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Women & Electoral Politics

voice of the
**women's
liberation
movement**

► **Towards the
Next Step**

by Evelyn Goldfield

(We publish this article in the hopes that it will stimulate debate on the subject of strategy for the women's liberation movement, so if you have some reactions to this article, please send them to VOICE. - Ed.)

This article is a collection of notes and reflections on the direction of the women's movement, not a well-worked out program or strategy. These thoughts grow out of my participation in the radical women's movement in Chicago, out of discussions with comrades and from trying to confront some of the problems facing the radical movement in general. It is meant to be suggestive.

I have three general beliefs about the radical women's movement:

1. That we have reached a point at which we must begin a new phase in our struggle. We have been very successful in our initial work, but, unless we begin to define ourselves more carefully, much of the force and vitality of our movement will be lost.

2. That discussion is not enough either to change women's role in society nor to bring about substantive personal liberation. We must begin to act collectively, both to broaden our movement and to begin to effect change.

3.

(cont. on p.3)

by Molly Malcolm

(CIPA - Citizens for Independent Political Action - is a radical community organization in a middle class neighborhood on the north side of Chicago. It is conducting an electoral campaign this fall as a vehicle for discussing politics in the community. The CIPA women's group has been in existence since last fall and has resulted in a striking change in the relationship of women to CIPA - from shit workers to leaders and active participants. - Ed.)

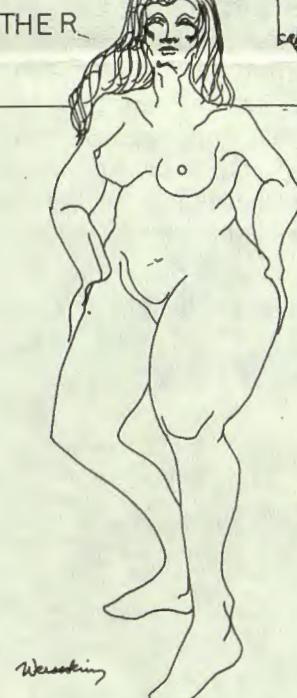
Research on the city of Chicago has been the major summer activity of the CIPA radical women.

As in any radical research project, our main thrust is critical and issue-oriented. We hope to gather the makings for a substantive and provocative campaign for one of our members, Betsy Vazquez, who is currently a CIPA candidate for the state legislature. The other two CIPA candidates are men, and we are concerned that Betsy's campaign, along with theirs, have an educational impact on the community. In Betsy's case, it is particularly important that part of this impact relate to people's attitudes toward women politicians. In a previous CIPA campaign, candidate Kathy Kearney felt that the old "apple pie and motherhood" at-

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Ladies and gentlemen: you are not just electing me, you are electing MOTHERHOOD; you are not just electing motherhood, you are electing MYSTERY, you are not just electing mystery, you are electing OVARY; you are not just electing ovary but orgasm and contentment and goodness and givingness and softness and dopeyness and doe-eyedness and childlikeness and we will all go to bed together and then I will beget a lamb.

women of vietnam

by Sue Munaker

(The following is an excerpt from a tape made by Sue Munaker with Mrs. Than Van Pham at a conference between representatives of the American anti-war movement, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front, held in Stockholm, Sweden, April, 1968. Mrs. Pham is a member of the executive committee of the South Vietnamese Women's Union for Liberation and a member of the American/Vietnamese Solidarity Committee. Sue's questions were raised by a New York radical women's group before the meeting.)

QUES: What do you think about family structure as it exists in the west and in many eastern countries where the husband owns his wife and the wife owns the children? We are asking the question in the US as to how we build a cooperative society. People in the US now see each other as private property. We are trying to understand how we change that concept.

ANSWER: We have not the concept that people see one another as private property and this concept reflects itself in the family. We rather have the concept that in society each individual has a responsibility to each other. The family is the same. Father has a responsibility towards the mother; the husband to his wife; the mother to her children, and so on. There is not this concept of possession because it supposes that there is an owner and an owned; a master and an inferior and it doesn't suit our conception now.

