

The Victoria Status of Women ACtion Group was formed in 1971 in order to work for the implementation of the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women; to foster public knowledge of the rights and status of women; and to promote full participation of women in social, economic and political life.

SWAG is a voluntary group, registered as a society, with an executive elected yearly.

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595-5745

Membership Chair

PastShirley NordstromPresident7, 2209 Oak Bay Ave.595-0405V8R 1G4

477-8535

MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS

SWAG meets the fourth Monday of each month (except when it falls on a holiday) at the James Bay Community Centre, 140 Oswego St., Meeting Room 11 at 8:00 p.m.

WORKSHOPS*COFFEE*GUEST SPEAKERS*

COMMITTEES

Members are encouraged to focus their energies on one or more committees. This is where the real work of SWAG goes on. You need not be an expert. Call one of the chairpeople and offer your services.

CHAIRPEOPLE

Family Law	Gwen Bavin 1160 Greenwood Ave. 383-2502 V9A 5M1
Education	Avis Rasmussen 3050 Uplands Rd. 598-3188 V8R 6B4
Human Rights	Norrie Preston 755 Monterey Ave. 598-1390 V8S 4V2
Health	Cathy Mountain 241 Howe St 383-2165 V8V 4K7
Labour	Diana Butler 2149 Granite St. 598-6964 V8S 3G8
Feminist History	Alice Albert 5, 1159 Yates St. 382-1536 V8V 3N1
Archives	Alice Albert
Editorial Board	Alice Ages Shirley Nordstrom Lois Vickery
Editor	Shirley Nordstrom
Typist	Joan Pearson

MEMBERSHIP entitles you to a subscription to SWAG NEWS -- a completely volunteer effort dependent upon your contributions ... poems, articles, opinions, reports. ALL FEMINIST MATERIAL WELCOME.

NEXT MEETONG defence workshop

Feb. 25th

ARK YOUR CALENDAR

- Feb. 15 Kate Millet speaking at U.B.C. Topic: Violence Against Women. For tickets call Lois --598-1704.
- Feb. 16 FLAG VALENTINE DANCE Unitarian Church 106 Superior Street
- Feb. 18 FEDERAL ELECTION
- Feb. 19,20,21--9:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m. WORKSHOP: Re-Entering the Labour Force or Returning to School. Langford Outreach Office, For information call Kenna, 478-9525
- Feb. 22,23 The Challenge of a Woman's Middle Years (see announcements)
- Feb. 25 SWAG General Meeting Coffee -- 7:30 p.m. Meeting - 8:00 p.m. Topic: Self-Defense Workshop
- Feb. 27 DOLLARS AND SENSE AND SEPARATION A Divorce Life-Line meeting with a financial counsellor and Trudi Brown -- family lawyer
- March 4 SWAG Executive meeting at Diana's, 8:00 p.m.

Mar. 14-17 NAC Conference, Ottawa

Apr. 12-13 BCFW Standing Committee meeting, Victoria. Plan to attend!

VICTORIA RAPE RELIEF

24 HOUR CRISIS SERVICE 383-3732

ANNOUNCEMENTS

8th Annual Fall Conference!! NOW Is the time to think about the October Conference. If you want it to happen call Susan, 477-8385

I have recently spoken with a few women who have had both ovaries removed and who are on long term estrogen maintenance. Some of the women asked me to connect them with other women in the same situation. I would be happy to help you get in touch with each other via an informal support group. Please call me -- Susan Moger, 388-6101.

SWAG executive members have chosen to rotate the position of President. Lois Vickery will serve for the month of February and March. Please direct information and questions as much as possible to appropriate committee chairs.

PRIME TIME: The Challenge of a Woman's Middle Years.

This conference co-sponsored by Prime Time and University Extension, University of Victoria, is planned for women and anyone who would like to learn more about this time in a woman's life.

Friday, February 22 -- 9:00 a.m. - 4:30
p.m. and 8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Saturday, February 23 -- 9:00 a.m. 12:00 noon.

This day and a half conference is designed to explore the concerns, special needs and strengths of mid-years women. Fee: \$30.00 -- additional tickets for Friday evening \$3.00 each. Bursary money available if necessary. Please phone Eunice at 388-6101.

Our newsletter collating team needs a larger stapler. If you have one you would donate, please call Mary Jane -- 477-8535.



BREAD AND ROSES Words by James Oppenheim

As we come marching, marching, in the beauty of the day, A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill lofts gray, Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun discloses, For the people hear us singing, Bread and Roses, Bread and Roses.

As we come marching, marching, we battle too for men, When they get themselves together, we will work with them again. Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes; Hearts starve as well as bodies: Give us bread, but give us roses.

As we come marching, marching, unnumbered women dead Go crying through our singing their ancient cry for bread. Small art and love and beauty their drudging spirits knew. Yes, it is bread we fight for, but we fight for roses too.

As we come marching, marching, we bring the greater days, The rising of the women means the rising of the race. No more the drudge and idler, ten that toil where one reposes, But a sharing of life's glories, Bread and Roses, Bread and Roses.

BREAD AND ROSES was written by James Oppenheim to commemorate an incident that occurred during a textile strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts, in 1912.

The mill workers, mostly women, went on strike to protest the working conditions for children in the mills. Their demand was that no child should be made to work for more than 54 hours in a single week. After a lengthy dispute the strikers won their point. But then the management retaliated by reducing everybody's work week to 54 hours, with a corresponding cut in pay. The women, who of course couldn't afford such a drastic cutback, went on strike again. "What do these women want?" the managers said. "Roses?" The next day the women appeared on the picket lines with signs that said "WE WANT BREAD AND ROSES' BREAD AND ROSES is written from a viewpoint that is both compassionate and optimistic.

The version recorded here is the same as James Oppenheim's with the exception of the second line of the second verse - "Because they are women's children and we mother them again".

The version recorded here is from O.I.S.E.

