

the FURIES

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The story of the Furies is the story of strong, powerful women, the "Angry Ones", the avengers of matricide, the protectors of women. Three Greek Goddesses, they were described (by men) as having snakes for hair, blood-shot eyes, and bats' wings; like Lesbians today, they were cursed and feared. They were born when Heaven (the male symbol) was castrated by his son at the urging of Earth (the female symbol). The blood from the wound fell on Earth and fertilized her, and the Furies were born. Their names were Alecto (Never-ceasing), Tisiphone (Avenger of Blood), and Megaera (Grudger). Once extremely powerful, they represented the supremacy of women and the primacy of mother right.

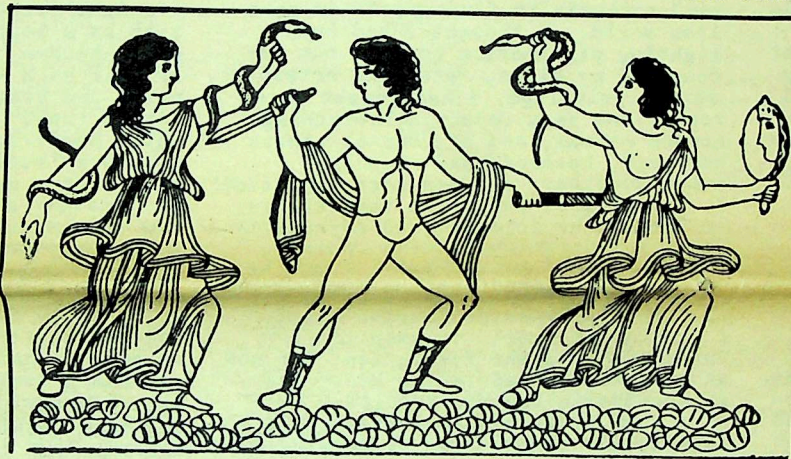
Their most famous exploit (famous because in it they lost much of their power) involved Orestes in the last episode connected with the cycle of the Trojan War. Orestes, acting on the orders of the Sun God Apollo, killed his mother Clytemnestra, because she had killed his father. Clytemnestra had killed the father because he had sacrificed their daughter Iphigenia, in order to get favorable winds so his fleet could sail to Troy. The Furies tormented Orestes: they literally drove him crazy, putting him under a spell where for days he could not eat or wash his blood-stained hands. He bit off his finger to try to appease them, but to no avail. Finally, in desperation, Orestes went before the court of Athena to plead his case.

The point at issue was whether matricide was justifiable to avenge your father's murder, or in other words, whether men or women were to dominate. Apollo defended Orestes and totally denied the importance of motherhood, claiming that women were no more than passive sperm receptacles for men, and that the father was the only parent worthy of the name. One might have thought that Athena, Goddess of Wisdom, would have condemned Orestes, but Athena was the creation of the male God, Zeus, sprung full-grown from his head, the first token woman. Athena decided for Orestes. Some mythologists say that Zeus, Athena, and Apollo had conspired from the beginning, ordering Orestes to kill his mother in order to put an end, once and for all, to the religious belief that motherhood was more divine than fatherhood. In any case, that was the result.

The Furies were, of course, furious, and threatened to lay waste the city of Athens. But Athena had a direct line to Zeus, King of the Gods; she told the Furies to accept the new male supremacist order or lose everything. Some of the Furies and their followers relented, the rest pursued Orestes until his death.

We call our paper The FURIES because we are also angry. We are angry because we are oppressed by male supremacy. We have been fucked over all our lives by a system which is based on the domination of men over women, which defines male as good and female as only as good as the man you are with. It is a system in which heterosexuality is rigidly enforced and Lesbianism rigidly suppressed. It is a system which has further divided us by class, race, and nationality.

We are working to change this system which has kept us separate and powerless for so long. We are a collective of twelve Lesbians living and working in Washington, D.C. We are rural and urban; from the Southwest, Midwest, South and Northeast. Our ages range from 18 to 28. We are high school drop-



ORESTES PURSUED BY FURIES

outs and Ph.D. candidates. We are lower class, middle and upper-middle class. We are white. Some of us have been Lesbians for twelve years, others for ten months. We are committed to ending all oppressions by attacking their roots--male supremacy.

We believe The FURIES will make important contributions to the growing movement to destroy sexism. As a collective, in addition to outside projects, we are spending much time building an ideology which is the basis for action. For too long, women in the Movement have fallen prey to the very male propaganda they seek to refute. They have rejected thought, building an ideology, and all intellectual activity as the realm of men, and tried to build a politics based only on feelings--the area traditionally left to women. The philosophy has been, "if it feels good, it's O.K. If not, forget it." But that is like saying that strength, which is a "male" characteristic, should be left to men, and women should embrace weakness. Most straight women, to say nothing of men, feel afraid or contemptuous of Lesbians. That fear and contempt is similar to the feelings middle class whites have towards Blacks or lower class people. These feelings are the result of our socialization and are hardly worth glorifying. This

is not to say that feelings are irrelevant, only that they are derived from our experience which is limited by our class, race, etc. Furthermore, feelings are too often used to excuse inaction and inability to change.

A political movement cannot advance without systematic thought and practical organization. The haphazard, non-strategic, zig-zag tactics of the straight women's movement, the male left, and many other so-called revolutionary groups have led only to frustration and dissolution. We do not want to make those same mistakes; our ideology forms the basis for developing long-range strategies and short-term tactics, projects, and actions.

The base of our ideological thought is: Sexism is the root of all other oppressions, and Lesbian and woman oppression will not end by smashing capitalism, racism, and imperialism. Lesbianism is not a matter of sexual preference, but rather one of political choice which every woman must make if she is to become woman-identified and thereby end male supremacy. Lesbians, as outcasts from every culture but their own have the most to gain by ending race, class, and national supremacy within their own ranks. Lesbians must get out of the straight women's movement and form their own movement in order to be taken seriously, to stop straight women from oppressing us, and to force straight women to deal with their own Lesbianism. Lesbians cannot develop a common politics with women who do not accept Lesbianism as a political issue.

In this (see page 8) and following issues of The FURIES we will share our thoughts with you. We welcome your comments, letters, articles, fiction, poetry, news, graphics, and support. We want to build a movement in this country and in the world which can effectively stop the violent, sick, oppressive acts of male supremacy. We want to build a movement which makes all people free.

For the Chinese women whose feet were bound and crippled; for the Ibibos of Africa whose clitoris were mutilated; for every woman who has ever been raped, physically, economically, psychologically, we take the name of the FURIES, Goddesses of Vengeance and protectors of women.

Ginny Berson

Such A Nice Girl . . .

In February 1969 I joined a Women's Liberation study group in Washington, D.C.. As we read Engels' Origin of the Family I knew I had found other women who shared my anger, frustration, and hopes. I stopped trying to organize "radical teachers" and quit my job as an elementary school teacher to work full time in the women's movement.

Between September 1969 and the spring of 1970, Women's Liberation reached its first peak in energy, participation, and media coverage. Hundreds of women came week after week to our free university course. We opened an office and were flooded with mail, phone calls, and "new" women. Our projects and actions on daycare, abortion, the pill, and the war kept us out all day and up all night. Our enthusiasm, which we called female life-force, infected the left movement in the city, including husbands and boy-friends of many W.L. women. At softball games, parties, and communal suppers, women challenged men about their chauvinism in a mock-serious way which did not threaten the growing sense of community. My husband paid our bills, washed the dishes half the time, and wanted to know everything that happened at every women's meeting.

By the spring of 1970 we had developed a descriptive analysis of the oppression of white, middle-class American wives and mothers, which most of us were. We practiced a fly-swatter, help-your-sister approach to ending the oppression of women. We were confused by guilt feelings about black, poor, and third world women. Where could we go from there?

Several women who had been leaders in W.L. got together to form a working collective. We knew we were beginning to flounder. We had ideas but no overall direction and less energy. We rejected leadership but were still leaders. We prided ourselves that Washington avoided factionalism, and tried to figure out an individual explanation every time some one dropped out of the group instead of understanding the political reasons why people did not stay. Most of all we believed "sisterhood is powerful" and that an analysis and strategy for our liberation would simply come out of our good vibes and our renewed seriousness.

In the meantime I had fallen in love with Joan and was scared shitless that I would be kicked out of Women's Liberation if anyone found out. At meetings in the W.L. office, women protested loudly whenever the media or men denounced W.L. as a "bunch of lesbians". Each time I looked at the floor and waited for them to go home so Joan and I could lock the door and make love.

Gradually we told our friends, and while we were both relating to my husband, no one was very upset. Bisexuality was seen as progressive. The real threat, and the real contradictions in the women's movement, only became clear when Joan and I ended our attempts to relate to my husband.

I had never questioned or thought of heterosexuality as an institution. Now, I began to understand that everything I had thought was "natural" was a vicious lie maintained to keep women down. I was as disoriented as my friends were threatened. I was very conscious of changing. A crucial part

of my conditioning as a woman was to be passive, to let things happen to me. Now I was deciding to be different and make things happen. My friends, and their husbands, explained to each other that I had been stolen from my husband by a man-hating lesbian. Their hatred of Joan as a "real" lesbian only emphasized their need to continue seeing me as a passive, duped, non-threatening "real woman".



As I experienced the combined exhilaration of loving a woman and knowing I could change, I thought all women would come out, change and be as happy as I was. Most of my friends didn't change and come out; I gradually emerged from my "new gay" euphoria to find myself in an alien world. I thought I had been fighting pig America before, but because of my class, race, and heterosexual privilege, I had fought as a rebel, not as a reject. Everything around me was, and of course, always had been, heterosexual--men and women together, and men most important". Books, movies, people in the streets, my family, my friends, and especially Women's Liberation: Birth control, bad fucks, and abortions! I had belatedly discovered lesbian oppression. I was a queer and I was going to have to fight in order to survive myself. I had taught myself to shoplift to "practice" for the revolution, but now as a lesbian I had to lie every day to survive in the Man's world.

Much of my new oppression as a lesbian was coming from my heterosexual friends--the women I had worked with and loved in W.L.. I was a "nice" lesbian who explained to them over and over, as many times as they asked, why I was a lesbian and how I was oppressed. At first I did not push anyone to come out, even as I began to see that lesbianism is a political choice. I kept reassuring them and myself, that we could continue to work together.

I wasted energy and emotion on them too long. They had said "women should love women--men keep women apart--women together can change the world". Because they wouldn't or couldn't live up to those ideas, they are traitors to their own vision. They have been bought off by the privilege and security they get from men. They have betrayed women, especially themselves. A women's revolution can be made by women only who give their full energy and love to each other, that is, by lesbians.

Only after I had kicked out my husband did I see how much heterosexuality had blocked my real understanding of men and male supremacy. I could let myself remember the disgust I had initially felt about fucking. I realized that every fuck is a rape even if it feels nice because every man has power and privilege over women, whether he uses it blatantly or subtly. My "liberated" husband kept me down not by violence but by making me feel guilty. He wanted me to be a strong woman as long as my main worries were about his feelings, problems, and "oppression". In a conversation, when the guilt

tactic no longer worked on me, he sat in disbelief, and I saw him consider whether to fall back on the male power which he had always had in reserve. As a heterosexual I had always had to double-think, "well, my man is an exception" every time I got close to the truth, that male supremacy is the source of all oppression, and that every man benefits from it. As a lesbian I have begun to experience how it will be fundamentally different as women begin to build our own world. As long as I gave energies to my man, I had not experienced that tremendous difference.

When I first came out I thought of myself as better than "old" lesbians. I believed in my "superior women's consciousness" and my "revolutionary life-style." I was afraid of bar lesbians and offended by "sexist" camp humor. In fact I looked at lesbians with all the prejudice and fear I had learned as a heterosexual. I still wanted to be "normal" and to keep my heterosexual privileges. As I saw through the perversion of heterosexuality and experienced the shit that came down from my straight friends, my identification as a lesbian--a man-hating dyke--became clear to me. I cut my hair as a symbolic cut with my past, and because I wanted to look like a "real" lesbian. The bar which had frightened me at first became my refuge too.

I gave up some of my privilege by becoming a dyke. But I am only now understanding some of the rest of my privilege and how to change it. About a year ago I joined a lesbian collective that lived together one painful week and broke up, largely because several of us had not dealt with our class privilege. I had thought that eight gay women living together would be heaven after the isolation of being the only lesbians in Women's Liberation. But I was so consumed by what I thought was "revolutionary"--communal everything, non-monogamy, dope--that I resisted any criticism about my class behavior. Class had been mentioned but not understood in the heterosexual women's movement, because we spent all our time dealing with men instead of with each other, and because the organization was started and controlled by middle class white women who couldn't or wouldn't see that our class behavior was the cause of many of the problems that so distressed us.

There are many ways in which I have not changed enough about class. Some of them I understand and just have to do something about. I know there is a lot I don't understand yet about class, and I have hardly begun to deal with race. I did change from a heterosexual to a lesbian, and from heterosexual consciousness to lesbian consciousness. I am frustrated and angry at women who cling to their privilege and refuse to make that change. Working class women are just as angry at me, for the same good reason. The revolution means change...women changing themselves...women changing the world. There is no middle ground and no individual solution. If you, or I, choose not to change, we choose against a women's revolution and against ourselves.

Sharon Deevey

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WOMEN : WEAK or STRONG



Women have been kept down in many ways. One pervasive and oppressive way has been the stereotyped body that women are expected to have. A woman is supposed to be feminine or, in other words, full-breasted, soft, tiny-waisted, large hipped, long haired, or a variation on that model depending upon the style of sex object desirable that year. But, as long as that woman appears somewhat weak and helpless, in short, physically unfit, she is acceptable any year.

Women are rarely encouraged to be strong, because it is undesirable to men. When women start thinking about themselves first and develop their strengths, men hurl the "insults"; strong women are called dykes or too masculine and told that they are stepping over the accepted line of behavior. The truth that a woman is strong or is a lesbian, freaks men and totally threatens them. Men can't stand the fact that some women don't need them and don't ever depend on them.

The way women are supposed to dress also keeps them in place. High heels, clunky heels, and now platform shoes make walking harder and running almost impossible. Let alone the fact that most women's shoes are never made to last more than a year. Any kind of skirt, whether it be long, short, midi, or maxi is a drag for walking, sitting, running, or moving freely. Men know how to react to a woman who dresses correctly and are usually thrown off guard by women who do not dress in the expected manner. Women should dress comfortably, sensibly and in clothes that are not constricting.

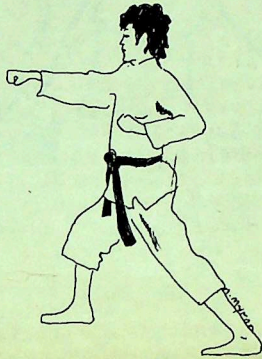
Unfortunately most women still care about what men think and have a huge investment in the heterosexual world. These women are stopped from developing this strength in themselves and kept from knowing what it means to love or be in touch with their own body or another woman's body; they fear losing what little social and economic status women have and cannot take men's disapproval of them.

To begin to be strong and care about your physical being is to reject the male stereotype for women and the idea that women are supposed to look a certain way, and to begin to take yourself seriously. If you are political about your situation-meaning that you will take control of your life, make changes in yourself and in others, and ultimately, in the system that keeps you down.

To be strong is to feel great, to have loads of energy, to have some idea what it means to be in control of your life. To be strong is to know you can fight back. To be strong in mind and body is to love yourself and have everybody be able to see that love reflected in your body. It's time we understood what it means to have a strong body, a body that you're in comm-

unication with - a body that you care about in a healthy way.

Since I started to care more about my body and began to take karate, my body has changed in many ways. One of the most dramatic has been that my waist has gotten much larger. To have a strong torso, it is essential to develop your waist muscles and stomach muscles. Men usually have straight waists and women are to have slim waists - it keeps us weak. To be physically



weak makes intimidation easier, both physical and psychological.

Another visible change has been my breasts. Everywoman knows that the second your breasts start to develop a bra is slapped on you. Sometimes girls (or their mothers) are so anxious to wear a bra that they start even before their breasts are developed. By wearing a bra your breast muscles are never allowed to develop and your breasts remain weak and soft -- just the way men like them. Fuck that shit! Strong, firm breasts are wonderful. If you stop wearing a bra and start working out, your breast muscles will hurt at first, but after awhile the muscles will develop. Even if your breast muscles have been stretched out by childbirth or if you have large breasts, it is possible to develop them to their particular capacity.

In the past four months, my arms, shoulders and legs have all gotten visible muscles. It is wonderful to see and feel my physical strength take shape. Strong arms and legs are essential for fighting, for good punches and kicks. Strong legs are also necessary for running, if you're not quite at the stage of handling seven men with one blow!

I've also cut my hair. I first cut my hair as a symbolic cut with my past and the male heterosexual world when I became a lesbian. I have also found that short hair is a lot less burdensome when I work out and a lot easier to take care of. Long hair gets in the way of many physical activities and is a general pain. Long hair on women now seems like a calculated put down. At one point in history wo-

men were forced to have long hair as a punishment.

I know that since I've gotten stronger I have much more confidence in myself. I'm taking a healthy interest in my body and how physically fit I am and my body is beginning to reflect what I think of myself.

Other women in touch with their bodies and developing their strengths are such a turn on! Such women develop their bodies for themselves, not according to a male sex standard that is unhealthy. Consciously or unconsciously they understand that a strong body is a reflection of what they think about themselves and how they love themselves.

Everywoman, even if she has certain physical limitations, should begin to work for a healthy physical state, getting in touch with her own and other women's bodies.

We have to begin to fight our oppression on many levels. We have a lot to change and we need to be strong to do it.

Traditionally women's arms have been one of our weakest points. I have listed here twelve exercises for strengthening them, to be done with 3 lb. hand dumbbells. These exercises should be done everyday, increasing the number of each as your arms get stronger.

Ideally you should work out at least three times a week, doing exercise for your whole body. A workout should make you sweat and use all the parts of your body. If you are not able to take karate or disciplined enough to work out on your own, I suggest you start building up parts of your body and as time goes on maybe you will become inspired to jog a mile everyday, swim laps, ride your bike to work, or take karate. I have found karate to be most satisfactory for me. I know that karate may not be for everyone, but some sort of exercise is and every woman should find what suits her best and then keep at it.

For exercise 1-10, stand with your feet shoulder width apart and feet pointing straight ahead. As soon as your arms get stronger, increase each exercise to 20x each, then 25x each, on up to 50x each.

1. wrist twist, arms at side, twist wrists simultaneously, 15x

2. arms at side, fist facing forward, lift just your forearms up and down, alternating, 15x



3. arms at side, fist facing backwards, lift forearms as in #2, 15x

4. arms straight above shoulders, bring hand down to shoulder, alternate, 15x each arm

5. arms straight out to side shoulder height, wrist facing sky, bring hand to shoulder, alternate, 15x each arm

6. arms at side, going forward, raise arm up to shoulder height, alternate 15x each arm

7. arms at side, bring hand to underarm, alternate, 15x each arm

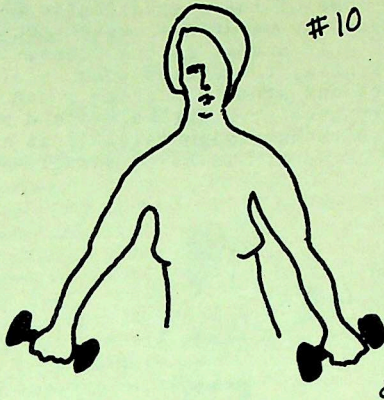
8. arms at side, going sideways, bring arm (straight arm) up to shoulder height, alternate 15x each arm

9. arms straight out sideways shoulder height, fist facing forward, bring hand to shoulder, alternate, 15x each arm

10. arms at side, simultaneously, bend right arm at elbow and left arm at elbow, bring right arm parallel to stomach and left parallel to back, alternating between front and back, 15x each

11. squat, rest wrists on knees, fist facing floor, raise wrist as high as you can, 15x

12. squat, rest wrists on knees, palms facing sky, raise wrists as high as you can - don't take wrist off knee. 15x



Lee Schwing

THE DENTIST

All the way to the dentist she thought of Jennifer. Of how it got better all the time, every night. Of how incredible it felt to love someone like that. To want them so much that her body ached at knowing that it would be hours before they would be together again. Last night had been the best, and her insides stirred and trembled at the thought of their passion--hands lips legs tongue on ears neck breasts cunt--"I am loving you". Morning coming and not wanting to get out of bed ever--to hold each other, talk, make love. Thinking with sadness now, instead of her usual anger and scorn, that all women were not Lesbians, that all women did not know, would not let themselves know, feel, love another woman--themselves. And then to Jennifer again--Jennifer of blue light eyes and laugh; Jennifer of "I am loving you", never said to her like that before.

The parking lot at the clinic was half empty. The day was gray and the ground was covered with puddles. The clinic was equally gray, the magazines in the waiting room at least six months old, one of the small prices one pays for not going to a private dentist. She sat with an old *Life* open on her lap, thinking of Jennifer. Her name was called and she moved quickly to the office, eager to get it over with. The dentist was surprised to see a white woman enter, and was ashamed for her. As he poked around her mouth he poked around her life: "Are you a student?" "Why aren't you married?"

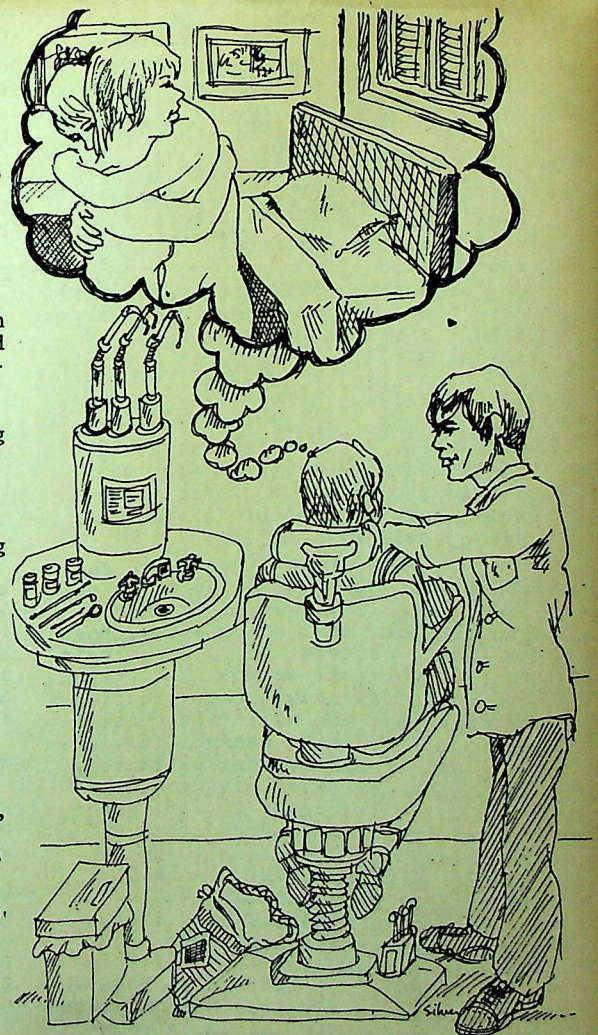
"Ah, but you do have a boyfriend?" A job? A family? A life? She answered in grunts, submerging her desire to tell him to shut up, can you just fix my teeth, can't you just be a dentist instead of a man? Of course not. She knew.

The nurse filled the needle. Her mouth wide open, his fingers stretching it more, he poised over her and said, "If you come to my private office, I can give you much better treatment." "I can't afford it." "It could be free." The needle went into her gum but she did not feel it. Screaming, swearing, glass smashing, heavy feet stomping his face in, knees flying to his prick, kicking kicking over and over until there was nothing left but a useless sagging mass of flesh. A knife in his guts tearing them out while he writhed on the floor in total agony and pain unimagined before. He pulled out the needle. "No thank you," she said.

He drilled and filled for the next twenty minutes, chatting all the while about his private practice, the great sacrifice he made by working at the clinic twice a week, how if any conflict arose of course his private patients came first--"A man has to make a living, doesn't he?" He only filled two--there were two more to do next week--she would have to come back. He handed her his card as she got up to leave. "Come see me some time." "Right, I will." He walked out of the office into the waiting room. "Next?"

All the way home she tried to think of Jennifer and couldn't.

Ginny Berson



ROXANNE DUNBAR:

how a female heterosexual serves the interests of male supremacy

The following article is a comment on Roxanne Dunbar's latest work, "The Movement and the Working Class."

I hesitate to write this response to Roxanne Dunbar's latest article because it is so critical. There are women and men who will lick their lips at the prospect of one woman raised in the working class criticizing another. Therefore, let me state that this article is a political criticism, not a personal attack. Criticism is a form of respect because you take the individual seriously enough to reply to her ideas.

"The Movement and the Working Class" is both helpful and harmful. It takes a sharp look at the various groups existent in the U.S. The article does us all a service by analyzing how the different movements ignore class or sell working class people down the river. It is unfair to summarize the article, you owe it to yourself to read it. The address is: Roxanne Dunbar, Box 3983, Lafayette, Louisiana 70501. Send in and ask for the article by name. The point here is to single out areas where Roxanne Dunbar has overlooked something or made a disastrous mistake.

The most glaring factual error in the article is where the author includes the Lesbian movement under the banner of the New Left and then goes on to vilify that struggle as being totally removed from the class struggle. She represents Lesbians as promoting bourgeois ideology. Nothing could be farther from fact.

"The young people who make up the base of the New Left are organized by 'constituencies.' There is 'Gay Liberation' and 'Women's Liberation' which have merged at points into a more virulent, all-female form called 'Radical Lesbians.'" In this quote from her article, Roxanne simply puts us all in the same pot and throws it out the window. There is no explanation, just a slam in the word "virulent." The fact is that the lesbian struggle has been operating in this country since the '50's when a group of Lesbians formed Daughters of Bilitis. The majority of those women were not working class but they did pull themselves together at a dangerous time--in the middle of the McCarthy era when homosexuality was as great a sin as communism. The Lesbian movement is older than the New Left and has little to do with fashionable radicalism among white, middle class youth.

A second push toward lesbian organizing came through oppression suffered by young Lesbians from all classes in the Women's Liberation Movement and the Gay Liberation Movement--the push was to get out of the boat. Some of these women, particularly the ones of middle class origin, are more tainted with youth culture rhetoric than the older DOB women or the Lesbians who came out on their own, independent of political movements.

Roxanne is one of the women who turned Lesbians away from the Women's Liberation Movement by her in-

sistence that Lesbianism was a bedroom issue. This is a variation the same argument that men use against women when women fight for their own liberation. It's the old "your oppression isn't all that important" line. As men deal with women only as sexual beings so Roxanne locks Lesbians in the bedroom.

Roxanne goes on to put us down by saying, "--nothing could be further removed from the class struggle than the question of homosexuality as a freedom, even among homosexuals in the working class. Nothing could be further removed from the consciousness of a working woman with children than the 'freedom' to be a Lesbian." As a woman born and raised in the working class who is a Lesbian living with other working class Lesbians (and some from the middle class) I know this is not true. Except for two of us, all the working class women are new Lesbians and since becoming Lesbians have doubled their work output; they are also happier. They are free from having their energies drained by struggles with individual men or with men in groups. Now they pool their energies with other women and have that much more time for political work. Materially we have pooled our resources and don't have to spend as much time working outside at straight jobs. When is it counter to class struggle to free people more to work in the fight to end class oppression, race oppression, sex oppression?

Roxanne attempts to smash Lesbianism by treating it as a personal luxury rather than dealing with it as a political ideology. This sweeping us under the rug as some great apolitical, individualistic freedom is classic heterosexual blindness. Her thesis that Lesbianism is a simple personal choice is a cover to avoid recognizing the political implication of Lesbianism: Lesbianism is the greatest threat to male supremacy that exists. As for this simple choice, this unimportant freedom--which frees women's bodies, heads, time and energies--it is also the freedom to get fired from jobs, betrayed by straight women in the movement and spit at by one's own race and class. Why? Because if all women were Lesbians male supremacy would have the impossible task of maintaining itself in a vacuum. Men know what a threat we are to their power so they heap the worst abuse upon the Lesbian in order to keep women from becoming Lesbians. They also know that when their male supremacist order topples so will race and class differences since it is not in our self interest to foster divisions based on race and class. Male supremacists foster those divisions, especially the white, rich variety, because it keeps people fragmented and preserves their power. If people are divided from one another they will not unite against the common oppressor, the white, rich capitalist male. This ruling class male encourages working class men of all races to participate in his system by giving those men the

power of sexism. Depending on their usefulness to his plans he can also bestow race and class privilege on men. In this way he can turn those men against other men below them who see the truth and organize to end the white, rich man's rule. He can also turn all men, not just segments of the male population, against all women who would organize to end sexist oppression--the privilege all men share: they control the women in their sub-group. The big man preys on the other men's fears of losing control over their women to keep them from seeing that any attack on him, The Big Man, weakens his power. So by oppressing women, particularly Lesbians, since they fight sexism the hardest, working class males are cutting their own throats. The Big Man controls their jobs, housing and worse, the inside of their heads for he has shaped their concept of masculinity, he has forced them to identify with him both emotionally and economically. Even the man farthest away from The Big Man, the working class Black male, identifies with The Man's phallic imperialism. Roxanne Dunbar's smothering of the politics of working class Lesbians keeps all men, especially working class men, from understanding how sexism most benefits the ruling class male. It keeps the working class man from changing those parts of his behavior that oppress Lesbians and women. No solid alliance can be built between working class women and men until he changes his oppressive actions toward women. The only people who effectively challenge those oppressive actions are Lesbians, and Roxanne, a woman, legitimizes male power by writing off Lesbians. So once again we have political struggle in the hands of men. This time it is the class struggle with a few token women to mask male oppressiveness.

Does this mean that working class Lesbians are intent upon destroying working class men and weakening the class struggle? No, it does not. It means that working class Lesbians are not going to work for an ideology, practical plan or people who oppress us. Men have not purged themselves of supremacist behavior regardless of class/race background. To encourage women to ally with them now perpetuates our oppression. How will men, especially working class men, learn to shed sexism? If we leave them flat, that's how. As long as there is a woman to wipe their noses, cushion reality for them, serve them, men aren't going to change. When women remove themselves from the dominion of men the men will have a hard time hanging onto sexist behavior and ideas. The male concept of self depends on the subservience and debasement of women. Male power depends on female acceptance of it. If you don't accept their power then they don't have any. Only the rich, white capitalist will have power and that will be economic--and that too, can be crushed.

Also, when we are gone who will be men's escape valves, shit-

Roxanne Dunbar continued

workers, peacemakers? Without our necks to stand on for a better view the men will be forced to look at themselves and change. The serious ones will join women in the struggle against this society/state international sore.

This same process holds for straight women. As long as they do male supremacy's dirty work and keep Lesbians down, Lesbians must leave the straight women to wallow in a cesspool of their own making. Sexism is not limited to men and must be fought wherever it is found.

By keeping straight women from seeing that Lesbianism is political, that their individual lives and the relationships in it are political, Roxanne allows straight women to continue to support individual men as well as collective male supremacy. The political Lesbian is committed to the destruction of male supremacy, therefore the Lesbian is serious about a women's movement.

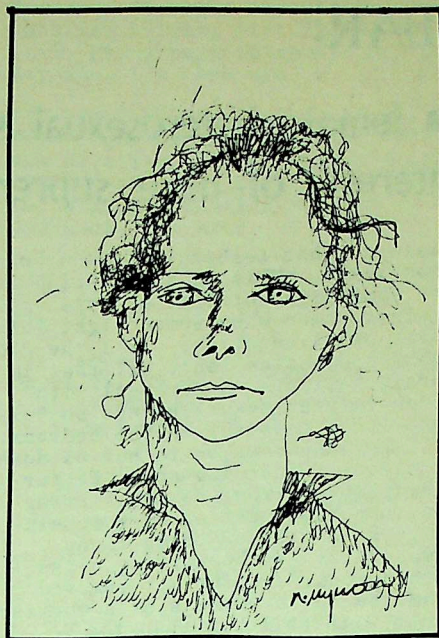
Roxanne gives straight women an excuse for not building a strong women's movement to destroy male supremacy. You can't build a women's movement if women are tied to their oppressors---individually and ideologically. Holding onto male values and privileges granted to women for heterosexuality (which insures that each man will have his slave) subverts the women's movement. You cannot build a women's movement if you don't commit yourselves to women, totally. Heterosexual women are still committed to men. Roxanne guarantees that they will stay that way.

Lesbians contain the only hope for women to realize their own strength, their political power. This explains why working class Lesbians prefer to work with Lesbians in the Lesbian movement (a mixed class movement to smash male supremacy) rather than work with heterosexual working class women in a movement devoted solely to class oppression. Why work with someone who ties you to your oppressor when you have just freed yourself from him on a one-to-one level? Why work in a movement that drains your energies fighting the supremacist attitudes of your supposed working class brothers--- who will also try to screw you? Why work with someone who derides your oppression or who actively suppresses you with another brand of Marxist intellectualism?

We'll be damned if we'll work with people who oppress us, no matter what class they come from. Roxanne herself says, "for the working class and the poor, the loss of one of its number from the struggle is a great loss---." Yet she insists on insuring that working class Lesbians defect from her appointed class struggle.

By cutting down Lesbians without ever dealing with our politics, by lumping us with the New Left and middle class concerns, Roxanne safely avoids the real crises that would be caused by a meeting of working class women and men. The crisis being that the men would be forced to stop oppressing the women and both would be forced to stop oppressing the Lesbian.

Like many women faced with the choice of renouncing their heterosexual privilege and fighting sexism/racism/classism, Roxanne has chosen to retreat into class strug-



gle, heterosexual to the core. This pattern is repeated wherever Lesbians have asserted themselves. To become a Lesbian is to renounce all sexist privileges, privileges which keep you apart from other women. Men refuse to give privileges to women who reject their control. Lesbians reject male control and lose heterosexual securities. But they gain through that loss---women.

By turning your back on sexist struggle and embracing class as the only road to liberation, straight women allow men to retain their power over women. They also have the added advantage of being taken seriously as class struggle has a respectable history, after all, it includes men. The battle against sexism is, to date, exclusively a women's fight.

You get points from men for joining a heterosexual class struggle and you get bonus points for attacking Lesbians who are the people attacking sexism. Once again, men have gotten women to do their dirty work for them. Having the straight women attack the Lesbians, their hands remain clean.

Another debilitating feature of the class struggle as it now exists is that it allows middle class people to "join" it. These people reared in middle class homes do not have to give up their privileges or their behavioral patterns cemented in childhood, patterns that are destructive to people reared in working class homes. Often these middle class joiners do not even have to share their material resources with the working class people. All too often all they have to do is accept the intellectual premises of class struggle and go on to organize others for the fight. How revolutionary.

The world has witnessed a number of class revolutions led by Marxist intellectuals who originated in the middle class. In all those countries women still do not share political power commensurate with their number. Their economic situation is improved but that hardly alters the realities of political power: Women have none. In Cuba for all its miracles, sexism is so fierce that homosexuals are "rehabilitated." To tell a woman, especially a working class Lesbian, to repeat the class struggle as defined by men in this country, is to tell her to forget her own opp-

pression, tow the class line, to once more, like a good woman, give herself over to politics as constructed by men.

Sexism is rampant under socialism. Having seen what happens repeatedly in class revolutions to women it is clear that we must try another way.

Does this mean we junk class struggle? As a person who grew up in the working classes I can hardly endorse that. I believe the class and race struggle is and must be part of the fight against sexism. This is an absolute truth for Lesbians. It is not in our self-interest to promote oppression based on class and race. We are despised by all sects, to continue among ourselves destructive divisions of class/race invented by rich, white capitalist men is to commit political suicide. A Lesbian who comes out loses many of her class/race privileges although she doesn't necessarily lose her behavioral patterns that reek of those disgusting privileges. No one wants their Lesbians---not the rich, not the poor, not the Black, not the White not Roxanne Dunbar. We need each other. We cannot weaken ourselves by hurting each other with left over daggers from white, rich, capitalist male America. Lesbians of all people, have the greatest stake in destroying class and racial oppression.

You can't destroy class without destroying capitalism. A Lesbian movement is necessarily socialist. A socialist movement is not necessarily non-sexist. Therein lies the great gap between Roxanne Dunbar and myself.

Roxanne misses this precisely because she is not a Lesbian. No straight woman knows what a Lesbian's life is like and she never will as long as she remains straight. She has not suffered the ultimate sexist oppression. The Lesbian has. She has not experienced Lesbian strength/love. The Lesbian has. Roxanne thinks that Lesbian communities are a new Left hoax. We know they are the tiny space of freedom we have created in the male world. We know they are the beginning of the end for male supremacy and its hideous younger brothers, racial oppression and class oppression.

A word of common sense. When I speak of Lesbians and Lesbian communities, I am not speaking about all Lesbians everywhere. I am speaking about those women who have developed a political ideology, who have committed themselves to the destruction of male supremacy et. al., who have committed themselves to women, who want to build a new world. I know full well there are women who physically love other women who could sell us out as quickly as any man or straight woman. Some of them are racist, class snobs and outright reactionaries. By the same token, all working class people are not committed to the destruction of capitalism. There are plenty of racists and fascists among the workers. The essential point is that workers carry the greatest threat to capitalism if organized just as Lesbians carry the greatest threat to male supremacy if organized.

Roxanne envisions organizing by breaking through the brainwash of ruling class ideology in the workers. She is absolutely right. But she had better break through the brainwash of male supremacist ideology in her own head or she and other women like her will find themselves deeply betrayed by their own analysis.

Rita Mae Brown

EDWARD THE DYKE

and other poems



A History of Lesbianism

How they came into the world,
the women-loving-women
came in three by three
and four by four
the women-loving-women
came in ten by ten
and ten by ten again
until there were more
than you could count

they took care of each other
the best they knew how
and of each other's children,
if they had any.

How they lived in the world,
the women-loving-women
learned as much as they were allowed
and walked and wore their clothes
the way they liked
whenever they could. They did whatever
they knew to be happy or free
and worked and worked and worked.
The women-loving-women
in America were called dykes
and some liked it
and some did not.

they made love to each other
the best they knew how
and for the best reasons.

How they went out of the world,
the women-loving-women
went out one by one
having withstood greater and lesser
trials, and much hatred
from other people, they went out
one by one, each having tried
in her own way to overthrow
the rule of men over women.
they tried it one by one
and hundred by hundred,
until each came in her own way
to the end of her life
and died.

The subject of lesbianism
is very ordinary; it's the question
of male domination that makes everybody
angry.

I'm not a girl
I'm a hatchet
I'm not a hole
I'm a whole mountain
I'm not a fool
I'm a survivor
I'm not a pearl
I'm the Atlantic Ocean
I'm not a good lay
I'm a straight razor
look at me as if you had never seen a woman before
I have red, red hands and much bitterness

V. Detroit Annie, hitchhiking

Her words pour out as if her throat were a broken
artery and her mind were cut-glass, carelessly handled.
You imagine her in a huge velvet hat with great
dangling black feathers,
but she shaves her head instead
and goes for three-day midnight walks.
Sometimes she goes down to the dock and dances
off the end of it, simply to prove her belief
that people who cannot walk on water
are phonies, or dead.
When she is cruel, she is very, very
cool and when she is kind she is lavish.
Fishermen think perhaps she's a fish, but they're all
fools. She figured out that the only way
to keep from being frozen was to
stay in motion, and long ago converted
most of her flesh into liquid. Now when she
smells danger, she spills herself all over,
like gasoline, and lights it.
She leaves the taste of salt and iron
under your tongue, but you don't mind.
The common woman is as common
as the reddest wine.

Edward the Dyke is a book of poems by Judy
Grahn and drawings by Wendy Cadden, Brenda Cri-
der and Gail Hodgins. The four of them and other
lesbians in the San Francisco Bay Area (The Wo-
men's Press Collective) designed and printed the
book themselves. So it's not a normal stodgy book
of poetry, but a beautiful book of beige and wine
colored pages which reflect the poems. The wonder-
ful sky-blue cover is graced by the above drawing.

Judy Grahn's poems are a delight to read. She
is one of the few lesbian poets to celebrate the
strength and survival capacity of women. No self-
pity or whining here. The language is direct and
simple; you don't have to go to the dictionary to
figure out the images. You can tell that a lot of
time and work has gone into turning her ideas, ex-
periences and emotions into powerful and beautiful
verse.

Edward the Dyke sells for \$1.25 and can be or-
dered from 1018 Valencia St., San Francisco, Cali-
fornia. If you would like to have bulk copies to
sell at meetings, consciousness raising groups and
the bar, the press would be delighted to send them
to you. Bulk copies are \$100 each, you keep \$.25.

COJ-111 P.12

in the place where
her breasts come together
two thumbs' width of
channel ride my
eyes to anchor
hands to angle
in the place where
her legs come together
I said 'you smell like the
ocean' and lay down my tongue
beside the dark tooth edge
of sleeping
'swim' she told me and I
did, I did

LESBIANS IN REVOLT



Photo by JEB

The development of Lesbian-feminist politics as the basis for the liberation of women is our top priority; this article outlines our present ideas. In our society which defines all people and institutions for the benefit of the rich, white male, the Lesbian is in revolt. In revolt because she defines herself in terms of women and rejects the male definitions of how she should feel, act, look, and live. To be a Lesbian is to love oneself, woman, in a culture that denegrates and despises women. The Lesbian rejects male sexual/political domination; she defies his world, his social organization, his ideology, and his definition of her as inferior. Lesbianism puts women first while the society declares the male supreme. Lesbianism threatens male supremacy at its core. When politically conscious and organized, it is central to destroying our sexist, racist, capitalist, imperialist system.

LESBIANISM IS A POLITICAL CHOICE

Male society defines Lesbianism as a sexual act, which reflects men's limited view of women: they think of us only in terms of sex. They also say Lesbians are not real women, so a real woman is one who gets fucked by men. We say that a Lesbian is a woman whose sense of self and energies, including sexual energies, center around women--she is woman-identified. The woman-identified-woman commits herself to other women for political, emotional, physical, and economic support. Women are important to her. She is important to herself. Our society demands that commitment from women be reserved for men.

The Lesbian, woman-identified-woman, commits herself to women not only as an alternative to oppressive male/female relationships but primarily because she loves women. Whether consciously or not, by her actions, the Lesbian has recognized that giving support and love to men over women perpetuates the system that oppresses her. If women do not make a commitment to each other, which includes sexual love, we deny ourselves the love and value traditionally given to men. We accept our second class status. When women do give primary energies to other women, then it is possible to concentrate fully on building a movement for our liberation

Woman-identified Lesbianism is,

then, more than a sexual preference, it is a political choice. It is political because relationships between men and women are essentially political, they involve power and dominance. Since the Lesbian actively rejects that relationship and chooses women, she defies the established political system.

LESBIANISM, BY ITSELF, IS NOT ENOUGH

Of course, not all Lesbians are consciously woman-identified, nor are all committed to finding common solutions to the oppression they suffer as women and Lesbians. Being a Lesbian is part of challenging male supremacy, but not the end. For the Lesbian or heterosexual woman, there is no individual solution to oppression.

The Lesbian may think that she is free since she escapes the personal oppression of the individual male/female relationship. But to the society she is still a woman, or worse, a visible Lesbian. On the street, at the job, in the schools, she is treated as an inferior and is at the mercy of men's power and whims. (I've never heard of a rapist who stopped because his victim was a Lesbian.) This society hates women who love women, and so, the Lesbian, who escapes male dominance in her private home, receives it doubly at the hands of male society; she is harassed, outcast, and shuttled to the bottom. Lesbians must become feminists and fight against woman oppression, just as feminists must become Lesbians if they hope to end male supremacy.

U.S. society encourages individual solutions, apolitical attitudes, and reformism to keep us from political revolt and out of power. Men who rule, and male leftists who seek to rule, try to depoliticize sex and the relations between men and women in order to prevent us from acting to end our oppression and challenging their power. As the question of homosexuality has become public, reformists define it as a private question of who you sleep with in order to sidetrack our understanding of the politics of sex. For the Lesbian-feminist, it is not private; it is a political matter of oppression, domination, and power. Reformists offer solutions which make no basic changes in the system that oppresses us, solutions which keep power in the hands

of the oppressor. The only way oppressed people end their oppression is by seizing power: People whose rule depends on the subordination of others do not voluntarily stop oppressing others. Our subordination is the basis of male power.

SEXISM IS THE ROOT OF ALL OPPRESSION

The first division of labor, in pre-history, was based on sex: men hunted, women built the villages, took care of children, and farmed. Women collectively controlled the land, language, culture, and the communities. Men were able to conquer women with the weapons that they developed for hunting when it became clear that women were leading a more stable, peaceful, and desirable existence. We do not know exactly how this conquest took place, but it is clear that the original imperialism was male over female: the male claiming the female body and her service as his territory (or property).

Having secured the domination of women, men continued this pattern of suppressing people, now on the basis of tribe, race, and class. Although there have been numerous battles over class, race, and nation during the past 3000 years, none has brought the liberation of women. While these other forms of oppression must be ended, there is no reason to believe that our liberation will come with the smashing of capitalism, racism, or imperialism today. Women will be free only when we concentrate on fighting male supremacy.

Our war against male supremacy does, however, involve attacking the later day dominations based on class, race, and nation. As Lesbians who are outcasts from every group, it would be suicidal to perpetuate these man-made divisions among ourselves. We have no heterosexual privileges, and when we publically assert our Lesbianism, those of us who had them lose many of our class and race privileges. Most of our privileges as women are granted to us by our relationships to men (fathers, husbands, boyfriends) whom we now reject. This does not mean that there is no racism or class chauvinism within us, but we must destroy these divisive remnants

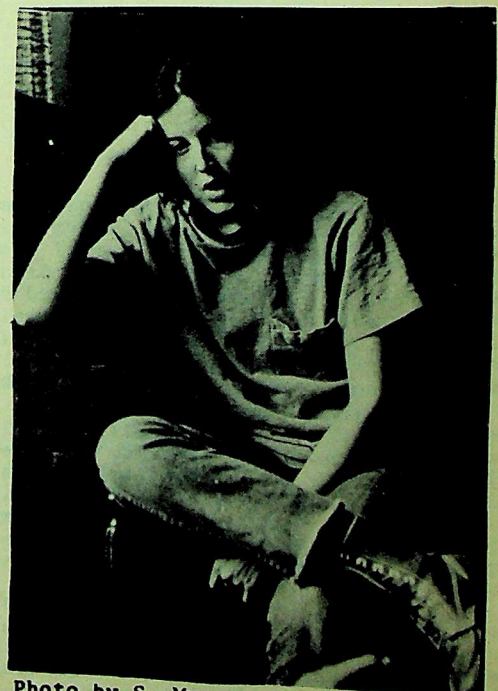


Photo by S. Myers

Male Supremacy Quakes and Quivers

of privileged behavior among ourselves as the first step toward their destruction in the society. Race, class, and national oppressions come from men, serve ruling class white men's interests, and have no place in a woman-identified revolution.

LESBIANISM IS THE BASIC THREAT TO MALE SUPREMACY

Lesbianism is a threat to the ideological, political, personal, and economic basis of male supremacy. The Lesbian threatens the ideology of male supremacy by destroying the lie about female inferiority, weakness, passivity, and by denying women's 'innate' need for men. Lesbians literally do not need men (even for procreation if the science of cloning is developed).

The Lesbian's independence and refusal to support one man undermines the personal power that men exercise over women. Our rejection of heterosexual sex challenges male domination in its most individual and common form. We offer all women something better than submission to personal oppression. We offer the beginning of the end of collective and individual male supremacy. Since men of all races and classes depend on female support and submission for practical tasks and feeling superior, our refusal to submit will force some to examine their sexist behavior, to break down their own destructive privileges over other humans, and to fight against those privileges in other men. They will have to build new selves that do not depend on oppressing women and learn to live in social structures that do not give them power over anyone.

Heterosexuality separates women from each other; it makes women define themselves through men; it forces women to compete against each other for men and the privilege which comes through men and their social standing. Heterosexual society offers women a few privileges as compensations if they give up their freedom: for example, mothers are respected and 'honored', wives or lovers are socially accepted and given some economic and emotional security, a woman gets physical protection on the street when she stays with her man, etc. The privileges give heterosexual women a personal and political stake in maintaining the status quo.

The Lesbian receives none of these heterosexual privileges or compensations since she does not accept the male demands on her. She has little vested interest in maintaining the present political system since all of its institutions--church, state, media, health, schools--work to keep her down. If she understands her oppression, she has nothing to gain by

supporting white rich male America and-much to gain from fighting to change it. She is less prone to accept reformist solutions to women's oppression.

Economics is a crucial part of woman oppression, but our analysis of the relationship between capitalism and sexism is not complete. We know that Marxist economic theory does not sufficiently consider the role of women or Lesbians, and we are presently working on this area.

However, as a beginning, some of the ways that Lesbians threaten the economic system are clear: In this country, women work for men in order to survive, on the job and in the home. The Lesbian rejects this division of labor at its roots; she refuses to be a man's property, to submit to the unpaid labor system of housework and childcare. She rejects the nuclear family as the basic unit of production and consumption in capitalist society.

The Lesbian is also a threat on the job because she is not the passive/part-time woman worker that capitalism counts on to do boring work and be part of a surplus labor pool. Her identity and economic support do not come through men, so her job is crucial and she cares about job conditions, wages, promotion, and status. Capitalism cannot absorb large numbers of women demanding stable employment, decent salaries, and refusing to accept their traditional job exploitation. We do not understand yet the total effect that this increased job dissatisfaction will have. It is, however, clear that as women become more intent upon taking control of their lives, they will seek more control over their jobs, thus increasing the strains on capitalism and enhancing the power of women to change the economic system.

LESBIANS MUST FORM OUR OWN MOVEMENT TO FIGHT MALE SUPREMACY

Feminist-lesbianism, as the most basic threat to male supremacy, picks up part of the Women's Liberation analysis of sexism and gives it force and direction. Women's Liberation lacks direction now because it has failed to understand the importance of heterosexuality in maintaining male supremacy and because it has failed to face class and race as real differences in women's behavior and political needs. As long as straight women see Lesbianism as a bedroom issue, they hold back the development of politics and strategies which would put an end to male supremacy and they give men an excuse for not dealing with their sexism.

Being a Lesbian means ending



Photo by JEB

your identification with, allegiance to, dependence on, and support of heterosexuality. It means ending your personal stake in the male world so that you join women, individually and collectively, in the struggle to end your oppression. Lesbianism is the key to liberation and only women who cut their ties to male privilege can be trusted to remain serious in the struggle against male dominance. Those who remain tied to men, individually or in political theory, cannot always put women first. It is not that heterosexual women are evil or do not care about their sisters. It is because the very essence, definition, and nature of heterosexuality is men first. Every woman has experienced that desolation when her sister puts her man first in the final crunch: heterosexuality demands that she do so. As long as women still benefit from heterosexuality, receive its privileges and security, they will at some point have to betray their sisters, especially Lesbian sisters who do not receive those benefits.

Women in women's liberation have understood the importance of having meetings and other events for women only. It has been clear that dealing with men divides us and saps our energies and that it is not the job of the oppressed to explain our oppression to the oppressor. Women also have seen that collectively, men will not deal with their sexism until they are forced to do so. Yet, many of these same women continue to have primary relationships with men individually and do not understand why Lesbians find this oppressive. Lesbians cannot grow politically or personally in a situation which denies the basis of our politics: that Lesbianism is political, that heterosexuality is crucial to maintaining male supremacy.

Lesbians must form our own political movement in order to grow. Changes which will have more than token effects on our lives will be led by woman-identified Lesbians who understand the nature of our oppression and are therefore in a position to end it.

Charlotte Bunch
For the Furies collective



Photo by JEB

QUEEN CHRISTINA

Lesbian Ruler of Sweden

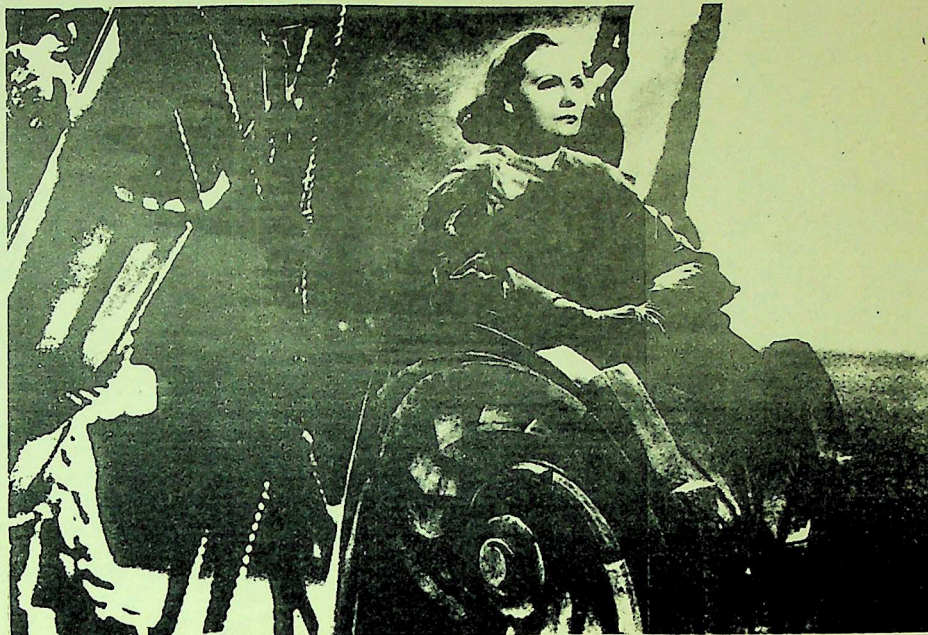
Garbo is superb striding in male attire in the movie, "Queen Christina, Ruler of Sweden." But male Hollywood could not let her portray that strong woman lesbian image in its entirety and my heart fell when she went to bed with John Gilbert. In reality, the Christina of the 1600's did not go to bed with dashing Spaniards but with her lady-in-waiting.

Christina was born in 1626 and her voice was so strident that the nurses at the birth reported to the king that he had a son. Gustavus was not dismayed when he learned that the baby was a daughter but declared that since he had welcomed the child into the world as a son, then a son she would remain to him. He ordered that she be treated as his son and heir; Christina was educated entirely as though she had been a boy, which meant physical training and the sciences instead of needlework.

Gustavus Aldolphus was killed in battle in 1632. Christina became ruler of Sweden at the age of six. She was sitting in Council at 17 and already at odds politically with the Chancellor, Alex Oxenstierna. And at this time, her guardians started pestering her about marriage. It increasingly distressed her and though she did not understand why, her active aversion to marriage had begun when she first became attached to Countess Ebba Sparre, her lady-in-waiting. Most of Christina's biographers will agree that her refusal to marry was the decisive factor in her life; and they agree that had she married, she wouldn't have later left her throne. But less than a handful discuss the real reason why she refused to marry even though many documents and her own letters clearly show that she was a lesbian. There seems to be no doubt that Christina had a love relationship with Ebba Sparre. For instance an excerpt from a letter Christina wrote to Ebba:

"I have seen the most beautiful and the most charming members of our sex, I can claim with even greater assurance that I have seen no woman who can compete with you, for you are charming above them all. And now tell me whether there is any comfort for an eternal separation. But even if I must face the fact that I may never see you again, I am equally sure that I shall always love you."

It is clear that Christina knew that she loved women and so did not want to marry, although she was very discreet. It seems that Christ-



Greta Garbo playing Queen Christina

tina did not consider her lesbianism abnormal, but she felt that she had to contemplate a future for her country--an heir or successor. Since she would not marry and produce an heir she decided as early as 18 that she must abdicate. She frankly admitted that she "felt such a repulsion towards the marital state that she would rather choose death than a man." She went further on to state that she would "never submit to being treated the way a peasant treats his field when planting seeds."

After her coronation, Christina became increasingly more strong and clear. She became her own master. And the main person in the court opposing her was Oxenstierna. He vigorously opposed her efforts to make peace with Sweden's enemies. Oxenstierna considered the war a sacred heritage from Gustavus Aldolphus. He wanted peace only if it would bring immeasurable benefits to Sweden. Little did it matter to him that an estimated three-fourths of Germany's populace was being slaughtered. The clergy did not want peace hoping that the war would somehow make Protestantism the greatest force in Europe. And neither did the generals and high officials want peace for it would destroy their careers. Christina wanted a speedy peace. She was alone, except for perhaps the suffering people, but she remained firm. Christina was the only leader in her country who saw that Sweden had sought a position in Europe which it could not sustain forever, as a country of small resources. Peace finally came in 1648 with increasing friction between Christina and Oxenstierna; Christina was greatly pleased but Oxenstierna and his party were

dissatisfied at not having their outrageous demands met.

In that same year the court persisted in urging Christina to marry. Charles Gustavus, her cousin was now the most popular candidate. Christina mentioned to him in a private interview that she might recommend him to the court as her heir. But the idea of becoming her successor instead of her husband did not appeal to Charles. His ego was sorely hurt. He pouted and when he next saw her stated that "if she would not marry him, he would ask her permission to leave Sweden forever." At this Christina lost her patience and told him to "stop posing and not talk like a hero in some drama." But she realized that he would make the best successor and be the most acceptable to the Estates and Council.

Although the officials of the state wanted to settle the country's future as well as Christina (they did not want an unmarried queen as their ruler), they delayed the abdication to make it seem that they did not want their "God-given" ruler to leave them. It took Christina months to get the Council to agree that she could present Charles Gustavus to the Assembled Estates. And it took that same amount of time to persuade Oxenstierna to summon members of the State Council so that she could formally announce her abdication. At each level of the governing body of Sweden her abdication was opposed by the same men who opposed her governing efforts to bring her country to peace. The people especially begged her not to leave them. It was not until June of 1654 before the formalities were over and she could lift the crown off her head.

Charles gave her a sum of money and, still convinced she was a "real woman" at heart, gave her a jewelled hairpin. That night Christina ordered her valet to cut off her hair.

Ebba Sparre did not leave Sweden with Christina, and little is known about their parting. There is only one letter left written to Ebba from Christina in Rome, imploring her to "fly into my desperately longing arms."