I can tell you that this new concept has only been since the revolution of August,



1945. Before, the Vietnamese woman was a possession of man. She was inferior, she was more than inferior. In feudal times, for example, she was not only a servant of man, treated like an inferior thing, but like an animal without any sentiment by herself and a toy only for a man. In feudal times there was



a saying, "the woman who gives birth to ten girls is less considered than a woman who gives birth to one boy." Such was the conception that 10 women aren't worth one man. So it is a conception of feudalism which is very strong. And under French occupation men also have been exploited by the French colonists. And women who were only servants of men had become the slaves of the slaves. We had to endure two yokes of slavery. That's the general situation among the laboring masses, workers and peasants.

In the middle class under the French the influence of western society women have an outer appearance that they are liberated; they have the liberal thinking of the west. But in reality they have been considered as play things; like toys of men. The question of equality is a phony one. There is no true equality; it has only been since the August revolution that women really became equal with men. It was during the process of the this struggle to which they devoted themselves with their whole heart and soul that they became really equal to men.

QUES: What will happen to women after the revolution? Do you think there will be a great demand by men that women go back into the home and not play a major role in social affairs?

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3. That we must learn to define ourselves in such a way that the question of a "separate" women's movement no longer arises. We have attempted to undercut the question by our slogan. "There can be no liberation for women outside a general movement for liber-

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ation, and no such movement can exist without a movement for women's liberation," but still the question haunts us like an old ghost in forms like "What do you put first, women or the movement?" or "Why should women meet separately, anyhow?"

The first thing that I would like to do is to expand upon these premises.

Analysis of where we're at.

When radical women in Chicago (and other cities) felt the need to understand the oppression facing women in our society, we formed small groups of women who met regularly to discuss common problems. Although most of these groups have thought about or tried action projects, they have been most successful through discussion. Through free and intimate talk, about personal problems, about our experiences, about political questions, we arrived at a sophisticated understanding of the myths and realities which operate to confine women to their present roles, and we developed a camaraderie.

Most of our groups have been geographically based, on a campus, in a neighborhood, on one side of town; generally such groupings have been based more on convenience than on any definite relation to the locale or institution. Groups have also been based to an extent on common life situation, college women, young married women, movement organizers, etc., but as yet we have found few ways of using these common situations to develop programs for the group.

Our discussions have been fruitful, exhilarating and, to a point, liberating. But unless we begin to use what we have learned, our new knowledge and hope may change to bitterness, despair or pure resentment. Anger is good when it is out-reaching; turned inward it can become poisonous. Anger can also be dissipated, many women will lose interest or go on to other kinds of movement work, without the sense that there is a "future" for the women's movement.

Unity of theory and action.

The idea that ideas are tested in practise or that social change doesn't take place in the heads of intellectuals is one of the most radical notions I can think of. It is also an

idea that our movement has recognized since its inception. Yet, it is often easier to talk and think than to translate an idea into a concrete act. We have a difficult task before us and there is no simple correlation between those beautiful truths in our heads and that intransigent reality out there.

For women it is doubly difficult, since we have been trained to be passive and to be very cautious about acting. Still, I think we're ready. I feel that we must redefine the concept of a women's group. Later on, I will suggest various kinds of groups which I think should exist.

The question of "separate"

I do not think we should think of a women's movement as separate but as a united force within the radical movement. The question of excluding men from meetings should be a tactical one, i.e., because it is difficult for women to express themselves around men, and not a matter of principle. As a force within the movement, women have four major responsibilities:

a. To organize women into the movement in such a way that they will understand the oppression of women, recognize women's issues as legitimate political issues, stand tall and not take shit.

b. To combat male chauvinism in the movement, in ourselves and other women as well as in men. Also to combat related sister

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⇒ Women ←

The first issue of WOMEN: A Quarterly of Women's Liberation will be published in the fall of 1968. Poems; short stories; political, literary and scientific articles, which consider the condition of women, are being solicited.

