

# WOMAN'S WORLD

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## editorial

### WE SUPPORT SHIRLEY CHISHOLM'S CANDIDACY FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

We like her militant, irrepressible spirit and we like her feminism! And this is why we support her over all the other candidates

In addition, we feel that the Shirley Chisholm nomination campaign is very important for the interests of women in particular, but of all oppressed and working people as well. Her candidacy strongly challenges the Democratic Party - the largest political party in this country - to make some moves toward actually representing the people and to make concessions to some of our needs. It also challenges all political parties, major or minor, to take feminism more seriously.

We think it is vital for all women to support her and we urge those who have a particular interest in this area of work to make haste to do everything they can to help. (FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE CAMPAIGN, SEE PAGE 2.)

## OUR LIFE OF CRIME

The popular male version of the story defining women pictures us in our state of blessed motherhood suckling humanity at our breasts; we who are the vessel of the young, the protectors of the innocent, the heart and feeling of the union, so distant on the pedestal that sex must be something special for us, embodying moreover the spiritual, just all around blessedness. That is, until we reject one of these special duties and slip off the pedestal. Then we are sinful, crazy and even criminal. The blessed and the fallen, and not a very far drop in between. But we don't take men seriously at this level anymore; we know what their interests are. We know because they never take responsibility for the kids we bear them and seem rather more concerned with their own gratification than with spiritual elevation. So they call us names when we play their games and refuse to be "blessed" (subservient to them). Their names don't bother us, it's their power over us which makes their definitions important; their power to define what they don't like as crime and punish us for it.

### LIVING OUTSIDE THE LAW: PROSTITUTION AND ABORTION

There must be scarcely a woman alive who has not lived outside the law at one time or another, who has not resisted or flouted the state's rule over our sex, and rule of our sex.

In this issue we will concern ourselves with two such forms of rebellion and, therefore, criminal activity that masses of women have engaged in, abortion and prostitution. (There are others, too, of course, like lesbianism and "illegitimate" motherhood, which also defy the powerful strictures on women to marry and bear children.)

In the case of abortion, there are few women calling themselves feminists who would doubt, that at the point a woman goes to seek an illegal abortion, (driven by a desire to retain what little bit of freedom she has) rebellion and crime are one and the same. It is a point that millions of women attain each year through their personal experience and political consciousness, knowing all too well the terrible fear of the illegal activity they are about to plunge into and their desperate need to do so.

Even the most conservative of feminists isn't going to talk about working through the system and waiting to change the laws at the point she needs an abortion.

As Florynce Kennedy, feminist lawyer and activist, has so accurately pointed out, the friends-of-the-fetus by putting up signs that say 'Abortion is Murder' are actually telling us that women are murderers. The next logical step would mean that women would be found guilty of homicide, manslaughter, murder; which has already happened to Shirley Wheeler in Florida.

### NATURAL AND UNNATURAL CRIME

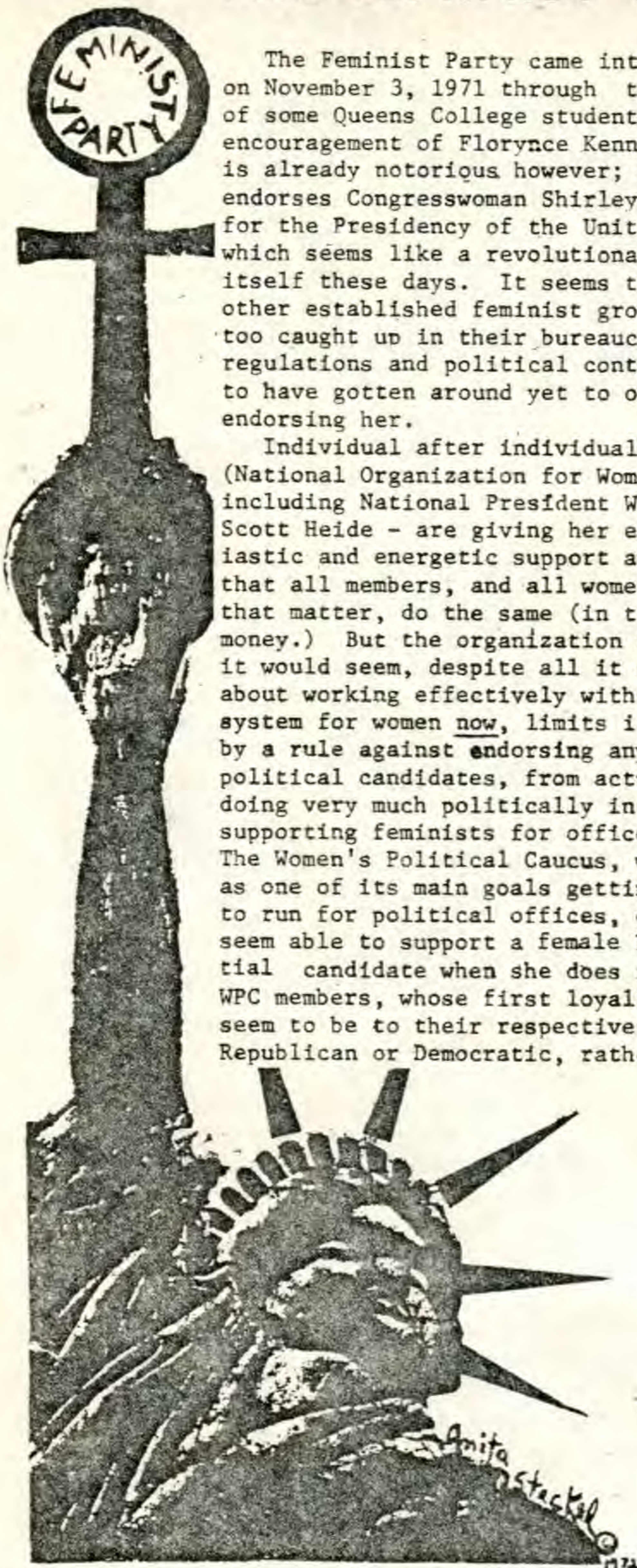
There are differences between the two criminal situations for women - abortion and prostitution - dealt with in this issue, but they are similar in that they are both acts of rebellion against the male supremacist state. The prostitute is arrested for demanding a price from men for her body; the woman in need of an abortion is arrested for defying the state's effort to make an incubator of her body. Abortion is considered murder and a revolt against the maternal instinct, therefore, an unnatural crime. Prostitution, on the other hand, is distinctive just because it is regarded as such a natural crime for women. Both crimes interestingly enough revolve around men and sex with men. Actually it seems like all you have to be is a woman, to have a run in with the law sooner or later.

### THE REAL CRIMINALS

This is a terrible irony because women hate crime, real crime, that is. We are against crime, how could we not be, we are so often the victim. But the real criminals go free. In previous issues of Woman's World we have run article after article of cases where rapists were let go scot free. The men who do go to jail are usually the petty thieves,

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# THE FEMINIST PARTY by Colette Price



The Feminist Party came into existence on November 3, 1971 through the efforts of some Queens College students with the encouragement of Florynce Kennedy. It is already notorious however; it endorses Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm for the Presidency of the United States, which seems like a revolutionary act in itself these days. It seems that many other established feminist groups are too caught up in their bureaucratic regulations and political contradictions to have gotten around yet to officially endorsing her.

Individual after individual in N.O.W. (National Organization for Women) - including National President Wilma Scott Heide - are giving her enthusiastic and energetic support and urging that all members, and all women, for that matter, do the same (in time and money.) But the organization itself, it would seem, despite all it claims about working effectively within the system for women now, limits itself by a rule against endorsing any specific political candidates, from actually doing very much politically in the way of supporting feminists for office. Even - The Women's Political Caucus, which sets as one of its main goals getting women to run for political offices, doesn't seem able to support a female Presidential candidate when she does run. WPC members, whose first loyalties seem to be to their respective parties, Republican or Democratic, rather than

to the good of women, apparently regard the endorsement of Ms. Chisholm as in conflict with their partisan aims. (You would think that, at least, the Caucus as a whole would find some kind of compromise like endorsing the best feminist candidate within each major and minor party.)

In the Women's Political Caucus, as in N.O.W. also, there is a tremendous groundswell among the rank and file members to endorse Ms. Chisholm, which is being sat on by what would seem to be the conservatives in control.

The Congressional Black Caucus also does not endorse political candidates, and has even tried to ignore the Chisholm campaign.

The Feminist Party, made up of white and black women who are actively working for Shirley's campaign is the group to join if you want to get going right away on putting some militant feminist organizational backing behind Chisholm as soon as possible. In addition the Feminist Party has plans to get into other feminist activities, leaving ideas for this up to each individual chapter. But their major effort right now is the Chisholm campaign.

Black support likewise is growing for Shirley amongst individuals. What seems to be lacking again is organizational endorsement however. Some black men are giving Shirley a rough time as usual, though she must be used to it by now. It doesn't seem to be dampening her spirits. For example, Percy Sutton, Manhattan Borough President, who is the only major political figure to come out in support of Ms. Chisholm so far explains his reasoning in an article in the Times of Feb. 4th. "Shirley was out there and we had to make a decision," Mr. Sutton said. "She put a number of us on the spot. I found I could not run around the country committed to a black Presidential candidate concept and not support Shirley." Why did Shirley put them on the spot? Why was there any conflict involved in supporting Shirley if they indeed were committed to a black Presidential candidate concept? Shirley is black. But then Mr. Sutton goes on to show us how he



solved his indecision. "Then I decided," he said, "if I join her, she is accountable to me." If Shirley were a man would they be so suspicious, so cautious, and obviously patronizing? Would they dare?!

The press hasn't given Shirley nearly enough coverage - though, despite this, the remarkable response she is getting from the people manages to leak through. Ms. so far has been the only woman's publication which gave her a top rating amongst all the candidates running. However Ms.' celebrated editor, Gloria Steinem, has seen fit to make a public endorsement of the candidacy of George McGovern (as "the best white male candidate"), and has not yet duplicated such an appearance for Shirley, or said who the best candidate is. A new magazine on the market which boldly without meaning it, calls itself The New Woman failed to include Shirley on the list of candidates running - what an oversight ladies! It's not much different, it would seem, from the type of publication which would go to great lengths to interview the wives of all prospective candidates getting into their every reaction to their husbands' notoriety. It seems you have to be the wife of so-and-so, if you're a woman, but certainly not the so-and-so yourself.

But if being the first black woman candidate for the Presidency isn't news

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## Crime cont'd

who rob us, yes, but rob us for less than the big thieves do - the Wall Street bankers, the big farmers, the industrialists, etc. These are the men who deny us jobs and pay us so little for the work we are able to get, whose laws force us to bear children for their purposes (war, cheap profitable labor), who tax us and not themselves to subsidize their economic and military ventures and adventures, and then deny us services.

### THE BIG THIEVES AND LITTLE THIEVES: WOMEN, THE VICTIMS

The big thieves send some of the little thieves to jail for their own purposes, not for ours, though they try to confuse us about that. The petty thieves may be a bother to them, as well as to us, but they also serve a useful function to them. The big thieves are siphoning off our paychecks every week while the petty thieves divert us by keeping us worrying about being stabbed on the way home every night.

Our fear of and hostility to the petty criminals is perfectly justified - they do hurt us in very real ways, and the poorest, most vulnerable women get hurt the worst. They are like all oppressed men who identify with and imitate the behavior of their fellow males on the top, rather than joining with the women who are fighting them, or even just going about their business without feeding off anyone else. Like all male supremacists, they help perpetuate the whole cycle which maintains the men at the top.

Still, to the big thieves who rule

us all, the petty thieves aren't really any different from us women whom they unjustly define and treat as criminals. To the extent that the petty thieves try to rob the rich instead of the poor and working people, they are an irritation to those in power, just as rebellious women are. And that is why we are both called criminals, even though in the case of women this is mostly unjust and in the case of men it is more often accurate.

What is crime is obviously confused and defined by those in power. What they always define as crime is the poor trying to even things up with the rich. What they always define as crime is women (like prostitutes) trying to get back some little thing from the men who take advantage of us, or women (like those seeking abortions) who are trying to escape another trap men have set for us.

Whenever revolutionary movements occur - and revolution let us remember always involves the overthrow of the existing order of things (not to mention the laws we don't like) it is the revolutionary who is presented as the criminal, the "bandit in the hills." This is not to say that bandits are always revolutionary. It is just to say that women and others who are fighting for their freedom are defined as criminal because of who's in power.

### THE POWER STRUCTURE MUST BE ATTACKED AND REPLACED

The women's movement so far is fighting these criminal definitions of women's

activities by having the laws changed. This is good, laws need to be changed, but in a male supremacist state what will guarantee that new laws will not crop up? Favors are given and taken back rat quickly when you lack bargaining power. Unjust laws need to be challenged but if we are not to spend the rest of our days changing and unchanging the same laws, the power structure initiating those laws must be attacked and replaced.

We, as women, long for order; we wish to make sense of the chaos which surrounds us. But the question is: how are we going to do this when even words don't mean what they are supposed to? We will have to start by straightening out the definitions for ourselves, by knowing and really understanding that we are not the criminals that the men in power tell us we are (and that the laws of the state tell us we are). Then we must get together to figure out what we really want and how we're going to get it.

We are prepared to act on the abortion issue. We support the repeal of all abortion laws - that is no laws whatsoever against abortion - as part of women's fight for freedom over our sexual and reproductive lives, as well as for power over our lives in general. On the issue of prostitution, we are not yet sure of what our short-term strategy should be. We feel the urgent need for more ongoing investigation and discussion of possible approaches, some of which you will find in this present issue.

Barbara Leon, Colette Price,  
Kathie Sarachild

# abortion: THE STRUGGLE EXPANDS

We decided to print the following articles as an illustration of new developments and old problems in the movement for abortion law repeal.

## THE L.A. SELF-HELP CLINIC

The first article discusses the menstrual period extraction technique developed by the Los Angeles Women's Self-Help Clinic. This approach has been attacked in some parts of the radical and/or women's movement on the grounds that it provides do-it-yourself help for a small number of women, without challenging the state's power to maintain laws which lead to forced childbearing or the government's refusal to provide the quality medical care which is due us. We feel differently. The information uncovered by the Self-Help Clinic would seem to have such enormous implications for (eventual) widespread civil disobedience against abortion laws as to make them virtually unenforceable.

The Self-Help Clinic's technique, a technique developed by Lorraine Rothman, a "non-professional" woman inspired by the feminist movement, is potentially better than all existing techniques. Because of Rothman's contribution and the work of the other women at the Self-Help Clinic of which she is a member, the existence of a safe, simple abortion procedure - the development of which it has been in the interest of the medical establishment to suppress until now - would seem to be just around the corner. Its achievement can only further highlight the contradiction between the technological possibilities of providing for people's health needs and the inability of the present male supremacist state to develop and use that technology for the benefit of most of us.

## IN FLORIDA...

by Margaret Reynolds with Carol Hanisch and Dedi Anderson, Gainesville, Fla., Nov. 1971

We joined the Alachua County Abortion Action Coalition (then the Alachua County affiliate of WONAAC), which was organized by some members of Women's Liberation, because we hoped it would be possible for us to work together on the issue of abortion. We knew there might be differences in tactics, but we never dreamed there would be such disagreement over whether or not a woman has the right to control her own body. The coalition group said that they wanted to repeal the law, but all they really wanted was a reform law. They were working to substitute their own restrictive law for the present one. Their fight was for which women should have the "right" to control their own bodies, not that all women should. This actually means of course that no women have really won the right from men, but that some have won a concession.

The Coalition proposed that abortions could be performed only up to 24 weeks and only "under proper & licensed medical supervision." This meant that they considered abortion after 24 weeks murder. When we argued against the 24-week limit we were accused of supporting infanticide. Their law would have left Shirley Wheeler, the Daytona Beach woman who is now appealing her manslaughter conviction for having an abortion, and other women who might be in her same position, still liable to prosecution. One of the "experts" at her trial decided she was over 24 weeks pregnant when she had the abortion. (Of the other two "experts" who testified, their guesses about the "age" of the fetus varied from 5 months to over 6 months).

Another article describes some of the difficulties encountered by a group of women in Gainesville, Florida (Alachua County), when they attempted to work with a local affiliate of the Women's National Coalition (WONAAC) for repeal of the Florida abortion law.

## WONAAC AND NARAL

There has been a great deal of controversy in the women's movement over the actions of WONAAC and the connection of many of its members with the Socialist Workers Party. We feel that the only political restriction on people in the abortion rights movement should be that they be willing to work for total repeal of the abortion laws, as well as of all laws prohibiting contraception, and that the trouble with WONAAC is not that many socialists are members but that WONAAC is not really working for abortion law repeal. Despite the organization's official position, in its actual work across the country, as the Gainesville example and Cindy Cisler's article on the language of the repeal fight illustrate, WONAAC has consistently demonstrated that it's too willing to stop at merely reforming the existing laws. NARAL, the other big national so-called "repeal" group has also been following this duplicitous policy. (For instance, a recent memo from NARAL artfully stated that: "now . . . medically safe, legal abortion is available under the 1970 New York Abortion Law," neglecting to mention the terrible restrictions that still exist in the law).

## NEW YORK STILL FAR FROM REPEAL

Of course, the conflict over abortion reform versus repeal of all abortion laws is not a new one. Cindy Cisler of New Yorkers for Abortion Law Repeal has been warning for a long time that the "vic-

tory" of a liberal but still much too limited abortion reform bill in New York State would have a retarding influence on repeal efforts in other states. And her predictions have proved depressingly true, as organizations within the abortion movement are now pressing for reform bills "like the one that was passed in New York," instead of taking advantage of the new political possibilities and going all out for repeal.

## REFORM VS. REPEAL

As the Gainesville article points out, the existence of a reform bill such as New York's or the bill proposed by Alachua County WONAAC would not have helped Shirley Wheeler, the first woman in the U.S. brought to court for having an abortion. She and other women like her would still be accused of "infanticide" for having an abortion beyond the 24-week time limit. This may be one reason why there has been a virtual news blackout on the Shirley Wheeler case in the establishment press - because her case would illustrate the

barbarity not only of the old reactionary abortion laws but also of our much heralded new reform laws.

We are also printing the Gainesville article as well as the one entitled "Abortion: A Poor Black Woman's View" as illustrations of general kinds of problems which come up within groups in the women's movement, between women who are fighting for our interests all the way, and those who are still concerned with "looking good."

We strongly agree with the conclusions of other women on the necessity to fight it out and ultimately to be willing to go it alone (when need be) if there is ever to be a chance of achieving our goals.

by Barbara Leon

The only feminist demand the Coalition made was that no woman should be prosecuted for having an abortion. But wanting to put in a time limit while at the same time maintaining that no woman can be prosecuted for having an abortion is contradictory. Even if women themselves could somehow be exempt from prosecution under this type of law, many would still be prevented from having the abortions they need because of doctors' fear of prosecution. The coalition group said they wanted to protect women and yet the very time limit they are proposing will force many women to seek illegal and dangerous ways of getting the abortion they want.

When it came right down to it, this "liberal" faction of Friends of the Fetus supported the rights of the fetus over the rights of women. It is questionable whether they were ever really interested in fighting for their own rights. For example, the women from Zero Population Growth (ZPG) were mainly interested in curbing population growth. This had nothing to do with the right of a woman to control her own body but with the desire of ZPG to prevent women from having children. Other women wanted to protect the (unwanted) "child." None of these women were saying that they opposed the present abortion laws because the laws restricted their own rights. It was always somebody else's rights they wanted to protect (or rather control).

This was carried to an extreme when the coalition decided to include in their new law the statement that no hospital or doctor should be required to participate in an abortion! No doctor or hospital should be allowed to turn away people in need of this one

kind of medical aid, especially when their refusal to help inflicts years of suffering, hardship, and even death. The women in the

coalition had to waste our precious time and energy to prove to men (doctors, legislators, husbands, etc.) how fair they were. The question has never been one of OUR taking away MEN'S rights or of OUR being unfair. Women have never yet had the power to do that - men have seen to that. We need to start fighting for what we want instead of what men want us to fight for. Whenever we stop to listen to men, it always ends up weakening the major weapon we have and that is the power we have WHEN we are united.

In some ways the law proposed by the Coalition would be more restrictive than the present one, because it introduces a time limit and medical restrictions where none have existed before. The present law has no restriction on who can perform an abortion but the Coalition was proposing that abortions could only be performed "under proper & licensed medical supervision." This adds a restriction we don't even have under the present Florida law.

As far as a time limit is concerned, under the existing law a woman can get an abortion AT ANY TIME if her pregnancy endangers her life. Under their proposal, if she was over 24 weeks pregnant and found out that the pregnancy would endanger her life, she would not be able to get a LEGAL abortion. Even if they changed their proposal to include this particular extreme case, it would still mean that they wanted to decide for other women when an abortion would be murder, and when it wouldn't be. We don't want men OR women telling us what they think is "best." We are fighting for the right of each woman to decide these things for herself.

Another major difference we had was whether or not women are the experts on our own conditions. For example, the Coalition invited men to the meetings and gave them

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# THE SELF HELP CLINIC

by Colette Price

For all practical purposes, men have probably had more intimate contact with, and certainly far greater accessibility to the vagina than women ever had. The male organ, on the other hand, has always been exposed. The male organ, you see, is external and we really do seem to feel that seeing is believing. Thanks to the (Women's Liberation) Self-Help Clinic of Los Angeles, however, the same possibilities are now available to women.

This self-help clinic is a group of women who got together as a result of the feminist movement in Los Angeles. They began fighting the California laws against abortion and soon came to the conclusion that if women were ever going to win this fight, they would have to have a lot more knowledge about their bodies and familiarity with the medical procedures themselves. In the course of doing this they have come up with some astounding results. They have been traveling around the country telling women of these researches, asking women to share their own private investigations and just generally bombing out the Mystical Medical Mystique which insists that only your doctor knows for sure. The conference in New York was held at Queens College the 20-21st of November and Carol Downer and Lorraine Rothman, originators of the group, lost no time in introducing us first off to the vaginal speculum.

