system. On their own terms they have succeeded--and how many socialists are there in the U.S. anyhow? Here I have to admit to heresy--I subscribe to, and enjoy, Priorities, more because of its feminist viewpoint than its socialist convictions. But again does Ms. receive any contributions from socialist feminists with non-capitalistic proposals? I hope, if it did they would be printed, because--I hope--Ms. is still "our" magazine, despite being American and capitalist, and theoretically at least it should be possible to widen its horizons; unless we would be better occupied promoting our own Canadian feminist non-capitalistic magazine.

I don't agree that the picture regarding magazines for women is as bleak as Shelley thinks. It could be a great deal better, and less devoted to the super housewife image, but most magazines do print one or two reasonably intelligent articles among the advertising--tokenism maybe, but better than the picture ten, even five, years ago. I don't believe that the odd magazine article is going to raise any one's consciousness much, but the fact that they are there at all is encouraging. The whole concept of separate magazines for men and women is so odd when one stops to think about it that perhaps it is this we should be attacking rather than criticizing individual magazines.

Angela Page,
Port Moody.

REPORTS FROM
groups
where are
you?

Peace on Earth

The following are stories of women who live or have lived around Lesser Slave Lake, in northern Alberta. These are accounts I heard or was working on while drinking and visiting during the time of "Peace on Earth Good Will Toward Women."

In November (1974) about the last weekend, I think (Mrs. Davies) she was drinking in the bar--and last I seen her she could hardly stand up--so she couldn't walk there--by herself anyway. Anyway she'd been drinkin' a lot and then she lef' the bar. Then next thing I knew the cops were askin' me if I knew anything about it. Well I guess they found her there --north of town about four miles--in the ditch. Died they said of exposure. Well they say somebody lef' her there and she couldn't make it back or maybe she just fell asleep and froze. No, I don't think any charges goin' to be laid. They say her sister thinks she knows who done it. You know its bad--they say last summer two sisters in that same family they were raped and nothing happened about it either.

April 1973

The body of a sixteen year old woman was found in a field eleven miles from Slave Lake. She had died of exposure. Upon seeing this notice in a local newspaper I wrote to Grant Notley, NDP member in the Alberta Legislature. I received a reply saying he had inquired of the Attorney General's Department and was told that the information concerning the case had been mislaid. About six weeks later an inquest was held but the result stated that no evidence could be found to place blame or responsibility on the companions who had been with this

woman shortly before her death.

These brief paragraphs above are about Indian women who are living in the hazy space between two cultures and it seems do not receive justice from either. Here's hoping someday there will be "Peace on Earth."

Laurel M. Dow,
Courtenay, B.C.

Back Issues

Priorities back issues are available in single or in bulk orders. Single copies are .35¢ which includes postage. Over ten copies of any issue will cost .30¢ each and while they last a years back issues in plain brown envelope will be sent for \$3.00.

Please be sure to specify number of copies, issue number and your return address.

PRIORITIES 1973

January Vol.1. No.1 "Why a Women's Ministry"
February Vol.1. No.2. "Excerpts from Three M.L.A.'s Speeches."
March Vol.1. No.3. "Education for Whom"
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May Vol.1. No.5. "Women at Work"
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July Vol.1. No.7."Women in Politics."
August Vol.1. No. 8. "Women in Media"
September Vol.1.No.9. "B.C. NDP Women's Policy Conference.

October Vol.1.No.10. "Report to '73 Convention and Bill #1."
November Vol.1.No.11."Report from Convention and NDP B.C. Caucus Committee on Women's Rights."
December Vol.1.No.12."Women and Humour."

