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Ain't I a Woman?

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Ain't I A Woman?

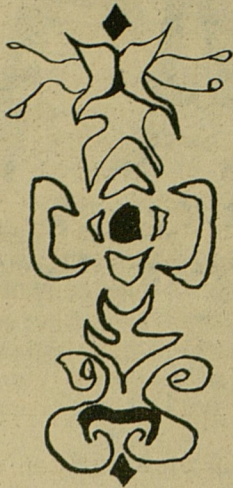
a midwest newspaper of women's liberation
Vol. 1 No 8 October 30, 1970

25¢



To Our Readers

We have decided to start publishing the paper every three weeks instead of every 2nd and 4th Friday. It is the quickest collective decision we have ever come to. We all found a two-week publishing schedule grueling. It wore us out physically and left us functioning with limited spirit, creativity, not to mention our mental awareness. We are hoping that we can use the extra time to put out a better paper, to talk to and learn from each other with less pressure, and to be engaged in other Women's Liberation work beside publishing so that our relationship to the women's movement is not limited to only writing about it.



Our apologies to the seven beautiful sisters who collectively wrote the article on the Panther Constitution Convention, which we reprinted on p. 4 of our last issue, for not listing their names as they had requested. The names that should have appeared are:

Marlene Elkin	Donna Gottschalk
Lois Hart	Brenda Howard
Arlene Kisner	Debbie Muldovan
Shoshana	

From Our Readers

Dear Sisters,

Just sending you some thoughts on homosexuality.

October 7,
Lansing, Mich.

Our red sisters have said that homosexual relationships have an oppressed and an oppressor. This is true. But the fault does not lie in homosexuality itself. Oppressed and oppressors are the conditions of feudalism, capitalism, and imperialism. Sex in and of itself has no politics. Only people have politics.

Why men become "homosexuals" is unclear to me. What I'm trying to say is I don't have a material analysis for why men do and I don't care much. Why do women prefer trying their luck with other women? First of all men in general don't know the first thing about the anatomy of women. Second man after man after man has freaked out either because I was sexual - meaning I could have an orgasm - or because I didn't need their dick to have an orgasm. In either case men have employed subtle techniques to make me feel odd, strange, queer, psychologically fucked-up, inferior, or just plain dumb - just because I behave the way I do. Men are dull because "women couldn't possibly understand or have an equal interchange." Men are always aggressive or else they feel they've been castrated because a woman refuses them, initiates the sexual play, or is preoccupied by other thoughts or rhythms. In other words they are castrated by bitches. Hence you get the term bitchy women. And what good does the man do for a family besides bring home an income that is denied women through discrimination. The more demanding and bastardly the man is the more uppity and castrating the woman is. Hence you get the term bitchy mother. So women of all kinds of politics and backgrounds become homosexuals.

Mao Tse Tung has repeatedly said a good communist makes a material analysis and acts on that material analysis. It is obvious that the Red Women's Detachment has made an intellectual analysis and not a material analysis. Mao Tse Tung also said that the relationship of oppressor against oppressed, (white against black, man against woman, homosexual against homosexual, landlord against tenant, grocer against customer) is an economic condition of imperialist capitalism, and feudalism. Mao said oppression is not human nature and I'll say oppression is not sexual nature.

In America there are female homosexuals who are heads of families. By definition a female head of the house in America is poor and oppressed, whether she is heterosexual, homosexual, asexual, actively homosexual, inactively homosexual, or doesn't have the time to give a damn about her sexuality.

Mao Tse Tung said to find "the poor and the tired" and of them build people's associations. He didn't say to exclude homosexuals, heterosexuals or asexuals. He didn't say a damn thing about sexuals. "It is dogmatism to approach Marxism from a metaphysical point of view and to regard it as something rigid. It is revisionism to negate the basic principles (one being materialism) of Marxism and to negate its universal truth. Both dogmatism and revisionism run counter to Marxism."

GLF is revolutionary if it is a people's association built of the poor and the tired, led by the poor and the tired, and with a main goal of setting up a people's government that ends all oppression.

As for myself I am a woman, I refuse to define myself as homosexual, heterosexual, or asexual because I refuse to define myself as a sexual object. I let whomever who meets, sees or hears me have whatever sexual fantasies about me they want. And I'm sure that some of the RWD women will have incredible anti-women fantasies about me. As for the RWD remember the word lesbian came from the white bourgeois male as well as the concept of homosexuality you use, as well as the concept of heterosexuality prevalent in America 1970.

In struggle forever
another Midwest sister
Sally

P.S.

Day Care Centers will be the battle grounds of women's liberation and a certain part of the revolutions. Universities all over the country are going to take advantage of the WL movement to exploit more families and condition more children. The hottest thing in the Universities today is Behavioral Science named after B.F. Skinner. Skinner's thing was feeding a dog after ringing a bell -- it got so all he had to do was ring the bell without food and the dog would salivate a physical chemical reaction besides a mental reaction. Behavioral Science in Day Care means fruit-loops to hungry, poor kinds if they're good. And up to solitary confinement for those that are bad. Done well enough it will condition 3 and 4 year olds not only mentally but also physically and chemically.

Dear Sisters,

We first saw your right-on paper, not in the midwest but in New York City, where we had gone to see what the women of the revolution were up to there. It was the issue that talked about your trip to NYC and your experiences and alienations there, and we felt instant love and solidarity. We too felt that the revolution is as much here as "there" and we need a stronger self-confidence in our own perceptions. We also got great energy from the gay women and many ideas from the community work of the Young Lords, and trips are certainly a good way to learn, but the real work is here at home.

I am studying to be a nurse at Lansing Community College because I feel that health care is revolutionary and crucial. I would like to get in touch with other women who are either hospital workers, nursing students and in any area of the health services to talk about the kind of experiences they've had and what they have learned. Also any free clinics that have been set up in the midwest. I am trying to compile an article on Revolutionary Health Care and thought I can go on for HOURS about what's fucked-up about capitalist health care. I need more info. about what's been tried in other directions.

Last year at LCC a friend and I publicized a Women's Liberation meeting and four women came. This year we tried again and over twenty came. We are still very shy but we are gaining strength by knowing we are not alone.

...we are not alone

MacGregor Eddy
907 West Shaiwassee
Lansing, Michigan
48933



Dear Sisters,

I've just finished Vol. 1, No. 5, the 2nd issue of Ain't I A Woman? that I've come across and had to write - tell you it's outside - and wanna get a subscription starting from Vol. 1, No. 1. The paper reads so much together, & the articles are really so stimulating (God, it all sounds so cliché-d!) but true.

We publish The Pedestal here in Vancouver. I don't know if you know about, but suspect we have an exchange sub, because one issue I read of AIAW was down at the office. We'd love to hear any comments, criticisms, suggestions etc. -- and in the meantime, keep on truckin.
Sisterly,
Patti Hoffer

To our readers: The Pedestal is put out by Vancouver Women's Liberation, 307 W. Broadway, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. AIAW

Sappho was a right on woman

The weekend of Oct. 9-10 five members of the gay cell of women's liberation in Iowa City attended the midwest Gay Liberation conference in Minneapolis sponsored by FREE, Freedom from Repression of Erotic Expression. We knew that some women in gay women's liberation there were going to try to get the women together separately. We arrived in the hall at which the meetings were to take place to witness a typical interchange. The males had just asked the gay sisters how they wished to relate to the conference and while the sisters were getting ready to speak to this, the men began to discuss women's oppression and how they can relate to it. We could say nothing. The sisters from Iowa City exchanged glances that said this is why we want to meet with the women alone.

The women adjourned to a day care center on another floor to decide how we wanted to relate to the conference. Some wanted to meet with the men; others did not. The women that were in mixed gay liberation groups felt a strong bond with their gay brothers stemming from their common oppression. The Iowa City sisters thought that it could benefit only the men to meet in mixed groups--it would do nothing to bring women together. We felt lesbianism was not a priority of the males that made up a good majority of the conference and that we would not be able to participate fully. Homosexual and lesbian experience are very different, especially when lesbian oppression is seen as an integral part of women's oppression. The women decided to meet separately all weekend at a near by women's collective and that those who wanted to were to meet with the males at 10:30 Sun. to help them deal with their sexism.

It was around noon on Sat. when all the women got to the collective. There were about 25 of us all crammed into the livingroom. We went around the room with everyone saying their name, where they were from and what they wanted to talk about. There were women from Minneapolis, St. Paul, Dekalb Ill, Laurence Kansas, Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis, and Iowa City. We broke up into three small groups with each town represented and talked all afternoon until we had sandwiches at 4:00.

We talked about how or whether butch/fem relationships are oppressive, working in mixed gay liberation groups, consciousness raising, helping gay people with gay problems, the situation and experience of older lesbians, the revolutionary people's constitutional convention, the position of bisexual women, psychiatry, the oppres-

sion of people who are considered ugly by society, sisterhood, the problems in trying to make relationships more collective, and gay women's collectives. In these groups and throughout the weekend we were struck by the strong feeling of warmth and sisterhood.

After eating the sandwiches we all met together to discuss the revolutionary people's constitutional convention, how we wanted to relate to it and have the gay liberation movement relate to it. We formulated two demands which we presented to the male homosexuals: 1. That in their delegation to the convention, GLF make there priorities those of third world peoples, women and lesbians. 2. That for every male homosexual on the delegation there be two lesbians and third world women.

A group of about ten of us drove to where the men were meeting to present the demands. We were to be there at 5:00, the time arranged that morning. The men were sitting in a large group discussing racism. The third world gay revolutionaries had felt the need to caucus because of the racism in the group and had confronted the white males with their racism. As we walked in a group of males left saying it was time for a coffee break. We stood there in a group waiting to be recognized. They asked if we wanted to join their discussion on racism. We said no and that we had talked about it separately and had come only to present to them our decision on the revolutionary peoples constitutional convention. We still were not recognized by the chair so during a silence we began reading our demands. What ensued, whether intentional or not, was a case of racism being used to divide black males and white females who basically understood each other pretty well, but who lacked the tools to control the situation. (We were called racists many times by the white males, but not once by the black males.) Later, the gay liberation organization accepted our demands.

When we returned to the women's collective, we discussed how we could have been more together in our confrontation. The confrontation alienated several women who work within FREE, and some sisters felt that if we had stuck to our original idea of just presenting the demands with no discussion, their anger could have been prevented. Women must be strong when confronting male groups because the males will bring up issues that attempt to divide women against each other by class, race, or threatening us with our abnormality because our non-acceptance of the heterosexual norm.

Saturday night we all went to Honey's, a lesbian bar. When we walked in Honey shouted "How many of you are from Women's Lib?". We all raised our fists. It was a wonderful welcome. We'd never been to a gay bar that had such a sense of community. The atmosphere wasn't competitive, not much role playing, not tough or uptight, no one was hassled, quite a few

older people, and the women there felt free enough to dress like men if they wanted to. While they were dancing, the women would sing together the defiant phrases: "let me be myself", "I am gay", and "we shall overcome". About 15 of us danced in a big circle with our arms on each others shoulders to 'What have they done to my song'. We got high from the sisterhood of it.

The conference was a good experience and we made new friends. A community of mid-western gay women is developing and we may hold a retreat at thanksgiving time. We think this would be a good idea and that it would solve the major problem the conference had--male domination. Half the short time we had together was spent talking about men, problems of women in mixed GLF groups and how we should relate to the FREE conference going on around us. Although we realize the need of gay women to do consciousness raising on their relationships to men, we also realize that women are afraid to confront themselves by relating to other women and so tend to talk about men. Women need to get themselves together so we can relate to each other without distraction and get on with the business of defining our own needs and building a strong women's movement.

REBIRTH

Last night I was driving alone. I had just spent three days at a Gay Liberation Conference in Minneapolis with part of the gay cell from Iowa City WLF. This was the first conference of any type for me; I'm only 1 month old/new.

One month ago I entered a Women's Liberation Collective merely fulfilling a weekly favor to a friend in relation to my job. I entered both apprehensive and curious. I left feeling the same. The next week after thinking things out for 5 days, returned less apprehensive, but just as curious. After fulfilling my weekly duty, I decided to stay another day in order to talk to the women who weren't there and would be returning the following day. The day was filled with housely duties I normally would appall, but because they were done collectively I wanted to help. During these days, I listened to the various discussions and talked to several individuals. This time I left very reluctantly. My reason for going every week had folded, so two weeks passed before I decided to go back. I really missed the sense of community and sisterhood the women in the collective offered, fulfilled, and instilled in me each in their own and individual way. This particular week-end I found myself ACTUALLY GOING to a Gay Liberation Conference. (Don't miss the write-up about it.)

