THE PEDESTAL

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International Women's Day

International Women's Day, March 8, commemorates the militant activity of women in industry in the early 1900's and specifically a strike called by socialist women of the garment industry in New York on March 8, 1908. Clara Zetkin, a leader of the German Socialist Party, made a motion at the meeting of the congress of the Second International in 1910 that March 8 be declared International Women's Day. It was declared an international working class holiday in honor of women's struggles.

When Canada was little more than a wilderness, women shouldered the common struggle with men. Such women were the wives of the first coal miners on Vancouver Island who stood side by side with their men in strikes waged over a period of half a century, culminating in the great Vancouver Island coal strike that began in September 1912 and ended two years later in August 1914.

Women fought beside their men on the picket lines and in their homes to keep their families fed on meagre strike pay.

Their spirit is recorded in one paragraph of a report of a meeting held by the Miners' Liberation League in 1913. Mrs. Porter, wife of a miner sentenced to jail, told the meeting: "Twice have I been put out of my house and home, through strikes, in the past 25 years. But I shall continue fighting."

It was the women in the labor movement and particularly the socialists among them who gave the various suffrage leagues a militant character.

Helena Gutteridge of the B.C. Suffrage League was a member of the delegation sent to confront Premier McBride with their demand for the franchise.

His answer was "The provincial executive is not in agreement on this question of the vote for women and for my part I am unable to subscribe to the views you offer today. The home would be neglected and women would no doubt sit in parliament when they had the vote, then form a women's party and run the affairs of the country."

In 1918, women in provinces where they had the provincial vote were allowed to vote in the federal elections and in 1920 it was accorded universally irrespective of provincial rights.

However it was not until 1940 that Quebec women gained the franchise, finally granted as a result of Mme. P. Casgrain's leadership of the League for Women's Rights.

The fight for the franchise was only one part of the basic struggle. It came as a result of large scale capitalist development and the employment of women in industry during World War I.

Women became store clerks, cleaners, laundry workers and unskilled workers in munitions plants and various manufacturing plants. Timid and anxious for work, ignorant of industrial ways, these women were an easy mark for unscrupulous employers. Their low wages, long hours and miserable working conditions became a threat to everything the unions had won. However they soon realized that they must join the struggle and began to participate in union organization.

Through the grim years of the Hungry Thirties women were in the strikes, the hunger marches, the struggle against the barren existence of the relief camps, against the degradation of relief.

In Vancouver, led by such women as Annie Stewart, Effie Jones, Susie Lane Clark and Helen Mathieson, they formed the Mothers' Council, whose militant campaigns for the unemployed forced concessions even from reluctant governments.

During World War II, thousands of women entered the war plants, mastering trades and skills few women had ever worked before. Women ran the streetcars and the machines that worked the farms, yet they still battled discrimination on the job — for equal pay, adequate nurseries and day care for their children.

Today, hundreds of women across the country are forming women's liberation groups to carry on the fight around issues like equal pay for equal work, equal job opportunities, and day care centres.

Housewives, students and working women are organizing to change the society that treats them as second-class citizens, denies them safe birth control and free abortions, channels them into narrow, pre-planned roles, and uses them as unpaid labor in the home and a pool of cheap labor for industry.

"Women of the past we will not betray you — we too will fight to make Canada ... the land of the people

Women in History

Rosa Luxemburg

Rosa Luxemburg was born in 1870 in Russian Poland. At an early age she became interested in political and economic studies, which eventually converted her to Marxism. In 1893 she assisted in founding the Social Democratic Party of Poland and Lithania. Three years later in Germany she was recognized as one of the notable economic theorists of the Social Democracy.

Her preoccupation with theory did not lead her to abandon revolutionary activity; in Warsaw in the years 1905-06 she played an active role in the revolution. After World War I began she attacked the German Social Democratic Party for their support of the war and as a result she spent the years from 1915 *till the end of the war in prison. During this time her* revolutionary writings were smuggled out of prison, were widely circulated and gained influence. When the Berlin workers' uprising broke out Rosa participated in it despite her conviction that it was premature; and during this revolution she was arrested and later "murdered".

At the time when she was in prison friends tried to persude her to withhold her pamphlet "The Russian Revolution" from publication as being premature and possible harmful to the revolution, but she maintained that "honest criticism" was always in order. What does Rosa Luxemburg mean by "honest criticism" or "opposition to the regime"? She was referring to the attitude of nonacceptance of the status quo, of constant questioning and challenging of fundamental assumptions. She was concerned with active struggle within a society of which she was a member and was a strong advocate of uninstitutional revolution.Rosa Luxemburg's controlling doctrine was not democracy, individual freedom, or spontaneity, but participation leading to class-consciousness and revolution.

Rosa studied law and capitalist economics in Switzerland where institutions accepted men and women on equal footing. Rosa never wanted to claim woman's privileges but she did not want to accept an inferior status either. When founding the Social Democratic Party her sex was irrelevant to her and she indignantly refused to accept that her natural habitat was in the women's movement, though later on before her final arrest she had planned to attend an international women's conference. Rosa also fought for suffrage for women as well as the men.

Although Rosa Luxemburg was not an activist in a specific women's movement, her concepts apply to the present women's liberation movement. She believed in social and political revolution, participation in the revolution of the immediate society and most important the non acceptance of the status quo.

—SYLVIA KITCHING

WOMEN DECLARE WAR

Laws can be changed very quickly in war time; a state of national emergency. Women's Caucus feels that the deaths of thousands of women yearly from illegal abortion, plus the tragedy of unwanted pregnancies, are such an emergency.

The successful demonstration on Valentine's Day in Vancouver was only the beginning of the campaign against Canada's inhuman abortion laws. On Sunday, February 22, Women's Caucus met to map plans for action to culminate in the Canada-wide actions, focussed on Ottawa, to be held on Mother's Day,

The meeting began with a general discussion of the campaign, and how to make it effective in achieving the objective: the right to control our own bodies;

The present law denies all women the *right* to abortion on request. But it affects poor and working class women most severely. Safe abortions (legal in Britain and Japan; illegal in Vancouver) are available — but only to those who can afford to spend a great deal of money.

Women active in the Abortion Information Service, reported that their experience shows that the medical profession, as well as the law, is responsible for the inability of women in Canada to obtain safe, legal abortions. The law allows abortion when the "health" of the mother is threatened, and does not define health. The doctors themselves have defined "health" in the most narrow and conservative way.