Christina became a well-known celebrity-adventurer throughout Europe--one who associated with Jews and wore male attire. Jews at that time were not considered at all equal to the Christian Europeans and a woman who wore pants was almost unheard of. She lived the rest of her life actively, almost always with a finger in European politics urging peace and acting as a personal diplomat between European powers.

Two of the three biographies of Queen Christina that I read mentioned her lesbian tendencies but later denied that she was gay by telling story after story of her rumored affairs with men. One book by Margaret Leland Goldsmith states that Christina was "sexually abnormal." Goldsmith like many women today, hates women. Again and again she attacks Christina had her so-called "problematical nature." In one breath Goldsmith will rave on about how "masculine" Christina was and in the next attack her

"overconsciousness which even today is such a disadvantage to many pro-

fessional women, who refuse to forget their work after they have left the office. It is almost as though, being new as a sex to responsible work, they are parvenues in their overzealousness."

Furthermore she starts the book by explaining that Christina accomplished nothing. Goldsmith, like most male-identified historians, recognizes greatness only in how many countries one can conquer during one's reign. Male-identified historians have to validate and romanticize the aggressiveness and recklessness that male rulers perpetuate. For if they recognized the peace and practicality that happens when women rule, they would then have to admit that women should be in power and rule the world.

Christina is not a famous ruler simply because she did not initiate the foolhardy power-hungry acts of male rulers. She brought peace to Europe, proving herself one of the ablest political stateswomen of all time. This then was the real reason why she had to abdicate. A male society cannot stand to be ruled by a female monarch who has female values. Most of all Sweden could not tolerate, in the long run, having a queen who would not fit into the woman role--marrying and producing a male heir--and who was clearly a lesbian. But male-identified historians will never admit this.

Much is to be learned from her including the way in which she viewed European politics and the premium she put on peace. Queen Christina left an important political legacy for all lesbians to study.

Helaine Harris



Garbo as Christina with her lady-in-waiting

GOSSIP

Gossip is irresponsible communication. Irresponsible because it is at the expense of another person who is not there to defend herself. Irresponsible because it is not constructive: it helps no one, least of all the person being gossiped about. We have all experienced being gossiped about so we know the end result: it destroys trust. It's bad enough when this activity flares up among friends, but when it crops up in a political movement it jeopardizes our security and detracts from political issues.

Women gossip because we will be listened to by other women; gossip is often the only way women can get an audience. With some taken exceptions, women are excluded from TV and radio broadcasting and newspaper reporting and editorializing. Men have determined that women have nothing to say, and women have internalized their own "unimportance" and limit their speaking and listening to other women gossip.

Given our rigid roles as sex object, mother and maid it is surprising that over the centuries women did not lose the power of speech altogether. We spoke to each other about those areas of life left to us: child care, domestic chores, maintaining our status as desirable sex objects, and each other. In talking about each other we glossed over the good things and seized upon the bad. Women are ready, so ready to listen and ac-

cept negative information about each other. This upsetting activity stems directly from our oppression and subsequent self-hatred. Most women's lives still are a tedium of muffled unhappiness. Aside from TV, one of the few escape routes left is getting involved in other people's lives vicariously. Gossip aides this escape.

How reassuring to hear that Mary is as wretched as you are, or better yet, worse off. That means Mary is "less" than you are and therefore you can feel superior. Given our low status in the pecking order it is a very real consolation to be able to peck someone beneath us. And who is lower than a woman except another woman who has transgressed in her assigned womanly duties or who has freaked out because she could no longer bear her oppression? You also get status if you are the first to know something about another person and you can feel superior.

Gossip is especially destructive when it is aimed at women who are political, and when its content, although appearing to be "personal", is a thinly veiled attack on the victim's politics. There are many types of gossip; this article will discuss two of the most dangerous kinds. First, an example of the "emotional appeal" method.

Mary has formed a political study group with other women. The emotional appeal gossip would say something like this to an unwary listener: "I'm so upset and feel so rejected. Mary, Jane, Susan and Evelyn have formed a study group and left me out. Mary and I used

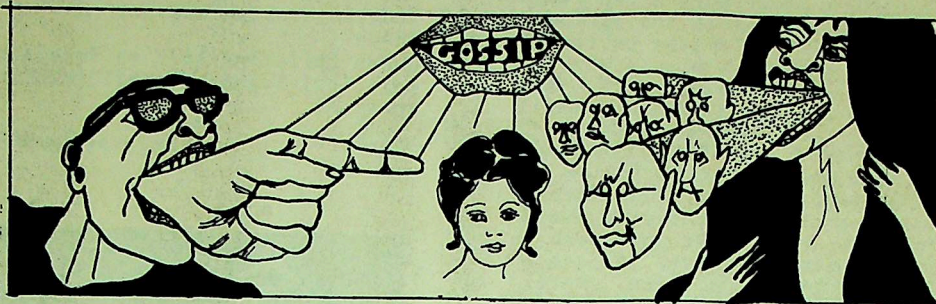
to be good friends. How could she do something like this to me?" What the speaker has failed to tell the listener is exactly that--why she is not part of that group. The speaker has put the formation of a political study group on emotional terms, centered it around herself and her supposed needs. She gives no hint at what the political differences between herself and the group are. The speaker has created an aura of pity for herself. Women are suckers for this kind of emotional appeal because emotions are our assigned sphere by men. This form of gossip is especially disgusting because it preys on women's emotional susceptibility which comes from woman oppression.

The second and more destructive type of gossip is the pseudo-psychological method which includes emotional elements to bolster its claims on the listener's attention. It is connected with class privilege whereas the emotional appeal is not. You have to have had some contact with middle class psychological bullshit in order to be able to pull off this technique--obviously, well-educated middle class women are standouts in its performance.

This form of gossip is vicious and the hardest to track down because it offers some kind of explanation for another woman's behavior that is easy to swallow, and once digested, the listener can then turn around and pass it on as her own idea. With emotional appeal alone, the listener can only relate how the poor gossip has been

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continued



injured by Mary. Here's a brief example of this method--it is best performed over a few weeks or months time so the gossip can build up credibility with the listener and round out her thesis.

"I've known Mary for some time now and we used to be very close. She is a very ambitious and insecure woman. She has to prove herself better than anyone else and she really needs to control people because that is the only way she can be sure about them. Now she has gone and organized this study group with her lackeys and it's only to dominate others that she's doing this. You really should stay away from here, and don't try to work with that study group." Again, the gossip ignores the political basis of the study group and chooses to single out Mary, who she dislikes, in order to turn people against Mary and the group. Most political statements or ideas can be traced back to their originators and then destroyed by destroying the originators. It is a very clever way to explain and destroy political ideas.

It is crucial that gossip be seen as a political and counter-revolutionary act. It is a means by which women can form hierarchies without interfering in men's hierarchies. It takes energy away from our real struggle, which is not just personal (in that it is not against individual people) but ideological and political. Gossiping about Richard Nixon will not bring him down, any more than gossiping about a woman will build a movement which can destroy sexism. Furthermore, if the gossip were really concerned with the behavior of the victim, she would confront her instead of stabbing her in the back.

But the crucial point about gossips is that they attack political women without attacking their politics, when it is clearly their politics that are threatening. Straight women gossip about Lesbians in order to excuse themselves

from dealing with Lesbianism. Reformists support gossips because they don't want stronger politics to emerge. Gossips don't want to face either their own oppression or responsibility for their own actions. They don't want to face the fact that they do not fight their oppression. If you understand your oppression than you are faced with the moral decision of complying with it or fighting to end it. Apolitical women want to hide from that decision; gossips help them do it by smearing the women who would force that decision upon them. Men adore gossips because it weakens the entire movement and keeps them in the power seat longer.

We should be clear about the difference between gossip and political fights. Gossip is not ideological struggle. Gossip is under-the-table verbal assassination. Gossip serves our enemies by weakening us and making us look like backstabbing fools. Political differences exist and one way to educate ourselves is to air them. We owe it to ourselves to freely express those political differences. Reformism is different from revolution and any attempt to smooth over the sharp lines of divergence only water down the politics of both beliefs and make them sweetly liberal.

It is a mistake to assume that gossip is just talk, that women who gossip are merely prattling and that gossip does not have specific targets for specific reasons. A woman in the movement who gossips cannot be said to lack politics. She gossips about those whose politics are different from her own. Gossip therefore serves her political interests as well as her more petty concerns. She is able to rip to shreds a political person and avoid a confrontation with that person's political ideas. She insures that other women will not consider the analysis of the women she is damning. The sad fact is that people not only remain ignorant of the purpose of this be-

havior, they are influenced by it.

The values that operate in gossip are those that operate in any power struggle. The gossip is seeking a measure of power for herself with the least amount of risk possible. She tries to enlarge and defend her personal or semi-political power over those that threaten it. The more powerful a person's political analysis, the more viciously must this kind of woman attack her. Gossip gives you control over others and when facing gossip we often forget this basic fact--control.

The question now is what to do about gossip. If you are the object of political attacks, covered as gossip, you can try to short circuit the gossip by speaking to her straight out. She will probably evade you, cry, or try to lie her way out. You can confront her in front of other people so that they can judge what is going down. One amazing upshoot of this procedure may be that after the exchange is over, the gossip will gather her followers and twist the entire exchange to her own advantage. A ripe lie is that she was too overcome with emotion (that old trick again) to respond. Horseshit.

If you cannot stop the chief initiator, you can at least stop the cycle from spreading by calling your group together (be it consciousness raising, a project group, or a tightly organized cell) and making everyone aware of the problem. Everyone should understand that not only is someone's character being assassinated, but that the political ideas of that person, and by extension, the group with which she works, are being destroyed.

The most effective way to deal with gossips is to cut out their tongues. However, at this time, that is not feasible. Gossips can bad rap you from coast to coast and they can succeed in slowing down your work because other people who don't yet know you will be leery of you. But if you are seriously trying to change the conditions we all live in, no amount of gossip can cover that seriousness over. KEEP WORKING. In time, even some of the former supporters of a gossip will clearly see who gets the work done and who doesn't--and no amount of psychological hogwash can obscure why the gossip can't get anything together, including herself.

Keep your head up and don't stoop to answer her ridiculous accusations and outright lies. The future is yours. Her future is to fall in the trashcan of the struggle against sexism.

Rita Mae Brown

The Price is Wrong

The primary moving force behind the most powerful white men in this country is the economy. These past few months we have been inundated with the news that there is a crisis in this economy. This crisis is particularly serious because it involves both the international and domestic spheres.

It is important for us, as revolutionary lesbians, to understand this crisis. Any crack in the monolithic power system that rich white men have built can never be completely resealed and provides a present and fu-

ture source of weakness. If we are to turn these weaknesses to our advantage, we must analyze them.

In this issue we will begin with the international economic situation --its basic elements, the dynamics which have produced a crisis in it, and how that crisis is being dealt with by Nixon et al. In the next issue we will begin discussing the domestic economy.

ELEMENTS OF THE MARKET

Balance of payments. This is a

bookkeeping term. Subtract the international minuses (dollars gone out of the U.S. -- for private investment, military expenditures, foreign aid, tourist spending, import purchases) from the pluses (dollars coming back in to the U.S. -- primarily for its exports) and you have the balance (of payments). If the figure you are left with is a plus figure, you are said to have a surplus balance of payments, and if it's a minus figure, you have a deficit. The balance of payments situation for the U.S. is a deficit, and

has been an 'unacceptable' deficit for at least a decade.

The Gold Standard. In its most basic form the gold standard means the use of, and common acceptance of gold as the standard for determining the value of one currency relative to any other currency. Since 1934, gold has been priced at \$35 an ounce -- which means that one dollar is worth 1/35 of a gold ounce because, theoretically, the U.S. promises to any country an ounce of gold for every 35 American dollars it chooses to turn back in to the U.S. With the dollar's value fixed in terms of gold, the value of each other currency is then determined relative to the dollar. This gives each currency a fixed value in terms of gold and a stable currency value in relation to each other. (Commonly known as a fixed rate of exchange.) As long as currencies are tied to the gold standard, their values do not change with periodic fluctuations of the international market.

Reserves. A nation's reserves refer to the amount of gold it has in its possession with which it can guarantee its currency internationally. Its currency is guaranteed by its reserves as long as the amount of currency it has outstanding (the amount of its balance-of-payments deficit) is no more than the total amount of its gold reserves. Thus, a limit on its deficit is imposed by its gold holdings. When the U.S. has a deficit, other nations have a surplus of U.S. dollars, which they can theoretically turn in to the U.S. for some of its gold reserves.

Two things are important to note here: 1) We are describing the theoretical functioning of the gold standard-reserve system. It is hopelessly archaic, and has not worked according to theory for many years; and 2) The gold standard-reserve system is solely international and governmental. It is not applicable to the workings of domestic economies.

Devaluation. A country's currency is devalued in relation to the gold standard, and, consequently, depreciates in relation to the currencies of other countries. If the U.S., for example, were to devalue its currency, the number of dollars needed to purchase an ounce of gold would increase (e.g., from \$35 per ounce, to \$40 per ounce). One dollar would thus be worth a smaller fraction of a gold ounce -- the dollar is de-valued.

If the dollar is worth less in gold than it was, and all other countries' currencies are worth the same in terms of gold as they always were, then the dollar is worth less in terms of their currencies also.

If the dollar is worth less in terms of the pound, one can then buy more dollars worth of goods for one pound. Thus, the exports of the U.S. will increase (more countries will buy U.S. goods because they are, in effect, cheaper) and the imports will decrease, because they are more expensive. Since the country has more of its money paid in to it (for its increasing exported goods) and less increasing exported goods (paid out for its decreasing imported goods), its balance of payments will be improved. That is, it will have less of a deficit. This improvement is one of the reasons for devaluation of currency.

Serious inflation in the domestic economy can also lead a nation to devalue. During inflation, prices

and wages are high and keep pushing each other higher. As this happens, the currency becomes worth less domestically; the dollar is able to purchase less. This kind of domestic instability affects the international market the way bad news affects the Stock Market. The demand for that nation's currency in the international market decreases. Often, speculation in international markets indicates that it will continue to decrease in value, and there follows a rush by other countries to rid themselves of that currency. (Usually, this is done by turning it in to that country for the promised gold.) Such a rush against the unstable currency increases its instability and decreases its value even further. At this point, the country is practically forced to devalue its currency. Doing so will stop the trend against it, since the devaluation will bring the currency closer to its real value in the international market.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CRISIS

The twentieth century rise of technology and corporations changed the world economic situation drastically. Each year the U.S. further outstripped every nation in amount of goods produced. The other developed nations also acquiring the new technology soared ahead economically, while the under-developed nations lagged farther and farther behind.

By the end of World War II, and with its help, the U.S. economy was, by far, the most powerful in the world. Likewise, the U.S. dollar was the 'hardest' currency in the world, because it was the most stable and was backed by the largest gold reserve supply. It was considered by all nations to be 'as good as gold' -- unlike any other currency in the world. Consequently, dollars were the currency most wanted, and most readily accepted in foreign trade. Dollars poured into Western Europe, Latin America, and selected nations in Asia. Foreign aid dollars: to help the war-torn capitalist nations rebuild their economies; dollars for private investment in overseas firms, the foreign subsidiaries of American corporations: to boost the productivity of other nations (which in turn creates greater markets for the U.S.), and to produce American goods at lower costs (since labor and raw materials are cheaper outside the U.S.); American tourist dollars; and most importantly, dollars in overseas military expenditures: to protect the "free world" (read, free markets for continuing U.S. economic growth). The U.S. balance of trade alone -- its import-export balance -- was a surplus (a profit -- it imported fewer dollars worth of goods than it exported), but the amount of this surplus was not nearly enough to cover all these other outlays of capital, primarily military, which stayed overseas. Thus, the U.S. began running a deficit in its balance-of-payments as a whole.

In the past, other nations would have forced the U.S. to deal with this outflow of dollars, by turning in their surplus dollars for U.S. gold. They didn't do this now for many reasons. First, the massive power of the U.S. economy insured the value of dollars held overseas. They did not need to be turned in for gold because they were 'as good as gold'. This enormous economic power also intimidated trading 'partners' who could hardly afford to cross the U.S. There was

an unwritten pact not to challenge the U.S. reserve supply, which was at the time, advantageous to all. The U.S. could continue its deficit, getting something for nothing, since it didn't have to pay its international debts. Other nations had dollars in surplus which added to their total reserve supply and gave them a larger international bank account. Dollars, unlike gold, could also draw interest. The international market itself was also stimulated since these dollars added to the overall money available for world trade.

Dollars began to be held with gold as reserves, filling the gap created by the inadequate supply of world gold reserves. There seems to have been no real alternative to this course of events, within the framework of capitalism and the gold standard. The gold standard-reserve system, if adhered to strictly, would have stifled the world capitalist market. The limited supply of gold would have been a ceiling on the market's growth, when it needed to increase without limits. Likewise, the overwhelming growth of U.S. capitalism required that it continue to expand its markets overseas, to use its surplus capital. When the domestic market becomes unable to consume all of capitalism's products, it can expand no more domestically. Yet it must continue to expand in order to exist, so it must turn to overseas growth in order to survive. Similarly, it must spread some of its capital wealth around, essentially creating smaller versions of itself, so that it will have someone to trade with.

NIXON'S "SOLUTION"

The dollar domination of the international market, coupled with a U.S. balance-of-payments deficit, has escalated continuously since the end of the second world war. On August 15 of this year things came to a crashing halt. Nixon announced, in his "New Economic Policy" two international actions: 1) Cutting the dollar loose from the gold standard -- floating the dollar; and, 2) the institution of a 10% surcharge (tax, or tariff) on imports.

Only the U.S. (and only the conservative in the U.S.) would dare to do this singlehandedly. Nixon-Connally et al. have, with these actions, abolished the standard upon which all capitalist world trade was based, and transformed a 'spirit of cooperation' among Western-world nations into 'survival of the fittest'. The liberal position of cooperation, consultation, and freer trade which predominated in the 60s, has been replaced by a conservative, protectionist doctrine. This doctrine maintains that the U.S. is powerful enough to go it alone and pursue its best interests, regardless of the interests of other nations.

Floating the dollar, or cutting it loose from the gold standard, accomplishes two things. First, it is an underhanded way of devaluing the dollar, without admitting U.S. economic weakness -- an unacceptable loss of face for the U.S. and its sacred dollar. Actual devaluation also would have further weakened the shaky domestic economy by making the dollar look worse internationally. By removing the gold standard (the fixed rate of exchange), the U.S. says, we will not devalue but will make all other countries upvalue their currencies in relation to ours.

OVER

CONTINUED

With the dollar floating, each currency's rate of exchange vis a vis the dollar now floats upward until it reaches a new, more accurate exchange rate. The U.S. is also discussing the possibility of increasing the price of gold -- another way of devaluing the dollar without saying it.

Secondly, the removal of the dollar from the gold standard stops the convertibility of foreign dollars into gold from the U.S. reserves. This action prevents an international rush to get rid of dollars. Such an international movement against the dollar, though not a probability, would have been debilitating to the U.S. economy. Taking the dollar off the gold standard also holds the U.S. gold reserve supply stable (at a respectable \$10 billion) in anticipation of a return to the gold standard system.

Nixon's import surcharge requires that all nations pay a tariff of 10% of the value of any exports they send to the U.S. This increased expense requires other nations to decrease their imports to the U.S., and imports that do come in are 10% more expensive than similar American made goods. This surcharge gives the U.S. a large trade advantage over all of its customary trading partners (i.e., the International Monetary Fund members who are Western capitalist nations). While this surcharge actually does little to help the overall American economic position -- since only a small per cent of its economy depends on foreign trade -- it weighs very heavily on all the other IMF members. Unlike the U.S., they depend mainly on their exports; and their primary export market is -- guess who. Their exports will be cut at least in half and their economies will suffer enormously.

ANALYSIS

The American economic position has so deteriorated in recent years that its balance-of-trade, a strong point for over two decades, has begun to show a deficit. Both of the Nixon international measures are aimed directly at this trade deficit specifically. Devaluation itself, though it will undoubtedly help the trade balance, would have been necessary in any case, given the weakened condition of the dollar both at home and overseas. The surcharge, along with this devaluation, could help to turn the trade deficit back into a surplus. However, since trade accounts for only two or three per cent of the entire American Gross National Product, these moves cannot significantly resolve the economic crisis. The truth is that they were never meant to. Nixon-Connally et. al. had other reasons for announcing them as part of the NEP.

First of all, these moves are showy, and controversial enough to produce a flurry of news about their effects -- a good cover, since most people take news to be actual activity. This obscures the gravity of the economic crisis, and the real problems continue to go unsolved. The surcharge specifically is meant to act as a force behind U.S. demands on other nations. The U.S. will blackmail the others into revaluing, and into accepting some of the burden for its overseas military expenses -- because it won't lift the surcharge until they agree. The discussions at the latest IMF meeting, in Rome, seem to confirm that the U.S. will achieve its purposes. Although weaker, it can still wield the club of superior

power and win. The economic futures of the other Western nations are still too tied to that of America for them to do more than bemoan their fates and be 'reasonable'. In the end, they must shuffle -- and so they are. They have accepted the surcharge with a stiff upperlip (and with only one reprisal: Denmark). They have agreed to the revaluation, and they will agree to shoulder some of the 'free world' military expense. They will reform the international monetary system within the limits which are set by the U.S. But they will not forget.

They will not forget that the U.S. has fucked them at its whim. The U.S. had a so-called cooperation with all these nations, when it suited its needs. Its needs at this time are to protect its existence, its image, its shaky economy. For the sake of its economic system, its heartbeat, the U.S. has forsaken these nations and broken many long-standing political alliances and economic promises. Its capitalist allies have learned the hard way that, in dealings of power, the one with the most power can 'cooperate' at its pleasure, and will rule brutally when necessary for its survival. The resentments and anger the U.S. has caused among its allies will prove bothersome to it in the future -- probably not disastrous, but troublesome. They will not be so eager to support every move of the U.S. As an example, many of the old allies voted against the U.S. proposal to keep Taiwan in the U.N. In future years when the U.S. needs their help, if it's not in their best interests to give that help, they may refuse. Alliances are hardly strengthened by power plays like this one.

These actions also exacerbated the divisions within the U.S. ruling class. Nixon-Connally et al. have smashed the liberal trend of U.S. international economic policy, and moved to a conservative, 'power-1st' approach. The liberal men of the ruling class have long argued for 'cooperation' -- that it is in America's long-run interest to consult the other Western nations, remove all trade barriers, and allow an 'acceptable' balance-of-payments deficit. The conservatives opinion of the first two liberal tenets need not be repeated. The actions of Nixon and his boys defy these notions absolutely. Connally has made the conservative stand on the third point equally clear. Repeatedly, he has said that the U.S. is now aiming not simply for a lessening of the deficit but for an \$8 billion surplus. Since the deficit is presently \$5 billion, the U.S. would have to recover \$13 billion to have such a surplus. Most people laugh at the absurdity of this plan. The worried liberals argue that if the U.S. goes ahead with this plan, there would be a recession in the world market, which would certainly be harmful to long-run U.S. interests. (In order to achieve a surplus, the U.S. would have to pull dollars out of the world market...which would decrease market activity, since much of the international market's growth has been dependent on the surfeit of American dollars.)

The Nixon-Connally bunch are conservative-reactionary down the line. Domestically they are hard-headed capitalists. Apparently, they still believe in the 'free market' system that went out decades ago, with the rise of big corporations. Internationally, they are adhering doggedly to a 'might makes right'

approach. In most conflicts among the ruling men, the conservatives are much more brazen in their exercise of power than the liberals, though the effects of both methods are essentially the same. Liberals are consistently more eager to 'soften the blow', to cloak the exercise of power in the guise of 'free choice', 'cooperation', etc. Essentially, these men are arguing among themselves about the most effective way to retain, maintain and enhance their power. This in-fighting will recur with each new crisis. By itself, it does nothing to change the actual seat of power; but every division is another wedge, another weakening link which impairs the ability of the ruling class to unite solidly against future challenges to their power.

The U.S. is no longer unquestionably the most economically powerful nation in the West. These actions indicate the weakened state of its economic position. The forceful disruption of long-standing trade arrangements has produced a precarious world economy, in which the existing power balance is subject to change. The U.S. has disturbed a set of international alliances and market principles that were established after the second World War, at the height of U.S. economic and military superiority.

Since then, other capitalist nations like Japan and West Germany have, with U.S. aid, rebuilt to the point that they are now challenging American economic strongholds. Some of their products now out-sell the U.S. competition. The Common Market has been successful enough to provide more strength for European countries as a group, allowing them greater flexibility in market relations with the U.S. Greatly increased trade between capitalist and communist nations in the 70's will further alter the world market situation.

All of the above factors combine to make it unlikely that the new set of international arrangements will be as favorable to the U.S. as the last. Nor will the new order be as easily arrived at...there will probably be years of negotiation, modification, and re-negotiation. At present we can only be certain that the market of the 70's will be in a state of flux. Its 'golden age' -- two decades of prosperity and stability -- is a thing of the past.

Finally, these international measures were advertised as the way to solve America's balance-of-payments problem, the way out of a deficit and back to a 'healthy surplus'. They do not touch, except peripherally, the real source of this deficit which is the monstrous American military expense, the cost of policing the world for capitalism. In one quarter of 1971, the annual rate of the trade deficit was \$4.2 billion; the balance-of-payments deficit was \$23 billion. Part of the overall deficit problem is the long time required for foreign investments to return profits, but the bulk of it is purely military expenditure... for Vietnam, the Middle-East, Europe, the rest of South-East Asia, Latin America, etc.

The cost of insuring markets for capitalist expansion is high; the cost of imperialism even higher. This part of the deficit problem can never be resolved by merely reforming capitalism. Here lies the hidden heart of the U.S. problem. At some point, the profits of exploitation are consumed by the costs of maintaining it.

Susan Hathaway

WHAT'S GOING ON?

We know there is a lot more news from Lesbians out there, but it has been difficult to get for this first issue. Lesbians are, in fact, getting together. There is an overall feeling of need to do that. At the same time, there is a common complaint that people are not sure what to do with themselves once they do -- physically -- get together. Many groups are struggling against disintegration and several have already fallen apart.

Groups that have been started around specific issues or projects have found that they lose steam or people begin to drift off. Groups that have a "consciousness raising" orientation find that eventually no one seems to know where they are going with it. Things break down because of emotional conflicts, disputes and bad feelings over issues like monogamy, or just a general lack of clarity about politics, about what people should be doing, and what their commitment to each other is.

Having experienced some of this breakdown in our collective, we see now that it was largely because of an emphasis on personal relationships instead of politics. When there is no common reference point (clear Lesbian politics) for evaluation of issues, it becomes hard to make political decisions. As a result, politics are pushed aside in order to deal with what is more tangible, what does not require tedious study or hours of preparation and thought, that is, personal relationships. But the kind of personal trust that everyone wants to feel among the members of a political group cannot grow in a political vacuum.

We need to pull together to form a solid ideology so that our purposes are clear. It is essential to have a firm understanding of how and why Lesbianism itself is politically important. Through the development of this understanding, we will be able to decide where to go and what our priorities are. Groups will get together and stay together because a firm political commitment and common strategy will transcend traps like overemphasis on personal relationships and will eliminate political indecision.

MIDWEST CONFERENCE

A weekend for Lesbians from all over the Midwest is planned by Yellow Springs Radicalesbians for February 11-13. It will be held at the Outdoor Education Center in Glen Helen, near Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio. The cost will be \$2.50 per person per night. There are mattresses, but you should bring sleeping bags.

The conference will start with a swim and art display on Friday evening, Feb. 11. There will be workshops, consciousness raising, and reports from various cities on Saturday and Sunday, and a dance on Saturday night. Hopefully, women from the different areas represented will furnish guerilla theater throughout the conference.

If you have any suggestions about what you would like to see happen at the conference, write to RADICALESBIANS, c/o Women's Center, Antioch Mail Room, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387. Or you can call 767-7862 (area code 503). Write or call the same places for directions and further information

about the conference. Also -- you should bring Lesbian and women's literature from your area.

PHILADELPHIA

Philadelphia Radicalesbians has been in existence for about a year. They meet for consciousness raising and business meetings every Monday night at 8:00 P.M. at the Women's Center, 4734 Chest Ave. The number there is (215) SA7-1717.

Currently, Radicalesbians in Philly are involved in several projects. Members of the group go out in groups of twos, threes and fours for speaking engagements. Two papers have been given to psychiatry-social worker conventions, "basically trashing them and their view of homosexuals, female or male." Both conventions were clearly taken a-back by the presence of Radicalesbians and what they had to say. However, they were, of course, "liberal and tolerant". Other members of the group are involved in talking to college classes.

Gay women from the Homophile Action League (no longer existant) are now working with Radicalesbians. They have been especially concerned with legislation and job discrimination against gay people, especially women. During the mayoral campaign, they picketed the offices of both candidates -- protesting the total disregard of any gay issues.

Radicalesbians also sponsored a Halloween costume party for all women in October. They are now putting out a bi-monthly newsletter, which they hope will grow into a Lesbian newspaper.

DENVER

Gay women in Denver started getting themselves together last Spring through Gay Liberation. Because of the inevitable hassles between men and women in GLF, they split off from that group. They are now meeting every week. Some of them have been learning auto mechanics and they are anxious to start a class for gay women soon. Also -- football in the park every Sunday. For information, call (303) 623-0773.

BOSTON

Radical Lesbians in Boston are hoping to get out more issues of the Lavender Vision this year. Also in the works are plans for some meetings on feminism for gay women who haven't been politically involved before, come-out meetings, and Lesbian anti-rape groups. Meanwhile, they have been organizing some basketball teams for gay women and working on the possibility of a Lesbian band which would play for a weekly free women's dance.

SAN LORENZO

From San Lorenzo, ALTA writes that so far, nearly all the poets whose work she has published at Shameless Hussy Press have been Gay. For a catalogue, write to Alta, Shameless Hussy Press, P. O. Box 124, San Lorenzo, California. 94580

SAN FRANCISCO

The Lesbians Speak Out Collective in San Francisco is getting ready to put out the second edition of Lesbians Speak Out. They want it

to include a wide variety of material about Lesbians, their lives and how they have been affected by being gay. They would like to have articles, poetry, songs, pictures, drawings, maps, graphs, photographs, short stories, "plus any whatever that are available." And they would like to have them by midnight, December 31, 1971. They are also trying to put together a book of Lesbian letters. The material should be sent to the Lesbians Speak Out Collective, 1018 Valencia St., San Francisco, California, 94110. Material will be returned if it is accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

The Women's Press Collective in San Francisco wants gay women to know about Edward the dyke and other poems, a 46 page book of poetry by Judy Grahn and drawings by Wendy Cadden, Brenda Crider, Gail Hodgins and Sunny. The book is \$1.25, and copies are available from Judy Grahn, 1018 Valencia St., San Francisco, California 94110. (See article at page 7.)

Also in San Francisco, the Lesbian Mothers Union is meeting weekly. The group got together last summer after the Los Angeles Gay Women's Conference, where they had attended a workshop for Lesbian mothers. They are working on a program to be presented to the Family Service Agency. The Union wants the professionals to come through with legal aid as well as legal and psychological research. Since Lesbians are not considered to be fit mothers in this society, their children are always taken away from them in custody cases. The Lesbian Mother's Union hopes to gain solid ammunition from mental health professionals and research before it tries to bring forward a test case in the courts.

SEATTLE

In Seattle, the Gay Women's Resource Center is open five days a week, 9 to 5 phone service. It is staffed by volunteers. The object is "to provide a place for all women -- particularly gay women -- to meet one another on a personal level in an area of acceptance." The center offers a Survival file, small library, speakers bureau, small rap groups and alternative counselling that happens "in really good ways".

The Center also puts out a newsletter called Gayly Forward, which includes poetry, fiction and other commentary for and by Lesbians. You can get in touch with the Seattle Gay Women's Resource Center at (206) ME2-4747. Or you can call Martha Walters at (206) LA3-4597.

Also in Seattle, Lesbian mothers have just started a rap group. Anyone interested in the group can contact the Gay Women's Resource Center for more information.

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CLASS BEGINNINGS



A revolutionary women's movement must understand the subtle yet dynamic barriers of class that exist in this advanced consumer capitalist society because class is one of the main pillars that keeps the male power system standing sturdy. Class keeps women down and divided through middle class women's oppressive behaviour towards lower class women. Instead of recognizing class for what it is, middle class women refuse to see it in order to keep many of the privileges that they get from that same class system.

Movements to date have dealt with class only in its romantic and academic Marxist sense. The romantic view of the working class is some groovy simplistic way of living rather than an oppressive product of capitalism. There's nothing cool or gutsy about being working class...it's a brutalizing and dehumanizing way to grow up. In a society responsive to images it is hard to break that romantic vision of the working class. Witness the popularity of the downwardly mobile life style.

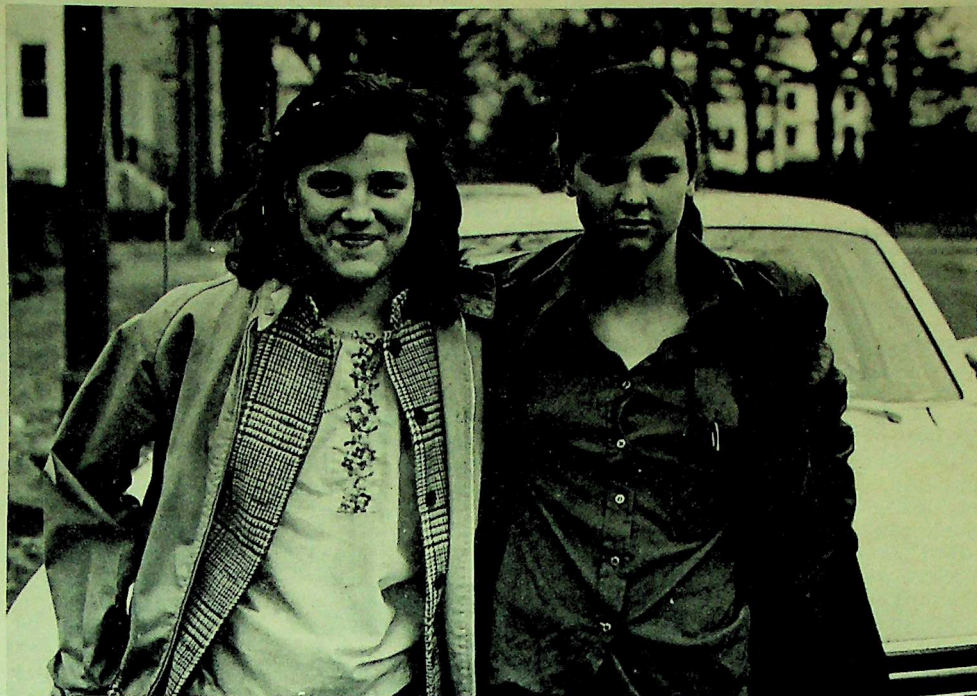
Before we begin to figure out class and how it specifically affects our movement, we have to understand the devastating psychological effects that poverty has on the working class in this country. The conditioning and behaviour that comes from financial security and the lack of financial security are radically different. In a society based on materialism, your worth is defined by where you are on the economic ladder. One of the reasons that poverty continues in the richest country in the world is because people are brainwashed with the protestant ethic. If you're successful, it's because you work hard and are a good, clean, ambitious American. If you are poor, you haven't tried hard enough, therefore you are lazy and useless and your poverty is your punishment. The sad truth is that most

poor people believe that they're inferior and act in a way that confirms it. Everything in this society keeps them thinking it. Every ad and TV show confirms their economic inferiority. Every bureaucratic insult and humiliation makes their place in society more secure in its horror. Even the material goods you acquire work against you. One can buy a color TV and car "on time"; but these are visual pacifications that keep people off the streets, in debt, and even more dependent on the system.

For example, if Marsha Marvelous has nice clothes, eats good food and has a little spending money then all of her social maintenance things are taken care of. Her place is now secure in the community. If Gracie O'Neil eats boiled potatoes, Hostess Twinkies and drinks Kool Aid most of her childhood then chances are her teeth will rot out by age 15 and she will have a lousy disposition from lack of proper nutrition. And if her clothes are from the bargain table of St. Vincent De Pauls Goodwill Shop it doesn't exactly instill her with an air of graciousness and confidence as she walks down the halls of her high school. Her worth and potential in this society are questionable and at best shakey. Marsha thinks Gracies a real frump and is that way because that's just the way things are. Gracie will usually think Marsha's better because she has a nice disposition and pretty teeth and that's just the way things are.

America has set up a scale of worth that affects everyone. If you are not white, 25, male, middle class, and exude an aura of virile sexuality then you are inferior. (this includes about 98% of the population) At the top of this scale are the wealthy white males and at the bottom are the penniless powerless trash. This scale keeps everyone in line. Within it, everyone, including those near the bottom, cling to that part of their identity that makes them superior to someone else, middle class over working class, white over black, male over female, etc. And it works especially well in keeping women divided. Sexism and classism reinforce each other sometimes in outrageous ways.





Photos by S. Martin and N. Myron

For example, I moved from Boston (where I was with my own kind) to a middle class village in upstate NY when I was 12. We were the trash of the community, and were treated accordingly. I'm filled with rage when I think of what happened to one of my sisters who had the misfortune to not only be trash but to also be endowed with large breasts. She was called a whore and an easy lay. I spent much time defending her against these awful insinuations the sad truth being that she was a shy sensitive virgin till the ripe old age of 18 when she got married. Any other woman in the village with a little financial status and the same physique as my sister was "dated" and had the respect of that foul little society. I'm not saying that the sweet magnolia blossoms of lawers daughters escaped sexual objectification but that they had a less traumatic time of it. Someone has to be on the bottom to hold up the top. An in this case part of the female citizenry was projected into the shadows of alleys while the rest went steady with basketball stars. It becomes clear who were the good and who were the bad. If women were stripped of these illusions of superiority they would begin to see the reality of the oppressed state of all women in this culture.

As a white lower class-female, I still got one small compensator from this scale of value . . . racial superiority. I grew up in poverty but I had white skin privilege. Despite all my feelings of inferiority I could still "improve" my lot and even make it in the middle class. Not that I wouldn't pay for it with bits of my soul. My education as bad as it was wasn't as bad as a Black womans'. And as poor as we were, we still weren't as poor as the Blacks in Roxbury. I latched on to this one confirmation of my superiority with much enthusiasm.

It was only when I started to put my racism in a broader political context that I was really able to begin to deal with it. It didn't take political genius to see the similarity between the way my family was treated in the context of a middle class village and the way Blacks were treated in the context of the whole white system.

Women in our society have little control over the political system. Class privilege is one of the things given to a woman and that is given to her because she's attached to or has been attached to some male along the way (her father, boy friend, husband) and got it from him. Most people do not deal with their racism, classism, and sexism because they accept whatever tokens of power this privileged society gives them through these systems. It is true that middle class women gain certain privileges and identity from their classism but only at the expense of lower class women. Thus they carry around a miniscule version of a larger oppressive power system. Yet because women have so little control, when you tell middle class women this, they think you're nuts. What

the hell do they have to do with all that power? If you're wallowing in that shaky class security then you're not likely to admit that it exists.

There are many ways and reasons why middle class women never confront their own classism. They can intellectualize, politicize, accuse, abuse, and contribute money to in order to not deal with it. Even if they admit that class exists, they are not likely to admit that their behaviour is a product of it. They will go through every painful detail of their lives to prove to me or another working class woman that they really didn't have any privilege, that their family was exceptional, that they actually did have an uncle who worked in a factory. To ease anyone's guilt is not the point of talking about class. Some women still think that because they have a working class friend they have licked the class problem. One of the most horrifying responses in the women's movement today is that of the "political" woman who actually goes out and works in a factory so she can look at the working class women and talk to them and maybe drop a little socialism now and then. You don't get rid of oppression just by merely recognizing it. This patronization is outrageous and every woman in the place is sure to smell the stench a mile off.

Refusal to deal with class behaviour in a lesbian/feminist movement is sheer self-indulgence and leads to the downfall of our own struggle. Middle class women should look first at that scale of worth that is the class system in America. They should examine where they fit on that scale, how it affected them, and what they thought of the people below and above them. But this examination does not get middle class women off the hook; they still have to change their behaviour. Seeing your class position points out that you are not necessarily the enemy but that you too have been taken by the system. Start thinking politically about the class system and all the power systems in this country. Stop being immersed in political idealism and abstractions that have little or nothing to do with your life or anyone else's.

You are an enemy of lower class women if you continue destructive behaviour, based on your sense of middle class superiority. But you will become an ally in the feminist revolution if you will examine that behaviour and change those patterns. If women start forcing confrontation with their own class, race and heterosexual privileges, then they will both oppress other women less and begin to confront a whole system based on power and privilege. As women and as lesbians we can only count on each other to bring male supremacy down and must deal with class chauvinism before we can build a movement to make that happen.

Nancy Myron

JAMIE: A SHORT STORY

Jamie had been on her own for a year. In that year she had changed from the introspective schoolgirl who blushed ever slightly when a girlfriend kissed her playfully on the cheek to the young woman that she now was--a woman who knew that she loved women and was happy that she did. She had dropped out of school and had done everything from painting houses to being a secretary. And she had lived that year from one coast to the other. Now she had decided to settle down for a while.

Jamie started going to the only woman's bar in town every Friday night. She had seen Fran on and off at the bar and had really liked her. A few times she had been with friends who knew Fran and they all sat together. Fran always listened to what she had to say--about how she couldn't stand her dates in high school and how she hated to play those little games one always has to play with men. The more she saw Fran the more Jamie wanted to be with her. They started seeing each other outside--going on picnics and bicycle rides. Fran told Jamie everything about herself--that she was 26, had been a dyke for as long as she could remember, and that her green eyes came from her mother. And Jamie told Fran a lot about herself--about her job as a house painter and her pig foreman who laughed when she had asked for the job but tried her out as a joke and had the joke played on him. She told Fran about her dream to get a BMW and a track in the country. But she never told Fran that she was 17 and had left home when she was 16 because she couldn't take any more shit from her parents and school. She didn't tell anyone that anymore. . . It made the difference. She had been refused job after job because she was only 16. The police hassled you when you were on your own and 16, because they were on the lookout for runaways. She had to constantly lie about her age. And when she told friends her real age, she knew that their behaviour towards her changed--that they didn't trust her as much, didn't expect as much from her and sometimes were downright patronizing and "concerned about her welfare." But Fran wouldn't be that way. "No, Fran couldn't be that way," Jamie said to herself.

Both Jamie and Fran wanted to be with each other more and more. When they went to the bar they danced all the slow songs together. And one Friday Fran whispered in Jamie's ear that she loved her. They were sleeping together and soon became inseparable. Jamie trusted Fran more and more. Finally one night she decided that it was time that Fran knew more about her.

"Fran, you know I've never mentioned to you some things about my past." Fran yawned, "Uh, huh."

"Yeah, Fran, I mean you don't know a lot of things about me like what I did before I moved here and how old I am and things like that."

"Well, I do know those things; I know you lived in California before moving here

and I know that you're at least 21 to be able to get into the bar."

"Well, it is true that I lived in California before coming here but before that, a year ago to be exact, I lived with my parents."

"Oh, well there's nothing wrong with that. I suppose you had a job and were just living with your folks until you had enough money to move out on your own."

"No, that's not exactly it. You see my parents were supporting me. I'm 17 now--a year ago I was in high school. The only reason I get into the bar is because I have a fake I.D." There was a moment's silence.

"Oh, well why didn't you tell me that before? I told you all about my previous life. Jamie, sometimes I just don't understand you."

Jamie felt sheepish. She herself didn't know why she hadn't told Fran. Fran was different. "No reason, Fran, no reason."

* * * *

The morning sunlight pierced the light green curtains and made the room filter green. Jamie woke up first and lightly touched Fran's freckled shoulder. Fran turned over, mumbled a sleepy good morning, and went back to sleep. Well, Jamie thought, I guess I'll fix breakfast and let her have an extra 20 minutes of sleep before work.

She was just pouring the broken eggs into the pan when Fran walked into the kitchen. Their embrace was broken by the smell of burnt eggs.

"Jamie, what are you doing to the eggs? Here, give me that spoon. I'll finish the eggs. Why don't you go read the paper? Huh, honey?"

"I started the breakfast, I can damn well finish it," Jamie huffed.

"Now, Jamie don't get mad. I just suggested that the eggs weren't turning out so well. See, they're ready to eat. Let's not have a fight this morning, especially over something so silly."

Jamie had a hard time swallowing her eggs. She had made breakfast before and Fran never complained. Why was she so, so . . .

The change in Fran was slight and most of the time Jamie wondered if Fran really did act differently toward her now or if she was just paranoid. It was all very subtle. It was the change of tone in Fran's voice when she wanted Jamie to do something--a kind of "Jamie, I know what's best," tone. And Fran seemed to be more and more in the right these days--she seldom sought out Jamie's opinion on how to do something or what was the best thing to do. It got worse and worse and finally Jamie had to leave for a few days--to go to the beach, relax, and get over the paranoia.

"Fran, I want to borrow your car for the weekend. I need to get away, to take a rest, to go to the beach."

"But Jamie, the beach is a five hour drive from here. Are you sure you want to drive that long a distance by yourself?"

"Fran, as you know I've driven cross-country by myself before. I really need to be by myself for awhile."

"Jamie, I don't quite understand why all of a sudden you have to go off and think about something. Anyway, I was thinking of giving the car a lube job this weekend."

"Can't that wait for one week? Fran, I don't understand why you don't want me to go?"

"Well, Jamie it's not that I don't want you to go but I'm worried you'll have an accident and you don't have any insurance."

"You never worried about those things before. Why now?"

"Jamie, it doesn't matter when I started worrying about them. I just wish that you wouldn't go this weekend. Next week I could go with you."

"I really don't understand. Two weeks ago I could have gone to California and back without insurance and you would have hardly said a word. You want to know why I need to go? Because of your goddamn change of attitude toward me. You just don't trust me to take the car. Isn't that right? Isn't that the truth? Isn't that why the car needs a lube job this weekend? You feel like you know more than I do. You don't trust my judgement anymore and you don't because you found out how old I was. But you fuckin' sit there and tell me that it doesn't matter how old I am when something that was true two weeks ago is not true today because you know my age."

"Jamie, I never said any of that. But I'll tell you what is true. No, age doesn't make the difference but what does is the experiences you get from age and how much you learn. Now, there are a lot of things that I know that you don't know yet because you haven't lived long enough to have had those kinds of experiences. So I do know a little bit more about life than you. It's not your fault. That's just the way it is."

"No, Fran, that's just the way it's not. It's not true that I can't do many things as well as you can. And it's not true that you have a better knowledge of life than me. You're older and have different experiences than me but that's the only difference. You say that my experiences aren't as real or important as yours because I'm younger. You say my judgement isn't as good as yours because I'm younger. Do you think I've survived this long and gotten to where I am now because older people showed me the way? I left home because older people who had lived longer than me thought they knew more about life and about my life. They told me that marriage and a family was for me and when I questioned that they told me to shut up because they were older and my parents. The only difference between you and them is that you don't say you're right because of age but because of experience. I left home to get away from just that kind of shit, and I don't plan to stay and take it here. I just hope that your next lover is your age. It would be a drag to have one older than you."

by Helaine Harris

LESBIAN HEADACHE

69

Tension. Have you been fighting with your lover? Has your job been getting you down? The cost of living rising? Monogomy or non-monogomy taking its toll? And how do these problems leave us? Either constipated, with the runs, aching backs, necks, or shoulders, or just that all over tight feeling. We all know what tension feels like in our bodies. But few of us know how to eliminate it - except, of course eliminating the tension causing situation, which is not always possible. When we don't release this tension an armor builds up. This body armor, built up over a long period of time hinders your physical abilities. Women who have poor posture, bad backs, tight faces, or stiff movements may all be suffering from tension, and they don't even realize it.

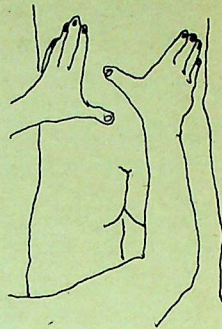
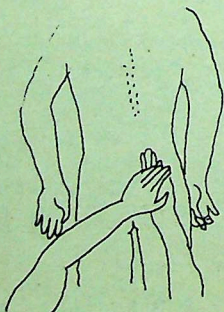
How women move, where they're tense, where they're loose, how they carry themselves, can tell a lot about their personalities. The body speaks a potent and eloquent language all its own.

It's important that we are all aware of our bodies and that we not abuse them. Not only is physical important but also the knowledge of how to reduce tension. Even when we do struggle thru tense situations the tension is not necessarily eliminated in our bodies. Massage is one excellent and direct way of dealing with body tension.

Massage is best done without clothes and on a firm surface - a massage table ideally, the floor will do fine. The best way to start the massage is first look at the persons body you are about to massage. Where is the tension? Do her hips look turned in? Are her hands clenched? Is her chest tight? Are the shoulders hunched too high or rigidly held? Skin color is another way to spot

* *

your hand is placed just to the right of the spine, with your other hand on top, pressing down using a circular motion, cover from the waist to the buttock. this is important, since the lower back is full of tension.



using the ball of your thumb, move up the spine on either side. make short, rapid strokes, concentrate on the same spot before moving on. work close to the spine.

*

tension. Wherever there is tension, the skin is whiter and more faded. All of these are ways to detect tension, but, the best and most accurate way to know is by touch.

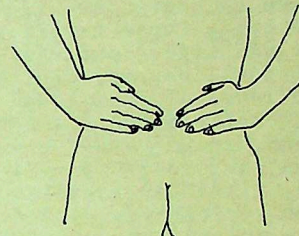
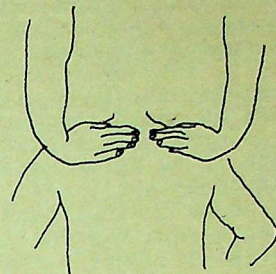
The tensest areas are usually the shoulders and upper back or the lower back or neck. In general, where someone is tense, the skin simply feels tight, stiff, and is resistant to handling. First apply oil or cream. If the oil or cream is not room temperature, rub it between your hands before applying. Massage the areas that are tense. If the muscles between the shoulders are tight, work not only on those particular muscles, but all the muscles surrounding the tight ones, since the tight ones are usually just a focal point for tension. Once you've started to massage someone, don't take your hands off them until you've finished, it breaks the continuity of the massage.

After you've massaged the tense area, focus on the actual tense spot. It is important to stroke with pressure. Using the tips of your fingers and your thumbs, massage very thoroughly, trying to feel the individual muscles and pressing the tension out. Frequently this pressure will be painful. This pain is a good pain and when you've stopped, the person will feel much better.

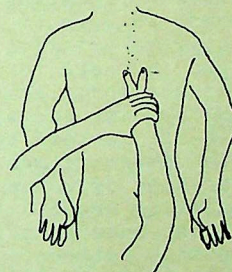
Massaging just tense areas is fine, but a whole body massage is also wonderful. An entire massage takes about an hour. I like to start with someones head, moving onto the chest, then arms and hands, followed by the legs, feet, back of legs, buttocks and the back. Using gentle strokes, long strokes, short strokes, kneading movements, let your hands discover the person's body. Be systematic, cover every part of the body from the toes to the scalp.

Massaging is a way to communicate. It allows you to develop a skill in knowing bodies. It should make you more aware of how other people move and each person's particular body language.

put the tips of your fingers right beside the spine, glide your hands down the entire back - pressing firmly with your finger tips



* * * *



as you come down the spine, dig your fingers into the two furrows that are immediately to either side of the spine

Lee Schwing

*

IDEOLOGY:

Guide to Action

Building a feminist ideology is putting together a theory that will guide our actions so we don't waste time and energy on projects that leave women's oppression basically unchanged. It is developing an understanding of how and why male supremacy started, how it has developed and changed throughout history, and how it keeps going now. Feminist theory is aimed at developing an understanding of our male supremacist society so we can change it to allow women control over their own lives.

The Women's Liberation Movement never adequately analyzed the root sources of women's oppression. Consciousness raising groups too often stayed at the level of recounting personal experiences of oppression. That is the place we all have to begin, but if we don't try to bring those experiences together and figure out what is common to them, our movement will stay at the level of individual struggle.

When the Women's Liberation Movement did go beyond consciousness raising to group political action, it did so haphazardly and without a clear-cut direction. Because theory was inadequately developed it was impossible to determine what part of a strategy any particular action was; therefore it was impossible to tell whether the action had been successful. *The Women's Liberation Movement* was characterized by a series of sporadic unconnected actions--Miss America protest, pill hearings disruption, Grove Press sit-in--that used up our time and energy without necessarily getting us closer to our goal.

If the Lesbian/Feminist Movement is to avoid repeating the same mistakes, we have to start making ideology the priority of our small groups. We need to know what institutions are most important to keeping men in power and where they are vulnerable. We need to understand how the power of men is built on the oppression of women. We began thinking about a feminist theory with the understanding that the relationship between the sexes is political; it is political because men as a group have power over women as a group. We soon realized that a crucial institution keeping men as a group in power were women's individual relationships with them. That led us to one of the first points in a feminist ideology: that heterosexuality supports male supremacy.

That point lead to the second --that women can choose to not be heterosexual, to not support the power system that oppresses them. Lesbianism then becomes a political choice which every women is capable of making. It is a choice for women and against oppression. These two ideological points lead to the beginnings of our strategy. First, we knew we couldn't stay in the Women's Liberation Movement and develop lesbian politics because it was heterosexual. Second, we knew it was a priority to convince women to become lesbians.

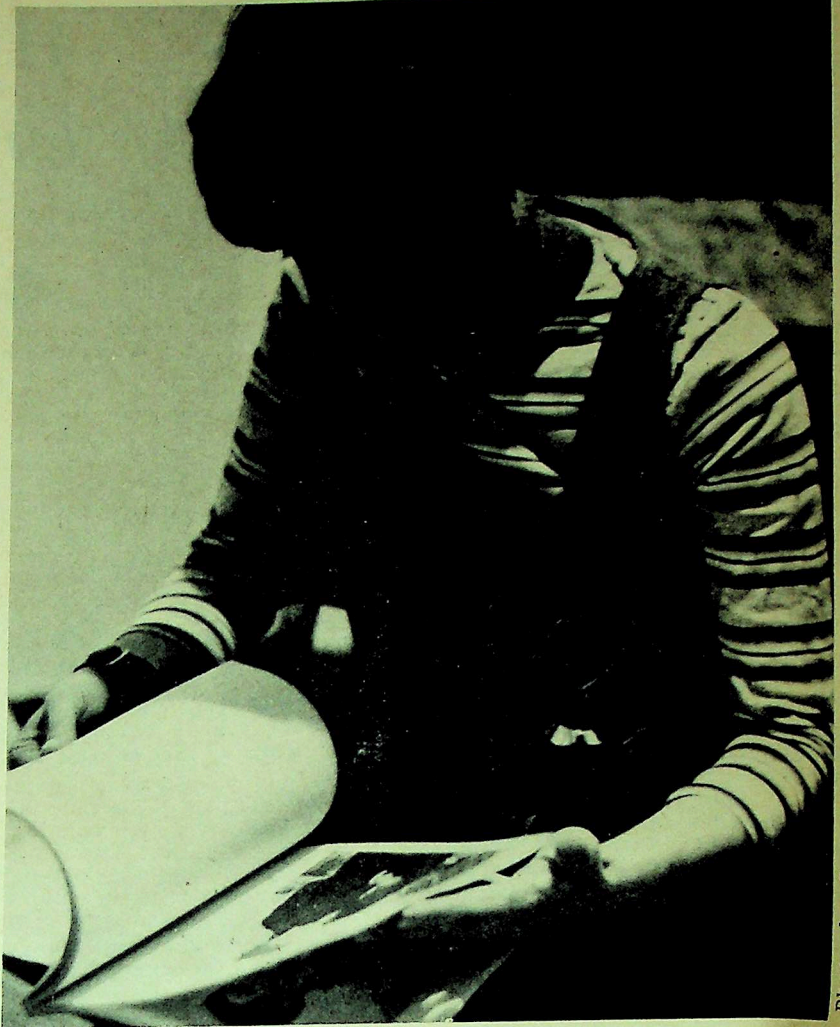


Photo by Susan Baker

One of the reasons women distrust ideology so much is that ideology in the hands (minds) of men, whether establishment or radical, has never made the needs of women primary. Because all ideologies in the past have not met the needs of women is no reason to reject ideology as such; it is a reason to reject ideologies formed by men in male supremacist societies. We have to form for ourselves the ideology that will inspire the actions that free us. We can't depend upon men or male ideologies like Marxism. Marxism was developed to give the working class power over the means of production because Marx thought that would make all persons free and equal. But Marxism is inadequate. Women, children, and racial minorities are not free and equal in socialist societies. A feminist analysis should go beyond Marxism to find the sources of our oppression.

Lesbians also distrust theory in general because feminist theories in the past have most often been created by white, middle-class, heterosexuals and have reflected their class, race, and heterosexual bias. We cannot leave feminist theory only to women who have privilege--knowledge, education, skills, self-confidence and time--because that ideology will reflect that privilege. Where you are in the system of power and privilege affects how much of that system you think has to be overthrown. Middle class women by themselves will not make the eradication of classist behavior a priority in their theory because they get benefits from it. Heterosexual women do not confront the sexism in themselves because they get benefits from being considered

heterosexual. Their feminist ideology reflects that.

For example, *Notes from the Third Year*, a collection of 1971 Women's Liberation articles says that marriage, motherhood and prostitution are three institutions that exist solely for the exploitation of women by men, yet they do not go on to analyze the factor common to all three--heterosexuality. They don't because they're heterosexual and the Women's Liberation Movement is heterosexual. The benefits (privileges) that heterosexual women get from the system blind them to the way heterosexuality operates to keep women oppressed. And the ideology they produce shows it. Feminist ideology must be created by those with the greatest stake in the male system or it will be reformist and sell less privileged ones down the river.

Women often resist taking the responsibility for creating a feminist ideology because they realize the difficulty they have conceptualizing and abstracting. That's true; it's hard work for all of us because, as women, we have not been trained and encouraged to think abstractly. Men want us to think personally and concretely, to rely on our feelings rather than on an analysis of what keeps us down. We have to get over our passivity and feelings of inadequacy. We will never be able to create a movement that challenges the real sources of our oppression until we can analyze the structures of society to find what those sources are and where women have the power to change them.

by Coletta Reid

THAT'S CAPITALISM FOR YOU...

