

PRIORITIES

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**CUTOFFS AND CUTBACKS
- ATTACKS ON
WOMEN**

A FEMINIST SOCIALIST ANALYSIS

A PUBLICATION OF THE B.C. NDP WOMEN'S RIGHTS COMMITTEE

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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 an NDP government to creating the legislation necessary to realize these demands."

— NDP Policy on Women's Rights

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Thanks to all the workers who have made the production and distribution of this magazine possible.



Our herstory gives impetus to move forward

by Shelley Rivkin, Chairwoman Women's Rights Committee

This editorial, replacing the usual editorial and chairwoman's report on this page, was developed out of a discussion in the 'Priorities' Editorial Committee. A small sub-committee was struck to prepare the article which was subsequently written by Shelley Rivkin.

During the Women's Caucus meetings at the recent convention, there were a number of questions raised about the Women's Rights Committee. What is its role and mandate? How do we arrive at particular decisions? What do we mean by "feminist?" The discussion arose in part from a recommendation put forward by the steering committee that we seek equal representation with labour on the Provincial Executive.

The subsequent adoption of this recommendation by the Women's Caucus has provided us with a new direction. It therefore seems appropriate to take the time to review our history, to explain the step taken at the '81 convention for the benefit of those who were not able to be there, and to consider our plans for the future.

Women's Committee in 1962

The B.C. NDP Women's Rights Committee was first established by a resolution passed in 1962. Its purpose was "to stimulate interest among women, to develop their capabilities in the field of organization and education . . . so they will be more effective as people, as supporters, members, party officials or as potential representatives."

In the years 1962-1967 resolutions were adopted on child care, women in the labour force, and women at home. But the philosophy of the Women's Committee was not clearly defined. Between 1967 and 1971 there was little activity around women's issues. Then in 1971, in response to the *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women*, the committee was reactivated. On April 3, 1971, a standing committee on women's rights was established by Provincial Council and directed "to study and work towards implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission Report on the Status of Women."

A month later, in a letter to delegates at the provincial convention, the Committee clearly stated the belief that socialism is the only way to end the oppression of women. The statement declared that the "socialist view of equality had always included equal conditions and equal opportunities," and called for a "recognition of the oppression of women and for radical changes in our way of life and in our social orientation." It asked the convention to "establish a Provincial Conference for NDP women, trade union women and others so that a united program for action and education could be established by the women themselves."

The government years

From 1972-1974, when the NDP formed the government, the Women's Rights Committee developed and strengthened NDP policy on women's rights, taking on an increasingly active role within the party. The creation of a Women's Ministry responsible for the implementation of policy on women's rights became the focal point of a growing awareness of the relationship between feminism and socialism.

This process culminated in the drafting of what came to be known as the Kamloops Manifesto, a resolution which was adopted by the 1974 convention after one of the most passionate and stimulating debates ever held in the NDP.

Two key paragraphs from the Manifesto best express our concept of the role and philosophy of the Women's Rights Committee.

Women's liberation does not mean attaining equality with oppressed men, nor does it mean incorporating some few women to join with some few men in oppressing the vast majority of men and women. If the future liberation of women is not as total as is the present



oppression of women — if it does not touch and change the lives of every woman and every man — there will be no liberation at all for anyone. Socialism is a condition of women's liberation.

But by the same token, women's liberation is a condition of socialism. No socialist society can be built, or even begin to be built, on premises that include the systematic oppression of half the population, or indeed, of any part of the population. A socialist movement that does not systematically and energetically rid itself of sexist thought and practice, that does not actively seek to change the oppression of women's lives in its every form and manifestation, that does not incorporate into its everyday workings conscious and specific actions that reflect the nature and vision of a socialist society forfeits the right to claim the name or tradition of socialism. Such a movement is a sham and a fraud.

Policy and parity

The years 1975-1979 saw the Women's Rights Committee concentrating on two key objectives: the development of policy and programs and the achievement of parity for women within the party. The demand for parity was supported by the Federal Council in 1975 when it called upon the party in its internal workings to set "the example through the encouragement and development of women in the party at all levels."



The B.C. Women's Rights Committee had already begun the practice of running a half-slate of women candidates nominated by the Women's Caucus for positions on the Provincial Executive. By 1980, many more women were serving on the executive and council of both federal and provincial parties. However, they were not for the most part women chosen by or accountable to the Women's Rights Committee, nor were they always women with a strong commitment to women's rights policy.

In 1980, the Women's Rights Committee decided to abandon the policy of running a half-slate, and to contest only one position — that of the Participation of Women representative to the Federal Council.

This decision was the subject of an in-depth discussion at the Women's Rights Committee Mini-conference in May 1981. There was a serious re-evaluation of our strengths and weaknesses, and of our goals for the future. The conference voted to recommend to the Women's Caucus at the 1981 convention that we again seek only one position, and that we not run a half-slate.

In retrospect, it seems that this decision was born out of a feeling of pessimism and uncertainty. The women's movement was facing a growing attack from the right, and in the light of the accelerating economic recession, it did not seem the time for new initiatives.

Over the summer, however, it became clear that the women's movement was not dead. In fact, it was gaining new momentum around issues such as the constitution, abortion, and equal pay for work of equal value. Campaigns on these issues were gathering increased public support as women began to fight back against the attacks on their hard-won rights.

Within the NDP, the electoral success of the B.C. Women's Rights Committee candidates at the federal convention clearly demonstrated the growing recognition of the concrete achievements and the effective leadership of the committee over the past decade.

In the light of these developments, the steering committee decided that the time had come to take the struggle to a new and higher level. Reversing the decision made at the mini-conference, it



PHOTO STEPHEN BREWER

Lisa Kam, Delta, listens to debate

put forward a new recommendation to the Women's Caucus in the convention: that the caucus run four candidates — one vice president, two members-at-large, and the POW representative — and that we seek support from the delegates, not on the grounds of parity for women, but on the basis of a clearly spelled-out feminist and socialist stand. This recommendation was adopted after a full debate.

A statement approved by the caucus was distributed at the convention. It read in part:

“... the Women's Rights Committee represents an important and large special interest group within the party. The NDP, as a socialist party, recognizes that without women's liberation there can be no socialism and as feminists we recognize that there can be no women's liberation without socialism, so we are both inseparably bound together... the Women's Rights Committee is a major innovator of policy within the party... Because of the valuable work that the Women's Rights Committee does in the party, the Women's Rights Committee, like labour, should have recognition at the provincial executive level.

Election results encouraging

In the election that followed, our nominee for vice-president, Elaine Bernard, came to within 30 votes of winning. She was subsequently elected as an alternate. Our POW nominee was elected by acclamation, and our two nominees for member-at-large, while defeated, obtained a substantial vote.

The Women's Rights Committee has reason to be encouraged by these results. They represent a significant step forward in our political development — a step which should have important consequences for women within the NDP.

The coming year

In the coming year, our work will have two major thrusts arising out of the convention. First, resolutions put forward by the Women's Rights Committee and passed by convention will require that we work actively with the autonomous women's movement and the trade unions. A resolution calling for the establishment of a working group to study the impact of technological change on women will call for close collaboration with the NDP Labour policy committee and the labour movement.



PHOTO STEPHEN BREWER

Pauline Jewett, M.P., New Westminster-Coquitlam, speaks in plenary.

Another resolution gives the Women's Rights Committee responsibility for the development and implementation of policy around the needs of older women in the areas of employment, health, housing, and finance. The resolution

.... →



Our October NDP convention had the honour to be addressed by Olga Aviles, a representative of the Solidarity Section of the Department of External Relations of the FSLN of Nicaragua.

