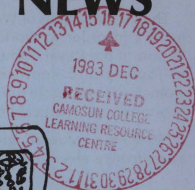


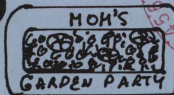
HQ 1154  
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# swag STATUS OF WOMEN NEWS



The Spirit of Christmas Present: Human Rights Services abolished; Family and Social Services reduced to skeletons; Planned Parenthood extinguished; Child Abuse Helpline vanquished; Cutbacks in Education (i.e. 370 substitutes in S.D. #61 and 100 taken off list due to length of lists); Health and Medical Services (i.e. 200 lose jobs from Vic General in January!...)

"Are There no prisons, are there no workhouses?"  
(C. Dickens)



# olidarity

AVIS '83

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 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 annually.

**Address:** P.O. Box 6296, Stn. C, or 1045 Linden Avenue  
Victoria, B.C. V8P 5L5      Victoria, B.C.  
381-1012

### Working Groups

Each of the Contact Persons has a particular area of interest in women's issues. Members who share that interest or, have a concern or problem in that area are encouraged to make contact.

### Contact Women

B.C.F.W.	Sylvia Watson 382-3914
	Stella Lord 595-2542
Family Law	Gwen Bavin 383-2502
Education	Elizabeth Azmier-Stewart 642-3678
Human Rights	Carol Milstone 381-2882
Health	Susan Moger 592-4215
Labour	Stella Lord 595-2542
Feminist Study Group	Alice Albert 382-1536
Social Services	Elizabeth Hamlet 595-2569
Newsletter Editorial Board	Stella Lord - Editor 595-2542
	Alice Albert - Layout
	Avis Rasmussen - Cover 598-3188

### Co-ordinators

February	— Laurie Lawson - 595-1564
March	— Diana Butler - 598-6964
April	— Josephine Adams - 389-0745
May	— Catherine Winter - 389-2959
June	— Alice Albert - 382-1536
July	— Gwen Bavin - 383-2502
August	— Alice Albert - 382-1536
September	— Avis Rasmussen - 598-3188
October	— Stella Lord - 595-2542
November	— Stella Lord
December-	
January	— Lois Vickery - 386-1047

### Media Co-ordinator

Josephine Adams  
#1 - 1205 Bay St.,  
Victoria, B.C.  
389-0745

### Conference Co-ordinator

Judith Barrett-Lennard  
#109 - 575 Marifield Ave.,  
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1N3  
382-5930

### Recorder

Laurie Lawson  
#2440 Foul Bay Rd.,  
Victoria, B.C. V8R 5A9  
595-1564

### NAC Contact

Shirley Avril  
386-4467

### Membership Co-ordinator

Catherine Winter  
389-2959

### Treasurer

Diana Butler  
2149 Granite  
Victoria, B.C.  
598-6964

### Correspondent

**MEMBERSHIP** Entitles you to a subscription to SWAG NEWS (\$10.00 per year) — a completely volunteer effort dependent upon your contributions... poems, articles, opinions, reports. **All feminist material welcome.**

**Meetings/Workshops** SWAG meetings are held the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month (except when it falls on a holiday) at 1045 Linden Ave., 7:30 p.m.

# WHO? WHAT? WHEN? WHERE?

December 15, 1983

Victoria Women's Network General Meeting,  
7:30 p.m. at the Dingle House. Christmas  
Special.

February 20-April 13, 1984

DIRECTIONS--A Course for Single Parent Women.  
Workshops on communication skills, stress  
Management, etc. Contact Jan Christie at  
the Single Parent Centre. 385-1114

\*\*\*\*\*

January 10, 1984. Tuesday

SWAG Coordinating Committee  
meets at 1045 Linden Ave. 7.30.p.m.

January 31, 1984. Tuesday

SWAG Annual General Meeting  
at 1045 Linden Ave., 7.30.p.m.  
Election of officers for  
coordinating committee for 1984

Women Against the Budget meet  
every Monday at Room A204 Clerihue  
Building, University of Victoria  
at 8.00.p.m.

The SWAG newsletter is published  
every two months. Our next issue  
will appear in early February.  
If you have announcements, notices  
or articles etc. which you would  
like to see go into the newsletter  
please drop these off to the office  
at 1045 Linden Ave., marked for the  
SWAG News, or phone Stella Lord at  
595-2542.

**Rowena Hunnisett M.A.**  
**Feminist Counsellor**

- support group for women, starting January.
- *Surviving Unemployment* - group for  
unemployed women, starting January.
- individual and relationship counselling.

**5-305 Montreal St.**  
**384-2833**

## STATUS OF WOMEN NEWS

### OFFICE REPORT

submitted by Shirley Avril

BROCHURE: A bright, informative, up-  
to-date brochure is now available.  
It has been distributed to community  
groups, recreation centers, libraries,  
women's centers at Camosun and Uvic.  
and the NDP Constituency office.

CONFERENCE: Activities from the office  
included organizing registration,  
mailing posters to rec. centers  
and health clinics etc., stuffing  
portfolios and designing and  
typing, printing and folding the  
concert program.

VOLUNTEER FAIR: We had a table at  
University Center primarily to  
advertise the conference. Next  
year hopefully we can plan to  
make better use of that community  
contact.

ISSUES FOR YOUNG WOMEN: ALICE ALBERT \*  
presented the video at a Spectrum  
Community Night School program.

WOMEN'S FUNDRAISING COALITION: We  
just met expenses on the conference  
concert. After much discussion  
and negotiating the decision was  
made that organizing a concert  
with Sweet Honey In The Rock would  
be taking too much of a chance.

\* with Avis Rasmussen

Times that could be arranged were not satisfactory and we weren't confident of a large response. A greater involvement of the SWAG membership is essential for the success of any future fundraising events.

NANCY WHITE CONCERT: SWAG co-sponsored with OXFAM.

OFFICE SPACE: I toured the old St. Ann's Academy with Barbara Field. The space has some promise but would require renovation which the B.C.B.C. is not willing to pay for. The Sexual Assault Board is still searching for alternate space. The Women's Building of Victoria Society has had little response to its funding drive to Foundations.