This means that the removal of abortion from the criminal code would not necessarily mean that women would have the right to make that decision themselves; those who control the medical profession would still have that power.

The priorities of this system — the profit motivation of the drug companies; and the free enterprize, fee for service organization of medicine — prevent women from achieving safe, effective birth control, including abortion. Just as the abortion laws are biased against poor and non-white women, so is the whole system of research around birth control. What little research has been done on the pill and other birth control devices has involved the use of poor and non-white women as guinea pigs, with little regard for the consequences.

We recognized however the danger of narrowing our efforts solely to the issue of abortion. We tried to learn from the experience of the

We tried to learn from the experience of the suffragette movement. When the vote was won, the movement collapsed. The result was that the vote meant very little for women.

Those at the meeting felt that the only guarantee of lasting success in this struggle would be a movement of women strong enough and confident enough to challenge any future attempts to restrict their rights.

Mother's Day, or even the changing of the law, cannot be seen as an end in itself, but only a part of the process of building that movement. When the [illegible] actions to build up to Mother's Day, it was agreed that these actions should be linked as much as possible to the organizing work that is going on now with high school students, university students, working women, women on welfare, etc.

To be effective, the campaign must deal with other problems that restrict the right of women to control their own bodies. For instance, the falsemorality and double standard around dating would make high school women feel guilty using birth control, even if it were available to them.

For women everywhere, the right to abortion does not *automatically* bring equality in society; but this right is a necessary step towards the liberation of women. The fact that women do not control their own bodies is essential to the maintenance of the role of women as unpaid worker in the home and as cheap labor in industry ('why pay her more? She'll just get pregnant and quit').

In demanding safe abortion and birth control, we are demanding the right to control our own lives. We do not accept society's definition of us as wives and mothers only; we demand the right to make other choices.

Research and Action

Areas of research were outlined, with the hope that the information gained will provide the basis for building actions around the medical profession, the drug industry, the hospitals, as well as the government.

Anyone interested in participating in any of these research groups should contact Women's Caucus office:

—birth control: how, where and on whom research is done; the lack of thorough research; the suppression of research. Why: how the drug industry and the medical profession profit out of birth control.

—hospital boards & the medical profession: how the medical profession is controlled; who hospital board members are; possible alternatives to the present organization of medicine (i.e., Sask. community clinics experience).

—the mechanics of the present law

—the population explosion argument: It is necessary to accumulate facts and arguments on this to make clear that our position is to give women control of our own bodies, not to enable a minority to control women (particularly non-white women) through *compulsory* abortion or birth control.

Women Declare War on Ottawa

On Mother's Day, thousands of women across Canada will declare war on Ottawa. Women from all over the country will demonstrate in the capital. Local demonstrations in support will be held.

Women are no longer prepared to sit quietly while our lives are determined by others; while our sisters die. Now is the time to act!

Join the campaign. Call Women's Caucus, 879-9722. Send donations to 307 W. Broadway, Vancouver 10, marked for the Abortion Campaign.

The sad little boy stands by me
He shows me
The letter from his father
who died last week
he told me about happiness
With his eyes
I learn about sadness
The three legged dog hobbles
to the call
from his master
who chopped off his leg
and laughed
Mrs. Jones from down the hall
has never been out of her room
for five years
she locks the door
and tells me through the keyhole
about the niggers
who are taking over the world.
And her son
who wears mascara
and lipstick
and lives with a Communist queer
brings her supper
and pays her rent
I pass the hippy
from down the hall
who was beaten on the head
in a peace march
and smiles
at this ten year old girl
who plays on the stair
with the rat
she found in the crib
I knock on the door
my mom answers
and says
I can't come in
until the men callers
have left.

BY GAEL KOOB

HUNDREDS PROTEST ABORTION LAWS

More than 250 women and men marched through Vancouver Valentine's Day to begin a three-month national campaign to remove abortion laws from the criminal code.

Sponsored by Vancouver Women's Caucus, the marchers carried banners reading "Illegal Abortions kill 12,000 a year in North America", "Abortion is our right" and "We demand safe birth control."

"We're going to change the abortion laws this year," said Betsy Meadley, organizer of the march. "If we work together we won't have to wait till next year, or the year after. We can do it now."

The campaign, coordinated with women's liberation groups across Canada, is based on the fundamental right of every woman to control her own body. This means she has the right to safe and effective birth control and abortion so that she can decide if she wants to be a mother.

The women's guerrilla theatre effectively communicated to marchers and passers-by the cruelty of the present abortion law.

A "Mother of Six" appeared before a hospital abortion committee to plead her case for abortion. After being wound in red tape, she was informed by the doctors that it was "too late". Abortion denied.

A third woman told the hospital committee she was raped. Abortion denied. She had German Measles. Abortion denied. But when she re-appeared in a fur coat and with handfuls of money, the doctors quickly granted her an abortion.

The existing federal abortion law is biased against poor and working women, for legal abortions in Britain and Japan and safe illegal abortions in Vancouver cost between $500 and $1,500.

Denied an abortion by the committee, one woman turned to her only alternative — a black-hooded, evil hack abortionist. After paying a huge sum of money, she was given a chemical potion and soon after died.

It is estimated by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics that 100,000 illegal abortions are performed in Canada each year. At least 2,000 of these women die and more than 20,000 are admitted to hospitals for post-abortion complications which result in disability or death.

A counter-demonstration of five women with picket signs claiming "abortion is murder" joined the march.

Margaret Benston, Women's Caucus member, said, "The march was significant in that more and more women are beginning to realize that we must work together to change the abortion laws.

"Together we can do anything."

When the march reached Victory Square, Mary Borsky gave a speech on the growing movement of women across North America to demand abortion as our right.

Dr. Richard G. Foulkes, medical director of the Royal Columbian Hospital, told a public meeting in the evening that the final decision on abortion should be made by the woman with an unwanted pregnancy, whatever the reason, and her medical advisors.

Efforts must be made to prevent unwanted pregnancy, he said. "Until such time as we can prevent unwanted pregnancy, the backstop of therapeutic abortion must be available — unfettered by unjustified legal restrictions and by prejudice."

The present campaign will culminate with demonstrations across Canada on Mother's Day, focused on Parliament in Ottawa.

Join the fight. Call Women's Caucus at 879–9722 or write to 307 W. Broadway, Vancouver, B.C.

GUERILLA THEATRE

By DIANA MOORE

Two days before the kick-off demonstration for the abortion campaign being launched by the Vancouver Women's Caucus, a few of the caucus members were recruited to do guerrilla theatre as part of the demonstration.

