

A feminist newspaper distributed nationally

September/October, 1988  
Ottawa

Free

# The Womanist



The first issue!

# Womenspeak



## Congratulations

To the Editor:

Congratulations on this the first edition of *The Womanist*. This periodical will take its place among those who support the need for women to publicly discuss and debate issues and events that affect our lives.

As you know, one of the debates raging at this moment concerns the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. In particular, NAC has long suffered the criticism of being a feminist organization without a feminist process. The events of the last NAC Annual General Meeting suggest that the question of feminist process - a feminist way of doing what we do - is essential to the success of the Women's Movement. The debate about organizational review and implementation strategies continue within the parameters of NAC.

As I see it, the debate is not so much over whether change is needed but over how much of what kind of change and how soon. The new Executive, at the June 1988 meeting, gave us support to the implementation plan and now must look for new ways to make the approved changes. The membership of NAC will be kept informed through *Feminist Action* and members have been encouraged to discuss and debate the particulars of organizational changes in a special column reserved for them.

These are turbulent times for NAC and for the Women's Movement generally. I think that NAC is being closely watched by the women of Canada, by the government agencies that partially fund NAC and by women outside of the country.

However, NAC needs time to make fundamental change. One does not "get healthy" overnight! The Organizational



Review Committee, not yet fully in place, will be, I think, conscious of living and working

in a fishbowl. However, change takes time and NAC must work cohesively and in a focused way to achieve fundamental reorganization.

Outside of NAC, the organizational review debate seems to have raised yet again the larger questions:

- what is a feminist process?

- can a single umbrella organization truly represent the diversity of Canadian women?

- how can an organization lobby and educate effectively and

- how can women's organizations, partly dependent on government funding, "lobby the hand that feeds us"?

These are difficult questions that we face. These questions and others will guide the Organizational Review in its work this year and look forward to exploring and describing/defining a better NAC.

In sisterhood,  
Sandi Kirby  
Vice-President, NAC

see page 36

## An Open Message to the Women's Movement

At a time when the women's movement appears to be in crisis and in need of serious re-organization (see NAC pages), it is interesting to note that this situation is not limited to mainstream white women's organizations.

As ex-employees of the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada (NOIVMWC), our story is painfully similar to that of the women who were employed by NAC.

In the history of our work experience, we had never felt so oppressed and manipulated as we had working for NOIVMWC. Not only were we treated as subordinates, but there was lack of trust and violation of basic ethics.

We are writing this letter to inform the community of a situation which would otherwise remain hidden. It is our hope that women in the community will seriously examine every aspect of the ways in which our organizations are working.

The National Organization for Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada, founded in November 1986, serves as the united front for immigrant and visible minority women's groups across the country. Funded by Secretary of State, the organization lobbies on behalf of immigrant and visible minority women of Canada on issues such as

health, language training, immigration, employment equity, status of women and racism.

In March 1988, the organization received funding to establish an office in Ottawa. We were hired as coordinators, both on a part-time basis. For six months we worked in an environment of mistrust, lack of respect, little recognition or value for our work, never a guarantee of being paid on time, conflicting and contradictory guidelines....

Despite these unhealthy working conditions, we continued, always giving the organization the benefit of the doubt. After all, we are both committed to working with and for immigrant and visible minority women and building a strong movement for ourselves. We worked full-time hours for part-time wages, worked with minimal resources, often worked late nights on borrowed equipment only to be met with criticism.

In a final breach of basic ethics, Sylvia was fired without notice. A one-week severance pay was received only after she contacted Labour Standards. Ravida subsequently resigned after being offered a non-negotiable job contract which not only contravened labour standards but served to "formalize" the same patterns of exploitation.

Obviously we were wrong in believing that an organization working on behalf of immigrant and visible minority women would never manipulate and exploit its employees. We were mistaken in thinking that whilst fighting for employment equity and against discrimination, this organization would be an example of proper employment practices. In fact, it is ironic that a support group for doubly disadvantaged women would fire a woman who is eight months pregnant, without due process, leaving her unable to qualify for either unemployment insurance or maternity leave.

We believe that you, as women, as immigrant and/or visible minority women, have a responsibility. NOIVMWC will be holding their biennial general meeting from November 11-13, 1988. How will you ensure that the conference itself will not provide a convenient "distraction" from the issues at hand? How will you ensure that this Board is held accountable for their actions or inactions?

We urge you to write, phone, speak to your provincial representative(s), and other members of the board and ask them what they are going to do to ensure that due process takes place.

Ravida Din & Sylvia Sioufi



## The Womanist, Vol 1 #1

Women who worked on this issue: Lynne Tyler, Joan Riggs, Michelle Albert, Beth Ryan, Ravida Din, Nedra Lee Prisk, Marylou Murray and Debbie Mather.

Designed by Joan Riggs, Catalyst Research and Communications.

Special thanks to Catherine O'Neill who created the front cover. We would also like to thank the many women artists from whom we have borrowed their artwork yet were unable to find their name.

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**The Womanist**



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

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

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

*The Womanist* appears 6 times a year. Welcome to the first issue.

## The definition of Womanist

1. From *womanish*. (Opp. of "girlish", e.i., frivolous, irresponsible, not serious.) A black feminist or feminist of colour. From the black folk expression of mothers to female children, "You acting womanish," i.e., 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: "Your trying to be grown." Responsible. In charge. Serious.

2. Also: A woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and women's strength. Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or nonsexually. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health. Traditionally universalist, as in: Mama, why are we brown, pink and yellow, and our cousins are white, beige and black? Ans.: "Well, you know the colored race is just like a flower garden, with every color flower represented." Traditionally capable, as in: "Mama, I'm walking to Canada and I'm taking you and a bunch of other slaves with me." Reply: "It wouldn't be the first time."

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

4. Womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender.

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

# What is *The Womanist*?

## Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of *The Womanist*!

Imagine:

- the entire staff, except one, of the largest national women's organization in Canada resigns. (front page, *Globe and Mail*)

- a woman who has worked in a feminist business for eleven years is one day fired, the next day locked out. (also in the *Globe and Mail*)

- you attend the International Feminist Book Fair and find that the Women of Colour are divided. A boycott has been called of the Book Fair by a group of black women, while other women of colour attend.

All of this happened in the midst of us preparing for our first issue, **What is happening to the Women's Movement in Canada?** There are some who would say "nothing," "everything is under control," "just one more crisis to deal with but we can manage." We beg to differ.

When we first began to think about doing this newspaper we wanted to reflect the diversity of women's experience in Canada and around the world. Now, we urgently want to talk. What is going on? What do we want to

achieve as women? And just how are we going to do that?

We believe knowledge of and about women is empowering. We want to talk honestly in this newspaper about the lives of all women.

It is a courageous act for the women on these pages to show you a bit of themselves. Let us show them, that we, as women, committed to change, are capable of withstanding a discussion. Let us show those who discredit and marginalize us that we are not afraid to openly talk about what needs improvement, what needs changing.

A little bit about the paper:

### The Content

Our vision of the newspaper is that each issue will be a reflection of some part of the women's movement. It will provide news, analysis and personal testimonies. As we move towards this vision, we ask that you, as readers, recognize the contributions of those women, the connections they are making, as well as the gaps. And we ask you to courageously fill those gaps through discussion, art work, or writing.

We would like to be part of a process of integrity and honesty. It would be great to hear from each of you, based on your own experience, coming from your own centre and not in reaction to another oppression.

We felt we could also offer a unique contribution to the Canadian women's movement since we are situated in Ottawa and have easy access to federal government information. Hearing from many different women across the country is an evolving process - we invite you to add your voice as we grow.

We also wanted to connect with women around the world. We have reached out to 65 other organizations in different countries and are slowly building international links. We believe that Canadian women will greatly benefit from the wisdom of women around the world.

### Distribution

We are distributing this newspaper free as a commitment to getting women's news and views to as many people as possible. We want to be where women are, in

community centres, daycare centers and laundramats.

We are a low-budget operation so distribution is fairly simple. We bundle up the papers, put them on the bus and a friendly face greets them somewhere in Canada. She drops them off to places in her community where women gather.

### Funding

We are not government funded. Nor do we ever want to be dependent on that source. We believe that the women of Canada can sustain a women's newspaper. Through subscriptions and advertising, we are determined to prove that what economic power we do have we want to spend investing in other women.

### Why National?

Because we want women's voices to be heard everywhere. There is an interesting dilemma in the women's movement in Canada. We have been dependent for so long on government funding that we feel we have to meet government criteria to call

ourselves national. Well, when you are self-funded, you don't have to fit any criteria except your own and that of your readers. All you need is a commitment and a plan.

We have a vision of being a national newspaper distributing to every woman who wants an issue. We are beginning small, 7,000 copies, relying on friends and will grow upon request.

### Language

We want to publish articles in any language. As you can see, we have started in English. We do not presume to think that we would be an appropriate vehicle for Francophone women and, like distribution, we are going to watch and see how the paper evolves. We now have the capacity to write, read and edit in English, French and Spanish. We are always looking for other women who might be interested in helping!

Please consider writing. We hope you will see *The Womanist* as your newspaper...a vehicle to reach other women, in Canada and the rest of the world.



## Welcome to *The Womanist*!

by Nona Granda

The ultimate strength of the women's movement lies in the unification of distinct struggles that are constantly being waged by women in every sphere of social activity in different parts of the world. An important step towards the achievement of this goal is to create means through which women can reach out to one another across class, cultural, and racial boundaries. Learning about other women's experiences would not only provide information and inspiration, but would allow women to explore grounds on which national and international solidarity may be built.

The need to provide a channel through which women may listen and be heard has been the motivating force behind the creation of *The Womanist*. With the aim of establishing a nationwide, multi-sector, multi-racial information network, this feminist newspaper draws on various articles by women from all sectors and races as well as news events in Canada and abroad that are of interest to the women's movement.

The emphasis on the multi-racial and multi-sectoral aspects of the network that we are trying to build is based on the recognition that women have a lot to learn from each other in the quest for liberation and empowerment. For it is only through an awareness of the experience of women from all walks of life can we hope to build a strong, broad foundation for our movement.

issues that *The Womanist* focuses on is women's experience in politics and political change. Since the quest for women's empowerment is inextricably linked with politics, the experience of women engaged in political struggles in Canada and in other countries is of great interest to the women's movement.

Not only is it important for us to know what goes on in the sphere of politics in terms of its impact on women, but it is also important to understand the process in which women take action in an effort to influence this process. An understanding of the problems that women face in their effort to effect political change would certainly enhance our analysis of the dynamics of our struggles.

The political experience of our sisters abroad certainly offers us invaluable insight. The plight of the women's movement in the Philippines, for instance, draws out the problematic nature of the articulation of women's struggles within broader political movements. Caught within a milieu of political and socio-economic turmoil, women's issues and concerns are often cast aside as secondary to the broader political struggle.

While an independent women's struggle may offer a tempting alternative, the need to put women's agenda in the vehicles of political and social change is likewise necessary. There are no clear answers to

the problems that women face, but we need an awareness of these problems to shape our analysis of the women's movement.

Thus *The Womanist*, in its goal to provide up-to-date information on what goes on in the political sphere, news events in Canada and around the world, and personal stories of women, provides food for critical analysis of what is happening in the women's movement today. With this small but significant step, we hope to be able to contribute to building a stronger foundation for our movement.

Nona Granda is a Filipino woman and member of STAND, Students Advocate for National Development.

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**Congratulations on your first issue on  
behalf of the Immigrant Women's  
Program at the Ottawa-Carleton  
Immigrant Services Organization.**

## Highlights in this issue

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- local, national and international news and views throughout...



# Audre Lorde



During the International Feminist Book Fair, Audre Lorde sat on a panel entitled "Speaking of Power," with Miriam Tlali of South Africa and Daisy Zamora of Nicaragua.

Audre Lorde is the author of *Sister Outsider*, *A Burst of Light*, *The Cancer Journal*, which chronicles her battle with cancer, and *Zami*, her autobiography.

Below is her presentation at the International Feminist Book Fair:

Racism, Writing, and Empowerment. This was the original title of this panel when I agreed to take part in it. First of all, I wish to thank the organizers of the Third International Feminist Book Fair for their very hard work in making this fair possible.

It is crucial that these formats exist where Black Women and white women can meet and share our differences and our strengths. We cannot speak of the empowerment of women without asking the inevitable question, which is: Empowerment for what? For power without focus is very dangerous.

Each one of us has some power. That power is particular, it is specific and it is relative to what she gives. It is relative, but it is real. Unless each one of us learns to recognize that power, and to use it in the service of what we say we believe in, then each individual woman is only making her power available to her enemies to be used against her and against women.

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. So the only way for us not to be used as instruments of oppression is to actively engage ourselves in the liberation struggles of women who are oppressed.

In New York, in Baltimore, in Montreal, in Québec, as well as in Haiti, and Soweto, Women of Colour are oppressed by systems that too many of us take for granted.

For example, it is not enough for us to say that we support handicapped women (ed. women with disabilities). That is an important first step, but unless those of us who move about freely make sure that accessibility is provided for those women who do not move about freely, then we are enjoying the privilege of mobility without ever recognizing it.

**Racism is the inherent belief in the superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominate. Like all other isms it is based upon power and that right to dominance, which is the natural assumption of privilege.**

It is not enough to say we are against racism. That is an important first step, but unless those of us who enjoy white skin privilege are actively fighting the many manifestations of racism in whatever arena we choose to work, then we enjoy privilege without using it, and that is abuse.

The recognition of privilege is the first step in making it available for wider use. When we do not shrink from who we are, we do not deny who we are, we learn to use who we are, in the service of what we say we believe in.

Each one of us sitting here tonight is privileged or we

would not be here. One of the most frequent errors of privilege is to absorb without use and as a matter of fact, that is what Western European education teaches us, to be spectators, and commentators, rather than to recognize and use and act.

I am a Black American lesbian feminist which means I deal with racism on every level, every single day of my life. It also means I am a citizen of the most powerful country in the world. Unless I use that power in the service of what I believe which is that all people must be free to choose their living, than I am allowing my power to be used in ways I do not agree with.

Speaking of power, how does your life testify to what you believe? If each one of us does not use this power which we are acquiring, than what is the meaning of empowerment?

What does our feminism mean to the women of Eritrea, who spend most of every day searching for water so that their children will not die of thirst?

What does feminist empowerment mean to the women of Soweto who bury half of the children they bear before they reach the age of five? Or to a woman of the Philippines who was forced to sell herself in the cities of western Europe and Canada in order to feed her family?

What does feminist empowerment mean to the Afro-Caribbean women of Montreal who are forced to work in white women's kitchens for slave wages so that their children in the Caribbean can eat?

The transcendence of women's power is meaningless if we do not use it as we learn from the liberation of other women. There are many kinds of power, the power to recognize, the power to ignore, the power to silence.

Racism is the inherent belief in the superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominate. Like all other isms it is based upon power and that right to

dominance, which is the natural assumption of privilege.

But what woman here is so enamored of her own oppression that she cannot see her heelprint upon another woman's face? What woman's terms of oppression have become so precious and so necessary to her as a ticket into the unrighteous, that she turns away from the cold winds of self-scrutiny?

Many of you sitting here tonight have fought as women, as feminists of Québec, for the right to your own language, your own identity, and yet the small amount of land left to the truly native people of this area can be taken away without one remark.

Native women can be beaten, and brutalized, in front of their own homes, scarcely ten minutes away from where we are sitting now and where is the voice of the empowered feminists of Québec, the empowered white feminists of Québec?

The organizers of the Third International Feminist Book Fair have made a commitment to make the issue of racism, central to all discussions here, and I implore their bravery in doing this, because they do it at a time when communities throughout this hemisphere, and I include women's communities, are becoming more and more reactionary and more and more racist. But there must also be a commitment to act against racism wherever it functions, to use that power in the service of what you say you believe and for white women this means not hiding beneath a blanket of guilt, nor fear of Black Women's anger.

I understand that yesterday certain Black Women distributing leaflets at the Book Fair were ejected as trouble-makers. What does this say about a desire for dialogue? I know also what it feels like to be called a trouble-maker. I have also been called a racist, when I have heeded for white women to be accountable for their privilege in a racist society. But that is a basic misunderstanding of the

## Gallerie: A new women's art magazine

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Did you ever have the feeling that "Art" doesn't really do justice to the richness of women's experience? Or did you ever suspect (or know) that women artists are doing wonderful work, but we never get to see it?

Then get your hands on the 1988 *Gallerie Annual*.

Women artists from across Canada and the United States describe their art, their lives and their philosophies in this new Vancouver-based publication.

Over 275 photographs packed into 144 pages make for a visual feast. The commentary that goes with this is the words and ideas of the artists themselves, and it is as direct and moving, as subtle and as lyrical, as the photos of their artwork.

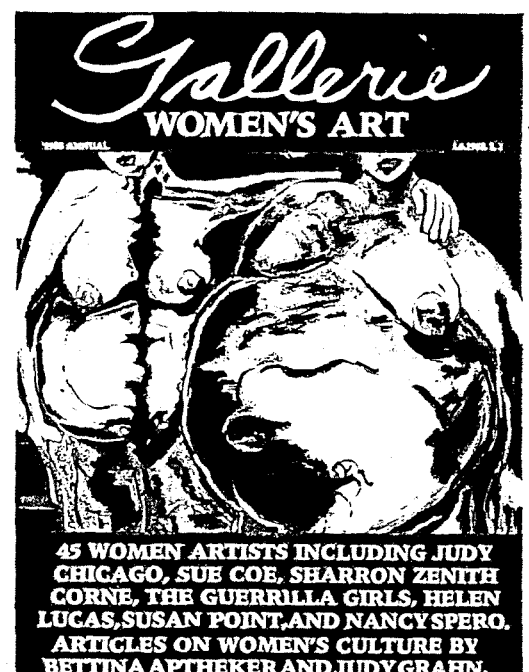
*Gallerie* includes contri-

butions from some of the world's best-known artists -- Judy Chicago, Sue Coe, Nancy Spero -- alongside many unknown artists, often living and working in rural communities.

Women artists are encouraged to send material for future issues of *Gallerie*. Publication plans are for three magazines and one book-length *Annual* per year, all devoted to representing various aspects of women's art.

The 1988 *Gallerie Annual* is available for \$12.00 in bookstores or direct from the publisher, *Gallerie Publications*, 2901 Panorama Drive, North Vancouver, BC, V7G 2A4.

*The Womanist* will publish a full review of the *Annual* in our next issue.





## at the International Feminist Book Fair in Montreal

dynamics of power and racism which requires the privilege of dominance.

Any discussion among women about racism must include the recognition and abuses of anger. This discussion must be direct and creative because it is crucial. We cannot allow our fear of anger to deflect us, nor to seduce us into anything less than the hard work of excavating honesty.

We must be quite serious about the choice of this topic and the angers entwined within it because, rest assured, our opponents are quite serious about their hatred of us and what we are trying to do here.

I would like to underline here that for women, hatred

and anger are very different. Hatred is the fury of those who do not share our goals, its object is death and destruction.

But anger is made of distortion between peers, supposedly, and its object is change. But the time is getting shorter. We have been raised to view difference, any difference, other than sex, as a reason for destruction, so it is an heretical and generative idea that Black Women and white women face each other's angers without denial, without immobility and without silence.

Women of Colour, women of various ethnic backgrounds in the Americas have grown up within a symphony of anger, at being silenced, at being unchosen, at knowing that

when we survive it is in spite of a world that takes for granted our lack of humanness, a world that hates our very existence outside of its service and I say symphony rather than cacophony because we have had to learn to orchestrate these furies so that they do not tear us apart. We have had to learn to move through them, to use them for strength, and force and insight within our lives.

Anger is an appropriate reaction to racist attitudes, particularly when the actions arising from those attitudes do not change. To those women sitting here who fear the anger of Black Women more than their own unscrutinized racist attitudes, I ask, is the anger of Women of Colour more threatening than the women-hatred that is freezing and destroying our lives?

When Women of Colour speak out from the anger that

**No woman is responsible for altering the psyche of her oppressor, even when that oppressor is embodied in another woman.**

laces so many of our contacts with white women, we are told that we are "creating a world of hopelessness". We are told that we are "preventing white women from getting past their guilt".

We are told that we are standing in the way of trusting communication and action. But our anger is part of our power and learning to focus that anger with accuracy and precision to help bring about change is one of the tasks of every women's life.

I speak here as a Woman of Colour who is not bent upon destruction but rather upon survival, survival of us all. No woman is responsible for altering the psyche of her oppressor, even when that **psyche is embodied in another woman.**

photo: Janet Wason



Women arriving at the Book Fair.



There is very little new in what I have to say here tonight. I would love to be here, reeling with poems, new thoughts, new stories, but unfortunately there is nothing new about racism. I have said many of these things before, but as Gloria pointed out, something has given you license to ignore me and so I say it again.

It is not the anger of Black Women which is dripping down over this floor like a diseased animal. It is not my anger that launches rockets, spends over sixty thousand dollars a second on missiles and other agents of war and death. It is not the anger of Black Women that strangles and tortures six-year-old children in Soweto. It is not the anger of Black Women that buys women on the streets of Berlin, and Montreal, and Québec and New York. It is not the anger of Black Women that kills children in cities, and

stockpiles nerve gas, chemical bombs. It is not the anger of Black Women that is sodomizing our daughters and our earth.

It is not the anger of Black Women that corrodes into blind dehumanizing power, bent upon the annihilation of us all unless we meet it with what we have, our power to examine and to redefine the terms upon which we will live and work, our power to envision and to reconstruct anger by painful anger, stone upon petty stone a future of pollenating difference and the earth that will support our choices.

As Women of Colour we welcome all women who can meet us face to face, beyond objectification and beyond guilt.

## Support your local Feminist Periodical

The fifty-five Canadian feminist periodicals had a strong showing at the International Feminist Book Fair, held in June in Montreal. Women from around the world were amazed that Canada could have so many periodicals and such a diverse collection.

Including *The Womanist* there are five new feminist periodicals: *Divva*, *Arcade*, *Recherches Féministes*, and *LTC2*.

*Divva* is a journal for South Asian women in Canada. It comes out of Toronto. Subscriptions cost \$18 for an individual. For more information contact Jeeti Sahata, 253 College Street, Toronto, Ont, M5T 1R5.

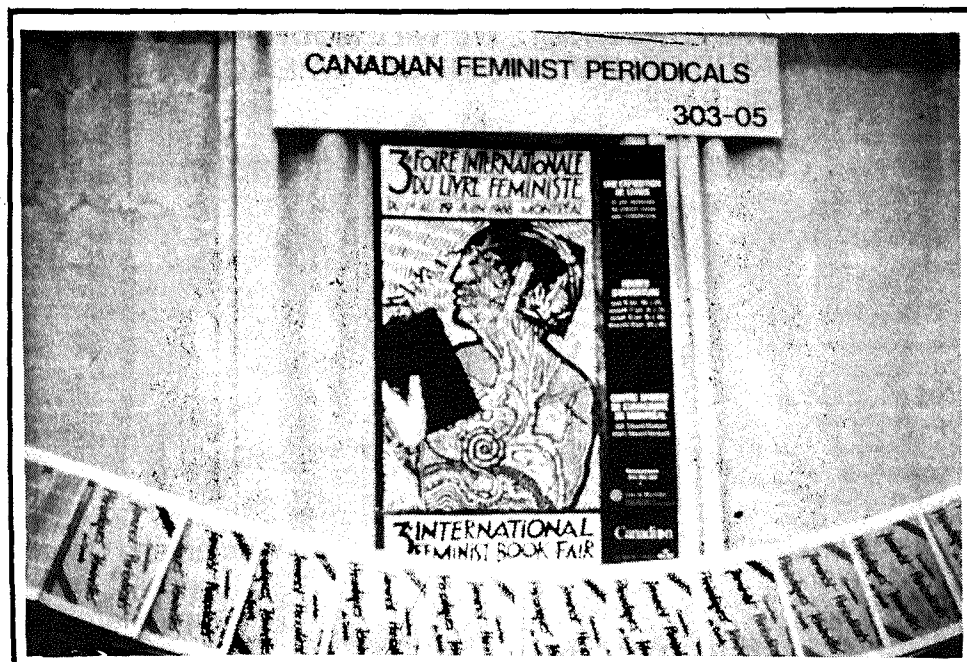
*LTC2* is a national publication to inform, report and analyze issues of importance to lesbians. First issue is this fall. For more info contact LTC2, Box 531, Place du Parc, Montréal, Québec,

H2W 2P1.

*Arcade* est une revue littéraire consacré à l'écriture des femmes. Pour de plus amples renseignements, contactez Arcade, 4903 Coolbrook, Montréal, Québec, H3X 2K8.

*Recherches féministes* est une revue scientifique francophone à visée interdisciplinaire, qui paraît deux fois l'an. Tarifs au Canada: régulier 18\$, étudiant(e) \$16, institutions \$28. *Recherches féministes*, Gremf, Pavillon Charles-De Koninck, bureau 2463, Université Laval, Cité universitaire, Québec, QC, G1K 7P4.

For the Book Fair, a directory of Feminist Periodicals in Canada was prepared. To receive a directory send \$1.00 to: Canadian Feminist Periodicals P.O. Box 76, Station B Ottawa K1P 6C3



The Canadian Feminist Periodicals had two tables at the Canadian Feminist Book Fair.

photo: Janet Wason

# Take Back The Night

\* 1 woman in 4 will be assaulted at some point in her life  
 \* a sexual assault is committed once every 6 minutes in Canada; a woman is raped every 17 minutes

\* 83% of women raped are attacked by someone they know  
 \* 60% of all rapes occur within the private home  
 \* Of convicted rapists, 50% repeat their crime upon release

from prison  
 \* Since 1969, reported rapes have increased 120%  
 \* most convicted rapists are married or have girlfriends  
 \* 1 in 5 survivors attempt suicide



Toronto 1987

photo: Toronto Rape Crisis Centre



Our slogan, "Take Back the Night" reflects the growing realization of the links among crimes against women. Sexist articles, programming and advertisements in our media, increasing amounts of pornography readily available, and sexual assaults against women and children at all times, are now the norm. That we have been unable to walk the streets after dark without a male to protect us from the rest of men has been assumed in this society for so long that people can hardly imagine a world in which this would not be the case.

Our slogan, "Take Back the Night," was first used in the United States as a theme for a national protest march down San Francisco's pornography strip. The march took place at night and was in the spirit of many similar events taking place all over the world. Take

Back the Night was a public statement of our commitment to stopping the tide of violence against women in all areas, and demanding that the perpetrators of such violence -- from rapists to batterers to pornographers -- be held responsible for their actions and be made to change.

Since that time, women around the world have organized around the 2nd or 3rd Friday of every September to say no to violence against women!

As we walk in solidarity tonight, we walk with candles to mark our own assaults and those of our sisters. We take strength in the knowledge that tonight, in cities all over the world, women everywhere are banding together to TAKE BACK THE NIGHT!

*reprinted from the Ottawa's Sexual Assault Support Centre's Take Back the Night brochure*

"Tonight we are going to walk together, all of us, to Take Back The Night, as women have in cities all over the world, because in every sense none of us can walk alone. Every woman walking alone is a target. Every woman walking alone is hunted, harassed, time and time again harmed by psychic or physical violence. Only by walking together can we walk with any sense of safety, dignity, or freedom. Tonight, walking together, we will proclaim to the rapists and

pornographers and women-batterers that their days are numbered and our time has come. And tomorrow, what will we do tomorrow? Because, sisters, the truth is that we have to take back the night every night, or the night will never be ours. And once we have conquered the dark, we have to reach for the light, to take the day and make it ours. This is our choice, and this is our necessity. It is a revolutionary choice, and it is a revolutionary necessity. For

us, the two are indivisible, as we must be indivisible in our fight for freedom. Many of us have walked many miles already - brave hard miles - but we have not gone far enough. Tonight, with every breath, and every step, we must commit ourselves to going the distance: to transforming this earth on which we walk from prison and tomb to our rightful and joyous home. This we must do and this we will do, for our own sakes and for the sake of every woman who has ever lived.

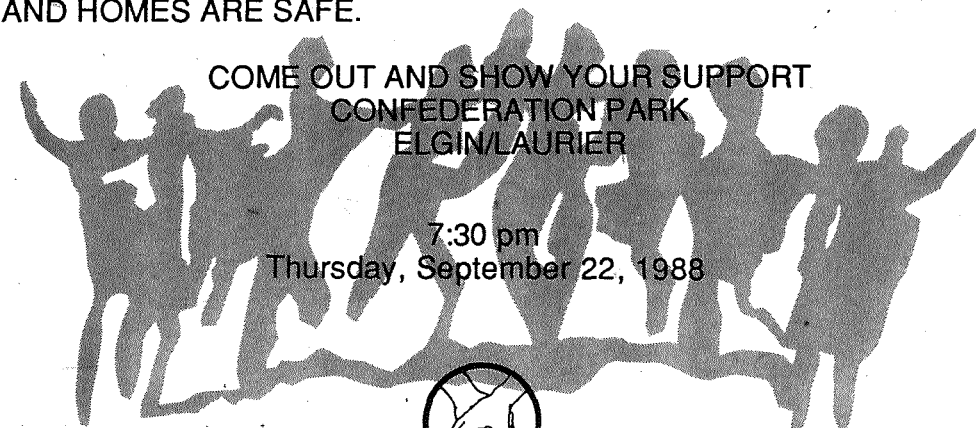
Andrea Dworkin

## TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

THIS YEAR'S CANDLELIGHT MARCH WILL FOCUS ON SEXUAL ASSAULT. EACH WOMAN WILL CARRY A CANDLE DEDICATED TO A VICTIM OF SEXUAL ASSAULT. WE WILL MOURN THEIR VICTIMIZATION AND CELEBRATE THE DAY WHEN OUR STREETS AND HOMES ARE SAFE.

COME OUT AND SHOW YOUR SUPPORT  
 CONFEDERATION PARK  
 ELGIN/LAURIER

7:30 pm  
 Thursday, September 22, 1988



The Sexual Assault  
 Support Centre



Women and Children  
 only  
 during march

**A special  
 thanks to all the  
 women who  
 work in  
 supporting  
 women who  
 are the  
 survivors of  
 violence.**



**The Ottawa-Carleton Rape  
 Crisis Centre**

- 24-hour-a-day crisis line
- accompaniment to hospital, police
- support/guidance
- information/advocacy
- counselling
- public education

238-6666 Crisis Line

238-6667 Business Line

~~LES ABOUT RAPE~~

~~LES ABOUT ABORTION~~

### THE RAPE RELIEF FILES

The truth as we know it about violence against women. Read our analysis of the criminal justice system, statistics on the incidence of violence against women, herstory of legal campaigns against prostitutes, the profits of pornography and more.

Complete set of 16 files is \$6.00 (incl. postage). (Institutional rate \$20.00).

Rape Relief and Women's Shelter  
 77 E. 20th Ave.  
 Vancouver, B.C.

~~LES ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY~~

~~LES ABOUT PROSTITUTION~~

~~LES ABOUT THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT~~

# South African Women's Day

by Deborah E. Gough



photo by: Merete Anne Vespry

As Canadians, raised on a tradition of racial equality, we are furious that our taxes are used to support a consulate in Toronto representing the Apartheid regime. We wanted not only to honour Azanian women's battles against apartheid but also to inspire the insipid government of Brian Mulroney to close down all diplomatic sanctions. To accomplish these aims the Toronto Black Women's Collective and Multicultural Womyn In Concert held a rally outside the South African Consulate in Toronto. Speakers and musicians (including Laurie Bell, local bluegrass artist and Faith Nolan, prominent folk-singer) provided entertainment for marchers and passers by.

August 9...On this day in 1956, twenty thousand women demonstrated against the use of pass books -- South African women have struggled since 1913 against carrying pass books and were successful in this until the 1950's.

Pass books require that Black women must obtain the consent of their fathers, male guardians or husbands and their government representatives to work or live in other areas than their homes. The 1956 uprising was not successful, and in 1964 a total ban was placed on the further entry of women into urban areas outside of "homelands" except on a visitor's permit.

Current conditions in South Africa, Azania to its native peoples, are atrocious. Three million Whites control the twenty six million Blacks and Coloureds by denying them the right to vote, and the right to live where they want. The "homelands" or bantustans occupy a mere thirteen percent of Azania, coincidentally, the most arid, infertile, and mineral poor area in that country.

The education facilities for the indigenous peoples of the bantustans are limited, thus denying the inhabitants the possibility of upgrading their own standards of medical care of general lifestyle. As a result of the inequitable treatment, their standard of living is below the world poverty level. Approximately eight children die each day due to the lack of adequate food and medicare.

## Freedom Charter

"We, the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and world to know:

- that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people;
  - that our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality;
  - that our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities;
  - that only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief;
- And therefore we the people of South Africa, black and white together -- equals, countrymen, and brothers -- adopt this Freedom Charter. And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes set out here have been won.

- \* The people shall govern!
- \* All national groups shall have equal rights!
- \* The land shall be shared among those who work it!
- \* All shall be equal before the law!
- \* All shall enjoy equal human rights!
- \* There shall be work and security!
- \* The doors of learning and of culture shall be opened!
- \* There shall be houses, security and comfort!
- \* There shall be peace and friendship!

These freedoms we will fight for, side by side, throughout our lives, until we have won our liberty!"

## International Lesbian and Gay People of Colour Conference

by J.A.N.

Gays and lesbians from all over the world gathered in Toronto from July 28 to 31 this year for the The Fifth International Lesbian and Gay People of Colour Conference.

We gathered to learn, think, share, dance, network, and ponder the beauty and energy of a diverse gathering of lesbians and gays of colour.

Participants came from New Zealand, Germany, Australia, the U.S., South America, the Caribbean, Mexico, and other parts of Canada.

Caucuses were formed in the initial two days of the conference so that participants of similar races could get together and discuss issues of concern to their particular group. These caucuses also provided an opportunity for members to share coming out stories and to collect suggestions on such issues as racism, politics, AIDS, homophobia, his/herstory. These suggestions were then shared with other participants on the final day of the conference.

It was important to the native/indigenous caucus, for example, that environmental concerns and native rights be

recognized as urgent and significant issues at all conferences.

For the black women and men caucus, attention was centred on stressing visibility through actions such as marching and letter writing to expose racial injustice and homophobia. After all, black lesbians and gay men have been working within either homophobic black circles or racist, mainstream, feminist, or gay/lesbian organizations for a long time.

Mixed race participants were faced with the difficult task of deciding which caucus to join. Not being able to split themselves up and go to each caucus they wished to attend, these participants instead formed their own impromptu caucus and spent time discussing the difficulties and joys of identifying with one more race.

Although there was a space allotted for a working class caucus and a disabled caucus, neither group materialized. There were definitely working class, as well as differently-abled participants, and the conference space was reasonably accessible.

I surmise that there were several reasons for neither group meeting. Some participants' chief concern might have been to identify first with a racially-based caucus, rather than as working class or disabled. As well, the conference was held previously in Los Angeles, California, which could mean that people of colour belonging to these two groups might not have had the funds, nor the physical energy, to make it to this side of the world twice in four years.

In addition, organizers from L.A. neglected to send helpful information immediately to the Toronto organizing committee. This oversight on the part of the previous committee resulted in low-key and overdue advertising. There was also recurring confusion about what workshops, social events, and meals were to be included in various ticket packages.

Aside from an opportunity to join a caucus, participants could take part in a number of workshops on such topics as spirituality, parenting, AIDS, styles of loving, and images of people of colour in literature and film.

Contrary to the beliefs of

the white women who demanded, but were rightfully denied access to most of the conference, we spent time talking about our ideas and our needs. We talked about "others" when they were relevant to the subject matter - i.e., during the Interracial Relationship and Racism Workshop.

Accessibility to workshops also depended on the topic of discussion. For example, the styles of loving workshop was open to both people of colour and whites; but it was divided up into two separate groups of men and women. As well, it was suggested that next time there be not only a racism workshop to discuss prejudice as something we experience, but also a workshop on the racism that we ourselves display to each other.

The sixth International Lesbian and Gay People of Colour Conference will be held in London, England in 1990, ensuring that we remain loyal to the international intent of the conference. Suggestions of Vancouver and New York City were thankfully vetoed, allowing the conference to leave North America and to

reach people of color in other parts of the world.

While England will undoubtedly be an exciting venue, how the Thatcher government's Clause 28\* will affect areas such as fundraising and advertising, as well as the conference, remains to be seen. In addition, although the umbrella term People of Colour is used increasingly in North America, non-whites in Britain seem to be dissociating themselves from such general terminology. In order to get recognition for their groups' needs, people of colour in England have recently chosen to be more racially specific in naming themselves, and therefore may have difficulty with the conference's name.

With such differences resolved, the next conference for gays and lesbians of colour should be as enlightening and reaffirming as those in the past.

\* Clause 28 is legislation recently passed in Great Britain that makes it illegal to promote homosexuality in any way including ads for community services, discussions in high school courses, etc.



# Across Canada

## Nova Scotia

During the past two months, the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women has received more than 60 allegations from women complaining of sexual harassment, mistreatment, and sexual abuse by doctors. In June, the Council brought together many of these women, who have recently formed a support group -- Advocates for Medical Ethics Now.

On July 7th, the formal complaints of 12 of these women were heard by the Provincial Medical Board. Although no decision has yet been made, the women of Nova Scotia have changed forever the way in which medical complaints are handled in this province.

Until the recent media exposure, the Medical Board has had very little visibility -- in fact, very few women even knew of its existence. The Complaints Committee of the Medical Board, which formerly was comprised of three male doctors and a priest, has recently appointed two women to its Committee. The public eye is certainly on the Medical Board, and it is hoped that its practice of dismissing complaints and blatantly favouring doctors will be a practice of the past.

## Alberta

Thousands of live-in domestic workers in Alberta get a 13% pay increase in October. Even with the increase, domestics' wages will still be only \$4.75 an hour, or \$975 for a 205-hour month. Things are worse in other provinces, though -- these low wages will put the Alberta group among the highest paid domestic workers in Canada.

## New Brunswick

Mary McIntyre is 74, black and still lives in a house with no running water and no toilet. She is just one of the many people met by members of a provincial task force set up by the Liberal government of Frank McKenna.