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January Vol.2.No.1. "Women and Law"
February Vol.2.No.2
March Vol.2.No.3. "Women on the Island" a supplement by Victoria Socialist NDP Women's Caucus.
April Vol.2.No.4. "Child Care Supplement" and Review of "A Touch of Class and Kamouraska."
May Vol.2.No.5. "Facts of Life for Rural Women" by the Upper Island NDP Women's Caucus."
June Vol.2.No.6. "Highschool Women." and "Women's Resolution '74."
July Vol.2.No.7. "Feminism and Socialism" a special supplement by Burrard NDP Women's Group.
August Vol.2.No.8. "Report on NDP Women's Conference in Winnipeg" also review of "Growing Pains" by Emily Carr and "Privilege of Sex" by Eve Zarembo.
September Vol.2.No.9. "Report of the B.C. NDP Convention."
October Vol.2.No.10. "Morgentaler and Abortion."
November Vol.2.No.11. "Sexuality" by Fraser Valley NDP Women's Committee."
December Vol.2.No.12."Women and Literature."

BC WOMEN'S STUDIES ASSOCIATION

Initial steps toward the foundation of a BC Women's Studies Association were taken in October 74, and on 2 February 75 the organization was formally brought into being at a Conference at Vancouver Community College, Langara. About 50 women attended from a great number of the community colleges and all the universities of BC. Much time was spent in small discussion groups dealing with a variety of issues; the principal decisions taken in plenary sessions were as follows.

A primary goal of the BCWSA will be the establishment of a Research Centre, independent of any particular educational institution and available for all interested women to utilize. It will collect, organize, and publicize the availability of research on women's issues currently underway, and should also move to getting its own research projects going. Contact person is Allison Bouleter, 2042 W. 7th Avenue, Vancouver.

A pamphlet outlining How To Get A Women's Studies Course Going on Your Campus will also be prepared by the Association. Women who would like to contribute to it or to receive the finished product should write Pat Buckley, 1353 West 64th Avenue, Van.

The conference passed a motion condemning a quite extraordinarily sexist pamphlet in use at Okanagan College. The pamphlet, designed as a guide to the college library for OC students, features many cartoons showing female library personnel either as prune-type Old Maids or as Bosomy Young Things. Very gross. To protest, write Okanagan College Council, 1000 KLO Rd., Kelowna.

The contentious issue of whether or not

men should be involved in teaching women's studies courses, or should be members of the BCWSA, was essentially tabled to the next meeting for a full discussion. A motion was passed stating that instructors for women's studies personnel/faculty should be "sought among women"; this was felt to be acceptable for the present, but it's clear that the issue is an important and controversial one. At present, the organization is open to membership for any woman interested in women's studies.

There follows a list of contact persons for the BCWSA in all (or at least most) parts of the province:

- CAMOSUN Alice Ages, 553 View Royal Drive, Victoria
- CAPILANO Andrea Kiss 2055 Purcell Way, North Vancouver
- CARIBOO Sheila Mombouquette, 944 Surrey Avenue, Kamloops
- DOUGLAS Lillian Zimmerman, 1345 West 48th Avenue, Vancouver
- FRASER VALLEY Esther Robertson, 4628 Saddlehorn Cres., RR3, Langley
- GULF ISLANDS Donna Watt, Box 689, Ganges
- NEW CALEDONIA Kathleen Donovan, 1791 6th Avenue, Prince George
- NOTRE DAME Margaret Ostrowski, 416-6th Avenue North, Castlegar
- OKANAGAN Ruth Bohne, 425 Brighton Road, Kelowna
- SELKIRK Susan Charlton, Women's Centre, Box 1200, Castlegar
- UBC Women's Office Marion Barling, 5602 President's Row, Vanc.
- UBC Continuing Ed Eileen Hendry, 3356 West Third, Vancouver
- UBC Credit Courses Dawn Aspinall, Department of English, UBC
- VANCOUVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE Cindy Schreck, 7779 Birch, Vancouver

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A DAY IN THE LIFE

Margaret Smith jumped to the sound of the alarm. "Oh my god" she thought wearily, "another day, if only it were Sunday."

If anyone had cared enough to ask her, Marg would have probably told them that she was lucky to be a Canadian--citizen of a free country --a country where everyone--well practically everyone--had a chance to be somebody--to be rich. She'd had her chances but her luck hadn't been too good.

To begin with, her poppa and momma had funny accents and that made it difficult at school sometimes. And they were poor--dirt poor. Being a girl, when the family needed extra money to send the boys to school she had to take a job--any job. She might have made a good choice and married someone with some prospects. But she was young when she met Bill--hating her job and the family fights. Then she got pregnant. What can you do. Now Bill had lost his job because the plant closed down. He'd been a good worker no doubt about that, had hardly missed a day. The boss just said "sorry Bill." So what can you do.