MARCH 8th

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Victoria activities to be discussed at the next SWAG general meeting, FEB. 25th VID ENDROW JAUAATANTE DAY

It was 1908. Women did not have the right to vote. The eight-hour day was still a dream. Children labored in sweatshops. On March 8 of that year, women garment workers marked in the streets of New York's Lower East Side to demand the right to vote and an end to sweatshop conditions. Two things began that day: The song BREAD AND ROSES, Womens clarion call for economic security and better lives; and International Women's Day.

1908 was by no means the first time women had come together to protest their oppression. As early as 1647, maids in London had signed a petition for the institution of the day off, "To shut up our kitchen doors from eight in the morning till eight at night every second Tuesday." Women's oppression was not a new idea in 1908. What grew in the aftermath of the 1908 march was the international solidarity of the struggles of working women.

In 1910 Clara Zetken, a leader in both socialists and feminists in Germany, proposed to the International Socialist Women's Congress an international day of protest demanding universal female suffrage. Their theme was: "The vote for women will unite our strength in the struggle for socialism."

International Women's Day took life in March of 1911. Alexandra Kollontai, the Russian revolutionary leader, wrote about it: "Germany and Austria ... were one seething, trembling sea of women ... the first show of militancy by the working women." The largest demonstration was in Austria: 30,000 women and men marched.

It was born a working women's day, and thus it grew in the countries of b Europe before the First World War. Even b under severe repression, women workers w and peasants fought back on the day that h symbolized their struggles. In Czarist a Russia in 1913, when demonstrations and j meetings were forbidden, the women of the Petrograd Bolshevik Party organized a public forum for March 8. The hall was packed, and right after the meeting the police arrested the main speakers. But



they could not kill the essence of March 8: It brought workers to their feet.

The war put a stop to International Women's Day for a time, but in 1917 in Russia, women textile workers poured into the streets demanding bread. By the end of the day 90,000 workers had followed them, and the Russian Revolution had begun.

March 8 celebrations continued on all over the world, but as the quiescent '50s approached the day's history faded in the sluggishness of the women's and workers' movements. The big capitalist boom sapped the strength of March 8 as a workers' day of protest.

In Russia, Stalin's idea of March 8 as only "a means of winning the reserve of women toilers to the side of the proletariat" robbed the day of its potential for women's liberation. International Women's Day became a cultural fete to glorify motherhood.

With the women's movement reborn on a global scale, International Women's Day is rising again. It was celebrated in 1970 in Uruguay by an all-women jailbreak organized by the Tupamaros.

All over the world, working women are taking back their day, using it to build their struggle On March 8, 1977 in Spain, over 8,000 factory workers demonstrated to demand equal pay, contraception, abortion, and amnesty. Women in Liverpool occupied their factory, with the support of other workers. Seven thousand people, including trade unionists, marched in Belgium.

In Canada, since 1976, March 8 has been marked by large demonstrations led by trade-union women's committees and the women's movement. The essence of March 8 has returned with demands for equal pay, abortion rights, child care, and for jobs.

> By Justine Durrell Reprinted from "Socialist Voice"

RETUERS

Dear Shirley:

Re the article "I Want a Wife" by Judy Syfers and the ending: "My God, who wouldn't want a wife?" I wouldn't at least not as described. I wouldn't have it on my conscience and the karma I'd lay up!

Mina Wilson

Dear Friend:

My heartiest congratulations to you on your forthright letter to Raif Mair, in the Sunday Colonist.

It had been my intention to point out one fact which you have seemingly overlooked, but I was recently denied publication by the editor on the grounds that I was taking up too much space.

That fact is that any elected official is elected to serve EVERY MEMBER of the community, not just those who happen to subscribe to his personal views on a particular matter. Mair is quite obviously a fanatic on the subject of abortion, and as such should be removed from the portfolio, or forced to resign. There is no room for fanatics in government at any level.

I suggest that it should be put to those who arrogate to themselves the right to decide someone else should be compelled to bring forth an unwanted child, that since they are responsible for compelling that child into the world, then they should be compelled in turn, to take on the responsibility for that child's upbringing, until the child was of an age to look after itself.

There is far too much of this foisting of fanatic opinions on others who neither want them nor should have to accept them . The ONLY person who should have ANY say, is the woman concerned, or to a lesser degree, the father. It is absolutely no one else's business. I would say to everyone else, HANDS OFF. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely Harry B. Dickens

Dear Ms. Nordstrom:

Thank you for your letter of January 12, 1980, regarding abortion.

At the outset let me assure you that I have no intention of withdrawing any of my remarks on this issue. However, I also have no intention of over stepping my authority or of questioning the integrity of British Columbia doctors.

On January 11th, I wrote a letter to all hospital boards and administrators in This Province explaining my position on the abortion issue and perhaps if I outline here the content of that letter it would be helpful.

In my letter to the hospital boards I indicated that while I am not opposed to abortion for all purposes, I am strongly opposed to it as a method of birth control.

I indicated further that as Health Minister, I feel I have at least three obligations.

Firstly, the public has a right to know my views on the matter and, remembering the vagaries of the reporting process, I think I have expressed that.

Secondly, I think I must make it clear that while I have every right to my views and to persuade others to agree with them, I have no right to impose them upon others.

Thirdly, I think as Health Minister I have the right to ask, and indeed insist under Section 251 (5) of the Code, that the law of the land be obeyed.

I went on to say in taht letter that, in my view, all hospitals, their administrators, boards, medical staff, and other employees involved in the issue

LETTERS (Cont'd)

know what the law is. They will, I confidently expect, see that the law is obeyed. A patient's physician must make difficult judgements concerning the wellbeing of <u>his</u> patient. <u>He</u> knows, I'm sure, that notwithstanding <u>his</u> patient's wishes in the matter, <u>he</u> must make these judgements in the context of Section 251 of the Code. Therapeutic abortion committees must, and I am sure will, bear in mind that they are performing a quasijudicial function when passing judgement on these matters. They will, I expect, treat each matter with the letter and spirit of the law of Canada in mind.