Ever since, I've been trying to decide how I could possibly describe the way I was feeling that evening when I left the sisters in Iowa City and returned to the straight and narrow. Like most things beautiful, it's next to impossible to express an emotion in words. The closest I can come is contained in the work "rebirth." Think about the days and years before you were born or the months in your mother's womb. (Take a minute to really think about them) ----- Do you miss them? This is the way I feel about the years before Women's Liberation. Actually, I don't feel anything about them except wonderment at how many days and years passed without any consciousness on my part about ALL the oppressed women in the world.

Now take two minutes to think about the days and years after your death and the unborn sisters to come. -----It will be all over for us then, so these are the moments, days, and years that matter. I feel like standing up and shouting I'M ALIVE AND I LOVE YOU. Do it to the next woman you see, look at her face, and you'll know how oppressed we've been.

I'm sure the women already in Women's Liberation have felt this sense of rebirth at one time or another, so I'm writing this to express my deep gratification to them and to YOU who aren't in the Women's Liberation Front. Investigate, talk, think, but most important of all, don't be afraid of it. WE'RE ALIVE AND WE LOVE YOU.



A Woman?

October 30, 1970

3

what have they done to my song?

Music is to me the most universal "art" and probably the most ancient. Even before humankind made music, there was beautiful noise in the world. Birds, insects, elephants even, all communicated in characteristic sounds. (Maybe they weren't "communicating", as humans would perceive; maybe they just like to make their noises.) And music happens when water runs over stones; the sound has varying pitch and rhythm. Music happens when humans recognize patterns in all this joyous noise.

People were of course tuned in, sensitive to rhythm since their own bodies expressed rhythms in heartbeat, breathing, sucking, etc: the body moves to a one-two, lub-dub, beat. Somewhere in the formative years of humanity, someone started stamping or clapping that rhythm: someone hummed a soothing noise to her baby; a whistling note came out of someone's sucking mouth; and someone dug it.

"I love to sing, love the way it feels, the sensual feeling of song in my throat."

--Buffy Saint-Marie

Music came out as physical joy. Music was also sort of a mystery, a thing to wonder at. It became associated closely with religion in some societies. Religion and music in the last thousand years (at least) have reflected the increasing specialization and male dominance of western "civilization". Since the 15th century or so, western music reflects class divisions: folk music and classical music. The upperclass "serious" music has been preserved in written form; folk music is orally passed on, but changes a little with each person's interpretation.

Classical music seems to reflect ruling class values: stability, systems & rules, abstraction, specialization of roles, and of course, male supremacy. Women were tabooed out of control in music as in religion, government, arts, and trade. And we civilized women are under the influence of an aristocratic musical tradition that is composed, directed and performed mostly by men. Even when women were breaking taboos in poetry and novel writing (18th and 19th centuries) the only roles for women in music were as singers. Woman's place was in the home and if she was musically talented that was where she was to perform. (Of course, men designed and produced the instruments ...thus...)

"What have they done to my song?" --Melanie Safka

"Yaaah, squeeze my lemon, baby" --Robert Plant/the Led Zepplin

Some very popular, influencing music is chauvinist: some is also overwhelmingly cop-out (all that "I want my own little faraway world" crap). With a little imagination I can listen and ig-

We get letters from sisters who've seen our paper in distant parts of the country, who are thinking about moving to the Midwest. We want to help them but we need --they need --information from more sources than just Iowa City. We hope sisters in other groups in the Midwest can supply information about their towns: like job opportunities, housing availability, etc. --whatever a woman would need to know about a place she's never known.

Dear Sisters,

We are a collective of women, each of whom has been strongly emotionally based in New York, and among us, I suppose, we've accumulated an incredible number of interim years here. Some of us have labored within and without the Establishment and some are newly statistical adults. And now it's time to move out. New York is guilty of intense factionalism, the air is rotten (one doesn't quite see New Jersey from the West Side anymore), floods of freaks, some to organize and some for solace, abound, the Young Lords are offering viable help within Third World communities, certain presses are being smothered or obliterated and we feel a need to disseminate our revolution-

nore or "change" the lyric. I really thought for a while that a line from Let It Be was "nothin's gonna chain my world". But the dreamy tenor voice came through with "nothin gonna change my world." And that is too damn much -- that should sound like one of our people?

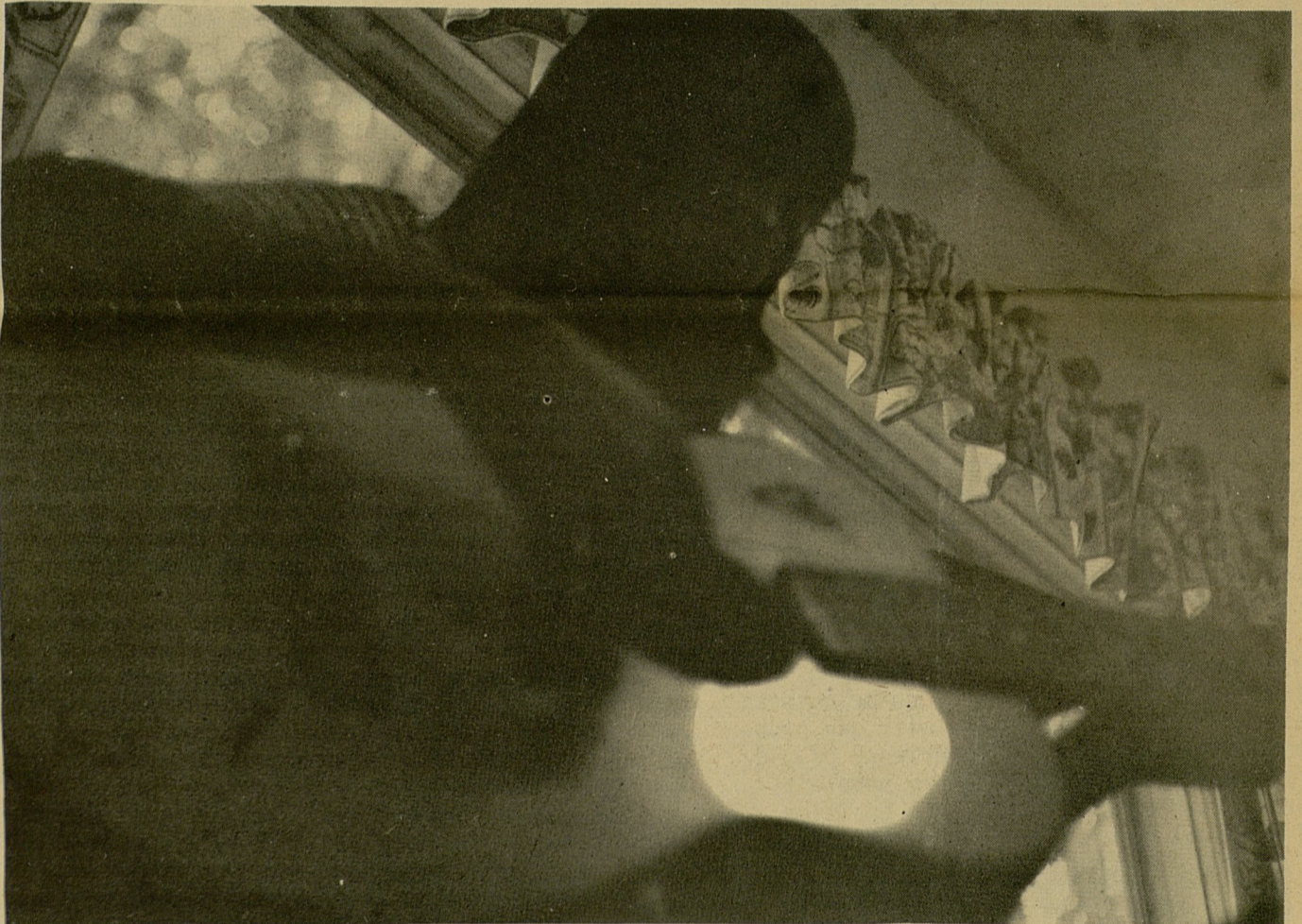
Economics is a weird trick: success corrupts too many musicians. And stability, I fear, is a figment of our parent's imagination. Exit all that phony pleading about All I Need Is You and Please Love Me Forever, which is the prelude to If You leave me I'll beat your ass. There's a new world coming, but it ain't me babe. New music for new people ... I am a new person, according to yesterday...

Feminism can be in music; there is music clearly expressed from a female viewpoint. But where are the women in music? In front of the band looking cute, squealing for a male body; in back of the band, a groupie; behind the scenes, never being credited or considered. Think of one rock group with a female instrumentalist (not a sexy singer): I thought of only Sly and the Family Stone; a woman is lead guitarist. (Name a female jazz developer? a female classical composer? a female symphony conductor?) This society reflects the usual male dominance through music even more than through the other fine arts.

But maybe I see it that way because I'm so into music that I want to relate everything to it. I love to play music so much that I was trying to cooperate with oppressively egoistic men, just to make music. And it was a sad realization that I was left out of jam sessions, was unconsidered or put down when I tried to take the lead; I was not part of the group, I was a chick dammit. But I could not help it, I couldn't sing some of those words, couldn't help squirming at "Down by the river/ I shot my baby, shot her dead."

Sisters join the dance ... we are full of music... do you wish it as I do, that women's joy, women's pride, women's love, shall be the music in the streets ... can you imagine a feminist rock group playing the music of Dancing In The Streets? Some of us in WLF would really like to get it together. If you are into music -- if you can play drums, piano, flute, bass, brasses -- if you write music -- if you love to sing -- if you have instruments or equipment we can use --get in touch with us in Iowa City WLF and spread your sound around. Cock-rock is not our vibration! Let's get it on, with sisters.

Lay Lady Lay
LAY OFF!



ary woman's consciousness.

It's our intention to move to a middle or large size city with a substantial white working community. We want to organize working women and probably high school women. We want to offer alternatives through our life style, accurate information, and the continuity of growth possible when lives are freely blended.

Where we're at is that many of us have commitments in N.Y. lasting a few months. People come through to rap with us but we don't always catch them. So we are scouting.

Roughly we'd like to know what's happening: is there a women's center nearby and how functional is it --does it reach working women? Do you know of any women's living collective? Would we be shot, tarred and feathered or tolerated? Is any organizing along women's lines being done? Could you also be able to put us in touch with people to continue to answer these questions?

Do you have word of Cedar Rapids or Des Moines?

Maybe we could set up a dialogue wherein we could relay useful information to you about women's groups here and speak more specifically of what our thoughts and lives are doing now.

Forward Sisters in the Struggle
Women are the Revolution
Love, Judith

Judith Lindbloom
161 Lexington Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10016

Helping
Sisters
on
the
move

4
Vol. I No. 8 Ain't I



That I am that symbol of woman having been struck in the face
for daring to be female.

I was really asking for it, all those years, like my father told me
I was enticing those men, just like he taught me how to.

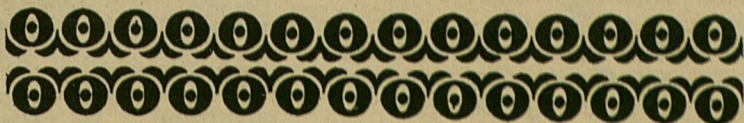
But just when he was ready to dismiss me I said no
and he hit me in the face for that.

Shit, I didn't know I as a woman threatened him.

like I didn't see myself as that woman
who could ever have that type of power.

but like he hit me just in case I should ever be thinking that
I had that power to threaten him.

like he smashed me in the face.



Poet, Female

"I feel it but can't
put it into words"

"Maybe I know, the
words, I could..."

Help write this poem.
In the dark.

The Modern Woman at 4

We gave her a cuture of
fancy dinners, chewing gum,
information and
outrageous models.
What more could she want?

With a few filling in of spaces,
she can count to ten.

● ● ● ●
Why trust a man?
I did
and I sure don't now.
Why trust a woman?
I do
I just do



a Woman?