The demonstration was scheduled to begin at 1:30 p.m. Saturday. By 11:00 p.m. Friday night, not only was the skit still disturbingly formless, but the players themselves were still so shakey that they had to ask the four member audience to leave as they were too embarrassed to perform in front of them.

Saturday I woke up feeling decidedly nauseous. I kept thinking of being stranded in the midst of Saturday crowds, a recognizable member of a colossal flop. The rehearsal had been disaster enough, but the thought of the two members who had not been able to make the Friday rehearsal and who had to be clued in, in the hour before our first performance, made me really ill.

We were supposed to meet in the public washrooms outside the court house. When we got there it became evident that none of our members had recently felt the urge in the vicinity of the court house. The space where the washrooms had been was all hole, forty feet deep, and part of the Eaton's Cemp excavation. So the troupe that had quailed before an audience of four in its first rehearsal, had its second in front of the court house and the whole city.

The five Valentine's Day performances were smashingly successful, which is understandable, as we, in company with all good revolutionaries, had God on our side.

So a regular guerrilla street theatre troupe was formed. This troupe will perform two sorts of activities. The most frequent will be unrequested raids doing protest skits on various topical issues, including, of course, abortion. The second activity will be to co-operate with any of the local radical groups who request our assistance with demonstrations and marches.

For the raids, regular troupers will be used. As our members increase we will create two raiding parties to be used on alternative days of the week, so that, without exhausting our members, we can pull one raid daily. For these raids, as for the demonstrations, the members will wear black hooded capes streaming with brightly colored scraps and ribbons of satin over their costumes. Each member will carry a cloth bag containing props. The idea is that such a get-up will be readily recognizable, and serve to remind passersby of the questions raised by any previous skit they may have either seen or heard of. Also, by carrying the props in this way the troupe can arrive, perform, and disappear with maximum rapidity.

For any particular demonstration additional members, from the organizations concerned, will be encouraged to participate.

The troupe intends to avoid overloading the audiences. Our main attempt will be to get people to laugh, as we believe this to be a more efficient way of changing attitudes than moralizing. Members will not engage in heated or militant exchanges with individuals on the street. Again, because we consider such contest are inefficient in so far as effecting social change is concerned.

Any men or women interested in joining the groupe are welcome to come to rehearsals at 137B Water Street, Mondays, 7-9 p.m., or to phone either: 732-9018 (Shelagh, or 879-9722 (Women's Caucus HQ).

WOMEN CELEBRATE

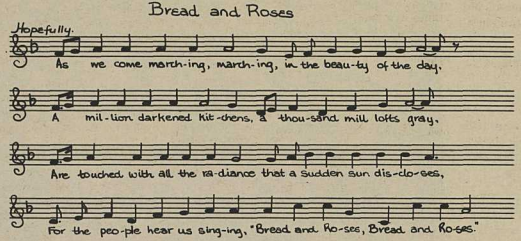
International Women's Day will be celebrated here in Vancouver in two days of events. On Saturday, March 7, at 8:00 at the Labor Temple, Vancouver Women's Caucus presents an evening of theatre, films, song and story to dramatize many aspects of women in history and in their present roles. On Sunday, March 9, films and discussion on the role of women in contemporary society will take place in the Labor Temple, 307 W. Broadway at 1:00. "This Is No Time for Romance", "Caroline" and "Women on the March" from the National Film Board will be shown.

The Saturday evening festival is entitled "Bread and Roses," from the title of a song written during the great Lawrence, Mass. textile strike of 1912. In that struggle, 20,000 workers walked out of the mills in spontaneous protest against a cut in their weekly pay. Workers had been averaging $8.76 for a 56-hour work week when a state law made 54 hours the maximum for women and for minors under 18. The companies reduced all hours to 54 but refused to raise wage rates to make up for the average loss of 31 cents per week suffered by each worker because of the reduction in hours.

This caused the walkout which rocked the great New England textile industry. Under the aggressive leadership of the Industrial Workers of the World, the strike was militant and successful.

During one of the many parades conducted by the strikers, some young girls carried a banner with the slogan: "We want bread and roses too." This inspired James Oppenheim to write his poem, which was set to music by Caroline Kohlsaat.

Bread and Roses



England - 1915

By Sheila Rowbotham
Reprinted from Socialist Woman, Britain

In 1912, a vacant baker's shop in Bow was taken over, and the sign *Votes For Women* appeared in gold letters above the entrance. It was the headquarters of the East London Federation of the Suffragettes. Behind the move to Bow was Sylvia Pankhurst for whom the emancipation of women became inseparable from the Socialist Revolution. Indeed the movement for the vote in the East End raised inescapable social issues which embarrassed some of the feminist ladies who were later to prove such sound patriots in the first World War. Before long the rest of the Pankhursts were at loggerheads with both the branch in East London and with Sylvia. They liked neither her politics nor her company. The contradiction within feminism was to produce an inevitable rift.

In 1914, a deputation of six members of the East London federation went to see Prime Minister Asquith. He had finally consented to see them after Sylvia Pankhurst, pale and weak from hunger-strike had been carried on a stretcher surrounded by indignant women from the East End to the House of Commons. The demand for the vote was put in very real class terms.

Mrs. Ford who had started working at eleven and struggle for years to keep a sick husband and two children as a needlewoman and trouser-presser told him how she had been sacked because she would not sleep with the foreman.

Jessie Payne a shoe-maker who told him how when her mentally defective daughter had been removed to a padded cell in Poplar workhouse and she had tried to remove her she'd been told she had no say in it. The husband had to apply.

In jail, Miss Pankhurst wrote poems 'Writ on Cold Slate'. She was contemptuous about 'the good, who flutter on the Stock Exchange striving to corner food or bring off wars.' It was this same contempt which made her oppose World War I. When the main body of the suffragette movement rushed to support the war effort, she exposed continually, the class interests behind it.

In 1916 everything seemed so clear Sylvia wanted the British Labor movement to learn 'the Bolshevik way of dealing with the world'. It seemed too in 1918 as though they would. She welcomed the police on strike for better pay into the 'workingclass army' and looked for the tommies to strike next. While concrete questions of social class had erupted on to the surface when the feminist movement was in it's militant phase, with middle age, respectability and the liberal demand of the vote granted, they disappeared. Not only was it difficult to find new forms for the old enthusiasm, but because feminism had found it's symbol of liberation in the vote, because it had expressed itself in liberal terms, it was hard to translate a socialist feminist consciousness convincingly into marxism. Feminism went one way, revolution another. Not surprisingly, Sylvia Pankhurst found it difficult to hold in balance the original feminist impetus and the more compelling one of social revolution. Instead of bringing into marxist theory the consciousness of another group struggling for liberation in the way the movements of the black colonial people were to do later, red feminism arrived as a limping fellow traveller, and simply hitched itself behind the workers' movement hoping to be drawn along into socialism.

