

# International Women's Day Committee newsletter



Jewels Graphics/Sarita Johnson

August 1986 - South Africa Women's Day



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial . . . . .	p.3
Letters . . . . .	p.4
Superplastics Update: Workers Win! . . . . .	p.5
Defend Clinics . . . . .	p.5
Cap the NDP . . . . .	p.6
Manushi . . . . .	p.6
Tory Sex . . . . .	p.7
South African Women's Day . . . . .	p.9
Fruits Against Apartheid . . . . .	p.9
Namibia . . . . .	p.10
Zimbabwe . . . . .	p.11
Mystery on Harbord Street . . . . .	p.13
Big Mountain . . . . .	p.15
Our Right to Read and Write . . . . .	p.15
Inglis Greedy . . . . .	p.18

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PH. PARKER



## Editorial:

## Regulate Capital Not Sex

The proposed legislation banning all pornography and erotica and establishing harsher penalties for both child sexual abuse and children's own sexual activities was tabled by John Crosbie shortly before he was shuffled off to his new portfolio, Transport. Trying to look for the silver lining in the Tory cloud, let us hope that the tight regulatory approach pursued by Crosbie in the realm of sex and porn will be more appropriate in the field of transportation, where deregulation has wreaked havoc with rail transport serving small towns and is threatening to undermine unions in the airline industry. But perhaps Tory ministers simply change course as they exchange ministry desks: now you regulate sex and I deregulate capital, and then we'll switch. (Whoever said role-playing was unheard of on Parliament Hill?)

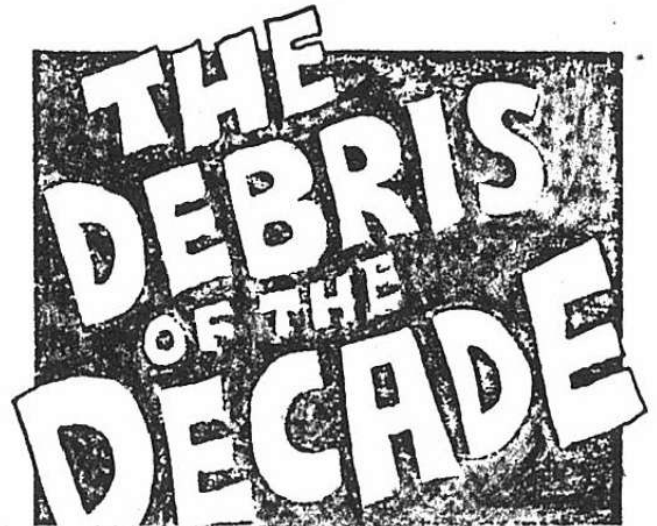
Speaking of deregulation, most of the media did not include the Minister responsible for the Status of Women in their list of shuffles—which is probably a fair indication of its real importance. But the fine print in the Globe and Mail stated, without any editorial comment, that Barbara MacDougall (who became notorious last year for using our money to bail out finance capital) is now the Minister of/for Women.

What is interesting about MacDougall is that her main portfolio is the newly created one of Minister for Privatization. Yes, that's what it's called. I guess transferring millions from our pockets to the credit ledgers of the banks was good practice for what is called deregulation but is really just a different type of regulation, one in favour of capital.

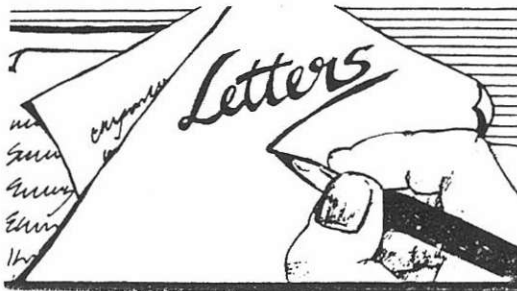
The controversial anti-porn and anti-child sexual abuse bill (see article in this issue) is now in the hands of Ramon Hnatyshyn. This might make it easier for the government to retract some of the more draconian parts of the bill if public pressure against its blanket ban on all erotica and porn continues. Be that as it may, it is crucial to continue writing letters and mobilizing against the yet

unnamed bill. Despite a couple of provisions that may help children suffering sexual abuse, on the whole it is another example of Tory mis-regulation.

The anti-porn provisions are so sweeping that the government could afford to pretend to compromise by dropping the infamous catch-all phrase "or other sexual activity" from the list of forbidden acts. Too many people, including feminists, have already fallen into a trap by saying that the problem with the bill is that it bans depictions of "normal" as well as "abnormal" sex acts. Most Canadians would probably be happy if the government changed the bill so that "only" "abnormal" sexual practices were forbidden. We must challenge the whole framework of normal vs. abnormal and refuse to play the game of "well, if you take-out oral sex we'll be happy".



What we need to do is denounce the bill as a whole, call for measures to empower children and women who suffer sexual abuse without relying on the police or other "protective" agencies, and tell the government that regulation ought to apply to the economic abuses of capital, not to consensual sexual activity or to depictions of sex. "Regulate capital, not sex" could be what Barbara MacDougall needs to hear from feminists, as she tries to sort out the contradictions of her new double portfolio.



Dear Sheryl,

It is, as always, good to hear from you and encouraging to hear that women so far away are also fighting towards the same goals as us, women of Zimbabwe.

We feel that it is important to keep in touch with women and what they are doing in other parts of the world. In fact we have decided to build up information and friendship exchange links with as many other women's organizations as possible.

WAG is progressing slowly in its haphazard way, despite the problems that we face. This year three project committees have been set up - Baby Dumping, Domestic Violence and Sexual Harassment. Each issue needs vast amounts of time and energy, more than we have.

At the moment, we are thinking in terms of a workshop for this year on "Domestic Violence", but no plans have yet been formulated. We have started a monthly discussion group to promote discussion and open talking on relevant issues. The first meeting was very well attended, discussing "Abortion - Woman's right to choose". It was a great meeting and good for our spirits. The next topics will be "Domestic Violence" and "Sexual Harassment" and "Maintenance". That covers for as many months as we can see ahead.

The newsletter too is being revamped. A change in emphasis to more simple stories and lots of pictures relating to women's issues. We will send a copy when the first is out. At the present we still have no funding for it.

