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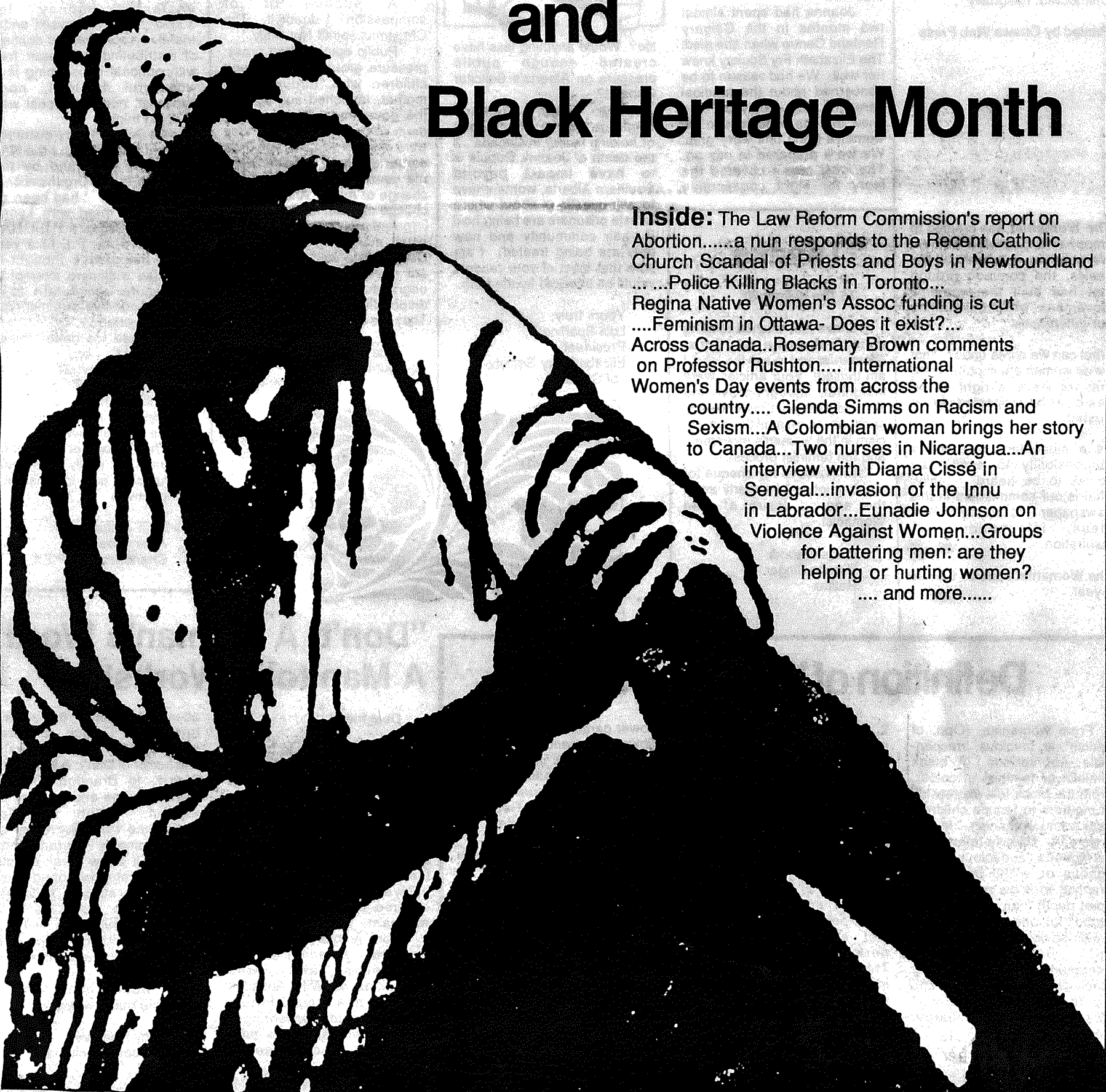
# The Womanist

February/ March 1989

A feminist newspaper distributed nationally

Vol 1, #3, Ottawa

## Happy International Women's Day and Black Heritage Month



**Inside:** The Law Reform Commission's report on Abortion.....a nun responds to the Recent Catholic Church Scandal of Priests and Boys in Newfoundland  
....Police Killing Blacks in Toronto...  
Regina Native Women's Assoc funding is cut  
....Feminism in Ottawa- Does it exist?...  
Across Canada..Rosemary Brown comments on Professor Rushton.... International Women's Day events from across the country.... Glenda Simms on Racism and Sexism...A Colombian woman brings her story to Canada...Two nurses in Nicaragua...An interview with Dama Cissé in Senegal...invasion of the Innu in Labrador...Eunadie Johnson on Violence Against Women...Groups for battering men: are they helping or hurting women?  
.... and more.....

# Womenspeak

## The Death of Joanna Dupuis: A Lasting Legacy

To *The Womanist*:

The public inquiry into the death of Joanna Dupuis in the Calgary Remand Centre was held on January 25, 26, 27 and February 8 of this year. Joanna died sometime during the early hours of September 24, 1988, alone in her cell. She was serving a sentence for writing bad cheques with further charges pending.

The Calgary Remand Centre is a badly designed and seriously under-funded holding facility. However bad it is for the 200 - 400 male prisoners rotting in its dormitories and cells, it is much worse for the women. The women are held in a small interior area. There are no windows. Up to forty female prisoners share one toilet, sink and bathtub. Even when as few as a dozen women are held there, they find it cramped and confining. There is little to do to pass the anxious months until trial.

Joanna had spent almost two months in the Calgary Remand Centre when she died. The Elizabeth Fry Society knew her well. We had reason to be concerned about the medical care she had received. We knew that the conditions in the women's living unit were grim. We were prepared to say so. The local media covered the story for eight consecutive

days, and it was eventually carried nationwide by W5.

The Elizabeth Fry Society was granted standing at the public inquiry into Joanna's death. Probably only the lawyers in the courtroom fully appreciated the significance of a public interest group being allowed to cross examine witnesses, call evidence, and present arguments at a hearing of this kind - a first for Alberta.

We could not bring Joanna back, but we did close the female remand unit at the Calgary Remand Centre. All the women will be moved out within a few days of this writing. Was this victory worth a human



life? Would anything less have created enough public pressure on Alberta's Solicitor General?

The Calgary Remand Centre is not the worst prison or holding facility in Canada. If the death of Joanna Dupuis is to have impact beyond Southern Alberta, women have to ask questions about where female prisoners are being held in their community and how they are being treated. I am sure that most of your readers would be shocked by the truth.

Yours truly,  
Lois Sparling  
President  
Elizabeth Fry Society  
of Calgary



## A Victory in B.C.

Dear women:

Well, the very day *The Womanist* went to press with my article on "Poverty in B.C." the government rescinded the \$50 reduction in welfare rates for employable single parents, effective January 1, 1989. Of course, it didn't refund the money it had already taken away, but at least it agreed not to take away any more.

A sudden fit of compassion? I doubt it. The Christmas spirit? Not likely.

Public opinion; bad press; pressure groups; three young children who, through their mother, launched suit against the government for depriving them of benefits because they were over six years of age (how embarrassing!); these were the reasons for the sudden change of mind. And it was a change of mind, not heart.

And are we grateful for this small mercy? Not a bit! As Oscar Wilde said, "...the poor are never grateful. They are ungrateful, and discontented, disobedient, and rebellious. They are quite right to be so."

Gus Long  
Burnaby, B.C.

## Sorry, Vancouver

For reasons we have yet to understand, Air Canada Express did not deliver the last issue to our Vancouver distributor, Janet Wheeler.

Despite our best efforts, the newspaper sat in the Vancouver airport for several weeks and now we are not sure where it is!

Please accept our apologies.

## A Supportive Voice

Dear Sisters:

I have read the first two issues of *The Womanist* and I think it is wonderful. I am enclosing money for subscriptions for myself and a friend. I also think the concept of distributing the paper free with optional subscribing is a wonderful feminist, non-capitalist, non-patriarchal way of doing things.

I was (am!) very disturbed by what I heard about the NAC AGM this year and by the response to the Organizational Review report. I had been so pleased to meet with Lynne Tyler, as a rep of a P.E.I. NAC group (CARAL, P.E.I.) a year ago because I thought it indicated a sincere attempt to restructure and return to a more responsive feminist type of organization.

I hope for better things from NAC but I also appreciated what Louise Murray said in her letter in the December/January issue, that "No one is represented by anyone but ourselves."

Thank you for producing this paper. I really appreciate the national and international perspectives.

Best wishes  
Alice Crook  
Charlottetown, P.E.I.

Women who worked on this issue: Lynne Tyler, Joan Riggs, Beth Ryan, Michelle Albert, Gloria Shalay, Toni Gorrie (Halifax), Susan de Rosa, Donna Pinay (Regina), Giselle Marcotte (Prince Albert), Ariel Books (Vancouver) and all the women who gathered the International Women's Day information for the center pages.

Designed by Joan Riggs, Catalyst Research and Communications.

We would like to thank the many women artists from whom we have borrowed their artwork yet were unable to find their names.

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*The Womanist* was created to empower and enable women. We want to get back to the basics, the common ground that has built the women's movement, while celebrating our differences.

What can we agree upon? That we as women are important and that we have a right to be heard, to be respected, to be trusted.

As a movement we have a responsibility to enable all voices to be heard, equally. That is our commitment in this newspaper - to empower with ideas, information and inspiration.

*The Womanist* appears 6 times a year.

## Thanks

To *The Womanist*:

I have just finished reading your first issue of *The Womanist* and to say the least I am thrilled! Your articles were insightful, thought-provoking and addressed timely issues such as accessibility and racism in the women's movement and the feminist process.

Enclosed is my cheque for a subscription. I eagerly await the second issue of *The Womanist*.

In sisterhood  
Verona Singer  
Halifax

## Definition of Womanist

1. From womanish. (Opp. of "girlish", ie, frivolous, irresponsible, not serious.) A black feminist or feminist of colour. From the black folk expression of mothers to female children, "you acting womanish," ie, like a woman. Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or willful behaviour. Wanting to know more and in great depth than is considered "good" for one. Interested in grown-up doings. Acting grown up. Being grown up. Interchangeable with another black folk expression: "You trying to be grown." Responsible. In charge. Serious.

2. Also. A woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and women's strength. Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or nonsexually. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health. Traditionally universalist, as in: "Mama, why are we brown, pink and yellow, and our cousins are white, beige and black?" Ans.: "Well, you know the colored race is just like a

flower garden, with every color flower represented.) Traditionally capable as in "Mama, I'm walking to Canada and I'm taking you and a bunch of other slaves with me." Reply: "It wouldn't be the first time."

3. Loves music. Loves dance. Loves the moon. Loves the Spirit. Loves love and food and roundness. Loves struggle. Loves the folks. Loves herself. Regardless.

4. Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender.

From *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens*, Womanist Prose by Alice Walker.

## "Don't: A Woman's Word" A Manitoba Workshop

Dear friend:

I was delighted to pick up the second issue of *The Womanist* at the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women office in Brandon. It is important that as a national paper, your focus and distribution move outside the Toronto-Ottawa region. I enjoyed the issue and was inspired by the definition of womanist.

For "Across Canada", you may want to add that the Minnedosa and Area Committee on Wife Abuse is breaking new ground in rural Manitoba and sponsoring a one-day workshop on adult survivors of child sexual

abuse. This March 16 event will bring Elly Danica, a rural survivor from Saskatchewan, and author of *Don't: A Woman's Word*, to Brandon. Danica offers courage and hope to all women. With financial assistance from Secretary of State Women's Programs, the event will allow rural people from several neighboring communities to attend. It is vital that issues such as this surface in rural, as well as urban communities, and that alternatives be sought immediately.

I would also like to distribute the newspaper.

Cindy Hanson  
Brandon, Manitoba

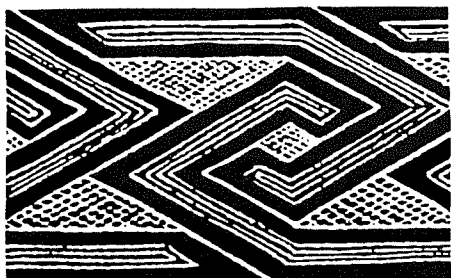
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## Editorial



The Law Reform Commission, in its project on abortion, set itself the task of developing proposals that would be

- a) "ethically defensible",
- b) "solidly rooted in principle",
- c) "generally acceptable in our pluralistic society", and
- d) "fairly balancing the rights and interests of all those implicated."

Judging by the report released in late February, **Crimes Against the Fetus**, we can safely say they failed. (for more information and analysis, see article in this issue "Misogyny rears its ugly head again", by Mona Wynn and Nicole Jasmin )

The essential proposal appears to be to make abortion legal before 22 weeks, but only on certain restricted grounds, and entirely illegal after 22 weeks.

Once again, like a spoiled child, the state is poised to seize the authority without accepting any of the responsibility. The high mucky-mucks, whether parliamentary, legal or religious, want to make the decision for women, but won't be around to deal with the consequences.

In effect, they are telling women, "You will live with the consequences of this for the rest of your life, but you don't get to make the decision -- we do. We don't know your dreams, we don't know if you're rich or poor, black or white, old or young. We don't even know your name. But we will decide."

Not only is this inhumane, irresponsible and anti-democratic, it just plain won't

work.

Which brings us to the bottom line -- what is the purpose of all this? Is it to prevent abortions? To promote respect for human life? If so, the Law Reform Commission report is wildly off the mark.

The effect of the proposal (and presumably therefore, the purpose, since these are intelligent people who wrote the report) will be to control women's decisions about their own bodies, and to punish women who break these rules. How this will promote respect for life is not clear to me.

They have artificially simplified what is actually a very complex decision. Their tidy solution: before 22 weeks is OK under certain conditions, after 22 weeks you're a criminal.

The reality is not that simple. The decision to terminate a pregnancy involves weighing a whole range of ethical, medical, social, economic and other factors, which only the pregnant woman herself is best able to know.

Most people realize this - 71% of Canadians do, the medical profession does. Why doesn't the Law Reform Commission?

Part of the problem is that we asked a bunch of lawyers for their opinion on what is essentially not a legalistic issue. Naturally, being lawyers, they suggested using the Criminal Code - it's what they know best. The fact that it is a totally inappropriate mechanism for this issue is irrelevant.

Where does this leave us?

We are at a difficult stage

in the abortion debate. The situation is rapidly disintegrating into greater polarization and even violence, fuelled by actions such as those by Operation Rescue and the ignorance and misplaced paternalism of the Law Reform Commission.

We need leadership from our federal government, and quickly. We don't need a solution based on the Criminal Code or any other form of punitive authoritarianism. Instead, we need a genuinely Canadian solution -- one based on tolerance, pluralism and commonsense.

If we want to demonstrate a profound respect for life, and for the constitutionally guaranteed right of women to security of the person, and we want to be effective in the real world, our government might consider the following:

a) provide comprehensive education, information and services to prevent unwanted pregnancies (demonstrated over and over again to be the best way to prevent abortions),

b) ensure the fair and universal enforcement of the Canada Health Act, and

c) provide genuine and significant support to parents raising children in this country, especially single mothers and low-income parents.

This approach has no glory, no placards, no headlines, no flamboyant arrests or self-righteous soapboxes.

But it will promote respect for life, for women, and for children. And it stands a far better chance of actually working than anything else in sight.

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# Womenspeak

## Would you call what Canada is doing "Protection"?

"When am I going to feel protected?" This is a question that refugee women have been asking themselves for a long time, trying to find an answer in every step they decide to take.

Women searching for refugees are mothers, grandmothers, sisters, daughters who have fled tremendous repression, torture, family disappearance, killings and war. Some of them had to go through the traumatic experience of crossing rivers, borders or tunnels, with their children in order to find a safe place to go.

In Canada, these women realize that they cannot get the answer they are looking for. PROTECTION is not a priority in the Conservative government's policy on refugees. On January 1, 1989, Canada's new refugee law came into effect, ignoring what churches, human rights groups, labour groups, lawyers and refugee rights organizations had to say in opposing the law. The government pushed ahead the law and promised that true refugees will never be turned away from Canada but... refugees are being turned away right now!

The Canadian public must be aware of the repeated violation of the Charter of

Rights and Freedoms in most sections of the refugee law (Bills C-55 and C-84). How can only two people decide the future of a claimant's life (ie. the first and decisive step in the Immigration Inquiry Phase)? Canada is not offering protection to refugees, and as usual, the women are the most affected.

Refugee women in Canada are aware of the dirty game the Conservative government is playing. On one hand the government wants to show the Canadian public that this law is the best to "screen" the "credible" claimant, and that Canada welcomes all real refugees because this country through history has shown that it has in one way or another received refugees fleeing war, economic and socio-culture difficulties. On the other hand, the issue of "Canada and its third world intervention" is never discussed side by side with the refugee issue.

But what does this mean? What does this have to do directly with refugees? This issue has a lot to do with refugees. Canada's intervention in the creation of refugees can be seen through the financial support provided to third world countries, which violate human



rights. The Canadian public should also link the fact that Canada has gained the prestige of being an arms producer country. ARMX, "Canada's International Arms Exhibition" is happening here (Lansdowne Park, Ottawa) in May 1989, where the violators of human rights from Asia, Latin America and other parts of the world will view and purchase these Canadian weapons.

Once one has the whole picture of what the right and left hands of Canada are doing, it appears clear that the refugee

situation will never end. Canada is not doing anything to prevent the creation of refugees but instead is cooperating for its continuation.

From the "First Consultation of refugee Women" held in Geneva, Switzerland, on November 14, 19, 1988 a strong message came out: refugee women, NGO's (non-government organizations), and the international community must focus on the root cause. The answer to the refugee issue is not just to create programs and/or services as a bandage to meet

the needs of the refugee women. Refugee women do not want a cure for the symptoms, they want to finish with the illness.

The refugee women in Canada, besides encountering so many barriers such as the lack of knowledge of the language, culture shock, difficulties in finding affordable housing, etc., have to carry on with a new burden: Canada's refugee law. Some of these women had to leave their children back home and have to cope with the emotional stress of not knowing when they will be able to have their family reunited. The ones who came with their children have to cope with the insecurity of what to do and where to go in order to provide protection for them and their children.

It is everyone's responsibility to act on the Canadian government's involvement. If Canada does not want to deal with the results of its involvement in other countries, it should stop providing support to them.

Just as women through history in all parts of the world have been struggling to have the rights of voice, respect and trust, there is no difference with what the 'refugee' women are struggling for. They do not choose to leave their home country, they are forced to.

Justice and empowerment for all refugee women!

Noemi Garcia  
Toronto

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## A special thank you

We would like to thank all of the wonderful women who have helped us get started on the newspaper and are giving us the energy and vision to carry on each day.

We would like to thank the distributors of the last issue of the newspaper.

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We need more distributors in Manitoba, in Edmonton and anywhere you feel there is a need for this newspaper.

# Misogyny Rears its Ugly Head

by Nicole Jasmin and  
Mona Wynn

The Law Reform Commission has produced a working paper entitled **Protection of Life: Crimes Against the Foetus**, intended "to propose a comprehensive policy regarding the foetus that would be ethically defensible, solidly rooted in principle, generally acceptable in our pluralistic society, and fairly balancing the rights and interests of all those implicated."

The resulting document is an example of doubletalk that is all too typical of our legal profession and the fence-sitters in the abortion debate.

It is ironic that the Law Reform Commission represents itself as an objective observer when it is obvious that they undertook the exercise with a predetermined bias in defense of the foetus, as illustrated in the paper's title. Furthermore, they did this regardless of the fact that the foetus has not been accorded rights by the Supreme Court of Canada, or by our Charter of Rights.

Abortion is equated with "destruction or serious harm to a foetus", rather than women's definition of "ending an unwanted pregnancy" and the rights of women are clearly secondary and poorly considered.

reaches an age of twenty-two weeks as determined by the usual clinical indicators and by the medical profession."

Selecting twenty-two weeks as a benchmark is contentious and overlooks the numerous variables that affect the viability of an individual foetus. Determining viability is a medical, case-by-case decision.

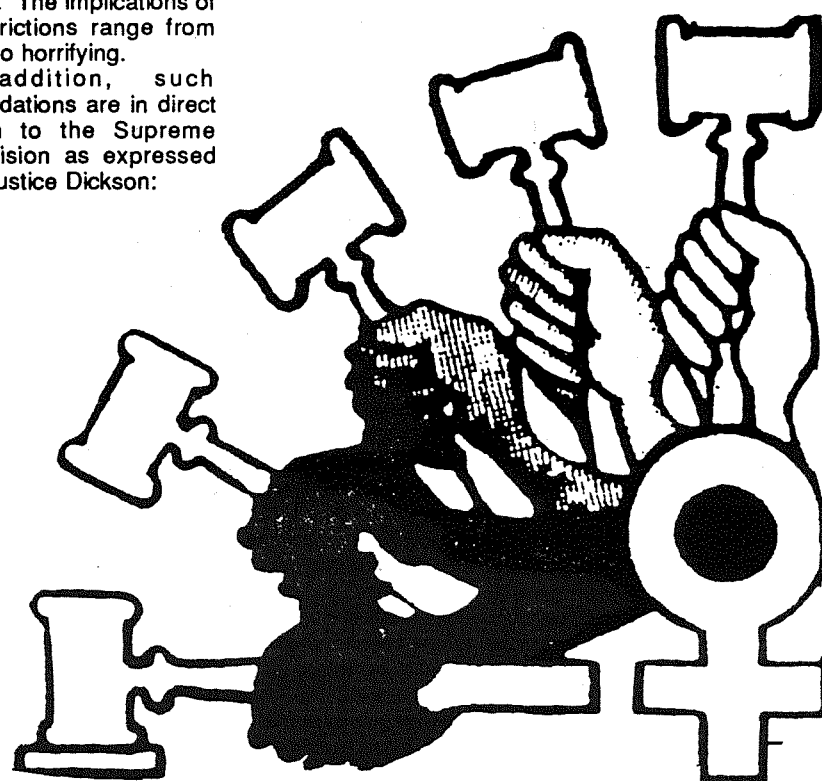
By attempting to redefine and revise the provisions in the Criminal Code that were struck down by the Supreme Court in January, 1988, the Law Reform Commission draws attention away from its central purpose: restricting women's rights to individual choice.

The entire tract is an exercise in maintaining the legal system's control over women, thinly disguised as an attempt to protect the rights of the foetus. Consider the following:

- restrictive laws do not stop abortions, they just make it more dangerous for women,
- 89% of all abortions are done by the twelfth week of pregnancy. Only 0.3% are done after 20 weeks of pregnancy and 0.1% at 22 weeks (Statistics Canada). There is clearly no need to develop criminal sanctions to protect viable foetuses.

recklessly, can she also be charged with causing destruction or serious harm to her foetus? The same applies to a woman's smoking, drinking, poor diet, etc. during pregnancy. The implications of these restrictions range from ridiculous to horrifying.

In addition, such recommendations are in direct opposition to the Supreme Court decision as expressed by Chief Justice Dickson:



*"a woman must not be meeting criteria entirely unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations, it must not interfere with a woman's bodily integrity in both the physical and emotional sense. Forcing a woman, by threat of criminal sanctions, to carry a foetus to term unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations is a profound interference with a woman's body and thus a violation of security of the person."*

The lack of concern for women is evident when the Law Reform Commission states that pregnancies which are the result of rape or incest do not justify ending a pregnancy.

A complete misunderstanding of the circumstances which surround the decision to terminate an unwanted pregnancy is apparent when the Commission insists that situations in which "the mother can't afford another child, the parents already have more children than they can cope with ... fall below the threshold of justification."

The Commission indicates that it has "confidence in the good faith of pregnant women to act responsibly ... and to terminate pregnancies only for sufficient reasons and it has confidence that women and doctors act and will continue to act with responsibility."

If this were true, the Law Reform Commission should have taken note of the fact that the Canadian Medical Association, the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada, and the Canadian Psychiatric Association all consider abortion to be a medical procedure to be decided upon by the patient and her physician.

Further, in its August 1988 policy, the Canadian Medical Association approved the performance of abortion in free standing clinics, supported full medicare coverage for all abortion related services and saw no need for a new abortion law.

The Commission's report suggests that women have abortions on the basis of whims or for capricious reasons. This is an assumption that could only be made by men who have never been confronted with the personal reality of unwanted pregnancy. Abortion remains a women's issue beyond the

scope of men.

Until we are allowed full control over our own bodies, we cannot fully participate in the social, political and economic world.

Mona Wynn, a sociologist and community developer working in health and social services in Ottawa, is also involved in the women's community.

Nicole Jasmin has been a choice advocate and lobbyist since her arrival in Ottawa four years ago. She is also involved in several feminist groups in Ottawa.



The Law Reform Commission has strayed far beyond its professional responsibility to impose its conservatism and lack of vision onto the field of health care. Over the past two decades, the World Health Organization's definition of "health", which includes "physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity", has been embraced at the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government. In fact, this definition is central to recent initiatives of both Health and Welfare Canada, and the Ontario Ministry of Health.

Surely what is accepted by the health strategists in our country is more than adequate for legal discussion. Yet, the Law Reform Commission has opted to restrict its definition of health to physical and psychological terms.

The tendency to wander past their professional bounds is evident in their decision that "a foetus is capable of independent survival after it

The Commission states that "in the absence of justification for subordinating foetal life to maternal interests, criminal prohibition of and sanction for abortion may well be defensible" and suggests


that the following clause be added to the Criminal Code:

*everyone commits a crime who a) purposely, recklessly or negligently causes destruction or serious harm to a foetus; or b) being a pregnant woman, purposely causes destruction or serious harm to her foetus by an act or by failing to make reasonable provision for assistance in respect of her delivery.*

What are the implications of these notions?

Does failing to take your obstetrician on an airplane with you at 38 weeks of pregnancy constitute "failing to make reasonable provision for delivery"? If a woman goes into labour and delivers her baby in flight, would she have committed a crime?

If a woman has a car accident while driving



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# Canada's Future — Who's in Charge?

by Maude Barlow

There is an unease in the land. In recent weeks, the corporate world has been rocked by a series of changes leaving analysts and the public alike to puzzle about their meaning and whether they are "good" or "bad" for Canada. Several large mergers have left Canadians asking if they are the deliberate actions of corporations who know they will lead to layoffs, higher consumer prices and lowered competition, or the necessary rationalizations that will prepare these companies for the brave new world of global competition.

A proposed major acquisition of one of Canada's largest pulp and paper companies by an American corporation was met with cries of protest followed by resigned acceptance as being the inevitable result of a climate of free trade and an investment watchdog agency likely to rubber stamp this deal as it has every other since its formation. Headlines appeared in all the papers warning us that American business is poised to take over many Canadian companies, particularly in the primary resource sector. "Foreigners sweep up Canada's forest industry," warned the Globe's business section. Was this expected, we wondered.

