

WOMAN'S WORLD

WOMEN'S LIBERATION

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THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

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by Barbara Leon

The following constitutional amendment which would prohibit discrimination based on sex is now awaiting action by the state legislatures. "Section 1. Equality of rights shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex. Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article. Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification."

The Equal Rights Amendment passed the House of Representatives on 10/12/71 by a vote of 354 to 23. On 3/22/72 the ERA passed the Senate by a vote of 84-8. All that is now necessary is ratification by 3/4 of the state legislatures (38 states). As of this writing 20 states had approved the Amendment.

Looking back into women's history brings more and more surprises. The 1848 Woman's Rights Convention held in Seneca Falls, N.Y. is only beginning to hold its deserved place in women's history as the official kickoff for generations of feminist agitation in this country. But how many of us have even heard of the 75th Anniversary Seneca Falls Convention? This was in July 1923 when, the official feminist history books tell us, suffrage had been on the books for three years, the women were satisfied and back in their place, and feminism as a movement was dead. Yet hundreds of women came to Seneca Falls that day under the auspices of the National Woman's Party and unanimously adopted the following resolution: "Whereas, only one point in the Equal Rights program of 1848, that of equal suffrage, has been completely attained, and whereas the National Woman's Party, as stated in its declaration of principles, is dedicated to the same Equal Rights program as that adopted on this spot, seventy five years ago. Be it resolved, that in order to bring the complete equal rights ideal to the victory that was won for suffrage, we undertake the following program: the securing of an amendment to the United States Constitution, stating, 'Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction.'"

Alice Paul, one of the founders of the Party added, "If we keep on this way they will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of the 1848 convention without being much further advanced in equal rights than we are. We have much the same feeling now that we had in the beginning of the suffrage movement, that many groups were working in many states, all for different measures, with much waste of effort. If we had not concentrated on the Federal amendment we should be still working today for suffrage . . . We shall not be safe until the principle of equal rights is written into the framework of our Government."

This Woman's Party was the same organization which in three years of militant demonstrations, hunger strikes and bonfires managed to accomplish what fifty years of respectful petitioning could not: the securing of women's right to vote. The same group which in 1922 pledged itself to a 28 point platform "to remove all forms of the subjection of women" covering the areas of law, education, religion, sex-

uality, jobs and marriage - to name just a few. This was the same Woman's Party which is still referred to in history books about feminism as the "ultras" and the "extremists." It's no wonder.

The Equal Rights Amendment, then known as the "Lucretia Mott Amendment," was introduced into Congress five months later and three years after the voting amendment had been passed. The reaction was instant. Against the united opposition of Democrats, Republicans, trade unions and many established women's groups of the day, the only other national group to support it was the Farmer-Labor Party. All opponents agreed with its goals (they said) but had doubts about the effects of the amendment on women in certain areas. Many of the issues they raised are still with us in 1972 when the amendment has finally passed both houses of Congress and is awaiting ratification by the states.

Before going into the specific issues and different areas of law let me just deal briefly with the general question--how much good will a constitutional amendment do for women? I think the point to remember is that an amendment passed by male supremacist legislators will not give women power. Only a strong, independent feminist movement can do that. What the ERA could do is make our lives easier in certain concrete areas and give us a tool to use in the overall fight.

Support, Alimony and Child Custody

One of the major arguments raised by opponents of the bill, then and now, is that it would take away from married women the benefit of support by their husbands. No doubt passage of the Equal Rights Amendment would invalidate the marriage laws now existing in every state in the country which state that the primary responsibility for support of a wife and children is that of the husband. (Often the wife has secondary responsibility for support, for example if the man is sick or injured.) Although nobody is talking about it very much yet the amendment would also open the way for challenges to the other part of those same state laws, the part which makes housework, childcare and sexual services the legal obligation of the wife. In other words the Amendment would challenge the legal underpinnings of marriage as an employer-employee relationship. While this is certainly desirable and even crucial from a feminist point of view we must consider the danger to women right now from a practical financial point of view. For that reason it's important to look at just how much guarantee of support women really do have right now. The answer is not much.

In the first place, although the laws require that the husband support the wife, courts have a policy in direct contradiction to this. The courts will generally not require a man to support his wife while they are still living together. The typical case cited in the legal textbooks is that of a Nebraska woman, wife of a well-to-do farmer who for 34 years cooked, cleaned the house and worked in the fields but had to live on the money she could earn selling eggs on the side. The state Supreme Court overturned a lower court ruling which would have granted her a monthly allowance and required certain minimal repairs to the house she was living in, on the grounds of non-interference in the privacy of an ongoing household. This decision, typical of others throughout the country, shows that in practice the only kind of support a married woman who is living with her husband can be sure of

My Summer Vacation

by Ms. X

This is my last year's summer vacation. It was in Canada in a big house where my three children and I, plus two friends and a dog, had just arrived. Although my husband and I planned to live separately in the fall, he was due to arrive soon and stay in the house, too. During this summer I began painting the most important and serious paintings that I had ever done. They came to me almost as visions and became a way of working out in my work the conflicts that were so much a part of my life and also gave me a feeling of being able to use my life and my work in a way to communicate with other women who had similar experiences and feelings.

June 5

Made it to Canada today - I drove with the kids all but around 4 hours - while Anne drove - arrived to find everything so much more beautiful and fantastic than I had remembered and was filled with hope and joy and love and shit when we all decided to REST being utterly exhausted - we lay in the sun in the livingroom and everyone went to sleep but Cindy - she made so much noise that I had to spend the next few hours carrying her around so that everyone else could get some rest - I went through a very heavy HATE scene in which I realized that, reasons not withstanding, the facts are that Paul is enjoying (I presume) total freedom in New York and I can't even rest after no sleep for 30 hrs. and driving for 18 hours because I'm stuck with the kids - for two weeks - for the rest of my life and NOBODY is here saying let me help YOU . . . Anyway, I made some fast decisions - fuck fixing up my studio - I'm not wasting any time doing anything except getting to work as fast as possible and painting all I can considering the kids - I'm not going to do anything else and my "isolation" might be really neurotic and wierd but if I'm going to get any work done in my life that's how it will have to be. I feel like a victim of the biggest joke ever played - my life has been taken away from me long enough - He can't even begin to realize the totality of oppression that motherhood is - the absolute complete and total effacement of one's self because the very LIVES of others depend on you - I haven't had one day without that pressure for eight years and now after begging, screaming, crying, fucking and everything else for a REST I find myself here with them and facing the very real prospect of living alone with them next year and for the rest of my life - be strong? He doesn't even know what that word means. PM . . . Sometimes I think I can only do it alone - and I think I'm really insane, or soon will be if I have to think about other people and have all these feelings and stuff. Going to paint tomorrow - yay - feel better . . .

June 6

Fluctuating between feeling like if I don't get out of here I'll go nuts and feeling like this is the worst of a change that I must go through to get to something better. Hope the latter turns out to be true. Fixed up my studio today and hung my triptych all together on a wall for the first time - Didn't get together enough to

paint yet, but am heading in that direction. Did do good things with the kids - chemistry and talking and we are going for a walk on the beach tomorrow - Anne and Ted are going to Monton - Cindy will probably take naps after lunch and I hope to be able to work then and at night and any other time I can . . .

June 7 AM

Anne and Ted have gone to Halifax - I am overjoyed at being alone and have realized that my insanity is caused not by the house or Paul or the kids or anything except the simple fact that I WANT TO LIVE ALONE - to live at my own pace and control my own world . . . PM I'm really confused. Painted alot today - working on the figure of the crying woman - it's so horrible to have to have all these terrible feelings and I'm so sure they are real that when I see Paul not have them I think he is suppressing them - More and more I miss him and remember good feelings together.

June 9

I'm so exhausted I can hardly write - worked on the kitchen all afternoon and night - painted the woodwork - went to town this AM and bought stuff for the house - feel good about fixing it up and am enjoying myself and Anne and Ted. Thinking alot about my pictures but not doing much right now - reading Tolstoy's The Kreutzer Sonata again which is really flipped out. Says man's sexual attitudes toward women and dehumanization of her causes all the world's evils - far out. Wrote to my comrades - sisters - Red-stockings Artists - looking forward to next year.

June 10

Just finished painting the kitchen - orange woodwork - it looks great - Paul will be surprised - worked a long time today on my painting - decided to isolate crying woman and use her for the center of the triptych - started planning my next picture which will be a heavy MOTHERHOOD picture - will be a woman standing on right w/kids holding on to her - holding her back - as she reaches toward (crying) a man who is leading herself (her life) away - the man will look oppressive and the led-woman very blank maybe absently smiling? The kids will be screaming except a young girl who will be looking straight out - think I'll pair it with another where the woman and kids are running the world very nicely - I'm exhausted - I feel great and stronger every day.

June 11

Anne and Ted took Cindy to Halifax and I painted all morning - worked on the crying woman - took the kids to the playground - it's so beautiful there, had fun with them swinging, pretending to be airplanes - I took a shower with my scented soap and even shaved my armpits feeling very sleek - I have almost no appetite and have lost a lot of weight - like myself much better thin. This afternoon I worked on the proportion studies for my next painting - did the 17 year old girl. If I get good accurate drawings for all the figures the painting should be a lot easier. Tommy caused a fire with the dog after having been warned and scolded for playing with matches - then he lies - I spanked him. Also later he poked Cindy in the

eye. He's acting wilder and wilder. I got depressed tonight about the responsibilities of the kids and had talked to Anne a long time today about Paul - sometimes I see him as such a fool - on one hand I think he has tremendous potential and is really wasting his whole life away fucking around - this whole business with young girls is really so stupid - thank god I have so many intelligent, interesting and thoughtful as well as tremendously exciting (politically) women friends - Anyhow I'm just glad no more of my life is going to be fucked up, I believe totally in the importance of my work and don't intend to let anything ever again stop me from doing it. I would hate to really lose respect for Paul - I think the thing that pisses me the most is that here he is with all the freedom of a member of the male ruling class all these years and except for a brief while when he was in school (while I baby-sat and modeled) he just farts away - Christ, if I had the time and freedom that he has - but maybe it's because my time is so very much taken away from me that I have to make every second count . . .

June 12

Got alot done today - worked on my picture alot and did 2 more figure drawings for the new painting and put the 3 - woman, girl and boy together - I'm really excited about it - the figure of the woman is coming nice and her head I love. Spent a long time on the beach with the kids - it was a nice sunny day - painted more of the kitchen. It really looks great and painted MY name on the mailbox - red on orange with flowers on it. Haven't heard from Paul yet - Now that I have my own room - own name, etc. I can't imagine having ever been any other way - One thing for sure, I'm getting much more done - hope it continues after Paul comes . . . He does add so much joy to my life - hopefully we will eliminate the pain.

June 13

I feel bad for putting Paul down for running after 20 year old girls - I thought about it rationally and remembered what Simone De Beauvoir said about Sartre's girlfriends - Anyhow in Paul's case who else could he know? He couldn't possibly meet any 30 year old women - especially in Long Island. They're all married already - and it's probably only young people who would accept the kind of arrangement we have considering the world - and isn't it the same exact thing I'm doing with David, but that only happened after what Paul did and I realized that our marriage could never be the same.

June 14

Had a political argument with Ted tonight. He's so fucking naive. I've got to learn more and be able to argue better, though, especially in defense of communism. Painted spots on the rocking horse tonight - I love my room so much - I'm really on top of things I think - I'm really believing in and controlling my world - it's a great feeling.

June 17

The kids are going to really drive me insane - Tommy has been worse and worse since we got here - Cindy is a goddamn baby and they all keep asking me stuff

and talking to me and I can't be alone ever for any length of time - I can't paint. I'm lucky to get some drawings done. Tommy has lost a shoe on the beach today - I was so fed up with them and hateful toward them that I sat down and cried on the way carrying Cindy up the hill, which is just great for my asthma - then I came home and gave her a bottle so I could draw and fell asleep only to have Amy wake me up to tell me Cindy had shit all over her crib - so I had to get up and clean that up - I can't believe the amount of hatred in me because of the kids - when Paul comes I'm not coming out of my room ALL SUMMER until noon.

June 21 PM

I finally called - Paul had gone to the country with Lynda for a week and came back and wanted to stay down there and PAINT for another week - plans to come Sunday - I talked - hysterically - to David and he promised to fly up as soon as he can. I hope he does soon - I'm numb.

June 22

I feel bad about Paul - at first was overwhelmed with violent hate, but now just feel a slight disgust and pity - he's going to fuck his life up - he really blew what could have been a very good thing with me - I really wanted to be his friend, to not lose respect for him, but now I just see him as a joke, and a bad one - at least the joke's not on me any longer. I'm going to file for a divorce as soon as I get back to New York with all the proper legal child support so I can be assured of money - I will never believe in or trust him again with any aspect of my life or the lives of my children - I want to be totally free from any bond to him except the most superficial. I'm strong enough and capable enough to manage my own life and take better care of myself and my children than with him . . . I guess the worst thing is that it's so terribly lonely. I'm so lonely I almost would go back - I did have good and beautiful things with Paul - I did have love and joy and wasn't alone a few times, and it was so beautiful. Sometimes I feel like such a fool to have given it up - but I know it was unreal the way we were . . .

June 23

Drawing - painting - reading NOTES FROM THE SECOND YEAR which gives me strength - got up early and went for a long walk on the beach with the dog . . .

June 27

Very strange but I think I'll ex-

plore every potential form of HELP - it looks to me like I can see myself making this mystique around my life - an older sophisticated woman into her own thing with 3 gorgeous kids - for some reason very attractive to some guys - so why not? They love playing with the kids - the kids love it - they like learning from my head and I enjoy being appreciated and admired - it would mean sex, but I would get tangibles - selling pussy? Maybe, but why not - better to take all I can get in my oppressed state rather than being overcome. Besides it's like a game - it's me that's in control - that's pretty neat. Can't wait to get started on my BIG CANVAS!

June 29

Paul came this AM - everything is good. . . He saw my room, my work and said it and I were very beautiful.

July 4

Painted this AM and spent rest of the day with Paul in my room lying on the bed talking - later we made love - we talked a lot about us - how we feel about each other. We both feel very much that we relate to each other on a level that we don't relate to anyone else on - it's strange and has to do with us as painters. . .

July 9

Beautiful weather at last - had a fight with Paul about the kids - he has agreed to take complete control of Cindy for the summer, an impossible promise as he already left her to go paint, etc. . . Anyhow it might work - Otherwise there's so much hostility. He wants to take her and Tommy to NY - but I doubt that will happen. Worked alot on my painting and had fun ride in the car and picnic on the beach . . .

July 12

Got a lot done on my painting today - hope I can finish it by August - going to go on my diet again so I feel more self-confident and sexy and will be cool and collected once more.

Aug. 1

Got a letter from Pat yesterday that really put me back into the real world - it was about all the things our group is doing etc. Made me very much aware of the pain and suffering of my sisters and the incredible struggle ahead of us - I got very exhilarated about the excitement of DOING it and was anxious to get back and FIGHT. Fuck this "everyone - love - everyone" shit. . . anyhow it provided a good

incentive for me to get back into my work been working a lot on the picture of Paul and Cindy - later I got very depressed and lonely - angry at the shit - which came out at Ted for not helping out. This AM after Anne and Ted came down I got pissed at Ted for not doing dishes and everyone got into a big fight - agreed that Ted wasn't doing enough but everyone got on me for being nasty - SUPER BITCH - I got very depressed and Ted and I went for a ride whereupon I got sad over EVERYTHING cried, etc. . .

Aug. 2

Bad day - good day - Bad emotionally in that Paul and I got into a nasty thing about the house in Syosset - I don't know if I'll have a house or not and he's not saying anything except did say I should know better than to trust him in such matters and that it's all up to me now - I expect not to have a house - if only I didn't have to depend on him for money - wow.

Aug. 5

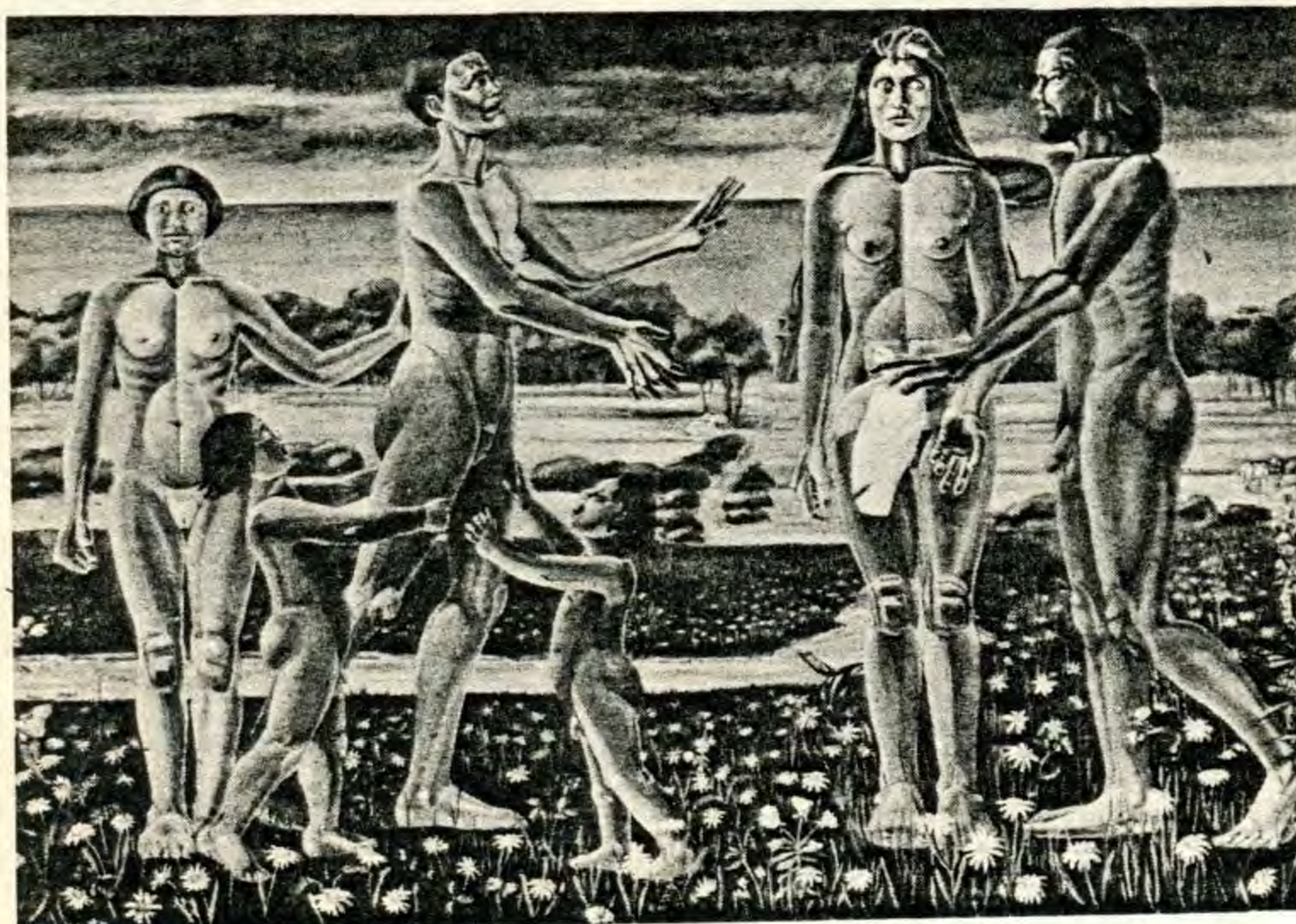
Painted out on the porch in the sun this afternoon - great, and took a long nap it's amazing how I sleep so DEEPLY now that the responsibility of the kids is lifted - woke up with a start one day when everyone was gone thinking "I have a baby where is it?" Then remembered Paul had her. Am really enjoying my painting now and looking forward to doing the next one. . .

Aug. 18

Unbelievable happenings - Lynda's coming here any day now and she says she's PREGNANT. Fantastic. I have feelings on a lot of levels - I went into and out of some self-pity - feel very, very sorry for Paul because he's going to be into a very heavy trip and it's going to be horrible. I feel terrible for Lynda because she's a woman. I have feelings of hate - anger - bewilderment. I told Paul whatever he does is fine with me - if I leave or stay or he marries her or whatever . . .

Aug. 19 AM

After much melodrama I've decided to leave tomorrow. The only reason I would stay at this point is to help Paul and it's very clear now that there's nothing I can do to help - last night I went down to see if things were alright with him and we got into a whole ugly nasty scene and ended up having a fist fight - hysterically screaming and yelling and lots of horrible shit. After we were both just sad and well just sad. And I decided the best thing for me to do is leave . . . I could stay and be strong and be sisterly with Lynda and everyone - love - everyone in which case everyone would be feeling good . . . or I could leave which I KNOW is a better thing to do. PM Everyone has been talking and apparently decided that they would keep all the kids here - a real treat for me - it's been eight years or more since I was really on my own. I'll probably be lonely some but will have an opportunity to really get some work done plus really relax and enjoy total freedom. All I know is I can hardly wait to get out of here - I have a bad cold and asthma right now to top things off - the roof is on the car and tomorrow after I get my stuff together roll up my pictures and everything else I'm leaving - Lynda comes tomorrow night so I won't see her - At least I'll have a week by myself to recover before the kids come back and I'll have to deal with taking care of them alone. What a summer!