The vaginal speculum is a \$2 duck-billed bit of plastic technology which puts you in touch with yourself, i.e. it lets you view your cervix. I suspect it will do for modern women what the mirror did for primitive women -- allow them to see. As I sat there at the conference handling my speculum and becoming familiar with the rather easy manipulation of the duck-bill, I suddenly began to wonder about the absurdity of male gynecologists. I mean what would motivate a man to spend the rest of his life absorbed in examining and palpating organs which must be as foreign to him as appendixes to non-surgeons. I decided not to think about that, and instead became absorbed in my own rather sudden love for my female gynecologist, and returned to the conference.

They started off with slides of various organs and pictures of equipment which would become more familiar as the day wore on. "Here's a slide of a cancerous tumor of the cervix," said Carol. "The danger signs we're supposed to look for however are associated with late stages of the disease. If you could frequently check your own anatomy, you would notice any changes and very early. In the next slide, you'll see what the speculum we've brought you here exposes. That tiny slit-like opening is the entrance into the uterus; it's called the external os. The mass surrounding the os is the cervix, that part of the uterus which extends downward into the vagina."

"The vagina, you know, is not really an internal organ," she said, "I mean it's about as internal as the mouth." The mouth - Goddammit, I thought, why hadn't anybody ever said that before! She went on. "We try, as in consciousness-raising, to stick to our own experiences and those of the women we come in contact with. For example, we've found that the typical textbook position of the uterus is not typical at all. The uteruses we've seen are tipped or flexed more commonly than not. The exact angle of the uterus is probably as relevant

or irrelevant as the color of your eyes except we know someone who underwent surgery to have the shape corrected."

"We see a lot of infections" said Carol, "most times the women don't even know they have them. Here in the next slide you'll see an inflammation of the cervix, usually called cervicitis. This is very often treated by cauterization, we've found however that the situation seems to clear up within a few weeks of its own accord. We suggest you watch its course by means of the speculum and probably save yourself a costly and unpleasant medical treatment." The timing of this conference was perfectly synchronized with my own life. I was due next month to be cauterized for cervicitis. I have subsequently cancelled that appointment and will watch its course, contributing my own personal scientific research.

"We've talked to birth control designers," said Lorraine, "incidentally all men. We told them women say the IUD is painful on insertion, during the time it remains in and on extraction. 'They probably have a low pain threshold,' was the reply we got from these so-called experts." All of us! I thought to myself. Well then why not just change the criteria for pain in regards to women and make us credible at least on the new value scale.

"You know all the commotion in the name of safe health care, about getting your routine \$10 IUD office checkup," Lorraine and Carol went on. "Well save your money. In the next slide, you'll see by use of the speculum, what it is exactly the highly trained doctor sees during a routine checkup -- a string, exiting from the uterus, a string. Why not stay home and check that the string is there yourself."

"Because we came to be interested in the health field through our association with the fight to repeal the abortion laws, we've looked into the abortion techniques and facilities around the country. Two of the most commonly used methods for abortions under 12 weeks are the D&C (dilation and curettage) and some combination of the aspiration technique. I will go into just what is involved in both methods to give you an idea of where we're at now. The D&C involves general anesthesia. The cervix must be dilated, which means the muscles are stretched by use of instruments

to allow entry into the uterus. A curette (sharp, scraping instrument) is then introduced to scrape away the uterine walls thus emptying the contents."

"The aspiration method requires only local anesthesia. The cervix is dilated as above and a suction or vacuum curette attached to pressure empties the uterine contents. We found that a lot of abortion centers which stated they used the aspiration method were also scraping the uterine walls with a curette, which is really a combination of both procedures. We'd like to demonstrate for you a technique we've sort of come across in our findings; we call it the period extraction method. By means of a tube or cannula (credited to Dr. Harvey Karmen, thus called the Karmen cannula) attached to a syringe and 2 air tight bottles which create a vacuum, it is possible to extract your period yourself and thus reduce it from a 5 day period to a 5 minute procedure. Quite simply what is involved is the following. By means of the speculum you can locate the external os. The cannula can then be gently inserted (that seems to be the key point, gently) without dilation. Manual rotation of the connected syringe will then exert the necessary suction effect and by means of the vacuum system set up in the air tight bottles, the uterine contents will empty into the bottles."

The equipment used resembled what I had seen written myself of the abortion equipment used in China (see illustration). The method seemed very similar. Could you believe it, no more periods and we've really only just begun.

Of course, if you could extract a period you could also extract a 'late' period, up to 5 weeks 'late' I subsequently found out. And of course by means of the speculum it would be possible to know if you were pregnant as early as 2 weeks later.

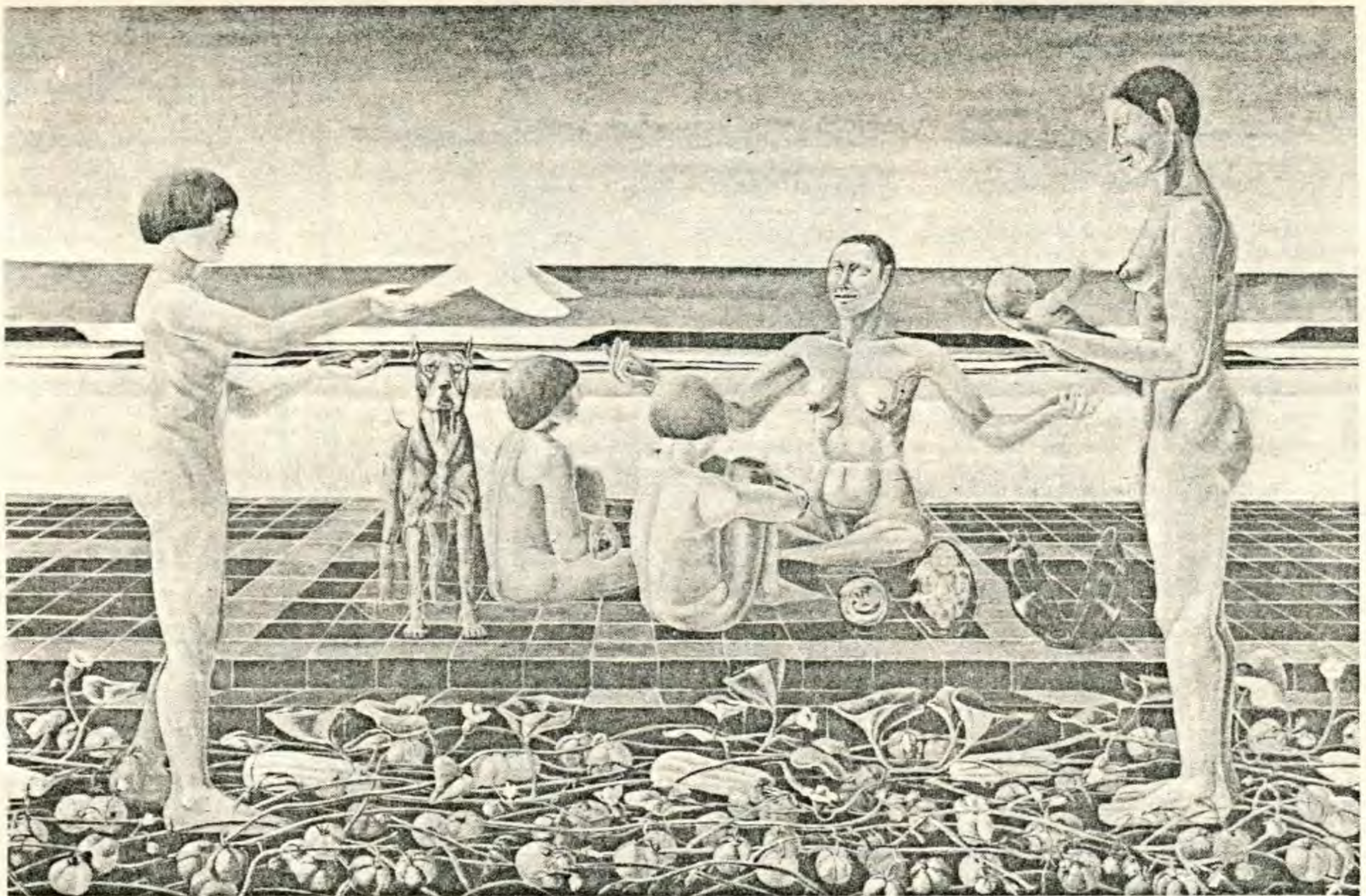
It was a brilliant discovery and I thought if I ever needed an abortion this is the way I want it to be done. Of course the method is not foolproof as of yet, still in its experimental stages the scientist would say, and can't be used by those with previous gonorrhoea or endometritis - anything I guess which would cause bad scarring of the uterus. It was brilliant anyway just because it shows what we're capable of doing, and



Simple abortion technique, using an ordinary stoppered bottle in which a vacuum has been created by burning alcohol is described in the Peking Journal of Nursing,

March 1966. Abortion by suction originated in China where smaller vacuum jars are used to cure headaches and other minor ills.

The technique here is very similar to the menstrual period extraction method developed by Lorraine Rothman with the aid of the Los Angeles Women's Self-Help Clinic.



Creation, oil on canvas, 46" X 70" by Janet Sawyer, 1972, One of a series of paintings by a powerful new (female) artist

are doing.

The audience was stunned, awed, overwhelmed, shocked and eager. "Can air get into the uterus with this method," one woman asked? "No," said Carol, "the air tight bottles make it a closed system." It was a legitimate concern for, as one woman explained, air injected into the uterus can be fatal. "Isn't this really an abortion technique," asked another. "No," said Carol, for political reasons, "abortion is illegal; we deal only with period extractions." Subsequently, LA self help has been criticized for not being right-up there and calling a thing what it is. This is nonsense, you can't expect 2 people to take all the risks, we're not in the martyr business.

"Now" said Carol, "we'll show you how to examine yourselves," and in the final denunciation of 'feminine protocol' she whipped off her pants, hopped up on the desk and inserted the speculum. My God, I thought, I'd follow her anywhere! It suddenly occurred to me that in all my nurses' training I had never done a vaginal examination. I had never been taught how to handle a speculum, let alone use it on myself or anyone else. And I had certainly never been presented with such a frank discussion and disclosure. To think that by means of a flashlight and hand mirror you can be put into direct dialogue with your inners.

"You see the os," said Carol. Yes, we all nodded in unison. "Well when you get used to viewing your own bodies you'll notice different changes. You'll be able to see when the cervix softens, and opens a little and the color becomes darker or blotchy red - all of which means you're pregnant in which case you'll know before anyone else does - which is the way it should be."

My reaction to the self-help clinic was sheer joy and still is, despite the unfavorable press reaction and severe criticism launched in some radical and women's movement press, in their aftermath. They have since been accused of everything from being against pap smears to helping the Catholic Church

turn back progressive abortion laws. This latter attack appeared in the so-called radical newspaper, The Guardian.

The radical press seems to have a rather absolutized either/or approach to things. They're all upset that do-it-yourself medicine will stop the revolution. "The way to get better health care," they yell "is not through small group do-it-yourselfism but through struggle, demanding care from the institutions that are supposed to give it." In their dogma have they overlooked the fact that the information uncovered by the self-help clinic, information which up until now has been suppressed, could only further highlight the contradictions between the technological possibilities of providing for people's health needs now and the unwillingness of the present male-supremacist state to do so. If they think we have a naive approach to the problems surrounding us in regard to good health care, how sophisticated is it to put down what is being done now simply because the revolution won't be here until tomorrow? Can't we encourage the self-help clinic without giving up our struggle against the hospitals, the doctors and the male supremacist powers that are holding us back. Or does that boggle the mind-that because we're in favor of self-help, we're also in favor of getting the power for more medical help and self-help.

Or is the radical press itself so mystified by the medical establishment that it too believes only a doctor can really give good safe health care. Why is it that a procedure such as a D&C which requires a blade in the hands of a doctor or intern (after all how are they going to learn) scraping away the walls of a muscle with all its possible traumas not to mention lacerations is accepted with the medical seal of approval while the insertion of a cannula into the same organ brings the house down with cries of "infection" and "what about sterile technique?" If we favor self-help it's also because it actually would seem to be the better method. It is not perfected, true, but LA self-help didn't

tell women to go home and abort themselves either. Anybody who would attempt the method on themselves given the insufficient information about specifics mentioned at the conference would have to be terribly misguided. Throughout the conference the self-help group encouraged all those interested in their techniques to get in further contact with them and explore the possibilities. They have disclaimed anything to do with a do-it-yourself abortion described in the article "Menstrual Extraction," which appeared in the October 26, 1971 issue of *Everywoman*, a West Coast feminist newspaper. They implore women not to attempt to use the items as explained in that article. If you wish to find out what they're really about you should contact the Self-Help Clinic at 1027 South Crenshaw, Los Angeles, California 90019.

Many women's comments have been no better - their big concern revolves around safety and the fears that we're  
cont'd p.7



off our backs  
(newspaper)

The following was written as a letter to the editor of the University newspaper The Alligator in Gainesville, Florida (and never published). We think it illustrates and exposes the way in which many people and groups - in this case, the university press and the attorney general of the state of Florida are misusing words in order to pretend to take a more radical stance on the issue of abortion than they really are. In Florida right now, the state's 103 year old abortion law is under challenge in the courts and has already been voided in certain test cases on certain limited grounds. The powers-that-be are obviously trying to get a new restrictive law passed in time to replace the old one. (Flash! The Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court has just granted the state legislature a 60 day "grace" period in which to write and pass a new abortion statute.)

Editor:

Atty. Gen. Robert Shevin does NOT seek abortion law REPEAL as your front page headline in the Tues., Jan. 18, Alligator (Gainesville, Florida) proclaims. The "repeal and replacement" explanation in the first sentence of the story is just a sneaky way of saying REFORM.

REPEAL means nothing less than wiping off the books all laws which hinder a woman's right to an abortion. Shevin is for REFORM, not REPEAL. He wants, according to your article, a time limit of 12 weeks except for therapeutic purposes.

It is irrelevant whether this incorrect headline appeared out of negligence or was an intentional effort to join those

who are planning their political fortunes with the vote of women in mind. Either is inexcusable.

In other states, New York for one, the mass media has done its dirty work in muddying the distinction between abortion REFORM and REPEAL. There is a very important difference. REPEAL allows the pregnant woman to make the decision of whether or not to have that child. REFORM keeps this decision in the hands of others - doctors, legislators, husbands, fathers (men).

Shevin and others are out to get a reform bill passed before that "horror of horrors" happens and Florida is left without an abortion law, which would be the same as repeal.

No fetus - no matter how many months old - is more important or has more rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" than a woman. No husband, doctor, or panel of "experts" knows better than the pregnant woman how having an unwanted child will affect her life. An unwanted child ALWAYS infringes on a woman's rights.

The purpose of using REFORM and REPEAL interchangeably is to confuse women (and sympathetic men) into thinking they are getting REPEAL.

We who see what's going on will fight all these reform bills because in the long run they make it more difficult for women to get what is our right - what we really should have.

The issue is whether or not a woman shall be forced to bear a child. REPEAL makes abortion the woman's choice. REPEAL IS OUR RIGHT. Stop clouding the issue by calling REFORM REPEAL.

Carol Hanisch Gainesville, Fla.

for  
A Woman's Right to Choose

**NYALR**

**Model Abortion Law:**

This is the abortion law that every state will have when present abortion laws are repealed. Of course, this is only a first step. Once existing abortion laws are cleared away, it will be possible to go on to pass positive legislation: for example, legislation guaranteeing minors the right to abortion and contraception without compulsory consultation with parents or guardians, and establishing a network of public clinics to provide abortion and contraception to anyone requesting these birth-control services.

For more information, contact NEW YORKERS FOR ABORTION LAW REPEAL (NYALR), Box 240, Planetarium Station, New York City, N.Y. 10024

**SAY WHAT YOU MEAN - AND MEAN WHAT YOU SAY**

or, Abortion is Worth Being Petty About

BY LUCINDA CISLER

"General Action Proposal: That the conference call for a nationally coordinated abortion repeal repeal campaign. . .for the repeal of all abortion laws, against forced sterilization, and for the repeal of all contraceptive laws. . . . Legislative Action Proposal: . . . That the WONAAC not support laws that restrict access to the termination of pregnancy, voluntary sterilization or contraception." —Proposals adopted by WONAAC conference #1 July 18, 1971; printed in first WONAAC newsletter, Summer 1971, pp. 1-2 (emphases supplied)

"MOTION: That WONAAC sponsor a week of local abortion activities, May 1-6. . .around the demand for repeal of all anti-abortion laws and restrictive contraceptive laws and an end to forced sterilization. . . ." —Proposal submitted by 13 women for consideration at WONAAC conference #2, Feb 11-13

As anyone can see, the words used in these two sets of resolutions are not the same. People use different words when they want to express different ideas. That is clearly what some people meant to do in drawing up the second proposal. Despite WONAAC's repeated claims that it strictly abides by the "democratically-made" decisions of those who were at its founding conference, the literature it puts out began as early as September to call not for repeal of all abortion laws but for repeal of all "anti-abortion" laws. In talking about "anti-abortion" laws it obviously implies that at some time since July WONAAC suddenly found at least once pro-abortion law lying around somewhere—a law that positively guarantees every woman the right to terminate a pregnancy she does not want to continue. Where is this marvelous law? Why haven't we heard about it before? Because it doesn't exist, of course.

"ANTI-ABORTION" LAWS

Most of us who've been working on birth-

control issues for awhile thought that all states have "anti-abortion laws" because all forbid some women abortions, and that all states have "pro-abortion laws" because all allow some legal abortions. We also thought that our task was to get rid of every one of these insulting laws—to repeal them, leaving nothing at all on the statute books—and then to go forward to make sure abortion and other health services were really available in practice. But apparently we were wrong: "The fight to maintain and extend the New York pro-abortion law will be an important component of WONAAC's campaign." ("Building WONAAC", by Barbara Roberts, Carol Lipman, and Joan Gombos, WONAAC newsletter, January 12, 1972, page 4).

A "PRO-ABORTION" LAW IN N.Y.?

Astonishing. Feminists and their sympathizers have been fighting doggedly for the repeal of New York's so-called pro-abortion law ever since its passage—and long before WONAAC's formation—through public education, demonstrations, and the drafting, introduction, & active support of repeal bills in the 1971 & 1972 New York legislative sessions. The New York law still contains more than a dozen sections making abortion a criminal act—some of which do not appear at all in the laws of even 10 other states! Women are still subject to a \$1,000 fine and a year in jail if they dare to get abortions that the state considers "unjustifiable"—such as those done after 24 weeks gestation or by a non-MD—the same old penalties they risked under the old law.

Late in 1970 the opponents of abortion in New York started deliberately clouding the issue by calling their efforts to restore the old law "abortion law repeal." They are very loud & very rich, and so were able to get much of the media and a lot of the public to jump into their 1984 semantic bag. The New York Times (always a bad reporter on abortion



# A POOR BLACK WOMAN'S VIEW

"We must not . . . be content with delving into the past of a people in order to find coherent elements which will counteract colonialism's attempts to falsify and harm. We must work and fight with the same rhythm as the people to construct the future and to prepare the ground where vigorous shoots are already springing up."

Fanon, *The Damned*

Most of us will keep our babies and not have an abortion when we are tied up with a 'cat.' We think we can keep him this way. A lot of us younger ones get pregnant because we read all those romantic magazines and look at T.V. soap operas. We really and truly forget who we are. Yes, we make believe we are these white people. When we get so bored with our lives, we think, maybe we'll get a baby like our older sisters and their girlfriends. It looks like so much fun: Then our guy drifts off to some other bitch and we go hunting for another. The more babies we have, the harder it gets to keep a man. After a while we consider birth control which we use off-and-on. And then we get pregnant once too often.

We'll have an abortion by doing our own thing - taking something orally, going to our own mid-wives, who are our neighbors and friends, or doing our own abortions, if we are desperate and alone. We don't tell other women about it usually because we are ashamed. Down deep, we know it's against God's law. We don't want to kill our baby. People in the neighborhood will talk about us in a bad way if they find out. When we are younger, we look down on "boogie" negro and white women who have abortions. But as we get



Woman's World photo

older, we resent those who are middle-class and can get the 'bread' together for an abortion out of the state or the country.

The abortion law of New York is just fine! It takes a load off our minds. We almost never discussed being pregnant with the man. We made our own decisions and our own arrangements. After a while you learn never to ask no man shit. What for? Weren't none of his business! In fact, you finally learn having babies is a woman's business and most of our men ain't really had nothing to say 'bout it.

These 'boogie' nigger women, who go to white women and do all this bad 'woofing' 'bout birth control and abortion being genocide. They go sneaking around to the old Negro high society doctors who take care of them for a lot of dollars. But these women don't come 'round 'louding' us. They always talking that shit to some up-tight white folks. We'd just look at 'em and pass on by, if they even tried that shit on us. These are known strivers, baby! But they climbing the political social ladder.

All these militant women with one or two kids ain't about to overpopulate

whitey. They ain't going to have 5, 6, 7 or 8 kids. "DON'T COMMIT THIS GENOCIDE ON YOURSELF!" that militant 'cat' telling us from 'big whitey's T.V. These cats don't feed me, clothe me. Some bad, black militant telling me to have this baby. These brothers come on down and give us some pennies. Then maybe we'll have that baby. He don't run our show!

I know these militant chicks ain't too slick but they only have one or two babies. So they sneaking on down, getting their birth control on the sly. They getting the shit somewhere. They ain't having a whole bunch of babies. And Lord knows they're getting 'laid.' And they telling us to have the babies. We're having 'em for them, I suppose. We doing all that hard work, lying up there sweating and pushing, coming home to 7 or 8 kids our neighbors been keeping for us. These nigger chicks want this so-called black army for them - to put them and the 'brothers' in power. Now, dig it! Class is where it comes down, baby! We read Fanon, too. Hard as it was, we got through it!

