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# PRIORITIES

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*A FEMINIST SOCIALIST PERSPECTIVE*

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
N.D.P. WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

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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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"The issues and demands raised by the Women's Liberation Movement are integral to the development of a democratic socialist society. The NDP actively encourages and provides support for women organizing around the demands of the women's liberation movement and commits and 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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# EDITORIAL

Congratulations to the women who ran and worked on the two elections! The real struggle is, of course, still to come. NDP women must make a continuous effort to support the feminists who have been elected and moreover to ensure the election of additional feminist MIAs and MPs.

After the frantic work of putting together our election issue, we at Priorities are backtracking a little to continue discussion on the oppression of children in our capitalist world. Women may be second-class citizens in capitalist societies, but children are not citizens at all, despite the platitudes that are constantly uttered.

Probably, however, the most oppressed group of all are women in prison. In this issue of Priorities, we have two articles that raise concerns of those incarcerated by the penal system. Working for prisoners' rights or even understanding the oppression of prisoners is very difficult for most of us. Because it is so difficult, we would rather not become involved. But it is precisely the way a society treats prisoners that demonstrates what fundamental worth a human being enjoys in that society. We cannot ignore the issue.

Obviously, there is no direct connection between electing feminists, protecting children, and defending prisoners' rights. But until we are prepared to fight for the rights of the most oppressed, we will not change our society. Likewise, if we genuinely want a more humane society we must elect enough socialists to lift the capitalist oppression that has caused our inhumanity to each other.

# Letters

Hello Friends,

I really value my copies of Priorities. It continues to provide a platform for so many of our concerns and causes. It is a very real part of my communication with other women. Keep up the excellent work. I look forward to hearing from you!

Harriet Falladown

Dear Priorities:

Thanks for sending me the February issue of Priorities, which I found stimulating and quite literate. I was especially interested in "Daddy Made Breakfast"; the Point Grey Group seems to have had some unusual experiences with housework.

Thanks for your kind comments on Woman's Place. Positive feedback helps me keep going. I will be in Vancouver May 10 - 17 (approx.) and would like to visit the Priorities collective if you have any time free during the election.

Thanks again and keep up the good work.

Cheers

Penny Kome

Dear Priorities:

It was with great interest that I watched T.V. and read the paper to see results of the Provincial Election in B.C. and the Federal Election. To all our women who ran in both elections, congratulations. Some came so close to winning and it was really exciting to see the support our CANDIDATES received. Keep up the good work. We need you.

In your last issue you asked for the readers feelings re continuing to publish PRIORITIES. I want to see it continue on, but realize it does take money as well time given by the Editorial Staff. Perhaps by publishing every two months, it would ease the load on the people who give so generously of their time. We need Priorities as it is the only magazine of its kind where we can keep in touch with other women who try to make a better life for us all.

I am enclosing a cheque for another subscription for myself so I can give one away without having to give up my copy and a subscription for a friend that I met at an N.D.P. rally and I have given some copies to read.

Sincerely

Joyce Harrison

Dear Priorities:

Please find enclosed a money order for \$10.00 to cover one new subscription and a donation of \$5.00.

Thank you. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

Luella Forrister

# B.C. RIGHTS COMMISSION

## «APPALLING»

by Stephen Hume

A B.C. Human Rights Commission meeting on Tuesday, dominated by nine male commission members, was often interrupted with sarcastic remarks about women and homosexuals.

"The meeting resembled a boys' locker room," said Norrie Preston, a member of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and its committee on human rights.

Preston, who was at the approximately five-hour meeting as an observer, said it was "appalling." She and this reporter were the only members of the public at the meeting.

The 12-member commission, 10 men and two women, was appointed about six months ago by the provincial government. It is responsible for human rights education and the promotion of human rights awareness among the B.C. public.

Ten members of the commission attended the meeting Tuesday at the board room of the labor ministry offices. Members are paid a per diem rate every time they meet.

At the meeting, as the commission discussed a meeting to be held April 27 at the well-known Devonshire Hotel on Georgia Street in Vancouver, commission member Ted Pearce interjected: "That's good, that's where all the girls are."

Pearce later sarcastically suggested (to laughter from commission members) that the commission should establish a "take-a-gay-to-lunch day."

Pearce also said at one point, referring to women reporters in locker rooms, that men should "have rights to

throw them the hell out of there."

Commission member Jock Smith later described as "nonsense" a sex discrimination case which is now before a provincial board of inquiry.

During the meeting, however, one commission member criticized his colleagues for not taking human rights seriously enough, and another said some commission members were "unaware."

Human rights education, commission member Joe Katz said, "should begin right here."

Some commission members at the meeting appeared unfamiliar with the machinery of the B.C. Human Rights Code, and others admitted they had yet to read the United Nations Document on Human Rights.

Not all commission members thought the proceedings were a joking matter.

Commission member Ron Jeffels said: "I wonder if we could pursue the matters of this commission with some urgency. I've been seated at this commission a long time and there has been little business carried on of a serious nature."

"There are asides and cheerful remarks, but little serious business."

The main thrust of the meeting occurred when some commission members moved to grab power and stifle comment from the Human Rights Branch, which is separate from the commission.

While the commission is responsible for education, the branch's responsibility is to enforce the B.C. Human Rights Code.

CONT. ON PAGE 29

# MATERNITY LEAVE COMPLAINT

The Human Rights Branch has received increasing numbers of complaints from women alleging discrimination on the basis of pregnancy and maternity.

Clearly this kind of discrimination is one that potentially affects all women and undermines the security and rights to equality of women as a class. If women are penalized in the job market because of fulfilling their biological role as mothers, then they are not on an equal footing.

The following complaint filed under the Human Rights Code is an example of one kind of discrimination on the basis of pregnancy that women can encounter.

A mother who was denied her old job when she tried to claim it after a maternity leave has been awarded \$3,006 under terms of an agreement negotiated with a Vancouver firm by the B.C. Human Rights Branch.

The woman, who had worked for the firm for 12 years, was running a one-person suburban branch of the company when she took the available three months maternity leave plus four weeks of regular vacation.

But 3 days before the date of her return to work the woman was told that her replacement would remain in charge of the suburban branch and was offered only a temporary job at the firm's main office in Vancouver.

Federal law requires that women resuming employment after maternity

leave be reinstated in the position occupied at the time of the leave or in a comparable position with not less than the same wages and benefits. The B.C. Maternity Protection Act has no such protection however.

The Human Rights Branch took the position that under the Human Rights Code the woman's right to return to the same job is protected and cited a May 25, 1978 Decision by the Canada Labour Relations Board which stated, in part, that "the employer must reinstate returning employees to the same jobs, that is, the one she was occupying at the place where she was working when she left".

That case involved the Retail Clerks International Union and the Alness Branch of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in Downsview, Ontario.

Among other things, the woman argued that location was an important benefit, along with the greater responsibility and permanence.

The company argued that the woman's replacement had proved more effective in the job and that there were business arguments for keeping the replacement in the post.

The company also argued that a move to computerization was eliminating some jobs and gave that as a reason for not restoring the woman to a

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CONT. ON PAGE 10

# YOU CAN TAKE ACTION

Dear Friends:

## Human Rights Commission Unfit To Serve

Women and minority groups have worked hard to end discrimination and have effective human rights legislation in this province.

When the Social Credit government come into power however, they showed little interest in the area of human rights. One of the first things they did was abolish the Office of the Co-ordinator for the Status of Women. Shortly thereafter they fired the woman who was Consultant on Sex Discrimination in Education.

They let the Human Rights Commission sit empty for 8 months. Finally, as a result of mounting pressure and criticism, they appointed a new Commission in August 1978. Of the 12 people they named to the Human Rights Commission only TWO are women. Almost all of the members of the Commission were people who had never been active in the human rights field.

What has the Human Rights Commission done since it was appointed 8 months ago? The B.C. Human Rights Commission is an embarrassment and a bad joke. They have done nothing except show their appalling ignorance and insensitivity to human rights. Paid a \$150 per diem plus all expenses every time they meet, they are charged with the responsibility of educating the public and promoting human rights. As the attached newspaper report accurately states, the meetings of the Human Rights Commission are like a boys' locker room where they just sit and joke and jock around, making slurs against women and homosexuals.

