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Berkeley/Oakland Women's Union

a socialist-feminist organization

Newsletter

No. 1 AUGUST 1973

THOUGHTS ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

It is important for women to write, to publish our thoughts.

When women don't write we are kept more isolated from each other.

The Union newsletter is a space for many things. Discussions of many things; strategy, theory, who we are, information, how we're feeling.

Having a space to write in is an opportunity to develop our theories collectively.

We are taught that knowledge comes only from books. We've come to know that this needs to be supplemented by the knowledge from experience.

We encourage fragments as well as wholes.

A space for women to write. To share our thoughts and feelings. Our concern for the world, Our plans, Our actions.

Deadline for the next newsletter is Sept. 10. Bring to 2029 Essex St.

*****One of the things I feel best about this summer is being in a study group with five other women. We came together originally because we work in local media doing feminist programming, and we wanted to begin to define a common political reality among ourselves. We've grown close through our study group — talking about ourselves as well as analyzing different things we're reading together, like Juliet Mitchell's Women's Estate, Engels' The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State, Lesbian feminist material, and things on class. Our backgrounds range from upper middle class (in terms of what our fathers do for a living) to working class, and one of the things we do is try to be very self-aware of how these class attitudes influence our present thinking and behavior, whether or not we feel we are still defined by our parents' social class. In upcoming meetings, we will be discussing such things as heterosexual privilege, black-white relations in dealing with sexism, and ideas for actions women might organize around with respect to the food price situation. So we're a fairly wide-ranging study group, and we all feel that our group is very important to our lives right now.

I've been attending (sporadically) the mass meetings of the Women's Union, and am also in a random group. I have been a liason between my study group and the Women's Union, trying to report to the group what's going on in the Union. I think that several sisters from the group will attend the first public meeting of the Union. All are very interested in what the Union could become.



I'd like to share with Union members some of the questions and criticism which sisters in my study group raised when I discussed the Principles of Unity with them. Some of the questions were "off the top of our heads" -- sort of first impressions -- and should not be felt as well worked out "positions". We were feeling our way through the document, and there was disagreement among us as to what we agreed and disagreed with.

First, two sisters wondered why it was called the BERKELEY Women's Union. Both women live in Oakland (as do two other women in the group), and they had some objections to what they feel is a kind of Berkeley chauvinism, and that things with the name "Berkeley" on them don't last long, and that "Berkeley" connotes dropout, student, longhair, etc. Both women have come to California within the last three years -- they don't have a sense of Berkeley's movement community being very active. I've lived in Berkeley for nine years, and feel really good about the history of this community; however, it was an education to hear that some newcomers don't see things the way I do in this respect. They would prefer East Bay Women's Union, or some name which isn't "Berkeley."

Another woman, who had been in an anarchist-communist collective in New York City, wondered why the Principles talked about socialism, and not communism -- does this imply that we envision the mechanics of the final stages of revolution in terms of a vanguard party

seizing state power? Why is nothing said about the state, or its abolition, in the Principles. She would feel more comfortable calling herself a communist, to distinguish ourselves from bureaucratic socialism. Other women agreed, but also understood that there may be good reasons for the name "socialist" too, as coming from a revolutionary socialist tradition. Perhaps what this question points up is that we haven't described well enough what socialism is (or could be), in our view. Or maybe we should say something about visions vs. blueprints?

One woman asked why nothing was said about class within the women's movement in the principles of unity. Her question was coming out of the kind of thing we deal with in our study group -- differences in verbal self-confidence, job-hunting self-confidence, self-image, among us in the group, which we attribute, at least in part, to our class upbringing. Certainly the question is important in terms of how women in the Union will relate personally to women outside of our decidedly more intellectual community, not to mention how they will see organizing itself. "Will I be comfortable there?" she asked me... meaning, among other things, do women in the Union take care to talk simply and slowly enough to allow all sisters present to follow, participate, and question. I know that there are many levels to this class question, and that sometimes bitter conflicts have occurred within the movement over it. I think there's much to be discussed here, and that the discussions need not be divisive. In my study group, the daughters of assembly-line workers and the daughters of businessmen see each other as revolutionary sisters, and we feel it's better to have all unconscious conditioning out on the table, so that we can move on it cooperatively.

All of us in the group are curious to see what kinds of projects will come out of the Women's Union. A few of us are beginning to feel antsy about not doing more collectively to raise consciousness among women about the present food price inflation crisis. We haven't yet discussed a project idea as a group, but maybe we'll come up with something. If so, we'll pass it on or ~~*****~~

Several weeks ago I experienced a period of a week or two of feeling very depressed and pessimistic about the Union. I had lost sight of what we were doing - the seemingly endless mass meetings concerning Principles of Unity and structure had finally gotten to me. I no longer felt that it was directed toward something, but felt that we had forgotten about developing strategy and programs. I concluded that we should abandon everything and have discussions on the "political direction of the Union". But I realized that this was an irrational conclusion, coming mainly from a feeling of impatience. The Union's implicit agenda of adopting Principles of Unity and structure as a basis for working together and then focusing more directly on developing strategy and programs again seemed correct.

The question now (now that we have Principles of Unity and structure) is: How do we proceed? A polarization that has often been expressed in the Union is that of working on projects as opposed to developing theory. And in dealing with the question of how to proceed I thought I had to choose one or the other. But it seems that this is an unnecessary polarization which can be avoided if we take an explicitly strategic approach to projects (actually I prefer the term "interest groups" because I think the whole Union should be an integrated "project".) To expand on the concept of strategy - developing a strategy involves several things: understanding historically and materially the present situation, recognizing the need for a long-range view of building a revolutionary movement, and figuring out what to do and how to do it. But this cannot be done in a real and meaningful way unless it is part of practice and experience, and since there is no history of socialist-feminist organizational work to draw conclusions from, we must begin our practice at the same time and in conjunction with developing our strategy.

But why worry about strategy anyway? Why not just start doing things and forget all this theoretic-

tical stuff? The reason as I see it is that there are many important political conflicts within the Union that we must be dealing with, and we need a perspective on them so that we understand the true dimensions of each conflict. For example, many women in the Union might have a position on whether building alternative institutions is a constructive political thing to do, or whether we should only engage in actions which directly confront the State, and competition might develop in a project group as to where the time and energy should go. But if we have a strategic orientation to our discussions we would see that both are necessary elements of building a movement, and the discussion could focus on how, and at what point in the struggle we should do either one.

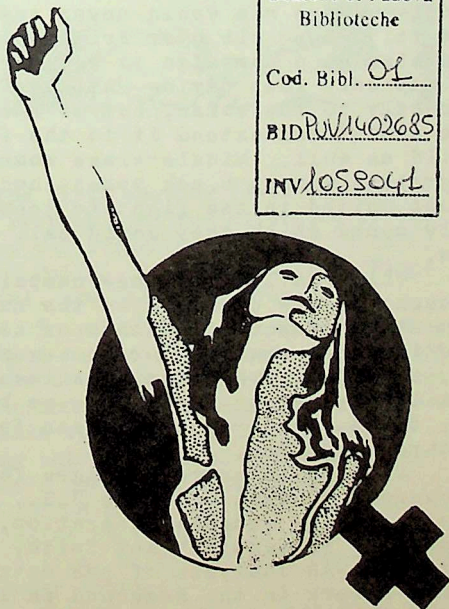
I'd like to add that I feel very good about the Union now, about all the energy that we have for it, that we are really taking ourselves seriously and building our organization in a positive way.--Jane Meyer

Comune di Padova
Biblioteche

Cod. Bibl. 01

BID PVV1402685

INV 1058041



Wages For Housework

Last May two marxist-feminists from the European Women's Movement: Mariarosa Dalla Costa from Lotta Femminista ("Feminist Struggle") in Italy; and Selma James from The Power of Women Collective in Britain, came to speak with women in the Bay Area. The political perspective which they presented centered around the demand of Wages for Housework - posed not only as a demand but as a means of mobilizing women against the State. Their perspective, firmly rooted in marxist theory, is at the same time distinctly feminist: it deals with women's relation to capital and how women can fight to destroy it.

The perspective of Wages for Housework came out of the struggle in Britain around Family Allowance (an English version of AFDC). Family Allowance is paid to all mothers who have more than one child, for helping to raise the second child and all the ones after the second. The State tried to take Family Allowance away from the woman and put it instead into her husband's pay-check as a "tax credit" where she would never see it or get it. Women all over Britain rebelled and started a campaign to get the State to not only keep paying Family Allowance directly to the woman, but to increase the amount and extend it to the first child as well. Middle-class women, working-class women, black women, and white women united in the fight to keep the only money which they could call their own.

This Family Allowance campaign brought up the question in the European Women's Movement of whether or not women should receive wages for housework; which is, in effect, what Family Allowance really is: paying women to give birth to, train, feed, clothe, clean for - the future workforce.

We have interpreted Wages for Housework to mean, for the U.S., not a blueprint for women's liberation, or a demand to immediately set forth, but rather as an analysis of the nature of women's work in the home and an indication of how we, as women, can confront

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L.A. Women

LOS ANGELES WOMEN'S UNION: While I was in L.A. Laurie and I met with women from the Media Chapter of the Los Angeles Women's Union. The Union considers itself to be a socialist-feminist organization. With 300 women at a March 10th founding convention, the Union began working out political differences and struggling around needs and goals the story of which is very similar to ours. Some 50 women have worked continually to develop principles of unity and a structure and they are now publicizing Union activities throughout the L.A. area.

In their principles they see sexism, racism, capitalism, imperialism as integrally connected. "Women's liberation will not be achieved until all people are free." They are an autonomous independent women's union. They see the L.A. Union connecting with other unions to be a "multi-national organization." They want to be a "democratic organization with mutual support and enthusiasm for change." They intend "to develop a theory, strategy and tactics of the steps we will have to take to make ourselves and all women free.

(cont. over)

WAGES

our enemy: the capitalist State. We can learn alot from Selma's and Maria-rosa's analysis even though their strategy was developed specifically out of the political situation of their respective countries and cannot be simply super-imposed on the situation in the U.S.

Alot of energy and discussion was generated from their talks but because this energy wasn't organized it got diffused and follow-up discussions never took place. We hope that sometime in the near future the Union can discuss the Wages for Housework perspective and arrive to some strategic conclusions. A group of us from the Union are presently transcribing tapes of Selma's and Mariarosa's talks to be printed up for women who missed them when they were here and to facilitate further discussion. Their book, The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community

(read by the Union as a whole a few months ago) is available at A Woman's Place Bookstore (5251 Broadway, at College).

Selma would like to keep in contact with the Union, as she said in a recent letter after meeting with women here, "I am a more deeply confirmed feminist than ever."

--Piera Piagentini, with input from Carol Malley and Jane Meyer

L.A.

Regarding structure, the L.A. Union has at-large membership with all members subscribing to the principles of the Union and encouraged membership in one or more chapters. There are interest chapters and geographical chapters and existing groups which may join and become chapters. Existing chapters include Media, Working Women, Anti-rape, Guerrilla Theater, Childcare, Women in Education, World Women in Struggle, and "Young Sisters", an idea similar to our day camp. There is a steering committee with delegates elected out of chapters on the basis of one delegate for every 25 members.

Presently they are working to unify the chapters in an overall strategic direction for the Union as they have felt problems with chapters being separated and acting almost autonomously within themselves. Many members were anxious to start chapter work and did so early and are now feeling the need to develop a more common and long range strategy.

I found talking with them both validating and exciting. Important to say is that they felt encouraged in their self organization from the begining by hearing that a Women's Union had organized itself here in Berkeley, and they continue to be interested in exchanging information. We will be in communication and the papers I brought back will be available in the Planning Committee files. More up to date papers will be coming.--Lian Hurst

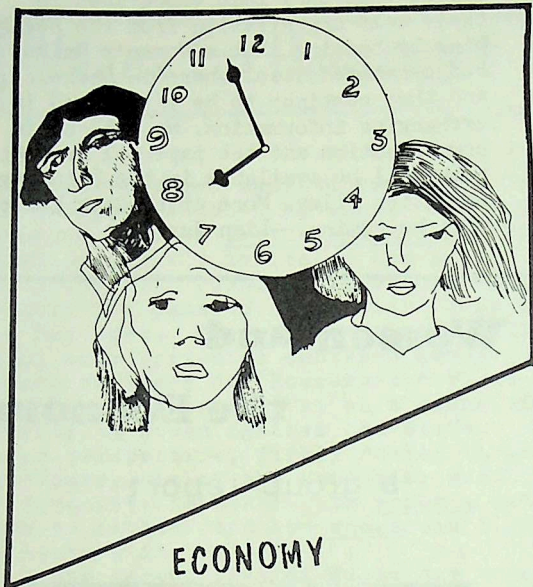
Women and the Economy

a group report



At the first meeting (8-9) the following proposal for the direction of the group was presented by Kathy Johnson, Carol Malley, Jane Meyer, Piera Piagentini, and Daisy Selhorst:

1. Do research (or compile information) on the social and economic situation of women in the Bay Area (i.e. gathering demographic and labor force ~~xxxxxx~~ statistics.) The purpose of doing this is to find out ~~about~~ what women's needs and demands are.
2. Find out about existing groups and struggles that relate to the general topic (i.e. Welfare Rights Organization, Consumer Action.)
3. Review theoretical articles on strategy for the women's movement.
4. Do a survey of the women in the Union, to find out where we work, what our specific needs are. (can't over)



ECONOMY

There was general agreement that this was a good plan, and we expanded somewhat on each of the sections .

We had a very interesting discussion on the idea of setting up alternative institutions as opposed to putting all the energy into attacking existing institutions. It seems though, that both have merit within the context of one organization - alternative institutions can give people within the organization support and show others what the possibilities are, while attacking existing institutions is necessary to 'overthrow the system.'

Someone suggested that we have a column in the newsletter each month where we could share information that we find in our reading and discussions.

There were 9 women at the meeting, and everyone had a lot of interest and enthusiasm. We assigned things for each person to do, like calling various organizations and starting to gather statistical information.

The purpose of doing these things would be to understand what effective actions we can take around women's political and economic position in the community.

More women - 12 or 13 - came to the second meeting on 8-11.

After assignment reports, we decided to make up a bibliography and a list of contacts in other organizations and people with information useful to the project.

Kathy Johnson will do the bibliography, and Karen Garrison will do the contact list. If anyone hasxx anything for either one or needs information from either one, please contact them.

We had a discussion on the time commitments of various individuals in the group, initiated by one woman who felt that varying levels of commitment might cause uneasiness or tension. We generally agreed that women can participate according to time available, but that we will recognize this distinction (rather than take an ultra-democratic approach.) It was suggested that some women with alot of time for the project could develop the initial perspective. This was not decided on specifically, but it was clear that we want it to be an ongoing group.

The main subject of the meeting was the public meeting of the 26th. The Planning committee's suggestion that the group be responsible for putting together a presentation for the public meeting was at first met with reluctance. How can we possiple develop a working understanding of the current economic in the U.S. in time for the meeting? But we decided that we would attempt to do it, and proceeded to discuss how we would go about it. The result was dividing into 3 general areas of investigation:

1. Nixon's economic policy as seen through wage and price controls.
2. The food crisis -- Does it exist? Who is making profits? What is the role of retail stores?
3. How does the economic crisis fit into the general political crisis (Watergate.)

Also, one person will be analysing different strategies (like consumer boycotts) for their relative strengths and weaknesses as possible Union actions.

The group will meet as a whole several more times before the public meeting to figure out how to present this information at the meeting.

Like the first, it was a really good meeting with an amazing amount of energy, input and commitment.

For more information before the public meeting on the 26th, call Jane Meyer - 527-2054.

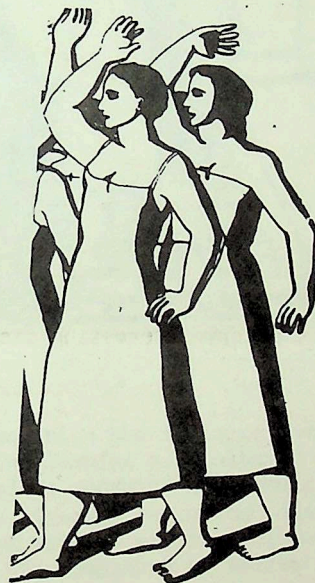
on our name

These are some thoughts on the name of our organization which I think we should think about before we have any large public meetings or print many copies of our documents.

There are several reasons to drop the word Berkeley. It does not describe our membership or the anticipated realm of our influence. Adding the name of the next closest city (making us the Berkeley-Oakland Women's Union) postpones the problem but doesn't solve it. Also, while I do think it will be crucial for us to work in Berkeley and Oakland city politics, we will want to avoid limiting ourselves to a local perspective. Some (relative) political power is located in the city; very little economic power is. A major strength of socialist-feminist politics is the analysis which understands that the forces of capitalism maintaining women's oppression are organized nationally and internationally. We know the need for developing the socialist-feminist movement throughout the United States, and it seems that having a name other than a specific city would reflect our intention to work for that.

Secondly (and here's where we do want to be specific), I think we should refer to our politics in our name. Let's remember that we struggled very hard for six months for the legitimacy of a strong political definition. We resisted the obvious appeal of a loose organization that would attract huge numbers of women right away. For weeks, we argued for the importance of being more, rather than less, clearly defined. We argued for fuller, rather than briefer, principles of unity. We also argued for being openly, rather than covertly, socialist. From these struggles we emerged an organization of socialist-feminists, fully aware that winning that definition had been costly and feeling suspicious of calling it a victory.

However, it was a victory--a political victory over conflicting political positions and also over our collective confusion and reluctance to make decisions for ourselves. We gained some ideological ground and I would like to stand on it for a while. There are approaches to building the movement that advocate soft-peddling the word 'socialism' and others that try to camouflage the real implications of feminism. I disagree with both these approaches and think it's much better to say what we're really about, clearly, directly, and from the start.



It is an important way to create and demonstrate our confidence in socialism and in feminism. Furthermore, in the long run, the accomplishments of the organization will come to reflect on the strength of the politics we are based on rather than on the individuals who comprise the membership.

The third part of our name (Union) presents some different questions. One reason people seem to like it is that it links us nominally with the similar women's organizations we know about (CWLU, the unions in Minneapolis and LA) and perhaps with other sources of inspiration such as the Chinese or Vietnamese Women's Unions.

coming home

OR WHY I'M IN THE WOMEN'S UNION--Since deciding about a year ago to become something like a lesbian-feminist activist (after having been a closeted lesbian for at least twelve years and an inhibited feminist my whole life), I have become acutely aware of the many schisms within both the women's movement and the lesbian liberation movement and have come to understand these schisms as a function of various forms of chauvinism. I have seen and am seeing schisms developing around a number of issues, some of which are sexual identity, class, race, life style, and separatism. At first I experienced myself as being continually required to identify myself, display credentials, and so on: What kind of lesbian was I? What kind of feminist? None of the options I encountered felt right or comfortable. I felt out of place. Finally I understood that I was being challenged from one chauvinist vantage point or another, as, for example, when I was trashed for working (bourgeois?) by welfare recipients from middle class backgrounds. I began to realize that what was hurtful to me personally was also hurtful to the feminist movement as a whole. These schisms couldn't destroy me (I would withdraw first), but I felt strongly (still do) that they could destroy the movement. At some point I knew that my commitment to my idea of what feminism could mean (now I understand that idea as feminist socialism) was so steadfast that I wouldn't pull out and/or witness the demise of the movement (my conception of its potentiality, anyway) before I had offered it all the resources at my disposal, including my willingness to struggle resolutely for the realization of certain fundamental values (for example, truthfulness, generosity, and compassion) which are the ground from which I choose/endorse/make-manifest the means to whatever ends I work to actualize. (Our means as feminist revolutionaries will be our ends: We'll get how we got it.)



Entering the feminist movement (and the lesbian sub-culture) as a full-blown buddhist just emerging from a six-year seclusion (during most of which I worked a blue-collar job), this business of values is crucial to me because my very sense of myself and my relationship to the world arises primarily out of my practice (unorthodox and left-handed) as a buddhist. This perspective requires that I strive for a certain quality in my relationships, my work, my life, and that striving is completely incompatible with relating to others, to ideas, and so on, on the basis of what I am aware of as chauvinism in any form or supporting such relating in others.

Given this orientation, the matter of deadly schisms within the movement in which I have so much at stake (my realization as a human being and therefore as a buddhist) was exceedingly painful for me until last spring. I was in a relationship with a marxist and was finding myself disagree-

cont.

home

ing with her so sharply around certain assumptions that I connected with one of my past lives...the early sixties, when I was a student and a pacifist-socialist. Not only did I then realize that I was going to have to face the "political" question, too, but I understood (remembered?) immediately that some combination of feminism and socialism was the only means by which human beings might come to recognize chauvinism as a deluded way of seeing/being and evolve beyond needing to experience themselves and their brothers and sisters on its terms. (I had become apolitical, then anti-political, at the point in my life when I saw that my political consciousness was essentially vicarious, knee-jerk, and an evasion of personal dilemmas. And because my politics were inauthentic, I came to devalue radical politics en toto...by which admission I in no way intend to minimize what I perceive(d) as the total decadence of the political activity of the middle sixties.)

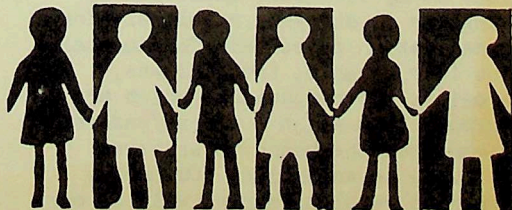
By the time I'd come home from the West Coast Lesbian Conference at UCLA in April, where I'd experienced all the movement divisiveness at full tilt, I was ready to come out politically. Awakened to that, it was simply a matter of time. I heard about a women's study group on class but couldn't work it into my schedule. I tried some political reading on my own, but that wasn't very meaningful precisely because I was doing it in a vacuum. I knew I needed to be talking to other women about political ideas, that I needed feedback; and, after the Conference, I knew that there were other lesbians who identified themselves as socialists and with whom, therefore, such an exchange might be possible.

