

The Womaniist

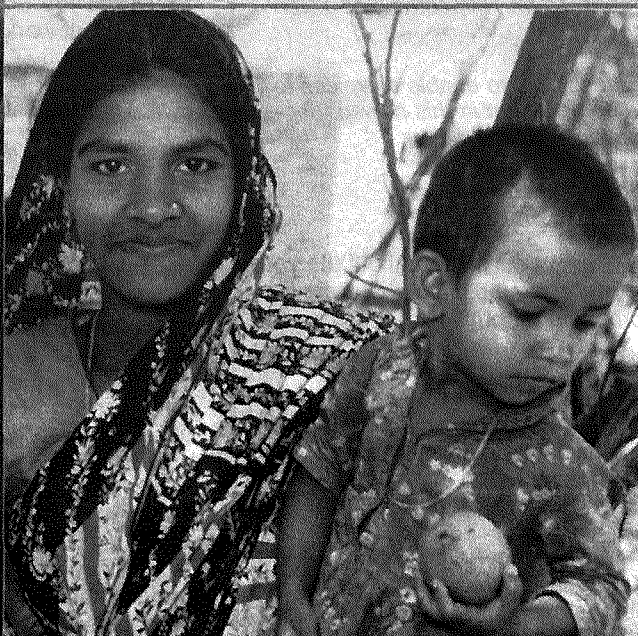
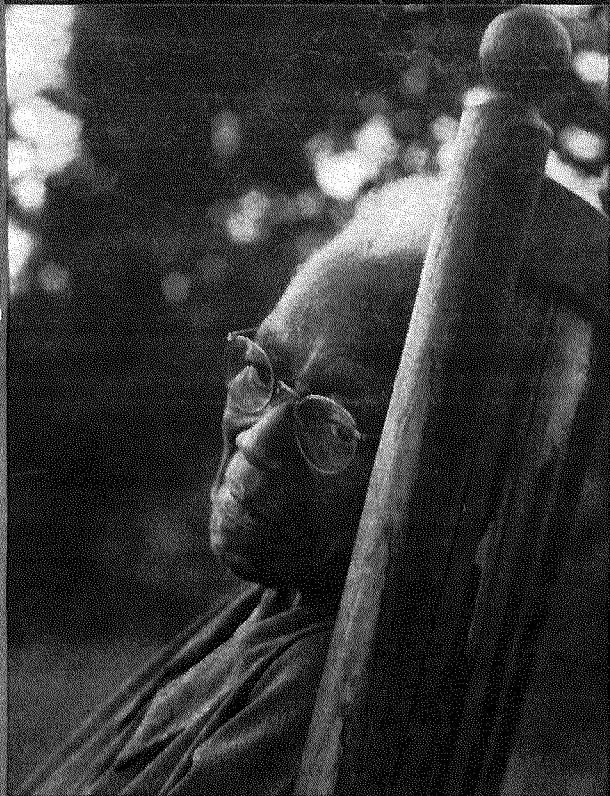
Free

Spring 1992 Vol. 3, #1

A feminist newspaper distributed nationally

In this issue:

- "The Beauty Myth"
- Breast cancer
- Free trade with Mexico
- Feminist therapists
- Pornography
- Poor women
- news from across the country
- ... and much more!



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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 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 and to be trusted.

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

The Womanist appears 4 times a year.

This issue took a very long time to come out. Throughout the year we had many women who wrote articles for the paper that were time sensitive and are no longer appropriate for printing in the Spring of 1992.

We would like to thank the women below for their time and effort.

These women reflect the incredible support and commitment women have in sharing information and inspiration to help all of us understand a little more about ourselves and the world.

Mary Allen-Creighton, Janis Alton, Susan Annis, Elizabeth Art, Elaine Auerbach, Joan Baril, Margarita Belan, Ruth Bell, Jill Bend, Jacqueline Bernard, Janet Biehl, Laura Bildfell, Dawn Black, MP, Catherine Bray, Pat Carney, Jean Christie, Ellen Cole, Katherine Cooper, Jane Craig, Vida Cuadra, Constance D., Elise D., Meg Dean, Xavier Declercq, Anna Demetropoulos, Chief Liz Diablo, Sandy Dobrowoisky, Margo Dunn, Suzanne Edward, Trish Eliot, Kelly Faraday, Lee Fleming, Mona Forrest, Carolyn Gammon, Joyce Green, Barbara Greene, MP, Irene Grobowski, Joyce Hancock, Jo Hayward Haines, Kathryn Hazel, Carmencita Hernandez, Anne Hicks, Jennifer Horsman, Par Israel, Lisa Jenson, Mobina Jaffer, France Lafond, Jan Langford, Robin LeDrew, Julie Lee, Gloria LeMay, Doreen Ligertwood, Lucie Laliberté, Jennifer Loten, Laura Macdonald, Theresa MacKenzie, Joan MacNeil, Heather Mathers, Sasha McInnes, Heather Menzies, Penni Mitchell, Marika Morris, Pascale N., Linda Nelson, Greta Nemiroff, Hanna Newcombe, Peggy Orenstein, Elizabeth Panashue, Diane Park, Nano Pennefather-McConnell, Betty Peterson, Gillian Phillippe, Pictou County Women's Centre Collective, Judy Poulin, Dariah Purdy, Pauline Rankin, Penni Richmond, Joyce Roberts, Judy Roberts, Esther D. Rothblum, Beth Ryan, Juanita Sauvé, Jessica Simon, Christine Smillie, Sandra Sorenson, Jane Stinson, Aisla Thomson, Sara Torres, Mary Trafford, Liz Turcotte, Linda Ungar, Denise Veilleux, Frances Wasserlein, Lise Weil, Cindy Wiggins, Dolly Williams, Women's Research Centre, Vancouver.

Womenspeak



Thank you

To *The Womanist*:

I read your newspaper for the first time yesterday, and it just blew me away. This is the type of information I have been searching for. I found the articles well written, informative and positive. I now have a renewed sense of hope for the women of the world. I look forward to your next issue.

Regards,
Josie Filipovic
Kitchener, Ontario

Thank you

To *The Womanist*:

BRAVO! Thank you for finally having a "real" woman's newspaper! It's a pleasure to open a paper and not see an exploited woman clad in bikini form!

I have thoroughly enjoyed reading many of the issues and I admit my ignorance regarding some (or many) of the concerns. Certainly the media exposes a pragmatic picture, yes?

Enclosed please find a cheque - I wish I could donate more. However, being a single mom, a budget is like my shadow!

Thank you again and keep up the great work!!!

Another Sister,
E.M. Tolie Stewart

To *The Womanist*:

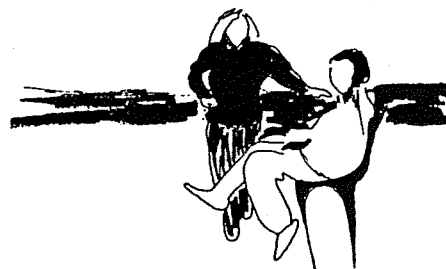
Just a quick note to thank you for distributing your paper to welfare offices. I had to go through a degrading experience and your newspaper was an unexpected source of pleasure, courage and strength. I've read the paper from cover to cover and liked what you had to say. I am very interested in the second half of the article by Salli Abbott called "Bridging the gap: Lesbians and Heterosexual women talk together." I may submit some writing some time in the future but at the moment I am happy to read and think and discuss the articles in this paper. Good job!

Sincerely
Sara Short
Vancouver, B.C.

To *The Womanist*:

Oh, thank goodness you people are publishing this newspaper. I attempt to read the Citizen every morning, you know, to stay on top of world politics and to be somewhat knowledgeable about the world around me. It is becoming increasingly frustrating to read about male-created wars and tragedies from a male-centered journalism perspective. And that's why I'm so thankful the Womanist exists - you understand my life experiences and make intelligent sense out of these woman experiences in a male-centered world. Please keep up the wonderful work you're doing. If I can volunteer my time on Weekends to helping you out, please give me a call. Thank You

Sincerely,
Debbie Potts
Kanata, Ontario



Male Subscriber

To *The Womanist*:

I am not really sure if you welcome male subscribers. I am, however, very interested in women's publications concerning the female condition in our society. I am a social worker and co-lead treatment groups for men who abuse their partners and, as such, am always interested in finding new ways to help men understand the impact their violence has on women.

Gender equality in our treatment program is held as very beneficial to both women and men. Heightened awareness and sensitivity among our clients to women's anger and pain due to continuing inequalities must remain one of our primary objectives. One way I strive to ensure that I am continually sensitive to and aware of the anger and pain is to read publications such as yours.

I wish you success in your work.

Yours truly
Dan Jardine
Brookdale, Manitoba

Editor's Note: We certainly do welcome male subscribers. Thank you for your support.

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 greater 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 coloured race is just like a flower garden, with every colour 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.

Editorial

Triumph of heart over logic

It's good to be back. It is no easy feat putting this paper out but with the support of many women we have managed again to reappear. And we are more determined than ever to keep coming back.

The Rodney King riots reminded us again that it takes that amount of violence, anger and despair for the media to notice what surrounds us everyday. But *The Womanist* notices and we write about it.

There is so much happening to us everyday as Canadians, as women and as citizens of the world. We are bombarded with conflict and bad news: unemployment is skyrocketing, Québec is leaving Canada, racial violence is increasing ... even the cod stocks are diminishing.

We need reassurance now and leadership. Canadians do not want to mirror U.S. society - a society that endorses police viewing all black men as dangerous and all white people as needing protection, a society that views poverty and violence as beyond control. We do not accept these beliefs.



Just because certain prominent politicians have betrayed us, does not mean that we should turn our backs on the entire political system. If we abdicate the running of this country, then we leave it to people who don't share our beliefs.

Canadians do not want to be a part of a global economic plan that exploits other people, other countries and this planet.

We also do not want to be jobless. These are not mutually exclusive goals.

We have battle-fatigue as a country and as individuals. But think of the fatigue of people in El Salvador, Eastern Europe and Southern Africa. We have infinitely more resources, and many of them we fritter away every day. We need to use every avenue we have available.

We need to pull together now more than every - WE HAVE TO REBUILD CANADA - in the image of what we value and believe.

Keep the faith. Stay strong. Trust your instincts. You are not crazy, but a few of our leaders leave something to be desired.

Enjoy this issue of the paper. We enjoyed putting it out - and subscribe please - we need the money. Hope to be out again this summer but no later than the end of September.



Communities where you can find *The Womanist*

Newfoundland: St. John's, Corner Brook, Stephenville, Grand Falls, Labrador City, Gander. **Nova Scotia:** Halifax, Antigonish, Wolfville, New Glasgow, Sydney, Truro, Bridgewater. **Prince Edward Island:** Charlottetown, Summerside. **New Brunswick:** New Maryland, Fredricton, Moncton, Sussex, Saint John. **Quebec:** Montreal, Eastern Townships. **Ontario:** Toronto, Ottawa, Newmarket, Scarborough, Belleville, Tottenham, London, Melborne, Cambridge, Guelph, Waterloo, Hamilton, Windsor, Sarnia, Stratford, Pembroke, Killaloe, Renfrew, Cornwall, Almonte, Kingston, Peterborough, Bancroft, Hunstville, North Bay, Thunder Bay, Kenora, Marathon. **Manitoba:** Brandon, Thompson, Winnipeg, Dauphin, Flin Flon. **Saskatchewan:** Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, Big River, Moose Jaw. **Alberta:** Calgary, Red Deer, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Whitecourt, Hinton, St. Paul. **British Columbia:** Nelson, Vancouver, Kamloops, Kelowna, Campbell River, Port Coquitlam, Victoria, Penticton, Cranbrook, Golden, Fort St. John, Terrace, Prince George, Telegraph Creek. **Yukon:** Whitehorse, Dawson City. **Northwest Territories:** Yellowknife, Hay River.

Thank you to the many, many women who help distribute the newspaper.

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Table of Contents

Women and Leadership

The Mulroney Government

The Constitution	8-9
Government cut backs	10-11
North American Free Trade Agreement	12-13
Fisheries	14
GATT and the future of agriculture	15

In the Movement

The three mistakes	17
Learning to deal with disabilities	19
Racism: Learning to change	20-21
Pornography: the uneasy debate	22
Feminist Therapists	24-26

Breasts

The breast obsession	27
Breast Cancer	28-29
Meme Implant	28
Gwen Jacobs: Being topless	30

News

Spousal femicide	31
The Pandora victory	32
What's in toy stores lately?	33

Low Income Women

Attack on welfare recipients	35
Literacy	37

International Issues

United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development	40
Women in Czechoslovakia	42
El Salvador	43

Reviews

Naomi Wolf: Beauty Myth	44
Fried Green Tomatoes	44
Brides from Hell	45

Women leading the way: in the country

by Trish Keays

Questions about leadership, the women's movement and Canadian society raise other questions for me. Leadership? Which women's movement? Canadian society -- wouldn't that be nice? (to paraphrase Gandhi's comment about western civilization - that it was something he hoped to see).

Leaders are accountable for transforming the hierarchies of power so that diverse equalities are facilitated, rather than resisted and cut off at the knees.

People don't empower other people -- people empower themselves. A leader's number one job is to create conditions within which people have true access to resources of money, power and time, and circumstances in which people are held accountable for their decisions from the point of view of the future as well as now. This means not just making things look good, but considering who benefits, who pays, and in what ways.

Leaders have to help wean us rich-world people from glut, guide us in seeking less of what is poisoning us, and help us demand more of what we truly need: respect, self-determination, autonomy, a sense of the continuous opportunities to meet our life tasks with dignity. We have too much -- too much stuff, too much stress, too much power, too much money -- and we are too much influenced by promoters, marketers, charlatans and cretins.

Each one of us has to take a leading role in changing our lives, as individuals, as members of households and families, and as members of wider communities on a planet under assault.

Women, who have been shaped by patriarchal values as we all have been, are spread along the same continuum of Canadian diversity as men. Sex really isn't a determinant of a different approach to power, control, leadership and humanity.

It is true that more women voters are doves than hawks, that women perceive

relationships to be as or more important than tasks and outputs, that more women than men initiate and take part in movements for change (obviously -- we have so much more to gain!).

However, I don't see evidence that women who pay the high prices required to rise within existing systems show fundamentally different styles of leadership, management, administration -- the fair, wise use of power and other resources. This is true even of those structures we claim are alternatives, with flatter structures, consensus or collective decision-making processes, and within which I have seen equally hierarchical ego-systems.

I do believe, though, that women's full participation in every sphere will transform the institutions that cripple and diminish us all.

In the shadow of the flimsy network of relationships I have enjoyed with women across Canada who are struggling with questions like these, I see the outlines of the kind of relationships of acceptance, accountability, responsibility and shared leadership that I want for my children. Raising them to carry that on is ever-

*How wrong it is
for woman to
expect the man
to build the world
she wants,
rather than set
out to create it
herself*

Anais Nin
Diary Vol. 5

challenging. Being true to the shadow outline when the relationships get fractious or wither from distance and disuse is something hard, but mostly easy. We are accountable to people who share our vision, to ourselves and even to those who aren't thinking about these things.

*An election is going
to happen in the Fall
of 1992 or Spring of
1993. Think about
who you want to
lead this country:
encourage them to
run, support their
campaign and
vote for change!*

So, I feel part of different movements, of which the women's movement is only one. I believe the women's movement needs to begin to look up from itself to consider the relation among all these questions, less divisively, more acceptingly, more flexibly, less personally. (And more personally, as we truly make the political the personal, and empower ourselves to be leaders in our own lives. Let the rest slide, because whose interests is all that really serving, anyway?)

My responsibility to "the" leaders (not "my" leaders at all, merely the functionaries left over from a moribund institutional legacy of the politics of self-interest) is to provide them with continual, unrelenting input on how I want them to act and behave.

No more demagoguery, no more weaseling away from issues, no more acceptance of male, white, middle-aged measures of "normal", and dismissal of all those other perspectives as "other".

I believe, with Theodore Roethke, that, "What we need are more people who specialize in the impossible." We need leaders in everyday life, not positional leaders. We need powerful people who use their power, their capacity to act, on behalf of others as well as themselves. We need self-government: Ovide Mercredi and Ethel Blondin as joint candidates for Prime Minister!

No more party politics, no more politicians who don't live like the rest of the people, no more separation between acts and actions, and their effects on people. No more meanness, no more mean-spiritedness, much more respect for ourselves, each other and the planet. No more violence. Let's let "the average citizens" take the lead. I trust a motley collection of citizens selected on the same basis as a jury more than I trust those who rise

up to the seat of power.

The "women's movement" is overlapping edges of different networks that contribute to all movements for progressive change and equality. What I expect of the women's movement is: mutual support, confidence, willingness to listen and to hear, willingness to be an advocate as well as a listen and to hear, willingness to be an advocate as well as a participant, principles of connection / not separation, respect, balance, and generosity of mind and spirit as well as hard cash. (Our principle should be tithing, to share the good fortune we may be at times privileged to experience.) I also expect occasional shared belly-laughs, commiseration in time of pain, and gentle jokes as we deal seriously with things that matter. These are candles on the cake we share along the way.

I support Ursula Franklin's approach to development, and apply it to national governing as well as international relations. We need a "potluck" approach to development, where each person brings something, each person's contribution is valued and incorporated into a feast. Everyone gets fed (probably better than they would have fed themselves), each person gets essential needs met in community, no one gets left out or ignored, and no pot luck ever ends up with 400 plates of carrots.

Perhaps this is a prayer more than an analytical offering - may we live to see it so!

Good luck!

Trish Keays lives in Powell River, BC. She has a background in development: international, educational, economic, community, social, human, personal, and especially the links between all these and sustainable development.

by Alexa McDonough

I agree with those who say there has always been and always will be a women's movement.

Women like to work together. We are the life givers and we prefer cooperation to competition. But women leaders and the women's movement needs a mutual support system to persevere in a male-dominated world.

Until economic and social structures are transformed, they will repudiate us. Don't leave your leaders isolated, to send messages from the top down in the traditional, male-dominated manner. Form a support system - act in a sisterly manner - so you have a way to validate each other's visions, feelings, experiences and goals.

We who seek to change our roles and set new standards must be true to ourselves, to our sisters, and to the men who support us. That's how our actions will be consistently directed toward the vision we share of a society that nurtures and empowers each member, rather than one which exploits people and the environment.

**WOMEN
VOTE=**

A woman leader must demonstrate that there are other, equally valid methods of discussing issues, making decisions and setting priorities. Otherwise, subconsciously and certainly in the perception of many, she gives in to the established rules and the male power that lies behind them.

When it seems that all the powers that be are lined up against us it's especially important to reach out for support, take heart and keep on going.

Every step that challenges the old way of doing things is a risk worth taking. This is not the road to quick success by traditional standards - I'm living testimony to that. But it is a rewarding journey.

Nova Scotia NDP Leader Alexa McDonough, became in 1980, the first woman to be chosen leader of a major political party in Canada.

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and in the women's movement

by Iona Campagnolo

I sometimes wonder what pioneer feminists like Nellie McClung and Therese Casgrain would think of these woman-times. They who sustained countless insults and painful encounters, but who "soldiered on" to the end of their lives with a clear view of what Feminism was, and where we women were going. Nothing seems as clear now.



The Big Lie of our time is that our goals are all realized and that equality is ours, while the facts show anything but. Other big lies of our time abound: "new" women are becoming sterile, women who seek equality cannot hold a husband, "new" women are bad moms, public day care is detrimental to our children, women who want it all must inevitably fall into emotional oblivion. Not true! If women have won, why are women's issues subjected to the intentional "flogging", and women to an unjust legal system, to downright lies and deliberately calculated counter attacks on our progress that are all a feature of everyday Canadian life.

We know what a woman-led world would look like and what too many power-men and their few women supporters, still fail to grasp. It is that Men and Women are two halves of the Same humanity, and that given equal power, we will re-assert the human equilibrium that 2,500 years of patriarchy have obliterated. Night after night the television news shows us those depressing pictures of rooms filled with men who are making decisions about the lives of men and women, in which women have no opportunity to express their views. Incongruously, this is being called democracy! The structures that women feel comfortable working within are co-operative, circular and exhaustively consultative.

Decisions are reached consensually, all views are addressed and every voice is heard. The values that women bring to decision-making are based on practical considerations for now and tomorrow. Our children are our vested interest in tomorrow and the main reason that we rarely dwell on yesterday (besides, yesterday was no place for a woman).

The leaders of today's women's movement are beset on every hand. Fearful of falling into the false trap of "Political Correctness", we have allowed ourselves to be cut off from each other by a deliberate and manipulated fragmentation of the movement. Rather than standing in solidarity, as we once would have to return the fire aimed at us, too many of us have allowed that barrage of half-truths and lies to hit their mark.

Traditional women-leaders, we are told, are too left, too elitist, too white, not sufficiently conscious of the needs of poor women. Does anyone seriously believe that those making these charges from the political right have the faintest concern for poor women? Does anyone believe that the model of the woman leader is static and not subject to change? Does anyone remember that leaders cannot stand without support and that those who chose to follow have responsibilities too?

The principles that will lift us from despair, from this "slew of despondency" are those that have sustained the women who first led us, those of us who have survived from an earlier woman-time and those who will

Power.

Energy..

is the one force
in the universe
that is never really
wasted. In other words,
if we do not use our
power, it will be used
by some other force.

Audre Lorde

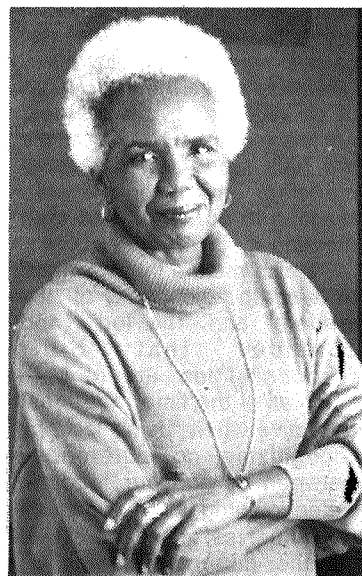
need to broaden the outreach of our care and concern to include within our ranks those men who seek to make that better world *with us*. We have to stand together in mutual respect and in all our differences, with a simple, clear goal in mind: *That all women everywhere have an equal right with men to seek and attain that better life that is the ongoing goal of the human family*, and that we will not cease our struggle until this most basic of human rights is attained.

Ms. Campagnolo is a former federal Cabinet Minister, well known in recent years for her work in international development. She is currently a Commissioner with four other distinguished Canadians, leading a cross-country Citizen's Inquiry into Peace and Security, sponsored by an unprecedented consortium of Non-Governmental Organizations.

by Rosemary Brown

The absence of women from the leadership ranks of politics, business, the church and other institutions is a national scandal.

Women continue, as Christina McCall says, to have influence but little power. There have been some outstanding exceptions to this situation however, and certainly the women of Canada will always be grateful to



Madame Bertha Wilson for the difference she made during her all too brief tenure on the Supreme Court. Most of the real leaders of the women's movement remain little known: Iris Murdoch, whose experiences served to highlight the injustice of the nation's Family Law, Henrietta Muir, Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney and Irene Parlby, these five whose efforts ensured that women were issued the status of persons.

Many women, through no choice of their own, act as our leaders. Their life experiences reflect the strength and sacrifice we women continue to have to make simply to live our lives: the women whose massacre at Ecole Polytechnique focused national attention on violence against women; the poor women who have fought for childcare, the women who have resisted all attempts to close down abortion clinics, the domestic workers and immigrant women who continue to fight for the right to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their class, race or economic condition.

A world in which the principles and ethics of these women are part of the decision-making structure would be a world more committed to social justice and human and civil rights. Not just because they were women, but because they were women who rejected traditional patriarchal principles based on self-interest.

I cannot envision a world ruled by women, since the goal of the feminist movement is to create a new form of power based on equality and sharing rather than on dominance and control. Leaders emerging from that equal power base would be committed to peace and have the respect for the environment and all peoples.

Rosemary Brown is a former member of provincial parliament for B.C. and most recently was the Executive Director of M A T C H International.

*Everybody wants
to do something
to help,
but nobody wants
to be first.*

*Pearl Bailey
The Raw Pearl, 1968*

lead us. We require a n unambiguous ethic embracing love of our own and each other and all children, one that will forever put to rest the anti-woman, anti-child canards perpetrated by those who would restore yesterday. We

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Women leading the way: in the country and in the women's movement

by Lorraine Greaves

It is easier to say what feminist leadership should not be than what it is. It's clear that simply getting more women into so-called leadership or power positions isn't ever enough. It's equally clear that having feminists continue to create and operate organizations without constantly examining leadership principles and practices is downright damaging. In fact, like an unexamined life, an unexamined concept of leadership or organization leads to no vision and no quality. The practical effect of unexamined leadership is perpetuation of only a slightly varied *status quo*.

It is often assumed that feminist process can be simply learned and transplanted into an individual's or organization's style or repertoire; as if it's a matter of acquiring a few new rules and some politically correct tricks, and hoping for the best. Not so. What is often overlooked are several preconditions. The parties involved must truly value the goals inherent in feminist process such as increasing representation, an appreciation of diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility. The mechanisms for reaching these goals must be sincerely welcomed: inviting and welcoming dissent, accepting challenge, and liberating the self or the organization through giving up/taking up power. But most fundamental, those interested in creating feminist process

and practice must be constantly ready and able to reexamine their values.

Sometimes this means re-examining well-established and often unquestioned values, those that seem to give us and our organizations our very identity and greatest security. And lastly, it means that all of us must genuinely want to change, to fit, to modify, to meld, to share, to cooperate, to be different, to have our minds changed, to become dispensable to the feminist cause. It means that we will feel better when there are more of us ready and able to lead, not fewer of us; when our minds are less made up, not more made up; and when we stop reacting to our world and start creating it.

It also means that we need to reject the dichotomy of "the leaders" and "the led", and consider that our responsibilities are of both kinds all of the time. We must be active when "being led", by recognizing no differences between us and our leaders. Indeed, being as responsible for ourselves and each other, whether currently "leading" or "being led", may be the first step in re-examining the feminist *status quo*, and creating a model of feminist leadership that is workable, humane, effective, and visionary.

Lorraine Greaves is an educator, activist and writer on women's issues, living in London, Ontario.

I think the key to being a feminist leader is accountability. To me, feminist leadership is about furthering the interests of the collective, of women in general. Leadership in a collective doesn't mean that everyone plays the same role but rather that leaders speak for the collective and not for themselves.

Accountability means several things to me. It means providing individual feedback to women leaders, and it means developing structures for democratic decision making that support both the interests of the group and the



spokesperson. It is important that we learn to direct our leaders, and to be critical of them in constructive and not destructive ways.

I believe that understanding the real strength of democratic process is the key to responsible leadership. Real wisdom comes from a variety of experiences. Ten women from different regions, races and classes will come up with better solutions to problems than one or two women, however broad their experience. The creative exchange among women is critically important to responsible and accountable leadership.

"If you move, you're a target" is a mantra that I have repeated for years. This applies to groups as well as individuals. Women who provide leadership in whatever way -- arguing for new ideas and policy, fighting against racism in the women's movement, speaking publicly for an organization -- are putting themselves out on a limb. No matter how we collectivize our positions, those who speak them, or those who push for them most effectively will be identified with them as individuals. No matter how strong their organizational

base, they risk, as individuals, public disapproval and criticism in order to further the struggle for feminism. Women who put themselves in these positions need critical support.

All of our organizations are in struggle not only with our own ideas about how we want to be represented, but also with the government and media practices of choosing and (mis)representing our leaders for us. The mystification that our society places upon leadership and particularly upon public figures, makes it very difficult to provide leadership, without getting seduced by this process of mystification. I have found this especially true as I have become a media figure. It is important that women feel comfortable giving leaders very personal feedback - letting them know if they are becoming egotistical, arrogant or otherwise unresponsive and insensitive.

Representation has always been a demand of, and an issue within, the women's movement. It is very difficult for any one woman to adequately 'represent' the voices of the diversity of the movement in this country. Our movement is fiercely democratic and is very hard on its leaders. As a result, a lot of very talented women have burned out on the women's movement. At the same time as we are working towards more representative groups, events and organizations, I think we need to understand and use leadership more strategically. We need to understand the extra stress and responsibility leadership creates for individual women, the responsibility of providing them with feedback and support, and the strategic moments when we need to mobilize the strengths of our leaders and spokeswomen to make our points heard loud and clear.

Sharing leadership skills is also an important part of feminist leadership. Rather

than competing for leadership as men have done historically, women should be promoting others with talent and ability and training them in the necessary skills. The women's movement has not devoted very many resources to training leaders. Experienced women should be encouraging younger women and sharing their skills.

I feel very supported in my present position. I get a lot of support and understanding from the NAC Executive and others in the women's movement about the demands of my position. I would welcome more feedback than I get.

Women often think that any criticism is negative and destructive. Without critical feedback, a leader can only guess at how she needs to change her behaviour. Silent criticism of her behaviour will turn to resentment and that's when things get ugly and destructive.

There will always be leaders, at least in this society. What is important is to recognize their leadership formally so they can be held accountable and be provided with the support necessary to provide responsible leadership.

Judy Rebick is the President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

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Tory bull in the Canadian china shop

by Liz Rowley

After six years of suffering the Tory bull in our Canadian china shop, several key questions remain: who will pick up the pieces? How will they be put back together? Given the scale of the damage, where do we begin?

The questions which the Conservatives have sought to answer with their brutal agenda are questions which, in one form or another, are being dealt with in different ways the world over.

No country has been immune from adjusting to the new economic and social realities. Economic reality is the foundation upon which is built the civilization or human culture that gives life its texture and meaning, including social values, political culture, democratic values, attitudes to minorities and women, educational levels and so forth.

Here in Canada, under the Tories, restructuring has tracked the Reagan/Thatcher model of privatization, deregulation, regressive taxation and gutted social programs - all steps towards integration into the United States.

How have they gotten away with it?

As the saying goes - hindsight is 20:20 vision. None of us in the, for want of a better term, pro-people movements in Canada had a fully developed understanding of the shape or scope of the patterns that lay behind the unfolding Tory agenda.

Vigorous resistance campaigns were mounted at different times against various parts of the agenda. Coalitions against different aspects of the Tory agenda came and went, some have stayed alive. Cooperation between the different movements was minimal as none of us sufficiently saw the grand pattern of linkage between the parts of the Tory agenda.

We all were locked into reactive political organising, which is by definition defensive. There was no overall proactive program to advance as an alternative to

the Tory plan. We all were captives of the disconnection between parliamentary politics and extra-parliamentary action. We all were weakened by the age-old rivalries between political parties zealously guarding their turf.

My own party, the Communist Party, is going through a very difficult time of adjustment. Externally, the events and revelations in Eastern Europe have shaken us to the core of our being. Internally, the past form of overcentralized, top down, secretive and administrative form of organization is being reformed amid quite sharp debate on the pace, form and extent of renewal.



Picking up the Pieces!

The Tories have about one year left in their term. The recession appears to be slowing and the cyclical start up the slope of growth could be imminent. Mulroney will no doubt toss out some economic tidbits to the electorate to try to buy another term.

Blocking a third term for the Tories and reversing the disastrous course of integration with the United States is critical if Canada is to be preserved.

The big challenges before Canada are:

- making Canada a comfortable home for Québec and Native Canadians;

- profoundly democratizing Canadian life - that is, breaking the grip of big business on government; dealing with institutionalized sexism and racism; dealing with the environmental deterioration of Canada; and dealing with the politics of poverty;

- re-establishing Canadian independence: scrapping the Free Trade Agreement, regaining control of the economy from the transnationals and making our foreign and military policy in Canada.

Unless we move in such a direction we will be surely and inexorably absorbed into the United States.

A New Constitution

There are three questions of principle involved in making Québec a meaningful part of Canada.