The Confrontation, oil on canvas, 46" X 70" by Janet Sawyer

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MALE SUPREMACY

BY PATRICIA MAINARDI

I first became suspicious of the ecology movement when Richard Nixon came out in favor of clean air and water. That was a while back of course, along about the time I began hearing from ecology activists that ecology was the most important struggle going on and that all other liberation struggles would have to wait. After all, they would say, we're talking about our very survival as a species (funny how they always seemed to call the species "man" . . .). Anyway, we've heard the tune before. It's called "Something else is more important, sorry you'll just have to wait. And wait. And wait." In practice, what it has meant is that anything that white men decide is all important (ranging from trips to the moon to returnable bottles) has priority. And this includes "revolutionary" white men as well as ruling class white men. It's getting harder and harder to tell the difference.

The need for an ecology movement is obvious. But the need for a sexist ecology movement is not. The nature of a political movement is largely determined by the sex, race and class background of its participants. The ecology movement is no exception, and its composition, largely white and male, university oriented and middle class has largely determined both the false analysis and incorrect solutions of the ecology movement.

LEFT AND RIGHT WING ECOLOGISTS

In the ecology movement as it now exists, there is a huge right wing and a small left wing. The left wing includes mostly reformers, and their analysis, which is correct, is that the wholesale destruction of our bodies and our earth is a result of the unbridled quest for money and power on the part of our large corporations with their interlocking boards of directors - in short, the rulers of America. The reformers want to legally limit their right to pollute us, to extort money from us, to sell us shoddy goods. The reformers are not questioning the "free" enterprise system.

Nonetheless, they are focusing attention on the abuses of capitalism - a necessary first step to any kind of change - and they have grasped the essential truth about our current ecological disaster, namely that the abuses are coming from the corporations, not from the people.

No such insights mark the right wing ecology movement. Not surprisingly, this right wing is identical with the counterfeited left, our very own ecology "revolutionaries"--the hippy communing nature loving back to the land freaks.

The right-wing ecologists, in their desire to live close to nature, frequently reject modern technology in favour of more primitive technology. The slack is



Photo by Howard Patrick

taken up by women. They have reshuffled the sex roles so they come out as some old-timey biblical patriarch (they identify this as their "natural" role) who has however appropriated the emotional freedom, and decorative dress of the female. The best of all possible worlds. Male supremacy without rigid male codes. Women are frequently denied all labor-saving devices --a category which includes birth control. Rare is the woman who "returns to the land" who doesn't get pregnant within the first year. Whereas the man will take himself back maybe 75 years, the woman will be taken back several hundred to become his "natural" slave. The unavoidable result of rejecting technology, as all oppressed peoples know, is slavery for somebody. Nor do these right-wing ecologists mean by assuming this political stance, slavery for themselves. They mean to go all the way back and have a slave class--women--who will allow them to fulfill their anti-technology fantasies about the beauty and goodness of the "natural" way of living--when somebody else is doing the work. Their favored flavor female is white and middle class with long hair (preferably blonde); a faint smile, and totally silent. Peaceful resignation is the trip.

THE BLACK NATIONALIST VERSION

White men are not the only ones who have seen the possibilities of the back to nature ploy. The black aspects of this are described by Michele Wallace of WSABAL:

Because of the traditionally forceful nature of black women, about 3 or 4 years ago black men anticipated the threatening potential of a women's liberation movement among "their" women by popularizing a "Back to Africa" Movement which directed female blacks to wear long wrapped skirts, no make-up, to get pregnant and carry their babies on their backs, to spend the

entire day grinding meal, making bread, washing clothes by pounding them with rocks and generally doing a lot of work to prepare healthy food. By jumping the gun in such a manner, black men have seriously delayed a black female reaction to their oppression, although signs of discontent are becoming more and more apparent. Because they have been told (and do believe) that they are castrating their men by resisting such abuse, black women are naturally quite hesitant about speaking out against it.



LNS

I find it fascinating that when black men and white men go backwards looking for a better way of life for themselves, they should both "just so happen" to choose--out of all the different ways people have lived--to pick out as "natural," lifestyles that have us spending our days in the kitchen and our nights in the hay. And they ain't bringing home no more lion meat neither. Whenever they trot out those long skirts they have reaction in mind. It was no accident that the male-controlled

MOMMA'S REVOLT

The Alcotts, poppa, momma, the four little girls - like any family trying to live according to their radical beliefs - had a difficult time. They were against slavery; they were against exploited labor; they were against taking the lives of living creatures for one's own food or comfort; they were for better relationships between people and for free minds. Louisa May Alcott - yes, she of Little Women - tells about it in her Transcendentalist Wild Oats.

Philosopher poppa with a half dozen other men had a solution. They would set up their own ideal community, Fruitlands, where they could not only live purely by their beliefs without being penalized by society, but equally important, be an example of new relationships. This was the mid 1830's, 140 years ago. Momma, with her four little girls to help, was the only woman on the commune. And it was work, work, work. The special "solar" diet was limited; had to be grown, processed right, made attractive and palatable. You couldn't take from sheep their natural clothing; or use slave cotton or exploited labor products; so flax had to be grown, carded, spun; and of course hand sewed. This was New England climate. And there were always important visitors, such as Emerson, to be taken care of. And the men had speaking, preaching the

new life to do; and reading, thinking, writing, teaching. Momma loved reading, thinking, good conversation too, but there wasn't time. (The story is that one of the stream of observing visitors, seeing how primitive everything was, asked momma: "are there any beasts of burden on the place?" "Only one woman," momma is supposed to have answered. It is not recorded in what tone.)

Night times they all sat around the fire. The men had Higher Thought on the Ideal Life. Momma and the girls had all the damn sewing and mending which there hadn't been time during the day to do. Remember, this was when everything had to be made and mended by hand; and there weren't light switches to flick on. And the commune couldn't have a lamp; that would mean using other animals or killing whales for fuel. I've never tried sewing by flickering firelight, but I can imagine what it was like. Finally momma revolted: there must be a whale oil lamp, good light, for her to see by. Hours of agonizing discussion: how could they permit pollution in their pure midst; the exploiting of other creatures for one's selfish comfort. But if there was to be covering for one's body; if there was to be food on the table; the men had no choice but to give in. Momma had her way - a whale oil lamp to see by.

- from remarks made by Tillie Olsen at Old Westbury College . . . March, 1972. Olsen, who lives in San Francisco, has also written of women's lives in her collection of short stories called Tell Me A Riddle re-published recently by Delta Books.

in the ecology movement

fashion industry met the threat of women's liberation by attempting to force every female in the country into long skirts. But where the capitalists failed, frequently the "revolutionaries" succeeded.

It is an indication of how useless and collaborating the male left in this country has become that the colorful hippy alternate life style freaks who in no way challenge the system or make life better for the rest of us have become an accepted part of the left while reformers like Rachel Carson, Beatrice Trum Hunter, and Ralph Nader who have done real work and have actually improved our lives are not considered in the movement at all. An illustration of the difference between the right and left wing ecologists is their reaction to chemical (DDT and worse) spraying. The right wing moved away, bought land in the country (which they don't spray) and pretended they had escaped--although DDT has been found in the tissues of every living creature including arctic penguins. The left wing--and they might be very surprised to hear themselves called that--fought and still fights the spraying through lawsuits, demonstrations, pamphlets etc. and has had a limited success. If they keep up the pressure and we are all very lucky, the United States may even be the last country in the Western world to outlaw poison chemicals altogether. At home. Then we have to make our government stop spraying them on third world peoples.

RACHEL CARSON - FIRST AND BEST

The organic food trip has encouraged many to think they have found a personal solution and to put down others who cannot afford to eat highpriced organically grown food--another example of class bias. With radiation fallout, DDT and Mercury falling on our heads, it is obvious that this is some kind of dream world they're living in, and it can't matter much what kind of vegetables we eat. The late Rachel Carson, the first person to let the general public know what was coming down on us by writing a readable articulate book (for which she was branded an "hysterical woman" and called a "popularizer" by the male scientific community) was once asked what she ate. Her answer was "Chlorinated Hydrocarbons, just like everybody else." Now that is a realist and revolutionary.

The sex bias of the ecologists has caused numerous errors in their analysis. The most crucial point that they have refused to see is that in our present social order, woman power, especially black woman power is the cheapest source of energy, and what keeps the whole system functioning. At the same time as the Women's Liberation Movement is trying to force a change in the condition of the unpaid houseworker and the army of miserably paid women workers, the ecology movement has been flooding the country with what they call "eco-tips"-- things "you" can do to stop pollution. They all attempt to force women to re-assume the labour once eliminated through technology. They aim to exploit woman power as a natural resource more expendable than wood or fuel, electricity or metals. They tell us to lug our empties back to the store, to wash out cans and bottles we would have just tossed into the garbage, never to use paper cups or plates or napkins, not to use convenience foods but to cook everything from scratch, to use storage dishes instead of baggies, on and on. Using Pampers, an invention which has saved many a child from infanticide, is strictly

taboo. If disposable diapers are not bio-degradable, then technology had better come up with something that is, because the alternative presented by the ecologists--increased oppression of the unpaid houseworker--just won't do.

There is the tendency on all the right wing levels of the ecology movement to make pollution one more responsibility of the people on the bottom. Some better known slogans of the right wing of the ecology movement are:

"A cleaner New York is up to you"

Ads showing someone throwing a kleenex in the litter basket while the city itself throws all our sewage in the river, and Con Edison dumps it on our heads.

"People make pollution, people can stop it"--with pictures of ordinary people type people, not chairman of the board type people.

So-called radical ecologists are quick to spot this line when it is used by the giant corporations on them. Nonetheless, they then turn around and come on to us with the same line--about the few extra things "we'll all" have to do, as they hand us their "eco-tips" which will add a couple of hours a day onto our already exploitative work load.

In any political movement, we must always look at who is saying what. We cannot overlook the fact that the ecology movement--white, male, middle class, college-educated is composed of virtually the only class of American men who have been seriously affected by the largely white and female, middle class and college-educated Women's Liberation Movement. They are our husbands, our fathers, our

I mentioned the sewing machine, the one liberating invention for women in the last century. But it was adapted primarily to industry. Otherwise, in that age Whitman sang of as "the technological sublime," there was no attention, no interest, in easing or eliminating the labor of women so accepted, so little did the work of women matter, this drudgery that consumed your life and without which human life could not be maintained.

New uses of power, steam, electricity; new labor saving profit making mechanization, in every branch of industry and commerce; the railroad, airplane, automobile. The 14 hour day became through hard fighting, the 10 hour day; the 8 hour 6 day week; the 5 day week. But for women, their work still never done, hand mops, brooms, carpet beaters.. The corner sink with its one wooden drainboard. Sometimes running



HEALTH REVOLUTIONARY
UNITY MOVEMENT

brothers, our sons. It is no accident that this very class of men--the ones who have been hardest hit in their male privilege--have devised a new version of Back to the Kitchen religious theory. In the history of "civilization," God started out telling women it was divine will that they stay in the kitchen. As "he" started fading out, Freud came in with the same message. Now men have dragged out the Ultimate Threat. ALL OF NATURE is telling us to get back in the kitchen. It is for the good of the WHOLE PLANET, it is for the SURVIVAL OF THE SPECIES (man) that we get back in the kitchen. They are getting desperate.

Mixing pleasure with business, the ecologists have determined to hang on to male supremacy besides saving the species. Like the riders that congressmen tack onto their bills, the male "revolutionaries" seem incapable of acting politically without re-introducing a little pork barrel in the form of sexism. The "immediate emergency" line is the standard introduction to the sexist ploy. And somehow, male solutions to the state of "immediate emergency" are always more sexism.

Another crucial point the ecologists have misunderstood is the nature of labor-saving appliances. Most labor-saving appliances were developed coordinate with the rise of feminism. The ecology movement displays its ignorance of the social function of household technology by the frequently met charge that women want all kinds of "gadgets." Frequently what they are referring to as "gadgets" are household tools (they are so unfamiliar with them they don't even know what

cont'd p. 1

water, less often hot water. Wood, coal stoves. Women's steps, backs, technologically unnecessary labor into which their lives went, not mattering. Wooden, tin, washboards. Eventually the hand wringer. I feel true bitterness about all this; too much of my life went into this unnecessary drudgery. I was still washing diapers by hand; the capacity for the most awesome technological breakthroughs were there, such as - yes, the atom bomb--World War II, the 1940's, before the first automatic washing machine for women - if you could afford one -- was on the market. It was one of those rarities a woman engineered, who in the 1920's, in that beginning to be servantless-for-the-well-to-do-world, staying home with one of her babies, put herself to applying industry efficiency and know how towards saving the labor of women. She thought up - an absolutely new concept - sinks, stoves, continuous counter tops all of step saving, even back saving heights. There should be statues to her; we should all know her name she should be in the Hall of Fame.

It had not yet occurred to anyone that saving the labor of women could be a profitable consumer industry; it took the large numbers of women whose paid labor was needed in World War II who were vocal about what carrying on two jobs meant, who had their own earnings, to start that up. The fact that it has become such a consumer industry, with its interest only in profits, its contemptuous advertising, its flooding the market with unnecessary gadgets, gimmicks as well as true labor saving advances, must not blind us to the true nature of what is happening - the beginning basis for freeing women from their centuries old, life-consuming domestic labor, even if as yet it is primarily on a profit, private, individual home, if-you-can-afford-it basis.

- Tillie Olsen, Old Westbury College, March, 1972

Is Children's Liberation A Part of Women's Liberation?

by FLORENCE RUSH

I always have a problem when I am asked to consider the liberation of other groups as part of the women's liberation movement. When I think of the war, racism, imperialism, socialism, or human problems as opposed to sexist problems, I often respond with the usual feminine guilt. I feel I should do something in all areas of struggle but the cause I'm most interested in is my own and my cause is the cause of all women and their struggle against sexism.

A group of Junior High School women asked me to attend an after school women's liberation meeting. During the first session, an exciting one, a man sat in the back of the classroom. Later he explained that the teacher's union, now in negotiation with the Board of Education, refused to supervise after school activities as a show of the teachers' strength. I was, in a sense, scabbing. The students and I felt badly and as we discussed alternatives and the union teacher, now friendly and pleasant joked with us: "give it up," he said. "It's no great loss. When we win, you can go back to your liberation." That did it. The students decided not to be concerned for the teachers if the teachers were not concerned for them and questioned why I should struggle for unionism or any other cause, if those I am struggling with and for are sexists? You are now looking at the biggest "scab" in my school district.

So just as I was throwing away my mail from the Women's Strike for Peace and invitations to community meetings on child care and drug abuse, I was asked to speak on the place of the liberation of children in the women's movement. Yes, children are oppressed and often without protection, are starved, neglected, and abused. They are denied civil and legal rights and have no alternative way of life beyond the often limited and handicapped nuclear family. Women bear and give birth to children, care for them, raise them and worry about them. Mothers, teachers, nurses, social workers and almost all who care for children are women. Men are seldom interested in children. If they are, it is as experts, professionals and authorities - like Dr. Spock telling the women, who do the work what to do - what is right or wrong, what is good or bad, and what is best for children. I discovered, as I went along, that men are not only not interested in children, but are generally without concern for all those who are helpless and dependent. When did men ever care for the sick, the aged, the retarded or the disabled? Women have always cared for those who could not care for themselves - we've been doing it for centuries - so if the cause of children is to be the cause of women, what about all the others? Because we have been assigned the role of ministering to the poor, old, young and sick, does this mean that even in our own liberation, we must continue to give service to and uplift the needy and dependent? I suddenly got very depressed but what reached me most deeply was the fact that half of those who need uplifting are males.

Women and children have always been lumped together. We hear around us; "Women and children first." (like getting off a sinking ship). "Women and children stay home" (while the men go out and fight the Indians). "You talk like a woman" or "You talk like a child" (an insult). "You think like a woman" or "You think like a child" (a bigger insult). It seems only natural that so identified with each other, we should encompass the needs of children and their right to human dignity. But even though thus identified and even though male babies are not born sexist, and heartless as it may sound, I cannot

bypass the fact that these very male children will grow up to be men. What will happen to the male child when his voice changes, when he gets taller, begins to sprout a beard, compares the size of his penis with those of other boys, learns that girls are to be screwed, have babies and stay home to cook and clean. When he gets that great feeling that comes with pushing some chick around, will he remember that when a child, a woman fought to protect him, looked after his rights, his health and welfare? Will he remember or will he, eager to get rid of childhood helplessness and humiliation, embrace his male privileges and just as he was abused, so abuse some woman.

Before I continue, I feel I should make one important point. I can sense how uneasy mothers of young male children may feel as the result of what I am saying. I am not denying or overlooking the love, deep feelings and attachments that mothers, teachers and others may have for male children in their day to day relationship, nor am I suggesting that little boys be abandoned by women. I have a son myself and personally know the depth of feeling which affects mothers of small children. I am talking about our work and the direction we must take as women liberationists, in the hope that we may never be distracted from the cause of women. There are those who will try to confuse us, play on our guilt, and this we must not allow.

We are told by Freud, and others who explain human behavior, that when children reach a certain age, about 8, the sexes instinctively dislike each other. The girls then go off to do girlish things and the boys go off to do boyish things. In our culture, this separation definitely occurs, but it is not by "instinct." Male children turn away from female children when they learn that this association with the female sex is undesirable and shameful. When male children become aware of the female stigma they can be utterly cruel and contemptuous of the very girls who were, just yesterday, their close friends. At age 8, my daughter and nephew were constant companions and their understanding, feeling, and loyalty toward each other was a beautiful thing to see. One day, without warning, Bobby refused to talk to her and when she appeared in his presence, he turned away. In apology, his mother said, "I'm really sorry, but there's little I can do. You know how boys get when they reach that age! They just hate girls!" When my daughter, hurt and weeping, asked why Bobby treated her so badly, I tried to explain, "Boys stop playing with girls when they get older; that's how they are." In a great anger, she threw a book across the room and screamed "But I didn't do anything to him and he has no reason to hate me." She was right, of course, and I wish I had said to her then what I can say today: that Bobby, age 8, was a male chauvinist pig.

Last year, I spoke to a group of male and female students who were between the ages of 12 and 14. I tried to relate the oppression of women with the oppression of children, but the male students, revolted by the idea of being associated with women, rejected the concept in undisguised hostility. The junior high school female students I spoke of earlier, found their greatest humiliation at the hands of 10 and 11 year old boys whose wild pleasure came from lifting their dresses, pinching their behinds and shouting obscenities. A little boy on the street, young enough to be my grandchild, looked me straight in the face, recently, and said, "Hello cunt."

Yes, the male child, just as the fe-

male child, is oppressed but as he grows a little older and gains in male status, privileges and power, he can compensate for and eventually forget his humiliation as a child. As a man, he may suffer from being poor, black, or uneducated, but the female, though she may have money, be lily-white with three degrees, and no matter how old, can be greeted on the street by a small boy with, "Hello cunt." When the little girl becomes a woman and her sex is physiologically obvious and biologically established, she is degraded by this event. She achieves no power or dignity in womanhood; on the contrary, now that she is ready to bear children, she becomes a sex object, ripe for exploitation. The male child grows up to be a man and whatever that is, it is better than being a woman.

But the question still remains unanswered - should women in the movement, struggle for the liberation of children? Yes, as long as the children are females! Poor health is a problem for both males and females; poor and aged males are severely deprived of decent medical and health services, yet the women's movement has no conflict about concerning itself only with the health of women. The discrimination of women exists in all institutions offering health and medical services and as a result we relate to the health problems of women. Sexism is also ingrained in every aspect of childhood and is often the basis and cause of the oppression of children, and especially female children and the women who care for them. It is only in this context that I feel we can make the children's cause our own. So, finally to illustrate this point let me get on to the sexual and physical abuse of children.

The subject of the physical and sexual abuse of children is filled with obscenities and horror. But strangely enough, in a society where sex differences are of prime importance; where jobs, education, toys, clothing, fashion, etc. are geared toward distinguishing the male and female, in statistics concerning child abuse, sex is suddenly of no consequence; the abusers are referred to by the sexless term "they" and the victims become the generalized "he" when almost always they are really "she's." When a prostitute rolls a john for his wallet, we know very well that the prostitute is a "she" and we are advised of the increasing violent crime rate among women. There was no confusion about the sex of Alice Crimmins; it was a woman, a mother, a female who was judged the murderer of her two children. But where the statistics indicate without a doubt that men commit the crimes and that females are the victims, our experts suddenly regard us all as equal and finally, we are awarded the privilege of not being distinguished from males. I finally found the statistics which revealed that the abuse of children is not only the result of discrimination against children, but more important, the discrimination against females. The sexual abuse of children is clearly a sexist problem.

The sexual abuse of children is an act whereby an adult uses his position of power and maturity to exploit a child for the purpose of sexual stimulation and gratification. The act can range from fondling, exhibitionism, carnal abuse to rape.

1. The problem of the sexual abuse of children is of unknown national dimension but findings point to the probability of an enormous national incidence many times larger than that of physical abuse. A guess based on the study of reported cases in Brooklyn and Queens, estimates that the more brutal and violent cases amount to about one half million, nationally.

2. The problem is not restricted to the poor and underprivileged. There is scarcely a female, no matter what her background, who has not been molested by a family friend, a dentist, storekeeper, etc.

3. By an overwhelming ratio, in the study mentioned above, the offenders were 97% male and victims 9 times out of 10 were female children. The study found that the victims suffered severe emotional damage by the occurrence. The female child and woman are the same person, merely at a different stage of development and the sexual exploitation of the female child is an early manifestation of the contempt for the exploitation of women.

4. Most cases of the sexual abuse of children remain unreported. Of those reported, the burden of proof is on the child victim and family so that repeated questioning and investigation often prompted families to drop the case and even for those that followed through, one half are dismissed for lack of proof.