Also new, WAG is starting a small library resource centre, so we are collecting as much information as possible. So if you think you have anything that might be relevant or useful, please send it. So with all these new ideas and actions, we are going forward slowly - the task is always huge.

Good to hear from you. Love from all at WAG.

Rosie  
Women's Action Group  
PO Box 135  
Harare, Zimbabwe  
Africa

## RESPONSE TO E. FRY SOCIETY

I am writing these comments in response to an article in the March, 1986 IWDC Newsletter, entitled "A Wave of Reaction". This article provided the position of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies on the Fraser Report's recommendations on prostitution. In it they state that "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." While the report's recommendations may certainly appear enlightened, in view of the Tory government's subsequent passage of Bill C-49, its suggestions leave a lot to be desired, as it attempts to satisfy everyone.

The Fraser Committee recommended that some forms of prostitution in 'private' be pseudo-legitimized through a system of legalization (a matter quite different from decriminalization) which would allow up to two persons over 18 to work from their own homes, and regulated prostitution establishments to operate according to guidelines established by the relevant province or territory. It also viewed 'public' forms of prostitution as a serious enough social problem to warrant further criminalization, although, as is the way with liberalism, this was disguised under the cloak of partial decriminalization.

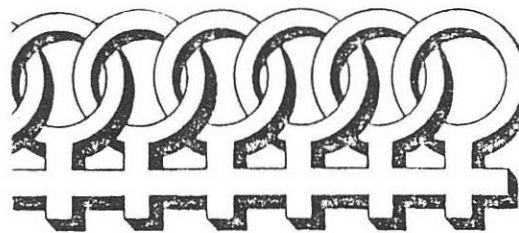
continued on page 18

## Defend Clinics

by Mary Gellatly

The Morgentaler Abortion Clinic is facing yet another cycle of legal harassment and charges. It is not just Drs. Morgentaler and Colodny at the Harbord Street clinic who may face new charges within the next few weeks, but also Dr. Robert Scott who recently opened a new clinic in Toronto. The opening of Dr. Scott's clinic challenges the federal abortion law and provides an essential medical service to women who face decreasing access to and barriers from Therapeutic Abortion Committees (TAC) and the hospital system.

The announcement of the Scott Clinic not only ruffled the feathers of the anti-choice, but of the Attorney General, Ian Scott and other Liberal cabinet members as well. Ian Scott had stated on record that new charges would not be laid at the Harbord Street Clinic while Drs. Morgentaler, Scott and Smoling awaited the appeal at the Supreme Court level. The Attorney General changed his tune, however, when Dr. Scott opened the new clinic and he ordered police to investigate the clinics and threatened to lay charges against Drs. Scott, Colodny and Morgentaler. (Surely four jury decisions finding Dr. Morgentaler not guilty is enough!).



Supporters of the new clinic rallied quickly and held a press conference representing over 60 diverse groups from labour, NDP, church, women's and other communities, all demanding that no charges be laid and all existing charges against the doctors be dropped. Moreover, the Attorney General should follow the precedence set in Quebec and declare the federal abortion law

unenforceable in Ontario.

The police were, however, quick to follow the Attorney General's order and "evidence gathering" at the clinics began. Plain clothes police directed their investigations at the women who depend on this service and began taking photographs of everyone entering the clinics. Further intimidation included approaching women leaving the clinics and asking them for their names and if they wanted to go to the hospital. In one case, two women were followed to an athletic field and threatened with arrest if they did not provide their names. Such blatant intimidation is totally unacceptable. Moreover this harassment is

continued on page 16

## Workers Win

by Carolyn Egan

The workers at Superplastics have finally won their first contract! They had been on strike for ten months. Most of the strikers are Punjabi speaking men and women, members of Communication Workers of Canada Local 535. The strike was a classic first contract fight with a boss who did not want a union. The issues were basic: fairer wages, seniority rights, overtime pay, and health and safety language in the contract. These workers won through sheer determination on the picket line. Not one crossed the line. They saw their jobs taken by scabs. They were subjected to arrests, racism and close police surveillance. Although most had little union experience, they stood firm.

Unfortunately, they didn't receive much support from other unions, the women's movement or the community at large. IWDC, the South Asian Women's Group, Women Working with Immigrant Women and the Communication Workers organized a very successful solidarity picket on May 7th which shut down the plant. These groups and the International Socialists were going out every week to strengthen the line. The ONDP Women's Committee also organized a support picket. But there was not the broad-based support, on an ongoing basis, which would

continued on page 14



## Manushi

by Maria Wallis

On June 18, the South Asian Women's Group (S.A.W.G.) sponsored a talk by Madhu Kishwar on the struggles of Indian women in India.

Madhu Kishwar is an activist who also teaches at Delhi University. She is one of the founders of Manushi - A Journal about women and society, which is produced by a feminist group.

Manushi has a circulation of about 10,000 and is known for its combination of scholarly investigation and committed activism, analysis as well as testimony - it has played a role in publishing and supporting the various struggles of Indian women.

Madhu opened the discussion by soliciting questions from the audience (approximately 80 people). This approach enabled Madhu to touch on various topics hinting at both the diversity and complexity of issues present in India.

She spoke of 'dowry murders' or bride burning and the collusion between the in-laws and the police to report it as either an accident or suicide with a fake suicide note. Speaking on divorce, she highlighted the difficulties Indian women must go through to get only a small amount of alimony money. Expenditures on the army and the military overall is growing, she said, while the percentage allocated for family education and health is only 0.8% of the budget in the fifth Five-Year Plan. Madhu also spoke on



the situation of minorities in India. "My commitment," she said, "is to human rights of every person, black, white or whatever with special interest in women's rights." Madhu warned against generalizations. "Dealing with a country as vast and populated as India we must acknowledge, recognize and understand in depth all the nationalities."