First, Québec must be recognized as a nation with certain inalienable national rights. Second, Québec must have the right to self determination - the right to choose whether to opt for independent statehood or to be a meaningful part of a new Canadian federation. Third, Québec must have the right to secede or terminate its existence within a Canadian federation.

As women, would any of us enter into a marriage or other relationship if our womanhood was not recognized, if we did not have the right to choose that particular relationship and if we did not have the right to divorce if the relationship was irretrievably soured?

The Native peoples of Canada will have to be treated as full equals in formulating a new constitution. Their demand for regional self-government must be met, their land rights fully restored, their distinct culture and languages respected and a major affirmative action plan

developed to overcome the horrendous economic inequalities they have endured.

These principles have to be enshrined in a new Canadian constitution.

A New Democracy

Democracy does very well in Canada for the needs of big business. When it comes to the needs of working people, the poor, the disadvantaged, women, minorities, young people, democracy does not do as well - not by a long shot.

Democracy is more than election, free speech, *Habeas Corpus*, religious freedom and other human rights. Important as these are, democracy should mean much more.

Democracy includes the right to work, the right to good health, the right to decent shelter, the right to equal educational opportunity, the right to recreation, clean air, clean earth, clean water, the right to food and economic dignity, the right to peace and prosperity, the right to organize into trade unions, the right to full equality for women and minorities, the right to security in one's senior years - the list is very long indeed.

The point is that these should be rights not privileges and the reason they are not is that their recognition and enforcement as rights would curb the "rights" of big business and big business runs Canada through its control of the political-electoral process.

Canada's economy needs to be repatriated from American control. There is a place for foreign investment and there is a place for a vigorous private sector but its scale and mode of operation and its balance with the public sector must be consistent with the needs of Canada as a whole.

We need to look at creative ways for an international division of labour between states that benefits all of humanity.

Canada's manufacturing, farming and research and development sectors need restoring and expansion, and need to be balanced with the needs of Canadians and the world. The

Free Trade Agreement must be scrapped and trading patterns inside Canada augmented while new international trade patterns are established.

The situation demands approaches that go way beyond traditional electoral politics. Already the scenario is being scripted in Wall Street, St. James Street and Bay Street for the next elections. The Reform Party will replace the Conservatives, in the West. The Bloc Québécois will help out in Québec. The Tories will take what they can in Ontario and the rest of Canada and together they will form some kind of coalition government.

With the NDP and the Liberals competing for votes in the middle ground, neither can win.

An approach that would serve Canada better would be for a people's conference to be convened of all the organizations that have an interest in blocking a third term for the Tories and have a genuine interest in a new direction for Canada.

Let the trade union movement, the women's movement, the youth and students, farmers, ecology and peace movements, Native People's organizations and organizations from Québec, the NDP and the Communists and other left political forces convene a meeting to create an agenda for the nineties and to pledge to work together to contest the next election in whatever united form can be decided upon.

Unity is key, not only in action but also in the vision of a united program.

Several authoritative polls have indicated that people are fed up with existing political forms, with politicians and political structures. Perhaps the wide response to the Reform Party's rhetoric is a misdirected echo of this anger.

This might sound like a dream - but isn't it a dream worth fighting for?

Liz Rowley is the former leader of the Ontario Communist Party, and is the first woman leader of a political party in Ontario.



Long term advocate of women's rights; dedicated to the creation of equal rights, pay equity and the elimination of violence against women and children.

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Little for immigrant, visible minority women

Beaudoin - Dobbie Report

by Eunadie Johnson

Attending the Constitutional Conferences in Toronto and Vancouver was a rare opportunity to participate in discussions of the history and the future of Canada.

As President of the National Organization of Immigrant and Minority Women of Canada (N.O.I.M.W.C.), I wondered at times whether the information I brought, the perspective I shared with my group and in plenary was representative of the target population, but then again my experiences as an immigrant and visible minority woman covered all bases.

I felt excluded in a lot of the discussions, not because I was not allowed to have input, but because the discussion most of the time did not take into account the target populations of which I am a part. The opening speech by a prominent white male lawyer totally negated my presence and those of other visible minorities in the audience. He used a rose as an analogy to describe what or who represented Canada, mentioning each petals different size and shape, some imperfect but in the end making up a beautiful flower. I immediately saw something wrong with the analogy because the perfect flower was all one Colour.

After reviewing the Draft Constitutional amendments, I felt again the exclusion of multi-racial groups, because our voices were not heard of course we were told that as "special interest groups we should hold our thoughts and identify our needs at another time. The goal was to keep Quebec in Canada."

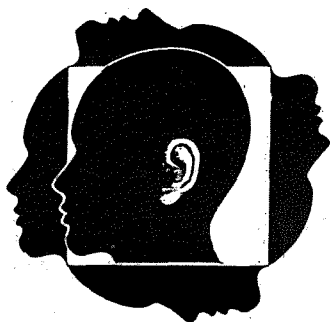
We fully support the "goal" but we are also part of Canada and Quebec.

In the poem or preamble, there was no mention of the Indigenous, Blacks and First Generation visible minorities in the Canada Clause. What do we have? A motherhood statement? If so where are the multi-racial groups? Notice I said multi-racial not

multicultural as stated in the constitutional proposal.

Where in the hierarchy does the Canada Clause fit? In Section 2 of the Constitution? Does it supersede the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom?

We clearly voiced concern re: the Introduction in the Charter of An Economic Union but wanted Section 121 (the common market clause) of the Charter strengthened. One of the concerns we had was the grading of Foreign credentials and that there be an overall Federal standard which makes credentials transferable within provinces.



We recognize that provinces have shared jurisdiction with the Federal Government re: Immigration but felt there should be no further erosion of the federal powers in favour of the provinces.

The notwithstanding clause is obviously going to stay, and we are opposed to this clause because it contradicts itself. You cannot on one hand say certain rights are guaranteed, then on the other hand say "NOTWITHSTANDING".

We supported the proposed amendment to Section 28 of the Charter - that would guarantee the rights of groups disadvantaged by race, etc.

We fully support Quebec's need to be recognized as a distinct society as it relates to language, culture and civil law. We are concerned about the rights of racial minorities not just within the rest of Canada but also within Quebec.

I am not encouraged by the Beaudoin-Dobbie Report, as it has negated, not reported on, nor made any recommendations relating rights of racial minorities within Canada.

Eunadie Johnson is president of the National Organization of Immigrant and Minority Women of Canada and the Executive Director of Thompson Manitoba Women's Shelter.



Don't silence Aboriginal women



by Cathy Doyle & Fiona Muldrew

The Aboriginal Women's Unity Coalition (AWUC) was formed in 1990 by Winnipeg Aboriginal women and community groups in response to inaction and silence on the case of Carl Krantz, who drugged, raped and videotaped 50 Aboriginal girls.

The AWUC wanted to ensure these young women would receive counselling and support from the Aboriginal community to help in their healing process and to avoid further victimization from police and non-Aboriginal institutions.

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, (AMC), with the exception of Chief Peter Yellowquill, was unwilling to listen and act on the concerns of the AWUC in regard to this case.

In the fall of 1991, the AWUC challenged chiefs to address alarming rates of violence in their communities.

The AWUC support a woman from Long Plains First Nation who staged a hunger strike at the Legislature to protest inaction on the part of Anishinabe Child and Family Services (ACFS) to protect her children from alleged abuse by their father. Their father is a chief and also on the board of ACFS. Instead of addressing valid concerns raised by the AWUC, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs accused AWUC of dividing the Aboriginal community.

Also in 1991, due to the Chiefs' apparent disregard for women's issues, the AWUC presented a constitutional brief to the All Native Constitutional Committee outlining their concerns about being excluded from full and equal participation in self government.

Recently, Kathy Mallett, an active member of the AWUC and numerous community groups, has been charged with defamation of character by one of the chiefs for her statements concerning suspicious child deaths on reserves. This legal action was initiated by Chief

"When Aboriginal women demand equality, we are accused of being feminists. We are accused of dividing our communities along sexist lines. But we are not leaving our men. Our men are at the table. They have been well-funded to participate in this constitutional debate. They are the ones with the seats at the table. They are the ones with the money, power and control. And we are reminding them we are here."

Aboriginal women are equal.

Aboriginal women are ready.

Aboriginal women want to participate."

Native Women's Association of Canada,
Position Paper, February 2, 1992.

LISTEN TO THE PAST



LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Louis Stevenson who is the Chair of the AMC Justice committee. Mallett did not mention specific chiefs nor chiefs as a group in her statement. The newspaper that published her statement has had no statement of claim brought against them.

The defamation claim is seen as part of a continuing harassment campaign to intimidate and silence any questioning or criticism of Aboriginal political leadership by Aboriginal women.

Aboriginal women will not be silenced! To support their

struggle you can send letters of solidarity to the AWUC, 356A Stella Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R2W 2T9. Donations towards legal costs can be directed to the Aboriginal Women's Freedom Fund. Tax deductible receipts can be issued for cheques made out to the Ikwewak Justice Society. Both groups are at the above address.

Cathy Doyle & Fiona Muldrew are members of CHOICES (a coalition for social justice) and a newly formed women's task force based in Winnipeg

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Women and the Social Charter

by: Marion Boyd

On January 17, 1992, Premier Bob Rae said, "It's important to send a clear signal that even in the toughest of circumstances, we're not going to forget the social justice agenda."

High on that agenda is a Social Charter in our constitution. Along with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, a Social Charter would reinforce Canadians' sense of themselves as members of a community based on respect for, and responsibility to, each other.

These aren't idle words. It's because generations of women and men have fought for the principle of universality that today Canadians from coast to coast enjoy what should be basic human rights: a national health care system, an array of income support measures, free public schooling and affordable post-secondary education.

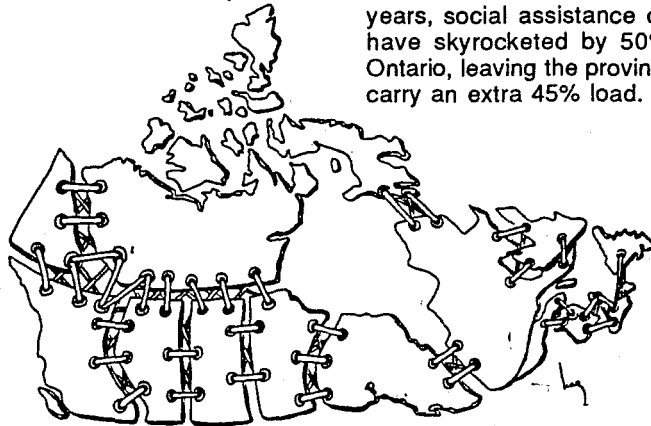
Taken together, these programs form something of a "social contract" between governments and the people. But nowhere is this contract written. It's only assumed. Yet recent federal budgets have shown what can easily happen to contracts which aren't spelled out: they can be breached without recourse.

That's why the Ontario government is pushing for the following principles to be incorporated into the 1982 Constitution Act:

- A Canada-wide health care program that's comprehensive, universal, portable, publicly administered and accessible;
- social services and welfare assistance based on need, so that all Canadians have access to a minimum level of food, housing and other basic rights;
- high quality public primary and secondary education for every person living in Canada;
- protection and improvement of the environment within a sustainable economy; and

overall promotion of the standard of life in Canada.

Let me give specific examples of why an entrenched Social Charter is overdue. In its latest budget, the Federal Conservative government ended the universality of Family Allowance benefits. Last year, it also froze Established Programs Financing -- one source of support for post-secondary education and



health care -- until 1993. Meanwhile, the Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation is seeing its social housing budget shrink by 15%, dramatically reducing women's chances of finding safe shelter in times of emergency.

No wonder the Conservative government has killed women's hopes (thanks to years of promises) for universally accessible child care: that service would have had to be considered a social right. Instead, Prime Minister Mulroney treated child care as a special interest charity. So chop went the axe.

An especially painful "breach of contract" came in 1990, when the federal government targeted what were then considered the three richest provinces -- Ontario, Alberta and B.C. -- by limiting their increases in the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) to 5 percent.

CAP is a longstanding agreement between Ottawa and the provinces to split the bill down the middle for necessities like child welfare, transition houses and rape crisis centres. Given that almost 60 percent of poor adults in Canada are women, CAP has also helped ensure low and no-income women get the social assistance they are entitled to.

But in each of the last two years, social assistance costs have skyrocketed by 50% in Ontario, leaving the province to carry an extra 45% load. The

added burden has dealt a \$1 billion blow to other equity programs and job creation initiatives. Until at least 1995, or the accession of a new government, the cap on CAP is here to stay.

A Social Charter may make the difference, not by directly preventing cuts to social programs, but by making those cuts more politically expensive. With a Social Charter in place, agreements reached between governments could be made legally binding. Binding governments to their agreements means any legislature which simply ups and leaves its obligation to fund social programs can be taken to task -- without having to wait for a ballot box.

So how do you enforce a social charter? Ontario believes it's through an independent Commission. Then what's the role of the courts? While a Social Charter

commits governments to provide social programs, the courts would ensure equitable access to these programs through the Charter of Rights. In short, the two charters would work in tandem to promote the dignity of all Canadians.

Still, Ontario's vision of the Social Charter can't be complete without the input from the very women whose lives will be most affected by it. As the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, I and Premier Rae recently met with a cross section of feminists -- including disabled, aboriginal, lesbian, immigrant, refugee, racial minority and francophone women. (There was no shortage of lively discussion!)

Many women's groups worried about the impact of the Social Charter on federal spending powers. Because federal spending is crucial to develop and maintain social programs in Canada, Ontario doesn't propose that the new Charter in any way replace or limit Ottawa's ability to spend the way it should.

On the other hand there's the concern Ontario's Social Charter proposal isn't broad enough. Some groups want constitutional protection for pay equity, employment equity, workers' rights, job training, child care and anti-poverty assistance. Groups representing doubly disadvantaged women rightly argued that not every Canadian starts from the same "advantage point". So immigrants, racial minorities and the disabled, among others, need guarantees of policies, programs and services which redress the added discrimination they face daily.

It's hard to say how far Ontario's proposal can go before the chances of it being accepted by other governments are seriously

**Next issue:
Constitutional
update**

hurt. We began with those areas -- namely, social programs -- that clearly are a part of the unwritten "social contract" in Canada. That doesn't mean we shouldn't go further. The question is, should we do it now?

Recently, the federal government's all-party (Beaudoin/Dobbie) committee released its Report of the Special Joint Committee on a Renewed Canada. In that report, the Committee indicates its support for Premier Rae's proposal for a Social Charter. It calls for a "Social Covenant" to be constitutionalized, and proposes that the Covenant protect: comprehensive, universal, portable, publicly administered and accessible health care; adequate social services and social benefits; high quality education; the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively; and the integrity of the environment.

Some insist that there are no hard and fast rules to fair constitution-building. Here's one: any constitution that fails to reflect the needs, values and aspirations of the majority -- in this case, women -- must be reworked.

That's what Ontario's proposal for a Social Charter aims to do. If fairness, accessibility and dignity are women's issues, so is the Social Charter.

Marion Boyd is Ontario's Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and Minister for Community and Social Services.



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Highway robbery? Or workplace robbery?

by Nycole Turmel

It's a sickening feeling to know you've been robbed...

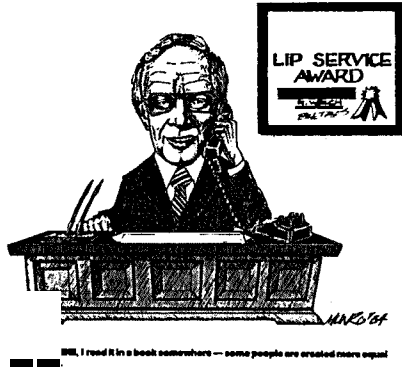
Most women who work for the Federal Government can probably relate to this feeling, especially on pay day. They know this government is knowingly robbing them of about \$1 billion. That's on average, between \$7,100 to \$29,000 per person!

Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value has been part of the Canadian Human Rights Act for close to fifteen years. This government has, however, consistently demonstrated its intention of disregarding the principle of Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value for its own workers. They have demonstrated this with their constant attempts to derail the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, their refusal to deal with Pay Equity at the bargaining table and more recently, with a federal budget that threatens the fundamental integrity of the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

The struggle to achieve salary justice for 80,000 members who work in female-dominated occupations has been a long one for the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC). The female dominated groups include: Clerical and Regulatory (CR); Secretarial, Stenographic and Typing (ST); Data Processing (DA); Library Science (LS); Hospital Services (HS) and Educational Support (EU).

Sections 7, 10, and 11 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, which deal specifically with the issue of equal pay for work of equal value, became law in 1977.

As early as 1979, PSAC began filing complaints with the Canadian Human Rights Commission for various groups of its members. One of the Alliance's first successful cases was the complaint filed on behalf of the Library Sciences group in 1978, alleging their work was of equal value in terms of skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions to a higher paid male-dominated comparison group. While this and some of



the other complaints were resolved (or partially resolved) one of the largest complaints on behalf of 50,000 Clerical and Regulatory members of the group filed in 1984, remains outstanding to this day.

The fact that it can take many years to process complaints through the Canadian Human Rights Commission led PSAC to participate in a joint union and management study on equal pay for work of equal value, announced by Treasury Board on March 8, 1985.

This study, the largest of its kind to date in Canada, was conducted jointly by Treasury Board and 13 federal public service unions and associations. Over 4,000 employees across the country participated by completing questionnaires that outlined their job duties and responsibilities, as well as the challenges and working conditions they face on a daily basis.

Joint committees made up of an equal number of union and employer representatives rated the completed questionnaires, using a new evaluation system developed by Norman D. Willis and Associates. The evaluation process ended in September 1989 and the results were clear. Female-dominated classification groups in the federal public service were being significantly underpaid for their work. The release of the study results, however, marked a turning point in the governments attitude, and supposed commitment, to

actually enforcing the provisions of the Canadian Human Rights Act. In spite of its equal participation in the process, Treasury Board immediately began its attempts to discredit the study.

In 1990, as the Alliance pressed the government to act on the study results, the Treasury Board unilaterally announced retroactive and ongoing equal pay adjustments for three of the female-dominated groups in the study, while ignoring three other groups represented by PSAC. These adjustments represent approximately one-quarter to one-third of the amounts deemed necessary (by the study) to achieve pay equity and were not included in salary rates. Treasury Board ignored 95% of the data collected for comparison purposes in the study, and limited their comparison to only four male-dominated occupations of the 53 included in the study. As a result women in the government were effectively manoeuvred out of their money. The Alliance's

approximation of monies owed, based on the study results and Treasury Board's unilateral wage adjustments, are indicated below. The figures speak for themselves!

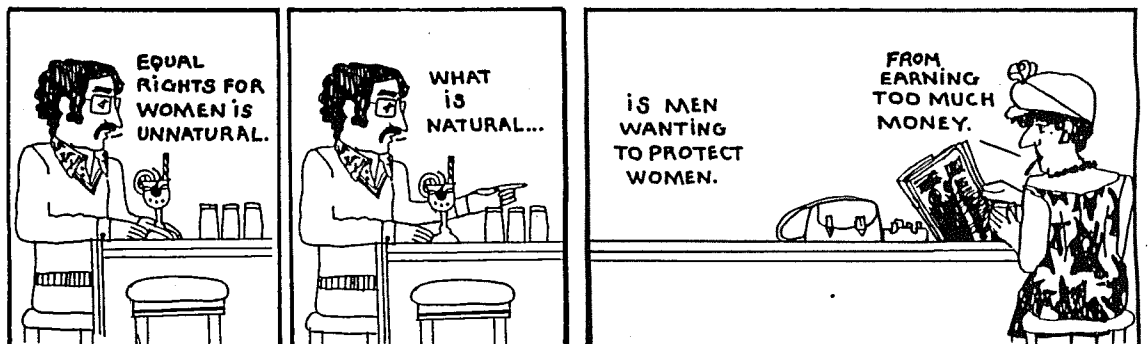
In 1990 a further complaint was filed with the Canadian Human Rights Commission. The Commission investigated and found that Treasury Board's wage adjustment calculations were unacceptable and more money was owed to all female-dominated groups represented by the Alliance. Treasury Board refused to accept these findings and, as a result, the Commission decided to refer the complaint to a Human Rights Tribunal.

The government has continued to use considerable financial and human resources to avoid its obligations. When the Alliance attempted to negotiate equal pay for work of equal value in 1991, Treasury Board argued it was unable to do so because the issue was before the Human Rights Tribunal. At the same time, they were appearing before the

Federal Court challenging the jurisdiction of the Tribunal to hear the complaint. Treasury Board and Justice lawyers also argued the questionnaires used during the Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value Joint Initiative were not admissible as evidence at this Tribunal. This and subsequent government attempts to have the Courts nullify the complaint have all been rejected.

Regardless of the government's announcement that pay equity retroactive payments will be limited to November 1st, 1990, the Alliance is continuing to pursue its complaint before the Human Rights Tribunal. And it will do all it can to dissuade the government from proceeding with its planned legislation. Someday, with or without this government, equal pay for work of equal value will be a reality for women in the federal public service.

Nycole Turmel is PSAC Executive Vice-President responsible for women's issues.



NICOLE HOLLANDER
"THAT WOMAN MUST BE ON DRUGS"
ST. MARTIN'S PRESS, NEW YORK

Since 1977, equal pay for work of equal value has been law for women in the federal public service. Since the early 1980's, the Public Service Alliance has been trying to get the government to obey this law.

A joint union-management study clearly showed that female-dominated groups in the federal public service are being grossly underpaid.

Still, the government refused to act on the study, refused to deal with the issue in contract negotiations, and even went to court to stop a human rights tribunal from hearing the case.

Now, the government has introduced legislation to allow it to ignore its own equal pay laws.

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Killing the Court Challenges Program

by Kathleen Ruff

Ten year ago women and other disempowered groups fought very hard to get strongly worded equality rights in the constitution. Having these rights is not much good however, if people are not able to access them.

Half the battle was won when equality rights were written into the constitution; the next battle was to get the federal government to set up an independent program that would fund women and other equality seeking groups taking test cases to court under section 15 of the Charter of Rights & Freedoms.

In September 1985 the federal government (apparently it was Brian Mulroney's own decision) announced that an independent Court Challenges Program would be set up for the next five years. It would receive \$83 million a year towards equality and language minority rights cases. An independent Equality Rights Panel and an independent Language Rights Panel would decide which cases should get funding.

Women and other groups who experience discrimination are often poor and do not have the means to hire lawyers and go to court when their rights are violated. The Court Challenges Program made a world of difference.

For the first time, cases were brought to the court challenging the ways federal laws and policies violated the equality rights of disempowered groups.

Here are just a few examples of the kinds of cases funded by the Program:

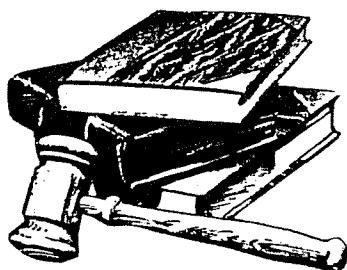
- discrimination against immigrant women in the way the federal government makes language training available

- discrimination against women prisoners, particularly aboriginal women prisoners, by sending them thousands of miles away from their homes to one barbaric prison in Kingston without proper programs or services

- denial of employment benefits, social benefits, and human rights protection to lesbians and gay men

- discrimination against persons with disabilities in the tax system; immigration system; justice system; in transportation; in access to culture and information; in access to employment

- discrimination against aboriginal women in the Indian Act



- genocide of aboriginal communities by the low flight military testing program in Labrador
- racism and sexism in the justice system.

In addition to funding cases, the Program gave disempowered groups the chance to come together to develop their ideas and strategies on how to fight important equality cases. Without such help, the most disadvantaged groups had the least chance to bring forward cases. The Program used the money in its own administrative budget to pay for the costs, but let the groups control their own meetings. Activists from across the country met to discuss issues of poverty, disability, race and ethnic discrimination, prisoners' rights, and aboriginal concerns.

These meetings proved to be vital and effective. The fact that the Program was independent and was challenging the government, was a new experience that the government did not like at all.

The all-party Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights &

the Status of Disabled Persons decided to hold hearings on the Program. It called witnesses from every party of the country and studied what the Program had done. At the end of 1989 the committee unanimously recommended the Program be renewed for another ten years (to the year 2000), that it be strengthened in a variety of ways and that educational work be made a clear part of its mandate.

The federal government tried to have the Court Challenges Program fold by dragging its feet. Twice, staff were fired, and only after an emergency Parliamentary Committee meeting, held 10 days before the Program's expiry date, did the government agree to renew it for another five years (to 1995).

However, the government also, ordered the program not to do any more community information work and all meetings bringing together equality seeking groups were expressly banned. Increasing pressure was put on the Program to provide the government with more information about cases it was funding.

In February of 92, buried in budget details, the government said it was ending the Program.

Court Challenges is one of many programs the federal government cut in its latest budget.

As explanation, Gerry Weiner, the Minister responsible for the Program, said, "there is now a solid base of responsibility." Minister of Justice, Kim Campbell, said she would continue to ensure government laws and policies comply with Charter equality rights.

In fact, the federal government is in court over and over again fighting against equality rights, both under the Charter and the Canadian Human Rights Act. Very few equality cases have made their way to the Supreme Court of Canada and by cutting the Court Challenges Program the government is making sure they never will and that it can continue violating rights with impunity.

Equality seeking groups

and language minority groups across the country are fighting to have the government reverse its decision and reinstate the Program. The Parliamentary Committee is holding hearings on the devastating impact killing of the Program would have on women and other disempowered groups.

The battle for the Court Challenges Program is a battle for equality rights. It is also a battle for democratic rights. It is crucial. If we are a democracy and if the constitution is to mean anything at all, there must be at least a opportunity for independent recourse against government abuse of power. That abuse of power, almost unfailingly, oppresses women, persons of colour, persons with disabilities, poor people, lesbians and gay men, aboriginal persons, and other disempowered groups.

The Court Challenges Program is needed so that these violations of rights can be challenged.

KATHLEEN Ruff has been a human rights activist for many years. She was editor of the Canadian Human Rights Advocate and chair of the Equality Rights Panel of the Court Challenges Program.



Mary Clancy, M.P.
*Official Opposition Critic
for the Status of Women*

*Best wishes
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its staff and readers
in the battle for true
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Women in Mexico: The cost of free trade

by Lynda Yanz

Over the next months we will be hearing a lot about the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Negotiators are currently trying to hammer out a draft treaty, expected to be implemented starting New Year's Day, 1993.

NAFTA will establish a process and calendar for removing restrictions to the free flow of goods, investments and services between Canada, the U.S. and Mexico. Although there is still controversy over significant details, there is little doubt that within the next year we will witness another historic step in the U.S. effort to create the world's largest economic and political bloc -- largely under its control.

Before looking at the specific impact on women, it's important that we understand more about NAFTA than most of us do. NAFTA is, at this point, the key tool for restructuring the North American economy. It will permanently alter local, regional and national economic and political realities.

In Canada, we've already witnessed unprecedented job losses, close to 450,000 since the free trade agreement was signed in January 1989. The extension of the deal to include Mexico will exacerbate the problem, accelerating the shift of manufacturing centres from central Canada and northeastern U.S. to southwestern U.S. and Mexico.

Emphasizing the bottom line of "let the market decide", the agreement ensures that transnationals (companies that work in many countries) can choose between countries for the cheapest labour and cheapest resources by lifting rules and regulations that a country has in place to protect their own labour force. It increases international competition, as transnationals go where the best deal is. It also reduces government investment in social programs and regulations of business as they are viewed as unfair subsidies to our population. These agreements pit workers and communities in different countries against each other

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as each country tries to protect their labour laws and environments and keep jobs and industry within their borders while at the same time trying to remain competitive to the transnationals. It's like the man choosing between his wife and mistress and both trying to outdo one another to win his singular attention.

In contrast to broad based opposition that still exists in Canada, it appears that most Mexicans, or at least the majority of those who participate in opinion polls, currently favour free trade. Many Mexicans are willing to gamble on the promise of more jobs, quality goods and economic stability. Unemployment in Mexico has reached crisis proportions in the last years and President Salinas holds out Free Trade as the carrot that will solve the

problem

Recent studies stress that job loss will likely outstrip gains in employment in Mexico, especially with increased migration of *campesinos* forced to leave their land as multinational agribusiness buys up more of the Mexican countryside. The agreement is likely to lock Mexico into its position as a supplier of cheap labour.

Mexico was chosen to follow Canada in Bush's grand plan for continental Free Trade, called Enterprise of the Americas, partly because of geography, but more importantly because Mexico is furthest along among Latin American countries in carrying out the "structural adjustment" program that will facilitate a free trade relationship. Structural adjustment is the popular program used by the World Bank where countries, in order to get financial assistance from the Bank, have to agree to a development plan that reflects the priorities of the first world (north). Often part of the plan includes:

- removing trade and investment barriers;
- privatizing key industries;
- cutting back the state's role in social programs; and
- attempting to break the strength of independent union organizing, often

times by violent repression.

NAFTA will further augment the changes that have already taken place in the Mexican economy. The economic situation has deteriorated and unemployment has skyrocketed. Families and whole communities have been left increasingly dependent on women's labour as men have been forced to migrate north looking for work. Women have been a specific focus of the government's restructuring strategies.

The *maquila* program, designed with women's labour specifically in mind, is one example. Nearly half a million Mexicans, the majority women, are currently employed in the *maquiladora* (assembly for export) plants. The program, first established in 1965, allowed U.S. companies to move labour intensive portions of their manufacturing to Mexico, where they could count on extremely low wages, docile unions, and little or no labour and environment standards. Wages currently are at about \$.56 U.S. per hour.

Until recently, the *maquiladoras* were contained to a few border cities. Today they are being expanded throughout the country, held up by the Salinas administration as the model for Mexico's future.

Until recently the *maquilas* depended primarily on women's labour. Now, as the program expands beyond the garment and electronics industries, transforming auto and other more traditionally "male" industries, that's changing. The percentage of women *maquila* workers has fallen from 85% in 1975 to 66% in 1990.

Obviously, the grim economic realities are making men more willing to endure conditions and wages seen in the past as more appropriate for women. This shift will no doubt be consequential for vast numbers of women who have in the past counted on finding work more easily in *maquiladora* factories.

NAFTA will accelerate and lock Mexico into the process of the "continental re-organization" of almost all sectors of our various economies. Cutting across the specifics of all industries will be a pursuit of flexible low cost labour.

As industries reorganize themselves more "efficiently" along continental lines, we can expect that women's labour will be "adjusted" to suit the needs of profit in a number of key sectors. One dramatic example is the garment industry, which has been particularly suited to continental restructuring. It is highly mobile, requires low capital investment, and depends almost entirely on a cheap and abundant work force. The restructuring of this industry is already having a major impact on women in our three countries.

Currently, Mexico provides only 3% of the U.S. garment imports, and less for Canada. However, with the opening of Mexico's borders through the free trade agreement, a massive relocation of garment production from Asia to the Americas can be expected. What this means for women is already becoming apparent. Textile production and cutting - the most capital intensive and profitable aspects of the industry will remain in the U.S., in the hands of a predominantly male work force; sewing is passed on to women workers in Third World countries, working at subsistence wages.

Since the 1980's, workers in Canada have been experiencing steady job losses as the industry opens up to imports, primarily from Asia. In Canada, the garment industry is in the midst of its most severe crisis. Between 1988 and mid 1990, Toronto suffered a loss of approximately one-third of its garment industry jobs.