By Susan Hathaway

The red and white tube of toothpaste...flash...Colgate, gardol shield, white teeth. Ah, America has run a magnificent game on me. My life is a television commercial even before breakfast. Py-co-pay, Helena Rubenstein, Hanes, Lerner, Safeway, Kellogg's. Oh so briefly I sneak in a thought on my life's meaning. Then...zoom..back to reality. Paper bags, cat food, granulated sugar. The choices of my life are made in the grocery stores, in the drug stores, in the shopping centers. I am not allowed to make the more important choices. I have no control over how I am going to live, under what set of rules, for what reasons. THEY make those decisions. I am left with toothpastes, hem-lines, turtle-neck sweater colors, car designs. And being left with only those makes them very important. They are my purpose. I buy, therefore I am.....

Each night when I get out of work, I am given, through no choice on my part, 1 1/2 to 2 hours to ponder the quality of mass transportation...a victim's-eye view. Forced meditation time courtesy of the D. C. Transit Co. Otherwise known as waiting for the bus. Waiting for the bus or for anything else is an un-act. I have no control. When what I am "doing" is waiting, I know that an outside force is determining my existence for the amount of time waited. Sometimes because I have allowed it to do so. In this case, because I have no fucking alternatives.

I begin waiting, standing there in front of one of the many downtown monsters kindly described as office buildings. Across the street, one of the hundreds of construction sites bears witness to my general lack of control. I who want to put an end to everything that makes 'downtown-business-areas' necessary and desirable, must instead watch THEM building more of the same.

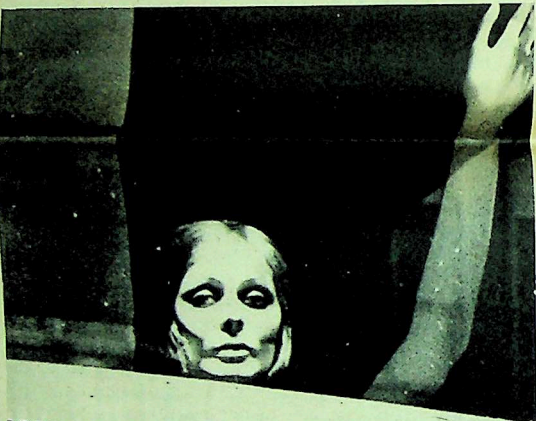
Waiting...I try to keep my mind off the fact that the bus may not come for 44 more minutes, and that there is nothing in the world I can do about its not coming. Waiting in sheer desperation, I think: I might have to give up eating lunch. Then I could afford to take a taxi home each night. Or I could sell my body, so that I could afford to go out and buy a car. (But then I come to my senses.) Even if I bought a car where would I be -- with only a greater illusion of control, but waiting nevertheless. Waiting in the parking lot lines. Waiting in the traffic jams, full of all those other people who couldn't stand the thought of waiting for the bus (and who figured out some way to afford the costs of parking, car-repair, etc.) I am convinced anew every night that the whole mode of mass transportation is designed to frustrate me enough so that I'll be forced to go out and get a car...And if I can't afford one (ever) then I'm not a real American anyway, so I deserve to be frustrated. Of course, most bus-waiters fit into the 'not-real-Americans' category. They are the expendables...who can't afford a car no matter what the level of their frustration. But generally they can't afford to do a lot of things that the real people, the good people do - like eat the right food, wear the right clothes, live in a warm, clean place somewhere, etc. This is just one more frustration for them - they're used to it.

Sometimes, when the light has changed at least 30 times and there's not a bus in sight, I make myself start singing..."bye, bye, Miss American Pie, drove my chevy...". I'm not having any fun singing. It just keeps me from launching an ill-advised attack on one of the fancy-suited businessmen strolling casu-

ally by my vigil at the busstop. That one is going to hail a cab at the corner. Those two are going to get a quick drink to avoid the rush at the parking lot. That one is heading across the street to the car and the wife-in-waiting. I however am still waiting for the bus.

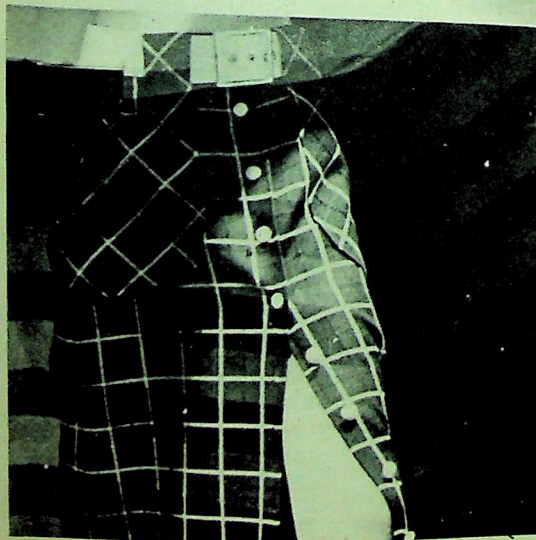
By this time, having gone through this bus waiting thing for months, my meditations have yielded some clarity. At first, I was mad at myself. No self-control...too impatient even to do a little bus waiting. Clearly wrong. One would have to be a fool to be calm and accepting of so outrageous a situation...having to spend nearly a third of the little evening time I have anyway waiting for a goddam bus. Next I was furious at the bus drivers. Wrong again. Who can blame them -- nice job, driving in downtown traffic for eight hours, back and forth over the same 38 blocks. Then I focussed on the bus company -- that's closer but still not quite it. After all, why is it that even bus companies (and all other mass transportation companies) are always complaining that they don't have enough money to buy new buses, put on more lines, pay bus drivers a little more, etc., etc. Simple. Somebody's bigger than they are. And the really big men know that if they made public transportation efficient and comfortable, then the good people might start riding. And then the good people wouldn't buy as many cars, or take taxis, or use parking lots, etc., etc. Big-money men make all those decisions -- all to insure that they stay way up there. On top...in the clouds of money and power. All the men in all the companies who really get their rocks off taking taxis and the like. Who wouldn't make any profit by making better jobs for bus drivers, or making me not have to wait for the bus at night. THEY...the ones who never even thought of waiting for a bus. If they're liberal, they're sorry for those of us who must endure it. If not, they just despise us and keep on getting up. And I keep on waiting for the bus, and complain to my friends when I get home.

EPITAPH: But the parking lots are getting pretty crowded these days, and pretty expensive, even for THEM. And the traffic stops THEM from getting to their martinis as fast as they have been accustomed. And the pollution is ruining THEIR lungs, and threatening their kids. So, THEY are building a subway system... a very fancy subway system called The Metro. It's clearly for THEM. One of the stops is the Kennedy Center For The Performing Arts -- hardly a hang-out for the masses. Anybody can ride it of course - free country you know - if you have the money. And if you're going to the Kennedy Center For The Performing Arts...Otherwise, you can always take the bus.



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TAKING THE BULLSHIT BY THE HORNS

by Barbry, Berkeley, Calif.

I've heard a lot of women criticize The Furies article, "Lesbians in Revolt." (See Vol. 1, January, 1972) Their criticism has not gone any further than to label the article elitist and arrogant. Such criticism does not deal with the political differences these women feel with the article. All it says is, "Reading this demanded a political response from me that was too threatening." This kind of thinking has been generated by the straight women's liberation movement which as The Furies introduction pointed out has defined political analysis as men's realm and left women acting on an emotional level. Since thinking about the article won't feel good for a lot of women, it's easier for them to call it arrogant and ignore what it says.

Some lesbians I know who read the article said, "There's no difference between straight and gay," or "People need other people to love them and if a woman can get love from a man, that's cool," and "I don't like to sleep with men, but they are going to be around after the revolution, and I could care less if another woman is sleeping with a man."

These lesbians probably crystallized their politics in the Gay Liberation Movement, which was an appendage of the New Left and which was run by men. Gay Liberation defined the enemy of gayness as public opinion that gay is perverted, and acted to disprove that notion. There were two standard arguments used. The first said that straight people need to loosen up and let everybody do their own thing. This argument equates lesbian lifestyle and sexuality with gay men's, when in fact there are crucial differences.

The second argument said, "Do what feels good. Sex is groovy. Gay is just as good as straight. I don't care what you do in bed, so you shouldn't care what I do in bed." This argument assumes that lesbians have the same lifestyle and sexuality as straight women. But we don't--straight women choose to love and fuck men. Lesbians have commitments to women.

Lesbians are not born. We have made a conscious choice to be lesbians. We have rejected all that is traditional and accepted, and committed ourselves to a lifestyle that everybody--straight men, straight women, gay men--criticizes. So most of us question this choice over and over again, and we are still lesbians. Therefore every lesbian knows in her gut that what we do is not the same as gay men--they oppress us too--and what we do is not the same as what straight women do. If it were, we wouldn't have chosen to be lesbians in the first place.

Implicit in the lesbian lifestyle is a feminist political principle. That does not mean that all lesbians are feminists. It just means that we have chosen living with and loving women, that we have rejected living with and loving men. Since straight women get some compensations for being straight which we have forfeited, then lesbianism further says that we get something better from women than we do from men. Or that we get something worse by relating to men that we do not get relating to women. Or both.

We live in a male supremacist shitpile. At its most basic level this shitpile is upheld by fucking, marriage and breeding. Straight women serve this system by serving their men. Lesbians reject it by saying we won't fuck, we won't marry, we won't breed and we'll damn well do as we please.

And we are oppressed for it. Our biggest oppression is not that everybody thinks we're perverted. Women think we're perverted because women have been handed a whole set of morals. But men have never given a shit



about morals and they could care less about perversion. Men tell women that we're perverted because men know that what we're doing is going to take their power away from them right where it hurts. Men see us saying that we don't want men in our beds and we don't want men in our houses and we don't want men in our bars. And they know that it is a very short step from there for us to say that we don't want men living on the street, we don't want men in our government, and in fact we would be 100% better off if we just didn't have to deal with men at all.

They don't think there is anything perverted about that.

They recognize it for what it is and oppress us, stick us away in ghettos and tell their wives and daughters that we're disgusting. Now any woman who gets raped by her husband every day, who has to live under his psychological and economic control, and has to grovel before him and lap up the shit that he ladles all over her knows that that is pretty damn disgusting and perverted. She is only too happy to hear that there is somebody lower on the pecking order than herself.

Heterosexuality insures male supremacy. To say that "Everybody needs love and I could care less if a woman is fucking a man" is to say "Any oppressed person needs some payoff to make them preserve their oppression. I could care less if a woman is oppressed, and I could care less if that oppression makes her gang up with that pig to fuck me over." The only lesbians who could say this are lesbians with a bigger stake in their own oppression than in our liberation; i.e., lesbians who use their class and race privileges, lesbians in the nouveau chic of the New Left, etc.

Lesbians have the potential to smash male supremacy. Straight women do not, because they are living its perpetration. The Furies article on Roxanne Dunbar summed this up very accurately, "I know full well there are women who physically love other women who could sell us out as quickly as any man or straight woman. Some of them are racist, class snobs and outright reactionaries. By the same token, all working class people are not committed to the destruction of capitalism. There are plenty of racists and fascists among the workers. The essential point is that workers carry the greatest threat to capitalism if organized just as lesbians carry the greatest threat to male supremacy if organized."

We can extend this analysis further. The middle class depends on capitalism for its privileges, although some middle class people feel oppressed by capitalism and are organizing. Because their interests lie with their oppressors', they are capable of organizing as a power bloc to minimize their petty oppressions at the expense of the working class and expand their privileges.

And so with women. Straight women are oppressed by men, but their lifestyle and privileges are nevertheless dependent upon their individual relationships with men. When they organize, they seek to minimize that oppression at the expense of other women, and grab more privileges.

Straight women's liberation started the myth that Sisterhood is groovy. Sisterhood is so groovy that if put to use by straight, racist, classist wo-

men it can make it easier and better for them to maintain their lackey relationships with the men who oppress us all.

The women's liberation movement has completely avoided making any kind of ideology about our oppression because that would expose the contradiction they are living in. So they left politics to the big, strong men and developed a philosophy of being "sensitive." They have expressed their sisterly feelings by making us slaves for their personal liberation. They say that all women are sisters despite sexuality, race or class. Then they organize us and put our sisterhood to work for reforms that only benefit white, middle class, straight women.

The abortion movement is a good example of what happens when privileged people organize. Abortion is a reform measure. It's analysis is good when it says that women should seize control of their own bodies, but it patently ignores the contradiction that women will not have control of their own bodies if they keep on voluntarily giving them to men. Abortion, then, does not threaten male supremacy. It assumes that women are going to keep on fucking and breeding and makes it easier for some women to lick up to men.

Straight women tried to rally us all together under the "Sisterhood is groovy" banner to win abortions. Straight privileged women said that sex, class or race issues would be divisive and would keep us from winning. Then they proceeded to use us to win abortions that are totally irrelevant to lesbians, can be used as genocide against Third World women, and are too expensive for poor women to afford. Oh, Sisterhood is so groovy.

The biggest rip-off of the Sisterhood is groovy line is that it says women should get together and get stronger and take care of each other's needs independently. This is great. But if some of those women are depending on men in their personal lives, then they are going to depend on women to fill the needs that those men cause them. Any woman who expects other women to fill her needs has a responsibility to minimize those needs by immediately eliminating any of the needs caused by living with or sucking up to an oppressor.

Straight women don't want us to fight with men--they just want pay-offs from men and women. Since women have been defined as always-giving, women who define themselves through men think that women that define themselves through women should always give--to them. They don't think that they are important enough to deserve anything from men, but because they're "real women" who get fucked by men, they think they deserve something from us. The reason they would rather exhaust our energy than join us in ripping off what we need from men is very simple:

The man who's got it is giving her some crumbs. She's been conditioned to think that she doesn't deserve anything more than the crumbs, so if we start taking whole pieces of the pie, it might make less crumbs for her. On the other hand, if she stays in middle-of-the-road straight women's



liberation, she can play us off against her man and get the best of both worlds. He's going to have to start behaving--washing the dishes, taking care of the kids, and being a good lay--or she might leave him and become a man-hating dyke. (He knows her friends are subverting her.) Meanwhile, we've got to prove to her that we're better than men--if we also wash her dishes, take care of the kids, help her try to change her old man and show him the light, hold her hand when he fucks her over but don't alienate her or hurt her feelings by telling her to leave him, and to top it all off, if we seem like desirable sex objects--then she might leave him to become a man-hating dyke, and reward us with her love. (If she changes her mind later she can always say that we subverted her.)

Every lesbian knows through personal experience how straight women sell us out. Each of us at some time has been infatuated with a straight woman and we compromised ourselves, grovelled to be good to her and tried to prove to her that we were better than men, all in hopes that she would love us. Meanwhile she feminized us--kept us passive in intimidation, ashamed of ourselves, pretty, dangling, kissing up to her and very, very vulnerable. Whenever we were hurt she was too busy with the men in her life to help us out. If any man found her out, she told him that we were dirty and disgusting and had done horrible things to her. Then he "saved" her and she paid him back by giving him a lifetime of services and free fucks. She had to betray us, because her interests were hanging on some man's prick.

"Lesbians in Revolt" does not say that all lesbians are necessarily feminists. It says that we are a very big threat to male supremacy, and if we're together with each other, we can bring that beast down. And it says that for sure any woman relating to a man cannot be a feminist. Women who give love and energy to men rather than women obviously think men are better than women. Therefore they will wish to remain in a society that says men are better than women, and they'll join their boyfriends in trying to do us in.

It's really sad that every man holds a woman in front of him to cushion reality and be his shield. Some women are so well trained that they'll run right out on their own to protect him and bare their own necks instead. When we pick a fight with a man, it seems like we can't even get close enough to kick unless we want to kick all those women out of the way first. That's why straight women's liberation tells us Sisterhood is so groovy. We've been kept from fighting our oppression because our enemies are just crawling all over with women who want to protect them, and fighting with women is a no-no.

Well, I'm not going to try to take on all those women if I don't have to. I am just stating that I personally am going to keep my distance from men and straight women. Maybe we can run around behind and stab that pig in the back. Any woman hanging out in front to protect him would then have the choice of joining us or letting him fall on top of her.

THE LAST PICTURE SHOW

A REVIEW

Rita Mae Brown

If the Last Picture Show were the last picture show to have as its theme the life and times of a young man on the "verge of maturity", I would view it with less jaundice. However, the coming-of-age movie seems entrenched; men are apparently fascinated with their first fuck and with the fading of boyhood into what is ridiculously termed "manhood". This particular movie is more dishonest than most in its packaged cinematic sensitivity.

First the technical dishonesty: Movies shot in black and white in the 1970's are artsy fartsy. Human beings see in color, we don't need to be insulted by enduring a black and white movie which is to clue us in on the fact that it is "serious". There's a class aspect to black and white movies in our times. Supposedly, the bleak screen will serve to heighten the viewers' sense of the drab, the working class, the impoverished. Those of us growing up impoverished were oppressed in living color and any deviation from that is a perversion of our lives justified in terms of "style". When our ceilings peeled they peeled from pea green to red to black to gray to blue and all together it was more hideous than anything shot in black and white. The only possible excuse any filmmaker can offer for shooting in black and white is money. Anything else is elevated crap.

If the color insult were not enough we had to endure ghastly lighting, zilch camera work and shots of the Texas plain held over-long. Naturally, the persistent shots of mesquite trees are to put us in touch with the flat environment the main characters exist in and to serve as an external manifestation of their equally flat lives. I think we viewers are advanced enough by this time to catch that snappy symbolism, we don't need endless shots to drive this point home.

The shabby technical work collaborated with the shabby story line which is the archtypal American relationship: Two male friends, this time it's Sonny and Duane. Let's follow Sonny and Duane in their adventures. So we do. They get drunk. They hurt a deaf/dumb friend. They screw girls. They fight each other. From these activities Sonny's "manhood" emerges, an understanding of life. No, I'm not making this up--if you've seen the movie you know it's true. Why do people sit through this shit? Why do people make this shit? It's very simple and it's all connected with male supremacy, white supremacy and class supremacy.

The people who make movies are male, white, usually middle class. The people who review the movies for the most part bear the same dis-

tingitive scars. So the rest of us who don't fit into those categories have to watch movies that have nothing to do with our lives, and we have no access to media to convey our own life experience. Therefore all of America since the beginning of film has had to watch the white, middle class, male version of life and life reflected through "art". I don't know about you but I'm sick of it.

If white men had concentrated only on themselves it wouldn't be so disastrous but they didn't and neither does Bogdanovich. They give us their version of what women are, what Blacks are, what people are who are not like themselves. It's grim. Women live through men. Blacks in the 30's and 40's were happy people that danced a lot; today they are super stud private detectives or slick doctors breaking down the white man's prejudices. Those distortions, past and present, have influenced oppressed people, influenced us to a harmful degree. All too often, oppressed people identified with the oppressor's definition of them, an activity that creates intense self-hatred, hatred of your own kind, hatred of other oppressed peoples and a desire to "make it" in the rich, white man's world. People denied their own life experience and adopted the white, male media version of life as a fact.

The Last Picture Show successfully meets most of our oppression ratings: It ignores Texas' racial question completely; the movie is 100% white; non-white existence isn't even recognized verbally by the movie's characters; it presents an arty version of working class whites and the typical male supremacist view of women. And this film gets rave reviews from most critics plus "right ons" from the "radical community".

To draw a sharper focus on the distortion, the women characters in the movie are worth a look. All the women in the movie are vacant and what little there is of life for them revolves around the men. Not one of these women has work of her own or even a hobby. Now many Texas women in the 1950's may very well have been that way but they did have brains in their heads even if they didn't have careers or hobbies. In The Last Picture Show they do not have brains in their heads, just dim ghosts of intelligence.

Jacy, the beautiful young girl, played by Cybill Shepard, is a spiteful bitch who pits the boys against each other. No insight as to why she does that, of course. We only see poor Duane suffering and poor Sonny looking sad. Men are mystified by this "bitch" behavior and horrified when it appears in what should be a "sweet young thing" That's all we know of Jacy, her cha-

acter is not developed, we see only surface action. I didn't take her lack of character development as sexist in this particular movie because the characters of the men never got off the ground either.

Jacy's mother, played by Ellen Burstyn, was more interesting. She is good looking, in her late 30's/early 40's...bored as hell with Texas, her husband and her tacky lover. She knows sex doesn't mean much when you do it with men and she makes this clear in many ways although that was not the intention of the author nor the director. Lois is the only person in the movie who sees through heterosexual sham; unfortunately she doesn't see far enough, the usual film lobotomy on female minds. So Lois wanders through the movie trying to convey her experience to her daughter in order to save her the same faded life. Too bad she didn't wander into her local neighborhood Lesbian, it would have been a much better movie and Lois would have been a much happier woman.

Bogdanovich's portrayal of the women isn't even outrageous, it's dreary and familiar. What is outrageous is that people are still receptive to that conception of women.

Sexism explains why men view the women in this movie in the same old way but what explains how they view themselves? Why hasn't this sentimental slop concerning white male youth been rejected by male viewers? Do men really want to believe that this is what their youths were like? Do they actually think Sonny and Ben the Lion were sensitive men? Worse, if it is a fairly honest portrayal of young male lives then men are much worse off than I thought. The men in this movie are not sensitive to anything except what is connected to their own concept of self. They have zero ability to empathize with a woman's life and only the tiniest ability to empathize with each other. Even the two men closest to each other, Sonny and Duane, do not understand and love each other. Each man is locked in his sense of himself which according to The Last Picture Show, is tied into screwing girls/women.

The only time in this entire movie that a male character is not centered on himself, when he is drawn into another human life, is at death. When Billy is killed (an artificial piece of melodrama as Billy was set up for it from the beginning of the movie), Sonny recognizes a love the deaf/dumb boy. Is that what it takes to get men to realize they love someone, death? And running true to form, Billy's death was too much for Sonny to handle so he ran to a woman to help him through it. And she ran true to form according to male movies:

She was glad to help him even though he had dumped her without an explanation. She threw a fit, cried and took him back. What incredible male propaganda.

With this kind of propaganda on the screen do you ever wonder if the movie makers are part of the establishment politician's plot to systematically oppress us? Is that why they keep cranking out these racist, sexist, capitalist flicks? Some are but Bogdanovich is not one of them. Why then is his film so much a part of pigdom? Because like most white men he can't get out of himself, out of the diseased male ego structure that has infected and crippled the male species for well over 20 centuries. He makes his movie not out of malice toward oppressed peoples but out of ignorance. For many of those just mentioned centuries, oppressed people have excused the Bogdanoviches of the world because they had good intentions. That time is past. Ignorance is in league with malice. Whether planned or unplanned the Bogdanoviches of the world and the Nixons keep us all down. Nixon's contribution to our oppression is obvious, Bogdanovich's, more subtle. The Last Picture Show like all picture shows feeds us a distortion of life, an apolitical, hopeless view of the world. And that apolitical view is the only view available to the public in mass form. The reasons are painfully obvious. These movies may be critical of American life. The Last Picture Show is certainly that. But they criticize one small part of American life and it is narrow territory because it is on the only land white, middle class males can plow. Because of this limitation, stagnation has set in what is called "art". The subject matter of The Last Picture Show has been flogged to death. People's response to it is like an electric current applied to frog's legs--there's a jerk but no life. The Last Picture Show is a kind of catechism, reaction is automatic because there is absolutely nothing new, challenging or even useful. This "artistic" repetition in all fields has dulled people. It provides a mechanized outlet for frustration with no solution. There seems to be a shred of reality on the screen, after all, most white, middle class viewers came out of spiritual, emotional emptiness so they are safe in the familiar dressed up to look different; i.e. working class Texans--but they haven't been pushed, challenged, taught.

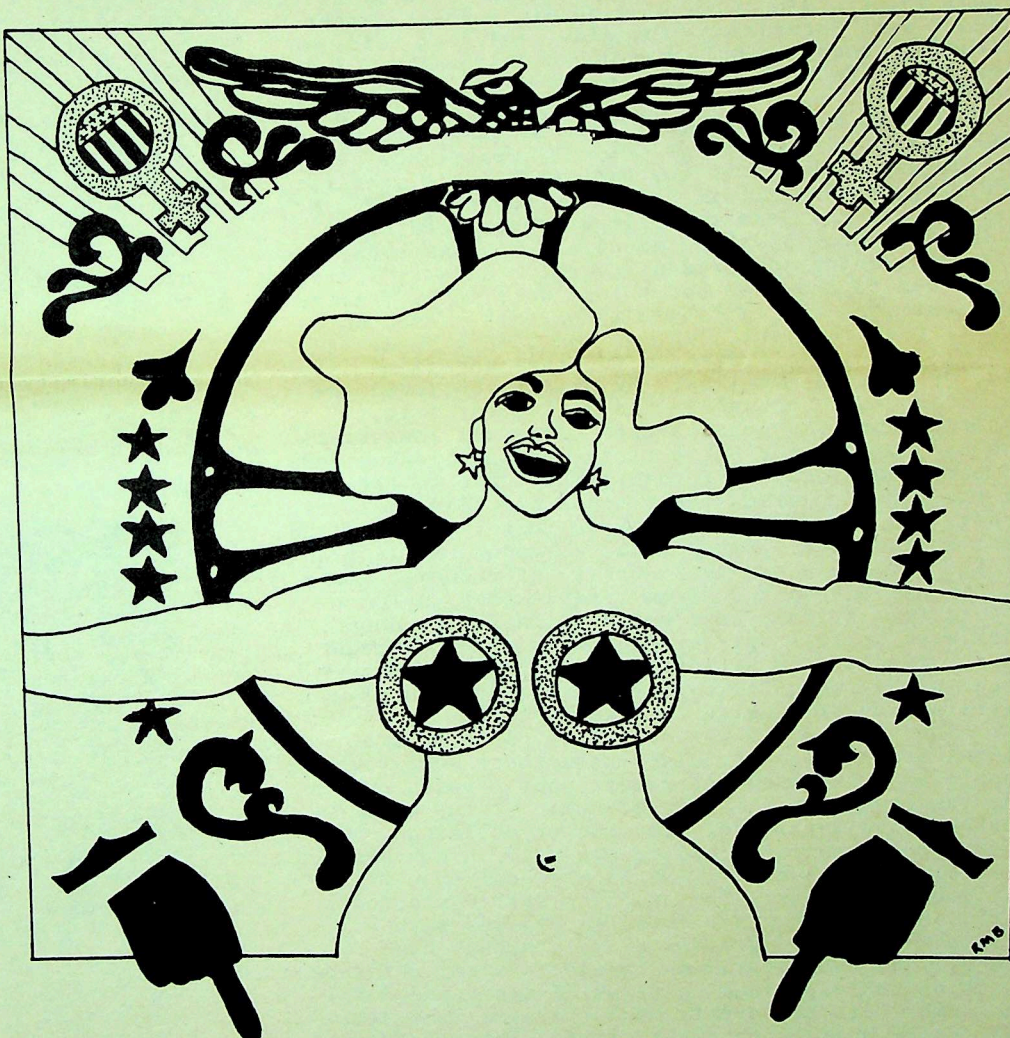
These kinds of movies are more than apolitical or neutral, they are blocks to real political development. The Last Picture Show offers no analysis of why those people's lives are empty--and film is a powerful medium for visual, political analysis. The screen is kept free from political thought although it can still be entertaining. This absence of thought, analysis, solution gives us barrenness--often disguised in technical riches. More, movies serve the oppressors in ways other than diverting us from thought, movies offer mild protest without resolution, catharsis without cure. Movies keep images of oppressed people intact and relative to the image of the white, middle class male. The oppressed image only changes (if at all) if the white male image changes--i.e. Dustin Hoffman in The Graduate

and Midnight Cowboy.

These changes are so minute that we can safely say racism and sexism reign supreme in the movies. The Last Picture Show is not Green Beret which is blatant enemy propaganda. The Last Picture Show is more destructive than Green Beret because it is so seductive to the minds of white, middle class males and the heterosexual women still tied to that system of thinking/acting/being--and that's millions of women.

The seduction is based on the ignorance mentioned earlier in the article. Without an understanding of other people's lives, the white, middle class heterosexual viewer

gets into the movie, gets into her/his own life and picks out those moments of it which correspond to the movie. The movie then seems honest--and those parts of it that correspond to certain life experiences may be honest but to Lesbians, Blacks, working class people, Asian-Americans, feminist women, Hispanic Americans, Indians who are strong enough not to have denied their own life experience, The Last Picture Show is another white man's lie. And that lie we have to fight on all levels. Even the parts of the movie which are honest cannot soften the overall effect of the movie: it keeps us in our place. Our place in the movie is no place.



SEXISM IN THE MOVIES



Slumming It In The Middle Class

Ginny Berson

The summer I was ten years old was very traumatic for my family--we had finally become so poor that we had to start eliminating basic necessities from our lives. That summer my parents had to decide between sending three of us to overnight camp at \$700 a head or buying a new car to replace the other which had reached the incredible age of three. They decided to send us to camp and put off the car for another year. If the financial crisis was not real, the tension I began to feel about money was.

My father owned a children's clothing store in Fairfield, Connecticut and both my parents worked there six days and one night a week. They worked hard and were always worried about money. As I became conscious of money, I looked around me and noticed that, in comparison with my friends, and with my parents' friends, we were "poor". Most of them had two cars; we had only one. Most of them had their own bedrooms; I had to share one with my sister. Their mothers didn't work; mine did. Their fathers didn't work Saturdays; mine did. They had maids or cleaning women; we only had one occasionally. They never had to wear the same party dress twice in a row; I did.

It was more than money that made me feel "poor and deprived". It was values. My mother was always putting my father down for his "bad" table manners (burping, eating before anyone sat down, etc.). My parents had not gone to college, never read books, and didn't know anything about art. I was embarrassed to bring any friends home for dinner; I didn't want them to know how bad things were in my family. The most important attitude my parents passed on to me was that in America anyone who hadn't "made it" by this time didn't deserve to--they were lazy, stupid, or just un-American. My parents believed the American dream because it had worked for them. Their parents (my grandparents) were all immigrants who had come to the US to escape persecution as Jews in early 20th century Europe. They came to the land of the "free", worked their asses off, made a little money, and taught their children that they could and must do the same. Poverty was as much a reflection of the kind of person you were as an economic state. My parents bought the dream because they could afford to. If they were not as rich as the Joneses, they were at least richer than the Smiths. Caught in the middle, the Bersons poor-mouthed themselves because they weren't wealthy, but had the moral satisfaction of knowing they weren't poor.

The view of the world that my parents have allows for no classes. They knew there were rich people and they knew there were poor people, but the reasons for a person's economic status were personal and moral, not economic or political. Everything around me told me the same thing--America is a classless society. My high school in particular confirmed this. The tracking system started early, and by 7th grade I was in classes with people with whom I would stay all through high school. It was clearly a classist system, but then division was explained in terms of smart and dumb. The dumbs were all pretty much the same--the girls had teased hair, wore tight skirts, lots of makeup, and were considered easy lays. The boys had greasy D.A.'s, wore tight pants, were always getting suspended, and drove around the school parking lot in their hot-rods. They weren't involved in student government or varsity athletics. They took home-making and carpentry classes. They took "business" typing, instead of "personal" typing (for the college-bound). They didn't have school spirit. The whole school was set up so that our lives would never touch. I went all the way through high school thinking they were trash because that's the way they wanted to be and thinking I was "poor" but noble because I had risen above my circumstances to be smart and clean and active.

When I was in college my political consciousness began to develop: it was the early 1960's and civil rights and poverty were in the headlines. I could both deal with my racism and get a lot of attention

from my wealthy classmates with one blow--revel in my poverty. I began to see America in class terms, and put myself right near the bottom. I knew we weren't as poor as Blacks, but I was on scholarship, did have a job, and thought I had known hunger because there had been times in my family when I couldn't always have as much steak as I wanted.

By the time I left college I was very much a 1967 radical. I wanted to be an SDS organizer, but I needed money to pay back my college loans. So, as all middle class people do, I found a way out. I joined the Peace Corps--to get organizing experience, get a deferralment on my loans, and learn about real poverty. (American poverty was less real than Panamanian poverty). I would force myself to live on \$120 a month, give up material possessions, eat rice and beans every day, take the bus, and live with rats, cockroaches, and poor people. I won't go into the racism and imperialism of the Peace Corps, only the classism. After a year of constant poor-mouthing to my family, friends, and Panamanian associates, I began to understand something about class and poverty. I was not really poor. I lived in a poor apartment, but I didn't have five kids and a husband to share it with. Most importantly, I knew that every month I would get paid; I knew that I could borrow money interest-free from my boss; and I knew that whenever I wanted to, I could get out. I was poor by choice, and that made all the difference in the world. And because I had economic security, I never went through the mind-fuck of figuring out how to get by from day to day.

My next phase of class consciousness started when I was back in the US living in a women's collective and working in the Women's Liberation movement. I began to identify myself as middle class, but hybrid middle class. One of the women in the collective was lower class, so I could no longer consider myself poor, but I thought I was closer to her in many ways than the middle class women whose



Photo by JEB



Photo by B. Gilden

parents went to Europe every year, who had no loans to pay back, who had never worried about money. But I never really had to deal with my middle classness until I moved into another collective where there were a number of lower class women with fairly high class consciousness. From my point of view, being a revolutionary meant sharing everything you had, and living without whatever you didn't need (among other things). From their point of view it meant (among other things) giving up class privilege. I didn't think I had any. They wanted their own rooms;

they wanted to work full time and save money; they wanted a strict financial accounting. I thought all these things were counter-revolutionary, and besides they were telling me and my middle class friends we were middle class because of the way we did things, and I thought they were wrong, so I decided class was bullshit. In the revolution there was no class. I had no understanding of where they were coming from; and it didn't matter to me that they had always been forced to share everything all their lives. They just had to struggle with that and reach the correct position. As for dealing with my privilege, I was sharing my possessions, and that should have been enough.

That house only lasted a week. We hardly knew each other, and there was no basis to trust what they were saying to me since it didn't feel right. It was only later, when The Furies collective formed in the spring of '71 that I began to understand that much of what they had been saying had been right. By that time I was ready to listen because I knew and trusted the lower class women in The Furies collective. I had reached that level of trust with them because we were agreed on our political direction--the politics of lesbian feminism.

I learned that class is not only how much money you have relative to everybody else, but what kind of economic security you have. My family never had to worry about whether we would eat, or whether my father would have work. We worried about how often we could eat at restaurants, and the kind of work my father would have to do. For lower class women those worries are so far removed from their lives that they seem ludicrous. Eating and working are questions of survival, not taste.

Class is the way you see the rest of the world, and your place in it. Because I knew I had enough, but a little less than my friends, I was able to romanticize my "poverty". Real poverty is anything but romantic. My parents' view of poverty as a reflection of personal failure was easy for them to have because they weren't poor; for a lower class person that view is degrading, debilitating, and self-defeating. When middle class women talk about self-hate (as women), they should remember what kind of self-hate is possible when everything around you tells you that you're poor and you're trash and its your own god-damned fault.

Class is how you get educated and where. No matter how "poor" we were, there was never any question but that I (and my sisters) would go to college. I had been prepared for it by a tracking system which started early. There was no need for me to earn my own income, or help support the family. There were scholarships, and if those didn't come through, there were loans--our credit was good. Once I got to college, I didn't have to experience the culture shock many lower class women do when they step into a totally middle class world. College was just like home for me.

Class is how you act towards people. Lower class women are usually not raised in "polite society". When they are angry, they let you know it. When they have something to say to you, they say it. Glibness and indirectness are a waste of time. They don't have to spend six months in consciousness-raising to get in touch with their feelings.

Class is what kinds of risks you take. Middle class women usually have something to protect. Middle class women fear the insecurity that accompanies a risk; lower class women are much less used to that security.

This is by no means the definitive article on class. Nor is it an attempt to glorify the lower class or guilt-trip the middle class. Class is a real issue which must be recognized and dealt with by middle class women without waiting for lower class women to lower the boom. I learned about class because I trusted the lower class women in our collective and because they cared about me. We have been through a long, sometimes painful process in order to get to where we are, and there are still class problems in the collective. But we are no longer blind about class.

For many middle class women the women's movement has meant a reprieve from working for somebody else's revolution. Having gotten in touch with their own oppression, they are unwilling to see themselves as oppressors again, especially as oppressors of other women. It is crucial that we stop this before our movement gets torn apart by middle class women's refusal to deal with their class privilege.

The next issue of The Furies will have a more detailed analysis of middle class resistances to class consciousness.

DOÑA CATALINA

by Charlotte Bunch

During most of the past 2000 years, women who sought to revolt against their sexual oppression found little or no social space to do it. If they were successful, it was usually because they came from the upper class and/or because they denied their sex and passed for men. A handful of women from the upper class were often allowed to deviate either because they had so much power that they could not be stopped (e.g. Queen Christina or Queen Elizabeth) or because they did not threaten the male power structure but used their class privilege to live marginal lives. For a lower class woman, these options did not exist as her survival depended on accepting her lot.

Every land has its tales of women who masqueraded as men in their search for a freer life. Female roles and dress were so confining that women who could not accept these bonds pretended to be men, not because they be-



"I cut off my hair."

lieved men to be actually superior but because this was the only individual escape they could see. These women took great risks since most of their societies and churches forbade women to wear men's clothing without special permission and this sin was often punished by death. (The excuse used for the burning of Joan of Arc was her refusal to wear women's clothing.) Such a woman always lived in fear of detection and knew that men and other women alike opposed her. Occasionally after a woman had managed to excel in certain fields and to survive in her disguise, she gained a begrudging admiration from society; if she then revealed her true sex, she sometimes acquired acceptance as an exceptional "neuter."

In all times and places, such women existed. They are a testament to woman's continual drive to escape her oppression. Many of these women were Lesbians and a proud part of our history. Their lives are often ignored, or if recognized, their lesbianism denied by male historians. We should know more about them. Yet, we need not romanticize them. Far from ideal, their lives were hard and usually tragic; society so circumscribed them that they had to hide their real identity, deny their womanhood and love of other women, and usually lived lonely lives as the price of their revolt.

Doña Catalina de Erauso was one such woman. A legendary figure, sometimes referred to as a Robin Hood of Latin America, Catalina was born in Spain, at the height of Christendom's oppression of women. She spent most of her adult years in male terrain, as a soldier of fortune in Mexico, Peru, and Chile. Many stories about her exploits have been passed down, although as with all legends, the details vary with the telling over time. But her existence and her general character are always consistent and not to be doubted.

Doña Catalina was born, 6th or 7th child to Captain and Maria Erauso in Basque in 1592. At that time, noble Spaniards believed that it was the duty of men to serve the King and of women to enter religion. So, her father and brothers were trained for the military and her mother and sisters instructed in religion. Some say that Catalina's father gave her at birth to a nearby convent to be raised by her aunt, because he already had two daughters and had no use for more. Another source puts her in the convent at age four, while others say that she was sent when her parents realized that no male was likely to marry her because of her powerful physique. Regardless of detail, she spent much of her childhood in the convent, where she was expected to take the religious veil.

By her 15th birthday, she had had numerous fights with the pious nuns and was fed up with her confinement. She stole her aunt's keys and escaped to a field where she cut her hair, made male clothing out of her habit, and sallied forth as a young boy. One source suggests that she left this letter to her parents:

By the time you get this letter, I shall either be free or dead. I will no longer endure the unjust imprisonment to which you condemn me. Why did you bring me up like my brothers? Why have made me take part in their work and play? Why have made me manly and strong like them, only to compel me, now that I am 15 to do nothing but mumble a lot of interminable prayers? Farewell, Forgive me if you can.

Your daughter, Catalina

She roamed around Spain in her male disguise for a year or so, learning to survive by her



wits and physical prowess. Eventually, she sailed to Latin America to try her hand on the new frontier, as did many an adventuresome young Spaniard. She wandered around the continent, taking on odd jobs, serving in the Spanish army, engaging in banditry, gambling, dueling, and earning herself a reputation as the best swordsman in the Americas. She mastered the frontier arts of survival, robbed the rich, and helped out individuals in trouble. (Once she saved a woman from her avenging husband who sought to kill her because of an affair with one of Catalina's friends, whom the husband had already killed.) She lived by the frontier ethic where each person made his own laws and interpreted his own codes of justice. The book, *Historia de la Monja Alferes*, supposedly written by her, tells the stories of her escapades and escapes. She was sentenced to die at least four times and always managed to get away.

As a dashing young Spaniard, she was openly attracted to and sought after by many women. She was engaged on several occasions (usually as a strategy to get out of a jam) but she always disappeared before the wedding day when she would be revealed. In Lima, she was fired from one job because of her intimate relation with a young lady. She said of it:

At the end of nine months he bade me go and earn my living elsewhere; and the reason of this was that he had at home with him two unmarried sisters of his wife's, with whom with one especially whom I preferred-I used to sport and frolic. And one day, when I was in the parlour, combing my hair, lolling my head in her lap, and tickling her ankles, he came by chance to a grating through which he saw us, and he heard her telling me that I ought to go to Potosí and make a fortune, and then we could get married. He withdrew, called me shortly afterwards, asked for and checked my accounts and discharged me, and I departed.

After 15 lively years, she was wounded near to death and so confessed her sex to a priest, lest she die in sin. (Since she required major surgery on her wounds, she may have confessed out of physical necessity as well!) She lived; she then used the revelation of her female sex to get herself out of some troubles. Soon after this, she entered a convent briefly and then returned to Spain, much to the regret of the nuns she had befriended.

In Europe, news of her legendary exploits and of her newly discovered sexual identity had spread like wildfire. She was greeted everywhere by throngs of excited townsfolk. One person described her entry:

When she came to go ashore, Catalina had flung her woman's dress to the devil and was once more flaunting it in the gorgeous trappings of a gallant cavalier. Thus attired, she set out for Seville, Madrid, Pampeluna, filling the hearts of the girls with love, of their gallants with terror.

The stories of her life were published; a famous poet, Montalbán, wrote about her; and she sat for a portrait by Francesco Crescentio. King Phillip received her and rewarded her with a pension for her service defending the Spanish territory and flag. She went to Rome, where the Italians were captivated by her, and Pope Urban VIII, fascinated by her tales, granted her special permission to wear men's clothing. One man who met her in Rome described her as:

tall and burly for a woman, artificially flat-chested, not plain in feature and yet not beautiful, showing signs of hardship rather than of age; with black hair, cut like a man's, and hanging in a mane, as was customary at the time. She was dressed like a man, in the Spanish fashion, and wore a sword, tightly belted; her head inclined forwards, and her shoulders were slightly stooped, more like a fiery soldier than like a courtier given to gallantries.

But Europe was too boring for Catalina. She returned to Mexico in 1630, still as one author put it "untamed." She escorted a young woman to Mexico to meet her husband-to-be and fell madly in love with her. She resented the couple's subsequent marriage. Then the new husband insulted her; he accused her of molesting his wife and forbade her to enter their home or to walk on their street. Catalina responded in a letter challenging him to a duel; the letter ended:

Now although I am a woman, as this seems a thing insufferable to my valor, in order that you may behold my prowess and achieve your boast, I shall await you at the back of the St. James Church from 1 to 6 o'clock.

(Duels were an honorable Spanish tradition, yet the male author who reports her letter called it, "incomparable arrogance"--had it come from a man, he would have called it, "defending his honor.") The husband chickened out, claiming that his honor as a gentleman forbade him to use arms against a woman. Clearly, he was terrified of Catalina's prowess as an experienced dueler. Catalina's friends persuaded her to leave the town. She continued a life of adventure, dressed as a swordsmen, until her death in 1650.

Her story became popular folklore in both Spain and Latin America, where novels and poems were written about her as La Monja Alferéz (The Nun Ensign). In the 1800's, European interest in her spread to France and to England, where translations of her stories appeared. None of

these sources wrote about her as a Lesbian, although it is clear that all her romantic experiences and feelings were with women, both when she is masquerading as a man and after her sexual identity is known.

Male authors enjoyed the titillation of Catalina as a woman in male disguise and made "cute" sexist comments about her. They saw her life as an intriguing individual aberration. In fact, her life is one of revolt against male supremacy. She was forced to disguise herself as a man, not because she thought women were inferior but because women were oppressed. She saw clearly that freedom was only available if she were a man. Her high spirits could not tolerate the bonds that society successfully clamped on most women and she was fortunate that her physical and mental quickness enabled her to revolt. She was not a social reformer in a strictly political sense, but her life did dispel myths of female physical and mental inferiority for those who would listen. But male society was not about to hear her message in the 1600's and so she went down in history as a curious "nun," another exception to the sexist world rule.

I want to thank the Women's History Research Center in Berkeley for first bringing this woman to our attention. Major sources for this article included: *Historia De La Monja Alferéz* by Catalina de Frauso (translated by James Fitzmaurice Kelly), *La Monja Alferéz* - a play by Juan Pérez de Montalbán; *Women in Men's Disguise* by O.P. Gilbert; and "The Spanish Nun" by Thomas DeQuincey.


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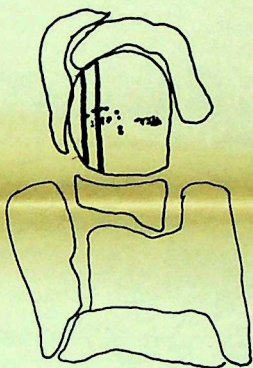
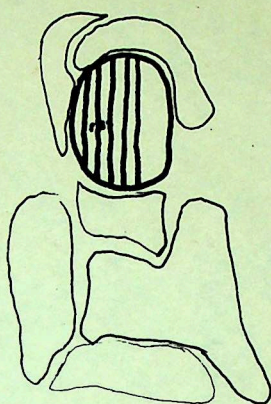
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REVOLUTION BEGINS AT HOME

Charlotte Bunch and Coletta Reid

Early in the Women's Liberation Movement, I saw class as an "issue" that men in the Left used to put down feminism. Later it became an "issue" that many women said we had to discuss, but these discussions never went beyond wondering why welfare mothers weren't beating down our doors. Hours were spent beating breasts with guilt. The verdict: Women's Liberation was middle class and that's bad, but we never understood why. We never examined how our behavior created and perpetuated that kind of movement. We never looked at how working class women within our movement were oppressed.

When class became an "issue" in the development of a lesbian-feminist movement in DC, I was apprehensive. Academically, I knew that class divisions existed and ought to be abolished, but I did not connect that to my behavior or to what was happening to women in the movement. Of course, I did not imagine that I was a class supremacist. Only after months of struggle (or should I say, fights, hostility, withdrawal, trauma...) did I begin to understand that much of my behavior came from being raised middle class and was oppressive to working class women.

I finally recognized that class in our society is not only an economic system that determines everyone's place, but also patterns of behavior that go with and reflect one's status. When middle class women carry their attitudes, and ways of behaving into the movement, it oppresses working class women. Class divisions and behavior come from male dominated society and it is absurd for us to perpetuate them. If middle class women remain tied to male class values and behavior, we cripple our growth and hinder the development of a movement that can free all women. Class struggle is not a question of guilt--it is a question of change, for our movement's survival.

I come from a thoroughly middle class family (economic security, education, etc.). Coletta comes from a working class home, worked her way "up" through college and a "good marriage" and accepted middle class values that oppress working class women. From our experiences, we will describe ways that middle class women are oppressive, how we avoid class consciousness and changing ourselves, and how we must change.

destructive attitudes and behavior

Classist behavior is rooted in one basic idea: class supremacy--that the individuals of the upper and middle classes are superior to those of the lower classes. Middle class people are taught to think that we are better than working class people and we act out that superiority and self-righteousness in a thousand daily ways. Class supremacy, male supremacy, white supremacy--it's all the same game. If you're on top of someone, the society tells you that you are better. It gives you access to its privileges and security, and it works both to keep you on top and



photo by JEB

to keep you thinking that you deserve to be there. It tells you over and over that the middle class way is the right way and teaches you how to keep that way on top--to control people and situations for your benefit. No one in our movement would say that she believes she is better than her working class sisters, yet her behavior says it over and over again.

Class supremacy is acted out in thinking that working class women are less together, personally and politically, because they do not act and talk the way we do. Their politics may not be expressed in the same manner, their vocabulary may not be as "developed", and so they are "less articulate" and treated as less important. Or they may be hostile and emotional so one can hardly trust their political judgement; after all, we've learned to keep ourselves in check, to be reasonable, to keep things in perspective. Looking down with scorn or pity at those whose emotions are not repressed or who can't rap out abstract theories in thirty seconds flat reeks of our class arrogance and self-righteousness.

Other middle class women pull the opposite number: emotionalism, hysteria and tears when you're feeling bad and things don't go your way, or begging sympathy because it's just too hard to change. To a working class woman this constant preoccupation with one's feelings and the difficulty of changing is a luxury she could never afford. She is tired of hearing how it's really hard for you to change because your mother was neurotic, etc. while you go on oppressing her. She had to do many unpleasant things that middle class women complain about endlessly, like exploitative jobs, just to survive. Endlessly analyzing and discussing your feelings is another way to keep control, which involves both out-talking people and using your feelings as excuses.

Sometimes a middle class woman feels superior because she believes that she worked for what she has--that her skills, education, possessions and position--come, not from her class privilege, but from hard work. I used to feel this way because I compared myself to the rich, not the poor; so, I thought that I did not have a lot to start with and had earned what I did have. By downplaying the role that privilege played in getting each of us to where we are now, we can keep on thinking that anyone can make it if they "try as hard as we did."

For example, I used to think that I had savings because of my good planning and frugality. Although I had saved a lot at a low salary, I was not recognizing that my ability to save came from my privilege--that I had inherited enough economic security and actual possessions to afford to live cheaply. If you think that you are where you are just because you worked hard, it is easy to become self-righteous and make classist moral judgements about others.

Often, middle and especially upper middle class women for whom things have come easily develop a privileged passivity. Someone with privilege can conveniently think that it's not necessary to fight or discipline herself to get anything. Everything will work out. Because she has made it by following nice middle class rules of life, she doesn't like for people to be pushy, dogmatic, hostile, or intolerant. Material oppression doesn't bombard her daily, so she has the luxury and time to move slowly and may resist taking a hard political stand or alienating "anyone." She can afford to assume that most people are good and that it is unnecessary to fight or prove oneself to anyone.

Advocating downward mobility and putting down those who don't groove on it is another form of middle class arrogance. Someone who has never had to worry about

eating or being acceptable can leave a job easily without knowing where money will come from, embrace patched pants and brown rice and anti-materialism as good for the soul, and treat with disdain those who are hung-up with material needs. She can usually also go back to her parents, college, or a good job when she tires of poverty. Once more, middle class women set the standards of what is good (and even the proper style of downward mobility which often takes money to achieve) and act "more revolutionary than thou" towards those who are concerned about money and the future. Often these middle class revolutionaries then live off of working class women, who haven't discarded all their property (which the middle class women may carelessly destroy) or who keep their jobs because of the fear of real poverty. This sharing is done as "revolutionary communism," but since it ignores the different class realities of those involved, it is a fuck over.

The "more revolutionary than thou" attitude is only matched in arrogance by the paternalistic social worker type who understands the "problems" of the working class woman and wants to help her out. Psychological paternalism occurs when one middle class woman explains to another that "you have to understand Mary's background and why she is so hostile." What Mary needs is for her to stand up and fight classist behavior with her not explain away why she is the way she is. Paternalism can be benevolence in which the middle class woman gives out of personal graciousness, rather than from the recognition that she has class privileges which it is her responsibility to share. She also retains control over the access to privilege and withdraws it when she disapproves, i.e., when she is threatened. Whatever form the behavior takes, it is condescending because it assumes class superiority instead of recognizing that as women raised in the middle class we have received some useful benefits (such as money, education, skills) which we can share. It is arrogant because it accepts society's idea that privilege makes you better when, in fact, being raised middle class has fucked us up in many ways which working class women can help us understand and change.

There are a lot of small, indirect, and dishonest ways of behaving that are part of being raised in "polite society" where "being nice" is at a premium. One is being indirect about anger and disapproval in destructive ways: we bitch, carp, withdraw, make snide comments, gossip, etc. We make people feel our disapproval or anger but we do not say what is really on our minds.

Some of us try to smooth things over and prevent open conflict which we fear. I did this because I took conflict and anger personally and assumed that if the other person liked me, she wouldn't get angry. It was hard for me to get over an angry scene, so I tried to avoid hostility. This behavior gives the illusion that things are ok, that you're still under control, but it is dishonest and destructive because it does not resolve problems and fucks over the person who is direct about her opinions and feelings.

These are only some of the forms of classist behavior that we have come to understand in our group. No one woman has all of these traits. On the surface many of these forms seem opposite or contradictory, but what is important is that they are all ways of maintaining the supremacy of the middle class and perpetuating the feelings of inadequacy of the working class. We are not saying that all middle class values and traits are inherently bad; many are helpful and when disassociated from supremacist use can help us all. But if we are to be able to use any of these and to develop new non-classist ways of behaving, we must examine the effects of our present behavior and how we resist changing.

resistances to change

When working class women start confronting middle class women with their oppressive attitudes and behavior, they begin to hear a series of defenses and rationalizations that would stagger a horse. It is not helpful to defend ourselves when someone tries to point out our classist behavior. It is important to be as open as possible, to listen to the working class woman and change what she tells us. Working class women don't confront us because they get their kicks that way, but because they want to work in a movement with us and they can't do it unless we stop oppressing them.

The following are some of the ways middle class women react when confronted. None of them are helpful. If you find yourself acting in these ways, stop.

First, there are several ways to divert the issue and avoid dealing with criticism. A common diversion is denying that we are really middle class. Our father worked his way up, or we come from a "hybrid" family, or all those definitions of middle class don't really apply to us. Of course, this in no way deals with what the working class woman is saying to us about our class supremacist behavior.

Or we deny that the woman criticizing us is really working class. She may have gone to college, or she dresses "well", or she's as articulate as we are. Anything to throw into question her criticism of us. According to this diversionary tactic, only a woman with six kids working in a factory can say anything to us about our class oppressiveness.

It is also diversionary to accuse the working class woman of denying our oppression. She's not denying that we are oppressed as women. All she is saying is that we also oppress her because of our class supremacist behavior.

Then we can always avoid the issue by demanding to know how working class women are going to bring about an economic revolution. When they start talking about our class oppressiveness, we start inquiring about their program. How will our being unoppressive help the coal miner's wife? What are they doing to alleviate the plight of Peruvian Indian women? Of course, the point of our changing is to build a movement together aimed at changing the condition of all women.

The second most common way of dealing with class criticism is the guilt trip. The purpose of criticism is to make us change not to make us feel guilty. It's not our fault that we were born middle class and breast beating about who our parents were and how we grew up



isn't helpful. It is our fault, if after being told how we're oppressive, we just feel bad and guilty but continue the same oppressive behavior. Guilt makes us know we ought to be "concerned" about working class women so we add them onto the end of statements or talk about how we ought to have more articles about "them." Guilt is not a helpful way to react to someone pointing out our class supremacist attitudes and behavior. It's just another way of not changing.

One of the most common ways of expressing guilt is to glorify the lives of women who were raised in working class homes. We talk a lot about "far out working class dykes" and wish that we hadn't been raised in the suburbs. This in no way deals with the economic insecurity and position of inferiority that working class women grew up in. It's pretty upsetting for a working class woman to look back at her own life and how she has been treated like scum, while we are telling her what an exciting experience it must have been. Then there are middle class women who put working class women on a pedestal to admire, imitate, or observe with delight. This is just another way of denying that working class women are our equals to be listened to and struggled with.

A step up from outright defensiveness and guilt occurs when middle class women begin to realize

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Kathy from Denver



the force of criticism but are unable to deal with it politically. So we take it personally. We talk and feel as if we are being unjustly attacked, as if the other woman has no real class grievances against us but is just hostile. "Nowadays, she's just angry at me." Instead of looking at our behavior searching for anything that might be class supremacist, we assume the working class woman is being unfair to us for no reason. Generally, instead of seeking her out to find out what's wrong, we withdraw in confused "hurt" thereby protecting our classist behavior. Often we feel self-righteous, because she's the hostile one. "I tried to keep up the friendship, but she just wasn't open."

Once we have a little class consciousness we don't think that the working class woman is being unfair for no reason, but we think she has things out of perspective. Her hostility is greater than our oppressiveness warrants. We feel as if we are scapegoats, as if all her hostility from every source is directed at us. She has everything out of proportion and how can we change in such an environment?

Often middle class women react as if working class women want to take away our very identity. "They don't want us to be ourselves; they can't accept strength in anybody." We don't know if any of our behavior is any good anymore. So we become totally passive and of no use to anyone. We acceptingly listen to all criticism with apparent openness and understanding. Yet, we do nothing. Our "polite" acceptance is a passive evasion. If directly challenged, we say, "You're right but I can't deal with that now." We don't take initiative because it might be classist. This sort of passive withdrawal from the fray is a very effective way of not having to change. It indicates that we know that part of our identity is based on our middle class ways of acting. Middle class women have to build identities that are not based on our supposed superiority. The way the system has worked

we have built who we are partly on whom we are better than.

Another passive reaction to class criticism goes, "Yes, I know I'm classist, and I really need you to struggle with me. Tell me every time I oppress you and I'll change."

This puts the responsibility for change back on the working class woman. We are the ones who are oppressive, so it is our responsibility to search our own and other middle class women's behavior and attitudes and to respond openly to working class women when they confront us.

We have to trust that working class women aren't just trying to tear us down, that they want us to change, that they value us as persons apart from our class oppressiveness. For sure, working class women don't struggle with those they don't care about or who they don't think will change. We can't wait for someone else to make it clearcut, totally explained and unambiguous. If part of what someone says about us seems wrong, we shouldn't use that as an excuse to dismiss it all. We have to examine ourselves, what others say and learn by risking change.

The anger of working class women towards middle class women is justified by life-long class oppression, and the class system will not be changed until middle class and working class women both see how oppressive it is and unite to change it. Working class women want middle class women to take up the struggle against classist behavior as their own, to stop resting on their secure middle class position. Middle class women haven't had to make the fight against classism important because we got benefits from it. We were in the superior position. Working class women want us to stop supporting the class system by accepting its middle class values, stop resting on our privileges and start confronting and challenging class oppressive behavior in ourselves and other middle class women. They do not want to be the only ones who fight against classist behavior.