Unfortunately, Madhu had no time to touch on the workings and objectives of Manushi. . . . . I will present a brief overview of Manushi.

continued on page 17

## Cap the NDP

by Nancy Farmer

The highlight of the New Democratic Party convention held in Hamilton at the end of June was the Campaign For An Activist Party (CAP). Calling for a revitalization of the NDP with an activist agenda, and also strongly opposing Separate School funding, CAP was formed by a group of NDP socialists in the fall of '85. Traditional left-leaners joined forces with the New Democrats To Preserve Public Education. CAP ran an impressive slate of candidates at the convention including Judy Rebick for President, Mary Rowles and George Ehring for Vice President and Pat Finaly and Diane Meagan for Members at Large.

The basis behind the CAP campaign was to put forward a new strategy for the Party: "If we are going to change society we must do more than elect better legislators". CAP's goal was to get the party more involved on a grassroots level, in social movements and coalitions that are supporting issues such as strikes, a women's right to an abortion, and defending solidarity and peace, rather than simply existing as an electoral machine. This is imperative if the NDP is to distinguish itself from the Liberals and broaden its electoral base.

CAP also called for a shorter work week; it opposed free trade with the US; gave support for free standing abortion clinics

continued on page 7

continued from page 6

and Dr. Morgentaler; and expressed opposition to the war drive and solidarity with liberation struggles around the world.

Besides being a thorn in the side of the establishment, CAP was able to pull a respectable 30% of the vote for its candidates, and not surprisingly won the same percentage of votes in the separate school debate. Unfortunately what weakened the campaign was that many initial CAP supporters appeared to switch sides on the question of separate school funding. One could feel a tremendous amount of pressure on delegates to toe the party line. Labour voted in block to extend funding and many usually dependable "left" people spoke in its favour. One IWD member commented "how can anyone who even remotely considers themselves a socialist support separate school funding"? That's a good question; however, this policy has been on the books since 1970 and should have been debated long before now and long before funding was extended to grade 10.



Although the convention is over, the Campaign For an Activist Party is not. CAP is planning a fall meeting to discuss how to continue to organize. Hopefully it will attract more of us from the "left" within the party. CAP put forward some good arguments. We need this type of agitation. If the party doesn't remain true to its socialist roots, I'm afraid that the NDP could well become another Liberal Party.

It is important to mention that some excellent resolutions, calling for sanctions against South Africa, condemning the harassment of women seeking abortions at the clinics, demanding immediate government action on the access problem and calling for support of the Gainer's Strikers, were passed overwhelmingly at the convention.

## Tory Sex

by Debi Brock

The latest tory Bills on porn, prostitution and child sex abuse have been tabled in the House. As feminists and gays who oppose the censorship of porn have been warning, the recommendations around porn bear little relation to the demands of pro-censorship feminists, and instead express the conservative moral view of those in political power. Pornography is defined as "any visual matter showing vaginal, anal or oral intercourse, ejaculation, sexually violent behavior, bestiality, incest, necrophilia, masturbation or other sexual activity" (if you happen to be imaginative enough to think of something which this list does not already encompass). 'Degrading pornography' includes any porn which shows lactation or menstruation. Clearly, alternative and positive images (and even the most mundane and boring of sexual interactions) can be encompassed by this legislation.

Not content with the comprehensive and punitive powers of Bill C-49, this latest tory Bill includes several recommendations dealing specifically with juvenile prostitution, which is regarded as a form of child sexual abuse. While they did not go so far as to criminalize the activities of juvenile prostitutes themselves, as the Badgley committee (upon whose ultra-conservative report and suspect data collection methods they draw heavily) recommended, this is small comfort since C-49 is quite adequate for the task. A 'juvenile' prostitute is a person under 18, despite the fact that 14 is the age of consent for most (hetero)sexual acts, and few prostitutes are under the age of 15. Currently, there is no recognition of juvenile prostitution in criminal law, a matter which the tories want to rectify through the criminalization of the clients and pimps of hookers under 18, whether they realized that s/he was under 18 or not. While I don't normally like to come to the defense of customers, this age distinction does seem fairly arbitrary and difficult to

continued on page 8



continued from page 7

determine. Bona fide pimps too are the objects of my contempt, but this legislation is broad enough to encompass lovers and roommates who don't bear much relation to popular stereotypes. Finally, using legislation as a 'cure' does not deal with the real problems that young prostitutes face, like unemployment and family violence, the latter of which is structurally embedded in the patriarchal nuclear family, and the former, in capitalism.

This Bill also takes on porn involving young people by expanding the range of criminal offences against those who make, distribute or possess it, as well as expanding legislation concerning the sexual abuse of young people more generally. This legislation cannot encompass the far more pervasive sexualization of children in the mainstream media. It does, however, pose a possible danger in enforcing a restriction against sex education materials which contain visual depictions, like the book Show Me (which was referred to quite negatively in the Badgley report).

Proposed legislation concerning sexual abuse is expanded to encompass three new provisions for 'sexual interference', making it an offence to touch anyone under 14 for a sexual purpose, "with any part of the body or an object"; 'invitation to sexual touching', which criminalizes propositions; and 'sexual exploitation' which is designed to "protect" those between 14 and 18 from "sexual abuse committed by persons in positions of trust or authority". These categories would bring to 10 the number of sexual offences in the criminal code which could be applicable to children, none of which, to my knowledge, have done anything to really 'protect' kids. The current 7 are sexual assault, indecent acts and indecent exposure, incest, buggery, bestiality and associated offences, parent or guardian procuring sexual activity, and householder permitting sexual activity. Incest legislation, which does need some revisions, is not touched at all by the recommendations. Incest is currently narrowly defined as being acts of intercourse between close blood relations; with a parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent or grandchild". Closeness in age (where the accused is less than 3 years

older than the victim) would no longer be permitted as a defence. Peer group sexual experimentation is therefore brought into the realm of 'abuse'. Since persons under 14 cannot legally consent to sexual play, even with others of their own age, 'sex' and 'sexual abuse' are regarded as the same thing. It is this denial of the possibility of positive and pleasurable sexual interactions among young people which is the most threatening thing about this legislation.

On the positive side, the recommendations would allow changes in principles of evidence, so that when a child provides evidence s/he would have the right to be believed without corroboration from a second witness. The age of consent for buggery would be lowered from 21 to 18, and the offence of gross indecency would be repealed altogether. These offences have been largely used for the persecution of gays.

