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Off Our Backs

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a women's news journal

inside:

n.o.w. convention

free journalism

inaugural demonstrations

data banks

abortion ruling



print by eleanora spalter-roth

3/21/73

off our backs

the
revolution
is now?



The emphasis at the sixth national conference of the National Organization for Women held this February in Washington was equality with men throughout society, not on establishing an autonomous women's culture and politics in their own right.

This direction was expressed in the keynote address of NOW president Wilma Scott Heide and in the press conference she gave afterward.

"Every social issue, every public policy, every institution of our society needs feminist analysis and leadership and we will provide it as a basic requirement of a humanist world." She called the "masculine mystique" the dominant ethos of our society, which needed to be overturned by a "profound universal behavioral revolution" and advocated more militant tactics such as sit-ins and teach-ins. Speeches and selective consumer boycotts have continued to be "substantively non-persuasive," she said.

NOW members, for instance, should educate the Federal Communications Commission by take-over actions of broadcasting stations if the FCC fails to develop adequate affirmative action programs demanded by the current NOW licensing challenges.

When asked by a newsman whether this was really necessary, she answered that she advocated "anything short of violence" to implement action mandated under law.

Such tactics are clearly not directed at the liberation of a free space for women, a women's culture, or variants of lesbian separatist proposals, but at joining the "man's world" which Wilma considers "our world."

Although affirming a need to make leadership and participation in NOW independent of personal economic resources, Wilma, once a mutual funds representative, said that "absence of structure and impoverishment from inadequate dues imposes a tyranny that is even less healthy." [A resolution to create a sliding scale of dues payments based on financial means, however, was passed at the final plenary session of the conference.]

Wilma said she preferred the term "feminist movement" to "women's movement" and that what is needed is a strong national organization (which NOW is considered both within and outside of the women's movement), from which men who choose the difficult task of living feminism and liberating themselves from the masculine mystique will not be excluded. (She advocated retaining some aspects of masculine mystique such as decisiveness, objectivity and bravery and added that some good feminine qualities were "caring and sensitivity.")

Citing as a model Martin Luther King, Jr., who, she said, insisted that whites be part of the civil rights struggle, the NOW president included men, "even Richard Nixon, in our struggle." So far he has not taken her up on her invitation to meet with NOW, Wilma's third attempt.

Although Wilma stopped short of saying that sexism is the primary cause of oppression, she did conclude her speech by saying that the absence of women at every level of public life may be the problem in our society.

When asked whether NOW is not structured to a rich, white, middle class movement, she countered with "We're not all that affluent. NOW doesn't speak for all women, girls, or men, but for the potential in them."

Asked about what role class can play in the creation of a more humane society, she admitted that class analysis has important values, but doesn't have the same social value as balancing men and women in institutions. "We've never tried feminism," she said.

The conference itself brought together the casually dressed, meagerly employed and the well-groomed professionals, though there seemed to be substantially more of the latter. They met in thirty odd workshops, most of them chaired by task force heads, some proceeding according to pre-written agendas and lecture type formats. Opportunity for the expression of diverse concerns depended on the sensitivity of the individual coordinator.

The resolutions pounded out at the workshops and presented for approval at the Monday plenary, however, dealt with just about every class of woman in just about every aspect of life. Comprehensive proposals to utilize legal, legislative and educational means to eradicate the injustices faced by women in this country included: a minimum wage of \$2.50/hour extended to all workers, including domestics; federalization of the welfare program; introduction and support of legislation to end discrimination based on sexual orientation; lobbying against federal funding of psychosurgery operations and research on humans designed to control emotional or social behavior; the decriminalization of prostitution; research into and revision of rape laws.

Most of the resolutions were preceded by lengthy "whereas" sections, the language of which clearly reflected what feminists outside of NOW have been saying for a long time. NOW, with its 15,000 members and political respectability, may have the leverage to effect institutionalized change that local radical feminist collectives cannot bring to bear.

The question, of course, is what kinds of changes NOW will concentrate its forces on effecting. The organization is top heavy with executive officers, a national board, an advisory board, and task force heads; resolutions approved in principle by the membership are not necessarily acted upon by those in power (see *report on lesbian caucus, page 7*); its major endeavors over the years since its inception in 1966 have been, as the application for membership states, "to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society," while allowing the basic structure of that society, which necessarily keeps most women in the mainstream of the home and low-paying jobs, to go unchallenged.

The resolutions presented at the conference ranged from one establishing a Stockholder Action Plan to one, buried in a pile of unattributed resolutions from "individuals and chapters" which read:

"Whereas NOW is not committed to any particular socioeconomic system except one which ensures and is premised upon full participation of all people; Whereas the time has come to raise fundamental questions concerning the structure of society, particularly a society premised on profit and competition, to ascertain whether it can achieve the human goals that NOW stands for; Be it resolved that a special committee, consisting of persons whose political philosophy is change-oriented, be established to undertake a serious in-depth study of the economic, social and political philosophy of our society to determine how or whether NOW's goals can be effectuated within the present framework. The special committee shall report its findings and recommendations directly to the next National Conference."

That resolution if implemented by the women's movement as a whole would go a lot further towards the liberation of women than the numbers game NOW advocates.

(For further coverage of the NOW convention, see pages 6 and 7.)

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volume III
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table of contents

data collection	2
free journalism	3
abortion ruling	4
history	25
news	5-7
culture(s) pullout	9-20
d.c. area news	8, 21
women's studies	22-24
survival	26
letters	27

us

beatrice camp, frances chapman, tacie dejanikus, margaret devoe, carol edelson, frederica green, chris hobbs, pam kalishman, frances lang, fran pollner, gale samuels

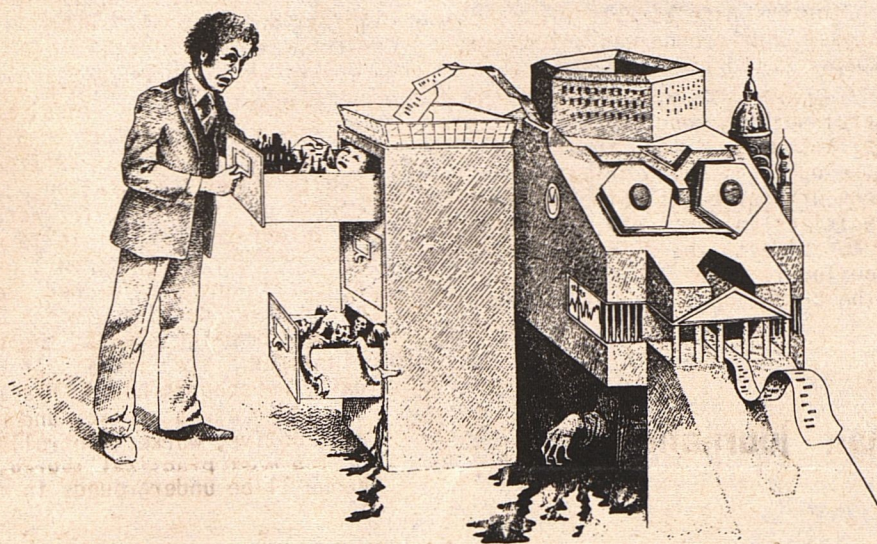
friends

nancy ferro, norma lesser, delores neuman, emily orzech, kary schulman

off my data trail

Everybody's doing it---the do-gooders, the government, the banks, the schools, the labor unions and so on. Americans are being surveyed, measured and questionnaired to the point where much of what they feel, think and do is recorded somewhere on someone's computerized data file.

It may be argued that the gathering of vast amounts of data and statistics is vital to the smooth functioning of our large and complex society. How else would private industry have known where to concentrate their effort on selling clothes dryers if the government had not been pressured into asking citizens on the 1970 census whether or not they had a dryer? Even if you can fight an ad campaign, a much more important consideration is that this accumulated information can and will be used to control you in any other way the government or any agency sees fit. McCarthy's job in the 50's would have been immensely speeded and he could have destroyed more people had he had computer records of security investigations. Just think of what his soul brothers (Nixon and company) will be able to do now with the recent developments in computer technology.



with & without consent

Data is collected and recorded on individuals sometimes with and sometimes without their knowledge. Even when people are aware that they are filling out a questionnaire or survey that will end up being entered into a computerized data file they usually do it. The mobility of some people in this society tends to make them want central data files. They want to be able to "take" their credit rating with them quickly and conveniently. Some people will also eagerly give information to the government if they think government services will be improved. And very often people faced with divulging information feel they have no choice---very often deceptive language is used in the wording of questionnaires making it sound like the only choice is to answer the questions or go to jail, completely hiding the other choice of simply throwing the form into the trash can.

beware the welcome wagon

But sometimes people are unaware that data is being collected about them. Everyone knows of course that no phone call is sacred. But no one ever suspects such innocents as the "Welcome Wagon" people who greet newcomers to a neighborhood with sample products and ads from local merchants. The newcomer as part of the deal is also asked to answer some personal questions. The "Welcome Wagon" representative walks out knowing a great deal about the new resident---income, religion, age, etc. All this information is then sold to the local merchants and credit bureaus. The individual has no control over the credit bureau data. As a matter of fact people are hardly ever aware of which agencies know what about them.

Aside from the fact that most collectors and handlers of personal data will use it or misinterpret it to their benefit with no consideration for the rights of the individuals involved, there are other dangers inherent in

computerized data collection. When information is put into a computer data file, the individual hardly ever gets a chance to verify that it was translated correctly. An individual even more rarely gets a chance to update her or his data record as the information becomes outdated.

So far what has kept citizens somewhat safe from absolute control by data accumulated about them is that it has been kept on magnetic tapes (such as those on tape recorders) which are quite bulky and can not hold vast amounts of data. Until recently these tapes have had to be physically carried from one computer system to another in order for data to be shared between agencies. So the problem of getting all the data available on one person together has been a monumental task even with computers. But new technology has been and is being developed to handle these problems.

laser technology

There has been a great deal of money spent by the federal government and by IBM among others to develop a new laser process that can record and read data at very high densities thus obviating the bulkiness and unmanageability of magnetic tapes. This process consists of recording data by a laser beam burning minute

many remote locations can all utilize the same computer. This is how airlines, companies with regional offices, multi-campus universities run their computers. Time-sharing also makes possible the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) established by the FBI. This center provides city and state police forces with immediate access to information on stolen property and missing persons. By 1969 the NCIC was providing data through several thousand terminals to police in every state except Alaska. There are plans to add all police arrest records to the NCIC. There are no plans to upgrade or verify the accuracy and quality of the data being put into their files.

One other major development in computer technology has been the ability to hook up two completely separate computers together through communications channels. This way all the data files available to either computer are available to both computers. For example, a bank's computer could utilize a credit bureau's computer and have access to the credit bureau's data files. And police systems are sharing information in this manner also.

universal i.d.

The federal government, in keeping with its history of maintaining dossiers on citizens, is taking advantage of the new technology. There has been a renewed push toward assigning everybody a personal identification number. In order to collate and merge data coming in from different sources it is essential that these data have some identifier in common. In 1948 the National Office of Vital Statistics proposed a National Birth Certificate Number giving each new individual born a unique lifetime identifying number. Many newspapers retaliated with angry editorials and cartoons raising the threat of "Big Brother." The measure was defeated. However, in the past decade the social security number has become, if not officially, the universal identification number. There is hardly any questionnaire of form that does not ask for an individual's social security number. Most personnel files are kept by social security number. And of course there's the IRS that operates on it. The Congress will probably pass in the near future a bill making it necessary for a social security number to be assigned each child at birth.

national data center

Not only has the government wanted to assign everyone a unique identification number but in the mid-1960's it attempted to centralize its information gathering activities by proposing a single federal statistical center---to be called the National Data Center. Advocates of the center felt it would reduce duplication in the government's data collecting, provide broader and more useful ranges of data and provide a data processing pool for all the agencies who did data handling. But when questions were brought up as to whether there would be controls and limitations on the use of the data no guarantees of individuals' rights were provided. The proposal did not get through Congress.

But since computer systems can now be hooked up easily and share data there exists a kind of *de facto* National Data Center. Agencies can feed information to other agencies back and forth. Congress did not even get the chance to lay down any policy guidelines to protect individual privacy. The data network that now exists is also harder to attack than a centralized system because the data being processed is scattered in various locations.

The only way to slow down the data centralizing process at this point is to refuse to fill in questionnaires and surveys. And by all means don't let in the "Welcome Wagon."

by margaret devoe

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free journalism: the press and worker's control

Last November, when Jean Westwood, then national Democratic chairwoman, barred a non-union Columbia Broadcasting System camera crew from a news conference, she was abused by the press establishment of news manipulation. CBS President Richard Salant said that her action involved fundamental free press and free access issues. The *New York Times*, whose class interest in the dispute is connected to that of the management of CBS, ran an editorial which criticized Jean for not considering the public's right to know.

Situations like this present liberals with apparent dilemmas, whether the principals are garbage workers and a garbage-laden populace or newspaperpeople and news-hungry readers and television viewers. The utilitarian problem of weighing of rights is only the tip of the iceberg however. Beneath the surface is a glaring contradiction within capitalist society. In this case, the role of the newspaperperson as newsgather is put in contradiction to her role as a worker engaged in battle with the management of her paper, the paper which is at the same time the vehicle through which she performs her function of newsreporter. Thus her class and professional interests are put at odds. The mystique of professionalism is used against all white-collar workers to discourage unionization and worker solidarity.

profit

The capitalist press, however liberal, is still part of the profit structure. With some allowance for occasional crusading journalism, an everyday daily must make a profit to stay in business. The threat of bankruptcy is very real, as witness the decimation of daily newspapers in major American cities. The concentration of media by merger and syndicalization poses a threat to a varied and vital press and the free exchange of opinion. Since the dailies are kept afloat by advertising revenues more than they are by sales to readers, though a high circulation must be maintained as an allurements to advertisers, the straight press has a vested interest in an everexpanding, infinitely profitable waste economy. As Grigory Moiseyev, an official of the Soviet Union, where they control the press more overtly, said recently, "a free press in the United States is only as free as the burdens placed upon to remain financially solvent."

That the motivation of the straight newspapers' cries of outrage with regard to the dangers of a free press is primarily economics not idealism is evidenced by serious consideration on the part of the American Newspaper Publishers Association of a proposal to seek immunity from price controls on grounds of the First Amendment.

The resolution of the capitalist contradiction which keeps the newspaper and the newspaperperson from being free to do the work that journalism and journalists should do depends on newspaperworkers taking control of their workplaces. Only when reporters, editors and production people control the publications for which they work will a truly free press evolve. Newspapers and magazines and electronic media will be media, not just means of making a profit.

workers' control

Workers control is not a pie-in-the-sky thing in the future. For as an article on the subject by John Lawrence, writer for the English anarchist weekly *Freedom*, states, the cooperatives which exist today originated in workers' pooling resources to cut out the middle man in consumer industry. Though hardly radical today, they are not exactly

capitalist either. They were originally based on the principle of mutual aid. Workers' control, Lawrence argues, is a natural direction for labor to take. Advantages of workers' control, according to Lawrence, are equal wages and flexible hours of work, reduction of division of labor so that workers can learn a variety of skills, and, finally, a way of getting off the treadmill of higher and higher wages. Indeed, workers' control was a cause that many workers died for during the Russian revolution.

However, until our society turns from profit making on the part of corporations to control by neither the state nor the corporations but by the workers themselves in every institution of society, we can find models of new ways of working and forerunners of a truly free and economically unshackled press.

There is a strong tradition of workers' control in the alternative or "underground" press. When the Los Angeles Free Press, the nation's largest underground was unionized by the Newspaper Guild last November, the issue of workers' control was as much a concern as general working conditions and wages. The newspaper's founder Arthur Kunkin lost control of the publication to private interests. Our own off our backs policy is to make editorial decisions collectively, at least in theory, and to abide to the dictum of "if you write it, you lay it out." These are policies clearly in the tradition of workers' control.

more than journalism

In an excellent article on the alternative media in the February 19 issue of the *Nation*, Daniel Ben-Horin, editor of *New Times*, a newspaper out of Phoenix, says that underground newspapers go beyond journalism, and by inference, beyond workers' control, which is after all an economic measure, which goes only part way in describing the cultural and emotional relations of the staffers of most undergrounds

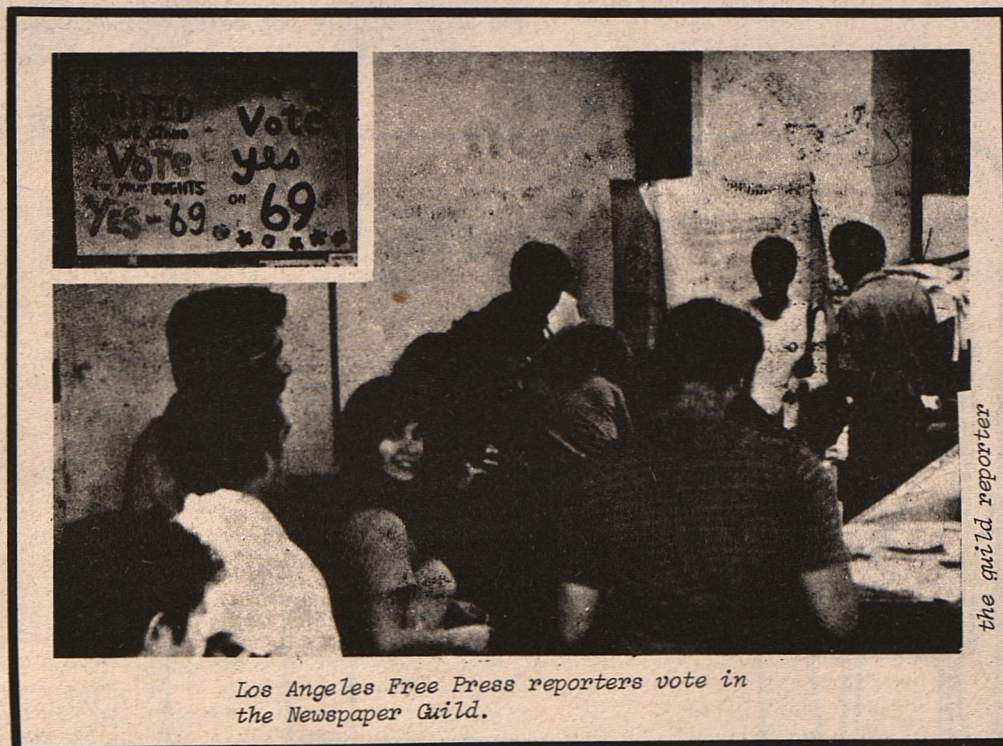
to their publications. Ben-Horin says that underground papers have "functioned as laboratories to test ideas about social organization." (Can they be compared to the communities of the utopian socialists of the 19th century?) "When the women of New York's *Rat* throw out the men on the paper, or when the San Francisco *Good Times* (and numerous other papers) tries to integrate an absolutely egalitarian communal life style into the operation of a 28-page biweekly paper, what we have is not just good or bad journalism."

The historical importance of the underground press lies in the possibility that it can produce, if nothing more, a cadre of media-aware workers with nonhierarchical and non-sexist views about personal and job relationships, Ben-Horin says.

In fact, in the future, new standards may apply: degree of interaction with the community, degree of non-sexist, collective organization, and degree of active participation in local political and social developments.

In the face of concrete proposals to maintain freedom of the press, such as shield laws to make communications to a reporter privileged and implementation of affirmative action and public access legislation, the more radical course of struggling for workers' control and an integrated life style to create an autonomous, in our case, women's press may seem impractical and far-fetched. Yet when we consider that, despite Nixon's obvious and sustained campaign against the constitutional rights of a free press, 71% of United States daily newspapers backed his reelection, directing our attention and energy to a strong alternative, worker-controlled press may be the most practical course, after all. Maybe we'll be undergrounds in more than name, too.

by frances chapman



Los Angeles Free Press reporters vote in the Newspaper Guild.

the guild reporter

supreme court abortion ruling

the first step

The Supreme Court decision on abortion was called a great victory in the press on January 22. From the first reports on TV and radio it was assumed that women had finally won the right to choose an abortion, at least in the first three months of pregnancy. Theoretically, the abortion laws of every state were declared invalid and all states would have to conform to the ruling.

A month later when the impact of this ruling has begun to be felt, it becomes apparent that what was won was only a significant first start in a continuing struggle for the right to choose.

The Supreme Court ruled on two cases, one from Texas and one from Georgia. While the rulings explicitly concerned only the abortion laws of those states, the fact that the laws were declared unconstitutional implies that abortion laws in all states would be unconstitutional and would need to be repealed or changed to conform to the Supreme Court ruling.

In both test cases which were brought before the Supreme Court the women involved sought a judgement on the basis that the abortion laws in their states abridged their rights to privacy as guaranteed in the first, fourth, fifth, ninth and fourteenth amendments. Indeed the Supreme Court ruled that "the ninth amendment's reservation of rights to the people is broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy." However, Blackmun, the Supreme Court Justice who delivered the opinion, concluded that although the right of privacy does include the abortion decision that "this right is not unqualified and must be considered against important state interests in regulation." The division of the pregnancy into three trimesters and the different rules which may obtain, was based on the state's vested interests in the health of the woman and later in the protection of the unborn. The woman's absolute right to privacy was upheld only for the first trimester. This is the period for which it was shown through medical data that mortality rates for women undergoing legal abortion appear to be as low as or lower than the rates for normal childbirth. Blackmun reasoned that regulations by the state for the purpose of protection of the health of the woman are unnecessary for the first trimester.

During this time a woman and her doctor may choose freely to terminate a pregnancy. However, at this point it must be remembered that the woman's right to choose is to a certain extent limited. Blackmun stated very clearly that this decision did not rule in favor of abortion on demand. The decision gave a woman the right to choose within the medical judgement of the physician, with the physician defined as one who is currently licenced by the state.

In the second trimester of pregnancy, the compelling state interest in the health of the woman allows the state to regulate abortions "to the extent that the regulation reasonably relates to the preservation and protection of maternal health." The fact that abortion becomes a more complicated and dangerous procedure is what allows the state to intervene.

