

THE TIDE

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A FEMINIST LESBIAN PUBLICATION, WRITTEN BY AND FOR THE RISING TIDE OF WOMEN TODAY

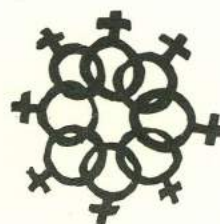


"GENTE" Northern California's Independent Third World Lesbian Softball Team

IN THIS ISSUE

MARGARET SLOAN ON BLACK FEMINISM
VENGEANCE OF THE CHEROKEE INDIAN WOMAN
ALSO:

Women's Movement Sued
Most Wanton Women
Who are the Dangerous People?



THE TIDE

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 9

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Double Trouble For Black Women

An Interview With Margaret Sloan

By Karla Jay

Karla: What is the National Black Feminist Organization * working on?

Margaret: Because we grew so quickly, we really didn't have time to work on our internal structure, so we're making plans for a convention of our membership. It will be held some time in October in the Midwest. Because we are involved in other organizations, because we work, and because we are very, very busy anyway, it's very difficult to sit down and hack out a national policy that you hope that the members will either accept, reject, or add to or whatever. And we're trying to get some action coming out of our committees, because we look at the committees as being the strength of the organization. And we're moving into office space. That's just where we are now.

Karla: How large is the organization?

Marg: We have almost 2,000 women across the country, and it's growing, and we have several chapters that are actually formed and women in many cities and states have written to us saying that they would like to form a chapter of NBFO. We just have to make sure that it grows right - that there is a feminist foundation for those chapters because there is a lot of confusion as to what NBFO is all about and what they think NBFO should be about. And so we kind of are slowly moving on requests to form chapters.

Karla: The Women's Liberation Movement is often accused, as you know, of being white and middle-class. Is your group ever accused of being predominantly Black middle-class women?

Marg: Number one: I don't respond to the accusation that the Women's Movement is white and middle-class any more than I respond to the accusation that is nonexistent that our movement is Black middle-class. Nobody criticized Dr. King for having a Ph.D. or Stokely for going to Howard University or Fred Hampton for coming from a suburb. People were able to be excited about the fact that these Black men were able to get up and out of their oppressive situations and bring about a movement. And I don't criticize women who had a B.A. degree and stood in front of the kitchen sink and asked themselves questions about why they should be there. In any movement, it's always the overeducated that get it together anyway. People who are so oppressed - rock bottom - don't even have time to shit.

In terms of the NBFO being Black middle class women, I think that people must understand that when you're talking about class with Black people, it's totally different than when you're talking about class with white people. There is really not that much second-generation Black money around. There's very little of it. In terms of the Black women who got NBFO together, most of us by white definitions do not come from the middle class at all. Our membership dues are based on a sliding scale according to income, and if you go by that, most of our women make less than \$10,000 per year. But even if we didn't, I would feel no need to apologize for that because I think that wherever I can get Black women to come into NBFO and can start connecting with Black women about their lives, about their frustrations, about issues that affect them - those kinds of class issues have not really divided Black women and I don't think we're about to let it happen in NBFO.

I think that one of the things we have noticed in NBFO is the ability of Black women to get together and organize across so-called white-defined class lines, across sexual preferences.



Margaret Sloan—Chairwoman of NBFO

At our conference we had 500 women from all over the country. It's so important for Black women to survive that we can't afford the luxury of saying: "Well, you oppress me because your father is a minister or the chairman of IT&T." We can't get involved in that.

Karla: People usually bring up class as a divisive tactic.

Marg: Yes, I know, but I don't think that feminists should do that - not saying that we shouldn't have sound arguments about class. But when feminists do that, here we are women who claim not to be male-identified but when we go into a class thing what we do is judge her by the man she's attached to, because most women who do come from a privileged class got it from the dude they sleep with, the man that kept them, the father that had them. It's never because of their money. Very few women in this country really have power and money. It's usually parasitically through somebody else.

So I have a problem with the whole class argument. Especially being a Black woman - being poor and my mother having middle-class pretensions as all poor people do.

Karla: Why do you call yourself the National Black Feminist Organization instead of perhaps the National Third-World Organization? Do you feel the oppression of Spanish women and Black Spanish women, for example, is different?

Marg: Well, the women who organized NBFO are Black women of African descent, and so we didn't feel the need to organize around somebody else's oppression. I do not know what it is to have a bilingual problem, for example. I don't understand the whole problem about "familia." Those are not the experiences of my culture.

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FROM US...

RADICAL THERAPY MEDIATIONS

Our mediations are continuing. At present we are working on a Tide Collective Contract. In our August birthday issue, we'll be giving you our analysis of the mediations.

JOIN US

The Tide Collective welcomes women in the local community to join the Collective or to work in some capacity with us. Our purpose is not only to report and mirror occurrences in Lesbos, but also to serve as medium for expression of individual women's talents.

In addition, articles and artistic contributions from women everywhere are lovingly appreciated.

CORRESPONDENTS

On the same note, correspondents are also desired from across the lands. Whether you live in a big city, a small anthill, work as a secretary or plumber - if you've got things to report and write on a continuous basis, let us know and we'll contact you.

BIO HIGHLIGHTS

Response to our June issue's "Contributor's Highlights" (Round-table rap) has been so fine we've decided to expand the idea. From now on, any woman who submits material is also urged to include a very brief biographical note. Place emphasis on your personal and cultural space, not your credentials.

NAME CHANGE

We're still investigating the pros and cons of our name change. Our final decision will be announced in the August issue. Send in your opinions quickly.

SMILE PRETTY

Winners of the "Dyke Cover Contest" will be announced in next month's birthday issue. Just another reminder to those who've submitted songs to send us a picture and brief blurb about yourself. If you don't, how can you "getcha picture on the cover"?

LZ.

Next month, The Tide is planning to do a take-off on MS. Yes, devoted fans - LZ. The idea was a spasm of brilliance when born months ago. Hordes of one-time MS readers (or skimmers) will now have a chance to actualize your creative ideas and thoughts upon that nationwide magazine of "liberation." We're asking for your contributions. Conceptualize LZ as you want - satirical, serious ... In addition to letters and articles, photographs and art work will be needed. Send us whatever you come up with and mark your submissions "LZ". Deadline is July 18.

LESBIAN: SEX and MUSIC

Last month we announced our plans for working along thematic lines. We've come up with some ideas for future issues; SEPTEMBER - Sexuality and Sensuality (suggested subjects: demystification of lesbian love, politics of masturbation, radical celibacy, where does the clit come in, erotic alternatives, group sexuality, lesbian porn ...)

OCTOBER - Women's Music: What is "women's music"? Who's writing it? What does it mean? Is it really different? How?

Ideas for other issues are:

Witches, Saints, and Magicians - Our Herstory

Amazon Nation - What will it look and feel like?

Send your articles in as soon as possible.

TO US...

Letters to the Collective

Dear Sisters,

To those courageous sisters, Jan Rice, Peggy Kimball, and Tyler, who wrote in dissent to the TIDE's diatribe regarding the SLA women - I pledge my support. Thank you for expressing such an unpopular point of view at such a delicate time. Unfortunately, THE TIDE's majority position and related articles left me feeling angry and intellectually affronted. Do you really contend that, because a person bears the labels, 'Woman' and 'Lesbian', she is justified in killing? (Sorry to be so blunt - but I'm rather weary of euphemisms.)

Does a simple word or slogan suddenly make it - "all right"? I've noticed that many radical lesbians are outraged by violent tactics on the part of "male-heterosexist-pigs", but condone and even encourage violence for "lesbian-feminist-soldiers-in-struggle".

Right... tell me about it. ...

It saddens me to see so many intelligent women respond with such Pavlovian fervor to ambiguous, over-used rhetoric. It's almost as though any woman who proclaims the divine phrase - "Revolution," need not explain herself further. By the grace of that single word, she is instantly relieved of responsibility for her words and/or actions. All of the articles in THE TIDE concerning the SLA implied that "these are really Good, Noble people who have been so Oppressed by the System that, although we ... 'question' their methods, it is easy to see how they were Driven to these extremes."

... at which point, I must contain my nausea.

Where does this two-dimensional, "good guys" - "bad guys" logic finally end? How much violence will it ultimately condone?

The world has well over its quota of hate-mongers, power-mongers and ideology-mongers.

Let us be peace-mongers together.

Gloria Hovde

Dear Sisters:

My article, "Convention Recognizes Androgyny" in the June issue of The Tide was rather badly battered by typesetting errors. In and of itself, that ain't so terrible, but the specific errors seriously impaired the comprehensibility of the content. So, I'd like to let the readers know what I was saying by printing these clarifications in the next issue.

There is no word "androgynous." The word is "androgEnous" and means "producing male offspring." It is pronounced the same as the word "androgYnous" which embraces both the male and the female principles, and in that order. The word "gynandrous" embraces both the female and the male principles in that order and is thus a preferable term over "androgyny" (and certainly over "androgeny"). Both gynandry and androgyny are synonymous with "hermaphrodite."

I hope that is clear now. I feel better.

In love,
Susan Kuhner

Dear Tide Collective,

This letter is to commend Karla Jay on her excellent article "Surviving Gay Coupledness" which I found very thought-provoking. Here in Atlanta, it is not as she describes, however. There are more Lesbian couples (radical ones) in the movement rather than a lot of singles. It seems that most of our social functions are geared toward couples, not singles (which makes it a bit hard if you are single like me).

Well, I want to thank Karla Jay for her article and I am awaiting the following book.

An open letter to Rita Mae Brown: thought Rubyfruit Jungle was fantastic.

Goddess Power,
Patsy
Atlanta, Georgia

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MOST WANTON WOMEN

by Gudrun Fonfa



California Penal Code 288a. (Sex perversions: Punishment.) Any persons participating in an act of copulating the mouth of one person with the sexual organ of another is punishable by imprisonment in the state prison for not exceeding 15 years. (1915)

This is it, this is the one and only law that hangs like a blade over our heads. It is this puritan statement (that does not even mention lesbians by name) that makes felons, sex offenders of us all. That gives society and the courts a club to beat us with.

Four weeks ago Jeanne Cordova received a call from an attorney who is activating the committee for sexual freedom. He asked her assistance in challenging this law. Meaning will you surrender yourself up to a duly appointed law enforcer? Jeanne's reaction was "Why me?" He explained that he needed a couple well-known in the community, with credibility and daring. Jeanne called Barbara whose first reaction was "this is crazy, my parents will disown me, I've kept them in the dark for 13 years." After careful consideration, they decided to put their lives on the line, the dotted line in the form of a signature on this document:

"We, Barbara Jo Gehrke and Jeanne Roberta Cordova say that:

1. We admit the commission of an act proscribed by Section 288a of the Penal Code (Sex perversion), in that on or about May 8, 1974, in the County of Los Angeles, State of California, we did participate in the act of oral copulation with each other.

2. We engaged in the act willingly, and the act was done with each of our consent.

3. We are adult females, aged 32 and 25 respectively.

4. The above mentioned act was done in private, with no person other than ourselves present.

5. We are aware that the possible punishment for the above-mentioned act is fifteen (15) years in the state penitentiary and that persons convicted of violation of Section 288a of the Penal Code must register as sex offenders under Section 290 of the Penal Code.

6. If arrested and charged with violation of Section 288a of the Penal Code for the above-mentioned act, we will voluntarily testify to the details of such act in a Court of Law and will waive our rights to a trial by jury, our right to confrontation of witnesses, and our right against self-incrimination.

7. We are making this declaration in the belief that the above statute is unconstitutional.

8. Further and last, we authorize Attorney Albert L. Gordon to notify the proper authorities of the above-mentioned act in violation of Section 288a of the Penal Code.

We declare under penalty of perjury that the afore-mentioned is true."

Jeanne balked a bit at the waiving of rights. "Is this really necessary?" The lawyers assured her it was. The preliminaries completed, a press conference was scheduled, their confessions

sent to the Chief of Police (and the County Sheriff) informing him of their intent (along with two other couples, one heterosexual and one male homosexual) to turn themselves over for arrest. Jeanne and Barbara prepared statements, the traumatic implications crystallizing. This was not just another speech at a college or demonstration that one could amend by saying "I've changed my position." This was IRREVOCABLE.

Barbara dealt with her scared feelings by reading her statement over and over until it was practically memorized. Jeanne, on the other hand, did her best to put the action out of her mind.

On June 13 at the LA Press Club the three couples volunteered to be taken into custody to test the constitutionality of California's archaic sex laws. No law enforcement officers showed themselves in the light of day, although they were given the opportunity to apprehend without wiretapping, entrapment, or even public expense. The attorney pointed out that these six people were attempting to peacefully reform oppressive legislation.

The press was attentive and heard statements: Al Gordon — "These six people have determined that these laws are iniquitous and invade the privacy rights. They have decided to

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Photo by CLAIRE KRULIKOWSKI



Left to right:
Barbara Gehrke, Rev. Troy Perry & Jeanne Cordova

We Have To Be Our Own Spark

AN INTERVIEW WITH "GENTE" THIRD-WORLD LESBIAN SOFTBALL TEAM



Photo by JULIE S.

"It's gonna come time to hook up with each other."

"Gente" is an all Third World Lesbian softball team, the first of its kind that we know of. They play out of Oakland, California, as part of the 10-team Bay Area Women's Softball League. This includes 9 Gay bar teams and "Gente", an independent team of united soul sisters.

"Gente" means "People" in Spanish, or just "folks", as one team-sister put it. Guess that means Third World Womenfolk here.

The team solidarity reflects their name. They are a spirited, united group of twenty-five Third World sisters who have come together from many different places. Nearly every nationality that is a part of the growing Liberation movement of Third World people is playing on the team - Raza (Chicana and Puerta Rican), Black (including a sister from the West Indies), Native American and Asian American. They are a mixture of folks from factory teams and folks with degrees. Bread to start and sustain the team was raised from a woman's corporation and from a fund-raising dance they threw themselves. They have no sponsor, they provide their own spark.

The entire team was involved in this interview, which happened at practice the day before their first game of the season. Watching them play together and treat each other as equals was a real up. They preferred that we not single out any sisters by name. They work and think as a team. This is their collective statement.

One of the team sisters - a pitcher - recently gave me her feelings about that game:

"We played a fantastic game. Our objective was to get ourselves together and hold it together... and we're doing that. We lost in points but we don't care about that. No way that team could've done anything to us that day. We won spiritually."

Digging into this intervju was the most pleasure i've ever had putting something together. Political play, i think of it as - in a way like the Third World sisters who play out their politics on the field, just by being WOMEN TOGETHER. Any solid womanfront is likely to have a "subversive" purpose in (her) mind! With a Third World Lesbian Women's Front, we can count on that being triply "subversive".

It is Woman strength, Woman pride.

It is Lesbian strength, Lesbian pride.

It is the pride and power of the whole Third World.

It is Third World and Female and Lesbian combined consciousness.

It is greater control.

It is a measure of freedom.

sudi mae

(thanx to the poet-sister for her idea for this intervju and to the entire team of womenfolk for their encouragement and the openness and love i felt just being around them.)

"HOW WE FIRST GOT HIP"

... Over LESBIAN AIR, that's how I first got hip to it. People were talking about the bar teams. We were interested in playing ball because we like sports. But we had some complaints and we weren't interested in playing with a bar team anymore or being in the bar league.

... What happened was, we all played on a winter basketball league, and all on different teams. We talked about some of the issues raised during the basketball season, like the competitiveness we found in the bar teams. There was a little bit of name-calling. Tempers were really hot. People got pissed. There were so few people on the teams, and we always had to play the same teams.

