

Mar/Apr 1987

# Rebel Girls' Rag

A FORUM OF WOMEN'S RESISTANCE c75

## JUSTICE FOR CLEANERS

by Sheryl Boswell

At the time of writing, the 37 Postal Cleaners at the South Central Postal Facility, the giant sorting station on Eastern Ave., are headed into the fifth week of their strike against Canada's Capital Building Services for a first contract.

On January 28, about 80 postal station cleaners and supporters deluged the Yonge St. post office (previously the main post office) about to close its doors the end of March. The protesters staged a "buy-in", purchasing one-cent stamps with \$20 bills and creating chaos for about an hour.

IWDC was happy to be asked to speak at the rally. It's very important for the women's movement and the broader community to join with the labour movement to express our vocal and concrete support for the striking cleaners.

The wage scale presently being paid is beneath any workers' dignity. As Erna Kunstek, a 45-year-old mother of two and cleaner at South Central said, "I went on strike because I cannot live on \$4.50 an hour. I don't want luxurious wages, I just want to survive. I want survival wages." Carol Henry, also a cleaner at South Central, has found it difficult to buy groceries for her three children. "Slavery wasn't abolished. It's still going strong in the 1980."

The sporadic but continuous strikes of cleaners throughout Canada are aimed against the contractors who employ them and the Canada Post Corporation. Canada Post has made it their mandate to privatize postal services and contract out Canada Posts' workers. As more post offices close down and the use of small, privately-run stores increases, the strength of the union decreases.



Cleaners and supporters deluge the Yonge St. post office

Photo: F. Rooney

Private contractors are well-known for their low wages and lack of the most basic of rights for which unions have fought many years.

Already, three Postal Cleaner collective agreements have been settled, most recently in Halifax. Post office cleaners used to earn between \$8.00 and \$12.00 an hour. As members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, they also had benefits, and rights. As a result of privatization and contracting out, workers are now fighting for: better wages, rights and job security. To add insult to injury, men make 15 cents more than women!, so whereas women make \$4.50 an hour, men make \$4.65. Definitely not a living wage!

Many actions have been planned during the month of February and the cleaners will be a very visible force at the International Women's Day celebrations, March 7. We've learned over and over again that strikes are won on the picket line with broad community

support. It's time to put an end to contracting out and exploitation.

For more information, call the Toronto local of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, 461-0711.

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## Rebel Girls Rag

A FORUM OF WOMEN'S RESISTANCE

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We are a socialist-feminist group which operates on the principle that mass action is our most effective instrument of change. We believe that the oppression of women touches every aspect of our lives and that the liberation of women will require fundamental changes in the structure of society.

We hold bi-weekly meetings where our policy and overall direction are determined. Smaller committees work on specific events or issues or in different constituencies.

We welcome new members. For more information phone Nancy at 531-6608.

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## EDITORIAL: FIGHTING RACISM AND SEXISM TOGETHER

"Fighting Racism and Sexism Together" is the theme of International Women's Day, 1987. The specific issues being addressed are Native Self-Determination, Choice, Affirmative Action and Housing. This focus clearly flows from the lessons of the 1986 coalition, in which women of colour and white women worked together under the theme "Women Say No to Racism from Toronto to South Africa". The political and structural problems of that coalition led to a recognition that the women's movement must fully incorporate an anti-racist perspective into feminist analysis and practice. White women had to learn that there is a crucial difference between viewing anti-racism as one demand among many, and truly integrating it into feminist issues and methods of work.

Black, Chinese, South Asian, Japanese, South African and Native women worked in the 1986 coalition and challenged the predominately white, feminist community to build a new women's movement. A women's movement which has not only the participation, but the leadership of women of colour. The 1987 coalition is a product of that challenge. It is a changed organization. One of the reasons for this change, is the dedicated work of a planning committee, which met through the spring and fall. This group of women of colour and white women examined the experience of the coalition, the evaluations, and the recommendations from 1986. It presented the results of this process to an all day meeting in December, and set the stage for organizational and political discussions. These discussions resulted in the coalition accepting a new basis of unity recognizing the differences among us of class, race, sexuality and ability, and outlining the basis on which we would work together. It developed a clearer more accessible structure, and clarified both decision making, and the group/caucus mechanism. It also initiated an accessibility committee which was long overdue. Obviously real change is an ongoing process, and the coalition will have to evaluate the impact of these measures.

