

Rebel Girls' Rag

A FORUM OF WOMEN'S RESISTANCE

Vol. 6 No. 2

75¢

MAY/JUNE, 1992

News & Views from Toronto Socialist Feminist Action

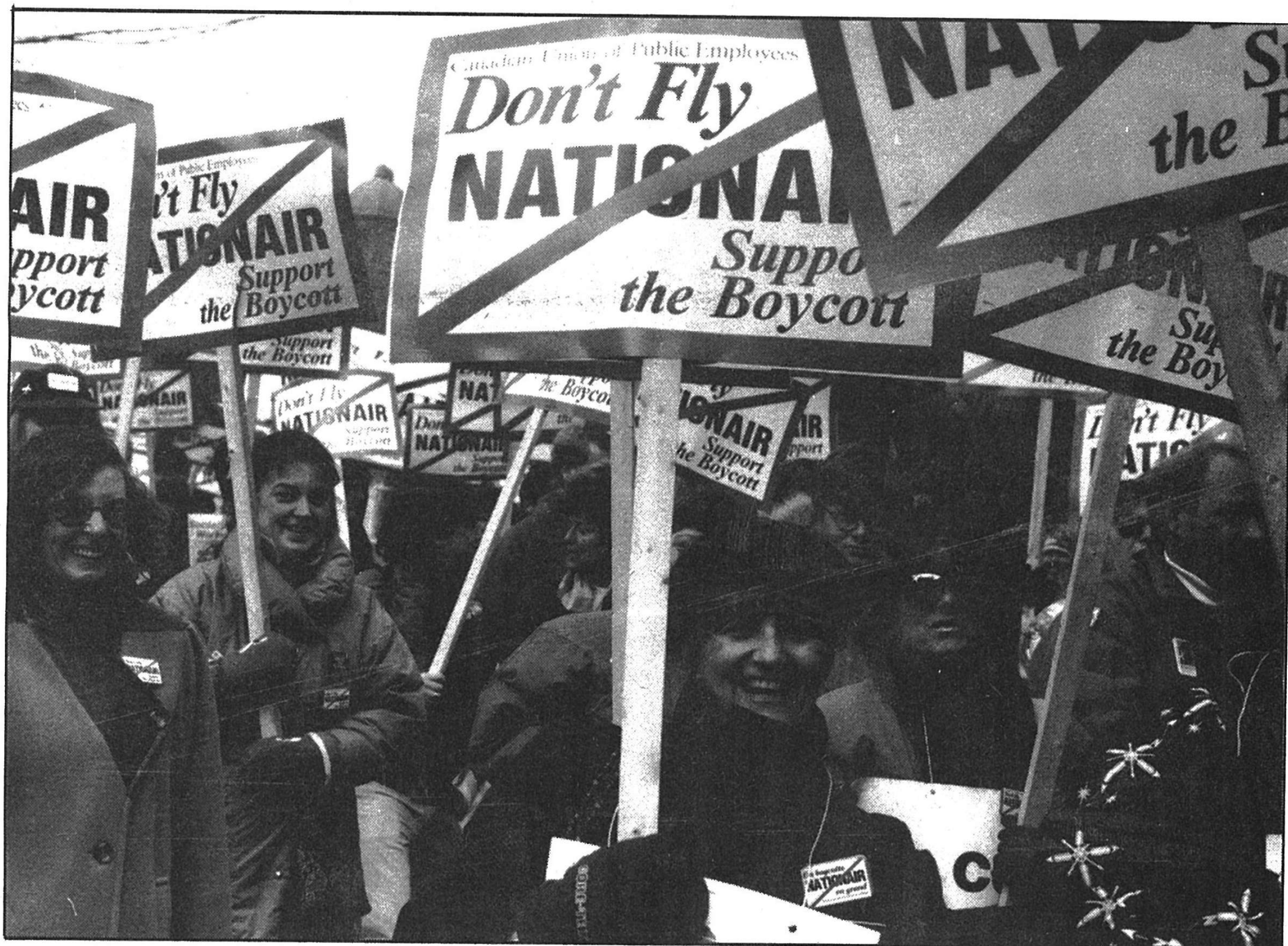


photo: Left Eye

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Training, Labour Adjustment & Unwaged Workers

by Jennifer Stephen

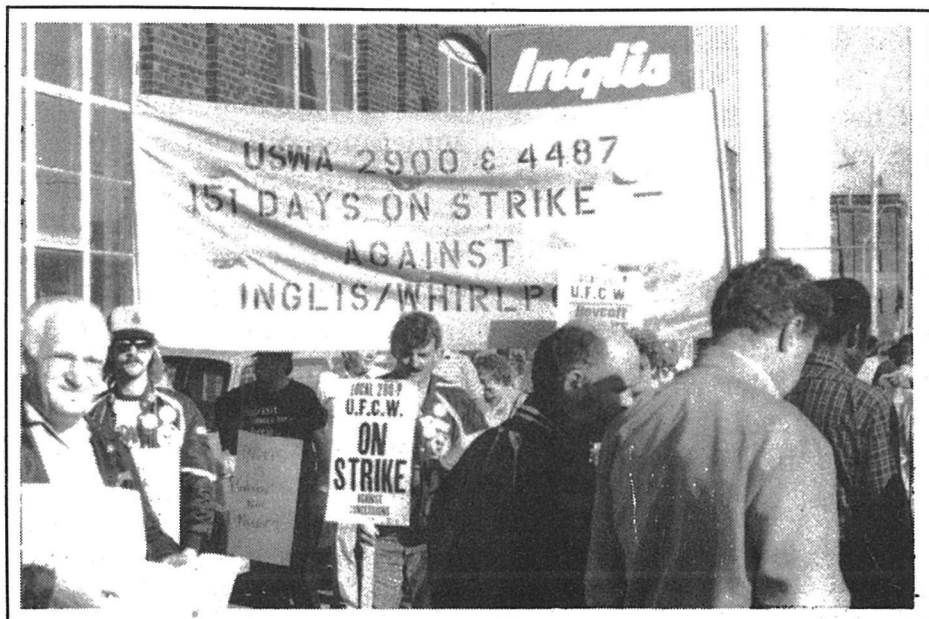
This article will frame significant, and perhaps challenging, questions about training as it relates to the broader process of economic restructuring. Economic restructuring is not a neutral, inevitable or even coherent process. Rather, and this is particularly evident around the issue of "labour adjustment," what we are facing is the result of deliberate political choices having a major impact on many different fronts around economic and trade policy, and social policy. There is no question that trade unions and the social movements are under attack. There is no question that the Business Council on National Issues has gained the ideological upper hand. There is no question that neoliberalism dominates discussion about international trade, economic development, and the options available to capital and by implication labour in this, the decade of so-called global competition. Still, the notion of choice does not figure in much of this discussion. Instead, we are urged to "tighten our belts" and accept the inevitable.

