

# Rebel Girls' Rag

A FORUM OF WOMEN'S RESISTANCE

Vol. 5 No. 1

75¢

November/December, 1990

News & Views from Toronto Socialist Feminist Action



photo: Left Eye

## Inside

- HELL NO, WE WON'T GO -- WE WON'T KILL FOR TEXACO
- MARCHING FOR WOMEN'S LIVES
- QUEER NATION
- IROQUOIS FREEDOM FIGHTER
- CUTBACKS & FIGHTBACKS



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## HELL NO, WE WON'T GO WE WON'T KILL FOR TEXACO

by Carolyn Egan

We are facing the possibility of a very bloody war and a serious global recession. Over 300,000 U.S. troops are already in Saudi Arabia, allied with smaller contingents from other nations including Canada. As the build-up grows, American President Bush is sounding more and more aggressive. Clearly he is willing to sacrifice the lives of millions of Iraqis and tens of thousands of American working class whites, Blacks, Latinos, and other People of Colour.

The U.S., using the pretext of defending "democratic rights" in Kuwait, has militarily occupied the area to protect its economic interests and reassert its global dominance. However, the U.S. invasions of Grenada and Panama make it obvious that the right to self-determination and the defense of democracy are not high priorities of American foreign policy. The war in the Gulf will be fought to defend imperialist interests and corporate profits; the slogan chanted at anti-war demonstrations, "Hell



no, we won't go, we won't kill for Texaco", aptly expresses why we must resist this war. We do not support the regime of Saddam Hussein or the invasion of

Kuwait, but the focus of our demands must be against western imperialism.

Now is the time to build a strong anti-war movement calling for U.S. and Canadian troops out of the Gulf. On October 20th there were demonstrations in fifteen American cities, with 25,000 marching in New York. Marches and rallies have also been held in Spain, France, Greece, and other European countries, and there have been massive anti-American actions in the Middle East. In the sixties the anti-Viet Nam war movement mobilized hundreds of thousands, demonstrating large scale support for draft resistance in the U.S., and contributing to the military defeat of American forces by the National Liberation Front.

This movement led to the radicalization of large numbers of people, particularly students, who began to question basic tenets of capitalist society and the racism, sexism, and class exploitation that it maintains. Recently teach-ins have been held at York University and the University of Toronto, and coalitions have been organized on both campuses. They are working with a broader community coalition to organize a demonstration on November 24th. These coalitions should be supported and we should be actively involved in building the anti-war movement. It is clear that the U.S. is willing to launch a devastating war for its economic interests, and it must be stopped.



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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 and in different constituencies.

We welcome new members. For more information, phone 531-2369.

This issue was put together by:

Laurie Bell, Julia B., Cheryl Boswell, Carolyn Egan, Mary Gellatly, Shelly Gordon, Miriam Jones, Leanna McLennan, Gillian Morton, Sharmani Peres, Jocelyn Piercy, Jennifer Stephen.

Signed articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the Toronto Socialist Feminist Action, but those of the author.

**TSFA welcomes articles from a socialist feminist perspective to facilitate discussion and debate. Please send articles to P.O. Box 70 Station F, Toronto M4L 2L4**



# MARCHING FOR WOMEN'S LIVES

by Miriam Jones

From St. Johns, Nfld., to Cornwall, P.E.I., to Thunder Bay, to Nanaimo and Fort St. John, B.C., people were out in the streets. On October 13, 1990, member groups of the Pro-Choice Action Network (PCAN) and local chapters of the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL) organized actions and events for a cross-country day of protest against the federal government's plans to recriminalize abortion with Bill C-43. Organizations in over 30 communities were involved and thousands of pro-choice supporters came out on the day.

Under the banner '*Marching for Women's Lives, No New Abortion Law*', close to 3,000 marchers gathered at Queen's Park at a rally organized by the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC). Speakers including Dawn Black, the Federal NDP Women's Affairs Critic, Anne Swarbrick, Provincial Minister for Women's Issues, Michele Robideau and Cherie

C-43 threatens women: it denies women choice and it will force women to lie about mental or physical health in order to obtain a health service. The Bill has already created a major crisis in access: fearing anti-choice harassment and spurious court charges, over 50 doctors have already ceased performing the procedure (even though the bill is still in the Senate as we go to press), and over 275 more doctors have publicly stated that they intend to stop providing services should the legislation be proclaimed. Health clinics are reporting longer and longer delays when referring patients for abortions. There have already been two casualties: two weeks after the bill passed the House of Commons in May by a slim nine vote margin, a man in Kitchener was charged with performing a non-medical abortion on a 16 year-old woman. An even greater tragedy followed: a 20 year-old Toronto woman died from a self-induced abortion. Women and doctors are already succumbing to the climate of fear

rally demanded that Bill C-43 be withdrawn, and that both levels of government take up their responsibilities to ensure equality of access to comprehensive healthcare for all women across Canada and Québec by immediately funding existing clinics and by creating a network of publicly funded clinics.