Legal strategies are cheaper and quicker than social strategies, if you are a government out to score political points without working too hard for them. However, they often create as many new problems as they 'solve' old ones, and despite frequent references to the use of law to "protect" young people, legislation is seldom a preventive tool. Legal strategies also point the blame at individual deviant actors and ignore the fact that violence, including sexual violence, against women and kids are deeply entrenched, and for the most part, normalized and acceptable, in our social organization. While there is a need and a place for legislation on non-consensual sex in criminal law, the Tories' latest proposals are clearly off the mark. These Bills deliver the goods to the forces of moral conservatism in Canada. We must strengthen our resistance.

A coalition group has been established to challenge these Bills (particularly the recommendations concerning porn), which will probably not be passed before the late fall.

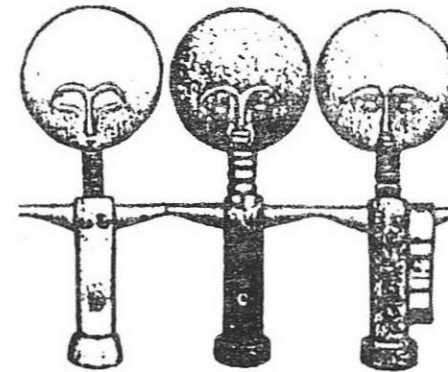
A large public meeting is being planned for September. Time, date and place to be announced. For more information on this coalition, contact Gary Kinsman at 929-0689.

## South African Women's Day

August 9 is another important date on the calendar because it marks the thirtieth anniversary of South African Women's Day.

On this day thirty years ago, 20,000 women of all races from across South Africa marched to Pretoria in what became one of the most memorable demonstrations in the history of the South African struggle. Demonstrations were also held in every village and town throughout South Africa. Women were protesting against the issuing of the passbook or "dampas" to African women.

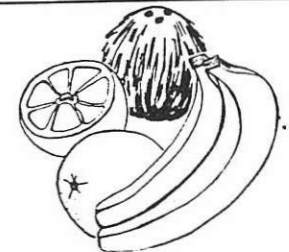
Passbooks are used to control the movement of Africans and have many far-reaching effects. Everyone over the age of 16 must carry a passbook. Since August 9, 1956, 50,000 women have been arrested for not carrying a passbook. Although the name of the passbook has been changed, it still amounts to the same attack on lives of African men and women.



As we commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of South African Women's Day, we recognize the contribution of women like Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Albertina Sisulu, Dorothy Nyembe, Fatima Meer and many others who have helped to shape the nature of the struggle in South Africa with their relentless courage and determination. We also remember our sisters languishing in South Africa's prisons for demanding a more just society.

Join us and participate in the events planned for the day!

The South African Women's Day Committee (of which IWDC is a member) is holding a rally on Saturday, August 9th at 2pm at Nathan Phillips Square. The speakers will include Janet Ndhlovu of the African National Congress, Lucia Hamatenya of the South West Africa People's Organization, and Shirley Carr, President of the Canadian Labour Congress. Call 461-4255 for further information.



## Fruits Against Apartheid

by Catherine Glen

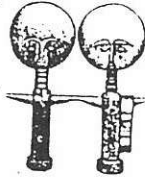
The Simon Nkodi Anti-Apartheid Committee is a group of lesbians and gay men working to promote solidarity with the struggle against South Africa's system of apartheid. Their stated objectives are to do anti-apartheid work within the gay and lesbian community and to establish a gay/lesbian presence in the anti-apartheid movement. The committee has been named in honour of Simon Nkodi, a black gay activist detained by the South African government since the summer of 1984.

Nkodi is one of the Vaal 22, a group of community leaders who are presently on trial in the town of Delmas, outside Johannesburg, charged with high treason, subversion, terrorism and incitement to murder. The South African state is trying to hold the 22 responsible for the largely spontaneous explosion of popular anger which rocked the Transvaal in 1984 when government-appointed councillors attempted to raise rents on Black housing in the area.



## Namibia

by Josephine Boas



### Background

Namibia is a vast country in the south-western part of the continent of Africa. Namibia, or South West Africa as it was once called, has a long history of colonial occupation and oppression. Germany occupied Namibia until 1920 when, under the League of Nations, South West Africa was turned over to South African administration. The United Nations terminated the League of Nations mandate in 1966 when it found that South Africa was not fulfilling its obligations under the mandate. South Africa has continued to occupy Namibia illegally.

SWAPO, the liberation movement in Namibia, was formed in 1966, twenty years ago.

### The Role of Women in Namibia

Women are the most disadvantaged sector of the population in Namibia. They are oppressed in two ways; by virtue of their race and by virtue of their gender. There is very little offered to women in terms of education and development. The black woman's plight in the rural areas is almost insurmountable. The best agricultural land has been reserved for white occupation and large parts of the areas where blacks live suffer from soil erosion, lack of water and over-grazing.

While men leave the rural areas to seek employment as contract labourers in the southern part of Namibia (in industry and mining), women's workload has increased by inhuman proportions as they try to produce enough from the land to feed themselves and their families. Much of the cultivation in rural areas is still done with hand hoes and it is the women who do much of the field work, using their hands for tilling, sowing, harvesting and threshing.

Because of the social and economic hardships in the rural areas, some women are forced to seek employment in the urban areas. The regime tries to keep women out of the cities because they believe that women

have no useful labour purpose there. The laws are so strict that only a small number of women can be considered settled urban dwellers. For those who have legal status to remain in the urban areas, their life remains one of insecurity as their status may be rescinded for a variety of pretexts. The lives of women living both "legally" and "illegally" in the cities are further complicated by the chronic shortage of housing for women. Black women have no maternity or unemployment benefits. Relatively few women are able to obtain professional qualifications as nurses or teachers and when they are fortunate enough to find work, they face discrimination in their training and careers.

Despite these severe hardships faced by Namibian women, they have always been a strong force in the struggle towards self-determination for their people. Their role is expanding and diversifying at an encouraging pace.

Because of the daily harassment and enormous sufferings inside the country, thousands of women have left the country and joined the struggle against oppression, racism, colonialism and exploitation. Women play a very active role in the struggle and are at the forefront of the battlefield. Many women have already made sacrifices for the liberation of Namibia.