5. There was not one study, and I have seen many, that noted that the sexual abuse of children was a crime committed by men against female children. The sexual abuse of children is winked at and permitted because it is an unspoken but powerful factor in preparing the female to accept her subordinate role and submit in later life to the abuse heaped on her by the men in her life.

6. The sexual abuse of children is the result of sexism, discrimination, and exploitation of women in our society.

"The physical abuse of children is the intentional, non-accidental use of force or act of commission (like neglect or starving) on the part of a parent or caretaker aimed at hurting, injuring or destroying the child."

The physical abuse of children is not so clearly sexist, but upon closer inspection there are connections which cannot be ignored.

The first studies I investigated, tabulated many characteristics regarding the physically abused child such as economic status, age of parents and child-

ren, size of families, intellectual capacity of those involved, but noted briefly that male and female parents abused male and female children equally. I was about convinced that there was no sexist element here, when I found a recent study, carried out and researched at Brandeis University called Violence Against Children and authored by David Gil.** As distinguished from all other studies, Gil also identified the victims and abusers by sex.

1. Nationally, there are estimated to be about 25,000 cases of physically abused children each year.

2. Of all cases studied (1300) 30% of the families were headed by females, so the mothers, without a father in the home, were the offenders.

3. 70% of the families with abused children, were headed by males, here both the father and mother were in the home. Where there was both mother and father in the home, 2/3 of the offenders were men.

So, in the cases of physical abuse against children, when the mother is the sole parent, she is the abuser, but if there is a man in the house, chances are he will be the abuser. There is an important factor which Gil overlooked and did not take into account. Who spends time with the children? I think I can safely guess whether there is a man in the house or not, that time is given by the mother and if Daddy gives 2 or 3 hours a day out of 24 to the kiddies, Mother is left with the rest. Also Gil's study represents a very low economic group, with large families, where, in addition to the children, the mother has to cope with problems of little money, no resources, no help, no alternative, and no escape. Granted no one should abuse children, but where children are abused by women, they are women who are distraught by the cruel and inhuman pressures forced on them. There are 10 million children receiving Aid to Dependent Children grants in this country and that means that there are 10 million children on welfare cared for by women alone. The total number of phy-

sically abused children is estimated at 25,000. Of this number, if only one third come from homes with only the woman as parent, the wonder is, considering the circumstances, that women abuse so few children. With all it's horror, the woman who abuses, has a reason, but what's the man's excuse? Why is it then that in a home where there is a man who, hardly involved with the children, abuses them more than the woman. What's the answer? "Well you know how men are; they have so little patience."

There was another statistic which impressed me. While under the age of 12, the sex of the child victim of physical abuse was about equal; half boys and half girls, but once past 12, up to 18 the victim rate rose to 2/3 female. Before puberty, when there is little physical difference between males and females, victimization is about equal, but when the secondary sexual traits appear; when the boy becomes a man and the girl a woman, then the abuse is directed against the female. So even with respect to physical abuse, the male child has it easier.

When the struggle against sexism is as equally important to men as it is to women, when women are in leadership on all issues and when all issues are considered from a feminist point of view, then we may be able to begin to speak of human liberation. Until that time, I'll stay with my sisters as infants, children, women and old women. If men are concerned for their little brothers, no one will prevent them from offering care and protection. But let it be clear, that it is men, not women, males, not females, who have oppressed us and driven us to seek liberation and now that we are just beginning to go toward it, want it and want it badly, let no one divert us to any cause, other than our own.

*De Francis, Vincent, Protecting the Child Victim from Sex Crimes Committed by Adults, The American Human Association, Denver, Colorado. (Mimeograph)

**Published, Waltham: Harvard University Press, 1970

LETTERS FROM A MOTHER TO HER SON BY MARY COPELAND

Dear Son,

It's been over a year since I have seen you. Your letters describing the far eastern countries and cities fill me with wonder and it is incredible to me that my son has had the ability to work, save, and take the time he needs to see the world. The descriptions of the places you've seen, the cultures, customs, and ways of life are amazing, distant, foreign and fascinating. I am curious, though, about your own personal reactions because I get very little about your feelings and experiences. Does the extreme poverty bother you? Have any of your ideas and opinions changed as a result of your travels? Have you met people and are you enjoying yourself? You know it's so long since I've seen you that I feel as though you are fading from my memory. Send me a picture: I'd like to look at your face.

Now that the weather is warm, I'm out again digging in the dirt. I think I'm happiest sticking plants in the ground and making them grow and best of all I enjoy looking at the conglomeration of wild colors when the plants bloom. I'm also enjoying my job. I never dreamed that volunteer work would lead me to a day care center. Four hours each day with the children are wonderful and I truly enjoy them but I know that this pleasure comes from being able to leave them after the afternoon session. Beyond this, I am not doing too much but I seem to need more time to myself. I read more, putter more, and see fewer people. Did you know that your sister dropped out of college? She's hitchhiking across the country now. She seems unhappy and restless and I'm worried about her. Here is some sad news. We finally had to get rid of Rover. He

was such a sweet dog and a friend for 18 years but he could scarcely see, hear, or walk any more and we decided that putting him away was the kindest thing we could do. We all felt badly for a while. I won't fill you in on your father since he wrote to you yesterday.

Please don't forget the photograph.

Love,
Mom

Dear Mom,

Thanks for your nice long letter. I can't send you a picture because I don't own a camera and the photographer is far away. Did you receive the packages I sent home? There were several hand made batiks (expensive), some silk shirts and silk screen prints. When I get to Japan, I plan on buying a camera, radio and a few watches. As I go along, I'll be sending packages. Please put them safely away because these are things of value.

Of course I'm enjoying my trip. If I didn't, I'd come home.

Love,
Your Son

Dear Son,

What do you mean "Thank you for the nice long letter?" I realize now that you are fading from my memory because your letters are so cold and impersonal. I have no sense of a human being. Don't you have anything to say about yourself, me, your sister and even a poor dead dog you once loved. I found your letter unbelievable!

Love,
Mom

Dear Mom,

This is too much. Do you really expect me to cope with your emotional problems? I must say I find them rather

insignificant and what can you possibly expect me to do about a dead dog. The issues you raise are bourgeois, decadent and petty particularly as compared to the poverty and suffering I see here. Frankly I don't know how to handle your letter. I do feel some pity for you in your isolation and would advise you not to cut yourself off from people because when your children leave home you will have no one. This seem to be a serious problem for the aging middle class housewife.

I am sort of flattered that you revealed so much to me but I can't get into your emotional bag.

Love,
Your Son

Dear Dad,

What's wrong with Mom? She hasn't written to me for quite some time. I had gotten some very weird letters from her. Is she going through her menopause?

Thanks for making that bank deposit for me - the money came right on time. Did you ever get the batiks, silks, and prints? These things are valuable and I haven't heard from anyone about them. I'm also sending home some rare editions of books and most of them are on the Chinese revolution and Marxism. I got some excellent buys on very old editions of Das Capital, Value Price and Profit and the Origin of the Family.

I've been reading a lot and talking to many people about the Chinese revolution and know that I am becoming a staunch supporter of Chinese Socialism. I must get into more theory and understanding of Marxism and want particularly to learn about the trials, efforts and hopes of the courageous Chinese people.

Hope Mom is O.K.

Love,
Your Son

A WOMAN'S PRISON & THE MOVEMENT

BY MICHELLE WALLACE

Since the battle of Attica, a lot of artists have been making a mad dash for the prisons, that is the men's prisons. The feeling seems to be that political prisoners can only be male, and that feeling is shared by a shocking number of women, as well as men. While the women's prisons remain forgotten, the male artists are obtaining money from other men to rush out to the men's prisons with their programs, the female artists holding up the rear, needless to say without pay.

Eventually, it begins to occur to a woman that something ought to be done about the female inmates, particularly since, at least in my mind, there is some doubt as to whether all male inmates (especially those that rape, murder, assault, and steal from women) are really political prisoners. Certainly, they are political prisoners but should they be put before women inmates who are political prisoners in a much more vivid sense. Let's face it. Women go to prison for one reason - men. If a woman decides that she doesn't want to be tied down, doesn't want to do anything in particular, just wants to bum around for a while, she will end up in a mental institution if she's white, and in a jail if she's black. A woman can never afford to be but so unclear about what she wants to do because if she doesn't know, there is a man that will know for her and, eleven times out of ten, that ain't good.

If you should decide that you really want to do something for women inmates, how do you go about it? You immediately think, "I'll ask around and find out what everybody else is doing." What you will find is that everybody else is doing absolutely nothing. There is no structure set up to rehabilitate women in or outside of the prisons. There is nothing nothing nothing happening for women prisoners: I repeat - nothing. Suppose you don't believe me. Then call the Fortune Society or some other organization that claims to help all former inmates. A white woman will answer the phone. But don't be fooled, she is fully authorized to speak for the black men who run things. She'll tell you that they don't have time for women prisoners, of whom, at least in the Women's House, ninety-five per cent are black, Puerto Rican, etc. If you don't want to, don't just take her word for it. Ask to speak to the man and he'll hit you with the real dope - it is impossible to rehabilitate female inmates. Now do you understand? Maybe you want to get in touch with the Women's Bail Fund. Fine, if you want to devote your major time to freeing leftist women, while Mary who is sick and has a baby on the outside and who is in jail for assaulting a police officer (she slapped a cop in the face) remains in prison. However, if that does not appeal to you, then you better realize that you are going to have to start from the very beginning.

About four or five months ago, some of us got lucky. We got hooked up with Faith Ringgold, painter and educator, who had done a mural for the Women's House of Detention. She knew some of the prison officials and she knew the warden. She wanted to start a program to bring art to the women's prisons. We all got together, decided on a name - Art Without Walls, planned for five workshops - art, poetry, dance, yoga, and a rap session. Representatives were chosen that met with the warden, arrangements were made, everything was set. We were to go out every Sunday at three, and leave at five, calling in the names of the people who were going on the Thursday before.

Pessimist that I am occasionally, I smelled trouble from the "git go." It seems that there was something basically wrong with the very type of woman who was drawn to such a program. She's a pretty common kind of a creature - incompetent, but an eager do gooder. She's got guilt enough for one hundred Ku Klux Kanners. She's politically uncommitted.

She's on the verge of feminism but somehow never quite makes it over the hump. Her most distinguishing feature - she wants to know more about, "what the blacks are into." In fact, the truth is that she really doesn't want to work in a women's prison at all, but she knows that if she joins a male dominated program, she'll never get to do anything except type up more proposals for money and lay the men. So she works with the women, hoping that what she will achieve there will carry her to greater heights - the men's prisons.

Why is the do gooder usually white rather than black? The black woman in jail seems to be too huge a dose of reality for the black woman outside. But for pure unvarnished good luck, that would be her in prison: and what every black woman knows is that, if she slips up just a little, she can still end up there in two seconds flat. Under such circumstances, it is difficult for the black woman to feel sympathy for those sisters who didn't possess unearthly strength, who refused to play the game, who "fucked up."

Are men drawn to a program for women inmates? White men in small numbers, partly because the guilt trip in the men's prisons is so heavy that they can't bear up under it. Further, they, like the white women, aren't allowed to do very much, except supply the money.

As for the black man, he seems to be completely repelled by the idea of working in the women's prisons. I closely observed the few that did come out with the program now and then. Outside of one young student, none returned for a second visit. It seems that they were very disturbed about how close the women were to one another and the not inconsiderable lesbian activity. They would spend all their time trying to convince one woman inmate after another that this was horribly, horribly wrong, and that they should be ashamed of themselves. It was just too much for them. On the ride back to the city, I would sneak a glance at their faces, sometimes, I would even talk to them, ask them how they felt about the program. "Oh, I'll be back, I'll definitely be back," they would say. "We've got to get these women's heads together, get their head together." You could see the confusion and horror in their faces; and I knew how each of them felt, kind of like the first time I noticed a brother giving me an intense, hot hate look because he was with a white sister. You could see in their eyes that all they wanted to do was get far far away from that all woman world never never to return.

As I have already explained, the people in the program were wrong from the very beginning, but Art Without Walls happened despite that. You're probably thinking that any program is better than none. At first I thought the same but now I don't know. The problems got heaped pretty high during the ten or more weeks the program existed.

WORKING "COLLECTIVELY"

The first controversy was over who should sign in for the group. At first it was just assumed by Faith Ringgold who did, after all, know the warden and know the prison official and did obtain clearance for the program. Quite naturally the prison officials wanted someone that was responsible, and that they could find if anything went wrong; and there were a lot of things that could go wrong with twenty some people going in and out of a prison every week. But it wasn't long before the cry of pig was raised against Faith. She was taking over, setting herself up as the leader, not working "collectively." She backed down and from then on a different person signed in almost every week. The first thing that happened was that each one of us had to sign up at the reception center, then we had to sign in again when we got to the Women's House, then the check list didn't have all the names on it (and if you weren't on the check list then you didn't go out). Meanwhile all of this new procedure was rob-

bing time from the program.

Then there was a controversy over money. At first, no one wanted any. Then people slowly began to realize that the program was turning out to be very expensive. It was decided that there would be an attempt made to acquire funds, and that marks when all hell broke loose.

We had to incorporate, and, in order to do that, we had to have a board of directors. No one on the board of directors could be a "pig." In other words, we could only consider people for the board who were not rich and not famous. The function of a board of directors is to help an organization obtain funds, stability and recognition. A board member achieves this end by using his or her connections. Who has those kinds of connections? Rich and/or famous people.

We had to have officers. Faith Ringgold could not be the president or hold any other official position since she somehow fell into the "famous" category. However, the membership was aware that without her the organization could not continue to exist. So what they did was elect me president because I am twenty (young and dumb), I am black (blind and honored), and most important, I am Faith Ringgold's daughter. Realizing that the job was just a glorified secretary, that I would receive no cooperation, no assistance and no credit from anyone, but wanting very much to set the organization on its feet, though knowing that that would be impossible, I, exactly like an ass, accepted the position.

We had to decide who was going to be on the proposal, who was a member of the organization, in other words, who was going to get paid once the money came through. If you know anything about this grant thing, then you know that once you get the money, as far as the funding agencies are concerned, you can go fly a kite with it, build a home on the shore, go to Bermuda, whatever you want. In fact, that is exactly what they want. It's all 'keep quiet' money anyway. Therefore once a person was placed on our payroll officially, they wouldn't have to do a damn thing if they chose not to, or; worse yet, they could stand around and block everybody else. Well. The group wanted everybody who had even hinted that they might be interested in talking about going out to the Women's House, to be placed on proposal.

THOSE WHO CAN, SHOULDN'T

Where did all this shit come from you might ask. It's all from one basic pile, and the name of that pile is Those Who Can Shouldn't. The particulars go like this:

Art Without Walls' active membership was largely composed of white women (and I noticed that the men rarely came to meetings), late comers to the civil rights movement, late comers to the left still dazed by the appearance of feminism, generally inept and unsuccessful. They thought that in the women's prison, they would make their statement - a fantastic new dance technique or an exhibition or something. But just as they were incompetent in the past, they continued to be incompetent. The women inmates were not fooled by their spurts of enthusiasms for they are seasoned experts on human nature.

Further, these do gooders were feeling a lot of guilt which one might imagine was justified, but that wasn't the point. The first thing you are supposed to think about when you are trying to do service for someone is what will add to that service. Guilt is not going to get those women out of jail, is not going to teach them a skill, and, generally, is not going to assist them in any way. That being the case, the only thing to do is to get rid of it, or indulge your guilt on your own time - its too expensive.

For example, a woman inmate would start to tell a story which was truly horrible. The do gooder would stop to listen, she would be paralyzed by guilt. Another Sunday had passed, the woman inmate had not learned anything about art,

anything about how to stay out of prison, had only learned that people are as full of shit as ever. The female do gooder goes home feeling empty, disgusted with herself, realizing that she has done nothing to improve the lives of the women in prison, frustrated, and guilty more than ever, naturally. The do gooder comes to the conclusion that she cannot teach a woman prisoner anything. She decides that what she has to do is bring revolution, not art, to the prisons, men's phony revolution, that is. At that point she begins to encourage her fellow do gooders to do the same. She frowns upon anyone doing anything constructive. For example, when I stated that the aim of the organization was to prepare women inmates for professional work in art fields, members of the group objected. "Don't impose your middle class values on the beautiful savage" was the tone. After the do gooder has failed, no one must succeed. In other words those who can, shouldn't.

FEMALE INMATE, LATENT FEMINIST

In the course of trying to bring male pseudo-revolution to the women's prisons, the do gooder ran into another problem - how to deal with the latent feminism of the female inmate. It is very difficult to get a woman inmate to fall for a bullshit male left line that was tired to begin with. They see right clear through it immediately. But they do know, perhaps better than any of us, that men and women are having some enormous problems relating to one another normally. They do know, deep down inside, that men are the reason they are in prison. They do know that they have been deserted and cast aside by their own black men. (I am sure that you already know that when a black man becomes a muslim, before or during incarceration, he becomes a part of a sub group of muslims inside; and when he is released, the mosque welcomes him with open arms. However, a muslim woman is forgotten by the temple. In the Women's House, muslim women renounce their faith because they have no support on the outside. The muslim policy is that women have no business in jail anyway, or at least that's the way it seems.)

If you were to visit the women's prison, you would probably be shocked by the lack of hostility, the amount of warmth that is there; and racial bigotry is at a minimum. There is an awareness of prejudice, of the problems dividing the races, but there is also an awareness of the fact that all women are oppressed, whether white or black. The black woman inmate knows that the black man put a lot of her white sisters in jail. In this drugged, deaf and dumb society we live in, it is shocking to find people who are reacting to you and demanding that you react to them, as the women inmates do. As a matter of fact, it is very hard to get used to it, and you have to pull yourself up to it. As a matter of fact, many of the women on the program never did get used to it. Some of the inmates are having sexual relationships with one another, and, when they leave the prison, some of them will continue to do so, some of them will not; and those that will not, as far as I can determine, will not be hung up about it. Women have always done what they have had to do and that was that. However, it is obvious that the special closeness and warmth and honesty between sisters in prison will disappear as soon as everybody hits the streets, for the men will be dividing them again. That warmth has to be preserved, not necessarily the lesbian activity but the warmth. If such a bond existed between women all of the time, they just might be able to survive out of prison. However, that bond was just exactly what upset the do gooders most. They couldn't deal with it: 1. Here they were trying to talk male revolution to the women inmates, and the women inmates were past all that, well on their way to feminism. 2. I suspected from the way alot of the do gooders seemed to constantly be getting involved in problems with the inmates propositioning them (why couldn't they simply say no) that many of these do gooders were lesbians themselves. Whether they were

fact, the do gooders seemed to have trouble saying no to the inmates about anything) the important thing is that it was increasingly difficult for them to face the lesbian activities of the inmates every Sunday. 3. The do gooders, both lesbian and non-lesbian, were playing male roles, which is to say that they took the same position with respect to the inmates as would a man. They saw themselves as very different - they being superior and the inmates inferior - and all their actions had the effect of maintaining that difference. They used the powerless position of the inmates to make themselves look better, to distinguish themselves from the other women there and other women in general, as a matter of fact. There were lesbian inmates who were playing a similar type role - and this made for the only hostility among the inmates. If you add that element of hostility to that that the do gooders brought in, then you will have some idea of the strain there was at times in the program. 4. All of this wasn't exactly conducive to warmth and honesty and unity.

The do gooders were horrified by the fantastic independence of the women inmates who brought to light the possibilities of a world actually dominated and run peacefully and satisfyingly by women; and everytime someone got a peek of such a world, it seemed to just knock them senseless. No one was capable of admitting it, but that was the horror that no one would verbalize, that made everybody try their damndest to doom the program to failure.

As could be expected, all of these goings on frightened me considerably. Before long, Art Without Walls had collapsed. The prison would not continue to allow the program to come out, their official reason was that they did not have the staff although they did allow a few of the workshops - the most unproductive and most reactionary ones - to come out separately. Strangely enough none of these workshops were instructed by black women. Ho-hum.

INMATES HELP INMATES

With my mere twenty years of life experiences behind me, what I really wanted to do was run. Instead I chose to attempt to analyze the situation in the manner that I always do when movement things get fucked up, which is often. I try to be objective. I ask myself, "Are blacks inferior? Are women really inferior?" I calmly answer, "No." "But then what went wrong here?" I ask. "You are dealing with rehabilitation," I say to myself. "You know male former inmates. How did they do it?" "Why, they did it for each other," myself says to I. And that is the answer - women inmates must do it for themselves. Only women inmates can help women inmates really. White women, white men, black men and even other black women are all well aware of the problem but none of us carry the solution. All any of us can do is try to put women inmates in a position to help other women inmates.

How? First you encourage the woman inmate's feminism as the only means by which they will be able to survive. You encourage their feminism because that will be what will enable them to stick together in a world that degrades and humiliates women, particularly black women. Feminism will be the thing that will enable the woman inmate to break the bonds of that shame that bounces them back to jail time and time again and that keeps them there.

Second, you somehow set up an organization that will be financially solvent, and you set it up in such a manner that former women inmates will be able to assume all the positions in the organization as they are ready. What does this organization supply them with? They need two things from us - jobs and skills. Those two things will strengthen their feminism more than all the words in the world. Jobs and skills are pretty tall orders, even for women outside - then how do you do this for a woman who has just come out of jail? The former woman inmate cannot work on many of the jobs that women have always taken because of her record. Fur-

ther, the woman in prison is the woman who would not stay home and play nice-nice or work as a secretary or a maid and eat shit her whole life. If she is given the skills of an artist, then at least she can feel independent, at least she can feel self-confident about her worth. She'll know she can create something besides a baby; it's something she can do by herself, and art is a hustle anyway; it's something a woman can fight with. You can change people with it and you can stay out of prison with it, as did a lot of male former inmates who now earn livings as artists because they learned how in prison.

