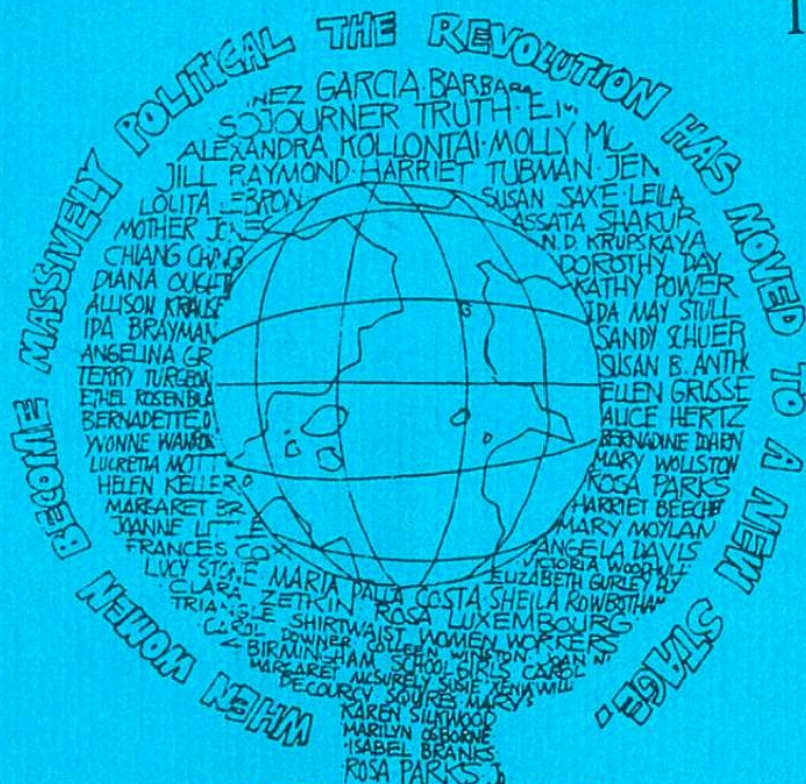


International Women's Day Committee newsletter

NOVEMBER, DECEMBER

1986



Please
Renew

ELLA BAKER, VIRGINIA COLLINS AND MANY MILLIONS OF MOTHERS, AUNTS, GRANDMOTHERS, COUSINS, FOREMOTHERS AND SISTERS IN STRUGGLES WHOSE LIVES AND ENERGIES HAVE MOLDED OUR MINDS, STRENGTHENED OUR HANDS, BACKS AND RESOLVE TO STRUGGLE FOR THE LIBERATION OF US ALL - AND EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US TOO WHO WILL BUILD OUR FREEDOM BY FREEING ALL

[QUOTE IS BY VIETNAMESE DELEGATES TO THE 1970 WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION.]

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Thanks to the Women's Press.

EDITORIAL

THE RIGHT TO DISCRIMINATE?

The Coalition for Family Values is an Ontario coalition which includes Real Women of Canada, pentecostal churches, The National Citizens' Coalition, The Canadian Organization of Small Business, and the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops. What do those groups all have in common, other than money? The answer is: they have been lobbying Queen's Park to have the Liberals back down on their promise to include sexual orientation in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Their homophobic lobbying has been partly counteracted by the efforts of gay organizations (see story "Gay Rights Protection Endangered" in this issue), which have included phone-in campaigns, personal lobbying of MPP's, and a public rally on November 20. We sincerely hope that enough public pressure will be generated to maintain Liberal and NDP caucus members in line with their verbal commitments to human rights.

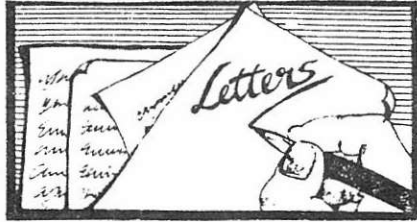
The concept of human rights upheld by the Coalition on Family Values is worth examining, however, since it is in many ways typical of the new right-wing attempts to redefine human rights in an anti-democratic direction. Rev. Hilsden, chairman of the Coalition, told the Globe and Mail that having sexual orientation in the Human Rights Code would infringe on the rights of the vast majority of Canadians. In his view, any discrimination suffered by gay people pales by comparison with the gross injustice that would result if bigots like himself were "forced by law to hire homosexuals and condone a practice that runs contrary to their moral fabric."

The only human right that Rev. Hilsden appears to believe in, therefore, is the right to discriminate. This is exactly the same logic used in the U.S. by union-bashing campaigners who argue that unions are unfair because they interfere with the employers' right to hire (and fire) whomever they want, and with the "right" of workers to "accept" low wages. These perversions of the concept of human rights are promulgated by the media as though they were logical and consistent with democratic rights. But in fact they are Orwellian denials of the very concept of human rights. As exponents of human rights have explained, ever since Voltaire took on the Inquisition, human rights are needed to protect individuals and vulnerable groups against the abuses of power of governments and institutions. To say that Peter Pocklington's "rights" are being infringed by the union which insists that scabs not be hired, or to argue (as Rev. Hilsden does) that the right to discriminate takes precedence over the rights of the individuals being discriminated against, is tantamount to saying with Big Brother that "War is Peace".

Socialists have often been uncomfortable with any campaigns that rely solely or primarily on the "defence of human rights", since these tend to be rather liberal even when the forces behind them are progressive. However, it is worth asking whether public education on the question of "what are human rights?" would not be an appropriate task for at least some of us to undertake. Canadian citizens seem quite unaware of the real meaning of human rights.

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November 3, 1986

Gordon Taylor, MP
House of Commons
Ottawa

Dear Mr Taylor:

We are writing to express our dismay at your comments about the possibility of open gays being hired by the RCMP (as reported in the Globe and Mail, Oct. 20). Your statement about "a fairy RCMP constable trying to arrest a lumberjack with a powder puff" ranks among the most bigoted and stereotyped comments that have ever been made by a Canadian politician. And your subsequent comment about "a lesbian RCMP fairy" is simply incomprehensible. However, your real point appeared to be that politicians are somehow being railroaded into giving gay people equal rights, and that you thought you ought to speak up to counteract this tide of

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Dear Sisters,

The Planning Committee for International Women's Day 1987 has been meeting through the summer and fall. We are a grouping of women of colour and white women, of different class backgrounds, sexuality and political perspectives. Some of us were active in the 1986 coalition, others were not. A call was put out in early summer asking women to participate in this process. Our goal was to have the 1987 coalition adopt within it new ways of organizing and working together, recognizing the differences of class, race, ability, and sexuality. Not

doing this has been one of the biggest barriers to unity among women. Although objective differences among us are crucial, we do not believe that they carry with them automatic and fixed conclusions about the possibilities of shared political

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One more example of the twisting of the concept of "rights" to favour the oppressors rather than the oppressed. While supporting Eaton's strikers during their long and bitter strike in 1984, many of us were confronted by irate shoppers who argued that, while workers may have had some claim to rights, the paramount right at stake was "the right to shop". The right to shop was presented as absolute, presumably because in any one picket-line situation there may well be many more "shoppers" than "workers" (though of course the shoppers also work some place, but this doesn't seem to affect their consciousness). But of course the numbers of people on either side of the picket line are completely irrelevant, just as the number of gay people who may or may not live in Ontario is surely irrelevant to the question of what is justice.

It is women as a group who need rights, not men; it is workers as a group who need rights, not stores and "shoppers"; it is gay people who need rights, not bigots; it is people of colour who need and deserve rights, not whites. Until we manage to explain that to the Canadian public, every human rights campaign will be threatened by counter-campaigns for injustice and oppression. We know that it should be the job of liberals, not socialists, to fight for legal, formal rights: however, socialists may have to help to reclaim the concept of "rights" away from those who would use "rights" not to protect themselves but to oppress others.

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liberalism that threatens the machismo of the RCMP.

First of all, there is no such tide of pro-gay liberalism: here in Ontario, where the Liberals practically promised to include sexual orientation in the human rights code, a campaign of homophobic letters and phone calls organized by bigots like yourself has endangered even this minimal civil rights protection.

Secondly, it is ludicrous to think that an anti-gay policy will actually keep gay people out of the RCMP or any other government body. There are gay people in the RCMP, as there are in the army, in the teaching profession, and yes, even in Parliament. The difference is that gay people in many professions cannot be open about their lives -- which often leads to problems both for the individuals involved and for the institutions for which they work.