The theoretical divide between Sylvia's Marxism and Mrs. Pankhurst's bolshevik bogeys meant that 'feminism' became synonymous with the assertion within the capitalist power structure of the rights of bourgeois women. It developed much more in terms of specific welfare organizations and improvements.

It is for us too, to make the connection, to relate the liberation of women, both to immediate and realistic social demands and to revolutionary theory. We have to hold a double consciousness as women and as socialists. We have to recreate a red feminism which does not apologize for itself, which demands social revolution from the logic of its own situation and not someone else's.

BOOKS: George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England.* David Mitchell, *Women on the Warpath.* Marion Ramelson, *Petticoat Rebellion.* Sylvia Pankhurst, *Writ on Cold Slate.* Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement.* V.I. Lenin, *Left Wing Communism, and Infantile Disorder.*

France - 1897

from *The Strand Magazine*, 1900 edition.

A women's "daily" has for a long time been the dream of some "advanced women" in England and America. By some strange irony of circumstances the practical realization of this dream has been left to the gay and frivolous Parisienne – as she is pictured, that is, by her Anglo-Saxon sisters.

In the autumn of 1897 the following advertisement attracted some amount of attention throughout France:

Women form the majority of the population in France. Thousands of women, spinsters or widows, are living in independence of men. Women pay taxes, though they cannot vote, contribute by their manual or intellectual labor to the wealth of the nation, and claim the right to be heard on all questions pertaining to the society of which they are members equally with men.

***La Fronde*, a women's journal for women, will be the faithful echo of their feelings, wants and claims.**

On the boulevards this announcement was received with no small amount of ridicule and derision, and when it was learned that the new paper was to be entirely produced by the work of women, it was freely prophesied that the "fad" would not last a month. But when the first number of *La Fronde* appeared on December 9th, 1897, the tone completely changed. The press generally gave the fair new-comer something better than a chivalrous welcome, and 200,000 copies were sold. In a short time the sound editorship, accurate information, and philosophic style of *La Fronde* caused it to be dubbed "the *Times* in petticoats" – a sobriquet which its conductors smilingly accepted as a high compliment.

It has celebrated its second birthday, and looking at a copy of *La Fronde* in comparison with its Paris contemporaries, I should unhesitatingly conclude that the first daily journal *"feminin* and *feministe"* had come to stay. . . . *La Fronde* shows a strong interest in the welfare of working women – among whom it circulates largely – and has organized a special department for the benefit of the female "unemployed". In politics generally it is Radical and Republican, and – true to the best instincts of women – is all for peace and amity in international relations.

Vietnam

Extracts from "Ho Chi Minh on The Emam in Women of Vietnam.

President Ho Chi Minh paid constant at of women, to their interest and life . . . Revolution, the great store President Ho women filled us with joy and pride.

On the occasion of March 8 (Internati great war of resistance being waged by important part . . . Like a brocade, the lar the labor of our women, young and old. North in 1954, the State promulgated interests of women. "To get much labor f women, who make up half of society: building of socialism is only half complete women, that is, liberating half of societ eradicate feudal and bourgeois ideology in

"I hope that the women of our count courage and ability to shoulder all respons and the entire people, defend their fatherl the resistance against American aggression

SOLID

Among the workshops held at the cor was a women's liberation workshop. The spring march April 18th.

The workshop was chaired by Janiel discussion opened by an expression of Vietnamese women, while acknowledging for liberation would really begin when t longer be vital in defense of the count Vietnamese women wiped out a platoon of

The proposals that came from the worl the rally and the march be women; 2) th opposition to the war from women's li liberation march under that banner – e Caucus be asked to send a representative The two representatives chosen from th O'Donnell and Linda O'Day.

1-1969

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tation to the problem of the emancipation . After the triumph of the August, 1945 Chi Minh set by the part played by the

eral Women's Day) 1952, he said: "In the ur people, the women are shouldering an of Vietnam is being embellished through ". . After the restoration of peace in the nny laws and regulations to protect the orce we must free the working force of the ailing to free the women means that the d. The law on marriage aims at freeing the y. As women are emancipated, we must he men."

ry will strive to develop their tradition of bilities, and, together with the armed forces and's independence and freedom, and bring o total victory."

ARITY

nference of the Vietnam Action Committee conference was held in preparation for the

olley of Vancouver Women's Caucus. The support for the heroic struggle of the hat their own (Vietnamese women) struggle e war was over, and the women would no ry. (It was noted that four battalions of marines single-handed.)

kshop were that: 1) one half the speakers at at one of the women who speaks represent beration point of view; 3) that women's arrying their own signs; 4) that Women's to work on the V.A.C. steering committee. e women's liberation workshop were D.J.

Russia - 1917

Excerpts from The History of the Russian Revolution by Leon Trotsky

[International Women's Day, March 8, was February 23 by the old Russian Calendar]

The 23rd of February was International Woman's Day. The social-democratic circles had intended to mark this day in a general manner: by meetings, speeches, leaflets. It had not occurred to anyone that it might become the first day of the revolution. Not a single organization called for strikes on that day. What is more, even a Bolshevik organization, and a most militant one – the Vyborg borough-committee, all workers – was opposing strikes.

On the following morning, however, in spite of all directives, the women textile workers in several factories went on strike, and sent delegates to the metal workers with an appeal for support. "With reluctance," writes Kayurov, "the Bolsheviks agreed to this, and they were followed by the workers – Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. But once there is a mass strike, one must call everybody into the streets and take the lead." Such was Kayurov's decision, and the Vyborg committee had to agree to it. "The idea of going into the streets had long been ripening among the workers; only at that moment nobody imagined where it would lead." Let us keep in mind this testimony of a participant, important for understanding the mechanics of the events.

Woman's Day passed successfully with enthusiasm and without victims. But what it concealed in itself, no one had guessed even by nightfall.

