

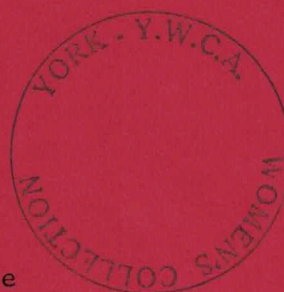
PRIORITIES

Vol. 3 # 4

April 1975



Y. W. C. A. ^{b.}
RESOURCE CENTRE



A young girl was raised to be sexually ignorant, emotionally submissive and intellectually a dilettante....Her education was to bring out her "natural" submission to authority and her "innate" maternal instincts.

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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Margaret Beardsley, Melodie Corrigan, Cynthia Flood, Marianne Gilbert, Ruth Houle, Judy McManus, Judy Paterson, Linda Storey, Marilyn Webb, with the help of Phyllis Bridges and Edith Thomas.

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

If you are willing and able to help on Priorities, please phone Melodie at 733-5990 or Cynthia at 255-7820.

WE ESPECIALLY NEED HELP ON WORK WEEK-ENDS WHICH FALL ROUGHLY THE MID WEEK-END OF EACH MONTH. FOR A LOCAL LIBRARY OR SCHOOL!

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

(From the B.C. NDP policy on women's rights)

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

If you are moving please submit a change of address the month before to Priorities, 3485 West 15th Ave., Vancouver.

BUY A SUBSCRIPTION FOR A FRIEND OR

EDITORIAL

Everyone is jumping on the bandwagon. First President Ford and the U.S. Government. Trudeau's Liberal Government quickly followed. Not to be outdone, a majority of Canadian provinces joined the group. Even the rich Playboy publisher Hugh Hefner hasn't missed out.

What's the attraction? Why these philanthropists, these wolves in sheep's clothing are about to "save" the orphans of South Vietnam. Some of them, that is. If their planes arrive in the "free world" safely and they don't crash.

President Ford has set up "operation babylift" and the word is out that up to 4,000 youngsters may know the light of Western democracy - many of them fathered by U.S. servicemen during the rape of their homeland. The U.S. Agency for International Development has provided up to \$2 million for the airlift. Other private adoption agencies are involved in the arrangements which are being done by a "rough agreement" with the South Vietnamese government. On April 9th, Hugh Hefner rode 41 of these children out in his "Big Bunny" luxury plane which contains a 7 foot round bed on which they could recline. The Big Bunny is a take-off from the "Bunny Girl" - one of Hefner's contribution to modern civilization.

In Canada, Manpower and Immigration Minister Robert Andras has indicated full support and has even set up an emergency desk in Ottawa to handle adoption information. The Ontario government announced plans to charter its own planes to bring about 500 orphans to Canada. Even B.C. at first threw its support behind these moves, later modified by Human Resources Minister Norman Levi, who said: "The provincial government has no intention of organizing an airlift of South Vietnamese and Cambodian refugee children to B.C....." After 15 years we have this "legitimate upswell of emotions", but where was the support years ago?

A good question. The only support that the Vietnamese received from the U.S. and Canadian governments was napalm, defoliants, bombs, torture and more torture. The U.S. government, with Trudeau's full complicity, made more children orphans in their scorched earth, racist war than we can ever hope to save. On April 5th, President Ford was photographed at San Francisco Airport "fondling" an infant arrival, Lelina Chapet. Five days later, on April 10th, he went before Congress requesting more military aid for "besieged" Indochina, to the tune of \$722 million. More money for a war that has already cost the American people 50,000 lives and \$150 billion.

Operation babylift is a cynical move to mask the final collapse of American foreign policy in Vietnam. To mask the fact that these refugees are created by the government that purports to save them. It is a known fact that when a Vietnamese village "goes Communist", the area is bombed by B52s until it is wiped off the map. This was done with Quang Tri, Hue, during the 1968 Tet offensive and in Laos.

The editorial staff of Priorities abhor this cynical snatching of children for political purposes. Many of us have participated in the powerful world-wide anti-war demonstrations that took place a few years ago. The N.D.P. gave full support to the anti-war movement. Some of our slogans were: Hands Off Vietnam, Vietnam for the Vietnamese and End Canada's Complicity. We now say: Hands Off the Vietnamese Children

.....continued on page

LETTERS

Dear Priorities:

I understand from reading an article in a recent "Chatelaine" magazine that the Standing Committee on Women's Rights produces a Vancouver paper "Priorities."

I feel the subject listed in the article should be of interest to all women and would like to receive same. Could you send me a sample copy and is there a subscription rate?

Please advise me and thank-you.

Alice Windt,
Quesnel, B.C.

Human values

Dear Priorities:

Enclosed is my cheque for one dollar to cover the increased subscription rate for Priorities which I enjoy very much. I feel that your publication is generally even-handed, with many interesting articles. I would like to thank you for your fairness in reprinting the letter from Otto Lang in your February issue, supporting the protection of unborn children.

It is unfortunate that so many "liberated women" in our society are seeking abortion as a means of furthering their "own" liberation. The policies of Nazi Germany included free abortion as well as the elimination of other unwanted people. If we are seeking true liberation for everyone, should we not include the caring for, and protection of, those who cannot defend themselves.

Who are we really trying to liberate?

Yours faithfully,
Clementien B. Secker.

P.S. Please return my cheque and cancel my subscription if you feel that my views are not a worthwhile contribution to your continuing discussion on Women's Liberation and human values. Thank you.

Cheers!

Dear Priorities:

I have received all copies of Priorities and really look forward to them each month.

S. Freund,
North Vancouver.

Bureaucratic error

Dear Priorities:

Our subscription to Priorities was cancelled accidentally by our purchasing department. Of course, we are anxious to keep in touch with all publications that are informative and relevant to Canadian women. But we have a staggering number of magazines that we read now, which probably accounts for the fact that we didn't realize--until you pointed it out that we were no longer getting Priorities

We have placed a new subscription order for it.

Sincerely,
Doris Anderson,
Editor, Chatelaine.

(Editor's Comment--actually this is the typists comment--that's the kind of a newsletter this is--Ms.Anderson you really know how to hurt a person. We thought we were being discontinued because of our militant, aggressive feminist-socialist content. Now we discover it was only a bureaucratic mistake. And to add to the insult you never even realized that you had missed our thought-provoking magazine for a few months. Ms.Anderson we are tough but we got feelings. Watch it!

Welcome comment

I want to thank you for the thought-provoking articles, especially the recent one on Capitalism (though I can't agree with every statement in it).

Yours sincerely,
J. Campbell, Vancouver.

(Typists comment- see Ms.Anderson some people know we exist and that we are thought-provoking!)

We'd like to know TOO!

Dear Priorities:

I am compiling information on what the NDP government has done for women in your province since it was elected. I would appreciate your sending me any available information on what the NDP government has done in the fields of day care; sex stereotyping in school textbooks, and in school counselling; women in the labour force; and women

in law.

Are there any educational programs designed to raise the consciousness level of women? Is there any likelihood of a Department of Women's Affairs being established?

Thank you for your kind assistance.

Yours sincerely,
Celia Borges,
NDP Research Office,
Toronto, Ontario.

(Editors Comment: As we have been asking these questions for two years ourselves we are sending this on to Victoria in hopes that some reply will be forthcoming.)

MUCH APPRECIATED

Dear Priorities:

Thank you for reminding me that my subscription is up. I'd hate to miss a copy! Also, thank you for all the work you've put into Priorities. It's much appreciated.

Janet Fairbanks,
Cumberland, B.C.

PRIORITIES NEEDS

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

VIEW



→ POINT

The following viewpoint was sent to Priorities by C.S. Peacock along with the donation of two books for the Priorities library.

Being surfeited with the male hallucination that men are the superior sex and women a mere appendage to them, I take to my typewriter to refute a few of their specious arguments.

Let us first define the term sex and what it connotes. Well, as far as I can see it encompasses only one insignificant function of the human machine, that is in point of time, but it has far reaching effects I will admit. Yet why it is used as a weapon to subjugate women must ever be a mystery.

Naturally a woman is prepared and willing to look after the needs of her offspring till they reach a measure of maturity. But why should every big hulking male who comes within a woman's orbit expect to be waited upon and every whim appeased. Oh yes, the better grade of males will stand when a woman enters the room, hold her coat and a few more of the inconsequential niceties, which going under the name of chivalry.

This is the sop they hand our with which to betray us. The drudgery of housework, the sole responsibility of the children and the financial burden of making ends meet is supposed to be our divine appointment. Written over the lintel of every door women are supposed to read, "By appointment to his majesty, the self styled male god of fertility," and naturally bow before this edict.

Women are weary beyond measure of listening to the tooting of these tin-horn gods.

They claim that woman's place is in the home, because she spends most of her time and energy there in making it a haven for her family. By the same logic if a man monopolises the family car his place is in the garage.