By Sunny, San Francisco

If they are, they might as well separate into their own movement.

Working class women also want us to use and share our middle class privileges with them--the things and skills we have because we were born into the middle class. They want us to share our money, our property, our access to jobs, our education, and our skills. Many middle class women think that downward mobility (voluntary poverty) makes them less classist. In fact all it makes us is poorer and unable to share potentially large salaries with those who do not have the education or skills. We should not deny our class privileges. Use and share them with those who don't have the choice of voluntary poverty.

Bringing down the male supremacist system in this country will not be a possibility until we stop acting out our class supremacist attitudes on the women with whom we're building a movement.



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A WELL PLACED KICK

Lee Schwing

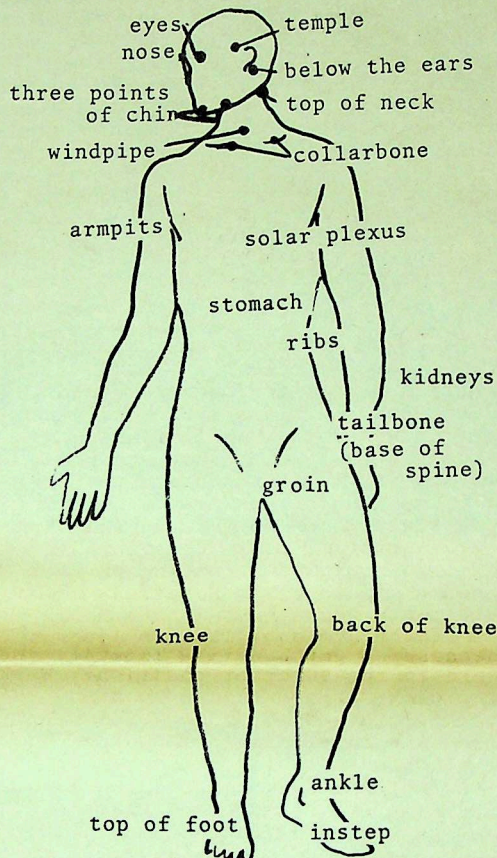
For those of us who were young little tykes in the middle-class world, dolls were supposed to be our thing. I was allowed to run and climb trees and was urged to swim, but it was clearly stated that I should also be into dolls and playing house. Nice quiet games for nice young girls, not those rough boys' games. The pressure became more intense as I grew older. All my girlfriends were getting the same shit. Wear skirts, they told us - which meant we couldn't run as fast or climb trees - because all those nasty little boys would see up our skirts. So most of us stopped running around so much. One of my girlfriends even dropped competitive swimming because it was giving her too many muscles in her shoulders. Men don't like women with muscles.

When I think of the shit that has been placed on me and millions of other women, I am outraged. Being physically weak makes women think that men are naturally stronger. If you are weak, intimidation is easier and the constant fear of rape and other forms of physical violence keeps you in place.

Physical weakness relates directly to women's traditional passivity. As we were forced to accept the weaker role, especially in the middle-class, so we also accepted the idea that being strong or aggressive in any way was a man's role. Our role was acting weak, submissive and quiet. We were trained to let other people (men) do difficult things for us - mentally and physically. If you rejected this pattern - you were treated as an outcast and were subjected to constant ridicule. If you accepted the woman's role, then your natural strength was stifled. You knew you couldn't be better than the boys - you would hurt their egos - so try less girls, don't study, act weak, and you'll get your man. Even if you did achieve academically in school, this being an acceptable outlet for a woman's talents and aggressiveness, the physical fear and passivity were usually still there.

For us as lesbians it's especially absurd to continue to accept these male-defined roles for women or men. Each one of us needs to know, feel and develop her physical and mental strength. One powerful step in the physical direction is having the ability to fight, being able to defend yourself. Stop this constant fear of rape and physical violence. Women who already know basic street fighting skills, can refine those skills to make them more powerful. Physical power is just one area of power that men have over women. We need to take this power into our own hands.

To know how to fight, you need to know where to hit, punch, bite, kick - the vulnerable points. They are:



Before you start to attack - have a plan of action. Know that if a man attacks you, you'll first knee him in the balls, punch to his solar plexus, trip him, then stomp on his nose. Or first kick to the balls, punch to the stomach, elbow to the head or karate chop his neck. Think up your own combinations as you're walking down the street. Just knowing that you will fight back makes you walk tougher. Here are some standard techniques:

PUNCH
know that your punch is stronger if your fist is tightly closed and if you throw your body weight into it.

ELBOW
your elbow can be a dangerous weapon, if you close your arm tightly and put your body weight into the elbow action

KNIFEHAND
to make a knifehand, point your fingers straight ahead, keeping them together. try to bend your fingers at the first joint, just below your fingernails. this bending at the first joint creates tension in your hand which makes it strong. the knifehand is great for stabbing to the stomach, solar plexus, eyes, and for chopping actions to the head and neck.

YELLS

I don't mean the traditional screams for help, but a ferocious AIY, KEEUP, SHEEZAK, or similar karate type noise, it will give you confidence and will take your attacker by surprise.

KNEE

your knee is good for quick powerful moves to the groin; or if someone is doubled over, to the stomach.

FEET

your feet are great - for simply stepping on someone's feet. (its very painful, let me tell you) for kicking to the knees, groin, stomach, and if you're more coordinated kicking to the solar plexus or head.

A beginning knowledge of fighting is important, but it is not enough. Even if you read this article and memorized it, don't fool yourself. Body building, coordination, confidence, and fighting skills need more time than just memorizing an article. To break thru all the years of our socialized passivity, we need disciplined classes or groups in body building, karate and self-defence. A combination of the three is necessary. Any one of the three alone has its faults. Pure karate is a very long process; in most places you don't even approach fighting for at least six months to a year. The karate skills still have a lot to offer by way of balance and coordination for powerful kicks, fast movements, and learning how to use your power to the fullest. For women who do have street fighting skills the learning to control and refine their power is the more relevant part of the class. While the street fighting part of class is important especially to women who have never fought before, because it puts to use some of the karate skills learned. It gives you an immediate sense of having learned something practical and useful. It makes you think about real fighting situations and gives you practice defending yourself. The body building aspect of a class insures that you can fight to your fullest potential. Lifting weights, push-ups, sit-ups, chin-ups, skipping rope, running - all serve the purpose of strengthening your muscles and building up your endurance.

After a few months of being exhausted after a workout - I reached a point where I instead felt energized - the high of feeling your body move with strength and coordination. This energy didn't affect me only physically but it affected my mental state as well. I wanted to put this energy into work that I was doing, and I could do that well because my body juices were moving and made my mind clear. To start to take control of your life it is necessary to have both a strong body as well as a strong mind.

CLONING:

a recycling?

or an answer to copulation?

Michela Griffo,
New York City

Cloning is a word that has come up frequently in movement literature but a complete explanation of the process, its history, and its future as a political tool has never been presented.

Lesbianism, birth control and abortion are all seen as a means of controlling our own destinies, our lives and bodies. Lesbianism and abortion are as old as history itself. Despite tremendous social, legal and political pressure against them, they have always been sought by women who were aware of their oppression.

Birth control and cloning are products of the twentieth century. When women became aware of the existence of birth control, it became one of their political demands. Reproduction and childcare have always been used by the sexist male culture to keep women chained to their role. With the advent of women's collectives and the emerging Lesbian Nation, we are finding ways of relating outside of the hetero-sexist culture. Child care centers and collective responsibility for children have freed a lot of mothers. However, society still holds onto the outmoded notion that a child should have its father's name and be raised in the nuclear family structure.

Up until now the only way a woman could have a child was to join with a male and then give birth to a male or female child who through chromosomal alignment would bear some of the characteristics of the father. With regard to childbearing we had no options. We could raise the child in a women's collective but the humiliation of having to copulate with the male was always present. A woman who lived with and loved other women could not bear the children of these women. We cannot propagate on our own.

Cloning (a word having its roots in the Greek word, KLON meaning slip or cutting) is generally defined as asexual propagation. Cloning makes it possible for a woman to bear a child without the union of egg and sperm.

To understand cloning you must understand a few things about cells. There are sex cells (gametes) and body cells. The sex cell in the woman is the ova, in the man it's the sperm. Sex cells have 23 chromosomes each. The chromosomes contain genes which are repositories of genetic information. In simple terms, they are the You in You, your hair and eye color, skin color, intelligence level, body characteristics, etc. In sexual reproduction the two gametes come together as parent cells to form the resulting 46 cell zygote. Every cell in your body carries all the information necessary to form a duplicate of yourself. However, unlike the sex cell, your body cells have limited and specialized creative capabilities. They can be used for reproduction only by cloning. In their present state, they make only skin, muscle, bones, etc.

It is also important to understand the history of cloning. It is the product of years of research in artificial insemination. The first of these experiments

was done at the University of Michigan in 1958. The ova (eggs) were flushed out of the ovaries of several varieties of mammals for the purpose of artificially inseminating them and then re-implanting the fertilized egg into another mammal of the same species. In other words, you take a prize cow who could only bear seven or eight offspring, flush the eggs out of her, fertilize them with the sperm from a prize bull and re-implant the eggs into the uteri of poorer quality cows. These cows will carry to term the calves that really belong to the prize cow.

So the geneticist found that you could remove the egg from one mammal, perform microsurgery or artificial insemination, re-implant the egg into the mother or into a completely different mammal of the same species, and the fetus would grow to term.

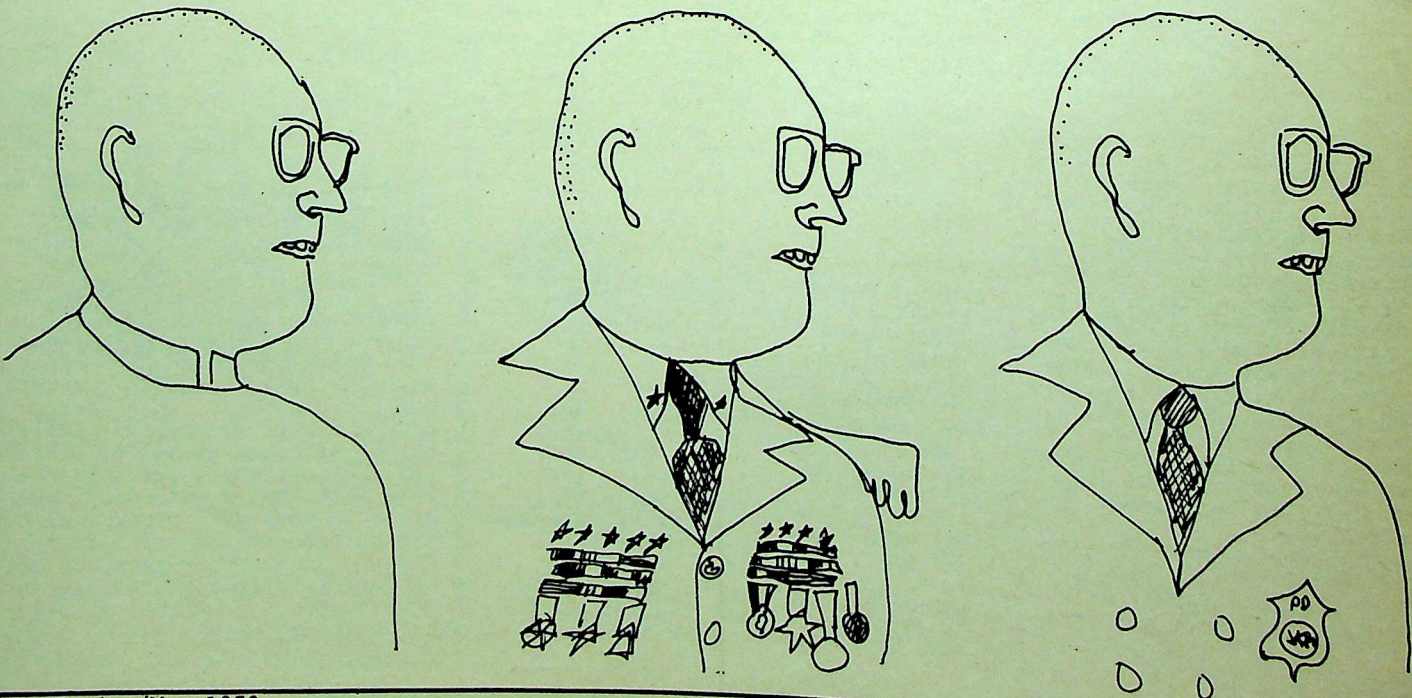
At the same time other geneticists were studying the process of fertilization under electron microscopes. It was formerly believed that the sperm penetrated the egg by boring into it and once the 23 chromosomes of the male joined up with the 23 chromosomes of the female, reproduction began. But they found that, "Contrary to wide belief, the sperm does not penetrate into the egg by boring in, but the egg engulfs the sperm. Women are the aggressors in reproduction. The sperm merely acts as a stimulus to trigger development. Therefore it is possible to provide a substitute stimulus such as a pin prick and obtain the same result, as in artificial parthenogenesis." 1

An additional discovery has been made: the cytoplasm (the clear material around the nucleus of the egg) acts as a control center that tells the nucleus when to switch on and start dividing, thus creating new cells and ultimately a new human being. As soon as another set of 23 chromosomes are introduced, the cytoplasm is chemically programmed to begin division of the nucleus.

Microscopic examination also showed that at the exact moment of fertilization in the case of the XX (female child) chromosomal combination, the gametes merge and become identical. You could not tell the difference between the mother gamete (female sex cell) and the male gamete (sperm), as both had merged to form the 46 chromosome zygote.

This is where the potentially dangerous situation arose (for the male of the species that is). As we have seen, the sperm is not necessary to begin reproduction as has been believed since the beginnings of patriarchy. The female of the species -- and only the female -- in the phyla which reproduce sexually rather than asexually has the necessary physical and physiological make-up to nurture the zygote (first stage of embryonic development) to completion. The ova or egg is the basis for life and cannot be artificially reproduced.

We can then see that what is needed for reproduction is an ovum, another sex gamete (not necessarily male, unless you want a male child) and a pin prick.



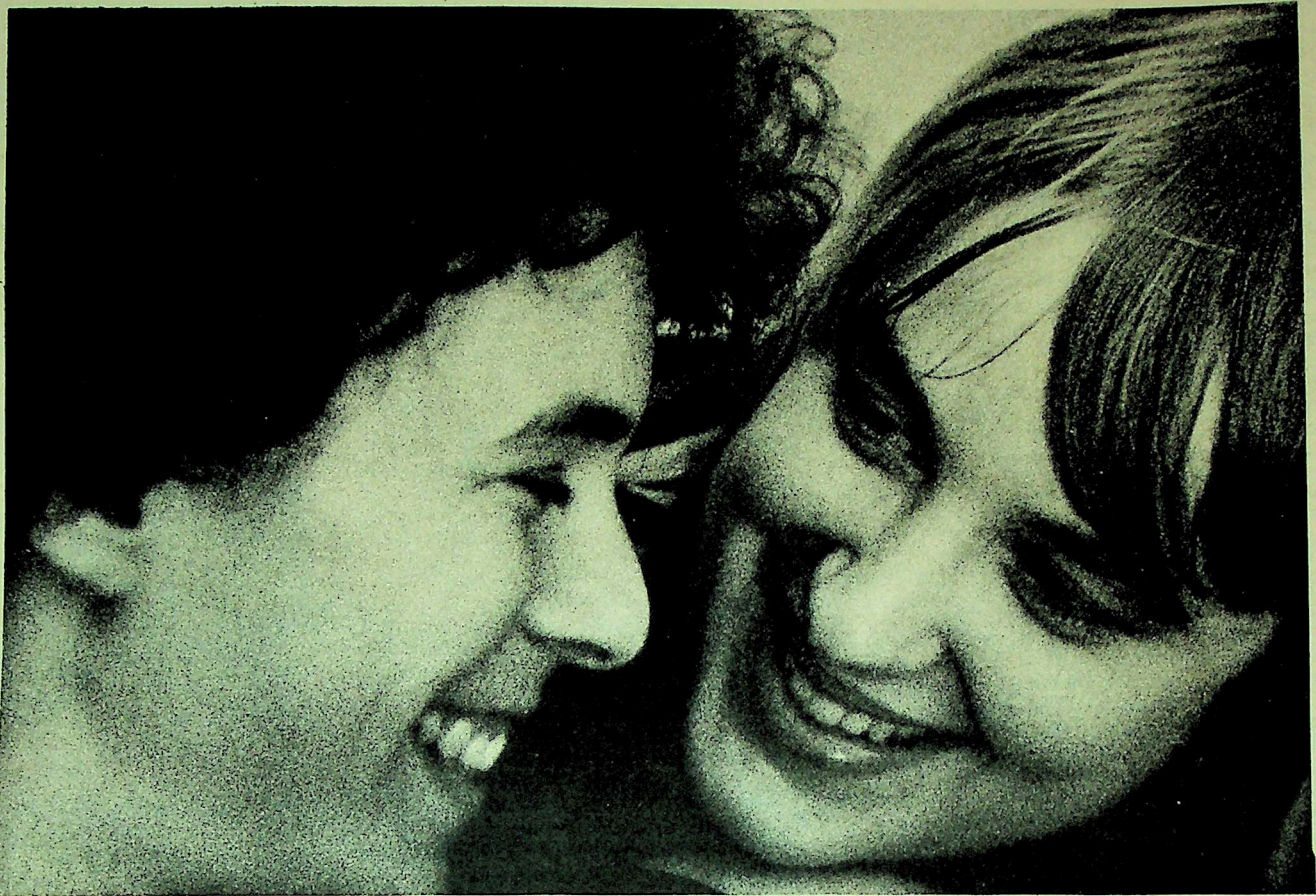


Photo by JEB

At this point American scientists had gone bananas and were running around holding onto their balls. While the Americans were still in shock, a team of geneticists from Oxford University took over. Something had to be done to save the male ego and cloning was the answer.

Cloning was developed by males for males. Every paper, every book, magazine or journal I read was aimed at the reproduction of the master race for males. This is a direct quote, "If one Einstein could lay down the whole foundation of modern day physics what might 1,000 Einsteins accomplish. Think of the talents of Mozart or Beethoven. Imagine the power and discipline of any army whose members are all copies of the Congressional Medal of Honor winner, all united by the same attitudes and objectives. It (cloning) promises to take evolution out of nature's hands and put it in man's--making him for the first time master of his own fate."² By the process of cloning, men would take the one thing they cannot artificially reproduce -- our eggs and our wombs -- and use them as receptacles for their own reproduction.

By now, scientists know several things. They know that the egg cell will automatically begin to duplicate if it is pricked by a pin. You can hit the sperm over the head with a hammer and it won't do anything. How then do you save the male of the species? How do you switch on a male cell? The answer was typical!
YOU USE THE WOMAN.

In the process of cloning, the egg is flushed out of the female ovary. For a male to reproduce a male, the process is like this: He removes the nucleus (the part of the female egg that contains the female's 23 chromosomes). Now we have an egg with no chromosomes. He then takes a cell from any part of his body (body cells contain the complete 46 chromosomes) and implants the nucleus from this cell into the cytoplasm of the egg. In this way the control center in the egg, realizing that there are now 46 chromosomes, switches on and begins to divide. Because the nucleus of the egg has been removed there is no intermingling of genes so the child can never be female nor will it have any characteristics of the mother. Therefore the word KLON, Gr. Slip or Cutting. The child is an exact duplicate of the one parent donor and has an identical genetic makeup.

A woman has three options to reproduce a female. She can go through the same process using any of her own body cells. She can use the body cell of another woman. She can have the sexual gamete of another woman implanted in the nucleus, without having her own 23 chromosomes removed. The third choice would be a form of artificial insemination, or rather in ovulation, and not really cloning.

Scientists don't want any inter-breeding; they want to know exactly what the final product will be; they want an exact duplicate of themselves and other men. So they developed cloning. Cloning as men see it is using the female reproductive cell donor (male). In other words:

1. Only the female sex cell is capable of beginning reproduction.
2. Only the cytoplasm of the egg cell can be switched on to divide itself once 46 chromosomes are in its nucleus. (It will divide if pricked by a pin but without another gamete [23 chromosomes, not necessarily sperm--another egg will do] the resulting zygote would be diploid or only contain half the number of chromosomes for the normal body cell.) This means that two women can reproduce without a male gamete.
3. The male wants the same option that women have naturally with the final objective being a male master race.

If this sounds like science fiction I can assure you it is not. Dr. J.B. Gurdon of Oxford University has been performing cloning on animals for years. Dr. Kurt Hirschorn, chief of the division of Medical Genetics at the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York City believes that "cloning will be applied to man much sooner than people think." Some scientists who refused to be named suggest that some of their colleagues very quietly are attempting to clone mammals right now.

¹Paul B. Weiss, *The Science of Biology* (McGraw-Hill, 1969), p. 57

²Science Digest, Nov. 1969, article by David M. Rorvik, p. 9.

I was almost mesmerized by the dayglo Peace Now bumper sticker on the car ahead. Waking up suddenly, I slam on the brakes to avoid hitting that same sticker now only a hair breadth ahead. The traffic is bad. I curse myself for trying to cross town in rush hour traffic. Finally passing the bumper sticker car, I look at the driver, who immediately gives me the finger and asks why a stupid little cunt like me is driving. I don't reply, knowing that it would get me nowhere, a waste of anger and energy.

"Born with the moon in Cancer, Choose her a name she will answer to". I'm brought back to the reality of the radio and of that song. I think of Annie--with her moon in Cancer and her eyes a chocolate brown. Annie Oakley, straight shooter, they called her for obvious reasons when she and James were into skag. Annie--always ready to help someone with a bad trip--to talk with you all night until the dawn. Who lightly touched your hand while you told her how afraid you were. Annie--who decided with me to join the Women's Liberation Movement--who realized that her relationship with James was for shit months before I realized that mine with Paul was just the same. Annie--for two months in my first consciousness raising group before we decided to drop out because talking about James and Paul was just that--talking. We knew we had to start struggling with them and force them to stop fucking us over.

Paul and I had tremendous fights and the same was true of Annie and James. Neither of us could stand living with them any longer. Our fights never really changed the men. They treated us in the same ways they always had, although they were more subtle.

"Child with a child pretending". I flash back to the time we went striding down the street holding hands, giggling in each other's ears, "step on a crack, break Nixon's back"--corn, pure corn, and the hysteria that follows. Suddenly, somewhere from behind, a man's voice booms, "You two little ladies cunt lickers?"

"Fuck you, pig. Fuck you. Fuck you." I screamed till I was hoarse. The man edged away laughing to himself. You didn't say anything, just stood there, hands at your side. When we walked home we weren't giggling, weren't holding hands anymore. We never talked about what had happened. I told myself that it didn't matter what that pig had said; but, somehow it did. We didn't touch as often anymore.

Annie--I remember when we went to the park at the end of Winter. We were sitting on the rocks and picking up colored pebbles from the stream. We were alone and it was so quiet, like a picture post card scene. I watched your hand pick up a soft brown pebble and when you looked up and I kissed you very softly, I remember being scared, and not knowing why. Annie--why we

ALL

I

WANT



Photo by JEB

you so surprised when I told you I was leaving Paul and that you should James? Why did tears come to you when I asked you to share an apartment with me? Annie, you who told me again and again how women were going to be the ones to make the revolution. That you were convinced that James was never going to change, that you had wasted hours trying to explain to him how he was oppressive. Annie--how could you tell me that James only held you back and that I and other women were the only people you really trusted? Why did you only shrug your shoulders and bow your head when I asked you those things? Annie--I don't know what happened to you. One day you just weren't there anymore--you vanished. You were there in body but away from me, somewhere else in an apartment with a man you didn't even like.

"Just a little green, Like the color when the spring is born ."
It's been two months since I last talked to you and asked you those questions. I left Paul and moved into an apartment by myself. You stayed with James. I see you now only in glimpses--crossing the

street, at the store, and sometimes in the park. You didn't want to see me anymore, said that things would get too complicated. Annie, don't you know that I love you?

End of song--I cut off the radio. I have fought my way across town to the food co-op. I haven't been to it in those two months since I left Paul. I just couldn't hassle it, but the food is cheaper there and so I decided to buck up and do my week's shopping.

There are a lot of people there, long-haired women and men. Children are running everywhere. I know a lot of them. This had been my community, the people with whom I belonged for two years. Susan, with Matthew, her six-month-old, on her back comes over to me, smiles, and says that she likes my hair short. She asks when I got it cut and starts rapping about how it looks wonderful on me but that she just couldn't bring herself to cut hers--that it really doesn't bother her. I don't say anything. What can I say? Susan yells a slight OW--Matthew is pulling her hair. I muffle my snicker, excuse myself and start picking out my groceries.



Pat is filling up empty egg cartons. "Hi, Rosey, haven't seen you in a while. I was going to give you a call but just have been so busy, you know, getting ready for the march next weekend. I really did want to talk to you about what happened between Paul and you. I just didn't understand it. I always thought of Paul as the least oppressive man around. I thought you were working things out?"

"No, things weren't working out. Look, I don't think I have time to talk now, OK?"

"Well, did I say something wrong? Listen, I'll call you up sometime next week. For sure. I talked to Paul, a week after you left and he's really feeling bad. He says he doesn't know why you left. He says he would feel all right about it if he only knew why you left. I tried to talk to him. I really like him, Rosey. Well, I've also been sleeping with him. I hope you don't mind. He really needed someone, and . . ."

I simply walk away. Me mind? The only one I mind about is you, Pat, and the next fucked months you spend with him. Paul is a pretty fast mover. One woman leaves him and another fills her spot. How does that song go? Faster than the speed of light?

I move on to the vegetables. As I put a head of lettuce in the bottom of my grocery sack, a long-haired blonde man I don't know walks up and addressing me as sister informs me that soft vegetables should never be placed in the bottom of a bag. It happens so quick that I am at a loss for what to do or say. Do I scream at him that I am quite able to pack my own groceries? I decide to ignore him but he isn't into ignoring me.

"You know lettuce will get all fucked at the bottom of a sack--you know, smashed. I was once a grocery packer, so I'm very conscientious about those kinds of things." He laughs

to himself. I don't think he's a bit funny. I wonder to myself if a sharp kick to the groin would make him equally conscientious about women. But I decide that it wouldn't look good to kick one of my "brothers" at the food co-op.

"Well, sister, you sure aren't a speed rapper, are you? Is your old man with you or something? Fuck you. A guy tries to make a little conversation with a nice-looking chick and she's too uppity to say anything."

He walks away. I can hardly believe what just happened. I decide to block it out and place the lettuce at the bottom of the sack again. Are all men pigs or just the ones attracted to me?

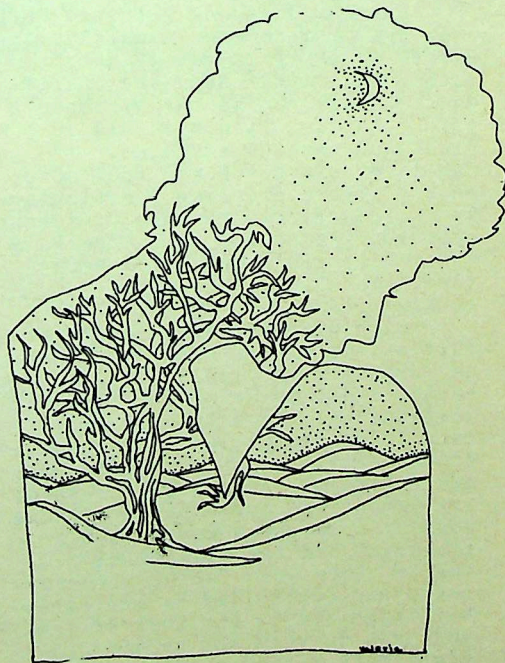
And then I see her--coming in the door, James with her. I want to leave, I didn't think she came on Friday nights. She looks tired and seems to have lost weight. And then she sees me and our eyes lock for a moment. James leaves her in the corner and starts to pick out their groceries. I walk, all too casually, over to her.

"Hello, Ann, long time no see and all that shit."

"Yeah, Hi. What's happening. I . . . I see you've cut your hair. You look good Rosey, really good. I'm glad to see you. I couldn't bring myself to call you after our last talk. Shit, I've missed you so fucking much. I can hardly stand to be with James all the time. Why didn't you call or come over?"

"You know why I haven't been over. If you can't stand James, do you think I can? Why are you still with him? I don't understand."

"Rosey, I can't leave him. Don't push me. I can't explain it. It's much harder for me to leave James than it was for you to leave Paul. You just don't know how it is. Rosey, I want to see you. I want it to be how it was. I need someone to talk to. Forget my relationship with James. Don't I mean anything to you? I'm on skag again, Rose, Skag. Doesn't that mean anything to you?"



"Annie, I really need you too. I trusted in you more than any other person. But I can't be with you and James. It would only bring me down. Anne, you're not going anywhere with him and you wouldn't be going anywhere with me as long as he's in the picture. Why can't you understand that? Why can't . . ."

James walks up to us. The pleading look in Annie's eyes changes to one of stone. "Hon, are you ready to go? Oh, hi, Rosey. What are you doing over here? Haven't seen you in months."

"Checking out the vegetables, James, just checking out the vegetables."

"Oh . . . yeah, I see. Well, Annie ready to go?"

"Sure James, I guess I'm ready. Rose, I think it's probably better this way, for us not to see each other. I guess we're just into different trips, or something like that. Let's go James."

I watch the two of them leave. James is unconsciously pushing Annie out the door. When a tear trickles down my nose, I realize that I'm crying. Crying for Annie who won't come with me. Who should be moving with me but won't and hates herself. Annie, who's 23 years old and bored and sick enough with life to be on skag.

I drive home to my apartment with the radio on.

"I am on a lonely road
and I am traveling
traveling, traveling, traveling
Looking for something,
what can it be
Oh I hate you some,
I hate you some
I love you some
Oh I love you
when I forget about me.

I want to be strong . . ."
Annie, I can't forget about me. I have to be strong.

by Helaine Harris

AN ANARCHIST PLEBE

FIGHTS BACK

by Katz, Boston

I started to write a personal response to Rita Mae Brown about her "Leadership vs. Stardom" article, but I realized that an open article was more necessary because in printing her article, the Furies opened the broader discussion of structure for the lesbian movement. The distinction between leaders and stars in the beginning of the article felt comfortable and valid. But as it got into discussing the need for a feminist party, I was frightened and disturbed by a presentation which left those of us who disagree to be labeled as anti-leadership, cowardly, non-struggle, middle class (or their dupes) and over-emotional. I take such a suggestion as an arrogant insult.

Her article can only be answered really by another white working class man-hating dyke, and since I am one who is also an anarchist, I want to have the space in Furies to further the struggle between what I call the "communists" and the "anarchists." Since those terms generally suck up pictures of male-dominated revolutionaries, let me make clear that I use them only as a general way to distinguish between those (the communists) who believe in the necessity of some kind of organized structured hierarchical (to any extent) national organization or party for a successful revolution; and between those (anarchists) who believe in voluntary loose mutual aid cooperative anti-hierarchical self-disciplined networks of groups of any size comfy to its members.

I'm not sure what you mean when you talk about a party. I KNOW that you don't mean like the Democrats and the Republicans, so I can only assume that you are talking about communist parties based on Lenin's model of democratic centralism. Since you refer to the fact that all of "the great revolutions of this century have been built by political parties and not by stars and anarchists," I figure you are referring to Russia, China, North Vietnam, North Korea, Cuba... since China and Russia are the only revolutions I have really studied with any depth, I'll take what I use historically from their parties.

Your idea of a party seemed to be based on the feeling that we need a national centralized structure to hold everything together and really get things done. Lenin said that too, but his amazingly intense classism seemed more the reason for his pushing the idea of a party. In the essay he wrote about the need for the party, "What Must Be Done", he constantly makes sickening attacks on the peasantry and working people, saying that the masses must be led in the fight to meet their own needs, they must be taught by the party, that the party was better equipped to see what must be done than the hoards. Basically, he felt

that a lot of dumb illiterate workies needed to be led by a well-educated prick: himself.

In practice parties have worked all different ways. China has, perhaps, the most humane structure and clear reasons for the existence of the party (at least prior to the last decade). Before the revolution in China, the economy was basically feudal, meaning that most of the people were rural and most worked on little bits of land they didn't even own. Ninety percent of the Chinese population was illiterate; the country was not electrified so there was no t.v., radio, or phones; people were too poor to own their own transportation, not even horses, and there was no national system of transportation; people couldn't read newspapers or leaflets; so they really needed an external structure in order to communicate over any distance. That meant a cone-shaped thing where people in their local groups elected representatives (say city-wide), who elected representatives (say county-wide) who elected representatives, etc., on up to the central committee of the communist party and from there to the head man (always man). Decision making power got further and further away from the average peasant or worker. In China, they do attempt to keep as many decisions as possible on the local level, but in Russia, almost everything is decided at the top. I guess how far away power is from you in a communist party depends on the good will of the head prick. (Mao is just a nicer fellow than Lenin or Stalin ever were.)

But how does one get into such a party, or into its leadership? First, in every "revolutionary" country there has been one charismatic leader; he has always been a prick; he has often been middle-class and foreign educated. I can't say exactly how I feel about such a figure existing (particularly in countries with such different cultures from ours), but I do know that there ain't one woman among them. Not Fidel, or Ho, or Mao, or Kim Il Sung, or Lenin.

Gaining membership to those parties has always been dependent on verbosity, articulacy, good connections, on being some kind of intellectual, some kind of military strategist. In those countries at those times, there were few women, certainly no working class or gay women, who could produce those goods. Even where women revolutionaries did have plenty of skills, they were facing structures begun and controlled by men, they were immersed in the work of family and home in very sexist old societies, they were forced to live up to male imposed values in terms of "leadership qualities." Parties, all of them, have always been anti-women. I would argue, that the

very idea of a party is inherently sexist and classist. Certainly the practice of parties backs me up.

As for all the great revolutions being made by parties, that's bullshit. All the "revolutionary" countries are controlled by parties now, but those parties didn't make the revolution. In Russia, for example, there were a zillion different parties and organizations of every ilk; and many of the really revolutionary peasants were anarchists. It was these anarchist groups, perhaps more than anyone, who were really grass roots, who were really the people who were kicking ass, who were the military and political basis for winning the revolution.

I have heard this story, and I do firmly believe it, that Lenin was sitting around one night meeting with the rest of the central committee of the Bolshevik Party trying to decide when to call for the big general strike, the moment to actually sieze the Winter Palace and thus finally complete the revolution. Most members of the central committee were suggesting that they should "lead the masses" in this action in about six months. Lenin, to his ridiculously dubious credit, said "what about three weeks?" Suddenly in the middle of this argument in runs this kid who says, "Come quick. The Winter Palace has been siezed. The Revolution is made." So all these middle class scholar cocks got off their fat butts and ran on down to the Winter Palace to make like they were the vanguard of this great event.

So if they were so consistently running behind the people instead of with the people, how did they get control of the country and not the anarchists? It was because their party most resembled the bureaucracy of Kerensky, the leader who they were deposing. They were able to easily slide right into the old system, put a new name on it, redistribute power a wee bit (from the hands of white pricks to the hands of red pricks) and take advantage of the general mayhem.

The anarchists wanted to totally transform society and people's relationships; they expected rough times for a while in the process, but their vision was strong enough to sustain them. The communists wanted to be a vanguard, the "voice of the masses", as if the masses couldn't speak on their own. The communists were fully prepared with a bunch of businessmen and bureaucrats to take over the running of the banks and the railroads and the police and the schools. In one sense, the communists were better prepared to run the country; but it was because they were so much more like the men who were already running it. They just slid right behind the old desks, made some economic changes, and look where Russia is today.

But Amerika is a different

story. In China it sometimes took weeks for one section of the country to find about a revolt in another. They needed a regular machinery, maybe a party, to do that. Here, everyone has electricity, or access to it. Most people can read a newspaper. Ninety percent of the homes have t.v.'s. Most of us have phones. No problem knowing that there is a general strike in Kansas if we are in Boston; no problem knowing that the women's army has liberated California if we are in Philly. Why the fuck a huge rigidified structure hanging over us? It certainly isn't necessary for communication, which is one reason you suggest.

But what about efficiency, cooperativeness, working together on a big geographical level? If our movement is truly real and radical, we'll do what has to be done because we want to. Struggle has to go on inside the movement for years and years. So we are dealing with classism and racism, with heterosexism in the feminist movement

second grade. Because we are a small groups in numbers does not mean that we are small in brains or commitment. Small groups of women who talk nothing but "feelings and emotions" are not anarchists...they are women's liberation. Let's not confuse things. You seem to have thrown your every resentment at us poor anarchists, no matter that we have been making the same complaints for years.

We are in our gang, not because we are being complacent and only interested in picking each other's noses. We are in our gang because we are comfortable there, because we are among the few people we love that we trust enough to really have the struggle we must have to win. We are in a small gang because it is workable; because we can really do things and not have to fight through a bureaucracy to accomplish anything. But that does not mean we are not in the movement, not in the revolution, not real.

I foresee a world of man-hating-dyke-gangs; a world where everyone

together in our own households. Why, in Boston here in the radicalesbian group there are women who say they find class struggle "boring and disruptive to the meetings." There are straight "feminists" who are more interested in sucking cock than in defending the rights of lesbians. Why a national organization, let alone a party, is beyond the realm of imagination.

Are you ready to form a party in a movement where lesbians of color are not yet fully participant? Are you willing to form a party in a movement where most of its middle class members are classist? As a leader, are you ready to risk the codification of power? Let's see you kids get all of D.C. together so fine that you can justify such a call. And then I'll show you how well you did without any .amn party.

I resent your equating anarchism with emotionalism and cowardice and non-activity. I resent your being so ignorant of the history of anarchism, but going ahead and ridiculing it anyway. Don't believe Nixon



Photo by Fran Welton, Berkeley

now. And we will continue to do so until there isn't anything like that to deal with anymore. And that can only begin with sincere and lasting results in those small groups based on friendship and common politics that you are so flippily disdainful of. It is only since I have found my own wonderful gang that classism and racism have become actual questions and conflicts and struggles in our lives. In the big organizations everything was amorphous; it was too big a space for anything but rhetoric. A movement can only be as strong as the people who comprise it; it cannot be the "strength and truth of the people", as Lenin said (and then proved himself wrong.)

We resent your implication that a small group is a T-group. We are not sobbing weeping emoting ladies, stopping for a druggy mindfuck now and again, then returning to rehash our experiences in the

will be in the living and trizzing group of their choice. I see a world that is a net of cooperative gangs, a network which has few problems of communication because of technological media and transportation. If our gang is planning to do something too big for our own britches, we call up some other gangs around town and see if they're up for it. If it's a good thing they will be. A very "cohesive political movement" can very well emerge, and has emerged at other times in history, through voluntary association. People who agree will work together. People who disagree but believe they are somehow together in the same battle will struggle it out together. I don't need a party to convince me that the ten of us are insufficient to bring down phallic imperialism.

And a party now!? Impossible. Arrogant. Dangerous. We can't have any such thing to represent the national interests of all women when we can barely now begin to get things

when he says that the anarchists are into chaos to avoid doing a decent day's work. We have been the most radical of all movements. The first really revolutionary revolt in China, long long before Mao's communist party, was the Taiping rebellion. At a time in history when women were literally property, bought and sold, living with the livestock when there was any, maimed in childhood, tied to the home so they wouldn't run away, the Taiping anarchists were calling for the total equality of women and children. In a much later period of history, how long did it take the communist party to equal that even in rhetoric? And how long will it take them to reach it in practice? It's not that I hold you or any other feminists calling for a party responsible for the actions of male dominated of before, I just want to point out your misunderstanding or misrepresentation of anarchism.

Your attacks on anarchists were



Photo by JEB

not only off the wall; they were insufferable. I am working class, as you know, and I'm no fucking dupe of middle-class women and fuck you for saying so! Even more, I am no fucking dupe of middle-class men, as you so sickeningly imply. The world has been closing in on me very fast these last few years, but hearing that from you is too much. If you meant that, screw off and watch out. If you didn't, which is what must be the case, what the fuck did you mean? Dupes of the middle-class?! Anarchist movements have always been built by the most oppressed people; the peasants and industrial workers and housewives of China and Russia, for example. Anarchists have traditionally been the first to call for women's and children's rights, for sexual freedom, for land to the tiller. And it is the only movement where their admittedly few female leaders were totally respected.

I don't want to be a defender of any pricks, including anarchist pricks. My anarchism comes directly out of my feminism. I challenge you to prove the same of your call for a party. Anarchism means decentralization to me. It means that feminists everywhere can and will take care of business. It means that a feminist (which is a lesbian) movement will be in some very real sense a movement of lovers. It means that our feminism will come out of reality and that that reality will be different for different ones of us (based on class, race, age, etc.) Anarchism means that groups will band together based on the reality of their experiences, the truth of their politics, the wisdom of their strategies, their trust for each other and respect for the different needs. Anarchism means that our movement must build each of us to take care of ourselves; it can never mean that we sit around sobbing and weeping, dripping emotions and inactivity. Anarchism means that we won't need a structure to insure that leaders lead.

I don't reject leadership. I think it exists, on many levels in many ways. What I reject is the notion of power and the existence of power. A party makes power; it wins through power and its leaders have power. Leaders shouldn't have power...they should have vision and truth, they should have respect

and friendship. People should have only those leaders they choose and only for period of time when leaders are useful. Leaders crop up in some situations, they recede for others. China, which probably has the most decentralized and therefore the best-of-the-worst party in the world, operates on that principal. If it can be decentralized, decentralize it. That means that the people who any certain program affects are the ones who know best how to do it. So that everything, in their minds, that can possibly be done on the local level is done so.

Of course, in China, again, a country which is only in the last decade becoming industrialized and electrified, there is a need for a national economic planning. I am not opposed to national planning. If that's the only way you can get something done, let's cooperate nationally and get it done. But let bureaucracies only exist for the moment of their need.

Anarchism doesn't mean no discipline and no organization. It simply means that discipline is voluntary, and therefore dependable. And that organization is based upon mutual agreement and mutual assistance. Our little group will help your little group with your farming if your group will lend us your mimeo machine. Our community needs a new reservoir and you folks need a new bridge; let's work together on both. And the so-and-so community will send us the steel for the bridge if we both let them have some of our blueprints and engineers later. Co-operative organization can be as small as needed and as big as needed; as big as the world when necessary, as small as the bedroom when sufficient.

You said "a party demands that you band together on a political level." Well, me and my gang are good and bound on a political level, and reality demanded it, not some party. I don't need any structures and bureaucracy I can avoid. I don't need them, I don't want them; at best they will only get in my way. At worst (as in all those wonderful "revolutions" when the communists took over--after the work had been done and the victory won) they will kill me. Anarchists have always been massacred after

communists siezed power because anarchists believe in total revolution and push against the powers that be to get it.

Now a lot of people who want a party say to that "well your goals are just wonderful, but we need a party to get there. Once the party wins the revolution and transforms society, we'll get rid of the party and live just like you say. You're just too idealistic."

To those who say that sincerely, I can only accuse them of reformism. I'm not willing to wait for my rights, for my life. I won't bust my ass for a revolution only go through some "transitional period". But most of the people who answer anarchists that way (which is an unpolitical way), they're really just after power. They want to start the party, lead the party, lead the masses (and if I ain't a mass, what am I) and become King.

Lenin promised that the vanguard party will "wither away", because the true communist dream is supposed to be decentralized (anarchistic) government. But no communist party has withered in the least; no party will. Because those pricks who are in the party, who run the party and therefore the country, gain a lot of privileges from it. I've yet to see pricks give up any privileges whatever without blood. Will women be different? Why build in the necessity to find out.

We can only share a common political ideology (as you said a party must do) when we share it. Not when we join a party that has it. Not when our central committee dictates it. We have to share it really, through struggling towards it together. A party won't be magic, won't assure unity. Only unity can assure unity.

Fuck that shit. Who needs a party? What I need is more and more and more man-hating dykes getting together and figuring things out, trying a variety of working structures, trying different forms of cooperation, finding the new and important ideas in the heads of the feminists who have done everything they can, and justifiably so, to avoid joining a movement that puts them down for being gay or being working class or being brown.

The Russian communist party would have killed me for being an anarchist. The Cuban communist party would have jailed me for being a dyke. The Chinese party would have probably excluded me for being a woman. I'll stick with my gang and with numbers I can handle. Those numbers are the numbers of necessity, however big or small they are will be determined by what's necessary, not by some already existing structure.

Let's have a movement for freedom, to destroy bureaucracy, and its possession: Power. We'll beat imperialism and manhood by smashing power and the notion and dream and possibility of it. Women will not sell out (such as becoming "stars" for the privileges male culture offers) if the best life is a feminist life. Women will not cop-out of the revolution if the revolution is the only thing worth doing. Smash power and we'll smash oppression. Parties are a structure for making decisions (economic, political, social, whatever.) Power is the ability to impose decisions. Let's have a revolution of struggle and agreement.

All join hands and circle left.

Beyond Male Power...

Ginny Berson for THE FURIES

In the second issue of THE FURIES we introduced the idea of a national party in the article "Leadership vs. Stardom". We did it in a fairly off-hand way without acknowledging the difficult questions which are unanswered, both in the article and in our own minds. We know that any mention of a party requires long and serious discussions and that there can be no "final" solution at this or possibly any other time. What we can do is put out our vision of what might be possible in the near future, and raise the questions which will have to be answered before we proceed to different stages of development.

When we say "party" we mean a national organization which can plan, organize, coordinate, and communicate. We mean an organization which does institutionalize power and hierarchy among people or offices, but which allows leaders, and not stars, to lead.

We envision groups of women across the country (and their size is not at issue) getting together in various stages of political development. They want to further their development and they want to figure out how to put an end to the sexist, classist, racist system which oppresses them and keeps them from controlling their lives. These women will define their direction and their goals and their strategies to meet those goals. And their commitment to each other will come from arriving at those decisions together and from having a common political base and direction. They will deal, with each other, and among other groups in their area, with questions of class and race. They will begin to discuss the political thought they have been developing about ideology and program with other similar groups all across the country.

They will know that whatever strategies they develop for local use will not, by themselves, end sexism because the institutions of sexism, the governmental, economic, and social structures which uphold male supremacy and capitalism and racism are not local, but national and even world-wide. It is not a question of "our community needs a new reservoir and you folks need a new bridge; lets work together on both". That is fine in a post-revolutionary state in which women have control over their lives. The fact is that at this time we don't have control and we do not have the freedom to build a new reservoir. We don't have the freedom because we don't have the power.

White, ruling class male power is a fact of life which surrounds us and to a very large degree controls us. It is to this fact that we must speak when we talk about "party"--how do we insure that we are able to take control of our lives, to build the reservoirs when we need them, to

feed ourselves, to be lesbians. When we talk about taking control of our lives we are talking about taking power, away from the men who have it, and for (not on behalf of) the people who don't have it.

Individual lesbians can and do carve out little niches for themselves in which they are as "free" as possible and in as little contact with their oppressor as possible. But, by themselves, they do nothing to change the balance of power. They do nothing to change the basic system which oppresses them and forces them into that solution. Small groups, acting on their own, with no national coordination or agreed upon action do a little more. They expand the base of the niche and can improve the lot of large numbers of women. But their effectiveness is limited by their size and the degree to which they can coordinate their actions and their understandings with other groups. They still do not threaten the balance of power; they still do not bring about a major redistribution of power. They may be able to destroy power within their own group (and even this is doubtful), but having destroyed it does not give them a basis on which to fight their enemy. Because he still has power.

We do not believe that we can

totally destroy power; but we can and must redistribute it so that every woman has as much control over her life as is possible. To this end, we must at some point organize ourselves into a national party which can build a power base and which can therefore threaten the power of the oppressor.

The question then is, how can we create an organization capable of building that power base which does not institutionalize power among its offices or leaders. What is the basis for membership? How do you build an organization in a classist, racist society that doesn't reflect those same oppressions? How do you insure that women constantly change and struggle? Do you have to depend on local groups struggling for years before you build a national organization? Groups have power over their own members only because the members depend on the success of the group to reach their goals. This power is given voluntarily. But what power does an organization have over non-members? Is the promise of future success enough to make women want to change their lives? Is it enough to make men want to change their lives?

How are decisions made by the organization? What structures are employed which can both build the kind of women we need to make a



Photo by JEB

revolution and make the revolution? Will we have to compromise one of these goals? How much is an "ideal" organization possible in a pre-revolutionary society? Where does leadership come from? How is it recognized? Does everybody get together every time a decision needs to be made? Do we have representational democracy with majority rule?

We don't want an organization filled with people who refuse to deal with their class or race privilege. We don't want an organization controlled by white, middle class women who are into power for its own sake. Nor do we want an organization filled with passive followers who will spout the correct line as if it were a catechism and worship "leaders" only because they are "leaders". We want an organization filled with women who have the same basic understandings about sexism, class, race and who are committed with their lives to acting on that understanding. The first issues of THE FURIES have explained what our beginning analysis is. We are not the only people putting that analysis together, and we hope, through the newspaper and in other ways to increase the numbers of those who are working on it. Of course, not everybody wants to develop ideology, and there are many other tasks to be done. But everybody can and must decide by herself or in groups whether she agrees with that ideology and then decide whether she wants to be part of an organization that is trying to act on it.

We are talking about an organization which has a firm ideological basis, and which arises out of people's needs to act on their political understandings. We do not think that now is the time for that organization to begin for a number of reasons. First, there has not been enough ideology produced for us to have a strategy upon which to base a national organization. Second, the movement is at this time largely white and middle class. Third, there are too many unanswered questions about what form the organization should take in its initial stages.

Why will we need any organization? First, because the system we are attacking is national, and cannot be brought down by individual, uncoordinated little thrusts. Second, because the world we want to build involves women taking control of their lives, and they cannot do this if we do not organize into a unit that can give us power. Third, because outside of our own groups we have little power. Even our ability to communicate with each other depends on male good will or ignorance: we use their media, or their post office, or their telephones. Establishment newspapers long ago stopped publishing stories about bank burnings in California; they will probably not tell us about events that are even more threatening to them, like a general women's strike.

We will need an organization because everyone will need to know, in advance, what we can expect from each other and from groups, who we can count on; in other words, who shares our ideology. And we will know that by knowing who is in our organization, because the

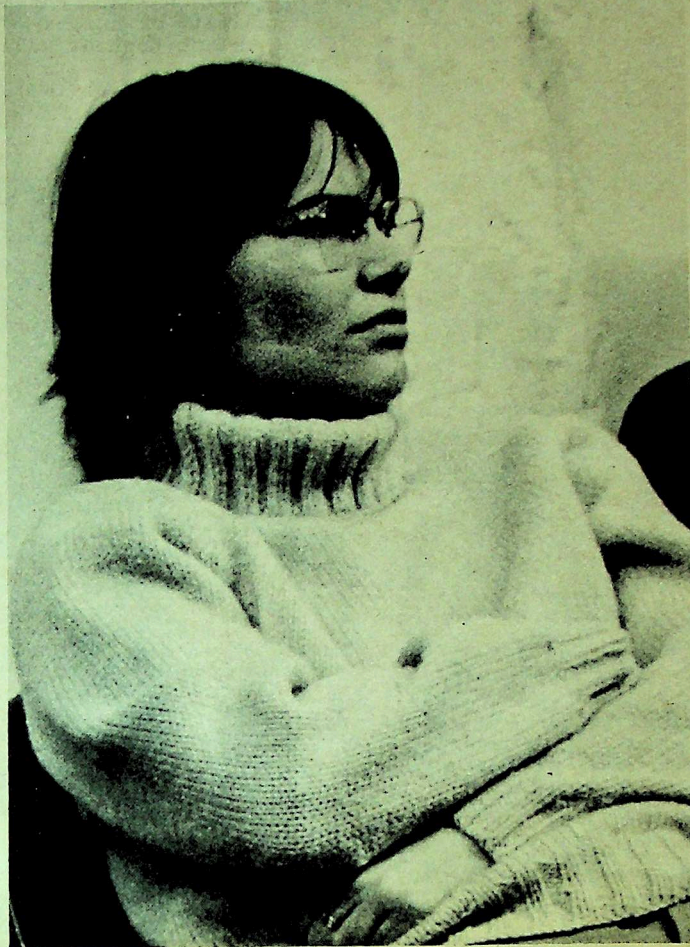


Photo by JEB

people in the organization will be deciding on their goals and strategies together, as part of the function of the organization.

We do not need a party to insure that leaders lead. We need common politics to do that. Those politics don't happen because there is a party; a party is created because there are those politics: because we cannot achieve our goals without one. And those politics happen because there is a need for them, because people are oppressed and see in those politics the key to their liberation.

We did not mean to imply that a small group is a T group. We are a small group and we are urging other people to form and be in small groups in order to develop their political direction. We apologize for the misuses of the word "anarchy" and for its equation with emotionalism, cowardice, and individualism. We do not think that anarchists are necessarily dupes of the middle class, and the use of "anarchy" to describe individualism, classism, lack of discipline, and anti-leadership attitudes was wrong. "Anarchy" is a noun, not an adjective. It is a political philosophy with which we have some agreements and some disagreements, and those disagreements need to be discussed in political terms, and not brushed away with emotional rhetoric. For this mistake, we apologize.

It should also be clear that we are not defending the Marxist/Leninist parties which are in power. Some of them are classist and all of them are sexist. There is a huge difference between that

type of party and the type we are discussing. We are not in favor of a bureaucratic, hierarchical organization which controls people. We are in favor of creating whatever structures are necessary to achieve our goal. We know how difficult that will be. But our goal is to create a world in which people have control over their lives. A strategy which is based primarily on substituting one form of control for another is not suited to that end. We want to build a movement of strong women who are willing and able to change their lives and help create the space for other people to do the same.

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The Power and the Glory

S. Hathaway

In the nearly 200 years of America's inglorious history, there have been about 40 Presidents - all of them clean, white, reverent, fellow Americans. There were the self-sacrificing types, and the do-gooders, the pragmatic politicians, and the committed ideologues, and, of course, the nobodys. Some were Republican, some Democrats, and some Tories. All were powerful, and all were men. And, when the shit is stripped away, all made their important political decisions on the basis of two intimately connected criteria: 1) the power of the nation and/or 2) the power of their own personal position. The game of power is the same whatever the name of the President.

Nixon may seem worse than most. He is simply more transparent. In the course of his great quest for power - first, for the Presidency, and now for re-election - he has discarded, piece by piece, all his right-wing ideological trappings. He now sits naked on our tv screens...with no ideology except power, and more power. One week he takes a liberal position on China, the next week a right wing stand on busing. As contradictory as the different positions may seem to those who still believe in principles, they are not so for him. His actions are consistent with the lust for power. Each gets him inches closer to four more years as king; and each is geared to preserve status quo American society, while increasing American power in the world.

Opening up relations with China - one of Nixon's most recent spectaculars - was a masterfully staged power play. After two decades of blissful Commie-hating ignorance, Americans are brought to their senses by the old Red-baiter himself. Just a few meetings with Henry and other enlightened advisors transforms the boring reactionary Nixon into the man-for-change, the man-of-action, the man-in-tune-with-the-times. Then the liberal in Nixon's clothing picks up his chopsticks and runs to the other side of the globe, where the nation of voters, via every television camera that was moveable, ate and slept with him and the formerly-red Chinese.

Never let it be said though that Nixon is only out for his own glory. He knows that being king is much less fun if one does not have a powerful kingdom; and establishing friendly relations with China does alot for America's power and prestige. It protects America's power position in Asia: 1) against the domination of Asia by a very strong Japan (who has long wanted to make a separate alliance with China, but has been prevented from doing so by the U.S.); 2) against increased Chinese support of the Vietnamese struggle - defusing the often raised threat of Chinese intervention in Vietnam; and 3) against united USSR-China (big-power communist) control of Asia, in the event that they would patch up their relations.

The U.S., because of the voracious needs of its imperialist economy, cannot afford to be excluded from, to be unable to influence the course of events in any significant area of the globe. America's economic development requires privileged access to resources in all parts of the world.

A good relationship with China, who is pivotal in Asia, enhances America's ability to bargain for favored treatment throughout Asia, and generally strengthens its position as a major power in the world of nations.

More immediately, Nixon succeeded in providing the American economy with a vast new market for its goods. The ailing American economic situation will be at least temporarily aided by being able to sell some of its ever-expanding surplus to the Chinese. Perhaps soon there will be Coca-cola in Peking. Ah, the American way...

Having said all this about the Nixon-America motives, one might ask the question: "Why did China do it?" What has happened to the hero nation of revolutionaries? For more than 2 decades the Chinese have been shut off from much of the world, basking in their ideological purity. In that short space of time they have built a stable economy, a solid political power base, and nuclear weaponry. Now, from a position of strength, China has entered the big-power ring. When one steps into the ring, one must fight according to the rules - like them or not.

The rules are simple: power and economic competition. One must be powerful in order to be listened to by the powerful. And one must make ever-faster economic progress in order to be powerful. China cannot remain at its present economic level and expect to be able to stand off America, Russia, Japan, etc. Further economic progress demands more and more sophisticated technology. And America is still the master of technology. Thus, China must turn to America.

The men who run China understand the rules. To make this move, they have abandoned their sacred ideology (as had the USSR before them). And so has Nixon-America. The three major powers, who since the second World War have refused economic relationships with each other because of their ideological differences, have made a major shift in their priorities. Economics, and the power that goes with it, has supplanted ideology. One-time ideological enemies are becoming friends behind the banner of power. And so goes the world of men...



As we turn a little to the south of China, in the same Asia, we find what is left of the country of Vietnam. Another of Nixon's toys for power. Vietnam, however, is not much fun to play with, mostly because the Vietnamese people will not give up like they're supposed to. But Richard keeps thinking that they are just being foolish, and that they can still be bombed to their senses.

First he wins the Presidency saying he has a secret plan

for ending the war - so secret that when he got into office he couldn't remember it. So he stops talking about ending it, and mutters instead about 'winding it down'. That's also known as buying time. He comes up with Vietnamization. That's also known as letting the Vietnamese kill each other with American weapons, and getting those real American boys safely out of there. American combat troops are withdrawn monthly - that's the 'winding down' part. Nixon figures that he can go on for a long time trying to bomb his way to victory, as long as American boys aren't getting killed anymore. Meanwhile, he is fulfilling his tricky promise to 'wind down the war', and thus is true to his Presidential word come re-election time.

