

# cayenne

No. 2  
February 1985



MIKE PHILLIPS

a socialist feminist bulletin

WHO WE ARE

We are three socialist feminists who formerly produced the IWDC newsletter together with Liza McCoy, who moved to the States this summer. The three of us are committed to producing a publication of socialist feminist news, opinion and debate. We welcome contributions--or how about a letter letting us know what you think?

Lynda Yanz, Christina Mills, and  
Marie Lorenzo  
Editorial Collective

Special thanks to Amy  
Gottlieb, Donna Scagliotti,  
Mary Sherlock and David Smith  
for their help in producing  
this issue.

Graphics in this issue have been  
borrowed from: Pork Roasts,  
Isis, Everywoman's Almanac,  
Razalugia, Akwesasne Notes, and  
the PRG Newsletter.

Yes! I would like to receive CAYENNE.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_ I enclose \$10 for my year's subscription.

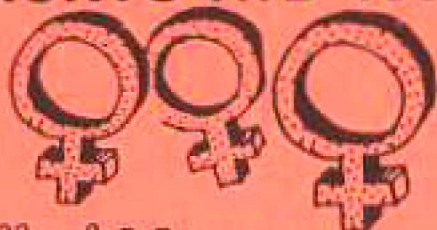
\_\_\_\_ I can make an additional donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

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receive CAYENNE.

Send to: CAYENNE, 386 Bloor St. W., Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1X4.



# TORONTO IWD 1985



Women Working for Choice  
 Women Working for Change  
 Women Working for Peace  
 Women Working  
 and Solidarity

- FEB. 22 8 p.m.  
 "Winter Fever Womyn's Dance" a fundraiser to bring Angela Davis.  
 The GSU, 16 Bancroft.  
 \$4/\$5 advance, \$6 door.
- MAR. 02 12 - 4 p.m.  
 Mass Picket at Eaton's Centre, Yonge & Dundas.  
 8 p.m.  
 Mixed dance sponsored by Latin American Women's Collective.  
 St. Lawrence Market Hall
- MAR. 04 7:30 p.m.  
 Strategies for the pro-choice movement, sponsored by OCAC.  
 Location t.b.a.
- MAR. 05 7:30 p.m.  
 Cultural evening for immigrant women, sponsored by Women Working with Immigrant Women; location t.b.a.
- MAR. 07 7:30 p.m.  
 Feminist Cabaret.  
 Location t.b.a.
- MAR. 08 7 p.m.  
 Angela Davis at Convocation Hall, \$3
- MAR. 09 11 a.m.  
 Rally at Convocation Hall;  
 March to Ryerson;  
 3 - 8 p.m.  
 Afternoon fair at Ryerson Polytechnical.  
 8 p.m.  
 Women's dance.  
 St. Lawrence Market Hall



All events will be wheelchair accessible and daycare will be provided. For more information, call Laurie at 863-6702 (days).

Volunteers are needed for the physical care of disabled women for all the events planned during the week of March 2 - March 9 (International Women's Day Week). Please contact Brenda, 537-1935 or Margo, 928-0765.

# cayenne

## a socialist feminist bulletin

**cay·enne** (kī-en'), n. [<native Braz. kynnha], 1. a very hot red pepper used widely in India, China and Caribbean; 2. a female spice; 3. a long-lasting irritant; 4. hot stuff.



## EDITORIAL

In this issue, we are highlighting the struggle for choice around abortion. Judy Rebick, activist in the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics, spoke to us about the current conjuncture in the abortion struggle. And we've reviewed Kathleen McDonnell's groundbreaking book, Not An Easy Choice. The issue of abortion has brought thousands of women out onto the streets over the last two years in a dramatic offensive in the fight for abortion rights. We have also witnessed a significant increase in the strength and violence of the "right-to-life". Rebick poses a challenge to socialist feminists to which it is incumbent upon us to respond.

This is our second issue of Cayenne. Response to our first issue has been great, but there are still too many of you we haven't heard from. What do you like about it? What don't you like? We're trying to encourage discussion and debate about the whole range of concerns that we as socialist feminists are grappling with. We want you to contribute to that, so send us your thoughts and ideas. You don't have to create a masterpiece, just sit down and write about what you argue with your friends about after a meeting, or your reaction to an article or event.

International Women's Day is fast approaching. In Toronto, a coalition has begun to organize this year's activities. We'd like to run a series on 1985 IWD activities across the country. What's going on in your city? Many of us have been organizing for International Women's Day for many years. How far have we come? What have we achieved? What do you think?

## *in this issue*

Editorial	1
Letters	2
Socialist Network	3
SF:U.S.A.	6
Pornography Project	8
Action Daycare	9
Women and Immigration	10
Eaton's Strike	14
Library Settlement	16
Nfld. Telephone Strike	18
Native Women	19
Interview: Choice	22
Grange Inquiry	29
WISCA: Focus on Nicaragua	31
AMES Appeal	34
Puerto Rican Women	35
Greenham Women	36
Miner's Wives	39
Women in Greece	41
International Notes	42
Review: Not An Easy Choice	43

## *newflash*

As we go to press we are informed that Newfoundland Telephone workers have just achieved and ratified a settlement with the Company. We send our heartfelt congratulations, particularly to the clerical workers, for whom it is the first contract. See our article on page eight, and watch for more details about the settlement in the next issue.

Dear Cayenne:

Having read the editorials in the recent IWDC Newsletter and the first issue of *Cayenne*, it seems to me that the separation of the two groups could be a healthy development in the socialist feminist current. One group publishing a socialist feminist bulletin independent of IWDC and another continuing with IWDC and its newsletter are not necessarily contradictory projects. Hopefully the socialist feminist current in Toronto is large enough to support both, and I hope that people won't feel it is necessary to take sides. If there are political differences between IWDC and the *Cayenne* collective, it would be useful to those of us not involved, as I'm sure it would also be to those directly involved, to see a discussion of the issues in the pages of your publications.

Judy Rebick

Albuquerque, NM

Dear Cayenne:

Have been reading your November/December issue--the first, and I hope not anywhere near the last! I think the magazine fills a real need, and I hope it continues to be the up-front, out-front, unafraid-of-the-issues journal it promises with this first offering! I want very much to keep getting *CAYENNE*, keep sharing it with women here in Albuquerque, and also to contribute to it. I'm sending a new poem, for starters. Maybe I'll be able to attempt something more "meaty" in the future.

The Beginning Again

"the beginning for me is  
never an idea"  
Lionor Fini

The beginning is dust  
swirling, a color charging  
or rearing.  
A notion of time  
or of timelessness.

The beginning makes sense  
instantly.  
We hold it  
and our fingers splay out  
become heavy  
with patience  
and wonder.

I am going home now.  
I am listening  
for my name  
among the keen sounds  
and the low.

People's words  
climbing upon each other's backs.  
Wind. Juices.

I follow the sound  
of my name  
on all those years,  
exploding.  
Running to the beginning again.

Margaret Randall  
December, 1984.



## Socialist Network Growing

When I lived in Vancouver, the easiest thing in the world when you wanted to get anything going was to contact people. Just working as a feminist meant that you built up networks of many names and references which were valuable as a way of putting others in touch with resources and connections. People of different political views were linked by common experiences or indirectly through connections with others. Feuds divided people but also set in motion counteractive work by those who found themselves torn in two directions. Coming to the metropolis was in many ways a shocking experience.

The metropolis is put together quite differently. Groups specialize; when they split, they split and there are no countervailing pressures; people can be working away politically in one part or sector of the city and simply not know what others are doing. The women's movement seemed to fall out into specialized circles with little working overlap. The marxist party organizations in creating their own connections also divided on a sectarian basis. But they did exercise a kind of gravitational pull on the left, creating consciously socialist discussion and working relations. Whether they were feminist or anti-feminist, they challenged feminist socialism and promoted debate. Their disappearance did away with sectarian distortions, but it also meant that there was no one whose business it was to work for, and talk socialism and to build relations among socialists.



A group of us have started work on the making of a socialist network. This came out of the Socialist Forums last year. People had mixed views about them, but generally felt they were valuable in bringing people together. So we decided to focus on

this need. We call our project the Socialist Network. Since I've been working on it, we've done things in quite a small way. But I'm already more and more aware of socialists out there in the city working in a variety of settings, with all kinds of concerns and interests, knowledge and skills. Yet we're hardly connected at all. We hardly exist for each other even as a mailing list, a list of phone numbers, let alone people to talk with, to work with, to mobilize.

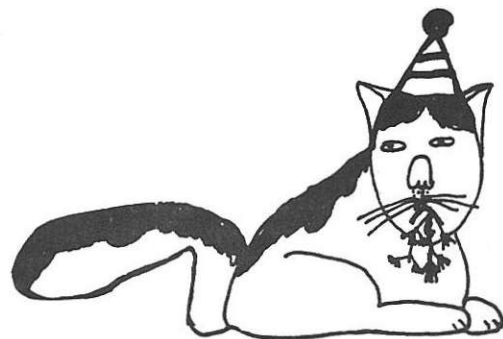
The metropolis creates problems for making and maintaining connections on the left or in the women's movement. But it's not just a problem of size. We live in a society with extensive systems of communication and information exchange. Do they provide a means for socialists to communicate? They do not. Though trade unions establish communicative relations within the working class, these are very limited and the widespread relations of an autonomous working class media do not exist now as they once did (read about the Winnipeg General Strike and you'll see the



difference). Nor are there media of communication internal to and controlled by the working class, other than the very partial communication systems of the union movement. Media of communication and culture are owned and controlled by capital. Television, radio, newspapers are the productions of large capital or government or combinations of the two. The mass media don't connect up the working class; they don't connect socialists with each other; they don't connect us with happenings in other parts of the country or the world or even in other parts of the city. We're not connected; we don't know what's going on.

This evening I was chatting with a friend on the phone. She was telling me about problems with the Eaton's strike and stressing its importance for workers. She told me about some of the things women were doing to mobilize support for the workers. I'd been only vaguely aware of what was happening, wished I had been connected earlier. I could have got something together at my place of work, perhaps can still do so, but earlier would have been better. This experience marks the missing network -- why hadn't I known. It pointed to the media which doesn't broadcast the interests of workers to workers. It marked our lack of means of communication on an everyday basis and the lack of a capacity to mobilize people widely through existing networks. Building communications and networks has to be seen as a conscious and systematic task.

This is what the Socialist Network is attempting. It is a long-term, very modest project. We are working to facilitate people coming together as socialists, recognizing each other as socialists, beginning



that the old recipes don't work, so we want to look at the world we're in, we want to share our experience of practice, we want to talk about what we're doing and what we should be doing.

We are planning soon to have a larger meeting, again with the idea of people coming together as to talk as socialists and to make connections as socialists. The term socialist is what people want to make of it. We don't define it. We think it gets defined in a process of debate and practice. We'd like to see that process underway.

As of now we are meeting in small groups of different kinds. We're tying out the idea of neighbourhood groups, focussed on issues for socialists in the areas they live in. We're also meeting on the basis of a common working interest, for example, as workers in the cultural area. We could try others--meetings of socialists working in the area of community organization for example, or with computers. And some of us are meeting just to get to know one another as socialists and to think through the issues which confront us now.

Somehow we haven't fallen into the old study group patterns. I think it's partly because we feel

socialists. Look for a meeting at the Trojan Horse sometime in the next couple of months. We're also talking of doing some work around May Day. We'd like to look towards a constellation of various groupings, which would come together once or twice a year, but as yet we don't have a definite organizational schedule or constitution. At the moment we're trying to hold a balance between planning a sensible and useful structure and letting structure grow organically out of the ways the small groups and projects are developing. For one thing the groups may not stay still, may take on some project, complete it and move into another phase, disappearing as a particular entity. But we hope to be able to put in place the framework of a network which will preserve the connections already built and will facilitate others. We hope to put out a newsletter. We look forward to a list of telephone numbers of people who'd like to know when there's an issue for socialists to support news we need to have (as when Grenada was invaded). We look forward to discovering other ways of facilitating the relatedness of socialists in Toronto. We are working to make a Socialist Network that gives practical form to a

socialist consciousness and provides a basis for the development of a socialist practice.



