

REVEAL DIGITAL

Voice of the Women's Liberation Movement

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voice of the **no 6** women's liberation movement

FEB. 1969 #6

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WITCH ACTION

Factionalism Lives

by Jane Adams
Cleveland

Analysis of Tent Rally, Jan. 19, Washington, D.C. (Mobilization)

The tent was packed. After a good deal of confusion, a women's contingent formed in front of the stage, wearing FEMINISM LIVES banners patterned from the sufferagist movement. Arrangements made before the rally were that the women's liberation forces would be near the first part of the program, with a symbolic destruction of a large mock of a voter registration card. Women were to stand on the speaker's platform to destroy their voter cards. The plans were great. Then, several monkey wrenches were thrown in. (cont. p.10)

ED. NOTE: (on Jan. 20, the Nat. Mobilization Comm. (MOBE) sponsored counter-inauguration activities. Ugly faction fighting highlighted the women's activities. Two women, Marilyn Webb and Shulamith Firestone, gave speeches (p. 9) and justify their actions below. Jane Adams wrote a 3rd perspective. We are printing these because we think it is important that our movement discuss political differences openly.)

We are Victims DECLARATION of INDEPENDENCE

by Marilyn Webb
Washington, D.C.

It had become clear, especially in light of the Presidential election, that voting is a parody and a mockery of democracy and power. Women from New York, DC, Boston and Cleveland agreed that an action of women destroying their voter registration cards would be a symbolic statement of the disavowal of past cooptation and the beginning of a new revolutionary struggle for liberation.

We all made plans locally and decided to finalize them during the two days prior to the planned Sunday action when we would all be in D.C. together and when we could contact other sisters to ask them to help with the plans. Then the battles began.

THURSDAY: N.Y. women wrote a leaflet and called to ask me what D.C. thought of it. They said they wanted to get it printed before coming, so they wanted to clear it with us. Since there was no time for me to discuss it with my group, I suggested they wait, but they read it to me. Most of it seemed good, but I mentioned that the last sentence which read "Women's liberation is the final revolution", might cause some problem. I suggested they clarify that by saying two forms of revolution were needed -- an economic and a cultural. (cont. p. 4)

One of the speakers, Shulie Firestone, requested that we reprint Ellen Willis's article, which appeared in the Feb. 15 issue of the Guardian. Of this article Shulie said, "She wrote it specifically to explain Washington and our political position vis-a-vis the larger movement, and although I think that had she written it for the women's movement specifically, it probably would have been more detailed about what precisely happened in Washington among ourselves, still it is close enough that I don't feel it necessary to write a whole new article. (Besides it is such a cogent statement of our general position that I don't think I could top it.)"

The women's liberation movement was created by women activists fed us with their subordinate position in radical organizations. Their first goal was to take an equal, active part in the radical movement instead of being relegated to secretarial and other service chores.

This circumstance has led to certain assumptions about the women's movement. In the standard radical view, women's liberation is a branch of the left and women are a constituency like students or GIS. (cont. p. 4)

L. Femina
Serial
Am
V8895

NATIONAL NEWS

A legislative hearing on abortion law reform in NY was shouted and hooted into adjourning last month by radical women demanding total repeal. The hearing had been underway only 15 minutes when the women jumped up and yelled, "No more male legislators," "Why are you refusing to admit we exist?" and "Every woman resents having her body controlled by men." One legislator screamed at the women, "You're just expressing your personal pique at men." "We're expressing our political grievance", they replied. The public hearing was adjourned to closed session as women members of NY for Abortion Law Reform picketed outside the Health Department building with signs demanding total repeal.

Several new journals and papers have been published including: From SSOC, BOX 6403, Nashville, Tenn. Freedom for Movement Girls--Now/ Vanauken, 10¢, American Women: Their Use and Abuse/ Lyn Wells, 10¢, and Chanelling Women/ Anne Johnson, 10¢. From Women's Liberation Collective, 1047 Ramona Avenue, Palo Alto, Calif, 94301: Towards a Woman's Revolutionary Manifesto. From Roxanne Dunbar, 62 Pleasant St #2, Cambridge, Mass: Female Liberation: No More Fun and Games, \$1. or 10 for \$5. From Betty Farians, 6825 N. Sheridan, Chicago, Ill 606: The Status of Women in the Church, 25¢ From Straight Arrow Pub., 746 Brannon St., San. Francisco, Calif. 94103, order the latest issue of Rolling Stones 15¢ (Feb 15) which according to Anne Koedt of NY "is a very hip looking publication ... special article on the "The Groupies"-- Hippie women who follow rock groups---some think it is very significant if you want to understand not only the "sex object" concept but how it applies to our more liberated communities such as the hippies."

On Jan. 24 the US Court of Appeals vacated the stay previously granted by the District court on the want-ad guidelines of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission. The guidelines make it illegal for any newspaper to segregate their want-ads into "male" and "female" sections, regardless of what disclaimer of intention to discriminate is put at the head of the column. However, most newspapers have still not integrated their want ads. The EEOC has said it has not the authority to enforce its guidelines until someone files a valid complaint as it lacks cease and desist powers of other federal regulatory agencies.

VWLM #6

Bridal Fairs have come under attack recently by Women's Liberation groups in NY and San Francisco. In New York, WITCH hexed the Bridal Fair held Feb 15 and 16 in Madison Square Garden, with guerilla theatre. WITCH also carried picket signs, handed out leaflets entitled "Confront the Whore-Makers", and gave away hundreds of shop-lifting bags. The Fair's own gift to the brides: a plastic bag with "Love Begins at Chase Manhattan" in psychedelic lettering. WITCHes who tried to disrupt the opening panel (male doctor, male clergyman, male banker, male decorator, female from Bride's magazine) were strong-armed and carried away by force. Fair spokesmen put down the WITCHES saying "They're teed off nobody ever proposed to them". Bay Area women picketed the annual San Francisco Bridal Fair, Feb. 15. Inside the fair, they handed out leaflets, did guerilla theatre, and disrupted a panel of "experts", (only one of them was a woman), invited women to come to a forum to discuss the nitty-gritty of American life. Two militant women were ejected from the fair by the cops. Unfortunately, both actions elicited defensive and often hostile responses from women attending the fair. Women also hexed a Bridal Fair in Chicago March 1.