The eternal wail of the male is that women are taking the jobs away from the men. Let's scrutinize this closely. Just who wove the cloth at home to make the family garments? Women! Who knit all the socks, stockings, sweaters, etc and still are doing it in some cases? Women! Who plucked the chickens and made feather pillows and comforters for the home needs? Women! Who made all the jams, jellies, pickles etc at home before men saw how they could commercialize these activities and sell them back to the women, who were willing to buy them in order that they might have a little leisure for the culture that was denied them for so many centuries.

Men were quick to realize that if they could corral the food supply and its distribution they could maintain the myth of their superiority. Now they beef if women go out of the home to work at what she originally created and reap some of the monetary reward for her labours. Of course they still grudgingly grant her the menial tasks but when she gets into a cushy job, listen to them wail. It is the wail of a lost cause because men will destroy themselves as all past patriarchal societies have done as attested by geological excavations.

Man is a predatory animal in that he preys upon his own species and justifying his misconduct in war and out of it by calling upon his god to favour him with victory over his victims. Shame on him.

WHAT CAN ONE WOMAN DO? Report from Omineca, B.C.

Dear Priorities:

Enclosed please find a copy of a report given to our Omineca Constituency Meeting on February 23rd, 1975.

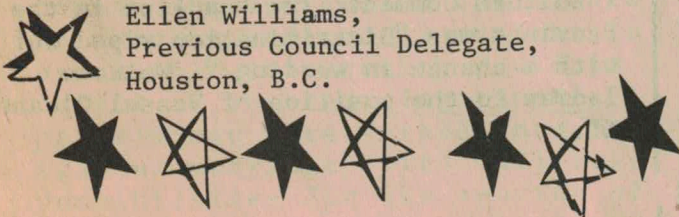
Please bear with me, and understand that NO ONE PERSON can forge ahead and DO all the things that are attributed to one woman in a Northern Constituency. Without the help of a great many others, it would not have been possible at all. Many of the merchants and individuals in the community have donated of their time and/or money, to get the things we want. It is distressing, indeed, that we do not (as a Government), see fit to provide these things, as a "matter of right" without resorting to "petitions," "letters of support," and all manner of sundry methods of "arm twisting" to get the things we want, need and deserve.

We feel that the North, in particular, is ex-communicated, in that we must work extra hard to obtain the services available, and taken for their "God-given right," by the people in the Lower Mainland.

I especially want to thank Marguerite Clarkson, Chairperson of the Women's Committee of the Omineca Constituency for her kind words on my behalf.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Williams,
Previous Council Delegate,
Houston, B.C.



In the past, we've talked of Rosemary Brown's Affirmative Action Bill which would require that employers accept applications from both men and women.

At the last meetings, we talked about women in municipal life. We said that of the three women who ran for municipal council in Fraser Lake, all three were socialists.

Still, you may wonder what one woman can do in a society which is guided by the profit motive rather than the well-being of the individual person.

Let us talk for a moment about Northern Development. Some years ago, the previous government welcomed a massive development in a Northern Village. But the building of this mill was not so advantageous as the people expected. The high school is operating at half-capacity, the floor of the company-built medical clinic sagged under X-ray equipment and was finally sold to the Hospital Board for a high price. Nearby, a mine closed.

Problems began to surface or already existed in the population at large. Newcomers needed a contact to give them information about community services. Senior citizens wanted a quiet place to sit and play a game of Whist. Young mothers were trapped in apartment or trailers. Deprived families needed clothing and furniture. Young people needed to know about the realities of hard drug use. Pre-delinquent youth needed to find constructive ways to use their time.

The retarded children wanted to play the part they were capable of in the community at large.



One woman in that village knew that there were untapped resources that could help those people in need. Clothing and furniture can be recycled. Recreation can be organized for senior citizens and young people. Baby-sitting can be provided for young mothers to give them some time for themselves outside the four walls that confine them. Educational films can be borrowed to inform youngsters about addiction.

Despite the aims of the programme which this woman devised the Village Council of the day was not completely sympathetic. Funding has not always been easy to get but no-one promised this woman that community service would be an easy trip. It hasn't been.

By now many of you know that the village is Houston, the project SCRAP (Social, Culture and Recycle Arts and Programs) and the woman who led it is Ellen Williams.

Mr. Chairman, I move acceptance of this report.

Marguerite Clarkson,
Chairperson of the Women's Cttee,
Omineca Constituency Ass'n.
February, 1975.

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♀

in the news

Vancouver Sun, April 5, 1975.

Allan Fotheringham.

Do you really think Canada Manpower should advertise for "go-go dancers and strippers"? There it is, the mark of Western Civilization, posted at a shopping centre on Scott Road in Surrey,-- one Manpower and Immigration card for "Live-in Housekeeper, Babysitter. Salary open, board and private room. One child (2½ years), general housework." Directly beneath it, the next Manpower card: "Go-Go dancers and strippers. \$250.00 per week"

SAVED AGAIN

Vancouver Province, March 19, 1975.

A change in wording has wiped out discrimination among maintenance employees of B.C. Ferries, Provincial Secretary Ernie Hall told the legislature Tuesday.

Gordon Gibson (L-North Vancouver) recently pointed out that public service employment schedules listed two categories of ship "cleaners"--male and female. Male employees were paid roughly \$50 more than their female counterparts.

Hall explained the categories now are listed as "vessel cleaners I and II" and both male and female may apply for the positions.

(Editors Comment: The headline in the Province was "Discrimination wiped out with a change in wording." Welcome ladies to the position of Vessel Cleaner II.)

WOMEN UNDER CAPITALISM

During the early stage of human development very little was known about biology. The role of the father was not understood in reproduction. Children were descendants of their mothers and belonged to them. As human knowledge developed the role of the male in the reproductive process was discovered and paternity was clearly established. Knowledge not only expanded here but people began to make tools and domesticate plants and animals. People stopped roaming as hunters. They settled in farming communities. Agriculture proved prosperous enough to provide for people a surplus over their daily needs. This was the first time in human history that there was more than bare subsistence living. As better tools and farming methods were further discovered people were able to produce greater surpluses. They also became weavers, dyers, makers of wool and leather products and even luxury products like jewelry.

Surpluses for the first time in history heralded the beginning of private property and with it the women's fall from a matriarchal to a patriarchal form of society. How man usurped the rights and property of the female is the subject of another article. Suffice to say men now became the owners of private individual wealth. In order that this wealth would be passed on to their legitimate heirs women were forced into monogamous marriages with full responsibilities for the rearing of

their husbands' offspring and the care of the household and his needs. Private property relations have remained the dominant form of human organization to the present in most of the western world with its culmination in the highly sophisticated capitalist system.

In the January issue of Priorities Cynthia Flood's article "Capitalism" gave us an explanation of the main features of this system. She also pointed out the great importance of women in this scheme of things --an importance that was directly related to her role as the guardian angel of the nuclear family and, when required, a cheap addition to the ranks of wage labour.

When one half of humanity are the virtual slaves of the other half the slave owners must justify their right to rule. Thus the myth of women's inherent inferiority was elaborated, backed by pseudo-scientific attempts to justify this position. This myth, which women have lived with for centuries, dies hard. During the last one hundred and fifty years capitalism refined it to a fine polish.

"THE VICTORIANS"

It was the Victorians who elaborated a rounded view of women. Queen Victoria has long been dead. Not so the Victorian attitude to her sex. England, often examined as an example of classic capitalist

development, is also a classic example of feminist and anti-feminist views and struggles.

The perfect Victorian "lady" was the perfect wife. Her main function: childbearing and holding the family, the "cornerstone of society", together. One additional duty was added to the lower class wife, that of contributing to the family income. A young girl was raised to be sexually ignorant, emotionally submissive and intellectually a dilettante with a smattering of academic learning rounded off with a health dose of music, art, embroidery and fine sewing. Her education was to bring out her "natural" submission to authority and her "innate" maternal instincts.

Middle class women were not allowed to work outside the home. Charlotte Bronte's rebellious Shirley Keeldar, the heroine of her novel Shirley longed for more than just marriage.

"Caroline," demanded Miss Keeldar abruptly, "don't you wish you had a profession--a trade?"

"I wish it fifty times a day. As it is, I often wonder what I came into the world for. I long to have something absorbing and compulsory to fill my head and hands, and to occupy my thoughts."

"Can labour alone make a human being happy?"

"No; but it can give varieties of pain, and prevent us from breaking our hearts with a single tyrant master-torture. Besides, successful labour has its recompense; a vacant, weary, lonely, hopeless life has none."

The response to this passage by two men of the time when shown it

by an early feminist, Mrs. Jameson, was: (a) they should marry, (b) they should emigrate (if they couldn't find a husband in in England).

The other alternative to the boredom of domesticity for most middle class women was to "do good." Women were encouraged to dabble in charity without having any power to effect any real change. They attempted to alleviate some of the harshest effects of the profit system while their husbands or fathers were busy perpetuating these conditions in the working world outside, their snug homes.

