

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER '71

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SPECTRE-4



written by revolutionary
separatist white women

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WHY WE CHANGED FROM "REVOLUTIONARY LESBIANS" TO

"REVOLUTIONARY SEPARATIST WHITE WOMEN"

We changed how we described ourselves because a lot of things have happened which have made us rethink all sorts of things.

- we had a long discussion with our friends in New Orleans about using terms like "gay", "straight", and "lesbian" which helped make it clearer to us what we had been trying to say when we used those terms...and it was really clear that we would have to reject the "gay"/"straight" distinction because it didn't really come close to getting at what we felt...we saw that when we used those terms we had in mind women who were involved with or had investments in men and women who were committed to struggling with women only, and who were changing their lives around in order to share their lives with other women. And all of that doesn't have a damn thing to do with whether you have "slept" with a woman.

- then we got a letter from women in Edmonton (Alberta, Canada) asking us why we used "lesbian" to describe ourselves since we seemed to be talking about and committed to lots of things that weren't expressed by "lesbian". They had done a lot of thinking about all of this and shared it with us. Well, that letter kept coming up again and again as we talked to each other and as we went thru different feelings we had. Our big problem at this point was that we liked "lesbian" for all sorts of reasons ...and we were proud of being lesbians and didn't know how it would be taken if we changed it. What was important to us was that it wasn't seen as a backin away ... which led into long discussions of the term "lesbian"

- we knew that we had both "come-out" totally and that we had embraced the term and that we had both faced the shit that came down on us for coming-out and being proud and all of that. But we also knew that even if you get rid of the sense of "evilness" or "perversion" that has gone along with the term "lesbian" in a lot of people's minds...well there was still something funny going on. "lesbian" is used by this society and by lesbians ourselves to indicate something - to tell us something about a person... and it is a damn...it is a typically male isolated and fragmented piece of information- it tells us what SEX a woman "sleeps" with. And we have had our hopes shattered often enough because we expected that that bit of information meant a whole lot of things to know that you can't tell anything from knowing a woman is a lesbian...

- we realized that we had built a whole lot of feelings and values into the term...into being a lesbian...and that well, things never came out that way...

- we know lesbians who are so invested into the positions they have achieved in this society that they will die fighting to protect how things are now

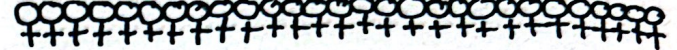
- we know lesbians who have enormous contempt for women...all women ...who see their women as inferior, dull-witted, slaves....(sound familiar?)

- we know lesbians who spend most of their time and energy with men....

- we know lesbians who have great investments in just one or two males...investments which gets expressed in time, energy, and values....

- we began to realize that to us it is not only the fact that we refuse to limit the expression of our love for each other in any way (for most of the world that "any way" means by some category called "sex")...it is most importantly that we devote our time and energy totally to women...that we relate to men only in our jobs... and there no more than is absolutely necessary.

- we realized that there are women who have not "slept" with another woman" but who have made the commitment of time, energy, and willingness to struggle to other women...



- because of terms like "lesbian", "New lesbian", "old lesbian", "real lesbian", "political lesbian" a lot of stuff has gotten all confused and messed up and there has been a lot of pressure created to "come-out"...to have a "gay experience" in order to be trustworthy...

- shit! what we managed to get in touch with in ourselves were the feelings and values that we had as we went through all of this...and what matters most of all to us is women having a basic commitment to other women...it is women building their lives around each other in a total struggle against the shit that comes down in this place... it is women refusing to give energy and support to men and giving it to women... and so you see what we found out... what mattered to us were the values and the real lives that we call "revolutionary" and "separatist"...but then as we started to face our racism and the racism of this place - well then we thought that it was about time we did something about the fact that it is always put on people of color to identify themselves as such because it is "normal"... "assumed" that a person is white... and so we finally ended up with a description that we think does a much better job of telling who we are and where we are at...we are revolutionary separatist white women....

a few lines from the poem Vera, from my childhood which was in a packet which we got from WHACK - Box 1595, Anniston, Ala. 36201. The WHACK women work with women in the military...

the common woman is as common
as good bread
as common as when you couldn't go on
but did.
For all the world we didn't know we held in common
all along
the common woman is as common as the best of bread
and will rise
and will become strong - I swear it to you
I swear it to you on my own head
I swear it to you on my common
woman's
head



page 2

COMMUNITY OF SEPARATIST ♀-

We all get to feelin pretty isolated at times.. and feeling that we can't do very much or that we haven't done very much. Just a few ...even one strong woman...can do a hell of a lot.

Quite a few of you have asked and yeah it is true that SPECTRE is a living collective of two... that the two of us do the paper...anyway that was how it was until SPECTRE opened up the space for us to find other women in other towns and have them find us. And what we now KNOW...what we have EXPERIENCED is that THERE IS A COMMUNITY OF REVOLUTIONARY SEPARATIST WHITE WOMEN in this kountry and in Canada...a community which sometimes doesn't seem to exist because we are spread out all over ...spread in one's two's, three's, etc. But visits, letters, calls, tapes... have made that community real to us...have made it part of our lives...and the women that we trust and love and struggle with and share criticisms with are in that extended community.

What we are tryin to say is that SPECTRE isn't just the two of us anymore...but that it comes out of the struggle and the criticisms and the comments and experiences of fine women all over this empire and Canada ...and also England...women in New Orleans, Iowa City, Wash DC, Seattle, Baltimore, Rochester, Edmonton, Anniston, Ft. Bragg, Dallas... it goes on...the list grows. We want you to know that there were days that we were so confused and feelin so low that we weren't good for very much ...until we went to the Post Office and got our mail...and your articles, criticisms, your questions, your supportive comments and your talkin about yourselves and what you're doin and how you're changin gives us the strength to keep fightin.

And so all of that goes into SPECTRE. And it really has become a way of gettin and keepin in touch with really fine women.

We use lots of different names in the articles and the same name doesn't mean that the same person is writing it. We do all of that because it is real to us that what is in SPECTRE shouldn't be tagged to one individual ...SPECTRE is a collective project...and we don't put things in it that we, as a collective in struggle against all the shit in this place, don't agree with. We may change and come to disagree with things that were written earlier... but then that is what growth and struggle and change are all about.

A note to myself -

Chickenshitness is NOT good for
your stomach
your head
your muscles
your pulse rate
my best friend & me
my liking myself -
So

FIGHT YOU CHICKENSHIT!



Dear Sisters,

Just finished reading your paper; the first I have ever read. I should tell you about myself so that I can express what is cooking inside me: I have been "actively" a lesbian for eight years. My age is 29. I can also say that in that eight years my almost total social-circle revolved around the bars. (Sometimes I want to god-damn those bars). My total involvement with other women started in the bars, grew in the bars, and TWISTED in the bars.

This last year the Movement became active here in Seattle with Gay Woman's Alliance. When the meetings started I went; out of curiosity and the possibility of meeting women outside of the bars. After a few weeks of struggles, chaos, etc., I split. Had better things to do than sit around listening to a "bunch of women bitching". Well, they got it together and have done many things that needed to be done. These sisters have gone through heavy changes and are fighting and struggling every day with them.

I remained separate from them and their (our) struggle. This was done out of protection. Trying to protect all the games and walls that surround most of us and keep us separate from the world and each other. We belong in this world and with each other and the beauty of it is that more and more of us are making this choice.

I am no longer separate from my sisters and I am starting the struggle (myself) and learning to Love --my womanhood, my body, and other women... in a totally different way than I learned in the bars...(the whole trip of duplicating heterosexual roles; assuming the male ego and applying it to women, etc.). Thank god, for changes...may they never stop.