AN INDEPENDENT GAY WOMEN'S SOFTBALL LEAGUE CAN HAPPEN

... There's different leagues. There's not just the bar leagues, where some of us come from. There's also the industrial leagues, sponsored by companies, like Goodyear Tires and companies in the electronics industries, where some women played as part of their job. Then there's the university teams, some of us come from there.

... We all got the idea, we might want to have a team of our own. We weren't sure who we wanted to sponsor it. We weren't even sure it was going to happen. Then it just kinda happened.

... More women, not only Third World, but women in general, need to start realizing that you can just throw a team together... and get your act together. I hope to someday see a lot of women's teams, have a gay women's league outside the bar. I think that can someday happen, especially when you have a team like us. A lot of us go to different bars. A lot of us are from both sides of the bay. We really don't identify with any one bar right now.

COMPETITION VERSUS

"WE WANTED TO GET HOLD OF EACH OTHER"

... I played softball last year for a gay bar. That was my first time playing softball. I decided to join, but I had no idea about all the different trips the bar teams put you through (solidarity laughter). Like you have all kinds of grudges against each other, not only the people on my team, but the people who sponsored my team and the people on the other team. It really interfered with our ability to play.

... To play on a bar team, you don't have to all be friends. You don't have to work together. We have arguments and we have differences, but we're all friends.

... We talked about wanting to play on the same team in softball, instead of on opposing teams, like we did in basketball. We felt like a lot of the competitiveness wouldn't happen if we were all together, as third-world women, on the same team. We wanted to get hold of each other. We wanted to be with each other, instead of against each other.

... STARTING TO COME TOGETHER

... So three of us got together one night, started talking about it, wrote a proposal up (laughter) ... well, anyway, that's part of it. We started circulating some information, saying where people could find us if they were interested. We wanted to get together a whole bunch of third-world women, outside of the bars, and be able to relate to each other outside of the softball field, too. This wasn't happening, you know. You see third-world women in bars in passing. You don't get to know anybody.

... I didn't know a lot of people here before we got this team together. That's the biggest reason I felt compelled to do what we are doing. It's amazing how many third-world women now come up to me and say, "Have you got your schedule yet, because we'd really like to come out to watch. We're not going to play, but we'd like to watch you."

... This issue of third-world women getting to know each other is important. We're always so scattered. So we thought it'd be a nice way to incorporate a whole bunch of third-world people.

... Now we're starting to meet more third-world women. Eventually, there'll be a lot more people coming out for a women's softball team. We will have established ourselves. That's basically where a lot of people came together on this.

BUILDING A HOME BASE FOR THE THIRD WORLD

... moving toward a women's center

... The way we started this was as a softball team. But we want to continue it, maybe get a place, a nice place where people can come, that's not a bar scene. They can bring booze if they want it, there'd be good music. It could be a comfortable place where people won't get hassled, like in that whole bar trip.

... That's one of the real issues, just trying to get a place. You go into some of these places and the jukebox is kinda weird.

... This doesn't necessarily have to lend itself only to sports. It's a starting place, something to get people together first. Sports are pretty universal. We were talking about getting together a center that would be an outlet. This is just like a spit in the bucket. It's one little thing we're doing. It takes a lot of our energy and a lot of our time.

"WE HAVE TO BE OUR OWN SPARK"

... You gotta start someplace. I guess the hardest thing for us is that we have to be our own spark. We don't have a lot of people sparking us up, like you do when you're in a bar. Someone'll say, "Oh, you're gonna have a game ... right on ... blah ... blah ... blah ..." We call each other. We talk to each other, saying (while she solidarity-pats a sister on the shoulder), "yaaaaay Yaaaay." We rely on the people we know. Perhaps a center will be coming ...

"IT'S GONNA COME TIME TO HOOK UP WITH EACH OTHER"

... We're identifying ourselves in some way. It's not the third world being just two people that happen to show up to talk on some talk show. All of a sudden, we really are in fact trying to get something together. There's a lot of third-world sisters out there that don't have anything to do with sports. But it's gonna come time when we're gonna hook up with each other. The only way we can do that is get together when we can on some common ground. Right now the common ground is softball. But we're not going to be limited to that. Some of us could leave here and go to other cities and say, "Hey, this worked when we all happened to be in San Francisco" and it all might happen again someplace else.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE BARS? —

KINSHIP & BREAD

... Sponsoring a team costs a little bit of bread. A lot of women in the bar wanted to have their own league. Several of us were playing in the city leagues, the industrial leagues. There were a lot of straight women there, and we had trouble with a lot of them. Some of them got really intimidated by us being gay. So we started talking to different bars and they started sponsoring teams. That's how it came down. A lot of the bar owners realized it would in fact bring them in quite a bit of money and bring in a lot of people. It's not just the team that goes to a bar. It's us and our lovers and our friends and

people who just want to do something on Sunday afternoon after the games, so they follow everybody. It's a nice way for the bars to attract people. Basically they wanted to give something to gay women, so we would patronize the bars and feel a little kinship with them. That does happen in bars. You spend a lot of time there and you start having a kinship with the bars.

"THE POLITICS OF A BAR LEAGUE":

\$\$, DRINKS & RACISM

... There's some tacky things about belonging to the league, like you have to buy drinks for the team. They can't come to our bar, because we don't have one. We have to go to their bar, instead. We have to buy them and ourselves a round of drinks.

... Mostly, the trip is money. Being trained and winning and money. We were trained and winning, but we couldn't afford to pay money.

... Yeah, we're trying to get away from that. But we're kinda stuck with it, too, since the people we're playing are on bar teams. That's the politics of a bar league. That's one of the main drains on our money. It comes to quite a bit. The bar thing is still ripping off our money. Win or lose, we gotta buy drinks.



Photo by JULIE S.

"When we come in the bars separately ... we're cool.

When the whole team comes in, it's like we're gonna start a riot. We're not supposed to be together."

IT'S NOT ALL IN THE GAME — IT'S ALL IN THE WIN OR LOSE

... There's not any consideration for the players. It's more of a lose-or-win type thing. If you don't win, blah blah blah, you're not this, you're not that.

"WHEN WE WERE DOWN ... SHE PUT US FURTHER DOWN."

... The owner of one of the bar teams was in it for the bread, strictly. That was it, from the git-go. When we were down, she put us further down. It was always a cut, "Shut your mouth ... Do this ... Do that ... You're drunk." When we were up, she'd say, "All right, all right. Looks good." I don't need that!

... Yeah, and you can walk all over the city before you find a bar owned by a third-world woman ... and walk back too (much laughter) ... walk all the way back.

... There is one.

... She ain't Third World.

... Yeah, she is,

... Well, you know, same difference.

WHITE WOMEN GOTTA DEAL

... Another thing that sparked the talk about this team was us feeling alienated from other third-world women. Not only do I not want to be alienated from other third-world women, but I want white women to deal with their responsibility about racism. As much as I have to deal with racism as the victim, they have to deal with racism

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confess to these crimes. If these laws are on the books they should be enforced." The facts are that P.C. 288a (and 286, anal intercourse) have rarely been overtly enforced. They have been used insidiously in cases involving job discrimination etc., against lesbians and male homosexuals. Society is able to point to these laws to chastize us as felonous offenders.

Jeanne Cordova — "I am here in the name of hundreds of lesbian mothers who have stood before California Judges and heard, "This woman is unfit, she has no right to her child." If this woman is unfit, I am unfit. I demand equal treatment under the law. I am here in the name of thousands of lesbians who have been dishonorably discharged from the services, thrown out of their jobs, their homes, their churches, their livelihood. In the name of those whose lives have been ruined in the name of this law — I demand arrest!

As a California citizen, I demand we here today witness, in public, the prostitution of justice that has countless times been committed BEHIND THE PUBLIC'S BACK. If I am not arrested, I am not a criminal. If that is the judgment — I demand the immediate release of lesbians held in mental institutions against their will. I demand the immediate reinstatement of employment for all lesbians who have lost their jobs because of their lesbianism. I demand the child custody judges in this state immediately reverse their decisions against lesbian mothers." etc. Although virtually no one has been arrested under P.C. 288a there are cases. In 1967, Livermore vs. State of Michigan, an off-duty vice officer on a camping trip overheard two women making love inside their tent. He entered and arrested the women. Ms. Livermore served three years in the state penitentiary.

Barbara — "This is the image of ourselves I was resigned to. I have lived under the threat of this vague law. I am no longer resigned to a fate as a felon. No uninvited referee belongs in my bedroom to see that I keep HIS rules."

Since the LAPD did not surface — Morris Kight, homosexual activist (according to a prearranged plan), made a citizens arrest of the six. They drove to the Ramparts Police Station, with the press in attendance. Here they were met by Commander Wise who said, "I will not take custody of these people. We didn't see the crime in action." The law states explicitly that duly appointed officers should acknowledge and act upon citizens arrest when there is probable cause for arrest. Signed confessions are of course probable cause.

The entire group then proceeded to the district attorney's office. The DA has the authority to instruct police to make arrests. All through the ordeal Barbara and Jeanne were calm, wise and quick with responses. Their intimate affection and concern for one another was serenely beautiful. Barbara — "I was less afraid than I anticipated. Due mostly to the inefficiency of male institutions. And their lack of response. I felt we weren't taken seriously. The police didn't even read our papers. My suspicions were confirmed, that gay people don't affect them personally, they don't care for us and they don't even care about us. I felt rather let down. There was nothing tangible to fight. Here we are trying to do something peacefully instead of resorting to calling attention to ourselves through the extremes of violence." The assistant DA Jacobson met with the attorney and defendants for some 45 minutes. The press and friends of the "felons six" were waiting in the conference room — where the blackboard was made use of for constructive graffiti "Gay is Good, Gay is Glorious," etc.

A LAW IS A LAW IS ...?

Jacobson then made the following statement for the press: "It is the policy of our office not to file criminal charges where consenting adults, in private, engage in sexual acts

which might be considered violations of penal laws. It is only when such acts are committed in public or offend others that complaints are presented to this office by law enforcement agencies for filing consideration.

Any groups or individuals who wish to change current laws in this area should take their complaint to the state legislature."

It seems we need to ask of this moderate and friendly statement (since the law is obviously deemed inappropriate by Police and DA's as they refuse to act on it, and we must point out that PC 288a says nothing of "private" and "consenting") when we write our congressmen to change the law in the legislature, will you assistant DA Jacobson, will you Commander Wise, (your names carrying more weight than mine) will you write YOUR congressman?

Jeanne — "We have not as yet been arrested and allowed our day in court, but I'm hoping other people across the country will do what we did today, and do it better! It is important for us to harass and embarrass the authorities publically."

Society originally armed itself with sexual discrimination laws in England in the late 1800's. Queen Victoria, when she was informed of the proposed law, said "English Women would never do such a thing." Well, our heads of state know better. It's not too soon to disarm THEM.



Photo by CLAIRE KRULIKOWSKI
After the day's hassles — happy 69!

Epilogue: ACLU lawyers (Albert Gordon, Tom Coleman, Walter Barnett) report the sexual reform committee "Felons 6" have grounds for a legal suit and will be protesting the constitutionality of 288a and 286 and the negligence of the LAPD (in failing to uphold their law) in the California state and/or federal courts. The felons 6 will be marching in a special contingent at Christine St. West, passing out a statement for sisters and brothers to sign that "We are all felons".

Additionally, the felons 6 will soon send out press release (How to do it in your city) to the feminist and gay community.

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REVIEWS:

JOURNALISM: IT'S A SEXIST AFFAIR

A book review of
Sexism: It's a Nasty Affair
by Jeanne Cordova
(New Way Books, \$2.00)

Review by Karla Jay

One of the great mistakes of the Women's Liberation Movement has been our failure to force the countless straight overground papers, as well as television and radio stations, to hire feminist and lesbian commentators. We do have some commentators in our own papers, but only one feminist or lesbian paper (*Majority Report*) comes out more than once a month, and a big magazine like *Ms* has its contents planned 6 months in advance and won't print anything that might appear "dated." Our commentaries, therefore, tend to run on the stale side.

I should make it clear that I'm not talking about women reporters "objectively" covering crime on the streets or more likely telling consumers (read: Housewives) about the best buys of the week at the supermarket, but I mean commentators who can provide an "instant" or as-fast-as-possible analysis of any given situation which might have some implications for women (and how many situations don't?). Where have we seen or heard a women's analysis soon after such incidents as Watergate or the SLA kidnapping? Where are our Russell Bakers, Jack Andersons, Art Buchwalds? Lots of them - and better ones - are out there, but in Amerika only the oppressors can tell us what's right and what's wrong, or even what's happening.

The above tirade was produced by *Sexism: It's a Nasty Affair* by Jeanne Cordova, which brought the whole oppressive situation home to me, because this fine collection of articles which originally appeared in the *Los Angeles Free Press* is an example of the superlative commentary-type writing women can do. For Jeanne Cordova is just what we're missing - someone who can denounce the piggery of Mort Sahl while he's still performing in town, throw some punches at the local radio show's sexist host, give a run-down of Sandra Hochman's visit to Los Angeles, or verbally obliterate L.A. police chief Ed Davis for his chauvinist policies. And when no villains are on the scene (which does seem a bit unlikely in a city as large as L.A.), Jeanne Cordova still has that beautiful column space in which to comment on the horrors of the female condition - the daily insults of pig English, or our secretarial status on the corporate mud heap. However, where the author really excels is when she talks about herself, for in her own experiences as a lesbian and as a feminist - in such places as the high school gym, in summer camp, in the convent, and in dealing with a large family - she reaches a core of essential truth about the human experience which makes one sigh (and often laugh because of her sharp humor) in recognition.

Thus, Jeanne Cordova is one of our first lesbian/feminist commentators. The only other commentator I can think of offhand is Jill Johnston of the *Village Voice* in New York. And Jeanne Cordova can be as funny as Art Buchwald or as perceptive as Jack Newfield, and the only question that arises from *Sexism: It's a Nasty Affair* is: What's a fine writer like this doing writing for a paper like the *Freep*? The question must ultimately be asked of society, not the author, but, as Jeanne Cordova puts it: "I have decided to make the best of what was available." A wise choice, for had the decision been otherwise, my week would have been drearier without this satirical and perceptive collection of articles.

Sexism: It's a Nasty Affair is available at local feminist bookstores or by direct mail order, New Way Books, 6013 Hollywood Blvd., L.A. 90028.

OH, LADY, CAN'T YOU HEAR THE MUSIC?

Review by Susan Kuhnner

A single 45-rpm record has been released by Olivia Records, a new national women's recording company. This is their first product. It is being used for fund-raising purposes, their goal being to buy their own studio. One side is Cris Williamson singing, "If It Weren't for the Music", and Meg Christian sings "Lady" on the other side. Each woman wrote her own song and accompanied herself with guitar, piano, autoharp and vocals.

Cris' song is an expression of her high and deep energies from loving women (a woman). Her words are not as profound as her feelings:

"If it weren't for the music bringing us together in a natural way,

I'd still be looking for a way to say I want to be your good friend."

Her song continuously begins and ends and begins again, each time on a different note (so to speak) and with a different feeling. Like the music of Joni Mitchell, Laura Nyro, and Margie Adam, it is a "stream of feeling" as well as a stream of consciousness, and it takes the listener (if she allows) through peaceful, soft brooks and powerful, rushing rapids.

Cris' music (and I've been familiar with it since 1972) is representative of the new women's music in its freedom from the structures, uniformity and simplicity that the male media demands of music. She can dare to celebrate the power and the freedom that loving women pours into her. There's nothing much political about her music except what is inherent in its woman-loving-woman lyrics. That's enough for some of us at all times, enough for all of us sometimes.

