

cayenne

No. 3

May - June 1985



a socialist feminist bulletin

in this issue

Editorial	1
Letters	2
A Broader Strategy for Choice	3
Doctors Organize for Choice	8
Angela Davis in Toronto	10
Sex, Porn and the State	14
Churches Support Eaton's	18
Eaton's Boycott May Extravaganza	19
Victory for Newfoundland Tel Workers	22
Air Canada--What You've Been Missing	22
Sister Vision	24
Musical Hot Tips	26
Reviews: Desperately Seeking Susan	27
Princess Di: The National Dish	28
Feminism in Northern Ireland	30
WISCA: Focus on El Salvador	32
Guatemala	36
Chilean Women After the Earthquake	37
International Notes	38

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Graphics in this issue have been borrowed from Asia Labour Monitor, Asian Women Workers Newsletter, Breaking the Silence, Everywoman's Almanac, ISIS, Women Draw 1984, The Women's Tribune and AMES' publications.

Special thanks to Linda Briskin for help in producing this issue of **Cayenne**. And thank you to friends at PRG who regularly put up with the chaos of **Cayenne** production.

WHO WE ARE

We are three socialist feminists who are committed to producing a bulletin of socialist feminist news, analysis and debate. We encourage **Cayenne** readers and supporters to contribute to this process.

Lynda Yanz, Christina Mills, and
Marie Lorenzo
The **Cayenne** Collective

Write **CAYENNE** at 229 College Street,
3rd floor, Toronto, Ontario M5T 1R4.
Or call (416) 977-8118.

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

One of the goals we've had for **Cayenne** since we first began dreaming of a bulletin by and for socialist feminists, has been to provide a space for women to discuss the issues which interest, affect, mobilize, and sometimes divide us.

Ideally, this process might take the form of a "kitchen table" discussion. That is, instead of theorists or "experts" facing off, each offering a tidy package of analysis and conclusions, contradicting and scoring each other off for an admiring audience, ordinary women, activists or otherwise, would take part in the discussion, each one adding her two cents' worth as the conversation flows. Nods of agreement, objections, elaborations on someone else's point, examples from experience to support or oppose a given statement, every contribution a thread in the fabric of our learning from one another. Even "digressions" provide illumination--let's hear it for lateral thinking! There is no audience, just women talking about what matters to us, sharing our ideas, our passions and, equally importantly, our questions.

Ideally. But it's hard to create a facsimile of a kitchen table discussion in print. Many, if not most, of us are intimidated by the prospect of putting our thoughts onto paper and exposing them to criticism, especially the criticism of the anonymous and forbidding "they" if we are so reckless as to actually publish our ideas.

That is why we particularly welcome the response by Nancy Adamson and Susan Prentice to our interview with Judy Rebick in the last issue.



Barbara Eidlitz

We hope their comments will in turn spur other women to get in on the conversation.

What are the issues you argue about in your house, with your study group, in the bar after a meeting? If we are going to move forward we've got to find more ways of having collective strategic discussions.

Our kitchen door is open and the kettle's on. Come on in and make yourself at home...

newflash

**A VICTORY FOR AIR CANADA WORKERS!
A VICTORY FOR WOMEN!**

Just before taking **Cayenne** to the printer, we heard that striking airline workers had settled their strike. It looks like they've won important gains on several of their demands, especially part time work. See article on page 22 for background. Watch the next issue for an analysis of the settlement.

Dear Cayenne,

The Whitehorse Women's Centre hasn't received word on our grant for this fiscal year and there are rumours that Ottawa may cut us off completely--the Centre has been funded through Sec State for ten years! Well, I'm afraid we are seeing many repercussions with the new PC government, mainly cuts in grants for culture, recreation, parks, and non-profit organizations like the Native and women's groups. The cuts come one by one, but if you add them up it's a sizeable number of jobs, not to mention the vital projects and services lost.

We have a territorial election coming up on May 15 and I fear a Tory sweep. Right now the NDP is the official opposition and it's crucial to keep the existing NDP seats. The conservatives here are playing on the idea that if the PC gets a majority in the territory, the feds and territory will bring "economic recovery" to the Yukon. Meanwhile, the cuts go on.

Cayenne is great! I like the local and national stuff best, and the more analytical pieces. I'd love to see more on topics such as liberal feminism and the censorship debate around pornography. The interview with Judy Rebick was good. It would be interesting to examine the positive aspects of open debate and idea sharing in an organization such

Gail Geltner



as OCAC. The experience of OCAC would be useful to the women's movement as a whole and in particular to socialist feminists who regard democratic processes and structures as important.

I really rely on the news in papers/magazines like **Broadside** and **Cayenne**, for news, updates, etc. How do you feel about reprinting articles, with appropriate credit given to authors and **Cayenne**? In particular, the update on Greenham Common was something that the **OptimSt** readers would be quite interested in.

Jan Langford,
The OptimSt,
Whitehorse, Yukon.

(Ed. note: **Cayenne** is happy to have any news or debate found in these pages spread further afield. Any publication which wishes to use our articles may do so, assuming due credit is given. If the publication is one which does not already have an exchange with **Cayenne**, please send us a copy of the issue in which the article appears--and let's start an exchange.)

We've Moved

Cayenne has a new home at 229 College Street, Toronto, M5T 1R4. We're just east of Huron Street, on the third floor of the building, in a light, well-equipped, pleasant office which we share with many other interesting people.

The topic of choice and what it means is a popular one in feminist and socialist circles these days. **Cayenne** had an interview with Judy Rebick in its last issue, Norma Scarborough has a long letter in the last issue of **Healthsharing**, the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) recently sponsored a public meeting, Ellie Kirzner wrote an article in **Now**, and Bob Gardner discussed the issue in **Talking Socialist**. All this has raised many questions about analysis and strategy that we'd like to discuss with other socialist feminists. In the following article we want to pose some of our questions in the spirit of furthering the growing dialogue about and within the pro-choice movement.

It seems to us that the pro-choice movement incorporates many more issues than the general public discussion has so far revealed. While we know, and talk about, the need for safe and effective birth control, sexual freedom, daycare, midwifery, birth options, equal pay for work of equal value, affordable housing, affirmative action, an end to forced sterilization and to violence against women, and a host of other issues as necessary pre-conditions for true freedom of choice, this awareness isn't translated into the message the public sees.

A singular focus on abortion doesn't make the links explicit to the many women health activists working in other areas of reproductive choice. Midwives, proponents of home birth, and health activists working to empower women through other than the medical model are left struggling in isolation, and the pro-choice movement loses the

strength that they could bring to the movement. The critique that these women can offer of the medical model is a powerful one that needs examination.

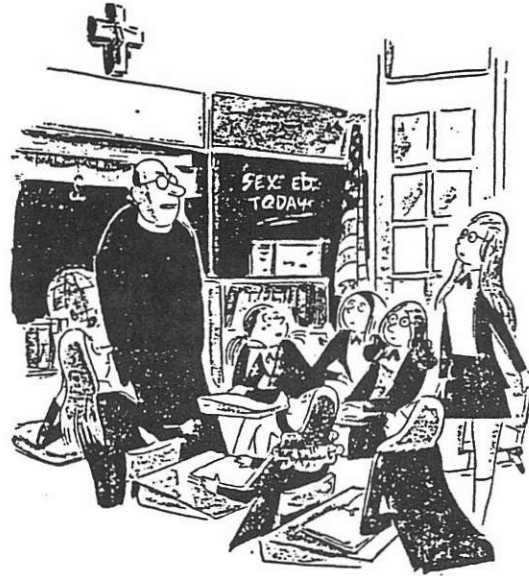
The medical model of health is one which focusses on illness and its cure by medical doctors. Medical doctors, traditionally male, are the experts who have colluded with the state, and more recently with the pharmaceutical industry, to control women and our bodies by monopoly of the definition and treatment of health and illness. In addition, the medical model has denied connection between our health and our social, political and economic situations, and thus the links between mental and physical health and our material situation. Women's health has been defined from a male perspective. The women's health movement has challenged this medical model in many important ways and has tried to put the control and responsibility for



based daycare centre wasn't going to result in the free universal daycare system which was our ultimate goal, we knew we needed to organize to provide our own care in the interim. Before we get to where we are going, we need the tools to help us move. We are all aware of the true "slippery slope", of accepting liberal reforms in place of radical social change. Nevertheless, those co-op daycare centres housed some of the most vigorous and vocal daycare activists, who, while holding onto a long-term vision, nevertheless chose to establish care in their own neighborhoods. Our provision of care for ourselves and our kids, while still focussed on demanding services from the state, was a radical act.

Is it possible to see the establishment of the Harbord clinic as another example of a movement for social change providing for its own in the absence of supply by the state? Aren't we choosing, in opening a clinic, to make quality, caring abortion services available for only a small number of Toronto women? Yes, the establishment of a clinic will set an important precedent. But one Toronto-based clinic is not going to make fundamental changes in the availability and access to abortion for the majority of Canadian women. Yet for the pro-choice movement, a clinic strategy is seen as mass action of a kind, while the provision of other reproductive health services (midwifery, lay health care, home birthing, etc.) are seen as "individualistic" or "hippie".

We suspect that there is a lack of clarity here: surely it is hypocritical to smash a tactic that we ourselves chose to use. As a result of specific decisions made by the pro-choice movement, a political terrain was carved out. Yet we've



"I can't give you any Do's and Don'ts about birth control young lady. Only Don'ts."

seen the clinic strategy argued as though it were an absolute, the "vanguard" issue. Theoretically, a clinic strategy was only one of many choices the movement could have made. We feel that it is essential to be clear that we framed the fight, and chose to go the route we did. The clinic strategy did not descend upon us from the sky; it is more than the simple "political reality, like it or not" that Norma Scarborough calls in the last issue of Healthsharing. It is the result of conscious planning. The pro-choice movement needs to accept responsibility for the decisions to accept the clinic strategy, and the medical model.