The following excerpts from her address explain why the utmost aid and solidarity is needed to frustrate Reagan's plans to put an end to the development of socialism in Nicaragua. His threats have been rapidly escalating since the convention. The U.S. does not want El Salvador, or any other Latin American or Caribbean country, to emulate Nicaragua. We are on the brink of another Vietnam in this arena.

'Priorities' thanks the Central American Support Committee for the use of its translation of Olga Aviles' speech.

We have received in an official way clear warnings that we can be attacked militarily. Imperialism has three variables — from the invasion of marines . . . to a regional war, a war of aggression of other countries against Nicaragua . . . The possibility of a counter-revolutionary invasion exists also . . . We know of preparations . . . of concrete plans . . . as we have seen now in the Atlantic with armies from Northern Central America and the United States. Another of the plans is to isolate Nicaragua internally and externally. They have invented all kinds of stories, sometimes bordering on the ridiculous . . . from the logic of political and economic interests with which they have always guided the interests of the masters of the North. They have tried to divide the revolutionary forces, even within the ranks of the Sandinista

U.S. threatens Nicaragua

by Joyce Meissenheimer

front. . . Our efforts are directed to avoiding another war for our people.

Our struggle more difficult

The situation has made the struggle more difficult for us. The struggle against underdevelopment, against backwardness, against poverty. The effects of the politics of imperialism have begun to take effect; we find ourselves in a country in an extremely critical situation.

We demand justice as a country impoverished by centuries of exploitation and by these international economic relationships. We cannot ignore, nor forget that this whole picture of brutal economic exploitation has been defended throughout our history by aggressive North American politics.

At this time, precisely October 7, 1981, the U.S. initiated in the vicinity of our sovereign territory a military manoeuvre called "Falcon View" in which its own naval forces participated, both land and airborne, together with military elements from Honduras. This is part of an entire history of intervention and aggression which has left unforgettable marks on Nicaragua.

For a free Nicaragua we send you this vote of confidence with a fraternal embrace from a people who will never sell out or surrender.

FREE HOMELAND OR DEATH!



Photo Stephen Brewer

Olga Aviles, FSLN representative

HERSTORY GIVES IMPETUS (continued)

making child care the responsibility of the Education Committee necessitates new linkages between the Women's Committee and the Education Committee, and will bring us into close contact with men working in the area of child care. This process was already begun in May when men involved in the Women's Rights child care sub-committee were invited to attend the mini-conference as observers.

Stronger alliances

This brings us to our second thrust. Over the next year, we will be seeking and developing stronger alliances with both men and women in the party who share our socialist principles. This does not mean a departure from the direction which we took, beginning in 1971. Rather, it will bring us nearer to the fulfilment of our goal. As the 1974 *Mani-*

*fest*o puts it:

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

New Steering Committee

A new steering committee — the largest ever — was elected by our caucus in convention. We can look forward to the new year with optimism and courage.

MANITOBA ELECTS 5 NDP WOMEN

In the November election of an NDP government in Manitoba, twelve women candidates were nominated and five elected.

The candidates and their constituencies (winners marked with asterisks) were:

- Toni Vosters (Charleswood),
- *Mary Beth Dolin (Kildonan)
- Lee Monk (Kirkfield Park)
- *Maureen Hemphill (Logan)
- *Muriel Smith (Osborne)
- *Doreen Dodick (Riel)
- Ruth Pear (St. Norbert)
- Joan Johanson (Turtle Mountain)
- Terri Gray (Tuxedo)
- Maude Lelond (Virden)
- *Myrna Phillips (Wolseley)
- Audrey Tufford (Portage la Prairie)

Muriel Smith has been appointed Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, and Maureen Hemphill has become Minister of Education in the new government.

Priorities extends warm congratulations to our sisters in Manitoba for this splendid achievement.

Obviously, feminism is alive and flourishing in the Manitoba NDP.



Women's Rights Committee

by Elaine Bernard

The three areas focused on by the Women's Rights Committee at the 1981 Provincial Convention were the Task Force on Older Women, Childcare, and Technological Change. We were pleased that resolutions from all these areas were addressed in the panels and at the plenary. Because of the limited time in plenary, only a few of the resolutions passed in panel made it to the convention floor.

We plan to bring these resolutions to a future provincial council meeting where they can be discussed and added to our policy.

A full report of the resolutions on women's rights passed at the convention has been published in the November issue of *The Democrat*.

New Steering Committee

A new steering committee for the Women's Rights Committee was elected at a caucus meeting held on the Sunday of convention. At 24 members, it is one of the largest steering committees we have had.

The next meeting of the new Steering Committee will be held on January 10, 1982 at 10 a.m. at Provincial Office. All women party members are welcome to attend.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS COMMITTEE – STEERING COMMITTEE ELECTED AT 1981 PROVINCIAL CONVENTION WOMEN'S CAUCUS

Shelley Rivkin	Chairwoman
Edith Thomas	Deputy Chairwoman
Dixie Pidgeon	Secretary
Joan Smallwood	Treasurer
Joyce Meissenheimer	Priorities Co-ordinator Federal Council

Members-at-Large:

Amy Dalgleish, Suzanne Gerard, Barbara Horan, Inger Kam, Jean Lake, Jo Lazenby, Gloria Levi, Nancy Walsh, Pat Williamson.

Regional Representatives:

Laurel Dow	Courtenay
Jean Hinton	North Island
Sharon Hazelwood	Cowichan
Bess Isert	Kamloops
Susan Monet	Fraser Valley
Joanne Partridge	Castlegar

Additional Members:

Mercia Stickney	Federal Councillor
Elaine Bernard	Past Chairwoman
Margaret Birrell	Women's Organizer
Hilda Thomas	Federal Council Participation of Women Committee and Provincial Executive



Shelley Rivkin



Edith Thomas



Dixie Pidgeon



Joan Smallwood



Joyce Meissenheimer



Mercia Stickney



Elaine Bernard



Margaret Birrell



Hilda Thomas



Contraceptive Russian roulette

by Kathie Robertson

Any woman seeking an alternative to the pill should be aware of the serious dangers resulting from the use of an injectable contraceptive called Depo Provera. Despite documented evidence of its many side effects, Depo Provera is surpassing the pill as a contraceptive throughout the world, and there is now reason to believe it is being injected into Canadian women.

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective (VWHC) issued a warning against the drug in June and, since that time, has continued to gather evidence on its use locally. This article is based to a large extent on the findings of the VWHC.

Because of Depo Provera's approved application in the treatment of uterine cancer, this drug is readily available to Canadian doctors. Moreover, it is manufactured here in Canada by a subsidiary of the Upjohn Company; Upjohn set up foreign branch plant production after the American FDA banned it as a contraceptive in 1978. Currently, Upjohn is attempting to have the ban in the United States lifted. The VWHC warns that if this happens, no doubt Canada will be close behind in approving the drug and, once again, "controlling fertility will be a priority over safety and women will be the victims on whom Depo Provera is experimented."

Serious side effects

Depo Provera is a synthetic hormone used as an injectable contraceptive by an estimated 10 million women in 80 countries. It interferes with the normal pattern of hormonal changes associated with the menstrual cycle, thus preventing pregnancy for 3 to 6 months or longer, depending on the strength of the dose. Many serious side effects are well-documented. They include increased risk of cervical cancer, irregular bleeding, birth defects, long term infertility and possibly permanent sterility, and inhibited bone growth. In lab studies, it caused malignant breast tumours in dogs.