I am certain you will agree that our primary concern should be to reduce the incidence of unwanted pregnancies by approaching the problem with a preventive medicine point of view. Indeed, I have instructed my Ministry staff to pursue this matter, working with the Ministry of Education where feasible, to emphasize prevention. I hope that I can count on your support for this approach.

Yours very truly, K. Rafe Mair Minister of Health

The Editor, Victoria Times:

In a recent article in your paper the proceedings of a meeting of the Capital REgional District Board were reported -the matter that concerns us is the issue of appointing a woman to the newly proposed Economic Development Commission. Apparently at the meeting one member of the Board made remarks ("quippingly" or not) that can only be described as racist, sexist and certainly in bad taste. Another member of the Board protested against appointing "token" women -- trivializing what we thought was a serious matter.

The issue itself arose from a letter sent to Board members from the Women's Employment Committee, a coalition of groups, individuals and community workers who are collaborating out of a concern for the high rate of unemployment amongst women, low wages and lack of job security. The Committee's objective is to improve the dismal situation of women who are in the labour force and of those wishing to enter or re-enter it. Thus we are concerned that positive steps be taken to ensure that the problems women face with respect to employment are erased.

We pointed out to the Board that while we are pleased that the District is undertaking efforts to promote economic development generally within the region, we are at the same time concerned that the Commission will not have adequate representation and knowledge of the particular problems women face in the economy. We also pointed out that we hoped that women's very special needs would not merely be assumed to disappear only with increased economic activity or that it would not be assumed that women will continue to be satisfied only with traditional work roles. We suggested, therefore, the appointment of at least one well-qualified woman to the Commission to act as both an advocate and resource person on behalf of women in the region much in the manner that other appointments were to be representative of other components in the local economy namely, industry, fisheries, forest products, construction, small and large business, etc. We also suggested that the Commission should at all times consider the impact of its efforts on women and how better to promote a more positive work environment and opportunity for women.

We protest that the issues we raised were not seriously considered. They are serious concerns. We hope that in future the Board will be more positive and work concretely towards ensuring satisfactory economic development for all citizens in the region. Let us hope that what happened this time is not repeated. It is of benefit to no one.

> Yours sincerely Diana Butler (On behalf of the Women's Employment Committee)

22222 QUESTION 22277 Is the symphony's "women's committee" any different from the ladies auxilary? 2222222

ANNUAL REPORTS

President's Report, 1979 Shirley Nordstrom

Status of Women Action Group activities in 1979 focused on community networking.

We are part of a Coordinating Committee for Comunity Education for Women. The Health Committee cosponsored a spring symposium at UVic and a fall seminar at James Bay Community Center. We had a second annual dinner with the Business and Professional Women. SWAG members were actively involved in the Mother's Day Pro-Choice rally. We are members of a Victoria Human Rights Ad Hoc Ccalition formed to monitor the present commission. We sponsored a summer student project on Women's history which fielded an excellent exhibit at UVic MacPherson Library. We are a member of the Victoria Justice Council. Much work has gone into coordinating a series of women's programmes for Channel 10. A coalition from Transition House, Rape Assault and SWAG has formed --labelled Women Against Violence Against Women. This is a result of having Jude Angione working through Women's Services Programme, a Secretary of State sponsored project. We co-sponsored our seventh annual fall women's conference at UVic. This year it was concerned with political skills.

We maintain contact with an increasing number of community groups including: Victoria Labour Council, Victoria Council for the Family, Victoria International Development and Education Association, NDP Women's Caucus. Inter-Cultural Association Women's Group, Victoria Council of Women, Feminist Lesbian Action Group, Women's Action Group (UVic), Prime Time, Victoria Volunteer Bureau, and Legal Aid Commission.

Outside our immediate community we have continued as an active member of the B.C. Federation of Women and the National ACtion Committee. SWAG members have attended province wide conferences on labour, education, human rights, health, violence and law. Monthly meetings have been varied and interesting. We have discussed the new Children's ACt legislation, Parents in Crisis, the Family Relations Act, Rape and Assault, Divorce Lifeline, Union organizing (SORWAC), and emotional selfdefence -- interspersed by the June B.B.Q. and the December Wine and Cheese parties.

The newsletter has continued, under Lois' editorship, to develop as a tremendous source of information and issue analysis. I have now begun to work on a Secretary of State sponsored project to extend the distribution of SWAG NEWS to women up-Island. The purpose of this project is to establish a communication network which will enable us to maintain contacts and support structures with feminists in other centers.

Now I come to the end of two years as president. I have enjoyed my work and I have learned a great deal both in organizing and analysis.

It is repeatedly emphasized in SWAG that the work is done in committees. That has been increasingly true. Now as we move into a time without a president each individual member must shoulder more responsibility. It will be a time of change and growth for each of us.

> Treasurer's Report, December 31, 1979

Group Assets	1979	1978
Cash in Bank	\$1,293.08	\$1,828.57
Typewriter	212.93	212.93
Accounts Rec.	17.91	ausei
	\$1,523.92	\$2.041.50

