

Vancouver Rape Relief & Women's Shelter

77 E. 20th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V5V 1L7 872-8212

July 5, 1984

Hassles for Hookers Means Hassles for all Women!

Text of speech delivered by Pam Moodie at a night march in the West End to protest the application for an interim injunction by Attorney General Brian Smith.

Dear Women.

The city of Vancouver has, for years, used various forms of legal harassment in an attempt to 'control' prostitutes - and all women. Eleven years ago the city instituted the Vagrancy "C" law. Any woman could be picked up by the police as a 'common prostitute' under this law if she 'could not give a good accounting of herself'.

Over this past year, citizens' groups have been organized in an attempt to rid the West End (Vancouver's downtown residential area) of prostitutes. On May 30th, 1984, the B.C. government moved in to support these groups. The Attorney General applied for an injunction naming 30 people (mostly women) and 'persons unknown' as 'public nuisances'.

The names of these people were published in both of Vancouver's major newspapers; posted on streetlamps all over the West End; and distributed to Ministry of Human Resources (welfare) offices, effectively 'blacklisting' the 30 people named.

On June 8th, Vancouver feminists organized a demonstration to protest the proposed injunction. We marched through the streets of the West End singing, shouting, blowing noisemakers - letting Brian Smith know that his threats would not silence us.

Other forms of protest have included telegrams to the Attorney General; letters to the city's newspapers; distribution of buttons reading "Public Nuisance #31"; and members of Vancouver Rape Relief attending the court proceedings in support.

The injunction was granted on July 4th. It gives the Attorney General sweeping power to control who has the right to be on the streets of this city. Anyone seen "engaging in any public conduct or activity apparently for the purpose of prostitution", or seen "to cause or contribute to a nuisance", can be named as a public nuisance, according to the injunction. They can then be charged with contempt of court, which carries a fine of \$2000, or two years in jail.

This injunction has set a new legal precedent; one which could be used all across Canada to further restrict women's right to go where we choose. Any one of us could be charged, now.

This is not for us an issue of whether or not to support prostitution, but rather an issue of whether we are going to support these women - as well as any others who might be included in this sweeping injunction.

This is an attack on women - another attack where we are most vulnerable. We urge you to join us in fighting this attack. We encourage you to talk to other women about the injunction and its implications for

Telegrams and letters

Brian Smith, Attorney General, Parliament Building, Victoria, B.C.

PUBLIC NUISANCE #31

JANUARY 1986.

The struggle to support prostitutes and not prostitution is a difficult one for many feminists. So it is for us. But this year in our city and country it has become vital to stand with the prostitutes in order to not be standing with the police.

Over the months we have had to express ourselves more and more loudly and clearly and in the course of that process our analysis has improved.

The following is a set of speeches and press releases that reveals events in our city, and our development on this issue. We believe the series or parts of each of the series may well be educational to others.

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Women Unite! Demand The Right To Walk On The Streets Day or Night!

Get Your Laws Off Our Bodies!

Whenever We Want Wherever We Go Yes Means Yes And No Means No!

Alternatives, Not Laws!

PUBLIC NUISANCE 31 YOU AND ME AND EVERYONE

Could Be Me, Could Be You PUBLIC NUISANCE 32

Just Cause the Courts are on Your Side Women Won't Be Locked Inside!

The Attorney General of this province has posted a blacklist of 30 people and persons unknown, outlawing them as public nuisances, blocking them from walking, playing, and being in the West End. If Brian Smith's injunction is granted, none of us will be free to go where we want, when we want, dressed how we want, in this city, especially in the West End. He will have the power to name anyone of us as a public nuisance on the word of anyone he chooses. I'm here tonight because I'm angry, and I know I'm not alone.

Who will he choose to make statements against us?

The "law-abiding citizens" who are uncomfortable and don't want to know that there is violence against women, poverty, unemployment or the purchase of sex -- so they don't have to do anything about it?

The property owners who think that they can make more money if the neighbourhood was more attractive to richer people?

Or will he choose Dan Stoveman, -- the manager of Red Hot Video, seller of pornographic material that encourages the lie that the rape, battering and murder of women and children is somehow inborn rather than learned?