The strategy adopted by the pro-choice movement is one of near-total reliance on doctors and corresponding validation of the medical model. The medical profession is no friend of women. It's legitimizing power is enormous, and its history is one of direct and repeated oppression of

women. In practical terms alone this reliance on the medical model and on doctors can mean, and has meant, that a large coalition of activists and volunteers can be held up for long periods of time until a doctor can be found who is willing to work in the clinic. The arrest (or decision to no longer participate) of doctors will bring the clinic down--paralyzing a group which has chosen to focus on a clinic strategy. Aside from the incredible power to control that this gives the doctors, the reliance on the legitimacy of the medical profession is a potentially dangerous one. "A woman and her doctor", though it sounds good, and certainly can make a social impact on middle-class Canada, still doesn't leave final control over a woman's body with the woman. Feminists have long claimed that ultimate sovereignty for women must mean being able to make those hard decisions about control of our bodies and our lives ourselves.

Self-consciously mass-action oriented groups, such as OCAC, are supplementing rallies and demonstrations with lobbying. Socialist feminists have a history of strongly criticizing the "gray-suited" feminist, briefcase tucked under her arm, as she tries to effect change from within the halls of power. What does it mean when we lobby?

This raises a question of strategy. We have come to realize in our discussions of the choice issue that we no longer know what it means to adopt a "mass action strategy". Certainly rallies and demonstrations, coalition and alliance work, and perhaps petitions are mass actions. But aside from certain tactics which rely on large numbers of people, the definition of mass action strategy is unclear to us. Mass action strategy

must have a meaning that goes beyond playing a numbers game. Without the kind of resources that the anti-choice movement can mobilize--without a constituency as well-organized, and as well-funded--the "right-to-life" will always be able to win in the demo body count.

We feel that it is time to critically examine and assess what we mean by mass action tactics and strategy and how well they work. "Mass action strategy" is such a tenet of self-definition for socialist feminists that we think it needs careful articulation.

To date, the pro-choice movement has limited its exercise of mass action tactics to demonstrations. Yet this is a tactic being used by the right-to-life as well as us. In fact, if photos of large demonstrations outside the clinic on Harbord had the picket signs whited out, we bet even the most astute observer would be hard pressed to guess (except, perhaps, by counting the relative number of suits) if the demo were pro- or anti-choice. Certainly the Harbord St. Business Association's call on posters lining the street: "Pro-Choice, Pro-Life: Enough is Enough" doesn't distinguish between the two groups.

The Right has adopted one of our most cherished tactics--mass action--to further their own aims. We suppose we could take this as a wry acknowledgement of the strength of mass actions. It seems to us that mass action is tactic and result-specific; it is distinguished by its content, not its form. The use of tactics which rely on large numbers of people isn't organically a progressive one. What implications does this have for our future activities?

Activities in the fight for reproductive choice could include



establishing free-standing clinics-- staffing them with doctors, nurse practitioners, and trained lay people; fighting for clinic legalization through the courts; establishing as many clinics as possible without waiting for court approval; training lay health workers in the provision of basic reproductive health care; developing lay abortion alternatives; lobbying; poll-taking; challenging the media; fighting the College of Physicians and Surgeons; challenging the Medical Reform Group; taking over hospital boards--we could develop a host of tactics, currently not being worked on, that would contribute to the pro-choice movement's strength. What among these are mass action tactics? What is a comprehensive socialist feminist strategy on the choice question?

The thread that ties this discussion together is the analysis of control of our bodies, emphasizing the continuity of the reproductive spectrum. We're aware that it's a controversial argument to insist on the integrity of the spectrum as a whole, and to see the struggles being

waged by health activists for control over that spectrum and our bodies ourselves, as all of a piece. Nevertheless, as feminists we've always insisted on the overview, on making the connections. The questions we've raised about the current strategy of the pro-choice movement are a part of that process. Further, the questions we've raised about mass action seem to us to be an exciting and challenging border at which to push socialist feminist theory further, and to deepen our understanding of what it means to struggle as socialist feminists.

Nancy Adamson and Susan Prentice

Doctors Organize for Choice

Women in the pro-choice movement have long wondered why progressive doctors have not come out publicly in support of our right to choose. Some have looked for a political stance and organizing effort around choice from the Medical Reform Group, which was explicitly formed in order to counter the political impact of the conservative medical establishment represented by the Ontario Medical Association. Not only has such an effort not been forthcoming, the group refused to sign the open letter of "Co-conspirators for Choice" published in the Globe & Mail at the beginning of Dr. Morgentaler's trial. Until now it has been a matter of a few individual doctors supporting choice in their own ways as members of the movement, without attempting to organize and take advantage of their potential political clout as

physicians. A step toward changing this situation is being taken with the formation of Doctors for Choice, which will try to mobilize pro-choice doctors in a variety of ways. The new group went public in April at a press conference at which five physicians announced they were beginning training to take over at the Morgentaler Clinic if it should become necessary. It is hoped that the appropriate authorities will realize that jailing doctors will not make the issue go away, because there will always be more doctors ready to support women's reproductive choice. The following is from a statement by the five doctors training to do abortions:



As physicians we have an obligation to provide the best possible medical care to our patients. When women come to us with an unwanted pregnancy we find ourselves unable to fulfil our obligation to them in the present circumstances. Therefore we have begun training to do abortions at the Morgentaler Clinic. We would like to remind our colleagues and the public that it was illegal to provide birth control advice or prescriptions to patients before 1969. By acting in defiance of the present abortion law, we feel we are following on the fine traditions of the thousands of Canadian doctors who defied the law against contraceptive services before 1969.

The next time you visit your family doctor why not ask what her position is on choice and what she intends to do about it. Tell her about Doctors for Choice and encourage her to get in touch at: P.O. Box 753, Station P, Toronto, M5S 2Z1. Of course, if she's not pro-choice, you can always find another doctor...

Christina Mills

Questions about women's groups in Toronto? Services for women? Jobs for women? Then call:

The Women's Information Line
926-8700

24 hours taped message
Phone line staffed Wednesday and
Thursday evenings, 7 - 10 p.m.

The Women's Information Line is a service provided by feminist activists.

Angela Davis in Toronto

Though she was here for less than 24 hours and she had to refuse personal interviews due to time constraints, Angela Davis did answer a few questions at a small press conference mostly composed of black, left-wing, feminist, and alternative press. Here we print the interview in full.

Q: What would you identify as the progressive elements within the women's movement?

A.D.: I think that, particularly in this part of the world, the most important recent development to take place has to do with the emergence of working-class women in the leadership of the women's movement. Of course, we know that with the initial emergence of the women's liberation movement there was some hesitancy to focus on issues that related to the conditions of working-class women and especially women of colour. I think that it is very appropriate that the end of the U.N. Decade of Women conference is being held in Nairobi, Kenya.

Q: Could you tell us a little bit about what you've been up to, because a lot of us remember you from back in your activist days, when we were all out there supporting you...

A.D.: Well, my activist days have not yet ended (laughter)..., and I'm involved in many of the same struggles as during the early seventies. As a result of the work that was done around the demand for my freedom in 1970, 1971 and 1972, we were able, in 1973, to found an organization which is called the

National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression.

The Alliance is still very active around a whole number of issues: political prisoners, of course. We're challenging the death penalty because of its racist and class-biased character. We are defending the rights of workers, especially during this period with the tremendous assault on workers' rights by the Reagan administration. We are involved right now, for example, in the defense of the strikers at the auto factory in Morency, Arizona. Some of the leading forces in that strike are women. We have a task force against police crimes, which have continued to mount and are even at a greater height now than they were during the late sixties and early seventies.

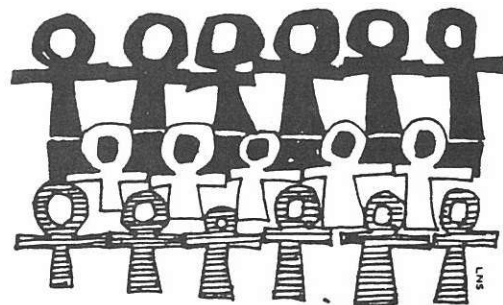
So, these are the kinds of things that I'm involved in. The struggle has certainly not ended; as a matter of fact, as a result of the election and re-election of Ronald Reagan, it's even more important to have organizations like the National Alliance.

Q: What kind of changes have you seen in the past decade for women, and what do you think is the most important challenge facing women now as we go into the next decade?

A.D.: Over the last decade, a much clearer consciousness of the oppression of women has arisen. I think that the major challenge is to provide not only jobs for women, but jobs with equal pay. Of course, in the States now, the comparable worth struggle is emerging as the main struggle of the women's movement. Then, of course, there are other

issues that directly relate to women's ability to move forward in the quest for equality, eg. the fight for reproductive rights... You probably know about the way the Reagan administration and the ultra-right forces are attempting to exploit the whole issue of women's right to abortion, and women's right to be free of sterilization abuse has to be linked to that struggle.

While there has been the development of a greater consciousness, the material situation of women has eroded in the last ten years, especially for women of colour. And this, of course, has to do with the assaults on working people in general.



Q: You ran as Vice-Presidential candidate [for the Communist Party USA] in the last American election. That's something that has not gotten very much coverage. Would you like to say something about that campaign and how active it was?

A.D.: One of the things we discovered was that, as a result of the vitriolic anti-communism associated with the Reagan administration, we got a lot more publicity in the established media in the States. With all the assaults

against communism emanating from the Reagan administration, many people wanted to know what the communists were really about, what they really say.

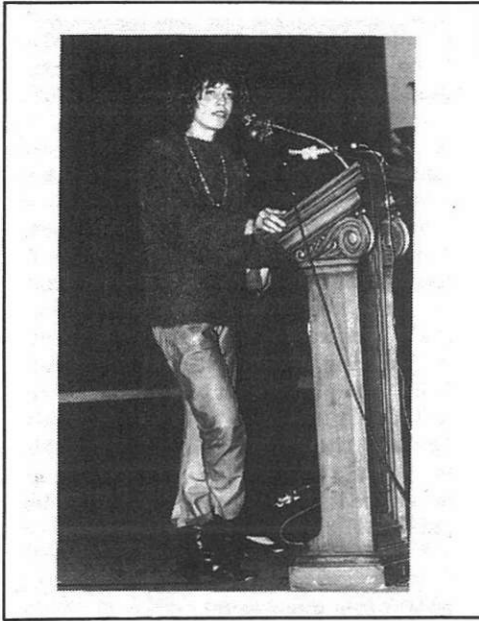
We felt that it was very important to have candidates in the last election, not because we felt we could, on our own, defeat Reagan, but we saw our campaign as being part of a united front against Reagan and against the Reagan administration's policies. And we played an important role in raising issues that were not raised by the Democratic Party. For example, the right to jobs: this was one issue that, except for the Rainbow Coalition in the Jesse Jackson campaign, did not come up in the electoral campaigns.