In Mexico, the parent industry outside of the *maquiladoras* has been experiencing a serious decline as well. In both countries,

(Continued on page 13)




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Things you should know about NAFTA

excerpts from a draft text by Action Canada Network, Canadian centre for Policy Alternatives, and Common Frontiers, April 1992

- The NAFTA will cover 75% of Canada's international trade.
- NAFTA will extend the economic space within which large corporations can move freely in Canada and elsewhere on the continent, unrestrained by public accountability. It will give them enormous new power and place further constraints on the ability of Canadian governments to shape industrial policy, manage resources and, indirectly, carry out social policy. For a NAFTA to come into effect, implementing legislation, new laws and a host of amendments to existing laws and regulations, must be passed both by parliament and the provincial legislatures.
- The result of this negotiation will be as important to the future of this country as the outcome of the constitutional negotiations.
- The U.S. wants a "post termination" provision in the investment chapter that anticipates the eventuality of a Canadian cancellation of the agreement. Under the proposal, investments existing at the time of termination will continue to be covered by this chapter, for a further 10 years after the termination date. This is an attempt to intimidate a

Canadian government that wanted to abrogate the deal.

- The Americans' single biggest goal in this negotiation is to entrench intellectual property rights; long term monopoly protection for patents, trade marks etc. of their transnational corporations. Ultimately set aside in the FTA round, the U.S. intellectual property proposal represents the largest U.S. part of the proposals. It could effectively destroy, for example, compulsory licensing for drugs, and therewith the Canadian generic drug industry, and add an estimated \$500 million in consumer costs.

- All the performance requirements prohibited in the FTA (which prevent governments from requiring that companies fulfill certain commitments as a condition of investing in Canada) are reproduced in the NAFTA investment chapter. Moreover, Mexico and the U.S. are pushing for additional prohibitions on the ability of governments to require companies to transfer technology and establish world (regional) product mandates as a condition of their investment.

- Contrary to public promises, the Mulroney government, by conceding to tariffication of quotas, is preparing to give up the basic tools of supply managed agriculture, the main organizing principle of dairy and poultry production in Canada.

- Not only does the NAFTA indicate a major restructuring of our rail and trucking and telecommunications systems along a north-south axis, but all countries agree that non-energy pipelines, including fresh water, will be included in the land transportation services chapter. Countries are required to articulate any domestic provisions in this chapter that are inconsistent with the investments and services provisions of the agreement and to spell out a timetable for their phase out. Additionally, the U.S. is proposing full scale deregulation of these services. Together with changes already made in the FTA, this appears to be another step along the way to the large scale export of Canadian water.

- Finally, Canada is proposing that the NAFTA (which in the event of a conflict will supersede the FTA) come into effect on January 1, 1993. Given that a federal election is not expected until the spring of 1993, it is clear that Mr. Mulroney intends to proceed with a NAFTA without an electoral mandate. Indeed, even if negotiations are concluded in the next weeks, there will be very little time for public debate and discussion of the final text.

(continued from opposite page)

there has already been a dramatic increase in work done in the home.

There is a need for solidarity, but solidarity of a new type, not from north to south, but among equals. The task ahead is to work together to develop vehicles for this new kind of solidarity. There are already examples emerging.

Groups such as Mujer Obrera, which organizes women primarily in the garment industry in El Paso, have begun to organize on both sides of the border. Mujer Obrera tries to build broad-based community and union support for their work, which goes beyond workplace organizing to develop alternative economic strategies at the community

level.

Fuerza Unida, based in San Antonio, Texas, was formed after the closing of the Levi Plant which employed over 1200 workers. This 650 member strong organization has won broad local and national support. They have filed a class action suit against the company, and are leading a boycott against Levi products, and have initiated a national campaign against U.S. garment plant shutdowns.

In Canada, there are several new and old initiatives. Action Canada Network is closely monitoring the new trade agreement talks and have documentation of the mounting a campaign for increased protection of garment homeworkers. In

B.C., a similar committee has formed to develop links with Mexican women in order to share strategies and struggles.

There is no doubt that the lives of Mexican, U.S. and Canadian women are being drawn together as never before; the challenge remains to build more permanent, long-term alliances not only to resist the free trade corporate agenda, but also to develop an alternative, and feminist, vision for economic, social and political relations.

Lynda Yanz works with Mujer a Mujer from Toronto.

U.S./Canada Free Trade Agreement. In Ontario, a coalition of community, women's and labour groups is

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No fish ... no future

by Rita Pennell

Trepassey is a one-industry town situated on the southern loop of the Avalon Peninsula in Newfoundland.

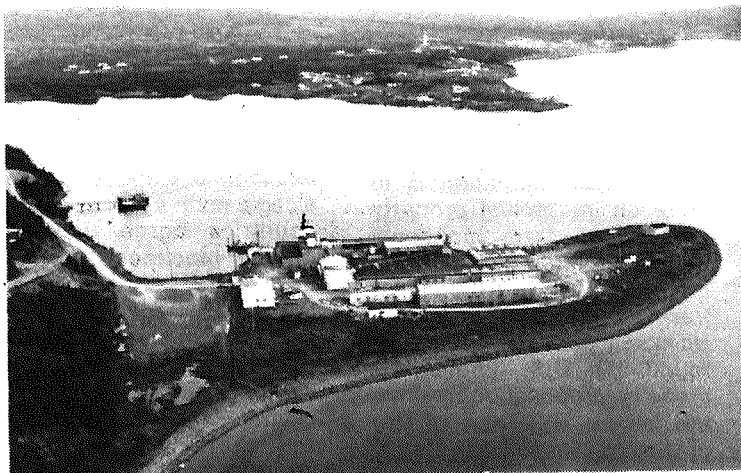
The fishery was the main source of employment in Trepassey and in the surrounding areas from Portugal Cove South to St. Mary's Bay. We are concerned about the impact additional quota restrictions will have on our community and the 9 or 10 other communities that depend on our fish plant.

This industrious and prosperous town now shows signs of much distress, anxiety, and loss of hope. We are frightened, nervous, and uncertain of what lies ahead.

The fishery in Newfoundland has had problems for hundreds of years, but right now it seems these problems have reached crisis proportions.

The fishery as we've come to know it in Newfoundland no longer exists. They tell us there are too many fisherpersons chasing too few fish; if this is the case, and if Newfoundland is to continue its dependence on the fishery, then we have to look at diversification and expansion of underutilized or non-traditional species of fish.

We have always processed cod, flounder and other species known and recognized worldwide. We now have to



research and analyze ways of processing some of the unknown, less attractive species. We have to learn to catch, process, package, and market these species. We must create markets where none exist; and make people aware of the health benefits of eating fish. We also have to investigate processing methods which are labour intensive so our people can continue to have meaningful employment.

Trepassey has been a viable and prosperous region of our province since our fish plant opened in 1953. For almost 40 years unemployment has been virtually non-existent and residents of the area have continually contributed to the local, provincial and national economy in the form of direct and indirect taxation.

At peak capacity the Trepassey plant employed 800-900 people. There are more than 30 small businesses operating in Trepassey, employing dozens of people whose jobs exist primarily because of spin-offs from the fish plant. In addition, there are government employees, teachers and medical staff, most of whose jobs can be attributed to the fish plant operations.

With existing quotas, our plant sits empty, our future processing groundfish looks pretty bleak, but we are still fighting and searching for an operator to take over and process underutilized species.

But what happens to our people and their way of life if we cannot find an operator? Do we turn to the province for social assistance? Do we rely on the federal government for make-work projects and UIC?

A black cloud hangs over our town as people discuss what they will do. I fear for the livelihood of my family, my friends and the people I represent. What happens to the economic prosperity and the social fabric of our communities? What happens to the work ethic, the pride and self-worth that our people possess?

Our people will have to move, but to where? There are no jobs anywhere. What will we do? How can we stand by and watch our children go hungry while the foreigners rape our fish stocks and seals eat our fish.

We are begging our federal government to make changes to save our way of life. Three suggestions would be for government to:

- control foreign overfishing. Beginning March 29, our fishing fleets will be going out beyond the 200 mile limit to show their opposition to foreign fisherman.

- Implement a cull on seal herds which are decimating our cod stocks. Seals do a lot of damage to equipment and eat large numbers of cod. Dragnets often pull up their nets to find half-eaten cod and seals caught in their equipment.

- Government can extend jurisdiction to include the nose and tail of the Grand Banks which is a legitimate right under the constitution.

We must all work together. The federal, provincial and municipal governments, unions, inshore and offshore fisherpersons, and you my fellow Canadians, all have to work together to save the East Coast Fishery.

Rita Pennell is mayor of the Town of Trepassey, population approximately 1500. She is a widow and mother of six. Rita works as an Emergency Medical Attendant with Ryan's Ambulance providing pre-hospital care to patients being transported to 100 miles away to the nearest hospital in St. John's. Rita is also the Chairperson of the Trepassey Community Development Fund and Secretary/Treasurer on the Business Development Centre Board.

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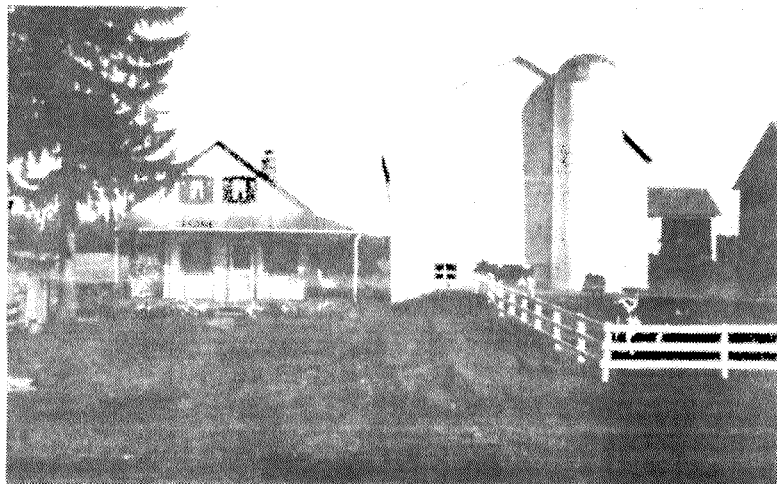
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Who will feed Canada?

by Sharon Weitzel



These days, it seems everyone is an expert on food. Who pays too much, and who not enough? Which farmers are fair, which ones not? And as the International trade talks heated up during negotiations on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, (GATT), more editorials, rhetoric, and inaccuracies have appeared in the media. The result, has been mass confusion for Canadian consumers.

Part of the problem is the complexity of the agriculture industry that most urban people view as pastoral simplicity. It is anything but. In today's complex society, I can't think of anyone more stressed than Canadian farmers. And sadly, no one has been telling that story.

As a Canadian dairy farmer, I am extremely concerned about GATT. At risk here is a system of marketing that has, at its heart and soul, the survival of family farms like mine. My husband, myself and our children run a farm of some 110 acres, with forty milking cows, and 45 or so young

animals. We grow most of our feeds and are both management and labour force.

We've put all our resources and a lot of sweat into its success. We work many long hours caring for our herd and we believe that our supply management system of marketing milk is the best there is in the world. Over the last 25 years it has brought stability to this industry, has ensured fair returns for our product, and allowed family farms to flourish. The spectre of our future without it is frightening to me. Without my marketing board, small individual farmers will have no one to bargain on their behalf for a decent price. Individual producers will have to deal with the large processors over price. Once that power is in their hands, we are looking at the end of family farms in this country. To see our future, one only has to look south of the border.

For many years now, American dairy producers have been living with price highs and lows. The drains on their industry are appalling. There is

no money, farms are going out of business in record numbers and large corporate farms are shifting production to areas of the country where the input costs are lowest, where no heated buildings are needed and where they can grow crops year round. Once proud, family farms are withering and blowing away like dust. Bankruptcies are commonplace. The very fabric of rural America is being torn asunder as rural communities are decimated.

Now many of you might be saying, "Well, what's wrong with that? The free market is based on the best price to the consumer and if family farms can't compete, then get out of the way." But in the long run family farms are important to the consumer.

Only some Canadian farmers are found under "supply managed marketing boards". They consist of milk, egg and poultry farmers. These farmers are price setters. Canadian dairy and poultry farmers can ask for a fair price, which is based on their costs to produce that

product, as well as a modest profit. Processors must pay the going rate. In return, these farmers agree to not produce excessive surpluses that would add to world chaos for farmers who must accept world prices.

Dairy and poultry farmers in Canada are producing for a domestic market only and they pay the lion's share of its operating costs, advertising, administration, etc. The result has been stability for the industry, consistent supply for consumers and processors and control on price increases at the farm gate.

That is where GATT rears its ugly head. The outcome of these talks is critical to all Canadians' future. Canada presently allows the United States access to less than 3% of our market in dairy products. If marketing boards are excluded from a new GATT deal, American milk and milk products could enter Canada without restriction. Proposed tariffs would add to the price of imported products, but even the highest tariff would still

milk in the first place. If any business fails to cover its production costs, it won't be in business very long. If we are forced to produce milk at American prices, we will go broke. It's as simple as that.

If GATT kills marketing boards, consumers will not save money. Farmers are not the only people in the dairy industry with higher costs than in the United States. If GATT opens up our border, American companies will put the Canadian family dairy farm out of business. Those same companies would also become the competition for Canada's dairy processors, and processing costs in Canada are believed to be a great deal higher than in the United States: more jobs lost in Canada.

More important than this issue, is the spectre of a country who will have lost the ability to feed itself! Look at Russians! Canadians face the very real risk of becoming entirely dependant on imported food. This is a ridiculous state of affairs for a country which can be totally self sufficient in food production. We already import a large portion of our food and the amount is ever increasing. For example, in Ontario in 1981, we imported \$2.5 billion worth of food. In 1991, we imported \$4.2 billion worth, most of which could just as easily be grown and processed here. If we remain slaves to the corporate bottom line on this issue, we will have lost control over our future. **Who will feed Canada?**

And if we are relying upon non-Canadians to feed us, what conditions are they going to put on our food? This is the question each and every one of us needs to examine.

Sharon Weitzel's family farm is Gravelloam Holsteins in Ontario.



allow American products into Canada at an estimated 12 to 15 percent lower than our prices now. Tariffs would also be reduced over time and eliminated eventually.

Simply put, cheap American milk and milk products would flood the Canadian market and the American price would become the Canadian price.

As I stated earlier, the American price for milk is well below what it costs the Canadian farmer to produce the

Comparing the costs

The social costs of farm consolidation were exposed 45 years ago by an anthropologist named Walter Goldschmidt, who was then employed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). He studied two agricultural towns, Arvin and Dinuba, in California's Central Valley. The two towns were similar by basic economic measurements, but the nature and size of the farms around Arvin were markedly different from those around Dinuba. Dinuba was surrounded by many small, independent farms worked mainly by families, while Arvin lay in the midst of larger farms, where labour was supplied mainly by seasonal workers. Though the total dollar volume of agricultural production in the two towns was nearly the same,

Goldschmidt found striking differences in the social fabric of the two communities--differences that made USDA officials so uncomfortable that they cancelled Goldschmidt's research and refused to publish his study.

Among his findings:

- The small farms supported about 20% more people and at a higher standard of living. Dinuba (the small-farm community) had more institutions for democratic decision making and broader participation in such activities by its citizenry.

- Most residents of the small-farm community were independent entrepreneurs. In the large-farm community, nearly two-thirds were agricultural wage labourers.

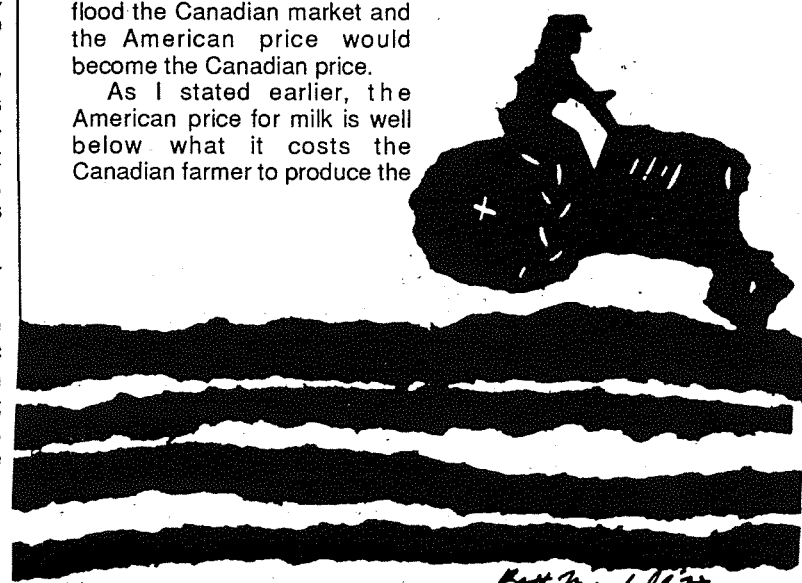
- The small-farm community

had better community facilities: more schools, more parks, more newspapers, more civic organizations, and more churches.

- The small-farm community had twice as many business establishments as the large-farm town and did 61 percent more retail business, especially in household goods and building equipment.

- Physical facilities for community living - paved streets, sidewalks, garbage disposal, and other public services - were far greater in the small-farm community; indeed, in the industrial-farm community some of these facilities were entirely wanting.

*excerpted from
Craig Canine -
Harrowsmith Country Life*



Boh Marshall '77

The Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres

In August 1991, The Supreme Court struck down the so-called "Rape Shield Law".

The Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres (OCRCC) and the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres (CASAC) were, and still are, outraged that our highest court rules that a woman's past sexual history can be relevant in a sexual assault trial. We believe a woman's past sexual history is never relevant.

The Department of Justice proposed legislation in December 1991 which will limit using a woman's past sexual history in court. The proposal attempts to do this in two ways - first by defining what constitutes "consent". This may be useful to combat the "defence of honest belief" - when a rapist claims that he "honestly believed" he had her consent. If this legislation passes with this clause intact, a rapist may be asked to tell the court what steps he took to get her consent - an example might be asking her if she wanted to have sex with him.

The second way the legislation hopes to limit the use of information about a woman's sexual history will be by providing guidelines and procedures for judges to use when deciding to allow it or not. For example, past sexual history is not to be used to suggest that woman is not believable. It is important for women to know that **this proposed law will still allow questioning of past sexual history**. This proposal will only attempt to regulate such questions, and will still leave the decision to individual judges.

Women's groups from around the country met in January to unanimously pass recommendations to strengthen this bill to make it work for rape survivors. CASAC and the OCRCC played a leading role in these discussions. They included a section in the preamble to recognize the increased vulnerability to sexual violence and decreased access to justice by: aboriginal women, black women, women of colour, disabled women, elderly women, immigrant women, lesbians, refugee women, sex trade workers, women without full citizenship, and children. Also needed is clearer wording in the clause defining consent and a clear gender specific statement in the preamble: it is men who rape and women and children who are the victims.

Most significantly, we agreed that without significant changes to other legislation, namely the Immigration act, foreign domestic workers program (FDM), native self-government and prostitution related laws, this legislation will not offer justice women who are most vulnerable to sexual violence. Women's access to justice is not equal in this country, and if the new rape shield law is really to benefit all of us, then it must say so explicitly in law.

CASAC and OCRCC believes that past sexual history is **never** relevant. Despite this, we do feel that this proposed legislation is worth supporting by women's groups with some changes to strengthen it. The defence lawyers want to water this bill down. If the opposition and anti-feminists are successful in weakening this bill, it will become useless, will not protect women, and will not be worth supporting. This proposed legislation will go before the Justice Committee in April. We ask that women write to as many M.P.'s as possible, and to Justice Minister Kim Campbell to tell her you want the bill strengthened for women. Tell them you support the changes that CASAC, LEAF and other women's groups are demanding. Tell them to listen to women's groups and not give in to anti-feminists. If you would like to make a presentation to the Justice Committee to support our demands, call the Clerk at 613-996-1553.

The Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres and the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres remains committed to investigating alternatives to the Canadian legal system in order to hold rapists accountable for their actions.

*The Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres
La Coalition des centres Anti-Viol de l'Ontario*

Head Office
P.O. Box 1929
Peterborough, Ont.
K9J 7X7
705-745-3646 Phone
705-741-0405 FAX

Centres

Barrie and District Rape Crisis Line
80 Bradford Street
Unit #21
Barrie Ont.
L4N 6S7
705-737-0464 office/crisis
705-739-7268 FAX

Sexual Assault Centre of Guelph
P.O. Box 1451
Guelph, Ont.
N1H 6N9
519-823-5806 Office
519-836-5710 Crisis
800-265-7233 Crisis
519-836-1979 FAX

Halton Rape Crisis Centre
676 Appleby Line, Unit E1-12
Burlington, Ont.
L7L 5Y1
416-847-1588 Office
416-875-1555 Crisis
416-847-3145 FAX

Sexual Assault Centre, Hamilton
P.O. Box 955, Station A
Hamilton, Ont.
L8N 3P9
416-525-4573 Office
416-525-4162 Crisis
416-525-7085 FAX

Kenora Sexual Assault Centre
P.O. Box 687
Kenora, Ont.
P9N 3X6
807-468-9095 Office
807-468-7233 Crisis
807-468-4808 FAX

Kingston Sexual Assault Crisis Centre
P.O. Box 1461
Kingston, Ont.
K7K 5C7
613-545-0762 Office
613-544-6424 Crisis
No FAX

Kitchener Waterloo Sexual Assault Centre
P.O. Box 2003
Kitchener, Ont.
N2H 6K8
519-571-0121 Office
519-741-8633 crisis
519-658-0551
Crisis..Cambridge
519-571-0522 FAX

London Sexual Assault Crisis Centre
700 Richmond Street
Suite 210
London, Ont
N6A 5C7
519-439-0844 Office
519-438-2272 Crisis
519-439-9931 FAX

Niagara Region Sexual Assault Crisis Centre (Carsa)
60 James Street, Suite 503
St. Catharines, Ontario
L2R 7E7
416-682-7258 Office
416-682-4584 Crisis
416-682-2114 FAX

Oshawa Durham Rape Crisis Centre
P.O. Box 2373
Oshawa, Ontario
L1H 7Z6
416-725-2241 Crisis
416-725-3046 FAX

Sexual Assault Support Centre
P.O. Box 1441, Station E
Ottawa, Ontario
K1S 5B4
613-725-2160 Office
613-234-2266 Crisis
613-725-9259 FAX

Peterborough Rape Crisis Centre
P.O. Box 1697
Peterborough, Ont.
K9J 7S4
705-748-5901 Office
705-876-4444 Crisis
705-741-0405 FAX

Sarnia Sexual Assault Support Centre
785 Exmouth Street, Suite 204
Sarnia, Ontario
N7T 5P7
519-337-3154 Office
519-337-3320 Crisis
519-337-0819 FAX

Scugog Rape Crisis Centre
146-6 Queen Street
Port Perry, Ont
L9L 1B7
416-985-8850 Office
416-985-8006 Crisis
416-985-0852 FAX

Sudbury Rape Crisis centre
156 Durham Street, 3rd Floor
Sudbury, Ont.
P3E 3M7
705-675-8071 Office
705-675-1323 Crisis
706-671-0063 FAX (downstairs)

Toronto Rape Crisis Centre
21 Baldwin Street
Toronto, Ont.
M5T 1L1
416-597-1171 Office
416-964-8080 Crisis
416-597-9648 FAX

Windsor Sexual Assault Crisis Centre
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N8X 2G1
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Where did we go wrong?

Rethinking the strategies of the "women's" movement

The latest wave of the women's movement started in the late 60's and early 70's. It made an important contribution to the advancement of women, primarily through raising our consciousness (to borrow a phrase from that era), both as individual women and as a society overall.

The silence was broken around many fundamental issues: rape and sexual assault, wife battering, discrimination in hiring, sexual harassment on the job, unequal pay for the same job (let alone comparable jobs), child care, non-sexist language, contraception and reproductive rights, sexual orientation, pink collar job ghettoes, housework, the glass ceiling for women in management, and so on.

These issues are now at least on the public agenda, although on many of them we have a great deal of work to do to achieve the concrete results we need. Placing these issues on the public mind is a huge accomplishment. We cannot underestimate the amount of energy and effort required to shift societal thinking, and we should congratulate ourselves on that work. However, that particular stage in the women's movement is coming to a close, it seems to me, and there is a searching for a wider relevancy and a further vision and leadership.

I think this is happening because, despite the important advances of the feminist movement, we made some serious mistakes. "We", in this case really refers to the organized, visible, "official" women's movement - those groups of women who referred to themselves as feminist and as part of the women's movement.

Our first mistake was that we assumed the similarities women share were far more important than our differences. Clearly, all women have much in common - there are profound similarities that cross boundaries of age, geography, wealth and family situation.

However, this continual focus on commonality allowed us to neatly gloss over some important differences among women. In fact, it allowed us to ignore issues that are central to the lives of many women, issues like poverty and racism. The so-called "women's movement" was for many years a movement that reflected the needs and the views of a very specific group of women - primarily middle-class and white.

Canada is an increasingly multicultural, and also multi-racial society. A single mother raising three children on welfare faces substantially different choices and problems than a skilled business

graduate who hits the glass ceiling. There are women who are denied services because they don't speak English. There are women denied jobs because they are in a wheelchair, or because they are lesbians. Aboriginal women are fighting for the very existence of their culture and their nation. Other women have sought their own development by joining the armed forces. How can one movement meet the needs of all these women?

It is only in recent years that the women's movement has even started to acknowledge the diversity of

few. These are serious barriers which cause pain and hardship and which deny society full access to the abilities and the contribution of women, contributions which we sorely need.

Obviously, we need to acknowledge that these obstacles exist, and we must battle them, but we must never let them define us. We need to identify not only the problems we face, but also the sources of women's strength and power.

Each of us is shaped by circumstances around us, by our origins, and by qualities within ourselves. Our cultural

wrong objective, I now believe. I spent the first ten years of my involvement in feminism trying to convince the men around me that, apart from biological reproduction functions, there was effectively no difference between men and women. Women are as smart as men, as good leaders as men, as physically fit as men, and on and on.

I spent the last five years trying to convince people that men and women are different.

As one button puts it, "A woman who seeks equality with men lacks ambition." That is not to belittle men, but to underline that no one can set the standards for anyone else. You have to have your own dreams, and you have to pursue them as you see best. You have to live your own life, take responsibility, take risks, and ultimately face the consequences.

So, the goal of the women's movement, and the goal of all of us who believe in women in any way, should not, in my view, be equality, but empowerment.

Implicit in that is a judgement that every woman, given the resources and opportunity, will make sound, compassionate and responsible decisions about her life, her family, and about the society around her. That means the women's movement will not second guess women,

by Lynne Tyler

will not tell them what choices to make, will not condemn certain choices.

Also implicit in this is the view that, however diverse our circumstances, no woman is completely powerless. Each of us has some degree of resources and power, that comes from within ourselves. We need to take what resources we have, whether rich or meagre, and apply them to our lives, and to the pursuit of what we believe in.

American black feminist Audre Lorde once said that energy or power, is the only force in the universe that is never wasted; in other words, if you don't use your power, someone else will.

The empowerment of women is fundamentally the key to the unleashing of tremendous human skills and resources, and even more importantly, to a new way of understanding the world around us and our responsibility in protecting, nurturing and re-shaping it. It is precisely because women see the world differently from men, that we have so much to offer.

Lynne is a past president of the YWCA of/du Canada, where she first tested the basic ideas contained in this article. As co-publisher of *The Womanist*, she is considered the best dressed member of the editorial team.



In the
movement

The phone rings, the operator connects us all and nine Canadian women, all Native or Metis, settle in to answer the question "Should women have the right to write fiction that is not based in their own cultural/ethnic context?". All these women are writers.

The silence is tense for a moment or two. It is an important question, one worthy of thought and honest answers. Then the questions start. "Do you mean 'right' in the sense that I have the 'right' to vote, or the 'right' to have my voice heard? There is a difference. Even in this society, I have a 'right' to voice an opinion, through fiction or any other medium I choose." There are murmurs of agreement.

"Fiction has theme and purpose, just like any other form of expression. If I voice an opinion through one of my characters or in a first-person essay, it's still my opinion, nothing more, nothing less."

"Exactly," says another voice, "I write about characters from within my culture, but my culture includes non-Natives, I can't exclude them. It wouldn't be honest."

The issue of honesty in writing sparks more questions. The inevitable resolution is that all writers write what they know. "I grew up on a reserve, all my friends were Native, I wouldn't write about non-Native children growing up in Toronto. For the first few years of my life, I thought you turned white after you became a doctor. The only white people I saw were doctors! I still find most of the doctors in my novels are white,

simply because that's how I envision them. It's part of my own prejudice. I don't think I should write only about Native doctors because I'm a Native Canadian. That would make my work seem phony."

"But isn't it phony for non-Native Canadians to set their stories in Native communities? They didn't grow up there!"

"Mark Twain wasn't an enslaved African, but he wrote about them. He didn't try to pretend he was one."

"Yes, but his books have been pulled out of the schools now."



"I don't want them doing an ass up job telling my story ..."

"I know. I think it was wrong. Even though he wrote about a time when people of colour had little respect from whites, I don't feel it was derogatory to people of color. He wrote about his time, time that maybe whites want to forget. Fiction is part of our history. What we write today tells people a hundred years from now about us, not about our characters. If I read Twain's work today, I know I'm reading about Twain's view of his world, not about some white kid on a raft with a slave. Whoever decided to pull his work off the school library shelves was ignorant. I don't care what color his skin was, he knew nothing about literature or history."

"So if you were to write about a non-Native family growing up in Toronto, you'd expect your reader to know that this was your vision, not necessarily reality?"

"Of course she would! Any thinking person would. The real question here is, 'What is the writer's intention?'. If I wrote about that family in Toronto, I'd have a purpose when I did it. I'd want someone to say 'Ah, this is this writer's view. I wonder if I'd see it that way if I were her.'"

"Right! We write our vision so someone else can see it from a different perspective. That's the whole point. That's why historians study literature. How could someone today know what Greek culture was really like without their literature? I don't know what it is to be white, but, by reading the stories they write, I know which of them have met and known Natives. We're in their writing."

"Can I add something? I write a lot of mainstream material, it's not very literary and I don't think it will be read by historians or anything like that..."

"Neither did Shakespeare."

"...True. But my point is, I write about non-Natives all the time. I don't think they resent it. Why should I resent it if someone who isn't a member of the First Nations writes about a character who is?"

"Because I don't want someone writing about Natives just to make a few cents. I don't want them doing an ass-up job telling my story, spreading a lot of misinformation, and wiping out the ground we've gained with a few smutty scenes about 'easy Indian women'. That's why!"

"Hang on here. No one can make me seem 'easy' just by writing a trashy novel."

"That's so idealistic. Propaganda is dangerous, all women know that. That's why I don't want whites writing my story. I want it to be right."

"So Twain really did make life harder for enslaved Africans?"

"No...I mean... Spirit. I don't know what I mean. Know what I mean?" Yes. Everyone on that line knew what she meant.

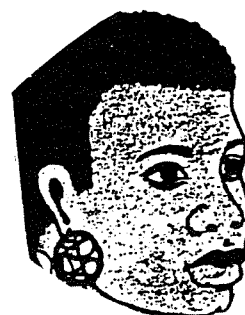
Across the lines, we could feel ourselves drawing closer to one another's understanding.

"What I meant was, I don't want to be exploited on paper. If someone writes about a 'drunk Indian', I want the reader

to realize that the writer knew a drunk Indian, not that we're all drunk all the time. I want that writer to treat our people with respect. It's just so frustrating because I can't expect every reader to assume it was a drunk Indian. You're all right. No matter who writes what, it's up to the reader to realize that the finished work is one writer's vision."

A gentle voice reaches out like a comforting hand. "So, even if someone gets it wrong, we've gained something. You see, every writer who writes from her heart paints part of the picture. A missed stroke is an example of a missed stroke. It isn't always deliberate. By writing what they see now, right or wrong, every single writer paints part of the picture. In time, after enough is written, we'll see what's out of proportion all the more clearly because of what is in focus."