The current members of the Human Rights Commission MUST GO. They do not deserve to be the Human Rights Commission. WE deserve a real Human Rights Commission with people who are familiar with and involved in human rights.

THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR WOMEN AND MINORITIES. . . ACT NOW.

\*Write to Labour Minister, Allan Williams at the Parliament Buildings and insist that the present Human Rights

Commission be disbanded. Demand that a proper Human Rights Commission be appointed with equal representation for women this time and with people who have a background of involvement in human rights.

\*Send a copy of your letter to the newspapers.

\*Ask each political party and candidate in the provincial election to make a commitment to appoint a proper Human Rights Commission

Thank you for your help.

Dianne L. Grimmer,  
Human Rights  
Committee,  
S.W.A.G., Victoria

## WRITE!

### LOWER MAINLAND WOMEN'S COMMITTEE MEETING ON MONDAY

AUGUST 20, 79, 7:30 pm

AT: 517 EAST BROADWAY

(UPSTAIRS)

AGENDA: DISCUSSION RE LABOUR

DAY WEEKEND

CONVENTION.

# CO-CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

Margaret Birrell

Since my last report to you we have all been through two elections. Although we had more women running for elected office than ever before (13 provincially and 6 federally) we still only elected two MPs and four MLAs. Obviously, we have a long way to go.

Ed Broadbent should be commended for the positions he took on women and the economy during the federal election campaign. He was to have presented a major policy position on women half way through the campaign but was scooped by Joe Clark. It will be interesting to see how much of the Tory platform on women will become a priority in the next session of Parliament.

In the provincial campaign the party broke ground in two areas: publishing a special leaflet for women and assisting Priorities with an additional run of its election issue.

The provincial convention will be held in Vancouver on the Labour Day weekend. If you wish to have a resolution on women's rights circulated throughout the party it must go through your constituency and be into provincial office by July 1. However, you can send a resolution to the Steering Committee before August 11 for consideration. As a policy committee it can forward it to the convention.

The Women's Rights Committee selected Irene Petry, chairwoman of the Socialist International Women and a vice-president of the Socialist International, to be the guest speaker at the provincial convention. She will also be speaking at the Robson Square Theatre on Thursday August 30, at 8.00pm. All women's groups are welcome.

The women's policy discussion at the convention will be based upon our working paper A Strategy for Achieving Sexual Equality in BC. The Steering Committee sees the development of a broad strategy on women's policy requiring discussion time at the next two conventions.

We will be presenting background papers on affirmative action, labour, family law, child care and economic development. Other areas will be covered if we can find women to undertake the responsibility for researching and writing papers on their topic of interest. For further information contact Hilda Thomas at 224-4678. Hilda will be the overall editor of the discussion paper.

As co-chairwoman I see it as part of my responsibility to the committee to start early discussions of the question of the elections to the provincial executive. Therefore, I would like to present a four part proposal:

1. That the Women's Rights Committee endorse a half slate of women for the provincial executive elections at the forthcoming provincial convention.
2. That they encourage feminists who support the Women's Rights Committee and the women's rights policy of the party to run in caucuses that meet to nominate and endorse candidates for the provincial executive.
3. That these women actively work to get the women's programme endorsed by such caucuses and make it a part of their caucus' programme.
4. That they further, if nominated by their caucus, differentiate themselves from other members of their slate who do not endorse the women's rights programme of the party.

In addition, we must encourage all supporters of the women's rights committee, not just those who will be looking for nominations to the executive elections, to work to get the party's policy on women's rights and support for the women's rights committee as part of their caucus' programme.

# INCO WORKERS FIGHT BACK-AND WIN

By Joyce Meissenheimer

One of the most inspiring events in recent labour history has just concluded with a victory - a victory for Local 5600 of the United Steelworkers of Sudbury in their 8½ month strike against the multinational International Nickel Corporation.

This strike was an inspiration on many counts and valuable lessons should be drawn from it. The workers won because they had a WINNING STRATEGY! What was this strategy? It had many essential elements:

1. A militant leadership with a programme to meet the needs of the strikers.
2. A mobilization of the rank and file, the whole Sudbury community through a Citizen's Support Committee, support across Canada and Quebec and even internationally, mobilization of women strikers and wives of strikers to provide key support.

The strike took place in a climate that was hardly encouraging. Inco had a huge stockpile and was busy developing-out of its profits and federal hand-outs- its cheap labour Guatamalan operation to benefit from the superexploitation of those workers. The Canadian economy is in crisis - part of the worldwide crisis of capitalism. The bosses' answer is, on all fronts - from parliament to the workplace - to make the working class pay to bail them out of the mess they have created for themselves.

Union struggles have gone down to defeat in this context. The CUPW strike got smashed and its president sentenced to jail. Other public sector strikes (e.g. AUCE at Simon Fraser University, Retail Wholesale at Adams Lab.) and many others across Canada are ex-

periencing the full weight of the bosses' weaponry against them. Jailings, injunctions, strikebreaking are the order of the day.

The Inco workers showed us all how to fight back and win. Its leadership defied a whole range of "experts" from their International Union leadership to people like Stephen Lewis who said the strikers were "mad" and the "Archie Bunkers of the left". It mobilized the rank and file (that's real democracy - involve everyone). An excellent strike newsletter was circulated, free. The strikers got a whole week to discuss settlement proposals before being expected to vote on them, quite a change from most union procedures.

The victory would have been impossible without the support role of women who fought back side by side with the workers. Even though only 30 out of 100 women survived a massive plant layoff that preceded the strike, those women and the wives of strikers organized a support committee which did sterling work. Family pickets, food, clothing, heating, health and family support was carried out by this committee. I hope they will document their experiences and publish them for use by others. Women in other unions and organizations came out behind them and organized solidarity efforts like the benefit put on by our women's committee.

The strikers stuck to their demands and won \$4.07 an hour over 4 years in wages and benefits, retirement after 30 years, a running COLA clause and better vacations. They also demanded the nationalization of INCO "with compensation of \$2.95 and busfare out of town". This demand generated a debate which resulted in the Ontario NDP Caucus coming up with

a private members' bill for nationalization of INCO. John Rodrigues, Sudbury NDP, raised a similar bill federally. The strikers were very clear on one thing: the NDP "industrial strategy" in the federal election was useless in the fight against Inco.

Support for the strike from the NDP was uneven. Ed Broadbent finally went to Sudbury with a \$1700 federal caucus donation - against the wishes of his "advisers" whoever they were (Stephen Lewis among them?). The Ontario leadership's response was better but far more should have been done to turn the whole weight of the NDP into strike support. Many rank and file NDPers worked to support but, as individuals, they lacked the power to reach as many as the leadership could. Here in B.C., besides the efforts of the Women's Committee, little or nothing was done by the NDP.

This is a big weakness. All union struggles today are going to need the broadest possible active support to win. The alternative is sell-out contracts negotiated behind closed doors. Skilled negotiators and mediators cannot win against capitalism's drive against working people. Only rank and file mobilization of everyone in the strike and citizen support can provide the muscle to win. The Sudbury workers mobilized everyone they could reach. But we have to wake up the NDP as a whole to the necessity of leading strike support, politically and organizationally. Why can't the CLC and NDP go this route rather than the wheeling and dealing that took place during the postal workers strike with its deplorable result? Politically we need a programme of nationalizing the multinationals without compensation, of affirmative action to get more women into industrial jobs and prevent discriminatory layoffs, of implementing the CLC policy of a shorter work week to deal with unemployment, of forcing open the books of the corporations so that all can see how workers in Canada

are exploited for profits. We need more rallies like the BC Fed rallies preceding the elections to take up these issues and educate workers to support unions in struggles with their numbers and these answers.

If this does not happen, more strikes will be smashed and their participants jailed, and women, as usual, will be the hardest hit.

Congratulations to the workers of Sudbury and thank you for teaching us these lessons on how to win.

### MATERNITY LEAVE CONT. FROM P.6.

permanent position.

"What they were really asking is that this person who had been promoted in the past because of her fine record with the company over 12 years now accept probationary employment because she had taken an authorized leave to have a baby," said Kathleen Ruff, Director of the Human Rights Branch.

