

# International Women's Day Committee newsletter

JUNE 1983  
Newsletter #5

## YOU MAY NEVER RECEIVE ANOTHER NEWSLETTER!

Does that thought upset you? Then read on.

Due to the high costs of printing and mailing this newsletter, we can no longer afford to send it to all the names on our mailing list--unless we receive more subscription money.

We have decided to split our mailing list. Everyone now on the mailing list will continue to receive the annual March 8 Coalition mailing and any occasional mailings we may send to a large number of people. Only those people on our special newsletter mailing list will continue to receive our newsletter (as well as March 8 Coalition information).

How do you get on the newsletter mailing list?

1. If you have sent us money in the past six months, help us out by sending in the coupon below telling us so. We do have a record of donations, but be on the safe side--send the coupon.
2. If you have not sent us a donation in the past six months, send \$5 (or more) and your name and address to IWDC. The coupon will make it easier.
3. If you want to receive the newsletter but can't afford to send \$5, write us a note saying that and we'll keep you on the mailing list for the newsletter.

Basically, we need to hear from you, whether you are choosing Option 1, 2 or 3.

And while you are taking the time to send in the coupon and \$5, why not tell us how you like the newsletter and what you'd like to see in future issues. Would you be interested in writing for the newsletter? We're looking forward to your comments.

If you are an institution or a well-paid person, please consider sending more than \$5. This will help cover the cost of mailing the newsletter to women who can't afford to pay.

## ABOUT US

*IWDC is a socialist-feminist group. We operate on the principle that mass actions are our most effective instruments of change. We believe that the oppression of women touches every aspect of our lives and that the liberation of women will require fundamental changes in the structure of society.*

*We hold bi-weekly meetings where our policy and overall direction are determined. Smaller committees work on specific issues or in different areas. Our current committees are: trade union, women's movement, newsletter, education, and new members.*

*We welcome new women. If you would like to know more about IWDC, come to a meeting or call Pat at 534-4138.*

Next meeting:

Wednesday, June 8 at 7:30 pm  
University Settlement House  
23 Grange Road

I would like to continue receiving the IWDC newsletter.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I am enclosing \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I sent you money in \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I cannot afford to send money at this time

Send to: IWDC, Box 70, Station F,  
Toronto, M4Y 2L4.

## DEBATES IN THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT . . . . .

### MAY 18th MEETING

Controversy is no stranger to the women's movement. So, while it was no shock that this year's International Women's Day sparked heated debate, letters, and articles in Broadside, the depth and emotion of it and how far it spread were both exciting and overwhelming. Discussions on anti-imperialist struggles and feminism and on the conflict in the Middle East seemed to be happening in many different areas of our movement. A lot of women responded in particular to the Thursday night public forum on Women's Liberation, Disarmament and Anti-Imperialism, part of the week of activities leading up to the rally and march.

It was after IWDC was approached by three women from the Committee of Concerned Canadian Jews (CCCCJ) to discuss their criticisms and suggestions about that meeting that the group decided to organize a broader discussion that would include other women who had expressed strong feelings about IWD this year. We also invited the March 8th Coalition sub-committee that had planned the Thursday night forum. We thought we could facilitate a discussion and exchange of views which would help the ongoing discussions and work of IWDC and also help to develop this discussion in the women's movement throughout the city.

It was with a certain amount of anxiety that women held their breath, took their seats and began talking to each other on May 18th. The meeting opened with four short presentations. Maria Teresa Larraín and Ann-Marie Gardner spoke for the March 8th sub-committee that planned the meeting, stressing the need to understand how women's lives are marked by the reality of imperialism and to recognize the contribution of immigrant women to the women's movement. The forum had been an extremely important event for immigrant women in this city and helped to bring more of them out on the demonstration. Lois Lowenberger presented a brief summary of the criticisms she expressed in her Broadside article: that we should focus on issues that unite us and while she supports anti-imperialist struggles, she felt we shouldn't wholeheartedly endorse struggles as a movement unless we look at what they are doing for women. It was this feminist perspective that she felt was lacking from the Thursday night forum. Margie Wolfe spoke for the Committee of Concerned Canadian Jews. She said that they felt the focus on the Palestinian struggle was correct, considering the events of last year, but that it could have been handled in a much more productive and balanced way than it was. She felt it was necessary to put forward self-determination for both the Palestinians and the Israelis.