Regional conferences are being held all over the country. Bay Area women have held two so far and the Student Christian Movement in Ontario held one entitled "Refreshments will be served by the Men's Auxilliary". 50 women attended a Boston area conference. New chapters have formed in Geneva, NY; Ann Arbor, Mich.; Cambridge, Mass.; and Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. Donna Goodman, 2736-B Winnipeg St. Regina would like to hear from Canadian contacts.

The film made of the Miss America demonstration is now available for distribution. Prints are \$20.00 to buy and \$10.00 to rent from NEWSREEL, 127 E. 15th St., NYC. Judith Duffet says it is "about 7 minutes long, exciting, beautiful, rabble-rousing, and includes the 'women's liberation' banner unfurled across the balcony of the Convention Hall." "Ski Weekend", first shown at the national conference, is also available.

(Cont. p. 7)

CHICAGO

ACTIONS WITCHES HEX ⊗ THE C.T.A.

Carol Vognsen, Chicago

"Eeeeeeeeeee" came the low, wailing sound. It grew louder and louder until one could hear an evil blend of cackling, hissing, and shrieking that sent shivers down the spine. And then, before anyone knew what was happening, they were there. WITCHes! The WITCHes had come to take revenge on the Chicago Transit Authority. They whirled and leaped



through the crowd. One could barely glimpse their strange, evil faces in the midst of the flying capes and tattered rags. All black, all present, all terribly present.

They seemed to fly down the hall, arms linked together, rushing onward. In the central part of the Joseph Kennedy-owned Merchandize Mart, headquarters of the notorious CTA, they leaped and formed a magic circle. One saw their caldron, saw their eyes --now mischievous, now grim, now intent -- as the hex began. First, their feet...only their feet began the curse, and a regular throbbing sound, so sure, so deadly sure spread through the hall. Slowly, inexorably did the WITCHes circle the cauldron. Slowly and methodically did they speak the curse:

Witches round the circle go
To hex the causes of our woe,
We the witchew now conspire
To burn CTA in freedom's fire.

Two hideous old crones

stepped forward to chant, casting toads and lizards, and foul creatures into their vile pot. Their horrible voices rose as they cast in these evil spirits:

Bankers gall, politicians guile,
Daley's jowl, lackey's smile,
Trustees toe, bondholders liar,
These we cast into our fire.

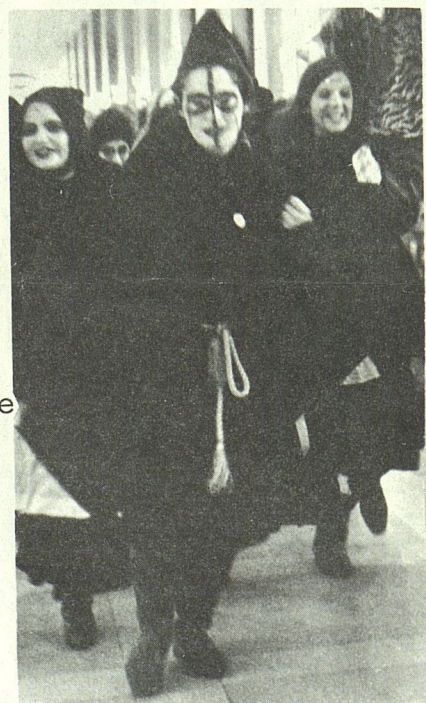
The WITCHes were voicing their anger, their fury, at the CTA's unjust fare hike. The WITCHes were striking back at the impervious, selfish, indifferent fortresses of capitalism. The people heard the WITCHes hurling

final,

words:

Angry people wake and rise.
Take revenge now for lies
Told to soothe the people's ire,
Told to smother freedom's fire,
Only when the burning's done,
Will the people's fight be won.

Louise Brotsky/Chicago



There was a wild feverish cry, and then the WITCHes swept out the door. The guards --no longer transfixed with shock and horror--were now ready to attack. They readied their walkie-talkies and marched indignantly after the WITCHes, now gone. Outside, three paddy wagons whirled by, chasing phantoms.

U.C—Lessons Learned

Judy Clark

Louise Brotsky

Natalee Rosenstein Sally Yagol

Nancy Stokeley

UofC WRAP

For the first time in the history of the student movement, a campus-wide struggle focused in a major way on a women's issue. The firing of radical professor Marlene Dixon was a blatant case of discrimination against women. Her scholarship and teaching deal with the social and economic oppression of women and with the women's movements that are organizing to change society. She teaches that women must approach their problems politically.

The issue of discrimination against women was readily accepted by the Rehire-Marlene movement because of the existence of an already strong women's movement on campus. A year ago, male chauvinism in the SDS chapter compelled female activists to form Women's Radical Action Project, a women's liberation group. WRAP now has over 100 members. It has programs such as guerilla theatre to raise the consciousness of women on

(cont. p.6)

Webb from p.1

The second was only possible given the first. N. Y. said if D. C. didn't like it the way it was they could do their own action and write their own leaflet, and hung up.

FRIDAY: Planning workshops for Saturday. A long meeting was held with women from D. C. and several southern cities. No one showed up from NYC although they had said some would come early. We brainstormed ideas for signs and technical plans for the voter-card burning and the demonstration at the reception for Distinguished Ladies. We had heard that the Mobilization was providing a space for a speaker on women's liberation at the rally and talked in detail about what ideas should be included in such a speech. Tentatively that meeting decided that I should give the speech, but wanted to wait until people from NY arrived to finalize the plans. We planned to meet again early Sunday morning.