Third, you have to find some people to work with the program. They have to be women and they have to be feminists. It is better that they have a hard line on drugs and that not many be lesbians. Why? Because the overwhelming majority of women inmates are addicts. If a do gooder doesn't know how she feels about drugs, or starts talking about "hard" and "soft," the situation becomes impossible. Alcoholics never drink, no wine, no beer, no nothing, and that's the way its got to be for addicts in a lot of cases. As for lesbianism, most women inmates do not identify as lesbians. Since the former woman inmate is not about to reject men, it is much more realistic to examine with her ways that one might go about relating to a man more positively, in other words, stop him from running over her. If a woman inmate is a lesbian, then naturally she needs the help of other lesbians. However, she does not need to be encouraged to play the male role, and of that you have to be very careful. (Do you know that there are female pimps?) A good-doer should either be black, or know something about black people. There is no time for people who are doing research on the race. These woman are not guinea pigs. A good-doer should be capable, know her art, know how to teach it. The women inmates know when you're bullshitting.

We were out on our asses, and a couple of do gooder, do nothing women are allowed to stay. What did we do now? It would have been nice to work in the prison but it seems that that was not going to be possible. The prisons are just like any other governmental system, like the board of education, like the board of health. They don't want anything to happen, they don't want anyone to do anything because then it becomes too obvious that no one else is doing anything. The system cannot absorb, cannot afford productivity. It's a question of honor at this point, like the Vietnam War.

So we decided we were going to have to work outside of the prison. We would set up a kind of halfway house where women inmates could live, and we would set up workshops supplying the women with professional training in the arts. The program will expand according to the needs of the women. Former inmates will assume positions from the top down as soon as they are able or willing. The program will be run by feminist women until that happens, and being twenty, I think it will work. the program will be called Art Work House, and we are trying to get a loft and some money for it now, not to mention some feminists.



DEVELOPING FEMINIST THEORY:

by Colette Price

Once upon a time, not too very long ago, it was discovered, revealed, let out and agreed upon that not only was it okay for women to be in touch with their feelings--it was wise. In an article written in the early days of the recent movement called "A Program for Feminist Consciousness-Raising," Kathie Sarachild pointed out that our feelings revolved around our perceptions of our self-interest and suggested that if women's real self-interest could be laid out, by sharing and analyzing women's experience and desires, it could serve as the fundamental theory of the movement. It was further felt that as more and more women began to perceive their situations correctly, i.e., get in touch with their own self-interest, a mass liberation movement would develop. Therefore, as put forth in the article, the primary task was to awaken "class" consciousness in ourselves and others on a mass scale. The process utilized to do this was called consciousness-raising.

I've always liked consciousness-raising; admittedly my past experience with it was brief, but I considered it an important technique, not to mention what I feel it did for my consciousness. So naturally when I heard WBAI was calling a mass consciousness-raising meeting, I hurried down to the renovated church on East 62nd Street, which now houses the radio station, and took a seat. Nanette Rainone, the station's program director, in conjunction with a C-R group from Brooklyn Heights would demonstrate, for those of us who needed introductions, how a C-R group works and afterwards we would break up into our own smaller, hopefully on-going groups, organized according to neighborhoods.

THE RULES

"Welcome Sisters" was the greeting which echoed forth from one of the Brooklyn Heights members sitting up front around the microphones. It was an enthusiastic enough beginning. She made the usual introductions, mentioned the veteran members amongst us in the audience who would participate from time to time, and

then mentioned the rules listed on the sheets passed out. Rules? Well, do's and don'ts the sheet said. I didn't remember any rules from my experience, only that you had to be honest and that wasn't exactly a rule, it was more like a necessary condition, and I didn't see that condition listed--so I put the rules away and got back to the demonstration.

The group began by introducing themselves individually. The first woman 35, married with two children used to be a lingerie model for Elizabeth Arden--"it got so," she said, "I didn't know if the price tag was on me or the lingerie." The next woman in her late twenties, separated from her husband, said, "I suddenly realized I was a whole, complete person, without this guy calling me everyday . . . I've also been taking myself more seriously as a poet lately." Beside her was a forty year old divorced woman who confessed she got into consciousness-raising almost against her will. . . . "I wanted to go out and march and carry a banner . . . everytime I went for the first four times it was a joy to leave . . . then I began to realize I was hearing things, learning things . . . now I never miss a meeting." The next woman was separated "I'm 41," she said, "I don't usually offer that. I want to be able to talk and express the way I really feel . . . it's a new thing for me." The last woman to be introduced was 38 and single. "I was determined to remain feminine on my job (film production)," she said, "I found myself constantly saying things like I'm not a feminist but . . ." She then went on to relate a little story, "I saw a big woman giving a little man holy hell the other day. Before I would have said, 'What a ball-breaking bitch.' Now I say to myself, I wonder what hurts her so much that she has to be that way." Oh God. I thought to myself. Is this an example of raised consciousness--that's awful. When I see a woman giving a man holy hell I think back to the last time I was in that position knowing damn well he deserved more than just holy hell and I say to that woman "bitch, sister, bitch and do it louder!" Where did she get this nobler than thou attitude? I checked back to their list

of do's and don'ts, don't judge other women--so, I guess this is what they mean by not judging other women.

Well I must admit my enthusiasm was being badly threatened, first the rules business and now this, but it was still early in the program and when I heard the question we would be dealing with I perked up. You see at the beginning of each meeting a question is picked and then each member relates personally, subjectively and specifically her experience to the topic. The question for this meeting is, How do you feel about the way you look . . . the dialogue begins.

"Well, you see, I had this mother," (everybody laughs), says the ex-lingerie model. "She was always telling me how beautiful she was, I felt as if I couldn't compete with her, but I was doing it anyway . . . Well to this day I can't go out without my eye make-up on, I think that's really a part of me now."

"My mother used to say," said the next woman, "I was really pretty before I had you. She was always telling me I was pretty, but I never believed it. Everybody else's hair always looked good, except mine, it never looked right . . . I feel like I can be a woman now without wearing high heels and make-up."

"I had a mother too," piped the banner carrier.

Now wait a minute, I said to myself. This has got to stop, what is it with this group. They've been together for a year and don't have their consciousnesses raised about mothers yet. Aren't some of them mothers! Why are they still concentrating so much on their mothers, isn't it really an easy target that doesn't have that much to do with their present situations. Don't they know that our mothers main task was to prepare us for marriage and to the best possibility around. Now granted that can be a ruthless training program, but women are oppressed, right? So let's cut the mother stuff.

So the banner carrier had a mother. "Well, I couldn't see; I needed glasses," she said. "When I finally convinced her to get me a pair, she wouldn't let me wear them . . . Everytime my mother sees me she says, 'Why don't you curl your hair?' To this day she's threatened to curl it in the coffin . . . Actually I'm fine as long as I don't think of myself as my face."

Luckily the next member had a father (a sigh of relief). "He wanted a boy and got four girls. I was the oldest, I used to climb trees and broad jump. I didn't know about things like bras and make-up until I was in college, and then I didn't know what to do or who to ask."

With the last woman we were back to mothers again. "She used to say I don't know what to do with you, you're bigger than I ever was. She used to say, beauty is inside of you--I don't think she knew what she was saying but she was right." (I wonder why this woman felt her mother didn't know what she was saying?) Then the veterans in the audience chimed in:

"Looks are still very important to me," confessed one participant. "It kills me to admit it but it's true. It was only in the last year that I learned how to grin. It was always that controlled smile I had practiced in front of the mirror."

"I always hated my eyebrows," said another. "While you were all trying to get skinny, I was trying to get fat--'emaciated' my mother would scream, 'you're emaciated.' To dream about looking like Sophia Loren was out of the question, Audrey Hepburn was more my style."

Well it went on and on. Straight



consciousness - raising

heads trying to curl, curly heads trying to straighten, worries about eyebrows and complexions and wrist measurements and waistlines. As one woman summed it up, "I don't know any woman who likes her body, and I don't know any man who doesn't."

Yes that generalization was becoming clear--women did not feel good about the way they looked and at one point or another in their lives they felt they just were not pretty enough. But God I thought, these women are all fairly attractive by the usual standards, what must other women feel whose looks deviate even more from the acceptable norm than this. What a terrible deception placed on women--to make us suspect of, nervous about that which is so fundamentally a part of ourselves, our body, our face, our hair, --our looks and that which is basically, except for minor alteration work, unchangeable. "A woman arrives at a party with a new dress, special hairdo, nice smile etc.," one veteran said, "while a man arrives with himself (his masculinity)." And for whom is all this laborious beautification work done, whose self-interests are being served? Women? Anyone who's slept in rollers knows that it's not in her self-interest. Men set the standards for beauty in women and the standards are not what we really look like. How can we feel good about the way we look when we're forced to judge ourselves by these artificial male standards--can we look like what we want to look like and still get what we want? Perhaps the clearer truth about the statement I don't know any woman who likes her body etc. is: I don't know any man who would like a woman's body the way it really is. In other words, would men allow women to define their own bodies, set their own standards, be what they are. Could we arrive at a party with ourselves! Well it's not happening en masse, women are still curling and straightening and reducing and gaining and trying . . . but remember this--we don't like it and we never feel good about it.

The information up to this point was good, but the demonstrators feel down poorly on analysis. Analysis of data should be a very important part of C-R groups but the obvious generalizations were stated without further comment.

1. Women did not feel good about their looks. 2. Women were isolated one from the other, feeling everybody else's looks were okay except their own. Well there were some of us who would have liked to know more. For instance when didn't a woman feel pretty enough? Did looks make that much difference when men weren't around? What happens when you don't dress up? When you do? What is your ideal about the way you should look? It took Nanette herself, the program director, to point out that the previous critical remarks made about mothers was not taking into consideration the tasks of mothers. She also then mentioned her mother was in the audience.

Now I can't describe to you in sequence what happened next but it was coming through loud and bad on my reception antenna. Snatches of dialogue, outrageous attitudes, and theory which didn't sound right in my experience. Let me give you my reaction first and perhaps in that way I can focus more clearly on exactly what was being said.

Despite my fondness for consciousness-raising, I know there are some real flaws with the method, limited experiences due to the small number of people in each group and/or experiences understood inaccurately and therefore analyzed inaccurately. But there are even worse

flaws in the consciousness-raising demonstrated at WBAI.

For one thing consciousness-raising seems to have changed. All these new rules. Back in 1969 the Redstockings Manifesto stated: "the first requirement for raising 'class consciousness' is honesty, in private and in public, with ourselves and other women," and there were no other requirements listed. Consciousness-raising is not a technique to help women express themselves, to improve characters or make anybody verbal and fluent. It is not therapy, self-help or a Dale Carnegie primer course. It is an opportunity for women to get together and learn the truth from each other--with whatever benefits come of that.



José Meléndez Contreras

But it seems, contrary to all the universal protestations that C-R is not therapy (and who will not agree with you) it now seems in danger of becoming just that.

NO "JUDGMENTS" . . . NO CONCLUSIONS

Take a look at these rules--don't interrupt another speaker, don't challenge another woman's experience, don't judge another woman, begin back with childhood experiences. Why can't you interrupt and challenge another woman if you can't understand a word she is saying? Believe it or not one of the members said they thought a woman was lying through several months of sessions and didn't say anything. I just can't help feeling that's a terrible waste of time. You can't judge other women--well I suppose arguing with another woman about whether something is true or not is now a judgment. Begin back in childhood, isn't that what Freudian analysis does? Isn't concentrating on things which have happened in the past a way of avoiding confronting present realities. Isn't looking for the reasons for our present behavior in the past underplaying that there are any present reasons. The purpose of consciousness-raising is to find out the truth about women, to see where our real self-interest lies. How can these rules get at the truth? How can I get the truth of what a woman is saying if I'm practically not even allowed to talk to her during a meeting? What do I do, see her later on privately after the meeting is over? I don't have to go to a meeting for that.

Now take this 'quiet woman' creation for example. It seems in conjunction with this rule of no interruption, talk of the 'quiet woman' emerges. Supposedly this rule was even made on her behalf.

Well, who is the 'quiet woman' and what does she do? Supposedly she's quiet. But is she always quiet? I mean is quietness now an absolute, genetic, hereditary permanent part of one's makeup? I mean I thought quietness was one of those 'it depends' things. It depends on who you're with, what's happening, what's been said. In other words it's relative. Sometimes it might be in our interests to be quiet and sometimes it might be in our interests to not be quiet. So probably there is no such thing as the 'quiet woman,'

only women who are quiet when it is in their interests to be so.

There are many reasons why a woman in a C-R group might be quiet. Some of these reasons don't present any problem at all.

1. She is interested in what the speaker is saying.
 2. She is in basic agreement with what the speaker is saying (hence silence means approval or consent).
 3. She feels the speaker is expressing what she herself would express and doing it equally well or better.
 4. She may not have made up her mind about certain issues yet and wants to hear more (confused).
- Others are a problem but reflect a political conflict in the group or in the individual.
5. She feels when she does say something nobody really listens--so it's energy expended for nothing.
 6. She does not want to appear rude, not nice, disruptive by interrupting someone else.
 7. She may feel it's dangerous (the climate is not right) to say what she wants to say.
 8. She feels that she can't get in a word edgewise--which means for some reason or other she would have to fight to make herself heard.
 9. She may be in disagreement with the speaker but unwilling to take a stand (hence silence means disapproval).
 10. She may not have made up her mind about how much she will commit herself.

ANALYZING PERSONALITIES INSTEAD OF POLITICS

It is necessary therefore to look at these reasons if we are going to clearly analyze the situation of the 'quiet woman.' It seems that the people who talk so much about the 'quiet woman' haven't even scratched the surface of investigating the real issues at work here. They take quietness to be a problem, never even assuming that there might be a perfectly good reason why a woman doesn't feel like talking at that particular time, or in that particular situation, or in that particular group. They assume in other words that it is a woman's personality that is making her quiet or that it is somebody else's personality that is making her quiet (the so-called noisy woman, in this case).

Besides skirting the real issues this explanation and definition of the 'quiet woman' is a psychological explanation (she is inadequate in some way) and therefore she must be helped (therapy). We find most therapy patronizing, not to mention the fact that it has nothing to do with the real issues in this situation. Is it purely accidental that everytime a woman makes reference to her sister the 'quiet woman' it sounds patronizing? At one point during the session in the course of one of the more talkative woman's discourse, she stopped, smiled and glanced over to the two labelled quiet women in the group, and said to the audience, "You see why we have this rule about no interruptions, notice who's been doing all the talking," and then returned just as abruptly to what she had been previously saying. What was the purpose of saying that I wonder, except to call attention to herself as being 'articulate.' It also served to focus less flattering attention on the two labelled 'quiet women,' one blushed, I guess the other was supposed to beat her breast. I don't know, but I couldn't help feeling it was a put down for them and a pull up for the speaker. After all it wasn't that she was indeed going to

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Consciousness-Raising cont'd

stop talking and let them talk--is this supposed to be encouragement to get those women to speak. That's why I feel this therapy line is even bad therapy. By labelling those women as quiet you've given them a special problem already, you've split them from the group, you've made another division, the thing male society has been doing to women consistently throughout history.

It is very important to expose this faulty way of viewing the woman who is quiet. If there is a problem with being quiet, by analyzing the real reasons you would realize they are probably coming from political differences and not personal inadequacies. It's not 'how you say it' it's 'what you say' that counts. There are those who find it easier to criticize someone's personality rather than their political views. But the issues of the Women's Movement are political ones and the problems faced by women, though felt personally by each individual woman, are political problems. The Movement is a political situation and shouldn't be a social scene where people worry about such things as witty conversation and keeping talk flowing, and arguments at a minimum, you know, the make friends and influence people scene. You see in 'social' situations there is a premium placed on not wanting to look like you have nothing to say and a certain contempt for people who have nothing to say.

If C-R groups were to assume this character the whole purpose of the concept would be lost. Women getting together to learn the truth from one another and coming to a political understanding would be impossible in that kind of setting.

PERSONAL IS POLITICAL NOT POLITICAL IS PERSONAL

The Movement says the personal is political not that the political is personal. To say that the political is personal is what the enemies of movements for political change have always said--that people are in radical politics because they have personality problems, that women are in the feminist movement because they are neurotic, rather than because they have justified political grievances and genuine political goals.

Let me mention that great acclaim was given to the longevity of the Brooklyn

Heights C-R group, the audience seemed really taken by the fact that they were able to stay together for so long. I think that's fine but I also don't think there is anything wrong with groups splitting, with political differences being laid out clearly, with wandering from group to group if you're not satisfied with what you see.

Let me also just mention briefly the other side of the coin--the so-called 'noisy woman.' She is just as much a categorization as the 'quiet woman.' If a woman is talking alot but saying things you want to hear, illuminating feminist principles, why should she be labelled 'noisy' and be made to be quiet? If she's going on and on talking about nonsense, well if you didn't have a no interruption rule, then you could challenge what she was saying. Who decides if you're being relevant or irrelevant, well obviously the group decides (in the end history decides) and if groups were deciding, things would be more out in the open and it wouldn't be necessary to go through this name-calling, labelling process which just clouds things over more the deeper.

It was very interesting to hear the explanation offered by the Brooklyn Heights C-R group as to the reasons for the no interruption rule. It was very contradictory. On the one hand they said it forced them to listen to what their sisters were saying--in the same breath, however, they said they spent the time while someone else was speaking going over in their own minds what they would say when their turn came. I'm not for forced listening, so I can see why their minds wandered. It's boring and irritating to have to sit through a dissertation when you feel the speaker is lying, or hiding, or being down right deliberately irrelevant, and it's a waste of time. But if someone gets interrupted, it shouldn't be for talking too much, or for being 'noisy' but for being irrelevant, incorrect about something or not relating to the issues at hand. I think it's just as possible that the no interruption rule came from some of the 'noisy' women's desire to speak uninterrupted forever--and I must say it's more to their credit if this was their motive, at least it tells us clearly where their self-interest lies.

Besides, if the atmosphere is one of

getting at the truth, which consciousness-raising is supposed to be, women would welcome the opportunity of a spontaneous comment or insight that related to the point. After all, isn't that what happens in normal conversation?

At the end of the session, and this was the highlight of the whole day, someone from the audience who said she had been in a number of C-R groups, mentioned that she had found that C-R groups worked better without this no interruption rule. "That's okay," retorted one of the panelists, waving aside a whole period of Women's Movement history in one moment, but "THAT is not consciousness-raising."

If it is true, as I earlier quoted, that a mass movement will begin when women begin to perceive their situations correctly, then I would venture to say that anything which stands in the way of developing that perception stands in the way of any hopes for a mass movement. And consciousness-raising which does not have getting to the truth as its essential goal, which permits myths and lies to go unchallenged, may in the last analysis turn against us, and a technique which has attracted so many women to the movement may turn out to be nothing more than a revolving door.

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LIBERATION ENTERPRISES Dept. W
131 Joralemon Street
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Satellite BY ROBIN MORGAN

I wonder if I hate him yet.
We lie awake to feign sleep--even breathing
through space that weights the perigees
our separate bodies spin, fearing to burn, burst, crater
such stillness by a word or hand.
I wonder if he thinks I hate him yet.

How can I hate? I am not here
but coasting a moonscape utterly far from him,
light seconds from the quarrel we did not have:
space, water, time, my breasts and blood divide us:
dishes ticking, clocks to be laundered,
even his eyes that know these things divide us.

"We are equal," he says and says. I will write
my poems in indelible ink on the laundry then
while lost buttons roll where green-marbled meat
molds books unfinished, unvacuumed ovaries, self-pity.
Women ought to be born one-breasted or male
or mindless. "We are equal," he says. We find me wanting.

Yet I've patterned and stitched no other man
to lie beside. Effortlessly faithful
I wax toward curves he charts himself
for straying. I couldn't care more. No woman, either, smiles back
sleeping my my arms. Not even
I--not now--lie there. He has no rivals.

© 1968 by Robin Morgan. The above poem is from the collection Monster Poems by Robin Morgan to be published simultaneously by Random House in hardcover and by Vintage Books in paperback in the fall.

I think of others though: of one
whose lunatic footprints on this dust stopped where
she rested her head in a moderate oven;
of one who sorts through drifted years to start all over,
sweeping out her husband-son
so that their child might breathe, a daughter, though human;

of another so young she thought she had time
to play the woman game, who now must search
his closets for her own stored clothes;
of the seasoned poets, just divorced, her recipe--
unwritten poems--still not having
nourished his appetite. And the showgirl, drawn

by a mind to learn its gravity
repulsed books, talk, thought--all but a child.
My mother got her child, then drowned
the man beneath freak tides, eclipsed herself in me.
No other course but this then? To thread
blood trails past clouded windows to a satellite

where lesbians, eyes streaming sperm,
rock fatherless daughters on their crescent laps,
spinsters dance naked, brutalized brides
scrub their nightgowns endlessly. I am unclear.
I would still sink back to earth, to him.
I wonder if I hate these women yet.

Who set me orbiting this bed?
My two escapes: to kneel before the oven
or hang his wrung-out love to dry,
each leaving these windows unwashed of that moon--unless
I turn to rouse his sleepless fear
With mine. I wonder if he hates me yet.