Q: How active were you?

A.D.: We spoke to millions of people, we had mass rallies all over the country, we did a great deal of press work, we went out into the streets and collected signatures... in California alone we collected over 150,000 signatures in order to get on the ballot. In many states, the Communist Party will not automatically be placed on the ballot in any given election. We have to go



Gail Geltner



Stephanie Martin

out and collect signatures. And so during that period, probably many people spoke directly with a Communist, or with a supporter of the Communist campaign, face to face. So, although our power was not felt with respect to the number of votes that were actually cast, we did play an important role.

And I should point out that even though Reagan was re-elected, I don't think we should be under the impression that the masses of people in the States have moved in a conservative direction. Of course, within the ruling class, we are witnessing a very dangerous move towards the right. But many people ended up voting for Reagan not really understanding what the elections were all about. Many people who voted for the nuclear freeze resolution, for example, also voted for Reagan as a result of the shrewd, demagogic approach that was organized by his scriptwriters.

Q: What do you feel the state of black America is under the Reagan administration, and the state of black women specifically?

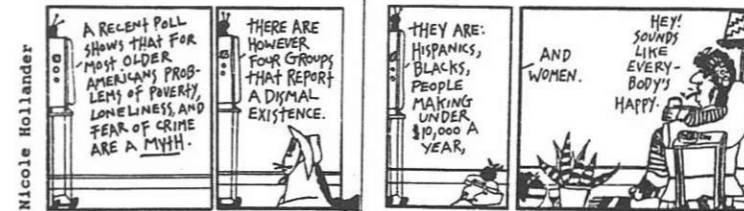
A.D.: Black people are suffering more than we've suffered for a long time. Unemployment is much higher than it was at the beginning of the first Reagan term when it was approximately 14% officially. Now it is over 16%. And, of course, many black people have ceased looking for jobs because of the fact that they don't find them, and they're not counted on the unemployment rolls. Probably about a third of the black population of working age are unemployed. And 50%, 60%, and in some places, 70% of young black people are unemployed. As a result of the Reagan Administration's attack on the civil rights gains of the last several decades, we are witnessing an effort literally to turn the clock back. The Civil Rights Commission no longer functions as anything other than a Commission to rubber stamp the racist policies of the Administration. There's been an attack on affirmative action. I could spend the next hour talking about the extent to which racism has been brought to the fore by the Reagan administration.

But I think what's important, also, is that black people, and black women in particular, are actively organizing, and if you look at the real spirit of the last election campaign it was the Rainbow Coalition led by Jesse Jackson--which of course brought together Black people, and Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Native American Indians, Asians, labour, women, the disabled...all groups in our society who have been hurt by the monopoly attack spoken for by the Reagan administration.

Q: Some people argue that Black Americans don't take you very seriously because of your specific Communist affiliations and that, because of that, you could never represent the Black community.

A.D.: Well, I never set myself up as a representative, or as a leader. I have been active in the fight for black liberation for many years, and I became a member of the Communist Party precisely as a result of the work that I was doing in the black community. I know that there are some anti-communist elements in the black community, primarily in the so-called black middle-class. But my experience in the years in which I've been thrust by circumstance into public life has been that black people by and large have not been affected by the anti-communist propaganda nearly as much as white people in the States.

As a matter of fact, during the last election campaign it was confirmed time and time again that black people were much more likely to sign the Communist Party's petitions. So that while I wouldn't argue that masses of black people are flocking to the Communist Party, I would argue that black people have had a more sophisticated attitude toward the anti-communism that emanates from the government than other groups. Martin Luther King was labelled a communist. And so has just about anyone else who has attempted to do anything in the black community.



Nicole Hollander

And, of course, within the Communist Party there are many members who are African-American as well. So, those kinds of statements usually serve the purpose of attempting to divide our struggles and I really can't take them very seriously.

Q.: Can you talk about the Free South Africa movement in the United States?

A.D.: It's a really exciting movement right now in the States. We are witnessing massive actions against apartheid in South Africa--every single South African consulate is now being picketed every day, as are the African tourist agencies. In the area where I live longshore workers refused to unload ships bringing cargo from South Africa. I think that aside from confirming the overall anti-imperialist character of activism in the black community, this new movement is the harbinger for a whole new era of mass struggle within the States, dealing not only with what's happening in South Africa, and not only challenging the threatened invasion of Nicaragua and the invasion of Grenada, etc., but also challenging fundamentally the anti-labour, the overall racist and sexist thrust of the monopoly corporations. We're really on the verge of an era of struggle which is going to prevent those represented by the Reagan administration from carrying out their policies.

Sex, Porn and the State

Two strands of the debate around pornography and censorship have taken on significance for me. The first has to do with discussions about sexuality that have come up in the last few months. The second has to do with the state and the way we use it.

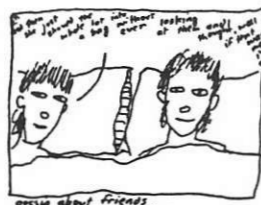
I used to be very ambivalent about the old dichotomy we employed to talk about pornography, i.e., pornography vs. erotica, because I could never figure out (nor could anyone) what we were talking about when we talked about erotica. It simply doesn't currently exist in North American culture, as a body. There are isolated erotic instances here and there, but no real mass-produced erotica as we have come to understand it, that is, in opposition to pornography.

However, I don't believe that that means there is no erotic potential out there. This is the feeling that I got reading Susan Cole's article "Sexuality and its Discontents" (Broadside, April 1985). I found myself agreeing with almost the entire article, in particular her critique of how we continue to eroticize power in sexual relationships in much the same way as has been the case in male/female relationships throughout history. It's true that sexual desire is not as straightforward as many of the contributors in Carol Vance's book, Pleasure and Danger, and Toronto's The Body Politic, have implied. It is disturbing that Gayle Rubin feels the vanguard of sexual liberation are S/M practitioners and pedophiles, "when in fact they express one of the fundamental elements of patriarchal ideology--the desire to dominate." (p. 9). It is extremely disturbing that BP believes the norms of racial

oppression do not apply in the bedroom. We have to be very critical in thinking through our desires, and, above all, we have to keep writing and responding to each other, realizing that this territory is so uncharted that we cannot afford to dismiss arguments carelessly.

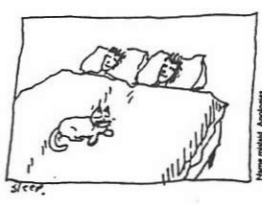
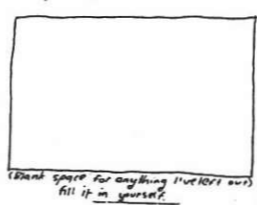
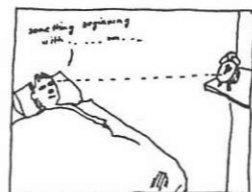
But it is important to retain a sense of the potential for change. Cole seems to be saying we cannot even afford to encourage sex, because it is all of it patriarchal. We all have our own personal and political histories of our struggles to change ourselves, to slowly chip away (it's a long haul) at our sexism, racism, and homophobia, and we can document progress here and there. Surely if conditioning were as indelibly ingrained as all that there wouldn't be any point in trying to change the world. We cannot afford to sidestep the issue of our obligation to struggle with our oppressive attitudes. It is this kind of approach to struggle that I think must be applied to the sexual arena.

On the eve of the conference
(or some answers to the question - what do we actually do in bed?)



The movie Taxi Zum Klo, shown recently by a committee of gay organizations, contained some of the most erotic scenes I have ever seen in what I thought was really a wonderful film. I haven't seen very many alternative (or not alternative) erotic films, so maybe I don't know, but what surprised me was how many people I found disagreed with me. What I liked about the film was the level of fun and safety that was worked into the whole idea of cruising, casual, anonymous and adventurous sex; and what a lot of caring went on between men during these encounters. Some would connect for longer terms than others, but overall there was a strong feeling of mutuality and trust.

The complications begin when the protagonist becomes involved with one of the men he has picked up in a close, quasi-long-term relationship. It is at this point that the protagonist's insistence on his freedom and his subsequent treatment of his lover become an issue. Is



the issue monogamy, or is the issue casual sex, or is the issue simple sensitivity?

It does seem that in the struggle over pornography and censorship the entire left movement, has ceased to discuss these more sex-related questions and their political implications. I think that is what Mariana Valverde (at a recent IWDC seminar on sexual politics) was talking about when she framed the problem in terms of needing to develop a "sexual ethics". I quite support this position, while arguing that we have to move towards being more self-critical about our sexual values and to what extent they are objective. Yet we do not work hard enough on this issue partly because we wear ourselves out in other struggles and need to maintain part of our lives still full of comforting familiarity, so where better than in that part of our life that can so easily be kept from public view.

There is a disturbing trend in the way the opponents of censorship talk about the state, almost as if the state per se were the enemy. This is also evident in the article about reproductive rights in this issue of Cayenne.

But just about every change we struggle for involves the state in some way. As I went through Burstyn's recommendations for change, I couldn't help wondering where all the extensive resources were going to come from to set all her suggestions into motion, if not from the state. We struggle to make small gains for social services, only to struggle again when they are cut back. We fight for increased funding for Canada Council grants. We struggle for equal pay legislation. We fight for increased funding for education. These are demands upon the state. The state is not a total monolith; it

is an arena for class struggle. To deny the very real gains we have made is to belittle people's historical struggles. We would surely not deny that the first equal pay legislation was progressive even though it ended up creating female job ghettos. It could be argued that it created the conditions to further mobilize around equal pay for work of equal value.