SATURDAY: NY buses arrived late. They came with signs and songs in preparation for the Distinguished Ladies demonstration. Since their buses came only an hour and a half before the demonstration was to take place, we quickly ended the workshops to learn the songs and walk to the National Gallery. It rained and we got pushed around by the cops. Workshops didn't resume in the afternoon since we were skirmishing with police and then recovering. We planned to meet again for workshops that evening, announcing that discussion and sign-making for Sun. would be early in the morning.

SAT. EVE. WORKSHOPS: That night, before the scheduled meeting time, NY had a caucus meeting. WITCH women hadn't arrived yet and most of the people in the NY caucus were in Shulie Firestone's group in NY. Most women went to other meetings that night. Three from D. C., several from Boston, and a few people from other places were there. As we arrived Shulie announced that Ann Forer would chair and there would be a discussion of Sun.'s actions. Some people said they thought this was a workshop and tomorrow morning would be planning for the action. The NY caucus just pushed on with their intended agenda.

That meeting was the most hostile, shrieky meeting I have ever attended. Many women were so intimidated or angered at obvious railroading attempts that they left in disgust. Shulie essentially said that NY had planned this action and here were the plans. There was to be no discussion

cont. p. 5

Willis from p.1

VWLM#6

Granted that we suffer our own forms of oppression and that radical men have oppressed us as women, the emphasis is on contributing our special insights to the left as a whole and using feminist issues as an organizing tool. In return, male radicals are expected to endorse women's liberation and combat their male chauvinism.

Many of us now reject this view of our purpose as anti-woman. We have come to see women's liberation as an independent revolutionary movement, potentially representing half the population. We intend to make our own analysis of the system and put our interests first, whether or not it is convenient for the (male-dominated) left. Although we may cooperate with radical men on matters of common concern, we are not simply part of the left. We do not assume that radical men are our allies or that we want the same kind of revolution they want.

This divergence in outlook was apparent when several women's liberation groups met in Washington last month to plan anti-inaugural activities. The theme of the women's liberation action was "Give back the vote". Since women's 80-year struggle for the vote had achieved a meaningless victory and vitiated the feminist movement we planned to destroy our voter registration cards publicly as a symbol that suffragism was dead that a new fight for real emancipation beginning. Some women wanted to invite men to burn their voters' cards during or after the action. This idea was rejected on grounds that it would change the action from a repudiation of suffrage as a sop for women to a protest against the electoral process.

There was also some wrangling over the speech we had scheduled. Some of us wanted to inform movement men that we were sick of participating in other peoples' revolutions and were working for ourselves. Others were horrified at the thought of criticizing the movement publicly. We decided on two short speeches--one a general statement of women's oppression, the other a militant declaration of independence from radical men.

Ensuing events bore out the separatist argument. The Mobilization Committee, supposedly sympathetic, neither included women's liberation among the issues listed in the Guardian and nor mentioned our action in its mimeographed program. Mobe spokesman Dave Dellinger announced at the Sat rally that Mobe had come to demonstrate against war and for (cont. p. 5)

Webb from p.4

and people should just report tomorrow to pick up NY's signs and listen to instructions. They had already appointed marshalls.

Shulie announced that she had also written a speech, which she said was like a poem and couldn't be altered at all. She would head it, however, and it could be taken or left with no changes.

By just writing this it is impossible to set the situation so you can understand the tension. Shulie and other women from NY screamed at people and at each other so much that some women introduced to women's liberation at this workshop left saying they weren't going to join a movement filled with hysteria. Much of this tension was the result of misunderstandings about what cities planned for each other, or what means other cities had conjured up to sell out the women's movement.

CLARIFY PERSPECTIVES

At any rate, the most interesting part of the discussion were political clarifications of differences in perspective. There seems to be three distinct views on organizing and ideology within our movement. The first is the view that by raising women's consciousness about their own oppression and by working only on women's liberation issues raised in this manner, women will be in the vanguard of a revolution. Women must define the issues for themselves and not work with other parts of the movement. This view is similar to Black Nationalism, it seems.

The second view is that women are a constituency, like the working class, blacks, etc. Women's liberation is another means of organizing for the revolution, but that although women must meet alone in groups for a while, they must be integrated into the larger movement and act as participants in a class struggle along with other groups. This is the SDS position, and women's liberation is seen as a program within SDS to organize for that organization and for the struggle.

A third position is that women's liberation must be a separate part of a revolutionary movement. It must organize around its own consciousness and its own concerns, but that it should remain as a separate arm, within a revolutionary context. It should work with other groups in struggles that help to end a capitalist system, but it should also develop forms that will destroy a superstructure of capitalist definitions of family, work, consumption, leisure, "lady-likeness" and male supremacy.

No one from SDS was at this meeting, so arguments occurred between the first and

cont. p. 12

Willis from p.4

VWLM #

black liberation. When some woman on the stage yelled at him, he mentioned women's liberation as an afterthought. During our presentation-which began with the moderate pro-movement statement - men in the audience booed, laughed, catcalled and yelled enlightened remarks like "Take her off the stage and fuck her." Instead of reprimanding the hecklers (as he did during an unpopular speech by a black GI), Dellinger tried to hurry us off the stage.

It is a mistake to think that education alone will change this. Radical men have a power position that they will not give up until they have to. They will support our revolution only when we build a movement so strong that no revolution at all is possible without our cooperation.

HALF THE HUMAN RACE

To work within the movement is to perpetuate the idea that our struggle is secondary. We will continually be tempted to defer to "the larger good of the movement" just as we have always deferred to "the larger good of the family". We must remember that women are not just a special interest group with sectarian concerns. We are half the human race. Our oppression transcends occupations and class lines. Femaleness, like blackness, is a biological fact, a fundamental condition. Like racism, male supremacy permeates all strata of this society. And it is even more deeply entrenched. Whites are at least defensive about racism; men--including most radical, black and white--are proud of their chauvinism. Male supremacy is the oldest form of domination and the most resistant to change.