The labour movement has developed a strong political analysis and series of demands around the issue of training. In this, training figures centrally as a right, as a continuous process of life-long learning, key to increasing the social, economic, and political power of workers. As Nancy Jackson has argued, trade unions must develop worker-based training programmes to challenge the political agenda inherent in corporatized, employer-based training. Training has come to be considered a mechanism for enhancing the quality of work, to protect job classification, and to articu-

late a challenge to the impact of technological change on jobs and work design, to fight against the degradation of work and the devaluation of skills. In short, training is intensely political. And throughout, the labour movement has responded to the necessity of articulating an agenda which meets and challenges that of the corporate interests.

Training for waged, employed workers must be distinguished from the issue of training for unwaged, unemployed workers. The concern is that we have simply imported the analysis of employment-based training into the discussion of training for unemployed workers, and have in the process lost or blurred some fundamental issues. In the current political context unemployment has come to be framed as an individualized social problem, where the "unemployed" have come to be viewed as a disembodied social mass, where an elected political official can describe General Welfare Assistance as "A vacuum cleaner sucking up all our money" (*Toronto Star*, Jan. 9/92, A20). Governments have abandoned full-employment and labour market stabilization policies. Therefore, the only political and ideological space left open is precisely that of training. However, training as it relates to the workplace cannot be made to apply to training for unwaged, unemployed workers. And the process of doing so effectively depoliticizes the issue of job loss by deflecting attention away from what is really at issue here: structural unemployment and a collective attack on workers and workers' organizations.

That training is a key to re-employment is central to the assumed relationship between training and labour adjustment.



Implied here is that lack of employment is due to a deficiency in the worker's skills. The onus is effectively placed on the worker to "upgrade" and train for re-employment. In this way, attention is deflected from the real issue, which is structural unemployment, to become instead an individualized matter of skill deficiency. Similarly, emphasizing training focuses attention on skill level. The skills required in any particular job, particularly in the manufacturing sector, are equated with the individual skills possessed by the worker in question. Since the majority of job loss in Metro Toronto has occurred in the manufacturing sector, and given that these jobs have been designated semi-skilled or low-skilled, it is similarly assumed that the makes determinations about what and how many training "seats" to purchase based on labour market surveys and consultation with business through Local Advisory Councils. Neither labour nor community-based trainers have any representation or access to these deliberations. Work shortages determine what training is available. And CEIC makes those decisions. Workers must convince CEC counsellors that a

work shortage exists in the selected occupation. CEC counsellors in turn must refer back to CEIC-approved training areas. The question is, to what extent does this framework reinforce structural weaknesses within the economy on the one hand, and recycle workers through low-wage, nonunionized jobs on the other, particularly if our goal is to develop a high-wage, high-skill high value-added economy of the kind described in the United Steelworkers of America paper, *Empowering Workers in the Global Economy*. At the moment, CEIC, an agency of the state remote from political accountability, holds tremendous power in determining what is on offer and who can gain access to it. At the same time, through the federal Labour Force Development Strategy and the creation of the newly created Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB) we can see the further devolution and privatization of the training system. As was pointed out by Erna Post of the Canadian Employment and Immigration Union in a presentation at a recent Canadian Labour Congress meeting on December 2, 1991, there are few systematic

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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., Carolyn Egan, Nancy Farmer, Mary Gellatly, Shelly Gordon, Miriam Jones, Sharmani Peries, Jocelyn Piercy, Jennifer Stephen.

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



Good Enough to Work? Good Enough to Stay!

by Judy Vashti Persad

Temporary Status Equals Slavery; Immigrant Status For This Nanny and Stop Discrimination; Stop Forced Live-in: these were the words chanted and the demands stated during a public meeting and march organized by the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights, also known as Intercede. There is no "day of rest" in women's struggle for survival and justice. It is sometimes difficult to go to a meeting on a Sunday, but a Sunday is most likely the only time women workers who are domestic workers can get away from their employer, who could easily pass as their owner. The policies of the government allows women to be owned for a period of time. Women from the Philippines, Guyana, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, St. Vincent, Taiwan and Uganda and other "Third World" countries apply to this country under the Foreign Domestic Movement Program, but soon end up having to serve a period of indentureship.

The meeting was held on February 2, 1992, in a large auditorium.

There was plenty of talking and laughing as women greeted each other. As the meeting got underway, Fely Villasin, Intercede's coordinator, thanked the women who were domestic workers for attending, acknowledging the courage it took for them to be present. The need to be with those who are in similar situations and to come together to demand one's rights does over-power one's fear. Once the meeting began, one by one, women stood up and spoke about their worry and how angry they were. Here they are taking care of people's children but they are not good enough to be granted equal rights with other workers and people in this country. Canada continues its historical practice of exploiting the labour of People of Colour.

After getting an update on the Foreign Domestic Movement (FDM) program and the federal government's policy changes in this area, women could only become more angry and worried.