Many more effects of the drug are suspected: chronic and malignant forms of uterine disease, lower resistance to infection, premature aging, and a wide ranging variety of disorders such as nausea, nervousness, chills, changes in skin pigmentation, painful menstruation, decrease in sex drive, diminished capacity for orgasm, and acne.

Local use of Depo Provera

Rebecca Fox of the VWHC outlined for *Priorities* the results of its research over the past six months:

1) Although Depo Provera is not used extensively in British Columbia, it is a fact that some Vancouver doctors have offered it as birth control to immigrants of darker skin; for example, from India, where it is well known. Its side effects are irritation at the point of injection in the arm, skin irregularities (cheloids) on dark-skinned women, immediate menstrual irregularities, concentration of the drug in fatty tissue.

2) A weaker, shorter-term version called Provera is used to bring on periods and may be prescribed routinely by doctors.

3) Depo Provera may be prescribed by doctors to treat cancer of the uterus lining (despite indications that the drug may actually lead to uterine cancer).

4) It is suspected that native women on reserves are receiving Depo Provera. The Collective is continuing its investigations in this area.

5) There is no monitoring by pharmaceutical, medical or other agencies on its total effects in the treatment of uterine cancer.

Routine prescription of hormones

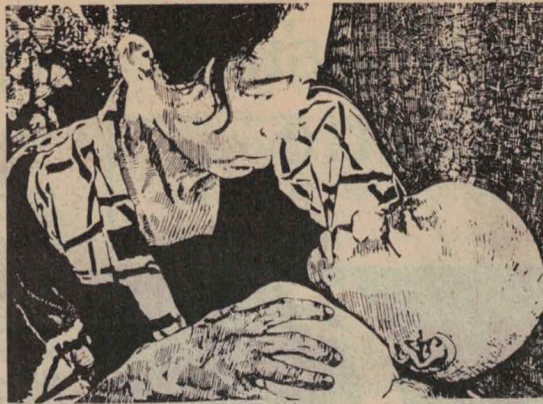
Rebecca Fox pointed out that all kinds of synthetic hormones are routinely prescribed by the medical profession. The VWHC is working on these generally. Women with personal knowledge of the adverse effects of any such drugs should let the VWHC know of their experience.

Favourable study invalid

A study to determine whether there is a connection between the use of Depo Provera and uterine cancer was conducted in the Chiang Mia province of Thailand, where half the women have used the drug. The research team was financed in part by contraceptive manufacturers, including Upjohn. The team concluded that there was no proven link between the drug and the incidence of uterine cancer. These results were then used in the United States to dispel doubts concerning the drug's use. But in the November issue of the American magazine *Mother Jones*, that study is branded as "clearly unscientific." The magazine shows that only nine women actually underwent study and points to a more recent World Health Organization report which says there has been a marked increase in admissions for cancer of the breast and cervix in Chiang Mai province.

This writer contacted the Health Protection Branch here in Vancouver and asked if any facts and figures were available about the extent of this drug's use in Canada. They had none — neither did the B.C. Medical Association and the College of Pharmacy — but they did say that Depo Provera had *not* been cleared by the Branch for the purpose of contraception.

The Canadian Pharmaceutical Association's 1981 Manual says of this drug: "any possible influence of prolonged . . . therapy on pituitary, ovarian, adrenal, hepatic or uterine functions awaits further study." On the basis of that bald statement alone, Depo Provera is a drug to avoid.



INFACT

Formula: babies = \$\$

by Jo Dunaway Lazenby

More than one million babies a year die from the effects of infant formula feeding, while another 10 million infants suffer from the use of the formula, estimates Dr. Derek Jelliffe, an infant nutrition expert, in his book *Human Milk in the Modern World*.

Infant formula is big business. Worldwide sales in 1979 totalled \$1.89 billion, almost half in developing countries — seen by the manufacturers as a ripe market given the declining birth rate in western countries. It is not a new phenomenon; the promotion of infant formula and its effects on the population have been observed by missionaries and CUSO workers in Third World countries for more than 20 years.

Use of the formula, not harmful in itself, combined with social and economic factors present in developing countries, contribute to a host of problems called "baby bottle syndrome." Severe intestinal disease results from the use of contaminated water to mix the formula, unsterilized bottles, and lack of refrigeration. The price of a can of formula can represent a very large portion of the family's income so it is not unusual for a three-day supply of formula to be diluted to last as long as three weeks. The result is malnutrition. In addition, the decline in breast feeding deprives the babies of natural antibodies and leaves them more vulnerable to disease.

Marketing techniques

Aggressive marketing techniques, exploiting the desire of mothers to provide the best for their children, are used to promote the sales of infant formula in Third World countries. Bottle feeding is

portrayed as the "western way" of nourishing plump, healthy babies. Visual displays, frequently placed in clinics and hospitals, show smiling, well-fed (often white) babies with cans of formula. Radio and television are also used to market the formula. Formula manufacturers sponsor baby shows with prizes for the most beautiful baby, the fastest crawler, etc. All the mothers are presented with samples of infant formula, of course.

Formula manufacturers strengthen their image of concern for the welfare of children by providing financial aid for clinics, medical conferences, hospital equipment, etc. A favourite device is the teams of "mothercare nurses" — non-medical personnel paid by the company usually on a commission basis, who visit new mothers armed with samples of infant formula and a promotional talk.

Nestle the most aggressive

Nestle Enterprises Ltd., a Swiss-based multi-national corporation, has been one of the most aggressive marketers of infant formula. Although infant formula represents less than 2% of its total sales, Nestle is the world's largest manufacturer and controls one-third of the Third World market.

In 1977, the Infant Formula Action Coalition (INFACT), an international group with a branch of the Canadian chapter located in Vancouver, called for a boycott of all Nestle's products until Nestle responded to the demand to immediately stop all promotion of infant formula in developing countries. They demanded: an end to advertising of

formula to consumers; an end to distribution of free supplies to hospitals, clinics and homes of newborns; an end to the use of company "mothercare" nurses; an end to promotion to the health professions and through health care institutions.

In May, 1981, the World Health Organization executive approved a code banning the advertising of powdered milk and formula preparations. However, the code was referred to the WHO Assembly as a recommendation rather than as a more binding regulation.

In the face of this pressure, Nestle stated that it would abide by the WHO code for advertising and marketing breastmilk substitutes in those countries that adopted the code. To date, only eight Third World countries have made use of the code. Several others are considering adopting it.

Nestle's sincerity is open to question, as Third World contacts report continuing violations of the code. Also a confidential company memo signed by Nestle's Vice-President and leaked to INFACT, outlined the goal of "an effective counter-propaganda operation" specifically designed to discredit INFACT.

In response, INFACT has called for a continuation of the boycott until monitoring in the Third World shows that Nestle is abiding *in practice* with the provisions of the WHO code.

Products to boycott

Following is a partial list (it's a big corporation!) of Nestle's products. Remember, if you purchase one of these products you are contributing to the profits of a corporation that is also making a profit from the illness and death of Third World infants.

Nestea, Nestles Quik, Nestles Hot Cocoa Mix, Montclair Bottled Water, Nescafe, Decaf, Encore, Tetley Tea, Beechnut Coffee, Libby's, Libby/McNeil, Crosse & Blackwell, Maggi Soups, Souptime, Stouffer Frozen Foods, Beechnut Foods — baby food, chewing gum, cough drops, Carefree Sugarless Gum, Life Savers, McVities, Nestle Pudding, Nestle Cookie Mix, and Cherry Hill, Old Fort, Swiss Knight and Wispride Cheese.

For more information, contact: INFACT, 200-1955 West 4th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. Telephone: 734-0434.