The radical movement has been dominated by men. Its theory, priorities, and strategies reflect male interests. Here are some of the more obvious points radical feminists should consider:

Theory: An anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist analysis is insufficient for our purposes. Women's oppression antedated capitalism by some 2000 years and has outlasted it in socialist countries.

Priorities: Women are the only oppressed people whose biological, emotional, and social life is totally bound up with that of the oppressor. The function of the ghetto, the army, the factory, the campus in reifying an oppressed group's separate existence must be assumed by women's liberation. We must provide a place for women to be friends, exchange personal griefs and give their sisters moral support ----cont. p. 14

PLAYMEAT of the MONTH

Members of Women's Liberation and Guerilla theatre group, greeted a Playboy representative who came to Grinnel College to speak on the Playboy philosophy, with picket signs and unadorned nudity. Here is their leaflet:

PLAYBOY MAGAZINE IS A MONEY CHANGER IN THE TEMPLE OF THE BODY.

Playboy claims to espouse a philosophy that asserts the body is good and the body is beautiful, but Playboy demeans the human body. Pretending to appreciate and respect the beauty of the naked human form, Playboy in actuality stereotypes the body and commercializes on it. Playboy substitutes fetishism for honest appreciation of the endless variety of human forms.

Playboy says the body is good, but posing as liberator it offers us a sexuality of "subjects" and "objects" -- of those who desire and act, and those who are desirable and acted upon. Thus sexual activity is dehumanized and depersonalized.

We believe that the human body is good and beautiful, but a sensual and aesthetic appreciation of the body cannot be divorced from an appreciation of and respect for persons, of both sexes, of all shapes and sizes. We protest Playboy's images of lapdog female playthings with their junior-executive-on-the-make possessors. The Playboy bunny is an affront to human sexual dignity.



Krystyna Neuman/Pterodactyl/Grinnell, Iowa

UofC

from p. 3

campus and is organizing for a day-care center for children of faculty, employees, and students. Women saw that the fight to get Marlene rehired must include the struggle against discrimination against women.

Before the sit-in, WRAP put out a leaflet, picketed the Administration building for two hours, and held a forum on the role of women in Academia. WRAP women who are also active in SDS canvassed women's dorms, emphasizing the women's issue.

In the political discussions inside the Ad. building, women's consistent attempts to raise the issue of discrimination against women were shunted aside as secondary to student-power discussions and "getting the group together". We found it necessary to caucus in order to find concrete ways of raising the issue inside the building and of combating the group's blatant chauvinism. Women wrote a position paper and made demands -6-

for a women's press conference and a women's rally.

Our position paper and demands were accepted readily by the body, so readily that many of us were suspicious that men were not really confronting the issue. The women's press conference was an enormous success. Our demand for only female reporters meant that women could cover a news story instead of the human interest and fashion news traditionally allotted them. They understood what we said about the oppression of women in society because they experience it in their own lives and jobs. Over one hundred people attended the women's rally.

Despite these successes, the women's caucus fell apart. For the rest of the sit-in most women stopped working on women's issues. Why did this happen?

First, the sit-in was falling apart. Radicals mistakenly compromised with the large minority of moderates in the building who threatened to leave after the majority voted to escalate by taking another building. This mistake was

(cont. p. 7)

U of C from p 6

crucial. It let the entire sit-in fall into a period of frustration as we watched motion on campus die. Women carried these feelings of frustration into the women's caucus. Some of us, believing that escalation was necessary to maintain motion, but more importantly, wanting to take a decisive action to bring the women's struggle into the forefront, advocated taking a women's building. The argument in our caucus wasn't between radicals and moderates but between radical political women. Some were afraid the action would be divisive and wanted to wait for the sit-in as a whole to take its next move. Their resistance caused the caucus to table its plans.

Similarly, many women were reluctant to push the issue on the floor of the sit-in. Instead we waited through endless discussions of non-struggle student power demands. It wasn't until our position paper was presented and passed, that most women saw the primary importance of their struggle. We learned that only in hard political discussion could the politics of the demonstrators develop and achieve some sense of purpose. That discussion should have been about the oppression of women.

We learned several things from our mistakes. We are now sure that the oppression of women is one of the most crucial problems facing the movement. It is as crucial as any other political issue. We should have taken a woman's building. Not only would it have furthered the raising of consciousness around the oppression of women, but we think it would have provided the motion that the sit-in lacked. Any women's action which is tactically and politically sound can only help a movement.

Secondly, we failed to develop new ideas and analysis. The only research we conducted was about discrimination against women in academia; as this most related to Marlene's firing. This gave the movement a middle-class reform orientation which many recognize as an inadequate and dangerous direction for the women's movement in general. At the end of the sit-in, we intensified our contact with women working at the U of C hospital, talking to them about their problems and their need for a day care center.

Sisters, there are some lessons to be learned from our experience. The first is the danger of letting ourselves be satisfied by tokenism and superficial deference to the woman question by the left. Secondly, for the

last year and a half, the women's movement went through the necessary stage of analyzing how we, middle-class women are oppressed. The movement must begin to confront the oppression of working class women. We must begin to confront the crucial question of WHY women are oppressed and what function this oppression plays in this society. We must go beyond simplistic analyses which see women as merely super-exploited workers and defines male chauvinism as a tool of the ruling class to divide the workers. An analysis of why women are oppressed must deal with both cultural and economic oppression. Our analysis must take into account both that women's oppression cuts across class lines and that this is a class society.