			at both the gunteipal and provincial manage				
Surplus	1979	1978	Sept.1, 1979 107 paid-up				
Balance forward Jan. 1, 1979	\$2,041.50	\$3,098.67	14 complimentary 20 response to Newsletter				
Operating Deficit	517.58	1,057.17	Sept Nov. 42 new members Dec Jan, 1980 17 new members				
	\$1,523.92	\$2,041.50	200				
Income			We actually have 196 paid-up subscrip-				
Memberships and Donations	\$1,610.97	\$ 715.68	tions because 12 copies alone of the Newsletter go to two different organiza- tions.				
Bank Interest	150.33	140.29	It was necessary to make cuts in the				
Miscellaneous	48.94	901.20	mailing list as an earlier study showed that, of the \$5 fee, it takes approxi-				
	\$1,810.24	\$1,757.17	matoly \$4 65 to produce 10 copies per				
Disbursements			Under the present system memberships				
Postage and Stationery	70.26	322.22	are dated from the month in which one joins. This requires two sets of records				
Rent	168.00	191.00	and a reminder in the Newsletter to renew. This is somewhat cumbersome and therefore				
Conference Expense	s 726.45	884.60	I would recommend, as other Membership Chairpersons have also done, that the fees				
Newsletter	1,074.86	666.02	become due at one time and that the fee				
Miscellaneous	146.48	750.50	be pro-rated for those joining later than for example, October 1.				
Donations	111.00	esently-bab	Therefore, I would move that this sug-				
Telephone Expenses	30.77	egg barer	gestion be referred to the Executive for				
Hole our number	\$2,327.82	\$2,814.34	discussion and a report to the general members at the next meeting.				
Operating Deficit for Year	\$ 517.58	\$1,057.17	To cut costs of mailing, which I feel is considerable, I would further like to suggest that membership cards and receipts be incorporated with the mailing of the				

Membership Committee Mary Jane Lewis

I have held the position of Membership Chairperson sonce May, 1979, taking over when Gail Cox resigned.

At that time we had approximately 105 paid-up members. An appeal was mailed in the Newsletter to 117 members whose subscriptions had lapsed. Approximately 20 people responded. (As you know this is a very mobile group, members' circumstances changing quite frequently.)

Therefore, the membership picture May, 1979 to January 1980 is:

Labour Committee Diana Butler

Newsletter. You may feel that this is a clerical problem for discussion by the

Executive only.

In the past year a number of initiatives have been undertaken. The Committee has, from time to time, undertaken to bring to the attention of various levels of government actions which might be taken to improve the situation of women employed by them or for which they bear legislative and regulatory authority. For Example, at the municipal level suggestions were made that an adequate number of women be employed as seasonal workers, at both the municipal and provincial levels on-going efforts have been directed towards getting satisfactory affirmative action programmes established, at the federal level changes in unemployment insurance and Outreach programmes which adversely affect women have been questionned.

Committee members have participated in a number of conferences and community organizations focussed on female employment. A continuing involvement has been with the Victoria Women's Employment Committee -- a committee comprised of representatives of several groups, individuals and community workers whose objective is to ensure that positive and concrete steps be taken to erase the problems women face in employment and in entering and re-entering the labour force. One recent initiative has been to suggest that women be a major focus of and be represented on the newly proposed Capital Regional District Economic Development Commission.

Throughout theyear, but more particularly in October, the Committee has provided information about the plight of women in the SWAG newsletter. In October most of the newsletter issue was devoted to labour issues. The monthly speaker that month also talked on labour issues, specifically on SORWOC's efforts in organizing women.

But, while much has been accomplished in the past year relative to some other years, more can be done. The major weakness of the Committee is its lack of membership which has put the burden of effort on a few shoulders. The Committee needs new members, regular meeting dates should be established and new initiatives There is much to should be undertaken. do for it is clear that on several fronts the position of women in the labour force gets worse not better. Hopefully 1980 will see some improvement and that our efforts will have helped to bring it about.

> EVERYWOMEN'S BOOKS 641 JOHNSON STREET DOWNTOWN

Health Collective Caroline Meggison

The Health Collective's most major (and successful) project was the presentation of a workshop-style symposium focussing on women and health. Approximately two hundred people participated in the Friday night of displays and music and Saturday workshops of March 2 and 3. The workshop had three focuses: "the birth cycle," "our sense of self" and "keeping healthy."

Other activities were participation/ support in a rally advocating pro-choice for abortion. People of the health collective were active in making the necessary posters for this rally which took place at the Parliament Buildings grounds on Mother's Day. Letters were once again written to the anti-choice people proclaiming our rights for control over our own bodies.

Yet another project was begun which is expected to be completed sometime in 1980: a doctor's directory which will be prepared from questionnaires that are presently being circulated. It is hoped that this will be able to guide women in regard to choosing a doctor in Victoria.

The membership of the Health Collective has grown over the last year and Cathy Mountain is the new chairperson.

Feminist History Group Alice J. Albert

The Feminist History Group came into existence in the autumn of 1978 as the Herstory Committee, thanks to the determination of Christina Johnson. We were three in attendance at the first meeting. the third woman having subsequently dropped out. Nevertheless, we decided that we would initiate a summer project around the "Persons Case" requesting funding from the Secretary of State. Funding was applied for and received and so the "Persons Project" came into being. In fact, this was the only activity undertaken by the Herstory Committee, whose name was changed in the Spring to its present name, the Feminist History Group.

At this time there were still only two active members!

Recruitment to the project proved less problematical than had been originally envisioned and by the end of the summer the numbers had swollen to six. Throughout the summer reference and resource materials were collated and photographs tracked down; the culmination was the "Persons Case" Photographic Exhibition held between October 15 and November 2, 1979 at the McPherson Library, University of Victoria. The opening on October 18, 1979, the 50th Anniversary of the achievement of the status of Persons, and the exhibition proved a terrific success. At least three women are interested in exhibiting our collection outside of Victoria. However, funding is lacking.

For the year 1980, the format has been changed and we are holding monthly meetings on topics around women's history, etc. Also, we are applying to do yet another summer project through the Secretary of State. In addition, a separate project on Women and the Labour Force in B.C. from c. 1870 to the present focussing on Victoria and Vancouver has been applied for through the Department of History, University of Victoria.

While our numbers remain small, and the number of women who are also members of SWAG remain even smaller, we hope for bigger and better things.

> Education Committee Avis Rasmussen

Mary Kafka, former Education Committee Chair, together with her committee prepared a brief on the realities of the employment world when girls leave school and try to enter the workforce and what the statistics are regarding work, women and their status in the Canadian economy. Mary read the brief to the Commission on Education for School District 61, which is headed by Mr. BErnard Gillie. A member of his commission (John Young) asked for more statistics!