The change has just begun for me and it is not easy. But it is happening and someday I know that if the time comes, I can love another woman honestly and with joy. In the meantime, I am loving my sisters with joy...and honestly.

Love to you and our struggle

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Beginning to talk about Racism-

We've noticed that everytime we've talked to women about racism that we'd all start talking about the strength of revolutionary women of color. That we never just start talking about our own white attitudes. That several major women's papers in this country have done whole long articles on the revolutionary actions of women of color but haven't spent any of that time talking about the things that we do and say and think as white women that are racist or continue the whole racist structure of this joint.

If we're gonna start talkin about racism, then we have to talk about the THINGS WE DO THAT ARE RACIST and not avoid that by talkin about how great women of color are.

I was just thinkin...we've said in the past that Spectre is the paper of Revolutionary Lesbians... and even when we were changing it to "Separatist Women", it didn't occur to us to include "white" - not until we started writing these things out... It's natural to see "Third World" in front of woman's groups. But that's part of our white skin privilege...or white ego mania, that white is assumed...just like male is assumed.

We've also never really talked about racism in Spectre...our privilege has kept us comfortable, and in the last issue when we started talking about classism...we didn't talk about racism... which sure showed our color.

Before I broke off the relationships I had with men I had real liberal attitudes about Black separatism. I mean - I always nodded my head extra hard when local 'radicals' would start talking about how together this separatist shit was...but I never understood any of it in my gut.

It was real hard times when I started breaking the one relationship I had left with a gay male, and became committed to a community of separatist women. Dolores really helped me thru some painful realizations then...anyway, once I had broken from that relationship, I began to feel the rage I had for men...that I had during that last tie to a man. I didn't have any male relationships to protect any longer...I didn't have to protect any more false illusions of "calmness" in those relations...and it WAS false because I never challenged alot of shit with men...just did alot of nodding, so of course everything seemed calm.

Anyway, once I didn't have to fool myself anymore I began to really feel the anger I had for men - for all men. I knew how draining and wasteful it was to spend time with any men...and at the same time I began to feel an understanding of Black separatism - this time in my gut.

I began to get upset when all the local women's groups kept trying to "get Black sisters in the group". And I got real pissed when a woman from Radicalesbians said that she thought a day care center would be a real good way to work with women of color. When I said that I didn't think that was right and all, she said that the young people would be more free of racism if they were around young people of color...I said that being with and not being with people of color has nothing to do with

whether you're gonna be a racist or not...that it's our training as whites...that we have to try to undo and breakdown our racism with other whites.

God, I just couldn't believe it, this was a woman separatist saying this, who knew how we never get anywhere trying to "educate" men, moreless trying to build strength with other women as long as we waste time with them.

But she didn't think that this would be the same for women of color. Shit. Trying to 'deal' with our racism by getting together with women of color is like men pretending to deal with their sexism by "getting together with a chick". We just keep draining the energy and oppressing the shit out of women of color.

A lot of women of color aren't wasting their time with white women...and what we as white women have to do is to stop lookin to Black women for 'help'...we've got to stop foolin ourselves about 'struggling with our racism' and start doing it with each other.

Anyway, several months after this talk I started in my second year of nursing school. This time I was thrown into the real experience of how I would act on all this stuff that I had just started to fight about with other women.

There are 250 women in my class...and things are REAL uptight. The male doctors are always layin down their prick comments like, "Well, I may be 74 but I'm not too old for a little of you..." Once they were showing this film about a Brazilian family that had a hereditary deformity so that alot of them were born without feet. (of course the family got along pretty good and apparently they all worked on their farm by moving around on their stubs - and they all looked pretty healthy and very strong). So the big shit doctors comment? "Well, they just don't have a chance" (course not in a competitive joint like this). Then he went on to say that he thought it was "disgusting that people who have problems like this should reproduce". Well, I was sitting next to the Black women and we all knew who that was meant for...Blacks...lesbians...as well as physically "deformed" people.

I had a real hard time in that class...lots of times I'd raise my hand and start fighting. I came out as a lesbian and I fought hard...not just with the hospital heirarchy but with the uptight white women in that class who fancied themselves 'radicals' but whenever a good fight was in the brewing...they start talkin about how I should try to Understand and be Patient, after all I'd just alienate them -those prick doctors and medical students. SHIT! They never bother to think for two goddamned seconds how those pigs alienate the Black women in that class, or the poor people, or me as a lesbian...or all of us as women.

So anyway every day is a total strain...I always have my body braced for the incredible hostility directed at me...of course always hidden behind phoney smiles. When the "teachers" would make comments that were real fascist (but they thought were funny or something) the whole class would start laughing supportively...I'd just sit there and scowl...and soon it was clear that the

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only other women who responded the same way were the Black women...I got strength from their anger. It became clearer and clearer that we hated the shit that was goin on and soon two of the Black women started asking me to sit with them...of course this had a specific purpose (I can't go into) and soon we started gettin sorta tight cause we had really put ourselves out on the line with each other. Even though I felt bad about it I rationalized the whole thing with...well, it's mutual survival...it's not like we spend any other time together except in class.

One day the nursing students gave a birthday party to the professor. They sang 'Happy Birthday'. It was sickening. After that prick insulted, degraded and humiliated us and taught us shit that will never help any sick person - except prick doctors...so they can make more MONEY. After all that...they all stood up and clapped for him...all 250 of them...except some of the Black women and me.

While they were singing, Terry the Black woman next to me, turned around and yelled..."you stupid gray-ass mutherfuckers", at the white students who were standing around us. Of course I felt this surge of wonderfully strong feeling flowing out of me because I hated those women so much and when Terry said that, it was just this tremendous release of anger.

Well, that was the day it really happened... I started hearing flashes of a talk we had with a revolutionary male once...he said he knew he should work with men but he just felt like he'd get support and strength from women...I remembered how we told him that that's just what women have been doing all their lives and even if they asked him around, that if he was really going to do something about his sexism that he HAD to do that with men.

I felt myself doing to Black women what men do to women...I was gettin strength from them and I wasn't fighting with white women. I'd stopped even trying to get that strength from white women...a really fatal mistake.

I remembered how early in the semester I'd gotten real pissed at the "teacher" because he was lecturing on all this detailed stuff that none of us understood...literally half the class was asleep and he made it even harder for us to understand the material we had to learn because he was just confusing us by showing off his big ego prick brain. So one day I talked to some white women who were sitting around me...they were women I didn't know and it's not like we were sitting together because we were tight or anything. I said how I thought we should fight him...that together we could force him to stop doin all this crap. Well, I raised my hand (after all the 'radical' women told me not to do it...I'd just antagonize etc.) and within a few seconds there was a minor rebellion in the class. The women directly in front, behind and on all sides of me got real mad at him... every time they said something I'd whisper over to them that they said real good things. Then I realized that all the women who were fighting were sitting right next to me and the women who were opposing us were all sitting farther away.

I remembered all this as I sat next to Terry and began to realize what was happening...that since I started sitting with the Black women that my anger hadn't gone to support and demand support in return from white women...instead I just didn't even interact with the white women...

cause I was gettin comfort and support...I knew I had been fighting less when I was with the Black women...my liberalism would rule and I'd find it hard to fight because I couldn't do it in the strong black way that Terry fought...I fight in a white way...not just a class difference - a cultural one too.

I realized that if I wasn't sitting next to Terry that her anger would have gone to a Black woman - to give her support...to a Black woman who would return that support in a REAL way that I, as a white woman can't.

