

International  
Women's Day  
Committee  
newsletter

March  
1986



**WOMEN SAY NO TO RACISM**

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 EDITORIAL: ORGANIZING FOR MARCH 8TH 

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In our last editorial we mentioned that there was some discussion among women activists in Toronto about making anti-racism a major theme for International Women's Day, 1986. Early last December, the March 8th Coalition began to meet, and a theme for the day was adopted: "WOMEN SAY NO TO RACISM FROM TORONTO TO SOUTH AFRICA". IWDC was involved in developing the proposal, strongly endorses it, and our membership has been active in building the day since late last fall. In this editorial we will talk about why this theme was chosen, and why now, at this point in the Coalition's history.

Why this theme? At the first March 8th Coalition meeting some women had reservations about choosing resistance to racism as the theme for the day. They argued that we are fighting for many issues that concern women, and that it would be difficult to include them all under one umbrella theme. Other women, including IWDC'ers, disagreed with this point of view and explained what an anti-racist perspective would mean for all the issues around which women struggle.

We believe there is a critical distinction between looking at the anti-racist struggle as one issue among many and adopting an anti-racist perspective because of its importance for all our areas of struggle. The first approach tends to isolate anti-racism at the bottom of the priority list, whereas the second can open up a way to develop an anti-racist feminism. This second approach has been taken in the pamphlet which the March 8th Coalition has produced for the day. Some of the familiar themes from past years are there - economic independence, reproductive rights, anti-imperialist struggles - but they have been interpreted and developed from the specific experiences of black women and women of colour.

The bottom line is that we cannot just "add on" anti-racist issues to existing feminist demands instead of doing the work of thinking through our politics from an anti-racist perspective.

Why this theme? Here is one answer, taken from the presentation made to the first Coalition meeting: "Because of our consciousness of our oppression as women, we seek to understand and eradicate the roots of all oppression in our society. Ever since Sojourner Truth asked 'Ain't I a woman?', the double oppression of women subjected to racism has made even clearer the nature of the oppression of all women."

Why now? The shortest answer is "because it's about time", but we also have a longer answer. The initial presentation to the Coalition referred to the ways in which the themes of race and ethnicity had been treated in the past:

"For many years, the March 8th Coalition has tried to give attention to the special oppression of women of colour and immigrant women. At first, we dealt with these issues in a separate section of the leaflet and, in particular, forums or activities. Later, we tried to overcome 'tokenism' by referring specifically to the impact on women of colour and immigrant women whenever we discussed any feminist issue. Nevertheless, many women have felt that issues of racism somehow tended to 'get lost'. The media seldom picked up on it, and people might have attended the March 8th celebrations without having to think about the



connections between racist and sexist oppression."

Also, the growth and importance of autonomous women of colour groups and the writings of black women and women of colour have had an influence on the women's movement. This International Women's Day the relationship between racism and sexism will be in the foreground in a way that it never has before, making it less likely that the media and the community can choose to ignore the connection.

As we go to press, the March 8th Coalition is still meeting on a weekly basis, with dozens of women continuing to come out to do the work. At this early date, it's difficult to draw up a balance sheet - we hope to do so in our next newsletter. Briefly though, we can already see some positive developments. One is the presence of caucuses of native women and black women, each of which has organized events to be held on International Women's Day. There are also an ad-hoc women of colour caucus and the group Lesbians of Colour. All have provided major political leadership within the Coalition itself.

The March 8th Coalition has always had problems finding a way to have necessary political discussions while also planning a massive celebration which involves countless details and decisions. The second positive development has been the creation of an education committee which has produced two anti-racist educationals, a reading kit and planned a forum during the week.

The establishment of both caucuses and an education committee demonstrate new thinking about some of the process and politics of the Coalition.

We feel that an important and historic step has been taken this year, and hope that the women's movement will continue to view the development of an anti-racist feminism as a priority.

A large number of events are planned for IWD '86. Look for posters and leaflets around town, or call these numbers: 978-4575 or 978-8201.

Happy International Women's Day!

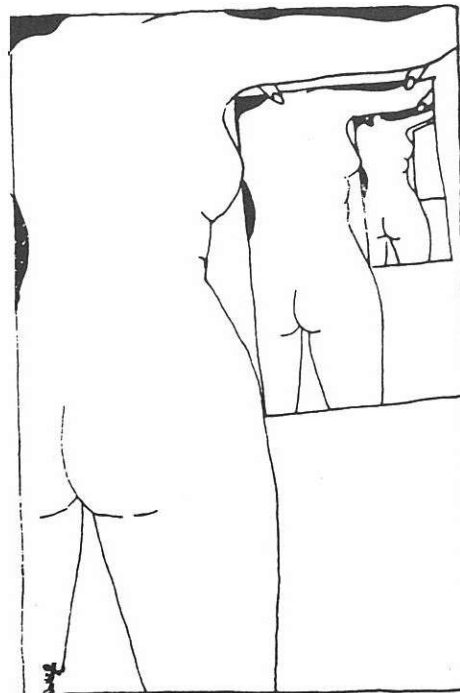
## SEX BOOK

A new book by IWDC'er Mariana Valverde called Sex, Power and Pleasure was launched by the Women's Press on Friday, February 14. The book examines the sexual lives of women today. Heterosexuality, lesbianism and bisexuality are discussed and issues of pornography, censorship, eroticism and power are examined.

Guests at the Valentine's Day launch were treated to food and drink and to hilarious entertainment - a skit spoofing T.V. "expert panel" shows explaining "what women writers really mean" and a song written and performed by Lori Bell.

You can buy a copy of Sex, Power and Pleasure for the bargain price of \$8.95 at the Toronto Women's Bookstore, 73 Harbord Street, 922-8744. Or contact the Women's Press, 229 College Street, #204, 598-0082.

CONGRATULATIONS MARIANA!



Women's Press  
Toronto, Ontario

## WOMEN IN PAKISTAN

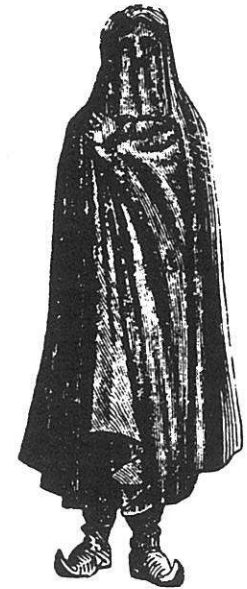
by Maria Wallis  
South Asian Women's Group

In Pakistan, as in most countries, there is a marked difference between the rhetoric used and the reality. Most official statements claim "Since the seventh century, Islam has given a privileged place to women..." Pakistan is also a signatory to the UN resolution which states that: "The full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields."

These general statements ring hollow when compared to Pakistan's specific actions. Recently, the Senate rejected, by a vote of 16 to 10, a motion calling for representation of women and minorities in the Upper House. Other figures substantiate the inferior position of women who make up 52% of Pakistan's population: 50 to 60% of girls drop out of school even before completing their primary education; out of 102 professional colleges in the country only 8 are for women; women make up less than 20% of enrollment in colleges; women's participation in the labour force (non-agricultural) has declined from 8% in 1977 to 5% in 1983; in the civil service only 3% are women.

The patriarchal system maintains control through the political interpretation of the Koran which permeates the Muslim lifestyle. In this way the subordination of women is enforced legally, socially and in the Islamic religion.

In Pakistan, among other laws, exists the Law of Evidence which requires the testimony of two male witnesses. If 2 males are not available, then one man and two women are required. The evidence of one woman will only be accepted as a last resort and at the discretion of the judge. This reduces the status of women to half that of men. Women's worth, in comparison to men, is considered inferior and is made legally inferior by General Zia's "Islamic Laws."



Socially, women in Pakistan are kept isolated. The chance of speaking to each other of common suffering is diminished by Islamic "culture". The wearing of the chador (the veil) when moving through male space,

and the traditional structuring of space, the seclusion of women, not only isolates women but also reduces them to exclusively sexual beings.