Established in June, the task force is charged with finding better ways of providing shelter for the poor. Statistics Canada estimates that 3,000 of the 246,000 households in New Brunswick are without hot water or have no water at all.

The task force, so far, has found that the common denominator for inadequate housing is poverty. Women, native people and Blacks are the people who are most often found in this housing.

## Newfoundland

A steering committee of Transition House representatives have prepared the groundwork for the creation of a new national group to represent the interests of Canadian transition houses.

The committee first met in January 1987. Since then, they have prepared a draft constitution, membership guidelines, and a statement of principles.

The committee members hope the national organization of transition houses will be formally established at a national conference set for Sept. 19 to 21 in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

For more information, write to Cheryl Hebert, co-ordinator of Kirby House and a member of the Steering Committee. The address is: Kirby House, P.O. Box 6208, St. John's, NF, A1C 6J9. The telephone number is 722-8272.

## Manitoba

Following the lead of governments in British Columbia and Saskatchewan, Manitoba's Conservative administration wiped out funding for a provincial wife-abuse lobby group Tuesday.

The decision by Community Services Minister Charlotte Oleson eliminated the last government-funded organization in Canada fighting for abused women, said Joey Brazeau, former executive director of the Manitoba Committee on Wife Abuse.

## Ontario

The Interweave Networking Project is a new provincial effort to enable women's centres across Ontario to network and strategize together. The networking project was born out of Interweave, a provincial conference of women's centres held in October 1987.

The project, which is based out of the Northern Women's Centre in Thunder Bay, is intended to provide a strong voice to lobby for funding and other issues, and will enable centres to share resources and information among themselves.

One of the major goals of the Interweave conference was to establish working connections among women's centres in Ontario.

Participating centres represented a diverse cross section of structures, goals and philosophies. However, all had one common problem: the difficulties encountered with funding and working in isolation.

In response to this expressed frustration, an Ad

## Nova Scotia Election

by Kathryn Morse

In the recent Nova Scotia election (September 6), women candidates ran in record numbers. The Conservatives and Liberals had three and nine candidates respectively, while the New Democrats had 22 women running out of a total of 52 seats. This number is up significantly since the last provincial election in 1984, when only 13 women ran for the NDP.

One woman was elected to each party with the final tally of votes being 28 seats for the Conservatives, 21 for the Liberals, two to the NDP and one independent.

I asked half a dozen of the NDP candidates and party organizers about the factors encouraging more women to go into provincial politics. They attributed it to the women's movement in general, and women's issue-oriented conferences in particular. At one such conference, the Atlantic Women and Housing Conference held in Fredericton last year, many women came to the conclusion that politicians wouldn't be interested in providing adequate low-income housing until more of them were women.

Another encouraging factor is the Women in the Legislature (WIL) Fund, established in June 1987 to provide money to all women candidates running for the NDP in Nova Scotia. It is the first such fund in the Atlantic provinces, and although it extends more symbolic than financial support at the moment, it is hoped in the future the fund will be a form of economic affirmative action.

One of the most important factors encouraging women to run is the support of other

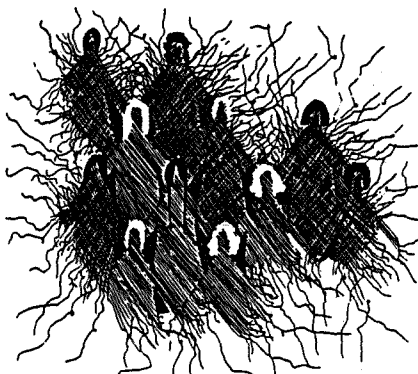
women politicians, especially Alexa McDonough, the leader of the NDP in Nova Scotia. When she became leader in 1980, McDonough was the first woman in Canada to head a major political party. Early in her career she formed a one-woman opposition, but since 1984 party fortunes have improved. She retained her seat in this election, but just barely, winning by only 27 votes.

One New Democrat party worker I talked to felt quite strongly that more women are entering provincial politics because the men in the party are more interested in the national ridings. In spite of party policy requiring gender parity at all levels of operation, there are rumblings that men are getting the hotter, more "winnable" spots.

One of the most interesting candidates in the election was Brenda Thompson, a twenty-five year old single mother, formerly on welfare, now a student. She successfully took former Conservative Social Services minister, Edmund Morris, to court last year over the release of confidential social services information.

Thompson's campaign challenged the stereotypes of who best represents the public in the provincial legislature: middle-aged, middle-class, male lawyers, or a young woman who understands the concerns of single parents, students, women and low income Nova Scotians -- in fact, the majority of Nova Scotians.

Kathryn Morse is a student at King's College School of Journalism in Halifax.



## WOMEN'S CENTRES

Interweave Steering Committee, a group formed as an outcome of the 1987 prov. conference for women's centres, is distributing an assessment to investigate the needs of women's centres in Ontario, possibilities for a prov. coalition and to connect centres with specific priorities for political action. Centres may also participate in an optional workshop. We invite participation from any women's organizations operating from a feminist philosophy, who define themselves as women's centres. For more information and to find out whether we have you on our list, please contact:

INTERWEAVE NETWORKING PROJECT  
Northern Women's Centre  
184 Camelot St.  
Thunder Bay, Ont. P7A 4A9  
or call Anna collect:  
(807) 345-7802.

Hoc Steering Committee has been formed, consisting of approximately 10 women from across Ontario. Most committee members are directly affiliated with women's centres, and several are especially interested in the concerns of francophone and immigrant women's centres.

The Committee will facilitate initial communication and shared action among centres. This process may result in the formation of a provincial coalition of women's centres, depending on the impetus from individual centres.

After Secretary of State funding was granted in late March, and Ontario Women's Directorate funding received in May, the steering committee met in Thunder Bay on May 28 and 29 this year. So far, several steps have been taken to determine the interest in forming a provincial coalition. A mailing list of all centres in Ontario is being compiled; a newsletter has been initiated; research on networking among women's centres in other

provinces has been conducted; and a questionnaire and workshop are being developed to both gather and distribute general information about women's centres, and to ask individual centres about their needs and interest levels for networking with other centres.

The Committee will be very interested in hearing from individual centres. If your centre wants to get involved, call or write for more information, or to let the Interweave Networking Project know about your centre's level of interest and the name of a contact person. You may also provide suggestions for the newsletter and about a priority for action that you would like other centres to know about.

Call collect (807) 345-7802, and ask for Anna, the project worker. You may send newsletter submissions to: Interweave Networking Project Northern Women's Centre 184 Camelot St. Thunder Bay, Ontario P7A 4A9

# Who Says We Can't

by Anne McCormick

Sound familiar? Well, OCLISS has proved that not only can we do almost everything we've been told that we can't do, but we've surprised even ourselves. We specialized in the impossible.

OCLISS, also known as the Ottawa Council for Low Income Support Services, is amazed to be celebrating our 20th anniversary this year.

While this may not seem to be a major milestone for some organizations, it is for an uppy political poverty rights group like us. For some reason, not many corporations, church groups or even politicians fight to give people like us money to

cheetah. Many times we get discouraged. Most of this frustration wouldn't exist, of course, if common sense was as common as the name implies.

Maybe we are the ones who have the problem because we can't grasp the logic that it's more valuable to society that we produce sweet smelling soaps, faster cars or even smaller sanitary napkins; than it is to raise healthy happy children. We can't understand how Lee Iaccoca of Chrysler can be worth \$17,000,000 and a single parent raising 2 children is living off the fat of the land on less than \$13,000

people, especially women. There's nothing worse than watching your children do without the basics of life or to watching their dreams slowly die. When you have nothing to lose, you either fight back or die physically and/or emotionally.

OCLISS is made up of people who have been or are presently on assistance. Most of us are single parents who've learned the hard way that being polite or good doesn't get you anywhere. We've learned to fight to survive and we're using those skills to work toward social change. We intend to give our kids back their dreams and ours.

In order to do this, we have done a number of things over the past 20 years. For instance, we started the first community legal clinic in Ottawa, the Ottawa Women's Credit Union, a small business called Airstop, demonstrated against unfair policies such as the de-indexing of the baby bonus, organized an alternative housing conference called 'Take Back the Flats' during International conference on Shelter for the Homeless, written presentations and submissions to legislative committees, etc. Of course, this list is incomplete but gives some idea of our versatility.

At the moment, we are working on making a 20 year dream become a reality. We have started a community economic development company, run for and by public housing tenants. After less than a year, we have created 11 full time jobs through a \$263,640 training program. Not many companies can say that. Another of the many things we were told that we couldn't do.

OCLISS can be contacted by writing 95A Beach St., Ottawa or call (613) 232-2677.

Anne McCormick is a board member of OCLISS and former community organizer. She is now working on the creation of the economic development company called Tenant Community Enterprises.

## Former Psychiatric Patient Fights Family Benefits

by Sue Clark

My name is Sue and I am a former psychiatric patient who founded in February of this year the **Ottawa Advocates for Psychiatric Patients**. Our group does advocacy work, lobbies the various governments, does public education, public speeches, and provides referral services for information for any psychiatric patient in or out of hospital.

On Thursday, June 30th, of this year I did not receive my Family Benefits cheque (Long Term Social Assistance). I went to the Ottawa Area Office at 10 Rideau St. (the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services.) I spoke to the Area Manager's (Mr. Pierre Lalonde) secretary and told her that I had not received my cheque in the mail and my rent was due the next day, July 1st.

I explained that I had no food, no bus pass, no drug card (I am diabetic), and no dental card. I was told that everything would be taken care of, and I should go and wait downstairs.

Carol Fortier, a supervisor, then saw me and told me that I would have to wait five days for a replacement cheque. I told her that I was diabetic and she offered to call my landlord to explain the situation. I declined the offer.

I went to the Area Manager's office again and he was not there. I went a floor higher and spoke to people in my MPP Richard Patten's office. They said they would look into the matter for me. While at Mr. Patten's office I called the Minister of Community and Social Services, John Sweeney, and spoke to someone in his Toronto office. They said they would call the area office and see what was going on.

At 4 p.m. I called Jane Scharf, Supervisor of Emergency Food and Clothing, for her support and asked her to come down to Family Benefits before it closed. At 4:20 p.m., with only 10 minutes till closing, Jane arrived.

Jane and I spoke to Julie Zurakowski, Income Maintenance Manager, who informed me that the only assistance

she could offer me was the Salvation Army - a soup kitchen. I refused as I am on a strict diabetic diet.

We were asked to leave at closing and I refused, demanding my cheque. Julie threatened to call the police. I said "go ahead." We staged a sit-in protest for 1 1/2 hours, were arrested and fined \$53.75 each for trespassing. We appear in court September 26th, 1988.

Since that time the Ministry has changed the old Family Benefits policy of making a recipient wait five days if your cheque was mailed and you did not receive it. Now all replacement cheques shall be issued immediately. More than 85 families every month, through no fault of their own, have had to wait those five days to receive a replacement cheque. They have had to do without food and sometimes shelter.

As I was quoted in the Ottawa Citizen on August 2 - "I feel our group has won a major victory ... I have proven that someone on FBA (Family Benefits allowance) can fight the system and win."

As a feminist, a radical, and a former psychiatric patient, I shall always speak out for justice.

*The five-day waiting policy was unique to Ottawa-Carleton. There are no province-wide directives regarding missing or late cheques and all other jurisdictions issue replacement cheques on the same day.*

*The logic behind the five-day policy was that the wait would allow the original cheque to get through the postal system. Meanwhile, the family was directed to rely on local emergency food and shelter service agencies.*

*We thank Sue Clark and Jane Scharf for taking the personal risk to change an inhumane policy. We salute these women for standing up for their rights and the rights of other women in Ottawa-Carleton.*

*To get hold of the Ottawa Advocates for Psychiatric Patients, call 728-7274.*



make real political changes. Our continued existence is a tribute to the many volunteers who founded this organization and those who continue to selflessly contribute their time and energy to us.

Historically, we started out as a group of public housing tenants meeting for coffee and discussing our problems and trying to find possible solutions, any solutions. Our original goals were small, like our children and grew along with our own awareness of ourselves and our community.

We started off by trying to find a safer place for our children (rather than the highway) to tackling the provincial housing AUTHORITY (our landlord). Sometimes it felt (and still does) like we were the damsel in distress tied to the railway tracks by good ole Simon LeGree.

As public housing tenants, we had few rights and no way to enforce the few rights we did have. We had no political clout because we were poor women and children, also known as "those welfare bums". Of course, we were isolated because of our poverty and this was compounded by our "middle class" neighbours who seemed to feel that poverty and the black plague were equally contagious.

It'd be great to be able to say that none of these problems exist anymore but unfortunately that's not the case. However, a lot of battles have been won and we've definitely made a difference.

One of the advantages of being around for 20 years is that you can see changes take place over time. It gives you some hope when you feel that you're a rearguard action against a bureaucracy that makes a turtle look like a

per year on assistance. Or even why families in public housing who pay rent are subsidized but the prime minister who doesn't pay rent while making us pay his interior design budget, isn't subsidized.

Someday we may accept and understand this logic, but hopefully, we'll be able to get them to see ours instead.

While we haven't yet won the war in the past 20 years, we are at least learning how to confound the enemy. We are losing our naivete but understanding how to bend the rules to our advantage. You may feel that enemy is too strong a word but we are fighting for survival.

Poverty is one of the most violent ways there is to control

## Ontario Municipal Elections - November 14



City of Ottawa

111, promenade Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5A1

**Ruth Wildgen**  
Alderman / Échevin

Quartier Britannia Ward  
(613) 564-1336



City of Ottawa

111, promenade Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5A1

**Diane Holmes**  
Alderman / Échevin

Quartier Wellington Ward  
(613) 564-1311



**Lynn Smyth**

CANDIDATE FOR ALDERMAN  
CAPITAL WARD, NOVEMBER 14

Join a winning team!  
Lynn Smyth Campaign Office  
929 Bank Street (Bank & Holmwood)  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1S 3W5  
Telephone: 230-0175



City of Ottawa

111, promenade Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5A1

**Nancy Smith**  
Alderman / Échevin

St. George's Ward  
Quartier St-Georges  
(613) 564-1329

# Another challenge for the women's movement

by Dorothy Inglis

For the last year and a half I've been writing a feminist weekly column for the St. John's **Evening Telegram**, called "Bread and Roses." My sisters in the women's movement give credit for the appointment to the Halloween supper we enjoyed together when we sent our spells calling for the enlightenment of certain people across the city. They think that is the only explanation that can account for the job being offered to me shortly after by the very same editor who had previously vilified me in editorials. I'm not that heavily into witchcraft so I tend to think of it as just another astonishing example of how far the women's movement is progressing.

Since taking on the column, I've had a small chance to test public reaction to feminist ideals and perspectives and from comments received, I think we're winning. More of our arguments are being understood and accepted by a wide variety of people, young and old, women and men. A lot of the old opposition has virtually disappeared. Nobody can really quarrel about equal pay these days. Day care has begun and will eventually be in full form. And who would have believed that the Supreme Court would come down heavily on our side!



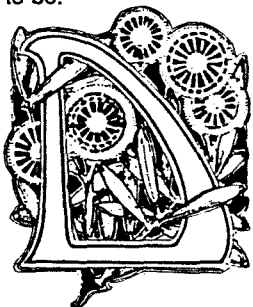
The whole of society has changed because of the women's movement. Feminism has emerged in some of the least expected places. In Newfoundland, for example, where church traditions run deep, women are doing amazing things. In the last few years, the Anglican church has ordained seven women as priests. A United Church minister re-wrote the hymn book for her church, taking out the sexist language and adding feminist sentiments.

Catholic nuns, after hearing Rosemary Brown speak at a Women's Network dinner, organized a series of feminist speakers beginning with Sister Theresa Kane. She gained international fame as the nun who spoke up to the Pope when he visited the U.S. In St. John's, she spoke to a packed house which gave her standing ovations.

We've been making gains on the municipal front, too. Women swept the polls as deputy mayors in the last election. And Government has

responded to our pressure by appointing numerous women as Assistant Deputy Ministers and to various provincial boards. No one questions their right to be there.

And we've changed the language. Apparently, the human tongue can pronounce Ms. after all; and he/she isn't nearly the obstacle it was made out to be.



None of these progressive changes would have occurred if we were not now a vital force to be reckoned with. And the really exciting story is that this is not peculiar to our country, but is only an example of what is also happening in other countries. Not a week goes by without another account of the tremendous changes taking place, often in the most oppressed circumstances. Women in Eritrea, for example, have had to find their tortuous route to equality by joining in the fighting. Becoming soldiers gave them the status to affect policy making, and now they can prevent the dreadful practice of infibulation from being carried out on their daughters. They have also demanded and gotten equal education for girls and boys.

In Brazil there are nine states that have established police stations for women and children, where women run the entire show. They take the statement as police, make the arrests, help the women to plan for the children and act as lawyers for the prosecution. Of course, this advance is only an indicator of how brutalized the women have been through the traditional justice system, but they may well be producing an institution that we would all like to emulate.

In Norway we have a woman Prime Minister with seven women cabinet ministers who are making herstory with their feminist style of government, increasing social programs in time of depressed resources.

The opposition leader in Pakistan, Ms Bhutto, has kept her own name after marriage and has made it clear to her husband that her first love and duty is to politics.

Iraq is boasting of its progressive measures for women in the fields of employment and education and has even elected a fair number to government.

We women in Newfoundland like to brag that we were the first to bring a member of the Icelandic Women's Alliance Party to visit in our country. We had been inspired by the wonderful article of Jan de Grass in the equally wonderful magazine **Horizons** and invited Gudrun Agnarsdottir to come and speak. The rest is herstory.

Women all across Canada now know from our three visitors from Iceland that those women are doing what nobody else has done. They have learned how to empower all women, not set up stars. They share power and decision-making and are gaining public support steadily because "they mean what they say."

Voice of Women sent a delegation last spring to the United Nations Conference on Disarmament in Geneva for International Women's Day and to attend a women's conference on peace. Each speaker, representing eight different countries in the morning forum paid tribute to the international celebration of women and acknowledged our presence in the galleries as representatives. It was the first time the Conference on Disarmament had ever recognized visitors in the gallery, and was yet another



symbol of demonstration of our growing solidarity and strength throughout the world.

To our astonishment, women from Sweden, of all places, asked us Canadians to what we would attribute our phenomenal success as a women's movement. They were impressed that the Canadian government had provided our transportation to the conference, that we had advisory councils to governments, that we had made so many gains and that we had a national organization representing more than 500 groups.

I've thought about their question a lot ever since, because we are making waves in Canada. And I suppose I would point to NAC as the

single, most important instrument we have had. Following, as it did, on the heels of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, chaired by Senator Florence Bird, NAC began right away to mobilize public attention on the recommendations of that startling report. In typical fashion, the report was never intended to do more than cause a few pious sentiments before joining all the other commission reports on dusty, parliamentary shelves. And that's exactly what would have happened if women had not jumped to their feet and organized public response.

I remember some of those meetings in Toronto that led to the formation of NAC. It was a time of wonderment! I used to go home after them bemused and bewildered with the events taking place: women in fancy hats and gloves in sisterly conversation with women in boots and overalls - and more importantly, listening to each other with respect and humour.

I thought it the hope of the world and still do. If we can lower the barriers between us, and build on our common ground, we can accomplish anything. Every division that we allow to keep us separated continues our oppression. We have, through NAC, been able in the main to find the common ground of issues vital to all women. The world needs more understanding - not less - across our differences, and this is the role that we are best suited for. It is our culture that can save this planet from destruction.

We've been busy the past 16 years of NAC, first of all organizing more than 500 groups of women to be a part, and secondly coping with the enormous numbers of complicated issues so that united strategists could emerge. We've done those things well and the country has benefited.

Now our task is to deal with the future in devising feminist methods of interaction in policy making. Icelandic women have charted their course,

Norwegian women are on the way, and Canadian women need to be next.

Inevitably, since those early days of NAC, the women's movement has developed some inner divisions and divergences of opinion, but we can't allow our differences to become a win-or-lose proposition. We've already done better than male-dominated movements at finding and building consensus, but we've got to do a lot more in that line. We are going to need plenty of solidarity if we are ever going to be policy makers.



One of the things that has held us back, I think, is that, although we have brought our own style to organization, our institutions have been operating largely with the old, familiar systems and structures. Those structures were designed by men for their own purposes, and they are often not really suitable for feminists. We need to get rid of Robert's Rules and to work out Roberta's.

There was a good example of what I mean at the annual general meeting of NAC this spring. We seemed to be dividing into camps or factions. It was clear that nobody really wanted that to happen, but the rules and structures seemed to be keeping us divided instead of helping us to reach a resolution.

After the meeting and all the newspaper headlines about "the split in Canada's largest women's organization", I was

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# Why doesn't feminism include me?

by Kelly Bolville

Someone asked me to write an article about the women's movement. If there was only one word I could use for the movement, it would have to be confusion. If nothing else, the women's movement has totally confused me about where I stand in this jigsaw puzzle called life.

When I was growing up, my mom was on mother's allowance. We lived in a public housing unit and we were poor. It wasn't a well-known fact, since we didn't really realize we were in this financial situation. For a ten-year-old, as long as I could have a quarter once a week to buy candy, I figured life was wonderful. I didn't realize what Mom had to give up for our quarters. I didn't really care either.

My place back then was the little girl of a woman on welfare. This meant that I wasn't treated the same as the rest of the kids at school. I once had a teacher tell me she was going to "teach me how to clean myself since my mother couldn't possibly teach me." This she did in front of the whole Grade 7 class. Kind of humiliating, but I dealt with it the best way I knew how. I swore at her. Next thing I knew I was in the principal's office being spanked because my mother didn't know how to discipline me either. They really thought she was an idiot. All they had to do was ask me - I could have told them she knew how to discipline. Boy, did she. So then I was the brat whose mother was on welfare and an idiot.

When I was in my 13th year, I had a health teacher tell me that she would like to talk to me about the facts of life. I explained to her that my mother had already done just that. She replied: How would your mother know anything about sex. She can't even hold on to a man."

I told her that my mom didn't even want a man - she



had enough troubles. I was then expelled for being mouthy. So there you go. I was the mouthy brat whose mother was an idiot on welfare and couldn't "hold onto a man." Lucky me.

In my 14th year, I met a man who was four years my senior. My mother was devastated - he had to be a pervert or something, going out with someone so young. Well, four years later I finally gained some respect. I got married and pregnant in that order. My husband also taught me how to behave like "a lady", something that I didn't quite understand but did anyway because that was the way things were done. I was no longer the kid of a woman on welfare, I was a respectable lady "in the family way" with a husband who had a well-paying job. It no longer made any difference where I came from or what I or my mother had done in the past.

After three years of marriage I got a job. My husband had lost his well-paying job and we had moved back to my hometown. I was expecting my second child and we needed the money.

against them. My husband and his friends always followed that sentence with a stream of curses. After all, feminists were man-hating lesbians who wanted to take over the world. Sort of like communists.

After stating my opinion, a co-worker who I had become quite friendly with told me she was a feminist. I was in shock. She was married once, had six children, and went out on dates with men. I even suspected that she had sex. Some of the things she said sounded quite interesting. I wanted equality. I wanted a better life for my son and daughter. I wanted peace. I wanted free choice. I wanted to make my husband and his friends crazy. Why not? I guess I was a feminist.

So here I am going around, to the utter disgust of my husband, family, and his friends, saying I'm a feminist.



Anyway, I found out that the women I was working with were divorced, unmarried and had children "out of wedlock." God, what was I getting into.

One day, a couple of months after I had started working there, we got into a conversation about feminists. I swore that I wasn't one of those women. My mother and mother-in-law had warned me

Then all of a sudden, someone hands me a copy of a feminist magazine. Hey, all the articles are about lesbians, middle-class women, Nicaraguan women, and prostitutes. I have no problems with these subjects. What I do have a problem with is the fact that there are no articles on straight women, women with children, poor

women, single mothers, housing problems. These are women's issues. Where are they?

I put down my issue and waited for the next one hoping that they would be in that one. No dice. For six more issues, I waited for these subjects to show up. Once there was an article on homelessness. But that was it. Hey, where is equality? These feminists are yelling that we want to be equal to men when they won't let me be equal with them. That doesn't seem right. What's the problem?

I don't think I'm a feminist anymore. At least not the way it seems to be demonstrated these days. I still believe in equality between everyone, men and women. I still believe in a better life for my son and daughter. I still believe in peace for everyone. And I still believe in freedom of choice. What I don't believe in is stepping on someone else to get ahead. I don't believe in forgetting where you came from. I don't believe in going to the public and saying that you are fighting for equality for all women and then turning your back on women who are not as fortunate as you are. I don't believe in turning down social housing because it brings down the land value of your neighbourhood. And I definitely don't believe in using the "feminist" title when you are not really fighting for all women - which means their children - which inevitably means men. Equality is for all people, not just for a chosen few, or just for those who can afford it, or just for those who can spell it.

*Kelly Bolville is a board member and the secretary of the Ottawa Council for Low Income Support Services. She is also the mother of two.*

## Another challenge for the women's movement (cont'd)

one of five delegates from various regions who were interviewed on Peter Gzowski's Morningside. What really encouraged me was that even though we didn't know one another, all five of us had reached the same analysis. It wasn't issues that were keeping us apart: what we needed were new systems to let us find consensus.

I don't know what has been going on in NAC since, but I hope that the committee that was working on new structures before the conference was reinstated to continue the search for a process that suits our needs.

Overall, the women's movement has made a lot of practical gains. Now is the time for us to let our imaginations soar.

Just recently, Dr. Margaret Fulton, past president of Mount St. Vincent University in Halifax, spoke to

a national convention in St. John's to 800 delegates of the Women's Institutes. Her strong, feminist message was to urge them to be a political force on all current issues, to see that their perspective and voices are needed in policy making. That was all well-received, but what I found particularly fascinating was that Margaret has spent the last year in Norway at a women's university as an education consultant where she and others were working on creative new ideas, new processes of human organization, new ways of distributing power. She spoke of the old, male system of "linear" thinking where power remains at the top and filters down to a few. But their Norwegian women's studies developed new arrangements, described as "circular" where power is distributed in ever-connecting and over-lapping ways that

share decision-making and empowers all women.

What the women in Norway were searching for, I believe, is exactly what the women delegates at the the annual convention of NAC were also looking for - a new system of operating that allows distribution of decision-making. When worked out, it could prove to be the most important contribution of our time. God knows what we call democracy isn't working. When nominations for elected office in Canada can be bought for \$50,000 and a thousand employees bussed in to sign ballot forms for their boss, we are in deep trouble.

Not only does it make a total farce of our political system and strengthen the immeasurable control of the millionaire class, it puts an end to any future hope for women to play anything but a token role in the parties that allow it to

happen. We would be blind to ignore what this bodes for the future. Political stakes in Canada are getting higher and we shouldn't be surprised. We are threatened with an American takeover of our country, under the guise of free trade. We are in an internationally sensitive position, surrounded by three strategic oceans. The boys are going to go after political seats like never before to be in on the action. When the highly respected, popular feminist Maude Barlow loses her nomination and Frank Stronach buys his, we women of all parties should be deeply worried.

The important breakthrough for Canadian women hasn't come yet and we're not spending enough time and energy to devise strategies to bring it about. Women won't get elected at this rate. And we never will - in large numbers -

until we make it happen!

Herstory may record the women's movement as the most significant revolution yet if our voices can stop the lunacy and greed of those who are bent on destroying our planet.

Women may possibly be the best hope we have. We must continue to find common ground to increase our numbers and follow the advice of our Icelandic sisters: "Shake yourself so the seeds will fall."

*Dorothy Inglis has been a provincial representative and vice-president of NAC. She is a founding mother of the St. John's Status of Women Council; an elected member of Avalon Consolidated School Board; a peace worker; a candidate for a provincial riding; and many, many other wonderful things.*

# My Experiences as a Black Woman in Canada

by Verona Reid

Many people think that the Blacks they meet on the streets are immigrants. This is not so. I am constantly reminded by women I know that they are eighth generation Canadians.

West Indians started to come in recognizable numbers to Canada during World War I and settled mostly on the East Coast. Later they moved to Toronto and Montreal. Many of the women came as maids and from the small monthly pay they had to repay their travel expenses. It was a dreadful and lonely life and many got married and reared large families. Out of those families grew the Union United Church and the Negro Community Centre. Also the Coloured Women's Club which is now in its 86th year.

Once World War II was over, the colonies were beginning to look to nationhood. I was out of High School and many women in Barbados were working as teachers, nurses or in government service. At this time, advertisements began to appear in our daily papers of good jobs in far off lands.

Organizations began to make contact with hospitals in United Kingdom and many young women were accepted. Weekly, people left for work in England. Many young women found it a very lonely life and had horrible food. Then Canada was calling for nurses and by the middle of the 1950's many women had left for the Canadian hospitals.

The islands were still overcrowded with young educated semi-or-un-employed

women and the leaders of two prominent West Indies islands met with Canadian politicians and asked for admission of young women as workers. It was felt our women could fill any position available, if only they had the opportunity to come. The women were granted the privilege of coming as maids. These women have risen to several important positions in Canada, due to persistence; and they brought relatives who have done likewise.

The selection of which girls were allowed in to do domestic work was rigid. The young women had to be 21-35 years old, literate, single, childless and in perfect health (the cream of the crop). These criteria led to a brain drain in the islands. I fitted those requirements and I came to Canada.

The first group of women arrived from Jamaica and Barbados late in 1955. The next year was a repeat of the first. In 1957 Trinidad and Guyana girls came, and by 1960 Dominican and all the other Island girls had begun to arrive. This type of immigration stopped in 1967.

The first groups arrived in Montreal and then went on to Toronto or other parts of Canada.

The domestics arrived, were whisked from the airport to rural government lodgings, along with other immigrants, who were forced to stay there for 2 to 6 days. Later, girls were put up in the Montreal YWCA.

From there they would be taken to a Manpower office where selections were made

and the girls sent to "suitable" employers. When the girls had to part at Manpower offices the crying at times was unbearable, as new friendships or long term friendships were broken. Some girls went to homes that replaced their own homes. Others went to face physical and psychological abuse.

Some employers were kind and friendly and treated the "girls" as human beings, others treated the girls like sub-human. Some worked long-hours, shared rooms with children, had the baby crib in their rooms, and little time off. An hour's rest was denied some girls. Some were given what was not eaten at the table, while others ate at the tables with the family. Some girls got every Sunday off, others got half-day every second Sunday. Thursday half-day's off found the girls in Montreal at ex-soldiers' families, Eaton's basement, the Negro Community Centre and the YWCA.

Some placements did not even last for two weeks. Sometimes the 'lady' took the 'girl' back or the girl found her way to the placement officer where she weighed the case.

## My experience

I was placed in a large Westmount home with four finished floors. It was a British family with four children aged 3 to 21, with the baby girl under my care to bathe, feed and walk.

I had no cleaning woman so I worked like a slave seven days a week. After dinner I had most Tuesday evenings off and every second Sunday after lunch. After breakfast on Sunday I could go to church and I could go in the week after supper. The church members were kind and invited some "girls" into their homes. When I complained that my work was too much for me, I was told that I was just too fat. I went to Manpower and they supported me. My employer hired a fireman to do the heavy work for me.



After 18 months I stopped domestic work and sent for my mother and later my brother who was in the UK. Then I started to search along with other girls for work and a home. That was the real test.

## Housing

How long have you been here? Can you pay the rent? How many people are living with you? Have you a steady boyfriend? Do you have parties? I do not mind renting to you, because as janitor I'll rent to anyone but the landlord might not like niggers in his place. You understand? I had a black family, I mean people looking like you and they kept too much noise and disturbed people in the apartment building. Your food smells up



the place (we use alot of onions). With a painted grin, "I'm really sorry but the house is already rented, if it were not rented I would really rent to you. I know how hard it is for your people to find a place to live." "Someone else asked before. Come back tomorrow, if they don't take it, you can have it." No such luck. Rent is \$15 per week, but when you get there it is \$25. "Oh no, you saw wrong...."

## Employment

I had my early education in Barbados: elementary, high school, teacher's training, further academic training, some business education, City and Guild of London certificate in Home Economics.

Since 1946 I was a school teacher in my native country. After I migrated to Canada I had difficulty in getting a teaching position in Montreal. I was given all kinds of excuses why I could not be employed. So I took other jobs.

when I came back I needed another certificate. I worked as a dietitian's helper (volunteer), not a dietary aid (paid) and did the same job of working on special diets, balancing calories and food.

I got a job at the head office of a five-and-dime store and the personnel officer paid me \$30.00 per week to be a Kardex clerk and the next group of teenagers hired he paid \$33.00 a day.

A new factoring company was opening up and several workers were needed. I am good at figures and was given the job to cross check invoices. The business grew rapidly and I asked to learn how to process bills on the bookkeeping machine. I was refused.

Manpower was a joke. The civil servant told me she could find no job to suit me and said that I should try housework. I persisted in trying.

Finally I was sent to a job that paid \$45 a week but I was paid \$35 a week for a 5 1/2 day week. One day the assistant whose greatest concern was that I was unmarried came to get something from my desk drawer and instead of asking for it, held his hand right over my bust to get it. I gave him one push and he landed smack on the floor. The following Saturday night, he called me to tell me to not return on Monday.

I did several mundane, low paying jobs and although I suffered a great deal I learned alot.

I worked at a hospital and when I got my opportunity to try out for my first full time teaching position I extended my vacation a few days longer and told my supervisor why. The top brass at the hospital wrote me and told me I need not return because she knew that I would feel better working at my profession and it was only a matter of time before I would be leaving.

I started a new job in a new large transCanada store. The psychologist who tested me asked if I had ever been subject to discrimination because it could not be on my qualifications that I have no

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# Black Women's Studies in Teaching Related to Women: Help or Hinderance to Universal Sisterhood?

by Esmeralda Thornhill

How many students of Women's Studies can identify with female pioneers of colour who have marked milestones in the History of women and humankind?

Women of Colour have played out key roles, have blazed important trails and have laid down bridges on which many of us today intrepidly tread. Yet much of today's Teaching related to Women, colourblindly ignores, omits, or simply fails to acknowledge such realities. Black women and other Women of Colour remain invisible. And so, Black Women's Studies is a positive response to the neglect of Black Women by today's Women's Studies and Teaching related to Women which clearly exclude -- especially in their philosophical underpinnings--- Women of Colour.

Women's Studies aspires to complete and correct the record by grafting on to present knowledge, knowledge about Women - ALL WOMEN. Consequently, Women's Studies must break with traditional approach, traditional content, and traditional values, and go beyond the proverbial cosmetic cover-up or lip service, in order to become more relevant to Black Women and not merely appear as a fight in which white women are fighting for the right to oppress Black Women equally with white men.

Through a progressive social movement like Women's Studies and Teaching related to Women, Sisterhood can become real worldwide possibility, provided such educational initiatives do not remain shortsighted, tunnel-visioned, or colourblind. For the struggle for equality of Women (with a capital "W"), must be waged not only within

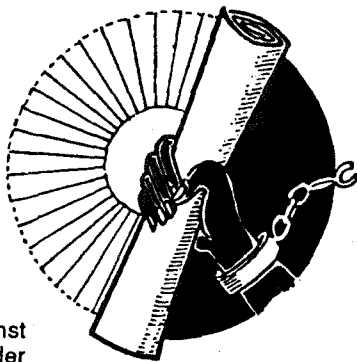
the ranks of the fight against sexism, but also on the broader field of the war on racism.

Black Women already share a past far different from that of white women, checkered as it is with a long history of "non-traditional" roles. And although multiple issues the world over are truly common denominators, the point remains that it is the order of priorities that differs when it comes to Black Women--whether they be the marginalized Black Women in North America, or Women of Colour in the underdeveloped and oppressed countries of the world. Therefore, it becomes primordial for Teaching related to Women, Women's Studies, and the Women's Movement to begin to address seriously issues of economic and racial oppression in order to be equally relevant to Black Women and other Women of Colour.

Black Women's Studies is a necessary component and an essential dimension to any Teaching related to Women. Black Women's Studies should be omnipresent and ubiquitous, pervading and permeating any Women's Studies program.

From a methodological viewpoint, in order to realize fully a program of Teaching related to Women, I posit that Women's Studies:

1. Can no longer remain colourblind to Black women.
2. Can no longer subscribe to the "Addendum Syndrome", "footnoting" and appendixing Black Women,



3. Can no longer exclude the active involvement of Black Women from decisional levels and blueprint stages.
4. Can no longer, ETHICALLY continue being accomplices in the "Conspiracy of Silence on Racism".

The first ever international coming together of Women to discuss Teaching and Research related to Women must mean that from the outset WE BELIEVE we share a common concern, a common commitment and a common goal. If we Educators in the area of Teaching related to Women and Women's Studies, are really the progressive activists and committed professionals we profess to be, if we consider ourselves true Members of the International Community of the Concerned, if we believe that we ARE indeed universally, Sisters in Struggle, then we can do no less than "Agitate! Agitate! Agitate!" until Black Women's Studies assumes its rightful place in Teaching related to Women as a help to universal sisterhood.

This article is an abstract of a paper presented by Esmeralda Thornhill to the First International Conference on Research and Teaching Related to Women, 1982.

The paper became the pilot for the course, "Black Women: The Missing Pages".

# Black Women: The Missing Pages from Canadian Women's Studies

by Esmeralda Thornhill

"This is a survey course, intended to introduce students to the experience of Black women in Canada as a triply oppressed group. The course will begin by examining the matrifocal role of Black Women during slavery and end with some consideration of the reasons behind the neglect of Black Women's issues by the current Women's Movement. Topics studied will include the politics of immigration, education, employment, human rights, culture and relationships. Prevalent negative stereotypes and pervading myths derived from slavery will be analyzed and re-evaluated, as will the influence of African traditions via slavery on such literary genres as slave narratives, biographical memoirs, letters and folk proverbs.

The combined intellectual (theoretical) and experiential (practical) approach of this course will offer a unique perspective which will provide an important link and much needed insight into the contributions of Black Women to the Canadian and Québec experience. At the same time the course will strive to improve and upgrade not only the image of Blacks in Canada, but also the links of communication, solidarity and sisterhood among Canadian women in struggle."

The foregoing description accompanies the course WMNS 398 c/2 Black Women: The Missing Pages from Canadian Women's Studies, the first ever accredited university course on Black Women offered in Canada.