Sometimes it's real hard to stick to a commitment to struggle with white women...out of 250 women, the only ones who feel the disgust and rage at what's happening is some of the Black women and me. And it's real hard when I feel weak and tired...it's like I just feel like this magnet drawing me to the Black women...to their anger. It's real hard in a room of women who hate you, not to turn to the Black women. BUT I KNOW I DO SHIT WHEN I LOOK TO THEM...TAKE THEIR ENERGY...I'M GONNA FIGHT WITH WHITE WOMEN ABOUT OUR ATTITUDES, THAT'S THE ONLY REAL WAY THAT WE WHITE WOMEN ARE GONNA BEGIN TO STRUGGLE AGAINST OUR RACISM...WITH WHITE WOMEN. WE'VE GOT TO BREAK OUR TRAINING DOWN...AND WE'RE THE ONES WHO KNOW THAT WHITE TRAINING.

Well this makes me real angry. We just got an issue of Battle Acts...the paper of the Women of Youth Against War and Fascism. The whole issue was on revolutionary women of color. At one point they said that any white woman is a racist who says that a "black woman who marries is prostituting herself". Now shit, I got all confused feelin like, yeah, any woman who marries or relates to men in any way is being used...because men only use women. But then things got all confused for me as I tried to fight back...so I turned to Lynn and we started to talk about it. What she helped me realize was that first of all, why were we white women talkin about sexism in terms of women of color...that the issues of racism and sexism were being confused...that the male world women of Battle Acts were throwing down accusations of racism so they didn't have to deal with the sexism in their lives. Then I realized that that's what male-world women do all the time... they deny sexism and to shut you up they call you a racist or any other handy accusation they can find.

Like this one time a woman from Radicalesbians came to "talk to us". I asked her what she wanted to talk about since I knew she was friends with some arch enemies of ours. Well, she really arched her back at that...she started sayin how I wasn't open to her as a person...I just see everyone politically...and I said SHIT! I don't trust people who are friends of my enemies...then she said that that really sounded racist! Goddamit I wanted to slug her. There she was talking in her sophisticated intellectual terms...she started sayin how the things I just said sounded (and I'm quotin cause it was so high falutin) "non-feminist, non-struggle, anti-woman...blah blah blah..." as she stood there in her shawl and spiffy clothes. I felt like askin her what the fuck had she done lately...she said it was racist of me not to trust people who were friends of my enemies...shit that's the limit of her understanding of racism...I'd like to see her on the day of reckoning explaining to the people how they're racists because they're

kickin her ass in "just for bein friends of some racists..." But christ, those women don't even wanna talk about things like that...moreless do something...this is a university town and "you don't want to alienate people...read 'people' for these comfort maniacs as upper and middle class, male world, white people.

Well, we're just gonna stop talkin to male world women...and we're gonna stop talkin on their terms...we're gonna start talkin with separatist women who are in struggle to see things change around this joint...maybe now we'll really be able to get down on some stuff about our privileges and our oppression.

If A store
in your
area
carries
under-
ground
papers-
see if
they'll
carry
SPELTINE
notes
one on
p. 16
Please
help -



Now
that's
what
we call
a well-
prepared
woman!
Do you
think
she's a
girl
scout?

A NOTE TO MY FATHER

For eleven years you taught me to realize that I was a complete human being. I ran, jumped, climbed and dreamed. I was one with nature and one with myself. I laughed, loved, cried--I lived...

You told me to be independent and proud of my autonomy. You told me that no person was better than any other person; that all people were just different, unique human beings. People were sisters and brothers...my sisters and my brothers.

A few people reproached you and complained that you were letting me grow up wild and uncivilized. They called me a tomboy and said that I was arrogant and spoiled. You told them that I was healthy; that I was mentally and physically strong, and what more could a father do for "his" child?

When I was eleven years old I began to menstruate. Those people who had questioned you and condemned me seemed to give out a loud gasp of relief - a gasp that said, "Ah, at last..." Do you remember what you said Father? You came to me, patted my head and said, "YOU'RE A YOUNG LADY NOW!"

I was horrified and dismayed. I wasn't a young lady; I was me, Sandy. Young ladies were those girls at school who played jacks and jump rope

while I liked to play greek dodge and softball. Young ladies sat quietly and attentively still in class while I fidgeted and longed to escape the classroom prison to the freedom of the outdoors. Young ladies talked and dreamed of sewing and cooking--I talked and dreamed of adventure... traveling, building bridges and climbing mountains.

I didn't want to be a young lady, but I rapidly discovered that I had little choice in the matter. Acceptable behavior brought positive reinforcement and reward (LOVE?). Rebellion brought disapproval (REJECTION?) and punishment. And the treadmill of socialization went ever onward and I learned. "Society" said, "Your body is no longer healthy and natural. You are a woman, and therefore, unclean". "Young ladies do not build bridges. Young Ladies must learn to cook and sew and keep house for their future husbands who will build those bridges...and decide what will and will not be built".

(It's very difficult to write this father because I am crying and the words are beginning to blur. I'm crying for myself and all those other "Young Ladies" past, present and future.)

And so it went on and on, an ever widening circle covering every aspect of life. Well father, this "Young Lady" grew and grew until she almost, but not quite, destroyed me and my strength. You and all those other people who are this thing called society lied to me. You lied because you told me that you felt me as a human being. Then you told me that because I was a woman I was somehow less human - less capable. I tried to believe you, I tried to learn to be this CREATURE that you called WOMAN. I tried so hard that I'll probably spend the rest of my life trying to unlearn all the shit that you made me believe was part of the "natural" even "chemical" me... and not, as I now know, a sickness that was hammered into me by you and all our "Very concerned for your future my dear..." neighbors.

Well father, here I am. Eleven years have passed since that fateful day when I started becoming a young lady. You don't want to have anything to do with me and we both know the reason why: I AM A WOMAN AND I AM STRONG. I AM PROUD AND ANGRY. I AM A WOMAN AND I AM A LESBIAN... AND I AM READY TO FIGHT ANYONE OR ANYTHING THAT WON'T ALLOW ME TO LIVE MY OWN LIFE. I AM ME, SANDY, A WOMAN IN STRUGGLE AND I AM READY TO FIGHT AND READY TO DIE FIGHTING IF IT COMES TO THAT...MOVE ON OVER FATHER OR I'LL MOVE ON OVER YOU...

A QUESTION....

THEY SAY THE VAGINA IS A RECEPTACLE FOR SPERM...

HMMM.....
HELL! WHAT A FANCY WAY OF TALKIN...WHY I BET THEY WOULD CALL A SPITTOON A "RECEPTACLE FOR SPIT"... SHIT! TO ME A "RECEPTACLE" IS SOME KIND OF TRASH CAN.

DO YOU THINK MALE-WORLD WOMEN ARE EVER GOIN TO REALIZE THAT THEIR LIVES REVOLVE AROUND BEIN SPERM SPITTOONS???

GOT TO GO....KEEP FIGHTING....

AN EX - TRASH CAN

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FAREWELL - GLF!

We came across the following letter in the Aug-Sept issue of THE LADDER (a lesbian magazine- PO Box 5025 Wash. Station, Reno, Nevada 89503- sample copy \$1.25 ,sub.\$7.50) and it brought out a lot of things we had been feelin and things that we have been hearing about from other women when they wrote to us.