And an apparently pre-arranged agreement to permit American Express Travel related services, not a bank in the U.S., to apply for status here, in contradiction of Canadian banking practise, has left the Cabinet open to charges of favoring the American company, a free trade ally. These charges came from the most unlikely of sectors - the banking establishment.

This sense of unease is pervasive. And it is not based on the pre-election battle lines. Former pro-free trade editorialists and supporters have been expressing doubt, confusion and surprise. Was not free trade meant to pave the way for Consolidated-Bathurst to buy Stone Container and not the other way around?

Claude Castonguay, Chairman of the Laurentian Bank of Canada, gave voice to his unease about the sale,

saying that it is not the type of transaction "before which one should remain indifferent," and called on the government to initiate measures to give Canadian companies a "fighting chance under free trade." Even American observers warn us that these takeovers and mergers are on a scale that would alarm U.S. regulators and give them serious reasons to consider refusal.

This disquiet emanates from a perception that we are reacting to events and not directing them. There is a pervasive sense that no one knows if these changes were expected and natural or a surprise with limitless others to follow. It is as if no one is home, and that all government can do is react to events, and hope they fit the free trade script. This is the natural consequence of the way in which Canada negotiated this deal, in haste and without a clear set of objectives. In comparison, it is essential to note how much longer the countries of Europe have been

preparing for 1992, at least 30 years to our four.

On an urgent basis, Canada must take action, and it must be based on the following principles:

## 1. Canadian control

It is essential that Canadians regain the means to own and control the levers of our economy if we wish to set our own agenda. In the 1987-88 fiscal year, foreign takeovers, 70% of which were American, increased sharply to investments worth \$20.2 billion, up from \$12.5 billion the year before.

The global trend to the formation of mega-corporations combined with a lack of ownership of our own resources will leave Canadian governments with greatly reduced ability to define rules by which these corporations must operate. Their sizes give them the obvious advantage of being able to move production out of a country with too many such rules and to relocate in a country with a more "favou-

able" business climate. Such favourable conditions might mean lower environmental and safety laws, a passive, non-unionized work force, and low or no minimum wage.

To avoid this scenario, Canada would need to start placating these companies with concessions. The Amex bank application is just a foretaste of our government's response to such multinationals - let them in and then write the necessary legislation to fit the circumstances.

## 2. A Planned Economy

The cause of our present discomfort over recent events stems from the fact that there is no plan, no blueprint against which we can measure them. Canadians were told that the world is changing and that Canada must change too. So the government opened the doors of competition, and stepped back. This is no way to manage change.

Business, government, and labour must work together to decide on Canada's strengths and its needs. Our joint resources must be aimed at providing what is needed to those areas of strength, and planning, with time, to phase out weak industry. Politicians must stop using political criteria for economic decision-making. Planning would permit the retraining of workers and would combine the best of business acumen with consideration for the human reality. It would establish a standard and goals against which future action could be assessed. Planning would help Canadian companies and workers to prepare for the new global realignment instead of throwing them into it and hoping for the best.

## 3. Sustainable Development

A remarkable development in recent months for anyone monitoring these trends has been the sudden expansion of investment into major new initiatives in our natural resource sector. Billions of dollars have been earmarked for new projects in the forests of northern B.C. and Alberta, and there has been an explosion of plans to build new natural gas pipelines including a resurrection of a MacKenzie Valley route.

Like our economy, the use of our resources, including our energy, must be planned, and the plans must be based on knowledge of our future needs and reserves. The philosophy of corporatism is that big is beautiful, unlimited growth is natural, and the bottom line justifies all expansion. Economic development must take place in harmony with Canada's resource, social and environmental requirements. Our concern for our environment must not be an afterthought, but rather the central consideration in all economic development. Who will safeguard this heritage if our resources are not in Canadian hands?

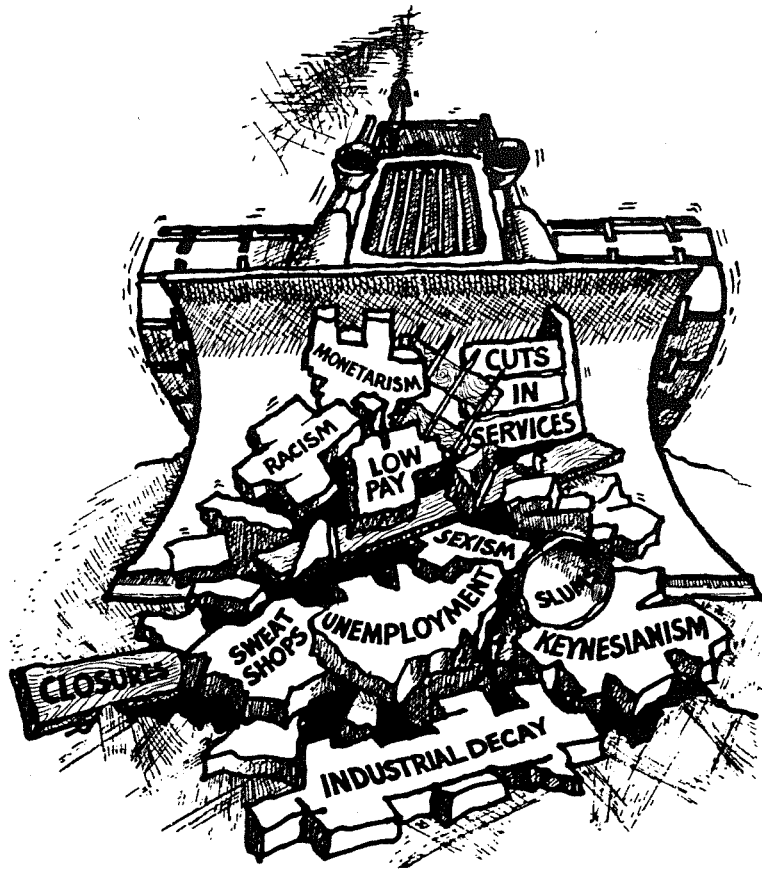
## 4. Social Justice

To build the kind of economy and political fabric that will keep Canada competitive, there needs to be a social consensus about our system and how it works. The gap between rich and poor is growing. The gap in income between women and men is widening. The fastest growing group of poor are children, one million and counting. Racial intolerance exists and has real financial and social consequences for minority people. Our native people are suffering.

Yet wealth is being concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, and a new Library of Parliament study shows that business' share of federal assistance has grown while its share of the tax burden has shrunk. In the first seven months of the last fiscal year, corporate income tax revenues fell by 10% while revenues from individuals climbed 11%. Canada needs a social policy framework based on equity of tax sharing by the corporations, and the belief that social justice is good business. It is not enough to tell workers laid off by recent mergers to read the want ads. Strong legislation for racial and sexual equality, employer/government sponsored retraining programs for workers and a war on child poverty must be undertaken immediately.

Canada has come to a crossroads. We can float and hope. Or we can control. It is time to choose.

Maude Barlow is the Chairperson of the Council of Canadians.



## CANADIAN VOICE OF WOMEN FOR PEACE/ LA VOIX DES FEMMES



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# Child Sex Abuse Among the Clergy: A Churchwoman's View

by Lorraine Michael,  
R.S.M.

Fourteen months ago, people in St. John's were rocked with the news that three charges of child sexual abuse had been brought against Jim Hickey, a high-profile priest of the Roman Catholic Church. This was a first for the Archdiocese of St. John's, and its effects were beyond belief. But what at the time felt like a massive earthquake now appears as a mild shock wave.

Since January 1988, the people have been hit with one blow after another. First of all, Hickey's charges were multiplied until the final count was 20. His initial plea of not guilty caused the case to be dragged on for months because of preliminary hearings. The guilty plea and final sentencing did not occur until September, eight months after the initial charges were laid.

Then in November 1988, another priest, John Corrigan, had similar charges brought against him. His sentence of five years was brought down in January 1989. People were still reacting to this second

conviction when more charges were laid in February, this time against two priests and an ex-priest of the Archdiocese. These latest charges have caused an even greater emotional outburst than previously. Recent revelations of victims in the media have opened a Pandora's box of group sex and planned orgies. They point to groups of priest "working" together in orchestrated sexual abuse of minors. This has created an awful expectation in the community that there is more to come.

The questions that are arising from this unbelievable situation are many. People want to know how a priest could be involved in child sexual abuse for almost 20 years without someone knowing. They are wondering if something about the clerical state, e.g., celibacy, has caused this to happen. They are asking if there's something lacking in the training of priests that has led to this. And more than anything, they want to know how and why there could

be so many involved.

While these questions, and similar ones, are important, I think there needs to be a broadening of the base of inquiry if we are to fully understand what is happening. As with many forms of sexual abuse, the issue at play here is not sex or sexuality. The issue is one of power.

As a woman in the church I am relating profoundly to the victims of these sexual abuse because I have experienced in my work and life the abuse of power by clergy. The sexual abuse of children is just the most extreme expression of the abuse of power that many of us women have identified for a long time. It is so reprehensible because these men are using positions of trust and power to destroy the lives of adolescents.

There is a danger because of the celibate state of the Roman Catholic clergy to see these cases only in sexual terms. If we do so, we narrow the analysis. Instead we must ask why do men in power positions use these situations



to sexually abuse women and children. Why do men sexually assault their wives? their daughters? their sons? other women? other children? Why do they try to prove who they are by asserting themselves sexually over those who are less powerful? These questions are, of course, being asked in the broader society. Their answers are the same as to why Roman Catholic clergy are involved in child sexual abuse.

As well, there has existed in society an unspoken, and very often unconscious, pact that has always protected men who have abused women and children. It is this same societal pact of silence that has protected these clergy. That pact is only recently being broken in this province. It has been only a very few years since rape cases were first reported in the media. It is no wonder then that the cloak of silence is only now being lifted in a society where clergy have experienced an incomparable position of power.

I do not talk about the broader societal experiences in order to minimize what is going on with the Roman Catholic clergy. These factors actually become heightened in the church since the Roman Catholic clergy constitute what I have heard referred to as "the most exclusive men's club in the world." Men who are involved in the criminal activity we are talking about use the cloak of a celibate structure to pursue their activities. Also, because there is no structure of accountability outside the "brotherhood" they have felt fairly confident of protection. There is a strong sense of loyalty among clergy, so much so that some priests still find it hard to see why the clergy involved in child sexual abuses should lose their status as priests. And this even in the case of someone who has been convicted of multiple charges perpetrated over a long period of time.

This is incomprehensible to me, but that is because I, too, am victimized. I am working as a director of an office in a hierarchical

structure where I am never involved in any ultimate decision-making, and never can be as long as all power rests in the hands of the male clergy structure. More than that, individual priests have used this structure to block my work and the work of other laity.

Group reflections that are going on as a result of the situation in the St. John's Archdiocese are allowing people to name this abuse of power. In a group that I was recently part of, participants agreed that the clergy who have exercised power over children through sexual abuse have been able to do so because their abuse of power on other levels had not been named and called. At last the laity, and laywomen more freely than laymen, are doing so. It is most unfortunate that things had to reach such a crisis in order for this to happen.

But one thing is now certain. Our church will never be the same again. Lay people will no longer be willing to leave the church to the clerics. More to the point, women will no longer be willing to leave the church to the men. And there are men who will walk with those women, both laymen who do not want to be co-opted by the clergy, and a handful of clergy who recognize the power inherent in their state.

This is the good that will come from the present evil. It will not come without struggle. But the struggle to create something new will give life rather than drain life as the present situation is doing. Instead of the destruction of an earthquake, we will create the new life of an evolutionary explosion. This is the challenge we face.

Lorraine Michael is Director of the Office of Social Action of the Archdiocese of St. John's. She is a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy of Newfoundland and Labrador.

## NO MORE EXCUSES!!

We are preparing a Directory of Women in Canada Specializing in Global Issues: Development, Environment and Peace, and related social justice and economic issues. We need your help to get the word out, to reach women who should be listed in the Directory.

The Directory will meet the needs of those requiring speakers, workshop leaders, consultants, etc. for conferences, seminars, workshops, the media, government and NGO's, and other activities.

Women in Canada have tremendous contributions to make on these issues. Yet women with expertise in these areas have largely been missing from conferences, negotiations and government deliberations. Partly, this is because they are not well known to the people who choose conference speakers, consultants and researchers. The Directory will help fill this gap, by providing background on women to be resource people for local, national and international conferences, workshops, media and other events and groups.

Let there be no more excuses that knowledgeable women cannot be found to participate in the processes of change!

## How can you help?

**1. Send us names,** addresses and telephone numbers of Canadian women you know who have expertise in global survival issues -- peace, development, environment, and related social justice and economic concerns. We are seeking a fair representation of issues, regions, race, background and other factors. We will contact the women suggested to us and ask them for more information, references and permission to be included in the Directory. We welcome as many names as possible, although we cannot guarantee that all women will be included in this edition of the Directory.

**2. Share this information** as widely as possible in your organization and community.

**3. Contribute.** The research, computer compilation and printing of the Directory will cost approximately \$70,000. We need your financial support to make it a reality. No contribution is too large or too small.

**Please send your generous donation today.**



Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg,  
Directory of Canadian Women  
Specializing in Global Issues,  
c/o Canadian Council for International  
Co-operation,  
1 Nicholas, Suite 300  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B7





# Police killings of Blacks: a symptom of a larger problem

by Linda Carty

The killings of two black men last year by police officers in Toronto have once again brought Black people, and concerned supporters, out into the streets protesting racism in the police force. Since 1978, when police first shot a Black man to death in Toronto, the practise has become more common and, simultaneously, the racism underlying it more overt.

The police killings must not be viewed in isolation because, in fact, they are the worst symptom of a larger problem, that of ingrained racism within the Canadian justice system and indeed society's entire social fabric. This fact is unpleasant for many to listen to, but it is the painful reality many more have to live with.

Across this country, Black people, like Native people and other peoples of colour have long come to realize that there is a different system of justice for them than there is for whites. It is this system which allows police the "freedom" to kill unarmed citizens and then insult their grieving families by claiming they did so in self-defense. The public outcry and protests in Toronto against racism in the police force, and/or the wider society, were also seen not too long ago in Montreal and Halifax, and are becoming quite commonplace in Canadian society.

Last spring, a Montreal police officer shot and killed an unarmed 19-year-old Black man at close range, after he had obeyed an order to stop and was actually in a position of surrender. The officer was continually supported by his peers and superiors after the incident, and it seems, was dismissed from the force only after subsequent investigations proved his continued defence too embarrassing.

Last December, a 17-year-old unarmed Black male, who police alleged was driving a stolen car was shot in the back of the head as police relentlessly fired at the rear windscreen of the vehicle. Although forensic tests proved the youth was killed with a bullet which is banned for use

by police, that particular police force claims it does not have such bullets in use. Since then, the Ontario Solicitor General claims that she ordered an investigation which proved that the specifically banned bullet was not being used by any police force in the province. Her investigation was actually a survey of all police chiefs in the province. Obviously, she expected them to tell her if they were breaking the law.

This past January, racial riots erupted in a Nova Scotia high school where 10 per cent of the student population is Black. After the riots subsided, the police laid charges against those perceived as being the instigators. More than 85 per cent of those charged are Blacks. The incident brought many issues to light and exposed once again how deeply entrenched racism is in that province. Blacks have been in Nova Scotia since the 18th century, yet they cannot be found in any positions of influence or power in the judicial system. For example, there has never been a Black judge in the province, and even at the school where the riots took place, there are no Blacks on the Board.

The anger and frustration felt by blacks, Native peoples, and other people of colour in Canada at the persistent injustices they experience in their daily lives because of their race is being compounded by the fact that those in authority - governments, the justice system, etc. - continue to ignore racism as a serious problem.

A most poignant example of this is what happens in Ontario to the many reports which have been solicited by the provincial and municipal governments about police-community relations. Most of these reports, among them Morand, Pitman, Maloney, and Carter, have consistently pointed out how poorly the police relate to the "visible minority" communities and have suggested numerous ways to improve relations. To

date, however, few, if any of the recommendations, have been adopted.

It is the same with the reports of the many task forces which are routinely struck after public eruption due to some racial incident. One wonders if the purpose of the task force is merely to give the appearance of concern by authorities. Such task forces have also suggested the setting up of an independent, civilian agency with legislated powers to investigate complaints against the police. But eventually, the reports are shelved, the police go on abusing their authority, eliminating human lives, investigating themselves, all the while protected by a system which turns its back on their victims.

It is no accident that after the killings of Lester Donaldson in Toronto in August 1988, and Michael Wade Lawson the following

youth who are out of control, but could not answer when asked if there is a section of white youth also out of control. With such minds being representative of those in charge of the system of policing in this country, it is indeed no surprise that all the police forces in Canada are at least 95 per cent white.

The facts indicating racism in the Canadian judicial system are appalling. For example, not one Black person appearing as a first offender under the Canadian Criminal Code has ever received a discharge, while approximately 25 per cent of whites in the same category are routinely discharged.

In Ontario and Québec, a Black person is at least five times as likely to be sent to prison for the same offence as a white person, and a Native person twenty times as likely. One of the most atrocious

make up more than 50 per cent of the prison population, although they make up only 10 per cent of the general population. In those provinces, a Native woman is almost 100 times as likely to be imprisoned as a white woman.

Racism in Canadian society is not new, but the forms of its legitimization are becoming more and more frightening for its victims. The state, through its political, judicial and even educational bodies, is obviously sanctioning the oppression and continued subordination of people of colour.

The racists are heeding the message of the socially acceptable climate to wage their racial attacks. It is the presence of this "welcoming" atmosphere which undoubtedly encouraged Philippe Rushton, a racist psychologist at the University of Western Ontario, to bring out his poorly



December, and the subsequent charges of manslaughter being filed against the officers in both cases, the police decided to stage a work slowdown in protest. After all, they have been given continuous support by those above them in all their brutal actions against Blacks and other people of colour. Such support has clearly indicated to them that they are above the law. Why else would they have issued a demand for the resignation of the provincial Attorney General when they perceived him not to be supporting them? Is it not a necessary part of police education to inform them they are not above the law?

The racist statements made by the head of Metro-Toronto police association, Art Lymer, following the laying of charges against the officers involved in the Lawson and Donaldson incidents, are also not accidental; neither are the comments by the head of the Metro police commission, June Rowlands, who stated that there is a section of Black

cases of a miscarriage of justice directly related to racism was recently disclosed in Nova Scotia. After spending 11 years of his life in prison, a Native man named Donald Marshall was finally acquitted of a murder he never committed.

It is worth noting that not only men experience racism at the hands of the police in our justice system. Black women in Toronto are now speaking out against the physical and verbal abuse they, too, have received from police. Historically, Native women throughout the country have long suffered such abuse.

Recently in Hull, Québec, a Native woman who was the victim of a traffic accident was left on the side of the road by police, even after witnesses told the officers about the accident. Apparently, the police officers did not call an ambulance because they assumed the woman was intoxicated. In Saskatchewan and Alberta, Native people

researched, badly written, and highly suspect paper in early January, in which he claims biological determinism has rendered Blacks inferior to whites and Asians. Our present social milieu encourages racism, which allows the Rushtons in the educational setting to promote racial hatred while hiding behind their "right to academic freedom."

People of colour in this country are thoroughly disillusioned with the system of justice. There is extensive evidence which clearly shows that racism is endemic to the entire Canadian judicial system, as it is in the schools and the work place. Serious attention must be paid to this problem as history has repeatedly shown that the oppressed never tolerate their oppressors forever.

Linda Carty is a member of the Toronto Black Women's Collective.

## Toronto Black Women's Collective

salutes women around the world this  
International Women's Day.

Our support and sisterhood goes specifically to our sisters in South Africa, whose suffering and continued oppression by that country's racist regime we will continue fighting against to bring to an end. As Black women in a white capitalist society, where racism is continually applied against us, though it is not a legislated practice, we know what it is like to be treated as less than equal. Our commitment to eliminate racism and all its attendant social evils, is firmly rooted in the recognition that until our South African sisters are free we cannot be free.



# The day I tasted Police Justice

by Brendalyn Ambrose

I am a Black woman who arrived in Canada within the last ten years. For a while I used to think that those people in Canada who treated me with indifference were only those with false perceptions and lack of tolerance for anyone who looks different. I also held the mistaken notion that police officers did not fall into this category. Much to my dismay, I found out differently when I sought justice from a police officer a few years ago.

I am prompted to write this story as a result of all the attention the media has given to the rights of the police and how the community in Toronto has stood up for the police. Blacks are the minority in this society and practically helpless. The police force is predominantly white, armed with their guns and the force of the law behind them. Does such a powerful majority need protection from its weak minority? That is the question to be answered. Those people who have been phoning and forming Citizens Opposed to Police Slander (COPS) in Toronto are perhaps glad for an opportunity to bring out their deep-rooted bigotry that they always held.

saw him pick it up. He replied that the money belonged to a young boy who stood in line ahead of me. I argued that I saw him pick up the five dollar bill I had put down. He replied that the boy gave him two five dollar bills, and the one he picked up was the boy's. I insisted that he had my money, and I was not leaving unless he gave me the goods, as I was not responsible for this misunderstanding.



While we argued about the matter, a teenage girl rushed from the back of the store and declared that the five dollar bill belonged to the young boy, and I was trying to steal the boy's money. She then picked up the phone and called the boy's home and told the person on

When the policeman came out of the store, he refused to allow me to say one word. All he said was "I have listened to the story from all three people (the elderly man, the young boy and the teenaged girl - all white). They all said the same thing, so it is three people's words against you; therefore I do not want to hear anything from you. I believe their story."

He then ordered me not to go back into the store and told me if I did he would arrest me and beat me up. He also made other verbal threats. I told him he was dishonest himself for the way he handled the situation and reminded him that if I had really been trying to take the money, I would not have been the one to insist the police be called in. He said he would hear nothing from me, and I could have neither the goods nor the money back. I told him I would report him to the Chief of Police and he remarked that it would not make any difference. I went home sick and stunned as I asked myself, "Where can I turn for protection in Canada?"

The reason for the problem with the police is lack of proper education, the way blacks are presented in the media, and the



discrimination to equal protection against discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

In addition to the Charter of Human Rights, our own Canadian Charter gives all Canadians similar assurances in Section 15 (1) which states:

**Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal benefit of the law without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.**

When such rights have been suppressed or obstructed, as the police did to me, and have been doing to many other blacks, it is proper for

black groups to speak out and seek justice.

Section 25 (1) of the Canadian Charter also states: **Anyone whose rights or freedoms, as guaranteed by the Charter, have been infringed or denied may apply to a court of competent jurisdiction to obtain such remedy as the court considers appropriate and just in the circumstance.**

I consider myself entitled to all such rights, just like white Canadians. I am guaranteed police justice, not police harassment. Why should society expect me or any other black to accept anything less?

Brendalyn Ambrose is an Educator and Technical Writer living in Ottawa.



The shooting incidents have brought the problems to public attention, but there have been frustrations building up over a number of years between police and blacks. Many people have related to me their own heartbreaking experiences with the police.

It was two days after I was discharged from hospital after delivering twins, and I needed a few items so desperately that I dragged myself from home to look for a nearby corner store. It was an area new to me, but I walked a number of blocks from my apartment until I came upon a store almost hidden from view by the taller buildings around it.

I picked up a few small items that amounted to just under five dollars. Finding a five dollar bill in my wallet, I placed it on the counter and watched as the cashier picked up the money. He was an elderly gentleman who appeared to be the store owner. Soon afterwards, he turned to me and asked me for my money. I told him I put my money on the counter and I

the phone the boy would be late getting home because "there is a lady here who is trying to steal his money."

When she said those words, I told her, "What did you just say, you called me a thief, and I have always lived with respect, integrity and honesty wherever I go, so as you are infringing on my integrity, I insist that you call the police." As I was adamant, she called the police.

When the policeman entered the store and asked what the matter was, the teenaged girl spoke up first. She related the entire incident from beginning to end and explained that I was trying to take the boy's money.

"You explained everything from beginning to end, where were you when it happened?" (She had been at the back of the store the whole time). No sooner had I opened my mouth than the policeman ordered me to go outside and wait there. I did as I was told. I waited outside for almost an hour, eager to tell him my side of the story.

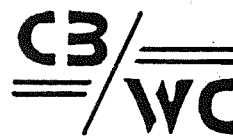
way adults, bureaucrats, teachers, etc., have been socialized to view blacks. It is society's duty now to re-evaluate their thinking and do some soul-searching. This is not the time to form COPS. Those who administer the school boards must look at the curriculum and the relevance given to blacks of prominence in Canadian society. And what about the role of the Church? Is it simply to stand by and say nothing?

Some of the people interviewed on TV referred to the black group leaders as "a bunch of radicals," among other things. As long as any other person or group attempts to seek justice or speak out against the status quo, he/she can be sure to get a label of some sort. The entire issue of racism is simply a matter of right versus wrong.

The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights has guaranteed all people the following rights under Article Seven of its charter:

**All are equal before the law and are entitled without**

## "Our Possibilities



are Endless"

The Congress of Black Women of Canada, in planning its biennial conference for May 5-7, 1989, has chosen as the conference motto, "Our Possibilities are Endless."

As black women we need to alternately whisper and shout these words so that we can reaffirm our inherent strength and capabilities.

As we contemplate not only February's Black Heritage Celebrations but also the significance of International Women's Day and the ongoing struggle in Canadian society we realize more than ever the need to strive for the reality of endless possibilities.

In recent months we have seen not only the issues of intense racism which have characterized much of the police work in Canada, but also ongoing realities of the inequalities within the government, service delivery systems, the systematic approach to discrimination in the provision of social services, the involuntary joblessness of our sisters, the barriers to employment retraining and education, as also the lack of employment equity in the workplace.

While we know that we cannot expect to eliminate all the problems which are associated with our struggle and our survival we do realize that we have an obligation to actively align ourselves to facilitate the development of concrete actions which will enable us to provide leadership and face the ongoing challenges which confront us in our daily lives.

As we go forward in the struggle for justice and equality for our work, the Congress salutes all of our sisters in their celebration of Black Heritage Month and International Women's Day.

We invite you all to join us in combatting the injustices which affect all our lives and the lives of our families. With united analyzing, planning and affirming of our abilities, together we will be able to bring about meaningful change, especially if we as women truly believe that our possibilities are endless.

In sisterhood,  
The Congress

# Regina Native Women's Assoc. Funding Cut

## The Events

Fall of 1988: Concerns were raised about the management of funds at the Regina Native Women's Association. The Association received provincial funding.

December, 1988: An investigation was undertaken by the government of the organization, including a full audit. The money was frozen until the results of the investigation was completed.

February 1989: The funding was withdrawn and offered to another native organization. It was not the provincial native women's organization who was not consulted in any way as to how they could help this group out.

## The Response

Native women's groups have a unique mandate. They work for and with all native people, regardless of their Indian status. This has not made us popular.