It is unfortunate that, due to the anti-gay climate in which we live, the Canadian public seldom gets to hear from gay people about what it is like to live and work under the constant threat of being fired, harassed, and ridiculed. Instead we have to listen to the remarks of those who are completely ignorant on the subject and speak not out of experience but out of their own heated imaginations.

The International Women's Day
Committee
Box 70, Station F
Toronto, Ont.

cc.: Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister;
Ramon Hynatyshyn, Minister of Justice;
and Gordon Fairweather, Human Rights
Commission.

Gay Rights Protection Endangered

by Mariana Valverde

The Ontario Liberals are waffling on their earlier commitment to include sexual orientation protection in the omnibus bill to amend Ontario's Human Rights Code (Bill 7). In recent months, both Premier Peterson and Attorney General Ian Scott seemed to favour including sexual orientation in Bill 7, and lobbyists for gay organizations were told that a solid majority of the Liberal caucus was behind the move. With this plus the NDP caucus, it was thought that the measure would easily pass even if MPP's were allowed a free vote on the matter.

However, in the last week of October sources within the Liberal party sounded the alarm. Many MPP's, besieged by letters and phone calls organized by an Evangelical group, Real Women, and other right-wing groups, seemed to be backing down on their earlier commitment to human rights for gay people. The sources said that the Liberal caucus might decide to withdraw the sexual orientation clause of Bill 7 even before it reached the floor of the House.

Given this crisis, the group of gay activists (primarily from the Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario, CGRO, and the Right to Privacy Committee, RTPC) that had been quietly lobbying MPP's organized a phone-in campaign. In a few days, enough pro-gay phone calls came into Scott's and Peterson's offices to counteract at least some of the right-wing lobbying. An NDP source with good Queen's Park contacts said

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Native Autonomy

by Carolyn Egan

The Haida Nation has been involved in a major battle with the provincial government over land rights, centering in the South Moresby area of the Queen Charlotte Islands. This area is rich in natural resources. Fertile soil and fast tree growth give the forests high commercial value, and mineral deposits have also been discovered. Because of this, resource companies and the Social Credit government have been trying to steal the ancestral lands of the Haida, who have been native to the Queen Charlottes for thousands of years.

I recently met a woman from the Haida Sisterhood, active in the Council of the Haida Nation. She was telling me of the struggle of her people, and the role of women. As a group they are demanding the preservation of their sacred lands, and the right to control any resource development. Under present constitutional law, all land and resources within a province are considered to be under the jurisdiction of that provincial government. British Columbia therefore has the legislative right to decide on land use. This is what the Haida are fighting. BC has issued tree farm licenses to a number of forest companies including MacMillan Bloedel and Western Forest Products (WFP). Twenty year licenses have been issued for all forests that can be profitably cut. These licenses are subject to renewal every five years, and no renewal has ever been refused. The south Moresby region comes under tree farm license twenty-four held by WFP. The Haida claim aboriginal title to all of the Queen Charlottes, but Lyell Island has a particular spiritual significance. The areas currently being logged are on Graham and Lyle Islands.

The whole question of aboriginal

sovereignty is not well understood by those outside of the native communities. A statement made on behalf of the Assembly of First Nations makes the position quite clear. It states the goals as "control over our lands, control over our own people, and control over our own destiny... we're not asking anyone to give us anything. We are asking Canadians to recognize that we have power and jurisdiction and we've never relinquished it. What we are attempting to do is have self-government entrenched in the Constitution as an unqualified right... A broad right entrenched in the Constitution would force governments to negotiate with native people."



Indigenous people are seeking a sharing of power between equals, striking a balance between aboriginal governments and federal/provincial governments. Today this equality or balance doesn't exist. It is the reason that the Haida are involved in the fight for land use. Under present conditions native people are answerable to the government for affairs on their own lands. They want to entrench the fundamental right to govern themselves. This means the ownership of traditional lands and resources, as well as jurisdiction over traditional lands and resources.

A first Ministers Conference is scheduled for 1987. This will include representatives of the federal government, the provincial governments and the two territories, as well as the Assembly of First Nations, the Metis

National Council, the Native Council of Canada and the Inuit Committee on National Issues. A recent rally organized by the Chiefs of Ontario took place on October 29th at Queens Park to put pressure on the Ontario Government to support native demands. The demonstration drew thousands of indigenous people from all over the province. As the Haida woman with whom

I spoke stated "This is the time for alliances to strengthen the crucial struggles being fought across this country. We need your support. You need ours. Whether the issue is land claims or reproductive rights, it is time we come together as equals and bury our differences". She is of course correct. There were very few non-native people at the recent rally, clearly all progressive groups must put their weight on the side of indigenous people in this struggle. Women involved in cross-race, cross-class coalitions or support work must be acutely conscious of the barriers between us, but with this recognition and an understanding of its implications, we can work together. We can hopefully build the unity necessary to win both our short term goals, but also develop the long term alliances and integration of issues that are necessary to make the economic and political changes required.

Sadawi: "Unveiling the Brain"

Nawal El Sadawi, internationally acclaimed writer of Woman at Point Zero, Two Women in One and Hidden Faces of Eve, socialist feminist and past director of Public Health in Egypt, recently spoke to about 200 people at the University of Toronto, an event that was co-sponsored by the Arab Canadian Women's Network and the Centre for Women's Studies at OISE.

During Gamal Nasser's time, women in Egypt were encouraged to go out into the workforce - a situation that



quickly changed under Anwar Sadat, a favourite of the West. El Sadawi was one of 1,535 people arrested in 1981 under the "Law of Ethics". Nawal El Sadawi had gained a reputation for her outspoken views about the religious and sexual oppression of Arab women. Three months after her arrest with Sadat's death, Nawal was freed.

El Sadawi has maintained that a process of "unveiling that brain" is necessary for women to assert their identity, reclaim their history and act against their oppression as women. She addressed the representation in the West of women from the Middle-East as limited and false - women are portrayed either as "belly dancers" or "veiled women".

El Sadawi, a controversial figure because of her outspoken ideas, inspired much debate. She attacked fundamentalist religion, internationally, as an arm of the state. "Religion and the state must be separated totally". Religion, El Sadawi maintained, must be a personal decision reflecting and recognizing spirituality.

As she wrote in her book, The Hidden Faces of Eve - "The great issues of society are never really settled in the meeting halls... They rest with the small details of the daily life of millions and millions of men and women."

JOSINA, YOU ARE NOT DEAD

We present this poem in commemoration of Samora Machel, the President of Mozambique, and the other revolutionary men and women who died in an air crash over South Africa in October.

This poem was written by Machel as a tribute to his first wife who was killed in 1971 during FRELIMO's struggle to liberate Mozambique. We feel his expression of grief and gratitude at that time is a lesson in accepting the challenge to carry on the intensifying struggle to liberate Southern Africa despite the painful personal losses so many have experienced.

JOSINA, YOU ARE NOT DEAD

Josina you are not dead because we have assumed your responsibilities and they live in us.
You have not died, for the causes you championed were inherited by us in their entirety.
You have gone from us, but the weapon and rucksack that you left, your tools of work, are part of my burden.
The blood you shed is but a small drop in the flood we have already given and still have to give.
The earth must be nourished and the more fertile it is the better do its trees flourish, the bigger are the shadows they cast, the sweeter are their fruits.
Out of your memory I will fashion a hoe to turn the sod enriched by your sacrifice... And new fruits will grow.
The Revolution renews itself from its best and most beloved children.
This is the meaning of your sacrifice: it will be a living example to be followed.
My joy is that as patriot and woman you died doubly free in this



time when the new power and the new woman are emerging.
In your last moments you apologized to the doctors for not being able to help them.
The manner in which you accepted the sacrifice is an inexhaustible source of inspiration and courage.
When a comrade so completely assumes the new values she wins our hearts, becomes our banner.
Thus more than wife, you were to me sister, friend and comrade-in-arms.
How can we mourn a comrade but by holding the fallen gun and continuing the combat.
My tears will flow from the same source that gave birth to our love, our will and our revolutionary life.
Thus these tears are both a token and a vow of combat.
The flowers which fall from the tree are to prepare the land for new and more beautiful flowers to bloom in the next season.
Your life continues in those who continue the Revolution.