Do we want these people signing affidavits saying we are nuisances when we insist on fighting for our rights, when we protest their attacks on our rights?

Can it be that the rich people in this city, those people with all of the power and prestige, want the West End to themselves? Do they want all reminders of their greed and our poverty removed from view? Were these 30 people singled out at this time because prominent johns were about to be exposed? Were those johns friends of Brian Smith's? Business partners?

Thirty women and men have been named as prostitutes by Brian Smith and Pacific Press. These people and their children are now subject to the terrorist tactics of anyone who wants to go after them; their welfare worker, any potential boss, any woman-hating man looking for a victim. WE must stand with them, naming ourselves.

This is the latest in a string of attacks against us. Frozen welfare rates, increased unemployment, increased violence against women, and funding cuts to most feminist services. The Social Credit government has been attacking us for a long, long time. Ten years ago, feminists in the women's liberation movement fought a major battle to have the vagrancy laws repealed. At that time, we were in danger of being arrested if we did not have money in our pockets, even in our own neighbourhoods. We won that fight, and we'll win this one.

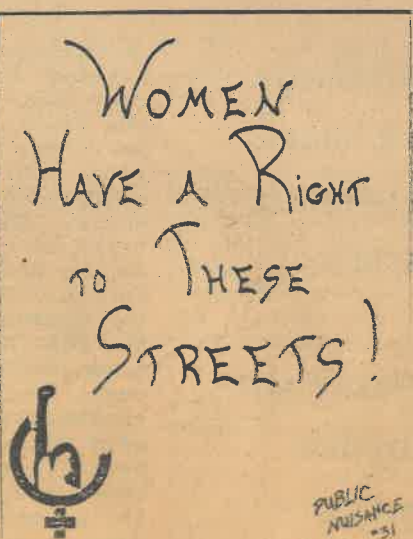
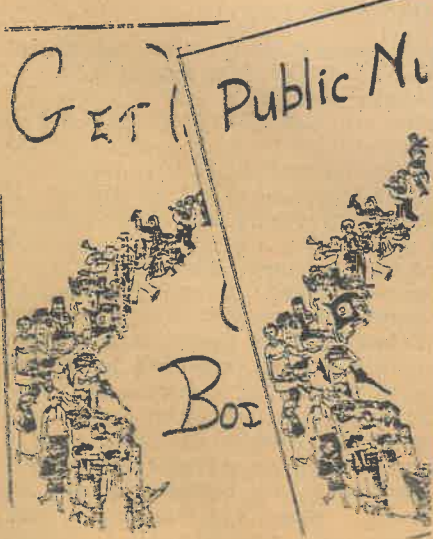
All of us from Vancouver Rape Relief are here tonight with some of the 30 named, with women from the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes, and with women from many other groups in the women's liberation movement. We are winning by having people on the streets to protest to the Attorney General and to the editors of Pacific Press who colluded with him in endangering these 30 people's lives. We are winning by donating money for the legal defense of these people, and we are winning with all of the other actions that we can think of. Together we are stopping this legal power that endangers us all.

If Brian Smith thinks that he will get peace and quiet on the streets of our city by threatening us with this kind of injunction, he's very, very wrong. We are here tonight to make noise and we intend to keep it up until this injunction is stopped.

Vancouver Rape Relief & Women's Shelter

77 E. 20th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V5V 1L7 872-8212

Handwritten number 250



## The Rape Relief Files

Always and everywhere the plight of the prostitute has been closely associated with other undocumented workers. In Vancouver, these women have shown themselves to us as farmworkers, domestic workers, mail order 'brides', runaway incest victims, political refugees and other illegal immigrants.

A study of 30 prostitutes in San Francisco found that, prior to beginning the life of prostitution, 80% of the women had been victims of physical or sexual abuse. Information on juvenile prostitution in Canada suggests similar conclusions. We cannot say that this is necessarily true for those who enter prostitution at a somewhat later point in their lives.