"It's just hard to see non-Native writers writing our stories when we could do it so much better. It's harder for us to write them. Last week I found out one of my manuscripts was being considered because the publisher wanted to have some 'Native content'. It was such a slap in the face, especially



when another contributor, a non-Native had a piece accepted because it was about Natives. I asked for my manuscript back. Now, her manuscript, mistakes and all, will be printed and no one even thought to ask me if it was factually correct, never mind the quality of writing. I don't want to judge the quality of writing in fiction about Natives, but I wish someone would check the facts. Instead, they'll point out that aspirin can only have a capital "A" if it comes after 'Bayer'."

After we'd hung up, there

by Ngaire Genge, with a lot of help

was a lot of journal writing. The frustrations will be there until the last barriers to women, Native Canadians, Métis, and all other ethnic and cultural freedoms fall. For the nine women who spoke to one another, the inner tension is turned towards changing those barriers into memories of the past. Fiction is fiction, based on what we've lived and seen, but many of our new characters



will talk to one another and what they have to say may be very much like what you've read in this piece.

Women from all cultures, will continue to write what they see, feel and experience. Some of it will be angry, some of it will be pleasant. For the sake of generations to come, it should be honest.

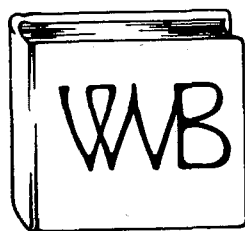
As writers, we could agree on some points. Censorship is wrong. Anything that removes the right to free expression is wrong. Censorship is doubly wrong in that it encourages us to stop thinking for ourselves, to stop questioning the status quo, to allow someone else to make important decisions for us. Women have struggled to prove that we can and should make our own decisions. To say that writers can, or can't, write in certain areas is censorship. Misguided or factually incorrect writing tells us where the stumbling blocks are. Once we know where misunderstandings are, we can try to write material that will clarify those points.

We nine, as writers and women and Natives and everything else that we are, refuse to condone the limitation of free speech. To do so would endanger all that we believe and all that we strive for.

Ngaire Genge is a feminist living in Labrador City.

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Coming to terms with myself

by Abby Pollonetsky

"Is it true Ms. Pollonetsky, that you have a fatal disease? The voters of Ottawa West deserve to know."

The question, following an all-candidates debate during the Federal election campaign in 1979, caught me off-guard, believing, as I had for some time, that my secret was well kept. "Well, Ms. Nosey Parder, yes, in a way it is true. . . life, after all, is a fatal condition." This silenced her, and no further personal questions were asked during the campaign.

For almost fifteen years I have carried what must be one of the country's worst kept secrets--depending on whether or not I trusted you, or wanted to up the ante on self-pity or self-aggrandisement by telling you, in the strictest confidence, about my condition.

I have thought, until recently, that there was something shameful about

Central America, with women trade unionists in the historic strike against Eaton, (and most recently in the Coalition Against Free Trade) given birth to two sons by natural childbirth, while carrying the knowledge of my disease with me. What a woman!

All this, and being a good cook, knowing the latest trends in fashion, movies and theatre, telling risque stories and convoluted jokes, whew, it makes me tired just thinking of it.

Flash backwards-

"Well Abby, your problems with your knees do not stem from jogging, we will have to do more tests."

A summer of CAT scans, electro encephelograms, angiography where fluorescent dyes were pumped into my veins turning my body wastes psychedelic colours, and Valium, prescribed to keep an increasingly uneasy Abby on a medicated even keel.

Finally, that fateful day, when my partner, and my mother, sat with me in the doctor's office to hear the results of all those tests.

"Abby," the doctor began, (I forget her name, but appreciate her calm manner to this day) you have a condition that will be with you for the rest of your life. It will come and go in waves, and will likely not interfere with the normal course of your life. From time to time it will flare up, but we will deal with those flare-ups on a case-by-case basis."

"O.K., doctor", I remember saying, "what is this condition called?"

"Multiple sclerosis."

There. I said it. I've just written it on the page.

My immediate reaction was panic. I asked if I would end up drooling, in a wheelchair. I was immediately assured this was not the kind of disease that MS is.

My next question, asked of the neurologist that I have had since that summer, was, "Dr. Rabinovitch, will I be able to have children?", the response being, "that depends on Don".

Those were the last questions I asked about MS for a decade. I did not want to know. I carried on as if my candle not only was burning at both ends but sometimes was in danger of igniting the whole house. I thought that if people knew about my MS, they would define me in descending order with the MS at the top of the list. And, to be perfectly honest, I did not have a need to admit the MS to myself until the last two years. It was not interfering in my daily life.



The "flare ups" have been, until recently, little more than inconveniences. The most serious occurring almost ten years ago, when a bout of double vision meant that I wore a black eye patch for close to four months, a move seen as nothing more than a fashion statement by some observers of the Ottawa scene. I was described then as a "striking young woman in black, sporting a black eye patch" in a review of a concert at the National Arts Centre.

The pigeons, as they are wont to do, however, have come home to roost. Time marches on, and I, in the past year, have come to the realisation that when Dr. Rabinovitch says, "You're doing quite well, see you in three months, he means, and always has meant, I am doing well in relation to other people with MS. And that there is nothing that he, or my husband or mother can do to alter that hard, sad fact.

Small acknowledgments along the way, applying for a disabled bus pass, "I cannot stand on a moving bus", followed a year later with tears

when Dr. Rabinovitch ticked off the box marked "permanently disabled" on the permit form for handicapped licenses.

There is a lot more that I would like to say, but space and time do not permit. The one thing I can say is that having MS has cured me of my adolescent hypochondria. I do not have Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, or Obnoxious Personality Syndrome, though at times it feels like I do.

Step by step, I am coming to terms with being a disabled woman. It is difficult, but as the Piet Hein grook says, "what does not kill you outright makes you stronger". I will continue, first, to make my feelings clear to myself, and then to the people I love and care for around me. I will also, as an advocate for women in my professional life, work to make sure that I, in taking care of myself, offer an example to others in similar circumstances.

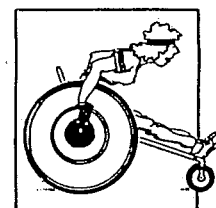
With the revolution in modern technology, there is no reason why I should limit myself from pursuing long held goals, even up to the point of running again for Parliament. The next time, however my response to an avid reporter, would be somewhat different;

In the movement



"Yes and no, Ms. Nosey Parker, it is true that I have a serious condition, but no, it does not in any way prevent me from standing for Parliament and representing the thousands of women and men, able-bodied and differently-abled who make up this riding".

Abby Pollonetsky is the women's co-ordinator for the National New Democratic Party.



admitting the truth, but more than that, admittance would mean that I would perforce, have to come to terms with being a "disabled" woman.

I have been struggling, all these years, with a dual reality. I define myself as an activist, a feminist, a mother, a lover, a wife and a brave woman living with a disability. Up to this moment I have hugged the notion close to me, that I have done all that I have; running for Parliament, working in social solidarity with the peoples of

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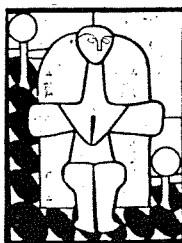
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In the
movement

Racism. What does it mean for white feminists? I am looking forward to the day when, in a feminist meeting, someone can say, "Do you think that comment was racist?" and have a discussion which is not charged with anger or judgement.

Just as I was socialized by sexism as I was growing up to believe women were inferior, weak, unreliable, hysterical - you know the list - and just as I was socialized as a lesbian to believe I was (pick one) criminal/evil/crazy, I also learned that as a white person, as an able-bodied, christian-raised anglophone, I was the norm. Ordinary. Unremarkable. Normal.

Socialization into normalcy is just as powerful, and just as pervasive, as the training I got as a woman, and as a lesbian.

I went to my first unlearning racism workshop, given by Gloria Yamato, a black woman from Seattle, in 1987. The experience was very much like one I had when I read my first feminist book, around 1970. Suddenly whole aspects of the world made immediate, and different, sense to me.

Of course I had absorbed the racism of the society, along with its sexism, and homophobia, and so on. Of course racism had twisted, contorted, confused my thinking in the same ways that sexism and homophobia had done. And of course I would need to work systematically to re-learn the world again. That "of course" experience was very liberating for me. But the scrutiny of myself in the world as a white person was both painful, and shameful. And the work of looking at internalized dominance is very difficult.

First of all, nobody talks about internalized dominance precisely because the dominant place is regarded as the normal, ordinary, unproblematic, unexceptional place. The dominant place is the place from which all other people are viewed different. We think "difference" is some

Racism: Learning to change

by Barbara Findlay

quality that lives in other people. And we forget to think about who is doing the thinking.

What is normal? Normalcy is the absence of the abnormal. For example, you wouldn't hear co-workers confiding to each other, "did you know, she's heterosexual", or "Charmaine knew her first husband, and he says her family was Christian". But you might hear someone say, "did you know she's a lesbian?" or, "Charmaine knew her first husband, and he says her family was Jewish".

In referring to people, we speak of the way in which they are not part of the norm. So

of a woman of colour and a white woman. We talk about racism, internalized racism, internalized dominance, and how people of colour and white people can work as allies.

As I began to work on racism I paid attention to my own reactions.

I noticed that I did not look people of colour in the eye. I had few people of colour as friends. I read mostly books by white women. I was ignorant of the struggles, the history, the leadership, the issues of (for example) Japanese Canadian people, or disabled people.

Because I was afraid of being called racist, I noticed

Racists are Bad. I am good. Ergo I am not racist. Flip that over, it goes: If you say what I did was racist, you are saying I am a Bad Person. This makes it very difficult for me to hear that what I did or said was racist.

In fact, we are all good people. We could no more have avoided the racism of this society than we could its sexism. As Antoinette Zanda put it, "It is not our fault we are racist. But it is our responsibility to work on it".

I am struck by how powerful the fear of mistakes, and the sense that we are Bad People, are among white people. This is no accident. This is a very powerfully structured, and socially sanctioned way of preserving the status quo. It is like the denial of wife battering, sexual harassment, child sexual abuse. Only this time, as white women, we participate in the denial.

Think about language. Take my favourite example "women and visible minorities". Think about that phrase - a very common phrase that is usually used to refer to some common experience of oppression. Watch closely. Where in that phrase are women of colour? Are they among the "women", in which case the phrase means "women, and men of colour and other visible minorities"? Or are women of colour among the "visible minorities", in which case the phrase really means "white women and people of colour and other visible minorities"?

And what is a "visible minority"? Is that really a code for people of colour? If not, does it include, for example, people with disabilities? (In which case all over again you have the problem of figuring out where women with disabilities fit). And where are Jewish people? Notice too the phrase is "visible minorities". Insofar as the term is used to refer to people of colour, it is simply inaccurate as a description of the world, where people of colour are a majority. And it

subtly imports the idea of legitimized powerlessness. In a democratic system, after all, that's what a minority is.

Or take the phrase "outreach". Outreach is a favourite activity of white feminist organizations. When you do "outreach", where is the centre?

Or take the phrase "You are different from us". Compare it to "We are different from you". Notice the shift in who is not different.

White feminists are very aware of how many women there are in a room, compared to how many men. But we do not notice the numbers of white people compared to the number of people of colour.

Lesbians -- but not heterosexual women -- look immediately for lesbians in the room. We notice when we are targeted. When we are not, we literally do not notice.

Education. We were educated in a system that lied to us by omitting completely both the facts about, and perspective of, people who are not white men. As a feminist I have been aware of sexist bias for a long time. I automatically look for sexism and correct for it. Yet, I found it very hard to accept that the whole of my education was systematically wrong, mistaken, inaccurate and unreliable.

Canadian society is profoundly racist, just as it is profoundly sexist. Fighting racism means changing laws, instituting affirmative action programs, redistributing the resources of society -- including the resources which we, as white feminists, have. But just as we fought sexism in the bedroom as well as in the courts and the legislature, we have to recognize racism at home, where we are. We have to change the ethos of silence about racism. To do that we have to look at how we have been silenced about racism, and break that silence.

If we are to work toward the liberation of all we have to look both at the ways we are

(continued on opposite page)



you have white men who write being called "writers"; white women who write being called "women writers"; black men who write being called "black writers", and black women who write being called "black women writers".

The stylistic convention is that unless someone is noted for being different then she/he is Norm-al. Think about characters in novels, where the writer must give the reader all the relevant details about her characters. It is very very rare for a character to be described as "white"; if she/he is not though, the fact of their colour is remarked upon.

Marilyn Frye, a white writer, says, "it was breathtaking to discover that in the culture in which I was born and reared, the word 'woman' means **white woman**, just as we discovered before that the word 'man' means **male man**."

Since 1987, I have been part of Alliance of Women Against Racism Etc (AWARE). "Etc." because racism operates along with, and not separate from, other forms of oppression: sexism, anti-semitism, heterosexism, classism, able-bodiedism, etc. It is an alliance group of women of colour and white women. We facilitate unlearning racism workshops in teams consisting

that I tended to treat people of colour with an exaggerated deference. I found that I wanted to "help", so I would do things like finish the ends of sentences begun by a woman of colour. I was eager to display my *bona fide* intentions but terrified that I would get it wrong. I felt awkward: I didn't want to be pushy, but I didn't want to seem uncaring or distant.

I knew that my reactions were not just "personal" but were embedded in the racism of the society.

What I noticed about myself and other white people is how much intense shame, guilt and denial there is in talking, writing, and admitting to ways I have learned racism. I did not grow up thinking about myself as racist. I have a deeply embedded Presbyterian antipathy towards Bad People who are racist. Racist people like the Ku Klux Klan.

So although it was liberating intellectually to distinguish between myself and racist training and misinformation I have been taught, at a gut level I was/am still terrified that someone - especially a person of colour - will call me racist, or anti-Semitic, etc. As I thought about the force of my fear, I realized how powerful social denial was operating. It goes:

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"Third wave" of feminism

by Sara Ballingall and
Kimberly Harkness

Feminists used to be told: there's nothing wrong, shut up. Now we're being told: well, there was something wrong, but it's been fixed, shut up. (And don't try to credit feminists with changes that have happened. Those changes fell from the sky one day.)

As two "third wave" feminists, we're often being told that we've missed our calling. We do sometimes have a sadness that we missed the initial women's movement in the early seventies for it seems such a time of discovery and optimism. Also we always have a deep thankfulness that we were born after it had begun, for we cannot imagine our lives in a time where women weren't already struggling to claim their right to be recognized as human.

Our feminism defines who we are, both as individuals and in relation to the world around us. It challenges us and provides us with strength and vision, yet sometimes we feel on the sidelines of this movement which is such an intrinsic part of our lives. We

read, talk to each other, examine our lives again but as our anger grows we don't know what to do with it. Fantasizing about reliving *Thelma and Louise*, doesn't provide the long term fulfilment we're searching for.

The work of feminists seems to be very focused into

feel that one is struggling alone against unsurmountable odds. Newspapers like *The Womanist* are our lifeline to feminism, but the printed word is not enough. Young women like us need the wisdom and sense of community with the women who are struggling with us. Without this sharing, we



organizations with specific goals and agendas. This is probably the best way to get work done, but for women just discovering their potential for political change, one is unsure of what one's place in all this could be. As the movement has broken into specific issues, a larger sense of community seems absent.

There is an incredible energy in solidarity, and the easiest way to burn out is to

are in danger of believing the "don't get concerned, it can't be changed" attitude that is promoted by those boys in suits.

The two of us will probably go to university and take women's studies, but this is one of the few ways women have of learning about and connecting with feminism. In the seventies women had "consciousness-raising groups to provide some beginning

framework for their analysis, but in the nineties nothing has filled that gap. So many women believe the distorted view of feminism often portrayed in mainstream media because they have never heard any alternative. As feminist thought and theory becomes more complex, we can't forget to go back to the beginning sometimes. Florence Kennedy once said, "The women's movement is any women who is off her ass and moving." After writing this article in September, we took her advice and started a women's issues group involving speakers, movies and discussion at our high school.

It is often said that feminists are unhappy and angry women, but what could be more miserable than simply carrying on in this world as it is. Feminists are filled with hope, as they dare to dream a way the world could be.

Sara and Kim are two newly graduated Toronto high school students.

In the movement



We're here, listen to us! A survey of young women in Canada

published March 1992
by the Canadian
Advisory Council on the
Status of Women
(see below)

Stop Racism Now!

oppressed and the ways we participate in oppression.

Just as we treated the personal as political in doing a feminist analysis of the world, we must treat the personal as political in naming and leading with our internalized dominance.

Just as we had to work on emotional, intellectual, and political levels in exposing and working against sexism, we will have to do the same to work against our own internalized dominance. In doing that work, we must be gentle with each other as white people. And we must work in alliance with people of colour.

Barbara Findlay is a 42 year old white able-bodied lesbian feminist lawyer, raised anglophone, christian, and working class, survivor of abuse and mental hospitals. To inquire about unlearning racism workshops call (604) 251-4356. Findlay would like to hear from other feminists working on racism.



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Pornography:

by Tracy Adlys

The moment I summoned up enough courage to step behind those ominous black doors was the instant I entangled myself from feminist ideology and entered the realm of sexual fantasy.

Those heavy dark doors slammed shut behind me, enclosing me in a foreign world of decadence and lust. Men sat immobile, in unnerving silence, the blackness abated only by the light of the flesh on screen. The only sound was the groans of couples writhing naked in front of us.

My foray into the pornographic domain was to be an objective observation. But my radical feminist disgust with pornography - what I saw as the mere degradation of women for the purpose of sexually exciting men - eventually waned. My foray became a voyage into the self.

I was one of those dictatorial feminists, like anti-porn advocates Andrea Dworkin and Catherine McKinnon, who feel justified in telling women what is proper for women to enjoy in sex.

Did that make me one of a dying breed?

That evening at the Cinema L'Amour, I saw some images exactly like those I can only allow myself to envisage in the utmost secrecy - images submerged in my most private world of fantasy - but images that I allow myself to savour in moments of extreme privacy.

So am I now one of the first of a new group of women and feminists - unashamed to admit to their own true sexual desires and appreciation for 'politically incorrect' sex?

When the American feminist Salli Tisdale candidly wrote about her love for pornography in Harper's magazine recently, she broke the ground.

And, I think I heard a collective sigh of relief. Like so many feminist issues that have arisen over the years, this new openness might occur when women realize, "Hey, I'm not the only woman feeling this way!"

Suddenly it might not be as taboo to talk about our hidden longings and fantasies. But no less difficult.

Patriarchy told us what was erotic and feminism told us what wasn't. But if these barriers dissolve, it will probably be revealed that pornography, at least non-violent, consensual sex among adults, holds a strong attraction for many lesbian and heterosexual women - feminist or not.

Some things point to a growing acceptance of pornography in society in



general. In February, the Ontario Film Review Board decided to allow Triple-X videos - penetration, ejaculation, gay porn - into the province. Anyone over 18 can go into their local video store, go to the Adult section and pick and choose among a variety of films that bare it all; so to speak.

Sean Kennedy says since Triple-X films have been made legal, business at his store is "booming". In fact, RIXXX Videos the store he works at is planning to open a new store in Ottawa's east end.

Triple-X videos actually fit the definition of obscenity in the Criminal Code. They certainly depict images of "undue exploitation of sex." But the meaning of "undue" makes the definition of the law ambiguous. The week the restrictions were lifted, police in Ottawa said they would consider laying charges, but only if they received complaints from the public. So far, only two charges have been laid in Ottawa.

If there is a new demand for pornography by women, it appears to have its limits. The pornography I am referring to is only that which depicts non-violent, consensual sex between adults. There is no significant, demonstrated appetite among mainstream feminists for kiddy porn or snuff films (movies in which women are killed).

The whole issue of censorship has divided feminists for over ten years.

Anti-censorship feminists argue that police and white men cannot be trusted to discern the erotic from the vile. Male authority is inclined to treat gay and lesbian porn as obscene - a compelling argument against allowing the state to set moral standards. And the recent increase in lesbian pornography has added more heat to the debate.

This division among feminist circles goes even further. Some of the images in "On Our Backs", a popular lesbian erotic magazine, depict S&M scenes - an obvious reflection of consumer demands.

Ali Biggs is a lesbian feminist who makes no secret of her support for pornography. She also likes S&M porn. "I'm tired of white, middle class women telling other women how to live their lives. And they're doing that when they tell women like me who enjoy reading 'On Our Backs' that I shouldn't be enjoying porn."

When the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the obscenity law last February, it was viewed as a victory by both sides of the debate. But what the Court really did was entrench the line that society had already drawn: Censorship was upheld, but only for material that is deemed degrading and dehumanizing to women and children. The Supreme Court resisted calls to tighten up the definition. Instead, it prefers to interpret the law on a case-by-case basis; an acknowledgement of the ever-changing nature of social tolerance.

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The uneasy debate

It now seems the feminist anti-porn camp is advocating the unfashionable viewpoint. Joan Riggs, the editor of *The Womanist* newspaper in Ottawa, says the movement has lost its impact.

"For ten years, the movement has focussed on censorship, it ignored the relationships between what pornography means to our sexuality. It stopped relating to women, and so women lost interest."

Riggs says she has been told by many lesbian and straight women that they find pornography sexually arousing. I have heard similar, yet hesitant, admissions by several women. The feminist condemnation of pornography still makes most women reluctant to tell the truth - even to themselves.

The morning after I visited the Cinema L'Amour, I lay tossing and turning in my bed with one phrase echoing over and over in my head, "the magnification of cock, the magnification of cock..." It is a phrase from Dworkin and McKinnon's definition of pornography that I am using in my radical feminist criticism of Harlequin Romance novels for a woman studies class.

I didn't want to have to get out of bed and fight the battle raging within myself between ideology and sensuality. I wanted to return from the land of lust back to a world of pretence, the comfortable world I had created for myself where fantasy remained unexplored, safely secret and comfortably suppressed.

Riggs explains that feminism has made sexuality a

subject that is rarely discussed openly beyond the realm of theory. She thinks this is because feminism has only focussed on women's negative sexual experiences, like rape. She points out that not all women's sexual experiences are about violence, coercion, dominance and submission. Some of women's sexual experiences are positive and pornography can be one of them.

"I've had quite a few heterosexual women say to me, 'This is not as awful as it's made out to be. I've used pornography as a tool, it's not something that's been imposed on me,' Riggs said.

Pornography can offer a form of sexual liberation for women. What society restricts women from doing and feeling in real life, she can live out vicariously in the films.

One of my friends talked openly to me about her use of pornography. She is in her late twenties, and has been married to the same man for over ten years. "Porn makes me horny," she confided. "It's like living out fantasies, things I'd like to do, but I can't. You imagine yourself in the scene. I put myself there, and it excites me."

She and her husband watch pornographic videos about three times a week, as a prelude to sex. They have a fairly large collection of films they often exchange with their friends. Occasionally, she will also watch a video alone and masturbate.

In fact, she says, some of her single or divorced female friends get their only sexual pleasure from watching pornographic films alone.

"They're lonely, but they don't want to go out to a bar and pick up some strange guy, just to get off. They're scared of AIDS. They'd rather go rent a movie by themselves and masturbate. They're human, they're not made of wood. They like to be turned on," she explained.

Why should this domain of sexual fantasy belong only to men? Women can have a lot of healthy, lusty fun with pornography. Recently I asked four female friends over to watch some contemporary Triple-X pornography, the kind you can get at your local video store. Along with potato chips and diet coke, each woman brought along her own particular brand of feminism.

Varied as our viewpoints are, we all watched intently. We all sat upright in our seats, red-faced and wide-eyed. Every one of us confessed to seeing images in the films of

things we'd secretly like to experience ourselves. We all simultaneously cried out in lusty appreciation when the camera showed a real shot of an incredibly beautiful, tanned, and muscular, male body moving on top of a woman. And we all felt envy for the woman lying underneath that fabulous male form.

Pornographic magazines and movies initiate most young men into sex. When I think of pornographic magazines like Playboy, I picture an adolescent boy masturbating behind closed doors in a magazine-inspired ecstasy. What tools do young girls have to initiate them into sexual fantasy?

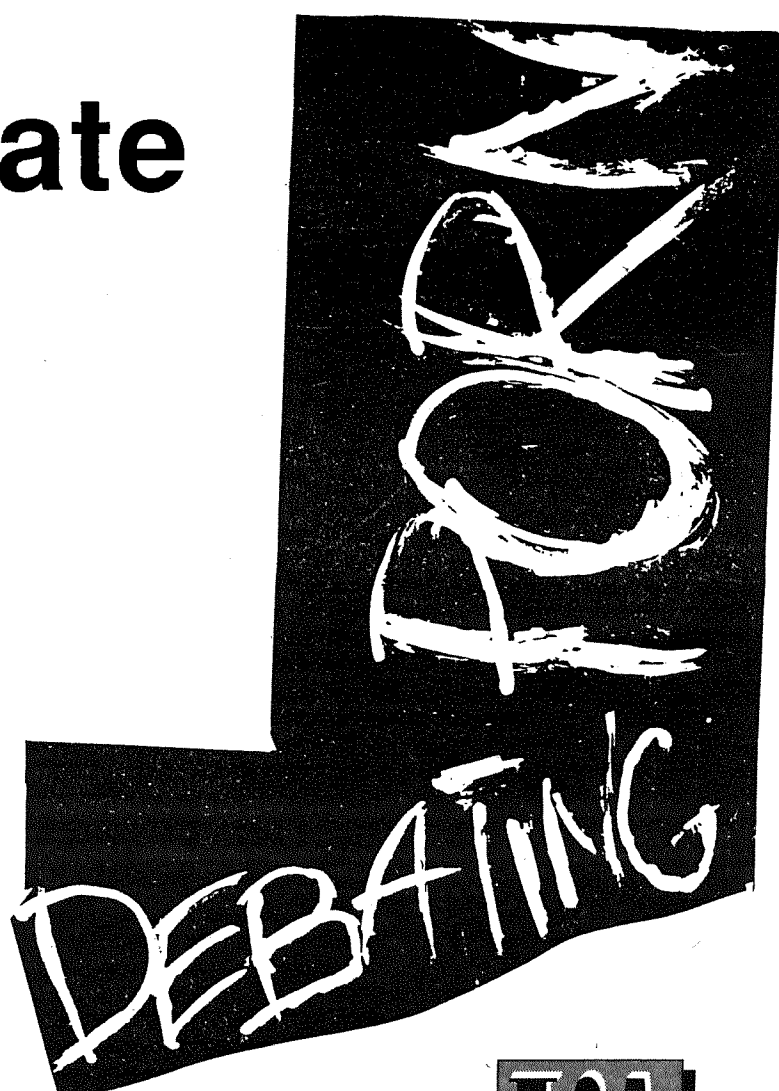
The feminine equivalent to is probably the Harlequin Romance novel. Millions of young girls and women all over the world escape into fantasy with Harlequins. But the erotic fantasy these books offer depict sexual pleasure on patriarchal terms. First of all, the love/sex scene always ends just as it is getting good. Secondly, the sex men see in Playboy and other porn is purely sex. The sex women see in Harlequins is always inextricably linked with romance. For men the two can be separate. For women, never.

And it's this ridiculous notion that makes us feel guilty for sleeping with someone we don't know well or don't 'love'. Guilty for enjoying sex just for sex's sake. Guilty for being turned on by images of other people having consensual sex.

One of the videos my friend and I watched was borrowed from a male friend. When my room-mate went to pick it up, my male friend said, "If I didn't know what you were doing this for, I'd think it was pretty weird - you girls watching a porno."

He lives in a house with three other young male students. They own the videos and often watch them together, sharing beers and laughs and lust. Pornography can be a form of male bonding, but it's not supposed to provide the same sort of enjoyment for women. Female sexual desires have to remain hidden and private.

The forbidden has its magnetic pull, but it still maintains its oppressive capacity for instilling guilt in those who indulge. After several days of submersion in pornography I was exhausted, and inexplicably depressed. All that cock and cunt. All that uninhibited horniness. And despite myself, I could momentarily be caught up in it, drawn to it against my will.



My fatigue was probably due to my efforts at trying to be unaffected; my sadness from my disappointment for failing.

I felt the way some women might feel the morning after a night of unconstrained, loveless lust with a stranger. Doing the forbidden, living out a fantasy, can be such a turn-on. Just the social defiance in the act can be exciting. It's like watching and enjoying pornography. No matter how much we know that it's a woman's right to explore her own sexuality in any way she chooses, a sense of guilt can somehow diminish the pleasure that both the act itself and the memory of the act provides.

As women and as feminists we can't allow ourselves certain pleasures because mainstream porn depicts women as objects. It wasn't the sexual objectification of women that turned on me and my friends, it was the visualization of some of our most intimate, socially sanctioned sexual longings. I've talked to so many different women about this issue recently - lawyers, journalists, secretaries, university students - and one thing seems particularly clear.

There is definitely a market for explicit pornography for straight women. I don't mean the feminine erotica out there now that Salli Tisdale calls "tasteful and discreet." Women don't need anymore Harlequin Romance-type titillation. Nor am I referring to lesbian porn. I mean egalitarian, non-violent, but totally raunchy uninhibited sex.

Tracy Adlys is a journalism student at Carleton University.



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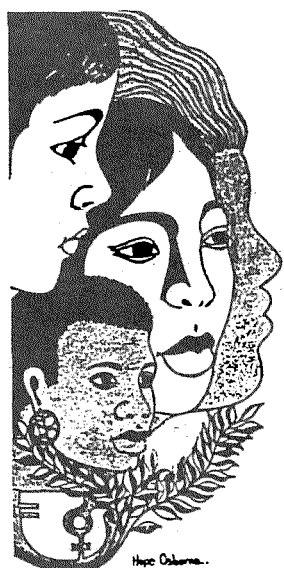
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In the
movement

Will the real feminist th

"A feminist therapist" the M.D. called herself. The client, a feminist and an incest survivor, felt that here, at last, she'd be understood by a professional who shared her worldview. She opened herself more quickly and completely than she would have dared to with a non-feminist therapist. Several months later when her "feminist" therapist touched her sexually, the devastation was great.

This vignette and those which follow are based on true case histories of clients whose trust was betrayed by practitioners calling

themselves feminist therapists. The findings of the Task Force on Sexual Abuse of Patients, recently commissioned by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario has shown that unethical behaviour by medical professionals is not as rare as we would like to believe. Although therapists of every theoretical persuasion are likely to engage in unethical conduct with their clients, those who claim the title "feminist therapist", do so with a particular betrayal.

What exactly is feminist therapy? Essentially, it is a

philosophy of treatment rather than a set of techniques.

Feminist therapy recognizes oppressive social conditions are often the cause rather than the consequence of a clients' emotional problems, as opposed to many traditional psychotherapy systems that perpetuate stereotyped roles and beliefs about women.

Feminist therapy arose out of the second wave of the women's liberation movement in the 1960's in reaction to traditional, *status quo*-preserving methods of treatments.

Part of the work of the

feminist therapist is to educate clients about the inequalities which affect them and to facilitate clients' development or recovery of personal and collective power with which to combat ongoing discrimination.

While one traditional therapist might prescribe tranquilizers to a depressed woman in a battering relationship, another diagnoses her as having a personality disorder for staying in the relationship, a feminist therapist views the woman's depression as a logical response to feeling powerless in an abusive situation, and

THERAPIST AS EARTH
MOTHER OR THE GREAT
BREAST

The therapist said, "I love you" to the client at the end of the session. The client felt obliged to say, "I love you" in return although she wasn't always feeling love. Eventually, she came to resent what she experienced as pressure to respond to the therapist's avowals in kind; she also felt unable to discuss the matter.

Frequently, the therapist gave the client feminist books and other small gifts. The gifts confused the client: she felt at once grateful, honoured and beholden. She often felt like a little child in relation to the therapist -- powerless and uncertain. Her therapy went for many years and ended only when the therapist left town.