Meg's "Lady" is a political love song (somehow similar to Joni Mitchell's sentiment in "The Fiddle and the Drum", in which she bitterly and mournfully expresses her feelings of betrayal and loss toward a woman who left the Movement, deserted her sisters, and removed herself from life. "Lady" poetically reminds us of our responsibility to our woman selves and to other women to choose freedom and struggle over bondage and ease. Meg critically questions the "Lady" on every level of experience: from the outside in, from social security to sexual/affectional intimacy. It scolds us into remembering what freedom is not, what responsibility is not:

"As you reap the sad harvest of wanting too much,

Pretending you still feel alive,

Now and then looking back over all you've forsaken,

There's nothing to do but survive.

Lady, now are you a Lady?

Do you like the one your beauty's been sold to?

How does it feel when he holds you?

Being who you are, couldn't you tell?

Knowing what you know, how could you sell?

Oh Lady, now, are you a Lady? a lay-dee? a lady?

This record company is, for sure, worth our support due to the freedom of expression it affords music-media sisters. This record is a fine gift for our own and for our lost and newly reborn sisters. You can get a copy by sending \$1.50 plus 30 cents (50 cents in Canada) for mailing to Olivia Records, Box 1784, Main City Stations, Washington, D.C. 20013.

A KISS DOES NOT

This second part of the round-table rap covers a lotta ground: from dyke separatism and death, to the creation of a Feminist party and being shat upon by the multi-national corporate power structure. Next month's part 3 will feature the role of culture/the distinction between power and influence/more on the multi-nationals/and more.

We hope to hear your responses as we go round and round on these issues that directly affect our lives and the state of our movement.

moderator: sudi

ON A FEMINIST PARTY

RITA: My concern, which ties me down, is that I care about the longevity of our cause, I don't want to dissipate it in huge rallies like the anti-war movement dissipated itself on Washington on one-shot deals; to me, the way you build longevity into a movement is to create the structures for continued leadership. The measure of a movement is, can it consistently produce adequate and inspired leadership? We cannot expect all people to do all things, so we have to recognize that the people who have political vision are the people, in terms of our struggle, who are a priority right now. We've got to find those people, we've got to develop them, we've got to in fact become those people. What I want to see happen are organizations which foster that. We can use an example like the Democratic Party, which I don't believe is *our* example, but that kind of institution.

BARBARA: What does this organization look like?

RITA: Well, to me, I'm an American, remember, we're all Americans, so it looks in ways *like* a democratic party. It's an organization in which anyone can join if they choose to, they can subscribe to the program of the "party."

JEANNE: Like N.O.W.?

"OUR PARTY MUST SHOW THE NATION A PROGRAM"

RITA: Better than N.O.W. I mean, N.O.W. is hung up reacting against the system. Our party must show the nation a program, not a series of reforms, but a program. This is what we're going to do, this, this, and this, a whole political, serious platform. We can set the structure of leadership up so that some woman who walks off the street can become chairwoman of the party instantly, or however we want to set up that internal structure.

BARBARA: Do you envision a feminist party which would enter into the contest with the Democratic and Republican parties?

RITA: I can't, and the reason I can't is that, first of all, it is against my emotional nature to organize that way. It is much too evolutionary for my blood, I'm a hot lady, by birth. My temperament is the blood-in-the-streets temperament. However, I recognize that this is not really America, that my incredible passion and desire for a quick win is not necessarily pulling it all in.

JEANNE: I would foresee that the program of such a large-scale organization would be radical, undoubtedly socialist radical feminist, and would probably work on certain civil rights.

RITA: A party doesn't work on civil rights, a political party tries to get people elected in the legislature to then activate the party's program. We're talking about a means to come to power "legitimately."

SUDI: I see a party generally as a tool for organizing women in the interests of women, educating and organizing around whatever programs or platforms or issues that party chooses to take up.

JEANNE: You seem to be saying that in order to take power in this society, we have to form broad-based organizations and learn some of the ways to beat the system at its own game.

RITA: Yes, but it actually isn't as broad in just getting people elected to office. I see it as having to work on a lot of levels. The first level is

not necessarily intellectual, that comes later and I'll explain why we must go through an electoral process for a time, I'm not at all committed to it for a long term but I am for a short term. Before we get to the electoral process, it's necessary to coordinate and codify the women's centers and the health-care centers because that's the social work of the movement.

WHERE DOES CLASS COME IN?

It's also operating a bit on the laydown principle that it's only privileged women who operate those structures; however, they can be broadened, those privileged women can serve the lower class woman, that's the first thing I, as a politician, want to do in our movement. I want to jump class privilege and give them confidence to the lower class women to come into the structures that the middle-class women have created and to get their health care needs taken care of, which is extremely important, and to have a place to just sit and relax, which they may not have in their homes, and hopefully to have some sort of rudimentary child care. We have the womanpower to do that, every major city has some rough raggedy women's center which needs to be coordinated in a national program where they know what they are doing and why they are doing it, where they understand that this is the way to reach women's needs and that the women who come in are not necessarily being politicized by polemics, that the needs are being met which will create good will. Every major corporation knows about good will, it's time we learned about good will, right? It also means that we win, that we've operated with a point in our favor, that any woman in any big city and hopefully the larger towns, knows as she goes down the street, "Oh yeah, that's the women's center." There's an awful lot to be said for a visual structure, she can see it, it exists, that's a first step.

"THEY'VE BEEN SOLD THE MYTH OF THE VOTE"

Then the next step is running candidates. Now that takes money, but by that time, which we hope will be five years from now, we will have created enough good will to get some campaign funds. I do not believe in the American electoral process, I think it's shit, however, the great population of *this* country has been sold the myth of the vote, therefore, for a time, we have to give credence to that myth, and run candidates in good faith. In good faith to show that we are *trying* to do this *fairly*.

PURPOSE OF THE PARTY: "DEFEAT OF THE MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATIONS"

Our program is hopefully a strong economic program, it is the only program that will sell to a mixed race population, a mixed sex population, that lesbianism is really fine, the program's purpose is the defeat of the multi-national corporations. Because they are so dangerous and they are destroying domestic life, you could make a good case out of it. Concurrent with that is strong civil rights, every issue on race, on sexism, I mean because basically your energy is coming from women. But you don't even have to push it that hard once you're there. Your very being is proof of your politics.

"LEGISLATURE IS ELECTRIFYING THE COUNTRY"

So let's say you get a whole caucus in the House, maybe even a hundred. You have one-fifth of the House, we consistently produce progressive legislature, we are electrifying the country by the legislature being the seat of political activity in this country. We are now in horrendous conflict with the Executive Branch, times look good, don't they?!? If we can heighten awareness by this time, we have the population with us by now. We have enough of the critical mass, doesn't even have to be 50 percent, it can be 20 percent, that's a lot of people in America.

SUE: What do you do with the lobbies?

RITA: Expose them.

SUE: You and Ralph Nader?

OT A REVOLUTION MAKE

A SEARCH FOR IDEOLOGY

WOMEN VS. THE MULTI-NATIONALS

RITA: Let me finish. So now we have a time of tremendous activity, we're getting good coverage by the media, remember those tight fuckers that liberals want to look good, we're pushing programs, how can they disagree with these programs. The real conflict now is that we are getting shat upon by the multi-national corporations, who will do anything to shut us up, and we're being shat upon by the Executive Branch, which at this point in time is the lackey of the multi-nationals. The important thing about Nixon is not Watergate, but that he sold us out to the multi-nationals, times are right because if we are not in a position to take over the Executive Branch we can say, okay folks, stand up and be counted! Either way, we are in a tremendous position to take power. I don't think, as much as the multi-national corporations want to maintain their power, bomb their own population, I think they'd choose England or Sweden. We have not been illegal; if we go to the street with guns, we'll be wiped out. The beauty of Kissinger as a real pig is that he is turning the police force into an internal army, that has been his brainchild all along, to arm the policeman with sophisticated weapons, which is why I've kept this program "legitimate", all the time "legitimate."

ON CO-OPTATION

JEANNE: If there is no fear of destruction, what about the fear of co-optation? If the assumption we're all good feminists and we all trust each other and we already know what we're supposed to be doing so as we move into the power structure we will not be co-opted?

LANI: Some will go over, but the bulk of us won't.

SUE: What numbers are you talking about? Somebody has to elect those women.

LANI: The housewives who have been oppressed, those women are seeing that they can vote for a lot of women like Shirley Chisholm.

JEANNE: What makes you think that we can do this when the National Women's Political Caucus...

RITA: They are too short-sighted, they don't have our vision, they don't have our energy. They just want a slice of the capitalist pie.

SUDI: Do you envision a third party as an independent party, an independent female party or do you think women should struggle for our needs inside the Democratic party?

RITA: I saw the McGovern campaign as a glimmer of hope that we could take over the Democratic party, but McGovern's machinery was such a clear indication that it may be possible now to create a third party, and that that's our function, to create that third party.

JEANNE: I project "our party" will have trouble keeping feminist principles in a capitalist society. The game of politics in this culture is manipulation, that's why campaign reform is a goddamn farce. It's not a byproduct of it, it is it. Surely our independent feminist party is going to have to deal with manipulation.

LANI: You change within the process of taking that power, and I know that feeling and we all know that it's a different one. It's not manipulation, it's a good definition of reform.

"WE HAVE TO OFFER SPIRITUAL REBIRTH"

RITA: I should have been more clear when I said that our major program had to orient around economics. Lani, that part you are offering is where cultural feminists are so right. You have to offer more than economics, you have to offer spiritual rebirth, and that is one thing we have going for us. We are literally showing people how to be reborn. I'm not who I was 15 years ago, I'm a lot more compassionate than I was as a young woman, and I know that is a result of feminism. We've had a twofold attack that no other movement has had.

SUE: But you can't legislate spirituality or ethics, which is what I've been questioning all along. Where does feminism fit in in the spiritual sense, I mean you can't pass a law that men can't be sexist, you can pass any kind of law you want about what they do with their money and their corporations, who they hire and don't hire, but you can't say, "There is now a law that you have to respect women, there is now a law that you don't fuck them over."

LANI: At that point, we will just walk right over them.

SUE: But then, what happens to them, do they wither up and die, do they change?

LANI: They'll have to change at that point, when we step on them, we'll just keep going, we'll keep moving and knowing more and more truth and loving and change in society and if men can't go with us, which they probably cannot, it's like stepping on them, and at that point, they'll have a couple of brains and they'll say, "My god, this is serious, I'd better begin to change myself." That's when men will come together and recognize what feminism is.

JEANNE: Are you saying that the party's programs will take a more economic dimension? That the feminist struggle is an economic struggle?

LANI: Sure, one of the reasons men have the power over women is that they have all the money. It's a twofold thing; sure it's economic and it will always be economic, but we've got this new core, this soul.

RITA: What has happened to us as a result of becoming feminist is so cataclysmic that we do not yet have a vocabulary for it. That is one of the reasons we've only gotten this far. We all know we've changed an enormous amount, we have a political polemic but we don't have the words yet to tell people what that journey has been. As we begin to find the words in painting and filmmaking, ritual and literature, we're going to see a much larger swing of public opinion over to us. That's why we cannot just stick on economics alone.

SUE: Where does the spreading of the word fit into your party? It seems like you went real fast over the grass-roots level. You're assuming everybody is at the same level of consciousness or that we'll all rise to it immediately.

BARBARA: It's purely organizational. How do you develop a power base? The problem has been the diversity in the Women's Movement. Each identifies as instructor, or artist, into health or whatever, we've been hurt a lot of times with this. But this in itself is our grass roots. I'm thinking it doesn't matter how or why a woman becomes involved, only that she does. Let her form this or that group, a health center or other interest group. Next, an identity is created, "I belong to the health community." Now the health community is a vertical thing. What we've identified as the problem so far in this movement is all we have are vertical things. You can't hardly get all these women together. Why? Because they're into their own thing. But that's all right because if you get all the women who are interested in their own thing together, that's a big base. Then, over here, are all these women who are interested in another thing, that's a base. Then all we need to do is create this horizontal thing and connect each one, and that is your party.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE, CLASS, SEX

SUDI: Let's talk about the role of culture in the overall revolutionary process.

BARBARA: To me, that's a very personal thing. Women get into the movement, find this conflict between their emotions and their intellectualism. Their head is way far ahead of anything they feel.

RITA: This is where class comes into the picture. You said it takes people's emotions time to get into their head. In my life the two have never been separated, nor are they separate in the life of my mother, nor are they separate in the life of my aunt. To use middle-class terms, we were very integrated people. I have never experienced that "head versus heart" dilemma my middle-class friends talk about. The essence of middle-class emotional life is that you halt yourself in midstream and analyze your actions, you become a cognizant schizophrenic. I am completely unself-conscious, I don't think about people's responses to me. I am so busy doing what I am doing, I'm not a spectator to my own life.

IDEOLOGY Continued on Page 28

Who Are The Dangerous People?

This is a speech given by Marianne Schneller June 8 at a demonstration in protest of the police action against the SLA. The demonstration was held at the Slauson Recreation Center, two blocks from the ruins of the house on 54th Street in Compton.

I am speaking today for the Women's Movement Community. The women's community is speaking today because four of our sisters, Camilla, Mizmoon, Angela, and Nancy Ling were burned to death - executed - on 54th Street. And two of our sisters, Emily and Patricia, are being hunted down like dogs even as we sit here.

All of the women who burned were feminists; two were lesbians. Through feminism these women learned the true meaning of strength. Through feminism these women were able to break away from the traditional script that is layed out for white women in this country. A script which tells women to sit back, stay pretty, wait for Prince Charming to come, get married, have children, and never use your brain to its fullest capacity again.

Feminism taught these women of the SLA, and is teaching hundreds of thousands of women every day to struggle to be free, independent, creative, vital human beings. This is a potential which has been robbed from us by the patriarchies and economic power structures which exist today.

Mizmoon, Camilla, Nancy Ling, and Angela were women who recognized their own oppression. And yet, how did these women - these feminists - choose to fight with men in their struggle against oppression? So often men are defined as the enemy. I believe it is because they saw that the oppression they experienced as women and as lesbians is not an isolated phenomenon. That the oppression of all people - black sisters and brothers, Chicanas and Chicanos, Native American people, workers, children, older people, etc. - are all linked. And that the linkage extends to the continuing war in Indochina, kept alive by U.S. economic and military aid, as well as the killing and jailing of thousands of Democracy-loving Chilean people by a Junta paid for by the CIA. All of these forms of oppression will continue as long as there is a power structure in existence whose survival depends on the ripping off and oppression of the people. Angela, Nancy, Mizmoon and Camilla linked themselves with people's struggles throughout the world and in the U.S., and fought with them.

They were strong women.

They were people-loving women.

Women-loving people.

Women-loving women.

Watching the house burn on 54th Street and hearing the coverage which has followed, it became clear to me that most media and all governmental people do not come close to understanding the mentality of progressive revolutionary people. This is greatly illustrated in their inability to explain the success the Vietnamese people have had in defeating U.S. war policies, and in the myths about the SLA which they created in order to explain away that which threatens them.

One myth was that Patricia Hearst was brainwashed. They could not comprehend how a white privileged woman could come to an understanding of oppression on her own.

Another myth emerged with the fact that Camilla and Mizmoon were lovers. This was the myth of linking lesbianism with violence. The originators of this myth could not hear the word lesbian without imaging great bands of vicious women riding across the land killing and destroying everything in sight. They are incapable of understanding the gentleness and warmth of women-loving women.

Photo by M. SULLIVAN



Marianne Schneller, woman loving woman, at SLA protest against police brutality rally.

Perhaps the biggest myth of them all was the FBI's statement that these people of the SLA are armed and dangerous. They were armed and dangerous to the people in power, not to the people.