This three (3) credit ground-breaking course is

being offered by Concordia University's Simone de Beauvoir Institute as part of its 1988-89 Academic Programme and it is complemented by another follow-up three (3) credit course scheduled for January 1989, WMNS s/4, **Women of Colour Speak Out! Confrontation and Collaboration: Issues and Implications for Canadian Women's Studies.**

It was in 1982 immediately following the first International Conference on Teaching and Research Related to Women that, under the aegis of the Congress of Black Women of Canada, the idea for a formalized course on Black Women's Studies was first proposed to Concordia University by Jane Kouka-Ganga and Esmeralda Thornhill. The University responded by offering during the summer of 1983, in what turned out to be a "one-shot deal", **Black Women: The Missing Pages ...** Despite unmitigated success and manifest popularity, it is only now -- five years later -- that Black Women's Studies is being "mainstreamed" into the Regular Academic Curriculum.

Interestingly enough, before the end of August, University authorities were reporting that student registration for both components, **Black Women ...** and **Women of Colour ...** was already complete and closed.

Esmeralda Thornhill, lawyer, writer and Human Rights Educator, conceptualized, developed and teaches **Black Women: The Missing Pages from Canadian Women's Studies.**

# My Experiences as a Black Woman in Canada(cont'd)

job; my test was excellent and my I.Q. was very good. I got the job but over 2 years I watched others promoted over me. I have never given up.

After eight years and several setbacks I applied for a job as a kindergarten teacher, but got one as a special education teacher. From the beginning the principal had an antagonistic attitude towards me. When the school was going to have its first home and school meeting he came in with his commanding manner and asked me to do a striptease for the parents' entertainment. A few days before the event he reminded me. Then I exploded and they knew then that I had a mouth and a temper and I told them off at that point - no swearing.

Next year I was sent to a sister school. The principal said he did not believe in stupid

things like God. One day in the kitchen I was at the sink and he came and tickled me in the ribs. I told him I did not like to be touched up by any man. He wanted to know why I made such a fuss when women in the islands only screw around. I was let go at the end of the year because I was cold and unfriendly. There were no unions then.

In Barbados I taught kindergarten to Grade 11. I have substituted all grades in Montreal - French and English. I have also had the privilege of teaching North American Indians of three tribes because I have taught in the remote areas of Québec.

Up to this day I am still plodding in minimum wage jobs.

I have been toying with another career - either cooking and catering or Gerontology. I have had courses in both.

## Daily Life

Scenario: Sit in a double seat and passenger after passenger will pass the seat and never sit down. Men would stand up and rub against your shoulder if you were sitting or on your back side if you were standing. I remember the evening I shouted aloud on a bus to a man to take his nasty prick out of my neck. My mother and cousin were two seats away and they laughed at me thinking I was crazy. He got off at the next bus stop. Men would exhibit themselves and ask you if you wanted to try it. They did not realize that they had nothing to offer us.

In the stores a saleslady sometimes avoided you. On Thursdays, six or more of us would go to a restaurant and eat (because in most cases we were poorly fed). The whole

restaurant crowd would stare at us and sometimes the service was very poor.

Salespersons could be quite aloof. To this day I do not try clothing in a store because there were times when you did not move yet you were accused of lifting merchandise.

Even in the universities you would sit in some classes and the professor never saw you. Sometimes you and white students would work together and they would get a B+ or A and you would get a C.

Emigrating to Canada is a challenge -- you either get callous, tough or you completely withdraw and blame society or yourself. As a Black woman you are discriminated against by mainstream women, younger women, Black women and Black men.

Unfortunately, the problems we lived with have not

been solved. But things have changed: girls work Monday to Friday and government controls working life. The integration of women's groups in society has given us more power and some people are less ignorant.

As a Black woman, no matter how many problems there are, I am pushing on.

Verona Reid was born in Barbados and migrated to Montreal in the late 1950's. She is in her early sixties. At the Third International Feminist Book Fair She worked with the Black Women's Coalition Group to sponsor a reception for Third World sisters. She is past president of the Congress of Black Women of Canada - Montreal Chapter.

At present, she is working to build the Council of Aging Blacks of Montréal.



# A Royal Commission on Reproductive Technologies?

by Beth Ryan

The development and use of reproductive technologies is one of the most crucial issues facing the feminist movement today. Although technologies are advancing rapidly and being used experimentally, women do not seem to be gaining the necessary knowledge and control to respond to this growing field of medical science.

It is a difficult issue. On the one hand, new reproductive technologies offer women the opportunity to overcome the physical limitations that prevent them from naturally conceiving. On the other hand, however, the new technologies also have the potential to designate women as baby-making machines for the benefit of society.

The issue has been brought sharply into focus in Canada with the call by the recently-formed Coalition for a Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies to investigate the implications of the new reproductive technologies.



The proposed mandate for the commission, according to the coalition, would be to "investigate the social implications of reproductive technologies and social innovations concerning them." The coalition would like to see the commission study such aspects of reproductive technology as: *in vitro* fertilization; embryo transfers; pre-natal screening techniques; genetic manipulation; sex selection techniques; embryo experimentation; and fetal tissue transplants. (See sidebar for an explanation of these technologies).

The coalition is spearheaded by Dr. Margrit Eichler, of the Department of Sociology at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). A number of groups and individuals have voiced their support for a commission. These include the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Canadian Abortion Rights and various provincial Planned Parenthood associations, and other women's health groups.

The coalition wants to see an examination of social and legal arrangements concerning the production of children (so-called surrogate motherhood arrangements); judicial interventions during pregnancy (e.g. the Baby R case); and the commercial marketing of semen, eggs, and embryos, as well as the use of people for reproductive services and related issues (e.g. patenting of medical procedures or

implements). According to the coalition, a royal commission should investigate these issues in terms of their implications for women, men, the resulting children, other relatives, professionals and other personnel involved, and the public good in general.

A tall order, and one that government has not yet responded to. Government can be sure, however, that this is an issue which will not go away. Like the related issue of abortion, advanced reproductive technology elicits strong opinions, both positive and negative, from Canadians.

As the coalition states in its March 1988 paper on reproductive technologies, we are witnessing "nothing less than a revolution in reproduction. But do we, as a society, want this revolution to continue without limits?"

A decade ago, the world was stunned by the birth of Louise Brown, the first "test-tube baby" conceived through *in vitro* fertilization. Since her birth, reproductive technology has moved with amazing speed.

In Canada and the U.S., there are now almost 200 *in vitro* clinics. In some clinics, embryos are frozen and stored for future use, other embryos are transplanted, while still other embryos are used solely as research material. Eggs have been flushed from one woman to be re-implanted in the womb of a second woman.

A child conceived through a variety of artificial reproductive technologies can have as many as five different "parents": the man who donated the sperm; the woman who donated the egg; the mother who would carry the baby to term; and the parents who rear the child. Fetal diagnostic techniques such as amniocentesis can determine some genetic



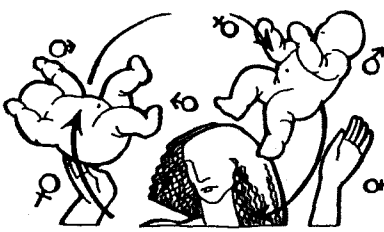
characteristics (i.e., whether the fetus is a girl or a boy) and abnormalities in the fetus. Genetic parents are being asked to make decisions they have never had to make before.

With such incredible developments in technology, there is no doubt that this issue needs immediate attention and investigation. However, a dispute has arisen on the methods of investigation. There are some who are adamantly opposed to the process of a Royal Commission investigation. While Margrit Eichler believes a Royal Commission is the best vehicle for a study because of its access to necessary funds and the high profile it will bring to the issue, others question the effectiveness of such an

approach.

Women's Healthsharing, a women's health collective based in Toronto, has decided not to add its name to the list of commission endorsers because members are concerned that Royal Commissions are unwieldy, require great investments of time and energy and rarely result in positive gains.

Two members of the collective, Diana Majury and Connie Clement, have taken a strong public stand against the call for a Royal Commission. Majury is a lawyer who teaches and is researching equality law, while Clement is involved in



public health family planning work.

In the spring 1988 issue of *Healthsharing*, the collective's quarterly magazine, Clement and Majury speak out vociferously against the commission, while stressing that they are speaking as individuals, and not for the collective as a whole.

Clement sees "no indication that membership would lie in our favour. No existing government reports in this field have been sympathetic to feminist viewpoints." Majury is also concerned about the amount of energy needed to "use a commission successfully."

"We need clear positions to articulate, and we need to sustain the energy long enough to influence not just the commission but the legislation coming out of it," says Majury.

Majury believes that feminists are a "small voice" in the debate over reproductive technologies, and that most of the current pressure on government is coming from the medical industry. In light of this pressure, how will women and their partners be protected from exploitation by an industry which seeks to make money from the production of children?

"The experimenters don't want to get shut down," says Majury. "If a commission is called, they're going to mobilize money and research to justify new techniques. The people selling *in vitro* fertilization, sex selection, embryo transfer - you name it - they're all white, male doctors. They command social respect simply because of that, never mind what they do, and don't worry about the health and safety of the women they do it to."

Clement says she doesn't think feminists can mobilize a similar level of response to a commission. She says she's been in heartfelt discussions about the issue in Toronto, Montreal, and Winnipeg.

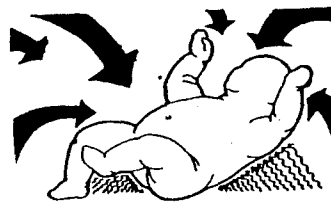


"One thing that I keep hearing over and over is that we're not ready. We haven't had the grassroots discussions needed to mobilize feminist response and create feminist positions," says Clement.

Both Clement and Majury express dismay at the coalition's statement of principles. Clement thinks the principles are "very middle-of-the-road, and they're erratic - some things are included while other very important issues are ignored."

Majury goes further. She thinks the statement of principles is problematic - "they're not adequately thought out and the wording seems to be deliberately ambiguous."

"It's very dangerous to be put in a position where our own principles can be used against us."



Majury notes that great emphasis is placed on informed consent, which she calls a "liberal notion that assumes the two parties involved are in equal positions - one of the main feminist critiques of the medical profession rests on the power imbalance between doctor and patient. This is compounded when doctors are male and patients are female."

Clement takes issue with the fact that the coalition's principles assume reproductive technologies are here to stay.

"The question of prohibiting the technologies isn't even addressed. I don't agree with that. I think that a costly technique, such as *in vitro* fertilization, with only a 5-10 per cent effectiveness rate should be prohibited from general use. If we were talking about a drug or medical device with such a poor effectiveness rate, the government wouldn't approve its sale in Canada."

Majury sees a major weakness of the Royal Commission model in its failure to demand a moratorium on both legislation and practice while the commission sits.

"The irony is that this call (for a commission) is both too fast and too slow. It's too fast because women aren't prepared for it - we need popular education, debate, development of analysis and theory from a Canadian feminist perspective. Let's see if we can get money to foster popular debate first."

"And it's too late because the technologies are already becoming entrenched. A much stronger strategy would be to

define the most damning technologies and those just on the horizon and to make a focussed effort to get the federal government to impose a moratorium on these technologies while also making a commitment to analyse social impact and possible controls of reproductive technology."

The Coalition for a Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies responded to Clement's and Majury's opinions with a letter to *Healthsharing* published in the summer 1988 issue of the magazine.

The coalition stressed in its letter that "both the coalition and Majury and Clement approach the technologies from a women-centred perspective, and we differ on only one aspect of a feminist response - calling for a Royal Commission." The Coalition also stressed the support it has already received from many feminist groups and individuals.

"We are all concerned that any government initiatives on the new reproductive technologies will ignore and further exploit women," says the coalition.

With the awareness that government could use women as pawns - appearing to respond to them while actually pandering to the profit-makers - the coalition has made it clear that it will only support a royal commission if it is comprised of a majority of women committed to women's issues. The coalition has also upheld that the chair of the commission should not be a doctor or lawyer, nor should the majority of commission members, as these professions have the most to gain from advancement of the new reproductive technologies.

The coalition sees a commission as a better vehicle than a task force or a ministerial study in that a commission has the ability to extensively fund research, and to issue subpoenas in the gathering of data from practitioners, such as sex selection clinics. Currently, this data is generally unavailable to independent researchers. Neither task forces nor ministerial studies have such broad powers.

The power and scope of a Royal Commission are seductive to those who wish to see a far-reaching investigation into reproductive technologies. The issue is one for women all over Canada to consider carefully. Women should make their views known both to the coalition (by writing Dr. Margrit Eichler, Department of Sociology, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor St. West, Toronto M5S 1V6), and to government (by writing your local M.P.)

# Reproductive Technology: A serious question for women

September 1988

page 15

by Beth Ryan



The Government of Ontario, the only one in the world to finance in vitro fertilization clinics, has spent more than \$7 million in two years on four clinics. During that time a little more than 200 babies have been born, at a cost of \$35,000 a baby.

I, for one, question the prudence of spending so much money on an experimental procedure to create babies, when children already in existence do not receive nearly enough financial attention from our policy makers. Many of us wonder why such funds are being allocated towards conception when social and medical services, such as treatment for the mentally ill, are not receiving adequate funding.

The use of public funds on reproductive technologies is a crucial point of consideration in the debate that is currently shaping up in Canada. A host of questions comes to my mind:

Why do we persist with in vitro fertilization despite the fact that it is successful only about 10 to 15 per cent of the time?



Why do we encourage women (and their partners) to subject themselves to the uncertainty, anguish, and most often grief, that comes with the attempt to conceive through in vitro fertilization? Why do we accept that a woman should go through such psychological trauma for the sake of bearing a child with one's own genetic code?

I wonder why our society doesn't encourage people to spend more time helping the children already in this world: children with mental disabilities, some of whom languish in institutions; the children who have suffered abuse, sexual or otherwise, and who would benefit immeasurably from a healthy,

loving relationship with an adult.

Why don't we spend public funds to provide a better student-teacher ratio so that children who need special academic attention may receive it? Why don't we reach out to the children who will be hurt by famine and floods in other parts of the world?

I believe we could encourage an infertile woman to direct her love outwards - and not inwards - instead of implicitly telling her that she is not a complete woman if she cannot bear her own child. Likewise, men should not feel less male if they are unable to produce the sperm which would fertilize an egg.

There is no doubt that the desire for one's own child is strong in most of us for a number of reasons: immortality, company in old age, the hope of molding other human beings within our value system, among others. But isn't it time we looked beyond the selfishness inherent in bearing one's own child? Instead of pandering to this urge at the risk of psychologically and sometimes physically hurting many women and men, could we not redirect our energies?

The dilemmas arising from in vitro fertilization are far-reaching. What about embryo research - such practices as freezing and later thawing embryos? What about the "killing" of embryos, which are, after all, human in that they are the product of the joining of an egg and sperm?

We hear no outcry on the fate of embryos created in a Petri dish, although they unmistakably have the potential to be full human beings. It appears that sperm and egg joined outside the womb don't deserve the same legal protection as the fetus developing inside a woman.

Vehement pro-lifers would have us believe that the fetus developing inside the womb deserves the utmost protection from its murderous mother. And yet, male researchers working on in vitro are trusted to make ethical decisions regarding experimentation on embryos.

These are only some of the contradictions that become apparent as one examines the process of in vitro fertilization, and indeed most of the new reproductive technologies. As society deals with these ethical issues, the stage is being set for a new era of human (and non-human) reproduction for years to come.

*Beth Ryan is a feminist writer who hails originally from Newfoundland and has a special interest in social justice.*

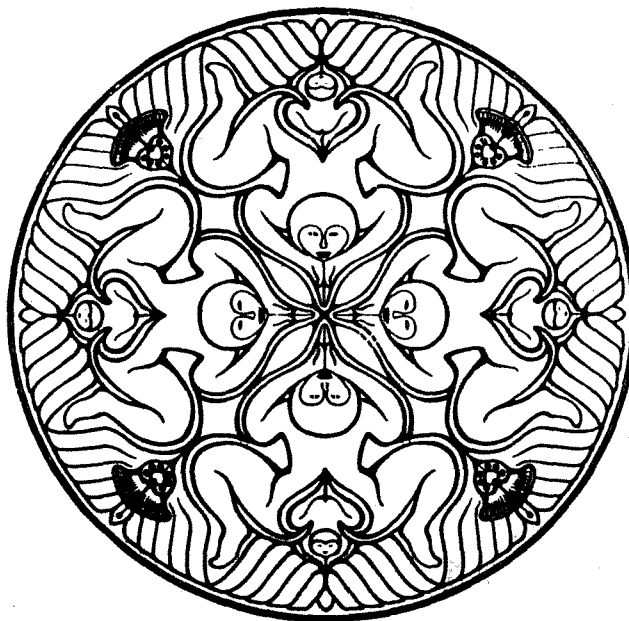
## New reproductive technologies used on women: Definitions

\* Most of the techniques described below have been developed in cattle. They are being transferred to women without adequate primate research and without appropriate public debate or scrutiny. In the process, the nature of human life and childbirth are being redefined. Parental and family relationships are being transformed. Yet we are largely ignorant about the various causes of infertility, at least some of which are preventable. Canada as a nation needs to face up to the

amniocentesis, ultrasound, and chorionic villi sampling, used to determine some genetic characteristics, abnormalities, as well as the sex of the fetus.

**FACTS:** Although these techniques were developed for problem pregnancies, their routine administration to all pregnant women is now becoming the norm. They carry the risk of harm to the woman and the fetus.

**QUESTIONS AND ISSUES:** Is the woman patient informed about the risks? What eugenic principles underlie the



issues and develop a national response to them. If policy responses are left to the provinces, this will result in reproductive tourism -- people will obtain in another province what they cannot get in their own. A federal Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies would involve the nation in coping with this reality." (Canadian Coalition for a Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies)

**Sex selection** - Refers to either (a) the identification of the sex of an already existing embryo or (b) the choice of the sex of an embryo before fertilization.

**FACTS:** The first sex-selection clinic in Canada opened in Toronto in the Fall of 1987. It is run on a private franchise basis. (each operation is independently owned but you have to follow direction/formula of the head corporation)

**QUESTIONS AND ISSUES:** Given that there is an international preference for boys as only or first children, widespread adoption of such practices is likely to lead to a distortion of the sex ratio. With an 80 per cent sex selection success rate, what are the long-term consequences for the 20 per cent of the wrong sex?

**Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques:** Include a variety of procedures such as

decisions made? Who makes the decisions?

**Artificial Insemination:** A woman receives the sperm of her partner or a donor. While AI has been traditionally seen as a means of dealing with male infertility, it is also an option for single and lesbian women who wish to conceive. At present, there is a decided bias towards couples and "family stability."

**Superovulation:** A woman is given fertility drugs and hormones (in Canada, often Clomid) to stimulate her ovaries to increase her production of eggs.

**FACTS:** Known adverse effects of Clomid include: disturbances of the intestines and bladder, eye and liver problems, enlargement of the ovaries and others. Long-term effects on women and resulting children are unknown. This drug is similar in structure to DES, a drug used earlier on pregnant women and found to be cancer causing in the women and their children.

**QUESTIONS AND ISSUES:** To what degree are patients informed? Follow-up of previously treated women and their offspring is imperative but not presently required. Who owns the ova that are produced but not transferred into the woman from whom they were taken? How will donor and recipient women be informed of the risks they incur?

**IN VITRO fertilization:** *In vitro*, meaning "in glass", refers to the Petri dish where a woman's egg, extracted from her ovaries, is fertilized by a sperm for later implantation in the womb. The fertilized eggs can be re-introduced into the body of the woman from whom the eggs were originally taken, or in a woman who is not genetically related to her child.

**FACTS:** Canada now has 12 IVF clinics. This is a highly experimental technique involving many risks. The success rate is around 10 per cent, i.e., about 90 per cent of the women undergoing this "treatment" will NOT end up with a child. It includes superovulation. The long-term effects on women and their offspring are unknown. Canada does not currently regulate these techniques.

**QUESTIONS AND ISSUES:** Before proceeding further, should the effects on women and their offspring not be studied -- including the effects on the many women who do not end up with a child? How many women are physiologically and psychologically damaged in the process? What are the immediate and delayed effects on offspring?

**Surrogate Motherhood:** (Pre-conception contracts for the production of children)

This involves contracts between a woman and a client who orders a child from a woman. The latter consents to be impregnated, carry the child, and hand it over to the client upon birth, usually for money. Contracts are often arranged by agents (such as lawyers or surrogate companies) who receive high fees for making the arrangements.

**FACTS:** Such arrangements are now occurring in Canada, as well as taking place across the Canada/U.S. border. However, contracts are currently not enforceable in Canada. The Ontario Law Reform Commission (1985) has recommended that contracts be legally recognized, scrutinized and enforced. This would include taking the child by force of the state from the contractual mother who has changed her mind. The New Jersey Supreme Court has identified the practice as the "sale of a child." Contracts may also regulate the lifestyle of the pregnant woman, to ensure a better quality product.

**QUESTIONS AND ISSUES:** Does Canada wish to legally permit the selling of children? In adoption procedures, the natural mother can change her mind and keep the child. Under the recommendations of the Ontario Law Reform Commission, the mother would NOT have such right. If appropriate behaviours for pregnant women are identified in a legally binding manner, how will we protect the pregnant woman's autonomy?

*Reprinted from a document from the Coalition.*

# Women in the Philippines: An interview with Lilia Santiago

Lilia Santiago is a writer, poet, editor of a *Filipina* magazine, member of the Faculty of Literature of the University of the Philippines, and member of the national women's coalition, GABRIELA. She was recently in Ottawa as part of a speaking tour, when she was interviewed by Lynne Tyler for *The Womanist*.

During the last years of the U.S.-supported Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines, in the mid-1980's, social and political forces were intensifying. Amid growing popular opposition to human rights abuses and massive inequalities, a group of women, mostly representing peasants and workers, got together and formed the core of what became GABRIELA.

Officially founded in March, 1984, GABRIELA is the largest national women's coalition in the Philippines. It includes groups representing women who are farmers, workers, writers, artists, religious activists of both the Christian and Moslem faiths, consumers, housewives, and others.

The group's name has a double meaning. The initials stand for General Assembly Binding Women for Equal Rights, Leadership and Action, but the organization is also named for Gabriela Silang, a Filipina heroine. She was the wife of a revolutionary leader, and after he died in the struggle, she became a leader in her own right in the rebellion against Spanish and Dutch colonialists.

"Gabriela Silang," says Santiago, "is just one example of how Filipina women are underestimated in terms of what they can do to lead a movement. It is only after their husbands are dead that they come out and show their mettle and prove that they are equally capable. ... We're trying to change that."

Every revolution is made up of thousands of individual stories woven together. One of the fascinating details of the birth of GABRIELA is the story of Nelia Sancho. A beauty queen in 1972, she went underground two years later and joined the New People's Army, which still today continues its 17-year armed insurrection against the government. She was arrested, then released -- she went underground again, and was once again arrested. Eventually, in 1984, she emerged as the founding chairperson of GABRIELA.

GABRIELA has been engaged in a number of issues over the years, notably the fight for restoration of human rights and democracy, the removal of U.S. military bases from the Philippines, equal pay for work of equal value, and other economic equality measures. More recently, the group has also focussed on the exploitation of women in the growing sex trade.



## Life Under Cory Aquino

The enthusiasm which initially surrounded Cory Aquino's "people power" revolution of 1986 has gradually turned sour.

"For the first year," says Santiago, "there was democratic space. The Filipino people benefitted a lot, they could express what they wanted without fear of harassment, and there was relative freedom to move around."

But from its inception, the Aquino government was "in trouble, according to Santiago, because it was installed there by people with widely ranging convictions that inevitably clashed. The military played an active role in putting Aquino in power, and their influence gradually grew. Now, it is a popular joke that "we had a people-powered restored democracy, and now we are going to have a people-powered restored dictatorship."

The growing military control covers the full range of government actions, but is most keenly felt in the extensive censorship.

Most Filipinos have not been able to voice their grievances, or set new direction for the country's future, through the various levels of elected government. The Senate and Congress are still dominated by landlords and big businessmen, says Santiago, who blames military influence for this continued elitism.

## Why is the military so powerful?

Why is the military so powerful? Because of the U.S., according to Santiago. American military bases all through Asia, including in the Philippines, are up for negotiation in 1992, so the U.S. is worried that they will lose their military foothold there.

One of the reasons the U.S. is worried, and one of the reasons the Aquino government is worried, is the communist rebels.

"While there was people power restoration of democracy," Santiago reminds us, "the insurgency was not solved, there was no ceasefire." She is referring to the armed struggle carried on for the past 17 years by the New People's Army (NPA) in various parts of the Philippines, especially rural areas.

GABRIELA does not advocate the use of violence to bring about social change, but there is a women's group who have taken up arms and are affiliated with the NPA.

Makibaka is a women's group whose name is short for "Free Movement of New Women", but, like GABRIELA, its abbreviation also has a meaning: "struggle".

The group started innocently enough in 1970, to protest a beauty contest at a Manila hotel. Only two short years later, it had become so effective that the right-wing Marcos dictatorship declared it a "communist front", thereby making it illegal and forcing it underground. From there, they joined the armed insurrection.

## Women and the U.S. military presence

There is a great clamour across the Philippines for the removal of the U.S. bases. GABRIELA actively opposes the bases on two fronts.

First, GABRIELA is part of the broad struggle for national liberation and democracy, along with many other community-based organizations, who see the bases as an intrusion on the sovereignty of the Philippines that virtually amounts to a U.S. colonial presence.

Secondly, they want the bases removed because of

what they have done to the women of the country.

## Sex rings and the U.S. bases

"It is around the U.S. bases that you find the most lucrative sex rings", states Santiago. "Women in this area have been subjected to the most degrading human and sexual exploitation ever conceived."

This interviewer told Santiago about the current prostitution debate in Canada: basically, that prostitutes want to practice their trade with the same rights as other workers, and to practice it with greater safety from violence. She acknowledged the self-determination argument, but suggested that coercion was a much greater factor in the Philippines than it might be here.

"Women are actually forced into prostitution. Also, in Third World countries like the Philippines, which has a very strong Catholic tradition and a sometimes rigid moral code, women who go into prostitution are forced there by grave economic need."

She described the sex trade in the Philippines: extremely exploitative, male-run, and international in scope. Moving women from one country to another is a favourite way of removing them from their support networks, and from any alternative employment.

GABRIELA is exposing organizers of these prostitution rings when they can, but it's difficult work tracking down these elusive figures. Even when they are successful, the results aren't always very satisfying. They recently exposed a Dutchman, but Philippine law prevented his conviction -- he could only be extradited to the Netherlands where the women can only hope his government will charge him.

## International support

In other work to stop the sex rings, GABRIELA co-operates with women's groups in Thailand, Malaysia, Japan and elsewhere, trying to document the extent of the sex trade, which women are targeted for it, who runs the rings, and the degree of child prostitution involved.

There are also sometimes joint actions. For example, a Japanese solidarity group pickets certain "sex tours" when they leave Japan for the Philippines, and Filipina groups picket them when they arrive. (Japanese businessmen come to other Asian countries, including the Philippines, on well-advertised "sex tours" that promise easy access to pliable and sensual women, with all the racist overtones that implies.)

This type of sex trade started around U.S. military bases in various Southeast Asian countries (Viet Nam is one of the first and most devastating examples of the effect on women of American military presence). It has expanded into a major international industry, often following U.S. military influence throughout the region.

## Autonomous women's movement

Not all women agree with GABRIELA's decision to join forces with the broad, national front for democracy. At least one group, Kalaya'an (whose name means "Freedom"), insists on the importance of an independent movement of and for women. They have accused the national democratic front of being male-dominated (which it is, Santiago readily admits).

However, GABRIELA has decided to stay within the front to work for women's freedom in the context of wider social change. They are under no illusions, though. Santiago says they realize that after national liberation, "the women's question will not be automatically solved." Much work will still remain.

## There have always been Filipina feminists...

Filipina feminists of today get much of their inspiration, according to Santiago, from the pre-colonial times of their country. Successive waves of Dutch, Spanish, Japanese and, most recently, American colonizers have failed to erase the memory of strong women of the past. These women had relative equality and freedom, and were political, cultural and religious leaders of their people.

Even today, in the Cordilleras region, which was never colonized, women are very likely to be active in occupations such as paving streets and building houses, that are "men's" jobs elsewhere.

It is from the women of these pre-colonial times, says Santiago, "where we draw most of our strength."





## Resurrection

by Lilia Santiago

This afternoon at two, Salud Generalla Alagbe, known as *Sakdalista* and a nationalist leader will be interred at Paco Cemetery.

Better known as Aling Salud among nationalists, she was active among farmers' organizations in many towns of Southern Luzon. Because of her patriotic beliefs and

unrelenting struggle against the American Colonial Government in the Philippines, Aling Salud was charged with rebellion and was imprisoned several times before the outbreak of World War II. Aling Salud died at 72.

BALITA (News)  
March 20, 1980

Caged in your casket, dim lights  
Keep you vigil. The pomp and fragrance  
Of flowers fail to wash away  
This sorrow wrought by your parting.

Farewell, Mother. Your confined body  
Travels imprisoned in a funeral car,  
Candled and surrounded  
In grief and tribulation.

This is your last march, the last time  
You walk the streets. The dirge stabs  
Our minds, our thoughts. Our hearts heave  
Like mountains in mourning.

Again, we bear witness to your fate  
Once more we shall witness your journey to calvary  
As your goals are detained in the tomb  
The grave becomes your last prison cell.

Yet, we know, Mother, that from your veins  
Would have gushed forth blood made vigilant  
Vigorous and vibrant through seven decades  
Lived in unrelenting struggle.

Time must have rendered your body frail, Mother  
But your faith in free thought  
So much like the seed you planted  
Grew luxuriant and bore fruit.

Through days and nights of toil and sweat  
Through months and years of service and sacrifice  
The struggle was like a field you tilled  
Rich and full were the grains you reaped.

In your shaggy legs and limbs,  
Your rough-hewn palms and arms  
The lines deeply etched on your forehead  
Are fortitude's indelible imprint.

Forgive me then if I should wish  
That your body not be buried but set to fire instead  
Let the flames warm the hearts  
Of calloused countrymen

Let your voice be scorching embers  
Burning with the very words you uttered:  
"That revolutions are never hampered  
They just grow strong, steadfast, victorious at every step."

(Author's translation)

# Filipino women in Canada

by Juliet A. Cuenco

There is a general perception that Filipino women in Canada are either nurses or domestic workers.

Although Filipino women in Canada are not limited to those two categories, the characteristics of Filipino immigration to Canada have contributed to that image.

A study by E. Laquien on the first wave of Filipino immigration to Canada from 1962-72 revealed that 67.3% of Filipino immigrants were female. The predominance of women can be explained by the professions they entered in Canada: most were nurses or medical technologists. These young, single, educated, middle-class, urban women found jobs in hospitals mostly in Ontario and BC, and have stayed on in these jobs.

Later, in response to the demand for garment workers in the 1970's, young single Filipino women were among the first to respond in Winnipeg.

Each subsequent wave of immigration has brought new professions to Canada. Filipino women were in various disciplines such as education, and social and natural sciences, as well as the clerical field.

More recently, an increasing number of Filipino domestic workers have come to Canada under the Temporary Work Permit classification, to satisfy the demand for their work here in Canada. Of the 43% recent arrivals of foreign domestic workers, 38% are Filipinos.

The political, social and economic conditions in the Philippines have greatly influenced women's immigration to Canada. So has their socio-economic class and educational attainment, and Canada's immigration policies.

The study cited earlier pointed out that the main motivation given by Filipino immigrants to Canada who participated in her study, was to seek better opportunities. The West, generally meant to be the United States, was perceived to be the "land of better opportunities", where the "grass is greener" and the future is brighter. This thinking has been the effect of our colonial experience and exposure to American commercialization.

The declaration of martial law in the Philippines in September 1972 and the following years of dictatorship under Ferdinand Marcos created a climate of fear and instability. The economic picture in the Philippines was not showing positive signs either. Any Filipino woman with a long term vision for herself had to seek alternatives outside of the Philippines.

Teachers, business administration graduates, social workers, and workers in other social sciences and natural sciences competed in the Canadian labour market. Although not documented, it is generally held that Filipino women found better jobs than their husbands.

The deepening problems in the Philippines, drove a lot of the women, though educated, to work as domestic workers. The increase of women migrant workers in several parts of the world reflected this pressure.

Filipino women also immigrate to Canada through the mail order brides system. Young Filipino women, wanting to be liberated from the crippling effects of poverty, agree to be matched by businessmen with Western men who they sometimes know little about. Some of these women end up in successful marriages but there have been cases of divorce, abuse and women suffering from isolation from this type of marriage.

The recent priority on family reunification in Canadian immigration gave rise to the

commissions, and senior positions in the public service. They are also active in women's groups, in their own community and other ethnocultural communities, as well as in the arts, in the environmental movement and in other sectors of society.

Like other immigrant and visible minority women, the Filipino woman also faces many barriers to full integration and equality.

While the Filipino women have the highest percentage of university education (60.3% hold degrees), only 33.9% have jobs in the higher (non-clerical, non-manual) job categories. In contrast, 13% of mainstream women have some university education but 25% of them have higher job categories.



increase in women seniors over 60. As grandmothers, they were sponsored by their children to fulfill a need for child care as Filipino women have to work outside the home. Some of these seniors found their way in Senior Citizens organizations.

Family reunification also brought to Canada young rural women from the Philippines. Families were also sponsored under the Assisted Relative category. It was usually the husband who was the main applicant and the wife the dependent. The husband's qualifications, if the main applicant, is assessed under the point system. The wife's qualifications, even if they are good, does not really matter for as long as the husband's background ensures their acceptance.

The Filipino woman who comes to Canada is an asset rather than a burden to the Canadian economy.

The once young single ambitious women who first came to Canada found their niche in their professions.

Filipino domestic workers or those working in factories or in hotels, when educated about their rights, can be in the forefront of advocacy.

It was a Filipino domestic worker who filed a case against her employer to challenge the Charter of Rights -- the first case of this nature by a domestic workers. A Filipino domestic worker boldly filed a criminal case against her employer for assault.

Filipino women have made contributions in Canadian political, economic and social life. They have been appointed to government boards and

This situation reflects the underemployment of Filipino women and underutilization of their skills. Lack of accreditation of their educational qualifications earned in the Philippines and discrimination are issues that prevent women's equal access to employment opportunities.

Lack of affordable, accessible and quality child care also create barriers to integration. Accessibility to social services and lack of information on community resources are also problems encountered by Filipino women.

The challenge to the Filipino community is to inspire its youth, including its women youth, to be sensitive and involved in the issues of the community. For the young women who grew-up in Canada, they must define an identity that grows out of two cultures.

The concerns of Filipino women are not only typical of Filipino women alone but are concerns shared by most women. Finding the strength in common issues and common action with other women must be the direction for Filipino women, especially our young Filipino women who have to keep the community alive!

Juliet A. Cuenco is Executive Director of the United Council of Filipino Associations in Canada, Secretary of the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, Board member of MATCH International, past president of the Multicultural Women's Assoc. of Ottawa-Carleton, and faculty member of Algonquin College, Early Childhood Education Program.

# Opening our eyes: A year in Nicaragua

by Michelle Albert

The most enriching experience of my life so far has been my trip to Nicaragua this past year. I had never been to a "Third World" country before and I must say that I was very naive.

I knew that Nicaragua was a small Central American country which had had a revolution in 1979 and has a history of repeated U.S. intervention. I knew that since 1981 it had been and still is fighting against this U.S. intervention in the form of the Contra war. I also knew that in 1985 the U.S. imposed a trade embargo.

I knew these facts but I didn't know what they truly meant on a personal level, for people living day to day in Nicaragua.

Upon arriving in Managua, the capital city, I felt as if I had been transported to another planet. I couldn't believe that an airplane could take me from Canada and sometime later land me in a place so different from my own.

I was immediately struck by how rundown everything looked. The cars were missing doors and windshields, they were rusty and full of holes. In equally bad shape were the taxis, buses, trucks, and motorcycles. In Canada they would have been discarded years before. In Nicaragua things are used until there is no possible way to use them anymore, a very different philosophy (out of necessity) than our 'throw it out and buy a new one' philosophy.

Not only does the condition of the vehicles cause Nicaragua's transportation problems, but so does the lack of buses. Every day the lineups are horrendous, workers and students wait for hours in the morning and again at night trying to get home, cramming into and hanging off buses more packed than is imaginable to the Canadian Western mind.

I lived with a family for four months and it was a unique opportunity to see and be a part of daily life in Nicaragua. I was able to see a different side of Nicaraguan reality - that is how beautiful and wonderful the people are. I was enriched by their spirit for life in the midst of war, their incredible generosity, and their total lack of pretentiousness.

Living with a family I was also able to see the direct effects of the economic boycott and the war. There was rarely more than rice and beans to eat, and often there was a shortage of one or the other. They had very little paper products for the children's schooling. Five of their ten children were attending school, while the others were working. Most families have suffered the loss of one or more family members and many have sons in the war zones.

These seven months caused a great commotion within me as I thought as never before of the way the world is run; why some countries hoard all the wealth, while others starve or die amidst brutal violence. I thought about economic systems, and distribution of food, land, about politics and war

I would like to direct the rest of this article to other women like myself, white, middle-class and feminist, because I can only speak from that specific background. I realize that there are many women in Canada, Native women, low income women, Women of Colour, differently-abled women, whose realities are very different than my own and who do not have the same privileges as others and who have to struggle very hard to survive. Their experience and their struggle demand our continuous support. This article is directed towards other white, middle-class feminists in the hope that we can analyse ourselves a little more within a world-wide context.

My stay in Nicaragua was truly an experience I cannot

Since we, as feminists, want women to be able to live without violence and raise their kids in peace, and since we as feminists care so much about equality and justice, we must look beyond our class, the colour of our skin, and our nationality. We must also look beyond our own borders and address the situation women face in other countries.

In Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Chile, South Africa, and other countries, women are fighting for basic rights: the right to live, to have enough food to eat and a decent place to live.