SOLIDARITY: We have re-confirmed our support and involvement of this community coalition. STELLA LORD and CAROL MILSTONE are our reps.

PUBLIC MEETINGS: ROWENA HUNNISETT and SUSAN MOGER proposed a presentation on the topic of Lesbian Feminism. They will be leading the SWAG February meeting to be held February 28 at James Bay Community Center.

PHYSICIANS FOR FEMINISTS: Preliminary discussions have begun, initiated by DONNA ASHFORD-LUND to up-date our files on empathetic physicians.

N.F.B. FILMS: "Attention: Women at Work" a new film about women in non-traditional jobs (coast guard and architect) and "I Want to be an Engineer" a film about three women engineers are now available from the National Film Board.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF YOUTH: LAURIE WIKELAND is our representative on planning committees etc. for activities in 1985. There will be ongoing meetings in Victoria and Vancouver. Any ideas for special youth (ages 16-25) projects please call Laurie (LAW-ree) 477-0483.

LABOUR ISSUES: The following telegram was sent to Andre Ouelette, Min. of Labour, House of Commons, Ottawa.

2% of employed Canadians are working part-time. 7% of part-time workers are women. We insist that up-coming amendments to the

Labour Code include pro-rated wages and benefits and regulation of time at video display terminals to forty minutes per hour. Women work and women vote. We expect you to consider our job benefits and our safety as part of your responsibility.

Victoria Status of Women Action Group

RAPE VICTIMS: The following telegram was sent to Mark MacGuigan, Min. of Justice, Ottawa and Ontario Attorney General, Parliament Buildings, Toronto

Fear for personal and family safety is not contempt of court. Please investigate Justice Joseph O'Brian's recent decision in Ottawa to send a rape victim to jail.

Victoria Status of Women Action Group

RESOURCE CENTER: JEAN MUIR, a volunteer with library experience, has finished cataloguing our resource materials! She is now filing and sorting on the shelves. We have a request in at the Volunteer Bureau for a typist for the subject and title cards. TANIS WAUGH and KATHERINE OGG continue to index journals and magazines. This is a painstaking job. Our three volunteers deserve a GREAT VOTE OF THANKS!!!

OFFICE FILES: The information cards and membership list are being updated, reorganized and typed.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT

There are, in the office, several duplicate back issues of SWAG News, Priorities and Kinesis, several copies of Breaking the Mould and Women's Studies annotated bibliographies (for public schools) and several copies of Update, a 1978 study of provincial implementation of the recommendations made by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, 1971. PLEASE call the office, 381-1012, before Jan. 6/84, if you want any of this material or have ideas for its distribution.

## CRIAW CONFERENCE

The CRIAW Conference held in Vancouver November 11-13 was well attended by women from Victoria. Topics ranged from women in French literature to the effects of technological change around the theme of "Feminism in Action: New Knowledge, New Education, New Society".

Dorothy Smith, the keynote speaker set the stage on Friday evening with a broad picture of the effects on women's lives of the changes emerging out of the 'renaissance'--rationalisation, bureaucratization, the state, industrial capitalism which interconnectedly meant that the renaissance was not a renaissance for women. It was instead a confinement--a cutting off of skills once entirely within women's domain, a narrowing of knowledge and of women's participation in decision-making.

Some concerned women at the Conference met on Saturday evening to discuss the effects of the current legislation in B.C. and what CRIAW's response should be. As a result of this meeting, CRIAW members were asked to sign a telegram to Premier Bennett protesting the effects of the legislative package on women. Some women also organized a delegation to the B.C. Labour Relations Board on Sunday noon to present a statement to the press (who were all there waiting for news on the BCGEU negotiations). About 70 women attended and Dorothy Smith made a statement on behalf of the women at the Conference deploring the effects of the legislation on women in B.C. CRIAW has also set up a network to monitor the situation in B.C.

Saturday night was the banquet and entertainment by the "Euphoniously Feminist and Non-performing Quintet". The CRIAW prizes were announced for important contributions to feminist research and political work. Milnor Alexander was presented with the Muriel Duckworth Award for an outstanding contribution by a feminist to peace issues. Milnor has been active with civil rights and the peace movement in the U.S. and Canada for 40 years. She now resides in Victoria and is a member of SWAG. It was a great pleasure for all of us from Victoria who know Milnor to see her work recognized in this way by the women of CRIAW.

Stella Lord



# Letters



Copies of letters from SWAG members were received on the following issues:

To Kimberley Clark, Johnson and Johnson, Canadian Tampax and Playtex from Wendy Ackinclose and her friends protesting the advertising women's personal products in a wide-ranging assortment of magazines.....

To U.Vic Cinecenta from Pam Blackstone for Women against Pornography on their proposal to show porn movies at the Cinecenta in attempt to boost attendance:

"While Cinecenta has been innovative and daring in offering excellent films that can be frank, daring and sexually explicit, blatant exploitation of the Russ Mayer calibre cannot be condoned." ....

To Monday Magazine from Kathryn Ogg protesting the full page "pro-life" ad because "The kind of double talk contained in this ad, comparing the freedom of choice that a woman commands over her own body with the incomprehensible violence displayed by men who attack women, is just the type of idiocy

reflected by a patriarchal culture which has devalued women for so long on this planet." ....

To the Editor of the Times-Colonist from Stella Lord in response to coverage of Walter Block's (Fraser Institute) speech to the Chamber of Commerce who argued that women could achieve equal pay with men if they undercut male wages:

\*8\*8\*8\*8\*

Correspondence to and from SWAG

Aug. 8 - acknowledgement from R.H. McLelland, Minister of Labour to Carol Milstone's letter protesting Bill 27 (withdrawal of Human Rights Code).

Sept. 19 - Thanks from the Royal Commission on Canada's Future for Brief presented by Stella Lord and hoping we will make a presentation during next phase of consultations.