□ Nowhere is woman treated according to the merit of her work, but rather as a sex. It is therefore almost inevitable that she should pay for her right to exist, to keep a position in whatever line, with sex favors. Thus it is merely a question of degree whether she sells herself to one man, in or out of marriage, or to many men. □

Emma Goldman,  
The Traffic in Women 1917



We say, get the laws off of these women's backs. Decriminalise prostitution, and let's start dealing with the real issues -- poverty, the objectification of women and the violence done to women and children.

JULY 20, 1984.

PRESS RELEASE

We want to alert you to the fact that, as of 1 p.m. Friday July 20, 1984, prostitutes and feminists have occupied Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver.

In the tradition of women in Paris in 1975 and in London in 1982, prostitutes with feminist support have taken a church, an historical sanctuary for the oppressed, in an effort to bring to public attention information that has been withheld by the media.

The injunction passed by the Social Credit government on July 4, 1984 which declared 30 people public nuisances, has now grown so that, at the time of this writing, as many as 290 women have been threatened by police to stay away from the area designated by this injunction. The public nuisance list is growing and so is the abuse and the threat of abuse and harassment to all women in the city of Vancouver, no matter where we are walking, standing, working or what we are wearing. This injunction has set a legal precedent and similarly this occupation by prostitutes and feminists.

We are inviting you to come to Vancouver to talk with the women in the church and the growing number of supporters. We are inviting you to send messages to the women through this organisation. We are inviting you to read the enclosed background and current material and to do what you can from your position to continue the fight for real legal, social and economic justice for all women.

For prostitutes, Against Prostitution.

Vancouver Rape Relief  
and Women's Shelter

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**Myth:** Prostitutes are not "normal" women and don't lead normal lives;  
**Fact:** Prostitution is a way of making money and surviving, not an identity. Society has carelessly confused prostitutes with prostitution, much as they have confused housewives with housework. Prostitutes have the same needs as do other people. They have a home life, and many have children.

**Myth:** Pimps and prostitutes are natural allies.  
**Fact:** Many prostitutes do not have pimps. Many are allies only in the sense that they are cut off from the rest of society because of their outlaw status.

**Myth:** Pimps are the only men who exploit and have power over prostitutes.  
**Fact:** The police, judges, lawyers, tricks, hotel owners and workers, the porno industry, massage parlour and nightclub owners are the men who most profit from prostitutes and use their power over them.

**Myth:** Prostitutes degrade women.  
**Fact:** Men degrade women - through rape, battering, insults and by maintaining financial and political power over us.

**Myth:** All prostitutes have lots of money.  
**Facts:** 1. They are in prostitution because they are poor.  
2. After paying fines, lawyers' fees, bail, pimps, cab drivers, hotels, being robbed, etc., there is precious little left. Not to mention a total lack of UIC, medical benefits, Canada Pension Plan or even criminal compensation. For that matter, it's pretty hard to get welfare if you are a known prostitute.

ASP's pamphlet dramatizes the complexity of the situation and the difficulty of finding legal and social answers that will satisfy the concerns of all the participants in the prostitution debate.

## The Injunction Fight

Kathy called us a few months ago. She was very upset - scared and sad about her life - and she wanted to talk about what to do. She told me that she had started prostituting herself on the street about 6 months before. She was 21 and thought that this would be a fairly easy way to make money. She said that mostly it was O.K. but recently she's been more and more unhappy as she has been getting increasingly involved with partying and drugs and alcohol and all the other people who are involved in prostitution. She has a nice apartment which she wouldn't be able to pay for on welfare. She isn't too excited about getting a conventional job - less money than she makes now and it isn't likely she would be treated much better if she were a cashier or a waitress. But she is scared about getting much more involved in prostitution, she doesn't want to be in it. She thought she might like to join one of our support groups so she could meet some new friends. We set up a meeting. I gave her Marie's phone number because she asked about P.O.W.E.R. and thought she might want to get politically involved on the issue of prostitution.