Marriage may have been a soothing prison to the majority. For those who never married life was a disaster. The "spinster" or "old maid" was a great source of humour in music halls and operettas. If a woman had reached middle age it was considered obscene that she should still want to marry. The only place for these women, if they didn't have a private income, was to go and live with a married brother or sister and become the shadowy "maiden aunt," a failure, and not really very important but helpful around the house. Or she could become a governess--another thankless, demeaning job about which much has been said in fiction notably by the Bronte sisters who underwent this lonely experience themselves.

This stereotype of the perfect lady was dominant in the working class outlook also. Economic circumstances made it impossible for poor women to realize this ideal but it was admired by many. The better off workers embraced premarital chastity and the family--they had more to lose if family respectability, their own key to honour, was lost. A "bad sister" could mean loss of work for other

members of the family.

George Eliot treated this theme in Adam Bede. A working class girl becomes pregnant by the young land-lord. The whole family faces ruin, the young woman, Hetty Sorrel, runs away from home and attempts to commit suicide. Her courage fails her and she gives birth to a girl who dies of exposure when she temporarily abandons it in her weak and hysterical state. Hetty is sentenced to hang, later commuted to deportation to the colonies. Her seducer, Arthur Don-nithorne, who is known by all as the father, lives with the punish-ment of a guilty con-science and the con-stant reminder that he was injudicious en-ough to fall for a girl beneath him.

The Victorian woman was educated to believe that she had no sexual drive, that submission to her hus-band was a "duty." Her compensation: she was deemed morally superior to men. But she was still inferior because of her "weaker nature."

ART & WOMEN

Art during this period produced many instructive paintings. They usually appealed to the viewers' sentiment and not the senses. The female form at this time did not express the voluptuous, naked soli-dity of previous artists like Rubens, Raphael or Michelangelo. The emphasis was on sweet, clothed innocence usually done in a domes-tic setting. With some excellent exceptions, the unhappy side of family life was avoided.

The Victorians were obsessed with the idea, inherited from Reynolds "Discourses, that art should represent nature as it should be not as it is. (Remember Dorothea Brooke and the "simpering" pictures in her uncle's drawing room?)

In 1858 Augustus Egg did a series of three paintings depicting the downfall of the adulterous woman who, in the last of the series, is shown, thin and miserable, cradling her illegitimate offspring and gazing at the Thames River from under Waterloo Bridge from which she is planning to jump. This bridge was so often used for this purpose by the desti-tute and despairing that it became a symbol of lost hope.

In the Bridge of Sighs Thomas Hood begins this beautiful poem with:

One more Unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death,
Take her up tenderly
Lift her with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

"Women don't consider themselves as human beings at all."

Florence Nightingale

Victorian hypocrisy, while condem-ning the "loose" woman, was quite prepared to overlook and not men-tion the adulterous male. And of the few painters of that period who condemned men's double stand-ard was Ford Madox Brown. He started a painting which he never finished entitled Take Your Son. It depicts a madonna-like woman holding out a husky male infant. Reflected furtively in the round mirror at the back of the mother's head is the father of the child. The woman's expression eloquently tells us that she is demanding he assumes his share of responsibil-ity.

Other established painters attempted to depict a different view of women's lives but they were not popular with the Royal Academy and eventually they turned to other subject matter. One of the best of these was The Seamstress by George Frederic Watts, the sadly beautiful picture of an exhausted seamstress taking a moment's rest. Thomas Hood's poem The Song of the Shirt is a fitting commentary for this picture:

With fingers weary and worn
With eyelids heavy and red...
Sewing at once with double thread,
A shroud as well as a shirt.

SEX & PROSTITUTION

Economic conditions and moral hypocrisy pushed many women into prostitution. Women were supposed to be asexual beings but once a woman fell, even once, into a life of "sin" her nature somehow became incorrigably evil and was considered lost forever. If an illegitimate child betrayed her beyond doubt she was driven from her family, discriminated against by pious employers and virtually driven to the streets. For the chaste working class woman who worked in factories, domestic service, shops or agriculture there was sharp competition for jobs and starvation wages. Many women had to supplement their low earnings and one of the few ways they could do this was by prostitution. In 1850 Henry Mayhew who wrote London Labour and the London Poor quotes a woman:

"One of my boys was alive at this time and we really could not live upon the money (as a needlewoman). I applied to the parish and they wanted me to go into the (poor-) house; but I knew if I did so, they'd take my boy from me, and I'd suffer anything first. At times I was so badly off, me and my boy, that I was forced to resort to prostitution to keep us from starving."

During periods of recession prostitution rose. The anonymous author of My Secret Life says to a 15 year old girl:

"Well, what do you let men fuck you for? Sausage-rolls?"

"Yes, meat pies and pastry too!"

Working class men as well as the middle class contributed to the demand for prostitutes but middle and upper class women never contributed to the supply. Working class women provided an outlet for the sexual demands of the male and also served the social function of preserving the virginity and shielding married women from the grosser passions of other males.

Something was attempted to curb this depressing situation in 1865 with passage of the first of the notorious Contagious Diseases Acts. It allowed forced examination of any woman suspected of soliciting but no similar measures were carried out against their male clients. The feminist, Josephine Butler, waged a long fight against these acts and eventually was successful in having them rescinded.

The "virtuous" females of the upper classes had another problem: sexual repression (well documented by Sigmund Freud who gave us that famous term penis envy and all it implied). Many women attempted to act out their repressed sexuality through religion, to the point of fanaticism with some. Others expressed their sexual repression in neuroses, depression, nervous debility, all traits merely interpreted as women's inherently "weak nature."

Many theories of women's sexuality were rampant. A most popular one was by a Scottish biologist Patrick Geddes who published in 1889 a book called The Evolution of Sex. He said that sex differences were related to cell metabolism, a complicated theory which simplified says: Male cells have power to transmit variations along with the power to dissipate energy. Female cells, by contrast, have the power to contrast, have the power to conserve energy, support new life and maintain

stability in new forms of life. Therefore he inferred from this that men are constitutionally aggressive, women constitutionally passive. Biology is destiny in new garb.

During the late 1800's this Victorian view of women began to disintegrate. The feminists who came on the scene at this time gained increasing acceptance and so began the slow destruction of some of the worst aspects of this period.

REFERENCES:

The following is a list of books that I examined as a basis for this article. I consider them the best. There were a few others I looked at which I am not listing here because of their inferior quality or because they were general books and dealt with women only in passing. I most used Suffer and Be Still, the first listed.

Suffer and Be Still. Women in the Victorian Age. Edited by Martha Vicinus. Indiana University Press, Bloomington and London.

The Indomitable Lady Doctors. (Canadian) by Carlotta Hacker. Clarke, Irwin and Company Limited.

Rapiers and Battleaxes. The Women's Movement and its Aftermath. By Josephine Kamm. George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London.

Century of Struggle. The Women's Rights Movement in the United States. By Eleanor Flexner. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

A Singular Iniquity. The Campaigns of Josephine Butler. By Glen Petrie. The Viking Press. New York.

Women: From the Greeks to the French Revolution. An Historical Anthology. Susan Groag Bell. Wadsworth Pub. Co Inc., Belmont, California.

The second of this two part article by Ruth Houle will be presented next month in Priorities. We welcome your comments. Write to Priorities, 3485 West 15th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C.

Ruth Houle,
Delta.

NEXT ISSUE

WORKING WOMEN OF THE PAST 100 YEARS

" All the mortalities tell women that it is their duty and all the current sentimentalities that it is their nature to live for others; to make complete abnegations of themselves, and to have no life but in their affections."

John Stuart Mill

(The Subjection of Women
London, 1869.)

Women in ENGINEERING

(The following address was given by the Honourable Graham R. Lea, B.C. Minister of Highways, to the Women in Engineering Seminar at U.B.C., March 20.)

Women in engineering is a subject of particular importance to my Department because we find ourselves to be an institute which presents formidable barriers to the employment of women. This is largely because we draw most of our senior staff from the engineering profession--an area of endeavour which remains almost completely the preserve of man.

In today's world, our position is frankly embarrassing. It is clearly inconsistent and unethical for a modern agency of government such as ours, which provides services to men and women equally and is supported by the taxes of men and women equally to deny women opportunities for employment and advancement within our employment.

For this reason, earlier this year, I commissioned a task force to investigate the opportunities for women in the engineering professions. I am pleased that the members of this task force are here with us today.

The terms of reference of the task force are very broad in order to give its members the chance to investigate all areas of the question: the effect of elementary and secondary school education on the number of girls who choose to go into engineering; the effect of parental guidance on career choices; the effect of community attitudes on career choices; financial restraints on women who might enter engineering; attitudes of teachers and fellow students within the university

on women training to be engineers; opportunities for employment upon graduation; circumstances of on-the-job training.

I am certain the task force, under the leadership of Ms. Linda Shuto, will do a fine job and will explore, as broadly as possible, the reasons why so few women enter engineering.