The Task Force hits Los Angeles

by Gloria Levi

I was invited to present the Report of the Task Force on Older Women at a poster session at the annual conference of the American Public Health Association on November 1-3 in Los Angeles, California.

Approximately 10,200 delegates were registered. There were paper presentations, round tables, poster sessions, and two major addresses. The conference was divided into community health planning, dental health, environment, gerontological health, maternal and child health, occupational health and safety, social work and many others. There were many caucuses: black health workers, Hispanics, socialists, physicians for social responsibility, women, etc. The theme of the conference was "Energy, Health, and the Environment."

The tone there was one I had never encountered previously at an American conference. Doctors, nurses, administrators, researchers were all talking about the disastrous effects of Reaganomics and the administration's policies. In one year, Reagan has been able to appoint to every senior environmental office business flacks who now offer a license to pollute legally on a scale never seen before. His across-the-board health cuts are so extreme that people are literally dying from lack of care.

Radicalization

Professionals, conservative, moderate and respectable, are becoming politicized



Interface

to an extraordinary degree. In the land of the "moral majority" it was exciting and heartwarming to hear so many left-wing statements being uttered. I believe that, within the next two to three years, we shall see a kind of coalition-building among the poor and middle class, especially from professionals, such as was seen in the early 60's during the Vietnam war.

Response to Task Force report

I met several interesting women who were also working on issues affecting older women. They were intrigued and amazed that our Task Force was initiated and sponsored by a political party. They are pure researchers and were fascinated by our interest in kitchen networking and building grass roots support. I met with Eloise Rathbone-McCuay, an eminent gerontologist and project director

of Health Issues for Older Women, and Cathy Delorez from the Boston Women's Health Collective who is focussing on older women. They wish to maintain an ongoing contact with us.

A number of papers were presented on occupational health and safety such as the effects of VDT's, health hazards of hospital work, and occupational health of older women. I have the abstracts of those papers. Anyone interested in more information should leave a message with our Women's Organizer at the Provincial Office, 517 East Broadway, Vancouver (879-4601).

Although the issues of older women in the U.S. vary somewhat from ours, the fundamentals are still the same. By sharing and exchanging our knowledge and experience, we extend our hands to our sisters across the border and increase our strength. It was a very stimulating conference.



Can we afford to cut training programs?

Suzanne Gerard got a rousing cheer at the Public Hearing on Manpower Training Program Cutbacks, when she proposed a plaque for B.C. Place:

B.C. PLACE

- Funded by Manpower Cuts . . .
- Funded by Welfare Cuts . . .
- Funded by Hospital Cuts . . .
- Funded by Housing Cuts . . .

Suzanne, a welder and member of *Women in Trades*, was presenting one of 18 briefs heard at the November 13 Public Hearing sponsored by Vancouver Status of Women, Women in Trades and the B.C. Student Federation. The Hearing was an opportunity for groups, organizations, institutions, unions and individuals affected by the reduction in the Manpower Training Program to present their views for the consideration of a panel representing municipal, provincial and federal governments, labour and government councils. Moderator of the Hearing was Mayor Michael Harcourt.

What is the Manpower program?

The Canada Manpower Training Program is a job skills training and upgrading program operated by the Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC). The courses offered by the Manpower Training Program range from English for new Canadians to re-entry courses for nurses who have been out of the workforce, to carpentry pre-apprenticeship classes and pre-employment programs in critical skill shortage areas. These courses are offered by vocational institutions and community colleges throughout the province. All have been affected by a recent shortfall in federal funding.

In April the provincial body responsible for the vocational institutes and colleges increased the fees it charges the Canada Manpower Training Program for the seats in training courses by 35%. Canada Employment and Immigration refused to pay the additional charge. Instead it reduced the number of trainees sponsored through the Manpower Training Program. The result was a loss of 280,000 training days for the province of B.C.

More than 6,000 seats have been

eliminated from pre-employment, pre-apprenticeship, academic upgrading and English language training programs. These cutbacks affect a large and vulnerable segment of society without employable skills, including women, single parents, immigrants, high school dropouts, Native people, disabled people, former prisoners, etc.

McCarthy's "employables"

For the thousands of British Columbians reclassified as "employables" by Human Resources Minister Grace McCarthy, the phrase "Catch-22" has taken on a very personal significance. While McCarthy claims that by denying GAIN benefits to single parents she is trying to give them the "rehabilitative tools to get back on their feet," the drastic reduction in the Manpower Training Program has all but eliminated the opportunity for these people to acquire employable skills — one of the vital "rehabilitative tools."

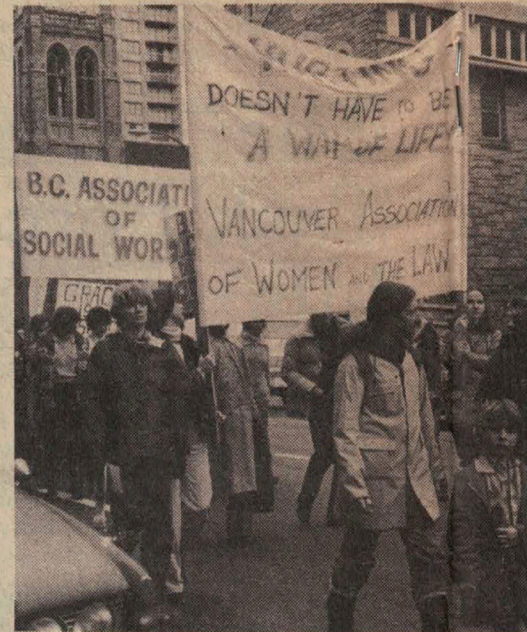
At the Public Hearing, brief after brief reinforced the message: the Manpower Training Program has been inadequate to begin with; to slash what had existed was, in the words of one presenter, "asinine."

Carol Goodwin, of the Native Counselling and Referral Centre, spoke of the importance of Basic Employment and Skills Training programs for Native people.

Chris Brown, of the Marine Workers and Boilermakers Industrial Union, stressed the shortage of skilled tradespeople in British Columbia. A shortage so acute that tradespeople are being imported — at a time when training programs and pre-apprenticeship courses are being cancelled.

Lidvald Strand, Association of University and College Employees, and Alice West, Public Service Alliance of Canada, talked about the "offices of the future" created by technological change and the huge pools of women workers made redundant with no retraining programs.

Representatives of student unions outlined how funding cuts for institutions reduced access to post-secondary education for women, natives, members of the lower and middle classes. "We are moving back to a user-pay philosophy of



Material on this page
Jo Dunaway Lazenby, Shelley Rivkin, Suzanne Gerard

education. Only those who can afford it will have access to education — white, middle and upper class men."

A woman related her last two years trying to get into a drafting course — two years of being shunted from counsellor to counsellor, insulted, treated like a beggar as she tried to get Manpower sponsorship for training for a trade that would enable her to support herself and her children. Transferred from waiting list to waiting list, she was finally accepted for one course only to have it cancelled days before she was to begin. She is now on a waiting list for a course in the spring with no sponsorship and no idea how she will pay the tuition and support herself and her family.

Panel representatives

Members of the panel asked questions and took notes. Representing the municipal government were Alderpersons May Brown, Marguerite Ford, Harry Rankin and Bruce Erikson. Also present were Ian Waddell, NDP MP, Vancouver-Kingsway; Eileen Dailly, NDP MLA, Burnaby North; Gary Lauk, NDP MLA,



Hunger and despair - the result of welfare cuts



More than 300 attended a Rollback Welfare Cuts Rally in St. Andrews Wesley United Church, November 21, to protest the Ministry of Human Resources' new policy. Another 100 protesters joined the parade and protest at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, where the Social Credit convention was being held.