Of course, if he were simply concerned with his re-election everything would be easy. He could end the war next week and practically guarantee himself four more years in office. But the power hungry want power all around them. Nixon's power is only as great as the power of America. And victory is power. Only as the victor in Vietnam can America continue to be the most powerful. A truce is as good as a loss. Nixon becomes crazed and dazed at the mere thought of omnipotent America being a loser. So, like Johnson, he keeps trying to bomb the Vietnamese to death and, thereby, defeat.

The U.S. began war with Vietnam largely to protect its economic power interests in Asia. The Vietnamese want socialism. The U.S. doesn't want the Vietnamese to have socialism, because socialist countries are harder to exploit. If the Vietnamese got socialism then other Third-world countries might do the same. And U.S. economic imperialism certainly couldn't afford that.

In domestic terms, the war's importance can be traced to the huge government defense budget, without which the ever-growing American capitalist economy wouldn't be growing. The balance of America's domestic economic health lies in its expenditures on war research, war equipment, and war-making. And surplus goods, which are the unavoidable product of capitalism gone wild, are neatly blown up in war.

By now, almost the whole world thinks the U.S. should get out of Vietnam. By now it is even patriotic to think so. But Nixon doesn't think so. He still thinks the U.S. should win - for the power and the glory of Nixon-America. He hasn't come up with a way to do it yet. So he's trying to sneak through re election first. That will give him four more years to figure out The Victory Plan. But the Vietnamese are hip to that trick. They have just launched a major offensive - to put the war back into the headlines, and thus back into the Presidential campaign. And after 3 1/2 years of Vietnamization, the fully Vietnamized South Vietnam troops are running for the nearest cover. American bombers, controlled by computers in Thailand, are waging the war. There are fewer American combat troops there now than there have been for many years. But never before in the endless war have there been as many American bombers and battleships as there are at this minute. And that's not called winding back up the war, that's called retaliation, protective reaction, Nixon's formula for a generation of peace, ad inf. b.s.

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Ginny Berson, Charlotte Bunch,
Helaine Harris, Susan Hathaway,
Nancy Myron, Coletta Reid, Lee
Schwing, Jennifer Woodul.

also

Susan Baker, Joan Biren,
Marlene Voorhees.

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CORRECTIONS

In the last issue (March-April, 1972), we omitted credit for several graphics. The cover photo was by JEB. The photo on p. 7 was by Susan Baker. The drawings on pp. 8-9 were by E. Mae Huskey.

In the second issue (Feb.), we omitted the next to last line from the poem, "After Monterey Pop" by June Slavin of Boston. The full poem should read:

After Monterey Pop

Here
Forthwith
Is a straight description of what happened.
He sang Wild Thing.
He walked over to the wall.
He put the guitar up against the wall.
He fucked the guitar-violently.
He laid it on the floor.
He mounted it.
He tried to make it come.
He fucked it violently.
He shoved his crotch, his cock into it.
He sprayed-he took something in a bottle
And sprayed it onto the guitar.
Fucking finished he ignited the guitar.
A wild blaze occurred.
Taking the unignited handle in his hand
He wielded it over his shoulders
Smashing it onto the floor.
Smashing-it smashed, it broke.

Women filmed in the audience blanched.
They understood. Horror was in their faces.
Men in the cinema audience laughed.
They dug, they grooved on our immolation
Desecration, mutilation and death.

Fuck you Jimi Hendrix-I'm glad you're dead.

WURDC

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the furies

lesbian/feminist monthly

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Photo by Sharon Deevey

"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of
Man."
Genesis I: 23

from cavities of bones
spun
from caverns of air
i, woman-bred of man
taken from the womb of sleep;
i, woman that comes
before the first.

to think second
to believe first
a mistaken conundrum
erased by the motion of years.
i, woman, i
can no longer claim
a mother of flesh
a father of marrow
I, Woman must be
the child of myself.

Pat Parker
from Child of Myself
(see inside p. 4)

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Darers Go First

"Sure, I would like to come out and to start moving politically, but how do I know that lesbianism is not a fad?" "How can I be sure that these women that are here now will be around to support me in five or ten years?" "There is so much that you have to put on the line or give up--family relations, old friendships, maybe financial security. I just have to think about it a lot more." "I'll wait a while to see how things go."

These are familiar statements from women who know they are faced with making changes in their lives. Those specific decisions are going to be different for all of us. If you are straight, it may mean coming out. If you are lesbian, it may mean taking a more aggressive and purposeful approach toward lesbian politics--wondering "Should I or shouldn't I, and if so, how much?" We are faced with choices all our lives and as lesbians trying to build a political movement we need to think about the risks they involve, the commitment that comes out of them, and what things keep us from taking those risks.

Let's we start throwing "risk and commitment" around like everyone agrees about what that means, let me define what I mean. If something looks risky, you must be afraid of something. Something is about to be put on the line. You ask yourself whether it's worth it. It may place something else in danger--your control (the certain learned methods by which you handle things and know to some extent what to expect), your friendships, your self-image, your money, etc. You risk losing something that is important to you, for the sake of something which may or may not be better. Since you are putting some of your security in jeopardy, whatever happens in the end, you are making an investment. Naturally, you hope that it pays off, and you dedicate yourself to seeing that it does. That's commitment. The only sure thing is that the first decision is going to teach you something and that subsequent decisions will be affected by it. You know that before you take the risk. And from that knowledge proceedeth fear.

One of my friends expresses her feelings on the subject of risk vis-a-vis her experience with art. You get an idea in your head about something that you would like to express

artistically. On the heels of the inspiration comes the fear that what's in your head is not going to turn out right on paper or whatever. Maybe you will not be able to meet your own standards and will not be satisfied with the result. Or maybe other people will reject or ridicule your results. To go to work in spite of that fear is to take a risk and find out what you can do. Not to take the risk is to backslide. You preserve your image of what you would like to have done and protect yourself from the possible trauma of not succeeding--which allows that fear to keep on working. Since you didn't push through fear the first time, it becomes harder the next time; you are dissatisfied, and the whole thing begins to block out inspiration.

We go through a similar process in making political decisions about our lives. Two times when I had to take that kind of political risk are especially clear to me. The first was when I came out. I was at a fancy eastern women's college. When Women's Liberation hit the campus, I began to do a lot of elementary women's liberation reading and a lot of hard thinking. In not too many days, I had reached the conclusion--partly academic and partly emotional--that I probably should be a lesbian. The decision was a fairly easy one for me to make. It was mostly personal--only indirectly political. It was made much easier by the fact that soon after I made the choice, I began a love affair with a woman who turned out to have been gay for several years.

Putting lesbianism into a political framework and coming out publicly was a much harder decision. After a while several women in our consciousness raising group at school had become lesbians. Largely because of being pushed by political lesbians from New York, we realized that becoming gay was not the end of the story.

Women's Liberation, at the time, was a crazy enough thing to be doing on that campus. The idea of coming out, of saying you were gay and thought other women should be gay scared me shitless. I was afraid of what other people would think--the other women in Women's Liberation, the campus intellectuals, the debutantes, my family and old friends. I also just didn't know

what it would mean to my life. It seemed like there could be no going back and there was a long road lying before me that I knew nothing about.

We started pushing the issue of lesbianism, and we quickly found out what it meant to "lose your heterosexual privilege." At Women's Liberation meetings, no one would listen to us anymore. We were irrelevant because we were a bunch of lesbians and they were not. Some old friends became standoffish; many acquaintances became openly hostile. There was a dyke scare. People stopped coming to meetings and Women's Liberation fell apart. We also had a lot of problems among ourselves. Jealousy, monogamy, non-monogamy and "sisterhood" were all things that none of us were particularly experienced in handling. There was a lot of confusion and depression. I think we each found out a lot of things about ourselves and grew fast and hard politically. But it wasn't no rose garden.

After I left college, I lived alone for a while--occasionally spouting my politics at work, going to the bar and sometimes to meetings. It took me some time to realize that I was sliding back into my older patterns of resistance--middle-class, defensive, liberalsville. Since I had taken the "big step" early, I guess I felt let off the hook for a while. I didn't want to put myself into any more scary situations. I was beginning to feel secure and did not want to risk losing that security. I was also very much in love with a woman who did not push me politically.

I met the women I work with now. One of them, in particular, began to question me very hard about what I was doing (not doing). I realized that I wasn't growing politically. Before long I saw that I was going to have to pull the rug out from under my own feet again. It was going to mean breaking up what I thought was the romance of a lifetime, and going to work with a group of people that I hardly knew. Putting politics over emotions has never been easy for me. But I had learned by that time, that once you know you have to move, you're digging yourself a rut to sit in if you don't do it.

Some women resist commitment to political lesbianism because it may be a passing thing--some kind of



Dorothy drew Nancy into the cushioned window. — Page 65.

a political "fad". I'm not talking about people who are in disagreement with the rightness of the politics, but those who may find little fault with the ideology of lesbian/feminist politics. They have thought about it and decided that it may not last, so they will wait and see before they make any commitments. They fear that the people talking about political lesbianism may up and decide to do something else in a few years. (It is a fear well-founded in experience for those who have spent time in Left politics.) But what it boils down to is questioning other people's commitment. And that insecurity about what other people are going to do conveniently protects one from having to decide what she is going to do. Instead, it demands a guarantee from women who have already taken the risk. The burden of proof is left with the lesbians who are already involved. They are asked to get everything all set up and patently secure before they can get any help. If we hold back until we're sure we're going to fit into a niche already prepared for us, we bow to the passivity that comes out of woman oppression. And we will be waiting most of our lives! The work has got

to be done by the people who have an interest in it now. And that means all of us.

Many women who have worked in political movements before are distrustful about getting involved in yet another. They have had the charming experience of having to fit into a political context already defined by men, middle-class women or heterosexual women. Yet, that kind of experience or knowledge will help us to make things different--if people are willing to risk trying it. In those movements, many of us related passively to what was going on, ultimately feeling oppressed and disillusioned. This time it is our show. We each have to assume responsibility for where we are going, take the risk of making mistakes and commit ourselves to defining our own movement.

Some women are afraid to be lesbian/feminists because they are not part of a group of women from whom they can get support and assurance. Already existing groups of political women may be somewhat closed and cannot easily accept others into their process. Furthermore, it is often hard to move into a group which you haven't helped create. Naturally, you're afraid of trying

to go it alone, especially when you are leaving a lot of past supporters behind. But one thing is sure---if you reach the point where you think you should be a lesbian-feminist, you will not continue to get a lot of support from straight women. And until you come out and identify as a lesbian, you will not get the kind of gut support that you're looking for from lesbians either. After you make that choice, you risk going it on your own for a while. Since most political lesbians are not into doorbell organizing, they will probably not find you. It will undoubtedly take time and work on your part to find the people who share lesbian politics and the people with whom you can best work to express them.

Class background also affects the way that you handle risk. A lower-class woman is not used to expecting a big pay-off every time she takes a risk. She has often had to learn very early to evaluate the choices she has and plunge right in. Risks have always been part of her survival. She has never gotten a pat on the back for her bravery. She knows how to do it alone and doesn't expect a hand to hold when the going gets tough.

Middle-class survival usually centers on avoiding risks. Middle-class women are taught to expect security and emotional support, to hold off on a decision until it seems safe, to demand a guarantee that everything will work out right, to conceive of an ideal situation but not to act on it until all the possible snags are sewn up. Now that, folks, is a lot to ask. And although that behavior would assure you a safe middle-class life, it also keeps you from changing and protects the very systems we are trying to change.

What holds the greatest number of women back from lesbian consciousness is the loss of heterosexual privilege. To blow one's heterosexual cover is to put almost everything on the line. Once you come out or stop hiding and direct yourself politically, a good portion of your former security goes flying out the window along with your heterosexual identity. But to let that fear stop you is to deny what you know about the roots of woman oppression. Giving up heterosexual privilege may be at the core of the fear, but it's also at the core of lesbian politics.

Political consciousness is not something that stands still. You can grow and go forward politically. Or you can avoid risk and concentrate on achieving some kind of mellow balance that is not so threatening. But that is more than avoidance. It is a real choice which denies all of us the self-knowledge, political growth and strength which you might have gained. To take risks is not necessarily to conquer all fear. But it is certainly to challenge it and sometimes to push right through. It's like that artist who's afraid to paint a picture. She knows she has to take a risk, not only for the sake of the potential product, but for the sake of breaking through her fears. If she doesn't do it, she stifles her artistic growth and inspiration. She begins to backslide--and so do we all. What happens to the lesbian/feminist movement in this country depends on what individual women decide to do with their lives. The only guarantee you'll get in this business is the one you draw up yourself.

Jennifer Woodul

a new book of lesbian poetry

by

PAT PARKER



Poster by Wendy Cadden, Oakland

Pat's book is of child, family, young girl, changes, woman, words, and writing. A book of poetry, a book full of woman.

The graphics, done with a sense of oneness, are not just put in or used as fillers; they are equal to the poetry. The book is an example of women caring about women, women working together, women exchanging skills--originally printed by Alta and the Shameless Hussy Press. The book was fitted together piece by piece to make a strong, beautiful book of poems by Pat Parker. For Copies of Child of Myself, write to:

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Single copies are 80¢; bulk orders are 60¢ each, plus postage.

Anne, Oakland

"a going out or going forth, departure."

A Moment Left Behind

Have you ever tried to catch a tear?
Catch it on bent fingers.
Press it against your eyelids,
And wish the moment gone.

Or capture bitter words
Ripped from your throat like timber
And surround them -
islands of instants.

I do not claim all possible
Creating myths of modern America
I cannot swim an ocean.
I attempt the width of a pool.

With the sun -
fear leaves me
rushes to cover/
leaves lumps
like the backyard gopher
to remind me.

I am afraid
of anyone
of anything
that would harm me/
not the pain
not the act
but,
the desire.

Let me come to you naked
come without my masks
come dark
and lay beside you

Let me come to you old
come as a dying snail
come weak
and lay beside you

Let me come to you angry
come shaking with hate
come callused
and lay beside you

even more

Let me come to you strong
come sure and free
come powerful

and lay with you

Exodus (To my husbands, lovers)

Trust me no more-
Our bed is unsafe.
Hidden within folds of cloth
a cancerous rage-

i will serve you no more
in the name of wifely love
i'll not masturbate your pride
in the name of wifely loyalty

Trust me no more
Our bed is unsafe
Hidden within folds of cloth
a desperate slave

You dare to dismiss my anger
call it woman's logic
You dare to claim my body
call it wifely duty

Trust me no more
Your bed is unsafe
Rising from folds of cloth-

ONLY BY ASSOCIATION

The following are two articles on groups and some of our experiences with the Furies collective. There will be more articles in future issues by other women which will also include more on the problems of groups.

Two years ago six women got together to form a women's living/working collective. The living part worked to some degree, but the working part never quite got together. Occasionally we would all work on the same projects, and we shared the same vague goal of making a women's revolution (which we didn't define much more than that), but we were never quite sure what we were doing or why or how. The house didn't work for a lot of reasons: there were class problems and gay/straight problems. There was tremendous chaos as we tried to let ourselves "flow with our feelings" (i.e. work when we wanted to, cook when we wanted to, etc.). There were never-ending struggle sessions where we would confront each other's weaknesses and try to change ourselves, for the sake of being better revolutionaries. But what did it mean to be a good revolutionary, when we didn't quite know what our revolution was? Total openness, for example, was proclaimed a virtue. For some of us, that meant endless hours of struggle with men about their sexism, or trips home to explain our lives to our parents, or refusing to compromise our principles (i.e. taking a low-paying job as a shit-worker in order not to be an oppressor of other shit-workers).

Because we were the only women's house in the city, every traveling feminist made her way to our home and stayed for a day or twelve. Outside of a core group of us, people moved into and out of the house fairly regularly. We had little basis to judge whether we wanted to live with other people since we had little real basis for living with each other. Our commitment to each other was limited by the degree to which we had defined

what we were doing together, and as long as that definition was vague, anybody could drop in or out. Also, it was difficult to know when someone was fucking up. When you don't know what you're supposed to be doing, how can you tell when you're not doing it? Thus our accountability to each other, the degree to which we were responsible to each other for our political work, was very low. We tried to make it high, we wanted to be accountable to each other, but we didn't know how. We became nit-picky about personal relationships and who was fucking who over, but couldn't deal with who was doing their political work, or what that political work should be.

We learned from that experience that a group, whether it is a living and/or working collective, a project group, or a consciousness raising group, must have a clearly defined goal from the beginning or it is likely to flounder. It must also have people whose level of commitment to achieving that goal is pretty high.

When the Furies collective formed, we knew that we wanted to build lesbian-feminist politics. We were all lesbians who shared some beginning understandings about our oppression, our privilege, and the system of power that determines those things. We all wanted to be in a group to try to develop those understandings into a comprehensive ideology that would change our lives and the lives of others.

We had come from the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Liberation Movement, the male left, and the mixed gay movement. We had fought the war, racism, capitalism, and sexism. But we knew that all our previous political experience was not getting us close enough to our goal of a non-sexist, non-racist, non-imperialist, socialist society. We knew that in order to do that we had to begin by devoting our energy to lesbians. We were tired of trying to insert feminist consciousness into anti-war marches. We were tired of trying to insert lesbian consciousness into abortion rallies. We had to develop an analysis of power and oppression that came out

of our own oppression (as women, lesbians, workers) and out of our privilege (all of us were white, some of us middle class).

We could have worked separately on our political development as individuals. But we decided to become a group because we felt that we would grow faster and develop better politics. As individuals our growth and political analysis were limited by our own experience. If you're trying to develop an analysis of oppression and look at the world through middle-class white eyes, your analysis is going to be lacking. If you're trying to understand the world and yourself in political terms, to develop a worldview which speaks to your oppression and your privilege, then to do it in isolation usually leaves out many pieces. It can provide you with a solution which may be right for you, but which will not change the society that defines your oppression and privilege.

When the Furies collective formed, I knew very little about what constituted middle class behavior. I knew only that such a thing existed and that it was a drag. I had read several pamphlets and articles on the subject, but none of them made much difference to me. Within the collective there were a number of lower class women to whom it did make a lot of difference because my and other women's middle class behavior oppressed them. Our assumptions, for example, about how to run a meeting were different from theirs, but we assumed ours were correct because they were easiest for us--given our college educations, our ability to use words our ability to abstract, our inability to make quick decisions, the difficulty we had with direct confrontations. I learned out of necessity what classism was and I changed more quickly than if I had not been in a group with women who had class consciousness. Had I been alone, or in a group whose priorities were less clear, not only might I have had less information about class, but I would have had less reason to do anything about it. The reason I had to begin to deal with the way I was classist was not

because people were starving in Bangla Desh, but because my behavior was having a bad effect on people in my group; it was stopping the functioning of the group in very real ways. Class oppression was no longer an abstract concept with which I agreed in principle. It was part of my life which I could see and change. And, having seen the manifestations of class in myself, I better understood how class operated generally to divide people and keep them down. The "personal" and "political" can thus feed each other in a group situation.

We decided to try to be responsible to each other in order to deal with those things that got in the way of developing our politics. At the beginning, our level of trust with each other was excruciatingly low. Some of us knew each other only vaguely; some of us could barely tolerate each other personally; everybody had had some bad experience with somebody else at some point in the previous year. Still, we wanted to be able to count on each other for support; not a pat on the head and a shoulder to cry on, but the support that pushes you, that allows you to realize your full potential--the support that comes out of common politics, not fake sisterhood or emotional whims. We wanted to support each other not because we liked each other, but because we needed that support in order to be able to do the work that we wanted to do. Our trust was based not just on having shared experiences with or opened up emotionally to each other, but primarily on the fact that we knew that every one of us was committed to the same goal, and therefore to the functioning of the group, and therefore to the best functioning of each individual.

In order to get past personal problems, we tried to put them in

a political context--to see how they affected our political work. We didn't want personal relationships to be all-consuming. When lovers broke up there were some heavy times, but there was also the knowledge that the ex-lovers could continue to work together, that the political trust remained and was as important as the lost romance. We also had a context for figuring out personal problems: if someone does something that pisses you off, you can decide how to deal with it on the basis of how it is affecting your or her political work. Is it detrimental to the functioning of the group or individuals in the group? If not, how important is it to either of you that time and energy be taken to struggle about the problem? If Mary Lou likes the Rolling Stones and you think they're sexist pigs, but liking the Stones doesn't interfere with her political work or growth, why try to get her to change? How important is it? When you are clear about what you want to be doing, it is easier for life's daily hassles to assume less importance. You are therefore more in control of what affects you.

In our group we felt a need for accountability to each other. We knew from previous experience that some of us had trouble disciplining ourselves. So we made ourselves responsible for and to each other. We usually tried to confront each other when someone was fucking around. And it was important to change because we believed in the work we were doing. This meant that if you wanted the group to be successful you had to change.

It is hard to say why each person felt committed enough to building our politics to submit herself to this group discipline. I don't know why. What I do know is that we didn't have time to wait

until some of us were individually able to discipline ourselves; the lower class women didn't have time to wait for the middle class women to develop class consciousness when they wanted to, etc.

I became more serious about political work as I realized more and more that it was giving me a definition of the world and my life that made sense. I saw myself taking control of my life in ways that were really important: knowing my priorities, knowing my strengths, knowing that I could control my emotions when it was important to, knowing that I could change myself, discipline myself, trust myself. I also know that our group has helped other people, both within it and without it, to change their lives.

There are a hundred other things to say about groups--how they enable you to see your strengths and weaknesses, how they give you a context in which to share your privilege. Obviously, not every group works this way. But if you are clear about why you are together, what kind of support you expect, and the importance to each individual of the work you have set for yourself, you and your group should have a pretty good chance of meeting your objectives.

Even if a group works well, situations will change. You may come to a point where you must have new people in order to continue with your work. You may finish the essential aspects of your work and decide the group has served its function and should split and re-group in other forms, with other people to do other things. After a year, we felt that our situation had changed in those ways, so we in the Furies have disbanded as a tight group in order to work with new people and on different projects.

Ginny Berson



From the movie "The Group"

DETAILS...

I would like to talk about how the Furies Collective operated when it was a tight group--about the way we lived together and the ways we worked together.

When we formed our working collective, we also decided to live only with women who were part of our group, who had a similar commitment to figuring out a lesbian/feminist way of looking at things. Many of us had lived in communes with women of varied political viewpoints, and had spent much time trying to work out our differences. As fledgling lesbian/feminists we had found it very hard to develop our politics in those situations. We wanted to live with like-minded lesbians who had similar political needs. Living only with women in our group helped us develop politically much faster as we no longer had to battle over serious political differences within our own houses.

Deciding how we would share our money and belongings was the first concrete way we tried to deal with class differences among us. We knew that everyone putting in equal amounts of money ignored our different abilities to earn due to class background and age. For example, one of us who came from an upper middle class family and graduated from college had a confident and easy manner and the right credentials which enabled her to get a \$10,000 a year secretarial job. Another woman was a working class high school drop-out who could only find work as a waitress or file clerk. We wanted to equalize their situations so working class and younger women wouldn't have to spend more time at straight jobs. One woman got money from her parents and we knew it wasn't fair for her to use it to live on while working class women had to get jobs to support themselves.

We worked on finding a way that a middle-class woman would be able to use her education, skills, and privileges for others, not just herself. We finally decided on a percentage system which varied from 20% of one's monthly salary or an \$80 minimum to 50% or more of other's salaries. We decided together on the particular percentage that each of us would pay--based on class background, former heterosexual privilege, education, and age. We didn't have any rigid pre-conceived ideas about how much each of us should put in; we worked it out in discussion. One working class woman who had supported herself since high school was supported by the group while she went to printing school. Everyone else was expected to work at least part time. Any money that came from parents or former husbands was shared with

the group. We also decided that each person should get as well-paying a job as she could. We did not want a middle-class woman who could get \$5.00 an hour teaching school to do temporary typing at \$2.80 an hour because she found it less oppressive. Working-class women in the group did not have any such choices and did not want the group to lose money which could later be used for them to gain skills. We also did not want anyone to use more of her time earning money than necessary. The less hours we had to work, the more time we could spend on our political work projects.

Of course not everything was worked out. We tried to meet everybody's basic material needs--rent, utilities, food, transportation, laundry, medical bills, etc. But problems remained; even though middle-class women with professional jobs were putting in more than half of their salaries, they still had more spending money than working class women. We are still working on finding more ways of sharing and using our privilege for each other.

During the past year we have shuffled around who lives with whom at various times. After the first four months all of us wanted to live with fewer people so we moved from two houses into four. At times, some of us wanted to live alone and moved into apartments. We tried to work out living situations that were good for everybody but we didn't always succeed. Sometimes what was good for some of us wasn't for others. Generally our styles of living have been pretty similar. Each house has had rotating schedules for cooking, cleaning, laundry, etc. Each woman has had her own room but we've often found ourselves unable to be alone and undisturbed long enough to do our own work. That's one of the problems that we're trying to solve now (without all getting studios).

What put living together in some context was working together. In deciding what projects to work on as a group we kept in mind our recent experience in the Women's Movement. We knew how much time and energy service projects like abortion counseling took and how rarely those services helped women understand how to get out of their oppressed condition. We wanted to do projects that would help us see what the roots of our oppression were, what kind of new society we wanted to create, and how to get from here to there. Not only did we want to figure that out for ourselves but we wanted to affect other lesbians and the activities and goals of the lesbian movement. For that reason we chose to work on an issue of MOTIVE magazine, and

started a newspaper and press. All of those projects forced us to spell out our politics more clearly and work out the differences among us. They also forced us to start a dialogue with other lesbian/feminists, not only in Washington, but also in other cities.

Each of us chose which of those projects she wanted to work on, in what capacity (primarily graphics, or writing, etc.) and how much time she wanted to put in. The whole group decided the specific aims of each project and then left it to those specifically working on it to carry out the details. We had weekly group meetings to hash out what we were doing and how things were going. Because we lived together we usually discussed decisions to be made outside of meetings and often arrived at a consensus which we only needed to ratify when we got together. We tried to specifically assign as many tasks as possible, to set up deadlines, and to hold people responsible for what they agreed to do.

Generally all of our projects took much less time than those of any other groups we had been in. I think that was true because we were in basic political agreement with each other. As a group we had decided on our goals and the ways we were going to get there. So our difficulties were in achieving what we tried to do, not in achieving agreement about what to do.

In addition to working on political projects, we tried to get in better physical and mental condition. We stopped doing dope. One woman took karate at a karate school and taught the rest of us three times a week. We formed three study groups that met weekly and read about and discussed past revolutions. Because all social movements have features in common, we wanted to know the problems others had and how they solved them. We drew up a list of questions that we wanted to answer and each group reported their findings to the rest. We knew that because we were women we had been cheated out of a lot of physical strength and historical knowledge (not to mention skills) that we now wanted and would have to get to change our society.

Now there are many more women with similar politics than when we first formed the group. Because we want to work with more women and on different projects, we recently broke up our small tight group. But we still live together, share our money, work on projects with clearly defined goals, take part in study groups, and do karate. We have found these ways of operating helpful and worth sharing with other lesbian/feminists.

Coletta Reid

RECYCLED TRASH

I grew up part of the rural poor--well fed from the garden but wearing feedsack dresses. I clearly remember the first time I realized we were considered despicable. We had gone to Wichita to buy new shoes for the school year. We kids had waited for days for the annual fall trip. Hurrying to the shoe store we passed a window with shoes just like the ones I wanted. My parents hesitated; I insisted. We went in and sat down five in a row. There was no one else in the store. The clerks continued their lighthearted and easy chatting. No one noticed us. As we sat there waiting, a feeling of dread began to grow on me. Finally my father mustered his dignity and marched us all out leaving the hypocritically apologetic clerks behind. Outwardly we were righteously indignant; underneath we were all properly humiliated. None of us ever mentioned it again, but I knew without asking: everything about was wrong--the way we looked, talked, dressed and moved.

My grandfather was a farmer, my father a self-taught mechanic who worked on farm machinery. His cinder-block garage was only thirty yards from our house; next to it were junked cars and piles of pipe and scrap metal. When I was four my mother quit her job as a storeclerk. She spent all her time raising the garden, making our clothes, and helping in the garage. When I was ten she went back to work, this time in the post office. Soon we got a used piano and I began lessons. Then a TV, and finally my father's dream: a red accordion so someday I could be a woman accordionist on the Lawrence Welk show.

After I started high school in town I realized that the attitude of those Wichita store clerks was shared by most people. In my one-room country grade school we were all pretty much alike--dirt farmers' kids. But in town there were professionals' kids and businessmen's kids and a pecking order with us on the bottom. Everything in town belonged to that order: what church you went to, which stores you shopped at, where you spent your lunch hour. During my freshman year I had a crush on a farm boy--dirty fingernails, workboots and all. I never got up enough courage to do more than ride around in his old car after school, but soon I heard around school that I was "easy." I spent the next three years living down a reputation for looseness. All of us poor farm girls had to prove we were moral, while it was assumed of the businessmen's daughters. From then on I waited for a nice clean professional's son--someone to confer status and respect on me.

My parents were what my middle-class sisters so scornfully refer to as "upwardly mobile." I guess that means that they didn't want me to be treated like dirt all my life like they had been. There were two things my mother drummed into me: get an education and stay away from boys. She saw education as the way out, the one thing that guaranteed financial security and respect. Men were the stumbling block to that goal. They got you pregnant and left you or got you pregnant and married you to a lifetime of low-paying jobs and housework. She had wanted to be a bookkeeper but had had to go to work right after high school to help support her family. After getting married she still had to support the family but had to cook and clean too. She wanted me to get married, but only after I had gotten the education to be able to do what I wanted to.

On scholarship, I went to a little fundamentalist church college in Oklahoma. There I began a long apprenticeship in the art of appearing middle class. I improved my grammar, increased my vocabulary, learned about classical music. College initiated me into an alien culture that I knew I had to master to go anywhere. From the first week on I stood demurely chatting and sipped hot tea, took showers and acted like I felt right at home in long-winded academic discussions. I found out that there were hundreds of books everybody else could discuss that I hadn't even heard of. I went to college so I wouldn't always be a waitress or nurses' aid, getting the smallest salary for the heaviest work in the place. But I found that college doesn't just prepare you for an easier, better-paying job; it insures that you dress, talk, and think

like a member of the professional class--that includes thinking you're better than working-class people and their culture.

Evidently I had learned my lessons well because I was rewarded my junior year by marriage to a doctor's son. I entered a family smug with the security of its social position. Rooms lined with books, a stereo, rolled roasts, asparagus, cocktail parties. In one dizzying stroke I went from drive-in movies with a Dairy Queen afterwards, to symphony concerts and late Chinese dinners. The next two years were the unhappiest ones of my life. Somehow I had believed that middle-class marriage would be different from working-class marriage. My father had been a total authoritarian patriarch; our family had revolved around him and his wishes. Whenever we got out of line we were brutally brought back. Just two weeks before my wedding he beat me for doing something he didn't like. But I thought that in middle-class marriages women would be equal to men. My mother-in-law was even a poet and painter. Violence was unheard of. It took a while but I learned there was only a difference in style not in substance. My husband never hit me; he just got up in the middle of the night and went for a walk. After I anxiously waited for hours for him, he came home, having decided not to hop the next train out of town. The message came through loud and clear. Stay in line or your emotional and financial security will disappear without so much as a good-by.

While I was still married I fell in love with a woman who was upper middle class. She was everything I was not. She could have met the Queen of England without batting an eyelash. Sure of herself and her place, she accepted my devotion carelessly as if it were her due. I was only too happy to be allowed near her, to have other people know I was her friend. I secretly hoped that her beauty, confidence, and ease would rub off onto my drab self. I moved into a women's commune with her thinking I was middle class like most everyone else. I had been to college; my husband had been a professional. But it was soon clear that the experiences and outlook of women whose parents had been well off were very different from mine. As they sat and joked about their "moms" I tried to imagine being pals with my mother. When they went shoplifting at Lord and Taylor I couldn't imagine being comfortable enough even to go in. Just like old times I felt on the outside of the "right" experience.

I have spent most of my life wanting to be part of that right experience. Since I have been in a lesbian/feminist collective I have started looking at where I came from, where I got to, and what happened to me along the way. When other working-class women started confronting oppressive middle-class behavior I sat on the sidelines and listened. I didn't want to risk the little respect from others that I had built up since being in the movement. I didn't understand why working-class women had to be so hostile; I understood and agreed with what they were saying but I couldn't understand why they insisted that others change. Because I had been accommodating for years it seemed only natural to me. But I finally had to choose whether to align myself with those who came from backgrounds like mine or with those I had been trying to emulate. I saw that choosing to risk the favor of my middle-class friends was choosing myself. To stop accommodating hasn't been the only pattern I've had to change; I've also had to question all those middle-class attitudes I'd accepted to find out which ones were worthwhile and which ones oppressive.

The most oppressive attitude I had accepted was that because I had become middle class, worked my way "up," I was better than other working-class women who were still down there. I had gone to college; if they had been as smart as I was, they would have gone too. It was partially their own fault that now middle-class women still treated them with disrespect. When other working-class women challenged my attitude, I felt like life had been particularly unfair to me. I had spent years enduring the disrespect of others and proving myself worthy and now I was being punished for it. I had taken one of the survival roads open to me and now I had to stop surviving that way.

There are many of us "upwardly mobile" lesbians in the movement--women whose college educations weren't a privilege, who fought every step of the way to get where we are, who are now less class oppressed than we ever have been. But we are only less oppressed because we have become more and more like our middle-class sisters. It is crucial to dealing with classism in our movement that we start throwing our lot in with our less "upwardly mobile" working-class sisters and start questioning our own middle-class attitudes and ways of behaving. We may have had to learn those ways to survive, but they're not helpful now in building a movement aimed at changing society.

Coletta Reid

Freest Fancy

Walking down the street on the way to work I almost trip over the sign announcing the current movie. All I see is the picture-- a man and a woman looking "sexily" into each other's eyes. He is leering. She is luring. They are not wearing any shirts.

We roll across the bed, our bare-breasted bodies laughing with inside joy. You look at me and my smile becomes fixed on my face. I will feel it long after the early passion is gone. I will burst in one minute if you do not kiss me, and then I will burst anyway. I love you.

As I near the other end of the theater I see another sign announcing the name of the movie: "Sexual Encounter"--How to End Your HANG-UPS. Honey, if you want to get rid of your HANG-UPS, you'd better get rid of your MAN.

I remember the time we slept together when I kept phasing in and out. You asked me why and I thought, "I can't go through this again." And then I explained that I was fairly fucked up about sex and that it was my problem and not yours. And you said that you knew what I meant because you had the same problem, only it wasn't mine or yours: it was everybody's who had lived in this world and who judged their adequacy on every possible basis except whether they were enjoying themselves. You were afraid and I was afraid, but we relaxed a little, and I loved you that night like I'd never loved anybody before.

I ride up the elevator to school with one of my students. She has been in the United States only a few weeks, but she is smart and her English is very good for a beginning student. "Luisa," I ask her, "why did you come to the United States?" "My father sent me. I have five sisters all married, and he got tired of waiting for me. He said American men make good husbands. But I don't know. I never can meet any. There are no places for it. And what else is there to do? I wish my father would let me go home. I am very bored here."

I knew from the second time we went out I would love you. You are strong and full of life. You will not need me or any other woman to keep you going, to fill your life. You know enough of who you are to be able to change without feeling like the world is coming to an end. You define yourself in terms of you. You see that your future, like your present, is with women, and you know what you are going to do about it. The answers to your life are inside of you, and you and the people you love will bring them out.

"Are you married?" my student asks me. "No." "Ah, neither am I. Isn't it sad?" "Why is it sad?" "Because you cannot be happy unless you are married. You need to have someone, you know? To love you and take care of you and be there forever."

"Forever" is a word that is not in our vocabulary. I know that in time, maybe three months, maybe a year, we will not feel passion for each other. I do not expect to be turned on to you for the rest of my life. I do not even expect to love you forever. Perhaps I will, but I know that what we have when the physical attraction wears off will depend on what we give each other now. I will think about what our love means for the other parts of my life, and I will decide what is best for me, just as I know you will do the same. I do not live in a world of dreams; I live in the reality of your love for me, now, and my love for you, now. I live in the reality of the present. And for the present I love you. And I revel in the joy and gladness.

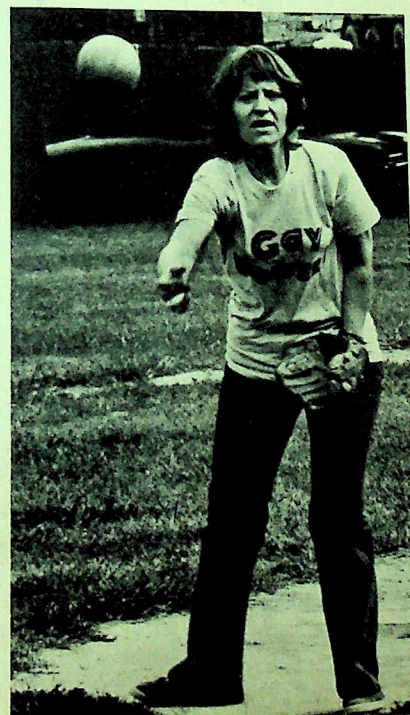
Ginny Berson



D. ENGLISH

COME OUTSIDE

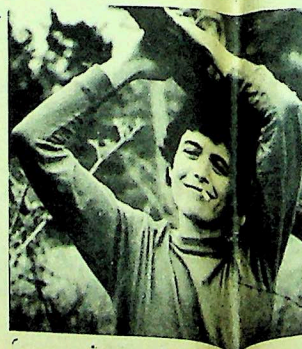
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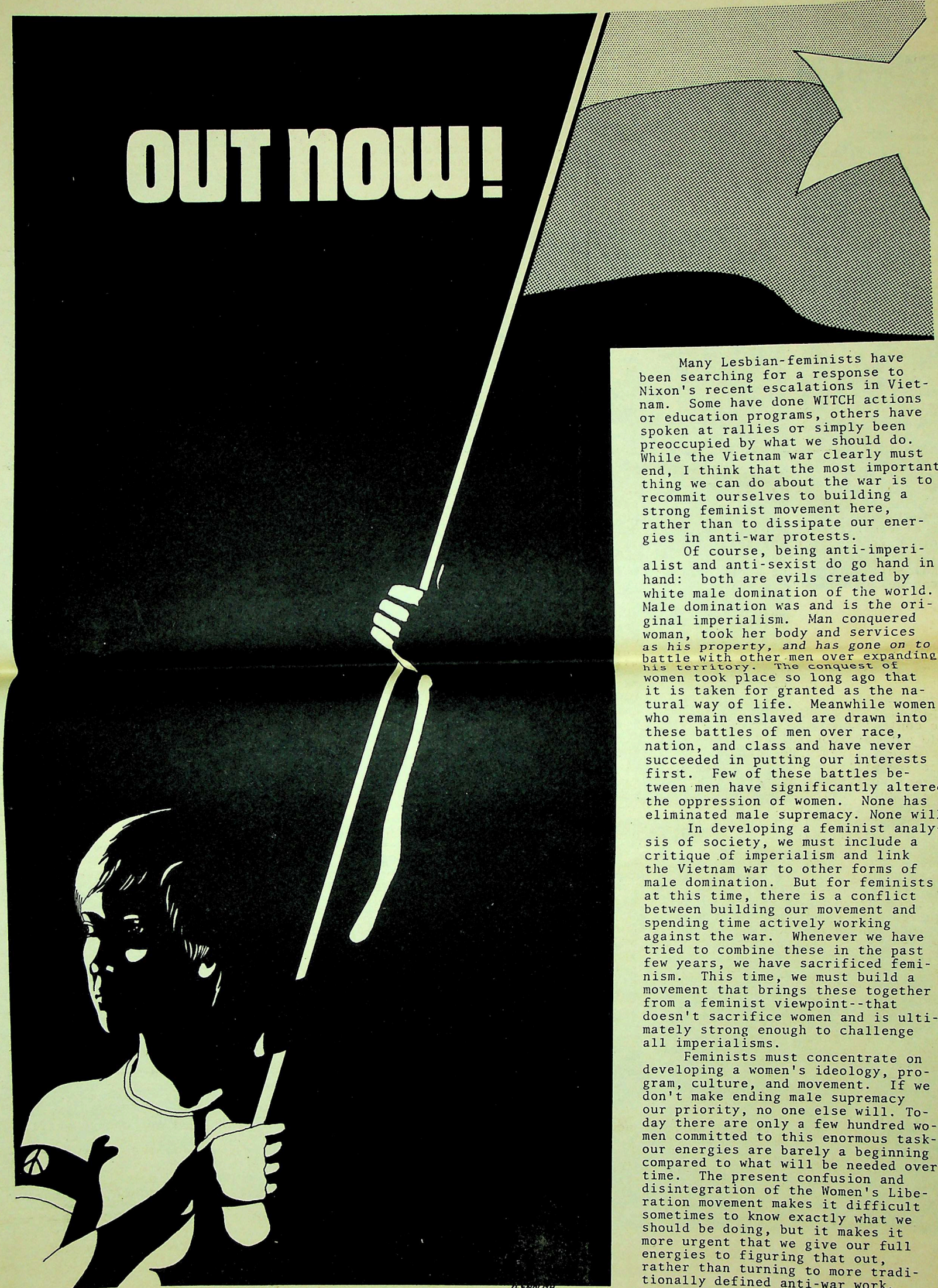


Photos by

JEB



OUT NOW!



Many Lesbian-feminists have been searching for a response to Nixon's recent escalations in Vietnam. Some have done WITCH actions or education programs, others have spoken at rallies or simply been preoccupied by what we should do. While the Vietnam war clearly must end, I think that the most important thing we can do about the war is to recommit ourselves to building a strong feminist movement here, rather than to dissipate our energies in anti-war protests.

Of course, being anti-imperialist and anti-sexist do go hand in hand: both are evils created by white male domination of the world. Male domination was and is the original imperialism. Man conquered woman, took her body and services as his property, and has gone on to battle with other men over expanding his territory. The conquest of women took place so long ago that it is taken for granted as the natural way of life. Meanwhile women who remain enslaved are drawn into these battles of men over race, nation, and class and have never succeeded in putting our interests first. Few of these battles between men have significantly altered the oppression of women. None has eliminated male supremacy. None will.

In developing a feminist analysis of society, we must include a critique of imperialism and link the Vietnam war to other forms of male domination. But for feminists at this time, there is a conflict between building our movement and spending time actively working against the war. Whenever we have tried to combine these in the past few years, we have sacrificed feminism. This time, we must build a movement that brings these together from a feminist viewpoint--that doesn't sacrifice women and is ultimately strong enough to challenge all imperialisms.

Feminists must concentrate on developing a women's ideology, program, culture, and movement. If we don't make ending male supremacy our priority, no one else will. Today there are only a few hundred women committed to this enormous task--our energies are barely a beginning compared to what will be needed over time. The present confusion and disintegration of the Women's Liberation movement makes it difficult sometimes to know exactly what we should be doing, but it makes it more urgent that we give our full energies to figuring that out, rather than turning to more traditionally defined anti-war work.

No liberation struggle succeeds by dividing its energies. It puts its own liberation first and then supports and relates to other struggles from that base. So the Black movement in the U.S. sought to link the war and racism--to help blacks see the connection between these forms of oppression, but it always kept the struggle for the liberation of black people its priority. We must develop a world-view and strategy for change that deals with the other forms of imperialism: class, race and nation, but we must do so from a feminist perspective. Our attack on sexism will then be an attack on all imperialism, since we are challenging the roots of male power and domination, male violence and war. Only this kind of attack can hope to end male imperialism. Any other will just transfer power from one country to another, one ruling male group to another.

These are overall goals of a feminist movement, but to come back from the grandiose, we must start at home, with the daily lives of women. The war in Vietnam is horrible but so too is the war against women waged daily. Everywhere, women are brutalized, raped, butchered and controlled by men in a million ways. It is more glamorous to talk about solidarity with Vietnamese women and to view ourselves as internationalists, but the oppression of women here and now in each hometown is the starting point for real class, race, sexual, and national solidarity among women. If we can deliver on some limited goals for ourselves now, we will have a basis for building toward international solidarity that has power, not just rhetoric and good wishes, behind it.

Another reason feminists should not be working on the war is that it will not make any concrete difference in the war if we do. As people of this country, we do not have control over the war, just as we do not have control over the rest of our lives. Besides, today there are millions who can carry on anti-war work. Our numbers do not significantly affect that work, while the drain of our energies away from the women's struggle is crucial. If the war can be ended by reform, the conditions are present now--the majority of the people and influential reformers want it over. Let them end it. If it cannot be ended by reform but requires more basic change, then in the long run we are helping to end the war most by concentrating our energies here in the U.S., attacking the sexist roots of imperialism.

Feminism must be our total priority if we hope to end woman oppression. Many will say that it is our priority but we can still take a little time out to work against the war, without being less feminist. Since I once believed and tried to do this, I have sought to understand why it did not work and why I wanted to work on anti-imperialism in the first place.

Two years ago, I visited North Vietnam and saw the strength and life force of the Vietnamese in their liberation struggle. Before I went to Vietnam, most of my energies went to women's liberation. In Vietnam, I felt support for that priority. But when I returned, I thought that I should work on the war and helped to form an all women's anti-imperialist collective. We tried to create actions and programs that combined feminism and

anti-imperialism, always insisting that there was no conflict between them. We thought that we would inject anti-imperialism consciousness and action into the women's movement. We soon found ourselves working mainly on the war, out of touch with the women's movement, and with no significant time to think about feminist strategy.

At that time, women's liberation was floundering and we had little clarity or confidence about what to do next. We knew that our movement was too white, too middle class, too U.S. defined, but we didn't know how to change it. We had exhausted the initial value of consciousness-raising groups, sporadic consciousness-raising actions, and women's services. We did not know how to start building a long-term feminist movement. Anti-imperialism was a ready-made answer. It seemed ideologically correct and we could begin concrete actions around it immediately. We knew that it was "legitimate" in many circles, and we knew that trying to build a feminist movement was viewed as legitimate by very few. So, we let the already defined issues of anti-imperialism fill the vacuum left by our confusion and it pushed feminism aside.

Because we did not know what to do, we were also susceptible to pressure and guilt trips from the Left. We wanted to work on the important issues. We had a valid desire not to have women confined to "our issues", while men took care of the rest of the larger, world issues. But our definition of how to view those other issues and which of them were important was still coming from men. Even though we worked separately from men, we were still directed by their analysis and responded to the support and approval they gave us for raising women's consciousness about imperialism and working on more than "women's issues".

The Left also constantly told us that our oppression was not as great and not as important as the Vietnamese. Many of us gave into this because as white middle-class women, we knew somehow that we had privileges, but we did not know how to deal with class and race in our movement. The easy male defined way to deal with class and national chauvinism was to work on "anti-imperialism", just as working with the Black Panthers was the white way to deal with racism that year.

No doubt we also felt the real horror of the war and wanted it to end. But since our movement did not yet have a strategy for ending imperialism or the power to really affect the war, we resorted to doing anything against the war in order to alleviate our sense of responsibility for it. These were acts of do-goodism on behalf of the Vietnamese, moral protests rather than strategic political directions. Finally, we worked on the war and many other good issues because of our socialization as women, which taught us that we should put the needs of others first and not be concerned for ourselves as women.

The effort to combine anti-imperialism and women's liberation was both a political failure and personally debilitating. I found my energies drained by the bottomless pit of good causes, with no political framework through which I could evaluate them. I saw our politics becoming more abstract and rhetorical. I felt out of contact with

the daily struggles of women around me. I realized that I and other women had learned more about world imperialism when we were working on the problems of birth control, which had grown out of our own needs, than we were learning from the anti-war work we were doing. After endless frustrations and with the constant challenges of the lesbian-feminists around me, I finally knew that I had to stop. The dichotomy between feminism and anti-imperialism was not true in theory, but it was true in fact. We were not able to build a feminist movement from the anti-imperialism work we were doing.

I see this same dilemma being repeated as lesbian-feminists try to work on the war today. It was a long painful process for me, but my experience and analysis tells me that for lesbian-feminists to put energy into anti-war activities is a diversion from building a feminist struggle and ultimately from defeating imperialism as well. This does not mean that Vietnamese women are necessarily less feminist because they put the war first in their lives at this time. Their situation is different. It must be their priority because their survival depends on ending the war. They know that they face many battles against sexism, but only when the war is over will they be able to concentrate on them fully. They also know that there is little that we can change in the U.S., except as women gain more power. They expect us to take that struggle for power seriously.

We have no reason to believe that we will gain any power in this country, in the establishment or the Left, except as we fight for it. We have no reason to expect any significant battles against sexism by the male Left in this country or by liberation struggles in most places.

My most recent reminder of women's plight, even in the midst of a liberation struggle, was Bangla Desh. I felt sympathetic to the rebels until I heard about the raped and pregnant Bangla Desh woman. First, she suffered the terror of rape and pillage of war. (The right to rape the woman as property of the males of the opposite side is an ancient wartime ritual.) After her side won, she was an outcast, because a woman violated by another man was not fit to be the wife of a liberated Bangla Desh man! It was her tough luck that all this happened as part of her country's liberation struggles; male prerogatives were still paramount. All the leftist sympathies and relief money did little to alleviate her plight. She and her sisters in the same condition committed suicide in large numbers.

This example is just one dramatic illustration of what can still happen to women in liberation circles. Men have carried on endless struggles over race and nation, using women and keeping us in servitude. This will not change until women demand it--with our lives. This begins quietly today with every feminist's decision how to spend her time, what struggles will be her priority. Our oppression doesn't give us the luxury to keep choosing to put a little energy here and a little there, dabbling in all the worthy causes and also carrying out an offensive against sexism. We must choose to win this time.

Charlotte Bunch

Out of the Sea of Discontent

In the beginning there was sisterhood. The beginning lasted for about two years or until 1970 when various factions split off from Women's Liberation. Those factions were the lesbians, lower class women and non-white women. Each group had and still has valid reasons for leaving. Each group found in its own way that sisterhood was qualified and didn't include them. Their exodus had a shattering impact upon the movement. Losing that many people over a short time span calls attention to the problems that forced their evacuation. The fact that these different kinds of women left in large numbers added a jolt to the initial shatter. During the Great Exodus another exodus was taking place. Few women noticed this tear in the tattered movement fabric and their failure to see it is an indication of how bad things really are. The silent refugees are our artists.

A two pronged fork jabbed women into Women's Liberation. One prong was Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique which aroused primarily professional and suburban women. The other prong was the New Left which harbored women under twenty-five for the most part, politically activated and tired of being fucked over by men. The two events coincided during 1967-69 and produced N.O.W. on the one hand and Redstockings, et al. on the other.

Both poles of the movement spent their early energies trying to establish organizations without benefit of ideology although they all had some kind of analysis of sexism. (An analysis of sexism does not automatically entitle the bearer to an analysis of political-economic power.) The question of art and its relation to politics was out of the question, literally. The early days were spent in women struggling with their individual men, banding together in consciousness raising groups for emotional support and trying to keep whatever group they were in, conservative or radical, afloat.

A few women artists like Ruth Herschberger (Adam's Rib, 1948) were visibly present during those early days and some of them arranged for discussions on the role of women as portrayed in male art as well as consideration of the likes of Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, etc. But the problems and promises of flesh and blood, breathing-right-this-minute-next-to-you artists were lost in the shuffle.

The first organized attempt on the East Coast to help meet the needs of "breathing" artists and the movement was made on April 14, 1969. On that night F.R.E.E.--the

New Feminist Repertory and Experimental Ensemble--opened at the Martinique Theater, a rathole sinking amid the skyscrapers of Manhattan. Rathole that it was, it didn't dim the hopes of F.R.E.E. which dedicated itself to raising social consciousness to the point where women, 51% of the US population, would be 51% of the government, industry, and on down the line. It also stated its primary reason for existence was "to give voice to the new feminist movement which has sprung up around the country over the last three years." This meant that stronger political views could find their way on the stage and was a signal to women to put those views in artistic form.

The four women co-founders--Anselma dell'Olio, Susan Vannucci, Jacqui Ceballos and Rita Mae Brown--pulled together an exciting band of playwrights, actors, composers of both sexes and for a short time it worked. Nearly all the individuals involved worked in the daytime and then drove themselves to exhaustion at night.



People paid for things out of their own salaries. They believed in what they were doing with the fervor of apostles and as sister-brother artists they believed in each other. F.R.E.E. died from a number of diseases not the least of which was the Greedyguts Ego virus. At first only a playwright and director were infected. The remainder thought they could combat the bug. But it had a nasty habit of eroding togetherness and dampening enthusiasm. The company rapidly demoralized and F.R.E.E. passed into the obituary file of the New York Times after a short life of less than six months.

Politically F.R.E.E. was daring for its day, including lesbianism in its format. It also had some fine skits on sexist behavior. Generally F.R.E.E. was headed in the right direction. Other theater groups have since come into existence--It's All Right to Be A Woman, Earth Onion, to name two. They operate on low budgets and for lack of a better word, underground.

F.R.E.E. was not underground. In the first month of its life it made the front page of the New York Times Sunday theater section. If it had survived its potential remains tantalizing. Would it have launched major talents to crack the media barrier? Would it have found itself a home in Lincoln Center or

some other place for brave new theatrical worlds? Or would it have clung on in the Village to become the grand old eccentric of both theater and feminism? But it went to an early grave like all infants carrying its secrets, dreams and possibilities with it. Is the word tantalizing or maddening?

As F.R.E.E. ground to a halt, struggle within the Women's Movement accelerated and so did defection from all corners. Many women simply couldn't stand the strain of constant pitched battles plus the tremendous drain on one's time. Hoards of the emotional refugees were artists. Needing long periods of time in which to create, they couldn't afford to whittle away their hours arming their group's fortifications within the Women's Movement. Needing a certain amount of peace (don't all humans) many declared the goal not worth the effort and destruction to themselves and beat a strategic retreat.

In the first wave of defectors belongs Mychelle Smiley. Actress, singer, director, Mychelle at the ripe old age of 24 said, "Fuck this shit," pulled up her tent and went packing. She believes in the concept of women's liberation but she found herself enraged at the backstabbing within the movement. "I went through all that crap years ago in the Black Movement, I'll be damned if I'm going to get my ass kicked in a second time. I think I can reach women through my acting and that's how I'm going to reach them. No more groups. If Jesus Christ herself asked me to be a disciple I'd tell her to buzz off. I'll work toward change in my own way and using my individual talents as best I can." Mychelle tries to keep up with the movement's intellectual activity and finds many of her friends within the movement. But she steadfastly refuses to join any group on any level. Part of the reason for this is that developing her craft takes a phenomenal amount of time and part of the reason is what she herself says, "I find most women don't yet know who they are. It's one of the realities of woman oppression - fractured identity. I'm not going to place myself in a situation where people who don't know who they are or what they're doing can meddle in my work. All I need is for some Miss Anne to tell me acting is bourgeois and



Drawings by Wendy Cadden, Oakland



I'll slug her."

The second wave of defection lapped upon the first. This second wave came from women who had already split with Women's Liberation during the Great Exodus: lesbians, lower class women and non-whites. As these groups left Women's Liberation hopefully to formulate policy on their own, the artist within their midst moved along naturally, like anyone else. However, problems facing artists were not dealt with among the sub-groups any more than in proto-Women's Liberation. Again part of the reason is time. The shock of a split directed people's energy into defining why they split politically and the chore after that definition was: Well, what now? The peculiar problems of artists hardly seemed relevant if indeed anyone considered them at all.

What are these problems anyway?

1. Time
Lots of time in which to work. Since most women are not independently wealthy that means they have to slave on some "straight" job. Then if they are politically active that means they take time to fight the good fight. This leaves little time left for what is usually closest to the artist's heart - her work.
2. Money
Is there anyone currently alive who needs this explained?
3. Emotional Support
Pulling the threads of disorder out of this epoch as well as out of your own life and weaving them on the loom of your mind takes an enormous amount of energy plus sheer determination. Everything is set up against a person's ordering their perceptions in an artistic discipline. As women the task is truly heroic because once she does her work the process of communicating it is terribly difficult because the discrimination against women artists is phenomenal and exceeds discrimination in other fields. (Actresses and singers don't suffer as do writers, painters, etc. But remember they can only work if they perform what The Man writes, directs, produces, etc., so it's really a slightly different form of discrimination.)
We all need emotional support. Artists are not fragile glass bubbles of creativity who

need protection from the big, bad world but they do need other women to understand the peculiar pressures upon them because of their specific work. Perhaps visual artists need the most—writers can fight back in print and push women to understand (like this article, for instance) but painters, photographers, film-makers (somewhat) work in the non-verbal and many don't readily fight for themselves verbally. Regardless of her discipline, any artist will find it easier to produce if she has warm, loving friends and a responsive movement.

4. An Alternate Media - the key!

With a strong alternate media artists can reach out to the people. In this way they raise consciousness, push back the limits of awareness and propel their audience towards involvement. This is the "cultural army" approach and one which Mao Tse-Tung used to great effect. He saw art as another front and felt that art had been separated from poli-



tics by reactionaries. One of the tasks of the people was to link the two "armies" together - cultural and political. A strong alternate media certainly provides this critical and missing link between art and politics. It is a necessary step if we are to move beyond scattered groups of individuals across the face of this nation. The creation of an alternate media is a task artists and politicians can work on. The movement has the artists and has the politicians but it doesn't have the bonding agent: business-women who can administer and finance/fund-raise those alternate media institutions. We'd better damn well get them or train women to fill that job. Without that alternate media, the thoughts of both artists and politicians are effectively suppressed by the ruling class (and we all know who they are).

Those are the peculiar problems confronting the artist and on some levels, confronting the movement. The split groups from Women's Liberation ignored or never recognized these problems or the artists who bore them. This precipitated the second wave. Michela Griffo was part of the second wave. She's a painter of rare imagination. Like Mychele she's sick of the intrigue, fighting and squandering of her valuable time. Her disillusionment is bitter, she really thought lesbians would prove better than they did. "You know, I've come to the con-

clusion that non-creative people, non-artists can never understand artists besides which they are usually envious of artists. Politicos are the worst. They build neat little formulas like Jesuits or Marxists and well, artists just don't fit into neat little formulas. I tried, but I'm not trying anymore. No, I'm not leaving the movement - there's no real movement to leave. Hell, it's never been organized into a serious political movement anyway. But whatever there is that passes itself off as a movement, I'm not leaving. I'll relate to an organization that functions around something concrete - but I won't administer that organization. I'm not going to pull it together and make it work, keeping the people functioning. When someone creates a party or something that makes sense to me, I'll do my bit. But I know my painting is going to do much more for women than if I spend my life licking envelopes at the Women's Center. So my primary energies go into my painting, my secondary energies go into my lovers, and what's left goes into a group of envelopes."