Unlike some other task forces and study groups which start out very objectively in their pursuit, this task force has been given some prejudices with which to start and we have asked the members of the task force to share those prejudices. The first is that it is fundamentally wrong that any group of citizens, who are otherwise capable of pursuing meaningful careers, should be barred from that pursuit because of accidents of birth, such as sex, or persuasion. It is our view that bills of rights and declarations of liberties are meaningless pieces of paper unless the community as a whole is prepared to provide measures which will give economic equality to all people.

Our second prejudice is that, should we find the reasons why so few women enter engineering, that reason will be linked to the reason women have traditionally been at an economic disadvantage within our society. We cannot separate opportunities for women in engineering from opportunities for women on the assembly line. We cannot separate this particular question from the issue of equal-pay-for-equal-work as it effects all working women. We cannot separate the ability of middle class families to assist their female children to become engineers from the ability of poor Native families to assist their female

children in completing grade eight.

I give the members of the task force my best wishes. They have some important and interesting discussions ahead of them. They will come close to some very profound questions about the society in which we live.

Hon. Graham R. Lea
Minister of Highways.

Task Force on Opportunities for Women in
Engineering Profession:

Linda Shuto, Vancouver. Executive Assistant for the Status of Women Program, B.C. Teacher's Federation.

Dan C. Lambert, Managing Director, Assoc. of Professional Engineers of B.C.

Robyn Smith, West Vancouver. Draftsperson.

Veronica Holtby, Fort Langley. Teacher. Actively involved in women's rights groups.



Flora MacDonald

Province, March 18, 1975.

Flora MacDonald (PC- Kingston and the Islands) says there are more important things for reporters to ask than why she isn't married and whether she has had many affairs with men.

"I come to press conferences prepared to discuss national problems," she said, "and yet these are the kinds of questions I face from the national media."

Miss. MacDonald was speaking during a weekend seminar on International Women's Year in Pembroke, Ontario.

ATLANTIS

The first edition of ATLANTIS: A Women's Studies Journal will be published in the fall of 1975, and the publishers are now soliciting subscriptions and donations. Any scholarly articles concerning women's issues or creative writing by women authors should be sent to:

Donna E. Smyth,
Co-ordinating Editor,
ATLANTIS, c/o English Dept.,
Acadia Univ., Wolfville,
Nova Scotia.

HERS

The library of the University of Waterloo announces its intention to mount a major International Women's Year project which will require extensive funding from sources outside the university. The aim of the project, to be called HERS--Higher Education Resources for the Study of Women--is to produce a bibliography of the collection relating to women's studies held in the library. The material includes books, journals, manuscripts, letters, clippings, and ephemera. The collection is approaching 10,000 items and is considered to be the most extensive collection in Canada.

Project HERS will provide Canadian scholars with organized access to, and detailed information about, an important and valuable Canadian collection on feminism. Also this project will facilitate the process whereby a strong library collection in women's studies may be developed into a major Canadian resource centre capable of supporting advanced research.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee met on 29 March, with Terri Ash, Marianne Gilbert, Cynthia Flood, Nicky Phillips, Shelly Dillon, Jean Millar, Hilda Thomas, Janet Fairbanks and Judy McManus attending.

new women's organizer needed

Shelly Dillon informed the Steering Committee that she is resigning from her position as Women's Organizer, for personal reasons. Much discussion ensued, revolving around the idea of possibly having regions apply for funds for an organizer for two-month blocks of time. It was decided in the end that this system would lack continuity. Nicky Phillips indicated her interest in applying for the position of organizer, and the Committee agreed to give her their support.

7-8 June ndp women's conference

The Federal-Provincial Women's Conference will be held June 7-8 in Vancouver. Site not yet known; see May Priorities. Nicky agreed to begin organizing for it. In order to ensure a representative attendance from BC, Yukon and the Territories, a call to convention will be sent to each constituency, requesting a minimum of three delegates each but urging them to send as many delegates as possible. The convention will make plans for the half-day allotted at the upcoming Federal Convention for Women's Rights.

STRUCTURE

Restructuring the Steering Committee was discussed again. Kamloops felt they weren't having any problems with the present structure, but did suggest setting up regional women's committee meetings and steering committee meetings on an alternating every-other-month basis. The Courtenay representative felt this might work better, and planned to take the proposal back to her group for discussion. Discussion of the functions and structure of the Steering Committee will come up at the caucus meetings of the Provincial Convention.

campaign

Hilda Thomas reported on Rosemary Brown's campaign for the federal leadership. Rosemary is running as a feminist and a socialist; her campaign policy is decided by the Campaign Committee, which feels that she is running a strong socialist campaign, and is working very hard. Much more money is needed! (See article on the Brown campaign elsewhere in this issue.)

convention

Women's Rights is not likely at present to come to plenary session at the Provincial Convention. The Committee felt that the best strategy would be to prepare policy papers relating women's issues to other policy areas, and to have women prepared to debate resolutions from that standpoint.

There will be a convention-strategy-planning Women's Caucus meeting on the Friday afternoon of 16 May before the convention opens, from 2-5 pm. Daycare available. (See ad elsewhere in this issue.)

SHACKLED EMPTY

to an CUP



DREAM: Amidst all my involvement in the daycare operation at Kitsilano Daycare Society, I had a dream one night. There was a man, a grinder, and he had a monkey who held the cup. He played his tune while the monkey sat faithfully waiting for a few coins to be tossed into her cup.

Today, after nearly two years of waiting and struggling, the grinder still sits in Victoria, and we monkeys sit in our places, that long chain shackled around our feet and our cups empty.

To understand completely the frustrations I have felt as a parent on the Parent-Staff Daycare Board, I must share the events of the past two years.

Parent-Boards are created!

: a stroke of the pen
In July 1973, Minister of Human Resources, Norman Levi, wrote a letter, dated July 6, to Neighbourhood Services Association (N.S.A.). The following is an excerpt:

"Therefore, if you will agree to the following conditions, I am prepared to authorize payment of of the actual deficit, in your current fiscal year (subject to

audit).

A) By October 1st, 1973, reduce operating costs to an amount that can be met by present provincial funding allowances

and/or

B) organize local community groups (including parental representation from each Daycare Centre) to accept responsibility for the operation of their own services. Our Day Care Information Centre Consultants in Vancouver would be available should you wish their assistance!"

Mr. E. J. Helm, N.S.A. chief, then sent a memo to all staff, informing them of Mr. Levi's conditions, and called for a meeting of "daycare and preschool staff, open to all N.S.A. staff!"

This memo was posted on the notice board at Kitsilano Neighbourhood House and I accidentally saw it. No notice was ever sent to the Daycare Centre or to the parents (i.e. those who would be "responsible for the operation of their own services.")

Aware that we were being left out of these discussions, and realizing that the struggle between the Department of Human Resources and N.S.A. over daycare put us directly in the middle (pawns?) and knowing that the shift in responsibility would be to a group that we formed, the parents called a meeting for July 31, 1973. Eighteen parents and staff were present for that meeting. The following is from the

minutes of that meeting:

"It was shown that the implication of the letter was that Levi wanted the administration and control of daycare centres removed from N.S.A. and given to community boards with parent participation on the Board."

"It became evident during the discussions which followed that the principle of parent and staff involvement in policy decisions and administering the centre was enthusiastically supported by those present."

However, before we even understood what would be involved in running the daycare centre, we were already experiencing what happens in a power takeover. Mr. E.J. Helm had heard that we were planning to hold parents meeting and had asked our Head Supervisor to resign if the parents met before the N.S.A. Board could meet. He felt the parents were acting prematurely and independently and that our Head Supervisor should squash our efforts!

Therefore, at that July 31st meeting we also drafted two resolutions related to "Mr. Helm's attitude" and formed a steering committee of five people to meet personally with Mr. Helm and arrange further meetings.

August, 1973: On the 17th of August we met with a representative from the Daycare Information Centre (a man charged with assisting in the 'takeover'). He described the change as a 'fait accompli.' When asked, "What if the parents won't do it?" he replied that an interim board would be set up in those locations where parents do not want the responsibility (i.e. it would be taken out of our hands). He

stressed that he wanted to see a parent-dominated board ("with staff and/or community if you so choose"). He assured us that the resource centre would provide resource help: Daycare Consultants and information. He said that he sees the Board's responsibilities as including salaries, paying rent, handling monies, making decisions on buying, purchasing equipment, drawing up budgets etc. One significant question was raised: "Since we will be saving the government money by removing administrators who up to now have been receiving 'salaries' for administering the services of daycare, where will that money go? Will it go back into daycare in the form of increased salaries, increased subsidies for the children and programmes, and more daycare centres?" The answer was a strong, YES!"

OH, WE WERE NAIVE FOOLS

The long, sad tale continues. Early in October 1973 we presented our budget and discussed it at the Daycare Information Centre in detail. We received a positive response and although they did not like the total amount, they agreed with every individual amount (i.e. \$15.00 per child per month for food; \$35.00 for programme; \$250 for rent etc)!

After a long wait, on into November, there was still no response as to whether our budget had been accepted. We called about the budget and they said they had "lost it." So we provided another one.