Mary also met with David Turner, Chair of the Justics Council of Victoria, to prepare another brief to the Commission on Education re: Teaching of Law in Senior High Schools because the Department of Education was considering deleting the teaching of Family and Criminal Law and offering only commercial and business law. The Advisory Council on the Status of Women recommendations on this subject were given, as well as the Woman and the Law bocklet.

As new Education Committee Chair, I would like to commend Mary and her committee for their work last year.

Family Law Committee Gwen Bavin

The Family Law Committee had a relatively quiet year. Lisa Cowan spoke to the membership regarding the new Family RElations Act and Marjorie Martin was a guest to address the problems of children. We have had no further news regarding the new Child's Protection ACt. However, there are many knowledgeable people in other areas giving input to that. The Law Committee wrote one letter to Grace McCarthy requesting her consideration of the rights of children put forth by the Berger Commission. Report -- no answer. Avis Rasmussen was very active during the year in the formation of Divorce Lifeline which is now a reality. We thank Jocelyn Gifford for speaking to the membership and wish her well in this very worthwhile venture. There have been two public meetings so far which were attended by the present three active members of the Committee and a good representation from the public. The phone calls for direction, support or just "someone to listen" are still a regular part of the Law Committee work. During the new year we hope to gather new members to help us study the work and needs of transition housing. It is a very necessary service but badly funded and in need of more government support, both for facilties and counselling. We would appreciate comments from anyone with any knowledge of transition housing.

> VICTORIA TRANSITION HOUSE JUST CALL

> > 383-3232

FERSONAL POWER/POLITICAL POWER Shirley Nordstrom

In the face of the complex problems confronting women today we want so much to believe that the assimilation of feminist attitudes and attributes will lead to a better life; a life somehow less fraught with frustration, somehow more fulfilling, richer and hopefully easier.

On one level it is true that dealing with truth and idealism is fulfilling and that taking an assertive posture leads to a richer life. But there is a danger in assuming that the women's liberation movement is THE ANSWER to the malaise of women's problems.

A better life is often conceived as a life filled with love, a personal space where we are accepted for what we are and supported in our growth process. We must never imply or allow a woman to assume that the feminist movement is the answer to her loneliness and isolation. We are not offering, nor do we provide warm caring and support. This may happen in intimate groups but it is not a function of the "movement." Women who expect that are set up to be disappointed and will likely leave the movement angry and resentful.

The purpose of the women's liberation movement, as I see it, is to provide a forum for analysis from a woman's perspective. There is nowhere else in our society where this perspective is validated. From the analysis will grow a desire to develop different social structures. The women's liberation movement provides role models for assertive, self- directed behaviours and a space for safely learning these new behaviours.

Self-directed behaviour develops personal power. Development of personal power is the only answer to the loneliness and

isolation that is a definitive part of being human. Personal power in no way eliminates loneliness or isolation but it enables us to learn the skills necessary to live with them and use them to our advantage.

As personal power increases we become increasingly aware of the institutional and political power of the system in which we live. The patriarchy is in many ways overwhelmingly powerful. Without personal power we function within patriarchy fondly believing we have a voice and share the power of the system. As we develop personal integrity and knowledge of ourselves we inevitably discover that in fact the system is diametrically opposed to all we hold sacred. Without internal strength we cannot deal with the reality of the patriarchy so we effectively blind ourselves, acknowledging its misogyny gradually and only to the degree to which we develop our personal power.

We can only be effective in the political arena from a position of firmly established personal power. We can be willing to undermine the present social structure only when our sense of self is in no way attached to that social structure. The growth process to independence and self-direction is slow and painful. It is a process which must be made alone. Feminists can join together to speak on issues which concern us all but let us not substitute the security of feminist rhetoric for the opiate of patriarchal dogma.

We are not an army. We will never have the support of the majority. We are engagedin guerrila warfare. We will succeed only as we learn to fight alone. WHEN YOU MEET A LESBIAN: HINTS FOR THE HETEROSEXUAL WOMAN

Do not run screaming from the room. This is rude.

If you must back away, do so slowly and with discretion.

Do not assume she is attracted to you.

Do not assume she is not attracted to you.

Do not assume you are not attracted to her.

Do not expect her to be as excited about meeting a heterosexual as you may be about meeting a lesbian. She was probably raised with them.

Do not immediately start talking about your boyfriend or husband in order to make it clear that you are straight. She probably already knows.

Do not tell her that it is sexist to prefer women -- that people are people and she should be able to love everybody. Do not tell her that men are as oppressed by sexism as women and women should help men fight their oppression. These are common fallacies and should be treated as such.

Do not invite her someplace where there will be men unless you tell her in advance. She may not want to be with them.

Do not ask her how she got this way. Instead, ask yourself how you got that way.

Do not assume that she is dying to talk about being a lesbian.

Do not expect her to refrain from talking about being a lesbian.

Do not trivialize her experience by assuming it is a bedroom issue only. She is a lesbian twenty-four hours a day.

Do not assume that because she is a lesbian she wants to be treated like a man.

Do not assume that her heart will leap with joy if you touch her arm (condescendingly? flirtatiously? power-testingly?). It makes her angry.

If you are tempted to tell her she is taking the easy way out, Think About That.

(The poster this was taken from is available through Day Moon Designs, P. O. Box 5285, Seattle, Washington, U.S.A., 98105)

FIVE LITTLE RULES TO KEEP WOMEN IN THEIR PLACE

Just when the struggle against sexism seems so endless and the spirit wilts, along comes a woman like Eerit As with her five little rules which make it all snap into perspective.

I'm going to pass on the five rules to you. Remember them, because they come straight from Berit As, 51, a Norwegian psychologist, former Labor MP and a party leader, and a feminist with a mind as clear as northern water.

"These are the five main techniques which every dominant culture uses to suppress the less powerful groups," Dr. As told me in an interview. "As I studied anthroplogy and the hidden female culture, I realized that men use these methods, consciously and unconsciously, to dominate women."