One of the criteria we use to decide on demands upon the state is what is likely to be obtained and whether that gain is worth the struggle involved. In the debate over the censor board I think it is a fair question whether it is easier to change its criteria (and its appointees) or to get rid of it altogether. I think that the onus is on the advocates of the latter to address this question. The other question, which I will take up in the rest of this article, is which of the two objectives would best serve us at this point in time.

It is not at all clear that censorship (whether it be prior censorship or after the fact pressing of charges) is always reprehensible. It's interesting that during the Zundel case, and a few years ago, when the KKK set up in Canada, many of us on the left actively advocated censorship. Many different ethnic groups have been struggling for years for good, enforceable hate literature legislation. There has never been, to my knowledge, any agonizing among the left over whether such material truly caused harm in the same way we feel bound to do about the psychological effects of pornography.

It is true that the parameters of pornography are far from clear, and that we have far to go in defining a healthy sexuality. But perhaps we can struggle for things that are clear now and in the process learn more about defining those parameters. I think it is worth looking into the possible adaptation of hate literature legislation--it might be possible to organize with other groups and strengthen the laws that presently exist at the same time. Or perhaps as a first step in legislative change we could focus on the censoring of the promotion of physical injury only. Another alternative to look at is what they have legislated in Nicaragua, that is, the prohibition of using women's bodies in advertising.

This brings me to an important point. In Nicaragua, the state is controlled by representatives of the people. In Canada, the state is controlled by representatives of big business interests. It is clear that the enactment of laws in our country can and often will be used against us. I do appreciate the historical arguments put forward by Burstyn in her introductory article about how laws have backfired on us before. But I don't know how it follows from this that the censor board or anti-hate literature legislation is a particularly vulnerable area for us. And there may be a lot to gain in consciousness-raising and education in the process. I think the use of the same laws to either liberate or repress has more to do with the relative influence of a movement (I am only referring now to states that are not under popular control), than with the type of legislation.

This is not to say that struggling for all the other reforms Burstyn suggests in her book could

not be carried out as well. My only objective here is to argue that she has not sufficiently proved that some form of progressive censorship does not belong anywhere on the list. Surely it is not because progressive censorship is too ideal a goal. Her list is so long and comprehensive, it sounds like an agenda for a socialist revolution to me. Is full employment, or the decriminalization of prostitution, or the "expansion of sexual harassment legislation to cover the display of offensive pornographic materials in their workplaces" (reforms Burstyn proposes) any more idealistic? And cannot all of these reforms also be used against us? What makes some areas more "appropriate cases for legal action" than others? Given our limited resources, what do we need to concentrate on first, what are short-term goals and what are long-term goals, what reforms will help us strengthen our movements and move on to other, more radical reforms?

I do not believe that censorship of pornography is necessarily a priority, and I disagree with those pro-censorship feminists who pose pornography or violence against women as the principle oppression or manifestation of the oppression of women. I am simply not convinced it is not useful as one demand among many.



I raise these questions around the state because I feel they have not been adequately dealt with in the arguments against censorship.

The recent flowering of articles and other contributions to the discussion of sexuality and the state, and the broad range of perspectives they represent, are welcome developments in the left in general and the women's movement in particular. I hope my comments will provoke more discussion and debate of these two critical issues.

Marie Lorenzo

A publication we highly recommend to Cayenne readers is **The OptiMSt: a Voice for Yukon Women**. Published quarterly by the Yukon Status of Women, it contains articles covering a broad range of local, national, and international issues of interest to women. For an idea of just how broad that range is, consider that in one issue you can find articles about abortion, native culture, Guatemala, Heather Bishop, women electronics workers in U.S.-Mexico border cities, pre-menstrual syndrome, battered women, the Charter of rights, mothers as working women, and women in electoral politics. All this and poetry too! Wherever you live, even if it's Toronto and you think Toronto is the bellybutton of the universe, you'll find it a bargain at five dollars a year!

The OptiMSt,
302 Steele St.
Whitehorse, Yukon.
Y1A 2C5

Churches Support Eaton's

A settlement was finally reached in the Eaton's strike as Cayenne goes to press. The strike was going into its sixth month having survived the long hard winter through the courage and determination of the strikers, most of whom were women, and with the help of the Eaton's boycott campaign which was supported by an impressive list of women's organizations and unions. The first contract of the Eaton's workers represents a landmark in the organizing of retail clerks. Although the workers made few monetary gains, they now have the protection of a union contract, access to the grievance procedure, and some security rights. Eaton's, the monolith, has finally cracked after keeping the union out for 115 years.

In the week of the settlement, public displays of support were extended to the strikers from the arts community and the churches. Canadian writers and performing artists entertained an overflowing crowd of 2700 at Massey Hall in the Eaton's Boycott May Extravaganza. Just days before, the Social Affairs Commission of the Council of Canadian Bishops and also the United Church (to which the Eaton family itself belongs) made public statements in support of the strikers.

Church support for social change can be significant in shifting public opinion. Everyone expects unions and women's groups to support a strike such as that at Eaton's, but few expect Canadian church leaders to take such a position. Whether we like it or not, because of the social location of the church in society,

its support greatly adds to the strike's legitimacy, so much so that it has both angered and surprised the business community.

Bishop John O'Mara of the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops tried to temper their statement of support by emphasizing that it was not meant as an attack on Eaton's, but rather "a statement in support of people's rights to form unions and organize, particularly in the retail industry." Tempering the statement did not assuage the anger of the business community, which dismissed the church leaders as "fuzzy-thinking idealists who should stick to religion and leave the running of the secular world to those who know better." It is worth pointing out to the business community that the churches' growing interest in social problems in Canada is a direct response to the self-interested and ineffectual way that both the business community and the government (those who supposedly know better) have handled these social problems.

A more strongly worded attack on the church support came from the Confederation of Church and Business People, which was founded in 1977. It would be fascinating to know what their mandate is. John Sullivan, director of this confederation and a mining geologist (which suggests he



Vladyslava Kryvoruka

knows very little about the economy) had this to say: "A small group of left wing bishops, lifting their ideas directly from dear old Lenin, have made statements in the name of the church with a lack of humility and modesty essential to wisdom." What evidence, I wonder, of Mr. Sullivan's humility and wisdom???

An Eaton's spokesman directly challenged the United Church statement: "It would be interesting to speculate how many church members support this statement." But the Rt. Rev. Robert Smith, Moderator of the United Church, responded, "Very few will agree, but does that mean we should remain silent?"

Smith's statement is a challenge to us as well. What role can we play in encouraging the churches to follow up these public statements with organizing and education with their membership? For the next strike

(Simpson's perhaps?), should we approach the churches for their support immediately? Should the Catholic Church's position on abortion, women priests, etc., discount it as an ally on other social issues? It is important to recognize that the Church, like all major social institutions, is the site of competing political factions. This is just as true in Canada as it is in Latin America. Without public support for the radical wing of the Church, I suggest that they will be unable to survive the barrage of their own right wing. Not only do we need their support and the legitimacy that they extend to our struggles, but we may also have a responsibility to support them.

Linda Briskin

(all quotations from the Toronto Star, Tuesday, May 7, 1985, p. A15)

Eaton's Boycott May Extravaganza

Picture the scene: the stage of Massey Hall was dominated by a gigantic brown shopping bag, filled with the red tulips of spring and marked boldly "WE DON'T SHOP AT EATON'S". The evening was hosted by June Callwood, who has a wonderful relaxed stage presence, and the audience was literally bubbling with energy and enthusiasm. Perhaps the only sour note was the sound system. At times it was terrible, and no apparent effort was made to improve it.

Taborah Johnson, the first entertainer, used selections from the play, "For Coloured Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf". She sang of a wedding invitation she received from HIM; she

was angry: "It should have been me." Her redeeming moment comes when she realizes gleefully, "I'm glad it's not me!"

In Erika Ritter's sketch entitled "The Striker and the Statue" a striker engages in a conversation with Timothy Eaton revived. After watching her fail to prevent people crossing the picket line, he suggests her salesmanship is weak. He offers some help. "We will not be knowingly underpaid," he roars convincingly.

"Heaven will protect the Working Girl" revives old women and union songs, one of which tells us, "If money talks, it ain't on speaking terms with me..." Jackie Burroughs

EATON'S BOYCOTT

M·A·Y

EXTRAVAGANZA

ENTERTAINMENT VALUE



presented a vignette from *Ten Lost Years* in which she reminisces about working in the Eaton's toy department at Christmas and having to face the sad-eyed faces of little girls who lined up to stare at the Shirley Temple dolls they were too poor to buy. She tells us, "I never knew a girl who was sorry to leave that place [Eaton's]...some even married fellows they didn't care for to get away..." Margaret Atwood shared her discovery that Eaton's emerges in her novels always at the lowest point in the heroine's life!

Rick Salutin contributed a moving sketch entitled "A Union Story" about one unionist's memory of the organizer who helped them. The organizer never actually appears, but

in those memories a powerful portrait emerges which challenges the oft-presented negative image of union organizers. The organizer's gift to the workers is his demonstration of his own power and his refusal to be intimidated by the company, and by extension his belief in and acceptance of the power of the workers. He helps them get in touch with their own power; he does not substitute himself for them. The worker reminisces, "We won that vote. It was the first time in my whole life I felt like I had done something." And he remembers also the organizer's words to him: "It is always a pleasure and a privilege to fight beside people who are willing to fight for themselves."

As an avid watcher of Masterpiece Theatre on channel 17 (should I admit to this?), I have wanted to tear my hair out when the programming is interrupted by their fundraising pitch. A man and a woman, always with freshly-scrubbed faces and a consistent awkwardness, harangue the viewers for what seems an endless fifteen or twenty minutes. Non-stop rasping voices tell us how important we are. We are begged, pleaded with, cajoled, encouraged and berated into phoning in a pledge. I am sure most pledges are given in desperation, for they promise they will return to the programming if only three or ten more people phone in and pledge. Now what does this have to do with the Eaton's Benefit? The fundraising pitch at the Benefit parodied the pair. It was delightful, I loved it, and it raised \$5000.

I was on the crew collecting money, so I missed most of Nancy White's act, but not her marvellous performance as Lady Eaton. She floated onstage in a shimmering blue gown, dripping in jewels and

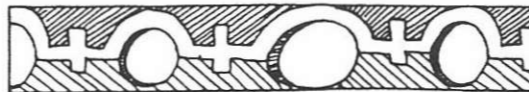
protected by Chuck the Security Guard. She crooned, "My life may be a bore, but I'm glad I don't work in Timothy's store."