October 30, 1970



5

Ain't I
A
Woman

name _____

Regular sub \$4.00

Institutional, } \$15.00

Library sub. } \$15.00

Box 1169
IOWA
CITY, IA.
52240

Leilah Khaled's Story

Soon after this, things became serious as we began our descent to Lydda. Of course, we had no intention of landing there--that possibility was the one thing that worried us. But we wanted to fly over our enemy's city just to show him we could do it.

"Descend to one-two-zero," I told the pilot and the co-pilot chipped in, "You mean twelve thousand feet?" "You know what I mean." So we began the long descent and out of the haze the coast of Palestine gradually grew clearer. "What shall we do when we get to 12,000?" the pilot asked. "Let's have a round twice," I replied and made a swinging gesture with my left hand and the pilot's eyes, as always, followed the grenade; "we want to have a picnic over our land," I said.

Needless to say, my exchanges with Lydda airport were not friendly. The controller was very excited and shouted at me angrily the whole time. Having switched to Lydda wavelength, I first read a message in Arabic for our people in Occupied Palestine. I tried to speak to the airport tower in Arabic but they wouldn't reply. "TWA 840?" they kept calling, so I responded, "Shut up! This is Popular Front Free Arab Palestine. We will not respond unless you use this call sign. We are coming down. We are landing. Give us space."

I said this just to frighten them, because I don't think the Israelis wanted us to land any more than we wanted to land there. My words seemed to have had the desired effect because Lydda tower shouted back, "Don't come down, don't come down, or else we'll send Mirages to shoot you down."

And I told them: "Here is Free Arab Palestine. What can you do about it? I don't care for my life. This is our land. We want to die over our land. But you will be responsible for the lives of the crew and passengers." (While all this was going on at about 20,000 feet, my friend held the intercom microphone near my mouth so that the passengers could hear the exchange, which couldn't have been very comforting for them.)

There were more threats of Mirages from the ground and when I glanced ahead there they were, two of them, just in front of us. We were still descending, but the captain said to me, "We can't descend any more. It's too dangerous with these Mirages in front." This, evidently, was how the Israelis were trying to prevent us from landing. The co-pilot then asked to speak to Lydda. He explained to them:

"We have to follow her orders and descend or else the aircraft will be blown up. Clear the air. And, don't keep calling TWA 840. This is Popular Front." Perhaps because of his words, the Mirages moved out a little, though they still stayed with us and we descended to 12,000. We then did three big turns over Lydda and Tel Aviv. We were seven minutes in all over Tel Aviv: enough to make our point. My final message to Lydda, just to keep them worrying, was "Bye bye for now, but we are coming back!"

17.12 hours. Compass bearing 350°

I gave the pilot a compass reading for a course due north and he suggested that we climb because we were using up too much fuel at 12,000 feet. I told him to go up to 25,000.

In a very few minutes Haifa was before us--the hump of Mount Carmel, the harbour below it and over to the right the oil tanks and the cement factory with its long plume of white smoke. "This is my city," I told the crew. "Take a good look at it. This is where I was born."

From maps I had a rough idea of the area in which our house stood and I think I identified this area but the city slipped away beneath us much too quickly. I felt like asking the pilot to make a turn over my home town so that I could have a better look at it but we were really running low on fuel and every minute counted now.

Just that fleeting glimpse, and a few dim childhood memories are all that link me directly, personally, with my home in Palestine. I was born in April 1944, so I was just under four when my mother, with us eight children, left Haifa some time

in March 1948. I remember a staircase: one day there was a man with blood all over his face lying under the stairs. My mother says he died there, one of the victims of the battle for Haifa between the Arabs and the Zionists that was going on all around our house.

My father was away from home, with the Arab fighters, but when he came home, a week before we left, and found that my mother had packed up things to leave he ordered her to unpack everything because we were not going to leave, then or ever.

But the street fighting increased, most of the other women and children left, the Zionists were advancing and they were ordering us to leave over their loudspeakers. Many, many times in the following years we asked our mother why she had left and she would tell us that she was forced to.

Certainly there was a lot of fighting in the nearby streets and she was alone with eight children: the first taxi we sent for was hit and set on fire and I remember there was shooting very close to us as we got into the second taxi. We left in a confused hurry with little more than what we stood up in.

At the last minute, counting her brood of children in the car, my mother found that one was missing, myself. I was hiding under the stairs. I remember not wanting to leave home but my mother teased me by saying that what I didn't want to leave was a box of sugared dates my father had brought us. My mother left with a big bunch of keys because she had carefully locked up everything in the house.

That was how my family became "refugees." But no Palestinian is really a "refugee." We are displaced persons or evictees. For if we were refugees and had found refuge, we would not want to go back to what we had left. Because we didn't leave of our own free will, but were pushed out according to a deliberate Zionist plan, we do want to go back, but haven't been allowed to. This determination to return makes us Palestinians unique among the "refugees" of the world.

As the plane crossed the frontier between Israel and Lebanon, the co-pilot, looking rather worried, asked, "Are we going to Beirut?" "That is none of your business," I told him. "We don't have much fuel left, you know," he replied. "I know that, and I also know how to swim, should anything happen."

I, too, was worried about our fuel situation but I also was tremendously excited as we flew over the beautiful blue bay that lies beyond Ras Nakura. On the point opposite the Ras is Tyre which is where we have lived since leaving Palestine. Our apartment is almost on the beach and I thought I could just about pick it out. Little did my mother know that one of her

daughters was flying high above her head. I visited her on my last evening in Lebanon and even told her I would be home for dinner. I knew she would be anxious but I had to keep things secret. I had also left the usual farewell letter in case something happened.

I could see the waves breaking on the beach where I had learned to swim. This is how we passed our time. Tyre had no cinemas then and we had no money to go to them even if there had been any. Away to the right, at the head of this splendid bay is what looks like a town but is really a camp for Palestinian refugees, 9,000 in all. For twenty years such camps have been the new homeland of our people.

When we arrived at Tyre we were a family of destitutes and destitutes we remained for ten years. In Haifa my father was not a rich man but we were reasonably comfortable: he was a textile merchant and he also owned a small cafe and rented out a couple of shops. He lost all this, of course; but what was really bad was that like many others, he got nothing of the money he had in the bank, even though it was a British bank.

There was so much confusion when the Zionists captured Palestine that for several months we had no word of my father and we gave him up for dead: he ended up in Egypt. This was not an unusual occurrence; I know of many families who were scattered like this into the neighboring Arab countries.

My father was a sick man when we saw him again, with blood pressure and a bad

heart. But what he was really suffering from was the loss of his home and his work. Again, this was not unusual, I know of several other men of my father's age whose health was broken because their careers were broken. Perhaps he should have struggled on. Many Palestinians have made a success of their new lives and when we do so that too is held against us: "refugees" just can't win.

My father was bedridden for the last five years of his life: he died in 1966. Fortunately my mother is originally from Tyre so for the first year we lived with one of her uncles. Then we moved into a two roomed house in which we lived for the next 16 years, and by that time there were 14 in the family.

Crowded wasn't the word for it. But still, we were luckier than the others living in tents. During the winter storms my friends wouldn't come to school because their tents had been blown down. The small brother of one of my friends was washed away by a flood which tore through the camp.

The only regular cash coming in was a monthly payment to us of 100 Lebanese pounds (\$31.20 dollars) by my mother's uncle which doesn't go far with 14 people.

Also we had to register as refugees with the UN. We received rations from the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). But UNRWA itself says that it can't afford anything more than a bare subsistence diet of 1,500 calories a day.

But hunger one can learn to bear; what was unbearable was the humiliation of having to stand in line with our cans and sacks to collect our rations as "bakhshish!" We had become beggars, just beggars, with our begging bowls in our hands, except that the alms came from UN and not from individuals. In the photos UNRWA has of ration distribution you will see few adults in the queues. They can't bear to go, so they send the children, as was the case with us. When my sisters began working as school teachers in 1957, UNRWA cut our rations, which was a blow, but we felt happier for being less dependent.

The best thing UNRWA has done for the Palestinians is to provide them with education. I liked school very much, I think we all did, because it was the only place where we could show that we were still human beings and not just a number on a ration roll. I first went to an Anglican school in Tyre and then to an American missionary school in the neighboring town of Sidon on an UNRWA scholarship.

I won another scholarship to the American University of Beirut where I planned to become a pharmacist, which is a good progression for a girl in this part of the world. The scholarship was not sufficient to cover all the costs of living in Beirut and my family couldn't help. So I could only stay a year at the University, and having to leave was the biggest disappointment I've faced so far.

I took a job as a teacher of English in Kuwait and did this for six years. I don't particularly like teaching but I had to start earning in order to help the family. One of my brothers got his degree in engineering and is working in Abu Dhabi in the Arabian Gulf, and another brother, who graduated in business administration, is working in a bank, also in Abu Dhabi.

With all our contributions the family is comfortable once again. We can now afford to send one of my younger sisters to the University but, how ironical this is!--she is more interested in becoming a fedai (a Palestinian resistance fighter). One of my brothers and I are full-time fedayeen.

Many of our Lebanese friends ask my mother, "Do you really want to go back to Haifa after all these years?" And my mother answers, "Yes, I'd go tomorrow. It's true we have had a hard time and now things have become easy: we have a pleasant apartment, enough to eat, funds for the children's education and extras like TV. What is more, I'm a Lebanese from Tyre. So I'm not a stranger, but I'm at home. Lebanon is my country but it is not my place, my place is Haifa."

And my friends ask me whether I want to return to a country I barely knew since I left Palestine as a small child. And my answer is, "Yes," because I too have learned that while I am never a stranger in any Arab country, I can never feel at home.

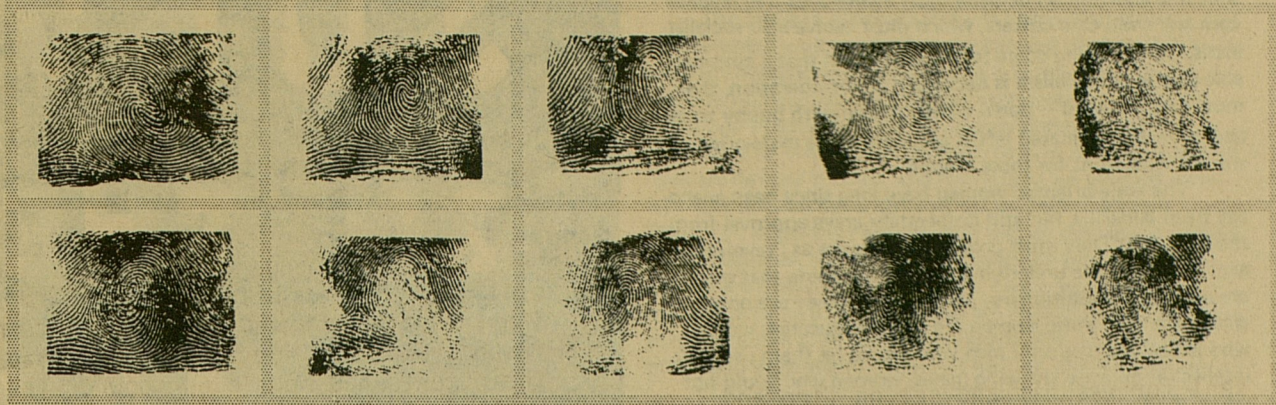
Continued next issue - LNS

WANTED BY FBI

JANE LAUREN ALPERT

FBI No. 117,505 H

16 O 32 W 000 15 Ref: 30
I 18 R 011 18



Who's watching me watching Gypsy.

Jane is my conscience

That part of my head the schools tried to tell me

belonged to Amerikan virtue - the Christian ethic -

do unto others - Capitalism - steal, murder, destroy -

My body housing all that shit from 23 years

wants to know about this woman who's lurking in my head.

I know she exists.

I saw her picture on the post office wall

Conspirator, wanted by the FBI

Jane a little younger than me

can be considered extremely dangerous.

She is the image of yourself.

(Wide awake - staring blindly - she looks like she just woke up)

She is the woman-woman within you.

Everytime I see my sister

I am put up against the wall

Because she is still questioning where I am afraid.

Her fingerprints: Amerikan female

criminal deviant, who couldn't ignore this society

with its hype of goodness - Amerikan justice

She said no to all lies of what she was

not supposed to think, and not supposed to be.