She calls them the "master suppression techniques," and she feels that to name them helps to drain them of their persuasive power. Here they are:

1. To Make Invisible: In Norway, a woman sprinter who won a world championship got one sentence on a back page of the paper, while a losing handball team (all male) was splashed sympathetically on the front page. It's part of a worldwide pattern in which women in the news, unless they are victims or sex objects, are ignored.

Language is very effective in making women "disappear" from our notice. When Norwegian men made up 3 per cent of the nursing profession, they insisted that the word for "nurse" (a feminine work in Norwegian) be made masculine. Men always argue that calling everything by a masculine name is merely making it "neutral," but what it achieves is to make women invisible in history.

Cultural Conditioning

Last week, I wrote a news story about a new Medical REform Group of 125 doctors. Two of the three courageous doctors I interiewed were women. But The Star changed my "Spokespersons" to "spokesmen." And they wouldn't have allowed "spokeswomen" since one man was present. Trivial? All of our cultural conditioning seems trivial when it's analysed bit by bit. Taken as a whole, such manipulations are powerful.

2. Ridicule: When Canadian Tories wanted to depose then party leader Diefenbaker, they called their movement "Dump Dief." A similar group in England aimed at Margaret Thatcher, was called "Ditch The Bitch." There's a difference. And when the Labor party calls her "Attila the Hen." the sexism is clear.

Dr. As herself was mocked on Norwegian radio by a "comic" rhyme to the effect that when "As shows her nipples, her Gallup rating goes up.'

"Look at the ridicule of women drivers, despite their low accident rating," she says. Or, for that matter, the accepted ridicule of mothers-in-law and spinsters.

And, as any female columnist can testify, male readers who want to disagree often can't resist a bit of sexual rieicule which they imagine to be devastating.

A male teacher, seething over my column about private schools, wrote me an otherwise well-argued letter ... but couldn't resist slipping in, "Anyway, you're a thoroughly ugly woman."

Dr. As comments: "Whenever criticism includes biological references, you can be absolutely sure that prejudice is at work."

3. Withholding the Information: Dr. As cites the centuries-long struggle of women to be allowed to study law, medicine and mathematics. The battle for birth control information is only now being won.

"Information about the lives and accomplishments of women is still being hidden," Dr. As says. "How many people know that according to a massive United Mations study, women do at least 66 per cent of the world's work, receive 10 per cent of the income and own 1 per cent of the property?" 4. You're Damned If You Do and Damned If You Don't: All power-groups use this double-bind technique on the less powerful, says Dr. As, remembering her youth in occupied Norway when the Nazis accused News of being dirty, stupid and cringing, but also powerful masterminds of science, literature and business.

Sardonic Humor

Any women could name 10 such double binds in a flash. Feminists are so cold and calculating that they make men impotent. But they're also emotional and hysterical and are the cause of rape.

5. Attribution of Guilt and Blame: After World War II, Dr. As recalls, American mothers were accused of "momism" ... bringing up their sons so poorly that they were "soft" and inadequate as fighting men. "Mothers feverishly read psychology to see what they had done wrong," says As wryly, "but meanwhile, men continued to create sex and crime on TV, pornographic literature, hero-spies and Batmen, and no one blames men as a sex for bad fathering."

Wives are blamed for their husbands' alcoholism; women are blamed for inciting men to rape (remember last year's ludicrous OPP report on rape?) and women are alternately blamed for not earning their own way and for taking jobs away from men.

There's an element of sardonic humor in much of this analysis of "suppression techniques." And that's the point. Once you recognize the way you're being psyched out as part of a pattern, it's easier to laugh off the manipulations rather than take them personally.

From Toronto Star, November 7, 1979.



PHILLIP NEY

For insulting the voting public with his one platform campaign in the current federal election.

ELECTION FOOTNOTES

BROADBENT: "Every Canadian should have a credit card.....to get HIS petroleum. (well nobody's perfect)

ROSEMARY BROWN: "We need to show women that it makes more sense to elect people who are committed to feminism than to try to educate politicians who are not." (How long ago was that party leadership convention?)

BROADBENT and CLARK met with National Action Committee representatives in public meetings to answer questions on party policy in women's issues. TRUDEAU refused a public meeting and would meet only with NAC <u>EXECUTIVE</u>.

BOOK REVIEWS

Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism by Mary Daly (Beacon Press, Boston, 1978: \$20.50 H.B.)

Reviewed by Elizabeth Sarah.

Gyn/Ecology is by and about women amazing all the male-authored 'sciences of womankind' and weaving world tapestries OF OUR OWN KIND. That is, it is about dis-covering, de-veloping the complex web of living/loving relationships OF OUR OWN KIND. It is about women living, loving, creating our selves, our cosmos. It is dispossessing our Selves, enspiriting our Selves, hearing the call of the wild, naming our wisdom, spinning and weaving world tapestries of genesis and demise. In contrast to

G Gynecology, which depends upon fixation and dismemberment, Gyn/ Ecology affirms that everything is connected. (pp.10-11: Daily, 1979).

Gyn/Ecology is a visionary book. While it rests on extensive documentation "of Goddess murder in the concrete lives of women" (p. 111) -- the elaborate "rituals" which savagely reinforce Patriarchal omnipotence -- the Indian Suttee (the "practice" of widows throwing themselves on their husbands' funeral pyre), Chinese footbinding, African genital mutilation, European witchburning, American Gynecology and Psychotherapy, it is also the work of an extraordinary creative imagination. The absolute "possession" of the female self by the "spirit" of Patriarchy is "re-called" in chilling detail, and yet. at the same time, Daly succeeds in reclaiming it all: every aspect of the language, the history, the psychology of Patriarchal power is completely undermined; the myths are broken and we (the Hags and Crones of the Patriarchal world) "move further into hagocentric psychic space ... Depending less and less upon male approval, recognizing that such approval is more often than not a reward for weakness, we approve of our Selves. We prove our Selves. Such self-approval attracts, and attracting Hags bond." pp. 341-2, my emphasis).