If you're interested in connecting with other socialists, contact us. Perhaps you'd like to be involved in what we sometimes call the "steering" and sometimes "animation" committee. You may want to meet with socialists working in a particular area, in community organizing for example, or in the cultural area, or whatever the area of your own major interests.

So far we haven't had a distinctly feminist component, though feminists are very much present. Maybe we should.

You can contact the Socialist Network through me at 534-6672 mornings or evenings.

Dorothy Smith

Dorothy Smith is a socialist feminist theoretician and a professor of sociology at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education



## Socialist Feminism U.S.A.

*We are reprinting excerpts from an article by Lisa DiCaprio that appeared in the Guardian November 7, 1984, because we feel many of the problems she describes were also experienced by many socialist feminists in Canada. Clearly, socialist feminism is at a crossroads, and we must enter into a dialogue about what the future has in store. Send us your thoughts and feedback.*

Where are yesterday's socialist-feminist activists?

As a participant in the Sept. 29 reunion of the Chicago Women's Liberation Union (CWLU) which existed from 1969 to 1977, I was able to look back on the ascent and downturn locally of the left wing of the U.S. women's movement.

The CWLU was one of the first of many such women's unions founded in the late 1960's and early 1970s. For over seven years, it served as a center of socialist-feminist activity in Chicago. For many women, CWLU was their first political experience. For others it was the high point of political work.

The women at the reunion expressed their continuing commitment to social change, but their present-day practice has undergone a noticeable shift toward working on single-issue projects or raising progressive issues within their professions or trades.

The sense expressed of the increasingly defensive posture of the women's movement is not unique to Chicago. With the collapse of socialist-feminist organizations, two developments emerged: (1) a tremendous growth of women's scholarship and practical organizing experience, and (2) a loss of the

multi-issue approach once characterizing women's liberation. While many projects are now well-established with offices and staff, they are necessarily narrow in scope and have assumed a social services/social work character.

In contrast, the CWLU of the 1970s worked on a number of issues, but within the framework of seeking a major restructuring of society.

The structure of the CWLU was decentralized, with local chapters and work groups. Projects included a citywide newspaper *Womankind*, Women's Graphics Collective, Action Committee for Decent Childcare, Direct Action for Rights in Employment, Prison Project, a legal clinic, and the Liberation School.

The Liberation School, one of CWLU's most innovative projects, enrolled hundreds of women in classes ranging from auto mechanics to sexuality to women's liberation theory. Some of the theoretical classes focused on outlining direction for the women's liberation movement. "The Liberation School study groups were intrinsic to the development of the union's own political strategy," said school founder Jenny Knauss. "This was a place where structured discussion took place around the central issues being raised by the movement."



The CWLU outreach committee made a specific effort to reach working class women in high schools and neighborhoods. "The Liberation School brought people to the union, while we brought the union to the neighborhood," explained Rinda West. "We were able to reach women who did not have the initiative, confidence or geographical proximity to attend Liberation School classes." The outreach committee also fought to open up Chicago Park District facilities to women and girls.

Although the union did not have a unified project in which all members participated, it sponsored two major citywide celebrations of International Women's Day (IWD). A 1974 coalition led by CWLU organized a march of nearly 4000, one of the largest demonstrations in Chicago since the height of the antiwar movement. An indoor IWD event in 1975 drew 500 people.

1975 saw the flowering of socialist-feminism nationally. Over 1600 women attended a national socialist-feminist conference in Yellow Springs, Ohio, to share ideas about theory and practice.

Ironically, at this point when socialist-feminist theory was taking off around the U.S., the CWLU began its demise due to organizational and political problems. The relationship

of work groups to the union as a whole caused major structural tensions hinging on questions of autonomy versus centralization. Politically, there was dissatisfaction over what some considered "reformist" aspects of the union and its failure to develop a class analysis.

In many respects, the CWLU raised more questions than it answered. Officially, membership required adherence to an anticapitalist and anti-imperialist perspective, but the specifics were never fully elaborated. The CWLU maintained a fairly broad definition of socialism, not necessarily embraced by all the work group members. The union confronted, but did not resolve, the problem of recruiting new activists while maintaining its previous political integrity. However, the significance of the union, was that it began based on socialist-feminist principles, to create a new politics of women's activism and a new method of organization.

Socialist-feminism arose out of the failure of previous Marxist theory to fully take into account the "means of reproduction of the labor force." By this socialist-feminists meant not only childbearing and rearing, but also unpaid work in the home. By excluding this, Marxists relegated "the woman question" to the realm of production, seeing women as simply part of the class struggle. Socialist-feminism challenged the prevailing view that raising issues of sexism and racism in the work force was "divisive." They upheld the need for an autonomous women's movement.

Socialist-feminist theory aims to explain how women's oppression is rooted not only in relations of production but also in the patriarchal family. Most "radical



feminists" consider demands of women antagonistic to all men and above class oppression. Liberal feminists promote equality within the existing system. Socialist-feminists, however, seek to combine socialist theory with a radical critique of capitalist patriarchy. The goal of socialist-feminists is abolition of class society and a thorough transformation of relations between men and women in all facets of society.

Today liberal feminism as represented by the National Organization for Women and Ms. Magazine has all but won out in the public eye. Some have even declared the onset of the "post-feminist" era. Many economic, political and social gains have been achieved in the last decade but they are being rapidly undermined by the Reagan administration's retrograde policies and the failure of liberal feminism to conduct a full scale offensive against them.

What then are prospects for revitalized socialist-feminism in the 1980s?

Union organizing has burgeoned among previously unorganized sectors

## Pornography Project

The Pornography Project Collective, Kingston, has produced a series of educational videotapes about pornography and the workings of the pornography industry in Canada. Material for the tapes is being edited from the proceedings of the Conference on Pornography held in Kingston last winter. The women involved in planning the Conference, and now producing the video series, include members of the Queen's University Women's Centre and the Kingston Action Group Against Pornography.

of the economy dominated by women and raised demands for comparable pay for comparable worth, daycare, pregnancy leave and flexible time.

Women of color have organized autonomously as well as challenging racism in the rest of the women's movement. Women in minority communities in the U.S. are in the forefront of connecting the oppression of U.S. women, imperialism and the need to support national liberation and socialism.

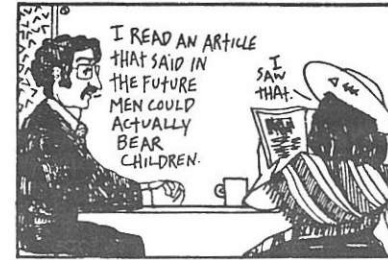
Toward reawakening "the buried part of American feminism," a national socialist-feminist conference is planned for August 2-4, 1985, the tenth anniversary of the Yellow Springs conference. Recognizing the essential contributions of autonomous organizing of women of color, the conference organizers have set a goal of 50% representation of women of color on the national advisory committee.

Lisa DiCaprio

**Lisa DiCaprio is a carpenter working with Chicago Women in the Trades and Women United for a Better Chicago.**

defining pornography within the interlocking systems of patriarchy and capitalism; the use of pornography as propaganda and commodity; the effect of pornography on how men see women, and how we see ourselves. Further tapes will be devoted to discussions of strategies for change: going the legal route, and/or direct action through education, feminist and alternative media, lobbying and non-violent political protest.

Pornography Project Collective  
51 Queen's Crescent  
Kingston, Ontario  
K7L 3N6



Nicole Hollander



## Action Day Care

For over five years, Action Day Care has played a leadership role in the fight to establish a universally-accessible, publicly-funded, non-profit, high quality, non-compulsory daycare system in Canada.

As of January 4, 1985, Action Day Care has lost all of its funding (for the last six months it was funded by Section 38 which provided for workers to receive what were essentially U.I.C. benefits as salary; for the preceding 18 months funding had come from Canada Ontario Employment Development). Action Day Care will continue to have an active role in the daycare community, despite the loss of the office and large staff that characterized the highly visible, and very successful Daycare Improvement Project--the group's main project during the past eighteen months.

Like most community groups which were (relatively) flush with staff and resources in times of

funding, and considerably leaner in times of government disinterest, Action Day Care has been through many changes. Now, as in other times in our history, we will exist as a volunteer group.

Action Day Care will continue to be active in the fight to establish a better daycare system. We'll continue to participate in the municipal, provincial and federal daycare coalitions, made up of labour, women's groups, daycare workers and parents, social service agencies, and activists who are leading the daycare struggle.

In the meantime, the Daycare Improvement Project has been incorporated as a separate board, with membership drawn mainly from staff. The new Board will be pursuing funding from a variety of sources with the hope of becoming a viable non-profit business which can provide a wide range of support and development services to non-profit daycare centres in Central Ontario. The Daycare Improvement Project can be contacted through Gisele Roy (532-5749) or Florence Boswell (534-6186), the Chair and Vice Chair respectively.

Until the next bout of funding comes our way, Action Day Care can be contacted through Jane Bertrand, Supervisor of York University Coop Day Care at 667-3273, or via P.O. Box 102, Station E, Toronto M6H 5E1.

Susan Prentice

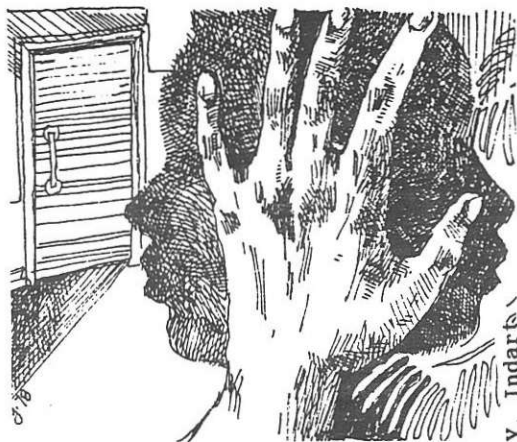
**Susan Prentice is a socialist feminist activist and the former Coordinator of Community Development for Action Day Care.**

## Women and the Immigration Process

In April 1978 the present Immigration Act was passed by Parliament after a series of country-wide debates about Canada's immigration policy. In spite of pleas from numerous church, humanitarian and community agencies that the new legislation deal with immigration in a humanitarian way, the new act strengthened the enforcement powers of the Immigration Commission. Seven years later it is possible to draw some conclusions about its operation and effect on persons who are subject to it. Rather than provide the answer to Canada's immigration problems it has created bureaucratic monsters in both the Immigration Commission and the External Affairs Department. There are a number of long-standing problems which have not been resolved by any of the several responsible immigration ministers who have taken over this portfolio since the Act became effective. Their response has ranged from that of Lloyd Axworthy, who was the most open to trying to work out the problems, to that of John Roberts, who tried to sweep the problems under the rug. The new Minister, Flora McDonald, has yet to give any clear indication of how she intends to deal with the immigration portfolio, which is not a good sign, given that she has been responsible for immigration for some months now.

Many of the existing problems in the immigration process are well known. The refugee determination process is lengthy, cumbersome and unfair, even on the Commission's own admission. It has contributed to, if not created, deepening emotional problems for refugee claimants

because of its serious flaws and its ties with enforcement policies of the Commission, resulting in suicide in one known case. While legislative change has been promised in 1985 and three major studies have been done on it over the past five years, Flora McDonald, instead of dealing with it, is commissioning another study, this time by the Immigration Advisory Council.