An author, Imam Ghazzali, explaining the Muslim theory of marriage in his famous work, The Revival of the Science of Religion defined the ideal women in the following way: "On the whole, regarding the proper conduct for a wife, one can say, in brief, that she must remain in her private quarters and never neglect her spindle. She must not make frequent trips to the balcony nor spend her time gazing down from there. Let her exchange but few words with her neighbours and not go to visit them." Obedience, silence and immobility are the features of the ideal Muslim women as defined by the patriarchal system. Once this doctrine is absorbed, the resultant passivity reduces the risk of challenges to the system.

This systemic subordination of women is further legitimized by the patriarchal interpretation of the Koran. The Maulvi (religious leaders) in citing Verse 34 of Surah IV of the Koran, claim that the

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## NEW CENTRE FOR NATIVE WOMEN

by Ivy Chaske

The Native Women's Resource Centre came into being as the result of the recognized need for specific support services for Native Women. A collective of Native Women began meeting to discuss the best method of responding to the need for support services; the result was the opening of the Resource Centre in October of 1985. This collective of Native Women believe in the ability of Native Women to initiate, manage and provide our own services. The Resource Centre is still managed by this collective.

The Native Women's Resource Centre has as its basis the recognition of the important role of Native Women in today's society based on traditional Native teachings. We believe these teachings to be a vital necessity to the continued survival of Native People. All women using or working at the Centre are equal and are treated as such, thereby providing a supportive atmosphere based on mutual respect.

The Resource Centre provides support services to Native Women living in Toronto. These services include counselling in alcohol and drug abuse, crisis intervention, child and family welfare, employment, housing, advocacy in the areas of tenant rights or social services, etc.

The Resource Centre is also a "Drop-in" Centre where Native Women can meet other Native Women for mutual support, networking and self-help as well as just a place to visit with friends.

The Native Women's Resource Centre has had difficulty obtaining funding. There are a number of reasons for this. There has been enthusiastic verbal and written support but no financial support. A typical example of the response we have received to date has been from the office of David Crombie, Minister of Northern Affairs. He supported our application for funding with a letter, but sent only three bouquets of flowers that had graced the table of Mr. Mulroney's dinner with the Prime Minister of Japan. We have not been deterred by this lack of serious consideration and insensitivity to

the needs of Native Women. We opened the Centre without funds and continue to operate with the commitment and dedication of a large group of Native Women volunteers.

We as Native Women believe that we have the strength and capability to initiate positive change within ourselves, our families and our communities.

The centre is located at 245 Gerrard St. E. It is open Monday - Thursday 9am - 9pm. Friday and Saturday open 24 hrs; Sunday to 4pm. Phone 963-9963 for further information.



## O POVO UNIDO

by Carolyn Egan

Once again the two hundred and fifty cleaners at First Canadian Place are fighting for their jobs. Through their militancy and the support of the broader labour and women's movements, they won a six week strike in 1984. Most of the workers are Portuguese-born women, and because of a loop hole in the Ontario labour law, they may lose both their jobs and their union rights. Their management, Olympia and York, have tendered the cleaning contract, trying to lower costs at the expense of the workers and smash the union, FASWOC. A rally was held on Thursday, February 13th, at which union and community representatives spoke of their support. Dawn Bradstreet spoke on behalf of IWDC. The rally was sponsored by the Committee for Cleaner's Rights, a coalition of labour and community groups dedicated to winning justice for Toronto's 20,000 cleaners. For more information call 656-1657.

## ABORTION RIGHTS INTERNATIONALLY

by Judy Rebick

Abortion rights are under attack around the globe. An examination of the struggle internationally leads to the conclusion that the attempt of the right, the Catholic Church, and the state in the advanced capitalist countries to roll back abortion rights is the cutting edge of a reactionary drive to erode the gains won by the women's movement over the past two decades.

A brief examination of the situation in a number of countries will illustrate the point.

United States

Despite the legalization of abortion through the U.S Supreme Court decision more than a decade ago, a powerful anti-choice movement, backed by the present administration has succeeded in significantly eroding access to abortion through cutbacks and terrorism. In 1984, there were an estimated 300 attacks against abortion clinics and the numbers are increasing. Picketing in front of the Morgentaler clinic is mild in comparison to some of the vicious tactics used in the U.S., including murder threats against women who have had abortions.

Less public have been the massive cutbacks which have seriously eroded access, especially for women. In 1976 government funding for abortion was stopped so that poor women are denied access. Today 80 percent of all the county and city hospitals do not perform abortions. Young women have been singled out for attack with 12 states considering legislation that would require women under the age of 18 to notify their parents before an abortion can be performed.

The relationship between the anti-abortion groups and reactionary forces is nowhere clearer than in the United States. Figures like Phyllis Shaffley make clear the links between their attempts to ban abortion and their general opposition to women's rights. More mainstream politicians like Ronald Regan, however, cannot politically afford to openly oppose women's equality in face of mass feminist consciousness. They use the mystique of the



foetus to mask the real purpose of their efforts, to drive women back into the bedroom and the kitchen, into traditional roles. The language of the anti-choice has been heard before. Now women are selfish because we choose not to have a child. Twenty years ago we were selfish if we wanted a career instead of spending full-time caring for our husbands and children.

Australia and New Zealand

Like Canada, different states in Australia have different approaches to abortion. Victoria and New South Wales allow abortion on social grounds. Other states are more restrictive. In Queensland last year, police launched a massive raid on two abortion clinics. Women's medical files were seized and two doctors were arrested. Sound familiar? This has coincided with increased activity by anti-choice forces including picketing of clinics.

Violence is also being used in New Zealand to attempt to prevent women from gaining access to abortion.

Great Britain

Over the past years in Britain, a high level of mobilization has been necessary to defend abortion rights. The offensive of the right and the Catholic Church has been given impetus by a high court decision to ban the issuing of contraceptives and abortion advice to under-16 year olds without parental permission. There was also an attempt by right wing member of parliament, Enoch Powell, to introduce a bill banning all experimentation on embryos on the grounds of protecting "the right to life." Although the bill fell, the government has promised some sort of legislation in the area. In addition, access to abortion is suffering because of cutbacks in public spending.

Europe

In Switzerland a recent attempt to introduce an amendment to the country's constitution to protect the rights of the foetus was defeated by a two to one majority. However, the referendum gave the right wing a massive propaganda opportunity. The tremendous publicity given to anti-choice forces in almost every country, despite their minority status, is another indication of the strength and establishment support for the anti-abortion movement. What other social movement gets this kind of access to the media? When a crackpot like Ken Campbell can get more media than coalitions who represent the interests of millions of people we have to begin to ask some questions about who is quietly supporting the efforts of anti-choice.

In Belgium there have been numerous trials of doctors. In Ghent an abortion clinic was recently raided by police supposedly investigating tax fraud. Women patients in the clinic were harassed and interrogated in an attempt to get them to admit to having an illegal abortion. A government minister has appealed against the acquittal of a doctor accused of procuring illegal abortions. The doctor was acquitted of the charge on the grounds of a "situation of moral distress." Sound familiar?

Another common factor in the abortion struggle is the fact that social democratic

governments have refused to stand up to right wing pressure on the issue. In Spain, the socialist government was elected on a promise to liberalize abortion but has only legalized abortion in very restricted circumstances effecting only 3% of those with unwanted pregnancies. In Greece the PASOK government has also failed to introduce promised legislation. As a result in both countries, a massive struggle for abortion rights has been launched by the women's movement. Most of us read about the dramatic conference in Spain, where an abortion was performed next to the conference meeting room and all participants signed a statement implicating themselves in the illegal act. In Greece there has been a massive petition campaign signed by women who have had illegal abortions.

The international fight against abortion rights has become so powerful, that the ruling class is even backing off its policies of population control in the third world. The International Conference on Population Control held in Mexico City passed a resolution urging governments "to take appropriate action to help women avoid abortion which in no case should be provided as a method of contraception...." Only Sweden voted against. In the context of this international offensive, the problem of masses of women dying from illegal abortions in third world is unlikely to change.



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## A WAVE OF REACTION

"The Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies deplors the government's intention to give third reading to a proposed amendment to the Criminal Code which will remove the 'pressing and persistent' requirements of the current soliciting law," its President, Betty Hopkins stated in a message to the Minister of Justice today. The proposed Bill C-49 will change the law so as to make criminal the behaviour of a person who "in any manner communicates or attempts to communicate with any person for the purpose of engaging in prostitution".