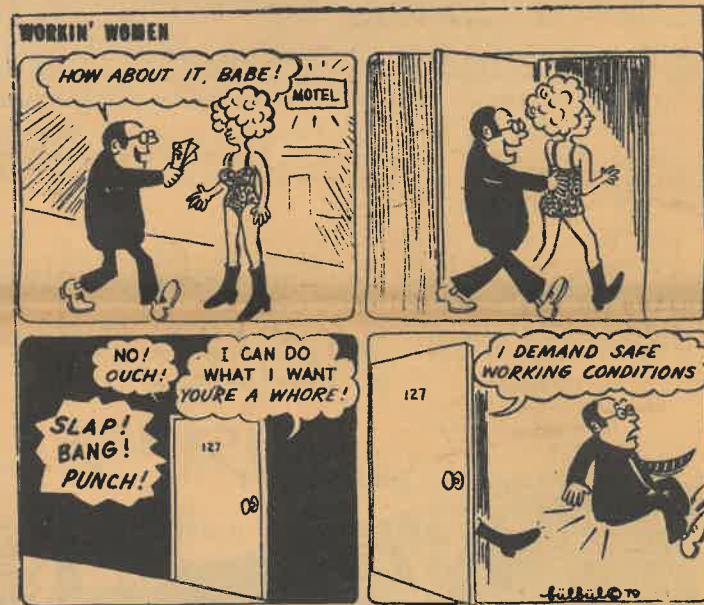
I phoned her back two days later before our appointment and she told me then, that she had changed her mind about coming to see me and going to the group. A friend had moved in with her and she was feeling much happier - less worried about rent and not so lonely.

by Rosemary Brown

In 1983, 37.4% of women under the age of 65 in B.C. were living below the poverty line. For women over the age of 65, that percentage rose to 60.6%. Economists and researchers tell us that poverty in B.C. is on the increase and nowhere more dramatically than among single parent families which depend totally on a female wage earner for their support.

The 1984 Statistics Canada figures put the poverty line for two persons at \$1100 a month. The Ministry of Human Resources in B.C. pays \$640 to a single mother with one child. If she were to work she would have to make at least \$6 an hour to reach \$1100 a month. Minimum wage in B.C. is \$3.65 an hour - a minimum wage which does not reflect our position as one of Canada's richer provinces.

Judge Abella in her Royal Commission Report on Equality tells us that in the years 1912 to 1982, working women came from earning 53¢ for every dollar that a man earns to earning between 55¢ and 64¢. Here in B.C. this figure in 1984 showed that women still earn less than 61¢ to every dollar earned by a man.



## At home in the house of the Lord

"In the absence of a fence to sit on, the weakly-hearted liberals will spend their time building one."  
(Bernadette Devlin)

During the summer of '84 as the prostitutes tried to fight the injunction, they desperately searched for allies. The Archbishop of the Anglican Church in Vancouver claimed to be one. The feminists, including the prostitutes, who occupied the church got fooled for a while. Gay rights activist, Rob Joyce, tried to be of use by using his position on the Board of the West End Community Centre. However, both the Christians at the church and the 'proper citizens' of the West End managed to spend all their time (and succeeded in stealing much of ours) on the question of "what are the alternatives to prostitution?" They were willing to endlessly discuss what social agency should be established to reeducate, redirect, or otherwise police the prostitutes. When all was said and done, there was only one man from either place who joined us in the persistent demand to get the injunction off the backs of prostitutes.

Women constitute half the world's population, perform nearly two-thirds of its work hours, receive one-tenth of the world's income, and own less than one-hundredth of the world's property.

## The Rape Relief Files

Speech by Nicole Kennedy to West End Community Centre's Forum on Prostitution -- September 26, 1984.

I am a member of a group of feminist women. We staff a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week rape crisis line. Three years ago we bought a house in Vancouver. We bought it because we know that women need many such places -- somewhere to go to get shelter and food when the man you live with is beating you.

We talk with about 700 women each year who have been violently attacked, mostly by men they know: women who have been raped, beaten, abducted, kept prisoner in their homes. We have done a lot of public education about violence against women and we have worked with women in their workplaces and in their neighbourhoods to publicly expose rapists and men who harass us by leafletting, postering and public demonstrations against rape, such as the annual Take Back the Night march.