On the following day the movement not only fails to diminish, but doubles. About one-half of the industrial workers come to the factories in the morning; intstead of going to work they hold meetings; then begin processions toward the centre. New districts and new groups of the population are drawn into the movement. The slogan "Bread!" is crowded out or obscured by louder slogans: "Down with autocracy!" "Down with the War!"

Thus the fact is that the February revolution was begun from below, overcoming the resistance of its own revolutionary organizations, the initiative being taken of their own accord by the most oppressed and downtrodden part of the proletariat – the women textile workers, among them no doubt many soldiers' wives. The overgrown bread-lines had provided the last stimulus. About 90,000 workers, men and women, were on strike that day. The fighting mood expressed itself in demonstrations, meetings, encounters with the police. A mass of women, not all of them workers, flocked to the municipal duma demanding bread. It was like demanding milk from a he-goat.

"The promenading crowd was sympathetically disposed towards us, and soldiers in some of the war-hospitals greeted us by waving whatever was at hand." How many clearly realized what was being ushered in by this sympathetic waving from sick soldiers to demonstrating workers? . . . [This was the beginning of the "February Revolution" which brought down the Czarist regime and led ultimately to the "October Revolution" of 1917.]

U.S.A. - 1970

Reprinted from "But It Ain't Me Babe," California

Ashland, Mass. (LNS) "It's not even a question of priorities. There are men's jobs and women's jobs. And for the more desirable jobs, men have absolute rights."

This is how one male striker at General Electric described the company's treatment of women workers. Demands for better treatment of women are a crucial focus of the nationwide, multi-union GE strike although they have received little publicity from the press. These demands are central to the struggle at plants like the GE Ashland plant where about 80% of the workers are women.

Women at the Ashland plant are hired for two main kinds of jobs. One is working on individual machines and the other is assembly-line work. Both of these are the lowest paying jobs at the plant, even though they are far more difficult than many of the higher paying jobs.

"No man [in this plant] works as hard as a woman," pointed out one woman striker. "The men get scared as hell when they look at machines, yet the women are still getting less than the sweepers."

To obscure the exploitation of women even further, GE also pays women on different machines different rates. Once again, GE uses this policy to buttress the fiction that the jobs they do account for women's low wages and not the company's pervasive discrimination against women. All the women at Ashland have signed a petition demanding that women get paid the same rate no matter what machine they operate.

When negotiations were just starting, the women went through the list of all their grievances and made up a set of demands which were decided on by men and women together. Not only have these demands consistently been denied by the company, but the company has even refused to consider the women's situation as a valid subject for negotiations.

There are 1100 women who work at Ashland. Of these, 1045 women are paid less than the lowest paying man's job, that of sweeper. Meanwhile, men are spread out all over the 12-rate pay scale of which 95% of the women strikers don't even see the bottom rung.

Canada - 1970

Reprinted from The Leaflet, published by the Canadian Pulp and Paper Workers Union.

By SHARON LAMBERT

Since the passing of the highly touted Human Rights Act of British Columbia, there has been an increased interest in the "Equal Wages for Equal Work" concept. The Human Rights Act actually does not enforce this concept any more than the old Equal Pay Act, however.

On Monday, January 12th, 1970, Local 5 held a meeting with some of the women in our Local to discuss this problem at length. Jean Rands of Vancouver Women's Caucus was in attendance and answered numerous questions pertaining to discrimination in this area.

She pointed out while the Human Rights Act and the Equal Pay Act before it provide for "equal pay for equal work" in theory, in practice many employers get around this because:

A– There is no law that prevents them from hiring men for a particular job and refusing to hire women (as shown by the Male Help Wanted and Female Help Wanted categories in the daily papers, at Canada Manpower, etc.

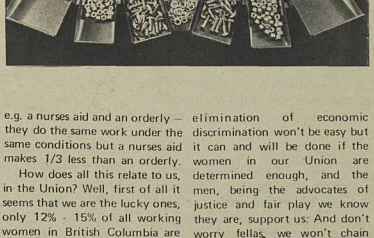
B– A difference of title to what is virtually the same job: e.g. a nurses aid and an orderly – they do the same work under the same conditions but a nurses aid makes 1/3 less than an orderly.

How does all this relate to us, in the Union? Well, first of all it seems that we are the lucky ones, only 12% - 15% of all working women in British Columbia are organized and enjoy the protection that the Collective Agreement provides regarding Seniority, Job Postings, etc. However, there are some very serious discrepancies in our industry.

First of all, there is the "Female Base Rate" and the "Male Base Rate" that exists in many of our agreements. There is as high as 50 cents per hour difference between these two categories. There was a strong feeling among the women attending the January 12th meeting that they are lagging behind in the area of job rate adjustments and that a thorough investigation of job content must be done. It was also felt that there are many jobs now being done only by men that could be done by women as well, if given the opportunity. A complete examination of all jobs must be carried out to ascertain which ones women could do, women then should be encouraged to apply for these jobs if interested and integration of seniority made wherever possible. The meeting of January 12th, 1970 passed a motion covering these points and will recommend implementation of same in up-coming negotiations to the Local 5 Executive.

There are, of course, many problems involved in implementing equal treatment on the job. One is the fear some women have, which is capitalized on by the Companies, and that is that they will be "phased out", that men will be hired if cheap female labor isn't available. This has been tried and it has been found that many of the jobs that women are now doing, being repetitious and requiring precision, are jobs that men either can't do (I'm not being prejudiced here – production results bear me out) or don't want to do. Certainly elimination of economic discrimination won't be easy but it can and will be done if the women in our Union are determined enough, and the men, being the advocates of justice and fair play we know they are, support us. And don't worry fellas, we won't chain ourselves to your lamp posts.

All kidding aside, this is just the beginning, for there is still 85% of better of women working who do not have the recourse through unions we do and we must in fighting for ourselves, make sure we fight on their behalf as well.



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Getting Broken to the Harness

By LAURA NEAME

There are human institutions which attempt to uplift and ennoble the human spirit, and there are institutions which attempt to degrade it. The Vancouver Department of Social Service is in the second category.

There is an evil inherent in the welfare system which cannot be remedied by even the most munificent increase in welfare rates; and this is the wrong done to the human spirit in the name of charity.

The aim of the Welfare Department of Vancouver is to provide financial aid to those unable to provide for themselves. The methods used to achieve this end are based on the assumption that 'cannot' and 'will not' are usually synonymous, and that anyone so low on the economic totem pole should need and expect only enough assistance to keep them alive and moving. The Vancouver welfare department has no concept of human dignity. Its end is degradation, and its means is humiliation.