Finally I read a copy of a "socialist-feminist paper" written by a few of the women who had been working to organize a women's union in Berkeley, and on the basis of that reading decided to go to a meeting. It was a pretty scary thing for me to do. I hadn't exposed myself as a whole person to hardly anybody

for the last six years or so with the exception of my therapist (for two months) and, testily, two or three women friends. And I really needed and wanted that in order to begin the hard work of integrating my buddhism and my lesbian-feminism and my hesitant notions of feminist socialism, which work would include trying to start talking as well as thinking about political ideas again, hopefully in a context in which I could feel safe and my values be taken seriously. In fact, recognizing the need for such a personal integration was the beginning of what I now consider my gradual emergence as a buddhist revolutionary. (My buddhist friends have some difficulty understanding this direction of my life, i.e., this aspect of the manner in which I am a practicing buddhist.)

Since going to a Union meeting for the first time, I have joined a Political Group, worked on structure and Principles of Unity committees, and become a member of the Planning Committee. The political and interpersonal growth I am experiencing feels very solid, and it is personally satisfying as well as, I hope, an asset to the Union and the movement. I'm being given sufficient space to develop as quickly as I can without being made to feel that the women I'm working with are being patient with me. And I feel like I'm positively blossoming as a result of the work I am able to do within the Union. In conclusion, my involvement with the Union continually reaffirms my conviction that only through feminist socialism will chauvinism in all its forms be eradicated. Thus feminist socialism remains for me the only viable solution to the factiousness which oppresses both the feminist movement and the whole of society.--

Janice Macomber



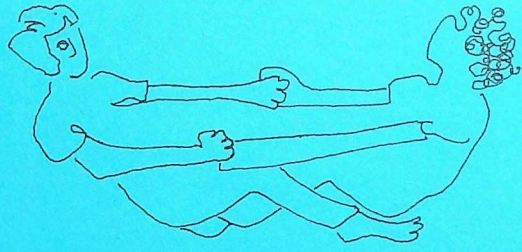
Berkeley/Oakland Women's Union

a socialist-feminist organization

Newsletter

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General Items: 1. Communication: We will have either one or two Focus Group reports at each P.C. meeting which will be prepared before the meeting. Also, FG's are asked to give P.C. the minutes of weekly meetings when this is appropriate. The minutes of the P.C. meetings are being typed and duplicated and are available on Monday afternoons at the office. They are comprehensive and so far the best way we can communicate with everyone, so please pick them up and go over them in your FGs.

2. Articles: We generally deal with 3 kinds of articles, a. views of specific groups, b. represents union as a whole and c. description of our Union. All articles for publication are to be submitted to the P.C. for review. Though we strongly encourage groups and individuals to write we feel that some review by P.C. is necessary to fairly represent the Union. Articles will appear in Grassroots about the Union, in Common Sense about Wages for Housework and in Socialist Revolution on Socialist Feminism as an introduction to our Principles of Unity.

3. Internal Education and Forums: Also encourage groups and individuals to hold educational forums, but folks should let P.C know in advance what is being planned so we can facilitate but not dominate.

4. No formal position has yet been proposed by the Strategy sub-committee on Coalitions, but the P.C. agreed to endorse, support, and organize for, as well as authorize use of our banner, for two demonstrations. One was the Oakland march against police repression in protest of the murder of a 14 year old black youth, Tyrone Guyton. The second will be the June 1st demonstration protesting the IWC's wiping out of protective legislation.

REPORT FROM THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The 7 women Planning Committee, with different representatives from various Focus Groups, as well as individual BOWU members have been meeting regularly on Fridays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Blake St. office. The meetings have been broken down into the following general categories: What Mood Are You In? General Items, Four-Month Plan, Focus Group Reports (included separately in the Newsletter), Membership Meetings, Evaluation. All Union members are strongly urged to come to the meetings--it really helps. Also, if it is possible, we encourage folks to contact a member of the P.C. before the meeting if you have agenda items. This will help scheduling as well as give us time to prepare.

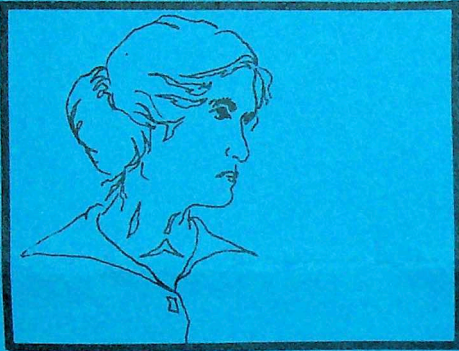
Four Month Plan and Membership Meetings

We decided that the June 29th BOWU membership meeting would devote substantial time to a discussion of lesbianism. This comes from some history of tension in our union, people's need to try to express feelings, as well as our desire to develop programs around the issue of sexuality and gay oppression. Other topics tentatively agreed on for union-wide forums are workplace organizing and the role of an autonomous women's union.

Also, we want to follow the decision to have regular public meetings so we decided to invite interested friends to the membership picnic, and expect that the meeting to build an anti-repeal of abortion law coalition will fulfill this goal.

This report is a brief description of some of the discussions and decisions of the new P.C. More extensive minutes of all our meetings are available in the office.

Patti



REPORT ON SOCIALIST-FEMINIST THEORY GROUP

The initial agreement of the members was that the Union needs to clarify its theory, and that this had been evidenced by the Union's problems in practice. We do not see ourselves as studying theory in isolation, but rather that theory is a basis for greater unity and more effective action in the Union. Furthermore, each of us felt the need individually to learn more about political ideas, perhaps to overcome confusion in some areas, and to be able to make decisions and analysis with confidence. As our discussions progressed, it became increasingly clear that such an evolution is needed in the movement in general.

The basic theme is the precise relation of socialism and feminism. Our questions center around the relation of the women's movement to the cause of the working class as a whole. We started by studying the actual basis of women's oppression within the class structure of capitalism and industrialism, and the role of the family in capitalist society. We have learned something about the history of the women's movement in America, and plan to continue studying the historical relation of revolutionary socialist and feminist movements. A special point is the question, why have women's groups failed in the past so often to touch the societal



The remaining
of time we can
to make we can
Goals, +
have, +
Some

sources of female oppression? Other possible topics include biography of socialist women or socialist-feminists, anarchist women, the distinction between communism or Marxism-Leninism and socialism, and the relation of women's and third world concerns.

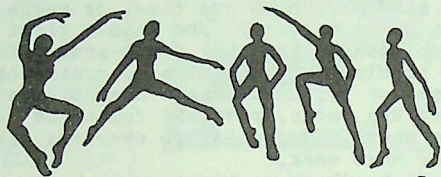
Some of us feel that it is especially important at present to distinguish between socialist-feminism and radical feminism. This is not in order to repudiate some of our sisters, but to strengthen the struggle against capitalism, and to increase the unity among all oppressed groups. Resolving the isolation of women by uniting with sisters is important but not adequate; the concrete problems in the country now (such as growing police oppression) demand a political solution. Politically self-conscious women need to make a statement.

We have read The woman question, Engel's Family, private property, and the state, J.S. Mill's book on the subjugation of women (some of us), Mitchell's Women's estate, Rowbotham's Woman's consciousness, man's world. One member, Virginia Enquist Grabiner, read her paper to us on the history of certain women's rights movements in the early part of this century. We had difficulty using the more basic Marxist analyses to advance today's practical considerations, and are reading some current attempts to relate feminism and Marxism. Some of us see our lack of a strong grounding in Marxism-Leninism as serious, and want to study Lenin's What is to be done?

Our group has had membership problems, as some people apparently dropped out, and some are taking extended leaves of absence. A couple of new women joined last month. On several occasions, we postponed work because everyone was there. Some of the early meetings were devoted to pressing problems of union business, or voicing dissent about the union. These disruptions to the tasks we had set for ourselves disturbed us. However, one problem has since been overcome, as we have totally lost contact with the Planning Committee; our PC rep disappeared, and no one has seen PC notes for two months. Nevertheless, the internal education part of the 4-month plan indicates that we are not out of touch completely.

The remaining members are committed to the group, but we are all quite limited as to the amount of time we can spend studying. It was necessary to make some realistic adjustments to our original goals, to accord with the available energy. We have been impeded by failure to take notes on our many splendid discussions and uncertainty about organization of writing. Nevertheless there is some optimism in the group because everyone recognizes the importance of our project. * * *

-Georgiana



OUTREACH GROUP REPORT

We have concrete tasks: planning and holding the monthly orientation meetings, setting up the office, planning and writing a pamphlet about the union. Plus we take on tasks not specifically our responsibility--like the international women's day party, writing the grass-roots and socialist revolution articles, setting up the finance sub-committee, and typing up the phone list. Also, we hear reports of other socialist-feminist groups forming in the state.

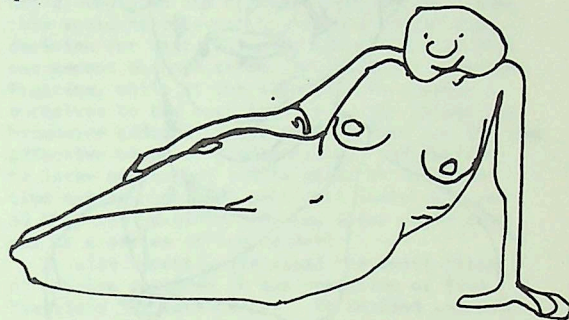
We do so much stuff, and so much of it is so concrete, that it's difficult for our discussions to take a turn in either the personal or the theoretical directions. This is frustrating, but on the other hand it's exhilarating to be in a group where things feel like they're getting done. We've had three discussions of our personal histories; two went badly because we couldn't begin, one came at the end of a meeting and went great. The most important theoretical discussion for us to have is defining to whom and how do we do outreach; it's a discussion we started once and would like to finish, but it always gets shoved aside for more concrete and therefore more pressing tasks.

At our last meeting it was proposed that we focus our energy of the next three months on one task (one we haven't even started to do): checking out other groups in the area (NOW, the feminist party etc.). People didn't object to that idea, but neither did we discuss what that would mean in terms of our responsibilities to new-member orientation (which we feel deserves a reassessment and far more energy), and writing the pamphlet (which has taken on a life of its own). Another proposal is that we

finish the pamphlet and then divide our energy between outside organizations and new members.

DISCUSSION AROUND THE FOUR-MONTH PLAN

A. Internal Education. We don't plan to initiate a forum, although we may. Outreach wants to contact women or organizations who might be interested in a specific forum of a not too internal



nature.

B. Public Presence. Outreach recognizes a distinction between 1) Outreach in which we make the Union's politics public by acting on issues (for example, on AB-39--the anti-homosexual legislation), and 2) Outreach in which we contact other organizations. To avoid being isolated and sectarian, we want to spend time in the next three months contacting other organizations.

In these three months we need to lay groundwork to achieve our more long-range goals--like building a national socialist-feminist organization. We want to trade information and publications with other women's groups, and we want the office to help facilitate that.

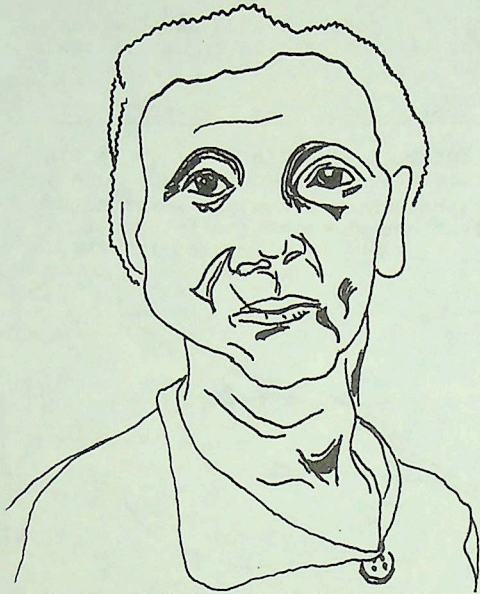
C. Process and Structure. In our committee we need improvement in supporting individual efforts of our members (for example, writing for the newsletter), especially giving them feedback, and in creating more time for personal stuff--which we feel suffered in the change from random to focus groups.

WHAT WE WANT FROM THE UNION

We are disturbed by the reports that the focus groups are exclusive and hard to break into. We want other focus groups to take responsibility for their new members. We should be notified when new members join and new members should attend an orientation meeting. We would like to have updated membership lists.

We also want focus groups to collect their dues internally. People should take the office more seriously.

We need the union to tell us how and to whom they see us doing outreach and each focus group to tell us how and to whom they see themselves doing outreach. (Also--how do we integrate new people?) (cont.)



WHAT WE WANT FROM THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

We would like to have part of a membership meeting deal with the outreach theoretical questions (how and to whom outreach???)

We think the union needs Socialist-Feminist study groups for women who are interested in the union, but don't feel easy enough with those terms to define themselves with them.

OUTREACH AT THE P.C. MEETING

Please see Planning Committee minutes from May 17, 1974 for a thorough discussion of our meeting...here are some of the main questions and suggestions that came out of that meeting. How do we see the growth of BOWU? Do we want as many members as possible? What's the value of expanding membership of the organization if the core stays the same? Which women do we want to attract to the Union? How is the Union different from a federation of projects? These questions grew partly out of a discussion about whether outreach should publicize the Union's existence, but they are also general theoretical questions which need to be thought about. We decided that copies of the socialist-feminist paper, the BOWU history and the Principles of Unity should be on hand at the office-especially for distribution to other soc-fem. groups. We agreed that outreach should submit a list of priority contacts to the p.c., which they would then decide upon.

THE OFFICE - PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Why do we have an office???

What should its functions be???

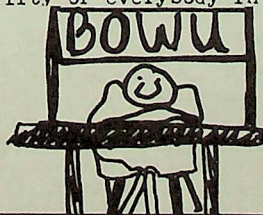
1. We don't have a good way of enlisting office staff (should it be obligatory for members? for focus groups? how often and how does it change?)

2. People forget to come to the office.
3. People can't come to the office.
4. People in the office don't know what to do.
5. Getting keys for every staffer.
6. Typing can't be done at the office without a typewriter.
7. The office isn't serving its function as an outreach tool.

Possible Solutions:

1. Members who are able to afford two hours a month should feel obliged. Staffing should remain the same each month. When a woman is going to miss her hours one time, or needs to give them up permanently, she should first seek a replacement from her focus group, then dump the problem on the office co-ordinators.
2. Instead of trying to reach next time's staff over the phone, postcard reminders should be sent on Wednesday to everyone signed up for the next week.
3. We need feedback on the current hours and some way of discovering hours that should be added.
4. We need an office meeting to familiarize staffers with the office. We should have a calendar on which specific duties can be given for each office hours. Every Union group, but especially those that generate alot of shit-work, should consider what tasks it can turn over to the office. Those tasks have to be explained in detail so that the office can easily assume them. No task is too large as long as it is explained well enough.
5. Keys should be made and given to every woman who regularly staffs the office.
6. We have come up with an office typewriter and a system to prevent its being ripped off. Could it be kept in the locked closet? Is that safe enough? How do women get into the closet?
7. The place, hours and phone number of the office should be given out to all friendly papers and newsletters. A poster with the same information should be posted in all friendly places. Women in the office should be prepared to answer questions/do orientations. Every Union group should send a member to a meeting with the coordinators to answer the following questions: 1) what hours can your members staff the office (be specific and don't confine yourself to the current hours), 2) what tasks can your group turn over to the office, what can the office do for you and 3) why should the union have an office? what function does it serve? Someone from each group should contact Barbara if they can't make the meeting (548-0304).

Reflections, suggestions, etc. on all or parts of the above will be greatly appreciated. We feel these problems are the responsibility of everybody in the Union.

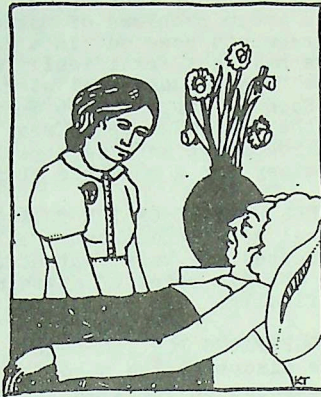


Comune di Padova
Biblioteche

Cod. Bibl. 81

BID 001602685

INV 1058042



Health Group

ED. We extracted this part of the health's group report to P.C. to give Union members an idea of the groups activities.

ABORTION LEGISLATION WE have already begun investigation of the bills - but thought it was excellent that P.C. makes recommendations to groups. We've just recieved copies of both abortion bills - one is to cut off medicaid financing of abortions, the other is to make all abortions illegal, (both national). We are contacting other women's groups to see about possible coalitions and tracing down the people (congress & senators) locally who have control over the legislation. We will also be contacting other groups nationally to report on our actions and exchange information. We see our objective as to stage public the activities of the legislature. We are certain many women would fight against if they knew about it. We discussed possibly doing a forum on the confrontation of Legislative (State) power - to implement the discussion that was started in the membership meeting. We would bring in an abortion legislation proposal as a specific example in that discussion.

We discussed the Bay Area Women's Health Worker & Consumer Coalition. One member is regularly attending the P.C. meetings of the coalition as an individual - when it seems as if the politics become more clarified and the coalition is actually forming - we will all attend the meeting and submit a proposal to the B.O.W.U. P.C. if we think we should join.

We were afraid of being overwhelmed by the short term issue of abortion - so we decided to continue investigating long range city health and mental health plans and to continue our discussions about Health Maintenance Organizations, National Health Insurance, etc.

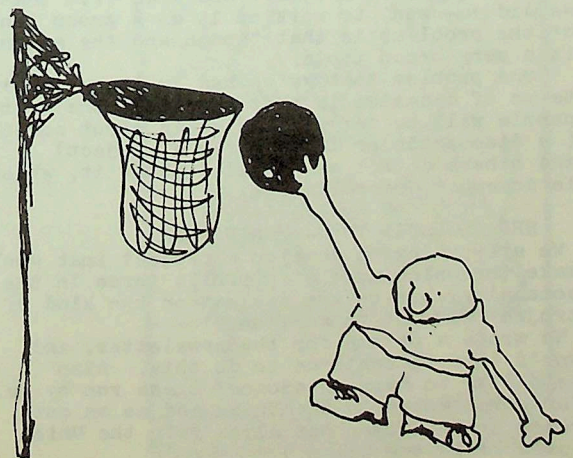
Children's Group

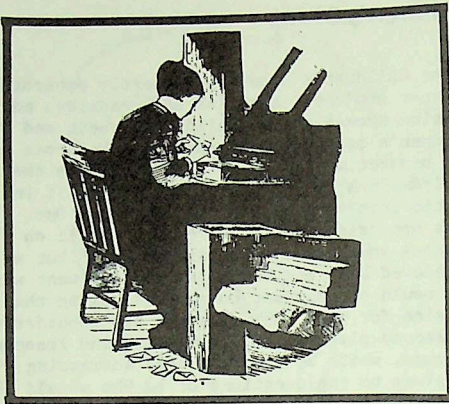
The Children's Group is presently embarking on a new project: a series of broadsides addressing themselves to children's needs and children's oppression in America. We chose this project as one which would solidify the knowledge that we have now and present it in graphic form to the larger community. Our first broadside was to be ready in April on "Sending your child to public school," but we got slowed down and the time came and went when this would be relevant to parents making that decision for next fall. We are now considering our second planned topic, Day Care and Preschool Programs, while at the same time addressing ourselves to the questions of 1) Who should the broadside address itself to?; 2) What are the most effective means of communicating information to large numbers of people while at the same time making clear our political position?; and 3) What are possible programs which could grow out of a series of broadsides?

We also recently discussed the possibility of getting involved in the operation of Blue Fairyland Day Care Center. We decided against such involvement as a focus group project. First, it was confusing what our role as Union women would be in relation to staff and parents, given Blue Fairyland's status as a parent cooperative. Second, we didn't feel that as a focus group we had the time and energy at this time that would be required to effectively participate in planning and program development. We left it open to other Union women who might be interested in working with Blue Fairyland, with the possibility even of forming another focus group around Blue Fairyland.

We are also tentatively scheduled to do another KPFA radio program in late June (we did one last fall on children's oppression). The topic and format of the show have yet to be decided.

Amidst all this we have been struggling hard to improve our process within the group--to listen and be straight with one another and recognize our interpersonal dynamics as an integral part of our political functioning, as the Children's Group. We welcome new members. Our meetings are Wednesday mornings at 9:30. Interested women can call Diane at 652-7021.





Women & the Economy

During the last several months we have:
 -- gone to the Economics Conference sponsored by Liberation School and URPF.

-- met with women from CHANGE. Originally we planned to discuss the ERA with them, but it turned into a general political discussion/argument.

-- had several discussions on the issue of mass vs. vanguard party in the U.S. Actually we discussed how to discuss this, and decided it was not a priority of the economy group. This prompted Toby and Suzanne to work on setting up a Union educational forum on this topic.

-- for a while we discussed economic topics every week: deficit financing, inflation, etc. But we have not been doing this lately.

-- we've been spending a lot of time talking about what our group should do. For a while our focus was studying the national economy, but we felt that we wanted to be working on a project and do study if it related to the project. We've discussed working on the municipalization of P.G.&E. Campaign that is starting in Berkeley, but decided we didn't want to put a lot of energy into it at this point. We also discussed the Berkeley City Housing Committee's population study, and also felt that we did not want to work on it as a group. One of the problems is that "women and the economy" is a very broad topic.

One problem that we've had in the group in terms of dynamics is that sometimes one or two people will be very enthusiastic about something (a discussion or an idea for a project) and others do not get excited about it, which is somewhat demoralizing.

RELATIONSHIP TO 4- MONTH PLAN

We are trying to develop a project that would make the Union more of a public force in the community, but we are unclear on the kind of project we want to work on.

We wrote a column for the newsletter, and would like to continue to do this. Also we'd like to have an economy class run by us for other women in the Union and as an outreach tool (women not already in the Union could be in the class.)