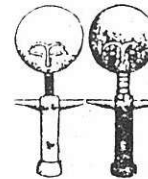
In December, 1959, in Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia, when the racist regime forced our people to move from their old locations, women took the lead and protested against this forced removal. The first victim who was shot dead was a woman and this day has honoured those women who fell and many others who have sacrificed their lives for freedom. December 10 is marked as Namibian Women's Day.

continued on page 11



## Zimbabwe

by Sheryl Boswell



On the 30th of October, 1983, in Zimbabwe, Africa, police were reported to be rounding up single women suspected of being prostitutes. Apartments occupied by single women and bars were raided and women "roaming" the streets were arrested, herded into army trucks and put in prisons around Zimbabwe.

This violation of personal liberty and the threat to freedom of movement brought together over 100 women. The Women's Action Group (WAG) was formed to protest against what became known as "Operation Clean-up".

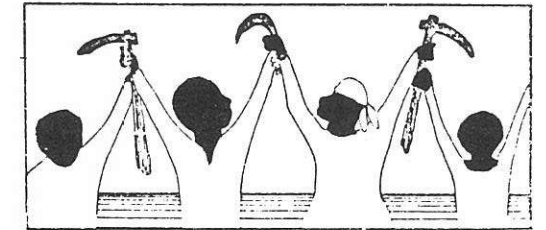
In May, 1984, we organized an exciting week-end conference "Women Speak Out" attended by 450 women from projects, co-operatives, trade unions, and the civil service from all over Zimbabwe. Many women had never been to the city before. For many women, the fact that there were so many women who felt as they did was an exciting revelation.

As a result of the conference, the following activities were initiated:

- \* a quarterly newsletter published in three languages (English, Shona, Ndebele) and distributed free of charge;
- \* a drama group, the Workers Rights Theatre Group, composed of women and men from the garment, clothing and engineering industry, has written and performed three plays to date - "The Problems of Women", a play about sexual harassment at work and, most recently, a play about unwanted pregnancies;
- \* two other workshops have been organized, one entitled "Women at Work" involving 250 women trade unionists from the urban centres in Zimbabwe and last year's conference on unwanted pregnancies and baby dumping;
- \* monthly public presentations are organized to discuss a wide variety of topics.

The Women's Action Group is, as its name suggests, an active group based in the capital city, Harare, and open to all women. WAG is firmly committed to the empowerment of women through their participation and leadership in issues that concern women.

For more information about WAG's recent activities, see their letter to IWDC.



continued from page 10

When the racist troops raided a Namibian refugee centre in Southern Angola at Kassinga, May, 1978, the majority of the people killed were women and children. Already women have proved that they are as capable as men in carrying out all kinds of activities and that they can contribute equally to the overall development of the Namibian society.

In the liberation movement, SWAPO, the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people, there is no discrimination between men and women. Depending on their strength and capability, everyone is assigned a task, irregardless of their sex. We have women who serve as leaders in the highest ranks of SWAPO e.g. the Central Committee. Women are also members of PLAN - People's Liberation Army of Namibia.

In the refugee settlements women serve as teachers, nurses, group leaders, etc., just to mention a few. There are self-help projects such as weaving, tailoring and knitting projects and women are encouraged to participate in these projects. The SWAPO Women's Council is mainly responsible for the political mobilization of women, both inside and outside the country. The Women's Council

continued on page 12



continued from page 11

also works with other women's groups and organizations all over the world to enlighten them about the struggle in Namibia and the role of women in the struggle. The Women's Council represents Namibian women at international forums like the U.N. Conference in Copenhagen, 1980, and the recent Women's Conference in Nairobi. The SWAPO Women's Council also carries out a literacy campaign in the settlements because Namibian people generally, but particularly women, are denied education.

The whole aim of having these projects is to get skills, to train women to be self-reliant so that when freedom is achieved women will be part and parcel of the reconstruction of our country.

(Josephine Boas is a Namibian student in Toronto and a member of SWAPO.)



"For a week in June the Toronto arts and political communities focused the city's attention on the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. Toronto Arts Against Apartheid and the Rally Against Apartheid were both successful in involving people in a cause which too often seems distant and futile. Missed by the media hype however was a significant performance event by the Simon Nkodi Anti-Apartheid Committee on May 28.

...The seven performances and one film all related to the issues of racism and apartheid. What was impressive about the evening was the way in which the pieces contained a wide range of styles and themes, all the while complementing each other and creating an entertaining and instructive whole."

The Simon Nkodi Anti-Apartheid Committee invites all concerned lesbians and gay men to join them in supporting the struggle against apartheid. Up-dates on the Vaal 22 trial can be found in *Rites* magazine. For further information about the Simon Nkodi Anti-Apartheid Committee telephone Lina at 961-2009 or Catherine at 783-2731 or write to the Committee c/o the ILGA Support Group, 105 Carlton Street, 4th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5B 1M2.

## Mystery on Harbord Street

by Dorothy Doers

It was a hot and hazy night, and Mona Lott decided to order a beer instead of her usual tea when the waitress, dacked out in Fran's regulation black and white, looked at her and said in a tired voice: "And with the lemon chiffon pie what will you have to drink?" As soon as the waitress had turned her back Mona thought it would not do to drink beer while eating pie but, what the heck, she didn't want to call the waitress back. And I'm sure they're not unionized, she mumbled, taking all her papers out of her plastic zebra-stripe bag.

The table for four was quickly covered in forms. Mona was filling out a Canada Council application that was due the next day, and had decided to break up her long night of bullshitting about her work with a visit to Fran's at College and Yonge. "Purpose of travel", the form asked. Mona licked the top of her pen, which featured a Mountie who saluted if you shook it, and wrote down: "A visit to the West Edmonton Mall is essential to complete my Ph.D. research." She ran her fingers through her dyed-blue hair, and tugged at her zebra earrings. The waitress returned with the beer, for which Mona was now grateful, even if it didn't go with the pie.