There were two general issues being discussed at the May 18th meeting. One was

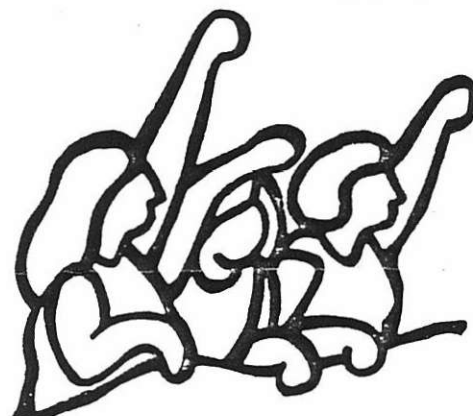
the connection between anti-imperialist struggles and feminism and the other was the conflict in the Middle East and how it was represented at International Women's Day. On the first, most women who spoke agreed with the linking of women's and anti-imperialist struggles. Divergent views were expressed on whether this kind of approach was appropriate for International Women's Day and on whether or how we judge which anti-imperialist struggles to support and how to maintain our feminist perspective in connection with those struggles.

It was on the second issue, the Middle East, that most of the discussion centred, specifically on the Thursday night forum. Some women felt that it was an important beginning for immigrant women to talk about anti-imperialist struggles they're involved in and a way to earn the trust of immigrant feminists. Others questioned the choice of a Palestinian speaker without a speaker to represent Israelis, saying that the imbalance more than implied a position against Israel and Israeli self-determination. Some women said that while they didn't disagree with a Palestinian woman speaking, the whole issue could have been dealt with more sensitively with the inclusion of an understanding of the peace movement and the left in Israel and their relations with Palestinians. Different opinions on whether anti-semitism should be included in the debate on the Middle East were raised by a number of women.

While we reached no unanimous conclusions, one thing was clear: we have many things to discuss and despite our fears we made a good, if tentative, beginning.

Afterwards at the bar, women talked about what to do next and some raised the prospect of a public forum on the Middle East.

-- Amy Gottlieb



LESBIAN & GAY PRIDE DAY

Sunday, June 26

Assemble 1:00 pm in  
King's College Circle  
University of Toronto



## ONE WOMAN'S VIEW

I want to make a few remarks about this year's International Women's Day celebrations. I write as an individual who has been participating in the coalition for the last three years, not as a member of WWIW (Women Working With Immigrant Women).

I have seen a process developing within the coalition that reached a crisis this year. Positions that were latent in the women's movement came to the surface. The discussions between various sectors were bound to happen. I think that if they didn't happen before it was because as a movement we were less mature. Also, because many immigrant women like me did not really have a voice before. The issues of class and race, which are real issues for many women in this society, were not addressed before because immigrant women were not present as a group. This is the first year that we were. I am glad that this discussion is taking place.

I do not pretend that there is unity within the women's movement. If unity is understood as the privilege of one sector to put forward its position while suffocating the attempts of other sectors, for example, immigrant women, I do not think that this is real unity. Real unity, in my view, is based on the understanding and acknowledgement of specific forms of

oppression that women suffer. Immigrant women, third world women, and working class women, for example, suffer a specific kind of oppression in addition to the oppression they suffer by being women in a patriarchal society. They should be allowed to communicate it. And they should be listened to.

Much could be said about this and other relevant issues. There is a discussion going on in WWIW, for example, about how we view our role in the women's movement in Canada. However, this discussion is not only happening at the level of WWIW; what happened this year at IWD and what has been happening during the last few years within the women's movement in Canada and abroad (in our countries of origin too) has shaken the very structure of our society. It is affecting our political work, our solidarity work, and our personal relationships. We have to understand this discussion as a process, learn from it, take it to our workplaces, and into our personal lives as well. This is starting to happen in the immigrant community and we, immigrant women, need your support, your constructive criticism. But, we also need to be heard. We will give you our support as well as our constructive criticism.