We are told by others that it is impossible to work for all native people. We have proven otherwise and will continue to strengthen our mandate. We know that one's Indian status has little to do with the treatment afforded all native people. We encounter racism and sexism on a daily basis. To further divide our people, based on government-imposed divisions, will not help.

The Aboriginal Women's Council of Saskatchewan calls upon other native or political and service organizations to oppose the cut in funds to the Regina Native Women's Association (RNWA).

Rather than cutting funds, the government should be supporting and encouraging the social and political development of native women. We are the key to our communities and we have the responsibility for the majority of our population. Sexism is an issue, and often we encounter not only racist and sexist treatment from the general

public, but we face the poor attitude of our own men as well.

We call upon other organizations to understand and appreciate the difficulties faced by the Regina Native Women's Association. We ask these groups not to play the government's game, and instead stand behind RNWA based on the issues. We do not need other groups scrambling for RNWA's funding. We need their support.

The government must receive a clear and strong message. Continued attacks on our people and in this case, women, are unacceptable.

*based on a press release of the Aboriginal Women's Council of Saskatchewan*



The Regina Native Women's Association (RNWA) is angered with Saskatchewan Social Services Minister Grant Schmidt's announcement to cut their funding. The Minister did not even have the courtesy to contact the Association directly, but rather announced the cut first to the media.

We are concerned that those who will suffer the most from this decision will be those native women and families who require our services. We feel male-dominated organizations cannot and will not do justice to battered women, troubled teenagers, families in crisis and to other concerns facing women and children.

RNWA acknowledges that our management was weak and this has resulted in funds being spent in areas other than specified in approved budgets. We feel, however, that the Association provided necessary services to the

community that cannot be provided by those who have not developed such programs. Native women have spent many years working to improve conditions for all native people. The decision to cut funding is an inappropriate response, as many people will be adversely affected.

The Department of Social Services must take some responsibility for not recognizing the weaknesses in management and for not assisting the RNWA in becoming a stronger organization. The Department should be receptive to our plans, which would result in recovery of the funds and still allow our organization to continue providing services. A proposal for review of management and administration was submitted to Grant Schmidt. Unfortunately, he has chosen to ignore our efforts to rectify the situation.

Grant Schmidt's decision to consult with other groups is paternalistic and sexist. He did not consult with our provincial body, the Aboriginal Women's Council of Saskatchewan, and instead, appears ready to transfer our programs to other groups. We are asking these groups to stand behind us and not to play Schmidt's game.

We are asking them to remember exactly what the attitude of the Conservative government is towards our people, and to understand that our funding cuts are part of a wider process to discredit and undermine native people. As long as we play this game of divide-and-conquer and allow the government to play us against one another, we will not accomplish anything.

groups who have faced the government cuts, and this is unacceptable. We are asking others to join us in our struggle and to support us.\*

We realize we are not the Peter Pocklington of this society.\*\* Native women and their families are at the lowest end of social and economic scales and do not have the political and financial clout that others have. However, we are not prepared to accept sexist, racist or paternalistic treatment from anyone, including the government.

When this government mismanages public funds, it appears not to matter. We acknowledge that our debt exists. However, it is less than 7% of our funding and often organizations do have larger debts. We also have a plan to recover it. The very government cutting our funding has put Saskatchewan into a multi-million dollar deficit, and likely will continue to do so. They, too, should conduct management reviews and develop a financial recovery plan, as we have done.

This is also the same government that was prepared to provide thousands of dollars to the RNWA three years ago, even though similar management difficulties existed at that time. Why were they not concerned then? Perhaps it was felt votes could be obtained. They rode the native women's "bandwagon" at that time because they felt it was to their advantage. Three years later, the same group faces funding cuts. What is the difference now?

We will fight this cut and seek a reversal of Schmidt's decision. We plan to show Schmidt and others that continued attacks on native and poor people are not acceptable. Instead of blaming the victim, this government should support efforts that enable our people to take control of our lives. No one

wants government dependency, but as native people, we require resources to overcome hundreds of years of oppression. We will not accept this sexist and paternalistic treatment.

We are asking our membership, other groups, and individuals to support us. RNWA is committed to improvements in our management, and we require the opportunity to implement them.

We call upon Grant Devine and his government to stop their unjustified attacks on our people and others. This province was once well-respected for its social and human programs, and now it has a reputation for its cruelty and oppression.

Send letters to

Regina Native Women's Association,  
1040 - 8th Avenue,  
Regina, Sask.  
S4R 1C7

Premier Grant Devine,  
Legislative Buildings,  
Regina, Sask.  
S4S 0B3

\* Several groups have already spoken out in support of RNWA, including the Saskatchewan Action Committee on the Status of Women, and the Saskatchewan Government Employees Union.

\*\* The Saskatchewan government recently handed Pocklington a huge giveaway to build a plant in that province.

*based on a press release from the Regina Native Women's Association*

**Shirley E. Greenberg**

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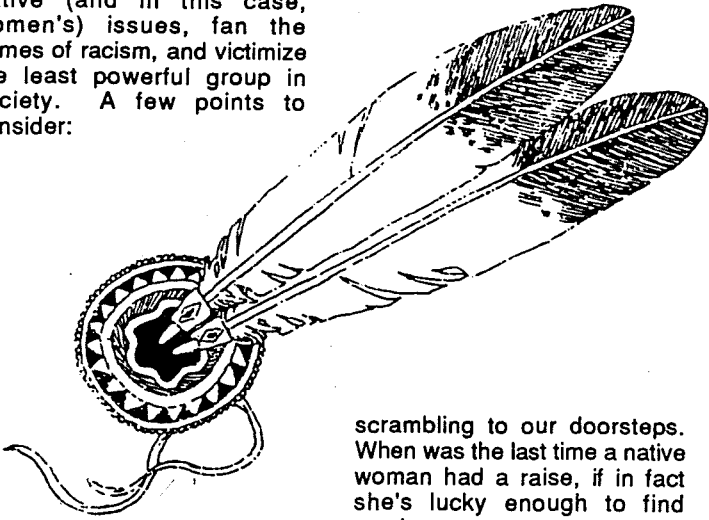
The Regina Native Women's Association has been able to develop credible services and programs in the past. We tackled issues no other groups would touch. How much prestige or glory is there in dealing with family violence, troubled teenagers, families in crisis and other similar issues? This type of work takes commitment and dedication, and as native women we best understand the concerns of women and children.

RNWA will fight Grant Schmidt's decision. We will not allow him and his colleagues to discredit and damage our work. We are only one of many native

# Some Thoughts on Regina

The recent decision by Grant Schmidt, Minister of Social Services, to cut funding to Regina native women is the classic blame-the-victim tactic which serves only to educate the public erroneously on native (and in this case, women's) issues, fan the flames of racism, and victimize the least powerful group in society. A few points to consider:

by Priscilla Settee



scrambling to our doorsteps. When was the last time a native woman had a raise, if in fact she's lucky enough to find employment.

Further, on the rare occasions that native women acquire funding, we are faced with the problem of not knowing from year to year whether this will be a continuous form of income, not to mention non-existent incremental increases. One cannot raise a family or offer much stability when one does not know whether or when your wage will arrive.

At the provincial level, the Aboriginal Women's Council of Saskatchewan has been expected to operate our workplace even when grants do not arrive on time. Some landlords love to point fingers when native groups cannot pay their office rent on time. Without any background information, this further fans the flame of racism.

Lastly, the amount of dollars that native women receive is a paltry lot when one considers the socio-economic environment that most of us live in. Compared to corporate Canada giveaways, these contributions fade into non-existence.

Grant Schmidt and his government have a lot of nerve to point fingers at native women and accuse us of mismanagement when his government possesses a deficit in excess of one billion dollars, and we tax-payers have not demanded accountability for this mismanagement.

So let's admit to the real culprit, and quit blaming people who have historically fallen victim to a socio-economic system which places profits before people and which makes mileage off racist, half-baked, divisive allegations.

*Priscilla Settee is responsible for Public Relations for the Aboriginal Women's Council of Saskatchewan, in Regina.*

Most native women's groups have been organized to respond to poverty and its consequences, and the crimes of society. For example, most of our locals deal with problems that are caused by a socio-political system which devalues women and children, a system which keeps native communities underemployed, and a system which ensures that the rich get richer and the poor get blamed. Hence, our work consists of cleaning up problems which were not of our creation in the first place.

Secondly, almost all of this work is done on a volunteer basis with no recognition or remuneration for our labour.

We as women are expected to administer and manage projects with no consideration for the time or skills required. When an NGO (non-governmental organization) is set up, for example the Prince Albert Interval House, no dollars are included in the operational budget to train volunteer board members to become effective managers and administrators. No one is a born manager.

No financial consideration is given to the volunteer women's transportation or childcare costs, so only those who can afford to volunteer, do. In other words, you have to be able to afford to volunteer.

Those women who do have the resources (i.e. a job) so as to afford child care and transportation usually suffer from burnout because they are the ones whose skills are requested beyond the call of duty. So if you are a sole support parent (and upwards of 60% of native women are) and you find yourself volunteering, you rush home after paid work, feed your family, and rush off to your unpaid work (i.e. volunteering).

Another important consideration is that the wages allowed for native women's projects do not exactly send qualified (papered) people

## Let's support PAKICE

by Dorothy Inglis

The Pakistan election news provided a lot of fascinating reading. One item that particularly interested me appeared almost as an afterthought. I read it several times before daring to believe that it was true.

The newspaper report covered the usual ground, including the well-known (but nonetheless exciting fact) that Prime Minister Bhutto is the first woman leader of a Muslim country. Toward the end the article explained that she won her position because of the combined strength of the seats won by her party in the election and the additional 12 seats gained when the Assembly "voted on candidates to fill 20 seats reserved for women." **TWENTY SEATS RESERVED FOR WOMEN?!!**

In a country where women have been cruelly repressed, they have an ordinance that reserves 20 parliamentary seats for women! We can't even imagine having such a thing.

It is sometimes said that if women would just be patient all good things would come to pass. I'm not a believer. It's pretty clear to me that the good things that come to pass are the things that we, as a society, make happen. Certain smug local politicians would have us think otherwise, but there is no natural evolutionary force that is going to open the doors to women in parliament.

What will open the doors to women is pressure on all three parties from the general public. But pressure for what? If it is going to be effective, there must be a strategy that is reasonable for us all to support.

The affirmative action plan of the Pakistan government is one possibility. Another would be the kind of system that operates in Iceland, which made it possible for a women's party to take hold. Their system is like ours, with candidates running for specific seats, but it has an important added feature. A number of seats are reserved for distribution to the various parties on the basis of the popular vote.

In the Women's Alliance Party's first election, although they didn't elect even one member outright, they picked up 10 per cent of the vote. That gave them four seats, and with that foothold they have gone on to ever-greater things.

My inclination is for something different. I'd like to see us develop a Canadian strategy that borrows what is best from both the Pakistan and the Icelandic experience and blend it into a plan of our own.

I'm going to need help with this. These ideas are just incubating, but it could go something like this: how about a system that rewards political parties for running women candidates by allotting them points for each woman nominated? The parties that ran women would then have the

chance of competing for a designated number of seats reserved for women. If a party didn't run any women at all they simply couldn't compete. The more they ran, the better their chances would be to capture the extra positions. Now that's incentive.

The competition could rest on the popular vote, but somehow the system would have to take account of a party's overall commitment to women candidates. We would probably need something to prevent parties from rushing to get women nominated in all the ridings they expected to lose. Maybe extra brownie points for each woman elected would take care of that.

Say we declared 10 per cent of present seats as the number to be reserved. Federally that would be about

30 seats. We'd need a formula that would relate three things: the number of women candidates, the popular vote of the party, and the number of women elected in the regular seats.

Anyone out there interested in helping to sort this out? Who's good at math? I'd really appreciate discussion from people who think there's merit in devising a strategy that will work. As the real estate people say, though, "only serious enquiries please." I'd rather not hear from someone who says we can't afford it.

Every new idea has to have a name that is short and

snappy and can be immediately recognized, like "Meech Lake" or "Free Trade." If this one ever gets to being a formal proposal, we could call it "Bill 99" or something, but in the meantime we need a rallying cry. "Votes for Women" was pretty catchy in its day, but I don't think "Seats for Women" would work. Too much scope for bad jokes.

Let's see now. Iceland and Pakistan provided the inspiration...how about the "ICEPAK PLAN?" We could conjure up an image of the body politic suffering from a headache that won't go away until women administer the cooling, soothing therapy of their presence.

Or how about the "PAKICE PROPOSAL?" The imagery could be that of women cutting through the years of resistance to the open sea of shared endeavour, rather like those whales. And, of course, that has the added value of making a Newfoundland connection.

Push through the PAKICE!

Give parliament an ICEPAK! By Georgina, I think we've got it! Suggestions will be gratefully received. If Pakistan can do it, can't we?

*Dorothy Inglis is a long standing member of the women's movement and a columnist for the Evening Telegram in St. John's, Nfld. Above is a column first run in the Telegram.*



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# Around the Hill

## Feminism in Ottawa

by Susan Riley



I am not a defeatist about feminism. As an idea, I think it continues to spread like a quiet contagion through every military base, Prairie community hall, and churchwomen's club in the country. After twenty years, it is hard to find a woman (or a man) who hasn't been exposed to the bug. And once someone is infected, the condition is usually irreversible.

But feminism as a political movement is another matter. It seems to have lost its freshness and its focus. Faced with the smug contempt of neo-conservatives and the elegant condescension of post-feminists, the movement towards social justice and economic equality for women has momentarily faltered.

This is especially obvious in Ottawa, always stoney turf for any progressive social movement. At the best of times, feminism at the federal level is only an elevated kind of tokenism. The feminist attitude – consensual rather than competitive, egalitarian rather than authoritarian, strongly sympathetic towards minorities and outsiders – has made very little impact. Not, at least, at the cabinet table where most power resides.

Ottawa's political culture is

still male-dominated, notwithstanding the noisy dissent of the occasional Sheila Copps and the earnest hard work of insiders like (senior Mulroney aide) Marjory LeBreton. Despite these good women, official Ottawa remains a museum for social attitudes, with Brian Mulroney, the Fifties Corporate Lawyer – and Mila, his Fifties Corporate Wife – being only the current exhibit.

Still, the times require some gesture to women – all those ordinary women whose lives have changed over the last twenty years – and the cheapest gesture is the appointment of the occasional gal to high office. (Jeanne Sauvé as governor-general is tokenism at its most refined: an accomplished, fluently bilingual former cabinet minister is "promoted" to a job with national profile, a comfortable household allowance and no real power.)

When Brian Mulroney was elected in 1984, he gave six of 40 cabinet portfolios to women and established a new historic record. Three of those women – Pat Carney, Barbara McDougall, and Flora MacDonald – had some political heft by virtue of their popular followings. However, none were included in the Prime

Minister's inner circle, and none – except for former Trade Minister Carney, who was constantly undermined by Simon Reisman – held front-line portfolios.

More to the point, all were politicians first and feminists second. (I don't say that to disparage them; it is the way you have to be to get anywhere in Ottawa. In the capital, feminism is still the ideology that dares not speak its name).

Even so, they made some inroads: McDougall surprised a lot of people by defending a woman's right to choose an abortion. MacDonald introduced employment equity legislation so weak that critics say it is actually counter-productive, but she also lobbied hard to have accomplished women appointed to various government boards and commissions.

The new cabinet contains the same number of women (six), but their power is even more diluted. Carney and MacDonald have been replaced by two Vancouver MPs: Mary Collins, now junior Minister of Defence and Kim Campbell, junior Minister of Indian Affairs.

Collins is a well-meaning and hard-working MP and a single mother. She introduced a pro-choice abortion amendment when Parliament voted on the issue last year and is more liberal than most of her caucus colleagues on human rights matters.

As a renegade British Columbia Socred, Campbell made a national reputation by challenging Bill Vander Zalm's zealotry on the abortion issue and declaring that "style without substance" is a dangerous thing. But as junior ministers, both Collins and Campbell will be almost as far from the centre of power in

Ottawa as an opposition backbencher. Even if both were determined to advance the cause of women – and neither has made so bold a declaration – they would be ill-positioned to do so.

Mulroney's other experiment in tokenism involves the Supreme Court. Claire l'Heureux-Dubé, a Quebec judge with a reputation for compassion and liberal judgments, was an inspired choice and doubled the number of women on the highest court: since April 1987, two of nine judges have been women.

But if Mulroney was really committed to parity, his next two appointments would have been women. They weren't. The new boys, Judges Peter Cory and Charles Gonthier, are universally acclaimed as sensitive and subtle jurists; but neither are women, and hardly anyone – pundits or women's groups – have mentioned that fact. Mulroney will have to make another appointment this spring: it won't likely be a woman either.

This is textbook example of the way tokenism works. As Lester Pearson replied when it was suggested he give Pauline Jewett a cabinet seat: "But we already have a woman (Judy LaMarsh)." What more do women want?

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women has tried over the last decade to answer that question – a daunting task, to say the least. It is an umbrella group for some 300 organizations, all of them loosely committed if not to the whole feminist agenda, at least to equal rights.

Now, of course, NAC is in disarray, apparently the victim of personality clashes, internal contradictions and tired blood. It is showing the classic signs of an organization under unremitting attack from without.

Ever since the Conser-

vative victory in 1984, NAC, the voice for mainstream feminism, has had few friends in high places in Ottawa (except, perhaps, for Barbara McDougall) and some fairly vicious enemies on the Tory backbenches. Meanwhile, lunatic fringe groups like REAL Women, according to a new doctrine of false equivalence, are accorded pseudo-respectability by media and the political culture.

In this context – a dispirited and disorganized feminist coalition, and an equally disorganized but resurgent anti-feminist right – the next Parliament will be dealing with some issues of crucial importance to women.

Child care is not exclusively a women's issue, but women will be most affected by the type of program – if any – the Tories adopt. Its first child care bill was opposed by every child care advocate, every organization, every witness that appeared at Parliamentary hearings. It wasn't so much a child care program, as a vote-buying exercise. No one knows yet what, if anything, the Tories will come up with to replace it. If child care is deferred in the name of frugality (and, as a trade-off for sinking the nuclear subs), it will be testimony to the current absence of feminist clout in the capital and affirmation of the boy's club mentality that still prevails. At the highest levels in Ottawa, child care isn't seen as an essential need, but as a social policy frill.

Another issue facing this Parliament: what to do about abortion? The abortion issue is a crude and incomplete measure of feminist influence and interest, not the battleground most of us (I suspect) would choose. But we have no choice. It is sitting near the top of the political agenda and the anti-choice movement makes up in fanatical energy what it lacks in numbers. It is frightening to see what is happening to the pro-choice movement in the United States, and scary to see the lengths to which anti-choice demonstrators will go in Canada. The decent majority of ordinary Canadians understands that abortion is a painful and complex personal decision – not a sin and not a crime – but will that decent majority prevail over the shrill imprecations of the zealots?

As I said, I am not a defeatist. I think the next feminist wave is incubating right now. I just hope the forces of reaction don't do too much damage before that wave breaks and washes the beach clean.

Susan Riley is a journalist with the *Ottawa Citizen* and author of *Political Wives*, a funny, feminist look at Mila, Margaret, Nancy, Imelda, and other famous and infamous wives.

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Still from video, *Hot Chicks on TV*, 1986  
Elizabeth Vander Zaag

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## Alberta

A hard won victory by women may soon be lost. An Alberta appeal court ruled that the previous sex conduct of an assault victim may be entered as evidence in a sexual assault case.

Restrictions against introducing evidence about the sexual activities of a victim were written into Canada's revamped sexual assault laws in 1983. But the Alberta Court of Appeal ruled that the law was unconstitutional, as it sometimes violates the right of the accused to a fair hearing.

Madam Justice Mary Hetherington said if the attack victim has previously consented to similar sexual activity in similar circumstances, then it should be allowed.

She said evidence the accused knew about the victim's sexual conduct should be allowed when the defence relies on an honest but mistaken belief the victim was consenting.

So if the guy heard in a bar that this woman slept with another man then it must mean she was available to everyone... Another step backwards.



**The Grapevine**, a monthly newsletter for survivors of incest and other forms of sexual violence, is going into its third month of publication. Written and published by Calgary writer Penelope Ash, who is a survivor herself, the Grapevine provides a forum and support network for women to speak out about their experiences, and for social change.

The Grapevine is distributed across Canada through local sexual assault support centres, and is also available by subscriptions at \$5.00 for 12 issues. For further information, phone 286-1951 or the Grapevine message service at 289-1474.



## National

Studio D, the award winning women's unit of the National Film Board has been reorganized in order to provide more opportunities for female freelancers across the country.

Starting April 1, the studio's six permanent film makers, including Oscar winners Cynthia Scott and Beverley Shaffer will be absorbed into other units of the film board.

Studio D will remain with its \$795,000 production budget that will be destined for freelancers.

One of the primary goals of the restructuring is to involve more women and increase the participation in Studio D by native women, new Canadians and the disabled.

Rina Fraticelli, executive producer will remain and Kathleen Shannon, the founder of Studio D will return as a producer.

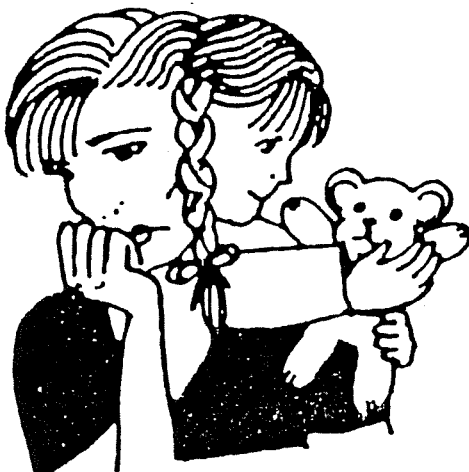


An American white supremacist attempted to claim refugee status in Canada.

Howard Pursley, a member of Jesus Christ Aryan Nations, was arrested by Canada Immigration officers and was charged with illegally working in Canada.

Saying he is being persecuted by the FBI for his political and religious beliefs, Pursley has filed a claim for refugee status.

Terry Long, head of the Aryan Nations stated that "If Mr. Pursley's claim is valid, if we lose this case, it will indicate clearly that the Immigration Department is biased against patriotic white people."



## Manitoba

Manitoba has been holding hearings about the judicial system in the province and its relationship to the Aboriginal people. Throughout the hearings, assumptions about aboriginal people have been stated and allegations have been made by media headlines.

On October 20, a headline in La Presse read "Sexual Abuse Towards Children Appears to Be Normal on Indian Reserves." Below are excerpts from the press release of the Native Women's Association:

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) is deeply saddened and shocked by the media coverage and so-called testimony of public officials in the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry in Manitoba. Linda Jordon, Speaker of the Association says, "Racism is alive and getting worse and has to stop. We will not accept it or ignore it any longer, particularly when it involves our children." Ms. Jordon was responding to the recent testimony heard by the Justice Inquiry suggesting "certain agents of the RCMP" attribute child sexual assault to the preservation of Native male hierarchical structures. The RCMP also apparently believe this practice is acceptable and inherent of aboriginal cultures.

Like many other Canadian professional and citizens, it is unfortunate the RCMP did not have the benefit of appropriate and accurate information on which to form reasoned pronouncements unburdened by racism. To suggest that "sodomy is based on the order of hierarchy among aboriginal males" is ludicrous and

definitely not what aboriginal social service agencies will tell you. What they will tell you and describe are the real causes of family violence.

"There are historical reasons as to why this behaviour exists and continues and it has nothing to do with OUR culture," continues Ms. Jordan. To think that aboriginal "male adults go after their children at the age when their spouses are no longer attractive" is totally contrary to our traditional customs which hold the child in the highest respect and honour — a cherished member of aboriginal society. Any violation against the child is considered the gravest of crimes in our society.

The sexual assault of children is not acceptable or culturally relevant to ANY culture, society or nation. The effort of aboriginal people to fully restore traditional practices and customs would serve as a model of the child's fundamental right to protection against all forms of violence and to be nurtured to adulthood — rights which are equally important to the discussion on aboriginal self-determination.

The RCMP and others — such as members of the press who deviate from the principles of objectivity with dramatic racist headlines — only serve to further endanger our children. Such attitudes and press coverage do not facilitate our work and struggle. In fact, the danger of such attitudes leaves victims without the necessary legal, social and public support.

## Nova Scotia

A former Nova Scotia family court judge who was fired two years ago after being accused of using the bench and the Bible to treat women unfairly has been charged with assaulting his wife. He has pleaded not guilty and will go to trial April 5.

Raymond Alvin Bartlett, 64, of Truro was fired in 1987 by the provincial cabinet after judicial council recommended he be removed from the bench. Women who appeared in his court complained that Bartlett, a fundamentalist Christian, waved the Bible at them and told them they should obey their husbands.

A Nova Scotia court decided that it is unconstitutional to jail people who can't afford to pay fines.

The case began when Judy Hebb, a 35 year old welfare recipient could not afford to pay the \$500 fine for stealing a pack of cigarettes so she was ordered to serve 30 days in jail.

Havi Echenberg of the National Anti-Poverty Organization points out that the justice system works on a number of assumptions, including that all people have discretionary income, and if you don't, somehow you should go to jail, but if you do, you shouldn't go to jail.

Another alternative that has been used to punish someone who has been found guilty but is unable to pay is to allow them to work off fines by doing community services.

## British Columbia

What kind of world is this anyway?

A man who suffocated his three year old stepdaughter while trying to have sex with her was sentenced yesterday to seven years in prison for manslaughter. A B.C. Supreme Court jury found that Willard Andres, 23 of Tofino, killed Holly Marshall but was too drunk to realize he was doing it.



## Women and Mental Health Conference

**May 11-14, 1989  
Banff, Alberta**

This Conference will deal with the issue of women and mental health from a variety of perspectives.

The keynote speakers are Dr. Susan Penfold, Dr. Paula J. Caplan, Dr. Phyllis Chesler, Freda Patiel and Dr. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson. There will be approximately 35 workshops as well as 6 study groups.

For more information please contact the Canadian Mental Health Association. Attention: Ms. Karen McFarlane, 9th Floor, 10050 - 112th St. Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 2J1.

(Telephone: 482-6091)



# Lobbying required for Ontario Incest Bill

by Nicola Cunningham

A Bill extending the time limit for actions arising from sexual assault and sexual abuse has been introduced into the Ontario Legislature and passed second reading January 12, 1989. This Bill will allow survivors of incest to sue for damages once they are adults.

Increased media attention and the publication of survivors' personal accounts have focussed attention on the widespread phenomena of incestuous child abuse. (For Canadian accounts see: Sylvia Fraser *My Father's House: A Memoir of Incest and Healing* [1978] and Elly Danica *Don't* [1988]). It is estimated that 3 in 4 girls and 1 in 4 boys were sexually abused as children (Royal Commission - Badgely Report 1984). The overwhelming number of abusers were adult men.