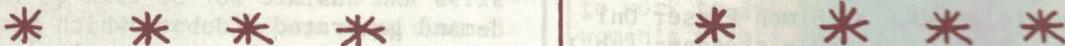
"That is exactly the kind of injustice the Code was created to eliminate," she said. "To allow this company decision to stand would be to make women unjustly vulnerable and penalize them because of their biological role."

### REPORT CONT. FROM P8

This proposal is presented with the intention of starting an early and open discussion of strategy on the composition of the women's caucus slate. Also, I hope it will begin to raise the question of slates being presented to the convention with clear policy statements.

I would like to encourage women who intend to run for nominations to send in biographies with their programme so that we can publish them in the convention edition of Priorities.

Finally, I hope you all have a warm and restful summer.



# The Trial of Betsy Wood and Gay Hoon

by ELLEN BARAGON

The moment the verdict was declared, a rush of applause, smiles and sighs of relief broke out in the gallery of on-lookers. On March 1, Betsy Wood and Gay Hoon had been found not guilty on charges of aiding an escape, and public mischief, in connection with the Jan. 28, 1978 hostage-taking incident at the B.C. Pen.

Betsy Wood in an unprecedented step had successfully represented herself in the B.C. Supreme Court, and along with Hoon, had in effect put the B.C. Pen on trial.

It had been a culmination of a year-long ordeal complete with harrassment and stone-walling by prosecutors, lawyers and prison officials over the charges that had been laid. Said Betsy . . .

"I was tired of watching people being spectators at their own trial. I didn't want to be part of the wallpaper. Judges, prosecutors and lawyers who played the legal game in the courtroom seemed to have nothing to do with justice."

Gay, 33, a former daycare worker and longtime political activist in Vancouver, has shown a firm commitment to several progressive movements over the years, including Leonard Peltier, SORWUC, SWAPO, and most ardently, Prisoners' Rights. Said Hoon . . .

"In this society, prisoners suffer the ultimate oppression. Prisons are the dumping grounds for members of the working class and minority groups."

Wood, 48, once married, with 4 children, had been affected by The Women's Movement in the late 1960's accounting for her activities in the NDP, Daycare organizing and the Abortion Campaign in the early Seventies.

Both Wood and Hoon got involved with

Prisoner's Rights around the time of the Prisoner's Union Movement and the 'Cruel and Unusual Punishment' Hearing in 1975 which spotlighted conditions at the solitary confinement unit in the B.C. Pen tentiary.

Irrepressible and seemingly undaunted by hostile beauracrats, Wood and Hoon have gained considerable respect for their hard work in the community.

The Rights of Prisoners and Prison Conditions became the major focus of their attention. Both worked together trying to draw attention to solitary confinement by a variety of methods, letters, lobbying and demonstrations.

On Jan. 28, 1978 five prisoners attempted to escape from the B.C. Pen by smashing the glass that separates the inmates from their visitors. The plan failed when a guard locked a door and shut all visitors and prisoners inside the area together. The prisoners, in desperation took the remaining group as hostages for seven days before being defeated by the authorities. Two of the hostages, Betsy and Gay (the only Prisoner's Rights activists among the visitors, mainly consisting of parents and girlfriends) were later arrested as participants in the escape attempt. As a result of the stabbing of one of the guards during the incident by a prisoner, Betsy and Gay found themselves facing charges of attempted murder, along with aiding an escape and public mischief (attempted murder carries a life sentence). Both women were sent to Okalla Women's Unit in Burnaby, where they had the opportunity of seeing the inside of a solitary confinement cell for themselves. The women were eventually released on bail after supporters sent over 60 letters to the authorities all attesting to Betsy and Gay's non-violent responsible characters.

Five months after charges were laid Betsy and Gay, flanked with defence lawyers, faced a two week preliminary hearing in New Westminster. The hearing was fully attended by family, friends and other sympathetic individuals. The women were disappointed when a ban on publicity was imposed by their lawyers, denying them the opportunity to educate the Public about conditions in Solitary. Nevertheless, the result of the Preliminary was a dismissal of the charges on the basis of lack of evidence. Relief was felt that the ordeal was finally over.

Some time later, however, Betsy and Gay received notice that the case was being proceeded with direct indictment on the authority of Attorney General Garde Gardom. Direct indictment provides a loophole exercised by the authorities under the Criminal Code whereby the judicial process can be bypassed on the advice of Crown Counsel. In effect, the preliminary hearing had been a total waste of time. It now appeared that the attitude of the Crown Counsel was an assumption of guilt from the outset, thereby creating a justification for direct indictment procedures. In short, it seemed a matter of political expediency.

Having no alternative, Betsy and Gay proceeded to prepare for the trial which lay ahead.

After a great deal of thought, Betsy decided she would act as her own lawyer in Court. There were two major reasons for this: the intention was to reclaim the power and control over the direction of the case, which for eleven months had been stripped away by the legal profession; and secondly, it was crucial to Betsy and Gay that an acquittal alone was not the only outcome of the trial, but rather that the trial would provide an opportunity to expose the corruption and futility of the prison system to the Public through the testimony of witnesses. This approach would not have been possible given the preference of lawyers for a straight legal defence.

The failure to attempt to enlighten the Public on the prison issue, seemed

to Betsy and Gay too great a political compromise.

While respecting Betsy's decision, many of her friends and supporters feared she would lose her case because of her lack of professional skills. She was strongly encouraged not to take the risk. Despite opposition, Betsy persisted and gradually an ad hoc committee of friends formed to help her develop her strategy for the trial. Meanwhile, Gay had found a new lawyer, Jim Vilvang to represent her.

Taking on a criminal case was not easy. It required hours and hours of hard work, day and night of scraping together evidence from all available sources, often times from memory. Because Betsy and Gay were attempting more than an acquittal, information concerning the prison movement, the role of the prison authorities, the police, the courts, the politicians and the prisoners themselves became key to the nature of the trial. It had to be a synopsis of all their experiences fighting for the rights of prisoners. The trial, expected to last three weeks, dragged on for nearly six. By this time the attempted murder charge had been dropped.

The first day of the trial, courthouse employees were met with a crowd of over 50, many carrying placards and chanting 'FREE WOOD AND HOON'. Nationwide media coverage was complete with all major papers, television and radio stations in attendance.

Support from feminists and other political groups was increasingly evident as the trial continued. The courtroom was consistently full down to the last day.

Considering the fervor with which the prosecution had pursued the indictments, the evidence was scanty. Basically the prosecution attempted to prove that Betsy and Gay had forehand knowledge of the escape plans and had assisted by providing the escaping prisoners with a gun, getaway car, and an apartment with several weeks worth of provisions.

Betsy and Gay's lawyer countered

these allegations with arguments that made prosecution evidence look contrived. Ironically, some prosecution witnesses, when cross-examined, volunteered stories showing Betsy as a fine, trustworthy individual, not consistent with the prosecution's idea of a criminal.

The Defence case was aimed at showing the repressiveness and corruption of the prison system. Prison officials suffered stuttering and anxiety when Betsy asked pointed questions about conditions at the B.C. Pen. Prisoners who were called for the Defence, (Andy Bruce, Stephen Hall, Ralph Saumer, to name a few), appeared more credible giving their testimony than many of the officials who had been called to the Stand.

In short, the main issue in the proceedings was not conflicting evidence, but misinterpretation of the facts coming from a decided mistrust of, and prejudice against prison activists generally. Every fact was presented in the worst possible light by the prosecutor. For example, Betsy upon arriving at the Pen the day of the incident, had left her keys in the ignition with the car unlocked. Defence was able to prove that she was in the habit of forgetting her keys in the car on many occasions, although the prosecution had attempted to prove that this detail was part of the breakout plans.

A tremendous sense of victory was felt after the acquittal was announced. For many of their friends and relatives the preservation of Betsy and Gay's freedom was the most important result. For others, most of all, Betsy and Gay, the opportunity to reveal the injustices of the prison system during the trial was the real victory.

For several years, these two women and a few others have fought to end solitary confinement at the B.C. Pen where prisoners are locked 24 hours a day in a concrete, windowless vault, (Andy Bruce has been in solitary for over 7 years) and where people only became brutalized, not rehabilitated.