Sisters, the real conclusion from our experience is that we have to get ourselves together. We will get nowhere until we devote our time and energy to women's problems. There is a women's movement growing in the country NOW. We must build a radical women's movement to free ourselves and our sisters and our brothers everywhere. ###

NATIONAL NEWS from p 12

The first national conference of the National Association to Repeal Abortion Laws met in Chicago, Feb 14-16. A WLM caucus met during the conference and passed out literature, demanding an end to all legal restrictions on abortion and that abortions be free of charge to all who seek them. WLM won a long, hard battle to get the conference to include in its official position paper a statement recognizing that to force a woman to bear a child against her will violates her basic human rights. They forced the conference to deal with the fact that it discriminated against black women, Latin women, poor white women, working-class women, students. (Drake Hotel, \$15.00 registration fee, \$6.00 per lunch, \$8.00 per dinner). WLM stated that no longer would male doctors, male lawyers, male clergymen be allowed to determine the destinies of women as they had tried to do at this conference. For more information write: Carol Vogensen, 610 Kemper, Chicago, Ill 60614.

cont. p. 12



- 8 - hanako

Marilyn Webb
DC Womens' Group

D.C. SPEECHES

VWLM #6

Shulamith Firestone
New York Radical Women

We, as women have been enslaved by a past that told us others--the poor, the Blacks--are oppressed. They are. And we tried to fight everyone else's battles. But now we realize that we too, we as WOMEN, are oppressed. We, as supposedly the most privileged in this society, are mutilated as human beings so that we will learn to function within a Capitalist system; So that we will reinforce that system. We will not! Our minds have been permanently drugged--the media controls our thoughts. We pop aspirin and see psychiatrists to try to heal our powerlessness. This will stop!

It will stop because we are not individually sick. This society is sick and oppresses us as a group. We are victimized by a domestic pacification program that tells us to solve our problems and make it in the world by purchasing Things. We are victimized by a system that makes us view other people as objects and property. We are victimized by being cheap labor. We are victimized by being educated to serve others. We are victimized by having to lead barren, privatized lives within our homes. We are victimized by having no control over our bodies. We are victimized by having no equality with men.

In the past our grandmothers struggled for the VOTE to gain this equality and power. Now we realize the vote was a compromise, a sell-out, that got us no power and no freedom. We have no choice through the electoral process, as you saw in this last election.

We refuse to be a part of this system any longer. We will define our own issues and fight for our own victories. We will start on a new path toward our revolution. We therefore break the ties of that cooptive bondage and give back the vote. We destroy our voter registration cards and the ballot, and we will take to our homes, our jobs, our stores, and our streets to struggle against a system that demands our destruction as human beings. We ask all women to join this struggle and march with us today. # # #

Women's History

Women interested in contacting other women who are writing womens' radical history papers, should write to Nancy Stokley, 5112 S. Kimbark, Chicago, Illinois 60615. We can help each other with critiques and information. Send suggestions for how to set this up.

We came here today to talk about the state of the union, our union, that is not yours. You men, however precariously, even if only as revolutionaries, are still united to the society at large. We are united only to you. Only to the extent that we live through you are we allowed to participate in your society. You may approve our action of giving back the vote. Yes, here we are at Nixon's inauguration several years and several smashed heads later. Sure the electoral process is shit. But we've come to more than that obvious conclusion. For if the vote is worthless for you, the vote is just a bitter joke on us. This vote that our grandmothers fought for a whole century to get. We'll tell you how worthless it is. Because that women's movement was coopted if anything ever was. We wanted total liberation. But the white male power structure made that vote such a huge stumbling block that by the time that little precondition for liberty was granted, they had managed to drain off all the energy, all the smarts, in fact they had managed to outlast all our best leaders. Now we're stuck with a pseudo-emancipation so subtle, so insidious, as to be a far more threatening thing. And it is enormous. So much so that we are only just beginning to understand the depths of that treachery. But we are getting wise to it now. For what good is a vote if all the means of controlling it are in others' hands? And we are controlled and more than you are controlled. If you choose to believe current mystique spread by men about female power, female money, castration, and all that other rot, go ahead. But we are on to you now. Because we know we are powerless. And we know from our own experience and there's nothing that can argue with that. And it isn't just nasty capitalism doing it all either. Though certainly that must be eliminated if we are to get it pulled out at the root. But let's start talking about where you live, baby, and wonder whether all those systems of exploitation might not just begin there, whether capitalism and all those other isms don't just begin at home. Because you've got it assbackwards. And you won't have your revolution 'till you start seeing straight. "Social progress is measured by the position of women." Karl Marx said that. And it's a reliable barometer of revolution for the simple reason that you men who run the revolutions have no selfish investment in that one.

Cont. p. 10

FACTIONALISM LIVES *from p.1*

- 1) somehow, the women were moved to the end of the speakers' list.
- 2) The stage was shakey, so the women couldn't stand on it unless the other speakers (all men!) got off.
- 3) A split developed among the women, so they decided to have two speakers.
- 4) The WITCHES were planning an action and the women at the stage got paranoid because they didn't know what the WITCHES were planning.

The crowd tired of speakers before the women spoke and wanted to begin the march. An organized group had heckled the previous speaker--one of the Ft. Hood Three who had just gotten out of jail. Dave Dellinger announced that all the men would get off the stage so that the women could stand on it--implying that this was an assertion of "Woman Power", and not stating the practical necessity: the stage would collapse if they didn't get off. That caused hostility from the already restless audience.

Marilyn Webb began to speak. Early in her talk she said, "Women are treated as objects and property" and a cheer went up--as if that were a good thing. The audience picked up on unintended sexual puns. The situation was irredeemable. Then Shulamith Firestone spoke: most of the audience didn't know the speakers had changed. The voter registration card was torn up, but by that time no one in the audience could tell what was happening--they couldn't see, people were jeering, Dave Dellinger was trying to get the women off the stage.

At the time, many of us who had been at or on the stage felt intense anger and bitterness--a "you can take your movement and fuck yourselves with it"--a feeling that certainly had justification, given the intense hostility of the crowd.