How can we focus so much of our energy on improving our own situation, we who have so much, when most women in the world live in conditions and situations far

struggle. Those who live in poverty watch their babies die of diarrhea and sicknesses that are easily prevented and cured in our countries. "Every day 20,000 children don't make it and 20,000 more take their place tottering on the edge of existence." (New Internationalist magazine).

When I helped with the vaccination campaigns in Nicaragua we went by foot, house to house, in the countryside. There I saw abominable housing conditions, shacks of scrap wood and corrugated tin with only the earth as a floor. Many women in the world live this way, in houses that do not keep out the monsoons and winter rains. I believe that there could be a decent place for all women in the world to live and that with proper distribution there could be enough food to eat. What can we do to ensure that this happens?

And what of the violence endured by so many women around the world? What of the women who live daily under the Chilean regime of Pinochet or the system of apartheid in South Africa? There are women in these countries whose children, husbands, lovers, sisters, brothers, parents friends have disappeared, or been tortured or killed; women who live each day in fear that their struggle for justice and equality could cause them their death.

Women the world over have died for their beliefs that people should be able to live in peace, and with dignity, with enough food to eat and without violence. Women have died for their struggle, given their lives. We can support them in this struggle against oppression.

I have always felt that the inequalities in the world are man-made and therefore reversible. I was aware before I went to Central America that there was inequity in the relations between the "First World" countries and those of the "Third World". I knew that they were dependant on us for buying their export crops and that the economies of many of these countries were tied solely to production for export.

In Central America, for example, instead of using their land for growing and producing foodstuffs for their own consumption the people have been forced to use their land for the growing of cash crops such as coffee, sugar, cotton, tobacco. As well, large areas are devoted to cattle-raising.

The majority of fertile land is owned by very few, both local families and foreign economic interests. Those who benefit from this system are the owners, and the consumers in the "First World".

Before imperialism destroyed their economies, the "Third World" countries had self-sufficient economies, growing and making that which they needed for survival. Since the dawn of imperialism they have been forced into a system that favors the "First World" countries.

The concerns of these women are our concerns. Not only because we are women and because we believe in sisterhood and solidarity, but because their situation and way of life is directly connected to our situation and way of life.

We must take responsibility and understand our part in the system. We benefit from the very system that keeps so many women in such poor and inhuman and violent conditions.

To paraphrase Fay Weldon, our femaleness cannot erase the history of our white imperialist past. We must realize that having enough food to eat, enough clothes to clothe our bodies, and a comfortable place to sleep is a luxury for most people in the world.

We must continue to address the economic and political relationship between the "First World" and the "Third World". We must look to and acknowledge the struggles of the refugee and exiled women who live in our countries. They are here as a result of this exploitative relationship and because of our country's policies, (whether it be policies that affect their mother country directly or a policy of turning a blind eye.) They did not benefit

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compare to anything else. It gave me the opportunity, for the first time in my life, to be able to see my culture and my world from a distance, to understand my culture and my country's place in the world.

I had never thought about being white. Perhaps a sense of guilt and uneasiness made me avoid it. I realized, for the first time, how wealthy I am, and how luxurious my life is.

What does this mean for me as a feminist? What about the feminist movement in Canada, the mainstream of which is white and middle-class, like myself?

Because of what I experienced in Nicaragua I came back with a profound sense that the mainstream feminist movement in Canada needs to put more attention to the struggles of women who do not live in the same situation as ourselves. I also felt that in Canada we have not looked closely enough at what it means to be in our position of privilege in the world today.

worse than ours? This is not to say that our struggles in Canada are not relevant or important, but rather that most women in the world have more pressing needs...they are struggling just to feed their families. We, as white people, are a minority. Should most resources go to us?

Many women in the world live with constant shortages of the most basic goods and necessities, such as rice, beans, cooking oil, toilet paper, soap, water, and electricity. These are things we would never consider not having.

In Managua, for example, there is generally water five days a week, although one place I lived in only had water one day a week: from 10:30 at night until 6:00 the next morning! This made washing clothes very hard as everything is washed by hand in Nicaragua. Electrical shortages were common too. Candles were a necessity.

For most women maintaining basic health is also a



Huehuetenango  
Guatemala  
September 1, 1988

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Central America



# What's happening in the grassroots...

by Susan O'Donnell

Around the time many of the women now working in the women's movement first became interested in feminism, stalls in public "Ladies" rooms were fun places to be. Catchy slogans about sisterhood and a lot of women's symbols were scrawled alongside affirmations of heterosexual coupling (Mike and Sandy, TRUE LOVE 4EVER); all a girl needed to assert her emerging feminist identity was a magic marker and a space above the toilet paper roll.

How times have changed. In one washroom stall used by volunteers at a local women's centre, a poster for last year's Take Back the Night march is covered with so much anti-feminist commentary that one cannot read the text underneath. If the graffiti in the "Ladies" room reflects the prevailing thoughts and attitudes of the female population in general, then the women that the "women's movement" claims to be working for have started impeachment proceedings.

Of course, many of these women are being seduced by the propaganda that "liberated women" are responsible for every current evil, including ring-around-the-collar. Blaming the new right for the woes of the movement is a cop-out, however. A significant part of the problem can be found in the attitudes and behaviors of many feminists in leadership positions. At least three trends seem to be fairly widespread these days: a fear of change; a lack of commitment to solidarity work; and a lack of support for ourselves and each other.

## Fear of Change

Judging by the chronic lateness and absence of members on many women's committees, meetings have



**Opening  
our eyes: A  
year in  
Nicaragua,**  
cont'd

from this interrelated system in their own countries, and more often than not, they do not benefit from it here.

We must also look to the struggles of the other women of our country who do not benefit from this system either: Native women, low income women, Women of Colour, and differently-abled women.

It is time to recognize the struggles of all women, within Canada and around the world. And it is time to address our role in those struggles, to acknowledge and fight against the imperialist system which keeps such a large percentage of the world's population in subjugation. Only in this way can we truly create a better world for all women, which is after all, what we've all been ideally striving for.

*Michelle Albert is a feminist from Toronto who has recently returned from a year in Central America.*

become boring and unproductive. There seems to be a surplus of feminist technicians, women who apply the old "feminist formula" to every new problem and situation, ignoring that the formula itself is faulty. Indeed, as many women interested in the movement realize, the machinery of the movement does not need oiling, it needs an overhaul. The problem is that many feminist leaders are afraid to hand over the reins of power to the women who are willing to supervise the necessary repairs.

The way the issue of racism has been mishandled in the movement is an example of this trend. The women's movement here is racist; and it's the women who work in it now who are keeping it that way. Combatting racism is a challenge that requires a variety of radical approaches but many women are afraid of facing it head-on, preferring to stubbornly follow the old patterns that got them into the mess in the first place.

Consider, for example, the group of feminists that was (and still is) deciding on a new structure for a committee. One of the problems with the original committee was that the members were all white women, with the exception of one woman who rarely attended meetings and often expressed that she felt alienated. Despite

the common agreement that "real or perceived racism" on the committee was an issue that had to be worked out, the issue was never dealt with directly. At least one woman on the committee believes that fears, the fear of change, the fear of confronting one's own racism, and the fear of giving up power, were responsible for the fact that the process became so bogged down and confused that it is still dragging on after five months.

This fear of change is symptomatic of an unwillingness to learn. A kind of colonizing mentality seems epidemic; many feminist leaders act like they've seen and done it all before and have now consented to pass along their valuable insights to the commoners. In fact, they have a lot to learn, including that the future of the women's movement depends on the flexibility and openness of its leaders.

One recent event illustrates how a willingness to learn can lead to success. A group of lesbians wanted to hold a women's dance, but the date chosen was only weeks away and none of them had any previous experience organizing a dance. At their first meeting, they quickly decided that this was going to be a learning experience, and even if the dance was not a financial success, they would be

**WOMEN!  
THE REST  
OF OUR  
LIVES  
MUST BE  
LIVED  
IN THE  
BEST  
OF  
STRUG-  
GLES**



content to have increased their experience and skills.

They divided up the tasks and started by getting in touch with other women who could give them advice; networking was done not out of "consideration", but of necessity. The morale on the organizing team was high and the women enjoyed the work, and the dance turned out to be such an overwhelming success that the dance committee stayed around until sunrise to celebrate.

## Lack of commitment to solidarity work

"Networking" by mail just doesn't cut it anymore. Many women's centres receive enough feminist junk mail to warrant an extra garbage bin. In some women's groups, computerizing mailing lists is a top priority; new volunteers are prized not for their commitment and creativity but for their skills on Wordperfect and D-Base III. If this computerized form-letter "networking" represents a group's sole attempt to reach women and groups that have previously been left out, then it's no wonder the "women's movement" has such a bad reputation.

Language problems, for example, are complex and do not have easy solutions; but they are often badly mishandled because women on both sides are not committed to solidarity. Many anglophone women are unwilling to put the energy necessary into taking French courses and finding money to pay for translation of their group's materials.

Even worse, some groups make superficial efforts to appease francophones, such as the mostly-anglophone women's group who produced and distributed a French version of a poster listing their International Women's Week events. Trouble was, not one word of French was spoken at any of the events and any francophone woman attending would have been left out entirely. Francophones are justifiably angered by these

feeble attempts at solidarity.

On the other hand, the refusal of many francophone women to deal with unilingual anglophones means that they cannot communicate with the many cultural and ethnic groups whose members speak mostly English.

Another example of a lack of commitment to solidarity work concerns a group of women representing a visible minority group who called for a boycott of a women's cultural event on the grounds that the organizing committee's lack of networking indicated racism. Before calling for the boycott, however, they did not ask women from other visible minority groups or even other women from their own group for their opinions, they simply informed them of the boycott. Some of these women were already committed participants at the cultural event. As a result, the boycott had very limited impact and many of the visible minority women who were not consulted were confused and angry.

A recent proliferation of letters is another symptom of poor solidarity building. Letters are used more and more these days to deal with disagreements between women's groups. Whatever happened to personal contact? Letters are safe, and they don't talk back; but they are lousy at resolving conflicts.

Recently in Montreal, for example, there was a situation in which two women's groups were at odds over the organizing of a series of women's events. Accusations of racism were made. In the heat of the conflict, the groups were communicating by letter, to each other and to the local press, despite the fact that both groups had offices in the same building. Of course, the time delay inherent in the communication process created further problems; and in the end, almost everyone involved was frustrated, confused, and angry. The original issue remains unresolved.

cont'd on page 20

## Caribbean Voices



Caribbean Voices was founded in May of 1981. Its main objectives were: 1) the retention of Caribbean culture and 2) the promotion of Caribbean culture in Canada through songs and dance.

The twelve members of the group are from Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad. Caribbean Voices performs locally at various cultural events in Ottawa, including Canada Day Celebrations, and at the National Arts Centre. The group also sang back up for the rock group Foreigner in 1985 when they appeared at the Exhibition Grand Stand.

On Saturday, October 15, 1988, Caribbean Voices will be putting on a mini-musical/variety concert which will also be featuring other local talents.

Location: Carleton University Alumni Theatre.

Time: 8 pm.

Tickets: Adults - \$10, Seniors and Children 12 and under - \$5

Tickets can be bought at Tropicks Boutique in the Market Mall. For more information please call 737-5726 or 820-8145.



# The tragedy of Black apartheid: Burundi



by Joan Riggs

One year ago Rose Ndayahoze was a woman alone, telling a story of pain, loss, death and genocide. Today she is one of the millions of people who have turned their eyes in horror to the tiny country of Burundi, in the middle of Africa.

The horror of apartheid is not only in South Africa. The abuse and killing of one people by another continues to happen in many places throughout the world. In Burundi, the Tutsi tribe the people of the Hutu tribe.

Sixteen years ago, Rose left Burundi fleeing with her life and her children. She left behind her husband, Minister of Information and Secretary General, who had been murdered. He was betrayed and murdered by his colleagues because he came from the Hutu tribe.

Since that time Rose has gone around the world, from Nairobi to Belgium to Canada to the United States and the United Nations asking each

country to recognize the genocide that had occurred in her country. At the time of her husband's murder, 200,000 other Hutus were killed.

Although the United Nations had documented that a genocide had taken place the overwhelming response to her pleas has been disinterest. Rose says, "When you are a woman, men don't take you seriously. While you are explaining the mass killing of 200,000 people and pleading for his help he is thinking about taking you to lunch and trying to convince you to forget about the past, to find a new man and settle down." But the children and women are not history. We go on living without our men, without our family members. We have to find jobs, or live on welfare or find other men to survive."

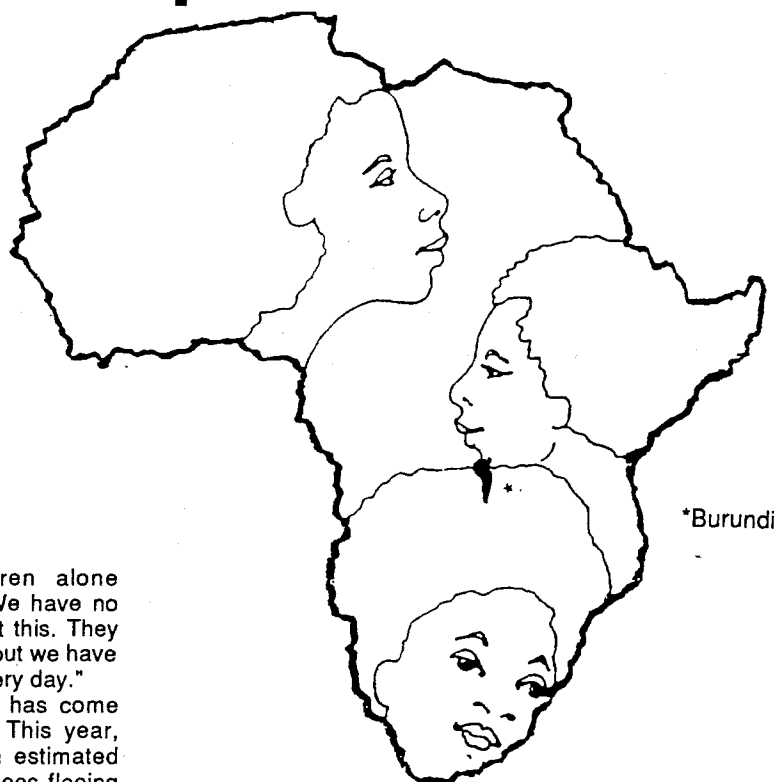
Rose over the last few years has paid a high personal cost in trying to get anyone to notice the apartheid structure of Burundi. The Hutus are denied the same educational, housing and social services in the country.

She was encouraged to give up her fight for recognition of the mass killing of 200,000 Black Africans. But she cannot. "Women are dying...of stress, loneliness and from

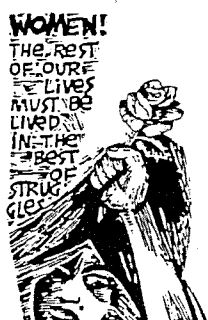
raising our children alone without support. We have no one to talk to about this. They say it is in the past but we have to live through it every day."

Well, the past has come back to haunt us. This year, there has been an estimated 200,000 Hutu refugees fleeing from their country into Rwanda, the neighbouring country. There have been reported mass killings and incidences of Hutu women and children being shot at and killed. It is being billed as a civil war. It is, in fact, apartheid in Black Africa. Again, are we going to turn our backs and pretend that this is not happening?

When will we open our eyes to the reality of oppression? It does not go away just because we don't want it to be there.



\*Burundi



## What's happening in the grassroots...(cont'd)

individual and in groups, to help them work out a wide variety of personal, political, and professional issues and problems. The reality of many women's groups, however, is such that its key members are often too burned out to support each other and the women they serve.

Some women have expressed frustration at having to deal with a committee member's personal crisis during what the meeting agenda says is a one-minute check-in. On the other hand, unresolved personal issues adversely affect the dynamics and productivity of a group and must be dealt with in some way. There is talk that any feminist leader suffering from burn-out should remove herself, quickly, from the line of action. Some women feel insulted when a woman who obviously cannot look after herself tries to give others advice, and they think that a group or organization that does not allow its members to take the time and space necessary to lead healthy lives needs to re-evaluate its purpose and direction.

Support also means helping spread the wealth around. A current example of a good support situation involves women working in a group which has access to resources such as photocopiers, mailing privileges, long-distance lines, and comfortable meeting spaces who make the

resources available to other groups without making them feel like charity cases. In addition, some paying jobs are now earmarked for women from disadvantaged groups. Unfortunately, such cases are still rare; many women from privileged groups have virtually no contact with groups working for disadvantaged women. Another discouraging trend concerns women hired by women's groups under government-sponsored projects who are often not given any real training which will help them in their future careers. They are used as (cheap) labour and set adrift once the project is over. Not surprisingly, many of them do not stay on as volunteers in the movement.

These three trends - fear of change, lack of commitment to solidarity work, and lack of real support - characterize some of what is going wrong in the grass roots women's movement. At the same time, however, there are some positive trends. The trick will be to read carefully the writing on the "Ladies" wall, and to initiate corrective action before the impeachment proceedings are complete.

Susan O'Donnell is the coordinator for the Women's Centre at Concordia University, Montréal.

In contrast, some women's groups are doing real solidarity work and attempting to forge strong links with groups working to end other oppressions. New strength is found in making "their" concerns "our" concerns. One woman recently told me that the most empowering thing she had done in years was working with a woman's group that organized a protest and demonstration in conjunction with an anti-apartheid group. Sure, it took energy away from "women's issues" for awhile, but it helped solidify the women's group's connection with several community groups and paved the way to more cooperative action in the future.

### Lack of support for ourselves and each other

A local women's centre recently undertook a major survey of the women they serve to determine their needs. The overwhelming response was that they need support,

## A Guide to Feminist Expertise

### The CRIAW Bank of Researchers

A computerized database of feminist researchers working in various fields and committed to the advancement of women.

The Bank allows you to identify researchers with whom you may wish to network or who are working in fields in which you may be seeking expertise. An indispensable tool for journalists, professors, action or community researchers, policy makers and conference organizers.

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N.B. We encourage all feminist researchers to register in the bank. Application forms available from CRIAW.

The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW) is a national membership-based organization that you can join. CRIAW encourages, promotes and disseminates research into women's experience though:

- A computerized Bank of Researchers (highlighted above)
- A variety of publications, including a substantial quarterly newsletter, two series of individual research papers (many of which are being used in women's studies courses): **Feminist Perspectives** (more topical, issue-oriented), and **The CRIAW Papers** (more academic), conference proceedings and more
- an annual conference in a different city and on a different theme each November (this year's is in Québec, Nov. 11-13, on the broad theme of Women and Development)
- small annual research grants, awards and prizes recognizing achievements in feminist research, writing, and service to the women's movement.

Membership fees are on a sliding scale. For membership, publications or other information, contact CRIAW at the address above. L'Institut canadien de recherche sur les femmes (ICREF) vous invite à devenir membre de notre organisme bilingue.

# It's time to serve the poor

by Maxine Stata

September 1988

page 21

"It is time to realize that the poor are neither 'worthy' or 'unworthy', they are simply poor." (Kenora Legal Clinic)

Guess who your "welfare bum" is? In Ontario, they are children. Forty one per cent of people on social assistance are children under the age of 16. They are 8-9% of all children in Ontario.

This is just one of the facts found in the recently released report by the Ontario government entitled "Transitions". It consists of 274 recommendations, all of which are intended to improve Ontario's social assistance system.

The report includes proposals for new incentives to work, higher social assistance benefits and an attack on "unfair rules and procedures."

In its report, the Social Assistance Review Committee recommends a new system

link her/him with resources to help reach self-reliance.

It's about time that it was recognized that recipients should be given the chance to achieve their full potential as human beings. But there could be problems.

The social assistance recipient would sit down with an Opportunity Planner and create a plan. She would then be expected to pursue the plan that has been agreed upon. If she fails to meet those conditions there would be a reduction in the amount of social assistance benefits.

The amount of the reduction should be great enough that it is clearly perceived to be a sanction, but not so substantial as to cut off assistance completely.

Most recipients would agree to do anything the Opportunity Planner wanted in order to not have their benefits

independence or achieve their full potential as human beings while receiving assistance, and they must be skilled in assisting them in doing so. Without such changes in approach and attitudes, the adversarial nature of the system will remain unchanged."

It is encouraging to see the government finally recognize that poor people are treated differently, even by their workers. It is pretty sad, however, that government must give such basic advice to staff as: "treat your clients as human beings!"

In addition to recommending immediate rate increases - primarily to help recipients meet the high cost of shelter - the report also recommends fairer handling of the amount of money given.

## Rate increases

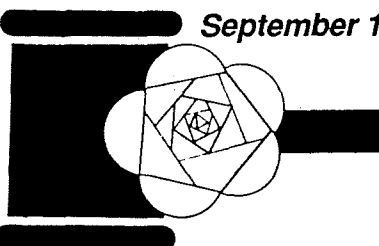
The immediate rate changes would result in increases to the rates as follows: 10.1% for a single disabled person, 17.5% for a single parent with two children or a family of four, and 22.5% for a single employable person. These rates would increase further over the next four stages to fully meet the committee's "market basket" definition of adequate rates.

## New benefit for working poor

Today, women are better off on social assistance than they are working because their wages cannot cover the benefits of social assistance (i.e. drug care, free medical and dental care).

In an effort to stop penalizing women who are trying to work, there are many sweeping changes proposed.

A new program, to be called "income supplementation" would provide a financial



benefit to people working at a minimum wage. The committee says its recommendation has two goals.

The first is to ensure that people who are already working are able to keep working. The second is to provide social assistance recipients with an incentive to work. "In short," said committee Chair George Thomson, "we want to make sure people are better off working."

## New programs for children and people with disabilities

"Few people realize that the vast majority of beneficiaries of social assistance are children, their sole support parents and people with disabilities."

The report suggests that a two-part income support program be implemented for all people with disabilities. The first component would be a comprehensive disability insurance program providing benefits for disability, due to accident, illness or injury.

People with disabilities, but not eligible for disability insurance, would qualify for a disability benefit, the second element of the new program.

Disability insurance and the disability benefit would rationalize and replace most existing income programs for disabled people including social assistance.

The committee also recommended that the income needs of children be met by replacing present income programs for children with a new income-tested tax credit. The credit would provide \$3,300 per child in 1988

dollars. All low and some middle-income parents would receive the credit.

"This measure would help reduce the incidence of child poverty, something the current system doesn't adequately address," Thomson said.

The committee also believes that by ensuring that sole-support parents have the money to meet their children's basic needs, it will be possible for most of those now on social assistance to achieve self-reliance.

"Since most sole support parents are women, this would have a major impact on the feminization of poverty," said Thomson.

However, it seems highly unlikely that \$3,300 per year would really cover all the expenses related to child care, etc., so would this really have the positive effect that the committee expects?

The committee's proposals have been met with surprise and delight by poor people's groups in Ontario.

The next battle ahead will be to pressure the Ontario government to implement these changes. And quickly. Time is running out for the children of Ontario.

Copies of the report are available from Publications Ontario, 5th Floor, 880 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1N8. Call (416) 965-6015, toll-free in Ontario 1-800-268-7540, except area code 807 call 0 Zenith 67200. Hearing impaired, call (416) 965-5130. Toll Free in Ontario 1-800-268-7095.

Maxine Stata is the co-ordinator of the Ottawa Council for Low Income Support Services.



which places an emphasis on helping recipients make the transition from dependence on public funds and isolation to self-reliance and integration within the community.

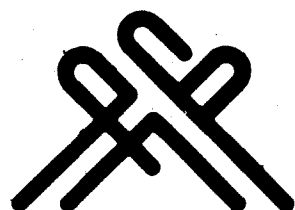
In other words, the report, with emphasis on "Transitions" for recipients, is an attempt to get or keep as many people off welfare as possible.

In one of the programs, each person on social assistance would work with an Opportunity Planner who would

reduced or cut off. It could mean recipients making the wrong choices for the future.

There were also concerns raised about the staff training when dealing with social assistance recipients.

"The manner in which the system responds to those in need must change if the reforms we propose are to be effective. Staff must genuinely want to help clients. They must believe that clients are able to make the transition to



## Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada

Planned Parenthood works to ensure:

- universal access to reliable information
- freedom of choice in decisions relating to pregnancy
- informed consent by each individual
- access to services for all Canadians
- ...so that everyone has the information, understanding and skills to make informed decisions and take responsibility for their sexual health and family planning.

### The Issues

**Sex education:** Although 83% of Canadian adults believe that sex education should be taught in schools, only one half of schools in Canada provided any sexuality education in 1984.

**Unplanned pregnancy:** Half of the pregnancies of women in Canada are unintended. One in five teenage girls will become pregnant before she is 20. These pregnancies often result in serious medical, economic and social consequences for mother and child.

**Infertility:** An estimated 10-15% of couples have difficulty

conceiving, partly as a result of the increase in sexually transmitted diseases.

**AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases:** These diseases will continue to cause infertility, injuries or medical problems, and death. The AIDS crisis has shown once again the need for education campaigns that promote positive and responsible sexuality.

**Reproductive technology:** Reproductive technologies are changing rapidly -- "test tube babies", techniques to diagnose the fetus, surrogate motherhood, and others. For some, these technologies provide an opportunity to have children when they could not before. For others, it raises questions about risk, use of medical resources, and control over reproductive decisions.

### Activities and programs

**Information services:** Planned Parenthood associations across the country offer information to the public on contraception, sexuality, and birth planning. The national federation supports this work through various services and publications.

**Awareness:** PPFC sponsors surveys and public opinion polls (eg. on sex education, TV advertising, access to birth planning services). There is an annual Planned Parenthood Week, which promotes different aspects of healthy sexuality. PPFC has produced and distributed TV ads promoting child-parent discussion on healthy sexuality.

**Advocacy:** There are public opinion polls, conferences, regular meetings with Ministers and MP's, and presentations to Parliamentary Committees to raise awareness among decision makers.

### Work across Canada

Here is a sample of the many projects and activities by Planned Parenthood associations at the community level across the country:

- Menopause is an important issue for Planned Parenthood Newfoundland, who have prepared a discussion kit called "Facing the Change of Life". It is proving to be very popular, and the discussion sessions have a long waiting list.

• For the last several years, Planned Parenthood BC has been working with teachers, community health nurses and others exploring how to teach sexuality issues. They have developed information kits, conferences, and other tools.

• Many groups across the country are holding workshops and discussions on sexuality and the disabled.

• More and more local groups are working on the AIDS issue, often linking up with local AIDS Committees or clinics.

• In Montreal, a new program this fall, run by and for parents, will address how to talk to your kids about sexuality and reproductive health.

• Insight Theatre, in Ottawa, offers plays by and for high school students on a wide range of issues related to sexuality: contraception, prostitution, homosexuality, AIDS, and much more. The open-ended skits are followed by discussions where the young actors answer questions while still playing their character in the skit, passing on information about local resources and agencies.

The National office of Planned Parenthood is: 1 Nicholas, Suite 430 Ottawa, Ont K1N 7B7 (613) 238-4474

• This means the diseases are serious enough that doctors are required by law to report all cases.

Why do we need a national family planning organization in Canada right now? Because

- nearly 1,000 teenagers get pregnant each week,
- over one half of all reportable communicable diseases in Canada are sexually transmitted,
- there is no method of birth control that is 100% effective; one-third of unplanned pregnancies result from contraceptive failure,
- one in every four teenagers is sexually active by age 15, two out of every three are sexually active by 19.

The mission of Planned Parenthood is "to promote healthy sexuality throughout the human life cycle" and "to promote birth planning by assuring adequate education and services for all Canadians". The federation believes that the quality of life will be improved when every pregnancy is a wanted pregnancy.

# Families and Feminism

by Maureen Kellerman

"Do families benefit from feminism?"

This question was the subject of a formal debate opening a conference on "Motherhood in a Changing Society". The conference, held last June in Toronto, was presented by the Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues.

The debate drew a large and enthusiastic audience, reflecting not only the controversial nature of the topic but the notoriety of the debaters. Betty Steele, author of the anti-feminist book, **The Feminist Takeover**, and Gwen Landolt, Vice-President of R.E.A.L. Women, argued against the resolution. Marjorie Cohen, Vice-President of NAC, and Hamilton M.P. Sheila Copps argued that families do, in fact, benefit from feminism.

Cohen and Copps maintained that feminism wants to ensure that women and men are equal partners in society and the family. Landolt accused feminists of saying that women and men are equal and the same, asserting that, in fact, women and men are equal but different. She stated that feminism is based on a flawed analysis that downgrades the homemaking and nurturing roles of women and unfairly brands the family as a place of oppression for women.

In a rambling presentation, Betty Steele accused feminism of ignoring biology and working to create androgyny. In her view, feminism is responsible for a host of societal ills: a soaring divorce rate which leaves children psychologically damaged; the denial of rightful promotions and raises to men because of affirmative action; a falling birth rate; and children who are "thrown away" into inadequate day care. Steele maintained that working outside the home should only be necessary for women of "exceptional skills" or women in the lowest 10 to 20 per cent of the economic ladder.

In an informal and personal presentation, Copps commented that most men misunderstand feminism and questioned why they should feel threatened by it. She argued that feminism is not a matter of special treatment for women, and that feminism allows men to be fuller human beings. She added that increases in family breakdown are partly due to a lessening of the social pressures which kept couples together.

Like her debating partner, Marjorie Cohen did not directly attack anti-feminist positions. Instead she presented a tightly organized, fast-paced description of feminism's accomplishments.

She pointed out that feminists fought for changes in family which recognize women's unpaid work in the home and for measures which would alleviate the poverty of elderly women. Cohen argued that since the majority of families depend on two

incomes, there should be no debate about whether women work outside the home. She stated that feminists have worked for equal pay and affordable, good quality day care because they recognize the importance of women's incomes to their families' economic well-being.

Cohen and Copps both pointed out that feminists have brought the issue of family violence out into the open by raising public awareness and by providing services for battered women and their children. Betty Steele countered by questioning the estimates of wife abuse cited by feminists and objecting to the inclusion of verbal and psychological abuse in these estimates.

While Steele maintained that fathers have been forced out of the role of fatherhood (referring to the fact that

that all children should be wanted children, while Betty Steele restricted herself to a comment that the women's liberation movement has meant liberation from sexual restraint.

On the whole, I found the evening disappointing. Debates encourage rhetoric and by their nature are adversarial. This kind of polarized presentation has the advantage of attracting media and a large audience. Unfortunately, the debate reinforced the image, so frequently exploited by the media, of women battling women.

The **Toronto Sun** described the debate as "delicious" and likened it to a "ball game" complete with "wolf whistles, cat calls...and maligning comments against the other side." (June 11, 1988). Certainly a formal debate is reminiscent of a sports event



mothers usually have sold custody of their children after divorce), Cohen and Copps pointed out that feminism invites men to become equal partners in parenting and that feminists have worked for parental leave for both men and women.

Proposals which would allow mothers to balance family responsibilities and labor force participation more easily were emphasized most by Gwen Landolt. She maintained that feminism has left women with three choices: to pursue a professional career and forgo having children; to attempt to be a "Superwoman"; or to accept the "less than human" status of being an at-home mother. Landolt commented that "the business world has been built by men and for men. Now it's time to make the changes that women need." She advocates longer maternity leave, job-sharing, and part-time work with improved benefits.

The topics of abortion and homosexuality were noticeable by their absence in this debate. Marjorie Cohen made a fleeting reference to the feminist belief

with its rules, opposing sides, strict time-keeping and moderator/umpire. And, like fans at a sports event, many spectators obviously arrived with their minds made up. Thunderous applause broke out as soon as Betty Steele and Gwen Landolt were introduced. (Ironically, Steele began her presentation by claiming to speak for a silent majority!)

Anyone familiar with the work of feminists and the criticisms of anti-feminists probably gained scant



additional insight into the issues by attending the debate. The format - which allowed each speaker exactly 10 minutes to present her views - did not allow time for a thoughtful, in-depth consideration of the issues.

A strictly controlled format may be necessary when the topic is controversial and the debaters heated, but time constraints and an adversarial approach to the issues limited this debate's usefulness. As well, highly public, acrimonious debates about feminism have occurred frequently enough in the recent past that I question the necessity of providing yet another forum for yet another round of attacks and defences.

There are difficult issues surrounding the topic of feminism and the family which do need thoughtful and creative exploration. The roots of the anti-feminist phenomenon need to be discussed more as do questions about the relationship of feminism to increased rates of family breakdown and the development of different kinds of families. Simplistic explanations and accusatory rhetoric do not do justice to the importance and complexities of these issues.

Oversimplification of the issues is tempting. The **Toronto Sun** managed to reduce the debate to the question of whether mothers should stay at home "tending to the family" or work outside the home, claiming that feminism "for the purposes of the debate means working women."

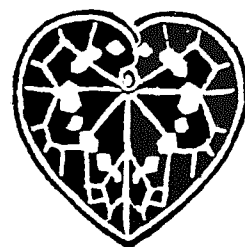
The assumption that feminists only speak for working women was countered somewhat by Cohen and Copps but they failed to address adequately the tensions between feminism and the role of the woman at home. Landolt and Steele repeatedly asserted that feminism has denigrated the nurturing and homemaking roles of women. Steele branded Betty Friedan, author of the 1960s best-seller, **The Feminine Mystique**, as a "Pied Piper" leading women out of their homes and into the work force. Landolt stated that Friedan described the home as a "comfortable concentration camp" and women at home as "prisoners" and "not fully human," a view she accuses the National Action Committee of agreeing with.

Marjorie Cohen noted that feminists have pointed out the invisibility of women's work in the home and have affirmed the importance of this work. Both Cohen and Copps noted that family law reforms advocated by feminists recognize the contributions and rights of women at home. Copps stated that it is a fallacy that women in the work force denigrate women at home, and added that NAC has worked to establish pensions for homemakers.

Despite these comments, I felt that Cohen and Copps skirted around the question of feminist support for homemakers, and the tension many women experience trying to combine paid work with family responsibilities. As an at-home mother who is committed to exploring the ways in which feminism can support women at home, I

understand the feminist critique of the homemaker's role and acknowledge the work feminists have done which benefits homemakers.

However, I am also aware that many feminists are uncomfortable supporting homemakers, believing that women at home are misguided in their choice. Louise Dulude, Past President of NAC, commented in another session at the conference that some feminists find it "easier" to fight for the rights of prostitutes than those of homemakers. As a woman at home, I have experienced support from feminists but have also encountered mistrust and resistance to proposals which would support women at home (in particular the inclusion of benefits for parental care in a comprehensive child care policy).



I believe that the women's movement will be able to counter anti-feminist accusations more effectively once feminists have resolved to a greater extent their ambivalence and antipathy to the traditional work of women and when our society has more measures in place which allow men and women to balance parenting and employment with less stress to themselves and to their children.

Later sessions at the conference were excellent and, unfortunately, poorly attended. One panel looked at motherhood from the perspectives of the educational system, television, the work place, religion, and culture, while other presentations discussed housework and homemakers, and new reproductive technologies. A military mother, a disabled mother, a native mother, a mother of teenaged and adult children, and an infertile mother also shared their reflections on motherhood. Transcripts of the sessions are available from:

The Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues  
880 Bay St., 5th Floor  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1N3  
or by calling collect:  
(416) 965-5824

Maureen Kellerman is a founding member of *Mothers Are Women*, an Ottawa-based organization which supports women at home.



# From Evolution to Revolution: A Call for political involvement

by C. Moriarty

Women and politics; women and power; small 'p' political feminists. The personal is political - the political is being feminist. So where does this take us? How do we put our theory into practice? How do we, as women, as feminists, go from building community to building movement?

I didn't set out in my life to be an NDP activist, nor for that matter to grow up and be a feminist, or a lesbian, but... these things happen... thank the Goddess! For me, joining the New Democrats, and being an active working member was much like my evolution to feminism and lesbianism. All were logical conclusions to my analysis; all came from working with feminist issues, with community issues and groups, struggling with other community activists to find solutions. Just as being a lesbian is a political extension of living my life as a feminist in a woman-centered, woman-positive world, so is being an NDPer a political extension and

logical conclusion to my sense of community, my analysis of social problems and my vehicle to social change.

We have, as feminists, broken terrifying silences through grass roots movements and services; we have recognized issues and developed a response that only we, as women, could do. We have challenged male structures and values and responses. We have lobbied and petitioned. What we have done through all this, in developing our framework for living, our feminist analysis, our responses to women's needs and women's crisis, is build a community. We have built a community complete with values, social structures, support systems, social networks, and feminist family. This is our core, our centre, our heart.

What we have failed to do is move beyond community to feminist movement. Where is our vehicle for revolution? We

need a revolution (non-violent, of course).

We need to take our feminism, our understanding, our wisdom and experience to a larger stage. Look at global issues: who was at the front of all those movements? Who brought heart and knowledge to those issues? Violence -- women; peace -- women; environment -- women; economics/poverty -- women; health -- women; housing -- women; family and social structures -- women; power -- ???; politics - ????. Where are we? Why is that?

Why is it politically incorrect to get involved in partisan politics? Why are women who do immediately suspect of selling out or being coerced? Why is it okay to shake every other social structure except for Parliament? What is so taboo about the House of Commons? (It's just another messy house). Is it really a sell out?

It's not a sellout to win the

vote! Why fight for it if we're not going to use it? It's not a sellout to provide alternative responses at a community grass roots level - why is it a sellout to shape the policies that fund those programs? It's not a sellout to lobby, to apply for government funds, to present briefs to parliamentary committees on everything from sex-role stereotyping to lesbian rights in the Charter.

Why do we bang our heads against the wall talking across the table to male power structures, when we could be talking across the table to ourselves?

With more feminists in politics, just like with more feminists in any discussion, the shape of that discussion changes, the dynamics, focus and style changes. It has to. That's the nature and beauty of being woman.