After the second wave women artists began to band together as women artists. (Please note, these waves aren't precise time bands. There's a lot of bleeding through the frame, overlap, etc., but the surges outward have fallen into rough patterns which I've called waves.) This adhesion produced neutral grounds such as the Women's Interart Center on West 52nd St. in New York City. Interart has a unique conception which sets it apart from other artists' groups in the various cities. The core to their thought is inter-action. Women from different disciplines come together and contribute to one another's work, often creating a "sum" work, a work that all have built.

Shouldering responsibility for transmitting skills, Interart has set up a series of workshops in photography, acting, painting, silk-screen, music, theater, dance, film and carpentry. Women with skills teach those who want those skills. Other women's art groups in different cities have also taken on the responsibility of teaching skills.

This alliance of artists with artists seems to be a solution - on the surface. But turbulence boils under the smooth surface and that turbulence is politics. Many of the women coming together as artists have not gone through the Women's Liberation Internal Wars. This usually means their political development is not sharpened to the degree of the veteran's. In fact, these new women resurrect sisterhood and march under that faded banner wondering why the rest of us stand on the sidelines in utter amazement. The veterans who have helped form these art groups find themselves in a precarious position once more. They wanted to get away from the fighting and into their work but the new women demand political training. It's very hard to function of you've been in the movement for five years, are now say in a musicians' group, and one of the musicians wants to know why the group can't give a benefit for McGovern: after all he's come out for gay rights and women. Again, the gaps in political conscious-

ness which close only with deep thought and time make it difficult for artists to pull together.

The artists' groups become political microcosms of all the tensions that caused the splits in the Women's Movement over these last five years. A few groups have solved this to their own satisfaction by creating a DMZ, a no-fire zone. They concentrate on art and stay neutral as a group on politics although members may be as active as they choose.

In this respect the artists regardless of time served in the movement trenches are a step ahead of the politicians. Politics has been a constant concern of the Women's Liberation artist no matter what her politics are. Art has not been a concern of the politicians. Not until 1972 have groups on the left begun to understand that there is an "Art Problem." The only reason groups on the left are dimly perceiving the problem is because the artists have begun to leave and/or push them.

This last defection or quasi-defection is the third wave. I belong to the third wave. Unlike Mychele or Michela I was an active organizer. Like all people who step forward I got shot up early in the wars. I'm not complaining, anyone who chooses to do this sort of work recognizes the hazards. Like my Momma says, "If you can't take the heat get outa the kitchen." My organizing was directed in the last years toward cadre building - a faint whiff of Bolshevism, yes. I differed from the bulk of Women's Liberation and the splits in this. My split was the lesbian one and even there I was a minority due to class background. Unlike most lesbians my concern has been, and still is political power. The bulk of Women's Liberation and the lesbian movement are essentially apolitical although their rhetoric is studded with chestnuts like "imperialism," racism," ad nauseum. It took me until the early months of 1971 to find a group of lesbians who would also seriously concern themselves with the questions of political power. Together we formed a collective. This March I left that group of women after being the Prime Mover for too long a time - too long for them and too long for me. There were many reasons why I left and one of them was art.

I wasn't getting much writing done those days. My time was devoured on all levels and not until the end of my association with that group of people did some of the women in it begin to comprehend that something was gnawing at my insides trying to get out: my writing. By then it was too late to deal with that problem plus I was a little retarded, it took me that long to stand up for myself as an artist. Like most people of Western Culture I had unwittingly dichotomized art and politics. It was art vs. politics. I knew that was bunk, intellectually. Those damn bandy-legged Greeks did us all a disservice with their head-heart opposition. All forms of communication are necessary in order to change people, and changed people change the

A Manifesto for the Feminist Artist

Art in the past has been the pursuit of the privileged with few exceptions. It has been white, male, usually middle to upper class, and overwhelmingly heterosexual. All forms of the arts--music, dance, literature, painting, film, etc.--reflect the concerns of this dominant group with a few male homosexuals thrown in for good measure. Only recently have the concerns of other people and their art begun to emerge, especially within the Black community and, in its beginning stages, among women.

Today 90% of what is available to the public remains the art of the oppressor. Since they control the business end of the arts they control what is presented to people. Therefore precious little of our work leaks out to the mass public. But their art for all its dominance is in such decline it has reached the final stages of disease and decadence. That art offers us two poles: nostalgia and porno-violence. Both come from emptiness, starvation of creativity and hope, and incredible self-indulgence.

Their concept of self has become so perverted that older members of the oppressor generation seek the coordinates of their fragmented selves on a graph of the past, nostalgia. Meanwhile the younger generation gluts itself in an orgy of porno-violence. The male ego is so eroded that these younger men--the inheritors of the political-economic reins of the death culture--seek an affirmation of self in violent, destructive sex. Porno-violence is their symbol of protest that in its essence denies not only dignity and equality to women but even life to women. Rape is the cliché of male art be it individual rape or the systematic brutalization of an entire sex and entire races.

As women artists we are in deep revolt against this rotting art just as we are in revolt against the syphilitic political structures that damage us and endanger world peace.

Our experiences have been locked away from the eyes and ears of the people. We must fight to transmit those experiences forcing people to face the reality of our lives, of all oppressed people's lives. But our art must be more than personal narrative; it must contain a vision for the future where no group rapes another, where force is not the heart of politics and egotism not the mind of art.

Our task is to achieve a synthesis of poetry and politics, theater and experience, love and society. We have to pull together a world compartmentalized by the resident schizophrenics in the White House, the Pentagon and General Motors. We have to build an alternate media, a new art to help us create a new government in which all people are free. Let our work be the bridge to that new world. --RMB

world. Art and politics are different ways of saying the same thing. I knew that but emotionally I felt torn. And I was torn. It takes time, that word again, to write and all my time was going toward those other women in an orgy of sisterhood, that word, too. Sisterhood is too sugary but some force, some herd instinct aggravated by a feeling of Leninist responsibility pushed me to violate myself - and when you violate yourself you violate others.

I left the collective and

launched my first novel plus a fleet of poems. I felt free. Happy isn't the right word, I was jubilant. I still am jubilant. When I sit at my typewriter I feel like an admiral and each one of those keys is a battleship in the fight against sexism, racism, imperialism and all that -ism shit. I fight the subprophets of the American proletariat in our movement who emerge from sparkling white, middle class back-grounds resplendent in blue work shirts. I fight the Mama Maos and Lady Lenins of classic Marxism who twist the truth of those politics because they can't seem to break out of their own revolutionary time warp - this is 1972 not 1917 or 1939. I fight the opportunistic philistines who rake the dumping ground of movement mediocrities into their own personal garbage gardens. I fight the phony radicals who declare art elitist, and then go back to their professional American husbands. I fight the lesbians who kiss in public and declare the revolution won. And I fight myself. Like Cromwell, I feel, "I'll run this country right even if I have to do it myself." Unlike Cromwell I know better so I fight that tendency. I fight to remain open especially when some woman kicks me in the ass and doesn't like me even though she's never met me before. I fight to keep navigating when some literary woman tells me I'm less of a poet than I could be because I'm politically involved. I fight to sail on when some political woman tells me I'm less of a politician because I write poetry. Oh, Ho Chi Minh and Mao Tse-Tung where are you now when I need you?

The confessions of a third wave defector? Am I really defecting? Hell no. Is the movement lost? No. Are art and politics deadlocked? They don't have to be. Are all women in the movement backstabbing bitches? No. Have I done my share in adding to the mess? I hate to admit it but yes. Is there any way out? Yes, there's always a way out of the tunnel but the trick is we have to hold hands so we don't get lost and drown in a sea of discontent. The human chain will wend its way to the light in time.

Hopefully, time will also heal the artist-politician rift if both sides become aware of how much they need each other. Trotsky had an interesting thought on this rift in 1924 (Literature and Revolution): "the separation (is) created by bourgeois society of intellectual work, including art, from physical work...one of the ultimate aims of Revolution is to overcome completely the separation of these two kinds of activity." He also said, "...the development of art is the highest test of the vitality and significance of each epoch." If this is true, and I believe it is, then the first five years of the Women's Movement heralds a golden age for women's art just as the first five years brought forth a torrent of political thought which promises completion on a grander scale in the future - a future that synthesizes art and politics and teaches us all to reach for the hand in the darkness.

Rita Mae Brown

Away With Your Man- Visions

"Away with your man-visions. Women propose to reject them all, and begin to dream dreams for themselves." Those words spoken by Susan B. Anthony sum up her life-- that of a woman who dreamed dreams for herself and other women. She spent over fifty years trying to build a women's movement in the 19th century and was one of the few women in that movement whose love and friendship went wholly to women.

Early in her life she decided to become a spinster. She said, "Nearly all the wrongs of which we complain grow out of the inequality... that make her the slave of the man she marries." She believed that marriage was a one-sided affair in which the man gained all and the woman lost all. In 1855 Lucy Stone and Antoinette Brown, both spinsters, rebel professionals and champions of women's rights decided to marry. They married men who were advocates of women's suffrage. But it mattered little to Susan who wrote them reproachful and indignant letters. "I am not complaining or despairing, but facts are stern realities. The twain become one flesh, the woman, "we", henceforth she has no separate work... I declare to you that I distrust the power of any woman, even of myself, to withstand the mighty matrimonial maelstrom... It matters not to the individual whose freedom has thus departed whether it be the gentle rule of love or the iron hand of law."

The meeting of Susan and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1851 was an important event for them and for the history of women. For the rest of their lives they continued a friendship and an allegiance equalled only by their dedication to the movement. Their friendship was intertwined with their work for women's emancipation. Mrs. Stanton said of their relationship, "In thought and sympathy we were one and in the division of labor we exactly complemented each other. I am the better writer, she the better critic, she supplied facts and statistics, I the philosophy and rhetoric, and together we have made arguments that have stood unshaken through the storms of long years; arguments that no one has answered. So entirely one are we that in all our associations ever side by side on the platform, not one feeling of envy or jealousy has ever shadowed our lives. We have indulged freely in criticism of each other when alone and hotly contended when we have differed, but in our friendship of years there has never been the break of one hour... So closely interwoven have been our lives, our purposes, and experiences that separated, we have a feeling of incompleteness, united such strength of self-assertion that no ordinary obstacles, difficulties or dangers ever appear to us insurmountable."

And obstacles they met--namely men. Throughout their lives and the Temperance, Abolition, and Suffrage movements they were a part of, men stood in their way--shouting them down in meetings, reproaching them for not staying in their homes, raising families, and supporting the husbands who could take part in the noble art of reform. When they were shouted down or ruled out of order they simply walked out and organized meetings for women run by women. Finally they found themselves forced to separate from the Equal Rights Association, an organization supposedly working for the vote for



Susan B. Anthony

both Blacks and women.

When the NEGROES HOUR came, when the Republican party needed the black vote, the white men of the North proposed a constitutional amendment giving the Negro man the right to vote. Women were asked to abandon their cause for an indefinite period. Both Susan and Mrs. Stanton refused and escalated their demands to include divorce laws fair to women. Wendell Phillips, leader of the ERA, treated them like children--directing parliamentary action behind their backs and coming out against them in public. Mrs. Stanton resented him with all her fury. In reply she said, "We are right. My reason, experience, my soul proclaim it. Our religion, laws, customs are all founded on the idea that woman was made for man. The men knew we have struck a blow at their greatest stronghold (marriage). Phillips thought that because Susan and Mrs. Stanton were women they could be tricked. He was wrong. Together they started their own organization for women called the National Women's Suffrage Association. They took up suffrage as the main way for women to gain their equality believing that only when women had the vote could they have the right to put food into their mouths and money into their pockets, without asking men's leave."

Soon after the beginning of the NWSA, other women in the abolition movement saw the need for some kind of organization for women. But these women were the proper Bostonians, the elite class of reformism. Susan and the NWSA helped

organize the Working Women's Association, helped publicize strikes, defended prostitutes, and worked with advocates of free love. No high browed lady from the abolition movement would join such an organization. So the aristocrats formed their own. It was called the American Women's Suffrage Association and was founded by what Susan called "Lucy Stone and Co." The organization was still dedicated to giving the Negro man the vote before all women and Wendell Phillips and other men were a part of its leadership. Susan and Mrs. Stanton who had seen these very men betray women's cause now saw women relying upon them to carry the banner for women's rights. Both of them were very bitter about their former male allies.

Susan was constantly seeking out other women who would be as dedicated to the movement as she. She thought she had found one such woman in Anna Dickinson, a famed orator of the day. Speaking from a handful of scribbled notes, Anna could hold an audience spellbound for hours. Susan first saw Anna speak in New York in 1862 and was enraptured by her. Her attachment to Anna became the most passionate affection of her life. Anna spoke on women's rights with fluency and conviction. Thus started an intimate friendship which continued for years. Below is part of a letter from Anna to Susan: "The sunniest of sunny mornings to you, how are you today? Well, and happy, I hope. To tell the truth I want to see you very much, indeed to hold your hand in mine, to hear your voice, in a word, I want you--I can't have you? Well, I will at least put down a little fragment of my foolish self and send it to look up at you..." Now such a letter tends to make one think that their intimacy was a little more than friendship. But of course the fact is not known. There are only fragments of letters and the knowledge that Susan made many trips to see her friend and often regarded her more highly than deserved.

Anna became more and more popular as an orator especially speaking for the Republican interests. She was courted by many men who wanted her talents in their cause--among them Wendell Phillips. Their causes were more acceptable and paid more than Susan's. Anna chose men. This must have been very painful for Susan, but as long as there was a possibility of gaining Anna's skills for women Susan continued to seek her out. It was only when Anna broke off their relationship that Susan finally accepted Anna's defection from the women's cause.

Once again she turned to her friend Elizabeth C. Stanton. Their close relationship became a cause of prolific comment. Many people tried to break it down. Together Susan and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were formidable foes. On Susan's 70th birthday, Elizabeth Cady Stanton said of their relationship, "I prefer a tyrant of my own sex, so I shall not deny the patent fact of my subjection; for I do believe that I have developed into much more of a woman under her jurisdiction, fed on statute laws and constitutional amendments, than if left to myself reading novels in an easy chair, lost in sweet reveries of the golden age to come without any effort of my own." It wasn't until 1902 that their friendship diminished and then only because



of death. On hearing of Mrs. Stanton's death Susan said, "Oh, this awful hush. It seems impossible that voice is stilled which I have loved to hear for fifty years... I am all at sea--but the laws of nature are still going with no shadow of turning." Susan never had another emotional relationship as strong as that one, although she spent the last four years of her life in a close companionship with Anna Howard Shaw.

Anna was an especially warm-hearted person who loved Susan completely. They understood each other well. Anna often traveled many miles with poor transportation just to be with Susan for a day. She wrote of Susan, "It is of her I wish to write--of her bigness, her many sidedness, her humor, of her courage, her quickness, her sympathy, her understanding, her force, her supreme common sense, her selflessness; in short of the rare beauty of her nature as I learned to know it." On the morning of March 7, 1906, she relates, she suddenly felt she must go to her friend. "I awoke with a feeling that Miss Anthony wanted me. Though her feeling was mixed with a fear "that she might not be permitted to see her" (Susan had been confined to her bed because of illness), she took the first train for Susan's home in Rochester. Upon her arrival Mary (Susan's sister) said, "Oh, Anna Shaw, we have been wanting you all day. Early this morning sister Susan said she must see you and talk with you. She insisted so much that I should

write you that I finally did so and about an hour ago mailed the letter." Less than a week later Susan B. Anthony died. During that last week she reflected on her life. "Just think of it, I have been striving for over sixty years for a little bit of justice no bigger than that, and yet I must die without obtaining it. Oh, it seems so cruel."

We need not glorify Susan B. Anthony as she made mistakes. Perhaps the biggest mistake was that the 19th century suffrage movement of which she was such a large part believed that women only needed the vote to gain their freedom. Nevertheless, she was a great woman whom historians have ignored or misinterpreted--all to the betterment of male supremacy. She was one of the few women in the 19th century movement to understand that marriage was a primary institution that kept women down. Perhaps only the Victorian period kept her from concluding that heterosexuality was basic to men's power. Above all, Susan B. Anthony understood the importance of women being totally dedicated to their fight for freedom including not being tied to men--either in individual relationships or political movements.

She fought for that freedom until she was 87, for over fifty years. Only a few months before she died she rose from her bed several times against doctor's wishes to give speeches to raise money for the movement and for women's colleges. In one of her last speeches she said, "This is a magnificent

sight before me, and these have been wonderful addresses and speeches I have listened to during the past week. Yet I have looked on many such audiences, and in my lifetime I have listened to many such speakers, all testifying to the righteousness, the justice, and the worthiness of the cause of woman's suffrage. I never saw that great woman, Mary Wollstonecraft, but I have read her eloquent and unanswerable arguments in behalf of the liberty of womankind. I have met and have known most of the progressive women who came after her--Lucretia Mott, the Grimke sisters, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone--a long galaxy of great women. I have heard them speak, saying in only slightly different phrases exactly what I have heard these newer advocates of the cause say at these meetings. Those older women have gone on, and most of those who worked with me in the early years have gone on. I am here for a little time only and then my place will be filled as theirs was filled. The fight must not cease; you must see that it does not stop."

*Most of the information in this article was taken from Katherine Anthony's book, *Susan B. Anthony: Her Personal History and Her Era*, one of the few histories we have found worth reading.

Roselake Graphics will be printing a pamphlet on Susan B. Anthony and the Women's Rights Movement this fall.

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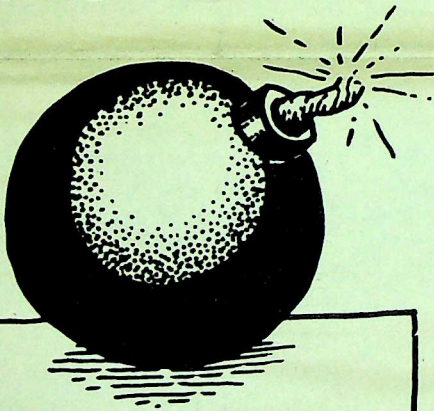
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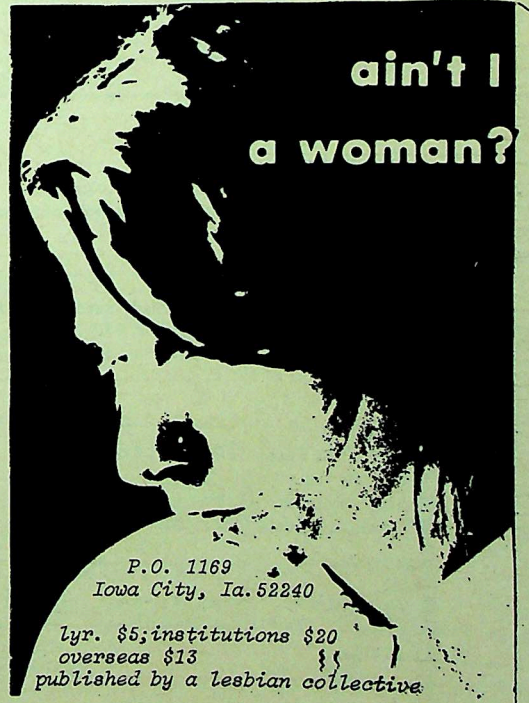
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LETTERS

We get piles of letters every month with only brief comments about The Furies. We really would like to know more specifically what you think about the paper: which articles and kinds of articles you particularly like or dislike; how you or your group is using the paper; how it could be more useful to you, etc.

PURPLE RAGE

There is a new lesbian newspaper coming out of New York: Purple Rage, Gay Women's Liberation Front, c/o Women's Liberation Center, 36 W. 22 St., New York, NY 10010. Subscriptions are \$2.50 a year.

INFORMATION SERVICE

A new lesbian service--the National Lesbian Information Service--has been started in San Francisco. NLIS puts out a monthly newsletter with a round-up of national lesbian news, lists of resource groups and materials, and articles on lesbianism. One year subscriptions are \$12.00. Write NLIS, Box 15268, San Francisco, Ca. 94115. Sample copies are 50¢.

the furies

lesbian/feminist monthly

FALL 1972

VOL. 1 ISSUE 7

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TO OUR READERS

Here at last is your fall issue of The Furies. We want to apologize that there hasn't been an issue since August (#6). Over the past few months there were many changes in our lives individually and as a newspaper. It proved impossible to get another issue out before now.

The Furies began as the newspaper of a tight lesbian/feminist collective. We were working together to develop a lesbian/feminist ideology and to find new ways of working collectively. The newspaper was one collective project. Its purpose was to communicate that ideology and our experiences and to publish lesbian/feminist work from other cities.

Last spring, the collective as a tight group was disbanded. (See articles in issue #5 - June-July) At that time, the core of the newspaper staff decided to continue the paper as a project separate from the collective.

Over the summer, two issues of the newspaper were produced amid many problems, which centered primarily around class and age (See issue #6). At the end of the summer, most of the staff decided that the newspaper was no longer their priority either because of class and age issues or because the paper was no longer the product of a cohesive political collective. Several members of the staff also moved to other cities.

Since that time, many of us

have tried to decide whether to continue the paper or to let it die. For the time being, we have decided to try to continue the paper so that it can reflect the continuing struggles and issues of the lesbian/feminist community. We hope that this issue begins that process. We need to hear from readers about whether we should continue the paper and we hope to receive more articles from you in the future.

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PERSEVERANCE FURTHERS: Separatism and Our Future

BY CHARLOTTE BUNCH

Women's consciousness and the issue of women's liberation has spread like wildfire in the past few years. Yet, the women's liberation movement has become increasingly splintered, satisfies no one, provides little vision or direction, and seems oppressive or beyond control to most women. Although some women's rights reformists are functioning, feminists, who are my primary concern, are in disarray.

Why has this happened and how can we build a stronger more unified feminist leadership and movement? Based on my experiences in women's liberation and particularly on the year I spent as part of a separatist lesbian/feminist collective (The Furies), I have identified three issues which are key to our dilemma and to its solution: the necessity and limits of separatism; a vision and strategy for the future; and women's sense of self or identity. This article discusses the first two. Part II on the self will appear in the next issue of The Furies.

NECESSITY OF SEPARATISM

When women first proclaimed 'Sisterhood is powerful', we had a hazy vision of women supporting each other and creating a new world. That naive vision was rightfully shattered by the recognition of the divisions among us-race, class, heterosexuality, etc. That early unity was false. It was presumed on white, heterosexual, middle class terms, at the expense of more oppressed women. Therefore, various groups found themselves constantly explaining and fighting their oppression within the movement. Some who were not totally discouraged formed separate feminist groups, while others stayed clear of a movement hostile to or ignorant of their needs.

Many struggles, failures, and articles later, we began to understand that in different ways, the women's movement was failing too many women. It was oppressive to lesbians, working class women, non-white women (the most obvious and least understood), young women, older women, artists, leaders or individuals with initiative, followers who were manipulated, mothers, etc. Even among women, we were perpetuating male supremacist societies' hierarchies, privileges, values, and forms of behavior that keep people divided. None of us had escaped their effect. As a result, individuals dropped out or formed separate groups; it seemed the only way to deal with these problems.

Women turned to separatist groups apart first from men, and then from others within the women's movement for several important reasons: to escape the debilitating effects of being with one's oppressor; to develop an analysis of one's particular oppression and force its recognition by others; to build pride and self-dependence away from those who downgrade or ignore you; to rediscover and affirm areas of experience and ways of thinking and doing things that are not recognized as legitimate by the oppressor's

standards; to create strength and unity of the oppressed as a base for survival and power within the whole society; and to build a political ideology and strategy more quickly with those who share certain oppressions and/or ideological positions.

These reasons for separatism are still valid. Increased consciousness about oppression through separatism has developed strength and clarity among women in many ways. It has freed us from much dependence on men and helped us to start breaking with the hierarchies of oppression and privilege that keep people in their place. Separatism has forced issues out into the open. It challenges the naive and oppressive unity of early women's liberation and present reformist groups who fail most women because they can only provide white, heterosexual and middle class solutions to the problems created by male supremacy. This challenge must continue in order for more women of different experiences to develop comprehensive ways to end male supremacy. Some forms of separatism may continue to be important as long as those on top perpetuate patterns of behavior and privilege that oppress others.

However, separatism has traps. Among feminists today, it has led too often to more fragmentation, followed by a retreat from responsibility and/or over-indulgence in "navel-gazing" politics. So far, separatist groups have raised consciousness about the problems of our movement but have not provided enough positive leadership and concrete proposals for the problems that face women today. As a strategy for a particular stage of development, separatism becomes most problematical when it functions as a goal and goes unquestioned. This paper concentrates on the problems of separatism, not because it is no longer useful, but because it can only remain useful if we constantly re-examine it and recognize its limits as a strategy more clearly.

LIMITS OF SEPARATISM

The following problems became clearest to me while in a lesbian/feminist group that sought to develop high consciousness of class and other oppressions that existed both within the group and in the society. However these problems are not exclusive to separatism and face everyone in the movement.

1. Separatist groups and the challenges they raised provided many with an excuse to give up responsibility for the women's movement or for fighting against male supremacy.

Too often privileged women retreated because they did not want either to face how they were oppressive or to give up their privileges. Some less-privileged women left because they saw few changes. Others retreated out of confusion. Immobilized by seeing themselves as both oppressor and oppressed at the same time, they lacked the ability, will-power, or political framework to sort it out.

Real problems of oppression became reason and excuse for retreat: "I've been kept down so long that I can't do anything now" or "Everything that I do is called oppressive or wrong, so why try?" For the privileged woman, this retreat is self-indulgent because she probably can slip back into society and develop an individual solution for her life. For the less privileged, this retreat is more likely to be despair because she has fewer options. We must not let each other retreat when the definition and problems of our struggle become more complicated. Instead we must develop a political framework and a means of communicating with each other that helps us evaluate the problems of oppression within our movement and work toward their solution instead of being defeated by them.

2. Those who don't retreat often get bogged down in self-examination and struggle that becomes an end in itself and takes on a tally-sheet appearance.

Each person's identity and her view of others are drawn increasingly from the categories of oppression that we are fighting. What started as an effort to eliminate oppression within our movement deteriorates into guilt and guilt-tripping, paranoia, making oppression into a status or power, and confusion about the political significance of each. Our lists of oppression become symbols of status and false pride. We play games with people's real oppressions, tally up how much each person suffers, and use these as tools for power and control over each other, rather than fighting them in the context of an overall strategy.

3. We tend to undermine each other's confidence and ability to function, often inadvertently, rather than building stronger, less oppressed and less oppressive, individuals.

We indulge in gossiping and back-biting -- women's traditional expression of powerlessness -- instead of giving direct helpful criticism. We romanticize oppression: we define any strength, no matter what its source, as oppressive and put a premium on acting oppressed. We respond more positively to other's problems and failures than to their triumphs. Secretly we are relieved to see that they too are "human", i.e., dragged down by their oppression. Sometimes women who make it and get strong do not use their strength to help other women. Nevertheless, we must build the trust and unity to insure that each woman's strength helps other women instead of undermining each other. We must build on what in each person's experience is useful and eliminate what is destructive. (Some articles analyzing this tendency include: "Gossip" [Furies Jan 72]; "Leadership vs Stardom" [Furies Feb 72]; "The Tyranny of Structurelessness" [Ain't I A Woman June 72])

4. We grow accustomed to using separatism as the way to solve problems of oppression within our movement and forget our broader goal of uniting women to end male supremacy
(continued next page)

and its divisions.

We initially raised the problems of oppression so that they would not impede our work together to change society or be perpetuated in a new society. We have rejected oppressive unity, but forget that we did so in order to create a working unity among women. What we need now is not more subdivisions but a new, less oppressive means by which we can work together to create programs that aid larger numbers of women and build the power necessary to change society.

5. We begin to think in terms of purity rather than revolutionary consciousness, limiting our vision and leadership.

We start with the useful strategy of working only with a particular group, x, lesbians, working class women, young women. But we slip into the purist assumption that if you aren't x, you can't be in our revolution rather than stressing the development of x-consciousness whether you are x or not. We may choose to work with a limited group, but if we develop this purist attitude toward others, we narrow the number of people who can join our struggle.

For example, The Furies decided to form a separatist group to develop lesbian/feminist theory. Our problems came not from our separatism per se, but from the impression we gave that only lesbians could fight male supremacy, rather than that lesbian/feminist consciousness was crucial to the struggle. Of course, lesbians are most likely to develop lesbian/feminist consciousness, but anyone can criticize white male heterosexual domination and fight against its privileges and oppressions. By not encouraging actions and consciousness of different sorts, we provided little opportunity for nonlesbians to develop strong feminist consciousness.

In summary, separatism is a necessary strategy for survival and growth at certain times, but it is not a final vision. To be useful as a strategy, we should be aware of its problems and correct our mistakes. At this time especially, we need to develop more coalitions that keep feminist connections going. At the same time we cannot allow coalitions to dilute our politics. We must struggle to expand consciousness of oppression within those coalitions. We need to affirm a theory of consciousness that makes possible the participation of more people, not fewer, in our struggle. We must assume that even though someone is in x, y, or z category, she can change her consciousness, her politics, her life, and help change the world.

A REVOLUTIONARY THEORY OF CHANGING CONSCIOUSNESS

A revolutionary theory of changing consciousness recognizes that biological and socio-economic factors strongly affect consciousness but do not determine it absolutely. This understanding provides the basis for developing our vision of the future and a way for anyone to choose to participate in building it.

Most of recorded history has not been based on this theory of changing consciousness. It has been

tribal-racial-national (therefore biologically and geographically determined) warfare, with economic power motives. One tribe, race, nation gained economic advantage and territory over another. The poor of one race fought the poor of another on behalf of the rich and powerful of each race. You were born into your side of the struggle--your race or nation. No particular consciousness was required or choice made about what side you were on.

Marx and the socialists challenged this with the idea of conscious class struggle and choice about one's allegiance. They rejected the race-nation basis of struggle (except where whole peoples were subject to colonial rule), proclaiming that the real interests of people were class interests. They called for the unity of the oppressed (working class) across national and racial lines and against their common enemy - the ruling class of all nations. The workers could choose their true interests and transfer their allegiance from geographically and biologically determined race and nation to socio-economically determined interests of class.

Marx went further by calling for revolutionary consciousness or choice by all people. One was born into a class, just as one was into a race or nation, but one could choose to develop a different class consciousness and ally with the progressive forces. Marx did not expect many ruling class or bourgeoisie to do so but he asserted the individual's ability to choose to transform her class allegiance, to change her accident of birth, by joining the forces of revolution. Anyone could work for a working class victory. Hence, the broad appeal of socialism.

In trying to break away from a world of national capitalism, Marx did not take enough account of the biologically determined oppressions of race and sex. He failed to see that class consciousness by itself was not enough. Racial oppression (racism and colonialism) and sexual

oppression (male supremacy) cut across class. But in reasserting the fight against sexism and racism, we do not need to revert to the earlier assumption that all allegiance is biologically determined. Marxism called for a society governed by working class consciousness, not class purity. So, too, our goal is non-sexist (and non-racist, non-classist) consciousness and struggle, not sex or race or class purity. If we return to a purist attitude about who can change and work to change society we will be reduced to smaller and smaller pockets of separatists who fight each other and thus allow the white ruling class male to keep the oppressed divided and to maintain his power.

Let me repeat that separatism is a necessary strategy but only part of the process toward ending male supremacy. To avoid the dead ends of separatist purity, we must act on our belief that revolutionary consciousness is possible among all people. Allegiance is not unalterably tied to biology or social status: men can become fighters for an anti-sexist world; whites can struggle to end racism; middle class women can combat classism; older people can oppose youth oppression.

Women can and must provide leadership in the struggle against male supremacy and for a better society for all. We must create ideology, program, vision, and a movement that large numbers of people see will improve their lives and can participate in if they are willing to struggle and change themselves. The revolutionary theory of changing consciousness discussed here provides the basis for developing that vision and those allies.

A VISION AND STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE

While there is vision among women today, as a movement, we have not been able to spell out that vision very concretely to large numbers of people. We have clear ideas about how previous societies and



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"utopian" visions have failed women, and some factions can explain parts of what they want in the future (e.g. 24 hour child care). But we need to make our visions and ideas more concrete so that larger numbers of people will feel that they are worth fighting for. No one but a handful of the most desperate and the most adventuresome will join a movement that lacks concrete visions and plans. We also need clearer goals and strategies so that our actions can fit into an overall direction and not simply be isolated projects with no reference to a larger vision.

We need to: 1) spell out more clearly the overall principles for governing a society that we favor -- its political, economic, and social institutions; and 2) discuss and experiment with practical models of how these could work. While we start with the ideas we have, they will of course change as they are put into practice and as more people respond to them.

Many people in the US want someone to suggest a better way to live and how to get there. All they have gotten are liberal reforms that don't work, Nixon's propaganda or the left's rhetoric that analyzes but goes nowhere. Our ideas will take time to develop and become a real alternative to masses of people. But until we begin to suggest some of those visions and to create concrete structures that people can begin responding to now, we remain primarily a movement of dissent and disorder like all the rest.

How do we do this in 20th century USA with its sophisticated methods of keeping people divided, killing and buying us off? It is no small task, but to begin with, lesbian/feminists must make our leadership stronger and more far-reaching. We do not become leaders, as we sometimes imply, because of our self-professed purity or high consciousness. We do it by hard work, by exhibiting greater energy, commitment, imagination, plans, and projects. We need to create a movement or momentum that helps unite, build, and direct people's energies but which does not ignore our oppressions within that. At this time, I can only suggest some of the steps that we can begin to take in that direction.

1. We must clarify the confusion caused by our separatist strategy. Even if we continue to work primarily with our particular group we can assert our belief that all people can participate in creating the new society. What we require of ourselves and of others is not purity, but willingness to struggle, to change oppressive behavior and to share privileges that benefit others.

2. We must continue to raise consciousness about women oppression and other oppressions that divide people. But our object in raising these divisions is to unite beyond them. We can start to lay the basis for a non-oppressive (or at least less oppressive) way to work with other individuals and groups. I do not mean sloppy pluralism where we pretend that it's OK for everyone to do their own thing, but practical coalitions that acknowledge our need of each other, even when all problems have not been resolved. We must stop using our oppressions

as weapons against each other, and we must not get bogged down in them or in other excuses for inaction. In short, we must create working coalitions of all those who are fighting against male supremacy and other oppressions.

3. Despite real fears about structures and institutions, we must experiment with more of them. We need to discover how to live differently (communes, childcare centers, etc.), how to work differently (our own businesses, nutrition and food cooperatives, unions, research institutes, etc.), and how to communicate and use media and arts differently. We must begin with ourselves and those who join us. We must reconstruct our lives and meet each other's needs -- economically and spiritually -- for security, dignity, space, love, work. Thus, we point the way to a better future.

4. We have to develop political organizations which can gain the power to make many of the changes we propose. This involves preparing the structures (party, special interest groups, etc.) and the methods

for leadership training and accountability, for the development of ideology and strategy, and for the gaining of political and economic power. We must show how women can gain power and what we will do with it.

As we take these steps, we will be spelling out more clearly our vision and strategy for the future. While working out the best visions possible, none of us can know for sure what will work and how we will have to change. Studying relevant models in other countries and movements is helpful but finally we can only discover by trial and error, as we have done in our experiences with separatism. Perhaps most important is that, although we know it will take a long time, we must not be afraid to risk, to try things out so that all women can progress more rapidly. One of the crucial places we begin is with our selves -- with our sense of selfhood and how we develop it. This brings me to the third major issue -- women's sense of self -- which I will discuss in Part II of this article in the next issue of The Furies.



Photo by Jeb



INTERNAL BLEEDING

(Or A Case Study In Bombastic Twaddling)

BY NANCY MYRON

Introduction: Black and White Photo

They once stood in sunny rooms
where half second deaths were nothing new
we watched the sun leave their shoulders
their faces became pale like November snow
they lived in their nightmares
repeating their dramas
embracing their sluggish fears.

A PLAY WITH NO STAGE OR SCENERY

Come with me pretty lady.
Oh, don't mind my wrinkled breasts or my stained
teeth. Its alright we can transcend it, you know.
O, do come with me and I swear I'll tell you how
it was. I'll trade my golden knowledge just for a
teaspoon full of your warmth and company.
Yes? O good! O joy! Thank you!
No. I take that back forgive me.
It's just up those stairs let me get the key.
O, don't be shocked I know it's awfully messy.
Come in don't be frightened. When I tell you how it
used to be all this will seem quite romantic, you
know. Are you a writer? Pity. I wish I could find
someone to record my life and loves. It seems such
a waste to have lived it all for naught. I had such
ambition. Writing was somewhere among the 'things'.
I mean I never wrote, I never had time but I knew I
could. Just put your coat anywhere. On that chairs
fine. I mean I hate to put it all down on the level
of art which is not what I'm talking about...at least
not now...I might have back then. But you see, we
all can do it or anything, for that matter, because
we're all DIVINE BEINGS. It's just that life's little
unkindnesses have a way of trampling out the DIVINITY
before we ever have a chance to recognize it. Will
you pass me that Jack Daniels, dear? Thank You. Oh,
whew! That's better. This stuff just seems to put
things to rights, you know. Would you have one with
me, dear? No? It's funny but young people nowadays
seem to have much more sense about taking care of
themselves. They don't seem to have the weaknesses
for booze, cigarettes and potato chips the way my
generation, or should I say generations, did. You
know three quarters of the girls in that bar don't
drink? Now forty-five years ago it was the going
thing to get looped and carry on. Now it's just
fruit juice and pool, fruit juice and pool. I know
most of the girls in that place think I'm a silly old
fool, but fruit juice won't cleanse them of their
false purity. They're the ones who are the fools.
I suppose I was foolish too. I let age mar my judge-
ment many times. I just wish I had known. Oh, but
I watch them pitying me from the cockiness of youth
and it's I who pity them and the cruel lesson they'll
learn when its my perch they inherit in that dump.
But sometimes I want to break through because I get
so lonely but I can't win because the unwritten laws
are all on their side. Besides there's more of them
than us. By some twist of fate they seem to outlive
us. Oh, but surely I must be boring you with my hate
ful old woman's talk.
I remember the great Utzetta Anacelli (I was her

seamstress and lover for the whole Broadway run of
Death Has No Choice), once said to me, 'You might be
the poorest in the world but you are the richest in
the beauty and electricity that you carry everywhere
with you.' Sounds corny, I know, to look at me now,
but very moving when you're in love, my dear. Would
you just put a bit more in here to freshen this up?
Thank you, dear. That's better. M-m-m-m, lets see
where was I? Oh, yes, now I remember. Utzetta.
Utzetta was the most gorgeous woman in the world.
She was the most written about, the most gossiped
about, the most admired, the most imitated creature
goddess, and actress in the world. The press loved
and hated her. She wouldn't give them the time of
day. Oh, you should've seen them! Each week they
would have her secretly married off to some new pimp-
ley-faced Don Juan. Oh, it was glorious to watch the
fools. They were making up absurd stories to feed
the poor fantasy hungry subscribers to that trash
while we were off, sometimes half a world away, making
love.

Once we were sitting in a cafe outside of La
Spezia and a gypsy lady came by and glared at Utzetta.
She came over and said she would give Utzetta some
gypsy wisdom for 100 Lire. Utzetta, amused, gave her
the money and the gypsy stared intensely in her eyes
the whole time and said,

'Take the oil of the oyster
after the pie
cream it about yer eyes
and you will espy
transformed beauty
with vanity's lies'

'Vain! I? Never! she shouted, but the gypsy was on
the road and down a ravine before Utzetta could get
up from her chair. She spent two days in bed after
that...sulking. There was nothing to be done to get
her out of it. Vain? Yes, she was vain. She was also
selfish, arrogant and greedy. But that was all later.
What she was was a great actress and artist.

Did you say you were a writer, dear? Oh, I
thought you said that. Ha! That's another lot! I've
seen 'em come and go the bunch of gas-bag egotists.
Put another nip in this would you dear? Writers?
Let's see...writers...they're afraid they'll become
the most loathsome and the most repulsive characters
they create. You know dear, I might even say that
they are a bit of each one of those characters. They
ward off their worst fears by jumping ugliness to the

punch and creating the extremes of humanity by their art and voila! they are sensitive artists....above the despicable because they created it. The rest of us who had the misfortune to be born a bit lowly have not such arrogance, such tools to ditch our tattered souls. (We loiter about being their worst fears. Ha, ha.) So what happens to us lot? The Blacks are criminals and dope fiends and the whites are sociopaths and drunks. (Present company excluded, Ha, ha.) Then there are the liberals who have the balls to write social commentary on both lots. Oh, my dear, if we could only make a blessed union on hate we would have knocked the stilts out from under this ugly Kingdom long ago. Art! Psshaw...it becomes a desperate business like everything else. God forbid that you give them a simple human category...like buffoon...no not them they don't want to be anything but the amorphous GREAT, the invisible three feet above the ground in arrogant detachment. Its their Ticket Out. Hand me the water pitcher will you, love? This stuff gets a bit biting after awhile....

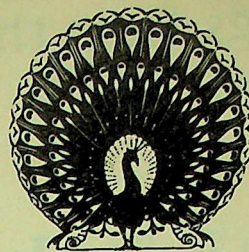
Now, Utzetta, there was an artist. Artist? Me? Well...why don't you hand me that bottle of Jack Daniels, dear. Well, I was sort of. I used to paint sometimes and loved it very much, but I never had a formal education like most. I was told I was very good. But where was I to go in that rat race? (Besides I was a seamstress and a very good one at that. And that, if you want to use the word art, is an art all in itself) I went to a museum last month and it was very depressing. It seems all you need nowadays to be an artist is a bit of mummy and daddy's money and a strong bicep to fling paint at a 12 foot by 12 foot canvas. Ayeeee...its all so sad. Its just a reflection of their barren lives...if you haven't suffered, loved and lived, what's to express?

Hand me those Lucky's, that's a love.

Did I love her? Utzetta was really the only one I ever loved. I mean I loved and have lived with different women for many years at a time but Utzetta was the one who had me completely. It was almost like I was possessed and then it became like a profession loving her...there were those two good years together in the beginning. The rest of the time I wasted the whole of my youth and the beginnings of middle age, either convalescing after a breakdown or patching her up after two ugly marriages. She drained me and cast me aside each time. Did I learn? No. I could be bought with a 'Forgive me, my sweet'. A scrape of fat from the keeper and I gobbled it up like a starving fool. Ah, dear Utzetta, how I loved and hated her....loved her for twenty years and hated her for twenty-two...twenty-three this coming July 14th. Oh, those were two beautiful years, traveling and partying. I could drink with the best of them. Once when she was on location in Banja Luka I drank two table loads of peasants right under the table. Ha! You should have seen them! Slobbering and pissing in their drawers as I hummed and watched the last bit of wick burn away. She loved to have me around then. She said I was so funny....' You have the raw wit of your class and you delight me'. Ha! The arrogance. When you're down at the bottom on the Big Scale you constantly have to prove yourself...you've got to do everything...even the most absurd piece of shit...the best. I become so engrossed in escaping my beginnings I hardly noticed it's just like flinging yourself in front of an express train with more expertise than anyone else. Poor me, what was I to know fresh out of a fabric factory...aspiring designer...and then to become the seamstress of the great U. Anacelli.



Oh, we humans pride ourselves on being such sane and sensible creatures but we're such weak egotistical fools. It never seems to fail that the one who's being loved always has a slight contempt for the one who's loving. And its always those with the money and all the things that go with it that have the luxury to reject. You know what I mean, dear? Oh, our stupid arrogances are our best defenses. How foolish I was. I sewed up the seams in her clothing and the seams in her, 'til my fingers were raw but what did I care...I was riding on the tidal wave of her beauty and fame. It gave me my universe. But we all know what happens to tidal waves don't we, dear? Would you just lean under the bed and get out those Hershey's Chocolate Drops? Thank you. I always need a little nourishment when I have a few drinks. It sort of settles my stomach. No one loves



worse than a woman. Romance. Its our lot. Romance. (Burp!) Its our beginning and our end. What love? Do we love ourselves...our bodies...life...living...flowers...do we love to create? Love? Sure it was love. Love for two minutes. Love for two years.... We strangle ourselves on our fears and insecurities and call it love...what happens when you wake up at age sixty-eight, with the blood stuck in your throat, still frozen in that fear? Am I the wiser? No! Nor has anyone else been. What do I have...knowledge of the years I wasted...knowledge of my humiliations...but who the hell do I give them to now? Even the garbage man won't take them...says that kind of stuff is too heavy for his truck. Did you ever hear of such a poetic garbage man? Psssshaw! We pass geniuses, poets and saints on the street all the time. Anyone alive is a potential genius....just the mere fact that she's alive is enough...but dear, most of us, of course, don't make it....and those that don't make it even have their own brand of genius...and that's hating themselves and procrastinating their lives away with more determination and conviction than anyone I know. 'So it goes, so it goes, this pitiful repetition of woes.' My friend Rajka Brankovic said that, another genius.

Sorry, dear. Yes, I am getting a little off aren't I? What happened with Utzetta? Well finally I tired of playing the role of the tennis ball for twenty years and left. Wandered about from job to job. I hadn't seen her in two years and then I heard the studios chucked her...between breakdowns, bouts of long seclusion and fading beauty....they weren't making a dime off her. She went back to Italy alone and broke. I used to write her long letters and once every six months I'd receive a postcard that was always cheerful and talked of work forthcoming. But I knew her all too well....its so sad for me to think that she only had those moments of delusion every six months. She died of peritonitis in Rome 15 years ago. What cracked me up was when I read her obituary in the New York Times I found out she had been an orphan and had grown up in the slums of Naples. Oh, my dear, I could have eaten the paper whole and kicked in the walls. You should have heard the stories she told me about her family and their wealth.....

After her? Well, I can hardly remember..just some women I cared about and who cared about me for awhile. It's funny though, I can never understand it but I always was attracted to women who ended up to be drinkers. I mean I always liked a nip but we would get in these stupid fights...I mean we would never remember where they started...always accusing one of being worse than the other....and after awhile it always ended very messily.....

Oh, I am going on aren't I? You're such a nice girl to sit and listen to all this mess. You're so pretty and what lovely hair! And such lovely stylish clothes! My, my....you probably won't get very far. No offense meant, love. It's just that facial beauty has a way of deadening the Divinity. Now, now..O, come, dear, you mustn't take offense...oh, now really I only meant...all right if you must go, you must. Why don't you come back.....hump! she's gone...arrogant twit she didn't even give me a chance to explain....I never know if I say things right. Of course I say things right. The problem is that it's all the truth, that's the problem....and then the guilt....and the guilt about the guilt...wishy washy cowardice that's what that is....and a nice drink always helps to fight the cowards off....back! back I say! Back to all you mash potatoe brains....Gaaaaa night, sweetie! Talk ta ya again...got alot ta tell ya....even if you don't want to hear it I'll tell it to you anyway....somebody's gotta.



"They are songs from the dark, written sometimes out of anguish, anguish assuaged only by an act which, i

Susan Baker

Susan is a poet and professional photographer from Baltimore. The following poems are from an unpublished manuscript.

AND ARAB

I loved you Arab,
And learned a new word-
Lesbian.
How we ran from it.
We gained strength from knowing
Anne Bonny and Mary Reed were lovers;
But not Susan and Arab.

You described yourself as flat,
no breasts, no hips,
And bought a size C cup.
A body outgrown itself.
We stood staring at Bliss's paintings of
No hip boys and girls
in faded bathing suits.

You out biked me.
I out ran you.
I wrote better poems.
You wrote better stories.
We were going to live in the Chelsea Hotel,
With a cat, a fireplace, and an adopted daughter.
I ran away, became a lesbian.
You stayed home, got married.
We ought to get together sometime.

How about supper Thursday after next.

SNAPSHOTS ON CONNECTICUT AND K

first

The daughter armed--hermaphrodite
A flute call, a drum roll,
I listen.
The daughter armed--hermaphrodite
An anger grown lean and hard and desperate.

Daughter of Darkness, Detester of lies,
Tell me, if the sun takes back the light at dust,
Where is the lie?

fourth

I am a woman.
I walk down the street
Hearing but not reacting,
Eyes following my feet.
I know what eye contact means.
Either he is real or I am real.
I am a woman.

I am a woman.
What does it mean to say,
"I am a man."

FOR MEG A

Lee Lally

Lee is a poet from D.C. These poems are from her recently published book THESE DAYS Printed and distributed by The Some Of Us Press, 4110 Emery Place Wash., D.C. 20016

HURRICANES

They name them after women.
You've been through a few
you say.
Hurricanes, tornadoes,
tropical storms,
women.
I understand that natural rage.

Tropical storm Agnes
swept through tonight
like a real lady.
Greeted rich and poor
with equal vengeance.
The poor will remember her
longer
with less detail.
With wild breath,
unyielding
she spit.
Small rivers run
now
in the streets.
I understand that rage.

Tornadoes, tropical storms,
hurricanes,
they name them
after women.

Merritt Wilson

Merritt is a poet from Maryland's Eastern Shore. The following are from MORNING STAR POEMS, an unpublished manuscript.

DIANA

She flies across the end of night
and enters the land of morning on the incoming tide.
They see and take flight.

A PREFERENCE

I have seen old women die in hospitals
withered, toothless ghosts
closer to death than life
the sounds they made addressed to silence
sounds that tried to speak
that said "there is no one...
there is no one"...

I want to die in the light that I have loved;
I shall walk out among the streams of green and light
and there shall be flight in the moment and
the dashing of hopes still alive
against the rocks that soar above the sea
and then the final gift
"There is no one... there is no one
but me"...

E. Sharon Gomillion

E. Sharon "Lois" is a Black poet from D. C. She presently has a photo-poetry exhibit at the S. E. Branch of the Library (7th & D S. E.)
The following poems are from an unpublished manuscript.

MY LOVE CALLED ME TODAY

My love called today
She said hello,
how are you dear

I was perturbed
thoughts were far away
She questioned my motive
nothing could I say

Love stop me today,
from what I had to convey

My love called me today
Do you still love me?

I had nothing to say

BLACK WOMAN

Black woman
Black woman
Black woman of mine

Step right up
Step right up in time

Strut your stuff, be real proud
Lift your head to the sky

Forgotten Black Woman
Lost in time, but not in mind

I await
words from a Person
who has listened to himself
has written himself
darkly in events
but
has almost perished
in the thunder
of history.

"Go from me lovely flowers --
find your way into the waves
and don't look back
or you will see
a woman sitting alone
disgusted with her loss,
and you had left a goddess
sheathed in perfect light."

out of anguish, anguish assuaged only by writing it on paper -
an act which, in a sense, draws the love into light again."

AND K

ermaphrodite
roll,

rmaphrodite
nd hard and desperate.

Detester of lies,
akes back the light at dust,

et
tting,
eet.
act means.
- I am real.

o say,

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The poor will remember her
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and enters the land of morning on the incoming tide.
They see and take flight.

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has written himself
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but almost perished
has the thunder
in history.

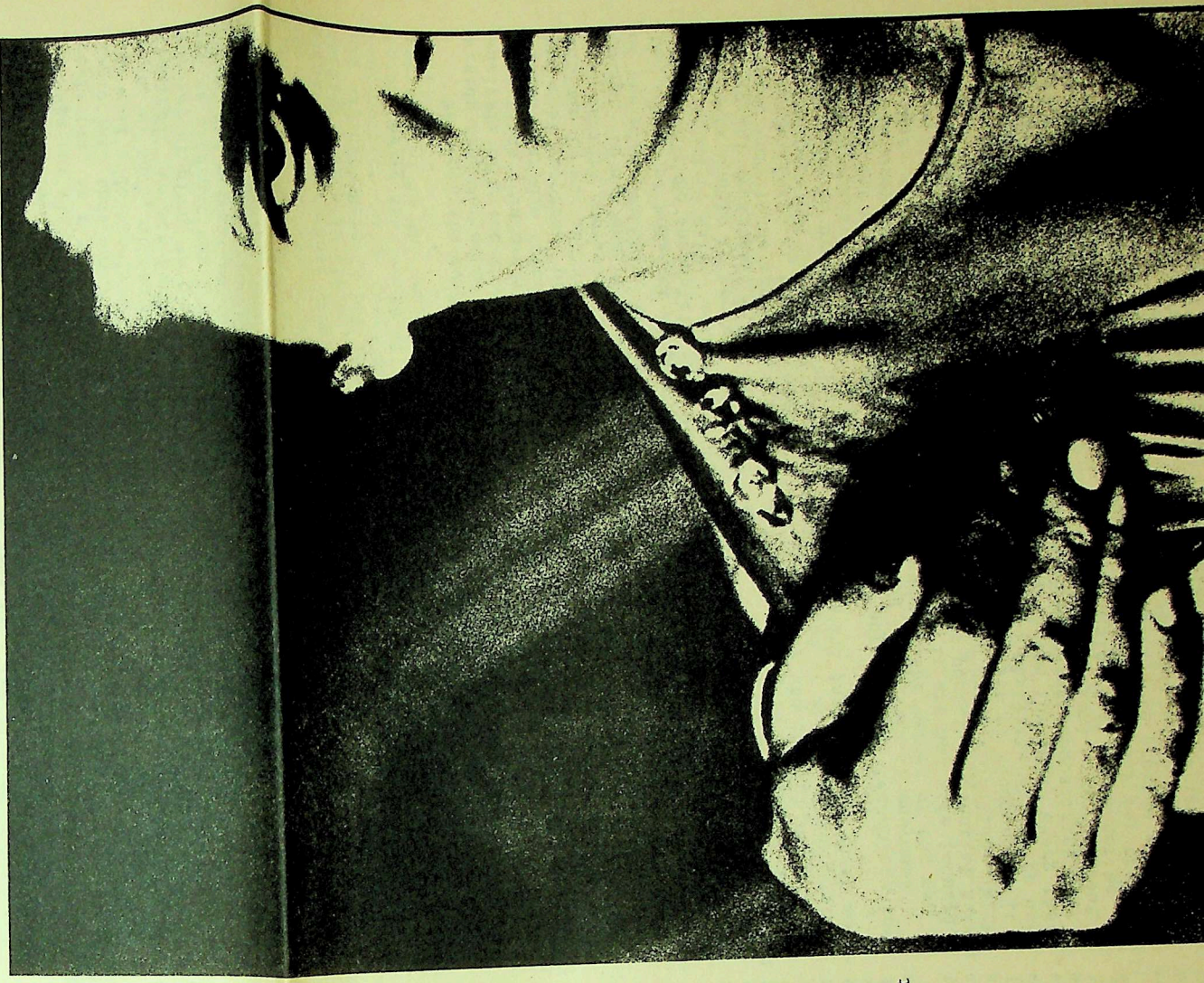
from me lovely flowers
may into the waves

FOR MEG AT CLYDE'S

You have left your voice
hanging from the mast.
No oceanic storm will
bring it down.
you have told us who you love
and why.
We could see the lighthouse,
on the dock, over coffee
early in the morning.
We have heard what makes millions
and what makes meaning.
There is a resonant echo
that seams the edges of my sleep
and dreams are more like Black Elk
than ever.
Singing others' words
listening is easy.
Sing your own
we will hear.

YOU WERE BURYING US BEFORE WE WERE DEAD

You told us the stories.
We did not like the heroes.
We did not like them then but
you kept us from our strength.
We could not speak.
The shovel slipped into the earth.
The horses have ridden off
with who ever would go.
The prince should have
been here by now.
We are no longer waiting.
We are writing our own stories.



It's Now Or Never, Baby

BY SUSAN HATHAWAY

In much of today's society, human beings are afraid of change--either in self or in society--because to change is to choose what is unknown, unformed. People are inclined to choose the security of what is known, the certainty of what is and has been, however unsatisfactory it is. The majority of people will not change, will not give up what little security they may have until they have a sense of what a changed world will look like, what it will be for them. We can give people that sense by describing our vision of a new world.

At every step we must take care to make our vision practical and realistic; at the same time, we must appreciate that any vision we create now will undoubtedly be utopian, and that, as such, it can never be fully realized. We set forth the vision, however utopian, to clarify what we see as alternatives: a new set of values and priorities for human society; different principles to guide human relationships; and goals to work toward. Any goal, even a utopian one, is reached step by step; the description of our utopia points directions for those steps. By unfolding a utopian vision, then, we are saying: Here is our idea of a near-perfect world--every major step taken toward that world will be an improvement in the quality of human life.

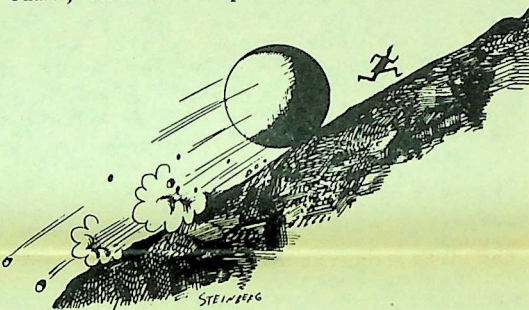
We begin the outline of our vision from our understanding and analysis of present human and world conditions. In order to create a vision that can succeed in resolving the most important problems, we must include in our analysis all the critical factors operating in the world today. If our analysis neglects any of the elements which are crucial to the course of human development, our vision will be incomplete and, as such, bound to fail: either it will simply be unable to replace the present social organization, or it will succeed only to be ripped apart by the inequalities it has perpetuated.

The critical factors we must consider can be broken down into two broad categories: 1) human, social values--social priorities, oppressions and inequalities; 2) material conditions--necessities for survival, other physical/ecological factors.

Although we separate the two categories for purposes of analysis, we must also remember that they are constantly contingent upon each other: over a period of time, one cannot be altered without altering the other. So far, we have concentrated our efforts on the existing social values, which perpetuate the existing material conditions, oppressive to so many. Yet, at the same time, we are able to propose a new set of values because, for certain privileged people of this world (primarily in the Uni-

ted States), material conditions have changed. And those changes for the few raise the possibility of changing material conditions for everyone.