One of the high points of the evening was "Voices From the Line", presented by the Eaton's Part-time Players, a group of actors who had spent a week on the picket line. My notes give out at this point, but I remember feeling that they captured in a moving way some of the diversity of picket line experience. The piece was followed by the introduction of five Eaton's strikers. The audience gave them a standing ovation to chants of "Boycott Eaton's". I was surprised that none of them actually spoke except to give their names, and it was an awkward moment. The one speech I would have added to the programme was from an Eaton's striker.

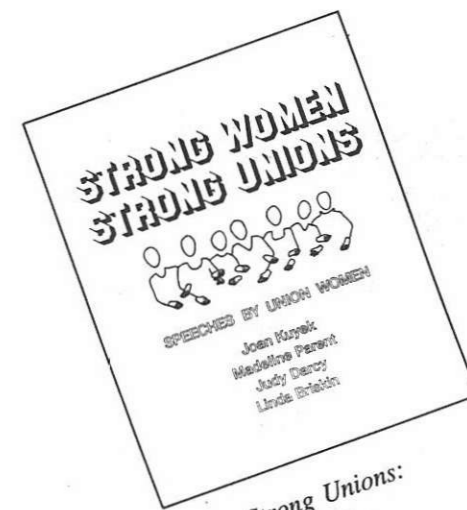
The evening ended triumphantly with the Parachute Club, who transformed the stage with magic lights and sensuous Lorraine Segato gliding across the stage. The whole evening and the music roused the audience to dance in the aisles.

An enormous power is unleashed at these events. But then the lights come up, it's all over, and we go home. What is the secret, I wonder, of mobilizing that power into an ongoing force for change?

Linda Briskin



Strong Women, Strong Unions and *Short Circuit* are both published by the Participatory Research Group. They are available at DEC and the Women's Bookstore and at PRG, 3rd floor, 229 College Street. The price is \$4. Discounts available for bulk orders.



Strong Women, Strong Unions: Speeches by Union Women
Published with the Canada Employment and Immigration Union. Includes speeches by Joan Kuyek, Madeline Parent, Judy Darcy and Linda Briskin.



Short Circuit: Women in the Automated Office
A critical look at microtechnology and its effect on women's employment. Short Circuit outlines important directions for protecting our health and our jobs.



Victory for Newfoundland Tel Workers

The 835 women and men of local 410 of the Communications Workers of Canada went back to work in February after winning their seven month strike against Newfoundland Telephone. They managed to achieve almost complete victory on all 14 points, including the sexual equality issues which were a main factor in overwhelmingly rejecting the company's earlier offer. A four year retroactive contract will bring them parity with the other Atlantic provinces by 1986. It is interesting to note that the clerical, craft, and operators units demanded a common expiry date for their agreements, although that meant a longer contract for the craft and operators units. The net result is that the 98% female clerical unit has achieved a first-ever collective agreement worthy of pride.

See Cayenne issues # 1 and 2 for details.



Air Canada — What You've Been Missing

Since April 28 the 3000 members of CALEA (Canadian Air Line Employees' Association) employed by Air Canada have been out on a legal strike. Like the Eaton's strike, the CALEA walkout has important implications for working women in Canada.

Sixty-six percent of CALEA's members are women, working in one of the few sectors where women get reasonable pay and benefits. Now management wants to turn it into a women's part-time ghetto, upping the ceiling for part-time workers from 20 to 40% of the total workforce. The plan is being (mis)represented by management as a boon to women who might want more "flexible" hours, part-time work, etc., in their childrearing years. This might sound benign, but it will actually reduce women's choice, since it will reduce the number of full time jobs available. Management's only aim is to maximize profit (\$27 million in 1984 and they project \$100 million in 1985), by saving money which should be paid in benefits, and by hiring part-timers to cover peak hours only thus reducing the need to carry "extra" full time workers during less frantic periods. Management also wants to reduce the starting wage to \$6.13 (from \$7.429) per hour, adding an additional three pay levels to the bottom of the present nine-levelled pay scale.

An important issue for the union is the right to transfer from one area to another, which would be taken away if management gets its way. At present workers have some choice in

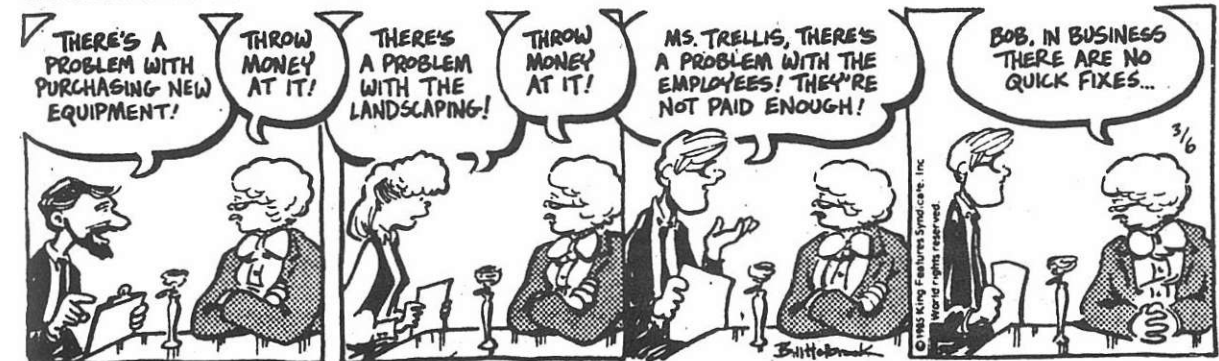
transferring from reservations to the airport. Working in reservations is extremely stressful, since workers are constantly electronically monitored for productivity--number of calls, length of calls, etc. In addition they are subject to all the occupational hazards of working with video display terminals on an eight and-a-half-hour shift with one half-hour and two fifteen-minute breaks. While there are no universally accepted health and safety standards for VDT's yet, most occupational health workers recommend a maximum of four hours daily with ten minutes away from the terminal after each twenty minutes. At the airport, time on the terminal is occasionally interrupted by other tasks; this does not happen in reservations.

So what is management offering in exchange for all these sacrifices on the part of the employees? "Lifetime job security", but with no guarantees in the event of technological change. Since airlines are in the forefront of tech change (we'll soon be seeing ticketing machines as ubiquitously as instant banking machines--they'll do everything but carry your bags!) this "offer" can only be described as

cynical. To add insult to injury, this "lifetime job security" is only good for the duration of the contract --lifetime security for two or three years is a bargain at half the price!

Though the strike is fairly young, workers are already changing their consciousness of labour issues and of themselves as workers. This is a union which has not lived through a strike in twelve years; most strikers were not even around for the last one. (Despite the fact that most members had no previous idea of what a strike is like, there was an 85% vote for the strike, and 75% of the membership voted). It is a white collar group which has not until now had a strong sense of solidarity with other unions. The strike is already changing that, and a big reason for that is the strong support CALEA has received from other unions: letter carriers refuse to cross picket lines to deliver mail; the Teamsters are respecting the lines and Wells Fargo employees are refusing to cross to deliver money (that must hurt!); the Communications Workers of Canada have switched their business to Pacific Western. And the Metro Library workers who won an important but expensive strike in the fall have donated to the strike fund.

On The Fastrack



This growing sense of a common cause with other workers, and not just white collar ones, is particularly important as the time approaches for a vote on a merger with the UAW. It must also be instrumental in maintaining the high morale which is evident on the picket lines and at strike headquarters.

It is very important that solidarity with this strike extend beyond the labour movement and that the women's movement mobilize behind CALEA. Unless we want to see one of the few important employment sectors where women get decent pay and equal pay for work of equal value transformed into another women's part-time job ghetto, we had better get out into the streets and show the same kind of support we did for Eaton's workers.

Christina Mills

For further information, or to donate to the strike fund, contact CALEA at: 6520 Viscount Road, Mississauga, Ontario, L4V 1H3, (416) 678-1551.

Many thanks to Anne Heney, Toronto District Chairperson of CALEA for so helpfully providing background for this article.

Heloise's Household Hint of the day: Why not try a little direct action? Call Air Canada (925-2311) and make multiple reservations; keep the scab on the line as long as possible. Let's keep those planes EMPTY!

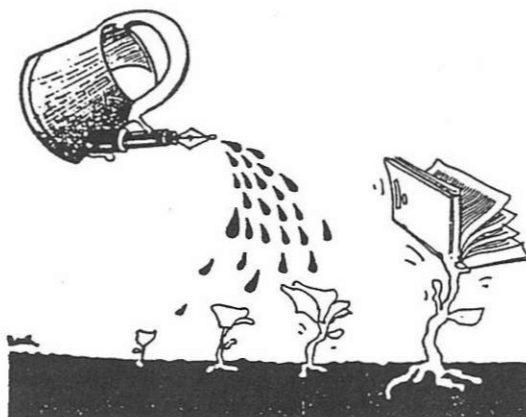


CULTURE

Sister Vision

Sister Vision is the first press for Black women and women of colour to be established in Canada. It was founded in the summer of 1984 because as Black women and women of colour we feel strongly that more of our works must be published and read.

Through Sister Vision we will encourage works by women of all cultures, sexual preferences and classes.



We made a conscious political decision to distinguish between Black women and women of colour. This is an important distinction because Black women have had a particular historical experience in the world: the experience of slavery and its aftermath. While needing to focus on the consequences of that history we will not be limited by it, and will continue to recognize our commonalities and share the writings of our Native Sisters, our Asian Sisters and others who define themselves as women of colour.

We are also committed to distributing our books to the general Canadian public.

We will focus on four areas. Our first area is dedicated to women's oral history. Through this medium we will present the vivid words and lives of ordinary women often omitted from traditional history and contemporary writing. Our second area is creative writing. We will encourage short story writers, novelists and poets. Our third area will focus on books for children and young people. Publication in this important area has been negligible. Our fourth area is theory and research. We intend to challenge the absence of our voices in Canadian feminist theory and research. We will provide a forum for theoretical works which speak to and analyze the political and social lives of Black and Third World women from a feminist perspective.