We have not thought a lot about the third part of the four-month plan. We've recognized in our group problems of making agreements/disagreements come out in a comfortable way, but we have not specifically addressed how we or the Union should deal with this.

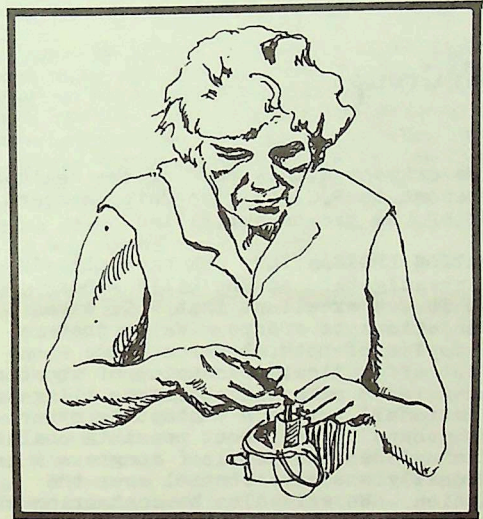
The Economy group is now meeting regularly with the Health group (Tues. nights at 7:00) Both groups are working together to develop a strategy for a possible abortion coalition.

NEEDS WE HAVE OF THE PC, & OTHER FOCUS GROUPS:

We feel very good about the PC, especially the minutes are very contentful. We are not aware at this point of anything we need specifically.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE UNION:

We've discussed the need for the Union to give classes on specific topics (i.e. the economy) and on socialist-feminism.



Labor Group

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING? We have had a series of discussions on wages for housework, history of women workers in the United States, present situation of women workers studied through a statistical analysis, Union Wage-an organization of women workers, CLUW-Conference of Labor Union Women recently held to organize women union members including their refusal to give total support to the Farmworkers in their struggle with the Teamsters as well as their position excluding the unorganized and unemployed from their organization, also our personal and work histories and experiences. We have done readings together by Selma James and Dalla-Costa, "Women and the Subversion of the Community", articles in Radical Economics pamphlet, and articles criticizing the role of unions in the struggles and concerns of women in plants and in the home. We've written, collectively, an article on Wages for Housework for Common Sense Newspaper

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and the BOWU Newsletter. Also, we participated in demonstrations against the Industrial Welfare Commissions' ending of protective legislation for women and men. Some of us worked with women from KPFA on two programs concerning women and work, the first was a general history with music about women and labor struggles (the tape is available), the second concentrated on recent strikes in which women were primary., e.g. Farah, Sears and the S.F. City Strike. Recently, we met with a women from Union Wage and discussed their organization and points of common interest with ours, as well as discussing the political differences of opinion emerging in CLUW. Some of us picketed at the recent wildcat at the DASCO plant in Oakland.

WHAT ARE WE PLANNING? We want to continue to contact and meet with women from other organizations working with women and work issues, such as BACOSH (Bay Area Committee on Occupational Safety and Health), Committee for Better Working Conditions, and workplace organizing groups.



We are going to give active support to the struggle against the IWC actions and encourage other BOWU members to participate. Also future discussions are planned around women's cauguses, organizing the unorganized and how to translate our politics and vision of liberation into practice, rather than being constrained by a non-socialist feminist perspective of working people's struggles.

PROBLEMS Figuring out how to go about learning what we want to know creates problems. Few of us are in unions, or work in "traditonal" jobs: some of us are unemployed, students, part*time or temporary workers, others, pardon the word, are professionals. We need better contacts with women in the union (BOWU) who work and are in unions. It has been difficult finding good written material to share, since the subject is broad and little written that seems really relevant to women today. We have felt overwhelmed at times. We don't want to limit our involvement with unions, since many of us have serious criticisms of unions, e.g. bureacracy, economism, sexism, racism, mediators for the bosses, etc. We sometimes feel a problem of what we call "legitimacy", or who are we because of our class, race and work backgrounds.

DYNAMICS The dynamics are very good, everyone is open and generally likes each other and feels support. We have nine members, and come regularly and follow through with tasks. Tension at times comes from feeling lost in our work, and frustrated because of lack of direction. When we say we will do something and do it, it feels good. Since we don't really have any strategy we too often find ourselves talking about what we should be doing.

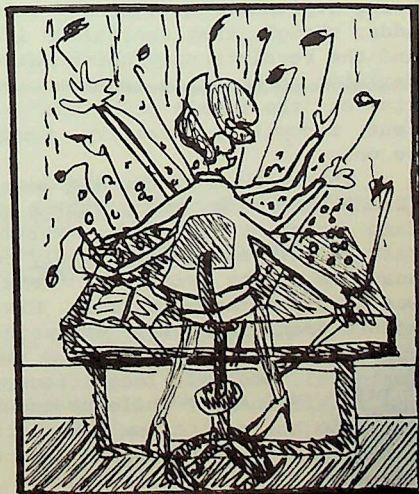
PERSONAL/POLITICAL SPLIT We feel it is necessary to take more time talking about ourselves, as it is often neglected in order to find out who we are, how we live, tensions in our lives, politics, etc. We've had dinner together before meetings, and sometimes devote entire meetings to such conversations. Some of us see each other outside the group and sometimes we go out for beer.

BUSINESS/NON-BUSINESS SPLIT In order to keep the P.C. business from overtaking our focus group, we schedule it at the end of our meetings. Often, however, there is not enough time for adequate discussion. Two of our members are on P.C.

FOUR-MONTH PLAN We failed to encourage union-wide support of early IWC demonstrations, but are trying to correct by raising it at the P.C., getting support and having a sub-committee plan for the June 1, demo. We see article on Housework and articles in newsletter strengthening contacts and are planning to work on a forum for union around workplace organizaing and wages for housework.

SUGGESTIONS FOR UNION Encourage other members to come to different focus group activities. Encourage all groups to make aggressive use of Newsletter.

More info contact Patti, 658-2850. ***



WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO
THAT MARCUSE PROJECT?



After hearing Herbert Marcuse give a speech called Marxism and Feminism (Palo Alto, March 8), a few BOWU women got the idea to publish his talk and distribute it in a pamphlet with our introduction. We thought that since Marcuse was one of the major living American philosophers and had figured prominently in shaping the ideas of the New Left and the "drop-out" culture, both of which had affected the women's movement heavily, socialist-feminists should try to take his views seriously and comment on them. When we suggested the project to the membership, there was justified scepticism: did we really think it was a good way to get BOWU's politics out, submerging them in a critical introduction to a man's philosophical statement about feminism?

Exploratory and informal groups met twice in May. We read the speech aloud, raised questions on nearly every sentence, and grew less enchanted as we peeled away the metaphysical layers. Marcuse views women as half of a duality (male/female) which comes from Greek philosophy and which is fundamental to Freudian theory. He seems to believe capitalism has flourished because of its ability to put "the male principle" to economic ends--male values being capitalism's governing values. He adds, though, that capitalism is decaying, and the revolutionary potential of the feminist movement is that it signals the rise of "the female principle" --non-violent, receptive, sensitive, tender and so on.

Those of us in the discussion group (Diane Ehrensafft, Debby Willis, Toby Silvey, Jane Meyer) thought that while much of what Marcuse said was descriptively correct, his analysis of the origins of "female traits" was pretty anthropological. His view of modern American society emphasizes how advanced capitalism has created the objective (material, economic) conditions to allow the ^{rise of} female energy, while he underestimates (we thought) capitalism's ability to re-define and further exploit that energy in new ways.

We also had serious political disagreements with his view of HOW women's liberation could come about. The four of us had not had many prior political discussions, but we all easily agreed that Marcuse's two-stage theory of women's liberation was not like ours. He thinks first women must gain economic and political equality (bourgeois rights), then we'll be able to "claim a leading role in the radical reconstruction of society." This assumes women's economic and political equality is possible under capitalism, which we think is highly unlikely, due to the ways sexism is structurally integrated into capitalism at its base.

These were some of our major objections, and because of the depth of our disagreement with Marcuse's perspective, we decided not to be his publisher. Instead, we're going to try to write a critique of the speech, and maybe get that published. We'd like your ideas on his talk; if you'd like to talk with us, call Diane Ehrensafft at 652-7021.



We've started a lending library in the Union office. Books are catalogued by title. To borrow a book, just find the card in the alphabetical list, write your name, phone number, and the date on it. When you return the book (1-2 days), cross off your name. To lend a book, make a card for it, put a strip of yellow tape (also in the card box) on the spine, and put it on the shelf. Also, put your name and the title and cost of the book on a separate card at the end of the file -- (card called "lenders").

The Planning Committee has decided to agree to support this venture to the extent that if anyone's books get ripped off, the Union as a whole will pay for them. We decided to do this to encourage people to put their books into the library. We have only a few books so far. We would like everyone to look through her shelves and bring in any things you've read and found interesting or helpful.

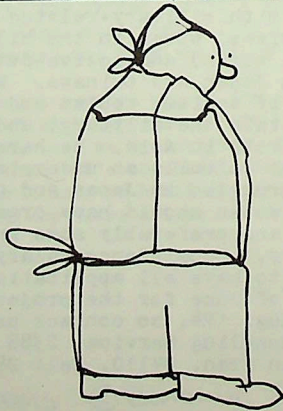
There will also be a little box for library fund donations. ***

political education

In discussing the Economy Group's report at the PC meeting Saturday, we found ourselves faced once more with the question of what role education plays in our organization and our organizing. The economy group, which has been existence for almost a year now, has constantly floundered on the question, both in terms of what they ought to be spending their time on in their own meetings, and in terms of what public activity to undertake. Should they be studying the basics of capitalist economy, which some members had much better training in than others, or doing something more active and relevant to their own everyday lives?

These questions, of course, come up in many of the focus groups. Should we spend time doing the research and sharing the knowledge we have about an area of interest, children, health, labor movements, prisons, etc., or should we undertake a more active project? In some ways I feel that the distinction is false, as I believe strongly that education, for ourselves and others, is a crucial step in building a revolutionary movement. Education, both internal and external, is essential for building an organization that has the "shared politics" we claim to want. I think that educational projects, radio shows, public meetings, etc., are some of the most vital projects we can undertake, since one of our major tasks is to convince others that our analysis of sexism and capitalism is right.

One of the most critical ways in which we are oppressed by capitalism and by sexism is that our knowledge of the world we live in is limited and distorted. Many women have a gut reaction to their own lives that tells them that the world is fucked, but we have to be clear about fucked by whom and for what reasons. We also have to overcome the imbalance which exists between those who have certain information and those who don't. It is not elitist to teach; it is elitist not to teach.



But it is also true that the focus groups should not all become study groups. One of the most serious tensions which is created when this happens is that it is very difficult for new members to become integrated into the groups. Many new members have gone into focus groups, and have not been able to break into whatever is going on, and have left. And yet there is no other place in the Union for them to go. We made a decision almost a year ago to be a public and open organization, and yet we have not confronted the problem of how to expand. I think that many new members would join the Union if we could only open up to them, and be conscious of finding ways to integrate them into the work of each of the focus groups.

One suggestion for solving some of these problems is to set up a clear way for study to take place. There has always been a demand from both new and old members for study groups, but we have never acted on it. If we actually started classes, on socialist-feminism, the economy, health care, history of women in trade unions, history of the left, economics of women in the work force, etc., etc., we could play a very important role in organizing ourselves and other women toward a shared and informed political perspective.

It seems that classes like this could be a good way to integrate new women into the Union as well as meet the need expressed in many of the focus groups for more education. I think there are good reasons for not doing this through existing groups such as Breakaway; we should have more control over the political content of the classes and they should be directly linked to various projects that the Union undertakes, not an abstract teaching exercise. To set this up ourselves however, means talking about staff, space, money, and a big commitment from the Union. It would be a major undertaking, but not an impossible one. * *

Barbara Dudley

The Newsletter recommends reading: Yesterday's Lessons, the autobiography of Sharon Isabel. Available at Woman's Place Bookstore, Broadway and College, Oakland

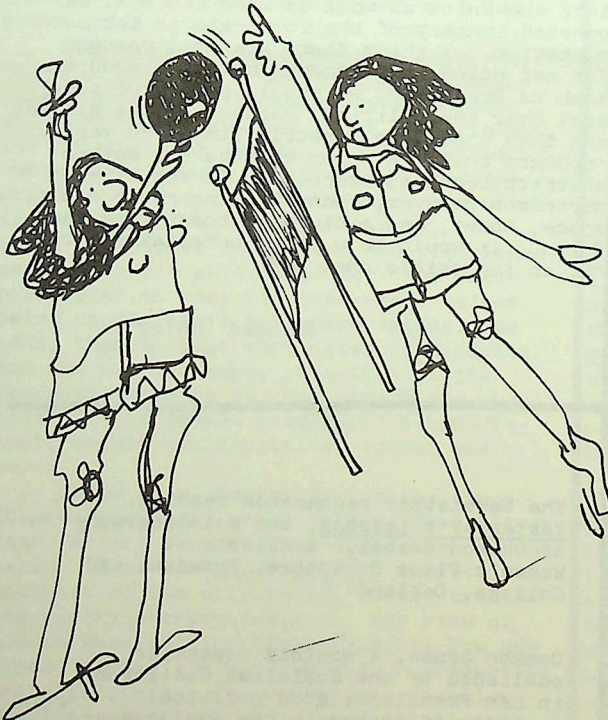
Common Sense, a monthly newspaper published by the Socialist Coalition in San Francisco; good political analysis of issues in the Bay Area and beyond.

Union Social Life

Last week the Union received a letter from a husband of a Union member, expressing concern that our picnic had been for women only. He made the point that if all the Union social events exclude men (and fathers), some women will be forced to divide their political and social lives in half, which is not our goal.

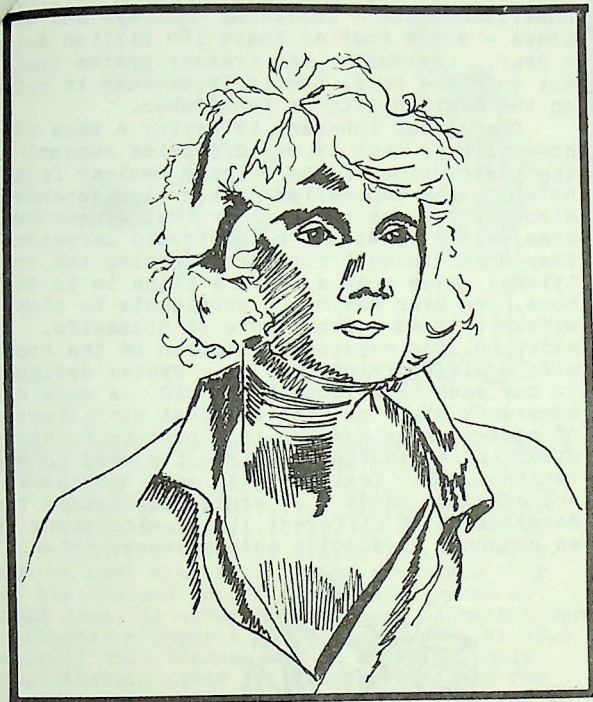
We responded to him by saying 1) that we believe all-women social events are and will remain a vital part of our organization's activity, and 2) that we are planning to have an event which includes men who are friends of women in the Union, husbands, or relatives.

Planning Committee would like your ideas about what this event should be. If you have thought about a possible picnic or some kind of party that would include men, please call one of the PC members. We'll try to have it in July. We really do need your input on this!



WANTED: women to work at organizing projects in Japan and Okinawa.

Pacific Counseling Service is looking for women to work as organizers/legal counselors with military-related women (military wives, women in the military, high school women) and active-duty men at projects in Japan and Okinawa. We focus on the issues of sexism, racism and class oppression within the military, and the military's role in Asia. We have contact with and try to build an understanding of people's struggles in Japan and Okinawa. Interested women should have organizing experience and preferably some knowledge of the military. Subsistence salary. We would like to have all applications in the early part of June for the project year beginning Aug. '74, so contact us soon at Pacific Counseling Service, 2588 Mission St., Rm. 216, San Fran. 94110. Tel; 285-1212



Steve's Sonnet at Midnight

I feel it's not my fault we fight, not fuck,
When you come home still chanting, "Dare to Win!"
Still planning leaflets, leaving love to luck
(So what your diaphragm's already in?).
Don't you remember us in Spanish class?
You were so young and sweet and needed me,
That bra-less you, in skirts that showed your ass.
You're covered now; there's nothing left to see.
But not for me you changed your clothes
(Any respect for my ideas is dead):
It's SDS whose finger's thru your nose.
At least it's me (and Freud) who reign in bed.
I wield my power most by saying no
Till tears put out your after-meeting glow.

Conversation

The way I love to hold your wrists is wierd,
The way I rip your skirt and blouse is strange,
But when I asked your name, I failed (I feared)
To make my name as known to you: it's Grange.
Remember me, I came last June to rape!
Yes, 'Grange, the raping man' I'm known to all.
I like your face, what's more I like your shape;
Tell me, are you the kind who likes to ball?

Strange Grange, your're wrong; I'd not forgotten you:
You came that night your cock held high with hate,
That once you took me by surprize, it's true.
You ask my name: it's now Karate Kate.
You had your chance to humiliate;
It's my turn now to retaliate.



WAGES for HOUSEWORK

Houseworkers are a vital part of the working population.

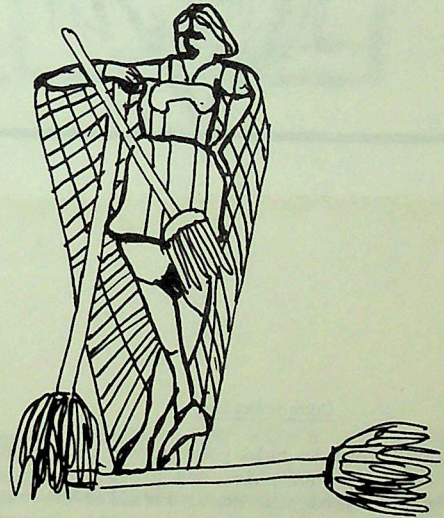
By our work in the home, we sustain the labor power presently needed by the capitalist economy. Not only do we do the work of maintaining the home (cooking, cleaning, etc.), we also provide the emotional and psychological sustenance and transmission of social values to the family. Furthermore, in the rearing of children, we prepare a new generation to take their place in the labor market. Capitalism could not survive without this labor, and could not profit without this labor being free. We have been exploited by not being paid for labor that is essential to the economy. Our exploitation has been hidden behind the values of our society which define housework as a private responsibility and service within the family, instead of a socially necessary function. The labor involved in taking care of children and home has been connected with the values and emotional fulfillment associated with family life; housework has come to be a "labor of love" having no need for monetary compensation. Our work in the home is taken for granted both by ourselves and by the society as a whole.

In the strategies of both the Left and the Women's Movement, housework has not been given priority; the Left has not tried to organize houseworkers because it does not recognize the vital role housework plays in the capitalist structure- nor does it give enough importance to the organization of women in general. Certain tendencies of the Women's Movement - to get out of the home and find fulfillment in careers - ignore the problems of women who do not have the choice to leave the home, and neglect also the valuable role of houseworkers. By seeing the home as a trap for women, we fail to respect the labor done there and the women who do it.



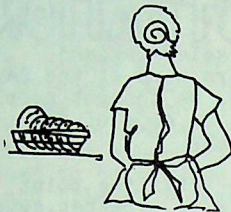
To pay one half of the population for an hour week at the wage scale of both skilled and unskilled labor - including holidays and sick leave - would cost at least 160 billion dollars a year. Obviously, the present system could not tolerate this, precisely because it relies on the availability of free labor.

One danger inherent in paying a wage for housework is that it could provide support for the institution of the private nuclear family, on which the capitalist system also depends so strongly. Since it is clear that housework is done mainly by women, a wage could permanently trap women in that role, reinforcing the traditional value that a woman's place is in the home, and even making it profitable to stay within the sex-defined role of housewife. In addition, the physical isolation of the housewife could be reinforced by a system designed to pay each individual household. A wage for housework might prevent eventual socialization of housework by keeping it a private function, diverting attention away from the need to establish public facilities to meet housework and childcare needs. It would also impede the development of different living situations such as communal households and gay communities.



The process of raising the demand for wages for housework could be far more important than its implementation. The changes in women's consciousness that could occur make it worthwhile to raise the demand, despite its difficulties. Housework could be identified as work - as a crucial part of the system - and women in the home could begin to see ourselves as workers who have been denied compensation for our labor. The development of a group consciousness of women as workers could help counteract our isolation, both from the rest of the working class and from each other. The growing realization of our oppression and exploitation as workers could bring women into the struggle against the capitalist system in greater numbers than ever before. What is more, the women who work outside the home as well as do the housework, could see that we are doing two jobs but are paid for only one. Women who

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work outside the home are victims of a double exploitation: we receive the lowest wages:

White men's median wage.....	\$9,373/yr.
Minority men's.....	\$6,598/yr.
White women's.....	\$5,490/yr.
Minority women's.....	\$4,674/yr.

and we must also fulfill the responsibility of the "second shift" - housework - when we come home. (A study by the Chase Manhattan Bank estimates a woman's overall work week at 99.6 hours!) This realization of women's double exploitation could help expose the need for higher wages and better working conditions in the workplace, as well as the need for public childcare and housework facilities to alleviate the burden of work at home.

By defining housework as equal to any other kind of work, we could begin to see our time spent in different ways. If a distinction were made between the job of housework and the rest of our lives, we could be encouraged to find ways of making our work more efficient, of standardizing processes to make the job faster, of putting the burden of work on community organization to free the individual houseworker of her time.

We see now the error in failing to deal with housework, and the necessity of finding ways of including it in the strategy for a mass movement. One idea, coming out of the Italian women's movement, which has sparked debate in the international women's movement, is the demand for wages for housework. It states, briefly, that in order to end the exploitation of houseworkers as a free labor market, all houseworkers should demand a wage. This would enable houseworkers to be seen in the same light as all wage labor - as a necessary part of production - and give the houseworker the identification with and the psychological independence of a wage earner. The demand has been raised in England, Italy and Australia; and we in the U.S. need to critically examine the question.