Family unification policies, permitting close family members to reunite with the families in Canada, are another major problem. Family members from the Third World wishing to immigrate to Canada, even straightforward sponsored applicants, are made to wait years before their visas are ready and are often refused on spurious grounds, resulting in appeals which take several years more to complete. There are known cases of parents waiting up to eight years to join their children in Canada. In other cases the parents have died before the visas are ready.

Inland humanitarian policy: because the Act requires that immigrant visas be obtained abroad, any person who applies for landing in Canada must satisfy an immigration

officer that his or her case deserves an exception on humanitarian grounds. Many people apply from within Canada because of the long processing time if done from abroad. Families do not want to be separated for several years, or the family does not want to send back a relative to the home country to process the application because the home country is unstable and unsafe. However, the inland humanitarian policies are applied inconsistently, being interpreted in various ways, not just from province to province and office to office, but from officer to officer, so no one knows with any certainty how a family member will be treated. The present inland humanitarian policies have been neutralized by enforcement-oriented senior immigration officials, who are worried, not about whether a wife is suffering from a mental breakdown, but about how many cases they can send to the enforcement branch of the Commission to set up their statistics to justify requests for more money from the Treasury Board to remove people from Canada.

Detention facilities for persons whose only "crime" has been to seek asylum as a refugee in Canada or to remain and work in Canada without permission, are substandard, not even complying with the international standards for just and humane detention. Detentions are often lengthy with no possibility of release because of the strict standards applied by adjudicators, who rarely take the principle of liberty of person with any seriousness. The list of concerns goes on and on: the end result being that rather than deal with its inhumane policies the Commission has further strengthened them so that year by year they become harsher. Visas have been imposed to "control,"



P. Sanchez

a euphemism for "limit," refugee flow from countries such as Guatemala and Guyana. Inland humanitarian landings have become more and more restrictive, ignoring dangerous country conditions in returning close relatives for a wait of years to get an immigrant visa to which they are entitled. Refugee claims are being discouraged through detention of the claimants, in the hope that they will "give up" and go back to the country which is persecuting them. Special programmes, implemented where there is recognized human rights abuse in particular countries, are not being applied, forcing persons who should be accepted outright for landing, into the refugee stream to up refugee statistics to create a "refugee crisis" fear to justify stricter restriction of access to Canada as a country of first asylum.

### How Does All This Affect Women?

The present immigration laws do little, if anything, to improve the situation of women immigrants. The Act ostensibly prohibits discrimination based on sex--the only obviously discriminatory regulation is one which denies men the right to sponsor illegitimate children--but



policies and rules which do not discriminate between men and women in their wording, do so in fact. It is the failure to recognize the particular situations in which women may find themselves, that results in discrimination.

For example, statistics indicate that women on average earn less than men. Women wishing to sponsor their children, husbands or parents will rarely meet income guidelines. Single women with children more often than not do not earn enough money. In assessing such applications, officers are given no instructions to deal flexibly with these cases. If a Canadian citizen is refused a sponsorship application she must appeal to the Immigration Appeal Board, which means a further delay of several years and also retaining a lawyer to help her, often at a high cost. If she is a permanent resident she has no right to appeal and can do nothing until she becomes a citizen or is earning enough money.

Another area in which women's concerns are not taken into consideration is in humanitarian and compassionate assessments either inside or outside Canada. For example, the Commission makes pregnant women return to their home countries in order to have their husbands sponsor them from there. There is a complete lack of recognition of the importance to a woman in having emotional support and assistance from a spouse when having a child, particularly with a first child. The Commission's response would likely be that the husband can go back with the wife, which would mean giving up his job, the only support the couple may have. As well, the lack or inadequacy of medical facilities in the home country is not considered a factor of sufficient importance to prevent re-

turning a pregnant woman to her country of origin.



This kind of insensitivity by immigration and visa officers, is perhaps at its worst, in the case of women who have been or are afraid of being raped. For example, in Guyana, there is a high incidence of rape of East Indian women. East Indian parents will keep their daughters out of the National Service because of the certainty that they will be raped while in the service, even though this means that they cannot enter university or obtain any government job. It is common for girls to stay at home after high school because of this and even then they are vulnerable to rape, because of the increasing incidence of armed attacks on East Indian homes and the number of rapes of women and young girls found in the homes during such attacks. The fear of family members in Canada about returning female East Indian relatives to Guyana is more than well-founded. Yet it has yet to be recognized as a valid fear by either the Refugee Status Advisory Committee or the Immigration Commission. A well-founded fear of rape because one is a woman is not a

recognized ground for acceptance as a refugee in Canada. It is also not one of the considerations in an application on humanitarian grounds. Officers are not supposed to consider the country conditions in assessing cases. Such fears, regardless of how well founded they are, are given absolutely no consideration. If rape is given any consideration at all, it is only after the fact, regardless of how likely it is to occur in the future. As a result East Indian women who are not otherwise recognized as refugees on other grounds are routinely ordered to leave Canada and return to Guyana, often in situations where they will have to live alone there, waiting for a visa to return to Canada under a sponsorship of a husband, for example, or for good if do not qualify on regular grounds for a visa to immigrate to Canada.

The present policy is in keeping with the Immigration Commission's tradition of ignoring fears and concerns particular to women. For example, no special recognition was ever given to Iranian women who did not want to return to Iran where they would not be able to work at their professions and would have to live as second class citizens, chattels in a male-dominated system. Similarly, the plight of women facing long jail terms for removing their children from countries where the man has an automatic right to custody is ignored. This tradition of giving no consideration and no preference to women who are or will be victimized in their countries continues.

Having practiced in the field of immigration since being a law student more than ten years ago, I have little hope that the situation for immigrants in general and women in particular will improve. The Immigration Commission is not making

any attempt to develop realistic and effective humanitarian policies; rather it is clearly attempting to take away or completely restrict those policies still in existence. Flora McDonald's track record to date leaves faint hope for improvement; it is likely that officials at the Commission's national headquarters will have their way in toughening our immigration enforcement system at the expense of Canadian families and their relatives, at the expense of refugees (including at the expense of their lives), and in particular at the expense of women.

Barbara Jackman  
Barbara Jackman is a Toronto lawyer specializing in immigration.



For further information about the situation of immigrant women, see One Sky Report, December 1984, on the theme "The Triple Oppression of Immigrant Working Women." Back issues (\$1 each, plus .50 postage) and subscriptions (\$10 for 8 issues) can be obtained by writing: One Sky, Cross-Cultural Centre, 134 Avenue F. South, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7M 1S8.

## Eatons Workers On Strike

Fifteen hundred striking Eatons workers from six stores in Ontario are into their ninth week as of this writing. And still Eatons has not made a serious offer, or even responded to the union's proposal for a collective agreement. It was 8 months into negotiations before Eatons even tabled an offer at all. At the moment, the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, has filed a complaint with the Ontario Labour Relations Board, charging Eatons with bargaining in bad faith. Though the hearings have concluded, it could be weeks before the decision is handed down, and time is on Eatons side. This is exactly what Eatons has been doing throughout, stalling for time probably hoping that they will reach the point when they can hold a de-certification vote.

So far the company has refused to consider putting even the company benefits it currently offers its employees into a collective agreement.

The Canadian Labour Congress has called a national boycott of Eatons and has thrown its weight behind the strike. Support from the labour movement and the women's movement has been growing immensely. There is a lot at stake in this strike, both for the Canadian labour movement, and for women in particular. An attempt to organize Eatons in the early 1950's failed, and women's job ghettos have historically been hard to organize, as has the service sector in general. Furthermore, Eatons is one of the most paternalistic, condescending corporations in Canada, but it typifies the nature of the retail sector.

So how were women at Eatons able to suddenly organize themselves when it has been so difficult in the past?



Geri Sheedy and Donna Johansen, veterans of the Dominion Stores Drive hired by RWDSU to work on the Eatons organizing drive, say it is a combination of several factors. They argue that we are dealing with a much more sophisticated labour force today, and in particular, a more sophisticated female labour force. This in part is due to the growing influence of the women's movement.

In 1950, women were perceived, and perceived themselves, as working for "pin" money, particularly in the retail sector. Now, many of the women working for Eatons are single mothers or self-supporters. Johansen pointed out that, also, labour laws have improved somewhat since 1948 and workers are aware of this.

But mainly Eatons did it to themselves: employees had been without a raise for 28 months when the Brampton store employees achieved automatic certification in March, 1984. Many felt insulted when the company took their titles away, cut into their commissions, and gave small bonuses instead of raises. Meanwhile, Eatons continues to enjoy as large profits as it ever has and is easily one of the most lucrative corporations in Canada. It made many women angry and they were able to take Eatons by surprise at the Brampton store--the forerunner in this drive--when the union signed up 85% of the workers in 7 days. Five more stores in Ste. Catharines, London, Scarborough, and at Yonge/Eglinton and Victoria Park/Danforth in Toronto, followed closely on the heels of the Brampton store.

Since then Eatons has stepped up its anti-union campaign in key stores in Toronto, especially in the Eaton Centre and in Yorkdale. And it is not alone: Simpson's, The Bay and other retail firms have also been affected by the organizing drive and are resorting to similar campaigns to keep the Union out.

It will make a big difference to working women in the entire service sector if workers at Eatons win this battle. Already, the RWDSU has received many requests to be organized from employees at other retail stores, banks, offices, and restaurants. But negotiations are at a critical point now, and time is on the Employer's side. Only massive public support will do the trick: get behind this strike! For more information about how you can help, call RWDSU at 444-5205.

Marie Lorenzo

On February 2, almost 1000 people came out in support of striking Eaton's workers at Toronto's Yonge & Eglinton store and forced it to close for half an hour. The rally was one of many across Ontario organized by the Women's Strike Support Coalition, a coalition of unions and women's groups.

## Poem

We now unite to fight,  
To walk our beat and not retreat.  
Lots of people don't care,  
Which is not really fair!  
Is it too much trouble for their mind  
To understand, we just like to be  
treated right?  
Eatons certainly has tried  
To keep us like robots without a  
mind.  
A robot only follows the command,  
It doesn't think, feel or demand!  
We have been a tool for too long,  
It is time to make it known  
How Eatons operate their empire,  
They just make any rules they desire,  
Play with people like in a game  
And that's how they got their big  
name!  
Is it so wrong then, to plead  
For rules in black and white to read,  
To have a contract basic and fair  
To stop this strike and have a care?  
Yet still, in all kinds of weather we  
walk  
Because Eatons just doesn't want to  
talk!  
They still play their "Power of  
Money" game,  
Now tell me: does that increase  
their value  
Or put shame to their big traditional  
name?

R. Striker, Eatons,  
Yonge and Eglinton





L. Lecamp

## Victory for Library Workers

Metro Library workers won our strike. After eight weeks on the picket line, we succeeded in withstanding a massive assault on our collective agreement and we made many important improvements.

As is known, we thought of our strike at the Library as an important one for women workers--and not only because the Library is a "women's job ghetto" with women comprising over 80% of the Library workforce. Along with many other women workers, we faced the threat of job loss and job de-skilling through the introduction of new technology at the Library.

Our strike was in the main a defensive strike, to protect the gains we had made in the past. In 1981 and 1982 we had negotiated some significant protection against the effects of technological change. Many of the Library Board's 104 proposed takeaways in 1984 were designed to eliminate that protection.

Fortunately, because the union was strong and because of all the support we received, we were able to prevent the Library Board from gutting our contract. In fact, we were able to make gains during the

strike. From the beginning of our bargaining, we had made it clear to management that we had no intention of striking to stand still. If they forced us onto the street, then we intended to make improvements. And we did.

Several of the gains we made are particularly significant for women workers. For example, adoption leave will now be treated exactly as maternity leave--including payment of benefits by the Board for the first three months. Pregnant employees will be allowed to transfer immediately away from VDT's to a comparable job.

