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KALEIDOSCOPE ONE

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a feminist quarterly

KALEIDOSCOPE

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Quest, a feminist quarterly is seeking long-term, in-depth feminist political analysis and ideological development. *Quest* is not an end in itself, but a process leading to new directions for the women's movement possibly including such concrete forms as regional or national conferences, a national organization, or a political party. We, the editors, are all women who have been in the movement for several years and have reached a point where each answer leads us to more questions. We have been through various ideological and activist metamorphoses and end up feeling that our overall perspective is still not adequate. Where has the struggle brought us? Closer to real economic, political, and social power for women? Closer to an end of the exploitation of and violence against women? Closer to self-determination for all women? We do not have all the answers ourselves and expect that feminists across the country and the world will contribute to this process of seeking.

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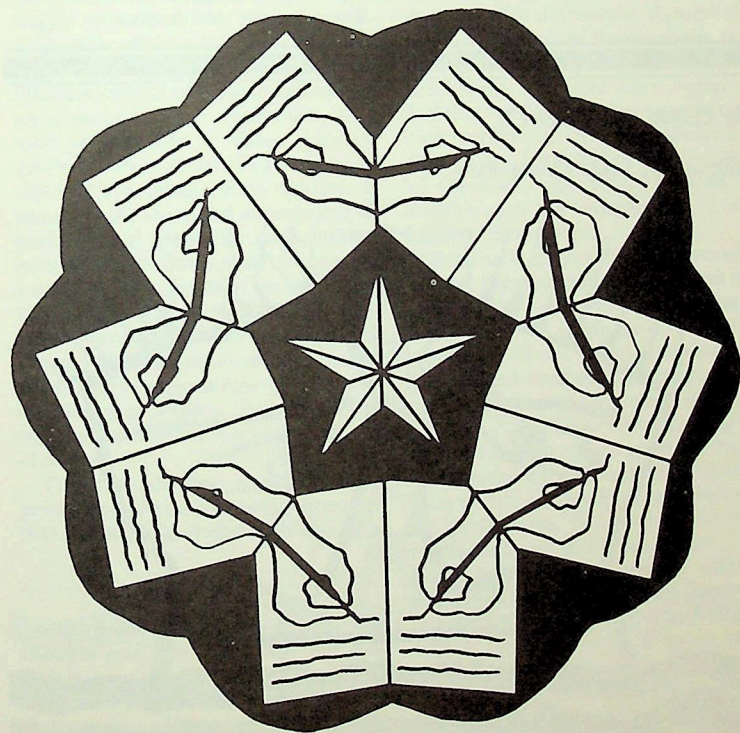
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graphic by Alexa Freeman

Beyond *Either/Or*: Feminist Options

By CHARLOTTE BUNCH

graphics by Leslie Montgomery



The time has come to reassess the experience of the women's movement, particularly with the left, and to reassert a direction for feminism which is both radical and independent, and which integrates the political, cultural, economic, and spiritual dimensions of women's lives. I have chosen to call this direction *nonaligned feminism*. Although the issues discussed here affect all its segments, I am primarily concerned here with the radical portion of the women's movement—by which I mean those feminists who are critical of all patriarchal systems, including U.S. capitalism, who tend to feel alien to those systems, and who are not satisfied only with their reform. Much of my analysis is based on the ideas and experiences of both radical feminists and lesbian feminists who have most frequently expressed this position in the U.S. However, here I have chosen a new term—nonaligned feminism—in order to avoid the limitations of existing labels and to suggest new grounds for defining a movement that incorporates the experiences of a wider variety of women.

The need for such a reassessment grows out of the increasing pressure that feminists (as individuals and as a

All of my work is aided by the thought and help of friends, but this article in particular could not have been written without the help and support of the Quest staff - most specifically Beverly Fisher, Alexa Freeman, Judith Jones, Mary-Helen Mautner, Sidney Oliver - and that of Bertha Harris.

movement) have experienced over the past few years to align ourselves—once and for all—either with or against the left, either as “socialists” or as “reformists” since this mentality recognizes no other options. And even if we resist that dichotomy, we encounter another one: that between “political/economic” feminists and “cultural” or “spiritual” feminists. Presenting them as mutually exclusive options, this dichotomy distorts the function of each of these spheres and ignores their interrelatedness. As a result, many feminists have begun to feel that we do not quite fit anywhere: that there is little defined space for the pursuit of a feminism which is critical of the U.S., very much engaged in politics, and yet independent of the socialist movement.

But I have no intention of succumbing to these choices as defined by others. Although we are not organized around a single goal, I believe that many (if not most) feminists feel limited and confined by pressures to conform to one or the other of those options. And I believe that now, perhaps more than ever, we must resist pressure for a final declaration of allegiance and continue to pursue the fullest implications of a nonaligned but committed and active feminism.

The pressure to choose one side or another of these dichotomies does not come from only one side or any single source, but is the result of many factors: our lack of answers in some situations, since a feminist analysis of patriarchy as it affects all aspects of life is still incomplete; women's doubts about our ability to create and effect a new political direction, which often results in either a retreat from politics

or an acceptance of the older, better defined traditions of American reformism or socialism; legitimate but often immobilizing concerns about the race and class makeup of the movement, which paralyzes some white feminists with guilt; and finally, the difficulties of survival for independent feminists—since white men, whether left, right, or center, generally control most of the resources in our society, if we either align with one of them personally, or with their politics or remain in what they define as women's spheres, we are allowed greater access to those resources.

Under these pressures, the radical portion of the women's movement seems to be fragmenting into three dominant, and often mutually exclusive trends: socialist-feminism, political reformism, and cultural or spiritual separatism.* While each of these embodies important work, what is disturbing is their general tendency not only to denounce or ridicule the work of the others, but also to deny the necessity for an independent feminist framework that would integrate aspects of each and go beyond them to create a synthesized feminist politics revolutionary in its implications for all aspects of our lives.

In this article, I begin to explore some of the questions raised by this situation, primarily in terms of pressure to be pro- or anti-left. In particular, I propose to look at the concept of nonalignment and how it can be

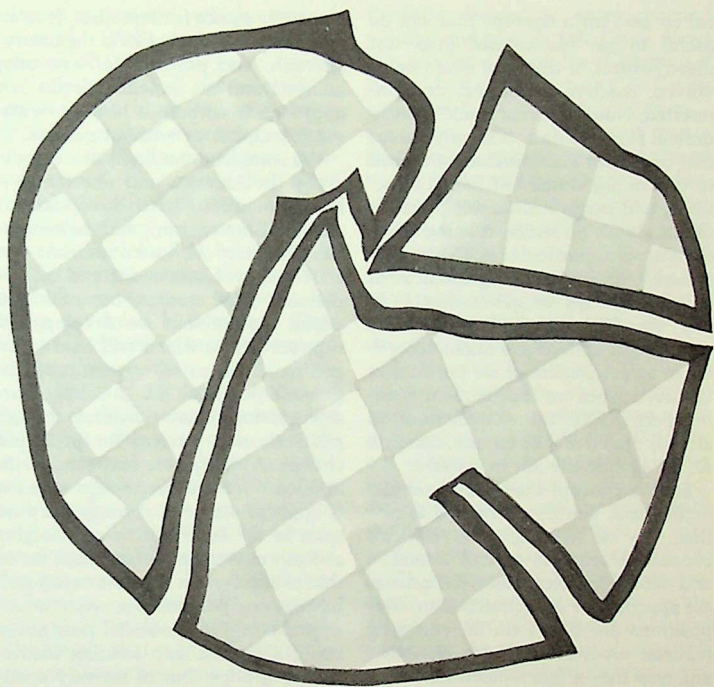
useful to feminists; to examine how feminists have dealt with this dichotomy over the past decade and how it is re-emerging today; and to describe how *Quest* functions as a nonaligned vehicle for political debate and analysis aimed at further developing a radical, nonaligned feminism.

The Concept of Nonalignment

The pressure to be for or against the "left" is neither new nor unique to the feminist movement. It reflects the polarity dominating our world for at least the past 30 years: capitalism vs. communism. In the 1950's, when this polarity was at its height—the cold war between "The Free World" and "The Iron Curtain"—many of the less powerful nations began to act to force open the vice squeezing them into allegiance to one or the other. In particular, leaders of some of the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa called the Bandung Conference in 1955, at which many of the "developing nations" worked together to establish their nonaligned status. As Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru proclaimed: "For anyone to tell us that we have to be camp followers of Russia or America or any country in Europe is not very creditable to our new dignity, our new independence, our new freedom, our new spirit."¹

The nonaligned nations were not always united with each other and did not create one single unifying ideology, but they did establish space outside the control of the two dominant poles (US/USSR), give legitimacy to the concept of nonalignment, and eventually alter the perception of world forces through the concept of

* *Cultural feminism and the women's spirituality movement are certainly different phenomena, but the separatist tendencies in both areas are similar. This is discussed further here in "The Feminist Dilemma Today" section.*



the "Third World." These efforts, along with the seismographic crack between Russia and China, made new alliances and new modes of development possible within the nonaligned countries, allowing them more political flexibility without, at the same time, making them irrelevant to, powerless against, or totally unaffected by the controls of the major power blocs.**

** While this polarity has diminished some in the past decade, its dominance is still evidenced in many world issues and was certainly a very

My purpose here is neither to detail the debates surrounding the nonaligned nations nor to propose that feminists are in an identical position. Rather, I want to establish an histori-

present conflict at the United Nations International Women's Year Tribunal in Mexico City, Summer, 1975. Feminists could gain from further study of the experience of nonaligned nations. A recent conference in Washington, DC, on "The Nonaligned Movement in World Politics Today" (Howard University, April 8-10, 1976), revealed that the concept is still evolving and has had varying degrees of political and economic viability in different contexts.

cal context for a concept that can be useful to us. Nonaligned does not mean neutral; it does *not* mean uninvolved, inactive, separated, or uninterested. Nonalignment is *not* a withdrawal from politics. It simply means that one is *not automatically* attached to one of the dominant lines or factions, and hence it does not preclude taking stands on issues, making coalitions around particular goals, or condemning or commending the actions of other groups or governments. In our context, nonalignment means simply that actions are taken according to an assessment of the particulars involved from an independent feminist perspective, rather than from an already stated and automatic decision for or against the left in general.

Such a concept may sound simple, or to some, simple-minded. It is neither. To be nonaligned is difficult because it requires careful attention and debate to determine what actions are appropriate in each situation. Our positions are based on an emerging feminist analysis of particular issues and how they affect women's interests and long-term feminist goals, rather than on pre-established approaches to each issue. For example, in the development of feminist theory, nonalignment requires that we study not only Marxism but many other theories critically, in order to learn where and how they can contribute to the development of a comprehensive feminist analysis. But we neither seek to force feminism into an existing (for example, Marxist) framework nor reject a given ideology out of hand, as having nothing to offer us.

Nonalignment is not solely a reaction to the left/anti-left pressures; it is

a *positive* stance for feminists. It is an affirmation of our belief in the future, strength, and potential of our own analysis and movement. We do not approach it without a history, without principles, or without politics.

We start from an analysis of patriarchy (in America and elsewhere)—how it manifests itself in capitalism, imperialism, racism, and heterosexism. We start with a commitment to start new processes and to end the oppression of all women, commitments which require that we develop and support efforts which will lead to an end to all forms of oppression. Our greatest potential lies in taking ourselves seriously as a powerful, though relatively new nucleus for profound change. Although we may work with and learn from other groups when it is appropriate, our primary purpose must be the expansion of *our* insights and *our* movement as feminists, for in that process, we will create new possibilities, new perspectives on ending all oppression. Our potential rests not in being absorbed into existing ideologies or groups, but in actively creating new efforts toward reshaping the political, cultural, economic, and spiritual structures of our world.

Our Recent Past

In the 20th century, the term "radical" has generally been identified with "leftist" or "socialist." Every political group critical of any or all aspects of the Western capitalist/imperialist/racist/heterosexist patriarchy has been forced to confront its relationship to the most developed opposition: the communist nations, the socialist movements, and Marxist thought.

In my generation, which came of age in the 1960's, struggle with the question of the left played a significant role in the civil rights, student, anti-war, and black militant movements. All of these movements began with an essentially nonaligned position—critical of America but aloof from the "old left" debates of Marxism. Yet, as they became frustrated with the limitations of reformism in the US, they discovered that the only available alternative model for change seemed to be Marxism. Over time, they therefore became engaged in those issues: many became intricately involved in the nuances and warfare of the left; some rejected the left entirely, either returning to work "in the system" or "dropping out"; and a few others, most notably some black leaders, began searching for and are still developing other ideologies not primarily oriented around Marxism, such as Pan-Africanism. While this phenomenon requires more careful study, still it shows feminists clearly that many of our problems are not entirely new and that we should seek to avoid mistakes made by other groups.

My own resistance to the socialist-/anti-socialist polarity presently facing feminists is not, therefore, simply a question of male vs. female politics. Women *can* learn from the experiences of socialist and other movements, and particularly from the black movement's struggles with the questions of race, nationalism, and socialism. (E.g., we should discuss such questions as the significance of Eldridge Cleaver's seeming rejection of "world communism" embodied in his return to America; why the Black

Panthers decided to enter electoral politics, and how Angela Davis views her relationship to the Communist Party. And certainly many of the issues raised by socialist critiques—e.g., class, the domination of monopoly capital, imperialism—are crucial to any movement for change.) Rather, my resistance to this polarity comes from a conviction arising out of my own experience in and analysis of the '60's, that the terms in which the pro or anti-left were argued then did not prove adequate to and were often destructive of those movements.

To be sure, debate with the left is not new to feminists. In fact, the women's liberation movement and much of feminism's rebirth in the '60's came out of that debate: women's caucuses in left organizations fought first for our right to exist, and then joined with the more radical elements from such establishment women's groups as NOW to create an autonomous women's movement, and hence established women's liberation and radical feminism. As important, during this struggle, analysis of patriarchy as the root cause of female oppression developed, and it pointed the way toward both theory and process that go beyond the confines of the capitalist-/socialist polarity.

But feminist theory is still young, still evolving toward a total analysis, and thus we are repeatedly subject to pressure that it be subsumed by some pre-existing "larger, more complete" perspective. Consequently, in the early '70's, after several years of experience with women's liberation, many feminists became impatient with our lack of complete answers. This impatience, combined with con-



cern over the Vietnam war and our class and race privileges, led many of us to consider working with the left again. At the same time, moreover, some left groups began a concerted recruitment effort to win back "their women" and to tap a now large women's constituency.

The resulting upsurge of socialist debate in the independent feminist movement took two primary forms: women's anti-imperialist study and action groups, and attempted take-overs of women's centers and organizations by left groups, particularly the Socialist Workers Party. The take-overs, when perceived by independent feminists, led not only to resistance but also to resentment of the left. The women's anti-imperialist movement (of which I was initially a part) included women of many political backgrounds, but was dominated then by strife between "socialism" and an emerging female separatism. Those tensions eventually led to splits in groups all over the country, symbolized in dramatic battles over the planning and execution of a North American Indochinese Women's Conference in the spring of 1971.²

Thus, out of this resistance to the left—in both its male and female forms—grew female separatism. In the early 1970's, female separatism was widely discussed and became the prevailing means for maintaining a feminist stance that was neither reformist nor leftist.³ Simultaneously, lesbians who were oppressed by radical feminists as well as by reform and socialist feminists, began to articulate lesbian-feminist theory and separatism. By 1974, lesbian-feminism emerged as the predominant separatist

position and led not only to new feminist theory but also to a flourishing of feminist culture, enterprises, and communities. Separatism in both these forms represented the independent and radical posture previously articulated by women's liberation. This period paralleled a similar period in the black liberation movement—a time when establishing one's independence, identity, and ideology, and solidifying a base of power were the priorities.

Separatism, then, arose out of the instinctive need of feminists to remain nonaligned, in order to maintain ourselves as a distinct interest group and to create new political theories and strategies. But we learned that separatism has its limits. Perhaps inevitably, separatism seemed to lead to isolation and powerlessness, rather than to the politically engaged, but independent, stance we had envisioned: ultimately, women's interests are not totally separate from the problems being struggled with universally. We are affected by all systems and divisions (e.g., class, race) and by all the practical issues (unemployment, housing, welfare, and police surveillance) and have a stake in how these issues are resolved.

The Feminist Dilemma Today

Emerging out of lesbian-feminist separatism over the past couple of years, I and others sought new approaches that would embody an independent, radical but non-aligned feminist position. In that search, I have become distressed by the movement's fragmentation, its wide-spread pessimism, introspection and dogmatism.

I want now to examine this phenomenon in terms of the dominant trends mentioned earlier: cultural and spiritual separatism, political reformism and socialist feminism.

First, while cultural and spiritual feminism are not the same, they have in common a recent flourishing and seem to be the most independent of the left/anti-left debates. Yet many, although certainly not all of the activities associated with both of these trends are increasingly detached from questions of political and economic change and their interaction with cultural and spiritual change. Thus, the energy generated in both of these areas, which if combined with a new feminist politics could be a powerful force for change, is instead becoming more "separatist"—that is, more isolated from other struggles. Since culture and spirit are integral parts of all movements for change (culture, for example, reflects the best and the worst of what is happening politically), and since a politics which does not express itself culturally and spiritually is necessarily weakened, then the growing polarization and hostility from both sides of the "political" and "cultural" camps is disastrous for feminism. Thus the issue is not whether you work in the cultural, political, economic, or spiritual arena, but what perspective and analysis you bring to your work and how you understand its relationship to the other three areas. The problem I perceive with both present-day popularized "cultural feminism" and "women's spirituality," then, is their tendency to embrace the most negative aspects of separatism and to isolate themselves from other areas of struggle: ul-

timately, this stance contributes to allowing the patriarchal *status quo* continued domination over most women's lives. Moreover, while my primary focus in this article is not on cultural or spiritual feminism, I believe that their tendency to separate themselves from politics is related to the pressures from many "politicos" to define pro- or anti-left as the sole political options for feminists.⁴

Second, for their part, independent feminists who are not primarily involved in cultural or spiritual activities seem increasingly divided between those who are moving toward traditional political reformism, those who are moving toward socialist-feminism, and those who, like myself, are not aligned with either. Again, the problem in radical feminists' involvement in reform activities is certainly not in the work being done—it is both useful and logical for radicals to engage in a variety of reforms, such as rape crisis centers, legislative changes, credit unions, and the like. The problem is that in building feminist strategies around reform goals dependent on existing political and economic structures, feminists often come not only to accept the limitations of reform but also to *defend* existing institutions instead of continuing to work toward feminist alternatives.

This may occur when feminists' work becomes so dependent on liberal or governmental agencies (e.g., those rape crisis centers which are funded only through LEAA), that their identities and political futures become tied to maintaining the establishment base for their work, thus precluding their developing a base for radical changes that might eliminate

the need for their own feminist institution as well. Another cause for this shift in politics may simply be that working on any feminist reform or institution requires so much energy that longer-range questions get put aside in the struggle to survive. Whatever its causes, many once radical feminists seem to defend the system more and to accept the argument that if you are not satisfied with socialism or the U.S. left, you must necessarily endorse capitalism. The pressure to say that if you aren't pro-left you must be anti-left, or vice-versa, is, then, coming not only from socialists but also from women engaged in political reformism. While there are exceptions, the general trend is nevertheless so strong that we must examine what is happening to feminists engaged in reform activities and determine better how to maintain radical politics and goals during that process. Otherwise, both political reformists and socialist-feminists end up denying the revolutionary possibilities in feminism, including its potential to go beyond the old capitalist/socialist polarity.