Toni Schweitzer, a lawyer, informed the meeting that on January 30, 1992, the Minister of Employment and Immigration announced the changes being made regarding entry requirements for the FDM program. To be qualified for entry into Canada under this program a person must now have a grade 12 education or its Canadian equivalent and six months full-time training in a field or occupation related to live-in care. They must also be able to speak English or French.

These requirements effectively discriminate against women from the Philippines, the countries of the Caribbean, India and the "Third World." It is clearly a racist and sexist policy. These requirements will qualify only those who have access to higher levels of education and to institutions that provide formal training. It was pointed out that the Philippines does not have a grade 12 level. In the Caribbean most women who apply to enter the FDM program possess a grade 4 or 5 level. The women from the Caribbean who do have a grade 12 equivalent are women who are already on their road to a defined career such as nursing. The combination of a grade 12 education and six months of related training makes it impossible for women from the Third World who have so far made up the majority of applicants to the FDM program to now qualify. These changes make it easier to exclude women of colour from the program, and include women who are from countries such as Britain.

The Minister stated that he was responding to the community. Of course that does not mean the domestic workers', women's or People of Colour communities. In December 1989 Intercede and other organizations advocating on behalf of foreign domestic workers made recommendations to the federal government with regards to changing the program so the discriminatory aspects would be eliminated. These changes were not made.

Foreign Domestic workers must be granted equal rights with other immigrants whose labour is in demand in this country. They are the only category of worker to serve a period of indentureship. What the government must do is improve the Foreign Domestic Movement (FDM) program and eliminate the discrimination which these women routinely experience. Their two to three years of temporary status, coupled with forced live-in conditions, make these women, who are mostly women of colour, vulnerable to violence, abuse, exploitation and racism. It is very often a despicable situation for women to have to go into and endure for at least two years of their lives.

Now the situation for foreign domestic workers has worsened with the implementation of the new entry requirements. This cannot be allowed to continue. It is always groups of people who are among the most oppressed in this country and internationally who are targeted for more discrimination and exploitation. The lines of race, gender and class always surface, reflecting the reasoning and objective behind state action.

So, join in with Intercede and other community organizations in this struggle. Contact the staff at Intercede and find out more about the FDM program and the recommendation for changes. Support the implementation of Intercede's recommendations, and demand that the federal government withdraw the restrictive eligibility criteria and conditions stated above, and stop the discrimination against them as workers, immigrants and women.

This piece was originally published in the Cross Cultural Communication Centre Newsletter, March 1992.



MOVEMENT BRIEFS

Purse Strings and Pin Money: The NDP Budget and Women

The provincial budget, to be introduced on or about April 30, will have an enormous impact on women as workers and as care-givers. Join activists in many sectors -- healthcare, education, AIDS awareness, and social services -- in a discussion of the impact of the budget and strategies of response. Co-sponsored by TSFA, the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, and the Workers Solidarity Committee.

Wednesday, May 20, 1992. 7:30pm. College St. United Church, 502 Bathurst St. Donations at the door.

Choice on the Home Front

OCAC, AIDS Action Now and Queer Nation are organizing a demonstration to coincide with a conference organized by the anti-choice organization "Campaign Life." Featured guests are Cardinal O'Connor, well known for his remarks about people living with AIDS, and Joe Scheidler, author of *99 Ways to Shut Down an Abortion Clinic*. Join in the protest on June 27, 1992 at 6pm at the Downtown Holiday Inn. For further information, call OCAC at 969-8463.

Battle for Choice South of the Border

Washington Rally

On April 5, 1992, more than 750,000 pro-choice supporters converged on downtown Washington for the biggest abortion rights rally that city has seen. The event was timely, as Americans are awaiting the ruling of the Supreme Court in the latest bid to roll back Roe v. Wade. The demonstration was organized by the National Organization of Women and the National Abortion Rights Action League. OCAC organized a Canadian contingent.

Buffalo Rally

On April 11, 1992, 1,500 pro-choice supporters gathered in the rain in Prospect Park in Buffalo, to protest Operation "Rescue" threats to shut down Buffalo clinics. Carolyn Egan of OCAC was among the speakers, and a lively Canadian contingent went down. The demonstration was organized by Buffalo United For Choice.

Operation Harass-you Comes to Buffalo

Operation "Rescue" could more aptly be called Operation Fiasco, as its threatened shutdown of all four Buffalo abortion clinics from April 20 to May 2 got off to a shaky start. As of this writing, on each day pro-choice forces out to defend access

to the clinics have outnumbered the anti-choice vigilantes, all clinics have maintained their usual operating hours, and women have been able to keep their appointments. You'll have to do better than that, Mr. Terry, if you don't want to lose your dwindling constituency altogether!

Mayworks Events

Mayday! Mayday!

Mayworks, the Coalition for Social Justice and the Turtle Island Support Group invite you to a concert in solidarity with 500 Years of Resistance. Features an all-Native bill, including The 7th Fire, Jani Lauzon and the Eagle Heart Singers/Drummers.

Fri. May 1, 1992, 9pm., Club Safari, 508 Queen St. W. \$8-10.

Womantalk

Mayworks presents Womantalk, an evening of women's music, performance and poetry. Topping the bill: reggae, ska and hiphopping with Random Order, Sheila Gostick, performance artist Rebecca Belmore and poets Ayanna Black, Afua Cooper and Christine Donald.

Sat. May 2, 1992, 9pm., Club Safari, 508 Queen St. W. \$6-8.

Stories From the Inside

An exhibition of Scott Marsden's drawings about sexual harassment based on the personal experiences of members of the CAW in the aerospace industry.

May 2-23, 1992. The Partisan Gallery.

For other Mayworks events call 345-8811

Ontario Federation of Labour

The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) is having a public meeting on NDP Labour Law Reform on May 11, 1992, at 7:30pm, at 15 Jervais Dr., Don Mills.

Workers Solidarity Coalition

WSC is having a forum at the Canadian Labour Congress convention on Tues. June 9, 1992, in Vancouver B.C.

WSC regularly meets every other Wednesday at the CUPW hall. For further information, please phone 461-0711.