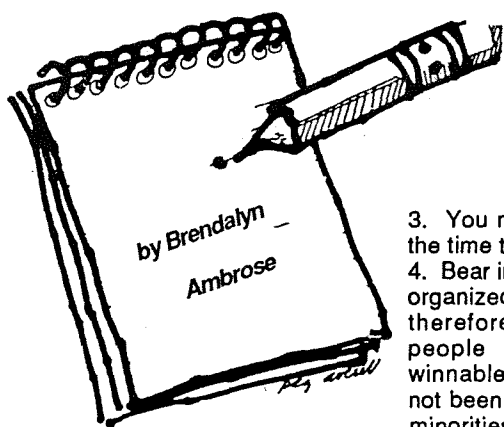
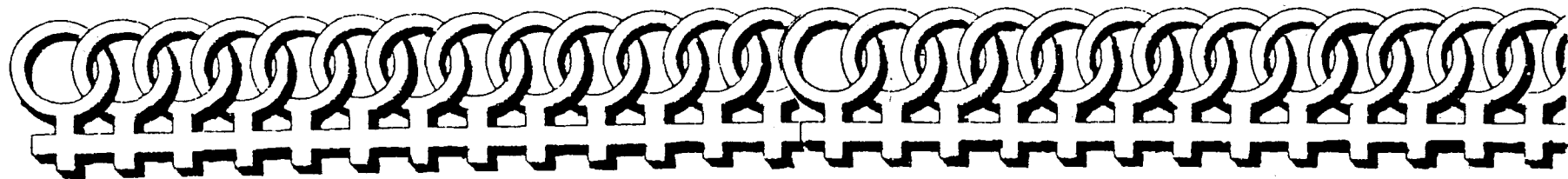
I like anarchists. They keep me honest. I am not saying that to be patronizing.

It's like keeping in touch with the front lines. I need those skeptical/critical thinkers to tug at my arm and say "hey, wait a minute..." That perspective keeps the balance in our discussions, in our efforts to understand the reality of a situation and develop a sensible concrete solution.

Anarchy, as a theory, however, is not the solution; it is self-defeating. We do not live in a society wherein working outside the system changes anything.

The irony is that in order to get such a society we have to change the system. The only structure we have available to us that allows for grand scale social change is political. What we need is a strong political alternative. We need political policies and legislation that calls for solutions and priorities as we define them.

C. Moriarty is an active feminist in the Ottawa women's community.



## Making Politics Work for you

Do you know how to pick a political party, how to lobby, how to be a politician, and still a housewife? If you are like me, your answer might perhaps be: I could learn a thing or two from those women with the actual experience.

These are only a few of the wide range of topics which were discussed at a two-day conference, organized by the Canadian Women for Political Representation, attended by women from all areas of political life. The conference was held in Ottawa from May 6-7 and included guest speakers from the United States and Iceland.

**How To Pick a Political Party** was a popular subject of discussion. Speaker Caroline Andrew, Co-ordinator, Women's Studies Program, University of Ottawa, gave some important guidelines in a question and answer discussion with a group of women. Here are some of her comments on how to pick a party:

1. Know what is important about the party.
2. Be part of a group, because it is important to have allies within the party.

3. You must ensure you have the time to devote to a party.

4. Bear in mind that parties are organized to win elections and therefore they favour only people who are seen as winnable. Their tradition has not been to favour women and minorities, because they were not seen as winnable.

5. Traditional attitudes toward women have changed, but parties are scared to take risks with people they feel will not win.

6. If a woman is going to operate within a party, she must learn to work in situations where people are mean to her. Women, more often than men, tend to recede when people are mean to them.

7. Know what you want to CHANGE about the party and try to be heard.

Some of the women in the audience mentioned that they found helping in an election campaign was one way to become involved and learn about the party. Andrew said the emphasis at election time is more on production than discussion and more campaign-oriented.

Maude Barlow, former Liberal candidate in Ottawa Centre, now social justice advisor to the Liberal Party, told us how to lobby. At one of the largest audiences of the conference, Maude gave the following hints:

1. Do not take an adversarial approach; remain calm and professional.
2. Have the courage to believe

you are right. "Serious people have serious enemies." Take adverse attacks as compliments.

3. Define your objectives clearly.

4. Create an alternative vision. Be for something, not just against something.

5. Crystallize the issue before you spread the statement. Keep it simple, not complicated - "short, to the point and makes sense."

6. Take the opposition seriously. Research them and their ideas. Know their arguments and plan a strategy.

7. Know your friends and choose them well.

8. Use the media well. Take them out to lunch.

9. It is essential that you go to the people for support.

10. Don't ignore the bureaucracy. Remember it is more constant than the government. Ottawa alderperson Nancy Smith spoke on lobbying at the municipal level. She said that because changes happen quickly at the municipal level, women should let the politicians know their views on time.

Make sure you know something about what the politician is doing. Work as an ally and suggest ways of resolving the issue. Here is some of her advice:

1. Be prepared and never go alone.
2. Provide an illusion of massive support for you out there.
3. Give the message that you know what's happening, and that you are there to stay.

4. Play to win when an issue is worth it, and never give up. Mobilize others.

5. The most critical factor is authenticity. People can smell a fake very easily.

Nancy Smith summed up lobbying like "playing poker; if you don't know what you're doing, you can't win."

Also speaking on the same subject was Kahn-Teneta Horn of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. Horn gave valuable insights into the history of lobbying efforts among Mohawk Indians. She recalled the efforts of Molly Brant, a staunch loyalist who played a major role in the shaping of Canada.

Horn, daughter of a native chief, has been an activist for 25 years. She recalled how her early lobbying efforts led to her arrest and other harsh treatment, but she was successful in focussing attention on Indian issues. Horn explained that native people lobby by putting their cards on the table as opposed

to wheeling and dealing; therefore, they are not understood by the white man.

She said that expectations differ among Indian women and other women; native women's experiences have taught us not to have too high expectations whereas whites often have very high expectations. "So when these two groups are bargaining, maybe we expect too little?"

Maude Barlow added up the common experience of women in political life in a response to the question, "What is the difference between a professional lobbyist and a non-professional lobbyist?" Barlow wittily replied: "It is a question of money. Those who get paid are called men; those who don't get paid are called women."

Brendalyn Ambrose is a Business Educator and a Technical Writer in Ottawa. She is committed to the integration of all women in Canada's political arena.



**LIBERAL**

**MARLENE Catterall**

OTTAWA WEST / OTTAWA-OUEST

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We know it hasn't been announced yet, but we're pretty sure there will soon be a....

# Federal Election

## Platforms

For your reference in the upcoming federal election, these are the positions of each of the three major parties on ten of the major issues of concern to women. As you can see, the Conservatives emphasize accomplishments, while the NDP and Liberals propose new directions. Also, many new platforms will be announced **during** the election campaign, and therefore are not available now. Check with your local candidates for the final word. Good luck!

## Special thanks to:

- Office of Barbara McDougall and Prime Minister's Office (Progressive Conservatives)
- Office of Lucie Pépin (Liberals)
- Office of Ed Broadbent (NDP)

## NDP

## Liberals

## Conservatives

### Housing

**Liberals:** 1) the restoration of federal spending commitments of subsidized housing, plus a new program to provide interest-free loans for the conversion of single family dwellings into three-generational housing; 2) expansion and upgrading of transition housing for battered women and children, and the homeless; 3) second stage housing for these groups, coupled with life and job skills under a more focussed Canadian Job Strategy.

**NDP:** 1) increase the federal allocation of new non-profit and co-operative housing units substantially to provide greater access to affordable housing for women and their children; 2) announce during the election campaign measures to provide relief from high shelter costs for low and middle-income Canadians, the majority of whom are women.

**Conservatives:** 1) CMHC cost-shares with the provinces housing for families in need of assistance. Mortgage assistance is provided to non-profit housing organizations; 2) the federal government, in co-operation with the provinces, provides housing assistance for senior Canadians which includes a mix of programs, such as non-profit housing, co-operatives, rent supplement assistance, and residential rehabilitation.

### Violence against women

**NDP:** 1) provide greater shelter from violence for battered women and children by allocating at least \$50 million for transition houses in the first year of a New Democrat government; 2) fund rape crisis centres with at least \$12 million of new federal money in the first year; 3) introduce amendments to the Criminal Code to combat pornography

**Conservatives:** \$40 million initiative announced in June 1988:

- 1) \$22.2 million for 500 new units to shelter an additional 25,000 women and children a year;
- 2) enhanced support for Aboriginal, immigrant and visible minority communities, as well as disabled people;
- 3) \$2.8 million to develop and test new approaches to police response; develop new training standards for criminal justice personnel and expansion of services;
- 4) \$3 million to monitor and evaluate prosecution/charging policies, evaluate treatment programs for men who batter, fund projects for research, public legal information;
- 5) enriched training materials for professionals;
- 6) increased public education.

**Liberals:** 1) increase shelter space; 2) provide adequate funding and funding stability for shelters; 3) develop programs for victimized children and adolescents so that they can attain health and stability; 4) improve the response of the criminal justice system to provide optimal and consistent support and protection across Canada; 5) separate funding for programs to treat batterers; 6) special support services for victims isolated by language, location, age and/or disability.

### Childcare

**Conservatives:** the National Strategy on Child Care, \$6.4 billion over 7 years:

- 1) 200,000 new and subsidized child care spaces through federal-provincial cost-sharing (both non-profit and commercial child care);
- 2) tax provisions that provide direct assistance to parents;
- 3) research and development of new innovative approaches to child care.

**Liberals:** 1) cost-sharing agreements with provinces would not restrict growth of services, and facilities receiving funds would meet negotiated national standards; 2) convert child care deduction to a tax credit, to further benefit low and modest income families; 3) capital funding would start immediately restricted to non-profit facilities that meet standards; 4) funding for native child care should support care compatible with native culture.

**NDP:** 1) provide federal funding to create at least 200,000 new non-profit child care spaces by 1992; 2) legislate national objectives for federal-provincial cost-sharing of child care services; 3) committed to the development of a quality, non-profit child care system that is comprehensive, flexible, accountable and accessible to women and children throughout Canada; 4) ensure subsidies are available for low-income parents.

## Who to

Perhaps the most pressing question most people are asking themselves at this time is: which party should I vote for? Given the reflection in the recent polls, most people are having a hard time deciding and are fluctuating from one to the other.

In order to make a good sound decision, we need concrete information. This is not always easy. What parties say at election time and what they do before and after the election is usually not the same.

The following is some advice on how to get information:

1. Campaign literature is the easiest way to get information, but not the most reliable. Election time is election time and each party likes to say what it thinks we want to hear in order to get our votes.

It is useful however, because it

- gives you an idea of what the candidates think the important issues are

- lets you make comparisons between candidates

- can be used to prepare questions for when the candidate comes to the door.

If you do not get pamphlets in your mailbox you can phone the campaign headquarters and ask to have material sent or drop by and pick it up yourself.

2. You can observe all forms of the media. The candidates cannot be as controlled when talking to the media and it is easier to judge their sincerity. You can:

- read the newspapers
- listen to and watch radio and television interviews, phone-in shows and debates.

### Immigrant women

**NDP:** 1) ensure equality of access to job creation and training programs, including language training, for all immigrant women; 2) ensure immigrant women's groups get their fair share of federal funding; 3) ensure equality for women in Canada's immigration and refugee laws.

**Conservatives:** 1) passed Canadian Multiculturalism Act; 2) has committed \$62 million in new resources over next 5 years to promote race relations, cross-cultural understanding and preservation of heritage cultures and languages; 3) Women's Program has focus on Native, immigrant, visible minority and disabled women; 4) existing programs include Settlement Language Training Program, Visible Minority Employment Program and Canadian Jobs Strategy.

**Liberals:** 1) strengthen the Employment Equity Act so that it can be proactively enforced by the Human Rights Commission; 2) instruct all departments and agencies to re-examine their public and internal programs and policies to ensure that women who are also members of minority groups are receiving fair and equal treatment and opportunity.

### Wage gap

**Liberals:** Equal pay for work of equal value is still entirely voluntary for employers under federal jurisdiction, unless a case can be successfully brought under the Canadian Human Rights Act. Clearly, equal pay for work of equal value needs to be made mandatory, as it has in Ontario.

**NDP:** The wage gap is caused by systemic discrimination against women in the workplace and the undervaluing of women's work. 1) implement pay equity legislation to make equal pay for work of equal value the reality; 2) legislate mandatory affirmative action programs and contract compliance with pay equity as an essential component of the programs.

**Conservatives:** 1) the Employment Equity Act, the Federal Contractors Program, Federal Public Service employment and pay equity programmes, equal pay for work of equal value legislation and provisions in the Canadian Jobs Strategy will all result in the narrowing of the wage gap over the next few years; 2) additional resources were committed to enforce equal pay provisions in Canadian Human Rights Act; 3) established Joint Union-Management Committee to examine how pay equity could be implemented throughout the Public Service; 4) embarked on public education program with employers to ensure compliance with equal pay provisions of Canadian Human Rights Act.



**NDP:** would cancel the Mulroney-Reagan Trade Deal. It threatens the essence of Canada and will have devastating consequences for all Canadians, particularly women. It threatens women's jobs, particularly in the service sector; it undermines Canada's social programs and will inhibit further progress towards equality.

**Conservatives:** see complete article on women and free trade by Barbara McDougall elsewhere in this newspaper.

**Liberals:** the current trade deal is a very bad one because: 1) it does not guarantee us secure access to US markets, 2) it does not protect our energy supplies, particularly in times of mutual energy shortage, nor our cultural sovereignty; 3) nor does it look to future issues such as the protection of Canadian water.

# Federal Election

## Vote For?

3. You can attend Public Forums and All-Candidates Meetings in your riding.

There you can:

- hear candidates statements
- watch their interactions with other people
- listen to the questions and answers.
- ask Questions.

There are usually several public forums held in a riding and they are open to everyone.

4. The best way to make a decision is by choosing which issues are that are important to you. Over a period of time you could follow each party's actions regarding the issues that you are concerned with. The above three methods will sometimes, but not always, identify issues of importance to you.

In the short term you could make up a questionnaire on the issues of concern and give a copy to each Party, asking for a response by a specific date.

You can do this as an individual, as a group or as a coalition of groups.

It is a good idea to keep the number of questions limited, to approximately five. To avoid misunderstandings make sure they are clear.

Remember: Actions speak louder than words!

## Reproductive health

**Conservatives:** 1) the Canada Health Act ensures that all medically necessary hospital and physician services will be provided on a publicly-financed prepaid basis to all Canadians; 2) Health and Welfare Canada has spent more than \$5.7 million over five years to fund research on reproductive health, including fertility, infertility and new reproductive health.

**Liberals:** 1) re-establish and expand education and information services along the lines of the Clearinghouse on Family Violence, in order that provinces, health care professionals and teachers can have the means to provide accessible and comparable information and services; 2) strike a Royal Commission to examine new reproductive technologies and recommend appropriate policies.

**NDP:** 1) restore and enhance funding to Planned Parenthood; 2) increase funding for research into safe and effective birth control; 3) establish a Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies.

## Meech Lake Accord

**Liberals:** Overall, the Liberals are supportive of the Accord, but proposed a number of amendments to it, including: 1) an amendment to state that nothing in the Accord would make women's equality rights in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms less important than the (aboriginal and multicultural) rights specifically mentioned in the Accord; 2) another amendment to ensure the federal government has the ability to set minimum national standards for cost-shared programs such as childcare. None of the Liberal amendments passed.

**NDP:** 1) the recognition of Québec as a distinct society was welcomed by women's groups in Québec and throughout Canada; 2) we agree with the Fédération des femmes du Québec that the distinct society clause does not threaten women's rights. On the other hand, several national women's groups believe there is a potential risk to women's equality in Canada generally. Out of an abundance of caution, in the same way aboriginal rights and our multicultural heritage are protected in the Accord, we continue to work for an amendment to include section 28 of the Charter (equality rights) in the Accord.

**Conservatives:** 1) First Ministers signed the Accord only after legal assurances that it in no way posed a threat to gender equality rights in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However, the accumulation of test cases before the courts will eventually determine the scope of the Charter; 2) the Accord clarifies that Parliament may establish new cost-shared programs in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction, and make money available to provinces for initiatives that meet national objectives or standards.

## Abortion

**NDP:** for over 20 years, New Democrats have supported freedom of choice on abortion.

**Conservatives:** 1) assessing the implications of the Supreme Court ruling on abortion; 2) recently held free vote in House of Commons to give direction on abortion legislation.

**Liberals:** Lucie Pépin, status of women critic, has continually supported women's right to choose in the early stages of pregnancy.

## Prostitution

**Conservatives:** 1) introduced amendments to the Criminal Code to strengthen provisions regarding street soliciting (this included a mandatory Parliamentary Review of the effectiveness of the legislation to begin December, 1988); 2) passed legislation dealing with child prostitution.

**Liberals:** When the Conservatives introduced their legislation on soliciting, we opposed it because we thought it would not solve the issue and would drive prostitution underground (which, in fact, it has)

**NDP:** 1) strongly opposed to the repressive criminal legislation brought in by the Mulroney government. It has served to harm women and has done nothing to alleviate the concerns of women and their families in residential neighbourhoods. We fought for a review provision in the Act and want this issue referred to the Justice Committee; 2) would put in place social and economic programs to reach out to juvenile prostitutes and assist them in leaving the street. Also programs to assist adult women who want to leave prostitution; 3) as research shows that many prostitutes were sexually abused as children, we would put in place programs to combat sexual abuse and assist adult survivors; 4) take tough action against customers of juvenile prostitutes.

## Women's Voices Must Be Heard In The Federal Election!

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Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women  
Conseil canadien sur le statut des femmes



Maude Barlow was status of women advisor to former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, and is currently social justice advisor to John Turner. She successfully won the federal Liberal nomination in Ottawa Centre last year. This year, when the riding boundaries were changed, she was forced to mount a second complete campaign. She did not win the re-nomination.



The last several years in Canada have seen an explosion of interest in women's involvement in politics. The women's movement has tackled head-on inequality in education, the lack of representation of women in management and non-traditional jobs, and the second-class citizenship of homemakers in our system. But it is only recently that women, as a group, have turned our attention to the need to get women elected to school boards, municipal and provincial legislatures, and the House of Commons. Long weary of recommending policy that elected officials had the option of adopting or not, the organized women's movement moved recently to secure some real turf for itself.

A number of organizations, like the Committee for '94 in Toronto, and the 52 per cent solution in Newfoundland, have been formed with the sole objective of bringing women into the political system.

These organizations are by and large feminist, meaning that their philosophy is one of supporting women candidates who are pro-women in their views. These groups have hosted conferences all over Canada, where women politicians and organizers trade stories and fundraising advice, as well as tackle the harder questions of how feminists can fit into a system not designed for co-operation, respect and consensus building. The last federal election saw the first of what many hope will become an election tradition - a women's debate with the three leaders.

In 1984, the Mulroney government appointed an all-time high of six women to Cabinet; and everywhere in the last several years, the hopes seemed high. The abortion issue is perhaps the most blatant example of the need for women in politics. A House made up of 90 per cent men will

decide on an issue that is intimately part of most women's lives, and only peripherally a part of some men's.

But, as we move toward the upcoming election, I find myself quite concerned about the state of "women in politics" in Canada. A debate on women is still being negotiated, and it is possible it will not take place. It is too early to do a full count of how many women candidates have been nominated in each of the Parties and in what kind of ridings (winnable or non-winnable!) A cursory glance, however, tells me that we're a long, long way from our goal, and that, in fact, there may be very little improvement in the numbers after the next election. Why?

Well, I don't pretend to have all the answers. They are many, and complex. Certainly, women, by and large, don't have access to the kind of money some election contests are costing now. Some of the recent hotly contested nomination battles are costing many thousands of dollars, and the lack of spending limits on nominations is a real deterrent

to anyone, male or female who is not wealthy.

As well, there is a great private sacrifice in Canadian and American public life not found in European politics - that is, in North America, the person is not running so much as the family package surrounding that person. For a woman who doesn't have a husband who will take on the helpmate role - and how many women in public life do? - the whispering and gossip is vicious. In my case, in spite of the fact that I am married, my husband is supportive, and I have the requisite two children, I was called anti-family. This I attribute to the fact that I maintained my family's right to privacy, not using them as election carrots, and that I am a feminist.

The third major barrier for women, however, and one which for me personally was real, is the obscurity of the nomination process. This is the method by which a Party chooses its candidates, and for many women, recently interested in politics, is either too remote, too partisan, or too dirty to get involved in. Yet this

is precisely the stage at which most women are halted. At no stage does a rawer, more open power struggle emerge than at the nomination stage. By and large, it takes many women by surprise and we feel uncomfortable with the baretoothed aggressive battle of such a personal, and public nature.

The central question for many women is whether our distaste for this process will direct us outside of mainstream politics to work for change, or into the rough and tumble of its current reality. We know that we tend to make changes when we have sufficient numbers, but we also know that we'll have to play the game to get there.

Of this I am certain: if we don't get there, the alternative vision we offer to the hierarchical, power-driven model of our current system, will not prevail on public policy. Without this alternative vision, our world is doomed to its fate of waste, pollution, unlimited growth, poverty for the many, and the violence that will surely follow.



I would like to take this occasion to congratulate all of you at *The Womanist* on the courage and enthusiasm you've displayed in the launching of this new newspaper. I wish you great success and hope that you will provide an instrument to effect the many social changes still needed in the area of policies affecting women.

Lucie Pépin  
Liberal Party

# Barbara McDougall

## Minister Responsible for the Status of Women



A l'occasion du lancement du premier numéro de la revue *Womanist*, je désire féliciter, au nom du gouvernement du Canada, toutes celles qui ont participé à cette revue.

Aujourd'hui, les préoccupations féminines occupent une place de premier plan au Canada. C'est en grande partie grâce aux efforts des femmes elles-mêmes que la société a élargi sa perception des questions qui sont cruciales pour la vie des femmes. Les améliorations apportées aux politiques gouvernementales visant à promouvoir l'avancement de la femme sont une preuve de la détermination des femmes de faire accorder une priorité à leurs préoccupations dans l'élaboration des politiques.

J'espère que *The Womanist* encouragera la participation des femmes à toutes les activités qui sont nécessaires dans notre société moderne pour maintenir l'attention du public sur les aspirations, les rôles et les responsabilités de plus en plus variées des femmes.

En tant que ministre responsable de la Condition féminine, je suis très consciente de la nécessité d'efforts conjugués pour faire avancer la cause de l'amélioration de la situation des femmes dans notre société. Les gouvernements, les associations et les individus ont tous un rôle important à jouer à cet égard. Nous pouvons accomplir beaucoup en travaillant en étroite collaboration. Une telle coopération est encouragée par notre gouvernement, dans le cadre de la stratégie globale que nous avons adoptée pour intégrer les préoccupations féminines à toutes les étapes du processus de prise de décisions.

Notre gouvernement est fermement déterminé à promouvoir l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes. Au moyen d'un large éventail de politiques, de lois et de programmes introduits au cours des quatre dernières années, nous avons cherché à créer les conditions qui permettront aux Canadiennes de profiter de chances et d'avantages égaux et de participer pleinement à toutes les activités de la société.

Plus que jamais, les Canadiennes doivent se tenir au courant des nouveaux développements qui se produisent dans notre société, lesquels peuvent avoir une influence sur leurs vies. Elles doivent s'adapter à des situations changeantes -- et elles doivent être au fait de situations qui doivent être changées. J'encourage *Womanist* à prendre une part active non seulement à la promotion des questions intéressant les femmes, mais aussi à leur propre sensibilisation.

A toutes celles qui ont contribué à la création de *Womanist*, je formule le vœu que ceci marque le début d'un partenariat qui encouragera l'échange d'idées, d'information et de réflexions pouvant profiter à tous les intéressés.

Longue vie à *Womanist*!

Ministre responsable de la Condition féminine

*Barbara McDougall*

Barbara McDougall

Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I congratulate everyone involved with *The Womanist* on the launching of your inaugural edition.

Today, issues of interest and concern to women command a prominent portion of public attention in Canada. Women themselves have been largely responsible for encouraging and broadening society's perception of the issues and factors that are crucial to women's lives. The resulting enhancement of public policy actions to promote the advancement of women is testament to women's determination to place their interests and their concerns at the forefront of government policy-making.

I hope *The Womanist* will encourage women's participation in all the processes that are required in our modern society to keep public attention focused on women's ever-expanding roles, responsibilities and aspirations.

As Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, I am very much aware that cooperative partnerships are necessary to advance the further progress of women in our society. Governments, organizations and individuals all have an important part to play in strengthening the achievement of women's equality. If given the opportunity to work collectively and cooperatively, much can be accomplished. Such partnerships are encouraged by our government, as part of the overall strategy we have put in place to integrate the interests and concerns of women in all our policy- and decision-making.

Our government is firmly committed to the promotion of women's equality. Through a host of programs, policies and legislation put forward over the past four years, we have sought to create the conditions in which Canadian women are able to achieve equal opportunities, equal benefits and equal access to the full range of society's endeavours.

More than ever, Canadian women must keep abreast of developments taking place within society which can impact upon their lives. They must be attuned to changing situations -- and they must be aware of situations that should be changed. I encourage *The Womanist* to take an active role in promoting not only the interests of Canadian women, but their self-awareness as well.

To those involved with the coming into being of *The Womanist*, and to the readers of its first issue, I offer my hope that this marks the initiation of a partnership which encourages the exchange of ideas, information and reflection of benefit to all concerned.

My best wishes to *The Womanist* for a successful future!



Status of Women  
Canada

Condition féminine  
Canada

Canada

# Free Trade:

## The simplified version

Marjorie Bowker, a lawyer and a judge for 17 years on the Provincial Court of Alberta, recently did the most miraculous thing: she wrote a comprehensive, accessible document on the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement.

The document entitled **What Will the Free Trade Agreement Mean to You and To Canada?** is short (only 60 pages), clear and to the point.

What impelled her to "undertake this analysis were widespread comments from even the most educated Canadians that they do not

understand what the Free Trade Agreement is all about. Not one in a thousand Canadians has read it (not even our leading politicians). Little wonder - when it is so massive, complex and intricate."

This study received no outside funding. She just decided to sit down and read the 21 chapters and write her thoughts on it. Her conclusion is that although she began and ended her project as a supporter of freer trade, she does not think much of this document.

"Ten of the 21 chapters have nothing to do with trade at all," she says. "They focus on economic union with the United States."

What is so strikingly different about this document as compared to all the other things we have seen on Free Trade is that she lets us make up our own minds, she puts free trade in a context, the global economic picture and she does it in an accessible manner and with an obvious understanding of the Free Trade Agreement. (she read it!)

Below are excerpts from her document:



Marjorie Bowker



### What is it?

The Free Trade Agreement is probably the most sweeping and complex document that has ever confronted Canadians. It is not surprising that few people have seen it, fewer still have read it, and still fewer say they understand it. From its contents, it is more an agreement on economic union with the United States, than it is on free trade.

### Do We Need it?

Already 80% of trade between Canada and the United States is free of tariffs and duties. Hence the Free Trade Agreement deals with only the remaining 20% of our trade. Questions to ask:

- Are we giving away too much for the sake of 20%?
- Should Canada's economic future be tied to the U.S., which has become the world's greatest debtor nation?

• Would it be better to expand trade on a wider world basis, especially with the Asian-Pacific region, potentially the great growth market of the future?

Canada is already a member of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), which is an international agency with 96 member countries. Its purpose is to promote trade on a global basis. It has been operating for over 40 years, during which time it has reduced visible trade barriers on industrial goods from 40% to 5%.

The Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement acknowledges GATT and asserts that its provisions continue in force.

### Canada's Past History of Free Trade

This is not the first time that the subject of free trade with the United States has arisen. In 1911 the Liberal government under Sir Wilfred Laurier introduced a free trade bill with the United States; the opposition forced an election and the government was defeated. Now 77 years later, the issue has been revived.

Mr. Brian Mulroney, when campaigning for the P.C. leadership in 1983, was asked his views on free trade with the United States. His reply was that it would "spell disaster for Canada." In the 1984 federal election, he, External Affairs Minister Joe Clark and Finance Minister Michael Wilson campaigned against free trade

(only John Crosbie favored it). Voters in the 1984 election had no reason to assume that a vote for the Tories was a vote for free trade (quite the opposite in fact). Questions are now being asked as to how the present federal government could have a mandate to conclude a Free Trade Agreement without returning to the electorate.



### Comparative Trade Positions: Canada and the United States

Canada's world trade has been running at a **surplus of \$800 million per month** over the past year (to May 1988). This works out to an **annual trade surplus of \$9.6 billion**.

In contrast, the U.S. for the month of May 1988 had a world trade deficit of \$10 billion; i.e. a **one month U.S. deficit exceeds Canada's yearly surplus**.

As for trade between our two countries, Canada had a trade surplus over the United States for the first four months of 1988 amounting to \$4,722 billion (Statistics Canada, June 15, 1988)

Thus, Canada is in a favoured position over the U.S. in terms of both -

- (a) World Trade
- (b) Canada-U.S. trade

Canada and the United States are already each other's biggest customers, buying and selling \$150 billion worth of goods and services annually. In the light of this, does Canada need to pursue freer trade with the U.S.? In other words - Who needs it most? Who will benefit most?.....

Is it forward-looking for Canada at this time to be making trade commitments to the U.S. when all indicators show that the U.S. is declining as the economic world leader? Several highly reputable Americans have said so - amongst them the following:

• Dean Lester Thurow, M.I.T. Sloan School of Management states that in 1945, the U.S. accounted for about 75% of the world GNP; by the 1980's this was down to 22%; that the U.S. is borrowing \$200 billion a year from world capital markets to cure its budget deficit; that it is now the "world's largest debtor nation".

• Patrick Moyhihan, New York Senator, says that if present trends continue, the U.S. national debt will reach \$13 trillion by the year 2000. (New York Times, June 19, 1988)

Japan has now exceeded the United States in its gross national product. At current growth rates, Japan is expected to surpass the U.S. within 10 years as the world's largest economy. (Maclean's July 4, 1988)

### The U.S. Omnibus Trade Bill (now before Congress)

This is aimed at American imports from countries around the world. Under it, the U.S. can impose mandatory penalties against any country which trades "unfairly" with the U.S. The definition of "unfairly"

is to be decided entirely by U.S. law.

One of the reasons (we are told) for Canada negotiating the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement was to protect imports from Canada from those punitive sanctions which will be applying to all other countries.

However, the Chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Trade Committee, Sam Gibbons, made a statement (March 30, 1988) that Canada would not be exempt from the U.S. Trade Bill.

If this is so, and it has not been disputed, then Canada's position is no different, with or without the Free Trade Agreement.

### Government Propaganda on Free Trade

Publicity emanating from the federal government on the Free Trade Agreement is directed at extolling its benefits. The government spent \$14 million to the end of March 1988 on promotional materials, including pamphlets, brochures, video tapes, etc. Yet a half million copies of this material became outdated, and ended up in the shredder. Now the government has asked for and received a further \$10 million, making a total of \$24 million being spent on publicity to promote free trade. Obviously no other organization or political party can compete with this level of expenditure.

Name-calling is a frequent weapon directed against opponents of free trade. Finance Minister Michael Wilson has called them "weak-willed and narrow of vision." Prime Minister Mulroney has called them "fearful and timid of mind". Pat Carney when Trade Minister called them "wimps". Alberta Premier Don Getty went further and called them "narrow minded wimps". When Simon Reisman, Canada's chief negotiator (who had walked out on the talks) later appeared at public meetings before the House of Commons, he referred to opponents of the Free Trade Agreement as "Nazis."

While there has been no lack of publicity, there has been a decided lack of factual

cont'd on page 29

New Report

just released

## Canada Under the Tory Government

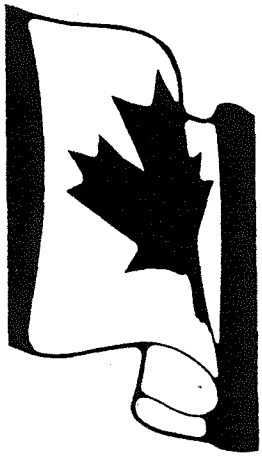
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survive competition from cheaper U.S. products, possible take-over and closure.

### What Canadians will lose

**Oil and Gas** Canada must export to the U.S. a fixed proportion of our total energy supply at a price no higher than our domestic price.

Canada has thus given away its control over supplies and pricing, and with that, any hope of natural energy self-sufficiency.

### Natural Resources -

Canada must sell to the U.S. a fixed proportion of our total export shipments of these commodities at a price no higher than that charged domestically.

This is a similar loss of control over supply and pricing of our natural resources. In other words, Canadians will have no preference over Americans in the enjoyment of our own resources.

**Agriculture** - This part of the Free Trade Agreement is so massive and complex that even agricultural economists have difficulty assessing its effect (as does this writer).

### Wine and Spirits -

Prohibition against mark-ups on American wine and spirits will eventually destroy Canada's wine industry.

**Service** - U.S. controlled enterprises operating in Canada may bring in their own service personnel.

This will remove job opportunities which would otherwise go to Canadians, especially in fields normally open to women.

### Temporary Entry -

American enterprises engaged in free trade activities in Canada can bring in their own technical workers and professionals. There is no time limit on how long they can stay



- except it not be with the intention of establishing a permanent residence. It could go on for years, for so long as the free-trade enterprises continued - anything from construction of a hydro-power dam to operation of a health care clinic.

Not only will Canadians not have the normal access to such jobs, but some workers could even be replaced.

## Free Trade: The simplified version

**Investment** - The door is open to American corporate take-overs of Canadian businesses - with no terms or conditions imposed as to their operation.

This is what Opposition parties call "the sell-out" of Canada.

### Financial Services -

American-owned banks operating in Canada will not be subject to the same regulations as those governing Canadian banks. Such regulations are intended for consumer protection.

### Government Procurement

The huge contracts for supplies for the federal government will no longer be limited to Canadian bidders. These will now be open to bidding from American competitors.

Such contracts have been a lucrative source of business for Canadian suppliers and employees.

### Technical Standards -

Canadian technical standards are to be made "compatible" with those of the U.S..

This could mean that Canada will have to compromise on some of its standards, even in the environmental field.

### Social Programs -

The omission of these from the Free Trade Agreement does not mean they are secure. All will be vulnerable to attack as "unfair subsidies", and be subject either to countervailing duties, or to pressure for their reduction or elimination.

This risk applies to Canada's health care system, unemployment insurance benefits, Canada pension, old age security, family allowance, equalization payments to poor provinces, subsidies to industries, regional development programs, and eventually to federally-funded daycare -- none of which exist on the same scale in the United States.

Not only can they be challenged as "unfair subsidies" but an even more serious challenge could arise under Article 2011.

This forbids either country applying any "measure" defined in Art. 201 as "any law, regulation, procedure, requirement or practise" which would reduce the benefits that the other country could reasonably

expect, directly or indirectly, from the Free Trade Agreement.

**Water** - As to the risk of Canada being forced to export water to the U.S. (water not being covered in the Agreement), political promises to the contrary are not enough. Once the free trade deal comes into effect, and in the absence of legislation forbidding it, Canada will be in a poor bargaining position against U.S. pressure to divert water - the most recent pressure being for diversion from the Great Lakes into the drought-stricken Mississippi basin.

In all the on-going bargaining implicit in the Free Trade Agreement, Canada throughout will be the weaker party at the negotiating table. Our lack of success on the acid rain issue is indicative of that.

**Dispute Resolution** - By no stretch of the imagination does the Free Trade Agreement provide legally-binding mechanisms for the resolution of disputes.

Despite elaborate provision for panels and arbitrators, it contains no sanctions to redress breaches, or assure compliance with panel decisions, except retaliation or termination. Without adequate enforcement, any agreement is rendered deficient and ineffective.

**Six Month Termination Clause** - This is not the "easy way out" that some people think. It works both ways and can be a boomerang to Canada. It could be used as a weapon by the U.S. to enforce its future demands with a threat to pull out (perhaps at a time unsuitable to Canada). Once the Agreement is in effect, and Canadian industry 'gears up' to anticipated greater exports, termination could create a disruption to the Canadian economy.

It has been said that Canada has never pulled out of an agreement with the United States. If it were to do so on this, the most monumental of all, American retaliation could be horrendous in terms of trade relations. (see Omnibus bill)

**Sovereignty** - Under the Free Trade Agreement, ownership and control of Canadian industry and resources will gravitate to the United States, and with that, decision-making will be transferred to the boardrooms of New York and Washington.

Political power is known to eventually follow the movement of economic power. It is not an improbable result that Canada could face the eventual loss of political independence, and of its sovereignty as a nation.

**Marjorie Bowker's document is available at Print 2000, 99 Bank St, Ottawa for \$4.00.**

### What Canadians will gain

1. Consumer goods imported from the U.S. will initially be cheaper. However they will be cheaper still from Hong Kong, Korea, China and Japan.

2. Jobs in some industries may increase, such as oil and gas (but only if OPEC prices rise). Export profits relate less to market access than to pricing, which under the FTA will be governed by factors beyond Canadian control. The federal government's own prediction is that the Canadian economy will create more new jobs in the next 10 years than will free trade (Michael Wilson's budget speech, February, 1988)

3. Canadian "big business" will profit through expansion to U.S. markets, provided such companies are big enough to

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# Free Trade:

## A woman's perspective

by **Barbara McDougall**,  
Federal Minister Responsible  
for the Status of Women

No subject has been more hotly debated in Canada in the past two years than the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. I know because I have been in the middle of many of those debates from one coast of the country to the other, and no issue has occupied more of my time nor been as intellectually demanding as the Free Trade Agreement.

My regret is that if women's voices are raised, and when they are, or if women are appealed to as a group, they are addressed in out-moded stereotypes as wholly dependent on the economic system - extra baggage to Canadian economic life, observers rather than creators of economic history. This is as true of women talking to women as of men talking to women.

This is unfair, true, and most seriously, potentially damaging to the progress women have made in Canada over the past several decades.

Most Canadian women would agree that life for them has changed considerably from that of their mothers or grandmothers. More and more women are working part-time or full-time in the paid labor force; more women are taking degrees in business, economics, and accounting; more women are opening up businesses and/or investing in financial and other markets; and more women are developing long-term pension strategies for themselves and their families.

Not unlike their mothers and grandmothers, most women continue to do most of the shopping, the family banking, and the payment of household bills.

Women are central to our economy and any major economic change must consider women the way they are and would like to be, in all their diversity, as opposed to how they have been in the past.

This, I believe, is the Free Trade Agreement's greatest advantage. Secure access to the much larger U.S. market under free trade will provide Canadian women with the opportunity to continue their own personal and collective development in a dynamic and expanding economic environment. Instead of fighting for a bigger piece of a very small economic pie, free trade will make the pie bigger, so that women can have a fair share.