The decision to limit articles written by men stems from a widely discussed position held by many women today: for centuries women have been defined and discussed by men; the time has come for women to create a special publication in which they analyze and express themselves and their relationship to the social order. The publication rests on the assumption that women are best able to define themselves and discuss their problems. Articles by men will be published on assignment only.

Material and monetary contributions should be sent to Dee Ann Pappas, 3011 Guilford Ave., Baltimore, Md. 21218.

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itudes were being reinforced rather than challenged by the campaign. Kathy's campaign photograph was a madonna-like shot with her baby in her arms; but the major political explanations of the campaign were done by the other candidate - a man. Part of our job is to teach CIPA men that this kind of gimmick for eliciting sympathy and interest is in fact inimical to a serious radical campaign. The rest of our job is in the community at large: to confront folks with a woman who neither elicits their sympathy as a sweet young thing nor earns their respect for her pluck by trying to make it in a man's world. The image Betsy projects depends in large part upon the solid research done for the campaign.

But Chicago has been researched before. Much of what we dig up will not be new or surprising to seasoned Chicago radicals. Are we guilty of unnecessarily repeating the path others have already walked? I think not. Besides the end product of our research (data compiled and interpreted as an educational and organizing tool), the process of educating ourselves is very important. We are learning how to be mutually reinforcing emotionally and intellectually. I think we have avoided the pitfall of one-up-manship which has troubled so many attempts at cooperative learning both inside and outside the movement. Perhaps this was possible because the forces which produce intellectual competitiveness in this society do not bear so heavily upon women as upon men. While we escaped that pitfall, we found ourselves confronted with other problems less typical of male-dominated groups, namely a propensity for anecdotes, digressions, and speaking two or three at a time. I think that one source of this problem is a tendency not to take ourselves seriously intellectually. Even if serious about our heads in a male-dominated



The old campaign



The new

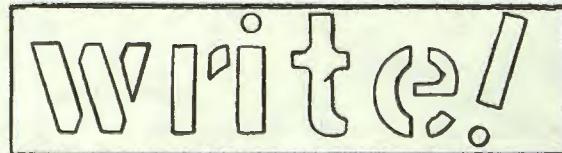
situation, we tend to react to a women's gathering as not quite in intellectual earnest. Through our research project, we are becoming increasingly aware of the ways in which feminine proconceptions continue to affect us.

In a very real sense our research is therapeutic, since it develops our strengths and focuses on our weaknesses. On the other hand, since our aim is Betsy's campaign and concrete action, the research is not the introspective type of therapy that paralyzes all effective action until the "cure" is effected, and hence often postpones the "cure" indefinitely.

Besides the radical research project, our women's group made an important contribution to the CIPA campaign platform this summer. Issues ignored in the general committee, including capital punishment, illegal drugs, and abortion laws, were hashed out in the women's group and brought back to the general group where our position won almost unanimous support. Our abortion plank, despite this support, was nearly sawed off behind the scenes due to the self-appointed veto power of one of the CIPA candidates, who feels that the issue of self-determination for women is less important than the state's duty to protect the unborn infant. He refused to be associated with a platform containing an abortion plank. A compromise was reached by including the plank along with a personal disclaimer by the dissenting candidate. This was not really satisfactory to all the women (or men) in the group. While admittedly only a token surrender, it was a token of a highly undemocratic principle: that an elected representative's private conscience take precedence over the explicit decisions of his constituency.

The VOICE of the WOMEN's LIBERATION MOVEMENT is a national newsletter put together by the Chicago women's groups. It is printed as often as material, time and money permit.

For this newsletter to be a valid reflection of the radical women's movement, it is essential that women from



all over the country send in articles, drawings, jokes, cartoons. No one has the time or money to hound you for it - just write and send it today to

Joreen, c/o Naim, 5514 S. Cornell
Chicago, Illinois 6

problems, such as elitism, lack of democracy, arrogance. We should recognize that these problems are deep-seated and won't be eradicated overnight.

c. To raise questions within the larger movement that presently only women discuss in an organized, coherent manner, questions of life-style, sex, community, personal relationships. We should try to create an atmosphere where men and women can rap together about these things openly, equally and freely.

d. To begin to organize around issues commonly defined as women's issues, and to see such organizing as in part a step in building a radical movement of both men and women.