The Black Women's Collective, which last year played a very dominant role, has no representatives. But members of other organizations such as Lesbians of Colour, The South Asian Women's Group, Women Working with Immigrant Women, the Coalition of Visible Minority Women and a number of native groups are very active. They are providing organizational and political leadership in an atmosphere which demands dialogue and accountability. The women of colour who have chosen to work in the coalition have made a political decision to develop a stronger anti-racist consciousness in the broader women's movement. They expect white women to deal with the economic and political structures which maintain racism in our society, but also to deal with the personal and organizational ways in which racism has become institutionalized in our lives and our politics. Recognizing existing antagonisms and contradictions is crucial if we are to break down barriers, and build the necessary unity to overcome the racist, capitalist system which maintains our oppressions.

The March 8th coalition is one of the few vehicles in Toronto in which women can work together, build on-going alliances, and develop a new politic which speaks to the reality of every woman's life, whether she is a woman of colour, poor, working class, lesbian, immigrant, disabled or old. This coalition would have lost its potential to be a cutting edge, and certainly its significance as a political force in this city, if it had not been able to continue dealing politically with the question of racism. It is the women of colour in the coalition who have brought the political dynamism and direction, which is enabling the women's movement as a whole to broaden the parameters of political struggle in this city. Anti-racism must continue to be a major focus in our movement. Capitalism benefits tremendously from the racism which divides us and distorts our lives. Those of us who are white materially benefit, and this fact is certainly among the major obstacles to unity among women of different races. Although objective difference are significant, we don't believe that they carry with them automatic and fixed conclusions about the possibilities of shared political work. Hopefully the March 8th Coalition has shown this, and will provide positive lessons for the future.



# Co-opting Abortion Rights

by Mary Gellatly

The long-awaited Powell report, commissioned by the Liberal government to examine access to hospital abortion services, was released January 29. The report provides a devastating critique of access to "therapeutic abortions" in Ontario and provides the pro-choice movement with clear documentation of the problems under the current system. Not surprisingly, the report fails to address operation and legalization of free-standing clinics providing medically insured abortions and repeal of the abortion law. The government's restricted terms of reference for the study demonstrate an attempt to re-frame the abortion issue by narrowly focusing on hospital's abortion service delivery.

The report not only documents the critical access problem and unacceptable delays, but details the inferior medical care women receive in often unsupportive environments. Dr. Marion Powell reports that 90% of health care workers interviewed believe Therapeutic Abortion Committees (TACs) cause unnecessary delays, serve no useful purpose and should be abolished. All of Powell's recommendations, however, include

the continuation of TACs appointed by hospital boards. Indeed she goes to elaborate lengths to ensure their role, even suggesting a "tele-conference TAC" to work in conjunction with doctors travelling to smaller communities. Moreover, the report examines how women are affected by the negative attitudes and stigma associated with abortion, yet fails to even discuss the ultimate affront women face when the ability to make decisions about one's body (and future) is taken away and placed in the hands of three anonymous doctors to whom there is no right of appeal.

Page after page, the unworkability of the existing abortion law and resultant hospital delivery system is established. Powell, however, presents recommendations which merely tinker with some of the problems. With the exception of two recommendations (i.e. to improve counselling and allow general practitioners, rather than gynecologists, to perform procedures), the remaining recommendations fail to grapple with the substantive problems raised in the report. The recommendations of the Powell report simply reflect

the mandate handed down by the government.

The Powell report poses strategic problems for the pro-choice movement. First, the government has framed the issue as a "health service delivery" problem. It is clearly attempting to re-focus and derail the movement's struggle for full control over our reproduction and sexuality. Secondly, the Liberal government is positioning itself as the "rational middle ground" in the abortion debate. Publicly, it is presenting the Powell report as a "reasonable process" to address women's concerns. In essence, the state is attempting to marginalize the pro-choice movement and set us as the counter-point to the fanatical anti-choice. In this manner, it can put in place a few minor improvements to access while maintaining state control over reproduction.