Another long wait. We contacted them in December to try and get an

answer. We asked for a "reply in writing." We did not get it. But they did agree to a meeting on the 18th of December.

At the December 18th meeting they asked us to "decrease staff by ½ person" so we let ½ person go. A week later the licensing inspector entered the daycare centre and we were told that we would re-hire and fill that slot or the "license would be ripped off the wall."

Back to our Daycare Information Consultants: We met with them in January and were told:

- a) "you don't have a hope in hell of getting that amount" (i.e. budget down the tube).
- b) salaries are "too high" (Head supervisor at \$650 per mo., Assistant supervisor at \$575 per mo.)
- c) fringe benefits are " too generous" (i.e. continuity of benefits to be denied).
- d) a union contract is "illegal, because you can't sign a contract if there's no money in the bank."

AND...we were informed that we would receive \$124.00 per child per month. We still required \$163 per child per month.

Following the January meeting, the parent of the Centre(every parent signed) sent the following letter to the Minister:

Dear Mr. Levi:

Contrary to the personal assurances of yourself and your staff that after the parents assumed control of the Kitsilano Daycare Centre from N.S.A., the quality of daycare would not suffer but would

improve, we have found ourselves unable to improve services or increase staff salaries. We are angry about promises made to us not being kept. On several different occasions, Paul Murphy stated that we would receive more money than N.S.A. received to improve daycare and to provide decent staff salaries.

Since 15 October, 1973 there have been several meetings at the Daycare Information Centre with...regarding our budget. At the 15 October meeting we submitted our budget and were told that it would be sent to Victoria. We were informed that if it was too high, we would receive information as to where and why it was too high. We have never received this information, but we have, instead, been told that our total is too high, even though the individual items are, by themselves, acceptable.

At the 30 September, 1973 meeting at Kits House, which you attended, it was made clear that our concern was with improving services and salaries, not who controls the daycare centre. We have no intention of being responsible for providing poor daycare and exploiting staff. If we are to continue operating the Centre, we MUST have sufficient money.

If you cannot provide more money then your department can operate our centre and be responsible for staff exploitation and poor daycare.

Sincerely yours,
(The Parents of Kitsilano
Daycare Society)

The change which this letter brought about was something which

the bookkeepers in Victoria term "deficit funding." What it is really is an amount of money which is sent to the Centre after many bills have accumulated. Naturally, important bills like rent, cleaning supplies, bank charges etc get paid. There is still not enough money to put the staff onto any fringe benefit plans, nor is there enough money to buy programme materials or plan outings for the children. The ACTUAL costs of running a quality daycare centre are never recognized.

This situation of "deficit funding" has continued to the present day; nearly two years after we were assured that monies and co-operation would be forthcoming if we, the parents, began to operate the Centre.

PARENT BOARDS

Not Working !!

Mr. Levi's public comment that parent boards are not working is absolutely correct. The reasons he gives are that parents are already over-worked and in many cases do not want the responsibility of running a daycare centre.

Since it is true that running a daycare centre involves disbursing funds, keeping books, paying salaries, drafting budgets, answering correspondence, planning programmes for children, hiring staff, drafting budgets, arranging cleaning services, incorporating as a Society, hasseling with the Daycare Information Centre, drafting budgets ad infinitum, it is little wonder that parents do

not want to get involved. We fools who do get involved because we want our children's daycare experience to focus on co-operation and sharing; an atmosphere free from sexist or racist stereotyping, find that we are in a hypocritical position of preserving our children from the reality of the very institution they are enrolled in. Everywhere throughout the bureaucratic structure (particularly with the Treasury Board) the message is that caring for children is unimportant. Children are not a resource like petroleum or natural gas.

A CHALLENGE TO THE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

A reliable source tells me that the \$18 million budget request for childcare has been cut to \$13.5 million. This high ranking daycare employee further states that "...there will be no expansion" and "it is questionable whether this is even a maintaining budget."

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the next issue...**

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That's the way things stand now. If we are to have any influence over Levi's final budget for childcare we must act now. Too many of us are individual casualties of the daycare dilemma. We must take action and begin discussions within the local women's groups and daycare centres. We must draft letters and submit briefs to Victoria. I would suggest that you write to:

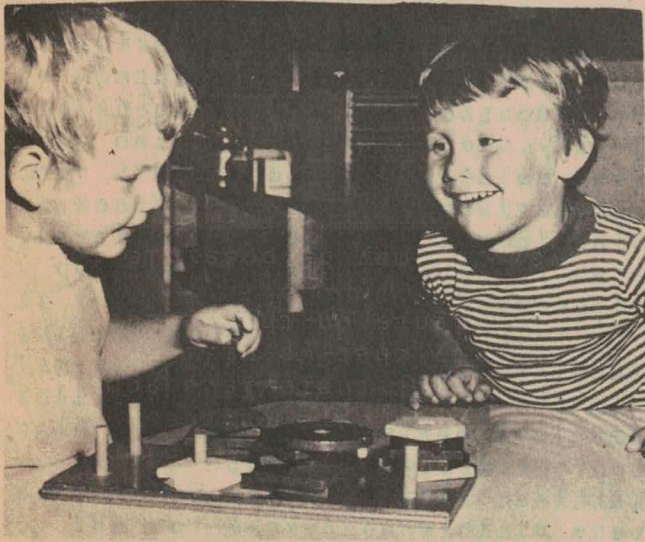
Ms. Marilyn Dahl,
Co-ordinator of Daycare
Services,
Department of Human
Resources,
614 Humboldt St.,
Victoria, B.C.

and send a copy (marked personal and confidential) to:

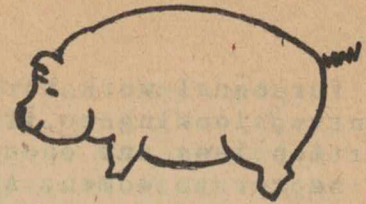
Hon. Norman Levi,
Minister of Human
Resources,
Parliament Buildings,
Victoria, B.C.

Also please send a copy to us at Priorities, 3485 West 15th Ave., Vancouver.

Marianne Gilbert,
Childcare Committee.



I.W.Y.



ROTARIANS LAUGH!

(The following editorial appeared in the Victoria Times, January 21, 1975.)

It's international women's year as if we needed reminding after the large ads the federal government is inserting in newspapers around the country, taking a page directly from the notebooks of two successive Canadian governments.

With this in mind it's sad to see this year of emphasis on women's new roles getting off to such a sick start. On the local scene the Victoria Rotary Club laughed at suggestions that a women's place might not be in the home when B.C. human rights director Kathleen Ruff addressed Rotarians on Thursday. Resigned women expect this sort of thing from a service club luncheon, but when the federal government adopts the same hayseed attitude it's time to worry. In large type the government ads say, "International Women's Year. It's not a slogan, it's an attitude." Gosh, that's impressive, along with the "why not" button and posters you can receive free of charge from the enlightened crew in Ottawa.

Impressive but phoney too. If the government is really going to do something about the problem, it should not spend taxpayer's money on the kind of junk that comes in cereal boxes. Rather it should get down to legislating equal

pay for equal work throughout the country, looking to its ambiguous abortion laws and opening up every job sector to women. As for the Rotarians, maybe they should order some posters, at least it might help them grow up.

resolution

WHEREAS women in the North face many social and economic problems peculiar to their environment and

WHEREAS NDP policy in the past has outlined in detail the kinds of government action required to change the position of women in society,

BE IT RESOLVED that the government proceed with more haste to enact legislation in accordance with existing party policy to change the social, economic and legal status of women, with particular regard to the need for expanded childcare, job equality, and legal rights.

(The above resolution was submitted by the Fort George NDP Constituency to the 1975 B.C. NDP Convention to be held May 16-19.)

SUPPORT FOR WOMEN'S MINISTRY

(The following editorial from the Victorian Times appeared March 3, 75.)

Whether Premier Barrett likes it or not, his government apparently is getting itself a department of women's affairs in all but official status. The premier's firm unbending

opposition to giving responsibility for women to a separate, distinct ministry has been expressed numerous times. In a nutshell, his argument against such a move is that people all have problems, not just women, despite hard evidence that women are a group discriminated against much like blacks and other minorities.

But it seems some of his cabinet ministers are getting around this fiat by appointing piecemeal different special programs. Economic Development Minister Gary Lauk, is only the latest cabinet recruit to the women's right's cause.

He's established a women's economic rights branch in his department to "examine, plan and recommend on all issues affecting the economic rights, economic development and socio-economic status of women in B.C." The branch will publish statistics on women in the province, monitor the progress of a plan to give women in the department equal opportunity with men, and provide advice and support for women in business.

The education dept. has a special staffer whose job it is to review teaching materials for sexist content. Appointed by Education Minister Eileen Dailly, Reva Dexter has also been holding workshops and seminars on the subject of sex bias in the curriculum. Why aren't there more girls in shop classes, for example?)