From: Samora Machel: an African Revolutionary. Selected Speech and Writings.
Ed Barry Munslow. London: Zed Books. 1985.

WOMEN IN ZIMBABWE

by Sheryl Boswell

Further to our article in August's IWDC newsletter, we have received the latest copy of "Speak Out" (Taurai... Khulumani), the Women's Action Group's newsletter, with an article about the continued harassment of women. From "Speak Out":

Women in Zimbabwe's towns are again being harassed, and in some cases arrested, for walking without a man. They are questioned about their employment and whether they are married or single. In 1983, 6316 women were arrested in "Operation Clean-up". Women are asking, "Is the same thing now happening again?"

Some women in Harare who make a living selling fruit and food to workers in industrial areas have been told. "We are going to sweep you off the streets like rubbish!" One of the women said, "What can I do? I have been selling food here for a long time. This is how I get money to support my children. I cannot get a letter from anyone to say I am employed, so they say that I must be a prostitute."

A Harare secretary, 26 years old, said, "If you are an unmarried Black woman, you will be questioned and maybe arrested if you have no way to prove you have a job. It is bad that in a free country, women must carry some kind of pass, such as a marriage certificate, to prove they are not prostitutes. We are afraid to go anywhere unless we are with a man."

A nurse, who often has to travel home alone after dark said, "It is married women who call for these "clean-ups". I can understand why these women get angry because they have to suffer with cheating

husbands who use money on girlfriends and prostitutes. But it is unfair for the rest of us. It is those men who should be arrested."

In 1983, Dr. Eddison Zvobgo, Minister of Justice, said, "All women have every right to freedom of movement, escorted or unescorted, singly or in groups, and should have no fear to go anywhere." - a response that was motivated by public protest to "Operation Clean-up".

Attitudes towards women have a long way to go before women can be truly incorporated, fully and equally, into Zimbabwean society. The revolution for women is only beginning...

A working woman said, The saddest thing is that many people still think a woman is not respectable unless she belongs to a man. Many married women call all unmarried women prostitutes. I'm tired of being told I must get a husband or I am a prostitute. Many of us single women work very hard at our jobs. We have the same rights as any other citizens".

Attacks on the 'undesirable' elements of society - prostitutes (women), vagrants and squatters have often been made since Independence in an effort to clean up the city for the benefit of tourists and visiting dignitaries; an unfortunate situation because the reality of Zimbabwe, like many other Third World countries, is that it is dependent on tourism for the much-needed foreign currency it brings. Women in Zimbabwe fought long and hard (over 15 years of war with the colonial settlers of Rhodesia) for their country's independence. Now, it is time for women's independence to be realized.

Forward to the struggle of women in Zimbabwe!

Garment Workers Update:

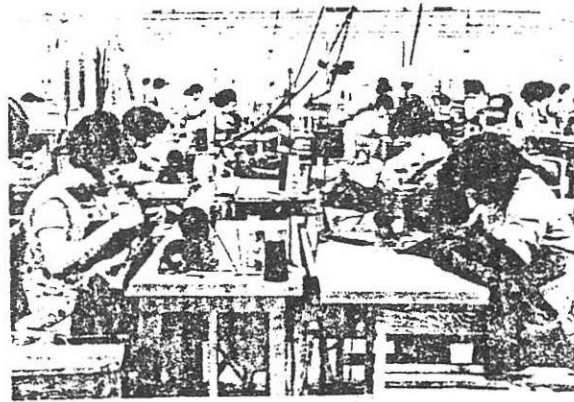
By Charlene Gannage

"If we go back to work for nothing, the bosses will step all over us... We've been giving in for too many years. We have to stick to our guns and we have to go all the way - no matter what." Irene Haines, striking garment worker (Toronto Star, 17 September 1986).

"You have made history. Without this victory the union would be set back 50 years," union leader Herman Stewart at a contract ratification meeting on 19 September 1986.

1986 is a watershed year for the Toronto local of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU). On 5 March the local's members democratically elected former organizer Herman Stewart to the position of manager. The electoral contest was a break with an age-old tradition that the manager be appointed by the International in New York and the "ratified" in an acclamation vote. Ten new women drawn from across the ethnic spectrum were elected to the Toronto District Council, the highest decision making body of the union. Stewart promised to shake up the industry and demand fairness for the workers.

On 15 September the union led out 1,000 garment workers in 18 shops on a four-day strike, following on the heels of rotating strikes the previous week. It was the first industry-wide strike since the militant 1930s, when the Toronto dressmakers participated in a series of general strikes to gain union recognition. Since that time, the union had been relatively quiet in pursuing a path of labour peace with the Manufacturers' Guild.



For years union politics were solely concerned with developing a co-operative strategy with the manufacturers to fight imports. While committed to saving the Toronto industry, the new union leadership is against Third-World wages for Canadian workers and, by implication, against government import policies that force workers to become the scapegoats.

The Toronto dress and sportswear industry is in a period of transition. Small owner-occupied dress shops of less than 50 workers now exist alongside larger modern sportswear factories with over 200 employees. The work force is made up primarily of immigrants, the majority of whom are women machine operators. The men are employed in the higher-paying jobs as cutters and pressers. In the larger firms, women work on sections of the dress as piece-workers or as time-workers. In some of the top-of-the-line quality shops, female operators make the whole garment.

Wages in the garment industry are low. Workers earn only 63 per cent of the average industrial wage. The women scoffed when they heard press reports that they were making \$10.50 an hour. One woman reported earning \$120 in two days, but lamented that she was laid

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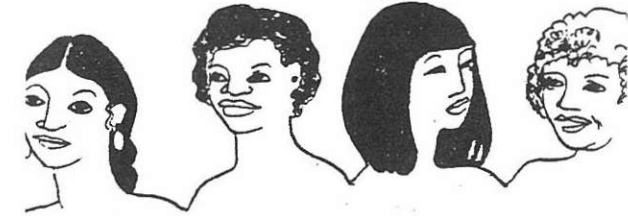
off for the rest of the week. Seasonal work is characteristic of the needle trade. A black woman on the picket line reported that after 12 years she makes \$6 an hour in the cutting room and that she was moved from job to job. Recent Chinese-speaking immigrants were making as little as \$4.15 an hour on time rates. Some piece-workers can earn \$9 an hour, but only if they work hard and fast. Competition among workers for better-priced styles not only divides workers, but also results in nervous disorders and fatigue.

After three months of bargaining, the employers wanted to return from a 35 to a 40-hour work week, impose a second shift, and, in a surprise move, take away the pension fund. On wages, they argued that women workers were second-income earners who needed only a two per cent increase this year.

Clearly the manufacturers were out to break the union. They owed a total of \$450,000 to the pension and health and welfare funds, and they hoped to push the union into a strike that would divide the workers and force Stewart to resign. This was the scenario in the Montreal strike of 1983, and they were determined to use this strategy in Toronto.

The manufacturers underestimated the strength of the rank and file, who were tired of back-room deals and "Daddy-knows-best" unionism. In a dramatic show of force on the first day, several hundred workers participated in a protest march down Spadina Avenue, moving from shop to shop and singing "Solidarity Forever" in the pouring rain. They finished outside the Ontario Labour Ministry where a select number stayed behind to show their support for the bargaining team during mediation talks. This action saved the pension fund.

The women workers remained proud and defiant in their resistance to the employers and the police on horseback. Less than a dozen workers crossed the line to go to work. Strikers rocked the cars of contractors coming to take away work. Picket lines at one shop held up a contractor for over an hour until the police intervened. Women learned each other's language in protest and in song. They shouted "shame" in Chinese as a known contractor attempted to cross the line.



Babies on the line were handed from woman to woman and hugged enthusiastically. A two-year-old girl shook her finger at the supervisors, as if in warning, as her mother's fellow workers returned to work after the strike. At the ratification meeting, questionnaires were passed out in five languages asking for information on childcare needs in anticipation of the new Garment Workers' Action Centre being built on a downtown site.

Four days of no-concession bargaining backed up by militant pickets won a four-per-cent increase in the first and second years and 35 cents an hour in the third year. Those earning less than \$7 an hour are to receive a minimum of 30 cents an hour, resulting in wage increases of more than six per cent for those at the bottom of the scale. This clause helps to close the gap between the higher and lower paid workers. They won a family drug plan, extended dental and eyeglass coverage, and a \$20,000 lump-sum payment for a union controlled education fund.