Who ARE the dangerous people? Was it the people who tried to show America that millions of people in this country are starving, that in Oakland thousands of people could stand in the rain five hours for food; or is the policeman who shoved a black woman leaving the burning house burnt and frightened - shoved her to the ground and stepped on her?

Who are the dangerous people ... people who wanted to give away 4 million dollars worth of food from Hearst's wealth; or the FBI and police forces who, according to the Christian Science Monitor, will spend 5 to 11 million dollars from our taxes to track down the remaining members of the SLA?

Continued on Page 25

SKILL SHARING:

All Women Are Healers

by Nan Kathryn Fuchs, *The Herb Lady*

Although the greatest number of medical doctors are men, women are the healers in our society and have been from the Middle Ages on. Midwives and witches were the names given to women healers who did much more than follow a doctor's orders. Often these women were consulted by physicians who had less time to gather and prepare herbs, and therefore had less knowledge of herbal medicine.

In the past few hundred years we have been told that many talents used in healing are nonsense. "That's just women's intuition" is a phrase of dismissal I remember hearing from my childhood. Yet this same "women's intuition" is one of the keys to healing. I call it tuning in to the body — yours or someone else's.

Mothers caring for their families during various illnesses had to use their intuition and pay attention to differences in coloring, brightness of the eyes, temperature, and temperament — techniques still used by the medical profession. And many wives consulted and wrote in their "still room books," which contained family recipes made from herbs, when they needed information for healing. Today, still room books are a thing of the past and the family structure is changing. Our pride in and awareness of our abilities as women are increasing faster than society can keep pace. But it is only necessary that we keep pace with ourselves.



Photo by N. BEAL

My own awareness of my health and body began close to 10 years ago and started with trusting and listening to my intuition. "Women's intuition" was more than a casual phrase. I found that it came from minute pieces of information that fit together like pieces of a puzzle. Often the information was subtle, and I didn't pay attention to it. But suddenly, with a flash, there was a whole thought. I paid more attention to the pieces and to the thought and found that more often than not I was accurate. This was the beginning. I started to trust myself more and stopped listening to people I could not respect. A doctor who smokes cannot care enough about my health for me to trust.

Somewhere along the line I discovered plants and the healing qualities of herbs on the emotions and body. I think that when we accept and recognize our destiny, all the tools needed for us to fulfill it are given to us. And one day, at the beginning of my discovery of herbs, a very loving, spiritual man who had grown up in Manchuria in a family of herbalists walked into my life. Shortly after, I became the Herb Lady.

My Chinese friend helped me by giving me technical information and help. My own interest in healing and in health motivated me to research the herbs I sold beyond what is necessary for operating a business. But then, herbs have always been one of many tools to use along with intuition in healing.

Hopefully, more women will become interested in tuning in to their bodies and learning how to work with herbs to balance their systems. This process is beginning, but slowly. We cannot allow others to take total responsibility for the bodies we live in. At least a large portion of this responsibility is ours to accept.

I am always willing to put aside time to talk about how to begin using herbs and nutrition in our lives with women who want to learn, and to share with others the information they have found to work. It is illegal to practice healing with herbs without a medical license, and not all of us can be herb ladies or physicians, but we can use our natural abilities and plants to make our lives happier and healthier. We have to. No one else has done a good enough job for us yet.

the Herb Lady
P.O. Box 26515
Los Angeles, Calif. 90026
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THE VENGEANCE OF THE CHEROKEE INDIAN WOMAN

by Ishihoumah/Redbird
from *Indian Women United for Social Justice*

The Cherokee Nation is a Matriarchal Nation. Cherokee Indian women are Medicine people. We are warriors, fighting today on a different level. At one time, we were chiefs.

When a Cherokee woman lost a loved one, she would go into battle for revenge. The vengeance of the Cherokee woman was respected and feared by all Nations that fought against us. When a Cherokee woman would capture someone from another tribe, she would take him back to her village as a prisoner. She didn't kill him immediately. She would see how much and how long she could torture him before he died. The worst thing that could happen to an Indian man was to be captured by a Cherokee Indian woman.

We had tattooed women. The Cherokee woman decorated her body with symbols - symbols of her battle accomplishments. She would break her skin with the vertebrae of a garfish and rub ashes in the wounds. Then she would go naked and be carried around the village on a platform to show off her battle scars. She could only have a certain amount of scars each time she went into battle. Sometimes the killing of one person did not satisfy her need for vengeance. She might go into battle again and again, until she, herself, got killed.

In the Cherokee Indian Nation, there were two chiefs - a war chief and a peace chief. When our people talked about war and peace, sometimes it lasted for days. Everyone had a right

to speak. If you agreed with the peace chief, you would sit on the peace side. Days later, if discussion changed your mind, you could go to the other side. There were no hard feelings. We realized there were always two sides. In a sense, we had a volunteer army.

The Cherokee people always looked on a woman as an individual. Her brain is no different than man's brain. Every woman had her own thoughts. Issues weren't resolved around whether or not it was feminine. That wasn't the issue.

It is sometimes said that plains Indian women became dominant and aggressive. The Cherokee Indian women never became dominant or aggressive because we were always that way.

When a Cherokee Indian woman took a mate in marriage, her mother and his mother approved of the mate. The men had nothing to say. The Cherokee man would leave his own village and move in with her tribe. Any time he wasn't pleasing her, she would send him home.

Cherokee Indian women continue to be fighters today. We are outspoken and politically active. We have always been taught we can do anything. We have never been passive. We have problems with Indian men who come from tribes where the women are passive.

We don't know where our people came from. Maybe we once were Amazons.

Our Nation will survive because of Woman-power. ▲

A SHOT IN THE ARM

Everyone was in for a surprise on Tuesday, June 11, at the American Nurses Association convention in San Francisco.

It was a well publicized fact that a new organization, the Gay Nurses Alliance, would be participating. Come time for their workshop, "Gay People/Straight Health Care," however, no one was prepared for the turnout. Observers placed audience attendance at 1000. GNA's room at the Civic Center lacked space, yet all other rooms were taken. In order to accommodate the crowd, an additional workshop had to be scheduled for 8:00 the next morning. Two hundred people attended the second. For the entire week, GNA's booth in Brooks Hall was thronged.

Founders of the group are Carolyn Innes and David Waldron, both Registered Nurses. Carolyn is assistant director of Nursing Services for Staff Development at the Medical College of Pennsylvania and holds an MA. David is clinical supervisor of medical nursing at the Medical College. Presently, he's working on his BSN at the University of Pennsylvania. First launched 10 months ago in Philadelphia with less than a dozen members, groups of organized nurses from 17 States and Canada have since joined them.

Some of the Alliance's purposes were laid out during the workshop's introductory speeches. It would be a consciousness-raiser, awakening nurses to discrimination against patients and peers; a forum for gay nurses to talk together and to air grievances; an information source for those concerned about the injustice gays receive both in and out of the nursing profession.

Ms. Innes made it perfectly clear that nursing is a very difficult profession for gays to enter safely. "Nurses' fears are not groundless," she began. "Our jobs are *not* secure. A gay nurse who 'comes out' or is 'discovered' may shortly find her/himself unemployed. Loss of license to practice nursing is also a real threat." She went on to emphasize the damage done to both the individuals and their work; "This energy . . . expended hiding . . . should be going into professional and personal growth . . ."

An audio-visual presentation was made illustrating substandard care, or, as Mr. Waldron put it, "treatment people have to put up with." One scene depicted a lover of 18 years not being allowed visiting privileges, as only immediate family were permitted. Revelation of the relationship for the sake of the visit causes the patient to be continually disturbed by "the curious." A nurse who notices the interruptions is afraid to act as advocate for fear her lesbianism will be revealed. Carolyn and David describe this as typical in a homophobic society.

A question-and-answer period closed the program. Participating were Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, authors of *LESBIAN/WOMAN*. Audience responsiveness was warm and supportive. What of Carolyn's and David's position in the nursing profession? As they told San Francisco Examiner reporter Caroline Drewes, "Our colleagues at the hospital . . . who work with and for us are supportive . . . The hierarchy is leary." At last the shoe's on the other foot.

(Batya Salte is forming a San Francisco Chapter of the GNA which will hopefully expand to include all of California. For information, write 5665 Miles Avenue, Oakland, California.) ▲

OPEN LETTER TO OUR THIRD WORLD SISTERS

In the spirit of sisterhood, we on the Tide Collective, address this open letter to our Third World Lesbian sisters. As we become more of a collective and grow more together as sisters, we continue to break out of our isolation from each other and from different parts of the Lesbian community. Part of this is that we're beginning to listen and look to you more as sisters in the same struggle, rather than as sisters isolated from us in your own struggle. We've been separated from you and ignorant of your experience as Third World women too long. What we have to say is, "Basta!"

The separation of our cultures, imposed by Patriarchy's racism, sexism and classism, has not made being sensitive to each other and assuming mutual respect any easier. The separation is centuries old and covers a lot of territory - social, psychological, cultural, geographical. This issue of THE TIDE on Third World women is a sign of our decision to deal with that separation. It is a concrete product of our efforts to actively open up communications with you, to hear your voices and to relate more to you as sisters in the Lesbian community. We do not think guilt-baiting, downing ourselves, apologizing or regretting is productive. But we do want to face the reality of our separation, as "movement" Lesbians, from Third World Lesbians and get in touch with what that means.

We want to define the concept of Third World. We see Third World people as the oppressed nationalities of Asian, African and Latin American origins. They are the vast majority of the world's people, rather than oppressed "minorities", as Third World people are generally referred to in the U.S.

The first world is known as the imperialist powers. The second world includes China, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, which call themselves "communist".

The use of the term Third World reflects the conscious attempt of oppressed nationalities to internationalize the national struggles for liberation.

As we get more in touch with the struggles of Third World women, we will learn - about the pride of your HERitage, the depth of your experience, the different colors of your vision, the lessons of your history, the needs of your Peoples, the power of your unity - all the dimensions of your oppression and liberation, all the things we only get glimpses of now.

As we open up more to exploring ourselves, we will learn - about our insensitivity - collective and individual - to cultures outside of our own, about ways we've upheld (often unconsciously) the dominance of whiteness in a racist culture, about how we sometimes overlook the importance of class consciousness to Third World women, and about how we can begin, now, to create an atmosphere that will make room for and respect the contributions of Third World women.

One word that covers this reality is racism. Like sexism, it's everywhere, and always there. It's conscious, unconscious, subtle, blatant. We understand that "The Man" (white, straight, rich, and old) makes it that way and keeps it that way for his own purposes. He knows that race, class and cultural divisions, among others, separate us from each other, alienate us from the source of our power as one united people against oppression, and prevent sisterhood from becoming a reality. We cannot begin to change the oppressive force of racism in our lives til we call it what it is, recognize the damage it does to us as Lesbians and figure out ways to move SISTERHOOD from rhetoric to reality.

It limits us all that often our Third World consciousness has not measured up to our Lesbian and Feminist consciousness. THE TIDE, however, cannot truly speak for the Lesbian community, unless we include, as a real part of our community, the culture of Third World Lesbians. We are after a total Woman-identified consciousness, as an alternative to the straight white male american dream. How can we accomplish that without support and input from our Third World sisters.

As we open up more to ourselves and our potential as women, it will follow that we will open up more to *all* sisters. As we open up more to *all* sisters, in turn, it will follow that we will open up more to ourselves. All that is worth struggling for.

The Tide Collective has worked very hard on this issue, and we've learned from the energy we've put into it. We know it's just a beginning. We know the long process of opening up communications in ways we've never done before won't be easy. We know it's a struggle to learn how to *overturn* the centuries of exclusion, to learn how to uncondition the conditioning.

We ask Third World Women for your feedback on this issue of THE TIDE. Next month, we will print the Collective's concrete plans for moving more in the direction of being a magazine that reflects the ENTIRE Lesbian Community. ▲

LATIN AMERICAN LESBIANS

An interview in the April issue of *SISTER* with businesswoman Estilita Grimaldo Smith (Womantours) was the impetus of the formation of a new "socio-political-culture" group, the Latin American Lesbians of Los Angeles. Estilita, who is from Panama, received calls from women who felt a need for contact with other Latin Lesbians. On Sunday, June 16, a group of eleven women met. They were of all ages and interests, from seven Spanish-speaking countries. Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Nacaragua, Panama, Mexico, and Columbia.

The women were an immediate support group, "It was a feeling of family". They spoke of their lives, of their lesbianism. A safe atmosphere was created, and women who had held onto their emotions for years, gave vent to them, through screaming. Two women brought guitars, and the group sang favorite Mexican songs. For information as to their next meeting call 256-3836. Latin American Lesbians plan to have a booth at the Women's building on August 26, Women's Day. ▲

Sister To Sister

Woman needed to care for thirty-three year old, congenial, woman invalid. Room and board plus salary. Prefer responsible person with own car. To begin September first. Call 874-8316.

Gay girl, 25, would like to correspond with other girls of all ages, all areas:

Gail Oja

P.O. Box 413

Venice, CA 90291



SEEKING WOMEN ENTERTAINERS FOR YOUR EVENT? Simply call or write WOMANTALENT PRODUCTIONS: 508 N. Alta Vista, L.A., Calif. 90036, [213] 934-6593.

TOO MUCH TO REQUIRE

*Fathers
required me
to split me tongue*

*to learn the silent
graces
of womanhood
like sweeping
cobwebs from family relics
and so i am gentle*

*to taste
that guilt for not being
'what you should be'
and working harder/for/everything
and so i am gentle*

*to remember the ease
of instant omission
and the necessity for
assimilation
and so i am gentle*

*to forget hiroshima
to ignore vietnam
to accept tule lake
to enjoy chinatown
o yes, daddy,
very gentle i am
when i clean my gun.*

Janice Mirikitani

WONDER HOW MANY BLACK WOMEN HAVE SUFFERED BEYOND REPAIR

*IN THE SLAVE QUARTERS-the ones for reproduction-WONDER
HOW MANY BLACK WOMEN SUFFERED BEYOND REPAIR?
IN THOSE DAYS WONDER HOW MANY OF MY SISTERS SLIPPED
AWAY FOR JUST A WHILE TO RECEIVE THE GENTLE CARESSES OF
ANOTHER LIKE HERSELF-TO GET HER LONGING FOR SEXUAL
AND EMOTIONAL SATISFACTION MET BY ANOTHER LIKE HERSELF*

*IN THE SLAVE QUARTERS OF OUR MINDS WONDER HOW MANY
BLACK WOMEN ARE SUFFERING-IN THESE DAYS JUST LIKE
THE OTHERS-WE'RE STILL FIGHTING BECAUSE OF OUR COLOR-
WE'RE STILL FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE AND FREEDOM-JUST
LIKE THEY IN THE DAYS BEFORE US*

*BUT I WONDER HOW MANY OF MY SISTERS ARE SUFFERING 'CAUSE
THERE IS NO TIME TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR LONGING FOR
SEXUAL AND EMOTIONAL SATISFACTION IN THE STRUGGLE*

*IT'S TIME WE STOP FIGHTING FOR OUR MASTERS AND BROTHERS
IT'S TIME WE START FIGHTING FOR SISTERS AND MOTHERS,
FOR NIECES AND COUSINS AND YES OUR GRANDMOTHERS.*

Roslyn

THIRD POE



SISTE

*i love
i love women -
i am engulfed in
i am frightened c
i am frightened c
i am not frighten
i am frightened c
not being able to*

Roslyn

THIRD WORLD POETRY



Jean Taura

SISTERHOOD

*i love
i love women - i love woman - i love love
i am engulfed in love - in loving
i am frightened of loving
i am frightened of not loving
i am not frightened of being in love
i am frightened of being in love and
not being able to continue to love*

Roslyn

FO

When
i try
with
to s
to t
to f
to r

& you
oh g
oh j
and i
here i
getting
a w
has
ag

Pat Pa

On a p
Nicara
But, ge
My p

Stopov
See br
The tr
Breath
My p

Soon,
There
Bubbl
of turt
And i

I'm he
What i
Are my
MIRE
peopl

The qu
Look
they
QUEE
queer
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Zelima

HAVE

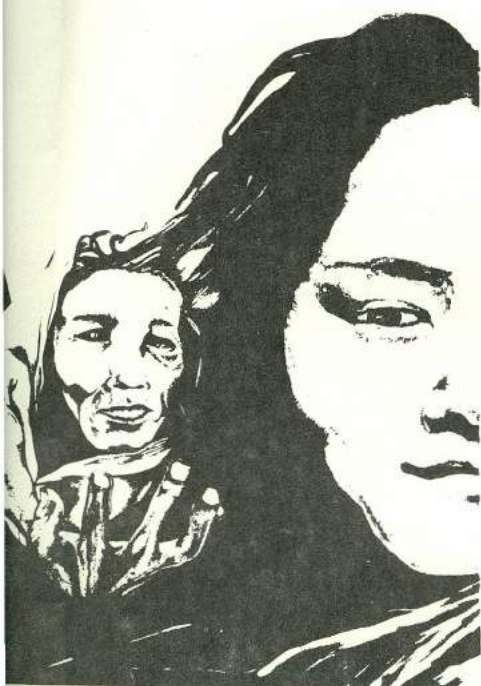
R
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ESSES OF
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HERSELF

MANY
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COLOR-
ST

ING 'CAUSE
OR
GLE

BROTHERS
ERS,
RS.