Before we had to pay for our abortions. Now we don't have to pay a damn thing. We get it on medicaid. We can even have an abortion early and we won't have all that worry no more . . . No money, who is going to do it and how we going to get that 'bread' together. Going to cut a lot of doctors' hustles. But it won't bother our mid-wives because they did it for us and cheap, too. They were our real sisters!

This article was distributed anonymously at WONAAC'S national abortion conference in July 1971.

## SELF HELP CLINIC cont'd

on a trip back to nature. The period extraction method is actually an improvement on present technology. The method was discovered researching the medical field not from folklore and old wives' tales. Not that there would be anything wrong with finding a method, if it were better, from folklore and old wives' tales (see boxes). China seems to have very successfully incorporated traditional (folk) medicine with scientific medicine. What's all this nonsense about rebelling against technology?

Even the speculum got attacked in the press. Ellen Frankfort, in her article in the Village Voice, for instance, somehow finds it necessary to argue that the metal speculum (the doctor's speculum) is not inherently cold. "Since they should be boiled," states the author, "before each examination warming them should present no problem." Well they may not be inherently cold but they're cold all the same, at least the ones I felt. I just have to guess therefore how many of them were not boiled and how many infections I narrowly escaped. She goes on then criticizing the self-help clinic speculum because it's plastic (of all the anti-technological statements) and it melts on boiling. Any fool knows plastic melts on boiling. If you need to sterilize it, there's a cold solution spray on the market. Actually your own speculum only requires washing not sterilizing, everything which goes into the vagina is not sterile you know. The vagina is an external organ, remember, like the mouth.

Frankfort then goes on to say that a medical student (male or female?) and

an experienced woman doctor she knows agree that most women do not have cervicitis. I have cervicitis and the first 4 out of 5 random friends I called had it too. It seems to affect women who have had children. I contracted it after the delivery of my first child as did most of my friends. I guess we just know different women. Her medical friend then informs us that if we use the period extraction device, we will get an infection and we will eventually require hospitalization and a D&C. Well Carol and Lorraine are not hospitalized and they have extracted their own periods many times. I'm sure they'll let us know if and when they are.

In another section from the same article the renowned anthropologist Margaret Mead, is quoted as also finding some of the concerns about safety excessive, particularly those relating to infection during period extraction. "Do you think a doctor's office is a sterile place," she quips.

The author repeats twice that Carol and Lorraine are finished with childbearing because their husbands have vasectomies, implying that they were asking other women to take risks they weren't prepared to take themselves. They performed the period extractions on themselves first, didn't they; they were the guinea pigs. What do you want them to do, get pregnant to prove that they mean what they say about safety?

As far as we're concerned the Health Conference has been a tremendous success. It has done the job both of raising women's consciousness and providing an outlet for that consciousness,

bringing us closer to a safe do-it-yourself abortion method than we ever dreamed possible right now. It's only with technology like this that women will be guaranteed control of their own bodies. In addition, this technology is itself a political force, threatening to outdate all abortion laws, existing or future.

### Grandma Bessie's Technique

Among the many medical skills of some of the old time granny women (read folk doctor) was aspiration. My grandmother-in-law, Bessie Wright, who lived and practiced in New Orleans and the surrounding bayous and countryside, was one such granny-doctor and the device described by the sisters in Los Angeles Self-Help Clinic sound exactly like the one used so successfully by Ms. Wright for so many years. There probably were many others who used this technique and there may be women in isolated communities who, despite modern communications and the attempt to spread "modern medicine," still do.

I find it interesting that in China, folk medicine, including such techniques as herbology, acupuncture and aspiration, (see illustration) has been incorporated into modern medicine, while in this country folk medicine with many of the same herbs, derivatives and aspiration has not. Can the reason be that the "folk" doctors in China are traditionally women while here they are traditionally men?

ESTHER CROFT

# ABORTION THE JOB AHEAD IN NEW YORK

The following is a brief synopsis of some recent assaults on the already restrictive New York abortion law. It is followed by some ideas from New Yorkers for Abortion Law Repeal on what you can do about the situation.

\*\*\*\*A court suit has been instituted by Robert Byrn, bachelor law professor at Fordham University, on behalf of the "unborn" child to declare the present New York law unconstitutional on the grounds that it violates the "right to life" of the fetus. Attempts are also being made, on the basis of the above case, to obtain a temporary restraining order that would block abortions in New York City's 18 public hospitals.

\*\*\*\*The New York State Court of Appeals has upheld a directive issued last April by the state's Social Services Commissioner, George K. Wyman, which bans the use of Medicaid funds for abortions unless they are "necessary for medical reasons." The decision will be appealed by the city's Health and Hospitals Corporation on the grounds that it denies "equal protection of the laws" to poor women. This may take the form of an appeal to federal courts, a request to the Social Services Department that the directive be rescinded, or an effort to write new state legislation which would invalidate the directive.

\*\*\*\*In some local areas, such as Dobbs Ferry, zoning laws are being used to keep out abortion clinics.

\*\*\*\*Massive lobbying efforts and petition campaigns have been organized by the Catholic Church to pressure the legislators in Albany to further restrict or entirely eliminate the present reform law.

- B.L.

Once again this year we have a chance to fight against all the bad abortion bills still pending, by working for the good legislation. The Ohrenstein-Leichter abortion law repeal bill is being filed, to remove all special references to abortion from state law. This true repeal bill will eliminate the licensed-MD limitation (which keeps costs up by limiting personnel), the grotesque 5½-month time limit (which violates women's rights to make individual decisions), the laws against self-abortion (the technology for which is being rapidly developed), & all the rest—closed trials, OKs on wiretaps, and so on.

At the same time, renewed efforts will be made to repeal the restrictions on contraception through the von Luther-Cook contraception law repeal bill\* (Right now contraceptives—even non-Rx ones—may not be advertised; displayed; distributed except by a pharmacist; or given to anyone under the age of 16.) This bill could pass this year—but only if we tell Albany we want it, directly by letters and visits.

By sending 50¢ to New Yorkers for Abortion Law Repeal (Box 240, NYC 10024; 799-0620), you can get a fat packet of political information on these repeal bills & on the issues generally; better yet, join—it's \$5. (NYALR initiated the repeal bills in '71 & '72, and with help from other groups got thousands of letters & a lot of lobbying done last year; it will do the same—or hopefully more—this year.)

If feminists act for what they want, we CAN keep New York from sliding back into the 19th century; if enough of us act, we can even move New York ahead in this basic area. We may even get the media to break its silence about the fight for repeal, & help spread the word.

If we think other people will do the work for us while we talk among ourselves, we may wake up to find the old abortion law with us. Let's work for what we want; we might get it.

\*Bill number: S-8961/A-10050

- C.S.

# FLORIDA CONT

Another major difference we had was whether or not women are the experts on our own conditions. For example, the Coalition invited men to the meetings and gave them equal say in policy making decisions. (Men are not the ones who are forced to bear or raise children). They called in a legislative aide to speak to us (he ended up spending half of the meeting telling us things we could have found out in a ten-minute phone conversation); and they decided to have a doctor speak to us about whether or not abortion was murder after 24 weeks. (One woman said she thought it was ridiculous to bring in a doctor because each woman should make this decision for herself. Later she decided to consult her husband, a medical student, about it. When he told her he supported the 24-week limit she began to question her former feminist stand.)

These differences are very important and account for why some women want a 24-week limit and why they want medical supervision. Stipulating these in a law means that they think women don't know any better than to go to a quack. (No woman would seek out bad medical care if there were good, inexpensive, and legal medical care available.) Actually, this stipulation is what will drive women to quacks. The 24-week stipulation also means that they think women wait around until the last minute to get an abortion. This is absurd. There are plenty of terrible but real reasons a woman may not be able to have an abortion before she is 24 weeks pregnant. Not enough money, too many restrictive laws and red tape, or a sudden reversal (like your husband walking out on you) are some of these.

Because of these arguments, some members of the Coalition got visibly, if not verbally, annoyed and angry with us. When we wanted to debate the question of the time limit, we were told that we were holding up the progress of the group. Although this did mean more discussion, it also meant that as long as they refused to talk about this issue their position could remain intact.

Because we can't change the reform position of this group, we've decided to leave and fight for total repeal, even though it means there are only a few of us right now.

## Women's Study Tour... Europe!

The Media Workshop is sponsoring a European tour on women's issues from May 27 through June 25, 1972. Highlights will include meetings with women in the feminist movement in London, Paris and Rome; visits to courts, clinics and child care centers; workshops and seminars; lots of politics and women's actions. Some of the women going are planning to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with

the Vatican for its stand on abortion. The cost, \$699 includes round trip jet fare, transportation on the continent and lodging and breakfasts in moderate-priced hotels. The tour has a limited capacity so those interested should apply as soon as possible. For further information contact Irene Davall, Tour Coordinator, Media Workshop Women's Study Tour, 311 West 24th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011.

## Can I Go?

Telephone call from Florynce Kennedy asking me to go to a Waldorf Press Conference and on a month long European jaunt to meet feminists on the continent and to demonstrate at the Vatican.

I'm so stunned by the idea that I can't fully digest it - my only real thoughts are would I dare leave my child for a month, leave L., my husband. Impossible.

Half excited, conveying my hesitation, I shyly report the offer to L.

He expounds in his usual declamatory fashion about this being an opportunity not to be missed. How public speaking is my real talent and forte and of course I should seize the opportunity and not be shy. All encouragement, only one aside about my taking my son, age 5, to prove someone has a womb - but later when I take him up on this point he says he's not serious.

Is my holding back an example of a "woman oppressing herself" as many might

say, or a man holding me back? In the first instance it seems like I'm a timid female being encouraged by a man who only has my best interests at stake.

Another way of looking at this scene is that on other occasions when I'm forthright and even say "Tonight I'm going here and of course you'll babysit," he gets angry at not being considered - does he have other plans, etc. So if I had presented the trip as "Of course I'm going" I'd be told, "Hell, I won't babysit."

Now it wasn't a tactic that I took the first approach, but real hesitation, my own lack of confidence that I, a married Mother of a 4 3/4 year old could manage. Part of me wants to go and part of me, the unadventurous part, just wants to go to the Cape as usual and is scared the trip won't be fun, doesn't want to make waves. A month away from a child. Poor image. What will L. do?

- Rosalyn Baxandall

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ITS MIND



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## PROBLEMS FACED BY YOUNG GIRLS

By Sylvia Delgado

### Sex

I am not advocating sex for every girl in her teens, but a deeper understanding about the love between two bodies, and what the outcome may be: pregnancy, V.C., mental depression, or maybe just a sore bottom. The young value a reputation. You must choose your own morals. If you believe that sex before marriage is wrong, then fine, this is your feelings. But remember, they may not be shared by others. Others may feel you are wrong for thinking so.

Let's be truthful. There is a lot of sexual involvement going on among the young. The unmarried mothers' median age gets lower each year. It is now residing at 14 and 15 years of age. There is a lot of heartbreak and guilt feelings that go along with an unwanted pregnancy, much of which can be avoided. I can just hear the screams from mothers, fathers (and boy-friends). My daughter having sex? Give her birth control information!

Yes, birth control is available to any girl who is physically able to take it, and where an unwanted pregnancy may occur . . . all without parents consent. Yet, constantly, the girls seeking pregnancy tests greatly outnumber the girls seeking birth control information.

Young girls, quiet girls, loud girls, fat, short, skinny, tall, girls there is no one particular set of girls who engage in sex. We all have a natural instinct for physical attractiveness and closeness. Yet, in the female this drive is constantly being suppressed. Family, church, siblings—all have their heavy hand over a girl's sexual life, instilling great guilt feelings, many of which take a hell of a lot to get over.

From what I have gathered, the Women's Lib is against birth control for they feel that women shouldn't take chemicals into their bodies. I can understand their argument but what have they got to offer in the meantime? A zipper? No, people will continue to engage in sex which is at least 50% of all motivation in life.

I am not trying to sterilize our race (V.D. is doing enough of that). It is just to make the load lighter on those who must now face the struggle. To make Aztlan a free nation, not to bring our children into slavery. We wear the chain, let us not increase the links.

Parents teach their children what values were taught to them. Through conditioning there is the hope that in later years, these values will guide us through life. There is an honest love there, although, it is being choked by over moralizing.

### "Cherry Myth"

I so wish that evolution along with the dinosaurs would have taken the hymen (cherry) with it. This thin membrane has caused so much sorrow. The predicament of the virgin. I would like first to clear up some of the myth that goes along with it. There is no thick skin covering the opening to the vagina that will make a distinct pop, bleed all over the bed, cause intense pain, then a wild erotic

frenzy and a female loses her virginity. It is a thin membrane covering maybe half or less of the opening at times. It is not always present, due to strenuous activity, baseball, swimming, sexual play, or the person is born without one. Yes, there are the few who may have the hymen intact, thick and veiny, but it is rare and at times surgery is required to make sex more enjoyable. If the male insists on a virgin . . . A C average in Jr. High Drama can get you by! Seriously, there is no sure fire way you can detect a virgin. So why does being a virgin matter. I can bet the man does not come to you clean. Do you feel this is a male right? Who said so, a male, undoubtedly.

WHORE . . . the best tool the male has against a girl. Yet, slowly, and this is true among the older kids, a whore is being replaced by stupid. Stupid because you let yourself become pregnant. There is truth to that but it can go both ways. First, and get this through your heads: "If you are going to have sex, you are going to get pregnant!" Do not fall for, "I didn't think it could happen to me . . . I've been having sex for months and haven't gotten pregnant, or he pulled out before he shot." These are not valid forms of birth control.

There are females who believe, "It is bad enough I'm having sex, now I should use the pill." Yes, it shows. Many girls feel they are bad and dirty for having sex. It is bred into us as a way of avoiding unhappiness in forms of illnesses and unwanted pregnancies. Yet, this whole concept has backfired. It causes shame in enjoyment of physical contact. It hinders orgasm peaks and even love. A monster built of lust and "sins of the flesh" has become a tenant in the females' minds. Where proper education on V.D., B.C. and pregnancy should be taught, unbelievable fantasies exist, causing mental anguish. All the fears and hush on the subject has failed to keep girls from engaging in pre-marital sex. It has only embedded sorrows. For what well meaning parents and teachers have etched . . . further scrawling is done by boyfriends.

If a male has picked what he feels is a virgin, he has a selfish need to keep her to himself alone, in a room, untouched and only for him to use. Many girls have turned down birth control because the man feels that, if the fear of getting pregnant is lost, she will go with anyone she wants. A girl has always had her choice and right to go with anyone she pleases, pill or no pill. This is especially heart breaking to the girl who never had intentions of leaving, who gave herself wholly to him.

You see, by emphasizing guilt feelings, the men can use your mind against you—making sure you don't wander away. He does not care what he is doing to you inside, that doesn't matter. What matters is that he has a private hole.

Most of all don't feel obligated to stay with one guy because you had sex with him. Don't fall into one of the most unhappiest pits of male strategy.

Sexual attraction will fade and what will be left is an empty woman and a wandering man.

### Wait to Marry

I could flaunt you with startling statistics of teenage marriages ending in divorce and unwanted pregnancies. You've only to look to friends you know who are married (or not) with one or two kids. Do they look happy? How many times have you heard . . . "have your fun now . . . don't get married." Why do you think they warn you? Marriage isn't a horrible institution if you enter it willingly. With more of your share of exciting experiences and making it on your own and without kids. You are going to have to make adjustments with each other. You will still be learning and experiencing so why jeopardize your happiness and the children's by immediately bringing in kids. This is not a sure guarantee for a happy marriage. There seems to be a feeling of being cheated on the part of each of the partners. Of being forced into marriage, jobs, bills, with no real social life . . . especially for those who like to party. After the illusion wears off you find yourself doing the same things your parents did and (just how many times did you envy your parents' position?) . . . no parties, cars, guys, girls, beaches, movies, clean clothes when you want them, food on the table when you want, beds made, house cleaned, a weekly check, bills paid. No you won't see it again. Now, it's your baby's turn. You have no choice, especially as a mother. For he may leave, but now you have a baby . . . your life is no longer yours. Your youth died and now you are assuming a role handed down to you. ALL BECAUSE YOU SAY, "MY BOY-FRIEND DIDN'T WANT ME TO TAKE THE PILL." A whole new battle begins, now you are a woman with a child. Your mother's face will show you the struggle.

### Abortions

You've yourself to think about. He may pledge undying love for you but as soon as you mention you are late on your period you may never catch sight of him again. He may deny it's his . . . and please understand that he will not always marry you, the way he said he would if anything happened. Abortion is a temporary answer, but do not rule it out, that you will never have sex again. The shock will wear off within a few months or years. Abortion should not be used as a continuing form of birth-control. Let abortion or the close decision of having one, teach you that: beauty and sex are important but never let them work against you. You, as a female and especially a Chicana should be aware that your fight is a heavier one. Do not add any more unneeded sorrows.

I know I have only skimmed the surface of the problems of growing into womanhood. If you feel yourself caught seek counseling. May you be willed a strong back, your load has not yet begun.

This article is reprinted from the special CHICANA issue of REGENERATION which has in it many other articles of interest about women in general and chicanas, in particular. Available for 50¢ from REGENERATION (a Mexican American political journal), P.O. Box 54624, Los Angeles, Ca., 09954.

### SAY WHAT YOU MEAN—AND MEAN WHAT YOU SAY cont'd

anyway) even printed a headline saying "Cardinal Cooke advocates abortion law repeal." Even more reprehensibly, the abortion reformers who seem to have an ego stake—or even an economic stake—in "saving" the present law followed suit, turning from their earlier false claim that New York had repealed its old law to a new and opposite false claim that the bad guys want to repeal the new one!

### WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO REPEAL?

Because most of the people—both in New York and elsewhere—who are usually active on vital political issues are now able to get NY abortions for themselves or their friends at prices only 3 times what they should be, it was and will be an uphill struggle ever to achieve repeal in New York or anywhere: the heat is off. It took incredible effort even to get repeal bills filed in the legislature last year and this year, & the media and established birth-control groups have imposed an almost total blackout on all news of the bills' existence. Still, the progressive campaign for their passage did stop New York from taking regressive steps to cut back the limited rights women have under the present law. And the firm refusal of feminists & other repealers to capitulate passively to the Friends of the Fetus' Orwellian misuse of "repeal" to mean its opposite has begun to show good results—not only in the media but within the very ranks of the FOF's, who now are more likely to say they want to "restore the former abortion law." In fact, repealers have found the public confusion about language to be a good educational tool: when people express puzzlement, they are told how

the dishonesty of the anti-abortion forces extends even into their use of words, and a new convert for repeal is usually the result. We think that "nice people" who knuckle under to FOF attempts to fool the public show even more contempt for people's intelligence than the opposition does. They also show their laziness.

It has not only been in the passivity of its language that WONAAC has shown that it does not want all abortion laws repealed for the grave shortcomings of New York revealed to the public; it has shown this disregard for "a woman's right to choose" in more concrete ways. Space permits only one example here, although there are many to choose from—especially in New York.

WONAAC has recently made an attempt to get NY Congresswoman Bella Abzug to introduce an abortion law "repeal" bill at the federal level. The provisions of this bill are not described in the Jan. 31 WONAAC newsletter, perhaps because the 13 women who urge support for it (page 2) could not have seen the bill—since it was still being revised after the newsletter came out! There is a serious constitutional question whether Congress has the right even to supersede state abortion laws. But it is impossible for a legislative body (like Congress) to repeal a law made by another such body (like a state legislature)—only the group that enacted a law can erase it—so to call a federal act which attempts to do this a "repeal bill" is seriously misleading and tends besides to draw still more people away from the few state repeal campaigns that exist.

### ABORTION FOR THE "NON-VIABLE" FETUS

But whether or not Congress can or can't

repeal state laws, the substance of this particular bill is absolutely crucial. It was quite hastily drawn up, and several versions—each one more restrictive than the last—were seen by various people in the abortion movement. (At this writing, the final version was not yet available.) The later drafts contain a "definition" of abortion as something that is done to a "non-viable" fetus. The termination of pregnancy after some misty, mystical time called "viability" is left as a criminal act.

Doctors disagree wildly about what "viable" means and whether whatever it is occurs at 20 weeks, 24 weeks, 28 weeks, or 21weeks3days5hours7minutes after conception—none of these "points" being determinable anyway, since no one can know when conception occurred. And many doctors—even those who oppose abortion—do not want the state telling them when they may & may not serve their patients, any more than the patients want to belong to the state at some foggy, crucial moment. In any case, science is fast pushing "viability"—roughly, the capacity to survive outside the uterus—back further & further, until soon there will be medical techniques that can keep fetuses alive outside women's bodies almost from conception itself.

### UNDER COMMON LAW ABORTION NEVER A CRIME

Besides, Cyril Means of the New York Law School has recently shown that, under common law, abortion at any time was never a crime. American & English women were legally freer in the 18th century than they are today in either country. And even after 1828, when US states began to pass laws against abortion, fetuses have had no legal rights of any sort until they become "persons" at birth—which of course is the only observable, definite event

cont'd p. 24

# THE MYTH OF FEMALE

It is generally agreed by those who study crime that the male, through aggression and action, acts out his masculine role and in crime this aggression extends to antisocial behavior and violence: female crime, however, reflects woman's passive and submissive nature.