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The spirit at the ratification meeting was festive, with women dancing in the aisles to the song "Union Maid". Following a ratification vote of 684 to 7, union members escorted one another back to work in a Caribana-style parade. One woman said, "When we go back to the factory, we'll be slaves." Another corrected her: "No, we will never be slaves again."

The struggle continues. Union leaders are confident that the gains on this strike will help future organizing campaigns. Stewart has promised to remain vigilant on the pension fund, contracting out, and union access to factories. He also recognizes the importance of strengthening the shop committees. Organizer Tom Abrahams told workers in the ratification meetings, "This is one helluva performance... and I'm proud to be part of this administration."

The next three years will not be an easy time. The union leadership faces owners who are threatening to contract out work to low-wage economies in Canada, the U.S., and even the Third World. Multinationals are becoming a dominant force. Thus far, the Toronto local has not fallen victim to the same number of homeworkers that plague the Quebec industry, but job loss from technological change looms on the horizon. Militant leadership, vigorous organizing campaigns, and workers' resistance on a global scale are on the agenda.

COFFEE, TEA OR COTTON

By Nancy Farmer

We don't know exactly what type of work we will be doing, but on December 12, 1986, 20 enthusiastic "brigadistas" will be leaving Toronto for Managua.

We will spend a month in Nicaragua picking coffee or cotton or doing whatever else is needed. The Contras have made much of the coffee growing area relatively unsafe so the Nicaraguan government has made a decision not to send internationalists into this area.

We are a mixed brigade with a strong contingent of women. We are a diverse group from various grass roots organizations and unions. This is the first Toronto brigade that is offering subsidies for two participants who would otherwise not be able to afford such a trip. We are selling raffle tickets (first prize is a round-trip ticket to Cuba) to raise the money.

Our group has been meeting for a little over a month. Some of our members are being instructed in basic Spanish. We are also being briefed on the hardships of Nicaraguan life. The war is taking its toll on the economy. There are shortages of food and supplies. Our living arrangements will be less luxurious than camping in Algonquin Park. However, now is not the time to be threatened by these obstacles or intimidated about going, as Nicaragua's opponents would wish. Instead, it is more important now than ever to participate in such a brigade, to build links of solidarity with the Sandinista government and its people, and to share these experiences when we return.

I was fortunate to get a leave of absence from work, through the District Office of the Steel Workers Union, to enable me to participate. The USWA has also endorsed the "Tools for Peace" campaign this year for the first time. This is an important breakthrough in obtaining more trade union support for Nicaragua.

If anyone would like to join us on this or other brigades, please contact the CAN office - 534-1766.

Tools for Peace - People to People

by Joyce Nobel

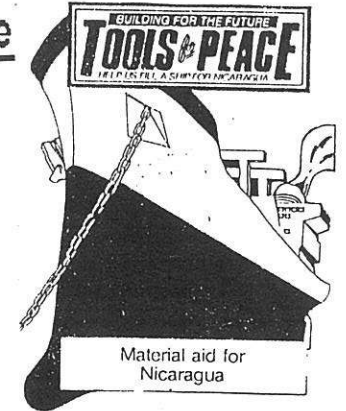
The Tools For Peace success story last year was measured in dollars: \$1.5 million in material goods were sent to Nicaragua, composed of donations to a general goods collection plus 3 popular projects (blankets, pencils and candles).

This year, a major change in the method of raising material aid reflects an important and positive step taken by the Tools for Peace national organization. The campaign is focusing exclusively on 6 designated National Popular Projects, chosen in an attempt to strengthen ties between Canadian popular organizations and Nicaraguan counterparts. The six projects are as follows:

- 1- Agriculture - boots shovels, axes, files
- 2- Labour - hammers and saws
- 3- Women - sanitary napkins
- 4- Education - pencils and notebooks
- 5- Displaced People - blankets
- 6- Health - 3" gauze roll, iodine-based antiseptic, 1" adhesive tape

The choice of priority items was made in consultation with Nicaraguan organizations with the intention of helping Canadians understand the impact of the U.S. economic embargo and the legacy of injustice, corruption and neglect left to the FSLN when it took power in 1979. We are also forced to confront our stereotypes and misconceptions of the Third World more generally. Cleaning out the basement is not an adequate response in helping to meet the needs of real individuals living in a country at war.

In addition to broadening the base of Canadian solidarity with Nicaragua Tools for Peace has plans to petition the government for:



- a) The approval of new bilateral aid projects for Nicaragua, and its elevation to "priority" country status for development aid;
- b) The suspension of aid to Honduras until it ceases to aid the contras and be a platform for U.S. regional military strategy;
- c) Active promotion of Canadian trade with Nicaragua;
- d) An active political profile in Central America by:
 - publicly expressing opposition to all forms of U.S. backed military intervention in Central America
 - establishment of an embassy in Nicaragua
 - strengthening political support for the Contadora Group and allocating financial resources for peace-keeping initiatives.

This lobbying will take the form of a consensus letter to be signed with as many signatures as possible as well as the efforts of individuals writing to MP's, Brian Mulroney and Joe Clark.

To make this year's campaign a success Tools for Peace requires much support in the form of educational

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C-49: ONE YEAR LATER

By Debi Brock

On Wednesday, October 15 the Elizabeth Fry Society of Toronto held a public forum at OISE to discuss the effects of Bill C-49, passed one year ago, on prostitutes. This Bill further criminalized communicating for the purpose of prostitution, making virtually every street hooker easy prey of the cops. The panel consisted of Sargeant Richard Brier of the Morality Bureau, Metro Toronto Police Association; John Hanbidge, an Assistant Crown Attorney who is now working to uphold the Bill in face of claims that it violates the Charter of Rights; Eleanor McDonald, who is Director of Community Relations at E. Fry; Valerie Scott, a prostitute representing the Canadian Organization of the Rights of Prostitutes; and Tamara Stomp, a lawyer who is working toward having Bill C-49 struck down. Interestingly, the two male members of the panel were staunch defenders of the Bill and critics of prostitutes, while the women on the panel pointed out its discriminatory bias and argued for both its repeal and the decriminalization of prostitution.

Sargeant Brier informed us that we would be happy to know that since the passage of the Bill, the number of adult prostitutes working the streets had been reduced to 40% of their previous number. He claimed that the women no longer on the streets had either gone home, to work in straight jobs, as dancers and call girls, and in bawdy houses. Young prostitutes had been reduced by 80%, he claimed, so that there were now few 11, 12 and 13 year olds working the streets; the average age of women being arrested is 19. These young girls had by his account mainly returned to their homes and schools, as the legislation had given parents a means of regaining

custody of their kids. All it took, apparently, was criminal charges being laid against the wayward young people. He was also pleased to announce that police were now enforcing the law equally against the customers of prostitutes, as well as arresting male hookers. However, he revealed that between January and October 15, 1986, 980 women had been charged with communication for the purpose of prostitution, as opposed to 553 men, and when pressed, admitted that the figure for men included both customers and hookers.



Brier defended these figures by stating that this unequal number of arrests was due to the method of enforcement; that there were more male officers than female to use as undercover cops, and that since male customers charged had fewer previous charges against them, if any, they were more likely to have their cases dismissed. In any case, this is not the kind of "affirmative action" we want to see in our fight for decriminalization. Convictions of prostitutes occurred in about 80% of the arrests. He further claimed that arrests were made only in the instance of "concrete communication"; a "wink or a nod" was not sufficient, contrary to the claims of women's groups.

Defense Counsel Tamara Stomp gave a different story. She stated that the law was being enforced for even the

slightest communication, and without directly using the word, strongly hinted that entrapment was a common police practice. It was also clear that police are using their power of arrest arbitrarily and as a tool for harassing prostitutes. The word of the cop is almost always taken over that of the hooker in court, given that the cop recorded in writing the alleged "conversation", and their relative degrees of credibility before the law. She charged that cops will also ticket women for minor infractions like seatbelt violations when they are in a car with a customer, if they can't get them for anything else. Hookers rarely have the chance of getting off in court, because the passage of C-49 closed up all of the old loopholes available in the previous soliciting legislation, such as the necessity of proving that the solicitation was "pressing and persistent". The only defense remaining to prostitutes is the constitutional argument - that the legislation violates the Charter of Rights- but any decisions made thus far which uphold this defence (two in B.C.) have been struck down under appeal by judges who claim that the Charter in fact must ensure that the rights of citizens be safeguarded against the infringement of prostitutes.