The assumption of inferiority is apparent from the moment a welfare applicant steps into the waiting room of the Vancouver department and proceeds to the intake desk, only to be told sharply that she must take a seat until called. There are no sings to indicate this as a procedure to be followed. There is no reading matter available, unless she visits the washroom, where she may read a luridly colored poster announcing *'Could be have given you venereal disease?'* followed by the address and number of the social hygiene centre.

The wait can be anywhere from five minutes to an hour, at which time the applicant is given a form which requests details of financial status, loans outstanding, length of residence in Vancouver etc. The social worker looks over the application, warns the applicant of the dire consequences of lying, and makes an appointment with an intake worker for one to three days later. All appointments must be made in person, not over the phone. It is almost impossible to cut through the mounds of bureaucratic red tape.

I witnessed a woman in her early twenties trying to make application for herself and her husband, whom she said was mentally ill. She was told that the male of the household was automatically its head, and the head of the household *must* be the one to make application for welfare. She must obtain a doctor's certificate of her husband's inability to appear. The fact that it could be a matter of days before she was able to get the certificate, and the fact that this conversation took place at the intake desk, in full hearing of those in the waiting room seemed not to be a matter of concern to the social worker in charge.

Emergency cheques for those with nil food and nil money are not considered in this stage of the proceedings. People who are absolutely broke are referred to the Salvation Army welfare centre. There, they can sometimes obtain an $8 food voucher redeemable at Woodwards if they satisfy the Army of their honesty and penurity. Unfortunately, it is a four mile walk over the Granville Bridge from one office to the other, and the office closes at 4:00 p.m.

After returning for a second appointment, the welfare applicant is interviewed by another intake worker and the application is gone over in greater detail. Disbelief and distrust in any statement made seems to be the accepted attitude. Any slowness or hesitancy in answering statements is pounced upon as evidence of lying.

If the social worker is satisfied, however, that the applicant is completely poverty stricken and thoroughly humiliated, she will make an appointment with a case worker. This appointment can be anywhere from three to five days later. At this point it is possible to apply for an emergency cheque. If the department is convinced of the need for it, the cheques can be ready in two or three days from that time. It must be picked up in person at a specific time and place, and can be cashed at only one bank.

The case worker, the only social worker to have long term contact with the welfare recipient, is the final step in a long series of humiliations. In the Vancouver Social Service department, the intake workers and the case workers are located on different floors, and communicate principally through files and memoes. By the time the applicant has been filtered through the intake floor, and bubbled up to the case worker, it is assumed that she is satisfactorily broke,and broken to the harness. Her honesty is no longer called into question.

This results in a marked change of atmosphere. It is more pleasant, free and relaxed. Without the constant assumption that one is lying, the impulse to lie is reduced. Here, the only problem is the administration of the cheque. The basic welfare cheque for a person with no dependents was $75 a month until recently, and is now $80. Extra money is available if the recipient can prove he needs extra money for medicine, car fare to and from the hospital, for rent above the amount provided in the basic cheque, and for other reasons. This information was provided to me by Mr. Thompson of the welfare department. Only a few receive these extra benefits, however, and these are often the old hands who have been on welfare for years and who know its ins and outs.

Mr. Thompson also spoke of training programs which allow people to receive welfare while training to be technicians, secretaries, hairdressers, and even teachers. He said however, that most welfare recipients were too stupid (sic) to be able to benefit from this type of training. This he said, was the reason so few of those on welfare were in fact on a training program.

There are absolutely no provisions for rehabilitation within the welfare program itself. Once a person is on welfare, the system seems to fight any effort made to become once again a functioning member of society. If she manages to find a part time job, and makes over $20 a month at it, it is deducted from her welfare cheque.

Most women on welfare are not stupid, although they are not formally educated to middle class standards. For the most part they talk of specifics, concretes, and do not seem to abstract from thier observations of individual actions to come to any general conclusions about society. They are subjective rather than objective in orientation, inevitably seeing situations from their own position in society, and the economic system, rather than taking an objective view. In other words, they criticize the attitude of a specific social worker, but do not make a general criticism of the bureaucracy which produces and trains social workers.

These are indications of an intellect applied to much more immediate ends than the social scientist and university student. They must solve their own day to day difficulties and problems. In such a situation, it is useless to speculate and organize for the future, for the future seems to hold no more promise than the present. The more energy expended on distant goals, the less there is for the immediate problems of food and shelter.

Organization of welfare women in order to change the conditions of a welfare institution, in a society which is by nature inefficient and inadequate, is no final answer. However, it can and would bring a measure of security and dignity into the lives of women who have, at present, no hope of fitting into society, nor of changing it.

Indian women

DOUBLE OPPRESSION

By ELLEN WOODSWORTH

Why do we allow ourselves to permit discrimination and racism to physically and mentally exploit our Indian sisters?

We must begin to understand that to fight against any sister regardless of color or culture is to fight against ourselves. When fighting against any sister or allowing men to do so, we are putting ourselves down and holding down our struggle for self-determination. Our feelings of prejudice have been instilled in us to falsely bolster our imposed self-images. But that obviously is not the real problem.

The problem is that all women have been refused their own identity. We have had to clutch out for identity through a husband or through children or through decorating ourselves in time with the ever changing commercials and unfortunately even to the extent of believing that we are superior to our non-white sisters. We should know by now that something is wrong somewhere when the idea of superiority comes up. Yet we have been jealous of the images we have of non-white women. We have believed that they were more sensuous. More free. While all the time we have been trying to find ourselves at the cost of losing ourselves.

Are we really blind to the picture on the TV, the stories in the press, the reality of Hastings and Carroll or of men, white men, treating Indian women worse than animals.

We must recognize that our Indian sisters are fighting a double battle which we should be sharing, to be women and to be Indian women.

White women begin learning as soon as they can observe as children that mommy bleaches her hair, tries to act very feminine (which has come to mean passive, delicate, in other words not strong and assertive). As soon as she enters school this is reinforced by her teachers and playmates. We all learn to play these roles, to conceal our strengths, even to repress and forget that we are strong. We forget that a plastic, bleach blond slim glossy photo does not represent a real woman.

Just think what this does to an Indian girl as she begins to look around her and see her Mommy has brown skin and black hair and does hard work and shares the burden of the family with a man. She knows her mother is strong, she knows her mother is beautiful but a child soon learns to doubt in a hostile environment.

She resents the fact that her black hair, different culture, family life, her strength, her whole person is rejected by our society's definition of what a woman is.