Sept. 23 - from Secretary of State informing us that we have been awarded \$2,600 as a supplementary grant for our fall conference and requesting a financial report

Sept. 23 - Acknowledgement of SWAG's letter to Judy Erola on establishing a Standing Committee on the Status of Women. She replies in part:

"My continuing concern related to this issue is that almost every issue raised in the House of Commons relates in some way to women. Many of these issues are referred to examination to the more than twenty Committees already established and would continue to be so. My first priority, therefore, has been to record in the House the government's recommendation that every Committee be required to examine each reference before it for its impact on women in the course of its investigation.

The specific step of a Standing Committee on the Status of Women is far more complicated. The mechanisms of the S.C. system to not allow the scope of examination or the immediate interaction that you have indicated in your letter. Changes to the Standing Orders and Rules of Procedure which govern the House are presently being examined and I have discussed the possibilities of such a Standing Committee with the Chair. I have also written to the Committee itself asking that they examine this suggestion and am awaiting a response."

On the same topic a letter from NDP critic Margaret Mitchell in September stated in part:

"In my last mailing there was information on the NDP proposal for a standing committee on the status of women. Thanks to all who replied with many excellent suggestions to ensure Parliament's accountability to Canadian women for its dismal performance on women's issues. The lack of government action is a major reason we need a committee. A Parliamentary committee would have the power to recommend implementation of programs and funding to improve the status of women. It would provide a valuable public forum for women across the country to exert pressure on the government for legislative and policy changes. ...."

Aug 31 - A letter from BCFW advising us that the Secretary of State could only guarantee \$6000 funding for 1983/84. With a budget of \$12,000, BCFW asked member groups for ideas as to how they could save or obtain from other sources the \$6,000 they needed; another option was to draw on BCFW savings. After considerable discussion in the Coordinating Committee of SWAG, Shirley wrote the following reply on October 7:

Dear Sisters:

The Status of Women Action Group is indeed troubled that the Secretary of State funding that we expected is in such jeopardy.

As we look at the budget provided by the finance committee we make an obvious observation: The annual convention is the most expensive item. The experience of our delegates at conventions over the years leads us to suggest that the convention is not worth the percentage of our budget that it requires. The obvious lack of womanpower needed for preliminary planning this year is an indication to us that the convention also requires more work energy than any of us are able or willing to give.

Our responses to the finance committee suggested options are:

- 1) using our savings would only be a temporary solution and would leave us with further financial problems.
- 2) fundraising activities would create too much competition for limited resources within the women's community. This is especially true in light of recent devastating budget cuts which have placed member groups in dire need
- 3) It is untenable to operate in a deficit position. We are ultimately personally responsible for all debt incurred.

In our opinion, the only alternative is to cut the budget by \$6000. The simplest way to do that quickly is to forgo the annual convention, at least for this year.

It is our feeling that the active sub-committees (listed in the budget summary as Lesbian, Red Hot Video and Prisons) should continue to receive our financial support. Sub-committees may change as other issues take priority. The criteria for forming a sub-committee should continue to be support from member groups and willingness of some women to take on the job.

We would like to see other available money in the budget spent on the newsletter. We would support the hiring of services for editing and printing if this would enable the BCFW to produce an information exchange newsletter that would truly network the member groups from all over the province.

We consider it important to financially support regional activities where there is a desire within the region to organize or facilitate networking between member groups.

We regret that this discussion is as late as it is. The memorandum in question arrived in-between SWAG coordinating committee meetings and our deliberations took much time.

Yours sincerely,

Shirley Avril  
for the Coordinating Committee

Editors note: The BCFW had significant savings on which to draw to finance the November Convention.

SWAG wrote a letter in support of a proposal made by Wendy Langhorne for the concept of a Financial Responsibility Equalization Program for family support upon separation and divorce. This service would provide help in organizing the information needed for the legal procedures. It would be a para-legal service for women facing the court system on their own and would not replace legal counsel or legal aid services where needed.

Nov. 7 - A letter written to Rosalie Abella, Commissioner of the Inquiry on Equality in Employment thanking her for organizing a meeting of interested women on her visit to Victoria and enclosing a copy of SWAG's Brief to the B.C. Minister of Labour entitled "Changing Times" and a copy of our brief to the Royal Commission on Canada's Future presented in September. Both these briefs in part bear on the mandate of Judge Abella's Commission.

Oct. 13 - Acknowledgement by Frank Mitchell, NDP MLA for Esquimalt-Port Renfrew of a copy of Carol Milstone's letter to the Minister of Labour in which he said in part: "Although the NDP is considered the legislative voice fighting for those rights in parliament, our effectiveness is only as strong as the support groups in the community, such as yours, can provide."

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## ARTICLES

### THE CASE OF THE VANCOUVER FIVE

by Dr. Milnor Alexander

As one who has had long experience with civil liberties issues, both in the United States for the first 41 years of my life, and in Canada for the last 18 years, I am appalled by the circumstances surrounding the case of the Vancouver Five. The manipulation of the media by the police in the crucial days following the arrests last January, and the manipulation of the judicial process by the prosecution since, plus some questionable practices used during the

investigation by the police, remind me of the Rosenberg-Sobell case which I was associated with in the 1950's, as well as the long struggle against HUAC (the House Un-American Activities Committee) in the 1947-1967 period. I was 'listed' in the HUAC reports for those activities, something for which I do not feel I have to apologise at all.

The Vancouver Five are charged with offenses ranging from possession of stolen property to bombing a B.C. Hydro substation, a factory producing guidance systems for the cruise missile, and three porn video stores. The five are Julie Belmas, Gerry Hannah, Ann Hansen, Doug Stewart, and Brent

Taylor. They are being used like guinea pigs in a Canadian version of the "Denial System" outlined in the documents from the so-called Counter-Insurgency Conference held in Puerto Rico in 1978 which Robin Bourne, then Assistant Deputy Solicitor General for Police & Security in Ottawa, now Assistant Deputy Minister for Police Services in B.C., and Inspector Ronald McIntyre of RCMP attended as experts.<sup>1</sup>

The "Denial System" is the systematic effort to "deprive the terrorist of resources needed for survival". Known leaders of "extremist groups" must be "immobilized and kept out of circulation"... There should be "denial of funding opportunities open to the terrorists, i.e., legitimate channels of acquiring funds... including Defense Funds". The conference materials emphasized strongly the "resource" of political contact with the public, repeatedly underlining how the populace must receive only the government's propaganda, and must be prevented from sympathizing with armed struggle. Control of the media (press, radio and TV) is a necessity. "To speak of idealism and truth in journalism or the public's right to know, is less than realistic and only pandering to slogans." Shades of the spokesman for the Pentagon in the days of the Vietnam war when I was a lobbyist against the war for the Women's International League for Peace in Freedom in Washington from 1964 to 1966!