In the third trimester, after the time of viability the protection of the unborn life becomes the compelling interest for the state. At this point the state may proscribe abortion except to preserve the health or life of the woman.

state's interest

The idea that any state interest is more compelling than the woman's right to privacy in the case of abortion must be questioned. Making abortions a matter of choice during the entire pregnancy does not mean that an abortion will always be chosen. The responsibility involved here would be tremendous, but one that could certainly be handled by a doctor and a woman who understood the responsibilities. Presumably a woman's doctor, much more than the state is capable of determining whether an abortion is safe or advisable in a given situation. A woman when given all of the medical considerations would also be in a position to intelligently opt for an abortion or not, within her own morals or religious beliefs. This kind of private, careful decision is certainly preferable to the arbitrary regulations which may be applied by the state to control abortions during the second and third trimesters. Decisions like that will never be able to occur unless women continue to struggle not only for an end to restrictive abortion laws, but also to have access to all of the medical information necessary for a responsible choice.

anti-abortion forces

This Supreme Court ruling is ambiguous enough to have opened the way for freedom of choice to exist within the limits described above. While the right to abortion is clearly given to the woman and her doctor in the first trimester the question of the second and third trimester is left to the individual states. The ruling does not say that a state must impose regulations, only that it may. Keeping the states from passing anti-abortion laws will be difficult, for the most part there is great resistance to the Supreme Court ruling. Nebraska has already moved to pass a bill which would impose the strictest regulations allowed. Virginia has rejected a liberal bill which would have conformed to the Supreme Court ruling. Many states have not yet removed the regulations prohibited by the ruling and abortions are not being allowed even in

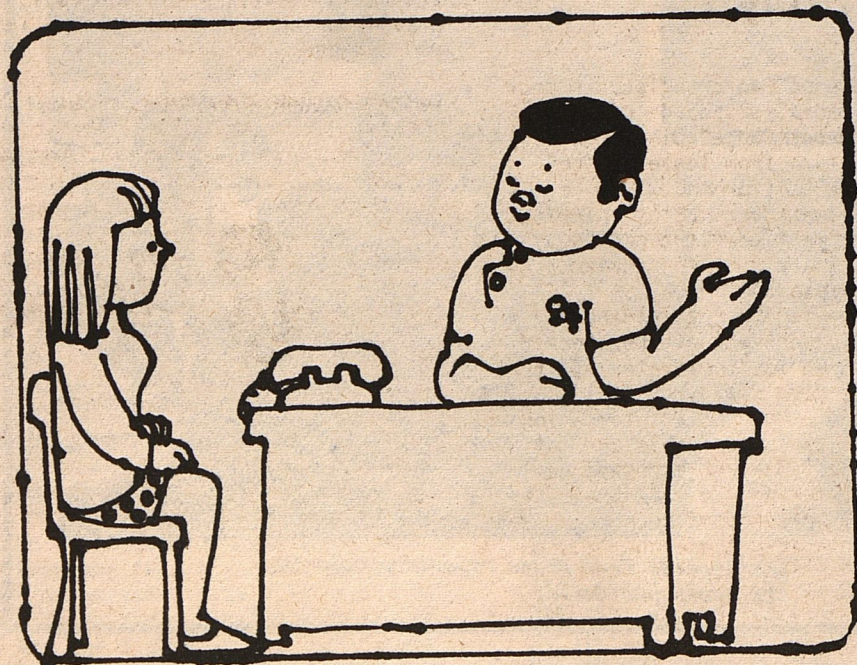
the first three months of pregnancy. At least on constitutional amendment proposed by Maryland Congressman Hogan which would prohibit all abortion may be brought before Congress. Anti-abortion laws will be passed unless the abortion movement is stronger than the anti-abortion movement and in most cases it is not. The Catholic Church and the Right to Life Group which is supported by the Catholic Church lead the fight against abortion. They are very well financed and have been successful in many states. The war they wage is an emotional one and their ammunition is bottled fetuses and color pictures of "unborn children". They have the money to splash these pictures and emotional phrases on billboards, in newspapers and on picket signs in front of abortion clinics. It was this kind of action that won the fight in the Michigan Abortion Referendum for the anti-abortion groups. The Catholic Church will not stop its fight until abortion is prohibited, for unlike other religious groups, they would impose their beliefs on all others. The Catholic Church has said that "abortion is not only a sin for everyone." Other religions have taken the preferable attitude that now more than ever, since abortion is more available. These religions stress the teaching of religious attitudes that will cause a woman to choose against abortion. These attitudes prevent the freedom to choose abortion in many cases, but in a more subtle way. A campaign against attitudes like them will certainly be necessary, but the attempt of the Catholic Church and other groups like it which would stop abortion for everyone must be fought.



It is well known that legislation alone does not automatically cause the conditions of that legislation to exist. Civil Rights groups are still fighting for school integration twenty years after legislation was passed. Even after abortion legislation is won, there will be a struggle to ensure that abortion is really an alternative to any woman who would choose it. It is easy enough in Washington D.C. for a woman to find an abortion clinic or private doctor where she may obtain an abortion. That may not be the case in rural communities. It is in these communities, where the availability of doctors is already scarce, that a doctor who opposed abortion would be disastrous. Since ultimately the decision as to whether an abortion is performed or not, even in the first trimester, is left to the medical judgement of a state licensed physician, a doctor who opposed abortion could effectively remove the possibility of abortion for a woman who had no other place to turn. The abortion movement must fight to change public attitudes against abortion stemming from archaic beliefs which picture the abortionist as a butcher, abortions as medically unsafe, and fetuses as having life from the time that they are conceived.

It is these attitudes, along with legislation in favor of abortion in the individual states which is the fight at hand. It can be won. The fact that so liberal a ruling could be handed down shows the results of the abortion movement so far. The next step is a fight for the most liberal implementation of that ruling that is possible, combined with a campaign against the attitudes perpetuated by the Catholic Church and so many other anti-abortion groups.

by carol edelson



\$485 million robbery

American Telephone and Telegraph company, which the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission estimated pays women \$500 million per year less than men, has agreed to compensation payments of \$12-15 million, promised women employees a new promotion, wage, and training policy, and submitted a model affirmative action plan to the Office of Federal Contract Compliance.

The charges of widespread discrimination against women and minorities were brought by the EEOC when the company filed for higher rates in 1970, a case which is still pending before the Federal Communications Commission. The settlement reached by EEOC does not require AT&T to admit that it "engaged in any discriminatory employment practices or other practices which constitute violations of the Federal laws, regulations or Executive Orders."

Notable because it involves the largest compensation ever paid for alleged discrimination, the agreement also marks the first time that OFCC and the EEOC have coordinated actions and it sets an enforcement precedent as the first application of the principle of financial restitution.

The settlement distinguishes between three groups of employees: non-craft women and minority employees, 13,000 of whom will be compensated from \$100 to \$400 in recognition that many failed in the past to seek promotions which they believed were barred to them by company policy; women already in craft jobs will receive back pay to compensate them for salaries which did not equal those men received for identical work; fifteen hundred college-graduate women in management jobs will get back pay because they were allegedly barred from the company's rapid-advancement training program.

All the Bell companies have agreed to adopt affirmative action plans based on the AT&T model accepted by the OFCC. Using 15 job classifications ranging through operator, clerical, sales, and skilled crafts, goals and timeframes will be developed by each Bell company for those classifications "where underutilization is determined to exist." Goals and targets of approximately 25% will also be developed for males in the operator and clerical classes.

Although the settlement contains assurance that collective bargaining agreements will continue to apply in hiring and promotion situations, the union that represents most AT&T workers denounced the settlement for ignoring its collective-bargaining rights. The Communications Workers of America lawsuit filed in Philadelphia recently charges that the plan violates the 1964 Civil Rights Act by requiring "preferential discrimination against certain of its members."

When the agreement was first released January 18, the National Organization of Women referred to its restitution provisions as "chicken-feed" compared to what the company should pay. The organization also complained about the lack of specific timetables in the affirmative action program and AT&T's refusal to comply with EEOC guidelines on maternity leave. Nevertheless, NOW attacked the union reaction as "an attempt to placate CWA's white male members," and called for the male president of the mostly female union to resign.



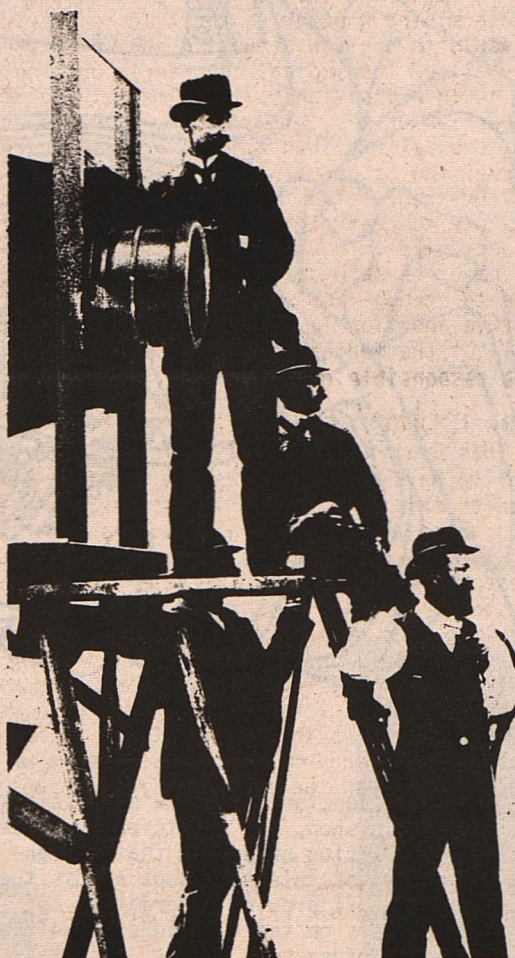
wrc guilty

Ruling on class action charges of employment discrimination against women brought in March 1971 by the Women's Rights Committee of NBC/WRC TV and radio stations, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission January 29 for the first time found a major broadcaster guilty of sex discrimination.

The commission reported that NBC-owned Washington radio and tv stations as well as the NBC Washington News Bureau violate Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act by "discriminating against females...: (1) by maintaining segregated job classifications..., (2) by discriminating against females in its recruitment policies, (3) by discriminating against females in its maternity leave policies."

The commission cited WRC's practice of excluding female employees from training positions by "sending notices of such vacancies to only all male department heads and managers."

Another class action charge by the Women's Rights Committee filed with the EEOC in November 1972 states that NBC/WRC denies promotion opportunities to women by failing to post all job openings. The company, it says, has filled 14 managerial positions (all white males) in recent months without announcing their availability so that qualified women could bid for them. The EEOC has not yet released its decision on that charge.



love in the army

The Gay Alliance of San Francisco is protesting the "undesirable" discharge of one WAC and the impending "undesirable" discharge of another, upon her return from leave to the Fort Ord army base in California.

The two had become lovers after entering the service at the same time eight months ago and were married February 3 by the chairman of the Gay Alliance, a reverend.

They reported having been threatened by the army with imprisonment and of the stockading of WACs who refused to "cooperate" by "fraternizing" with commanding officers (female).

According to the army public information officer, homosexuals are undesirable and must be discharged as such. One WAC accepted her discharge, waived a hearing and left the base. The other has yet to be disposed of.

The Gay Alliance urges those who condemn the army's policies to contact the Commanding Officer, WAC Detachment, Fort Ord, California. An army of lovers may fight the army.

droppings...

BIGGEST EVENT OF THE YEAR--The U.S. has agreed to withdraw their troops from Viet Nam. LONG LIVE THE TRUCE. However, before we could breathe a sigh of relief, we remembered that the U.S. has troops in other S.E. Asian countries. I guess we'll see you all in D.C. soon.

DROP-IN--Childbirth Conference, Saturday, June 2, 1973 at the First Presbyterian Church, Bedford Street, Stamford, Conn. all women conference on the subject of childbirth. For more info write to Lolly or Dorothy at Box 3488, Ridgeway Station, Stamford, Conn. 06905--West Coast Lesbian Conference April 13, 14, 15 at UCLA. For more info write to W.C.L.C., Barbara McLean, 508 N. Alta Vista Blvd., L.A., Calif. 90036.

BIGGEST EVENT OF THE MONTH--Food prices went up 2% last month. That means if you normally spend \$25 a week for groceries, you will now have to spend \$25.50 for the same amount of food. We are outraged.

SEND-IN--Catalog about Films about Women from Polymorph Films, Inc., 331 Newbury St., Boston 02115--Women's Film Co-op, Fall 1972 catalog, 200 Main St., Northampton, Mass. 01060. Free but they would like contributions to cover printing and mailing.

RUMOR HAS IT--all was not shown on NET's An American Family. Allegedly, Pat Loud and the producer of the show, Craig Gilbert were having an affair during the time the Louds were being filmed.

3,704,470 U.S. PATENT--A novelty device which simulates a pair of panties which is designed to fit invertedly in the breast pocket so as to simulate a handkerchief. The bottoms of the leg portions are bordered preferably in lace with the two leg portions slightly separated to simulate two panel portions of a hanky. The item is used for its amusing shock value when it is removed from the pocket (of a man's jacket) and the viewer can then see it is a small pair of pants.

LOCAL DROP-IN--Tax clinics opening soon in the Mt. Pleasant area and near 14th & Columbia Rd. Saturday and two evenings a week. Call Marie 265-9637--The Harvard Street School, a parent-run free school, holding a workshop Saturday March 10, 9-12 a.m., All Souls Church, 16th & Harvard St. NW. Charlotte Fremont Danielson leading the workshop, called "Discovery: Learning in Science and Math."

PLATTER-CHATTER--Capitol Records has Helen Reddy ("I Am Woman"), we now hear that Vicky Carr is cutting a new disc call Ms America for another record company, because of the huge success of Helen's record.

THE CAT'S MEOW--It's been a long decade. Green fingernail polish and white anklets are in the cards. When was the last time you tangoed.

Write, OREGON WONDERDOG. SWAK

FOREVER YOURS,



Chicken lady

more now press passes

Relations between the press and the women's movement have always been suspicious. On the one hand, women's liberation groups usually didn't have one spokeswoman a reporter could get statements from and more often than not there was no cooperation given the press or the press was boycotted entirely.

On the other hand, reporters tended to make leaders of certain women, giving no recognition to the trend toward collectivity and consensus in women's groups. They misquoted and took statements out of context according to the precepts of the macho school of journalism which focuses on the sensational at the expense of the authentic.

One evidence of the disenchantment with the straight press is the KNOW pamphlet "Reporters You Can Trust."

Ironically, NOW has generally been rather cooperative with the press. Some of its media-orientation is intentional. One of NOW's vice-presidents is in charge of public relations. It has officers who make policy statements and hold press conferences. In some ways, NOW has become an official source of feminist opinion.

That is why it surprised many members of the press to be excluded from the workshops and most of the plenary sessions of the conference. No distinction was made between members of the straight press and reporters for the feminist press.

When asked during her post-keynote address news conference how the policy had evolved, Wilma Scott Heide, president of NOW, explained that the conference was for NOW members only and that the workshops were to decide strategy. The Executive Board had therefore decided to bar the press from the workshops. When asked if she saw a difference between the straight press and the feminist press, she replied that there was a difference, but there simply wasn't enough room in the hotel to accommodate them.

In the late afternoon of the first day of the conference, representatives of the feminist press and some female reporters met with NOW press relations people and other NOW members in the press room. They agreed to bring a proposal to that evening's plenary session that the press and/or feminist press be admitted to all sessions. With the support of Betty Friedan, the proposal that all press be admitted to all sessions was passed.

In the press packet, ironically, NOW boasted of a press of "our" own as one of the organization's accomplishments and cited three independent publications as examples.

[At previous national conferences, though, press had been excluded, but pressure had not been so acute to bring the policy to a vote. According to Cheryl Capps, press coordinator for the conference, there had been a significant number of non-members who attended the conference in Los Angeles 18 months ago. Cheryl doubted there would be a problem with the press again, as it was clear that the membership at large did not want a closed conference.]

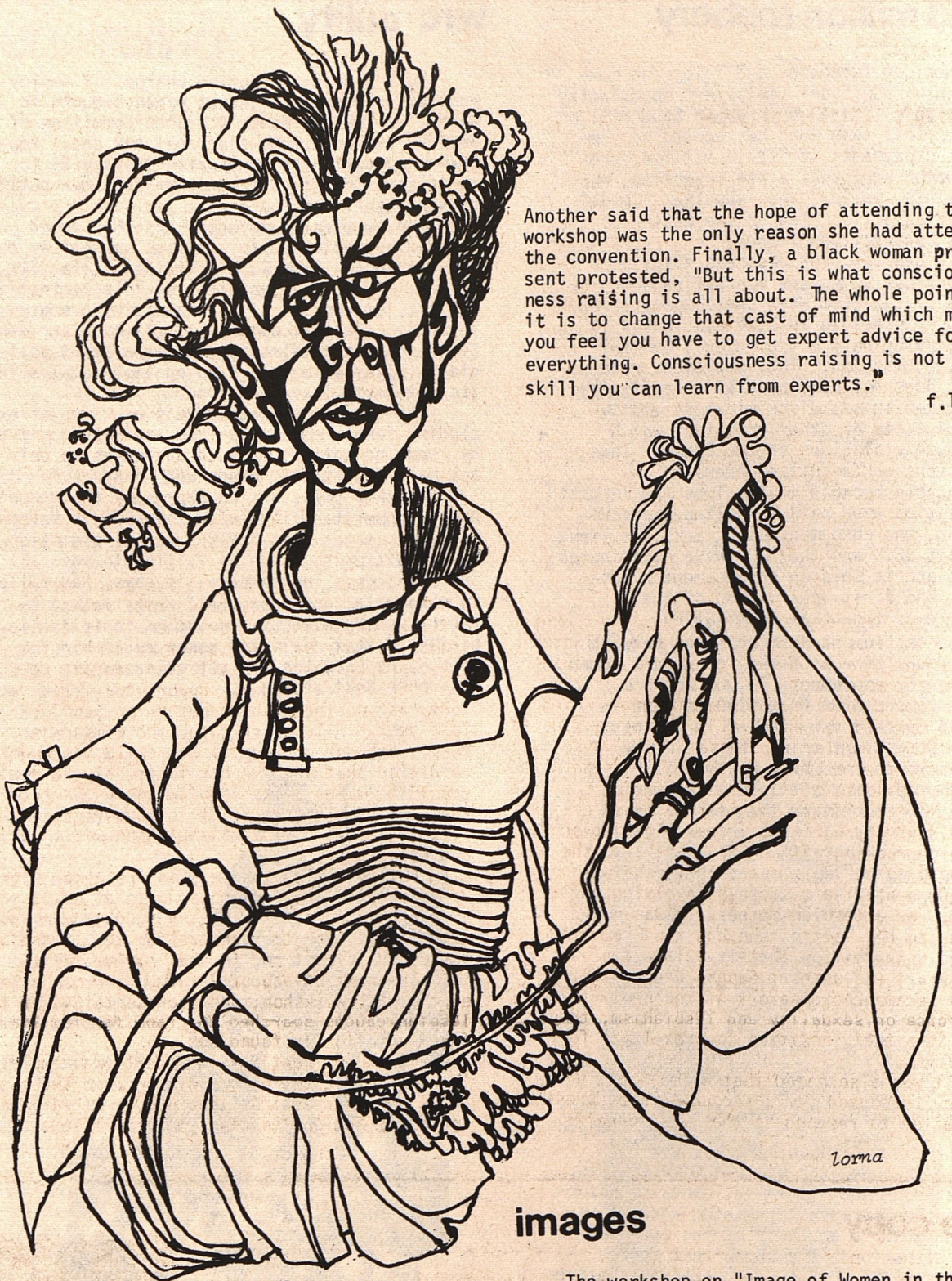
Journalists were not the only disgruntled group, however; women concessionaires were also aggrieved. The activity at the conference was not limited to the workshops and plenary sessions. A lot of it, particularly pecuniary, went on on the main thoroughfare of the mezzanine, where stands set up by various NOW chapters offered novelties such as "Fuck Housework" aprons, women's symbol pendants, literature and posters to raise money for the chapters. Ms magazine also had a stand out there. Other concessionaires, however, paid \$50 a table and were put back into a more inaccessible gallery area.

Women from other women's publications were upset by Ms's favored position, based, they charged, on the fact that NOW and Ms were splitting the price of subscriptions sold through NOW chapters 50-50.

The concessionaires decided to attend the Women in Business workshop to propose a resolution to return the price of the table to the concessionaires and to pledge NOW to sensitivity in the future to the problems of feminist entrepreneurs.

According to Mary Vaziliades, of the New York City chapter, Judy Lightfoot, newly elected chairone of the Board, came to the workshop late and persuaded opinion to the opposite position. "She didn't want to admit they had been insensitive," Mary said.

by frances chapmar



Another said that the hope of attending this workshop was the only reason she had attended the convention. Finally, a black woman present protested, "But this is what consciousness raising is all about. The whole point of it is to change that cast of mind which makes you feel you have to get expert advice for everything. Consciousness raising is not a skill you can learn from experts."

f.l.

experts

Toward the conclusion of NOW's consciousness raising workshop, the participants agreed to draft a resolution proposing that NOW endorse consciousness raising groups across the country and that it provide information to local NOW chapters on the techniques involved in establishing other such groups. This resolution was the logical culmination of the hour and a half workshop which had concerned itself primarily with elucidating the mechanical principles involved in establishing formal consciousness raising groups. Dorothy Tennov, the NOW member who chaired the meeting, announced at its beginning that she was experienced in setting up consciousness raising groups and she shared her experience with those present by presenting alternative procedures for conducting consciousness raising meetings; the optimum number of meetings consciousness raising groups should hold, subjects such groups members might find fruitful for discussion. None of the women at the workshop seemed interested in using it to clarify for themselves the meaning of the term "consciousness raising."

The hotel room provided for the workshop was far too small to accommodate all the women (and the few men) attending it. All available floor space was used, and the doorway was jammed with those willing to stand. When the meeting was more than half over, several women walked into the room-- late because of an unexpectedly lengthy NOW plenary session. They said they were very angry at Tennov for having started the meeting before their arrival. One latecomer said she had travelled 500 miles to learn about consciousness raising.

images

The workshop on "Image of Women in the Media" was chaired by Anne Hall, coordinator of the Now task force on the image of women.

She began by announcing that she is writing the only column on women's liberation in the country. The column appears in her hometown (Syracuse) newspaper. Half an hour later there was still a line of people waiting for the floor mike to inform Hall that she wasn't absolutely right.

Then she described an information kit which contains materials pertaining to actions taken by NOW in the past 18 months in order to improve the image of women in the media.

Next on the agenda was the reading of a previously prepared list of goals for the task force to work on for the next 18 months. The list included getting rid of the sexism on the Dean Martin show, removal of "My wife, I think I'll keep her" ads by Geritol, and eliminating the blatant sexism in children's tv cartoons and shows.

The workshop participants were then invited to amend or add to the list. Some of the additions were: elimination of sexism in government advertising, working toward a positive image of feminists and the women's rights movement, and taking action against sexist career advertising.

Also, two new resolutions were adopted concerning the oppression of lesbians in the media. The task force decided that the media should be made to cover issues concerning lesbians and that "where the media has been misinformed, misrepresented and manipulated with respect to issues of concern to lesbians, they be forcefully and repeatedly brought to task." These resolutions were brought to the floor by a member of the lesbian caucus, which had sent representatives to several workshops.

by margaret devoe

now, cont'd

lesbian dynamics

After six years' participation in the National Organization for Women and about three years' confrontation with what they considered anti-lesbian attitudes within the organization, lesbian members of NOW for the first time formed a discrete caucus at the national convention.

[For the first time, too, an acknowledged lesbian, Del Martin (co-author, *Lesbian/Woman*), ran for the National Board, stating that "Lesbians remain second-class members of NOW" and opposing also the "growing bureaucratic structure" of NOW and the proposed delegate system of voting. She was among the winners.]