WORLD DETRY



Jean Taura

SISTERHOOD

men - i love woman - i love love
 ulfed in love - in loving
 ntended of loving
 ntended of not loving
 frightened of being in love
 ntended of being in love and
 able to continue to love

FOR WILLYCE

*When i make love to you
 i try
 with each stroke of my tongue
 to say i love you
 to tease i love you
 to hammer i love you
 to melt i love you*

*& your sounds drift down
 oh god !
 oh jesus !
 and i think —
 here it is, some dude's
 getting credit for what
 a woman
 has done,
 again.*

Pat Parker

*On a plane to see my people,
 Nicaragua is so far away,
 But, gotta see my people,
 My people*

*Stopover in El Salvador, i
 See brown people ! my people !
 The tropical air fills my lungs,
 Breathing, with my people,
 My people*

*Soon, soon i'll be there,
 There with my people,
 Bubbling with childhood memories
 of turtle eggs, mangos and iguanas
 And my people*

*I'm here ! i'm here with my people !
 What is that i hear uncle ? What
 Are my people saying ? LA COCHONA!
 MIREN LA COCHONA ! they say, those
 people say*

*The queer,
 Look at the queer
 they say*

*QUEER
 queer
 queer
 they
 say
 those
 people
 say
 those
 people*

Zelima

CROSSCURRENTS

SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA **Indian Mother's Aid**

Sarah Bad Heart Bull is an Indian Mother of eight. Her nineteen year old son Wesley was stabbed to death in January of seventy-three by Darryl Schmidt. The state of South Dakota didn't feel it necessary to try a white man for killing an Indian. When Sarah and her supporters arrived in Custer to talk to authorities, she was arrested and charged with conspiracy to riot.

Sarah's strength was further tested in April of seventy-four, when another son, Butch, was shot to death by a white man in Allen, Nebraska. When Judge Bottum allowed white people who said they hated Indians to be seated as jurors, Sarah and others refused to stand in his respect. They were beaten, tear-gassed, and maced in the Sioux Falls courtroom.

Can the seven women on the all-white jury find a sister under the skin guilty for protesting her son's murder? If convicted, Sarah faces twenty years in prison. Donations for her legal defense may be sent to:

Wounded Knee Legal Defense/Offense Committee
Box 255

Sioux Falls, So. Dakota 57101

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Stonewall

The women of Stonewall have a message for you, out of concern and interest for the women of Seattle. At the moment we have only seven women out of thirty residents. Stonewall is a place for people, gay and bi-sexual, to deal with ourselves as total beings. Here we deal with problems they may have with alcohol, drugs, sexual identity and other identity problems that prevent full meaningful and productive lives.

Workshop approaches integrate Bio-Energetics, Gestalt, Transactions and Reality Confrontations, all in order to develop an awareness of the psycho-physical conditions which limit our options in experiencing and expressing aliveness. Women, please call or drop by:

Stonewall
4121 Dayton Avenue North
Seattle, Washington
634-2798

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

Stoned Soul Rhythm & Blues

"Sweet Chariot" plays Thursday nights at Ruthie's Inn on San Pablo in Berkeley. They are an all-Woman's R&B band.

"Sweet Chariot's" lead singer plays for "Gente," an all-Woman's Third World softball team (see interview, "We Have To Be Our Own Spark", this issue).

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

Do It Yourself

Project Repair, a women's non-profit skills center, announcing its summer schedule of home repair courses. Each course will last six weeks. Classes will meet twice a week for three hours per session on either: Monday/Wednesday, July 8 through August 14, 7 to 10 p.m., — Tuesday/Thursday, July 11 through August 20, 7 to 10 p.m.

Curriculum includes plumbing, carpentry, electrical and other basic projects in home repair. Write or call: 2631 Reynard Way, San Diego, CA 92103, (714) 295-5269

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

Women's Symposium

A three day symposium exploring the contemporary woman in the physical and sociological environment will be held August 24 - 26 at Spokane, Washington. Lectures, workshops and multi-media presentations will be made. Three topics are Women and Technology, Women and Lifestyle Choices, and Women and Consumerism. For more information write:

The Women's Symposium
c/o Viki Sonntag
W. 5415 Princeton Pl.
Spokane, Washington 99205
[509] 838-1633

MADISON, WISCONSIN

Asks Help

I am presently in the process of working on a book, A SURVIVAL MANUAL FOR ALTERNATIVE HEALTH CARE AGENCIES. Being a lesbian, I have taken on the task of developing a section of the book dealing specifically with gay people and health. Any help you might be able to provide in recommending books, pamphlets, newsletters, journals, etc., on this subject would be greatly appreciated. Please forward your recommendations as soon as possible. - publication is scheduled for August: Eve Rosenberg, c/o Stash Press, 118 S. Bedford St., Madison, Wisc. 53703.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Coalition of Labor Union Women

Labor Union Women will meet July 13th at the Carpenter's District County Hall (2200 W. 7th St. at Lake, L.A.) to form an L.A. Chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW).

"We want to expand women's participation within their unions, increase awareness of existing legislation, and to involve them, through their unions, in legislative and political action," said Ms. Miller, the National Representative of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. Ms. Miller will be a co-convenor of the July Conference.

Child care will be provided. Women who are members in good standing in labor organizations in L.A. are invited to attend. Contact Ruth Miller: 749-6161.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Auditions for New Play

The Los Angeles Feminist Theatre will be holding auditions for a non-Equity presentation of a two-act play by Marcia Savin: "THE FEAST OF TSOURIS".

July 8 and 9 open auditions; call-back on July 12 from 7 to 10 p.m. at The Church in Ocean Park, 235 Hill Street, Santa Monica, CA. The cast consists of 7 characters: Girl, approximately 10 years old, 2 Men, 20's to 40's; 3 Women, 20's to 40's; 1 Grandma Type.

Weekend performances are scheduled for early September. If you wish to participate in any other capacity related to theatre production please come and sign up on the above mentioned dates. We are also interested in people with musical abilities.

NATIONAL NEWS

CHAMPAGNE/URBANA, ILLINOIS

What is Feminist Music?

Over 300 women and 30 musicians from all over the country met at the First National Women's Music Festival, May 28-June 2. Due to an organizational mixup, superstars Yoko Ono, Roberta Flack, Maureen McGovern, Janis Ian, and Evonne Daniels did not, as was announced, show up. Nevertheless, dozens of the Women's and Lesbian Movement's best, Susan Abbot (Chicago Women's Liberation Rock Band), Jennifer Abod (New Haven Women's Liberation Rock Band), Dody Atkins and Kitty MacKinnon, Margie Adam (composer, singer, California), Jo Mapes, the Clinch Mountain Axe-Steppers, Vicki Randall (Womantalent, Inc., California), Pamela Pollard, Kay Gardner, Meg Christian (Washington, D.C., see review this issue), Cris Williamson (composer, singer, California, see review this issue), and others performed in week-long concerts and workshops.

Workshops included everything from practical skills such as "Audio Equipment" to discussions of the politics of music, "Revolutionary Music."

Among the interesting and somewhat controversial issues at the conferences were "Can a musician be 'slick' (translated 'good' by commercial standards) and still be feminist?", "Should women's music be overtly political?" and, "Should men be allowed to perform at women's events?"

Interviewed on her return, Cris Williamson spoke of receiving little feedback from the festival audience and questioned, "Perhaps they thought I was 'too slick', I got the feeling if I had made more mistakes, put myself down more, been more tentative, maybe I would've gotten more feedback. Maybe women aren't ready yet to identify with a strong woman image."

Discussion as to what indeed is feminist music arose out of the Revolutionary Women's Workshop, some women in the workshop feeling some of the music presented at the festival was not sufficiently feminist in form or content.

Upset that a few men joined performing sisters, a number of the audience did walk out when men appeared on stage.

COLLECTIVE NOTE: Through interviews with attending performers and participants the TIDE hopes to print more in-depth coverage on the above issue in future issues.

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

Flipped Lib

One unreported sidelight of the tragic explosion at the end of April which gutted a 25-story office building on East 45th Street in Manhattan was that the Lib, a popular Lesbian bar, was underneath! Fortunately, the explosion happened early in the morning and no sisters were hurt. The Lib has already moved to a new location on East 39th Street.

ALFRED, NEW YORK

Gay Rights for Alfred University

By a 3-2 vote, the village council of Alfred, N.Y., a municipality with a total year-round population of 500, passed a gay rights ordinance prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The proposal for the bill was introduced on behalf of the Gay Liberation group at Alfred University and Alfred Tech, which have a combined enrollment of 5,600. Upstate New York is generally considered a conservative area!

LETTERS, Cont. from Page 4

Dear sisters,

You must know that un-white is a sociological professional trip word (there's us and then there's them), and that third world is particularly offensive to us. The idea originally came from another culture and loses somewhat in the translation.

The concept of hierarchy puts oppressed people on the bottom (third). Oppressed people are strong and a vast majority on this planet earth.

Both of us worked on the old RAT collective and it was dominated and run by the same class of people - only women - that have always run this country. We hope THE TIDE is different.

Uva Ursi sisters

Dear sisters:

Just got The Tide, and feel so strongly about most of the Collective declaring sisterhood with the SLA women. I have been told (maybe mistakenly) that the "Lesbian community" (whatever that is) in San Francisco has "officially" declared its opposition to the SLA and the two women identified as Lesbians. It makes me puke (if it is true). I have publicly declared my position in this area as being in solidarity with the SLA women, because I feel that their decision to fight - regardless of the consequences - was a valid one. I have come to the conclusion that their way is - at present - the ONLY way to show the establishment where many of us stand, and although it is at present a suicidal stance, I find it an effective one, just as I always felt that the Black Panthers basically were in the right place. It's hard to put into words, but I have totally given up on things as they are - not so much through my experiences in the Lesbian movement (we CAN hide if we want to) but through my experiences with the Plainfield Joint Defense Committee, and the incredible fuck-overs we have received in the courts, again and again. I KNOW for a FACT that Blacks, women, counter-culture people, Chicanas, you-name-them - cannot get justice - at least not in New Jersey Courts. I have seen it with my own eyes, heard it with my own ears. I have been frustrated now since joining PJD in 1969, and trying to get justice - plain and simple justice - for George Merritt, Jr., and Gail Madden. But there is no such thing for either, because they are Black, young and poor. And I have seen again and again that so-called courts of justice will bend every rule, and use every ruse, and do any illegal act necessary to make sure that Gail and George do NOT get justice, and that they will rot in jail for life.

Julie Lee

New Jersey D.O.B.

Dear Sisters:

I do read, and enjoy, THE TIDE. So does a very dear friend of mine, who lives in Tampa, Florida. Your paper really gets around!!

Continuing success with THE TIDE.

In Sisterhood

Genie Horecka

Hi,

Here's \$7.50 for a year's subscription to the Lesbian Tide. Mail the first one quick. My relatives need something to worry about and I need to hear from real people.

Thanks for being.

A Sister,

from Virginia

CISLER vs. MORGAN

SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL FUND THREATENED

by Feminist Women's Health Center

The Sisterhood is Powerful, Inc., Fund, a fund developed to distribute the royalties from the book of the same title, is now depleted. Lucinda Cisler is in the process of bringing suit against Robin Morgan, editor of the anthology *SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL* and Random House, publishers of the book. Cisler is suing Ms. Morgan for allegedly plagiarizing a bibliography which appeared in the anthology. In keeping with standard book contracts, Random House as the publisher has the right to take their legal fees out of the royalties if any legal problems arise from a particular book. Random House has taken all of the royalties from the "Sisterhood" fund and will continue to take royalties until their legal fees are fully paid back. As of this point the fund has no money and will be tied up in paying legal fees for Random House for at least the next two years. If Cisler terminates the suit now, there is a chance that the fund could eventually resume giving grants to women's groups. Unfortunately, the damage has already been done. Money which could have gone into women's hands has gone into the pockets of Random House's male attorneys.

This suit is, in effect, suing the entire women's movement. When *SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL* was first published,

Robin Morgan assigned all of the royalty rights of the book to the "Sisterhood" fund for the purpose of putting the money into the Women's Movement. That is what has been done with the money.

It seems unreasonable to say the least that Cisler, a woman who calls herself a feminist would take another feminist into a male controlled judicial system. If there are disputes, such as this, they should be handled by women -- on our own terms. Initiating this kind of action only gives the male media another opportunity to spotlight women fighting with women.

In addition, suing for plagiarism of a bibliography is close to being absurd. Many bibliographies on the same topic show similarities.

For further information contact the Feminist Women's Health Center, 746 S. Crenshaw Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90005, (213) 936-7219.

(Of Special Note: During the time of the arrest and trial of Carol Downer and Colleen Wilson of the Self-Help Clinic, the FWHC received \$2000 from the Sisterhood fund - one/quarter of the total money we took in for legal defense. We are only one of the many women's groups who have received grants from the fund.)

OPEN LETTERS

Ms. Lucinda Cisler,

It has come to my attention through the "Feminist Grapevine" that you are suing Random House and "Sisterhood Is Powerful" for \$300,000 under the guise of plagiarism. This fact is received by myself and by my feminist colleagues throughout the state with much disapproval, shock, and disgust.

I can not possibly accept a "feminist" jeopardizing the publication of the book which has reached many American women, as well as jeopardizing to date, the one-of-a-kind-fund established to financially aid groups working for women.

Is there any truth behind the rumor that you have stooped to hire male lawyers? Where did you store your "feminist consciousness" when doing this? If there is any truth to your accusation (which I doubt, how the hell can a bibliography be plagiarized?!) you should have enough integrity to pursue your complaint through feminist channels.

It seems that your intentions are either opportunist or malicious in nature. If I am wrong in my theory, I am sure that you will rethink your action and either 1) drop the charges or 2) drop your male lawyers and announce your complaint through feminist channels. If you do not do this, I beg feminists across the country, yea across the world, to interpret your actions as an indication of your political stance and being: an opportunist, malicious person who jumped on the feminist bandwagon for capitalistic and professional gain.