In Toronto, most of the women charged appear before a small number of judges at Old City Hall, since most arrests are made in its area of jurisdiction, and the defense counsel are still attempting to persuade a judge to accept the unconstitutionality argument. One test case remains before the courts now. A female judge (the only female provincial court judge) is favouring the argument, but is now giving the Crown Attorney's Office the opportunity to prepare a case which argues otherwise.

Stomp asserts that since prostitution itself is legal (it is prostitution related activities which



are criminalized-- a fine line in light of C-49) then there should be a way of conducting it. Therefore the law offends the right to liberty. A weaker argument is that it infringes on the right to freedom of association. A strong argument is that it offends one's freedom of association and communication, since the code outlaws communication for the purpose of prostitution in any way.

Stomp also stated that since parliament did not repeal bawdy house legislation when it brought in C#49, hookers do not have a safe place to work off of the streets: it is obvious that they are not interested in the conditions of prostitutes themselves. She also reminded us that C#49 is up for review in five years, and so public forums and discussions have a crucial role to play in determining what will come after.

Valerie Scott stated outright that entrapment is a common method used by the cops for getting their girls. They even go so far as to dispense with formalities and simply line the women up and put them in the paddy wagon; a method that police refer to as "old style arrest". Once in custody women are usually held overnight, and a curfew may be enforced against them. The consequences of violating a curfew, which hookers must do if they want to work, are usually much worse than the original charge.

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Mystery on Harbord St.

Part 2

By Dorothy Doers

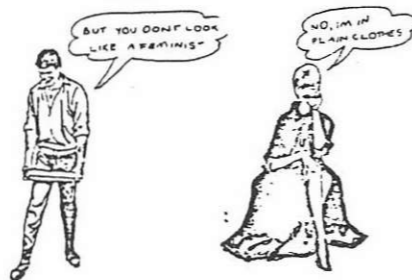
Editors Note: This is the keenly awaited second instalment of IWDC's special mystery serial which began in the last newsletter. Faithful readers will recall that at the close of the last episode, Mona Lott -- intrepid shopper, feminist and Fran's College Street fan -- had just noticed a personal ad in NOW directed at her. The ad told her that Henry needed her help, and that she was to appear at her favourite hangout (mentioned above) at 1:00 a.m. It is 12:59 as our story re-opens, and Mona is still sitting in Fran's, where's she's been since she left work at 5:00 p.m.

Mona looked around Fran's and realized the place was almost empty except for the staff and three drunks who were seated around the horseshoe-shaped counter near the front, eating Fran's "prize-winning sky-high lemon meringue pie with all-natural pie juice" (description courtesy of the menu). None of them looked like her contact, but then on the other hand who else was there? She decided to go downstairs to the can to see if there was anyone sitting in Fran's basement all-you-can-eat spaghetti cellar. Nobody. She went into the bathroom. There was nobody in the stalls so she looked in the mirror and tried to decide whether she should dye her hair its natural colour.

When Mona returned to her booth, all the drunks were gone. They'd each left their pie crusts on their plates. The cashier was filing her nails with a steel file and trying to decide whether to polish them their natural colour or leave them Joan Crawford red. Mona was about to collect her papers and Moutie pen and catch the College car when the

waitress appeared. She was fortyish and wore her very black hair in a modified beehive. Her eye makeup was Barbra Streisand circa 1965. She stood two inches from where Mona was sitting and said in a low voice: "I need to talk. Let's get out of here."

Mona's career as a Fran's fan had been full of surprises but this was definitely the biggest one of all. For once, she was speechless. "Let's get out of here," the waitress said again. "My car's in the parking lot behind. Scram. I'll see you out back." Mona's temples were now pounding from fear, as well as an excess of caffeine and sugar, but she did get it together to throw her papers into her bag and get out the door. The cashier did not look up, even though Mona in her haste had neglected to pay the bill.



Mona stood shivering in the dark parking lot waiting for the waitress to appear. She was looking around the lot trying to decide whether the waitress's car was the '64 Dodge or the '56 Packard when she heard the sound of gravel being crunched by not one, but two, pairs of feet. It was the waitress -- and the cashier. They approached the Packard. Remember them? They have real wood panelling on the inside and wooden steering wheels. Some of them even had built-in bars, but not this one.

By now, Mona was getting too tired to pay much attention to her surroundings or to put pieces of evidence together. Nor was she

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National News

Nikki Colodny and Carolyn Egan recently completed a speaking tour of Vancouver and Winnipeg on behalf of the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics, Concerned Citizens for Choice in Abortion (OCCA) in British Columbia and the Coalition for Reproductive Choice in Manitoba hosted public events in both cities.

The tour began with a media blitz on the west coast with Carolyn and Nikki appearing on the Jack Webster Show, the Dave Barrett Show, and a program hosted by Laurier LaPierre, as well as doing a number of other radio and press interviews. A very successful public meeting was held, announcing the start of a campaign for the establishment and legalization of a free standing clinic providing medically insured abortions in Vancouver. The public response was strong, and very supportive. A recent Gallop poll indicates that British Columbia has the highest percentage of choice advocates in the country--82%.

A conference planned by OCCA took place with the goal of initiating the actual plans for a clinic. This began the process of organizing the political support necessary for a successful campaign. Representatives from different sections of the women's movement attended, as well as the YWCA, the NDP, the labour movement, the Haida Sisterhood, the United Church, student organizations, pro-choice activists and many others. A strong group of committed women discussed the varying aspects of the campaign with the OCCA representatives, and pledged their support. They hope to see the clinic in operation within six to 12 months.

A new and very exciting phase of the struggle to repeal the federal abortion law has begun! The stakes are very high. The Social Credit government has made its opposition clear, but the fight could potentially be a rallying point for the forces opposing the Socreds. Strong pro-choice resolutions have already been passed by the NDP and within the labour movement, the broader women's movement is clearly committed to the clinic proposal. Today there is a lot of momentum in BC for this issue. Although there is access to abortion in Vancouver, many women are referred to the U.S. because of the delays, and access is close to non-existent in the interior and the north. Hospital access struggles will of course continue, but this campaign will bring a new energy to the movement for repeal of the federal abortion law.

Nikki and Carolyn, after a successful speaking engagement at the University of British Columbia, then flew on to Manitoba. They were greeted at a well attended fundraiser, meeting many of the choice activists and supporters. A press conference was held highlighting the visit, which got good coverage. The Women's Agenda, which is a broad grouping of women's organizations in Manitoba, had just held a conference and chosen access to abortion, and the establishment of clinics as one of its key issues. A public meeting was organized as well as private meetings with women's health activists and the staff at the Morgantaler Clinic. Although not providing abortions, it is still giving information and referral to women.

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Eighty per cent (80%) of all abortions in Manitoba are done in Winnipeg because the NDP has increased hospital quotas, but there is no access in cities such as Flin Flon, Churchill or Thompson. Many women must still go to the U.S. from rural Manitoba. The movement is not as strong as it was, since the charges were laid.

Clearly the energy and momentum is higher in Vancouver, but women are still fighting in Manitoba, and the tour in both cities was judged to have been a success.

O.C.A.C. UPDATE

by members of the Coordinating Committee

In January 1986 Nikki Colodny, a feminist physician and O.C.A.C. activist, began providing abortions at the Morgentaler clinic. In June of the same year, Robert Scott opened a second free-standing clinic in Toronto. All of this proved to be too much for the Liberal government; they announced that the clinic physicians would be charged. The police resumed their surveillance and intimidation of the women using the clinic.

On September 24, 1986 Drs. Colodny, Scott and Morgentaler were all arrested and charged. In a bizarre twist the charges were immediately stayed; the Attorney General said that no action would be taken until after the Supreme Court decision. There had been strong rumors that the government had intended to completely close down the clinics by demanding stringent bail conditions. In the end, this did not happen and the doctors were able to return to the clinics and abortion services were again offered by early afternoon.

Immediately after news of the arrests, over one hundred people were down at 52 Division. Throughout the day pro-choice supporters gathered outside to demonstrate their outrage at the arrests and show their support for the doctors.