With your support, Sister Vision will be part of a continuum of courageous and spirited women engaged in celebrating our strength, our diversity, and shaping the terms of our liberation.

Our tradition includes Marie Joseph Angelique, a Black Montreal slave who launched the first documented act of defiance against slavery; Mary Ann Shadd, the first woman editor in Canada and publisher of one of Canada's early Black newspapers--the Provincial Freeman--in the 1850's; and others whose voices we have never heard.

We want to reforge the links between women of colour in Canada and in the Caribbean and Third World the world over.

Our vision is that of a global feminism, an interconnecting and weaving of our histories.

We are excited about Sister Vision and welcome donations, manuscripts, and ideas.

SISTER VISION
Black Women and Women of Colour Press
P.O. Box 217
Station E
Toronto, Ontario
M6H 4E2
(416)532-9868

The Red Berets are looking for a percussionist and/or a guitarist. We are a group of socialist feminist women who sing at demos, rallies, benefits, and on picket lines. We are not "performers" but activists who like to sing and see our music as a way of contributing to the struggles which are important to us. If interested, please call Cathy at 368-0742.



Rock & Roll Confidential is a monthly newsletter about music, written from a progressive point of view. It covers everything from the politics and economics of the music industry to criticism of popular music of all kinds, both in terms of social content and musical value. It's also a great source of tips on new releases that are worth listening to and of particular interest to social activists. If rock & roll is not your thing, don't be put off: they also cover new wave, country, jazz, r & b, even videos.

\$20 (Canadian) for twelve fascinating issues.

Duke & Duchess Ventures,
Dept. 23,
Box 1073,
Maywood, New Jersey. 07607

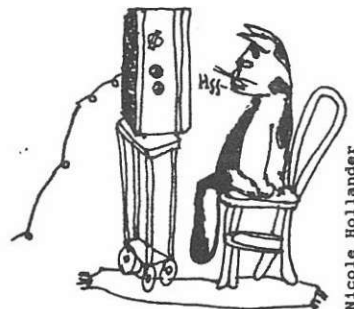


HOT WIRE: a Journal of Women's Music and Culture is just what it says. It includes not only reviews of women's music and other cultural activities, but articles on such things as the technical aspects of making a record or cassette and how to get gigs if you're an aspiring performer. It's also a good place to find out where all the women's music festivals are. Each issue includes a special treat: a soundsheet, a floppy disc record with women's music.

U.S.\$14 for three packed issues (if you're not sure it's worth it, check it out at the Women's Bookstore).

HOT WIRE,
1321 Rosedale,
Chicago, Illinois. 60660

Moonlight Grocery, Connie Kaldor's second record, will delight women who liked her first record, and probably please even the hitherto unconverted. At least two songs could become staples for women's dances. Available at DEC and the Women's bookstore.



Feminist Fitness! If you're bored with mainstream pop (pap?) in your fitness classes, or would like a little feminist content, suggest these cuts to your favourite instructor:

- "Wanderlust"
- "Caught in the Crossfire"
-Connie Kaldor, **Moonlight Grocery**
- "Gym II"
-Meg Christian, **Turning It Over**
- "As Soon As I Find My Shoes"
- "It Won't Take Long"
-Ferron, **Shadows On A Dime**
- "Extra Executives"
-Jane Siberry, **No Borders Here**
- "You Can't Stop the Girl"
-Linda Thompson, **One Clear Moment**
- "Unwed Fathers"
-Gail Davies, **Where Is a Woman to Go**

Desperately Seeking Susan

This film was delightful. Unlike most films I see these days, it made me laugh, and my laughter was not cut short by right wing politics, excessive sexism or unnecessary violence. And unlike the new genre of women's films which expose the grim realities of women's lives, this film appeals to a familiar fantasy, especially for those of us seemingly trapped in the rational political world where we are responsible all of the time and tired most of the time. The fantasy is escape, the chance to start over with a new persona, to make new choices, to liberate a hedonism where we are not reachable by phone or mail but only through the personal ads. "Desperately seeking Susan...meet me at ten in Gramercy Park..."

The fantasy world of the film contains lusty and powerful Susan, of strong emotions, outrageous costumes, a lot of presumption and bravado and not necessarily high principles. She lives by scams and has a limited connection not only to addresses but also to possessions. The story is set in motion when Susan trades her swank jacket decorated with a golden pyramid for a pair of shimmering boots. She lusted after the boots, but in her exchange of one treasured possession for another we see an example of what we might call "serial materialism". She so clearly delights not in the ownership of her possessions but in her use of them.

But the story is really about Roberta Glass, a rich, attractive young housewife whose kitchen contains the latest in gadgetry--a video machine with step-by-step

instructions by the great chefs--but whose life is characterized by intense boredom. She is a dedicated reader of the personal columns and so starts to follow the fortunes of Susan. Through one small act, triggered by curiosity and boredom and magnified by a series of sweet serendipity, Roberta steps out of her world into Susan's. At times she is Susan, but increasingly she finds the Susan in herself. This allows her to reject her old life which was dependent on the fantasy world of the personal ads, and the assertiveness training books and how-to sex manuals she had hidden in the drawer beside her bed. And it allows her to reject her husband, Gary Glass, intrepid seller of hot tubs, who related to her as a necessary and living extension of himself.

But Roberta never quite transcends being a victim and she most often seems at the mercy of her adventures rather than in control of them. Nonetheless, we like the Susan that Roberta becomes better than we like Susan herself. Roberta represents ourselves transformed; Susan is no more than an expression of the politics or irresponsibility. In the final analysis their interchangeability is only superficial.



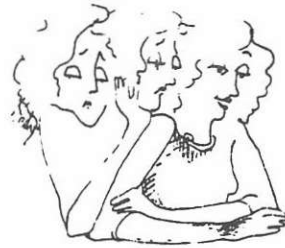
Nicole Hollander

I am not without criticisms of the film, especially of one bit of unnecessary homophobia which was quite out of character. At one point Roberta is mugged. The police pick her up, don't believe her story, (not surprising), and charge her with being a prostitute. Roberta's husband is appalled. To make matters worse (for him) his neurotic sister Leslie tells him that most prostitutes are lesbians. When he confronts Roberta, she responds that she is neither prostitute or lesbian. However, I would have liked her to respond "Well, maybe I could be a lesbian", with the same air of exploration that she has treated a variety of other experiences.

Finally, but, I must admit, only in retrospect, I had trouble with the ending. I hate reviews that give away the ending, but this one is entirely predictable. Roberta leaves her uptight conventional husband for the utterly more attractive movie projectionist named Des. When Des finally accepts that she is not Susan he asks her name. With a boldness uncharacteristic of the old Roberta Glass, she tells him, and the movie ends with a kiss. Although it appears that Roberta finds a place with Des in what we think of as Susan's world, it is entirely unclear that it is Roberta he loves. For he has always thought that Roberta was Susan, the hoyden he had heard so much about, and indeed he has understood all of Roberta's actions in the light of his expectations about Susan. What he will feel about Roberta remains to be seen. As the ending stands I have a sneaking suspicion that a little time into the future Roberta Glass, homemaker and dreamer, will be redecorating Des' grubby apartment--about which her first comment had been "What good light!"

A more challenging ending would have left Roberta on her own, without a man, eager to engage in and with the world. My dislike of the ending is part of my perennial discomfort with romance and happy endings about which I can articulate the politically correct analysis. However, I am left with a question: what does socialist feminist romance look like? Is it by definition a contradiction in terms? Any thoughts out there?

Linda Briskin



Hedy Campbell

Princess Di: The National Dish

The Making of a Media Star
Diana Simmonds
Pluto Press: London, 1984
112 pp., \$6.95.

When I first saw this book, I thought, oh no, more on Lady Di! What is Pluto Press doing publishing this kind of junk? The fact that it was written by a journalist only made me more suspicious.

Yet it turns out that *Princess Di* is a really good read. Funny, sarcastic, gossipy, chock full of information and political analysis, Diana Simmonds has written an easy-to-read look at "the making of a [royal] media star."

Starting from a sound grounding in the history of the modern monarchy (which she cleverly breezes through in the first chapter of the book), Simmonds lightheartedly compares England's relationship to the royalty to America's relationship to Hollywood movie stars. Inter-related is the phenomenon of a surviving royal house in an age where most European monarchies have succumbed. The fact that the British monarchy has survived the modern age with its accelerating upheavals means that it will always have much more prestige and status than any Hollywood movie star, precisely because it is enduring. Movie star status is something anyone, in theory, can



Hedy Campbell

obtain, and just as easily lose, but if you're royalty, it's forever.

Simmonds vividly illustrates the ideological role of the British monarchy in this high-tech/telecommunications age. The media is assiduously applied to keep royal rituals and extravaganzas alive and kicking in the public's mind, if not actually orchestrating them. The result is what is now known as a media event. It is really the use of royal media events in controlling public opinion that forms the core of Simmonds' expose. Media events such as The Royal Wedding, the Silver Jubilee, etc. that have tremendous mass impact, generally serve the ruling class very

well, if not to take the minds of the British populace off unemployment, rising prices, hunger, misery and/or ghetto riots, at the very least to reinforce the inviolability of a pyramid-structured society.

Enter Lady Di. She is the perfect model for the modernization of the monarchy's media image, combining the best of the Hollywood movie star with the solidity and inherent respectability of royalty. She also becomes a model of the ideal young woman of our times. The description of how Diana Spencer, shy, young schoolteacher, is taken in hand and transformed into Lady Di, fashion queen, by Britain's top designers, dieticians, and royal trend-setters is bone-chilling to say the least. Simmonds exposes the rather insidious role of the media in helping to turn out a product that everyone can love: the fairy tale princess of the modern age.