Authorities on the subject of juvenile delinquency claim that the female delinquent is a sexual delinquent. The fact is that more female juveniles are arrested for larceny than prostitution or other sex offenses (1) but even if picked up for shoplifting or robbery, the crime is sexually interpreted; she is acting out an incestuous wish for her father, she suffers from penis envy or she is a deviant and unnatural female. Unlike her male counterpart, the antisocial behavior of the female juvenile is rarely related to rebellion against a repressive society, poverty, or racial discrimination. The term "juvenile delinquent" usually refers to males and countless studies discuss the male problem; school, family, unemployment, income, etc. have all been investigated (2) but there is no such interest in the problems of the female delinquent. (3) With little research and information based on speculation (4) authorities assume that the female delinquent acts out her feminine masochistic nature (5) and her crime is written in her biology. As one expert said, "In a girl . . . delinquency is an overt sexual act or to be more correct, a sexual acting out." (6)

The juvenile delinquent of either sex suffers from public intolerance and discrimination but since the public is less tolerant of females than males, the female fares worse even in delinquency, for example:

1. More than 1/2 the girls referred to juvenile court in 1965 were referred for acts that would not be criminal if committed by adults; only 1/5 boys were referred for such behavior.
2. One girl was arrested for every 5 boys but girls were arrested for running away, ungovernable behavior and sex offenses while boys were arrested for rape, larceny, motor vehicle theft and aggravated assault. (7) Females were arrested for misbehavior while males were arrested for breaking the law.
3. In many cities a girl, picked up for shoplifting can be examined for pregnancy, venereal disease or sexual intercourse and then be charged with sexual delinquency rather than shoplifting, (8)
4. Although as fully prone to sexual promiscuity as girls, this behavior is often noted on a girl's record and not a boy's (9) and boys are less likely to be referred for sex offenses. (10)
5. In New York girls found to be in need of supervision can be imprisoned until 18 while the cut off age for boys is 16, (and in some cities girls have been convicted of the crime of "lascivious carriage" (11).
6. There is a great gulf between the legal and practical view of what constitutes sexual delinquency in boys but in girls the discrepancy is not so great particularly if she incurs the penalty of becoming pregnant. (12)

Here is a common public attitude: "We must never lose sight of the fact, clinically borne out, that the female

delinquent is far more profoundly self destructive and irreversible in its corrosive consequences than is male delinquency. With the aggressive and retaliatory use of her body and her reproductive functions, the delinquent girl deeply violates the protective and caring attributes of her maternal role." (13)

The man who states this view is a prominent psychiatrist and an authority on female adolescence and delinquency. His name is Peter Blos and his opinions filled with hatred and loathing for the adolescent girl are liberally quoted and used as valid opinions and sometimes established fact.

In a society that tends to overlook sexual delinquency in boys, boys still get arrested far more for sex crimes than do girls. Less than one arrest in four for sex crimes were female. As previously stated, the female has a much higher score for larceny than sex - 56,000 as compared to 2,259 - but no matter what, her crime is sexual. What are the categories of sexual delinquency?

1. Running away is usually related to a sexual offense when committed by a female under 18. Over 500,000 young people left home in 1969 and at least half were girls. Contrary to the male tradition of wanderlust, it is estimated that soon the majority of runaways will be females. (14) Children leave home to escape brutality, torn homes, alcoholism, desertion, etc., but the female runaway is not permitted such a rich variety of reasons. According to the experts she is chained to her sex, and supposedly runs off to control her incestuous wishes for her father. (15) I've worked with many young women in social agencies and institutions who ran off because they were in fact raped or threatened with rape or sexual assault by family members or institutional staff. (16) The female runaway is particularly vulnerable. Subject to arrest, without money, hungry, she is fair game for any man who offers food and shelter. Pimps are on the lookout for runaway girls because as a law-breaker she needs protection and help and is ripe for exploitation. (17)

2. Promiscuity is defined as indiscriminate mixture or promiscuous sexual union and applied to the female juvenile it means indiscriminate sexual behavior. One authority states, "The predominant expression of delinquency among girls in our society is promiscuous sexual behavior." (18) In my experience, the female adolescent who could not be controlled was usually labelled as sexually promiscuous. Parents of a young girl who was truanting and stealing, petitioned the court to control their daughter from sexual promiscuity. Her parents and society, I daresay, unable to relate to acts of truanting and stealing in a female, were more comfortable in blaming their lack of control of her life on sexual misbehavior no matter how false.

3. Illegitimacy is a term used to describe the illegal state of the unmarried mother and her child. In 1968 there were 340,000 illegitimate births and a little less than half were born to women under 19. (19) Literature on this subject explains illegitimacy as a plot on the part of the mother to extract welfare money, her need for feminine fulfillment, hatred of her own mother, good old reliable incestuous desire for the father; she's oversexed, narcissistic, primitive and infantile. (20) It was my impression that pregnancy was the result of sexual intercourse but for some reason this does not seem to be a good enough explanation. Since someone has to be blamed for this common biological process all kinds of evil and mystical

motives are attributed to the woman. What about the man's motives? Does he hate his father, have incestuous desires for his mother and is he oversexed, promiscuous, infantile, narcissistic and primitive? Since no one seems to notice his involvement in a pregnancy or hold him responsible, his motives are never even questioned. The woman is not only alone responsible for her pregnancy, but is also blamed for it. Practically no discussion on illegitimacy considers abortion as an alternative to unwanted pregnancies. In New York where abortions are legal, the adoption agencies are going out of business for lack of babies. In some states women under 21 who become pregnant can be institutionalized and the fact that human life can be legitimized would be funny were the social stigma and punishment not so cruel to the unmarried mother and her child. The only crime that concerns me here is the crime of forcing a woman to bear an unwanted child.

Total arrests for prostitution for 1970 were 45,000 and of this number only 726 females were under 18. Young girls are rarely prostitutes. They may have sex for affection, social acceptability, for a meal or protection but rarely for money. (21) Ignoring statistics, one writer claims, "The Lollitas of American whoredom or baby prostitutes sometimes earn 20 to 30 thousand dollars a year tax free and

tend to range in age from 10 to 15. Also known as the million dollar babies, they usually work out of stables presided over by paternalistic panderers and enjoy all material advantages. (These of course are the aristocrats of child prostitution in this country...)" (22) Perhaps it is true that many children are used as prostitutes and are unknown and unrecorded, but this man's contempt for female children and his claim that they profit from prostitution would be unbelievable were it not clearly and brazenly stated in print.

Prostitution, running away, promiscuity and illegitimacy are the general categories of female sexual delinquency but a social climate which harbors prejudice against females can tag any girl a sexual delinquent by virtue of her vulnerability and her sex. This story of Mary, told in social work and psychiatric jargon will illustrate what I mean.

Mary, 16, was raped by her stepfather at age 8. Later her mother who never believed the story abandoned her and Mary was placed in a foster home. She did fairly well until adolescence triggered off repressed hostility and sexual acting out. She got the reputation for being "easy" and it was rumored that she had been "had" by five boys (gang bang). Mary denied the story but a local physician found she had been penetrated more than once. The foster parents could not tolerate local gossip and at age 15 Mary was sent to the Jane Bloomington Home for Dependent Girls.

At first Mary was sullen and nasty but later she relaxed, became friendly and trusting and brought in dream material. Her fantasies revealed confused sexual identity so it was not surprising when the cottage mother reported that Mary had not menstruated for two months. She was tested for pregnancy, found positive and despite her insistence that she could not be pregnant, Mary was sent to Brown Memorial to have her baby.

One month later, Brown Memorial called to say that Mary was not pregnant and they sent her back. Although everyone apologized, Mary

(This article was originally presented in slightly different form, as a speech given at The Woman's Conference on Prostitution in New York City, Dec. 11, 1971)

# SEXUAL DELINQUENCY

was angry, fought, broke a chair and was becoming physically destructive.

**Diagnosis:** Adjustment reaction of adolescence with tendency to act out hostility and repressed sexual fantasies.

**Recommendation:** As a result of increased negative behavior, hostility and sexual aggression, Mary must be moved to a closed setting where she can be controlled: to Chester House, an institution for delinquent girls. (23)

What was Mary's offense? She was raped, sexually assaulted, suspected of a non-existent pregnancy and despite the crimes and injustices perpetrated against her it was Mary, not her assailants, who was branded with "a tendency to act out sexual fantasies," and this story is repeated all over the country. With total disregard for human suffering and justice and by the power of those who rule and make the rules, the illogical becomes logical, the violators are guiltless and the victims of crime and abuse become the criminals and are punished.

Recently, the news media has been changing the image of both women and female juveniles in crime. The New York Times reported that prostitution is no longer a victimless crime and 22% of the prostitutes arrested in New York have records of violence for robbery, narcotics and assault and that arrests of women for the real rough stuff, murder, aggravated assault and armed robbery, has increased 202%. (24)

On television, women imprisoned for forgery and robbery are interviewed and in a recent article in New York Magazine the following was stated:

"They (the prostitutes) don't just dispense pleasure. These girls swindle, mug and sometimes murder their patrons and police drives against them are about as effective as a pacification program in Vietnam...."

We know that women are becoming criminals at a much faster rate than men....

The shocker lies within the category of girls under 18 (the age at which the prostitutes now turn out) ... Their participation in violent crime - murder, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault is up 230%." (25)

In light of my earlier complaint regarding the stereotype of the female as a sexual criminal, it would seem I should be pleased by the recognition of our capacity to murder, assault and rob, but the fact is that we are still pitifully behind the male. Yes, female arrests have increased at a higher rate than male arrests in the past 10 years but so has the female population risen in this period; we are now 55% female to 45% male and still women are arrested once for every 6 males. Yes, violent and property crimes for female juveniles have increased 256.5% as compared with 79.5% for males but what do these percentages represent? In 10 years female

juvenile violent and property crime went from 18,900 to 67,400, up 256.5%, but in the same period and category, male juvenile crime went from 193,000 to 346,400, up 79.5%. No matter what the percentages, the female remains one out of four. Female juvenile robbery has increased 366.1% but the female juvenile is still one out of 23 arrests for robbery and as for forcible rape, women are technically incapable of committing the crime so this complaint represents totally false reporting. No matter which way you slice it, we're still far behind the boys.

Why are these sensational percentages now offered to us? Why is public opinion being manipulated to associate prostitution and female delinquency with violence? Are women truly more violent or have we just become more uppity, assertive and aggressive? Are we more violent or is it that we are simply pointing a finger at our violators: the rapist, the pimp, the john and the man. Is it violence that men fear from women or their conferences on abortion health, rape and prostitution. Is it violent women or liberated women who have become so troublesome? This was copied from a popular paperback:

"Kate Millet, Bernardine Dohrn, Angela Davis, Jane Fonda, Ti-Grace Atkinson, The Sharon Tate murderers - What do these women have in common? They are all representatives of the new breed of women. Here is a book that tells you the what, the why behind this strange new cult of violence. Here is the sensational new shocker that names the names, gives you the facts, tells you the real truth behind the rising flood tide of feminine militants - the so-called Violent Women."

And later in the same book:

"It may seem extreme to extend the women's liberation movement into the area of homicide but the record is crowded with relevant examples." (26)

And again New York Magazine:

"For in a crazy incoherent form the message of women's lib has seeped through to prostitutes. Why give one's body into the bargain when men go about crime much more directly. Why not attack the john, take his money and be done with it." (27)

But men do not really fear our violence, because it is men who are violent and not women. Prevented by men from alternatives to child bearing such as abortion, women are then punished by men for becoming pregnant; men initiate and perpetuate prostitution and yet prostitutes are punished by men; female juveniles are raped and sexually assaulted by men and then are punished by men for sexual delinquency. No, men are not afraid of our violence but they are afraid of our thinking, talking, writing, articulating, demanding and changing. It is not our violence but the loss of control over our minds, our bodies and our lives that they fear and let us deeply and passionately hope that they have very good cause for such fear. A young woman in a correctional institution for delinquent girls, Susan, made this point in a simple poem:

I no longer use my mind  
Nor think of anything,  
For I am just a puppet  
And my master pulls the strings.

There's one thing about it  
I fear he doesn't know  
Strings can be broken  
And then he'll have to go. (28)



Footnotes for "The Myth of Female Sexual Delinquency" are available by writing to Florence Rush, c/o Woman's World, P.O. Box 694, Stuyvesant Station, N.Y., N.Y. 10009

# Notes On The Prostitution Conference

by Kathie Sarachild

Last December, a number of the New York City groups which lay claim to representing and supporting the interests of women and our rights collaborated on organizing what they called "A Woman's Conference on Prostitution." The sponsors were: The Feminists, the New Democratic (Party) Coalition's Women's Rights Committee, the New York Radical Feminists and New Women Lawyers.

Although the conference lasted for two days of speeches and workshops, it was the stormy plenary session on the last day - the panel discussion entitled: Toward the Elimination of Prostitution - which raised the issues and emotions for which the event will be remembered. The open and angry clash which erupted between the organizers of the event and a group of call girls who had attended - the only openly announced working prostitutes there - spilled over into the pages of a fairly widely read N.Y.C. newspaper, the *Village Voice*, in which some of the participants continued their debate for many weeks. The issues and questions the confrontation raised continue still to have far reaching implications for the feminist movement. These urgent feminist questions tended to get lost in the charges and countercharges of duplicity that flew back and forth between the prostitutes and the conference organizers and yet they were always there, behind each and every accusation, however false or however true.

The conference organizers and the group of prostitutes differed in their analysis of what would be a solution to women's problems and, therefore, in their strategic proposals for feminism. But at the conference it was often extremely difficult to discern these very real and important feminist political differences and the short and long term interests which were linked with them. This was so because the conference organizers actually opposed a format for the discussion and an approach to the issues which would have clarified the real bases for the conflict.

The participation of a group of prostitutes at the conference represented a major new step in the development of the feminist movement. Their very presence was exciting and important in itself, and it was just what the conference organizers, with all their talk about "identifying" with prostitutes, had said they wanted. If nothing else, the call girls were offering the women there a fantastic opportunity to learn more, from first hand accounts, about one situation for women which is heavily veiled in mystery and whose truth male supremacy has made a considerable effort to conceal, thereby blocking also a more complete understanding of the situation of all women.

That the conference organizers failed, not only to appreciate their opportunity and take full advantage of it, but instead actively tried to ignore and, in the end, dismiss the important contributions of the prostitutes, on the surface, seems incredible and in fact was terribly confusing for most of the women there. An investigation of this mistake, however, has implications for the feminist movement which go far beyond this particular conference.

Ever since the two main groups who had organized the conference, The Feminists and the N.Y. Radical Feminists, had gotten involved in the question of prostitution, I had felt a little worried that their project had dangers of veering away from feminism and off into some kind of social work. I did feel that it was very important to raise people's consciousness about prostitution as a major male supremacist institution for the exploitation and oppression of women. But I also felt

that one of the most important points of strategy for the feminist movement was that women should know and feel that they were fighting for themselves. A helping-other-women, service approach, it seemed, couldn't help but deflate women's militant energies as well as pose a serious danger of insulting, holding back, and even harming the women being "helped." For women who weren't actually prostitutes themselves to get into doing anything more than "consciousness-raising" on this issue, unless they were working in close cooperation and agreement with women actually involved in the "trade," seemed to risk doing more harm than good.

The call girls had come to the conference assuming that it would be based on the radical feminist ideas about the common oppression of women sketched above, and which, in fact, had been the general basis of the publicity pitch the sponsors had made when they advertised their event. They had come willing to take the risks of public exposure and scorn in order to offer their special knowledge as women actually working as prostitutes - that is, earning their living by selling (for cash) their sexual services. The call girls believed that women at the conference who did not have this experience could make a contribution by talking of their feelings about prostitution instead. Only from this central starting point, they felt, could the conference make some real headway toward understanding what prostitution really was and its uses for male supremacy.

"The usury (money-lending) of the Jews and the extraconjugal sexuality (sex outside of marriage) of the prostitutes were alike denounced by Church and State; but society could not get along without financial speculation and extramarital love; these functions were therefore assigned to wretched castes, segregated in ghettos or in restricted quarters. The prostitutes like the Jews were obliged to wear distinctive signs on their clothing; they were helpless against the police; for most, life was difficult. But many prostitutes were free; some made a good living. As in the time of the Greek hetairas, the high life of gallantry offered more opportunities to feminine individualism than did the life of the "honest woman."

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 1949

The call girls were being honest. They said they wanted to talk about their self interest. The idea (One widely accepted) in the feminist movement) was that if everyone talked about her self-interest, they would be able to figure out what exactly were their differences, in this case, those between "good" women and "bad," in order to understand better what women's common interest is and thereby forge a solid, united basis for some kind of program.

"You're talking about the employment of at least 50,000, maybe 100,000 women in New York," explained one of the call girls. We too want to see prostitution eliminated But we need some better kind of alternative before you try to eliminate this one for all of us. We have to get rid of male supremacy, not just prostitution. Women need power. We have to talk about how we're going to get that."

Another spoke: "Before I went into prostitution I was very much into radical politics. But I couldn't handle having very little money."

"There's much that we still need to learn about what prostitution is really all about," someone else from the group added. "It's a very complicated issue. It reaches very deep into all of our fears and fantasies."

In comparison, the other panelists (and the conference organizers) were being dishonest. It's true, they made a pretence of talking about their self-interest. Some said: What you do degrades all women. I am a woman; therefore, what you are doing degrades me. Because of women like you, men whistle at me in the street, goose me in the public elevators, leer at me from telephone poles, etc. Therefore, I want you to stop. Other of the conference organizers preferred to go on and on in the old style moralizing about what they thought best, not for their own "dignity," but for the poor young girls . . . what will become of you in a few years, what will you be trained to do, etc. But this kind of political analysis (and understanding - or revelation - of one's self-interest) was at best very indirect, to say the least, focusing as it did on other women's behavior rather than on the very men the conference organizers were complaining about. It was an "analysis" that really missed the mark completely, in other words, a convenient misconception that avoided confronting the oppressor and ended up attacking women instead. It suggested, really, that one could escape oppression by disassociating oneself from others of one's class, pointing to one's own class as the obstacle to be overcome rather than the oppressor. (Men's insults and abuse of women have nothing to do with what prostitutes do or say. Men call women (and feminists) whores, lesbians, frigid old maids, dumb, housewives, crazy broads, etc. for their own political reasons, for what they can get out of doing so!) It was, as we have learned from the black movement, much the same kind of thing as when some in the black middle classes - not to mention most whites of any class - attribute the attitudes that racist whites have toward all black people to the "embarrassing" behavior of certain of "the race."

The call girls were opposed to the conference organizers ideas for what to do, opposed to their proposal for decriminalizing prostitution (the proposal for getting rid of all laws against prostitution, that is). They said it would just sanction new forms of prostitution like the massage parlors that were cropping up everywhere in Nevada and California, for instance, where women would not be able to command as high a price for their services, thus lowering the pay for all "working girls," as they referred to themselves. "No matter what feminists try to do about fighting the exploitation business," one of the prostitutes commented, "the people in power will be able to twist around it." They thought that only some kind of union organization, where women could support each other had any chance of really helping prostitutes in their daily lives as well as help in terms of building power for women with which to fight male supremacy and achieve our final goals.

Although the call girls opposed decriminalization of prostitution on the basis of their own interest as well as their general political feelings of what would be effective, they did go on to point out that here, they might be in conflict with streetwalkers' interests. It was the streetwalkers who had to face the police round-ups and arrests (call girls generally escape this) and, for them, maybe freedom from arrests would make up for the lower prices. The call girls

couldn't know for sure, they said, although they still thought the results of decriminalizing prostitution would be bad for streetwalkers too. Massage parlors would probably just eliminate streetwalkers completely, as one put it. But they did urge that, at least, the conference organizers should talk with alot of streetwalkers, check things out with them first, before going ahead and doing something that might create more problems for them and create more (and lower paid) prostitution, not less.

Only the call girls themselves brought any of the real conflicts of interest out.

"I feel concern" one explained "for the woman whose husband or boyfriend is seeing us, spending money on us when he should be spending it on his family." The prostitutes urged the other panelists and the women in the audience to talk about things like this and about their feelings about prostitutes and prostitution. Feelings for instance, of awe or jealousy, that they might have of a woman who is getting a good price for what alot of women feel they have been giving away free with nothing in return . . . or perhaps resentment and anger because of a woman's feeling that a man's being able to go to a prostitute, to get a prostitute to do anything he wanted sexually, was under cutting her own fight to make him pay some attention to her sexual needs.

This would be a way of figuring out which antagonisms were based on real conflicts of interest and which on myths, misinformation and therefore incomplete analysis. It would be the most effective place to start for trying to illuminate and understand some of the deeper questions about prostitution itself.

But the panelists who were conference organizers didn't want to talk about feelings, that is, beyond their already formed conclusions and opinions that prostitution degraded them. (They even carried this main conclusion of theirs to the point of saying that eliminating prostitution would eliminate male supremacy itself! As one of the conference organizers, Susan Brownmiller of New York Radical Feminist put it in a paper she wrote before the event, "Prostitution will not end in this country until men see women as equals. And men will never see women as equals until there's an end to prostitution," But all we ever got from the conference organizers to explain this analysis of theirs was some flowery symbolism, incorrect history and an adulterated parody of feminist theory in the form of the slogan "Prostitution is the world's oldest profession." A good consciousness-raising play on words this slogan was. History, or the truth, it was not. I never thought they'd actually take their slogan seriously. Male supremacy (and therefore, women's oppression) existed before prostitution ever developed and exists today where prostitution does not. Prostitution is only one of male supremacy's (more advanced!) forms and its absence or elimination does not come close to guaranteeing women full liberation.)

The conference organizers' feelings (of hostility and resentment) which went into forming their conclusions were not open for discussion because, as it became clearer and clearer, their conclusions and the actions on prostitution they had already planned to come out of the conference weren't really open for discussion either. They wanted to get "political," they said. (How many times before in the women's movement have we heard anti-feminists of both the "left" and "right" misrepresent as not being "political" what we were trying to do). "Women

have talked too much about their feelings," they snarled. "We've heard enough experience. Let's get political now."

But the program that the conference organizers were offering as political, as a substitute for all the alleged emotional garbage at the conference would actually have been funny if it wasn't so sad and dangerous. It was based on individual opportunism rather than on women uniting for power, and proceeded to flail away at prostitutes and other women in general rather than at male supremacy. In effect, it was the old technique for pleasing men by disassociating oneself from other women; the familiar pattern of the woman who seeks to impress men, gain favors from them, to advance herself in the man's world by demonstrating how different she is from the rest of her sex. But now, with the advent of a new feminist consciousness and "sisterhood," it was being graciously offered to the other women as a tactic for liberation: that all women should working on improving themselves so as not to be an embarrassment to each other.