"LET'S HEAR FROM THE QUIET WOMEN"

by Barbara Leon

I began going to women's liberation meetings about three years ago. A number of groups were at that time holding weekly orientation meetings on the Lower East Side to give new women some idea of what their groups stood for, to introduce us to the process of consciousness-raising and to provide a means of access into ongoing groups. My first reaction to these meetings was very mixed. On the one hand, I was fascinated by the ideas I heard and went back for more each week. On the other hand, I was scared, I didn't know exactly of what, and wasn't sure that I wanted to get involved. The format involved going around the room so that each woman could speak to the question of the week. I liked hearing the other women but preferred to speak briefly or pass at my turn and felt very uncomfortable about doing this because of the stress put on hearing from everyone. On the surface I seemed and felt "shy" but there were underlying reasons which I now see as basically political. I wasn't yet ready to commit myself to the feminist movement or the ideas expressed by the women at those meetings. At the same time I was strongly drawn to and felt the need for feminism so that I didn't want to either leave or oppose the ideas I was hearing. Keeping quiet seemed the safest strategy for the time being even though it could be and often was misunderstood. In that situation and in others my quietness often seen as some unexplained personality trait or as a sign of some kind of "psychological damage" rather than being analyzed as a reasonable way of handling a difficult or puzzling situation.

During those early meetings I was first exposed to some of the ideas about "internal democracy" circulating in the movement. Some of the women argued that special rules and structures were needed in groups to keep the more "aggressive," "articulate" women from dominating the others. Specifically, they were in favor of going around the room with no interruptions allowed, and dividing up all group work by the lot system (drawing names randomly from a hat). They argued that the ability to be articulate in speaking and writing was the class privilege of elite women and held back the "development" and participation of others. I was confused. I had always thought of myself as "middle class" (though my family background wasn't) and I'd had many of the privileges, for example, formal education and a professional job, that they talked about. Yet I was one of the "inarticulate" quiet women. Despite my confusion on this point, however, I welcomed the anti-elitist theories as a personal answer and saw the rules as a way to force me to resolve the conflict I had about participating more in the group.

A few months later I joined a regular consciousness-raising group (Redstockings)

and those nice sounding theories were put to the test of reality. In the beginning I had very mixed reactions to that group too. As before, I was really interested in the discussions of male supremacy although I didn't contribute much - at times out of indecision, not knowing where I stood on certain issues and wanting to hear more before I made up my mind, at other times because of that same conflict over how involved in this movement I wanted to be. But what made me really uncomfortable were the discussions on "what was going on in the group."

There were women in the group who seemed to be supporting me. They criticized others for being dominating and monopolizing the meetings. In the middle of a discussion they would break in to say that those talking were not giving others a chance and would then add "Let's hear from the quiet women." I knew that that meant me. I felt that I should be grateful and yet I would wince everytime I heard that phrase. (Other times however, I didn't mind being asked what I thought - for example when someone seemed to really be interested in my ideas or when a woman seemed to have a real reason to ask, for instance, a self-interest in knowing where everyone stood on a particular issue.)

It got to the point where I didn't even trust my own perceptions of what was happening. I felt angry and patronized by the women who were claiming to represent my interests. I felt attacked whenever another woman was accused of dominating me - since that implicitly meant that I was easily dominated, weak, damaged, etc. Yet I continued to believe that it was for my own good and to wonder why it only made me feel worse. I also ignored my positive feelings toward those women who were supposedly "dominating" me.

My negative experiences with the lot system of assigning and carrying out the work of the group were also in contradiction to the benefits it was supposed to bring. I found that women who I admired for being outspoken gave me the courage to say what I thought, but the lot system was based on the opposite assumption. The example of already active women made it easier, not harder, for me to become more involved myself. I wrote one paper before the lot system was instituted and felt good about it. When the point was reached where most of the women in the group wanted to use the lot system I supported that decision - who could be against "democratic procedures?" But deep down I worried that I would be forced to do things I didn't want to do or didn't yet have the skills for, and kept from doing other things I was really interested in. I never had a chance to test out those fears since, with the final crushing of leadership and initiative our group fell apart. We continued to meet for several months but no real work was done. As more and more

people dropped out, the meetings finally stopped.

One of the things we've learned in the women's movement is that lofty theories have to be judged in terms of the actual effect they have on people's lives. I've already described the effect on me of what seemed to be sisterly protection. What about the effect on others? For some women, those who strongly put forth their ideas, it meant a sapping of their courage through a repetition of the kind of response female assertiveness always meets with under male supremacy: accusations of being a dominating, selfish, aggressive woman, of acting like a man. For others, the women who set themselves up as advocates of what they called "internal democracy" (in reality they meant "protecting" women from each other) it meant a retreat to the ladylike politics of the past: un-self-interested, nurturing, and above all no threat to the man's world outside our meeting rooms. It's interesting that so many groups in the women's movement actually came under the control of women who are so vehemently against "elites." Someone has called them the anti-leadership leaders although it's unclear where they're taking us.

There are also many ironic parallels between this version of "internal democracy" and its counter part in the society as a whole, American "democracy." In both there is a failure to distinguish between people who have no more power than you do but whose words and actions inspire you to move forward - leaders - and those who have the power in the society to keep you in your "place" - rulers. In both the Women's Movement and American Society there is a real elite group speaking for the "great silent majority" (here known as the "quiet women"), telling everyone what we really want and what is good for us. In both there is an implication that it's nasty to be "out for power" - unless you're one of the people who already has it and can afford to be blasé about such things. In both there is the diversion of energy from a confrontation with the powers-that-be to the quest for the perfect personality and the model social group (in the women's movement this means learning not to be "too aggressive" or "too passive" and to "learn to relate" and be satisfied with sisterhood among the oppressed). In both there are lots of "democratic" rules, gimmicks and forms while people who threaten real change are punished for breaking those rules. In both there is the myth of the privileged middle class which everyone (in the society/in the movement) belongs to - otherwise known as the "affluent society" - calculated to make everyone think that we have less to fight for than we really do; that we already have power and should be satisfied with less, not more. The techniques of oppression remain remarkably the same from situation to situation; only the jargon changes.

Note: The following paragraph on the "disc system" had originally been edited out of this article. The reason for our initial decision not to print it was a feeling that the disc system was so obviously a bad idea and a reflection of an earlier, less mature state of the women's movement that groups were no longer using or advocating it. However, as we went to press, we discovered that the guidelines for consciousness-raising printed in the new issue of MS. magazine, and going out to thousands of women who may not have experienced C-R, suggest the use of the disc system as a way to help us "realize who is listening too much, and who is not

listening enough." So here's the deleted paragraph:

"At a couple of meetings we experimented with the disc system. Every woman is given a certain number of discs which she must throw into the middle of the circle everytime she speaks. When her discs run out she can no longer say anything. The stated purpose, of course, was to equalize everyone's 'chance to speak.' My own reaction to this kind of grade school discipline was to feel more tense at those meetings than I had for a long time. I dealt with the situation by putting my energy into thinking up enough meaningless comments so as to get rid of my discs as quickly as possible."

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COVERING UP WOMEN'S NOTES FROM THE FIRST, SECOND,

BY KATHIE SARACHILD

The woman's liberation movement has become a vague and amorphous thing that anyone can define. Its definition is up for grabs and lately everyone has been defining it. One person who manages to finagle a book contract can define it this way and another can define it that way.

And in a sense women and the women's movement have lost power over their own definition. We so often now must rely on the good graces of the individuals who produce the television shows and get the book contracts and hope that they will use the power that is in their hands to define the women's movement truthfully rather than to distort it to make it appear to be what they want it to be.

So the things that the movement has that aren't up for grabs are very precious commodities. Anyone can define "the movement" but not anyone can define a particular movement journal for which there is tangible physical evidence that it exists.

The movement journal NOTES is particularly important in this respect because it has been so influential. Whatever the deep underlying socio-economic causes, whatever the precursors - the books like The Second Sex and The Feminine Mystique, whatever changes the movement will go through in the years to come, the movement first expressed itself as a mass phenomenon in the political language, the slogans and mass organizing concepts which were first phrased and brought to public attention by a handful of women who were in a short-lived group called New York

Radical Women, and the splinter groups which grew out of that original one. The journal NOTES founded by Shulamith Firestone attempted to represent the thinking of these women and in its first two editions, NOTES FROM THE FIRST YEAR AND NOTES FROM THE SECOND YEAR articulated the ideas which then spread like wildfire throughout the country.

Betty Friedan in her book talked about "the problem that has no name." The women in New York Radical Women named the problem - MEN - or, rather, the unjust political power of men - and the term male chauvinism, even male chauvinist pig - spread. Male supremacy, women's liberation, sisterhood is powerful, the myth of the vaginal orgasm, sexual politics, consciousness-raising, radical feminism, the personal is political - they were all there in NOTES 1 and 2, written down for the first time in the first journal of the women's liberation movement.

Both editions sold out. There were several printings of NOTES 1 amounting to about 4000 copies altogether. And there were 40,000 - or ten times as many copies of NOTES 2 distributed the next year. But their effect reached far beyond the number of people who actually read them. Articles from both editions were reprinted in other periodicals and books throughout the world.

One of the richnesses of NOTES was that the journal - particularly in its first two years - revealed radical feminism at work. That is, it revealed women who thought of themselves as radical feminists in the process of arguing with each

other, making proposals, developing ideas. They weren't writing for any "style" other than to make themselves and their ideas understood, and put to use. They weren't worrying about selling their style on the anthology market or to magazines or newspapers, and so, if there wasn't time to develop a long paper or write a book, if a woman thought she had an idea that would clarify something for women and the movement, she would put it down in outline form or in a leaflet and get it out.

So NOTES became an annual record of significant movement developments in thought and strategy in the forms in which they were produced. And as a historical record it is particularly valuable for this because it shows the thought process of the movement. It is in this - in seeing what actually went into the thinking of the various positions, that we can get clues to whatever may be confusing or disturbing us about the "well-written" conclusions which are usually all that get published in the "regular" anthologies, and all that get spread by word of mouth and then manipulated as dogma.

This was the function of NOTES and what it did. It recorded the history of feminism of the period, at least as that particular journal saw it. And as an organ of the feminist movement, as a vehicle for women in the movement to talk to each other presenting their ideas directly both to women "inside" and "outside," NOTES not only contained historic documents, it was a historic document.

Early in February of this year, I received a letter announcing plans for a book to be published by Quadrangle which would be called NOTES FROM THE FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD YEARS: WOMEN'S LIBERATION. It was signed by Anna Koedt and Ellen Levine, editor and associate editor respectively of this year's edition of the radical feminist movement journal by the same name. I assumed from the title that this forthcoming book was going to be a way of making the now out of print journal available for republication on a wide scale; but I was confused by the request

2-6-72

Dear KATHIE

We are compiling an anthology on feminism scheduled to be published by Quadrangle Books in the winter of 1972. The working title is NOTES FROM THE FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD YEARS: WOMEN'S LIBERATION. We herewith request permission for world rights to reprint the following article(s):

TRADITIONAL WOMANHOOD IS DEAD!
(leaflet from J. Rankin)

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We would appreciate your signifying permission for us to reprint this material by signing below, where indicated, and returning it to us in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope.

Sincerely,

Anne Koedt
Ellen Levine

Anne Koedt
Ellen Levine

AGREED: _____

DATE: _____

Kathie - please let us know what name you want us to use. xx

to publish in the book a leaflet of mine that had never appeared in the journal and the omission of the articles I had written which had been published in the original journal. I thought perhaps that the editors didn't need to obtain permission for articles already published in the journal and that was why they hadn't asked for those. I checked with another former NOTES contributor and found out that this was not the case. It appeared, in fact, that the editors did not want the articles of mine that had been in the original NOTES.

I felt there was something terribly wrong. I knew that the current editors and I had political differences, differences which had been reflected in my contributions to NOTES as well as in their selections for the 3rd issue in which it had seemed to me that the character of NOTES had changed considerably from the two earlier issues. No Redstockings papers or Woman's World articles had been selected for that year, for instance, though many of the writers had been published previously, and almost no articles discussing feminist strategy and other political differences within the movement. It suddenly looked as if the Redstockings viewpoint, as I had contributed to it, (I didn't know about the others yet) was now going to be erased from the available record of past NOTES as well as having already been eliminated from NOTES FROM THE THIRD YEAR. I felt especially concerned about one of my articles scheduled for elimination because it was the first formulation of the idea of "consciousness-raising" and, in addition to its historic importance, would be quite pertinent to problems facing the movement now. Concerned, I sent a letter to Koedt telling her what I felt about the political nature of the abridgment and asking for an explanation. I received no answer.

About a week later, I received a phone call in the middle of the night from Shulamith Firestone who I hadn't talked to in a couple of years. It was about an incident that had just occurred on the street outside her window (a hysterical woman was being forcibly dragged off to Bellevue) and she wanted to know whether I knew of any feminist groups that might help her. It looked pretty hopeless.

I remembered NOTES in the course of the conversation and because she had been the editor of the first two editions of NOTES, those editions in which my work had appeared, I told her my fears - that I had been cut for political reasons - hoping that she would be able to intervene as former editor. She told me she had not been consulted about the project but had her own doubts about its validity. However, since she had no longer wanted to be involved in editing of the current NOTES (as opposed to past editions which she assumed would remain unchanged) she had limited herself to a written objection on the release form with no response in the three months since. Although she had been incommunicado for some time and didn't want to get re-involved, she said she felt that any issue which could involve a misrepresentation of past feminist history was a serious matter and that it was her responsibility as former editor to write a note demanding an explanation.

A short time later, although Anne had not yet acknowledged receipt of my letter, I learned from Shulamith that the very day she sent off her note to Anne, though she had been on only barely speaking terms with Anne for over half a year - she received a "friendly" letter from Anne suggesting that she officially relinquish her legal partnership in NOTES.

HISTORY, AN EXAMPLE -

AND THIRD YEARS

During the following week there was no response from Anne to either of us, but I decided to check with other former contributors to NOTES and began to discover that more and more work besides my own had been left out. Based on the content of all the excluded articles, there could no longer be any question but that the cuts were politically motivated. Although there were lots of articles left in about the general condition of women, almost all the articles debating and taking positions about what the movement itself should do - articles advocating strategies for change, in other words, dealing with methods as well as goals, had been excluded. These were: all the articles about consciousness-raising which appeared in NOTES 2 and which represented the period in which consciousness-raising was first developed; most of the articles about the debate with the Left; the articles developing ideas about power within feminist groups written by members of The Feminists; and the Woman-Identified Woman proposal for a lesbian feminist strategy. Also left out was Shulamith Firestone's article on feminist history in NOTES FROM THE FIRST YEAR, "The Woman's Rights Movement in the U.S.: A New View" in which she analyzes the mistakes she felt the 19th century feminist movement had made and advocates alternatives. All that remained in the Quadrangle reprint (as of the middle of April) of the discussions of what direction the movement should take were some of the conclusions - in the form of then current manifestos.

In addition to the strategy articles, all the articles developing one whole theory of the condition of women were left out - the theory which has come to be known as "the pro-woman line" and which was associated with the New York City feminist group Redstockings as well as with individuals in other parts of the country. The pro-woman line attacked as liberal and untrue the view that women had become mentally "damaged" by their oppression. It argued that the only problem with women was men (the political power men wielded through male supremacy) - saying that whatever a woman did was some kind of an effort to get as much out of life as she felt she could given the male supremacist situation around her, and that POWER was what women needed to improve their conditions, not self-improvement programs. (Consciousness-raising was initiated by those with a pro-woman line view, as a means by which women could find out the truth about their own lives and the general situation of women by overcoming their political isolation.)

It was this general point of view and its various ramifications that was just beginning to be articulated in 1969 and 1970 and was developed for the first time in a number of papers which NOTES FROM THE SECOND YEAR published. All of these papers were going to be left out of the Quadrangle edition. They were: my article discussing the political nature of feelings in "A Program for Feminist Consciousness-raising;" Carol Hanisch's "The Personal is Political;" Irene Peslikis' "Resistances to Consciousness," Ellen Willis' "Consumerism and Women;" and Jennifer Gardner's "False Consciousness."

I intend at some future time to discuss what I think are the full political ramifications of these exclusions which I think amount to a classic case of the radicals being written out of history. But whatever the political issues involved, the pro's and con's of the various analyses and proposals, there was clear cut evidence that the groundbreaking papers of one whole important radical feminist viewpoint were going

to be eliminated from an anthology purporting to represent the historic movement journal in which they had in fact appeared.

The elimination of the pro-woman line is the only out and out proof there is of a political motive behind the editors' selections, although it would appear that the omission of almost all the papers dealing with the subject of the feminist movement itself (rather than aspects of women's lives) - discussing strategic differences in history and at the present time, making proposals for approaches, etc. - would also have a political intent. (After all, It's much safer to just state the problem and leave it at that.)

In any case, at the point of discovering that these omissions had been made, for whatever reasons, there could be no doubt that the Quadrangle edition of NOTES was not going to be authentic NOTES as they appeared but a highly re-edited version which, if allowed to go to press would have completely subverted the value of NOTES as a historic record.

Why would anybody want to make an out of print journal available to the public if they were not indeed going to present the authentic version. The editors could have just put another feminist anthology on the market with a different name. Clearly, NOTES had built up a genuine radical reputation which could be exploited in terms of profit and prestige.

It was only after Shulamith had sent a second letter legally withdrawing all six of her articles scheduled to be printed, that one of us got a reply.

Within the week, I finally received an answer from Anne. She denied that there had been a political motive for eliminating my work. Never mentioning all the other articles on consciousness-raising in NOTES FROM THE SECOND YEAR that had also been left out, she claimed that neither she nor any other NOTES

editor had "any particular disagreement with consciousness-raising" nor any other of my NOTES articles. (By the latter, she was referring to my speech "Funeral Oratorion for the Burial of Traditional Womanhood" which had been published in NOTES #1 and which reflected an earlier period of my feminist thinking. She probably did agree with the speech since she had been active in seeing that it be presented.) Although two and a half months had gone by since I had received the publisher's release form she sent me WITHOUT my C-R article in it, she implied that my article on consciousness-raising had never definitely been rejected but that it had been "in question" because, given the limitations of space, my article included "a cumberson and awkward outline." There was no explanation of why, if it was truly a question of space, they had wanted to include a leaflet of mine that had never even appeared in NOTES.

In this letter, Anne told me that she and the other editors (by then Anita Rapone, the other associate editor of NOTES FROM THE THIRD YEAR had also joined the Quadrangle staff) had now (!) decided to include my C-R article anyway because they "felt its historical value outweighed its writing style." The implication was that they had come to this analysis on their own and that they had made their decision independently of any criticism (which after all, they had just claimed was totally unjustified). "Your letter," Anne said, "did not help you because it made us furious." No mention at all was made of Shulamith's two letters pertaining to this matter.

Neither Anne's acceptance of my C-R article nor her explanations of its absence from the original release form I had received were sufficient in the light of all the other articles I now knew had also been omitted. Even with my C-R article in it, there were all those other articles to consider whose ex-

cont'd p. 16

The Personal Is Political Carol Hanisch

For this paper I want to stick pretty close to an aspect of the Left debate commonly talked about—namely "therapy" vs. "therapy and politics." Another name for it is "personal" vs. "political" and it has other names, I suspect, as it has developed across the country. I haven't gotten over to visit the New Orleans group yet, but I have been participating in groups in New York and Gainesville for more than a year. Both of these groups have been called "therapy" and "personal" groups by women who consider themselves "more political." So I must speak about so-called therapy groups from my own experience.

The very word "therapy" is obviously a misnomer if carried to its logical conclusion. Therapy assumes that someone is sick and that there is a cure, e.g., a personal solution. I am greatly offended that I or any other woman is thought to need therapy in the first place. Women are messed over, not messed up! We need to change the objective conditions, not adjust to them. Therapy is adjusting to your bad personal alternative.

We have not done much trying to solve immediate personal problems of women in the group. We've mostly picked topics by two methods: in a small group it is possible for us to take turns bringing questions to the meeting (like, Which do/did you prefer, a girl or a boy baby or no children, and why? What happens to your relationship if your man makes more money than you? Less than you?). Then we go around the room answering the questions from our personal experiences. Everybody talks that way. At the end of the meeting we try to sum up and generalize from what's been said and make connections.

I believe at this point, and maybe for a long time to come, that these analytical sessions are a form of political action. I do not go to these sessions because I need or want to talk about my "personal problems." In fact, I would rather not. As a movement woman, I've been pressured to be strong, selfless, other-oriented, sacrificing, and in general pretty much in control of my own life. To admit to the problems in my life is to be deemed weak. So I want to be a strong woman, in movement terms, and not admit I have any real problems that I can't find a personal solution to (except those directly related to the capitalist system). It is at this point a political action to tell it like it is, to say what I really believe about my life instead of what I've always been told to say.

So the reason I participate in these meetings is not to solve any personal problem. One of the first things we discover in these groups is that personal problems are political problems. There are no personal solutions at this time. There is only collective action for a collective solution. I went, and I continue to go to these meetings because I have gotten a political understanding which all my reading, all my "political discussions," all my "political action," all my four-odd years in the movement never gave me. I've been forced to take off the rose-colored glasses and face the awful truth about how grim my life really is as a woman. I am getting a gut understanding of everything as opposed to the esoteric, intellectual understandings and *noblesse oblige* feelings I had in "other people's" struggles.

This is not to deny that these sessions have at least two aspects that are therapeutic. I prefer to call even this aspect "political therapy" as opposed to personal therapy. The most important is getting rid of self-blame. Can you imagine what would happen if women, blacks, and workers (my definition of worker is anyone who has to work for a living as opposed to those who don't. All women are workers) would stop blaming ourselves for our sad situations? It seems to me the whole country needs that kind of political therapy. That is what the black movement is doing in its own way. We shall do it in ours. We are only starting to stop blaming ourselves.