Sisterhood IS Powerful,
Gloria Greenfield
Research Librarian
Alliance of Women Against
Repressive Education of S.U.N.Y.

Dear Sisters,

SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL; it is our strength; it is the title of an anthology that introduced thousands of women to the Women's Movement; it is a Fund- or rather, it was a Fund. It was an access to money for women's projects supported by all the royalties from the book *Sisterhood Is Powerful*. The Fund was established by Robin Morgan, who compiled and edited the anthology, to provide financial support for feminist projects and actions. There are women who have grown rich on the movement. Robin Morgan is not one of them. Rather than profiteering from Feminism, she gave an effective example of real sisterhood in creating the Fund.

It was the first such Feminist "foundation," and for four years it has given money to a wide spectrum of woman's groups. Many of you reading this will know from first-hand experience that funding has gone to women's centers and health projects, newspapers and anti-rape groups, lesbian groups, welfare mothers, women's cultural projects, third world feminist groups, abortion campaigns, and more. The book royalties to date have approximated \$40,000, yes, forty thousand dollars. And there has been no male-style "politicking" in the form of dissemination - groups requested funds, and the checks went out.

The Fund is now being destroyed through a lawsuit brought by a woman, Lucinda Cisler. Contending that the bibliography at the back of *Sisterhood Is Powerful* was plagiarized from her "Women: A Bibliography," Cisler is suing Robin Morgan, Random House, and Vintage Books for a minimum of \$300,000. (One might ask: Will she turn it back to the Movement as Robin Morgan did the royalties? But then, again, who ever heard of plagiarizing a bibliography? Many women all over the country compiled bibliographies before or at the

same time Cisler did. Similarities in all these bibliographies abound, as anyone doing research in Women's Studies well knows - so the question is really rhetorical.) In addition, Cisler is attempting to get an injunction to stop the printing of *Sisterhood Is Powerful*. The standard book contract requires that all legal fees in such a suit against the publisher are to be absorbed from royalties. Morgan and the Fund are powerless to stop this. The lawyers hired by Random House are depleting our Fund at the rate of approximately one hundred dollars an hour because Cisler is suing.

Robin Morgan, when first faced with the suit, offered Lucinda Cisler the opportunity to settle this *within* the Women's Movement, by the establishment of a Feminist court, or by Feminist mediation. But seeking to play a male game by male rules on male turf and with a male lawyer, Cisler proceeded on her original course.

As a result, legal fees for the suit have presently depleted the Fund until at least 1976, and if Cisler persists into court the fees will destroy the Fund utterly. And, if Cisler is successful in stopping the printing of *Sisterhood Is Powerful*, the book, a substantive part of the literature of our new and growing culture and a basic women's studies text will go out of print.

Some large questions beg to be answered.

Why?

Why did Cisler wait four years to take this action?

Why did she never approach Morgan personally?

How on earth is it possible to plagiarize a bibliography?

Why is such an apparently futile action being taken when its only effect can be to destroy part of us - the Women's Movement?

If sisterhood is powerful it must be beyond self-destructiveness. If this case cannot be terminated very soon, the Fund is not merely depleted for two years but destroyed permanently, a valuable book will be lost, and another sister will have been taken to the stake by one who claimed to be our own.

It's a long way from the self- and sister-lacerating realities of today, to our Feminist vision. But Sisterhood *can* be powerful, if we dare make it so.

Kathleen Barry, Women's Advocate

Mary Daly, feminist philosopher

Adrienne Rich, feminist poet

Joan Hoff Wilson, feminist historian

Ms. Cisler,

I am saddened to learn of your recent unwarranted action against Random House and *Sisterhood Is Powerful*. I find it inconceivable that a feminist, or any woman with an iota of sensitivity or understanding would jeopardize an enterprise so vital to her sisters for personal motives.

If a woman cares nothing about the movement and if she disassociates herself from other women along with disregarding the tremendous amount of work that has to be done to set things right (the work that *Sisterhood Is Powerful* has been instrumental in nurturing) the situation is clear. Such behavior could only come from a ruthless opportunist out to make a buck.

An individual like that could be detrimental to the women's movement, but I believe that the strength of our sisters would stop this individual before she or he could do further damage. After all, sisterhood is powerful.

Marga Gomez

We Are The Women Your Father

Warned You Against Theatre Troupe

EDITORIAL NOTE: Any and all support/funds will be welcomed. The SISTERHOOD FUND functions under a corporate status, because they were denied status as a nonprofit organization. This means that if the corporate bank account does not have at least \$300.00 in it at all times, the fund will lose its status altogether. The financial goal Robin has in mind to keep the SISTERHOOD FUND legally active is \$3500.00 (total amount), which would cover corporate back taxes, the corporate bank account and corporate lawyers (all women).

Contributions should be sent to:

SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL, INC.

c/o Robin Morgan

c/o Random House

11th floor, Editorial

201 East 50th St.

New York, N.Y.

Please make checks payable to: SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL, INC. At this time, Robin is unable to make a public statement because of court proceedings. However, all us womenfolk are hopeful that by August she will be released from this "male" legal bind and plans on making a full statement to the Women's Movement. ▲

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DOUBLE TROUBLE, Cont. from Page 3

Karla: I think that there's not only apathy on the part of Black women but there's a lot of apathy on the part of white women towards the needs of Black women. Do you think

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you'll be able through your organization to get white women more involved?

Marg: Well, I don't think NBFO's responsibility is to educate white women - I think what we'd like to do is educate Black women, to make Black women feel good about themselves and get our self-image together so we can in fact organize, and the white women will just have to see that we're there. I don't think though that any group should have a responsibility of organizing other people. See the problem with some people is that people expect white women to be somehow supersensitive to the needs of Black women. I don't agree with that at all. If you don't come out of a culture where you have a history of your mothers being domestic workers, you won't have domestic workers as your priority. It would be nice if you did, but you won't. I think that people have to organize around those things that are important to them. That's why it was necessary to form a national Black feminist organization because - as one of our women said - we have a double perception because of our double oppression: We look at things twofold.

I think it's the responsibility of those white women who are sensitive to talk to their own sisters, instead of trying to talk to us saying, "Look here, we are responsible." There are a lot of white women who have come into the women's movement and brought their racism with them because they hadn't been into the Civil Rights Movement - they had not ever had the benefit of coalition politics; they had never been around Black people, so it is ridiculous to expect this group of women's movement people to have this sensitivity and consciousness about the Black female experience or the Black experience when they did not have the same history as people who were involved in the civil rights movement.

Karla: What kind of distinction do you make between a feminist and someone in the women's movement?

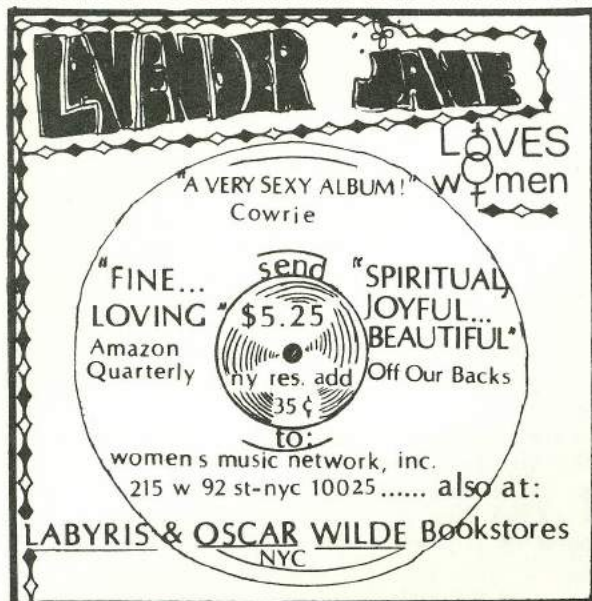
Marg: Well, I think that there are billions of women in the

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women's movement. These I think are women who understand that something's wrong; they want to make changes in their lives, but I think quite possibly these are women who would be not too upset if the present situation stayed the way it is - with maybe a matter of having a couple of things changed, like maybe they'd get a better job or their husbands would wash the dishes, which I'm not disregarding. The feminist movement to me is a movement of women who understand that feminism



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is necessary for revolutionary change; who see the feminist philosophy as being the solution, at least the primary solution for fundamental changes in society that would affect all people; who believe that from that flow, all other flows will happen; who see this as a priority struggle and as a priority issue. But I'm not against the others because I think people are at different levels; I just know that when I want some action I will go to feminists as opposed to women in the women's movement.

Karla: I'm sure a lot of people want to know what the National Black Feminist Organization is going to do. Are you going to have a legislative thrust or more of a social thrust?

Marg: Well I believe you can change some heads through legislation vis-a-vis the civil rights movement. While I might personally not be too happy with the legislative changes, on the other hand I recognize that there are some of us who believe that through legislative changes, Black people could make a collective dent in the society. I'm not about to tell Black women they're wrong for having these thoughts. I think it would be silly for me to define one thrust for all the Black women that we hope will come into NBFO - now anything we do, anything that's pro-Black women, has to be against the system.

Karla: What about personally? I know that I feel as a woman and as a lesbian that my energies are sometimes divided and it's hard to know where to put my energy. Do you feel that kind of division?

Marg: I used to before I was a feminist - or when I was just getting involved in feminism I used to feel divided and split - but if in fact I have in my head that my priority is women, I keep remembering that and in general my priority is women, in specific my priority is Black women - I just keep knowing that anything that I do that moves and has direction I have no problems with energy - If, in fact, for example, there's a demonstration against Nixon on Saturday and I'm asked to come and speak at a conference of Black women, there'd be no question - there are just priorities you take on once your philosophy forms. I don't feel any kind of strain because anything I'm doing is benefiting Black people as a whole because I'm part of the majority of Black people in this country - I'm a Black woman. I know there's enough people gonna be at that Nixon rally - but I'm not sure if there's enough people going around touching women and reaching women and telling Black women "Look, you are not ugly. You are beautiful. You've got to pull yourself together. Your self-image is gonna be terrific. You don't have to give a shit about anybody else. Organize! Get your shit together! Go back to school if you want to!" I think if there's thousands of

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us doing that Nixon won't be an issue because he won't even be there anymore, because these people down here will have their shit so together and their self-image that they will not let a bastard like that get elected again. Or at least if he gets in they will just kind of get rid of him quickly or something.

I think that process has to begin and one of the biggest changes that's happened has been the change in the minds and hearts of women and that's a kind of organic change that's necessary to get about a feminist revolution. I don't believe it's gonna be with guns. I don't believe we'll have to be kidnapping nobody. If we had half the women in this country withdrawing from the consent of oppression that they're experiencing in their everyday lives in the streets, at their jobs, in institutions, this country would fold up - I'm convinced of it.

Karla: What do you think is the best method of getting Black women together and raising their consciousness? Do you think consciousness raising groups or organizing around issues is the better way of doing this?

Marg: I don't think it's an either/or question. We have built into our structure that anyone who wants to form a chapter of the NBFO has to first be in a consciousness-raising group. We just think that that's paramount and you can't organize if you believe your lips are too big, if you believe your hair is nappy and your face is ugly. You can't organize. You don't even go out there and demand your rights if you believe that. So we believe consciousness raising is essential to any woman. White women have had the time - during the six or seven years that we've been organizing in terms of feminism - to sit back and have consciousness-raising groups. There isn't a white woman I've met that hasn't been in some kind of CR group - and most

Black women I meet have not been in them. It's important for Black women to create that space once a week, that they sit down with other Black women and say: "Hey, this is what I'm feeling." Black women, contrary to myths, are hung up on sexuality, have nobody to talk to, vie for some man's affection. There's so much there, there's so much rage. The Black female suicide rate is on the increase now, and I understand that frustration and I want to tap it. That rage has to come out. All that happens to Black women is we internalize it. Every Hostess Twinkie we put in our mouth is an answer to the rage we have because every pound we carry is some fifteen minutes of frustration and anger that we have internalized and it has to come out and I'm encouraging women as a caste this year to get the anger out. Don't internalize it because we're going to kill ourselves.

If there's a Black Puerto Rican woman or a Black Mexican who defines herself as a Black woman, then she's welcome to come into our organization. We have many Black Puerto Ricans who have told us that they can't identify with Third-World groups because there are Asians and white Puerto Ricans that oppress them as Black Puerto Ricans. So they want to be in touch with their Black roots. So we say welcome - but we will not put other priorities above those of Black women.

Karla: Have you ever had any flak from Black men who might feel that you are taking energy from the Black movement?

Marg: We haven't had any flak from Black men, because I think it's very clear in our literature that we didn't divide. We see ourselves as much a part of that as we are a part of the Women's Liberation Movement. I think there's always ignorance on the part of any group or man. And they can be hostile at best and murderous at worst to your organizing. So I don't think Black men have been hostile to us. We haven't received any letters or public statements from Black men. Who we don't get support from are all the white-owned foundations. That's really where we feel hostility - organizations run by white men. We haven't been welcomed by them.

There's such a myth about Black men in the Women's Liberation Movement. I think the myth has been pushed by white men to take the heat off them - the myth is that somehow Black and Third-world men are more hostile to feminism than they are, when my personal experience is that if you are a man of color, they seem to understand on at least an intellectual basis because they have been locked out of the political processes at least because of the color of their skins. So at least they identify.

Karla: I've noticed a certain amount of apathy toward the very types of goals that your organization seems to be aiming at. In other words, when I went to a working woman's conference in which a lot of the speakers were let's say in quotes "third-world speakers" - Chinese women and so forth - the audience was empty. But at the NOW conference on office workers there was a terrific turnout. What are you doing to try and overcome this apathy?

Marg: I don't know, I think personally a lot of Third-World women and Black women might be resistant to joining anything that's been - they feel in their hearts it's not going to represent their interest. We certainly haven't met with that - quite the contrary. We believed in what you're saying about apathy and that's why we were very surprised to find after our press conference in August we had over 200 phone calls from Black women asking us, "Where have you been?" The following day we received another 200 phone calls - you know we just had a press conference to really combat a lot of the lies that were going down about Black women in the media, and that's essentially how we formed. And now we are a national organization, so we didn't find that kind of apathy. ▲

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Sandy Horn
The Girl's Guide

Who are the dangerous people . . . the people who speak of love, freedom and a decent life for the children; or the military and police system which trains men to become incompassionate cold killers? A member of the SWAT squad who had just helped to totally destroy the house saw two victims lying in the smoldering rubble with the munitions on their belts still exploding in the heat. To what extent was his mind tampered with so as not to be moved by such a sight?

Who are the dangerous people . . . the freedom fighters who recognize wrong and oppression and fight against it; or a power structure with its criminal presidents and vice-presidents and an attorney general who calls for the execution of suspects before they are brought to trial? This is a criminal power structure which is imprisoning and killing progressive movements and people all over the world.

With all of their guns and money and pawn soldiers these people in power are losing. National liberation fighters like the Vietnamese are winning and progressive movements within this country are growing and gaining strength. Because they are losing and are desperate, the people in power were forced to use the war tactics of search and destroy on 54th Street.

When we remember the scenes of the shootout and the fire of that Friday night on 54th Street, let us never forget the capacity for violence of a desperate and losing people.

It was in this atmosphere that Nancy Ling, Angela, Camilla and Mizmoon fought and died. And it is in this same atmosphere that we all must continue our fight in our own ways until we can all be together in free, creative, fulfilling lives. ▲

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as the oppressor. I don't know if any white women will in any way deal with that as a team. I'm not so concerned with that. I'm mostly concerned about them dealing with their racism on an individual basis. If they do that and I ever see any of them in a bar, we'll have something to talk about. They'll be looked at a little differently.