A week later, on October 2, 1986, over 500 pro-choice activists and supporters gathered outside of the Supreme Court to rally their support of the doctors. Despite the presence of the anti-choice and the harassment by the police, the rally was high spirited and considered successful by those who organized and attended.

The highlight of the demonstration was another fine (and wonderfully critical) guerilla theatre piece by the "O.C.A.C. Players" about the recent arrests.

In October the hearings began at the Supreme Court of Canada. This is the final stage for the charges laid in the summer of 1983 when the Morgentaler Clinic was first opened. The doctors had been acquitted in November 1984, the fourth jury acquittal in two provinces, but the provincial government appealed. The Ontario Court of Appeal overturned the acquittal, paying particular attention to the doctors' lawyer's "error" in urging the jury to reject the law because it was so fundamentally unfair. It is the doctor's appeal of this decision that the Supreme Court is hearing. This is seen to be the most important test yet of how the Court will interpret challenges under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The result will have far-reaching implications, not least for how fruitful an avenue the courts will be for advancing feminist issues.

Ironically, the very considerable achievements of the clinics and the choice movement have created a

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troubling paradox. The clinics have responded to women's needs so well and the movement has been able to protect them from the state and anti-choice harassment so successfully, that the clinics have come to be widely seen as permanent and not under any threat. While the appeal is in the courts, pro-choice supporters must not be lulled into thinking that the clinics are safe.

There is a lot that can be done while the court case goes on, and O.C.A.C. is busy with preparations for the aftermath of the Court's judgement. The ruling will really only define and shape the perimeters of the struggle and certainly not end it. The goal is reproductive health care that empowers women. Many reproductive rights activists share a vision of future women-controlled clinics providing care for the whole spectrum of women's reproductive lives; from midwifery to abortion, from contraception to home birth and from artificial insemination to sexuality counselling. We have simply entered another phase of the struggle, the fight goes on for reproductive freedom for all women.

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that the CGRO/RTPC phone-in initiative had for the time being averted the defeat of seeing sexual orientation quietly dropped at the level of the Liberal caucus.

Meanwhile, the homophobic right-wing (which coincides almost completely with the anti-choice right wing) is predicting victory. An article in the Globe (Monday Nov.3) quoted Rev. Hudson Hilsden, chairman (sic) of the Coalition for Family Values, the main anti-gay lobbying group, as saying that the Liberal measure is "clearly in trouble". Rev. Hilsden has been

sending a steady stream of letters to MPP's arguing that while discrimination against gays "may be unfair to a minority group", having sexual orientation in the human rights code would "be immensely unfair to a much larger segment of Canadians". Presumably Hilsden thinks that the most important human right of all is the right of bigots to discriminate against whomver they choose as target.

As of press time (Nov. 2) there is no definitive word on the state of affairs at Queen's Park. However, the situation has prompted a renewed debate about strategies among gay activists. Some members of the gay left have expressed dismay at the "quiet diplomacy" tactics pursued by the CGRO/RTPC working group, and have pushed for more public, mass action tactics to be used in the weeks to come. A proposal for a public meeting or rally was put forward simultaneously by many groups and individuals (including IWDC). This plan seems to have been taken up by CGRO and individual gay activists, who are now planning a rally for Thursday November 20, at the St. Lawrence Market.

We encourage everyone to support the campaign around Bill 7. We know that Human Rights bills are not enough, and do not pose much of a challenge to the social institutions of heterosexism. However, to see sexual orientation dropped from the Bill would be a significant defeat. There is thus an urgent need to make sure that Liberals and NDPers alike keep their promises.

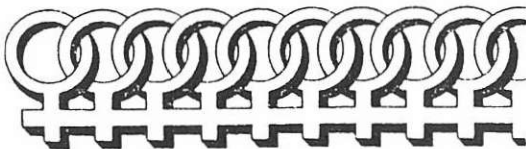


NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF IMMIGRANT AND
VISIBLE MINORITY WOMEN

by Carolyn Egan

Two members of IWDC were elected as delegate to the National Conference of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women held in Winnipeg, November 6th through 10th. This was a follow-up to a conference on immigrant women held in Toronto in 1981, and in many senses was a very historic coming together. There were over three hundred women from across Canada and Quebec, all active within their communities and seeking to share issues and concerns in order to have a more effective political impact. There were many problems in the planning process, most significantly the interference of the federal government, a lack of communication, and the limited participation of grassroots women particularly from visible minority organizations. Certain interests, including the government, had their own agenda, but the women who attended took control of the conference, and put their priorities first. A national organization was formed, which is to be a democratic, participatory, locally based alliance fighting for the specific needs of women who for the most part have been ignored. Although there were real differences, and hard debate, a strong solidarity emerged.

A major political debate focused on whether the organization should include both immigrant and visible minority women born in Canada, or be limited to only immigrant women. The Ontario Delegation had taken a position in favour of joint involvement, and it



supported the Congress of Black Women which was fighting very hard for this issue. The question was debated in workshops, caucuses, and on the floor in the plenary. The need for unity was stressed, recognizing the importance of autonomous groups such as the Congress, but at the same time, working in concert to achieve both specific, and common goals. The vote was won, a structure was developed, and the goals were agreed upon. There will now be a national organization locally controlled by immigrant women and women of colour. The task will be to consolidate and broaden on the local level. Women left the conference with a strong sense of unity, well aware of the work ahead, and confident that the results achieved will have a long term impact on the Canadian political scene.

Inglis Workers Back at Work

By Nancy Farmer

After almost six months on strike, on September 23, 1986, members of USWA Local 2900 returned to work. Readers may remember that it was the company who forced us out last April by demanding sweeping concessions that would have seriously eroded our seniority rights and reduced our wages and benefits. There were over fifty concessions on the table when we put on our picket signs.

Although we deserved more than we got after six months on the picket line, our members realize that we won an important victory. We held the company back on all but one of its concessions. We agreed to a 12% increase in productivity. We did get a 4% increase per year, a \$400.00 signing bonus, increased pensions and a job preference clause.

I would like to thank other trade unionists and members of the women's movement who dropped by the line to show support. It was always a boost.
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Although our strike wasn't as glamorous or newsworthy as strikes such as Eatons or Gainers, this strike was typical of the assault on Canadian workers and a clear example of how we can win by holding firm.

On September 24th IWDC, USWA Local 2900 and the CUEW co-sponsored a rally which featured a speaker from the Gainers strike, from the International Ladies Garment Worker's Union and from our strike along with Arlene Mantle. We raised \$200.00 for the Gainers strikers.



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outreach, political lobbying and of course, generous donations of money and materials.

If you can provide time and energy in any of these areas please call the Tools for Peace office.

Laurel Whitney, regional staff
person 922-0852

Janis Acton, public affairs and
education 922-2803

Excerpt from Tools for Peace Press
Release:

The national women's organization in Nicaragua is called the Association of Nicaraguan Women Luisa Amanda Espinoza (AMNLAE), named after the first woman combatant to be killed by Somoza's forces. Their slogan at this time is "Survival with Dignity". As women take up their places in Nicaraguan society, as producers, leaders, mothers, farmers and teachers they feel the effects of the war every day. The loss of life and senseless destruction is abhorrent to all. The poverty and frustration brought about by the embargo imposed by the U.S. hurts every individual but for women there is a special sense of anger. It is difficult to imagine not having the convenience of sanitary supplies as we do. For Nicaraguan women it is a pressing concern, using and reusing strips of cloth washed in cold water, rarely with soap, experiencing discomfort and risking infection. That is why the urgent request has been made to Tools for Peace to help provide these basic supplies.