Margaret went to the bathroom. Sometimes she felt like a robot. She was so tired her body ached. "Mamma, mamma there's no more milk." Lucy cried in the doorway. "Make some more" she shouted back. The radio in the kitchen was blaring "If you care about your family ladies, serve them lemon drop cookies--they're good and good for them." Mary stared at her face--now she was thirty-five. Tired, so tired she thought she'd die. And when would it end. Todd began to scream from his crib. She ran in, and picked him up and went to the kitchen. "Oh my God" she cried. The floor was

splattered with milk. "I was up till 11:30 washing that floor last night."

"Mamma, can I have \$1.50 for school for a book?"

"No, I don't have any money today."

"But I gotta have it, all the kids 'll have it."

"I don't have it to give you."

"Please."

"Ladies" the radio cooed "for a lovelier you buy Lovely-Lynn plus. Look 25 again."

Margaret put up the ironing board and set the iron. Then she started making the lunches.

"Mamma can I go skating tonight?"

"No, not tonight."

"But you promised."

"Debbie, you just heard me tell your sister, I don't have any money this week."

"Ah mamma."

Margaret went to the bedroom door. "Fred, it's almost 7:00, you'd better get up." The trouble with this place was it was so far from any place to work. Of course it was great to be away from the smell--to be able to open the windows in the hot weather. And in the old place she'd had to run to the door whenever she heard the screech of car brakes.

On her way to work Margaret took the children to Mrs. White's. She was a nice lady but very nervous. She looked after four little ones and

three after school . Her husband had left her and she couldn't get another job which was lucky for Margaret though unlucky for Mrs. White. One day when she had come by to pick the kids up Margaret found her crying, sitting in the living room in the middle of all the crap and crying. She'd said the landlord raised the rent again and she couldn't stand it. Of course she did stand it. What can you do.

After she left the kids, Margaret took the bus to work--it took an hour. Today she was lucky, she had a seat part way. The bus was late and she got to work at 9:10. She shuddered. "Thought you weren't coming in" the boss said. "I'll dock you next time" he said patting her behind. What a creep she thought.

Some of the girls had talked about a union. Said if you had a union it protected you. They couldn't make you come in on your day off and couldn't fire you for no reason. Those girls all got fired though--for just talking about it. The boss said business was slow. Well after all the boss is the boss. "I'm not the owner," the boss would say, "I don't make the rules, I just work here the same as you. If you don't produce I get it in the rear so don't make it hard on everyone." The real boss--the big guy, was in Toronto and his boss was in the states somewhere. So what can you do. But it wasn't as bad as down the street at Flako's where you didn't even get 45 minutes for lunch.

Marg had seen another job--for a stock-room clerk--it was more money than she was making. She thought she'd try out for it. "For yourself?" the man said. "Sorry" he said, "you made a mistake, that's a man's job." "But I'm strong" she said. "Better to keep what you have" he insisted, "ladies shouldn't try to do men's work."

On the way home Marg went into the Supermarket. She couldn't help thinking of old Mr. Brown who used to have a small grocery store on the corner opposite. He used to get fresh vegetables from a farmer out in the valley. When the supermarket came he hardly got any business. In the end he closed down. She saw that they were building another supermarket on that corner. She looked at the grocery list and carefully checked the prices of the things she wanted. Hamburger went up again--and it looked grey. Hope it isn't bad.

There was a forlorn looking old man standing in the aisle and he was being bumped by shopping carts as people passed him. He had an orange in one hand and a dented can of tomatoes in the other. It was sad when they got old like that. They just got in the way. They couldn't work any more so they were just pushed aside.

Marg picked up the kids and hurried home. It was dark and they were hungry. Bill sat there in the living room--smoking in the dark. "Anything?" she asked. "No," he replied. "They said at Beaver's they wanted younger men." "You're not old" she said. "I'm not young" he answered. Marg went to the kitchen. Better do a wash tonight. She started stacking the dishes and then peeled some potatoes.