-- Maria Teresa Larraín

## EL SALVADOR MOTHERS

On Sunday, May 8 two members of the Committee of Mothers of the Disappeared, Assassinated and Political Prisoners of El Salvador spoke in Toronto at an event organized by the ONDP Women's Committee, COSPES and CAN. CAN gave a three hour workshop on "Women in Arms" about the involvement of Nicaraguan women in the revolution and the changes in the status of women in Nicaragua since the revolution. The Salvadorean mothers, 61 year old Hilda Diaz and 31 year old Laura Pinto, spoke of the sadness of Mother's Day in El Salvador and of the tremendous suffering of the Salvadorean people. By their own personal testimonies they gave the lie to the so-called "democracy" of the Salvadorean regime. They asked three things of Canadians:

- that we pressure our government representatives to denounce the continued arming of the Salvadorean government to settle the conflict;
- that we write, individually or on behalf of our organizations to the U.S. government demanding that the arms flow to the Salvadorean government be stopped;
- that we provide financial assistance to aid the Committee of Mothers in their work of world-wide denunciation of the atrocities of the Salvadorean regime: send your cheques to The Salvadorean Mother's Tour c/o the ONDP Women's Committee, Mary Rowles, 2nd floor, North Wing, Queen's Park, Toronto M7A 1A2.

IWDC also had a speaker at the Women in Arms workshop who spoke about our commitment to the struggles of the Central American peoples, and of our support for women's struggles in the region. This particular workshop was quite well attended, but the day as a whole was poorly attended. This is disheartening given the urgency of the need for international support. Protection of the gains of Nicaraguan women will require massive solidarity from feminists internationally.

IWDC is now working with CAN and other Toronto groups to bring Margaret Randall from Nicaragua in the fall to talk about women in Nicaragua, the participation of the church in the revolution, and to urge Canadians to take a strong stand against U.S. intervention in Central America. The next newsletter will have more details or contact CAN at 534-1342 if you want to become involved in planning the tour.

*The above was based on an article from the CAN newsletter. If you'd like to receive their newsletter send \$6 to P.O. Box 398, Station E, Toronto M6H 4E3.*

\* \* \* TORONTO FILM PREMIER \* \* \* \*

\* DREAM OF SANDINO \*

147 Danforth, June 16, 8 P.M. Sponsored by CAN. Entertainment by Latin American Cultural Workshop. Nicaraguan Ambassador to Canada will speak. \$5 employed. \$4 other.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CHILEAN WOMEN IN STRUGGLE

This September 11 will mark the tenth anniversary of the military coup which put an end to the dream of a "peaceful road to socialism in Chile" and began the hideous nightmare in which thousands of Chileans have suffered imprisonment, torture, exile, and death in the name of free enterprise. Despite the huge setback which the decimation of the popular movement and its leaders constituted, the Chilean people began to organize against the dictatorship from the very first. Since 1973 women have played a central role in the Resistance in all areas of struggle, from legal and semi-legal fronts such as that of human rights, to the underground political and military arena. An underground Resistance publication, El Rebelde en la Clandestinidad (The Rebel), published the following interview with a woman member of the Popular Militias in its March edition as a tribute to International Women's Day.



We women are among the most determined to carry on our people's struggle for justice and dignity. We defend our rights on all fronts and we do it for our children, our families, and our youth . . . For us, March 8, our International Day, is a reminder of that heroic struggle of women textile workers in Chicago, and especially of that group of women which took over a factory to demand decent working conditions and an eight-hour day. It also reminds us that on that 8th of March a criminal attack took the lives of 129 working women. The adoption of March 8 as International Women's Day means the recognition of a point of departure for us, the beginning of a road which we are following together with other workers and will only end when all this hunger and oppression ends.