In conclusion, Simmonds shows what devastating implications the Lady Di project has for the ideological portrayal of women. She ends her very entertaining book with this succinct summary:

...the dominant look and ideal is that which Diana has adopted and had total success in achieving.... It is a myth as monstrous as that of the Virgin Mother, and, like this ancient zenith of female attainment, it imposes a psychic burden which requires a monstrous effort to shift.... Diana Spencer, aristocrat, ordinary girl and scholastic failure, has achieved the impossible status--not only of Fairy Princess and Virgin Mother, but also the magical Size Ten. She is the disastrous heroine of the eighties. (p. 108)

Marie Lorenzo

Feminism in Northern Ireland

In her book, *The Armagh Women*, Irish feminist and journalist Nell McCafferty declared that "the situation of women in Northern Ireland is finally attracting more than symbolic attention." However, North America's "mainstream" media continue to focus on the activities of the Northern Irish men and boys who have grown up in an atmosphere of violence, and to see women as non-participants or passive victims of the ongoing struggles within the state. Such an evaluation ignores the activities of Northern Irish women--activities undertaken to counter the effects of living within a "socially deprived, war-torn, rigidly patriarchal society" (McCafferty, *The Armagh Women*). It also misleads North American feminists into believing that since these women seem to be absent from political and social action, any sort of feminist movement, consciousness, or awareness of feminism is non-existent in Northern Ireland.

Certainly the overall position of women there cannot be described as enviable. Northern Ireland, apart from its continuing civil war, has high unemployment rates, some of the worst housing in Western Europe, absolutely no state-supported childcare, and 35 per cent of families existing below the poverty line.

However, women have not become helpless victims of their environment but have banded together in co-operative efforts to provide each other with goods and services which local and state governments cannot, or will not, provide. They have also been active in the formation and leadership of tenants'

groups which have publicized the steady deterioration of Northern Irish housing, and have forced local governments to act upon this issue.

Women's activism has emerged over fundamental social issues such as housing and childcare, and their involvement in the feminist movement has been of a grassroots nature. The Relatives' Action Committee, a group formed by women whose family members had been imprisoned by the British for alleged Republican activities, seems to have acted as a catalyst in drawing some women closer to feminism.

From a previous preoccupation with British imperialism and oppression, many of the women involved with this group have gone on to become aware of other forms of oppression, and have participated in anti-rape marches and forums dealing with wife abuse in Northern Irish society.

Derry Women's Aid is a socialist feminist organization which established a shelter for women in that city. The group has been represented by Cathy Harkin, whose November 1980 article in *Spare Rib*, arguing for the separation of feminists from the Republican



ISIS

movement, sparked an impassioned debate between feminists such as Harkin and those connected with the group Women Against Imperialism.

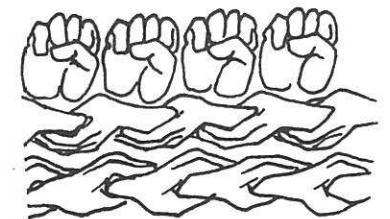
WAI, which has acted as a support group for women in Derry and Belfast, believes that liberation from patriarchal oppression in Northern Irish society cannot be separated from liberation from British imperialist oppression, and that feminists must struggle against both. Although aware of the potential for co-optation and exploitation by male Republicans, WAI members advocate working alongside the nationalist movement in order to achieve socialist feminist objectives.



Perhaps the most contentious issue among Irish and Northern Irish feminists is women's participation in the Republican movement. Both the IRA and Sinn Fein have been seen as patriarchal, militaristic, and hierarchical organizations within which women have been oppressed, their concerns disregarded, and their contributions devalued. Certainly this was true in the past, and still to a certain extent today. However, changes have been occurring within the nationalist movement; pressure from external feminist groups and from women within the IRA and Sinn Fein has led to the establishment of a Women's Affairs Department in Sinn Fein, separate women's caucuses at the party's annual convention, and the party's formal espousal of state-supported childcare, divorce, and contraception.

Sinn Fein has also led an active and vocal campaign against the British tactic of strip-searching female Republican prisoners --a campaign which focusses on the feelings of psychological and physical assault experienced by women who have been strip-searched and their feelings that specific harassment is directed against them as women. Former female prisoners have been prominent in this campaign, publicly discussing their feelings and demanding an end to the searches.

Women involved with both Sinn Fein and the IRA have been accused of being dupes of men and of rejecting feminism for nationalism. Interviews with these women in both Republican and feminist publications indicate that their situation is far more complex than this - for some women in the nationalist movement, a commitment to both feminism and Republican socialism is necessary in the struggle for liberation. Of course, such a commitment is problematic and at times might involve a painful choice of priorities, but for these women, women's issues cannot be viewed separately from the demolition of their homes by British troops. With this commitment comes the realization that sexism within the nationalist movement must be dealt with now, in order to work for (in the words of two women in the IRA) "a democratic socialist republic where men and women are equal."



Anne Dyck

To state that all Northern Irish women are feminists and are active socially and politically would be just as misleading as the popular media stereotype. Yet, as feminists, we should look beyond the popular images of women and appreciate the reality of these women's efforts to change and control their lives; we also should attempt to understand the complexities of the situation facing Northern Irish women, and support their efforts to analyze and combat their specific oppression.

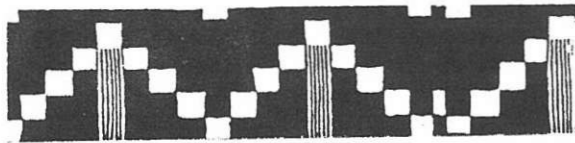
Cecilia Morgan

For Further Reading

Margaretta D'Arcy. **Tell Them Everything.** London: Pluto Press, 1980.

Eileen Fairweather, Roisin McDonough, and Melanie McFadyean. **Only the Rivers Run Free: Northern Ireland, the Women's War.** London: Pluto Press, 1984.

Nell McCafferty. **The Armagh Women.** Dublin: Co-op Books, 1981.



Cayenne readers can support women political prisoners in Northern Ireland by writing to the **Stop the Armagh Strip-Searches Campaign** at: P.O. Box 596, Station U, Toronto, Ontario, M8Z 5Y9 or phone (416) 698-2493.



Focus on El Salvador

This issue, WISCA focusses on El Salvador. Brenda Lee interviews Alison Acker, a long-time activist in the solidarity community who recently spent four months in Central America doing research for an upcoming book on children in the region; since the interview covers the situations in several countries in the area, we have excerpted that part of it relating specifically to El Salvador. Ann Irwin reports on a meeting with a Salvadoran doctor who recently visited Toronto on a fundraising tour. We also include a poem by Delfy Gochez Fernandez.

A Visit to El Salvador

WISCA: Whom did you speak with in El Salvador?

Alison Acker: I visited some schools--one building was in such poor shape that the teacher had to carry an umbrella when it rained! I set up a clandestine meeting with students and talked to many of the market kids. One eight-year-old refugee child I spoke with was very disturbed: he had been living in the basement of a church for the past four years. The children only went out for about one hour each day. I also interviewed a beauty queen in El

Salvador, Miss Central America; I wanted to interview rich children as well as poor. It turned out her father was head of a pharmaceutical company and she was the vice-president; they were selling aspirin at twenty cents per tablet. She went to work in an armoured car; she had six horses, and what a shame, they had to plough up the polo field! She worked for the ARENA campaign for Roberto D'Aubuisson and thought the Christian Democrats were communists. She didn't bad-mouth the peasants, but her point of view was that the only way to make the country rich was to make the rich people richer. Totally out of touch! She said that their company had a marvellous factory and that most of the people in charge were women. She said she didn't have problems with the women.



Of course there's no union there. She said that there was no need for a union since they were just one "happy family."

I also spoke with a sixteen-year-old girl who wanted to be a doctor and a dancer. She was poor, and she and a group of children were putting on folk dances in a theatre. It was very nice but there was no government support and they organized it all with their own money. There is no chance for a poor child to become a doctor or have a career in the arts.

Then I went to Chalatenango and interviewed a young man who had been in the FMLN since the age of fourteen. His companera had been killed just two months before. He said that realistically he couldn't see an end to the civil war for ten more years, and that for now he was just trying to survive and fight the military. There is immense support for the guerrillas. There's a bus that travels to La Palma, a zone controlled by the FMLN: on the first half of the trip we saw only government soldiers and then the bus stopped and a guerrilla stepped on and said, "Good morning everybody, I bring you greetings from Radio Venceremos." Then he passed a hat and everybody on the bus gave money. I spoke to many people and there was great support for the guerrillas. Even the local priest in La Palma said he now had more people coming to church!

WISCA: What is the group, "Families of the Disappeared" doing now?

AA: I think they're absolutely excellent, quite professional. When the dialogue between the government and the FMLN-FDR occurred at Ayaguela and La Palma, they got up there

overnight and put on a real show for all the foreign journalists so that they could publicize their efforts. I'm impressed with their intelligence and courage. Many are very humble women and there are also fathers who have lost children. They are very creative in their actions, whether demonstrating in front of the U.S. Embassy, knowing whom to speak to, or deciding what exactly to do next. I think they're a very important force; I'm not sure of the exact numbers, but I believe that at least 50,000 have been killed and 5,000 disappeared in El Salvador. It's hard to keep track because the government soldiers wipe out entire villages. It's hard to know why these people are killed. A lot of the killings occur in the country. It's difficult to get figures of the exact number of persons killed or missing.

WISCA: And you spent some time in a controlled zone...

AA: Yes, I was in La Palma for three days. I met a wonderful woman who had an awful pink-and-white dog she called "Gringo" - she said she hoped I wouldn't be offended! In general there seemed to be more work in the liberated zone; they had regular trade with the capital, which surprised me. La Palma is an area where they produce a lot of folk carvings, and even though it's under the control of the FMLN-FDR, they still maintain that trade, which began ten or twenty years ago. Most of these carvings are still sold in the capital. All the stores in La Palma were full. I had expected the liberated zone to be more undercover, but the FMLN-FDR negotiated wages for coffee-pickers and farmworkers. So in a way the government tacitly



admits that one third of the country is controlled by the guerrillas. One third is completely controlled by the army and the remaining third is still in dispute. The major problem is that the rich land is still owned by the government.

WISCA: Were you able to compare conditions in La Palma with those outside the liberated zones?