In Ottawa, despite uninviting weather, a number of smaller marches joined for one main rally on Parliament Hill, where Svend Robinson was a featured speaker. People on the Carlton-Ottawa Pro-Choice Network march enjoyed guerilla street theatre along their route.

There were PCAN rallies in Halifax, Montréal, Kingston, Kitchener-Waterloo, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Vancouver, and Victoria. PCAN groups also participated in event organized by CARAL or other organizations in Ottawa, Oshawa, Peterborough and Calgary. Local pro-choice organizing is clearly increasing, especially in smaller communities which will be hardest hit by the increasing restrictions on access.

Since October 1, OCAC has been working to obtain a clear statement from Bob Rae's new NDP government that Bill C-43 would be unenforceable in this province. Although the NDP has made significant statements about their commitment to choice, it appears very reluctant to publicly declare the law unenforceable. Pro-choice activists have been critical of the NDP's position on this issue and believe that a strong statement about the impossibility of this legislation, from the government of the largest province in Canada, would be a significant determining factor in the vote in the Senate, and/or whether or not Kim Campbell proclaims the bill after the vote.

OCAC has called for a demonstration at Tory Party Headquarters at 5:30 pm on the day after the vote is put through the Senate. Be there -- to protest or to celebrate the defeat of the bill. Call OCAC at 969-8463 for further information.

Photo: Left Eye

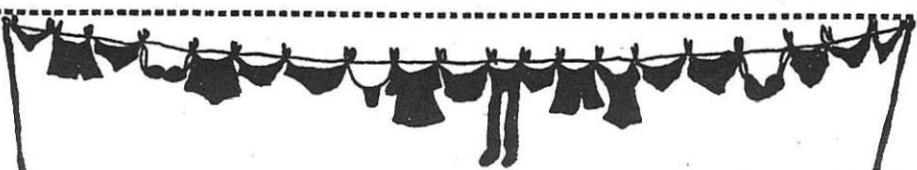


Macdonald from OCAC, Linda Tourney from the Metro Labour Council, Frumie Diamond from the Family Planning Network, the Toronto CARAL chapter, along with music by the Rebel Girls band, all denounced the Bill C-43.

Speakers emphasized how Bill

created by the federal government with this legislation. As access worsens, it will be women of colour, women from rural and other under-served areas, working class, poor and unemployed women, immigrant women, young women, and women with disabilities that will suffer the most. Speakers at the





## MOVEMENT BRIEFS

### Government Disappearing Act

Where are Women Living with AIDS and HIV on the Government Agenda? -- Invisible No Longer!

- Women Living with AIDS and HIV Demand:
- Equal Access to Treatment for HIV and AIDS
- No Restrictions on Our Reproductive Choices
- No Exclusion From Clinical Trials
- Equal Access to Community-based support Programs
- Equal Access to Anonymous Testing and Comprehensive Counselling
- No Harassment of Sex Trade Workers

Join AIDS Action Now! and our friends on World AIDS Day, Saturday December 1st at 1:00 p.m. at the 519 Church St. Community Centre for a rally with speakers and a march to the Ministry of Health offices at Bay and Wellesly. There will be sign language interpreters.

Protest the invisibility of women living with AIDS and HIV in government AIDS planning! For further information call 944-1916.

### Defense Fund

While the barricades may be down at Kahnawake and Kahnésatake, men and women of the First Nations face many charges laid by the S.Q. Money is needed for the court cases. Send cheques to:

**Liberation of Mohawk Nation Fund (Acct. 80186)**

**CP1987, Kahnawake, Québec JOL 1BO (514) 68-5464**

### International Women's Day 1991: Come Help Us Build a New Kind of Coalition

Every year women come together to form the March 8th Coalition. This coalition organizes events, such as a rally, march, fair and dance, to celebrate International women's Day. It is also a time for us, as women, to build alliances and to work as a committed and unified body towards eliminating the roots of oppression for all women.