And the director of human rights, in Labour Minister Bill King's department is most appropriately a woman, Kathleen Ruff. She has been very visible and vocal in

tackling sex discrimination in hiring, wages, promotion, job stereotyping, the whole range of problems.

How much more effective might these separate efforts be under the administrative roof of a single department? Premier Barrett should set aside his own personal prejudices and establish a women's department, or better yet, a department devoted to erasing all discrimination. He established a housing department, for example, in response to a pressing need.

Once a substantial measure of equality has been established, the department can always be disbanded. Indeed, its accomplishments will only hasten the day such a special agency will no longer be needed.

Rosemary Brown!

Have you contributed to Rosemary's campaign?

Maybe some of you were at the conference on Women in Politics at Capilano College last November. We talked about how hard it is for women to get nominated in winnable ridings, and the special obstacles they face if they do get the nomination. How many dozens of times have we discussed this in the past five years!

At the time, I had just been through a losing campaign for Vancouver School Board, so I was feeling pretty depressed, and said so. My courage was restored as it has been so many times before, when the going got tough, by the response of the women at the conference. Many took the

trouble to say that they understood how I felt, and that they cared about it. I was reminded of something Myrna Kostash wrote: "The genius of the women's movement has been to remind us that individualized and personal experience is, in fact, political and social". I was cheered, too, by the determination expressed by all the women, not just to get more women elected, but to establish a new level of personal caring and commitment to collective needs and feelings and decisions.

Rosemary's campaign for the Party leadership is our chance to put those ideas into action. The time is ripe, and we are very lucky to have in Rosemary a feminist who understands fully what we are trying to do - who has, in fact, contributed a great deal to our understanding over the years. But we need the help of all women who share that commitment. That is why I am making this plea, in my own name, but also on behalf of all of us who are working in the campaign. Please help us to make this campaign a demonstration of what we believe in. We must have your help if we are to succeed.

Send your ideas and your contributions (no amount is too small) to:

Rosemary Brown Federal NDP Leadership Campaign,
1111 Commercial Drive,
Vancouver, B.C.

In Sisterhood,

Hilda L. Thomas

DONATE

AND OUT GOES you!

There are three aspects of the play "And Out Goes You" recently premiered at the Playhouse Theatre in Vancouver that offer a refreshing change for local theatre goers.

Firstly the play is not only by a Canadian, it is about a Canadian situation, and is based on our experiences and history. Granted the satire has broader implications but the specific from which the general developed is a Canadian specific.

Second the author of the satire is a woman and the moving force--the closest thing to a protagonist--is a woman.

Thirdly it is a political satire with a view from the left--a swipe at B.C. politics --Barrett, Bennett et al--by an informed critic who is willing to poke holes in whatever political balloon is hoisted.

"And Out Goes You" is a satire about a family in Vancouver East who live in a neighbourhood recently bought out for a futuristic Government project. The grandmother, Goose, is a revolutionary firebrand--incapacitated by a stray bullet during the Regina riot of 1935. At the beginning of the piece she is carried around on a stretcher in a series of grotesque comedy scenes. Her son, now the head of the house, has been passive since the historic event and lives mostly in his memories of that day. One grandson is a hippie--doing his thing and little more. The second grandson is a postman who has stopped delivering the mail. The granddaughter keeps the family going. In Goose's estimation this may be the worst response of all because by keeping the family together and alive the young woman is maintaining the system as it is.

The action of the satire centres on a confrontation between government--the "they" of government, big business etc--represented by a Premier and his Chairman (obviously Barrett and Bennett) and the family. The politicians and their bureaucratic hack insist that the family "know your place" and even give out buttons to that effect. The family doesn't want to sell out to make way for the big project. It's not such a great house but they got plans for it. When Goose revives she rallies the family about her to take on the government and all B. and B. represent to her.

In a series of attacks on the two politicians the play presents us with the problem of what to do if we refuse to sell out.

Goose tries to organize a parade and to rally the people to join the struggle. The people prefer to wear the "know your place" button. The family then brings the two politicians home to show them by means of a Vancouver East theatre presentation what they want and how they feel. The politicians see only what they wish to in the skits.

In the end Goose rallies her family to follow her unto the street to organize. The politicians are their prisoners and the house is surrounded by police. The bureaucrat who was for a short time on the side of the family has returned to the fold to continue as a hack. Goose is established in command. Her family is behind her ready to hit the street.

Suddenly at the door Goose is shot down. Back to square one. The revolutionary activist is dead. The followers are disheartened. The politicians triumphant--only sorry the press wasn't there to photograph their "success" and of course the government project is now assured.

So we are left with the question--what to do. The Winnipeg Strike, the Regina Riots--it's not a drama of somewhere else--it's here and now and what can people do to change the status quo. Here we are with a social democratic

government, a conservative bureaucracy, a usually passive Vancouver East, a crowd that is ready to "know its place."

There is no answer presented but there is no doubt the play leaves us with the question of what to do. During the event it was funny but there are cruel moments, grotesque moments, bitter moments --such as the scene with Barrett and Bennett arm in arm, the reference to Stanley Knight, the treatment of poor Goose when she is back again on the stretcher.

We need this kind of theatre and more so. Our social problems should be addressed and when done so in this manner hopefully more people will identify with the struggle for change. We've had enough blah situation comedies about Americans living in a middle class ring-around-the-collar world. We have rich experiences to create from and our dilemmas though universal require our own expression. The satire "And Out Goes You" has its weak moments--will probably not endure --but it shakes things up a bit and that's good. The playwright Sharon Pollock has presented some good theatre moments, some laughs and some grimaces and left us with something to think about.

If you'd like to do the play in your local theatre why not write to the Playhouse in Vancouver and ask if the script is available. It's just a thought--it's the sort of play more of us should be able to enjoy.

Melodie Corrigall,
Vancouver Burrard.

WRITE FOR
PRIORITIES

bc ndp provincial convention 16-19 may, totem park, ubc

*women's caucus meeting
to plan convention stra-*

tegy... BE THERE!!

*2-5pm friday
16 may*

*check at the registration
desk for meeting room no.*

daycare available

**ALL NDP
WOMEN WELCOME**

PHOENIX RISING...

On April 2 about 30 NDP women from the Lower Mainland met to discuss the establishment of an NDP Women's group.

There was an overwhelming consensus of opinion that such a group was badly needed. When the Steering Committee of the NDP Women's Rights Policy Committee was established in 1973 it seemed to leave women in the Lower Mainland without a group to attend. No one had the time or energy to establish groups in individual ridings. Everyone felt that by setting up a Lower Mainland group, with meeting about once a month, we would again be able to get one-another's support and to share ideas.

After discussion of the background of the B.C. NDP Women's Committee and statements by those attending of their needs and concerns it was formally moved and voted "That a Lower Mainland Women's Committee be formed to provide political education and action, and social functions."

We had a brief review of existing NDP Women's Policy. From this came some ideas for topics to discuss at forthcoming meetings. At the next meeting

we will discuss past policy in relationship to an article by Cynthia Flood on Capitalism which appeared in Priorities.

A volunteer committee was set up to make physical arrangements for meetings, draw up agendas and a list of topics for discussion. Some suggested subjects were: What is Social Democracy?; The Relationship between Feminism and Socialism; History of Socialism; How Women's Lives Have or Have Not Changed in Socialist Countries; Marxist Theory. These discussion would provide a framework within which we could study present NDP policy on women's rights and begin to formulate new policy.

A long discussion ensued as to whether or not to invite men to speak to the group. It was finally decided that we should make every effort to do our own research for information but if a man existed with special knowledge, that we were interested in, he be invited to speak.

A telegram was sent to Prime Minister Trudeau and Justice Minister Otto Lang protesting the jailing of Dr. Henry Morgentaler.

JUDY McMANUS
vancouver south

The next meeting of the Lower Mainland NDP Women's Committee will be held May 7th. Make a note of the date on your calendar. All NDP women are welcome and if you're within traveling distance we hope to see you there. Old or new faces all welcome!

LOWER MAINLAND WOMEN'S
COMMITTEE MEETING
1956 W. BROADWAY RM 210
WEDNESDAY 7 MAY 7:30

and GOD CREATED **

SEGREGATION

A very favourable climate prevailed at the recent teacher's federation annual meeting in Vancouver. The atmosphere was favourable from the viewpoint of recommendations passed which show social leadership and responsibility on the part of teachers, but also from the viewpoint of participation by women teachers, and support of the status of Women program by the B.C.T.F. executive and major committees within the federation.

SEGREGATED

CLASSES

Probably the most significant item passed was that elementary and secondary classes SHALL NOT be segregated on the basis of sex. This was part of a longer recommendation which established learning conditions criteria for the 1975-76 school year. This becomes policy and also procedure. Teachers are bound by the code of ethics to report violations of learning conditions criteria.

This is highly significant. It seems strange that public education for all children would segregate on the basis of sex. Would we segregate on any other basis-- East Indian children in one class, Japanese in another for example? Certainly not! It may surprise many that classes are segregated on this basis. Surveys and questionnaires indicate that segregation on this basis is widespread. Research shows

that this originates with segregated physical education classes.

