
Unite and Fight!
Jobs & Rights for Women



*Resistance Against the
Cutbacks*

*Rally and Demonstration on
International Women's Day
March 10, 1979*

For most women, 1978 has been a year of struggle. As unemployment and inflation continue to rise, government and big business are trying to unload the burden of the economic crisis onto women. There is a conscious and concerted effort to push us out of the labour force. Our employment rights have been severely restricted at a time when we need jobs more than ever. Drastic cutbacks, discriminatory legislation directed specifically at women, include UIC benefit amendments, termination of women's outreach programs, reduction in job-training allowances, changes in family allowance benefits and elimination of women as a priority in unemployment strategies. We are told that working women are responsible for the rise in unemployment, the breakdown of the family, and the rise of juvenile crime. These are the effects of an economy in crisis, not of women working. We are being pressured to leave our jobs and get out the labour force altogether. They want us back in the home where we'll hide the full extent of unemployment and bear the burden of an even heavier workload due to unemployment and social service cuts.

WOMEN ARE FIGHTING BACK. This past year we have fought and are fighting for our rights in the workplace. We have organized to oppose changes in UIC legislation. We've fought against the attempt to shut down women's services. We've organized to oppose the attacks on lesbians and gay men. Individually and collectively, we have organized to resist the attempts to take away the gains we've struggled long and hard to win. Government and big business have not found it easy to resolve their crisis at our expense.

FULL EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS FOR WOMEN!

- Unemployment is hitting women hard. The official unemployment rate in November was 9.3% for women. But even these figures hide the true situation. Many women give up looking for jobs or are forced to take part-time work. These women are among the "hidden unemployed" who aren't counted in government unemployment statistics.
- The Cullen cutbacks in the UIC program are another in the series of attacks on working women. These measures reduce benefits, increase the number of work weeks required and eliminate benefits for part-time workers working less than 20 hours a week. These changes discriminate heavily against women since we are the last hired and first fired, on the low end of the pay scale and make up the majority of part-time workers.
- Large number of working women are concentrated in the public sector. This means that government cutbacks and measures like Bill C-22 which attempts to lower the wages of civil servants and limit their right to free collective bargaining will hit women workers particularly hard. Even when we do manage to find and keep jobs, our position as workers is growing more vulnerable. We still earn only 59% of what men earn, and the gap is widening. Our right to unions, to decent wages, to good working conditions and benefits — fundamental rights of all workers — are increasingly under attack. Our opportunities for equal work and equal pay will continue to grow slimmer. The struggles and resistance of our union sisters this year — at Fleck, Puretex, York University — have been important signals that women will not be passive in the face of these attacks.

FULL FUNDING FOR SOCIAL SERVICES!

- Day care waiting lists grow longer and longer. But the government continues to restrict its funding, to phase out spaces, especially in infant care, and to reduce subsidies. These limitations on already inadequate childcare facilities not only create serious blocks to women trying to find jobs in a time of inflation. They also make it more difficult for women who have jobs to continue. Childcare is available to fewer women today than three years ago.

•Maternity benefits have been cutback.

•Family allowances have been cut. The income tax rebate which is supposed to make up for this comes only once a year, not every month when we need it — and it goes to the husband.

•Hospital spaces, support for the elderly, the handicapped and mentally ill are being cut. Women have to take up the work and responsibilities the government is unloading on the family.

•Funding for women's services is being denied. Opportunities for Advancement, Women's Counselling, Referral and Education Centre, Times Change, Rape Crisis Centre and other services are under threat of closure and cutback. This denial of women's needs will deprive us of the support we need to cope with and alter the reality of our lives. The economic crisis puts additional strains on women — increased violence, family breakdown, desertion and poverty. We need these services and the support they provide now more than ever.

These cutbacks threaten our ability to challenge women's traditional role in the home and on the job. Our refusal to give in, the decision to dig in our heels and successfully resist the shutdown of WREC and other services are important milestones in our struggle to resist and fight back.

CONTROL OF OUR BODIES — FREE ACCESS TO ABORTION AND CONTRACEPTION! NO FORCED STERILIZATION!

•Anti-abortion groups are organizing to make abortion a key issue in the up-coming federal election. They continue to press for even more restrictions on our right to abortion, already severely limited under federal law. With their well-financed media campaigns and moves to gain control of hospital boards they are trying to shut off our access to abortion completely.

•Immigrant women, in particular, still face forced sterilization as the price for an abortion.

•Federal funding for family planning has been cut by half in the past year.

The right to choose whether or not to have children is by no means secure. The social and economic conditions we are struggling against rob too many women of this choice. With rising prices, lagging wages, inadequate day care facilities and the general climate of economic insecurity, many women are forced not to have the children they want.

END HARRASSMENT OF LESBIANS!

Right-wing organizations like Renaissance Canada are part of an organized political attack aimed at eroding the few advances we've made in our rights to determine our own sexuality, free from violence, coercion and harrassment.

The right to control our bodies and our sexuality is an issue for all women. We must resist any further restrictions to lesbian rights. We must continue to fight for protection under the human rights codes, for job security, custody rights for lesbian mothers, and for freedom from harrassment.

Our resistance must continue!

***We urge all who support our struggle to join us
March 10, International Women's Day***

**Rally
and
Demonstration
Saturday, March 10
12:45 pm
Convocation Hall,
University of Toronto**

**All Women
Celebration
March 10, 8 pm
St. Paul's Centre,
121 Avenue Rd.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 789-4541.

Send donations and endorsements to:

**The International Women's Day Coalition
P.O. Box 70,
Station F,
Toronto, M4Y 2L4**