

# Feminist Health Center Director Acquitted

anon.

1972

LOS ANGELES—The co-director of the Feminist Women's Health Center was acquitted on December 5 of charges of "practicing medicine without a license." The jury of four women and eight men deliberated nine hours before reaching their decision. The verdict was received joyously by Feminist supporters in the courtroom, as well as across the country.

The prosecution's case rested on an incident that occurred on May 11, 1972 when defendant Carol Downer was present at the Los Angeles Women's Center for a class in women's health care. A friend, or "sister," Zsuzsanna Budapest, asked Ms. Downer to help her insert some yogurt (unflavored commercial variety) for what Zsuzsanna believed was a vaginal "yeast infection."

A yeast infection is a fungus condition common to women, and the use of yogurt containing lactobacillus is thought to restore the normal balance of flora in the vagina.

For aiding Ms. Budapest in inserting the yogurt, Ms. Downer was accused under the Business and Professional Code of "diagnosing and treating" an illness.

Defense attorney Diane Wayne maintained that the statute is vague and too broad, so that under it "I wouldn't be able to discuss a cold with my friend, or offer her a Kleenex for it." The defense also contended that the use of yogurt was a home remedy which is exempted by law from the definition of "treating."

Said Ms. Downer on hearing the verdict: "This is a victory for all women. Now we and all women are free to learn about our bodies, to learn good health care, and to use common sense in caring for ourselves."



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Fifth Estate #173, December 16, 1972-January 5, 1973

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