The 'Earth Mother' feminist therapist celebrates and embodies women's capacities for nurturance; she attempts to "re-parent" the neglected child her client once was. Her unstinting "goodness" encourages the client to view her as a perfect mother which discourages expressions of anger or discomfort. Gifts, protestations of love and an over-focus on neglected needs in the past (while downplaying the simultaneous development of survival skills which are of ongoing value to the adult client) foster a child-like dependency in clients.

The power imbalance inherent in any therapist/client "relationship increases with the Earth Mother" therapist; as the client feels ever more dependent, less powerful and less able to express herself freely in therapy. Such therapy may help to maintain clients in the victim role. Clients who feel dependent or helpless rarely choose to end therapy.



Warning Signs:

- The therapist repeatedly or in a ritualistic way tells you how much she cares for you;
- the therapist gives you gifts;
- you feel beholden to the therapist
- you have angry or disgruntled feelings about the therapist or the therapy that you can't or you



shouldn't express;

- your relationship with the therapist feels like the most important relationship in your life;
- you begin to feel entitled to the gifts and that the therapist's job is to meet your needs;
- you've been in therapy with this therapist for more than two years and you don't feel you've made much headway on the things you came in to work on.

What to do:

This therapist is not making a simple error that you can encourage her to correct; she is labouring under the illusion that therapy is about re-doing your childhood properly. Since that's impossible, the enterprise is doomed from the outset and so are your chances of taking charge of your own life if you stay. Difficult as it will be, say good-bye to this chimera of the "perfect" mother as soon as you can.

LACK OF POLITICAL
ANALYSIS: THE NEW
AGE FEMINIST
THERAPIST

A client reported a dream in which she was the owner of an enormous, erect black penis. Her therapist interpreted the dream to mean that the client was actually a black man trapped in a female body who really didn't want to be a woman.

This 'New Age' therapist is probably a feminist Essentialist. New Age humanism and feminist essentialism are downright incompatible if you really think

about it. In order to overcome this difficulty, 'New Age' feminist therapists do as little thinking as possible, relying instead on mysticism and interpretations which spring full-blown from "the gut". By contrast, good feminist therapy seeks to de-mystify the therapeutic process for clients as a function of reducing the power imbalance between therapist and client.

**Everything which
transpires between
client and therapist,
including a
therapist's personal
disclosures, should
be in the best
interest of the client.**

Warning Signs:

- The therapist doesn't appear to be on the same train with you, let alone in the same compartment (the therapist's ideas frequently seem to bear no relation whatsoever to your reported experience);
- the therapist engages in mystical or magical talk and seems unable or unwilling to explain her thinking to you;
- the therapist fails to acknowledge that gender inequality exists or proposes a solution to the problem of gender inequality which blames women (e.g., if women stopped behaving like victims, they'd stop being victimized);
- you feel increasingly frustrated in your efforts to communicate.

What to do: Run!

SHORT ON POLITICAL
ANALYSIS: THE QUASI-
FEMINIST THERAPIST

The client told the therapist about her husband's violent acts and frequent infidelities. The therapist responded that many women in patriarchal societies are abused by men acting out their feelings of rage and hopelessness; according to the therapist, men are also oppressed by patriarchy and frequently lash out at women as a result of their oppression.

She cautioned that since the responsibility for relationship difficulties always belongs equally to both partners, her client would have to examine and change her co-dependent behaviour in order to improve her marriage. The therapist concluded that since women are more in touch with their emotions than men are, her client would have to be the one to change first and to show her husband the way.

The Quasi-feminist therapist appears, superficially, to have a feminist political analysis of patriarchy. In reality, however, if everyone is oppressed, then no one is. The co-dependent label for women and the 50/50 thinking are tip-offs that all is not as feminist as it may at first appear. And note how the equality talk suddenly fizzles when the hard work of therapy begins: the victimized woman is encouraged to change herself in order to change the behaviour of the violent man.

Warning Signs:

- The therapist talks about "co-dependency", and "male oppression";
- she fails to recognize power imbalances between women and men generally;
- she puts most of the onus for change on the victim rather than the victimizer;
- you feel unheard;
- you feel that your concerns have been dismissed;

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COUNSELLING, ADVOCACY AND
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ABUSED WOMEN & THEIR CHILDREN

therapists please stand up?

by Alison Kerr

works to empower the client to make necessary changes in her life.

Empowerment involves the recognition of a client's strengths, the re-framing of "symptoms" as coping skills, the transformation of the client's self-image from victim to survivor. It also involves acknowledging the inevitable power imbalance between any therapist and client.

Feminist therapy's understanding of the impact of oppression on women's lives can readily be applied to the lives of other oppressed people. Clients of feminist

therapists may include boys and men as well as women and girls. Arguably, the principles of feminist therapy may be employed by therapists of either gender. Feminist therapists may be found among the ranks of physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, social workers and psychotherapists trained in a variety of disciplines.

Unfortunately, some self-styled feminist therapists are insufficiently skilled as clinicians and/or are inadequately educated as feminist theorists. These self-styled feminist therapists are

the most likely to behave unethically with clients.

What is unethical behaviour by a therapist? Simply put, a therapist who places her own needs, values or plans for the client ahead of the client's needs, values and plans for herself.

Feminist therapy, practiced well, heals and empowers. Poorly practiced, feminist therapy does as much harm as any abusive therapy and packs an additional punch for the feminist client in the form of betrayal by someone who was supposed to be on her side.

Currently in Canada,

physicians, psychologists, nurses and social workers are accountable to their respective provincial organizations. Formal complaints can usually be made against feminist practitioners via these regulatory bodies.

However, the majority of feminist therapists, frequently by choice, often by necessity, work outside of established institutions and beyond the control of regulatory bodies. Most take their responsibilities to the client at least as seriously as the best regulated therapists do. But, like other unlicensed practitioners, unregulated feminist therapists

are formally accountable to no one.

The best protection clients can have against inadequate practitioners and harmful practices is knowledge about both. Below is a sampling of unethical behaviours which have been practiced by self-styled feminist therapists, both regulated and unregulated, in Canada. Although nine distinct therapist categories are identified here according to type of unethical practice, clients may encounter a variety of therapist-hybrids who engage in more than one type of unethical behaviour.



• you feel that you are being railroaded into changing your behaviour when you're not sure that's the problem.

What to do:

Recognize that you're not with a feminist-enough therapist, resist the temptation to effect a conversion and get out!

ALL POLITICS, NO THERAPY: THE AVENGER

A client who had recently recovered incest memories went to see a therapist at a feminist clinic. Upon hearing the story of the client's abuse, the therapist became enraged at the perpetrator and urged the client to press charges

immediately despite the fact that the client had ambivalent feelings towards the perpetrator and had come to the therapist to work them through.

With the 'Avenging' feminist therapist, the agenda feels more like the therapist's than the client's. The therapist may be so angry at the perpetrator that the client doesn't feel able to talk about any non-angry feelings she may have. 'Avenging' feminist therapists have strong political analyses and are sometimes survivors of sexual violence themselves who have unfinished business connected with their own trauma.

Warning Signs:

- The therapist is consistently angrier than you are about the abuse;
- the therapist gives lectures about oppression and justice when you'd rather talk about your feelings;
- the therapist urges you to take action before you feel ready;
- you feel uncomfortable because you don't seem to be in control of the process but you go along with the therapist because you believe that she knows what's best for you;
- you feel a little afraid of her anger yourself.

What to do:

If you feel able to tell the therapist what you need from her, do so. She may be able to rein herself in and attend to your needs. If she can't or if you don't feel able to ask, look for someone else.

ALL POLITICS, NO THERAPY: THE PURIST

The therapist was a Marxist feminist and lost no opportunity during therapy to interpret events from this perspective. The client, a radical feminist, often saw things differently and said so. Sometimes the therapist allowed the therapy to degenerate into a political debate. The client continued to identify with radical feminist causes and one day the therapist told the client that her political work was harmful to all women. The client felt hurt and misunderstood. Therapy ground to a halt, replaced entirely by endless rounds of political debate.

The 'Purist' feminist therapist can brook no deviation from the true path (which she assumes is her path). Clients who fail to share her analysis down to the last detail must be persuaded to change their minds. Rather than empowering the client (a central goal of feminist

therapy), the attempt to change her mind is likely to be experienced by the client as profoundly disempowering, particularly if her point of view is less well developed than the therapist's.

Political debate, no matter how engaging, is not therapy.

Warning Signs:

- You and your therapist seem to do more arguing than agreeing;
- you feel an urgent need to convince her of your point of view;
- you feel disconnected from the therapist and unsupported by her --



consequently, you feel more and more reluctant to talk about your feelings with her;

- you think that this whole situation and the fact that your therapy seems to have ground to a halt is your fault.

What to do:

This is a no-win situation. If you refuse to be convinced by the Purist, she will find a way to punish you for your insubordination. The Purist feminist therapist probably needs more therapy than you do and undoubtedly won't get it. Don't wait to find out; seek help elsewhere.

BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS: THE ACTIVIST

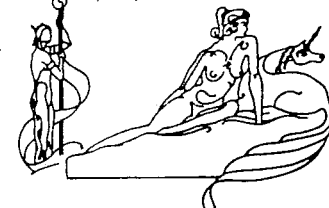
The therapist was a well-known feminist activist frequently quoted in local newspapers. She was also a very competent therapist who normally did effective work with her clients. One day, she handed one of her clients, who had expressed an interest in feminist activism, a notice about a fund-raising event at which the therapist would be speaking. She asked the client whether she'd be able to volunteer some time to help out at the event. The client didn't feel that she could say no to the therapist's request even though she'd have to cancel out of something she'd been looking forward to.

The client agreed to go but left the session feeling suddenly and inexplicably critical of the therapist's mannerisms and clothing. She felt guilty for not wanting to attend the fund-raiser, inferior to the busy therapist and a little stupid for feeling critical of trivial things about her therapist "all of a sudden".

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Feminist therapists (continued)



BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS: TOUCH

At the end of every session, the therapist automatically hugged the client whose mother had constantly violated her personal space when she was a child. The therapist never asked the client whether she wanted a hug or how she felt about receiving one. Sometimes the client liked the hug and sometimes she didn't but, just as she had with her intrusive mother, she felt unable to refuse. She also felt guilty about wanting to refuse something as apparently benign as a hug from someone as nice as her therapist. She was afraid to talk about her feelings and felt confirmed in the longstanding belief with which she had entered therapy: that there was something intrinsically bad and ungrateful about her.

Touch can be a useful tool in therapy, in the right hands, at the right time, for the right reasons. It can also be explosive in the hands of someone inadequately trained. Most women in this culture have at some time in their lives, been the recipients of unwanted touching; a therapist's touch can re-traumatize as easily as it can soothe her.

As a general rule, touch should be under the client's control at all times. Some feminist therapists have a laudable policy of never initiating touch. Touching must never be done to satisfy the therapist's need to comfort or to be comforted. And even when clients initiate touch or ask for it, it is the therapist's responsibility to help the client explore the meaning of that touch for the client.

Warning Signs:

- Any discomfort with the therapist's touch together with the feeling that you can't speak about it or stop it;
- a sense that you're engaging in touch for the therapist's sake rather than yours;
- feeling obliged for the sake of your healing to exchange touch with the therapist when she initiates it;
- the therapist doesn't give you the option of refusing her touch;
- the touch feels inappropriate or scary;
- you're the one who initiates touch and the therapist has never helped you to examine what meanings touch may have for you.



What to do:

If you're being touched by a therapist in any way that causes you even mild discomfort and you don't feel able to talk to her about it, you must interrupt the therapist's behaviour and indicate that something is wrong. To allow the behaviour to continue is, particularly for the survivors of sexual violence, to re-experience a loss of physical control and the violation of your personal space. If she takes your concerns seriously, helps you to express them fully and agrees to change her behaviour, you've just helped to increase the awareness of a good therapist. If she dismisses your feelings or touches you when you've asked her not to, make haste to be gone.

BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS: SEX

The vignette which opens the article describes what is undoubtedly the worst ethical violation of all: the sexual exploitation of clients by therapists. Sexual violations by therapists run the gamut from leering, sexual innuendo

and sexualized touching to intercourse, pregnancies and long-term relationships with current and former clients.

The active sexualization of the therapy relationship in any form whatsoever is always unethical; it is always harmful to the client in the long run even if the client eagerly participates at first.

Feminist therapists are obviously not immune from violating their clients sexually although by far the majority of therapist-abusers are non-feminist male practitioners. Feminist therapists who sexually abuse their clients undoubtedly need extensive personal therapy to resolve their own issues concerning sexuality and power.

Warning Signs:

- The therapist leers, makes sexual comments, touches you in a way that feels sexual;
- she proposes that you engage in any sexualized behaviours (from masturbating to intercourse) during therapy sessions;
- you feel in love with or sexually attracted to your therapist and your therapist responds in kind or proposes that the two of you act on these feelings instead of examining them in therapy;
- you leave or prepare to leave your real life partner because your feelings for her/him can't compare with your feelings for the therapist.

What to do:

If you feel uncomfortable with anything your therapist is doing or saying, tell her/him. Sexual feelings between therapist and client

are natural and can be a fruitful source of information if raised for **discussion**; sexual feelings between therapist and client should **NEVER** be acted upon **even if the client initiates it**.

If your therapist tells you it's all in your head, refuses to talk about sexual feelings and concerns, continues doing or saying whatever is making you feel uncomfortable or proposes that you become better acquainted by, for example, sitting closer than you like, seeing one another socially or becoming actively sexual together, **RUN!** Don't hang around to process this one!

Further reading:

Power in the Helping Professions by Adolf Guggenbuhl-Craig

Sex in the Therapy Hour: A Case of Professional Incest by Carolyn Bates and Annette Brodsky

A New Approach to Women and Therapy by Miriam Greenspan

For further information about therapist sexual abuse, contact

The Canadian Health Alliance to Stop Therapist Exploitation Now (CHASTEN)
P.O. Box 73516,
509 St. Clair Ave. W.,
Toronto, Ontario,
M6C 4A7,
(416) 656-5650.

Alison Kerr, M.A., M.Ed., is a feminist therapist and consultant in private practice in Toronto. She may be reached at (416) 516-4563.

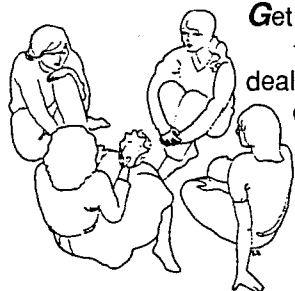
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The breast obsession

by Hazelle Palmer

Is big better? Most men would say yes, if we're talking about women's breasts. Why? Because they are told women with larger breasts are somehow sexier, more desirable.

Some women believe it too. And who can blame them? From early on, women learn their attractiveness to men is directly related to their value in society. While the women's movement has done much to break down this stereotype, what we read and the dominant images we see, continue to characterize women as sexual objects, measuring our value according to how we look. These images are largely based on male fantasies, and perpetuate what American author Naomi Wolf calls the "beauty myth".

How thin we are, the colour and texture of our hair, our features, and the colour of our eyes, are all taken into account to determine how attractive we are and if we meet the expectations of the myth. For those who don't, there are "solutions" - from hair dyes and coloured contact lenses to liquid diet plans. For more complicated adjustments, such as breast enlargements, there is surgery.

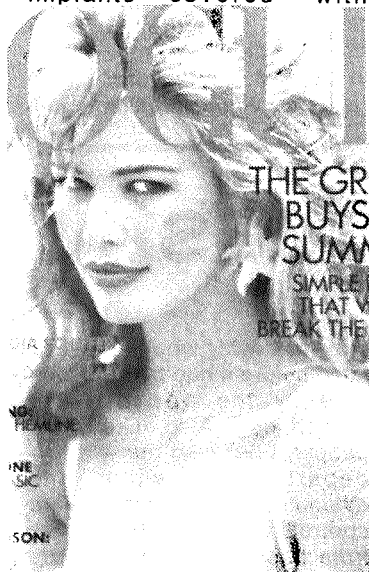
It is estimated that 10,000 to 15,000 Canadian women undergo breast implantation surgery each year. While some of these cases include reconstructive surgery following a mastectomy, a good proportion of these women undergo the procedure simply to "beautify" their bodies, to be more desirable to men.

Women's breasts have been a fixation in our society for generations. "Our culture", writes Wolf in *The Beauty Myth*, "screens breasts with impeccable thoroughness, almost never representing those that are soft, or asymmetrical, or mature, or that have gone through the changes of pregnancy."

What is represented in our culture are breasts that are firm, pert and large (but not too large), falsely creating for women the mythical ideal breast, and for men, a tangible picture to feed their fixation.

In the quest for larger, more shapely breasts a woman will pay upwards of \$5,000 for breast implantation surgery, depending on the kind used. There are actually about 50 different implants on the market in North America. And the implant will have to be replaced in about five years for another \$5,000.

The most common implants are silicone gel. There are also saltwater or saline-filled implants and silicone-filled implants covered with



(photo: front cover, Vogue, May 1992)

The latter is said to last longer than other types, but has far more damaging effects for women. These silicone-filled, foam-covered devices are marketed in North America under the names *Meme* and *Replican* and are simply unsuitable for human implantation.

"The *Meme* device", reports Susan Syment (*Kinesis*, April 1990) "is ... covered with the

same foam that is used in air filters, mattresses and aircraft parts." The foam covering is then fixed to the prosthesis with a bathtub sealant. *Meme* is produced by the American-based company Surgitek, a subsidiary of Bristol-Myers-Squibb, which defines the foam as medical grade, despite the Federal Drug Administration's claim that there is no such thing as "medical grade" foam.

What's even more disturbing about the *Meme* implant is that after implantation, the foam breaks down and releases into the bloodstream tiny amounts of toluene diamines (TDAs), a substance suspected of causing cancer.

Canadian women have been complaining for years about the side effects of implants, citing arthritic pain, migraines, numbness of the arms and a total lack of feeling around the breasts. But as Naomi Wolf points out in her book, *The Beauty Myth*, there are other problems which are direct results of the surgery itself.

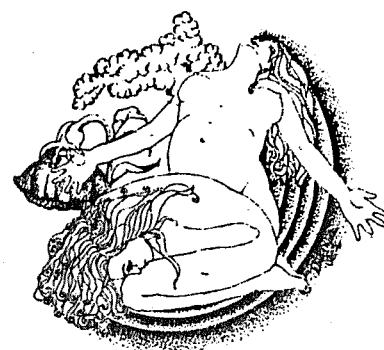
"The surgery leads to a hardening of scar tissue around the implants in up to seven out of ten cases, when the breasts become rock hard and must be re-opened and the implants removed, or the lumps torn apart by the full weight of the surgeon, using his bare hands."

Between 13,000 and 17,000 women in Canada have received the *Meme* implant and a growing number of these women are reporting health complications. Pressure is now building for Health and Welfare Canada to compensate these women, and those who wish to have the implant(s) removed. Only recently has Health and Welfare admitted they were negligent in allowing the *Meme* to be marketed in Canada.

The manufacturer stopped distributing the *Meme* in Canada in April 1991 (just before Health and Welfare

officially withdrew it from the market), and in September stopped manufacturing all breast implants. However there is nothing to prevent doctors from using *Meme* implants they still have in their possession. (Montreal Gazette, 30/9/91).

In a society which judges how women look and fears the aging process, surgery offers



reconstruction and a taste from the fountain of youth. Because our society has created a beauty myth by which all women are measured, we are held hostage - trapped between feeling good about our bodies and ourselves and what society judges as acceptable.

Cosmetic surgery does not make women more desirable. However, it does expose us to a number of health concerns, not just those related to breast implantation surgery, but those associated with face-lifts, liposuction, etc. Cosmetic surgery perpetuates the myth that women's bodies need fixing or reconstructing to meet the male's ideal of what women should look like. Furthermore,

cosmetic surgery keeps women's sexuality tied to beauty, and erodes the confidence women have achieved in themselves and in their sexuality.

Women must continue challenging the images men have of them. These images reduce us to nothing more than objects of beauty and force us to be insecure and vulnerable to a medical establishment which is profiting hugely by fitting us with plastic parts. We need to encourage our society to portray realistic images of all women and not one ideal.

Hazelle Palmer is a freelance writer and editor and part-time artist. She is currently the managing editor of *Healthsharing Magazine*.

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Breast cancer:

These are excerpts from the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, Social Affairs, Seniors and the Status of Women looking at the issue of breast cancer, June - November 1991

Breast Cancer: The Statistics

Breast cancer is the most important type of cancer in women. We estimate there will be 14,400 new cases of breast cancer among Canadian women this year. There will be approximately 5,100 deaths from breast cancer and 89,000 women-years will be lost. Close to 10% of women will develop breast cancer at some time during their life, and 4% will die of it.

As with most types of cancer, the incidence of breast cancer increases with age. Only 1% of breast cancer occurs in males. So these figures are on female breast

cancer.

The burden of the disease is relatively heavier on younger women than for many other cancers. Breast cancer actually accounts for 14% of all deaths in women between the ages of 25 and 49. Over the past two decades the incidence of breast cancer in Canada increased slightly.

Of all the factors which influence breast cancer, when looking at statistics of this type, fertility is probably the most important. Low fertility is associated with higher rates of breast cancer. As the women who experienced low fertility since 1960 enter middle age, the incidence of breast cancer is likely to increase further.

The incidence of the disease is slightly lower in the Atlantic provinces than in the

rest of Canada. This might also be explained by differences in fertility in the past. The incidence of breast cancer is low among Canadian Inuit and Indians compared with other Canadians. Similar trends are found in the mortality rates of these groups.

Again, some of the difference may be attributable to the relatively high fertility of these ethnic groups, but other cultural factors may also be involved - diet, for example. There is some indication from Saskatchewan data that incidence amongst Indians may be recently increasing rapidly, narrowing the difference between Indians and Canadians of European descent.

Turning now to the risk factors, most of the known risk

factors for breast cancer - and many have been described, such as having fewer children, having the first child late, early menarche, late menopause, family history of breast cancer -- are not really easily modifiable. The major risk factor that is potentially modifiable is dietary fat; however, it is by no means certain that this relationship is truly casual in nature. There are statistical associations only at this stage. Some large experimental studies to address this question have been started in Canada and the United States.

Other known or suspected risk factors include ionizing radiation exposure, such as from the atomic bomb or from, in the past, the use of chest X-rays and alcohol, which is still

somewhat controversial in the sense that the studies are not definite yet.

To turn finally to a few words about the control of breast cancer, in the absence of known modifiable risk factors, there is presently no practical method of preventing breast cancer in the general population. Current dietary guide-lines may help in terms of reducing fat, (which) may help to reduce the risk of this disease, but this is not certain. The most promising way of reducing mortality, at least in the short term, is through early detection.

Dr. George Hill
Epidemiologist,
Laboratory Centre for
Disease Control from
Health and Welfare
Canada.

The dangers of Meme breast implants

It has been reported that TDA (2-4 Toulene Diamine) has been found in the polyurethane covering on Meme implants. This is a substance known to cause liver cancer in rats and is suspected of causing cancer in humans.

The cancer causing properties of TDA have been known for many years, and brought about the banning of TDA from such products as hair dyes, nail polishes and some cosmetics. However, because of the so-called small amounts of TDA in Meme implants, we are being asked to believe it is insignificant.

I would like to ask if anyone would feel, upon being told that they had only a small amount of cancer, that it was perfectly all right, that it was insignificant because it was small? I am sure I speak for a lot of women, especially those who have already faced breast cancer, when I say that none of us wants it in our bodies, especially because of someone's innovative and untested idea, an idea we are also being told in some ways is beneficial.

From my own experiences with Meme implants, I can say there was and still is nothing beneficial. These implants, in less than three weeks, eroded through my skin, causing infections, tissue death, and resulting in large holes. The infection continued to run rampant even after I had them removed. This required one hospitalization after another.

I lived almost a month in and out of one type of intravenous or antibiotic, even after they had been removed. This in turn caused my body to react against the antibiotics, and I had the most incredible rash. This required further medication. Also, for some reason (still unknown to me), one of my nipples began to bleed almost constantly, causing a lot of pain and resulting in the loss of part of it. It basically was eaten away.

I endured nine operations and five lengthy hospitalizations for chronic infections, resulting in approximately 180 days spent in one hospital or the other, and on top of that I often required

home-care nursing visits for weeks at a time. All of this at the cost to our health care system.

All of this happened to me because of Meme implants.

When the problem started and the Meme implant had to be removed, the polyurethane covering, because of its breakdown abilities, was completely left behind, hence it continued its destructive course.

I had never been informed that the implant's materials have the ability to disintegrate, and that it's toxins produced TDA and could lead to cancer. I was never told that the company manufacturing this product was doing so in violation of many good manufacturing standards, the main one being sterility, and that because of this I would go on to suffer the invasion of my body by a fungus that was present on these implants before they left the factory.

I was also never told that the silicone gel used in implants had the ability to bleed through it's shell and find it's way into my system, and could contribute to other serious and debilitating diseases involving one's immune system.

I have already had polyurethane, silicone, and the silicone glue (used to adhere the polyurethane to the implant) removed from one of my breasts.

My initial surgery was in March 1985, and the doctor did not even tell me that he was going to use Meme implants. I never questioned him because, first, I trusted him and believed

that no doctor would use any thing before it had been proven safe by the appropriate authorities. Also, like most people, I believed that we had departments within the structure of Health and Welfare controlling and protecting us from possible health hazards brought about by medical products and devices, and that

strict requirements from both manufacturers and distributors had to be met before devices, any devices, were made available for sale.

Instead, I've learned that manufacturers, especially in this case, come first and foremost. Women certainly do not, especially when dealing with the Meme implants. One can get very hurt through nothing more than believing in this system and the people entrusted with its rules.

I am a woman, who, under advisement and with trust, believed in the medical profession. My trust was abused. In turn, I believed in another system that I thought in many ways advanced what is expected not only from the medical community but also the manufacturing sector. I trusted government. When I asked for help, however, it could not be given. Instead, officials viewed me as a threat because I had lodged a civil action against the doctors in court. They took it upon themselves to step in and ensure that no court-room would ever hear the true facts surrounding this implant. During the first three days of what was to be an eleven-day ordeal in the court-room, it became very clear to me that a political odour was present. It had no place there. My action was against the doctors and their treatment of me, but the government was present, and I knew then that I would not walk away with justice served. Over eight months later judgment was finally given, and I was



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First, I want to tell you about the demands that women experience in their daily lives as a result of being diagnosed with breast cancer. Because women's health concerns are often dismissed and unattended by physicians, women frequently experience delay in having breast lumps investigated. We estimate that among our group members, approximately 25% were advised upon initially reporting a suspicious breast lump to a physician that it was "probably not serious". These were women who went to a doctor for medical diagnosis, not glib assurances. Yet these women were observed for periods ranging from three months to one year before a pathological finding confirmed breast cancer in all of them. Some have since died of metastatic cancer. It is probable that some would still be alive had their cancers been detected earlier.

Of note here is a recent U.S. study by the Physicians Insurers of America which found that delay in diagnosis of breast lumps is a leading grounds for malpractice suits and that these suits produce the most expensive settlements. The most frequently cited reasons for delay in diagnosis were failure to be impressed by a patient's own finding or by the physician's own physical finding.

Ninety percent of lumps, and I am talking about lumps that ultimately turn out to be breast cancer, are detected by women, so although it is a very poor early detection method and very primitive, it is one that obviously many women use as their first line of self-defence.

When a mass is present, don't let a negative or an equivocal mammogram dissuade you from recommending a more definitive test such as a biopsy. We have frequently heard from women that although they had a lump - it was palpable, their physician could feel it - a mammogram did not have any suspicious finding. Mammograms can frequently report a false negative result; I believe it is as high as 15%. Not until a biopsy is done will you truly know what the lump is.

exhausted. It was like having the flu for 18 months. Losing my breast was just a part of the saga.

Women can bear this suffering from chemotherapy, they can bear the suffering from surgery, and they can bear the suffering from radiation. But what is unbearable is that this disease will kill many of us.

Most survivors learn to accept breast cancer as a part of life's experience and will often come to view it as a turning point in their lives. The shock and sense of isolation

The cost in terms of human suffering, families devastated, loss of fertility, and the loss of our ability to work and contribute to our communities is intolerable. The price of doing nothing, of being passive, far exceeds the burden of choosing to speak out and to act.

We strongly recommend to this committee a systematic focused campaign to broaden and move forward our understanding and treatment of breast cancer and its survivors. What we have learned from the AIDS activists

program a research project, because it will not prevent one cancer and it will not identify one cancer in a woman under the age of 50 . . . That project was funded for \$17 million for seven years. That was their answer to research funding in Ontario for breast cancer.

When I was diagnosed with breast cancer four and a half years ago, I was consumed with the work of staying alive and with living whatever life I had left with dignity and purpose. The need to learn about my disease and to help other women cope with their diagnosis became my focus and my way of healing. I am grateful to be alive. I am thankful that you have asked me to come here and tell you about my story today. I am also grateful to be able to raise my daughters and to do this work.

But an evolution has taken place in those four and a half years. I am angry. I am very mad that more progress has not been made. In the time it has taken me to speak to you, two women have died of breast cancer in North America. If breast cancer research continues at its present rate, my daughters may well suffer the same fate.

I no longer beam with pride when people tell me how much my little girls resemble me. Those same genes that gave them my freckles have also given them a sixfold increase in their risk for breast cancer.

It is not enough to emphasize public education and early detection of breast cancer, although these have prolonged many lives. What is needed is a cure. If allocation of research funding to find a cure for breast cancer is a purely political process, then I want to be a part of that process. Because I too believe in miracles, but I want a cure for breast cancer.

Ms Pat Kelly (Co-founder, Burlington Breast Cancer Support Services Inc.):



Hella Hammid, TREE, 1979

Breast cancer treatments often have severe effects on a woman's health. Physical changes and the magnitude of suffering was best summarized by this statement from a woman in active treatment for her cancer:

I didn't know I would be sick, nauseated, frightened, unable to sleep, irritable, have strange mood swings which have alienated my family, get terrible hot flashes, lose my hair on my head and other places, and feel

and loneliness that accompany a cancer diagnosis will eventually give way to acceptance and integration. This difficult process is emotional and lengthy and frequently can be helped with the compassionate understanding of family, caregivers, friends and support groups. All of us are changed by a cancer diagnosis.

Dismissing a woman's concerns about her mortality, her sexuality and physical changes in strength and ability are cruel. Again, they undermine a woman's control over these demands of illness.

Women talk about the need to change the future legacy of this disease, because today the best treatments available still fail thousands of women every year. Prevention is just a dream. We believe women must assume individual and collective responsibility for their own health. Despite decades of research, experts still don't know why we get breast cancer and there is only a vague notion of who is at risk.

Because we are women, we are all at risk for breast cancer. Two-thirds of women diagnosed with breast cancer have no risk factors for the disease. Many of the known risk factors are beyond our ability to control.

is that money is available for research when there is a focused, well-organized, vocal support campaign. Breast cancer, which will strike 15 000 Canadian women this year and kill almost one-third of them within five years, is no less an epidemic than AIDS.

I do have, of note here, a letter I received some time ago from Benoît Bouchard. In 1989 the number of deaths from breast cancer in Ontario was 1814. In 1989 the number of deaths due to AIDS was 122. Research funding in support of AIDS just from the Ministry of Health in Ontario for that year was \$37 million. The only research project to support breast cancer - and I do not call the Ontario breast screening

(continued from opposite page)

right.

You ask what legal redress women have. If anyone follows my case, they really don't have much hope. Unless successful at appeal, my case sits as reference to any other lawyer defending a doctor or this product and its legal standing.

