

first use
of term
"radical
feminism" in
Solanas'
press statement
June 1968

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I am holding this press conference at the request of Valerie Solanas. I hope to accomplish two things: (1) to make you aware of the injustice you, the media, have been perpetrating on Miss Solanas, and (2) the general and acute pattern of injustice meted out by law and in practice, particularly by the media and the criminal system, against accused women.

I have never, up until today, met Miss Solanas, but I had heard of her since about six months ago as the leader of a radical and militant feminist group called S.C.U.M., the Society for Cutting up Men. This group was described to me by feminists as one of a number of others I am familiar with which emphasize the male-supremacy or racism aspect of the woman problem (some of the typical literature from these groups may be submitted in the Solanas case [for individual related comments, see: David Riesman's commencement address to Mount Holyoke last week where he discusses male supremacy and the fact that just as the black problem is really the problem of white people, the woman problem is the problem of men, i.e. racism; a black power woman leader in Philadelphia recently commented ironically "the Woman's Movement is distinguished as the only political group with a war on, and no enemy"])). The position of these groups, as with their counterparts in the black movement, is that their oppressors are not only responsible for the oppression of the oppressed in the standard civil rights causes, e.g. in employment and education, but that the oppressor, the whites or males, are also responsible because of their disease, bred by power, of the major evils of the world--i.e. because oppressors by nature oppress by habit, they are barbaric and are responsible for Vietnam, poverty, the general brutalization of mankind.

Only two things, I heard in the past, distinguished Miss Solanas from these other groups: (1) her literary ability, and (2) her separatist notions. A well-known drama critic has described her as a "female Genet" and stated that her considerable talents had been recognized by several authorities.

If you replace "black" and "white" for "female" and "male" in Miss Solanas' theories, they are contemporaneous, and neither Garvey nor DuBois, nor even Zionism, is considered that shocking today. Whatever argument you address to Miss Solanas' political theories must be addressed to the others as well.

Finally, as I understand Miss Solanas' theories, she further adopts the classic revolutionary position that the oppressor is unredeemable and must be expelled from the community, done away with. A friend of hers reported to me that when Miss Solanas was pressed on how she would rid the world of the oppressor she paused and replied, "Well, you could segregate them. Men have such weak egos that if they were left by themselves they'd die off."

Miss Solanas has a fairly well-known political position. She may be advanced or radical as a feminist but she is certainly not unrelated to that movement. She is not a freakish lunatic. The press has ignored her action in any political context; her action of shooting Andy Warhol has been treated as purely personal and she herself has been attacked through her sexuality. Her political position has been recognized indirectly, even sneakily. She has had every intended insult thrown at her at random. She has been speculated as lesbian, as a prostitute, as asexual--inconsistencies notwithstanding. These are classic names all feminists are called--always to evade the political nature of their acts. She is described as an actress, while her recognition is as a writer and radical feminist. The press has tried to prejudice her in every way they could: as a woman, as a human being, as an artist, as a political figure. And what about Andy Warhol? This is the first time the media have even brought him up clean?

The media must stop manipulating the news!

Alice Crimmins was judged to have killed her children because of evidence that she had love affairs. There was insufficient evidence that she had killed her children. Linda LeClair was publicly stoned by the media and her future very nearly ruined, not for breaking housing regulations and protesting the discriminatory freedom of movement laws against women (a significant part of the 1967 U.N.'s Declaration on the Status of Women). L'Affaire LeClair was presented as a free love issue. I was with Miss LeClair at times when she spoke to the press and that is not how she presented it. Again, within a couple of months, a woman was judged on an irrelevancy, but curiously enough, always the same irrelevancy--sex.

Alice Crimmins was tried by an all male jury--a jury of her peers?--er, through the evidence that was presented, a jury of cuckold? What percentage of women will be on Solanas' jury? A representative half, I hope. But the laws on jury duty vary from state to state for women, and here in New York it is not mandatory that women serve so that, according to complaints brought to me, employers cannot exert such pressure on men.

can exert pressure on women not to serve and
The interesting aspects of recent deviant behavior by and towards women go unnoticed. What are the political implications of the battered child syndrome? Could it be an unconscious rejection of the feminine role? What about the searing rates for women in major crimes--they've gone from shoplifting to armed robbery. What about the fact that, according to published statistics, the only class of crimes on the decrease is rape? One gentleman's response to this was a pause, and then "I guess women look less feminine nowadays." Less like a victim?

The National Organization for Women has a case presently against the state of Pennsylvania because by law it is mandatory that a woman, but not a man, be given the maximum sentence for robbery. A N.O.W. lawyer in Oregon is charging the state for prosecuting the prostitute but not her customer. Charges against the city of New York are being filed by the New York chapter for the girls arrested in the Columbia demonstrations for indignities such as being forced to strip and follow through twice on a procedure fondly known as "steep and squat", before the police, according to the A.C.L.U., had any right to make this search.

Sugar Ray Robinson is suing the City for \$250,000 for making this search on his wife, according to the "Times" of last week.