Recently we have spoken out and demonstrated against the public nuisance injunction, including a rowdy march through the West End last June. We have spoken many times to the press, radio and TV to explain our opposition to this law which we think not only attacks prostitutes, but interferes with the freedom of all women to walk our streets whenever and wherever we want. We have written a leaflet and printed buttons identifying the wearer as "Public Nuisance #31" and distributed thousands of them.

I was one of the women who occupied Christ Church Cathedral to protest the injunction and publicly expose the violence by police and johns against those who prostitute themselves on the street.

I've come to speak on this panel tonight because I think I have something to say about women -- and it is women who are by far the majority of those who must sell their bodies on the street to survive. I want to speak from my own experience as a woman in this world and from the experience of hundreds of women I have known in the course of four years in the rape crisis centre and in an emergency shelter for women.

We are feminists who are working for the liberation of all women, are fighting for women who prostitute to have a better life. Our goals are to remove all the obstacles to our freedom including poverty and racism. Sixty percent of women who prostitute are single mothers living below the poverty line, and 50% in Vancouver are women of colour. When we can put an end to all forms of injustice and discrimination, whether based on sex, economic class or race, women will no longer be forced to sell such an intimate part of themselves to survive.

The focus of this forum is alternatives to street life, or prostitution. When I consider alternatives, I think of the immediate reforms we must fight for which will improve the situation for those who are prostitutes, and for all of us. I also think about what fundamental social change is necessary before women are able to freely choose how we will live our lives.

The list of reforms we want includes: higher welfare rates, decent and affordable housing, daycare which is accessible for everyone who needs it, emergency shelters for women and children on the street, more shelters for women escaping violent men.

Some excerpts from "Prostitution in Canada", by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, published in 1983.

Much of the information in the chapter entitled "Prostitution, who, what, where?" was taken from three sociological studies conducted in Eastville, Halifax and Vancouver. If you put the three studies together, the average age is about 23 for adult women who work the streets.

Although there are women of middle age and beyond who work as prostitutes, in general they may have less choice of areas to work in and they are generally less able to charge the rate younger women do.

The Vancouver study asked what age

## The Injunction Fight

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Many women (60%) who are prostitutes are single mothers. Right now, welfare rates are often only slightly more than what it costs to rent a place to live. Higher welfare rates and cheaper housing would mean that many women would not have to work on the street. It would also mean that women would be able to leave a batterer upon whom they and their children are financially dependent. Many women right now are forced to remain with a batterer or leave and prostitute themselves to support their children. More accessible daycare would mean that women would be freer to look for work and to get training for jobs. We would also be more able to support ourselves on the relatively poor pay that women do earn in the workplace. Now there are not enough daycares and those that do exist are very expensive, often costing one-third to one-half of the average woman's paycheque. Emergency shelters would make it possible to break out of the cycle of prostitution by giving adults and children who are prostituting shelter, food and time to think and plan in a safe and supportive environment.

Another reform which would immediately improve the lives of all those who are out on the street is to decriminalise prostitution. It is grossly unjust to label someone a criminal, a label which lasts a lifetime, when they are trying to survive by using one of the few means available to them. Not only is that not a solution to prostitution, it actually encourages the continuation of it because people's attitudes are influenced a lot by the law. Many employers, for example, will refuse to hire a woman who is known as a prostitute. The label of criminal also justifies a lot of abuse by johns, by police and by the general public of prostitutes. Little public support means not much strength to resist attacks such as the recent public nuisance injunction.

In the past, all the authorities' attempts to control prostitution have been primarily directed against women, and not against the chain of men who buy or control the sale of women, including the johns, the pimps, the multi-million dollar purveyors of pornography, like Jim Pattison. Buying women, or profiting from the sale of women's bodies is equivalent to rape, when it is a matter of survival for the women who are selling.

Prostitution will not come to an end until women as a group get out from under the boot of men's sexist treatment of us. One in four of us will be raped during our lives, usually by a man we know and trust. We want men to stop raping us. We want men to stop raping children. We know 80% of prostitutes were raped as children. We are not objects to be used and cast aside. Men need to stop behaving as if we are.