This brings me to socialist-feminism which (even though generally the new left in the U.S. is in decline), is having a resurgence. The problem again is not feminists' desire to discuss socialism or to examine issues of class, race and money from that perspective; they *are* important issues. But socialism does not have a monopoly on their solution. In fact, the women's movement has begun to confront them both theoretically and practically, and in some instances, more successfully than the left. The problem is that since socialist-feminism lacks a radical feminist perspec-

tive, what emerges is primarily another effort, frequently guilt-laden, to contort female reality and feminist concepts into some existing socialist framework. Like all contortions, this process is limiting because it precludes the emergence of a powerful feminist analysis that could lead to new approaches to the questions of oppression and change.

As Nancy Hartsock noted in "Fundamental Feminism: Process and Perspective,"⁵ several of us from *Quest* went to the Socialist-Feminist Conference last summer eager to see what new directions in feminist thought/-action were being developed. We went because we recognized the importance to feminists of many questions raised by a socialist analysis. But to our dismay, the framework of discussion was rarely feminism, and instead was the U.S. white male left. Hartsock analyzed why this approach does not further our understanding of what socialism can offer feminist development. Let me only add that for me it was also too familiar, too like the earlier feminist/socialist conflicts of 1968 or 1971.

Finally, I am disturbed that many socialist-feminists are demanding once more that independent, non-aligned feminists curtail our political explorations by choosing to be pro-left, by declaring that socialism is THE WAY, just as other feminists are demanding that we renounce socialism, or that we embrace spirituality as THE WAY. In public speaking, for instance, I am often asked *what* I am, in such a tone that I know immediately that my answer will condemn or redeem me, no matter what else I say or what *I* mean by the terms in question.

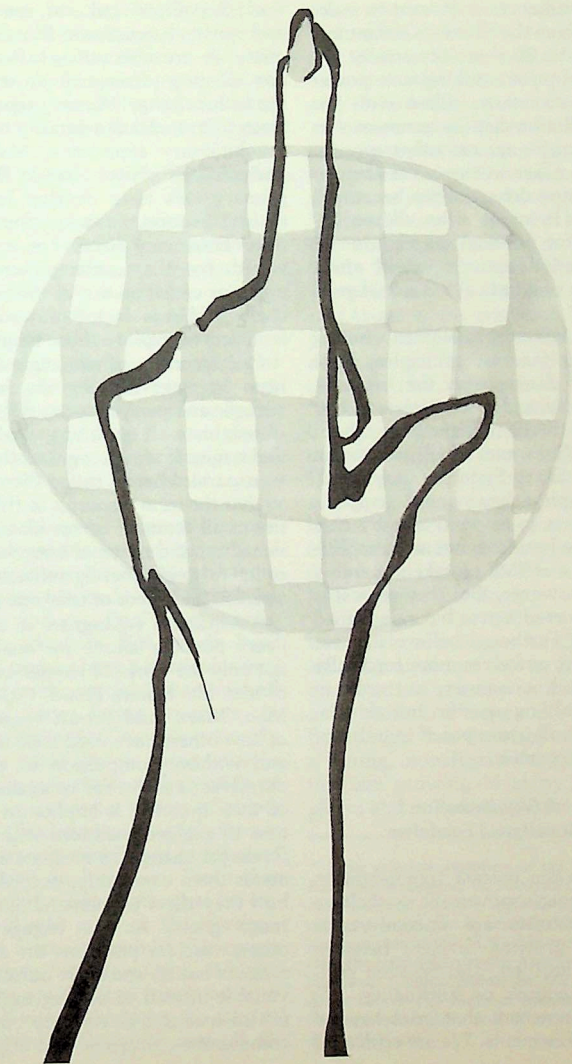
Although the pressure to align with one another of these mutually exclusive options is not always stated in these terms, it is there implicitly, if not explicitly, in almost all the recent big debates in the women's movement: e.g., in Albert vs. Swinton; in the Sagaris split, and in the Feminist Economic Network/Feminist Economic Alliance rupture. These debates are characterized by a fanatical insistence that one choose between two opposing forces, and that to align with the other side (not to mention, to consider other factors involved), is as much a moral as a political disaster. The Alpert-Swinton controversy embodied this mentality quite clearly.

From the beginning there seemed to be only two, very hard, moral lines on the Alpert-Swinton issue: 1) you were pro-Swinton (and therefore anti-Alpert), or you were a government collaborator (and therefore not a reliable feminist); or, 2) you were pro-Alpert (and therefore anti-Swinton), or you were a dupe of the left (and therefore hardly a real feminist). The first problem was the absence of facts on which to base action. Thus, while I personally sympathized with Alpert, who seemed to have been condemned without any reliable proof, I felt that an impartial investigation (or at least one made up of advocates on both sides) to establish just what *had* happened should have been the first order of business. (Several individuals did ferret out data, but without the resources or the political legitimacy of an agreed-upon national investigation, the success of that effort was seriously hampered.)

In addition to the factual void, the self-righteousness on both sides and

the rigid dichotomy it set up obscured, rather than explored, important political issues raised by the situation. What should have been discussed was not whom you trusted—Jane or Pat—but what, if any, genuine common interests exist between the left weather underground and feminism—such questions as whether independent feminists have something to gain by helping left groups to survive and grow, and, if so, what? Which groups, politics, and people on the left embody it? What are the specific politics of the weather underground (which, by the way, is available in their publications,⁶ but which I almost never heard discussed), and how does it coincide or conflict with feminist politics? Is it important for all radical groups to protect the existence of an anti-government underground, regardless of its actions or its politics, and if so, why, and how? Instead of discussing such critical political issues, we were urged to condemn or extol Alpert, most often in the form of demanding whether we were prepared *categorically* to support or oppose the left.

I do not argue that feminists should never ally with other oppressed groups or with a left faction; on the contrary, I favor enlightened coalitions with a variety of groups at different times. But alliance—or withdrawal—should grow out of careful political analysis of feminist goals and an assessment of our common interests, not out of generalized moral mandates. The irony here is that socialist organizations or black political groups do not automatically support *one another*, unless they are clear why they want that group to survive



and what alliances they want to make with it. (Even the Chinese Communist Party, in its 30 years of socialist development prior to taking state power in 1949, sometimes allied with the Chinese Nationalist Government—its bitter enemy—against other groups, including other leftists.) Yet the Alpert-Swinton debate, often because it was posed in moral terms, allowed little space for political examination of how different options would affect the future of a radical but nonaligned feminism.

Some individual women, acting from their feminist principles, have expressed dismay over the left/anti-left polarity and have asserted their right to make distinctions about which politics and which people on the left—Saxe, Swinton, Raymond, for example—they would support. Such efforts to respond case by case have often been sneered at as apolitical or as a refusal to take a stand. I believe, however, that they represent the best sort of active but nonaligned feminism. Further, I believe that we must assert ourselves more forcefully in just such a manner, not only in cases involving specific individuals, but also in all issues posed in terms of these dichotomies.

A Manifesto for Nonaligned Feminism

Despite the present fragmentation in the women's movement, we believe many feminists are uncomfortable with the growing division between pro- and anti-left, and between politics, and culture or spirituality. We seek a movement that goes beyond those confinements. We are critical of

the U.S. political, cultural, economic, and spiritual structures. But as feminists, we are also not satisfied with any existing ideological or strategic model for change. We are prepared to learn from social democratic thought, revolutionary experience, Marxism, and other efforts for change. But our primary task is to develop feminist theory, process, strategy, and direction. Too many issues are not answered by the contemporary left, right, or center stance of the patriarchal world; it is the job of nonaligned feminists to explore those issues.

Our assertion of nonaligned feminism involves keeping the feminist struggle and perspective at the fore as we evaluate all questions, coalitions, and issues. It also recognizes the need to expand what is called "feminist," so that the term responds to the realities of all women, across class, race, sexuality, and national boundaries in order to avoid merely reflecting the interests and needs of only one group.

It requires a willingness to explore every possible source for analysis—not only the works of women but also of men like Fanon, Freud, Galbraith, Mao, Marx, and Proust—regardless of how others have used their insights and without compulsion to declare ourselves *a priori* for or against any of their theories. It implies an openness to explore coalitions with other forces for change, to evaluate and reassess them constantly, according to how they affect women and our long-range goals. As we engage with others, declare positions on a wide range of issues, and make ourselves available instead of self-segregated, it is also crucial that we keep our own communities, projects, and organiza-

tions intact. We must not lose our independent feminist base; it is the source of our political power. It is the inspiration and touchstone for theory and strategy. And it is the source of our personal and communal sustenance.

This is the mandate for nonaligned feminism.

We see *Quest* as one of several vehicles for a nonaligned feminist on-going debate and analysis. As our first introductory article stated:

*"We are about open political forums. Quest wishes to explore differences and similarities in ideologies and strategies among the various segments of the women's movement. We are a journal of long-term, in-depth political analysis, a searching-ground for answers to unresolved questions."*⁷

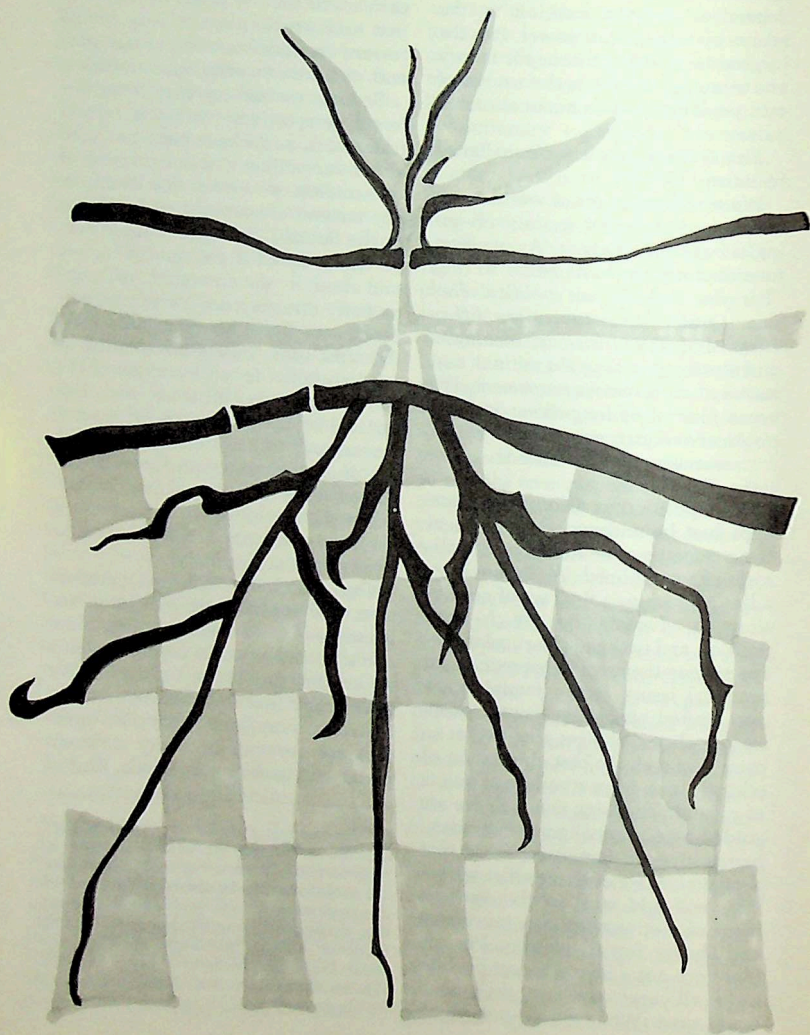
Quest's position as a forum can perhaps best be understood in terms of the perspective for nonaligned feminism I have outlined. We do not have a line to push or a final set of conclusions to advocate. But we do have politics, and we have a particular perspective on the crucial theoretical and practical issues facing feminists. In our limited space, we continuously make political choices about what to print. We seek the best elucidation of critical issues from a variety of points of view. In choosing material, we are guided by our nonaligned and radical perspective on feminism. From that perspective, we evaluate what we believe will add most to the development of a strong feminist movement and theory for all women. We are therefore not a liberal forum open to airing all views merely for the sake of equal time. While we do not all al-

ways agree with each other or with each article that we print, we do agree that each article in some way builds toward an understanding of our past and/or future theories and strategies.

Because we seek articles from different perspectives, within a certain framework, some have been confused about our politics and our printing of "contradictory" views. For example, one woman condemned us for going to the Socialist-Feminist Conference, yet when asked if she read what we said about it, she answered "no": apparently our presence alone was evidence enough for her conclusions. At the same time, others have called us "anti-socialist" for our critique of the Conference and of other socialist strategies. I could cite many such stories. I mean only to point out that as a result of exploring various facets or polarized questions, we have experienced the extent of the pressures in feminists to choose THE WAY and to label others accordingly.

Our search for different perspectives and contributors to *Quest* has led some of us to travel to other cities and to attend as many feminist events as our time and money allow.^{***} We have found that the ideas relevant to a strong, nonaligned feminist direction are growing in many different places and under many labels. Out of

^{***} For example, members of the *Quest* staff have been at: *Sagaris*; the National Congress of Neighborhood Women; regional lesbian-feminist conferences; the *Feminist Eye-Film and Video* conference; the NOW National Convention; the *Feminist Economic Network/Feminist Economic Alliance* fundings; the *Gay Academic Union*; the *National Radical Feminist, Women and the Law*, and *Women's Spirituality Conferences*.



these experiences and from our first two years of publication, we have concluded that *Quest*, in its search to clarify long-term questions, may have remained too distant from some of the movement's immediate crucial developments and specific controversies. We have begun now to solicit more articles which comment directly on these developments and debates, but which also attempt to clarify the long-term goals and problems they involve. We hope that, rather than adding to polarization and recrimination, this process will help directly to link theory and action.

We believe that analyzing current events and controversies is important since analysis and debate provide the groundwork for developing new synthesis, new resolution of the old conflicts and problems still plaguing feminism. With this in mind, we welcome you to the third year of *Quest: a feminist quarterly*, and to our on-going struggle to help build an independent, nonaligned feminism as a way of providing direction and hope for women seeking to change ourselves and the world around us.

Footnotes

1. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, *Economic Review* (New Delhi, May, 1955), as quoted in O. Edmund Clubb, *Twentieth Century China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), p. 345.
2. The North American/Indochinese Women's Conference, held in two parts—in Toronto and Vancouver in the spring of 1971—grew out of contact that feminists had with North Vietnamese women in 1970. It was meant to be the first meeting between Indochinese (North and South Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian) revolutionary women and explicitly feminist women from Canada and the USA. The battles that ensued in the U.S. had primarily to do

with who should organize and go to the conference and what should be presented there as the content of feminism here. Since this was an international event, it interested many women and quickly embodied all the problems and conflicts among feminists in the radical segment of the movement.

3. Two important statements of Female Separatism were: "The Female State," a journal printed in Boston in 1970, and "Fourth World Manifesto," a paper written by women in Detroit in response to the organizing of the North American/Indochinese Women's Conferences.
4. Thanks to Bertha Harris and Beverly Fisher in particular for help with the ideas in the section on culture and spirituality. For more discussion of women and spirituality, see: Peggy Kornegger, "The Spirituality Ripoff," IV:3 *The Second Wave*, pp. 12-18.
5. Nancy Hartsock, II:2 *Quest: a feminist quarterly* (Fall, 1975), pp. 67-80.
6. In addition to the communiqués written from the underground periodically and published in many women's newspapers, see particularly the book, *Prairie Fire: The Politics of Revolutionary Anti-Imperialism*, a political statement of the Weather Underground, printed underground in the USA (May, 1974).
7. Karen Kollias, "Spiral of Change: An Introduction to *Quest*," I:1 *Quest: a feminist quarterly* (Summer, 1974), p.7.

Errata:

In Vol. II, No. 4 (*Leadership*), the article "Who Was Rembrandt's Mother" should be marked © Copyright Jackie St. Joan, 1976.

Quest regrets the misspelling of Lorraine Masterton's name in "Feminist Leaders Can't Walk on Water," (Vol. II, No. 4).

eminist Pr & Feminist

By JUNE ARNOLD

graphics by Jacqui Linard

This article was written with the help and criticism of Wendy Cadden, Judy Grahn, Parke Bowman, Casey Czarnik and Coletta Reid.

The independent women's communications network began early in the women's movement as mimeographed newsletters and position papers. Very early, women saw the need to write down for clarification and make available to other women what feminism stood for.

In the last six years, this communications network has grown both up and out. There are now more than a hundred and fifty feminist presses or journals in over thirty states. Including women's book stores, we have created a circle of media control with every link covered: a woman writes an article or book, a woman typesets it, a woman illustrates and lays it out, a woman prints it, a woman's journal reviews it, a woman's bookstore sells it, and women read it—from Canada to Mexico and coast to coast.

I want to emphasize the importance of having such a network: the first

thing any revolutionary group does when taking over a government is to seize control of communications, and we have already set up our own. We can report on struggles and victories of women (our current events which rarely make or are distorted by the male papers), knowledge of which is vital to understanding the ubiquity and interdependence of our oppression; we can spend time—years now—developing an analysis by arguing back and forth in print across the nation; we can deepen and broaden our grasp of female life by reading autobiographies, novels, stories, poetry by women talking only to women; and we have our own stores where our words can always be found.

There are women in the movement now who weren't around in the years before 1969 when we used to telephone (or argue about the validity of calling) the male press to beg/ seduce/ bully them into covering an action of ours so other women would know of it, and when the only writing by women you could buy was published by male publishers for reasons of their own.

There are women who don't understand what it was like to write a novel or a poem or an essay and know, even before you began, that you had to pre-program your mind to work

esses Politics

from male values (if you weren't already programmed by life) or you might as well save your pencil for the grocery list. If you were very clever and managed to include your voice inside their language *and* get published, you were misreviewed by male papers and your work soon went out of print for economic (political) reasons. The words of earlier feminists were lost because they were the property of male publishers who easily avoided reprinting them.

But hasn't all this changed? Hasn't the feminist movement (and the feminist presses too, according to Jane Rule in *Lesbian Images*) put pressure on Madison Avenue to publish us? Madison Avenue publishers, now owned by such as Kinney Rent-a-Car, Gulf and Western, and RCA, are really the hard-cover of corporate America, the intellectuals who put the finishing touches on patriarchal politics to make it sell: what we can call the finishing press because it is our movement they intend to finish. They will publish some of us—the least threatening, the most saleable, the most easily controlled or a few who cannot be ignored—until they cease publishing us because to be a woman is no longer in style. For a feminist, they are truly the impermanent press.