In the area of VDT protection generally we made other gains. No employee will be required to work more than five hours a day on the machine and each VDT worker will receive a ten-minute break hourly, in addition to regular coffee breaks. Employees with serious illnesses will be allowed medical exemption from work at the terminals. The Board agreed to regularly check the machinery to ensure safety. They also agreed that electronic monitoring would not be used as the major method in evaluating employees work performance. We think these are important guarantees.

We also made some breakthroughs for part-time library workers. In particular, part-timers will now be able to accumulate sick time and so will be able to receive pay when absent due to illness. This is the first time part-timers will receive paid benefits. But to get sick pay provisions, we had to agree to probation for part-timers, and further, that part-time employees will not receive seniority protection until probation is completed. This was a bitter pill to swallow--particularly as it was introduced by management after everything else had been resolved. Clearly, the union

has a job to do in the next round of bargaining to extend protection to part-timers on probation. In this area, we also won the right to transfer 100% seniority from full to part-time jobs and from part to full-time jobs, as well as a procedure for such transfers.

We settled for a two year contract, with a 5% wage increase for 1984; an agreement was essential to allow us to recuperate and prepare for the next battle.

All in all, our strike was a success. We won, as I've already said, largely because of the support we received from the women's movement, the labour movement and the community. This support was demonstrated in a variety of ways. Community and labour rallies were held every Wednesday during the strike. Speakers brought solidarity



Gail Geltner

and encouragement from CUPE National and Ontario, from the Metro Labour Council and the Ontario Federation of Labour, from the women's movement and from the multi-cultural and immigrant communities (our slogan for this rally was, appropriately, "In Any Language, This Contract Stinks").

Special support pickets were also held Saturdays. Students came one Saturday; another Saturday event was an "Arts and Letters Day" on the

picket line--"A Strike Stranger than Fiction".

Daily support was also given on the picket lines and by individuals writing and phoning members of the Library Board. This last method of support was so effective that Board members complained they were receiving too many phone calls. It may also have had something to do with the resignation of both the Chairman and the Vice-Chair of the Metro Library Board immediately following the strike!

Strikes are expensive for unions as well as for the individual members. Our local made a commitment to supplement the strike pay of our members beyond the \$60/week provided by the National Union. We knew we were in for a long strike and did not want the strike to be broken for financial reasons. We also committed our local to pay childcare expenses for all members with children participating in the strike. This agreement allowed many more parents to join the picket line, but it cost us over \$1,400/week. Concrete support for the strike came in the form of financial donations from many, many unions. Many local unions were especially generous because they understood the significance of a "no concessions" strike such as ours.

Women's groups in the labour movement and the community also made an important financial and political contribution by helping to organize a fundraising forum "Women and Technology: Looking for the Benefits". Although this event was held after the strike was settled, it nonetheless helped reduce our deficit significantly.

As new technology is increasingly introduced, employers will be seeking, as did the Metropolitan Toronto Library Board, to maintain total control over the

technology itself and over the conditions of work of their employees. In many ways, the Library strike was a test case. Library workers passed the test. We wish other workers every success in their upcoming battles, and will be ready to provide all the assistance we can.

Sue Genge  
Vice-President  
CUPE 1582

Sue Genge was President of CUPE 1582 representing Library Assistants at the Metro Library during the strike.

## Newfoundland Tel Workers Stand Firm

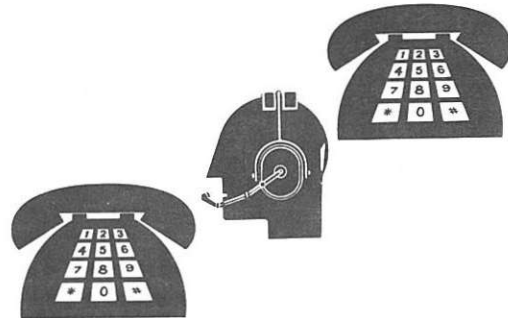
Newfoundland Telephone workers, out on strike since early last July (see Cayenne, Nov/Dec 84), have resoundingly rejected a company offer with a 92% vote, higher than the original strike vote.

The company slightly bettered its original munificent offer of 0% plus 0% over two years, but made a blatant attempt to divide the workers with an offer which would still have left the clerical unit way behind the operators and craft units. One of the main issues of contention in the strike is wage parity and the offer made no concessions on this, and withheld the Rand formula from clerical workers. It is apparent that the company wants to punish clerical workers because this is the first time they have organized. It was expected that the operators and craft units would accept the offer, which made some concessions to them, and that the clerical workers would reject it. As it turned out, the clerical workers

voted 92% against, but the operators and craft units voted 96 and 94% respectively!

Since the beginning of the strike two people have been fired--one of whom only found out she had been fired during negotiations--and four suspended. The membership is holding firm on demands that there be no firings and no suspensions. They are also demanding charges be dropped against those who were arrested on the picket line. Originally 52 people were arrested, but none of the charges brought to court so far have stuck.

How can you help put the pressure on Newfoundland Tel? Here's one idea: call directory assistance in Newfoundland from a pay phone (1-709-555-1212 - it's free!), and a scab will answer. Keep the scab on the line as long as possible, perhaps by asking for a number for a fictitious person and then suggesting myriad alternative spellings when the



number cannot be found. It's a good chance to use your imagination - get that long distance feeling! For more information about the strike and how you can help, call the Regional Office of the Communications Workers of Canada at 977-6678.

Christina Mills  
(with thanks to Janice McLelland and Ed Seymour)

*For the most part, we in the women's movement know very little about the lives, pain, laughter, anger, creativity and struggles of native women. We do hear about the issues that make headlines--the struggle to recognize women in the Indian Act, the heroic actions of women demanding an end to the kidnapping of their children by state agencies in this country, the murder of AIM activists like Anna Mae Aquash in the U.S.--and many of us have tried to work to support those struggles. Yet native women remain for the most part, invisible.*

*Since very few of you, our readers, are native we'd like Cayenne to play a small role in challenging this invisibility.*

*This issue we're reprinting a selection of poems by Joy Harjo, a Cree who lives in Sante Fe, New Mexico. The poems are published in That's What She Said: Contemporary Poetry and Fiction by Native American Women (Indiana University Press, 1984).*

*The two short articles that follow are written by women in Big Trout Lake, a small Ojibway-Cree community in north western Ontario. Big Trout Lake is not accessible by road or rail, but is serviced by scheduled aircraft from Sioux Lookout, a ninety minute flight away. The articles were written for the first issue of a community newspaper.*

*Recently, a few women in Trout have decided to organize a women's group so that they can support one another, make sure women get access to the limited number of jobs that are available, to find out about the women's movement in other places, and perhaps to take some action to change the dismal health system in their*

*community. They also want to set up a centre with women's books, etc. If you have any materials you could donate please drop them by our office at 386 Bloor Street West.*



## Conversations between Here and Home

Emma Lee's husband beat her up this weekend.

His government check was held up, and he borrowed the money to drink on.

Anna had to miss one week of work because her youngest child got sick,

she says, "it's hard sometimes, but easier than with a man."

"I haven't seen Jim for two weeks now," his wife tells me on the phone (but I saw him Saturday with that Anadarko woman).

angry women are building houses of stones  
they are grinding the mortar between straw-thin teeth  
and broken families



## I Am a Dangerous Woman

the sharp ridges of clear blue windows  
motion to me  
from the airport's second floor  
edges dance in the foothills of the sandias  
behind security guards  
who wave me into their guncatcher machine

i am a dangerous woman

when the machine buzzes  
they say to take off my belt  
and i remove it so easy  
that it catches the glance  
of a man standing nearby  
(maybe that is the deadly weapon  
that has the machine singing)  
i am a dangerous woman  
but the weapon is not visible  
security will never find it  
they can't hear the clicking  
of the gun

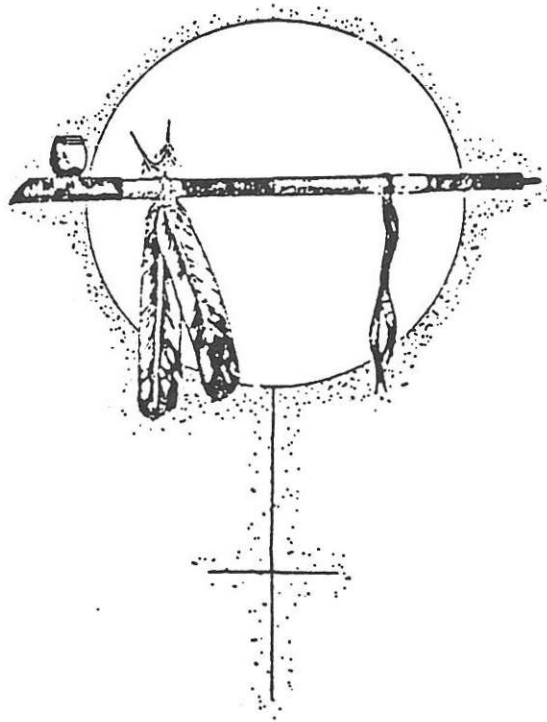
inside my head

Joy Harjo

## WOMEN'S TRADES COURSE

There is just a month left for the women's carpentry shop here in Big Trout Lake. According to the Outreach Program Worker, Roy Anderson, the funds are provided from Confederation College and Manpower. Joel Chapman, a local resident was hired by the band to teach 12 women carpentry. This program was started by the Band with their goal to train women to be able to work in housing in the summer. The carpentry shop commenced on October 1, 1984 and will end on February 15, 1985.

The women began building a foundation of a house and they ran



out of materials. Since there is a limited time they are only learning furniture making and the use of lumber. They work individually making their own furniture, eg. toy chests, book and magazine racks, telephone stands, clothes racks, take-apart shelves, medicine cabinets and sleds. They work together on bigger things such as kitchen cabinets. Anybody who wishes to have their furniture made or fixed can do so, as long as they provide their own materials and lumber.

Joel feels that the women are progressing well and seem interested in learning. He also said they need his supervision most of the time when making something. When we asked him if the women will be able to work on housing next summer, his response was some would be capable but they would need more training.

The women we interviewed said that they enjoy the course and most of them said the reason they took this training was that they were bored at home. So it sounds like six hours a day away from home is doing them good. They're finding this course easy but they think that it is too short. They are confident to work in housing next summer. The women feel it benefited them with the things they accomplished and what they learned.

So good luck to the women who will be working in the housing this summer. Show the guys women are just as capable of doing the men's jobs.

Rosemary McKay and  
Dora Sainnawap

## SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

We interviewed several employees of the Band Office and one transporter. We asked these employees why women are not allowed to do any school transporting.

First we interviewed the school transporter and he did not really know how to answer that question. A few of the statements that he made were that it is very hard for a woman to do the school transporting, especially when it is cold. He also said that while transporting the children, they might have skidoo problems on ice. Problems like these: maybe a woman would not be able to fix the skidoo right away and the children would be stranded in the middle of the lake. Also women might not be strong enough to get the skidoo out of the slushy water.

The last few people we interviewed said that probably the ladies were never given a chance. Maybe the hiring committee wanted men

only. Ladies should be given a chance because they deal a lot more with children than men.

Women could do it, even though it is hard work. They have to know how to maintain the skidoo, but it only depends on how strong the woman is whether she could learn it. Most women have more experience with children.

Initially, when the contract was signed, they did not know if it was open for women to apply. Maybe, they were not given an opportunity to apply.

In the future, what most people would like to see is for the ladies to be given an opportunity to transport the children.

Last but not least, the school transporter positions should therefore be open for both men and women to apply.

In our opinion, we think women are capable of doing anything that men can do. Women are just as capable as men.