The conference organizers believed as we have seen, that prostitution was the root of male supremacy itself. Their program for liberation, therefore, was not to work toward increasing the power of women in prostitution (as well as all women's power) and to improve the working conditions of whatever slave job we end up in, in the meantime working for our larger goal of freedom. What they wanted to do was to eliminate prostitution by eliminating prostitutes. What is more, the strategy they were advocating for this "final solution" was not even some kind of political effort to open up more and more jobs for all women at higher and higher pay so that there might be better economic alternatives than prostitution which women could then choose to go into. No, the program the conference organizers were offering to the prostitutes, the program they were using their anti-woman insults to construe as "political" was a one by one, pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps operation. It was American capitalism's Horatio Alger myth "Work hard and save and you, too, will be a millionaire some day" . . . for women . . . in a pseudo feminist form: Yes, a girl like you really can make a successful, fulfilling life of meaningful work in the man's world if you only try (or if you only join this movement of ours).

"I don't say - never did - that whoring is the best way of life, but it's better than going blind in a sweat shop sewing, or twenty hours work as a kitchen drudge, or housemaid, with the old man and the sons always laying for you in the hallway with their files open. Wages were low for women in the town, and no one had much respect for a girl who had to work. Believe me, it's the Good People who exploit poor girls who make a lot of whores . . . Love didn't have much to do with becoming a whore. Some find it a sentimental way to look at it - a girl ruined for love of a stud - but mostly it was a desire for an easy life, an outlaw feeling, too, of being against the snide smug society outside. Usually it all comes down to economics; a place to earn food and clothing and a little on the side for a bit of luxury." Nell Kimball, Her Life as an American Madam, by herself, pp. 258-9.

The "movement" the conference organizers were offering these women as the alternative to their bad situation and which, again, they were calling "political" was an Alcoholics Anonymous type

self-help association where women patted each other on the back for allegedly giving up their "bad" habits like "men" or "money," and their allegedly psychological, messed-up or cowardly needs for love and security.

"Look at me, I did it!", one by one a number of the conference organizers got up and "testified." They, too, had been lowly prostitutes and had raised themselves up from degradation.

These conference organizers conveniently talked only about their past experiences of oppression but didn't describe their present situation as an oppressed one.

The prostitutes told the truth. They knew that all women are oppressed, NOW, and in one sense or another must prostitutes (sell themselves) in an effort to meet their needs.

The call girls knew that they themselves are oppressed in their present situation. Unlike the conference organizers, they revealed what their lives are like now, exposed and examined their present situation, not their past "mistakes." Never did they say that prostitution was a form of liberation, as some of the conference organizers and newspaper reports implied. What they said was that it was no worse than the other situations women are in and that for them, given their feeling about the other situations open to them, it was better. They also suggested that women would do well to learn what its advantages as well as its disadvantages are compared to the other situations open to women.

. . . the economic advantage of the woman . . . lies in her power to attract and hold the devotion of men; and this power is not the power of maternity. On the contrary, maternity, by lowering the personal charms and occupying the time of the mother, fails to bring her the pleasure and profit obtainable by the woman who is not a mother. It is through the sex-relation minus its natural consequences she profits most . . ."  
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Women and Economics, 1898

If the conference organizers had admitted that they were oppressed (now) in their situations, that they still had desires that weren't being expressed, needs and hopes that weren't being met, because they were women in a male supremacist world, then they could have really talked with the prostitutes at the conference instead of sermonizing. They could have done some more analysis of the situation of women in general and of their own particular situation compared to that of working prostitutes (sexually and economically). Maybe they would have learned something about their needs, too, for instance that their needs aren't psychological or cowardly but are real and human . . . that love and security are in fact sacred human rights which, along with freedom, have been denied women by men; privileges which we have not had too much of but which we have never had (It is these things

that every woman, whether she admits it or not, is forced to scrounge for in her own particular way -- trying to beg, bluster ("impress"), rip off or seduce some of the emotional (sexual) and material (economic) necessities that the oppressor has now reserved for himself. Do-gooder or pseudo-feminist politics is the begging or blustering kind of scrounging (blustering may get you things in the beginning but it doesn't work for very long). Prostitution is the seducing or ripping-off kind. We all do some of each when we have to and none of them ever gets us very much for very long.) Then they could have gotten together with the prostitutes and figured out how they were going to get all these things -- freedom, love and security -- not how to give them up.

# NOTES cont'd

To get what we really want (freedom and love) and to keep it (security) we will have to have power, get it in some way. Of all the speakers on the panel only the prostitutes were talking about doing this and about a viable method for figuring out how to do it. The conference organizers were bogged down in trying to figure out some kind of psychological or "will power" method, for each woman must somehow develop herself to a point where she would then be ready, then be strong and developed enough to take power (or to fight for it).

What the prostitutes were saying was: We are ready NOW. All we need to do is ORGANIZE. Women are ready and developed enough right now to start on the job of getting ourselves power, figuring out ways of doing that.

From the actions of the sponsoring groups, both in the past and at this conference, it would seem clear that all their breastbeating and moaning about how "undeveloped" women are is a way of STALLING the movement either from fear or out of an effort to build up individual strength, the kind of "strength" that may get you some flattery from certain men while holding back all those women (most of us, that is) who are plenty ready NOW to go ahead with the fight. As an oppressed group, our only real strength is unity, in organization. That will be the source of the power with which we wipe out male supremacy once and for all. As for individual development, the growth of our organized support, our feminist power, will release strengths that are already in us, and support and inspire new ones -- as those who have been in the movement already know from experience. The more we organize, the more we fight, the more our power will grow and our strengths will be released and grow -- that will be the fastest method of "self-development", each using what she has to the utmost now, and acquiring more power for women and more strength and skill for herself in the process. ● ● ● ● ●

● The prostitutes were defending while the conference organizers were attacking what is probably the most basic axiom of feminism: that women are not inferior to men. What men have spoken, written and treated us as for thousands of years is not what we are. The conference organizers had accepted men's arrogant and blind assumption that what a woman is to them is actually what she is. They believed, as we have seen, that because a woman is oppressed she is therefore degraded; that being oppressed, in other words, is some kind of reflection on the oppressed person herself.

A conference organizer stood up from the audience and said to the prostitutes, "When you sell your vagina, you're selling your personality." None of the official "feminists" on the panel selected by the conference organizers pointed out to their sister that she was parroting the ancient male-supremacist definition of woman as only a body, only a cunt, only a fucking and breeding machine. It was left to the prostitutes to have to defend themselves and to defend all women with the above elementary point.

The prostitutes know the simple fact that they were not merely "cunts" (vaginas) - it is, after all, a clear biological-physical impossibility - even though they were only "cunts" for men, the men who employed their services. Similarly, they knew that women as a whole are not "cunts" even though men often refer to women as that, treat us as that, and though many of us earn a living through the use of our sexual organs as mothers, wives, and prostitutes. Anybody who has to work for somebody else in order to live (the conference organizers included) should know that she is a different person when the boss is around than when he isn't and that one's seldom one's real self on the job but that the real self one saves for one's own time. To say that women actually

are what their jobs are, that a charwoman, for instance, is a charwoman because that is the limit of her abilities, is to say that women are not discriminated against, kept out of some options and forced into others; that we have a full range of choices, in other words and therefore have only ourselves to blame if we end up "badly." It is to deny another of the most basic feminist axioms: that women are oppressed; in other words, that we live under political, social, economic and military subjection to men - a subjection which is not due to any alleged inferiority on our part, but to men's political, social and economic and military power due to historic circumstances. These historic circumstances are now undergoing changes, it is true, changes which we must all help to speed up whenever there is a chance to do so if we are going to benefit from them as much as possible in our own life time. But the fact that we can change these conditions does not mean that we are free of them, not free now from the power which men still wield due to them.

The conference organizers were saying that our ability to change these conditions is a personal ability, one due to choice. The prostitutes, on the other hand, were saying that women have plenty of personal ability; that what we need to change our conditions is political ability. In other words, that some women through luck and connections, as well as work, may be able to make a big jump in improving the conditions of their lives. But changes on a significant scale for more than a relatively small number of women will require a program of taking power on a feminist basis.

The prostitutes were also challenging another of the basic axioms of male supremacist society; the myth that prostitutes are "fallen" women who are leading a more rotten degraded life than ordinary women. They were trying to explain in what ways this wasn't so by examining and discussing the myths about women's other alternatives. The conference organizers were literally horrified by what the prostitutes were saying (and the implications of what it says about what's open to women - sexually and economically - in the society we live in are horrifying). But rather than wanting to go deeper into this question - and it is still an open one - with the courage the conference organizers and their groups are always talking about, or at least with curiosity (the search for truth, a friendly party might call it) or sympathy (a mutual desire for liberation, in other words), the conference organizers froze in their tracks.

"Money buys power and men have the power because they not only have the money, but they have it set up so that we are good when we give and bad when we are concerned about money. Although she may be well-treated in some ways, the housewife works as a slave; she receives no pay. One of the things she is required - by law - to do, is provide sexual intercourse for husband and to be the bearer of his children. Prostitution is "evil" and "degrading" because it threatens to limit his power. He fears we may all demand to be paid. That's why he defined prostitution as the ultimate sin."

Dorothy Tennov, "Prostitution and the Enslavement of Women"

"We came here today to eliminate prostitution and are not going to let anyone stop us," responded the conference organizers, as if they were the militants faced with a male supremacist enemy attack. They attempted to twist the reality of what was being said to make it look as if the prostitutes were the ones saying that they weren't oppressed, because they were talking about (some) advantages in prostitution. The conference organizers were trying to make it look as if the prostitutes were against the goals of the conference - the elimination of prostitution - and the goals

and analysis of the women's liberation movement in general. In fact, the prostitutes never said they were against either goal but made it clear again and again that they were for both.

The prostitutes at this conference were admitting that they were oppressed both as women in general and as prostitutes in particular. That their particular situation was in some ways different from other women, they did not deny. (despite what the conference organizers said to this effect). And they were ready to join in the effort of figuring out a way to do something about it. What they actually said about the elimination of prostitution was that they felt that it couldn't be done until there was some kind of better alternative for the women in it. They themselves weren't going to "give it up" at this time nor did they know any others who would. And they proposed that the best way now to work towards its elimination was: 1) to carefully study the problem in all its aspects and 2) to continue work on the problem of devising individual and collective strategies for women as a whole. What the "working girls" were saying was making lots of sense for all women, the conference organizers too, and they should have at least listened instead of frantically sticking to their pre-ordained plan and dogma which was rapidly revealing itself to be more and more questionable (and more and more in the interests of male supremacy rather than the interests of women). This was, after all, supposed to be a conference and not a rubber stamp. Maybe they could have learned something. (And anyway, women are supposed to be good at changing their minds. The conference organizers would have done well to see what is strong in what men hate about women.)

They didn't listen, however, because they didn't want to. As the afternoon went on, they often seemed just totally deaf to what the prostitutes were saying, as well as (ridiculously) unappreciative of the high caliber of ideas that were coming out of the mouths of these women who were, or so it seemed to have been to the sponsors - just whores, after all. Sometimes it was hard to decide whether the conference organizers were blinded by their contempt for prostitutes who, they kept insisting, couldn't possibly know more than they themselves did and who, they also kept reiterating, were degraded women. Other times, it seemed as if the conference organizers were fully aware of the depth of insight and ideas of the prostitutes but were just terribly jealous of this strength, that they were just refusing to recognize, rather than failing to recognize, the prostitutes' contributions.

The conference organizers were ready enough, it seemed to accept the "knowledge", the quotes and statistics, of already recognized, Establishment "scholars" - the ideas of men, in other words, or of those women acclaimed by men. But they somehow became threatened when members of their own class and, worse yet, when women they considered even lower than themselves showed signs of superior rather than inferior knowledge and spirit.

It didn't matter that the woman may have gained her knowledge at a ghastly price. It didn't matter that the woman - in this case, the prostitutes - might be putting her knowledge to the use of the movement to advance the interests of all women, as well as of her own. The conference organizers were apparently too wrapped up in their very immediate jealousies, and the problems of maintaining what position they had already be able to achieve, to think about what their interests as a whole were or how they could work for real power for themselves by building power for women as a whole. They were going for the immediate benefits of impressing people (however falsely) or of intimidating them (however momentarily) instead of for the long run benefits that an effective movement could bring about.

As soon as it became clear at the conference that the prostitutes had captured the favor of the audience with their personal honesty and political insight, the conference organizers began a frantic effort to put a stop to this growing alliance and preserve their won reactionary control, immediately launching a two front campaign: 1) to discredit the prostitutes and 2) to discredit the people in the audience. To anyone who has been around the women's movement for very long, the techniques will be familiar, and many of them are used by the rearguard and out and out enemies in the political movements of other oppressed groups as well.

The women of the audience (of which I myself was one) were attacked as, among other things, 1) being too much "like women" and only wanting to talk about feelings instead of getting "political" 2) being voyeurs who wanted to groove on other people's experience, who wanted to see a "freak show" 3) being on a guilt trip. Now, all of these above charges against the audience are sometimes real problems in women's liberation groups, ways some women have of feeding off the others instead of confronting the oppressor. But in this case, as has so often been true in the women's movement, they were out and out lies which were being used to divide the movement, to keep it "respectable," to hold militant (except they call it "emotional") feminism back and even bury it completely. If anybody was on an apolitical do-gooder guilt trip, for instance, it was the conference organizers. And it was the conference organizers who were "ego-tripping" on their own experiences, telling their experiences to show how much better they were than other people and thereby making a mockery of the truth that consciousness raising really should be.

With all the talk the conference organizers indulged in about how they were providing the political analysis and theory while the working prostitutes were providing the experience -- making a division between politics and experience that the radical wing of the feminist movement had exposed long ago as a male supremacist trick -- it was in fact the prostitutes who were providing the political analysis and theory, as well as the experience. It was they who talked about taking power, not giving things up or acts of individual martyrdom or helping others with social work or charity reforms. It was they who talked of eliminating male supremacy as a whole -- all its forms of sexual and economic exploitation -- not just one of them, like prostitution.

"The term 'prostitution' must change in meaning. It could be stripped of its connotation of degradation and expanded to include all our business (money exchange) relationships with males. Unified we can produce the goal of equal opportunity. Unified, we can get a fair price for all our services without any one threatening us with hellfire or ostracism. Unified, we will not be exploited whatever we sell. Let prostitution be the matter-of-fact selling of services (and whether I enjoy my work is none of anybody else's business). 'Maybe with other alternatives available, no woman will elect to have sex for money. We'll find out.' Dorothy Tennov, 'Prostitution and the Enslavement of Women'"

After the conference was over, the organizers switched to a whispering campaign to try to make it look as if the prostitutes didn't really mean the good things they said - a contradiction, it would seem, to the conference organizers' other claim that the prostitutes weren't saying anything worth hearing.

"The prostitutes weren't really the kind of feminists they were putting themselves forward to be," said the conference organizers. "Actually they were 'Leftists' who had been sent by their underground groups to disrupt the conference."

That sections of the male supremacist pseudo-left would attempt such an involuted and devious, not to mention callous, plan to exploit women (and the women's movement), is certainly (and unfortunately) within the realm of possibility. The trouble with such an analysis of what happened at the conference, however, is that it safely avoids any of the issues raised at the conference itself.

We have already seen the sad story of how the conference organizers falsely called a conference in the name of a radical feminism in which they didn't believe. And we have seen how the prostitutes -- whoever they were -- were the ones defending the ideas and methods of radical feminism.

That women may or may not be on the Left does not in itself contradict that they are also feminist.

Feminism is the most radical movement. It is the strategy for the liberation of the oldest oppressed class in history. Feminism, therefore, is the Left, in the truest sense of both words (although, of course, "Leftists" aren't always what they say they are just as we have seen from this conference that "radical feminists" aren't always what they say they are, either).

So the political question is never only what someone calls herself. It is what she is saying about the problem, what she is proposing to do about it and how she is proceeding to follow through on her strategy.

The kind of movement that the conference organizers were trying to build, the "movement" that they were espousing was based, as we have seen, on contempt for women, a contempt for all women other than themselves, that is, and a few others who had also managed to "escape" what they saw as brain damage wrought by the oppressor, and therefore qualified as leaders. There were the ordinary women, (as some of the conference sponsors would put it), and then there were themselves (some of whom had once been "ordinary" too, they conceded graciously, but who had managed to "develop" themselves).

What women like this (the conference organizers) do not admit, do not recognize, because it is not in their interests to do so, is that THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS AN ORDINARY WOMAN, there is no such thing as an ordinary wife, an ordinary prostitute, etc. Any woman who came along and said something smart, therefore, they had somehow to differentiate and divide from other women. She must somehow not be a woman actually. She had to be either a "feminist" or...something else...like a "leftist."

The women who want to think of themselves as different from other women and better, as exceptional in that sense, who want to separate themselves off from their sex, do not want to see how exceptional and extraordinary women in general are. Their so-called theories say that the experience of women, women's oppression, in this case, makes women dumb and damaged.

What the conference organizers didn't see -- didn't want to see -- was that this very experience, the experience of oppression, can often make people extremely knowledgeable, extremely smart. They did not see that the true leader among women was not somebody who had exceptionalized her experience, who saw herself as an exception, who had escaped the experience and situation of other women (an impossibility!), but one who had generalized her experience and therefore politicized it. In this sense only could she be called "exceptional": that she had had certain experiences which had enabled her to generalize, certain opportunities to break through the usual barriers which in most cases are still able to keep (certain kinds of) women and other people separated from each other and therefore continuing to see their experiences only as isolated, individual ones. She had had experiences that had exposed certain lies to her beyond a question and beyond doubt, whereas other women might still be misinformed about these myths. And she was not using this knowledge to establish herself above other

women with special favors from men by defining herself as an exceptional woman (either as someone even more "womanly" than the others or a woman "unlike other women"). She was attempting to share her knowledge with other women -- her knowledge about herself and her knowledge about them -- against the elaborate, ever shifting tactics of some (female opportunists) to stop her.

It was this kind of true leadership which the prostitutes were providing at the conference.

#### "ROUNDELAYS"

De Sor Juana Inez De La Cruz  
Mexicana  
1648 - 1695

Translation: Bernice Rincon

Foolish men who accuse  
women without reason  
without being aware that you  
are the cause of that guilt.

If with eagerness without equal  
you solicit their disdain  
Why do you want them to do good  
when you incite them to evil?

You fight resistance  
and then with gravity  
you say it was lasciviousness  
that which was done by diligence.

What manner of being can be more rare  
than he that, without counsel  
breathes on a mirror and fogs it  
and then is sad because it is not clear.

In favor or in disdain  
you are the same  
Complaining if you are treated badly  
Mocking us if we really love you.

None wins your favor,  
She that is most prudent,  
If she does not open up to you  
is ungrateful  
and if she does she is lascivious.

You are always so foolish,  
with your unequal measures,  
this one you blame for being cruel  
and the other you blame for being easy.

Well, how should she be made  
that one that your love looks for  
if the one who is prudent offends,  
and the one who is easy is a bore?

Moreover between the boredom and  
pain that your favor incurs  
Good will come to her who does  
not love you  
And you may complain, as you wish.

Do your lovers give you pain  
to your liberties take wings,  
and after making them bad,  
you want to find them virtuous  
very good.

Who has been most to blame in  
a passion that has erred  
she who falls upon being courted,  
or he who courts for the fall?

Or who is more to blame  
No matter what wrong has been done  
She who sins for pay  
or he who pays to sin?

Well, why are you surprised  
at the blame that is yours  
like them as you have made them,  
or make them as you would like  
to find them.

Quit soliciting  
and then with more reason  
you might accuse the inclination  
of she who seeks you out to court you.

from Regeneración CHICANA ISSUE

# THE MEN'S PAGE

## MALE PROSTITUTION BY LINDA BASANNA

Prostitution is female: it is one of the few activities where those who practice it are universally referred to as "she" and not "he." This seems curious in view of the fact that many estimates (including those of the Kinsey Institute) indicate that nowadays there are about as many male prostitutes in large American cities as there are female prostitutes. Like the women, the men also cater to a clientele which is in the vast majority male. Nor is this simply a modern phenomenon. Male prostitution can be traced back as far as the Oriental empires of the third millennium b.c. and has existed alongside female prostitution throughout the centuries.

Of course you don't have to look too far to find the function of this false identification of prostitution as a female profession - only as far as the arrest statistics which show the police persecution of the female prostitute and the relative hands-off policy applied to the men. According to the FBI Uniform Crime Report of 1970, females made up 79.3% of the total arrests for "prostitution and commercialized vice," while males constituted 20.7% of the arrests. Even this figure is misleading since the 20.7% males arrested for "vice" would include not only prostitutes - if any - but also pimps, pornographers, movie house operators and any other men involved in the sex business. What's more, the situation for women is getting worse. Between 1960 and 1970, a period when the overall population increase in the U.S. was 13%, male arrests in this category increased only 17.2% while female arrests showed a 73.2% increase.

The problem is not only one of selective enforcement of the laws. It is built into the prostitution laws themselves. A common legal definition of prostitution in some states reads as follows: "the practise of a female (my underlining) is offering her body to an indiscriminate intercourse with men for money or its equivalent" or "common lewdness of a woman for gain." Other states go further - they define a prostitute as a "promiscuous" woman, whether she is paid or not. In this way, a male prostitute cannot be legally accused of prostitution while a female non-prostitute (i.e. one who is not involved in a financial transaction for individual sex acts) can go to jail for prostitution.

But male prostitution does exist, despite all the attempts to pretend otherwise, and in recent years it is considered to be steadily increasing in all the Western countries. What does this increase mean? In part it is only one aspect of a historical trend in prostitution - and in employment generally - which has sought to take away from women even the few limited and exploitative ways we have had of earning a living. Traditionally the only thing women have ever had to sell was our sexual functions and now men, including the male prostitutes are moving in to take over the hustle. Just as men wrested away from women their places in medical care (before it became a "profession"); just as they are now moving into teaching and (back) into clerical work, men are also attempting to take over prostitution.