Working within this Coalition is exciting and challenging. The themes and events affect the activities of other social movements and organizations in this city. It is an opportunity for us as women to develop our politics, and to learn new ways of organizing and working together. In learning about each others' struggles for liberation, our politics and ways of working are personally challenged. We must recognize and address differences of class, race, (dis)ability and sexual orientation. The politics, structures and processes within the Coalition are continually advancing. Out of months of organizing comes a day which is a highlight in the women's movement.

Women Working with Immigrant Women, in conjunction with representatives from the native Women's Resource Centre, the Cross Cultural Communication Centre, and the Latin American women's Collective would like to invite you and/or your organization to join us in organizing International Women's Day, 1991, and to be a part of the March 8th Coalition.

You are needed. Your input is vital if we are to make this a Coalition which allows for full participation by all women. We want this Coalition to include and represent all women, especially women who have been excluded historically. We invite you to bring ideas and proposal for themes.

**MEETING TIMES: Nov. 21, 29, Dec. 5 and 12, 6 to 8:0 p.m.**

**PLACE: 519 Church St. Community Centre (N. of Wellesly).**

**WHEEL CHAIR ACCESSIBLE -- ON SITE CHILD CARE.**

For further information, call judy at 760-7855 or Sally at 963-9963.

### WANTED: people for escort service

Anti-choice harassment has dramatically increased in front of the Scott Clinic, on Gerrard St. OCAC will be organizing an escort service for the clinic patients, as we did for a number of years at the Morgentaler Clinic. We have seen that we cannot rely on the police to protect women; the community must protect itself. Any women interested in escorting, please call 969-8463.

OCAC meets regularly every second Tuesday at 7:30 p.m., at Trinity St. Paul's Centre on Bloor west of Spadina. All pro-choice supporters are welcome.

### Safe Sex Pros!

The Toronto Prostitute Safe Sex Project (PSSP), sponsored by Maggie's, has opened a resource centre in Toronto's Cabbagetown area. The first by prostitutes in Canada, the Centre is a safe and accessible drop-in for women and men working in the downtown area. The PSSP has also started a Bad Trick Sheet, publishing a bi-weekly list of violent or abusive johns. Call 964-0150 for info.

## QUEER NATION

by Leanna McLennan

Hundreds of people are being mobilized by Queer Nation, a lesbian, gay, and bisexual direct action group. The group, which is modeled after the Queer Nation groups in New York and San Francisco, formed in Toronto on September 10th. The focus of the group is on employing direct action, rather than lobby politics, to respond to homophobia and to the growing amount of violence against queers.

The actions organized by Queer Nation to date include a kiss-in at the Eaton's centre, where they chanted "We're here, we're Queer, and we're not going shopping" to promote queer visibility. They also held a kiss-in at the Loose Moose Bar in response to an offensive parody of a gay comic strip. Queers entered the bar, refusing to order drinks, which on a Friday night had a considerable economic effect. The Loose Moose later complied with Queer Nation's demand that they print an apology, devoting a full page ad to their apology to the gay and lesbian community.

Queer Nation has conducted a phone and fax zap of the head office of the Second Cup, because it removed a penny jar for the People With Aids Foundation from its Church and Wellesley franchise. On Halloween night, members of Queer Nation assembled at Church and Wellesley and marched through the area to protest lesbian and gay bashing, which often increases on this particular evening.

Representatives of Queer Nation have shown solidarity with other groups, such as the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics, by attending their demonstrations. Women from Queer Nation formed a contingent in the Take Back the Night march. With OCAC and AIDS Action Now, Queer Nation protested at a meeting where two infamous homophobes, Rev. Ken Campbell and Jerry Falwell, were speaking.

Prior to taking the name Queer Nation, an ad hoc group of lesbians, gays and bisexuals, which was later to call themselves Queer Nation, organized an action at an election meeting against Rev. Ken Campbell, where they let him know that queers were present by kissing

and waving signs. This group also postered the Church and Wellesley area and the University of Toronto campus with signs promoting queer visibility. Queer Nation continues its poster campaign by distributing posters with slogans such as *Queers are Here, Promote Homosexuality, Fight Homophobia, and Queer: Reclaim the Words.*

The need for an explicitly queer organization to fight the oppression which queers encounter daily is clear; one to two hundred people attend each Queer Nation meeting, which are held every 2nd and 4th Monday at 8 p.m. at the 519 Church St. Community Centre. There is an incredible amount of energy at meetings.