AA: I went to the government-run Children's Hospital in San Salvador, supposedly one of the best children's hospitals in Central America. I was amazed at the malnutrition I saw. I got my camera out and the woman in charge surprised me with her outspokenness. She said, "Sure, come in. I want you to take pictures of this to show the world how it is here!" She was so angry; she told me that every year there's more malnutrition. She showed me an extremely malnourished twelve-year-old girl whose father raised chickens but had to sell them; he owed all his corn even before it was harvested--he was completely in debt and couldn't feed his children even though he grew food. I was shown this yellow cornmeal which the U.S. had sent as food aid: it was really cattle feed and the children couldn't digest it. The woman said, "This is supposed to be the best children's hospital in Central America, and just look at it!"

I SHALL WILLINGLY DIE

*they are going to kill me.
when?*

I've no idea . . .

*what I'm sure of is that I'll die
so; assassinated by the enemy*

*since I want to go on fighting
I'll always be fighting to die in this way.*

*since I want to die with the people
I'll never be parted from them.
since our cry is the one which will count
I must always shout it out loud*

*since the future and history are on our side
I'll never stray from the path*

*since I wish to be a revolutionary
this will be the starting point
for all my opinions and aspirations*

*I shall never be afraid
all that I do
must be a blow against the enemy
in which ever form it takes.*

I will always be active.

*one thing is certain;
they are going to kill me.
and my blood shall water our land*

*and the flowers of freedom shall grow
and the future shall open its arms
in a warm embrace full of love
and shelter us at her breast, our mother
our homeland
will laugh happily to be once again
with her children.*

*with her people
with the child . . . who yesterday
cried for a piece of bread
and today
grows like a river
with the mother who was slowly dying
and now lives yesterday's faraway dream*

*with the eternal freedom fighter
whose blood
fed the day
that was sure to come*

*yes, I shall die willingly, full of love,
I want to die in the way most natural
to these times
and in my country.
assassinated by the enemies of
my people.*

by Delfy Gochez Fernandez
Santa Tecla, El Salvador.

Salvadoran Health Workers Tour

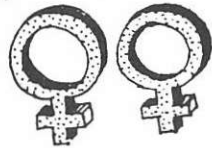
Violeta Delgado, a Salvadoran doctor, was in Toronto in March to raise funds and talk about her work in COPROSAL, an association of doctors, nurses, and other health workers working solely in the areas of El Salvador under the control of the FMLN-FDR.

COPROSAL was organized by medical students in response to the war in El Salvador. There is an established medical association in the country, but just as in Canada, it is politically conservative. Initially the goals of these medical students were: to declare hospitals neutral territory; to protect

themselves through their unity (two hundred doctors have been killed in El Salvador since 1980); to bring medical care to the outer reaches of El Salvador; and to attend to injured guerrillas who could not go to hospitals for fear of being reported to the authorities.

One aspect of their work is the training of peasants in basic medical techniques and organizing them in local health brigades. This work is of particular importance in areas where there are no doctors. Violeta spoke of the incredible extent to which people are committed to and involved in this project.

Another focus of COPROSAL's work is the establishment of health clinics. The purpose of these clinics is not only curative; educational work is also being done in order to help prevent disease. The needs of women and children are of particular interest in this program. Three areas she stressed are nutrition, prenatal care, and the traumatic effects of war on children.



There are many ways in which the exploitation of women in El Salvador is manifest. They are paid less than men for performing the same or similar work. There is a high rate of infant mortality and a high rate of mortality due to botched abortions. And there is a very high rate of prostitution. COPROSAL is addressing the specific health concerns of women, while at the same time helping people organize themselves to deal with their problems and change the conditions which bring them about.

Guatemala

In June 1984, the Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo (Mutual Support Group) was founded in Guatemala by a group of mostly women relatives of people who had been abducted and disappeared. Now a group has formed in Toronto for the purpose of promoting international solidarity with the Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo (GAM) and supporting the steps it is taking to ensure the safe return of their loved ones.

The GAM has functioned as a humanitarian civil rights organization, and is one of the few instances for organized public protest against repression. Originally it represented 150 families, but has grown to nearly 500. With over 35,000 disappeared persons in Guatemala, it necessarily continues to grow from day to day.

General Oscar Mejia Victores, Guatemalan head of state, declared on March 14 of this year that, "to take steps toward the reappearance alive of the disappeared is a subversive act, and measures will be adopted to deal with it." This was more than an idle threat to the GAM: the same month, on March 30, Hector Orlando Gomez, spokesperson for the group, was kidnapped; his tortured body was found later. Then on April 4, the vice-president of the group,

For more information about the situation of women in El Salvador, contact Friends of AMES (Women's Association of El Salvador) at:

P.O. Box 341,
Station Z,
Toronto, Ontario.
M5N 2Z5



Rosario Godoy de Cuevas, was found dead in a wrecked car, along with her two-year-old son and 21-year-old brother.

The GAM Support Group in Toronto believes that one way to safeguard the lives of GAM members in Guatemala is a show of international support. That is why we are asking for the following types of support:

- volunteers: people who will give time and effort in our local group.
- money and supplies: money to send to GAM and to be able to successfully carry out our tasks is urgently needed, as are supplies such as paper and printing materials. Financial donations can be sent to: GAM TORONTO GUATEMALA, Chequing Savings Acct. No. 419 Toronto Dominion Bank, 88 University Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M5J 1T6
- People interested in travelling to Guatemala to visit GAM or who would be able to promote the visits of international observers.

• People who can write letters of solidarity denouncing abuses of human life and dignity to: The Rt. Honourable Joe Clark, Minister for External Affairs, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A2; and to General Oscar Mejia Victores, Head of State, Palacio Nacional, Guatemala City, Guatemala, Central America.

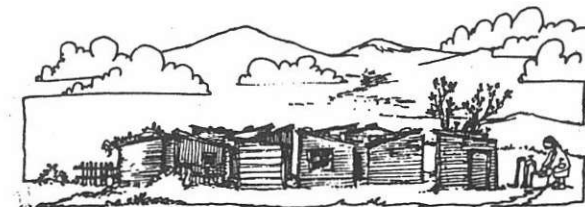
For more information about GAM please call: (416) 653-3202 or 762-8690.

Chilean Women After the Earthquake

The March 3 earthquake which left a million people homeless over half the length of the country presented a challenge to the spirit and ingenuity of the Chilean people, and in particular to peasant women.

The earthquake occurred at the height of the harvest season when many men were involved in seasonal farm labour often at great distances from their homes, leaving women with the entire responsibility for salvaging what belongings they could and rebuilding in the rubble where once they had homes. In one area 80% of houses were totally destroyed; women escaped with their children in tow and only what few belongings they could gather hurriedly and carry away. Crops in the ground and those already gathered were destroyed, along with farm implements. Whole orchards were uprooted, removing any possibility of recouping losses over time.

And all this at a time when peasant women were in the midst of the painstaking reconstruction of their organizations which had been dismembered by the military coup. There has been little relief aid from the Chilean authorities, although the churches have been involved in providing clothing, temporary



shelter, and health care, and aid is arriving from the exile and solidarity communities around the world. Women are organizing to help one another in whatever ways they can, as well as to ensure that materials received as aid are distributed among those who need them.

Two months after the quake, the country is still in a state of emergency, with many smaller shocks still happening, often strong enough to compound existing damage and create more. As the bitterly cold and rainy Chilean winter sets in,

the suffering is likely to become even more acute. At the same time, the dictatorship is taking advantage of the situation to step up repression and try to put a final lid on the resistance movement. Anyone interested in finding out more about the situation and how Canadians can help, please call Alvaro at 533-9248.

Christina Mills

(statistics from M. Teresa Larrain, fempress/ilet, *Mujer*, No. 45, April 85.)

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

Sri Lanka Tear Gas for IWD

In Sri Lanka, March 8 was celebrated amidst a situation where democratic rights are rapidly disappearing. The Women's Action Committee, along with two other women's organizations, was twice refused permission for a demonstration and public meeting, but took to the streets anyway. Police commandos tear gassed and beat the women, arresting four. Despite police brutality, 3000 women reached New Town Hall for the largest International Women's Day celebration in the history of Sri Lanka.

adapted from *Asian Women Workers Newsletter*, Vol. 4, No. 1, March 1985

Filipinas Protest Forced Remittances

Around 200 Filipino migrant women workers in Hong Kong marched on March 17 to protest President Marcos' Executive Order that all overseas workers remit 50 to 70% of their earnings through authorized banks in the Philippines, on pain of losing passports or visas. The women, most of them domestic workers, reject this exploitative procedure because the "authorized" banks charge a very high commission and it takes a much longer time for the money to reach their families.

adapted from *Asian Women Workers Newsletter*, Vol. 4, No. 1, March 1985

Korean Women Protest Discrimination

An association of women students in colleges and universities has submitted an appeal to the Korean National Council of Women against the discriminatory recruitment practices of business firms and mass media companies in South Korea. The group revealed that almost no south Korean firms even allow women to take tests for administrative jobs, and those which do restrict the fields of employment and insist women leave their jobs if they marry. The council sent recommendations to the Minister of Labour Affairs and heads of four economic organizations asking them to cease sexual discrimination.

Most women college graduates cannot find jobs because most firms prefer to employ men in all but junior posts, such as secretaries and clerks. Surveys show that employers feel employing women involves extra expenses, causes complex problems in labour management and lowers production rates. One survey also found that 33% of companies give women no chance of promotion.

Data from an International Labour Organization survey shows that the average wage for women workers is only 44.8% of that of male workers in south Korea. Comparable figures for other countries are 53.3% for Japan, 87.7% for France, and 69.9% for the United Kingdom.

Adapted from *Asia Labour Monitor*, Volume 1, No. 5/6
February 1985.



Argentine workers in several major unions are in the process of building a coordinating organization for working women. One of their first public acts was the organization of a demonstration in front of the national Congress on March 8 to present demands such as: ratification of the UN convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women; equality of children under the law, regardless of parents' marital status; automatic pensions for housewives at age 55; no-fault divorce; the appointment of a Secretary of State for Women; equal labour rights for domestic and agricultural workers; state financed services for battered women and rape victims; punishment for the military personnel responsible for the assassinations and disappearances during the dictatorship; price controls on staple foods; an end to unemployment; and equal pay for work of equal value, which they stressed as being of the highest rank of priority.

Adapted from *TIEMPO Argentino*,
February 9, 1985.