"The new law not only fails to take account of the recommendations in the Fraser Report on Prostitution and Pornography, it actually contravenes its recommendations," says Ms. Hopkins. "Under the guise of attempting to respond to the concerns of residents in urban neighbourhoods, the proposed law will result in the further victimization of the most vulnerable prostitutes," Ms. Hopkins declared.

The Fraser Report attempts to be all things to all people by making recommendations which:

- a) tighten up on the nuisance aspects associated with street soliciting;
- b) loosen up the "bawdy house" provisions which presently keep many prostitutes on the street; and
- c) invite all levels of government and other interested parties to work together to eradicate the conditions in our society which lead women and adolescents into prostitution.

Its recommendations form a sensible basis on which to bring the major interest groups together for the development of a consensus for legislative reform to address the range of problems associated with prostitution.

The Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies has for many years called for the repeal of the present soliciting law which discriminates against female prostitutes (leaving their male customers untouched by



the criminal law) and does nothing to create social and economic opportunities for disadvantaged women so that they might choose to avoid prostitution as an occupation.

Last year, a majority of Elizabeth Fry societies adopted a national resolution calling for the repeal of the present "bawdy house" laws, believing them to be ineffective in combatting prostitution and seeing them as laws which contribute to prostitutes working the streets, and last weekend the Board of Directors of the national Association declared its opposition to licencing of prostitutes or prostitution establishments.

For many years, the Association has suggested that other parts of the Criminal Code be used to curb behaviour connected with prostitution which is considered to be a serious problem. The Fraser Report concurred in that view by recommending the prosecution of offensive behaviour associated with street soliciting under the "disorderly conduct" provisions of the Criminal Code. The Fraser Committee required such conduct in relation to prostitution to be performed "more than once" before it was culpable.

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## DEVLIN IN TORONTO

by Cynthia Wright

Bernadette Devlin, one of the most important figures in the Irish republican movement today, spoke in Toronto recently to a packed audience in the Ontario College of Art auditorium.

Devlin opened her speech by reassuring us she would not go into Ireland's 800-year history of struggle, an announcement which disappointed few members of the crowd, most of whom were anxious to learn her thoughts on the new Anglo-Irish accords. At the same time, some recounting of Irish history is basic to understanding the contemporary situation, particularly since many people outside Ireland sum up the Irish struggle as a brutal war of intolerance between Catholics and Protestants, a strange leftover from the religious wars of the Middle Ages.

So, in the end, a good part of Devlin's talk was devoted to outlining how the current conflict is rooted in (1) the turn-of-the-century movement for Home Rule; and (2) the non-violent struggle of the 1960s for Catholic civil rights in the areas of work, housing and the vote.

Devlin stressed that the Northern Irish state, created by the partition of Ireland in the 1920s, has never been politically viable since 35% of its population (the Nationalist community) never accepted its legitimacy from the start. "We cannot," she said, "live in Ireland as it is presently constituted."

Non-violent action assumes that your oppressor has a conscience, an assumption that was shattered by the violence and repression with which the British and the Loyalist community met these two earlier movements. Since the seventies, we have seen the development of what Devlin referred to as the criminalization of the political process, evidenced by the numbers of young Irish men and women in jail for a range of political offences without ever having the benefit of a jury trial.



Long jail sentences are handed down based on forced confessions or on the testimony of detained persons who have been threatened with jail or deportation if they do not provide evidence. Such practices, together with the general ill-treatment of political prisoners in the North, have resulted in condemnations from Amnesty International and the European Court of Justice. Meanwhile, living conditions among the Nationalist communities generally continue to be very poor, with unemployment levels running as high as 50%, especially among the youth.

During the discussion which followed her talk, Devlin talked about the significance of the recent Anglo-Irish accords. In the Canadian media, the accords were largely described as a pact of joint sovereignty. In fact, Devlin argued, the accords have nothing to do with joint sovereignty and everything to do with repressing the republican movement. She described it as an accord between two police forces, the Royal Ulster Constabulary in the North of Ireland and the Garda (police) in the South for the improvement of communication and the transfer of intelligence. To support her interpretation, Devlin read details of the terms of the accord from an account in the Sunday Times, hardly a stronghold of Irish republican sentiment.

In the south of Ireland, the state has had two options in relation to the republican movement: repress it, or co-opt it by assuming leadership of it. By signing the Anglo-Irish accords, the Irish Republic has clearly opted for the first.

Note: Devlin's talk was organized and sponsored by the Irish-Canadian Political Education Committee, a sub-committee of the Irish Freedom Association. The Irish Freedom Association is a non-affiliated, non-sectarian organization which sees the political situation in Ireland as a colonial struggle, and not a sectarian one.

Readers interested in learning more about the Irish struggle should read Only the Rivers Run Free, an excellent account of women's lives in the North, published in paperback by Pluto Press and available at the Toronto Women's Bookstore and the Development Education Centre (DEC).



The wordprocessing of this newsletter was done by the women of Rexdale Community Microskills Development Centre. Rexdale Microskills is an on-the-job training program for immigrant women in microfilm and automated office procedures.

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Bill C-49, soon to receive third reading, criminalizes conduct in relation to prostitution which in and of itself may not be offensive and which occurs only once! "Such legislation," Ms. Hopkins claims, "will force young prostitutes off the street into remote, secluded premises which are likely to be operated by pimps (who for many years have been reasonably successful in avoiding prosecution) and which will surely put young, disadvantaged women, who are already victimized by a society which has failed to address their social and economic needs in more unsafe, vulnerable and dependent circumstances than has recently been the case."

Of particular interest in the proposed law is the inclusion of customers of prostitutes who may for the first time be prosecuted. "Such legislative reform," argues Ms. Hopkins, "is designed to appease those of us who have claimed that women are discriminated against in our legal system. Mr. Crosbie has failed to appreciate our concern that it is the unequal application of the laws, not just the words themselves, which discriminates against women." Previous street soliciting prosecutions were based, for the most part, on the evidence of male police officers who had acted as customer-decoys; this is unlikely to change under the new law because men still vastly outnumber women on most police forces, and hence, it is unlikely that police forces will use female officers as prostitute-decoys as frequently as they will use male officers to entrap female prostitutes. Furthermore, in Calgary, where the City passed a similarly worded municipal bylaw some years ago, very few, if any, male customers were prosecuted in a one-and-a-half year period.

To get a copy of the full Elizabeth Fry position paper, contact: Marlene Koehler, Executive Director (613) 238-2422



## CHALLENGING OUR IMAGES

by Mariana Valverde

Last November OPIRG organized an ambitious conference on two of the most difficult and controversial topics in the women's movement today: pornography and prostitution. By now, most feminists have probably read the report that appeared in community papers detailing the events of the weekend (Broadside had a report, and the current issue of Rites has a thorough account). Thus, rather than list the dozens of workshop topics and try to recount the debates at several large panels, it might be more appropriate to look back and do a kind of evaluation.

The conference certainly succeeded in one of its main objectives, which was to bring sex trade workers into the same space with feminist activists not just for an hour but for a couple of days. Strippers, prostitutes and former sex trade workers were present in small but visible numbers: their very presence made it impossible for feminists to speak about the problem of sexual work as though it were a remote occurrence involving hapless victims of patriarchy. Rather, we had to acknowledge that it was more appropriate to listen and learn, and then to offer our opinions merely as opinions, not as some kind of feminist truth hovering above people's heads. Some sex trade workers expressed a dislike for their work, while others see themselves as having made a positive choice which might compare favourably to the workforce situation of most Canadian women. But all of them expressed a unanimous denunciation of Bill C-49 (see accompanying article for one critique of this bill, by the Elizabeth Fry Society). And all of them offered insightful comments on the day-to-day operations of the police. I had not realized that much of the "nuisances" and traffic jams that have generally been presented as "evidence" for the need for a Draconian anti-prostitution bill were actually created by the police themselves, precisely in order to generate public resentment of prostitutes and hence support for Bill C-49.