The television was telling men to dress up for spring. Todd began to cry. The button on the stove came off in her hand. "Damn stove" she said. "You pay a fortune for a stove and it falls apart."

Bill stood at the door. "Well you could have started the supper," she yelled, or at least cleared the table."

"Jeez" he said "I feel bad enough about the job--do you expect me to put on an apron now and be the housewife." He turned around and

stamped out of the house.

After supper when the kids were finally settled in, Mary did the wash and started some mending. Her eyes were bothering her again. She should get some more glasses. The old ones were broken. Glasses were expensive though, maybe when Bill got another job.

The phone rang. It was Susan. "Did you see John Peters on T.V.?" she asked Marg.

"No, you mean from high school?"

"Yeah, he just bought the Carney Mills. He was with his wife in Hawaii or somewhere on vacation."

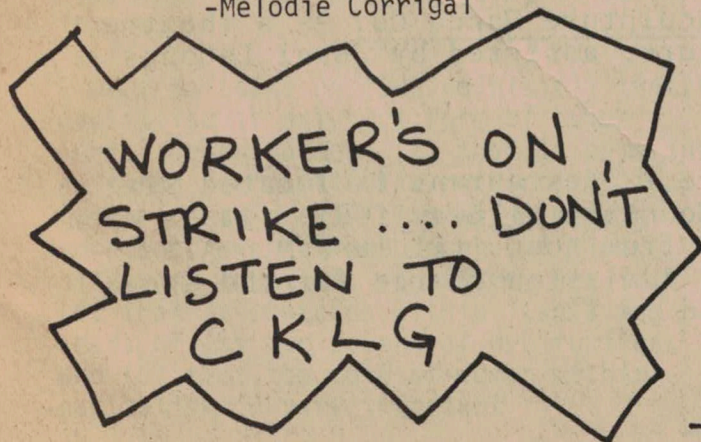
"Some people have all the luck."

"Luck, smuck his father was rich too. I tell you Marg you can't take it lying down--it's them or us."

Marg laughed, "Well I sure feel too beat to take it standing up."

Later, Marg lay in bed waiting for sleep. She heard Bill downstairs. And the kids crammed into that little bedroom were breathing softly. What'll happen to them, she thought. Lucy was already falling behind at school. And me, she thought, what'll happen to me. Something went wrong. I never got the white dress. It's never been like they said. Maybe it never is.

-Melodie Corrigan



WORKER'S ON
STRIKE DON'T
LISTEN TO
CKLG

TERRI'S report ~

Events in the past couple of months have pointed to a need within the women's committee and within us as individuals to solidify our thoughts on socialism and its relationship to feminism. There is also a need for us to articulate to others, inside and outside the party, what we see that relationship to be.

Our political philosophy is inextricably bound up with our realization of women's positions in society and how that position should be seen.

That's what is wrong with International Women's Year. It focuses attention on the inequalities women face without ever making reference to the underlying causes, and thus it gives false solutions. It gives the impression that if we realize women are unfairly treated, this realization will correct the injustices.

But what we must point out is that the injustices are an intrinsic part of the capitalist system. Cynthia's article on Capitalism points out extremely well how capitalism has shaped (perhaps I should say warped) our society. To think that anything but a fundamental restructuring of society will change the lives of women is to be unaware of the causes of women's oppression. It is not enough to believe that women are oppressed. To recognize the problem and not search out ways of effecting radical change is like cutting off the top of noxious weeds but not bothering to dig out the roots. The plant grows again and the roots are stronger and more deeply entrenched than before.

This issue of Priorities is the first in a series which will attempt to give us a clearer picture of the roots of
con't on page 24 ..