The purpose of a close examination of the conditions and instruments of Patriarchal oppression is obvious: ... by now we are able to know more about the mechanisms by which the masters devour the fruits of female creativity and attempt to grind them into oblivion. Armed with this knowledge, <u>Crones/Hags</u> will make every effort to remove our energy from allegiance to their systems, reclaiming our life force and our hidden, but never totally destroyed traditions" (p. 349).

Some women have remarked that Gyn/ Ecology is a difficult book. In my opinion, while it is extremely complex, it is not dense; the message is quite clear, but certainly, Daly makes considerable demands of her readers. It is not possible to read Gyn/Ecology passively. To understand it we have to be actively engaged, both in "a-mazing" the Patriarchal world, and in ". spinning," "spiraling" and, "weaving" the Female "Cosmos" because we are all part of it: "the oppression of women knows no ethnic, national or religious bounds. There are variations on the theme of oppression, but the phenomenon is planetary" (p.111). Indeed ... "ALL women are daughters ... Daughter-Right names the right to reclaim our original movement, to re-call our selves. It is this self-centering identity that makes female bonding possible. Since it points to the original self, it establishes the right to relate to other selves." (p. 347; my emphasis.)

Patriarchal concepts of <u>Individualism</u> (in which the self is <u>isolated</u> and <u>uncon-</u> <u>nected</u>) and <u>Collectivism</u> (in which the self is completely submerged) are totally inadequate for an understanding of the <u>sisterhood</u> of "Woman-Loving Spinster/ Lesbians:"

Because she has a strong sense of her own worth, the Amazon who has the courage to accept her self is not self-sacrificing. Having acknowledged the divine spark in her self and having accepted it as her own, she has no need to demand self-sacrifice of her sisters. This prospect is horrifying to her, for she cherishes their divine sparks, their be-ing, as she cherishes her own, knowing that their combined combustion is the creation of Female Fire (p. 378).

"The creation of Female Fire:" the force of Female Be-ing burns its way through the pages of <u>Gyn/Ecology</u>. This is an exuberant book. The reader is taken beyond "rage" at the systematic destration of womankind with the awareness that we can re-claim our 'inherent strength:"

Gyn/Ecology creativity is spinning... discovering the lost thread of connectedness within the cosmos, repairing this web as we create (p. 379):

Unweaving their deceptions, we name our Truth. Defying their professions we dis-cover our Female Pride, our Sinister Wisdom. Escaping their possession we find our Enspiriting Selves, Overcoming their aggression we uncover our Creative Anger and Brilliant Bravery. Demystifying/ demythifying their obsession we remember our Woman-loving Love. Refusing their assimilation we experience our Autonomy and Strength. Avoiding their elimination we find our original Be-ing. Mending their imposed fragmentation we spin our Original Integrity (p. 423).

- From: Women's Resource/Research Centre Newsletter. No. 1, 1980 (London, England).
- Ed. Note: Gyn/Ecology will be out in the Spring in paperback.



LEARNING AT NOON

March 19: WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE: CHANGE AND CHALLENGE

> 48% of women now work outside their homes which means new problems as well as new challenges for women.

Yarch 26: DOUBLE WORK DAY

anoldus knew

Balancing responsibilities of home and work and still finding time for yourself makes it important to look at your priorities.

April 2: DRIFT, DROWN OR DECIDE: PUTTING PRIORITIES INTO PRACTICE

A panal of women talk about how they manage their day, get their families to take responsibility and find original ways to better organize their time.

April 9: PRACTICAL WISDON: \$\$ AND SENSE

Managing personal financial affairs is in many wars similar to operating a small business. To do it well requires common sense, planning and a certain amount of discipline.

April 16: SPEAKING OUT FOR YOURSELF

Skills are essential at home as well as at work.

April 23: WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

A discussion of making the most of your present and future.

A SERIES OF SIX WEDNESDAY NOON-HOUR PRESENTATIONS TO BE HELD AT THE MCPHERSON PLAYHOUSE. FREE ADMISSION Bring Your Own Lunch



The National Action Committee on the Status of Women comprises approximately 130 non-governmental women's organizations. The objectives of NAC are to press for implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women; to work for additional reform supported by its participating organizations and to encourage communication between women's groups across Canada.

The federal Status of Women Coordinator's Office is currently preparing an "employment strategy" for women. Many employment matters, of course, are under provincial jurisdiction, so that if it or any other employment strategy is to have much effect, efforts at both levels of government will be needed.

NAC is asking its member groups and concerned individuals to send letters to their provincial premiers stating that employment matters are a high priority for women. The wage and salary gap is not diminishing, and the unemployment rate is higher for women than for men. The most recent cutbacks inunemployment insurance affected women mainly -- and we are threatened with worse.

Tell your provincial premier that you want his government to work actively with the other governments for improvements in employment for women . And if he doesn't want to discuss the matter make him say so, publicly, to the women voters of the province! Copies to the Prime Minister always help, but we stress that pressure at the provincial level is what is most needed.

40% of the workforce is female

65% of all working women are clerks, saleswomen, waitresses, and hairdressers.

DEPORTATION -- Some Facts

Byacinth Burnett, 20, mother of two, married their father in Jamaica and moved to Canada, as a visitor; her husband was a landed immigrant. Subsequently he withdrew sponsorship twice, a third child was born, her temporary work permit expired. On November 14th, a decision was made at a hearing that she must leave Canada whether voluntarily or by deportation, depending on whether Family Court order for ticket can be obtained from husband, Basil Burnett.

The case was reviewd on CBC-TV Ombudsman, by Kathleen Ruff, who suggested writing to Ron Atkey, then Minister of Employment and Immigration, to ask for:

 Mrs. Hyacinth Burnett's case to be reviewed and consideration given to issuing a Ministerial Permit at least for a three to six-month trial period, despite the case being under examination;
 That the sponsorship system be reviewed so sponsor and sponsored individual understand its significance, and revised so it cannot constitute a threat if personal conflict develops. This falls heavily as discrimination against women.