The fruitful exchange with sex trade workers is what made the prostitution part of the conference come alive. Unfortunately, the pornography part of the conference (which does not seem to have been as well planned) was not especially original. Most people on panels said what they have already said on previous occasions, and some (notably Geraldine Finn) were both unclear and boring. Some of the workshops apparently did have interesting discussions, and even the panels might have been interesting to those unfamiliar with the debates within the feminist movement, but for many of us it felt like we were watching the reruns (or participating in them!).

My own conclusion, which is merely a personal opinion, is that feminists need to put a lot more work into supporting the struggles of prostitutes and other sex trade workers against Bill C-49 and other repressive legislation and police practices. This may not be as glamorous as debating the fine points of the significance of sexual representations, but it is quite urgent. (This is a self-criticism!) On the other hand, I think that we have exhausted the pornography debate. When Crosbie introduces anti-porn legislation in the early spring, as rumour has it that he will, then we might organize to protest against it if we feel that it is inadequate. But in the absence of a concrete practical focus for the porn/censorship discussion, it might be better to put some work into organizing IWD activities....

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## SPEAKING OUT FOR CHOICE

by Mary Gellatly

On January 25, over 400 people packed a Vancouver hall, spilling over into the aisles and the back of the room. These people came not just to listen, but to be heard - they formed the "jury" of the first tribunal in the historic bi-national campaign, "Speak Out for Choice: The Abortion Law on Trial". The silence was heavy as the tribunal began. Not even the handful of anti-choice demonstrators dared to break the intense attention given to the 14 women and one doctor as they stood forward to give their testimony.

Some women spoke of their experience prior to the 1969 amendment to the criminal code. They referred to a time when even birth control was illegal and abortions were either self-inflicted or lives were entrusted (all too frequently to be lost) to back street butchers. More women, however, spoke to the injustice and inequality of the current abortion law which depersonalizes and denies women their most basic reproductive rights. The doctor, based on his experience doing hospital abortion procedures, underscored the need for free-standing clinics providing medically insured abortion services.

A panel of "judges" represented the choice movement's broad base of support and included notables such as Grace MacInnes of the NDP and Art Kube, President of the B.C. Federation of Labour. Following the intensity and power of the testimonies, there was no quieting the "judges" and "jury" when asked for their verdict. The unanimous cry of guilty rang loud and clear. The verdict reached at the Vancouver tribunal is just the beginning. People from across Canada and Quebec will add their voices to the verdict being sent to the federal government.

The 1968 Abortion Caravan was the first campaign to sweep the country, clearly demonstrating the broad support for women's right to choose. The struggle continues and once again, we will build upon the bi-national choice movement. The Speak Out

for Choice campaign will involve tribunals in many cities, culminating in a major action this spring in Ottawa. This campaign will build strong links between women struggling for choice in their respective provinces and territories. Moreover, by strengthening the bi-national movement, we will assist our sisters working in areas such as the Atlantic provinces who often face alienation and sometimes job loss when they are too "vocal" about the abortion issue.

The Speak Out for Choice campaign is focussed upon the federal government. While it is the provinces which implement the abortion law, it is the federal criminal code that ultimately bars women from controlling their own bodies. The government has institutionalized and regulated women's reproductive rights. As such, it is to the federal government that we must go with our demands. We cannot wait "patiently" for the Supreme Court to pass "judgement" on our reproductive rights - this forum is lengthy, costly and controlled by the interests of the state.

The tribunal will powerfully demonstrate how the abortion law denies women their



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## MARCH 8TH: NO TO RACISM

(We are reprinting the Introduction to the leaflet for International Women's Day 1986.)

The intense and ongoing struggle in South Africa has brought the fight against racism to the attention of the world. But racism begins at home. It begins here with the treatment of Native, Black, Chinese, South Asian and other Peoples of Colour in Canada and North America.

In 1986, thirty years after Rosa Parks refused to sit in the back of a bus in Alabama triggering the civil rights movement, Native, Black, Asian and other Women of Colour still suffer from double oppression - racist and sexist. Whatever white women face - unemployment, poverty, sexual harassment and lack of reproductive rights - you can be sure that Native, Black, Asian and other Women of Colour are doubly affected both here in Canada and internationally.

That is why women in Toronto are taking to the streets on March 8th to say a resounding "No to Racism! From Toronto to South Africa."

We do not believe that racism is merely a misunderstanding among people, a question of interpersonal relations or an unchanging part of human nature. It is, like sexism, an integral part of the political and economic system under which we live. This system uses racism and sexism to divide us and exploit our labour for super profits.

We are shaped by racism. It gives some of us privilege and we reproduce what it teaches us. This has to be fought in our daily lives. But we cannot just educate racism away, and even legal reforms are not enough. We must take racism to its material roots and change the economic and political structures which maintain it.

Fighting racism is a feminist issue, and white women must see it as a priority. Racism distorts all of our lives, it divides and weakens us, giving power to our oppressors. Fighting racism is a feminist issue to the extent that all women are not white, and, the women's movement and the labour movement are strengthened by the participation and leadership of Native, Black, Chinese, South Asian and other Women of Colour.

We are up against strong enemies and an anti-racist analysis makes our movement broader and more powerful.

So women as a whole must say "No! to Racism" because if they come for some of us in the morning, they'll be coming for the rest at night.



## AMERICAN VOYEURS

By Madhu Kishwar and Ruth Vanita

(Editor's note: American feminist Fran Hosken is leading a tour of India and Nepal for U.S. women (cost: \$3,600 U.S.). The following article was written in response to the tour by two leading Indian feminists).

From February 24 to March 16, 1986, the private life of the Indian woman will be on view for a group of American women who are currently on the "Status of women in India and Nepal" tour. The tour brochure reportedly offers them "breathtaking sights of natural and human wonders" - child brides, teenage widows and dowry victims, among others. It is a "grotesque venture" say the authors.

It appears that the latest commodity on the international tourism market is the misery of Indian women. We had heard of "sex tours" to Thailand and the Philippines where men from western countries go to buy the bodies of women who need the money. Now women from the U.S. propose to come to India and have an exciting holiday feasting on the misery of Indian women.

While the men who go on "sex tours" have to pay the women they use as objects of sexual pleasure, these women tourists do not even have to pay those whose lives they seek to experience vicariously. They are conducting this exercise as evidence of their "social concern".

We were horrified to receive a letter dated January 30, 1984, from Odyssey Tours, a travel agency in the U.S., announcing that it had arranged a tour called "Status of Women in India and Nepal".

The letter was followed by several phone calls, asking us to publicise the tour by interviewing the women tourists and writing articles about their "mission" in the Indian press and in Manushi (India's leading feminist journal). The agency is brazen enough to expect Indian journalists to give favourable publicity to this blatant insult offered to our society, the holiday tour

that puts the lives of Indian women on view along with such tourist spots as the Taj Mahal.



Let us look at the brochure. It promises "breathtaking sights of natural and human wonders" and goes on to outline them: "In New Delhi, we meet a broad spectrum of Indian women from those in top government posts to those who clean and repair streets for a living. We have scheduled a meeting with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. We will combine visits to Indian homes with sightseeing of ancient forts, mosques and monuments."

After putting our homes on the sightseeing circuit, the tour proceeds to do the same with the most private emotions of joy and grief: "At Ahmedabad, arrangements have been made to observe various women's rituals and functions around birth, marriage and death."

The brochure goes on to promise further delights: "You will meet child brides, teenage widows and learn about the dowry system. We will be guests of a local women's organisation as they show us the many lives of Gujarati women." This impressive two-day learning process in Ahmedabad will be followed by a visit to Bombay, where another exotic ritual, the celebration of March 8, International Women's Day, by women's organisations, is to be observed while staying at a local five-star hotel.

Two whole countries are to be dissected and laid at the feet of these holiday-makers for a mere \$3,593.

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## FREE TRADE: NO BARGAIN FOR WOMEN

by Marjorie Cohen NAC Vice President

(The following are excerpts from "The MacDonald Report and its Implications for Women" by Marjorie Cohen, NAC Vice President. To obtain a full copy of the report, contact NAC, 344 Bloor St. W, Suite 505, Toronto, Ont. M5S 1W9, 922-3246.)