The physical factor presently most critical to changes in material conditions is advanced technology. Throughout the course of male-dominated history, various technological tools--ranging from spears and stone hammers to television and computers--were devised, and enabled societies to provide adequate means for survival (food, clothing, shelter and water) to a steadily growing number of people. Over the same period of time, men developed and consolidated



various systems of power; thus, the highest forms of technology came to serve and enhance the power of the men who controlled it. Currently, it is clear that the most advanced technologies--in communications, weaponry and computer-information--are being used to serve power in the hands of ruling, white men. Likewise, much of today's advanced technology was originally developed for economic-military power purposes. Technology has been used to improve material conditions when and where it has been in ruling men's interests to buy off people, to give them just enough so that they wouldn't oppose the ruling system.

Technology itself is neutral; it provides ways to accomplish progressively more, using progressively less energy. It can be used for or against life, according to the social values of the people who control it; it is only as good or as bad as the system of values and institutions which maintains it.

The potential of technology for improving human life is enormous. Yet, because the values of the men who control it are not life-focused, technology's positive potential hasn't come close to being fulfilled. Without the existence of technology, it would not be realistic for us to describe a vision for today where there would be no major inequalities (sex, race, class, nation). For, without using technology, it would not be possible (as it is today for the first time in history) to provide adequate survival necessities to everyone on this globe. But to realize the life-supporting potential of technology requires drastic change in the social

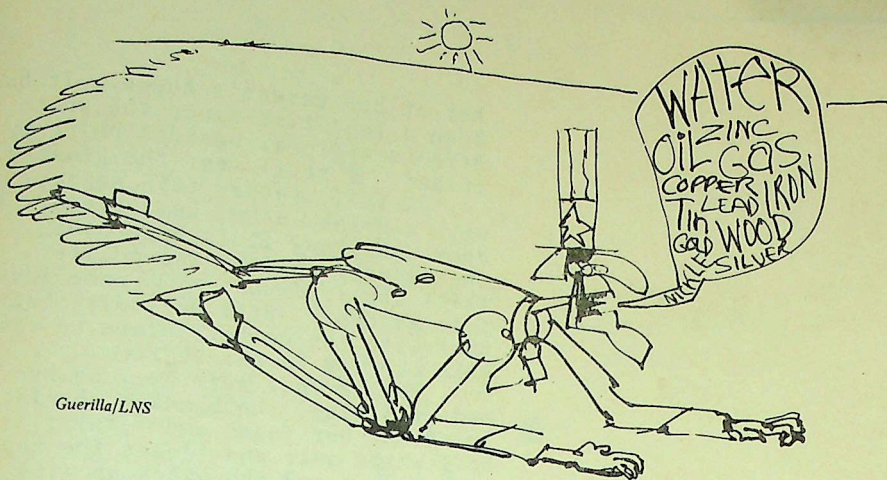
values and institutions which guide its use.

We must not make the mistake of denying technology or wanting to destroy it merely because it has been used in anti-human ways. Nor can we attribute to technology itself the primary responsibility or power to alter the present course of human events. Just as technology is not inherently bad, it is not intrinsically good. And there are no miracles with technology. For everything it can do to help human life, there will be a cost. All technological advances produce possibly harmful side-effects. But with foresight and a social value system in which the improvement of human life is a priority, most harm can be prevented or minimized.

In a recently published book, *The Limits To Growth*, a group of scientists consider the development and interconnection of five material factors, which, in their view, critically affect human life: industrial growth, population growth, food production, natural resource consumption, and pollution. This MIT group traces the past, present, and future growth of these factors, recognizing the importance of technology both to present and future development. In the course of their primarily material analysis, they assess the predominant social values which dictate the behavior of all five factors. Their evaluation, predictions and suggested alternatives represent a indictment (although not explicit) of male supremacy and all its counterparts. In addition, they serve to remind us that our vision must be global and technological in scope, if it is to be proposed as a genuine solution.

Each of the five factors they discuss involves elements which change and grow over time; moreover, a change in the dynamic of any one affects the movement of the others. For instance, a certain amount of industrial growth produces a certain amount of return on investment; adding that investment to the original investment makes possible a larger amount of industrial growth over time. And an increase in industrial growth produces an increase in pollution and in consumption of natural resources.

The growth behavior of each factor is exponential: each grows by a constant percentage of the whole amount, over a constant time period. (In linear growth, which is the way we customarily think of growth, each would grow a constant amount, over a constant period.) An old French riddle mentioned in the book describes exponential growth. Suppose there is a pond in which a lily pad is growing. The lily pad grows by doubling in number every day (increasing 100% in every 24 hour period.) On the second day, then, there will be two lily pads, on the third day, 4, on



Guerilla/LNS

the fourth day, 8, on the sixth day, 32, and so on. And as the lily pads double every day, they approach the limit of the pond's size with increasing speed. Starting with one lily pad on the first day, let's say it takes 29 days of exponential growing to fill half the pond with lily pads. It will take only one more day to fill up the other half. If the lily pads exhibited linear growth, there would be one today, Two tomorrow, three the next day, etc. And it would take the same amount of time to fill up the second half of the pond as it did the first.)

Exponential growth in the earth's system of the five named factors produces increases similar to those of the lily pads in the pond. Take population for example: In 1650, total world population was about .5 billion; it took about 150 years more (1815) for it to double, to 1 billion; the third .5 billion was added in about 70 years (1815-1885); the fourth .5 billion took less than 50 years (1885-1920). (In the case of population growth, the exponential factor is heightened because the percentage rate of growth is also growing--as if the lily pads grew by 100%, each day for a few days, then by 105% a day, then by 110%, etc.) Thus, as time goes on, more and more people are filling up the available space on the globe faster and faster. We are nearing the limits to growth.

Analysis of population in relation to industrialization (GNP growth) reveals that, although the total rate of world population growth is increasing, the rate in highly industrialized countries is actually decreasing. Most people who have been screaming about population control have failed to make this most basic connection: standard of living level is intimately connected to population level. If the standard of living of all countries were equalized at some acceptably high level, the so-called world population explosion would be substantially defused.

The world pattern of industrial growth is also exponential. However, most of this growth is taking place in the already highly industrialized countries. This situation can be changed only if and when a new value system replaces the present one which emphasizes continuing, unlimited economic growth (capitalism and imperialism) no matter what the cost to most people or the planet. Assuming that values, and therefore industrial growth patterns, remain essentially the same, over the course of time, the underdeveloped countries will continue to be underdeveloped, and the industrialized countries will speed further ahead in GNP growth. The gap between industrialized and underde-

veloped countries will continue to widen. The theory of benevolent capitalism is that continued unlimited industrial growth is necessary and good because over time it will raise the standard of living of all people on the globe. In fact, the opposite is the case: The few rich will get richer, at the expense of the many poor; and the poor, at best will increase their standard of living only minimally.

Combining this inequality with industrial growth's effect on population growth, one sees immediately a further injustice. Not only will the standard of living in poor countries remain essentially the same, while total world industrial growth constantly increases, but probably their standard of living will decrease; as their rate of industrialization does not measurably increase, their rate of population growth will stay at its high level; thus, there will be more and more people relative to a fairly constant amount of goods and services. In the U.S., on the other hand, the GNP per capita (measure of per person standard of living) is increasing, while the rate of population growth is decreasing. Therefore, the rise in the standard of living for each person is further increasing, since there are decreasing numbers of people relative to the increasing amount of goods and services.

The countries with the highest industrial growth rate are responsible for consuming the highest percentages of natural resources and for using the highest percentage of land area per person for food production. The world usage rates for both natural resources and land (for food production) are increasing exponentially, since those usage rates are a function of (depend on) the growth rates of industrial production and of population.

The U.S. is a principal consumer of most commonly used natural resources (along with U.S.S.R., Japan, and West Germany). Together these four advanced industrial nations are responsible for at least 50% of the total world consumption of almost every important world resource, a percentage way out of proportion to their combined percent of the total world population. For instance, the U.S. consumes 63% of all natural gas used in the world in a year; its land use rate per person is over two times the world average. If exponential growth continues, as at present, without controls and without equalization, it will reach physical limits soon. Either resources will be exhausted or pollution (which increases exponentially along with industrial growth increase) will reach a disastrous level.

Like the pond, the globe is close to being choked; the limits to unlimited growth on this earth--of either population or industrialization--are about to be reached. Since the global system has limits, the dynamics operating within it must also be limited, or the system will be devoured and will collapse.

A lot of people are talking "doomsday politics" these days, raising threats of disaster as reason for people to change. People need positive reasons to change, and concrete understandable alternatives. Threats are a dime a dozen. Even global, nearly indisputable threats, like those we could take from this book, are not sufficient to convince most people that their world is in need of a drastic change.

Instead, the facts, projections, and conclusions of this book are information, for our analysis and vision. They serve to inform us of the short time we have left to work in. The book concludes that to avoid any one of a number of physical disasters, not only must growth be limited, but also the products of that growth must be internationally redistributed. Technology must be turned to life-supporting uses, and its side-effects continually appraised. In order to do any of this, the system of values which prevails now must be drastically changed.

Although the U.S. is clearly the worst offender on all counts, it is important for us to appreciate that it is not the only culprit. Most countries in the world, whether developed or undeveloped wish to become affluent in ways that people in the U.S. have become. Even most socialist countries are presently working for economic growth in ways that more closely mirror the unlimited growth catechism of capitalism than they do any other system of economic progress.

Now the culprit is a group of values, defined and maintained by ruling men, which continues power divisions and social and economic inequalities based on a set of material conditions which could be changed. Feminists can and must create an alternative value system, one which understands that the male power divisions based on race, class, sex, and nation not only can but must be ended. We must figure out the ways in which technology can be controlled and used to help. We must see our vision in international terms, because it is clear from this book that only a solution of international scope can bring all the world's resources into balance for all people's good.

In summary, the oppressions and inequities we seek to end not only should be ended in order to improve the quality of human life, but also must be ended to insure the continuation of human life.


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FANTASIES OF A WHEAT LADY

BY HELAINE HARRIS

It is a long drive to her house, almost ninety minutes worth of suburb, then backroads, then shopping centers, and finally suburb again. The houses are all one story, brick ranch houses set on one-half acres. The driveways are mixtures of Mercedes, Porsches and Volkswagens. The parents choose the more subtle, expensive; their children, the more subtle, expensive. We are quiet, glad to be out of Brie's parents' house, glad to be driving through those backroads on a crisp, fall night. Brie is driving. I am taking it easy, punching the radio stations back and forth, slightly high from a double bourbon I had before leaving. It is one of my favorite things--bourbon, driving late at night, and controlling the car radio. Brie is tense. She is biting her bottom lip, a habit she has from her mother, who now has a very thin bottom lip. I smile at her and then move my hand to her leg. I am sorry for her--that she only drinks beer.

I remember that blonde woman, parts of conversation, a drive with her through the city. It has been over a year since I saw her but I remember her because her name is just like mine except that it is missing one letter. And I remember that the first time I met her I flashed that she looked like wheat blowing in a field. I wanted to say to her when introduced, "Hello, wheat lady. How are you today?" But of course I decided that no one would understand that, and I would have ended up as the fool. Everyone would have said, "What did you say?" And when I replied they would ask again, "What?". And by the third time I would mumble something entirely different from what I meant, and then they would have said, "We never understand you because you mumble, and . . . Well, you see how foolish it would have been, so now I don't say things like that. I think them, but I hardly ever say them. Only sometimes with my lover, late at night, under our quilt when we say weird things to each other just to be weird and to be silly and laugh.

Anyway, I remember a year ago

we were driving around in the white VW. I don't quite remember why she was in the city to begin with, except she was here and she was Brie's friend. And because Brie was my friend, though not my lover yet, I met her. It seems to me, thinking more about it, that there was some demonstration going on at the time. But I don't think she was here for that. She might have been visiting relatives, it really doesn't matter. What matters is that while Brie ran into a friend's house "only for a minute" which turned into a half hour, we were left alone in the VW, in the middle of the street, with the blinkers on. I being shy, shuffled in the front seat for awhile, pretending to listen to the radio, pretending to be foreboding with dark sunglasses on. People who know me tell me that they almost didn't know me because of those glasses--that I look far away and angry while wearing them. They didn't fool her at all. She spoke right through those glasses and the radio. She told me about herself. About the farm she lived on in Michigan. Of the two story house set on acres of land. She told of the freedom she felt there, of being alone. Her main problem was the freak men that also lived there in order to pay the rent. But mostly she talked of the fields and trees, of moon phases. And then, too soon, Brie was back and we spoke as three people speak to each other, joking followed by a serious conversation of some sort. And she had to leave. I wanted her to stay, I wanted to know more . . .

And I heard of her only sporadically. From time to time Brie got a letter from her and I read it. And between letters I forgot about her as I forgot about what wheatfields really look like. A poem sits on Brie's desk: "Breezes, bend my green stem aside. Over. Blowing to bring whispers from the skies. Stepping so softly We try to hear the past." It is written in very small, very thin, black handwriting. It looks as it says. I read it very often, but for the longest time I did not know that she wrote it.

And now we are driving to see

her at her parent's house. It has been a long time since the white VW. Brie is my lover besides being my friend. I still wear the glasses.

A tall, rather thin woman, with a drink in her hand answers the door. We know it is her mother. She is very polite, too polite. I think she is drunk. "Oh, she just fell asleep." Brie politely chats back with the mother before we can make our way to her bedroom.

She is in a warm ball on the bed--all blue, the blanket she is lying on, her jeans and t-shirt. Brie walks over and kisses the top of her head and she wakes up with a foggy, "Oh, hi." and giggle. I refresh my memory. She's tall with long slender hands. No sign of hips and very small breasts. Light brown gold hair is pulled back to reveal a pale neck covered with freckles. Around the neck is a black and brown twined thread with a single wooden bead at the end. I cannot tell if her eyes are gray/green or brown. At first I think she is glad to see me but then quickly doubt it. She and Brie talk while I flash in and out of their conversation, interrupting them once to ask if I can cut the muzak off the radio.

We go into the kitchen, make Constant Comment tea and into the living room to watch A Tree Grows In Brooklyn on tv. During the commercials we talk. She had been asleep after drinking with her mother and the tea is just waking her up. I am no longer high. She has been trying to find other women to move on the farm and wants the men to leave. Of course the men have refused and it is hard in such a small community to find women to move in. She spends more and more time by herself, drawing in the fields when not in school or working. It is late, we do not watch the entire film. We go to the door and Brie hugs her goodbye which is what I want to do except I can't because I haven't known her since high school and because of me, because of me and my glasses.

The drive home is silent, as drive homes frequently are. I want to go to the ocean but Brie doesn't so I let her off at her parent's

a women's news journal

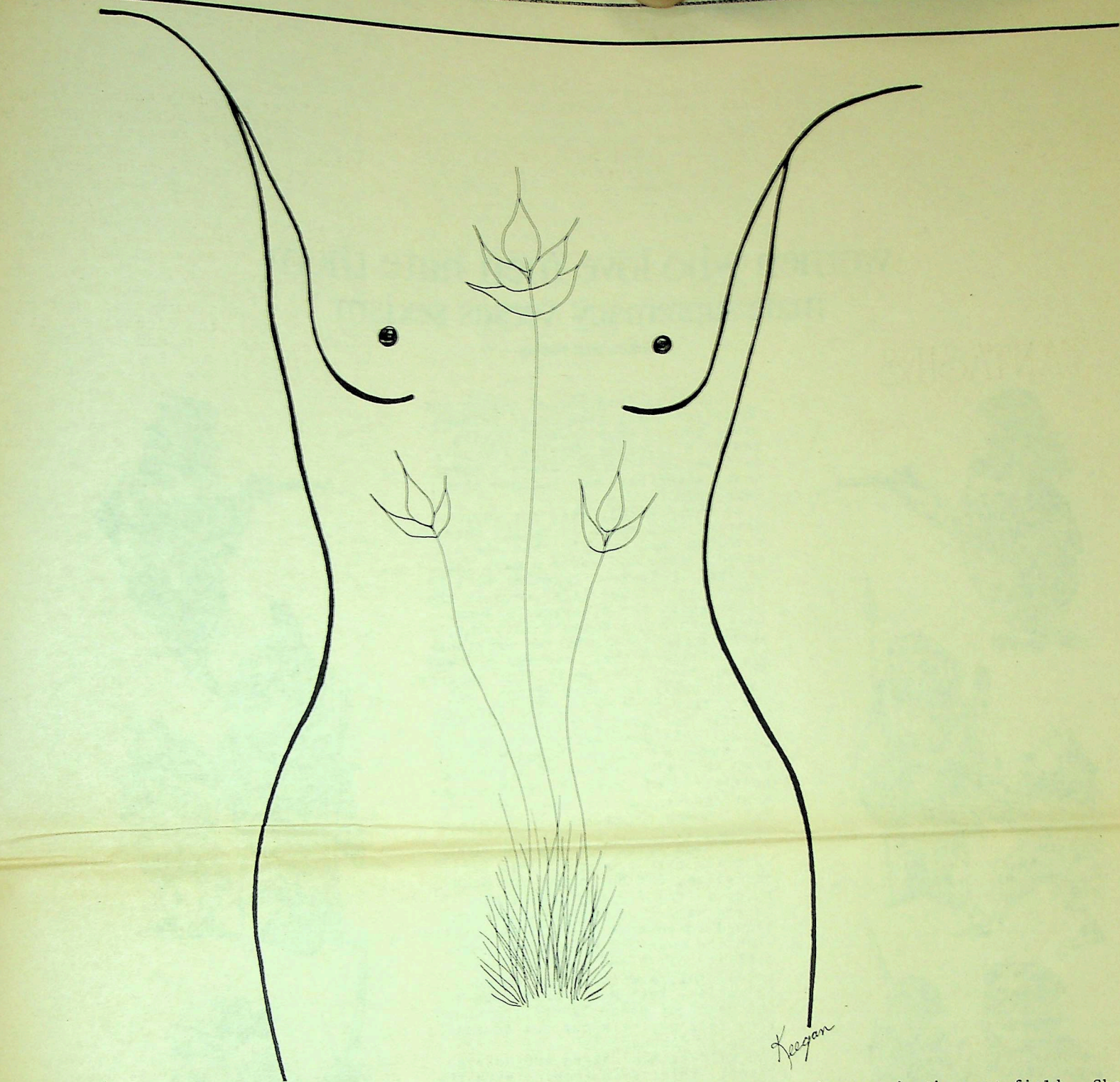


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house and go to the ocean myself. At two in the morning it is cold by the water. I sit in the sand, huddling, wondering what phase the moon is in, up in the cloud-filled sky.

My weeks are spent in the city working downtown typing numbers to a computer, and trying to read, trying to write, trying to think sometimes. And I forget about her--she seems so far away. I think about another woman I once knew in Cambridge. A woman I loved very quickly. It was the kind of love that comes from tripping around town together and then all of a sudden finding out you have the same birthday--watching the neighborhood all night long together on the front porch because you have so much to tell each other in such a short time. But I left and she moved. And I lost her and have regretted it since. That is why I forget about the wheat lady. Because she is like that woman in Cambridge. Like a feather you one day find in the street and put in your pocket so not to lose it. But when you get home, you find no feather because of the hole in your pocket.

Yet I was happy when one day Brie got another letter from her written in that thin, black handwriting that the poem was written

in. It started with a howdy, howdy, howdy and ended with a hello, to me, a hello to me, hello, hello to me. In between was general information about how it had snowed there and how she just couldn't find any women to live on the farm. She had found a nice bar in a town about sixty miles from where she lived. But the most interesting part was what she wrote about Halloween, about what it was like for her. About the jack o' lantern she made, about how she was really into Halloween but no one came trick or treating and she felt weird about that. I have felt bad about Halloween for a long time now, too. It is one of my favorite holidays--the one holiday that has any meaning for me. And I wanted to talk to her about how Halloween always made me sad and weird now, too. I wanted to talk about the party I went to on Halloween and how it had been a bummer, no dancing and tired people. About how I had really wanted to go and do ancient woman dances in a moonlit field. Halloween.

I thought, "Should I write? No, No, one cannot be too forward. Now can one? But hello, hello, hello."

And then another letter. She writes of watching a hunter kill a

pheasant in the next field. She can see him because she is writing the letter while sitting in a tree. She wants to warn the bird. And she writes about how she went to the bar the weekend before and how the beer there had been the best she ever tasted. And she writes of the growing hostility from the men in her house, of how they instantly hate and fear her because she has come out. Finally she writes of showing the barn and fields to another woman. Beautiful wheat lady. And I wish that it were her fields and barn. But I know that sooner or later the men will no longer tolerate her and you will have to leave, maybe to the city. She knows this and says in her letter how she must move but can't leave that solitude.

And she ends the letter with love, and under that her name, and under that a fish, or what I think is a fish. Anyway it is what I sometimes sign letters with.

I am here in this city, with the rain. I read her letter in my brown room with my rocking chair and my feathers and my mirrors and branches. My plants are all now dead. Brie says I didn't give them enough love. I don't know.

women who love men hate them male supremacy versus sexism

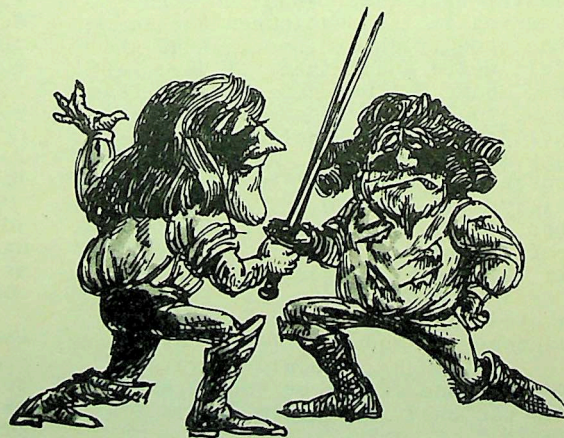
BY RITA MAE BROWN

Hate is love turned inside out. Fools and poets know that. Perhaps other people know it too. Hating men is a favorite pastime for certain segments of the Women's Movement. Women hate men because they love them.

Paradoxical, yes, but quite simple. Each woman is taught through childhood and puberty that she will someday love and serve a man. The man and their love together will be the center of her life. Love is the great goal, the ultimate panacea. Long before the Women's Movement, women found in the bitter emptiness of chattledom that love was a fraud. No man could live up to that concept, and probably no woman either. But the myth persisted, partly through inertia but mostly because the myth serves male supremacist interests. The Women's Movement began to destroy the myth. Floods of repressed hostility and waves of disillusionment concerning men swept the movement. Women hated men. Many said so vehemently.

Women hated men for not being what the myth promised. They hated themselves for believing the damn thing in the first place. Their hatred was redoubled when men continued to sustain the lie, especially when the movement offers the possibility of an end to rigid sex roles. Unlike whites confronted by racism, most men aren't even to the point of phony liberalism where they feel guilty about sexism and verbally denounce it.

The wildest man haters are heterosexual. This is in keeping with the original paradox. The lesbian wing of the movement is not as passionately concerned with men as is the rest of Women's Liberation. Although the lesbian like other women is oppressed by America's political structures, by racism, classism, control over her body, job discrimination, etc. she does not have an individual "oppressor" in her home. (Oppressor is in quote because a few, rare men don't deserve the



name.) Lesbians do not make men the center of their lives. They may have male friends, who knows from time to time they may have lovers who are as people--shorn of the cloaks of romantic love, stripped of sexist myth expectations. Because of this clear vision lesbians receive the heaviest backlash from reactionary males. Those men don't want to be viewed minus their power props.

Politically, the lesbian is motivated by loving women--a positive force. The heterosexual woman is all too often motivated by hating and needing men--a negative force. As heterosexual, white, middle class women have the ear of the media, their half baked politics seasoned with man hating gets transmitted to the public. To complete the circle, since so few people understands what it means for a woman to love women, man-hating is attributed to lesbians. Get the connection--"real" women don't hate men so therefore man-haters must be lesbians because they "rejected" men. Hate in the peculiar misthink of America is here applied to sex. If you don't sleep with someone you must hate them. What a rotten joke on us.

Straight women can politically foist their man-hating off on the lesbians but her problems are overwhelming no matter how she tries to skin out of them. The more actively she fights for her rights the angrier she gets at the roadblocks set in her path by the men who control this society. Yet she continues to go home to a man. If she's lucky he has verbal sympathy, usually she has to fight through his psychological roadblocks. She has the whole society to fight then she goes home to try to bring her man (or men) up from the depths of male supremacy only to find he gets the bends. Man hating looks like an occupational hazard for heterosexual women--that or schizophrenia.

For feminists there seem to be only two solutions to the problem of man-hating. Here I should state that I do find man-hating a problem. One solution is the consolidation of lesbian and gay male interests. If this occurs a precedent will be set for women and men cooperating on the issue of sexism. (There are mixed gay groups right now but the women have token positions in most of them and the men have zero feminist consciousness.) The other solution is that radical heterosexual men discover that fighting male supremacy is their fight. This means active support, physically and financially, of projects currently considered only "women's issues" and in particular, such men need make a concerted effort to understand and encourage lesbianism. It also means an enormous deal of self-examination accompanied by behavioral changes for every individual male--be he straight, gay, Ac/Dc, celibate, whatever.

Presently heterosexual, white radical males appear firmly entrenched in their oppressor roles with little hint of change. At this time the link up of lesbians and gay men looks more realistic.

I am focusing on man-hating because it is politically dangerous, individually damaging and utterly ridiculous. Dangerous because it invites backlash, a backlash that could erupt in a kind of sexual Klu Klux Klan. It's bad enough that individual women are hunted, raped

and murdered without giving demoted men an excuse to attack and kill us in groups. Here let me make a flat statement to any man reading this article: A generation of young men refused to participate in the slaughter of the Vietnamese. I want those same men to refuse to participate in the slaughter of women. How the hell can you sit on your ass and let this mass but individualized murder continue?

Another reason man-hating is politically dangerous is because it shuts the door on future coalitions. Now, such coalitions are shadows, given male intransigence, but they could be a possibility over the years. Look sister, no sub-group is going to change this power system. All you get by remaining totally separatist based on lines the oppressor set up (sex, race, class, sex preference) is trade unionism. A strong coalition can defeat impending fascism. Nothing else will. And if we can't form those coalitions then maybe we don't deserve power. However, be clear that coalition government does not mean you sell out. A coalition means you cooperate with people for shared goals, try to minimize or understand conflicts between you and in the process of that cooperation parties within that coalition grow to know each other and hopefully become tighter units, blurring the lines that once divided them. Right now, men are so far off, that coalition is impossible--and so is revolution. Our current priority at this time must be strengthening the Women's Movement.

Man-hating is damaging on an individual level because a woman dissipates her energy in hating men or the man of her choice. She does this rather than drawing strength from her sisters. Hate has a corrosive effect on both sides but the hater suffers more than the hated. Why? Because the hater lives with it every day in her soul. Worse, to focus on hate and submerged violence (the solution to hate is to kill the object that inspires hate) is the hallmark of old-form male supremacist politics. I thought we wanted men to relinquish that club. Why, so we can turn around and beat them to death with it? So we can spread hatred, destruction and a disregard for life among women?

On another level man-hating is ridiculous. Who wants to spend their life operating out of anger, unhappiness, revenge? To politically organize around it is not ridiculous but horrifying--that's not just imitating old male supremacist forms that's imitating the very worst of those forms, Hitler.

Perhaps one of the reasons so many women fall into the trap of man-hating is because they haven't differentiated between male supremacy and sexism. The difference is clear. All humans suffer from sexism. Women suffer from male supremacy. Sexism gives neither sex a fully human role. Male supremacy gives men power over the women in their sub-group and for the ruling class men it gives power over all women. In human terms no one gets a good deal from sexism. But in power terms men get a fantastic deal off of male supremacy--the same deal the Nazis got off of the Jews. True, a sensitive individual will

recoil from that kind of power but think how many gladly seize it. Men need to learn how sexism rots them as people and how male supremacy is the cornerstone for political oppression.

A man couldn't help being born male anymore than I could help being born female. To hold him individually responsible for his sex and for all wrongs done to women is to mistreat him as male supremacists have mistreated me. Or in the plain language on which I was raised: Two wrongs don't make a right. To hold all men equally responsible for male supremacy is a temptation. You can build a real theoretical case for it but not a viable political movement. However, we can and should hold men responsible for their complicity with male supremacy. Any man who actively oppresses a woman or women as a class is an enemy. Men who silently let the oppression continue are as bad as the men who actively do it. Anyone who fights that system is not an enemy but an ally, a comrade, a brother--which is not to say that a person can't fight male supremacy and still carry traces of male supremacy within herself/himself. Sexism conditions us to be male supremacists, all of us. We have to struggle with the enemy within as much as the enemy without. Which brings us to the problem of the reconstruction of the self--a problem which will be examined in future issues.

Sexuality has been a divisive issue politically because it touches each of us and we understand so little of what it really means. We have to re-examine total sexual oppression, the destruction to men and women, in order to bring us back together as a political force. And I don't mean together at the expense of women which is how coalitions have worked and are working now. This is why I have stressed the difference between male supremacy and sexism. We do share with men sexist damage. Our common bond is that it keeps both of us from fully opening up, from becoming People. Our difference is that men get concrete advantages from the system. Can enough of them understand that concrete advantages are at the expense of their humanness? We can not tolerate male supremacy. We can tolerate and have compassion for men, who like ourselves, are trying to find their way out of the maze of lonely and confusing sex roles which keep them separate from women (except sexually) and separate and competitive with other men.

The supreme irony is that you can't truly like men until you like women and you can't like women until you like yourself. The only woman capable of loving men as people is the lesbian. Another one of those delicious paradoxes. But then this article started with a paradox.

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LESBIANS AND CHILDREN IN IOWA

A collective of three feminist lesbians and two female children is looking for another lesbian or a lesbian and child. We are committed to dealing with people collectively. We are members of a day-care cooperative and are generally involved in consciousness raising about children. We do not use tobacco and good nutrition is important to us. Iowa is relatively clean and has good soil. Iowa City has a large feminist and lesbian social community. We will be moving to the country in the Iowa City area eventually. If interested, write: E. Stamps, 3 E. Market St., Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

D.C. GAY SWITCHBOARD

Concerned gays in D.C. want to establish an information and services clearing house where gays can call when they're wondering where to turn to get help or just find out what's going on. They need time, financial support, or professional assistance. Come by the Community Building, 1724 20th st, N.W., Monday nights at 7 p.m.

WOMEN'S LAW CONFERENCE

The Northeast Regional Women's Law Conference has been postponed to Feb. 16-18, 1973. Contact: Women's Law Association, Harvard Law School, Cambridge, Mass 02138.

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Rita Mae Brown, Charlotte Bunch,
 Susan Hathaway, Mary-Helen Mautner,
 Nancy Myron, Marlene Voorhees.

Also

Helaine Harris, Lee Schwing

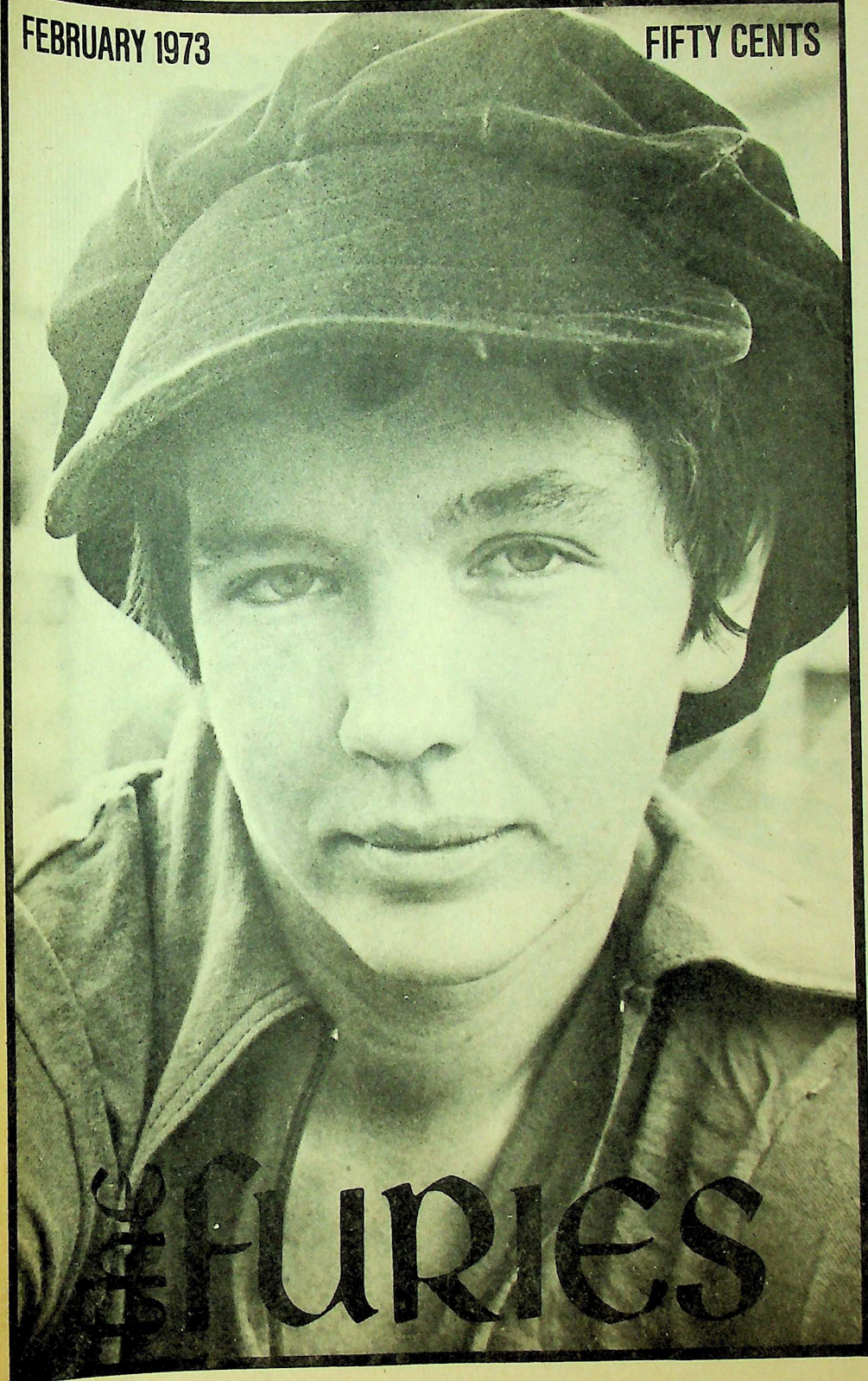
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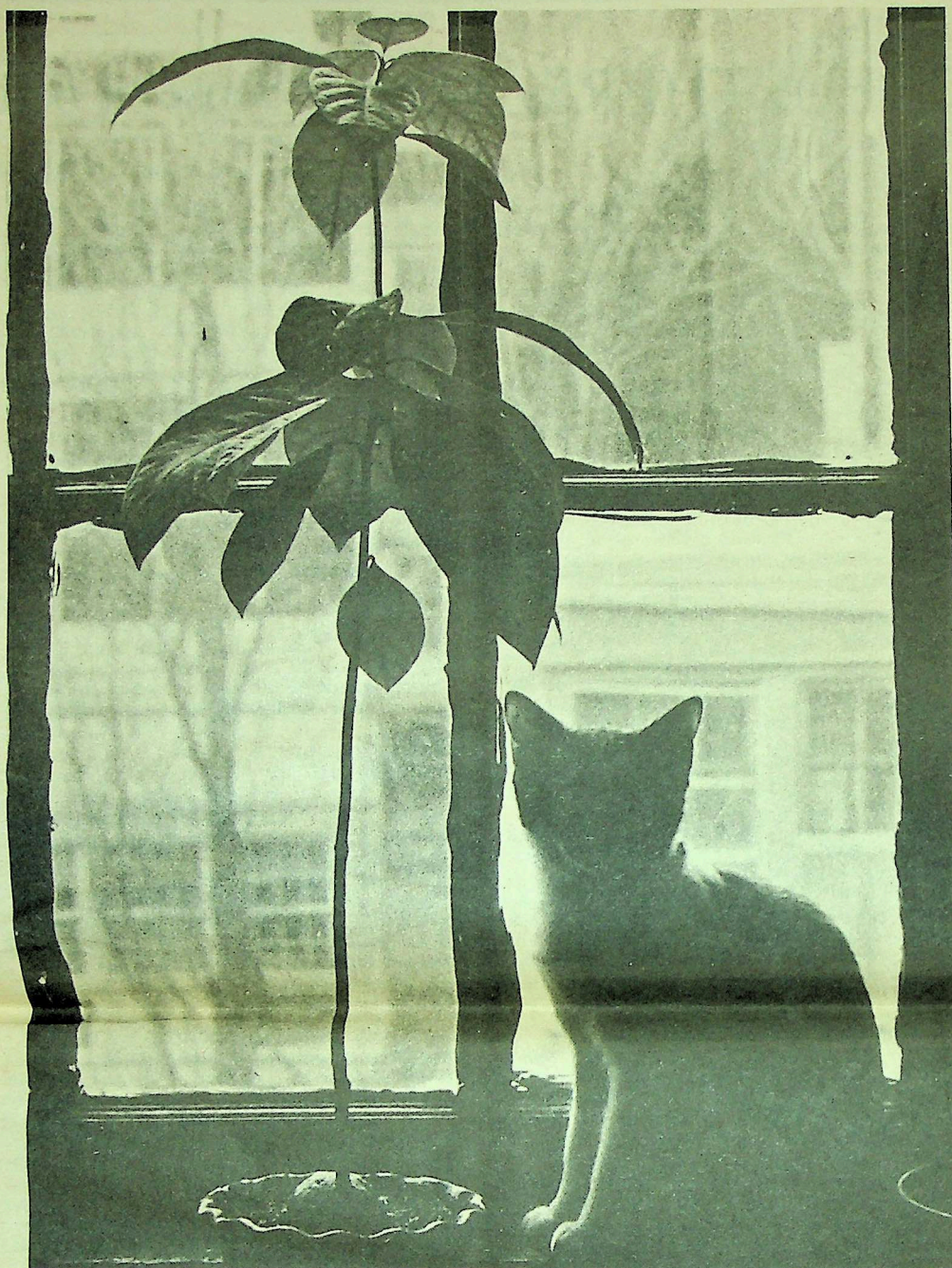


Photo by Sharon Deevey

clusion of political articles. As the Furies staff we have a commitment to work and grow together politically. The politics expressed in future issues will therefore be a reflection of our growth. We are working towards expanding, developing and changing many of the ideas talked about in the past Furies. We will address ourselves to many of the questions facing the lesbian/feminist movement.

We encourage women to send in their articles, fiction, poetry, plays, letters, and graphics. It usually takes us about two months to decide what will go into an issue, so give us that much time to return the works. It is also helpful if you send along a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

After taking a look at the number of issues put out last year - a total of seven, we feel we should be realistic, therefore the Furies will now be a bi-monthly. This means that the subscription rates will change from \$5.00 to \$3.00 a year; individual copies will be fifty cents. Check the subscription blank for detailed information.

The centerspread poetry pull-out in this issue is by Judy Grahn and is from a manuscript soon to be published. Judy is also the author of Edward the Dyke, and is a member of a women's press collective in Oakland. For information concerning works by Judy and other women writers, including Pat Parker, author of Child of Myself, write: The Women's Press Collective, 5251 Broadway, Oakland, Ca.

The poem by Gertrude Stein, pgs. 5, 6, was edited by Fran Winant. This is what Fran wrote to us about her editing: "My method was to put together the sentences and paragraphs I felt were most revealing of the main ideas in the poem. . . I left out a lot of what I felt was Stein talking to herself, making personal references which had little or no meaning for anyone else. I felt that she was upset by the idea of talking about her lesbianism and tried to hide her subject by talking about irrelevant or obscure things. In other words, I tried to extract the poem-within-the-poem. . . ."

I find that, especially when read out loud, Stein's poetry has a magic quality, a feeling of giving off meaning beyond what words can say. I tried the poem on two audiences, one straight and one gay. The straights sat like sticks as if they didn't hear a word. The gay women laughed, cheered and generally exploded at every line. I feel this poem is part of gay women's culture, that even Stein tried to hide from us, and should be given back to gay women. . . "

STAFF
Deboran George, Helaine Harris, Kathy Hopwood, Mary-Helen Mautner, Lee Schwing, Loretta Ulmschneider, Marlene Voorhees

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Photo and design by Sharon Deevey

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To Our Readers

This issue of the Furies marks the beginning of our second year of publication. Throughout the first year the staff has changed from time to time, as women initially working on the paper travelled, left the city and new women joined us. Also, like all other dynamic feminist groups, we have experienced many internal political struggles as we changed and grew. The paper has, of course,

reflected most of these changes. The new staff, as of this issue, is comprised of: two women who have worked almost continually with the Furies since its conception, two women who worked on the last issue, and three women who have never worked on the paper. In the past couple of issues, a trend toward more fiction, poetry, plays, and a more cohesive graphic outlook seemed to be developing. We plan to continue that development, but not to the ex-

The Furies

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PERSEVERANCE FURTHERS: Woman's Sense of Self

BY CHARLOTTE BUNCH

Discovering what it means for each woman to have and develop a sense of herself is crucial to our struggle for liberation. Today many women are experiencing a fundamental identity crisis. This crisis goes beyond the middle class question, "What shall I do with my spare time?," portrayed glibly in McCalls, and answered by returning to a job or doing volunteer community service. It is a crisis which challenges the basic premises that for many centuries absolutely determined and circumscribed women's identity: preoccupation with childbirth and motherhood; continual service (unpaid labor) to husband, home, and church; and political and sexual passivity. All of these are rooted in the assumption of male superiority and heterosexuality.

Historically most women have been denied any sense of self beyond these definitions. The Western philosophical tradition of man's search for identity was just that--man's search--the prerogative of males only. Woman's primary identity was determined by her sex and there was little self-esteem in being female. Society taught us to esteem men, and simultaneously, to downgrade ourselves and all women as inferior.

Women were given an auxiliary identity determined by the place of our men in the hierarchies of class, race, etc. Whatever sense of self worth many a woman has had comes not from herself as a woman, but from her "superiority" on one of these male scales. Identity of this sort keeps a woman tied to the men who gave it to her (husband, father, brother) and divided against other women and lower status males. It gives her false consciousness about her power and keeps her in her place.

Today technology and rising social consciousness have begun to call into question a woman's old definitions of her self, her patterns of behavior, and her work. Her self-image (if she has carved out any positive one) is usually based on limited female roles that no longer seem to be enough and/or class or race "superiority" which is a sham. Her patterns of behavior, developed as ways of accommodating to those old identities, aren't adequate for her new situation. Her work is rarely self-defined but centers on her family and/or a female deadend job. Who is her real self?

THE QUESTION OF SELF

Women are thrust into this search for selves with little preparation and at breakneck speed. We must get rid of our oppressed female identities and behavior: our passivity and self-effacement, our coy forms of accommodation and compensation, and our vicious methods of destroying other women. As we work for more positive, assertive selves that can command respect, we also try not to imitate the mistakes of men.

While reshaping ourselves as women we also must change the identities we have as part of the

male hierarchies. For some women this means shedding the subservient behavior adopted as part of a racially or class oppressed group. Others who see the destructiveness of their behavior as part of an oppressor group--whether race, class, age, or heterosexual oppressors--are trying to shed the arrogance and domination associated with that part of their selves. The same woman may be both trying to adopt new pride and aggressiveness in some areas and getting rid of dominance and false pride in other areas. She is then questioning all the means she has developed for surviving in this country, both as oppressed and oppressor. With no past experience or encouragement in developing an independent self, she undergoes enormous internal tension, insecurity, and confusion.

What have the women's movement and various of its factions done to respond to this dilemma? Few have recognized the depth of the changes that we are making and the crucial importance of the question of self for our struggle. Nevertheless there has been a certain progression in dealing with this issue.

An important part of shaping one's self is recognition of social conditions and how they have determined one's identity in the past. The women's movement has done fairly well in this by raising consciousness about how sexism affects women's sense of self. It has shown how society's attitudes and institutions have crippled us, thus freeing women somewhat from seeing ourselves as personal failures, from blaming ourselves for our self-hate, insecurities, or lack of training. Similarly, some women's groups have analyzed the effects on women of class, age, race, and heterosexual oppression. Consciousness-raising has thus helped us to understand our oppression and to develop pride in womanhood, lesbianism, and other oppressed identities.

The idea of the woman-identified-woman has also helped in defining what a woman's sense of self can be. Traditionally, women have been defined through men--husband, father, son, boss-- and through the status and approval given to us by male society. Both consciousness-raising and woman-identification are responses that the women's movement has made to the question of self. Through these processes, many women have begun to develop a stronger sense of ourselves, individually and collectively. However, this is not enough.

SUBSTITUTES FOR SELF

After initial consciousness-raising, the women's movement has by and large floundered. Women have adopted at least four substitutes for individual self-identity: building identity around 1.) oppression, 2.) the movement, 3.) ideal models, and/or 4.) relationships.

Any of us can slip (and most of us have slipped at times) into these substitutes for self because each is partially correct. Each is part of discovering and creating one's self. The problems arise when these parts begin to substitute for the whole self, instead of being incorporated into a larger whole or identity. I will discuss the problems with these substitutes as I have seen and experienced them over the past few years in the women's liberation movement generally and most recently in a lesbian-feminist collective.

1. Building identity around oppression. Starting with the valid assertion that society oppresses us because we are women, lesbians, or x and that we are proud of x, we can get stuck there. We concentrate too much of our self and work on discovering the intricacies of these oppressions instead of working to get out of them. We may wear them as a chip on the shoulder, a cross to bear, or a badge of



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honor. In so doing, some women become "professional victims" of social forces. We have politically legitimate excuses for untogetherness or lack of self which, as "victims", we allow to excuse us from responsibility for changing ourselves or the society. Both oppressed and oppressor use these excuses, saying, "I'm just a victim of society and can't fight it" or "we are oppressed in this way but oppressive in that way and can't win no matter what we try, so why try?" When this happens our consciousness of oppression, instead of freeing us from our insecurities so we can assert ourselves in new ways, becomes our new self and an excuse for not moving forward.

If we escape becoming immobilized as "victims" we may develop false pride and arrogance about our oppressions and our consciousness. Consciousness-raising helps us assert ourselves, but it is necessary to develop a self that is more than pride in our oppressions. If we fail to do this, we become dependent on our oppression for our self-respect and use them to demand power and respect from others. We do not get or ask for respect for our individual selves but simply for our self as a category of oppression (lesbian, working class, etc.). If our identity remains dependent on this category alone, not on a stronger self as well, we have not achieved liberation but remain limited and defined by the categories of our oppressors. Such stagnation often leads to false pride and arrogance toward those "less conscious." False pride is self-defeating because it does not help women see the strength of the woman-identified-woman and eventually it corrodes the self.

2.) Building identity around the movement. Some women "solve" the dilemma of self by turning our beings lock, stock and barrel over to the movement. The movement (or our particular faction) has helped us become aware of our oppression and our lack of self. Now it substitutes itself--hours of endless meetings, offices to be run, conversations to be had, articles to be written, good deeds to be done--these become our selfhood. When something goes wrong in the movement--someone disappoints us, a project fails, an office closes down, a new faction forms--we are crushed because we have little self except as that movement gives it to us.

Movement activity does not have to lead to this problem. Women can do movement work with a clear sense of ourselves and such work can help us figure out our own particular interests and abilities. But too often, we allow movement life to overpower us especially when we are just becoming conscious of our oppression. When the movement becomes a substitute for what one doesn't find in herself, eventually there will be a break-down or a dead-end.

The movement for all its political and personal importance to each of us, cannot suffice as our only means of identity, self-pride, and respect. The movement for all its political and personal importance to each of us, cannot suffice as our

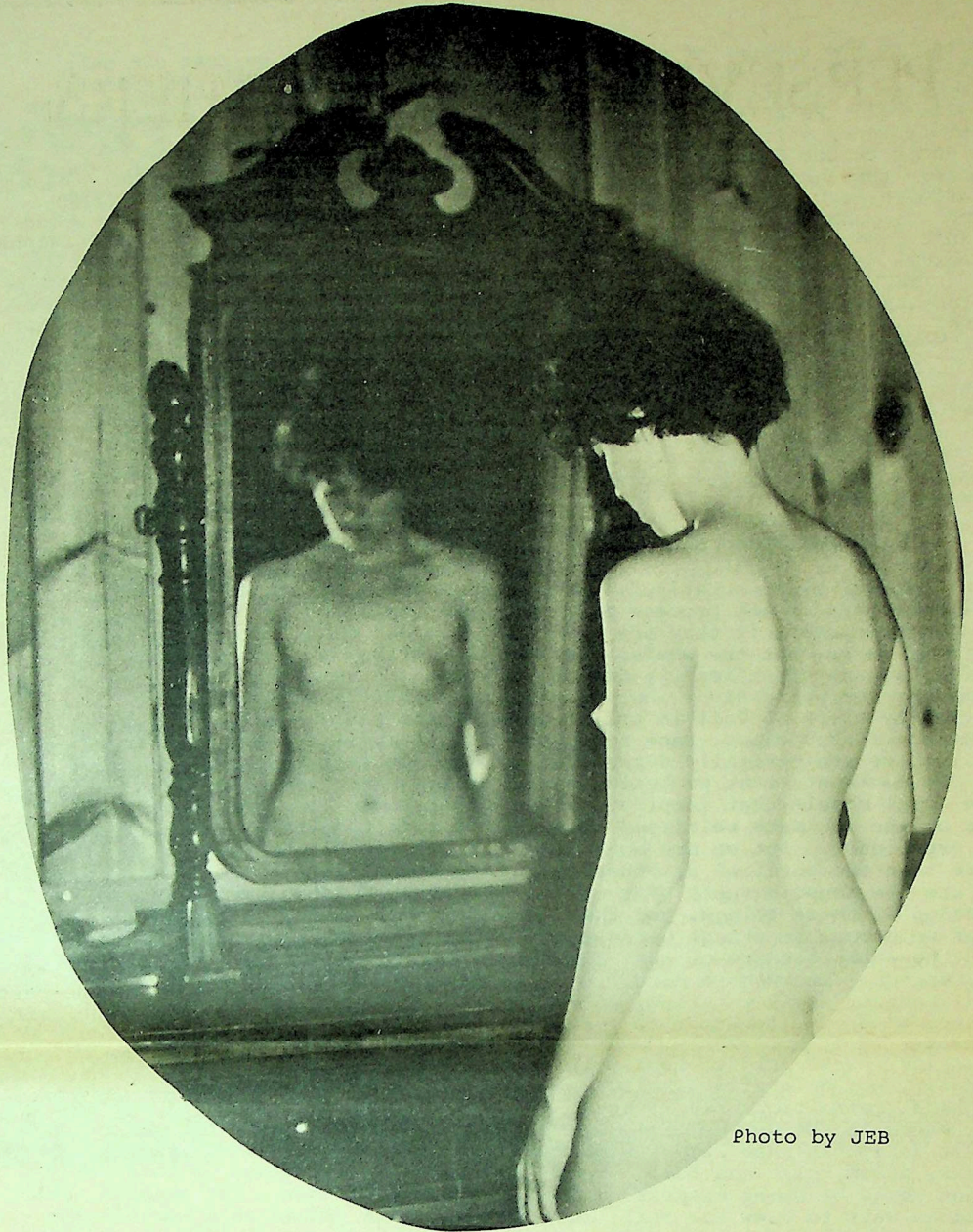


Photo by JEB

only means of identity, self-pride, and respect.

3.) Building identity around ideal models. Sometimes we escape the question of self through the creation of different ideal types that we try to become or should become if we want to be "in". Each ideal embodies some good things that women can do or be, but becomes destructive when it functions as the only acceptable standard. Then it becomes like the traditional ideals of beauty or dress that have kept women down in our society.

Each discovery of oppression brings new ideals: We learn about the suppression of women's intellect and we want to be writers; we learn about class and so we try to act like "the workers". Each discovery has something of value in it. But if we have no center and strength within ourselves, as women, we can float from one newly discovered ideal to another every six months, depending on what is premium in our groups. For example, one month we expect everyone to be a political analyst in order to gain respect, the next month, we all must be budding artists or, perhaps, spiritualists.

Ideals or models are helpful to inspire and challenge us but often we do not know how to use them without being controlled by them. Usually, we create ideals because this is what society has made us expect as women or because when we think of "self-identity" we romanticize it. We think that to have a sense of self, one must be something glamorous (an artist or writer), or well-defined (a professional), or neat and groovy (a knock out at the bar). Too often women are not able to be what we do well and like, whether it has status or sounds great to others. We strive to be the ideals determined by our movement instead of those of the male media. This is an improvement. But we are still controlled by movement images and our need for group approval instead of by the strength of our own sense of self-worth and knowing what we can do well.

4.) Building identity around relationships. Traditionally women have defined ourselves almost solely through our relations to others--family, husband, children, the women in our social or work circles, etc. In women's liberation, this tendency for relationships, whether heterosexual or lesbian to be the primary preoccupation of peoples time and energy persists,

often at the expense of other political work. Relationships are important. Relationships are political. Relationships do affect our sense of self deeply. However, a woman cannot find her own self solely through the creation of an intimate lesbian relationship or a good communal family, just as she can't through the traditional heterosexual marriage.

Each woman must find her center alone as well as in relation to others. She needs a sense of her own self-worth based on what she knows she can do and be--on her work. The women's movement's concentration on feelings and relationships often shields and even diverts us from this part of the hard but crucial struggle to develop each woman's sense of self.

TOWARD THE NEW SELF

Each of these substitutes reflects a part of the process of self development, if they are seen as parts, not the whole. Certainly we are significantly determined by our oppressions and privileges--by where we fall in the hierarchies of sex, class, race and age. So too, we are partially determined by the movements that we build, by the ideal models that inspire us, and by the intimate relations that we experience. But we are much more than the total of all these. We are the consciousness that we develop of these things, and the ways we choose to change ourselves and the world because of that consciousness. And we are more.

Each of us is a variety of selves that come together to form a center that is firm, yet ever changing. That self or center is, finally, not an abstract philosophical definition. It is best expressed in the way we live our lives daily--in what we do, say, think, dream, plan and feel. Many pages could be spent discussing various ways to view the self, but what is important is that women can, must, and want to explore this question concretely in our lives.

The question of self should not be seen as an individual search but as a question that moves to the heart of the problem of liberation for women as an oppressed group and as individual human beings. It is the confidence and strength of ones self that gives anyone the ability to fight for change and to cope with the problems and instability that go with that struggle. For many women in the 20th century America, the lack of a strong sense of self is a large part of their dependency on men and passivity about changing their lives. As each woman overcomes that passivity and gains more control over her life, she becomes stronger and is able to take responsibility for the women's movement and for changing the world as well. Only those who are taking responsibility for their own selves can possibly create the enormous changes that we all know are necessary. And only a movement that understands the importance of each individuals self strength can help women to develop that strength and thus to strengthen that movement. The development of each woman's self and the strengthening of the women's movement should be mutually reinforcing.

In working on the question of

self for women, we must not only correct the mistakes the women's movement has made but also face the general obstacles the society puts in the way of women's self-development. Women's liberation literature outlines these various obstacles and discouragements, the social, political, and economic "closed doors" and the psychological guilt that any woman faces who tries to break away and develop her own sense of self. Above all, few women have the time and space or receive the encouragement to develop themselves, especially if they are lower class. So, the question of self development is linked to the problems of survival--of women's economic and emotional support. Many women, especially those from the lower classes or who live without men, must combine the search for self with the struggle to survive. On the one hand, this makes it harder to find time and space to pursue one's interests. On the other hand, learning to survive on one's own is also part of developing the strength of one's self that most middle class heterosexual women do not understand.

Ironically, one of the hardest problems that many a woman faces is the envy and resentment of other women when she tries to pull her life together. Friends (both in and out of the women's movement) are often threatened by such efforts, which cause them greater insecurity about their own lives. Thus, they try to undermine her, often unconsciously, to keep that threat from getting stronger. Society expects its women to keep all women in line; it therefore conditions women to undermine each others' efforts to get stronger and to put energies into building the strength of their individual men.

It is also ironic that our society perpetuates sexual stereotypes, while its technology is constantly undermining them. For example, the old limits placed on a woman's activity (frequent childbirth, massive housework, etc.), are no longer necessary if our society utilizes its technology. Yet these old limits still affect women's self-definition. Each woman is damned if she does and damned if she doesn't. If she sticks to the old roles, they don't seem to be enough in today's world and even the people closest to her imply that she's dull. But if she tries to create her own new self (not just a Good Housekeeping hobby self), all the social institutions, her family, and her friends come down against her. It is out of the midst of these contradictions that women's liberation was born, and it is in the midst of these problems that we must now work.

SOME CONCRETE STEPS

The question of self for women is overwhelming in its complexity--it is the problem of reversing centuries of socialization and self-denial, perpetuated by men and women alike, and creating something new and unknown. However we have made important beginnings on this task and our analysis of our mistakes should not discourage us but guide us more clearly in the future. Some steps that we can take to further this process include:

1. Continue consciousness-raising about woman oppression,

about the importance of women-identification, and about other related oppressions. But this should be done with a clear understanding that these are only a beginning not an answer to women's identity.