Solitary confinement is one of the many issues around prisons that prison activists have concerned themselves with, both here in Canada and around the World. Betsy Wood and Gay Hoon and those involved in the prison movement in Vancouver (greater in number since the trial), believe that prisons are cruel, destructive ways of dealing with 'criminal offenders' and honestly believe that if the Public really understood the prison system, most of them would agree, it is unacceptable.



## VANCOUVER WOMEN IN FOCUS SOCIETY

Women's Art Gallery: at Women in Focus  
#6 45 Kingsway 872-2250

TIMES: Monday-Friday 10am-4pm  
Thursdays 10am-8pm

SHOWINGS: July 2-30 DIANA KEMBLE,  
ongoing graphics and drawings  
in book form  
August 1-30 CLAIRE KUJUNDZIC  
prints and drawings



## THE CRIME OF PRISONS

# AN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

But, where were the female offenders?

The women most concerned were nowhere to be seen amongst the delegates at this five day conference at Holiday Inn. True - there was the token panel entitled: The Incarcerated Offenders, which offered four women "residents" from two B.C. "correctional institution" under escort of the 'Brownies' (women sheriffs) to respond to the Chairman, Laurier Lapierre, the well-known media personality, as he titillated the audience with his charm.

"What led you to your life of crime?" "What can we do to help you not to return to it?" "How do you feel about bringing up your child in prison with you?" (to the mother of a one year old baby with her at Twin Maple Farm). Some members of the audience were seen to leave, and later admitted they left out of a sense of shame, and in some cases of guilt. Women who were stationed in the higher echelons of the prison bureaucracy were also finding themselves helpless to cope with situations where they were unable to influence major decisions although they were ostensibly expected to fulfil their moral obligations. These admissions came out even more clearly when they were later interviewed on the Channel 10 program: INSTEAD OF PRISONS, produced and aired weekly by the Prisoners' Rights Group on six Channel 10 stations across B.C.

When the women prisoners were questioned as to their reaction to the new government heroin compulsory maintenance program, they admitted they were scared at the possibility of being picked up for further harassment by the police, even though they were no longer on drugs. Suicides are already known to be taking place as prisoners face that prospect on

## THE FEMALE OF FENDER

by Claire Culhane

release.

And when the more pointed question was asked by a community worker as to how realistic were their chances of not returning to prison, given the grim employment scene where one million Canadians, not burdened with a criminal record, were unable to find work--the question was deftly set aside by the chairman.

### A PAUCITY OF ACTION

The keynote speech provided by J.J. Blais, Solicitor-General, at the opening session was in itself a masterpiece of what has come to be called 'the big lie technique.' Sweeping changes were announced--"we are on the verge of providing some long-delayed improved opportunities--Women's Prison at Kingston to be phased out--the problem of the Federal female offender has long plagued the administration of justice in Canada and is characterized by a plethora of reports on the subject and a paucity of action. It is my desire to reverse this continuing condition."

These declarations were interspersed with a list of imposing statistics:

In Canada fewer than 4% of all prisoners are women.

In the Federal system only 2% are women, and of these just (sic) 2 are serving sentences of 2 years or more.

Between 1880-1970 the percentage increased to 15%...we expect an increase... between 3.5% and 5% annually by 1985.

If, as we expect, 285 Federal female offenders in 1985, only about 10 will warrant maximum security...at the present time only 4 women out of a total of 140 at Kingston are considered maximum se-

curity...106 require perimeter security.

Prison for Women built in 1934 to house 100, began with population of 34--full capacity not reached until the 60's.

1938 - Archambault Royal Commission:  
"There is no justification for erection and maintenance of a costly penitentiary for women alone--further continuance is unjustified..."

1974 - National Advisory Committee on the Female Offender was formed charged with making recommendations...report made public in 1977 concluded that the Prison for Women should be closed.

July 1978 - Feasibility study commenced--Joint Committee to Study Alternatives for Housing of Federal Female Offenders.

And so on, ad nauseum.

#### WHO NEEDS THE FEMALE OFFENDER?

However, when the question was raised from the audience during the first plenary session "When are we going to close the gap--the gap between all these fine conferences with their grand plans, graphs and studies, outwardly demonstrating how well-motivated people seriously work towards the improvement of the increasingly foul penal system--AND--the grim reality of the human deterioration in every prison cell across this country, in terms of gross medical incompetence--increasing number of prison suicides--inhumane sentences--incredibly inept bureaucracies--and total lack of prisoner rights, there was no answer.

Nor was there any response to the suggestion that the approximate five hundred member audience identify themselves as receiving any portion of their income from the Solicitor-General's Department, the Corrections Service, or university grants. Or, even to be so bold as to include the precise financial gains incurred. Then, and only then, would the interest generated by such conferences reveal who it is that needs the FEMALE OFFENDER in order to maintain their personal positions and standard of living.

Although that question was never ad-

dressed, others became more specific as the proceedings unfolded.

#### CHANGE IS ESSENTIAL

At the panel named: SENTENCING AND DISPOSITION OF THE FEMALE OFFENDER, Dr. Gillian Sandeman (former Ontario MLA, and Executive-Director of the Elizabeth Fry Society) questioned the worth of the 25 year sentence (in lieu of capital punishment). Robert Francis, of the Faculty of Law, University of Calgary, one of the panelists, did not hesitate to place himself on record as having vehemently opposed same, as a member of the former Solicitor-General Warren Allmand's committee. He described how he was promptly dropped from the committee--not officially, just subsequently never informed of the meeting times and places! The point was also made that we are not faced with an alternative between capital punishment and the 25 year sentence, but between being a civilized nation and an uncivilized nation. It is well known that other western democracies (viz. England and the Scandinavian nations) impose maximums ranging from 5 to 8 years for similar offences. Despite this policy (or perhaps, because of it?) their national crime rate remains lower than ours.

As emerging forms of female criminality were discussed, one panelist offered as his explanation for the increasing number of women "terrorists" that many professional and highly educated women become disillusioned with the lack of progress made in social change, and then turn to acts of "terrorism". However, he omitted to make note of the fact that this subject could not be discussed separate and apart from the "terrorist" world we now share, where \$1 billion a day is spent on the arms race, and where Canada is the 10th largest arms salesman, selling its Candu Reactors to known fascist countries.

An impassioned plea was made by Antonio Sanchez Galindo, Director of the Centre for Addicted Youths in Acapulco, Mexico, for CHANGE! CHANGE! CHANGE! His centre had succeeded in instituting meaningful work programs where one third of the prisoners' income passed to family support; one third was placed in their release fund, and one third to cover current needs. Space does not permit further details of

his presentation, but the impact of Senor Galindo as he spoke in the strongest terms for the need to break away from present concepts of prison, will not easily be forgotten.

No provision had been made to present resolutions despite the intensive participation in forty panel discussions on the broadest spectrum of relevant topics. When Dr. Marie Andree Bertrand (Vice Dean of Faculty of Education, University of Montreal) approached the Coordinating Committee to request that arrangements be made to do so, and was handed a firm "NO!" as an answer, Dr. Bertrand's reaction was, "Well - YES!" A sign was promptly posted announcing that an Ad Hoc Resolutions Committee would meet Thursday at 5:00 p.m. Approximately twenty delegates attended with a number of excellent resolutions. Despite the visible agitation of the three Committee members who could hardly believe that their edict was being so blatantly rejected, a series of resolutions were brought in during Dr. Sandeman's allotted portion of the Final Plenary on Friday morning (Feb. 2nd). Valuable dialogue was generated and most of the resolutions were approved and passed.

#### BUREAUCRATIC "GAME-PLAYING"

The time has long since past when a Solicitor General can expound his intentions and expect his audience to remain impervious to the realities of the Canadian prison system. He must be made to realize how unacceptable is his verbiage about "providing programs" (meaning further imprisonment) in "correctional institutions" (usually archaic prisons)--about a "regional psychiatric centre that is fast becoming world-renowned" which in fact has no recreation officer and consequently no recreation program despite a recent budget from Ottawa in the neighborhood of \$16,000 plus \$9,000 to cover salary--or, about the "institution at Mission which in design, quality and number of staff is one of the best in Canada if not in North America..." but where a prisoner cannot even get an answer confirming his request to place a friend on his visiting list--about the Oakalla

Women's Unit where despite the 57 recommendations made by the Royal Commission under Justice Patricia Proudfoot, women prisoners continue to be deposited (none too gently) in solitary confinement cells under the old cow barn, and the Regional Director regrets that the environment is not exactly pleasant--the same institution where a prison doctor used toothpaste as a vaginal lubricant to perform an internal examination of five women prisoners.