Research projects have shown that incest victims experience significant and unique damages resulting from sexual assault which last into adulthood. As adults, sexual abuse survivors typically report low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and extreme feelings of guilt and shame. They can suffer from sleep-related disorders, sexual dysfunctions and suicidal tendencies. They are prone to anorexia, bulimia, and alcohol and drug abuse.

Many incest victims develop psychological blocks such as repression, denial and disassociation as a coping mechanism. Some of the

injuries may therefore remain hidden for years. Often professional assistance is required to overcome these blocks and to show the connection between the incestuous acts and the resulting emotional, psychological and social damage suffered.

In addition, a child who is subjected to incestuous abuse is often coerced into silence by threats of physical and psychological harm and by emotional extortion and blackmail.

The law as it stands limits the time in which a victim of child sexual abuse can sue the abuser for damages in civil

at the age of 23, is likely to be unsuccessful in court.

This is what happened to Karen Marciano. In June of 1985, when she was 28 years old, she filed a civil action for incest against her father. She had been sexually abused from the age of eight until the time she was sixteen. Although the jury awarded her \$50,000 at

It is unclear whether the Bill will emerge in its current form or in a watered down version.

The government has been reticent to fully support the Bill. Ontario Premier David Peterson is reported to have said that the Bill makes sense on an emotional level but may not on a legal level. Neither the Attorney General, Ian Scott, nor the Minister for Women's Affairs, Gregory Sorbara, will commit themselves to the Bill as it stands.

The Attorney General's office states that the Bill must be examined in the context of a comprehensive revision of the whole **Limitations Act**, which will be brought forward later this year.

These revisions will be made in light of recommendations from the Canadian Bar Association of Ontario (CBAO) Limitation of Action Committee. The Committee is still in the process of drafting proposals and would be an ideal target for lobbying efforts. Letters should be addressed to:

Paul Bates (Chair)  
Lerner & Associates  
Scotia Plaza  
40 King Street W.  
19th Floor  
Box 210  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5H 3Y2

Continued lobbying efforts should be directed at the Attorney General. It should be made clear that victims of sexual abuse provide an obvious case for legislative action and they should not have to wait for consideration of more general measures.

In addition, the Minister for Women's Affairs should be urged to make a public stand supporting the Bill. The Ministry should declare a position on this Bill independently of the CBAO recommendations and the Attorney General.

Finally, the Premier of Ontario, the Cabinet Ministers and your own MPP should be lobbied.

This Bill clearly impacts on women and children. It would be a tragedy if once again women's interests are put aside for "more comprehensive" (read "more important") proposals. This Bill needs your support -- please write.

graphic from / Belong to Me

I BELONG TO ME  
and it's up to me to  
choose who touches me.



The injuries sustained are a direct result of the abuser's conduct. An adult relative enjoys a unique relationship of authority and trust vis-a-vis the child. The child is therefore in an inherently disadvantaged position when this trust is abused. The child does not have equal power to say no to an adult relative, particularly given societal practices which stress that children respect and obey their elders.

courts. The **Limitations Act** of Ontario, passed in 1897, contains a four year limitation for actions arising from assault. This provision, together with a provision freezing a claim until the age of majority, ensures that any claims brought by incest survivors over the age of 22 would be statute barred.

This means that an incest survivor who stops repressing memories of child sexual abuse

trial, the suit was dismissed because of the limitation bar and she did not receive the damages awarded.

As a result of Karen Marciano's case, her MPP David Cooke (Kitchener riding) introduced Bill 198 to extend the limitations period for an action arising from sexual abuse or sexual assault. Cooke, to his credit, consulted with women's groups before introducing the Bill.

Although the preferred option would be to have no limitation period, Bill 198 is a considerable step forward. It provides that the current time period would be extended to "within the later of two time periods": 20 years after the abuse took place, or 10 years after the victim has discovered that the injury was caused by the abuse and the injury no longer renders the person unable to bring an action.

The Bill has received approval at second reading. However, its future is not certain. Due to lobbying efforts, the Bill has been "saved" and has gone to committee to be debated in the next session of Provincial Parliament which starts in April.

Canadian  
Advisory Council  
on the Status of Women



Conseil  
consultatif canadien  
sur la situation de la femme

## Update on Women's Issues

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACS) is an independent organization funded by the federal government to advise the government and the public on issues affecting women. The CACS produces original research exploring social, economic, and legal issues pertinent to women, such as wife battering, child-care, pornography, and women and pensions.

CACS research is published as books, booklets, background papers, briefs and fact sheets. For a complete list of free CACS publications, contact the National Office.

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# Native Women in Manitoba

by Sandi Funk

Between 70% and 80% of inmates at Portage Correctional Institution for Women in Manitoba are Aboriginal. At another institution, The Pas, the percentage is even higher.

The Ikwewak Justice Society is an independent body concerned about the underlying causes that result in the women going to jail in the first place. Why is it that over 60% of those in jail are single parents? And they are getting younger and younger. We are concerned about the lack of appropriate services for women when they are released and the fact that so many of them return to jail.

The Ikwewak Justice Society is governed by a management board comprised of Aboriginal women who have knowledge of the culture and also of the specific needs of the Native women who are involved with the Criminal Justice System. Ikwewak is the Ojibway word for women.

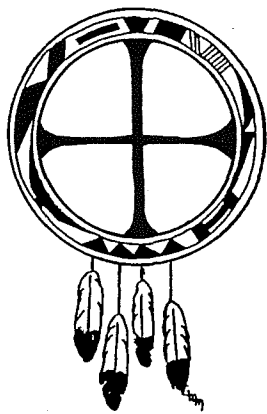
At this time more Aboriginal women than ever before are obtaining high school and university educations and employable skills; some are succeeding in professions and other employment and many Aboriginal women are continuing to volunteer their time and energies to open up more opportunities in the Aboriginal community.

Why then do Aboriginal women form such a disproportionately high percentage of inmates in Manitoba? The many causes may be summarized by stating that Aboriginal women in conflict with the law are a severely deprived minority.

Their poverty and the inability to escape from it are the result of well documented social and economic factors. Many aboriginal women are incarcerated due to default on

payment of fines. They also have to cope with the devaluation of their culture, religion, lifestyles, traditions and occupations. These concerns are exacerbated when Aboriginal women leave reserves for urban centres because of isolation, inexperience, lack of skills, and education.

Alcohol and drug abuse, negative encounters within the child welfare system and physical/sexual abuse also impact on the behaviour of Aboriginal women.



The Aboriginal woman has to contend with racism by the dominant society as well. Our people encounter prejudices in social relationships, housing, employment and education. In many cases there is a language problem, simply because our people do not conceptualize English in the way of the larger society. All of these make it more difficult for the woman to change her life around and more likely that she will drift into, or be pressured into, conflict with the law.

While statistical information indicates an overrepresentation of Aboriginal women incarcerated and in conflict with the law, services

and support systems have not increased at the same rate.

The pressures on the traditional family support network have made it difficult for women to find support in their local communities. Family breakdown, social disintegration, and assimilation policies have had the impact of increasing gaps in support services for Native women.

There is in Manitoba at present no residence (outside of jail) specifically for Native women in conflict with the law.

What are the options for aboriginal women sentenced to prison when they are released? In many cases they have no place to go, no job, and few, if any, have qualifications for getting one. If their children are in care they will probably have difficulty in getting them back from the authorities. They are probably far from family and home community, without friends or resources to support them. The result of a combination of these factors can be an early return to their previous lifestyle which may lead to further troubles with the law.

Thus the needs which are so often unmet for the majority of Aboriginal women in conflict with the law include needing enough to live on without resorting to breaking the law, need for education and training, counselling, special help to overcome addictions, support and encouragement, an improved self-image, a place to live which will help them keep out of trouble, and employment opportunities.

The Ikwewak Justice Society strongly believes that a halfway house specifically designed for Aboriginal women in conflict with the law would help them to deal more successfully with their lives.

cont'd on page 35



## Aboriginal Women in the Justice System: facts

Last year the Ikwewak Society, with a grant from the Solicitor General's Department, undertook a comprehensive research project. Some of the findings included not just information about native women but also information about the justice system.

Statistics on Native involvement within the Justice system is limited and subject to variable interpretation by the experts. Government data reflects different definitions of "Native." Very few places keep track of the number of Native women going through the court system or what offenses they are being charged with.

Some findings included:

1. The proportion of Native women incarcerated compared with non-Native is shockingly high. It appears to be even higher than the proportion of Native men incarcerated compared to non-Native men.

2. Native women are more likely than non-native women to be in jail for non-payment of fines.

3. Native women are more likely than non-Native women to be charged with liquor related offenses.

4. The recidivism rate (returning to jail) is much higher for Native than for non-native women.

5. A high percentage of Native women sent to jail are single parents, compared to non-Native.

Other information found:

• 13% of the federal women's prisoner population is Native. (The Native population in Canada is about 2% of the entire population.

• In Saskatchewan a treaty woman was 131 times more likely to be admitted to provincial correctional institutions and a non-status or Metis woman was 28 times more likely to be admitted.

• In Manitoba, Native people constitute 6-7% of the population and 40-60% of prison admission.

In the Portage La Prairie women's prison in Manitoba:

- 77% of the inmates were Native, and of the Native women:
- 53% were under 25 years of age;
- 65% were single parents;
- 75% were unemployed at the time of incarceration;
- 50% have less than grade eight education;
- 67% had alcohol problems;
- 46% were first time offenders;
- 35% of the women came from Winnipeg.

The Ikwewak Project also asked the opinions of 77 Native women, including 55 who were or are currently in conflict with the law, as to why Native women came into conflict with the law?

They indicated the following reasons:

- 54 women said alcohol and abuse;
- 42 women said physical abuse;
- 33 women said sexual abuse
- 20 said they were single parents; and
- 15 said because they were bored.

Women who are currently incarcerated added to the list: lack of identity, a need to supplement their income, and a desire to combat loneliness by seeking attention.

## The Manitoba Women's Initiative

by Monique Raimbault

Manitoba's Conservative government held consultation meetings with women's groups across the province from November 1988 through to January, 1989, in an effort to "enhance programs and services available to Manitoban women." The \$100,000 Initiative offers women the opportunity to provide input about provincial programming on women's concerns.

The special focus of the Committee is economic development and support and services to battered women and their children.

So the story goes. Women's groups however, fear the government has a hidden agenda of cutting women's programs. Ironically, although one of their priorities is battered women and children, the government recently cut

funding for the Manitoba Committee on Wife Abuse.

The biggest problem with the Initiative is that it is a repetition of previous efforts. This kind of consultation has been done many times and community groups have already provided advice in many forms. For example:

• Manitoba has an Advisory Council that researches and advises the government on women's concerns.

• The Charter of Rights Coalition has published two provincial audits documenting problem areas in government policy and has presented to the government of Manitoba recommendations to eliminate systemic discrimination.

• The Manitoba Women's Agenda, an ad hoc lobbying committee representing over

30 women's groups in the province, has presented a document of 9 resolutions to all three provincial parties in December 1988, indicating priority needs to be accomplished within the year.

The government has had ample opportunity to hear the concerns of women's groups, and what is needed now is the implementation of our recommendations and suggestions. Thus it is with great anticipation that women's groups in Manitoba await the government's three year action plan to be announced in conjunction with International Women's Day.

Regardless of the Initiative's outcome, women's groups in Manitoba will continue their valuable work and press on creating a new reality that will enrich and strengthen women's lives.

Y W C A  
of / du Canada



# Rosemary Brown comments

Excerpts from a speech by Rosemary Brown to BC Teachers Federation Development Day, prepared for *The Womanist*

"It was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope..."

1838, the year that Dickens wrote those immortal words, was the same year in which all slaves in the West Indies were set free. Yet here we are today still examining and exploring those words and here we are today still being subject to alleged scientific research based on the same theories which justified and supported the slavery of Black people for so many years by the early industrial nations.

Dickens did not say this, but it remains true nonetheless, that "the more things change, the more they remain the same."

Once again for people of Colour, or Visible Minorities as they are euphemistically referred to in this country, "the season of darkness" threatens. However, because in the intervening years since Dickens made his observations, we have all come to a better understanding of how we are linked, or how dependent we are on each other, and to accept that a hurt to one is a hurt to all, there is also a "Spring of hope..." in the belief that this attack will not go unchallenged.

Prof. Phillippe Rushton, of the Department of Psychology at the University of Western Ontario, reported recently that his research has led to the development of a "theory of racial ranking". This theory, he reports, evolves from, among other factors, the "scientific measurement" of the size of the heads and sexual organs of Oriental, Black and White



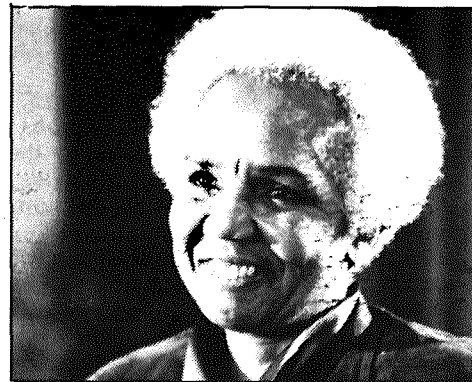
males. My assumption is that only males were measured for his research since the findings contain a curious lack of information or mention of women -- a fact for which I should no doubt be grateful.

There was no new or original information contained in Prof. Rushton's findings (except possibly the inclusion of Orientals in the equation race) since on earlier

occasions in history both Dr. Shockley, and Professor Arthur Jenkins of the University of California, Berkeley (under whom Prof. Rushton had studied) had unleashed on the academic world similar findings, based on nearly similar research methods.

Interesting as it might be to do so, the question I would like to explore is not so much the validity or the truth of the research done by Prof. Rushton, but the reason why such research should be pursued and why such research should be the beneficiary of so much publicity and public discourse. I realize that by raising this issue with you now I am adding my voice to the hue and cry, but I decided to take that chance nonetheless because of my curiosity and addiction to the WHY? of this occurrence.

I am always more interested in the WHY? of a phenomenon than in the HOW, because I believe that knowing the reason for an occurrence, especially doing a detailed analysis of it, serves to clarify both its intent and its goals. In addition, it can guide one as to how best to cushion or undo its negative impact should that



become necessary.

Ellen Boneparte in her definitive study on "Women, Power and Public Policy", tells us that an important element of any analysis is a framework for understanding why some efforts at influencing (public opinion and/or public attitudes and ideas) are more successful than others.

She suggests that there are three variables which play an important role in this process. These are: the Social climate, the Economic climate and the Political climate of the day. As supporting evidence, she reminds us that "No one can deny that the years of the 1960's and early 1970's brought a new climate to the North American scene. It was a time characterized by a concern for the oppressed, changing lifestyles, new political activism, and demands for government responses to social problems."

In Canada, it was a period of generous immigration policies, Opportunities For Youth projects, LIP grants, support for bilingualism, multiculturalism and women's rights. It was the period for national indignation about apartheid, about atrocities in Haiti or Latin American dictatorships, and a period of support of the efforts of Amnesty International and civil rights movements.

It was the period when Canadians marched in unprecedented numbers for peace, and when for awhile at least we really did live as though we believed that we were our brothers' and sisters' keeper. The social climate made it possible for us as a nation to respond to what Charles Roach, a Black lawyer in Toronto, refers to as our "Front end aspirations."

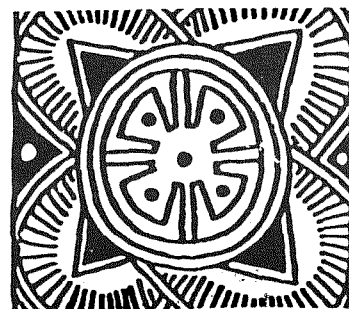
Today, however, the social climate is quite different. Boneparte believes that "The disruptions of war, political corruption, domestic violence and a faltering economy have all contributed to an increasing distrust of social change ... the

popular mood has been turned away from social movements and we have reverted to politics as usual".

Here in Canada, that change has been manifest in the election of governments which support and espouse a more conservative ideology both politically and economically. In a democracy such action usually heralds a return to ancient and traditional attitudes in other parts of our lives as well.

Observation reveals that today "Tolerance" is under attack, acceptance of other peoples, other ideas, other beliefs is no longer lauded.

Here in BC, committees are being formed to encourage white immigration to this country, petitions are being circulated to declare certain cities and towns unilingual, and health clinics are being blockaded by people who believe that they have the right



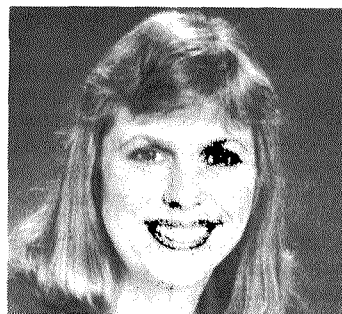
to dictate and impose their will on the reproductive options of women, and who are moreover willing to defy the laws of the land if necessary in order to do so.

As a nation, our actions fall far short of our words and declaration regarding the inhuman treatment of Black people in South Africa, and once again we are blaming the poor for their unrelieved poverty.

Economic factors have a very pivotal role in establishing the social climate in Canada. When the economy is buoyant, and it seems that the sky is the limit, and one's financial

**Congratulations to all the women involved in the struggle for equality.**

**Happy International Women's Day from the New Democratic Women's Caucus.**



**Dawn Black, MP**  
(New Westminster-Burnaby)  
Status of Women Critic



**Margaret Mitchell, MP**  
(Vancouver, East)  
Multiculturalism Critic



**Audrey McLaughlin, MP**  
(Yukon) Federal Caucus Chair, National Revenue, Northern Development



**Joy Langan, MP**  
(Mission-Coquitlam)  
Social Policy Critic



**Lynn Hunter, MP**  
(Saanich - Gulf Islands)  
CIDA, Small Business critic

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238-1312

# on Prof. Rushton



goals appear to be boundless, there is always a favourable reception for new ideas, there is more generosity, more sharing and openness. The 1960's and early 1970's were the "rich years in our country."

By the end of the 1970's however, the recession began to move in upon us and the mood of investors and spenders turned sour. As unemployment soared, interest rates rose and fear gripped the nation; both governments and society turned inward and self-centred. By the end of the decade government were searching desperately for scapegoats on whom to pin the financial disasters which were stalking the land.

There were no shortage of these of course as women were condemned for wanting universal childcare, immigrants were criticized for wanting to bring more of their relatives to this country, workers were castigated for being too committed to their unions, and the poor were denigrated for being too poor.

Pundits like to say that a political climate is a volatile commodity, meaning that one can never depend on any political situation remaining the same for any length of time. This is because politicians in order to survive have to develop the ability to read the winds of change and to adjust quickly to any shift of direction in the thinking of the electorate. It is always well to remember that politicians do not lead on most issues, they follow.

So when the social and economic climate are expansive, so is the political climate when the social and economic climate are closed and focussed inward, so is the political climate. For these reasons, therefore, one should not look to government for acts of courage. Initiative must always come from the community itself since governments are a mirror of society not its touchstone - and in a democracy this is not always a bad thing.

There was a time when I hoped and indeed even dreamed that the closing years of the 1980's would herald a return to the golden ages of the early sixties and seventies; those years when giants strode across the world's canvas, inspiring us to be the best that we could dream of. For a while it seemed that the rigid cruelty of the fanatical right had been rebuffed and the egalitarian society for which so many of us have been working for so long seemed to be within our reach. I was wrong.

Right wing fundamentalist thinking was not defeated, "the kinder gentler" world of which U.S. president George Bush

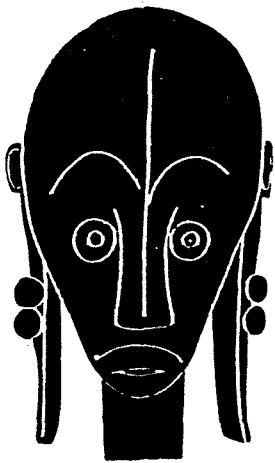
speaks signalled not a return to kindness, but a return to the strident dividing of people against people. Indeed his words proved to be as meaningless as his pretended neutrality on the subject of a woman's right to choice of reproductive options.

The social climate of today reflects our growing insecurity and fear of the future. Rising interest rates are once again

with us. The governor of the Bank of Canada speaks of the inflationary evils which accompany low unemployment. The voracious appetite and insatiable hunger of large companies is resulting in an epidemic of mergers which sends chills of panic down the spines of workers and trade unions. The search for scapegoats is upon us once again.

The social climate, the economic climate, the political climate could never be in more perfect constellation for the triple seeds of racism, sexism and homophobia to flourish. This is indeed "the best of times" to really hate and fear each other. From now until 1997 we can revel in an orgy of prejudice against the people from Hong Kong who dare to respond to our government's invitation and seduction to come and invest in our country.

What could be better designed to feed our chauvinism than the thought of the country being taken over through peaceful invasion by a race of people whose brains are bigger than ours and who are therefore more intelligent and smarter than we are? What better way to rationalize our abysmal failure to punish South



Africa for its inhuman policies towards its Black population than to be reassured that those Black people with their small brains and large sexual appetite are not only beyond help, but unconcerned about anything but lust. It is truly the "season of darkness..."

Yet, if Alvin Toffler is correct when he says that "In the new society that is emerging we will all be members of minority groups" there is reason to hope. For surely as a society we will not persist in hating ourselves? And surely we will learn enough from the experience of being members of a minority to develop a commitment to equality and tolerance.

"The spring of hope" for me resides in that fragile belief, and in the recognition that despite our best effort the Canadian community is undergoing change, and that

once our reaction to such change switches from fighting against to accepting that fact we will all begin to work together rather than against each other. I am not naive; and I know that surviving the process of change will need the concerted effort and assistance of the important institutions and groups in our society.



John Kenneth Galbraith in his extensive work on "The Anatomy of Power" explains that there are three types of power in our society. There is **Condign power**, which is really power through coercion, and is exercised through the police, military and the courts. **Compensatory power** is power based on the hope of benefit and reward, which is exercised through the church and other enhancing institutions.

Finally, there is **Conditioned power**, which "neither those exercising it or subject to it need always be aware that it is being exerted. The acceptance of authority, the submission to the will of others, becomes the higher preference of those submitting. This preference can be deliberately cultivated - by persuasion or education. This is explicit conditioning. OR it can be dictated by the culture itself; the submission is considered to be normal, proper, or traditionally correct. This is implicit conditioning. No sharp line divides one from the other."

For women, "conditioned power" has prepared us for the exploitation and abuse to which we have been subject throughout history. It ensured that for 2000 years we accepted our position as second class, weak, dependent and vulnerable. It also explains why we remain divided in our goals and confused and less than effective in our struggle for our full personhood. For Black people "Conditioned power" has served to convince us of our inferiority, lack of beauty, lack of intelligence and lack of worth.

It explains why, like women, our most difficult struggle for equality takes place in our heads and in our beliefs about ourselves. The most effective conduit for racism and sexism is Conditioned power. Although education is not the only instrument of "conditioned power" in our society, when it is supported by the media, religion and other social institutions, it certainly



becomes one of the most effective.

By cloaking himself in the mantle of pure research, Professor Rushton has used the education profession and institutions to once again wield its potential power against some of society's most impressionable and vulnerable members.

"It was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity..."

Scientists have managed to convince us of the pure unbiased honesty of the scientific research method. Hence we hesitate to question any findings made in its name. What we can permit ourselves to do, however, is to ask questions about the relevance of their research upon which they are embarked.

So the question is....What is the point of research which seeks to establish the superiority of one Race over another? (not how they differ, but which is superior to the other) What benefits to mankind accrue from those findings? In what way will we be enriched as a civilization from the result of such work?

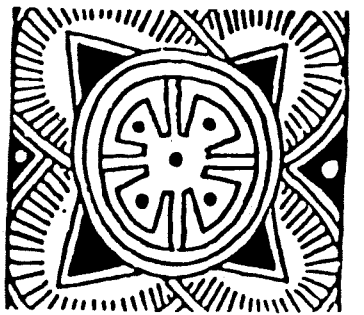
What possible use could there be in this world of ours, in which people are encouraged to fulfil their highest potential, for the ranking of persons according to the size of their brains and sexual organs? Is this information being collected, collated and stored in computers somewhere for use in the world of the years 2000 and beyond?

I think that we have to ask serious questions as to what the reasons are which lie behind this research, especially now when the times seem to be so fertile for the revival of Eugenics and what the Pioneer Fund supports, namely "The study of the improvement of the human species through he control of heredity factors in mating."

It would be quite simple to dismiss this whole matter as the naive prejudicial exploits of a young man born in South Africa, stung by the extensive and highly vocal and visible criticism of his native land,

fighting back. It would even be easy to dismiss the whole matter as simply the case of a researcher desperate for research funding and finding that the Pioneer fund, a conservative right wing foundation in the United States was willing to fund this type of research, decided to take advantage of their generosity. Then having done so found that he had sold his soul to the devil and had to deliver on the kind of findings of his funders would approve.

It would be easy but for the power of the an idea. The power of an idea should never be under-estimated. If it is beyond the pale of credibility, then it should be ridiculed into oblivion. If however, it is compatible, as this idea is, with the dysfunction of the times, then it has to be challenged




and destroyed before it can spread and poison the spirit and soul of our community.

"We are not all the same" Professor Rushton states, and of course he is right. But in the same way that "same" does not mean equal for women... difference does not necessarily indicate unequal for persons of different cultures or races. And as Professor Michael Horn of Glendon College observed "The study of racial differences has all too often been used to justify discrimination."

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.

Rosemary Brown is a former Cabinet Minister for the NDP B.C. government and is the new Executive Director of MATCH International.



Ontario Immigrant & Visible Minority  
Women's Organization  
Organisation des Femmes  
Immigrantes et de Minorités  
Visibles de l'Ontario

**To our Sisters across  
the country - keep up  
the struggle.**

555 Bloor St. W., Suite 202, Toronto, Ont. M5S 1Y6



As we gathered information about IWD events from women across the country, we realized that it would be impossible to list the dozens (hundreds?) of activities taking place. However, we thought we would at least give you a flavour of some of the things happening this year. To find out about events in your community not listed here, you might try calling the contact people listed, or your local women's centre, women's or alternative bookstore, or YWCA.

# International Women's Day cele

## Newfoundland

### ST. JOHN'S

#### "Women and Poverty"

March 4  
**Information Fair**  
St. John's Status of Women Council.

March 7  
**Entertainment Night**, featuring local poetesses, singers, musicians.

March 8  
**Rally at City Hall**

**Dinner with Nancy Jackman**, a feminist United Church minister.

March 11  
**Heather Bishop**  
Children's concert at 3pm, concert for adults at 8pm.

### CORNER BROOK

March 8  
**Status of Women Council** are sponsoring an open house at their centre on March 8. Women can drop in to view information displays and films.

### STEPHENVILLE

March 8  
**"Women in the Church Today"**  
Sister Elizabeth Davis, chief administrator of St. Clare's Hospital in St. John's.