Publicly, the pro-choice movement will use the statistical information contained in the Powell report. However, her recommendations cannot be supported. Given the framework of the report, the implementation of Powell's recommendations will only perpetuate state and medical control and regulation of women's reproductive lives.



300 people rallied February 10 at Queen's Park to demand funding for the Mobile Health Unit of the Immigrant Women's Centre. The Unit serves women in the garment industry. At press time, negotiations were still in progress.

Photo: M. Armour

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## Who was the Rebel Girl?

As you may have noticed, this newsletter of the International Women's Day Committee marks a major change for us. We've changed the format and the name, while managing to lower the price from \$2.00 to 75 cents. We wanted a newsletter that would be more accessible, snappy and fun. Our name, *Rebel Girls' Rag*, comes from the 1915 song, "The Rebel Girl", written by Joe Hill for fellow member of the International Workers of the World (IWW), Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. Flynn was a major agitator and organizer for women's liberation, workers' rights and sexual freedom -- still among the priorities for socialist-feminists today. Please write and let us know what you think of the newsletter, what you'd like to see... "for", as the song goes, "it's great to fight for freedom with a Rebel Girl."

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# "Every bean a bullet for the revolution"

On December 12, 1986, Canadian Action for Nicaragua took its third work brigade to Nicaragua. This was to be the first coffee brigade that the Toronto solidarity group had organized and, in spite of a thoroughgoing orientation, few of us knew what to expect during our month's stay.

The group was made up of twenty-four women and men of every imaginable political stripe. We were feminists, Marxists, conservatives and trade unionists. The common thread weaving us together was our need to learn first-hand about the country and most importantly, to express solidarity with the Nicaraguan people. There were 300 other Brigadistas in our area and we met internationalists from Britain, Switzerland, the United States, Italy and Sweden. Our brigade was named the Augustine Mendoza Brigade in remembrance of a young man who grew up on our co-op and who was killed by the Contras.

We arrived by diesel truck at Las Rosas, a coffee plantation outside the city of Matagalpa. Our accommodations weren't luxurious. The large open barn where we lived for sixteen days straddled the antiquated, yet remarkably efficient, coffee production plant and, as such, was the heartbeat of the community. Many nights, weary brigadistas were lulled to sleep by the hum of the equipment for, while we slept, the campesinos were ensuring that the beans we picked that day were being transformed into the precious export. We were told that coffee, being 70% of the export, sustains not only the limping Nicaraguan economy but its beleaguered people as well. "Every bean," our foreman told us, "is a bullet for the revolution."

Our days were long. We were up by five a.m. to a breakfast of beans, rice and tortillas. We picked or "cut" coffee until noon, ate the same meal as before and finished our day at 3:00 or 4:00. It was sometimes tedious work, and the infrequent rain showers could make it bone-chilling, but to be working amidst the lush verdant mountains of Nicaragua was no real hardship.

The campesinos on the UPE (coffee plantation) are organized by the Agricultural Workers Union (ATC). David was the elected



Women from the Canadian Action for Nicaragua work brigade cut coffee beans.

representative and although women's participation hadn't snowballed, there were two women active in the union. The union concerns itself with food, health, education, daycare and wages. It ensures that everyone has enough food. Many campesinos have their own plots of land and pigs and chickens. Education is free up to grade six. There's a health care attendant on each UPE. Wages average about 30,000 Cordobas a month. With Nicaragua's incredible rate of inflation (2,300 cords per US dollar), this didn't seem like much to live on, but compared to a government worker's salary of 42,000 a month, they at least weren't at the bottom of the scale. Prices are kept to a minimum when possible, 25 pounds of rice costing about 200 cordobas. Men and women are paid equally and women get their own pay.

Women in the UPE are still the victims of the double day, of work in the home and in the harvest. The roles seemed defined at a young age with the young girls being responsible for cooking and washing and always with a younger child in their care. While the girls were shy, the boys on the other hand were aggressive and outgoing and, rather than working, were always playing.



Two Nicaraguan campesinas belong to the Agricultural Workers' Union (ATC) pause for a break.