News Report, Globe & Mail, Dec. 12,1979

Every question at an immigration hearing for a Jamaican-born woman yesterday drove home the fact that she will have to leave Canada because her husband no longer wants her here.

Hyacinth Burnett, 20, has been ordered to leave the country because her husband Basel refused to continue sponsoring her as an immigrant after the couple separated last year.

Adjudicator Susan Comstock is trying to decide whether Mrs. Burnett will be given a departure notice, which will mean she may reapply for entry any time, or a deportation order. To get the less severe order, Mrs. Burnett's lawyer, Barbara Jackman, must show that her client is willing and able to pay her way back to her native Jamaica.

Mrs. Burnett recently started a factory job after being ill for several weeks. But yesterday she testified that she has debts of \$375 to York-Finch Hospital and \$248 to Toronto Western. She is not eligible for medicare.

She also said she didn't know whether her relatives in Canada could help her pay the \$470 fare back to Jamaica.

Immigration Minister Ronald Atkey has refused to intervene in her case, but Miss Jackman said yesterday she will make a fresh appeal to him.

The inquiry is adjourned until Jan. 11.

Write supporting Mrs. Hyacinth Burnett, c/o her lawyer Barbara Jackman, 165 Spadina Avenue #33, Toronto, Ontario M5T 2C4, who will forward copies to Minister of Employment and Immigration, Ron Atkey. Ms. Jackman tells us Mr. Atkey has received few letters to date.





The British Columbia Federation of Women: an umbrella organization of women's groups in B.C. whose objective is to bring about the liberation of women through fundamental change in our society. The intent of the Federation is not only to mobilize women around specific issues, but also to provide a network of full support for women's diverse struggles. B.C.F.W. will provide a mechanism for communication, education, and mobilization to overcome the physical and cultural isolation faced by all our sisters in this society.

Only women's groups may AFFILIATE with B.C.F.W. Affiliated member groups

may become involved in all areas of Federation activity, including:

Subcommittees These are the main action areas of the Federation. They are organized around province wide issues and each has a chairwoman to facilitate participation.

Conferences and Conventions All member groups will send delegates to Convention and are urged to participate in regional and issue-oriented conferences.

B.C.F.W. was formed because the time has come for women to take UNITED ACTION. The Women's Movement in B.C. is strong and vital but handicapped by geographical isolation. lack of communication and lack of a mechanism for speaking with one strong voice on issues of concern to women. B.C.F.W. is that linking-together mechanism. B.C.F.W. does not exist except as a Federation of already existing groups tying together and strengthening our individual efforts, expressing coherently and powerfully our concerns.

Write for a copy of the B.C.F.W. POLICY and CONSTITUTION HANDBOOKS. B.C.F.W. regional representatives will be pleased to come and speak with groups.

IN YOUR AREA CONTACT: Elaine Forsey 384-5019

QUOTABLE QUOTE:

....neither ideological criticism nor social action can bring about a new society. Only disenchnatment with AND detachment from the central social ritual and reform of that ritual can bring about radical change.

Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society, Harper and Row, 1970

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

FEMINIST MAGAZINES/JOURNALS

UPSTREAM, A Canadian Women's Publication					h/April,	1979	- R
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WAVES, A lesbian feminist newsletter	Ve	10	1.70	No	. 4 June	1979	
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WOMEN IN TRADES ASSOCIATIONS, Julie White February, 1978

April 1, 1978 - March 31,1979

ONTARIO STATUS OF WOMEN, 5th Annual Report

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WOMEN AND THE LAW (Vancouver People's Law School) 2 copies	n.d.
PART-TIME WORK IN THE FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE, Prepared by the Office of Equal Opportunities for Women	1978
WOMEN'S PROGRAMME RESOURCE BULLETIN (Secretary of State) no.3 summer** no. 4autumn**	1979 1979
** details grants extended, amount, project description and contact.	
INFORMATION, Status of Women, Situation de la Femme Office of the Coordinator Status of Women v. 2 no. 4	1978
7th Annual Report, Law Reform Commission of Canada 197	7-1978
8th Annual Report, Law Reform Commission of Canada 197	8-1979
Law Reform Commission of Canada, Working Paper 24 Protection of Life STERILIZATION Implications for mentally	
retarded and mentally ill persons	1979
Annual Report, Ministry of Labour, Province of British Columbia	1978
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MISCELLANEOUS

FREE LOAN, 16mm films.	Modern Talking Picture Service (Section	
on Women's World incl	udes films on cotton, fine china, salads)	1978

POSTER to commemorate the Persons Case

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This list is by no means exhaustive. There remains a lot of material to be sifted through dating back, probably, a couple of years or more. In addition, we have been donated a box of magazines including MS which needs to be notated. An acquisitions list shall become a regular feature of the newsletter and possibly as materials are catalogued they will be included in this list. Should anyone desire to see some of the above mentioned items, please contact me at the next SWAG meeting.

HUFF HUFF WE MUST EDUCATE THE MASSES SO THAT THEY MAY SERVE THE SYSTEM HE MASSES HAVE BEEN EDUCATED, NOW THE THE EDUCATION! NOW THEY WANT TO ALTER THE SYSTEM VOI. 2, NO. 4 FROM "WORKING TEACHER"

Alice J. Albert



JAMES BAY COMMUNITY CENTER 140 OSWEGO ST. 8:00 P.M.

EVERY ONE WELCOME

in your area contact:

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Women's Resources Sue Egers 724-3069

Native Freindship Center Judy Joseph 724-3013

NANAIMO

Women's Resource Centre Addrienne Kemble 743-5921

COURTENAY

Women's Services Programme Lee, Darline or Denise 338-1133 (office)

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			949-7500	(0)

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