The central themes of the MacDonald Report are that the Canadian economy should be more directly controlled by market forces and that the economic links between Canada and the U.S. should be made stronger through free trade. The commissioners recognize that these changes will cause profound changes in the economy, but they feel that with reasonable adjustment policies in the short run and higher productivity rates in the long run, people will ultimately be better off. On the whole, the commissioners are relatively unconcerned about the disparate effect their policies would have on various groups of people in the economy. There are brief references to the industries which will be weakest and strongest in the free trade arena, but there are no detailed analyses of how each industry would fare. Also, in all of its 1,911 pages, the report pays scant attention to how various groups of workers and regions in the country will be affected.

### Women in Manufacturing

The commissioners admit that moves toward trade liberalization are likely to affect women adversely because of their predominance among workers in textiles and light manufacturing. But they feel this is not a cause for serious concern because adjustment assistance would give female workers the opportunity "to leave low-wage, declining sectors of employment for expanding ones." (II, 629) The sanguine view that displaced female workers in manufacturing will find high-wage jobs in new, expanding sectors has no basis in the findings of studies prepared for the commission, for this issue was not the object of any investigation: it is merely stated as a belief.

The commission has identified two sectors as being in a strong position to

survive a free trade market. These are urban transit and forestry products. The weak sectors are much more numerous, they employ far more workers, and are principally in secondary manufacturing.<sup>1</sup> Women's labour in the manufacturing sector is highly concentrated in the industries which are generally considered to be most vulnerable to free trade. These industries are textiles, clothing, small electrical products, sporting goods, toys and games, and leather products. About two-thirds of the workers in these six industries are women and altogether these industries account for about 42% of all female manufacturing workers.

The likelihood of the displaced employees in vulnerable industries being easily retrained to find higher-paying jobs in new industries is slim indeed. Research has shown that the female workers in these industries tend to be older than average female workers; they are much more likely to be immigrants and therefore less likely to speak English or French; they are more likely to be married; and they have considerably lower levels of education than the average female worker in Canada. They are also much more likely to be living in Quebec. —

### Service Sector

Women workers in the manufacturing sector are not the only ones whose jobs are threatened by free trade. The vast majority of women workers, over 80%, are employed in the service sector of the economy. It is no secret that the U.S. intention in liberalized trade arrangements is to include trade in services as well as trade in goods.<sup>5</sup> While the commission notes that the U.S. is the only nation which is convinced of the need to negotiate free trade in services, there are very good reasons why they are intent on doing so. Like Canada, the U.S. economy is increasingly service-oriented: services account for about two-thirds of its GNP and almost 70% of its labour force. But what is increasingly important is the export of services. It is estimated that the U.S. exported services worth \$60 billion in 1980. —

### Social Policies

The objectives of the commission in recommending changes in income-security systems and the provision of social services are to simplify the delivery of these services and to make the labour market more flexible and adaptive. The proposed changes are extensive: As the commission notes, "they will affect the lives and livelihood of virtually every Canadian." (II, 540) I would add that they are likely to affect the lives and livelihood of virtually every woman adversely.



### Incomes Policy

In the presentations made to the commission by women, labour, and community groups, the overwhelming concern was for the extreme hardship which high and persistent rates of unemployment in Canada imposed on people. In its interim report the commission took the approach that unemployment and inflation are both evil, but that fighting inflation was paramount.

This tone is also central to the final report. Keeping prices low is the fundamental concern and whatever solution is to be found for unemployment has to be found within the parameters of maintaining low prices.

To this end, the commissioners advocate reinstituting an incomes policy "for three years or so" in order to reinforce the downward trend in inflation." (II, 377) As the National Action Committee on the Status of Women noted in its brief to the commission, wage control programs have had a profoundly negative impact on women. —

### Changes in Unemployment Insurance

One of the worst features of the report is the attitude it takes toward the unemployed. The belief of the commissioners is that the unemployment insurance program can be redesigned to reduce unemployment itself. The implications are that the unemployed are largely responsible for their own joblessness and that it has merely been the misguided generosity of the state which has lured them into unemployment.

In redesigning the unemployment insurance scheme the commissioners hope to develop a more "flexible and adaptive labour market" and to reduce costs. To achieve these objectives they recommend a reduction of benefits, more stringent entry requirements, shortening the length of benefits for some, and ending the extended benefits to people in regions where unemployment is particularly high. —

### Universal Income Security Program

Their program would provide a very low guaranteed income. In fact even the commissioners recognize that the income levels are "not necessarily adequate to meet all family needs unless some additional support is provided." (II, 797) Nevertheless, the commission is recommending that most of the existing support programs be eliminated. These include guaranteed income supplements, family allowances, child tax credits, married exemptions, child exemptions, federal contributions to social assistance payments, federal social housing programs, and possibly the personal income-tax exemption. —

## NEW CLINIC DOC

by Lynn Lathrop

A new face at the Morgentaler Clinic in Toronto is a cause for celebration for the Pro-Choice movement. The clinic's newest doctor, who began performing abortions in January, is a long-time socialist-feminist and abortion rights activist.

Dr. Nikki Colodny, who trained with Dr. Morgentaler in Montreal, is a member of the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics and a founding member of Doctors for Choice. Her decision to work at the Morgentaler Clinic and directly challenge the law has been a year in the making.



"I had to ask myself whether I was prepared for anti-choice picketers to harass my children, picket my house. That has happened to others. And, of course, there's always the death threats like those received regularly by public pro-choice individuals. But after discussing this with political and professional colleagues, I decided that I couldn't afford not to act—there is simply too much at

stake. We have got to get rid of this terrible law that victimizes women. I have seen the awful physical consequences of it."

Nikki hopes that other doctors will step forward to challenge section 251 and at least add their voices to the growing numbers of people who are demanding its repeal.

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After an examination of these facts the inescapable conclusion is that the fight to defend and extend women's right to choose is today at the centre of the fight for women's equality. The ideological fight against abortion, cloaked in the emotional language of "killing our poor innocent babes", is nothing more than another attempt to glorify motherhood as the main if not exclusive role for women. While we can acknowledge that abortion can be a difficult decision, we cannot give any credence to anti-choice propaganda about the "immorality" of abortion. We must focus our efforts on exposing the real meaning of anti-choice attacks as anti-woman attacks.

We can be optimistic however when we look at the response of the women's movement around the world. After a low key approach over the last few years, the women's movement in the U.S. has finally decided to mobilize against the abortion attacks. In March a national pro-choice demonstration will be held in Washington. There as everywhere else that the women's movement mobilizes for freedom of choice, we are certain that the majority support for woman's right to choose and for woman's right to equality will be demonstrated. However, if we let up the fight and allow the anti-choice to organize unopposed, we risk losing not only our access to safe abortions but all of the gains we have won over the last number of the years.

## TOOLS FOR WOMEN

by Shelly Gordon

IWDC held an open house last December 1st to raise money for the Tools for Peace campaign. Over seventy group members, friends and supporters accepted the invitation to come for fun, food and refreshments and leave money.

We raised over \$1,000 that afternoon for the Tools for Women project. IWDC is rarely able to offer financial support to anyone so we are really pleased to have collected this amount.

Our donation has been sent to the School of Agricultural Mechanization near Matagalpa, Nicaragua. Since 1981 this school has taught farm workers to use and maintain the tractors, trucks, water pumps and other machines that are crucial to Nicaragua's objective of adequate food production.

The school has already shown its support of women in non-traditional work by welcoming women machinists from the U.S. as teachers, accepting women carpenters for construction projects and training women to drive tractors.

They are now proposing an 18-month project designed specifically to train 4 women in agricultural machine maintenance and repair, including basic machining and welding.

In a letter to women in the Ontario Labour movement the school asked for donations of \$4,200 U.S. to purchase a set of mechanic's hand tools for each of the four students. In 18 months a roving female agricultural mechanic will be repairing farm machinery with a tool kit we helped to buy.

IWDC's evaluation of the event was that it was a financial success but having an open house in someone's private living room restricts publicity for and access to the event. It was a good way to raise money on short notice and without much effort but not something we want to do very often.