Photos N. Farmer





Members of the Augustino Mendoza Brigade weigh in with other workers after a day's cutting on the UPE.

There are signs of change. There are 8 daycares in the area and one is being planned for Las Rosas. Two of the most influential FSLN leaders in the area are women and one, Alba, was assigned to our UPE. In Matagalpa we met with the Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs who had just opened a small cafe. Proceeds from their project will fund a bakery, sewing co-op and housing for women.

The war is the real tragedy of Nicaragua. Although we were far from the "front", we could hear mortar-shelling at night. While there seemed plenty to eat, there were apparently shortages of sugar and cooking oil, and transportation was difficult. It was the people who really touched us, however: the kids we played with, the mothers who brought us flowers and eggs, and the man who wrote us a beautiful poem on Christmas day. These are the real victims,

the ones who aren't getting a fair chance at a better society.

The Reagan-financed war is taking its toll - 40% of the budget, labour power that could be used in production and, finally, young lives are going to the defense of the country. This bloody war must be stopped. All that the Nicaraguans wish is to be left alone to live in peace. That's not too much to ask for.

Janet Dassinger  
Acting Education Director  
I.L.G.W.U.

Nancy Farmer  
USWA, Local 2900

Currently we are working on a slide show and video that will be available for showing. For information, call 531-6608 or Emma Productions 368-3783.

## Hookers' Rights

During the past year IWDC has held internal discussions on the subject of prostitution. The following is our policy in progress.

We support the right of prostitutes and other sex trade workers to conduct their business in safety, free from harassment. We recognize the social and economic constraints which women face in a patriarchal and capitalist society, which may make prostitution appear to be the best available option for some women. Prostitutes are women workers and like all women workers they deserve the right to dignity and the support of other women.

While we support the rights of prostitutes, we condemn the institution of female prostitution itself as it has been historically utilized as a method of female subordination. However, this must be contextualized by the recognition that we struggle against all forms of female labour and social institutions which are the product of, and perpetuate, unequal power relations between genders. Our commitment as socialist feminists is to work towards a future where the institution of prostitution and the exploitation of women generally no longer exist.

We therefore support the empowerment of prostitutes, and the decriminalization of prostitution through the repeal of Bill C-49 and all other prostitution related legislation.

Soliciting legislation puts street prostitutes at the mercy of police entrapment, abuse and harassment, and prevents them from working together to ensure their own safety.

We believe that where women and girls are being pimped without their consent this can be dealt with through other existing criminal legislation like extortion. Procuring and living on the avails legislation denies prostitutes the right to live and associate with whomever they choose without interference from the law. Procuring legislation also passes judgement upon a woman or girl's past sexual conduct.

Similarly, bawdy-house legislation prevents prostitutes from establishing safe and stable places of business. This legislation is also used for the persecution of gay men in their bars and bath houses.



# Up Against the State

While the state is a key institution in perpetuating all the main forms of oppression, it also presents itself as the main instrument of change in our society. Thus feminists are in a contradictory position, spending much energy discrediting the state (e.g. on the abortion law) but at the same time insisting that we get not only social benefits but even funding for our organizations. And furthermore, the state in its various embodiments is the largest employer of women in Canada: these women do not generally have much power but they are hired to do the work of the state.

The successful conference for feminist activists held at OISE in Toronto on Feb. 5-7 gave about 400 women a chance to discuss these contradictions. There were dozens of workshops, and it would be an impossible task to summarize the conference as a whole here. We have therefore opted for publishing an edited version of the presentation given by IWDC member Carolyn Egan at the Sunday morning plenary session. The other two speakers were Dorothy Smith and Himani Banerji.

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I want to discuss first some strategic dilemmas women are encountering in our dealings with the state, and secondly, how we can try to overcome the disorganization and disunity within our movements which have been hampering our organizing against the state.

We have learned through this conference how important the various institutions, programs, and policies of the state are to women's lives, and the role they play in maintaining our oppression. We have seen how, and in whose interests, the state operates. But we have a paradox. The state seems extremely visible and invisible at the same time. It touches our lives in fundamental ways, but how do we touch it? How do we deal with it and win?