The conference materials also said: "The media, which has the power to aid as well as hinder the terrorists, should never be permitted to demonstrate the terrorist as an ordinary human." The early media treatment of the Vancouver Five including newspaper and TV drawings that made them look like degenerates, rather than the normal looking people they are, is an example of this.

After the arrest of the Five (with dramatic flourish) on the Squamish highway north of Vancouver on January 20th, they were held in illegally bugged police cells at Squamish for several hours, photographed and questioned, and then moved to Vancouver City Police cells, where they were held overnight. They were not allowed to see the lawyers they had phoned from Squamish until Toronto detectives had finished questioning them about the Litton bombing in Toronto and then they could confer with their lawyers only through glass windows over telephone receivers. If the set-up of the telephones is similar to the ones in prisons it can be presumed that these first conversations were monitored by the police.

Even before the arrests, some members of the press had been getting the word about the arrests, and on the night of the 20th a "major press conference" was announced for the next morning at Vancouver City Police headquarters. Defence lawyers for the Five had requested and received a judicial ban on the publication of evidence, and requested that the Crown Prosecutor cancel the press conference because of risk of prejudice to the Five. However, the press conference was held, a four page press release was read, and a display of captured weapons and material was on display one hour later. The display was clearly designed to manipulate the media, and no proof of the connection of all the material to the Five was given. And if it was connected, given the judicial ban on publication of evidence, what was it doing on display?

The result of all this was to prejudice the public before the Five were ever brought to trial. Despite an order that the accused be remanded directly to Oakalla prison, the Five were kept in city police cells overnight on Jan. 21 where police continued to try to question them. They were only able to confer privately with their lawyers for the first time some four days after their arrest.

At a bail hearing, bail was refused, and during a pre-trial conference crown counsel indicated that a direct indictment was unlikely and that a preliminary hearing would proceed. But by April the crown began to hint that they might proceed with direct indictment, and that indeed happened, so that there would be no preliminary hearing to examine evidence.

The first of the trials was held in September in New Westminster, on the so-called "criminal" charges (conspiracy to rob a Brinks armoured car--shades of the conspiracy charge in the Rosenberg-Sobell trial? -- when you can't prove an actual occurrence, you charge conspiracy--possession of restricted weapons, vehicle theft, possession of stolen property and explosives, breaking and entering). The second trial, due to start sometime around January 1984, will be on the Red Hot Video charges, the third trial will be on the conspiracy and bombing charges relating to B.C. Hydro and Cold Lake, Alberta; the fourth trial will be on the robbery of IGA, and the fifth trial, in Toronto, on the Litton charges.

The investigation following the Dunsmuir substation blast focussed on environmental activists who had been opposing the power line of which the substation is a part; after the Litton plant which produces the guidance system for the cruise missile was blasted, the investigation looked at so-called "anarchist"



groups linked with opposition to the Trident submarine base at Bangor, Washington; after the firebombing of the Red Hot Video stores, attention focussed on women opposed to pornography; and in all cases, intrusive investigative techniques were used including wiretaps and the bugging of houses of suspects. Other measures which were even less appetizing were: cutting one woman off unemployment insurance in an effort to get her to cooperate with the RCMP; visiting the employer of another woman in an effort at intimidation; taking another woman from her classroom and driving her around and threatening her with charges if she did not inform on the Five; following the arrests, a number of supporters' houses were raided, and at one house police told two of the women "We know that you are lesbians".

In the East the police also conducted a number of raids and harassment was directed at peace groups. The result of these questionable police and prosecution tactics has been to unite a lot of people in support of the Five. Support groups have formed across the country, in defiance of the continuing attempts by officials to prejudice the public against the Five. If you want to receive the "Free the Five Newsletter" and to contribute support in some way, write to Free the Vancouver Five Defense Group, P.O. Box 48296, Bentall Station, Vancouver, B.C. V7X 1A1.

<sup>1</sup>CLAS<sup>D</sup> Buttletin, #1/2, Aug-Sept, available from the Civil Liberties Action Security Project, P.O. Box 65369, Station F, Vancouver B.C. V5N 5P3

## REVIEWS



### The Nurturant Suffragists

Carol Lee Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? The Idea of the English Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918. U of T Press, 1983, 203 pp.

Catherine Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, U. of T. Press, 1950 (1974), 324 pp.

Linda Kealey, ed. A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880-1920s. Toronto: Women's Press, 1979. 233 pp.

Nellie McClung, In Times Like These. U. of T. Press, 1972. Introd. by Veronica Strong Boag, 129 pp.

The publication of Carol Lee Bacchi's critical study of the Canadian woman suffrage movement gives us a good opportunity to evaluate this little-studied movement under the guise of reviewing the books listed above. Such an evaluation might help us in our collective reflections regarding the benefits and the dangers, of importing our feminist debates and our women's history from south of the border.

The first thing that needs to be said about the women's suffrage movement is that it was not, as a whole, a feminist movement in the modern sense of the word. As Carol Lee Bacchi conclusively shows, the suffragists were, with almost no exception, hopelessly middle-class and

insufferably Protestant, and sought the vote as much to further the goals of the "Christian family" as to further women's interests. In fact, many conservative social groups, notably the churches, were persuaded to lend their support to the suffrage campaign on the basis that this move would double the vote of the responsible Christian family, and help to win the battle against the drunkenness and vice of transient and immigrant men. The vote would help women--Christian mothers, in the paradigm of the suffragists--extend their maternal influence beyond the home. In this way the social ills caused by urbanization and immigration would be cured. The Women's Christian Temperance Union, probably the most influential women's organization at the turn of the century, was the first and staunchest supporter of women's suffrage in Canada: since men were showing no signs of wanting to vote for prohibition, women had to be enfranchised in order to win the battle against drink.