We also feel like we are thinking for ourselves for the first time in our lives. As the cartoon in *Lilith* puts it, "I'm changing. My mind is growing muscles." Those who believe that Marx, Lenin, Engels, Mao, and Ho have the only and last "good word" on the subject and that women have nothing more to add will, of course, find these groups a waste of time.

The groups that I have been in have also not gotten into "alternative life-styles" or what it means to be a "liberated" woman. We came early to the conclusion that all alternatives are bad under present conditions. Whether we live with or without a man, communally or in couples or alone, are married or unmarried, live with other women, go for free love, celibacy, or lesbianism, or any combination, there are only good and bad things about each bad situation. There is no "more liberated" way; there are only bad alternatives.

This is part of one of the most important theories we

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NOTES cont'd

clusion would be a violation of the journal's nature and scope.

I felt that I should let the other contributors know what was happening in the hopes that something could be done about the situation.

Because Anne's editorial objectivity had been placed in question, there was now a need for the contributors to guarantee that the book version maintain the original selection of articles with no additions or subtractions or overall "interpretive" frameworks.

A mailing was sent out to all contributors to NOTES #1 and NOTES #2 telling them about the political deletions that had occurred and asking them to demand release forms from the publisher indicating guarantees of a faithful duplication of the original journal, and to withdraw whatever permission they may have already given until such guarantees were made.

The mailing was limited to NOTES #1 and #2 contributors because we did not have enough information about what had happened to NOTES #3 and it was just too difficult and time consuming to try to find out at that point (although Dana Densmore and Betsy Warrior received letters before this decision was made).

After this mailing was sent, Anne began contacting people for articles she had not previously wanted (it was at this time that the Radical Lesbians' "Woman-Identified Woman" was requested for the first time), although not everyone who had been omitted was contacted nor all the excluded articles in question requested. Most important, no grounds for being able to assure that the book would in fact be a faithful representation of NOTES were forthcoming (nor even any offers of guarantees of fair political representation).

The response to the request for support from other NOTES contributors not directly affected by these editorial policies was disappointing. Very few signed who had not been part of the Redstockings group that was most seriously affected or who had not had some of their

Why I Support This Action by Shulamith Firestone

First, I want to make it clear that I have not acted out of ill will toward NOTES, a magazine I founded - as some women have been led to believe. While it is true I had nothing to do with NOTES after THE SECOND YEAR, it was more out of choice than political difference, though the differences were always there. There had also been a personal split between me and Anne. But these are not the reasons I withdrew from the proposed publication.

I withdrew because it was politically correct to do so. By which I do not mean to imply I have been recently converted to some 'line;' but on the contrary - as former editor, I have remained true to the original purpose of NOTES: to publish all positions significant that year to the development of the spectrum of "radical feminism" (as opposed to the purely leftist analysis of women that was all we then had; or, on the other hand, single-issue 'feminism.')

I was committed to this whatever my own political analysis. At the time I edited NOTES FROM THE SECOND YEAR I did not agree with all of Ti-Grace's definition of radical feminism; any more than I accepted all of the pro-woman line (and as for the Radical-lesbian manifesto, by then I'd had it with the whole movement). But I would have supported equally the right of any of these contributors to be fully included in any reprint of NOTES - particularly after the original went out-of-print.

I am sorry to see NOTES narrowing into one more sectarian journal. When I left I entrusted it to a friend and comrade, Anne Koedt. But pleased though

own work cut. Even some of the contributors who had part of their work cut decided to get anything published they could, apparently unconcerned with the political distortions it would mean for others (especially the readers) and the serious historic misrepresentation of a movement journal it would entail. "Getting the ideas out" by undercutting the credibility of the movement which produces them isn't getting out anything solid or worthwhile at all. It's bad enough that up until now the only way we have had to reach a mass audience with our ideas has been to release movement articles to establishment publishing houses which then included them (a small taste of the real thing) in establishment-approved books and magazines. We agreed to this because it seemed to be the only alternative we had, given our lack of financial resources. But this situation made our own woman's movement press all the more important, as one of the few areas in which we have some concrete control of the definition and ideology of the movement.

That is why the publication of this doctored-up version of NOTES is such a serious development, and far more dangerous than any ordinary anthology would be. After careful editing has been carried out, for political content and "unprofessional" style, millions of readers are to be presented with what passes for a "movement journal," i.e., which claims to be the movement. A few (selected) ideas have gotten out, but only at the price of handing over the power of defining the women's movement to three women, the men at Quadrangle Books, and those other NOTES contributors who have gone along with - and even aided and abetted - their selection. It would seem that the "pathology" of short term opportunism is now affecting the decisions of "radicals" of every persuasion within the women's movement, from feminists like Ti Grace Atkinson, Cindy Cisler, Dana Densmore, Kate Millet, Betsy Warrior and other to socialists like Max Meredith Tax.

At this point, the present status of the book is unclear. Letters of protest to the publisher have resulted in a "concession." In the one reply which directly discussed the title, Quadrangle has stated

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I was to see a NOTES FROM THE THIRD YEAR - and appreciating the amount of work involved - still I found myself mildly disappointed in it: the old fire was lacking. I felt it had been weakened by the exclusion of too many impassioned articles, my own among them. But I was afraid to say so 'lest' I be accused of sour grapes.

Even after I received a release request in the mail for the book project, I was afraid to protest. But I said my piece on the form itself, making explicit what I had expressed many times: that I thought NOTES should come out as a book only in bound volumes of the original format (a la Susan B. Anthony's REVOLUTION); thus gradually building up our own written record as we go along.

But it was only after I received no answer, and evidence piled up that serious political cuts were being contemplated for the new anthology (e.g. an article as important in the history of the movement as Carol Hanisch's THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL) that I finally took a stand on the issue.

So now after all that hate mail, what have we got? "NOTES ON RADICAL FEMINISM." Some title change. Even more politically specious than before. (*This last, courtesy of Ti-Grace Atkinson, Mediator, whose own theory may now stand a better chance of going down in history as the exclusive interpretation of radical feminism.) There was just no support from the women involved.

And thus it happens that radical writing becomes "unavailable." And we have yet another schlock anthology.

© 1972, Shulamith Firestone

NOTES

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FROM THE FIRST YEAR

JUNE 1968
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● THE WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN THE U.S.: A NEW VIEW
Shulamith Firestone

THE MYTH OF THE VAGINAL ORGASM
Anne Koedt

● WOMAN AS CHILD
Jennifer Garner

● WHEN WOMEN TALK ABOUT SEX
Shulamith Firestone

● THE JEANNETTE TAKEN BRIGADE:
WOMAN POWER
A SUMMARY OF OUR INVOLVEMENT

● A LETTER TO RAHWARTS

● FUNERAL ORATION FOR THE BURIAL OF
TRADITIONAL WOMANHOOD
Kathy Ackerly

WOMEN IN THE RADICAL MOVEMENT
Anne Koedt

● ON ABORTION
Shulamith Firestone

● SEE'S PAGE

A thesis for a future study

These two articles are based on group discussions held over the past year. Although highly interpretive, they will give the reader some sense of what a typical discussion is like at the weekly Thursday night meetings.

WORDS FROM ACTIONS: 1968

Speech given in Washington, D.C., to the main assembly of the Jeannette Rankin Brigade on January 15, 1968.

Speech given at a citywide meeting of radical women's groups at the Free University in New York City on February 17, 1968.

Speech given at an abortion repeal rally in New York on March 24, 1968. The rally demonstrated support for the activities of Parents' Aid Society, National, I., and its founder William Baird, in birth-control education, abortion referral counseling, and litigation against laws prohibiting such work.

Marked in the above table of contents are some of the contributions to NOTES FROM THE FIRST YEAR which will not appear in the forthcoming Quadrangle book by a similar title. Some articles published in this edition of NOTES, however, do not appear in the table of contents. These are: "Women of the World Unite, You Have Nothing to Lose But Your Men," by Carol Hanisch and Elizabeth Sutherland and "On Staughton Lynd's Good Society" by Judith Thibeu Gabree. The first was originally requested but withdrawn in protest. The second was requested by the editors after the protest began but permission for publishing was not granted by the author.

● indicates an article not originally requested

● indicates an article withdrawn in protest

□ indicates an article not originally requested but whose status we did not know about

Since we did not hear from all the contributors, there may have been even more deletions than those we learned about. The table of contents of NOTES FROM THE SECOND YEAR below is marked in the same way. The only article which does not appear in it is Shulamith Firestone's "Editorial," which has also been withdrawn.

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they do) and they are designed to make boring work go faster. The fact that most housework is boring and is done over and over again by the same person gives rise to the proliferation of household appliances. Almost all women want them, but they are within the economic reach of only some women--usually not the ones most in need. This has caused Environmental Action to refer to them as "rich women's toys," an error in analysis that first of all ignores the fact that they do work, and secondly mistakes the distribution of goods for the nature of the goods themselves. The fact that a self-cleaning oven is too expensive for most women does not mean it is contemptible or a toy. It eliminates one of the meanest jobs in the kitchen. The criticism that it uses power wastefully is an entirely different matter, and even here we must recognize the politics in priorities: lightening women's workload has always had very low priority among men.

"I agree with an 85-year old black woman who said to me: 'Earth Day. Polluted water, polluted air. But I'm not going to get caught up in that. What we need is a campaign in America about polluted hearts.' That's what's worrying black people." Shirley Chisholm, N.Y. Times, May 22, 1970

WOMEN ARE DUMB

This is practically the only point of agreement between the ecologists and the polluters--as might be expected according to the principle I laid out earlier--shared privilege leading to shared oppressiveness, short-circuiting the movement. The "Women are dumb" line emerges in the frequent statements that "consumers" have to be re-educated about what to buy. The more reactionary groups just come right out with it. In all the commonly met charges against women, sheer stupidity prevails. To run them down:

1. Women are dumb because they buy fruit and vegetables in cellophane wrapped trays. (Unnecessary packaging.) Anyone who's shopped even once (that lets out most ecologists) knows that the reason supermarkets package produce this way is so we'll have to buy more than we'll need and so we can't pick out the best stuff and leave the half-rotten stuff on the shelf. The advantage to supermarkets is that they have no waste produce and they can sell the bad stuff at the same price per pound as the good stuff. The advantage to us is nil. The collaboration is that since the supermarkets are obviously not going to come out and say that the reason they're doing this is because they make more money this way, the safe thing is to say they're doing it because women are dumb enough to want it this way. An appeal to the sexism of a revolutionary always wins.

2. Women are so dumb they won't buy fruit and vegetables unless they are completely blemish free so spraying with pesticides is an absolute necessity. First of all they are right, only it's not just women. Nobody will buy wormy old fruit if they're given a choice--men are notorious for refusing to eat food that looks less than perfect, and who do you think housewives shop for? Before it became commonly known that there are poison residues on fruit (and I question outside of academic "radical" circles how well that is known even now), it was a common sense decision to buy the best looking fruit and vegetables.

3. Women are dumb because they don't go and tell off the supermarket managers and demand . . . (whatever). Although most men are sexists, they do not hesitate to use us as troops. This particular charge is interesting in that it encourages

women to be uppity to men (at the command of other men). It assumes that women will be in a position to stand up to super-market managers, disregarding all sex and race and class factors. In poor neighborhoods, the primary food struggle is to get enough of anything to eat, and in supermarkets, to get the specials on the windows to be in the store. Men who would encourage us to be uppity to their enemies are the first to call us bitch when we go on our own priorities and are uppity to them.

4. Women are dumb because they won't use non-polluting technology even if it were developed. Environmental Action's variety of this is the charge that women need to be reeducated because secretaries would not use a silent typewriter. Once again we must see who is saying what. Aside from the obvious facts that secretaries do not buy typewriters and are too replaceable to refuse to use the boss' machine, this charge is important because it illustrates how "revolutionaries" are bribed with their own sexism. When the manufacturer claims he is doing something because women are dumb, the ecologist must choose between women (by defending their intelligence against the manufacturers greed and deceit) or his own sexism. When corporations say they can't market an improvement, frequently what they mean is that they can't market it at an inflated price or that they don't want to market it and so they haven't informed the public what they're selling. The first line of defense is that they are only doing what the public wants. When the public includes middle class white men this is immediately challenged. As far as women are concerned, they never get this far because they are stopped at the manufacturers first line of defense--that he's only doing what (dumb) women want.

This cannot continue precisely because the ecology movement is so important. Minus all the fancy words,

abstractions, and generalizations, the ecology movement is about our right to eat wholesome food, our right not to be poisoned and not to die for somebody's profits. This is obviously important to women. It is however, only one of our oppressions, and while it would seem an economical use of the people's energy for this struggle to be carried on mostly by white middle class men in all the people's interests, this does not seem possible. Instead, they are dissipating all the energy that could be directed towards a better life for us all and squandering it by directing it downward at the victims. They are squandering my energy because I have to write this and direct it to privileged white men to straighten them out--to fight sexism on two fronts, not only against the larger power structure in this country, but even against those men who should be our allies.

In conclusion, I must say that ecology is the most important struggle. And the most important species to be saved, after centuries of exploitation is WOMAN. The ecology movement should be a powerful force working with Women's Liberation to push hard for truly human solutions and ways of living that would be non-exploitative of any human beings, the earth and all living things. For centuries, man's solution for a cheap source of energy was woman. With the rise of feminism, he partially alleviated our condition by substituting machines that extracted a different toll on our lives. We stand at the crossroads now. We can go backwards as most male ecologists suggest and try to force women to re-assume the labor of machines. Or we can go forward and seek ways of living and a technology that does not exploit, and share those tasks which must be done by people not machines. Until the ecology movement changes its position on woman labor, they will be to us a giant step backwards, just another manifestation of the male supremacist counterfeit left.

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Some of the topics covered 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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The Equal Rights Amendment (cont'd)

is what her husband chooses to give her, all marriage laws to the contrary.

Support payments for the woman after the breakup of a marriage - alimony - is not that usual either and far less common than is thought. A nationwide study done by the American Bar Association in 1965 showed that about 2% of divorced women are awarded permanent alimony and 10% are awarded temporary alimony. In most cases the reason given by the courts for awarding alimony is not concern for the woman but the intention of keeping the wife with no financial resources from becoming a public charge, i.e., adding to the welfare rolls. Usually the award is granted only long enough to give her a chance to train for or find employment. It would seem that the spectacular cases of large alimony payments played up in the press (e.g., the recent Johnny Carson case) are used to keep us unaware of the situation most divorced women find themselves in, and to create a false sympathy for the man.

The same study also found that divorced Mothers are generally awarded child support payments amounting to less than half of the support costs of a child. And that's the amount awarded, not the amount actually paid. Another study showed that, a year after courts ordered child support payments, 42% of the Fathers were not complying with the court order; after 10 years 79% were not complying. This type of information has led some legal authorities to state that under the ERA divorced men would end up paying more child support rather than less, by requiring that neither spouse bear a larger share of financial responsibility for the children - as most divorced women now do.

Child custody in divorce cases, on the other hand, is one area where women could lose out under the ERA. As things stand now, most courts will award custody to the Mother in the vast majority of cases, either by tradition or by local ordinance. It's still an open question whether new custody laws, rewritten to accord with the ERA, would take into account which spouse had contributed the most to raising the child (not to mention the labor of bearing the child).

Protective Laws and the Working Woman

This category refers to state laws which regulate the job conditions of women but not men workers. Some of these laws are "protective" only in that they protect men from women who might take their jobs - for example weightlifting restrictions which are in effect for higher paying or skilled jobs but don't apply to the night work of office cleaning women; and sometimes even outright exclusion of women from some jobs (e.g. mining or bartending).

"Women have been protected from working as waitresses at night when the tips are large, but they have never been protected from working as charwomen, scrubbing floors all night long."
Shirley Chisholm
10/6/71

In other cases protective laws do work for the benefit of women in areas where male workers are more likely to be protected by union contracts (only 1/8 of women workers are unionized compared to 1/4 of the men). Such laws include minimum wages for female employees or regulations covering health and safety protections or rest periods. Of course, even the best of these laws illustrate the powerlessness and therefore the need for "protection" of women workers, and could never compensate for the power rather than "protection" that union organization would bring.

"What women need is power, not protection. We must gain power, so that we can be free to develop the best that is in us . . . special legislation does not help us to get equality and strength. It substitutes for freedom of contract that vague and dangerous thing called the police power. The invocation of the police power permits the State to decide under what conditions women may work and employers hire. Legislatures, when they pass such laws, and courts, when they uphold them, recognize the weakness of women, as compared with employers, and give them, in special legislation, a few crumbs of what is claimed to be protection. The object of such legislation is merely to enable women to keep on working and being moral; living at a minimum and having children at a maximum. The State does not help women to arrive at a position of power and equality with the employer; instead it regards them as wards . . . The way for us to get power as I see it, is to organize and rely on ourselves, co-operating, of course, with those men who have the same needs as ourselves. When we have achieved economic power, we shall be in a position to secure laws which protect our power instead of intensifying our weakness."

From "Power is the Best Protection," an article by Elinor Byrns in the magazine of the National Woman's Party "Equal Rights," Sept. 1, 1923

Again, it is an open question whether the ERA will be used to wipe out the benefits of the better protective laws or whether equality will mean keeping the benefits for women and extending them to cover male workers, in this way making it impossible to use them to deny women jobs. There is a precedent for the latter approach in some states which have already extended minimum wage laws for women to men also, making overtime work voluntary for both sexes. This would certainly be an advance for all working people.

Another possible solution to the no-overtime laws for women would be laws making overtime work voluntary for both sexes. This would certainly be an advance for all working people.

In fact, this whole question of protective laws for working women may be a non-issue, as far as the ERA itself is concerned. Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits sex discrimination in employment has already been held to prohibit state protective laws which apply only to women. In guidelines released this past April the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission specifically stated that the Federal law would supersede these state laws wherever there was a conflict.

The Draft

This area has raised a lot of problems for people on all sides. The right wing has stirred up the spectre of women in combat boots losing their "femininity." I suspect that what bothers them the most is the prospect of women being trained in the use of weapons and capable of protecting themselves from predatory males. (The right wing has long played upon the valid fears about personal safety which women have by attempting to displace those fears and the anger which goes with them onto poor people.)

They also know that, all old stereotypes to the contrary, women as a group are more radical politically than men. We can be sure that right wing legislators were the first to get their copies of the polls showing that substantially more American women opposed the war in Vietnam compared with American men, and other polls showing similar more progressive trends among women on all political issues. They know that an army containing women would be an army even harder to regulate than the one they've got now, particularly in the kind of individual sabotage which women have used for a long time and which draftees soon enough learn - "passivity," "inability" to get orders straight, to "understand" the job, etc. Finally, the conservatives can't be unaware of the secondary economic benefits men have gotten from the military - job preferences in and out of government, medical care and especially the G.I. Bill which has provided subsidized education for countless men over the years. It would cost a lot to extend those benefits to women.

Extending the draft to women has been a problem for many feminists too, though for very different reasons, of course. This isn't hard to understand. There has always been a close association between the anti-war movement and the women's rights movement. In fact, women have made up the backbone of the anti-war movement though rarely getting the recognition they deserved. Few women have any desire to risk our lives fighting for the interests of the same male ruling class which denies us power and decent living conditions in this country. Of course, women could use the military skills. As long as men are learning them, women are at a disadvantage if we don't have them too.

Most likely passage of the ERA would be another factor hastening the end of the draft in this country, in addition to the concern over the radicalism of male draftees. It might even be the final determining factor because of the realization by the right wing of the enormous implications arming women would have to their future political stability, and to the operation of an efficient military.

Another likely possibility if the draft is maintained is that women would be drafted but, as one Congressman put it "assigned to serve wherever their skills or talents were applicable and needed," in other words they would put women in the mess halls or offices. But presumably this too could be fought on the basis of the ERA.

In all the above areas - marriage and divorce laws, protective laws, the draft - the thing that becomes most clear is the complete unpredictability of the results that passage of the ERA would have. There are other areas where this is not the case. A lot of the other laws which would be wiped out by the ERA are really isolated holdovers of another era of male supremacy when its style was more obvious. It's pretty clear that with an ERA there would be immediate grounds and not much room for counter-interpretations in doing away with the local criminal laws that give women longer sentences than men for the same crimes or that allow "passion killings" by "wronged" husbands, or with legal provisions that make it harder for women to serve on juries. But with laws which shake up women's position in such basic institutions as marriage, the economy and the military, we can be sure that, if the ERA were passed, every effort would be made to interpret it in a way favorable to the stability of the present male supremacist system and therefore unfavorable to the interests of women. This leads to the conclusion that the next important question is "what will we do after the votes are counted?"

How Will the ERA be Interpreted?

Pamela Kearon of The Feminists raised an important point in her testimony before the New York City Commission on Human Rights in 1970. She said, "The Equal Rights Amendment would not automatically invalidate any laws. Each law would have to be tested through the courts. We can and are doing this right now under the 14th amendment as well as

under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. At present we are on the offensive - we can pick the laws we want to challenge. If the ERA is passed, men can seize the offensive. They can pick out ways the amendment can be used against us and challenge those particular laws in the courts, and since the courts are male, there is a good chance for success for them." While I don't agree with her conclusion, that the ERA should not be supported, because women are on the offensive and we are demanding and using the ERA as part of an offensive, I think she pinpointed the weakness of any approach which would rely solely on the granting to women of theoretical equality before the law. The ERA is a very general statement (see box above) and as we've seen in discussing specific areas where it might apply, it could be interpreted in lots of different ways. The determining factor in all this will be one of power, in whose interests the Amendment will be used. The ERA at best is a tool, one that will speed up the process of legal change in the relationship between men and women in this country. But that change could go in lots of directions. Just as a strong feminist movement was needed to get the amendment this far, a strong feminist movement will be needed to achieve final passage, and, just as important, to see that the laws are rewritten in ways that are helpful and not harmful to women.