The caucus met in the evenings to work out goals and activities as well as resolutions to be presented to the plenary session.

Supplementing the official NOW candidate questionnaire, the lesbian caucus prepared its own, questioning candidates for NOW offices on their consideration of lesbian discrimination as a priority for NOW.

At the Saturday evening caucus, the candidates' responses were read aloud and evaluated. With perhaps two or three exceptions, everyone running expressed unqualified support in the fight against lesbian discrimination -- which brought comments of approval for some candidates and cynical laughter for those others whose past performances were known to the lesbians gathered.

The response of Muriel Fox, former chairone of the National Board and newly elected chairone of the Advisory Committee, drew the most scorn. As a high-ranking officer for some time she had done nothing to implement a 1971 resolution that NOW support a test case involving child custody for a lesbian mother, it was noted. According to Del Martin, she had also remarked in a phone conversation that if Del Martin and Sydney Abbott (co-author, *Sappho Was a Right-On Woman*) became coordinators of the newly formed task force on sexuality and lesbianism, they would "use their position to proselytize for lesbianism."

It was also noted that Wilma Scott Heide, running unopposed for a second term as president, had failed to respond to the questionnaire.

NOW elections aside, the lesbian caucus discussed the necessity for incorporating the phrase "sexual orientation" in all legislation against discrimination on account of sex in employment, housing, financing, public accommodations and child custody (a resolution on this order was subsequently unanimously approved at the plenary); for doing their own research to combat the myths about lesbians; for changing the image of lesbians perpetrated in the media; and for the repeal of all sodomy/sex laws.

They remarked that although sex laws are currently used to entrap male homosexuals, as lesbians become more political these laws will be turned against them as well.

It was decided that members of the lesbian caucus would attend other NOW workshops scheduled for the following day to ensure that the interests of lesbians were not neglected in the areas under discussion, i.e., consciousness raising, image of women in the media, finance and credit, and, especially, the Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDEF).

The LDEF, according to its descriptive brochure, is the "tax-deductible arm of the National Organization for Women." It gives substance to many of NOW's goals by supporting legal cases charging violations of women's rights. The LDEF had refused to support the child custody case of the lesbian mother in San Jose last year. A landmark case, the woman was eventually awarded custody of her child but under condition that she see her lover only at certain specified times. The lesbian caucus decided that an LDEF amicus brief in support of the woman's appeal of that stipulation was in order and necessary.

Before ending the session the women signed up to receive and work on a national NOW lesbian caucus newsletter. Of the 2,000 women who came to D.C. for the conference, 200 strong were out of the closet and in that caucus room.

The next day about 75 women and men attended the LDEF workshop; one representative of the lesbian caucus searched the room for familiar faces and finally found one.

LDEF President Sylvia Roberts was explaining the tax-exempt nature of the Fund and its decisive contributions to a number of far-ranging court actions to give women full legal

rights under the constitution when the woman from the lesbian caucus broached the subject of the lesbian mother's case.

Roberts quickly countered with: "We can lose our tax-exempt status from the IRS if we cater to one group. We have three criteria for participating in a case: it has to affect the largest number of women; it must be a test case, one that has never been brought before; and it must communicate concerns about ending sex discrimination. We have five lawyers to pass on the merits of a case brought to us."

It was pointed out that the lesbian mother case met all criteria, to which Roberts responded that fitness on the basis of sexual preference and practice was an issue that the defendant's lawyer had told her was not going to be raised. Therefore, the case did not meet the third qualification.

This contention was refuted by another woman, who observed that that was the issue in the case, or there would have been no case. Roberts replied that "this whole thing is taking a lot of time. We have many other things to discuss that are of vital concern to most of the people here." Many of those people applauded the rejoinder and the lesbian caucus representative left.

Roberts then settled back and detailed how NOW members and chapters and special interest groups could engage the LDEF under IRS and NOW guidelines. "Our dream is to be NOW's lawyer in a wide variety of litigations," she said.

Meanwhile, outside in the hall, members of the lesbian caucus were discussing the outcomes of the various workshops. They were joined by members of the black caucus, who were angered by the fact that the one black candidate for the National Board had been taken off the ballot for lacking the proper credentials.

Referring to the lesbian caucus newsletter, Del Martin said, "We're going beyond this conference. It's not the membership we're up against, but the ruling clique. We'll get it together through our nationwide communications."

She and her colleagues then left to meet privately with the black women, a natural alliance of two minority groups, especially for those women who were part of both caucuses.

by fran pollner

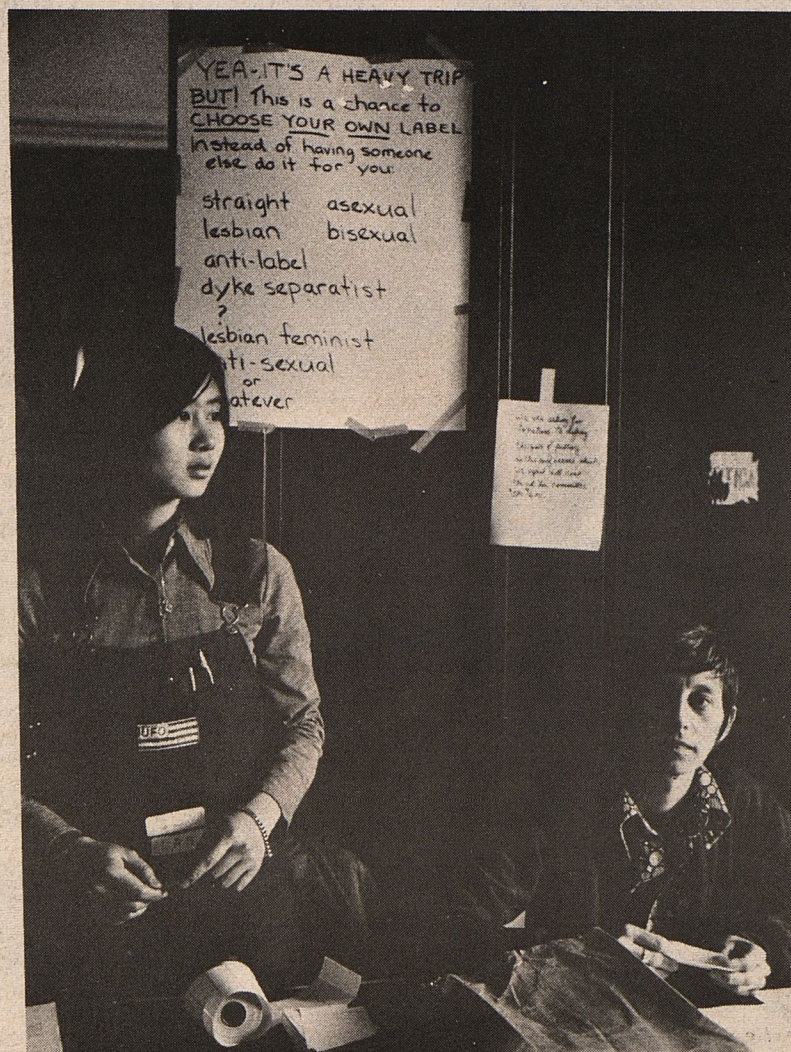
late copy

In the January issue of *off our backs* was an article on the "Lesbian/Feminist Dialogue" held in New York in December. The photos accompanying the article arrived air mail, special delivery, the day after we went to press. But here is a backward glance at two of them. (Maybe next month we'll have some photos of the NOW conference.)



Margaret Sloan and Gloria Steinem

photo by susan remmie



Lesbian activists at Barnard provide labels

photo by susan remmie

international feminism



This summer women from the women's liberation movements of the United States, England, France and Italy met for two days in Padova, Italy.

They issued the following statement, sent to us by Priscilla Allen, London correspondent for the United Feminist Press International, printed below:

We identify ourselves as Marxist feminists and take this to mean a new definition of class, the old definition of which has limited the scope and effectiveness of the activity of both the traditional left and the new left. This new definition is based on the subordination of the wageless worker to the waged work-

er behind which is hidden the productivity, i.e., the exploitation, of the labour of women in the home and the cause of their more intense exploitation out of it. Such an analysis of class presupposes a new area of struggle, the subversion not only of the factory and office but of the community. It also presupposes the struggle in the two areas of production, the home and the factory, as interdependent to communist revolution, and the destruction once and for all of the auxiliary nature of women's struggle within the struggle of class. This assumption of the auxiliary nature of women's struggle flows directly from the misconception that women's labour in the home is auxiliary to the reproduction and development of capital, a misconception which has so long hindered us all.

Within the women's movement, therefore, we reject both class struggle as subordinate to feminism and feminism as subordinate to class struggle. Class struggle and feminism for us are one and the same thing, feminism expressing the rebellion of that section of the class without whom the class struggle cannot be generalised, broadened and deepened. We believe these two positions in the women's movement have been a response to the masculine management of the class struggle: either our uncritical acceptance of their fragmented pol-

itical theory and practice, or our uncritical rejection of class in response to this acceptance.

While we place ourselves unambiguously among the revolutionary forces in whatever country we find ourselves, we reaffirm the necessity for the autonomy of the women's movement. This autonomy has appeared to be limited to a negation of the left. It is in reality the positive expression of the level of female struggle. It is because only an autonomous movement is looking for women's lever of social power that it offers the only possibility of driving it forward. Therefore our relations with the left, while we may utilise information and contacts, will always be secondary and subordinate to that autonomy.

For these reasons we wish to maintain and develop our own international contacts, our own publications in translation and our own joint discussions which aim ultimately at joint mass actions transcending national borders.

The International Feminist Collective may be contacted at the following addresses:

Italy: c/o Dalla Costa, via B. Cristofori 35, Padova 35100; France: c/o Galtier, 48 Boulevard Jourdan, Paris 75014; England: c/o James, 20 Staverton Rd., London NW2; U.S.: International Feminist Collective, 273 Clermont Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y.

d.c. area news



photo by dana

still motion

A wide variety of images and techniques giving new dimensions to the visual experience were exhibited at a local photography show. The "Talking of Michelangelo" gallery in Southeast D.C. showed the works of eight photographers in its annual group showing. The exhibit was well organized and presented several different styles and philosophies of photography.

Of the three women photographers, the one who impressed us most as having the freshest style and unique technique was Dana. Her pictures are studies in motion of woman, some being moving faces and others of the body in a series of flowing movements. When one first looks at her pictures they appear to be just a trick to catch the eye, but upon further viewing and particularly with the knowledge that they are self portraits, they acquire a much greater meaning and depth.

Betsy Frampton's images reflect a social consciousness centering on the dignity of the working class male, showing mostly rural scenes of black laborers and their environs. With her excellent technical skills and her ability to empathize pictorially with these people, one can only lament that she has chosen to neglect the women in these scenes. It is sad to see that she seems to be imitating some very great male photographers who have excelled in this style, yet her imagination is of a scope that one's emotions are nevertheless touched by the humanness of her subjects. We look forward to the day when women will also be an integral subject of her photography.

Patricia Smith-Fox uses the technique of hand painting to transform domestic objects into works of art. Her photographs are mainly still lifes of the tools of housewifery--scissors, sewing paraphernalia, etc.--which are then painted in soft colors to give them a vibrancy and cheerfulness extremely pleasing to look at. It is heartening to see that works portraying woman's activities at home are finally a subject for serious artistic consideration.

Group shows--particularly those exhibiting local photographers--are too scarce in the D.C. area. The non-profitability of these shows seems to be the main reason for their scarcity, but they do give us the chance to see the works of photographers who are very talented but not well known. We hope that other galleries will follow the example of "Talking of Michelangelo".

by delores neuman
and gail peabody

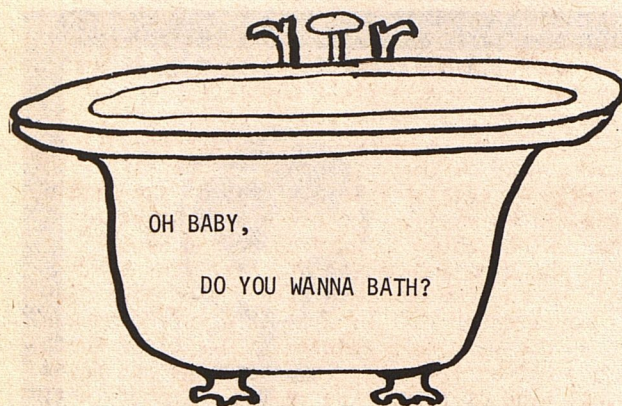


Among the Warramunga of Australia, women were required to cover their whole body with white pipe clay during mourning. Photo of a January 20, Inauguration Day demonstrator by Delores Neuman

contents

ms. continental	10&11
experiments in hostility	12
crazy quilt-how to	13
jan.20: a sad celebration	14 & 15 & 16
short story	17
reviews	18 & 19

ms. continental



The Continental Baths is a homosexual glitter palace owned and operated by Steve Ostrow, the new Mike Todd of Sex & Entertainment. Secure enough in its gayness to admit straight people to the Saturday night show, the Baths of 74th Street have received much publicity lately as the birthplace of Bette Midler's career and a scene to make in NYC. What has not been publicized is the nascent idea of a baths for women which was actually inaugurated for two short week-ends in December.

Two members of Ostrow's staff, Pinky and Cheryl, along with Joanne, who is married to Steve, became the "womanagers" of the "Little Tubs" at 111 W. 56th Street. For two Sunday thru Tuesday marketing experiments, Ostrow's 56th street sauna club (not to be confused with the fabulous 74th Street Continental), opened exclusively for women.

Pinky and Cheryl are talented women who run the lights and the house band respectively for the Saturday night show at the Continental. Cheryl is a professional musician who rehearses many of the acts before they perform. Pinky used to be the bouncer who kept women out of the swimming pool but has since been promoted to light director of all stage shows. She never misses a cue. Both women are about 5'2", small boned in features and blond in coloring. Pinky wears an oldtime Beatle haircut and wire-rimmed glasses which she adjusts by placing her whole hand across her face when looking for words to express what she means. Cheryl curls and uncurls in her chair while talking fast and omitting sentences replaced by snorting laughter. They have lived together for several years in an apartment in the west 80's where this interview was conducted with a tape recorder and three bottles of wine.

This interview is by Betsy Donahoe.

Q. How did the idea of a Continental Baths for women originate?

Pinky: A woman customer who was a guest at the show suggested it to Steve Ostrow. He wanted to know how much interest a baths for women could generate and what exactly women would want. We passed out questionnaires to all the customers. He wanted to set up a place where women could meet and discuss the idea.

Q. How did you and Cheryl get in on it?

Pinky: Steve knew intuitively that women would want to see a place like this run by women and that Cheryl and I would be interested in a place like this anyway. We were already on his staff. We thought it was a good idea, but were partly put off by the 56th street location, which is another bath he owns but keeps on a small scale. It's a businessmen's sauna club for quickies at lunchtime and after work.

Q. Is there actually a bath at the 56th street club?

Pinky: No swimming pool. There's a sauna, a sun room, a broken whirlpool, a steam room, some gym equipment, a pool table, and a jukebox. But it's clean. The women came to see how it looked but after they saw it they didn't come back.

Cheryl: Some did though. Some came back.

Q. Did they pick people up and use the rooms?

Cheryl: Yes, the younger, more militant gay girls did. Some people came in groups. Some didn't care about the surroundings. The majority who used the rooms came in with their friends. There were all different types; the older crowd, the collegiates, the now-womens-group women, the party-goers who wanted to hang out and were upset there wasn't a bar or a kind of social scene. It was hard to discuss what they would want in a new situation without being biased by what was already there. It wasn't a good test to see who would stay or return and who wouldn't. We were trying to get the concept across.

Q. Do you think the concept would work?

Pinky: Yes, if a place were like the Continental Baths with health facilities.

If there was a pool and a diversity of activities. Most of the girls don't want to come for sex or don't want to admit that they're there for sex. If there were other reasons, like a restaurant, dance floor, physical fitness classes or a movie, they would come. In other words, most girls don't want the feeling that they're sex hungry, at least not in a situation with chicken wire over the beds. It has to be tastefully done, like a hotel room. Nice.

Cheryl: If you want to sell a women's lib idea you don't want a place that is built toward sexual exploitation. In order to work, it has to be different from the bars. The idea of a total environment makes sense to me. What would sell, what seems to me a healthy concept for women would be a place for multiple factions to meet where whatever you wanted to do would go. No limits. If the bar closes and you don't want to have a lover under the pool table you have a place to go where the emphasis is not specifically to pick up people but to meet them.

Q. Were most of the women gay?

Pinky: Yes. A few weren't but two people asked for their money back because they didn't know what kind of place it was. They thought it was a health club. A total environment could appeal to both straight and gay women, but not the 56th street club because there's nothing else to do.

Q. How many straight women?

Pinky: About 10. We got a lot of phone calls asking if it was straight or gay. One woman called from Kansas City to find out if we had ladies to scrub her back.

Cheryl: If you knew about the Continental Baths, you'd know that it's a homosexual health spa and most of the customers knew that this was a women's homosexual health spa.

Q. But you think that liberated straight women would go to the baths?

Cheryl: All the women's groups need meeting halls. They can't afford rent in most places. One of the questions on the form was, "Would you like a meeting hall?" Most of the gay people said that they didn't care. They were doing their coming out thing their own way. This is 1973--they didn't need that kind of thing. The

straight people felt they needed a hall, kind of a headquarters. So I don't know.

Pinky: We need a big big place to house all the factions, everybody.

You also pay as you go. It's not like those health clubs where you pay \$600 and if you don't like it you're out the money. If you go once and don't like it you're only out the price of admission.

Cheryl: If the idea of women's liberation is ever going to work then the liberated woman has to accept her gay sisters. You can't tell straight women, "Get out with your gay sisters, go to the bars." If it also has health features, meeting rooms, libraries, lectures, it gets away from anything women have known before. Men have had clubs all their lives, private clubs, business clubs.

Pinky: Also it should appeal to liberated women because they're not going to be accosted by men in the baths and they probably won't be accosted by the gay women unless they want to be. In the men's baths guys will accost you whether you're gay or straight. The women, I don't think, would go up to people and proposition them. It's safer than going to a singles bar or walking down the street.

Cheryl: And it gives straight women a whole other framework. Suppose a woman has it that she's never tried it and wants to sort of come out. What would this in turn do to her relationship with her husband? She is an adultress, in her own way. But if she's going to accept the responsibility of what she thinks a liberated woman can accept then she should have these same outlets available to her too. She should have to live with "everybody is a woman here"; who is accosting whom, where the sexual pressure is coming from. Is it just in the male/female relationship, is it women to women, is it men to men? Where does the sexual objectivity, sexual object thing, stop and human relationships start?

It's a good place to find out.

What if we get the old dyke crowd in there trying to put the make on a Long Island housewife who's a liberated woman? If that same woman hates sexual advances on her in an office and then goes to the baths to get a sexual advance on her by a dyke, how is she going to handle the two situations? What is her position going to be on purely sexual advances on her? Hopefully, the concept is women's freedom. Wouldn't it seem like she was talking to a sister rather than a male aggressor?

Q. Steve Ostrow makes money at the baths because men come there willing to spend money. What about women customers?

Pinky: Well, they're not quite as willing to spend it because, unfortunately, they don't make as much as men do. They're not that free yet, but Steve did reduce the prices for the women. He didn't charge the regular prices for the opening days and would continue to charge less to the women. He's pretty fair about these kinds of things, admissions, student discounts and veterans. POWs free. He doesn't charge exorbitant rates. His rates for a room for the week end at the big baths is \$10 for 24 hours which includes the show, dancing, discoteque, so they're not spending a lot of money. They're not spending it on liquor because he doesn't have a liquor license. Once you're in you're in.

Cheryl: His whole trip is liberation of everybody. Apparently it takes a lot of money to have big name people come in and do big shows, but The Public comes in and sees, and intermingles with the scene that's already there. So a form of liberation has been accomplished. The outside came into what was before an underground secret. They mixed, they mingled, they watched a great show, had a good time. What is all the hassle? Steve's great for trying to infiltrate the women's bridge society with Andy Warhol. He loves it. If he can get them together in one room, nothing could please him more. Where else are they ever going to meet? And they can come out and say, "That was bizarre, it was strange, it was wonderful, it was fun," and secretly like it and want to come back. He likes to put everybody together. Let them hate it, let them kill each other, but let's see what happens.

Pinky: It does seem that when factions which never meet in everyday life get together, to start a basketball team or whatever, that you have to have something to bring them together, so you have a place that offers so much stuff that sooner or later those people all have to get there. Entertainment is always a draw so that's a way to do it.

Q. But tacky as it was, how many people came?

Pinky: About 180 altogether, at different times. The most he does in there with men on a Saturday night, his biggest night, is 90. It's a small place. You can have a locker or a room. The locker entitles you to the use of everything, all facilities and a place to hang your clothes. If you meet someone with a room you can use their room and keep your things in a locker, so there is a choice of prices too.

Cheryl: If you get your room and your locker and you want to go out to eat you can come back in, spend the night and use the sauna in the morning for a hangover. It's the 24 hours come and go. \$3.50 for the locker, \$5.50 for a room. And you can bring a bottle. There's ice and mixer. There's no stipulation on that. Your room is your room, your lounge is your lounge.

Q. I still don't have a picture of what the women's baths were like. Were there a lot of women running around naked or what?

Pinky: No, only after midnight. They were very uptight for the most part. The women who came in after the bars, at two in the morning, were not uptight. They were the ones who were running around naked and didn't care. We had some problems because we had two men at the door taking money... cashier people. We didn't want to hire women for only four days work and these guys knew their job. One of the guys wanted to watch television and the girls said they didn't want them in there.

Cheryl: The other hassle was what to wear. The general meeting room was right in front of the steam bath. There were robes there but no one who came in the very first day had any idea what to do and everybody was fully clothed. We had some complimentary wine out, so everybody's dipping wine and filling out the questionnaire and nobody knew what to do. Pinky was the first to go put on a bathrobe, and the robe is so ridiculous....

Pinky: Like a hospital gown.

Cheryl: Everybody laughed. It broke the ice to know you could run around in these robes. For some of the duded up made up people who were out to meet their later loves that night it was a jarring thing that it was not a social place where you did up your hair. When you put that robe on and come out of the steam room, forget your make up, you just look like you look. After they got over that, it started to be fun that everybody looked ridiculous in the robe and you could get all wet and smeary and sit around in a towel.

But these were things that would only happen in the first week of a place. If the place had been running for awhile and you came in and saw people in towels, you wouldn't think twice. That would be the ambience of the place and you would know it.

Pinky: If I didn't know about the Continental Baths and I just came into a place like that, I wouldn't know what to do.