But having gained the distance of time, and having talked with a number of women who were in the audience, I think the audience reaction was partially justified, and that there are lessons we can learn from that fiasco (and we gotta learn them or we'll destroy our movement).

1) In a rally situation, the speeches should be directed around the action and the rationale for our involvement as women in that action. The point of a rally is to excite people for the action. The voter card burning was a good idea, but neither speech clearly spoke to that or to the demonstration.

VNLMM#6

2) People in a mass gathering don't understand and are impatient with factional disputes--and rightly so. Save our differences for sisterly dispute. There should have been one speaker. The WITCHES and the sisters at the speakers' platform should have talked out plans and worked out a common strategy. The conflict never became public, but it created mistrust and tension which could have been avoided.

3) We must be more flexible in our speaking, responding to the immediate situation. For instance, had Marilyn explained why the men were asked to leave the stage, and explained that there would be two speakers, and had Shulamith given Marilyn time to introduce her, some of the hostility might have been averted.

4) We should realize that we will meet hostility and ridicule from rather large segments of the audience--and that includes some of our sisters. Words and phrases should be chosen to which the forces of ridicule can't respond.

5) Fight for an early place in the agenda and be brief.

We have to recognize that we will be misinterpreted and misrepresented, even by people we think we should be able to trust (like Dave Dellinger, in this instance), and be ready to deal with that. But we also have to recognize that we often open ourselves to misinterpretation by assuming friendliness and understanding that don't exist, and speaking as we would to committed sisters. We cannot assume that people know about factional disputes within our movement.

I think we want to expose the hostility in such an audience, but do it in such a way as to discredit those who are hostile and to demonstrate what we are saying. In Washington, we were the ones who were discredited--and we can't let that happen again.

#

FIRESTONE SPEECH *from p.9*

Because we women often have to wonder if you mean what you say about revolution or whether you just want more power for yourselves. This time we aren't going to wait for your revolutionary charity and we've learned better. Remember: 53% of the population are women. And we won't even need to revolt. We'll just sit back and watch the whole male society disintegrate at our feet. But this time we won't roll a bandage and won't shed a tear. # # #

WOMAN ^{as} KONSUMER

by Rosalyn Baxandall, New York

VWLM #6

Granted, corporations are capitalistic:

They stink because they do exist to build profits while humanity's needs tag along a very poor second, or tenth. And the corporations do prey, especially on women. We the race's ribs and tits have been relegated and forced to be the society's decorative, shit work and specifically consuming caste. Still, just because Revlon, Dior, Clairol, and Silva Slims hit women over the head (subliminally), drum their message to the ears they flatter, assault the vulnerable eyes--do we, Women's Liberation soul sisters, have to add to these cruel blows, by telling women they are idiots for submitting to the corporations and buying their beauty line? Isn't this further victimizing the victim? In doing this don't we just gain an illusion of superiority, while leaving the real causes untouched? Now why do women buy in the first place?

We buy (1) because we believe the product, that magic want, that instant Utopia, the tickle of the eye liner or the polish on the whatnot, will turn us into fairy princess, and Prince Charming will whisk us off our feet and we will live happily ever after. Once Mister Charming does succumb to the bait, consuming marches on to the quickened tempo of the bourgeois Family's status. We women buy so our husbands and the Jones' husbands will see the evidence of the Mister's bread winning capacity: and through that our worth. At either stage, marvels are promised if we buy, revolving around the Man or at least that image of him and us the Madison Avenue Man has created. But suppose we women dug ourselves as we are--fat, skinny, blond, black, curly kinked stringy, hitched, single, dikey straight, snubbed hooked nose? Then no one could con us into buying things to change our essence. Women are Beautiful in and for themselves indivisible without changes or disguises demanded by those mythical guys and guiles.

(2) Sure, they con us to buy, basically, we buy because prior to being solicited we are oppressed, bored and don't feel capable of being productive or producing anything for ourselves. From birth we're raised to tend the

(oops! Sorry about the layout.)

flock, keep the home fires clean, play house, cook, mend, sew and purchase the produce. Those of us who manage to make it into a productive providing role usually have to perform double duty bread winning and home tending. If women manage to work it's usually in the servant master capacity we've been programmed into, under a man, secretary boss, nurse doctor, teacher principal, or culture work the so-called arts.

Of course, it's an amazing feat if anyone in this polluted system engages in meaningful work play--but most women don't even get the chance to make the effort. From the time we're physically able we dress rehearse playing house and caring for dolly. Heaven forbid we enjoy trucks sports or math. Then we're cursed with Freud's magic hex, penis envy. Well, whatever we do, we're damned-unsatisfied bored condemned to live vicariously if we do go along with the so called traditional women support roles, and taunted and told we're unnatural neurotic if we do attempt to get somewhere with something we dig.

We're not fucked up. We're fucked over.

To the question of strategy for the Women's Liberation Movement. Should we direct our energies to exposing and attacking women the consumers? No, emphatically not. Do we put down those black people who want Cadillacs or flashy threads? No, because when you have nothing, you're vulnerable. If we should do that to our sisters, we'd attack the symptom, consumption, rather than the cause: lack of a productive role with vicarious living for and through the man. If we are trying to liberate all women from secondary status, dwelling mainly on the consumer aspect just puts women down without insisting on the needed way forward. The alternative women's role must instead be worked out. It's glib to trot out the inanities of our position again and again, and only alienate our sisters.

#

NOTICE OUR NEW ADDRESS--WE HAVE FORMED A COLLECTIVE TO ANSWER YOUR REQUESTS AND PUBLISH THIS NEWSLETTER REGULARLY. FULL REPORT, ISSUE # 7

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We are restocking our literature supply. It may be another month or more until we are able to fill many of your requests. Please be patient, sisters.

Webb from p.5

VWLM #6

third positions. People who didn't see the third position believed they were arguing against people who were using women's liberation to build other organizations. (Some women from NY believe SDS is doing this.)