The Stephenville Status of Women Council sends letters out to businesses in the area to ask that they let their female employees take a longer lunch on IWD so they can drop into the centre and celebrate this important day in women's lives.

## Nova Scotia

### HALIFAX

March 8  
**Open House**  
Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women invites you to the Council's office, Suite 207, Purdy's Wharf, 5:30-7:00pm or drop in anytime during the week. 424-8662

**Women's Concert**  
Celebrate and enjoy the talent of the women of our community. TUNS, School of Architecture, 5410 Spring Garden Road, 7:30pm. Pay what you can. Door prizes.

March 11  
**IWD March for Peace**  
International peace begins at home. Begins at noon at the North End Library, ends at St.

Patrick's - Alexandra School, 2277 Maitland. Refreshments. Info, Susan Atkinson, 425-0631

**Women's Community Fair**  
Find out what is happening in your community by and for women. Information booths, book tables, and films. St Patrick's - Alexandra School, 1:00-4:00pm. All women welcome. Childcare provided. Free.

**Women's Dance**  
Work is done, now it's time to party! Veith House, 3115 Veith Street, 9:00pm - 1:00am. Women, 19 years and over. \$5 waged/ \$3 unwaged. Wheelchair accessible. Childcare provided.

## The Women's Centre of Hamilton-Wentworth extends

*sincere congratulations to all those individuals and groups working for equality and justice for all women in our society.*

To celebrate this anniversary of **International Women's Day** we are holding an evening of speaking and discussion with Julia O'Connor, Assistant professor of sociology at McMaster University.

Evenings topic: **"The Women's Movement -- We've come a long way, and we have a long way yet to go."** All women are welcome to attend. Thursday, March 9, 7:30 p.m.  
Women's Centre, 80 Augusta St. Hamilton

## Québec



### QUEBEC CITY

le 3 et 4 mars  
**Pouvoir ... Gérer nos politiques**  
Colloque populaire sur les enjeux pour les femmes des politiques gouvernementales actuelles.  
• Panel: «Les femmes et la politique»  
• Sur le marché du travail ... des politiques adaptées à la réalité?  
• Soutien à la famille et politiques natalistes  
• Politiques sociales  
le 3 mars, 9h00-17h00, le 4 mars 9h00-17h00, au 155 est, boul. Charest. Comité des femmes  
CSN-Québec, 647-5834

### MONTREAL

March 8  
**The wonderful women of the YWCA** invite you to spend the day with us. Women's information day with various women's groups, activities, video on women and development, NFB film premiere. Free childcare. 1355 René Levesque Blvd.

**The Sacred and the Profane**  
Photo images of and by women, Concordia Women's Centre, 4:30, 2020 McKay.

**Rally / Rallieement**  
6:30 / 18h30, Parc Lafontaine.

**Dance / Danse**  
8:30 / 20:30 L'Union française, Viger & Berri. Childcare provided. Garderie sur place.

## P.E.I.

### CHARLOTTETOWN

March 8  
**Celebration**  
An evening with local women artists. 1989 "Feminist of the Year" awards. Frith, 892-5160

March 12  
**Heather Bishop in Concert**  
7:30pm, Courtyard, Rodd Royalty Inn

## New Brunswick FREDERICTON

March 8  
**Vision 2000**  
History of Women by Gillian Thompson, UNB.

**Feminist play**  
Lighthearted look at how women are viewed: snake woman, dragon lady and witch. UNB.

March 14  
**Women in the Science Age**  
Panel discussion on "Women: Making a Career in the Maths and Sciences", 8:00pm at National Exhibition Centre, Queen Street. Sponsored by New Brunswick Women's Directorate.

**Les femmes à l'âge de la science**  
Panel-discussion sur "Les femmes faisant carrière dans les maths et les sciences", 20h au Centre national d'exposition, rue Queen. Direction générale de la condition féminine du Nouveau-Brunswick.

## KINGSTON

### "Rise Up, Reach Out"

March 4  
**A Women's Dance**. Louise D. Action Hall, 8pm, \$3-\$10.

March 8  
**International Women's Day March**: Candlelight March starts at 7:00 at Confederation Park (across from City Hall)

March 11  
**A Country Fair in the City**. 3-7pm, McGillvary Brown Hall, 212 Barrie St. Square dancing, country music, dancing, game and fun booths. Fireworks

For more information: 544-5400, Jean ext. 1136 or Kathryn ext 1166

## TORONTO

### "Women Against Poverty: Fighting for Social Equality"

March 4  
**Rally and March**  
Women Against Poverty: Fighting for Social Equality. 10:00am, Convocation Hall, University of Toronto

**Fair**  
2:00-5:00pm, Ryerson Polytechnical.

March 8  
**Broads on Bay Street**  
A Women's Day of Rage -- a day of non-violent resistance on Bay Street, to make normal business impossible at least for a time. Women's Caucus of the Alliance for Non-Violent Action, 533-9507.

## Ontario

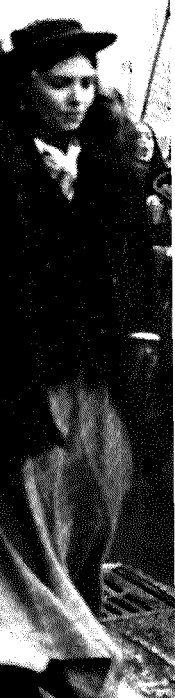
## LONDON

### "Shifting the Weight of the World: Making Power More Equal"

March 7  
**Arlene Mantle**. Class Act, blues, jazz, humour, singer, songwriter, rage and reign of liberty.

March 11  
**March**. Starts at City Hall. Paddy Musson, Vice President of District Labour Council will talk about the meaning of IWD and current struggles of women.

**Workshops in Afternoon**  
Celebration with local talent



March 8  
**Arlene Mantle**  
Follow dance. \$8.

There is y more a copy guide

Marc Rally: Music words Parliar wome Georg 12:30 563-3

Rallier Venez chans musici vous i et leur ralliem enfant House ouvert

## Rise Up! Reach Out!

From  
the 1989 Kingston International  
Women's Week Coalition

# Celebration Across Canada



## GUELPH

March 11  
**Arlene Mantle in concert.** 8pm.  
Followed by the Guelph IWD  
dance. Location: The Loft. \$3-  
\$6.

## OTTAWA

### "Women and Creativity"

There are over 50 events for  
this year's festivities. For  
more information, get yourself  
a copy of the Towne Cinema  
guide and check the back

March 11  
**Rally and March**  
Music, song and inspiring  
words from women. March to  
Parliament Hill. 1:30 Rally,  
women and children only, 151  
George Street, House Works.  
12:30 March, open to public.  
563-3140

**Ralliement et Marche**  
Venez célébrer avec des  
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musiciennes, des femmes qui  
vous inspireront par leur parole  
et leur musique. 11h30,  
ralliement, pour femmes et  
enfants, 151 rue George,  
Houseworks. 12h30, marche,  
ouverte au publique. 563-3140



## THUNDER BAY

March 8  
**Celebration**  
"On Guard", Australian  
action/drama. "International  
Sweethearts of Rhythm", 40's  
women's blue's documentary.  
Balkan choir for women. "The  
Raging Grannies." Kim  
Erickson singing with Jennifer  
Garrett and Debbie Patterson.

## KITCHENER- WATERLOO

March 7  
**Singer Beverly Bratty** in the  
Bombshelter, Campus Centre,  
\$4 and \$5, 8pm

March 8  
**Maude Barlow**, speaking on  
Women and Politics, 8pm.  
Tickets at the door.

March 15  
**Ferron in Concert**, with special  
opening act by Stephen  
Fearing. Humanities Theatre,  
UW, 8pm. \$7 and \$8.

For more information call 885-  
1211 ext 3457



## Manitoba WINNIPEG

March 1  
**Ferron in Concert.** Women's  
Resource Centre.

March 11  
**March and Celebration.** 12:00  
March from Legislation Bldgs.  
to Knox United Church.

Celebration includes: Display  
tables and speakers: Heather  
Grant, Winnipeg Labour  
Council; Grace Mesconce,  
Ikwe Widdjiwin, Bertha Lopez  
and performers Chris Purdy  
and Nellie McClung Theatre.

## Saskatchewan

### PRINCE ALBERT

"Towards the Year 2000  
A Conference for Women"

March 11-12  
**Opening.** Panel: How do we  
build a culture of resistance.  
\$15.  
Banquet at night.

**Speakers** for the African  
National Congress, Women's  
Section Iceland's Feminist  
Alliance Party and women  
involved in the struggle in  
Nicaragua.

**Workshops** will look at issues  
such as racism in the women's  
movement; women in prison,  
and international solidarity  
issues.

For more information call 764-  
0516 for Prince Albert, 933-  
4141 in Saskatoon and 525-  
8329 in Regina.

### SASKATOON

"Women's Well-Being"

March 4  
**Workshops** on Rural Women,  
Native Women's Strength and  
more. Frances Morrison  
Library. 9:30 -11.

**Keynote Speaker:** Joan Riggs  
on the Well Being of Women's  
Groups.  
11-12

**Fair** featuring open stage,  
displays, women's art, books  
and music at Third Ave. United  
Church.

**Panel on Women's Well Being:**  
Choosing Your Own Way  
Frances Morrison Library

**Dance** to Women's Music at St.  
Joseph's Parish Hall, \$5-\$7.

## Alberta CALGARY

"Women Stood United, Women  
Stand United"

March 8  
**Information Fair,** Scotia  
Centre. 11am. - 4 pm. Many  
groups involved including the  
YWCA, Committee Against  
Racism and CAPSAC.

**IWD March.** Meet at City Hall.  
Followed by celebrations at  
Hillhurst-Sunnyside  
Community Centre. Food and  
entertainment.

March 10-11  
**Rock Against Racism** featuring  
Activate, Forbidden  
Dimension, Anne Lorree Band,  
Juba. Westward Club.

## EDMONTON

March 4-12  
**Events** planned between this  
time to commemorate IWD.

March 11  
**March Against Racism.**  
Potluck and entertainment.  
Speeches at 2:00 at the YWCA  
at 10305-100 Avenue.

**Concert with Heather Bishop  
and Sherry Shute.** Provincial  
Museum theatre at 8:00 pm,  
\$15 or \$10 for low income.

For more information contact  
Sande Copeland 439-3037 or  
427-7661.

## N.W.T.

### YELLOWKNIFE

"Prosperity"

March 3  
All day of workshops,  
entertainment, resources and  
companionship. Display  
tables. Childcare. Free.

For more information call  
Colleen at 920-2777.



## British Columbia VANCOUVER

March 8  
**Films** about women's work and  
lives. At Cinémathèque, 1131  
Howe St. Free. 666-3838  
(YWCA)

March 11  
**March for Choice** to defend the  
**Everywoman's Health Clinic** at  
11:00 Queen Elizabeth Plaza  
(Georgia and Hamilton) 322-  
6692.

March 12  
**Rape Crisis Centre and  
WAWAW 7th birthday and IWD  
celebration.** 7:30. Faith Nolan  
and special guests. W.I.S.E.  
Club. 1882 Adanac St. Women  
only. \$6-\$12, includes food.

## TERRACE

March 8  
**Potluck Lunch and Open  
House.** NFB film, Maureen  
Bostock accompanied by her  
guitar.

## Women Against Poverty: Fighting for Social Equality



**International Women's Day '89**  
**Rally & March — 10 a.m.**  
**Saturday, March 4th**  
Convocation Hall, U. of T.  
FAIR 2-5 p.m. Ryerson Polytechnical

# Ottawa

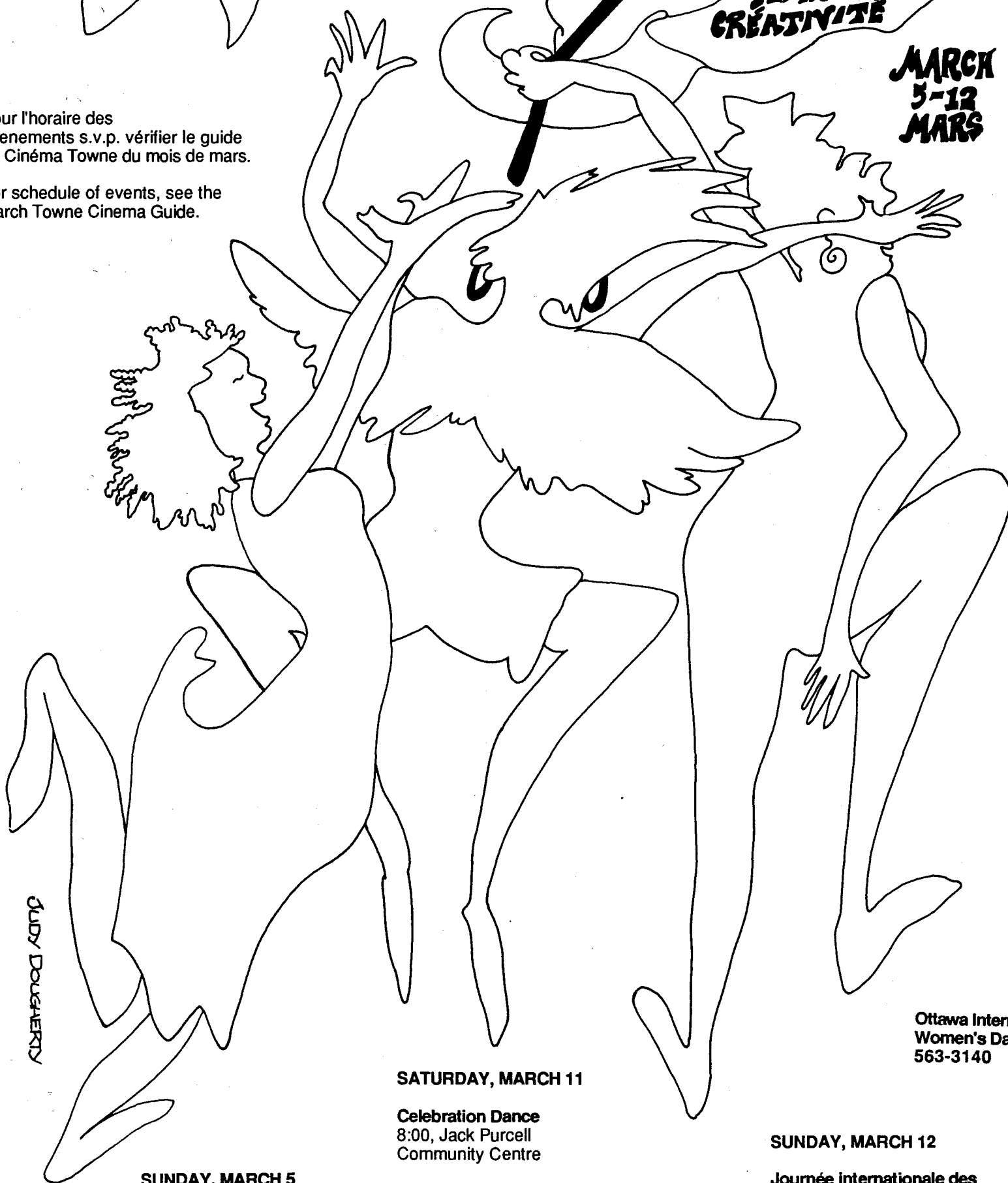
## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES

WOMEN'S  
CREATIVITY  
FEMMES, ET  
CRÉATIVITÉ

MARCH  
5-12  
MARS

Pour l'horaire des  
événements s.v.p. vérifier le guide  
du Cinéma Towne du mois de mars.

For schedule of events, see the  
March Towne Cinema Guide.



JUDY DOUGHERTY

Ottawa International  
Women's Day Collective  
563-3140

### SATURDAY, MARCH 11

**Celebration Dance**  
8:00, Jack Purcell  
Community Centre

**Célébration**  
20h, Centre communautaire  
Jack Purcell

### SUNDAY, MARCH 12

**Journée internationale des  
femmes: Ralliement et marche**  
11h30, 151 George  
Houseworks

**International Women's Day  
Rally and march**  
11:30, 151 George  
Houseworks

### SUNDAY, MARCH 5

**Foire d'information**  
10h à 16h, Centre  
communautaire Glebe,  
690 rue Lyon

**Information Fair**  
10-4, Glebe Community  
Centre, 690 Lyon



# Racism and Sexism

(Excerpted from her upcoming book "Racism and Sexism: Towards a Canadian Perspective")

Miss Ann becomes the personification of the white woman's predisposition to Women of Colour. Miss Ann resides in our psyche. She is rooted in history. She sits in the "big house". She is both mistress and victim. She embodies all our contradictions. She needs to liberate her soul. She is heard and seen through the voices of these Women of Colour. In "racial" terms, she is the "white" woman. In classicist terms she is the upper class woman. In heterosexist terms, she is the homophobic "sister".

(In this section, Glenda Simms recounts some of the personal experiences of various women she has met over the years. The following is one of those stories. - eds.)



Rachel

[Rachel came to Canada as a Crossroads exchange student from the Gambia. She spent ten months in Winnipeg.]

I understood how appeared to my host through the comments that she made about the Native Canadians. I can remember accompanying her to a bingo and she remarked about the number of Natives in the hall. I asked her to tell me how I can identify a Native. She mumbled something about their hair -- the inability of their hair to curl even if they cut it.

I sometimes wonder what she was trying to say. I was not naive. I needed some kind of marker to identify who is Native and who is white. (Since these relationships were obviously important to the social relationships in the city of Winnipeg.)

In Africa the distinction between "Native" and "white" is stark -- this is a distinction not only of skin colour but of social distance.

Back home in Gambia there are no egalitarian bingo halls!

Is the hall occupied by whites and Natives a sign of a progressive society, or is it part of the charade that satisfies my host's conscience?

I detected an attitude that was subtly condescending. My host needed to distinguish

herself from the Native women. Her point of reference was the hair. Hair becomes the metaphor for social and racial barriers to the feminist vision.

I am a twentieth century African woman, born and bred in a continent that has been raped and pillaged by colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism, a continent that has, by and large bought into the western capitalist camp, a continent that has aped the best and the worst aspects of western thought and lifestyle.

As such I am an African woman who has had no choice but to understand the western world.

Imagine my state of mind when I came to Canada and met people who expected me to be stupid, primitive and totally devoid of any knowledge of technology, mass society and consumerism.

How can I explain my host's anger on the occasion when I touched her VCR, or her consternation at the fact that I not only knew about the use of refrigerators and freezers but that I owned one of each back home?

Was she angry because I rendered her useless? Inadvertently I robbed her of the multiple role -- teacher, missionary, benefactor, goddess.

Why did she find it so hard to be just another woman -- a sister, a comrade and a friend?

I came -- not to see gadgets. I came -- not to be startled by bright lights. I came -- not to trod the corridors of department stores or to stare in wonder at the aisles of food cages.

I came -- to find human values, to make friends, to participate and to share. I was rendered helpless. I became angry!



If Marlene Dixon is correct in her analysis, *the women's movement initially had an ideological base that encompassed poor Black and poor White women* on relief, working women exploited in the labour force, middle class women incarcerated in their split-level dream houses, college girls awakening to the fact that sexiness is not the crowning achievement in life, and the general rank and file of women who realized that they were not free in an age that sees "freedom" as an essential value for maximum human development.

This kind of world view should have resulted in a movement that has an anti-imperialist and anti-racist ideology. If this is not the outcome, then the Women's Movement has nothing in common with the struggles of Native Women and Women of Colour.

Furthermore, I wish to subscribe to the argument that *if women's oppression is viewed primarily as an outcome of male chauvinism*, then the Movement will not understand

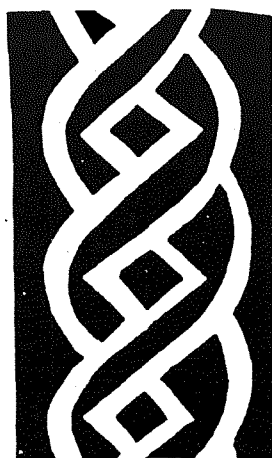
by Glenda Simms



that these minority women are in "a life and death struggle to combat racism and exploitation". This lack of understanding will see White women (of all classes) procreating and perpetuating through the socialization processes and institutions the same oppression that has continued since and before 1492.

## Towards Solutions

If Canadian feminists are committed to a serious critique and a restructuring of the



feminist agenda they will have to consider some of the following issues:

1. The concerns of Women of Colour must be part of the feminist agenda. Women of Colour must define this agenda as equals. In other words, white women must be prepared to deal with their predisposition to be maternalistic and condescending in their treatment of Women of Color.

2. Racism must become a feminist issue. To date this has been seen as solely the

concern of "minority" organizations. Attempts at discussing racism within the white women's movement have been *weak, incoherent, condescending and patronizing*.

The problem with this issue lies not in the inability of women to comprehend the magnitude of the systemic barriers but in their inability to move their analysis from the exclusive focus on gender as the base for the construction of feminist theory.

3. In order to deal with historical inequities and racism the Feminist movement must target all institutions. One very vital area is that of formal education.

Feminist educators need to commit themselves to equitable systems while they commit themselves to excellence. The continuation of equity and excellence will assist all students and especially minority students to achieve their goals. Women and other minorities respond to the lack of equity in education because they learn very early that they are not valued by the society and by extension they are not valued by the educational system.

The research on gender and schooling shows that what



is good for males is not necessarily good for females, and females are disadvantaged in classrooms that are organized around the world view and value systems of the male.

By the same token, what is good for white women and girls in a majority white society is not necessarily good for women and girls of colour. In the final aspirations of Canadian females, the educational authorities have automatically based their policies and instructional adjustments on the white female perspective. Obviously then, it is important for educators to realize that minorities in general and minority females in particular are the most disadvantaged by the lack of equity in education.

Such educational equity can only be achieved by structural changes that affect the social relationships within society. It is not enough to depend on the few minorities who will achieve in some fields and who might be strategically scattered in school systems and in other educational institutions.

Shakeshaft (1986) cited the findings of Washington and Pollard who found that both black and white teachers in the U.S.A. evaluated white girls more positively than they evaluated black girls or boys of either race. This suggests that in the process of socialization and accommodation to inequality black women also internalize the negativity of the society in ways which make them party to their own oppression.

Without overt efforts to change the social relationships such predispositions will be perpetuated by all educational institutions and in Women Studies courses. Jim Cummins, a prominent Canadian educator, underlined this concern in a recent article on anti-racist education. He

cont'd on page 22

## National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women

salutes

*International Women's Day and supports the continuing struggle for justice for all women.*

Suite 1102, 251 Laurier Ave. W. Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5J6  
(613) 232-0689

# Congress of Black Women

The Congress of Black Women of Canada is a voluntary, non-profit organization which is dedicated to improving the welfare of Black Women and their families in their local communities, and nationally, to clarifying and bringing due recognition to the role of Black Women in Canadian Society.

The Congress also seeks through a program of education and service to motivate Black Women to participate in the life of the communities in which they live.

The Congress rejects the tradition of oppression and exploitation which excludes Black Women from the mainstream of society.



## Our History

The first Conference of the Congress of Black Women of Canada was convened in Toronto in 1973 by the Canadian Negro Women's Association and chaired by the late Kay Livingstone. The enthusiastic response of individuals and organizations across the country to this first coming together of Black Women from all walks of life resulted in subsequent conferences being held in Montreal (1974), in Halifax (1976) and in Windsor (1977).

At the Fourth conference, it was unanimously resolved that a national organization be created. Consequently, representatives from across Canada were elected to form a National Secretariat.

At the Fifth Conference held in Winnipeg (1980) the National Organization was launched.

## Our Objectives

To provide a network of solidarity for Black Women in Canada, and to be a united voice in the defence and extension of human rights and liberties for Black Women in Canada.

To foster a climate in which it is acceptable for Black Women to openly examine the issues which affect us and our families.

To plan and implement programs of education for Black Women.

To develop relations with other local, national and international organizations whose aims and objectives and purposes are in keeping with those of the Congress.

To constantly re-examine our objectives and purposes and adjust our efforts accordingly.

## Our Membership

Membership is open to:

1. All Black Women, sixteen years and over,
2. Black Women's organizations whose aims, objectives, and purposes are similar to those of the Congress, as Associate Chapters.

## Some of the Our Issues and Concerns

**Human Rights:** The Congress believes that everyone should be guaranteed the right to equality of opportunity without regards to race, sex, age, nationality, etc. and the right to safety and security of person.

**Housing:** The Congress believes that decent and affordable housing should be enjoyed by everyone. This includes co-operative non-profit and government housing programs. The Congress

recognizes promotion of Consumer action for better community development.

**Health:** The Congress believes that all people should be aware of available health care and should have the best medical care in the community. Through a public education program, health problems and concerns can be discussed, including the relationship between members of the medical profession and Black Women.

**Child Development:** The Congress believes that Black Parents should explore the issues of complete child development - physical, mental and emotional development - language development - readiness for school - the role of cultural activities in positive self concept. It recognizes the importance of quality day care facilities which includes lunch and after school programs, and family day care.

**Education:** The Congress believes that Black Women should be able to pursue adult education and training and receive information about alternative careers and counseling, so that they can train to develop the necessary skills.

**Pensions:** The Congress recognized that a program of education about pensions - eligibility, carrying pensions for job to job (portability), retirement, splitting or divorce - should be available to Black Women.

**Racism:** The Congress believes that racism is dysfunctional in any civilized society.

Join us and Help.



from Martin Luther King, JR. a documentary



## Racism and Sexism cont'd Glenda Simms

Canadian feminists are teaching and working in schools, colleges, and universities. To date they have not demonstrated their commitment to any but their own racial group. The time has come for these women to use their positions and influence to forge alliances with Women of Colour and re-examine not only the content of their courses but the nature of their institutions.

Glenda P. Simms is Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at Nipissing University in North Bay, Ontario, a past president of the Congress of Black Women of Canada, and board member of the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women.

posited that institutionalized racism is preserved in educational institutions by posturing, pretense and rhetoric because educators give lip service to programs and plans but very little structural change occurs. He also pointed out that Canadian society has effective ways of obscuring "the contradiction between the rhetoric of equality and the reality of domination."