We have a Solicitor-General advancing his "very clear intention to phase out Kingston Women's Prison" knowing full well that no corresponding effort is being made to dispose of the "legal constraints" which automatically nullify his highly trumpeted announcement. Sentences imposed on these women prohibit them from being transferred in sufficient numbers and early enough to make the proposal meaningful.

The stage is thereby set for passing responsibility back and forth between Federal and Provincial jurisdictions, relying on an ill-informed public's inability to comprehend that bureaucracies must build empires in order to maintain themselves in power. "Game-playing" is the term prisoners use to describe how such policies affect them. It is not so much the custody of their bodies as the humiliation and dehumanization of their person, as their self-respect is stripped from them, guaranteeing the high rate of recidivism which is later deplored.

Two years earlier, Isabel Macneill, former Director of Kingston Women's Prison for ten years, shocked her audience when she declared: "I am sick to death of prisons. I think we have wasted so much of human people...to keep women at this point in time in cells that are only toilets is completely uncivilized...if something drastic is not done in the near future we are in for far more trouble." (Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of Subcommittee on the Penitentiary System in Canada, March 17/1977).

As long as the newly-appointed Commissioner Yeomans continues to make "...34 new appointments to major positions at Headquarters and in the Regions." (LIA-

ISON, Sol-Gen's Dept. vol. 5, no. 1, Jan/79--and as long as conferences continue to be organized on FEMALE OFFENDERS featuring literature tables which display enticing brochures such as: Careers with the Corrections Branch; Community Correction Centres; Family Court Counselling; Volunteers in Correctional Programs...and more studies are authorized like Report of the Joint Committee to Study Alternatives for the Housing of the Federal Female Offenders--just so long will government bureaucracies self-perpetuate, literally over the bodies of human beings.

#### MICROCOSM OF THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM

For the more politically astute--let it be clearly understood that our prison system is merely a micrcosm of the capitalist system, and can only reflect its basic aims as it employs historic methods to remain in power. To remain in power, such governments must control the military, the police and the prison system.

Prison reform can no longer be considered effectual if it simply aims to 'improve' prisoners' conditions, and at the same time reinforce corrupt prison systems. Prison reform must, at this moment in history, be conceived as effectual only if it can contribute to the transfer of the balance of power from the hierarchy to the prison movement. Prisoners must have access to the process of natural justice, and where denied same, to be able to organize themselves to gain their civil and human rights--none of which have ever been officially denied them by the courts.

The community, where the so-called crime has been committed has a social responsibility both to the 'lawbreaker' and the victim--in fact it is obliged to view both parties as victims in the final analysis. The elderly woman charged in a Vancouver court for the theft of half a pound of oatmeal is indeed a community responsibility, and not a criminal.

When imprisonment is conceived as the very last resort, only after every other community alternative has been explored,

will we attain the desired goal of a few people imprisoned for the shortest period of time. Any opposition to this philosophy would soon reveal itself as emanating from a power structure which demands an escalating and repressive prison system in order to survive.

The economic burden and the human waste of such a policy is the cost to ourselves as citizens. It is no longer just the problem of the female offender, though it is she who pays the price for our ignorance and intolerance. Actually, it is the public which must be rehabilitated to participate with the full knowledge of why there are female offenders--a most critical area of the struggle for women's rights.

(Ed.: Priorities will publish some of the resolutions in our next issue.)

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## FAST-FOOD CHAIN CLAMS UP CHILDREN

Toronto (CP)--The chairman of the Toronto Board of Education says the growing popularity of fast-food restaurants is making it harder for children to communicate at home.

Fiona Nelson, speaking on Toronto radio station CFRB, said that because many children eat by themselves in restaurants, family dinner conversation no longer exists in many homes.

Children lose an important aspect of growing up because they do not discuss their problems, opinions or experiences with other family members, she said on the program.

reprinted from, *The Principal*, Burnaby PE Teachers Newsletter, by Ed Silva-White, supervisor, January 1979.

\*\*\*\*\*

Write... \*  
send your  
thoughts

# THE ABUSED CHILD

## — AN IN-DEPTH REPORT

by John Maccagno  
reprinted from Swag

### CHILD ABUSE

**Definition:** Child abuse and neglect means the physical and mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment or malnutrition of the child under 18 years by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances which indicate that the child's health and welfare is harmed or threatened.

**Incidence:** is world wide with the highest incidence in society where physical punishment is an accepted way of disciplining.

Figures for U.S.A. and Canada estimate 380 per one million population.

Other estimate figures as high as 1500 cases per million population.

Most authors agree that for every reported case undoubtedly four to five that are not. Actually very little is known of the magnitude of the problem, e.g. older school age children -- does the problem miraculously disappear after the age three?

10% of children under two who present in the the Emergency Department with injuries inflicted by parents or guardians.

The University of Denver working paper on Child abuse -- estimates that 30% per year increase in child abuse. If this projected through for ten years it is estimated that in the U.S.A. alone there will be one and a half million reported cases in 1987 with fifty thousand deaths.

Three hundred thousand permanently injured children.  
One million potential abusers in the next generation.

CHILD AT RISK -- usually under one year

### Statistics

One month to six month child:

- Number one killer -- sudden infant death syndrome
- Number two killer -- child battering

Six months to one year child:

- Number one killer is child battering

One year to three year child:

- Number one killer -- accidents
- Number two killer -- child battering

From three years on statistics unavailable:

Accidents listed as number one killer -- no mention of child abuse.

Failure to thrive accounts for approximately 5% of all pediatric hospital admissions.

From other studies

Approximately 50% of battered children have previously been treated for trauma.

Approximately 75% were listed as seriously ill on admission.

50% had head injuries.

45% had fractures

75% soft tissue injuries

90% had a combination of the above.

40% of battered children usually present with facial trauma.

It is estimated that the child at risk is unrecognized he has an 80% chance of being further battered and a very distinct possibility of dying or being permanently maimed by the battering.

THE VICTIM --- is usually an infant:

(a) demanding

(b) defenseless

(c) non-verbal

It is estimated that approximately 35% of all batterings are less than six months

35% six months to one year

30% one year to three years

Sex Incidence -- 2 to 1 male to female.

Premature greater risk.

Step children and adopted children are also higher risks.

THE ABUSER -- It is important to stress that child abuse occurs in all classes of society, there is no correlation with low I.Q. There is no correlation with "lower society."

Groups with Increased Incidence

1. fundamentalist religions -- believe God expects them to punish children vigorously
2. military bases
3. poverty groups

Qualifications to poverty groups is that possibly due to more frequent crises and diminished resources available -- there is more likelihood for battering.

The female is more frequent abuser than male, again probably due to the fact that mothers spend more time with the children.

Apparently equal frequency of abusing -- male or female -- if the male is unemployed and at home.

Failure to thrive is almost always due to maternal incapability.