"Nature of research." Another pause. "To investigate consumer patterns by means of participant-observer methodology." She



chuckled and bit the Mountie's head. Ha, that means they have to subsidize my shopping as well as my observing. She kicked off her winklepicker black satin pumps and slouched back, straightening the wrinkles on her Goodwill fuchsia dress. "Special materials." The pie arrived and Mona set it down on top of the budget form. I've got it! "Seven large shopping bags, reinforced vinyl, with special anti-sweat handles. \$200."

Mona looked up and saw the waitress trudging across the restaurant carrying five blueberry muffins on plates on one arm, and five beers on the other. Gee, I seem to have set a trend. Mona suddenly thought: What if I put in for an assistant? After all, I couldn't possibly carry all my own shopping! Maybe that waitress would like a new job. I could unionize her, I suppose. But then I would have to get a travel grant for her too. Maybe it would be better to wait until I'm in Edmonton: I could hire one of the women on strike at Gainer's so she could make some money.

Now I have to do the budget, she sighed to herself, and looked out the window for inspiration. A strange-looking man with bloodshot eyes and a touque waved at her from the sidewalk. She then saw that he had a pile of the next day's *Globe and Mail* beside him. Oh, maybe I should get the paper, there'll be something there about Fergie and Andrew —maybe even a picture of my sister and her husband Lord Bleusang at the wedding! She rummaged around in her zebra purse and took out a plastic leopard-skin wallet. Extracting a quarter from it, she got up and walked to the door, waving the quarter: "Could I have a paper?" The man hobbled toward her and grinned menacingly. Why do they have to hire these guys to sell the paper, she wondered.

Back at her table, she ogled the nuptial imagery and tried to see what the material of the wedding dress really was —this had been a hot controversy in *Vogue* and *The National Enquirer* last week. She was scanning the print for the names of her sister and her sister's relatives: ah, there it is, "Lady Loaded was wearing a purple silk short dress..."



continued from page 13

Just as she was about to turn the page to see what her sister's mother-in-law was wearing, another story caught her eye. "MORGENTALER KIDNAPPED". Her heart stopped. God, here I am worrying about Fergie's wedding dress and Henry's been taken off by the Right to Life! The lemon chiffon pie rose in her gullet. She felt sick and was flooded with guilt about the triviality of her reading habits. Why worry about royal weddings when herstory is being made?

Only after five minutes had been taken up by this guilt could she remind herself to finish the story. "According to police sources, Dr. Henry Morgentaler failed to appear at his Harbord Street clinic this morning for his appointments. The doorman at the Harborcastle Hilton said that Dr. Morgentaler, who has a suite there, had last been seen at 11:00 p.m. the previous evening when he came to the bar for his usual nightcap, a Chivas Regal on the rocks. His bed had been slept in and his toothbrush was still wet, so police detectives believe that he left early in the morning and was kidnapped on his way. There is a 24-hour security protection for Dr. Morgentaler, Staff Sergeant Lines said, 'therefore the incident must have occurred on the street'. The Chief of Police, P.I. Coon, said that a message claiming responsibility for the kidnapping had been phoned in to the Globe and Mail newsroom. However, this message, supposedly from the B Violet Lesbian Feminist Collective Against Male Doctors, has not been authenticated. The investigation continues."

Mona gasped. Could it really be a separatist group? Maybe it's just those Right to Lifers putting the blame on others. On the other hand... Her brain was spinning. She thought: I should call my gang at SIS, and see what they think. She doubted that any of the Sisters In Struggle had heard about this yet, they all went to bed early. She reached into her purse to find the SIS phone tree and a quarter for the phone. Her hand suddenly got sticky. What's this? She wondered, pulling out a day-old blueberry muffin. She recoiled in horror, since she was allergic to blueberries. Just as she was about to drop it under the table, she looked at the muffin

in her hand and noticed a bit of paper sticking out of it. With her other hand she pulled at it. It was a corner of a Now magazine page with a couple of personal ads. One was circled in violet ink. Mona's heart was pounding wildly. She read it out loud: "Woman with blue hair and zebra shopping bag, meet me at Fran's College Street on July 25 at 1:00 a.m. Henry needs your help." Mona looked at her watch. It was 12:59.

WILL MONA FIND OUT WHERE HENRY IS? AND WHO SENT THE NOTE? DON'T MISS THE NEXT INSTALLMENT OF "MYSTERY AT THE CLINIC" TO APPEAR IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE IWDC NEWSLETTER

continued from page 5  
have helped to win a contract much earlier. The question is why?

The Ontario Federation of Labour recently held a conference on broadening the participation of workers of colour. This was reported on in our last issue. Many unionists and community activists attended. It was an important initiative. Opportunities to raise consciousness and discuss together are crucial. But what is even more crucial is to actively work together in support of concrete issues. These workers of colour at Superplastics were fighting in isolation. As appreciative as they were for the support received, they were well aware that it was quite limited. This can't help but have an impact on the strike, and strengthens the boss's hand.

If the union movement, the women's movement or any other progressive movement is serious about fighting racism and integrating an anti-racist perspective into its politics, it must make a priority of supporting the struggles and issues that workers of colour raise. Calls for support were made at International Women's Day, at the Canadian Labour Congress Convention, at the previously mentioned OFL conference, yet this strike was not taken up in a meaningful way. Hopefully this response will change as racism and the issues of unorganized workers become central to the political agenda. It is the responsibility of all of us to make this happen.

## Our Right to Read and Write

On September 6 hundreds of Torontonians will take to the streets in a celebration of the achievements made in the literacy rate throughout the world. September 8 is officially International Literacy Day and has traditionally been a day to recognize the successes of literacy campaigns in countries like Nicaragua, Cuba and Brazil as well as the work of Canadians in community-based literacy projects. However, as the following statistics clearly show, much work is yet to be done.

- \* 25% of Canada's adult population has less than a Grade 9 education
- \* 20% cannot read or write well enough to understand a newspaper or street sign or fill out a job application form
- \* in Toronto, 1 in 4 people over 15 is illiterate
- \* 70% of illiterate Canadians live in urban areas
- \* 3 out of 4 illiterates are Canadian-born
- \* Since 1960, the number of literate women has risen by 500 million. However, women still account for 2/3 of the world's illiterates (Women and Development, SCIC, Regina, 1986)

In order for all women and men to participate fully in society, literacy must be seen as a right, not as a privilege.