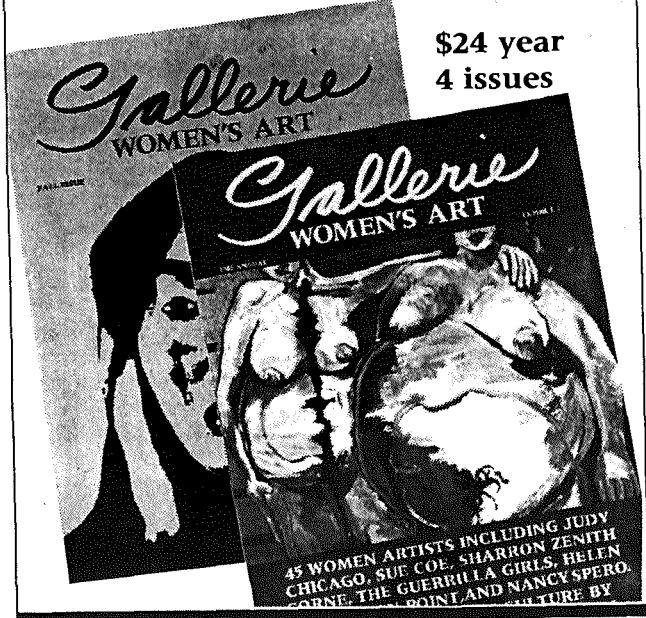
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# Native women in Canada: one woman's perspective

The following is based on the personal experiences and observations of one Maliseet woman, from a small reserve in southwestern New Brunswick. The writer recognizes that her experiences and observations are not necessarily those of her native brothers and sisters and respectfully acknowledges that every person has his/her own story to tell.

Like many of my contemporaries, my predecessors and foreseeably my unborn relatives, my drive to be of some significance in the struggle for the preservation of my "Native Soul," has dominated my life.

Although I was born in a natural state, I have journeyed through life in a most unnatural manner. I have assumed many roles, many disguises and many personalities. I have been an actress, a director, a playwright, a prop. Externally, I have seemingly been successful at many things; yet internally, I have been in constant search of meaning, of myself, of who and what I am. I have willingly assumed the role of any character, any character other than my own.

Although I strove for success, the impetus for my drive was my feeling of inadequacy and my fear of failure. Outwardly, I had become adept at creating the illusion of competency and confidence. Inwardly, I had become a reactionary.

I reacted to my feelings of awkwardness with an air of self-assurance. To hide my real feelings of inferiority, I reacted with anger and determination. I reacted to my



by Karen Paul

honesty sparkling from their eyes. Their trusting spirits are dancing from the innocent places in their hearts. Their unconditional love and lack of fear are evident as they too embark on their life journey.

The spirit, the very core of their being, looks upwardly and outwardly to follow me to the places that I will go...believing that it is good. They feel secure in the knowledge that I have made it beyond the hurdles leading to this place and so they follow. I am powerless to stop them from following my path, for they have already begun their journey.

My heart is heavy, and I am worried. Can they deceive

other to walk in a good way from this point forward? Might we all leave tracks made of goodness, kindness, honesty, cooperativeness, helpfulness, so that those tiny tracks that follow from here, will have a good path to follow and a good place to go?

I know now that I must rediscover my essence, I must nurture myself, I must ask for help to heal my wounds. I must break down those barriers that live within me for it was I who constructed them and it is I who must tear them down.

I must release the pain that I have become so familiar with. I must release the infection and diseases that I carry, I must purify my blood and I must recognize that in doing so there is a goodness, for it is in the letting go of these terrible things, that I will set myself free. "I" can be released. I must strive to be



IF OUR  
GRANDPARENTS  
COULD SEE  
US NOW:

BINGO  
CIGARETTES  
SMUGGLING  
DISUNITY  
POLLUTION

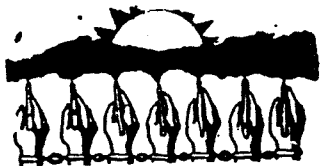
comfortable with who "I" am instead of being uncomfortable with who "I" am not.

I can be thankful for the path that I have led, for looking back has brought me to myself. I have come to know what legacy I want to leave behind and I have come to think about the children. Those small, round, smiling faces will follow where I lead, and they will follow me to the places that I will go, believing that it is good. I pray that it will be!

Although I cannot speak for anyone else, my feeling and my observations are such that more and more native women in Canada are beginning to take a long, hard look at what is happening with our communities, what is happening to our children, what we are doing to ourselves. I

feel we are beginning to re-examine our role in all this, are we hindering or helping? What will happen to our loved ones, our families, our communities if we ourselves don't do something now? I believe that growing numbers of women are beginning to re-examine where we have been, where we are, and where we want to go. And most of all we are beginning to reach out for the help that we need from one another, for the survival of our future depends on it.

Karen Paul is the former vice-president of the Native Women's Association of Canada. She is now travelling across the country.



feelings of insecurity by attempting to transmit a devil-may-care attitude and made obviously courageous strides to the satisfaction of myself and others. I have done so many things for so many wrong reasons, and I found it was "I" who cheated myself the most. I have since stopped to examine the footsteps that I have left in my wake and to see what legacy I have left behind.

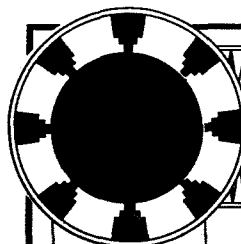
When I look back, I see that my tracks are filled with anger, resentment, bitterness, distrust, hate, deception, and confusion. It is painful to look at, it is painful to see. My heart becomes increasingly heavy and my breast fills with sorrow. The lump that fills my throat prevents me from crying out. The dam holding back the tears from my eyes, feels as if it is going to burst and release a flood of pain and blood, of infection and disease.

Before my eyes, I can see the children, the little ones, my relatives. They are at the beginning of the path I have just forged, their tiny feet following the tracks I have just left. My eyes behold small, round, smiling faces with

themselves, disguise themselves, pretend well enough to conquer those same hurdles I have? Can they hurt others as well as I did, and can they carry the weight of that hurt within themselves, a natural consequence of such activity? Will that same trust and innocence remain constant until the time they reach the point where I now stand? The point of introspection and reflection? Will their anger, pain and bitterness be so all-consuming that it blinds them to the lessons that they have learned?

And, will the lessons that "I" have learned be enough to help me to recognize my mistakes and acknowledge them honestly and openly? How will I let these children know that I am sorry? Sorry for leading them on a treacherous trail. Can they ever forgive me?

Can we meet at the crossroads of life and bare our souls? Can we accept our mistakes as part of the test? Can we collectively transform the lessons that we have learned, into tools to be shared among us? Might we help each



NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

**"In the renewal of  
kindness, honesty,  
sharing and strength"**  
(the Teachings of the Creator)

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# A Colombian woman brings her story to Canada

interviewer: Michelle Albert

*This interview with Elizabeth Castro of Colombia was done in Spanish and later translated. It was not transcribed verbatim and is presented as a summary of Elizabeth's ideas.*

While paying for dinner at a local Toronto greasy spoon, the sign on the coffee machine caught my eye. "Pure Columbian." Beside it was the familiar drawing of a man, a donkey and a mountain. That little restaurant was the Colombian coffee's last stop in a long connected chain that starts hundreds of miles away in the Andes mountains of Colombia, where workers pick coffee cherries for long hours and pitiful wages. I thought about this while walking to an interview with a Colombian woman named Elizabeth Castro.

Elizabeth Castro was recently in Canada to make Canadians aware of the abuse of human rights occurring daily in Colombia. Every day there are reports of assassinations, threats, attacks and disappearances.

As a union organizer and a nurse in a hospital, Elizabeth was fired for her activity in a strike. The strike was to protest high costs and poor services and throughout its ten days the nurse and staff (98% women) took over the hospital and ran it collectively. She is now a member of the Popular Education Corporation of the Atlantic Coast in Barranquilla.

Another focus of her trip was to ask for solidarity for two projects she is working on. "The first is a community hospital that will support the health work that we do in indigenous communities."

"The second project is a women's project which aims to gather economic funds to better organize and mobilize women in the different communities along the Atlantic coast, and to develop popular education."

"Because of the lack of economic resources it is impossible to travel to different towns to organize the women. The project will allow the women to produce publications, to express themselves, to support themselves in their crafts." The organization "Organizacion Fememina del Atlantico," of which Elizabeth Castro is a member, will help facilitate this project.

Women's situation in Colombia cannot be looked at without first examining

Colombia's political social and economic problems. To learn about the situation of women in Colombia, it was first necessary to understand the context in which women live.

Colombia, a country of 30 million people, is situated in the northwest corner of South America and shares borders with Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru and Ecuador. While incredibly rich in natural resources - petroleum, coal, iron ore, gold, wood, emeralds, and fish and varied in climatic zones which allows for the cultivation of many different crops.

The majority of the

cutting back on social services.

The poverty forced upon the peasants and the cuts of basic public services such as health and education have compelled people to organize to voice their concerns. Instead of working to raise the standard of living, the government has met their protest with violence and repression.

"The answer the government has for these organizations has been one of repression rather than helping to improve the conditions of life for the Colombians. The more people have organized -



population do not have enough food to eat and live in extreme poverty. Many live without potable water or electricity. There is a high rate of infant mortality and many children die every year because of malnutrition. There is high unemployment and illiteracy. Most of the arable land is in the hands of the very few while the majority are kicked off their land, forcing the peasants to go to the city in search of work.

Colombia's resources have been increasingly controlled by foreign multinationals and their obligations to their foreign debt. Colombia borrows money from and owes money to the International Monetary Fund (IMF); therefore its economic policies are dictated by the IMF. They must adhere to these policies which include putting more money and effort into the production of crops for export (mainly coffee, but also marijuana and cocaine, although not acknowledged publicly), and

peasants, workers, students, professionals, women, indigenous groups - the more the military has responded with violence.

People are imprisoned, threatened, tortured, killed, and disappeared. Recently there has been an escalation in human rights abuses. The method of human rights' violation has changed over the past two years. Before they threw people in jail illegally, then they turned to torture, then the threat of terrorism and now they resort to selective and collective massacres."

In November of 1988 over 40 people were killed in a massacre in the town of Segovia. "According to the sociologists these are part of the Pentagon's policy of 'low intensity warfare,'" said Elizabeth.

The government claims that they cannot control the killings. The terrorist attacks are the work of "death squads" which are out of their control. Yet often the members of these death squads wear army uniforms, use army equipment and the army never steps in to stop them nor have these people ever been prosecuted.

There has also been an escalation of violence towards political party members and supporters. "Traditionally there have been two parties in Colombia: the Liberal and Conservative, but because of all the problems other groups have formed.

There is now a political group called the Union Patriótico (UP), which has gained substantial legal space in the senate and congress, in the political space that has traditionally belonged to the two parties...almost 800 members of this party have been assassinated."

"In 1988 Colombia had its first mayoral elections and it was the UP that had the most opportunities. Today most of the UP members that were elected have been killed, forced to renounce or threatened."

The mayor of Segovia, where they massacred 40 people, was from the UP. In areas where the UP gained a lot of votes, they consider the whole town to be a threat. There is a complete policy of terrorism."

The situation of women in Colombia is found within a greater context of popular revolt and military repression and within a "Third World" country heavily in debt.

As a result of the lack of basic services and military oppression, women have responded and organized, in the countryside and in the city.

"There are many different women's organizations in Colombia. There are those that are fighting for sexual equality, others are fighting for equal opportunity in political life, and at work, showing that women are capable of other jobs, and that they are as capable as men. There is another kind of woman who is organized because she believes that her participation in the political and social process has to be done within the framework of the struggle for justice and this applies equally to men and women because they are both exploited. Logically all these types of organizations are formed depending on the class that the women belong to," says Elizabeth.

For example, there are upper class women's organizations, and organizations formed to help poor children, but which don't actually affect real social change, they don't solve the problem.

"But the woman of few economic resources, the popular woman (of working or lower class background), the campesina woman is the one who's really going through the struggle because not only does she have to fight against the oppressive state but she must also fight the attitudes of her compañero (companion). As father Camilo Torres (the first priest to join a Guerrilla group in Colombia), said, "Because women are doubly exploited they must be doubly revolutionary."

"In Latin America, it is believed that women's role is in the house, taking care of the kids...thus the woman fights the oppressive state as well as her compañero and she has to question her role at home."

International Women's Day is an important event for women in Colombia. They

always have a political-cultural event. Until this year "the different types of organizations were isolated and had separate events, some had a luncheon, others a lecture, others an exposition.

This year, however, Elizabeth explained, there is a more concerted effort to join together and coordinate an event. "For example, on the coast they are planning an event in a park; different cultural groups and each sector will have an exposition - indigenous, campesina, student, professional, religious.

There is a group of nuns who are interested in participating as they've done a lot of craft and literary work in their convents which they would like to make known. It will be the first time all the different groups have come together. They've also invited the Central Union of Workers (CUT), the major union in Colombia.

Another form of resistance in which women are involved is the formation and activity of the "geurrillas", the armed insurgents. Colombia has a long history of armed guerrilla struggle. There are currently five or six geurrilla organizations. Women are active in all of them. Recently these separate organizations have overcome some of their differences to form the Coordinadora Geurrillera Simon Bolivar, which is the first step towards the process of unification.


When I asked how we, as Canadian women could express our solidarity with the women of Colombia, Elizabeth suggested an exchange of information material concerning women's issues in Canada and how we go about effecting change. What mechanisms we use to mobilize ourselves? How we've worked out our relationships with our male partners? How we share housework, etc.? Another way we could show our support is to write letters protesting the violations of human rights in Colombia. The addresses to write are as follows:

Sr. Presidente Virgilio Barco  
Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente  
Palacio De Narion  
Bogotá, Colombia

and

Jefe del Estado Mayor  
Conjuntode de las Fuerzas  
Militares  
Mayor General Nelson Mejia  
Henao  
Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52  
Bogotá, Colombia

For more information on the situation in Colombia or to make a donation to Elizabeth's projects, contact:  
The Canadian Colombia Assoc.  
P.O. Box 591, Station "A"  
Toronto, Ontario  
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# A tale of two nurses in Nicaragua

by Josie Wallenius

I am a 54 year old nurse, now working on a casual basis with the elderly, and previously on Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Rose is much younger, and works a steady full-time night shift in a Paediatric Intensive Care unit in Minneapolis, U.S.A.

We met for the first time at a speak-out against the U.S. shooting down of the two Libyan jets in January, 1988. We began to talk. Nurses always have a lot to talk about of common interest.

I had one very searching question I wanted to ask Rose. A question I knew I could ask her because she, like myself, was active in healing outside the hospital walls. The question was to do with ethics.

I started to talk to her about my experience in Nicaragua in 1986, and as I talked I saw her eyes widen in recognition. I stopped, and asked her if she had been to Nicaragua too. She said she had, her eyes still wide on me. We exchanged our stories before I asked her the question.

## My Story

In 1985, I was already active in the Nuclear Disarmament Movement, but if you had asked me where Nicaragua was on the map I would not have known where to point.

Then one day I was ironing, deep in thought, and I heard something on the radio. One fact penetrated my consciousness. A commentator was saying that there was a high incidence of cancer of the cervix in Nicaraguan women. These women had to be nursed without pain relieving drugs, because of the U.S.-imposed economic embargo on imports to Nicaragua and because 40% of Nicaragua's G.N.P. (Gross National Product) was going to defend themselves from the U.S.-backed contras.

I remember standing motionless with the iron in the air, wondering how you nursed terminal cancer without relieving drugs.

A year later I was in Nicaragua with a Canadian Electrical brigade. We were going to a canning factory. I went as an electrician's labourer, but the brigade of 12 people, which included two people over 70 years of age, was glad to find out that I was a nurse. I spent many hours atop shaky scaffolding worrying that somebody else, not me, would have an accident that I might not be able to cope with. It is a secret nightmare of most nurses, that they will be asked to cope with an emergency in their private lives that will be beyond their ability.

Fortunately, except for a few minor cuts and diarrhoea, my skills were not called upon.

During the month we were there, we went travelling around in an old truck on weekends. One weekend we were in Estili, which is a small town near the war zone. I was walking along a road with our Canadian interpreter and we passed an old building with a vehicle outside which had a red cross on it. The building was a hospital.

I asked the interpreter if she would come in with me and ask if I could see the hospital. She was a bit impatient, and wanted me to wait till we were in the capital, Managua, before I went into a hospital. I dug my heels in and we went into a front courtyard. It was full of outpatients in a waiting room for emergency. People were sitting on benches against the wall. Mothers were holding sick babies.

We just walked to the front door and opened it. A young woman in a white spotless uniform greeted us. I knew everything in Estili, including this spotless uniform, was handwashed.

I explained I was a nurse from Canada, and asked if she could show me around. She was warm and friendly and led us down a corridor with peeling painted walls. I asked her about her training. She said she had had three years of training. In Nicaragua medical and nursing training is free. She explained how the U.S.

tries to tempt trained doctors and nurses with dollars to go to the U.S. and leave her country to suffer without proper medical care.

Along the corridor I saw a woman walking along holding a child with a deformed leg. I asked the nurse what was wrong with the child, and she told me it was a congenital disease. The child had been at the hospital for two years. Medical treatment in Nicaragua is free to all citizens.

We went in the pharmacy, and I saw a small room, with half stocked shelves of little brown bags with pills in them. There were less drugs there than we see in a shopping mall pharmacy.

about 8 years old, lying propped up and asleep in a bed with his mother sitting in a chair by his bed. She had her head on his bed by his side, and she was sleeping too. The boy had an I.V. hanging from a rough wooden cross.

The nurse told me, quite calmly, that he was dying from bronchitis. I asked her why he was certain to die since bronchitis can be cured without antibiotics. She said it was a very virulent bronchitis, induced by the germ warfare from the Honduran border and was always fatal. I forced myself to take a picture. I wanted to work for Nicaragua when I got back to Canada. I thought that showing the

hope. The nurse that greeted her was young, harried and acting as the assistant administrator of the hospital.

They first went into the orthopaedic ward, which was half empty as the ceasefire was in effect and there had been less casualties. There was a child with one eye, the effects of a land mine. She was then taken into the burn ward where "everything came down on me," she said.

She walked in the door and saw a large ward of beds down each side. All she could see was sheets with the shapes of small bodies underneath. The children all looked dead, like when you draw the sheet up over a dead body. But they weren't dead. The sheets were trying to prevent infection. These children had no dressings. She noticed pus and blood seeping through the sheets. Rose began to hyperventilate and became catatonic.

There were screams coming from the debriding room. They had no drugs, no silverdene cream, nothing.

The nurse looked at Rose, and Rose walked to the bedside where a father was sitting by his son. The father lifted his sheet from his son's face, and the child looked at Rose, then closed his eyes and turned his face to the side. The father began to talk to Rose in rapid Spanish, and Rose said that if ever she had wanted anything in her life, she wanted at that moment to have been able to understand what the father was trying to tell her.

Rose could not, would not, take any pictures.

After Rose told me her story, I asked her my question.

"Rose, you work on a Paediatric floor. I saw a documentary last year on television about a hospital in the States. Part of it was taken on a Paediatric floor, in a premature baby unit. One of the babies, a very small one, already linked up to tubes, stopped breathing, and a code was put out. The next thing I saw was five adults rushing along the corridor with a crash cart, (a special type of emergency cart that can only be used once) They rushed into the unit, and bending over this little scrap of life in the incubator. The documentary also stated at one point that a number of babies in the US were now being admitted to hospital with the "sugar water" syndrome. That is, babies of welfare mothers who can't afford milk are feeding their babies sugar water, and the babies, of course, get very ill. What do you think of that?"

Rose looked at me, still wide eyed, and said, "It's very expensive to use a crash cart. I think about how much milk for babies of welfare mothers that would buy."

*Josie Wallenius, is in Thunder Bay and is travelling the world to contribute whatever she can to people's struggles.*



I saw the sterilizing room. It reminded me of rooms in a tiny hospital where I had worked in the 1950's in England.

The beds in the women's ward were full. There was only a half sheet under the women. All linen at the hospital is handwashed.

We gownned and masked to go into the premature baby ward. There were five incubators, all of them old, with babies in them. The nurse explained they couldn't get spare parts for the incubators and sometimes the oxygen ran out. The embargos to Nicaragua affect everything.

I went into the labour ward. There was one woman especially in great pain. No drugs. A doctor was washing his hands at a small sink while a nurse collected blood-stained bowls on a trolley. I asked the nurse how many Caesarian sections were done, and was surprised when she said about 50% of the women had sections. Then she explained that most babies were delivered by midwives at home and they only admitted women with complications.

I was taking pictures as I went around. The nurse seemed glad that I was doing that. We went into the isolation rooms. There was a boy of

people in Canada this picture it would help in some way.

That night as I lay awake on my mattress in our billet in San Isidro, I heard heavy vehicles passing through the village. I got up and went to the window and saw military trucks going to the war zone. I lay down again and cried.

## Rose's story

Rose is a member of Women Against Military Madness in Minneapolis. She works full time night shifts in a hospital. When she is off duty she does fundraising and protests on the streets of Minneapolis. She told me that last year she was all set to go on a holiday to Mexico. For some reason, at the last moment, she decided to go to Nicaragua. She went with donated medical supplies and speaking very little Spanish. She too had many fears. She felt she could deal with a gunshot wound if she had to, but not a difficult breech delivery.

Rose first went to the Children's hospital in Managua that treated children wounded by contra attacks. Like me she was warmly greeted and allowed to take pictures. The Nicaraguan people are full of



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*by Catherine Loull*

I check my agenda, the date is Thursday, January 4, 1989. I have an appointment at 12:30 p.m. with Diamo Cissé. Diamo is a Senegalese journalist, who has graciously agreed to an interview. We meet in the parking lot below the Canadian Embassy, I'm a little late, and have no idea who to expect. I look around, and a tall woman approaches and asks if I'm Catherine the Canadian. I reply in the affirmative.

explains to me that we would go to her home, so that we may be more comfortable.

Diana is a practising Muslim. She follows what we would consider a strict faith. Diana will pray five times a day, and is the second wife in a polygamous marriage. Her husband left that morning at 10 a.m., and will not return for another 48 hours. She tells me this so I will feel comfortable knowing that we would be "entre femmes." The interview is in French which, along with Wolof, is the other official language of Senegal. She lives in the Medina, in an apartment. The apartment is very spacious, with many windows, and sunshine enters almost all the rooms, at any given time of the day. She shows me around the apartment and introduces me to her two children, both girls; one is eight months old, the other from a previous marriage is 15.

a woman. In her second marriage, as a second wife, she feels that her husband has greater respect for her and who she is.

We enter her bedroom, where Dima explains to me that in her culture one receives important guests in the bedroom, since it is the nicest room in the house. She takes my sandals and offers me some slippers, so that I will be more comfortable. She pulls out her prayer rug and we sit down. We chat about my education, and then hers.

She had the opportunity to study journalism in Paris, with the help of her sister who took care of her child while she was away. The family unit plays a very important role in Senegal. Women in the country are also encouraged to pursue their studies, so they may be self-sufficient and less dependent on their husbands. My impression is that this is especially necessary in polygamous marriages, where the husband must distribute both his time and income equally between his wives and children.

A black and white portrait of a woman with dark, voluminous, curly hair. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. She is wearing a dark-colored top with a light-colored, leaf-like pattern and a prominent white, ruffled collar. The background is dark and out of focus, with a vertical light source visible on the right side.

take notes with more ease. I ask Diamo whether she feels the urban woman in Senegal was gaining ground in terms of equality. Her response stuns me for a moment. Rather than answer the question, she asks me if there is such a thing as equality. Is equality not a modern phenomenon? she persists. As a Muslim, she does not believe that equality exists. Allah did not create anything equally. However, this does not mean that she feels inferior to her husband; on the contrary, she feels he has a great respect for her.

I ask if she felt her individuality suffered in her present arrangement. In her answer she refers to culture and religion. Diama explains that within Muslim society, it is considered abnormal not to have a husband; it is impossible, she stresses, to imagine yourself as a Muslim woman who is childless and without a husband. Women in Senegal, she explains, are taught at an early age to dedicate themselves to the family unit. She relates to me a story of a woman in her village, who died unmarried at the age of 40. Before burying her, the chief asked a group of men which one would volunteer to marry this woman. Three or four volunteered; and after the ceremony, the woman was buried. Now, Diama explains, she may go to the next world with respect.

societies." The question we should address, she says, is the integration of women at the socio-economic level, specifically rural women. She does not believe the betterment of women in Senegal will come via feminism. It occurs to me that perhaps what we are having is a disagreement on terminology.

Diana conveys to me the need to understand each culture, not to impose our "definition" on a completely different society. While she is opposed to being called a feminist, she has broken from the traditional role of a Muslim woman. Diana is educated, she lives in her own apartment, and does not share her dwelling with her husband's other wife. As a professional journalist, she is pursuing the career of her choice. She believes in her own strength and power. Diana Cissé is concerned with the betterment of women in her society, specifically the right to ownership of land for rural women, and the integration of urban women in development. I believe that understanding women of all cultures, and their struggle for self-actualization, is the key to strengthening our power of women in the international women's movement.

Our wonderful afternoon is coming to an end. I have so many questions left, so much to share with this enigmatic woman. When we leave her apartment, and return to the Canadian embassy, I feel as if she is returning me to my cocoon where everything is understood. We stand in front of the car for several minutes.

Diama leaves me with this thought: "I am not sure you have understood what was said this afternoon. Our cultures are very different, but we are women, and we must continue to talk amongst ourselves, to understand each other." I realize that she is right, that we need more time together. After a month in Senegal, I am saddened that I did not meet this amazing woman before today. As it happens, our meeting occurs on the day before I part for home. Diama Cissé is a strong woman who believes in the empowerment of women, in the strength of communication between women. Who is to say that her brand of feminism is not feminism?



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# Invasion of Innu homeland: Nitassinan under seige

In the space of a split second, the powerful early morning buzz of activity of the Innu bush camp in Nitassinan is shattered. The roaring, tearing howl builds from nowhere to a hellish pitch. The instinct is to throw oneself to the ground. Some do. Birds whirl, Mani Mat's baby goes rigid. Seconds later, and the passing tornado fighter is distant thunder.

The planes barrel in at 700-1,000 kilometres an hour. From any direction, at any time, thirty tons, they fly so low the faces of the pilots are visible. Their passing shakes trees, ripples canvas tents, leaves an oily slick on the water. One plane's noise deafens, and is painful. Noise levels can reach 140 decibels; a few seconds of this is equivalent to the industrial noise of a day. Nishabet has a heart condition. Mani Mat cannot cover her ears while breastfeeding. Little Annet runs into the tent screaming and crying. She was playing in trees which bent from the impact of the jet.

Families have been so traumatized, they don't want to return to the bush as long as the low-level flying persists in their hunting territory.

Sometimes the fighter jets fly in pairs or formations of as many as eight, black and tight-turning. It is no wonder they crash from time to time, flying so close to the edge, so close to the lake. There have been eight crashes since 1979; frequent crashes in West Germany have provoked massive public outrage and calls for a halt to low-level flying.

For thousands of years, the Innu have lived quietly on the Quebec/Labrador peninsula, in their homeland which they call Nitassinan. They fish, trap, and hunt caribou, the mainstay of their physical and spiritual lives.