And the pie will indeed be bigger! Canada has always been a trading nation and the United States has been our biggest and best trading partner. In fact, 78 per cent of our trade with the U.S. is already duty free, so the Free Trade Agreement is really just

an extension of initiatives that have taken place over the past forty years, initiatives that have helped Canada prosper and grow.

Perhaps the two greatest factors that brought Canadian and U.S. leaders to the bargaining table for this trade agreement were: growing protectionism in the world's economies, and the slowness of the multilateral process, normally conducted under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), to achieve more open world trade.

The Free Trade Agreement complements these multilateral negotiations by securing and enhancing Canada's access to its largest trading partner, the United States.

A significant benefit of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement is the fact that, not only will Canada be stronger because of the elimination of barriers between the two countries, but more importantly efficiency and experience for Canadian industry will make Canada much stronger against other trading competitors.

This is an important point for all Canadians, women and men, because it helps answer the questions: what will be the impact of free trade on employment? and, if jobs are created, how will they be created and where?

Almost every independent study over the past six years has found that free trade will result in an increase of jobs. There will be some job changes for a small number of men and women, but change is not new in today's job market. In today's world, people change jobs and find new ones with a frequency unheard of twenty years ago.

According to Statistics Canada, four million Canadians change jobs, or enter and leave the work force every year. This happens in all regions and all industries right now. Since people are already changing jobs, free trade will be an added benefit because it will create more and better job opportunities.

These jobs will be better because as our Canadian companies become more efficient, many routine jobs will be replaced by higher-skilled, higher-paying occupations. This is important to women, many of whom find themselves locked into low-paying, repetitive tasks or who find themselves the first to be let go if a company falls into hard times. Healthy companies create secure, well-paying jobs - and that's good news for women!

Most of the new jobs created by free trade will be in areas of the economy where women predominate. Eighty-four per cent of women who work in the paid labour force work in the services sector, in occupations such as accounting, administration, public relations, retail and wholesale trade, computing, architecture, and food and beverage services. Free trade will create more of a demand for these

services, and a greater demand for these services will create more jobs.

Another important area where jobs will be created is in the manufacturing sector. There was a time when Canada relied on its vast natural resource base to carry the rest of the economy. But we now have many more competitors internationally for traditional products such as coal and lumber. So while these remain important industries, a good deal of our recent growth has been in processed resources and manufactured goods where women have a much higher representation.

One area bears special mention - and that is the future of women's jobs in the textile and clothing industries. The Economic Council of Canada concludes that any employment changes in these two industries resulting from free trade will be small

free trade. Since 1948 duties on radios have come down by 20 per cent, refrigerators by 7.4 per cent, and aluminum kitchenware by over 12 per cent.

Lower prices mean that consumers have more income to spend on other things so we can expect to have a higher level of economic activity, producing more jobs, more businesses, more new products - and so the cycle continues.

I have purposely dealt with economic issues - job creation, secure access to markets, prices for goods and services - because the Free Trade Agreement is an economic agreement. Unfortunately, much of the opposition to Free Trade is based on issues that are not part of the Agreement, never were, and never will be.

Social programs such as old age pensions, maternity benefits, unemployment

danger for Canadian women, is that by creating alarmist and misleading arguments, opponents of the Free Trade Agreement would leave women especially unprepared for their economic future. These opponents suggest no solutions for the work ghettos that many women, especially immigrant women, find themselves in today. They suggest no new markets for the products and services that are being created by Canada's small businesses, a growing number of which are owned by women. Critics have no idea where Canada's new jobs will come from, the majority of which are destined for women. They offer no workable strategies for allowing Canada to compete in world markets in the decades ahead.

We are at the threshold of a new century and renewed prosperity. Canada has always



compared to the changes brought about by technological change and offshore industrial development. The simple fact is that there has already been tremendous change in the Canadian textile and clothing industries over the past decade.

Canadian textile companies are in general supportive of free trade because it will make it easier to sell their products in the U.S. As well, Canadian clothing firms are already internationally competitive in the production of specialty items, such as fur apparel, outer wear and designer fashions. Enhanced and more secure access to the U.S. will give Canadian companies a significant advantage over other trading nations.

By selling to the large U.S. market, Canadian companies will be able to produce more goods at lower prices which will in turn make them more competitive in other markets. It is important to remember that our real competition in the textile and clothing industries is not from the United States but from developing countries with lower production costs.

I have stressed the importance of women as producers in the Canadian economy, but women remain important consumers for goods and services as well.

Since tariffs create artificially high prices for products, women can expect to see more competitive prices, as well as a wider selection of goods and services once the remaining tariffs on our trade with the U.S. are removed under free trade. For example, tariffs as high as 20 to 25 per cent for items such as clothing, shoes, and bedroom linens with

insurance, and child care are not affected by the Agreement. Chapter 14 of the Free Trade Agreement which deals with services does not include government-provided services on the list of affected services. What the critics of free trade fail to mention is how they would pay for the social services we have come to enjoy in Canada without the prosperity that free trade will bring. Free trade is just one more way to ensure that we can maintain our network of social programs.

Canada retains the right to protect and promote Canadian culture and Canadian cultural industries with some very minor exceptions, such as copyright protection for cable retransmissions, which only seek to provide fairness to both sides in the Agreement. Our publishers, our film and video producers, our music and sound studios, our radio and television broadcasters are protected as are the production, sale, and distribution of their cultural goods and services.

Finally, despite passionate protests to the contrary, we are not giving up our Canadian sovereignty. What we have negotiated is a trade agreement that will reduce tariffs, secure access to the U.S. markets, and establish rules of fair play in our trading relationship with the U.S.

Our negotiators drove a hard bargain with the United States. We ensure long-term economic benefits without sacrificing those things which are uniquely Canadian.

What I see as the greatest

been a country of opportunity - a country where our children and grandchildren can strive to be the very best they can be; a country where our seniors can retire with dignity from meaningful jobs; a country where people and ideas from around the world are welcomed.

But this is a critical time for Canada, a time when we can reject the opportunities of the future or we can embrace them. Our government is committed to ensuring Canada remains a land of opportunity, a land where we can all seek new areas of achievement and succeed. Free trade is a part of that future, and more importantly, it is a part of the future for all Canadian women who will benefit from the opportunities it opens up for Canada.



# What every woman needs to know about Free Trade

by Marjorie Cohen  
for the National Action  
Committee on the Status of  
Women

## The Gender Gap

Across the country, polls show a large "gender gap" on the issue of free trade. More women than men are against the free trade deal. This is because it will affect every issue women in this country are concerned about, including employment, wages and conditions of work, education, day care, health care, the environment, consumer protection and prices, and peace issues.

Free trade is more than simply the removal of tariff barriers. It would mean a much closer integration of the economic and social systems of the United States and Canada. The supposed reason for entering into the agreement in the first place was to counteract U.S. protectionism. Americans were using their trade laws to challenge the Canadian way of managing the economy - arguing that a wide range of Canadian practices are "unfair" subsidies to export industries. The intent of the agreement was to override U.S. trade legislation.

The tragedy is that the agreement did not deal with the issue of how an unfair subsidy would be defined. And the promised override of American laws never materialized. As a result, Canada would be undertaking a whole range of changes which would dramatically affect our way of life, without any guarantees of access to the U.S. market for Canadian industries.

The free trade deal is packaged in two parts: the Canada/U.S. Free Trade Agreement and Bill C-130, the federal government's legislation to change Canadian Laws. The commitments in the Free Trade Agreement itself will require other changes, beyond those contained in changes in Bill C-130. All of these changes will be devastating for women, should they eventually come into place.

## JOBS

**Manufacturing:** Women's employment in manufacturing is concentrated in industries where jobs are most at risk: textiles, clothing, food processing, electrical and electronic products, and other consumer goods. These are often characterized as "sunset" industries, not deserving to survive. Yet textiles and clothing, for example, are the largest industrial employers in Canada and account for 7% of our total national income.

The women who will be particularly affected by job losses in manufacturing are immigrants, women of colour, older women, disabled women, and women with low levels of formal education.

While new and better jobs are promised there is little real evidence that this will occur. Where women have moved out of manufacturing jobs in recent years, they have tended to find work only in low-paying, unorganized, and part-time work in the service sector.

**Services:** The majority of women work in the service sector, (84%) where jobs will be threatened as restrictions on the provision of services from outside the country are removed. Just about every type of service can be traded internationally, including banking, data processing, telecommunications, computer services and culture. The removal of the current restrictions on data processing, for example, will eliminate many clerical jobs which will shift to low-wage states in the U.S.. Also in the Free Trade Agreement, there is no "country-of-origin" provision for services. This means much of our data processing could also

ing are the free trade provisions for ongoing negotiations over the next five to seven years on the definition of "unfair" subsidies.

In addition to the problem of subsidies, the free trade deal provides "right of establishment" and "right of national treatment" to U.S. companies in 299 different service categories. This means that U.S. firms may freely do business here and receive treatment "no less favourable than that accorded to Canadian service enterprises."

The prospect of American firms taking over our service sector is only half the tale. Canadian businesses can be expected to apply pressure on



occur in low-wage countries and be imported into Canada via the U.S. Almost one-third of all women in the labour force now hold clerical jobs. The Free Trade Agreement also lays the groundwork for the privatization of public services. Women will lose these jobs which traditionally have been some of the better-paying jobs in Canada.

**Agriculture:** In agriculture, women's work is jeopardized because so many of our agricultural industries are at risk under free trade. With increased competition with U.S. agri-business, Canadian farmers will lose access to our own domestic market. Canadian grain growers, fruit and vegetable farmers, the dairy industry, the grape and wine industry, the horticulture industry, and poultry and egg production are particularly threatened by free trade.

**Wages and Working Conditions:** Under free trade, women and men would also have lower wages and poorer working conditions. With increased U.S. competition here, Canadian firms would be forced to cut costs by lowering wages, ignoring health and safety standards, and fighting legislative protection which ensures equal rights and equal pay for women. They will do this because their major competitors will be companies located in U.S. states with low or no minimum wage, poor labour legislation and very low levels of unionization.

**Social Services:** Our social services (such as health care, daycare and unemployment insurance) could also be endangered by free trade. U.S. firms can challenge any public program they feel is an unfair subsidy to business. In the past, the U.S. has challenged aspects of the unemployment insurance system, the national railroad, and the regional development schemes. Particularly troubl-

all levels of government to lower the taxes that support our social programs -- all in the name of becoming more competitive.

**Health Care:** Canada and the U.S. have radically different ways of providing health care. In Canada it is publicly supported while in the U.S. it is run by private enterprise.

Under free trade, U.S. businesses will be free to come in and manage (and/or own) our hospitals, nursing homes, homes for the disabled; our halfway houses, homes for single women, and community health clinics; our ambulance services, medical labs, X-ray labs, and even our blood banks.

A few hospitals in Canada are already run by such private U.S. management firms. They cut costs by U.S.ing "patient classification systems." These are computer programs which determine the type and amount of nursing care necessary. As a result, the full-time nursing staff is cut to a minimum, and the part-time nurses are expected to follow the computer printout with regard to time and care for each patient.

**Daycare:** Under the investment chapter of the free

trade deal, private American daycare corporations can claim access to public funds for establishing centres here. They would be allowed to compete for such funding on an equal basis with our own non-profit day care centres. This could lead to a preponderance of "for-profit" care delivery in Canada. Private day care companies U.S.ually pay lower wages to their workers and have lower standards for caregiving.

## New Social Programs:

Under free trade it would be virtually impossible to set up new publicly provided services, as Canada did in the 1960s with Medicare. For example, many Canadian women feel that we should be moving toward things like public auto insurance and public dental coverage. Under free trade, Canada would first have to get approval for such programs from the U.S., and then our governments would have to financially compensate U.S. insurance firms for losses they would experience under such new programs. Obviously, no province could ever afford this.

**Education:** Free trade gives U.S. private educational firms rights of national treatment and access to public funds for training programs. This means that our local training programs for women through our community colleges, vocational schools, trade schools, schools of art and performance, and business colleges will have to compete with big American private firms for public funding.

## THE CONSUMER

Those in favour of free trade usually claim that the Canadian consumer will be better off as a result of the deal. This claim deserves careful examination.

**Duty-Free Goods:** Canadian authorities have admitted that under free trade there will still be the normal limits on the amount of duty-free purchases tourists can make across the border.

**Taxes:** Under free trade, the Canadian government will lose more than \$2 billion a year by not collecting tariffs. The government plans to recover this loss by extending the federal sales tax to include not only manufactured items, but taxes on all goods (except food) and taxes on all services. This may mean that every time we ride the bus, make a banking transaction, and have our hair cut, we will have to pay a tax on the service.

**Prices:** The recent changes which Canada has been forced to make in our drug patent legislation are a direct result of the government's push for free trade and pressure from U.S. drug firms. This result is higher prices for Canadians. This is a forerunner to what will happen to prices for many items under free trade.



While the elimination of tariffs would seem to suggest lower prices, the Federal Finance Department's own studies acknowledge that there is no control over whether savings will be passed on to consumers or be kept in the pockets of suppliers and retailers. Prices can be kept lower when there are domestic producers who compete with importers - otherwise importers can charge whatever they want. This happened in the Canadian shoe industry when tariffs and quotas were removed and import prices increased by as much as 26%.

**Pesticides and Food Additives:** For decades, Canadian women have been leaders in changing attitudes and practices with regard to harmful additives in our foods. Ironically, the Free Trade Agreement commits Canada to "work toward equivalent guidelines, technical regulation, standards and test methods" for use of chemical substances such as herbicides, pesticides, growth hormones and steroids.

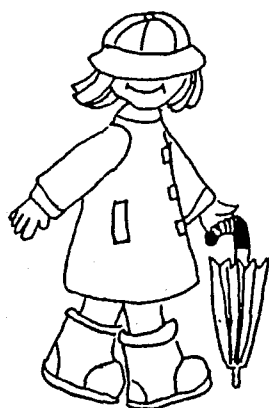
As a result of this "harmonization" under free trade, Canada will have to adopt the far more lax U.S. approach towards regulating chemical substances based on a "risk/benefit" analysis. This means that if the economic benefit in U.S.ing a chemical substance outweighs the health risk, then that is the deciding factor for licensing the product.

U.S. "factory" farms make extensive use of hormones and antibiotics to speed growth and counter the disease-ridden conditions in which they confine farm animals. These additives are a danger to human health, including the risk of salmonella poisoning.

**Energy:** Under free trade, the Canadian government is committing itself to a one-price policy on oil and gas and energy exports. This means that it can't impose a policy whereby Canadian consumers buy energy at lower prices than those charged to U.S. consumers.

Equally important, the Free Trade Agreement obliges Canada to share our energy -- even in times of shortages. The Agreement guarantees U.S. buyers the same proportion of Canada's energy resources that they now receive. In the case of some resources, such as oil, the U.S. uses more Canadian oil than Canadians do and we will be locked into this, even when there is not enough oil for our own use.

cont'd on page 32





# What every woman needs to know about Free Trade

## THE ENVIRONMENT

Canadian women are increasingly concerned about our environment and the need for environmental protection. All governments in Canada, including the federal and all provincial governments, have endorsed the need to integrate environmental protection with economic planning and policy. However, the free trade deal will seriously erode government's ability to take such measures.

**Acid Rain:** The acid rain which is destroying our lakes and forests is caused by the sulphur dioxide emissions released from the smokestacks of industries relying on coal for fuel. Under free trade, government subsidies to help Canadian industries cut acid rain pollution may be seen as unfair trading practices. "Harmonizing" standards will likely mean that Canada will have to accept the lower U.S. standard for emissions control of acid gas pollution.

**Water:** The trade agreement does not allow Canada to limit exports of natural resources on the basis of shortages, unless restrictions are also placed on Canadian consumption. In

addition, it does not permit export restrictions for the purpose of protecting the environment.

Every Canadian resource is subject to the provisions of the master Free Trade Agreement. **THERE IS NO EXCLUSION FOR WATER.** Where the agreement intends to exclude an item, as in the case of logs, it explicitly states this. The government's changes to Bill C-130 won't change the Agreement itself.

**Forests:** What little reforestation is carried out in Canada is heavily subsidized by the government. The U.S. lumber industry regards reforestation grants as "unfair" trade practices and subsidies to Canadian lumber exports. Because of the Softwood Lumber deal, the B.C. government has already agreed to end its replanting subsidies to the forest industry.

Another casualty of free trade will be our prospects for adding to Canada's parkland and wilderness areas. Unimpeded development in the oil, gas, mining, and lumber industries will have a tremendous impact on our wilderness areas, on aboriginal hunting grounds, and on areas that support traditional ways of life.

## PEACE ISSUES

The trade deal will reduce the possibility for an independent Canadian voice on peace and security issues like the American "Star Wars" initiative. Women are in the forefront of the peace movement and are concerned about the potential use of our resources and labour for military purposes under free trade.

**Militarization of Regional Development:** The ostensible objective of entering the free trade agreement was to eliminate the ability of U.S. firms to challenge Canadian policy, such as regional development schemes, as unfair subsidies to trade. The agreement failed to achieve this. Most government subsidies to poor regions can still be challenged. But there is one exception. If any government subsidy is "sensitive to the defence of the country", it will be permissible. The result may well mean the increased focus on military industries in the economies of poorer sections of this country.

**Militarization of Jobs:** Building weapons is not the answer to Canadian unemployment, but as thousands of jobs are lost in other

sectors, this is one area where the free trade deal allows governments to subsidize and intervene as much as they wish. Already in Quebec, female employment levels are down as textile companies relocate to low-wage states in the U.S., and the defence-related industries expand.

## OUR WAY OF LIFE

The Canada\U.S. Free Trade Agreement is not simply about tariff reduction and trade, as the proponents of the Agreement would have us believe. It is about how much control Canadians will have over our future.

Women have long recognized that we need the modifying influence of public policy to correct the most discriminatory and unjust feature of the market system. Market forces alone cannot provide U.S. with sufficient jobs and eliminate the grossly unfair ways women and minority groups are treated.

Our experience is that justice and fairness have to be imposed on business. Yet the move toward free trade is an attempt to return to a greater reliance on the workings of the international market mechanism to determine our economic and social policies. Once we embark on the free

trade route our ability to establish priorities, other than those dictated by profit-making and the private market mechanism, will be relinquished.

Trade is important for Canada. We are a great trading nation and will continue to be one. But the main issue now is the role of trade policy: it should serve economic and social goals -- not determine them.

This was prepared for the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. It is available as a pamphlet at the NAC offices, 344 Bloor St. West, Suite 505, Toronto M5S 1W9.



Pauline Jewett  
(New Westminster-Coquitlam)



Lynn McDonald  
(Broadview-Greenwood)

***Congratulations and best wishes to The Womanist, from the Women's New Democratic Caucus!***



Marion Dewar  
(Hamilton-Mountain)



Audrey McLaughlin  
(Yukon)



Margaret Mitchell  
(Vancouver East)



# On the Hill

## Childcare Strategy

As of press time, it looks like the federal government's national childcare package will pass, despite some stiff opposition, both in the House and among women's groups, labour, childcare organizations, and others.

The Tories are pushing hard to get the legislation through fast, so they can tout it on the campaign trail as a major social policy achievement. The program would provide \$4 billion over 7 years to cost-share with provinces the creation of 200,000 childcare spaces.

Liberal MP Lucie Pépin is not impressed. "By limiting the number of spaces to be created and failing to provide any directives as to standards or objectives, the Tories have done nothing to address a very important social crisis," she said. "We need five times the number of spaces the Conservatives are offering."

"In the two and a half days of hearings, the Legislative Committee on Childcare did not hear from a single witness that said any merit to the Act," according to Pépin.

The Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association and others claim that the 200,000 spaces is in fact less than would have been created under the existing, already inadequate system.

The other major part of the debate in the House is about the absence of national standards in the package. The arguments go something like this:

- The Tories claim that nationally imposed standards do not take into account the regional diversity and needs -- what works in Toronto may not work in the NWT.

- The Liberals and the NDP say that if standards aren't set, some Canadians (especially those in poor regions) will be getting poor quality childcare, courtesy of federal funds.

Other groups, such as NAC, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and the Canadian Labour Congress, also are calling for national standards.

"The role of the federal government becomes one of brokerage," said Sheena Haley of the Canadian Teachers Federation. "Without objectives, there can be no vision. Without standards, equity is impossible."

## Fetus Rights Case

On October 3, the Supreme Court of Canada will hear the case of Borowski v. Attorney-General of Canada. This is a critical case for women since the issue on which the court will rule is whether a fetus is a "person" entitled to the constitutional protections guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.



According to the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF), the decision will have sweeping implications for women, related to reproductive freedom and the rights of pregnant women.

LEAF has been granted intervenor status in the case. (This means they will be allowed to present to the court, even though they are not one of the two central parties. Normally this is allowed in order to present a position that will not otherwise be heard.)

LEAF will take the position that the case should not be heard, since Borowski first raised it as a challenge to abortion legislation. That legislation no longer exists, as a result of the Supreme Court's Morgentaler decision.

Should the case proceed, LEAF will argue it raises equality issues for women. More specifically, the protections for the fetus Borowski is seeking will violate guarantees for women's equality in the Charter.

The court has also granted REAL Women intervenor status. This was something of

a surprise, since REALW's position is unlikely to differ much from Borowski's and is therefore not news to the court.

Borowski will be further reinforced by the intervention of a coalition of nine pro-life religious leaders, including representatives of the Catholic, Baptist, Hindu, Muslim, Pentecostal, and Jewish faiths.

## Gay Issues head for Supreme Court

EGALE (Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere), an Ottawa-based lobby group, has been awarded \$25,000 to prepare cases of discrimination against lesbian and gay Canadians.

The Court Challenges Program, with funds provided by the federal Secretary of State and administered by the Canadian Council on Social Development, is designed to bring issues of Charter equality and language rights to the high courts as part of an effort to keep federal laws in line with the Charter.

EGALE has begun work in five areas of federal law:

1. The Canadian Human Rights Act will be challenged for its failure to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

2. The Canada Health Act is being examined to see the extent to which it allows for discrimination, especially in light of the many abuses that AIDS has brought to light.

3. Several elements of the Immigration Act will be challenged.

4. Hate laws under the Criminal Code will be challenged for failing to protect gays and lesbians along with other groups subject to "hate crimes".

5. Also under the Criminal Code, the defence of provocation in charges of murder will be examined. This defence (which can reduce a murder charge to manslaughter) is frequently accepted in murder cases with the accused



murderer claiming s/he was provoked because of homosexual advances. EGAL believes that the defence ought not to be available on this ground. It is not available in similar circumstances to a female accused who was the subject of a male heterosexual advance.

## Federal Action on Battered Women

In June, the federal government announced a \$40 million 4-year package to address the situation of battered women. It has met with a mixed response from women working in this field. Shortly after the program was unveiled, the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH) outlined some of their concerns.

Of the total amount, \$22.2 million goes to Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to build shelter beds. OAITH points out that there is no funding for the operation of these units.

Furthermore, it only amounts to the equivalent of two more beds in each shelter in the country, or one new shelter in each province each year. This is a drop in the bucket, given the need.

Research (\$5.71 million to Health and Welfare) should not be a priority at this time, says OAITH, given the "desperate lack of frontline services".

Overall, OAITH says the package is inadequate, and "may even be counter-productive if it gives Canadians the impression that abused women are being served."

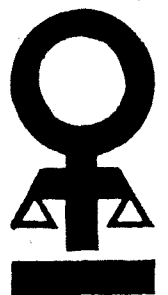
Mary Lou Murray was unable to do her column this issue. We eagerly anticipate her first column for November.

## Fighting Sexual Harassment on the Job

Bonnie Robichaud, who after an eight year struggle, won a complaint of sexual harassment against the Department of National Defense and her supervisor in the Supreme Court, has released a booklet, **A Guide to Fighting Workplace Sexual Harassment/Assault**.

The booklet, primarily written for the residents of Ontario, is about "Sexual Harassment/Assault, Stemming From A Person's Employment, commonly known as sexual harassment. Its main objective is protecting employment, and employment rights".

To obtain a copy, send \$2.95 plus \$1.00 for postage and handling to: Bonnie Robichaud, P.O. Box 149, Osgoode, Ontario, KOA 2W0.



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# What did your Member of Parliament say during the Abortion debate?

**Doug Lewis, House Leader** presented the government motion on abortion to the House on July 26, 1988:

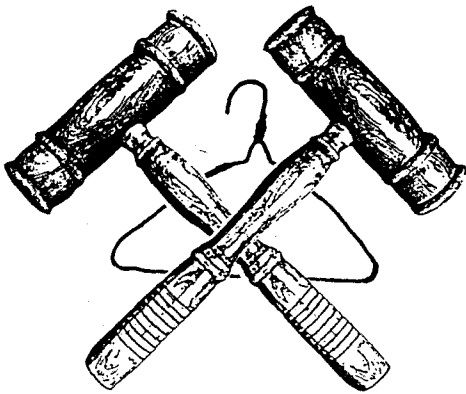
That, in the opinion of this House, the Supreme Court of Canada having declared that the provisions of the Criminal Code relating to abortion are inconsistent with the provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and are therefore of no force or effect, the government should prepare and introduce legislation, consistent with the Constitution of Canada, including the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which reflects the fundamental value and inherent dignity of each human being and the inherent worth of human life, and which achieves a balance between the right of a woman to liberty and security of her person and the responsibility of society to protect the unborn; and

Such legislation should prohibit the performance of an

abortion, subject to the following exceptions:

When, during the earlier stages of pregnancy: a qualified medical practitioner is of the opinion that the continuation of the pregnancy of a woman would, or would be likely to, threaten her physical or mental well-being; when the woman in consultation with a qualified medical practitioner decides to terminate her pregnancy; and when the termination is performed by a qualified medical practitioner; and

When, during the subsequent stages of pregnancy: the termination of the pregnancy satisfied further conditions, including a condition that after a certain point in time, the termination would only be permitted where, in the opinion of two qualified medical practitioners, the continuation of the pregnancy would, or would be likely to, endanger the woman's life or seriously endanger her health.



**Gus Mitges, PC Member for Grey-Simcoe** who is adamantly pro-life, was an unlikely defender of women's rights in the abortion debate:

Women today are not given the type of support that is necessary at such a vulnerable time. Decent and reasonable alternatives are often withheld. Some are forced to abandon further education or employment. Then society politely offers abortion and calls it the "women's choice." More and more women are realizing that they are being terribly exploited by our selfish abortion oriented society. This is discrimination against women and against the very nature of womanhood. I support women's rights, but individual rights stop when they affect the rights of another. No man or woman has the right to take the life of another individual in or out of the womb.

In summary, I have just reviewed how many Canadian unborn children are denied basic rights as other rights are supposedly pursued. They have no recourse to be heard on the denial or infringement of rights; they have been deprived of the most fundamental right, the right to life; and they are subjected to cruel and unusual punishment. They are discriminated against on the basis of handicap. We have seen that women are discriminated against as they are not protected from abortion. They are manipulated by society to do the most unnatural thing in the world, to kill their own tiny child.

**Keith Penner, MP for Cochrane-Superior**, was equally dramatic in his pro-life speech:

We all know that there are many kinds of violence in our society, violence that robs life of that treasure of living. There is war, highway traffic accidents, dreaded diseases of many kinds, murders, and suicides, but it is chilling for me to realize that the most violent place in Canada today is not some dark side street in a decayed section of an inner city; it is, rather, the human womb.

**Benno Friesen, Conservative MP**, gave equal billing to a Canadian pop singer with a famous humanitarian in this statement:

As Mother Teresa said in Vancouver, when a woman has an abortion she commits murder twice; first she kills a child, then she kills her conscience. Even Paul Anka recognized the contract in that song which was popular two years ago (sic), *Having My Baby*. He said: "You could have swept it from you but you didn't do it. You see, there was a contract between two people."

**John Oostrom, Conservative MP for Willowdale**, showed his own ignorance with this statement:

In today's society there simply is no excuse for not being aware of the various methods of contraception available.

**Barbara McDougall, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, and Minister of Employment & Immigration.**

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the amendment proposed by the Hon. Member for Don Valley West (Mr. Bosley) that: Motion 36 be amended as follows: By deleting all the words after paragraph 1 and substituting therefore: "Such legislation should prohibit the performance of an abortion except when performed by a qualified medical practitioner."

I speak to this amendment on behalf of those women who have been faced with bearing a child not of their choosing. Many women who have been faced with this choice have taken the choice to bear a child they did not choose to conceive. They have chosen to bear it, have taken the responsibility, and have taken joy in that decision.

Others have made another choice, consciously, perhaps in desperation, but despite all the words, all the edicts, all the laws over centuries, women have made the choice not to bear a child - rich, poor, ignorant, sophisticated, in every culture, in every epoch, in every religion, by whatever means available.

Let us not be pretentious enough to think that when the debate is over in this Chamber the issue has been resolved. The issue began at the dawn of time and it will end when the earth ceases to circle the sun.

There has been a lot of talk in this Chamber about the morality of abortion. There is no question that it is a moral issue. The question is, who is to make that moral judgement; the court in its red robes and ermine, the church in its silk robes and rings, or politicians in the green Chamber, people like us, men and women of ideals and principles? I do not know one person who has ever run for public office who has done so without a kernel of ideals about why they want to be here.

In a democracy politicians are people of consensus who, with the best of ideals, over time represent the ebb and flow of public opinion. Why are any of us in a position to make this judgement best? Why is the woman who is carrying the child not the person who can make that judgement best? Do we honestly believe that she who has the life within her will make a worse decision than us?

A woman is a whole being. She has a body, an intellect, and a soul or a spirit, whatever the magic is that makes us a unique species. I remind you that frequently the body

makes its own choice. The miscarriage of an unborn child is a natural abortion. It is the body saying "no."

Why, if the woman is a whole being, cannot her mind, her intellect, her spirit make that same decision?

In a free society we expect people to make choices, to exercise judgement, and to bear their responsibilities, sometimes at great personal sacrifice whatever that choice may be. We not only expect people to make choices, we must respect their ability to make those choices. Women do that. Women know that there are people who want to adopt a child. Women know that a handicapped child has the same rights as others. Women know that children born in less than perfect circumstances can still have a happy and successful life. They do not make these choices without knowing the things that we in this Chamber know. We cannot make the choice better than they can.

Society and religion, over the centuries, have had differing views on the mores of aborting, of killing an unborn child. Let us not be afraid of the vocabulary. Those views include such things as that the soul enters an unborn baby boy after 40 days and a girl after 80 days, that the soul enters the unborn child at the time of quickening, when the woman feels the fetus moving for the first time.

Many of us in this Chamber have spoken of life from the moment of conception. Tomorrow we may talk of life beginning when the sperm joins the egg in a solution at a certain temperature in a certain plastic container under controlled circumstances. God knows, the human species some day may not reproduce but be produced from elements as yet we know not what. But throughout history to our time and into the future as we can see it, the constant is the woman who carries the child, and despite threat of death and social isolation, castigation and damnation, women have exercised their choice to have the child or not to have it.

As a society and in our time, our epoch, we as parliamentarians and as Canadians can make the choice to bear the child an easier one as opposed to the choice not to have the child. We provide help for child care. We should provide better social and personal support. We provide job-training and housing and medical care when women are faced with this decision, with the terror, with the oppression, of bringing up a child in circumstances of uncertainty or loneliness or poverty. But at the end of the day, even if we provide

perfection in all of the above, it is the mother who bears the ultimate responsibility and therefore ultimately must have the choice. And make no mistake, women make the right choice, a far better choice than you or I or all the pageantry of institutions that have been invented by human beings from the beginning of time.

They make the choice and the judgement based on the societal expectations of their time. They do not do this in isolation. They do it based on their own health, on the potential health of the unborn child, on their relationship with the father, on the basis of all their expectations, which may or may not be good ones based on what society and their own circumstances have taught them. They do it based on their ability to deliver on the ongoing responsibility, and of course on their unique and individual caring sense of personal being and the being of their child.

Of course, society as always must make rules about the infringement of the rights of others. Of course, freedom is defined by a collective of what we all believe. Of course, as a nation we must have a view of the circumstances under which any abortion is to be allowed. Of course, we have a view of medical standards. But we must guard against our own ignorance, our own anecdotal evidence of horror stories we have heard, our inheritance of values from other times, and from all the things that make us meddle in other people's ability to judge.

Life is, of course, to this day still a mystery and some mysteries are eternal. Let us strive to understand them but let us not pretend that we do. Most of all, let us not judge those who bear the burden of the gift of child-bearing. Make no mistake, it is not a right, it is a gift. But how that gift is accepted can only be decided by the recipient who will judge best.

I have said before that I am a Minister of the Crown and not a Minister of God, but I do have a calling. That is, that women in our society in Canada are contributors, are participants, have values that I respect and care for, and judgement that I bow to. I hear their voices, and these principles come from I know not where, but what they tell me is that my power to decide, like yours as a Member of this Chamber, has its limits. The ability to decide, not the right but the ability to decide, and the sensitivity, and the responsibility that is a part of what I am, not as a Member of Parliament but as a woman, as a part of what every woman is, and as a part of us as Canadians, is to be respected and is to be celebrated.



**Audrey McLaughlin, Rookie NDP MP for the Yukon**, made an impassioned speech on how anti-life our society truly is, despite the eloquent defence of life by many of our Members of Parliament:

Does our society today really reflect a respect for human life? I would say it does not. It is so much easier to stand up and legislate than it is to bend down and give your hand to a child who has been abused, a mother who is tormented, or an unemployed father who is wondering how he is going to feed his family.

Let us examine respect for life in our family. A single parent and child on social assistance in Canada today receive about \$8 a day for food and incidentals. Incidentals include clothing and all other necessities. Those who have been following the news lately will know that foster parents are very concerned about the amount of money they are receiving per day, and well they should be. I am well aware of the challenges which foster parents face in this society to assist these very said children

who have often had very traumatic experiences in their families. However, the average foster parent in our society receives more than a parent does to look after his or her own child. A foster parent receives about \$10 a day.

As one foster parent recently pointed out, when she went to board her dog it cost \$13 a day. I think that example indicates what kind of respect we have for human life, what kind of respect we have for the born.

When we are debating this important issue and sounding out opinions, when we see a person sleeping on the street or we hand out canned goods at a food bank, when we avert our eyes from the 13-year-old prostitute standing on the corner, the group of young adults whom we call street kids, as though being a street kid was simply a way of life rather than a tragedy, it behooves us as legislators to look at the human pain and the human questions with which one must deal.

When I was at the Children's Aid Society a number of years ago as a social worker, I saw an 18-

month-old who was disciplined by being seated on an electric burner. I went to a house where I saw a six-month-old girl who had been burned by cigarette butts. I spoke to a 10-year-old girl who had been sexually abused by her father for 10 years. There were no marches for those children. There were no pickets. There were no people calling the offices to say, "Let me help that child, that child who is here among us."

When we as legislators talk to these people, we are talking about the rights of the born and are exemplifying what respect for life our society has shown them.

McLaughlin also addressed the idea of criminal sanctions for abortion:

I remind you, Mr. Speaker, that as recently as 1969 our society said that attempting suicide was a criminal offence. At that time I happened to be at the Vanier Reformatory for Women. There was a woman there who was incarcerated for having attempted suicide. We believed at that time that the way to prevent the taking of that life was to jail that person. Since then we have rethought the issue, and now attempted suicide is no longer in the Criminal Code.

Anyone who has been following the issue lately knows that suicide is the most common cause of death for young people in our society between the ages of 15 and 21. The majority of suicide victims are male. Are we to address that issue by putting all males between the ages of 15 and 21 in jail? Will we fine them? It sounds almost ludicrous even to be suggesting such sanctions today because we know that there is something much deeper wrong with our society. We must find help and caring in our society which we do not presently have.

**Lise Bougeault, Conservative MP Argenteuil-Papineau**, put forward some interesting food for thought for pro-lifers who are calling for tough criminal sanctions:

Mr. Speaker, how does one make the father feel more responsibility for an unwanted pregnancy? Would those who want to make abortion illegal and in so doing, as I was just explaining, take drastic measures, even going so far as to create prisons for pregnant women, agree to punish the man who should have put on a condom before having sex?

Bougeault made another good point in her moderately pro-choice speech: Mr. Speaker, when we go back to our constituencies and meet young women who have to care for a young child on a welfare cheque that is hardly one-sixteenth of the weekly pay of a Member of Parliament, Mr. Speaker, how can we claim that such a woman can decently, while sharing the joy of life, bring up a child under conditions that will necessarily lead to that child growing under conditions that are totally conducive to his or her personal growth?



## Difficult Choices



by Marion Dewar

As a Roman Catholic and a woman, I have spent much time in the past year pondering and praying about a solution to the problem of abortions in our society. I am convinced that abortions must never again be criminalized. As our present society exists, we must work for attitudinal and value changes, rather than criminal sanctions.

This can be done by giving women choices - by making certain that they have access to good medical care and to sound information about contraception, female sexuality, and female physiology. This cannot be done in isolation. We must continue to help men to take responsibility for their sexual behaviours, to understand their own sexuality, and above all, to make them equal partners in reproduction. Children must be truly regarded as priorities in our public policies. No longer can we treat child care as a footnote to other social programs.

It was with great sadness that I learned Sister Barbara Ferraro and Sister Patricia Hussey, who spoke out courageously on abortion issues, have decided to resign from the Sister of Notre Dame de Namur Order. My sadness is not for their decision but for the patriarchal structures of the institutional church that did not permit open dialogue and debate.

Surely, if we read the encyclicals of the church we will discover the great need to transform society. We will also discover that the sisters and their order were working toward this transformation. Unfortunately, the masculine logic is to take one part of that needed transformation and hold it up as an example, stating that there is no room for dialogue or problem-solving. There must be public withdrawals of statements and no discussion of the societal causes of a serious problem.

The Holy Spirit speaks through each of us and the voice that asked for the dismissal of the sisters was the voice of the structure, certainly not the voice of Jesus telling us to love one another. The sisters showed courage in challenging the attitudes that are held toward women and abortion. There was no dialogue on why women make the decision to have an abortion, or how society itself is responsible for that decision. Women face an ongoing struggle to be seen as equals within the church, a struggle that is not going to be resolved simply or easily. Is the Spirit moving within the institution? I believe the Holy Spirit speaks to us through Sister Barbara

Ferraro and Sister Patricia Hussey.