Susan Beardy  
Mary McKay



## Strategy for An Interview

## Choice: with Judy Rebick

*Judy Rebick, socialist feminist and long time political activist, is a prominent leader in the pro-choice movement. Chris Mills of Cayenne spoke with her about the state of the struggle for abortion rights.*

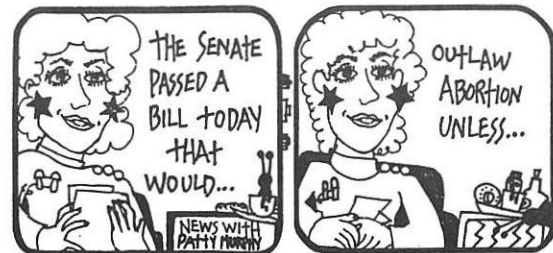
CM: Could you start by situating the struggle for choice in the context of the rise of the Right in Canada?

JR: The struggle for freedom of choice, particularly around this clinic, is really the vanguard of the fight against the Right in Canada. If we can win this and set back the anti-choice forces it will be an important blow against the emergence of an overall Right wing. They see this issue as a priority and it's on the abortion issue that they have their widest support. They have broader support on the abortion issue because of all the mystification around motherhood and because of the success they've had in touching a concern about life-and-death, the question of the fetus. They've built a base on the abortion issue which they then can use to fight on other issues, such as sexual freedom so pushing them back on this issue is really critical in terms of the general fight against the Right.

CM: The women's movement has lost some support among many disabled people who feel that, for example, aborting a fetus because it is known to have spina bifida or some kind of disability means that the life of a disabled person is not being given equal value. How should the pro-choice movement approach this issue?

JR: The percentage of abortions which are done because the fetus is disabled in some way is so minimal that it's really a red herring. The problem of the lack of value given the life of a disabled person is rooted in the whole attitude of society toward the disabled; it has really nothing to do with the abortion issue at all. Fighting those attitudes and educating people as to the capability and the humanity of disabled people is the key to solving that problem, as well as, of course, changing society so that it doesn't just look at people in terms of their productive capacity, but looks at their humanity. I'm particularly sensitive to this because I work with disabled people and I've been personally attacked on this. I think we just have to discuss it with disabled people and try to convince them of that point of view.

CM: All of us who are pro-choice have at one time or another said that no woman goes through an abortion lightly or casually; there's ambivalence and anguish involved. Why?



JR: I think that for most women the anguish comes from wanting to be a mother; nobody I know who has had a difficult decision around abortion was worried that she was killing someone. The reason she had difficulty was because "I'm pregnant, maybe I should go through with it now." That's the character of the anguish I know about. Personally, if I got pregnant now--I'm 39 years old--it would be very hard for me to have an abortion because the biological clock is ticking away . . . I've always wanted to have a child and I've decided not to, but if I got pregnant the possibility of having a child would be posed for me very directly. I think that's the character of the anguish.

That's the problem I have with Kathleen McDonnell's book; to me the crux of the issue of abortion is not a moral issue surrounding the fetus as the Right to Life has defined it. The central issue, pro and con, is around women's role in society, and the mystification about motherhood and the threat to the traditional role of women posed by reproductive freedom.



Nicole Hollander

CM: Do you think the Right to Life distorts the question?

JR: Yes, and we have succeeded in posing it in democratic terms... freedom of choice, pluralism, etc., but we haven't been as successful -- and this is important as a socialist feminist--in getting across the idea that the struggle for reproductive rights is a struggle for women's rights and that to fight against reproductive rights is to fight against women's rights. I don't think we've sufficiently made that point in the popular consciousness. It's there, but I don't think it's strong enough.

CM: What is the difference between a socialist feminist strategy on choice and a liberal or radical feminist position?

JR: I think the general programmatic position, that is, repeal the abortion law, abortion freely accessible and fully covered by medical insurance, is shared by everyone in the women's movement. There are differences in strategy.

The worst of the liberal feminists are afraid of the issue, they don't want to touch it, because it "divides" women and it's too hot. They think it's better to make gains on other issues like equal pay or pornography or whatever. The abortion issue sort of upsets the applecart. We do, however, have a lot in common with liberal feminists who are strongly pro-choice, and there are many of them. The differences lie mainly in their failure to understand the



importance of mass action in the struggle; They tend to focus more on lobbying and on the legal side and less on the importance of demonstrations and actions of that sort. Another weakness of some liberal feminists is that they don't understand what is necessary to make real choices, e.g. better economic conditions.

The differences with radical feminists are much less tangible. A socialist feminist strategy focusses demands on the State, whereas some radical feminists might focus more on a strategy of setting up an alternative, you know, the kind of thing Connie Clement talks about (Healthsharing 1983): women doing abortions on each other and not dealing with the medical system.



Q: So what what would be a socialist feminist response to that position?

JR: We should have a couple of responses. The first is that it's a solution for some women, for a small number of women, not for the mass of women. In order to come to a solution for the mass of women you have to address the institutions in

society, the medical system and the government. That's the fundamental problem with what she's saying. It's the same argument we had in the sixties with the hippies: is the way to change the world to change your life and life of the people around you and go back to the land, or is the way to change the world to struggle to change the government and the social system so that not just you and your friends have a better life but everybody has a better life? We would prefer to see women doctors working in clinics with community accountability. Our long-term vision is of women's clinics providing a range of services, of which abortion is only one.

When OCAC was first formed we felt that lobbying and organizing generally for repeal of the law wasn't working, and so our strategy was to open a clinic and to change the law that way. That's our central strategy. To win that OCAC has always had a mass-action strategy, feeling that mobilizing people in support of the clinic and in support of the legalization of clinics is the best way to win the struggle. We also recognize the importance of our links with the labour movement and the NDP, which we've always focused on and spent quite a lot of time on.

Our strategy has changed a little bit over the last two years. We now put more emphasis on the repeal of the law, seeing that it has to be a two-pronged campaign, one for the clinic itself and two, continuing to call for repeal of the law.

Generally, I think the strategy is working, but there are certainly weaknesses; I think it's important to talk about that. One is relying on Dr. Morgentaler, and on a couple of male doctors without whom we could not be waging this struggle. Because Dr. Morgentaler's profile is, to say

the least, rather high, the pro-choice movement almost disappears behind it. We've been able to combat that by making me high profile, which is also not so good, because we're a collective. Also it's a weakness of the clinic strategy that you have to have a doctor who's willing to open a clinic and who has the money to do it. There's nothing we can do about that but there are people who feel that it's a big enough weakness that we shouldn't be doing it. I disagree, but it is a weakness, in terms of mobilizing people, in terms of making some of the political points we'd like to make about how you change society.

I don't believe you change society through the actions of individuals--it's not Dr. Morgentaler who's winning this, it's a movement which is winning it, and yet to the average Canadian it looks like it's Dr. Morgentaler. Dr. Morgentaler is very important, but to the average Canadian it is Dr. Morgentaler.

Another problem is our being forced into the courts. We went through a whole year of demobilization because of that and lost some people. Then there's the expense of being in the courts. We raised \$150,000--well, the women's movement could have done a hell of a lot with that \$150,000. It makes you sick to see it go to lawyers and court costs, but on the other hand, if you're going to fight a battle like this in the courts you need the best possible legal help. Morris Manning is charging us a lot less than he usually does, and he's the best possible person; he's totally committed to the cause.

But having said all that, I believe we have managed, obviously, to make freedom of choice and reproductive rights a central issue in this country, to begin to gain

back some ground from the anti-choice people. Over the years they've been slowly and quietly rolling back the gains that women made on choice, on abortion. We've been able to stop that process to a certain extent, and are beginning to push them back.

I think we are winning the propaganda war now. Some people don't think so but, for example, two years ago nobody talked about choice in the populace whereas now everybody does. That's a result of the educational campaigns that not only OCAC, but the whole pro-choice movement has been able to do.



Unfortunately some people see our weaknesses and pull back as a result. Any struggle has weaknesses; you're never going to have a perfect social struggle and we're doing what we can. For example, the escort service shows the tangible involvement of the women's movement. It was something that we developed out of necessity because of police harassment, but it's a very feminist thing; it's self-help for women, women helping women, not in a social service way, but helping to defend each other from attacks from the Right and from the police. We have a hundred women volunteering for escort duty, and very few of those women have ever had anything to do with the women's movement. It's very exciting to sit in that clinic and see the sense of solidarity among women, it's fantastic.



CM: Why do you think that Quebec, which is strongly Roman Catholic, is so far ahead of the rest of Canada on this issue?

JR: There are two reasons. One is that our current struggle happened in Quebec ten years ago, and there was victory. And the other reason is anticlericalism. Quebec society was dominated by the Church for decades, and in the modernization it revolted against the Church. So the appeal

of fundamentalist religions is very minimal in Quebec, and the notion that Church and State should be separate and that the Church should stay out of people's lives, except insofar as their spiritual guidance is concerned, is very strong. That's not true in the rest of North America. So in a period where people are getting more and more alienated and losing their traditional values or their belief in the goodness of the system or whatever, fundamentalist religion, or religion at all becomes much more attractive.

C: Why was this struggle fought specifically there ten years ago, rather than in Toronto or elsewhere?

JR: It was because the Catholic hospitals there weren't doing any abortions; you had the 1969 law, but

in fact only the English hospitals were doing abortions in Quebec. The situation was much worse than in the rest of the country.

CM: If Morgentaler wins his appeal, can you see a situation in which his clinic would be allowed to operate, but only his clinic, in order to neutralize the movement in much the same way the 1969 law did?

JR: No, the 1969 law was an initiative of the government, this is

a struggle. And it's become very obvious, especially in the last week, that they are not going to back down from the struggle; they're going to fight us with everything they have. If we win, which I believe we will, it's going to open up the possibility of clinics developing across the whole country, which is not to say that they won't try and prosecute again, but a second acquittal here will make it very difficult for them to keep proceeding against the clinic. Our problem is the lack of doctors willing to do it. We know there are doctors who are prepared to work in clinics once it's safe. It makes sense: they're not willing to risk their careers over it but once a clinic's possible they'll work in a clinic. It makes more sense than doing it in a hospital.

CM: What will happen if he doesn't win the appeal?

JR: If he doesn't win the appeal it doesn't mean we don't win, it just means that there's a new trial. I believe he'll be acquitted again by a jury and once we get a second jury acquittal under our belt, I just can't conceive of them continuing to prosecute him. If they do, there'll be a massive civil liberties protest, the same way there was in Quebec. They're really up against the wall now, which is why they're resorting to dirty tricks to try to discredit him.

They've been following selected women home from the clinic since the beginning. But now, they are not only asking women if they will answer questions, but if they want medical help. It's becoming clearer that they're trying to find somebody who would be willing to discredit the clinic. And now they've found someone . . .

They took a woman who, when she left the clinic was feeling great, and very grateful, and somehow (as an illegal immigrant she would be particularly vulnerable to police pressure) got her to turn her story around to try and say that women aren't being treated well there.

I think they know they can never get a conviction under the present circumstances and figure that they can only get one by making it look like Morgentaler's a villain of some sort and is mistreating women...the suggestion being that 18,000 women had abortions and lied about the fact that they were treated well and now this one woman is telling the truth about how horrible it is at the Morgentaler clinic. It indicates how badly they want to get him, and us, and how seriously they take trying to defeat us in this struggle.

But they're up against the wall now...I don't think they can get a conviction. I'm not saying we can get an acquittal every time, maybe there'll be a hung jury, but I don't believe that with a fairly chosen jury they can get a conviction because it just doesn't make sense to the average person: why should there be abortions in hospital and not in clinic?

CM: Are men involved in the pro choice movement?