Support the Nationalir Boycott

Nationalir locked out it's 450 Montreal and Toronto based flight attendants on November 19, 1991 after the union soundly voted down a concessions contract. The workers, 80% of whom are women, make just over \$15,000 a year and work under horrendous conditions.

The CUPE airline union has launched a boycott of Nationalir and is calling for resolutions of support from other unions and organizations. Resolutions and solidarity messages can be sent to CUPE Airline, 180 Attwell Dr., Ste. 600, Etobicoke, M9W 6A9 or phone (416) 798-3399. In Quebec, write to 59 rue St-Jaques Ouest, Bureau 400, Montreal, PQ, H2Y 1K9 or (514)281-8439.

Postal Workers Jailed

In February Andre Kolompar, president of the Toronto local of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), Jim Lawrence, a vice-president, and Ron Pollard, a member, were all jailed for breaking an injunction against picketing which was imposed during the CUPW strike last summer. The three postal workers refused to be intimidated by the court order and stood firmly for the right of striking workers to picket. The Ontario NDP government instructed the crown to proceed with the prosecution of the three

workers, shocking trade unionists across the province. An open letter to Bob Rae from Andre Kolompar was published in the *Globe and Mail*, in which he accused the NDP government of hypocrisy in its dealing with the union.

Two hundred trade unionists rallied outside the Mimico Correctional Institution on February 29 where Kolompar was being held. There were speakers from the Ontario Federation of Labour, the Labour Council of Metro Toronto and York Region, the National Office of the Canadian Auto Workers, a Nationalir worker, and many

others who gave their support to the jailed unionists. A rally was held at Queen's Park the weekend prior to the sentencing. Then on March 12 approximately twenty-five protesters occupied the offices of Attorney General Howard Hampton. The majority of the occupiers were from CUPW but there were also members of the Steelworkers and OPSEU. Another forty supporters rallied outside. The demonstrators left after meeting with Hampton's parliamentary assistant. A meeting is scheduled with the Attorney General at the end of April.

The campaign in defense of the jailed postal workers was led by the Toronto local of CUPW and the Worker's Solidarity Coalition (WSC), which is a grouping of trade unionists and community activists interested in building a renewed rank and file workers' movement. WSC is planning forums at the upcoming OPSEU and CLC conventions and has been actively involved in organizing support for the locked out Nationalir workers.



No Place For Violence

by the Labour Council
of Metropolitan Toronto
& York Region

We know that violence against women is a workplace issue. As long as women experience violence and abuse we will never achieve equality. Violence can make it impossible for a woman to earn a living. And, too often, if we don't have money, we can't escape the violence.

What follows is a sample of some of the effects of violence on working women's lives. While there are commonalities between women's experiences we must not make assumptions or speak for other women; each woman's experience is unique. Yet the effects of violence on women's working lives cannot be overstated. For all women, violence is a workplace issue:

- Fear, injury or emotional after-effects may make it impossible to concentrate on the job.
- Women being sexually harassed at work may be afraid to use the stairs, corridors, washroom or cafeteria in case the harasser is there.
- Women who are in violent relationships may be unable to accept promotions, overtime or jobs that require overtime because their partners will become abusive if they do; women who are already in jobs with mandatory overtime have no choice and know each overtime hour makes an assault more certain; women may fear abusive phone calls or their partner showing up at work and being violent; women may avoid making friends at work (either for fear of a controlling partner or as a way of ensuring no one finds out about the assaults) and therefore ends up isolated and misunderstood.
- Women who are sexually harassed often end up isolated and judged by co-workers while the perpetrator continues to work, is transferred, promoted or quietly let go with a large cash settlement.
- Women are often assaulted travelling to and from work and on workplace premises.
- Work may be the only safe place in a woman's life (that

is, if it is a harassment-free workplace).

- Women are assaulted by co-workers.
- Women who are sexually harassed are given menial job tasks, poor performance reviews, negative references, are demoted, transferred or fired or forced to resign because of stress or direct pressure from employers and/or the harasser. All of these things happen when women complain or fight back *and* when we don't.
- Violence causes women to lose time from work, which can result in being fired for absenteeism:
 - wife assault: women may be hospitalized with injuries or may be reluctant to show up at work with visible signs of assault; partners may refuse to let them come to work.
 - sexual harassment: health effects are serious and can include ulcers, eating disorders, insomnia, and depression; can't bear to see harasser again/be harassed again.

pletely disrupted and women may be afraid to leave home or return home if the assault took place there; women are often ashamed and afraid co-workers will find out about the assault and socially isolate them.

Violence against women is already visible in the workplace. Violence against women is a continuum, a whole range of attitudes and actions - from sexual jokes, to pin-ups, to minimizing and ridiculing our views, to harassment, assault and murder - that serve to forcibly remind women of our secondary status and value in this society.