Of course, the women of the WCTU and other women's organizations also wanted the vote because they wanted to be full-fledged citizens. As Nellie McClung put it, they "chafed under the restrictions" imposed on their efforts to create a better world for themselves, other women, and children. And their campaign against the demon rum, while based on the conservative premise that the lower

orders could not be trusted near temptations, had a feminist subtext. Nellie McClung's moving descriptions of violent alcoholic husbands are explicit condemnations of male privilege as well as of wife-beating.

While the early feminists were genuinely committed to a fairer version of the traditional family, they thought rather less of men as a group than many a modern feminist who attacks the family. If women were by nature pure, selfless and devoted, and if women needed the vote, because (in the words of a 1909 writer) "they can and will be the salvation of the Dominion", the implication was that men had made a mess of the Dominion and could not be trusted to improve it. Women are human beings par excellence, while men are merely male: "The world has suffered long from too much masculinity and not enough humanity" (McClung). Government corruption and male violence in war is denounced by McClung's sharp words as though they were the pranks of wayward schoolboys. She even suggests that Kaiser Wilhelm would not have started World War I if his mother had been present in the Cabinet to say, "William, forget it!" The claims of women to a political voice are thus made not so much in the name of equality but under the banner of moral superiority.

In Toronto, the suffrage movement was led by women doctors and by well-to-do housewives. Flora McDonald Denison was the only leading suffragist to have a strong sense of the needs of working-class women--she herself had risen from dress-maker to "modiste" at Eaton's. Not coincidentally, she was also the only one to dare to criticize Christianity and its teachings on women. Nellie McClung raised her brave voice in favour of women being allowed to play a role in the church; only Flora McDonald Denison dared to say that: "The Church with its doctrine of the total depravity of the human race founded upon its assertion of the inherent wickedness of woman has built up a false morality...The teaching of the Church is at the bottom of women's slavery."

This sort of thing did not go over big in Rosedale. Flora was told, in an anonymous letter "to keep to her own class."

The class background of the vast majority of suffragists had a profound influence on the tactics of the movement as well as on the general ideology. I was surprised to find out, for instance (reading Catherine Cleverdon's book) that the noted "Persons Case" of 1929--in which the British Law Lords overturned the Canadian Supreme Court's ruling that women were not persons under the BNA Act--was fought solely with the aim of asking the government to appoint Judge Emily Murphy, a

noted Western Suffragist, to the Senate. (She never did get appointed, though other women did). Granted, the case did have implications far beyond the specific legal point in question: but the campaign, which dragged on for years and took up a lot of energy, centred around a situation which only about three women in Canada could relate to.

In the Western provinces, the campaign was less elitist than in the East. All the major farmers' organizations were early suffrage supporters and the suffrage campaign was often accompanied by the establishment of women's organizations with wider goals, such as the Manitoba Political Equality League. (The three prairie provinces all granted women the vote in 1916, as compared to 1917 for Ontario, 1922 for Prince Edward Island, 1925 for Newfoundland, and 1940 for Québec). To farmers of both sexes, the Victorian ideal of the "angel in the house", used with success in Ontario, would have seemed rather ludicrous; there was simply no room for a "separate sphere" for women. The Western support for suffrage, however, though perhaps based on a pioneer sense of equality, was not free from a racist fear that the West was being overrun by foreigners, and that if these worthless men were given the vote, then perhaps it was time for farm women to vote also. The Grain Growers' Guide, a leading farmers' publication and a staunch supporter of women's suffrage, had several cartoons demonstrating this point. One showed hoboes, Chinese men, and Native Indian men all lined up at the polls, while an obviously middle-class mother is relegated to the sidelines: the caption is "What? Isn't mother going to have one (a vote)?" Saskatchewan suffragists endeavoured to show, with statistics, that since there were few women among the recent immigrants, giving women the vote would result in a net gain for native-born Canadians. Women's suffrage was thus linked to the backlash against Chinese immigrants and what the WCTU called "the debased populations of Southern Europe".

The Western farmers' associations were probably the most important mixed organizations to defend women's suffrage. The second most important ally for the women suffragists was the labour movement. None of the works under discussion explore this aspect of the suffrage campaign, apart from mentioning the suffrage bills introduced in various provincial legislatures by socialist and labour members. But a very well documented thesis by Andrea Knight ("Educating working women for the vote: the response of the Toronto labour movement to woman suffrage"--MA thesis U of T 1982) studies this theme, and concludes that, despite the early and often enthusiastic support of organized labour for equal rights for women, male unionists also continued to hold fast to an ideal proletarian family with a non-working wife

Within labour as in other groups, these contradictory attitudes were not subject to criticism because there was no autonomous women's organization to do it. In the absence of a strong women's voice, the male mind is quite capable of continuing to defend completely contradictory ideas about womanhood at one and the same time.

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Given the absence of an autonomous women's movement with its own programme and its own organization, the best way of studying the woman suffrage movement is in its wider context. A Not Unreasonable Claim, the anthology edited by Linda Kealy, is hence an essential though by no means perfect introduction to the pre-history and early history of our movement. The lead article by Wayne Roberts on maternal feminism, and the articles by Wendy Mitchinson (on the WCTU) and by Deborah Gorham (on Flora McDonald Denison) are the most interesting. They provide the necessary context within which to understand the various specific campaigns, against drink or for the vote or whatever.

In terms of the suffrage movement as such, the early study by Catharine Cleverdon is rather dated, in its methodology if not in its informative value. Cleverdon spends most of her time describing the lobbying campaigns undertaken by women in each province and at the federal level; as a result, we end up knowing a great deal about the motives and thoughts of each leading politician, but not enough about the lives and political aspirations of the women who fought for the vote. This is especially unfortunate because Cleverdon was in contact with many of the surviving suffragists--she wrote her book in the mid-1940s--and she could have used their numerous letters to her and their personal reminiscences much more effectively.