The pamphlet, Notes from the First Year, put out by a New York women's group, raised a number of questions for me. I believe that these women see the women's movement as being very separate from other movement struggles although they accept the idea that other struggles are necessary and that alliances with other groups should be made when the alliance benefits both groups.

Sue Munaker has written that we must see our struggle as organically related to the struggle of other groups -- we must see the

need for the liberation of

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every other struggling group as clearly as we see the need for our own liberation. Such an assertion is more than a moral platitude or a test of radical consciousness. It is rather a precondition for any liberation whatever.

We need to be clearer about the organic relationships that various parts of the movement need to develop.

We must recognize that not every alliance between groupings is radical. A unity of women and blacks around the single issue of equal pay for equal work, while it would be very exciting, could be merely a demand for inclusion in the mainstream with no greater basis for unity than the fact that there is strength in numbers. It could be a very transitory alliance that was not at all based on a common ideological perspective. It is not enough to assert that particular groups should unite around issues which affect those groups in similar ways, or when the groups can aid each other. Such alliances are what prevailing pluralist ideology depends upon.

Although most radicals believe that our society is elitist and not pluralistic, the ideology of pluralism defines what the mainstream considers a legitimate political grouping and alliance. People are defined

politically by their membership in discrete interest groups, each group pressuring for its share of the pie, forming alliances and making compromises when necessary. Only immediate self-interest is thus taken into account; issues affecting people as a whole, or broader class interests, never enter the picture. Pluralist ideology also divides groups who should be allies. The fight between N.Y. teachers and parents demanding community control of schools (with the common enemy, the board of education, mediating) is a particularly poignant example; another good example of this divisive tendency is the antagonism between black and white workers.

We should not see the movement as a collection of separate groupings - each fighting for its own interests. For no one is only a draft age guy, or a worker or a woman or a black or a student or a consumer. Nor can we divide our oppression into nice, neat categories. What about the general oppression of living in a wasteful society which renders all of us powerless, provides little meaningful work, and allows us to live in ugly cities, tacky suburbs or a plundered country-side?

Black radicals recognize the need for a program which includes all facets of a black person's existence. Yet, until blacks and whites can get together, those things which oppress us all will not change. Black capitalism and a commercial black culture is the establishment's answer to black power.

I think we should be more critical of using the black movement as an analogy to the women's movement. Many things are similar, the fact that we want to define for ourselves what our liberation entails, that we will no longer allow men and society to keep us from being proud of being women, that we will no longer defer to men. But many aspects of our situation are very different from that of blacks. We are not isolated into ghettos, our lives are intimately connected with the lives of men. Much of the very content of our oppression is directly related to our personal relationships with men. Most of us do not consider the option of forming a separate nation of women at all attractive or realistic, so that we cannot think in terms of a nationalistic alternative.

A women's movement which confines itself to issues which only affect women cannot be radical. A demand for equal pay is not a critique of meaningless work, a demand for more women professors need not include a

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radical analysis of the university, a demand for legalized abortion need not raise the question of why the bearing of a child is perceived of as a personal rather than a social responsibility, the demand for child-care centers is not in itself a criticism of the familial structure. As soon as we broaden our analyses, issues affecting men are included. And finally, a discussion of sexual mores is meaningless and futile without the eventual participation of men.

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Radical Women's Groups

I think women's groups must strive to define themselves in terms of particular functions they can perform. Only newly formed groups should exist for the purpose of discussion alone.

I have some suggestions for types of groups. I don't mean the list to be rigid or exhaustive.

1. Orientation groups: Some women should see their role as forming and working with new groups of women. Such groups should be small and there should be many of them. They should initially be devoted to discussion only but people should learn about what other women's groups are doing. When women are ready, they should be encouraged to join other groups or the group as a whole should change its nature.