What appears to be a simple solution could cause problems in actual implementation. For instance, who would be paid? Nearly 50% of American women work outside the home - would they be paid twice? Would single men be paid for the housework they do? The issue of who

pays the wage is even more critical. If the husband were to pay the wage, as suggested by MS. magazine (July, 72), it could reinforce the dependence of the woman on her husband and her sex-defined role in the nuclear family, as well as aid in dividing the working class against each other. Again, a wage paid by the husband's employer to the housewife directly could tend to emphasize the private family, and the physical isolation of the private home. The labor of the housewife is far more than a private service to her husband; the profits from her labor benefit more than the individual employer. Her labor provides the crucial underpinnings of society as a whole - therefore, the state would have to pay.

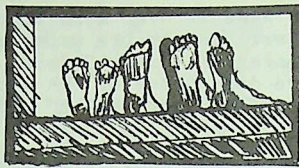
Another outcome of the identification of housework as wage labor, could be the breakdown of the sex roles of housework. If housework were considered equal to the wage labor of men, it could begin to lose its connection with a woman's duty, with "woman's work", and be performed by either sex. The association of housework to personal fulfillment could be broken - and in so doing expose the alienation and lack of personal fulfillment inherent in all wage labor.

The questions that could be raised by asking for wages for housework, the exploitation and inequities it could expose, and the changes in consciousness it could foster in the women demanding the wage, balance out the unfeasibility of the demand itself. If a call for wages for housework brings more and more women into the struggle against capitalism; if, in seeing the problems involved in the demand, the need for more socialistic solutions becomes clear - then the demand may be worth the risk and should not be discouraged.

* * *

WOMEN In Labor
Focus Group

Room available June 15 for woman in South Berkeley communal home with 2 women and 2 men. We are involved in the Women's Union, radical law, music, and print shop. Around \$85/month, utilities included. Phone 654-8948.



CHILDCARE DEMONSTRATION

A demonstration was held in Golden Gate Park on Saturday, May 11, to protest the lack of action on the part of San Francisco City Government to enact Proposition M. Proposition M was passed by San Francisco voters in the last election to expand childcare services throughout the city. The demonstration was called by CAPA -- Child and Parent Action, a S.F. based coalition which was initially formed to get a childcare initiative on the ballot.

The people who attended the rally were primarily parents of young children. The rally took on the tone of a Saturday afternoon in the park -- there were balloons, clowns, cookies, and most of the 100 or so people there were clustered in groups that picniced together or milled around. Despite many diversions for children, most seemed to remain close to their parents, making it difficult for adults to listen to the speeches.

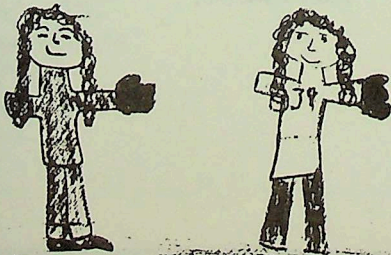
The speakers represented a wide range of interest groups. Some spoke from neighborhood community groups, others from national organizations like the National Organization for Women and Coalition of Labor Union Women. The speakers from community groups, among those the Mission and Chinatown, spoke directly about experiences in their childcare centers and the cutting of their funds. The national organization representatives seemed more concerned with telling of the contributions of their groups to childcare.

The demonstration was not well publicized within the Union. Not many women knew about it and only three Union women attended. The Chile demonstration was held at the same time and detracted from the potential attendance.

The small numbers at the rally pointed out the lack of interest in childcare as a political issue; those who were there embraced it as an issue because their lives are inseparably linked to the need for decent, comprehensive childcare.

We think that the effort put into this rally by CAPA was a really positive attempt to call attention to the glaring deficiency of quality childcare services in San Francisco. ▲

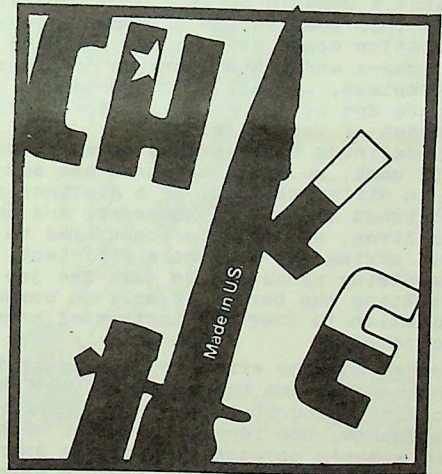
Myrna C. and Lisa D.



CHILE DEMONSTRATION

Since so few Berkeley-Oakland Women's Union members were at the May 11, Chile demonstration, we thought people might be interested in some of our thoughts and reactions.

Driving up to the starting point was like swimming in an alphabet soup. Two of the first signs greeting people read "defend the popular front" and "no more popular front governments." Beyond were a sea of signs and leaflets describing the politics of the IS, SWP, OL, FU, CP and SL/RCY. Despite the sectarianism of some groups that participated in the march, however, there was a good feeling -- especially as the crowd of demonstrators grew to 1,000. Once we started to march we could see people stretched out for blocks.



The march left the Chilean consulate and wound through downtown San Francisco ending up at Union Square. Along the route as we passed by the publishing offices of the Chronicle and the Sheraton Palace hotel the spirit of the march definitely heightened. In front of the Sheraton Palace (formerly an ITT subsidiary) - a scene of major anti-discriminations in the early '60's history seemed to be repeating itself. The chants and singing could be heard reverberating from building to building. While the crowd chanted from one side of the street "ITT, CIA, No more support from the USA," some of us went to the other side and leafleted in the hotel lobby.

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and down
barn

... on to Union Square where the
 ...ctable rally was held. The rally
 ... at one end of the park - belly
 ...ancers and a pick up band at the other,
 ... and down in the street a fine string
 ... band was playing. The rally speeches
 ... focused on such themes as the role
 ... of the U.S. before and since the coup,
 ... political prisoners, & the resistance
 ... in Chile. One trade unionist denounced
 ... the complicity of the AFL-CIO with the
 ... CIA in Chile and other countries.
 ... There seemed to be growing sentiment in
 ... the rank and file of American labor
 ... against military intervention in
 ... their name.

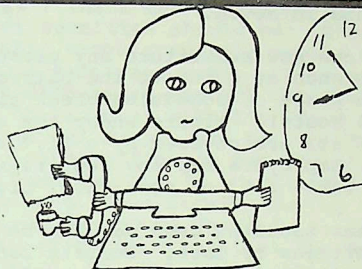
The four of us who were there from
 the BOWU couldn't help wondering why so
 few other Union members came. Was it
 because of the Child and Parent Action
 demonstration at the same time? (But
 only 3 Union members attended that.)
 Was it because Union members didn't
 know about the demonstration? Does
 anti-imperialism seem less immediate?
 Do marches seem futile? Then how
 can we relate to anti-imperialist
 issues?

We hope that these questions will
 stimulate some discussion in the Union
 about how much we want to be involved
 in anti-imperialist campaigns, and
 about our expectations of coalition
 politics generally.

Suzanne Jonas and Louise Gross



PROTECTIVE LEGISLATION ENDS DEMONSTRATE JUNE 1st



Under the guise of implementing the Equal Rights Amendment, the Industrial Welfare Commission, a Reagan appointed board of employers, will abolish protective legislation in California, as of June 1st. The California State Legislature gave the IWC the task of revising certain regulations covering working conditions and applying the ERA (as yet not a constitutional amendment) by passing Assembly Bill 478. Just as many working women warned, representatives of business have used the excuse of equality to cut deeply into the hard fought for protections of workers, thereby increasing their profits. The position of many working women has been to extend the protective laws to include men, as well as women. Much criticism has been levelled at professional womens' uncritical support of the ERA, since they have refused to fight the anti-labor use business would make of this sought after reform.

Protective laws have been fought for by the labor movement for a long time, through strikes, unions and other forms of resistance. They affect many areas of work. Unorganized workers' hours and conditions will bear the brunt of the new protective orders. Already workers in the electronics industry have had to work 14 hour shifts, had hot water cut off and lounges boarded up. The new orders will also hit minority workers the hardest, since they are largely unorganized and concentrated in industries such as agriculture, hotel, restaurant and domestic work. 80% of women workers in California are unorganized. While working longer hours for less pay, women must still return home to care for children as well as do the housework. Forced overtime and double shifts will affect women enormously. Workers with contracts will also be adversely hit, especially when their contracts run out.

The following is a brief summary of what the affect of the new laws will be. All industries (except motion pictures and canning) from Manufacturing, clerical, transportation, public house-keeping (i.e. hospitals, janitorial), professionals and sales, etc. can be forced to work a 10 hour day without overtime pay, up to a 40 hour week. Hotel, restaurant, small retail shop, domestic homeworkers and all agricultural and packing shed workers have been all together cut from hours and overtime regulations.

There is nothing in the new orders that prevent employers from working their workers 7 or more consecutive days as long as during each calendar month, the worker receives days off equal to one in seven.

Employers can now substitute any personal privilege time such as going to the bathroom, phone, etc. in place of scheduled break time, (i.e. 10 min/4 hours). Minors under the age of 18 years of age are covered by a \$1.70/hr. minimum wage. Employers can now require minors to work until 12:30 a.m. on non-school nights.

All employees handling cash can now be made to pay any shortages or loss. Workers can now be made to buy and maintain uniforms and certain equipment. Cut out completely are the following orders which required: Drinking water, washing facilities, toilet rooms, first aid, lifting limitations, exits, couches and lounges, cleanliness and upkeep, lighting, ventilation, etc.



For many months demonstrations against the IWC have been taking place whenever they met in S.F. or L.A. Workers in plants have also been fighting back. In San Jose, the day after the IWC passed the new orders, the hot water was turned off and the lounge boarded up in an electronics plant. A group of angry women workers circulated a leaflet and forced the employers to turn the hot water back on. The Owens Ill. Glass Plant workers from Tracy, Oakland and L.A. went on strike because employers tried to take away maternity leave and force mandatory overtime into the union contracts.

On JUNE 1st there will be a demonstration to protest the end to protective legislation. The Planning Committee has endorsed the demonstration and encourages women in the BOWU and friends to support the protest and to turn out. Meet at the BOWU Office at 10:30 to discuss the laws and for carpools into S.F. Meet at 12 noon at Union Square (Geary and Stockton) and March via Market St. to rally at 350 McAllister St. (State Building).

Information compiled from materials distributed by Union Wage and the Committee for Better Working Conditions by Patti. More info call 658-2850 * * *



Grand Jury Defense Support COMM

This is a report on two meetings of the Bay Area Committee to Support the Grand Jury Defense. This is a very diverse group which has come together to take action around the two current Grand Juries being held in San Francisco--one, the SLA Grand Jury, which purportedly was called to investigate just the SLA Bank Robbery; the other the Zebra Grand Jury. I would like to describe these meetings, to call attention to the actions being planned by the Support Committee, and later to discuss what I think the function of such a support committee should be.

Three meetings of this group have been held. I have only attended the last two. In general, I find these meetings both heated and disorganized. There is only very minimal political agreement represented here--and that is that protest work should be done to Stop the Grand Jury. Just what that work should be and what relationship a support committee should have to the Grand Jury Defense Office and to the witnesses called is not clearly agreed upon by those in the group. The United Prisoners Union and the Vacaville Prison Project both seem to exert a heavy presence at these meetings. Most other people are not there representing any particular organization; some are friends of the three witnesses.

Most of the discussion so far has centered around the SLA witnesses. However the committee did decide to deal with all aspects of the Grand Jury--not just the SLA investigation. But not much is known about the Zebra case or about the witnesses called. And so far no particular action is planned in co-ordination with people doing defense work around the Zebra Grand Jury. People have talked about the necessity of the ongoingness of this committee, but it is hard to tell how realistic this would be in times when no specific case with political import to the left is being heard. Three committees have been established to deal with the work load of the committee: Outreach--contacts with organizations, Publicity--sometimes called "Propaganda", and Fundraising. The only specific action taken so far by the committee has been the leafletting and

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attendance at the Grand Jury hearings in previous weeks. On the date, Wed., May 15, that the contempt of Grand Jury hearing was held for Paul Halverson and Cindy Garvey, picketing was organized by the committee and about seventy people demonstrated and packed the courtroom.

Now that these two witnesses are in jail, and the subpoena served on Joyce Halverson has been dismissed; the committee maintains regular contact with Cindy and Paul. Bail applications along with an appeal of the defense's case for illegal wiretapping charges against the FBI will be sent to the US Circuit Court of Appeal sometime next week. It is believed that the bail application will be denied. A protest rally is being planned by the Support Committee for the time when an answer is received from the Court of Appeal. A fundraising event is also being planned to help pay the lawyers. It is not clear at this time whether these two events will be combined.

The third meeting was held just a few days after the shootout in L.A. It was also the first meeting after Cindy and Paul were sent to jail. There were brief reports on how Cindy and Paul were doing, and also a report on the progress of the bail application and the appeal. We briefly discussed preliminary plans for the fundraising benefit. But the tension was high and people felt a strong need to respond to the police shootout and to the deaths of the six SLA members. The discussion which followed was mostly concerned with whether or not it was appropriate for this committee to initiate and organize a memorial and protest event. One argument was that if we are organizing against fascist and repressive tactics of the state and of the police, then it is appropriate for this committee to organize such a protest. The objection to such a proposal, and this was a minority point of view, was that putting energy into coalition work around a memorial and protest of the police action would hinder this committee from doing Grand Jury defense work.

It was also held that working in a primary way on a memorial and protest would prove divisive. Again it was brought out that the agreement here was narrow and that it would be a mistake to start working together around a broader issue than what the group initially got together for. My feeling too, was that the priorities of this group should be specifically defined in terms of Grand Jury defense work. There was also some question as to whether it was a political error for a group concerned with the Grand Jury defense to officially participate in a SLA memorial. Since most people there wanted to organize a memorial/protest event, it was decided that these people would work together individually outside of committee meetings and that the Grand Jury work of the committee would proceed. I feel this was a valuable debate, but I feel people are coming to these meetings with different needs, and this creates tension. Some of us feel a resistance to

discuss our responses to the politics and actions of the SLA in the context of this loose group, while others are eager for such discussion.

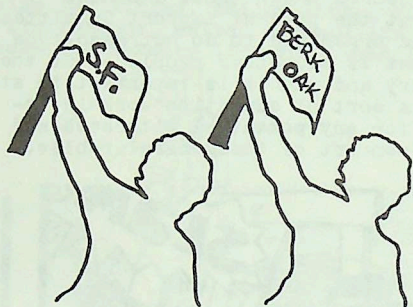
What I think the functions of such a support committee should be: There are basically three groups of people doing Grand Jury defense work. These are 1) the witnesses--who are not always clear about how to deal with the Grand Jury, 2) the Grand Jury Legal Defense Committee, which has an office in San Francisco, and their lawyers, and 3) the Support Committee. In the past, specifically during the Weather Underground Grand Jury, there has been resentment against the Support Committee. At that time, the support group wanted an equal say in planning the strategy of the defense. Witnesses felt pressured under these demands. I think that the present Support Committee should be organized to do outreach-type work--that is educating people about the Grand Jury and why it is important to stop it. This sort of education work is important for any potential witnesses and for the support of the general public.



The present support committee needs to establish a clear relationship with the Grand Jury Defense and I believe it should have a more supportive role than in the past. It would be good too, if a permanent support group could evolve out of this one which would be able to work on the defense of any politically-motivated Grand Jury which might convene in the future. It is important too, I feel, that this group make positive attempts to connect with the Zebra defense. Most important, I feel, is the need for the Support Committee to refrain from trying to convince an unsure witness not to testify and from assuming to speak publicly for any witness. I would like to see the priority of this group be mobilization and propaganda work and perhaps organizing a coalition of organizations aimed at stopping the Grand Jury inquisition.

The case of the two Grand Jury witnesses which is being appealed now is weak insofar as there being few laws protecting people's rights concerning FBI harassment. Therefore this case depends a lot on public demonstration of support for this case. I urge the BOWU to move soon to take a public position on the Grand Jury and on the wiretapping issues involved in this particular case. If we make public our support and work officially within the Support Committee, we can then have some influence on the politics of the committee and on the direction and approach of a public mobilization campaign.

--Myrna Cozen



San Francisco Women's Union

(by Val Robb of the Common Sense staff and a friend of BOWU)

A San Francisco Women's Union was born at a convention of over 200 women on the weekend of April 20 at the Community Center on Sanchez Street. The convention was organized by a group of about 15 women who had spent several months contacting women's organizations in preparation.

Most of the women there had been involved in other women's movement activities --- women's groups on the job, in health centers, rape centers, childcare centers. What brought us all together was the desire to build a city-wide women's political organization.

Why a women's union? Many of us had become frustrated with just working in small project or discussion groups. Although much has been accomplished this way, what is needed now is an organization where we can meet other women in different parts of the city, to exchange ideas, skills, resources. The purpose? To gather our strength and figure out ways to effectively challenge and change the man institutions that affect our lives -- hospitals, schools, workplaces, the government.

We who attended the convention agreed on the need for a city-wide multi-issue women's organization. The problems arose when we began talking about the specifics of this organization. Much time at the convention was spent in workshops on specific areas such as women as workers (organized and unorganized into unions), in media, childcare, health. This gave women with specific concerns a way to meet other women with common interests and see if there was the potential for working together. Many of the workshops will probably become ongoing work groups. Yet the major drawback with spending so much time in issue-oriented workshops was that it left little time to discuss the Union as an organization.

Among questions raised at the convention were: how should the organization be structured? Some want the organization to be fairly centralized, with the whole organization developing common politics and deciding on political priorities; others want a loose structure with ongoing semi-autonomous groups resembling an umbrella organization. Also, should the Women's Union be explicitly socialist? Many women at the convention pointed out that the current Principles of Unity focused on the many wrongs of capitalist society and were anti-racist, anti-imperialist, anti-sexist. But can a movement be built without putting forth a positive vision of the society we want? This was raised by a group of women who have formed an ongoing socialist-feminist caucus.



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A third important question concerns our political priorities. The childcare workshop, for instance, was attended by women working in childcare centers who wanted to set up a new childcare center. Other women thought the first priority must be confronting the institutions that should be providing childcare: the schools, workplaces, city government. This is a difference in focus. Do we confront institutions as a first priority or do we concentrate on building alternatives, or can we do both simultaneously?

Many other concerns were expressed at the convention. Many Lesbian women want to make sure the organization takes our needs seriously. Also, most of the women at the convention have been involved in the women's movement for some time --- how can women who have had no such experience relate to this organization?

The Interim Coordinating Committee set up at the convention will be working on a proposal for the structure of the organization and revising the provisional principles of unity adopted at the convention. The work groups are just beginning.

The convention was a big first step. Now there is much ahead of us to do. Hopefully we will be able to resolve the problems that face us and create a strong new force in San Francisco. * * *



The following poem was submitted by a Union member who felt it expressed some of her views. The question of whether to print it provoked a vigorous debate in the ad hoc newsletter group about the SIA, its analysis; about the recent events in L.A., and about our editorial policy. Because of the recent events, we want discussion of the SIA to continue on a union wide basis. We are printing the poem as a contribution to that discussion, recognizing that many union members, including some of the newsletter group, have major objections to it.

Our policy on controversial matters usually is to print opposing views in the same newsletter. We are unable to do that in this case because of time pressures (this poem was submitted the day of lay-out). Despite objections to this poem it was important to some of us for the Newsletter to begin discussion of the SIA now (this issue) because of a desire to carry discussions on current issues. But we will include in our next issue statements on this subject by union members. We urge union members to respond to our printing of this poem and to submit their ideas on the SIA for the next issue.

Newsletter.

WEATHER POEM FOR THE SIA

They call it terror
If you are few
and have no B-52's
if you are not a head of state
with an army and police
if you have neither napalm
nor tanks
nor electronic battlefields
terror is if you are dispossessed
and have only your own two hands
and each other
and your rage
It is not terror
if you are New York's Finest
and you shoot a 10-year old black
child in the back
because you think black people
all look like they've just committed a
robbery
it is not terror if you are ITT
and you buy the men
who line Chilean doctors up in their hos-
pital corridors
and shoot them for supporting the late
democratic government of their country
It is not terror but heroism
if you were captured by the Vietnamese
for dropping fragmentation bombs on their
schools and hospitals
Only those who have nothing
can be terrorists

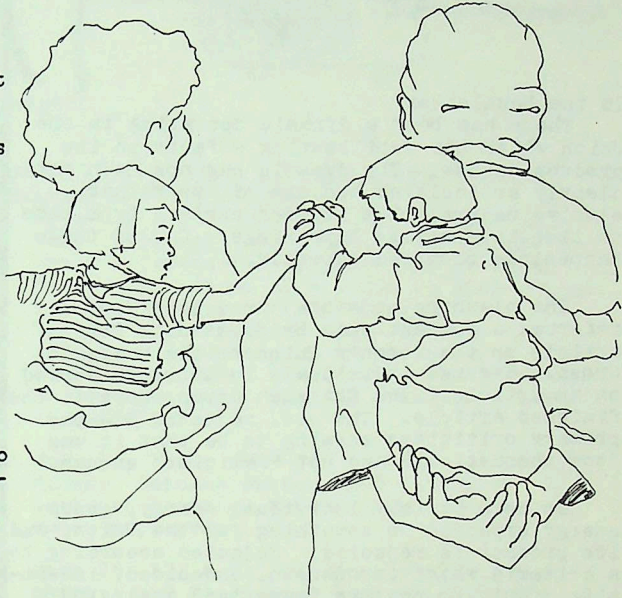
Brothers and sisters, let us choose

our weapons carefully and humanely
let us use no torture
no napalm
or genocide
but do not be fooled
there is no weapon they will allow
nothing that works will be called legitimate
unless we fight for it
unless we educated ourselves and others
unless we separate resistance from oppression
The same editorials that scream terrorism
screamed mob rule
at the civil rights marches of the early
sixties
at the anti-war demonstrations
thousands of busted heads later
they say, of course
we always upheld the right to peaceful pro-
test

The attitudes they offer up in print
with little tabs, cut them out and wear them
written by men who have not
seen a jail cell from the inside
or hunger
or the face of a duly constituted officer
of the law as he says
make one move and you'll be dead
they say, we cannot condone violence
but watch out
for whether they say it about murdering pris-
oners at Attica
or about kidnapping Patricia Hearst
about the disinherited
or about the inheritors
As we find our way slowly
To use the means available to us
As wisely as we can
there will be mistakes
but do not let
the enemy define the mistakes
because he is experienced
and has ten thousand printing presses at his
back
behind which he hides the tanks and guns
and he will say, the people don't support you
and saying it can make it so
if we agree
he will say, you only turn off
those you say you are fighting for
he is helpful
no anti-march
no sit-in
no teach-in
but had its helpful editor to say
how much more we could accomplish by doing less
or preferably nothing
while the people of Vietnam
patiently explained their cause to the world
but did not stop shooting down the bombers
for fear of alienating someone.