Carol Lee Bacchi's recent study gives us a good sociological analysis of the background of the leading suffragists, and particularly their anti-immigrant and anti-worker tendencies. This is useful and enlightening, though I felt she goes a little too far; she seems to expect these women to have leaped over the prejudices of their own WASP social circles by some kind of sudden conversion. If the organized labour movement itself barely acknowledged the fact that women were labouring in factories as well as preparing the dinner of their male union members, these ladies, who had no occasion to observe factories, could hardly be expected to understand the problems of working class women.

Like many other single-issue campaigns, women's suffrage drew many diverse groupings of people around its banner. It is thus a bit misleading to study it in isolation from other social concerns of the time. It is not as though there was a solid feminist movement which decided to focus on suffrage as a campaign; rather, there

were various groups concerned with social reform (temperance, urban poverty, child abuse, exploitation of women in factories) which came together for a while for a single aim. After suffrage had been won federally and for all provinces except Québec in 1922 the alliance naturally ceased to exist. There was no English Canadian feminist movement to carry on, because none had existed previously and the suffrage campaign had not been used to build one. Some suffragists later lamented the drop in activism after the vote was won; but they had not done very much to ensure continuity or to give any sort of wider future direction to Canadian women.

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The suffragists' weak point was clearly their blind acceptance of received notions about cultural, religious, and economic questions. Part of this legacy was the notion that woman's destiny and fulfilment lay above all in motherhood. Accepting this notion but changing its implications, they argued that mothers had to make sure that the world

they were bringing children into was a decent one. Hence, women's vote, since it would be exercised not so much to gain benefits for women as to protect the weak, was not in contradiction with their feminine role. The conservative assumptions behind this argument are made explicit by Nellie McClung, who stated: "Women are naturally guardians of the race, and every normal woman desires children."

This very desire to be guardians of the race nevertheless led McClung and her friends to make the first sustained Canadian attack on male privilege, and especially on the hypocritical ideology used to legitimize that privilege. (Then, as now, feminists were better at cultural critiques than at organizing for change!) In their critique of sexist ideology, the suffragists truly spoke for all women, not only for their own social group. McClung speaks for all women when she denounces anti-suffrage politicians who preach about women's place being in the home, while the cleaning women employed by the government patiently wait to clean out the politician's offices. And she puts her finger on the material base of sexism when she writes, with characteristic wit: "In spite of the testimony of many reputable women that they have been able to vote and get the dinner on one and the same day, there still exists a strong belief that the whole household machinery goes out of order when a woman goes to vote."

And when she muses about the possibility that exists in Canada to create a society free from vested interest and ingrained prejudice, based on equality, justice, order, and "a Fair Deal", she is giving us a glimpse of a different history, an alternative vision of what Canada might have been. In these musings, she is, like a good Canadian that she is, less concerned about individual freedom than her American sisters and more concerned about social organization. She knows that ordinary

women need economic independence and better working conditions to do housework, and that the vote is merely a means to that end. Her belief that justice depends on how society is structured, not merely on the existence of constitutional rights, is a good antidote to vapid liberalism--but it has an unfortunate tendency to fall into its dialectical opposite, enlightened despotism. She would rather remove all opportunities for sinning than let people exercise their free choice; she would censor all vice out of existence (or at least regulate it). Factory girls must be protected by special legislation; working-class wives must be protected against their violent husbands by prohibition; and the "race" must be protected against degeneration by forced sterilization of those she describes as "the unfit".

Nevertheless, one must not be too hard on the maternal feminists who wanted to use their brooms to sweep out all the cobwebs of society. They may have been a little heavy on protection, and too afraid of real self-determination. But they did make a courageous attempt to re-organize the world on an ethical basis. And our own feminist movement cannot claim to have transcended the dilemma of vapid liberal freedom vs. moralistic social regulations, or to have gone very far on the road toward a feminist ethic that, unlike all other ethics, is not moralistic.

Mariana Valverde  
(Reprinted from Broadside Magazine)



"So when I took over the company I discovered we didn't need quite so many male executives."

## COMMUNIQUE'ELLES

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## MAKE A FEMINIST FRIEND HAPPY AT CHRISTMAS

Everywoman's Books suggests you drop in and browse our selection of gift items. You will find the indispensable Everywoman's Almanac, the Women Writers engagement book and a selection of handsome calendars featuring "Women Friends", "100 Years of Women's Photography", and "Heroines". If your friend collects favourite quotations or writes poetry, she will treasure an artistic Women's Notebook I, II, or III. Or turn her on to journal keeping by introducing her to Tristine Rainer's The New Diary, highly recommended as a way to get started on creative journal keeping.

For a good read during the holidays, we suggest Anne Cameron's Daughters of Copper Woman or The Journey, Alice Walker's The Color Purple, Obasan by Joy Kagawa, or Anne Tyler's Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant. Marge Piercy's Braided Lives is a compelling new novel.

Short story lovers will enjoy Night Travellers by Winnipeg's Sandra Birdsell, A Sleep Full of Dreams by Alberta's Edna Alfork and the excellent collection by Alice Munro, Margaret Atwood, Margaret Laurence. Monto's Moons of Jupiter is now in paperback.

The new Virago Classics, with reproductions from famous paintings on their covers, make attractive gifts. These include Vera Britain's several "Testaments", Bread and Roses featuring women's poetry of the 19th and 20th centuries, and novels by Rebecca West, Winnifred Holtby, Antonia White and others.

Check out our poetry section and feminist humour books (what better gift than a chuckle?). Our children's section has been expanded to include many worthwhile non-sexist children's books for your small friends.

EVERYWOMAN'S BOOKS is located at 641 Johnson Street, between Broad and Douglas, and we're open 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Saturday.



# Announcements

The Vancouver Island Human Rights Coalition Society has opened an Advocacy Office at Suite 418-620 View Street, Victoria to provide information and assistance to persons who think they may be victims of harassment and/or discrimination. This is a referral service and an advocacy service. In view of the termination of the Human Rights Code in B.C. under Bill 27, this voluntary organization is an attempt to try to fill the gap.