She is not me, but are we not one of the same?

Woman, trying to define me is impossible

first you would have to feel secure in your body.

Would I like to live alone - to see myself,

and hear myself in relation to things that

only I remind myself of?

Is she a center core whose vibrancy stands alone?

Sisterhood is agonizing to me

(The screams of hysteria)

Why at 23 do I have to wonder what I sound like alone?



a Woman? October 30, 1970

An open letter to my sisters, in the hope that we will not have to wait 5,000 more years for liberation:

The women's movement is being co-opted, exploited, ripped-off, patronized, seduced and raped. Some of us have begun to notice the ways in which our movement is being killed with seeming kindness: others are bewildered at what seems to be the apparent ingratitude of a few sisters at the attention paid to us by various male groups. The following consists of my own impressions and analyses; if you agree with me, please send in your thoughts and information c/o this newspaper.

Subversion from the Right

I trust that the appointment of two women generals by the Nation's Number One Football Fan will convince few women that our demands are being met. Unfortunately some sisters are listening to the mealy-mouthed statements of male politicians, as exemplified in N.O.W.'s recent "Meet-the-Candidates" night at Fordham University (a Roman Catholic institution, dedicated to the maintenance of the Church, the abolition of abortion and the perpetuation of women's suffering for the greater glory of a male god). Entering the penthouse in a "Lavender Menace" T-shirt, I came upon a roomfull of well-dressed men and women, sipping sangria and eating canapes. Twenty of the candidates were male and one was female. She was the candidate of the Liberal Party against Marchi, running on Staten Island — an obvious sacrifice candidate who admitted she was running because she was bored with life as a housewife and schoolteacher, and couldn't find anything better to do on Staten Island.

A male candidate was walking around with a women's liberation button. I ripped it off his fat lapel after he referred to some women activists as "girls." Another male candidate, after purchasing a copy of COME OUT from me, suggested that I get my hair done and go find a nice Jewish boy.

The canapes were about as inspiring as the candidates, but they did fill an otherwise supperless stomach.

I suggested to some women present that working to elect an all-male slate of candidates might not be the best road to women's liberation. "Yes," one replied, "but they're all we've got right now."

All? Don't we have millions of women, hands, feet, minds, teeth, guns, pens, printing presses, cameras, lungs, eyes and ears? We have all of these organs — but we seem to lack heart. Every woman must know intellectually that no male politician will give her liberation — but very few people, male or female, are willing to face the fact that they must do it themselves. It is easier to delude yourself by setting up a Hero, a Liberator, and pretending that this Big Daddy will give you what you need. But liberation is an adult thing, and as such cannot be given to us like a Christmas present. We must take it ourselves, instead of "letting George do it."

Or Georgina. Georgina is the Women's Liberation Media Star. Many of us have watched her ascent into the heavens with an increasing incidence of ulcers and migraine; meanwhile, we struggle to get our groups together, working quietly at the day-care centers, on the mimeo machine, in consciousness-raising groups.

Generally a college-educated, white, well-heeled woman, a woman who knows a great deal about publicity and publishing but who never has the time for consciousness raising, she is prone to make apologetic statements to the male press, prone to waste her time arguing with Hugh Hefner or Dick Cavett when she could be organizing women. "I have a wonderful relationship with my husband," says one, denying her lesbian relationships in *Life* magazine — when only a week before, she brought tears to the eyes of gay women with the stories of her ill-fated lesbian affairs.

Another media star, at the Women's Strike on August 26th, sings a tune of "We want to walk hand in hand with men." "Men are not the enemy — we ourselves are the enemy," says that same woman who gave gay sisters in the movement what was then a derogatory name, "The Lavender Menace"; and who, on a Boston TV show, called us "man-hating harpies". Methinks the lady doth protest too much.

If the truth be known, these stars of the white male media are motivated partly by the desire for fame and fortune, and partly by a desperate need for male approval. They so despise their sisters — and themselves — that they can't imagine a woman's movement so strong it doesn't have to ask Daddy for money, for air time, or a pat on the head. They haven't got time for consciousness raising because they can't imagine learning anything useful from other women's experiences.

These media stars, carefully coiffed and lathered with foundation makeup, claim to represent all women. In actuality, they are ripping off all women. Example: one woman claimed to be organizing prostitutes in the Times Square area. Her only contact with them was to tape some interviews which she plans to use in her next book.

These women will betray us when the cock crows. Margaret Mead, who wrote some earth-shaking books in the 1930's and has served as an apologist for the establishment ever since, was recently asked if she thought the women's liberation movement will succeed. "If the media doesn't kill it," she replied. I agree with her.

Visions of Madison Avenue atrocities float past my eyes: "Be liberated — wear the light new Womanform bra." "Drive a Pantherette — the sexiest, swiftest car for the liberated woman — from General Motors." "Liberate your breath with Listerine — and catch a liberated man."

Don't be surprised if you see Georgina shilling for Procter & Gamble in the near future. If large numbers of women are going to passively depend on a few stars to liberate them, instead of getting themselves together to do it, the movement will surely fail.

... And from the Left

Subversion from the left is a more serious matter. It will eventually dawn on large numbers of women that they cannot obtain liberation under the present social structure — that free abortion on demand must evolve into free medical care and child care centers, which must evolve into socialist institutions. Having come to the realization that a considerable degree of socialism is necessary to our liberation, they must turn leftward — down a path strewn with booby traps laid by male-dominated leftist groups and the male-oriented women who front for these groups.

The male-oriented women have long since been alienated from Amerika, but still desperately crave approval from the male left. They must prove that they are as "revolutionary" as men — the underlying assumption being that men are naturally revolutionary, particularly if they are non-white. Many of these women are college-educated; women who found that the only men who would let them use their intellect at all were left-wing males, women who could not relate at all to apolitical sisters because they despised "woman talk". They cannot conceive of the notion that women can liberate themselves, and so they place the fate of women's liberation in the most male-oriented political groups in the country. What touching naivete!

We need hard-working women like these, but they expend their energy on every other cause but women's liberation, heatedly justifying any male chauvinism which appears in any male they consider oppressed. If a working class or non-white male assaults them on the street, it has to be understood that he is just acting out of his oppression. If a working class or middle class white woman is afraid to send her children to be bussed into Harlem, she is "reactionary," "racist," or "stupid." The male-oriented political woman has no patience with the mistakes of her own sex, but she is all full of pity and liberalism for the worst male chauvinist. A few words of kindness, a statement of support of women's liberation in an otherwise male-chauvinist party line is enough to bring tears of gratitude to these women's eyes.

A woman can spend her whole life getting one man's foot off another man's neck and still remain on the bottom of the heap herself.

The right wing says, "If you women want to be liberated, you will have to be drafted."

The left wing says, "If you women want to be liberated, you must pick up the gun and fight alongside of us."

In other words, the only liberation we are being offered is the right to be cannon fodder. The right to fight in men's causes, taking orders from men, in situations which they define and direct. We have seen the posters depicting the woman revolutionary with a baby slung over her back and a gun in her hand. We must bear revolutionary babies. No male revolutionary is ever depicted carrying the baby. It might slow him down in battle. Well, you know we always do two jobs and get paid for half a job, if we get paid at all.

I say if we want to be liberated, we must pick up the gun and turn it on the men who are issuing all these orders, the very men who are telling us that we must follow them, obey them, in order to get our liberation.

Hurrah for the Vanguard Party

The Black Panther Party is the vanguard of the revolution. The Black Panther Party, according to Huey P. Newton, its Supreme Commander, intends to level the earth in order to prepare the way for the flowering of Black Manhood.

The Black Panther Party, a "people's democratic" organization, has never elected any of its officers, nor called a party congress in order to debate policy, nor permitted any deviation by any of its members from the official party line.

The Black Panther Party tells us that our function is to bear revolutionary babies. Their statement at the so-called "Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention", where they heavily oppressed those sisters who attended, was that women's liberation is "right on" — that a crash program must be instituted to give women control of the technology which is relevant to our needs, i.e., *child care*.

Obviously, nothing else is relevant to our needs. After the revolution, the Black Panther Party will presumably retain control over agriculture, housing, medicine (except for gynecology), transportation, the military, manufacturing, education, communications, and some brand-new version of the OGPU.

Any white person who criticizes the Black Panther Party is a racist pig.

Why is the Black Panther Party considered the "vanguard" of the revolution anyway? Why was Huey Newton's patronizing statement on Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation received with such touching gratitude? Why did some gay people walk so tall after receiving Good Huey's seal of approval, as if their needs could not be considered valid, nor their revolutionary, unless the Black Panther Party approved of them?

The Black Panthers are being shot at. This is not, in itself, a sufficient qualification for being a revolutionary. They are attempting to defend themselves with guns. This is again not sufficient. The Plains Indians were in the same position a century ago, and no one calls them revolutionaries. People are not revolutionary because they are under attack or engaged in self-defense; they are revolutionary only if they are consistently fighting for the liberation of all people.

The Black Panthers might even be revolutionary with regard to black males. With regard to other males, their attitude is liberal, and with regard to women, it is indistinguishable from the attitude of the German Nazi Party, which also demanded increased baby production.

It is my conviction that the reason gay males were fairly well treated at the Convention was that they simply asked to be allowed to be gay and to fight alongside the Panthers. Women asked for "that amount of control of all

SUBVERT IN THE W MOVEM What is t don



production and industry that would ensure one hundred percent control over our own destinies." In short, women asked for *real* power, and the Panthers freaked out.

For women to allow their energies to be diverted in support of a group that wishes to restrict them to the old baby-making function is masochistic, guilt-liberal bullshit. Those energies could be expended on projects which would benefit the Women's Movement — day care centers, clinics, a women's liberation school with courses in technology and self defense, a women's publishing company. All these require workers and money. Yet the biggest fund-raising drive I have seen in the women's movement was the drive to raise bail for Joan Bird. The slogans were everywhere — "free our sister, free ourselves." "No one is free until everyone is free." Perhaps these slogans are true in some ultimate

CONVERSION WOMEN'S MOVEMENT: to be alone?

M. Shelley



sense. They basically appeal to liberals who wish to hide their liberalism behind radical rhetoric.

Our resources are limited. To spend all that energy and time to raise \$100,000 for one woman who is then supposed to "free" us when she steps out of jail in return for our dollar contribution, to spend all that on a woman whose Party affiliation requires unquestioning obedience to the Supreme Commander (male) — is that the way to make a woman's revolution? The Black Panthers can't be our paid mercenaries — we have to liberate ourselves and fight in our own cause.

Why not admit it, the purpose of that campaign was to prove to the Black Panthers that we in Women's Liberation aren't racists. As if we could ever prove it, because we are racists by definition. And there they've got us — we will

always be giving money, proving our worth, sewing shirts for soldiers, until we stop taking this bullshit and organize a revolutionary women's movement.

The Socialist Worker's Party

The Socialist Worker's Party is highly attractive to male-oriented women who have swallowed the line that a socialist revolution will automatically bring about the liberation of women. Any careful examination of the status of women in nations that have already gone socialist will give the lie to this pleasant fantasy. In such nations, women's roles are defined by men, and restrictions on political activity make it much more difficult for women to achieve liberation. When the Party decides that an increase in population is desirable, heroic mother medals are awarded. When women are needed in the factories, heroic working-woman medals are minted. When women are needed to nurse soldiers, as in the USSR after the Second World War, the medical profession is opened to them — at least on the lower levels.

The Socialist Worker's Party, whose membership is 75% male and whose leadership is almost entirely male, has moved with frightening success to infiltrate and take over sections of the women's movement. They have moved full-time workers into the women's centers of New York, Boston, Baltimore and Los Angeles, attempting to take over jobs, moving in SWP literature and moving out feminist literature. Check it out sister, if you live in these cities.

The SWP has a policy of infiltration, which is described in their handbook — a handbook issued only to loyal party members. I am attempting to get hold of this handbook, which was described to me by a disillusioned ex-SWP woman, and will publish it as soon as possible.

The SWP is also backing the Equal Rights Amendment, a deceptive piece of legislation which will strip away protections from working women. So this is a Socialist Worker's Party?