Cheryl: We kept our robes on, towels or whatever, so we greeted everybody who came to the door in the garb of the place. Then they felt dumb with clothes on. So even if they didn't do anything, they cautiously checked out the steam room, or the sauna. One group came in and we showed them the locker room, where to change clothes. They seemed to be checking out everything. I thought, "Oh God, they're going to hate this place." Then they all disappeared. I thought they'd just gotten bored with the whole thing and left. Later I'm taking the next tour group around to show them what's available and I say, "Here's the steam room and here's the sauna," and I open up the sauna and everybody's in there making it. It was the first group that I had wondered about. They were doing just fine.

One girl...later that night they had to check because she was in there with a bottle of scotch. I thought holy shit, sitting in there in that hot room...drinking and passing out....

Pinky: A little short girl, all by herself, had seen the ad and came because she needed a place to stay, so she just stayed in there those days, with her bottle of scotch. She met all the people, had a wonderful time and came back the next week end.

Cheryl: There were tales about people taking stale buns into the steam room to get them warmed up and cooking TV dinners in the sauna. By the time they'd taken their sauna their dinner was ready and they'd take them to their rooms.

Q. Do you think the men's baths, the Continental Baths, are exploitive?

Cheryl: In the sense that Steve invites the public in for the week end show for the thrill of being in that kind of place, yes, it's exploitive. In the sense that it's the straight people who are in the minority, that it's the gay people's place, it's not exploitive. If a guy takes off his towel and flashes it, a straight person there for a week end thrill, can't say waiter, throw this guy out. It's their place and what they do goes.

Q. What about during the week when it's just men?

Cheryl: It is understood that sex is the reason for being there. That is what male homosexuals want. That is why it would probably be different for women than for men.

Pinky: It's like if you go to a vegetable market you go there for vegetables. That's what that place is for. The male homosexual health spa is there for screwing.

Q. What about the hypocrisy of opening a women's bath and saying it's not for screwing? Do you think that's hypocritical?

Cheryl: No, when it's open for women, the women are making it what they want. If that's what they want, that's what it will be. Male homosexuals made their baths be the way they wanted them. This is what I mean by the housewife having to decide what exploitation is. It's your world, you make the rules, codes, whatever. It's transposing things right out of society and making a whole other world where the shoe is on the other foot...and seeing what happens then. Nobody has anything to lose except the straight person as opposed to the way it usually works on the outside world.

Pinky: But the straights are gaining. That's part of it, straight people and the straight press. The part about coming in and being accepting and aware is great because now there are people who you never would have expected coming to the shows. They're not shocked, and they're not sickened, and they're not making fun of anybody. They're coming because they enjoy it.

Cheryl: It's like the straight people have to have an excuse. The excuse at the Continental Baths is the show. You have to give people an excuse, like women, right now, with where their heads are now...you have to give them an excuse though maybe they just want to pick somebody up and screw them. Women are not at the stage, right now, to accept that. You have to have many other things, options have to be there so they can say, I really went there for the steam room.

Q. Don't you think there is a woman who would go there for the facilities?

Cheryl: Sure, but I'm talking about the ones who need to come out, who need to learn, have to have an excuse. The ones who can't be presented with Go fuck your next door neighbor lady and find out if you're a lesbian. She might, in the guise of something else. I think secretly people want to accept things but they can't really come out and do it. You have to give them little steps to take that are acceptable so they don't feel they're really jumping a big line to reach what they ultimately would have reached if they had the balls to just go do what they were gonna do in the first place. And certainly people who have been gay all their lives, who know what they're doing, who are bored with the bars. They're not being exploited. That's a whole other ballgame. The Movement gives people an excuse to do what they want to do. That's what clubs are all about.

Q. Then you don't think that anything this open is exploitive?

Cheryl: Right. Like if a straight guy walks into the Continental Baths and he really doesn't dig it, Steve just gives him his money back and says now you know. But it's open. Everybody has the option of going or not.

Q. Everything that you are saying negates the idea of one straight woman and another straight woman going to the baths and NOT sleeping with each other or with other women there. Yet in the beginning (of the interview) you said you wanted to appeal to both gay and straight women.

Cheryl and Pinky: No, yes.

Pinky: Yes, of course I think it's possible. If these two straight women go and just want to use health facilities or go to the restaurant or whatever they want to do.

Cheryl: Or run around naked.

Pinky: Anything they want to do.

Cheryl: I'd go along with that. They can just do that.

Pinky: Yes, but I think it can work that way as long as they're aware that there are gay girls there, and it doesn't scare them. If they know that and they go, then of course it can work.

Q. Do you think that a straight woman in a lesbian bath can handle it better than a straight man in a gay bath?

Pinky: Yes. Because they are not going to be propositioned immediately as soon as they come in the door. Any man who goes into the men's baths is pretty much propositioned immediately if he goes in in a towel during the week. And I don't think that girls will proposition people right and left. One of the things I've found among lesbian girls is that if they see someone they like they'll ask around to their friends, is she gay?

That's because of this big fear of approaching a straight woman. Therefore a straight woman is not going to have to defend herself all the time and say oh no, take your hands off of me, I'm not interested, blah blah blah. I don't think that kind of thing would happen.

Cheryl: Male chauvinism has given women much better manners. They don't go out doing that kind of thing. We're too aware of that, and women don't handle things that same way. Men handle each other the same way they handle women on the street. Men at the baths chase each other around, pinch each others asses....

Pinky: I think there's a great quantity of straight men, married straight men, who use the baths as a sexual outlet. There's that part too. That's 56th Street in a nutshell. It's all straight businessmen in a lunch hour. They go back to Long Island on the train.

Cheryl: It's just like picking up a whore. Prostitute time. Maybe it's going to be the prostitute women's scene...for women too...What about the Long Island housewife who wants the new sex technique with a woman. That's prostitute time too. That's nothing to do with meeting your sister and knowing her head. That's nothing to do with swimming in the pool and beautifying your body. It's prostitution. There's going to be that too, I'm sure of it.

Q. Do you think the Baths are beautiful?

Pinky: The idea of the Baths or Steve Ostrow's Baths?

Q. Let's go to your idea of the baths for women as you would have them be.

Cheryl: Oh yeah, definitely beautiful.

Because it would have everything under one roof that you would need to bring people together. To bring anybody...to bring yourself together. You'd have companionship, activities, food, sleeping quarters and entertainment. Everything would be there any time of the day or night. If you get a lot of people together who are similar, their boundaries tend to be similar, so there's no room for expansion, but if you have a lot of different people together, their boundaries necessarily go thisaway and thataway which ends you up with a lot of space that you have to fill or create yourself. It gives you that place to fill up with space and become what you are. It's taking the pure things out of society and transplanting them into an environment where they can really find root.

Pinky: So anyway we're holding onto our Continental T-shirts...and hoping he opens a place.

Cheryl: Steve's dream is to build a women's bath in the same building with the Continental Baths. On the week ends, when the big show comes, there would be a tunnel so that the women and the men could get together. But that's so far away. He's not ready for that yet. It's still an idea. It works in people's heads but not in their lives.

Pinky: If you could guarantee that everybody was gay, but as soon as straight men are accosting lesbian women and straight women are accosting homosexual men for kicks. That's another whole mess.

Cheryl: It takes time. Once your own world is secure enough, you're ready to attack the other world. But until the women's side gets as strong as the men's side you can't open those doors because it's too many things at once. You have to take it so slow and so easy. Integration just takes the longest time in the world. Somebody has to open doors, start a thing, let it flub on its ass and start it again until it's so old hat to you that it finally gains acceptance.

The day after the interview I telephoned Steve Ostrow to ask him if he planned to open a women's bath. He said, "Plans are formulating but nothing's definite as yet. Could open tomorrow, next week or next year...."



experiments in hostility

The following is the second in a series of articles the Culture(s) pullout section will be running on experiments in hostility.

experiment 4

Saturday night, a party. I leave the dancing and wander into a room where forty people are sitting on the floor in concentric circles. The inner circle consists only of men. Confronting each other. One says, "The discussion was going fine until you decided to change its format." Another man, bearded, Defends. The company attends Respectfully: the moment is about to birth the Encounter dig that passes for revelation, in the cheapening of intimacy common to our times. The room is hushed, it is Saturday Night Allegory Time. I have just left a room where men danced ostentatiously with each other, like Anthony Quinn when he plays men connected to the Soil, lots of stomping and so forth, and in this room that I now enter -- here as well-- the boys are playing with each other. I sit in boredom for about five minutes and then holler out in a way I hope is provocative/playful for a party: "What about the women?" After all, this is a Group. The company is stunned, asks me what I mean. I quickly run through my spiel -- no woman is talking, the boys are playing Big again, it's boring not to hear a woman talk, even the change in pitch would be welcome. In addition, I accuse the women present of being cowards for not speaking up. Two things rapidly happen: 1) All the men but one rise-- almost as if in tandem-- and file out of the room, including a sometime lover who will later justify his deserting me in a clearly Crisis situation by saying he knows all the Feminist arguments and including one man who says, "I wonder what she looks like" then holds a candle up to my face as he leaves. 2) The women who remain in the room attack me on three counts. One says, "I'm sick of women who only open their mouths to say that women aren't allowed to open their mouths." Another says, somewhat obscurely, "It's who's doing the criticizing that I object to." And a third explains, "It's good to listen. You learn a lot."

I was surprised by both the men's and the women's actions. Apparently, to even playfully challenge sexism was to empty out a room in a minute. The men's behavior was not so hard to fathom. Women are either not sufficiently interesting to engage the People's attention or, more probably, sexism is a fragile condition, too weak to be even verbally defended. I was taken off guard by the women. Thinking over their reaction, I thought that perhaps by presenting myself as the only woman present with enough guts to plead the cause of women, I had in a way, exalted myself at the other women's expense. I remembered too how often female students of mine would rush to defend men who were being attacked even slightly. I once said that overweight women and short men were considered unattractive, for instance, and three women

immediately asked what was wrong with short men.

Anyway, I now know how to have a good time at a party: don't rock the Cock. But will I ever get invited to another party?

experiment 5

Henri Peyre is a renowned literary critic and professor of French. Two years ago, I found the derogations of women he offered in his courses so annoying I dropped the courses. I am now auditing them, and the derogation is still there, though he is more defensive now, pauses after a remark, like an animal who hears a noise. Women in college are familiar with the way in which women and women intellectuals are either ignored or disparaged. A remark one often hears in literature classes is that women writers excel at short forms, the short story for instance. (Since universities seldom assign the short story past Freshman Composition, this is a not so subtle put down.) One hears, though, that women lack the Longer Breath required for the novel. Peyre's attacks are varied and conventional. One mode of attack is frequent enough and its nature so ossified that it should be called a Figure of Misogyny; it is the kernel of contempt in the Anti-Woman Epigram. Professor Peyre doesn't himself share the famous views he quotes, of course, among which is a tri-partite definition of the ideal Woman which has as its third term: "never opens her mouth." One of his courses is on the 19th century novel-- the French personal novel; when Peyre discusses its origins, he fails to mention the author who is acknowledged to have originated it, Mme. de Lafayette. Speaking of the autobiography as the 20th century literary mode, he fails to mention Leduc, Nin, De Beauvoir, and Doris Lessing, its theoretician. Peyre's emphasis on the hero's development is normal enough in such a course where where most of the works used are written by men, but as his non stop lecture proceeds, I have an increasingly disturbing sense of an Alice in Wonderland, upside down world. I am so aware of thinking with a woman's point of view, of having women at the center of my world, that to hear women referred to as stepping stones in the development of men, to listen to male accounts of experience as if they were universal, and to see my own sex as peripheral, to have it encapsulated in a male consciousness, and I along with it, as if I almost couldn't breathe on my own, but first had to be swallowed by a man (and rapidly disgorged) is profoundly upsetting. I stare at Peyre but he doesn't notice. In his view, and in those of the authors he paraphrases, I could not see, merely be seen. I had no ego, no concerns of my own, not even standards by which I could judge men attractive. Even the love experience, generally acknowledged to be quintessentially women's, was not mine. I existed to be an object of consideration for men, if and when they chose to consider me at all. Period.

In addition, Peyre was asking me and the rest of the class, fifteen out of sixteen of whom were women, to consent to considering women a class apart from ourselves, a class on the outskirts of consciousness. He was asking us to laugh at our frivolity and dispensability as well. Perhaps because it was such an archaic performance, he is over seventy, this Genteel Club Gent, perhaps because his touch is no longer so light, or because the times are heavier, I chose to object: "Men love women in whom they see themselves reflected," he pronounced. "Women love men in whom they see themselves reflected," I pronounced. "I don't think that's true," he said. Here I was careful to be flirtatious: "You wouldn't know; you're not a woman," I said. "But I think that those on the outside, (men) see things (women) more truly," he said. "In that case, women understand men more than men understand themselves," I said, and there it ended. I said some things which I didn't believe. I was interested in applying men's logic to themselves, and more importantly, I wanted men to know that women have a con-

sciousness. Such a simple thing, really, you'd think they'd know.

After the class, two women began speaking to me. They had also been offended, it turned out, but one was curious about my anger (I had thought it repartee.) "Why antagonize him?" she asked. "That's the way he is." After we talked a bit, she told me that a woman friend of hers had delivered a paper on Montaigne, at a conference. Peyre's only comment had been: "The only thing Mrs. X knows how to do is dress well."

I objected to Peyre not only because he angered me, but also because I think that if women let his kind of palaver go down, they are perpetuating the atmosphere of sexism. One doesn't really challenge an individual so much as a climate.

a plan

One good method of attacking sexism in public is by hissing. I doubt whether a man in a position of power or visibility can tolerate being embarrassed for more than a few months. When women hiss in theaters, classes, political rallies, they help create an atmosphere in which sexist remarks, like anti-semitic ones, are no longer permissible, respectable. No one likes to be hissed at. It would, obviously, be most effective if more than one person attacked a sexist speaker. A single person is too vulnerable, in her own eyes, and in the eyes of society, to the charge that she is crazy (though, I suppose, there is a certain glory in being attacked that way too.)

The place Hissing can be a most effective agent of social change is, I think, in the live studio audiences of television programs. One and a half years ago, I was angry at Dick Cavett. While ignoring female guests and flirting with male ones, he alluded to women as dogs once a week. Men (and women?) in the audience laughed, and the jokes went on for a long time, a year at least. I used to wonder why women didn't boo and prayed for them to do so. The remarks eventually petered out-- perhaps Cavett's prick went limp. Probably numerous women wrote in to protest.

But if a hundred, or twenty five, or even ten women had been dispersed throughout the audience, dispersed so they couldn't be easily singled out as wierdos by the camera and ejected by the ushers-- and dispersed hissing could seem the spontaneous voice of social disapproval rather than the voice of a specific group (who could be called crazy, subversive or unrepresentative) then the jokes would have ended a lot sooner. Cavett would have been publicly humiliated as the miracle of television broadcast to millions as the impersonal and ubiquitous voice of an almost divine disapproval.

Women in an audience did do this on a recent David Susskind show about Feminism, but it failed for several reasons. The women sat all together, in too small a theater, and they became defensive. The Hissing needs to happen not only on shows dealing with feminism, but all the time, preferably dispersed, and always cool. A flustered person is unconvincing and seems weak. Since it is difficult for me to avoid being defensive, I imagine it would be better not to talk, if asked by Susskind or another of his ilk, but rather to frustrate him by refusing to answer and thus dignify his question, or by Hissing interminably.

If women attack men, they should be prepared to be called Ugly or Bitter. Women are tyrannized by the fear of being called either or these. A lot of women's anger is suppressed because of the fear. Dispersed Hissing is safe in that it avoids the possibility of being personally insulted. However, what the terms Ugly and Bitter mean in themselves should also be examined. The fear of the two epithets needs to be confronted and overcome for the purposes of waging other mass political actions, not to speak of individual acts and all our lives. Ugliness and Bitterness need to be discussed at further length. For a future column.

by pussy new york

women's crafts:quilts

crazy quilts

Crazy quilts are not actually quilts, in the sense that they are not held together by running quilting stitches. However, they are generally called quilts since they originated from that craft.

When quilts became popular in Europe and even after they were brought to the New World in the days of the colonies, quilting was not only a popular craft, but many of the women of the upper classes practiced quilting as well. Quilts were designed of family patterns and were often made of fine and expensive fabrics. During the western expansion in the United States, when access to fabrics was limited, the women of the time had to come up with alternatives. It was at this time that the crazy quilt became popular.

By using scraps of fabric left over from other needlework, as well as parts of old clothing which was not too worn, and piecing them together randomly, the women were able to conserve material while still providing the warm bedding that was needed.

These crazy quilts were utilitarian but were beautiful as well. They became popular in places where material was available and with people who could afford the best yard goods. Crazy quilts and slumber throws made of the finest materials began to appear in the parlors of the rich.

Today the crazy quilts are still popular. Old ones have become collectors items and new ones are still being made.

how to:

Start with a piece of unbleached muslin, percale or an old sheet that is not too worn. This material will be the base of the quilt, so if you use a sheet, make sure it is not torn or worn thin anywhere.

The goods that you use for the patches can be scraps or pieces of old clothing. When choosing the patches be careful to use materials with the same qualities. This is especially important if you plan to make a washable quilt. All of the fabrics should be able to be washed in the same conditions with no shrinkage or stretching.

Start in one corner of the base goods. Lay the first patch right side down at the edge of the base goods and run a line of stitching by hand or on a machine along that edge leaving a 1/2 seam allowance.

Turn the patch over so that the right side is up, and the first patch is in place.



Take the next patch and lay it right side down along one of the raw edges of the first patch and run a line of stitching along that edge. Trim any extra off of the seam allowance and turn right side up.

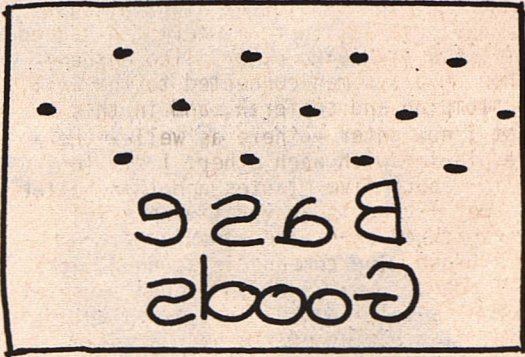


Continue this procedure, laying each new patch right side down along one of the raw edges of a patch which is already sewn down until the entire base is covered. At the edge of the base fabric, sew raw edges under by hand with a blind stitch or an applique stitch. Add pieces of ribbon, decorative tape and embroidery to enhance the design of the quilt.

The top is now finished. To assemble the quilt lay down the back, which is usually a piece of plain fabric. If the fabric you are using is not wide enough and you must sew several pieces together, make sure that the seams are spaced evenly on the finished quilt.

Over the back, lay down the filling. Do not use quilt batting since there will be no running stitches to hold it in place. You can use an old blanket or a piece of flannel but make sure the filling is as washable as the top. Line up the three layers so that they are centered with each other.

The three layers will be secured by a series of knots. Use several strands of embroidery thread or some other kind of strong and decorative thread. The knots should be in rows and spaced as pictured in diagram below. Make the knots by pushing a threaded needle through the three layers and back up again in the spot where you want the knot. Without cutting the thread, go on to the next place where you want a knot. After you have made a stitch at all the points, cut the threads halfway between each place and tie the ends of the threads. Trim the threads close to the knots. French knots can also be used to secure the three layers together.



To finish the edges of the quilt, turn the edges of the top and back, so that the edges meet on the inside. Place bias tape over the edges and sew shut.

by carol edelson



january 20: a sad celebration



photos by delores neuman

introduction

The day after the January 20th Counter Inaugural -- Sign the Peace Treaty Treaty -- Out Now demonstration found me in bed with a cold reading about the the piacular rites of the Arunta, the Warramunga, and other Australian tribes, in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, written in 1911 by Emile Durkheim.

According to Durkheim, when the Warramunga heard the piercing cry that indicated the death of a tribesman, they came running as fast as they could. Most began howling, weeping and moaning. When they reached the body of the dead man, the men threw themselves upon it, until the dead man could no longer be seen for the mass of struggling bodies. Women knelt prostrate next to him, while digging sharp sticks into their heads, drawing blood. After several hours of violent (though etiquette controlled) mourning, the rite ended with a torchlight procession as the dead man's body was borne to its burial place.

Funeral or mourning rites appeared to Durkheim to be the most common, but not the only form of piacular rite. When enemies from other tribes or the white man stole one of the Arunta's religious treasures, the tribesmen deplored the misfortune by smearing themselves with white clay and remaining in their camp for two weeks while weeping and lamenting. Among the northern Australian tribes, when a harvest proved to be insufficient, the tribespeople went on prolonged fasts and vigils, frequently dancing until exhausted. A primary object of these "sad celebrations," according to Durkheim, was to meet a calamity or else merely to commemorate and deplore it. The more important object of the rites, however, was for the tribespeople to heighten their common emotion and thereby to strengthen their feelings of social solidarity through collective cultural displays.

The more I thought about this use of mourning rites, the more the notion seemed appropriate as a taking off point for analyzing the January 20th demonstration, despite the vast difference in cultural contexts between what might loosely be termed the left, and the Arunta. Not only was the demonstration a display to deplore the re-inauguration of Nixon (King Rat as the Yippies saw him), or to protest the increased bombings of North Vietnam; but the demonstration was possibly a double piacular rite. For with the growing feelings of weariness, rancor and impotence of anti-war lamentors, along with the rumors of the signing of a cease fire aired by the mass media; numbers of people I talked to felt that they were viewing the death of the rite itself--of the mass anti-war demonstration.

Yet while the Counter Inaugural was a sad celebration, with characteristics conforming to those set out by Durkheim; it failed--it seemed to me--to produce the anticipated feelings of emotional strength, social solidarity and moral cohesion.

To test this notion, I collected demonstration reminiscences, including my own, in written and oral form from half-a-dozen unsystematically, non-randomly selected women. The reminiscences will be used for two purposes: 1) To see if the defining characteristics of piacular rites are applicable to the demonstration; and 2) to give some reasons why the demonstration didn't fulfill its purposes.

defining characteristics

celebrated in a state of uneasiness

Piacular rites differ from other positive rites in that they are celebrated not with joy or euphoria as their dominant emotion, but rather a sense of mourning, lamentation, loss or emotional uneasiness. When a loss, disaster or calamity occurs, the struck group or tribe feels uneasy about the strength of the social bonds that tie them to the group. Durkheim reports that at Warramunga rites of mourning, there is much ritual kissing and holding of one another, seemingly as a means of assuring themselves that despite loss, the group will continue.

Walking down 16th Street on our way to the demonstration, members of the little band I was with looked eagerly at buses and cars that passed us by to spot fellow demonstrators. When we spotted or were spotted by likely suspects, there was an exchange of New Left signals (raised fists, v signs). These signals were given with exuberance, in contrast to the growing coldness and lack of exuberance we felt.