Watch out for what they turn into news
and what they quietly forget
What if all the headlines
and stories about Solzhenytsyn
had said instead
Millions of humans

held in semi-slavery
 deprived of every human and legal right
 families forcibly torn apart
 strikes broken by mass murder
 hundred of thousands imprisoned without trial
 in Southern Africa?
 (Is it because of their impartial humanity that
 they hear
 the cry of the Russian camps of '47
 but are deaf to the roar of the African prisons
 of '74?)
 Or, 25,000 U.S. troops remain in Thailand
 the war in Southeast Asia
 isn't over but continues
 directed as before by U.S. officials
 and U.S. money
 U.S. advisors who changed their uniforms
 into civilian clothes and call it by another
 name
 or worse, do not call it anything at all
 but hope the world will forget
 and let them carry on their dirty business
 undisturbed
 while solemn conferences are held on what to do
 about the "international terrorism" of the Pal-
 estinians
 who disrupt the peaceful prosperity of tourism
 with annoying reminders that their land has
 been stolen from them
 and they have been left with nothing
 but their courage and the justness of their
 cause
 with which to win it back
 poor enough weapons
 we can help supply some others
 by shouting and whispering on every corner
 the story of their struggle
 a people utterly deprived of its homeland
 which the world has tried so hard to forget



this issue thanks to:
 Toby, Cathy, Debbie W., Myrna, Carol M.,
 Karen, Barbara S., Patti.
 graphics by Cathy, Barbara S.
 Karen, Carol M.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: JUNE 20
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 put on newsletter shelf at Union Office,
 2022 Blake. Events can also be called
 in; call 548-6093 or 658-5763.

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 send money and your address with zip
 to 2022 Blake St., Berkeley
 94704
 if you are a union member your dues pay
 for your newsletter, but all contributions
 are appreciated. Let us know immediately
 if your address changes. We welcome
 all comments & contributions.

Sisters and brothers, think hard before you jump
 onto the bandwagon
 of condemning terrorism
 remember who is making the definitions
 remember not to strengthen the hand
 that will turn in an instant
 against every means of resistance to oppression
 That bandwagon rolls straight toward fascism
 do not forget the real terrorists
 that lurk behind the masks of heads of state
 do not be afraid to hold strong
 together
 with all who dare to struggle

A sister in the Weather Underground

letter from outreach group
written by Joanne W.

To the Newsletter*

There has been a dynamic operating in the Union which has debilitating effects on its productiveness. The dynamic has not been very clearly articulated because of its rather elusive nature. But it does surface from time to time in concrete happenings. One of these happenings occurred recently.

The planning committee from last term referred a request made by Grassroots for an article on the Women's Union to the Outreach Group. Several individuals in Outreach worked on an article. The Outreach Group approved the finished article. The p.c. rejected it--the primary criticisms seeming to be that it was "too theoretical" and not "feminist" enough.

So here it is. Individual energy, group energy expended on something for the Union, and its product is rejected. Rejected according to a criteria which is unknown, undecided, indefinite. But who has the "accepted" analysis? There does seem to be an unspoken demand that every word, every action issuing from the Union must be the perfect formulation on any particular matter--or it is rejected. Within the context of an unstated expectation for perfection and a vague criteria to measure that perfection, very little will be forthcoming from the Union.

Indeed, the feeling that a "right" answer exists in some repository in the Union and that whatever is said or done will be compared to that "rightness," creates an atmosphere of intimidation. This underlying current within the Union discourages the exploration of a very wide range of ideas, positions, opinions, feelings, possibilities. Impetus to spend energy on Union matters becomes negated.

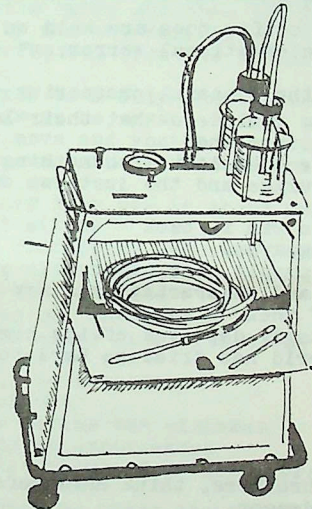
Some suggestions:

Generally--we must take seriously our understanding that socialist-feminism is a developing theory which needs the test of practice. We should not expect perfection in the theoriew we formulate nor in the actions we take. Recognizing this, the Union should exercise restraint in rejecting the work of any of its members. Differences around a matter should be stated in a way which encourages activity. We must be supportive of each other without avoiding constructive criticism.

Specifically--if the Union as a whole, or the p.c., or the newsletter, etc., requests an individual or group to work on a particular matter, specific guidelines should be set forth

before, not after, time and energy has been expended. When there are criticisms of an article, flyer, proposal, or whatever, the criticisms should be clearly enumerated and alternatives suggested. Vague criticisms indicating that something isn't "socialist" enough, or isn't "feminist" enough, not only obscure political differences, but imply "correct lineism"--something we reject in the left, and should reject in the Union.

* this letter came directly out of a discussion in Outreach Group. It was written during the last p.c.term. We hope the 4 month plan and the fully-elected (i.e. decision-making and accountable) p.c. are improving the relation of the groups to the p.c. But we think the observations and suggestions should be circulated, and we welcome members' comments on the ongoing effort to develop a union-wide politics without discouraging individual or group initiative. -ed.



Abortion

New group welcomes new members; women from Health and Economy groups are meeting Wed., May 29, at 7 p.m. at the Office to continue developing a position and strategy for Union participation in a possible coalition around abortion. They are now investigating current anti-abortion legislation and the recent history of abortion.

OUR OFFICE HOURS:

MON, THURS, Sat 10-1

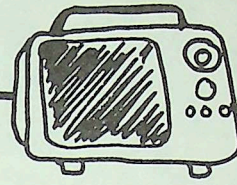
2022 Blake St. 548-6093

AT LARGE MEMBERS, MEMBERS IN GROUPS THAT MEET LATE IN THE WEEK:

You can have the week's events read to you from the planning committee minutes if you call the office from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Mondays.

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CALENDAR



JUNE 1, 12 noon, Civic Center, S.F.
Demonstration against California's
removal of protective legislation. Sign
making and discussion at Women's Union
office at 10:30 AM (2022 Blake). Rides
leaving from there at 11:15.



JUNE 1: 9 AM till 4:30: CIUW, Coalition
of Labor Union Women, first Northern Cal.
meeting to acquaint union women with CIUW
and to charter local chapters. Held at
George Washington High School in San Fran.
The planners have included the noon
demonstration against the abandonment of
protective laws as part of the day's
activities.

For more information call 658 5763.
Some of us who are union members would
like to drive over with other members of
the Women's Union and maybe get together
to discuss the conference afterwards.
If you would like to join us call the same
number. (At this point in CIUW's life only
members of collective bargaining agencies
can attend.)

JUNE 2, Sunday, 7:30 Unitas (Bancroft and
College, Berkeley), Women's Union
internal educational; Women and the
Organized Left, part 1. Presentation
on the revolutionary parties in the U.S.
and the role of women within and out-
side those parties. Readings and fur-
ther description available at Union
office, 2022 Blake. Call 652-7723 for
childcare or babysitters.

JUNE 16, Sunday, 7:30, Unitas. Part 2 of
Women and the Organized Left, current
approaches to building a new party.
Same details as for June 2 educational.

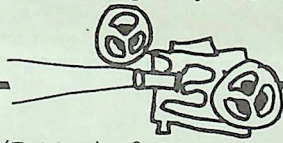
SEXISM IN THE SCHOOLS, a series of workshops,
will be given this summer by women in BARTOC,
Bay Area Radical Teachers' Organizing Com-
mittee. More specific information in next
newsletter, or call 863-5636

WATCH OPEN STUDIO, CHANNEL 9 KQED FOR THE
FOLLOWING SHOWS IN JUNE:

June 17, 6:00 P.M. "Half of Heaven": Two
short original dramas about the issues of
women's liberation in Chinatown as shown
by the situations of a would be Miss China-
town Contestant, or a working wife.
Written and presented by members of the
Chinese Modern Theatre in cooperation with
the Chinese Media Committee. The plays are
in Cantonese with English dramatic reading
on KQED-FM radio.

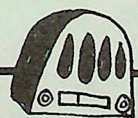
June 26, 6:00; "Adelante Mujer" Dorinda
Moreno, Chicana writer, and community
activist hosts an informative third world
women's program.

June 26, 27, 6:00; "Willie Lobo/Manchild"
parts 1 and 2; an hour long drama by the
Black Ensemble Theatre Company about the
ghetto homecoming experiences of a black
soldier much changed by the war.



JUNE 7 (Friday), 8 PM movie, Citizen Kane,
the story of the Hearst Empire;
directed by and starring Orson Welles.
Newman Hall, 2700 Dwight Way, Berkeley
Donation \$2.00 for United Prisoners'
Union.

also showing on Sat., June 8 at St.
Peters Hall, 1249 Alabama, San. Fran.



ON KPFA (94.1 FM): WOMEN TALKING UNION
A SERIES ON WORKING WOMEN AND
ORGANIZING

Tuesday, 10 PM, May 28, June 4, June 11
Friday, 2:30 PM, June 7, 14, 21, 28

The topics covered are: a history of working
women and organizing, strikes, caucuses,
and new organizing. The history and the re-
cent strikes shows have already been run in
the Tuesday night series. The whole series
will be rerun on Friday afternoons in June.
Women from the Women and Labor group in the
Union worked on some of the shows.

Newsletter

AUGUST '74

Deadline: Aug. 20th



P.C.'s

Suzanne Dahlquist

FOCUS GROUP EVALUATIONS

A large part of Planning Committee's work in this term was spent studying reports from all the focus groups. The following is an evaluation and summary of those reports....

Evaluation of the Focus Group Report Summary

When PC asked for in-depth reports from the FGs, we had several purposes in mind: 1) to provide communication among the focus groups and between the FGs and the PC, 2) to give more feedback to FGs from the PC, and 3) to get an overview of what is going on in the Union. Some feedback has already gone to the FGs and some of what we learned will be incorporated into the next 4-month plan. This report is somewhere in between: We want to share the general observations we made and to make specific suggestions that groups may find helpful in attacking the most common problems.

One thing to keep in mind when considering this report is that the focus group structure is a new one for the Union and is not necessarily the permanent structure. The structure was based on the assumption that most Union members would be in FGs, yet now nearly half the membership is at large. Also, many of the recent events and projects done in the Union have been through ad hoc rather than focus groups (e.g., the Party forums, SLA article group, AB 39 protest, etc.)

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Planning Com. on the focus groups....	1
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The Main Problem: Finding a Project

The most striking thing we noticed in the FG reports was a tone of discouragement, which came from the difficulty in deciding on a project. By spending a lot of time searching for a project, many groups felt a lack of dynamism, growth and purpose. This often became a cyclical process: the more women left the group, the smaller the group became, and the more difficult it then became to consider any project. Also, when the practice of a group is vague, it is hard to attract and hold new members.

Many reasons were given for this difficulty in finding a project. One was that FGs felt they should find the strategically correct, "politically perfect" project. Since the Union has to some extent been working on the premise that our strategy will grow out of our practice, it gets tricky to find a practice that fits our strategy.

Some groups questioned the role of the FG in the Union: how much initiative should FGs take?

Other groups had internal disagreements about which project to choose: is it necessary to find a project with which every woman in the group agrees?

The discouragement many women feel in FGs also stems from a feeling that the FGs and the practice in those groups are sometimes unrelated to what women do in the rest of their lives. Often women choose a focus group almost at random. Also, there are no

focus groups of students, teachers or lawyers, although there are many women whose main work is as a student, teacher or lawyer. It is not clear whether women should be in a FG which relates directly to what they do in the rest of their lives, but all of this does raise the question of how political groups are chosen and what they should be or could be to their members. cont'd. →

Another Problem: Internal Dynamics

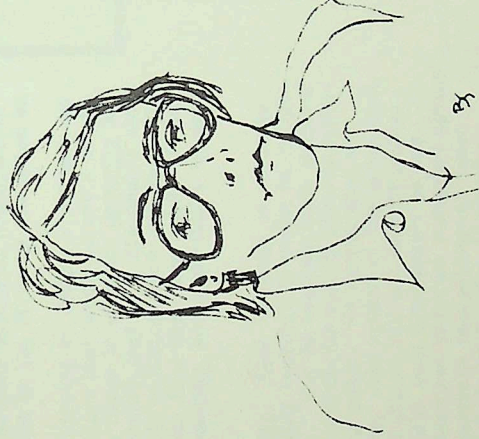
In addition to the main problem of finding a project, groups are also having trouble with internal dynamics, including attracting and keeping new members. By internal dynamics we mean dealing with political differences and problems working together, making space for expressing differences and sharing feelings, and discussing aspects of women's lives outside the Union, and balancing the different expectations that members have for the group. The problem of attracting and keeping new members has added to existent dynamics problems because it has been sometimes difficult to make new members feel welcome and informed about the group without disrupting the continuity of the established group's process.

Another Problem: The Union as a Whole

Several groups said they felt unconnected to the Union as a whole. This has been helped somewhat by more consistent interaction between the FGs and the PC this term. We see the problem of connecting partly as a structural problem but we shouldn't discount the fact that there is a general vagueness to the Union's direction at this point which makes it hard for any group to feel connected.

What's a Focus Group's Responsibility?

Planning Committee tried to clarify what a FG's basic responsibility to the Union is. We decided that 1) each FG should have a specific task within its focus area (including a period of study or research), 2) each FG should report its decisions and public positions to the PC, and 3) each FG be open to taking in new members. Based on these expectations, we came up with the following recommendations.



recommendations

1. Clearly defined work. It seems crucial for each FG to have work clearly defined for itself. It is useful to have a time schedule so work doesn't seem like it will never reach a different stage. Although



deciding upon a short-term project may be crucial for the FG's survival, this project does have to fit into a larger picture of the long range goals of the FG. For example, the health group was really stimulated to work around abortion but was thrown back into confusion when that particular decision was changed and a new project had to be found.

It's also important for FGs to reach a decision about what kind and amount of cooperation is needed from the rest of the Union and request it through the PC or membership meeting. For example, the children's group calculated how many posters to make on the basis of how much distribution its six members could handle, but in fact there was a lot of assistance from other Union members and they could have put up more posters than they thought.

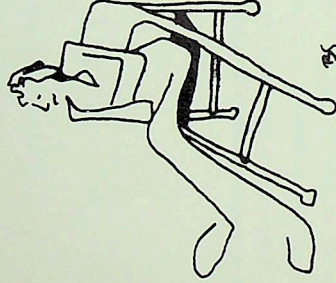
In trying to decide on a project, it is helpful for a FG to lay out all the options and discuss each one. For example, Prisons and Jails group spent a lot of time looking for a specific service for prisoners that they could do. Actually, most of the people in the group didn't feel sure that providing a service made sense to them, and it emerged finally that they wanted to do more reading and research before doing public practice. Groups should be able to decide to be a study group if that is what is clearly needed, and the decision to be a study group will be made with more confidence if the alternatives are seen clearly.

Sometimes the reasons for eliminating a project possibility will be practical. For example, lots of people in the children's group wanted to be able to generate public struggle about the number and quality of day care facilities, but there were only 7 people in the group, with no direct links to ongoing issues of contention in daycare in Berkeley or Oakland. They decided instead to begin with a series of posters about issues of concern to parents and children, which more realistically reflected the size limitations of the group. Other responsibilities of the members must be taken into consideration as well.

Coalition Possibilities

Sometimes the problem in finding a project is the sense of having to start from scratch in an area. A FG might then consider working in coalition with an ongoing group around a particular issue, like the labor group's work with Union W.A.G.E. around extending protective legislation. Another related approach is to join an organization and function as a caucus within it, although this has many problems of its own. (How committed do the Union women need to be to the growth of the larger organization? What would their relationship be to the non-Women's Union members of the organization? etc.) For a BOWU

... group to work with a mixed coalition like the Campaign to Municipalise P&E would be complicated but might also lead to a better understanding of how much we can begin to actualise out sense of ultimate solidarity with a mixed socialist movement.



How much unity in the FG is needed?

The process of trying to define a project may lead to the realisation that there is not a single practice that makes sense to every member. When that happens, the group needs to determine what decision does make sense to the majority of the group, talk with the outvoted members about other work in the Union that might meet their needs, and also encourage them to write up their position for the benefit of the whole Union.

If a member or members have objections to the majority decision based on theoretical differences (e.g., the proposed project looks like it may be in contradiction with the Principles of Unity), and not merely a matter of individual preferences or priorities, the objections should be presented to the PC for a decision by the PC or by the Union as a whole.

The process of trying to define a project may lead to the realisation that there is not a single practice that makes sense to even the majority of the members. This should lead to a discussion about how people want to do political work and where else in the Union they can find what they need. It may lead to the FG disbanding, which shouldn't be seen as a failure.

2. Internal Dynamics. Each FG needs to evaluate its process of working together in order to define shared expectations. The PC has been made aware of this both by reports from FGs and by our own difficulties as a working group. We agreed that as minimal expectations, each member of the group must feel recognised and valued for her contributions, and that dynamics that seem destructive to any member be closely examined and then struggled against.

One way to encourage recognition of these problems is to insist on at least a 15-minute evaluation at the end of each meeting. The PC has also found it helpful to go around the table at the beginning of each meeting to that second thoughts or resentments about previous meetings can be expressed directly rather than affecting how someone sees things throughout the present meeting.

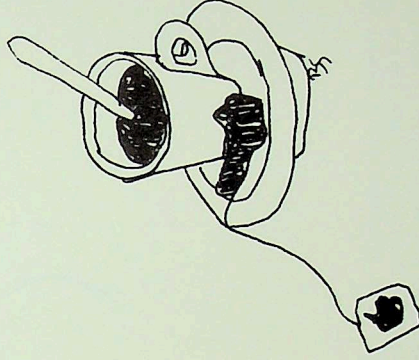
It is also important for FGs to be explicit about how much other aspects of people's lives will be discussed in the group, and what level of support for other struggles people need in order to believe that working in the Union is qualitatively different

from working in a capitalist operation. Sometimes the work of the FG is pretty remote from the rest of a member's everyday struggles, and it is possible that the solution is for an individual to reconsider her choice of a focus group.

3. New Members. The issue of integrating new members needs more attention in all focus groups. The main solution to the problem of new members is to have a definite task at hand, accessible to the participation of new members. The labor group has started trying a "buddy system" where an old member of the group invites a new member out to coffee to fill her in on the Union's history, past practice of the FG, etc. Another suggestion is to set up a specific meeting for new members every 4-6 weeks so that more attention can be given to new members without disrupting the ongoing work each time a new woman joins. We should experiment with different methods of raising the level of shared expectations.

4. At large members. The PC recommends that we do a survey of the at-large membership. The office staff could do it by phone and ask the following questions. (We would also welcome written responses from at-large members.) Why are you not in a FG? Is it because of lack of time? Are you involved in other organisations? Would you want your work with that organisation to be more connected to the Union? How would you like to see the two organizations working together? Would it be worthwhile to form a Union caucus or a Sec. Fem. caucus within that organization? Do you feel connected to the Union as an at-large member? What do you feel you get from being a member? What could be changed so you could participate more? Are there interests and concerns to you that are not reflected in any of the focus groups?

* * * * *





I appreciated the discussions that were generated by the forums on Women and the Organized Left and hope that these discussions are carried on both to help us further our political analysis and to address our political differences in the Women's Union. In that vein, I want to throw out some of my thoughts on the kind of organization we need on the Left. I do not have space to convey these ideas fully here but will try to suggest them and give further readings for people who find them interesting.

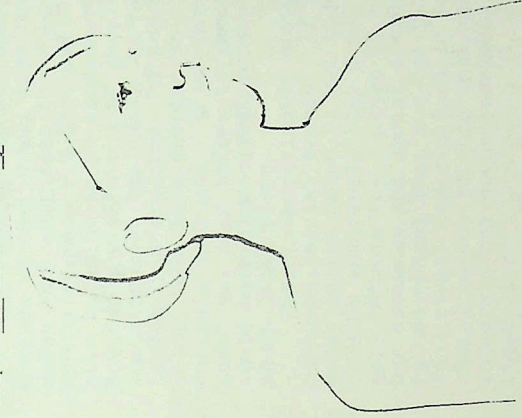
I have to start by questioning the idea that we need a party (of some kind) "for the people" in order to win power from the state to win our demands. I want to give some of the reasons that I believe a party will not be the agent of our liberation.

I think we in the Women's Union work for revolution or radical political change because we want control over our lives; we are most involved in the struggle against the oppression we experience directly in our own daily activity. However, I think that a party, no matter how broadly based, if structured to take over state power, would lose the capacity that we now possess to struggle directly against our immediately-experienced oppressions. Instead, it would have to struggle against our oppressions from outside of our daily activity, by calling demonstrations or putting forth candidates for elections or whatever.