OUR SINCERE THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO DONATED  
TO TOOLS FOR WOMEN



The Agricultural Mechanization School of the Ministry of the Agrarian Reform near Matagalpa, Nicaragua, is looking for the following skilled women to work under a 19-month contract instructing women from agricultural cooperatives:

- 1 experienced female farm or diesel equipment mechanic
- 1 experienced female auto mechanic

Airfare can be subsidized to \$850 U.S. and pay is \$75 U.S. per month (more than adequate at 700 cordoba/\$1 U.S. exchange). Call Barbara Stewart at 533-1849 or send resume and references to: Fredrico Royce, Apto.124, Matagalpa, Nicaragua.

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superiority of men over women is justified by the fact that men provide women with the resources necessary to maintain human life. (Ignoring, of-course, that no other self-sufficient economic option is left open to women in Islamic Society.)

Further, the identification of desire/devil/woman triad is very clear in religious literature. Women are viewed as temptation. (Thus the rationalization of the use of the veil) The author, Ibn al-Jauzi stated: "When Satan despairs of someone, he tries to use women as intermediaries." The premise, woman as evil, rationalizes all the social injustices done to her. Her purity (and worth) is maintained by her isolation from society and total subjugation to her father or husband.

The plight of women and minorities in Pakistan is tightly linked to the political and economic corruption of the martial law governments of the past and present. Their emancipation must be fought for simultaneously with the political liberation of the country.

Two women's organizations in Canada reach out and help women, who upon migration from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, are still reeling from the patriarchy and oppression of both, their own countries and Canada. The only difference is the different style of rhetoric and oppression. These women organizations are (a) The South Asian Women's Group (SAWG) - contact Debra at 532-2824 and (b) The Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre - contact Varinder at 465-4778.

The Committee of Progressive Pakistani Canadians (CPPC) in Toronto support and maintain the Pakistani struggle in Canada by inviting speakers (Pakistani political prisoners, former politicians and academics) and generally educating our peers of the situation in Pakistan - for further information, contact the editor, CHALLENGE (CPPC's newsletter) by writing to P.O. Box 5669, Station 'A', Toronto, Ontario - M5W 1N8

(NOTE: a recent book called "Women in the Muslim Unconscious" by Fatna A. Sabbah (1984) is excellent in exposing how elements of Islamic culture develop attitudes toward women in Muslim societies.)

## SWEET CONCERT

Sister Vision, Canada's first press for Black Women and Women of Colour held a very successful benefit concert featuring Sweet Honey in the Rock at Convocation Hall on November 16. The five black women singers from Washington, D.C. lived up to their reputation by providing a powerful and inspirational performance. Their music focuses on the history of the Black American experience and the lives and struggles of Black Women as well as integrating contemporary political issues. Their songs speak out against racism, sexism and oppression. Throughout the whole performance, the audience was thoroughly absorbed in every note and word.

Several IWDC women were among the many volunteers that Sister Vision had gathered together to work on this event. It was a fun-filled and rewarding experience for us. We met and worked with many women active in the Black and Women of Colour communities and we learned from their experience and skills. Both groups found it to be a good working relationship and we are hoping to work together again in the future.

In the meantime, with the proceeds from this benefit, we can all look forward to more publications from Sister Vision Press whose continued existence is vital to us all.

For more information on Sister Vision, Black Women and Women of Colour Press, write to P.O. Box 217, Stn. E, Toronto, M6H 4E2 or call (416) 532-9868.



## CONTRA CONTRACEPTION

by Lynn Lathrop

Opponents of abortion rights for women have been busy attacking on other fronts as well. They have had some success in curtailing much-needed services, particularly in the area of birth control and contraception. Agencies such as Planned Parenthood, a national organization which provides contraceptive information and counselling, has been targeted by right-wing groups and politicians who would love to turn the clock back to pre-1969, when abortion and contraception were illegal.

Planned Parenthood says it is facing the toughest challenge in its 50-year history. To date, it has lost half its federal funding. Federal Health Minister Jake Epp last year cut its budget by 12.5%, while giving a 12% increase to Serena, an anti-abortion organization which promotes only natural family planning.

Another setback at the federal level was a 75% cut in the budget of the agency that was conducting research into better and safer forms of birth control. And the Family Planning Division of Health and Welfare has been completely eliminated.

But the war against birth control is not being waged just at the federal level. Some provinces have launched blistering attacks of their own. The Tory government in Saskatchewan, for example, has given more than \$100,000 to anti-choice groups. It also funds Teen-Aid, the Alliance for Life's Chastity Program, which teaches that chastity is the only means of preventing pregnancy!

Saskatchewan is also the birthplace of Bill 53, a notorious private member's bill, which insisted that women seeking abortions be given a detailed description of the fetus at the time the procedure would take place, and be told of the risks of abortion. The bill was brought forward by an anti-choice, anti-sex-education member from Saskatoon and received a frightening amount of support from other Tory members. Fortunately, it has been ruled invalid by the provincial Court of Appeal.

But that's no reason to rest easy. We are certain to see more hysterical lobbying this year at both the federal and provincial levels, and renewed efforts to undermine not only abortion but contraception as well.



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fundamental reproductive right to decide if and when to have children. Moreover, they will clearly illustrate how the abortion law discriminates against women on the basis of wealth, race, language and proximity to urban centres. Representatives from women's groups, unions, church groups, ethnic and immigrant communities are joining in the campaign to demonstrate the broad base of the pro-choice movement. The Speak Out for Choice campaign will send the undeniable verdict of the majority to the federal government - the abortion law is guilty of discrimination against women and Section 251 of the Criminal Code must be repealed. Furthermore, free-standing clinics providing medically insured abortion services must be legalized.

The Vancouver tribunal was a highly successful beginning. The momentum will build as tribunals are held in Winnipeg on February 27, Toronto on March 1, Edmonton at the end of March, Saskatoon on April 8, and Halifax on April 14. Women from Quebec have not yet set a date for the tribunal there. The culminating tribunal in Ottawa will pull together months of work by pro-choice activists from across Canada and Quebec. Unfortunately, the details of the Ottawa tribunal were not available at the time of writing this report. Phone the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics at 532-8193 for further information.

## NAC NOTES

by Carolyn Egan

IWDC chose to attend the mid-year conference of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. This year to increase the involvement of Western women it was held in Winnipeg. I took part in an opening strategic panel, which was designed to deal with some of the major issues of the women's movement. The four areas of concentration were labour and the economy, racism and women of colour, militarism, and reproductive rights. The theme was "making connections", both among ourselves and the issues that we are organizing around. Each of the speakers challenged NAC in terms of its role and militancy, clearly stating that we must have an integrated analysis, and not work in isolation from each other. Glenda Simms, national president of the Congress of Black Women, confronted the women's movement for not dealing with racism, demanding that antiracism be made a clear priority. Margery Cohen spoke on the dangers to women of free trade, Solange spoke of the lessons she has learned in anti-militarist campaigns, and I spoke on the present reproductive rights struggle, outlining the range of demands that must be won if all women are truly to have reproductive freedom. Workshops on a variety of issues followed.

As has been mentioned in earlier newsletters, IWDC has made a commitment to take a more active role in NAC. As each year goes by, more and more grassroots women's organizations are taking out membership. (see our Summer 1985 issue). These groups feel that since NAC is seen to represent the feminist movement by the state, the media, and the community at large, we ought to be working within it, shaping its policies, priorities and methods of work. It has grown to include over 400 groups, and is making a real attempt to increase membership. At the conference there was a lot of interest from Manitoba women, which hadn't previously been the case. The number of native women participating was very small, which speaks to some of the concerns Glenda Simms raised. Representation from the Asian and South East Asian communities was somewhat larger, but it is quite obvious that women of colour have not

made a priority of working in NAC. There cannot be any expectation that this will change until NAC truly deals with the contradiction of racism and how it manifests itself. Individual black women and women of colour such as Jon Leah Hopkins, a vice-president, and Maria Wallis from the South Asian Women's Group and Women Working with Immigrant Women have committed themselves to working within the organization, but it is up to all of us to prioritize anti-racism and clearly make it a feminist issue.