We changed some parts of the letter and didn't include others because there was some bad age chauvanism in it at one point and also we think that it is important to not say things that make it seem as tho it is the "homosexual" character of the men involved that is the basis of what the hell is goin on...for instance the "fetish things" that the writer talks about in gay males, we see in all males. And we see it coming out of the same basic thing...the big male fetish is their penis...they all worship it. Freud or Jean Genet it doesn't make a damn bit of difference. They spend hours - jesus lifetimes talkin about it - creatin theories of human history based on it... they live in mortal terror (to hear them talk, at least) of losing it...they force it into women who don't want it...they are convinced we women live in constant envy of them because we don't have one...and they have pronounced women "unfinished" ..."incomplete" because we have something quite different from a penis...yes ALL MEN - not just straight men a thing about their thing...

What we feel is really important about the letter are the emotions that scream out against the MYTH that GAY men have somehow REALLY come to grips with sexism...or are really in struggle against the whole institution.

We have found a lot of gay men very angry and hurt by the exit of the lesbians...by the growth of separatism - and in fact quite reluctant to "let go" of women. Homosexuals may not want women sexually but an awful lot of them have gotten endless amounts of attention from women and they have loved every moment of it. And now that it has publically been accepted that we all must do something about homosexuality, they are even in greater demand - for male-world women can feel socially aware because they are good friends with homosexuals (homosexual is a male word to us and refers to males...). In fact they love to be with gay men ...and some-day those women will figure out why and what that why (they don't have to worry about being screwed) means in terms of their basic feelings about men and what they do to women...

But it has become clearer and clearer that more and more women all over the kountry are leaving GLF and for very similar reasons... and so we wanted to give support to those women by lettin them know that what they feel is felt by a lot of women....

SO

YET ANOTHER WOMAN LEAVES THE GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT

All right guys, gentlemen,"brothers"...I am leaving at last. I'm n0t going home to my kitchen to sulk. And I'm not going out to misspend what's left of my youth in the bars. (Why should I?

They're male oriented, almost always male-owned too.) I'm just leaving.

Leaving because this organization and this movement offer me nothing. Why should I be interested in homosexual rights - they're based on(male) homosexual problems: entrapment, police harassment, blackmail, tea room little "meetings", venereal diseases. Christ, I can't relate to that kind of shit; it has no meaning whatsoever for me.

I'm leaving because I'm disgusted . I can't relate to people (read that men) who need people (read that fetish objects). Snow queens, dinge queens, chicken queens, muscle queens, queen queens...the list goes on and on. Pick your favorite, or add your own to the list. I see this fetish thing in every male homosexual I know. I don't see it in women. Thank god WE see people as people , not as objects.

I'm leaving because I'm tired of coping with massive male egos, egos which cannot comprehend how anyone could want to have nothing to do with a male-dominated movement. If you cannot understand why I wish to withdraw, then my "liberated" brother , you are part of the problem.

Everywhere I turn, my senses are bombarded with the most appalling of crudenesses. I'm sick of watching skag drags parading up and down, prancing and dancing in their "finery" and mocking me and my sex in every step. I'm tired of hearing somebody referred to as a "Miss" when he's done a no-no: "Miss Terry, well she's always late." " Miss Chuck, well she can't seem to get herself together." "Hush your mouth, Miss Cade."

Crap! The incredibly blatant sexism of the GLF could be told in many volumes.

I'm tired of being called "girl".

I can't even withdraw into homophile literature without being offended. Naked "studs" on every page. And those ads! "Wanted - triple amputee for photo exchange." "Want cauc. male, over 8 inches, for Greek pleasures." "Black stud needed as master for willing white slave." And on and on. The ads droen in fetishism. Whatever happened to people, huh?

IS IT ANY WONDER WHY THERE HAVE BEEN SO FEW WOMEN IN THE MOVEMENT? AND WHY THE NUMBERS OF WOMEN ARE PLUMMETING?

Oh, but in our Wash. D.C. GLF there have been women. Yes, there have been and they've gone, too. How many can you count who have attended more than two or three meetings? (Not that I really expect you to be able to do it...Why should you be expected to remember mere women? After all, if you can't go to bed with them, they're of no use whatsoever.)

You PRICKS!, and I use that word with every ounce of malice I possess, could care less about women.

Liberation? Gay Liberation? Liberate yourselves. For myself, I don't need you.



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Battle Fatigue ...

I just feel all blocked up...and I don't see how we'll ever get the paper written and put together or that it will be any good at all. I am just feeling so tired and low...and then raging fury explodes inside my head for a moment and I tighten my whole body. It feels like what battle fatigue should feel like...that's what it must be...struggle fatigue.

Before - whenever we sat down to do the paper (even last time when we were hard pressed) I felt full of energy. Now I just feel sort of constipated...with depression, frustration, anger - anger hell!...raging fury. It has been a hard year in general - but now things are beginning to get through to me and the strong pressures of the past few months have taken their toll.

First it was Elinor getting into nursing school and us having this discussion about whether we should come out at nursing school and fight the shit that we knew would be coming down...liberal friends warned us about stepping out of line - and how if she made the slightest peep, she would be kicked right out. But then we figured - shit! - we can't hide and not fight...we can't ask others to put themselves out on the line if for great reasons that we can make up about surviving and all that - we don't do it. So she stood up and started fighting. I went the

day she started. Jesus, was I proud. Elinor has guts...next to her I am a first class chicken-shit. Oh I talk better than she does...say things more "coherently" and stuff - but she has the real guts in the collective...if she can't always say it - she can do a hell of a lot. And there she was in a roomful of 250 nursing students with a hysterical giggling academic nurse as an instructor in a "human" (read: white, male, middle-upper class, heterosexual) development class. The tension in the class was awful. Our pulses broke 100 and mine made it to 120 (told you I was the chickenshit). But she started asking questions about the material, challenging the way the class was structured - the values that were being handed down as tho they were scientific facts (all dutiful copied down by the class, of course)...she was fantastic. But you know what she got for it...? The hatred (through gritted teeth with sometimes smiling faces...lock-jaw smile hatred) of 250 "coeds" (and believe me I use that word with all the contempt that it carries...women who say in a voice full of sighs..."I'm not oppressed... I am liberated...oh...and don't they look so nice in their white doctors jackets...")

Those 250 women (let me be more specific...) those 250 white women think she is a "queer" and run out of the bathroom when she walks in and they ignore her when she asks them questions when she is studying for those horrible anatomy exams. Now and then one of them will be nice and talk to her...which means a fight because she is "so mean to those nice doctors". That's how it went for 2 months of her trying to do things - getting no support from any of the white women there - coming home frustrated and angry - on the brink of tears or already crying because of all the shit. And it would happen day after

day and it drained me until I was afraid that I wouldn't have the energy to comfort her on a really bad day. Then we faced things and knew we couldn't fight like that everyday... not because we wanted to protect a cushy job... but because it was really wearin us down.

Something is happening to me right now... I got started talkin about what had happened to Elinor and I really got into it - but as soon as I tried to get down to how I feel... try to get in touch with what is happening to me - well then I freeze. I cross out stupid abstract paragraphs...I stop and stare at the paper for minutes on end...I guess I know why. I am scared to death. Anger has always meant helplessness to me...gettin angry in a situation always meant blowin it...and I am so full of anger right now at so many things...I would rather punish myself with a depression and take it out on Elinor by being a cranky than face what is beginning to bubble up inside of me. Oh I wrote about rage in the last issue - but that weren't nothin to what is goin on inside of me...because of what a strain it has been lately...because of what is happening to us separatist women all over the country.(see there I go off again... away...I am scared to death to get down to talking about what the hell has been happening... and that's because I am still shuffling to the goddamn people who are ripping all of us off... to the people who TAKE TAKE TAKE and never give a goddamn thing...I am scared because a lot of those people probably read this paper and I still tense up or flinch whenever something is said my me or Elinor to make them uptight.