At the Women's Strike in New York, control of the speakers platform was in the hands of Ruthann Miller, a long-time member of the SWP. A lesbian, who was attempting to tell her sisters in Bryant Park about the pig harassment coming down on gay women in the streets, had to get permission to speak from Ruthann — since the Socialist Worker's Party has a long term policy of expelling gay people from its membership, our gay sister found this a humiliating experience.

SWP has considered gay people to be counter-revolutionaries and a "danger" to the party. Seems like it's bad enough to be called a Commie without being called a Commie Pinko Queer to boot. Some of the expelled gay people are now in Gay Liberation Front; and sadly enough, some of them are wistfully trying to get SWP to change its mind and readmit them now that they have proved they can be "revolutionary." Maybe Huey's seal of approval will cause the SWP to have a change of heart.

It's difficult to place one's faith in a so-called vanguard — whether it's a black vanguard or a white vanguard — when the members can't think for themselves, when they can't even notice your oppression until it is spelled out in blood on the streets and cleared by the Central Committee.

Male Orientation in Women's Groups

This subversion and co-optation of the women's movement by the male-oriented left would not be possible if so many women were not male-oriented, and if the left were not so full of liberal tendencies. Women have a difficult time in getting rid of the need for male approval, particularly straight women. They find it almost impossible to put their own needs first, tending to act as if women's needs are trivial. This is compounded by a tendency to see men as simultaneously strong and weak — too strong for poor weak women to successfully fight them, and too weak in their dear little egos for us to criticize them in any way.

Since men are always getting into fights, and since they present every situation as a life-or-death crisis (or carefully engineer such a crisis), for us to take time out to criticize them or demand that they change their behavior is pure sabotage. They haven't got the time for trivial gabble about women's problems. Our job is to relate to their struggles.

For example, women took over a male-dominated newspaper — RAT — and have been running it for eight months. A look at a recent issue (as of this writing) is an example of the continuing inability of some women to relate to their own needs. It is my impression, having worked on RAT, that while many of the women on it are happy working with other women on a paper where they are allowed to run it themselves, they can't get it together enough to publish something which isn't basically a report on the doings of the male movement.

The front and rear cover of the issue are pictures of two women who are guerilla warriors in male-dominated movements, Angela Davis and Leila Khaled. Nothing new about that — women fighting for male causes goes back as far as Judith, who in the Old Testament, entered the camp of the enemy (some other Semitic tribe) and slew their general in his sleep. As I recollect, that didn't do much to liberate Jewish women.

A great deal of coverage is expended on the Panthers and on the "Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention", with no mention of the way women were fucked over at that convention. The *right on* to the Panthers is automatic by now. The Women's Strike of August 26 is covered without any attempt to distinguish between liberal and radical politics, without any attempt to take a feminist stance against the cooptation by various socialist groups as well as various establishment groups. A great deal of coverage consists of a *right on* to bombings, rip-offs, various forms of violence, without any analysis of what constitutes random violence and what constitutes revolutionary violent action.

The following issue contains a lengthy article on Korea. For some months now, the Panther Party has been extolling Kim Il Sung and the Korean Communist Party. I'm glad to

see that RAT has finally caught up. The RAT interviewer asked the people who visited Korea what happens to homosexuals over there. *Who knows? That doesn't relate to Korea or the Korean culture. There are no homosexuals in Korea. Anyway, why should anyone want to embarrass the Koreans by asking such a question? What straight person would think to ask? They might think I was queer . . .*

Liberalism on the Left

The unwillingness of left-wing groups, particularly women's groups, to engage in criticism and analysis of political groups and events stems from a kind of liberalism which says that anything left-wing is good, and that public criticism of a left-wing group can only do harm to the movement.

No successful male revolutionary has felt it incumbent upon him to refrain from criticism of other left-wing groups whose principles or actions seemed contrary to the interests of oppressed people.

The fear to criticize other left-wing groups results in wishy-washy, vague politics, and an uncritical acceptance of behavior which can be actually counter-revolutionary. It destroys any attempt to organize a movement around sound ideological principles, permits oppression to flourish within the movement, alienates potential converts, and saps the spirit of women who would otherwise be willing workers for our liberation.

This fear, at least among whites, springs out of guilt politics and a martyr-like attitude, an attitude which says that if you haven't been hit by a billy club or killed a cop or bombed a building, you're not good enough.

If you're white, your ideas are useless, and the best thing you can do with your life is to sacrifice it in the struggle to destroy honky culture and allow the emergence of a black nation. This idea was presented to me and passionately defended by a sister who is now underground. Another white sister informed me that as a white person, I am necessarily a racist (I agree to that definition), and that I am like all other white people including her. We all hate non-white people to the extent that we will all commit any atrocity whatsoever in order to defend our white skin privileges, including torture and genocide. As a working class lesbian one generation removed from Dachau, I find such politics unspeakably funny. I could die laughing.

What is a Revolutionary?

We seem to confuse people who are fighting simply to end their own oppression — regardless of what happens to other people — with genuine revolutionaries.

I believe that the true revolutionary is a person working, in whatever capacity — as a soldier or a distributor of leaflets or a worker in a day care center — to end all forms of oppression. She (he) does not fear criticism from comrades, because she recognizes the limitations of her own experience and wishes to broaden her understanding of all forms of oppression in order to struggle more successfully against them.

She struggles for understanding and pays attention to an idea rather than to the source of the idea. An idea is not correct simply because it issues from the mouth of Mao or Che or any other leader.

A person is not automatically defined as a revolutionary simply because she is poor, female, black, or a member of any other group by the circumstances of her birth. She is defined by her conduct, by the manner in which she relates to people. If she demonstrates a willingness to liberate her own group while attempting to oppress other groups, or if she judges a person's politics by the circumstances of their birth or occupation, she is simply engaged in a struggle for power for her own faction, not engaged in revolution.

At the present time, almost all males are only too willing to oppress women while they issue a few patronizing statements about women's liberation. They have no standard of **humanity** — only a standard of **manhood**, and that standard is the cock and the gun. They show almost no willingness to deal with their own sexism or their own liberalism towards so-called radicals who practice sexism, that is, who oppress women and gay men. Nor are they particularly interested in examining the autocratic structures of their own groups and the ways in which they oppress each other.

It is obviously necessary — has always been necessary — for there to be a strong, separate women's movement whose members are dedicated to struggle for their own liberation and the liberation of all people; women who will band together in strength and not run too quickly to form alliances with oppressive men; women with self-respect who will not be diverted into being female auxiliaries and fund-raising organizations for male power structures.

It is necessary for such a movement to have a principled, coherent ideology, and to cast out of its ranks opportunists who are seeking approval and favors from the Establishment, as well as women who are willing to sell themselves short in order to gain radical credentials with male groups. It is necessary for such a movement to have within it skilled political economists, because the United States is in an economic situation unlike any other nation past or present, and this is not the place for a revolution modeled after those which have occurred in agrarian societies. We have a lot to figure out before we can move intelligently.

Since women have been oppressed longer than any other group in history, men have a very heavy investment in continuing to oppress us. Their very sense of "manhood" is defined by their continuing to oppress us. As a result, such a movement will be attacked viciously from both the right and the left, and attempts at subversion will continue. Our only hope will be a clear understanding of what must be done in order to make a woman's revolution.

We must have control of all the avenues of power in accordance with our numbers — that means 51% control of everything! **All power to the sisters! Forward to the World-Wide Women's Revolution!**

A Woman?

Oct. 30, 1970

9

A continuation of the story of the Collective that has no name follows:

III. ONGOING STRUGGLES

Looking back, we feel that the two sisters who originally called the collective together played an important role in maintaining it during the first few months when our interest and loyalty had not yet developed. They took responsibility for regularly attending meetings, coming prepared, and keeping a flow to the meetings. Now that our collective has become very important to each of us, we all try to take responsibility for these functions. One goal of our collective is to develop the leadership potential of every individual; however, the early and necessary leadership of these two women has carried over, creating some problems of leadership and unequal participation which must still be worked out.

We have had one insight, however. When we began meeting, every woman came wondering how the other women in the group would view her. We were so self-conscious about how we came off that it was impossible for the uniqueness and beauty of our true selves to come through all the shit-defensiveness. Each of us had developed our own way of projecting ourselves in a group. These patterns perpetuated themselves. Some of us dominated, others spoke very seldom. We have come to realize that to be ourselves, we must come out of ourselves. We must cease to relate through these same roles. We must relate instead to the needs of the group - the total, the collective, rather than to our self images. Relating to the needs of the collective allows our individuality to be expressed. We find that as each sister risks herself with the collective and finds the response not shock or hostility but the sympathy, help and acceptance that comes from realizing our oppression has warped us all, the ugliness and fear of her "true self" becomes lost in the beauty and strength of the collective. What was before only a phrase becomes reality - Sisterhood is powerful. Even as we realize this, it is extremely difficult to act out. Each of us slips into periods of self-consciousness which inhibit us. We must continue to struggle.

We found that creating a collective means more than sharing the part of our sisters' lives brought to our weekly meetings. It means taking total, collective responsibility for our sisters - always. We cannot

allow our sisters to face their daily lives alone. Sisterhood is all-encompassing. When each of us is left to struggle alone with our responsibilities - be they child care, work, transportation, family life, whatever - these responsibilities can easily be overwhelming. Each sister finds herself in the situation where, because she is alone, she does not have the time or energy to respond to the needs of her sisters - nor they to her needs. By bringing a total picture of our lives to our weekly meetings, we can share with our sisters not only a better idea of who we are outside the collective, but we can give to them a sense of what burdens we often find overwhelming. In this way we can better deal with crisis flare-ups (by understanding the history and meaning of these situations) as well as allowing us to plan our lives together, in order to meet these needs.

We are just beginning to explore what it means to take collective responsibility for a sister. We have begun to share child care, cars, financial help to allow a sister to not work for a period of time or to take a vacation, as well as emotional sustenance available anytime - day or night. Again we have just begun and, although our rhetoric is together, we have a long way to go to make that rhetoric reality. From realizing this we have begun to see Women's Liberation not as ideas and concepts that we try to convince other women of, but a concrete reality that must meet the needs of all women if we expect these women to find Women's Liberation meaningful to them.

IV. WHY WE HAVE COLLECTIVES

Many of the reasons why we believe that collectives are an essential form for building the Women's Liberation movement have been expressed in earlier parts of this paper. We would like to summarize these reasons and others here:

First: To overcome our isolation and aloneness.

As women we have been divided from each other. Our oppression has left each of us alone to fend for herself in a male world; as wife, mother, or worker. Men cannot respond to our needs even if they are sensitive enough to realize we have them. We need sisterhood with other women. Collectives, where sisters attempt to deal with each others' needs, can begin to help us overcome our isolation.

Second: To overcome the learned competitiveness which makes us ineffective.

We women have spent much of our lives competing with each other or competing to make it in male circles. Collective groups by definition are constantly struggling to overcome these old patterns so destructive to realizing sisterhood.

Third: To gain the political strength we lack as individuals, and to build a political unit out of which to act.

Alone, we as women are powerless to alter our situation or overcome our oppression. In unity there is strength. Our collective has enabled us to develop politically and to be able to articulate to each other programs or methods of struggle for overcoming our oppression. The possibilities for political activity in collectives which decided to take on projects are endless: theatre, abortion repeal, women artists, newspapers, media groups, women's cultural centers, writing groups, child care groups, women's history groups, etc. From our experience we have found it very important for sisters in collectives to be actively involved in working on projects together, as well as having regular gatherings and discussions. Projects are important in building a collective history.

Fourth: For companionship.

Because of the society we live in, we have usually looked to men for companionship and have considered our relationships with women as secondary and/or temporary (until we found the right man). Our collective has enabled us to discover the beauty of companionship with women and to develop deep and lasting friendships to carry us through our daily struggles.

Fifth: To make ourselves individually stronger.