VOTE-CARD ACTION PLANNED

After tactical decisions were made, Shulie and I were asked to read our speeches. Most reactions were the same. Shulie shouldn't give a speech that attacked movement men at a public rally, and mine should be more militant.

Shulie said she didn't want to give her speech, she was going to leave the movement since it was clear people weren't in agreement with what she felt were the crucial issues. Others, disturbed, said of course she shouldn't leave. The group felt that rather than have that happen, I should give my speech first and Shulie could say hers as an introduction to the action.

SUNDAY: (For description of the action see p.1 "Factionalism Lives" by Adams.)

SDS WOMEN APPEAR

The next night I got a phone call from SDS women who were in town. One spoke while others cheered in the background. "If you ever give a speech like that again", they said, "we'll go up there and beat the shit out of you. And we jave women in every city who feel like that and they will get any woman that gives a speech like that. Furthermore, SDS now has a line on women's liberation that was developed at the National Council meeting, and that is THE LINE. We will beat the shit out of anyone who doesn't stick to it." They were from NY, Michigan, and Ohio. They said they thought that fights for women's liberation should include brothers as well as sisters.

AND SO THAT IS WHAT HAPPENED....

There are several things I think we have to clarify if we are agoing to be a movement at all. One is that ideology and political differences no longer can be pushed under the rug, since it creates paranoia about what positions and motivations others have. Issues have to be defined and publically discussed in our newsletters and conferences.

Secondly, we in DC were put in a strange position. If we disagreed with Shulie's speech, we were counted out of the action. There was no way we could alter it or even say that we thought it shouldn't happen at all. By the end of the weekend many of us felt that, but we couldn't do anything about it, except compromise as best we could. This didn't work. The speeches sounded like one speech and our position was never

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clarified. If we define and work out our positions together, we will not be put in this situation again.

Three, we've got to realize how deeply male chauvinism exists in the movement. Take a guy individually and he'll agree but get a crowd and all hell breaks loose. We've got to do a better job on the local level of explaining what we are about to both men and women.

Lastly, we've got to use this newsletter to argue our positions publicly. That means we've got to do our homework and define our positions better for ourselves. This is just a beginning and I hope that by the next issue we can all write articles that spell out what positions different people hold so that we can examine them all. ###

NATIONAL NEWS from p.7

Women at the U of Missouri have organized themselves into SPECTRE--Sisters to Promote the Ends of Cultural Terrorism, Revolution and Emancipation. They held a teach-in on "Woman as Uncle Tom" and are planning a McLuhanist environmental art show to look at women as presented by the media. According to Linda Phelps, "It will be an art show on the sidewalks at school, accompanied by tape recordings of songs and ads. One suggestion was to create a small square box, into which people could walk, and whose walls would be covered with film strips and ads projected from the outside."

The task force on Women and Religion of the National Organization of Women (NOW) is planning a "coif-burning" later this year. It has sent requests for nuns to send their veils and Jewish women to send their wigs to the Task Force, 5037 S. Drexel, Chicago, Ill. The release states that "at an opportune time and place there will be a public burning of these headcoverings to protest the second class status of women in religious groups."

Reader correspondence in the Feb 22 issue of the Guardian contains this gem: "Please drop all that 'women's liberation' crap. If certain chicks have personal problems, let them selve these without using the movement." From Henry Felisone, Floral Park, NY.

Send your zipcode or WITCH will HEX you!!!!
Note VWLM address change!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

(cont. p. 14)



Willis from p.5

--in short develop group consciousness. Yet this function is often degraded by movement oriented women--"How can we indulge in group therapy while men are dying in Vietnam?"

Strategies: (1) In deciding what role, if any, confrontation and violence should play in our movement, we must consider that women are at a disadvantage physically and that our aggressiveness has been systematically inhibited. On the other hand, we must realize that men don't take us seriously because they are not physically afraid of us. (2) We must admit that we will often have more in common with reformist organizations like NOW (National Organization of Women) than with radical men. Repeal of abortion law is not a radical demand--the system can accomodate it. But it is a gut issue to radical as well as liberal women. (3) We will never organize the mass of women by subordinating their concrete interests to a 'higher ideology'. To believe that concentrating on women's issues is not really revolutionary is self-deprecation. Our demand for freedom involves not only the overthrow of capitalism but the destruction of the patriarchal family system.

It is not only possible but imperative for women to build a specifically feminist radical consciousness. As radicals we must do our best to foster this consciousness. But we should have the humility to realize that women who have never been committed to a male-oriented radical analysis may have clearer perspective than we. Unless we shed our movement prejudices and help women's liberation go its own way, we will not be a revolutionary vanguard, but reactionary obstructionists. ##

NATIONAL NEWS from p.12

Female grad. students at the U. of North Dakota have begun an interdepartmental seminar on feminism. Each member of the class will receive a free "Uppity Women Unite" button. Over 100 women and men have attended a course at U.C.L.A. organized by WLF on "The World's People--Half or Whole? A Symposium on Women in our Age." Students at the University of Chicago are organizing courses including "The Fallen Women in English Fiction" and "The Legal and Economic Position of Women."

Joan Lester, 428 W. 26th Street, Apt 9G, NY, is editing a book on women. Send her anything interesting--essays, poems, short stories, cartoons, etc.

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letters

VWLM #6

In the SDS thing...it seems to me that the primariest, most basic of all oppressions and the deepest is the oppression of women by men. It's nonsense to suppose that a revolution against capitalism or any other ruling class would produce "as a natural by-product" a liberation of women. Men as such are a ruling class (including radical men) as far as women are concerned. Nothing but a direct attack on sexism, root and branch, will free women. And the struggle for women's freedom is a separate struggle whether it takes place in the context of a struggle against capitalism or not. In my opinion the overthrow of capitalism and the achievement of socialism is likely to be both easier and less revolutionary than the overthrow of sexism and the achievement of genuine and total freedom and equality for women. Freedom--first and always,

Vanauken, Lynchburg, Va.