Unions' view

David Rice, of the B.C. Federation of Labour, called the Social Credit government "the cruelest, most inhumane government B.C. has ever seen — a horde of vultures preying on the victims of our society."

Pauline Weinstein of the Vancouver School Board revealed that when the School Board had protested the policy because of "hungry, undernourished children who find it difficult to read stories that don't even relate to where they are coming from," Human Resources Minister McCarthy replied that the issue had nothing to do with the School Board and, in any case, "there is a lot of misinformation in the media."

"Welfare is not something you choose. It is something that happens to you when you have no choice left," Gus Long, Past President of the Federated Anti-Poverty groups told the meeting.

"All Grace McCarthy cares about is transferring as many people as possible from the ranks of the welfare poor to the ranks of the working poor so that they are no longer her responsibility."

Social workers' view

Marjorie Martins, of the B.C. Association of Social Workers, told the rally that the 1400 members of her organization deplored the new welfare policy. She described the results of the policy that she had observed: lengthening bread lines, family pressures causing emotional physical and school problems, troubled adolescents, single adults in their 50's — "pioneers" — without money for food and facing eviction.

"The Socreds build costly monuments to themselves on the one hand and break down families on the other," she said, vowing that her organization would continue their pressure to have the policy rescinded.

Jo Dunaway Lazenby

this page compiled by Rivkin, Suzanne Gerard and Jean Greatbach

Vancouver Centre; Joy Langan, Vice-President, B.C. Federation of Labour; Lewa Kress, Building Trades Council of B.C.; Edith Nee, Advisory Council on the Status of Women to the federal government; and Shelby Dowling, representing Senator Ray Perrault of the Liberal Party.

The Social Credit and Conservative parties, the Vancouver Chamber of Commerce, and the federal minister responsible for the status of women had been invited to participate in the panel but had declined.

At the opening of the Hearing, Mayor Harcourt announced that the federal government had that day mysteriously come up with 25% of the amount needed to fund their training programs. He called on the government to "restore and increase their investment in human dignity."

In summing up, Jean Greatbach, of the Vancouver Status of Women, said that "training and retraining programs are so important that we don't ask how the government can afford to pay for them but how can they afford not to?"



Public Hearing briefs emphasize need to expand training program. Photo Lotar Jaeger



Domestic workers - overworked, underpaid and without status

"IF WE'RE GOOD ENOUGH TO WORK HERE WE'RE GOOD ENOUGH TO STAY" is the position of the Committee for the Advancement of the Rights of Domestic Workers (CARDWO).

Each year approximately 10,000 women come to Canada on temporary work permits to work as live-in domestic workers in private homes. As temporary workers they are denied most of the rights and privileges and protections of other workers. They are overworked and underpaid. Many have worked for many years in Canada with the insecure status of temporary worker. During these years they have raised children and maintained households for thousands of Canadian families and they want this contribution to Canadian society recognized.

Demand landed immigrant status

In June, Minister of Employment and Immigration, Lloyd Axworthy, raised the hopes of thousands of domestic workers by admitting that the work permit system is unjust and promising policy changes that would make it possible for domestic workers to gain landed status. But the new policy still has not been announced.

CARDWO urges the Minister of Employment and Immigration to:

- (1) Announce a new policy *soon* which will make it possible for all domestic workers to gain landed immigrant status.
- (2) Recognize work experience in childcare and housework when assessing the applications of domestic workers already in Canada and those applying from outside Canada.
- (3) Allow domestic workers in Canada to apply for landed immigrant status from within the country.
- (4) Notify all domestic workers of the policy changes and how to go about applying for landed immigrant status.

Protest rally in Vancouver

At a rally held November 22 at Robson Square in Vancouver, CARDWO called on supporters to send telegrams to Minister of Employment and Immigration, Lloyd Axworthy, House of



Photo Jo Dunaway Lazenby

CARDWO member distributes leaflets at Domestic Workers rally

Commons, Ottawa, demanding that domestic workers be granted landed status.

New regulations

As a result of this and other protests in Canada, Lloyd Axworthy has announced new regulations to govern the status of domestics in Canada.

Domestics may now apply for landed immigrant status after two years of Canadian work experience subject to an annual evaluation of their capacity to live on their own in Canada. Employers now have to grant domestics a minimum of three hours free time weekly so that they can take "self-improvement" courses. Employers are also required to contribute up to \$20 weekly towards the cost of such courses.

Those already in Canada will have to be subjected to this two-year trial in addition to the time they have already spent in the country.

If workers are unable to pass the two-year test they may apply for a one-year extension of their temporary visas.

Workers wishing to enter Canada will now be evaluated not only on their domestic skills, but on their potential for upgrading and self-sufficiency.

What kind of "upgrading" can be achieved in three hours a week costing \$20 is not explained. There are no provisions for minimum wages or hours of work so, presumably, the \$20 can come off their present low wages.

Domestic workers are to be congratulated in winning a response to their organizing efforts. The new regulations, however, fall far short of what they have been agitating for. No doubt they will keep up the pressure until their legitimate aims have been won.

CARDWO can be contacted for more information at 728 E. 37th Avenue, Basement, Vancouver, B.C. Telephone: 325-0408, 251-3872, 931-2726.



Participation of Women Committee meeting

by Hilda Thomas

The NDP Participation of Women Committee met in Winnipeg on Saturday, November 30, in the warm glow of the stunning Manitoba victory. No doubt the location contributed to the spirit of optimism and determination shared by all the delegates at this, the first meeting of the committee since the federal convention in July. Of course, there are still many problems and obstacles to be overcome. But I believe that when we parted on Saturday evening, all of us headed back to our provinces (and territory!) immensely cheered and stimulated by the sisterly exchange of ideas and experiences, and strongly motivated to get to work on the NDP women's rights policy and program for the coming year.

In the reports from the regional representatives which took up a major part of the day-long meeting, there was a surprising degree of unanimity both about the issues which are seen as priorities by NDP women across the country, and about how we, as socialists and feminists should respond to them.

Saskatchewan fights anti-choice

Chris Banman of Saskatchewan reported that a resolution opposing choice on abortion was soundly defeated at their last provincial convention. Saskatchewan NDP women have been wor-

king with other women's groups on issues like the constitution and equal pay for work of equal value. Their women's committee is being restructured.

New Brunswick's pro-choice fight

Allayne Armstrong of New Brunswick recounted how a resolution opposing the right to choice passed last year at their convention (after a standing count, with the chair casting the deciding vote in favour) gave the N.B. women an understanding of the need for a strongly organized women's committee. Their committee, established at a fall conference, presented a number of important resolutions at this year's convention, on issues ranging from affirmative action and sexual harassment to micro-technology. New Brunswick women are also giving support in several first-contract strikes involving women workers, and are addressing the question of pensions and the problems of native women.

Alberta activities

Cynthia Geraluk of Alberta reported that women in the Alberta NDP have been concentrating on training women in public speaking, Roberts Rules, the drafting of resolutions, and all the ins and outs of parliamentary procedure. At their last provincial convention, the B.C. Women's Committee slide-tape show on older women was shown, along with Bonnie Krep's film on women in company towns. Resolutions on women in isolated areas and equal pay for work of equal value were adopted. Cynthia agreed with the B.C. women that putting child care under the Ministry of Education will have the effect of improving both the quality of child care and the status of child care workers. She spoke warmly of the support the Alberta women receive from both the leader and the provincial secretary in their province.