Since few women would say out

loud, "All feminist work should be published by men," why do many women still prefer to sell their writing or any form of their art to the big male publishers? There are several reasons usually given, all based on male myths:

1. "If I publish with them, I will reach more women." New York University Press published Rita Mae Brown's *The Hand that Cradles the Rock* and sold 650 copies in two years. Diana Press published her *Songs to a Handsome Woman* and sold 5,000 copies in two years. The usual Madison Avenue first novel has a printing of 2500; a big promotion is made and all the bookstores order it. If it doesn't catch on right away (rave reviews) the bookstores return it in three months and the finishing press remainders it.* The average sale of a finishing-press novel is 800 copies. In contrast, the women's presses keep the book in print until it finds its audience: Daughters, Inc. has gone back to press (sold out the first 3,000 copies) on every one of its novels; the Women's Press Collective and Diana Press have sold out the first printings

*To remainder a book is malese for getting rid of all unsold copies at cost or less to second-hand bookstores. Some books are remaindered even before publication date.

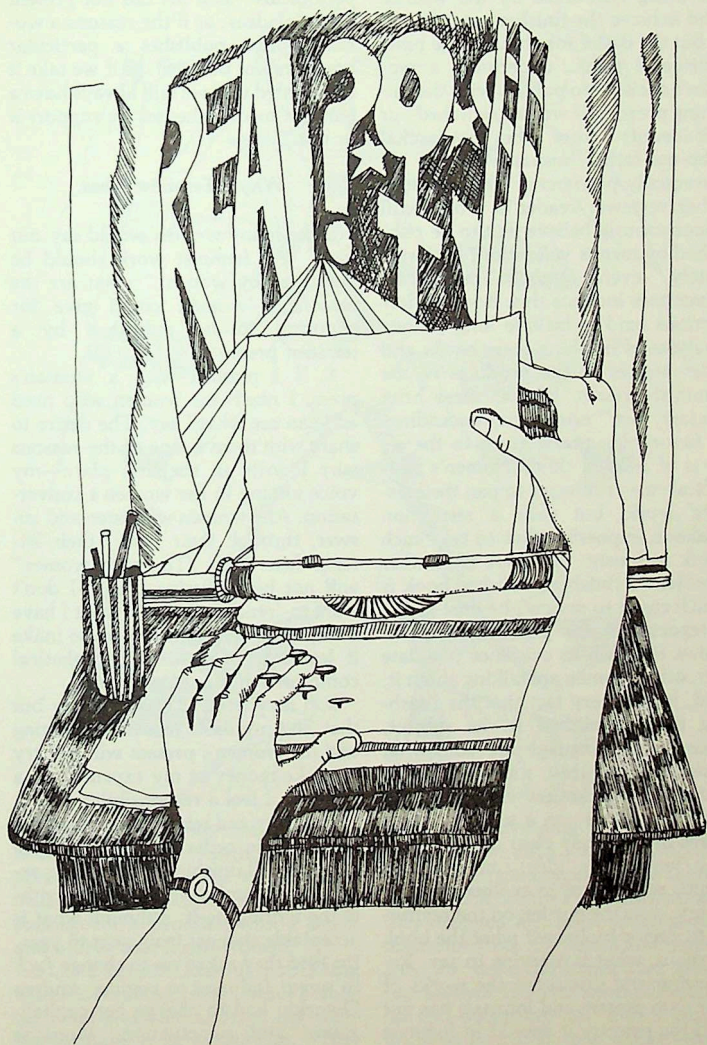
of almost all their titles. But suppose a woman believes that her book will catch on. In that case, won't she reach more women by publishing with the finishing press? A conservative estimate is that every feminist press book is read by five women; one woman's press book that has "caught on" has already sold 50,000 copies and has therefore probably been read by 250,000 women. The combined titles of the Women's Press Collective, Diana Press, and Daughters, Inc. have already sold over 150,000 copies and most of the titles continue to sell month after month.

2. "Okay, but if I publish with the finishing press I will make money and be able to continue my work." If you are unknown and in the category of author-who-may-be-remaindered, you will only make your advance (an average advance for first novels or nonfiction is \$2500, and less for poetry). Ti Grace Atkinson has to date been paid no royalties beyond her \$4000 advance on *Amazon Odyssey*. One woman's press first novel has already made over \$30,000 for its author. The women's presses care about the author being paid for her work and you can be sure that whatever money is made from the book will be shared with her. You have a better chance of making money on the same book when it is published by a woman's press than if you sold it to the finishing press. (The average amount of money that writers in the United States make from their writing is \$500 a year.)

3. "Well, suppose I publish with the finishing press until I am famous (have prestige, a name, power) and then throw my weight over to the wo-

men's presses?" The women's presses are busy developing feminist art and political analysis and may not accept this latter-day *noblesse oblige*. The author may be too out of touch by then to publish anywhere, having sold her chance for a revolutionary artistic development in exchange for Valentine candy. Or, if she does become famous, she may start identifying with, or become obliged to the finishing press and forget about women's presses altogether.

4. "But I will have greater status as an author published by the finishing press than if I published with an alternate." This is, I think, the crucial point. The women's presses are not an "alternate;" they are in fact the real presses, the press of the future. Through them, the art and politics of the future are being brought to flower. (Literature has traditionally depended upon those willing to experiment: Gertrude Stein and Virginia Woolf were published by presses which did not have stockholders to satisfy. But because the presses were not based upon political passion, they sold out at the first opportunity to the business world.) For most feminists right now, it is impossible to take seriously fiction (not to speak of political analysis) written according to Madison Avenue formulae; in the future, the emptiness and lack of vision of such fiction will relegate it to the attic corner along with male stories of conquest (nature the enemy: the lion, the shark, the vagina). It is important to remember always that the finishing press has a big stake (survival) in keeping middle-class values around and, since art is politics, you should check carefully to see just what values



are being reinforced by the women who achieve the finishers' status.

But the desire for status is the basic motive, I think, underlying a woman's decision to publish with the finishing press, as if we had switched our self-identity from the patriarchal who-our-father/husband/son is to the equally patriarchal who-our-publisher/reviewer/reader is. Do we still unconsciously believe that to be published by men is validation? Unfortunately, even feminist periodicals sometimes indicate this: book review sections tend to include long serious analyses of finishing-press books and brief notices of the products of the feminist presses. Worse, these brief notices are often condescendingly favorable—praise given to the efforts of a loved child. Women's periodicals may not want to pan their sisters' work, but such a restriction makes it impossible then to take such work seriously. But there is another problem: a finisher-published book is much easier to review. Its dust-jacket categorizes it for you, finishing reviews establish its existence (validate it?), other women are talking about it, and, by the very fact that the finishing press published it, its subject, theme, and language are somewhat familiar. In contrast, a simple, unvalidated, dust-jacketless volume by an unknown name, on a subject not always immediately clear (because it is not yesterday's idea), in language which reaches out to explore new territory, puts the burden on the reviewer to decide by herself what the book is about, what it is trying to say. Reviewing and discussing the works of our own presses and journals has not had the priority it should in feminist

periodicals—as if art did not present essential ideas, as if the reasons a woman's press publishes a particular book are not political, as if we take it for granted that we will always have a feminist media whether we support it or not.

Why A Feminist Press

Since many women would say out loud, "All feminist work should be published by women," what are the reasons a woman could give for choosing to be published by a feminist press?

1. If I publish with a woman's press, I reach the women who need and can use what I say. The desire to share with them is one of the reasons why I write in the first place—my voice joining in the women's conversation. And women will listen and answer, through their work, their letters, their lives. "To reach women" will not be a passive event—I don't want to "reach women" if what I have to say must be watered down to make it less scary for some hypothetical common-denominator-woman.

2. I may need to make money but that isn't my basic reason for writing and the women's presses will not try to make money at my expense. As a feminist, I feel a responsibility to my community and refuse to compromise my work in order to make it more saleable. All finishing press editors expect compromise—particularly within the writing itself, although what is acceptable changes from year to year. (In 1966 they asked me to change *fuck* to *screw* and *cunt* to *vagina*; Andrea Dworkin had to change her capitalization and punctuation; Monique



Wittig's *Lesbian Body* was mistranslated by a man; etc.) With a women's press, I can work with my publisher instead of having my book mindlessly packaged as a product, with a jacket and blurbs that insult women.

3. If I became famous publishing with the finishing press I would wonder what was missing from my writing to make it so acceptable. What

truth was I avoiding that they liked me so much? And I would probably succumb to the temptation to think I was hot shit—until I was finished and they dropped me. Such status would divide me from my sisters and perpetuate the same old hierarchies where one woman is good/talented/beautiful and others are not, and it would bring us no closer to a world where

women's art is a total complex expression of all our voices. As a writer, my greatest need is not status, but criticism from women I respect, in order that my own imagination and language can expand.

4. If I publish with the finishing press, I throw my lot in with publishers whose profits go to oppressing women in South America (Gulf and Western, owner of Simon and Schuster); whose women workers are fired if they try to organize for better working conditions (Macmillan); whose advertising and promotion methods manipulate women into buying something they don't want or need. I want to add whatever strength I have to building a feminist press as one aspect of controlling our own lives. In 1970 we marched wearing aprons which read: Is this uterus the property of New York State? In 1976 we should wear headbands which state: My words will not be sold to "his master's voice."

It is essential for authors whose political commitment is to publish with the women's presses that their art and their politics be recognized, treated seriously (not necessarily praised) so that their work can grow, and through that work, we all can grow. It is equally important that readers of feminist periodicals have an ongoing political analysis of the art and the political theory that we are creating, and be encouraged, through the depth and completeness of the review, to buy and read our own writing from the source.

Feminist studies teachers too, should realize that when they assign readings from the finishing press they are guaranteeing that their own jobs

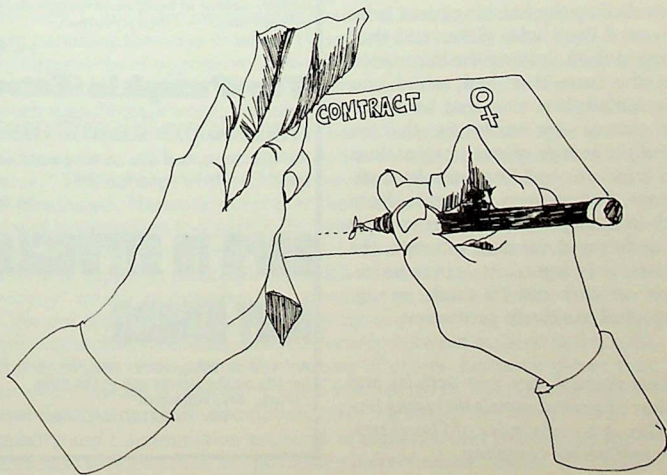
will not be permanent: by turning over their students' minds to the finishers they are saying quite clearly that what men think is good is good and what men won't publish is bad (amateurish, strident, vanity-based). As Judy Grahn puts it, "To publish your own poetry is not vanity, it's aggression". Feminist studies teachers also undermine the feminist presses by xeroxing articles or poems from feminist press books and journals while requiring students to buy the books of the finishing press. If they want students to read what the finishers publish (for contrast, or for its value in analysing the political motive behind its publication), those books should be xeroxed or borrowed and women's limited money used to support the feminist media.

Lately there has arisen a competitiveness, a clear hostility, between women who work for the finishing press (or hope to be published by them) and the independent women's presses. For one thing, a woman who wants to be senior editor at a finishing press depends for her rise up the ladder upon getting the best women's writing for "her" house; the growth of the feminist presses threatens the availability pile. And, the woman who writes (or hopes to write) for the finishing press is frightened deep down that all the other "feminists" may publish only with their own, and redefine feminist to exclude her—thus leaving her without a publisher at all, since the finishing press only took her to cash in on the sales value of feminism. These women, either consciously or not, see their very survival threatened and try to belittle the products of the women's presses

(or steal them away) and sow discord among us. These women use their prestige to discourage other women from publishing with women only, saying such things as, "Those little presses are fine for the young women just finding their way (or the real politicians) but *your* art deserves the very best." It is in whose interest to keep "those little presses" *little* and to equate big with quality, like men do? And the flattery, again, is playing upon our fear that men really do know best. There also seems to be a temptation for a women's press to feel flattered when a finishing press offers to buy one of their books—usually one that has been selling well. In this case I think the finishing press sees a chance to make money without doing any work (the women already have put together the book and proved its audience) but I want to repeat that the finishing press is the hard-cover of

corporate America and absolutely does not want the independent women's presses to survive. Each time he takes a feminist book from us he weakens us all.

The feminist presses are not stepping stones to being published by the "real" (artificial and false) male publishers. The feminist newspapers are not training grounds so women can get jobs at *The New York Times* nor are the magazines preparation for writing for *Saturday Review*. Together, we are engaged in the essential struggle to develop our politics, strengthen our voices, and make certain our movement prevails. *Publishers Weekly* (owned by Xerox), *The Village Voice* (owned by Rockefeller interests), and *The New York Times* know this; you will not see the women's presses or journals praised or analyzed in them. (Although they sometimes review a woman who can't



be completely ignored any longer, perhaps to draw her into working for the finishing press. An occasional review of one of us in a finishing journal is a tactic meant to confuse and divide us).

It is time to stop giving any favorable attention to the books or journals put out by the finishing press. It is time to recycle our money and refuse to let any male corporation make profit—off of us. It is time to understand what male status really means and withdraw support from any woman who is still trying to make her name by selling out our movement.

The first feminist movement was briefly just as popular as ours, just as sought after by the finishing press (who depend upon buying up the energy of genuine movements because they have none of their own). When they neglected to build their own press, they had access to none. They allowed their movement to be controlled by the finishing press, who showered them with glitter and then dropped them, leaving the impression that the issue they had raised was now settled. It is vital that we maintain control over our future, that we spend the energy of our imaginations and criticisms building feminist institutions that women will gain from both in money and skills. As soon as we understand our own interests, the women's independent communications network can be made strong, deep, and positively permanent.

June Arnold, feminist activist and author of several novels including Sister Gin, is a co-founder of Daughters, Inc. publishing company.

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Critique & Commentary

By JOAN BELKNAP

This comment is a response to Nancy Hartsock's article, "Political Change: Two Perspectives on Power," which appeared in Quest, Volume I, Number 1. It was written as an assignment in a Women's Studies Feminist Theory Course, and addresses four specific questions asked by the instructor.

Quest is interested in this form of critique and commentary, and welcomes other such material from feminist studies courses.

Nancy Hartsock is a radical feminist whose emphasis in this article is on political change. She identifies capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy, as the three inter-related historical forces which oppressed women, stressing the ways in which these forces have fed each other, creating larger webs of oppressive inter-related structures and ideas. Hartsock focuses on the capitalist idea of power, including many of the ways in which it enslaves women. She uses the model of money in a capitalistic society to explain that our society is based on marketplace relationships of domination, with power understood to be a commodity of "exchange value." This concept of power assumes that someone is being controlled or dominated. Hartsock notes that the domination concept of power is rooted in capitalism and patriarchy (virility = control), but does not explore the relationship between them. Is dominating masculinity an outgrowth of capitalist marketplace models of power relationships, or is the "money" model an outgrowth of an earlier patriarchal relationship?

We are oppressed by our own concept of power (as domination) because it describes a commodity relationship between isolated individuals who seek their own gain at the expense of others. Hartsock shows that our own thinking is oppressive when it is limited by concepts formed by capitalist (patriarchal) assumptions. For instance, the liberal ideas of equality and discrimination are tools of capitalist and patriarchal structures, and concepts such as "possessive individualism" are as politically

oppressive as the more identifiable social institutions of the family or the state. The process of compartmentalization, a function of the common needs of capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy, results in a fragmentation that takes away women's power. This fragmentation cannot be eliminated by the passage of a law, or even many laws, but only by a direct challenge to the structures of oppression.

The major strengths and disappointments in this article lie in Hartsock's presentation of strategies to change the deeply rooted oppression of women. She recognizes a need to destroy the many-tiered structures of capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy, as well as the thinking which supports them. This political change must come on at least three levels. First, a redefinition of self. Power is presented as energy or accomplishment, a non-dominating definition. This positive definition of power leads to a sense of an independent self. Second, this new concept of power enables a restructuring of inter-personal relationships within the feminist movement, so that they are no longer transactions of power. Feminist organizational structures can be built to cultivate the power (energy, accomplishment) of women, rather than level it.

The disappointment in Hartsock's strategy comes in her discussion of the third level of change. The ultimate change must come in direct struggle against the oppressive institutions. She reverts to the power (as domination) model for this struggle. By discounting the strength of power (as accomplishment, energy) when faced with power (as domination) Hartsock leaves an impression that power (as energy) is really a weak sister to the controlling male power. If it is not enough for the big struggle, why is it good enough for our internal relationships?

Ultimately, Hartsock shares the basic radical feminist principle of the political value of personal experience. This is in many ways the profound principle of feminism, providing the main roots for feminist change, as well as the guide to feminist visions of goals and possibilities. As much as Hartsock claims that we must make no assumption about the process of feminist change, her entire theory assumes the value of personal power, personal independence, and personal wholeness.

Beyond this principle, Hartsock holds fast to the rule that feminist social change is open-ended. Its task is so huge, so complicated, so vast, that its directions and structures cannot be predicted. "Change is the process of creating new problems. Feminist political change is so profound, so basic, so unknown, that even "the meaning of power itself is transformed." Feminist theory describes a process, rather than a result. The process brings a whole new sense of human possibility. A principle of feminist social change is that the strategy must contain "the seed of its own supersession."

Joan Belknap is presently unemployed and moving to California, where she hopes to return to school to study women and religion.



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Women, Power, and Labor Governments



By ROSEMARY PRINGLE
and ANN GAME

graphics by Scarlett Cheng

Editor's Note:

In 1972, a Labor Government headed by Gough Whitlam came to power in Australia, after 23 years of Conservative rule. It initiated major changes in Australia's foreign policy and a series of social democratic reforms domestically, including the formation of a women's National Advisory Committee and a Women's Affairs advisor to the Prime Minister. The coming to power of the Labor Government coincided with the growth of feminism in Australia and provided funds for various women's projects. Feminists were, therefore, actively engaged in debate over the relationship between the development of an independent radical feminist movement and a government that was respon-

sive to some reforms for women, but still operated within a male supremacist and capitalist context.

In November of 1975, the Labor Government fell from power and with it went most of the funding for women's concerns. This article was written out of the struggles of Australian women to analyze that experience, look at their present situation, and better understand the effects of different political concepts of power upon feminism.

Three years of social democracy in Australia, and particularly the reforms implemented during International Women's Year, have highlighted the various conceptions of social change and political power which characterise feminism. In December of 1972, the Equal Pay case was reopened, signaling the first of many initiatives to end discrimination in employment. Through the Schools Commission, steps were taken to end in-

equalities in educational opportunity and to accept responsibility for child care. Tentative steps were taken towards funding Family Planning clinics, health centres, rape crisis centres and women's refuges. In all these ways, the traditional demands of the women's movement appeared to be being met. However, it was not without pressure being brought to bear. For the most part, the Government belatedly took the credit for reforms initiated by the political activity of the women's movement. It even rationalised its stance in terms of the desirability of "grass roots" participation in policy making. By 1975, when several million dollars were made available to women's groups, feminists had become increasingly concerned about the problems of "co-optation." Reform of laws relating to abortion and homosexuality, which were of central importance to the women's movement, failed to receive the backing of the Labor Party. Instead, we were given the farce of a Human Relations Commission. Time and energy had been put into fighting for "Welfare State" policies which would not in themselves bring about "liberation," and whose treatment by the government seemed to range from the trivial to the token.