Both white women and Indian women have been sold this image of what they are supposed to be. Indian women resent white women for we represent this plastic image. There can be no image for women to follow as we begin to realize each and every one of us is an individual. We recognize that we are all very beautiful and have great potential strength that has been denied us for too long. A beautiful woman is one who has black or brown or white skin color that has begun to struggle for her identity and that of her sisters.

Indian women are in some important respects in a very different situation than we are. They cannot get jobs and neither can Indian men. As our class society places the white male at the top of the hierarchy, so he places the Indian women at the very bottom. On the reservation, however, there is still equality with the men.

In a capitalist system, racism is used very effectively to divide people from each other. While women fight against each other, poor whites fight against the Indian people in a desperate grasp for status.

When an Indian woman leaves the reservation to try to earn some money she begins to realize she will only get recognition as existing if she marries a white man. Then she loses her legal status as an Indian and becomes a 'person' and her children become white with no rights to live on her home reservation.

These are just a few of the dehumanizing oppressive situations that all Indian women are born into.

we must speak up . . .

What this means in terms of white women must be discussed and worked on. We must realize how it affects each one of us white women. It is imperative that the depths of our exploitation of each other be analyzed and struggled with.

This means more than an intellectual acknowledgement of the desperate situation of Indian women who are struggling not only for self determination but also for their existence. This means that we must support with funds, resources, energy and love the groups our Indian sisters are working with, such as the Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP). This means we must protest the taking away of their rights in Chretien's white paper on Indian affairs. It means that we must stop mining companies from moving in on the Sechelt peninsula. It means that we must change laws which dictate that an Indian woman is no longer an Indian when she marries a non-Indian. This means that we must speak up, step in and stop white men from abusing Indian women in any situation. The struggle to fight our oppression can only give us strength and unity; neither color nor culture is a barrier.

There are factors that can give us freedom and an alternative to our society.

As white women we must recognize our oppression and how we oppress non-white women. The struggle begins now.

MEN'S CORNER

Dr. Dennis Fir, father of six, said Tuesday, "Tremendous damage is being done by the strip mining activities of Kaiser Resources Ltd."

Wearing a black, pin-striped suit with matching tie and shoes, Dr. Fir strongly urged an immediate end to all coal mining in the area Kaiser controls.

Speaking at a public meeting, tall, handsom Dr. Fir said the government has no plans of its own for the coal industry and is relying on surveys made for Kaiser.

"I felt it necessary to take the position of president of the Land Preservation Society in addition to my duties as husband and father because of the grave situation we now face," he said as he raised his left 18 inch bicep.

With a smile and a slight dimple in his chin, he added, "I don't like stepping outside my normal role of worker and bread-winner, but my wife has been most understanding — she went out and got a job."

Diana Fir, practicing lawyer with Sykes, Dykes and Lawton, Ltd., said she was pleased her husband had a chance to expand his activities.

"We've had no real problem adjusting," she said.

FROM KITS BEACH AT 1:30 TO THE COURT HOUSE

March

By JANIEL JOLLEY and MARCY COHEN

The American Deserters Committee has asked women's liberation, Vancouver Black Action Group, Native Alliance for Red Power and student groups to join them in an action on March 14th. The intent of this action is to bring together women, blacks, youth, workers and American exiles. By organizing around and participating in this March we can begin to understand why the system deliberately separates us from each other.

The G.I. identifies with the discontent at home because he too has no control over his life in the army or the system that put him there. He goes into the army because he has been streamed into the work force after grade 12 or into trade or technical schools.

G.I.'s generally don't question the fact that they are going into the army in the same way that women don't question their destinies as wives and mothers or secretaries.

The G.I. while in Vietnam comes to understand the way in which racism and male supremacy divide him from his people. It makes it easier for the G.I. to kill when the army presents him with an image of the enemy as a "gook" with no human identity.

When he looks back home, he finds that black people are rising up in the ghettos, that women and young people are beginning to challenge a system that defines their lives and directs their energies; a system that serves corporate rather than human needs.

There are proportionately more black and brown people serving in the armed forces. These people have traditionally been used as a marginal labor force, easily manipulated by the military and corporations.

The channelling of working class youth into the army and the psychological mutilation caused by racism parallels the situation of women.

Throughout modern history, women have also been used as a marginal cheap pool of labor. During the first and second world wars, women were integrated into every area of the work force to replace men overseas. When the wars came to an end women were forced back into the home. Bettery Friedan's book, The Feminine Mystique, talks about the enormous advertising campaign necessary to convince women that their return to the home was a victory, not a defeat.

Representatives of manpower and counsellors accept the businessmen's definition that what is good for his corporation is good for the people.

The interests of businessmen are not our interests. The education system which reinforces economic and psychological inferiority in women makes it possible for them to pay us low wages which keeps the wages of all working people down.

Women, still bound up in their traditional role, act as a conservative force. They put tremendous pressure on their husbands to bring home more money and act in a socially responsible way.

One of the most important tasks of women organized around their own oppression is to educate all peoples as to the commonality of their problems.

Working men must learn that racism and chauvinism are used against them! They are conditioned to take their anger out on their wives, rather than the boss; they are taught to hate "niggers" and Indians rather than the system.

It is an exciting opportunity for us as women to march in solidarity with youth, Native people, blacks and working people who understand the integrity of our movement — who understand that women's liberation is necessary for people's liberation.

with love from women's caucus

February 14, 1970

"our own mind,
our own womb,
body and soul
NOW!"

with LOVE from
Vancouver
Women's Caucus
Canada

AWARD

FOR HUMANITARIAN SERVICES

TO
DR. A.F. KOOME
Renton, Washington, USA

"She wants to be able to guide her own life. She wants to determine if she wants this child, yes or no. You wonder who is this big person who can harden himself, herself, to say 'you should do so, you should get this child. . .' We push women so early into motherhood . . . We brainwash them into the idea they have to become mothers . . . Very early we give girls the message . . 'don't be as smart as men, be sweet, be dependent on men. Your first job is to please men.' We teach women to be attractive to catch a man. If there is a woman who speaks up in an effective, aggressive way man says, 'my god, isn't she masculine.' No wonder women in some way have an inferiority complex."

Dr. A.F. Koome
from "1 out of 4, An Abortion Primer," Women's Liberation, Seattle.

FIGHT FOR DAY CARE

By SUE CLAUS

The women at Vancouver City College are working very hard to set up a community day care centre in the home of Mary Easterson, a VCC student who in May will be a qualified pre-school teacher. But the battle to comply with all the regulations is difficult to win without a great deal of money.