Average age of abusing parent -- female 26 years old  
male 30 years old

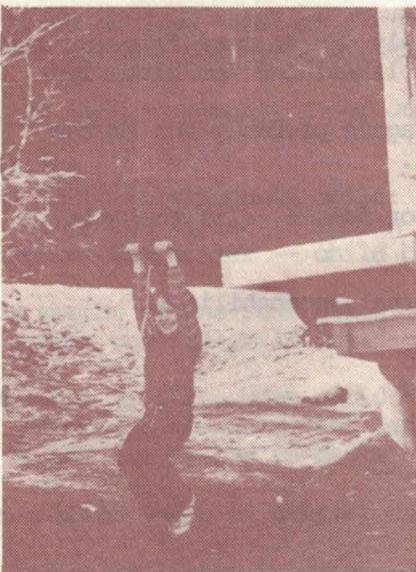
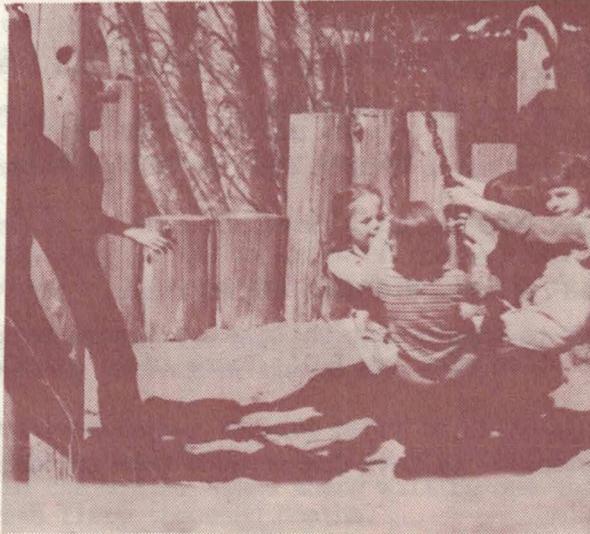
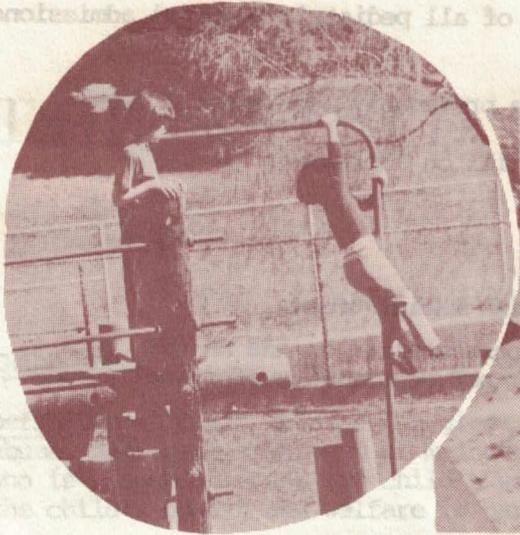
Profile of Parent

90% of parents are not insane or criminal

5% are psychotic

5% are sociopathic

The sociopathic usually recognized with a long history of wife beating,



trouble with the law, etc.

Majority are from homes where they were physically abused when they were children, i.e. the abusing parent was also an abused child.

Concept -- "right child" "right Parent" "right time"

Right Child e.g. -- colicky child  
-- demanding child  
-- child that appears smarter than the parent  
-- better looking  
-- handicapped

i.e. the child stands out from the rest.

Right time -- crisis e.g. - car breaking down  
- child ill with crying  
- drinking etc.  
- interrupted intercourse

The crisis can be any everyday frustration.

### Right Parent

Profile of the right parent -- the parent is capable of giving good physical care but cannot give emotional and protective needs -- long standing emotional problems which are highlighted by demands and responsibilities of parenthood.

--Parents who reject their children and are primarily concerned with their own feelings and pleasures.

--Parents stand to identify with their own sadistic parents and inflict on their own children hurts that they themselves experienced.

--Parents with low impulses control leading to sudden rage reactions which are directed at the child, e.g. child picked up and vigorously shaken to control his crying.

### Jealousy

The parents are incapable of forming any true emotional bonds, are jealous of any relationships between spouse and child. They see any bonds developing as a real threat to themselves and to their own limited relationships. Parents are often unaware of this but apparently this is a very real situation in a battering parent.

### Crisis Situation

\*Is usually a precipitating event -- i.e. right parent - right child - right time concept.

This is never an isolated event but the combination of a progressive breakdown of parental care. It very frequently occurs during mothering activities e.g. feeding the child, changing napkins, etc. The child may not be "cooperative" leading to feelings of extreme anger and frustration.

Studies indicate that potentially battering parents express extreme feelings of anxiety and annoyance when the baby cries and many of them will freely indicate that this is what makes them unhinged for they feel that they cannot cope with a crying child. This is to be considered one of the warnings, so one has to be very concerned about a parent whose reaction to a crying child is such that it appears that they cannot cope with it any longer.

AN EXTRACT FROM A MOTHER'S LETTER . . . "I don't think anyone ever really knows how big a strain child bearing and child rearing is until they have been through it. When my babies were small I used to find myself flying into an insane rage particularly with the youngest. I would find myself flailing at him in all direction, slapping his face, kicking or shaking him and finally throwing him across the room. Babies and small children sap everything from their mother, they are life's cruelest torturers, always wanting more when mother feels least like giving."....

In summary the parents are like children themselves -- hostile because of their own unmet needs, resentful because of the demands made on them as parents -- often tied to their own parents in neurotic love/hate hostile dependent relationships -- unable to give of themselves -- unable to meet the needs of their children -- act like children with rivalries like children -- jealousies of attention like children -- strike out in a blind rage like children. It is important to remember that the abusive parent was an abused child himself.

#### CLINICAL HISTORY OF CHILD BATTERING.

Statistics indicate that 98% of child battering is reported by agencies and only 2% by physicians. It would appear the physicians in general are not aware of the problem or tend to not report.

The most important aspect of history in child battering is for the examiner to be very suspicious.

1. The history is inconsistent with the extent of the trauma, e.g. six month old child rolled over in a crib and strikes his head, presents with a fractured skull, this history is inconsistent with the findings. E.G. Extensive one sided burn with a history of a child who apparently rolled against a steam register and "couldn't roll off."

2. The history is not uniform under different questioners.

3. The accident prone child.

4. Over and under reaction of the parents.

5. Repeated visits to doctors or emergency departments for minor or imaginary complaints.

6. Reaction of the child when separated from the parents.

7. Delay between the accident and seeking medical aid -- 40% next day  
40% four days later

8. \*The high degree of suspicion regarding the potential for abuse.

It is well to remember that children rarely injure themselves, especially those that are under one year old.

#### PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Examine the child for bruises and welts, e.g. confined to buttocks and lower limbs are invariably child abuse and punishment. Very frequently finger prints and or thumb prints are on the arms and chest and hand prints may be discernible on the child's body.

\*\*In small children bruises to lips or frenulum and gums very frequently due to a bottle being stuffed in child's mouth -- especially so if child is colicky with much crying.

**\*\*Beware of mouth injuries in young and older children -- this may be due to a punch.**

**\*\*Human bites on a child often attributed to other children, maybe indication of "scape goating" -- where other children are encouraged to pick on a different one.**

Loop scars -- marks from being hit with belts

- lash marks
- tattoos with sharp instruments, e.g. initials on the child's leg
- choke marks
- tie marks to arms and legs.

Burns -- approximately 10% of child abuse presents as burns. Most frequent are cigarette burns or incense burns. Frequently a child will present with a burnt thumb and it may be that the child was a thumb sucker and this is the parents attempt to "stop the habit."

Dry contact burns -- forcibly held to hot radiator, manifold or dry heat. This usually involves a very extensive burn to one side of the body, both palms, soles of the feet, etc.

Scalds -- two distinct patterns:

(a) dunking -- you will find burns to buttocks, perineum and abdomen. This is often a punishment for lack of toilet training or enuresis. There is a clear cut demarcation water level with hands and feet scarred because of the way the child was put in. It is extremely improbable that this type of accident is consistent with any history given.

(b) hot water thrown on a child, hot coffee, hot tea very difficult to differentiate from accidental scald of child pulling a pot of water over himself. One has to have a high degree of suspicion.

(c) forcible immersion of hand or foot -- burn usually well above the wrist or ankle and more severe than one would expect if the child actually accidentally placed an extremity in the hot water.

For some unknown reason burns as a form of child battering seldom involve the face.

Eye Injuries\*\* very frequent

- hyphema
- dislocated lenses
- detached retina
- fundiscopic hemorrhages

These are very frequently overlooked as an eye examination is seldom carried out in any great detail on small children. The tremendous significance of this injury that over 50% lead to permanent blindness or impaired vision.

CNS Damage -- subdural hematomas associated with fractures can be subtle or acute.