This trend began in earnest with the highly publicized "vice raids" of the early 20th century - the major effect

of which was to transfer the management and profits of prostitution from the madam to the pimp. It is no coincidence that there was a longstanding rivalry between the madam and the pimp. As Polly Adler, a famous New York madam in the '20's put it, "I had two great enemies all the time I was in business. One was drugs, the other was pimps." Nell Kimball, a New Orleans madam, was even more direct: "There is nothing lower than a pimp, unless it's some politicians I have known." Many madams refused to even employ a woman who had a pimp. In the long run, however, the madams were driven out, and today the pimps are raking in the profits.

The trend toward male direction and profiting from prostitution has gone even further in those countries where prostitution has been legalized (brought under state regulation). In West Germany,

for example, the pimps are now rich men in business suits.

Of course, female prostitution was never really controlled by women. The very fact that, with rare exceptions, the buyer is always male would rule out that possibility and show where the real power lies. And a large part of prostitution profits have always gone into the pockets of some men, whether through payoffs to police or government officials, through connections with organized crime, or whatever. The importance of contemporary developments seems to be that the token female management of prostitution, which formerly existed in the form of the madam, has now been virtually eliminated. What was always a bad situation has gone from bad to worse.

With men now firmly in control of prostitution more and more of the jobs themselves are going to other men. Some male prostitutes go the whole gamut in their competition with the female - makeup, frilly clothes and the most exaggerated feminine shuffles. But they are a minority. The majority of male hustlers are supermasculine - and in this male supremacist world, are therefore of even greater value than the "female" types.

A large number of male hustlers identify themselves as heterosexuals. And that's where an important contradiction comes in: although these men have more power than their female counterparts, they are in an exploitable position with regard to the higher class men, the homosexuals who are able to buy them. The most comprehensive study of male hustlers was done in Copenhagen in 1953. Among the findings: 85% were under 21 years of age, 87.5% were solely or mainly heterosexual in their private lives, only 30% came from economically stable backgrounds. Hustling for them was not a longterm career, as it is for many women, but it was a way of earning money when nothing else was available.

Like female prostitution, the male variety too occurs in a less "official" more informalized way. This is the case with the young man, for example, who is under pressure to sleep with his boss as a way of obtaining upward mobility or even just keeping a job. Despite what the "gay liberation movement" would have us believe, there are lots of male homosexuals with considerable power in this country. In fact, there are whole fields which are already under almost complete homosexual control. These seem to come in mainly two types: the fields whose major function is the maintenance of female oppression - fashion, cosmetics, and interior decoration, for example; and those which serve a general repressive function in the society, notably the FBI, the CIA and the Catholic Church. The young man who wants to rise in any of these structures will have to bow to his "superior's" will.

And so the area of prostitution is like a microcosm of the society as a whole: women oppressed by men; men oppressed by other men but kept from fighting by their own male supremacy; and the all male ruling class johns calling the shots. The problem is ultimately one of power - not just one area (prostitution) where that power is exercised - and the solution can only lie in taking that power away from those who are presently controlling our lives.





# MR. SANDMAN...

by Clara Feuer

I'm walking from the subway against cold night wind. It's winter. I've spent another day at work, and my feet are tired, so my mind is tired as well. Drudgery is what I do there, technical drudgery spiced with small talk and jokes; the old techniques we use to make the time pass as quickly as possible when it's not our time. A day like this leaves me small; full of small thoughts and weariness, full of confidence in my small abilities but not in my large ones. The day has used me up and wrung me out, but there's a lot left to do before it's over. I have a dance class to take, then the long subway-ride home, my dinner to make, the dishes to wash and a little straightening up to do - I live alone and I like it neat. Then perhaps I'll sit with the phone glued to my ear, or get in bed with a book, either way trying to repossess the day, make some sense out of it, make it a day that I have lived. (Because I know my life is passing.)

Now what, I wonder, could make it good? What would I need to make me be able to say, "I love my work!" that statement I've seen men make, their faces brimming with confidence and enthusiasm, that statement which intimidates me a little and makes me feel smaller and left out. When I wonder, "What are those men that I'm not," my imagination refuses to answer, but when I put it another way and ask, "What have they got that I don't," whole worlds appear.

Right away it occurs to me I could use a help-mate. My job pays pretty well, and it's a job which other people think must be "fascinating:" in fact things do happen now and then which are interesting in a small way, and I get absorbed. Now supposing that after a day at my job I were to come home, tired feet and all, to a handsome man who would sit me down, take off my shoes and massage my feet tenderly, bring me nice comfy slippers (which I don't actually have) and then serve us up a beautiful dinner by candlelight. I could tell him everything that happened to me during the day, thereby imbuing it with some significance. He would laugh at the funny parts and hope sincerely for my progress. (Naturally: his well-being depends upon it.) Then,

as I'm resting with my eyes half-closed, he soothes me with charming little stories of this and that, stories I don't need to take seriously and only half listen to. Let's say he's been home all day: he's glad for the news of the outside world, the sense of reality I bring into the house each evening. He washes the dishes and runs my bath, and when I get out, all fresh and nice, we share a cup of cocoa. I love his little stories, so tender and nonsensical they tie me back into the creative, nonlogical, emotional part of life and set me dreaming. Then we go to bed and he kisses me from my head to my toes. (Such as they are.) In his eyes, and in his hands, I'm transfigured, and he himself is extremely beautiful: tender and passionate - those are our watchwords and we do it night after night after night.

Not bad, right? My job looks good to me - great to me. Yes, we could use more money, but I don't want him to work; then he would come home every day all worn out and shuffling like I do and he wouldn't be captivated by every-

thing I said: Nor would he captivate me. I like money but I'm not greedy for it: my happiness comes first. I'm smart, happy, and "middle-class," so I can take life slow: I know I have a fairly good future.

Unfortunately, it's very true that the men I know whose needs seem to be satisfied by things-as-they-are, don't have the kind of home-base love, beauty, support and understanding I'm fantasizing for myself. Perhaps, instead, many of them have live-in help, the kind that cooks, cleans, and keeps the bed warm: where romance fades, routine flowers. The trouble with this arrangement is, that people want to live well, so either you have to pay them for the work they do, or you have to discover that weakness which you can exploit to push them into slavery. Almost every woman I know, myself included, will make a slave out of herself for the promise of love. But men aren't gripped with the same vertigo at the thought of a loveless life, once they realize that, even if they can't wrap themselves up in the real thing, they can manoeuvre their way into a fairly cozy imitation. Society has to help:

the woman's face has to be whacked about almost from birth, until it hangs with appropriate limpness from the neck. So that, years later, a man can tell a woman that, no matter how bad things are at home with him, they'll be worse for her if she leaves: and her experience will tell her that he might be right. Where love fades, fear flowers. Perhaps I too could learn these tricks and convince some man that the world is such a fearful place that he's best off in my back pocket? No, not a chance: the power of society is not on my side. So where does that leave me? It leaves me without the services of a loving or obedient spouse. But more important, it leaves me walking home on a winter's night feeling that I'll always be without, that these are just dreams against the cold.

Suddenly I remember real moments I have lived and seen that tell me that even fear doesn't always keep us women in line. There are more wild-cat strikes, more major and minor acts of insurrection among us domestics than among any other people who do any other kind of work. Such riotous domestics don't give their bosses too much comfort and I'm glad I'm not a boss; I might be dragging my flat feet around the corner to the local bar, instead of home to supper, bath, and bed, even though I have to fix them myself.

Then why is that man's face still brimming with confidence and enthusiasm? Because he's still smiling, even though, in actuality, he too may be living alone, living a life as limited a round of routine as mine, and lacking that redeeming, perfect domesticity at the end and beginning of each day which he too must dream of. In my mind's eye I see his face again. The skin is well-polished, the eyes slightly glazed, and the smile, while remaining a gesture of the mouth, does seem to convey an inner feeling of self-satisfaction. The physical conditions of our lives are similar, and yet our faces are different. The difference must lie in our expectations. He dreams, and from past experience and present example, expects his dream's physical realization. I dream, and know I'm dreaming. I wake up to a world where, with things-as-they-are, I'd best be alone.

A YOUNG GIRL'S DAY ON A VERY LONG UNEMPLOYMENT LINE

HIM: (the usual) Did you work last week?

ME: No. (for the 24th week)

HIM: (suddenly) Why not?

ME: (I just looked at him, puzzled and a little worried.)

HIM: (sneering) A pretty girl like you should be able to find some kind of a job. There's always a man to work for.

ME: What?! (As I signed the card he handed me, I looked at his white, pimply face and suddenly got brave). I don't call that work, I call that exploitation.

HIM: (silent, and sneering).

ME: (also saying nothing, as I grabbed my stuff and left, but deciding to report him if it happened again.)

## UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS EXTENDED AGAIN

If you are a jobless worker in New York State currently receiving unemployment benefits you are eligible for an additional 13 weeks of benefits beyond the 39 weeks previously available to you.

Although the reason given for the extension of benefits was concern over "the loss of jobs during the recession," the Labor Department has not gone out of its way to inform workers of their rights and publicity about the extension has been at a minimum. This information is especially important for women who have the highest unemployment rates of any workers.

The extension is the result of an agreement between the state and federal government which went into effect on January 31, (because the unemployment rate in New York State went above 60%). The new benefits will be paid entirely from federal funds. THE DEADLINE FOR APPLYING FOR THESE EXTENDED BENEFITS IS JUNE 25, 1972.


B.L.

## FEMINIST PARTY cont'd

to the press, it sure is to the people, good news in fact. They have been turning out in large numbers to hear her and indicate their support.

The big hurdle is the Democratic Convention this summer. It is there that the real battle will take place because it is the politicians and not the people who are opposed to Chisholm's candidacy.

The Feminist Party, in line with its real political involvement, is sponsoring a Miami Demo Tour from July 8-15, so that you can be in Miami during the Democratic Convention to influence the platform writers and support Congresswoman Chisholm. The tour is priced at \$299; for further information contact: Irene Davall, Tour Coordinator, The Feminist Party Miami Tour, 311 West 24th Street, New York City 10011.

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# THE PROFESSIONAL WOMAN



BY DOROTHY TENNOV

The professional woman is important because she is often cited as the exception, an exception which does not prove, but which defies, the rule that all women in our society are victims of prejudice and discrimination. She is held up to show that women can make it, because she has made it, a view sometimes expressed by professional women themselves. In fact, numerous studies show that in all professions women are represented more often in the lower than in the higher ranks and that they receive lower salaries than males with comparable credentials.

Beyond the overall statistical picture, there are the day by day events of the life of the professional woman, the fine grain pattern, the details which make up the unequal position of the woman professional, whatever her field her rank or her salary. Until recently she has seldom perceived or admitted these details, but instead rationalized her environment by secretly blaming her situation on flaws in her own performance and personality. When her eyes open to the true nature of her circumstances, she recognizes that despite her favoured position relative to other women, she is crippled and victimized and often so blinded that she contributes to the victimization of her even less fortunate sisters.

The female professional in pursuing her career, even "successfully", still must walk about disguised, because her colleagues do not see the real person behind the mask of femaleness which she is unable to remove. She can never play it straight, but must adopt one of the strategies through which professional functioning is permitted her, a functioning which is always limited compared to what would be possible for the person of her abilities who is male. However unconscious her protective reactions may have become, they are there, nevertheless. The woman lawyer, physician, academician, architect, must always damp her enthusiasm for her own ideas must always rank with less experienced or less capable males and be subordinate to her equals. To be assertive is to be vulnerable; to be less than perfect is to be vulnerable; to be an innovator is to be most vulnerable of all. The professional woman knows to inhibit

all but the most logically sound and best-documented propositions. Only males are permitted to take unpopular positions without undermining their credibility.

If she is sexually attractive to her male colleagues, the professional woman may be the recipient of considerable flattery and attention, attention which may distract her, especially at the beginning of her career, from the true nature of their attitude toward her as a professional, and of the limited nature of the relationship which she may have with them. Although seemingly "one of the boys," she is more likely to be looked at than listened to when she makes a comment at a meeting; it is only if and when she comes to wield true power over them that she will really be heard. Advancement is more likely to result from hard work than from original thinking for when a woman attempts to put forth new ideas, she must overcome not only the resistance with which originality is always received, but also the added strength which the universal assumption of basic female inferiority gives to her opponent. "We will not be free until all our sisters are free," is not empty dogma. So long as discrimination and prejudice against women is permitted, all women are at risk.

As she begins these days to incline toward the women's liberation movement, the professional woman already has several strikes against her; she is battle-weary and calloused, a tired veteran. She usually comes to the movement only when she recognizes defeat.

At 20, she is an outstanding student, far ahead of her fellows - male and female. The woman's movement seems to her a haven for those without will or ability to put out the slightly greater effort which brings success to one's grasp. Perhaps discrimination against women prevailed in the past but she does not experience it. Besides, at this point, she likes men, and finds her relationship with them happy and rewarding, far more so than her relationships with women who are so often jealous and who have little interest in the theoretical and philosophical issues which concern her.

At 30, however, she is beginning to crack. The burdens are more than she bargained for. Usually, her career is temporarily suspended at this age while

she "completes" her life by child-bearing and marital responsibilities. It is becoming clear that her best laid plans for professional accomplishment must be juggled with these other things. She was not prepared for this: she wonders what she has done wrong; she sees a psychiatrist (who blames her problem on "sex-identification conflict," "penis-envy" or "masculine protest"); she throws herself into motherhood and domesticity with increased vigour; she stops reading her professional journals; she plays bridge; she feels frustrated and guilty for having feelings of frustration and guilt, which in turn . . .

By 40, she has thrown off those conflicts, if she is to be a professional woman (many drop out) and given that she is intelligent, competent and creative, at least in potential, she achieves the professional status and recognition - if she has been industrious and fortunate - of an inferior and younger male. Her real potential contribution is still not welcomed; she has even learnt not to hear her ideas herself, unless they are put forth by others. At conventions she is no longer "one of the boys" but, unless she is on her husband's arm, simply lonely. She has begun to need cronies, women who may be very unlike her in their interests within the profession and therefore, even in the hall of professional meetings, cannot talk shop with each other because their basis of communion is their exclusion from the cliques of those (males) who are their intellectual peers. The professional woman at 40 is rejected by our Couples Society which does not understand that men and women can be comrades, or that for a man and woman to eat together does not mean that they sleep together. Thus men have many excuses for not socializing with female colleagues; they may feel themselves obliged to pick up the tab in a restaurant; they may become the victim of scandal and gossip; they may find themselves inferior to an inferior if they allow the conversation to get on to serious topics; they fear that the woman's real aim is to capture a mate. But these "reasons" are often mere rationalizations.

In addition, professional men do not wish to waste their time with a woman colleague when it is only the males who wield the political power within the profession through which their own careers can be advanced. As one male put it: "There are things a man can accomplish with a phone call (Hello, Charlie, old pal, how's the wife?) that no woman can possibly achieve, not through the writing of a hundred articles and well-thought out letters. She is outside the network of friendly patronage, gentlemen's agreements and outright deals which make our world go round."

By 40 then, she understands her situation: either she is one of those rare token true exceptions - which we will not take time to discuss - or she is broken. A restructuring, through shrinkage of her goals and ambitions has reduced the problem. But every time she reads that another Johnny Nothing, who copied her essay questions back in Eng. Lit. and still barely got a C while she always had As, has been appointed Director of some Institute, a position which would have given her the time and position to get her ideas into practice and the credentials which would assure them an audience, every time she hears such she dies a bit more.

When she joins the Women's Movement

and through open consciousness raising learns the identification with all women which is appropriate to the reality of sexism, she may stand up to her full height for the first time in her life. The Women's Liberation Movement has begun to build a culture in which women are created equal. This new culture offers hope for women of any age, and there are a number of reasons why the professional woman is of great importance to our struggle. While not necessarily more gifted than their sisters at home or in the factory, professional women are intelligent, resourceful and energetic (they have had to be) and their skills, political acumen and writing experience can be useful to other women. They are likely to command, even at second string, power which can be of value to the achievement of feminist goals. For her part, the professional woman needs the movement for her salvation. As she begins to work with her sisters, she regains some of the strength that the years of uphill battle with the masculine oligarchy have sapped. Although she may at first appear more knowledgeable than women without her impressive credentials, she is likely to have been more damaged by her futile attempts to realize her potential and hence to have developed defences against the recognition of what sexism actually does to her (even as she cites statistics which demonstrate discrimination) than her sister who looked on from a less pressurized vantage. In meetings where women describe their experiences as women in a sexist world in a positive atmosphere of non-judgemental respect, the professional woman comes to understand how much she has to learn from other women. Eventually she is able to accept herself as a woman and to recognize how her former attitudes towards women were derived from the traditions of thousands of years during which the male conquest was made possible by the envy and distrust which divided women. No longer is she proud of being unlike other women; no longer does she secretly consider herself not really a woman at all (but something better, a kind of male). She begins to view other women as victims of injustice and as equals, persons who deserve not only consideration but genuine attention and respect. Sisterhood begins with the assumption of equality, just as sexism begins with the opposite. Both are self-fulfilling prophecies. The gulf which separated the professional woman from her sister was created by masculine-serving myths of female inferiority which made it hard to be a woman-identified woman. The Woman's Movement is closing that gulf and ending the divisiveness that has kept us all enslaved in our futile efforts to gain selfhood at the expense of our sisters.

Thank the goddesses, things are changing.
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This article was reprinted from Women Speaking, a British feminist newspaper. For copies send \$2.80 to Esther Hodge, 72 Oakley Street, London, S.W. 3 England.

The format of the journal FEMINIST REVOLUTION announced in the last issues of WOMAN'S WORLD is in the process of re-evaluation. We are sorry that we were not ready at the time we promised. We will soon be mailing our revised format out to all who sent in advance orders.
The Editors

With a Bow to Women's Liberation

To the considerable embarrassment of all male chauvinists, seven of the eight medals awarded to the United States at the recently concluded Winter Olympic Games were won by the female of the species. Less deadly by far were the males. It took the collective effort of a dozen and a half of them to produce one other medal, the one for ice hockey.

If the shrill voices of every Ms. proclaiming the glories of women's liberation do not ring out in triumphant chorus, someone is missing a priceless opportunity. The message is there for all to accept: Take a gal out of a kitchen; give her a chance to freeze to death in a wintry setting and she performs wonders. Even though all female medal winners were too young to have developed kitchen complexes of Freudian intensity, so what?

It might be a shock to those in women's lib to learn that dames once were summarily barred from the Olympic Games in ancient days—even as spectators. If any culprit was discovered, she was led forcefully from the arena and flung to her death off a huge rock in the vicinity. A couple of thousand years ago few dared break Olympic rules. The penalties were too severe. Times have changed. And how!

Eventually, of course, the damsels were admitted to the Olympic festival as spectators and the point finally was reached when they also were allowed to compete. The first female Olympic champion of record was Belische of Macedonia, the driver of a winning chariot during the Olympics of 288 A. D. No charioteers were to be found among our dolls during the refrigerated Olympics at Sapporo over the last fortnight, however. They all moved on either skates or skis.

Short Shrift

Advice is hereby given to the women's libbers, though, to exult in female winners while they are fresh in mind because a sports-minded public normally pays mighty little attention to the distaff athletes. They are a cinch to go relatively unnoticed in the real Olympic Games at Munich in August because the men are the superior performers in every sport. Sorry about that, Gloria Steinem and Kate Millett.

For example, the track and field season will swing back to normal hereabouts this week when the Olympic Invitation meet, the newest board floor spectacular, comes splashing in full color into the Madison Square Garden showcase Friday. There will be international fields in almost every event—at metric distances, too—and a notable cast of characters has been assembled by Jesse Abramson, the indefatigable meet director for Ed Mosler, the man behind the scene.

Because most track meets have events for women nowadays, this one will have them, too. Except for a few close friends and relations, though, the gals just don't

draw customers through the turnstiles. The men produce the brisk ticket sale and the railbirds at the indoor meets

This is a top-notch indoor track carnival that is upcoming and it will be dominated by the males. The gals were a distracting factor in the Winter Olympics, but in the main Olympic show this summer the men will get top billing, even if women's lib vehemently disapproves.

(We'll see! WOMAN'S WORLD)



Twenty-year-old Susan Corrock of Ketchum, Idaho glows from winning a bronze medal in the downhill. Switzerland's Nadig took the gold.

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Some of the topics covered in the first three issues have been:

The Myth of Abortion Law Repeal - a long analysis revealing that, contrary to both establishment and pseudo-radical rhetoric, repeal of the abortion laws is not being supported by The Establishment. Shows how in most states new legislation "reforming" the abortion laws (rather than repealing them) has actually been a step backwards. Challenges the genocide theory of some Black nationalists, with respect to abortion and birth control.

Fewer Jobs for Women - an article on female unemployment which shows how the denial of jobs to women operates to keep women "in their place," dependent on men. It corrects a number of misconceptions about women in the job market - revealing that single women have a harder time finding work than married women, and providing further evidence against the myth of the black "matriarchy."

Rape - articles in several issues analyzing different women's personal experience in their efforts to obtain justice . . . a woman who beats up her attacker and gets arrested . . . a woman who goes through the legal channels and loses . . . a group which challenges the court's protec-

tion of rapists. Shows how rapists function as the extra-legal police force of male supremacy (male supremacy's KKK).

Women Take Church to Court - an article exposing the Catholic Church's longstanding hatred of women and its protection by our "secular" government. A suit challenging the tax-exempt status of the Church, because of its political lobbying against abortion law repeal, is announced.

Male Psychology: A Myth to Keep Women in their Place - an article challenging the old and new psychological theories (such as "internalization") which blame women's problems on women, and which lead to an underestimation of the strength we possess right now to bring about change.

Black and White Women - an article covering problems such as the "naivete" and special liberalism of white women towards black men, which undercuts black women's pioneering feminist struggles.

The Men's Page - a regular feature . . . what men should be doing . . . and the kind of "help" we don't want. Analyses of the politics of impotence and male homosexuality, etc.