JR: We have several men in the coalition; there's one man who plays a central leadership role. We're a mixed group--obviously women have to lead this struggle, but I think OCAC is actually a very exciting example of a mixed group. It's sort of a new stage in the women's movement, where you have a mixed group that's female-dominated instead of male-dominated, and where men play a role--they don't sit back. In fact, I remember when a group of men joined and one man



later told me they had felt they'd have to sit back and let women take the leadership, but they realized after about three meetings that in fact the women had better ideas about what to do than they did, and they didn't have to sit back at all, because in fact women were in reality leading. The men didn't have to let them lead.

I think it's a sign of the maturity of the women's movement that we have so many powerful women leaders now that in a group like this we don't worry very much about men dominating.

OCAC is the healthiest group I've ever belonged to. There's virtually no infighting or backbiting or gossiping or anything like that. When there are differences they are discussed openly; they're never personalized. There are often differences, sometimes big ones, and yet they're always openly debated and a solution is found, and people listen to each other. I think the reason for that is that we've been in such a bitter struggle together and it's so clear who the enemy is that the kind of factionalism you sometimes get in groups that aren't directly involved in struggle doesn't happen. And for the same reason, although there are differences between us and CARAL (CANADIAN ABORTION RIGHTS ACTION LEAGUE), there's very rarely tension, and when there is, it's worked out very quickly. The battle lines are so clear that you don't get infighting.

It's very exciting to me because I've been involved in politics for fifteen years and I've never been in a group that was as free from that kind of deformation as OCAC is. It wasn't always like that...but it's a very relaxed group too, and it's common to find new people talking after about two meetings, putting forward their ideas, in a way that

women's groups are supposed to foster but rarely do. OCAC's like that even though it's a mixed group.

I guess the last thing I'd like to say is that I think that this struggle that we're in now is one of the most important social struggles that has ever happened in Canada. I think that it's a fundamental struggle for women's rights in a very profound way. It's a fight against the Right and a fight for a fundamental democratic freedom.

I guess I'm a bit disappointed that more socialist feminists aren't actively involved in it. A lot of the leadership of this struggle on the socialist feminist side falls to a very few people who are under tremendous pressure, and while we have lots of new people coming in, so we don't lack for "bodies" and for people to do the work, there's not enough leadership. We're dealing with very difficult and complex tactical and political situations, and we need help.

I guess I'm making a plea to socialist feminists in this city to get involved, especially now when the issue is so hot, and we're in such a battle. We need help from experienced people and we're not getting enough. People come out to demos but that's not enough. It's a total pitched battle with the State, where they're bringing in everything they can against us. And we need help!

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As part of this years International Women's Day activities, OCAC is sponsoring a meeting to talk about strategy in the pro-choice movement Monday, March 4, 7:30 p.m., Trinity St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. W.

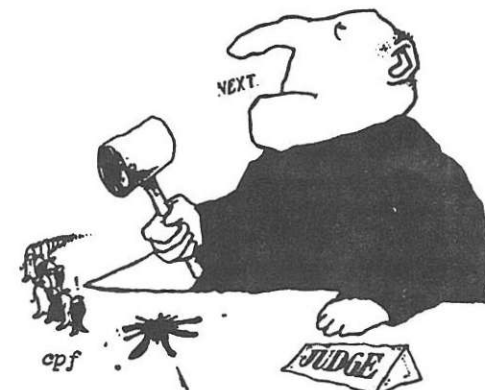
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## The Grange Inquiry: What Was the Point?

The Report of the Grange Commission Investigating the Deaths of the Children was rather an anticlimax to anyone who has followed the proceedings at all. Despite the fact that it was termed an investigation into the "deaths," it was clear from the outset that the Commission had already made the leap from "deaths" to "murders," and that it was not going to consider seriously any other hypothesis. Evidence and questioning of witnesses was largely oriented towards trying to prove deliberate wrong-doing, not just negligence. Any attempts by the nurses' counsel to present evidence concerning inadequate staffing and the shortage of space in the intensive care unit were limited or determined to be irrelevant to the investigation. Therefore, any theory that perhaps hospital cutbacks and inadequate staffing may have had something to do with the deaths was not considered realistic or even relevant.

Furthermore, in single-mindedly pursuing the theory of murder, the Commission focussed on the nurses as the/potential and only possible murderers. While it is true that the records of doctors were reviewed, the hospital records of their times and locations of duty were not accurate and were poorly kept. By comparison, the records of nurses' whereabouts and activities were meticulously detailed. Moreover, the nurses were grilled on the witness stand about such things as personal relations among themselves, for example, the alleged ongoing "disputes" between Phyllis

Traynor and Susan Nelles. Not one of the doctors was asked questions of this nature about their relations; in fact, they were questioned about the nurses' personalities and manners of handling themselves on the ward and with staff.



Although the Commissioner could not "name names," the investigation centred around one specific nursing team in particular and so the evidence focussed on it, and on two of its members more than anyone else. Although all nurses working on the cardiac ward during the time period under investigation have been affected by the Commission, and those on the one nursing team more than the others, the two nurses Traynor and Nelles became public figures and have had their reputations seriously prejudiced.

Despite the fact that Nelles was discharged by a preliminary hearing and there was no evidence of wrong-doing on her part found by the Commission, she will be under suspicion for the rest of her life. The police actions in jumping the gun and charging Susan Nelles (despite insufficient evidence to prove the charges, and using as

evidence such facts as her desire to have a lawyer present before talking to them, which is anyone's basic right) and continuing to press even after it became clear that they had no case, were simply whitewashed.

Phyllis Traynor was damaged even more by the investigation; she became accused in investigation with no opportunity to defend herself against criminal charges and be cleared of them. She was subjected to having her name constantly brought forward in evidence, her personality, and mannerisms picked apart, her method of dealing with pressure, her ways of relating to doctors and other staff. Hearsay evidence, none of which would ever be admissible in a criminal court, and other unsupportable evidence equally inadmissible in a criminal court, was presented--not to prove that Phyllis Traynor did anything wrong concretely, but to try to give her an unlikeable image in the public mind. It was clearly for the public, as it was irrelevant to the Commissioner, who could not name names, whether or not Phyllis Traynor cried when she was under pressure. Behaviour which might be exhibited by anyone under pressure, crying or expressing emotion, was portrayed before the Commissioner as "suspicious."

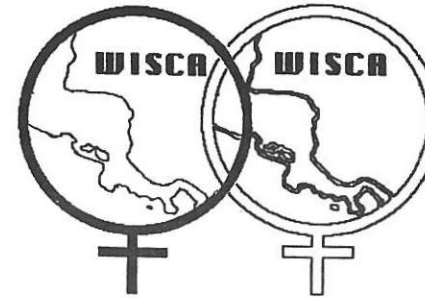
In summary, the Grange Commission was a witch hunt from the beginning, aimed at nurses, none of whom were given the benefit of the most basic protections accorded persons accused of crimes by our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The authorities responsible for the justice system in the province learned little if anything new and nothing significant enough to allow them now to charge the "criminal." And for this, the taxpayers of

Ontario paid close to two million dollars.

The public mind was supposed to be put at rest with the findings of the Commissioner, but nothing definitive has been said, and the issue is just as cloudy as it was before the hearings began. Presumably, criminal charges were to be laid after the Commission completed its task, but the Attorney-General and Police could not have learned anything of significance from the hearing, as they already had the evidence presented in their possession in the form of witnesses' statements and various reports from experts on digoxin, including the probability study done by the Atlanta Centre for Disease Control. The only positive aspect of the process is that it was the first time the public at large has had a full opportunity to know the details of a complicated medical/criminal investigation, with the attendant fascination of lessons in pharmacology, forensic medicine, and medical practice in a large hospital. That is small comfort to the infants' parents, who are no closer to understanding what happened than before or to the nurses who have had their reputations destroyed.



Ben Sargent



## WISCA: Focus on Nicaragua

*This issue we would like to salute the Nicaraguan people in celebration of the recent elections and FSLN victory. Deb Barndt was in Nicaragua with a Canadian delegation observing the November elections, and visited with Nubia Aguirre, of the International Relations Department of the Nicaraguan Women's Association (AMNLAE). She's written a brief update on some of AMNLAE's current projects. Following Deb's article are two translated excerpts from a broadsheet published by AMNLAE during the election campaign.*

*At our January educational WISCA showed a Canadian NFB film about Nicaraguan women. Hilda Afre, a Guatemalan sister, has written some reflections on the film for us.*

## AMNLAE

AMNLAE prepared two publications for the 1984 elections. Mujer en Nicaragua (Women of Nicaragua) was co-produced with the Nicaraguan Photographers' Union in honour of the Fifth Anniversary of the Revolution. It is primarily a stunning collection of photographs of Nicaraguan women, but also includes basic history,

statistical data, and women's poetry. The second publication, Las Mujeres Respaldamos al FSLN (As Women We Support the FSLN) is in the form of an 8-page newspaper, with text and photos; it provides a succinct summary of the advances women have made since 1979 in all aspects of their lives: education, housing, work, law, etc. AMNLAE is particularly eager to have the latter document translated into English and distributed to North American and European groups.

In terms of funding priorities, AMNLAE is seeking financial and material donations from international sources for the reconstruction of the these day care centres have been destroyed by counterrevolutionary groups that have stepped up attacks on peasant communities in the north of Nicaragua. The week after the elections, a CIR serving the "Ernesto Acuna" state farm was burnt to the ground by a surprise attack that left seven dead in the department of Jinotega. An estimated 2 million cordobas (\$70,000) is needed to rebuild the facility used by 90 children. Tin roofing is one of the critical construction items that must be imported.

In March 1985, AMNLAE is planning a National Assembly, where members will elect new officers. The Nicaraguan Comandante Doris Tijerino made a recent tour of Latin America as president of the Continental Women's Front. In March 1985, AMNLAE will be sending a representative to a conference on Women and Law in New York City. It might be a time when a visit to Canada, too, could be arranged. International relations with women's groups continue to be critical to AMNLAE and to all Nicaraguan women.

Deb Barndt





From "As Women We Support the FSLN"

Nicaraguan Sisters:

The criminal war unleashed by the U.S. against Nicaragua has not been able to break the will of the people . . . while our children confront mercenary aggression and get ready to face the constant danger of military invasion, the whole people has important tasks to do in defence of national sovereignty and our hard-won liberty.

The health and education of our children, land, work, dignity, the construction of the better life we began to build five years ago, must also be defended with popular mobilization in order to make the first free elections in the history of Nicaragua another defeat for the imperialist plans for our country.

It was the Sandinista Front that led us in the struggle against the dictatorship, guiding our participation in all the tasks, until we finally triumphed.

It was the Sandinista Front which recognized our sacrifices as mothers, our work, our dignity, encouraging our greater and greater participation in society, opening up opportunities for work and education

for us, creating the conditions for us to stand in full equality with men.

Only with the Sandinista Front can we continue advancing in defence of peace and national dignity, in the construction of the new society for which so many Nicaraguans have given their lives.

In the past, under the Somoza's, the ones in power thought that because we were women we were worth nothing. We had neither voice nor vote; we just had to shut up and suffer. But there was no way we would put up with that eternally. And so it was that in the insurrection we rose up en masse against the oppressors' yoke. And in the ranks of the FSLN we women always distinguished ourselves for our courage.

Today, in defence of our conquests, we do not hesitate to shoulder a gun if necessary to stop the beasts who want to shove us back into a bloody past. That's why we participate in the Territorial Militias and in the Reserves; that's why 8 of every 10 revolutionary guards and 7 of every 10 members of the Civil Defense Brigades are women.

Eight of every 10 members of the Sandinista Defence Committees are women. Seven of every 10 members of the health brigades are women. Six of every 10 literacy brigade members were women, and today almost half of the promoters of the popular education committees are women. Without the rearguard, there is no victory. Without us women, there is no rearguard.

Our voices are heard everywhere: in the home and in the streets, in the union halls and in the Council of State, in the media, in the "Face to Face with the People" sessions, and in the offices of the government.