There is a 2 year period between the final ratification of the amendment and the date it would go into effect. Although still-existing laws would undoubtedly be challenged in the courts after that time, that 2 year period would see a flurry of activity as legislators worked to bring their state laws into accordance with the ERA. That will be the time when they decide whether the benefits of the better protective laws are taken away from women or kept and extended to men, when they decide what the new criteria will be for awarding child custody, when they write new support laws, and so on. It's hard to know exactly what will happen but it's clear that we'll have to be on our toes.

At that time we'll also be in a position to challenge some other areas of law on the basis of the ERA where the connection is a little less direct, i.e., where the word "woman" is not written into the laws but nevertheless only women are affected; for example, the rape laws which require more corroboratory evidence in order to convict than is required for other felonies, the unequal treatment of female prostitutes and johns, and hopefully the abortion laws. It can't be emphasized enough that the passage of the ERA must be only a beginning and women must work hard to have a say in its interpretations and to keep it working for us instead of against us.

Is the ERA Necessary?

Some people have questioned why we need a special amendment guaranteeing women's rights, don't we have the rights of all citizens guaranteed under the Constitution and can't we appeal unjust laws on that basis? One could just as well question why we needed a special constitutional amendment in order to get the right to vote. The fact of the matter is the U.S. Constitution was never intended to apply to women. As Wilma Scott Heide, national president of the National Organization for Women put it, "The Equal Rights Amendment will, I think, free this nation from the dead hand of a 200-year-old Constitution If one looks back at the writing of that Constitution, we know that at that time a Negro man was considered three-fifths of a person, and no woman was considered any fraction of a person. Women were excluded from participation, from the intent and from the content of that Constitution. It therefore represents what is tantamount to legislation without representation."

(I'm reminded here of a mural I saw in Provincetown, Massachusetts, commemorating the first landing of the Pilgrims in this country. One picture shows all the men aboard the Mayflower signing the famous Mayflower Compact which was to guarantee "liberty" in the "new world," free from the oppression experienced in England. In the next picture we see some women scrubbing clothes. The inscription goes something like this: "That afternoon while the men drew up the Mayflower Compact their wives brought ashore all the dirty clothes accumulated during the long voyage to be laundered...").

This exclusion of the rights of women from the Constitution has consistently guided Supreme Court decision throughout the history of this country in cases evolving from discrimination against women. Previous appeals to the Supreme Court on the basis of women's constitutional rights have received responses like the following: The Supreme Court has held that it was constitutional to bar women from becoming lawyers (1872). That the 14th Amendment did not give women the right to vote (1874). That maximum work hours could not be set for men and women (1905) but could be set for women only (1908). On the other hand minimum wage laws for women were unconstitutional (1923) - this one was overruled 14 years later. That it was alright to require a husband's consent to his wife's will although she had no say in his (1927). That it was not unconstitutional to prohibit women from being licensed as bartenders (1948). That states could require special procedures for women to register for jury service (1967). The pattern becomes pretty clear.

In 1971 the Supreme Court, for the first time in its history, did strike down a state law which discriminated against women - one favoring men over women as administrators of estates. We all know that the courts are very subject to political pressures and this decision was no doubt a

concession, a very small concession, to the women's liberation movement. Significantly, it left the burden of proof on women plaintiffs in the future to show that government action perpetuating sex discrimination is "unreasonable" - you know, as opposed to "reasonable" sex discrimination.

I can't believe it's just coincidental that this decision was handed down while the Equal Rights Amendment was awaiting action in Congress and considered likely to pass. It was supposed to be an illustration, although a pretty flimsy one, that the ERA was not really necessary. To some of us its lateness and its inadequacy proved just the opposite.

The Establishment and the ERA

One important question for us to figure out is why, in this year of backlash against the women's movement, the ERA was passed so easily by Congress. In a year when the President personally intervened in New York state politics to help do away with a minimal abortion reform law and bring back a more reactionary one, when he vetoed a child care bill on the grounds that it would destroy the family; when abortion rights are under attack throughout the country; when Bella Abzug was redistricted out of Congress and Shirley Chisholm accused of "arrogance" by male "radicals" like Pete Hamill for trying to get the Presidential nomination; in that same year the ERA overwhelmingly and with little discussion passed both houses of Congress and has already been ratified by 20 of the 38 states necessary to its passage. Certainly they couldn't have had the same thing in mind for the ERA as we do.

I think the male establishment has counted on passing a law for us which they can also interpret for us and if we were to be satisfied with that it wouldn't be too much of a threat to their power. In one sense it would be impossible for the male ruling class to ever grant women our "rights." As long as you have one class of people legislating for another subordinate class you're not dealing with "rights," you're dealing with favors that can be taken back again at will. Constitutional amendments can and have been repealed before. This is why an ERA, not backed up by a feminist movement fighting for power in every area of life, would be useless.

In addition, the establishment is well aware of the limited value of legal rights when peoples' living conditions make it impossible to even use those rights. That's why they're fighting so hard against abortion and child care: a woman tied down at home with the kids is not going to be able to participate in politics or compete for a job no matter how many laws say it is okay for her to do so. The men know this and for that reason their reactionary attacks are especially focused on the areas of childbearing and childrearing.

There's also the matter of the economy. With jobs disappearing all over the place lots of unemployed men are looking for new places to go. An ERA would make it easier for them to enter fields formerly relegated to women. We've already seen the beginnings of this among elementary teachers, social workers, secretaries and stewards/stewardesses, just to mention a few.

I think the male establishment has a scenario something like the following one in mind: Pass the ERA. Help men take over women's jobs (there are so few jobs to go around after all). Keep the women from protesting too much by keeping them home with lots of kids. End the draft - it was becoming unmanageable anyway - and we won't have to worry about women in the military. They'll be home with the kids, remember, and there'll be lots of unemployed men who'll end up being volunteers. For the women who do escape and start competing for those overtime jobs make sure the working men see them as the threat rather than the unemployment.

I don't think that scenario will happen - although a lot will depend upon our actions as a movement. In the first place, women just aren't getting pregnant as much as they used to. Population experts, looking at the decline in child births among women in all segments of the population have gone so far as to refer to it as a "baby strike." Women are entering the labor force in more and more numbers. They're unionizing in jobs that were never unionized before (e.g., domestic workers), striking to an extent they haven't done in years (e.g., telephone workers) and making their demands felt in still male-controlled unions.

Even in the more "moderate" wing of the women's movement there's a growing realization that laws made for us by men are not enough, no matter how benevolent they may be, that we have to have power to make the decisions ourselves. As we move to increase that power the ERA could be a useful weapon for moving into arenas that were formerly closed to us, but we'll have to make sure that that weapon stays in our hands.





'DREAMS' by Olive Schreiner

This piece of writing was uncovered by Tillie Olsen, San Francisco writer referred to earlier in these pages. It is taken from the book *Dreams*, written by South African novelist Olive Schreiner in 1899. The book has been out of print for years - and we think something ought to be done about that. Schreiner, a feminist and socialist who was also active in the struggle against the white colonialization of South Africa, is another of our great historical figures whose important political work has been submerged. The novel *The Story of an African Farm* and the study *Women and Labor* are among her works.

As I traveled across an African plain the sun shone down hotly. Then I drew my horse up under a mimosa-tree, and I took the saddle from him and left him to feed among the parched bushes.

And all to right and to left stretched the brown earth. And I sat down under the tree, because the heat beat fiercely, and all along the horizon the air throbbed. And after a while a heavy drowsiness came over me, and I laid my head down against my saddle, & I fell asleep there. And in my sleep, I had a curious dream.

I thought I stood on the border of a great desert, and the sand blew about everywhere. And I thought I saw two great figures like beasts of burden of the desert, and one lay upon the sand with its neck stretched out, and one stood by it. And I looked curiously at the one that lay upon the ground, for it had a great burden on its back, and the sand was thick about it, so that it seemed to have piled over it for centuries.

And I looked very curiously at it. And there stood one beside me watching. And I said to him, "What is this huge creature who lies here on the sand?"

And he said, "This is woman; she that bears men in her body." And I said, "Why does she lie here motionless with the sand piled round her?"

And he answered, "Listen, I will tell you! Ages and ages long she has laid here, and the wind has blown over her. The oldest, oldest, oldest man living has never seen her move: the oldest, oldest book records that she lay here then, as she lies here now, with the sand about her. But listen! Older than the oldest book, older than the oldest recorded memory of man, on the Rocks of Language, on the hard-baked clay of Ancient Customs, now crumbling to decay, are found the marks of her footsteps! Side by side with his who stands beside her you may trace them; and you know that she who now lies there once wandered free over the rocks with him."

And I said, "Why does she lie there now?"

And he said, "I take it, ages ago the Age-of-dominion-of-muscular-force found her, and when she stooped low to give suck to her young, and her back was broad, he put his burden of Inevitable Necessity. Then she looked at the earth and the sky, and knew there was no hope for her; and she lay down on the sand with the burden she could not loosen. Ever since she has lain here. And the ages have come, and the ages have gone, but the band of Inevitable Necessity has not been cut."

And I looked and saw in her eyes the terrible patience of the centuries; and the ground was wet with her tears, & her nostrils blew up the sand.

And I said, "Has she ever tried to move?"

And he said, "Sometimes a limb has quivered. But she is wise; she knows she cannot rise with the burden on her."

And I said, "Why does not he who stands by her leave her and go on?"

And he said, "He cannot. Look--"

And I saw a broad band passing along the ground from one to the other, and it bound them together.

He said, "While she lies there he must stand and look across the desert."

And I said, "Does he know why he cannot move?"

And he said, "No."

And I heard a sound of something cracking, and I looked and I saw the band that bound the burden on to her back broken asunder; and the burden rolled on to the ground.

And I said, "What is this?"

And he said, "The Age-of-muscular-force is dead. The Age-of-nervous-force has killed him with the knife he holds in his hand; & silently and invisibly he has crept up to the woman, and with the knife of Mechanical Invention he has cut the band that bound the burden to her back. The Inevitable Necessity is broken. She might rise now."

And I saw that she still lay motionless on the sand, and with her eyes open and her neck stretched out. And she seemed to look for something on the far-off border of the desert that never came. And I wondered if she were awake or asleep. And as I looked her body quivered, and a light came into her eyes, like when a sunbeam breaks into a dark room.

I said, "What is it?"

He whispered, "Hush! the thought has come to her, 'Might I not rise?'"

And I looked. And she raised her head from the sand, and I saw the dent where her neck had lain so long. And she looked at the earth, and she looked at the sky, and she looked at him who stood by her: but he looked out across the desert.

And I saw her body quiver; and she pressed her front knees to the earth, and veins stood out; and I cried, "She is going to rise!"

But only her sides heaved, and she lay still where she was.

But her head she held up; she did not lay it down again. And he beside me said, "She is very weak. See, her legs have been crushed under her so long."

And I saw the creature struggle; and the drops stood out on her.

And I said, "Surely he who stands beside her will help her?"

And he beside me answered, "He cannot help her; she must help herself. Let her struggle till she is strong."

And I cried, "At least he will not hinder her! See, he moves farther from her, and tightens the cord between them, and he drags her down."

And he answered, "He does not understand. When she moves she draws the band that binds them and hurts him, & he moves farther from her. The day will come when he will understand, and will know what she is doing. Let her once stagger on to her knees. In that day he will stand close to her, and look into her eyes with sympathy."

And she stretched her neck, and the drops fell from her. And the creature rose an inch from the earth and sank back.

And I cried, "Oh, she is too weak: she cannot walk! The long years have taken all her strength from her. Can she never move?"

And he answered me, "See the light in her eyes!"

And slowly the creature staggered on to its knees.

And I awoke: and all to the east and to the west stretched the barren earth, with the dry bushes on it. The ants ran up and down in the red sand, and the heat beat fiercely. I looked up through the thin branches of the tree at the blue sky overhead. I stretched myself, and I mused over the dream I had had. And I fell asleep again, with my head on my saddle. And in the fierce heat I had another dream.

I saw a desert and I saw a woman coming out of it. And she came to the bank of a dark river; and the bank was steep and high. And on it an old man met her, who had a long white beard; and a stick that curled was in his hand, and on it was written Reason. And he asked her what she wanted; and she said "I am woman; and I am seeking for the land of freedom."

And he said, "It is before you."



And she said, "I see nothing before me but a dark flowing river, and a bank steep and high, and cuttings here & there with heavy sand in them."

And he said, "And beyond that?"

She said, "I see nothing, but sometimes, when I shade my eyes with my hand, I think I see on the further bank trees and hills, and the sun shining on them!"

He said, "That is the Land of freedom."

She said, "How am I to get there?"

He said, "There is one way, and one only. Down the banks of Labor through the water of Suffering. There is no other."

She said, "Is there no bridge?"

He answered, "None."

She said, "Is the water deep?"

He said, "Deep."

She said, "Is the floor worn?"

He said, "It is. Your foot may slip at any time, and you may be lost."

She said, "Have any crossed already?"

He said, "Some have tried!"

She said, "Is there a track to show where the best fording is?"

He said, "It has to be made."

She shaded her eyes with her band; and she said, "I will go."

And he said, "You must take off the clothes you wore in the desert: they are dragged down by them who go into the water so clothed."

And she threw from her gladly the mantle of Ancient-received-opinions she wore, for it was worn full of holes. And she took the girdle from her waist that she had treasured so long & the moths flew out of it in a cloud. And he said, "Take the shoes of dependence off your feet."

And she stood there naked, but for one white garment that clung close to her.

And he said, "That you may keep. so they wear clothes in the Land of freedom. In the water it buoys; it always swims."

And I saw on its breast was written Truth; and it was white; the sun had not often shone on it; the other clothes had covered it up. And he said, "Take this stick; hold it fast. In that day when it slips from your hand you are lost. Put it down before you; feel your way: where it cannot find a bottom do not set your foot."

And she said, "I am ready; let me go."

And he said, "No--but stay; what is that--in your breast?"

She was silent.

He said, "Open it, and let me see."

And she opened it. And against her breast was a tiny thing, who drank from it, and the yellow curls above his forehead pressed against it; and his knees were drawn up to her, and he held her breast fast with his hands.

And Reason said, "Who is he, and what is he doing here?"

And she said, "See his little wings--"

And Reason said, "Put him down."

And she said, "He is asleep, and he is drinking! I will carry him to the Land of freedom. He has been a child so long, so long, I have carried him. In the Land of freedom he will be a man. We will walk together there, and his great white wings will overshadow me. He has lisped one word only to me in the desert--'Passion!' I have dreamed he might learn to say 'friendship' in that land."

And Reason said, "Put him down!"

And she said, "I will carry him so--with one arm, and with the other I will fight the water."

He said, "Lay him down on the ground. When you are in the water you will forget to fight, you will think only of him. Lay him down." He said, "He will not die. When he finds you have left him alone he will open his wings and fly. He will be in the Land of freedom before you. Those who reach the Land of freedom, the first hand they see stretching down the bank to help them shall be Love's. He will be a man then, not a child. In your breast he cannot thrive; put him down that he may grow." And she took her bosom from his mouth, & he bit her, so that the blood ran down on to the ground. And she laid him down on the earth; and she covered her wound. And she bent and stroked his wings. And I saw the hair on her forehead turned white as snow, and she had changed from youth to age.

And she stood far off on the bank of the river. And she said, "for what do I go to this far land which no one has ever reached? Oh, I am alone! I am utterly alone!"

And Reason, that old man said to her, "Silence! what do you hear?"

And she listened intently, and she said, "I hear a sound of feet, a thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, & they beat this way!"

He said, "They are the feet of those that shall follow you. Lead on! make a track to the water's edge! Where you stand now, the ground will be beaten flat by ten thousand times ten thousand feet." And he said, "Have you seen the locusts how they cross a stream? first one comes down to the water-edge, and it is swept away, and then another comes and then another, and then another, and at last with their bodies piled up a bridge is built and the rest pass over."

She said, "And of those that come first, some are swept away, and are heard of no more; their bodies do not even build the bridge?"

"And are swept away, and are heard of no more--and what of that?" he said.

"And what of that--" she said. "They make a track to the water's edge."

"They make a track to the water's edge--" And she said, "Over that bridge which shall be built with our bodies, who will pass?"

He said, "The entire human race."

And the woman grasped her staff.

And I saw her turn down that dark path to the river. And I awoke; and all about me was the yellow afternoon light: the sinking sun lit up the fingers of the milk bushes; and my horse stood by me quietly feeding. And I turned on my side and I watched the ants run by thousands in the red sand. I thought I would go on my way now--the afternoon was cooler. Then a drowsiness crept over me again, and I laid back my head and fell asleep.

And I dreamed a dream.

I dreamed I saw a land. And on the hills walked brave women and brave men, hand in hand. And they looked into each other's eyes, and they were not afraid.

And I saw the women also hold each other's hands.

And I said to him beside me, "What place is this?"

And he said, "This is heaven."

And I said, "Where is it?"

And he answered, "On earth."

And I said, "When shall these things be?"

And he answered, "In the future."

And I awoke, and all about me was the sunset light; and on the low hills the sun lay, and a delicious coolness had crept over everything; and the ants were going slowly home. And I walked towards my horse, who stood quietly feeding. Then the sun passed down behind the hills; but I knew that the next day he would rise again.

LETTERS

Sisters:

Dorothy Tennov brought Issue Number 4 of your newspaper to our April 10 meeting. I am Pres. of Western Conn. NOW. I want to subscribe and enclose my check for the back issues I have missed.

I must say I feel its one of the best newspapers to come out of the women's movement. I had read all the Village Voice's articles on the Prostitution conference but not until I read Kathie Sarachild's article was I really clear on what happened. As a housewife, I respond to the many "putdowns" of the role I play as a "personal" putdown. Whether I like my role or not is not the issue, it's a job like any other, and probably better than most (with the proper partner). However, the movement tends to put down the people rather than the job. I believe this same thing happened in relation to the prostitutes and this is what I had responded to. I feel Kathie recognized this in her reporting. That strikes me as more honest as well as more helpful. If one wants to help housewives one asks them what they need and the same holds true of call girls.

Cindy Cisler, who I met at a conference in Armonk, New York, also clarified for me all the double talk about the repeal issue in abortion. I am sure I will be more articulate on this issue in the future.

There was also a very "consciousness raising" statement in Sylvia Delgado's article on young girls. In speaking of the issue of virginity among girls and boys she states: "So why does being a virgin matter? I can bet the man does not come to you CLEAN" (my emphasis). Was this term deliberately used? To me it explains the whole issue. We have been conditioned to believe that intimate contact is somehow dirty. A man wanted a virginal wife because, had she had sexual contact with another man, she would be dirty. Who got her dirty? Why the other man of course. Maybe they each believe the other is dirty. I don't know, but it sure is something to think about, this whole concept of clean and dirty in relation to the body. Orthodox Jewish women have to bathe in special waters to make themselves clean.

Finally, our chapter is sponsoring a conference on May 20th on Women's sexuality. Interest so far is very high. Several hundred inquiries have come in. I hope some of your writers will cover this conference for your paper.

By the way how about a letters to the editors column in the paper. Also, can we sell some copies at the conference?
In Sisterhood,
Barbara Hoberman Levine.

Dear Sisters at Woman's World;

A friend in New York sent me your paper and I think it's the best current woman's paper, so, please send me two subscriptions, one to me at the above address and one to my friend below.

I especially like the article on the Prostitution Convention by Kathie Sarachild. I really liked what she had to say - it cleared a lot of my thinking on listening to and respecting other women which has a lot to do with purpose and practice in small groups. Women are always so righteous, inevitably.

Anyway, it's a great paper - lots in it, not just rehashing. I'm glad you're doing it.

Ellen Clark
Grass Valley, California

April 8, 1972

Dear Editors,

Thank you! Your article on the Self-Help Clinic gave us real pleasure and a renewed vigor to push ahead in some new and exciting areas of self determination in controlling our own bodies. As you know, we had received such idiot flack that we were beginning to wonder where our sisters' heads were at. You have recharged us!!! What's more important, you see it and understand it. And we can only say, thank you.

In sisterhood,
Lorraine Rabinowitz

Dear Sisters:

Linda Basanna's article (Number 4, Vol. 1, March - May 1972) on male prostitution was an eye opener for many of us. The vague awareness of males in this profession and how it relates to the business professions and law enforcements, controlling forces in our society, is a startling fact not before mentioned within the context of women liberation.

More access to source material and factual data is needed in this area. If there are any other authorities on this subject could we hear from them, please.

Sincerely,
Nadga McKie Tillman
ASUW Women's Commission
Seattle, Washington 98195

Information on this subject is understandably very difficult to obtain and even harder to get anybody with the information to admit to publicly. If you would like to do some investigation yourself, we suggest that as good a place to begin as any would be by reading the articles about J. Edgar Hoover and the F.B.I. under the directorship of him and his friends - a number of whom have resigned recently, which appeared in the N.Y. Times in the days following his death. Any book about Hoover will give you an idea of the immense political power in the United States in the last fifty years of this man, who began his political career in his high school debating society arguing against women's suffrage and never once shifted either his political allegiances nor abated his dedicated campaign to keep America, its government - especially his F.B.I. and his precious SELF - pure and clean of all such sully and lowly elements as women.