ANSWER TO RACISM:

"ALL ON THE SAME FIELD, STANDING SIDE BY SIDE"
(better blatant than latent)

. . . I think of what a blatant statement it is for us all to be on the same field, standing side by side. It's a little hard for them to not look at that. It's a consciousness-raising thing.

JUST BEING TOGETHER: "RACISM IN REVERSE?"

. . . We get a lot of flack behind just being together, not doing a damn thing. I've had people say, "that's racism in reverse, isn't it?" People come up to me, people I haven't even ever seen before, and say, "You on that?" I say, "Yeah, why? Does it worry you?" They say, "Haven't we been treating you nice?"

"WE COME IN SEPARATELY . . . WE'RE COOL."

WE COME IN TOGETHER . . . WE'RE GONNA START A RIOT!"

. . . When there's one or two of us who walk into a bar - we usually come in separately, not with each other-then we're cool. Nothing's gonna happen. Nobody's gonna be violent and all this shit. When the whole team walks into a bar, everybody's immediately on needles. It's so up-tight. Like an automatic, "There's gonna be a riot here." It's like (another sister: "you people"), yeh, "you people are just too violent. I don't know why you wanna be so violent. I don't know why you wanna be together. Why don't you be with us?"

"WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE TOGETHER"

. . . I feel that third-world gay women just don't need to be in the bars. There's just white women. If we're together collectively, it feels a hell of a lot better. People are a lot less apt to say anything to you. You walk into some place together, and they think you're crazy anyway. People really think we're crazy. We're not supposed to be together.

INVISIBLE IF WE'RE ALONE VIOLENT IF WE'RE TOGETHER

. . . You know that poem that Pat (Parker, "Have You Ever Tried to Hide?" in PIT STOP) wrote? That says a lot. You're sitting in a room and you're not there. Nobody sees you. If we walk into the bar, one at a time and sit in our corners, then we're not there. But if we walk in as a group of people who know each other, somehow, we cause a threat. Other people are uptight about it. If you're uptight about it, that means there was something there before that you were uptight about, long before I slid in. Even when we're together, it doesn't make any difference, because we're still outnumbered. But there are more of us now.

. . . It's not like we're given a chance and have to fit a pattern. Where I grew up as a Chicana, was predominantly Latin, Mexican, and Indian and there'd be some white kids too. They'd put us down, call us either white or Indian. The state was approximately 70 percent Mexican-American and yet we were supposed to fill in the column as either white or Indian. We weren't neither. Seventy percent of the state as neither. Weird. We were invisible to those people.

ASIAN SISTERS HAVE BEEN WHITEWASHED

. . . I feel alone a lot of times. I go to bars and look around to see if there are other Asian sisters. But there's not too many. If there are any, they're sort of whitewashed. They don't acknowledge me. I feel a coldness from other Asian Lesbians.

With straight Asians, I never had that problem. Maybe it's because straight Asian women are in the Asian movement, where there's more of a feeling of sisterly and brotherly love. I don't know why I feel this distance from Asian Lesbians. I've tried to understand that kind of vibration. It's like they don't want to be Asian and they wish they weren't.

There's so few of us. Maybe that's related. There's less than a million Chinese in the whole U.S. And less than 3 million of all Asians combined.

So I thought I'd look for black women, for other third-world women, in the bars. I have more to say to black Lesbians. I feel closer to them. But, sometimes there wasn't anyone else in the bars and I'd feel alienated. I thought, "If I try and merge in, then I'll lose my identity." I didn't want to lose that.

I'm still trying to find other Asian Lesbians. So we can rap about how our culture makes a big difference in the movement. Rap about the things I feel, find out if it's a common thing among Asian Lesbians or just a hangup of mine.

... It's really hard. There's not all that many places to go to find other third-world women. If you have a straight job or you go to school, if you're lucky, you'll find some women on campus or some friends where you work or walking the streets sometimes, you'll run into somebody. But other than that, there's just not that many places to go. So you go to the bar, and there ain't nothing happening there.

... I never played on a team before and when I walked into a bar, I felt like, "Damn, where are all the third-world sisters"? We're just a few people in the bars. "Who's that and that? There's so-and-so. I don't know her." I say hello to her.

... "So nice to see you." (laughter)

... "Yes, so nice to see you."

... "Who's that Chinese woman over there?" (boo...booo...laughter...)

**"IF YOU DEAL WITH WHITE PEOPLE,
IF YOU'RE NICE AND POLITE - YOU'RE TOGETHER."**

... Most of my life, I've spent around mostly third-world people, mostly black. Outside of that community, just going to school, or going out to the city, or whatever ... if you live in the ghetto, you ain't worth shit. But if you don't live in the ghetto, you're supposed to be by yourself, making it on your own, have fine clothes, and a fine car and you're all-right-nigger then.

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"TRICKS OF THE TRADE: ALWAYS TRYING TO GET OVER"

... You go through all sorts of trips. You talk completely differently when you go into a group that you feel impressed by. You want to have a conversation so you might not talk as loud, as you do when you're talking to people who understand what you're saying and who are used to you talking. You want to get over, you know. You're always trying to get over.

... Tricks of the trade.

... Talk soft, and by all means, don't be violent. That's the worst thing in the world. Let me fuck with your head, mentally violently, but don't use any physical violence. They don't change you. They just rearrange you.

"I NEEDED TO FIND OUT IF I WAS THAT PARANOID MEXICAN"

... Most of the racism is subtle. We find it in the gay bars or on any baseball field or basketball court. I've just gotten to the place where people are really irritating me. It's minor things. I felt like I really needed to talk with someone else about it. I needed to find out if I was "that paranoid Mexican." Just 'cause they call you Rosita and your name's Sandy. That's paranoid, you know.

... "Hey, Pancho, what's happening?" (laughter)

FEEDBACK FROM THIRD WORLD SISTERS IS A "REALITY KICK"

... You're not sure if you should be getting angry or not anymore. You feel like you're angry a lot. "Maybe I've lost my balance or something." You need someone else to talk to, to get some feedback.

... A reality kick.

IT'S NOW TIME TO PUT ENERGY INTO EACH OTHER

... I know I was really excited about this team because I have been around predominantly Latin people and white people. It's a real up when you start looking around ... we're around each other and we're giving to each other and we're not always in a fighting paranoid stance. We've all put a lot of energy in that place, it's now time to put energy into each other.

"I WAS RAISED EITHER PUERTO RICAN OR WHITE"

... I've always been raised either Puerto Rican or white. (laughter)

... White?

... Yeah! When I came to the Bay area, then I started meeting a lot of women. I met Peggy through a white woman. Peggy's Native American. Then I met Pat. Pat's Chicana. Then I had a personal deal happening. When I went into a bar, I was treated white. I wasn't treated third world.

... Unless you opened your mouth!

... I'd say, "Hey, wait a minute. Fuck, I'm Puerto Rican" ... and this and that. They'd say, "Oh, well, then you're all right." Then I got into a group like this, and I got to meet black women. For a long time, I felt like I was being shunned. Unless they knew I was Puerto Rican, I was treated like white. So the team for me is really nice.

"OUR GENERATION OF INDIANS IS TURNING THINGS AROUND"

... As Indians, our parents raised us to be white, raised us to fit in. It was for their own protection and for ours, they thought. That was the type of oppression they faced, having to raise us as close to white - or acceptable - as they could.

Now all of a sudden our generation is getting back. White people trace their ancestry back to the Mayflower, Plymouth Rock, and the Puritans. When third-world people try to trace our ancestry back, we're not allowed to do that. White people treat us like children. They're still waiting. Waiting for a whole generation of third-world people to be assimilated, acculturated. Then they can say, "Now, you've finally made it."

You know, for years, they used to say about Indians, "We give 'em



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clothes and we give 'em homes and we give 'em income and we give 'em education and they still don't want to fit in. What's wrong with them?"

Now we're saying, "We didn't want it to begin with." This is a third generation thing going down. Our generation is turning things around. We're letting people know, "This is where we're really at. Give us a chance to grow."

... I speak another language and that's held against me.

... I'm getting to know more third-world women and being able to play with them. I find it a real thrill to talk in Spanish, to hear commands in Spanish. That normally doesn't happen. It's a real up for me.

"WE'RE ALL STRUGGLING TOGETHER AGAINST OPPRESSION"

... My opinion is that the women's movement has always been mainly white. But we all are struggling. So I feel identified with the women's movement, the Lesbian movement, the Asian movement, the gay movement. We're all together. We're all struggling against oppression.

... That's true, but we have to also go outside of that for reinforcement, in other ways from third-world women. You can't go to them for that support. But somebody that is in the same position you are in - you get their support, even nonverbal support, sometimes.

WE HAVE TO UNCONDITION THE CONDITIONING

... We've been conditioned into one thing and we have to uncondition ourselves. We've been brought up in this type of society. We've got to get out of it.

"THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IS WHITE-IDENTIFIED"

... Change is like a process. I think it's hurt that the women's movement is white-identified, and mostly middle class. You know, that whole thing about equal rights and how they want it so they can get a Ph.D. Well, there aren't too many Ph.D.'s sitting around here. It's a little hard to identify with that. But there are a lot of things I can identify with. We're all feeling a lot of gay pride. Eventually we'll get their consciousness raised to third-world women.

ROLE OF THE PERSON WHO'S BEING RACIST

... We're trying in all kinds of ways, sometimes in very angry, belligerent ways, sometimes in very subtle ways, to force those doors open and not just let racism happen. Instead of looking at racism as just the victim, we're trying to make people aware of the role of the person who's being racist.

TO STOP STRUGGLING IS TO SIT LIKE A FAT CAT

... I don't see it as a utopian world. I see it as a really long process and a continual struggle. Anytime we stop struggling, we're gonna be sitting just like fat cats do in Washington. We just can't sit.

"I OPEN UP FROM A PLACE WHERE I FEEL COMFORTABLE"

... We're gonna have to open ourselves up. There are a lot of things that we have a lot of biases about, as third-world women. I know I have a lot of trouble thinking about bisexuality and transsexuality. There are a lot of things like that that I really have to start opening up my head to. And a good way to do it is from a place where I feel comfortable. That's the kind of process I'm talking about.

... There's a lot of things I'd like to know about other cultures. It's going to take us time. The only way we can do that is to get together. It is a powerful thing.

ON AN INDEPENDENT THIRD-WORLD

WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT

... At this point, I'm not even thinking about that. I'm thinking about this group of people, right here. This in itself can be considered a political move. To me, it's a way for us to get together. And hopefully, more third-world women will get together. Organizing a movement involves a whole lot more head hassles. I've been through that trip already, trying to incorporate some kind of third-world women's movement or Black movement.

"BLACK WOMEN WERE THE 'IN' THING TO BE"

... At one point, it wasn't third world women and white women in the women's movement. It was mostly white women and Black women, trying to get it together. Black women were the only women that existed at that point because that was the in thing to be. Everybody else didn't exist. I don't want this whole thing to turn into something like that.

HOW TO BE BIG-HEARTED AND POLITICALLY CORRECT...

... I don't want someone to come and ask me if people from this team will be on a panel because they feel big-hearted and want to look politically correct. Fuck 'em. We're gonna get our thing together and if it happens to coincide with theirs, that's cool. And if it doesn't, forget it.

"THE SHIT COMES DOWN ON WOMEN, PERIOD!"

... I'm not so sure I want to see a totally separate kind of thing. The shit comes down on women, period. There's no way we can be separate from each other. We really do have to somehow identify with each other. But instead of shying away from our differences, and being apprehensive about our differences, we're going to have to figure out some format that will be inclusive and not exclusive of those differences.

"THERE'S GOTTA BE SOME SEPARATISM SOMEPLACE"

... There's gotta be some separatism someplace, to really get our shit together. A white woman can sit down and talk to a white woman more than I can about what it feels like to be a white woman and to have racist feelings about black people or Asian people or Indian people. I don't have the time or the inclination to discuss these sorts of things with a white woman. But I can sit down and talk to somebody Black about what it feels like to feel oppressed. Some positive things can come out of that.

"IN THE END, THE BLEND"

... In the end, it's gotta come into a blend for all women.

"YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO FIGURE OUT I'M BLACK RIGHT AWAY"

... Yeah, sure. There was an incident that happened at a bar. This woman said to a Black woman standing right there, "Well, I have nothing against you, blah, blah. I don't even know that you're Black. I don't even recognize that you're Black." She said that and here I am. You know, you may not be able to figure out I'm Black right away. Maybe a little later. This woman thought she was giving me a compliment. She has to go deal. I'm not gonna go tell her, "Well, I am Black and this is what it is to be Black..." She should go sit down and talk to white women about that, about where those feelings come from.

WHERE DO MEN COME IN?

... We're sitting here talking about basically women - black women, white women, getting together. But there are some things that concern me that are going on in the world that men are involved in.



I don't know how to hook them both up. While I'm a Lesbian and I'm mostly with women, there are some levels on which I can dig what some men - who are trying to change this whole thing - are doing. This is the level at which I deal with men.

"THIRD WORLD OPPRESSION SETS US APART FROM WHITE WOMEN"

... Most of my time is spent with women. But there are other areas of oppression that Black men are working on, that Chicanos are working on, that everybody's working on. It's not just our oppression as women. That's one of the things that's different and sets us apart from white women. That is a very big difference.

... We're not only oppressed as women, we're oppressed as third world women.

THE THIRD WORLD PAST IS SAFER THAN THE THIRD WORLD FUTURE

... Third World People are accepted for our past, for the nobility of past cultures. This is true of Chinese, Japanese, African and Native American history, and all the others. With Africa, you think of Ethiopia, and the Ashanti and Dan cultures. It's the Great Wall and the Ming Dynasty in China. But when white people meet those same people in reality, they don't relate us to our cultures. We're the same people as the people we come from. But all they see is skin. It's as though we're extinct.

* * * * *

"WE'RE ALL HERE BECAUSE WE ALL NEEDED EACH OTHER"

... We're all here because we all needed each other. And although we may come from different political levels and backgrounds, we all basically know that we need each other's support. Basically we want to give that support and some kind of reinforcement of who we are. I'm not shying away from these differences. We're not all trying to be one Latin softball team or one Black softball team. We're dealing with some of our differences and I'm quite sure that a lot of us have biases about differences here.

... Yeah, sure do.

... But it's gonna take us time. We're just starting. We're a young team. We haven't been together very much. A lot of us have just met each other. We hope that from this, it'll lead to other things.

sudi: Sounds like you've formed a many-cultural kind of woman-front and that out of that can come a respect for each other's cultures, and a respect for the differences, rather than a fear of those differences, and from that a greater respect for one another.

... That's the aim. That's the total aim. Right there.



IDEOLOGY. Cont. from page 11

Where I come from, who had the luxury to examine your life? You don't have that time to examine your emotions, all of your emotions are centered on physical survival. Passion is immediate, despair is immediate. You didn't eat Saturday night? You feel terrible Saturday night. So you get out Sunday morning and you fight for food. You're not alienated, you might be isolated from the culture, you might be poor, but your life is not spent pushing papers, or insulated by a Cadillac car with windows that go up and down at the push of a button. I do not understand guilt, when middle-class women start talking about guilt, I don't know what they're talking about.

BARBARA: I created my own middle class. In my child's ghetto there was nothing to have a conflict about, I learned not to wish for toys because I knew I would never get those things. My adult reaction was I don't want to worry about those things any more. I want everything I can have to make up for the things I never had. I know today a lot of people who come from a poor background, and believe me, they are very middle-class conscious. You are not the rule.

RITA: Barbara, we cannot assume that the lower class is homogeneous. The middle class is. A low class Polish urban girl is a lot different than me. I am very much the product of the group of people I grew up with, poor white trash. You find anybody else who was poor white trash and she is going to be a lot like me, she's going to be direct, she's going to be aggressive, she's not going to have any conflicts in terms of guilt.