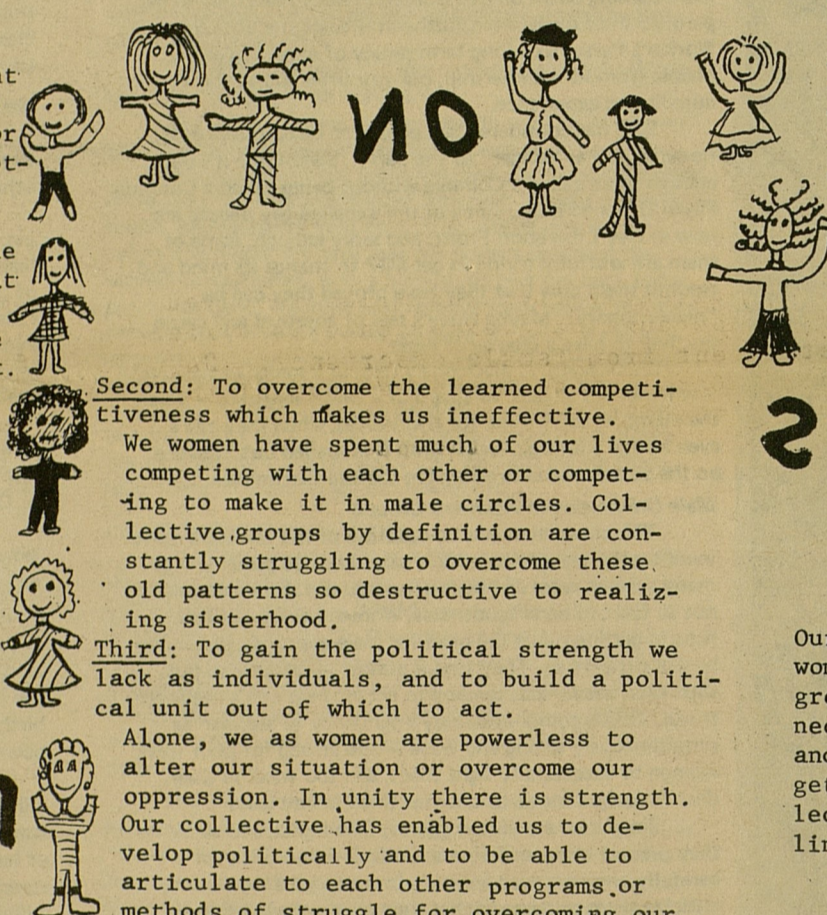
By far the most fantastic thing that has happened to all of us in the past

year is that we have become individually stronger through our involvement in the collective. For the first time we are experiencing other people really loving us, with a beautiful love that can never be taken away. This has enabled us to look more honestly at ourselves and to realize our beauty. Sixth: To unite political and personal struggles into one struggle.

If we are to create a decent non-oppressive society we must be able to unite our political goals with the way we lead our individual lives. Most of the insights we have had as a collective have not come from great political discussions about how to bring about a cookbook revolution in America. Our insights have not come from what we said but rather from our reflection on how we have said it. They have come from beginning to break down the superstructures through which we relate to each other and through the love and acceptance we have for each other, which has made it possible for us to deal honestly with conflict, feelings and fears. By uniting our personal with our political struggles we gain the strength and perception needed to go out from our collective to further the Women's Liberation Movement.

Seventh: To have collective responsibilities for decision-making.

To build a collective, we must first decide to struggle collectively to solve problems rather than individually. Often times it is very difficult; it is "easier" to decide things by ourselves. However, it is only by making decisions collectively that everyone can fully participate in carrying those decisions out. It is only through collective decisions that we overcome hierarchical relationships with each other and build a revolution in which the output of every individual is respected.



REFLECTIONS

COLLECTIVES

Our experiences lead us to encourage other women to organize into similar types of groups. We understand collectives to be necessary to gain both personal strength and political power. We are interested in getting women together to start more collectives, and in developing a means of linking all of our collectives together.

SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL!

COLLECTIVITY IS STRENGTH!

All Power to the People who fight all forms of oppression

SISTERS IN THE REVOLUTION

for more information contact
THE WOMEN'S COUNSELLING SERVICE
808 East Franklin Avenue
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Phone 338-5479 or 338-3335





04

SUCH

TROUBLE

After a long struggle last Spring trying to find a structure to end the frustrating general meetings in which nothing got done and where we were at different political levels, Women's Liberation in Iowa City finally came up with a structure in which sisters could be close to one another and grow politically together as well as do things. It was a structure with autonomous cells and a monthly general meeting. Over the summer five cells were formed: Publications, Day Care, Gay cell, Speakers Bureau, and the Medical Issues cell. Although the general meetings were supposed to be for intercellular communication, there was a tendency not to discuss reports from the cells and even not to have the general meeting. During August when the Gay cell and the Medical Issues cell were temporarily not meeting, there began to be intimations of a schism between the Day Care cell that was busy setting up three free community controlled day care centers and the Publications cell which was busy putting out bimonthly issues of Ain't I A Woman? Almost everyone who was in Women's Liberation during the summer was in one of the two cells. Although a member of the day care cell questioned the policy of Ain't I A Women? to allow only female writers in the paper, the split was not yet visible.

To recruit parents and volunteers for the day care center, the Day Care cell decided it wanted a supplement on day care printed in Ain't I A Woman? which would include reactions written by male parents. The Publications cell, agreeing to publish and finance the supplement but in light of its no male writers policy and wanting to encourage women to write, suggested that the reactions of the men be written by women. The Day Care cell felt that potential male day care volunteers and parents should hear reactions

directly from the males involved because male experience is different from female experience. Day Care pointed out the control they thought the Publications cell had with power of the press. At this point it was clear that there were differing political opinions and yet Iowa City Women's Liberation did not deal with the schism as a group.

Finally the Day Care cell decided that they wanted to extend the involvement of the parents from control of the individual day care centers to political action on the day care issue in Iowa City. This would mean working politically with men. The Day Care cell asked at the next day care center meeting whether anyone would be interested in doing this and males were interested. The Day Care cell then asked at a general meeting of Women's Liberation how WL wanted to relate to the proposed Day Care cell: 1. disassociation from Women's Liberation 2. partial disassociation from Women's Liberation or 3. the Day Care cell with men included would become part of Women's Liberation.

The meeting was polarized; both sides sat separately, felt on the defensive, gave arguments defending their politics, and vented resentments that had been building all summer because they weren't talked about. The Publications Collective saw the three alternatives as an ultimatum. Either men would be brought into Women's Liberation or the women in the Day Care cell would disassociate.

The women at the meeting decided to put off the decision until another workshop could be held so that all the women in the Day Care cell who weren't present could listen to the discussion and better

make their decision. We realized that lack of communication had made of a problem that once could have been more easily handled, one whose scars we would personally feel and as an organization would have to deal with for a long time. A structure of intercellular workshops was set up to be held every two weeks until things got ironed out and later once a month so that sisters in different cells could talk politically about issues that come up throughout the year.

The second meeting was better in that the atmosphere was more sisterly. The Publications collective, however, was disappointed that the attendance of the Day Care cell was not greater. The Day Care cell contended that all members of the cell who had been active in the cell regularly were there. Since members of Women's Liberation who were not in the Day Care cell would not agree to having men in a Women's Liberation cell, the suggestion was made by a member of the Day Care cell that women who wanted to work with men would help form a male consciousness raising group, but that the Day Care cell would remain open only to women and do consciousness raising. The Day Care cell met later and agreed to try it.

Ain't I A Woman? felt that it was important to deal with the problems in Iowa City Women's Liberation openly for two reasons: That other groups should not consider as a personal problem the phenomenon that seems to be happening throughout the Women's Movement. Secondly, that other groups around the country be able to benefit from our mistakes and what we learn.

On the next 2 pages are an article by a member of the Day Care cell and an article written collectively by the Publications Cell.

A Sister Questions Separatism

I can understand two reasons for WLF being a separatist organization. The first is that only women understand and feel our own oppression. It is therefore necessary for women to get together with one another to share common experiences and realize that what we've felt were "personal problems" are in fact a common oppression by this society. It is also up to us to arrive at just what this society must do or provide to end our oppression. The second reason is that all men oppress women, making political action with them intolerable. This usually means that because of their socialization all men act in such a way as to oppress women, and that they can not deal with their male chauvinism enough to make our working with them useful or tolerable. Another view would be that although individual men can deal with their male chauvinism, males can never give up superior position in this society. No matter how "right on" a male may be in his head, he will still have caste privileges he has no control over. A "right on" male oppresses the women he works with just because he is a male in this society.

For my year in WLF I have accepted WL being separatist: it was emotionally very nice to have a year in which I felt no obligation to deal with men at all and could hate them as a caste. But with our childcare centers we decided we wanted men to take responsibility for childcare now- not after the revolution, but now or else women with children would never

have the time or freedom to be revolutionaries (a privileged position in this society.) So we were in the position of working with men- in our case politically aware men. At this point it became very difficult to see men as the enemy- to draw a line and say they weren't worth the effort to deal with. So I began to question separatism:

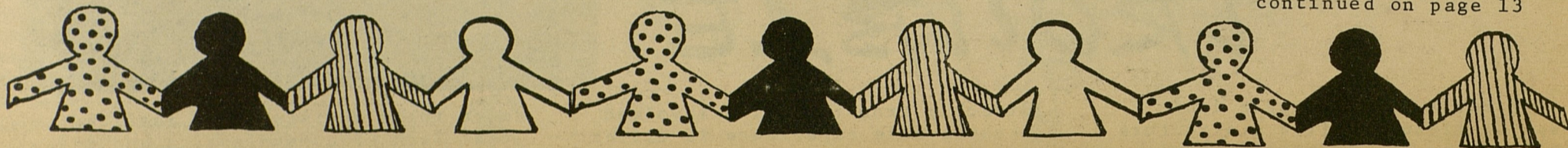
I still agree with the first reason for separatism- members of an oppressed group must identify with one another, understand their common oppression and make demands on society. But the number of oppressions in our society are incredible: women-men, black-white, old-young, gay-straight, upperclass-lowerclass to name the ones we are most aware of. But is it really necessary for all female, black, 60 year old, gay, lower class people to get themselves together and separate themselves politically except for alliances with all other people? Maybe a group like that is necessary for a while, but certainly there is a time when the divisions are no longer useful and that the people must begin to deal with their oppressors- by constant education, confrontation, and explanation of just what behavior oppresses them. The point is, separatism for analysis is essential, but after that analysis is made the divisions can lose their usefulness. This implies stages- stages that will be different for each person in each situation and stages that will have to be repeated as new things come up. I think we must learn

to recognize the point at which enough analysis has been done to begin working on changing society in the most effective way. Perhaps our child care cell is not ready for a new stage yet, but how will we know unless we try when we feel we want to?

I have become very disillusioned with the second reason for separatism. First, I believe that there are men who are legitimately working on their male chauvinism and that it is possible for them to deal with it although it is a constant struggle. Second, I have realized that I am probably more intimidated by the more politically aware and confident women in WL than I am by the men I am now dealing with in child care. This probably comes from a greater respect for the women than the men. But the fact remains that political intimidation by men relative to women is no longer a reality for me. Thirdly, recent speaking situations have lead me to dread dragon ladies (the privileged few who "liberate themselves" and dump on all other women) as much as male chauvinists. I would like to choose the people I work with politically by their actions and not their sex.

In the context of the child care centers in Iowa City: I feel a demand of 24 hr. a day free community controlled day care staffed half by women and half by men is a sufficient analysis of the child care problem for the time being at least. If I and other women feel we can handle working with men on this issue and can derive some benefits from it - Why

continued on page 13



The politics of Women's Liberation is that our collective strength will free us by giving us an analysis of the position we hold in this society and the necessary action needed to destroy the power of those people and institutions that oppress us. Our analysis will show us how and what we must do to end the oppression women suffer as a class of people.

We have barely begun to make a feminist analysis, an analysis about the condition of women and how to materially change that condition. But that analysis can only be gained from other women, because they are the only people who have experienced the condition of being female in a patriarchal world.

Making that analysis is painful, and it is necessarily collective because we are a whole class of people who are oppressed and a whole class of people who must define what freedom can mean to us. The reality of race, and economic class differences within the female class rules out any individual analysis. Only together as women, transcending class and race barriers, can we arrive at goals and tactics that will benefit all women. Realizing the isolation and separation of women from other women has not removed that reality or what it has meant to us. We have never been able to define our needs or fight for them because we have been kept apart. Getting together as women we see as a crucial tactic of our revolution.

It follows that neither our analysis nor our battle can be different for each person nor can it be a series of stages that we individually go through. Many women who have had little "political" experience (new left or other) have a very clear definition of their oppression and we must seek them out just as we must reach out to women who have been or are active politically to identify with us as women and struggle with us to end the oppression of all of us.