Nova Scotia plans policy meeting

Barbara Levy from Nova Scotia gave a run-down of the recent election in that province. Although the increase in the NDP vote and the strong showing of women candidates is encouraging, Nova Scotia leader Alexa McDonough is the only NDP member in the legislature, and they are having to negotiate with the government to get office space and secretarial help for her. The Nova Scotia women have done a study of teen-age pregnancy in Canada, and they developed a mini-task force on child care. They will be holding a policy meeting in May.

Difficulties in Newfoundland

Frances Ennis of Newfoundland was somewhat less happy about the situation of women in her province. There is a small but active NDP women's group which is tackling issues of importance such as micro-technology and disarmament in an effort to give the party a higher public profile. Unfortunately, the Newfoundland party is deeply in debt, and the women are criticized for not putting their energy into fundraising instead of policy development. Frances' story sounds very familiar to some of us who have been through the same thing in years past.

Manitoba election

Chairwoman Muriel Smith gave an interesting overview of the Manitoba election. It was encouraging to hear that the election platform was arrived at through broad consultation and negotiation. Child care, family law, equal pay for work of equal value, and pensions for women were all given prominence. She also reported that a poll conducted by "pro-lifers" during the campaign was not published, the reason being that it "worked against the pro-life candidates."

Muriel's appointment to the Manitoba Cabinet as Minister of Economic Development was announced the day after



Photo Monica Jones

Muriel Smith, outgoing POW Chairwoman; now cabinet minister in Manitoba

the POW meeting. Congratulations, Muriel!

Ontario position paper

Lynn McDonald, who attended the meeting as a substitute for the Ontario delegate, circulated a position paper drafted by the ONDP Women's Committee which shows that women are still under-represented at every level of the Ontario leadership. A major resolution passed at the Third Annual Conference of the ONDP Women's Committee in November calls for a series of tough measures to improve the status of women in the party and to take women's issues to the electorate. It recommends the adoption of by-laws requiring parity on provincial and riding executives and council. It was interesting to learn that the ONDP membership is not coded by gender, and data on women are therefore difficult to obtain.

Yukon difficulties

Margaret Thomson from the Yukon Territory expressed concern about the low level of political participation, especially by native women, in her area. Geography alone makes it difficult to organize women's committees in the North.

B.C. report

Reporting for B.C., I outlined the resolutions passed at our fall convention, and explained the thinking behind our electoral strategy at the convention. I

also reported on our campaign for the repeal of Section 251 of the Criminal Code, and our role in the protests against cutbacks in welfare and Manpower training.

Two other reports of special interest were received by the meeting. The first was from Mary Humphrey who, after two elections back-to-back, is finally free to concentrate on her duties as federal Women's Organizer. An excellent discussion about the placement of women's organizers in election campaigns followed her report. The committee recognized that it would be unreasonable not to make use of the special organizing skills of the women's organizers in election campaigns. At the same time, we felt strongly that the Women's Organizer should be placed in a winnable riding with a feminist candidate, and that the POW committee should be consulted about her assignment. The new federal secretary, Mary Ellen McQuay, will be invited to meet with POW to discuss this question. It was also agreed that a POW sub-committee be established in Ottawa, to include M.P.'s and staff members.

The Constitution charter of rights

The second report was from Margaret Mitchell (M.P. Vancouver East). Margaret has been working closely with the Ad Hoc Women's Committee on the Constitution, which finally succeeded in getting sexual equality (Section 28) fully restored in the Charter. In spite of this success, however, there is a feeling

that the inclusion of the general "notwithstanding" clause which gives both provincial and federal governments the right to pass overriding legislation, leaves Canadians in general, and disadvantaged groups in particular, in a precarious state. Concern for the rights of native Indians has not been laid to rest either, and POW women expressed strong support for their cause.

Our thanks to Margaret and all the other M.P.'s who carried the women's banner in the House of Commons.

National Action Committee concerns

Another item which took up considerable time at the POW meeting was a letter calling for a special meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women on January 9, to deal with pension policy and internal problems of the organization. POW is a member of NAC, and it was agreed that we support the request and send a delegate if such a meeting is called.

Child care

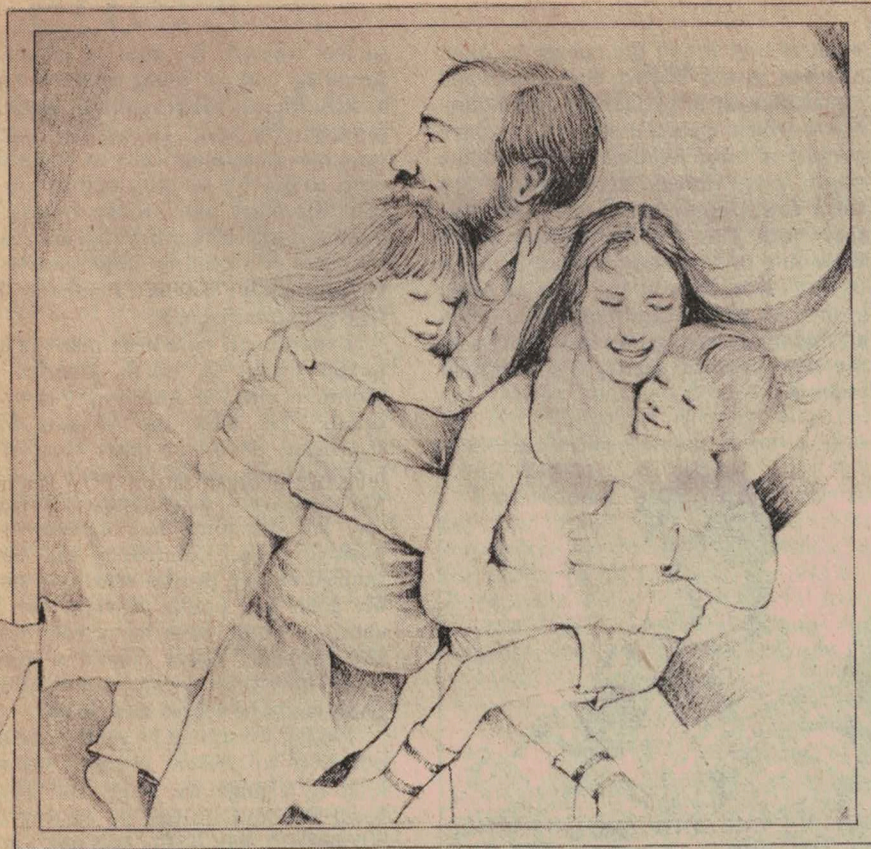
There was also some discussion of the problems with child care at the federal convention. I explained that the difficulties arose because of the unexpected high registration, especially of infants, and the inadequacy of the physical facilities, and that both these problems had been resolved in time for the B.C. convention at which the child care provided was a model for all future conventions.

A motion that child care costs for POW delegates be routinely submitted with expense accounts received unanimous approval.

Next POW meeting

The next POW meeting will be held in Winnipeg on Thursday, January 21, in conjunction with the Federal Council meeting. The major item on the agenda will be the proposed federal Task Force on Older Women. Mercia Stickney and Margaret Birrell have been invited to attend. Also on the agenda will be a discussion of nominating procedures within the federal party. The election of new officers for POW will be held at the meeting.

I was tremendously encouraged by the atmosphere of seriousness and cooperation at the meeting, my first as B.C. delegate to the POW committee. I look forward to an active and productive year which will advance the cause of women and of the party across Canada.



Ms

The family: a new model

by Margaret Ward Carew

The following article was presented for discussion at an NDP constituency meeting. It is printed here for the same purpose. Priorities welcomes readers' reactions to the views expressed by the author.