In the second half of 1974, recession set in and the Labor government was unable to sustain its progressive stance: the child care budget was cut and the N.E.A.T. (National Employment and Training) scheme, which was originally designed "to aid in the removal of past inequalities in employment opportunities," was increasingly used to relieve (male) unemployment. The government be-

came more and more sensitive to public criticism of the money it was "wasting" on International Women's Year, and particularly on the heavily subsidised Women and Politics Conference in September, 1975. Following the backlash from this, it hastily cancelled a U.N. Conference on "Women and the Media," planned for November, 1975. The Prime Minister's adviser on Women's Affairs, Elizabeth Reid, was sacked under the guise of "administrative re-organisation." Funding of women's projects was threatened by the government's efforts to cut public spending. The structural limitations of social democracy itself, and its dependence on the economic climate, were becoming clear. The women's movement had become disillusioned with the Whitlam Government by the time of its sacking; at the same time, it had no alternative but to support it, thus exposing the contradictions that had always been implicit in its political practice.

Concepts of Power

We wish to argue that the limitations in the practice of the women's movement are a consequence of the feminist conception of power, which is based upon, and consistent with, the theoretical trends of feminism. Here we touch upon a question frequently posed in the women's movement, "what is the relationship between sex and class?" Insofar as feminists assume that the oppression of women by men is the fundamental form of oppression, we fail to recognise the reality of power as a function of the class relations on which a social

formation is based. Our underlying assumption here is that any political practice directed towards overcoming forms of domination and oppression is, in essence, a question of political power. In class society, political power, exercised through the state apparatus, is the means by which one class maintains its dominance over the other classes. The specific content of forms of oppression other than class oppression (e.g., black, women, homosexuals) is not to be denied. However, the adequacy of the strategies of the liberation movements is dependent upon an understanding of the nature of oppression in terms of the role of the state in maintaining the political dominance of the capitalist class.

Despite claims of feminist theorists to be developing radical views of power, these are based on precisely the same assumptions as the pluralist conception. Power is understood to be either an attribute of individuals or of "male" institutions. Even when it is conceded that power is not fragmented, it is viewed from a pluralist standpoint akin to that of C. Wright Mills: the orthodox definition of the powerful as "those who are able to realise their will, even if others resist it."¹ Mills even accepted that a "romantic" pluralism was "a recognisable, although confused, statement of the middle levels of power."² He simply stressed that at the top, the units of power (economic, political, military) that really count are few in number, and in the hands of those individuals who have access to the command of major institutions and come together to form a "power elite." The feminist conception of a "male power structure" similarly suggests that while

some power is dispersed amongst all men, the major units of it are in the hands of those who control "male" institutions.

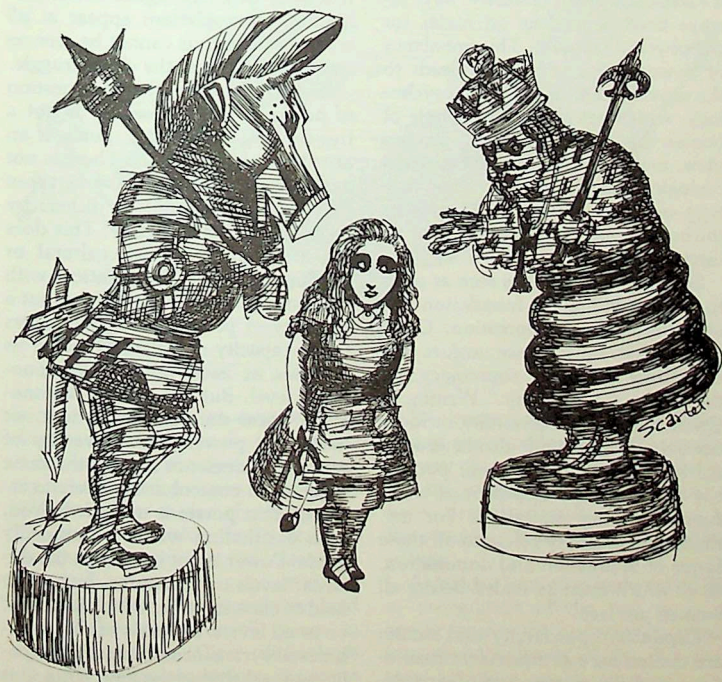
Some of the implications of this emerge from a comparison with Stokely Carmichael's analogous formulation of a "white power structure." He argued that the aim of black power is to gain "an effective share in the total power of the society"³ through "a broadened base of political participation."⁴ The feminist mission has similarly been conceived of as a matter of taking over units of power in order to balance "male" power with "female" power. In terms of political strategy, this takes two forms: first, women should gain a share of what is now seen as a male preserve, through lobbying, running for office, and entering the bureaucracy; second, by setting up alternative power centres to counter "male power." Both involve a zero-sum conception which is based on the assumption that there is a fixed amount of power and the more of it that women can gain, the less will be held by men.

Very few in the Women's Movement consciously turned to pluralist theory to explain "male power." But at the time it emerged, in the late 1960's, pluralism had been the prevailing orthodoxy for years, and Easton's view, that "neither the state nor power is a concept that serves to bring together political research,"⁵ was still accepted. Marxist theory, which might have provided an alternative, was only just emerging from the tradition of economism stemming from the Second and Third Internationals. The Women's Movement did emerge out of the humanist tradition

of the New Left, breaking away when it became clear that participatory democracy and the creation of "whole people" with the power to make decisions affecting their lives, was not to be extended to women. But the attack on "bourgeois pluralism,"⁶ which both shared, was made within essentially the same framework as that being criticised.

The most important assertion of the early Women's Liberation movement was that "the personal is political." The examination of personal ex-

perience produced the recognition that relationships between men and women are "power" relations, based on dominance and subordination, so "power" did seem to be spread, if not evenly, amongst all men. Orthodox theory therefore *appeared* to have immediate relevance. This was reinforced by the emphasis on the technique of consciousness-raising and the assumption that experience alone, properly understood, will generate theory. There was a confusion between theory and ideology which left



women vulnerable to just re-using the prevailing ideologies of power, and prevented our breaking away from an empiricist epistemology.

It is the analysis of patriarchy that distinguishes the new feminism from the older women's rights movement. For Kate Millet, "patriarchy" is a universal political system, penetrating class divisions, different societies and different historical epochs.⁷ Shulamith Firestone traced its origins to the "biological family": she argued that women, because of our biology, and children, because of the length of time it takes us to reach maturity, have always been dependent on males for our physical survival. This imbalance of power within the family leads to the development of a power psychology, which has shaped the whole of human history.⁸ According to this view, male supremacy in the original biological family created a psychology of domination which provides the basic model for the exercise of *all* forms of power.

Sex oppression is thus seen as prior to, and providing the foundation for, all other sorts of oppression. Charlotte Bunch, for instance, argues that capitalism and white supremacy are the "sons of patriarchy." Writing in *Quest*, she says: "Patriarchy includes not only male rule but also heterosexual imperialism and sexism; patriarchy led to the development of white supremacy and capitalism. For me, the term patriarchy refers to all these forms of oppression and domination, all of which must be ended before all women are free."⁹

Capitalism, patriarchy and racism are treated here as equivalent institutions and the question of their rela-

tionship is posed in terms of "which came first." This is misdirected because it assumes that capitalism designates a specifically economic relationship from which the rest of society is relatively separate. Hence sexism is seen as something outside "capitalism" and superimposed on it. But any social formation constitutes a complex unit in which a certain mode of production dominates the others which compose it. The abstract concept, "mode of production," already embraces not only relations of production but political and ideological relations. In a capitalistic social formation, class relations appear at *all* levels. Sexism thus cannot be seen as standing outside of the class struggle.

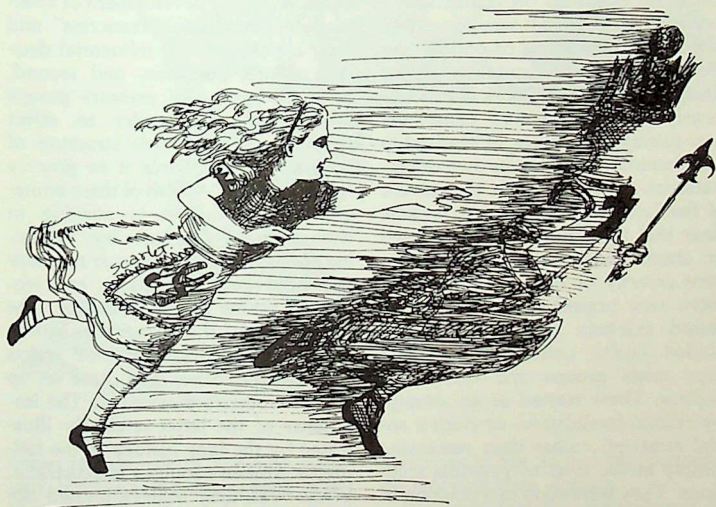
It is in this context that the question of power is to be posed. It is not a free-floating commodity, nor is it an attribute of individuals. There is not a fixed quantity of it that can be taken over, either lot by lot, or sphere by sphere.¹⁰ Power is a unity. This does not mean that political, cultural or ideological power are identical with economic power, or that there is not a plurality of power centres. It relates to the capacity of a class to realise its interests at each relatively autonomous level. But the relative autonomy of these different levels does not mean that power has a diversity of sources. It does not require the same "agents" in control at all levels to establish that power is unified. Indeed, such a situation would be absurdly crude. Power is not located in the different levels or structures, but in the field of class struggle, which is carried on at all levels. In terms of any revolutionary transformation, it is the political level that is the key, since it is

the state apparatus that holds the social formation together. This makes clear why the transformation of capitalist society depends on the seizure of state power by the working class, rather than a piece-by-piece eating into, or sharing, of "male power."

Sexism is a form of oppression related to the reproduction of the dominance of the capitalist class. Its exist-

feminists would have it, and it is idealist to believe that consciousness-raising can remove them. This idea is expressed explicitly by Nancy Hartsock when she asks:

*Can our organisations serve as tools for taking power for women and still lay the groundwork for new non-sexist, non-racist, non-classist societal institutions?*¹¹



ence at all levels as an expression of class power highlights the importance of the women's struggle. But women are not a unified group in terms of our relations to the means of production. The crude suggestion that sisterhood can unite all women across class barriers fails to come to grips with the complexity of the overdetermined form of the oppression of women in capitalist society. Class differences are not a matter of ideology, as some

Its objective relation of exploitation makes the working class the revolutionary class. The significant question for the women's movement then, is how, organisationally, it relates to the struggle of this class for political power.

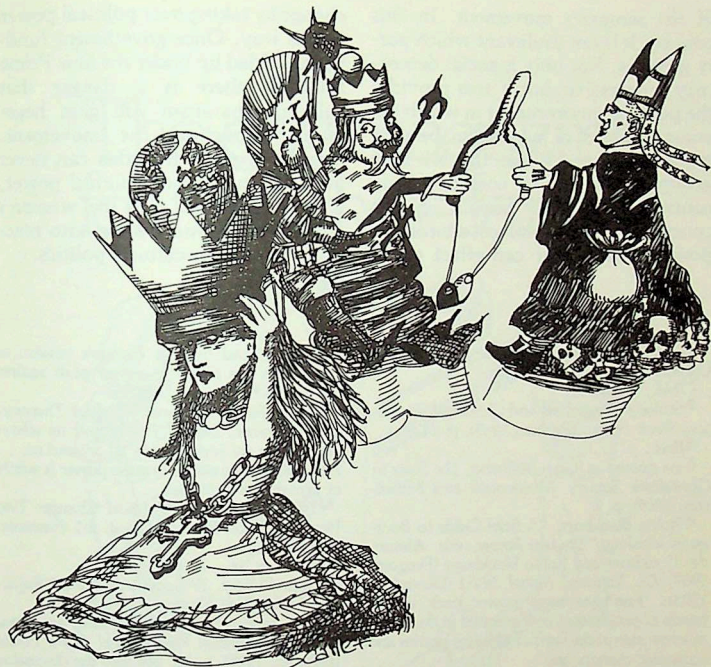
American feminists have called for a "recognition of the two faces of power, and of the necessity for working on both levels."¹² By this they mean "power as domination" and

"power as energy and strength." Male power is to be fought both on its own terms and by setting up alternative female power centres. In Australia, the first of these was taken up by the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL), which believed it could take advantage of the opportunities offered by "pluralist politics" to make the system relevant for women.¹³ Women's Liberation has placed its emphasis on changing the face of power. Thus it was concerned with the possibility of co-option into the "white, male, capitalist, power structure,"¹⁴ and its political practice largely revolved around consciousness-raising and issues of leadership and domination within its own organisational structure. With the advent of the Labor Government it became clear that these practices were based on similar assumptions. The dominant activity of the women's movement was beginning to revolve around self-help groups which included health collectives, shelters, rape crisis groups and child care centres. These started as an attempt by radical feminists to produce a social strategy, rather than remaining simply at the level of personal solutions. They were soon in a position of having to decide their attitude towards government funding. While accepting that it would provide an opportunity to expand the activities of the movement, and force the government to fulfill its stated social welfare responsibilities in relation to women, it seemed to have numerous built-in problems: would it be possible to threaten relations of power and control while financed by the system? Or would it be a way of dismissing the movement, through assistance and

approval? Would it be possible to resist the re-imposition of hierarchial structures?¹⁵

These questions were answered in terms of an analysis of "bureaucracy" which led only to a partial recognition of the role of the state. The state apparatus was reduced to a bureaucracy made up of men. This could be dealt with in several ways; first, for example, by the development of a network of "feminist bureaucrats" and their appointment to influential decision-making positions, and second, by the extension of pressure groups and lobbies, "in order to effect changes and the whole structure of government and force it to give us what we want."¹⁶ Both of these strategies assume that it is possible to change power structures by "balancing and equalising the power relationship between bureaucracies and women,"¹⁷ taking power lot by lot. The inadequacy of the former was shown when the first round of IWY grants went to areas other than those set up by the women's movement. The impotence of the latter is clearly illustrated by the long history of the failure of women's lobbies in Australia. While WEL may achieve limited objectives, it will remain a traditional lobby group dominated by "the belief that no matter what partisan quarrels may arise, women have more to gain by working together."¹⁸

The response of women's liberation is more complex, although it is still put in terms of relating to the bureaucracy. Self-help groups were originally seen as autonomous female power centres. However, they were always open to the criticisms made of charities, and they fitted in with the estab-



lished female role of applying band-aids. Insofar as funding seemed to put them at the mercy of government grants, the problem was exacerbated. Consequently, some would argue that setting up self-help groups is a useless strategy, wasteful of time and energy, and that the main responsibility of the women's liberation movement to women is not to provide services for us, but to build a mass political movement based on working women.¹⁹ This at least addresses itself to the right questions, but much too simply: the problem of the relationship of sex

and class is not solved by focussing on working class women.

We agree that the main impact of women's liberation has been neither on the provision of services for women nor in the recruitment of individuals. It has been through political agitation that consciousness has been changed and reforms effected. Self-help groups are nonetheless important. Insofar as their involvement with the "bureaucracy" forces them to confront organisational forms and the role of state intervention, this has potential for politicising the leadership

of the women's movement. In this context, it is not irrelevant which party governs. Not only is social democracy progressive, but it also provides the political environment in which the contradictions of capitalism become most apparent. While the self-help groups have had to confront these contradictions, they should not be conceived of in terms of alternative power centres that can effect social

change by taking over political power in this way. Once government funding has dried up under the new Prime Minister, there is a danger that cultural separatism will gain hegemony throughout the movement. Since we believe that this can never pose the question of political power, it is to be hoped that the women's movement will not retreat into reactionary, counter-cultural politics.

Footnotes

¹ C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 9.

² *Ibid.*, p. 244.

³ Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power* (Pelican, 1969), p. 61.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁵ As quoted in Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalistic Society* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1969), p. 2.

⁶ Robin Blackburn, "A Brief Guide to Bourgeois Ideology," *Student Power*, eds. Alexander Cockburn and Robin Blackburn (Penguin, 1969). Cf., Editorial, *Mabel*, NV:1 (December, 1975): "Feminists want power back in the hands of people, not concentrated in the hands of a few men at the head of political parties and economic monopolies."

⁷ Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics* (Rupert Hart-Davis, 1970).

⁸ Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex* (Johnathon Cape, 1971).

⁹ Charlotte Bunch, "The Reform Tool Kit," *Quest*, I:1 (Summer, 1974), p. 43.

¹⁰ *Mabel*, NV:1 (December, 1975), p. 7: "We can observe that a male power is divided into hundreds of competing yet interlocking blocs and structures. Power is unequally divided (hi-

erarchical), and there is constant tension as those with less access to power push against those who have more. . . ."

Claude Steiner, "Power," *Radical Therapy*, III:3 (Summer, 1975): "Power and its effects like the air we breathe, are all around us. . . . And just like the air we breathe power is subtly or grossly contaminated. . . ."

¹¹ Nancy Hartsock, "Political Change: Two Perspectives on Power," *Quest*, I:1 (Summer, 1974), p. 17.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹³ Julie Richter, "Women in Politics," *Refactory Girl*, NV:9 (Winter, 1975), p. 36.

¹⁴ For an expression of this idea, see Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police* (Penguin, 1975), p. 23. See also the discussion of "capitalist patriarchy," *Mabel*, NV:1 (December, 1975), p. 7.

¹⁵ For a discussion of these problems, see *Scarlet Woman*, NV:2 (September, 1975).

¹⁶ Liz O'Keefe and Margaret Roberts, "Bureaucracy," a summary of discussions held at the Women and Politics Conference, Canberra, Australia (September, 1975).

¹⁷ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁸ Julie Richter, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

Rosemary Pringle and Ann Game are lesbians active in the women's movement in Australia; Rosemary is Women's Studies Tutor in the Politics Department of Adelaide University in Adelaide; Ann is a research assistant in the Sociology School of Macquarie University in Sydney.