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## AN INTERVIEW WITH

## KATHLEEN CLEAVER

This interview with Kathleen Cleaver was conducted by Sister Julia Herve, daughter of the great black novelist, Richard Wright. The portion published here has been edited and prepared by Julia Hare, educator and public relations consultant and Mona Scott, sociology professor at the University of San Francisco especially for THE BLACK SCHOLAR.

HERVE: *The basic problem facing the world today is the exploitation of man by man. But even more fundamental than that is the question which has never been thoroughly analyzed by any revolutionary much less resolved, the exploitation of woman by man. There is a quote from "The State" by V. I. Lenin which says, "Only when you learn to find your way about independently in this question, may you consider yourself to be sufficiently confirmed in your convictions and able with sufficient success to defend them against anybody at anytime." To what extent does this apply to women's liberation?*

CLEAVER: I think this quotation is very instructive. Because the basic principle on which this pamphlet was really written and on which Lenin was operating was the revolutionary change of the social order. He was interested in changing the nature of the state in order to change the nature of society. Even more fundamental, however, than the state — and this is where women become so crucial because women's participation in the state is minimal — is the family. And when you begin to discuss the liberation of women you begin to talk about the alteration of the entire social order of the world regardless of the nature of the state — communist, capitalist, semi-socialist, bourgeois, whatever.

One of the basic problems in the women's liberation movement or its development and the creation is the lack of any form of ideology, any form of research or any form of independent thought, research and activity on the part of women. For all the movements from which we may take models of movements controlled and directed by men. All the ideology which we can read, the revolutionary ideology, the revolutionary teachings, are written by men. And the entire society in which we find ourselves is controlled by men, and every woman in the world regardless of her status, class, nationality, race, opinions, anything, knows that men do not understand women.

The basic reason men do not understand women is the fact that men are not women, they are biologically different, their biological differences lead to emotional differences, their emotional differences lead to behavioral differences — differences in thinking, differences in attitudes — and the society that all women find themselves in is one that has never at any time been organized in such a fashion as to promote the interests of women.

Because men, regardless of the time in history or the nature of the society they are involved in, are engaged in promoting the interests of men. And whether they are aware of it or not — and I don't really think that they are — they consider men to mean mankind. But it's their way of thinking, the values they hold, and the nature of the relationship that has been established between men and women that makes even the discussion, much less the initiation, and not to mention organization of any movement for the liberation of woman, the most difficult change to bring about — the most profound change to bring about — and in the final analysis, the most revolutionary element in changing the social order of the world.

HERVE: *How did you become involved, interested in the women's liberation struggle? And how is the liberation of women related to your view of the liberation of colonial subjects throughout the world?*

CLEAVER: That question has a rather complicated and personal answer and I'll try to be as succinct as possible. I was involved in and have been involved in the struggle for the liberation of black people since I was approximately sixteen years old. The first thing that turned me on was the demonstrations and activities in the South under the leadership of James Forman. I began officially, totally you might say, working in the movement on July 6, 1966. One thing I noticed while working in SNCC was that the bulk of the office work, the bulk of the basic responsibilities of carrying out the day to day work, all the organization were carried out by women and were carried out most efficiently by women. But the first time a woman was elevated to any significant position of power within the organization was in 1966 after the articulation of Black Power when Stokely Carmichael became Chairman . . . May the 3rd, May the 2nd, in Nashville 1966, and Ruby Doris Robinson became the Executive Secretary — a position formerly held for three years, four years I think, by James Forman. Now Ruby Doris Robinson was one of the key figures in the moving powers in SNCC. As a matter of fact, when she died of a very rare blood disease resembling leukemia in 1967, the eulogy written to her was that Ruby Doris was essentially the heartbeat of SNCC. And actually, history has shown that with the death of Ruby Doris Robinson, SNCC's decline began.

HERVE: *Can I ask a question about Ruby Doris? I've heard from some SNCC people that she was actually assassinated in the Southern hospital. That they feel that she was given injections of a type which led her to die. Do you think that this is true?*

CLEAVER: That sounds to me more in the nature of SNCC paranoia than reality. I know for a fact that the type of exhaustion that Ruby Doris suffered . . . Ruby Doris died at the age of twenty-six and she died of exhaustion. I don't think it was necessary to assassinate her. What killed Ruby

Doris was the constant outpouring of work, work, work, work, with being married, having a child, the constant conflicts, the constant struggles that she was subjected to because she was a woman. That is the way I see it. But I don't have any information on that so I can't comment on that assassination thing. But she was destroyed by the movement and whether she was assassinated by drugs or whether she was assassinated by exhaustion is irrelevant at this point. But I'm getting off the track. As I moved to California and became engaged and later married to Eldridge Cleaver, I began functioning, working with the Party, the Black Panther Party. Now after the attempted assassination of Huey P. Newton the Party was in a state of disruption. Many people were in jail for various reasons here and there. The three functional members of the Party that began to put together a movement to liberate Huey Newton, that began to put together the Free Huey movement, were myself, my husband, and Emory. Three very close friends and the three people who were able to function. And I don't think that either of our roles can be considered superior or inferior to the others.

I viewed myself as assisting everything that was done, and you must recognize that this is what's key in the liberation of women. That the form of assistance that women give in political movements to men is just as crucial as the leadership that men give to those movements. And this is something that is never recognized and never dealt with. Because women are always relegated to assistance and this is where I became interested in the liberation of women. Conflicts, constant conflicts came up, conflicts that would arise as a result of the fact that I was married to a member of the Central Committee and I was also an officer in the Party. Things that I would have suggested myself would be implemented. But if I suggested them the suggestion might be rejected; if they were suggested by a man the suggestion would be implemented.

It seemed throughout the history of my working with the Party, I always had to struggle with this. The suggestion itself was never viewed objectively. The fact that the suggestion came from a woman gave it some lesser value. And it seemed that it had something to do with the egos of the men involved. I know that the first demonstration that we had at the courthouse for Huey Newton which I was very instrumental in organizing, the first time we went out on the soundtracks, I was on the soundtracks, the first leaflet we put out, I wrote, the first demonstration, I made up the pamphlets. And the members of that demonstration for the most part were women. I've noticed that throughout my dealings in the black movement in the United States, that the most anxious, the most eager, the most active, the most quick to understand the problem and quick to move are women.

HERVE: *What about the relationship of the white woman to the black man and woman?*

CLEAVER: As a result of my own personal involvement with Eldridge, I had to do a lot of thinking about this particular question about the relationship between the black man and white woman. He did a lot of thinking himself, he wrote much about it in *Soul On Ice*, and some of the things he has to say are valid. You see, some of the reactions of black women are not only, how would you say, hysterical but subjective because in reality when Eldridge was an unknown convict sitting off in the penitentiary writing letters every day to different attorneys asking for assistance on his case, the only one who responded to him was a white woman attorney. No black woman attorney came to his assistance and I don't know if he wrote any — if he knew of one he probably did.

But the point in fact is that no black woman came to his assistance. No black woman got him out of the penitentiary.

The Black Scholar, December 1971 issue on "The Black Woman." Send \$1.25 for a single issue, to Box 908, Sausalito, California 94965. Subscription rates are \$10 a year, \$8 to students and \$25 for 3 years.

This issue is devoted to articles by and about the black woman. Of special interest are a new essay by Angela Davis called "Reflection on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves" and the interview with Kathleen Cleaver on the liberation of women reprinted here.

Angela Davis' article goes back to the time of slavery to refute the male supremacist myth that the black woman was a matriarch who collaborated with the slaveholder in keeping her family in line. On the contrary, she demonstrates that the black woman played a significant part in promoting resistance activities throughout the history of the black community. Davis sees the status of women within the

black community as "a barometer indicating the overall potential for resistance," and male supremacy as an ideological weapon of the ruling class intended to defuse that potential.

The issue also includes, among other things, an annotated bibliography on black women in America, and an article by Shirley Chisholm in which she confronts the white women who ask her "What can we do?" Her reaction: "In many ways it is a strange question — strange because the phrase: 'to help you people' is only implied. It is strange because of the implied assumption that they are free to help . . . in a position to help . . . I have always left only the implication of the real answer, the one thing that they not only might do — the only thing that they must do. Today I must state it. Free yourselves! And in order to do that you must first free yourselves of the assumption that you are now free."

And I had to do a lot of thinking myself in order to be able to accept that because just the fact that any black man had anything to do with any white woman I become very hostile, irrational because of that historical relationship. However, there is the other aspect of that historical relationship that has to be regarded. In order for women to obtain liberation the struggles are going to have to be united on the basis of being women not on the basis of being black women or white women. But that relationship, I'm positive, will have to be on a coalition basis and not on an integrated basis. Because the problems of black women and the problems of white women are so completely diverse they cannot possibly be solved in the same type of organization nor met by the same type of activity. We must remember that colonialist men, white policemen, white politician men, white business men . . . what white men have done to black women as women, my antagonism and hostility towards white men is unyielding and profound. I can understand how a white woman cannot relate to a white man because I cannot relate to a white man. And I feel sorry for white women who have to deal with that type of people.

The perpetuation of racism in the United States was not something that was initiated by white women it was something that was developed as the need for a rationale to justify an economic exploitation of Africans, as Africans, as slaves, as objects of property not even as human beings. For centuries and centuries — in fact up until this day in the U.S. — one of the main pillars of maintaining the subjugation of black people has been the division between the man and the woman, has been the destruction of the family. From the very beginning in the slave system families were separated, this is in the North American slave system. Marriage was not allowed between slaves; it was an absurd notion, this is as absurd as the notion of horses and cows being

married. I'm from the State of Alabama and the plantations in Alabama were breeding plantations to produce slaves. The men were housed in their quarters, the women were housed in their quarters, and a bull — this is what they called them — a stud was selected by the slave master to impregnate the women to produce the best possible, the strongest slave. The black man was reduced to the position of an animal. However, since this whole setup was run by white men they denied the black man access to the black woman. They denied the black woman access to the black man as a husband freely.



But they themselves had free access to the black women. They raped the black women that worked in their homes, the black women that raised their children. The inhumanities and tortures that black women have been subjected to by white slave masters are beyond discussion. And this is not only in the slave quarter of Afro-America, but this is true of colonialism throughout the world. The types of tortures and inhumanities that women have been subjected to by the white men.

Now, it's possible to conceive of a man who is carrying on these types of activities, it is impossible to conceive of that man as any form of a human being. So what this man has to do with this white woman is nothing. So the white woman essentially has become extremely dehumanized by the white man, and that whole Western-European view of the woman as being placed on a pedestal, as being something pure, as being something like a statue, denies the

white woman her humanity.

The whole hangup about sex, that sex was something that women were not supposed to participate in or enjoy but only men, the white woman has been sexually exploited in one level by being denied sexual freedom. The black woman was sexually exploited on the opposite scale by being raped and brutalized and tortured and used by the white man. Now a black man viewing this and knowing this can only feel revenge and take that out on the white woman, the possession of the white man. And that's very understandable, but understanding is not the most intense ingredient in a liberation struggle. Black people have been understanding too long and there's no longer any role for understanding unless that understanding leads to political action that solves the problems.

HERVE: *What are the origins of the present status of women?*



CLEAVER: Since our society is one that's Westernized, and since our view of the problem is that of the colonial woman in a Westernized society, we must deal primarily with the patriarchal elements of the development of the European society, which elevated the man over the woman. The basis of this elevation was more than likely the nature of that environment, and the herding of sheep, and the nonavailability of water, and the necessity of extreme fight over territory, terrain, etc., and so therefore perhaps the most important function for survival being performed by the man, meant that the man was in a superior position vis a vis the environment, than the woman. Now there's this whole thing that Freud gets into about the leader of the tribe having control over all the women — the old man. And in order for the young man to get any women they have to destroy that father. Now, I don't agree with a lot of Freud's theory because I think it has more to do with a particular analyses in a Victorian period of European culture, with that viewpoint in the framework of a Jewish upbringing, but it might be somewhat relevant.

But the fact that women were considered objects and considered property just as African slaves during the slave system were considered objects and considered property puts them in an abject status. Even today in this area women veil, they have no rights, the Koran which is the Bible of the Islamic peoples is very oppressive of the rights of women. The Bible, the Old Testament and the New Testament, is very suppressive of the rights of women, and the Roman Empire was a slave empire. We have to understand that when we talk about the cultural, economic and political basis of the development of the Western European nations most instrumental in colonization, that we must take into consideration their so-called Judeo-Christian heritage and the political basis of the Roman Empire. And it's the role of women under these value systems and these roles that leads to the present status of women in colonial areas. I think that's where we have to get our beginning.

I think also that something is involved there in the fact that the birth — giving birth — is a very mysterious process. Even to this day women are sheltered by their fathers and the man views his daughter as his own possession. When she is given to the husband she is then considered the husband's possession not to be shared with

others. This attitude gave the men control over the women. Although the woman produced the children, raised the children, reared the children, the economic sustenance of the family was provided by the man and the physical protection of that family was provided by the man, and since the man did that and the man controlled, and the man wrote, and the man dictated, and the man was the laws, and the man controlled, it was the man who defined the position of the woman. It's a position very similar to colonial peoples' prior to World War II when all the Europeans decided that the colonial nations should have the right to self-determination. But the colonial people who were subjected to this had no say — there was no representative there — they were silent. As Fanon says, "They were not in history, they were outside of history."

What we see today in the development of the women's liberation movement is the beginning of the entrance of woman into history, the woman beginning to speak for the woman. The woman beginning to understand, analyze the history of woman; the woman seeking the roots of the source of her oppression in order to be able to deal with this. Now, of course there are always, as in any historical case, exceptions. There is the famous example of Cleopatra, who Europeans like to hold up as some kind of queenly sex symbol but who was actually a political figure, a queen and a military leader of the Egyptian people in their fight against the Roman Empire.

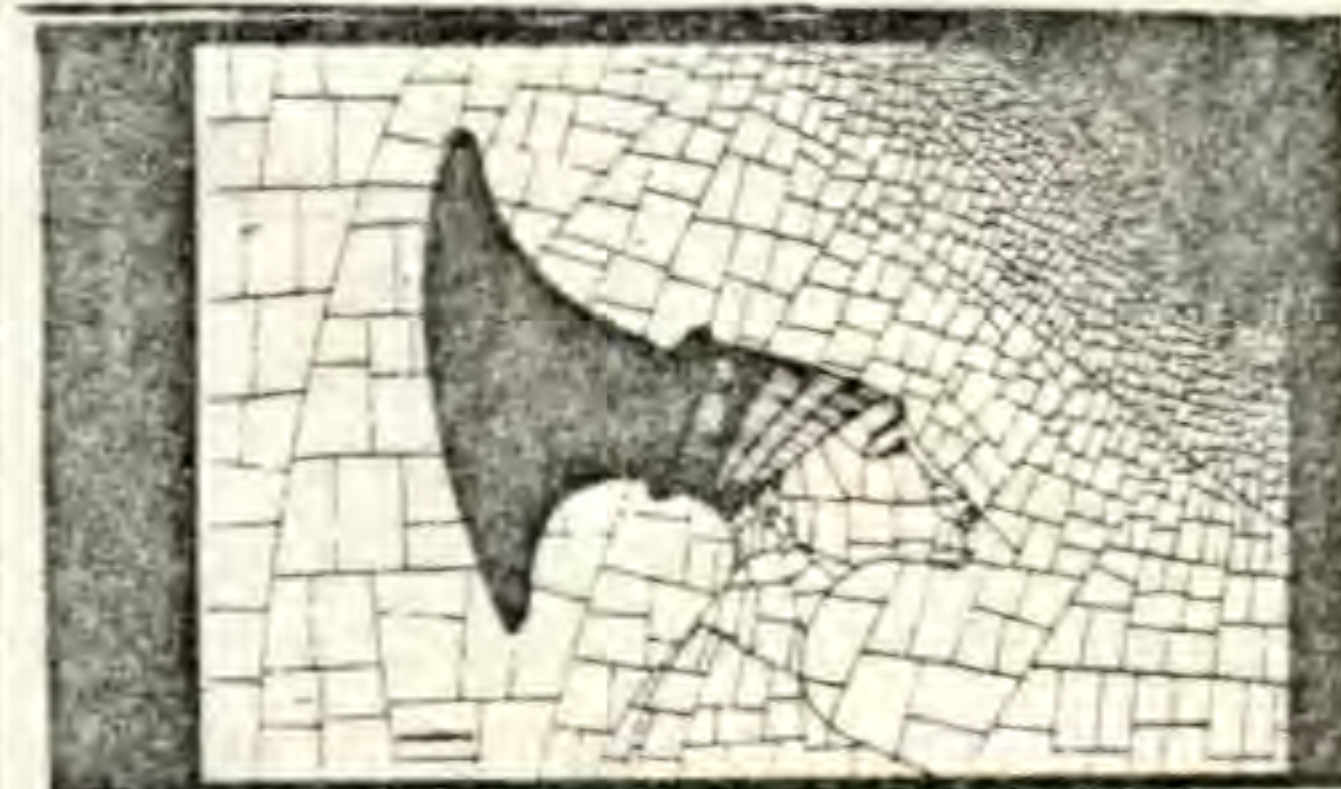
In particular, the history of Afro-American peoples in our struggle for liberation against slavery is laced thoroughly with examples of heroism and political activity and tremendous action on the part of women. The most outstanding examples are Harriet Tubman who was a military genius, who executed 300 successful slave escapes in the underground railroad. A black woman who could neither read nor write and was considered a soul-less inhuman slave by her captors but outsmarted them; fought, managed to have slaves escape, and fought with the Union Army against the Confederacy. There's also the tremendous example of Sojourner Truth. And on the other side we have the example of Harriet Beecher Stowe — not a very good example for us to bring up but to make a point — who wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* which created such a stir in the abolitionist movement that it was like dynamite — a woman wrote this book. But it is not these specific examples that we must deal with, what we have to deal with is the general deprivation of women in their entirety; its roots, its causes, and its elimination. It's not a personal struggle for the personal liberation of individual women, and it's not a class struggle for the liberation of women in individual classes. It's a struggle to totally alter and rearrange the values and organization of a society that allows women to be forced into position of submission, a position of secondary significance, a position of dependency, and a position of inferiority vis a vis men that has no concrete, irreversible actual basis in fact.

HERVE: *Perhaps we could now expand a bit more on the oppression of women originating from her sexual role, her sexual function. That is, that she always has to submit to men in sex, that she rears the children, and that classically she does not have any initiative on that level.*

I can see no reason why the mother who produces the children should have less say in their upbringing than the man whose role is only that of initiator. And after the fertilization for nine months the child, the period of gestation, goes on inside the woman. The period of the caring of the youth is taken by the woman. And this role is extremely crucial, in fact it is the most crucial factor in the reproduction of the species and the maintenance of society. But for some reason this most crucial work performed by woman is the basis for wom-

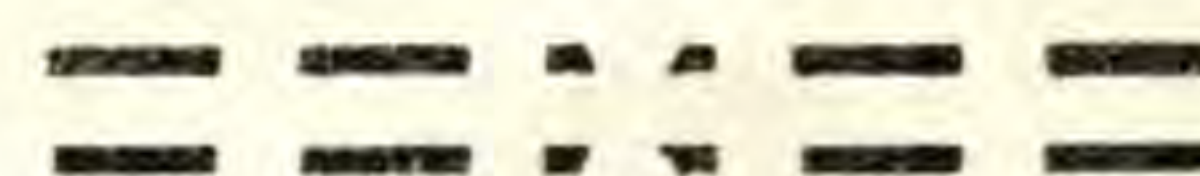
an's position of inferiority. And if anything was rational, this should be the basis for the respect of women.

The nature of the position of black women vis a vis black men in a colonized society, is so entirely different from the nature of white women vis a vis white men in a colonizing society that the nature of the liberation of women under these two different systems has to proceed along very different channels. In the black colony, the oppression of the woman by the black man is something that is perpetuated and encouraged by the system of colonialism run by the white man. We must always remember that the basic enemy of the black woman is not her own man because her own man, the black man, is not the creator or perpetrator of the system that is dedicated to depressing women. However, as black men move to assert themselves, as black men move to regain a sense of dignity, to regain a sense of manhood, to regain a sense of humanity, and to become strong enough and powerful enough and manly enough to fight against the oppressor, they many times take out their resentment of their position against their own black women. And many times flee from the guilt that they know is theirs in their refusal and inability to protect the black woman, their inability to deal with the entire situation that they face created by the colonial system in slavery and leave the woman, abandon the woman to deal with the problems of raising children and surviving in society by herself. And this guilt — this resentment combined to give a very antagonistic tone to the relationships between black men and black women in the black colony in the United States today. Therefore, we see an effort towards an assertion of manhood by the black man following the European model of suppressing the woman. Unfortunately the women, too many of the black women are so brain-washed and anxious to help the men, as they always have been, in any way, that they go along with this and try to become overly submissive. And the violence that black men direct toward their own women, the brutality, the hostility, the bitterness, the antagonism, and all this resentment, is something that black women are subjected to as a result of the colonialization of the man.



I think the problem in essence between black men and black women is a far simpler problem to resolve than the problem between white women and white men. However, in order to resolve that problem between the black man and the black woman, the whole system of colonialism must first be destroyed.

This is where the liberation of women becomes so crucial. That as long as the men deny the women their full role and their full respect in that struggle, that they are cutting themselves short and they're selling the struggle short because the women have as much to give as the men if not even more in some cases, such as in espionage and infiltration. Therefore the black woman must be given her full respect in life and not hampered in her abilities, in her desires, and her activities towards forwarding the liberation of her people.



# a review of MS. MAGAZINE

by Kathie Sarachild

For me the first "preview" issue of MS. magazine turned out to be a gently ticking time bomb buried in Lord & Taylor ads, a molotov cocktail that looked like a martini. Despite its fashionable appearance, MS.'s feminist, political content, in some important ways, is better than most of what the women's liberation movement has yet come up with.

Don't get this complete edition confused with what must have been its decoy - the diluted preview of the preview published in New York Magazine - because there is much more in the final version than there was in that one, including some new information, ideas and evidence that even most women's movement "veterans" probably haven't heard before or responded to enough.