From its beginning, critics of the women's movement have claimed that female equality will cause the demise of the family. I think that's probably true. The traditional nuclear family is breaking down now, and there is no doubt that women's work outside the home is one of the causes, but not the sole cause.

The so-called nuclear family, comprising dad, mum, two or three kids and a dog, is quite new in western culture and almost unknown elsewhere. It is the product of the industrial revolution, urbanization, economic pressure, high mobility and the need to limit the number of children. The nuclear family

typically lives in a residential suburb with Dad commuting to work while Mom stays home to take care of the children and housework.

Mom may spend long hours alone or with small children. She is often bored, tired and lacking stimulation. If she works outside the home, she usually carries the burden of two jobs, one generally underpaid, the other not paid at all.

Meanwhile, Dad spends most of the children's waking hours away from home. Often he is a stranger to his family. It is not surprising that communication often breaks down.

Grandparents are a nuisance in such a lifestyle. There is not enough for them to do and they are not needed.

Whose responsibility are children?

It has become accepted that each couple is responsible for its own offspring and no others. Abandoned and abused children are always someone else's responsibility, and we don't want group homes in our neat neighbourhoods. Having invested in our own children, by the cost of raising them, we should be able to control their lives to some extent.

I don't think it's good for children to grow up in this narrow and slightly neurotic environment. They are exposed to only one set of ideas, and dependent on only two adults. They worry about what will happen to them if either or both parents were no longer there. If one parent leaves, the child often feels vaguely responsible. They are over-protected, over-organized, even suppressed, and thus prevented from developing skills for self-sufficient living.

Children — the generation who will be running things when we are old — are members of the community as a whole and, in my view, the responsibility of the community as a whole.

To be preserved?

This is the family unit that we must preserve at all costs? It is often asserted that the family is the basic building block of society, true enough. Do we still want the kind of society which depends on inefficient and wasteful consumerism to keep capital's profits up? Where each nation is entirely self-serving and unconcerned with the welfare of the global community? Where the power and means of production are concentrated in the hands of the few at the expense of the many? Where fences mark unequivocally the property lines?

I stated that the nuclear family is a modern phenomenon. There is an older model which has a better title to the term "traditional" which has vanished from western culture only in the last century and is still the norm in many parts of the world. Immigrants have been criticized for crowding into so-called single family dwellings. In their culture, brothers with their wives and children, plus grandparents, is a single family.

..... →



This was true once of our own culture. If you were homesteading on the prairie, the more strong sons and daughters you had to share the work, the better.

Industrial revolution

In the cities, the inhuman conditions of the working class in the industrial revolution militated against these family ties. People left the farm for jobs in the city and high mortality rates limited the size of families. One wonders how the

workers ever found the energy to beget children at all! But for the middle and upper classes, large families and households which included servants, maiden aunts and poor relations were still the norm, even though urban living gave them fewer opportunities for contributory work. This model went back to the beginning of the Middle Ages, and had its origins in turn in the clan or tribal group. So we see that socialization, like all organic things, grows and changes all the time. A static society is a moribund society.



Women worked together

In these households, whether medieval, Victorian, European, or north American, there was a lot of work to do and the women worked together — caring for the livestock and garden, canning and preserving, spinning, weaving and sewing, cooking and washing. This companionship makes many modern jobs bearable and is significantly missed by the solitary housewife turning to the soaps for company.

While this work was being done, children contributed their share and learned to function productively in a community, while infants were cared for by grandmothers and pregnant or nursing women. Everyone, young and

old, could be useful.

It probably wasn't perfect. There was certainly a hierarchy, and young adults were not independent. No doubt the dirtiest jobs were done by those lowest in the pecking order, and poor relations were constantly reminded that they were living on charity. There was very little privacy. But there was a lot to be said for the system and, in my opinion, lessons that we can learn from it.

Alternative lifestyles

We have now to think seriously about alternative lifestyles. What kind of society do we want? And if families are the building blocks of society, what kind of families do we want?

We want everyone to be wanted and

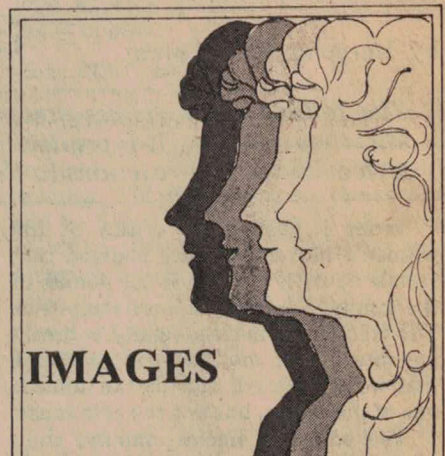
to feel wanted. We want to reduce the spiralling cost of living and the unfair and inefficient distribution of work and rewards. We want to use our natural resources as economically as we can. We want to provide security against job layoffs, disability and broken homes. We should be experimenting with alternative lifestyles. We need to think clearly and adventurously. We need flexibility, courage and unselfishness.

Experiments have been made in communal living. In north America, the Mormons and the Amish have been successful. So were the Shakers for a significant period of time. Most of the hippie communes of the '60's were not. The significant differences, it seems to me, are discipline and agreement on positive goals. Communes can be organized among people who have similar life goals and points of view. Growing children would have many role models and probably fewer anxieties. Parents would have time to enjoy their children. Skills could be shared and taught.

I think we should be asking ourselves not how to prevent change, but what kind of change we want, and how to bring it about instead of waiting until our present way of life falls apart at the seams.

What do you think?

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Letters...

Following is the text of a letter sent to Prime Minister Trudeau by Pauline Jewett, NDP MP, New Westminster-Coquitlam.

It is ten years this month since the Royal Commission on the Status of Women reported. It has been two years since the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) followed up on the Commission's report. The CACSW then pointed out [that] out of the Commission's 167 recommendations, 122 were under federal jurisdiction. Not even half of these have been fully implemented. As outlined in *Ten Years Later*, a CACSW publication, only 41 of the recommendations have been implemented. Many new and pressing issues relating to women today were not at all evident in 1970 or were not addressed by the Commission.

Much remains to be done. Revisions to the sexual legislation have not yet been made. Improved funding — at the federal level — for day-care services is not yet a reality. Pension reform with women in mind is urgently needed. Changes in income tax structures to take account of child care expenses are not yet underway. Economic security for women in the labour force is a worsening situation — women are just not making any gains.

I wish to reiterate my comments to the House of June 1, 1981: it is still not clear that the federal government will commit itself to mandatory affirmative action and contract compliance. There has been a marked lack of success in the voluntary testing program for affirmative action.

As a Member of Parliament I am concerned that the government be accountable to Parliament on all matters affecting women. At present, this is difficult to achieve since no single committee of the House deals with the many issues affecting women. I am writing to you, therefore, to urge that an all-party standing committee of the House of Commons on the Status of Women be established as soon as the House reconvenes.

This permanent committee should have responsibility for monitoring the progress of Canadian women towards true equality and could deal with current

issues relating to women.

It could also receive advice and testimony from the major governmental women's programs such as the Co-ordinator's Office, Status of Women Canada, the Office of Equal Opportunities for Women, the Public Service Commission, the Women's Bureau, Labour Canada and Employment and Immigration's Affirmative Action Program. As well, it should examine closely the reports submitted by the non-governmental agencies such as the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Honourable Judy Erola, Minister responsible for the Status of Women, to the Leader of the Opposition and to the Honourable Flora MacDonald in order to notify them of my request for the establishment of such a committee.

I look forward to an early reply.