WE WON'T SETTLE FOR LESS: IMPROVEMENTS TO SERVICES AND SYSTEMIC CHANGES

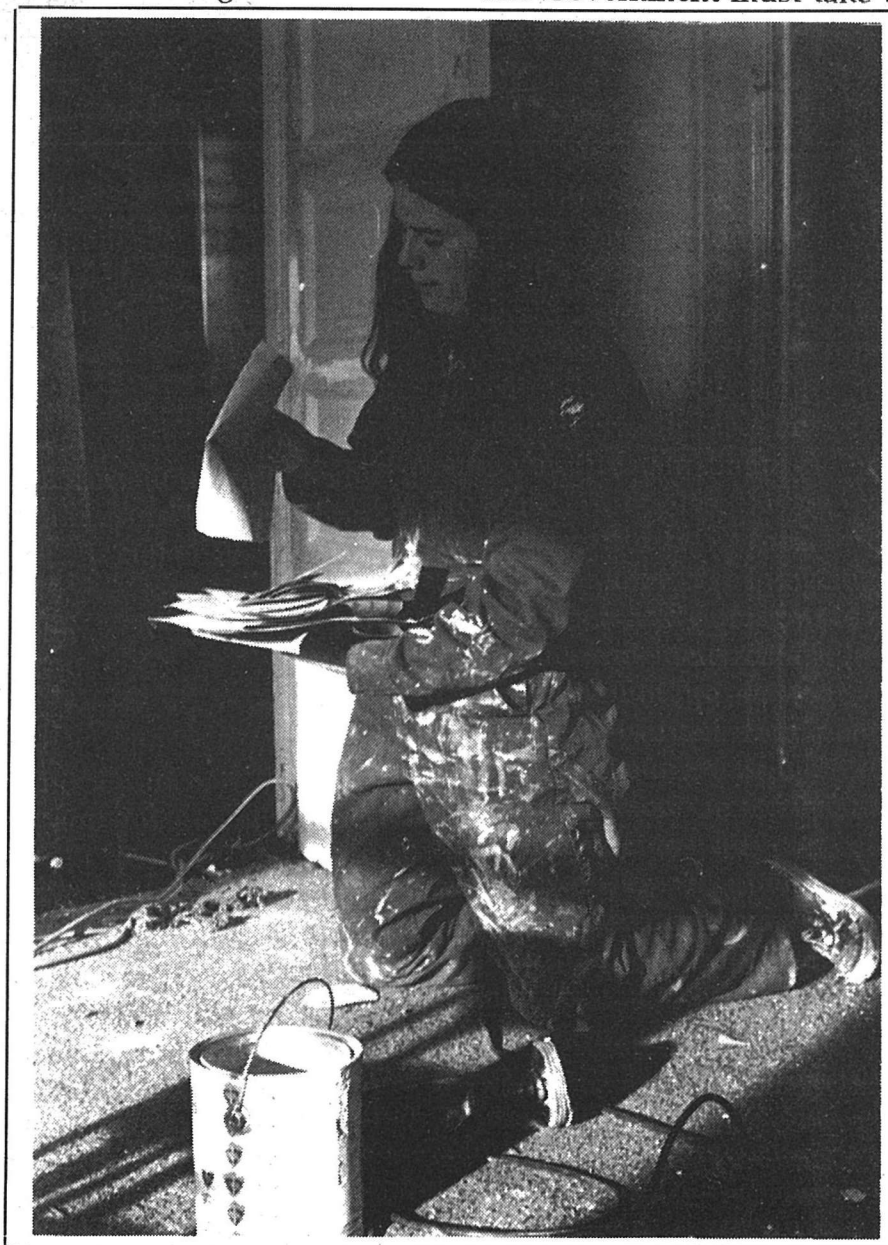
Violence against women is commonly thought to be the experience of a small minority, in extreme situations. The truth is that violence against women is commonplace. It is systemic. It is business as usual. The Government must take im-

mediate action to show the women of Canada that it does not condone the violence we experience. Only action will show that we are being seen, we are being heard, and that our pain is taken seriously. Words do not heal bruises or mend broken bones or find a safe place. For the Government to let the reality of millions of Canadian women fade in importance at budget time is unconscionable. We are not just another issue.

Government decisions on funding and legislation directly affect the quality of women's lives. The policies of the current Federal Government make it less likely that violence against women will end or that women who need services will get them. Every part of our social safety net is endangered. Transfer payments to the provinces have been steadily decreasing and cost sharing agreements between the federal and provincial levels of government may cease to exist.

The promised national childcare system is on the scrapheap. Support for co-op housing has been slashed. Changes and cuts to Unemployment Insurance mean that fewer workers receive fewer benefits for less time after longer waiting periods. Increased poverty, heavy job loss due to the disastrous Free Trade Agreement - all have a disproportionate effect on women, the traditional low wage earners and poorest segment of society, along with children. This Government appears to have no idea as to the reality of women's lives.

There are so many areas that need change. Immigration and refugee policies cause women real suffering - the current sponsorship program means women can virtually be held hostage to their sponsors, usually the husband, for up to ten years. Domestic workers are extremely vulnerable to harassment and exploitation. Our children's textbooks are still sexist. We need non-violence built into our educational system. Our judges, lawyers, bureaucrats, doctors, police, educators and politicians all need a dose of women's reality, now. We must have mandatory training programs for people in positions of authority, people who now have too much power over women's lives. This training should be done by grass-



- sexual assault: emotional healing can be lengthy; normal routine can be com-

mediate action to show the women of Canada that it does not condone the violence we ex-

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◆ Concessions Are No Tradeoff ◆

by Carolyn Egan

Recently many unions in this country have been pressured by management to accept concessions in their collective agreements, as corporations and governments attempt to make workers pay for the economic recession. In Metropolitan Toronto public sector workers have faced demands to reopen their contracts or face layoffs or service cuts. The argument for concessions as a way to save jobs has also been central to employer demands in federal and provincial bargaining. We have seen this in the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) strike and the recent contract signed by the Ontario Provincial Service Employees Union (OPSEU).

It is critical that unions take a clear position against pressure to make workers shoulder the burden of hard times. The Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto and York Region recently adopted an executive board statement against concessions:

- We support no roll back of wages of unionized workers directly impacted by the Metro budget crisis.
- We support Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), ATU and Fire Fighters locals in their efforts to avoid layoffs and scapegoating of unionized workers.
- We support the "Fightback Metro Coalition" in its efforts to prevent cuts in social programs.

Inter-union solidarity is very important at this time and unions must support each other against these attacks.

The push for concessions as the only means of saving jobs is but one of a number of attacks on unions, including injunctions against picketing and back-to-work legislation. It is crucial to understand why these arguments are wrong, and why concessions will not benefit workers in either the short or the long term.