The state sometimes appears to accommodate us, but it will just as easily take away what it appears to give. It organizes society, and at the same time disorganizes us in a very particular way. It develops categories such as immigrant women, family benefit mothers, Native People. It categorizes and structures differences in a concerted fashion. It invents

distinctions, e.g. between status and non-status Indians, between welfare recipients and old age pensioners.

We are forced to organize with the state's categories. These categories organize groups as "special interest groups", and aggravate differences among us. We, in our organizing, have to pick up the pieces. It's difficult, because it appears to be a very purposeful disorganization.

Having divided us, the state is better able to co-opt and subvert our demands. The process of co-optation takes many forms. One is legislative reform that appears to answer our demands while in fact creating new problems: a good example of this is Ontario's new pay equity legislation. Another form is the production of official reports that admit the situation is indeed bad but which do not propose any real solutions because they have to stay within the parameters of what is acceptable (to the state, that is). An example of this is the recent Marion Powell report on abortion accessibility in Ontario, which concluded that access was indeed a problem but did not challenge the power or the therapeutic abortion committees.

## Subverting Our Demands

There is also co-optation in the mechanisms of political representation. (The Canadian state) loves to do this. Through hearings, commissions, parliamentary committees, advisory bodies and so forth, it grants access to policy makers, allows consultation, and seeks participation. Movement leaders are sometimes incorporated into these bodies; but the outcome is often set from the start. Even when commissions do bring progressive recommendations (as in Justice Berger's inquiry into the Mackenzie pipe-line), the state can ignore them -- and does. It also chooses to deal only with individuals and groups that it recognizes as "representative", who make "reasonable" demands and who speak in a "moderate" way. The rest of us are thus marginalized.

Another co-optation mechanism is the two-edged sword of funding for women's services. An enormous amount of energy has to be spent in grant applications, reports,

etc., and tension is created between service delivery and broader political goals. There is also a process of professionalization which puts constraints on feminist activity, and the group's priorities and objectives may be derailed by the funding structure.

None of this is to say we don't make demands on the state. We must do this but we have to be clear about what can be gained. To organize is to empower women, if we can keep our goals clear and understand the role the state is playing. For example, as important as equal pay is, equality with male wages does not challenge the inherent inequality and exploitation of the capitalist labour market. We can know this and still demand equal pay, because it can have an immediate impact on many women. However, we can't allow our movements to be limited by the language and ideology of equal rights. In the long run we want to build alliances which can truly challenge state power.

## Lesbian Baiting

In this process of organizing, however, some contradictions arise from within which are not always organized by the state. Lesbian baiting by co-workers, racial harassment on the street, wife abuse and so on are very real oppressions that may be reinforced by the state but will not automatically fall away if we seize state power. These forms of oppression have to be the focus of specific struggles on our part. This underlines the importance of alliances and coalitions as key forms of organizing. Coalition building is never a simple task, and we can never assume automatic unity. But we can't overcome differences by denying or downplaying their effects on us.

Coalition politics have the potential to link and integrate struggles and break down the disorganization; they can help each constituency broaden its consciousness of other struggles. But this is not just a matter of one's political analysis being in the right place - our very process and methods of organizing have to be aimed at giving control and empowering. The manner in which we organize and structure ourselves today should reflect the type of society we hope to create in the future.



# Slaves of Fashion

## Shopping with Sindee and Sandee

With this issue of Rebel Girls' Rag, we begin our long-awaited fashion column. Our goal: to put the shopping back into socialist-feminism. To prove it was never really lost, the theme of this first column is: FIVE GREAT SOCIALIST-FEMINISTS WHO WERE SNAZZY DRESSERS.

1. Alexandra Kollontai, the only woman in Lenin's government and author of The Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman (among other books) was by all accounts -- and photographs -- a snazzy dresser.

2. The same goes for Rosa Luxemburg, as can be seen in the recent Margarethe von Trotta film about her life and work.

3. The case of Simone de Beauvoir proves that you can be a heavyweight feminist and still wear red nail polish and carry silly handbags.

4. In case you think only right-wing women such as Imelda Marcos go overboard for footwear, we're here to tell you that Ruth First, heroine of the anti-apartheid struggle, loved Italian shoes.

