"In Germany, the Nazis first came for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time there was no one left to speak for me." -Martin Niemoeller- a German WWI veteran, who later opposed Hitler and was promptly thrown into a Nazi concentration camp.

Sidestepping Gay Rights

Michele Lish's legal battle to save her teaching career raises several issues that deserve attention. The lawyer in the case has advised that gay and feminist support for Michele be kept quiet and out of the public eye. Public controversy could be used against Ms. Lish as it could be argued that it interferes with her professional relationship with students and parents. The defense apparently is being built on legal and contractual grounds regarding tenure, carefully avoiding the issue of gay rights.

The courts are not immune to public pressure. The numerous racist, sexist, homophobic, and politically motivated injustices perpetrated by the courts, the most famous being the Rosenberg and Scottsboro cases, are frightening to recount. The self proclaimed New Right is organizing their forces nationwide to pressure the courts, the congress, and all other social institutions to deny the rights of minorities, women, gays, and labor. In Anchorage a small number of right wing homophobics have been holding meetings and circulating petitions demanding that Michele be fired; presumably they would like to purge all gays from the school system.

Public controversy already exists. For us to sit quietly by "avoiding public controversy" is nothing more than suicidal. The only real protection for gays and their jobs is united action by all gays, feminists, and working people who recognize that a threat to one is a threat to all; united action to pressure the courts, the employers, the government, and all other centers of power over our lives into respecting our rights.

The legalistic defense being taken in this case may or may not be the most likely tactic to get a favorable decision for Michele. Regardless of the outcome, this approach gains no ground for gay rights. Michele and other gays will still be subject to discrimination, harassment, and the real threat of losing their jobs for being gay.

This time it is Michele's job that is threatened. Who's job will it be next time?

--Juneau Common Ground Collective

The school board hearing to decide whether Michelle Lish will be allowed to continue teaching will be held in Anchorage on January 5th. It will be open to the public.

SHORT BITS

Sourcebook

An excellent source of information is the book "Alternatives in Print/ Social Change Publications" for 1977-78. It is a catalogue listing almost every progressive newspaper, information service, and print collective in the US. The book also lists publication titles and services of these groups, plus addresses and subscription prices. To send for this book write to

Alternatives in Print
New Glide Publications
330 Ellis Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

The price is $8.95 plus $.50 postage.

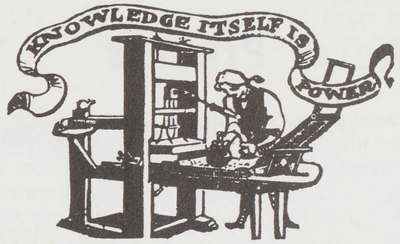
Ruby's Tuesday Night

In Anchorage there is a woman's coffeehouse, Ruby's, at The Cauldron, 328 'G' Street, every Tuesday from 5 to 10 pm. On Tuesday evenings the restaurant is operated by the Coffeehouse Collective for women only giving women a chance to get together for music, conversation and general get-acquainted bullshit sessions. People new to town are especially welcome. Drop in when you're visiting Anchorage from Juneau or Fairbanks or anywhere. The welcome is warm and the feeling is great.

---Ruth Sheridan

Data Bank

The state Division of Economic Enterprise has recently announced a new data system which is available to Alaskan residents. The 'Alaska Economic Information and Reporting System' puts out a quarterly report with over 800 items including average wages by industry, the going price of fish, energy consumption by fuel type, the cost of fuel, population by age, net migration induced by new development, and other data describing the oil, fishing and timber industries.



Any 25 items will be supplied free by requesting them. Over 25 and under 100 items are $1.00 apiece —— for instance 78 items for $78.00. The whole set for any quarter can be purchased for $250.00.

The best way to use the system is to write and request a list of all the items (variables) available and then to pick out the information most important to you. Then write in and request your printouts. Write to

Division of Economic Enterprise
Pouch EE
Juneau, AK 99811

This information service can be an important organizing tool —— whether you are negotiating fish prices with the cannery or wages with your boss or if you are planning an electrical generator for your community. The data service was originally intended for businessmen and government officials but it can also be used to advance the economic rights of Alaska's working class and rural people. By mid 1978 the Division of Economic Enterprise plans to make this data available on a regional basis.

LNS/cpf