There are 10,000 Innu (as the Naskapi-Montagnais People call themselves) in Nitassinan. In the 50s and 60s they were settled in 11 communities along the Quebec North Shore and in seven

**For Innu women in particular, the military expansion translates into physical, sexual and economic exploitation. Last June, an 18-year-old Innu woman was brutally raped by a Canadian Air Forces officer. She attempted suicide the day before the December preliminary hearing in court.**

settlements on the Labrador side of Nitassinan. Each spring and fall, Innu from communities - places like La Romaine, Mingan, Natashquan and Sheshatshit travel far into the bush to hunt and fish. Here, the knowledge of hunting, trapping, fishing, hide preparation, cooking, snowshoe making, traditional beliefs and rituals, all of this is passed on to the children.

Without this seasonal migration, for many families lasting up to eight months of the year, the Innu culture would

cease to exist. For the Innu of Natashquan and La Romaine, virtually all of their territory is within the southern Special Use Airspace Zone for military flight training. Contrary to government reports that the Sheshatshit Innu are the only opposition to the developments in the region, this issue has united the Innu from all over Nitassinan.

As well, the Labrador Inuit Association, representing 4,000 Inuit and settlers, has publicly stated its opposition to the military developments which impact on their traditional homeland.

Innu hunters have observed the results of low-level flights and believe many wildlife species such as

caribou, beaver, fish, mink, ducks and geese are adversely affected. Some of these concerns have been backed up by information from cattle, fox and mink farmers in Europe, the U.S., and Western Canada. They report that low-level flying causes cattle to stampede and female mink and foxes to eat their young.

The federal government has undertaken an environmental assessment review to be completed in 1989. The Innu fear this impact study will simply rubber stamp a decision the government has already made. DND claims the jets will avoid Innu camps if the military is notified about their

cont'd on pg. 28



by Camille Fouillard

## An International Women's Day message from the Hon. Barbara McDougall, Minister for the Status of Women



*As we mark International Women's Day, I commend **The Womanist** for expressing the diversity of women's experiences around the world and for sharing with us a greater understanding of women's concerns, at home and abroad. It is a day to celebrate the gains made by women everywhere, gains which enable women to participate as partners with men in their contributions toward the achievement of equality, development and peace.*

*I am particularly proud of measures initiated by the federal government in the past four years to help Canadian women achieve greater equality in the workplace. These include the **Employment Equity Act of 1986**, which requires employers under federal jurisdiction to identify and remove discriminatory practices facing women, the disabled, native peoples and visible minorities and the Equal Pay Program, assisting employers under federal jurisdiction in complying with the requirements to provide equal pay for work of equal value.*

*I am also proud of a series of federal Government initiatives aimed specifically at improving participation by aboriginal, immigrant and illiterate women. These initiatives include measures to improve access for aboriginal women to business, management and human development training; to combat illiteracy by providing \$110 million for a new program; and to increase the opportunities for immigrant women to obtain employment by establishing a new \$25 million program to deliver basic language skills overseas, expand orientation and language assistance in Canada and increase workplace training for immigrant women.*

*Our Government has also demonstrated its firm commitment to the promotion of women's equality of opportunity abroad. In the fall of 1990, Canada will host the Third Meeting of Commonwealth Ministers responsible for Women's Affairs. The meeting will continue to work towards integrating women's concerns in all areas from economic planning to scholarships and training programs. We begin our four-year term on the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in 1989. This is an honour and signals the recognition of Canada as an active proponent of women's concerns around the world.*

*I congratulate the magazine's role in helping to lower the barriers between women by providing a positive forum for dialogue. I trust that it will continue to reflect meaningful exchanges of ideas, information and plans for future action and to build the common ground of issues vital for all women.*

## Invasion of Innu homeland: Nitassinan under seige, cont'd

locations. On three occasions, camp location coordinators were provided to DND, yet direct overflights continued.

Many of the Innu want the low-level flights to be abolished and want no more talk of a NATO tactical fighter weapons training centre for the region. Others, who say there must be a compromise, ask that a just land settlement be reached before there is any more expansion. Even with such an agreement, most Innu feel they cannot share the land with the planned NATO base.

The proposed NATO base would give NATO countries an opportunity to test high-tech surveillance systems. Aircraft would practise air-to-air combat and bombing with live ammunition. The number of low-level flights would increase from the present 7,500 to 40,000. The number of aircraft would increase tenfold. The present low-level flying is impinging on the traditional way of life now. If the training centre goes ahead, the Innu are convinced this way of life will be destroyed.

For Innu women in particular, the military expansion translates into physical, sexual and economic exploitation. Last June, an 18-year-old Innu woman was brutally raped by a Canadian Air Forces officer. She attempted suicide the day before the December preliminary hearing in court.

Military personnel regularly drive down to Sheshatshit to pick up young girls to bring to the bars on base. They are often left to hitchhike home the morning after. Formalized prostitution may not yet be a problem, but it cannot be ruled out in the future. The sexual abuse of women by military personnel for their "rest and recreation" is repeated worldwide. For poverty-stricken women, like the Innu, resorting to prostitution is often an attempt to escape deprivation; indeed, it can sometimes be the only apparent alternative.

Innu women are also concerned about the unwanted pregnancies of young, single women. Since the base was established, 15 children have been born to Sheshatshit women as a result of liaisons with British, American, Dutch and West German men. These women are left to bear the economic burden, usually on social assistance, of raising these children.

Innu women also fear the breakdown of their community as their young women emigrate and marry foreign military men. They fear the spread of diseases like AIDS from the military men and increased alcohol-related problems, especially with the young women who have such easy access to the bars on the base.

The Sheshatshit Women's Group has not yet decided whether it will participate in the public hearings for the Federal Environmental Assessment

**"The Innu are no different from any other Canadian."**

**Major David McCabe, Department of National Defence, 1988.**

**Review Process.** For the first time in the history of the review process, a research guideline for the environmental impact statement has been included, outlining the need to look at specific impacts on women.

In May, Innu women will host a Philippines visitor, Sister Bernadette Jagunos who has lived near the U.S. Clark Air Force Base. The sharing of experiences will help to make the links between local and global problems of growing militarism, particularly the sexist, racist, and colonialist aspects of this "industry."

The Innu believe the Canadian government is conducting illegal activities in their homeland. The Innu have never signed a treaty or land claims agreement. They have never been conquered. The land belongs to them. According to the Royal Proclamation of 1763 which remains a part of the Canadian Constitution, aboriginal peoples cannot be deprived of their land except through negotiations which are based on the equitable principles of justice.

The Innu feel overwhelmed by the immensity of their struggle, but they vow to do everything in their power to stop this invasion. In September 1988, then Defence Minister Perrin Beatty welcomed a NATO survey team, intent on selling Goose Bay for the future NATO base.

The Innu were not even given a perfunctory meeting with these Canadian and NATO

officials. Their voice was not being heard through their campaign of letter-writing, press releases and low-key demonstrations. They decided to step up the fight.

In September, the Innu set up camp on the Minipi Lake bombing range south of Goose Bay, halting all bombing practice for two months. Time and time again through the fall, they breached base security by walking through the airport gates, over the fence, past F-4 Phantom 11s, F-16s and Tornados, and parked themselves on the tarmac all the while led by their elders in

**"It's our land. How can I be breaking the law when I walk on my peoples' land? It's been hard on us, being arrested and jailed, but we'll keep it up. We have to. I don't like what we have to do, but we have to fight for our land."**

**Elizabeth Penashue, mother of 7, Sheshatshit, 1988.**



—CP photo

prayer. Training flights were disrupted and 200 arrests were made. As the pilots from West Germany, Britain and the Netherlands prepared to leave for the winter, the Innu hand-delivered letters to the Commanding Officers informing them that protests on the bombing range and the airport runways would continue upon their return in the spring.

**THIS IS HOW YOU CAN HELP THE INNU:**

- Write letters of support, like the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp did, to the Innu Band Council, P.O. Box 160, Sheshatshit, Nitassinan A0P 1M9, and to the Sheshatshit Women's Group, c/o Elizabeth Penashue, Sheshatshit, Nitassinan, A0P 1M0

- Write letters to the Ministers of National Defence and Indian Affairs, as well as to the Premier of Newfoundland, stating your support of the Innu and your opposition to the military expansion in Nitassinan.

- Get involved in actions and activities through your women's peace, environmental, native support or church groups. For example, the Canadian Peace Alliance is sponsoring a national campaign on this issue. For more information, contact: Camille Fouillard, P.O. Box 986, St. John's, Newfoundland A1C 5M3 (709) 739-6178/8963.

**"You say, why can't we change our way of life, but why should we change our lifestyle? If I go to Toronto, I wouldn't ask people to change their lifestyle."**

**Mani An Michel, Innu elder, Sheshatshit, 1988.**

## Social Justice Foundation

It seems that every profession, every occupation, every volunteer activity, has its own particular award: a statue, a trophy, a pin, a plaque, a certificate, a ribbon, an order, a hall of fame, a day or a week of the year, an appointment to the Senate...

However, the chances of low-income groups or individuals who devote their limited time and resources to the cause of social justice being so honoured are slim indeed. The only thanks they get are from the people they help — and thanks are all those people have to give.

In order to recognize and show appreciation for the work of those who help the poor, the Social Justice Foundation was incorporated on December 31, 1986, as a registered charity under the *Income Tax Act* (Canada). The purpose of the Foundation is to make awards "to individuals and groups who have made significant and innovative contributions" to the low-income community by:

- educating the low-income community and the general public on poverty issues;
- advocating on behalf of low-income individuals or the low-income community as a whole;
- organizing low-income people for the above purposes;
- providing services which significantly benefit low-income people.

The Foundation will also recognize the contribution of individuals and groups who work with the low-income community and on its behalf.

The awards are not competitive in nature, and more than one may be awarded in any category. The awards will consist only of pins and certificates: we'd love to give money, too, but we don't have any to give — not yet, anyway.

B.C. has now appointed its provincial committee and hopes to make its first awards this fall. The committee consists of Gus Long and Linda Marcotte, both founding directors, Val Anderson of Marpole United Church (appointed by B.C. Plura) and Belinda Halpin, the Federation of Anti-Poverty Groups' Vancouver representative.

We need support. Contributions are tax-deductible and should be made out to Social Justice Foundation, 8084 - 11th Avenue, Burnaby, B.C. V3N 2N7

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# Violence against women

On September 17th, a workshop entitled, "Violence Against Women" was organized by the Calgary Status of Women Action Committee as part of a three event series commemorating Calgary's Annual Women Reclaim the Night March.

The guest speaker was Ms. Eunadie Johnson, Executive Director of the Thompson, Manitoba Crisis Centre.

I've been asked to come here now to speak about violence against women with a race analysis.

There are four distinct elements that are visible in looking at the politics of violence against women: imperialism, capitalism, racism and sexism.

These things support and maintain each other. They have also been divisive in the women's movement where some have thought that capitalism was the only cause for the oppression of women and people of the Third World/people of colour. There are others who thought that racism was responsible for all these things. Obviously imperialism is responsible for wars and sexism for the second class status of all women. It is also important to understand that capitalism has to have racism to maintain it, and vice versa.

Racism is saturated in all crevices of the institutions in society. It helps to maintain the unemployment level, the number of people in prisons or who is in prison in larger numbers. In the United States it's Black people and in Canada it's the Native people. An inquiry into the justice system in Manitoba showed that although aboriginal people make up about 3 or 4 percent of the population, they make up 50 percent of the prison population.

Within my own work, if a white man who is working has beaten his wife and goes to court, he gets an unconditional or a total discharge. The Native man will usually go to jail. Sometimes the degree of abuse has nothing to do with it.

To deal with racism requires consciousness because it is something that is ingrained in most of us. Sexism is similar...At the same time that we realize society is indoctrinating us to be racist or sexist, we must not let ourselves be its tools and allow it to pervert us.

For instance, I have to be conscious that while I may live in a negative environment, I must be who I am. I am a Black woman. That is the first thing people notice about me. So you cannot say to me, I don't really notice your colour. You see me, you recognize me as who I am. I don't necessarily want to be seen as negative but the environment around me is negative because I am a Black woman.

In expressing our outrage about violence against women and in organizing around its



many forms, we have a responsibility not to ignore other kinds of oppression such as racism. Because they mutually reinforce one another, sexism and racism are linked and must be combatted together. Racism is particularly relevant to organizations fighting violence against women. We must make an effort to include the perspectives of women of colour in our analysis and our work, and address the concerns of different groups of people regarding violence.

## Talking About Men

Men abuse women because of the way they look at women in this society. Let's look at men as part of the women's movement. Is it feasible? Yes, it is. I think for a long time as feminists we have said that men do not belong in the women's movement. We have to move away from that thinking. Unless we have men included in the movement, then they do



not become educated to our needs.

The saying is that "every man in a potential abuser." The saying is true: he is a potential abuser in terms of his upbringing, his tradition, how he was educated. We have to, at some point stop that

potential abuser from becoming an abuser by educating him and by involving him. But NEVER taking direction from him...we must be the leaders in the movement.

I think that's where men have had a hard time dealing with the women's movement. They were suddenly not seen as the ones providing the direction. In our education we have to let men know that it's not because we want to exclude them, it's because we want them to learn and be educated about inequality, about the violence against women. Men should develop and work in community programs that sensitize them to the problems in their communities, to the acts of violence against women. These programs should help men to understand that we see these acts as crimes. Men should support the women in their lives.

Let's look at how our shelters are structured. Most of the organizations that deal with abuse against women are structured with women working for little or no pay. Where women work for any decent wage, there is control. Who has that control? The government. Who controls the government? Men.

We have all kinds of new information about women who are being abused. Statistics are showing that abuse occurs in lesbian relationships. The statistics are reversing themselves to blame the woman: the man who is abusing his wife says his mother abused him. Men deny abusing their children because they say the mother is vindictive in not wanting him to visit the child.

We have all kinds of men's organizations springing up all over the country for protecting what they call their rights in cases where children are reporting sexual abuse. So we not only have the situation where women are doing all the work, but it seems to me that when men become involved, they become involved in a negative way. Again the blame goes to the women.

## A Message to Women

There are two very large organizations that I'll talk about. One is NAC (National Action Committee on the Status of Women). I went to Ottawa last May to their Annual

by Eunadie Johnson

meeting. A motion was put on the floor about including visible minority women in the executive. I was shocked to hear a woman go up to the microphone and say "If all these special interest groups want inclusion are we going to have lesbians next?" I thought to myself, 1988, the women's movement in this country, me standing here. Did you think things have changed very much? No, they haven't.

Another national organization is forming to provide transition houses across Canada. Again I proposed a clause for women to recognize the double oppression of visible minority women. Two women voted against it. Two women from Alberta, one from Calgary, the other the president of the Council of Shelters in Alberta. Again I sat there thinking, I should know this...

Esmeralda Thornhill and Glenda Simms are power-houses in terms of their analysis of the whole situation of women of colour. They have an analysis about the exclusion of women of colour in the mainstream movement, the ignoring of differences and the fact that the mainstream movement does not allow women of colour to have a voice. The mainstream movement sees it as a threat when women of colour want to organize.

When we organize as women of colour, alone, we are not excluding you. Because of our history we need to strengthen ourselves. Then we will join you. We cannot be equal even in this movement if we do not come from equal places.

cont'd on page 31

## Mary C. Clancy Liberal Status of Women Critic



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# Groups for battering men: are they helping or hurting women?

by Beth Ryan

*In the area of violence against women, there has been a long history in the women's movement of working with the victims of violence, the women and children. There is now a growing number of women and men who feel that we must not only help the survivors of violence but tackle directly men's violence by dealing with abusive men. Below is an interview with the founder of New Directions, an Ottawa based counselling group for battering men.*

Mark Holmes is not as optimistic as he used to be about the counselling group he runs for battering men, called New Directions. He says when he and another man first established the group four and a half years ago, they were setting out to change the violent behaviour of men towards women. And while in many ways they were able to accomplish this goal, Holmes gradually realized that they were only getting at one aspect of "men's repertoire of abuse against women."

As he and his colleague, Rick Goodwin, began to consider the wide range of behaviours abusive men use to control women, they became less confident that their program would work.

"I don't think there is any research to date that says programs like ours produce significant long-term change in men's controlling behaviour in a significant number of cases," Holmes admits.

He then poses the obvious question stemming from that statement: "Should we have programs like this in the first place?"

Should valuable resources be used for a men's group when there are obviously not enough programs available for abused women, such as shelters and support groups?

Groups for battering men are gaining credibility, with about 117 already established across the country. The Ottawa group is the first one for the region, and its \$100,000 annual funding is provided jointly by the provincial Ministries of Community and Social Services and of Correctional Services. Funding for similar groups across the country generally comes from provincial governments and organizations such as Catholic Family Services, which sponsors New Directions.

As for assistance to women, there are about 250 battered women's shelters in Canada, mainly in rural areas, with very few services found in rural communities. Women's groups generally receive funding from similar sources as the men's groups. Fundraising is also carried out in the community.

Holmes says he has spent a great deal of time contemplating the purpose of his group; as a result the New Directions program has shifted focus to make it more accountable to abused women. What this means, Holmes says, is that if the program can make a difference in the battered woman's life, then it is being effective, even if the abuser isn't dramatically changing his behaviour.

A key component of the New Directions program is sending out information packages to the partners of the battering men. Holmes and the other counsellors will also often refer women to other feminist groups or shelters. Holmes is proud of a new women's support group which his program has just co-founded with Interval House, an Ottawa shelter for battered women.

The group of 10 women meet regularly to discuss the men's group and their partners' progress. Holmes says the group has allowed women to make some decisions about their own relationships and their own lives, which he thinks they might not have been able to make without that group. Sometimes the decision will be to leave the abusive partner, although Holmes and his co-workers are careful that they not push a woman in either direction: ultimately it is she who must make the decision, based on the information made available to her.

The women's group is jointly coordinated by Lorna McRae and Carolyn Sinclair, both of whom have long been associated with Interval House. McRae says she's "generally" happy with the progress of the women's group, although she does have some mixed feelings about groups for battering men. She is particularly concerned that women don't feel isolated and left out because their partners are getting help. Sometimes women can end up feeling more abused by society when they see their abusers getting help and support, while they are left

to deal with their anguish on their own.

"From our perspective, it's so important that these women aren't feeling that pressure to help him through the program, and to be really supportive, without looking out for themselves," says McRae.

She says so much pressure can be put on a woman to stay if her partner seems to be genuinely trying to change his ways. Sometimes the women feel even more caught, and may experience more guilt if she thinks about leaving even after her partner has sought help.

Despite the problems, however, McRae feels "pretty good" about the women's group; and she thinks New Directions is a particularly "hopeful group - it's just going to take a lot of work."

She stresses that the group for women is strictly voluntary; and if a man tries to pressure his partner into participating, he is judged guilty of abuse.

Holmes feels that the social services and feminist communities have given New Directions strong support since its inception. He says he realizes that groups like his are "potentially dangerous" for women, depending on their direction.

"We know that a lot of these guys are great con artists, and they'll promise anything to get her (their partners) back," says Holmes.

Holmes recognizes the concern of feminists that a group like his may appear to be absolving men from the responsibility of their violence. He thinks the battered women's movement should be vigilant about what goes on in men's groups; and, he says his group appreciates being confronted by women although it is sometimes difficult to accept criticism.

He notes that some men's groups see battering men as being victims, just as much as the women. The groups who subscribe to that philosophy want to work on building up a

relationship of trust with the men by being very supportive, and not being too confrontational.

"We reject that approach," says Holmes. "I mean, you can be respectful of another person, but it's really important to confront the men with the idea that they've made a choice; this is not something anyone's forced them to do. We say to them: 'You're violent because you've chosen to be violent, because it works, and lets you gain control in the short term.'"



It is easy for the abuse to persist because society generally doesn't hold men accountable for their violence. The criminal justice system doesn't hold men accountable; friends, relatives, colleagues, neighbours, don't hold men accountable. And, as one of the men in New Directions, has accurately pointed out, "It's a lot easier to be abusive, because what you're asking us to do is really hard."

What New Directions is asking the men to do is to use negotiation, compromise, and discussion to solve a problem, instead of resorting to violence. It's so easy to be abusive in individual relationships, because abuse is supported by our culture and our society.

It is significant that men come to New Directions because they've been charged with wife assault, or their partner has threatened to leave unless the abuser seeks help. While some men may appear to be coming voluntarily, Holmes

puts it this way: "Some people are court mandated, while others are wife mandated, girlfriend mandated, or parent mandated; most men are there because someone has coerced them in some way."

After almost five years of working with battering men, Holmes has arrived at an analysis that control must be seen on a continuum. He says there are similarities between a man constantly harassing his wife for sex and another man who brutally rapes a stranger on the street. While many would be shocked by such a comparison, Holmes says he thinks it's important to see "all these coercive, controlling, violent behaviours along a continuum."

Holmes believes men in general can look for concrete ways to fight sexism. He suggests that men be more public about getting involved in what have traditionally been women's activities. He cautions that men have to watch that they don't act as if they can do it better, but rather they should open up dialogue and listen to what women are saying.

"I think a lot of men react very defensively to feminism and to being challenged; so I think part of it is to stop being defensive, to not be afraid to listen to what women have to say. Make a real commitment to asking women what they want, and be committed to following through with it."

There are many organizations in each province offering information and services to abused women (and to abusive men).

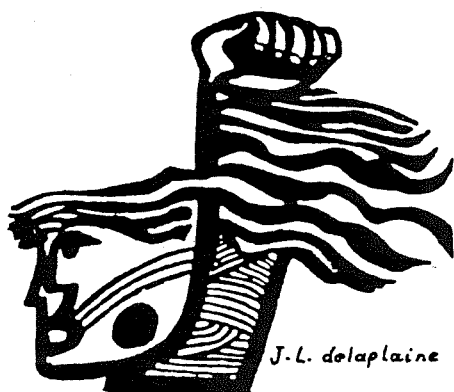
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Eunadie Johnson cont'd  
from page 29

When we come out with you we're coming from a different strength. When we talk, we're talking about a whole group of people as opposed to women within that group. There are few of us who feel very confident, like myself, and can be part of this group without feeling intimidated. I find it hard to get women to come out to groups and conferences because they feel intimidated when they are the only women of colour in attendance. You have to understand that it's not necessarily because we can't speak up, it's because the environment does not allow us to speak up. Sometimes when we speak, you take over and interpret for us as if we can't be understood when we speak for ourselves and express our feelings. I think that is what you have to be conscious of in this movement when we talk about violence against women.

Toronto is the only city which has an immigrant women's shelter. The Manitoba government has just given the Immigrant Women's Organization some money to do some counselling for women in abusive situations. But most of the shelters do not hire women that are culturally sensitive to the needs of women in the shelter. We need culturally sensitive counsellors on the rape crisis lines, at the shelters.

The whole issue of violence against women is a political issue. The whole issue of funding of rape crisis centres and shelters is a political issue. It's a political issue in terms of votes. It's a political issue in terms of who they believe gets beaten.

Now the government has announced \$40 million over

four years - pittance! That \$40 million is for 500 extra beds and that's across the country.

Of the \$40 million, \$22 million goes towards CMHC for housing. If any of you have ever seen the application form, if any women are in an area where they do not have shelters or just started a group and are not incorporated, you know it is absolutely impossible for them to complete the application and get any money. They announce the amount and then place barriers in our way.

Three million was put aside for violence in native communities. The political atmosphere in most of the native communities will not allow any of these women to access that money. The only people who can access that money are the band councils who do not necessarily include or involve women in their proposals or work. Violence against women is not part of the councils' agendas. I see that money going to meetings, to research and development.

It is not necessary to research whether native women are being abused. By the time 1992 comes, when that money is supposed to finish, there won't be one shelter or satellite shelter in a Native community. The bureaucracy will have eaten up that \$3 million. Other departments such as Health and Welfare will also get some of that money to do more research. Over the next four years, every psychiatrist in his right mind will apply for money and will become an expert on the issue of violence against women.

The only shelters that might benefit are those already in existence. They may get an addition for a few more beds by

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proving their statistics show an increase of women being turned away from their shelter. If we are not vigilant with that money, it will go down the drain. That is part of the progress we have been making in terms of violence against women.

Any group that is political or seen as a lobbying group for women, any group that had the "F for feminist" marked next to it did not get and will not be getting any of that money. That is part of classism - they give some of us money and move us up and away so we don't deal with those other women who are radicals. Yet we know damn well that without those radicals women would not have shelters, crisis centres, or any of the services we have for

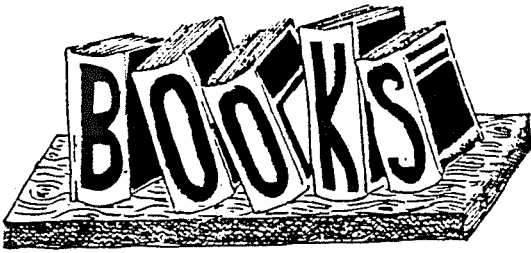
women who've been beaten and raped.

We have the emergence of right-wing groups across Canada. CBC in Ontario just spent their time and taxpayers' money doing a documentary on a group of white skinheads in Windsor and how they want Canada to remain white. Judge Klein in B.C. two years ago said Canada should remain white. The emergence of right-wing groups is a part of the racist system. They don't want any money to be given to women on a whole, let alone to do anything about violence against women.

The only way we can get people to change is through the education we provide. I don't think it matters what people's particular ideologies are.

Women should understand that we all have the same fear of being abused. Some women are very smug...it's always someone else to them. Women have to begin to look at violence against women as against all women--we cannot look at those Native women or those Black women or those white women. We need to open communication just a little bit and let us be part of it as we are. You don't have to learn our culture to do that. We can tell you, we can speak for ourselves about where we're coming from and how we can work with you.

Because I won't become white, I have no desire to become white, I'm not white, and neither are you black...



# Taking Care :

## A woman's Health Handbook

The second edition of **Taking Care, A Handbook About Women's Health**, is on the shelves and is chock full of useful health advice for women of all ages. Best of all, **Taking Care** is written in an accessible and entertaining style, with delightful cartoons interspersed throughout.

**Taking Care**, written by Mary J. Breen, is sponsored by the Peterborough YWCA and is being distributed free to women. However, Breen wants to make it clear that the book is designed for low-income women. Since there are only a few copies left, she is asking higher-income women to leave the remaining books for those women who can't afford to pay for other health advice books which are available.

Lynn Zimmer, Executive Director of the Peterborough YWCA, explains in the preface that **Taking Care** is a useful book for many reasons:

- It is relevant and readable and accurate. A wide range of women were consulted in the writing process. They helped decide the content and they tested the book for readability.

- It contains vital information which women need in order to understand common medical practices and procedures.

- It stresses our rights and responsibilities as patients.

- It stresses what we can do ourselves to improve and control our health, such as eat right, be active and cope with stress.

A quick skim of the table of contents reveals an amazing variety of topics related to women's health. There are chapters entitled: Eating Well; Dealing With Your Nerves; Depression; Being Active; Controlling Your Weight; You and Your Doctor; Sex; Menopause; and others. Breen has packed a great deal of information into a 403-page paperback.