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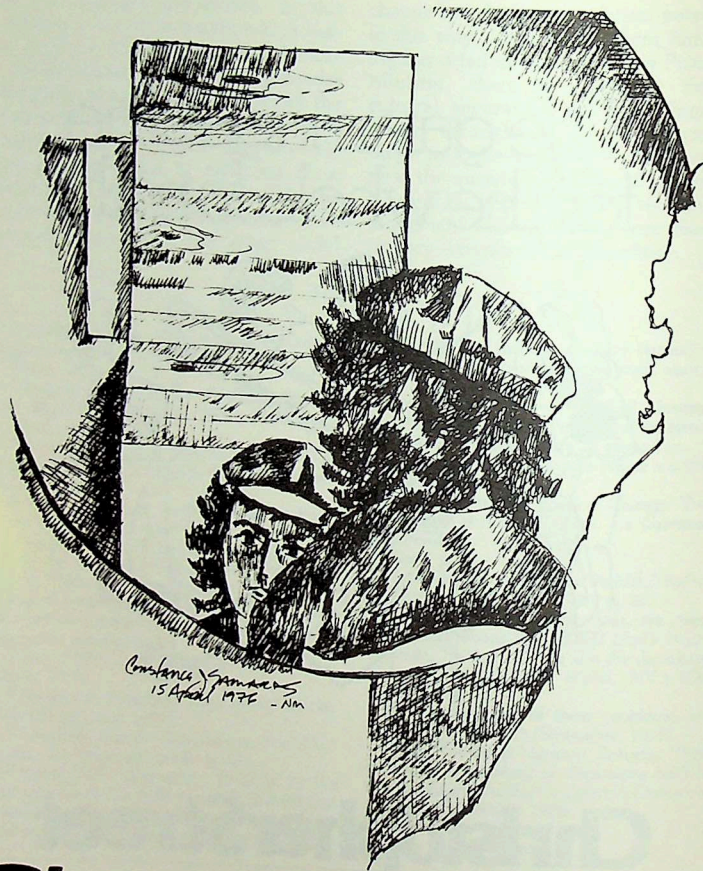
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The Club

By HOPE LANDRINE © Copyright Hope Landrine, 1976

graphics by Constance Samaras

Alice dressed slowly and methodically in her tent, giving herself the time she needed to review all she had learned. It had been a fascinating six months at Basic Training Camp; she had read more, perceived more and understood more than she ever had in the past. And most of all, she had come to understand that the battles she had fought daily were battles others fought also, that she was not alone in this struggle and that The Club was not simply winning, but that The Club would win.

That morning she had one thing left to accomplish in order to be a real member of The Club. That morning she was to take a test that she had been told would require all she had learned and now understood, all of her strength and all that she was, a test that would be the final measure of her commitment to The Club. Alice put on her hat, paused to look in the mirror at her so changed, so suddenly aged face, and left her tent.

Outside the sun was blaring and beating down on the charred earth. Alice walked slowly, listening to the scratching of her boots in the desert sand, swallowing hard and wondering what it was she would be asked to do. She arrived at the Basic Training Camp at 11 a.m. She paused, took a deep breath and went in. Behind a metal desk placed squarely in the center of the tent a C sat, waiting.

"Alice Norton?" the C asked.

"Yes," Alice replied.

"Good!" the C exclaimed, "Are you ready?"

Alice swallowed again and then said loudly, "Yes. I'm ready."

The two women left the tent followed by a third woman and started

across the desert. They walked slowly and in silence, Alice and the C together, and the third woman, who had an X on her cap, followed behind them. After a half-hour of trudging they arrived at the Test Tent site.

"This is it, Ms. Norton," the C said. "Let me give you a brief explanation and then you can ask any questions you'd like, though I won't promise to answer them all. Okay. All members of The Club should pass this test. Those who do are dressed in blue jeans and then sent to the cities to work for the The Club. Those who do not pass this test are given various statuses within The Club and some choose to go back to Basic Training until they are ready to try the test again. I took this test a month ago and couldn't make it. So I've chosen to go to a special ovular with those who failed for the same reasons I did — collaboration. That's what the C on my cap stands for. I am a collaborator and, in my opinion, not really suited to represent The Club, though I *do* work for it. Ms. Clairton here is an X. That means she failed *all* of her Basic Training classes and she's chosen to take Basic Training again from the beginning, and then she wants to try the test again. In the meantime, Ms. Clairton assists in giving the test and so she also works for The Club, although she is in no way qualified to represent it. Now. The test is fairly simple in design. See that hill over there?"

Alice Norton looked in the direction of the C's pointed arm. There, a few hundred yards in the distance, was a steep hill with a tent at the top. "Yes, I see it," Alice responded.

"Well," the C continued, "that's it.

—some walking arm in arm, some playing and kissing, others working together.

"Well?" the C asked, "Are you going to try?"

Alice turned to her and looked into her eyes. The C looked away. "Yes," she answered, still looking at the hill, "yes."

Ms. X climbed on Alice's back and held on tightly. Alice stuck one hand into her Club pants pocket, pushed back her hat with the other, glanced once more at the tent on the hill, swallowed, and started walking.

Hope Landrine, a black lesbian-feminist living in Cambridge, MA., is working on a novel about a black lesbian/feminist's conflicts and experience with psychosis. She is also preparing a collection of feminist short stories, from which "The Club" is excerpted.

Errata:

Due to typesetting and proofreading difficulties, the following inexcusable errors were made in the article by Bertha Harris, "The Lesbian: The Workmaker, The Leader" in Vol. III, No. 4 (Leadership): p. 16, col. 2, final paragraph, first sentence should read: Patriarchy's most dynamic instance of ta legomena epi tois dromenois³ (the thing said about the thing done) is the celebrated drama of Fifth century B.C. Athens. P. 21, col. 2, line 4 should read "(penis as womb)" instead of "(penis and womb)." P. 22, col. 1, first paragraph, first sentence should read: The human model for work-making, therefore, should be neither the unconsciousness of the mother nor the consciousness of the father, but the use of both by the child to make first herself, then the work. P. 24, col. 2, final paragraph, line 5 should read "from gender to gender" instead of only "from gender." P. 25, col. 1, line 3 should read: "group- and self-propelled power." The article should also be marked © Copyright Bertha Harris, 1976.

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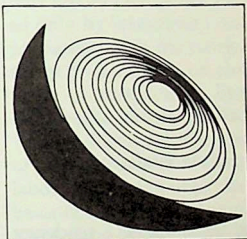
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DO FEMINISTS NEED MARXISM ?

By JANE FLAX

graphics by Sylvia Wallace

In the past three years, a tendency has emerged called socialist feminism. Many feminists have argued that it is the most progressive position in feminism today.*

Socialist feminism is not a precise term. Those who consider themselves socialist feminists include female socialists, women who consider imperialism to be the primary contradiction, socialists who see feminism as a way of organizing women into the class struggle, and women who see patriarchy** and class as equal and (to vary-

**The most visible organizational manifestation of this tendency was the Socialist Feminist Conference held at Antioch College in July, 1975, and attended by 1600 women. See Socialist Revolution, V:4 (1975), and Quest, II:2 (1975) for reports and criticisms of the conference as well as position papers on socialist feminism. See also Socialist Revolution, IV: 1 (1974) for additional articles on socialist feminism.*

***Patriarchy means here a system of power relations whereby men dominate women.*

ing degrees) independent sources of women's oppression. The minimum area of agreement seems to be that Marxism has something to teach us about the sources and maintenance of women's oppression and about ways to overcome it. On a theoretical level, this assumption has led to attempts to integrate feminism into Marxism or to reconceptualize one in terms of the other.¹

Feminists have received strong criticism from both male and female Leftists for "dividing the working class," making bourgeois "personal" issues central to political struggle, and so on.

Perhaps the turn to Marxism is to some extent an attempt on the part of feminists to show that they too can do "real" political work and "real" theory. It may be a way of showing that it is "correct" to organize women because they do produce surplus value (through housework), or at least reproduce labor-power which is the precondition for extracting surplus value. Alternatively, since women constitute an expanding segment of the working class, they can now be seen as significant in the organization of a

socialist movement (as workers). Or, socialist-feminism allows women to argue that feminism, because it focuses on process, is a valuable *tool* for building revolutionary organizations or revolutionizing the working class.

All these positions implicitly assume that women's lives in and of themselves have little or no revolutionary potential, that women's experience only becomes meaningful when it is related to the class struggle, and that patriarchy is not a relatively autonomous historical force which also determines the character of social relations and human history. In short, socialist feminism suggests that feminists have raised interesting questions and developed forms of organization which must now be integrated into ongoing class struggle.

These issues are considered subordinate to class struggle and have not been taken seriously as a fundamental challenge to the way Marxists understand politics and political change. The real question is whether we accept Marxism as the correct (if flawed) paradigm for comprehending women's oppression or instead call for the development of a new mode of analysis. What, if anything, can Marxism as it stands now teach us about women's oppression, and what is the utility of the Marxist method for feminist analysis?

Problems of Orthodox Marxism

A careful examination of Engels' writing can point up the weaknesses of orthodox Marxist theory*** in re-

gard to the analysis of women's oppression. I will not restate Engels' argument in *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*,² but rather I will list seven basic problems with his argument and discuss how these problems are related to the general nature of a Marxist approach. Furthermore, I will show that Engels' own theory can be fully comprehended only by integrating an analysis of patriarchy with his work. By relying solely on a history of changes in the mode of production, Engels ignores the specific history of women.

*First, Engels takes a sexual division of labor for granted.*³ He assumes that labor has always been divided on the basis of sex and that women have always done household labor. He provides no explanation for why this is the case, and moreover, does not do justice to the fantastic variety of the *content* of work done by women and men; as recent anthropological work shows, childcare seems to be the only type of work women do almost universally.⁴ A more concrete analysis of the sexual division of labor in different societies would have highlighted one crucial fact: whatever women do is considered less valuable than whatever men do.⁵ The orthodox Marxist approach has not explained this fact. Nor does Engels explore the consequences for men, women, and children of the primary responsibility for childcare falling on women.

Second, Engels argues that wealth was owned by the gens† and that the gens was matriarchal. But then, how can he argue that cattle became pri-

***The term "orthodox," here means a simplistic, or mechanistic use of Marx.

†As used by Engels, "gens" refers to a circle of blood relations in the female line.

vate property of men because they were "heads" of these families?⁶ According to more recent anthropological work, agriculture and herding developed about the same time, so that the development of private property in cattle could not in itself be such a radical transformation that it would lead to the overthrow of mother-right (if it ever existed).

This is merely one concrete instance of the larger difficulty of assuming the existence of a matriarchal society and the primacy of changes in property relations. Engels needs a matriarchy so it can be overthrown by men—not as men but rather as owners of private property, or the instruments of labor? That is, the course of history depends on changes in the mode of production and the consequent property relations, not on (or as well on) sexual-power relations or the mode of reproduction. For Engels, the family becomes part of the superstructure rath-

er than a part of the base. He recognizes the centrality of the "mode of reproduction," but fails to carry out the exploration of sexual politics required to understand it.

Third, also along these lines, if cattle and slaves were such clear signs of wealth, how did the presumably male heads of households claim them? Why did they not belong to women? "Custom"⁸ cannot explain why these sources of power could so easily be appropriated by men.

I am led to two possible conclusions: either there never was a matriarchy (in which case one cannot explain the oppression of women solely on the basis of changes in production-property relations), or the overthrow of matriarchy was a political as well as economic revolution in which men as men subdued or destroyed the privileged (or perhaps equal) position of women for a number of historically possible reasons (such as men discov-



ering their role in reproduction and/or asserting control over reproduction).

*Fourth, why should inheritance be such a crucial issue?*⁹ Engels is reading the present into the past. In gens society, is there any danger to children themselves (would they be outcast, or not be taken care of), or is illegitimacy and/or individual inheritance even a meaningful concept in a matriarchal society? Men must already have been feeling excluded from the gens and/or from reproduction, since, as Engels states, in pre-monogamous marriage systems, only the mother of the child could be known with certainty.¹⁰

Thus, men might attempt to use children as a means of claiming power and overcoming exclusion, promising protection in return. (As feminists have pointed out, this is one of the oldest protection rackets around—women and children are guaranteed protection by the aggressors—men.) Furthermore, in most cultures, only sons can inherit property, not daughters; thus inheritance can be seen as another way of keeping power and property within male control.¹¹ Alternatively, inheritance could point to the possibility that women and their products (children) were already regarded as property. Indeed, Levi-Strauss suggests that women were the first form of property and were traded out of their clan to cement relationships between men in differing clans. At least initially, such a system must have been instituted and maintained by force.

Fifth, Engels suggests that men wanted their own children to inherit and that this was a reason for over-

throwing the then traditional matrilineal order of inheritance. But what is wrong with a sister's children (or anyone else) as inheritors? There must already have been a property/patriarchal system in which children and women were seen as a special sort of property.

This is where the concept and reality of patriarchal privilege become important. Men, according to Engels, would want to retain the power and privilege they held as a result of the original division of labor. Women's natural interest in a restricted birth-rate (because childbearing is dangerous and tiring) would oppose men's interest in increasing their power by increasing the amount of property for trade or labor available to them. Restricting births would also reduce men's control over women since women would have more energy for activities other than child-birth and child rearing. In addition, as long as women have children at home, service to children spills over into service to the man (why cook, sew, clean, for example, only for children). Why would anyone want to give up these personal services? So men have an interest in controlling reproduction. At this point, the sexual division of labor becomes an instrument of oppression.

*Sixth, Engels argues that the overthrow of mother right could take place through a simple decree.*¹² Wouldn't women be disturbed by being transferred out of their gens upon marriage, thus losing a crucial source of their power? How and by whom could a "simple decree" be issued that descent would in the future be patrilineal? Why would women obey it? Certainly legal doctrines had little

meaning in this era and would have had to be backed by other forms of power. Again, the very structure of early social systems seems to point to force being used by men against women, originally for control over scarce resources (children) and later to maintain the privileges the initial system created.

Finally, *why did shifts in inheritance of property bring total supremacy to the male?* Doesn't this view transfer the present centrality of private property back to "primitive" times? Moreover, there is no reason to think that property owned by families would necessitate or lead to male-dominated families. The existence of male domination and private property cannot be explained unless we postulate a whole structure of society in which power derives from and is exercised by males as well as by a property-based ruling class. All men are kings in their castles, no matter what or who they are in the King's castle.

In short, the dynamic which Engels sees centered in property and inheritance must also be grounded in a struggle for power, in the dialectic of sex. Changes in the mode of production are not a sufficient explanation for the overthrow of mother-right. On another level, even though it is doubtful that a matriarchy ever existed, Engels nonetheless needed to postulate one so that he could paradoxically avoid following out the implications of his statement about the modes of production and reproduction. *Women* (communal property) are overthrown by *men* (private property): Engels only examines property relations, not relations between men and women, and hence does not carry

out a thorough analysis of the mode of reproduction. In fact, the mode of production and the mode of reproduction are not necessarily in harmony, and contradictions can be overcome by force, by the maintenance of patriarchy, and by realignments of the family, and realignments within the family.

Marx acknowledges this when he discusses "the natural division of labor in the family."¹³ Marx means "natural" in a very specific sense, i.e., "uncivilized." "Natural" is the opposite of "social." So the "natural" division of labor in the family must be based on the capacity of women to bear children, and since they bear them, it is "convenient" (Engels) for them to also raise children. Marx explicitly acknowledges that the distribution of labor and its products is unequal *within* the family and that it is unequal because the man has control over the woman and children and can do with their labor and reproductive power what he wills.

Property is the power of controlling others' labor.¹⁴ Marx does not explain how/why men got this power. Furthermore, he says that the slavery latent in the family is the "nucleus" of later forms of property, which are just higher forms of essentially the same relation. Although the question of how men got this initial power is still unresolved, its existence permits men to gain other, more extensive and elaborate forms of property and power. Thus we can argue that "patriarchal privilege" is both a foundation for ("primitive accumulation"?) and basis of men's economic power. Once the initial act of expropriation (women and children as property) is car-

ried out, men can use their differential power bases to subordinate other men through gift-giving, wife-trading, etc. To destroy men's privileged position in the family means to take control over our own labor power and thus it is analogous to removing the privilege of appropriation of surplus value from the capitalist.

In fact, Marx himself seems to be making a similar analogy in his next paragraph when he says:

the division of labor offers us the first example for the fact that man's [woman's] own act [childbearing, labor for the man] becomes an alien power opposed to him [her]—as long as man [woman] remains in natural society, that is, as long as a split exists between the particular and the common interest, and as long as the activity is not voluntarily, but naturally divided. For as soon as labor is distributed, each person has a particular, exclusive area of activity which is imposed on him [her] and from which he [she] cannot escape.¹⁵

Translated into feminist terms, Marx's argument means that patriarchy is a form of individual expropriation which constricts the possibility of developing a communal form of society. The man's private possession of women and children leads to the anti-social form of private and privatistic families. Nonetheless, the man has an interest in maintaining this form of property; he benefits directly from this inequality. Furthermore, women will remain enslaved as long as they are subject to a "natural" as opposed to "social" division of labor.

Marx does not point out, however, that the division of labor has different consequences for men and women.

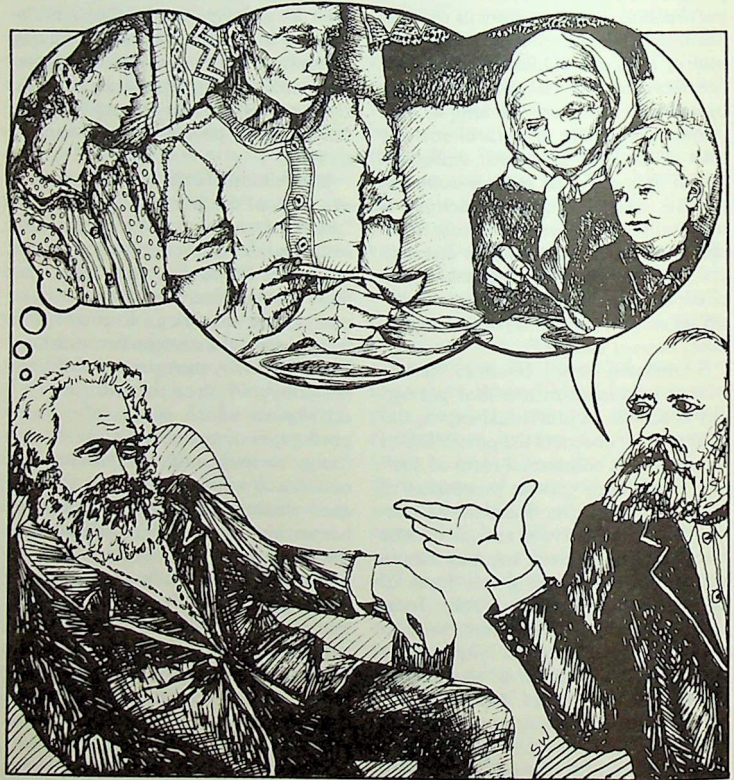
Men go outside the home; the family is the base from which they can move out. Women remain embedded in the family, and the split which results from the sexual division of labor (particular/common, private/public), reinforces the powerlessness and exploitation of the woman.¹⁶ While historically neither men nor women can escape their exclusive areas of activity, men's sphere has expanded and increased in importance while women's area of activity (the family) has decreased in importance. Men, having committed the first act of expropriation and having accumulated their first property, are free to expand their holdings and power. Women remain slaves.