Women everywhere, Christian and non-Christian, owe a debt of gratitude to these noble women who refused to be silenced. I know that as they pursue their careers outside the order they will continue their struggle and it is important for them to know our prayers and good wishes are with them.

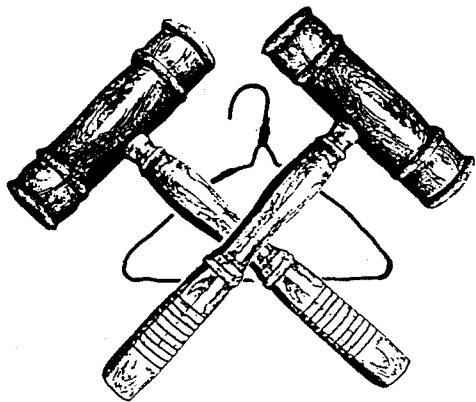
We must recognize that we, the baptized Catholics, are the church. The people who study and develop policies are not to be ignored, but they must dialogue with the whole church. We can only grow by sharing our strength, knowledge and wisdom with each other. If we disagree, we can discuss and search for answers. Too many tragedies have occurred in history when structures and power become more important than the people they are intended to serve.

The abortion issue may be the one that finally reveals the inability of the church structure to be sensitive to the concerns of women. Women do not become pregnant to have an abortion, nor do they become pregnant alone. There is no discussion of penalties against men who do not take personal responsibility for their own reproduction. It is easier to speak of adoption than to suggest that men take ongoing permanent responsibility for the children they conceive. There is no discussion of the collusion that takes place in the first world against the third world to kill men, women and children by contributing to the arms race and the military-industrial complex.

The destruction of our planet by arms and pollution, destruction engineered primarily by men, displays a much greater disrespect for life than abortion. We are selective about the things we choose to condemn.

Until the church opens its arms to men and women, accepting them equally as brothers and sisters, the dialogue that is so necessary to bring about social transformation will not take place. I have prayed with women who are nuns and others who are not; we have come together in prayer asking to be shown the way to best serve God and the human family. Our responses have been an attempt to give everyone dignity, not by control and power, but by knowledge, sharing, support and love.

Marion Dewar is the Member of Parliament for Hamilton-Mountain. She is the former mayor of Ottawa.



**Ernie Epp, NDP MP for Thunder Bay-Nipigon**, got to the crux of the matter on the abortion debate, when he said:

It is all too easy for persons to recognize that abortion is a control question. Every time another man rises to make a speech against abortion, it is astonishing how often he gives himself away in the extent to which he understands that this is a control question, or halfway understands it at least. He knows perfectly well that keeping women in check and under control is a way for men to continue in the control that they have exercised for so long in society.

Against such a context is a choice as an assertion of the freedom for women and their desire to achieve full lives for themselves, to have good lives for their families and to be able to provide for their children the comfort and plenitude we would all like to have. Those are the things that are vital to

life in society. To focus in a very narrow way on the question of whether it is a human life from the moment of conception and on not interfering with it in any way is surely to get involved in one very particular aspect of the question and all too easily to ignore all the others.

He also made a disturbing point later in his speech:

Just over the weekend, I was reading an article from the **Canadian Journal of Women and the Law**, under the rather cute but ultimately incredibly painful title of "Men Will Be Men." It focussed on the fact that 98.5 per cent of cases of sexual abuse are cases of which boys and men are guilty. What is it in our society that leads to that kind of abuse? How profoundly wrong it is to focus on women and the abortion decision they may be driven to in these circumstances instead of recognizing that it is society that needs to be changed and transformed.

## CARAL/ACDA



Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL)  
Association canadienne pour le droit à l'avortement

VOTE for FREEDOM OF CHOICE - access to safe legal abortion for Canadian women.

Volunteers, new members, or donations welcome.

CARAL - Ottawa

P.O. Box 7057  
Vanier, Ontario  
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The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) is the largest women's organization in Canada with approximately 600 member groups. Its head office is in Toronto, Ontario.

NAC's mandate is to lobby on behalf of their members for federal legislative change. They are also involved in public education.

NAC organized the first Leader's debate on women's issues during the 1984 federal election campaign.

In May of 1988 NAC made it to the front page of the *Globe and Mail* because of the events of the Annual General Meeting. The question remains: Is NAC in Crisis?

To contact them write:  
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## Heated disputes finally boil over at NAC meeting

From Page D1

There remains the risk that the federal Government will choose to view the new left-leaning leadership as hopelessly anti-Tory and will have a reason, or an excuse, to withdraw part of its financial support.

But newly elected NAC president Kay MacPherson, a 42-year-old housewife, said that she was in a process of asking whether she was receiving only a "never-ending debate over efforts to democratize the organization's structure."

Playing into these fears was the loss of a key ally, the Ontario Women's Centre, which had been a major source of funding for NAC.

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## Largest feminist association faces crisis

Factional rows, partisan politics has NAC on 'suicidal' course

Shortly afterward, with delegates still puzzling over that development, Mary Lou Murray, who worked on the NAC staff in Ottawa, announced that all of NAC's paid staff, including executive director Judy Campbell, had resigned.

The course of this annual general meeting has persuaded us we would find it impossible to continue working for NAC," Ms. Murray said.

"We are not the first time we've had a crisis," said Kay MacPherson, a long-time feminist activist who was called for an open discussion of the organization's future.

"I'm worried that we're going to have one crisis too many," another delegate, Dorothy Logie of Newfoundland, spoke about the need for an organizational review.

FEMINIST — Page A2

Seven of the eight paid staff at the National Action Committee on the Status of Women resigned Sunday during the group's annual meeting. They said they quit because of poor pay and working conditions.

And disputes erupted Sunday during a vote for the group's new president. A package of recommendations calling for an organizational review met resistance.

Lorraine Greaves, a community college instructor from London, Ont., who led the review committee, was one of two candidates for the presidency. She withdrew, saying later she wanted to shock the committee into realizing it has to go ahead with restructuring.

By Louise Croesby  
Ottawa staff writer

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## At the Annual General Meeting

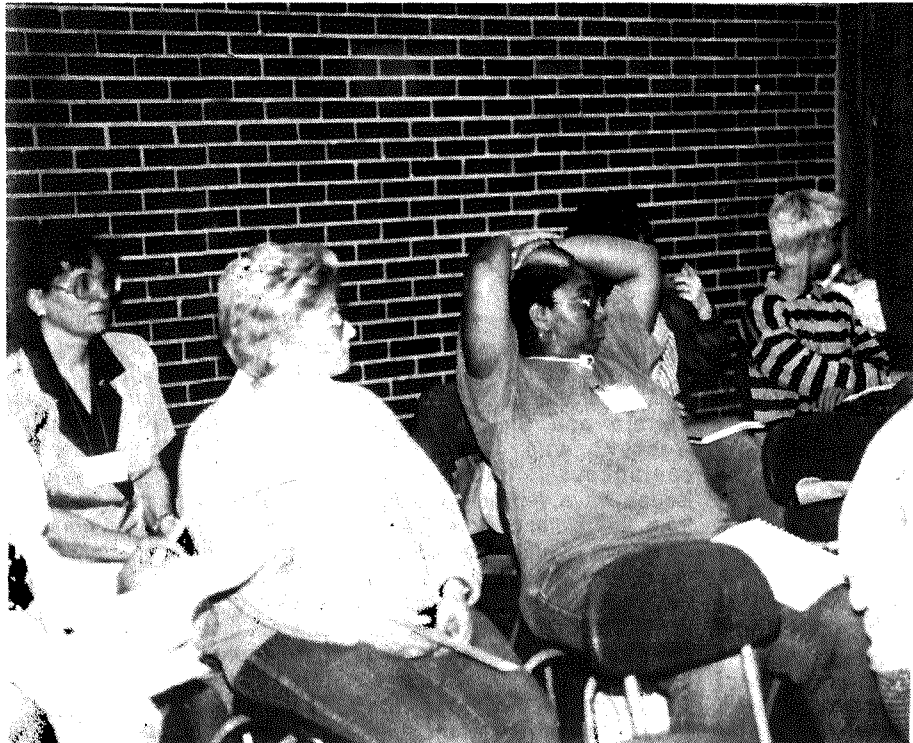


photo by Premika Ratnam

Along with delegates, new President, Lynn Kaye (last person on the left, in the back row) looks on at the proceedings of the AGM.

## A Presidential Candidate Withdraws

Lorraine Greaves' withdrawal speech

Good morning. I have asked for these few minutes to address you to explain why I have removed my name from the presidential ballot. NAC is not at the moment, a happy or a healthy place to be. We can continue to ignore the aspects of our organizational crisis, that are dogging us. Or, we and I really mean you, can reclaim this organization for yourselves.

We all recognized the humour last night, in Doris's speech, where she described our annual blood-letting, the AGM. But at age 16, NAC must decide, whether or not it is desirable, productive or wise to continue as we have. The Organizational Review Committee, informed by hundreds of women who are not and never get to Ottawa, to these meetings, is asking NAC to transform itself.

After 3 to 4 hours yesterday of plenary time alone there appears to be less and less opportunity to do that. You, we, have to make a choice about NAC. Do we all care more about the organization than our own political agenda?

At the moment, a small group within NAC is

obstructionist as opposed to cooperative, protective of a narrow set of interests and skilled at controlling the process of debate.

For those here for the first time, there is perplexity and horror, at how unfeminist our process is. For those who have been here for many years there is the dullness and relentlessness of repetition, the same distorted process, the same people, the same battles. Just because we are used to it doesn't mean we have to stay used to it.

To my supporters, it is a fantasy for you to think that a single president can transform this organization. It can only be done the way the organization was formed, from the grassroots up.

I would have liked to have been the president of the NAC we want, not the NAC we have. At the moment, that's not possible.

I beg you to see this as an opportunity, for rebirth. You know as I do, that the energy of the feminist movement in Canada is only temporarily stifled by our structure. It will in no way be stifled for long. Thank-you very much.

# The NAC staff, except

During the NAC AGM 1988, the entire staff, except one, resigned. Below is the speech, presented by Mary Lou Murray, on the behalf of all the staff of NAC.

This is my sixth AGM, it's the first time I have ever spoken to the AGM. At my first AGM six years ago I was a very scared delegate from the Sudbury Women's Centre. Ever since then I've been a member of the NAC staff and I've been without a voice at this meeting.

Unfortunately, the first time I am speaking to you is to deliver to you a message from all the staff with one exception.

The NAC staff as of the end of June are tendering their resignations.

I would like to take some time to explain this decision. First of all I'd like to say that the one person who is not quitting has made that decision because of extreme financial obligations and is unable to join with the rest of us. I want to speak to everyone in this room. I want to speak in particular to members of member groups and to members of the NAC executive.

I think everybody in this room knows that NAC has a long history of staff/executive problems, but in the past year they have gotten much much

worse. In the past year we have had more than a fifty percent turnover on the NAC staff.

We have joked in the past that NAC fights for the rights of all women workers. Except those of its' own staff. In the past year that joke has become a painful reality.

There is a huge gulf between the pro-labour rhetoric we hear in this room and actual practice within the organization.

Within the past months staff and executive relations have hit an all time low. Early this year staff decided to unionize, we made this decision not as a way to battle

further with the executive but to separate out our interests as workers and to provide us with a formal structure to talk to the executive.

The executive, in a time of severe fiscal stress within the organization, has hired legal assistance to argue before the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) against the inclusion of all staff in the bargaining unit.

It is our understanding that the new president was the original lawyer to fight the case before the OLRB.\*

We have told the executive repeatedly that we feel oppressed as workers. Their response to us has been to say that they feel powerless

too. I would like to say to the executive: you control the budget of NAC, you control the priorities of NAC, you control the committees of NAC, you control the job descriptions and working conditions of NAC staff, you talk to the media, you talk to the politicians, you are the voice of NAC, and I do not believe you when you respond to our very real concerns as workers by telling us that you are powerless too.

I have two questions for you as an executive. Why are you so threatened by two staff in Ottawa, six staff in Toronto? So threatened that the only discussion we would ever have about a self management

\* Members of the Executive later said that, although Lynn

Kaye was approached to take on this task, she declined.

# Is NAC in Crisis?

## The straw that broke this feminist's back, or a plea for Consciousness raising groups

by Annette Costigan

I think that it's time to revive consciousness raising groups, especially for women who are politically active in the struggle for women's liberation. Just to remind us why we are feminists, and to develop some kind of self-conscious process of reflection for action.

It seems to me that those of us who have gone through the process of consciousness-raising once, that it has the simultaneous effect of mobilizing us for action, and distancing us from our sense of oppression. We then move out of CR groups and into 'politics.'

We draw up political agendas which can develop a momentum and immediacy of their own with their own internal reference points. We thus become political activists complete with competing agendas and often a set of scales for weighing up who is more politically correct than whom. (She's very good on lesbian issues, but not so hot on francophone, she's a cultural feminist, and tends to ignore class, she's a good community organizer, but somewhat ethnocentric...and so it goes on).

I am frankly tired of the factions and fragments in the women's movement. In a somewhat naive, idealistic and impatient fashion, I feel that it is time that we got on with the fight to liberate women and not get side-tracked with organizational infighting and power politics.

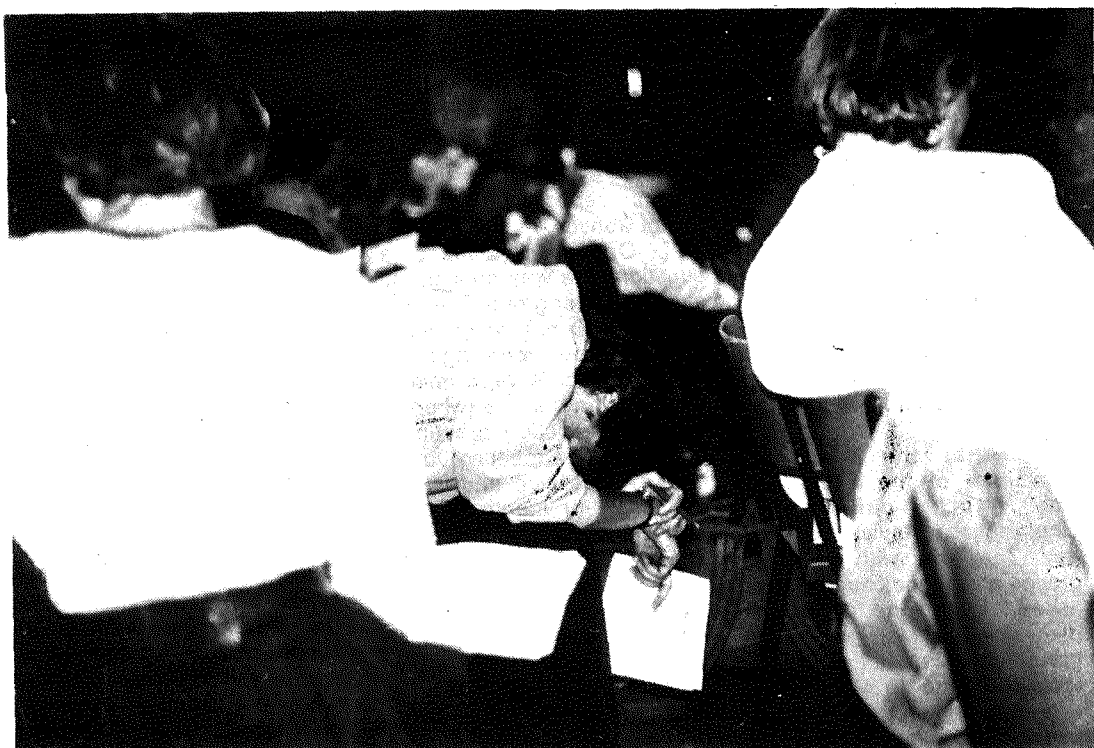
So what has all this got to do with the NAC Annual Meeting? The May '88 AGM was my first experience with NAC. I attended on Sunday only. When I arrived, a woman (whom I later learned was Lorraine Greaves) was in the process of withdrawing as a presidential candidate.

"Who is she, why is she withdrawing?" I vainly asked the women around me. Nobody seemed to know. Our confusion grew steadily as the day progressed. The staff resigned protesting the behaviour of the NAC executive.

"Is what she (staff delegate) says true?" I asked the women around me. Nobody knew. Her resignation speech on behalf of the staff struck a resonant chord in me somewhere. A member of the NAC executive replied to the staff accusations. Someone whispered to me that she was very well respected in the women's movement, and had been at the forefront of the nurses' strike.

"So how do we know what's really going on, or who to believe?" I asked. Nobody seemed to know. I felt fascinated, repelled, disempowered.

Lorraine Greaves, why did you withdraw? I wished you had run, and then at least we might have had some open debate. It was clear to me that the problems which NAC was experiencing were older and



It says it all!!!

photo by Premika Ratnam

more entrenched than I could possibly hope to understand or solve in one day. Equally clear was the fact that the greater membership of NAC did not understand the issues much better than I and without access to any inside information, the AGM process would not facilitate our greater understanding of NAC issues. Robert's rules, hidden agendas and political manipulation defeated us and we were left feeling disempowered and embarrassed by the whole process (not the least because of the ever-present journalists).

But I don't want to sound holier than thou. Everyone who's ever been involved in women's organizations recognizes that competing agendas and political infighting are par for the course. We all have the capacity to behave badly. We often strategize to get our own way. But lately I've

had the feeling that there is just too much infighting, too many agendas, too little trust, too much negative judgement, too little awareness of how to deal with our political differences constructively. For me the NAC annual meeting was the straw that broke this feminists' back.

And so I come full circle to consciousness raising groups. Little cells of trust building and political exploration. A forum that dispenses with the pressure of competing agendas and political infighting. Not that I am naive enough to think that deep-seated and genuine political differences do not exist between feminists right across the spectrum or that they can be dispelled by simply talking. But we must develop strategies for dealing with these differences in a constructive and respectful fashion.

For me, the NAC debacle was neither constructive nor respectful. The sense of dismay and disempowerment which could be felt among the NAC membership was reinforced by the bitter personal and political struggles which were very close to the surface of the meeting.

So I say let's build some time for ongoing reflection and trust building into our movement. Let us recover some of the feelings around the 'personal is political.' Let us guard against unreflective and entrenched political positions.

For me, what the NAC annual meeting ultimately demonstrated is that the 'political' is not political enough.

Annette Costigan is Board member of MATCH International. She is presently working on a thesis on Prostitution.

## one, resign at the AGM

workplace would happen before the OLRB?

My second question to you would be, when are you going to acknowledge your incredible power in this organization and start using it responsibly?

The question of power within NAC is one that has to be addressed.

We, as staff, have made this decision not to be flamboyant and dramatic but because we have felt so invisible and so powerless within the organization that we felt we had to make this decision to put our livelihoods on the line despite financial obligations and dependent families.

Because it's the only way we know how to make sure our message is heard. The course the AGM has taken over the weekend has convinced us that despite our commitment to women, our commitment to feminism, our commitment and our intense devotion to NAC, that one by one we would find it impossible to continue to work for this organization. We made a very painful decision to quit as a unit because we do not want the problems between the executive and the staff to remain invisible.

It is agonizing for us to accept that this action is the only recourse left to us. The executive controls the money

and they will spend what they have to to defeat us before the OLRB, and we feel powerless to stop them.

There are a lot of women in this room who arrive at the AGM feeling powerless and who leave feeling battered. I know because I was once a first time delegate. My message to you as a group is that this is your organization, those are your microphones, get up and use them!

We would appreciate it very much if women here do not spend time trying to convince us to reconsider. It has taken us along time to make this decision, we recognize the enormity of the decision, we

recognize the damage it will do to NAC in the short term.

But our decision is final. If you as member groups want to ensure this decision is of value to the organization you will ask NAC to institute a process for examining feminist management practice, and you will make sure that that process includes staff participation; you will ask for changes to the structures and procedures at the AGM. You will continue to fight for the organizational review.

You have spent, I don't know how long on resolutions for a committee that no longer has a budget, no longer has chair and no longer has

membership. I don't know whether you're aware of that when you stand at those microphones and discuss those resolutions. I would like you to make sure that there is a voice for staff at next year's AGM and all further AGM's.

And today when what you want to say isn't getting said, you will get up to the microphone and say it. The theme of this AGM is Feminism and Political Power. As feminists we always say we don't want power over, we want power with. I would like you to do everything you can to make 'power with' a reality within the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. Thank-you.



# Organizational Review in NAC

*NAC has over the last two years been formally involved in an organizational process. Below is a history of Organizational Review in the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.*

- Member groups in NAC have been asking, for several years, for a review of how the organization operates; how members participate in the AGM, and ways NAC can be more open and representative.

- At the 1986 AGM, a resolution was passed calling for an organizational review process.

- After the AGM, a committee of the Executive was struck, called the Organizational Review Committee. They met with member groups across the country, and asked for everyone to send in their views. Many member groups and Friends of NAC\* took the time to write well thought out letters about possible areas for change.

- At the 1987 AGM, this committee presented its report. The delegates at the AGM decided to continue to the next stage of organizational review - a more thorough and more inclusive survey of member

groups' views on the key issues outlined in the report.

- A broadly-based Organizational Review Committee was struck, and consultants were hired to do the bulk of the legwork in getting views from member groups across Canada. Two parallel processes were undertaken: one in Québec and one in the rest of Canada.

- Outside of Québec, a questionnaire was sent out to every member group. Friend of NAC and Executive member. Face-to-face meetings or conference calls were held in every region but one (where a provincial election prevented the calling of a meeting) to get further discussion and views. Interviews or meetings were held with many past or present Executive members, and the present Executive.

- The results of this work were presented in a report to the 1988 AGM with recommendations for immediate action, and detailed information and suggestions for further consideration.

- The Québec study, also presented at the AGM, focussed on improved translation and interpretation measure and clearer AGM processes.

## Summary of the 1988 Organizational Review Report

All recommendations and suggestions were based on the following five principles:

- Accessibility and representation of the diversity of women's experience in Canada
- Democracy
- Accountability
- Ownership and participation by member groups
- Empowerment

### Key Recommendations:

1. Establish a process for setting annual priorities for NAC. (The process suggested involves the creation of a priorities committee, whose responsibility would be to gather the input of member groups through regional meetings and regional representatives, and present a proposal to the AGM for approval.)

2. Develop comprehensive guidelines for the Executive and the committees for financial and policy decisions. (Currently, the process is very unclear, and sometimes unfair and contradictory.)

3. Develop a more effective approach to the lobby function. (There was confusion about the purpose of the lobby function: is it to bring about change at the federal level? to learn how to lobby? to have an empowering collective experience? More clarity and better ways of work are needed.)

4. Strengthen the regional structure of NAC. (The minimum essential steps proposed were one regional meeting per year, and relieving regional reps of their tremendous responsibilities outside the region.)

5. Increase member participation by ensuring more avenues of participation and by ensuring all avenues are equally accessible to all members. (A series of changes were proposed, mostly to completely overhaul the AGM, and to enable more open committee structure.)

6. Clarify the management function of NAC. Develop clear job descriptions for staff, Executive and committee members. (Again, the confusion and frustration, especially in executive-staff relations, makes this basic step crucial.)

7. The functions of the executive need to be defined,

including in managing staff, priority setting, policy making and resource allocation. The role of the Executive would be balanced between a leadership in policy (defining and representing issues) and leadership in process (enabling full participation of members in all aspects of the organization and ensuring clear, responsible processes).

The 1988 AGM adopted these key recommendations, as well as the minimum requirements of the Québec report, and also approved related actions:

- a regional meeting or equivalent in each region during 1988-89;

- policy committees to be co-chaired by one executive member and one non-executive member, with other members to be solicited through ads in NAC's magazine and active outreach.

- the creation of a new Organizational Review Committee to oversee implementation. The chairpersons are Sandi Kirby, Nova Scotia and Ann McGrath, Alberta (both are Executive members).

\* Term used within NAC for individuals who join NAC. They are non-voting members as only groups can be voting members of NAC.

## Since the Annual General Meeting

### An Open Letter to the Women's Movement

by Julie Lee

I am writing in order to make you aware of my resignation from the NACSW\* Board. Originally, I had planned to write two very different letters: the first to the NAC Executive -- a bloodless, formal statement, and the second to the general feminist readership--a personal account complete with feelings, experiences and analysis.

However, I have thought a lot about this distinction and have decided to write one single, integrated statement about my reasons for resigning. Since, it seems, the single most important reason for my resignation is to resist any further separation between the spirit/mind and the body of the feminist movement.

Needless to say, the apparent gap between these two entities -- reminiscent of the separation between the public and private and the personal and political -- is what I have identified as THE NAC PROBLEMATIC. In short, I have found NAC to be a dangerously alienating place to be. And, if this is the case for the particular, (i.e., one or a group of feminist activists), then the organization cannot work towards establishing the universal or community-based goals of the feminist revolution.

Indeed, I am talking about two very basic feminist

principles: 1) that the particular or "subject" is, and should remain, the foundation of all careful analysis and action and, 2) that what we are trying to achieve is truly revolutionary and there ought to be no place within feminist structures for reformist compromises. These principles have arisen out of the historical understanding that male structures and processes are decidedly hostile to the needs of women.

I have seen NAC as violating both of the above principles. In terms of the first, where the experiences of women are raised to legitimacy and respect, I have been personally attacked/discredited within NAC on two separate occasions, for being who I am and for what my life has been.

I am talking about references to my work around violence against women and, in particular, how my activism rests upon developing a political consciousness around my experiences as an incest survivor. Interestingly, I am quite accustomed to being discredited or my analysis reduced ad hominem, but this usually occurs when I tread on patriarchal toes.

The second reason for my resignation is my belief that the NAC organization is flawed by

the maintenance of a male structure, (from Robert's Rules to partisan politics), which serves to neutralize the radical potential of feminist process. This reality is rendered hopeless, for me, by the resistance by those in control of both the public and the hidden agenda to let go of the organization's structure. The argument seems to be that without "structure" no work will be done, and granted the work has overwhelming proportions. Nevertheless, as feminists have been arguing for quite a while, "the" male structure is not the structure and our task is to create the alternative.

For me, then, I need to work in a place where my action has the most impact -- where my energy feels directed and not diffused. I also need to work in a context where I feel valued and respected in order for me to replenish the spirit needed for demanding that the world change in fundamental ways. After all, I have resigned from NAC, and not the women's movement!

*Julie Lee is an activist in the women's movement around violence against women. She is the director of a women's shelter in Goderich, Ontario.*

\* National Action Committee on the Status of Women



### The situation in PEI

by Ruth Freeman

In the wake of this year's tumultuous and emotional A.G.M., and mass exodus of NAC staff, Prince Edward Island member groups are very concerned about the organization's future. P.E.I. regional rep Ruth Freeman resigned her position following the first executive meeting in Ottawa. In her letter of resignation, she stated:

"The image of women silenced by a process which is the very antithesis of feminism left me feeling anxious and disillusioned. During the executive meeting, the lack of verbalized recognition of the crisis facing NAC added to my feelings of uneasiness. This crisis, and strategies to attempt reconciliation with NAC staff, should have been at the top of the agenda. At the insistence of one member, a discussion of personnel was added to the bottom of the

agenda. The 'crisis' did not make it at all."

P.E.I. member groups have chosen a new representative, but are adopting a wait-and-see attitude in regards to NAC. There is general acceptance of the fact that while NAC may be experiencing difficult times now, it remains the best vehicle for achieving some form of feminist solidarity and progress. However, most acknowledge that there must be changes made in process and structure if NAC is to be representative of -- and accessible to -- member groups. According to one member: "If we don't have a structure and process which reflect feminist ideology, we might as well join the Rotary Club."

*Ruth Freeman lives on Prince Edward Island and was briefly on the NAC executive.*

# Unionization at the National Action Committee on the Status of Women

by Judy Campbell, Maxine Hermolin, Enid Moscovitch, Mary Lou Murray, Jennifer Palin, and Lisa Phipps, past NAC staff members

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) is Canada's largest feminist lobby group, with 600 member groups across Canada. Membership is diverse, from the Communist to the Progressive Conservative Parties' "Women's Caucus".

This article is the story of why and how staff decided to unionize at NAC last year. Those of us who work in "idealistic" organizations often feel disloyal talking about some of the problems we face, but we believe that many of our organizations have very similar problems and that by sharing our stories, solutions can be found. For the continued health of our organizations, we believe such "story-telling" is necessary.

As is the case with many non-profit, activist organizations, NAC was underfunded from the start, and has relied heavily on the voluntary hard work of an over-extended, twenty-five member Executive which is expected to accomplish the bulk of NAC's crushing workload with the assistance of voluntary committees, under often unfriendly media scrutiny. Canada's flagship feminist organization, representing over three million women, had seven and a half permanent paid staff last year. NAC also contracted out work such as magazine editing, research and bookkeeping.

Over the years, NAC has often had bitter labour relations reflected in high staff turnover and a thick file of memos from staff to the NAC Executive reiterating the same litany of complaints: overwork, an out-of-date wage policy, a stressful working environment, lack of respect, contradictory Executive direction, etc.

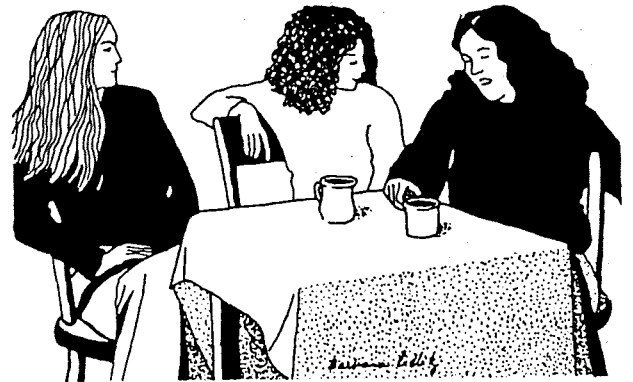
Exacerbating these common labour problems were unclear rules for problem resolution. Personnel policy was in a series of conflicting memos and meeting minutes. The Personnel Committee had a high turnover of Executive members and an unclear staff status and mandate.

By November of 1987, NAC had had a fifty-percent staff turnover in six months

and a similar ratio of Personnel Committee turnover. It was clear "something had to be done". As a progressive organization, NAC had an active history of supporting labour unions and recognized the particular value unions could have for women workers. One thing unionization could do at NAC would be to provide a structure and procedures for labour-management negotiations. At its November meeting with staff the Personnel Committee suggested they would support

and appreciated the work being done by women on the NAC Executive, but as workers we had interests not always congruent with the Executive's. As a first step towards recognizing this, NAC staff collectively wrote a memo to the Personnel Committee that they wished to meet with the Personnel Committee in January as a staff group, rather than as ambiguous members of the Personnel Committee.

Through much discussion at staff meetings, it became



voluntary recognition by the NAC Executive of a staff union.

In early January, 1988, all staff from both the Ottawa and Toronto offices met to discuss staff issues and established the principle that whatever major decisions were to be made, they would be made as a staff group; at each stage, the unionization process was by consensus. We recognized that in the highly-charged political setting where we worked, we had suffered from being played off against each other; solidarity as co-workers was identified as crucial to our being able to improve our work environment.

As feminists we respected

clear to us that many of our problems as workers at NAC shared the same root cause: the Executive had great difficulty determining priorities, which led to conflicting and contradictory directions to staff from a very "hands on" Executive. For our work to become manageable, we needed an Executive which would collectively determine and take responsibility for prioritizing and planning the work to be done in relation to the limited resources available. It was clear to us that if some staff were singled out as "managers", all that would happen is scapegoating of these "management" staff for

ongoing confusing Executive directions.

We decided we needed legal protection for our staff group to help us maintain the solidarity with each other that we needed, so in February we applied for Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) union certification. The entire NAC staff had signed CUPE union cards, and we asked that all paid staff be included in the bargaining unit. NAC's Executive hired a lawyer to oppose inclusion of NAC's Executive Co-ordinator, because they wanted to separate her out as "management".

Very unfortunately, the Executive discussed this *in camera* and from that point on would not discuss any aspect of unionization with staff, saying that they would be charged with unfair management practices if they did so. This refusal to talk with the staff meant that we were not able to find out what their concerns were. Similarly, they were not able to discuss with us a range of alternative staffing models including all paid staff in a bargaining unit, which we had researched and believed could work.

Their behaviour appeared to staff as unnecessarily rigid, paternalistic, self-serving and "unfeminist". There was no forum for discussion left other than the very adversarial one in front of the OLRB, where a judicial body rather than the women involved would make the final decision about inclusion of the Executive Co-ordinator in our bargaining unit. In an already very strained labour environment this led to mutual suspicion with the possibility of amicable resolution unlikely. It was a dismal beginning to this new stage of Executive-staff relations and left the organization in a precarious position as NAC faced new crises.

In 1987-88, NAC had three Treasurers, two financial co-ordinators, and several draft budgets. As the year progressed it became evident NAC would have a considerable deficit this fiscal year. At its April meeting, NAC's second Acting Treasurer presented different cost-cutting options for consideration, such as the closing of one of NAC's offices, staff lay-off, etc. None of these had been discussed with staff. At the same meeting the

Toronto office's highly skilled Bilingual Information Clerk resigned citing exhaustion due to stress, to be followed within the month by notice of resignation by the Executive Co-ordinator, effective July 1.

The dismal financial picture, a lack of clear membership direction from the Annual General Meeting about proposed major organizational reform which would impact significantly on staff, and ongoing incidents of Executive-staff friction, exhausted staff who had been putting in dozens of hours/weeks of overtime prior to what turned into a very stormy AGM. The remaining staff who had not already resigned decided to resign as a block at the AGM to highlight labour relations problems, and to appeal to the Annual Meeting delegates to hold the Executive accountable in future for improved staff relations.

A day later at the first meeting of the newly elected Executive, a motion was passed asking staff to reconsider their resignations with an amendment that NAC would drop opposition to inclusion of the Executive Co-ordinator in the bargaining unit. Unfortunately, at the OLRB hearing scheduled three days later, NAC's lawyer was not so instructed, and so she asked for another postponement of this decision, rather than advising the OLRB that NAC was not going to oppose its staff on this issue anymore.

To staff, this was a clear indication that contradictory messages from the Executive would continue to be a problem and that the Executive was still not uniformly committed to a labour relations practice congruent with the labour-positive ideals of the organization. All but one of the NAC staff left NAC's employ at the end of June, 1988.

For many reasons, probably the least of which were the staff resignations, NAC's Annual Meeting was front page news across Canada and is still eliciting analysis and media commentary. We hope that in all the rhetoric about "feminist process", some consideration will be given to the importance of appropriate models for feminist labour relations for the longterm health of activist feminist organizations.

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# Upon Reflection

by Lorraine Greaves

As the months roll quickly by after the NAC AGM '88, the issues of process and strategy remain important ones for the women's movement in Canada. As NAC is not the only feminist organization currently facing internal problems, it's clear that wider issues regarding how women work together and how we resolve conflicts in positive ways are crucial not only to our present, but also to our future.

These issues cannot simply be called "process issues", and then tucked away, ignored, denied or devalued, just because they appear to lack concreteness. The easy divisions we may have made, or do make, between process and product, that imply that task orientation is incompatible with, or at least separate from a good caring process, need to be seriously evaluated.

In addition, the subsequent division between those who see good process as an essential, has to be reconciled. In my mind, process is akin to good health, without which talk of product or tasks, becomes academic, good process will provide constant energy, commitment and creativity, with which to do the jobs necessary to maintain our organizations and create feminist change.

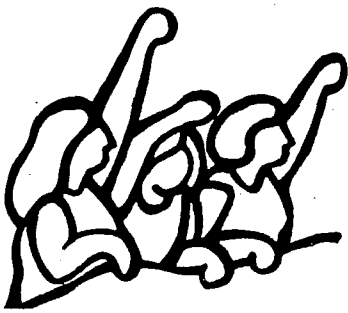
**The lack of a feminist process in the largest feminist organization in the country is surely cause for concern, not denial; rapt attention, not minimization; and abundant open discussion, not silence.**

## Let's Get on With It

There are pitfalls in discussing feminist process and the value of developing and building one, in NAC, or any other organization. Everyone can easily regard good feminist process the way motherhood has often been regarded...of course, it's a good thing, now having agreed upon that, let's not nurture it, value it, reward it, or treat it as a priority, but let's get on with the real work. So it's one thing to get agreement on the value of a healthy organization, but hard to commit our time, resources and energy to creating that health.

Such is the situation within the National Action Committee at present. While public commitment to the task of reorganizing NAC in a healthier way has been made, little concrete action has yet to follow. NAC is at a crossroads. If we were to devote at least half of our energies and resources to ensuring the organization's health, we may get close to recreating the energy found at the grassroots of our movement into a national force.

This requires a commitment from all of the members of NAC, and from all of the Executive at NAC, that clearly states the priority of developing a healthy process. This needs to be done immediately, and it needs to be done openly, inclusively, and with the full involvement of the membership, as well as those groups documented in the consultants' report who are not members. It needs to be a priority, and it demands the erasing of a well-entrenched power structure, some dysfunctional communication patterns, particularly within the



Executive and between Executive and staff, and the rigid protection of territory and ideology that NAC has had to become used to.

Such a radical change in attitude and practice represents a major and dramatic shift for NAC. In particular, the most important indicators of that change are probably to be found in the minutiae of the personal interactions within the organization. As in any group, family or relationship, the insidiousness of eye-rolling, deep sighing, and other forms of non-verbal dismissive behaviour, though rarely appearing on a printed agenda, in fact create the agenda. Further, such behaviour infects the atmosphere, taints the discussion, shatters even the perception of a unity of goal, and worst of all, erodes the spirits of those so treated. Outright rudeness, snide and sarcastic remarks, and interruptive behaviour, are also typical modes of interaction at a NAC Executive meeting.

The effect of these behaviours seep through to the annual meeting, for the ready observation of the delegates. For those new to NAC, the competitive, aggressive, grandstanding speeches are a shock. Behind-the-scenes crudeness and negativity masquerades as "politicking" and "alliance-building", yet focusses on making one "side" look good by making the other look bad. As was clearly felt at this year's AGM, procedures such as Robert's Rules become a cage for some and a comfort for others, depending on the facility with those procedures.