For information about the church's homosexual ideology and institutional efforts to keep itself protected from women's bodies and the "filth" of even our physical presence, for a start see Patricia Lawrence's article in Woman's World, July-August, 1971, "Women Take the Catholic Church to Court." Although this article is only about Catholics, we suggest you

check out the Episcopalians, too, and the entire, all too familiar strain of ideas about women's "uncleanliness" running through religious priesthoods of all kinds.

You might also try talking about the F.B.I. and the C.I.A. to people who've worked around government circles in Washington, D.C.



Clyde A. Tolson, Associate Director of the F.B.I. and close personal friend of J. Edgar Hoover, walking his usual respectful step behind the chief during an investigation in 1942. Mr. Tolson, like Mr. Hoover a bachelor, was part of Mr. Hoover's strict schedule, and had lunch and dinner with him six times a week beginning in 1929's.

Another of the late J. Edgar Hoover's top assistants has resigned from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. John P. Mohr, 62, resigned as assistant to the

bureau's director, and its third-ranking official, saying he was leaving for personal reasons. Since Mr. Hoover's death on May 2, all three of his top advisers have resigned.

FEMINIST ART JOURNAL

In the last issue of Woman's World we recommended a quarterly called Women and Art for good news and analysis on the woman artists' movement. The group putting out that paper has recently split. So far there has been no new issue of Women and Art. However, many of its best writers have started publishing another paper, Feminist Art Journal, which is of the same good quality as the original Women and Art. Especially recommended are an interview with Black feminist Faith

Ringgold, and one called "Artists' Rights in the New Left" by Pat Mainardi - a dispute over printing this last one, we're told, was what led to the final split in the Women and Art group. Editing the journal are: Pat Mainardi, Irene Moss, Cindy Nemser.

Subscriptions: \$2 for four issues, \$5 to institutions and those who can afford more. Send your money to: Feminist Art Journal, 41 Montgomery Place, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215.
- B.L.

PERSONAL IS POLITICAL cont'd

are beginning to articulate. We call it "the pro-woman line." What it says basically is that women are really neat people. The bad things that are said about us as women are either myths (women are stupid), tactics women use to struggle individually (women are bitches), or are actually things that we want to carry into the new society and want men to share too (women are sensitive, emotional). Women as oppressed people act out of necessity (*act dumb* in the presence of men), not out of choice. Women have developed great shuffling techniques for their own survival (look pretty and giggle to get or keep a job or man) which should be used when necessary until such time as the power of unity can take its place. Women are smart not to struggle alone (as are blacks and workers). It is no worse to be in the home than in the rat race of the job world. They are both bad. Women, like blacks, workers, must stop blaming ourselves for our "failures."

It took us some ten months to get to the point where we could articulate these things and relate them to the lives of every woman. It's important from the standpoint of what kind of action we are going to do. When our group first started, going by majority opinion, we would have been out in the streets demonstrating against marriage, against having babies, for free love, against women who wore makeup, against housewives, for equality without recognition of biological differences, and god knows what else. Now we see all these things as what we call "personal solutionary." Many of the actions taken by "action" groups have been along these lines. The women who did the anti-woman stuff at the Miss America Pageant were the ones who were screaming for action without theory. The members of one group want to set up a private day-care center without any real analysis of what could be done to make it better for little girls, much less any analysis of how that center hastens the revolution.

That is not to say, of course, that we shouldn't do action. There may be some very good reasons why women in the group don't want to do anything at the moment: One reason that I often have is that this thing is so important to me that I want to be very sure that we're doing it the best way we know how, and that it is a "right" action that I feel sure about. I refuse to go out and produce for the movement. We had a lot of conflict in our New York

group about whether or not to do action. When the Miss America Protest was proposed there was no question but that we wanted to do it. I think it was because we all saw how it related to our lives. We felt it was a good action. There were things wrong with the action; but the basic idea was there.

This has been my experience in groups that are accused of being "therapy" or "personal." Perhaps certain groups may well be attempting to do therapy. Maybe the answer is not to put down the method of analyzing from personal experiences in favor of immediate action, but to figure out what can be done to make it work. Some of us started to write a handbook about this at one time and never got past the outline. We are working on it again.

It's true we all need to learn how to better draw conclusions from the experiences and feelings we talk about and how to draw all kinds of connections. Some of us haven't done a very good job of communicating them to others.

One more thing: I think we must listen to what so-called apolitical women have to say—not so we can do a better job of organizing them but because together we are a mass movement. I think we who work full-time in the movement tend to become very narrow. What is happening now is that when nonmovement women disagree with us, we assume it's because they are "apolitical," not because there might be something wrong with our thinking. Women have left the movement in droves. The obvious reasons are that we are tired of being sex slaves and doing shitwork for men whose hypocrisy is so blatant in their political stance of liberation for everybody (else). But there is really a lot more to it than that. I can't quite articulate it yet. I think "apolitical" women are not in the movement for very good reasons, and as long as we say, "You have to think like us and live like us to join the charmed circle," we will fail. What I am trying to say is that there are things in the consciousness of "apolitical" women (I find them very political) that are as valid as any political consciousness we think we have. We should figure out why many women don't want to do action. Maybe there is something wrong with the action or something wrong with why we are doing the action or maybe the analysis of why the action is necessary is not clear enough in our minds.

THE CONSPIRACY vs REPEAL: ABORTION & THE MEDIA

by Colette Price

We've just had a narrow escape. We here in New York almost suffered a serious setback in the abortion struggle. A group which calls itself the "Right to Lifers" without specifying they mean the fetus's life not the Mother's, descended upon Albany, marched down Fifth Avenue and managed to pass the Donovan-Crawford bill returning us to the 19th century near-total prohibition against abortion which had been with us until two years ago. Luckily, the Governor vetoed it and here we are back to where we all started with the present reforms but WHAT HAPPENED?

Well, various analyses of this close call have emerged. Some say that the problem was that women didn't go up in large enough numbers to Albany to lobby with the state legislators and cite all the lobbyists that the fetus fetishists had up there. Others, like Kip Dawson of the Socialist Workers Party and the Women's National Abortion Action Coalition (WONAAC) say that the women's movement didn't work hard and get women into the streets marching. Certainly, it is clear from the 10,000 strong "Right to Life of the Fetus Over the Woman" March down Fifth Avenue in the Spring compared to the 1500 who marched for abortion rights two months ago, that the fetus fetishists outnumbered us with the marching tactics as well as with the lobbying tactic. The Village Voice, in a lead article on the abortion fight which revealed, if anything ever did, how frightened even a so-called liberal newspaper is of the growing reach of the women's liberation movement, even claimed that the setback had occurred because the pro-abortion forces led by the women's liberation movement had never really had any people in their ranks to begin with, but had just puffed themselves up to larger-than-life-size because of clever use of and sympathy from the mass media, sneaking the reform bill through the New York state legislature before the great "silent majority" of Americans ever so much as had a chance to blink an eye. Sob, sob - if it wasn't such a reversal of the truth.

The one thing we know the pro-abortion forces of the women's liberation movement have is numbers even if we don't always use them. The Catholic Church and President Nixon and the Village Voice may have money, but since July 1, 1970 more than 35,000 women in New York city alone have obtained abortions. If that isn't being pro-abortion and a pretty large demonstration turnout, as well, we don't know what is. If the legislators really made their decision on the basis of numbers, there could be no doubt that the number of women having abortions outnumbered the "Right to Lifers"

So what happened - if the fault doesn't lie with women, who have been scapegoated for not letting their pro-abortion feelings be known, where does it lie? The real reason for the near setback, we feel, was the fantastic lengths the Establishment went to, through the media, to hamstring the women's liberation forces who wanted to move forward and toward full abortion freedom for women. It seems that women will not be inspired to put their energy into holding onto halfway measures like the present reform, and, for the reasons I am about to discuss, they were prevented from taking the offensive toward repealing the abortion laws completely.

We are dependent on the media, as you all know, for information about the world not otherwise accessible. The media tells us what's happening, keeps us informed right? Wrong. Sometimes the media has other jobs. A case in point:

During the recent abortion struggle, both on TV and in the press, in headline after headline and article after article,

the media consistently referred to the bill proposed by the Fetus Fetishists as a "repeal" bill. Now back in the days before truthful reporting was discarded as an unnecessary weapon in the hands of the people, we all used to know what the word repeal meant with respect to the abortion laws. It meant then what it does now and always has; to repeal a law is to take away that law. Now let's get this straight. The issue which the Fetus Fetishists were disputing was not the New York state abortion law itself, which has been on the books since 1869 and unfortunately still is. The issue under dispute was one new clause added to this law in 1970 which extended some of the conditions under which abortions would be allowed. Formerly the only condition under which abortions were allowed was to save the life of the mother. The 1970 clause added to the law a provision allowing abortions performed by a doctor for any reason up to the 24th week of pregnancy. The "Right to Lifers" wanted to hold on to the law but delete the 1970 reform clause.

By no stretch of the imagination, or the English language for that matter, could you call a bill to stiffen an existing abortion law an abortion repeal bill. Repealing the abortion laws means abolishing these laws completely and giving a woman the right to choose what she wishes to do with her own body. Two of the very groups organized to do just this actually have the word repeal right in their titles - New Yorkers for Abortion Law Repeal (NYALR) and the National Association for Repeal of the Abortion Laws (NARAL).

Now assuming that the media has access to dictionaries and, as yet, is not completely removed from common English usage, how can we explain this persistent error on their part? Are we to believe that the media is confused over the meaning of repeal? Are they suddenly not aware of these abortion groups who clamor now, as they have done in the past, for repeal? Did they not cover the rallies and demonstrations where women marched with signs demanding repeal of all abortion laws - didn't they hear the speeches, see the petitions? Don't they read the newspapers?!

Just what the abortion struggle was all about in New York was clear to anybody who wanted to communicate it. Obviously the press didn't want to. Their usage of the word repeal was a standing on its head of the real meaning of the word repeal. It was misleading, grossly inaccurate, a complete distortion - which can only be interpreted as manipulation of the real issues for their own private purposes.

So what's the big deal you say. Isn't that being picky? So the media used the wrong terms. Well, first of all you have to admit that people do things for reasons. If I know what the word repeal means - the media knows. What could the media possibly gain by confusing the terms? I'll tell you. Suppose I wanted to send a letter to the legislature saying what I felt. If I said that what I wanted was repeal, they might think I was for the Donovan-Crawford bill stiffening the law because that's what "everyone" (i.e., the mass media) was calling the "repeal" bill. Or suppose somebody handed me a petition saying "repeal this law." I wouldn't know whether that meant the Donovan-Crawford bill or what I wanted - an actual repeal bill. Now I suppose I could always ask, but you can see the difficulties this causes in trying to organize people around really repealing the law. Another confusion: could you imagine my shock at reading that the President supports repeal of the state law on abortion, that Cardinal Cooke was leading a repeal campaign? If I didn't know or trust somehow innately, instinctively that me and them must be on

opposite sides I would be led to believe, by correct interpretation of the English language, that the over-powering truths of feminism had won two new converts.

What is more, the press, in addition to using the word repeal to mean its opposite, consistently omitted the actions of what the people organizing for real repeal did, or else misrepresented them as organizing for support of the present law. The 1500 pro-abortion demonstrators who marched for abortion law repeal on May 6 were reported throughout the press as being demonstrators opposed to any change in the existing reform law. Through this means we were left in the situation of not being able to work for the alternative of advancing beyond the present law.

If you are still unconvinced about the media's role in a conspiracy to prevent any further advances in women's reproductive rights, let me add that it just so happens there was a genuine repeal bill (the Ohrenstein-Leichter abortion law repeal bill) in the legislature at this same time. That was the third alternative never presented by the media. Was this a mere oversight on the part of the media or would it have been too awkward to report on a real repeal bill and still keep up the rhetoric about the "Right to Lifers" "repeal" bill? How do you explain to the people that the Ohrenstein-Leichter repeal bill abolishes the abortion laws while the Donovan-Crawford "repeal" bill strengthens the abortion laws. Did the press suddenly feel perhaps we really didn't need all the news that's fit to print?

There seems to be no question but that, by their exclusion of the genuine repeal bill, their out and out reversal of the meaning of the English language and their deceptive manipulation of the issues, the liberal press, TV and radio included, will go to any lengths to keep real abortion law repeal from becoming an actuality.

There is even more evidence that the motives behind support for the present reform law and the setting up of saving the present reform law as the radical alternative were really to prevent repeal, real repeal, that is. Governor Rockefeller in vetoing the vote of both Houses of the state legislature to stiffen the law, said that he was afraid that a stricter law, such as the one proposed by the "Right to Lifers", would be too easily invalidated in a court case such as the recent court decision in Connecticut. "In such a circumstance," he said, "this state would be left with no law at all." This latter eventuality is, of course, what feminists want. Yet Governor Rockefeller was portrayed in the press as our friend, saving us from the more prohibitive bill but it's because he is against abortion law repeal. What will he do about the third alternative, the one never presented to the people, the genuine abortion law repeal? I think he makes that clear.

I think the attempt on the part of the media to manipulate the women's movement and block our efforts at organizing support behind abortion law repeal is obvious. We have already tried just complaining about it, not only in articles within the women's movement (such as several in the last issue of Woman's World) but also in direct written and verbal statements of protest to the media by feminists throughout the period it was happening. The National Organization for Women alone sent numerous memos and press releases out protesting the false use of the word "repeal" and asking the media to stop. Since the media went right ahead anyway, it is obviously time to prepare for more persuasive action if this happens again next year.

cont'd p. 24

As a first step we might throw up picket lines around a selected important media target, like the New York Times or CBS, for instance, in an effort to draw attention to what is going on. At the same time we might even begin to talk to the people going in and out of the building about organizing a work stoppage if that becomes necessary.

The media has proven itself to be, at this time, the first obstacle in the way of our advancing in the abortion fight. We must force them by any means necessary to report the abortion struggle truthfully.

WONAAC AND REPEAL

The following article was submitted to us by two members of the staff of the Women's National Abortion Action Coalition by Nancy Rolfe and Rose Weber (WONAAC).

Is the Women's National Abortion Action Coalition striving for the repeal of all abortion laws, or is it willing to support reform legislation? According to its demands, it works for repeal, but this is not really always the case in practice. In point of fact, WONAAC's policy is often to support reform of existing abortion laws rather than their total repeal and this deceptive policy is largely a result of the influence of the Socialist Workers Party.

At the June 4th National Coordinating Committee meeting of WONAAC, a motion was introduced by one of the authors of this article, proposing that the NCC endorse the following statement:

WONAAC has as one of its demands the call for repeal of all abortion laws. In light of this, we must reject, time and again, any efforts to placate women by throwing us the bones of reform laws. We propose: 1) that WONAAC discontinue its former lax practice of supporting any law which falls short of total repeal; and 2) that from now on we support only those bills which would absolutely repeal abortion laws.

During the subsequent discussion, Carol Lipman, women's liberation coordinator for the SWP led the opposition to the motion. She said that she could not support the proposal because then WONAAC wouldn't be able to work on the Michigan referendum, a reform bill limiting women's abortion rights to the 20th week of pregnancy. When the vote was taken, virtually every woman in the room who was a member of the SWP, or the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), its youth affiliate, voted against it, while almost every other woman voted in favor. Because the SWP had a majority of the women in the room, the proposal was defeated. **ABORTION CONFERENCE**

The fact that the NCC voted not to endorse the statement does not mean that the matter is settled. WONAAC is having a national conference at Hunter College in New York on July 15-16 (for more information call 212-675-9150, or write: WONAAC, 150 Fifth Ave., N.Y.C. 10011). The question of reform vs. repeal will be discussed, as will many other issues concerning WONAAC. If the SWP again has a majority, the conference will merely be a replay of the NCC. If, on the other hand, sufficient numbers of interested women attend, the conference will be truly democratic. We urge all women who care about the abortion movement to attend.

- Institutionalized oppression of women continues by the medical professions, the pigocratic media, the courts, and the male, dominated courts.

ABORTION RAP

by Flo Kennedy & Diane Schulder

- Legislators, get your hairy fist out of women's private matters!!! Read personal testimony and analytical essays presenting the women's viewpoint on abortion. French translation due in Fall. Demand a feminist section in your bookstore. If you can't get ABORTION RAP (Mc Graw-Hill), call us (212) PL 9 - 3224.

In her first novel, Ms. Shulman has unraveled for us a bitterly funny and bitterly true version of how it is to be female. Its outspoken honesty about the pressures put on women to be beautiful, to marry, to bear the consequences of pregnancy and be happy in this world of limited woman-alternatives is nicely juxtaposed against the heroine's sometimes rambunctious, sometimes depressing, sometimes even victorious attempts to maneuver around these obstacles, using whatever weapons are available. For Sasha Davis is not the usual heroine - she is too busy bunking into the cruel

realities of her everyday life to take us off into the fanciful flight of escapism, we've grown so accustomed to in "female" novels. Nor does she present the other false, completely depressing, picture of women's lives which leaves out women's fascinating efforts at resistance both individually and with their women friends.

The story is filled with many of the insights unearthed by the Women's Movement and perhaps this is why Shulman (the first novelist I know of in history to do so) dedicates her book to a Women's Liberation group - in this case her Red-stockings sisters." By Colette Price

The following is a response to a completely off the mark review of Shulman's book by Marilyn Bender which appeared in the New York Times. It is written by a woman, who not even having read the book,

was infuriated by the reviewer's biases not only against the book but so obviously against women - a review which revealed a complete misunderstanding of the lot of woman which was so spunkily described in Shulman's book.

To the Editor:

Some remarks on Marilyn Bender's unsympathetic review of Alix Kates Shulman's Memoirs of an Ex-Prom Queen.

A feminist novel is an important event. It does not matter which is the first to appear, except, perhaps to publishers who are marketing the book or possibly for historical perspective. What does matter is its existence. If it is to be regarded simply as a novel then its literary merit should be evaluated. Ms. Bender does not address herself to this aspect except to say that the book "scales no lyrical or imaginative peaks." If it is significant because it is a feminist novel, then it must be looked at in terms of women and their struggle for liberation. The major contribution of the women's movement at this time has been consciousness-raising, which means that women are becoming aware of themselves as women and the various ways that society has shaped them into what they are. This molding of them going on, needless to say, without any awareness on their part, and it is precisely this molding which must be brought into the light. It is the exceptional woman who has escaped during her growing up from the tremendous pressure to look beautiful, and has managed, instead, to concentrate her time and energy into developing her own individual self rather than into trying to achieve some stereotyped beauty in her appearance. Our society oppresses everyone in this sensitive area of their looks, but women are its worst victims. If Ms. Shulman has exposed the insidiousness of that oppression then she has done a lot.

Ms. Bender headlines her review with "the girl who couldn't say no" and concludes it with "must you give up so easily." The protagonist is not the only girl who couldn't say no. There are legions of us. Probably the reasons behind it are complex: the distorted

state of male-female relationships today, women's feelings that they have no rights (including the right to say no), a women's relationship to her own self - to protect it from destructive experiences, to open it to pleasurable ones, and others. It is an issue that women's liberation should seriously address itself to--but I also feel that this is where the reviewer betrays her own antagonism and even cruelty. If this book has chronicled women's oppression in a way that she can't handle so that she must stand apart from it and put it down with a "must you give up so easily," then in all honesty she should not have reviewed the book. Better to have sent it on to a man.

"Yes, sisters the struggle has been hard" (she writes) could be a serious statement of identification with the women's movement. To recognize that women genuinely are your sisters is not as easy as it looks. We are all having trouble with it now in the movement and from her condescension in this review I doubt that she recognizes Alix Kates Shulman as her sister. "The struggle has been hard . . ." assuming that the struggle is to be a free, independent whole self then certainly the author described exactly the hardness, the difficulties, the obstructions that are put in the way and yet Ms. Bender has contempt for the heroine's experiences of them.

The reality of women's experiences and the groping half-blind young woman who must deal with them, is not a pretty story. Those painful lost years first out in the real world when one still believes the illusions perpetrated on women everywhere in our society, that happiness can be found if only one can be pretty enough to attract the right man . . . this is not the story of one loser but the true story of women until they learn to fight for their own selves.

— Ann Foree

NOTES CONT'D

"the title of the book is now Notes on Radical Feminism and the subtitle makes it clear that the selections are drawn mainly but not exclusively from Notes." If this remains the case, however, it is no concession at all and is actually even worse. They have made the title more general while still insinuating a connection with the radical journal NOTES (thus exempting themselves from legal prosecution), and by making the title more general they now imply that the whole scope of radical feminism will be covered here. The radical feminism this Establishment NOTES will contain hardly represents the nature and scope of the radical feminism the real NOTES contained that is, radical feminism as it has developed within the movement over the years covered by NOTES. It will be a sectarian version with whole lines of thought left out. Unfortunately, it will be this diluted, version which will be the only one to remain on the public record long after the newsprint copies of the original NOTES as it really was have disappeared.

These NOTES #1 and #2 contributors joined the protest:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Roz Baxandall | Irene Peslikis |
| Anselma Del'Olio | Kathie Sarachild |
| Shulamith Firestone | Barbara Susan |
| Carol Hanisch | Judith Gabree Thibeau |
| Lucile Iverson | Ellen Willis |
| Pat Mainardi | |

Kate Millet originally supported the protest but later decided to include her article in the anthology anyway, even though the conditions of the protest have not yet been met.

These contributors failed to join the protest:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Ti Grace Atkinson | Bonnie Kreps |
| Lucinda Cisler | Barbara Mehrhoff |
| Marion Davidson | Kate Millet |
| Dana Densmore | Suzie Olah |
| Roxanne Dunbar | Meredith Tax |
| Pamela Kearon | Betsy Warrior |
| Anne Koedt | |