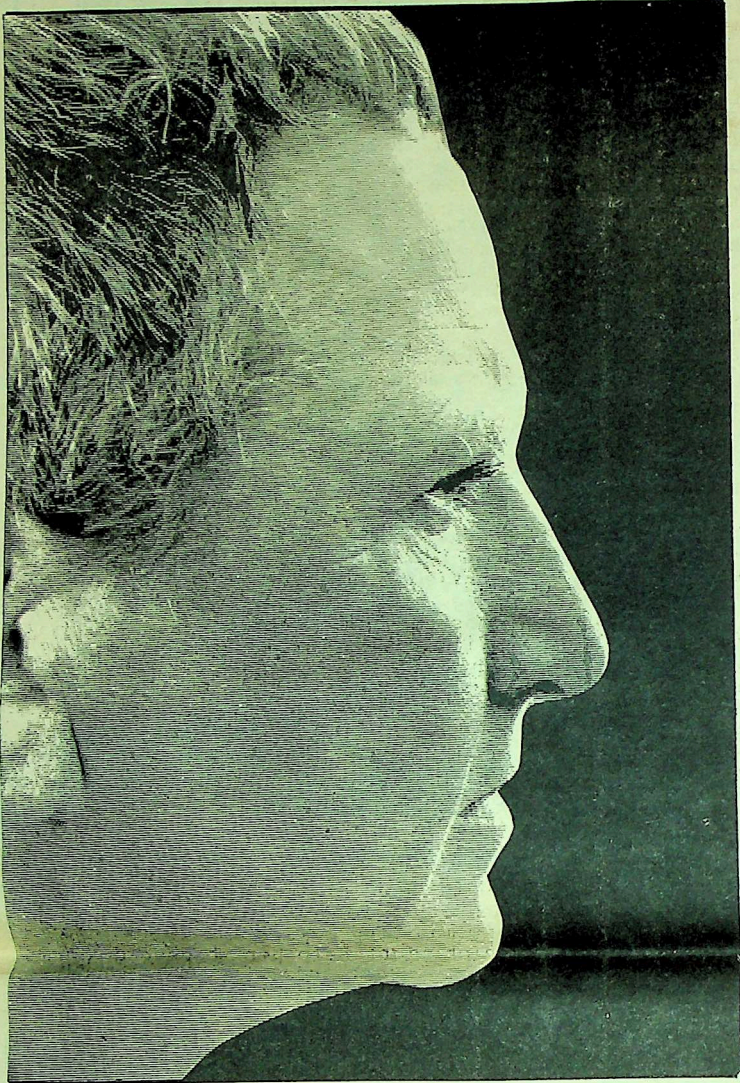
2. Fight women's tendency to undermine each other's strengths and to impose models of behavior for all women (whether it is the ideal movement organizer or the tough dyke). Search for an honest diversity, one which encourages individual differences and skills, without domination of one over another. This diversity would not stop our efforts to create a common political vision and commitment, but try to provide a honest basis for it.

3. Develop more experimental projects for women, especially for those not trained or self-directed. These should give practical experience in new areas of work, encourage self-discovery, and where possible, become means of support for those working in them. Projects could include practical services (e.g. health, building design and construction), communications media (film, radio, printing), the arts, education, self-supporting businesses, etc.

4. Produce manuals, skills courses, radio shows, films, etc., that spark an interest in trying things that women do not ordinarily do and give concrete information on how to go about it. These would be for all women. They would aim at countering the influence of the media, school counselors, families, and other forces which discourage a woman from trying out many things which might help her to develop her own self and life plans.

5. Find various ways to provide more women (especially those less materially privileged) with the time, space, and money to pursue their own interests and talents. This would also free more women who have not had these privileges to build a stronger women's movement, a task which demands much free time and energy.

These steps are a beginning. All of them must be done within a political context so that they build individual strength as part of a movement's struggle and are not just social service projects. As I mentioned in Part I (Fall issue, 1972, pgs. 1, 2, 3) of this article, further defining that political context, our vision, strategy, and organization for the future --is another of our major tasks. Perhaps most important for the question of the self is our growing recognition that it is crucial to the success of our struggle--that to build the strong women and strong movement we need, we must discover how women can build selves of our own. Selves that are not dependent on our previous oppressed (submissive) or oppressor (dominant) identities and behavior. We are moving on an uncharted path to discover something new for women. We won't ever perfect ourselves or lose all traces of our previous oppressed and oppressive behavior, but we can keep moving forward, examining what we are becoming as we work for a better society.



A Sonatina Followed by Another, by Gertrude Stein

EDITED BY FRAN WINANT

Thank you very much, how often I have thanked you, how often I have cause to thank you. How often I do thank you.

Thank you very much.

...now we are in the South and the South is not the North. In the North we resist even when we kissed and in the South we are kissed on the mouth. No sonatina can make me frown.

I love my love with a g because she is so faithful. I love her with a p because she is my pearl.

Eighty pages of love and blandishment and small handwriting.

Let me neglect you. Do not let me neglect you. I do not let you neglect me. I am reproachful.

I have been reading. What. The book about Russia. And you have loaned it to me. No I was personal. In the french sense. In the french sense.

I love you, I know it, how do you know it, I know it by my feeling.

She said that I was to wake her in an hour and half if it didn't rain. It is still raining what should I do. Should I wake her or should I let her sleep longer.

Coo, coo.

The coo coo bird is resting on the coo coo tree budding the roses for me.

And now I want to explain again the difference between the South of France and Brittany. In Brittany they have early potatoes. In the South they have early vegetables. In Brittany there is a great deal of fish caught. In the South they catch a great deal of fish. There are trout in the streams in some streams of Brittany and in some streams in the South. They grow camellias in some places in Brittany. They also grow camellias in the South.

I am very pleased to be in the South.

I address my caress, my caresses to the one who blesses who blesses me.

You are extraordinarily gracious and I am very contentedly grateful. In this way we are adjusted.

Olives for wood, butter for cheese, milk for honey, and wind for sunny sunny weather and clouds. How can you distress

me. You can't. You can please me.

We have a multitude of roses and mountains of lilac. We pick everything as it shows. We are a model to every one. We are wonderfully productive.

And now muntains, and now mountains, do not cloud, over. Let us wash our hair and stare stare at mountain ranges. How sweet are suns and suns. And the season. The sea or the season, and the roads. Roads are often neglected.

How can you feel so reasonably.

How are houses entered. By the determination to be well and happy. How kindly you smile. How sweetly you smile on me. How tenderly you reward me and how beautifully you utter your words. We have no use for botanically painted plates.

How can I thank you enough for holding me on the ladder for allowing me to pick roses, for enjoying my fireside and for recollecting stars. How can I thank you enough for all your kindness to me. How can I thank you enough.

When I was wishous, when I had wishes. When I wished I wished to be remembered to you.

How can you silently think of me. Rest easily on the terrace look out on the blue sea and think of me.

And how nicely we sing of the thirteenth of April.* The thirteenth of April is the day which is the month of May. On that day we hesitate to sing. Why because we are so happily flourishing.

How can we whistle in our bath. By means of oxygen. Oxygen in water makes oxygenated water. Thank you for all you are doing for me. And don't mind the rain. It is not going to rain long.

The song of Alice B.

Little Alice B. is the wife for me.

I caught sight of a splindid Misses. She had handkerchiefs and kisses. She had eyes and yellow shoes she had everything to choose and she chose me. In passing through France she wore a Chinese hat and so did I. In looking at the sun she read a map. And so did I. How prettily we swim. Not in water. Not on land. But in love. How often do we need trees and hills. Not often. And how often do we need mountains. Not very often. And how often do we need birds. Not often. And

how often do we need wishes. Not often. And how often do we need glasses not often. We drink wine and we make, well we have not made it yet. How often do we need a kiss. Very often and we add when tenderness overwhelms us we speedily eat veal. And what else, ham and a little pork and raw artichokes and ripe olives and cheddar cheese and cakes and caramels and all the melon. We still have a great deal of it left. I wonder where it is. Conserved melon. Let me offer it to you.

How can you sleep so sweetly, how can you be so very well. Very well.

We know of a great many things we are not to do. We are not to laugh or be sarcastic or harsh or loud or sudden or neglectful or preoccupied or attacked or rebukeful.

A special name for careless is caress.

How many is four times two. Eight. And seven plus one. Eight. And six and two. Eight. And how much is seven. Seven is five and two and four and three. We are free. We are free to have false smiles. I smile falsely and I do not hesitate to give pleasure I speak sharply and I hear the sound of falling water. I linger and I kiss a rose. How often do I kiss a rose. Everytime. I approach the wonder. I wonder why I have so many wishes. I wish to please and to be repeated.

Georgie Sand is in my hand and what are omelettes made of, of oranges and lemonade and how did you see the new moon. It was not the new moon it was the first quarter.

Don't make fun of me.

A sonatina followed by another. The public is not invited to laugh.

False smiles are wiles to make one's styles realise the difference between a tone and atone. I atone with smiles and miles.

I see the moon and the moon sees me god bless the moon and god bless me which is she.

A sonatina followed by another. This ought to be the other. And it is.

Come along and sit to me sit with me sit by me, come along and sit with me all the next day too. Come along and sit with me sit by me sit for me, come along and sit by me sit by me and see.

This is a list of my experiences. I cannot describe beauty. I cannot describe a square, I cannot describe strangeness. I cannot describe rivers, I cannot describe lands. I can describe milk, and women and resemblances and elaboration and cider. I can also describe weather and counters and water. I can also describe bursts of melody.

How often have I said, what do you wish.

Some have a honeymoon with a husband too soon, some have a honeymoon with a husband soon enough. And we have a honeymoon at noon, every noon, we have a honeymoon, a honeymoon-moon at noon and in the afternoon and before noon and between the afternoon and the forenoon which is not noon. You understand me. I understand you very well.

I can sign myself sincerely yours.

Are you resting nicely. Oh charmingly. Are you pleased with everything. Oh so very pleased. Do you feel satisfied. Oh so satisfied. Have you pleasure in your point of view! Oh a great deal of pleasure.

We have been told that telegrams are sold and we do not buy them. We have been told that rooms can be sold but we do not buy them. We have been told that chairs can be sold but we do not buy them.

What we buy is this and with it we satisfy a longing for solitude a deux.

When we see women we say do you inhabit this hotel. When they see us they say we can very easily tell all that we wish to state.

I read to you and you read to me and we both read intently. And I waited for you and you waited for me and we both waited attentively.

I find knitting to be a continuous occupation and I am full of gratitude because I realize how much I am indebted to the hands that wield the needles.

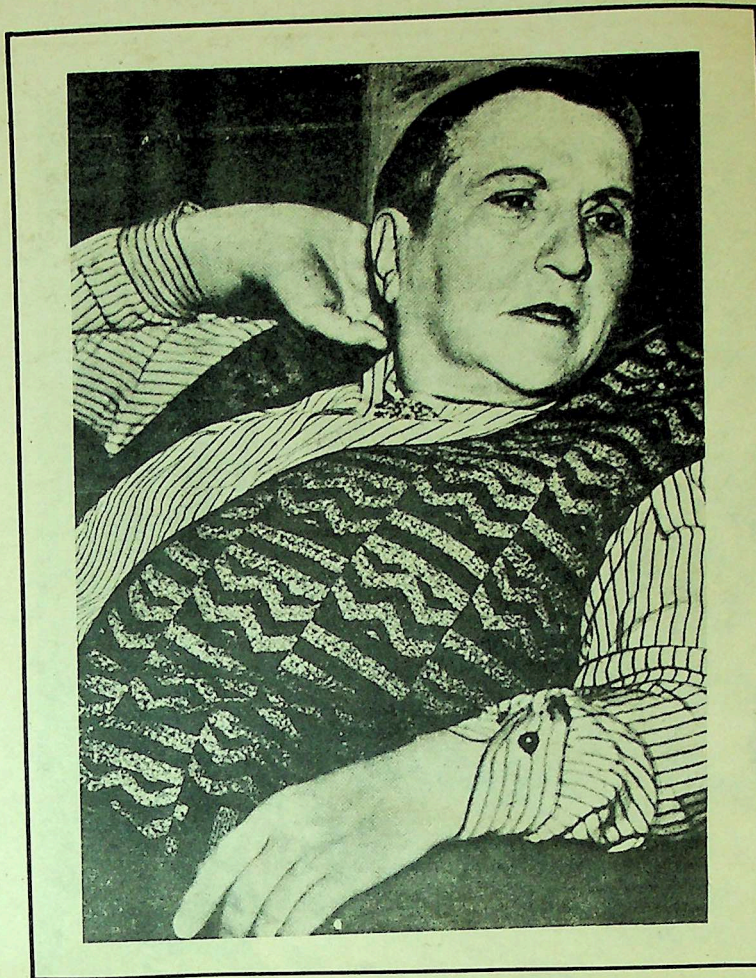
Entire poem is in *Bee Time Vine*; Yale Univ. Press; 1953

Gertrude and Alice

COMPILED BY FRAN WINANT & LORETTA ULMSCHEIDER

"It was Gertrude Stein who held my complete attention, as she did for all the many years I knew her until her death, and all these empty ones since then. She was a golden brown presence, burned by the Tuscan sun and with a golden glint in her warm brown hair. She was dressed in a warm brown corduroy suit. She wore a large coral brooch and when she talked, very little, or laughed, a good deal, I thought her voice came from this brooch. It was unlike anyone else's voice--deep, full, velvety, like a great contralto, like two voices. She was large and heavy, with delicate small hands and a beautifully modelled and unique head."

This was Alice Toklas' first impression of Gertrude Stein when she met her in Paris in 1907. Both women had been born in the 1870's, of middle class parents of Jewish descent.



Both had been raised in California and had been influenced by its independent, 'free' spirit.

Gertrude's interests in literature and psychology had brought her through Radcliff College and John Hopkin's Medical School. In her last year of schooling, she had realized she was bored with medicine and did not pass her exams. In 1903 she decided to join her older brother, Leo, in Paris. Immediately, they began to make acquaintances among then-unknown artists and collected their works. Thus, the famous Stein salon was born with its never-ending stream of artists, writers, tourists pouring through to see the Stein collection and talk with Gertrude. Her way of listening intensely to all she spoke with earned her many life-long friends. The Cubist movement in art fascinated her, and she wrote her first-published book, *Three Lives*, seated in front of Cezanne's painting of Madame Cezanne.

Alice arrived in Paris at a time when Gertrude needed the kind of whole-hearted support of her work and devoted friendship that soon developed between the two women. Alice, who had been well-educated also and for awhile had pursued a career in piano, now taught herself to type and began helping Gertrude with her manuscripts. In 1909, when Alice was 32 and Gertrude 35, they began living together. Alice became Gertrude's secretary, companion, friend, and lover. They lived together in France for almost forty years.

During that time, Gertrude developed an original and influential body of work which included novels, plays, operas, poetry and children's stories. She used simple words exactly, in a repetitive, rhythmic, ungrammatical style.

She wrote the Sonatina printed here in 1921, and in 1933 wrote the *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* which brought her fame. Though the *Autobiography* is uncharacteristic of most of her other work, it was popular because it was written as though Alice was the author and described the now-famous artists who visited their salon. This fame gave the two women a chance to re-visit their native land on several lecture tours.

Gertrude Stein died in 1946 at the age of 72. According to a series of articles by Janet Flanner in the *New Yorker* magazine, Gertrude did not provide for Alice in her will, although Alice had spent most of her own money having Gertrude's books privately published. The valuable art they had bought was left to Gertrude's nieces and nephews. (It is possible that the original intentions of Gertrude's will were contested by her relatives). In an attempt to raise money, Alice wrote the *Alice B. Toklas Cookbook*. She also wrote another cookbook which was a financial failure. A group of writers supposedly contributed money to support her. In her 80's, sick and desperate for money, she wrote her own autobiography: *What is Remembered*. She died in 1967, at the age of 90.



SHE WHO

Poetry by Judy Grahn · Graphics by Nancy Myron



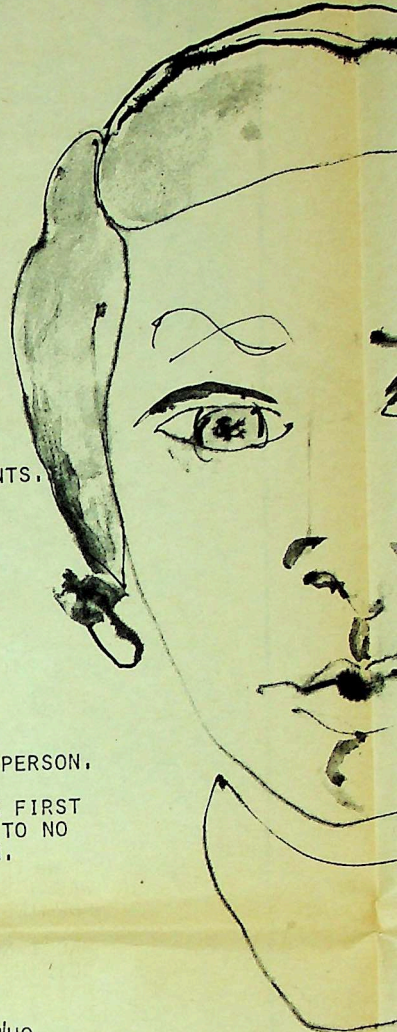
SHE WHO CONTINUES,
 SHE WHO HAS A BEING
 NAMED SHE WHO IS A BEING
 NAMED SHE WHO CARRIES HER OWN NAME,
 SHE WHO TURNS THINGS OVER,
 SHE WHO MARKS HER OWN WAY, GATHERING,
 SHE WHO MAKES HER OWN DIFFERENCE,
 SHE WHO DIFFERS, GATHERING HER OWN EVENTS.

SHE WHO GATHERS, GAINING
 SHE WHO CARRIES HER OWN WAYS,
 GATHERING SHE WHO WAITS,
 BEARING SHE WHO CARES FOR HER
 OWN NAME, CARRYING SHE WHO
 BEARS, GATHERING SHE WHO CARES
 FOR SHE WHO GATHERS HER OWN WAYS,
 CARRYING
 THE NAMES OF SHE WHO GATHER AND GAIN,

SINGING I AM THE WOMAN, THE WOMAN
 THE WOMAN--I AM THE FIRST PERSON,

AND THE FIRST PERSON IS SHE WHO IS THE FIRST
 PERSON TO SHE WHO IS THE FIRST PERSON TO NO
 OTHER, THERE IS NO OTHER FIRST PERSON.

SHE WHO FLOODS LIKE A RIVER AND
 LIKE A RIVER CONTINUES
 SHE WHO CONTINUES



SHE WHO INCREASES
 WHAT CAN BE DONE

I SHALL GROW ANOTHER BREAST
 IN THE MIDDLE OF MY CHEST
 WHAT SHALL IT BE

NOT LIKE THE OTHER ONES LYING THERE
 THOSE TWO FRIED EGGS.

IN THE CENTER OF MY FLESH
 I SHALL GROW ANOTHER BREAST
 ROUNDER THAN A READY FIST,
 SLIPPERY AS A SCHOOL OF FISH,
 SOUNDER THAN STONE, CALL IT
 SHE-WHO-EDUCATES-MY-CHEST.

SHE WHO

SHE IS NOT MY DAUGHTER, NOT MY SON
 I'M GOING TO GROOM HER WITH MY TONGUE
 NEEDLE HER SENSES WITH MY PAIN
 FEED HER HUNCHES WITH MY BRAIN.

SHE WHO DEFENDS ME.

BREAST NUMBER ONE
 BELONGS TO SOME, AND
 BREAST NUMBER TWO
 BELONGS TO YOU, AND
 BREAST NUMBER THREE
 IS SHE-WHO-WORKS-FOR-ME

NOW I HAVE A LONGER TONGUE
 AND THREE GOOD BREASTS, AND SOME HAVE NONE,
 WHAT CAN BE DONE



SHE WHO,
 SHE WHO CARRIES HERSELF IN A BOWL
 SHE WHO HOLDS A BOWL OF BLOOD
 AND SWALLOWS A SPECK OF FOAM
 SHE WHO MOLDS HER BLOOD IN A BOWL
 IN A BOWL, IN A BOWL OF BLOOD
 AND THE BOWL, AND THE BOWL AND THE
 AND THE FOAM AND THE BOWL, AND THE
 AND THE BLOOD BELONG TO SHE WHO HO

SHE SHOOK IT TILL IT GOT SOME SHAP
 SHE SHOOK IT THE FIRST SEASON AND
 SHE SHOOK IT THE SECOND SEASON AND
 SHE SHOOK IT THE THIRD SEASON AND
 SHE WHO.

A GEOLOGY LESSON

HERE, THE SEA STRAINS TO CLIMB
 AND THE WIND BLOWS DUST IN A S
 THE TREES BEND THEMSELVES ALL
 AND VOLCANOES EXPLODE OFTEN.
 WHY IS THIS? MANY YEARS BACK
 A WOMAN OF STRONG PURPOSE
 PASSED THROUGH THIS SECTION
 AND EVERYTHING ELSE TRIED TO F

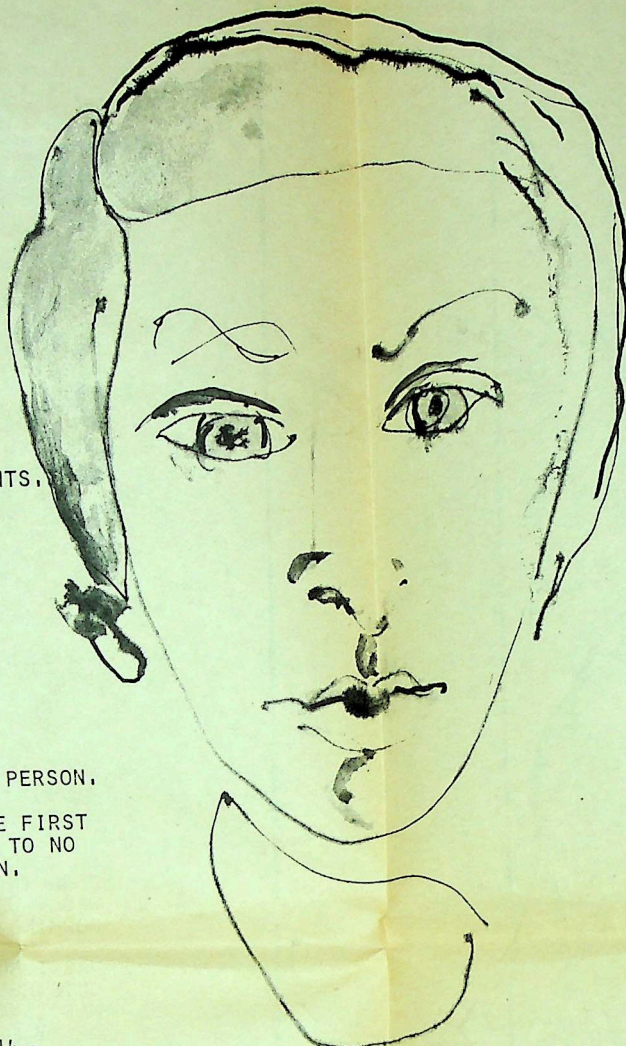
CONTINUES,
HAS A BEING
SHE WHO IS A BEING
SHE WHO CARRIES HER OWN NAME,
TURNS THINGS OVER,
MARKS HER OWN WAY, GATHERING,
MAKES HER OWN DIFFERENCE,
DIFFERS, GATHERING HER OWN EVENTS,

HO GATHERS, GAINING
HO CARRIES HER OWN WAYS,
RING SHE WHO WAITS,
NG SHE WHO CARES FOR HER
AME, CARRYING SHE WHO
, GATHERING SHE WHO CARES
SHE WHO GATHERS HER OWN WAYS,
YING
NAMES OF SHE WHO GATHER AND GAIN,

ING I AM THE WOMAN, THE WOMAN
THE WOMAN--I AM THE FIRST PERSON.

THE FIRST PERSON IS SHE WHO IS THE FIRST
SON TO SHE WHO IS THE FIRST PERSON TO NO
ER. THERE IS NO OTHER FIRST PERSON.

E WHO FLOODS LIKE A RIVER AND
KE A RIVER CONTINUES
E WHO CONTINUES



SHE WHO,
SHE WHO CARRIES HERSELF IN A BOWL OF BLOOD
SHE WHO HOLDS A BOWL OF BLOOD
AND SWALLOWS A SPECK OF FOAM
SHE WHO MOLDS HER BLOOD IN A BOWL
IN A BOWL, IN A BOWL OF BLOOD
AND THE BOWL, AND THE BOWL AND THE BLOOD
AND THE FOAM AND THE BOWL, AND THE BOWL
AND THE BLOOD BELONG TO SHE WHO HOLDS IT,

SHE SHOOK IT TILL IT GOT SOME SHAPE,
SHE SHOOK IT THE FIRST SEASON AND LOST SOME TEETH
SHE SHOOK IT THE SECOND SEASON AND LOST SOME BONE
SHE SHOOK IT THE THIRD SEASON AND SOME BODY WAS BORN,
SHE WHO.

A GEOLOGY LESSON

HERE, THE SEA STRAINS TO CLIMB UP ON THE LAND
AND THE WIND BLOWS DUST IN A SINGLE DIRECTION.
THE TREES BEND THEMSELVES ALL ONE WAY
AND VOLCANOES EXPLODE OFTEN.
WHY IS THIS? MANY YEARS BACK
A WOMAN OF STRONG PURPOSE
PASSED THROUGH THIS SECTION
AND EVERYTHING ELSE TRIED TO FOLLOW,

SLOWLY: A PLAINSONG FROM AN OLDER
WOMAN TO A YOUNGER WOMAN

AM I NOT OLDEN OLDEN OLDEN
IT IS UNWANTED,

WANTING, WANTING
AM I NOT BROKEN
STOLEN COMMON

AM I NOT CRINKLED CRANKY POISON
AM I NOT GLINTY-EYED AND FROZEN

AM I NOT AGED
SHAKY GLAZING
AM I NOT HAZY
GUARDED CRAVEN

AM I NOT ONLY
STINGY LITTLE
AM I NOT SIMPLE
BRITTLE SPITTING

WAS I NOT OVER
OVER RIDDEN?

IT IS A LONG STORY
WILL YOU BE PROUD TO BE MY VERSION?

IT IS UNWRITTEN,

WRITING, WRITING
AM I NOT ANCIENT
RAGING PATIENT

AM I NOT ABLE
CHARMING STABLE
WAS I NOT BUILDING
FORMING BRAVING

WAS I NOT RULING
GUIDING NAMING
WAS I NOT BRAZEN
CRAZY CHOSEN

EVEN THE STONES WOULD DO MY BIDDING?

IT IS A LONG STORY
AM I NOT PROUD TO BE YOUR VERSION?

IT IS UNSPOKEN,

SPEAKING, SPEAKING
AM I NOT ELDER
BERRY
BRANDY

ARE YOU NOT WINE BEFORE YOU FIND ME
IN YOUR OWN BEAKER?

DO YOU NOT TURN AWAY YOUR SHOULDER?
HAVE I NOT SHUT MY MOUTH AGAINST YOU?

ARE YOU NOT SHAMED TO TREAT ME MEANLY
WHEN YOU DISCOVER YOU BECOME ME?
ARE YOU NOT PROUD THAT YOU BECOME ME?

I WILL NOT SHUT MY MOUTH AGAINST YOU,
DO YOU NOT TURN AWAY YOUR SHOULDER,
WE WHO BREW IN THE SAME BITTERS
THAT BOIL US AWAY
WE BOTH NEED STRONGER WATER,

WE'RE TOUCHED BY A SIMILAR NERVE,

I AM NEW LIKE YOUR DAUGHTER,
I AM THE WILL, AND THE RIVERBED
MADE BOLDER
BY YOU--MY OLDEST RIVER--
YOU ARE THE WAY,

ARE WE NOT OLDEN, OLDEN, OLDEN?

SLOWLY: A PLAINSONG FROM AN OLDER
WOMAN TO A YOUNGER WOMAN

AM I NOT OLDEN OLDEN OLDEN
IT IS UNWANTED.

WANTING, WANTING
AM I NOT BROKEN
STOLEN COMMON

AM I NOT CRINKLED CRANKY POISON
AM I NOT GLINTY-EYED AND FROZEN

AM I NOT AGED
SHAKY GLAZING
AM I NOT HAZY
GUARDED CRAVEN

AM I NOT ONLY
STINGY LITTLE
AM I NOT SIMPLE
BRITTLE SPITTING

WAS I NOT OVER
OVER RIDDEN?

IT IS A LONG STORY
WILL YOU BE PROUD TO BE MY VERSION?

IT IS UNWRITTEN.

WRITING, WRITING
AM I NOT ANCIENT
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AM I NOT ABLE
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WAS I NOT BUILDING
FORMING BRAVING

WAS I NOT RULING
GUIDING NAMING
WAS I NOT BRAZEN
CRAZY CHOSEN

EVEN THE STONES WOULD DO MY BIDDING?

IT IS A LONG STORY
AM I NOT PROUD TO BE YOUR VERSION?

IT IS UNSPOKEN.

SPEAKING, SPEAKING
AM I NOT ELDER
BERRY
BRANDY

ARE YOU NOT WINE BEFORE YOU FIND ME
IN YOUR OWN BEAKER?

DO YOU NOT TURN AWAY YOUR SHOULDER?
HAVE I NOT SHUT MY MOUTH AGAINST YOU?

ARE YOU NOT SHAMED TO TREAT ME MEANLY
WHEN YOU DISCOVER YOU BECOME ME?
ARE YOU NOT PROUD THAT YOU BECOME ME?

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DO YOU NOT TURN AWAY YOUR SHOULDER,
WE WHO BREW IN THE SAME BITTERS
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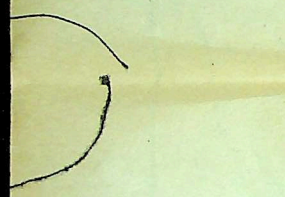
ARE WE NOT OLDEN, OLDEN, OLDEN?



FOAM ON THE RIM OF THE GLASS
ANOTHER WAVE BREAKING

FOAM ON THE RIM OF THE GLASS
ANOTHER WAVE BREAKING
SHE ONCE WANTED TO BE A SAILOR

NOW SHE SITS AT THE BAR, DRINKING
LIKE A SAILOR




OF BLOOD

E BLOOD
E BOWL
OLDS IT,

PE,
LOST SOME TEETH
D LOST SOME BONE
SOME BODY WAS BORN,

B UP ON THE LAND
SINGLE DIRECTION,
ONE WAY

FOLLOW,



THE WOMAN WHOSE HEAD IS ON FIRE
THE WOMAN WITH A NOISEY VOICE
THE WOMAN WITH TOO MANY FINGERS
THE WOMAN WHO NEVER SMILED ONCE IN HER LIFE
THE WOMAN WITH A BONEY BODY
THE WOMAN WITH MOLES ALL OVER HER
THE WOMAN WHO CUT OFF HER BREAST
THE WOMAN WITH A LARGE BOBBING HEAD
THE WOMAN WITH ONE GLASS EYE
THE WOMAN WITH BROAD SHOULDERS
THE WOMAN WITH CALLUSED ELBOWS
THE WOMAN WITH A SUNKEN CHEST
THE WOMAN WHO IS PART GIRAFFE
THE WOMAN WITH 5 GOLD TEETH
THE WOMAN WHO LOOKS STRAIGHT AHEAD
THE WOMAN WITH ENORMOUS KNEES
THE WOMAN WHO CAN LICK HER OWN CLITORIS
THE WOMAN WHO SCREAMS ON THE TRUMPET
THE WOMAN WHOSE TOES GREW TOGETHER
THE WOMAN WHO SAYS I AM WHAT I AM
THE WOMAN WITH RICE UNDER HER SKIN
THE WOMAN WHO OWNS A MACHETE
THE WOMAN WHO PLANTS POTATOES
THE WOMAN WHO MURDERS THE KANGAROO
THE WOMAN WHO STUFFS CLOTHING INTO A SACK
THE WOMAN WHO MAKES A GREAT RACKET
THE WOMAN WHO FIXES MACHINES
THE WOMAN WHOSE CHIN IS STICKING OUT
THE WOMAN WHO SAYS I WILL BE
THE WOMAN WHO CARRIES LAUNDRY ON HER HEAD
THE WOMAN WHO IS PART HORSE
THE WOMAN WHO ASKS SO MANY QUESTIONS
THE WOMAN WHO CUT SOMEBODY'S THROAT
THE WOMAN WHO GATHERS PEACHES
THE WOMAN WHO CARRIES JARS ON HER HEAD
THE WOMAN WHO HOWLS
THE WOMAN WHO PLOWS
THE WOMAN WHOSE NOSE IS BROKEN
THE WOMAN WHO CONSTRUCTS BUILDINGS
THE WOMAN WHO HAS FITS ON THE FLOOR
THE WOMAN WHO MAKES RAIN HAPPEN
THE WOMAN WHO REFUSES TO MENSTRUATE
THE WOMAN WHO SETS BROKEN BONES
THE WOMAN WHO SLEEPS OUT ON THE STREET
THE WOMAN WHO PLAYS THE DRUMS
THE WOMAN WHO IS PART GRASSHOPPER
THE WOMAN WHO HERDS CATTLE
THE WOMAN WHOSE WILL IS UNBENDING
THE WOMAN WHO HATES KITTENS
THE WOMAN WHO IS LOCKED IN THE JAILHOUSE
THE WOMAN WHO IS WALKING ACROSS THE DESERT
THE WOMAN WHO BURIES THE DEAD
THE WOMAN WHO TAUGHT HERSELF WRITING
THE WOMAN WHO SKINS RABBITS
THE WOMAN WHO BELIEVES HER OWN WORD
THE WOMAN WHO CHEWS BEARSKINS
THE WOMAN WHO EATS COCAINE
THE WOMAN WHO THINKS ABOUT EVERYTHING
THE WOMAN WHO HAS THE TATOO OF A BIRD
THE WOMAN WHO PUTS THINGS TOGETHER
THE WOMAN WHO SQUATS ON HER HAUNCHES
THE WOMAN WHOSE CHILDREN ARE ALL DIFFERENT COLORS

SINGING I AM THE WILL OF THE WOMAN
THE WOMAN
MY WILL IS UNBENDING

WHEN SHE WHO MOVES THE EARTH WILL TURN OVER
WHEN SHE WHO MOVES, THE EARTH WILL TURN OVER

Sometimes There Are No Seasons

BY HELAINE HARRIS
for Lee

Beer sloshed in her belly as she finished the eight block walk with the last two steps leading to the door of the building. The walk had rushed the blood back into her legs. Legs that had been still, drawn up under her, sitting, brooding, in an empty room she had rented for the week. If she wasn't leaving the next day she might have taken the place permanently. She hadn't even looked at the room closely when the old woman showed it to her. In fact she hardly noticed the woman.

"I'll take it," she said instantly when she heard the rent was twenty a week.

One week--that was all she needed it for. It was a small room with only a single bed sagging in the middle and a large black trunk the woman asked her not to "meddle" with. One four by two foot window looked down four stories below to a small rose thicket at the bottom. "Rapunzel, Rapunzel," she thought gazing down to it. A rose thicket, there were no blooms in the middle of January. One week--in one week all the blooms had fallen off those bushes with the first cold wave. One week--in only one week she had moved out of their apartment, decided to leave the city, found this room, and bought her ticket. One week--she could have left the apartment and been in another city in one day, but stretched it out to a week, positive at first, but later hoping that Sandie would change her mind, that it hadn't been the fight. Yet, she had been the one to walk out of the apartment. She who confirmed the fact. And she had made reservations for her flight.

It wasn't until the middle of those eight blocks to what was now Sandie's apartment that she realized her real intentions.

She had to take her hands out of the fleece pockets of her battle jacket to dial the phone next to the locked building's door. It rang once, twice, three times.

"She's not going to see me. She's changed her mind."

The phone rang again as she thought, "Why doesn't she answer? Shit, she asked me to come over."

Snow was coming down harder now and she squinted her eyes in order to see the crystals in her lashes. Finally the phone was picked up.

The voice at the other end answered, "Hello," waited, and said, "Hello," again.

Kathy ignored the voice, lost in the flakes instead.

The voice asked, "Hello, Katherine. Is that you? Why don't you answer?"

She blinked twice, her eyes strained from squinting. "Yeah, it's me. You asked me to come over didn't you. Well, can I come up or not?"

"Yeah, sure. Hang up and I'll ring the buzzer."

The buzzer sounded, she pulled open the door and strode across the empty brown hallway to the elevator.

A petite woman wearing blue jeans and a black leotard waited at the door on the fifth floor. As she heard the elevator door open she opened her door wearing the smile she had planted there a second be-

fore. She pulled at the ends of her dirty blonde hair.

"Hi, Katherine, glad you came over," she said as she put her arms around Kathy giving her a quick squeeze.

Kathy forced a quick smile across her face but could hold it only for a minute because her lip nerves began to quiver.

It always happened that way. She would fake a smile, but it would never stay in place.

In order to hide the twitch she walked into the living room rubbing the blood back into her hands. She stood waiting for Sandie to take her coat, already feeling warm drops of sweat slide down her side.

The thermostat had been turned up. Every morning she used to turn it down as she left for work, when she returned it would be up again. They played this game every day with each other. On certain days one would forget and lose points. They never talked about it, it was such a silly thing--due to different body temperatures or temperaments. But today the heat was irritating.

She sat or rather sank into a fur covered chair, throwing her jacket onto the orange carpet. Instantly, she pulled herself up and sat on the floor. She just got settled when she noticed it.

The picture leaned against the wall. A large picture, modern, with a red, green, and white background. A yellow stripe splashed down the middle of the watercolor. It waited to be hung on the white wall. A very empty white wall with only a black couch to break the white-white. Stark--the picture would add color and would break the coldness. But this apartment was already too warm for her, with plush animal fur pillows and radiator that overheated. A thick, hot, damp heat lay in the air. She didn't like the steam on the windows, so heavy that she couldn't see through the pane's fog to the building next door.

For years, with her family in Texas, she had lived in heat, except it wasn't contained in one room. It was inside and out--humid, hot winters and summers. The only difference was the rain in the winter and occasional frost on the ground. For years the smells and feels had been heavy and slow, not sharp biting ones of the North. She was in love with ice and snow; the biting winds that awakened her, made her move.

She revolted at the thought of that picture hanging where the white had been. Hot bits of color would destroy the last touch of cold left in the room.

She was staring at the picture with half-closed eyes, wishing it away, when Sandie entered the room holding a pot of coffee and two cups.

"Shit, you know I don't want coffee. Have you got anything else in there, like beer?"

"Look in the refrigerator, I'm not sure."

On the way to the kitchen she passed the thermostat and turned it down.

Holding a can of ale, Kathy returned to the floor and looked at the picture. Both of the women

tried to think of something to say. Kathy thought of telling Sandie about her room and the thicket but decided it didn't matter. Finally Sandie spoke.

"I see you've noticed my birthday gift...Well?"

"Well, what?"

"How do you like it?"

"Its okay," said Kathy with a shrug."

"I want to hang it on that wall. I didn't have time to hang it this week...I think that wall needed something, don't you?"

"Uh, yeah...No! Why ask me? I don't know."

"Hey, why don't we hang it now? It's so big, two people really need to do it. What do you think? It would take only a few minutes...."

"No, I'd rather not. I'm pretty tired and...."

"Katherine," she said as she stood up grabbing Kathy's arm, "Come on. One small favor... for me?"

"Shit. Where's a hammer?"

"Great. I promise it'll be painless, just two nails banged into the wall. The hammer's over there by the couch."

She took another gulp of ale and walked over to the couch. Holding the nail between her thumb and index finger she banged the nail into the plaster wall and completely missed the beam. The nail slipped out leaving a large, crumbling hole.

"Fuck, the nail won't stay in."

"Katherine, you've got to hit the stud, the wood. Try again."

"I'd like to hit the stud, alright," Kathy muttered as she went to the refrigerator for another ale.

She walked back into the living room and stood, slowly drinking the ale and looking at the picture.

"Where did you get this thing in the first place?"

Sandie knew bait when it was thrown to her. "Since you ask, Ralph, gave it to me."

"Well, why do you have to hang it here? One space left in this whole apartment and you want to clutter it with this picture."

"I think it's a great painting. But...if you're too high to hang it. I'll get someone else to help me with it."

"That wouldn't be ol' Ralphy now, would it?"

"So, what business is it of yours? Katherine, you could have just said 'no,' in the first place."

"So, it's Kath--er--ine, now, is it? Well, when did you decide to call me Kath--er--ine, instead of Kathy?"

"I am not high, and I'm going to hang this damn thing."

This time she hit the board; smashed the nail in. Another nail and the wall was ready to hang its Christ. She got off the couch and took another swallow of ale. She definitely did not want to hang it and thought, "Sober, I could do it. Sober, I could quickly knock in the nail, put up the picture, and walk out of here. I could walk right out of here into the snow and forget all about the picture, Sandie, everything."

"Drinking always slows me up, makes me face what I don't want



to see."

With one eye she stared at the picture, the other saw Sandie waiting for her to finish hanging it, a slight smile on her face. She sat down on the sofa.

"Hang your own fucking picture. You asked me over for a good-bye drink, not for this."

"Katherine, you're impossible. I know I asked you over for a goodbye drink. But I asked you one small favor. I would do it myself if I could. You always make something out of nothing. Leave it here then. I'll ask Ralph to do it."

"What is that supposed to be? A little threat?"

"You're the one who said it."

"Sheeet, let Ralph do it. He does everything for you now, doesn't he?"

"Now, listen, Katherine. Kathy, if you like. Let's not go into that again. You didn't have to come over tonight. You're drunk and you're saying things you wouldn't say if you were sober. We were together long enough for me to know that."

"I'm no more drunk than you must have been when you first became his friend. You know, I just can't understand? I just can't. A man. Why did you want to sleep with a man? One reason, just one good reason."

"Because I'd never slept with a man before. It's no big thing. I wanted to know what it was like."

"Okay, okay. So now you've slept with one. Why do you keep on seeing him?"

"Why do you see Laura or Julie or any of your friends? Because you like them. Well, I like Ralph. Why can't you accept that?"

"But it's different."

"What's different? I know you would get along if you met each other. You know I told him about you. He thinks it's great."

"That would be fine. Great. Me and ol' Ralph--pals, huh? We could compare how it is with you. I can see it now. Over a friendly drink. "Well, Ralph,

ol' buddy. Can I give you a few tips on oral...."

"Stop bringing sex into it. You know what I mean. He's just like anyone else. You've already put him down just because he's a man."

"That's right. That's what makes him different from Laura or Julie or...."

"Look, I'm going to choose my friends and you choose yours. I don't owe you anything. You always want to tell me what's right and what's wrong. I lead my own life, and if you want to know me, be my friend, or even love me, that's the way it's going to be. I didn't ask you to leave, remember. You're the one who had to move out, and now leave the city. We had a good thing going, honey. You can stay but I've got to ask you to let me make my own decisions."

"I don't care if you decide to die in the next minute. But I am not going to be just another fuck for you."

"That's right, Katherine, just block it all out. Nothing I can say will make you understand. Now, I know why you don't want to hang this picture. It's because it's from Ralph."

"That's right. I don't want to hang this damn thing and I don't want that prick hanging it either."

And, she thought of the only way it would not be hung. Taking the ale she steadily got up, walked to the picture and carefully, evenly flowed the rest of the can onto the picture. Within five seconds, the cheery modern design reeked of ale; the colors slowly blended into a brown mess.

"You goddamn bitch. You goddamn stinking bitch. Katherine, I asked you over because I wanted it to be at least okay between us when you left and you have to do this kind of shit. You're crazy, you're fucking crazy. Get the hell out of here! Get the fucking shit out of here."

There was a smile on Kathy's face.

"You know what your problem is, Sandie? You're too warm, just too warm."

"Get out of here. Here's your coat," Sandie said, throwing the jacket at Kathy.

"Thank you for the coat. You were a most charming hostess, goodnight," she said, with that same smile on her lips.

Sandie slammed the door behind Katherine and angrily turned the thermostat back up.

She kept smiling in the elevator. Yeah, everything was okay, all forgotten, everything had been a dream.

She thought, "My gift to you Sandie, a going away present--a nice brown, drab painting to brighten up your life."

It was cold, a cold that was clear and bright. It wasn't until she slipped that she noticed there was ice everywhere. She walked down the middle of the street. Midnight and stars and ice. She slipped and fell every tenth step while singing an old country western song she remembered hearing on the radio one of those smothering days.

At 5 o'clock she woke up not knowing where she was. Finally she recognized her attic apartment and remembered she had to catch a helicopter at 6:30 to make connections on her flight. She got up, put on the light, and felt a stab of achiness in her head matched only by the black and blue bruises all over her body. She felt the first wave of nausea and was surprised. The bruises were to be expected, since she bruised easily, but when she slept after being drunk, she was never nauseous. There's

always a first time she thought as she walked to the chest where she had lain out her clothes. She donned a red flannel shirt and brown corduroys, laced up her boots, and climbed down to the bathroom. Squinting against the bare bulb's light, she tried putting her finger down her throat. It wouldn't come up and she was late.

Six o'clock and the streets were already busy with people going to work or coming home from late night shifts. The streets were icy, the taxi ride quiet and slow, but her head throbbled as if she were riding in the cab of a mack truck. She handed the driver the \$2.25 fare in change and slipped on the ice as she walked toward the sidewalk in front of the terminal. Going through the electric sliding doors she felt her stomach coming up. Out of her mouth came a mixture of ale and yesterday's supper--warm vomit. She watched herself retching as though someone else--someone she couldn't help because she didn't know her. People stepped by either side of her, running to make flights. The yellow mixture splashed against the red, green, and white checkered floor.

She finally stopped and went to the bathroom where she splashed water on her face, rinsed out her mouth, glad she had not stained her clothes. She walked out of the bathroom still feeling sick, bracing herself for the flight. She purchased her ticket and was the last passenger out of the door onto the runway to the copter. The blades swept the already cold air and a slight shiver ran through her as she crossed the concrete field.

Gay Reformism: Almost but not quite

BY MARY-HELEN MAUTNER

The advent of Gay Liberation, with its shouts of "Gay is Good," has brought many lesbians out of the closets and into the fight for equal rights and acceptance for lesbians.

Several subgroups approach the problem of lesbian oppression differently. The more traditional groups take a defensive position: "Lesbians are not sick or perverted. We are as good citizens as you are. Therefore there is no reason for you to deny us equal rights. We ask you to give us our rights to full economic and social equality." They spend a good deal of time refuting the homosexuality-as-sickness arguments. More "radical" groups recognize that society's rejection and fear of lesbianism results from society's attitudes about women in general. They advocate a struggle against sexist attitudes in order to gain equal rights for lesbians.

However these gay reformists cannot succeed in their efforts because they lack comprehensive politics explaining lesbian oppression. Those politics have been stated many times in this newspaper. Basically, the male supremacist society cannot afford to "give" lesbians equal rights or accept them fully, because doing so would destroy male supremacy.

Two recent books about lesbians and lesbianism, written by lesbians, demonstrate this basic failure to recognize the politics inherent in lesbian oppression. *Lesbian/Woman* by Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon and *Sappho Was A Right-On Woman* by Sidney Abbott and Barbara Love are very different books and yet have a lot in common. They are important books because they are firsts in that lesbians talk about lesbianism in a positive way and because they describe in vivid, heartbreaking detail all the forms of lesbian oppression.

Lesbian/Woman was written by the founders of Daughters of Bilitis, two women with nearly twenty years of constant contact with lesbians of every description and background. Their book is crammed with examples from lesbians' lives. They show how a lesbian lives through the agonies of learning to accept herself in the face of degrading treatment by every institution touching her--the church, the law, psychiatrists, teachers, friends and family. If she manages to arrive at a satisfactory self-image, she still faces the problems of survival in a system which discriminates against her financially and socially, not only as a lesbian but also as a woman, a single woman.

Lesbian/Woman also discusses lesbian oppression in terms of woman oppression, but basically the book remains a plea for equal treatment: "We Lesbians do not want your sympathy nor your pity; we want your love and respect. We are not looking for society's toleration, a 'let live' policy which would simply rel-

egate us to a second best kind of life; we want to partake of the richness of life and be a part of the mainstream of society."

The authors are asking for societal approval by denying that lesbianism is a threat to the society. This approach is clearest--and saddest--in the chapter on lesbian mothers in which the authors assure their readers that children raised by lesbians will not necessarily become homosexuals.

Lesbian/Woman is mainly directed to the friends, employers and families of lesbians -- and somewhat to lesbians themselves. "These are your daughters, sisters, wives and mothers....What happens to the Lesbian from here on is up to you -- you as a Lesbian, you as parents and relatives of Lesbians, you who are friends or work on the job with Lesbians...." To the extent that this book reaches and changes the attitudes and behavior of that audience it is a valuable book. To the extent that it contributes to the easing of the oppression of lesbians, it has made a significant contribution. But it is not enough.

Sappho Was A Right-On Woman, subtitled "A Liberated View of Lesbianism," reaches somewhat further than *Lesbian/Woman*. It too describes, although less vividly, the nature and extent of lesbian oppression and discusses the Gay Liberation Movement, Feminism, and their effect on lesbians. (The book has a detailed account of the struggle within NOW about lesbianism in the women's movement, and the resulting formation of Radicalesbians.)

The two most important chapters in the context of a discussion of the political implications of lesbianism are "Lesbianism and Feminism" and "Curing Society." The authors frequently approach the politics of lesbian/feminism but then back off into advocating only a struggle against sexist attitudes within the society, thereby reforming it, rather than an organized struggle for the destruction of male supremacist society and the building of a new world on non-sexist, non-racist, non-classist principles.

It is impossible to set out clearly the authors' politics because they vacillate on the connection between lesbianism and feminism. Numerous ideas will sound familiar to the lesbian/feminist: "the first condition for the success of the heterosexual system is that woman abdicate any role other than the assigned one, withdrawing from any competition with man. The system will be shaken by the advent of a woman practising self-determination. As such women increase in numbers, the structure of sexual hierarchy necessarily will rock on its foundations." They describe lesbians as in fact being models of self-determination. How-

ever, they seem to see this process as one that just happens, "spontaneous rebellion," rather than one that requires political organization for its success.

The authors recognize the limitations of (asexual) sisterhood among heterosexual women: "The first loyalty of most heterosexual women still goes to their husbands and children....Women are often fearful that full dedication to women's issues might jeopardize their relationships with men....No matter how free heterosexual women feel they are economically or socially, if they are still bound to men for their erotic or emotional life, they are handicapped and their allegiance to other women necessarily runs in second place." But they decline to follow through to the logical conclusion of this statement -- that in order not to betray women and the feminist movement, women must give their full love and commitment to women, i.e., become lesbian/feminists. Rather, they conclude only that the Women's Movement should not reject its lesbians.

Occasionally a bright light shines through: "Surely any potential influence of Lesbianism is terrifying to those who stick blindly to tradition: for it is not only a sexual preference but a political stance against male domination.... Authorities have a motive for keeping Lesbianism a 'private issue.' They do not want large numbers of women to know the good aspects of this alternative. What would happen to the 'healthy' patriarchal authoritarian system based on women's submission to men?"


They follow by describing the feminist movement as "A revolutionary movement...based on the deeply personal area of the member-group's sex life and the values attached to it." This view of feminism is reflected in the chapter "Curing Society," where the authors say society is sick, therefore we must cure society by changing society's attitudes. The mechanism for "curing society" is teaching that lesbianism is a "valid alternative lifestyle" and by eliminating the degradation and oppression by religious, educational, psychological, economic, and legal authorities. But this approach is piecemeal. It asks for massive surgery on the sick body when, in fact, the body is too sick to be cured. It must be replaced, re-created in a new form. [continued next page]

THESE DAYS

by Iee lally

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In the final analysis, Sappho does not see that feminism is a revolutionary struggle for political power. Reading Sappho is like being constantly brought to the edge of orgasm but never quite making it.

Lesbian/Woman and Sappho Was A Right-On Woman did not satisfy our hopes for them. And our hopes were high. It is wonderful to walk into a bookstore and see TWO books written by lesbians talking about lesbianism in a self-affirming, political way after all these years of sickness literature. It these books are read and listened to, they may help reduce lesbian oppression and every change, however small, produces new changes in snowball fashion. A reduction in the intensity of lesbian oppression gives lesbians a little more room to live, breathe and survive, thus giving feminists more time and energy to devote to our revolutionary struggle.

Lesbians (and future lesbians) will find the beginnings of a lesbian/feminist analysis. They will find some answers for their questions and doubts. But the books (and gay reformists in general) provide only half-answers which by themselves will never destroy lesbian and woman oppression. It is impossible to reform the male supremacist system into a non-sexist, non-classist, non-racist one because male supremacy is in direct contradiction to these goals. Male supremacy must be destroyed, not reformed, in order to create a society in which women are not oppressed. As long as lesbians are oppressed, all women are oppressed; as long as lesbianism is seen as a threat to men and therefore forbidden, it means that men will not tolerate women loving and supporting each

other rather than men. Lesbians deny the assumptions of women's inferiority, of women's need for men, and of their stated role of serving the interests of men. The lesbian's refusal to support and need men denies men's power even in its most individual and personal form. And therein lies society's fear and hate of lesbians: They are not "real women" (i.e., fulfilling their male-defined functions). Therefore lesbians threaten the very existence of male supremacy; for male supremacy can't survive without heterosexuality.

* * * *

Gay and Groovy

BY HELAINE HARRIS

The other side of the "Gay is Good" coin must be "Gay is Groovy." Times Change Press offers as one of its Gay publications a book titled Great Gay in the Morning, subtitled "One Group's Approach to Communal Living and Sexual Politics." And what a strange mixture it is. It was written by seven gay men and two lesbians (the men's experiences dominate the book). They call themselves the 25 to 6 Baking and Trucking Society. With a name like that what can one say but "Wow." What's more they came to that name because "somebody said 'Time is oppressive' and stopped the clocks at 25 to 6 -- and so the commune's name was registered in the local phone book, reflecting a new way of living that had begun. Sorry, but I couldn't find anything new in the entire book that I hadn't picked up from reading a Berkeley Tribe or Quicksilver Times adding a small sprinkling of those basic "Gay is Good" politics.

The book is one long "and then we smoked some more dope, and then

we 'glommed' some more cakes and cookies, and then we created some gay liberated zones, and we are moving to the land with domes and are gonna make a lot of dreams happen and put more energy back into the universe." SHADES OF YIPPEE.

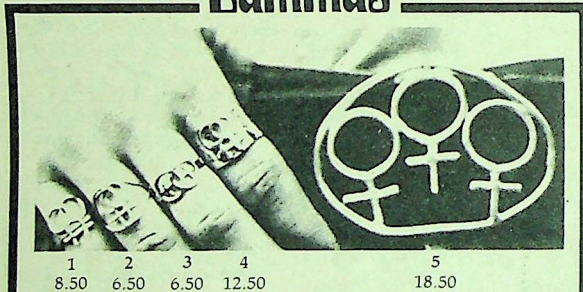
Their politics were confusing. I never did understand if they wanted to "smash Amerika" or turn cosmic. Maybe a mixture of the two. Included in Great Gay... was an article entitled "Less is More." It was written by one of the men explaining how he used to earn over ten thousand dollars a year but now he doesn't have to do that because he has learned to rip off. What would ten thousand dollars mean to the Lesbian/Feminist movement? On the whole this is the prevalent attitude toward privilege throughout the book. The men are trying to deal with their male supremacy only in their attitudes; they ignore privilege. They recognize only individual power and while they do try to deal with that, they do not recognize the privileges they receive just by being men, even though they are gay.

Of course, I did not imagine that most of the articles in the book would be written by women but there was only one article by a woman directed to women in the entire book. It was the only article worth reading -- a come-out story and a short paragraph on what it meant to be woman-identified. All said before, but well worth repeating.

This book doesn't even go as far as Sappho and Lesbian/Woman in its analysis of oppression or male supremacy. Their life style acknowledges male supremacy in a very limited way; yet they continue to live very privileged lives. This book doesn't accomplish anything.

* * * *

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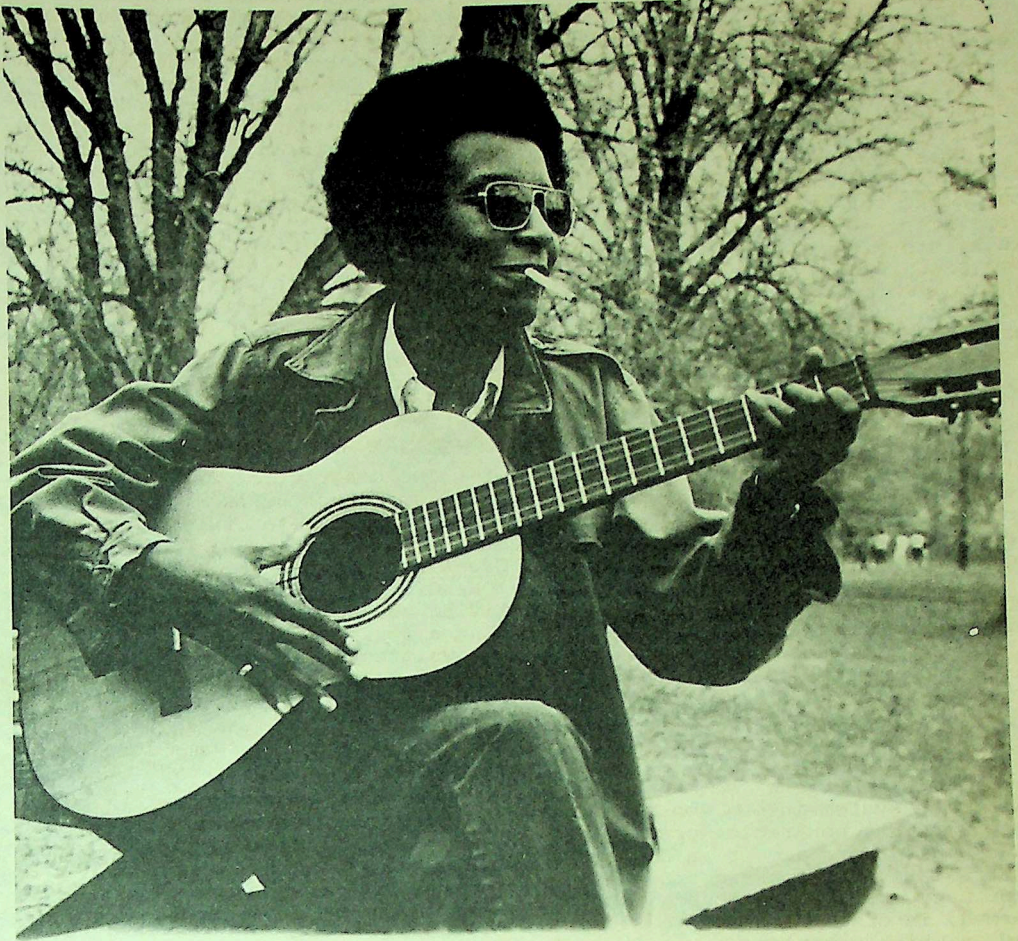


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