It happened again...I began to zoom in on those feelings and whams...gibberish...

But I know something important is happenin... because as I read this over to Elinor right now I started to cry when I got to the part about me.

I have had it. I am sick and tired of listening to women who spend most of the conversation defending MEN...talking about MEN...worrying about what happens to MEN...why it happens to MEN and how it happens to MEN. I am sick and tired of listening to tales of happy marriages or about the exceptional men (and of hearing myself say - well then they should be working with other men to change themselves). I am tired of listening to how we separatists with our anger at male-created and male-defined power "objectify and don't treat half the population as human being..." - of being told that by our making everythin into sexual POLITICS we make sex so aggressive...that we deny humanity...etc. Why the hell aren't they mad at men for objectifying women into property, meat, pussy - why aren't they mad at men for all the rapes - for roughness - for not caring if they have much real satisfaction in their lives...why don't they notice that on every movie page of every paper there are ads talking about "VIOLENCE! TERROR! SEX! Women didn't make those movies..."

Right about now someone will usually say "well change is hard and you have to make it as easy for someone as possible and it really is hard for women to admit things about men because of their investments..." BULLSHIT! Change is hard...it shouldn't be made impossible but I also just don't understand why all the caring about the hardness of change goes into women who have a lot of male, class, and racial privilege...why does so little of it go towards

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the women that have to make changes without any or very few privileges to make it easy? Why do we care so little for the really ripped-off in this place?

I don't know what kinds of decisions and changes you people think we have made - but you seem to think that the changes we ask of women tied to the male-world are too great. Listen! revolutionary separatist women have made some very painful changes without much support. Some have among other things faced the reality of marriages and gotten divorces... some have separated from their male-children (I can hear the intake of breath and see the appalled faces)...some have lost their economic security by no longer holding onto their careers that they worked for all their lives...others have told their parents about their lives and had to face the consequences of that action. A lot of women have stopped taking all the shit with a smile and started to fight back - and they catch more shit - but somehow it seems better not to go happily along in the kinds of things that happen in this place. And those are only a few of the changes that revolutionary separatist women have gone through...and believe me...believe us - none of those decisions were easy. Nobody is asking you to do something that hasn't been done before...hasn't been faced before - and by one of us.

There is a big difference between discomfort and oppression. All too many women in this society have known that for their whole lives. But to a lot of women who are into "women's lib" this will have to be learned through changin' - changin investments and privileged positions.

My anger isn't just because we get "bugged" a lot - not just because women who have no desire to change themselves, their positions, and this society want to come and have a few hours "chat" about our rather strong positions - and therefore waste our time and energy. My anger is because it becomes only another "interesting" (if rather tense) discussion and they never do a damn thing. And it is a pain in the ass to always be stuck with the responsibility of making the conversation honest - by not just nodding and keeping things comfortable for everyone. It isn't just a pain - it is a fantastic drain on energy - and I resent putting that energy into merely "interesting" discussions.

My anger - my resentment - my feelings that I am the wrong one because I allow myself to get caught in those asine discussions comes from the gut experience and knowledge that as long as women direct their energies toward men - towards male goals and values - nothin will change. And each day that things don't change - more women die - more women are raped - more women have their whole lives and sense of dignity stripped from them...more young people are murdered and beaten by their parents - more black women face their double oppression... but then I forgot...WE are the ones who are accused of bein "insensitive" to the dignity of human beings."

Tell me - why is it so much more humane to be "sensitive" to what makes someone "uncomfortable" than it is to be angry and resentful at what happens in this society because of that comfort? WHY? And why is there such a fantastic value placed on "talking"? I have a feeling it is because then it won't dawn on anyone to ask "what have you done lately?"

All this stuff has become more and more important because we are not the only women in the country who get into these conversations with male-world women and gay men and.... And because we have had to give our attention - it is demanded after all - for they only want to spend an hour or so talking about these issues with us (but then there are so many of them and so few of us - so an hour for them is an hour for them - for us it is one more hour spent talking to one more woman who hasn't got the slightest intention of doin a goddamn thing - why does it never occur to them to sit down and talk to each other?). We have spent more time with other separatist women and when we start talking about what has been happening in our lives we start talkin about our feelings of frustration with our conversations with male-world women - and we nod as someone else starts talkin about how pissed she is at the gay men for asking for so much time and energy - or someone else tells of a meeting with women's liberation and GLF and how the male-world women came and fawned all over the gay males - but avoided the lesbians as tho they were lepers...we find out that we have all been interrogated about "monogamy" - when male-world women don't even have the slightest idea about what the hell kinds of relationships we have in the first place...and they sure are right there to talk about awful "butch/femme role-playing" when it never occurs to them to ask themselves about their own role-playing - it never seems to dawn on them that before there was any open support for women lovin women - there was only one model for loving women...and that was men lovin women. One of the effects of all of this is that we seldom have time to get down to talking about the things that really matter to us...how we feel about each other...

what anxieties we have about being with each other...what we have been working thru... what we want to strive for now...

But we are learning - learning what gives us strength and energy and what drains it. Separatism first meant makin the splits from males - the n splittin from the male-world of values, attitudes, etc. and it means a lot about building the world with women. But we don't have infinite energy and an infinite amount of time.

I think male-world women should just go and aks their males for comfort, support, understanding, etc... they should ask for strength from males and not from women (of course they might just have to face some very nasty truths if they did that - and the women's movement guarantees that that won't happen at this point) because when they get support, comfort and strength from women all that seems to happen is that it makes them stronger for their men...it means that they have more understanding and energy to give to men - and by giving it to men they not only do not give it to other women - they get it from women and give it to men. Well - they'll just have to get along without our energy in that little exchange.

As revolutionary separatist white women we give our time and energy to women in struggle - to women who are not passin that energy onto men - to women who are facing what their positions of race and class privilege do to other women and are committed to changin those positions.

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Notes on Age...

I think that's bullshit because when this. There's no end to that sentence. I never finished. Nobody was listening. And nobody even noticed that I didn't finish the sentence. Goddamit... I said something...would somebody listen to me!

I've been listening to total crap for the last hour and everybody seems very interested in that stuff but when I say something (and alot more than the shit that's goin on in this room - because I'm talkin from my gut and not from some shit I learned in books) nobody listens. I think I'll just keep talkin to myself. But I already know how I feel. Maybe they're talkin about something that really is meaningful...

But every time I translate those big abstract words down, they're just sayin garbage.

....no, I musn't understand what they're sayin. ...that's it! I don't understand//that's why I can't appreciate what they're talkin about.... oh hooray! oh good good good.

No good. So what if they're really not talking about garbage...if I can't understand what they're sayin then what good is it?

Maybe they're not listening to me because I'm a woman. No, everyone in this room is a woman, we've all had about the same class privileges.

Would somebody listen to me!

Oh wait...

I shouldn't have been so mean...she's taking notice of me. Did you hear what she said?

...if Marlene and I broke up she wouldn't know *which one of us to go 'after'.* "oh, I know you didn't mean that in a bad way Myrthel...oh no, I know you don't want Marlene and me to break up. Oh yes...I take that as a compliment...you were just showing how good you feel about both of us..."

Oh wonderful...did you hear that? She must really like me to have said that...I thought she only liked Marlene...she only talks to Marlene. Why does she talk only to Marlene...

"myrthel, I know I have a hard time expressing myself, but why do you only talk to Marlene?"

"Well, you always look at the floor when you talk and you don't explain what you're saying".