United Auto Workers Local 510 call for support to the Pratt & Whitney 3

14 July, 1981

Dear Friends,

In November 1979, Suzanne Chabot, Katy LeRougetel and Wendy Stevenson were fired by Pratt and Whitney Aircraft of Canada Ltd.

Following the firings, our local union submitted grievances for an unwarranted layoff and deposited a complaint before the Human Rights Commission.

During a general membership assembly held Sunday, April 13, 1980, our members voted a motion of support to the struggle for the reintegration of the three women to their jobs.

We invite you, as soon as possible, to support Suzanne, Katy and Wendy.

Signed
President, Local 510 UAW (interim)
Fernand Foisy
Box 128
Longueuil, Que.

Theatre/Women

A National study is being undertaken under the auspices of the Status of Women Canada. This study is a modest but serious attempt to assess the current status of women in the Canadian theatre, with particular reference to women playwrights, directors and artistic directors.

Your views, experiences, and suggestions will help us to evaluate the opportunities now available to women, and to discover any obstacle to the full participation of women and to make recommendations towards enhancing the position of women in the Canadian theatre.

* If you are a Canadian playwright, director or artistic director or work in the theatre in any other capacity

* If you are, or have been involved in a feminist theatre, women's theatre, or alternate theatre company in this country

* If you have concerns as an audience member about the characterization of women in the plays produced in this country

* If you are aware of any obstacles to the full involvement of women in the Canadian theatre and/or can suggest programmes, legislation or other action

* If you would like to meet and discuss this subject or suggest other individuals and groups for us to contact

Please write:

Rina Fraticelli
96A Bellevue Ave.,
Toronto, Ontario,
M5T 3N9

Meetings will be arranged in several cities across Canada through the winter of '81-'82. If you would like to attend one of these discussions, please indicate this in your letter and we will send you a schedule as soon as one is available.

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The Female Connection — Women in the Global Community

— Women in Canada

— Women in the Church

From June 7 to 11, 1982, the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada is hosting a national gathering called *The Female Connection* at Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario. This event is open to all women — cutting across the usual boundaries of geography, education and denomination.

The primary purpose of the conference is to educate ourselves in women's experience generally — non-Canadian, immigrant Canadian, native Canadian and multi-generational Canadian — and to explore the concept of sisterhood in a multi-cultural perspective. Our practical goal is to establish links between special interest organizations (immigrant, native, third world and church women's associations) so that we may be mutually supportive and achieve a stronger collective voice in world affairs. In order to achieve this, W.I.C.C. is working closely with native and immigrant women's groups in the planning stages to ensure that conference programming reflects real issues as they are perceived by the participants. In our workshops we will look at the connection between violence, health, poverty, work and women's experience, and consider the various ways we, as women, may address

social issues — denominationally, congregationally, ecumenically, and individually.

The conference is also intended to be a celebration of women. This aspect of the national gathering will be especially evident in the opening session (the evening of June 7) when a major choral work, commissioned by W.I.C.C., will be premiered. Members of the Thunder Bay Symphony Chorus, conducted by Dwight Bennett (conductor of the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra) will perform Nancy Telfer's composition which has been built upon the themes and concerns of the gathering. The renowned Canadian mezzo-soprano, Catherine Robbin, will be the guest soloist for this premiere.

There will also be plenty of opportunity at the conference for browsing through books (provided for sale by the Toronto Women's Bookstore) and display materials, for singing and sharing, and for solitude and reflection.

W.I.C.C. encourages women to think of projects that might assist participants with travel and registration/accommodation expenses, and congregations to consider funding some of their members.

For more information, write to:

Shirley Davy
Co-ordinator, National Gathering 1982
W.I.C.C.
77 Charles St. W.
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1K5

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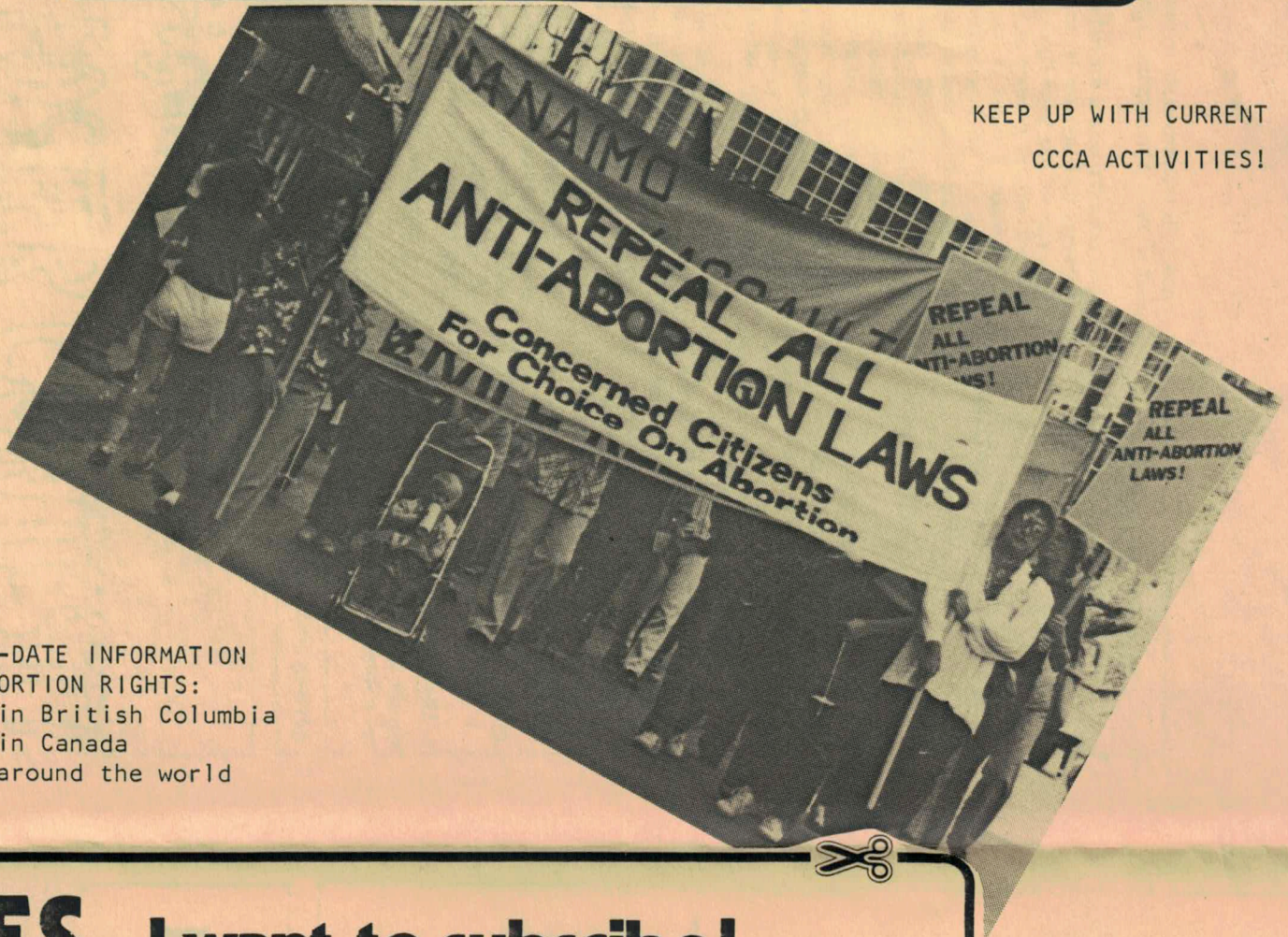
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