My cousin Barbara, described the march to me as "pretty depressing," until she ran into her last year's housemates. Greetings for old friends and acquaintances in general seemed to carry a warmth that was incongruous with the depression many people felt at being, as one observer described it, "100,000 weary but struggling, well-meaning but impotent demonstrators." After long years of anti-war struggle that seemed, at least for the last few years, to be without any political efficacy, many wondered whether a "we" really existed, and many went to the demonstration despite apathy and indifference to see if a moral community still survived.

attendance is an obligation

When the Australian tribespeople face death of a peer or other misfortunes, grief may or may not be spontaneous, and strongly felt by an individual. Regardless of the depth of feeling, according to Durkheim, individuals feel morally bound to participate in the mourning or sorrow. Not to participate would be equivalent to breaking the bonds uniting the individual to the group.

Despite the fact that many marchers saw the demonstration, as one reluctant participant described it, as "the same old shit," many came because they felt an obligation to show Nixon and ourselves that despite our losses we were still a moral force that hated Nixon and the war as much as ever. To quote a sometimes anarchist:

"Anti-war demonstrations have become a part of my life. They are command performances like weddings and funerals. One feels guilty not making an appearance. Just living one's everyday life is tantamount to sleeping through Christmas. Historical occasions always suck me in. Even when they are Trotskyite-inspired set-up jobbies like the Moratoriums and Mobe demonstrations. How would I feel, I think to myself, if a grandchild asked me 'What was it like at Nixon's Second Inaugural?', and I'd have to say, 'I didn't go.'"

Another respondent describing why after weeks of decision not to attend she was at the last minute frantically calling baby-sitters, feeling twinges at the thought of missing the occasion:

"You gotta be there...if people are doing something, anything, to oppose the government, if they are physically laying themselves on the line to protest--always a possibility at any demonstration--it's your moral responsibility to support them, to be there."

requires sacrificial acts

The tribal piacular rites described by Durkheim, require of participants both abstentions such as fasts, silent vigils, and withdrawal from the rounds of ordinary everyday life, along with positive acts to show suffering such as self-mutilation. It is through this sacrifice and sorrow that tribespeople rise above themselves, and become worthy of the moral or the sacred.

Anti-war demonstrations are also characterized by these redemptive acts; fasts, vigils, and laying one's body on the line to be gassed, beaten or jailed. On January 20th, the bitter coldness of the day, the rumors of busts for passing out counter inaugural literature, and the ankle-deep mud between the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument made possible some positive acts of sacrifice as evidence of moral commitment. One observer recalls, "We parked the car far away from the gathering point. It was of course freezing. We bought chocolate bars. We made wry comments. We got our shoes caked with mud trudging to the Lincoln Memorial." Another observer described "hours in the cold" watching people in long lines for the portable toilets, sitting and waiting for the directions to line up and move. And finally, perhaps the best description of preparing for the sacrificial ritual:

"Preparations always make me feel a bit like Walter Mitty. Layers of clothes. The work boots that make me feel too clutzy in everyday life. I am self-conscious and laugh at myself for being so, but really I am savoring every act, every preparation as if it were momentous. My cynicism at the counter-establishment establishment shows: we are all just going through the motions again. I go I guess to be counted in the body count of the Militant and not to be counted in the Washington Star. I have reserved \$50 out of the paycheck I chased yesterday for collateral. May Day, two years ago, collateral was \$10, which I didn't have. Inflation raised the price of protest too."

raises the collective spirit

Individual sentiments are intensified when they are performed and affirmed collectively. Among the Warramunga and Arunta the intensity of feeling produced by their collective affirmation of sadness and mourning results in the need to act violently to the self or others. But as Durkheim notes, this self-mutilation or mutilation of others is not depressing, for the rites and rituals raise the emotional tone and energize the group.

The January 20th demonstration did succeed somewhat in accomplishing this. While we were marching between monuments, a bus with Nixon inaugural guests tried to pass through the lines of demonstrators. We stopped the bus. The Nixon guests decided to hoof it. They emerged from the bus--some with eyes straight ahead or downcast, others with shit-eating grins as if to say, 'I'm not really here in my own persona.' The demonstrators made a pathway for them, but they had to pass the moral scrutiny of the crowd. As they passed through, we chanted, not sporadically or half-heartedly, but with strength and purpose, "End the bombing. Stop the war." One of the Nixon guests, a middle-aged woman with hate in her eyes aggressively made her way down the path, elbows jabbing. When she passed she gave a non-directed shove. To my surprise, I found myself shoving her back, screaming, "Don't you shove." Two middle-aged women, demonstrators from New York, applauded my action saying, "I'm usually non-violent, but her I could push."

Another observer described her rising spirits as she saw the anti-imperialist contingent arrive in all their glory. "It was a fine sight, with spirited chants and bright colored banners." A third observer of the collective spirit noted that, "people screamed with delight when the sun shone for two seconds and sneered with disgust when the march approached the more strategic streets where cops on horses were posted to ward off an onslaught of crazies into the inaugural territory."

Chanters watching the Nixon inaugural parade yelled at participants, "You're marching for a murderer." The yippies had their float of Nixon as King Rat. Numbers of demonstrators were dressed in black robes with names of bombed North Vietnamese villages and cities around their necks. Others carried large papier-mache caricatures of Nixon and Kissinger designed to cast ridicule and defilement on their coronation event.

But for many the rituals of the day and the rite itself did not produce strong enough energy or emotion to overcome their feelings of disaffection and impotence. One observer put it the following way, "Even meeting old friends didn't give the day a feeling of solidarity. There were too many of us in too many degrees of indifference or commitment." Or as one cold, hungry demonstrator put it, "It seemed there were billions of people, but not enough to warm us."

The next section suggests two or three reasons why.

failure of a rite

the women problem

During funeral rites (the most common piacular rite) the abstentions required of women are the most severe. Among the Warramunga, for example, a strict silence was imposed on women during the whole period of mourning, often lasting as long as two years. Women also bear the most severe obligations to show grief, often involving the most painful self-mutilations. With great equanimity, Durkheim states that these extra severe obligations fall to women because of their low status and social worth. The role of women as chief mourners, especially chief mourners to fallen warriors (from POW wives to

continued on next page.



sad celebration cont'd

Women Strike for Peace mothers to girls-who-say-yes-to-boys-who-say-no) is carried on by the anti-war movement. A couple of weeks before January 20th, a Harpo Marx look-alike friend of mine asked me what information I had about the demonstration. I replied that I really didn't know anything much, to my knowledge the women's movement was not involved in organizing. Voice filled with righteousness, he thundered that the war wasn't between male powers, and ignored my "yes it is" comeback. "Women are losing sons," he yelled. I admitted that I felt a moral obligation to go (I'm sonless, but all those pictures of burning Vietnamese), once again heeding the old demand that women put others ahead of themselves.

In other sorts of piacular rites (as in most religious rites Durkheim described) women are excluded from participation. Women, Durkheim tells us, are considered profane, contaminators of the sacred. At the 1969 Counter Inaugural Marilyn Salzman-Webb attempted to give a speech on the oppression of women. She was greeted by boos and a loud male cry of "Take her off the stage and fuck her." Four years later, there was a special section (Section E) for women, but little display of women's issues or culture (a group of women from New Haven did raise my spirits as I saw them march by behind a women's liberation banner).

There was still the feeling transmitted that at least some women and their issues contaminated the march. To quote one observer, "I got the distinct impression that some of the other members of the section were as irritated as I was at my being there. I intercepted glances and scrapes of conversation (in carefully lowered voices) indicating my Lesbianism (I was wearing my buttons, including my well-beloved Dyke button). Why the devil did I have to contaminate their section of the march instead of swelling the ranks of the token women's or gay section?

The two traditional obligations of women in piacular rites--special obligation to mourn for men, or exclusion because of our contaminating quality--are no longer tenable; but numbers of women left the demonstration not elated but depressed that they had once more participated in a rite that they didn't feel was theirs. As one radical feminist friend put it:

"I went back with my group having learned and re-learned an extremely important lesson: never, never again will I participate in non-feminist doings, no matter how just. I wished before the march and I wish now that there had been feminist actions focusing strictly on women's issues, because Nixon deserves to be gotten on those grounds alone. If there is another inauguration, I hope devoutly that we will create our own tactics, around our own issues, and not go in peonage to someone else's march."

a lid on lamenting

Putting the woman issue aside (my apologies to all concerned), the demonstration still failed to fulfill its potential for emotional and moral energizing. Firstly, the march organizers acted as if the anti-war demonstration might still have an effect on the Nixon oligarchy. Much of the time of the march organizers (NPAC and People's Coalition for Peace and Justice) was spent negotiating parade permits and arguing whether the rallying cry of the demonstration should be Out Now (NPAC) or the more politically realistic

Sign the Peace Treaty Now (PCPJ). But we all know that demonstrations are no longer attended on grounds of their political effectiveness; so the organizers' time would have been better spent in planning emotional and cultural displays. A PCPJ organizer I met on the train to Philadelphia was flabbergasted by my suggestion that defilement rituals--like spitting in the reflecting pool at the Lincoln Memorial--ought to be encouraged. He replied that there would be too many police and troops to risk anything but the most dignified march.

Which brings us to the organizers' second fault; their law-and-order mentality. After past demonstrations, women writing in *oob* have noted that Mobe marshalls prevented demonstrators from committing acts of defilement, defiance or sacrifice. At the January 20th demonstration, the organizers and marshalls played the same role. The voice over the loudspeakers told us not to start fires in trashcans, it was one of the conditions they had agreed to in receiving the parade permit. Another observer reports, "People were pulling down the flags around the Washington Monument, and some bonfires were set. The voice of peace movement law-n-order pleaded with the crowd to put back the flags."

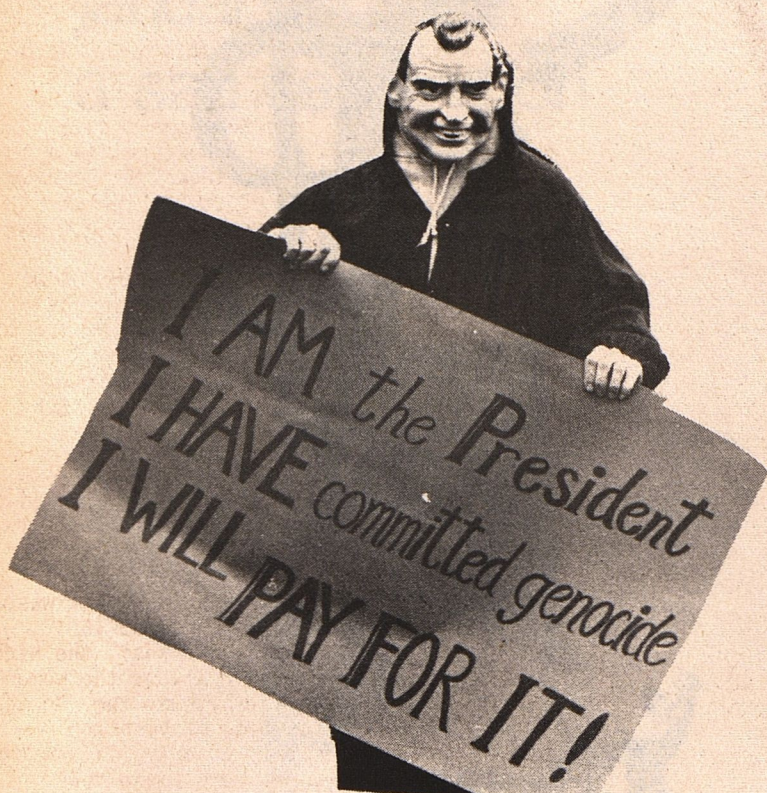
Had the organizers not put the lid on emotional displays, the demonstration might have become more of a sacrificial rite than a piacular one, as we all got gassed or beaten or taken to jail. But remember Mayday, a sacrificial rite that was much more energizing than the January 20th demonstration.

But we the demonstrators must also bear our share. The observers described the demonstrators as wandering aimlessly about, cold and grumbling, waiting for orders to march. As one observer saw it: "Everybody wondered why we weren't allowed to go; the march was an hour late in starting. We waited for the magical instructions to move--from whom? A huge chant started up: Go! Go! Go! but, of course, no one did because it was only us telling us."

Clearly it's hard to put on a cultural display when we don't have anything like the coherent culture of the Arunta or Warramunga. We're not even sure who we are. We grew up in a society where cultural rites or displays are usually for the benefit of corporations or the military; a society where the etiquette of piacular rites emphasizes refinement and little emotional display. We have rejected many of the rites of the culture(s) we were raised in; so we don't have the tribes-person's legitimation of the rites, "because our ancestors did it." Nor do we have their belief in the effectiveness of our own meager rites. Durkheim argued, however, that part of the reason the Australian peoples believe in the effectiveness of their rites, is that engaging in them makes participants feel so strong. A lesson?

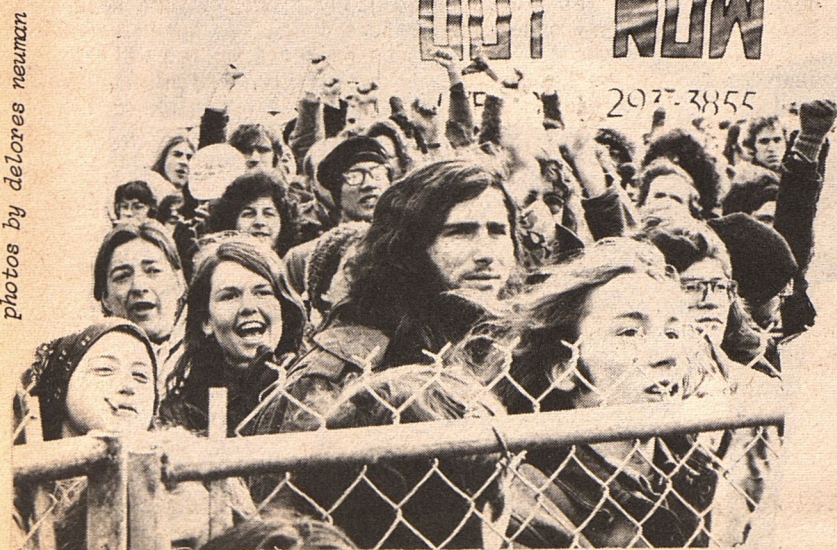
by bobbie spalter-roth

How many people crashed at your house?
Next issue: I Was a Demonstration Hostess!

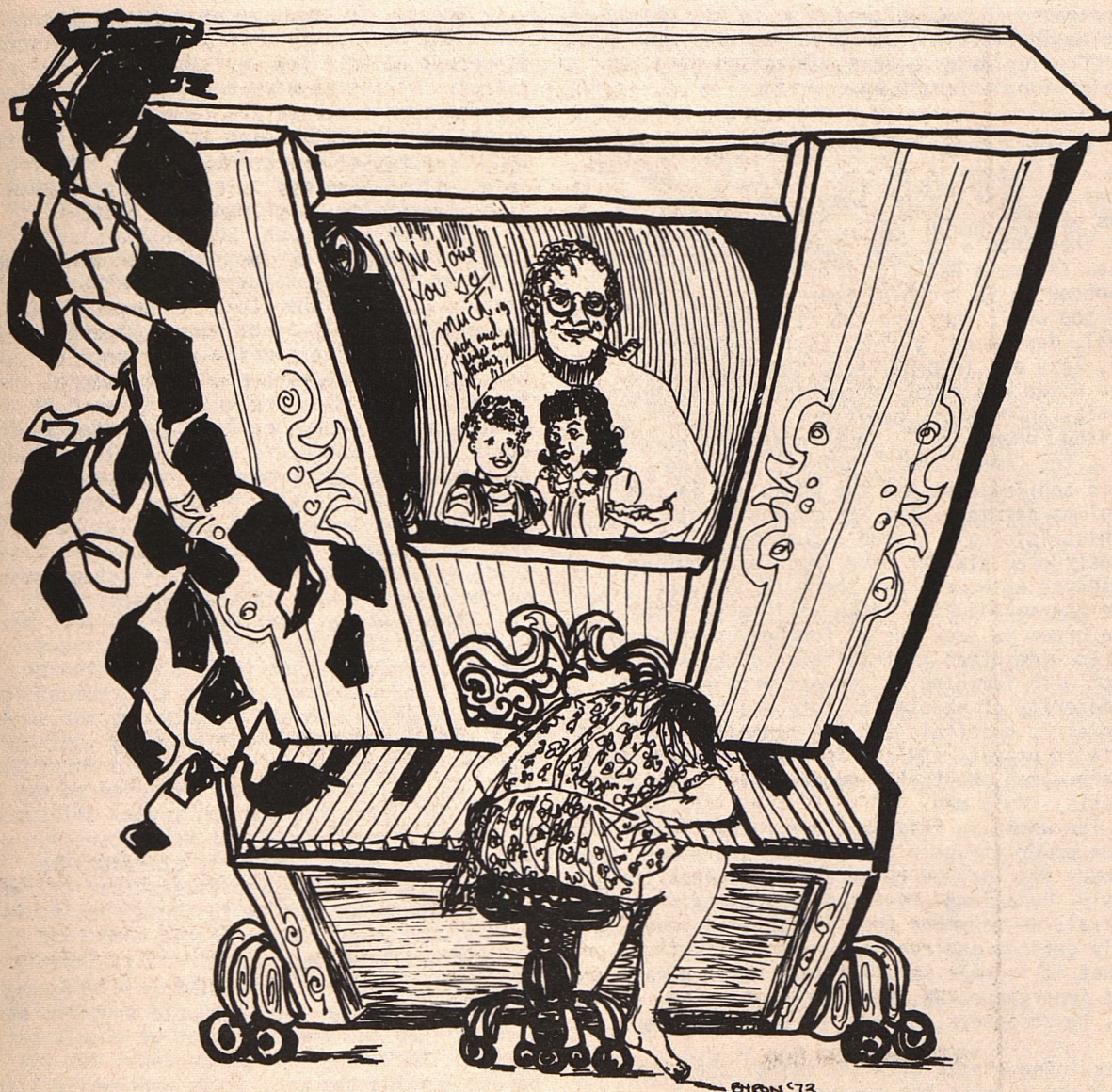


OUT NOW

207-3855



photos by delores neuman



mother as sacrificial lamb or whaddya mean, yr lonely

i had to take a tranquilizer today because all the family was home. that doesnt sound like a big deal until i say also that i was addicted to meprobamate for 6 years & got off it 15 months ago. so when i take one now, it is only when i want to die & need to do a half death to see me thru until i want to live again. i am not suicidal: i am eager to live. but my life is, over & over again, intolerable. i didnt ask for it to be this way. one reason i dont kill myself is what if that were no better?

today was memorial day. to me that means no school, so the 8 yr old will be home, and no work, so the 24 year old male will be home. also we have a house guest, but she has worked on self-development for 10 years now & tends to play less games than most people.

so i wake up, argh, its a holiday, everybody is home, but that doesnt mean we will suffer all day long so after an appropriate pause in bed to wake up greet the kids, kiss the man & pee, i sit down to the piano. figure we'll sing a song before i wander off into chopin. 1/4 way thru the song, the 8 yr old goes off to cry because i slipped into singing the first verse twice, instead of maintaining the 2nd. i suggest

she rejoin us for the 3rd but she's busy suffering. so i finish that & begin chopin. the man walks thru "where's my cigarettes." i mumble that i dont know, no one else replies to him, & i go on playing. i figure it would be nice if he bought some more at the corner store, or if he asked the woman staying with us. but here he comes again, WHERE'S MY CIGARETTES! i suggest a couple of places & keep playing. when the song ends, i get up & hobble around on my sore knee looking for the cigarettes. by this time the woman has caught on & is looking under couch cushions. he takes one of her cigarettes & sits down with a book. i get cereal out for the kids & begin the dishes (it was his turn to do the dishes last month: mine this month. we're not that old style unliberated couple). he doesnt say a word. finally i scream out, "i had to quit playing & you havent even said yr sorry! you havent even said, its alright dear, i got a cigarette from maggie, thanks for looking. all you can do is sit there & read. well get out."

"what?"
"get out."
so he does. i scream how he's a coward, cant even fight, i start slinging his chair around the room yelling "come back here and defend yr chair!" but he doesnt & soon the chair is in pieces on the floor. he's busy suffering outside. the kids say o dear & put the chair back together, he comes in & says hes sorry. i try to relax, we all sit down & urge him to bitch about the car which is broken so maybe he'll feel better if he talks about that instead of wandering around nasty. things are looking up.

i turn on the t.v. to watch my favorite show & the baby starts pounding things with sticks. the bigger girl grabs the sticks, spansks the baby & i comfort the baby but tell her not to make noise right now. she takes the sticks again, makes more noise,

gets them grabbed away & gets spanked harder now so i tell her older sister to stop hitting her & would everybody just calm down & hug or something. the baby wont come to me she's too busy suffering full volume so i walk to the t.v., turn it up & stare resolutely at it at which point the man steps in to take care of the kids. the t.v. show ends & people mildly bitch at each other & the baby wants to ride her trike but its broken so i go out to the patio screaming "i hate holidays i hate holidays i hate holidays i hate holidays i hate holidays i hate holidays" & the baby cries "momma, momma" & of course nobody goes to her cause god knows theres only one mother in the world & i'm it

after while she starts looking for me & the man explains i'm upset & would she calm down instead instead of bringing her to me or telling her calmly where to find me & i'm yelling "come out here; i'm out here" figuring a sore knee ought to mean i dont have to get up every goddamn time

the point is, its a political problem, that is, not a personal predicament. every family has holidays, everyone suffers thru them, on saturday at least the men can play golf or pool or screw out or whatever they do for entertainment (i figured out today golf was invented by wives who couldnt stand 16 straight hours with their husbands), the kids can play outside with other kids & the women can get drunk or read or whatever they do to escape (i wouldnt recommend playing the piano. everyone can tell yr doing it, which is an open invitation to come smash you) i used to think that a commune would help cause there would be lots of people incase you got bored with the regulars, but my experience in a commune convinced me that the situation is the same, just on a grander scale. dont ever, if you want to live in peace, dont ever play the piano in a commune unless the group has decided its piano music time. you'll hear about every dirty dish that ever sogged in the sink.

so maybe the problem is geometrical. maybe if the street were ripped up & grass & trees with benches out there instead, it wouldnt matter if the car didnt work because we wouldnt have to go away. wed just have to walk out the front door & the kids could play & the housewives could visit even when their husbands are home (which we cant do now) & blah de blah de blah why me?

because i am in charge here. i am the woman of the house, right? no matter how liberated the household, i am still everyones main emotional plug because i dont spend all my time on implied insults or ignoring whoever is crying etc. the other adults are not mothers, they are substitute mothers. the other woman is not his lover, she is a visitor. did i create this monster? i dont want the kids to not need me: i dont want him to have a woman to replace me. do i bring this all on myself? i didnt want to bitch all day about my sore knee: what if i had bitched first this morning? would they have seen me as a human with equal problems rather than a musician who wanted to be happy before they were ready for it?

i havent reached any solutions. i am going to try the following: meprobamate the minute i wake up on a holiday. then announcing (if indeed i do want to be happy) that i want to be happy & does anyone have any objections before i begin? hopefully the car will not be broken & my leg will be better. another solution i might try is leaving. let them all play house while i go sit in a park eating salami. but i refuse to play sacrificial lamb again. next time i will not be the one to collapse in the patio crying "how can i fight loneliness when i'm always alone how can i fight loneliness when i'm always alone how can i" next time if i want to be happy on a goddamn holiday i goddamn well will be happy.

by alta



women and madness

by Phyllis Chesler

Do not be misled by the title. Dr. Phyllis Chesler, Assistant Professor of Psychology at Richmond College of C.U.N.Y. is not writing about madness per se. She is writing about power; the power men exercise over women and the power women must learn to exercise for themselves. She chooses the issue of madness because it is there that one can observe how the mechanism of control works. There, too, can be found the key to our freedom.