Oh shit. I knew it was my fault. I should never have been so suspicious. That's true I do look at the floor alot. OH why why WHY do I deep looking at the floor. If only I wouldn't look at the floor when I talk then people would listen to me.

But I don't look at the floor when I talk to Marlene...or when I talk to ... I feel like I look at the floor because I sense her not listening to me...the way she sort of gets impatient when I say something...even when I'm sayin the exact same thing Marlene would say.

Oh no. It really is because of ME. But. Oh I don't know... But shit, Marlene doesn't always explain what she's sayin...so I just ask her. Why doesn't Myrthel ask me to explain what I'm sayin if I'm not clear...

maybe because she really isn't interested anyway.

"Myrthel, I feel like when I say things that you're not interested because I'm ten years younger than you...and even when I say the same things as Marlene that you listen to her because she's 31 and has all these academic credentials..."

"Well, of course...after all Marlene has had

lots of experiences that you haven't had and you're still pretty impressionable...When I was 19, I was pretty..."

"But the way I see things has nothing to do with my age. Sure there are things that people do to us because of our age...we can make certain generalizations about that...but how I feel and the things I think are real...it's not the number of experiences I collect that makes me understand things...it's how I relate to those experiences... how I interpret them, how I feel about them.

I think...

I think the things you've been sayin are very age chauvinist".

"Alright, ALRIGHT! YES! I'm an age chauvinist... SO WHAT? I think it's right..."

Gawd. It's like being a woman to a man. She's made comments about how she'd be 'interested' in me...but she doesn't even listen to me... she's not interested in my feelings - only in scientific evidence (presentable only with the appropriate credentials). What contempt she must have for me, to do that to me...like the contempt men have for the women they marry. Young people and women...neither are taken seriously. But both are good to fuck. No wonder that's the only way she ever showed any interest in me...

SO WHAT?

So what about age chauvinism. So what does it do? So what if you're an age chauvinist.

So it does alot of things and there are alot of reasons why it's kept goin around this joint. Keeps people in their places...trains people how to be obedient to the man.

When I complained to Marlene that she didn't help me very much when I started talkin about age chauvinism to Myrthel...she said, for her to fight for me would have just reinforced the same whole thing. She didn't understand. Marlene didn't have to fight for me...she has to fight against the kinds of attitudes that go into

being an age chauvinist. Like men...they can't fight for women's liberation...what they can do is fight against their own sexism.

And when we get down to talkin about age chauvinism, we've got to stop talkin about how 'capable and fine' young people are...and start talkin about the things we've said and done that reinforce age chauvinism...in all directions.

MURDER

THE LEADING CAUSE OF CHILD DEATHS FROM BIRTH TO PUBERTY IS "ACCIDENTS". SHIT, THEY AREN'T "ACCIDENTS"...THEY'RE MURDERS. IN NURSING SCHOOL WE WERE TOLD THAT AROUND 50% OF THESE "ACCIDENTAL" DEATHS ARE BATTERED CHILDREN...THE POLITE WAY OF SAYING THAT THE LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN YOUNG PEOPLE IS MURDER BY THEIR PARENTS.

"ACCIDENTS?" GODDAMMIT, YOUNG PEOPLE'S BONES ARE FLEXIBLE...THEY DON'T BREAK EASILY- THEY'RE ALMOST LIKE A WAD OF CUSHION...

THE FAMILY - FORCED INDOCTRINATION BY THE STATE

Living in a family as a young person (private property of Mommy and Daddy's whims, demands and unfulfilled needs) is pretty regularly a matter of physical life and death...and always an emotional slavery that keeps this whole joint run-

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ning. Right now I'm think of three kinds of things that happen to young people in the family... and they're all rigourous preparations for our lives as obedient Amerikan citizens.

The first one is direct age chauvinism. Ever since I can remember, anything I've said is taken like a joke...one because I'm a woman and two because so far in my life I've been relatively young - I'm 20. It's like young people can't have any real ideas or commitments...anyway since I'm young and therefore have "muddled thinking" (a necessary concept because young people, being closer to their feelings - called emotional or idealistic - and not having 'made it' yet in society, tend not to have quite as many investments in the old order and so...are prone to rebel). So how many of us have been told by our parents, I fought when I was young, too- I used to have such aspirations..." and then the inevitable age chauvinist ending..." but now that I'm older, I understand the world better...you come back in ten years and we'll see how you think then".

BULLSHIT! What they're sayin is, "you'll sell out too...you'll learn that the powers will knock you down if you try to fight". Sure after struggling for years to eat, after years of trouble and then finally making it in this jungle...sure alot of people sell out.

Well, this training...that you submerge your reactions to put your parents' ideas in their place, gets us ready to "respect the authorities of the state". This phoney 'respect' is based on phoney ideas about 'intellectual knowledge' ...parents, and presidential advisors on economics know more (meaning they've read alot of books with big abstract words in them) "and so I'll just have to believe them". Even though everything we see and feel in our guts tells us that something stinks. I remember ever since I was about 10 that I've been asking why this government has to plow under fields of food when so many people are hungry. I've been asking that for years...and I've got some pretty detailed and very complex answers... and all in the tone of, "But you HAVE to - otherwise it wuld just ruin the whole economy and since you're not an economist...well, you don't understand so you'll just have to take my word for it". Well, after 10 years of tryin to find an answer to this I started to read some Marx and stuff on imperialism...(I found that stuff amost impossible to read...all males...including male radicals...cling to the idea that there's something mystical to understanding economics...and everything else that they make money off). Anyway I began to realize that there was a very simple reason why we plow that food under...because rich people stay rich that way...and that 'way' is capitalism...and the only way capitalism survives is on competition (or monopoly)...and the only way that competition can exist is if some people go hungry and slave and sweat for other people... that makes for a 'market'. So when I asked why we had to plow that food under...nobody even questioned the whole set-up in the first place... the only question was - how to keep that set up goin..Shit, when I was ten years old, after I heard all those awful answers...I just kept askin, "well, why can't we just SHARE it?"

And my guts told me right...I'm relyin on them alot more these days. What parents, men and the government do is to keep us from usin our feelins, from being in touch with what our guts tell us...

they say, "You don't understand nothin unless you've spent 40,000 smackers goin to school". Of course if you got the bread to do that...you know where that person's comin from, and once you get out of school, well hell, those people get paid a whole lot...so those people aren't gonna complain.

Well, the second thing I was thinkin about that happens to young people in the family is that you don't go out, you don't even eat alot of times unless you 'cooperate'. All my life I can remember sayin things like, "that's really awful...think I'll go with my friends and complain". And my parents sayin, "oh no you're not." You're not allowed out tonight".

Shit they didn't even argue the issues...they didn't have to - they had the power and if they didn't like something...they could punish me or prevent me from doin what I wanted by withdrawing 'their' money. Course if they did things I didn't like, I wasn't even allowed to QUESTION them, about what they were doing...or why it was 'their' money. (They don't think they should pay for someone who doesn't appreciate all they'd done for us) So they decide what we will and will not do.

The parallel I see to this in terms of the larger State...is the government dictating who gets the money and when. Like their agents, employers...one of them at their own whim, can fire a dozen people...but not even a thousand of us can fire the most unjust and cruel employer.

The third thing I'm thinkin about is just the sheer physical power of parents over young people. No matter how much you don't want to do what the 'adults' want you to...say you wanna play with your friends instead of sitting uncomfortably thru your 'parents' party where they want to show you off (anyway spending too much time with other young people isn't permitted overly... what parent wants 'their' newborn to live in a collective with lots of other young people... because young people don't socialize each other into being capitalists or sexists or racists... we have to be taught that) so 'education' is a very important part of the "Amerikan culture.