~eve-olution~

What is Eve doing in 1975? Beginning March 14 through March 30, Brackendale Gallery, in co-operation with Women's Studies Program, Capilano College, is presenting an exhibition of the arts for everyone, by and about women. The show is organized to reveal a spectrum of Eves' creative energy -- from those who are beginning to explore their artistic talents to those with considerable experience. Over fifty female artists from B.C. will exhibit paintings, drawing, sculpture, batik and weaving. In addition, two weekends will be devoted to women in the performing arts:

- Friday
March 14 Ardelle Lister, from the feminist media co-op, "Reel Feelings", presents a mixed-media demonstration of the roles women have historically played as artists and as objects of art.
Admission: \$1
- Saturday
March 15 A Wearables as Art Party -- an opportunity for everyone to show off creative apparel and to have fun. Live entertainment will be provided. Admission free.
- Sunday
March 16 An evening of Classical Music by musicians from Capilano College. The program will include Schumann's Frauen Leben, instrumental music by women composers, and a presentation of various operatic arias depicting the role of women in opera.
- Friday
March 21 Women Writers: Gladys Hindmarch will read from her new book, Growing Within -- an account of giving birth. Also, scenes from A Taste of Honey by Sheilagh Delaney will be presented.
- Saturday
March 22 Shari Ulrich & Friends in concert; an evening of wine, women and song; guitar, flute, piano, fiddle and voice.
- Sunday
March 23 Evelyn Roth's Moving Sculpture Dance Co. -- a theatre event of living sculpture; assisted by Jeani LeGongs's Afro Jazz arrangements.

Brackendale Art Gallery -- Theatre -- Restaurant is located six miles past Squamish on Whistler Mountain Highway (99). It is open every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from noon 'til 10 P.M. All special programs begin at 8 P.M. Admission charge for the above events, unless otherwise indicated is \$2.

CAPITALISM

Capitalism. The word itself is intimidating to many people, particularly women --we who have been taught for so many generations that we cannot understand "hard" subjects like economics, that we aren't logical/analytical, etc., etc. (I think that for many of us words and phrases like Profit, Supply and Demand, Labour Theory of Value, Deficit Balance, and Labour Force (seasonally adjusted) simply ring small gongs saying "Do not receive this message" in our heads.) This is not surprising; it's obviously to the advantage of those in control of a society if the controllees are convinced they can't understand how the society works.

So much for the negative. One thing the women's movement knows very well is that a major aspect of our oppression is precisely our lack of self-confidence; and for many women the movement's greatest gift has been that of increasing recognition and development of capacities that were there all the time, but which capitalism does not--to say the least--encourage. It is in this spirit that Priorities want to approach these theoretical discussions. These matters are not beyond us; we can and will cope with them, because, as with everything else in the movement, no one else is going to do it for us.

I want to touch on five points; (1) that capitalism is only one form of human social organization; (2) that it came into existence for particular reasons; (3) that it has certain qualities which remain constant, even given passage of time, different locations and forms, etc.; (4) that it contains within itself the seeds of its own potential destruction; and (5) that the role of women within capitalism is very important.

(1) Because the social context into which we are born is so all-encompassing and so powerful, it is difficult to keep firmly in mind that capitalism is temporary, not fixed and eternal and the natural order of things. To the people who lived in pre-historic matriarchal and egalitarian societies, in slave societies, in feudal societies, these social systems probably seemed solidly entrenched too; but they gave way, each in their turn, to the pressure of economic, technological, social and political change. Further, that change occurred not because of some mystic Plan of the Universe, outside the influence of men and women. It occurred because of improvements and developments in the productive capacities of society, and because of the activities, inventions, struggles, and doings in general of men and women. Further, the basic direction of change in social/economic structure has been from lower to higher, in terms of social capacity to produce an abundance of goods, materials, and services necessary or desirable for the welfare and development of human beings. (N.B. I said to produce, not to distribute.) Capitalism is the best the species has done so far.

(2) Capitalism as we know it emerged in Western Europe and in Britain towards the end of the 18th century. You may remember, as I do, learning in public school about the spinning jenny and the mechanical loom. These and the myriad of other technological developments and inventions which occurred in this period were indeed crucial. Why? Because in some ways the history of our species is the history of the tools and techniques and artifacts we have created in order to deal with our environment. These mechanical inventions of the 18th century heralded a new age for our species because they made possible totally new methods of organizing the production of the things our species needs to survive. Take the simple example of cloth. Until this time, cloth was woven by individual men and women in their individual homes, or by small local

groups of workers in a particular vil-
lage or town. The work took a hell of a
long time to do and a lot of effort by
a lot of people. Machinery changed all
that. Much more material could be pro-
duced in far less time by far fewer
people.