5. Frida Kahlo, the surrealist painter who sheltered Trotsky in Mexico, was one of the snazziest and most original dressers of all time. Take a look at the pictures of her in Hayden Herrera's biography, Frida.

HEAVY-DUTY THEORETICAL READING FOR SOCIALIST-FEMINISTS WHO NEED TO BE CONVINCED THIS IS A SERIOUS ISSUE

Rush out and buy:

1. Elizabeth Wilson, Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity. Not as good as it could be but read it anyway.

2. Wendy Chapkis, Beauty Secrets: Women and the Politics of Appearance. Really interesting.

3. Joseph Hansen and Evelyn Reed, Cosmetics, Fashions and Exploitation of Women. Entertaining in the extreme.

4. Vogue, any issue.

And remember, as Holly Near says: "Makeup is not the problem; sexism is the problem." (For those of you out there who don't believe she said that, see the interview with her and Ronnie Gilbert in Socialist Review #73.)

Next month, Sandy will talk about The Diseases of Shopping and How to Cure Them.

Struggle, had been neglecting imperialism as a political focus, when she was brought back to the Silhouette-Desire by Violet's voice.

"We may be able to help you find Henry, but you have to get us to Edmonton. Fran's is expanding to the west and opening a new store in the West Edmonton Mall. We think something big is going to break in Edmonton, and we want to get the Union in on the ground floor. So what do you say?"

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"Edmonton looks like a bleak moonscape in the winter", thought Mona looking around as she gripped the handles of her assortment of shopping bags. "But the West Edmonton Mall...Fran's was absolutely right to try to get a share of the market here, but how did they manage to make the deal with the infamous Grimy brothers? Probably by promising to break a few unions", she concluded ruefully. So here she was with Bea in the palace of consumption extraordinaire, courtesy of not the Canada Council, but Mona's over-the-limit Visa. Violet, following a hunch had headed immediately downtown to the Silk Hat, Fran's major competitor,

## Mystery on Harbord St. Part III

by Dorothy Doers

Mona was in the grungiest lesbian bar in the city, clutching her zebra bag over the fly in the front of her orange mini-skirt so as not to violate the dress code of the Silhouette-Desire and be kicked out before she found out where Henry was.

Bea and Violet sat across the table from her, smoking unfiltered cigarettes from a crumpled, foreign looking package, staring at her intensely. "What do they really want from me?", Mona Lott thought nervously, "Do they want me to help them unionize Fran's? Maybe they want me to join Henry in the trunk of the Packard?"

Bea broke the tension abruptly. "I knew as soon as you ordered beer with your lemon chiffon pie that you were the woman I left the message for, and that you are exactly the woman we need." "You have to help us", coughed Violet through a cloud of smoke.

Mona could hardly hear her. Violet's wheeze was almost drowned by Madonna's full volume announcement "I'm keeping my baby". "What are lesbian bars coming to?" thought Mona. She decided to take a big risk, and shouted, "Look, I'll help you unionize Fran's, only if you take me to Henry".

As she spoke, she was drawn again to B's beehived hair. "Backcombing is very bad for your hair" she thought. But still, there was something very

compelling about her. "Perhaps if she switched to gel and clipped the sides...yes, there was something very interesting about Bea.

Bea caught Mona's look. "Look, we know that you are planning a trip to Edmonton. We also know that you are coming into some money to get you there. And we know that Henry is very important to you and your friends at the clinic."

"How does she know so much about me?" thought Mona. "Why did they put that ad in NOW? What does Henry have to do with unionizing Fran's?" All the same, Mona felt a connection with Bea. Violet, however, somehow reminded her of JR Ewing.

"Shit", thought Mona. "I forgot to watch Dallas tonight. While I was sitting in Fran's College St, JR was planning to blow up oil fields in the middle east in order to bring up the price of Texas crude." "A ridiculous plot anyway", Mona thought, "It is so USA-centric. Alberta is the place for oil (if only they can find a cheap way to extract it from the tar sands), not to mention being THE place to shop." Mona was thinking about American cultural imperialism and how her group, Sisters In





which was famous for its clam chowder.