2. Sustaining groups: women's cell groups. Primarily made up of organizers and activists, these groups would be a place where women doing all kinds of work can come together and share experiences, talking about all kinds of things. From these groups women should derive sustenance, courage and a sense that others are behind them. These groups should allow us to inject our perspective into whatever other projects we are working on.

3. Caucuses within larger movement groups, e.g. SDS, CIPA, New University Conference, Peace and Freedom Clubs, Radical Teacher's groups, etc. The job of such caucuses is to fight male chauvinism within the group, to give women a chance to discuss programs and ideas among themselves, to make sure women participate in decision making, etc. Women should feel responsible for developing program and leadership, for supporting one another, without obscuring the fact that women differ politically also. Too often women decide that movement groups are irrelevant and withdraw from them, rather than trying to assume major responsibility for their direction. But I think that we have reached the point where we can begin to operate effectively within movement groups.

4. Research and writing groups: These groups are vital if we are to further our understanding of women's oppression and develop a long-range perspective. Research groups might also work on projects closely linked with organizing efforts. We need to develop channels for the communication of ideas and information.

5. Project and action groups: These groups form the core and the base of the women's movement and are the most difficult to define. I would like to make a few points about them:

a. They should see themselves as related to a particular institution or constituency. Campus groups should relate to the campus. Neighborhood groups should relate to the neighborhood. There are other possibilities: groups of teachers, women in a work place, women around a specific issue.

b. A certain amount of flexibility should be accepted as to issues and constituency. The groups should organize women, raise consciousness about women's oppression and radicalize women. But that does not mean that they should confine themselves to women's issues or to organizing only among women. In fact, it may prove unfruitful to radicalize married women while leaving their husbands with their old politics or lack of politics.

c. Women's groups should, when they are ready, relate to other radical groups. They may also see it as important to form other radical organizations if there is a need for them, e.g., in a neighborhood where nothing is happening.

Programmatic Ideas

In communities where community organizing projects exist, wide range of possibilities for action among women are open. Some suggestions:

a. Efforts can be made to reach women about questions concerning child-care, high prices, housing, etc. Within a larger urban renewal fight, for example, women could canvass in the afternoons when mostly women are at home, call meetings for women to discuss the issues and talk about what they want the neighborhood to be like, arrange baby-sitting pools so that women could attend community meetings, get neighborhood women to write position papers for community meetings, etc.

b. In many poor and working class neighborhoods, young guys are organized into gangs and radicals are working with them. Efforts should be made to reach young girls in these neighborhoods. Such an attempt could involve setting up coffee houses, Freedom schools or other places where young women in the neighborhood (and guys too) could meet and talk.

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WOMEN VS MADISON AVENUE

by Vivian Rothstein

Several women in the movement have been toying with the idea of developing a uniform for radical women. The purposes of the uniform are many. Primarily, it would be a public way to disassociate ourselves from the "women as consumer and clotheshorse image".

We conceived of the uniform as an attractive, up to date dress. It could be made by the "Poor People's Corporation" so that we would be giving our money to a co-operative rather than a profit-making corporation. The dress could be made in three colors; in cotton for summer and wool for winter. The introduction of the uniform would be done with a lot of publicity in the established media to make the dress a symbol.

The advantages are many: 1) We can be identified as part of a women's liberation movement by our appearance. 2) We will be "liberated" from the daily chore of having to choose what to wear and what image to project. 3) We can save money because the dresses would be inexpensive and would be made to last, hopefully made out of perma press material. 4) We can raise the issue of women's enslavement to the system constantly as people around us ask why we wear the same dress each day; as teachers wear it to school, secretaries to the office, etc. and we can talk about how women are used as a market for unnecessary products. 5) We will know each other on the streets all over the country and can feel solidarity on marches, etc. 6) It is unco-optable by the fashion industry unlike our previous uniform of sandals, turtlenecks, & long hair. No clothing manufacturer would adopt the idea of a wardrobe consisting of one dress. 7) It would help to eliminate the competition that divides women from each other.