In addition, Marx has an ambiguous view of the family. He states that "the third circumstance entering into historical development from the very beginning is the fact that men who daily remake their own lives begin to make other men, begin to propogate: [they create] the relation between husband and wife, parents and children, *the family.*"¹⁷ Since the two forms of activity to which Marx refers—the production of material life (food, clothing, shelter), and the creation of new needs which arise once the old ones are satisfied—are constitutive of human history, we might assume that the mode of reproduction is just as important as the mode of production itself. Indeed, in the paragraph following, Marx calls the production of persons and the mode of cooperation which accompanies it a "productive force."¹⁸ Marx implies that the family could be treated as the "mode of cooperation" with which the production of persons is allied. At the same time,

however, Marx says that the family becomes a "subordinate" relationship as society becomes more complex. This would imply that although historically the family was one of three aspects of historical development, it no longer retains any independence and can only be understood as a subset of some more central, autonomous aspect. However, Marx does

not tell us here *what* the family becomes subordinate to or how this occurs—a typical failing of Marxist discussions of the family.

Finally, any mention of women as *women*, or of how their historical development might have proceeded differently from men's is glaringly absent from Marx's discussion. Indeed, this absence points to the dangers in-



herent in any analysis of women's oppression which relies solely on a history of the changes in the mode of production. *Without an analysis of patriarchy, women as historically specific beings disappear.*

This is where socialist feminist theory must begin. We must trace the history of the mode of reproduction and its changing forms of social cooperation. We must work out the relation between the mode of reproduction and the mode of production, with special attention to the different experiences of women and men within this history (the dialectics of sex as well as the dialectics of class).

In order to carry out such an analysis, we must overcome the simplistic determinism we have inherited. (Marxists have their equivalent of the Holy Grail—the search for the contradiction from which everything else follows.) An analysis of the mode of reproduction requires considering psychological and sexual-political dimensions which remain almost untouched in Marxist literature.

Patriarchal Ideology and Feminist Theory

Georg Lukacs shows us the interaction between self-interest and theoretical unclarity:

The hegemony of the bourgeoisie really does embrace the whole of society in its own interests (and in this it has had some success). To achieve this it was forced both to develop a coherent theory of economics, politics, and society (which in itself presupposes and amounts to a 'Weltanschauung'),†† and also to make conscious and sustain its faith in its own

*mission to control and organize society.*¹⁹

His words apply to men's protection of their interests as well as to the bourgeoisie. Any ruling group protects its hegemony by making universally valid rules out of currently existing relationships. In addition, however, the ruling group must develop a clear enough grasp of reality to be able to control and manipulate it. A ruling group thus claims objectivity, but only elucidates those aspects of relations which are in its interest to know. For example, bourgeois economists could develop laws of the market but could not develop the Marxist labor theory of value or the concept of surplus value. The self-interest of any ruling group must necessarily lead it to ignore the deeper contradictory aspects of reality which underlie the immediately given, and which provide possibilities for revolt and liberation.

Lukacs contrasts the bourgeoisie's need for mystification to the proletariat's need for an analysis of the real social relations underlying the production and exchange of things.²⁰ He adds a warning that is as relevant to feminists as it is to socialists:

When the vulgar Marxists detach themselves from this central point of view, i.e., from the point where a proletarian class consciousness arises, they thereby place themselves on the level of consciousness of the bourgeoisie. And that the bourgeoisie fighting on its own ground will prove superior to the proletariat both economically and ideologically can come as a surprise only to a vulgar Marx-

††"Weltanschauung" refers to a world view.

ist.²¹

Feminists must understand that in order to maintain their hegemony, men will attempt to deny or obscure the experiences and insights of women who challenge their privilege and power. Men will deny that they have any special self-interest because in order to maintain hegemony, they must insist that they are speaking for and acting in the interest of society as a whole. If we deny the lessons of our own experience and/or try to fit that experience into categories established by men, we will lose both the meaning of that experience and our struggle for liberation (men cannot be beaten on their own ground).

This means we have to stop "acting like women," by justifying our theory and practice to men. We must stop seeking their approval of what we do. In particular, we must stop proving we are more socialist than they.

Men do not have a monopoly on truth. Indeed, their self-interest keeps them from seeing the totality. The "personal is political" because our *experience* drives us both to understand and to transform the present (indeed the two activities must be aspects of each other, integrally connected). If we deny our own experience, if we decide *a priori* to fit those experiences into categories which others have decided are politically correct, we lose the very possibility for comprehending and overcoming our oppression.

In summary, it is the orthodox Marxists who have been insufficiently dialectical, and who have never adopted the standpoint of women. They did not adequately deal with the "woman question," in part because they never really explored reproduc-

tion as a crucial moment of history—both in its internal relations and in its relation to the other moments of history. An overly deterministic methodology which focuses exclusively on production in the narrowest sense, will, of necessity, ignore women and the dialectic of sex because women's labor often takes place "outside" the market. Moreover, determinism leads one to focus on things rather than on relations, and patriarchy is above all a social relation.

One cannot ignore the fact that most socialist theorists are men. It is not in their interest to acknowledge the existence of patriarchy. Engels' work is a clear example of the distortions and omissions typical of orthodox Marxists. After the opening chapter of the *Origins*, the book becomes an analysis of the changing nature of production. Reproduction and the family disappear, "hidden from history" indeed.

Historically, socialists have put off women's demands until "after the revolution," or have defined women's demands as particularistic, divisive of the working class, not central to socialist revolution or society. Again, we must ask: who defines what is central and what is not? On what grounds? Working class demands are defined by Marx as both particular and universal: this is precisely what defines it as the revolutionary class. Working class demands as traditionally defined by Marxists speak to transforming the social relations of production. We women must speak to the question of reproduction, because in that realm, as well as in production, our labor is being expropriated.

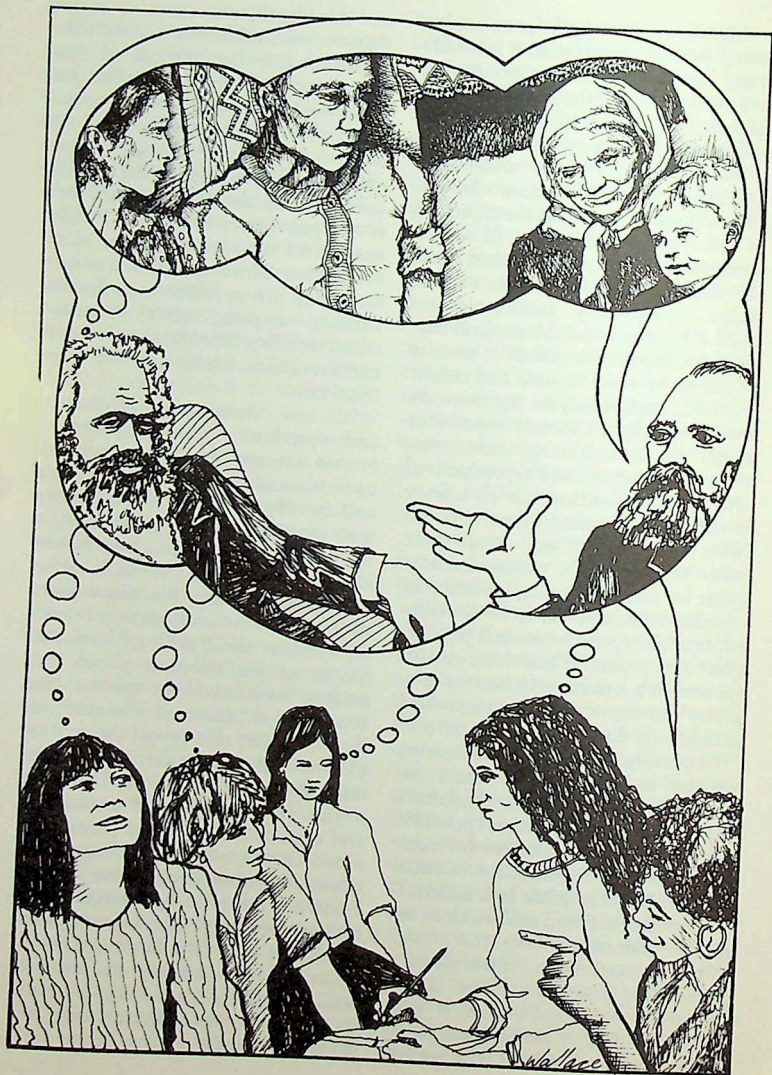
Marxism can only help us understand women's oppression if it is radically reconceptualized. Specifically, we must develop a theory of social relations, and analyze history as the development of social relations.

Marxism can help us understand one aspect of social relations: that between the exploiters and the exploited in the realm of production. (It was to understand these relations that Marx developed categories such as surplus value, commodity fetishism, and class.) Furthermore, Marx (and Hegel) developed a method—dialectics—one of the most flexible and richest modes of social analysis. But there are other, equally important aspects of social relations, among them, relations centering around reproduction. Despite his insistence that all history is rooted in concrete human beings, Marx had little to say about these other relations. The categories adequate for comprehending the realm of reproduction have yet to be developed; though reproduction and production are separate but inter-related spheres, it is a mistake to impose categories developed for the comprehension of one directly onto the other.

In developing these new categories, we need to look beyond Marxist theory. Psychoanalysis, structuralism, and phenomenology have provided many valuable possibilities for comprehending the reproduction of social persons, but they often lack a historical dimension. Freud enables us to begin to understand how sex/gender comes to constitute a central element of our very being as persons. Under patriarchy we do not become a person but a male or female person. In many ways our gender *is* who we are

and this identification goes far deeper than sex roles understood in the sense of socialization or intentional (and easily changed) choices of roles and behavior. The theory of the unconscious, the role of sexuality, and the Oedipus complex which traces out on an unconscious level the consequences of the domination of the father—all provide a starting point for the analysis of the social relations of reproduction. Structuralism and phenomenology are excellent tools for examining ongoing social relations without falling into the simple determinism characteristic of orthodox Marxism.

We can conceptualize production and reproduction as two spheres of human life and history, constituted by the social relations within them and by the relations of persons to their own biology and to the natural world. These two spheres have historically been related to each other through the family. For this reason, the organization of the family reveals *information* about both spheres, and shows us the attempts people are making to bring these spheres into some sort of harmony. The study of the family can also reveal the contradictions between the demands of production and reproduction. The more disjunctive the nature of production and reproduction become (conceptualized by Marx as the difference between use and exchange value, and by Freud as the conflict between the pleasure and reality principles), the more possible it is for the family to retain an aspect of autonomy and uniqueness. The categories we employ must do justice to these disjunctions, not submerge them.



Conclusion

As feminists, we must not assume that there are Marxist answers to feminist questions. Our history is not the same as men's—neither on an individual nor on a collective level. Until we understand the mode of reproduction more thoroughly, we cannot begin to bridge the often discussed gap between Marx and Freud. To comprehend reproduction, we must continue to explicate our experience with the help of psychoanalysis, structuralism, and phenomenology. This is not to deny the interrelation of the world of production and reproduction, or to ignore the fact that we are shaped by both—indeed we need to retain consciousness of this inter-relatedness while carrying on our explorations. We must come to understand how and why men obtained and kept power over women and how this power relation varied historically. We must explore the consequences this relation has for the ways we are constituted as persons. We must learn how power relations interact with and affect relations of production. Finally, we must discover the most effective sources for change.

Marxism alone cannot answer our questions. But if we retain and expand our original insights into our experience as women, we will be operating within the spirit which originally motivated Marx—that history is rooted in human needs and social relations. By confronting Marxism with feminism we require an overcoming, a retaining of the old within the new. What we will create will be neither Marxism nor psychoanalysis, but a much more adequate form of social

theory. The concepts used by Marx, Freud, and others are only guidelines along the way, to be retained in a new form within a more integrated and inclusive theory. For now, we have only glimpses of the necessity and possibility of such a theory, through the frustration we encounter in trying to answer feminist questions.

Footnotes

This paper could not have been written without the ideas and discussion provided by Jessica Benjamin, Jean Elshtain, Anne Ferguson, and Heidi Hartmann. However, they are not responsible for the final result.

¹ Juliet Mitchell, *Woman's Estate* (New York: Random House, 1971), Margaret Benson, "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation," *Monthly Review*, XXI: 4 (1969), Eli Zaretsky, "Capitalism, the Family and Personal Life," *Socialist Revolution*, III: 1-3 (1973), and the articles on women's labor in *Radical America*, VII: 4-5 (1973) all insist that in the last instance contradictions within the sphere of production are the crucial determinant of women's status. The radical feminists emphasize patriarchy as either equal to class or as the first form of class oppression which still underlies all forms of oppression. See Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex* (New York: Bantam, 1971), and Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970), as well as Barbara Burris, "The Fourth World Manifesto," *Notes From the Third Year*.

² Frederick Engels, *The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, ed. Eleanor Burke Leacock (New York: International Publishers, 1972). All citations from Engels refer to this edition.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁴ See, for example, Claude Levi-Strauss, "The Family," *Man, Culture, and Society*, ed. Harry Shapiro (London: Oxford University Press, nd) for the varieties of work done by women in primitive cultures.

⁵ See Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" *Women, Culture, and*

Society, eds. Michelle Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), pp. 67-73.

⁶ Karen Sachs, *Women, Culture, and Society*, eds. Rosaldo and Lamphere, pp. 211-212.

⁷ Engels, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-120.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹¹ Suzie Olah, "Impolite Questions about Frederick Engels," *A Feminist Journal* 1:1 (March, 1970), p. 4.

¹² Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

¹³ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The German Ideology," in Lloyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat (eds.) *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), p. 424.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, (My comments in brackets.)

¹⁶ For an elaboration of this point see Rosaldo, "Theoretical Overview," *Women, Culture, and Society*, eds. Rosaldo and Lamphere, pp. 23-42.

¹⁷ Marx and Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 424.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 421.

¹⁹ Georg Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness* (Boston: MIT Press, 1971), pp. 65-66.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Jane Flax teaches political science at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and works in an experimental living/learning community there. She has been an active feminist for many years.



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Critique & Commentary

By JEANNE HORBACH HSU

Gracia Clark in "The Beguines: Medieval Women's Communities" (Vol. I, No. 4 *Quest*) brings out much fascinating information on this little known organization of pious women living a communal life according to their own rules. She traces their history, their struggles for independence and identity, and she gives a good description of life in the medieval beguinages and the beguines' role in the community. She leaves them at the end of the 14th century, when the Church is finally successful in enforcing the beguines' obedience to a supervising friar. From that point, the once independent communities "declined sharply into charity homes and sheltered workshops."

This last remark could not be more to the point. The beguines did survive until the present times, but they offer a different picture from what was true in the Middle Ages. I was very surprised to read of their independent spirit because, in the popular mind, their image has become, with some justification, that of fairly cloistered women, active in taking care of the poor, the sick and the elderly, and addicted to time-consuming ancient crafts such as lacemaking, where the pay is not, and cannot be, commensurate with the time and skill required. As has happened so many times, the established powers managed to bring a self-sufficient group back into line by reducing its members to their "proper" roles (as women) of auxiliaries, caretakers of the poor, the sick and the elderly.

Most historians agree that the Beguines' movement was the strongest in what is now Belgium. It probably started in the southern French-speaking part of the country in the 12th century. Curiously enough, the beguinages remaining now, and which can still be visited, are all located in the northern Flemish-speaking part of the country. At one time there were as many as ninety-four beguinages dotting the country. Twenty of them still remain.

The beguinages' history after the middle ages has not always been a peaceful one. During the devastating wars of the 16th C., the beguines often had to disperse and go back to a lay life. In the 17th C., during a peaceful period, many of the beguinages were rebuilt (most of the extant buildings are of that period) and beguines gathered once again. At the

time the French Revolutionary armies swept over Europe, their properties, assimilated to Church property, were confiscated, and their houses used as shelters for destitute families. Later, some of them were returned to their previous owners, and Napoleon, recognizing the usefulness of the beguinages, gave permission for them to reorganize and to keep a wall around their compounds. During the 1815 campaign, ending with Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, near Brussels, the beguines took care of the wounded and the sick with great devotion. They were also cited for their exemplary behavior during a cholera epidemic in 1832. During the 19th C., several attempts to instill a new life into the beguines movement were made, but without much success. Now, in the late 20th C., beguinage as a movement has almost disappeared. Only in Ghent (the *Small Beguinage* or *Klein Begijnhof of Our Lady of Ter Hoy*) is communal life still practiced by approximately sixty women. In Bruges, since 1934, Benedictine nuns have been occupying the beautiful grounds. They have somewhat modified their habits to resemble the old dress of the ancient beguines and the tourist can get the feeling of old, walking around the square and the narrow cobbled streets. One can even visit a typical beguine's room or apartment.

Other beguinages are used differently, as cultural centers in Diest or in Hasselt; low cost housing, as in Tongeren; or old people's homes in many others, even student housing in Louvain. Most contain at least a small museum; the site and the buildings are protected as historical and artistic monuments and efforts are made to preserve their character. Two years ago, the Belgian government called for a commemoration of beguinages and abbeys; a new guide was published, where I found much of the information cited here.

To the visitor, a beguinage offers the aspect of a small town, surrounded by a wall, with the gates closing at night. Small houses, sometimes with a garden in front, line the immaculate cobblestone streets. A church occupies the center. The individual houses used to belong to the wealthier beguines who kept control of their property, while the poorer women had a room in the convent or collective house. "La Grande Dame," who managed the community, lived in the "Grande Maison."

Gracia Clark has touched upon their role in the community as teachers and examples, and has described their organization, each house having its own rules and its own emphasis. The beguinages were, in troubled times, a haven where spiritual and intellectual pursuits were still possible. They are still inspiring places to visit, filled with a strong sense of self-sufficiency and community. The art treasures they have preserved leave no doubt as to the quality of life within those walls.

Jeanne Horback Hsu, born and educated in Belgium, has taught high school French and just received a Master in Library Sciences from the U. of Ca., Berkeley.

Alphabet Soup

Women and Mixed Movements

SWP MLP CRUSA NCLC
YSA CORE BBP
YAWF NAM ESTE
RU MPOC
S&S
SOS YAF SDS
FDR IPS
NCLC PUSH MCLC
SNC

By PEG AVERILL

graphics by Jacky English

Peg Averill serves on the Political Council of the Mass Party Organizing Committee, and is acting editor of its NIC women newsletter. She helped found Art for People in Washington, D.C. and is a contributing artist for Liberation News Service. She argues that Left political organizations are being affected, both directly and indirectly, by feminist developments. She also notices a cross-fertilization between feminists new to political work as such and women new to feminist politics. This process is encouraging more and more women to struggle with the questions which go to the heart of the rationale for mixed Left politics—questions of class, race, sex, constituencies and survival organizing for new power bases. Averill views the mixed Left as neither predominantly white nor predominantly male. It is made up of people—particularly poor and minority people—who for a long time have been active in their own communities on a variety of levels. She includes in the Left all progressive forces, that is, any struggle which looks beyond liberalism.

Q. Recognizing that more and more women are participating in political organizations which include both men and women, can you discuss what there is available for women?