Queer Nation operates by consensus. No clear political perspective dominates the meetings; the commitment to direct action as a means of fighting homophobia is the unifying force.

The group is mobilizing a large number of people who are dissatisfied with the more conventional methods often employed by lesbian, gay and bisexual activists. Many people who are not part of the "established" community find direct action a more accessible as well as a more effective means of fighting their oppression.

Queer Nation Toronto is one of several direct action groups recently formed in Canada; others include Out Rage Canada, which is operating out of Edmonton, and Lesbians and Gays Against Violence (LGV) in Montreal, which formed as a response to police violence against lesbians and gays this summer.





# IROQUOIS FREEDOM FIGHTER

by Doreen Falling Doll  
Silversmith

*The following presentation was given at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), October, 1990.*

The whole situation at Kahnawake and Kahnawake is a prime example of police and army violence and racism, except it's on a larger scale and is publicly condoned by the Quebec provincial government, the government of Canada, and by some members of the Canadian public. Before the crisis at Kahnawake and Kahnawake we had the Meech Lake Accord to contend with. You know, where eleven overrated white male politicians sat behind closed doors to decide your future while excluding Native people from that package. But they never counted on Elijah Harper to kill it.

While racism and violence has always been present towards our people in this patriarchal society, we can't help but think that the use of the army, police, and public violence against the Mohawks in Quebec is a backlash for the failure of the Meech Lake Accord. And on the surface, it looks like the son of a bitch Marcel Lemay died for the proposed expansion of a golf course. But it runs so much deeper than that. What I'm talking about here is the government's capitalist greed. That's what he died for!

It's not clear who shot that officer but the Surete Quebec police and other police associations across Canada are implying that the Mohawks are guilty of this crime, even though no one has been charged yet. The police have taken ads out in prominent newspapers proclaiming this. They say the Surete never returned any gunfire. Well there is evidence that the Quebec police did return fire; even some members of their own force have

spoken out and said that they did, in fact, return fire, even though there were women and children behind those barricades. The evidence is also in the trees and the pine forests, where there are bullet holes.

They go on to say that the barricades disrupted the lives and threatened the peace and stability of tens of thousands of law abiding citizens they are sworn to protect. The barricades did this? Get real! What about the S.Q. and the government's tactic of sending in the troops to terrorize the residents of Kahnawake and Kahnawake? If those police forces oppose terrorism, then why did they and the army go in and beat up women, children and the Mohawk men?

During the siege, the army and police stormed the Longhouse; the sacred, spiritual heart of our tradition, and beat up women as they prepared a meal. This was on the pretext of looking for weapons. One woman was taken to the hospital with a fractured cheekbone and others suffered severe bruising as a result of this cowardly attack. And why did the army and police stand by idly when a racist mob in Chateauguay stoned women, children and elderly men who were leaving the Kahnawake reserve? One man died of a heart attack two days later as an indirect result of this. Why did the army use tear gas on a group of Mohawks a couple of weeks ago? Why did the army and police throw women and children to the ground and rough them up as they were leaving the Oka barricade? Why was a woman thrown into a razor wire fence which cut into her body? Why are the Mohawks in S.Q. custody being severely beaten? And these police associations say they oppose terrorism. Then what the hell is that?

The government and the police are all the same and it is

very difficult for us to trust them. The Prime Minister went into hiding when this crisis began. When he finally emerged from his coma at the beginning of August, this is what he had to say: "I believe our Native peoples have not been well treated by Canada and Canadians". Heck, that boy's in the wrong country! His statement also reeks of paternalism, and we take strong exception to people like him, referring to us as "our Native peoples". We are a distinct society, and this is the land we lived on and cared for so beautifully long before the Europeans arrived, and we still continue to

care for it beautifully, despite what other people do to pollute and abuse it. And you don't hear us walking around saying "our Europeans" or "our Irish", or whatever. We refer to you as our neighbours or coexistants.

During the siege, the Prime Minister also stated, "Racism in any form is intolerable". So why was the racist violence allowed to happen at Chateauguay? I'm of course referring to the stoning. He went on to say, "The laws of Canada must be respected by all. There are no two sets of laws that govern Native people and the rest of Canada." It's quite clear that there are two sets of laws. One to mistreat Native people in the judicial system. A prime example of this is the Donald Marshall case, the Micmac man from Nova Scotia who spent eleven years in jail for a crime he didn't commit. Do you really believe





that these Mohawks will get a fair trial when they've already been convicted by the public? The other set of laws governs the police, army and people like the racist mob in Chateauguay. After the seige was over at Kahnasatake, Indian Affairs Minister Tom Siddon came out of the

bushes clapping his hands and talked about victory. Where the hell was he for most of this crisis? Maybe if we are "good little indians" he will give us more platitudes and hollow promises.