"Well, exclaimed Bea as she lit a cigarette, "Unless you have any better ideas, I think we should by-pass the Benneton sweater sale, 70% off and no sales tax or not, and go right to the management office to apply for jobs with Fran's. Have you ever waited on tables before?" Mona's stomach dropped. How was she to conduct her research, find Henry, and unionize Fran's with a pot of hot coffee in one hand and a tray of Clubhouse sandwiches in the other?

And what did that nasty crack of Peter Pockmark's have to do with all of this? She'd been thinking about it ever since the airport when they'd picked up the Edmonton Journal while waiting an interminable 45 minutes for a bus. The front page had featured speculation about the connection between Edmonton money and the Iranian arms deal, and another story about the settlement of the Gainer's strike. "I can't cope with this", thought Mona as she flipped the page. On page 6 Pockmark was not only claiming victory in the strike but apparently thinking about running again for the leadership of the PCs. "I am in charge. I am god. I don't like unions and I don't like abortions. And you can see what I've done to unions...." On the facing page there was a two paragraph article about Henry, of whom there was still no trace. Surely this was no week to be organizing a union drive in Edmonton. Bea and Violet had got it all wrong. Or maybe they hadn't...

Mona and Bea were in the management office filling out their application forms to get on a waiting list for filling out application forms to work at Fran's. Mona's attention was distracted by a loud discussion which was breaking out of a room

just to her right. With a shock, she realized that one of the Grimy brothers was standing but 3 feet from her, confronting a nervous little man with a scarred face and a twitch in his left eyebrow. The Grimy brother was smoking a foul smelling cigarette. She looked at the pack he still held in his hand. "Key-rist", she thought. It was the same brand that Bea and Violet smoked.

"This must be conditional upon our expanding into Mississauga", boomed the Grimy. "I'm sure that Mississauga is ready for 24 hour restaurants", replied his companion in a tone lacking conviction. Without acknowledging the comment, the Grimy brother ("Which one?", she wondered) continued: "but we need those fools in Ottawa to take a hard-line stance on national economic policy if we are to get anywhere.... Get rid of these bleeding heart liberals who want free everything except free trade. The country is being run by women who want to control everything, even their bodies. What this country needs is more REAL Women, because abortions mean fewer consumers. At least then Morgentaler is out of the way," he concluded with satisfaction.

Something triggered in Mona's head. Was the B. Violet Lesbian Feminist Collective against Male Doctors a front for REAL Women? Bea interrupted her thoughts. "Earth calling Mona. Look, it'll take us 5 years to get a job in Fran's. Let's just get out of here, OK?" Why was Bea suddenly in such a hurry?

Mona and Bea sat dejectedly on a bench watching the submarines; Bea puffing and Mona fuming. "What next?!" Mona's speculations were interrupted by the public telephone beside them ringing insistently. "Might be for you" stated Bea. "After all, our situation can't get much more

bizarre than this." Mona picked up the receiver. "West Edmonton Mall public relations and research officer", she quipped. "Shop 'til you drop."

"Mona! Glad I found you. You really shouldn't be there - you should be in Iran". "Oh Christ" thought Mona. It was her brother-in-law, Lord Loaded, calling from his estate in England. Lord Loaded had been trying to recruit Mona to sell plastic palms in the middle east for his company, Go Green International. She should never have got him that contract with K-Mart. Would he never give up?

"Mona", he lorded, "I've just returned from a business venture in Iran. Not a safe place, you know, but a big market for plastic greens. I think they melt it down and convert it to sandwich wrap, but..." "How did you find me here?" interrupted Mona, understandably perplexed. "Never mind. Listen, I think you need to know this. When I was in the big market in Tehran, I could have sworn that I saw Henry Morgentaler. I couldn't imagine him opening up an Iranian clinic. What was he doing there, Mona?" "What indeed!". she exclaimed.

Had Lord Loaded really seen Henry in the market?

Could Fran's be expanding to the middle east?

Would Mona's Visa card get her there?

What would Mona do with 14 new Benneton sweaters in Iran?

And what about Bea? Where was Bea? As she turned from the phone she discovered an empty bench, the floor around it littered with cigarette butts.

TO BE CONTINUED

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