It has been customary to term "mad" those people who do not conform to expected behavior. The first interest of any society is to protect itself for its own survival, so that those who break social taboos are harshly punished. In her examination of women and madness, Dr. Chesler suggests that men have set up different standards of sanity for men and women. Those qualities said to constitute

mental health in a woman are not the qualities that constitute mental health in a man. A double standard of behavior exists and is perpetuated in society and also in its supporting institution, the psychiatric community. (Chesler makes a neat comparison with the Inquisition, which is appropriate.)

Erving Goffman has suggested that to define a situation is to control it. For generations men have defined women, not only in terms of what women "are", but in terms of what they should be. The woman who does not follow the male definition of femininity or womanhood is in trouble. Some women play the role too well; they are too clinging, emotional, dependent, giving, self-abnegating, dumb, lazy and immoral (e.g., too "feminine"). Other women who rebel become too bright, energetic, aggressive, ambitious, strong-willed, ungiving, unemotional, independent and moral, (e.g., too "masculine"). Neither the woman who is too feminine nor the woman who is too masculine has made what the psychologists and psychiatrists call a good adjustment. Such unreconstructed sinners have trouble accepting themselves as women. But there is hope, because the maladjusted woman will herself seek or be urged to seek "help" for her unhappiness.

So widespread is this tendency to seek "help" with feminine adjustment problems that the majority of people in state and private psychiatric hospitals and the majority of people in private and clinic out-patient therapy are women. Most of them are not, Chesler suggests, truly mad.

The women in "therapy" are rather losers in the power struggle between men and women and have not learned to accept their loss graciously. Recalling the issue of society's survival, we remember that "society" as presently defined and run is a male institution, so that it is male survival that is of paramount importance. We are trained, Chesler says, to be losers so that men may be winners.

The training starts with the mother who must find a way to make her daughter a lady, a young woman. Years of nagging and hassling are only the outward symptoms of what is basically a deprivation schedule. The daughter is deprived of both physical and emotional nurturance from her mother so that the daughter is made to turn elsewhere for affirmation of her being.

Reinforcement of the self is only to be had from men (and if it is to be had, it will

be on men's terms). To the extent that a girl conforms to the image of loser or slave, so her behavior is rewarded.

School, friends, society at large continue the work started in the home, the work of perpetuating a low self-image and low self esteem. Two things have happened: women have allowed men to define the female image for women; and the definition that men have created for women offers a debased and debasing image. It is thus not surprising that women live down to the image expected of them.

In a sense, women have become slaves. But if slavery is an imposed dependency, the slave at least has ritual confirmation of his status. He is neither told nor expected to believe that he is free. Women, however, are asked to reconcile a daily experience of submission and subservience with the social falsehood that they are indeed "free." No wonder, women become confused and seek psychiatric "help". Women are compelled to live down to images created by men, yet are punished if they adhere too closely or depart too radically from the images. All the while, be it understood, being assured that they are free to do as they wish, and that any unhappiness on their part is all in their heads.

What is to be done to break free of this double-bind situation? First of all, says Chesler, remember that it is a question of survival, our survival. Women are trained in "self sacrifice" so that men can better survive. "Suicide" might be an equally good word for the attitude we are expected to adopt vis-a-vis men. Us or them, as "Time" used to say in the old days. Rather than invest all our thoughts, energy and effort for others (our men, our children, the world at large) we should think of ourselves first. That is, we should devote our energy to ourselves. As it is now, we "give" to men in the hope that our gift will be repaid indirectly. Experience has shown, however, that nothing is returned.

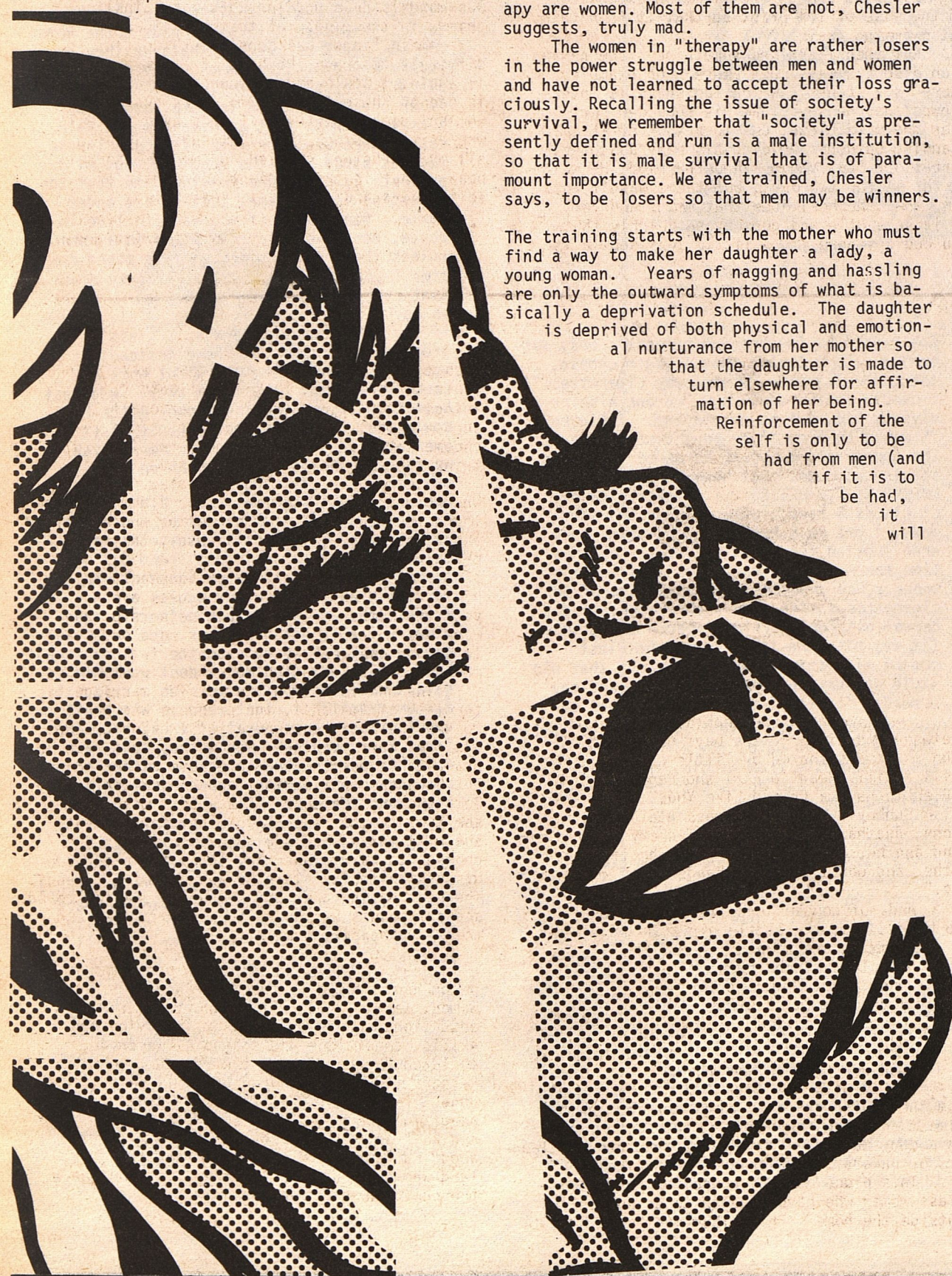
To repeat, we face a double problem: men have defined the image of what we should be; further, the image offered degrades us. But before leaving the men, it is worthwhile listening to one of their number. Nikos Kazantzakis used to say that one should create an image of what one would like to be and then spend one's life living up to that image. How can we do this?

Chesler has some suggestions. First, to create and live our own images, to form new myths of female heroism and greatness, we must recall and refashion the old myths of women heroines and goddesses. Second, in the effort to become free, we need to help each other, to offer reinforcement and support. We must cease fighting among ourselves. Third, we must "brutally" and "ruthlessly" protect ourselves from people and situations that do not reinforce healthy, strong, independent images of what we are or would like to be. For instance, if a friend tells you that you study too much, drop that friend. If a mother or aunt tells you that you should be "more feminine" walk away from that conversation. And if a man would have you behave in a weak and dependent fashion, walk away from that man. We cannot indulge in activities that in any way demean or impair the high image we wish to create.

Finally (and the book itself is the most eloquent argument for this point) we women should write and think about our own experience; what it has been, what it is, what it should be. As we create our own images of reality, so we will create our own reality. We must learn to trust ourselves and we must become worthy of that trust.

Dr. Chesler has shown us the bind we are in and has given some clear and basic rules for finding our way out. Her work is, however, more than a handbook for action. It allows us to think more deeply about the meaning of freedom. In the delicate balance between idea and action (or image and experience, if you will), Chesler has shown the deadening weight of ideas; that is, how ideas or images can constrict behavior. Now, if images can bind, they can also free. It is up to us to create those images that will free us. Because Chesler writes with a humorous awareness of the ambiguities and difficulties involved, she approaches her subject with a refreshing lack of dogmatism. What will be, how it will be, she dares not to say. It is enough to know that what is to come will be new and it will be ours.

by alicia betsy edwards



films

la salamandre

When I first saw "La Salamandre" in November, I tried to write a capsule review of it for myself and found my thoughts-- and even more, my feelings-- almost too scattered to be coherent. Three months later I still find myself awed by the enigma of this movie, as well as the unapproachable mystery of Rosamonde.

"La Salamandre" is directed by Alain Tanner. Belle Ogier stars as Rosamonde, the heroine; Jacques Denis and Jean-Luc Bideau star as Paul and Pierre, the two male protagonists. The story line goes like this: Paul, a slick young writer finds a year old newspaper clipping that he thinks shows promise for a screenplay. It concerns a man who was shot in the shoulder-- he claims his niece did it; she says the gun went off while he was cleaning it. Paul calls in a friend to help him with the screenplay, a young married man who has abandoned writing for housepainting. This friend, Pierre, develops a very detailed story out of his own head about the girl and her uncle, but the writer is not satisfied-- he wants to meet them himself. He finds the uncle, the girl's employers and friends and finally the girl herself-- Rosamonde.

Rosamonde has a strong sexuality-- a kind of big city, cosmopolitan cynical sexiness tinged with madness. She is a vibrant girl, but dark-- you never quite know where you are with her. The writer follows her into her apartment, taking pictures, and she protests, "No, I'm a mess. Let me straighten up a bit." She steps into the next room for a second and then returns, looking exactly the same. The two men are fascinated by her, devote themselves to her and the project becomes so tangled up they have to lay it aside to take

up housepainting to support themselves. And Rosamonde's madness grows and blooms like a dark flower through the film, culminating in her final resignation from reality in a shoe store. She slowly leaves the place, walking into the Christmas shopping crowds, super grainy, slow motion, turning around and around while sado-funk music reminiscent of Velvet Underground rides overhead. Damn. I've never seen a closing sequence quite that emotionally and sexually powerful.

impressions

I went through three different stages while watching this film, three radically different opinions. The first was, "Another cheap shot at remaking 'Jules and Jim' (J&J being a 1961 film by Francois Truffaut about two men and the woman who fascinated them both-- often imitated but never duplicated even by Truffaut himself; see 'Two English Girls'.) The plot was too close for coincidence, Rosamonde too obviously another attempt at recreating Catherine, and too many techniques were familiar-- techniques introduced by Truffaut and the other New Wave types in the early sixties. There was, for instance, the narrative voice-over that kept a day-to-day diary of the movie. And there was at the beginning and end of the film, an expanding of the size of the print so that it is nothing but swimming grain.

But then I noticed something-- the narration didn't always make sense. For example, there is a scene in which the uncle is interviewed, and he says that his shoulder hurts when the wind blows. Cut to a shot of Pierre standing outdoors holding his baby daughter. Narration: "But Pierre liked the wind. He waited for it for two days, but there wasn't any." Now, what the hell does that mean? and yet, it is so subtle and goes by so quickly that you could ignore it. A little less subtle is

a gimmick Tanner uses twice--a character will be walking brooding along the street, while a very serious narration describes his thoughts and will get dog shit on his shoe. The narration continues unruffled while the character scrapes his shoe on the curbstone. Clearly, I thought, here is the New Wave parody we have all been waiting for.

But once again, the movie made me reconsider. The writer Pierre is seen trudging through knee-deep snow to Rosamonde's house, when he takes out a notebook and begins to write. The narration tells us what he is writing: "The salamander is an amphibian, black on top, and orange underneath...It is said that it can pass through fire without being harmed." My first reaction was to consider this another narrative joke-- but perhaps this was serious, a bizarrely romantic touch. From that point on, for me, the film gathered strength to become a truly remarkable, moving film, not just a copy or a parody. The strength of the fascination Rosamonde bore for the writers-- a strength which slowly incapacitated them; Rosamonde's chilling interior monologues wherein she corroborates the details of the life Pierre had invented for her before he met her-- a story she has never been told; and most of all, her insanity as we watch her slowly slipping away into some other life, the movie closing with Rosamonde's head nodding softly to tinkling chimes in the middle of the busy sidewalk.

Alain Tanner has done something that is difficult to grasp. Perhaps if I saw the movie again, I would have a fourth impression. It is one of those fluke films where everything somehow goes right (even if it's hard to tell where it is going). "La Salamandre", despite all my confusion, carried for me a melancholy beauty that is transcendent and an air of self understanding that is reassuring.

by frederica green

records

free to be...

The ideal boy-girl relationships and the ideal nuclear family are pleasingly lyricized and humorously dialogued in "Free To Be...You and Me," a Bell Records release by Marlo Thomas and friends. The music is so upbeat and catchy and some of the messages so appealing that the adult feminist listener may miss the first time around the basic idea of this one-hour long album: that little boys and little girls should get together at a young age to ensure a solid and satisfying future marriage and family life.

Except for about five of the 18 selections which nicely and effectively inveigh against specific sex stereotyped behavior -- like boys not being able to cry and girls dressing and acting like "ladies" -- there is no piece which does not assume and reinforce traditional family roles.

Even in "William's Doll," the story of a boy who is ridiculed for wanting a doll to play with and who is bombarded with every "boy's" toy his father can think of, the justification for his desire for a doll is "so when he has a baby someday/He'll know how to dress it..." etc. "Someday he is going to be a father, too," the song concludes. The lyrics make quite clear, too, that William excels in all normal boys' endeavors. God help him if he was a clod at baseball and also wanted a doll!



Nowhere are free and loving relations between two girls or two boys depicted: the fun is always shared by little couples, like Jill & Bill, Pearl & Earl and Peg & Greg in "Glad to Have a Friend Like You." There are also Dudley & Naomi, Princess Atalanta & John, Agatha & Christopher, Zachary & Jennifer, and another unnamed boy & girl who like each other and don't want to change "when we grow up."

And, of course, the little boys grow up to be daddies, the little girls to be mommies:

"Mommies are people.
People with children.
When mommies were little
They used to be girls,
Like some of you,
And then they grew.

And now mommies are women,
Women with children..."

But the saving grace is that "mommies can be almost anything they want to be...like ranchers or poetry makers or doctors or teachers or cleaners or bakers..." Cleaners, most likely.

This piece must be consoling to middle-class women who have managed to do something outside the home. This album must sell best to

such women, for whom it provides a way to show their children that they are allowed to do things other than mothering. Personally, as such a woman, I appreciated that. To a lower income woman or a woman on welfare, I would think the song would be a travesty.

The song also includes daddies. In fact, wherever there is a mommy in the album so, too, there is a daddy. For those of us whose children do not also live with a daddy, this is a bit grating.

The perfect middle-class household is depicted in "Grandma," where one week every year the mother goes on a business trip, one week every year the father goes on a business trip, and one week every year the father and mother go on a vacation together.

The one selection that defies marriage is the tale of Atalanta, the princess who wants to see the world and whose father-king decides she must marry whatever man wins a foot-race. Atalanta is desirable not because of her beauty but because she is bright and clever and strong. Both she and the poor village boy, with whom she ties in the race, inform her father that she will marry whom she chooses, if ever she chooses to marry, and they spend the afternoon discussing their interests and becoming friends. The next day he goes off to sea to see the world and she mounts her horse to see the world and they live happily ever after.

Part of the proceeds of this album are being contributed to the Ms. Foundation for Women, Inc., "Which will support a variety of educational projects aimed at improving the skills, conditions and status of women and children," according to the record cover. Perhaps one of those projects will be to produce a record which fulfills the promise of the beautiful opening number of "Free To Be...You and Me," an exciting song of the same title about "a land where the river runs free...a land where the horses are free...a land where the children are free."

by fran pollner



Diane Hoxmeier sent in the following communication on the ritual of handshaking:

" In response to your request for "Rites and Rituals," I have one that has bothered me for some time, and one I try to burst asunder or at least underscore everytime I encounter it. Such is the familiar handshake upon introduction or initial greetings. This ritual occurs in "mixed" company; so if one never interacts with men this may not be a problem. But from my own experience, when men and women greet each other, the men clasp each other's hand while giving a polite nod (or a perfunctory kiss or hug) to the women involved. Often they extend the "hip brotherhood" version. Either way, whether the men know it or not, they are separating the women, excluding them. Which infuriates me.

I will usually extend my hand, sometimes aggressively, as it is not expected and is bewildering to persons involved. If the "brotherhood" handshake is used, I will do likewise, often exaggerating the point. I will shake women's hands, also, of course, if they are present(which sometimes bewilders them, too!)

One could argue against such a formality altogether, being "stylized" or too mechani-

cal. But in our society, which so hinders physical contact (except between "lovers", and parents and children) I am all for what limited physical contact we use. we need it; it is like saying "hello" on the phone only more telling.

Among friends, perhaps greetings are more spontaneous and with affection. I think this is especially so between women. But among not-so-close friends and strangers, the handshake may be in keeping. And if it is, I'd rather it be non-discriminating. What do you and others think?"

new names

Thanks to Joyce S.Kaye and Mary Winfrey for sending us suggestions for new titles for the "Culture(s)"pull out section. Joyce's suggestions were: "True Life", "The True Culture," and "Reality and Us." Mary's suggestion is contained in the following communication:

"In answer to Bobbie Spalter- Roth's request, I've been pondering new names for "Counter Vulture and came up with some witch words like Hurly burly and hoodoo; familiar female symbols like the knowing owl and the friendly magpie or the spinning jenny; and then thought, well, the journal is called "Off Our Backs," how about calling the pull-out section "US?"

... One last idea in regard to a name: what about a phrase like "Hecate's Country" or "Hecate's World?" Hecate, you remember, was the original queen-sorceress of earth, moon and underground, usually pictured as having three heads and six arms. Think what a lot she can do for us!"

writers' grants

This newspaper is always looking for money. We thought the following grants listed might be of some use to our readers.

Dodd, Mead, and Co.
79 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10016

The Edith Busby Award is given for the best fiction or non-fiction manuscript written for the age group 6-16 by a librarian or teacher who is working with or has worked with young people. One award of \$2,500 against royalties is given annually.
Available to: U.S. or Canadian citizens
Apply to: Above address
Deadline: April 15

Folger Shakespeare Library
201 East Capitol Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003

Fellowships in three categories are given to persons preparing books or monographs in the field of the Library's resources-- British civilization of the 16th and 17th centuries; drama up to the 19th century. Senior Fellowships are available for advanced scholars, at the rate of 50 % of annual salary up to \$10,000 maximum for one year.

Short Term Fellowships (including summer fellowships) of one to four months of \$300 to \$600 per month are open to advanced scholars and graduate students writing dissertations. Dissertation Year Fellowships of \$1,000 to \$2,000 per year.
Available to: No restrictions
Apply to: Director, above address
Deadlines: October 13, February 15

by
bobbie spalter-roth.....editor
frances lang.....asst
betsy donahoe.....poetry editor
kary shulman.....layout
+ heidi steffens, shaye kris-spanier and the culturesses.

women's fest

March 2 - 18

Arts and crafts show and sale throughout the Fest at the 2nd UP Gallery Community Bookshop.

Friday, March 2, 8 p.m. -- Opening of Arts and Crafts Show (Recorder Concert and refreshments)

Saturday, March 3, 1 p.m. -- Sports Day at Rose Park (Volleyball, Basketball, Softball)

Sunday, March 4, 2 p.m. -- Recorder Concert
8:30 p.m. -- Self Defense and Karate Demonstration (Rape Crisis Collective)

Monday, March 5, 8 p.m. -- Open Poetry Reading

Tuesday, March 6, 7:30 p.m. -- Earth Onion Theatre Workshop (Basement of Summer School at 17th and M St/ N.W. -- \$1 donation -- limited to 30 women so pre-register at the Bookshop.)
8:00 p.m. -- Meg Christian singing at Bookshop (2nd UP Gallery--\$1 donation)

Wednesday, March 7, 7:30 pm -- Earth Onion Workshop (See Mar. 6)

Thursday, March 8, -- INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
Two Vietnamese women will speak and there will be reading of Vietnamese poetry. Donations go to rebuilding of the women's hospital outside of Hanoi.

Friday, March 9 -- "Work Oppression and Alternatives from a Feminist Psychotherapist's Perspective" by Pat Webbink

Saturday, March 10 -- 1 p.m. Art Happening
6 p.m. Pot Luck Supper and Women's Dance at 1719 Swann St.

Sunday, March 11-- 1p.m. Collective Quilt-Making (bring patches, scissors, needles, thread, and pins)
8 p.m. Anais Nin as an Artist: Open Discussion led by Jackie Potter

Monday, March 12, 8:00 p.m. -- Poetry readings by Lee Lally, Rita Mae Brown, and Carolyn Forché

Tuesday, March 13 -- 8 p.m. Film and Self-Help Demonstration by Women's Health Collective
8:40 p.m. Meg Christian singing at Sophie's Parlor at the Women's Center

Wednesday, March 14 -- Sexism in Psychotherapy and Some Alternatives Feminist Counseling Collective

Thursday, March 15-- "Beware the Ides of March: Are You Killing Yourself?" Rita Mae Brown

Friday, March 16 -- 8 p.m. Women in Prison (Prisoners Solidarity Committee)

Saturday, March 17-- noon--GW Ballroom, Women's Film Festival
Nelle Kaplan's "A Very Curious Girl", "Virginia Woolf: the Moment Whole", Agnes Varda's "L'Opera-Mouffe". "Aretha Franklin: Soul Singer", plus others to be announced.