We have no faith that the federal government will follow through on their recent promises for speedy landclaim settlements, improved housing, and so on. We won't believe this until we see it. They've made those promises before. On the reserve, we have hardly any plumbing. My mother just got her plumbing in this past summer, and this is 1990. And the Prime Minister once again praised the army for its handling of the Oka dispute. He said, "In the end, firmness and patience and concern for human life have carried the day in a very explosive situation". He gave himself a pat on the back while addressing more than five hundred police officers from around the world. The word "firmness" can only be taken as his ruling of the country with a dictatorial iron fist. Patience? Why was the army immediately sent in when he couldn't handle the crisis? He has a lot to learn about patience from us. We have been patient with this colonial regime now for nearly five hundred years. Both the Prime Minister and Robert Bourassa are also guilty of spreading anti-Native hysteria.

The government has a long track record of broken promises and human rights violations and so much more. And another damn thing: their racist, paternalistic Indian Act needs to be completely overhauled or deleted. We don't need these "bureaucratic babysitters". They're not very good. They've ignored us for too long. They could be charged with neglect, and we're sick and tired of their bureaucratic "white tape".

I went to Oka for the first time on July 29th; there was a big rally in the Jean Sauve park about five kilometers from the actual barricade. I found a lot of support there for Native Peoples. So the

support is out there. The second time I went to the Peace Camp in the same park, I saw things there that I've never seen before in my life. I saw tanks going by, army trucks, and military helicopters flying all around us. I was appalled by this show of "macho force". It's similar to what the Prime Minister did by sending those ships to the Persian Gulf; it's just another show of macho force and also a smokescreen. So many millions of dollars were spent on that smokescreen, whereas it could have been used to help Native people or perhaps spent on the women's programmes.

To get back to the Oka situation. I was so angry. But I'm no longer bitter about this thing, I've had to deal with it all my life. I'm past that stage now. I'm just very angry and I think that we have to keep fighting this. If we give up, then I don't think that we'll have anything left-- no pride in who we are and absolutely nothing for our future generations.

I wanted to talk briefly about the Condolee Chiefs. We have a Chief in our family as well. These are the hereditary Chiefs; I'm not talking about the Warrior Chiefs--that's long ago; that's done away with, and so are the Warriors. So these people who call themselves Warriors, well, we don't have them any more. Maybe they should choose another name, because we buried the hatchets a long time ago in the Great Pine Forests. Until the Europeans arrived. People started getting angry again and brought out their weapons. Only this time it was with the white man's weapons, like guns.

I'm traditional Longhouse and I find it very difficult at times. Sometimes I'm torn because my Elders tell me to be peaceful. But how can I be peaceful when all this is going on? So this is how I'm torn. They say this land belongs to nobody, it belongs to the Creator. He created it and everything that we have here is for our use and to share and care about each other. But unfortunately, the government and some people don't see it that way. We do recognize the capitalist greed of the government and some people and so this is why I find it very difficult. As I said, I'm traditional Longhouse and it's very difficult to take heed of what my Elders are telling me. What I hear in the Longhouse is, "Be peaceful". I just wish the government would see it that way, but they don't.

The stand-offs at Kahnawake and Kahnasatake are somewhat similar to the Stonewall Rebellion in New York, where some gay people were raided in a bar and charged. This set the stage for gay people coming out and protesting the violence against them. The people in Kahnasatake and Kahnawake set the stage for our people. It's acting as a catalyst for our protests across the country and it's already happening. But you haven't seen anything yet. So I think there's more protests to come and some might be violent. I can't guarantee that it won't be. People in my generation, the younger ones, they're very impatient and very angry with the government ignoring us for too long. We're not taking it any more. We're going to come out and protest some more. And if it leads to a civil war, then so be it!

I'd like to end this by reciting one of my poems for you.

## Iroquois Freedom Fighter

My spirit is crying for my people's stolen freedom,

And my soul is feeling restless and troublesome.

My heart is impaled by the lofty alienation,

I lean to "left wing" for viable solution.

I'm an Iroquois Freedom Fighter with a score to settle,

And I won't succumb to defeat without a fierce struggle.