In our country many companeros have given their lives fighting against tyranny; we have examples from as long ago as the time of the Spanish conquest of women like Guacolda, Fresia, etc., courageous women, born to be free. In our day, when we are struggling against the military dictatorship, history sees women playing a vitally important role. We are absolutely essential to the people's revolutionary war to free our country from the corrupt dictatorship which has brought so much misery and suffering to our people. And we are determined to assume our responsibility.

I am reminded of something said by a mother who participates in a cooperative kitchen. She said, you can't live off an "image" of the country, even less when your children are barefoot and starving. That's an affirmation shared by all women. That's why today we're working in cooperative kitchens, in women's committees, in labour struggles, in student organizations, in the unemployed

workers committees, in the organizations which defend human rights, and of course in ever-increasing numbers in the Popular Resistance Militias.

We understand very clearly that the only solution to the present crisis in Chile is the overthrow of the dictatorship. And that will only be possible by combining all the forces and all the forms of struggle of the people, among them the people's violence. By necessity we have to use armed force in response to a regime which has maintained itself in power and oppressed the people with military might, and what's more the permanent use of terror. We don't look for violence for its own sake, but it is something imposed on us, an indispensable condition in order to win this war against our oppressors.

Now women are showing that we are also capable of bearing arms, and doing so with courage and conviction, because only a new democratic popular and revolutionary order will be able to open the way to the well-being and freedom we all long for. And only then will women be able to exercise freely our rights that have continually been trampled on by the capitalist system.

OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER WILL  
FEATURE A SUMMER READING  
REVIEW SECTION. DON'T  
MISS IT--BE SURE TO TELL  
US THAT YOU WANT TO STAY  
ON THE NEWSLETTER MAILING  
LIST.



## A BI-NATIONAL SOCIALIST FEMINIST CONFERENCE . . . . .

The growth of the women's movement has had a tremendous impact on our political and personal lives. The positive aspects of our experience in the last 15 years has included a better understanding of our oppression as women as well as the development of democratic principles which guide our organizing. But the current political and economic crisis, combined with the erosion of gains won by women suggest the need for even more powerful and creative responses from the women's movement.

We have felt frustrated by a feminism which accepts the capitalist system as a workable system and in effect denies the pressing needs of the majority of women. At the same time we are critical of socialists who define feminist issues as 'secondary' or as a problem of a minority group.

For several years now the idea for a binational socialist feminist conference to share experiences, to facilitate communication and to deepen our analysis of our work in the women's movement has been voiced. We want to get together to expand and make concrete our ideas about a socialism redefined by feminism --and talk strategically and practically about how to organize this idea wherever we work.

Just in case you have not heard about the possibility of such a conference here is some background information. In June 1982 socialist feminist women attending a meeting of the Committee of Socialist Studies in Ottawa decided to put out a draft call for a bi-national conference and possible newsletter. The newsletter would build the conference by circulating information about it, providing analyses of current events of concern to women as well as enhancing theoretical discussion.

The feedback from across Canada and Quebec has been positive. Socialist feminists organizing committees have been established in Quebec City, Montreal, Edmonton, Sudbury, Peterborough, Ottawa, Hamilton and Vancouver. In the Maritimes and in the Prairies individual women have expressed interest in the conference. Individual members from the Ontario Federation of Labour, the Ontario NDP women's committee and women's caucuses in public and private sector unions support the initiative.

The Vancouver group has agreed to coordinate the first three issues of the newsletter which will appear in French and English. Women who would like to contribute articles should submit them to: Feminist Socialist Conference Newsletter, c/o 102-1455 Napier Street, Vancouver, B.C. V5L 2M6.