Even the problems of MS. seem to stem from its very strengths. Its serious intention of creating a feminist magazine with a mass circulation sets up some contradictory elements which appear throughout the issue, sometimes within the same article. The editors seem to realize that the exposure of some of the most radical pro-woman truths has the potential for reaching the masses of women and that the magazine can achieve success on this basis as well as advance feminist goals. But acquiring the financial backing for a project of this scope seems to have had to require a certain amount of catering to well-connected people in positions of power who have their own interests to advance by pretending to support women's needs. The challenge for this magazine will be to sort out the best of what could make MS. useful for women and powerful in our hands, from the worst that could only feed the power of male supremacy.

One of the best and most important articles in the magazine - the interview with Daniel Ellsberg, the former high level government official who gave "The Pentagon Papers" to the press - seems to be a perfect example of this dilemma, and not at all because Ellsberg happens to be a male contributing to a feminist journal.

Ellsberg's article is vital because of the important information it reveals and the evidence it contains about the radical political commitment of U.S. women as a whole, taken on a wider, more general scale than we usually get to see. Even for those who "knew all along" it will offer some encouragement and further confirmation for what has come to be known as "the pro-woman line" in the feminist movement. This is the recognition of the great political insight of oppressed groups, and of women in particular, and the understanding that feelings and intuition from direct experience are the expression of an oppressed group's (personal-political) self-interest and an important way of arriving at the truth of a situation in spite of the lies women, for one, are daily bombarded with by the oppressor.

Both Ellsberg's failures as well as contributions are really important to understand. The faulty conclusions Ellsberg draws from the pro-woman truths he has uncovered and only partially understands himself - truths which other male supremacists before him have also "come to" and used in their own interests - are no doubt one reason why some feminists wrongly try to steer clear of acknowledging female strengths, thereby avoiding what would otherwise be a great source of clarity for women, as well as of a terrible anger which would know no bounds until justice was done and our freedom finally won.

In his article, Ellsberg describes how he slowly came to the realization that not

only females, but other allegedly "inferior" groups (like black people and blue collar workers), knew more about the politics of the war in Vietnam than he did with all his "advanced" education. He reveals from polls and information he had access to as a high government official that, contrary to some official misconceptions widely spread by the media and other Establishment channels, in general, people of the lower income and less (formally) educated groups have tended to oppose the war in Vietnam, not support it. All along it has rather been (again, generally speaking) only the men like himself in relatively powerful, high status positions in the United States (with a drive toward improving or maintaining their status) who were the "hawks" blindly and relentlessly supporting this anti-communist crusade. He notes that women in particular, regardless of their race or socio-economic connections with men, were always statistically less likely than men to support the war. This was true even for women married to the men in the high-placed groups most likely to be hawkish. Ellsberg also makes it clear that this political stance of women is not due to some kind of female ignorance or timidity. He refers to more statistics which show that women have supported some wars, that they supported World War II, for instance, in the same numbers and percentages as men. He points out that in light of this it would seem that women actually are not only well able, but better able than men to distinguish a war which is in their interests from a war which is not. Answering a Harvard "social-psychologist" who attributes the "dovishness" of women and others to a statistical tendency to read less about foreign affairs and "a lower level of awareness" about Vietnam, Ellsberg suggests that women and other "out" groups read less because "they share a skepticism about the information handed down to them by the white middle or upper class men who dominate the media and policy making." They may read less, but they know more, in other words.

This information is political dynamite. It challenges some widespread myths about the political attitudes of large numbers of people in the United States. But even more importantly, by so doing, it tells all the individuals in the oppressed groups discussed who have long held their views to themselves that they are not alone, that they are millions strong, in fact, and it leaves people freer therefore to speak out their ideas and to act on them whereas before they were afraid to.

But in Ellsberg's analysis and interpretation of the powerful facts he presents, particularly with regard to women, it becomes apparent that he wants to try to control this pack of dynamite, to guide its explosion in one direction rather than another, and keep it within bounds, those of his own interests. He proceeds to attribute the political blindness and stupid arrogance of men to "cultural" differences, to differences in "values," rather than to men's different and unfair share of power. This, despite the fact that all the information he so courageously shares contradicts this interpretation. He counsels women to act for these higher values, to act for "peace" (instead of for ourselves!), and to stay away from what he calls "masculine forms" of power. By emphasizing values, he evades the question of power - which is the key to women's problems and the key to the problems in the whole world, as well; for it is only by acquiring some power that women will be able to create a

situation in which their values can flower into reality.

Ellsberg discloses the truth of women's great intelligence and united strength, but he would use this truth as a pulpit from which women can preach to the men who rule the world instead of as a base from which women could stage a successful revolt against male supremacy. It is really Ellsberg's pulpit, though, that he has set up, with himself as the master still, preaching to his female flock.

The information Ellsberg has shared, however, more feminists must recognize if we are ever to act on these truths in our own way. No doubt ignorance, fear and some arrogant ("educated") blindspots of our own are part of what has been holding some females back from seeing the great strength of women (other than themselves) and therefore from the kind of militancy this understanding would produce. And that is why the magazine MS. is making such an important contribution. In its own way, even with the kind of political ambiguities described above, MS. through a number of its specific articles and its general approach has taken a more straightforward, simply put and therefore strongly stated pro-woman stance than most other feminist publications.

One such article, "Welfare is a Women's Issue," by (Ms.) Johnnie Tillman, opens with a few slick, journalese lines which seem designed to inspire pity rather than anger, but it soon straightens itself out and goes on to make one of the strongest feminist analyses I've seen anywhere. Tillman doesn't stop for a minute to give any credence to the lies told about women in general in male supremacist society and welfare mothers in particular. And to her, the fact that some women may believe these lies or sput them doesn't make them any truer. "A welfare mother probably has a better head for money than Rockefeller," is her answer to the male supremacist notion that women in general and welfare mothers in particular are frivolous spenders and incompetent bunglers. It takes something akin to economic genius, she points out, for a woman and her kids to make ends meet and survive on the pittance of a welfare check.

Tillman also illuminates some of the problems of general feminist strategy, discussing the dangers of fighting for single issues alone, like child care centers or abortions, rather than for what we really want, freedom and power for women across the board. Our minimum demands, she reminds us, must always advance and guarantee women's right to choose; otherwise, for instance, we may "get" child care centers and be forced to send our children to them. (This is a particular danger now for the women on welfare.) Tillman suggests paying women for "women's work" as one, very important, short term step toward improving women's lives and bargaining power (a step, in other words, which at least goes from slavery into wage slavery!)

Quite a few other articles in MS., including Anselma Del'Olivo's on "The Sexual Revolution" and Jane O'Reilly's on "The Housewife's Moment of Truth" also make some really good connections and hard-hitting points and, in the case of Estelle Ramey's on "Men's Cycles" (the male equivalent of women's monthly menstrual periods) also make some really new ones. The article on child care centers is a good starter for action. Celestine Ware's conversations with New York City Human Rights Commissioner Eleanor Holmes Norton touches briefly on

the emotional areas in the relations between black men and women but in a way I haven't seen go as deep before, in women's liberation publications, anyway.

There would seem to be hope, judging by the selection of many of the articles that MS. might become like a feminist version of the muckraking journals of the early 20th Century and really go digging for information of use to women in their fight against male supremacy.

Relatively few of the articles in this preview issue for instance are befogged in Establishment (Academic, Capitalist, or whatnot) jargon and those false psychological theories in which too many so-called women's liberation writers have buried the simple truths of pro-woman feminism.

Unfortunately, the article "Why Women Fear Success," by Vivian Gornick is, in one way, a horrible example of the above problem. Unlike the usual case with these "psychological" theories, Gornick does come up with a good point in the end, but she still covers herself and weakens and clouds the point by surrounding it with ridiculous, scholarly jargon to make it

sound more respectable. She takes such a roundabout way of coming up with a straightforward insight that it's almost funny.

Gornick, it would seem, has to go visit a big university to "discover" what most females on the street could have told her and what she has probably known all along herself if she ever wanted to admit it: that women are punished in various ways when they reveal that they are as smart as or smarter than men and, therefore, steer clear of open success in competition with men - which, of course, in a man's world, amounts to steering clear of open "success" in practically everything. Gornick actually ends up thanking Harvard for providing time and space and money where science can come up with "new" understandings like this.

MS. also manages to avoid most of the "be strong like me and give up men" dishonesty and defensiveness which has been a detracting undercurrent in so much women's liberation writing. For the most part, the MS. approach to the very real problems to which the above is a reaction seems to be to recognize the whole gamut of women's feelings, both of need and of exploitation,

and to treat women's emotional needs seriously instead of as "hang-ups" of some kind or other.

Unfortunately, however, MS. does tend to err a bit in the opposite direction. It is too often defensively and dishonestly pro-men and therefore exaggerates our need. The truth unfortunately seems to be a very fine and difficult line to adhere to, with definite dangers to the movement lurking on both sides of it, "left" and "right." But trying to find the truth and sticking to it - with our real feelings as the guide - is our only hope for getting what we really want and eliminating all the rubbish which stands in the way.

As it is now, MS. seems to have dealt with the problems and difficulties of uncovering the truth by being something of a hodge-podge, though a good hodge-podge because it has encouraged and brought out some fine, beautifully strong and beautifully true writing that hasn't appeared before, along with the mediocre, run of the mill phoney stuff. The question is, how long can this make-everybody-happy approach go on without becoming a source of confu-

cont'd p. 24

## ON "MS.", THE TITLE

A long time ago, before I went to Mississippi as a civil rights worker, I held to the view and would even go on quite passionately about it - that honorific titles like Mr. or Dr. or Miss before people's names were fussy and pretentious - sometimes even downright snobbish - and just hold-overs from the days of kings and nobles and ancient hierarchical societies in general. I wasn't going to bother with them myself and even took some pride in the fact that I would usually write down my return address on an envelope without a Miss before my name and seldom put down a title when I addressed a letter to an acquaintance - male or female (or even older people or teachers when they were friends.) I wasn't worried then about the fact that men and women were differentiated by these titles or even that married women were differentiated from single women (and men were all equal in comparison) I just didn't like any of them - for the various "idealistic" reasons stated above.

When I joined the SNCC Mississippi Summer Project (1964), I was suddenly in a situation where black people were literally risking their lives if they made the simple request to the people in power that they be addressed by these same honorifics. One of the ways that white racists in the South used - and still use - to constantly remind black people of what "their place" should be and how low, low, low these black folk better stay "if they know what is good for them," was to refuse ever to address a black person - no matter how old or admired that person was - by the titles of Mr., Mrs., or Miss. Even local bill collectors neglected to put Mr. or Mrs. on the envelopes they addressed to the wonderful family I was staying with, not to mention judges in court referring to a fifty year old civil rights leader and the head of a church in the community as "Robert." Little by little, after enough incidents like these, I found myself getting really furious and indignant over an issue I had previously thought rather petty; though, for a while I must have put the people I worked and lived with through some impatience and irritation while the realization was still dawning on me. (When I would go into my "idealistic" spiel about how

honorific titles were a hold-over from the aristocracy, people generally reacted with amazing calmness and consideration. Instead of choking me or even ranting about my blindness to their situation, they would usually just nod and say nothing or change the subject to talk about the weather.)

But as I have said, I did come to understand just how serious the issue of honorific titles was when you were the one being denied the honor by the people in power. I even came to realize why black people in that situation felt the best way to fight the issue was to insist on using these titles themselves. I still wasn't sure I was going to use an honorific title for myself. Back then I was only beginning to get an inkling of why it might be in the interests of black people that their allies, as well as themselves, be recognized with full "respect." I wasn't yet near seeing how important this issue would be for my own life. I was still a little too young to worry that I was a woman and still being called "girl" or by my first name only, not to mention the problem of being a "Miss" for the rest of my days (or of being some man's "Mrs.," for that matter). But I became absolutely scrupulous about putting an honorific in front of the name of any black person over twenty-five whom I wrote to (at least the whites in the post office would see it!).

By the time "Ms." as a form of address was raised in the women's liberation movement, however, the years had taken their toll and I had become painfully aware that the problem of honorifics was affecting me. The prospect of being the boss' "little girl" when I was an old woman began to assume new dimensions in my consciousness, adding to rather than cancelling my growing anger every time I filled out an application form and got to the part where I had to check what I was to be addressed as, the part, as we all know, that designates a woman's marital status and thus her position in the world. There were fewer and fewer occasions when I felt completely comfortable in saying, "Just call me Kathie," and somehow I couldn't help flushing a little with embarrassment whenever somebody asked me "Is it Miss or Mrs.?"

The day that a letter came in the

mail addressed to me as "Ms." for the first time, however, was the day I really understood the issue. Until then, I think I had still been pretending not to care. I held the letter and looked at that "Ms." in front of my name and suddenly began to feel a glow spread through me, a glow of pride and excitement, I guess. I felt as if I was actually holding a weapon in my hand, a weapon I could use to smite that horrible old distinction between married women and single women, every time I sent a letter. A weapon had come into my hand which I could help use to counteract that powerful pressure on women - on myself - to get married on such unequal terms, with so little love and at such a terribly unfair cost to our lives.

I still believe, of course, that a time will come when people won't have to fight against other people for their status as human beings and we won't use special titles anymore. But I now see that the use of such titles can actually help move us toward that time.

We are working now on eliminating the differences between Miss and Mrs., to create a term to designate the equality of all women. Our eventual goal, of course, is to eliminate the social distinctions between men and women, as well as other class distinctions. Part of this will mean eventually creating a term of address which designates the equality of all people. "Comrade" was such a term, used for this purpose, in several (Communist) revolutions. Although, words as we all know aren't everything.

The use of "Ms." will get us to the point where a word like "comrade" between men and women is really true, is really felt. There may be a while when on some occasions we feel it is right for us to say Mr. and Ms. and on other occasions we will know that it is safe and true

and right to use "comrade" or else no honorifics at all (as we do among friends). There will be phonies who use these words to trick and confuse us. But we mustn't let them stop us from fully utilizing what power we have, even the power of words.

Kathie Sarachild

## MS. review CONT'D

sion instead of strength and one which dulls us and lulls us with its "tolerance" for everybody instead of sharpening distinctions and awakening us to the issues.

Ultimately, the success of MS. magazine as a weapon of feminism will depend on its relationship to the rest of the movement . . . whether it dares to have a full relationship, revealing the whole spectrum of activity - even if not representing it - taking positions and heeding its feelings and leading when it is on the right track, and changing course to follow when it finds itself on the wrong track.

Right now, MS. seems rather nervous about its association with the real, living, breathing women who comprise the feminist movement; although, it is obviously on the basis of this movement and the feelings and hopes that it has awakened that the magazine is drawing its readership and power. It is a little too vague about the history of some of its articles and projects and tends to emphasize "prominent" women too much. This would seem to be a bad omen. For instance, the article called "We Have Had Abortions" makes it seem as if the whole idea of women talking about their abortions publicly as an aid to breaking through the social and legal taboos on the subject was started in France by a group of famous and "respected" Frenchwomen. In fact, the French women's action was a wonderful development out of something the raggle-taggle and not so "respectable" feminist groups called Redstocking had initiated and inspired in the United States in 1969.

In a way, Cynthia Ozick's article "We Are the Crazy Lady and Other Feisty Feminist Fables" reveals a rather disturbing possible motive for the kinds of omissions above and a dangerous type of self-interest for latching on to MS. Ozick tells the story of her time as a university graduate student and how one of her professors would lump her together with another woman in the class just because they were the only women there. To Ozick, she and the other woman were clearly as different as night and day because the other woman, who Ozick describes as "almost brilliant, only not actually on the point and frenetic with hostility" was obviously crazy, while she, on the other hand, was perfectly rational and analytical. Nevertheless, somehow, the professor could not tell them apart. From bitter experiences such as this, it would seem that some respectable type ladies as Ms. Ozick have concluded that a possible way out of the kind of dilemma described above is for them to join the crazy, angry women and try to civilize them so that such as they

and by implication the feminist movement will no longer be an embarrassment. The respectable ones will try to fix the rest of us up so that we will no longer tarnish their credentials and reputation when men continue to lump us together.

What Ozick didn't seem to realize in her story - or else failed to state in any kind of clear terms - was that the crazy lady of her tale wasn't crazy. Rather she was probably onto something that the rest of those academic pedants were trying to suppress. What Ozick doesn't seem to realize is that there is no stopping "crazy" ladies like this one, nor those in the feminist movement who may seem "far out" to a few fancy women like Ozick but are really just far seeing and out in front, giving the rest of us fantastic insights. There will always be at least some of these around to embarrass her, so she might as well let go and become one herself - or at least live and let live, or become a silent supporter - instead of pursuing her futile efforts at pacification.

Of course, genuine support from the "prominent" and "respectable" type of women could be a real aid to MS. and to the feminist movement as a whole. The defeat of male supremacy is, after all, in our common interests and such women may have access to sources of information and money which would otherwise be unavailable for feminist use. The strengths of MS. are right now coming from two directions: the many women who are interested in feminism and the special contacts of the MS. staff with some of the men in positions of power. It remains to be seen for the interests of which group MS. is going to be the vehicle, who is going to be using whom, and how free MS. will be to represent the true interests of women. (For instance, unlike any other women's magazine designed for mass circulation, there is not one article in MS. about clothing fashions, or make up. But the publication does contain a number of such advertisements and will depend, no doubt, on getting more in order to survive in its present form.)

MS. could just possibly get a good deal better and could easily get a lot worse. A new publication takes some time while it settles into definite shape (witness WOMAN'S WORLD, as a case in point), and even after that it can change. In its present form, MS. is no worse than most other women's liberation publications and on some topics and in some ways, both theoretically and practically speaking, it is much better. Even if no more issues were to appear, this first one alone would make one of the sharpest liveliest feminist anthologies printed to date.

## Say What You Mean cont'd

during the course of their development.

Through sheer accident NOW-New York heard about this proposed bill, got hold of this late version (which those who called Ms. Abzug's office were told that WONAAC wanted), and was horrified by it—since NOW, of course, stands for repeal of all abortion laws and for at least 3 years has shown its commitment by actually working for this goal in a multitude of direct, effective ways. After consultation with attorneys around the country who are most active & knowledgeable in the abortion sphere, NOW-New York prepared & sent to Ms. Abzug a careful critique, dealing with every aspect of the bill, but most importantly with the inaccurate title, "Abortion Law Repeal Act," and with the injection of the medically nonsensical, discriminatory, offensive concept of time limits.

It remains to be seen whether the final version of this bill will seek to give every woman "the right to choose"—or only some women, as in the past. Which does WONAAC really want?

More important, which do you want?

—Cindy Cisler (11 Feb. 1972)

POSTSCRIPT (24 February 1972): It appears from the newest "final" version of Ms. Abzug's bill that she has indeed listened to the feminist

criticism offered by NOW-New York, and has eliminated the references to time limits from her bill, which is now more accurately entitled an "Abortion Rights Act." It is still not at all sure whether Congress actually has the power to enforce this right, nor whether efforts to work for this bill will aid or harm the scattered state-level work for direct legislative repeal in which crazy feminist zealots are still engaged—nor even whether the version that incorporates NOW's ideas is in fact the version that will be filed. It is fairly safe to say, though, that it seems to pay off if you speak up loud and clear for exactly what you want and why. As to the speaker at the WONAAC conference who airily dismissed this article & the serious issues it raises as "semantics"—she was absolutely right. But semantics is never a petty thing; the word refers to the ways that language, thought, meaning, and action reflect and reinforce each other—for good or ill. We may never agree on what we want or how to get it, but at the very least we can try to talk about it in the same language. Otherwise, chaos and defeat are inevitable.

## MORE REVIEWS ...

by Barbara Leon

Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings ed. Miriam Schneir, Vantage Books, \$2.45.

In her introduction the editor states "In compiling this anthology, I have bypassed writings which deal entirely with the outdated topic of suffrage and have tried instead to select materials which pertain to still-unsolved feminist problems." The result is one of the most eye-opening anthologies to come out of the present women's movement, providing glimpses of aspects of the 19th century feminist movement which I, for one, never knew existed. Whether it is Margaret Fuller advocating a period of celibacy and separatism from men; Susan B. Anthony describing the function of female laborers under capitalism; Victoria Woodhull proclaiming the right to female orgasms; or Emmeline Pankhurst explaining why physical force and not education of men is needed to win women's freedom; the selections in this book explode many of the myths about the conservatism of the early woman's rights movement. Unfortunately, the articles are frustratingly short and sometimes choppy, just enough to whet the appetite. Nevertheless Schneir has made a good start in uncovering our suppressed history.

Women and Art, a quarterly. Send \$2 for a years subscription (\$5 to institutions and those who can afford it) to 89 East Broadway, New York, N.U. 10002.

This newspaper, which covers and analyzes actions being taken by women against the male art world is noteworthy for its clear writing, lack of phoniness and willingness to take positions. "Some Thoughts on Feminist Art" by Marjorie Kramer, who organized the recent women artists' show at Museum, is a down to earth discussion of this question which contrasts art that tells the truth about women's lives and dreams to the concept of some mythical "feminine aesthetic." There are also accounts of women in art history, good descriptions of how women are fighting male supremacist museum practices, reviews of the work of women artists, and much more of interest to women outside the art field as well as within it.

### Correction

In the last issue vol. 1, no. 3 Sally Steenbeck's article "The Girl on the Cutting Room Floor" it was stated that "there are numerous female editors - 30% of the film editors (union) local in New York City are women." This percentage has been generally assumed for many years. Everyone in the Local "knows" that from 1/4 - 1/3 of the membership is female.

We found out recently that this is not so, only about 10% of the Local's membership are women. This seems to be another case of the admission of a few women to a group, raising fears in the men of being overrun. Esther Croft

### MARCH FOR CHILD CARE SERVICES

A "Children's March for Survival" is being planned by a coalition of welfare rights, women's groups and other social action groups to take place in Washington on March 25th, to protest the Nixon anti-welfare Family Assistance Plan. Other demands of the march are for universal free comprehensive child care and expansion of feeding programs for children and pregnant women. For further information call the Women's Action Alliance at 212-972-0750.