Let me expand on this. First, if we build a large, perhaps national, party it will have to be structured to accommodate a lot of people. But as an organization designed to take over state power, it could not possibly devote attention to the immediate problems of all of these people. Instead, it would have to set priorities, lump certain struggles together and ignore others, and give some people within its ranks the job of organizing the rest around collections of issues viewed in general--i.e. by its nature the party would have to neglect the concrete situations of its members in favor of "efficiency." On a large scale this creates a space where many people are not struggling themselves around their direct experiences. Then the movement is easily co-opted or crushed by buying off or eliminating the organizers. I think the movement is stronger and healthier if people remain in decentralized groups where they are directly active in their struggles.

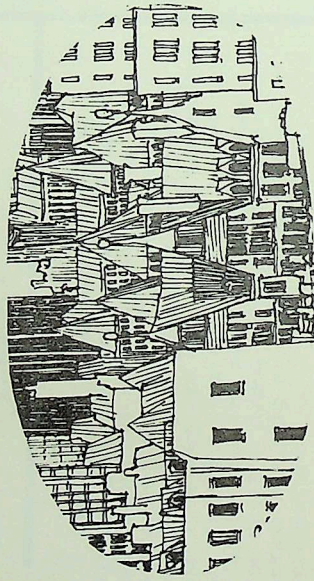
Secondly, if we unite the entire left (as Kinoy suggests in his article in Liberation 1974) for the purpose of bringing a mass party to power, the party program will have to be based on the least common denominator that unifies the different groups within it. I think this unity will be unsatisfactory because it would necessarily restrain the more radical elements. Also it would mask a lot of internal fighting, because although the groups may agree on what they are against, they will not necessarily agree on what they want. We have learned in the Women's Movement that "the enemy of our enemy isn't necessarily our friend", which was demonstrated by Kinoy's complete neglect of women's oppression in his description of the potential for the party. Also we have seen that some groups may agree on paper that they are opposed to the oppression of women while they continue their sexist practices.

Thirdly, I do not want to build an organization that uses the same methods the Democratic Party uses. A party that attracts the "masses" by even revolutionary slogans, that manipulates people's dissatisfaction to win their votes, money or time will become so much a part of the system that it can't challenge that system. Further, since I want to see hierarchy abolished along with capitalism, I don't want to work for that victory in a hierarchical organization whose structure retains capitalist social relations while its slogans proclaim anti-capitalism. Such a structure is evident in vanguard parties. It is less evident in the concept of a mass party, but may be lurking in the vagueness with which such an organization has so far been defined. If for the sake of efficiency the power is concentrated in the hands of the political experts, the party for the people will not--in fact, cannot give the power to the people. Instead the power will be passed from one group of managers to another, to be administered for our sakes, perhaps--for us but not by us.



Finally, such an organization cannot overcome the split between the personal and the public spheres of our lives since by its definition it exists in the public sphere. We have no use for an organization that would take over and operate the very same state apparatus that inherently denies us control over our lives--we want to end the state, to take control into our own hands by our own direct activities. COMRADES →

... the process by which we strive for power over our lives is terribly important because it carries within it the seeds of the society we will create. There are plenty of examples that I could cite here; on some level probably everyone who reads this has experienced the frustration of having her reality not considered important by an organization or of watching the "leadership" co-opt people's energies.



Eleanor Magid (detail)

However, I want to mention some historical examples of revolutionary situations in which groups in a direct struggle for liberation found themselves opposed by leftist parties.

In 1917, Russian workers formed workers' councils and soviets across the country and began to take production into their own hands. The Bolsheviks rode this tide to state power and then began to suppress the autonomous activity of the workers. Most notably, after the civil war ended, with Lenin as head of state and Trotsky as head of the army, a revolt of sailors, workers and party cadre at Kronstadt proclaiming power to the soviets was crushed by the Bolsheviks. (See Daniel and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit, Obsolete Communism: the Left-Wing Alternative, published by McGraw Hill paperbacks; Alexandra Kollantai, The Workers Opposition, published as a pamphlet by Solidarity, London; and Ida Mett, The Kronstadt Commune, published by Solidarity, London.)

In both the Spanish and Hungarian revolutions workers' councils and agrarian collectives were formed on a large scale; these were opposed in every instance by the CP. The Hungarian Revolution was destroyed by troops from the USSR with the backing of every communist party then in existence, including the Chinese (see Andy Anderson, Hungary '56, published by Solidarity, London.) In Red China itself, during the Cultural Revolution, workers in Shanghai attempted to set up a city "administration" modeled after the Paris Commune of 1871, which was so highly praised by Marx. This initiative in Shanghai was suppressed by the People's Liberation Army (sic!) (see Neale Hunter, Shanghai Journal, published by Beacon Press.) And most recently in Paris, May 1968, loosely structured Worker-Student Action Committees which formed out of the March 22nd Student Movement triggered a general strike involving ten million people across all of France. This strike movement was alternately opposed and manipulated by the Socialist Student Party (the P.S.U.) as well as the Trotskyists, the CP and the CP-controlled national labor union (the C.G.T.) (see Cohn-Bendit, and also R. Gregoire and F. Perlman, Worker-Student Action Committees, published in the U.S. by Black and Red, Detroit.)

Reading about these occurrences takes some of the romance out the the vision of a party for the people and at the same time reaffirms the ability of people to organize themselves. In each of these revolutionary periods the collectives and councils which formed demonstrated the ability of people to work together when they are concretely engaged in a direct struggle to recreate the social relations of their daily lives. They did not need the supervision or direction of a separate bureaucracy to organize themselves, and they successfully coordinated actions sometimes nationwide without the aid of a party apparatus. For our own situation, then, we can learn that our task is not to build an organization that would merely act in the name of the people, but to carry on and expand the creative activity of directly reshaping our immediate lives that we have already begun in our own name. ****

-Micki

Culture, Cookies, Poetry and it all happened...



IT HAPPENED: The Women's Union first cultural event! On Wednesday July 17th a poetry reading was sponsored by the Union, for members and their friends. Women from the Union (and others) shared their poems with about thirty other women.

The reading was successful not only because so many women came but because women who never read their poems to large groups of people before did - and were able to do so in an atmosphere of support. However appreciation of people's poetry was expressed basically through smiles, laughs, and applause. I think some time should have been devoted to discussing people's work and I think people who never had read before to large audiences would have appreciated people's feelings about their poems.

The Union obviously should have more cultural, social events. It's nice for women in the Union to get together with friends and people they don't know so well outside the context of a meeting. Our cultural and social events help us to understand that our Union is not a "political" organization in the traditional sense, but one that is trying to integrate our social personal, and "political" lives.

Other cultural events are in the process of being planned but so far there are no definite dates and events. Ideas for the future are having speakers, a women's dance and a talent show.

P.S. The cookies at the poetry reading were Great!!!

Debby

BISEXUALITY.

a Personal View

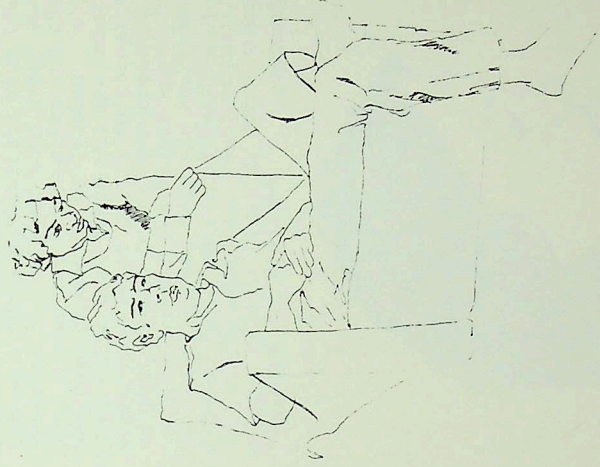
This article was sparked by the discussion in my small group following the lesbianism presentation at the last membership meeting. The question was asked, what does it mean to be bisexual, and I, as someone who presently identifies as bisexual, came away feeling a need to clarify that for myself. I speak only for myself; others identifying as bisexual may have an entirely different perspective.

Bisexuality to me means an openness to the possibility of sexual and emotional relationships with both sexes. As much as anything concrete it is a space inside my head. It is a choice based on emotion and not ideology; I find myself with strong feelings for members of both sexes and to try to deny either response to conform to ideology or social pressure would be very destructive. It is not a position I recommend as I have often found it a difficult and confusing place to be.

At this point in history it seems a particularly awkward choice to make, or at least my personal experience has been so. I came out in Madison, Wisconsin about two and a half years ago at a time when the women's movement there was beginning to be seriously divided. The prevailing tendency was that a true feminist had to be lesbian and not relate to men; I succumbed to this tendency myself. I identified as lesbian although I continued to carry on a furtive relationship with a gay man. This was known by my woman lover (who also had a male lover she occasionally saw) but by and large I kept it a secret from the lesbian community I was working politically with; I just happened to have this gay male "friend." I felt extremely guilty about it yet I couldn't convince myself to stop seeing him completely when I was getting something positive out of it.

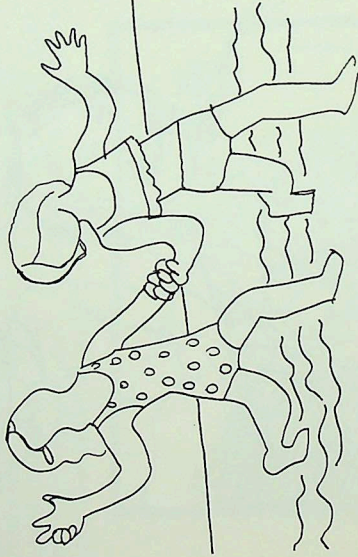
At the end of that year I spent a part of the summer with my parents during which time they found out I was gay. My mother could not accept it, even when I for the first time used the word bisexual in application to myself. Although I felt I was coping out by using that label, trying to make it a little safer for her, I also felt it most truly corresponded to my feelings.

A year of intense confusion followed. I did not go back to Madison in the fall, I went to an art school near L.A. where there was no supportive lesbian community. There was a sizable gay community however, mostly male and not at all political, in which I did not feel very comfortable. A war was going on in my head: was I gay or straight? On the one side was my mother and all the forces of mainstream American society saying, be straight, be straight if you want us to love you. I was vulnerable to this side because I valued my relationship with my mother and didn't want this gulf that had arisen between us; I also to a certain extent wanted to be able to move through mainstream society without fear. On the other side were the voices of lesbian feminism saying, be gay, be gay, relating to men is colluding with the enemy, you're a traitor, at this point in history you should be putting all your energy into women. In between was a weak little voice saying, follow your feelings. I had a great deal of trouble trying to find any feelings at all. I realized that I wasn't going to be able to resolve anything with so many moral imperatives running around in my head so I tried to lull both sides of the argument to sleep. I more or less withdrew from politics, putting most of my energy into study--literature and writing. I went home again for the summer, appeasing my mother with the fact I was having no affairs with women (nor with men either) although covertly slipping out to gay bars a few times. (cont'd)



cont'd

In the fall I came to Berkeley. I felt a great freedom coming here with no attachments. I could be anybody I wanted to--if I only knew who I wanted to be. I tried to give free rein to my fantasies, falling in love with people on buses, on the street, teachers, etc., taking them to bed with me in my dreams. I tried on the label bisexual, and although the opposing voices returned, they were not as loud.



During this time I started thinking about politics again and for the first time started viewing feminism from a Marxist perspective. (I say for the first time because although I was involved in general left politics before becoming involved in the women's movement it was not with any coherent analysis). It became clear to me that socialism is prerequisite to any true liberation of women, for all oppression is rooted in class divisions in which the means of production are controlled by a few. The oppression of women arises from this contradiction, rather than, as some radical feminists see it, the sex division itself being the cause of all other class divisions. Consequently I was no longer convinced by the argument that all one's energy should be going into women, for a commitment to struggling for socialism means at least part of one's energy is going for the benefit of men as well as women. I affirm putting some of my energy into men, both politically and personally. My politics now seem much more consonant with my feelings.

As a woman from a white middle class background the oppression that seemed most heavy to me was that arising from sexism; I think it is because of this that I was originally attracted to the radical feminist argument that poses sex as the primary contradiction and men as the enemy. I was then guilt-tripped by this argument into not being able to stand up for the heterosexual part of my sexuality.

On the other hand, I think that for a while when I was trying to hang loose from my moral imperatives I slipped back into the closet, and took advantage of heterosexual privilege. In society at large it is obviously easier to play straight. I stopped confronting myself about my gayness and did not reveal it to very many of the people I was around, putting that part of my sexuality on ice.

I am now trying to allow myself the full range of my sexuality. I still have a very difficult time getting behind the label bisexual, however. For one thing, I don't like how it has recently been presented in the media as the latest sleep-with-anything-that-moves fad; I find it abhorrent and don't want to be associated with it. For another, the battle in my head continues to a certain extent and I still feel a kind of panic whenever I identify myself as bisexual, even when I'm aware the response will probably be sympathetic, such as within the Women's Union. I feel particularly cowardly because at the present time I'm in a relationship with a man and not with a woman (though open to that possibility). In some ways coming out as bisexual has been harder for me than my original coming out into the supportive lesbian community--though not harder than coming out to my parents.

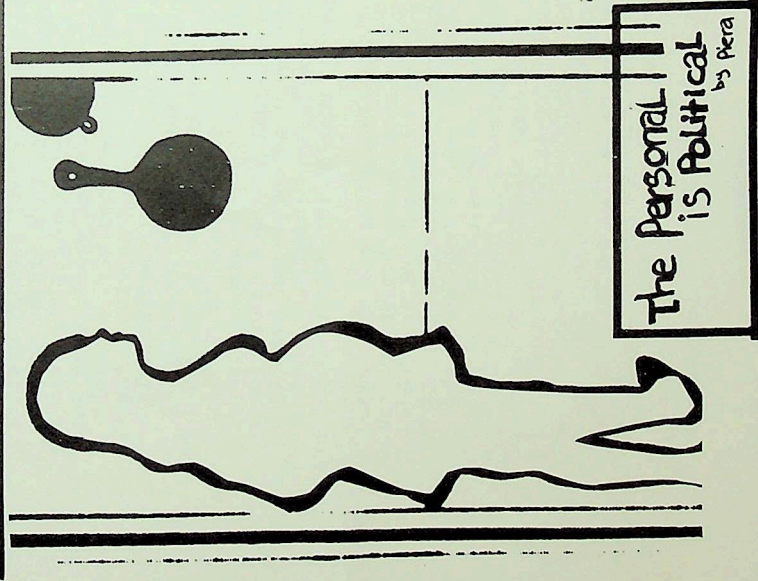
I see bisexuality not as a refusal to make a choice one way or the other or as a transitional fuzziness but as a third alternative with its own dynamics. I support both women who have chosen heterosexuality and those who have chosen to be lesbian. I also think that those who are unsure of where they're at need a supported space of their own. One of our greatest oppressions under capitalism has been to become alienated from our emotions and desires by being forced into roles not of our own choosing. Part of taking power over our lives as women means reclaiming our feelings. continued →



CONTINUED

women to act on the fact of lesbian oppression, since it is for our gayness that we are oppressed, not for our heterosexuality. It is necessary for us to put energy into the political and social struggles around lesbianism and not to fall back on a primarily straight identification. This tendency to fall back may be due in part to fears of encountering hostility from separatist sectors of the lesbian community; it is also no doubt due to our own heterosexism and must be struggled against.

I would be very interested in any responses to this article and am also interested in the possibility of meeting with other women in the Union who identify as bisexual. --Debbie Willis, 843-8430 or leave a message in the office. ✱✱✱✱



This article was written basically about the author's past and does not discuss her life (changes, experiences etc) over the last six months. This article was also written for the Outreach pamphlet and will appear in it, in a shorter more concise form.

THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL: To me this is one of the basic concepts of socialist-feminism. Before I understood this through experiences in my life, socialism and feminism / capitalism and sexism were unconnected for me and created contradictions in my life, in perspectives on life and consequently

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personal experiences of being...
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anger and bitterness towards men...
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and its causes...
give up relating to men...
depended on them to fulfill my emotional

kept me from moving...
I became a feminist...
personal experiences of being...
in relationships with men...
anger and bitterness towards men but I felt caught in a trap, for although I had made certain realizations about my oppression and its causes (basically men) I couldn't give up relating to men. All my life I had depended on them to fulfill my emotional

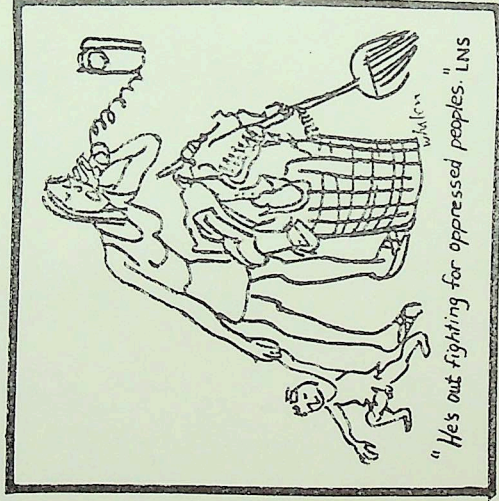


needs, women friends were always secondary. I felt like in my head I was a feminist but I was unable to put my realizations into their concrete practice. i.e. give up relationships with men. I felt incredibly guilty about this contradiction in my life. What I did was try and become a "free" independent woman by sleeping with several men and keeping emotional attachments at a minimum. I tried to "use" them and gain power in that way. This of course, did not work; I would inevitably end up feeling like the "used" one.

It was while I was in this painfully contradictory situation that I had my first radicalizing experiences in terms of coming to understand the nature of capitalism and the need for socialism. I was a student in archaeology on a dig in S. Italy, a very depressed poor agricultural area, and I was really hit hard with the difference between bourgeois academics and the real world. There we were trying to find some Neolithic village, employing peasants at cheap wages to dig around in the dirt for us, completely oblivious to the realities of their lives and the lives of most of the people in that community. In fact, they thought we were crazy to waste time and money digging around in the dirt.

I got to know one worker in particular who had a family of ten children, most of them couldn't go to school because they couldn't even afford shoes,; their mother

to get to the bottom of the situation. I became a member of the Women's Liberation Movement. I had many experiences after this in Italy which strengthened me in the belief of the unjustness of this profit-motive dehumanizing alienated society. But in all these experiences I fought for the poor and oppressed (peasants and workers) who although I identified with had very little to do with my life and my past experiences as a white American middle class woman.



I had also been painfully conscious of the sexism which existed even in these left movements. I had met women revolutionaries who denounced feminism as bourgeois and yet were incredibly oppressed and fucked over in their personal lives by men. I was very sensitive to this sexism because I was directly oppressed by it, but how did it fit in with my being a socialist, a revolutionary?

Maybe it was then that I began to understand the split people make between their personal private life and their public political life. I understood it because I was in a relationship with a "revolutionary" and because I could see the same things happen all around me, happening to women everywhere. I experienced and I could see male "revolutionaries" devote their political life to fighting capitalist oppression and exploitation, and these same "comrades" sexually exploiting women or coming home and expecting their girlfriends to have dinner ready. They could be the most reactionary piggy oppressive privileged people in the privacy of their personal life and it didn't have any connection with their beliefs in the political realm. Even in the so called "political" arena I saw how men overshadowed their women constantly how women were relegated to "women's work",

having to try twice as hard since they had a double amount of invisible work. Women still had to worry about their looks feeling like that was one way they could gain acceptance in the male dominated movement.

I looked alot at my mother's life. She give up her life for marriage, having children because she was freakin' out and that was the thing to do. Her spirit, creativity broken completely by day in day out housework, children, husband, mental institutions, an alcoholic for ten years. I also examined my mother-in laws life. She was an old Italian woman who had broken her back raising her only son, sacrificing everything, living her life thru her husband and son. We use to wash all the clothes by hand (no machines) She would even iron the hankersheirts and underwear. She had to take pride in the only work society allowed her to perform. Her husband would come home complaining of his hard day at work and how she just got to sit around the house and listen to the radio. He was so used to seeing the spotless kitchen, the meals prepared from scratch, the clean ironed clothes, that he had no idea of the hours of work that went into everything. That competely blew my mind.

Women like me, who were supposedly liberated from bourgeois values, who had become "comrades", what a joke! In our personal lives, relationships, sexuality, we got the same double standard, the same oppression as our mothers, as do most women. I began to realize that fighting capitalism is not just intellectually allying oneself with the working class but it means looking at our own lives as women and the way women are specifically oppressed by capitalism; sexism.

I had been working with a group who put out a newspaper for "working women". That meant women who worked outside the home. It was as if the only valid revolutionary way to work around women's oppression was to look at women only at the point of production. As if that was a working women's only reality. It became clear to me that a new way of looking at women's oppression had to be formulated (Dalla Costa). It wasn't just a matter of getting women into production, they were in it already!

It is the so called personal life that women have been defined and shaped by. We have been locked into the private sphere, a whole reality which was considered almost outside the reaches of capitalist relations. It is in this area that we first become stifled, our sexuality denied us. This is what shapes our lives. This is political and we must make it explicitly so by organizing as women to fight the specific form of oppression capitalism has for us.

SUMMER WISHES WINTER DREAMS

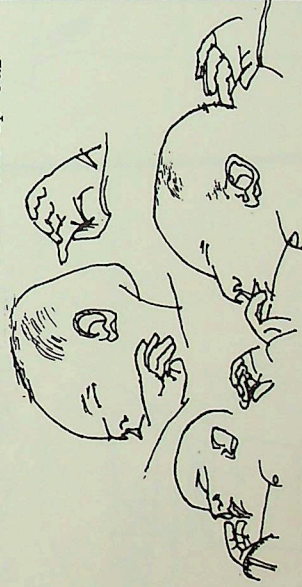
text of the first
Broadside from the
Children's Group

Summer vacation for most parents is no vacation at all. Parents don't get a three month release from work (be it housework or paid work). For most kids summertime means freedom from school. While there's not much they have to do, there's not much they can do. Going back to nature is no simple task; it's a drive or a bus ride to a crowded public park or beach. For these three months, while school is out, parents ALONE shoulder the responsibility of their children's disappointment and anger (as well as their own guilt) when they have to say No. "Summer time is fun" is often just another burden for parents.