PHYS. ED.

THE VILLAIN

Because classes are frequently segregated for physical education they are in turn segregated for Art, Library, Music, Health, Guidance, Science, and some Language Arts to accommodate time-tabling. While the girls use the changing rooms and have gymnastics or dancing the boys have their guidance. Then the boys have their turn to improve basketball skills or soccer, or wrestling skills.

GIRLS P.E. NEEDS ?

Many P.E. teachers and administrators are adamant that boys need to have a more active games oriented P.E. program to develop their physical skills, to allow for greater aggressiveness and to prevent delinquency. The whole topic is controversial, and yet teachers agree that education should be equal, and offer children equal opportunities for intellectual, social, and physical growth.

Because this topic is controversial, and many educators have not reached a consensus that P.E. classes should be integrated it is even more significant that this climate prevailed among the

some 640 delegates from B.C. school districts. Certainly there was opposition:--"What about wrestling classes?" and "Does this mean that we have to have a token female on the football team?" and "This means that there won't be girls on basketball teams in high school because girls cannot match the boys in skills." The dialogue was good and an amendment to change "shall not be" to "should not be" was defeated. It is significant that this was included in learning conditions and made procedure. Already attitudes are changing.

In January the Vancouver Elementary teachers presented a brief to the Vancouver School Board. It contained 18 recommendations prepared by the Status of Women Committee. The brief with its supporting statements was passed by the Vancouver teachers except for the recommendation for integration of P.E. classes. Instead it was changed and the recommendation was made to establish a committee to investigate the feasibility of integrating all P.E. classes at the elementary level.

RESEARCH NEEDED

Research on integrated P.E. will be facilitated by the passage of the recommendation that elementary and secondary classes shall not be segregated. Some research is already being done at U.B.C. There are schools which are integrating their programs.

HOCKEY GETS PREFERENCE

At the local arena boys and girls were having skating eliminations for relays for a winter wind-up carnival. Boys of every size were outstripping the girls in speed.

Why I wondered? The little boys begin hockey at age five. Their mothers (it's the mothers I'm sure) waken them at 4:15 a.m., get them to the arena by 5:00 a.m. for practice, drive them home again for an hour's sleep before getting them up for breakfast when the fathers are leaving for work. Of course mother and father accompany the tyke to the game, and father shouts and exhorts his son, "Get the puck!" and "Check him!"

The ice time is almost fully booked for hockey with a little time for girl's figure skating, and public skating. It has been observed that when girls do have time for figure skating practice they can also skate with speed.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- * Last year 96 women delegates attended the annual general meeting. This year there were 234 out of 640.
- * Last year one woman was elected to the executive. This year 3 more women were elected so that 4 out of 10 are women. Three of these have been involved in status of women programmes.
- * The Canadian Teacher's Federation has applied for funds from the federal government to enable other provinces to initiate status of women programs in education.

Other recommendations passed

- *that, in accordance with the B.C. Human Rights Code, all courses, programs, activities and clubs sponsored by schools shall be open to all students regardless of sex.
- *that the Federation request the Provincial Government to enact Affirmative Action Legislation.
- *that local associations be encouraged to negotiate parenthood leave of absence with pay.

EVE-OLUTION HIGHLIGHTS

Described as "A spectrum of Eve's creative energies," this festival, co-sponsored by the Brackendale Art Gallery Near Squamish and the Capilano College Women's Studies Program, ran 14 through 23 March. It grew out of the originators' well-founded conviction that "while art may have no sex, many women artists have been affected by their position as women in our society--in terms of both available resources and their own levels of confidence. Eve-olution is intended as an opportunity to show their work and for people to see it." Such an opportunity is occasionally afforded women writers, but I know of no other local exhibition of women's talents in the visual arts, music, drama, fiction and other media, all drawn together in a single festival displaying and exulting in women's creative energies.

It began with a slide presentation by Ardelle Lister from the feminist media co-operative Reel Feelings. Her slides underlined the woman-as-sex-object image through the different periods of western art. Elizabeth Miles commented in the 20 March Squamish Times that, "Historically, the creative skill of women has been downgraded by calling it 'folk-art.' She also noted that the slides "contrasted examples of female 'folk-art' with the 'high art' of the male art world, showing how the so-called 'new' discoveries of hard-edge modern painting were very similar to the flat spaces of shaped colour used in quilting decades before the fifties."

The paintings, drawings, weaving and other "wearable art" exhibited at Brackendale would certainly offer encouragement to other women, and to some of the young girls I was pleased to see and hear of in the various audiences. Those who are curious about the "wearables" can get some idea of these art-works from the photographs in the 20 March Squamish Times, accompanying Rose Tatlow's article on Eve-olution of that date.

On 16 March an evening of classical music was presented by women from Capilano College, including the two women members of the music faculty. I was not able to attend, but pass along comments from a friend, Joy Smith, who did. "The evening... was a completely satisfying one: very balanced with the variety of textures in the Gallery matched by the varied textured tones of the music. Nadine Bohna, accompanied by Linda Falls at the piano, opened with the Schumann lieder "Frauenliebe und Lebel," telling of woman as wife and mother. Two pieces by Anita Sleeman followed, the first a Sonata for clarinet and piano, the second, "Spectrum," a piece for piano and electronic tape, spacious but intense. Jean Coutlhard's Sonata for Cello and Piano was beautifully played by Audrey Nodwell and Linda Falls."

On the final presentation of the evening, Cathy Stewart on Images of Women In Opera, Elizabeth Miles noted in her Times write-up that, "The areas were chosen to depict a variety of

female stereotypes, such as a naive adolescent and powerless heroine. Stewart's narrative about these stereotypes was illuminating and humorous enough to carry the program." Together with the intellectual analysis, here is great need for women to continue as performers in a field in which they tend to be hired only as token representatives to the most prestigious orchestras, and there is a special need to encourage women to become composers. The performances of Sleeman's work, for example, might well have provided some young woman with musical talent with her first knowledge that a woman really can be a successful composer of serious music.

On 21 March Gladys Hindmarch, an increasingly well-known West Coast writer, read one of her Peter stories to a rapt audience and then read a selection from a book tentatively titled Growing Within to an audience intent, but twice disrupted by a couple of middle-aged, well-dressed men. These hecklers became disruptive during the reading of the birth account, showing the embarrassed rudeness once associated with young teenagers. One of the men, in the course of his shoving around and cat-calling and laughing, elbowed his wife right off the end of the bench they sat on.

Meanwhile, a 12-year-old girl beside me and two younger girls across the table had no difficulty with the material. Gladys kept her cool and passed the incidents by quietly. I found myself quite angry at the time, but later was able to see with sadness the alienation and fear that made these two men unable to bear forced awareness of women's experience. At the oppo-

site extreme, the 12-year-old girl near me, on hearing Gladys reply to a question with the comment that she had drawn from her own experience and dreams in writing the story, raised her hand and cried out, "Do you mean you wrote that story yourself?" As I look back on the evening, that amazed, enraptured cry drowns out the giggles of two nervous men. For them, a door had remained shut. For her, a whole world had burst open; and I think it nothing else had happened during the Festival, that one incident alone would have made it a success.

But much else did happen. There was a performance of scenes from Shelagh Delaney's A Taste of Honey by Squamish women (and one man) taking a contemporary drama course given in Squamish by Capilano College. The instructor, Janet Marx, had done a remarkably fine job of coaching the students over a 3-week period, and the very talented group of players turned in a delightful and high-style performance. There was also "An evening of wine, women and song by Shari Ulrich and friends" described by Elizabeth Miles as "pop and folk music performed by an all-female band." And on the final evening was Evelyn Roth's Moving Sculpture Dance. I enjoyed this, and also found Jeni LeGong's afro-jazz arrangements exciting and delightful. It was a lively, up-beat ending to a well-developed, splendidly-conceived festival of women in the arts, which surely helped to put an end to the myth that women are only creative in the delivery room.

FRANCES BURSTEIN
Coquitlam

Chairwoman's Report

-- a farewell ...

This will probably be the last report I will write as Chairwoman since the convention on May 16-19 will be over before the next issue of Priorities comes out, and you will have elected a new chairwoman for the coming year. I feel I should make a few comments about the past year, since it has been fraught with all kinds of both personal and group soul searching.

Many of us have found that our personal and political lives are inseparable and that the philosophical crises which we have been experiencing have translated themselves into ones which have affected our lifestyles. I said once before that one of the reasons we are socialists and feminists is because of the lives we live as women in a male dominated hierarchical society. Our experiences have brought home the intellectual arguments concerning feminism and socialism and reinforced our commitment.