Because of all this and because the FSLN has the political will to give us the standing we deserve, today no one can reduce us to decorative objects for advertising purposes.

On the contrary, the FSLN is committed to facilitating our access to the press, radio and television and to make these our channels of communication to talk about our achievements and contributions to the revolution.

Once we were marginalized by isolation in our homes. Today, our participation makes us equal. Now we are consulted in the guidance of the State, we give our opinions on the central problems of our country, and we organize to present our demands and goals.

The FSLN maintains its commitment to continue supporting and stimulating our organizing as women in order to be taken into account and to protect our interests as women. That's why as women we support the FSLN.

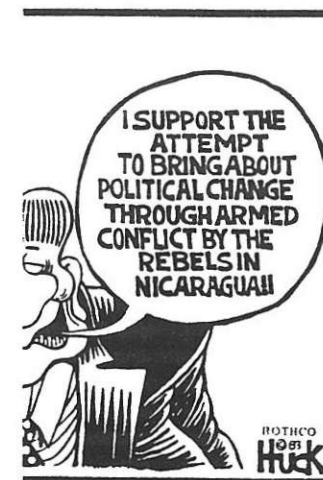
## Dream of a Free Country

AN NFB STUDIO D FILM

The film, "Dream of a Free Country," outlines the participation of women in the Nicaraguan people's struggle, as well as their daily struggle for liberation as women. The film contains several interviews with women in various fields and levels of development, from peasants, workers and artisans, to women in some of the highest positions in the Nicaraguan government, including a commandante and a minister.

An outstanding area of women's achievement is the literacy campaign, in which women formed the majority of participants, both as teachers and students. As the campaign achieved its goals, groups of women were formed in various sectors in order to deal with problems which previous governments had neglected for years. These governments of the colonial and imperialist phases of Nicaragua's development only thought of women in terms of how they could be exploited, as workers and as women; at the same time women suffered racial discrimination if they were native or of mixed blood.

In order to really understand this film one has to know about the reality of the lives of Nicaraguan women. It includes an interview with a journalist who is obviously struggling to control painful emotions when she speaks about certain experiences and at the same time shows a great joy in the present, which is like a dream starting to come true.



In the long and difficult process Nicaraguan women are undertaking, the obstacles left by the long history of imperialism and sexism are immense. There have been many difficulties on the personal level, with broken relationships when women's growth comes into contradiction with their partners' ingrained attitudes. It is evident that there is no turning back, nor is there any sign of a separatist tendency.

The film shows something of women's participation in the defence of the revolution as members of the armed forces or militias. A scene showing women militia members in a march is enjoyable for the remarkable

### Friends of AMES' Children to Children Campaign

Thanks to the generosity of women in Toronto, Friends of AMES (El Salvador Women's Association) was able to send 15 boxes of toys, clothing, baby food, medical supplies, arts and crafts materials, as well as several strollers to the AMES daycare centre for Salvadorean refugee children in Managua, Nicaragua. The boxes were sent on the Tools for Peace Campaign boat to Nicaragua.

The Children to Children Campaign continues with showings of a children's slide show about the day care centre and the sale of cards, buttons and posters.

At the end of April (exact date not yet confirmed) an AMES representative from El Salvador will speak at a public meeting in Toronto about AMES' work and the present conditions in El Salvador.

In conjunction with this, an art auction and exhibition will be opened at the Maximum Gallery on Thursday, April 25 on College Street at

combination of joyful enthusiasm and discipline they display, all in regulation-issue military boots, but dressed in colourful "civvies" from the ankles up! In the same scene a child teases and plays with a Sandinista soldier. I couldn't help but be struck by the trust and affection displayed by the child for the soldier, when previously a military uniform was an object of hatred and fear.

The film was made in 1980 by Studio D (the women's studio) of the NFB, and is available free from the NFB film library at 369-4093.

Hilda Afre

Spadina. The money raised will go to AMES work in El Salvador and the day care centres in the zones under FDR-FMLN control.

Take some time to stop by our table on International Women's Day, and if you would like more information or can work with us please call Axelle Janczur 783-5146 or 533-0680.

Gini Dickie

WISCA and PRG (Participatory Research Group) are collaborating on the publication of an interview with Patricia Lindo, head of the Political Education Division of AMNLAE. The interview covers such topics as methods of political education and organization among Nicaraguan women, and relations between the women's movement in Nicaragua and the Sandinista Front. Projected date of publication is February 15; for details contact PRG, 386 Bloor St. W., phone 961-8638

## Puerto Rican Women POW's Brutalized in U.S. Prisons

"...I let out a desperate scream, pleading with Lt. Lewis not to do this to me. He wouldn't listen, and the other guards just stood there and said nothing. In my fear and desperation I managed to free one of my hands. Another guard grabbed me and thrust my arm behind my back. I was handcuffed again and brutally pushed to the floor by Lt. Lewis. I realized I was helpless. He was

putting pressure on my neck with his legs. I was on my knees. I felt a blow to my rib cage as he forcefully pushed my face to the floor, causing tremendous pain. I felt my legs being spread apart forcefully, my panties lowered, and then the spread search was consummated."

Puerto Rican POW Alejandrina Torres, Chicago MCC, July 10, 1984.



States women in the Puerto Rican independence movement stated: "We consider this violation of Alejandrina tantamount to rape. This is the ultimate personal abuse, and one that we will not tolerate. For women, this is a form of torture. We call on all women to join us in a campaign to stop the bestial torture aimed at stripping Alejandrina Torres--a woman who fights for the freedom of her people--not just of her clothes, but of her dignity and will to fight."

Intense community pressure has forced the authorities to back down from this form of harassment against Alejandrina, and she is in the general population again after a stay in the hospital. Prison authorities have promised that her attackers will not have any contact with her.

But right now, two other POWs, Lucy Rodriguez and Haydee Torres, are being held in equally barbarous conditions in Davis Hall, Alderson Federal Women's Prison, Alderson, West Virginia. Held in complete isolation, they are locked in tiny,

It was an act of brutality reminiscent of Latin American dictatorships. The Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and political prisoners have always been subjected to special abuse at the hands of the U.S. government. Alejandrina and the other women prisoners are particularly subjected to degradation--precisely because they are women who are willing to fight for the freedom of their nation.

In an open letter sent to the women's community in the United



soundproof, windowless cells "for the rest of their lives." They are not allowed to communicate with each other or anyone else. They are handcuffed wherever they go and are checked by guards every 15 minutes. Although Haydee has a long history of illness, the prison refuses to give her the treatment she needs or allow an outside doctor to treat her.

What we are seeing is the slow but steady implementation of physical and psychological torture against political prisoners and prisoners of war in the U.S. This campaign extends to all the POW's, who are denied mail and communication with their communities and families, denied the political news they need to continue their struggle, and constantly subjected to threats or physical violence because they remain steadfast in their convictions. The goal of this treatment is to break their resistance and deny their leadership of the Puerto Rican nation in the struggle for independence.

The North American Sanctuary movement and solidarity organizations

## Greenham Women Still Strong

For over three years now, the Greenham Women's Peace Camp has survived outside the gates of the USAF Base at Greenham Common in Berkshire. It is that unrivalled sense of survival that has enabled the women to resist court judgements, bailiffs' warrants, legislative bans and hate-propaganda. It is the story of the Greenham Peace Women's resistance that has probably made Greenham the greatest international symbol of world peace.

Women who, for whatever reasons, cannot spend their lives outside the Greenham gates make the trek to Greenham whenever possible because they share the hopes and fears of the

with the people of Central America have also been under attack in the recent period, and many activists have been approached by the FBI in an attempt to discredit and weaken these formations. The attacks on the Puerto Rican independence movement show that the US government is determined to stop all forms of opposition that threaten its domination of other nations.

The U.S. military is moving to make Puerto Rico the center of their military operations for the entire Central American and Caribbean region. The huge Ocean Venture '84 naval manoeuvres took place in May off Puerto Rico. The growing resistance of the Puerto Rican people to U.S. military domination of their island was demonstrated on May 1, 1984 in San Juan, where 50,000 Puerto Ricans came out to march against U.S. imperialism.

Excerpted from *New Movement in Solidarity with Puerto Rican Independence and Socialism Newsletter* Fall, 1984.



Peace Women. The action, **TEN MILLION WOMEN: TEN DAYS** was a call to those women to come to Greenham between September 20 and 30, 1984 to protest the existence of weapons of nuclear destruction at a time when massive NATO exercises were taking place in Germany.

To many of us more jaded activists, Greenham often seems like a desperate political project. Sometimes, being there makes the goal seem unwinnable because the threat of the nuclear base is so overwhelmingly powerful. Perhaps that's why the peace women have made it into a different kind of political arena. It is theatre: the theatre of peace pitched right up against the theatre of war. And this in turn is what makes its symbolism so powerful. The theatre of war is a dark ugly air force base wrapped up in yard upon yard of barbed wire fencing trying to shield the massive silos containing weapons of nuclear destruction. It is dark and evil. In contrast, the theatre of peace is performed by women in colourful costume; the stage is festooned with tents and benders. Everything is decorated with flowers, balloons and material, even the ominous barbed wire fence has been embroidered with signs, poems and pictures, all symbols of peace and optimistic of a future. The theatre is constantly carried on around a wood-burning fire which always draws more women onto its stage with songs of peace and joy. Perhaps it is not surprising after all that jaded as we might be, so many of us make such a strong connection with Greenham that we return time and time again reinforced each time with the feeling that eventually we will win.

This Ten Days was especially festive in spirit. Despite the fear and horror of what lay beyond the fence, women were in the mood to

celebrate their strength and the strength of the movement. Women were meeting each other from all over the world. They came from Holland, Denmark, France, Germany, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. A group of them had walked from Paris. At every gate, women were engaged in activity: singing, blockading the road, holding a peace vigil, playing instruments, weaving signs and symbols on the fence or pantomiming in dragon costume; planning their next fence cutting spree or merely cooking and eating: it was indeed a lively commitment to peace.



Even the fence-cutting episode I witnessed was conducted in carnival mood. It was the aftermath of a champagne birthday party near Violet Gate. Women were dressed up in bright hats and pictorial make-up; there was music and dancing between the road and the fence. No-one would have guessed that wirecutters were at work on the fence nearby. The women were almost through the fence when they were intercepted by police, horses, dogs and helicopters, the force of all needed to halt their

assault on the base. As Uuill of the women's peace camp told me, "We are trying to show the government and the public that the security is terrible and we should be informed about what is going on inside there." I shuddered at the thought of some crazy terrorist breaking through the fence into the camp and stumbling upon the secret mechanisms of the Cruise missile.

The government thought that Greenham Women could be legislated out of existence and they have tried to do this without success. Their current strategy has changed and they are now trying to maintain a very low profile in the hopes that women around the world will think that



Greenham has disappeared. The Greenham Peace Women and all who support them know differently. There may only have been 10,000 women at Greenham in September, but Greenham remains in the hearts of ten million women. With that kind of support there can be no retreat.

Sue Colley

Sue Colley, former coordinator of Toronto's Action Daycare, is presently on an extended visit to England.



photo by Sue Colley

money: a single miner gets nothing; a family of four gets 24.75 per week including all benefits and the prospect of winter looms large as the latest rounds of talks have broken down.

The support groups are desperate for sponsors to adopt them and carry them through these critical months. Already the miners are in debt to the tune of thousands of pounds--their mortgage payments and hire purchase payment have all been suspended--but they have to feed, clothe and keep their children warm. Without the means to do this, they will be forced to cross picket lines and go back to work. This is precisely what the government is hoping and, I might add, has been hoping for eight months without much success. It is too late for the miners to give in now. They know they have to win, and they also know that their victory is critical to the fate of the trade unions in the rest of the country, and in the rest of the world for that matter. The Canadian Government could well learn a few lessons from Maggie Thatcher if the miners are defeated.