Historically NAC has taken a lobbying role, monitoring legislation and government activities as they affect women. This is its mandate and the priority of the executive. It is a limiting mandate, which prevents it from taking a more militant, mobilizing course in defense of women's rights. The present structure was developed to implement this lobbying approach, and unfortunately doesn't allow for the active involvement of the membership on a year round basis. There are a number of questions that are confronting us. How can we help to make NAC a more vibrant, activist organization with local women participating on a regular and integrated basis? What changes in structure will allow for greater input and accountability? Is

## ANTI-RACIST READING

Black American Politics, Manning Marrable (Versa)

Black Marxism, Cedric Robinson (Zed)

...But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies, co-editors, Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, Barbara Smith (The Feminist Press)

Feminist Theory from Margin to Centre, Bell Hooks

Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain, Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Susan Scafe (Virago Press)

Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology, edited by Barbara Smith (Kitchen Table: Women of Colour Press)

In Search of Our Mother's Gardens, Alice Walker (Harvest/HBJ)

Part of my Soul, Winnie Mandela (Penguin)

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there a more productive way in which individual women not in member groups can participate?

We believe that there is a real possibility of building a strong campaign to democratize the organization, and make it the type of bi-national organization that the women's movement desperately needs. We are meeting with other activists who are asking the same questions and sharing the same concerns. There are many ideas including the possibility of local chapters, regular regional meetings with mechanisms for individual involvement, structural changes, election strategies, etc. We urge groups to affiliate to become a part of this process. There will be a southern Ontario regional meeting on march 22 in Toronto, place to be announced, and the annual general meeting is to be held in May in Ottawa. The southern Ontario regional representative is Lynn Kay who can be reached at 895-2081.

Sister Outsider, Audre Lord (The Crossing Press)

Women Race and Class, Angela Davis (Vintage Books)

Yours in Struggle, Barbara Smith et al.

PERIODICALS:

Feminist Review, Autumn 1984, "Many Voices, One Chant, Black Feminist Perspectives"

Feminist Review, Autumn 1985, "Ethno-centrism and Socialist-Feminist Theory", Michele Barrett and Mary McIntosh

Fireweed, Summer/Fall 1984, "Black Women in Toronto: Gender, Race and Class", Dione Brand

Race and Class, Summer 1983, "Toward an Anti-racist Feminism", Jenny Bourne

Contact the Anti-Racist Workgroup if you are interested in holding a workshop.



# Letter Letter LETTER

Organized Working Women  
Box 82  
275 King Street East  
Toronto, Ontario, M5A 1K2  
Telephone 364-2161

Endorsed by the Ontario Federation of Labour

November, 1985

Greetings:

This year - 1985 - Organized Working Women is launching the most important financial appeal since being founded in 1976. Why is it so important? This year will be a "make it or break it" year for O.W.W. The continuation of our program in support of women's activity in trade unions - and the development of new programs to help implement the goals of union women - are now crucially dependent upon the support of unions.

Our \$10,000 goal for this year's local union campaign is not frivolous - it is based on a rational assessment of what is required to support a much broader and deeper program addressing the need for a collective assessment of strategy, training, support and evaluation requirements.

Our membership is growing fast - we expect to be two or three times as big at the end of the year as we are now - with new members coming in from OFL/CLC affiliates, as well as teachers, nurses, members of faculty associations and other professionals working under a collective agreement. More membership is wonderful - but it also means more paper, more postage, larger meeting rooms, more activities - that is, more money!

If you've never made a contribution to O.W.W. - how about making this your first year? We are grateful for every donation regardless of size. If you have donated previously, we urge you to consider increasing - maybe even doubling your contribution this year. Please help us meet our financial goal and assist us in building a stronger, more equal and just future.

In solidarity,

Maureen O'Halloran  
President

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One final point: the OPIRG conference came under some criticism for racism. One reason for this was that a gay male stripper who performed one piece during the cultural evening had racist remarks about Native women in his piece. The remarks were quite offensive, but the gay male stripper was clearly outside both the conference organizing process and feminism in general; and it is uncertain that the major organizers knew what he was going to say. Less shocking, but in my eyes more serious, was the accusation by Lesbians of Colour that the conference represented basically the white women's point of view on the questions at hand. On the whole one has to agree with the Lesbians of Colour criticism. Of course, one conference cannot do everything, and the organizers certainly had their hands full as it was, especially given the conflicts among organizations purporting to represent prostitutes. But I think it would be too easy to say, "oh, the organizers should have done X or Y or invited A or B". No. Women of colour ought to have been represented - and everyone who spoke on panels (including me!) and who led workshops ought to have included an anti-racist perspective. Both pornography and prostitution affect people of colour in very particular ways. We need to see both women of colour presenting their thoughts on this, and white women doing some thinking on this as well. Elsewhere I have tried to 'x

an analysis of pornography that is not merely tokenistically inclusive of women of colour but which, more fundamentally, takes up the question of how American culture (of which porn is but an example) glorifies not just male aggressiveness but also imperialist and racist aggressiveness. (See my forthcoming article in special sexuality issue of New Internationalist, April 1986). However, my comments at the conference did not center on this point. This, in retrospect, was unfortunate. Perhaps I too was suffering from the issue ghettoization that affects us all the time (i.e. if it's anti-racist day let's not say anything about lesbians, and if we are talking about porn let's leave imperialism for another day).

Nevertheless, the conference was felt by most people attending it to be a positive step in the building of a women's movement that does not merely speak about or for sex trade workers and other marginalized groups but includes them meaningfully. And although the conference itself was clearly not a positive experience for many women of colour attending it, the fact that there was dialogue and criticism should help to make the next conference on similar topics much better.



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Of course, that is not how the organisers describe it. They call it a "meaningful cultural exchange". If it is an "exchange", perhaps they would like to organise a tour for Indians on the status of blacks in the U.S., or even the status of women in the U.S. They could conduct this tour through the slums, ghettos and playboy clubs, the psychiatric wards, asylums, old peoples' homes and divorce courts, and, of course, through private bedrooms where women have been known to be battered and abused.

If they are so concerned about the status of women, these tourists would do better to study such phenomena in their own country rather than travel so far to observe women of whom they have no understanding, whose language they do not know, and of whom, consequently, they can only carry back highly distorted impressions. India is a land of complex cultures that are centuries old. Is it possible to understand these cultures and the situation of women there in the space of less than a month?

The real purpose of the trip is revealed in the adjectives that are liberally sprinkled throughout the brochure - "luxurious", "comfortable", "convenient", "enjoyable". Of course, it is much more enjoyable and comfortable to look at misery from a distance than to look at it in one's own backyard. These tourists are implicitly being promised a psychological boost of the kind that is often indulged in by the wealthy - that of realising how "lucky" they are, how much "better off" than these "poor women".

The attitude behind this tour is, unfortunately, not a new one. All those who are concerned about the status of Indian women owe it to themselves to protest against this proposed tour.

LETTERS OF PROTEST  
SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:

FRAN P. HOSKEN  
WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL NETWORK NEWS  
187 GRANT STREET  
LEXINGTON, MA 02173  
U.S.A  
TEL. (617) 862-9431



## BULLETIN BOARD



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WANTED: SUBMISSIONS for an anthology about disabled women, by disabled women. Short stories, poems, graphics, history, photos, analysis, etc. Non-profit with proceeds to Disabled Women's Network. Topics of interest include affirmative action, violence (battering, rape, incest), sexuality, parenting, accessibility to women's services & the women's movement, and self awareness. For more information: write: Joanne Doucette, 122 Galt Ave., TORONTO, Ontario M4M 2Z3

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### TENTH SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN AND GAY FILM FESTIVAL

June 20-29, 1986

FRAMELINE is now accepting entries for the 10th San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Festival, June 20-29, 1986. Held each year during San Francisco's Lesbian/Gay Freedom Celebration, the Festival brings together the best in feature, documentary and short films and video works by and about lesbians and gay men. This, the world's oldest and largest annual screening of lesbian and gay film and video, is sponsored by FRAMELINE, a non-profit media organization. Awards will be presented to outstanding works in several categories. Formats accepted are 35mm, 16mm, super-8 films; 3/4" and 1/2" VHS video cassettes. The deadline for entries is April 15, 1986. For more information and entry forms contact FRAMELINE, PO Box 14792, San Francisco, CA 94114, or call (415) 861-5245.