For me, and others, and for our committee, this has been a year of trying to come to grips with the implications of this commitment. There is not, I think, any need to go over all the old ground covered in the past few months. However, I should say that on March 9th, the Steering Committee met for an all day discussion. The meeting was an attempt to understand the problems which were confronting us and to seek new ways to function which would be more geared to the role we saw as appropriate for the steering committee. The meeting was reported in the last issue of Priorities, and the only comment I wish to add is that it was a very

difficult meeting and I thank those who stuck it out for their determination to make the steering committee work.

The steering committee met again on March 29, to discuss further, one of the proposals which came from that March 9th meeting; that is the proposal that we set up regional steering committees. After the meeting of the 9th, the Kamloops Women's Caucus discussed the idea and made the following suggestion.

There would be first the local groups, which would meet on whatever basis they wished. Then the women in these groups would meet with the other women in groups in their region. For example on the Island, there are two organized groups, the Lower and Upper Island groups. They would continue to meet locally and once every other month, they would meet regionally with the possibility of other women living on the island who do not have a group to relate to being able to take part at the regional level as well. Then on the alternate month there would be a meeting of the central steering committee, which would be structured as it is now with reps from the groups, but perhaps also one or two reps from the regional steering committees.

This type of structure would enable more women to be involved in the discussion of issues within a broader group, and it would also allow for broader representation on the steering committee. It would establish committees outside

the lower mainland which I can foresee being able to take on such tasks as conferences, supplements to Priorities, writing of briefs to government and so on. It would also allow women in different parts of the province to develop their own thought on issues concerning the movement at their own pace, and to feel that they played a greater role in decision making. From the discussion which took place at the March 9th meeting I feel that this proposal would deal with many of the problems which were articulated.

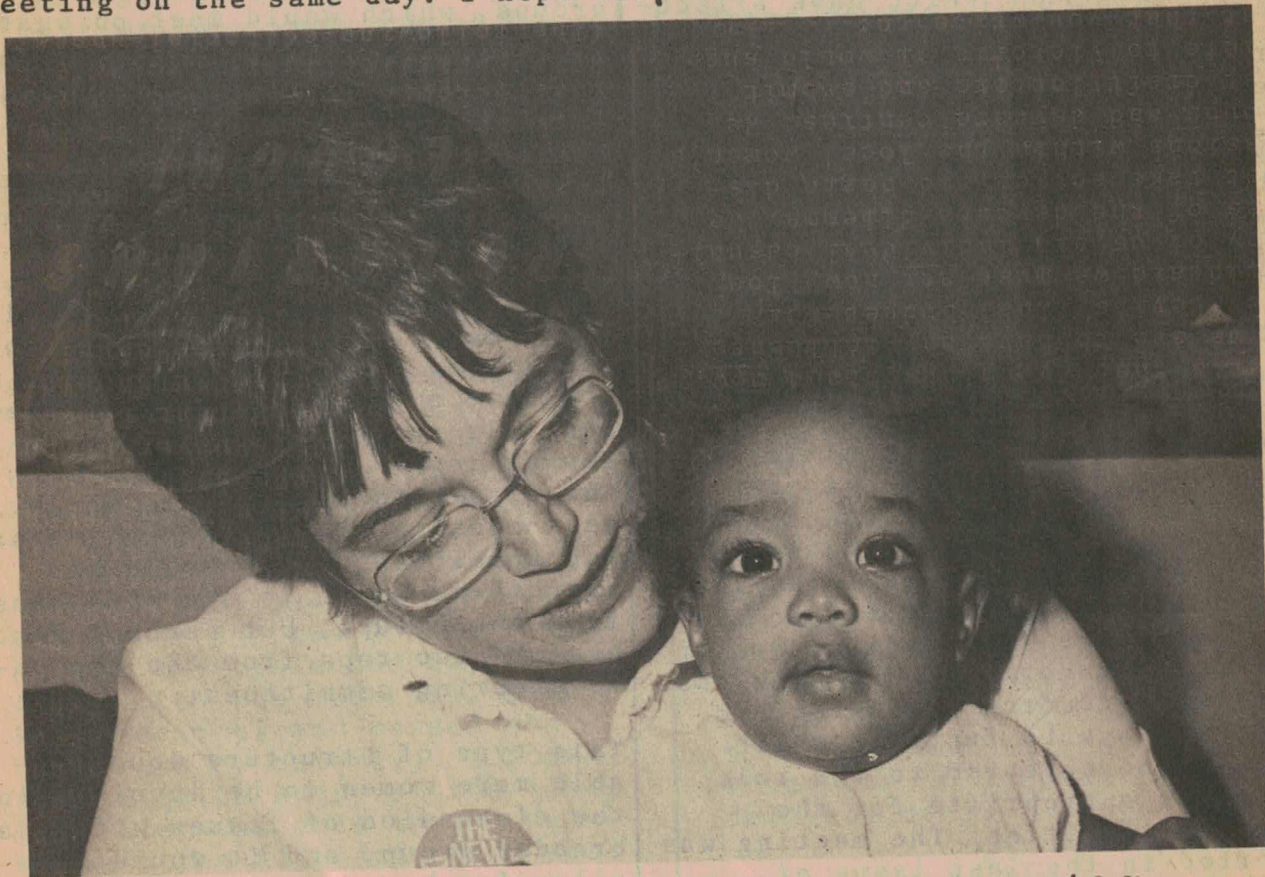
The steering committee will be meeting on May 16th, and will vote on whether to recommend such a proposal for regional steering committees to the Women's Committee which will meet in a pre-convention meeting on the same day. I hope all

the groups will discuss the idea and send a rep to that meeting to discuss, perhaps amend, and vote on the proposal.

The CONVENTION

This year's convention is set up in such a way that there will not be panels in every policy area. We are one of the areas which will not have a panel. At this point I have no idea of how many resolutions were submitted on Women's Rights or whether there will be time allotted in plenary session for debate on these resolutions. But there is a good possibility that we will not see women's rights on the agenda.

However, it may be possible for



TERRI & DAUGHTER *an upcoming feminist?*

some of our resolutions to be brought up in other policy areas, e.g. education, health etc. If they do we must be prepared to go to those panels and raise the issues there. The other thing we should be prepared to do is to raise women's issues in discussion of resolutions which do not mention women but which cover areas of policy which will affect women's lives. In order to do this it was decided at the steering committee meeting that any resolutions we receive should be referred to the appropriate sub-committees of the women's committee so that background papers can be prepared by the subcommittees to enable our participation to be more effective. Those of us who are delegates to the convention will have to be prepared to debate the issues. If you know you are going to be a delegate please let me know, and also let me know what areas of policy you feel most capable of handling.

In closing, I would like to be able to say that I have enjoyed being the chairwoman of the NDP Standing Committee on Women's Rights, but I cannot. There have been some positive moments in the past year: the establishment of the B.C. Federation of Women and the pride I felt being able to greet that new body on your behalf; the very strong and positive support I have felt from women in the women's committee (that friendship has meant much to me); the great contribution which Shelly Dillon, as women's organizer has made to the women's movement; and the continuing excellence of Priorities; all of these things have been the life line to which I have held.

However, given the sad state of affairs in the Party; the lack of any real efforts on the part of

the NDP government to understand or deal with women's issues; the farce of International Women's Year; the old saying "the more things change, the more they stay the same," is very appropriate.

Serving as chairwoman in this turbulent year was a challenge and although I would not say I have been successful, I feel that the fact that I have survived at all is something of an accomplishment.

My thanks to all of you who made the life line which kept me afloat.

Terri Ash,
Chairwoman,
B.C. NDP Standing Committee on
Women's Rights,
Kamloops, April 1975.



EDITORIAL-----CONTD P.1

The "Communist" government from which they are to be "saved" has a known reputation for just treatment of its children. Could they be any worse off than under Thieu and American napalm? We believe that the heroic men and women of Vietnam who have demonstrated their courage and humanity for many years can look after their own children. Leave them in their own culture.

The legitimate concern by many Canadians should be channeled to Vietnam in whatever form of aid they may require.



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MORGENTALER JAILED

"I am more firmly convinced than ever that the law under which I am now being tried is unjust, cruel and dangerous to women."



Anti-abortion forces have gained momentum with the recent Supreme Court decision, sentencing Dr. Henry Morgenthaler to 18 months in jail. Women's Rights groups have called for his release, John Diefenbaker, a lawyer, condemned the decision, calling for an enquiry into the legal mechanisms by which the Supreme Court can override a jury decision. The court decision is in line with Justice Minister Otto Lang's "hardened" approach to abortion, and shows how far we have to go in this International Women's Year. Chief Justice Bora Lakin supports Dr. Morgenthaler

IN THE NEXT ISSUE Shirley Miller will review the work of Vancouver poet, Pat Lowther, who has had three books published - This Difficult Flowering; The Age of the Bird (about Che Guevara) and Milk Stone...no book stores in B.C. carry the last book...if you would like a copy, phone or write to a book store and request a copy...considering the many difficulties for a woman in getting to the point of actually publishing, it seems the last straw when a book of this quality cannot be purchased... this problem of achieving the potential audience for women's art IS POLITICS.

on the ground that law must be modified to reflect social change.



THANKS



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