Day care, publishing, medical care -- these have been some of our equipment to help us gain strength working together, to help our analysis of the needs our revolution will have to meet. We must be able to collectively analyze our actions on these projects as to their effects on women and as to how these projects have brought us closer to waging a revolutionary struggle (theory correcting practice, practice correcting theory). We must be able to change our direction on any issue or project if they become an end in themselves and not a means to liberate all women.

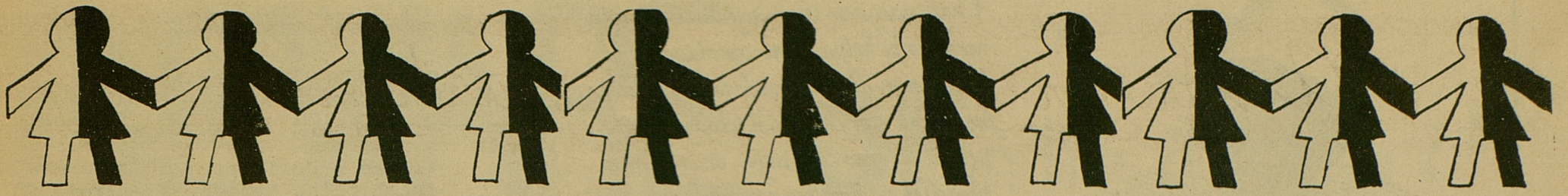
To want to choose the people you work with politically by their actions and not their sex sounds pretty good -- until you realize the you are choosing to relegate Women's Liberation to secondary status within some greater movement. When women are free, we will have that choice.

None of us chose to be revolutionaries -- objective conditions caused that. None of us chose to be women -- because we are, objective conditions affect us differently from men. Men can choose to give up the privileges of an oppressor class, women don't have that choice. But so long as men tell women to work for some kind of people's socialism, so long as men assume as their right the right to define women's needs (because women are, after all, people too), those men are the enemy. To be politically aware, men will have to give up all the privileges of an oppressor class and define their own needs. Only a strong women's movement will keep us from being one of those objects they need -- like the free grass, free food and free women in the promised land of People's Park.

To be a revolutionary woman is to recognize a fundamental oppression -- that of being female in a patriarchal society. This is the primary contradiction we live with. It is not the only contradiction. Women are affected by economic class and race and are determined to end that oppression, but it is the primary contradiction of being female in a male world that forces us to identify with and work with each other to accomplish its destruction.

Recognizing our own oppression is painful and figuring out what to do about it is hard. Women's Liberation doesn't have a recipe for making that contradiction more tolerable. Sometimes we delude ourselves when we say women get together to discover their problems aren't "personal problems". It goes much further than that. That sort of analysis leads to the derogatory notion of all-women groups as therapy sessions and reduces "consciousness raising" to therapy. "Consciousness raising" grows out of all our actions. It means recognizing what little power women have simply because they are women, whether in demands on the state or on the husband. Sometimes we fall back into thinking of politics as something unrelated to sex, we separate ourselves from other women by blaming them for not having the correct ideology, thinking that other women intimidate us as much as do men. But the intimidation we feel from men comes from the recognition of the material power they wield. We cannot feel intimidated by women wielding power that they have never had. Power is a material condition in the male world, it does not materially exist in the female class.

We also can fall back to preferring to think of ourselves as "people", forgetting that person and woman in a patriarchal society are a contradiction in terms. It should be irrelevant to us that any man could be considered more or less "politically aware" while any woman is still in the position to be oppressed. Only our collec-



must we be hassled by WL? If separatism hasn't become an end in itself - there should be room in WL for groups (Lesbians, older women) to caucus about their oppression by their sisters in WL and also for groups who wish to work with men to do so.

I would like to say something about the "end in itself" attitude I seem to have toward day care and how this relates to working with men. I am beginning to feel that at this time, it is only the privileged who have the time, energy and lack of personal responsibility to question the established order and become revolutionaries. This is one reason why the Left has been largely middle class white males. I think we have to critically look at Women's Liberation and figure out what privilege means within the female caste. We can no longer just define privilege according to class and race, although the correlations will be high. For instance I must realize that living as I do with 7 women in a Women's Liberation collective without children is one of the most privileged positions a revolutionary woman can be in. I believe that married women with children are low on the scale of privileges within the female caste. Women have certain defenses that make their lives livable: they love to serve their husbands, they love to take care of their children 24 hours a day, they think their bosses are smarter, etc. As a privileged woman in my position I have been telling them that their husbands are oppressors that they

shouldn't have to have 24 hour a day responsibility for the total physical and emotional support of children, that they should be able to use their minds and their creativity. I then expect them to be able to look at the reality of their lives, drop their defenses and work for Women's Liberation, with a hope for an end to their oppression "come the revolution." I expect this even though they may have no free time to work for Women's Liberation because they must continue their responsibility to their children and they see no alternative to daily existence with husbands or bosses on whom they are completely dependent for money to survive. My point is that unless we can offer some alternatives now, we can't expect most women to drop the defenses that validate their lives. And unless we offer some alternatives now some women will never have the time or energy to work in Women's Liberation. I therefore don't see the function of day care centers primarily to organize women but rather as a necessary prerequisite for the organization of women.

Because it is not after the revolution, this means compromise, it means working with liberals, it means working with men. We have to establish day care centers where we can: In churches although we don't like what religion does to women, through universities although we don't like what they do to women, etc. It means involving men who will spend time caring for child-

ren and will fight for the establishment of new day care facilities. Day care could be spread out so that all women shared equal responsibility for children, thus taking the privileges away from some women and freeing others. However, I feel it's more desirable to have as many men as are willing, working at day care centers and working to establish new day care centers. Timewise this frees women to a greater extent to question their lives and work politically. If we maintain a purist view toward day care (for instance a totally female controlled and established day care center in a non-sexist location) there will be very few day care centers. We privileged women will continue to theorize about the revolution, we will refuse to be co-opted, but our revolution will be based on the theories of privileged women not on the mass of women we didn't involve because it required from us reformist services.

Sisters - I hope I want the same revolution you want - I can't leave the support I get from you - but I believe no one, not even WL, knows how to pull this revolution off right. If my new (old?) way won't work, I'll find out - my feminist consciousness won't leave me. But please, don't have an unquestionable dogma - that when broken or questioned makes a sister not quite the sister she used to be.

Love to the sisters and power to the people.

To Be A Revolutionary Woman

tive strength will ever make women a part of the people. Slogans, education, or what now would be an unequal confrontation won't do it. Confrontation implies a clash of at least two sides each with relatively equal power. If women were to face men with their sexism now, there could be no confrontation -- just a squish.

To take men into women's liberation, as some women would do, is to give up the right of women to define their own needs and to discover the ways of meeting those needs. It is profoundly anti-woman that men should want that power. We should not have fears of making alliances with other groups when we share common goals: the end to that primary contradiction as well as the contradictions of being poor in a rich land or black in a white land, but we must not cut off our most basic belief by denying our right to define our own needs. We should set up no standards for politically aware men which ignore that primary contradiction of being female in a patriarchal world.

Consider that if the gay cell had proposed to take men into their cell because they share with gay men the experience of homosexuality in a world with a heterosexual norm, the issue would have been treated quite differently. We would have demanded that lesbians see a primary contradiction, that they identify as women. Should we ask any less of mothers, wives, and all sisters?

Really identifying with other women is perhaps the most important and also the most difficult task we have. To achieve it we must deny the heterosexual norm -- the standard from which we are accused of deviating.

Women working, living, or loving without men are viewed as separate from a group of people, against the people and the "people's revolution." Men and women alike often see that as a negative reaction to men. Such a view sees working with women only as a stage that must be transcended because working with men, being a heterosexual grouping is seen as natural. But no woman should be obligated to work with men for a year, a month or a lifetime. We must support those women who choose to positively identify with other women. In a society based on the heterosexual norm they will receive little support, something women who work with men will not have to worry about. Society will consider them normal, just as it considers their secondary status natural.

Wanting to build a strong movement of women, for women, says little of what we think of men, or ecology, or going to the moon. It says something about how we feel toward other women. It is an act of revolutionary love.

Consider how basic and deep our conceptions of heterosexuality are. Many people think that men loving other men must do so out of a negative reaction to women. Not sharing the oppression of gay men, they deny gay men their

humanity and their positive feelings toward the men they love. Gay men may oppress, dominate, ridicule and hurt women because they are men and society values men more than women -- but gay men do not love men because they hate women.

We are committed to fighting male supremacy and dominance, but that is not the basis for our identification with and love for women. To think it is would imply that when women and men share equally in some sensible society we will no longer identify with, love, or work with women. These positive feelings would be unquestioned in a sensible society that had no sexual dogma.

Women's Liberation is separatist in origin -- like Weatherman or the Republican Party, we started somewhere else. But separatist means nothing about how the group functions, it refers to the act which took place -- the withdrawal from an original organization. Many women left old/new left organizations when we realized our own oppression within them, and we realized the lie we were living to deny our oppression for some greater good (that is, the male defined goals) of a "people's revolution." We realized that we were functioning to women's needs as the NAACP functions to blacks -- token leaders, women to keep other women cool, conforming to the image of the good revolutionary. But the "woman question" is too important for us to function that way.

Men who may help us meet our needs will be willing to let us define those needs. Men never began the idea of day care because it was not men who benefitted from it. No men would sustain a day care project, because they still view child-care as the responsibility of women, or some half-and-half, so long as they define the terms.

Men are very much involved in day care because our society is still based on a nuclear family and children have fathers, mothers often have husbands. Working to establish day care centers, women face problems of how to work with men that many other projects never have to face. The direction this issue will take and its importance are unclear. We don't even know if it is possible to work on day care with a strong feminist perspective. Despite our uncertainty and our criticism we do not want to deny the love and commitment the women in day care have displayed. We have been critical of what we consider failures on their part but we don't want that to negate what we recognize as their accomplishments.

Because men are involved in day care is no reason they should be members of women's liberation groups. Women will have to do the analysis of day care as it concerns women, whether men ignore, share equally or completely run the day care centers. But the experiences women have working on one issue cannot determine the tactics or goals of the women's movement.

a Woman? October 30, 1970

13



SOJOURNER TRUTH,
"THE LIBYAN SIBYL."

"That man over there say that a woman needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helped me into carriages, or over mud puddles, or gives me a best place... And aint I a women? Look at me. Look at my arm! I have plowed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me... And aint I a women? I could work as much and eat as much as a man when I could get it, and bear the lash as well... And aint I a woman? I have borned thirteen children and seen them most all sold off into slavery. And when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard... And aint I a woman?"

Sojourner Truth: Speech before the Woman's Rights Convention at Akron, Ohio in 1851.

AIN'T I A WOMAN? is published every three weeks by the Publications Collective of the Iowa City Women's Liberation Front, P.O. Box 1169, Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

We are a collective of 10 women functioning either as a front for a world wide conspiracy of Radical Lesbians or the house cornfield of the Women's Movement.

The voice of the Midwest needs to be heard in the Women's Liberation movement. Ain't I A Woman? will print without editing any laid-out page from a Midwest (New Mexico thru Ohio) Women's Liberation group. We would like to encourage other women to start working collectively to avoid elitism and destructive power relationships that pit us against each other. We will send details on deadlines, page size, column length, etc. if you would like.

If your group wants to receive bundles of AIN'T I A WOMAN?, send 15¢ per copy. Minimum bundle: 20 copies

NEWS FROM MICHIGAN

Pissed Off Pink is a newsletter for women in East Lansing. Their address is Women's Liberation, 209 Abbot Road #405, East Lansing, Michigan.

TWO NEW WOMEN'S ANTHOLOGIES (LNS)

Two anthologies of women's liberation material, out in paperback, have just hit the stands. They are: SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL, edited by Robin Morgan, and WOMEN'S LIBERATION: BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE, edited by Sookie Stambler. Proceeds from both books, unlike most books written for the express purpose of making money off this new "fad", are going back into the women's movement. Articles in both paperbacks are written by women for women, so, pass the word.

announcing...

A women's poetry magazine--plus photography, artwork, and anything else expressive of a women's liberation/revolutionary consciousness.