---

*Doreen Falling Doll Silversmith is a member of the Lower Cayuga Nation of the Iroquois Confederacy, poet & short story writer. She is a founding member of the Women's Coalition Against Racism and Police Violence and the Indigenous Women's Coalition. She is a long time Native activist and Freedom Fighter.*

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photo: Left Eye



# PROWLING BY NIGHT

by Alexandre Highcrest

I have seen many films about the business; those made by social workers, big buck Hollywood producers, T.V. documentary filmmakers and the like. But I've never seen a film about working made by hos—that is, until I saw *Prowling By Night*. This film is unlike any film dealing with prostitution that I have ever seen.

To read my initial description of *Prowling By Night*, the film sounds almost innocent. Gwendolyn, an outreach worker with the Prostitutes' Safe Sex Project, comedienne and part time ho, made the film to document the experiences of two other Safe Sex Project workers and the street girls they work for. The format used was that of an adult, puppet cartoon—no actors, no big budget, no glitzy special effects. But she did use working girls; street pros drew the pictures to represent themselves in the film, pros did all the talking and there was no script. Everyone spoke freely and openly about their experiences working Toronto's strolls. Valerie and Ryan, the two girls who work for the project, did the same.

The film follows Valerie and Ryan as they walk the stroll in Parkdale, passing out condoms, doing the AIDS rap and talking the politics of the sex trade. But the film focuses on the girls who work the street and the harassment they face at the hands of the



drawing by Catherine

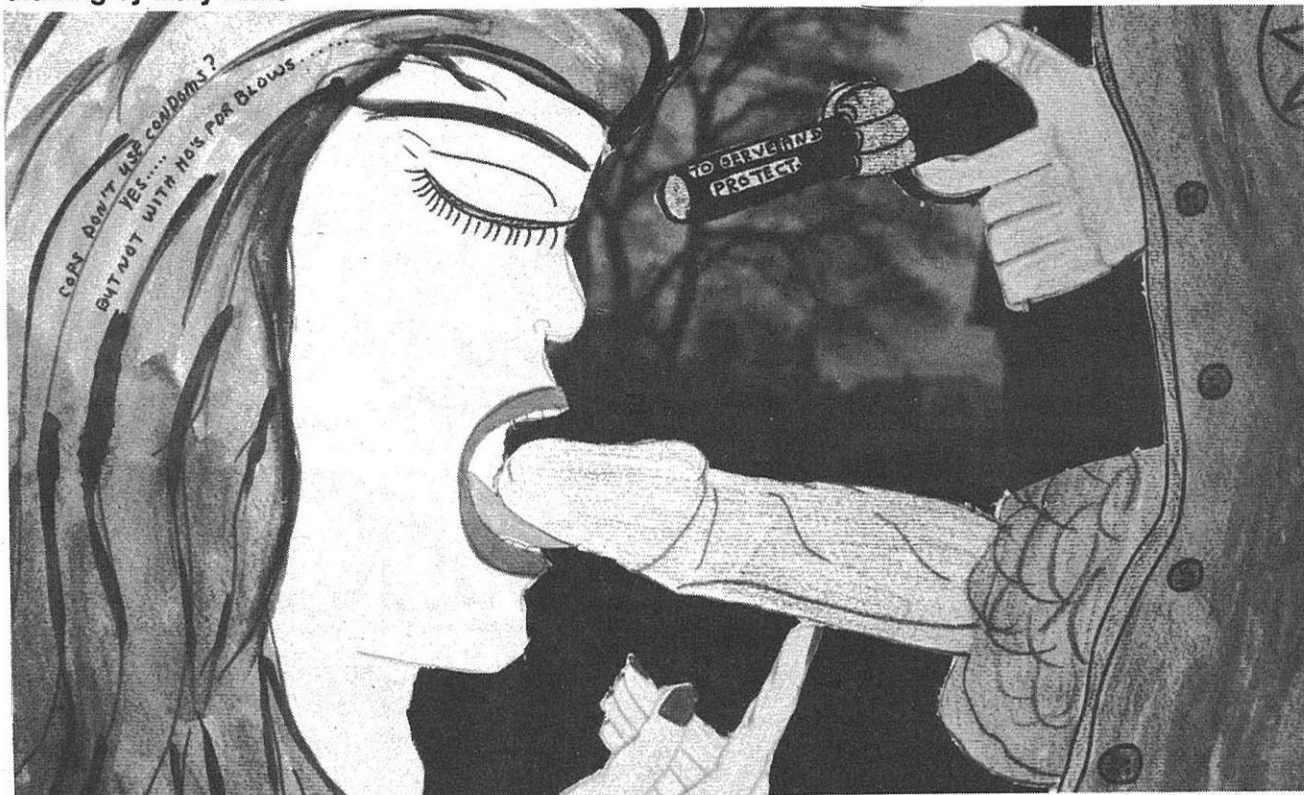
cops. The language used is as real as the women who are speaking and the effect is moving and powerful. Hos, friends of hos and people who get upset when they see other people being abused or disadvantaged will be affected by this work. *Prowling By Night* is not a cartoon version of *Pretty Woman*. This film's imagery is vivid, often stark, but the message is driven home clearly. Cabbagetown's bike-riding "Condom Lady" and the twenty or so prostitutes who helped make the film have done one hell of a job.