In Toronto the plans for the conference have been tentative. The draft call has been circulated to organizations and individual women. The IWDC supports the plan in principle. In order to ensure broad-based participation from as many socialist feminists as possible in the Toronto area an ad hoc committee to organize the conference has decided to hold an initial meeting on Thursday, June 30, 1983 at 7:30 at Trinity-St. Paul Church, 427 Bloor Street West.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss a number of basic questions: What's your reaction to the conference? How would it relate to local political work? To what extent should the conference focus on the sharing of experiences? on strategy? on theory? What is the best way to organize and structure the conference? What are the issues and struggles which flow from our experiences in the Toronto women's movement which are essential to discuss?

Please plan to attend the first meeting. Your comments and suggestions would be most welcome. Childcare costs will be covered collectively.

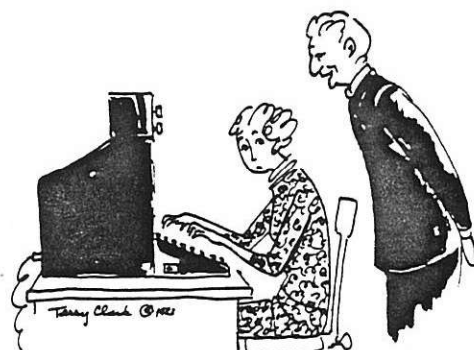
-- Charlene Gannage,  
Conference Organizing Committee.

*IWDC would like to continue discussion of the conference in future issues of the newsletter. Please send us your ideas, concerns or questions.*

### A SOCIALIST FEMINIST FORUM

Sponsored by the ONDP  
Women's Committee

Friday, June 24, 7:30  
Room 228, Queen's Park  
Parliament Buildings



NOW - YOUR LAST TASK, MS. JONES, IS TO  
PROGRAM THIS MACHINE TO DO YOUR WORK.

## IWDC NEEDS YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

In the last five years the International Women's Day Committee has done, learned, changed and grown a lot. This last year has been especially hectic.

Internally, we have tried to get the new committee structure that we adopted last year under way. We've gone from sending you a bulletin to sending you this newsletter. We've held educationals for ourselves on such topics as heterosexism, micro technology and the Middle East.

We are working with the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) to win free-standing, medically insured abortion clinics in Ontario. We participated in peace and anti-nuclear coalitions, sponsored a film premier with OPSEU and worked to support the OPSEU members who are on strike against Mini-skools. We participated in a workshop on coalition politics with Holly Near and other community groups and in a commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. And, of course, we played a major part in initiating the International Women's Day events this year.

So, why am I telling you what you already know? Because none of us are immune from the economic crisis. It always really pains me to see women's groups, unions or any other fightback organization having to adopt a program of economic restraint in order to keep going in the patriarchal-capitalist system that we are fighting against. Why should we suffer for their economic crisis?

But we do, both as individuals and groups. We even publish leaflets that explain how wage controls, cutbacks and unemployment hit women hardest.

Even the small contribution that IWDC can make to this struggle to win a world where women will be liberated in all ways costs money. It costs over \$400 to put out each issue of this newsletter. It costs money for us to rent rooms to meet in, to rent a mailbox, to print leaflets that explain our politics and so on.

IWDC has always depended on donations from from its members and friends, as well as the \$5 we ask people to send to cover the cost of the newsletter. In order to maintain our political independence we never look to government sources for money.

In order to keep on with our work we need your help and financial support right now. Please send whatever amount you can afford. Our thanks to all of you who have given generously this past year and, in advance, to all of you who will respond to this request.

Shelly Gordon, for IWDC.

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## A REPORT FROM THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT COMMITTEE

The Women's Movement sub-committee (of IWDC) has been revitalized since March 8 by the participation of four new members to IWDC and by the joint work the committee has begun on the issue of pornography. Our last three meetings have centered on the work of initiating and preparing an educational on pornography. Our goal in the first educational (we are assuming there will be more discussions) is to examine "what is pornography?" This first discussion therefore will avoid the thornier question of strategy.

For women who have not seen the films Killing Us Softly or Not a Love Story, we are going to have a showing Sunday, June 5, from 1:00 to 5:30 pm in the 2nd floor meeting room, Hart House, U of T. The films will be followed by a discussion.