The concept of a SPONTANEOUS SUBDURAL -- this was a diagnosis where the subdural was present without a fracture. This was thought to occur for no apparent reason. It is now known that this is usually due to violent shaking with rapid acceleration and deceleration of the brain leading to tears of the veing with subdural bleeding. Retinal hemorrhages are invariably present. It is important to consider this diagnosis in any subdurals of no known cause, for all intent and purposes these are all due to violent shaking and therefore a form of child abuse.

Abdominal Injuries -- the second most common cause of death in battered children. Invariably due to tearing of the mesentery, small bowel, splenic or liver tears. High degree of suspicion necessary or will be frequently missed.

The complaints by parents include:

1. he bumped his head
2. he bruises easily
3. he fell down the stairs
4. he fell off the bed or couch
5. a swing hit him in the stomach

Obviously these are complaints that one hears many times a day in an Emergency Department. Some will be related to child battering, therefore be suspicious.

As a general rule the fairly obvious clinical signs of child battering include

- failure to thrive
- perioral injuries
- odor of alcohol on a child's breath
- fractures under three years old
- evidence of frequent injuries
- bizarre injuries
- advanced or unattended injuries or illnesses
- trauma to genital and perineal areas
- clearly demarcated burns
- subdural hematomas
- skull fractures
- ruptures visous
- DOA's

These are usually not missed, the ones that are most easily missed are those cases with very subtle findings or those where the injuries are such that they could conceivably be caused by those things outlined by the parent.

#### MANAGEMENT

1. Prevention
2. Early identification
3. Treatment
4. Follow-up
5. Rehabilitation

#### Objectives

1. To protect the child against initial and repeated violence.
2. To provide parent abuser with necessary support and therapy to enable them to cope with causes or their aberrant behaviour.
3. Enable earliest return possible of the child to rehabilitated and safe natural home.

The danger with all programs is that the tendency is to the vengeance rather than therapy as demanded.

".... criminal process is a solution to child abuse" is usually totally ineffective. Probably it has some deterrent effect on the parent capable of controlling his conduct but its chief value lies in the satisfying of the conscience of the community that the wrong of the child has been avenged. But the true cause of battering or the child's conduct has not been sought out and treatment is of little concern.

The accepted treatment today is that a battered child is better in his natural home if the parents are considered to be fit, i.e. the danger of repeated injury to a child is considerably reduced when it has been possible for parents to form an on-going relationship with professional help. It is considered acceptable today that criminal action is grossly inappropriate and it certainly does not prevent

child abuse. "... criminal sanctions are poor means of preventing child abuse, day to day family life charged with the most intimate of emotions is not likely to be an area of life easily ruled by the threats of fines and prison. The criminal law tends to destroy a child's family relationships and cannot preserve or rebuild them..." "Beginning of a prosecution is likely to be the end of a chance to improve the child's home situation..." Thus using the law creates such hostility that it makes case work with the family all but impossible. These sanctions do nothing to help the child.

### Notification

In British Columbia the law is very clear that everyone has a legal responsibility to notify the Director of Child Welfare or his designate in any suspected child abuse or child neglect. The person who makes the report is liability free providing this call is made without malicious intent.

PREDICTIVE QUESTIONING --a list of questions that may give clues to supporting your diagnosis. e.g.

1. Does your child cry a lot?
2. How do you manage the baby crying?
3. Does the baby crying upset you when you are unable to stop the crying?
4. Does the baby crying make you feel like crying?
5. How do you feel inside when the baby cries?

The answers often indicate anxiety, despair and frustration and can point out eventually to abusive parents. These questions also include some that indicate "bailing out", i.e. using someone else in the time of crisis. e.g.

1. Can you call someone at the times you are having problems with your child?
2. Does it make you anxious to have someone watch you feed your baby?
3. Do you get the feeling that others are critical of you and how you feed your baby?
4. Do you understand the problems you have with your baby?

These questions often indicate that the parents are under tremendous pressures and that they have fought all their lives to respond to someone else's needs and that they are emotionally incapable of handling even the most basic emotional needs of a child.

Predictive questioning also includes those which inquire about the patient's feelings about being left alone, e.g. are they afraid of being left with the baby. \*This is a very common fear amongst abusers. Predictive questioning also includes those about unreasonable expectations.

1. When do you feel that your child is old enough to understand what is expected of him?
2. How well do you feel that your child understand you?
3. Can they tell when you are upset and need help?

These questions will indicate whether the parent is turning to his own child for satisfaction of his needs (role of reversal).

Appropriate observations of the child in question by appropriate questioning and by appropriate house visits, etc. will often diagnose the potential of child abuse.

### DYNAMICS OF A BATTERING FAMILY

#### POTENTIAL

What allows a parent to injure a child?

1. Imprint of mothering is lost -- usually a disastrous childhood -- the parent as a child was belittled physically, was injured physically and was chastised.
2. Basic trust patterns -- unable to use people to solve one's problems -- this is learned as a child. When attempts are made to go to mother or father for help the usual normal reaction is that the mother or father will assist, but in the battering family the child's call for help is usually met by physical injury or by being publically chastised or ignored. Thus leading to isolation.
3. Unsupporting spouse relationship -- "concept of crummy partners." The abusing parent is a difficult person, incapable of feedback because of distrust, he is incapable of any real emotional relationships. Thus it is not an accident that they select mates like themselves as they are unable to give anything of themselves. Therefore the situation arises where two people of identical emotional makeup mate and both are incapable of looking after the child. Therefore the concept of "right parent," "right time," "right child."
4. Poor self image -- the abusing parents feel that they are no good, they feel that they have no value. This is a learned reaction and is not unexpected for their own childhood has been one of being kicked around and chastised.
5. Role Reversal -- the battered child's home the mother usually expects the child to look after her, to fulfill her needs. This is her expectation. This child is not allowed to be a child, e.g. a four year old child is "such a comfort when I have a headache."

The child with any intelligence learns fast, he learns how to conform and to comply to protect himself from physical injury.

In many situations this is the first tip off in that a child at a very early age e.g. a nine or ten year old will act like a twenty year old in looking after the home etc.

#### CHILD AT RISK

It is important to realize that not every child in a family will be abused. That the child that is abused will be different or special or will give some demand which the parent cannot meet. The child at danger is usually "a stubborn child":

Wrong sex  
Handicapped  
Colicky, etc.

Often times this means that the mother or father identifies the child with someone he or she hates. It is important again that the crisis can be anything and that THE CRISIS IS NOT THE CAUSE, the crisis can be any daily frustration.

It is important to remember as well that in a battering family that other sibs who are not physically injured would also have some degree of emotional problems because of their home situations.

#### Concept of the "Sick Family"

All families have problems but most have the capability of "bailing out," i.e. using other people in time of needs being it grandparents, each other etc. In The "sick family" this skill is not learned because of their own childhood being so miserable. This leads the parent to unreasonable expectations of the child, e.g. don't cry, don't soil yourself, etc. The child has to comply to protect himself. It is not unusual for a battering mother or father to expect a one year old or six month old child to be toilet trained and become very annoyed when the child wets himself or soils himself. Concept adopted by these parents really is then one of

role reversal, whereby the child is expected to look after and comfort the parents and do as the parents feel they should be doing. The child will attempt to follow the ground rules set by the parents, this is a learnt function called compliance.

In such a family situation the child learns that he cannot trust anyone. Childhood is essentially missed in these children as there is no room for childhood things. It is accepted that misbehaviour will not be tolerated in most of these households. Basic trust learned will not be present if the child cannot seek out other people. This basic trust is learned at home and the abusing family the child's attempts to be comforted are met with abuse, thereby leading to emotional deprivation and isolation. These children learn not to use other people and this leads to a self image that they "are no good."

In their life these children present with problems selecting friends and invariably they find each other and mate with people like themselves. Thus the cycle is complete, the battered parent -----> the battered children -----> back to the battered parent.

In summary, in terms of numbers the problem of child abuse is indeed staggering. If one considers the spinoffs from the so-called "sick families" the problem is further magnified. The products of such families include:

Child abuse	Drug use in children
Child neglect	Obesity
Emotional deprivation	Retardation
Failure to thrive	Learning disabilities
Behaviour disorders	Teenage pregnancies
Sociopathic behaviour	

Most importantly that the child is abused will in all likelihood also become an abusing parent.