Send poetry, photographs, artwork, etc. to DIANA PRESS, c/o Regina Sigal, 1854 Wyoming Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

Any proceeds from this magazine will go to help free political prisoners of the U.S. government.

NEWS FROM INDIANA:

Indianapolis Women's Liberation P.O. Box 88365, Indianapolis, Indiana--publishes a newsletter and wants contacts with other organizations and individuals. Monthly newsletter is \$1.50/yr.

Attention Revolutionary Artists:

A women's poetry magazine

A new women's poetry magazine needs poetry, photography, artwork, and anything else expressive of a women's liberation/revolutionary consciousness.

Diana Press, c/o Regina Sigal, 1854 Wyoming Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20009.

Their leaflet says "Any proceeds from this magazine will go to help free political prisoners of the U.S. government."

Midwest WLF Conference *November 13, 14, 15*

Dear Sisters,

Grinnell Women's Liberation is planning a midwestern conference for the second weekend in November. In order to give the conference a wider cultural scope, we are having a women's art exhibit and sisters from VSC or Twin Oaks present views on alternative life-styles as well as radical political points of view expressed by Marlene Dixon and sisters from the Feminists. Although our list of guests is not yet completely definite, we expect sisters from several women's publications collectives, particularly from "Off Our Backs" and "Ain't I a Woman?"

We'll send you more details about the women's art exhibit and the day by day schedule of events later, but, in general, this is what we have planned --Remember, if you have any suggestions, be sure to let us know -- we want to be organized, but not rigid! The conference will open Friday evening at eight with a panel discussion defining the liberation of women in terms of the particular goals of our sister-guests. On Saturday, a series of intensive closed workshops will be held dealing with Lesbianism, Organizing Women, The Institutions of Marriage and Sexual Intercourse, Caste and Class, and Women in the Arts and Media. Finally, Sunday morning at ten, there will be a closed panel discussion, the topic, "Women's Liberation, A Basis for Social Change." During spare moments we hope to schedule several films, but right now we're not sure of which ones we'll be able to get. Saturday night we'll be able to provide dinner for everybody. Visions are of steaming pots of beef stew... Feel free to bring anything you wish to augment the stew --Also, be sure to bring sleeping bags --We've got lots of comfortable floor space.

We are really very excited about the conference and eagerly wait to hear from you. So, let us know by November 5, at the very latest, how many of you expect to join us.

Grinnell Women's Liberation
c/o Box 32A, Grinnell College
Grinnell, Iowa 50112

GRINNELL CONFERENCE -- Nov. 13, 14, 15

Name of Group _____

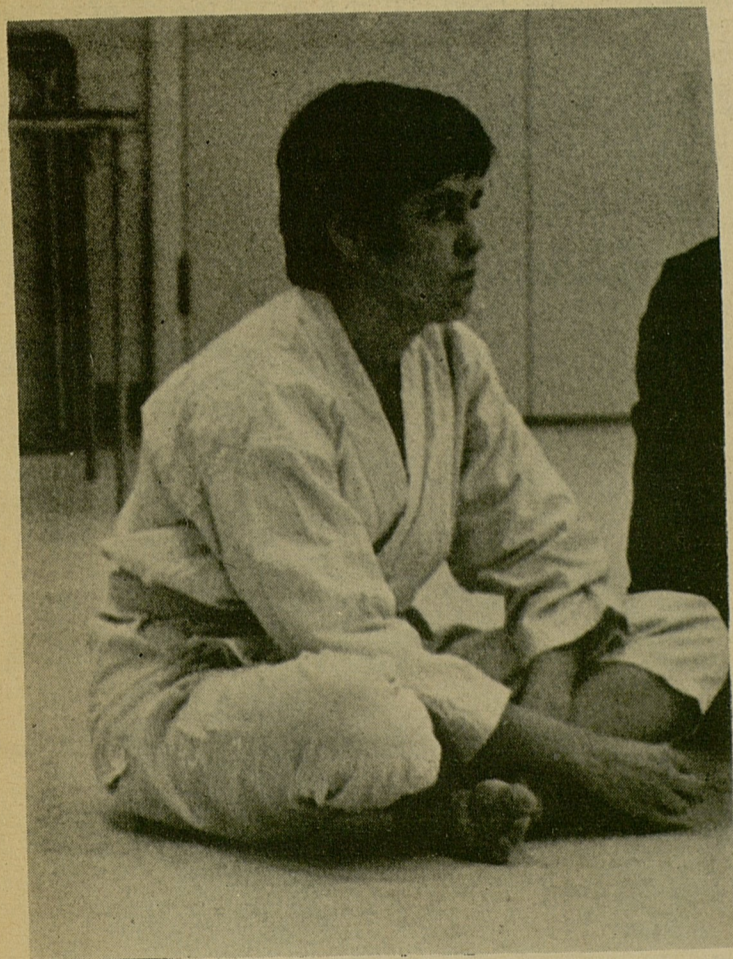
No. to attend _____

Please send before Nov. 5 to
Grinnell Women's Liberation
c/o Box 32A
Grinnell College
Grinnell, Iowa 50112

BEWARE OF JACK THE RAPER in the disguise of: Mr. Solid Citizen

Since the beginning of the semester there have been three females assaulted while walking at night. One woman was stabbed, one was raped and the other was beaten. These are the only incidents I happen to have heard about. Reports of assaults on females rarely make it into the newspapers; if they do, it's a two-inch story on page 10. Possibly that's because rapes and physical attacks of women are so common that they're not worth repeatedly taking up space in the papers. So working women, student women, and any female who has to leave her house alone after dark is not reminded that she faces the constant threat of an attack.

That threat is no less constant here than in a large city. Violence is not an urban phenomenon; it pervades all American culture. Rape is political. This society breeds a class to be attacked and a class of attackers. A rapist is



Women are beginning to get it together! In Berkeley women associated with the free clinic are going out into the streets. One woman baits hookers (especially if they sell drugs to children) and she takes them to a room. Here the rest of the group of women are waiting and they all beat him up. Also in Berkeley sisters leafletted the wedding of a groom who had raped the dancer from his stag party.

not an isolated case, a sexual deviant who needs help. He is not deviating from the sex role socialization that encourages males to be aggressive and females to be passive.

The differences in development of physical strength are obvious. Women are not supposed to be strong --not even to handle everyday situations in which some strength is required. We are not physiologically incapable of developing strong bodies. The Man does not want us to have that power. But males are expected to develop in true macho spirit, devoting their life energy to building their bodies.

Most of the institutions in this country provoke rather than prevent rape. Our entire society (politics, education, advertising, movies, magazines, T.V., Etc.) is filled with situations in which the male is the person in power. People are led to believe that every "normal" female really wants to be overpowered and that every male has the right to demand anything he wants from a woman.

"...the marriage contract in fact legalizes and institutionalizes the rape of women and the bondage of women, both their internal (reproductive) and external (domestic labor) functions.." (from a leaflet by The Feminists, 1969)

"A husband may force his wife to have sexual relations as long as his demands are reasonable and her health is not endangered." (from *Wives' Legal Rights*, Richard T. Gallen, Dell, 1967, pp. 6-7)

This society is responsible for permitting attacks on women, by the way it socializes people into male and female roles. Women have not been given a realistic picture of the danger of assault. Since police and the media do not report all the incidents of rape and other assaults, women have been allowed to feel safe. We are not responsible for creating this situation; we should not be ashamed that we are vulnerable. However, we must learn to fight back. We have the right to defend ourselves by whatever means necessary. Don't wait until you or someone you know has been attacked to learn a skill which will allow you to protect yourself: Do it now! Women who are studying karate, carrying mace or learning how to use guns are not doing so out of any kind of pro-violence trip. They have been left no other choice.

We must learn to get angry when we are physically or verbally assaulted by men. Next, we must have enough pride in ourselves to feel that we have the right not only to defend ourselves but to strike back. When it is as threatening to attack a female as a male, then and only then will women stop being attacked. We must not be hesitant to kill for the defense of our lives and freedom if it comes to that. The fact is that for very many women today it is coming to that.

Harriet Tubman had a revolver!

Pissed Off Pink

Seen Jack the Raper lately? Well, you might catch a glimpse of him sooner than you think, especially if you happen to be hitchhiking down Grand River Avenue.

Apparently, a woman's thumb can arouse any macho motorist from his usual depths of depravity to new heights of drooling insanity. ZAPPO, WHAM, Happy Jack flashes to Jack the Raper.

Jack the Raper has taken a heavy toll around the East Lansing area. One woman has been in a brace all summer after having vertebrae crushed while Jack's "amorous" advances. Others have been stabbed, pistol whipped and beaten for having the gall to resist Jack.

Always he gets away. The Big Guns in Blue are invariably unable to find the fiend. The difficulty of course is that Jack lurks in the breasts of many men, why his foul heart even beats in the chests of some of our so-called solid citizens.

What can women do about Jack the Raper? First, we can appeal to all women to pick up their sisters, to give less of a chance to strike. There is no reason for women to fear other women, so when you see a sister who needs a ride, help out. Second, if possible, hitchhike in twos and threes, there truly is safety in numbers--besides Jack prefers single victims.

Third and most naturally we should strike back. Jack the Raper has intimidated and victimized our sisters for too long. Therefore, we of P.O.P. in conjunction with our sisters in Berkeley, announce the idea of Anti-Rape-Squads--groups of feminists dedicated to avenging the rape or other kinds of harassment perpetrated on our sisters by male supremacists. Hopefully such squads will form during the fall term. Remember, when you hitchhike to write down the license plate number of the offender and we will publish his name, address and telephone number in the P.O.P. for sisters in the area to use as they see fit. Sisterhood is Power.

Women's Liberation East Lansing, Mich.

A Woman?

October 30, 1970

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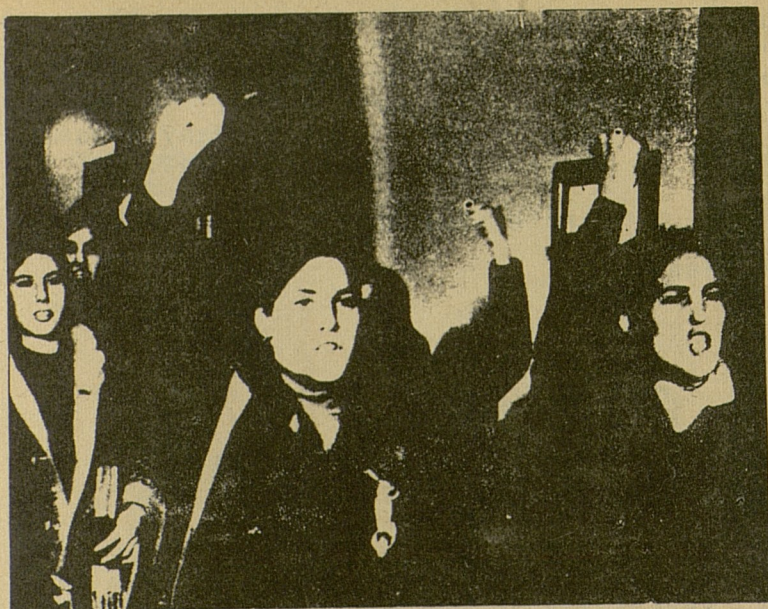
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Definitions:

a CAPITALIST PIG is a greedy "man who has everything" and wants to keep it that way; hence the "protection racket."

a MALE CHAUVINIST PIG is still a pig though he may not be protecting anything more abstract than his potency.

MALE CHAUVINISTS, PIGS, display their united strength in aggregates usually called "teams". Their uniform is the jock strap.

JOCK STRAP -- Big Brother's holding company

ATHLETIC SUPPORTER -- member of a "Booster Club" for a "team"

NUT CUP -- a trophy, given to novice MCP's in recognition of their initiation into a "team"

BALL -- that which is supposed to be kicked but is most of the time held onto with the hands

FIELD -- a battle-field, on which lines are drawn and games are fought (or, fights are played). Each team has its own field, yet is not content and, in true pig style, teams fight on their own and others' fields; but nothing is ever resolved and fields do not change hands.

POSITION -- not a geographical location, but a status. Regardless of where he is, a team member must fight in, and maintain, the same position. A LINE-MAN, for instance, tries to act consistently with his line. There are also QUARTERBACKS and HALF-ASSES, among others.

GOAL POST -- at the end of the fight, the ideal is to tear up the goals. It figures.

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