IWDC members will also be reading the following five articles: "Hard Core Horror" by Anne Cameron (Broadside, 4/4, 1983), "The Politics of Porn" by Leirdre English (Mother Jones, April 1980), "Misogyny, Pornography and Violence Against Women" by Debra Lewis (Kinesis, April 1983), "Whose Body, Whose Self: Beyond Pornography" by Myrna Kostash (Still Ain't Satisfied) and "Pornography, Oppression and Freedom: A Closer Look" by Helen Longino (Take Back The Night).

These articles reflect a number of points of view and we hope will stimulate discussion. We in the committee have differences of opinion. Some of the questions we hope to tackle in the first discussion are:

- What definitions are there of pornography and what problems are there in the various definitions?
- Can we/and is it useful to differentiate types of pornography? We have decided to talk about heterosexual pornography only but even here there are some distinctions that could be made.
- What impact does pornography have on men and on women in our society?
- Is there anything liberating about pornography?

### FILMS! FILMS! FILMS!

These are just some of the recent films that we can borrow free of charge from the Public Libraries to help us in our work: The Wilmar 8; Not a Love Story; Cramps! P4W; Love It Like A Fool: a Film About Malvina Reynolds; Women in Sport; Women in Arms; Loved, Honoured and Bruised; Good Monday Morning; See What I Say; El Salvador, another Vietnam; If You Love This Planet.

In Toronto call 484-8251 to make borrowing arrangements.

## THE ISSUE IS, OUR RIGHT TO CHOOSE

### OCAC REPORT

#### LOBBY AND PETITION DAY

On May 26th Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) members spent the morning lobbying MPPs at Queen's Park to elicit their support for the legalization of abortion clinics in Ontario. A delegation also presented OCAC's petition to the office of Health Minister Larry Grossman with over 10,000 signatures. The petition endorses the legalization of free-standing clinics providing medically-insured abortions. The delegation also demanded a meeting with Grossman, something he has denied since October. The ministry representatives refused to establish any official liaison with OCAC and evaded continued questioning as to why this continues to be the case. Ministry staff will meet with the coalition but it is outrageous that the health minister will not meet with a group that represents majority opinion over this serious matter.

#### TORONTO CLINIC

On June 7th, Dr. Henry Morgentaler will hold a press conference in which he will reveal details about the opening of an abortion clinic in Toronto. As this announcement may have important ramifications which might require increased mobilization around this issue, we urge all choice support to pay close attention to this press conference.

#### BI-NATIONAL DAY FOR CHOICE

There will be a day of action in the fall regarding the choice issue. Discussion about this idea began during a strategy session at the April CARAL

annual meeting. With the Borowski case, clinic openings, hospital board fights, deterioration of abortion services and the continued demonstration of the inadequacy of the federal law regarding abortions, organized choice support has grown remarkably in the last year.

The time is ripe and it is important to stage a coordinated bi-national event to illustrate our support to be able to ensure our success. More information, regarding the event will be available in the next newsletter. At this point, the three slogans suggested for the action are:

- Defend women's right to choose
- Repeal the federal abortion law
- Legalize free-standing abortion clinics.



### MOTHER'S DAY ACTION

For the 4th consecutive year, pro-choice supporters marched on Mother's Day to defend a women's right to choose. About 150 women and men participated in a rally at Queen's Park organized by an ad hoc committee as a counter-demonstration to the Right to Life's Mother Day vigil. Overhead an airplane hired by OCAC proclaimed our message: "Motherhood by choice, not by force." As the 3,000 or so Right to Lifers marched silently down University Avenue, our small but spirited group chanted slogans supporting the opening of the Winnipeg clinics and our right to abortion.

Organizers for the pro-choice forces received something of a warm reception from the police. We were forced to send home the sound truck we had hired for the occasion when police threatened to impound the van and charge the driver with disturbing the peace. Organizers were threatened with further charges if demonstrators proceeded south of College Street. Disregarding these warnings, we decided to march quietly past Toronto General, returning to the north side of College to conclude our rally.