A. There are two ways to look at what's available for women in mixed

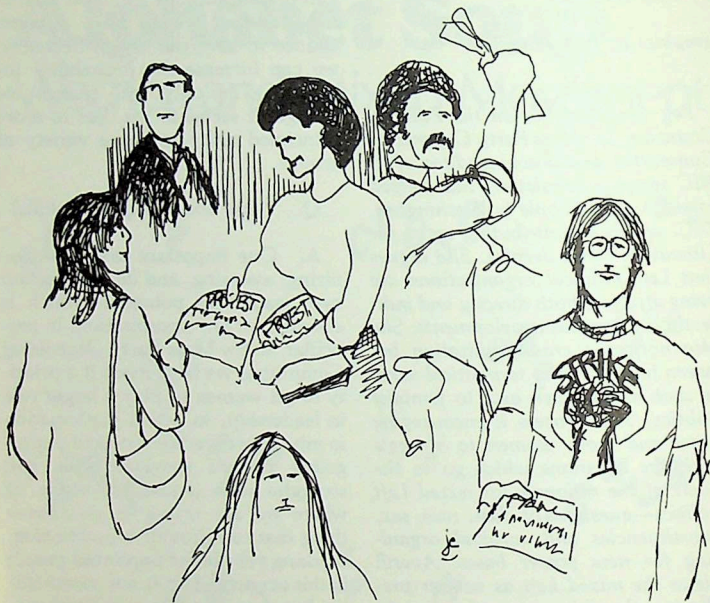
Left organizations. First, there's survival—together we all have a better chance to save our skins. Secondly, we can increase the probability for change. The only real chance for change, it seems to me, lies in more principled unity among a variety of groups.

Q. What about acquiring skills?

A. One important skill is recognizing, assessing, and developing our own leadership potential—which is essential for any organization. In particular, in the Mass Party Organizing Committee, we have made it a priority to get women to play a larger role in leadership, in active participation in mixed work, while trying to put together today's survival skills and struggles with a socialist vision of where we are trying to go...something that can provide a functioning, working vehicle for oppressed people in this country. This is not paternalistic, but is an effort to make sure women share in what's going to happen.

Q. That's interesting, especially since developing leadership is also a priority to many sections of the feminist movement. How does this occur in mixed organizations?

A. Women need to recognize where their leadership potential comes from—whether it's from political participation, their experience of the women's movement, or their personal backgrounds. For example, I believe that class and race exert a unique kind of influence on leadership development. A lot of dirt-poor and working-class women who became active



in civil rights and other community struggles did so only as a last form of resistance and survival. The courage of these women could fill volumes and has hardly made the history books. Leadership for them is simultaneously survival and resistance. It's the healthy and necessary response of people who find their options limited or even non-existent. For better-educated and more economically secure women, leadership is more a matter of personal preference, moral principle, and ego.

I'm not saying this to cut down other women, but it seems to me we must be really clear about the differ-

ing widths of survival margins of different women, and the immense influence this has on our ways of living and working. It seems quite logical that where there isn't a real personal urgency, the reasons for moving, for trying to find a solution or even just some temporary relief, tend to be more introspective and, well, intellectual. The less the need for an analysis or action of some kind, the more intellectual and leisurely leadership tends to be. A middle class or better-off woman of good intentions can recognize the seriousness of a given problem but, particularly in mixed organizations, she may still hold back her

ideas out of fear of being wrong, or sounding bossy, or being misinterpreted as egotistic or unnecessarily aggressive. Women facing grave situations tend not to care, or not to be able to afford to care so much about image and timing. So, a woman's past history and needs will determine whether and how she exercises leadership. Certainly there is the likelihood that some poor women will not exercise leadership—initiate action—because they don't feel as well educated or as verbally effective in presenting their ideas. But, at the point a woman looks at the problems and determines to risk herself by offering leadership in initiating or accelerating struggle, I would say it comes from a real gut commitment—a survival understanding and a refusal to lie down and die, a decision to resist psychologically and politically. Class and race are terrible, powerful, effective weapons which keep people divided. These are weapons which keep real struggle—which means active leadership from the oppressed—at a low level. And they're weapons which have worked effectively for a long time.

Q. How about an example of women's political participation? Where have you seen that develop into women's leadership?

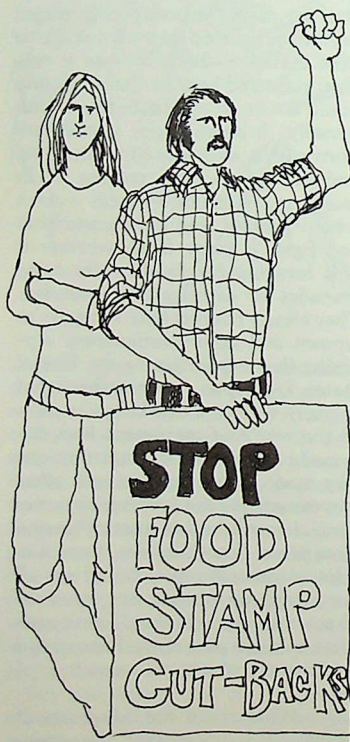
A. Well, I'd use China as an example because it allows for a more expanded vision of the possibilities. . . free of capitalism. . . as a frame of reference. The women there believe that the Party, the revolution, and the country are theirs, and always refer to "our party, our country," etc. It must be great to feel that way! They

know that it was their blood spilled to build it. They went to prison, they organized, they did whatever it took to pull it off. There's no sense of intimidation or disassociation or disowning the crucial role they played, whether it was under male leadership or not. The Chinese women we talked with in Shanghai pointed out that when they became involved in revolutionary activities, there was no precedent whatsoever for women being leaders. So, of course, they had male leadership, but the male leadership encouraged women to develop their own skills, to take initiative—both because it was their right and because the revolution could not be won without them. Universally, it seems, poor women are born with a sixth sense for surviving and finding ways of making it. In many, many instances it was women who organized women to participate and fight at every level, whether it was foraging for food or throwing grenades or carrying the wounded. They clearly connect their struggles as women and as revolutionaries. Applying that experience to the United States, I felt upon returning here that so many women in the Left who joined the women's movement had disowned the fantastic contributions they made in the anti-war and other movements. *We did* accomplish something of worth in this country during those years. If nothing else, there was a lot of consciousness raised on all fronts and we should be proud of what we did to build that. Those activities, too, are part of the history and development of activist women.

Q. What about the influences of the women's movement? You men-

tioned that feminism also was important in influencing women's leadership potential in mixed organizations.

A. The women's movement is having a cumulative effect on mixed organizations in promising ways. Some of the women who courageously initiated (or attempted to) feminist perspectives early on, helped to alter the entire political environment, to



make possible more input and leadership—and not only on the Left. Even women in the liberal parties have begun to flex their political muscle, and to make waves. Who could have predicted the "Women make policy, not coffee!" buttons worn by well-dressed women *inside* the 1972 Democratic Convention while others wore sisterhood buttons in the streets outside? And some of those women, once started, are going to refuse to stop growing politically.

This is also affecting many men who have decided to stop and take stock of what's going on. All this obviously affects process, openness to new approaches, and the ability to respect and really hear the input of women. It puts an emphasis on educating oneself on the so-called women's issues—like sterilization—so these issues become part of all demands. This makes it easier, more supportive, to work with women's groups within mixed organizations. In the MPOC, we have a name for it—dualism—which means that party building and other organizational affiliation around women's issues, or racial or ethnic concerns, can be worked on simultaneously. It can mean either parallel organizational and/or personal commitments. Clearly, this opens up a lot of possibilities for coalitions.

Q. What kinds of coalitions do you think can work?

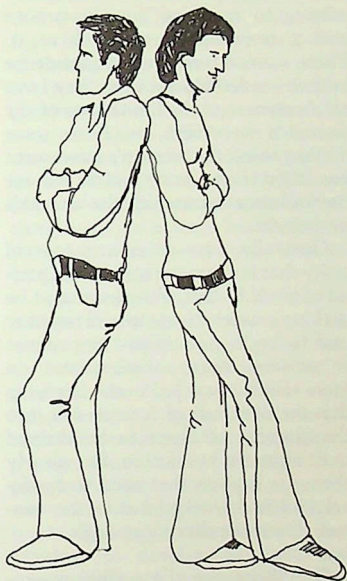
A. There are two kinds of coalitions which can be very important right now. First, there are local survival coalitions that can be made up of radicals and reformers (and sometimes non-reformers) at least in the

beginning. These can be coalitions formed around specific issues—food stamp cutbacks, for instance. Such local survival coalitions can build into a second kind of coalition—a network. There are a number of these around, which focus on survival, party building, or anti-imperialist issues.

Unified action is becoming increasingly important. That's why a party, to unify all these struggles, is so important on the Left. Although the women's movement has begun selective organizing around some key issues and developed some good local models for work, the problem remains that given the complex and interrelated issues, we aren't strong enough—divided—to deal with them adequately. There is also a growing awareness in the women's movement that capitalism creates conditions which keep feminist solutions from being developed. The awareness of the accelerating decline of capitalism, and the subsequent increase in economic and political repression, bring feminists ever closer to the position that while socialism may not be totally synonymous with women's liberation, capitalism makes it impossible. I'm willing to bet that fact will continue to influence the relationship between the women's movement and the mixed Left.

Q. What are the reasons women are coming into mixed political organizations, especially women who have been working in women's groups?

A. Women who are entering, or re-entering the mixed Left from women's unions or other kinds of femi-



nist groups, seem to want to broaden the nature of the struggles they are involved in, particularly in terms of class and race. They want to do this while keeping a primary focus on women and women's issues. In that sense, I'd say the women's movement is very important—providing a new consciousness, a new sense of rootedness, but also creating a need to understand more fully the class and race bias which underpins this country. I feel really good about the leadership and direction I've seen these women exercise, and I've learned a lot watching them do it. I've been impressed by

their honesty and candidness in admitting to race and class ignorance and a commitment to work at it. These women have a clear confidence in their leadership abilities; they have an awareness of the limitations of the women's movement, but in no sense do they think the women's movement has failed them. And most do not see themselves as having left the women's movement.

Generally, I see a tendency toward unity that is characteristic of this period of the U.S. Left. People seem to be making greater efforts to pull together and to begin principled compromise to achieve more cohesion and do more effective work. I'm not implying that the demands of women fall into the category of those to be shelved until after the revolution, but clearly there are aspects that need to be developed and worked out in the context of a more diverse struggle.

Q. What are the problems women face working in mixed organizations?

A. There are a lot of frustrations right now. There is a lot of divisiveness, and there is a tendency to relate primarily to male political figures. In addition, for women who've worked only with women from similar race and class backgrounds, dealing with women (as well as men) from different races and classes can be threatening. While certainly some women's organizations include people from different race and class backgrounds and not all mixed organizations do, it can be a problem. For example, when MPOC began to work with Black construction workers in New York, it

took time to understand and relate to what they were saying. There were class/race/sex and experiential differences. But we *have* found ways of working together. Racism is something everyone is trying to deal with in that setting. Sexism is certainly there, but the women's movement has had an impact. For example, one of the black construction workers was trying to find ways for men's and women's caucuses to communicate, in part because he thought that the women's caucus was doing important things, and he wanted to learn from them. This is not to say that sexism is being adequately dealt with, but once people are committed to doing something, they can begin to move beyond the problem.

Q. Can we talk about women's issues? There are disagreements among feminist groups on what makes an issue feminist. In your opinion, what are the issues that directly affect women? And how are these issues handled by mixed Left organizations?

A. Personally, I see women's issues first as questions of survival, and second, as questions of power. I'm defining power as people's energy in a formal and informal sense. Survival comes first, because I don't think you can get to power without survival. Part of survival, aside from having a place to live, something to eat, something to feed your kids, to get clothes on them—is getting basic information on things like nutrition. Another part of that survival has got to be building knowledge and tools for change. Tying the concept of survival skills with women's issues in mixed organiza-

tions brings several examples to mind. Work around unemployment and strike support, compensation delays and cutbacks, and new restrictions on government programs, all of which affect the lives of poor and working-class women. This is especially important since many women are, for a variety of reasons, the economic heads of families. Generally, I would say these survival areas are the main organizing thrust of the mixed Left at present, with unity building efforts a close second.

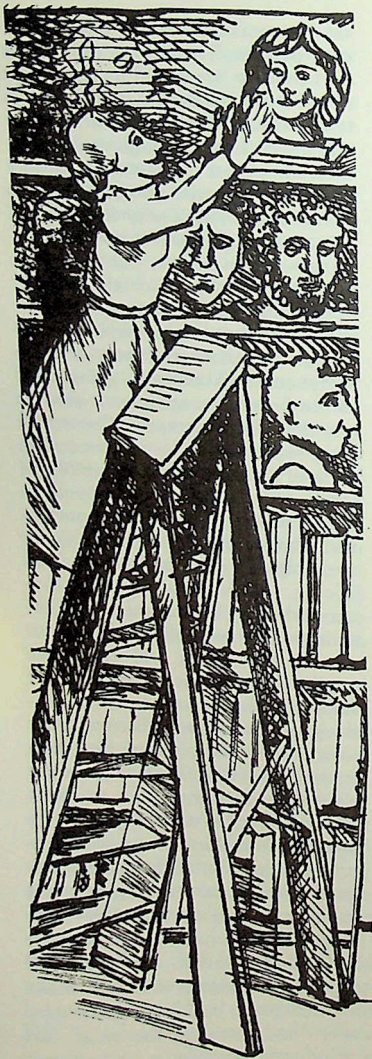
In both these areas, feminist organizations and activities have shown mixed groups which issues are the most viable areas in which to begin work, and have helped to develop and publicize tools people need to fight their own battles. And, of course, whenever you have a tool that is a badly-needed tool for women, it is a badly-needed tool for almost any poor or oppressed people.

Q. What do you see as immediate future tasks for the Left generally—both women's organizations and mixed groups?

A. Basic education is going to determine the success of our organizing. During the Vietnam war, we talked about educating people, and then it was seen as a liberal way of not doing anything. But really it *was* fundamental to moving forward. People saw education as less important than organizing, but you really do build on analysis. People can't be organized unless they already have a basic analysis of what the problems are. Where community organizing or wider organizations are being built, they rest

on what was done in the past to educate people. There's an old saying that children are raised by the values of their grandparents. I think this is true politically as well. We are just beginning to know enough radical history to make a difference. It is only now being recorded and presented on a wide scale. That's why the 20's and 30's are so important. It isn't that nothing went on before, but that those years are a really important time for us to build on.

Left organizations—whether all women or women and men—need to accept and build on small gains, need to not be discouraged, and need to gear for the long haul. The whole thing really has to be understood in terms of increasing the probability of change. Our success will depend on people making a long-term commitment and working to develop higher levels of struggle. We have to keep fighting, to develop women's caucuses which will pressure mixed organizations to get political results for women, and which will encourage broader participation from more women. If women have to leave mixed organizations again, then everyone is lost. Part of this turns on how men respond, but women have a larger role to play than men, just as Black and other Third World people have a larger role in making progress on important issues. We all have been under-represented, and each group has unique contributions to make—contributions which have gone unrecognized and unrecorded—and it is these unique contributions that will make the difference in building mass organizations and instilling the belief that revolution is possible.



The Wrote &

By CAROL ADAMS

graphics by Claudia Vess

"Remember, I pray you, the famous women of former ages."

Mary Astell, 1694.

"What the woman thought is not recorded, any more than the lion has erected a statue to the victim in the hunt."

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 1914.

"Documents originate among the powerful ones, the conquerors. History therefore is nothing but a compilation of the depositions made by assassins with respect to their victims and themselves."

Simone Weil, 1943.

"Justice and Injustice are administered by their Hands: Courts and Schools are filled with Sages; 'tis Men who dispute for Truth, as well as Men who argue against it: Histories are writ by them, they recount each others great exploits, and have always done so."

Mary Astell, 1706.

Winners have always told their stories; those who were defeated lost not only the battle, but their voices, denied even the ability to articulate their pain and suffering. Throughout recorded history, women have voiced their experiences, sometimes pointing to women's oppression and labelling

One Who Loved Her Sex

male hegemony as "patriarchy." Their perceptions have been lost to us; historians have failed to see these analyses, or worse yet, have perverted, distorted, mistranslated, obscured or destroyed the words of their victims. At the end of the nineteenth century, and again today, a strong interest in our history has catapulted us into seeking through musty old libraries, searching through attics and basements, and talking to our mothers and grandmothers in hopes of reconstructing our hidden, denied experiences.

One of the frustrations which besets an enterprising feminist scholar is that women often had only an oral tradition, talking while quilting or watching the children. Writing was a hazardous occupation; when women pursued it they often spent their energy hiding their work. Our history is most likely found by reading recipe cards, gravestones, diaries, old wives tales, and dedications to men's books.

This paper will probe the historical exclusion of women by examining the history of one woman, Mary Astell. For us to insure a future where women are taken seriously, we must begin to take ourselves and our foremothers seriously. By examining what happened to Mary Astell, perhaps we can learn of the pitfalls we must avoid.

Mary Astell's Writings

Mary Astell wrote at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. While most of

her books and essays are addressed to fiery controversies of her time which have since lost their vitality, two of her books are early feminist treatises which could have importance today, if they were available.

Mary was a well-educated, unmarried woman, who held a salon that attracted many educated, progressive-thinking women of the upper class. Her contact with these women pushed her to examine the problems of women, concentrating on the need for education and economic independence. Her first work, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, appeared in 1694 and concerns itself with questions of marriage, education and independence. Women's ignorance was acquired, she claimed, not natural. "The cause therefore of the defects we labour under is, if not wholly, yet at least in the first place to be ascribed to the mistakes of our education, which like an Error in the first Concoction spreads its ill influence thro' all our Lives."¹ She argued fervently and passionately that women have better things to do with their time than concern themselves with fashions or men. "We value *them* (men) too much, and ourselves too little if we place any part of our worth in their opinion, and do not think ourselves capable of Nobler things than the pitiful conquest of some worthless heart."² To remedy this she proposed the establishment of an academic institution for women.

Some Reflections Upon Marriage

published in 1700, continued to explore these ideas. After outlining the duplicity and selfishness which influence men's choice in marriage, she stated, "a woman, indeed can't properly be said to choose, all that is allow'd her, is to refuse or accept what is offer'd."³ In describing the marriage relationship Mary continually used slave imagery, referring to man's dominion and tyranny, women's submission and martyrdom.

Hinting that marriage was a curse for women and that women needed economic independence, proved too controversial. She was attacked from all sides. The divine ordination of women's subjugation was one of the most frequently invoked arguments to refute her statements. This particularly enraged Mary, a very religious woman, and in her preface to the third edition of her book she made her strongest feminist statements. She queried, "If 'all men are born free', how is it that all women are born slaves?"⁴ She bemoaned that "women are not so well united as to form an Insurrection. They are for the most part Wise enough to love their chains, and to discern how very becomingly they set."⁵

In a later book, Mary Astell summarized her position: "*Most of, if not all, the Follies and Vices that women are subject to [for I meddle not with the Men] are owing to our paying too great a deference to other People's judgements, and too little to our own.*"⁶ Women deciding for themselves, taking their lives into their own hands, becoming independent—these were Mary Astell's visions. In her own life she influenced many women of her time to follow

step. In the late 1720's she convinced her friends to begin a charity school for poor girls in Chelsea; it opened before she died. Some girls today are recipients of scholarships from the money bequeathed by Mary's friends to the school. Her actions, like her thoughts, live on for us today.