We want men to stop battering women they are living with, to stop threatening violence. We want men to stop buying pornography which teaches that sex is about power and submission, and that women love to be raped, tortured and beaten. It influences how men behave sexually with us and influences how we perceive ourselves. For example, pornography's message to me is that my woman's body is for any man to use to get his rocks off. We want men to share their money with us and not demand sex in exchange as their right. We want men to fight with us for more job training, more job opportunities, for equal pay for work of equal value. We need more options than the traditional low-paying jobs allotted to women or we won't have the choice to be independent of individual men. We want men to share equally in the responsibility for children or we will not have the freedom, if we want it, to do more in our lives than raise our children.

When men give up the power they use over us in these ways, we will not have to sell our bodies to make a living.

It takes an enormous amount of determination and strength, I would say almost superhuman, to survive as a woman in this society without losing most of your confidence, self-respect and personal dignity, to say nothing of your physical well-being. Women do survive and do most of the nurturing of humanity at the same time. When there are more of us saying we deserve better and more of us fighting to get it, we will be even stronger.

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PUBLIC NUISANCE #31

PUBLIC NUISANCE #31

women had started prostituting, and the answers varied from 12 to 29 years, with half beginning in their late teens. It is not yet known whether today's juvenile female prostitutes will continue the work when they become adults -- if they do, the average age of introduction to prostitution obviously will decrease.

The studies showed that prostitute women tended to be from a lower socio-economic background, from the working class. (Many people familiar with the world of prostitution feel that there are always some prostitutes who have considerable education and who come from a middle class background, although these women do not seem to represent a large proportion of prostitutes).

All of the women who had been charged

for prostitution in the Vancouver study were on welfare at the time of their interviews. Twenty-four percent of all the women had never had a regular job; 75% had had some experience as typists, tellers, waitresses or baby-sitters. Several had worked as go-go dancers or strippers.

Thirty-three percent of the women were supporting at least one child.

Closely related to the economic vulnerability these women experience are their rather tenuous links to an established social identity. They often did not have social insurance cards, driver licenses, health care cards or credit ratings.

JULY 5, 1984

NEWS RELEASE

A legal precedent has been set today.

We are furious that the Attorney General of this province has been granted the power to name a group of people "public nuisances" and restrict their right and freedom to be on the streets of this city. He has chosen to first target prostitutes because he thinks there is little public support or understanding of them. He is punishing mostly women, many of them single mothers and third world women, all of them poor. He is punishing people for the way they have found to survive financially, without providing another means for them to survive.

It will now be possible for any group of people to be restricted in the same way. It may be homosexuals or lesbians, activists, the disabled or any other minority group without money to protect themselves. Women's freedom on the streets is already restricted by our very realistic fear of sexual assault. This injunction, and others that may follow it, further restricts our freedom to walk where we want or dress how we want.

At the same time, those who are largely responsible for the noise, traffic and other problems being complained of -- the men who buy the bodies of women, young men and children -- are not being stopped. The men who harass women on the streets are the real "nuisances" and they are not mentioned in this injunction.

It is obvious to us that Brian Smith, in his "war" on prostitutes, is using this injunction as a direct attack on poor women who happen to be prostitutes.

Brian Smith is sticking to the, by now obvious, Sacred policy of pacifying rich property owners in this attack on the needs and rights of poor people.

We are furious that it is once again poor women who are being attacked and that the courts, namely Justice McEachern, are participating in giving an already powerful government more weapons to use against us.

\* \* \* \* \*

Brian Smith, We Have Rights  
Women on the Streets at Night!

Interim Injunction Granted on July 4, 1984 -- An Attack on Prostitutes

... This is the actual text of the injunction.