Lucie Pepin, President of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women issued a press release expressing serious alarm at the impact of the B.C. government's restraint program on women. Citing the removal of the Human Rights Code, cutbacks in the public sector, the elimination of rent controls and the changes in financing education, she called on women across Canada to convey to the Premier of B.C., their concern in letters, telegrams and telephone calls. Ms Pepin also issued a statement on the availability of abortion in Canada calling on women to pressure federal and provincial governments to act on this question without delay.

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The Commission of Inquiry into Part Time Work made its Report in September. The report made 32 recommendations designed to ensure fairer treatment of part-time workers. These include:

- labour standards legislation to provide fringe benefits, pensions statutory holiday pay for part-timers;
- UIC regulations to cover part-timers who work more than 8 hours per week
- Labour relations board practices in some provinces which exclude part-timers from the same bargaining unit as full-time workers

The report also urged:

- employers to open up part-time jobs at all levels;
- unions to allow part-timers access to seniority lists instead of insisting that they be the first laid off.

This Report is available in the SWAG Resource Library and a copy can be obtained from the Commission at 337-52A Street, Delta, B.C. V4M 2Z7

Planned Parenthood would like women to know that the B.C. Ministry of Health has announced it is terminating its grant to Planned Parenthood of B.C. They say that the effect on the Victoria-Langford Clinics will be disastrous. Please write personal letters protesting this to your MLA's. A sample letter appears below. For more information please contact:

Margaret Prevost at 385-3351  
or 385-7412

## (Sample Letter)

Dear -----,

I am writing as a concerned citizen regarding the September termination of funding to Planned Parenthood of British Columbia. The Victoria-Langford birth control clinic services are put in jeopardy as a result of this decision.

These Clinics fill a recognized need in our community. In 1983, on an average evening 32 patients visited the Victoria clinic and over the year 5,569 patient visits were made. The young patients, the majority having been sexually active prior to attending the clinics, value the confidentiality and anonymity of the clinic situation.

Planned Parenthood, a Volunteer based service is an economical method of preventing unwanted pregnancy.

How can I be assured that the clinics' operations will be continued?

Yours sincerely,

(also print your name and address clearly so that you can expect a reply)

\*\*\*\*\*

University of Victoria Extension Division offers course in Microcomputers for Mothers and Daughters. The November course is full but another one will be offered in January. The four sessions include

- operating skills and an introduction to the machine
- word processing for creative writing
- simple graphics programming

For more information phone 721-8451

# swag MEETING

ANNUAL

# GENERAL

tues jan 25 7:30

MEDIA WATCH now has new forms for you to fill in regarding those ads, programs, etc. which you feel are sex-stereotyping. We have a few of these forms at the office, or you can write to:

Media Watch,  
209-636 West Broadway  
Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1G2

Victoria Voice of Women has written to let us know that a campaign is now underway to protest the proliferation of war toys and toys which are associated with violence. The Calgary branch is preparing a kit to be used during the Xmas sales season. For more information contact:

Valeria MacDermot,  
Voice of Women,  
Box 853, Stn E,  
Victoria. V8W 2R9  
or Phone 478-7486

The Human Rights Coalition of Canada will hold a conference on December 8 to 11 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For further information telephone the office or write:

Human Rights Coalition,  
University of Ottawa,  
Fauteux Hall,  
57 Copernicus, Rm 368  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 6N5

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A new organization has been formed to lobby provincial governments to ensure that Section 15 of the Constitution (on women's equality) is ratified by the provinces within the three years originally specified. The Charter of Rights Coalition (CORC) has suggested that women and women's groups prepare for regional conferences to be held the weekend of October 19-21 1984 and that these conferences be linked to each other by satellite. CORC needs women in the regions to work on this project. If you are interested contact

Nancy Jackman  
184 Roxborough Drive,  
Toronto, Ontario M4W 1X8  
Tel: (416) 961-7744

and

Dr. Milnor Alexander  
649 Mountjoy Ave  
Victoria. Tel 592-8870

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1045 LINDEN AVENUE

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FOR ALL POSITIONS ON CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

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### CALL FOR PAPERS

CONFERENCE ON WOMEN'S HISTORY IN B.C.

CAMOSUN COLLEGE April 28, 1984

Submission Deadline: January 27, 1984

Inquiries: Barbara Latham, Co-ordinator,  
Pacific Canada Research Development  
Centre, Camosun College, 3100 Foul Bay  
Rd, Victoria, V8P 4X8. 592-1281, Loc 337



"Why, yes, I am a 'little homemaker' -  
I'm in the construction business  
and I build small homes."  
AN HEINZ & SONS INC.

## SPECIAL REPORT

### If Borowski wins.....

If Borowski wins his challenge and the law recognizes that the life of a human being begins at conception and that a fertilized egg is a human being.... This law would have a profound effect on medical decision making and on the health care and health practices of women.

If a fertilized egg is a human being, physicians would be unable to prescribe IUD's and low dose pills since their mechanism of contraception is thought to operate by preventing the implantation in the uterus of the fertilized egg. Reliable methods of contraception are the most appropriate means of preventing unwanted or medically ill-advised pregnancies. If IUD's and low dose pills are banned women will be forced to use less reliable contraception which would result in even more unwanted pregnancies.

If the embryo were to have the legal status of a person, any termination of pregnancy-- intentional or unintentional would be grounds for a serious charge, murder or manslaughter, against the doctor. The physician could then be placed by law in the medically untenable position of choosing less than optimal therapies because of having to balance only the life, not the health, of the pregnant woman against the life of the embryo because by legislation, the legal value of the embryo could equal the legal value of the woman.

Consider the case of a woman who develops leukemia and subsequently became pregnant. Chemotherapy would be appropriate to treat the woman's disease, but could have a devastating effect on the embryo. Abortion for any reason would of course be outlawed and if there was a miscarriage the doctor could be charged with manslaughter. This is further complicated in treatment of non-pregnant women where pregnancy could not be definitely ruled out. Every miscarriage would be a case for the coroner's court. The whole situation would become intolerable and ridiculous. Woman's health care would be in jeopardy. If there was any possibility of pregnancy women would be denied optimal treatment except in the extreme case of life or death. This is not a bizarre possibility, this is before the courts of Canada right now.