Surprised by her insights, haunted by her visionary statements, startled by her harsh, militant language, frustrated and enraged by the great silence around her, I wanted to know why I had never learned about her writings. I was astonished by the number of books which do mention her, disappointed by the lack of understanding these writings display of her, and provoked by the insensitive way in which we as feminists have researched history.

Historical View of Mary Astell

The first contemporary recognition of Mary is found in John Evelyn's *Numismata*, published in 1697 and before she produced most of her writings. George Ballard wrote the first biography of her and included it in his *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain*. He hoped to bring public awareness of women who "have been passed by in silence by our greatest biographers."⁷ Ballard, writing just twenty years after her death, relied on a friend of hers, the great Anglo-Saxon scholar Elizabeth Elstob, for most of his information; he could find few written sources. Much of the information he gathered about her is mythical in content but was, as the years passed, taken as fact. After describing the birth-place and "genteel" education of "this great ornament of her sex and

country", his language flowers in effusive declarations of her concern for her sex. He accurately describes *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, but then the myths begin. Basing his information on a supposed relative of hers, he claimed:

"When she has accidentally seen needless visitors coming, whom she knew to be incapable of discoursing upon any useful subject, she would look out of her window, and jestingly tell them (as Cato did Nasica) "Mrs. Antell is 'not at home,' " and in good earnest keep them out, not suffering such triflers to make inroads upon her more serious hours."⁸ As this story became perverted through the years, one historian writing in 1974 claims that Mary Astell was a "man-hating recluse."⁹

Another myth which begins with Ballard is that her motive in publishing *Reflections Upon Marriage* "was her disappointment in a marriage contract with an eminent clergyman."¹⁰ He used this explanation to dismiss her "warmth of temper" in her discussion of marriage for she "carried her arguments with regard to the birthrights and privileges of her sex a little too far."¹¹ However, he acknowledged that *Reflections Upon Marriage*, as well as the Preface to the third edition, "make perhaps the strongest defence that ever yet appeared in print, of the rights and abilities of the fair sex."¹² Considering his expertise on women's writings, this is a statement not to be taken lightly.

Mary is complimented by Ballard for her "piety, charity, humility, friendship, and all the other graces which adorn the good Christian." The result of this extolling of her Christian

virtues is that her piety and self-sacrifice, feminine characteristics *par excellence*, displace her feminist thoughts, and leave one with an image of a severe, devout, straight-laced woman, rather than an angry, articulate feminist.

Imitations and outright plagiarisms of Ballard's work appear for the rest of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and slowly Mary's eccentricities start to outnumber her thoughts on women's positions.

In 1803, *Eccentric Biography; or Memoirs of Remarkable Female Characters*, appeared. While Ballard attempted to make known the "very many ingenious women of this nation, who were really possess'd of a great share of learning,"¹³ the author of *Eccentric Biography* hoped to instruct the female mind by pointing out the contrast of virtuous women with evil ones. Once again "the eminent clergyman" conveniently disappoints Mary, and so we need not put too much stock in her demands.¹⁴ Ballard has seen her as an "eminent woman," whereas later writers considered her increasingly freakish, her greatest eccentricity being her defense of the female sex.

A Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors, published in 1859, reached the height of condescension about Mary and her clergyman. The author, S. Austin Allibone, stated once again, that *Reflections Upon Marriage* resulted from Mary's disappointment in a marriage contract. Allibone then incorrectly attributes *Six Familiar Essays Upon Marriage, Crosses in Life, Love and Friendship* to her, and adds his condolences: "Poor Mary! Still

harping upon that gay deceiver!"¹⁵ This trivialization of her works affirms Sheila Rowbotham's assertion that an individual woman who is a spokeswoman for the freedom of all women "is an amusing incongruity, a titillating commodity, easily consumed."¹⁶ In just one hundred years from the time of George Ballard, Mary Astell's concerns about women had been diminished, distorted, consumed, and spewed forth in perverted interpretations by the English chron-

ed directly from a book on women throughout the ages, frequently without close attention being paid to the contents. It was disappointing that when Mary Astell was mentioned, her proposal for a school and her feminist statements were not mentioned. Her writings were discussed as relating chiefly to "religious controversy."¹⁷ This lack of historical knowledge is all the more frustrating since both Anthony and Stanton had a strong sense of history. They reprint-



clers (all male): her piety glorified, her dissatisfactions dismissed.

The first reference to Astell by a woman that I could find is in Sarah Hale's *Women's Record, or, Sketches of Distinguished Women, from the 'Beginning' till A.D. 1850*. Much of what is said about Mary is taken from Ballard. However, no discussion is made of her feminist thoughts. All give way to a description of her piety, chastity, humility, friendship, and abstemious nature.

The *Revolution*, Susan B. Anthony's and Elizabeth Cady Stanton's short-lived publication, often used short descriptions of worthy women for filler. It is obvious that the descriptions of these women are excerpt-

ed Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* because it was out of print, collected and published their monumental *History of Women's Suffrage* to insure that when they died the story of that struggle would not; and each worked on her own memoirs. They recognized that if they did not record their history, no one else would. Although Astell's works were widely available in England, I can find only one mention of her in the nineteenth century English feminist movement, an article in the *Westminster Review* in 1898.

I had hoped that one of the militant suffragettes would cry out "remember Mary Astell". Mrs. McIlquhan in *Westminster Review* did, in the most

striking, sympathetic, and understanding of all the essays I have read. While there are a few inaccuracies, she grasped the spirit of Mary Astell's writings, and tried to share them with her readers. She argued that Mary Astell should be considered as important as Mary Wollstonecraft in the development of feminist thought. After pointing out Mary's use of sarcasm and cynicism, Mrs. McIlquhan summed up what was most important about Mary Astell in a moving eulogy:

*"But less by her 'piercing wit than by her warmth of heart will Mary Astell be tenderly remembered. Her own words were 'She wrote as one who loved her sex.' She led the way for the ever-increasing procession of women who walk through life having their chief desire to work as women who love women, and to give services to enoble womanhood, though in their lives they may be very much misunderstood, and their services ignored and almost forgotten, like those of Mary Astell."*¹⁸

Except for Ballard and Mrs. McIlquhan, the authors of books on women worthies are transparently patronizing. It is insulting that over and over again, the arrogant presumption is that one book can contain all of the important facts about women in history. But perhaps the more damaging assumption was that the authors could decide who were "worthy women". Of course, the women who were chosen fit the authors' concepts of what a woman should be, and they often were women who Mary Astell would say were "wise enough to love their chains." It is a truism that we find in history what we want to find.

In the past, women who fulfilled society's strictures on women were extolled. So, Mary's life was adapted to fit these restraints. As we seek to free women from these restricting labels, we must be careful not to fall into the same pitfalls by simply substituting our own designations. The task of the feminist historian should be one of exploding images, roles, concepts, so that we neither have to label Mary a conservative, an educator, or a feminist, but instead allow her words and thoughts to speak for themselves. Once historians label her, box her into a specific role, then they need not explore her life further. This is the most damaging result, which, in turn, breeds neglect and misunderstanding.

When feminists probe no further than secondary sources, we get an incomplete picture of Mary. One solution to the problem of misinterpretation, misunderstanding, and misinformation about Mary Astell would be to reprint her works in order to make them more widely available.¹⁹ Then more complete studies of her writing could appear. Current scholarship might clear up disagreements and varying interpretations. Research on her could also correct the sloppy work that has gone previously unchallenged for lack of primary sources.

What we must do is closely examine the time before Mary Wollstonecraft and explode the myth that "Mary Wollstonecraft started the modern feminist movement." Eleanor Flexner in her biography of Mary Wollstonecraft recognizes Mary Astell as a forerunner, but believes that Wollstonecraft had no knowledge of Mary Astell, because Wollstonecraft's

writings were experiential in nature.²⁰ Yet, it is impressive that many of Mary Wollstonecraft's thoughts are anticipated by Mary Astell. Like Astell, she saw education as the means to achieving personal freedom and self-respect. The concept of founding, initiating, and starting, is a male concept. Why do we think that *modern* begins with the French Revolution? Has women's history and experience ever paralleled men's? The very periodization of history is based on men's experience, not women's. And when we are informed that things are improving, isn't the concept of evolution as linearly progressive a male fabrication? Do women think naturally in cycles? We delude ourselves in thinking that we are a recent movement, especially as more and more facts about protests prior to 1792 are uncovered. How much is still hidden, or worse yet destroyed, to keep us from knowing how rebellious our sisters in the past were? We find it hard to believe that anyone wrote such radical statements as Mary Wollstonecraft's as long ago as the 1790's; what then are the implications of protests in the 1690's? And earlier still? Slowly the boundary is being pushed further and further back.

There is a strain of feminist theory that believes that women have steadily been losing ground as the years progress. In the nineteenth century Matilda Joslyn Gage marshalled facts to prove her thesis that Christianity brought about women's subjugation. Gage, and Elizabeth Gould Davis, almost one hundred years later, point to facts showing that before patriarchy gained control there was a matriarchy in which women ruled. Davis

argues that when patriarchy became the norm, women slowly lost their influence and power and that Christianity dealt the death-blow. Joan Morris has criss-crossed Europe summoning facts from woodworks and grave-stones to prove that women held powerful positions in the church in the early medieval period, and that there has been a steady decline since that time. These analyses place the fact that Mary Astell wrote one hundred years before Mary Wollstonecraft in another light. History can serve as a reminder that what we have gained was won after a long hard fight, and that it isn't solidly guaranteed to us. Just as we fight over and over again for the same things, repeating the same claims, so we write the same things over and over again. We have not yet sufficiently begun to build on our tradition. If other books had retained currency, I would not have to duplicate their efforts to claim for Mary Astell a place in herstory. So much of our efforts are duplicating studies already done. Mary Astell sinks back into oblivion, as do women's histories, as do women in real life—erasure is their common lot. Mary Astell's history and reputation are the reification of women's lives. How many times will we invent the wheel before it starts rolling? How do we insure that it doesn't stop?

Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton understood that it was only with a strong feminist movement that women have a history. Florence Smith also recognizes this connection, remarking in 1916 that only as a result of women's activism had students turned "back to the pioneers."²¹ Activism and scholarship go hand in

hand—feeding and supporting each other. Both concern themselves with rescuing women from the status of “non-data”. As we struggle to be free we are strengthened and energized in our knowledge of women from our past. For they dreamt our dreams for us and we are their spiritual daughters.

Afterward

“If truth is not to be found on the shelves of the British Museum, where I asked myself, picking up a notebook and a pencil is truth?”²² Hera-worship drives one to strange desires. Bertha Harris describes how she followed Djuna Barnes down the streets of New York so as to experience what it was like to be a Lesbian in the twenties in Paris.²⁴ And I, I wanted to go to the British Museum, like Virginia

Woolf, to stand under “the vast dome”, and find books about women, *by* women. Away with male scholars doing our history—I would pick up where Virginia Woolf had left off, and find more women in our past who wrote about their experiences. Women who lived at any time before Mary Wollstonecraft would do; I wanted to explode forever the concept that with Mary Wollstonecraft the feminist movement began. So, I walked through Bloomsbury, aware of Virginia Woolf striding behind me, encouraging me to go faster through the streets which were dirtier and more crowded than when she had lived there. I entered through the swing doors of the British Museum Reading Room and “went to the counter. . . took a slip of paper. . . opened a volume of the catalogue, and. . .”²⁵, looked up “biography.” Hadn’t Vir-

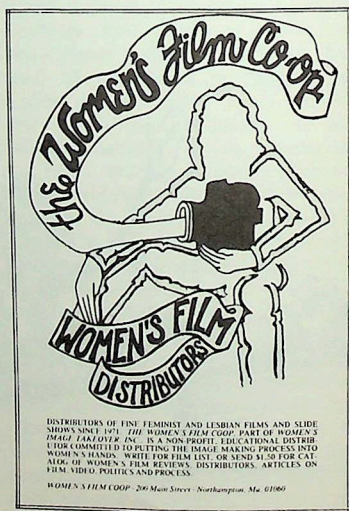


ginia Woolf always referred to "biography" for data, for information to learn women's thoughts? Yes, it would be biography for me.

There wasn't much that was promising, mainly biographical collections of famous men. Turning page after page, carefully reading each listing, I spotted *Eccentric Biography: or Memoirs of Remarkable Female Characters*. I wrote the name down, handed it in, and went to a desk to await the appearance of this enticingly-entitled book. My thoughts wandered to Virginia Woolf; maybe she had sat at this very desk and requested the same book. I daydreamed about her daydreams and saw women circling around, joining arms, transcending the different ages...the book arrived. I slowly perused the book, reading about the different women. I stopped when I read about the life of Mary Astell. Here she was! The woman I had waited to find! She had feminist desires, shared her learning with other women, freeing them from their follies, and her writings went so far as to be threatening in their militancy to whomever had compiled this volume of eccentrics. Her anger, her 'warmth', had to be explained away as a result of disillusionment with, and disappointment by, a man. Oh, she sounded wonderful—strong and dedicated, unmarried, visionary, assertive of her rights...a hundred years before Mary Wollstonecraft!

I ran to my friend, seated M3, no longer thinking about what Virginia Woolf would have done. I gesticulated and jumped around in my enthusiasm, the recipient of indignant stares from male scholars, who were being disturbed by this excitement,

the evidence of life in this stodgy, stuffy repository of male thought. My friend nodded in agreement to my rapidly-fired questions. "Yes", she said, "this woman should be recovered from oblivion." This paper is that rescue expedition.



Footnotes

1 Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of Their True and Greatest Interest*, (London: 1694). p. 25.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

3 Mary Astell, *Reflections Upon Marriage*, (London, 1700). p. 22.

4 *Reflections Upon Marriage*, the third edition, 1706, p. 22.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

6 Mary Astell, *The Christian Religion as Professed by a Daughter of the Church of England*, (London: R. Wilkin 1705), p. 36.

7 George Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain*, (Oxford, 1752), p. vi.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 447.

9 Roger Thompson, *Women in Stuart England and America*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 31.

10 Ballard, p. 450.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 449.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 450.

13 Ballard, p. vi.

14 *Eccentric Biography*, (London: 1804), pp. 8-9.

15 S. Austin Allibone, *A Critical Dictionary*, p. 76.

16 Sheila Rowbotham, *Women, Resistance and Revolution*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), p. 12.

17 *The Revolution*, Volume II, no. 12, (Sept.

24, 1868), p. 183.

18 Mrs. McIlquhan, "Mary Astell: A Seven-

teenth Century Advocate for Women," *Westminster Review*, April 1898, p. 448.

19 Source Book Press has reprinted expensive editions of *Serious Proposal to the Ladies and Reflections Upon Marriage*.

20 Eleanor Flexner, conversation, Cambridge, Mass., Oct. 1974.

21 Florence Smith, *Mary Astell* (New York: Columbia, 1916).

22 Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1929), p. 25.

23 Rather than using a male-identified term like "heroine", my roommates and I preferred the word "hera." We combined Elizabeth Gould Davis' statement that "the word 'hero' was after all, originally feminine," (*The First Sex*, p. 319) with the worship of the Goddess Hera.

24 Bertha Harris, "The more profound rationality of their Lesbianism: Lesbian Society in Paris in the 1920's," *Amazon Expedition*, Phyllis Birkby et al, eds., (Washington, New Jersey: Times Change Press, 1973), pp. 77-78.

25 Woolf, p. 26.

Carol Adams teaches a course on women and spirituality at Goddard-Cambridge Graduate program for Social Change. Her book on feminism and vegetarianism will be published this fall.

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Betty J. Powell

HOME: Brooklyn, New York

PROFESSION: Educator

OTHER INTERESTS: Black history, Lesbian-feminist movement, tennis, hiking, pottery.

MOST RECENT ACHIEVEMENT: Chairwoman, Gay Academic Union, Third Annual Conference

PROFILE: Energy and ability characterize this woman whose kind spirit hones students, inspires friends, and

informs the movements to which she gives so much of her talent.

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MEMBER: The National Gay Task Force

REASON: "Freedom and power to be and become, to invent and reinvent ourselves in our own and no one else's image will not be given out some Monday morning on the way to work. We must seize it through overt action on every front—political, legal, social and personal."

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Notes for Prospective Contributors

We would like to describe our processes for handling material for each issue. About 9 months before an issue comes off the presses, a small development committee prepares a list of questions and ideas which we hope that particular issue will cover. This list is available to anyone who is considering submitting ideas for the issue, outlines for potential articles, manuscripts, poetry, graphics, etc. We accept unsolicited material and seek out writers and artists known to have definite political perspectives on issues related to the theme.

All material is reviewed by several staff members. If it is not appropriate for *Quest* purposes, the manuscript or graphic will be returned to the author or artist. If a manuscript is to be considered, it is then assigned to one *Quest* editor. This editor is responsible for working with the author through whatever processes of rewriting and editing are required. This process includes soliciting comments and suggestions from various *Quest* staff and Advisory Committee members. Authors will receive final edited manuscripts for review before printing.

Manuscripts should be double spaced on 8½ by 11 paper, using black black ribbon, submitted in duplicate [original plus one copy]. Length of submissions should be from 2,500 words [10 typewritten pages] for reviews, responses, and short articles, to, at most, 7,500 words [25 pages] for longer articles. Where appropriate, bibliographic footnotes should be collected and typed at the end of the paper in numerical order. All manuscripts, poems, and graphic material must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Only original, unpublished manuscripts and graphics are acceptable.

Quest uses graphics for illustrations of specific articles. For information concerning graphic specifications, please address all correspondence to the attention of Alexa Freeman.

Future Issues

COMMUNICATION & CONTROL

Fall, 1976

Vol. III, No. 2

The selection and transmission of information is an index to power in mass society: feminists must analyze how this power affects women and determine how we can use it to better political effect. Areas for articles include: the role and functions of the media in our society; communication and art; communication and political organization; feminist forms of communication.

Copy Deadline: May 15, 1976

WORK, WORK, WORK

Winter, 1976-77

Vol. III, No. 3

Work is an essential part of our lives: of our survival, our self-identity, and our group identification. Crucial to feminist vision are new ways of viewing and organizing work. Areas for articles include: What is defined and rewarded as work—for men or women; how does work affect our self-concept, especially in regard to class, race, and sex; what are feminist modes of organizing work.

Copy Deadline: August 15, 1976

RACE, CLASS & CULTURE

Spring, 1977

Vol. III, No. 4

While feminists create a "women's culture," we learn about our differences as women; we must examine how race goes beyond the color of our skin and class means more than just the money we make. We seek articles for this issue that discuss various aspects of the relationship between political development and culture, with a particular focus on the issues of class and race.

Copy Deadline: November 15, 1976

KALEIDOSCOPE TWO

Summer, 1977

Vol. IV, No. 1

Are we connecting our lives to our ideas? This issue will be an open forum for substantive response to our first three years of publication and for your input to help chart our future. We seek discussion of topics and ideas you consider vital, as well as commentary on previous articles.

Copy Deadline: February 15, 1977