It is ordered that the Defendants listed in Schedule A hereto and anyone acting on their behalf, and anyone having knowledge of this Order be strictly enjoined and restrained, and an injunction is hereby granted enjoining and restraining them from engaging in or causing a nuisance in an area of the City of Vancouver commonly known as the West End and more particularly described hereinafter, and without restricting the generality of the foregoing, strictly enjoining and restraining the said Defendants and anyone acting on their behalf and anyone having knowledge of this order from:

- (1) engaging in any public conduct or activity apparently for the purposes of male or female prostitution, or any public conduct or activity which is calculated by itself or in conjunction with any conduct or activity by another person or persons to cause or contribute to a nuisance
- (2) publicly offering themselves or publicly appearing to offer themselves directly or indirectly for the purposes of male or female prostitution by words or without words, or by actions, gestures, loitering or otherwise;
- (3) Using or trespassing upon any public property including streets, lanes, sidewalks, boulevards, parks, or school properties for the purposes of male or female prostitution;
- (4) trespassing upon any private property for the purposes of male or female prostitution;
- (5) (As in particular (5) of the Notice of Motion )

etc. (state geographical area)

... this was given out by the judge to the law

PUBLIC  
NUISANCE  
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Speech delivered by Joan McMahon on August 16, 1984 in front of the court house.

Today in this courthouse, businessmen Bennie Tessler and Karl Stein of the Chateau Granville are applying to extend the injunction even further eastward labeling 15 more people, mostly women, as public and private nuisances.

We already know that the term "public nuisance" is a cover-up. It is a cover up because there are laws in place to stop the acts that are being named public nuisance -- acts like noise, littering, loitering and because the people who are largely responsible for these acts, the men who buy sex from women and children, have not been served with this injunction. It is also a cover-up because we know that the law-makers (in this case the Attorney General, Brian Smith, Judge McEachern and the Social Credit government) are not interested in ending prostitution.

They are interested in making sure that the women who prostitute are kept under more control. Extending this injunction means an increase in violence for the women on the street because they are being forced into a less lighted, more industrial area of town where pimps, police and tricks can have more direct control over them.

Sargeant Lucy from the Vancouver City Police says: "We intend to serve anyone who is a prostitute, male or female." "We'll serve them throughout greater Vancouver." "If we make any observation of soliciting for companionship, they will be charged."

We say that women all over the city are now even more fearful of how we look walk, and whom we talk to.

The injunction was to be served only in the area in the West End. Lucy has already shown us that he intends to break his own laws.

To date we also know that right wing officials in two other cities in this country are beginning the same kind of anti-woman attacks. Niagara Falls and Halifax have begun proceedings for injunctions against prostitutes.

I have had the opportunity to spend a lot of time in the West End lately, and I continue to be outraged that many women are denied the freedom to walk these streets. This city is ours, all of ours not just for a few rich property owners and businessmen.

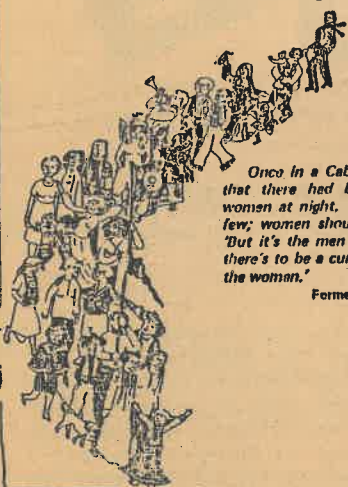
It is great to see you here today! To me it says that you too want freedom for all people; that you, too, know that when one minority is attacked, we are all attacked; that you, too, know that prostitutes are the first targets being named 'public nuisances', and that gays, Native people, immigrants, or whomever they choose will be the next target; that you, too, know that prostitution is a hard and degrading way to make one's living, and that we must support prostitutes and fight for more alternatives; that you, too, know that it is only when we are united and strong that we will win in this fight to stop this injunction and others.

This attack must be stopped!

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# CURFEW FOR MEN

## not the prostitutes



Once in a Cabinet, we had to deal with the fact that there had been an outbreak of assaults on women at night. One minister ..... suggested a curfew; women should stay home after dark. I said, 'But it's the men who are attacking the women. If there's to be a curfew, let the men stay at home, not the woman.'

Former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir

PUBLIC  
NUISANCE  
\*31

Thirty, Forty, Many More  
You Can't Keep Us Locked Indoors