This is the third year that International Literacy Day is being recognized in Toronto and every year brings more committed people together who are raising people's awareness of the very real problem of illiteracy as it affects Canadians.

On September 6, we meet at 10:30 a.m. at Nathan Phillips Square. A parade will then take us to Trinity-Bellwoods Park for an afternoon picnic with music, games, food and other activities. On Wednesday, September 10 a forum will be held at DEC, 229 College St. on "Women and Literacy". Two women will speak about their work with literacy programs in St. Vincent and in India. Join us on September 6 and September 10 in saying that it is "our right to read and write."

## Big Mountain

by Carolyn Egan

The forced removal of an indigenous or traditional people from its ancestral area constitutes genocide according to the Geneva Accord. At Big Mountain, Arizona the U.S. Government has been attempting to forcibly relocate over 10,000 Diné (Navaho) people.

The land is mineral rich, and is said to contain up to two thirds of the remaining energy resources in the country. Puppet native councils have been set up by the government. They have little popular support and have signed away mineral rights. The Bureau of Indian Affairs is claiming that it is stepping in to settle a dispute between the Hopi and Navaho peoples, but this is not the case. The two groups have shared land in this area for over four hundred years. The Hopis are farmers and the Navaho are a pastoral people living in family groupings scattered throughout the area.

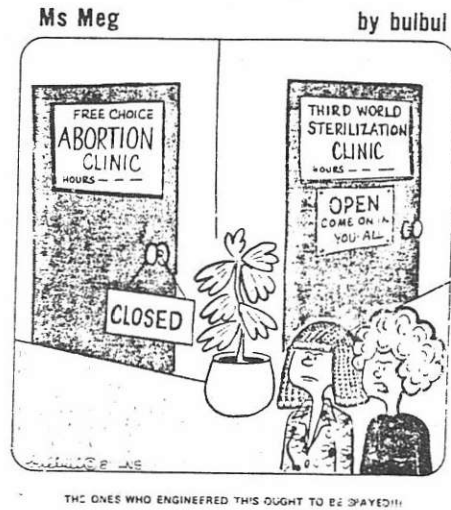
Tribal elders have issued a call for international support. Native people from across North America gathered to participate in a four day Sun Dance Ceremony which ended on July 8, the scheduled deadline. The Big Mountain Support Group and the Canadian Committee in Solidarity with Native Peoples held support activities in the Toronto area including a border stand and a demonstration at the U.S. Consulate on July 8. The removal has been temporarily stayed because of this support and the clear determination of the Diné to remain.

continued on page 16



continued from page 5

unnecessary as it is no secret that the clinics operate to provide abortions and the doctors state this publicly.



Such "evidence gathering" has, for the past few weeks, slowed down, not because of sudden concern for the patients but because of the Ontario Medical Associations (OMA) actions in opposition to the bill banning extra-billing. The clinics were more essential than ever as doctors disbanded TACs, cancelled hospital abortion procedures and withdrew their services. The Morgentaler and Scott clinics were flooded with calls as the number of procedures almost doubled. Doctors who, for the most part, have failed to publicly support free standing clinics, are referring patients to them.

While the bill banning extra-billing has been passed, some doctors are finding new methods of extra-billing. Among other services not covered under the OHIP fee schedule, women have found doctors charging up to \$150 to write a simple referral letter to TACs for abortion procedures. Some gynecologists are now refusing to do second trimester abortions as they receive substantially less under the OHIP fee schedule than the \$500 to \$600 they used to extra-bill. Such practises certainly belie any notion of money not being an issue in the extra-billing dispute.

We must be prepared for the Liberal Government's attack on the clinics and clearly demonstrate that the pro-choice majority will defend the staff and clinics. The abortion law is simply unworkable in Ontario and the Attorney General should, as is the case in Quebec, declare it unenforceable until the federal law is repealed. One week after any charges are laid against the doctors or the clinic(s) are raided, the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics will organize a demonstration at the Attorney General's office (7 p.m.; 18 King Street East). Please phone CCAC at 532-8193 for further information or attend general meetings held every second Tuesday at Trinity St. Paul Centre on Bloor St. W.

continued from page 15

As Elder Roberta Blackgoat has stated in Our Times, "No matter what they are going to do, we are going to stay... There is a hogan between these mountains, and we cannot have it if we are moved. We got no other place to have our medicine. It is our alter, our place to pray. We can't lose our area. It's like digging up a tree and planting the stump somewhere else. You know what will happen to the stump".

A self-sufficient culture is being destroyed and traditional people are being forced into white society. Twenty-five percent (25%) of those who have been relocated have died. This cannot be allowed to happen. If the government initiates further action we must be prepared to give the necessary support.

Contact the Big Mountain Support Group  
16 Spadina Road  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5R 2S7  
416-964-0169

Send Donations to:

Big Mountain Legal Defence/  
Offense Committee  
Big Mountain (jua)  
2501 N. 4th Street  
Flagstaff, Arizona  
86001 USA  
602-774-5233

continued from page 6

### Manushi

Manushi is put out voluntarily by women active in various areas of struggle. All writing, artwork and photography in Manushi is unpaid. Manushi does not accept grants from any institution, Indian or foreign. Nor does it accept any advertisements which depict women in oppressive or stereotyped roles. Manushi's revenue comes from small donations and subscriptions. In early 1986, Manushi received an award that was instituted in the memory of Smt. Chameli Devi Jain, a committed freedom fighter and worker for women's rights.

Manushi goes beyond things that are defined as women's issues such as rape and abortion. In Madhu's words, "Manushi attempts to explore and analyze as many significant things as possible happening around us, from the point of view of women, particularly women of oppressed groups and communities. It tries to develop a vision of an oppression-free world, not just a strategy for tackling isolated issues."