I really hope I'm not giving anybody the impression that I am, for want of a better way of putting it, anti-breast implant. I wear implants. There will always be a tremendous need

for this type of device to be available for women. This I know. I want this type of thing for myself. We need to know if what is available is truly safe and, if not, urge new research and development of breast implants to bring about devices that won't have the ability to deform, debilitate, or expose women to any form of cancer, however small.

Linda Wilson is a member, Je Sais/I Know, British Columbia.

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The great breast debate:

How do we protect the integrity of our bodies?

by Allison Nyiri

On July 18th, 1991 in Guelph, Ontario Canada, Gwen Jacob and a friend walked home from the University of Guelph. It was a hot day so Gwen took her shirt off. She and her friend walked home without incident.

Several days later, Gwen was walking on her own when she removed her shirt. This time the police stopped and informed her that if they received a complaint they would charge her. They left it at that. But someone did phone in and the police came back.

Six men in blue arrived to subdue the radical fire-breathing feminist.

Of course you need six grown men to subdue a topless woman, she might get hysterical or suddenly develop superhuman strength, or draw out a semi-automatic weapon from behind her back, or she may even have a posse of semi-nude women hiding in the bushes.

Alas, Gwen did none of the above. But she absolutely refused to put her t-shirt on. Consequently she was arrested and put in jail, then released. During her first court appearance in August Gwen requested legal aid from Judge Bruce Payne. Three more court appearances followed: October 30, November 15 and December 20. On January 17, 1992 Gwen Jacob was found guilty of public indecency and was fined.

She could have been granted a conditional discharge because she had no previous record, but because Gwen refused to remain silent and talked to the media and questioned the right of the court to rule on the use of

women's bodies, Judge Bruce Payne found her guilty. Gwen Jacob now has a criminal record for public indecency.

Jacob is appealing the ruling. She is seeking to appeal the case on a broader basis: that it is unconstitutional to charge women for removing their shirts in public. Jacob wants the right to go topless recognized by the government.



Gwen Jacob (photo: CP)

Her fight will not be an easy one. Our society does not see women's breasts as part of a whole woman. Gwen was told by Judge Bruce Payne that "the public has the right not to be exposed to women's breasts." He argued that you can't take an explicit picture of a nude woman and put it on the street. But the woman in the picture, argued Gwen Jacob, walked to work and is a three-dimensional person.

The issue here is that women in our society are not seen as whole persons but as parts readily available for male consumption. Women are reduced to breasts, mouths,

vaginas and buttocks. We are dismembered and disempowered by the dominant group who are in a position to decide what we can and can't do with our parts. Gwen's fight is to reclaim control over our bodies, to claim the right to choose when and where we will remove some of our clothes.

The sneaky, scary glitch here is even if we are accorded (or demand) the right to remove our shirts, will the legal system guarantee our personal safety? What would happen if a woman is assaulted while walking with her shirt off? We may know that we have the right to be free from violation and that attitudes must change but how do we ensure personal safety and integrity while our breasts are bared when we are not even guaranteed safety with our clothes on?

Empowering ourselves as women is the principle which ties together much, if not all feminist discourse and practice. Struggling to achieve the right to go bare-chested is one aspect of such empowerment. Jacob is very concerned with investing women's bodies with positive associations, free from harassment and violence. Very few of us would disagree with her objective.

However, as feminists and as women, we must carefully examine the motives of not only the patriarchy but of other feminists as well. This is not to say that we should dismiss other women's choices or ideas when they don't fit ours, but rather to develop a critical eye for seeing the underlying structures around us. It is at this point when theory and practice meet that the task of critical analysis begins.

Gwen Jacob is quite clear on her theory and her practice follows it closely. She is comfortable in her body and feels that other like-minded women have the right to exercise control over how they want to exhibit their comfort. Her focus is clearly on women having the right to exist as something other than sexual objects. She does not believe women's breasts should be covered up because men have invested breasts with sexual desire. Legally enforcing women to keep covered only perpetuates the objectification of women.

Yet for some women fighting for the right to go bare-chested at any time and anywhere is not part of their reality. The threat of violence toward women is an everyday reality and to go topless appears to invite even more violence. Feminists acknowledge that women are not responsible for, nor do we

invite, violence upon ourselves. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the attitudes of the dominant group towards women.

In North American society it is dangerous for women to walk the streets, regardless of whether or not we are wearing clothes. 'Take Back the Night' marches are still going on and women still lobby for proper lighting, increased police patrol, safer building designs and much more. In short, women are still trying to knock the patriarchy awake and make them see that more than half the population live in constant fear both inside and outside of their homes.

Jacob's story highlights the tension between feminist theory and practice. Feminists agree women are oppressed and fighting this oppression is the core of feminism. How we conceive of, discuss and dismantle this oppression



varies. Ideally, all feminists work toward a common end: to emancipate and empower all women. But each woman's reality is different and is shaped by race, culture, economic status and religion.

While Gwen Jacob works to achieve the right to go topless other women would not see that as emancipation.

On the other hand, why should any woman be forced to cover her body because the patriarchy has decided our bodies are the source of sin, shame and temptation?

There are no simple answers. Nor is there one branch of feminism that suits all women. But there is a single thread that binds us: love and respect for who we are and the belief we are deserving of love and respect from others. How we realize this is what makes feminism a dynamic force.

We as women all have our own thoughts and feelings on this story. Some of us will agree and some of us won't.

Either way, we all recognize that Gwen Jacob has pushed against the patriarchal wall of dictated behaviour for women.

We have to think carefully about the ways our bodies are controlled by the dominant group, and about how we are going to act and can support each other in this fight.

Finally, we can ask ourselves several questions: how do I feel about my body? If I am uncomfortable with my body, why is that? What messages has society given me about the integrity of my nakedness? What can I do to increase my comfort and respect of my own body?

Gwen Jacob has her own reasons for doing what she did. Her actions are political because society responded using rules that apply to all women. Empowerment for women is personal as well as political.

Gwen Jacob has received national and international attention. Her story has been printed in Paris, Australia, South Africa, Japan, China and in parts of the United States and she was interviewed by the BBC in Ireland.

But a price is being paid for her fight. She receives horrible letters from men from around the world. A 61 years old man from South Africa thought Gwen was a flasher like himself and gave explicit details of how he enjoys sex with young children. The hardest to bear, however, is the harassment Gwen receives on campus. On one campus wall someone spray-painted: "hey G.J. tits are for kids, show us your hole." A friend immediately tried to paint over the sick comment, but another was painted on before the paint was dry.

While Gwen Jacob wants other women to join in her struggle to go topless, she does not encourage women to go topless alone. She recommends walking in groups of two or three and preferably with men. Her argument is if a man and a woman are topless who do you arrest and what constitutional reason do the police cite if they arrest one and not the other? Gwen plans to go topless again this summer and is working to organize a national day of Action and march on Ottawa. She encourages women to march with her or to organize your own rallies.

You can send letters of inquiry to Gwen Jacob, c/o University of Guelph, Box 48-27-20, Guelph, Ontario, Canada, N1G 2W1.

Allison lives in Waterloo, Ontario, and is interested in writing about women, language and sexuality.

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'til death do us part . . .

by Andrée Côté

One thousand thirty-two (1,032) women were killed by their spouses between 1974 to 1986 in Canada.

Spousal homicide accounts for almost one-fifth of all homicides committed in this country (18%).

This represents 43% of all the women murdered in that thirteen year period. Contrary to popular myth, women are most at risk of being killed, just as they are most likely to be victims of physical and sexual abuse, by the men they are intimately involved with.

During that same period (1974-1986), 312 men were killed by their spouses, 6.4% of men murdered. Can you imagine if 43% of all male murder victims were killed by criminals belonging to an identifiable group? I would suggest this would be recognized as a major social problem, but when women are the victims it is not.

When the expression **spousal homicide** is used, it should be generally understood as **male violence** against women. Spousal homicides are committed by men in 77% of the recorded cases in Canada: higher in Québec (86%) and higher again in Montréal (91%). Most spousal homicides are spousal **femicides**.

Between 1974 and 1986, an average of 78 women died annually as a result of "family" violence. In 1975, International Women's Year, 91 women were killed by their spouses.

Recent statistics indicate that 90 to 100 women are killed by their spouses each year. This represents an increase in spousal femicide compared to the preceding thirteen year period.

My own study of spousal homicide in Montréal leads me to believe that official statistics grossly underestimate the number of women killed by their mates, by a margin of 30%. The data provided by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics establishes that 41 spousal homicides were committed in Montréal between 1982 to 1986. I documented 58 cases of spousal homicide in Montréal during that period. (51 crimes committed by men, and 7 by women). Official statistics do not take into account homicides committed by lovers, boyfriends and ex-common law spouses, since the object of their interest is "family" violence.

Spousal femicides have typically been represented as crimes of "passion", a irresistible impulse by men who have been unjustly provoked

by "harpies, sluts or nags". It is always presumed that these men loved their wife, lover or girlfriend. Be it in Shakespeare's *Othello* or Bizet's *Carmen*, the local paper or late-night reruns, men who kill their wives are looked upon with compassion and sympathy, if not outright complicity by other men.

When Louis Althusser, hero of the Marxist intelligencia of the 70s, killed his wife in the early 80s the french press focussed on her "difficult" character and "stubbornness" in defending her ideas.

usually committed with a great deal of violence.

It took me years to erase from my mind the memory of Jocelyne Grégoire's mutilated body. This young woman lived on a reserve near Sept-Îles. She had been seeking police protection for years, and had filed three complaints against her boyfriend for assault and aggravated assault. After many months of delay, he plea-bargained and was sentenced to a month in prison for each accusation, to be served concurrently (a few months earlier, he had been sentenced



In the cases that I have studied in the judicial district of Montréal, and on the Québec North-Shore, lawyers, crown prosecutors and judges often interpret these crimes as acts of love, committed out of desperation or provocation.

This representation of spousal femicide continues to be used to excuse the murderer and to lessen his criminal liability. However, it does not reflect reality. In fact, most of these crimes are committed out of hate, not love. These men seek ultimate control. They kill to have the last word.

In half the cases of spousal femicide studied in Montréal, women were murdered while attempting to leave their spouse. In other cases, sexual possessiveness, sexual frustration, domestic "disputes" or more simply a wish to get rid of a woman for whom the man no longer had any use, (because he had another lover or because she was old, sick or complained too much), were reasons men murdered their spouses. These crimes are often committed after repeated death threats and years of physical abuse. The murders are sometimes premeditated, and

to three months for having stolen a color T.V. ...). On the day that he was released from prison, he stabbed her repeatedly, mutilating her horribly. She was eighteen years old.

Another man, angered when his lover decided to leave him, harassed and threatened her, but she would not give in. Finally he asked her to meet him to talk. When she arrived for the appointment, he strangled her.

Another man killed his wife when she told him that she had found a job, after years of being a housewife. The psychologist who examined him said that this had exacerbated his feelings of insecurity.

Yet another killed his wife when he found out she had not been a virgin upon marriage. Having paid a bride-price to his wife's family, he felt cheated and strangled her with a scarf.

One man shot his wife when she told him that she was going away on a two week vacation, without him. "Who will cook for me?" he asked. She told him that he'd figure something out. She was shot in the back as she was leaving the apartment.

When women kill their spouses, they usually do so in

self-defense. In roughly 70% of cases they are acting in defense of an actual or impending life-threatening attack. Whether it is a woman or a man committing spousal homicide, it is more likely than not the result of male violence.

A team of American psychiatrists have determined that most men kill their wives because they feel a "sex-role threat", caused by "a potential or an actual desertion. The threat relates to the denial of the right the killer believed he had to dominate his wife and to exercise control over her actions".

Another research team concludes, that "domestic homicides, with women as victims, tend to be motivated by a desire for a system maintenance, i.e. the maintenance of the gender based status quo". These men want to have control over their women and if they lose control, they are willing to kill them.

These men will resort to violence for many reasons: to restore a diminished self-image or for sexual pleasure. But mostly, this violence is instrumental: a conscious, goal-oriented strategy for obtaining a specific result; the restoration of their male strength and power. Contrary to the usual interpretation, their violence is not the result of a loss of self-control or of an individual psychopathology. On the contrary, it is a **prise de contrôle**. By interpreting a women's autonomy as rebellion against their authority or an insult to their masculinity, these men justify their violence as a legitimate means of reclaiming power.

Spousal femicide is an expression of male dominance. It is a crime committed by men against women, for the maintenance of male power over women.

In a patriarchal society, this creates a political dimension that transcends individual experience. Male violence against women is systemic, rampant and mostly unchecked. Despite the occasional exemplary sentence boosting the criminal justice system's image in the eyes of those who are satisfied with symbolic solutions, these men are not being stopped from committing their crimes.

Every time a woman is killed, hundreds fear for their lives. When the coordinator of Baie-Comeau's battered women's shelter was assassinated by her husband, many women abandoned their divorce proceedings and returned home. Men would tell their spouses "if you don't behave, you will suffer the same fate as Ginette Desjardins". The shelter emptied itself.

Spousal femicides are crimes committed to maintain the socio-sexual status quo, in a society that has formally abandoned it. These men act as individual agents for a collective interest. In their own way, they are terrorists, trying to save the old order by the best way they know how: violence. There is a civil war going on, and only one side is suffering the casualties.

*Andrée Côté is the author of a study on the judicial treatment of spousal homicides in Québec, entitled: **La rage au coeur: étude sur le traitement judiciaire de l'homicide conjugal au Québec**. A copy of her report can be obtained by writing to the Regroupement des femmes de la Côte-Nord, 767 rue Puyjalon, Baie-Comeau, Québec, G5C 1M9, (418-589-6171)*

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Victory for Pandora ... and all of us

by a member of the
Pandora collective

It was the best win we could have hoped for as it stated emphatically that women as a disadvantaged group are legally entitled to engage in activities which seek to redress inequality.

In June 1990, a sex-discrimination complaint was filed by a man who claimed he was the subject of sex-discrimination when Pandora refused to print a letter he had written. The letter was written in response to an article which Pandora had printed in a previous issue.

On March 17, 1992 the adjudicator rendered his 47 page decision in the case. In his decision he stated: "I am satisfied on the evidence before me that women as a group have been and are disadvantaged and unequal in our society by the reason of sex." He continued, "the promotion of equality in the prohibition against discrimination has a more specific goal than the mere elimination of distinctions and that identical treatment may produce inequality." In summary he stated, "I am also satisfied that Pandora's policy of maintaining Pandora as a single sex newspaper is reasonable for the purpose of ameliorating disadvantage." Finally, Pandora's original position had been vindicated in a court ruling that was clear and concise: Pandora had the right to be women only!

Pandora is a newspaper written and produced for, by and about women, exclusively. It is a policy which has been part of Pandora since its inception six years ago. The complainant was told of this policy immediately and that his letter would not be printed because he was a man.

The complainant proceeded with filing a complaint of sex-discrimination with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. As procedural rules dictate, the Commission responded with an investigation into the complaint. During this investigation, we argued our position by trying to demonstrate the importance of Pandora as a forum which responds to the disadvantaged position of women in society.



This investigation led to a conciliation meeting at the Human Rights office with the complainant, which ultimately failed.

Pandora then discussed the possibility of applying for an exemption from the Human Rights Commission, to be legally recognized as an equality-promoting organization. After much discussion, we decided not to pursue being considered a 'special interest group' which requires permission to promote equality, when we do so by virtue of our existence.

The Commissioner's recommendation was to proceed with a full-blown board of inquiry and in June 1991, Pandora was notified that the

case would proceed in this fashion. It is ironic and disturbing to note that the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission agreed to defend the rights of a white, heterosexual, highly educated male. It is also ironic that Pandora has fought so hard to help secure the rights of women through its pages and now finds itself at odds with the Human Rights Commission.

An independent Halifax lawyer, David Miller, was appointed by the Human Rights Commission to adjudicate the proceedings. The case is now outside the jurisdiction of the Human Rights Commission and lies solely on the judgement of the adjudicator based on the information he was given at the inquiry by attending lawyers and complainant.

The Board of Inquiry began during the week of January 13-17, 1992. It was a hellish week for the women of Pandora. During the final arguments the lawyer for the Human Rights Commission presented a brief which was highly charged with offensive and derogatory comments about the women of Pandora and our witnesses. For example the brief contained the following quotes: "the hysteria of extremism", "verbal gymnastics reached the heights of ridiculousness," "... is so ludicrous that it far outreaches the furthestmost boundaries of reason and sanity," and reference to Pandora as "a special interest group providing a space to promote their own special interest"

The inappropriate characterization of women in the final arguments brief by the Human Rights Commission prompted the women of Pandora to file a formal and

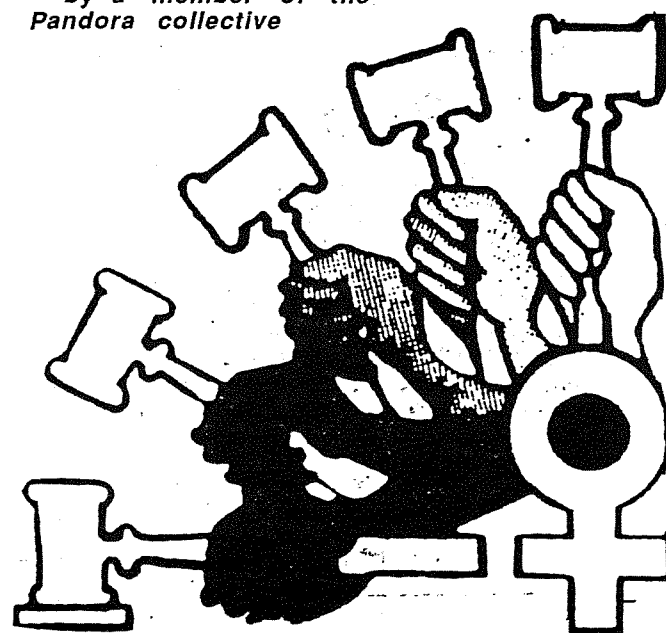
detailed complaint against the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission on March 26, 1992. In this complaint we outlined three solutions which we felt would redress our complaint against the Commission: a public apology; regular workshops for Commissioners; and the costs associated with the outcome of the case. What we received was an "apology" construed as a newsrelease.

This case, and our victory on March 17, 1992, has radical implications for every other women-only organization across Canada. Pandora took a strong position that women-only organizations should not be required to apply for exemptions to carry out legally the functions it already performs by virtue of its existence. Women constitute the majority of the population, and feminist organizations which work to improve the living and social conditions of women should not be considered special interest groups!

The coercion of women-only groups into applying for exemptions leaves all remaining groups, functions and/or events vulnerable to attack from angry men who feel their rights have been violated. If Pandora had applied for an exemption but was denied, the consequence would be that we would have no protection against this claim or further claims of sex-discrimination. Similarly, all other women's groups would be unprotected and vulnerable to claims of sex-discrimination.

We hope the position we have taken will help secure the rights of women's groups across the country to be and remain who and what you/we are.

During the inquiry, Pandora women were permitted to testify using a pseudonym for security. To be consistent with this ruling, we decided not to publicly disclose our identities. This is why names are absent from this article.



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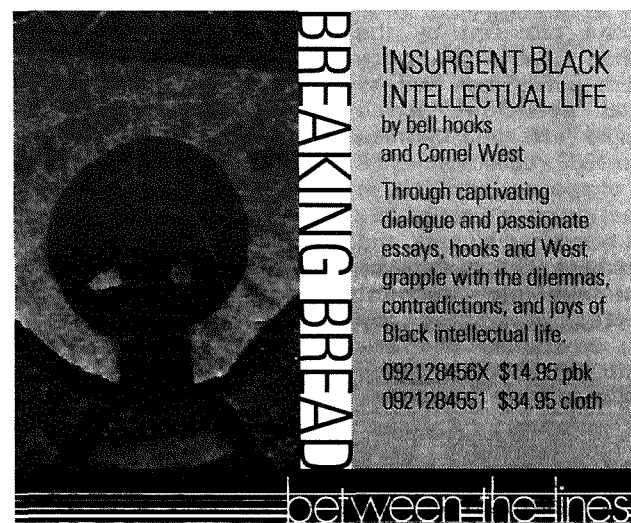
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Walked into a toy store lately?

by: Hana Hruska and Tracey Eisenberg

Walked into a toy store lately? No? Well, let us describe what you'll find.

You'll find several aisles of "action" figures. "Action", in case you're not familiar with toyspeak, doesn't mean athletics and it has nothing to do with any fast-paced childhood games like tag. "Action" basically means violence.

Action figures are based on violent TV shows for kids. Or, more accurately, TV shows are produced to sell the toys. Action figures hold weapons in their upraised fists. They grimace. They come in green, black, brown and other military fatigue-inspired colours. They also come in sets, like the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, each Turtle (Turtle! That slow, passive animal...) with a different weapon and a few other distinguishing characteristics. If you have a son, he'll probably want the whole slew of them. If you have a daughter, she won't be interested. These are the boys' toys.

This isn't to say that girls are forgotten. Just think pink. Girls' toys are, above all, pink. Barbies with pink and frilly clothes and pink doll's houses; little pretend make-up sets with pink lipstick, sold in pink cardboard packaging; little pink plastic tea sets. Interesting; one assumes boys will also drink tea when they grow up, but maybe they don't need to practice. Experts say these toys help little girls work out relationships. Could it be boys' toys, also, help boys work out relationships - just a bit differently?

Of course, this isn't all you'll find in a toy store. You'll also find video games, with names like "Punchout" and "Skate or Die". They are supposed to teach hand-eye coordination. They're for the older boys. Older girls just get more Barbies. They don't need to learn hand-eye coordination or the underlying message of violence.

There are aisles of stuffed animals and "educational toys"

(as if every toy didn't teach something) hidden away in every toy store. These toys aren't heavily advertised on TV and don't, for the most part, have TV shows based on them. These, however, are the toys parents like. Most parents don't like the other toys.

Long before our children go to school and are exposed to unisex curricula, non-sexist textbooks and (hopefully) teachers who believe in gender equality, our kids spend many hours with toys and TV. Kids' toys and TV shows engage the imagination. They help the child to develop a sense of identity.



(photo: Jerry Berndt, Mother Jones, May/June 1992)

In the preschool years, children struggle with gender roles, and try to model the "appropriate" one. Some children's experience is not much different than the narrow (and harmful) range of "appropriate" behaviour for males and females the toys promote. Other, luckier children receive messages of sexual equality from elsewhere - from family and friends. But the positive messages can get diluted or even lost within the flood of commercially-promoted violence that occupies much of a child's imagination.

When the world of imagination that little girls and little boys inhabit, are so radically different from each other, our children risk never playing with or learning to understand the other sex.

Little boys learn violence, and may grow up to see violence as natural. And in some cases to perpetuate, the

entire range of male-generated violence, from spouse beating to war as a first option in international relations.

When girls learn only passivity and nurturing, they are unlikely to grow up assertive enough to stand up to men, and to take their rightful place as equals in society.

Girls' toys and boys' toys have always differed. This isn't surprising since they are a reflection of how men's and women's roles have differed. Women are struggling for equality and winning at least some measure of it in more and

more areas of life.

Differences between the sexes that a few years ago most considered innate, are now being challenged and are decreasing, to the point that they are now seen as being socially-induced. Witness the spectacular improvement in the performance of women track and field athletes in recent years, or the rise in female students' math scores relative to men's.

At the same time, and in inverse proportion, the toys and television programs produced for young children are becoming more, rather than less, sex-typed. As educators, storybook writers, and parents become more conscious of sending the "right" messages to children, many toy manufacturers and children's TV producers bypass adults altogether, producing glitzy, limiting and negative toys that are



advertised directly to children. These toys engage the children's imagination in a way that blots out the messages people with the child's best interests in mind are trying to impart.

As a parent, educator or as a child's friend, one's power is limited. Junior can't watch the Turtles at home? That's ok - he'll go to his friend's house to watch them, or he'll apprentice himself to some child in the schoolyard who's only too willing to teach him martial-arts and conflict-resolution techniques. He'd better learn them quick, or he'll be labelled a sissy.

Individually, it's an uphill struggle, but as the old saying

goes, "the people united will never be defeated." We invite you to join us in devising strategies to protest violent children's media and playthings and to promote positive and non-sexist toys and TV programs.

Hana Hruska and Tracey Eisenberg are the co-founders of Towards a Gentler Society (TAGS), a group that was recently formed to raise public awareness on the issues of violent children's toys and media, and to work for the elimination of violent children's playthings. TAGS can be contacted c/o 737 Mooney's Bay Place, Ottawa, K1V 8W4.

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Northern women's health at risk

Depo Provera in the NWT

by Lynn Brooks

Last fall the Status of Women Council of the N.W.T. received a complaint regarding the controversial drug Depo Provera. The complaint was received during a time when we were conducting research into professional ethics in the N.W.T. Research that revealed an alarming number of questionable situations and incidents regarding a variety of N.W.T. professionals and professionals who visit the N.W.T.

One of the most disturbing complaints was also one of the best documented. An educated, articulate woman in her 30's, who had been through two successful planned pregnancies, was offered Depo Provera as a desirable birth control option by an Iqaluit physician.

The woman was surprised to say the least and more than a little concerned. The complainant knew research had been done on Depo, which alleged the drug has very serious side effects.

Extensive research done in the '70s and '80s revealed that Depo Provera had caused cancer of the mammary glands in lab animals. In humans the research alleged the development of uterine abnormalities, huge weight gains, interruption of menstruation and great difficulty conceiving post use. For these reasons, Depo Provera has been banned for use in a number of countries including the U.S.

It needs to be stated that all the medical people we consulted told us that Depo has great potential in treating some forms of cancer, and were upset at the idea that the drug be banned.

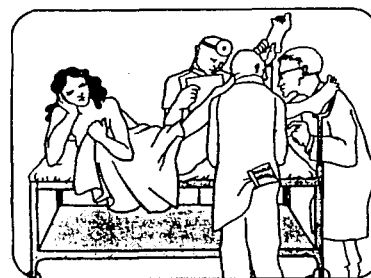
Depo has not been licensed for use as birth control in Canada although doctors can prescribe it. Depo also cannot be advertised or promoted in any way.

In the course of investigating the original complaint, our board members interviewed women in their regions to see if the Iqaluit incident was isolated or if indeed numbers of women throughout the NWT were being offered Depo as a birth control method.

The results were disturbing. A number of women, and, in some cases girls as young as 13, were being offered this controversial medication as a first line option. The more upsetting stories were, however, coming out of Iqaluit.

Some NWT nurses who had also worked in the Third World articulated some disturbing parallels in physicians' attitudes. The nurses had deep misgivings about Depo and about doctors in the Third World using the convenient periodic Depo injections for what they called, "rural populations with low education and low compliance levels". Some of the NWT doctors we talked to seemed to have similar attitudes.

It needs to be stated that a number of doctors from foreign



countries practise in the NWT and while nurses coming north are required to take cross-cultural training before they begin working, doctors are not required to undergo the cultural education.

After our complaint to the then Minister of Health now Government Leader, Nellie Cournoyea, an informed consent form was instituted.

The problem is - What is "informed consent" if the patient does not have English as a first language and does not know about the research done on Depo Provera? Another problem is when the doctor is from another culture and in some cases also not fluent in English.

During our investigation, numerous other concerns about doctor-patient relationships and patients' rights came up. The semi-silvered lining of this cloud is that the Status of Women Council is now working with the Department of Health in the NWT to develop some materials which will inform and educate women regarding their rights around many physical and mental health issues.

Women need to become assertive consumers when it comes to their own and their children's mental and physical health.

Lynn Brooks is the Executive Director of the Status of Women Council of the N.W.T.



Because wife assault usually happens at home, people tend to think of it as a family affair. But wife assault is not a private matter. **It is a crime.**

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For emergency assistance or referral, call the Wife Assault Helpline, listed in the white pages of your telephone directory or call the police.

Ontario Women's Directorate



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Does the Charter apply to the poor?

by Lise Corbell

The rural County of Hastings in southeastern Ontario is not a comfortable place to live if you happen to be out of work and in need of welfare.

On September 5, 1990, the Hastings County Council decided their general welfare rolls were getting out of hand, and concluded that people were abusing the system and committing welfare fraud. They chose to ignore that Ontario's economy is in the midst of a major recession and jobs are disappearing at a critical rate.

In Ontario, the General Welfare Act provides social assistance to those classified as "employable" and is funded by federal, provincial and municipal governments but administered by the municipalities.

Hastings County Council passed a resolution instructing the local welfare administrator to release the names of general welfare assistance (GWA) recipients in Hastings County to them. Some Councillors wanted to use the list to "police" welfare rolls by identifying welfare "cheats" and reporting them to the Welfare Administrator.

The resolution was quickly condemned by poverty action groups who fought back by organizing public forums and contacting the local media. The Honourable Zenana Akande, then Minister of Community and Social Services for Ontario, wrote to the Council expressing her disapproval of the resolution.

In November, 1990, the local community legal clinic, representing some welfare recipients, obtained a temporary injunction restraining the Council and the Welfare Administrator from

acting on the resolution. The Council retaliated November 22 by passing a second resolution re-affirming its original position.

The legal clinic then tried working through the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the provincial Privacy Commissioner to stop the council from accessing the welfare lists. The clinic was told this situation is not illegal.

power to make life miserable for welfare recipients by denouncing them to the local welfare administrator on the basis of his or her personal and biased opinion of what people on welfare should be able to afford or what work they should be willing to do.

A coalition of anti-poverty organizations was quickly formed and asked the court for

Rights and Freedoms to ask that the resolution be declared illegal by the courts. Section 7 of the **Charter** states: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice." The coalition is arguing that the Hastings County resolution violates the social assistance recipients' right to security of the person because it is an invasion of their personal privacy and inconsistent with the principles of fundamental justice.

Welfare recipients are saying they are fearful Council members will try to reduce the number of welfare recipients in the county. A leak in the information may lead to public and private humiliation for themselves and their families; that their elected representatives will be less receptive to their particular problems; and that they may be coerced into doing work for which they are unsuited.

Section 14 (1) of the **Charter** states: "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability." In June 1991, the Supreme Court of British Columbia, in a case

opposing the Federated Anti-Poverty Groups of British Columbia and the Attorney-General of British Columbia, said it was clear that persons receiving income assistance constitute a discrete and insular minority within the meaning of Ss. 15. and that the **Charter** protects them from discrimination.

The coalition of intervenors is arguing that the County resolution is discriminatory and is based on false assumptions and stereotypes that recipients don't want to work, are dishonest, are immoral, etc. The resolution violates their right of equality before the law because the General Welfare Assistance Act (G.W.A. Act - the law in question) would be administered and applied differently with respect to recipients of general welfare in Hastings County than it is throughout the rest of the province.

The anti-poverty movement considers the action of the Hastings County Councillors as one more incidence of welfare bashing and is fighting it both at the political level and through the courts. The court case is seen as crucial because a victory would provide a clear signal to all municipalities that this type of action is not only unethical, it is also illegal.

Lise Corbell is the Executive Director of the National Anti-Poverty Organization.



Illustration: Kimberley Whitchurch, Dal Gazette

Hastings County Council's resolution is very threatening to welfare recipients. It creates a "Big Brother" system of surveillance and intimidation operated by those very people who are elected to represent all county residents. It gives the local Reeve access to highly personal information. This person may also be the welfare recipient's landlord or the owner of the local grocery store. The Reeve then has the

intervenor status. The coalition is comprised of: the National Anti-Poverty Organization, the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation and the local anti-poverty group, Citizens for Action. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the Ontario Government also received intervenor status. The case is presently before the Ontario Court (General Division).

Among other arguments, the coalition of intervenors is using the **Canadian Charter of**

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A New Work by Janice Williamson



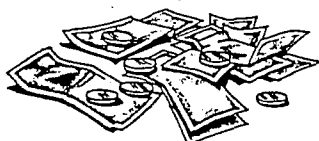
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Fostering dependency

What has been the long term effect of welfare on women?

by Darlene McBain

This question is not the basis for a lengthy article. It can be answered quite simply - the welfare system is part of women's dependency on men. The system has been set up by men and is controlled by them.