#### CONCLUSION

It is of utmost importance that all people from all walks of life be more aware of child abuse and that the physicians and the communities become more aware of the scope of child abuse and how to prevent and treat this illness.

Reference material available on request. John is an emergency room physician and founder of the Parkside Emergency Physicians. He is not a feminist but we share with him a great concern in this area.

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## Sweden bans "war" toys

Parents in Sweden will not be able to give their children war toys to play with from December 1, 1979, the last month of the UN International Year of the Child. This is the victory of a campaign which began in Warsaw three years ago.

Toy manufacturers and the Swedish Consumer Agency and the Play Council (representing the Government) reached an agreement on January 8 to ban the production and sale of war toys in Sweden. The campaign in Sweden implemented a decision of the European meeting of youth and students in Warsaw, in 1976, to press for the ban of war toys.

The Swedish Play Council took it up. Members of Parliament joined, and, in April, 1978, pressed for the ban in a two-hour debate. The debate led to a request to the Consumer Agency to start negotiations with toy manu-

facturers to reach a "voluntary agreement". A minority of MPs urged that if it was not possible to arrive at such an agreement then the Government should impose a ban on the import of all military toys.

In the Malta Declaration of the Child's Right to Play, the International Playground Association stated, "Stop the commercial exploitation of children's play, e.g. manipulative advertising, war toys and violence in entertainment!" The World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession (WCOTP) also took up the campaign.

Around the world several countries are opposed to the manufacture and sale of war toys. In Austria, Kinderfreunde (a children's organization) has been campaigning for some time for a ban; in the Federal Republic of Germany, the Minister of Justice told toy manufacturers he wanted a reduction in war toys.

Sweden hopes other countries will take up the campaign.

## BOOK REVIEW:

# DAY CARE



This book is a practical guide to day care in Canada. Written by more than twenty individuals and groups in the day care movement- parents, workers, educators and government consultants-it outlines the social need for day care, compares the types of service presently available and discusses the ongoing struggle for more and better day care.

Good Day Care begins by describing what the experience of day care has meant to those whose lives it has touched-women, children, fathers and workers. An article on early childhood development dispels the myth that group care is "bad" for children, while another article examines the connection between socialized childrearing and women's liberation. The book looks at day care in other countries, and discusses quality of care with reference to programs, values, legislative standards, working conditions, and community involvement.

Parent and worker-controlled day care is the book's first choice, but various articles evaluate the alternatives: private home day care, workplace day care, profit-making day care "chains", and day care provided through municipalities or private social agencies. The closing section of the book exposes the tremendous unfilled need for day care, analyses the roles played by industry, government and community groups in the struggle for day care, and suggests the directions this struggle will take in the near future.

## BOOK REVIEW:

# Task Force Study

reprinted from BC Teacher

Written by the 12 member Task Force on the Child as a Citizen, Admittance Restricted; The Child As Citizen in Canada, focuses on Canada's 7,000,000 children, but is addressed to every literate resident of Canada. The study examines both what is and what ought to be - the first because "it is through our day-to-day attitudes and actions that the lives of children are actually shaped so we will look instead at present realities." The second invites us to tread the path outlined to an improved tomorrow.

Four principles undergird the report. Children must be accorded their full rights as citizens. The family is usually "the best environment for the healthy development of children." There must be equality of opportunity - an end to a system of a few winners and many losers, a system in which children are not guaranteed minimum levels of economic support, health care, protection and education. Finally, the individuality of each child's interest must be protected on those occasions where these interests would be contrary to those of the parents.

Lucidly and forcefully written by individual members of the task force, the book contains seven chapters. It begins with an overview, followed by separate chapters on the child's need for economic support, for health care, for protection and for education. A chapter is addressed to the special needs of that most neglected and abused child - the Native child.

The final chapter rings the clarion call for support for children's rights to advance children from their current passive and dependent stance to that of recognition as full-fledged citizens, though in some cases, other members of society will have to guarantee these rights through "special representation." Discrete use of pictures enhances the volume's visual appeal.

The timing of the publication on the eve of 1979 as the International Year of the Child is most appropriate. Its revolutionary message for Canadians to change their attitudes and actions towards children, to advance from viewing the period of childhood-adolescence as a sorting-out stage in which a few already advantaged children are confirmed as winners and the many others are classed as losers, will undoubtedly promote worth-while discussions and debate. It is only through a raising of the overall level of awareness and understanding that genuine progress to acceptance of children as citizens will be made.

B.C. teachers will be particularly interested in the chapter on education, particularly as several BCTF working papers have served as source materials for the description of the current operation of the educational system.

### B.C. RIGHTS COMM. CONT FROM PS.

Some commission members criticized branch director Kathleen Ruff and demanded that she answer in future to the commission. A motion to that effect passed by a wide margin.

Commission member Smith criticized Ruff for "taking a crack at the government...saying things like they weren't spending enough money on education and weren't taking care of human rights."

Smith also held up a newspaper clipping from the Vancouver Express which quoted a branch worker on the subject of racism in Vancouver: He accused Ruff of allowing the worker to make irresponsible statements to the press. She replied that the quote was taken from a board of inquiry when the worker was a witness under oath.

Partly because of the frequency of asides, usually concerning women or sex, commission chairman Margaret Strongitharm sometimes had difficulty keeping order at the meeting.

Ruff, who was at the meeting, was silent almost the entire time. Also present were a woman secretary and a woman executive assistant.

The press and public were asked to leave at one point so that members could

discuss a "personal matter," which turned out to be a discussion on whether the human rights branch should come under the control of the commission.

Commission member Harry Crosby let it slip later in the meeting that the in-camera session involved a proposal that Ruff be required to seek permission from the commission to recommend boards of inquiry to Labor Minister Allan Williams.

Some commission members also hinted at the meeting that Ruff should not be allowed to talk to the press.

Preston said in an interview that the commission's ignorance of human rights documents and legislation was appalling.

"They just sat there and joked and joked around. I couldn't believe it. It was just an old-boys' club.

"Surely the government could've appointed people who were familiar with human rights legislation. These people have been there six months and they still aren't.

"I'm disturbed that the commission does not seem to know what its mandate and responsibilities are."

"Since August, what has the commission done other than design its letterhead, fuss about calling cards, and discuss the per-diem rate?"

reprinted from the Victoria Daily Colonist, April 1979

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July

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August

## We need you

### PRIORITIES MEETINGS

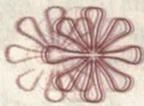
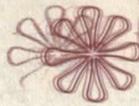
515 17. E. BROADWAY

8:00 PM

JULY 10

JULY 24

AUGUST 7



### WORK WEEKEND

FR. AUG 10 7:30 PM

SAT. AUG 11 FROM 10:00 AM ON.

SUN. AUG 12 FROM 11:00 AM ON.

### MAILING

TUES. AUG 21 7:30 PM

## Women's Organizer

FLASH!!!!!!

Good News! MARGARET BIRRELL has been appointed the Women's Organizer for the Provincial Party. Everyone who has worked with Margaret is delighted and knows that she will do a superb job. Margaret can be contacted at Provincial Office.

## Resolutions

CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS MUST BE POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN JULY 1.

## August 11

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

SATURDAY, AUG. 11

1:30 PM

515 E. BROADWAY



## Convention News

RECEPTION FOR IRENE PETRY

THURSDAY AUG 2 28

8:00 PM AT THE ROBSON ST. THEATRE

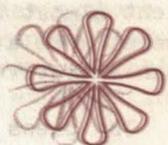
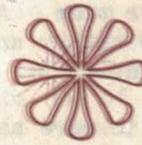
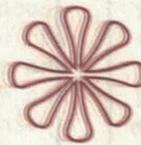
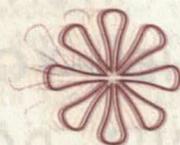
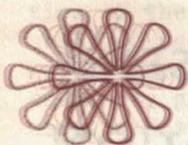
Irene is the Chairwoman of the

Socialist International Women.

She is also a Vice-President of

the Socialist International and

a Member of Parliament in Belgium.



# THANKS

to the following people who have made donations to Priorities:

Kathleen Swalm	-Kindersley, Sask.
Doreen Rutka	-New Westminster
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