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THE NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING in Ottawa, May 30, 31 and June 1. This year's theme "ORGANISING FOR POWER: MAKING THINGS HAPPEN FOR WOMEN IN 1986." Some travel subsidy money available for NAC members. For more information on this AGM and membership deadlines phone 922-3246.

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GET INVOLVED IN THE STRUGGLE FOR ABORTION RIGHTS - The Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics meets alternate Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. at the Trinity-St. Paul Centre, 427 Bloor St. West. We work actively for the repeal of the abortion law and the establishment of government-funded free standing clinics. Join us! For further information phone the OCAC office at 532-8193.

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"TURKEY STRUT" - Break out of your winter blues with a foot-stamping country celebration featuring Prairie Oyster. This benefit dance is presented by CANADIAN ACTION FOR NICARAGUA and TOLPUDDLE FARM LABOUR INFO CENTRE. Theatre, book tables, professional child care. SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 8 p.m. at 300 Bathurst St. \$6 advance/\$7 at the door. For more information contact Fred 766-5837 or Erma 422-0025.

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OF INTEREST TO SOUTH ASIAN PEOPLE - The South Asian Advisory Committee and the NDP are holding a 1-day forum "MOVING AHEAD: SOUTH ASIANS IN TODAY'S ONTARIO." A variety of issues such as education, employment and youth will be discussed. Come and express your views and concerns, Saturday, March 1, 9 - 4 p.m. at the auditorium 155 College St. Free child care. Free admission.

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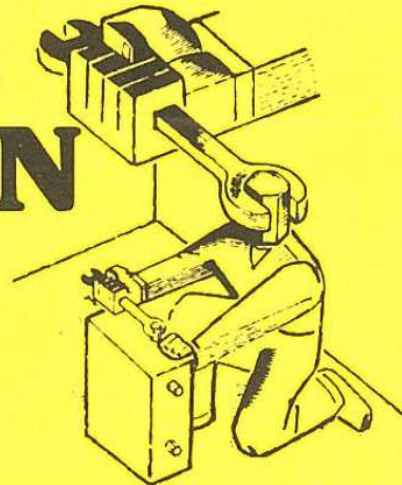
EDUCATION FOR ACTIVISTS - Sponsored by Alliance for Socialist Action, Sunday, April 6, 8 pm. "Will Japanese Labour Relations come to Canada?" Cherie MacDonald, OCAC activist, OPSEU member and long-time former member of a Japanese labour union will discuss the labour movement in Japan and examine new proposals for industrial relations in Canada advocated by such bodies as the MacDonald Royal Commission. 229 College Street, Room 208.

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**ANTI-RACISM WORKSHOPS** - The Toronto Lesbians of Colour Collective and two members of the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre have formed the Anti-Racism Work Group. They are currently offering workshops to women's groups in Toronto. These workshops are an excellent resource for white women's organizations wanting to improve their analysis of racism and how they as a group and individuals work with women of colour. We have a \$25 negotiable fee. To schedule your workshop call 594-2930 or 465-1781. Please book one month in advance.

Mark your calendar! **THE ANTI-INTERVENTION COALITION** presents a fundraiser at the Bamboo Club, March 19, 8:00 p.m. **LATIN AMERICAN MUSIC NIGHT** featuring group and individual performances. Then on Sunday, April 13, we'll be presenting British folk singer **ROY BAILEY IN CONCERT**, 8:00 p.m., Trinity Church, 427 Bloor St. W. Tickets at DEC. Saturday, June 14, the **ANTI-INTERVENTION DEMONSTRATION AND PUBLIC FAIR**. March from City Hall to Ryerson. Booths, food, children's activities and more. Come and make a day of it! If you or your group would like to participate phone 535-8779.

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# WOMEN SAY NO! TO RACISM

FROM  
TORONTO  
TO  
SOUTH  
AFRICA



SATURDAY  
MARCH  
8,  
1986

## International Women's Day

Rally gathering at 10:30 a.m., Convocation Hall, University of Toronto

March to Fair 3 — 6 p.m., Jorgenson Hall, Ryerson

### DANCES

**March 1st:** 8 p.m. - 1 a.m. Organized by U. of T. Divestment Comm. & Canadians Concerned About S. Africa. Location: Graduate Students' Union. Everyone Welcome.

**March 8th:** At the Concert Hall, 889 Yonge St. Organized by African, Ethiopia Anti-Hunger Collective, and Native Women's Resource Centre. Tickets \$7 Ad. \$8 At The Door. Available at Native Women's Resource Centre, 245 Gerrard, 3rd World Books, 942 Bathurst, Toronto Women's Bookstore, 73 Harbord, Sliding Scale at S.C.M., 333 Bloor W. All Women Welcome.

### EVENTS

**March 1st:** Anti-Apartheid Demo - 11 a.m. King & Bay. Women Speak Out For Choice — Abortion Law On Trial - 2-4 p.m. Trinity St. Paul's, 427 Bloor W.

**March 2nd:** Racism In Ontario Government Workplaces. Organized by Ad Hoc Committee on Wei-Fu's Complaint. 1-4 p.m. (Registration 12:30), 33 Cecil St. Childcare Available.

**March 4th:** Anti-Racist Forum. Sponsored by The March 8th Coalition. 7-10 p.m. St. Christopher House, 761 Queen W.

**March 5th:** Cultural/Political Evening Against Racism. Sponsored by Women Working With Im-

migrant Women (W.W.I.W.) 8 p.m. For information on location call 978-8201.

**March 6th:** Women Under Apartheid. Sponsored by Anti-Apartheid Coalition, 7:30 p.m. For information call Margie 533-8821.

**March 7th:** Zindzi Mandela (not yet confirmed) or A.N.C. Speaker U. of T., Convocation Hall.

**March 9th:** South Asian Women Coming Together. For information call 978-8201

**March 10th:** Feminist Cabaret. Sponsored by Nightwood Theatre & Women's Cultural Building. 8-10 p.m. at Lee's Palace, Bloor W.

### FOR INFO

**For Information Call:** Ontario Public Interest Research Group (O.P.I.R.G.): 978-4575 or U. of T. Women's Centre: 978-8201.

All events wheelchair accessible unless otherwise indicated.

March 8th Rally interpreted for the hearing impaired. Men interested in doing childcare please contact Ne 591-6793

At Fair: Native Women Only Space. Black ... Women Only Space.

JOIN US ON MARCH 8!

WOMEN SAY NO TO RACISM FROM TORONTO TO SOUTH AFRICA

International Women's Day grew out of the struggles of poor and immigrant women workers in the 19th and early 20th centuries. In those days, our foremothers were demanding better working conditions, equality for women, full political rights and an end to police repression.

Today, we are still fighting for many of the same demands: equal pay for work of equal value, first contract legislation, mandatory affirmative action and the right to unionize. We hope that you will join us on March 8, 1986 -- whether you are a man or a woman -- to address the theme of racism from Toronto to South Africa and to help build the tradition of fighting for the rights of all women.

The intense and ongoing struggle in South Africa has brought the fight against racism to the attention of the world. But racism begins at home. It begins here with the treatment of Native, Black, Chinese, South Asian and other Peoples of Colour in Canada and North America.

That is why women in Toronto are taking to the streets on March 8th to say a resounding "No to Racism!" From Toronto to South Africa!

The struggle against racism and apartheid begins here with each of us and we urge all women to join in solidarity on March 8!

SUBSCRIBE TO THE IWDC NEWSLETTER!!

The IWDC Newsletter provides a vehicle for socialist-feminist activists to analyze, discuss and report on our political work and our visions. It is the voice of an activist organization. If you subscribe you will be kept in tune with the key issues women are dealing with, and at the same time support a socialist-feminist group. Subscribe now!

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International Women's Day Committee, P.O. Box 70, Station F,  
Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2L4

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 events or issues or in different constituencies.

We welcome new members. For information call Nancy at 531-6608.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY COMMITTEE  
P.O. Box 70, Station F  
Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2L4