I am sure many women will balk at the idea of the uniform because it destroys our "individuality". This is a measure of how the fashion industry has distorted our concept of individuality. (Ed. Note: the VOICE is eager to hear responses to this proposal. So write!)

by Evelyn Goldfield



LIBERATION NEWS SERVICE

16 / GUARDIAN / JULY 6, 1968



THE MOVEMENT

Open letter to NATIONAL GUARDIAN
Dear people:

The enclosed cartoon is our response to your printing of the LNS cartoon which juxtaposed the virile, potent, aggressive movement - male - against the fawning, prissy, decadent system - female.

We are all awaiting your next printing of a movement versus the system cartoon. We are fully expecting it will be something along the lines of a crowd of

lily white, fine citizens - the movement - hanging a stupid, black, kinky-haired, ape-like nigger - the system.

May the revolution blow your minds. Your politics and passion both need an upheaval.

Fran Rominski
for Chicago Women's
Liberation Writing Group

Letters

Dear Voice,

I received your newsletter today and was very encouraged. Many women now know that they are an oppressed minority and Radical Women realize that they (alas) are no exceptions. I had a copy of the newsletter sent to a male friend. A friend who was on a freedom bus to Selma and who considers himself and indeed acts otherwise as a radical. His comment was as follows: "Received that woman radical thing. The content and organization were pretty poor but maybe if they got some male proofreaders they'd improve..." ha ha. Another so called radical male from Chicago refers to Chicago Radical Women as "the lesbians." Nobody I guess is surprised. We are not mowed down in the streets, we're ridiculed (but if you haven't noticed it's very nervous laughter).

I will be in Washington (where I am a student) in a few weeks. Is there a branch of the women's liberation there? If not I'd like to help organize one.

We will get into our own history as people one day but it will take organization and hope and the ability to take being laughed at by the bvery people who should be our comrades. Thank you for beginning. Womanpower,

Ellen Bernstein
Snyder, New York

Dear Comrades,

The June newsletter obliquely raises the question of the apocryphal Piece Corps, or prostitutes-for-peace plan, a long-standing joke among male radicals. The tactical assumption in this reverse-Lysistrata deal is that soldiers and sailors

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C. The CIPA women are supporting the woman CIPA candidate by studying Chicago and thus, providing her with information and exciting things to say. This project combines a "woman's thing" with a broader political work in an especially creative way.

In neighborhoods where there is little or no radical work being done, a woman's group should see itself as a catalyst for such work. Initial attempts to reach women can be made on local issues like consumer problems, day-care centers, conservation and abortion; neighborhood anti-war groups integrated with the discussion of women's liberation could be started; forums at community centers and local churches about political and women issues should be tried.

could be induced to desert by pacifist girls who were willing to fuck deserters, or more likely to become their mistresses and join them in hiding from the MPs and FBI.

To thus "be a sexual object", in such an extreme form or in the milder prickle-please pattern of possible coffee-houses, is rightly decried as degrading by the Women's Liberation Movement.

"Degradation" involves loss of status, and sometimes includes suffering. Arrest, being beaten up, being jailed, and being mocked as a "commie beatnik" are all degrading situations, yet radical women bravely suffer these indignities - because such acts involve loss of status only among squares, not among our own peer group of "significant others". In dramatic contrast, prostitution and sexual promiscuity cause loss of status among most leftists.

For most girl pacifists, to purposefully fuck a sailor is a bigger sacrifice than to be beaten by a cop, because of status loss and resulting negative self-image(shame). Well, is it ethically right for male pacifists to ask female pacifists to make a large sacrifice for The Cause? (Lets assume arbitrarily, for the sake of this discussion, that a Piece Corps really would help peace, which I doubt.)

The proper feminist answer, I submit, is that males should ask such a sacrifice only if they are willing to do the same - by which I do NOT mean the pleasant task of offering their bods to the Wacs and Waves. I mean the sexual task which involves equal loss of peer-group status and damage to self-image:seducing the thousands of homosexual soldiers and sailors.

Presumably 90% of my radical readers have now recoiled in confused indignation from this little exercise in social science fiction fiction. Still I hope each comrade can ~~canindate something~~ by analyzing his or her emotional reactions to this Modest Proposal.