In the United States there is case after case where concessions were made by major unions, only to be followed by massive layoffs. Concessionary contracts give employers the confidence to attempt to walk all over workers. In 1979 the federal government bailed out the Chrysler Corpora-

tion, and the United Auto Workers (UAW) accepted concessions under threat of plant closures. Plants closed anyway. The response of the other auto manufacturers was to press for the same sorts of concessions from their workers. The employers' strategy worked, and the same pattern was followed in steel, transport, meat-packing, and the airlines. For example USX Corporation, the largest steel manufacturer in the US, demanded pay cuts, shorter vacations and givebacks. There were no wage increases for a decade. After getting all the concessions it demanded, USX then wanted to open half of the remaining jobs to non-union workers. In their Chicago plant the workforce has decreased from 10,000 workers in 1979 to 1,000 today. Many of the layoffs in the US are particularly hurting women and people of colour, who had made some advances through affirmative action programs. These gains are being wiped out, and there is a massive attack on affirmative action by the Bush administration and the courts.

The same argument for concessions to save jobs is being used throughout this country. Sears Canada announced a wage freeze affecting 48,000 workers effective through January 31, 1993 after experiencing its first unprofitable year in thirty-nine years. It is now laying off 154 full-time and 810 part-time workers in Halifax and Stelarton, Nova Scotia. The wage freezes are not stopping layoffs.

Will workers be able to catch up in the next round of negotiations as the employers suggest? Not likely. What happened in the next contracts after concessions in the US? Workers were forced to eliminate cost of living allowances (COLAs), to accept lump sum payments in lieu of wage increases, and to agree to a two-tiered wage system: one for current employees, and one for new employees. Beyond the increased exploitation of the entire workforce this two-tiered system has race and gender implications. Not only did workers not catch up but the momentum created by the erosions of past gains gave the entire employing class the confidence to demand further concessions.

In April 1991, 400,000 public sector workers agreed to salary freezes for the first six months of 1992. The union is now being asked to make further salary concessions of \$350 million. The Quebec government has asked its workers to put off the renewal of the collective agreement for two years, and to accept 1%, 1% and 2%. This essentially does

ary contracts and massive layoffs in the US some workers are beginning to fight back. Women, African-Americans and Latinos are unionizing at a much higher rate than any other sector of the working class. In Bathurst, New Brunswick, Stone Consolidated, a pulp and paper plant, had been threatening to close its mill unless workers agreed to reopen



photo: Left Eye

away with the process of collective bargaining and is the same tactic the federal government used with its workers, sparking the PSAC strike last fall.

Employers and governments are telling us that we all have to share the burden. Who is really carrying that burden? In Toronto there are 160,000 people collecting unemployment insurance, 300,000 on welfare, 50,000 homeless and 150,000 relying on food banks. These are the working class and the poor, including a disproportionate number of women and people of colour. Meanwhile the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce made \$811 million in profits in 1991 and yet is telling its workers that it is expecting a hard year. Canadian corporations made over \$25 billion in untaxed profits in 1989. The wages and salaries of the working class are taxed at a much higher rate than capital gains, corporate stock dividends and other investment income.

After a decade of concession-

their contract and accept a 20% wage cut. The workers who are both Anglophone and Francophone were also asked to give up a 5.5% wage increase scheduled for July, 1992. On both counts, the workers said no. On the eve of the threatened shutdown of the plant, Richard Doucette, union president, stated, "We know if we give into concessions, they'll ask for more and more. Mill owners across the country would be squeezing wages out of workers if the union gave in." Despite the company's threats, the workers refused to give up the gains they had already won. The day the plant was to close, the provincial government stepped in with financial assistance to keep the company running. Although government bailouts are hardly ideal, the situation clearly demonstrates that there is a willingness to fight concessions among some workers. If we are to turn the tide against employer attacks, whether concessions, injunctions or back to work legisla-

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roots women's groups, by survivors of violence. We need mandatory affirmative action and employment equity programs, we need real pay equity. We want to see Workers' compensation and Employee/Workers Assistance Programs recognize the psychological effects of sexual harassment and provide suitable counselling and time off for recovery. We want to see the Government demonstrate in concrete terms that it is moving toward a more equal society.

Women need money for services, the right kind of services. We need more shelters for more women, for women whose first language is not English, women living in poverty, older women, women with disabilities, lesbian women, Black women, Asian women, First Nations women, working-class women, Jewish women. We need counselling programs for survivors, for victims, for children, for men. It is absolutely essential that this counselling is feminist, affordable or free, covered by provincial health insurance plans and available in many languages and culturally appropriate. There is

one feminist counselling course in Canada aimed at graduating women who know how to provide this kind of service: the Counsellor/Advocate for Assaulted Women and Children Program at George Brown College in Toronto. These women students hold bake sales in order to get the kind of education they need. We want to see changes, now. We need money, now. The money has to be in women's hands, in grass-roots organizations. We cannot stress enough that the kind of service women receive is as important as the services being available. We do not need more money going into the traditional male model of psychology. We do not need therapists whose main interest is in "keeping the family together." We do not need more drugged and institutionalized women. We do not need one more woman to hear that she is to blame for the violence.

We do not need a Federal Government who says that education, health, employment legislation and social services are provincial responsibilities while continuing to slash funding to the provinces. We do not need a Federal Government that con-

tinues to destroy the very foundation of the Canadian social services system.

In our society, violence against women is institutionalized. It is woven into our culture. It is visible in our economics, our religions, our educational and health systems and in every other societal institution. Violence against women serves a societal purpose: violence is the means by which the status quo of women's inequality is maintained. Women's secondary place in the patriarchal hierarchy is required in order to maintain that hierarchy. And violence against women will not end until all violence against all women is ended. First Nations women struggle with the daily reality of racism, with the neglects and abusive policies caused by successive governments, with the destruction of their communities. Racism, homophobia, Jewish oppression and religious persecution, ageism; all are, in and of themselves, violence. Immigrant and refugee women, women with disabilities, women whose first language is not English, working-poor and working-class women, all experience discrimination and

extra barriers to equality. For women who live with these daily realities - in addition to the injustices of sexism and violence against women - it often means unjust and unequal treatment from individuals and institutions, damage to our knowledge of our own self-worth and increased economic and emotional vulnerability.