You talk with a Catholic girl from the country, she's going to have a different story. The lower class never assimilated.

SUDI: Are you suggesting that class is more of a determinative than sex?

RITA: No, sex is the first determinant and class is the second. The lower class has been able to keep its ethnic identity and geographic peculiarities in a way that the middle class has not because of price of middle-classness is homogeneity. All I can tell you is from my experience in class that the women and men where I come from do not have those emotional dicotomies.

LANI: A friend of mine was talking to me about Marx's theory - what comes first always is action, and then ideology or analysis comes out of that action. We in the Women's Movement have put consciousness first, put the head ahead of the soul. Then we say, we'll act out of our consciousness. That may be one of our mistakes. I am beginning to see just now, our actions will change who we are.

RITA: Can I build on that? One of the reasons the white middle-class women in our movement are so inactive is that they are so concerned with getting it all right. The middle class takes no risks in America. The middle class doesn't move unless they think there is a reward at the end.

LANI: It's all a head trip.

RITA: Sure it is.

JEANNE: It's once removed from survival. When the ethnic and class movements talk, they're talking about food.

LANI: We're not doing much action, we're doing little good acts that we like. But the few working-class women that I've known can't afford to pay babysitters like middle class women so they don't get together.

My friend kept telling me such and such theories were not functional, and I thought, isn't that male logic! Maybe when it becomes dysfunctional for a housewife to make dinner every night, she will rebel. Marx, I guess, would say our theory will come out of our action, and from that we can go into an action-reflection dialectic.

JEANNE: It's the whole thing of objective conditions starting action, people don't decide, "Let's have a Women's Movement! It would be tremendous for the following 17 reasons!"

THEORY OF SUBVERTING OUR WAY INTO THE REVOLUTION

JEANNE: I'm particularly interested in the theory of subverting our way into the revolution; the tiny cells, do our own thing, poof, it will happen or separatist withdrawal orientations. That's a perspective I don't share, but I know a lot of people believe somehow this sort of thing will occur. For instance, in the field of health care, the rationale is feminist health-care centers will seep the bottom out of establishment health care, and eventually will in fact tumble the existing health care structure ... ad infinitum.

LANI: I like that fantasy, but I don't think it's true.

SUE: It seems like it's so easy for those future four or five hundred congresswomen to say, okay, here we are, let's go, without thinking of all those billions of *MS.* magazine readers. Something has to be done with them, we can't abandon them, we can't leave them there and say read *MS.* magazine for the rest of your life, while we go off and take control. I think alternative organizations are incredibly valuable because these people have taken a step, enabling them to say "fuck the world." It may not be doing something constructive for the great mass of people, but for themselves they're daring to be individuals and people in groups.

JEANNE: I don't know if that's a step toward revolution or reform.

LANI: It's on its way to revolution, it's good reform, it's saying "I like myself, let's work on this health center together."

JEANNE: There are certain feminist institutions that have been created, that say "We don't have any politics, we're just doing this." For example, a record company created *solely* because they say "We love music." Then there are others who see themselves as withdrawing from the power structure, which I think is an illusion. We on *The Tide* know that we're on the bottom of a power structure but we are in it. If you're trying to sell anything, or buy anything, or produce anything, or have anything, you're in it.

SEPARATISM: FANTASY OR REALITY?

LANI: I think we're going to be separatist and have a grand time. I think we're just going to keep learning and doing and growing. That's where feminist culture is, separatist. Your fantasy is a village or a United States or a lot filled with women, we've done it as separatist and we are indeed Amazon women.

JEANNE: It's not my fantasy at all, I wanted to explore that theory. I advocate a separate lesbian movement, but I think it's insane to think or talk about separatist withdrawal as a direction for that independent movement when we liberated lesbians only number 10,000. I don't want to wall out the majority of our sisters, which is what we would be doing if we totally withdrew at this stage of the game. I think there needs to be a great deal of work on that score. I got a letter about four months ago asking why I write for the *Free Press*, you know they don't come any more sexist than that inside section, but they also have 40,000 women readers, you have to figure at least a thousand are lesbians. I wonder about these alternative institutions where we can't get out a magazine with more than a couple of thousand copies, but yet they can read this rag out there.

LANI: But that's real important to use and to embrace that we can use it. I love that women read you and that women read Rita's book. The ability to reach thousands of women, that's real powerful and loving.

JEANNE: I think separatism is the strategic first step towards building institutions, but I don't see it as a realistic ultimate end in itself.

LANI: It's like health care, when you're in the health-care thing. It's being a separatist and I needed that. I went through that and I needed to love myself and the health care made me love myself, it made me trust other women, made me love other women. I was a separatist, I was an Amazon and now it's time for something new. But that stays with me, that intensity is there, but it's also recognizing whatever else is around us.

DYKE SEPARATISM:

The Logical, Psychological and Historical Extension of Cultural Feminism

SALLY: I need and want to say something about dyke separatism and about why I believe in my heart I am a dyke separatist, but cannot act on it now. It falls under that category of getting my head together, or functioning with alternative organizations. There may be a time in the future when I'll be able to act on it again. I know I believe in it. I know that it's the logical and psychological and historical extension of what I believe cultural feminism to be. I don't see much difference between a heterosexual cultural feminist who wants to build a female culture free of men and a lesbian separatist who wants to do the same thing and in fact is doing it. I'd really like to explore that difference. But when we

start talking separatism, I sort of understand that to mean separation from heterosexual women as well as men. That's where it really gets down, because this whole thing of relating to heterosexual women is just *so heavy* for me. When we're talking about heterosexual women who are struggling with their feminism, and their lesbianism, to me, the vital thing is not so much that these "heterosexual" women are sexually relating to other women. I think that's great if they are, I wish they were. I want every woman to be a lesbian. But what's really important to me is that she is not sexually relating to men or in any way relating to men. I don't want her energy going to men.

RADICAL CELIBACY

Right here I want to put in a word about radical celibacy. Rita Mae Brown says it's a contradiction to talk about radical celibacy. I don't think that's true. I know just lots of women who are in this situation, who are fed up with men, who are unable to endure them sexually or any other way, but who are unable to express themselves with women. When their political head is on right, I find myself behaving toward them, these celibates, just like I do toward my lesbian sisters.

HETEROSEXUAL PRIVILEGE

The separatist feelings that I see in myself are the old old arguments. I am resentful somewhere in myself of the heterosexual privilege straight women and bisexual sisters enjoy. Secondly, I sometimes have felt ripped off by heterosexual sisters who get a lot of energy from me and other women and take it home to a man. Third, I feel the need to build and discover my own myself on a common ground of identity, and heterosexual women, by definition, are identified with men so can't identify with me. In all the struggles I've had with heterosexual women, I've learned the difference between *I want* and *you must*; I would like for every woman to be a lesbian. But I know that she has to move to that out of some part of herself. If she's coerced, cajoled, or seduced into it, then she's done it without integrity. I trust every woman to take whatever step she has to take when she knows she must take it and not until then. She knows where her support lies and what she herself needs. If that means that she needs a man, then I have to respect that decision on her part. I don't like it and I can tell her so, but she's the one who knows. It's categorically bad for me to lay a heavy political line on her and tell her she has got to be a lesbian. All I can do is tell her what I want her to be. In the meantime there are heterosexual women with whom I'm working very closely and whom I can say I love.

LESBIAN SEPARATISTS:

Guardians of the Past, Visionaries of the Future

I'm convinced that lesbian separatism, when it means living and growing and working together in isolation from men, is really essential, not only to individual women at different times in their lives, or even perhaps for a lifetime, but I think it's absolutely essential to the women's movement. I don't want to hear ever about the heavy trips that come down on lesbian separatist women. There's got to be room for all of us here, particularly when our goals are the same. They are working out the Amazon dream of functioning for a lifetime, having only superficial and necessary relationships to men. I don't know how we are going to discover the values other than the ones we grew up with if we don't do that. I believe that lesbian separatists are not only the guardians of the deep prehistorical past but are also the visionaries of the future.

CAN THERE BE MUTUAL COEXISTENCE WITH MEN?

I find myself most strongly identifying with dyke separatists, when I hear people describing the way things have to be between the sexes in this liberal way. Calling it a dialectic or a pendulum swing or mutual coexistence or some happy medium between a male culture and a female culture, and how it got ahead of the human thing. That kind of talk drives me to distraction. I don't believe we can coexist with men or with male values. They're killing us with the extremism of those male values. That's exactly what this whole movement is about. And it's not any kind of happy medium between the two extremes where we have a little dab of male dominance and a little dab of female dominance and mix it up into some kind of nebulous gray. I get really upset at talk

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about the dialectic . . . some sort of changed relationship growing out of inner relation between the present male values and the female culture. It's not a pendulum swing either. People who say first we had the matriarchy and now we have the patriarchy and now it's matriarchy time again. I don't think any of these metaphors are appropriate. Male culture can be nowhere in sight when we really begin to build a lesbian nation or a female culture. We can't just add a little feminism to the patriarchy and expect humanity or human values to emerge. We've got to start all over again. An element essential to humanness has been left out of the patriarchal world, and that element is womanness and woman values. I just don't want to hear about a pendulum swing or the dialectic or the coexistence. I want masculine culture in its extremism and its anti-lifeness and the way it's killing us all on the earth to be wiped out. So we can begin again to build a female culture. Female here, in my words, equals human because women won't leave out the masculine values as we grow. Men have demeaned and held down and obliterated what womanly traits there are like compassion, emotionality, and so on. That's the patriarchy's tragic flaw. But we aren't going to do that. When women begin to build from scratch we're not going to obliterate or demean those male values that will make us whole persons. We'll be aware of them and we'll have a close rein on them and they will be included. Therefore neither the feminine values or the masculine values are going to run rampant. I see lesbian separatists coming the closest to trying to bring all this into existence. Insofar as you can live a separate and isolated existence in a capital patriarchal system. I find lesbian separatists trying to do it, and I rejoice in that.

ARE LESBIANS OUT TO KILL OFF THE HUMAN RACE?

The other time that I get upset is about the argument that comes down on lesbians and on homosexuals and I guess particularly when we talk about lesbian separatism, about the propagation of the species. I'd just like to lay that one to rest if I can. When indignantly all these straight people object to separatism or homosexuality saying that we're likely to kill off the human race, that we've got to propagate the species. That's not the case. First of all, heterosexuality will probably endure. Not every woman will separate from every man, alas. The separation will simply have to be great enough quantitatively to make a qualitative difference in human history. Even if 90 percent of the women separated from men, the other 10 percent could still keep the race alive, and probably happier and better fed too. Even if every woman did separate from every man, that does not mean there could not be heterosexual intercourse, occasionally, for the propagation of the species. It's easy to perform heterosexually. Most lesbians know how to perform quite well, but just performing heterosexually or homosexually is not their whole identity. They're still lesbians. They could be lesbian separatists if women did indeed separate from men 100 percent. We

could do the Amazon thing once a year and subject ourselves to intercourse just to keep ourselves going. But third, *even* if every woman separated from every man, *even* if there were no intercourse, that still doesn't necessarily mean the end of the human race, what with cloning and parthenogenesis and all that we're finding out about now. And finally *even* if every woman separated from every man, and *even* if there weren't any intercourse, and *even* if cloning or parthenogenesis were not a reality, and indeed the human race didn't survive, so what! I think it's about time someone dared to utter that. I don't know what makes us think we are so ultimate, the crown of creation. So what if we do die and pass out of existence; The patriarchy has had its emphasis on tomorrow and capitalism its emphasis on "buy now, pay later." The patriarchal capitalists have never let us dare to think of death as a good thing. Always it's striving for immortality. Sometimes I flash on the fact that the women's movement may not so much be a discovering of how we ought to live as a learning of how we, as a race, are to die. Mankind has raked and gutted the earth for a good while. He has had his chance, and he muffed it but good. And so now it's up to women -- it's always up to women to be the restorative power, to make the cuts and the bruises of the world all well again and to pick up the pieces and bind the wounds. But this time -- even though we hope it's not so -- man may have gone too far and women may be taken right with them. We may not even be able as women to restore life where man has ravaged it and taken it away. It may be too late.

AN ARMY OF LOVERS MAY FAIL

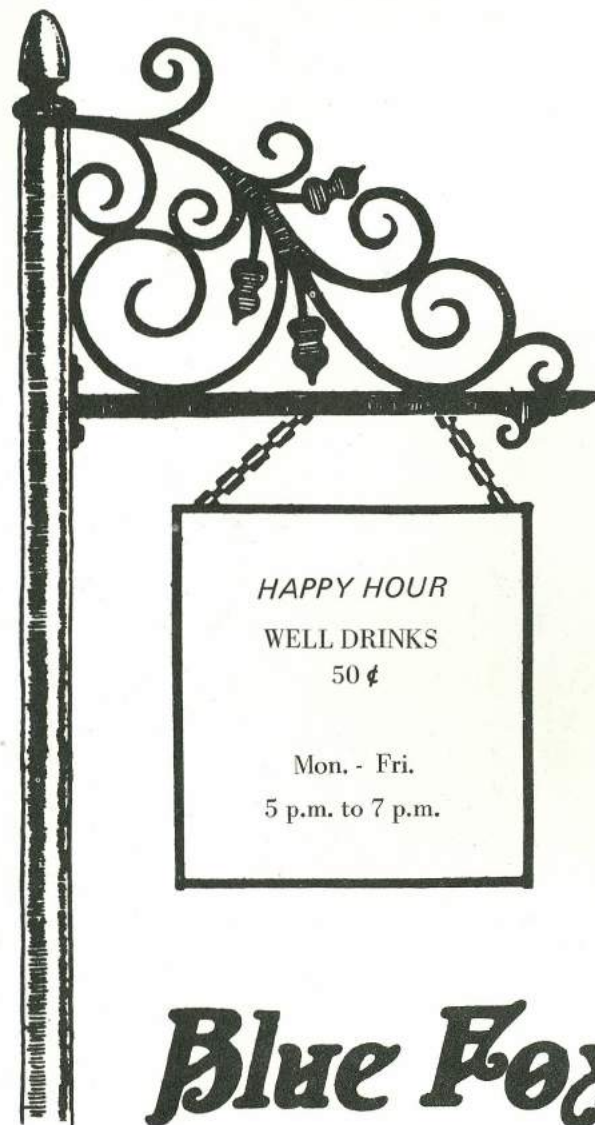
Rita Mae's strongest line to me is "an army of lovers shall not fail." At San Francisco University we've been struggling for several months now to keep some women's jobs. The other night after a particularly long and hopeless meeting in confrontation with some powerful unseen, unhearing white men, I said to a lesbian sister, "Erica, an army of lovers may fail," and we may. I have to live my life as if we will not but always I know in my heart that it may be too late, that the whole historical and cosmic function of feminists in this century on earth may be to teach us all gracefully how to take leave of the human enterprise. How to admit that we blew it and to take up our tents and silently steal away, completely out of the universe. We may only be able to teach us all how to die well. It's been a long and exciting epoch, but it's been a destructive one. Nature is giving us clear and unmistakable signals that we are perhaps, unless women can really get it together, on the way out. Then maybe with us gone from the earth, the earth can be restored to its life, to sustaining its natural cycles. We may be able only to die well and help men die well. That may seem a little ironic that we, who are so close to life and such guardians of it, have to be the ones to understand and aid in the final closure of it. But that may be our task, and in doing it we may be able to give the earth back to herself. Empty of mankind, empty too of womankind, empty of humanity. Maybe then some day in the great somewhere, there will be another Eve born and perhaps things will be different the next time. ▲



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