WOMEN'S COVERT AID- BLANKETS FOR NICARAGUA

AN INVITATION

WHEN: Sunday November 23, 2-6 pm

WHERE: 15 Washington Ave. 1 block south of
Bloor, east of Spadina

WHY: Donations for TOOLS FOR PEACE

Bring a blanket and/or
Bring your own checkbook

REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED

SPONSORED BY THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S
DAY COMMITTEE

MEET DAISY ZAMORA-FEMINIST, POET, FIGHTER

NICARAGUA MUST SURVIVE

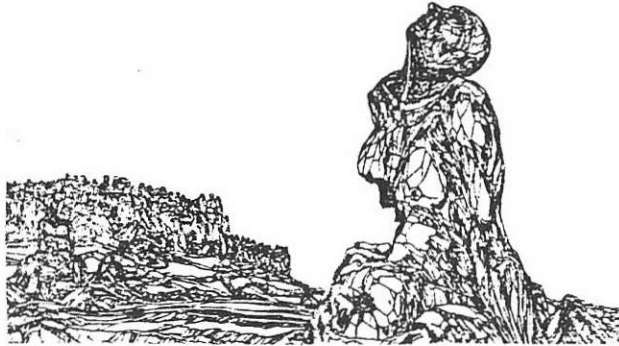
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In addition, the law against procuring (pimping) could be applied to anyone in the company of a hooker, and stated that "This law tells us that we are so dirty that anyone who is our friend should be criminalized". Scott asserted that the law also put the women in a great deal of physical danger, since women could no longer stand together and work in a buddy system. For example, before this legislation was passed, when one woman got into a customer's car the other would make a show of writing down the license plate number as a protective measure. Now, however, standing together makes them too vulnerable to the cops, and customers and other men know this. (A non-prostitute woman in the audience who lives in the track area emphasized this point when she asserted that she is constantly sexually harassed by men, but has never been bothered by the hookers, and that this harassment has increased since the introduction of the Bill.) Scott says that there are now more weirdos out there than ever (since they know the women are easy prey), prices are down, one cannot pick and choose one's customers, and so on. What the law has done is make men more powerful.

Scott would like prostitution to be decriminalized and its practitioners recognized as "freelance professionals", who can take out R.S.P.'s and even pay taxes (right now, women are even afraid to open bank accounts, since they can be frozen by the courts). Women could also advertise their services through print media, meaning that there would be fewer women working the streets.

Eleanor McDonald outlined the E. Fry position on prostitution legislation (see the March 1986 IWDC Newsletter for details), and provided a general feminist social analysis of prostitution. She said that E. Fry has supported the decriminalization of

prostitution for over 20 years, and the repeal of both bawdy house legislation and living on the avails of prostitution legislation (the latter which can be used against the families and lovers of hookers). She also discussed the effect of prisons and criminal records on the women charged, particularly on women who are already marginalized, and pointed out that most people residing in areas where street solicitation takes place do not oppose prostitution on moral grounds, but rather because they believe that it causes a decrease in property values in their neighbourhoods; a peculiarly middle class concern.



For me, the highlight of the evening was Assistant Crown Attorney John Hanbidge's reference to prostitution as the "social evil"; a term which has not been used since about 1920. This comment was made despite his claim that since he was a representative of Her Majesty he could not state his personal opinions. According to this pompous windbag, parliament "in its wisdom" represents our interests, and it is his job to prosecute vigorously according to the laws established by parliament. Hanbidge compared prostitution to smoking tobacco, and claimed that people have a right "not to smell it". As for the legal defences to charges against prostitutes, the representative of the crown stated that the guarantee of "freedom of expression" under the Charter is the defence most in vogue, but is, however, a difficult concept to

define, and many Toronto lower court judges have defeated it outright. On a "balance of probabilities", he thinks that the courts will rule that the law protects people's rights, because prostitution victimizes neighbourhood residents, who are forced to witness "disgusting acts" and submitted to an increase in robberies and other forms of crime, allegedly as a result of prostitution. (This charge conveniently ignores the fact that there is also an increase in crime in areas not frequented by prostitutes.)

The possibility that the law offends hookers' rights is in view of this but a "small breach". Worse still, an Alberta court has ruled that prostitution has no social value, and that it is an affront to the Charter to say that is violated by prostitution-related legislation. Hanbidge claims that the majority of Canadians are opposed to prostitution, despite opinion polls which find the contrary. In a brief moment of pseudo-liberalism he stated that the law indeed has no place in the bedrooms of the nation, and is only concerned with sex in a public place. However, as was revealed in audience challenges to this position, the definition of what a public place is varies, and can be (and has been) expanded by legislation.

The Forum was an enlightening one, but the most novel and fruitful contributions were the statements made by the defense lawyer, since they so rarely air their views publicly. The event provided a useful insight into the internal political wranglings of the judicial system. Not surprisingly, however, it was Sargeant Brier who was put on the hot seat during question period, as the audience spoke out against not only the law and its interpretation, but its means of enforcement. This event promises to be but the beginning of a number of public forums on prostitution and the law to be held this year.

ANNOUNCEMENT

AN INTERNATIONAL EVENT ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- We demand an end to violence against women
- Saturday November 22nd from 10 am to 5 pm. - Key note speaker: Sandra Camacho
- A latina, lesbian organizer from New York City, who has done extensive work against violence against women and against racism.

Location (wheelchair accessible)
Adult Learning Education

Centre
1 Danforth Avenue (at Broadview)

Tickets: \$ 4 waged
\$ 2 unwaged

- Sandra Camacho will speak at 11:00 a.m.
- Workshops on State Violence Against Women, Domestic Violence, and Sexual Assault will be offered in the afternoon.
- Racism will be part of the discussion in each workshop.
- Bring your own lunch or buy it at the event
- A cultural event will be offered during the lunch break.
- All women welcome.
- For Pre-registration, Childcare, Translation Services and Information call 961-8100

Co-sponsored by: - YWCA Metro Toronto

- Rexdale Women's Centre
- Latin American Women's Centre for Spanish Speaking People
- Metrac
- Toronto Rape Crisis Centre
- Latin American Women's Collective



A CONFERENCE FOR FEMINIST ACTIVISTS

Dear Sisters:

We are organizing a conference on women and the state. It will bring together women activists from many organizations to reflect collectively on our experience and to develop strategies for the future.

The state is powerful. Its activities reach into the lives of every Canadian woman. In our struggles for women, we confront, challenge and depend on the state. But we cannot count on its being on our side.

Our struggles are on many fronts: for better funding for women's organizations, for the provision of services, for legislation ensuring the rights of women, for equal access to employment, education and housing, and others. In these struggles, we have seen our demands shaped and often distorted by the state policy, legislation and funding programs.

The conference will provide a place

for women activists to share such experiences and to build a picture of how the state functions in relation to women's organizations and demands. Through collective reflection, we will work towards assessing and advancing feminist strategies for change.

The conference is organized around a sequence of workshops designed to take the participants through a process of thinking around the state. In order to facilitate this, registration will be limited to 200. Note also that daycare will be provided/subsidized. The conference will be held February 6, 7 and 8 at OISE.

CONFERENCE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

LINDA BRISKIN, DEBI BROCK, ANKA BROCH-DUE, BARBARA CAMERON, LINDA CARTY, KARI DEHLI, ALICE DEWOLFF, BARBARA FALK, SUE FINDLAY, JOAN HANNANT, CATHY LANG, MELANIE RANDALL, SHERENE RAZACK, JANICE RISTOCK, ROXANA NG, DOROTHY SMITH.

TO RECEIVE CONFERENCE BROCHURES, PLEASE CONTACT:
WOMEN & THE STATE, DEPT OF SOCIOLOGY, OISE, 252 BLOOR ST. W,
TORONTO M5S 1V6

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ ORGANIZATION (IF ANY) _____

NUMBER OF BROCHURES NEEDED _____

SPONSORED BY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, OISE

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particularly scared anymore. She did, however, check to see if Henry's body was in the back seat of the car. Since it wasn't, she got in. Neither the waitress nor the cashier had said anything, so Mona tried to make conversation. She leaned forward and said, "Where do you two like to shop?" Nobody said anything in reply, so Mona leaned back and started going through the pages of her appointment book and randomly rummaging through her handbag. When she looked up, Mona realized they were outside the oldest, most smoke-y, most all round dive-y of all the Lesbian bars in town: the Silhouette Club.

"Key-rist," thought Mona. Lesbians are everywhere. Even at Fran's. The waitress and the cashier were Lesbians. They had to be if they knew the Silhouette. "I'm Bea," said the waitress. "I'm Violet," said the cashier. Bea was tapping her unvarnished nails on the steering wheel. Mona stared. They were blue at the tips -- blueberry-stained. So it was the waitress who had mashed the blueberry muffin with the message into Mona's bag! And the ad circled in violet ink -- of course Violet had written it.