Community day care would afford all women the opportunity to have free time from the job of child-rearing as well as maintaining a good child-teacher-parent relationship. The regulations set down by the government make it extremely difficult for a group of individuals to set up their own day care centre. The day care centre must have a qualified pre-school teacher.

The government will subsidize approved and licensed day care centres. But without the license only four children can be looked after and there is no government subsidy. At present, day care centres only take children from three to five years of age. In order to take in younger children, a nurse plus beds must be available.

Since the government sets down the regulations, it seems most appropriate that they also set up the community day care centres. This would take the burden off the few concerned individuals and put the responsibility where it belongs, with the government. After all a community day care centre would serve all the people in the surrounding area.

At VCC we are close to applying for a licensed day care centre. But there are still many regulations to be met before we receive a license. Once the day care is licensed, Mary would like to see the centre take on a home-like atmosphere. There will be no structured program, but rather the children will be free to do what interests them.

A very important aspect will be the teacher, child, parent relationship. Mary hopes the parents will take an active interest in their children by participating in possible week-end excursions.

A progressive community day care centre will be a great asset to the Broadway and Oak St. area. We are still asking for donations. Both money and equipment will be appreciated as well as we would appreciate volunteers to help work at the day care centre.

To help, contact Mary Easterson, 874-6600 after 4 p.m., 736 W. 7th Ave.

JOIN WOMEN'S CAUCUS

The general meeting of Women's Caucus Feb. 26 decided to establish a committee to facilitate co-ordination and communication between the groups that make up Women's Caucus. In the past few months, many more women have become involved in specific activities of Women's Caucus. But the strength of our movement depends on our ability to generalize those specific struggles, and unite women workers, students, housewives in the fight for women's liberation. The co-ordinating committee will include representatives from all groups plus people who are most involved in the work of Women's Caucus as a whole. It will hold open meetings, every second Monday, beginning March 9.

NORTH SHORE

"Feminine Mystique or Real Oppression?" — Educational to be held with Capilano College at Park Royal Lanes Bldg. at 8:00, Thursdays, March 12 and 19. Dr. Kathleen Aberle will speak the first evening on 'The Evolution of Women's Roles' and the slide show, prepared by Katherine Stone, will be shown. The second evening, Dr. Margaret Benston, Liz Brienberg, Mary Stolk and Betsey Meadley will participate on a panel on aspects of oppression in the family.

ABORTION

Abortion Information Centre, Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m., 307 W. Broadway, Rm. 6.

National action campaign for abortion as a human right: contact Women's Caucus office, 879-9722.

ARTISTS

Contact Women Artists' Co-op, 137 Water St. or Pat Hoffer, 731-5412. Cooperative art for women, the movement, yourself.

WORKING WOMEN

Workshop on problems faced by working women and what can be done, Fridays, March 6 and March 20 at 8:00 p.m., Community Educational and Research Centre, 434 W. Pender.

CELEBRATION

"Bread and Roses", March 7th at 8:00 p.m., to celebrate International Women's Day. Labor Temple, 307 W. Broadway.

Films and discussion of women's liberation, March 8th at 1:30. Labor Temple, 307 W. Broadway.

LITERATURE

Reading material available by writing or dropping in, to Women's Caucus, Rm. 6, 307 W. Broadway, Vancouver 10.

Poverty: Canada's Legacy to Women — Alice James (10 cents)
The Political Economy of Women's Liberation — Margaret Benston (10 cents)
Bread and Roses — Myrna Wood and Kathy McAfee (15 cents)
Day Care — Melody Killian (10 cents)
McGill Birth Control Handbook (free)
3 back issues of the Pedestal (10 cents)
Women's Caucus Program (free)

INTRODUCTION

Women's Liberation: what, where, why & how — Labor Temple, March 11.

MOVEMENT LITERATURE

Women: A Journal of Liberation (bi-monthly) 3011 Guilford, Baltimore, Maryland, 21218. $1.25 per copy, No.'s 1 & 2 (subscriptions $5.00 a year).
Off Our Backs (bi-weekly newspaper) 2318 Ashmead Place N.W., Washington, D.C., 20009 (Subs — $6.00 per year).
It Ain't Me Babe (bi-weekly newspaper) P.O. Box 6323, Albany, California, 94706 ($1.80 for 6 mos., $5.00 for supporting sub.)

SUGGESTED READING

The Second Sex — Simone de Beauvoir

NEWS BRIEFS

San Francisco — Exhibition of Women's Arts and Crafts and photo exhibits March 7th and celebration — Portraits of Women — March 8th, with electronic music, poetry dialogue and dance. A rally, with women speakers from Black Panther Party, Los Siete, Welfare Rights, San Jose Women's Liberation, is to be held the afternoon of March 9th on imperialism and high school and workers strikes.

Amsterdam — Crazy Minas, named after Wilhelmina Drucker, a famous Dutch suffragette, have been kidnapping men for a secret "treatment". Unable to raid a beauty contest because of guards at the door, the girls grabbed Dutch film director Pim de la Para outside and kidnapped him. Their demands include equal pay for women, legalized abortion, birth control pills for teenagers, better sex education in the schools and an equal split of household duties between husband and wife.

New York — An all-woman collective took over *Rat*, an underground newspaper, after it published male chauvinist articles. Women from Red Stockings, WITCH, Gay Liberation, Liberation News Service and Weathermen joined the women on staff to put out the next issue.

Atlanta, Georgia — The Atlanta Women's Liberation, with the black community, is organizing a defense fund for Dr. Luth W. McCaskill, a black doctor from Mississippi, who has been charged with murder by abortion. Atlanta women said: "1) Dr. McCaskill has spent 18 months already in state penitentiary; 2) the black community has been robbed of decent and often free medical help due to his absence; 3) a young woman is dead because of this society's denial of her right to have a legal and safe abortion. Dr. McCaskill said the young woman came to his office for treatment having already received the abortion. Contributions can be sent to The McCaskill Defense Fund, c/o Ben F. Jones, Chairman, 504 Florida Ave., Clarksdale, Mississippi.

Washington, D.C. — The head of Planned Parenthood, Dr. Allen Guttmacher, told the Senate sub-committee investigating the pill that oral contraception is the most effective safeguard against "one of the gravest socio-medical illnesses — unwanted pregnancies."

Pregnancies are 15 times more dangerous than taking the pill, he said.

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