In light of the last minute decision to hold the demonstration, organizers were pleased with the the turnout and the support for the rally. Major television stations and the Star and Sun covered our rally, with CFTO broadcasting the most sympathetic report on their early evening news programme.

The level of police harassment we received confirmed the importance of our opposing the Right to Life whenever they march in the streets to deny our right to choose. We suggest that next year a committee be struck from the March 8th Coalition to organize 1984's Mother's Day march.

Kathy Arnup, for the  
Ad Hoc Committee for  
the Right to Choose.





## PORN POLITICS

The June issue of The Body Politic contains a paid advertisement for Red Hot Video, the British Columbia chain of video outlets whose violent "erotic" material has drawn protest from parts of the feminist community. In a mini-editorial, The Body Politic Collective puts forward its reasons for accepting such an ad. Although fearing that running the ad would alienate many of their readers, "(t)he final Collective sense, however, is that the anti-pornography movement is bad politics, a movement playing into the hands of right-wing, moralizing elements in our society. We do not wish to side with that movement."

The Collective is right in one thing--their action certainly has alienated and outraged many of their readers. The Body Politic's position is a narrow one, reflecting a gay male perspective that does not attempt to understand the issue from a feminist perspective. They view anti-pornography campaigns as being anti-sex and pro-censorship, fearing the negative implications such a campaign has for the rights of gay men and lesbians to define and express gay sexuality in the media. But it is not that simple. An anti-porn position is not necessarily pro-censorship. Many women who oppose the kind of violent pornography sold by Red Hot Video are against censorship. The Body Politic's position does not reflect an understanding of the way feminists are coming to understand the connections between pornography, violence against women, and how we experience our own sexuality. And because they have not understood the complexity of the issue from a feminist perspective, they fail to see the distinction between gay erotica and pornography depicting women for a straight male audience. (We question whether the "lesbian titles" Red Hot Video advertises aren't really intended for straight men.)

The women's movement is far from united on this issue. Feminists are involved in a debate that discusses questions such as:

- is there a difference between porn and erotica and if so, what is it and who decides?
- what are the connections between porn and violence against women?
- is censorship appropriate, and if so, how and when?
- how does all this bear on our own sexuality and sexual practice; is there "politically correct" sex?

The discussions and debates women are having are sometimes hostile and scary, but always important and useful. Within IWDC we are just beginning to talk about these issues--watch this newsletter for further discussion.

We feel, therefore, that coming at a time when discussions about pornography are taking place within the women's movement and also when Red Hot Video has been singled out by feminists as a particularly offensive outfit, that The Body Politic's decision to print the ad shows a disregard for feminists, and for women as victims of violence.

-- The Newsletter Committee

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## THE OCLA CONFERENCE

The Ottawa Committee for Labour Action (OCLA) organized a conference May 14 and 15 for Ontario activists to discuss socialist organization. The conference was attended by approximately 180 people, 40% of whom were women. On the first day, workshops discussed whether there is a need for a new socialist organization, the problems associated and forms of organization appropriate at this point. The second day had a plenary on the relation of feminism to socialism, regional meetings and final sum-up. The main result of the conference was the call for another one to be organized within a year, in Toronto.

Throughout the weekend, socialist-feminism was a main topic of discussion, and a women's caucus met twice during the weekend. Directives were passed at the final conference session to ensure the integration of socialist feminism in the Toronto conference. For example it was felt that any conference should not take place before the proposed bi-national socialist-feminist conference. Also a socialist-feminist committee is to be part of the organizing structure for the Toronto conference.

The Ottawa conference represented an important initial step, providing an opportunity for activists to meet and establish contact. But it is hoped that the Toronto conference would focus more directly on content areas such as socialist-feminism, disarmament, unemployment, etc. We also need to talk specifically about what the politics, orientation and practice might be for any new socialist organization.

A meeting will be held June 21 at 7:30 pm to discuss the OCLA conference and follow-up activities. For more information (including location) call Shelly at 928-5333, days.