Simultaneously with the development of
the new way to produce came the new way
of organizing production. Instead of
each worker owning his/her small indivi-
dual loom, one man owned several large
looms. This man was and is a capitalist.
The workers came to the place where the
looms and therefore the work were,
rather than toting their means of pro-
duction around with them individually.
And with this new way of organizing
production came the new way of earning
one's living. Instead of making several
lengths of cloth and then going to mar-
ket and selling them and getting the
money, workers now produced goods for
somebody else to sell, and received
wages from him for their work. This was
and remains today the basic structure of
the system. A worker produces X lengths
of cloth on machinery owned by someone
else. The someone else sells these pro-
ducts for Y amount of money. But the
worker does not connect with the Y
amount of money at which her X amount of
production is valued; she connects only
with a little y, which is what is left
when the machine's owner has scooped in
a nice fat profit for himself.

The basic structure, then, is composed of
two essential elements: a very small
group of people, mostly men, who own and
control the means (resources, machinery
etc.) of producing needed goods and
services, known as the ruling class, and
a very large group of men and women who
actually produce the goods and services
known as the working class. It is impor-
tant to note here that "the working
class" does not simply mean people en-
gaged in factory production of tangible
objects like cars or kitchen cabinets.
It includes all who sell their labour-
power, whether that power is manual,
mental, imaginative, etc.,

(3) The key word is profit. Acquiring
and retaining that profit for a favoured
few is the absolutely dominant aim of
this particular method of economic or-
ganization. Given this premise--that
profit is all important--we can see how
certain qualities and features of cap-
italism come to be.

As the new method of organizing produc-
tion spread and took hold, peoples who
had lived for generations in the country
found their means of livelihood fled to
the bulging new cities, and went there
too. Countries which had been 90% agri-
culture began the rapid swing to indus-
trialization. This trend, towards con-
centration of industry in large urban
centres, was and remains characteristic
of capitalism. Other essential trends
were and are those of standardization
of production quality; production in
large numbers/quantities; and a
constant search for ever-improved
methods of production (i.e. those
which can produce more in less time by
fewer people). Yet another feature
inherent in capitalism is that of gen-
erating wars. Since the desire for
profit is limitless, there must be a
continual search for new and larger
markets for the product. In the search
for these markets one runs up against
competitors, and at a certain point
the only way to gain control of a par-
ticular potential market area is through
war. Yet another characteristic aspect
of capitalism could simply be called
chaos. Since production is not planned
for need, we have on occasion over-
production of one type of goods or
service and on another occasion scar-
city; we have hundreds of similar pro-
ducts all competing for the same mar-
ket; we have the open destruction of
usable goods (remember those millions
of eggs last year?) because their sale
would not be profitable; we have the
waste and ravage of natural resources
without regard to long-term needs and
uses, or to the life and health of the
natural world and the humans who live
in it.

It should be noted that all these features of capitalism have nothing to do with the technology per se. There is nothing inherently wrong or bad about large numbers of people living close together in cities and producing things there, or about standardizing production quality, producing lots of goods, trying to improve ways of producing them, getting goods and services to as many people as possible, or making use of natural resources for the benefit of human beings. The problems lie with the capitalistic and profit-oriented way in which the production is organized and the technology used and the products/goods/services distributed. I think this is important because there is a certain current of "socialist" thought which calls for a return to the Simple Life and the Good Old Days before we had all this nasty technology which is destroying Mother Earth. This is a denial and rejection of human progress. Technology can and should be used for the benefit, comfort, enjoyment, etc., of the human species, and used to the hilt. Under capitalism, it isn't; but that's not to say that it can't be.

