

Letters

Various Authors

1971

Sisters:

Subject: "Abortion Must Be....." [FE #126, March 4-17, 1971]: Working women often fear that demanding free abortions means we want more money out of their paychecks." Just who are you if you are not a part of the masses of working women?

You have revealed in this statement a very interesting and damning consciousness of division between yourselves and those of us who must work for our paychecks.

Your subsequent "explanation" tells us what we all know—that your reforms are derived from our sweat.

The solution will not come from demanding a piece of the action: "Why not turn some of those business profits, war expenditures, doctor's profits into free abortions?"

Why not stop begging the power structure for favors and unite with other working people in order to take it all? All of it! We'll pay for what we get until that time.

That's the reality of the situation, and that reality demands a total identification with all working women and men—a class action.

Silly establishment cartoon figures (cover) do not symbolize our struggle. Real women engaged in real situations do.

Diana

(Note: the women discussed the cover at length before we agreed that the figures nearly all of us grew up with, rejecting the roles they were used to project and joining together, did have a symbolic powerfulness.)

Dear People of the F.E.:

I was glad to read a little about the struggle of the American working women in your Women's Issue of the Fifth Estate. I feel it has been one of the neglected topics. Even F.E. writers are guilty of male chauvinism when they write about the struggle of the working class: MEN!

What about all those thousands of women caught in the 9 to 5 drudgery of secretarial work and other office jobs that keep one sitting at a desk for 8 hours a day?

In the office where I work, 90% of the workers are women, yet it's the 10% of the males who have the highest standing and highest paying jobs and while the supervisors are women, the managers over them are men. They refer to the women workers as "our girls" as if we were their concubines (and some act the part).

We are required to dress "feminine" even though office work can be one of the messiest jobs. And who should give a damn what you wear anyway?

I did hear one co-worker once remark, "Why should I dress up? There aren't any guys to dress up for anyway." This sister needed to be aware of her other sisters working around her.

Many women are stuck in these jobs for several reasons. Mainly they have been brought up with the idea that if a woman doesn't go to college all she is fit for is marriage and/or a boring office job. They live from day to day as slaves, which they themselves sold, with little enjoyment from life except maybe bowling night on Thursdays. Some are divorced and have children to support who spend their days at day care centers (wherever they can be found) or with babysitters. They see Mother on the week-end.

And some are passing through a job on their way to being married. They don't know who they will marry but they will. They dress up like a worm on a hook.

The San Francisco Mime Troupe has a play about how working women should get together and fight the profiteering capitalist males at the top. Women are the majority and in a society that "believes" majority rules it is strange how working women end up at the bottom.

But actually it's not all as strange as that as the U.S. government has many such inconsistencies. It is the major corporations that rule and look who controls them—men!

Women unite Power

Terry Cowen

Staff,

In reply to the "Unsigned" letter you printed, I feel this person is a hypocrite. (See FE #125, Vol. 5 No. 21, Feb. 18). I am a little tired of people who read articles and magazines and papers like yours every week, cover to cover, and then have the nerve to call it trash. If they believe it's filth, why do they bother to read it?

I also think it's very wrong for this person to put sex into the same category with alcohol and drugs. After all, what is more pure, natural and beautiful than sex?

I believe if this person were to spend more time out in nature, they would try hard to find the real beauty in the world.

In the words of the S.F.—fuck censorship!

M.G.S.

Dear F.E.:

While home on a leave I saw Dick Gregory, who said "If a man in the service signs his \$15,000 government insurance over to the Black Panthers you will be sure of an honorable discharge."

I've been thinking about this and it sounds like a good idea. I've been looking for proof that this plan has worked. So far I haven't read anything about this. If you know of anyone who has been discharged from the military this way could you print about it and give the address of the Black Panthers?

David Quigley Ofab, Neb.

Staff note: We don't know, but you should try asking the Black Panthers at 1048 Peralta Street, Oakland, Calif.

People of the Fifth Estate:

I am very pleased that you give us grunts in Viet Nam the opportunity to read the latest underground news, free. One of my buddies is going home so he is giving me the privilege of receiving the F.E. for our company. Our 5th Estate is passed around until it gets sopping wet from rain or ragged from going in and out of pockets when we move from place to place.

We always look forward to our copy. I personally am from Atlanta, Georgia and our paper there is the [Great Speckled] Bird, a very groovy paper.

We appreciate all of the real news about our place of inhabitation. I really dug on "Vietnam: 2nd Decade" in Vol. 5 No. 18. I'd love for our square pigs and lifers to feast their eyes on such articles. They'd shit.

Once again thanks for all of your fine works and good words for the heavier people in Vietnam.

Yours truly,
Charles E. Turner
101st Abn Div

Dear Fifth Estate:

I am a GI doing my hitch in God's Country. Well, what I wanted to say is we really dig the paper. I have a subscription and every time I get the paper there is always a guy who wants to subscribe.

Every day GIs are turning on to your paper. But the thing is that the people are thanking me.

Well, I'm writing this letter to say you people at the F.E. really have your shit together. I want to say thanks a hell of a lot for printing what the people want and sending the paper FREE to us in Nam.

I don't know if this letter makes any sense to you or not (I'm really stoned) but all we say is keep up the good work and peace be with you.

The Boys

Sisters and brothers:

To show their disapproval of Americans on their soil, the Vietnamese kids have been rioting and demonstrating the past few days (Qui Nhon). Why? Well, a few days ago a GI from a U.S. tank shot a grenade into a near-by home, killing 2 or 3 Vietnamese, probably injuring a few. (Some GIs were told the killed were run over by a truck.)

The GI thought it was a flare he shot?! Hell—doesn't the Army teach the differences?! Whether accidental or not human beings were killed unnecessarily! And it's happened before!

Another reason for my writing is I wish to cancel my subscription. I am finally getting out of the Army and Vietnam (it wouldn't be so bad if there wasn't a war) in about 35 days!

You'll be hearing from me in the future, for I wish to continue my subscription back home (Chicago). I also get *The Seed*.

Thanks for making my tour of duty a little more bearable!

Revolt, freedom and diversity,

Jose Nunez

Brothers and sisters:

Or maybe I should say sisters and brothers, oh well, I guess that's not important. What is important, however, is the fact that the all women's issue of your paper [FE #126, March 4-17, 1971] was the best issue of any paper I've ever read.

This issue made me realize that despite my efforts to overcome them, I still have some deep rooted sexist attitudes. It also made me realize that now, more than ever, a revolution cannot succeed without more of our sisters playing a major role in the cadres.

I'm looking forward to seeing more special issues done entirely by other oppressed groups (or at least on other oppressed groups).

Congratulations for putting out a paper in a true revolutionary sense and with a true revolutionary attitude.

Free our sisters and all oppressed people! Free John, Jack and Pun and all people from the C.I.A. conspiracy! Free all political prisoners of war!

Duane Albright

fifth Estate

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