Glad you put in the Male Reactions in the Women's Movement in the last newsletter, but I didn't like the title very much.--COCK-
TALES. It seemed kind of crude, and not in context with what I tried to describe.

Anne Koedt, NY

ED.NOTE: We apologize.

Gentlemen (or should I have said "Ladies"?). ... Can you send me a sample copy of your magazine along with some information concerning subscription rates?... VWLM #6

Russell Wigfield, Campus
Minister, Edwardsville, Ill.
(SIU)

ED.NOTE: Don't call us; we'll call you, boy.

One hundred and eighty southern women from nine southern states held a conference in Atlanta on the weekend of Feb. 9. As well as discussing the oppression of women in America, they discussed the particular problems of Southern women, and the southern heritage of populism and struggling women. Plans were made for campus, work-place, and community organizing across the South. Information is available from Lyn Wells, SSOC, Box 6403, Nashville, Tenn. 37212.

Sisters,

Do we need a uniform or a handshake to recognize our sisters? Surely we know a woman when we see one without signs and ceremonies and all women are or should be our concern. Sometimes it seems from reading VWLM and the conference report, that we are playing some kind of immature game, sort of like ten year olds in a tree fort marked "girls secret club-no boys allowed." Perhaps it is because we are used to being excluded from positions of responsibility that we stumble so often now; perhaps we are laughed at so often we cannot even take ourselves seriously. It is hard for us to hold together, much of what's happening in the liberation is encouraging but much of it, especially our theory and our writing, seems unsure of itself, often somewhat vague or silly.

Hopefully we will come to our own, there too with time, but there seems, to me at least, to be a more pressing and basic problem. It seems especially from the report of the Thanksgiving conference, but from other sources as well, that there is at least tacit agreement that unfortunate though it may be, it is indeed a lousy thing to be a woman. Not just at this time and this place, not because of our oppressed status but because we believe our oppressors, we believe in our own inferiority, our energies are directed at circumventing our woman-ness-not having babies, forgetting our strengths, wanting somehow not to be a woman-to negate our femininity-to live celibate childless self denying lives. Why? The reason is not really difficult to understand. It is as women that we have been exploited; it is sex and marriage and children which have tied us up and thwarted us and kept us mute, stifled creatures of despair. With, as a woman wrote to an advice columnist in a Washington paper, a short time ago, "A 14 hour day at home and my diploma hung over the washing machine." It is our bodies, air brushed and tinted to be sure, which fill Playboy and similar trash; our bodies that are used to sell cars and coats and liquor and oleo margarine. It is shameful. But it is not our shame! It is not we who must change, or at least not us alone. Because being a woman, wife and a mother is now a degrading, and often unbearable, frustrating experience, does not mean we should cease to be-not their idea, but our own idea-of a woman, wife, mother. If all women decided not to bear children the consequence would be the gradual end

of the world. If we are not to be an elitist group who says, "Oh well, childbearing is O.K. for some women i.e. those not as smart, as educated or whatever as we." If we are really to appeal to all women in capitalist countries and socialist and in between, to break their chains; we must not deny, but have pride in ourselves.

We must say to ourselves and to other women and to men. I am proud to be a woman and not afraid. If I choose to be celibate or bi-sexual or the communal life, that is my right; but if I choose to be a wife (legal or just actual- you can be wife oppressed license or not) and/or a mother I will not choose slavery, I will not choose denial. Those roles must change. The work week can be reduced as per Ashley Montagu's suggestion; nurseries staffed by sisters with time; co-operative help for new mothers- a kind of two month maid brigade to take the pressure off; black lists and action against discriminatory employers; an end to alimony; the word "illegitimate child" should pass out of the language- children are not against the law ever; protests and organized boycotts of products that sell cheese, or anything else by the use of women's bodies; true pride in our physical being, not as some fashion czar or perverted pederast with a mammary complex, like Hugh Hefner says we should be- but as we are- living, breathing, joyously alive! These things and more can restore the respect, the happiness, the harmony of women at once, with what they are and unexploitedly permanently strong and free.

Yours,

Flora Ellen Hardy

Last issue we announced a crisis and most of you ignored us. We need zip codes and subscriptions. The response from new people was large. But those of you who have been receiving the VWLM gratis, barely responded. We must break our bonds of economic dependence. Let's begin by supporting our own liberation. In a couple of issues we will discontinue mailing to those of you that we never hear from. Either send money or plead poverty. If factory workers and welfare recipients can pay \$3.00/ year to support their liberation, why can't you? Send zip code AND money to: VWLM

READINGS

Up From Ridicule: A Position Paper on
Radical Women In the Professions/
Marlene Dixon

Towards a Radical Women's Movement/
Marilyn Webb

Women In the Radical Movement: A
Reply to Ramparts/ Evelyn Goldfield,
Heather Booth, Sue Munaker

The Look is You/ Towards a Strategy for
Radical Women/Naomi Jaffe and
Bernadine Dohrn

A Call for Women's Liberation/ Sue Munaker
The Sexual Caste System: On Passing Two
Whores and a Nun/ Heather Dean

Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen/ Judi
Bernstein, Peggy Norton, Linda Seese,
Myrna Wood

An Introduction to the Boston Regional
Meeting/ Nancy Hawley

Excerpts from an Interview with Pam Allen
and Julius Lester

The Position of Black Movement/ Patricia
Robinson

The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm/ Anne Koedt
Women's Position Paper From the University
of Chicago sit-in and statement by Marlene
Dixon

Available from the VWLM for 35¢ each,
10 for \$2. 50, 15 for \$3. 50

The Secondary Social Status of Women: Class
and Caste Applied to Women's Position/
Marlene Dixon

Sexual Politics/ Kate Millet

The Place of American Women/ Joan Jordan

Notes on the Jones-Brown paper/ Jane Adams
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