Anyway, say you wanna play with your friends but your 'parents' decide that you have to go to bed...well, baby, no choice, they just pick you up...no arguments, no discussion...you just go, and you're powerless. But the real horrible thing is that this shit happens about everything everyday to young people...and if you're uppity, they can always beat the shit out of you.

Course you never slug them back or you're considered a 'violent' kid".

So if direct age chauvinism and money manipulation don't convince you that you gotta do what THEY TELL YOU TO...parents can always back it up with a good beating...and if you're under 13, you're lucky if you live thru it.

The thing is that money manipulation serves the exact same purpose as direct force...like locking your bedroom door from the outside or not giving you the keys to the car because you want to go to a woman's meeting...they get exactly what they want and you have no choice in it. But they don't have to rely on force because they can just take away the money to support you... and there's always the threat that anytime you'd just rather leave...that you'd never survive without 'their' money.

And that's the same way with this government...it keeps people obedient by threats of loss of job, welfare or security...and if we still rebel...they use the same power Mommy

Just goes to show what they think sharing and collectivity mean. But it was so clear, all

people of different ages.

than anything else.

than anything else.

ability to manage ...servants.

to take care of yourself...

ones...how do you do it?

of clasp - or at least it looked that way. Anyway there was a real contrast between us with our cropped hair. Mary really makes a connection

gain all sorts of rewards and privileges.

in all sorts of rewards and privile

pushed onto women in any society

page 12 try to find a store
to carry SPECTRE!

MOTHER will do incredibly amounts of without requiring the whole family (especially the children) to pitch in and help...because the more money you have ...the less "necessity" there is for the young people to do work... and everyone knows that. I mean if you have to help around the house - if you HAVE to...if it isn't just nice if you do...if you HAVE to ,well you must be under some strain...so if families want to convince their neighbors that they really are "comfortable" and on the rise...well the children must be out playing all the time... taking trips and doing something - but not helping out. After all - what's a mother for?

- we have a feelin that by followin thru all this stuff about helplessness and femininity and class that we may be able to get to some thin - some connection to lesbians or now as we would rather put it - to separatist women.... and here we have some ideas that we'll just put down for all of us to think about and check out...

- a clearly identifiable lesbian or separatist woman should lose a lot of privilege and security ...she should move down in class (of course there will always be a Gertrude Stein - the ruling class loves to have interesting salons to visit to dampen its boredom..)

- we would think that a really femme lesbian would not necessarily lose a lot for even if she cannot emotionally move back and forth...her classic characteristics still please men enormously....

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- we've noticed that we have been able to get a lot closer to our "class" attitudes and training by just noticin our reactions to all sorts of things....by asking ourselves really simple questions...

- what sort of women catch our attention?

- do we notice if a person makes a "mistake" in grammar

- what do we like to see women do...what kinds of things do we admire in women?

- what makes us really angry...what kinds of things do we make fun of?

-how easy is it to relate to "professional" women?

- how comfortable do we feel in a roomful of university women?

- when we talk about women and fight for them what kind of woman do we have in mind...

- do we treat women in a "male" way?...do you relate to secretaries and clerical workers the way men do , if you have a different sort of position...?

- last issue - on the last page - we wrote:

" 57 (out of 400) WACS were kicked out of the Army because they were lesbians...given our views of the military - we're glad they're out"

- our first response was really awful - sort of - why would anyone go into the military?... what kind of people would want to be in the service?...and we didn't think too much more about it until we got a packet of things from WHACK in Anniston, Alabama (Box 1595, zip 36201) with some things about women in the service...

" when we joined the Army most of us were looking for something better than what we had, which in some cases was pretty bad. All we

got was a bag of lies and worse." (from UNCLE SAM WANTS YOU BABY)

" My recruiter told me of all the wonderful programs available, and the extensive high quality training the AF provides. Of course he didn't tell me I would be working shift-work and be unable to enroll in any on-campus courses(my main interest). As far as the wonderful job training...I attended a 14 week tech. school, the first week being KP. The rest was a "concentrated Mickey Mouse" course.

"Before I joined the Air Force I was interested in nursing, and was debating on going to school to become a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). My recruiter informed me that I would be an LPN when I came out of the service. To me this sounded rather like a nice deal since I didn't have the money to go to school without getting a loan. Of course he really meant I would have the same training as an LPN, but I would have to go to school when I got out if I wanted a license."

(from WAF GUY HO) ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓  
-when we read the leaflets and started to talk about them, well we both had to face our first reactions...and we choked on how typically middle-class university privileged they were... neither of us had ever been in a position to see enlistment as the only way - or the best way out of old lives...we had had zero understanding of that when we had been told that the 57 WACS had been kicked out...

-and from this we have learned to start asking ourselves about what we did see or were able to see as possibilities for ourselves as we grew up as a way of figuring out exactly what all those privileges are that we have had ...

- we feel that we owe the women at Anniston and Ft. Bragg a real apology...and we will try to show thru the paper that we are trying to change and struggle through our ignorance and our lack of understanding...

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- another thing that helped us understand the different values and attitudes that go into different class backgrounds was a great conversation with the Easter Day Press women. We were talking about anger... and at first we talked about it in terms of males and females... that anger is not an emotion that women are allowed to express...and then we talked a long time about how hard it was to get anger out and how other women has a hard time relating to anger. And of course, this got us talking about our homelives...which brought out a really important thing...the more "lower" or "working" class the background the more open things were...the angrier ...the more explosive the family fights had been. The more middle or upper class the home, the tighter the teeth had been clenched as things had been "TALKED" about or ,wait a minute... I think it is called a DISCUSSION.

-and it isn't just anger... we have begun to get the feelin that as you go "up" in class you also get further and further away from all your feelings - or at least most of them... -maybe this connects to something else... I get really super uptight about making scenes in front of people...

- also - altho sometimes it is ok - most of the time I start to sweat when the people I am with are really loud and noisey - say at a resturant...and loud and noisey isn't so bad if they aren't making comments about all

13.



the values that the other people in the place obviously accept... it's that nice middle-class training about making good impressions ( because you never know who or what you might need as you start climbing and heaven forbid you should have a bad mark in your file somewhere).

- it's also a lot of middle class stuff about everyone being "comfortable" and friendly...

- "friendly" - well that's a whole other thing - in the middle and upper class people who hate each other enough to want to kill each other smile and hug each other ( but always the clenched teeth...) the middle class can't stand hostility or tension... so they smile a lot at each other...

- OK ...now it is time for the hard one...a little SELF-CRITICISM has to be done...in the last issue I wrote a thing about being in a fairly rich college on scholarship and I said " I soon learned that even tho I was 'poor' and they were 'rich'... I could float in and out of that world just because I was 'bright and interesting' " Well that whole thing in itself was just the statement of a whole set of class values... Dorothy and I fought about it...and I said that my only way out of what I came from was to be bright...now did she get pissed then... (I am very slow to figure things out sometimes....) firstly- that it was even seen as a way out for me - that showed that I already had a lot of privilege... why didn't enlistment in the service seem a way out? or getting some very practical skill? We may have been uncomfortable financially... but I sure got a big dose of "making-it" values shoved onto me....

-the other thing ...and we will have to write about it in greater length later... is the whole bunch of stuff that gets put into "bright and interesting"... "bright and interesting" to certain people...and in certain ways... why is a person who can read lots of books and not be able to do a goddamn thing in the world called "bright and interesting"? But a person who hasn't read "great books" but has figured out how to survive...or how to make a decent living place out of a horror - or knows how to fix cars ,etc...why are they never seen as 'bright and interesting'....?