When women have to worry about how to pay the rent, buy their food for their children and simply survive on a day-to-day basis, they don't have the time or energy to fight back. What better way for men to control us than to keep the majority of us poor? Women still earn 65 cents for every dollar men earn. 84% of women in Canada can expect to be single parents.

I have worked for the Legal Services Society of British Columbia for seven years. During that time I have interviewed many women, most

of them on welfare. I have seen the effect dependency on government has on people. It robs them of their self respect and dignity. It makes people frustrated and angry and isolated from the mainstream of society.

For middle class people who often adopt blame-the-victim attitude, amnesia develops and they forget welfare rates are almost 50% lower than the poverty income guidelines set by Statistics Canada.

In British Columbia a family of three gets \$1,033 a month on welfare. Statistics Canada estimates the monthly poverty line income for a family of three is \$1,620. What goods and services are people on welfare "choosing" to give up each month to compensate for not having that needed \$600? A



dental visit? New shoes for their kids? Meals? Telephone Service?

I recently assisted a family that had been unable to save enough money from their monthly shelter allowance to pay their in-house taxes. They received a notice from the city that if they did not pay the taxes by the end of September

their home would be put in the tax sale. When I discussed the possibility of getting a crisis grant, their worker said the government would pay the taxes this time but would start to administer their client's funds, as they were not capable of doing so themselves. Not only do they not have enough money to survive on, but the government will now decide what is a priority for the limited dollars they do receive.

Mothers on social assistance in British Columbia are automatically enrolled in the Family Maintenance Program by the welfare system. The decision to seek maintenance from an ex-spouse or father of their children is controlled by the Ministry of Social Services and

Housing. If the woman has left a violent or abusive relationship, she has to go to a Family Maintenance Worker and plead her case. She may not want to seek maintenance payments because she does not want any further contact with an abusive ex-partner. She has to convince a bureaucrat that her own safety and that of her children is best for the welfare system.

When women receive welfare, what are we telling them? That other people now have the right to make decisions for them about their safety and financial priorities?

I always knew poverty was a women's issue but until this year I didn't realize poverty is a form of violence against women.

Violence is defined as excessive force being exerted against something. Poverty is a very effective form of violence because, like mental abuse, it is systematically engrained into our culture: often we don't even see it and when we do it's not recognized for what it is.

Poverty affects mental and physical health. The Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) reports that poor people have considerably fewer disability-free years than others, and have the highest incidence of some health conditions. The Alberta Status of Women Action Committee report states infant mortality rate among poor women is twice the national average. CCSD reported there is an 82% higher rate of infant mortality and low birthweight babies among the poor.

We will continue to need a welfare system, as there will continue to be people who are unable to work. But the system needs improvements. More affordable housing and more money are just two areas to address.

Poor people have the right to live in dignity and with self-respect. The system must allow women to make their own decisions. These changes will only come about when women, who make up the majority of the poor, get together to form strong lobby groups to pressure the governments in their province and federally to legislate for welfare laws. Considering the federal government has recently made a decision to reduce transfer payments to the three provinces considered to be "have" provinces - British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario - this task is going to be even more difficult.

Darlene McBain works as a paralegal at The Legal Services Society of British Columbia in Kamloops, and is active as a Board member of the Kamloops Women's Resource Centre.

December 6th Happens Every 6 Minutes...

"In Canada, an act of male violence against women occurs every six minutes."

Kate Eccles, "Blow the Whistle on Violence," IMAGES MAGAZINE, July 30, 1990, p. 34

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PROMOTING CHANGE THROUGH DIALOGUE

One-third of all women can't read this article

by Jill Uhrich

- She overdosed her child - she could not read the directions.
- She drank Drano thinking she read Bromo.
- She stays on welfare because she can't fill out job application forms.
- She was handed a pamphlet about wife assault it went, unable to be read, in the next garbage bin she passed.
- She was ripped off because she couldn't make change.
- She didn't vote because she couldn't read the candidates' pamphlets or the ballot.



- She missed her appointment because she couldn't read a map.
- Grocery shopping is a hassle because she can't read the labels.
- She feels alone.

A 1990 Statistics Canada survey shows that 38% of Canadian adults have some difficulty reading everyday print.

The scope of the literacy issue includes poverty, health, safety, security and self-esteem.

But primarily literacy and poverty can not be separated. It's a vicious circle.

Although there are exceptions, most people with low literacy skills are poor, undereducated and underemployed. When they were kids, they came to school hungry and found it hard to concentrate. People would then make assumptions about their behaviour. Yes, they went through our school systems. They had parents who couldn't help them because the same thing happened to them. They had physical or developmental

disabilities and were never given the chance to learn. They had to drop out to support the family. They learned differently than most.

Again, I emphasize, there are exceptions, but what I have described is all too common. They were kids in a system. Now they are adults. Has anything changed? We still have a 30% high school drop-out rate and the need for food banks have tripled over the last five years in Metro Toronto.

Awareness is acknowledging there is a problem. We have done that quite well. We are aware people have difficulty reading.

How can we change things?

Become sensitive and make changes from within. You are society, you are social change. Don't wait for the infamous society to change, you are it!

There are many ways to be part of the solution: tutoring, fundraising and prevention work. But what is often missed is how everyone, in their own area of work, can make a difference. Be part of the solution and write based on the guidelines of **Clear Language and Design**.

Clear Language and Design is a style of writing and print presentation which reaches the largest possible audience. It is not simple, boring or childlike. If you produce written material for the general public it makes sense to write in order to include as many people as possible.

Go back and read the few opening paragraphs. Are there any that relate to your area of work? Consider all of your print material. Ask, "in what situations have I assumed (or not considered) literacy ability?" You may have identified areas for change such as the readability of:

- standard forms
- dosages for medication
- labels and instructions on consumer items
- signs in your workplace
- advertising
- pamphlets



The list goes on . . . To change from within is to include the millions of people with low literacy skills. **Clear Language and Design** is a tool for inclusion, and inclusion is a tool for empowerment.

A request from *The Womanist*, in the Summer 1991 asked for a critical look at the women's movement. It asked, "are there some things that need to change? any assumptions?" The piece ended, "At *The Womanist*, we believe that inclusiveness is the foundation of an effective women's movement".

Therefore, we must consider who we exclude: in terms of literacy, we exclude at least 1/3 of all women because we assume they can easily read what we write.

The women's movement

wants to change women's circumstances. We know many women are poor. We know there is a direct relationship between poverty and low literacy skills. Therefore, we must write in clear language or we will exclude the very people we want to reach.

To adopt the principles of **Clear Language and Design** is to learn a new way of writing and print presentation. Believe me, it's not easy to do. I'm still learning! First of all you have to come to terms with what I call "literary snobbery" the "I like using big words" attitude. Impress your peers when you write as them, but be inclusive when you write for the public.

Seek out a community literacy group that can guide

you in the change to **Clear Language and Design**. Hire learners as consultants. I recommend the book; **Clear Writing and Literacy** by Ruth Baldwin, prepared for the Ontario Literacy Coalition. Do these things and you will be taking a step toward empowerment.

Empowerment gives people a chance to make choices. *The Womanist* ended that same article with "Women can make change, personally and politically. Each of us must accept and use the power we have in order to empower all women." Make your change within. Write for all women.

Jill Uhrich coordinates a literacy program in Toronto



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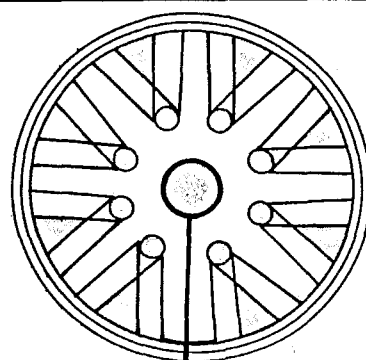
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Women study class:

by Eunice Lavell

I too "begin from a position of love of women" and believe that "inclusiveness is a foundation of an effective women's movement" (Womanist, Summer 1991). My own definition of love is broad and includes constructive criticism and loving confrontations. In this paper, I want to share my understanding of the relevance of social class for feminists. This view is based on my own analysis, which grows out of my experience, I describe my process in gaining this understanding as gleaning: gathering together bits of knowledge into an organized whole. I share with you those little subversive gems of knowledge.

I identify myself as both a poor woman and a feminist, a joint identity which is not always comfortable to maintain. The majority of poor



women I know don't identify themselves as feminist. But more to the point, most of the self-identified feminists I know are unaware of the relevance of social class. In my experience, feminists are just as likely to accept and perpetuate the negative and disempowering stereotypes of poor people as non-feminists.

Feminism in its basic sense - an understanding of women's

situation in patriarchy, and in its radical sense - a deeply felt respect for women and yearning for the Female, has been one of the most empowering experiences of my life.

I write to give voice to the often-unheard perspective of a feminist poor woman and to promote an understanding that the women's movement can never be a dynamic force for all women unless it accepts the views of poor women, validates our experiences, and includes our analysis. Many poor women have a very different perspective from that of other-class women. We have our own experience of being woman. Our own view of what has to change, and how.

Capitalist society is by definition classist. Many feminists fail to recognize their own deeply embedded classist assumptions, while others understand issues of social class only theoretically, basing their analysis on the works of Karl Marx. You don't have to read Marx to learn about social class, classism and poor women. You need only listen to poor women.

Some key areas in which poor women's experience differs from those of non-poor women are:

Reproductive Freedom

For many feminists, reproductive freedom is about having the freedom to choose not to become pregnant, not to continue a pregnancy, not to mother a child. This springs from the fact that for centuries, non-poor white women in this country have been struggling to have access to birth control information and to abortions. Denial of freedom for these women has taken the form of forced reproduction. But this is not poor women's history.

Poor women have been the subjects of campaigns, to, "keep the unfit from reproducing", programs which were often endorsed by the upper-class white women now revered as First Wave feminists.

Poor women have been victims of involuntary abortion and sterilization. Our babies have been stolen from us and

adopted by "nice (non-poor) couples." Native women in particular have lost their children to adoption, residential schools, and white foster homes. Denial of freedom for poor women has been denial of our right to have children.

• My paternal aunt Beatrice, at the age of fifteen, was sexually abused by two adult men and contacted venereal



disease. She was "Treated" with confinement to a Home for Delinquent Girls, and a hysterectomy.

• My paternal aunt Eileen, at the age of seventeen, was given an involuntary abortion by a doctor-friend of her abusive employer. She died of a hemorrhage.

• My maternal aunt Madilla, at the age of twenty, became "hysterical" while being "disciplined" by her abusive husband and was admitted to a mental hospital. She "miscarried" and was then given a hysterectomy because of her husband's agreement with the hospital to "limit family size."

These incidents are not confined to the past. Many of the poor women I know who are against abortion are against it because of their own, or a family member's experience of being forced to have an abortion or sterilization. It is the very young poor women in this country as well as poor women of Third World countries who, even now are guinea pigs for untested and dangerous fertility control drugs. In addition, many poor women on welfare have had abortions and "tubals" because of the threat of withdrawal of funds. ("Why should we pay just because you can't keep your legs together", one woman was told by her social worker.)

On Family and Mothering

Feminists identify "the family" as one of the most oppressive institutions. This analysis is based on the experience of many feminists, women who grew up in families in which the needs of female family members were always secondary to those of males, especially fathers. In these families, women are required to be passive, ornamental servants to men and children. In these families, women have all the responsibilities while men make decisions. Women take care of everyone else but men have power. These are the families which feminist family therapist Deborah Anna Luepnitz has identified as patriarchal (father-dominated) but father-absent.

Again, my sense is that this depiction of the "family" structure is more representative of middle-class families than of ours. I am not saying poor women are not abused within families or that poor people's families are unaffected by male privilege under patriarchy. I am saying the above description of family is not accurate for many poor women. It certainly is foreign to me.

Much of the popular interpretation of feminist theory on "motherhood" follows this class-biased view of family. This interpretation first assumes, a 'family' as one which is father-controlled, woman-as-servant. Not only does this analysis not follow poor women's experience in families, but it also fails to account for the experiences of important groups such as divorced mothers, lesbian mothers and the growing population of unmarried heterosexual women who choose to procreate without the permission or sponsorship of any man.

Second, it assumes that "mother" equals "wife". To make a very simple observation, mother is in relation to child, while wife is in relation to man. Men have

more power, as a group than women. But children have less power as a group than women. So wife by definition is a subordinate role for women, while mother is a role of greater power. And although our society demands these roles appear together, they are not necessarily interdependent roles.

Third, this interpretation fails to challenge the deeply-held and sexist belief that a woman cannot properly care for a child without a man in the family. Once again, this leads to circular thinking: mothering disempowers women because it puts them in the service of husbands, but a mother without a husband is not a proper mother. At the risk of being indelicate (not a particularly frightening risk for me), I would point out that when it comes to making children, a man is only necessary for a brief moment! It is true that most female-headed families experience dire financial problems. But mothers of any class are better served by the supportive of other women and groups than by the often unacknowledged demand to "get a man" or else forfeit our ability to be a mother.

In my parental family, my mother was an essential and powerful person, independent, capable and resourceful. And so were other adult females in the neighbourhood in which I grew up. This was a community of strong women, their various children and grandchildren, and sometimes husbands. Actually, the families which better resemble my own are those I read about in fiction of black women, particularly Toni Morrison.

For myself, I have experienced great learning and empowerment in the process of becoming a mother, a process which continues to unfold as my first-born daughter, reaches her eleventh birthday. "Mother" is as essential a part of my self-definition as

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Gleanings of a white poor woman

"woman" or "feminist". But, although I have sometimes been married, "wife" has never been an important role for me (as I believe my ex-husbands would agree).

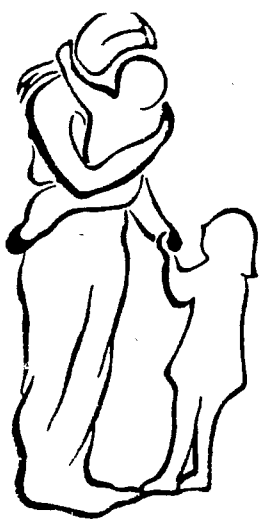
What has been most disheartening for me is encountering the same negative judgements, disapproval and assumptions about the inferiority of my family form among feminists as I do from anyone else.

Work-for-Pay.

One of the most visible accomplishments of the women's movement has been its effort to make room in the paid work force and get better pay for women. Unfortunately, for some feminists this one area of effort is often seen as the focus for the women's movement. For me this emphasis is problematic. The majority of poor women haven't a hope of a "career" which is personally satisfying, financially rewarding or even pleasant. Mostly, we get jobs. And our jobs give us no prestige or power, very little pay and often are very bad for our health. Yet feminist theory continues to assume that all

women want to work-for-pay because of the "personal satisfaction" we get from our "careers".

I am not saying that pay level is unimportant to us. Obviously, for those of us who live in poverty, every extra dollar is of vital importance. I am saying that an exclusive careers-for-women focus does not truly serve poor women.



Poor women can only be served by radically changing the system. As long as you accept the capitalist system, you perpetuate the oppression of poor people, because poor people are what makes capitalism work. And a large proportion of poor people will always be women.

Finally, I want to point out the relationship between the particular institutions that we as feminists choose to criticize and our own beliefs and values. If feminists want to question all institutions which oppress women, they must begin by looking long and hard at the institution of paid work. To me there is a glaring inconsistency in the willingness of many feminists to unquestioningly endorse women's greater participation in the paid work force, but to approach every aspect of our participation in families with suspicion. I am not saying women should not work for pay. I am saying we need to examine the whole system. Paid work is an essential component of a system which oppresses poor women more than it does non-poor women.



These are some of the main areas in which poor women often have differing experiences, and thus very different perspectives, from women of other classes. The longer these differences remain unaddressed, the more divisive they become. Non-poor feminists become more convinced of the universality of their perspective, while poor women continue to assume they don't qualify to be feminists. Not only does this rob the women's movement of the rich contribution of poor women, but it also makes poor women vulnerable to the propaganda of anti-feminists and right-wing "fundamentalists".

Think of this as an invitation. For non-poor women, it is an invitation to

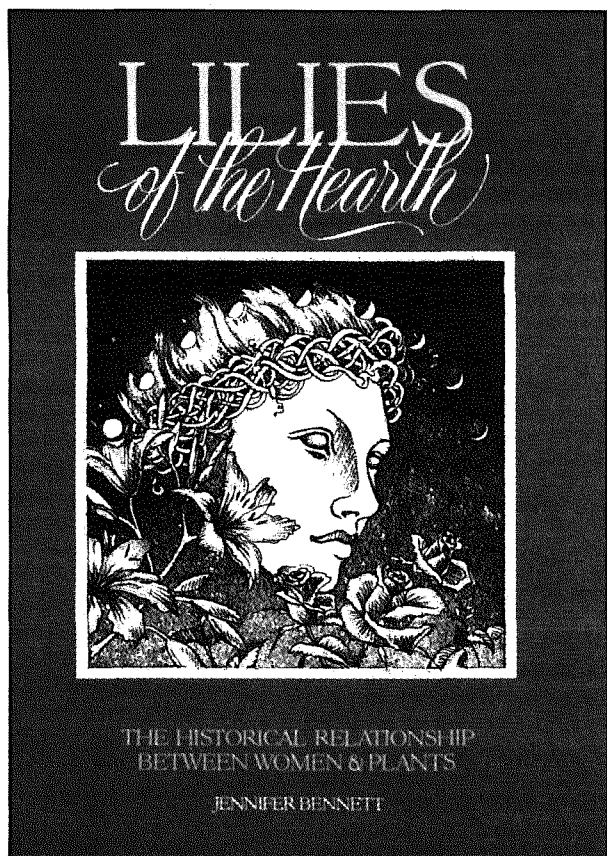
challenge yourself to recognize the classism you have been taught all your life.

Sisters, listen to the voices of poor women and learn from them. Poor women, this is your invitation to know that your experience as a poor woman is essential to your self as a feminist. Remember feminism must ring true to your life. Liberation begins with learning to honour those aspects of yourself which you have been taught to value the least.

I believe the women's movement hovers at the moment of decision. Will we strive for inclusiveness, challenge ourselves to listen to all women, flower out in diverse directions? Or do we go the linear, hierarchical, ultimately destructive route of the machines before us? It is our choice.

Eunice Lavell is a white, poor woman, mother of three children, friend. She is currently completing her Masters Degree in Educational Psychology at the University of Manitoba and plans to work for pay as a feminist counsellor.

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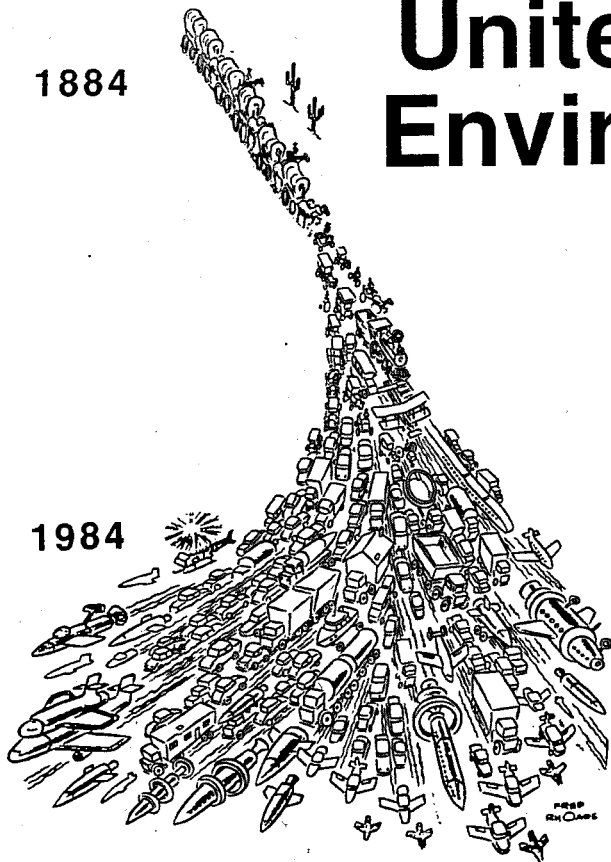
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United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)

by Allison Gale



The world's largest ever summit of governmental leaders will take place this June in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Representatives from over 150 countries have been preparing for UNCED for almost two years and, as the June deadline approaches, there are serious doubts about whether the process will make any fundamental moves towards ecological sustainability and justice.

Some big decisions are being made at UNCED, decisions that will guide national and international environment and development agendas for years to come. At least, this is the hope.

With so many minds gathered in one place, one would think chances are that fundamental issues will be discussed, and our good governments will get down to the task at hand of stopping the destruction of the earth and instituting equality and social justice.

But this would be putting too much faith in a process that has proven itself to be not only alienating, but disempowering and destructive. More than a year and a half has passed since government representatives began

discussing the fate of the Earth, and it became painfully apparent early on that no governments -- especially those from overdeveloped industrialized countries -- are prepared to alter the minimalist tactics being taken on these issues.

Fifteen hundred women -- over half from developing countries (like Canada) -- met in Miami in November 1991 (World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet) to find common ground and lend their voices to the decision-making. Organized by the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), women from 83 countries put together Women's Action Agenda 21, (in direct response to UNCED's own Agenda 21). In 15 pages the Women's Agenda makes more sense of our global crisis than the 'official' action agenda of governments does in over 700 pages!

The Women's Agenda was the result of five intense days of alarming testimony about the consequences of the destructive policies of patriarchal governments and corporations the world over.

In the Marshall Islands of the South Pacific, women poisoned with radioactive fallout are giving birth to "jellyfish babies - living blobs of flesh with no limbs, eyes or brains."

Ethiopia, once 60% forested, has only 3% left.

Women from Tibet urged action to stop the Chinese from dumping nuclear waste in Tibetan headwaters.

Magda Renner, an activist from Brazil, spoke of the "age of global homelessness, where 75% of the world's 14 million refugees are women and children."

In the face of such stark evidence, it is clear that until society truly values women and nature, their joint degradation will continue unabated.

For too long, environmental issues have been seen as gender neutral, as if the subjugation of the Earth had no consequences. Women, as the world's primary nurturers and food producers, bear the brunt of radiation leaks, desertification of the land, crops dying and deformed babies. They are on the frontlines of poverty -- North

together to present their position on the environment and development) is calling on the North to come up with its own sustainable development plan. And why not? Unfortunately, the North is doing all it can to control the whole agenda, and along with that control, women's perspectives get marginalized or ignored altogether.

The South wants the North to "stop sacrificing human development at the altar of economic growth." The

Bank -- are the harbingers of death and ecological destruction. They must change for any environmental plan to succeed.

Who knows, maybe the process at UNCED can begin a process of change, but it will take the concerted efforts of women everywhere to build community participation and have their say.

Over 85% of the participants in the official UNCED process until now have been male. Women at the

In 1991, the entire continent of Africa will get \$800 million in U.S. developmental aid.

North Americans spend \$5 billion a year on special diets.

Mother Earth magazine Sept/Oct '91

1994



and South -- and this consideration must take a front seat at UNCED negotiations. Starving people in developing countries will not preserve their environment. They will choose to destroy rainforests in order to produce food for their family.

Rarely do we in the North acknowledge our own culpability for the unimaginable poverty in most developing nations.

Leonor Briones, of the Freedom From Debt Coalition based in the Philippines, told how her country paid \$2 billion a year interest on loans from lenders in the North, while receiving a pitiful \$236 million in Aid. "It's foreign aid in reverse, and we are only one of 50 countries that annually pay the North \$50 billion more than we got."

Voracious consumption in the North fuels this slave trade economic machine, and no real acknowledgement of this is happening at UNCED.

The North wants the South to draw up sustainability plans to qualify for increased aid. And the G77 (77 developed countries that have banded

transformation into commodities (wood, water, fuel) of nature continues unabated based on the economic assumption of sustained growth. Marilyn Waring, author of an economics book, *If Women Counted*, dissected the World Bank model of "development", where a dollar amount is ascribed to all it deems has value. This so that we can weigh the value of one million "misplaced" indigenous people along India's Narmada River, against the "benefits" of the mega-dams currently under construction there. "Economic growth" gets commodified and accounted for under national income accounting systems. What gets left out is "environmental degradation, the free gifts of nature and all unpaid work of women." The multinational agenda, apparent in UNCED, is effectively keeping these issues in the shadows.

Indeed, one wonders where the UNCED process will lead. Issues affecting all humanity are left off the agenda altogether. It's clear from the glaring omission of militarism that neither Northern or Southern nation-states are willing to deal up front with real oppression. The price tag put on saving the planet is \$125 billion, a mere 20% of yearly military expenditures, but Northern nations are feeling stingy after last year's binge in the Gulf. It's as if the world's biggest polluter and destroyer of life is merely an afterthought. In women's eyes, the capitalists and multi-nationals, the military and institutions -- chiefly the World

Congress made it clear that we must be involved in the formulation and implementation of policies for environmental protection and development. A society that fails to consult half its population, while expecting it to quietly acquiesce, cannot call itself democratic or sustainable.

Women everywhere must seize every opportunity to impart our vision of an ethical and harmonious world, without distorted "development" and callous disregard for social justice. Bella Abzug asked us to "look forward to the day...when a majority of the heads of state gathering for the next United Nations Conference on Environment and Development will appear in their silk and cotton dresses, robes and saris, to report to an assembly composed of no less than 40% and no more than 60% of either sex." We can all work towards, celebrating the wisdom of women and of indigenous people, while nurturing a respect for all life.

UNCED may prove itself a complete farce, but not if the Women's Agenda has any influence:

"We come together to pledge our commitment to women, the central and powerful force in the search for equity between and among the peoples of the Earth, and for a balance between them and the life-support systems that sustains us all."

If only UNCED could aspire to such goals.

Allison Gale is a community activist committed to social change and works within the environmental movement.

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Women in a "democratic" Czechoslovakia

by Iveta Jusova

The Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia was brought about by men and women who longed to liberate themselves from the grip of the ever present party. Both men and women were fighting for freedom.

The enthusiasm and ecstasy of the revolution has been followed by a natural hangover of disillusionment. People have gradually come to understand that the rebirth of democracy in Czechoslovakia will cause much more pain than first assumed. Enthusiasm has been replaced by lethargy, particularly for the most traditionally vulnerable groups like women and the elderly.

New concepts are now being introduced and accepted in Czechoslovakia, as well as new paradigms of behaviour. Once the meaning of a new thing has been shaped in people's minds it will be difficult or impossible to change it. Democracy is emphasized as meaning consumerism. As a young Czech woman I am highly concerned about the way the very concept of democracy is being presented and understood in my country. Hopefully things will get better and we will achieve our main goal - democracy for all people.

So far, however, it looks as if our country is turning into a bastion of sexism and patriarchy. I know we will have to be very patient, that the transformation of society will take a lot of time, but I also believe this patience should not become as apathy. Women should not be so "patient" as to put up with sexist ads and jokes that are now being tolerated by society. They should not put up with only three women in government, with politicians trying to send women back to the prison of households. It should be purely a matter of choice whether a woman decides to stay at home with children or not.

Peep shows and pornographic magazines were among the first things to be introduced in Czechoslovakia after the revolution. Feminism is ridiculed. Incest, sexual assaults and harassment taboos and anorexia and bulimia among young women is ignored or treated as an individual deviation rather than a problem of the whole society. I understand this is the heritage from our past but I see no reason why it should be tolerated any longer.

The present trend to reject everything connected with the last regime is understandable; nevertheless the argument that

some things have no place in our new state only because they existed before the revolution is sometimes misused, often to the detriment of women.

Unfortunately women in Czechoslovakia have been deprived of raising their voices on their own behalf. There is no bridge between women activists of the past (before the state socialist transformation) and contemporary women. During the socialist regime, women were systematically silenced, as were all other potential harmful groups. It was claimed that in socialist countries where all people were equal, women's concerns did



not exist. In reality, however, these countries remained strongly puritan. The traditional sexual division of labour was (and still is) taken for granted, sexual stereotypes were (and still are) regarded as normal, "natural".

Nevertheless, not all things introduced in the republic during state socialism were altogether bad. As the state badly needed the women's labour force, it introduced some changes to ease the housework burden, although this was accepted as a purely feminine concern. Networks of nurseries and kindergartens were cheap and provided relatively good services - including eating facilities for school children. Tax deductions for families with several children, family allowances, cheap children's products, maternity allowances (to permit mothers to stay at home up to three years without losing jobs), the right of abortion - all these things were a substantial help to young families, particularly mothers.

However, most of these achievements also had negative sides. They were introduced by the state to

exercise more control over people's lives. Nowadays, in the process of privatization (that will hopefully strengthen our economic situation), the state support is being withdrawn in many fields. Nevertheless, I still believe it is in women's interest not to give up all the above mentioned achievements too quickly.

Unfortunately, women in Czechoslovakia are neither encouraged nor used to speaking on their own behalf. The existence of state-aided child care was used in the past as an argument against women activists. As a result, in contemporary Czechoslovakia, there is no feminist discourse. We are lacking both the women activists who would raise women's issues, and the other side of the potential debate - those who would listen and respond.

We are also lacking the language - there are no ready-made concepts, no vocabulary available for questions feminists would be concerned about. The term 'feminism' has a pejorative meaning in Czechoslovakia not only among men but also among women. Even young women with university education remain suspicious and approach feminism with either rejection or indifference. The myth of a fussy, militant, hairy, ugly feminist (blue stocking) who hates all men and therefore takes on feminism, is very powerful and the only one available. This picture, of course, cannot work as a role model.

Nowadays everyone's primary concern is their jobs. Nobody has time or energy to really care about politics. The economic situation in an average household is unbearable. Who is affected most? Women, of course. It is women who struggle to make ends meet every month and to keep members of families fed. Men must work hard in the workplace and the threat of losing their jobs is very heavy, but this applies also to women. Because of their double burden, pressure on women is also double. No wonder more and more women insist they should stay home.

Traditionally, a woman's position is in the household. Many conservative male politicians insist that only by returning to traditional families with traditional male and female roles can we regain lost moral values. For many that simply means jumping 40 years backwards without taking into consideration any progress made within these years.

Contemporary

Czechoslovakia looks to the west for its new model. Many people accept without criticism anything coming from western countries. I wish this was true of feminism. Unfortunately the main model for Czechoslovakia is Germany, a country that has remained quite conservative as far as the role of women is concerned. As people in Czechoslovakia try to find their place in Europe, they take only the established views and fail to see that the established, is not necessarily the best and only possibility.

Considering feminism is still treated as marginal even in western countries (and particularly those with the most influence on Czechoslovakia), I can hardly expect feminism to be regarded as a very serious matter in my country.

There are many challenges before the women in my country. It is necessary to draw women's attention to all the traditional sexual stereotypes at work in our society. Unequal pay, a small

cont'd on page 42



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Hope in El Salvador: The signing of the Peace Accords

by Margaret Sumadh

In El Salvador, the Peace Accords were signed January 16th, 1992 by the Christiani government and the Farabundo Marti Liberation National (FMLN) rebels.

The ceasefire came into effect on February 1st, after almost two years of negotiations and 11 years of cruel civil war. El Salvador is a country decimated by war. Such destruction needs a new and fundamentally different approach to democratize the country and create a functional political, economic and social society.

El Salvador is a small and beautiful, mountainous country dotted with volcanoes. It borders Honduras and Nicaragua and a Pacific coast. Its people, with their history of struggle, poverty and repression over the last decades, are striking in their warmth, generosity and love of life. A population of approximately 5.5 million live in an area like Nova Scotia beyond the capital city, San Salvador, there are a few provincial towns and many tiny communities dot the mountains.