"Where's Henry?!" shouted Mona. For one split second, she thought: Key-rist, the B. Violet Lesbian Feminist Collective Against Male Doctors has captured Henry and is holding him in the Silhouette. Then she remembered there's no way he could've got through the Silhouette's strictly-enforced dress code which ran as follows: "Lesbians are women and must dress like them at all times." Mona could do a pretty good imitation of a femme, but she had friends who'd been turned away from the Sil for wearing slacks with the fly at the front.

"How should we know where he is, for Chrissake," said Bea. "Violet wrote that ad to get your attention. We need your help. We want to get the union into Fran's. I'm sick of that effing place." Mona sank back into the plush green corduroy upholstery of the Packard, and for one brief moment she pictured Fran's organized, Fran's unionized, Fran's being invaded by 10,000 marchers on International Women's Day.

Mona's head was beginning to whirl, no longer as a result of the caffeine and the heavily-sugared all-natural pie juice. She was putting two and two together and getting five. Violet must have put that ad in NOW well before the story of Henry's kidnapping broke in the papers. Did that mean she had advance knowledge -- was she one of the kidnapers? And then there was their names. Bea and Violet. Bea and Violet. Key-rist, thought Mona, I've been captured by the B. Violet Lesbian Feminist Collective Against Male Doctors. Was Henry in the trunk?

To be continued...

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work. Such differences, if recognized, can be the focus of positive political struggle, which will hopefully lead to necessary changes in the women's movement and society as a whole. We are particularly conscious of the need to integrate fully an anti-racist perspective into feminist organizing. We have taken the statements, recommendations, and evaluations from IWD 1986. Many lessons have been learned which hopefully will move the coalition and the women's movement closer to this goal.

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Because of the importance of structural and process questions (role of caucuses, direction, leadership, decision making, committees etc.) being fully discussed prior to the actual organizing process, we are calling a first meeting for 11 am - 5 pm Sunday December 7 at OISE, 252 Bloor Street West, Room # 4-412 with appropriate breaks scheduled. The location is wheel chair accessible. Proposals for issues or themes may be brought to this or subsequent meetings in December.

The planning process has been very useful and very productive. We are urging women to join with us in the coalition itself. It will need your energy, your diversity, your ideas to be a success. We are building on the lessons learned from past years, and need you to help us to do that. We want to make International Women's Day 1987 truly representative and reflective of the women's movement in Toronto.

In Sisterhood,

The March 8th Planning Committee

Community Events

NOVEMBER

- 14th 7:30 p.m. Public Forum on "Nuclear Zones from Toronto to the Pacific", organized by CAMDI, 826-7216, Friends House, 60 Lowther Ave.
- 15th Saturday and Sunday, Toronto Anti-Intervention Coalition (TAIC) is holding a conference with educational presentations, panels and workshops of the current situation in Central America. Registration is \$5 and \$2. Phone TAIC for further details, 599-9409 or 535-8779.

8:00 p.m. Cathy Fink, award-winning banjo player and folk singer with Marcy Marxer, presented by DEC Bookroom. Tickets are \$6.00, \$7.50 at the door.

8:30 a.m. Afro Canadian Congress presents a one-day conference on Employment Equity. Fee is \$10.00. For more info, call 965-1613 or 293-7393. Council Chamber, City Hall.

16th 8:00 p.m. Tools for Peace benefit with Manteca and Nancy White. Concert Hall, 888 Yonge St. Tickets are \$8.00 and \$10.00 at the door.

19th 9:00 - 6:00 p.m. Refugees in Toronto: "Responding to the Housing Crisis", one day conference, organized by O.C.A.S.I., Toronto Refugee Affairs Council and the Refugee Housing Resource Group. Friends House, 60 Lowther Ave.

20th 7:30 p.m. Public Forum on "A Feminist Analysis of Development: Women in Education, Health and Work" Speakers from MATCH, World Literacy of Canada and DEC. Sponsored by CCIC-Ontario. Development Education Center, 229 College St.

20th 8:00 p.m. Rally to WIN YOUR RIGHTS. Make a noise so that lesbians and gays will be included in Ontario's human rights legislation. Music, entertainment and guest speakers. Sponsored by The Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario and the Right to Privacy Committee. St. Lawrence Market North.

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21st 8:00 p.m. Daisy Zamora, former Vice-Minister of Culture and ex-combattant, reads from her new book of poetry. Fee is \$4 and \$2. Co-sponsored by Women in Solidarity with Nicaragua and A-Space, A-Space, 183 Bathurst St.

22nd 11:00 a.m. - 3 p.m. Christmas Bazaar organized by St. Christopher House, 761 Queen St. W.

10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Conference on International Violence Against Women with guest speaker, Sandra Camacho, a Latin American feminist from New York. Fee is \$4 and \$2. Sponsored by the Latin American Women's Collective. For more info., call 961-8100 Ext. 323.

23rd 2:00 - 6:00 p.m. Tools for Peace benefit with Daisy Zamora. Sponsored by IWDC. Bring a blanket/chequebook. 15 Washington Ave.

23rd 2 - 4:30 p.m. "I didn't Know It Had a Name", a video tape about sexual harassment by Current Video. Shown in both English and Spanish, followed by a panel discussion. A-Space, 183 Bathurst St.
\$4/\$2 For info: 364-3227

25th 9:00 p.m. Sunforce in a benefit for Black Perspectives, cultural program of Dixon Hall Neighbourhood Services. Tickets are \$6.00. For more info, call 863-0499 or 967-5822. At the Bamboo.

28th 2:00 - 4:00. Lecture on "Writers and Artists in Angola and Mozambique today" Rm. 2053, New College., U of T.

DECEMBER

1st 8:00 p.m. Sheila Neysmith speaks on the "Development of a Feminist Analysis on Aging". Rm. 2-212, OISE.

7th March 8th Planning Committee. First meeting of the Coalition. 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., 252 Bloor Street West., Room #4-412.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 6-8, Conference on "Women and the State" - A conference for feminist activists. Themes of the conference include: the effects of the state on the daily lives of women, the impact of women's organizing on the state and theories of the state, and women's experience. Venue: 252 Bloor St. W., OISE.

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 word processing of this newsletter was done by the woman at Rexdale Community MicroSkills Development Centre. Rexdale MicroSkills is an on-the-job training program for immigrant women in microfilm and automated office procedures. If you would like further information please call Shelly Gordon at 749-0640.



March 8th Coalition

Dear sisters and friends;

It's time once again to start planning the events of International Women's Day. The first meeting of the March 8 Coalition (1987) will take place:

11 AM - 5 PM, Sunday, Dec. 7,
OISE, 252 Bloor St. W., Room 4-412.

The location is wheelchair accessible. Proposals for issues or themes may be brought to this or subsequent meetings in December.

Every year, the March 8 Coalition organizes a broad-based demonstration, rally, and fair as well as educational and cultural events in the week leading up to International Women's Day (IWD). Between eight and ten thousand people generally participate. Last year, the theme was "Women say NO to racism from Toronto to South Africa!" This year, we want to continue to integrate an anti-racist perspective into our feminist organizing.

The March 8 Coalition draws large numbers of people into action around issues which are generally supported by the women's movement, the labour movement, and the anti-racist movement. Not surprisingly, the Coalition is politically independent and receives no Government funding. Neither does it receive funding from large business corporations. Instead, we rely on organizations such as yours to provide financial assistance to cover costs such as printing posters and leaflets, renting halls, providing sound equipment, and providing wheelchair transportation on the march. Advance funds are very much needed this year. Please mail cheques as soon as possible to:

March 8 Coalition, Room 208, 229 College St., M5T 1R4.

This year, the ad hoc March 8 planning committee studied recommendations and evaluations from IWD '86. We felt that many lessons could be learned from the past years of the Coalition and that it would be fruitful to have a full discussion in the Coalition and to reach agreement on matters of structure and process before beginning the tasks of organizing IWD '87. This discussion - of topics such as direction, leadership, decision-making process, committees, and caucuses - constitutes the proposed agenda for the Dec. 7 meeting.

The Coalition itself is a women's organization. However, men are encouraged to participate in the events of the Day. Women are invited to work in the Coalition either as individuals or as representatives of organizations.

Help us build IWD '87 bigger and better than ever!

In solidarity,

*The ad hoc planning committee
for March 8.*



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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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History tells us that every
oppressed class gained true
liberation thru its own effort

-Emma Goldman