Some issues Manushi deals with:

- \* The harassment women face when contesting political elections (No.25, 1984)
- \* Harassment of prostitutes by the police (No.27, 1985)
- \* Risks women continue to take while giving birth (No.27, 1985)
- \* Cottage industry - another area of nonrecognition of women's economic contribution (No.33, 1986)
- \* Helping the unorganized - re: poor working conditions (No.32, 1986)
- \* Women trade union activists (No.33, 1986)
- \* How women suffered in Bhopal (No.29, 1986)
- \* Women and music (No.33, 1986)
- \* The myths/attitudes about the birth of a



girl. In some areas of India "to give birth to a girl is considered the punishment for sins of a previous birth, and a girl's death equivalent to paradise for her parents." (No.33, 1986)

Manushi reveals interesting facts which both reflect some aspects of the country and culture as well as demonstrates the various ways women are oppressed. For example, in Kerala, there is the Travancore Christian Succession Act (TCS) 1916. Under the TCS, if a man dies without making a will, all his property goes to his sons, to the exclusion of his daughters. (No.25, 1984) Then there is the Indian Divorce Act, 1869 to which Manushi has called for amendments giving men and women the same grounds for divorce. At present, men can get a divorce on grounds of adultery but women can get a divorce only on grounds of adultery coupled with bigamy, incest or cruelty. (No.33, 1986)

Manushi's blend of theory and practice is "to stimulate and assist in information gathering about women's situation in different castes, classes, communities, regional and occupational groups." According to the feminist group putting out Manushi, "Information is power, and we have become increasingly convinced that without a systemic understanding of the problem, no effective solutions can be found. This we see as a vital precondition for the development of theory and practice by the emerging movements."

In addition to putting out the journal, the feminist group is also involved in various struggles in India. Apart from the larger context that this work contributes to, this kind of political activity is important to women as individuals for "it is only when a woman gets support from others that she can change her situation. Change in people's lives occurs through the joint action of the individual and the people surrounding them. Both are necessary."

Manushi's combination of theory and practice in the grass root women's movement in India is well worth the \$18 (IMO/Banker's cheque) or \$19 (Personal cheque) for six issues. If interested, you can subscribe from: Manushi Distributors, America c/o Esther Jantzen - 5008 Erringer Place - Philadelphia PA 19144 - USA.



continued from page 4

What the Fraser Committee did was recommend the repeal of section 195.1 - soliciting for the purpose of prostitution - a statute which was totally ineffective anyway - and its replacement with a less obviously discriminatory but more effective tool for clearing the streets of hookers. They proposed that this should be accomplished by dealing with prostitution related activities under quite a comprehensive package of public nuisance legislation (enough to make virtually every street hooker liable to charge) and not through measures like Bill C-49 or Section 195.1, which single out soliciting in public places as a particularly abhorrent activity. While juvenile prostitutes were not singled out for separate legislation, as the Badgley Committee recommended, they would be the hardest hit by this legislation, since no indoor places of business would be available to them.

To their credit, however ineffective the outcome, the Fraser Committee did at least begin to take some minimal consideration for the position of prostitutes themselves, a consideration which is entirely absent in the Tory strategy.

Debi Brock

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## Inglis Greedy

by Nancy Farmer

It has been four months and we, members of USWA Local 2900, are still on strike against Inglis Ltd. —and I might add, still standing firm. We won't knuckle under to a company whose issues came from "Greed, Not Need".

At the beginning of the strike Inglis insulted us with proposals that would add 20% more work for less money and benefits. Although the increased production is still on the table, three months into the strike the company dropped most of their take-away demands and threw in a 25 cents raise (over three years) for good measure.

Our members won't buy this. After almost 40 meetings, the company has still refused to address our concerns of better pensions, job security and wages. We won't return to work for status quo. To date, we have organized several successful mass pickets, the most recent one being June 19th, called by the Labour Council and Local 2900. Lynn Williams, the International President of Steel, dropped by the picket line on July 5th, with an army of reporters and cameras.

It appears these actions haven't had enough of an impact against the company. We must step up to the next level. It's time to get a national boycott of all Inglis products rolling. We must call on Labour and the community for more support. There is more at stake than our 638 jobs. The trend today is toward an "open season" against Canadian workers. The Gainer's strike in Edmonton is a perfect example. The July 9th Supreme Court decision preventing union funds from being used for anything other than collective bargaining is another example —for example, we won't be able to spend money fighting the free trade initiative that is partly responsible for the long strike at Inglis (as I explained in a previous newsletter article).

Drop by and see us on the picket line at 14 Strachan Ave., and watch for further actions.





## IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN CANADA

We are seeking contributions in, but not limited to, the following areas affecting immigrant women:

- \* social attitudes (e.g. towards sex, sexuality, ethnicity, race, etc.)
- \* social and state policies
- \* paid and unpaid labour
- \* women's involvement in politics, cultural production, and the community
- \* socialization and family relations

Length of contributions:

Articles: 2,500 words or approximately  
10 typed pages, double-spaced  
Reviews: 500 words or approximately  
2 typed pages, double-spaced  
Poetry, prose, graphics, etc. should not  
be more than 2 pages  
Reports of Work in progress:  
one typed paragraph  
(not to exceed 150 words)

Please send contributions by October 30,  
1986 to Immigrant Women Editorial  
Collective, RFR/DRF, The Ontario Institute  
for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor Street  
West, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1V6

### 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.

# THE ISSUE IS CLASS

*FIREWEED: A Feminist Quarterly  
is planning an issue on class . . .*

*We want to hear from poor and  
working-class women from all  
across Canada who have been  
thinking about the impact of  
poverty and economic hardship  
on their lives. Women:*

- who are inside or outside  
the organised women's and/or  
labour movements

- who may not consider  
themselves writers

*The issue will reflect a  
diversity of experience:  
race, culture, ethnicity, age,  
sexuality . . .*

**PLEASE SEND:**

- poetry
- essays
- photographs
- interviews
- short stories
- theatre
- dance
- theory
- critiques
- oral histories—

*from women whose lives  
would not otherwise be recorded*

**WRITE:**

**FIREWEED**  
P.O. Box 279, Station B  
Toronto, Ontario, M5T 2W2

**DEADLINE:**

November 1, 1986

*Please write or phone 416-977-8681 if  
you have any questions or suggestions*

The wordprocessing of this newsletter was done by the participants 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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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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Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2L4

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



11/86