- another thing that we all might think about more is just how we are made to feel about different kinds of work...Ain't I A Woman was trying to get at this in the last issue we saw...

- we all use the phrase "shit work" to describe boring, repetitive work...and this always seems to mean things like housework, clerical work, factory work, etc.... it is usually used to describe the work done by most women and that done by the "lower" class...it is administrative, executive or professional jobs that are considered valuable and exciting...

- what makes a lot of jobs shitty is that they are repetitive...that you never get to do anything else...

- what makes some jobs shit jobs is that you are watched all the time...accountable for every moment...what makes some others more pleasant is that you can do it more or less when you want... secretaries in the university where I work have to be in at 8...and they have to do certain things...and if they don't -well there is hell to pay...but faculty - well they

can ( a lot of the time) choose when they want to teach... and if they miss their office hours for a while or don't do something else...who yells at them? A male privilege....since most of the secretaries are women ( if not all) and most of the faculty are men.

- we think that you can't change things by just reversing things and saying that the lower class jobs and the jobs done completely by women are not shit jobs... but we think we may be beginning to understand that jobs should be looked at in terms of what is socially necessary labour...

- next time we want to talk more about this and about how labor is divided ...and how women ...how working women get ripped off.... and how they are even placed in a position of helping the people who really rip them off...how they are used to take the anger and shit that the system creates...etc.



Mary - I just can't stand it - every time we walk down the street - there are all these heterosexuals -

## They TRIED TO MAKE IT 'PERSONAL'

A little while ago, my best friend and I became aware of a problem. For a while she had been real uptight about being touched and she stopped responding in her usual easy and self-assured way that she used to when I would stroke or caress her body. So we asked ourselves questions...what did my giving attention to her body mean? How had she been with other people, How had other people been with her in the past?

We began to see some stuff. For a long time she had always been very 'smooth' about reacting sexually. She'd given a lot to the two people who she'd lived with during the 10 years before we did...one man, and one woman. Both of them had taken a lot...and Sandy gave a lot in terms of making them feel at ease...comforting them. And that's what she did with her body too...she tried to make them feel at ease and relaxed with her. She told me how the woman she'd lived with would go into fits of depression and self-hate whenever Sandy would tell her that Betty had hurt her...which meant that Sandy had to comfort Betty, when Betty had hurt her...and Sandy's needs had to be shoved aside.

We recognized how much this was true of all women...that we're constantly comforting, putting aside our own feelings. How we sense, that as women...we're not valued by men...or by other women, so we make ourselves necessary by giving so much that the other person will be 'grateful'...

And then we tried to get at what it meant for Sandy to be loved for the first time, for me to respond to her openly and out of respect that's built on a lot of struggle. We asked what it meant for her to admit our love for each other by responding.

This time it became clear how hard it was for



either of us to let the real depth of our love for each other in...because in a society that rips everything away that we value...where we're betrayed over and over again when we have opened ourselves up to people and where we have been treated as a piece of meat by men...and by male-world women...it's real hard to admit to ourselves the love we felt for each other in fear that it would somehow be taken away. We felt ourselves constantly bracing our bodies for the possibility of one of us leaving the other...just so we could sort of shrug it off like it didn't mean that much to us anyway...

And to let that love really sink in meant that we would really let ourselves in for FEELING what happened to us...and if we did bad things to each other it would HURT. We realized how had both been testin things out ...sort of feelin around...then numbing ourselves a little -just in case...

But this time we both began to WANT to let all those feelins in. It was real clear that we really cared for each other and that we trusted each other...Sandy's body was just testin things out a little more...she was making a decision by lettin her body get cranky. Before it had been easy for her just to climb into bed, into an argument, into a 'relationship' and to "comfort" the other person. She had trained her body to respond acceptably on cue. If she didn't respond right - well then all sorts of thing might happen to her. She might have to face the fact that the other person didn't even care enough to notice that something was wrong...or she would be noticed and the other person would flee in the face of having to help her - so in order for Sandy to avoid all those terrifying possibilities ( and they did terrify her for good reasons) she just got her body to "behave". She now talks about it as tho it had been a plane and inside the pilot who would take a nap and just put the controls on "automatic pilot".

I got really excited that her body was bein cranky and told her so. She just couldn't believe my reaction - she thought that I was puttin her on and she began to cry ...just from relief. I told her that sure it upset me a little... I wasn't used to her saying things like -"stop-that tickles" or "no - that doesn't feel nice", but I was just really happy that she was lettin her body say things to me because I knew what a big thing that was. IT meant that she was beginning to let me know her needs...her feelins - and she wasn't satisfied to just react to my needs. Our love helped us to love ourselves enough to begin to express our own needs and to ask the other person to take notice. That is real hard for women to do...cause that is something we never get to do...we are trained from the beginning to be an endless source of compassion and strength for everyone else.

A mother can't give into her cold...what the hell would happen to everyone? Look at all the women in "service " positions... GIVE GIVE GIVE...Men use women for this all the time... - even if a woman gets raped - she ends up consoling her boyfriend or husband - she reassures him and then hopes he won't hate her because she got raped... Women comfort men - they protect them from the world...from other men...to make it easier for the men. In the business world , the same thing happens... you put rows of women between the customer and the executive - if something goes wrong and

the customer is furious - who do they yell at - who are they rude to...and that happens even when the customer knows what is going on because the people really responsible for things hide... I know women who have been told in their secretary courses that their major purpose is to keep their bosses happy and to keep unwanted people away...they have been told that they are office "wives".

Everyday Sandy and I go thru this same process ...asking ourselves what we are feelin - what memories we are having...what we think might have made us react the way we did...what our parents said about that...and we start asking things like who benefits from the way we were trained to act...what purpose does such training have , in the end?...how does this old value connect up to other things and how does all of this keep things running smoothly? And these questions, and many more are asked about the feelins we are havin or the experiences we are rememberin and tryin to work thru. We don't have our feelins and then at some later date examine them with a fine tooth comb.

What we know is that everythigg that goes on has a social reason...somebody is benefiting from all this shit coming down...and if you started talking about your most secret experiences or fantasies - you would soon find out that you ain't the only one...so a distinction has been drawn- and values placed on different parts... what men say or have been saying for ever is that what happens to you in your gut...what you experience and others experience every day of their lives ...your whole life... well that is called "personal" and that don't mean shit...because see that just happens to you and what are feelins anyway? Now "political" well that's somethin else - according to them... why that's real important...and takes a lot of brain to follow...and has to do with things like votin ...or if you are beyond reform politics... well then it has to do with very HEAVY things... like Dialectical Materialism and Economics and statistics...

BULLSHIT! There ain't no distinction between personal and political...that distinction only exists for people who have a mighty big gap between what they say they think and what they do every day of their lives...

Yes, they tried to pull it off - they tried to define politics as something abstract and away from you and from your lives. They can't afford for politics to be brought home... to have us know that things that happen just aren't some sort of personal little events... for if we begin to start makin connections - if we begin to understand what gets done in the family, in schools, at work, and if the rage that that knowin would release ever got started - why things would really start changin...there's a lot of really angry women walking around... and we aren't gonna believe those men ( nor their male-world women agents) any longer...we know that strong women, who are close to their feelins, and who don't have any particular investments in the way things are run , and who have real investments ( like their lives) in things changin- who are filled with rage at what has been done and won't accept any excuses...we know that women like that can tear this disgusting beast to pieces...and well - that's what I call real political.

15.



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