Valerie Solanas says in her Manifesto that the world must be rid of men to wipe the leer off the face of the earth. I can't speak for the world, but the 6 o'clock T.V. News regularly leers at human rights for women. It has taken a sheeting to make the front page. It is the media and, thus, the public that endorses violence; no one listens to hearings and peaceful demonstrations. N.O.W. has been working by every legitimate means to desegregate the help-wanted ads for ever a year: when they are not ignored, they're laughed at. How many women correspondents appear by by-line on the front page of major newspapers? They're relegated to the "Woman's Section" along with women's rights unless women's rights become important, i.e. violent, and then ~~they~~ *they* move up front and ~~are~~ given to a male reporter who knows nothing about the subject!

High government officials have said to me: We can't deal with the woman problem now; black people are rioting. Is this a recommendation? I am trying to tell

you that Valerie Selanas' act was in large part a politically motivated act. If society refuses to listen to reason, I fear that violent acts by women will increase sharply. Society must not and, in fact, cannot deny women human rights any longer.

Ti-Grace Atkinson

Ti-Grace Atkinson
Criminal Court
New York City
June 13, 1968

Grace rule presenting resolution from the Comm

NOW-New York

Membership Meeting June 20, 1968

RESOLVED: That NOW-New York repudiate the implications of NOW support and interest in the article headlined "Valeria Solanis a Heroine to Feminists," which appeared in the June 14th New York Times under the byline of Marylin Bender;

That we take unmistakably clear action to assure the public and our membership that NOW has not even considered or been connected with this case in any way;

That Ti-Grace Atkinson and Florynce Kennedy were speaking only for themselves and had no right to use the name of NOW or imply any interest on our part.

We further resolve that

a) the Executive Committee shall fully investigate this incident and report to the membership

and b) that the membership shall be polled by mail and given the opportunity to vote on resignation, censure or any other step that might seem indicated.

Background: On Friday, June 14 in the New York Times an article appeared which linked NOW with the Valerie Solanis case and with SCUM (Society for Cutting up Men). The article implied that NOW considers Valerie Solanis a heroine to feminists and quoted remarks by Ti-Grace Atkinson and Florynce Kennedy as NOW representatives appearing in support of Valerie Solanis at a court hearing.

In fact, neither NOW nor NOW-New York has even considered this case or taken any stand; (therefore the members mentioned above had no right to make statements about the case.)

but we didn't!

as members, certainly not

④ Raval ruling

July 18th

- ① B.I.C. - Canada*
- ② Thank the membership*
- ③ Bender*

implying we're already paid, we didn't already did we're to watch for new statements

Valerie Solanas a Heroine to Feminists

By MARYLIN BENDER

VALERIE SOLANAS, the 28-year-old actress-writer who is charged with shooting Andy Warhol, the pop artist and underground filmmaker, on June 3, was cast yesterday in the role of a heroine of the revitalized feminist movement.

Two representatives of NOW (National Organization

for Women), which seeks "true equality for women," appeared in State Supreme Court maintaining that Miss Solanas was being prejudicially treated because she is a woman. Her actions are politically, not sexually, motivated, they said.

Miss Solanas was characterized as "one of the most important spokeswomen of

the feminist movement" by her lawyer, Florynce R. Kennedy, who moved for a writ of habeas corpus on the ground that she is being improperly detained in the psychiatric ward of Elmhurst City Hospital in Queens.

"She has been called a female Genet, but she has not been taken seriously," Miss Kennedy told State Supreme Court Justice Thomas Dickens, who denied the motion and sent Miss Solanas back to the hospital for further tests.

Clad in the beige chinos, gold sweater, navy turtle neck and blue sneakers she was wearing when she surrendered to the police in Times Square, Miss Solanas made several vociferous statements in the courtroom about her treatment by the press and psychiatrists.

Miss Kennedy, who once represented H. Rap Brown, the black power leader, is a member of NOW's most militant affiliate, the New York chapter. A black and red button inscribed with "Freedom for Women" was pinned to her brown hat.

The president of the New York chapter, Ti-Grace Atkinson, was also in the courtroom. Miss Atkinson, a willowy blond divorcee who is a doctoral candidate in political philosophy at Columbia University, wore her "Freedom for Women" button pinned to her dress. She said she had never met Miss Solanas but was concerned with the "injustice meted out by law . . . against accused women."

Miss Atkinson repeated the comparison between Miss Solanas and Jean Genet, a French writer who has spent

most of his life in prison and who links power with sexuality. Miss Solanas had shown Mr. Warhol a play she had written about a man-hating panhandler. It ends with a mother strangling her son. Miss Solanas had also played a lesbian in the Warhol film "I, A Man."

Answering a series of questions submitted to her behind the locked gates of the psychiatric ward yesterday afternoon, Miss Solanas said:

"Genet just reports, despite what Sartre and DeBeauvoir, two over-rated windbags, say about the existential implications of his work. I, on the other hand, am a social propagandist." She also described herself as "a superfeminist" and "a revolutionary."

She said that her goals were stated in the SCUM manifesto she composed last year, which she intends to submit as her legal brief at her trial. SCUM is an acronym for "Society for Cutting Up Men." The manifesto calls for the overthrow of the government and the elimination of the male sex. Miss Solanas denied yesterday that she meant elimination by murder.

"I think she means that men control society and look what a mess they have made," Miss Kennedy said.

She predicted that many other explosive actions by women would take place in the coming months.

"The woman thing is going to be like the campus thing," she said. "Women may be the third force to link up with youth and black people."