There are some services set up for children in the summer. Information about these resources tends to get lost in the fistful of papers that come home with kids daily from the public schools. (**On the broadside, programs were listed - for Berkeley in one set of the broadside and for North and West Oakland in another set. The list included full-day programs, morning programs and afternoon programs)

WHAT DO WE HAVE A RIGHT TO?

We have a right to much more than what's available here. Places that offer relaxation and sunshine are scarce. We have a right to EASY access to what's left of the great outdoors. We have the right to vacations that don't eat up our



Blanche Sherwood

pay. The problem of summer is the problem of our whole lives. We just can't buy back in two weeks what is stripped out of our lives every day. We have to take jobs where we find them. We spend most of our time putting in hours so we can survive. The jobs are boring or dangerous or frustrating, and our paychecks don't even meet the rising cost of living. If we work as housewives, we never even see a paycheck. For those who can't find work, the state makes people go through humiliating waits and endless forms for less than anyone can live on. The quality of life we all deserve is reserved for very few. Our homes, promised to be a haven, are often in reality the battleground between overworked parents and frustrated children. Women are expected to take care of everybody else's needs and keep smiling, even if they work 8 hours a day outside the home. We have a right to publicly funded day care and community programs. Individually we can do very little to obtain these rights. We can begin to change some things by working together right now, but ultimately real and lasting changes can't happen in a society organized like ours. We see women and children as part of a socialist movement to transform our society into one that will meet all of our needs as full human beings.



Muriel Block

LIMITATIONS

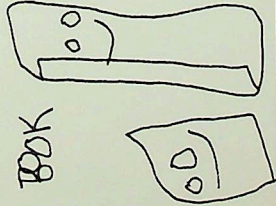
The empty spaces on the chart show the most glaring gaps in summer child care. There are NO AVAILABLE spots for pre-school children to receive low cost full day care in either Berkeley or Oakland. If you work a few days a week and need full day child care you're in trouble. There's just no program to meet your needs. And even if you do find a full day program, can you afford it? cont'd

Broadside, cont'd

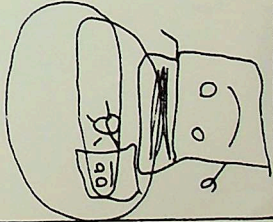
Behind the basic "what's available" information lie even more questions and problems. Why are so many of the sports activities limited to boys? Why is it sometimes assumed that only girls need to know how to cook? Why don't these programs teach about the struggles of working people, third world people, or women, or even teach useful skills like fixing machines or carpentry? Suppose you live in Berkeley and your kids or their friends have been bussed to school. Now it's summertime and the kids want to see their friends. Who's responsible? YOU ARE. Integration in this country is only officially endorsed during school hours, not for the rest of people's lives. Then there's the problem of public transportation. Take BART, for instance - for ten years we've paid to build a transit system. It doesn't run on weekends or nights; it certainly doesn't take discontented kids anywhere near a park. Suppose we get to these places, what do we find? Often already filled, inadequate programs with overworked, underpaid workers. What's left behind? A disgruntled community.

and of text

BOOK

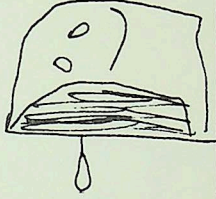


BOOK WISHED HE COULD BE THE BATTER! ALL THE TIME, BUT HE COULDN'T.



GARAGE

GARAGE AND BOOK PLAYED BASEBALL AT THE BASEBALL COURT AND GARAGE HAD THE BAT AND BOOK WAS THE PITCHER.



BROADSIDE FOLLOW-UP

As a follow-up for the broadside, the Children's Group had a public meeting at Oakland Technical High School library on July 18. We showed a film, "Janie's Janie" and talked about the Children's Project and the Women's Union with three new women and a returnee. Some Union members also came for the film and the early discussion. Two of the new women and the their children came as a direct result of the broadside.

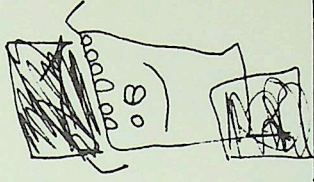
We felt that the purpose of the meeting--to follow through on the broadside--was well met. We thank Hank and Gene who provided childcare. We found the library a good meeting place and suggest it for other groups.***

About the book. My brother Peter is 5. He writes books about a character named Book who has friends like Garage, Drive-way, House, and Street-sweeper. The books are patterned more or less after books my 7-year-old sister writes about animals. There are no female characters in either kid's books. Neither of them play baseball, but all their characters do. The Army man refers to the soldiers who participated in the Special Olympics for the Retarded.

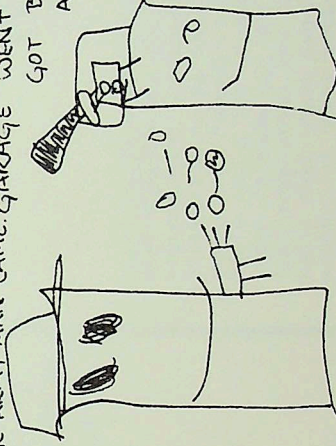
-BARBARA S.

GARAGE

GARAGE GOT TO MIDDLE BASE



THE ARMY MAN CAME. GARAGE GOT BOOK'S BLANKIE AND THEN THEY MADE A HOLE IN IT AND LOOKED OUT WITH A TELESCOPE



THE END

??? THE QUESTION WOMEN???

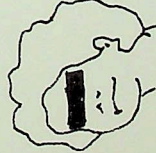
by E. B. & P.

WHAT DOES YOUR MOTHER THINK OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION?



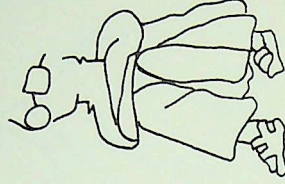
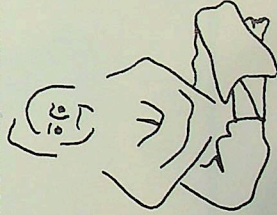
Barbara Deinhardt: I think that women's liberation and I in specific are threatening to her. She sees women's liberation as devaluing what she's done with her life. She sees her work at home and with her children as creative but thinks that the women's liberation movement does not recognize this work as creative. She doesn't think being a housewife and mother should be ruled-out. She sees me as doing things she would have liked to do but the options weren't there when she was young.

There's also the question of her volunteer work. She sees women's liberation as saying that this kind of work is not good. I don't think she understands that what women's liberation is attacking is not the women who do volunteer work but the ethic of volunteerism. She feels this is another instance of the kind of work she feels is creative being denied as such by the women's movement. In general, she agrees with the precepts of women's liberation and is glad about the course my life is taking but it's scary to her. I feel that women's liberation has brought my mother and I together. We talk about what it means in her life to be a woman, especially in relation to her going back to work.



Identified ROWU member: She is for it but doesn't understand all this anti-men stuff. It's not something to be extreme about...not this SCUM stuff or witch stuff. When I brought five women friends home to crash, she said, "Don't you get tired of being with just women."

Leanne Grossman: She's into it for her own self-interest as well as for women in general. She still does the dishes, housework, etc., but she went back to work and really got a sense of economic independence and self-worth from it. She has channeled herself into different groups, including women's groups.



-DS

Sandra Golvin: She thinks it's real far-out. She's been in a women's group. She feels real good about the way it has affected me. I think that when it comes to relating to another woman, that's where she would draw the line. She'd be less than enthusiastic about it.



CM

Carol Malley: She thinks she is liberated because she has made sure she is economically independent. She sees liberation as an individual thing. Each woman must demand economic independence. She's had a lot of support from her women friends and she doesn't realize that some women are really isolated and can't make these demands without the support of other women.

She says she really loves women and really needs to be with them once a week at her Yahtzee club.

Report/Analysis On:

STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR SEMINAR ON WOMEN
July R.

On Saturday, July 20, I went to the morning session of an all day seminar on increasing women's participation in unions and on questions around maternity and unions. It was the second seminar on women held by the State Fed as a result of Union Wage agitation beginning 3 years ago.

WHAT IS THE STATE FED?

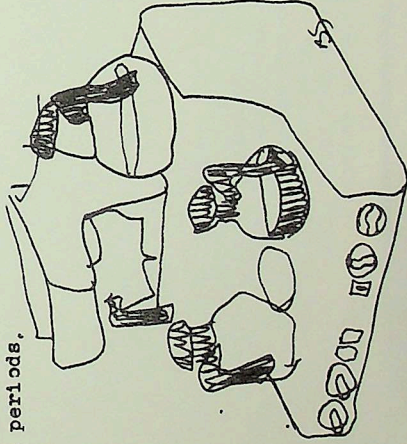
Primarily a legislative and educational arm of the national AFLCIO, the State Fed is a body of representatives from California AFLCIO unions that choose to belong and keep up dues payments. Recently it played an important role, after tireless pressure from Union Wage, in passing AB478, the bill that made possible the extension of protective legislation to men, and in getting an injunction against the violation of that law by the IWC (see articles on protective laws and the IWC in earlier newsletters). The State Fed also holds monthly seminars open to delegates from member unions; upcoming subjects are alcoholism, training in negotiating skills, and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

WHO CAME TO THIS SEMINAR?

Over 200 union women from all over the state registered. Attendance was excellent considering that the price of participation was \$5.00 and that the seminar was only advertised through the labor paper. Instead of opening the conference to working women or at least to all union women, the State Fed required that women be delegates of member unions. I heard about the seminar only through my CLUW (Coalition of Labor Union Women) chapter.

THE PROGRAM

The morning schedule included 4 speakers, all women union officials. Short open mike periods were sandwiched in between some of the speakers; there were no workshops or long discussion periods.



THE SPEECHES

The speeches contained some encouragement for women to get involved in political issues like the federal health insurance plan or the fight for a comprehensive childcare bill, and much encouragement to become active in unions. But the reasons women in general aren't presently active in unions and around political issues weren't discussed. No mention was made of the structural barriers to women's participation in the union movement. And without that analysis, strategic suggestions for increasing women's participation were necessarily inadequate. The speakers tended to hold women themselves responsible for our exclusion. Their suggestions for changing the present situation amounted to "each of us should try harder".

For instance, a speaker who was an official organizer described well problems of women feeling less important than men and less deserving of unionization. But she never talked about how those feelings are rooted in the fact that women have to do the least valued work in the society, or how unions duplicate the sexism we experience on the job. Her speech left me with the message that our main task is to change our self-conception.

In some of the speeches the recognition of sexism took a token form; "though I was lucky enough not to experience discrimination, we know that many women do." The speeches were like a course in how to be tough and persevere in the face of immense obstacles and in the absence of a movement that could fight some of those obstacles. That position reflects the reality of women who had to go it alone in the labor movement, but it can't be the basis for our own movement.

A different position was expressed by most of the women who spoke from the floor. As one woman declared, "We have to take issue with this blame-the-victim psychology. Women aren't apathetic, they're exhausted. Women don't fall ^{comt'd} →

to participate in union meetings because they're passive but because the union movement doesn't offer them a real alternative, because their kids are home waiting and because they can't afford to go to a meeting on their own time. Women will begin to participate when daycare is provided and when the unions begin to show an interest in these things."

The seminar itself provided a ready example of some of the structural barriers to women's participation in the union movement. At the start we were informed by the chair not only that discussion would be restricted to two periods of about 15 minutes each, but also that any resolutions were out of order. It was clear that the State Fed wanted to avoid, or at least control, the participation of the delegates. Their reasons were also clear; all the useful suggestions about how the labor movement could involve women by becoming more responsive to our needs came from the delegates in open mike periods, not from the planned speakers. Those suggestions may be helpful to us in the Women's Union both in developing our strategy with respect to the union movement and in learning what some union women define as important issues for an organization to address. For that reason I'm going to use the rest of this report to cover statements made in the open mike periods.

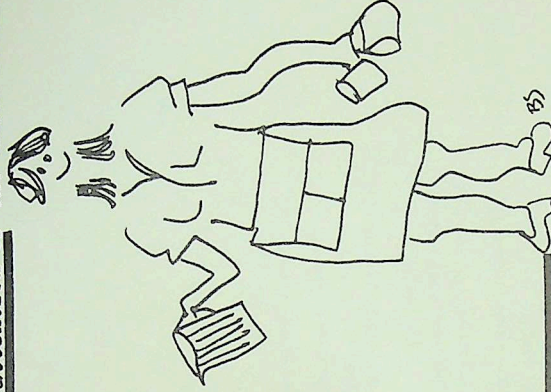
Women from the floor challenged the "every woman an organizer" refrain that recurred in the speeches, claiming that it perpetuated the volunteerism women have long been consigned to. One woman pointed out that working full time made it impossible for her to be an organizer. Lack of funds for organizers is a major obstacle for her union, which organizes clerical workers. She urged the State Fed to make good its commitment to organizing the unorganized by using some of its dues income to train and pay organizers for Calif. unions.

Another woman pointed out that the AFLCIO is paying little attention to the largest group of unorganized women workers in the state--domestic, childcare, and personal service workers.

One woman drew rousing applause after a statement that many of us wouldn't be here if it hadn't been for the women's liberation movement. "It's true that women in the movement have taken some anti-labor stands, but our job is to show those women what a pro-labor stand is, not to dismiss the whole movement."

Childcare was a major topic. Women were incensed that childcare wasn't provided at the seminar. Several speakers agreed that men should take responsibility for providing daycare for union meetings. Childcare was also discussed as a crucial political issue. A CWA member from So. Calif. asked for advice for her local in setting up a daycare center for its members.

On the subject of education, women challenged the State Fed to broaden its scope. Seminars like this one could be held for working people in general, for example. Public school education was also named as an important focus for the attention of the union movement.



Though a common message in the union officials speeches was "any woman can do what I did," it seemed unlikely that most women would get the training and the crucial support that these women mentioned getting from their families. Each of them had grown up in union families for the labor movement, to stand up for their own ideas, and to steel themselves for a rough life. The importance of early public school education came up in this context. Some women stressed the importance of teaching children, through the schools, to value and understand the labor movement. They urged the State Fed to take a more active role in changing the quality of public education.

Other people noted that many women are involved in that effort on the local level, working around school board elections and in PTA's. The State Fed could take notice of the ways women are already active, as teachers and parents, around the issues of education, and support their efforts.

Several people raised questions about women and leadership. The official speakers mentioned the need for more women leaders, but said nothing about evaluating the kind of leadership that now exists in the labor movement. Women from the floor refused to accept the view that women should be leaders just because they're women rather than because of the views they represent. One woman talked about the need to train women to be leaders with a different set of standards than the ones current in unions. Since the process of finding models for ourselves is a complex one, she proposed that labor papers include in each issue articles on historically important women in the labor movement. cont'd →

The central questions posed at the seminar--how do women become active?, and how can we organize the unorganized?--are questions we face in the women's union. Two different strategic directions emerged in answer to these questions. The official speakers' position could be summarized as "it's up to us and us alone to organize ourselves." The speakers were remarkable fighting women, but their speeches were directed for the most part toward individuals who have no political movement to back them up. They didn't mention that our lack of participation in the union movement is structurally enforced; they offered no direction for a movement that aims to change the situation of most women, not just a few. In contrast some of the union women who spoke from the floor began to describe a system of sexism in the structure of work and in the labor movement. They helped me imagine what a serious attempt to organize the unorganized might look like, and what it would mean to structurally encourage women's participation in the union movement. The seminar brought home to me the need for more activity based on these possibilities.

I found it very exciting to hear union women discuss concretely the ways sexism effect working women, children, and men. The existence of CLUW, which "aims to bridge the gap between women's fight for equality and the labor movement," to quote from the CLUW leaflet handed out at the seminar, makes it a little more legitimate for women to raise issues of sexism in the context of the union movement. In contrast there is still no place for us to discuss with large numbers of working women the fundamentally capitalist character of the union movement, and the movement's consequent failure to respond in the needs of working people for changes in the structure of the economy and work. We in the women's union need to begin to provide that context, to have those discussions, to raise those questions in a more public way. * * *



love song to myself
 lightly ever so lightly
 rightly ever so rightly
 tell yourself you love you
 nicely even nicely
 touch your body precisely
 tell yourself you love you
 when i look in the mirror
 and i see my face
 now i hardly ever
 hope to find another one to take its place
 sweetly ever so sweetly
 neatly ever so neatly
 tell yourself you love you
 gently ever so gently
 came as ever so wently
 tell yourself you love you
 have i told you lately that i love you?
 tell yourself you love you
 Patti Levi

The Outreach Group
 invites
 you
 to
 tea



and
 crumpets
 (and a little bit of
 business)

-54

RED ROVER, RED ROVER SEND THE
 The Red Rovers are alive and well as is exemplified in the above reproduction of the July Outreach Red Rover invitation. We hope that Red Rovers continue as they provide a space for us to get to know people in focus groups other than our own, to talk to other women in the Union about our personal lives, and (of high ranking priority) to have a good time.



DS

F + KIP'S + ME

Let me tell you some of what I've learned about Kip's Charbroil in the last three years.

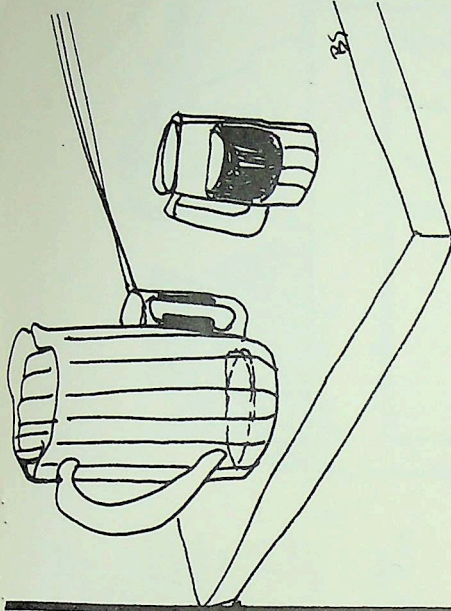
The worst job is waitressing. When I'm a counter woman downstairs, there's a customer separating me from any hassling customer, and working right beside me are one or two other women I can call on for help. Waitressing upstairs I'm all alone; I leave the other employees 10-30 feet behind and plow thru tables crowded with drunken men. When I come back to my coworkers, I'm coming back to get beer from a bartender who's my age, thinks he's a stud, and pouts if I don't flirt when I ask for a pitcher. Or I could be coming back to wait for the cook's helper, another male my age, to give me change from my customer's check.

If I'm rude to the customers I don't get any tips. If I'm not rude, I run the risk of having some jerk offend me with his drunken attempts at flirtation. Either way I feel guilty - "I wish I weren't short with the customers," or "I wish I hadn't let him get away with that remark which still burns me up 4 hours later."

The women I work with don't make me feel any better. The cook doesn't want me loafing around the pizza kitchen talking to her (that's wasting the Boss' money); she sends me off to do the alienating work of folding napkins. The other waitresses let me down by being on the make, by flirting with the bartenders and cook's helpers, by competing for "best-looking Kip's waitresses" (many will come in on their off nights to show off their non-waitress wardrobe and hair-dos), and by fighting over tips with me.

The women customers also let me down. I'm relieved to see them; I'm friendly; I don't ask to see their ID's when they ask for beer; and I try not to be disappointed when they invariably don't tip. But I am terribly disappointed when they let themselves be picked up by the same creeps who have been hassling me for the last hour.

You'll be relieved to know it's not that bad waitressing. Some women leave tips, some customers are understanding, some male employees aren't studs, and some cooks and waitresses crack jokes and make the job fun, whenever you can run into them. But you get the idea that the job can get really bad, bad enough for me to hate it in general.

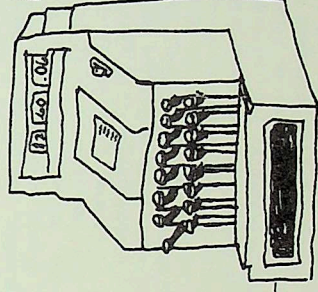


BS

I made individual attempts to avoid waitressing. I stayed downstairs working as a counter-girl (\$2/hr college girl who works short shifts at the lunch hours, etc.) long after I was old enough to move upstairs and get \$2/hr & tips. I asked for and received a 25%/hr raise after the first year. The next year he made me the upstairs lunch-hour cashier. A guy doing that job earned \$2.50 an hour and was considered a bartender. I asked to be paid bartender pay and receive bartender's raises. He agreed to the raise, and then realized he was conceding to a charge of sex-discrimination and backed down. At first he said bartenders deserved the extra money, not because they worked harder (it's recognized the \$2/hr bus-boys work harder), but because they were more responsible; they handled cash and checked ID's. Since I also handled cash and checked ID's whenever I waited, he retreated from that position to the old standby of lifting boxes being too heavy a job for me to legally handle. I didn't get the raise.

cont'd ->

PLEASE
PAY
HERE



BS

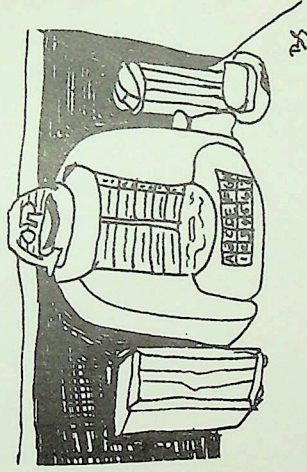
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I asked if I could get a cook's helper job which would mean no contact with the customers and unionscale pay, \$3.50/hr. The job always went to former bartenders, guys who were Cal students, like me, and had worked there at least six months less than me. When I asked him, he said no, he didn't need me. "I've already promised the next job to Mike Richardson." (I'd been there a year longer than he had) "You couldn't handle the fights upstairs at night." (Women call the cops, men prolong the fights by joining them) "You make more as a waitress anyway." (I'd make even more as a prostitute).

