Feminist Periodicals

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relationship between women's issues and broader political issues. Following these presentations, a white woman from South Africa, who was not an official participant, proceeded to describe women's studies in her country — without reference to apartheid. The resulting heated discussion raised questions about the impossibility of considering women's rights in the absence of human rights; the existence of racism in the women's movement, including women's studies; and the presence of people from the Agency for International Development (AID) at the conference.

AID became the focus of controversy at subsequent sessions. (AID had provided travel funds for various Third World participants in two sessions.) The representative from the Office of Women in Development (WID), a unit formed in 1973 within AID, argued that she and others sought to ensure that foreign aid be used to help women, to promote research on the impact of "development" on women, and in general to have some impact on policies that would affect women in Third World countries. The critics of AID argued that AID has a history of supporting counterinsurgency groups and of promoting racist and dangerous population control programs. Furthermore, they maintained, foreign aid functions to tie other countries more closely to U.S. capitalism; thus, WID could only succeed in integrating women more thoroughly into a relationship of dependency. Good intentions would be coopted, said the critics; this cooptation is no different from that experienced by any feminist, argued the WID representative.

Reactions to the international sessions varied from outrage at the presence of AID to frustration at criticism of feminists trying to work within the system. Perhaps the most realistic yet optimistic evaluation came from a Ghanaian woman who suggested that raising the issues of racism and imperialism was a sign that the NWUSA was grappling with important questions rather than ignoring them.

Peg Strobel, one of the 1979 Convention Coordinators, is taking up new duties as coordinator of the Women's Studies Program at the University of Illinois/Chicago Circle.

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By Barbara Parker

As Kate Stimpson, of Signs, pointed out at a session on feminist periodicals that took place in Kansas, few, if any, of the current feminist periodicals can survive if people replace this year's subscription to a feminist art journal with next year's subscription to a feminist literary magazine.

Those who attended the Convention could not leave unaware of financial worries that burden every type of women's studies project. A collective groan, for example, greeted the woman who reported that her Women's Studies Program receives a budget of $9,000. While she considered that a paltry figure, most of those who groaned did so because that is more money than many projects receive in a number of good years.

Financial resources are needed most desperately by feminist periodicals. Although most feminist periodicals are published by editors who receive little or no pay, and contain articles by authors who receive little or no pay, periodicals must pay at least for paper, ink, and related printing services. Even though printers may be willing to wait, and authors and editors may work for the joy of it, when the day comes...

Three leaders of the All China Women's Federation holding a press conference during their one-day visit to the NWUSA Convention. From left to right: Amy Sverdlow, who chaired the press conference; Heven Sze, biologist at the University of Kansas, who translated for the Americans; Madam Xu Manqin, Section Chief of the International Liaison Department of the Federation; Florence Howe; Madam Huang Ganying, Vice Chairperson (Head) of the All China Women's Federation; Madam Lin Shangzhen, Deputy Section Chief of the International Liaison Department, who translated for the Chinese; Elaine Reuben.

The Chinese Women's Federation leaders visited six sessions, toured the exhibits, heard Ora Williams sing, shook hands at the barbecue and relished the food, and held a two-hour "Conversations" session with a group of forty Americans and international conference participants at the end of a very long day. Their message to NWUSA was that "the rest of the world needs women's studies, too."
that subscriptions and other revenues do not match expenses, feminist journals must close their doors.

Over the years we have all witnessed the demise of a number of fine feminist magazines, and it is we who are the poorer for it. Chrysalis staff members attended the NWSA Convention hoping to sell enough subscriptions to pay the printer, who is holding Issue 8 as a hostage against previous unmet obligations. Other journal representatives expressed varying degrees of hopefulness about the future, but all agreed that unless many feminists determine to support publications through buying subscriptions, chances for long-term survival are very slim.

Barbara Parker is a staff assistant for the Women's Studies Program at the University of Colorado/Boulder and a member of the Frontiers editorial collective.

Exhibits at the Convention

By Nanette Bruckner

Nearly 100 registered exhibitors utilized 72 reserved tables at NWSA's First Convention. In addition, five "free tables" allowed for the spontaneous participation of countless other individuals and organizations. In many respects, the displays area was a busy microcosm of the larger Convention. Exhibitors ranged in size from an independent poet showing her solitary book of verses to a large publishing house displaying more than 100 titles in women's studies. Books included scholarly anthologies and "pop" paperbacks. Indeed, almost every idea endemic to women's studies could be found somewhere. Several political organizations also reserved space to share their concerns, and a number of feminist entrepreneurs sold various wares. Amidst this cornucopia, the NWSA National Office sold, as fundraisers, T-shirts, buttons, calendars, music sheets, posters, and books (which are still available through the office in Maryland; see box on page 28 of this issue).

Four months prior to the meeting, invitations to reserve exhibition space were sent to 1200 relevant organizations. The responses were enthusiastic. Anticipating that some organizations would not be able to send representatives, NWSA made a special offer: we would set up, display, and return materials if requested. We assumed this responsibility in part for nearly 50 percent of the registered exhibitors. This allowed many exhibitors to participate who normally could not — especially smaller women's presses.

The average costs per table were $100 for large, profit-making institutions, $50 for nonprofit organizations; in line with the Association's philosophy, no organization was denied access because of financial hardship. Likewise, no form of censorship was instituted, in order to allow for a truly free and open exchange of ideas and opinions. At the Convention, all exhibitors were treated alike, regardless of their philosophies or the financial arrangements they were able to make.

The exhibit area consisted of a third of the available space in the McCollum Hall cafeteria and a large adjoining room. All tables were covered with white linen; and beautiful, individually prepared, professionally lettered signs (constructed especially for us by the Audiovisual Department at the University of Houston/Clear Lake City) identified each of the preregistered exhibitors. The area was a women's studies smorgasbord. Next year the National Office should make shopping bag available for those laden with the hundreds of free flyers, magazines, books, and catalogues that were available to all.

Almost all exhibitors expressed positive enthusiasm about this center of exchange, and expressed their interest in participating again next year. For many, it was the first conference in which they really enjoyed a dialogue with the interested browsers. Finally, this endeavor was a financial success, netting a profit of over $3,500. This turned out to be the biggest fundraiser for the 1979 Convention.

On a personal note: coordinating the displays and exhibits was a difficult, time-consuming, sometimes anxiety-producing, always exciting, psychologically and emotionally uplifting experience. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. Throughout the many months that it took to develop and execute this function, I always felt as I worked in Texas the positive energies and strong support from the rest of the program committee throughout the country. I am impressed with the amount and quality of work that was done and by what we eventually accomplished. We can all take pride in this demonstration of dedication to women's studies that the Convention symbolized. We witnessed a major event in Kansas, of historical importance to the women's movement, and I am truly thankful to have had the opportunity to experience it first hand.

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