Films, even shorts like *Prowling By Night*, need money to be produced and Gwendolyn's efforts were funded by a grant from the National Film Board's women studio, studio D. This year Studio D is celebrating its fifteenth anniversary by sponsoring the Five Feminist Minutes Project, which funded fifteen women filmmakers to each make a five-minute film documenting experiences of women in each of their communities. They will all be screened at several festivals. *Prowling By Night* was one of the fifteen proposals selected from a field of many contenders and I have to give Studio D credit for making a wise choice.

Keep your ears open for information about when and where you can see this film. *Prowling By Night* is about police harassment of Toronto's street prostitutes, but all the stories the girls tell could have happened anywhere. The sad part of it is, they probably already have.

Alexandre Highcrest is a member of the Canadian Organization for the Rights of Prostitutes (CORP). Reprinted with permission from *Stiletto*, the magazine of CORP. For subscriptions write to box 1143, Stn. F, Toronto, Ont., M4Y 2T8.

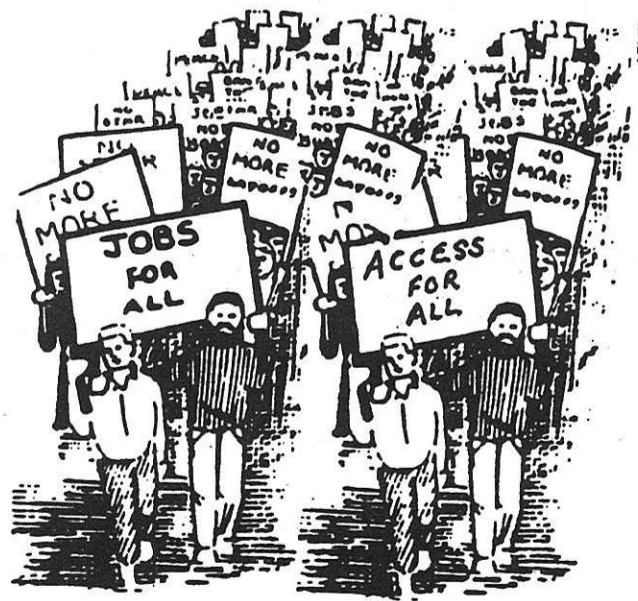
drawing by Mary Anne





# CUTBACKS & FIGHTBACKS

Free Trade brought plant closures. Bill C-21 brings Unemployment Insurance and retraining cuts. The GST promises high and unfair taxes. Three strikes against workers. But workers are fighting back. Demonstrations in front of the offices of Tory Members of Parliament and the Canada Employment Centre demonstrate a determination to fight the sweeping Tory agenda of cutbacks and sell-outs.



My name is Teresa Rebol. I was working at General Freezer. On January 28, 1990, the President of General Freezer came at 3:45 p.m., fifteen minutes before the end of the shift, and told us that General Freezer was sold to White Consolidated Industry from the United States. A lot of people were in so much shock that they couldn't even talk. The next day everyone started to talk to each other and say, "What are we going to do?". These people were angry and afraid at the same time. This plant was in business for over thirty years. We had 230 people when this plant closed. It was very hard for people because they were there for a long time. Also, they started to think about their age. Most of them were over forty and fifty. The manager and our Union Local arranged to have an Industrial Committee to help everyone. In March, we started having meetings to know what each of us was going to do to help the people. I was appointed to this committee.