(4) The final and most important feature of capitalist mode of production, as outlined above, is that it produced an enormous group of persons who work for wages (sell their labour-power). There are thousands and indeed millions more workers than there are capitalists. This is the contradiction of the system within which lie the seeds of change. The capitalist system cannot function without these wage-workers; but precisely because of the way the capitalist system functions workers are in a position of opposition to it. Instead of working in isolation from each other here and there, we work together in large numbers and through our work build/operate/control/know about/run all this technology which the capitalists own. Without us nothing can get done...and yet most of us can scarcely afford to buy or acquire more than the smallest and most miserable portion of all the incredible and marvellous variety of goods and services and materials we ourselves produce.

This conflict of interest is irreconcilable.

These basic facts about capitalism did not escape the attention of even the earliest wage workers in the first great factories. Immediately the struggle began, with the formation --after bloody and dreadful battles and defeats--of primitive defense organizations and trade union formations, with the discovery of the weapons of strike and sit-down and boycott and with the formation of political parties representing the interest of the working class. As we know, that struggle continues today. The important thing is this: this is not a disagreement which can be settled by compromise, such as the ruling class would like to have us think so. There is no compromise which can satisfy the needs of both capitalist and worker, because the system is basically structured so as to benefit the one at the expense of the other. A radical--i.e. from the roots--reconstruction of society if necessary.

These theoretical concepts were first outlined in the early days of capitalism by such socialists as Marx, Engels, Bebel etc. This paper cannot possibly attempt to take up the history of the development of socialist theory, but I think it should at least be noted that there have developed two basic schools of thought: (1) that major social change can be achieved gradually and peacefully via a cumulative series of reforms, and (2) that a total revolution in social organization is necessary and can only be achieved through actual taking of power by the working class from the ruling class.

(5) It has been extremely difficult to keep women out of the preceding; I have tried to do so in order to be able to focus on our situation and our role under capitalism as clearly as possible.

It is easiest to see precisely how women fit into capitalism by looking at the institution of the family; and it is easiest to see how that works if you

consider the family from the point of view of a capitalist. To him, the family represents one life-time wage worker, the man; one potentially-available-if-needed wage worker, the woman; and x number of of future either lifetime or sometime workers, the children. Since the capitalist class wishes to obtain its labour in as pure a form as possible--does not want to bother having to feed or clothe or educate or care for it in sickness or old age--many of these functions are shoved off onto the family and particularly the woman. She is responsible for giving birth to, training and educating in early years, and socializing in the correct attitudes, x number of future workers. She is also responsible for cleaning up after, providing sexual services to, feeding, nursing, entertaining, and giving emotional support to the lifetime wage worker. She is also charged with the care of the physical dwelling in which these present and future workers live, and -- extremely important--with the acquisition of most of the goods, materials, services etc., which find their way into that dwelling. Looking at the matter thus, from the capitalist viewpoint, it is easy to understand why the demands of the women's movement for childcare, equal pay for equal work, equal job opportunity, control of our bodies, freedom of sexual preference, an end to sexism in education, etc., etc., are such a threat to the ruling class.

My preceding paragraph may make it sound as though women work only in the home. As we know, it's not so; because capitalism is so riddled with contradictions and confusion and chaos, it has never been possible to exclude women totally from participating in social production. From the very beginning of industrialization women have worked, and --precisely because of the dominant ideology that our place is in the home--our role in the labour force has always been that of the last hired and first fired, the lowest paid, the most menial, the least protected. Moreover, entrance into the labour force per se has not meant relief from the at-home labour force; it has meant simply adding one load of work to another. Thus we are oppressed both as workers and as women.

I have now touched on my five points, and am overwhelmed with all I have omitted: unemployment, ideological support of capitalism, racial and national divisions fostered by capitalism, boom and bust, wartime economies, role of church, what is the state, multinational corporations, imperialism, prostitution, inflation, welfare, and doubtless much more. Let us hope that some at least of these will be taken up in future issues of Priorities.

Cynthia Flood,
Vancouver-Centre.

FLYING

The B.C. Federation of Labour today called on the Federal Government to intervene and prevent the Ministry of Transport from passing a regulation barring female flight attendants from working after 3½ months of pregnancy. The following is the text of telegrams sent to: John Munro, Minister of Labour; Jean Marchand, Minister of Transport; and Marc LaLonde, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

"Our federation protests, in the strongest possible terms, the proposed Ministry of Transport regulation which would bar female flight attendants from working after 3½ months of pregnancy.