At Kip's it seems impossible for a college girl to do anything but waitress or quit. I work now as a waitress.

Another time I could talk about the race, age, sex, and class differences that make it hard for us to think, much less organize, collectively, and the guilt I felt for not doing workplace organizing.

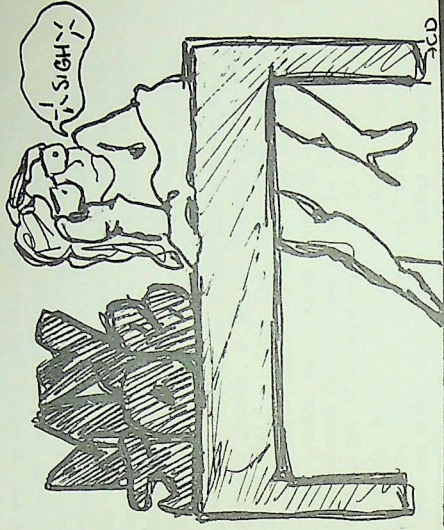
-BARBARA S. *****



METAMORPHOSIS INTO BUREAUCRAT

Marge Pierce

My hips are a desk.
 From my ears hang chains of paperclips
 Rubber bands form my hair.
 My breasts are wells of mimeograph ink
 My feet bear casters.
 Buzz. Click
 My head
 Is a badly organized file.
 My head is a switchboard
 where crossed lines crackle.
 My head is a wastebasket
 of worn ideas.
 Press my fingers
 and in my eyes appear credit and debit
 zing. Tinkle.
 My navel is a reject button.
 From my mouth issue cancelled reams
 Swollen, heavy, rectangular
 I am about to be delivered
 of a baby
 xerox machine.
 File me under W
 because I wonce
 was
 a woman.



One of the problems of the Women's Union, one which is a concern of everyone, is the lack of connection between the Union and the rest of people's lives, especially people's work. There are no forums for discussion around what we do all day, how we make our living, what we are concerned with most of the time. In many cases, especially with women in the Union there is a great distinction between the kind of life we live outside of work and the kind of life we live from 8 to 5. The contradictions between work and the Union are immense. We need to in some way help each other deal with this split in our lives, to connect up our politics with our job, to overcome some of the alienation we feel. The first step is to start talking about what we do and how we feel doing it. There is a lot of variation in the type of work women in the Union do, from researchers and lawyers to gardeners and maids. I am an office worker, and have been doing alot of thinking about the kind of work that is, and the way women are treated in the office. This article is being written on the job; it is just a rambling about some of the things I want to share and discuss.

I work as a Kelly Girl, a temporary office worker doing typing, filing receptionist work. I do it because I need to support myself, yet haven't been able to find a permanent interesting job. After too many experiences in horrible fulltime jobs I realized I could not stand to work full time at something so boring and alienating. It drained all my energy, dampened my spirit, blocked my creativity, and generally bummed me out. I found I did nothing except work; I stopped playing music, reading or writing. After a week or so I dropped into a kind of stupor, wanting only to watch TV or in some way react instead of create. I've worked full time as a "mail girl" teller, receptionist, "file girl" and more. Now I do the same work, with only part of my life taken away by it instead of the whole thing. That has happened through this arrangement, however, is an intensification of the contradiction in my life. For a week solid I will be involved in Union work and activities, sunshine and exercise study and creativity. Then suddenly one Monday morning I awake too early and put on tights (you can always tell someone who is playing this game by the tights, the only way to hide hairy legs) bra and dress, and go to a new office to fill a space. It is jarring experience with only one rationale, the little money I get to keep me going for another few weeks. (Until such time as I find

cont'd



cont'd

a paying job doing what I like, I'll continue to work marginally for money and do what I love for free.) I hate to sound melodramatic, but it is often like walking into another world, some would say the real world. The day is spent in an unnatural light, in rooms where the windows don't open, yet which are too cold from refrigeration (I get all my colds this way). Most workers spend the whole day inside, even staying inside for lunch. Usually the men, salesmen and such, are able to come and go into the sunshine as they please. The desks usually face away from each other - in rows - with my desk (receptionist) in front. We can't face each other while we work. The men usually sit in private offices off to the sides - they often have the windows. Each of the men has his "gal" out front. Offices are modern and well lit, quiet - except for the constant din of copy machines, typewriters, phone bells, intercom buzzer musak (the worst part of it all), and file cabinet slamming. Offices are very clean - you know some man or woman came in and emptied garbage cans for a buck. These are the qualities of office life that hide the terribleness, that cushion the work. Workers can forget the drudgery in their work when there is no physical pain, or loud deafening machines, or hot warehouses; where they get "free" coffee, and sometimes donuts on Fridays, and where their hands stay clean all day. Pleasant environments have certain passifying effects - and they are very successful. A clerk typist can think she is in a better situation than another woman who works an assemblyline, even though the factory worker makes three times as much money and has more job security than she does.

Besides the physical setup, the thing that hits me in the gut when I walk in is the social hierarchy and the relationship between men and women. I am always referred to as the girl, the gal, the young lady the little lady. (Granted I am short, but there are limits). No one asks or uses my last name, I often stop saying it myself. The other women are also the "girls", there are never any message boxes for the women, except perhaps for the bookkeeper. I'm sure you have heard all this many times before - that the men are called Mr. so-and-so and the women are called by their first names only. But when a 50 year old woman is referred to by a 30 year old man as the girl, I can't help it, it pisses me off no matter how many times I hear it. There are countless examples of sexism in the office, from women only on coffee duty lists, to men who need a file yet refuse to touch a file cabinet. Yesterday at this office, a man came up to me around ten to five, and said can you type

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little girl! I said yes, and he gave me a speed letter form and stood over me and dictated a single line and the address and told me to make up the envelope, all the while he stood and watched. There is definitely men's work and women's work, and the lines are strictly drawn; although in some offices of TV companies, advertising, media and other younger, more "hip" businesses, there is a breakdown of roles happening. But for the most part, in conservative places like banks, insurance agencies, etc, there is no attempt made to change anything.

My usual job - receptionist - PBX - was created partially out of overloaded work on certain secretaries, partially because many men don't want to answer their own phones. I am the protective shield around them, I lie for, look for them, keep track of them, deal with their customers when they don't want to themselves. I have never seen a man in an office answer his own phone first even if he is sitting idle. I speak of this job of receptionist with not a little anger, because it is the ultimate in office absurdity; there is no creativity, no productive work, no organic basis for the job other than making other workers seem more important than they really are. It is Public Relations, and a receptionist is hired for her manner and her voice, not her ability. It is the peak of Office Decadence, conspicuous clerical consumption, unnecessary extravagance. The funny thing, though, it becomes a necessary extravagance after a while. I realize that receptionist is both the most useless and the most useful to the office. The whole office learns to depend on the "girl up front" to field the calls and keep track of whereabouts. In keeping with a certain law of business management of which I have forgotten the name, the job creates a space which then must always be filled, and becomes essential.

Which brings me to the point (I know you have been waiting). It seems to me, and I speak only from feelings, that so much office work is just so much hype. The bureaucracy of expanded capitalism has grown like a monster, creating whole strings of businesses whose sole function is to connect up one point in the line of commerce with another, with no production involved. There are companies I have worked for whose sole reason for being is to receive orders for a product and sent them to the warehouse for shipment. And in those offices hundreds of women spend their time typing and filing invoices in quadruplicate and refiling four stacks of invoice payments in four different places, keeping records of transactions which take place 50 levels away from them on either side. It is amazing how cont'd



-CD-

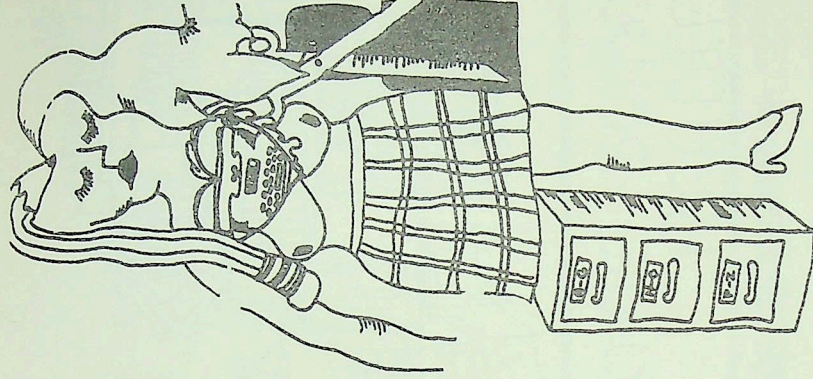
many women are employed only to do the paperwork for a system based on the simple act of buying and selling. One of the largest employers of women office workers are the insurance companies - an industry having no basis in production at all, but created to sell as a wager the security people have a right to receive from the state. It is an industry owing its existence and massive growth to the negligence of the capitalist state. Capitalism keeps on expanding and creating non-essential industries which hire thousands of workers to fill non-essential tasks. This causes a very strange dynamic: On the one hand, we are taught that our jobs are important. We must be grateful to get them, do our jobs well and care about the company. When we act like we don't give a shit about the company or about what we are doing, we get fired. On the other hand, the non-essential nature of most office work is apparent in the lack of career identification, the temporary feeling often used as an argument against pension plans and such, and the belief that office work is not a point of production and need not be a focus for organizing unions. Therefore, most of the workers in offices remain unorganized, with low pay and no job security or benefits, other than what the company provides for a cost.

There will always be new office buildings going up, to be filled with the thousands of women flooding the job market these days. For most women in typing pools and receptionist desks, it is the only place they can find work. A place has been created to accommodate and control the overflow of workers by making new work with little meaning. I'm getting a little philosophical, I know, and my theory may be bullshit, but it stems from a sincere attempt to find out what the characteristics are of office work that have deterred its organization. There is a lot of research to be done on the history of office work and the statistics of office work today, in order to figure out our strategy towards organizing and politicizing the women who work there. It is important to deal with the psychological aspects of the job, to express our feelings about working, to share our experiences. Write something to; the newsletter, a description of your job, how you feel in it, what you do, what your physical surroundings are like, the number of people you work with, the relationship between men and women, employer, employee, and so forth. We have a lot to learn from each other, and it will be a big help for each of us in dealing with our contradictions and alienation.

Cathy Dreyfuss ****

FOR RENT

Woman looking for woman to share funky old fashioned flat with high ceilings on Carquinez Strait in Crockett. (Crockett is a small town 18 miles north of Berkeley; 25 minutes by car.) Crockett is nestled in the rolling, underdeveloped hills of Contra Costa County. House (flat) is on quiet street. From front yard can see cattle grazing on hills, across water and boats passing by.
Have a fruitful, organic vegetable garden. Am a non-smoker.
\$70 a month (utilities included). First and last month's rent; \$35 deposit.
Ph. 787-2208 or leave message for Charlene at 841-3173.



! KPFA STRIKE !

The paid and unpaid staff of KPFA radio went out on strike last Monday night... the vote to strike was unanimous after nine paid staff members were laid off and the third world program producer fired. The main demand is for the immediate firing of station manager Roger Pritchard who the strikers feel has mismanaged the station financially and failed to implement the affirmative action hiring policy of KPFA.

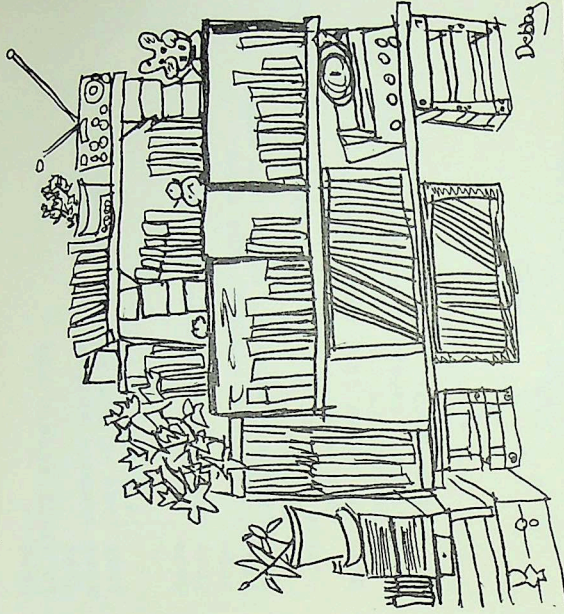
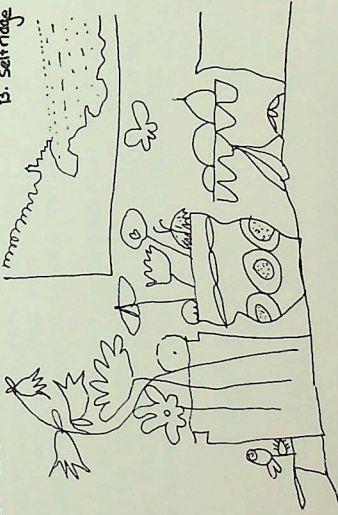
So far, both the local advisory board and the national Pacifica Foundation board have failed to negotiate with the striking staff. The station was taken off the air on Monday by the staff and until Roger Pritchard is out only scab labor will get KPFA back on the air. KPFA listeners can support the strike by joining the strikers on the picket line and by writing to the President of the National advisory board and urging him to fire Pritchard and negotiate with the staff at KPFA. Write to: Ed Goodman c/o Pacifica Foundation, 1050 Park Ave., NYC, NY 10028, and be sure and send a copy of your letter to KPFA strike headquarters at 2022 Blake St., Berk. (same address as us)

Dear Newsletter,

I took a Breakaway course on Liature by women two years ago. It lasted eight months and started me reading a lot of stuff by women. I think a lot of us in the union are readers. It would be nice to read and discuss together.

I've read a lot of Shirley Jackson's books. She writes about women, women in woman/woman relationships (the relationships that Virginia Woolf says are missing from men's works), women in female environments like kitchens, gardens, houses. She writes about mob violence and derangement and the supernatural. I don't like the supernatural stuff. I can only recommend two of her novels: We Have Always Lived in the Castle (my favorite) in which the orderliness of the life of two sisters is measured by the orderliness of their kitchen and pantry, and everything is upset by the arrival of a male cousin. The Haunting of Hill House is more supernatural but has a heroine I love who associates her social success with her clothing; "I told a joke, everyone laughed, and I'm wearing new red shoes."

Carson McCullers is another author I like. I felt ripped off that I had to discover for myself that she was a lefty lady. Her themes are loneliness, feeling different from the rest of society, and the inequality of love relationships; her setting is the South. My favorite works are The Ballad of the Sad Cafe (about a village's most powerful figure and how she loses everything when she gets involved in a love triangle), and Member of the Wedding (in which a young girl spends an agonizing summer in the company of her black housekeeper and five-year-old cousin while she tries to figure out how she fits into the world). The Heart is a Lonely Hunter was her first novel; it's about the loneliness of five different characters, two of whom are fervent Marxists. The Marxists feel terrible about their alienation from the masses, and Carson McCullers has a lot of Marxist analysis in the book, coming from their mouths; it's interesting but not real successful (the other themes of the book are much more powerful).
B. Seafidge



SOME SUMMER READING

The Man Who Loved Children, Cristina Stead
1940, Avon Books.

Story of an African Farm, Olive Schreiner
1800's

Tell Me a Riddle, Tilli Olson

The Awakening, Kate Chopin, 1899
Capricorn Books

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya
Angelou, 1969, Random House

Gemini, Nikki Giovanni, 1971, Viking Press

Marthe Quest (and the next three of the
Children Of Violence series), Doris
Lessing, 1952

Brown Girl, Brownstone, Paule Marshall
1959, Avon books

Thirty Stories, 1946 Kay Boyle

The Dollmaker, Harriet Arnow

Rubyfruit Jungle, Rita Mae Brown

Small Changes, Marge Piercy

Yesterdays Lessons, Sharon Isabel

Portrait of a Marriage, Nigel Nicolson

Bonnie's Rape Song

© Bonnie Lockhardt

Bad vibes when I'm out for a walk
my nighttime is filled up with fear.
Feel like some deer that is being stalked
in some illegal time of the year.

Rape is a word that seldom is heard
in rooms filled with men who make laws.
They do it each day to the world in a way:
they ain't into endin' the cause.

Rape
Fall, winter, summer, spring:
Rape
It just keeps happening.
The climate may change, but the threat
still remains the same.

In fall when there's leaves on the ground
one crackles behind you, you jump;
you hallucinate shapes and sounds,
see knives in the hands of a stump.

The wintertime moon has grown fat;
the rainin' has stopped for the night.
You fancy a stroll, but regret
you'd just rather wait till it's light.

Rape is a symptom of contempt for women;
men are taught from the time they are boys.
Keeps us in when we want out and fills us
with self doubt
and makes our lives hard to enjoy.

Rape
Probably happened right on this street:
Rape
Never too cool the cold or too hot the heat
to keep them from prowling and fouling up
our sisters lives.

It's spring, the world grows green and lush;
you walk at a lazy pace;
you feel something move in a bush;
by the time you're home you've run a race.

The summertime sun warms your back
sunbathing in your backyard;
yet even here you can't relax,
there's no place you can be off guard.

Rape is a crime happening such a long time
we're supposed to accept it as fact;
but sisters I swear it we're not gonna bear it
no more now, we're gonna fight back.

PEOPLE WHO PUT MORE THAN THEIR ~~24~~ INTO THIS

ISSUE ARE: CATHY D., DEBBY W., BARBARA S., PELL,

ELLEN B., LINDA

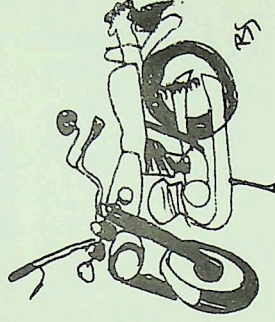
Rape
In every season you

Rape
meet sisters who've been through
that fear of not knowing if your life
is going to end.

Rape
They say women's nature brings pain:

Rape
explain it like sunshine and rain,
But sisters I swear it we're not gonna
bear it

'cause when we discover our strength in each
each other
solution seems long range but we're gonna
see change
my sisters I swear it we're not gonna bear
it no more.



Subscribe to the
Newsletter!

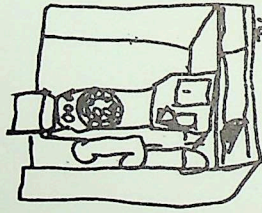
\$6.00 a year

Send money and address (with zip)
to 2022 Blake St.
Berkeley, CA. 94704
(checks to: Oak Women's Union)

If you're a union member,
you dues pay you sub.
We only ask you up-to-
date address, you comments,
and your contributions (articles,
graphics, calendar events, jokes,
financial support, whatever).

→ 8¢ (WITH INFLATION)

CALENDAR



Office Hours:

* Call at these hours for p.c. reports and news.

MON: 10-1

THURS: 10-1

FRI: Ph: 548-6093

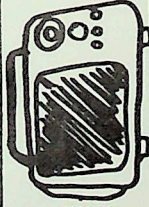
NASTY NOTE FROM NEWSLETTER

Aug. 3 - Membership Meeting on the four (six?) month plan. Washington School (61st and Shattuck) 9-1, Saturday.

Aug 17 -Membership Meeting to select a new Planning Committee.

WOMEN: BRAVE POWERFUL & STRONG:

An exhibit by members of the Women's Art Center. At Scott's 10 Sanchez St, S.F. Exhibit open thur August 8; 6 to 9 pm.



WOMEN'S PROGRAMS ON OPEN STUDIO (KQED Channel 9 6:00 PM)

Mon. Aug 5- Women's Art Center about women artists and the S.F. art center

Mon. Aug 12-Songwriter at Work; Melvina Reynolds

Mon. Aug 19-Voices Part I
dramatic reading of Susan Griffin's poem

Tues. Aug 20-Voices Part II

Mon. Aug 26-Abelante Mujer
About women in the spanish-speaking community

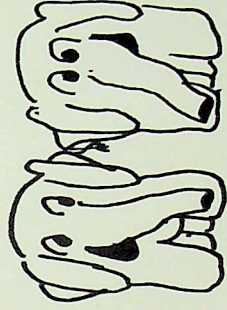
New scheduling policy for OPEN STUDIO

Monday- women's program
Tuesday- variety
Wednesday- children
Thursday- art and culture
Friday- public affairs

It's too hard for us to lay-out the news-letter when articles keep coming in all states of readiness after we start laying-out. From now on we want you to see us less like the high-school teacher you gave your late papers and more like your sisters. What we get after the deadline we will save for the following issue. We haven't kept to that deadline before because it would have meant a three page newsletter, but September's will be that short if you don't plan ahead. Please plan ahead.

A woman and two men are looking for another socialist-feminist woman to live in a house together in Oakland. Contact Valentine, 658-5763 or at work, 864-2000, ext. 247

JOKE



-54

Question! How do you tell a girl elephant from a boy elephant?

Choose one: a) the girl elephant is in the women's union.
b) the girl elephant wears a pink angora sweater.
c) none of the above.
d) all of the above.

--submitted by Piers who claimed elephant jokes weren't sexist or racist. See her for the answer.

* August issue of Flexus has a calendar which announces women's events in the Bay Area for Aug.

F. 95
Unit 8

the BERKELEY/OAKLAND

WOMEN'S UNION

a socialist-feminist organization

PUBLIC MEETING for WOMEN

AUGUST 26 ~ WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE DAY

to celebrate the history of the early Women's Movement,
Women's liberation and the formation of our Union; and to

Confront
Rising Prices
and the growing
Economic Crisis

Women are tired of being used as pawns in a consumer game while
the country wallows in political corruption and crisis.

As Socialist-feminists we in the Women's Union believe that our
struggle is against both sexism and capitalism. We are
working together to plan a strategy and to confront the economic
crisis that all women are facing; as wage earners, women who work in
the home, mothers, we are recipients and consumers.
only through our unity can we create a society which meets our needs
as we define them.

COME and PARTICIPATE

for more information call Anita-841-8627 or Carol 549-0658

AUGUST 26 1:30-4:30 UNITAS HOUSE

SUNDAY

bancroft & college

child care provided