Sunday, March 18-- 1 p.m. Finishing the Collective Quilt
8 p.m. Tentatively more films at the Bookshop's 2nd UP Gallery

Women interested in participating in the Arts and Crafts show and sale should contact the bookshop at 833-8228 as soon as possible. (Also for Earth Onion Theatre Workshops)
The Arts and Crafts show will be set up on Thursday night, March 1. All activities except the Arts and Crafts show and the film festival will be for women only.
Any men willing to do child care during any of the activities should contact the Bookshop. Women needing child care should also contact the Bookshop.

COMMUNITY BOOKSHOP, 2028 P St NW
833-8228

advertisements

2 feminist plays
THE INDEPENDENT FEMALE, OR A MAN HAS HIS PRIDE,
by Joan Holden
directed by Patricia Petretti

plus
EVE HAS NOT BEEN IN PARADISE YET,
by Estela Luna
adapted + directed by Elaine Heffernan

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for further info:
Barb McLean - 508 N. Alta Vista
Hollywood, California 90036

free classified

Feminist Studies soliciting course proposals for 1973-4. Priority areas-- arts, work, family, American sexuality, social change. Others welcome. Part-time 12 month positions. Cambridge-Goddard Graduate School, 5 Upland Rd. Cambridge, Mass. 02140

Freehold Life Center, a political collective, seeks women committed to movement work to share our 10 room farmhouse (men & women) Fighting sexism is part of our daily struggle. Call: (201) 431-2826

Open Environment Pre School in NW looking for 2 1/2 - 4 1/2 year old children 9 AM - 1 PM session. Call Sue Bott 337-0154 or 333-9634

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THE LESBIAN TIDE

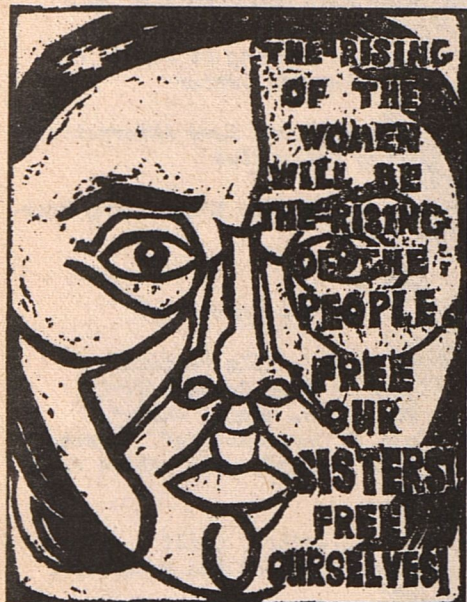
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A VOICE OF THE LESBIAN/FEMINIST COMMUNITY

a feminist therapist



the rising woman, harrisburg defense committee

The text below is an edited version of a discussion with Pat Webbick, a feminist therapist, in a class called Perspectives on Strategy and Tactics in the Women's Movement at the Sojourner Truth School at the Washington, D.C. Women's Center.

feeling better

MONA: What exactly does therapy try to do? I really don't know. They try to get you to live in this society. You come to feminist psychotherapy. You're trying to liberate the women to live in a sexist society? Drive them a little crazier?

PAT: Do you have an answer?

MONA: I think the answer is that we're living in a horrible society and that therapists are just paid friends. In years to come I think people will look back on this sick society and what it bred: all these psychiatrists and therapists. All these people who don't know what they're doing and who are playing with human lives. You can't even answer it. I'm hostile. Answer it. Put me down. Justify what you're doing. PAT: I agree with much of what you say. The only justification I can give you is that people feel and function better when therapy is successful. That's all; there's no proof.

CAROLINE: I don't see how we can talk about psychology without taking economics into consideration. I think if next week we established a minimum income of \$5,000, there would be a lot of people who would change overnight and who would start loving each other.

PAT: I agree, but there would be a lot who wouldn't.

marriage?

ANOTHER WOMAN: What would you say, Pat, if a young woman in this room wanted to get married? It seems to me marriage would be a real tough topic to deal with as feminists if we all subscribe to the idea that we don't want to lay a heavy trip on somebody.

PAT: I would find out her feelings and might share my personal experience. I've been married and there are a whole lot of things about the institution of marriage that I found oppressive. But I think that's different from saying "this is it and any other choice you make is wrong and stupid." I don't want to tell a woman how to live her life. I do, however, want to help her not to be self-destructive. In my experience most marriages are a death trip.

A WOMAN COUNSELOR: I have found myself using positive and negative reinforcement; I ask questions and positively reinforce the negative comments. But I can't be too transparent or people will notice what I'm doing. PAT: What you describe is people manipulation. Be up front. Say "look, I've been married and this is what I liked about it and what I didn't. Here's the experience of friends of mine. But it's your decision. How could I possibly tell you what your life is about?"

WOMAN COUNSELOR: This way I can get them to question things themselves. Oh, I've had a number of women say, look this is my decision and I stop.

feminist dos and don'ts

PAT: Sisterhood is another issue which can become another "should". When it does, it stops us from being in touch with feelings. I think a certain amount of these "shoulds" are good. The women's movement has opened up possibilities and when they are just that and not absolute demands, it leaves women free to decide upon options which were previously closed to them. However, we might never have had the courage to face heavy issues about ourselves without these counter-forces. As long as it isn't extreme, some of the guilt trips haven't been totally destructive. It seems when there are "shoulds" coming from either side, then we have a situation of more freedom to explore alternatives. Once you know yourself, you can say, "fuck your 'should'; I'll make my own decision."

ANOTHER WOMAN: The things that happened to me when I came out! The shit that got dumped on my head. It became important to take a defensive posture.

PAT: Yes, oppression and pain breed defensiveness and sometimes counter-dogmatism. It takes so much strength to be free of "shoulds". One of the big things of therapy is to get rid of someone else's "shoulds" and to find your own which come out of conviction and common sense. If you're going to be some kind of revolutionary, it is easy to fall into a rigidity trap. Strength, however, can lead us to openness towards ourselves and others.

BILLIE: What's your guide, though? You read the life of Emma Goldman and you think aha! She did everything right, right on down the line. She did it, so it's do-able. American life is not exactly brimful of culture or religion or ethics. There's no social ethos to clasp to your breast.

EVA: Except money, mammon, and capitalism. That gives people a lot.

PAT: I find that feminism for me has filled a lot of that void; it does give me a totally different meaning from what I had. Before that I was going to be a pollyannaish psychologist and "help" and "save" people. But I really didn't have any direction or meaning or an explanation for my alienation. Feminist therapy, as I see it, has liberation as a goal. This would involve a sensitivity not only to one's self but to other people.

women's center bust

ANOTHER WOMAN: Who do you find to be the great thinkers in the field of psychotherapy, Pat?

PAT: Best to delve into your own experience and that of other women. In addition, I find reading Rough Times (formerly Radical Therapist), Voices, and the new Issues in Radical Therapy good. I also get a lot from modern therapists such as Rogers, Perls, Laing and Janov (with reservations). Freud was even a revolutionary for his time. He really fucked over women, but he had brilliant insights into the unconscious.

I'm really excited about the Gestalt fantasy and dream technique. When we don't get too far with talking, we use role play to get to a deeper understanding of where a person really is. Our dreams are ourselves. When I see someone, and I say ok, let's act out your dream, they usually find it very difficult. Sometimes it doesn't work.

It depends on where the person is and how sensitive I am.

EVA: How do you act out a dream?

PAT: Why don't you tell a dream in the I-form. EVA: Somewhere in the city a pornography store was bombed. We were having one of our Tuesday night groups here. The police decided it was a woman from the Women's Center, so they came en masse to the Women's Center in their riot gear and they made us all stand against the wall and handcuffed all of us. I was in the dream. I couldn't remember my telephone number to call my husband to help me --for some kind of legal defense. We were all being kept.

PAT: What is your husband's name?

EVA: Doug.

PAT: O.K. Could you talk to Doug? Take yourself through the dream, your feelings and thoughts as you're there from the time when the dream started.

EVA: I'm all of a sudden cut off from everyone. We're all just individuals. We're so shocked--stunned at this violation of our privacy.

PAT: Can you talk to another woman in the room?

EVA: What's going on? I don't understand. I'm really scared. It's not fair.

PAT: Can you be one of the women in the room now?

EVA: I feel as baffled as you are. I just hope it doesn't take a long time.

PAT: Now be yourself again.

EVA: This is really unbelievable. Oh, God my poor baby. Oh she's alright. How long will this last..

PAT: Now, try being the phone number. Try being the right phone number and trying to get through to you.

EVA: How do you be a phone number? I could be my husband.

PAT: Let me try. I'm the right phone number. Can't you remember me? It's very important for you to remember. Can't you remember me? Otherwise, you're going to be totally helpless.

BILLIE: I sort of sensed that the number was mocking. I had a dream about a phrase, "policy structure." In the dream I said, "I've got to study your policy structure." When I woke up, the right phrase said, "Ha, ha, ha, ha, it's policy. "Policy structure" isn't even a phrase.

EVA: Sometimes I think, in a really tight situation old Eva, my mind just falls apart.

PAT: That's the terror. A lot of us have had dreams that there will be all these powerful pigs and then this helplessness.

EVA: I guess it bothers me too because I didn't feel any community with any of the other women in the room. For one thing we were prohibited from talking. And another thing that even if we hadn't been, that we still would have been quiet. We still would not communicate about our feelings.

PAT: The powerful people in your dream were the men. The women were helpless. The "pigs" were in control. And your husband had the solution.

EVA: That's the last time I provide my dreams for public scrutiny!

PAT: That dream seems like there is a lot of heavy emotion in there, like the helplessness, not being able to talk or reach out for help. The pornography image could be further explored.

PATTY: Well, this is the first time we've had a real discussion instead of just a resource person spewing forth.



by karen kordisch

men and women's studies don't mix

Prior to coming to New Hampshire to teach in a small, liberal-arts college, I lived in Berkeley, California for four years. Those years in Berkeley had been particularly heavy for me, resulting in a divorce and, consequently, active participation in the women's movement.

The college in which I was to begin working featured a "January Term," described as a "special four-week study period, seeking to give the student the opportunity for uninterrupted investigation of a subject which particularly draws his interest." (Underlining is mine.)

Shortly after I was hired, I received a form on which I was to describe the January Term activity I would offer. I decided to sponsor a course on women. I was pleased that I would be able to work intensively on this subject with interested students. So I sent in my proposal entitled, "Women: The Oppressed Majority," and began my cross country trip from California to New Hampshire.

After January Term registration had been completed I was ecstatic that thirty students, both men and women, had signed up for the course, and I approached the first day with a combination of nervous apprehension and excitement.

During the first week and one-half it was extremely difficult to initiate any objective discussions. (I had divided the class into two equal sections to allow for more personal interaction.) Many women were reluctant to speak and share their experiences, as no sense of trust and community had evolved from the group. Four to seven men were overtly hostile and extremely defensive whenever asked to explain their feelings or clarify their positions.

Some of the women had difficulty relating to topics such as marriage and divorce, while I, unfortunately, had some difficulty relating to questions as, "Should men hold doors open for women?" or "What do you do if a man wants to light your cigarette for you?" I felt that these were superficial issues and not pivotal points related to the movement. We discussed these differences in class, and I could see that I had been wrong in making such a judgment. If these questions were meaningful to the life experience of the women, then I had to

start from where they were and use their experiences as a point of departure. This problem, then, was soon resolved.

But the problem of the defiant men remained. In my journal entry dated Wed., Jan. 12, 1972, I wrote:

"My classes are going miserably. The men seem hostile, though they haven't spoken for the past few sessions. They are judgmental; I feel I'm always being put on the defensive. I asked one section four or five different questions and still couldn't get any response. They just sit there--some embarrassed, some daring me...I feel that this course is too close to me personally; it is difficult for me to be objective. I think I will talk to them tomorrow and possibly ask the men to leave. I feel this is recognizing failure, but I don't want any good that could happen for the women to be denied. I think an apt analogy might be one of blacks giving a course in black studies and having whites feel compelled to defend their status as oppressors...any talk of change--and of equality--must necessarily threaten them...if the system changes they can only lose. There are several variables involved, but that still doesn't erase my failure."

The next day I told the class my feelings. The consensus of both men and women was to keep the men in class. One woman suggested additional meetings open to women only. I felt this was an excellent idea, and was pleased it had been suggested by a student. In my journal I wrote, "I'm looking forward to the meeting and think it will aid in establishing a sense of community, even though the course has only two more weeks to go."

The first meeting with just the women was excellent and exciting. My journal entry for that day read:

"The women opened up when they met alone. One spoke of being two months pregnant, another of her sister's 'illegitimate' child and subsequent attempted suicide, and a third about her sister's attempted suicide due to the fact that she (the sister) had dated a black man in a small Virginia town. So much unhappiness, despair...So many women are searching and silently aching inside, while smiling fear lights their faces."

My feelings of relief were short-lived. Later a woman student came up to me and described the session as "raw." I saw it as reality. The need to be able to exchange feelings/fears in a supportive environment was an intense need these young women had. As most of us, they had been socialized too well; most couldn't admit to this need. Thus, this was the first and last meeting of the women which was open and honest. Most withdrew after the initial verbal avalanche. No real trust had been established and the women were embarrassed after they realized how much they had revealed about themselves and their families. For me, the time was too short. The term was nearly over and no follow-through was possible.

In retrospect, I see several significant problem areas. The time allotted--a month of intensive study--was not sufficient. It takes time to create a sense of trust and community and the process of sharing with the group should be a continuous one. I realize that while my intentions for allowing men to participate were acceptable in theory (the course being a learning experience), it just didn't work in actuality. None of them had given much prior thought to the women's movement and their roles within it. The analogy to blacks becomes relevant here. Although men have problems within the structure of our society, they still benefit from the status quo and have more to lose by a radical change in the system than do women.

Last, I found that hours of heavy rapping on a subject so close to me personally was extremely draining. The subject is intimately related to me. I am a woman. I have personally known and felt the anger and feelings of impotence when I've been discriminated against. Also, at that time I was struggling in both my personal and academic life for recognition and equality as a woman.

But I have gained much insight from this negative learning experience. The next time I teach a course on the women's movement it will be open to women only; it will occur in an unlimited time span so that we can establish a sense of trust and community and take as long as necessary to study all the issues involved. Then, hopefully, theory can be put into practice as we work with our ideas in a political framework.

by paula eder

bucknell rumble



A radical feminist poet, a women's rock band, and some out-of-state lesbians started a rumble one recent weekend at 1950's-style Bucknell University in north central Pennsylvania.

Freshmen clutched their girlfriends tighter, the religious element refuted feminism in the school paper with quotes from St. Paul, and hostile boys put up sexist signs on the bulletin boards.

The seismic weekend was triggered by the university's refusal for the umpteenth time to hire seven male B.A.'s for regular positions on the faculty, and three women Ph.D.'s as lecturers. It was too much for some of the Ph.D. faculty wives, who follow their husbands from campus to campus, unable themselves to find employment. So they set "Women!" as the theme for Bucknell's annual seminar weekend, Colloquy '72.

Robin Morgan, editor of *Sisterhood Is Powerful* and author of a new book of poems,

Monster, alienated most of the campus right from the start by refusing to answer questions from men after her keynote address (reportedly a stock speech), which eloquently and comprehensively described the reformist, regular, and radical branches of the women's movement. The campus paper distorted her points, and her points and her "antimale" attitude became a hot controversy for the rest of the weekend, with women students trying to appease the ire of boyfriends, who were barred from Robin's poetry reading and from some of the workshops.

More attuned to the majority of participants were the elitist faculty and administrators from other colleges who excitedly described their efforts to impose federally mandated "Affirmative Action" plans on their campuses. This alliterative scheme from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare requires colleges and universities to hire women at all levels within specified time periods. These proponents, justifiably proud of their new status in the academic profession, attested to the folly of an apolitical approach to feminism. Affirmative Action sucks us directly into the Man's work-death machine.

"All of us have women who work for us," agonized Patti, the assistant to the president of the State University of New York at Oswego, a smooth blonde in a well-tailored turquoise pantsuit.

Attainment of academic positions was seen as an end in itself, not as a means to organize women.

A statistician from New York City spoke of the "gentleness of women--the feminine qualities we have grown comfortable with--things we want to give to the larger culture." But in expressing only our gentleness we are kept house niggers, coopted, controllable. We are traditionally nonviolent, not supposed

to be angry.

"We all have a right to our rage--any oppressed people have," Robin said in her keynote speech. "[If we] channel hate into energy, [we can] consume the system. It's important to learn to burn this fuel. We also must learn to burn love--it's helped us survive this long."

"Don't be afraid of your rage: go with it and trust it. That doesn't mean you're crazy. On the other side are strength and love, which do not vitiate hate but transform it."

Vignettes from the workshops:

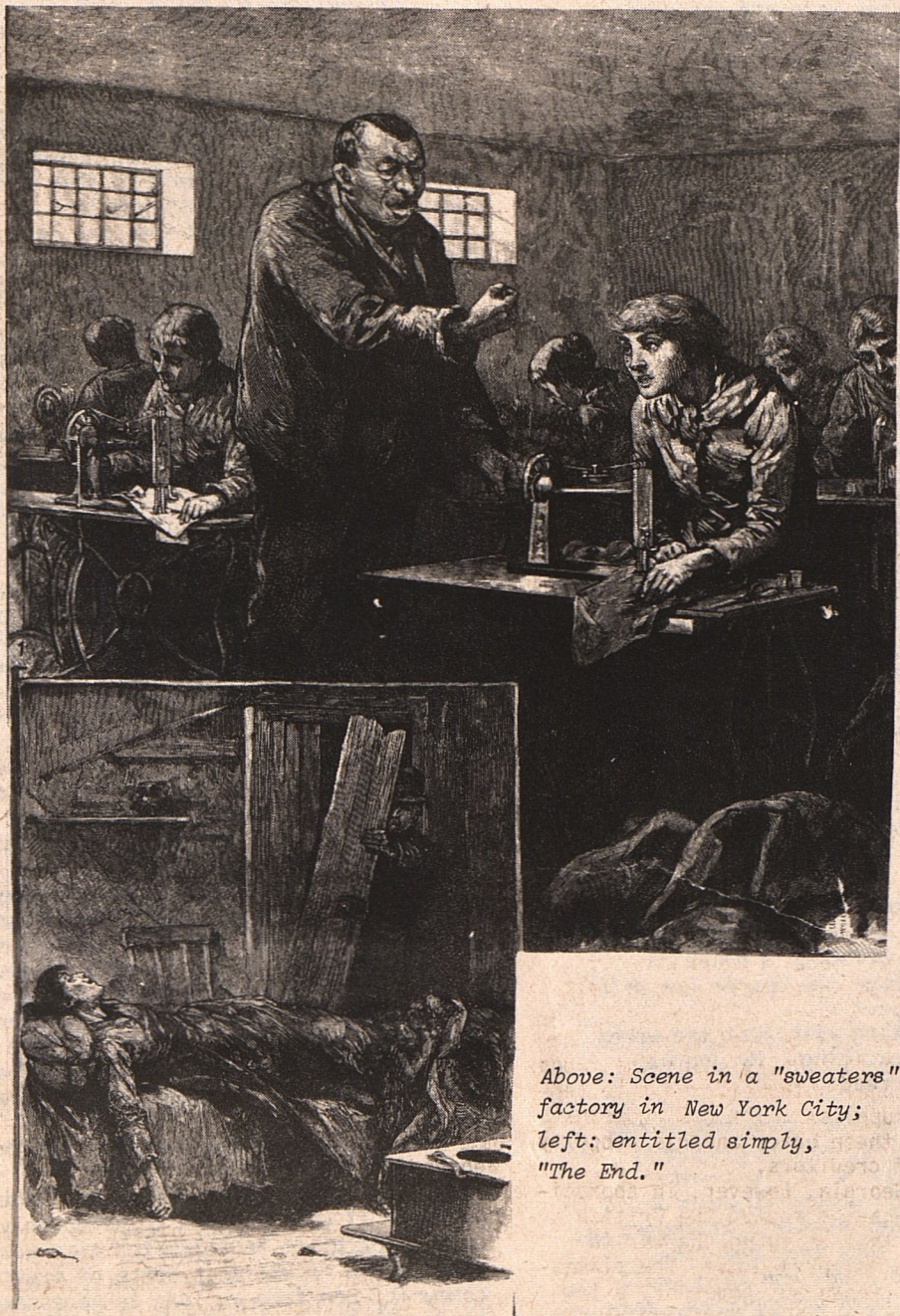
Day care--anecdotes about five-year-olds exploring each other's bodies drew peals of laughter from the statistician; "get them [welfare mothers] day care and they still will not be whole people because there aren't any jobs for them." Note the heavy "we-they" orientation.

Lesbianism--the largest attendance, maybe 200 people. As the two lesbian women from Cornell respond to questions, a Bucknell boy behind me exclaims to buddy, "They're reaching all the girls in this room!" The women say that they have valued platonic relationships with a few men, but that their sexual orientation is with women. One Bucknell jock to another on the way out: "Gee! I thought they'd be wearing black leather jackets and tire irons!"

Sexuality--a platinum blonde biopsychologist from Rutgers dominates small discussion groups all clustered in one dorm living room: "You're college kids, you're not a 31-year-old woman like me. You're kids, caught up in this male-female bind...I like to have bleached blonde hair. I don't feel I've sold out to the male establishment." She went on to describe the virtue of a second marriage.

susan pennington

living history



Above: Scene in a "sweaters" factory in New York City; left: entitled simply, "The End."

There are women alive today who have recorded, in their memories, what historians have failed to record in their compleat tomes: the history of women struggling in this country at the beginning of the century for the vote, decent pay, housing, child welfare, and birth control--and the recriminations they suffered for their struggles.

To recapture for posterity the buried history of American women, two feminist historians, Ann Forfreedom and Sherna Gluck, have created the Feminist History Research Project.

Presently based at the Los Angeles Women's Center and operating in affiliation with the Women's History Library in Berkeley and the L.A. NOW Center for Women's Studies, the project is searching out women who were active in the early 1900s. A 104-year-old suffragist, a 90-year-old professional photographer, a 76-year-old union organizer, and others have already been interviewed.

There are hundreds of other women throughout the country to be located and interviewed, and the project has estimated a \$20,000 budget for the year 1973 to cover the costs involved in recording the volumes of information to be gathered.

The two researchers plan to establish also a clearinghouse for women's research and a digest of the material accumulated, eventually to grow into a regularly published journal.

They need source information and money. (Contributions are tax-deductible.) If you are a woman with first-hand knowledge of women's battles from 1900 to 1940, or if you know of such a woman, or if you have money to donate, write the Feminist History Research Project, 218 S. Venice Blvd., Venice, CA 90291.



western conference

A Western Regional Women's Studies Conference is being planned for April 13 through 15. The organizers, members of the Women's Studies Board at the California State University at Sacramento, are seeking feedback from all women who would be interested in attending: on workshop topics and arrangements, on the agenda for the three days, on the possibility of cultural presentations in addition to academic discussion.