Wealth has accumulated in the hands of a few families who have grown export crops, e.g. coffee, sugar. This was made possible by forcing peasants off any small plots of good land and into cheap labour.

In 1932, an uprising led by Farabundo Marti against the coffee plantation owners (to protest deplorable wages and conditions) led to a massacre of over 30,000 (2% of the population) in a few weeks. There has also been extensive slaughter of the Indian population, reducing their numbers and severely suppressing their culture and language.

cont'd from page 41

percentage of women in positions of authority, poor public services, double burdens and heavy pollution threatening our children's health are the main issues that will be effective in raising women's consciousness in Czechoslovakia. Women have to realize that if they do not raise their voices, no one else will do it for them. After all, it was not only men but also women who went striking during the revolution for their rights, democracy and dignity.

Iveta Jusova was recently in Canada at Carleton University doing some work and returned to Czechoslovakia in March.

In the 1970's people began to organize again, particularly in rural areas with workers and students. During this period, the Salvadoran government, backed by massive U.S. financing, military intelligence, and training, supported the capitalist economy of the landowners. The police force became a security force, linking with the army, to protect the interests and property of the rich and powerful, while restricting the rights of the poor to farm their land, travel freely and have access to education and health services.

In the late 1970's the FMLN brought together groups who had been organising separately as trade unions, cooperatives, etc, under one umbrella. They turned to an armed struggle to protect the rights of approximately 25% of the country. The civil war that ensued has resulted in more than 75,000 deaths and many disabled and exiled. Twelve years of war dislocated rural and urban communities. Families have been torn apart by different ideologies.

The role of ordinary men and women changes during a civil war. Often, only men do combat fighting; however, approximately 45% of the FMLN combatants are women, taking an equal share, including combat unit leadership.

In rural communities, men have gone to the front and have been singled out by "death squads" as suspected FMLN supporters or as leaders in the community. Women have taken over the agricultural work, fuel-gathering, community leadership, etc., as well as the traditional roles. The women became empowered to make changes in their lives. Government troops would visit the village and these "visits" resulted in livestock being killed, houses burned and crops destroyed. It was the women who decided that they were no longer going to flee into the mountains. The initial cost was high - death, rape, terrorism, but eventually the army stopped coming.

There are no government social services, health, birth control or pre-natal care and many mothers and babies die in childbirth. Children are denied education (except where a community can organize), vaccination programs and basic dietary needs. Because of this children still die of simple dehydration, measles and pneumonia.

For many middle and upper class city women, the war has been a 'nuisance', the troops in the street, the rationing of electricity, the sound of

bombing and troop carriers through the night. They were not the target of repression and could still be educated, eat and clothe themselves and their families. Even after 11 years of war, these families are usually intact, as few saw combat. The government army is made up primarily of forcefully conscripted youth.



The other city women are low wage factory workers and domestics who fled the countryside to seek safety, employment or a family member. They live in poor housing, often cardboard shanty towns on the outskirts of the city with plastic sheeting for protection. Their food and clothing is often bought from the money their children earn washing car windows at stop lights, directing traffic when the power is off, selling newspapers and watching cars.

There are countless vendors on the street of markets selling iced drinks, magazines, fruit, tortillas, cheap bric-a-brac, but there are very few beggars. Even the disabled find some service to offer. Many women, girls and young men resort to selling their bodies and suffer greatly as a result from abuse and disease.

What difference has the signing of the Peace Accords made? The most immediate is the relief of no aerial bombing and government troops. In addition there is hope for reconstruction of family life. Though the war lasted 11 years, the lack of control most people experienced over their lives has been beyond living knowledge.

The Accords most affecting women include:

- The Reform of the government Armed Forces which puts them under civilian authority and reduces their size by 50%. The illegal paramilitary groups (death squads) will be eliminated and there will be no forced military recruitment.
- The FMLN armed forces are to be demobilised by October 31st, 1992 and can apply for the New National Civilian Police Force. This also means that because the FMLN has a high percentage of women with

experience, there will be qualified women included in government security forces. Until now, women were only brought in for 'hearts and minds' programs such as, vaccinations and food distribution to try and 'win over' the people.

- Four pluralist commissions have been set up to implement the agreements.

a) COPAZ: (National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace) will supervise the implementation of all the political agreements with representatives from government, opposition parties, the army and the FMLN, and prepare draft legislation to implement the peace agreements. These include providing state benefits for war-disabled, their families plus victims from both armies.

b) Truth Commission: to investigate cases of gross violation of rights.

c) Ad-hoc Commission: to approve all armed forces members.

d) Forum of Socio-Economic Plans: to create permanent dialogue between government, unions and private enterprise. This should create better working conditions, job security, and fair bargaining.

• Socio-economic agreements are to implement agrarian reform, limiting property to 245 hectares. Government land will go to landless peasants and small farmers and agricultural credit policy is to be revised. International aid must go directly to the communities. This will allow for the poor to have a steady crop production and longer season crops to

provide a variety as well as raising livestock more safely.

- Finally, verification of human rights by the United Nations through ONUSAL is key to enforcing the Peace Accords.

There are those who are against the Accords: those who will lose power and sources of wealth, notably officers from the Army and Security Forces and members of the ruling families. They have launched propaganda to try to convince the people of things that were not in the agreements. There are those who are trained for repression, who know no other life; the elite battalions dedicated mainly to terrorizing the civilian population and attacking civil targets and the Death Squads that will have to change.

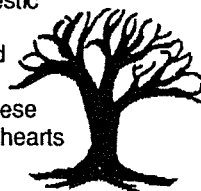
The struggle is far from over. Members of the military, assisted by ongoing U.S. intervention, will continue to do what they can to limit popular participation in Salvadoran politics and maintain their economic privileges.

However, the Salvadoran people are hopeful. Women of all ages and talents have become stronger through the war in a way that might not have been available to them without these struggles. They have created opportunity in a seemingly hopeless situation and become leaders in a situation where there seemed no way to go. They will not look back now.

Margaret Sumadh a member of the Salvadoran Women's Association in Toronto. In El Salvador, this group supports women's grass roots community projects, including literacy, health, nutrition, agriculture.

Voices of Women in El Salvador

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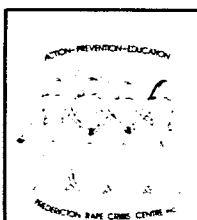
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Naomi Wolf: author of The Beauty Myth

by Gillian Burnett

Naomi Wolf, author of *The Beauty Myth*, spoke to a crowd of 400 March 6, at Carleton University in Ottawa. She was invited to speak as part of the celebration of International Women's Week.

Wolf was certainly in her element. She is a very fluid speaker who easily grasped and held the attention of the audience. Wolf was not addressing a critical audience however and I am rather critical of parts of her presentation.

She gave an empirically charged talk - all interesting of course - but seriously lacking in theoretical analysis. I was quite astonished when one woman spoke on the inaccessibility of the language used by Wolf. I, for one, felt the language was in no way overly difficult, as there was very limited theory in her talk. That is not to say that she did not present ideas: but the ideas presented carried very little theoretical "weight".

Wolf was justified when she claimed that feminism, like democracy, must be rejuvenated every generation. Reactionary elements within society are always more than willing to withdraw the advances made by previous generations, and to put regressive forces in place of progressive ones. However, I question Wolf for invoking this analogy between feminism and democracy. I have lived in Canada all my life and I have yet to live in a truly democratic society. It should be taken for granted that democracy includes all the objectives of feminism - one should not be able to exist without the other - however, this is not how Wolf sees it.

Wolf appears to accept that democracy and feminism can be two mutually exclusive phenomena. I think her parallels were unclear. She claims that America is a democracy, and in the strictest sense it is, but if America is a

democracy and everyone is equal (one of the essential pillars of democracy) then feminism should not have to exist, let alone be fought for - it should be inherent.

Naomi Wolf has, to a limited extent, joined the ranks of prominent feminist writers, like Gloria Steinem. By classing Wolf as such, I am simply trying to say that she, like Steinem, has moved away from collective action and has

Action will achieve this. Consciousness-raising alone will not achieve any concrete economic, social or political advancements for women.

Lastly, I was astounded when Wolf claimed to have given us a Marxist analysis of why women are oppressed by "beauty" and the "beauty industry". The talk given by Naomi Wolf was in no way a Marxist analysis. She did not address the question of the

from the University, or that we petition the alumni and demand that they refuse to give more money to the University until better lighting is installed.

Give me a break . . . In reality Conrad Black, our infamously rich alumni, does not give a damn whether or not female graduate students have phones in their offices (or whatever the case might be). In reality, if I, or 400 other students withheld our tuition cheques we'd be out on our ear. No questions asked. Wolf also suggested that women get together, stop nit-picking each other and the world would become a better place. This is all too individualistic and passive.

Passivity is exceptionally dangerous in times like these. Abortion rights are being challenged across North America and Europe. Violence against women is epidemic. Racism is reaching new heights. Lesbophobia and homophobia are rampant. Passivity, individualistic initiatives and consciousness-raising will not solve these problems.

Yes, women are oppressed by the beauty myth; yes, this must be acknowledged and addressed, as Wolf has done. What I question are her proposed methods of ending the oppression. Yes, empowerment is vital, but keeping it within ourselves will not accomplish anything - direct aggressive collective action will.

Gillian Burnett is a 4th year women's history student at Carleton University.



retreated, in a sense, to 'good ole' consciousness raising. Wolf even offered her Friday night speech as her consciousness-raising gift to us. I do not have a problem with this except that it is inactive. Women are constantly being told to "get together"; "remember and thank the feminists who preceded you"; "talk to your fellow women, do not let society divide and conquer" or "be together as one".

All these recommendations are needed but they have a time and a place. Talking to each other will not get us, say, free abortion on demand.

need for change relation to the means of production - a classic Marxist tenet. She did address the fact that big decision makers are all male and that the beauty myth is economically based, etc. but she did not provide a Marxist solution.

Furthermore, she very lightly addressed the question of class - another essential Marxist consideration. My point can be made more clearly if we look at the solutions Wolf did offer to women caught in the beauty myth. Her solutions, with the exclusion of one, were exceptionally individualistic; reminiscent of pure liberalism, which is the type of analysis I would suggest Wolf used.

Wolf suggested that all 400 of us storm the Admin Office and demand better lighting on campus. Sounds good to me - but, there was no sign-up sheet passed around for anyone willing to partake in such an action and we will never meet again, to participate in any collective action to better the lives of women. This was her most active solution.

She also, insultingly in my opinion, suggested our parents withhold our tuition cheques

by Lorna Drew

First the good news. *Fried Green Tomatoes* has some nice moments. Kathy Bates and Mary Stuart Masterson are certainly two of them. Bates, in her role as Evelyn, the wife of couch potato Ed Couch, does a hilarious job of trying to inject romance into their hum-drum middle-aged marriage. The shot of Bates swathed in saran wrap and palpitating is almost worth the price of admission. And Masterson gives a fine, wiry edge to her performance as the tomboyish Idgie Threadgood.



Then there's the presence of Cicely Tyson and Jessica Tandy as welcome reminders that older women are still capable of acting. Director Jon Avnet has his bases covered. With women black and white, old and young driving the plot, what can go wrong?

Well, at the risk of sounding like a kvetcher in the wry, I have to tell you that the movie disappointed me in a number of ways. It's not that I'm naive; I learned from the *Steel Magnolias* school of soft slaps (the southern equivalent of hard knocks) that several strong women do not a feminist movie make. *Thelma and Louise* notwithstanding, Hollywood is not given to patriarchy-bashing. Still, I'd read Fannie Flagg's slyly radical novel, *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle-Stop Cafe* and hoped for the best.

What I saw, however, was a film structured on absences. Lacking Flagg's feminism, the movie characters stay stranded at the level of stereotypes. Idgie Threadgood is just the latest in a series of southern tomboys better represented in print by author Carson McCullers' *Member of the Wedding*. Ruth Jamison (Mary-Louise Parker) is Idgie's opposite, the familiar southern belle with the soul of steel. Evelyn Couch becomes another discontented, over-weight housewife and Ninny Threadgood (Jessica Tandy) an elder lady dispensing

cont'd on page 45



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Brides from Hell:

The Womanist infiltrates the bridal preview

by Joanne Steven

wisdom in the form of stories. Missing is the reason for Evelyn's transformation; a hilarious monologue in which Evelyn realizes female powerlessness is equated with the absence of balls.

"No wonder," Evelyn muses in the novel, "(she) had always felt like a car in traffic without a horn."

Missing also is the love affair between Idgie and Ruth. Positive lesbian relationships are conspicuously absent from most Hollywood movies, and **Fried Green Tomatoes** is no exception. I understood from the film that Idgie's love for Ruth was unreciprocated, permitting them only a friendship devoid of sexual expression. The novel allows them a sex life.

Meanwhile, back in the cotton fields, life among the blacks is centered on the whites. Sipsey (Cicely Tyson) and her son George risk their lives to save the baby of the white mistress. In the novel, blacks had lives of their own.

Finally, and also AWOL, is Eva Bates, the owner/madame of "The Wagon Wheel Club and Camp", who initiates Idgie in the joys of lesbian sex before the coming of Ruth. In case you missed her in the movie, she's the woman who stalks the club like some misplaced hooker without a cause. We're not even told her name.

Then there is the musical score. For a moment, during the opening credits, I had hope. There was the sound of a blues harmonica. Women's voices sang gospel a capella. I heard a twang. Then, just as I'd decided to buy the sound track, a thousand and one strings took over and spritzed the music on like Cool Whip. And the costumes! I couldn't take my eyes off Idgie's swamp-girl denims. For a poor back-woods southern gal, she made a great fashion statement. I have several friends who, even as I write, are trying to copy her overalls and t-shirt chic.

Let me add that none of this is Fannie Flagg's fault. Even when the author works on the screenplay, a novel is still at the mercy of Hollywood's revisionary editing. **Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle-Stop Cafe** remains a wonderful novel, in spite of anything the movie moguls do. That alone is reason enough for Flagg waving.

Lorna Drew is a womanist living and writing in Fredericton, New Brunswick. She spends her spare time eating popcorn in the dark.

A Bridal Fair is surely one of the most obvious of targets for a feminist. Tacky gowns, Marabel Morgan (the latest model to reflect womanly perfection) clones hawking cosmetics, surreal multi-layered cakes decked with miniature plastic brides and grooms, and gaudy plastic flower arrangements -- all in celebration of women's historical slavery to men, and the oppressive myth of romance.

Not that all feminists are against rituals celebrating unions between two people. In a revealing conversation the other day with a friend, we both admitted that we had thought about what kind of wedding we would like to have. We both hastened to tell each other that, of course, it would be a small, intimate, politically correct ceremony - none of this love, honour and obey crap - and not a white dress in sight (I personally favor flaming red silk).

How many other women, good feminists all, also dream about their wedding day? A lesbian couple I know are debating what kind of music to play at their "commitment ceremony" (I've suggested Annie Lennox's, "Sisters are Doing It For Themselves", but they're leaning towards Phronc's, "I Enjoy Being a Girl"). It's not weddings per se, but rather the commodification of the wedding ritual which nauseates us, and the unreal expectations such commodification generates. Not to mention the glorification of good old heterosexual gender roles at the expense of gay and lesbian relationships.

The recent Bridal Preview held at Lansdowne Park was a perfect example. This event comprised of a variety of booths devoted to the selling of wedding-services ranging from catering and custom-made dresses to varicose vein treatment and life insurance, plus several fashion shows and a keynote talk by sex populist, Dr. Ruth Westheimer.

For two hours I meandered among the various booths picking up numerous brochures and samples of chocolates and perfume, stashing them into the shopping bag oh-so-conveniently provided. I even entered a few contests, except the one which obliged me to put down the name of my prospective groom and the wedding date. I thought about putting down "Svend Robinson", but then became afraid of what the Bridal Police

might do to me for breaking some kind of cultural code.

At one booth I was given a hefty magazine entitled "Wedding Bells" which consisted almost entirely of ads for dresses and services. Ads in which anorexic brides and GQ grooms were photographed laughing and lounging around gardens festooned with flowers and striped tent canopies, sipping champagne from silver goblets and eyeing each other as lustfully as one can when

clitoral ones ("He was a genius but he didn't know anything about women"), and broke the crowd up with her story about the woman who liked to toss onion rings onto her lover's erection (I'll bet the consumption of onion rings in Ottawa tonight will increase!).

A few absurd moments: Dr. Ruth, blithely chatting to her squirming but delighted audience about orgasms and clitorises while a man on the outskirts of the crowd, sweating in his rented tux,



from National Enquirer Special issue on Weddings

dressed so uncomfortably and so much in debt. Interspersed here and there were a few articles such as, "How to plan your wedding" which read, interestingly, like a military campaign, and was about as cognizant of collateral damage as George Bush.

As for Dr. Ruth, her hour long talk was a big hit with the crowd. She trotted energetically up to the microphone, a tiny woman who looks like everyperson's mother, wearing a Chanel suit with the ubiquitous maternal handbag dangling from her forearm.

Dr. Ruth knew her audience. Her talk was heterocentric, phallogocentric, and simplistic, laced with humour, and filled with practical advice. "Tell him Dr. Ruth says it's okay not to have sex on your wedding night!"

Without patronizing the crowd, she translated sex therapy lingo and psychological research jargon into simple terms: have fun with sex, don't try too hard, women need and deserve lots of foreplay (before the "main event", of course).

She debunked (does anyone still believe this?) Freud's myths of mature vaginal orgasms vs. immature

earnestly shows a young couple the inside of a stretch limousine, his high-heeled sidekick handing out free chocolates to passers-by.

Satisfying sex is clearly as much of a commodity as limo rentals, a message emphasized by the strategically-located booth selling Dr. Ruth's various how-to books.

It would truly be a cheap shot to criticize the women and men who attended this affair. Ranging in age from late teens to early thirties, these people had clearly bought into the dream that they too, could be rich for a day.

The dresses, the cakes, the limos, the glamour; all trappings of luxury, a fantasy stoked by the capitalist manufacturers and purveyors of romance, and rented for one day at an exorbitant price. The rich can take this kind of fantasy for granted, especially since they are the ones who control the industries which generate them; but for the working classes, it means a great deal of economic struggle. After a lifetime's barrage of media ads pushing the message, "rich=good, poor=bad", it's no wonder so much debt is incurred in the search for upward mobility, no

matter how elusive or how temporary.

When I got home, I went through all the brochures and samples I had stashed in my handy little shopping bag. Among the price lists for catering, ads for photographic studios and coupons for discount leg waxing were two curious little pamphlets.

I remember being handed these by two smiling women as I entered Lansdowne Park. One pamphlet was a slick little number with attractive graphics which at first I took to be information on AIDS and safe sex. It turned out to be a diatribe against pre-marital sex, and stated that to avoid getting AIDS, one should "rule out sex before marriage, remain faithful in marriage, and choose a life-long marriage partner who shares your moral convictions".

Not one mention of nasty condoms, I.V. use or, (horrors) -dental dams.

The other handout was a pocket-sized card extolling the virtues of chastity. Both were published by Human Life International, an American anti-abortion group with a local branch here in Ottawa.

Gee, maybe I'm stretching it here, but could there be some connection between a fundamentalist anti-sexuality, pro-(hetero) marriage organization and the whole wedding industry?? Hmmmm. Clearly more than just dresses and veils are being flogged at these bridal fairs, a whole fundamentalist right wing heterosexist agenda is present as well.

I think I'll stick to my politically correct red silk fantasy for now.

Joanne Steven is in social work graduate studies at Carleton University.

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How the well are you?

Surviving urban cycling

by Cathy Beaumont

It happens every spring. The temperature rises, the roads dry up, the breeze becomes softer and much less icy, and I become possessed. I wait eagerly for the end of the working day. I race home in order to catch the last light of the day. I run up my stairs two at a time and shed my clothes swiftly. I can't wait for it to happen.

The object of my passion? She's white, but also red. She's sleek, beautiful, and remarkably light for all her strength. She responds quickly to my every wish. Even so, she's very quiet. Her name is Fuji Club: she's my bike, and on a nice spring day I can't wait to get home, change, and go for a ride. And I've come a really long way in my love for bikes and cycling.

A few years ago, I figured (like most people) that a bike was good, basic transportation for kids and people who couldn't afford a car. I had a Raleigh ten speed as a teenager (earning the money to buy it the summer I was sixteen). It was a quick way to get around, but as soon as I earned my driver's license the bike became a second-class vehicle. Even when I was out in the working world full time, I walked everywhere, preferring the safety of the sidewalk to the unknown horrors of urban traffic.

It took the beginning of the cycling boom to get me to even look at my old bike again. A cyclist friend showed me how to clean and oil the old Raleigh, and I started to take it out for a few short spins. I bought a few parts to replace the ones that

had rusted or otherwise frozen in place. I also bought a helmet and a Kryptonite lock. And I started to have fun! I loved the feeling of moving fast, yet staying in control. I found I could get a good workout, yet never feel stiff the next day. I could get around the city faster than pedestrians, buses, even cars during rush hour! And I paid no transit fares, cursed at no parking tickets, fed no parking meters. I even started commuting to and from work.

One of the easiest ways for people to get into cycling is to commute by bike. It's easy because the pressure is off. You're going to work so you wear sensible clothes, not those skin-tight Lycra outfits. You don't want to work up a sweat, so there's no need to set a breakneck pace. All you

need is a working bike, a good sturdy lock, and a helmet. Plus a couple of road skills and a sharp eye for cars. Sure, commuting by bike has its hazards, but so does using your car or taking transit. Like most things in life, it gets easier with a little practice.

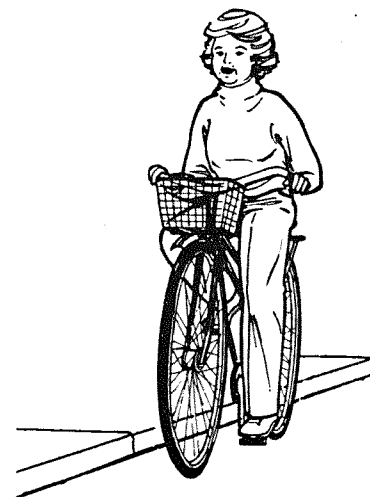
In my commuting experience, I've learned a lot, most of it the hard way. It took me weeks to map out the best route to my office -- and then we moved. I felt smug sailing through traffic snarls on my bike, and longed for the dryness of a car when I got caught in sudden rain showers. In reflecting on these and other experiences, five main points come through. Here are, in my opinion, the Five Secrets to Successful Cycle Commuting:

1. **Slow down.** Commuting is not training. Nor is it touring. This is not a workout. Getting to and from work should be a cruise, not a sweat-producing adventure. Get used to riding at half the speed you think you ought to be going. Never mind if other cyclists pass you. Going slower also means you have more time to react if you get into a tricky traffic situation.

2. **Get a commuting bike.** A solid, heavy, inexpensive, rust-resistant, throw-it-out-a-ten-storey-window-and-you-won't-even-remember-it crate of a bike. You probably have one of these languishing in your basement, storage locker, or garage. Get fenders to put over the tires so you don't get splashed up the back of your work clothes. If you're buying a new bike, make sure you get fitted for the right size frame. Too many women get stuck with bikes that are too big for them because that's what the dealer wants to sell. Get a knapsack to carry your purse, papers, and stuff you pick up on the way home.

(This may sound like it's running into money, but compare it with the price of a tank of gas. Or a month of downtown parking. Or a month of transit fare. Spend a little now and save a lot in the long run.)

3. **Dress normally.** When I started commuting, my biggest fear was that I'd have to buy two of everything and keep one wardrobe at work and one at home. Plus I'd have to shower when I got to work, redo my hair, fix my makeup, etc. But thanks to following rule no. 1 (Slow down), none of these fears have been realized. I've cycled in suits, skirts, silks, wool trousers, and jeans and never ruined anything. (Tight skirts, however, are out.) Use whatever works best to keep your pant legs under control (I've seen some male commuters wearing cross-country skiing gaiters to protect their suit trousers).



During the spring and fall, I've found a very large wool scarf (you know, the kind they drape over suit jackets and winter coats in fashion magazines) handy: it can keep you warm around the neck and shoulders and protect your hair in sudden showers. All year round, though, wear a helmet.

4. **Wear rubber-soled shoes.** This is the only exception to rule no. 3. Try cycling in high heels or slippery leather soles and you'll see what I mean. Any shoe that doesn't give you a firm grip on the pedals is unsafe for commuting. You can either slip your "good" shoes into your knapsack or stash them in a closet or spare filing cabinet at your workplace.

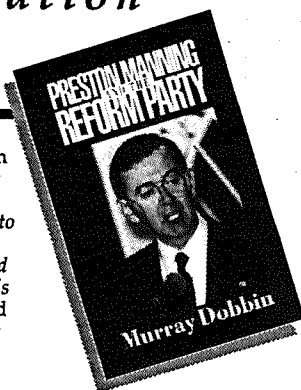
5. **Be assertive in traffic.** By all means, plan your route to avoid busy streets if at all possible. Rush hour traffic can be noisy and intimidating, so when you must face it, concentrate on what you're doing. When in doubt at an intersection, wait for things to clear up a bit -- they often do in a matter of seconds. Try to make eye contact with drivers who don't appear to be concentrating or sure of where they're going -- if they know you're there, they'll usually let you go first. Watch out for drivers' side doors of parked cars opening suddenly. Most traffic problems can be avoided if you slow down and stay alert. And I've discovered that, with experience, you can anticipate most traffic situations successfully.

Cycling is pure liberation. Going where you want to, quickly, under your own power. Seeing places and things you never saw before, or never really noticed from inside the cocoon of a car or bus. You may start out nervous, but you'll gradually gain confidence and self-assurance. It's never too late to discover the joy of riding. And what your mom said was right: you never really do forget how.

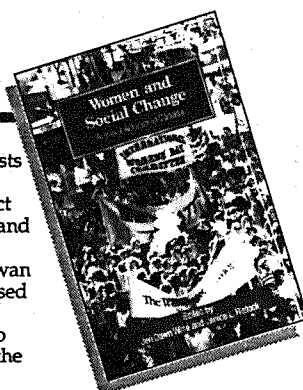
Cathy Beaumont is a former Torontonian who recently arrived in Vancouver, and is using all her stress-management skills to handle the chaos of moving. She is a dedicated recreational cyclist, and plans to indulge her (until now) secret passions for hiking and downhill skiing.

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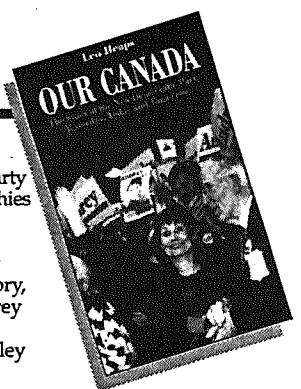


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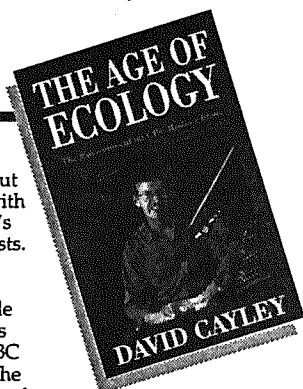


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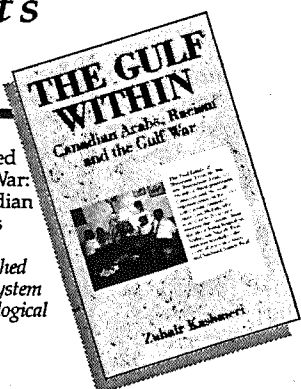


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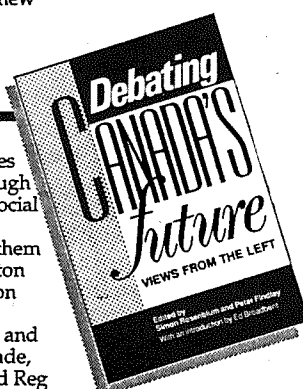


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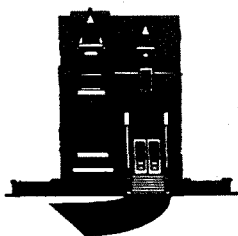
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Women at work

by Jane E. Foy



There is no question women are revolutionizing the workplace. The question is: can women change the workplace for the better before it changes us for the worse?

FIRST, THE BAD NEWS

Some say the women's movement has unwittingly sold women down the economic river by encouraging them to go to work in droves just when the economy needed a cheap source of labour.

"The real revolution in women's lives would have occurred whether or not there had been a feminist movement with its crusade for equal rights. The real revolution has been an economic revolution that requires women to work to maintain a family in the face of declining living wages," writes Mary Ann Mason in *The Equality Trap*. "Without realizing it women supplied an ideology which suited the economy's new need for women workers. The crusade for equal rights both glorified the experience of work and gave women equal responsibility for supporting the family. Men were conveniently relieved of the sole responsibility for supporting the family at a time when it became impossible for them to do so."

Statistics do indicate that the shift from the old exhausted industrial economy to the new, and profitable, service and information economy has been accomplished largely on the backs of women. While men continue to compete for the well-paid, secure, unionized jobs in industry, women have been soaked up by the new ranks of lower-paying, non-unionized, often temporary or part-time jobs in the service and information sectors.

The bottom line is that Canadian women average 66% the wages men do for full-time work. That's economic abuse and that's got to stop.

MORE BAD NEWS

Women are essentially putting down a double shift - at the workplace and in the home.

A major American study shows that, when housework and childcare are added to paid labour, women work more than men on average throughout their lives. In peak childrearing years, women toil almost 90 hours a week, 24 hours more a week than men.

AND NOW FOR THE GOOD NEWS

Women are the key to creating a new work ethic and, if we hang tough and act smart, we'll get there.

"Women can transform the workplace by expressing, not by giving up, their personal values," write futurist gurus John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene in *'Re-inventing the Corporation'*. "The reality of working women has forced the humanization of the workplace."

University of California researcher Judy Rosener found that women's style of leadership fits in with the participative and interactive wave of the future.

"Women encourage participation, share power and information, enhance other people's self-worth and get others excited about their work. All these things reflect their belief that allowing employees to contribute and to feel powerful and important is a win-win situation - good for the employees and the organization."

Anita Roddick, founder of The Body Shop, is a star of new success - nurturing a multinational corporation while maintaining personal integrity, employee well-being and environmental consciousness.

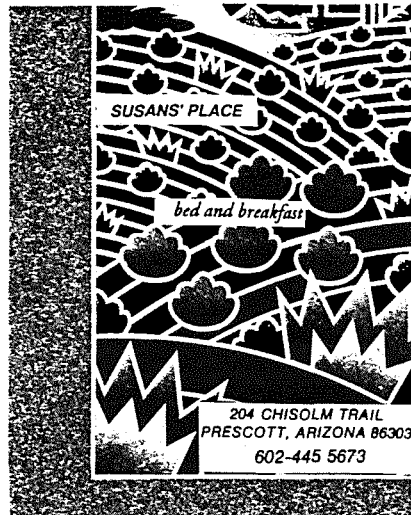
"I think all business practices would improve immeasurably if they were guided by 'feminine' principles - qualities like love and care and intuition."

"I am mystified by the fact that the business world is apparently proud to be seen as hard and uncaring and detached from human values... I personally don't know how the hell anybody can survive running a successful business in the nineties without caring. I don't know how they keep their role within the community. I don't know how they keep their soul intact."

Roddick has done an end-run around the male business establishment. "The big mistake they make is to equate our feminine values with weakness and inefficiency. We are not a bunch of bleeding hearts who have somehow stumbled into a successful business. We know how to run business. OK, we do it differently, but we do it well."

As trend setters Naisbitt and Aburdene optimistically conclude: "Market forces will do what habit, tradition and mind-set have not done: acknowledge and reward women for their contribution to the enterprise."

Jane Foy has a column for the *London Free Press* and has her own consulting firm working with newspapers.



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