As the law stands at present, abortion is legal if the life or health of the woman is deemed in danger by a therapeutic abortion committee composed of at least 3 doctors; doctors who have never examined the patient, and there is no chance of appeal. Women nowadays can choose to become anything they want; doctors, lawyers, astronauts (but not Roman Catholic priests) but she cannot choose to have an abortion. A committee of doctors decides her fate for her. They have the power to refuse to allow an abortion thus forcing the woman to go elsewhere or to carry on with an unwanted pregnancy. What are the consequences of abortion and of refused abortion?

Consider the mortality rates: the risk from motor vehicle accident: 30:100,000 pregnancy & childbirth, 11:100,000 therapeutic abortion, 1:100,000 which is the same as the pill and the IUD

In the years 1972-79 (the most recent statistics available), Statistics Canada reported 3 deaths from Therapeutic Abortion. The underlying medical conditions were unknown and the last occurred in 1975. During the same period 241 died as a result of pregnancy and childbirth.

Numerous studies have shown that T.A. has no greater effect in the outcome of subsequent pregnancy than pregnancy does itself.

Dr. Janet Yasling of the University of Seattle has done a number of studies in this area. In one study of 26,000 patients in Taiwan she compared the pregnancy outcome of women having had a previous abortion with those with a previous pregnancy. She found abortion does not cause abnormal future pregnancies or miscarriage. She has also studied infertility and found no connection between infertility and abortion.

Three investigators from the University of Hawaii examined the medical histories of 17,000 women and concluded that abortion does not cause miscarriage in a future pregnancy. Post abortion depression is rare; post-partum depression is far more common.

In summary, abortion does not cause abnormal future pregnancies, miscarriage or infertility, any more than pregnancy and delivery cause these problems. Abortion is a safe procedure so there is no justification for limiting it on grounds of medical risk.

The consequences of refused abortion are far more profound. Studies have shown that women who were refused abortion more than 3/4 had adjustment difficulties to compulsory pregnancy and 1/4 were having these difficulties 7 years later. Unwanted children fare no better. Children born to mothers refused a legal abortion were more at risk and suffering insecurity in childhood, in attending psychiatric facilities and in poor educational achievement. Being compelled to carry an unwanted pregnancy to term is not a benign experience for a woman and offspring of such pregnancies are clearly in a disadvantage psychologically and socially. For those women who seek illegal abortion or do-it-yourself solutions, the risk to life and health are astronomical.

72% of Canadians agree that a woman should have the right to decide if and when to have a child. (Gallop, June 1982) and the medical community agrees. The Canadian Medical Association policy is that abortion is a personal decision between the woman and her physician. We now have rule by a minority. If Borowski wins, women's health and life will be in unbearable jeopardy.

(Speech given to Pro-Choice Rally by Dr. Mary Conley, October, 1983.)

### Network Against Female Sexual Slavery

(Rotterdam)--Women from 24 countries met in Rotterdam, April 1983, for a Global Meeting, during which they formed an International Feminist Network against forced prostitution and other forms of female sexualslavery. Recognizing the practices of female sexual slavery as a violation of human rights, they called for refugee status for all women escaping from sexual enslavement. Forms of female sexual slavery which were considered for political action included sex tourism, international traffic in women and children, pimp controlled prostitution, forced and arranged marriages, and sexual mutilation.

The work of this Network will be centred in each of the world regions represented at this meeting; Latin America and the Caribbean; Asia and the Pacific; The Middle East and North Africa; Africa; and Europe and North America. Each region is committed to developing the Network through utilizing action against sexual slavery at both the grassroots level and nationally. The Network will be based in its regions and global strategies will result from interaction among the regions. Some support will be provided through existing International structures such as the International Women's Tribune Centre and ISIS International Information and Communication Service.

This approach to organizing the Network was developed by the participants to provide for a wide variety of kinds of organizing that are necessary to address the many dimensions of female sexual slavery. Network participants agreed on basic strategies for combatting the growing international traffic in women but recognized that those strategies would be expressed through different culturally based approaches to organizing for human rights.

During ten days of intensive meetings held at Erasmus University in Rotterdam, each participant reported on the practices of violence against and exploitation of women in their country and region. Discussion of specific instances of forced prostitution, traffic in women, torture of female prisoners, sex tourism, military brothels, sexual mutilation and other crimes against women demonstrated the commonality of the oppression of women globally. Presentations were also made by resource people on their areas of expertise.

In their consideration of these crimes, the participants explored the implications for feminist theory of the meaning of sexuality in the context of coercion. Additionally, there was considerable discussion of the problem of identifying prostitution as another form of work which tends to validate this institutional form of the exploitation of women.

During the meeting, three major areas emerged and constituted workshop sessions: violence and sexuality; national legislation and international agencies; and the institutionalization of female sexual slavery (e.g., sex tourism, torture, military prostitution, etc.) Network strategies for combatting female sexual slavery were developed in these workshops. Some of the strategies included commitment to making the problem visible; to fighting for decriminal prostitution; to establishing refuge shelters for victims of sexual slavery; to challenging traditional practices and religious beliefs which support these practices; to creating alternatives for the development of national economies which do not exploit women's bodies in the sex industry or in labour; to bringing international attention to specific cases of female sexual slavery; to organizing between countries and regions to expose both ends of the traffic (the procurers and the buyers); and to coordinating international protests in each region and country simultaneously.

Network participants concluded their meetings with the agreement that over the next two years, efforts will be directed toward organizing and engaging in strategies in communities and in regions. They plan to meet and assess the situation again in Nairobi in 1985 at the United Nations End of the Decade World Conference on Women. A full report of the Rotterdam meeting will be available in late 1983 from the International Women's Tribune Centre 305 East 46th Street, New York, New York, 10017 USA, (Reprinted from Broadside Magazine)



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