Therefore I am enclosing a request from the Savile Miners Support Group for support. What Savile Wives really need is regular weekly cheques to help them with their needs, but if this is not appropriate, then a collection or a donation would be extremely welcome.

Sue Colley

NATIONAL UNION OF MINERS  
**COAL  
NOT  
DOLE**

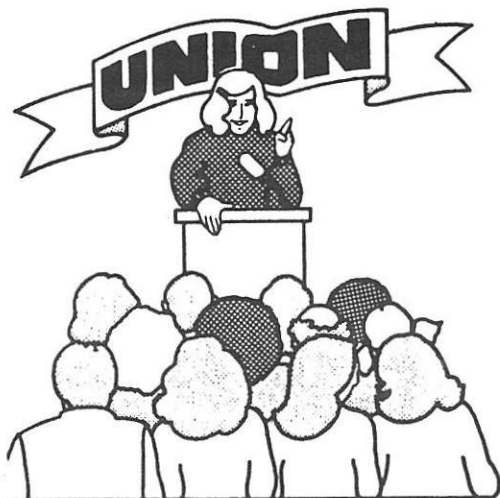
We received the following letter from Sue Colley about the Miners Strike.

. . . Last week I went to Yorkshire and met with a lot of miners' families and women's support groups to discuss the strike and figure out what was going on for some articles I'm writing. I was amazed by their determination. Living down in the south gives you a very warped perspective on the support for the strike because you are just a little bit influenced by the press, even though you know it is completely biased. So I wasn't quite expecting what I heard. All the miners wives I talked to are adamant that this strike is necessary because it is a question of their livelihood: that's what makes it different; that's what makes it so crucial; and that's why they are still out on strike. Nearly every miner that I talked to had already had to move at least once because of a pit closure in the past and the spectre of losing 70,000 jobs in the mines, is one that they are just not prepared to face.

The problem of course is survival. They have already been on strike 8 months with very little







Dear Brothers and Sisters:

We are writing to ask for your help in our present time of hardship. After seven months on strike, hunger and deprivation are a grim everyday reality in most mining villages in Britain. But we are fighting against pit closures for the very survival of our communities and the future of our children, and that is why we dare not surrender.

New changes in the welfare laws mean that a striking miner with a wife and two children can claim just 24.75 a week. As you can imagine, it would be impossible to survive for long on this amount. This is why Women's Support Groups like ours have sprung up all over the country, to

collect money and provide food for the needy in our communities.

Methley is a small village on the outskirts of Leeds in Yorkshire. Most of the miners here work at the Savile colliery which is being closed down. They are 100% behind the strike, and we are putting out up to seventy food parcels each week to help them through. It is very hard work, but it has its rewards, especially in the closeness that has grown between the women, and in the community as a whole. For many of us, it is the first "political activity" we have ever been involved in, and it has opened our eyes to many things.

Now with winter coming on, we face new difficulties with having to pay fuel bills--otherwise our electricity and gas will be cut off.

We would be most grateful for any donations--small regular donations are particularly welcome--and we will never forget the kindness of our many friends at home and overseas.

Margaret Bell

Savile Miners Support Group  
c/o Mrs. Margaret Bell,  
30 Savile Road  
Methley,  
Near LEEDS, West Yorkshire

### THIRD CONGRESS OF THE FEDERATION OF GREEK WOMEN HELD IN ATHENS

On December 6,7,8, 1985 the Federation held its third congress which included delegates from across Greece and 25 guests from around the world. Foreign delegates included representatives from the British Miners' Wives Committee, Israel, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, Vietnam, the U.S.S.R., Palestine, Canada, Syria, the U.S.A., Czechoslovakia and others.

Discussion took place about the new Greek government. While things are "better than before", when the right wing ruled Greece, the status of women is not good enough. The PASOC government has introduced new legislation on maternity leave and has issued a new Family Code. However, the government has not established mechanisms for enforcing these laws. PASOC has also established the Council for Equality to monitor the status of women; however, the Council acts as a mouthpiece for government policies and does not represent the concerns of the Federation of Greek Women.

Another area of immediate concern was the struggle for peace. While the Greek government promised to take Greece out of NATO, it implemented a program of economic austerity and recently bought 100 fighter planes from the United States. This "purchase of the century" was a clear indication that Greece's political and military policies are subordinate to the interests of U.S. imperialism. The Federation calls for Greece out of NATO and all American bases out of Greece.

At present Greece is at a crossroads. National elections are expected to be held between February and July 1985. On the first Sunday in December 1984 the fascist leaders from around the world held a convention in Athens. This aroused the indignation of democratic people

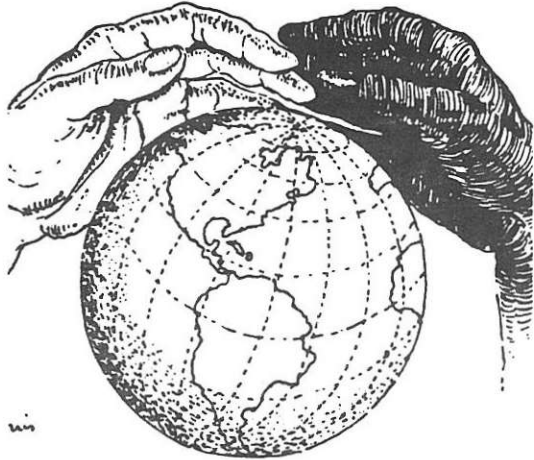
in Greece. The Federation is working actively to counter the right wing and will participate in the election campaigns by putting forward a program for women.

The militancy and enthusiasm of the delegates at the Congress was an indication of the determination of Greek women in struggling for a better future for themselves and their children.

Costanza Allevalo

Costanza Allevalo is President of the Congress of Canadian Women.





#### Polytex Strike Ends in Sri Lanka

Solidarity from unions, church groups, residents, and political parties was instrumental in settling a strike in the Polytex Garments Factory in the Free Trade Zone near Colombo. The strike, which involved 1300 women, began when six union leaders who had been negotiating for higher wages, were fired by management. The Christian Workers Movement organized a massive support campaign, and after four months the Labour Department called the involved parties to a conference at which the strike was settled. (See IWDC Newsletter, May and September issues).

Labour Communications  
Vol. VI, No. 6, Nov. 1984

#### Japanese Union Moves on VDT Hazards

Officials of Japan's main trade union, Sohyo, have called for legislation on VDT use, arguing that existing guidelines are insufficient and that there is a need for more protection of workers' health. Among

the proposals is one for a daily limit on the number of hours a worker should spend in front of terminals. The Union surveyed 6000 employees who had worked an average of 2.8 months on VDTs. Of these 76.8% complained of eye fatigue and 46.4 said they had become short-sighted. A total of 36.7% said that working on terminals made them more irritable.

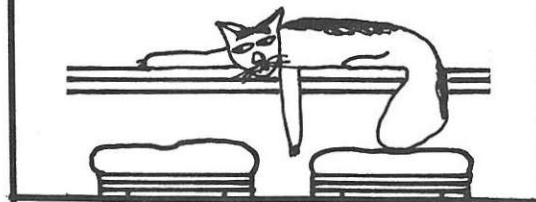
Asia Labour Monitor

#### Free Filipina Workers

The Kilusang Mayo Uno (May First Movement) is campaigning for the release of imprisoned labour leaders, among them Millet Soriano, a 26 year old organizer for the KMU in the textile industry. She has been under arrest since September 1982 and is being held in the Philippine Constabulary Integrated National Police stockade. Please support the campaign for her release and that of other trade unionists in detention by writing to President Marcos of the Philippines demanding immediate release.

#### CAT POST

In 1869 British Post Offices were authorized to put cats on on their payrolls, following reports mouse mutilation of the mail. Postmasters were required to furnish periodic "cat efficiency reports" which are on file today at London's main post office.



## Not An Easy Choice: A Feminist Re-examines Abortion

by Kathleen McDonnell  
Women's Press, 1984, 116 pgs.

Kathleen McDonnell has written an important book on the issue of abortion and the questions that plague many women about it. Essentially she challenges the current organizing drive for abortion clinics and the way it has posed the question of abortion. For McDonnell, there are many nuances that have not been sufficiently developed in the analysis of the abortion issue, and most importantly, that have not been developed in the way political action is taken around abortion.

Basically, McDonnell feels that the struggle for abortion rights is being conducted too simplistically, and that it does not address itself to the moral and political complexities behind the issue, such as for example, the question working-class and minority women have been raising for years, i.e. the irony of having choice without money, so that a woman is forced to abort a child she cannot afford to raise. The chapters in her book cover fairly controversial issues directly and honestly, leaving no question about her commitment to feminism and social change.

Other issues that she takes up include the question of men's role in the decision to have an abortion; the question of emerging reproductive technology and how feminists should respond to it; the question of the life of the fetus; and, perhaps, most interestingly, the question of the control of the medical establishment over all aspects of reproductive technology and the need for women's control.

I think what this book ultimately decries is a systematic lack of support for women's dignity and autonomy in this world, in particular over reproductive rights. In many ways, what McDonnell is addressing is the need to shoot for more than just simple access to abortion in this struggle. Clearly, before we can talk about free choice, we must attain economic independence for women, so that working class and poor women, for example, will not be forced to abort children they would rather have but cannot afford; we must attain social services that will provide much-needed counselling and support for women going through abortions; we must attain democratic control of social institutions such as the medical establishment so that disadvantaged groups in society are not further discriminated against in terms of their health; we must attain extensive social support for the disabled, so that we do not abort a disabled child on the basis of hardship; all of these things require the kind of economic and social control socialists are struggling for. Unfortunately, though McDonnell raises the questions, she does not put the struggle quite in this context, but rather seems to imply that the women's movement must somehow supply enough support to make up for this lack.

The main problem I have with the book is that it does not have any action to recommend to us in terms of how we go about achieving the degree of social support we need to have a just society for women--and children



and men. Though it raises questions we have all struggled with, it leaves the question of strategy to others. But, surely, strategy is critical.

Clearly, struggles against the state must be waged in terms of what you can realistically expect to achieve within the context of an advanced capitalist state with a deeply ingrained liberal/conservative ideology. We may not be able to achieve support networks for the disabled before we achieve abortion rights; we may not be able to achieve abortion rights before we achieve home births; we may not have sensitive and responsible men until we achieve control over education; we may not be able to achieve economic independence for women until we achieve control over reproduction; and so on. Developing strategies is critical.

Yet while we make specific demands upon the state, it is important not to lose our vision of what ideally a society should provide its women, and raise these visions wherever possible. This is where I think McDonnell's book is important.

I take issue with her contention that feminists have failed to adequately acknowledge the very real pain involved for women in making the decision to have an abortion. It is very difficult to organize political action and include a comprehensive analysis, but nonetheless I feel that we mostly have acknowledged women's experience, to some extent publicly, but certainly in print, at health centres, in self-help groups, and so on. For many years now, we have been arguing that we are not saying abortion is easy, and it is from this need that we have argued for the necessity of abortion, as opposed to its desirability.

In her final chapters, McDonnell takes up the issue of women's control over reproduction and again makes the mistake, I think, of assuming that what the pro-choice movement is organizing for is necessarily all we want in the long run. I personally have strong feelings about the control of the medical establishment over our lives, and I believe it is one of the critical institutions maintaining the power of capitalism, but medically-insured abortions, provided in a variety of ways, in plentiful, accessible centres run and controlled by women is so far into the future, I don't believe it is possible to organize strategically for this goal at this time. Though, as I said earlier, it is important to all struggles to keep and develop our visions, it feels like McDonnell is critical of the women's movement for not trying to achieve everything at once. Yet she herself does not provide specific ways of organizing to achieve that level of control for the majority of women.

Marie Lorenzo

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