Here are some excerpts from **Taking Care**:

### Controlling your Weight

The big question is "How much fat is too much fat? If we compare ourselves to the women on TV, we may think that any extra fat is awful. This is a mistake. Extra fat is only a problem when it hurts your

health. There is a lot of pressure on us to be thin, and we need to be aware of it. We need to think carefully about how important it really is to be thin. We need to think carefully about who benefits most from our trying to be thin. If you are worried about your weight, think about why you want to lose weight. You need to be sure that you have a good reason to lose weight.

Good reasons to lose weight:

1. to improve your health
2. to feel better



Bad reasons to lose weight:

1. So you will be happy
2. So someone will love you

### Pap Tests

Pap tests are an easy way to find out if you have cancer in your cervix. The cervix is the opening to your uterus (or womb). Cancer of the cervix, or "cervical cancer" is fairly common. It usually grows very slowly. If it is found early and removed, cervical cancer can nearly always be cured.

When cervical cancer is just starting to grow, you will not know it is there. Cervical cancer doesn't cause any pain or discharge for many years. This is why some women don't know they have it until it is too late. This is why some women die of it every year. Pap tests could have prevented most of these deaths. Pap tests would have found the cancer before it had time to spread.

A Pap test is usually done during an internal (or vaginal) examination. Many women feel embarrassed having an internal examination so they avoid them. If you feel embarrassed, remind yourself that Pap tests are a necessary part of keeping healthy. You owe it to yourself to have a regular Pap test.

### "Dealing With Your Nerves":

If you want an end to your "bad nerves", remember these ideas:

1. Watch for the warning signs of too much stress.

You might be on edge or you might cry more easily. You might be smoking, or drinking, or eating more. You might have more headaches, or tense, sore muscles. You might have stomach problems or sleeping problems. You might notice that you are sick more than

usual, or that you are tired all the time.

2. Figure out what is bothering you.

Is it a big thing, or a lot of small things, or both?

3. Make some changes.

Figure out what has to change, and then change what you can.

4. Take good care of yourself.

Take good care of your health, and be sure to get support from your friends.

5. Keep your sense of humour.

### "Sex":

Remember, love and sex do not always go together.

- Someone may want to have sex with you, but they may not love you or even care about you at all.

- You may love someone and not want to have sex with them.

- You may want a sexual relationship with someone you don't love.

- You may love someone a lot, and you may want to make love with them.

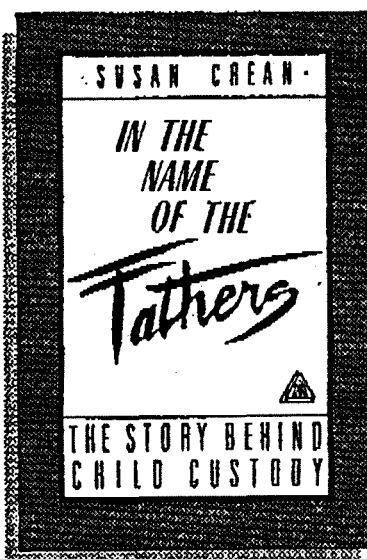
Make sure you know what you are doing, and make your choices carefully.

Remember: you can decide what you do about sex. It is your choice. You have the right to choose, and the right to be respected for your choice.

This is the kind of straightforward advice **Taking Care** gives to women who want to get past medical jargon and get information that truly applies to their lives as they are.

For copies of **Taking Care**, contact:

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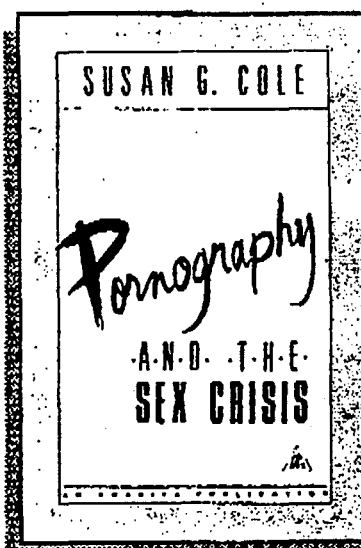
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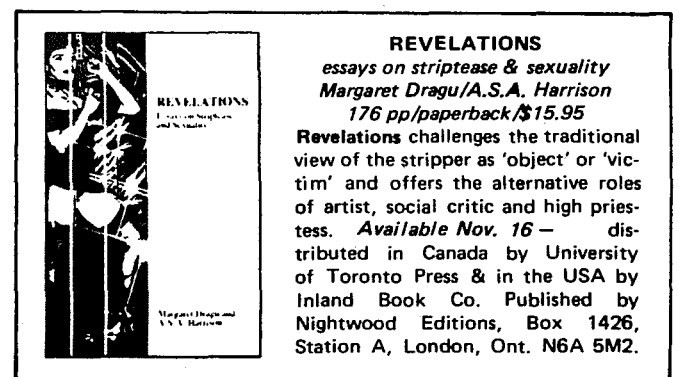
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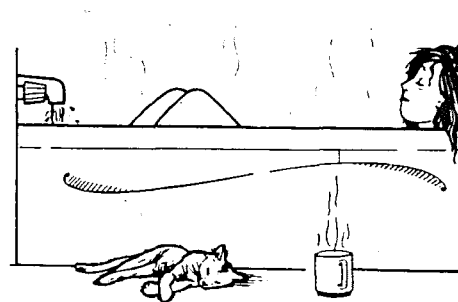
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# How the well are you?

by Cathy Beaumont



Well-come back!

If you cast a curious eye at this column in the last issue, you'll know that it's all about wellness, not just health or fitness. For the uncurious, (and you know who you are), wellness is a state of being that's several steps beyond the disease-free state we commonly call "good health." Wellness is about the body, to be sure, but it's also about the mind and the spirit, two important parts of any human that traditional health care seem to overlook.

Put in its simplest terms, wellness is about feeling really good about yourself, in French, "être bien dans sa peau."

Trouble is, this exalted state is as elusive as brilliant sunshine in a long, cold winter. Although we may have heard of people so well, so energetic, so damn cheerful that they are self-evidently not of this planet, (we may actually even know one or two of this kind, which is even more hazardous), wellness remains a long shot for us personally. We figure that in order to get as well as we'd like to be, we'll have to revamp the diet, remodel the body, check into an ashram for a month, and forbear our cherished little vices for the rest of our lives. Depressing thought, no?

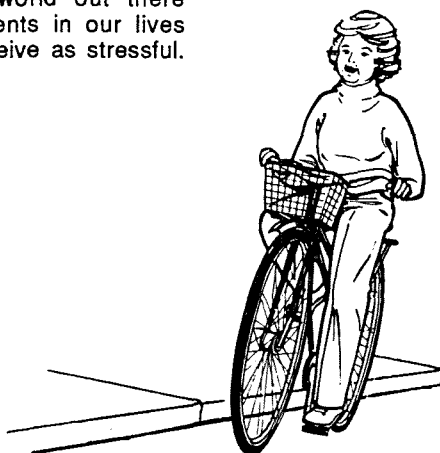
Well, it ain't like that. People I know who practise wellness lifestyles tell me that it took them a long time to get to where they are now. Years, for some of them. And there isn't an overnight convert among the lot. Y'see, wellness is a **journey**, not a **destination**. Every little bit helps. And if you do it right, the process of wellness also becomes a process of growth and self-discovery.

And now, after that somewhat long-winded introduction, on to the topic at hand, which I will phrase in Andy Rooney fashion: did you ever notice that everybody talks about stress, but nobody's doing anything about it?

OK, we all have stressful lives. Without at least some stress, we'd be dead (literally: the internal stresses in our bodies keep us going). Jobs, friends, families, the environment, and the whole messed-up world out there generate events in our lives that we perceive as stressful.

Because of a broken clasp, I may lose a brooch that has sentimental value to me. I may be distraught, but my spouse, who never liked the brooch or the great-aunt who gave it to me, may be secretly pleased. The event is a negative stress to me, but neutral or perhaps a positive stress to my spouse.

Second, when we feel "stressed," ancient instincts for "fight or flight" in our brains



put our bodies on red alert. We breathe more rapidly and, our heart rate speeds up, our hands and feet get cold and clammy, and we may even feel stronger, more focussed, tuned in, or up. It's all an adrenalin high - the fastest, most natural rush in the world - and the hardest to sustain. Of course, since our culture no longer condones fighting or fleeing, there we are: all stressed up with nowhere to go. Too much of this, for too long, and we end up with muscular twitches, ulcers, high blood pressure, or we burn out.

Not all of this intensity is problematic: consider Steffi Graf or Vicki Keith. Could you see Vicki, halfway across one of the Great Lakes, thinking to herself, "Boy, this is really stressful. Maybe I'd better back off and try something easier." Of course not. Vicki and Steffi use the effects of stress to focus and intensify their efforts. But one thing makes their stress different from ours: they know when it will end. For Steffi, three sets, give or take a tiebreaker or two. Two, three hours, tops. For Vicki, a few weeks during the summer. For the rest of us...who knows?

The stress in our lives can be compared to background music. When it's turned down low, we scarcely notice it, and it doesn't interfere with our daily lives. Let enough stress pile up, though, and the volume of the music rises inexorably. Without warning, something happens. We become incensed because we run out of toilet paper at an inappropriate moment. We scream at the fellow

inhabitants of a traffic jam. Co-workers dive into their offices at our approach. We are not, you might say, balanced people. Fortunately for all concerned, we usually become aware of the music and take steps to turn it down.

In creating a more balanced approach to stress, we need to be able to do several things:

- Develop a greater awareness of the events and situations in which we're most likely to feel stress. Make a list. (A list containing one item, "My life," is not acceptable.) Some of these situations and events may be avoidable, but most of them probably aren't.

- Think about what you worry about. Write these things down. Scratch out the worries you hang onto from the past. Scratch out the worries that you're projecting into the future. Scratch out the worries you can't do anything about. That ought to cut your troubles in half right there.

- Learn a few tricks to use when you start feeling stress symptoms. Some people take a deep breath and count to ten. Others deliberately lower the pitch of their voice (we tend to get high pitched and squeaky under stress). Others mentally recite cue words or phrases, like "I am calm."

- Make a definite ending to your stressful activity. "When this project is over, I'm taking a day off just for myself, or "No phone calls between two and three p.m." are easy ways to help manage stress. A friend of mine sits down with her partner every January and they plan the year's vacations together. She's not as crazy as she sounds: setting the time aside so far in advance ensures that she doesn't get wrapped up in the oh-so-seductive "I can't leave now, this place will fall apart without me" syndrome.

- Examine the things, events, and people that tend to trigger stress symptoms in you. According to stress experts Herbert Freudenberger and Gail North, women often experience stress differently from men because of socialization that encourages us to smooth things over, say nice things to each other, and please other people before we please ourselves.

One final suggestion (if you've made it this far, maybe this is what you're looking for): try taking a problem-solving approach to the things that make you crazy. After all, since you can't eliminate stress, or wrestle it to the ground and make it promise it won't bother you any more, you might as well treat it the same way you'd treat other problems that come up from time to time. If you'd like to try this, here are a few questions to ask yourself:

**What is this problem, really?** (Try stating this in a sentence that begins "How to...")

**What makes this your problem?** (This is not to say that it isn't, but owning the problem is a big step towards solving it.)

**What have you tried so far?** (Many people are surprised at the number of ways they've tried to solve a problem without really being deliberate about it.)


**What could you try but haven't?** (Be as fanciful and off the wall as possible here - a cat-phobic friend suggested killing her roommate's cat, an implausible but cathartic solution!)

**What are your criteria for a workable solution?** (Since my friend wanted to keep a good relationship with her roommate, the caticide was definitely out.)

Once you have the answers to these questions, you can generate lots of possible solutions, which you can then whittle down to a reasonable few by applying your criteria to them. Then give one or two of your solutions a try, and see if it makes a difference. Most people find that even if they never get around to implementing a solution, the process of getting the problem down on paper and working with it reduces their stress symptoms dramatically.

Until next time. Stay well.

*Cathy Beaumont is dedicated to fitness, well-being and chocolate. She pursues a wellness lifestyle in downtown Toronto if that, in fact, can be done.*



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# No Way Not Me!

a review by Megan Ryan-Walsh

Before I saw **No Way! Not Me**, I thought of poor people as the "bums" you see on the streets, and "welfare people" who didn't have any homes or clothes and looked dirty. My perception changed after seeing this film of a lecture given by ex-British Columbia cabinet minister, social activist, and educator Rosemary Brown. **No Way! Not Me!** gave me a new and powerful insight into the truth about poverty and women.

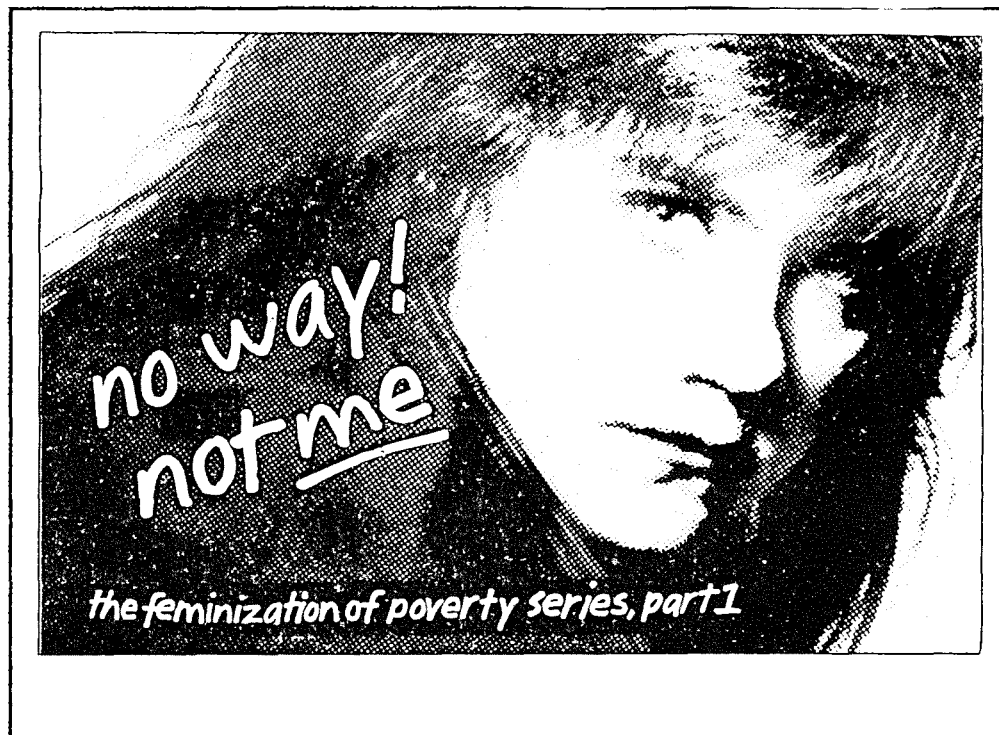
Before I saw this video, I knew that there were many poor people in Canada, but the astounding fact is that 60 per cent of those living below the poverty line are women. Still, we as young girls don't even realize for the most part how poverty can hit us. My friends in high school weren't interested in hearing about this video because they really don't think it affects them. They don't feel poverty will happen to them. Many of them feel they will just get married and everything will work out.

It was interesting to learn of the statistics, both past and present, which Rosemary Brown presented in the film. She shows how women have

always been overworked and underpaid. Women were hired at the turn of the century, in the twenties, because they were docile, dependable, and dispensable. After the war though, women were put back in their "traditional" roles of mother and wife.

Poverty: not having the means to afford the basic needs for survival: food, clothing, shelter, and transportation. Poverty can affect anyone, but its number one victims are women. The majority of women who live below the poverty line are old women, widows, teenaged single mothers, divorced women, and women married to poor men. The people who will be the poorest the longest, though, are single mothers, especially those in their teens.

I became enraged while watching the film as I listened to Brown describe how men are raised to be the breadwinners in the family. I believe we women have to learn not to expect someone else to rescue us in order to support us financially. We have to take the initiative and use the resources at our disposal and



become self-reliant. We have to learn to survive economically on our own. Education is especially important to women, as this lecture has shown quite clearly.

Out of 500,000 single parents, 85 per cent of those are single mother families, and 60 per cent of those families live below the poverty line. Are we going to continue to let our society practically force these women to live under these circumstances? No! I don't think we should!

We are the generation that has the education at our disposal and the resources to change society's attitude regarding women in the work force. We do this by showing that we are capable of supporting ourselves. Too many

people accept this as a way of life. These women and their families are people. They have certain wants and needs that have to be fulfilled. These women have ideas and dreams that deserve to be realized.

As Rosemary Brown told the students in the film:

"You see the beauty and fragility of our planet. And you care enough to strive and protect it...I have confidence that you will take control of your lives as you carefully, lovingly, yet firmly, turn this world around until it reflects your highest aspirations and dreams."

Poverty may be a touchy subject, but it is one that has not been touched on enough. In fact, poverty as an issue is rarely discussed in my school.

It really disturbed me to watch the video and see the kinds of lives many Canadian women are leading. The people who think there is nothing they can do about poverty in Canada are wrong. They need to open their minds and hearts to the situation now.

I don't know what the future holds for my generation of women, but I hope we prepare ourselves for economic independence. Let's not wait around for some male to rescue us!

Megan Ryan-Walsh is a 14-year-old high school student living in Calgary who is concerned about the attitude of her peers towards poverty and the environment.

## feminist perspectives

### New Releases

No. 10, The Work of Child-rearing by Michelle Duval, explores this burden of mothers as the basis on which patriarchy's oppression of women has been built. The characteristics and institutionalization of «motherwork» and its effect on mothers is described, and a revolutionary strategy to transform it and ultimately society, is proposed.

No. 11, Getting Older and Better: Women and Gender Assumptions in Canada's Aging Society, by Susan McDaniel. In this article some assumptions about gender and gender differences which guide much thinking, including supposedly scientific thinking, are explored and questioned. Some of the challenges as well as opportunities for women in an aging Canada are highlighted.

No. 12, Smooth Sailing or Storm Warning? Canadian and Québec Women's Groups on the Meech Lake Accord, by Barbara Roberts. An attempt to clarify and heal some of the wounds suffered by the women's movement over the Accord, this article provides an overview and analysis of various groups' positions. Particular care is taken to explain the positions of women's groups in Québec to their sisters elsewhere in Canada. Includes a Constitutional chronology, text of the Accord and other background documents.

No. 13, Some Advice for Overcoming Barriers to Women's Achievement in Non-Traditional Occupations by Barbara Carroll and Frances Cherry. Provides women contemplating non-traditional careers with information about the types of barriers they may encounter and advice to overcome them. Based on interviews which tapped the experiences of women already involved in non-traditional careers.

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# Creating a voice for Black women

In a speech she delivered in Toronto a couple of years ago, Bell Hooks stated that black women should voice their own experiences, not let others speak for them. Five Toronto women took this advice to heart and pooled their talents to create Ebony Voices.

Ebony Voices is a theatre collective which has worked in the Toronto area since 1987. It first performed as part of Nightwood Theatre's Groundswell Festival, an annual event which supports women writers and artists in the creation of new works. This first show was based on Ralph MacDonald's song "The Path", which exposes the black immigration from Africa to the Islands to America as people were transplanted from one area to another.

Since that first performance, Ebony Voices has performed regularly in such diverse venues as conferences, schools, universities, dances and theatres. Most recently, they were heard at The Biko Foundation Benefit Dance and Cultural Show and at the Toronto Board of Education Auditorium in celebration of Black History Month.

The collective has five members, Jo-Anne Atherley, Alana McKnight, Carolyn Harris, Margaret Joseph, and Vivine Scarlett, all black women currently based in Toronto. The five have varied backgrounds, two born in Canada, two in Trinidad and one in England. They first met while working with the AfroCanada Dance Group.

All of Ebony Voices' material is developed by this collective. The company uses dance, poetry, monologue,

by Lynn McGuigan

represent all black women. Instead, the company creates a public voice for its individual members. Each performer shares her own experiences, knowledge and feelings in the hopes that these voices will reverberate with those of the audience, bringing better understanding and awareness to all.

Ebony Voices currently has two shows in repertoire:

**EBONY VOICES is a series of vignettes exploring different aspects of black women's lives in different parts of the world. This piece is updated and adjusted for each audience it plays before.**

**WE WITNESS is an exploration of the impact South Africa's apartheid policy has on the lives of ordinary people, and of the role North America's imperialism plays in apartheid.**

The company operates on a part-time basis. Its members all have other roles in life: mother, student, employee, teacher.... Ebony Voices provides an outlet for the creativity and feelings of its individual members, offering them an opportunity to explore new knowledge and find new insights. These discoveries are then shared with others through performances, performances which are "raw" and full of "gut feeling" so they can speak directly to an audience without the alienation or distancing often experienced with more formal theatre companies.

Recently, one of the members of the company, Jo-Anne Atherley, found a poem



which she felt encapsulated the mandate of Ebony Voices. The poem, "Notes on Commercial Theatre", is by Langston Hughes:

*Someday, somebody'll  
Stand up and talk about me,  
And write about me --  
Black and beautiful --  
And sing about me,  
And put on plays about me!  
I reckon it'll be me myself.*

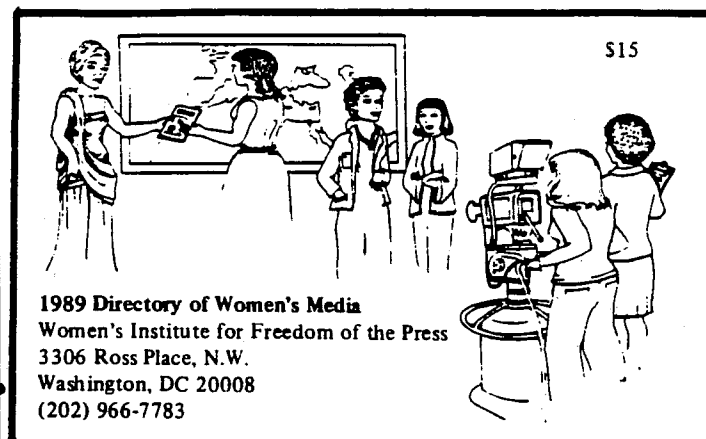
*Yes, it'll be me.*

This is why Ebony Voices was created.

Lynn McGuigan operates her own business, McGuigan Art Ventures in Toronto. She has produced theatre, dance and music events, and has written for numerous performing arts periodicals.



## Directory of Women's Media



**1989 Directory of Women's Media**  
Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press  
3306 Ross Place, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20008  
(202) 966-7783

**The Womanist** is featured in the new **Directory of Women's Media** under the section "Women Working Toward a Radical Restructuring of the Communications System."

In addition to this section, the Directory has grown to include 1,873 entries, with 702 periodicals worldwide.

Following the periodical section, the **Directory** describes 111 women's presses and publishers, 11 women's news services, 7 radio-TV groups, 39 regular radio/TV programs, 31 women's video and cable groups, 19 women's film groups, 55 women's music groups, 60 art/graphics/theater groups, 11 women writers groups, 18 women speakers' groups, 47

media organizations, 93 bookstores and mail order, 86 special library collections on women, 32 selected directories and catalogues. And more!!

The Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press has been publishing the **Directory of Women's Media** since 1975.

Founded in 1972, WIFP is a non-profit research and publishing organization of women who are concerned with the expansion and restructuring of the communications system in order for media to be in the hands of all people, not just wealthy and predominately male media owners.

To order a copy, send \$15 (low income women, \$11) to WIFP, 3306 Ross Place, N.W., Washington, DC 20008, USA. (202) 966-7783.

## Manitoba women in prison cont'd from page 15

The residence we promote would be a home-like place with a culturally appropriate atmosphere and programs. There would be provision for some women to have their children with them so that the family could be reunited in a stable and supportive situation, thus giving the children as well as the mothers a better chance in life.

Aboriginal staff would provide counselling and assistance in accessing education and training, as well as acting as role models. It is hoped that economic strategies can be developed to enable residents to become self-sufficient.

It is hoped, as well, that not only women who have spent time in prison but women who are in conflict with the law and who would be otherwise incarcerated could use the residence as an alternative to prison. Apart from the obvious advantages to the women and

society in avoiding incarceration, it should be noted that the costs of keeping women in an institutional setting are considerably greater than the costs of a halfway house.

In conclusion our message to the community is this: we believe that to a large extent Aboriginal women who are "offenders" are actually victims trapped in a vicious system perpetuated by poverty and other factors beyond their control. Opportunities must be provided to our sisters who are imprisoned in a lifestyle of poverty and despair, so they may find the strength and courage within themselves to escape the trap and take charge of their own lives.

If you have any questions please contact Ikwewak Justice Society, 226-388 Donald Street, Winnipeg Manitoba, R3B 2J4, (204) 956-2711.

Sandi Funk is a member of the Ikwewak Justice Society.



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## Rumour Has it...

**Rosemary Brown**, well-known B.C. activist and past NDP provincial Cabinet minister, has just been appointed the new Executive Director of MATCH International. MATCH is a Canadian women's organization dedicated to establishing links between Canadian and Third World women and to building a global feminism.

**Sasha McInnes**, weaver and feminist living in Thunder Bay has been appointed to the Board of the Ontario Arts Council, where she will no doubt work hard to ensure women artists get their fair share of support from the council.

**A new member group for NAC:** the women who work for NAC have formed a staff association and applied for membership in the umbrella organization.

**A Directory of Canadian Feminist Periodicals** is available.

To receive a directory send \$1.00 to:

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### Calling all Asian Women for Submissions

**Fireweed** guest collective is planning an issue on Asian women. We want to hear from Asian women from all across Canada. The issue will reflect the diversity of Asian experience; race, age, disability, class, culture, sexuality and defy all stereotypes of the Asian women. Don't be left out. Please send us your: poetry, short stories, essays, visual arts, reviews, interviews, oral histories, biographies, photographs and theory.

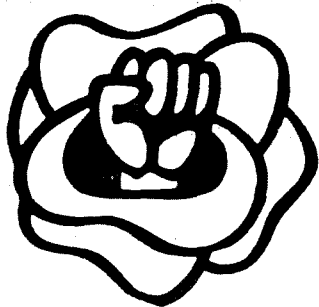
Submissions must be in by April 10, 1989 and send to Fireweed, P.O. Box 279, Station B, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 2W2.

## Classified

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**The Womanist** is free. But, like all other publications, we must rely on ads and subscriptions to cover our costs. We are free because we believe that all women, whatever their economic situation, should be able to get news about women.

We have noticed that most women's periodicals do not get distributed much farther than the women's community. By being free we find that we can distribute **The Womanist** to places where women are, such as laundromats, corner stores, and community centres.

We need your help to make **The Womanist** accessible! Please subscribe or advertise. OR. Write us and tell us where you think **The Womanist** should be distributed in your community. Help us insure that all women who want the news about women can get **The Womanist**!

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