Fraternally,
Jefferson Poland
SDS, NOW, SFL

Groups of women interested in working in factories, offices, restaurants, etc. should form a group to discuss experiences, formulate strategies, etc.

Women interested in high-school organizing should also form a group, as well as women who are working with various other constituencies.

I realize that much of the work suggested above is already being done by women but it seems that it is not seen as part of the women's movement.

Vietnam Interview
(cont. from p. 2)

ANSWER: We have not such fear. We have seen that in North Vietnam where peace has been restored since 1954, that there has been 10 years of peace before the bombing and during those ten years the whole of the people of Vietnam pulled themselves together to heal the wounds of war under the French. Women took a very great part in the reconstruction of the country. The percentage of doctors, engineers and technicians is large, women participated in all kinds of work. QUESTION: I'm sure that there are many women in SVN that are not in the women's liberation movement and I would like to know how you try to reach those women.

ANSWER: In our organization we have educational work. Of course, we gather women to talk with them about the possibility of emancipation. They have to fulfill not only their responsibility as wives, as mothers, but they have a role to play in society. We are sure that it is not difficult to convince them because during our struggle women have been beside men. Not only in the laboring strata, but in the middle classes, among intellectuals, everybody. It has been such a war that it mobilized the entire people. Very few, a very small minority are standing aside. Otherwise, we can say the overwhelming majority of women will take part in the struggle, so it will be a continuation.

We South Vietnamese women, will not be ready to give up what we have gained because our efforts, so many efforts, so much hard work, to win our rights to be equal with men.

QUESTION: How much theoretical work has been done by the women as part of the women's movement? How much of this is available in English?

ANSWER: There has been, of course, lots of theoretical work about the question of liberation of women but there are people who speak about the liberation of women who really don't effectively take part in the building of society so they are not trusted very much. But real patriots such as Mrs. Le Thi Reing, women like her do real work for the liberation of the country; she has at the same time written on the liberation of women, and we discuss much about the correct point of view. It has become a line in the political program of the NLF. There is a whole part of the program which speaks about equality of men and women, protection of mothers. It is a great inspiration for us that the NLF views such work in the future, because it cannot be done in a few days, that question of winning equality. It is a long process of struggle. We are struggling to win effectively that right to be equal with men; it cannot come naturally. If you don't work, if you don't

struggle, men will never recognize this equality with us. They always want to be superior to us; they have always been used to it. We have known so many centuries of oppression by men and by foreign invaders.

The revolution has brought us the right of equality; we must fight hard to overcome the prejudices because the revolution gives us the right but it is only on paper, you know. For the effective thing, women must win it, and demonstrate by our efforts that we have the capabilities to play our role in society. Men recognize this and have a feeling of brotherhood and fraternity; they feel the responsibility towards us. It is a mutual responsibility.

I am sorry that there is not theoretical work in English or any other language because we think it is only an internal question and we only discuss between us. We have no opportunity to spread what we feel about our own experiences to other women in other countries.

QUESTION: My next question is one which we talk about in the U.S. all of the time. It is really two different questions with the words reversed. One is, what is the particular role of a revolutionary woman--that means within a revolutionary struggle? The other is: what is it that makes a woman revolutionary?

ANSWER: I don't know if I can answer this question, but for us VN women, when we say woman revolutionary, we mean women who take part in the struggle of the whole nation. There cannot be a revolutionary woman--in the sense of an emancipated woman--without national liberation. A woman can be free only in a free society, in a free nation. It has always been so in our country. When we fight for national liberation, we also fight for the emancipation of women.

There is also one point about a revolutionary woman. Besides her responsibility in society, in participating in the struggle for the whole people, a woman has the responsibility towards her own family in her role as mother, wife. She cannot give up to anybody so she must keep those responsibilities as well. For us the conception of revolutionary woman is not separated from the conception of woman with obligations in family. The problem is to reconcile these duties. You cannot drop the family to become involved solely in revolutionary or social