Women who would act as liaison between their campus or organization and the planning committee and women with ideas about the conference should contact: Karen Kennedy, Women's Studies Board, C.S.U. Sacramento, TJJ-3, 6000 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95819. (When requesting further info, please enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope. Every penny counts.)

ad: feminist teacher

The Women's Studies Program at California State University, San Diego (San Diego State College) needs women for Fall 1973 who can teach: Women in History, Women in Education, Racism and Sexism, Contemporary Issues in the Women's Movement, Women in Comparative Cultures, Socialization Process of Women, Self-Actualization of Women, Women in Literature, and The Status of Women Under Various Economic and Political Systems.

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dramatic reading

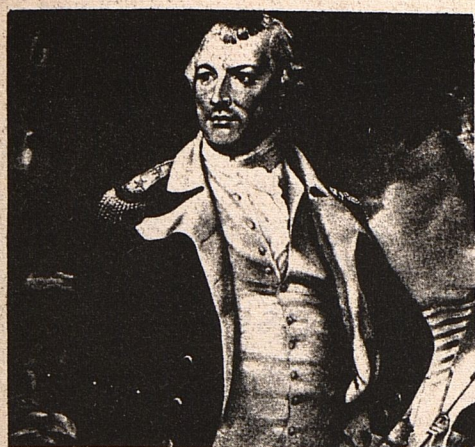
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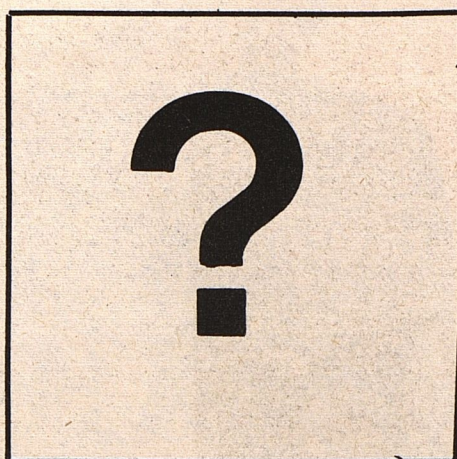
study oob

We recommend off our backs as excellent source material for women's studies programs. Let us know what topics are of specific interest to you; we have back issues galore to furnish your orders.

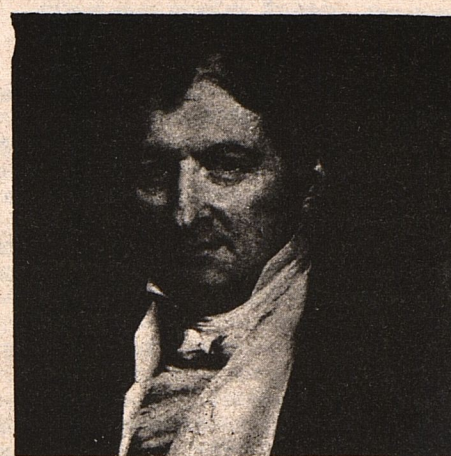
caty of the revolution & the cotton gin



Nathanael Greene



Catherine Littlefield



Eli Whitney

facts?

The Liberated Women's Appointment Calendar attributes the invention of the cotton gin to Catherine Littlefield Greene -- a tantalizing attribution since every fourth-grader knows it was Eli Whitney.

To find out about Catherine Littlefield Greene, one must pore through books written about the men in her life--her first husband, revolutionary general Nathanael Greene, and Eli Whitney, not to mention George Washington, Lafayette, a slew of pre- and post-revolutionary men of prominence (with whom "Caty of the Revolution" was romantically linked by various authors) and her second husband, Phineas Miller.

The ones I skimmed were *Forgotten Leaders of the Revolution* by Swiggett, *Nathanael Greene, Strategist of the American Revolution* by Thayer, *The World of Eli Whitney*, by Mirsky and Nevins, *Eli Whitney and the Birth of American Technology* by Green, *Georgia: A Guide to its Towns and Countryside* by Leckie, and *Let My Name Stand Fair* by Seifert (this last a romantic historical novel, based on extensive research and a monument to puerile, sexist, racist writing).

What one discovers from these various historical documents is that Catherine Littlefield married at age 18, 19, or 21; had 4, 5, or 6 children; had several affairs before and after her first husband's death, or did not; was an atrocious speller, much to the embarrassment of General Greene, or wrote long, evocative letters to her many acquaintances, who fondly called her Caty, or was it Kitty? All agree she was extravagant with money, beautiful, flirtatious, and that she was born in Rhode Island and died in 1814, probably at the age of 61, in Georgia.

Thus is her character and role in history defined. What may be extrapolated from the bits of information contained in these works devoted to other weightier subjects is speculation.

war and crinolines

But a few sure surmises filter through: she traveled through a war-ravaged country, at times pregnant, to join her husband at his various campsites throughout the revolution, braving (and apparently once outwitting) British troops and smuggling gun powder and food supplies in her crinoline; suffered many of the privations and diseases that besieged the soldiers at various northern winter quarters, including Valley Forge; ministered to the sick and, with her buoyancy, made life more bearable for the officers and foot-soldiers alike.

Judging from the letters Nathanael Greene wrote her, quoted extensively by Thayer, her involvement in the Revolutionary War might have been more than morale booster. Greene wrote rather detailed accounts of forays, strategies, possible consequences. Not once does Thayer proceed to quote from Catherine's letters to her husband nor do any of the authors hint that Catherine may have spoken to her husband on any matters other than dinner party preparations. But the letters of Nathanael Greene do indicate that Catherine had a head for more than fancy hats.

debts and letters

A look at Catherine's writing style is afforded by Swiggett in his treatment of Jere-

miah Wadsworth, one of Nathanael Greene's chief aides during the war and one of Swiggett's "forgotten leaders." Catherine enters as a love interest of Wadsworth in the few years following General Greene's death. The series of letters excerpted reveal her feel for language, her pride and her wit.

Mirsky and Nevins quote from the lighter portions of several of her letters to demonstrate the charm and sophistication of the woman who gave the unworldly Eli Whitney a home in a land foreign to him (the South). They allude to the fact that these letters were mainly concerned with financial and legal crises, but do not expound upon the manner in which the woman handled them.

The financial and legal crises were incurred by her husbands, but their burden fell mainly to Catherine. Greene had been left penniless by the war; as quartermaster general he had been responsible for provisioning the troops and had signed personal notes of credit to secure the necessary supplies. The U.S. government did not cover these notes and his property was used to pay off creditors.

The state of Georgia, however, in appreciation for Greene's having routed the British from the South and thus bringing the war to an end, awarded him Mulberry Grove, the plantation of the former lieutenant-governor, a loyalist. Catherine and he, both Northerners, had to relocate themselves, Mulberry Grove being the only property left them. When Greene died, shortly after the move, Catherine was left with still unpaid creditors and a huge, potentially rich, plantation that had lain fallow for ten years. Only vague references are made to her ensuing fights with creditors and Congress, those not being her main appeal.

She married Phineas Miller, who had been procured by her husband to tutor the children and oversee the plantation, in 1796. For years prior to that, however, she had allowed the Greene estate of which she was executrix, to be used by Miller to secure credit for his and Whitney's joint ginning business. Were it not for her estate the two would never have been able to command credit. In 1794 or 1795, when Miller was involved in a colossal case of land speculation and fraud in Mississippi, Catherine authorized the use of estate funds as collateral to save Miller and Whitney from bankruptcy. The financial difficulties of that partnership were a burden to Catherine for the rest of her life.

Notwithstanding the serious matters of correspondence between Eli Whitney and Catherine Greene, Mirsky and Nevins quote such phrases as: "Come here and let me teach you by my example how to enjoy the few fleeting years which any can calculate upon..." -- which is delightful enough but hardly gives Catherine her full dimension.

the lady and the inventor

Miller had secured a tutoring job in the South for Whitney, who had just graduated Yale and was without any job prospects. Miller, Whitney and Catherine traveled together to Mulberry Grove, where Whitney was to rest a few days before continuing his journey. This was in the fall of 1792. He stayed at Mulberry Grove, however, where Catherine gave him the basement as a workshop, and in the spring of 1793 the cotton gin had been invented.

Georgia planters were in desperate need of a means to separate properly and rapidly the cotton from the seed of the variety of cotton that could grow in Southern soil. Noting Whitney's manual dexterity (after having known him for about a week), Catherine introduced him to the nearby plantation owners and reputedly suggested to him that he devise such a machine. And so, apparently, he gave up the idea of tutoring and accepted Catherine's basement and hospitality.

Catherine's role in the development of the cotton gin is rumored: some authors allude to it facetiously; others don't mention the possibility. How many times she entered her basement and made suggestions to Whitney during the months he was building his model is unrecorded. But somehow or other, word did get around about her providing the idea for the necessary completion of the partial machine Whitney had constructed.

He had fashioned a rotating tight-toothed contrivance which allowed the cotton lint but not the seeds to pass through. That the lint adhered to the teeth was the problem. According to one source (the guide to Georgia), "Mrs. Greene intuitively picked up a brush and, applying it to the teeth of the machine, caught the lint upon it." Ah, a woman's intuition. And so the cotton gin was born with a revolving brush to clear the teeth as the seeds were separated from the lint.

Concludes the above quoted passage: "So delicately balanced are the destinies of men that there are times when an event of a feather's weight can definitely change the course of human existence." The feather brain of a woman had possibly provided the principle which the man trained in the use of tools since his boyhood days on the farm could implement by hand.

fade-out

Very little is written about Catherine's activities after the turn of the century: obviously, no other notable men entered her life. She was, after all, approaching 50.

Catherine Littlefield, whatever her buried potential or unacknowledged accomplishments, is not to be glorified. She was a woman of social status and of her times, apparently (if one can believe anything written about her) reasonably well sheltered and nourished at Valley Forge when the foot-soldiers there were starving and the mistress later of a plantation-full of slaves.

She is still, however, one of thousands of women in history denied the development of their abilities and their rights to voices of their own. Having married nobly, she was allowed to squeak through into posterity.

Of the other women alive during that era, the books mention only the wives of great men. Of the relationship of Catherine to other women, nothing but petty jealousies and sewing circles are observed.

The one undistinguished woman pulled by Catherine into the history books is Nancy Loring, her traveling companion and friend who faced with her the enemy troops and the hardships of living in the battle. The historians don't waste any time on her: the one word used to characterize Nancy Loring is "spinster."

by fran pollner

cruisers and choosers

I had just split up with my first lover when I walked into one of Washington's gay bars for my first experience as a gay, single woman. I'd been out with some friends to some straight, dressy party, and I was wearing a long skirt. Mistake number one.

I had hardly ordered my first drink when a figure loomed over me, and a woman's voice laced with shades of Bogart inquired, "Slow dance?" Sure.

Stepping up to the dance floor, we begin awkwardly at first, as women often do, unsure of who is to lead. At least I am unsure. My partner obviously feels no doubt as she wrestles me into a firm grip. The long skirt apparently has given me away. I am, it seems, marked for life as a "femme". I tell her that my lover and I have recently broken up and she looks me over sympathetically and announces: "Don't worry, honey. You'll do all right-- if only you can get a little butcher."

Back again the next weekend. This time I wear jeans. I may as well have had a sex change. Women who had asked me to dance the previous week now smile brotherly smiles and ignore me. The long-haired girls in skirts obviously expect me to ask them to dance.

I comply and find I am also expected to lead (not one of my greater talents). Finally, after shuffling some poor girl around the floor for a few minutes, she looks at me as if I've committed some masterpiece of deception. "You," she glowers accusingly, "aren't as butch as you look."

Visions of compromise garb flash across my mind. How to avoid the type-casting? A long formal topped with a blue jean jacket? Sexy patterned stockings with heavy men's loafers?

change of scenery

The point, of course, is that there's as much sexual stereotyping in women's bars as in any of the "singles" places for straight young people. If you've ever experienced Wayne Wayne's Luv or Fran O'Brian's on a Saturday night (I hope you haven't) you're familiar with the superficial conversations, the cruising and the emphasis on physical appearance that leads some women to spend more time fixing their eyelashes in the ladies' room than meeting men on the dance floor.

The only difference is that in women's bars the superficial conversations are with other women, the cruising is of other women, the people you're trying to attract are other women.

Still, there's something to be said in defense of gay women's bars. Certainly not all of their customers are into sexual role-playing and stereotyping. And there's nothing wrong with going to gay bars to meet people or simply to "be around your own kind." It's parochial but valid in a society which makes it hard to meet other women anyway, and especially hard to meet gay women.

slow dance

But should you decide to go for the first time, there are a few culture shocks you should be prepared for. First of all, expect an inordinate emphasis on dancing in Gayland. I sometimes wonder if we homosexuals really want to dance as much as our culture insists upon. The theory may be that if we didn't dance, we'd forget we were gay.

leadership syndrome

Anyway, you gotta dance. And, no doubt about it, to some people who leads is important. I've seen whole patterns for relationships established in the first few minutes on the dance floor. My advice is, tell your partner whether you want to lead. If you can't,

say so rather than dragging her leadenly around the floor. If you don't care who leads, say so and establish yourself as a woman in search of a less rigidly structured relationship.

If you want to meet people, just do it. You all have something (maybe not much, but something) in common, or you wouldn't be there. Women have been told for so long just to "sit and look pretty and someone will approach you", that we have to learn to take our own initiatives. That's one of the good lessons of a gay bar. Women have to learn to approach each other. If they didn't, in a segregated society like a women's bar, you'd have a whole room full of women sitting and smiling and looking pretty and no one would ever meet anybody.

It doesn't matter how you open a conversation. I've heard lines in women's bars that no Superstud in a singles bar would dream of using. If all else fails, it's OK to try: "We've got to stop meeting like this." But DO NOT stoop to "What's your sign?" She may be a political type who'll think you're referring to the sign she carried at the counter-inaugural.

Be prepared for some sexual stereotyping based on dress and appearance. Sad but true, most gay women are no more enlightened than their society about typing people according to physical superficialities. That first night at the bar, when I wore my long skirt, I even had my "honor" defended in the ladies' room. Two girls were leaning on the sinks, laughing

and talking in a conversation studded with a lot of "fucks", "shits", and "mother-fuckers." I was listening and waiting for an empty stall. Suddenly the door to one of the stalls flew open and out strode a large woman. She looked me over and glared at the girls. "Girls," she said threateningly, "watch your language. Can't you see there's a lady present?" I looked around the room for the lady. I thought maybe the woman had brought her old mother. It took me several minutes to figure out that I was the "lady."

options

There are, of course, places other than gay bars where you can meet other gay women-- open houses, women's movement functions, interest groups. But perhaps in our attempts to raise our consciousness, we all take ourselves too seriously. Rigid ideologies aside, there is nothing wrong with going out for purely social reasons like dancing and meeting people. Joan Baez once told a very serious audience at a peace movement concert: "For God's sake, smile. No movement can survive without a sense of humor and some frivolity." And, God knows, gay bars can't be survived without cultivating some tongue-in-cheek frivolity.

by anne kidwell



photo by gail peabody

return to sender

Dear Sisters:

Here is a suggestion - something women can do for our movement who because of their situations can not be as active as they would like. Watch the mail for "male oriented pieces" and return them with an appropriate note. For instance this week I received two I responded to. One was from Newsweek Book Division. It was a direct mail piece advertising the book, "Wonders of Man". It had a business reply envelope in which to remit my acceptance of the book (no stamp required). I took a sheet of paper and wrote across it in large red letters, "Sisterhood is Powerful" just to grab their attention then typed in a message about their title and told them how offensive that was. The other piece was from Common Cause, also with a free reply mailer. These are always to be taken advantage of! It listed their programs for the year, including, congressional reform, environment and spending, not a word about Causes that are Common to 52% of the population. Again with red pen I wrote Sisterhood is Powerful and then typed a message about the causes WE were interested in, as women first. We can engage in an active mail campaign which need not even cost a stamp! Let's flood their offices with reminders that women are out there and are not to be taken for granted when they get out these pieces of literature. Let's preface all our return replies with our fighting slogan, "Sisterhood is Powerful."

Clue Dennis

cell-mates

Hi,

What a gas your paper is! First paper that I've really dug. Ana [Lou Coelho, see oob April 1972] is my next-cell neighbor, so to say, so we share alot. Your paper touched me in so many familiar ways: reading all there was, wish there was more.

Right now inside, of "inside" I do my trip as art editor of the prison paper here (The Clarion). Ours is censored of course, but it is alot better than the kitchen or the yard.

All I can say for now is keep up the "goodness" that you produce. I feel the warmth of womanhood, that more people should be exposed to. For Sure.

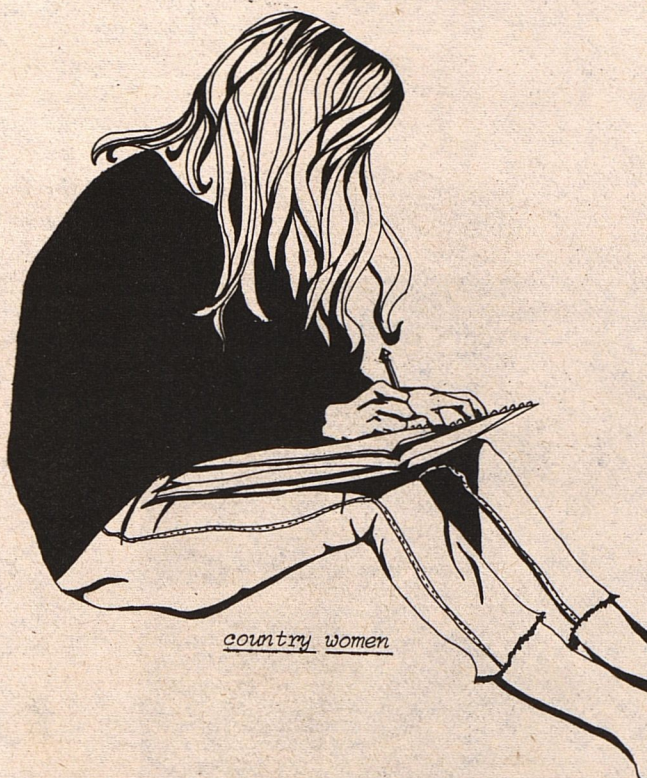
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gratis

Dear Sisters:

It's high time I thanked you for the free subscription. I love oob and look forward to getting it in the mail every month.

In sisterhood,
Mary McDermott



tucson news

Dear Sisters--

I'm enclosing \$5.00 for a year's subscription to oob. We have just been talking about wanting to get a women's paper for our collective from San Francisco or the West Coast area anyway-- to be a little closer to home here in Tucson. If you could suggest any paper from the West Coast-- we don't know of any coming out new.

Another request-- we have read about the New American Movement's Women's Conference on Socialist Feminism held in Durham, North Carolina over Thanksgiving. It seemed from the N.A.M. write-up to have been an exciting and even historically important event for feminists and the concrete beginning of a reconciliation between "radical/cultural feminists" and "socialist feminists". What we were wondering was-- did you cover the conference and if so, have you written anything about it?? We would be very interested in seeing what an independent women's paper had to report. Please send us whatever you have-- if you have anything.

To give you a little news from Tucson-- Up until the summer we had a women's center. Around the end of August, beginning of Sept. we decided to split up into a number of different groups-- a political education group (now reading and discussing writings connected with socialist feminism); a health collective; several consciousness-raising groups; a group doing work, education and counseling around rape; and for a short while, a theater group. At least 3 of the sub-committees or whatever are going well after some lull over Christmas. But the women's center as such isn't functioning anymore. It seems that women have begun to define themselves more clearly in terms of special interests and no longer experience the need for a general women's center. The problem comes with providing information for new women to find out what is happening and how they can get involved, without staffing a center to provide this stuff.

In sisterhood--
Ann Yellott

Dear Ann:

A report on the N.A.M. conference appears in the January off our backs; it was written by one of the participants.

Some West Coast women's papers are: Pandora, 1408 NE 43 St., #203, Seattle, WA 98105; Country Women, Box 51, Albion, CA 95410; Goodbye to All That, P.O. Box 3092, San Diego, CA 92103.

oob

manners vs. force

Dear Sisters,

I noticed your column on "manners" and want to add a few notes on handling women who are non-sisters.

On a recent TV talk show-- Kup's Show on NBC-TV here (Chicago)-- there were 2 segments. One segment featured Jack Warner (of Warner Bros.) and Beau Bridges. Beau Bridges began to announce the Peace March planned for Saturday, Jan. 20 here in Chicago (he was unable to be here personally, but wished to inform viewers.)

Suddenly, Mr. Warner interrupted him and began spouting the most incredible reactionary rhetoric-- every cliché from Archie Bunker to Agnew was thrown at Bridges. The other guests, including Kup and Charlton Heston were silent during this tirade. Finally, Heston murmured some liberal garbage about "peaceful demonstrations" which didn't begin to answer Warner's wild charges.

The second segment featured Esther Vilar, ("The Manipulated Male"), Mary Jean Collins Robson of NOW, Lily Tomlin (yep, a sister!) and Edie Adams and her husband.

Most of the discussion centered around Ms. Vilar's book, but the way the discussion was handled was entirely different. There was controversy and debate, but non-hostile. The women listened to Vilar and listened to each other. Everyone felt strongly about certain statements in the book, but no one put down Vilar personally but answered her charges.

The consensus among the three women was that Ms. Vilar's book was sadly out-of-date (and out of touch, too) with conditions in America today. (Vilar got off some nasty, anti-women statements, too.) Lily Tomlin thought the book was a "satire" but there was good discussion on each of Vilar's charges. When Kup tried to change the subject, it naturally turned back to the book.

Although the discussion in this segment was lively and spirited, it was remarkably free of hostility. The women-- I am sure-- responded emotionally to Vilar's charges-- but were able to deal with some highly-charged issues in a rational manner.

Where did women come to be characterized as "emotional" and not rational? Looking back on my own experiences, it seems that men are the ones who shout you down and attempt to beat you down with words. If they cannot use force directly, it is always threatened.

I don't recall any arguments with women-- even women who disagreed strongly-- who used this hysterical tactic. Even when highly emotional, women do listen. A man as stupid as Jack Warner learns to be aggressive and on the offensive-- if he had to respond to other people, they would soon become aware of the man's intellectual limitations (stupidity if you will).

Men rule only through use of Force. Take away armies, cops, courts, prisons and governments could only rule thru voluntary consent of the governed (you and me, sisters).

Of course, Force is always backed up by Fraud. Artificial concepts of wealth, truth, religion, etc. Force and Fraud are the cornerstones of Male Rule.

I think learning about women's ancient history is far more radical than anything Marx or Bakunin ever wrote. Has oob got anything on women's ancient history yet?

Take care sisters. We need you and the first rate job you keep doing in oob. (How do you keep together?) Ms magazine is good, but there are times I get glimpses of Glamour and Mademoiselle in those fancy pages. The feminist movement must remember that there are a lot of us working-class sisters around, too. I don't want to see our energies go solely toward creating more privileges for the privileged.

Arlene Meyers
for SIREN

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