My job was asking people what they wanted to do. All their answers were that they wanted another job. Another thing that they were afraid of was that they didn't know how to speak, write or read English. Most of these people were working there for a long time. For some of them that was the only job they knew. They came from their countries and started working at General Freezer. The Industrial Committee decided to get some people in to teach them how to fill out an application form and how to do their resumes. We called the Metro Labour Education Centre. We had another two people phoning companies to check if they needed people to work. Most of their answers back were, "Right now, we don't need you but you could drop an application in." The good thing that came out of these meetings was the Metro Labour Education Centre. Most of these people were very comfortable speaking with them.

Even today, we still have people coming in to the Centre to learn how to speak, read and write. My husband and I, who were working together, are still out of a job as are many of my friends that were working with us. As I keep in touch with my friends, they all ask if my husband or I have a job. My answer is no. Our plant closed on June 29, 1990. Today, November 21, 1990, most of us are still out of a job. We can find work, but it only pays \$7.00 or \$9.00 an hour which is not enough for you to eat, pay your rent and your bills.

This was another plant that closed because of Free Trade.

Dear Brian,

We are a group of unemployed workers studying at the Metro Labour Education Centre. We are victims of plant closures and want to work but are finding that there are not enough jobs for everyone. All of us need jobs to support our families and pay our bills. We don't want to be unemployed but we have no choice.

We feel that the Conservative Government is abandoning unemployed workers. It is doing this through mismanagement of Canada Employment Centres and by passing Bill C-21.

We think that with unemployment as high as it is this treatment is unfair. The government should be helping us to find jobs not making it harder. By passing Bill C-21, workers are being forced to take low-paying jobs on which they can't even support their families.

This must end now!

The government must act immediately to remedy this situation. We demand:

- Access for everyone to employment services
- No computer job postings
- End worker harassment
- Stop the claimant re-employment strategy

The paper that we read yesterday gives a lot of information about the GST, especially about how harmful it will be for poor people. Canada is one organ in the USA's body which is very difficult.

## The GST

by Mahmoud Said

The GST is the enemy of poor people that makes the "haves" get more. The symptoms of the GST are everywhere and the disease will start in on January 1, 1991. Free Trade and the GST are two friends that can live together for the sake of rich people and USA business. Today, Michael Wilson admitted that Canada is in a recession. This shows that the government failed to do its job properly. I think the government doesn't know what it is doing. It seems like they are being directed by others.



photo: Left Eye

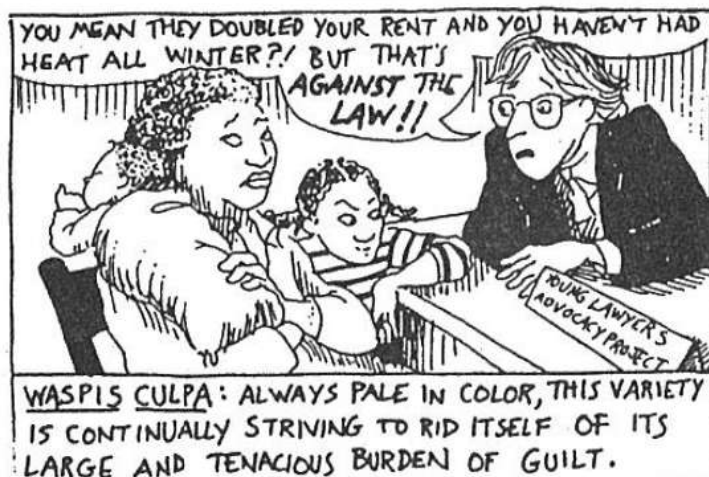
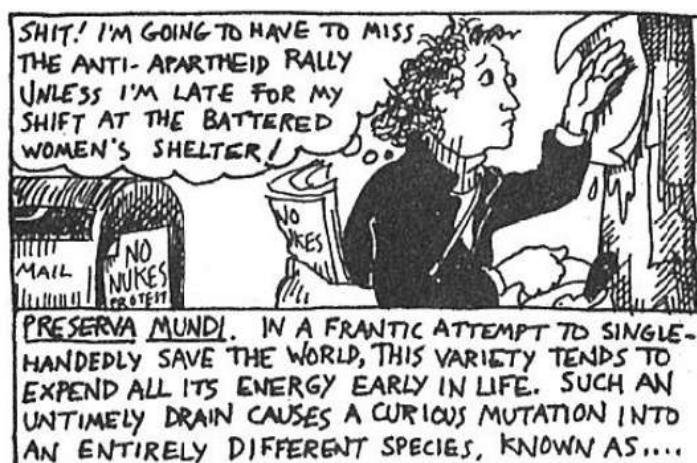


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BY HELOISE C. BLAND



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