Flexible attitudes about sex roles and other forms of personal change are not enough to end violence against women. More and more shelters for assaulted women are not the answer. It is not enough to pick up the pieces after the damage has been done. We need change at the core of our society and in our systems of government. We are calling for a transformation - whatever it takes for women and men to live together in dignity, justice and respect.

From a brief to the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, March 26, 1992



Prisoners with AIDS, Support & Action Network

by Donald Ainslie

Some prisoners with HIV have been forced into isolation for lengthy periods of time because of the ignorant fears of their guards and wardens. The HIV anti-body status of prisoners is routinely circulated among guards. Consensual sex between prisoners is still illegal, and officials refuse to acknowledge the existence of IV drug use 'inside'.

Even though the federal minister of correctional services, Doug Lewis, recently announced that condoms would be distributed in federal prisons, it is clear that the federal and provincial governments have yet to address the complex issues relating to prisoners and HIV/AIDS. Accordingly, this summer, AIDS ACTION NOW! members formed a committee, Prisoners with AIDS Support and Action Network (PASAN), to fight for the rights of prisoners living with HIV/AIDS.

According to PASAN and AIDS ACTION NOW! member, Julia Barnett, the committee decided that the initial problem they had to address was the failure of our governments to have a comprehensive and integrated policy on AIDS in the prisons. At the moment, AIDS-related decisions are in the hands of individual wardens and guards. PASAN plans to issue a brief in mid-February which will discuss concerns and recommend action in the following eight areas.

1 Education and Prevention. Prisoners and guards must have access to up-to-date information on HIV/AIDS, safer sex, and safer drug use. Not only must condoms be distributed, they must be free for all prisoners, both men and women. Prisoners should be able to acquire condoms without having to fear reprisals for engaging in currently illegal consensual sex. Needles and cleaning materials for them (e.g. bleach) must be

made available, and the confidentiality of drug-users must be respected.

2 Confidentiality and Human Rights. The confidentiality of a prisoner's HIV-antibody status must be guaranteed. Guards, wardens, and other prisoners should not have access to this information. HIV-antibody testing should only be done with the informed consent of the prisoner and with pre- and post-test counselling.

3 Women and AIDS. Since it is now clear that women with AIDS have different treatment needs than men, the particular concerns of women with HIV/AIDS must be addressed. At the moment, PASAN members have been unable to find out whether Lewis' condom-distribution announcement even applies to women's prisons. Dams and gloves must also be distributed.

4 Forced Isolation. Prisoners with HIV/AIDS must not be forced into isolation because of their health status. They must also be allowed to work freely with other prisoners.

5 Access to Physicians and Treatments. Prisoners with HIV/AIDS must have access to an HIV primary care physician. Alternative therapies and experimental drugs must be made available to prisoners. Prisoners must be able to get the medications they need without losing their confidentiality.

6 Refugees and Immigration. The rights of detained refugees with HIV/AIDS must be respected. A negative HIV-antibody test should not be used as a criterion for refugee status.

7 Early Release. There should be the possibility of early release of prisoners with AIDS on humanitarian grounds.

8 After-care. Prisoners with HIV/AIDS should be coun-

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guidelines to cover the allocation workers involved are themselves semi- or low-skilled.

The logical extension of this argument is that the next best step is to create a high-skilled workforce, to create a high value-added economy which will enable us to compete in global markets. Training is not capable of creating such jobs, however. In fact, while it is important to argue for training as a coherent component of labour adjustment programmes, we must also argue for a broader industrial strategy.

A political vacuum has developed while the panacea of training for global competitiveness has captivated so much of our attention. The structural realignment which has been occurring within the labour force, with high-skilled jobs at one end and McJobs at the other, has proceeded apace with a major reconfiguration of the policies and institutions which comprise the training system. All training programmes which unwaged workers attempt to gain access to must first be approved by the Canada Employment Centre (CEC). Under C-21, training purchases are made out of the UI fund, rather than the general revenue account. This is known as the UI charge-back. Refugee status workers, who contribute to the UI fund, unlike the federal government, are not eligible for UI-sponsored training. The Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) of funds by local training boards. Competition may emerge within labour, perhaps dividing along public/private sector lines. Competition will most certainly emerge between labour and Community Based Trainers for the few training dollars available, even while both groups share similar political objectives. And both will have to content with private, for-profit consultants most of whom appear to be guided by the view that their role is to assist workers to adjust by lowering their expectations.

The experiences of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in Britain are pertinent here. In 1980, consensus emerged within the TUC that unions should develop services and organizations in order to retain unemployed members and, where appropriate, recruit unemployed people. Following from that, Unemployed Workers' Centres (UWCs) developed to a high of over 200

by 1984. Keith Forrester and Kevin Ward surveyed the UWCs, and concluded that "the central strategic ambiguity inherent within organizations representing the interests of waged workers additionally attempting to encompass the interests of the unwaged remains a crucial strategic issue facing trade unions in the 1990s" (*British Journal of Industrial Relations* 28:3, Nov. 1990). Labour must articulate a coherent response around the adjustment process, beginning with the role of training in relation to labour adjustment. One place to begin is by incorporating adjustment within the collective bargaining process. Training within the workplace is clearly on vehicle for the collective empowerment of workers through their organizations. However, training as it has been framed within the adjustment process and through CLFDB and now Ontario Training and Adjustment Board (OTAB) raises a series of fundamentally distinct questions. Why are we no longer talking about the need for a broader industrial strategy, or full employment? Training for re-employment, while politically expedient, does not create the political space we need to challenge structural unemployment. Rather, it compels us to accept the view that "skill" rather than deliberate economic and trade policy is at issue. How can we ensure that social equity objectives are first established, and then maintained and achieved within a decentralized, increasingly privatized training system, particularly where labour and Community Based Trainers may potentially be internally divided and compelled to compete because of the structural alignment set out under OTAB and the CLFDB. Finally, should trade unions consider the route adopted by the Trades Union Congress and fight to retain unemployed workers within their ranks, to ensure that the interests of unemployed workers are represented through organizations of which many of them were previously members? Given the current situation, these questions will become increasingly pertinent.