Passage of such a regulation would make a complete mockery of the Canada Labour Code and of the Government's stated concern for the rights of women.

Furthermore the prospect of a Government agency such as the Ministry of Transport showing such blind servility to the wishes of airlines whose activity it is supposed to govern is disgusting.

We urge you to take all necessary steps to ensure that the Ministry of Transport does not go ahead with its sell-out to PWA and Transair."

Press release issued by the B.C. Federation of Labour, February 3, 1975.

Feminist

* * * * *

ROSEMARY BROWN

MLA VANCOUVER -
BURRARD

IS RUNNING FOR

FEDERAL LEADER OF THE NDP

CAN YOU HELP IN HER CAMPAIGN?

WOULD YOU LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

Rosemary would like to hear from you.
She needs participation and support
from every Province.

WRITE: Rosemary Brown, MLA,
4750 Belmont Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C.



! ROSEMARY ! SPEAKS OUT

Reprinted from 'The Ubysey', Friday,
February 7, 1975.

Socialism and feminism are both movements reacting to the capitalist system, Rosemary Brown, NDP MLA and possible federal NDP leadership candidate said Thursday.

Speaking to about 60 young NDP club members, Brown said she could not envision the possibility of a socialist party leader not being committed to feminism.

"The oppression of women is part of the historical process which is rooted in the private ownership of property, the alienation of labour, and the substitution of commodity exchange," she said.

"Recognizing the parallels and having made the link between our oppression, the alienation of the worker, the rape of our natural resources and the destruction of the environment with the economic system we call capitalism, we should not compartmentalize and separate our struggles, but accept that they are all part of the whole."

Brown said being a feminist would not be a liability to an NDP leadership candidate.

"Feminism, like socialism, calls for a new human community based on the creative and co-operative use of power to create new economic, social and political forms," she said.

Brown said the brutal and dehumanizing capitalist system is irrational and absurd.

She said the system denies the right to life itself to millions of people, lays waste and squanders the resources of the earth and feeds upon injustice, oppression

and inequality.

The assembly line is an image of the division and alienation of labour, the separation of the worker from the product of his labour and from his fellows, Brown said.

The modern city with its rows of separate housing units radiating outward from the central business core is but an imitation of the assembly line she said.

"In such an environment the nuclear family becomes an economic unit whose main function is that of consumer, isolated from any real sense of community," Brown said.

She said the two major parties are perpetuating the system rather than trying to help Canadians.

Brown said the NDP must present a clear alternative based not on reforming or patching up their old line structures but on structuring and designing a new system.

She said this new system should be based on the collective responsibility of society for its members.

Brown charged that the governments participating in the Syncrude deal are more involved with the welfare of private industry than with the welfare of the people.

She said the parties in the Syncrude deal, the two Conservative provinces, the Liberal government and private industry together formed an unholy alliance.

"Such alliances indicate the need for an alternative designed to protect the interests of people," Brown said. "And this is the challenge which the NDP must continue to meet."

Asked if the international women's year could be rescued, Brown said it cannot be rescued because the Liberals

do not understand what it is.

"It is like trying to explain driving to someone when they have never seen a car," Brown said.

Brown also called for greater socialist education to replace the present accent on legislative change.

She said the legislation is only a tool and is less important than educating the public in socialism.

Asked about education in B.C. Brown said the educational system is going through a period of change and there will be a rough time during the change.

"That's how change comes about," she said. "You have to live through the fire."

Brown said she will have made up her mind whether or not to run for the federal party leadership by the end of February.

(con't from page 18)

women's oppression. We will gain knowledge of the history of capitalism. We know the effects from our own experience and the experience of our sisters and we will be more able to enunciate the future.

In my three years of party membership, no part of the party structure, with the exception of the Women's Committee, has ever attempted to give party members a perspective of their political activities. The Women's Committee is attempting to do just that. And I believe that that perspective will make some people uncomfortable but it will also win us new allies and strengthen our commitment to the feminist/socialist movement.

Terri Ash,
Chairwoman,
NDP Women's Committee.



THANKS



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

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