Based on a presentation delivered to the Training and Education Working Group, Centre of Research on Work and Society, York University, January 10, 1992. A version of this article is scheduled to appear in an upcoming issue of *Our Times*.

AIDS

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selling on how to get care and support after being released.

Given the disproportionate number of people of colour in the prisons, Barnett stressed that one of PASAN's priorities for the brief is the presentation of an anti-racist perspective in each of the eight areas of focus.

Members of PASAN plan to take their recommendations to the provincial Departments of Correctional Services and of Public Health in February, and hope to meet soon after with the ministers who oversee these departments. The finished brief will be circulated nationally in order to facilitate meetings with Correctional Services Canada.

The variety of the backgrounds members of PASAN bring to their committee work helps them to address the complex issues concerning prisoners

and AIDS. Members of PASAN include ex-prisoners and nurses from the Department of Public Health, as well as representatives from the Canadian AIDS Society, AIDS Committee of Toronto, Alexandra Park AIDS Prevention Program, John Howard Society, Elizabeth Fry Society, Street Outreach Services, Anishnawbe Health, Native Legal Services, Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention, and prison abolition groups.

With the announcement of condom distribution, the federal government has for the first time acknowledged the issue of AIDS in the prisons. But condoms are not enough. Barnett hopes the proposals put forth by AIDS ACTION NOW! will finally force our governments to treat prisoners with HIV/AIDS with the respect they are entitled to.

For more information, call Julia Barnett at 926-0744, during regular office hours.

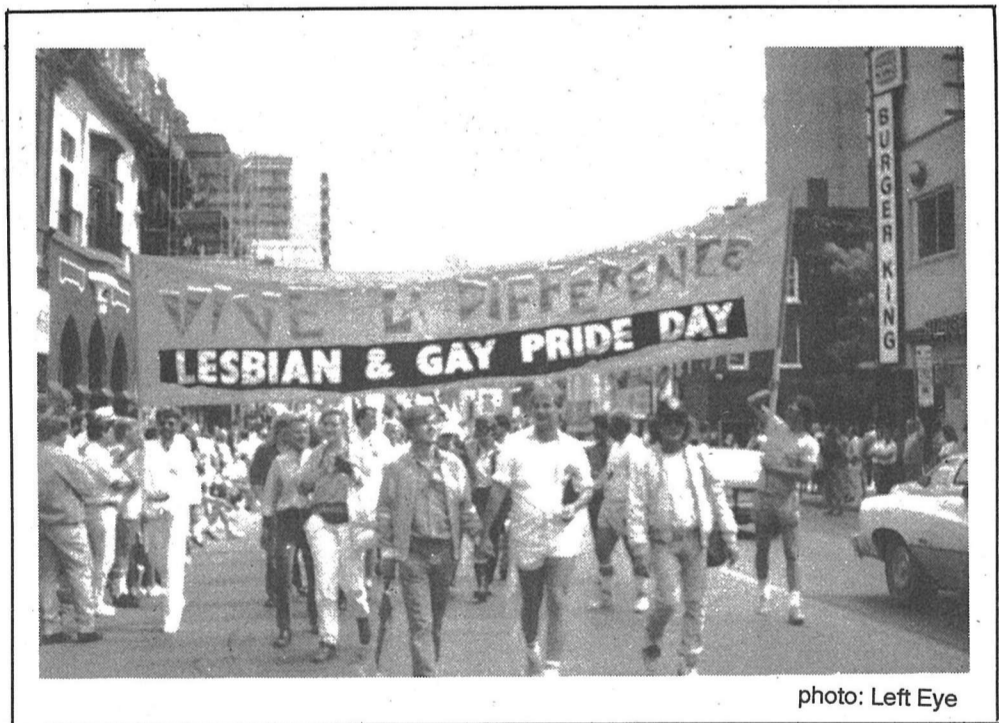


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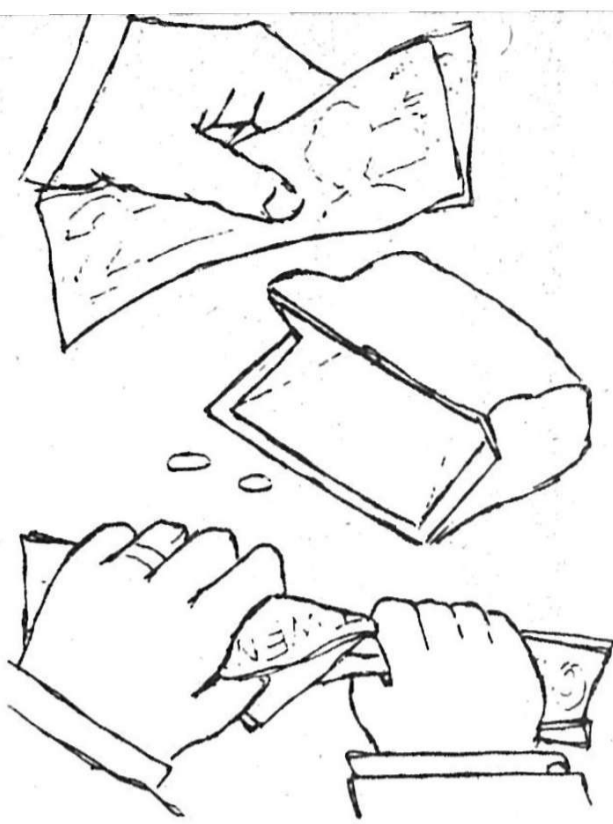
Concessions

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tion, these workers cannot stand alone.

In both the US and Canada, employers are on the offensive. It is clear that the only way to reverse this situation is by building a fightback, not by accepting concessions. We must build a

rank and file movement and support each other through mass workplace picketing and inter-union solidarity. The more unity that can be built across race and gender lines the stronger the working class fightback will become. The more unions that take a stand against concessions, the harder it will be for employers to impose them.



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