For example, in the emotional atmosphere immediately following my resignation from the presidential ballot and

the staff's collective resignation as employees of NAC, there were some who calmly tried to resume the resolutions discussion, while others craved an open discussion and a procedure more responsive to the events.

Three separate facilitators, hired by the NAC Executive during the years 1985-88 had no particular impact on improving the communication patterns. This was likely because trust simply did not form the basis of the NAC Executive interactions. Assumptions, loosely based on observable or historical facts of someone's life or work, were and are often made about a woman's "political" stance. Apart from the unfairness, inaccuracy, and implied rigidity of this process, the observable purpose of such assumptions was to separate the "good gals" from the "bad gals". Those women whose "politics" were ambiguous, unformed, forming, or considered irrelevant, were dismissed. What better way to intimidate women, inhibit creative discussion, and limit the exploration of a new "politic", I cannot imagine.

## Let's just get used to it

There are those who argue that oppressive behaviours, interpersonal conflicts, and bloody ideological battles are part of the territory in an organization like NAC. "This is politics", they say, and the implication is get a thicker skin or get out. Any notion of "sisterhood" is regarded by these women as an unattainable, idealistic, (prehistoric?) state... something quaint, that we used to talk about in the movement. To so glibly dismiss the essence of modern feminism represented an ignorance (or perhaps loss) of the more profound, world-changing potential of our movement.

## Let's wear badges

There are those who argue that our differences need to be more clearly defined and overtly acknowledged, and that this clarity will bring an acceptance of conflict, much the way formal political parties define themselves with respect to each other. However, one of the hallmarks of the grass roots feminist movement has been the attention paid to the development of empathetic validation of other women's experience as the basis for political action. Such work may well be undermined by settling into clear sides, ready to do battle. Worse, though, this view implies an acceptance of the male model of political organization, and the assumption that women can't do better.

## All in the family

There are those who react to news of internal dissent within NAC (and presumably other organizations) with something similar to the traditional responses to revelations of familial incest.

The impulse is to minimize, deny and then silence the reports and the reporters. Although understandably tempting to keep such troubles "in the family", it is still a tired and closed response to other women's attempts to "name" issues as they experience them.

Doris Anderson, in a Toronto Star column of July 30, described the AGM as a "debacle" where "private linen got a very public airing". Notwithstanding the temptation to believe and even pretend that everything is and will be fine, the delegates at the 88 annual meeting voted to keep the proceedings open to the press, an act of strength and pride in our organization. This act was an affirmation that NAC is indeed public property, and that the women's movement is very much a part of Canadian political life. Further, the struggle to change, and to become a more democratic and

of a feminist process is indeed a challenge, as feminists plunge into uncharted waters, attempting to define a new way of working and being together. Because this work is idealistic and somewhat abstract, is no reason to dismiss or undervalue it. The feminist movement is a revolutionary movement; starting out by radically altering the way we deal with each other, work together, meet together, plan together, make policy together, and maybe even play together is surely the place to start.

## Rebuilding strength

The upheaval of the NAC 88 AGM, where my resignation and the staff's resignation forced the naming of the problem within the NAC family, is a first sign of health. Had I not resigned from the presidential ballot, I would have been silenced on these issues of process that are so important to the future of NAC.



representative organization is not a source of shame.

## Prescribing an alternative

In its assessment of its organization over the past two years, NAC learned that, though well-loved by its members, it has fallen short of fully including or involving all of its constituencies in a meaningful way. Various regions and kinds of women felt underacknowledged, out of touch, or simply unrepresented. When women report these feelings, that, in itself is important enough to cause an immediate and clear reassessment of priorities. Without full involvement and full support from the membership, NAC cannot pretend to carry on, but must instead create a model of inclusivity by creating a truly feminist organization.

Some groups of member-groups of NAC are meeting across the country, in an attempt to deal with and solve aspects of NAC's organizational problems. The creation

The lack of a feminist process in the largest feminist organization in the country is surely cause for concern, not denial; rapt attention, not minimization; and abundant open discussion, not silence. The coming year will see whether the NAC Executive and the NAC membership stay concerned, attentive, open and noisy about the problem of developing a healthy organization.

The development of a healthy organization is clearly our lifeline to the future of a formal women's movement in Canada. We've had the tests, we've got the diagnosis. We need not let our fear about the treatment deter us in our search for health. Further, the acquisition of permanently changed habits, in fact, a whole new way of being, is the only way to maintain our organization and ensure our vitality. Let's get on with it.

*Lorraine Greaves is a past executive member of NAC. She lives in London, Ontario and is a community college professor.*



# An urgent need for change

by Beth Brehaut

As a feminist and a recent past executive member of NAC, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, I have felt a need to express my dismay and disappointment at the way in which this highly visible "feminist" organization goes about its business.

I do not now, nor will I ever, believe that the end justifies the means. NAC has done immense good, more than seems possible with the limited funds and the astronomical work to be done. And yet, NAC is too aware of where the majority of its funds come from and entirely too protective of the "image" it has built for itself. In an attempt to not play into the hands of the "opposing views," NAC trips over itself to seem invincible. Trust and self-worth are very minor factors rarely taken into consideration.

This organization continues to elect - mostly by acclamation (WHY? Give it a try and see!) - strong, caring feminists. These women were likely in good health at the

beginning of their terms and are quickly exhausted, depressed and ill from the overwork, insane expectations, lack of support, and above all, from disillusionment.

This organization has developed into a shadow cabinet of the government. It deals with every issue, since every issue is a feminist issue, and does not accept the impossibility of this task. At best NAC has had 7 1/2 staff members, 25 executive members, and a very limited number of committee members from across the country doing the work of thousands. With the exception of an overworked/ underpaid/ undervalued staff (where have we heard that before?), all are volunteers with full-time jobs, be it at home or in the work place, or more frequently, both. The task the active NAC members take upon themselves is not possible, but not willing to give up the prestige, and with the sincere belief that the feminist world will crumble if NAC shows weakness

(change?), the organization plows ahead - and drives right over its staff, its executive members, and its committee members and leaves the member organizations believing (1) all is well or asking (2) what the hell is going on?

This organization has to face reality and start setting down its priorities - not continue to be led by the government in power. It has to realize that this country is loaded with capable, willing organizations that will deal with the issues that directly pertain to them and handle them well. They do not need NAC's blessing on every single brief and every single issue.

From one feminist's point of view, NAC is in severe jeopardy of becoming a major sham. The feminist process is almost non-existent in the workings of this organization. If the closest members of the organization have little or no faith in the process by which they work, how long will the organization survive? The staff and the executive

members know full well how poorly the present process works.

Never before have I been so disappointed with a group of women. Within this organization surely one should not expect to be made invisible. Honesty, sincerity, hard work, respect, and support give way to mistrust. NAC hired a feminist, hardworking, reliable staff, gave them too much work, too little information or control, certainly too little salaries, then treated these women with total disrespect. And that is putting it mildly. Personally, I believe that this very upper-middle-class-oriented organization has no concept of the work asked of its staff, no respect for the doing of that work, and no respect for those who do it. Actions speak louder than words (and there were damn few words) and the actions of the NAC organization must be very demoralizing for the staff.

Their gutsy and sincere last attempt at NAC's last Annual General Meeting to get

the organization's attention to see the very real desperation within the workings of NAC was met with stony silence and ignored. The pen cannot express the anger, frustration and disillusionment I feel at being a witness to, and by association and lack of action, a part of, the treatment of these women who are the single most important group holding NAC together. Yes, we know that, don't we? We truly value them...etc...sound familiar?

NAC has grown. It has gotten so big that issues and image are vastly more important than people. The end does not justify the means. I cannot support an organization that tramples women. I do support those whose efforts are sincere in guiding such an organization back onto the feminist path.

Beth Brehaut was last year's Prince Edward Island regional representative on the NAC executive. She lives in Montague, PEI.

## There is hope

The fog has not quite lifted with respect to the NAC AGM.

I have read most mainstream and alternative analysis and commentary of the press; I have attended two Executive Meetings in my capacity as Member at Large, and survived with no apparent back wounds; the B.C. Caucus women who are located in the Lower Mainland have provided me with much support, information, and inspiration and our Regional Conference plans are moving along nicely.

The staff who resigned at the AGM have, I regret, left and new staff are now in place. Yet there continues to be this churning feeling when I try and sort out exactly what occurred at this year's AGM, and how I feel about it today. It feels like a very deep and heavy heartache.

It seems that in the immediate fallout from the explosion everyone quickly ran to their typewriters and microphones and declared that, despite it all, we're going to come out of this turmoil better evolved; that it was a necessary naming of the problem and thus an inevitable starting point for the solution. I'm not so sure.

I have been lucky to be able to attend the NAC AGM for the past four years and have been truly inspired by the power, strength, knowledge and commitment of the women in attendance. The sheer joy of being in the same room with 600 women concerned with and working towards the betterment of women's lives was, and will continue to be, awe-inspiring.

After the declared apparent "new start" I read some articles which chose to continue to polarize the sides, the "we" and "them" that appears recurrent in my experience with women's organizations.

I heard continued criticisms, of Lorraine Greaves' resignation; of women such as

Marjorie Cohen and Lynne Kaye, who have been involved in the organization for many years, continuing to ignore the wishes of the membership and set their own agendas.

It seems we have named the problem of needing to redesign the organization but have not yet set out to provide the framework and basis from which we will create the solution.

It is my view that that basis must be one of trust and belief! Trust in each other, pure and simple trust that we are all working towards a better experience for women, and a solid belief that we have among us the brilliance, skill, dedication, insight, intuition, knowledge and experience to create a system that is empowering and at the same time efficient.

As long as there is one woman who feels alienated or silenced we certainly cannot claim as we have in the past, that we speak for all women. In fact, we will only speak for all women when each woman speaks clearly, freely and without fear, for herself. If the basis or framework for the solution to the structure that exists is trust and belief then we will no longer need to waste so much valuable time analyzing what is really going on or what devious plot someone may or may not be devising.

I expect the more politically literate of you will be suggesting "political naivete" etc. etc. Well that it may be, but for me anyway if we cannot get back to that place which brought many women into the movement in the first place, which had its basis in trust and belief then there is no "movement".

It is only in the unity and strength of our "sisterhood" that we will ever truly evolve, and yes, make major and lasting changes in the world.

That unity must exist in an environment where we truly support one another, where we give true thought and consideration to each woman's view, and share power among us equally in the belief that each of us brings a valid and important ability to the usage of power in the traditional world. That will enable us to change that traditional world, to make it better and to make it a place where we are all treated as equals. We must, however, first learn how to treat each other truly as equals or it all remains theory.

The changes may indeed take longer but they will occur with less compromise, pain, and destruction if we begin from the premise that we, all women involved in the feminist movement in Canada are going to provide the model for a distinctly evolved way of life. It is quite a challenge to find the system which empowers and enables rather than dominates, which speaks from the heart as well as the head, which values life rather than dollars, and which allows for the individual voice to be heard.

Nonetheless it is the belief that women will do just that that has inspired our work thus far. It is the trust I have in women that makes me believe today more than ever that we will embrace such simple and direct principles. We need never take back our words if we all speak honestly; we need never fall if we have each other's support; we need never feel betrayal if we know there is trust; we need never doubt our abilities if we believe in one another; and we will never fail if we can nurture the commonality of our experience and build our future from within it.

Sharon Costello is a musician living in Vancouver and a member of the NAC Executive.

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# What is feminist process?

"It is only in unity that women can effect change." (NAC organizational review report, 1988)

Recently, we had the incredible opportunity to talk to a great many women under the disguise of work. The work was a contract with NAC to do an organizational review analysis, and the opportunity was going across the country to meet with the women who make up the member groups of the organization.

We returned from our travels, wrote a report, attended an AGM and watched an organization struggle in pain and anger.

We have some observations we want to make based on our experiences in working with NAC. Most of them relate to what became the second most popular question at the AGM: "What is feminist process?" (The most persistent question being "What is going on?") We are also drawing on our experience as longstanding contributing members of the women's movement.

To answer the question about feminist process: we don't know yet. But what we do know is that it is our responsibility, as women committed to social change just as it is yours, to find the answer.

We suggest that the answer lies in each of us being

We would like expand a little on those five and offer one or two points or examples of each.

**Empowerment** - An over-used term, and yet often misunderstood. Why?

Because it is a word that challenges the very foundation of the women's movement. It moves women from being victims to being responsible for not only our own destiny, but for enabling other women to reach their own goals, ideals and dreams, even when they are different from ours.

This does not negate our real oppressions, but it does make us responsible for what power we do have.

Women do not live solely as victims and survivors, nor do we remain only strong, empowered women. We are on a moving wheel, a fluid continuum. Just as we participate in our own enabling and the growing of others, so we sometimes participate in perpetuating our victimization and the victimization of other women.

We need to stop identifying individuals and whole groups of women as permanently victims. We need to stop scapegoating strong women as having no needs.

Each woman has some power, some privilege and thus some opportunity to do something for herself or

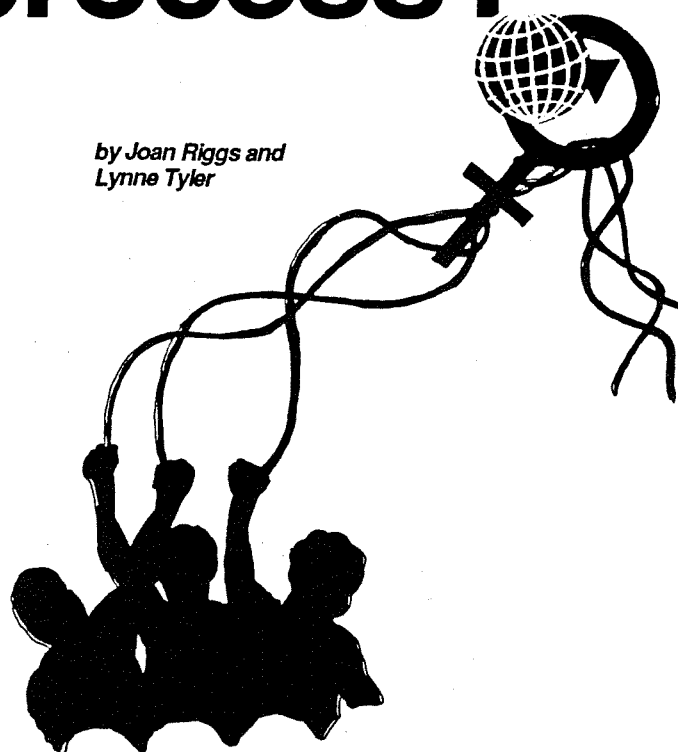
**Accessibility** - Accessibility does not mean adding on token representatives of the various "categories" of women who are presently in vogue to committees or boards.

Token appointments of individual "minority" women assumes that each of these women conveys all the viewpoints of her particular constituency. It is token because it assumes that unlike white, middle-class, anglophone women who have a variety of viewpoints, black women, for example, all have the same opinion.

To paraphrase one delegate to the NAC AGM, "We are not ketchup, that you add to your resolutions, your issues. We have our own issues."

Sadly, tokenism is often used under the title of "affirmative action" and, in fact, pre-empts more fundamental structural action.

Instead, we feel accessibility means opening up the entire organization, the entire movement, to women of differing experiences and backgrounds. This means structural openness. As Ettie Rutherford, of the Calgary chapter of the Congress of Black Women of Canada, said, "If NAC had been open to poor women, it would already be



by Joan Riggs and  
Lynne Tyler

graphic from Toronto International Women's Day Committee

members for giving direction to the leadership and participating in some part of the action.

We are all leaders at some time, and we are all followers, whether in collectives, in hierarchies, or in any structure. In some instances, we act in both roles at the same time.

Each of these roles requires skills.

Leadership means having a vision not only on the issues but on the process of how we decide on those issues. It's no good having the right idea if your group cannot understand it and has not participated in defining it.

Accountability in the "follower" role means supporting and directing women in leadership roles -- giving them guidance, giving them room to make mistakes and helping them learn from those mistakes, giving them honest feedback, and working with them.

Responsible leadership also means knowing your privilege and not pretending you are powerless.

The white women's movement has been built on all women being victims. It has allowed leaders of the movement to make decisions that impact directly on women while simultaneously claiming to be powerless.

One of the most frightening experiences of the NAC contract was talking to one Executive member who many of us would define as quite powerful. She described how she was so misunderstood and powerless. This may have been true in relation to patriarchal structures, but within the women's movement, she has considerable power. Power that was unrecognized and not dealt with responsibly.

As members of the women's movement, we must ensure our leaders know what we expect of them, what we will do to support them, and how we will hold them accountable.

**"Power is the one force in the universe that is never wasted. In other words, if we do not use our power, it will be used by some other force."** (Audre Lorde)

**Democracy** - That's an easy one, you say. Everyone has a vote. Or better still, we work by consensus.

But, for everyone to have an equal voice, they must have an equally informed voice. This means access to the same information and opportunities to learn about the issues.

How does an organization do that? They deal with language and accessibility issues. They work on breaking down the other barriers that prevent one woman from hearing another (women with disabilities, racism, homophobia, etc.).

The reality of most women is that we experience our oppression in an internal, anguished way. When we express it outwardly, we often express it in a safe place, where no one can retaliate. That appears to be the space where women converge.

Women can ill afford to see our oppression as singular. When someone states that a person, organization or experience is racist, there is little doubt that her statement is part of a reality that makes up the whole.

It is a white liberal response when we abandon the entire reality, if a woman of colour stands up to denounce something as racist. She is not better than others, truer than others, just as before she was not lesser. She is simply equal. Her voice has equal weight...her reality equal weight. She is part of a total reality.

Repeatedly, we have seen women vote to prove that they were not racist, not anti-francophone, etc. They were no longer voting on the substance of the issue, they weren't even trying to understand it. They were voting out of guilt. The result is that they do not learn, they do not come to terms with their underlying racism, their underlying view of oppression.

It is no victory for Women of Colour if white women's response to racism is to give in to the demands of the moment out of fear and guilt.

This knee-jerk response by white liberal feminists is not only partitioning, it undermines the basic democratic principles of any organization.

cont'd on page 43



honest with ourselves and others, in articulating our needs, beliefs and ideas early on, so they can be incorporated into the overall picture. This is the responsibility of all of us as individuals, and the responsibility of our organizations.

There is a myth that there are "process" people and "issue" people. Or that process and substance are mutually exclusive. They are not.

Whenever you create a body of knowledge or a policy position, be it on free trade or violence against women, you choose a process by which you develop that knowledge or position. This includes how you treat your staff (if any) and other members of your group, how you treat women who don't agree with your conclusions, how you treat women from whom you gather your information, etc.

"How we respond to each other's ideas and thoughts is as crucial as the thoughts we are trying to convey." (NAC Organizational Review Report)

As part of our report to NAC, we proposed five principles as the basis for feminist structure and process.

another woman. She also has the potential to abuse her own power.

Enabling women is a job and someone has to do it. But the work is very different from what is rewarded in the mainstream women's movement.

We only have so many hours in the day we have control over, and we choose what we do with those hours.

We can choose to stand up and talk about immigrant women, and be noticed for our commitment to those issues, or we can choose to enable immigrant women to speak for themselves. But that sometimes takes hours or days of invisible work.

We could all write articles or some of us could sit with a woman who has never had her voice heard by the rest of us and enable her to write.

**"If each one of us does not use this power which we are acquiring, then what is the meaning of empowerment?"**

(Audre Lorde)

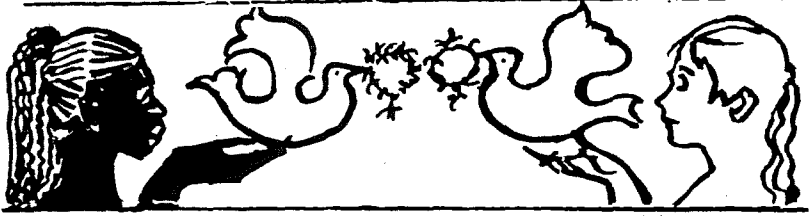
open to women of colour." It would simply be open to differences. (Obviously, this doesn't just apply to NAC.)

To do this effectively requires going to the women presently excluded and opening a dialogue with them about how (if) they want to be involved.

It also means clarity in the way our organizations work. Changing the rules, or ignoring them or not having any, is a great way to exclude women. This is usually done under the guise of tradition ("we've always developed our budget this way"), collective process, or speed ("we're too busy for that kind of red tape, we have to get this brief out this week").

**Accountability** - This has traditionally meant voting in the people you like and voting out the people you don't. (In collectives, the process is a little more indirect, but essentially the same.)

Something women's organizations could benefit from is mutual accountability: the "leaders" accountable for carrying out action and enabling participation, the



## Equity in Language Training Program

by Alma Estable

### What is feminist process? (cont'd)

Far better to have an open, inclusive, frank discussion making it safe for all women to speak. We will hear anger, insight, prejudice, and disagreement of all kinds. But at least we will know what we are dealing with, and be able to move forward together.

**Ownership** - Silence is a vacuum where women who have clear vision of what they want can get up and speak. What would happen if those who stood up were facilitators interested in enabling all of us to get up and speak?

We cannot wait for our "leaders" to enable us to speak. We need to also take the plunge ourselves and speak our piece.

Think about your life. You are most likely a worker. You may be working for other women or in women's organizations. Think what extreme conditions would motivate you to publicly leave your organization, disgracing it and perhaps yourself. And then stop and think about the NAC staff. At the AGM, all but one quit. One of them had been there for thirteen years.

Yet, most of the women at the AGM were silent. Think about how you would feel if you

quit under those conditions. Wouldn't you like to know that the women you had been working for felt some ownership of the organization, of the problems of the organization?

Organizations that name themselves feminist are ours, whether we want them or not. If NAC does something on behalf of women and we are women, then we are left to defend them or denounce them. Shouldn't we ensure that what they do is something we can defend, something we do believe?

We offer you these thoughts as a contribution to the discussion already well underway in the women's movement about defining feminist process. Our thoughts, like the overall discussion, are evolving, and we look forward to a continuation of the lively debate.

Finally, to close, one last thought from the NAC organizational review report: **"We believe that all of our voices are valid. No woman need be silenced for another woman to be heard."**

Next installment: How do we actually do this?

Canada is not benefitting fully from the skills, experience and labour potential of immigrant women who cannot speak English or French. Structural barriers and discrimination have historically denied immigrant women equal opportunity to learn an official language.

Immigrant and visible minority women's organizations say that knowing at least one official language is the most crucial link to full participation in Canadian society. Without language, women have limited access to employment. They also cannot obtain services to which all Canadians are entitled: health care, social services, education, training, and recreation. Without language, immigrant women remain in often painful isolation, they cannot integrate into Canadian society, and are not able to contribute to their full potential. And we, as a society, are denied the benefits of their skills and experience.

From the start, immigrant and visible minority women's organizations have voiced the need for a complete language training policy and an integrated, well-coordinated approach for second language program delivery.

Community organizations, policy makers, ESL teachers,

and government critics are concerned about the lack of an integrated approach in language training. They also recognize the disadvantages immigrant women face compared to their male partners when trying to get language training.

Over the past ten years, community groups have provided excellent reports and developed numerous recommendations to improve language training policies. So far, little has changed in the program delivery of second language training.

A concerted effort by a number of immigrant and visible minority women's organizations resulted in the initiation of the "Equity Project in Language Training". An Advisory Committee was formed with representatives of the following organizations: Ontario Region of the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada (NOIMWVC), the Canadian Ethnocultural Council Women's Committee, the Chinese-Canadian National Council Women's Issues Committee, the Toronto Chapter of the Congress of Black Women of Canada, Ontario Immigrant and Visible Minority Women's Organization, and the Coalition of Visible Minority Women.

Funding was received from different sources: the Ontario Women's Directorate, the

Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, and Secretary of State Regional Office.

Two consultants were hired in July 1988. These consultants are themselves immigrant women for whom English was a second language, and experienced social researchers. They have also been activists in the immigrant women's community for many years.

It is time to take a more pro-active approach on this issue. The Equity Project, therefore, will not result in yet another formal report. Rather, the focus is on developing a strategy to initiate change, and producing a lobbying and public education kit for community organizations. The kit should be available at the National Conference of NOIMWVC, which will be held in Vancouver in November, 1988.

Questions concerning the Equity Project, or material, information, or ideas you would like to contribute, can be forwarded to:

Alma Estable and Mechthild Meyer, Project Consultants, 99 Findlay Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 2V1 (613) 232-2823, or

Carmencita Hernandez, Advisory Committee, Equity Project, 777 Landsdowne Avenue, Toronto, Ont. M6H 3Z1.

## POLICY - A TOOL FOR CHANGE?

### ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE for WOMEN IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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#### THE CONFERENCE

The annual CAAWS Conference brings together women who are active as participants, volunteers and professionals in the fields of sport, fitness, recreation and health. The Conference provides an opportunity for information sharing, networking, skill development and putting strategies into place for action. Policy development and implementation for women in the fields of physical activity and sport at the provincial and local levels is the focus of the 1988 Conference.

#### THE BREAKTHROUGH CELEBRATION

Through the Breakthrough Award, CAAWS recognizes outstanding achievements which result in enhanced opportunities for girls and women in physical activity and sport.

#### THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**Maude Barlow**, feminist activist and former advisor of John Turner and Prime Minister Trudeau, will discuss advantages and limitations of policy as a tool for change.

#### THE MARKETPLACE

The centre of Conference activity will be the Marketplace where community groups, women's organizations, bookstores and artists will share their resources and wares. Films and videos will be shown and a lounge area will be open throughout the Conference.

#### THE SCHEDULE

Wednesday, October 12

5:30 p.m. Registration and Refreshments  
7:00 p.m. Opening Address  
9:00 p.m. Reception

Thursday, October 13

8:00 a.m. Registration and Refreshments  
8:30 a.m. Marketplace Opens  
9:00 a.m. General Session - Case Study Working Sessions  
Noon Break  
1:00 p.m. General Session - Case Study Working Sessions  
4:00 p.m. Break  
6:00 p.m. Reception at Houseworks  
6:30 p.m. Breakthrough Award Celebration Banquet

Friday, October 14

8:00 a.m. Registration and Refreshments  
8:30 a.m. Marketplace Opens  
9:00 a.m. General Session - Policy Process Overview  
10:00 a.m. Regional Strategy Sessions  
1:00 p.m. Break  
2:30 p.m. General Session - Plenary  
4:00 p.m. Break  
8:00 p.m. "Shooting Stars," the film about the Edmonton Grads, at the Museum of Civilization, hosted by NFB Studio D and City of Ottawa Women in Sport.

Saturday, October 15

10:00 a.m. Annual General Meeting

#### REGISTRATION

— CAAWS Members: \$100 (includes Reception and Banquet)  
— Non-Members: \$125 (includes Reception and Banquet)  
— Students/Low Income: \$25 (DOES NOT include Banquet)  
— Breakthrough Banquet Celebration ONLY: \$25

Some sponsored Banquet tickets will be available, please advise if you would like a sponsored Banquet ticket. Sponsorship by those who feel able to contribute for those requiring assistance is valued.

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#### Child Care

Child care is provided for children of Conference participants if arrangements are made on or before October 10, 1988. Please indicate the number of children, their ages, and when the care is required.

**Registration is limited.** All cheques should be made payable to: CAAWS CONFERENCE, 323 Chapel Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 7Z2. (613) 233-5204

Simultaneous translation will be available in all General Sessions. This Conference is made possible through volunteer time and energy and due to the support provided by the City of Ottawa, Women in Sport Program, the Secretary of State, Women's Program, and the Official Languages Program of Fitness and Amateur Sport.



## There's No Place Like Home



**There's No Place Like Home** is a wry feminist postscript to the International Year of Shelter For the Homeless.

Single mothers, Native women, Black women, and low income women describe their personal collisions with the "housing crisis", and tell stories of racism, abuse, and slum landlords. Together with housing activists, they analyze the twin bedfellows -- the real estate market and government -- and clearly outline the ways in which women's rights and lives are eroded by poor or non-existent access to affordable housing.

The film begins with footage of activist and single mother Amber Cooke, setting up a pup tent in front of Toronto's City Hall, with the help of her daughter and a small group of hostel residents and workers. Homeless for

almost two years, Cooke's action vividly illustrates the absurd lengths women must go to in order to obtain suitable housing.

Footage from rallies, marches, and protest actions illustrate the organizing being done by labour, the women's movement, and low income groups.

Even Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz, who had her own personal housing crisis, makes an appearance. Not wishing to go into a crowded hostel, she clicks her heels primly and demands a home.

There's no place like home is directed by Janine Fuller and Dianne Urquhart, produced by Emma Productions.

For rental or purchase information, contact V-Tape, 183 Bathurst Street, 2nd Floor, Toronto, Ontario M5T 2R7, (416) 863-9897.

## The 1988 Canadian Women's Directory



A bilingual directory of women's groups across Canada has just been published: the **1988 Canadian Women's Directory**. This new 350-page publication contains nearly 2,000 names, addresses, and telephone numbers of women's groups and associations, subdivided by province or territory. And within each province/territory, similar groups are listed together, making the **Directory** easy to use.

National and provincial women's organizations, women's centres, women's shelters, cultural organizations, services for immigrant women, health care services,

legal resources, women's bookstores, minority women's groups, resources for single mothers, vocational counselling and other work-related services, publishers and periodicals, government agencies, feminist bookstores, and groups working against sexism, sexual harassment, incest, pornography are just a few of the sections to be found in the **1988 Canadian Women's Directory**.

The **Directory** can be ordered from Les Editions Communiqu'Elles, 3585 St-Urbain, Montreal, Quebec, H2X 2N6, for \$9.95 plus \$1.00 postage and handling. Telephone orders are also accepted: (514) 844-1761.

### Call for Submissions

## woman of power

a magazine of feminism, spirituality and politics

Woman of Power - Themes of Future Issues

ISSUE THIRTEEN: Spring 1989, "Intimacy," will look at how women experience intimacy with ourselves, others, our work, and our world. Potential topics include women's visionary definitions of community, family, partnership, marriage and friendship; the importance of nurturing self-love; a cross-cultural exploration of "the erotic" in women's lives; the intimacy of remembrances; betrayal and broken intimacies; pornography and sexual abuse; AIDS; and the spiritual dimensions of intimacy. Deadline for materials is December 1, 1988.

ISSUE FOURTEEN: Summer, 1989, "Life Cycles: Conscious Birthing, Living, And Dying," will explore women's lives in all their stages - birth, coming of age, other rites of passage, aging, death, and transformation. Topics may include fertility rituals and methods of contraception around the world; cross-cultural perspectives on birthing, aging, healing, and menstruation, women's options for conscious living in different traditions; the development of body image; connections between women of different generations; life cycles of lesbians and heterosexual women; and how women relate to death and dying. Deadline for materials is March 1, 1989.

For more information write p.o. box 827, Cambridge, Ma. 02238 or call 617-625-7885.

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National Film Board of Canada Office national du film du Canada

# Don't Be Afraid Gringo: A Honduran Woman Speaks from the Heart

by Cindy Hanson

## Don't Be Afraid Gringo: A Honduran Woman Speaks from the Heart

The Story of Elvia Alvarado  
Translator and editor: Medea Benjamin  
Photographs by Susan Meiselas  
The Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1987, 171 pages

"I see our children dying of hunger, and the ones that live have no jobs, no education, no future. I see the military getting more and more repressive. I see us being persecuted, jailed, tortured. I get exhausted by all the internal problems between the campesino organizations. And I see all of Central America going up in flames.

I start to wonder if it's worth it. I start to think maybe I should just stay home making tortillas.

But whenever I have these doubts, whenever I start to cry, I put my hands into fists and say, "Make your tears turn into strength." As soon as I stop crying, I feel a sense of power go through my body."

Medea Benjamin, the translator and editor of *Don't Be Afraid Gringo*, followed Elvia Alvarado around the countryside of Honduras, interviewing her as she worked. Benjamin's interviews resulted in the publication of Elvia Alvarado's passionate and dignified account of peasant life in Honduras. The book is accompanied by the striking photography of Susan Meiselas.

In the introduction, Benjamin chronicles the history that has shaped the lives of Hondurans. As the poorest country in Central America, Honduras has seen its wealth stripped by the military and foreign companies like United Fruit and Rosario Mining Company.

Within this context, Elvia - a 48-year-old mother of six,

grandmother of eleven - describes the process that led her to organize Honduran campesinos (peasants). The book, which is a translation of Elvia's narration, is divided into 14 chapters. Each chapter discusses a theme in Elvia's life that eventually leads readers toward an understanding of the larger struggles facing all Honduran people.

Elvia, born into a fatherless campesino family of seven, originally began organizing women through the mother's clubs of the Catholic Church. Fed up with the inequalities between sexes, the rich and poor, landowners and the landless, foreign companies and the workers, she became an organizer for the National Congress of Rural Workers (Central Nacional de Trabajadores del Campo).

Elvia's political struggle, however, has a basis in her Christian faith. To Elvia, Christ was an organizer. Although Elvia understands that not all

While she was still working for the Catholic Church, Elvia says she realized just how hard the women work and how *machismo* leads to alcoholism with men being irresponsible to their wives and families. Through campesino organizations, she says, this is slowly changing because the organizations help campesinos obtain land, health and education - and with them comes a sense of dignity. She demonstrates how unions have a more democratic process for organizing and that women participate in the decision-making. Within the struggle Elvia recognizes the position of women and she also points out that the CNTC works to integrate women into the agrarian reforms rather than isolate them by creating "women's project."

"We're not interested in organizing women around particular projects. No. We want women to organize for the sake of organizing; and out of



Fr. Ed de la Torre

priests or campesinos view religion in the same way she does, her faith is strong and her Christian beliefs have political applications. Her religion is a theology of liberation and that is how she practises it.

"Just like they captured Christ and tortured him, so the soldiers capture and torture us. And just like Christ died for the poor, so we die for the poor. The day they kill me, I'll know that I died for a just struggle; I'll know I died like Christ did, fighting for the poor."

their organizations, projects will emerge.

Some of our women's groups are involved in the fight for land. Sometimes the women get their own piece of land and work it themselves. I have one group of women, for example, that grow watermelon together. The women also get involved in activities like setting up consumer stores or day care centre..."

Within the Honduran struggle, Elvia condemns the military for the way it works



Guatemala - NACLA

against the poor. She condemns government corruption, U.S. influence, and U.S. military presence in Honduras. She lives near the largest U.S. base in Honduras - Palmerola.

"But to tell you the truth, I think that Ronald's government is the stupidest government I've seen in my life. He calls us communists, but he's the one that is doing the damage. If it's true that communists are bad, that they take away all your freedom, then our government in Honduras is communist, and Ronald Reagan is the biggest communist of them all."

Her comments are supplemented by informative appendices that demonstrate the history of political events that have shaped Honduran history. The appendices also include maps, a fact sheet, a resource guide and a request for conscientious readers to send in a card asking the Honduran government to protect Elvia Alvarado's human

rights.

Elvia's testament provides a valuable first-hand account of life in Honduras. It asks us not to give charity or sympathy, but for our participation in solidarity and organizing actions to stop the oppression in Central America.

"We campesinos are used to planting seeds and waiting to see if the seeds bear fruit. We're used to harsh soil. And when our crops don't grow, we're used to planting again and again until they take hold. Like us, you must learn to persist..."

From those of you who feel the pain of the poor, who feel the pain of the murdered, the disappeared, the tortured, we need more than sympathy, we need you to join the struggle. Don't be afraid, gringos."

Cindy Hanson lives in Brandon, Manitoba. She is actively involved in the Central American solidarity movement.

## We have moved

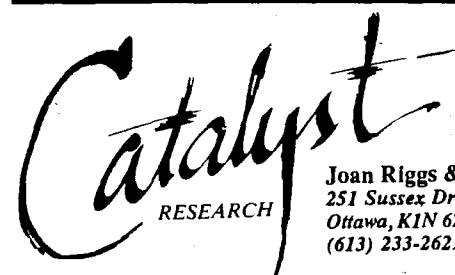
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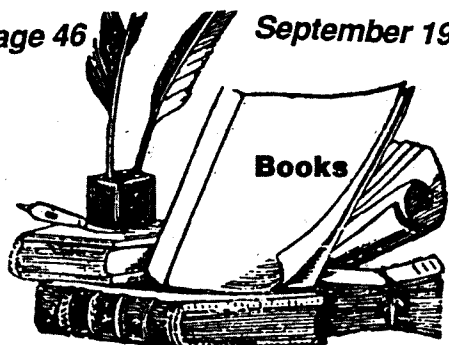
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# Aleta Day: a novel of Social Conscience

by Janet Wason

**Aleta Day** by Francis Marion Beynon, with an introduction by Anne Hicks. Great Britain, 1919; rpt. London: Virago Press, 1988, 266 pp., \$7.95 paperback.

Women's rights activist and radical journalist Francis Marion Beynon (1884-1951) was born near Streetsville, Ontario, the second youngest of seven children. Her parents were of Scottish-Irish descent, third generation Canadian farmers and staunch Wesleyan Methodists.

In 1889 the family left Ontario to take up farming in Manitoba near the village of Hartney. There Francis attended school and trained as a teacher, a career she never followed. Instead, in 1908 she travelled to Winnipeg to join her sister, Lillian, who was women's editor for the powerful daily newspaper, the **Manitoba Free Press**. Both sisters were

to male conscription, she was forced to resign from the **Grain Growers Guide** in June 1917. A month later she left Winnipeg for Brooklyn, New York. She returned to Canada only once, shortly before her death in 1951.

**Aleta Day**, Beynon's only known novel, was first published in 1919, and is largely autobiographical. Aleta grows up on a remote Manitoba farm, rebelling against her parents' attempts to break her spirit. Moving to Winnipeg she becomes a radical journalist, active in the Votes for Women Movement.

During the First World War, her public pacifism places her in a personal dilemma, for she has fallen in love with the right-wing McNair. The issues of racism, pacifism and sexism are as immediate in the 1980's as they were seventy years ago. Beynon's articulate writing stretches across the years to inspire feminists today.

Dedicated to reclaiming women's literary tradition, Virago Press has published **Aleta Day**, releasing the book in time for the 1988 International Feminist Book Fair in Montreal. Number 288 in the Modern Classics series, the publication preserves the original typeset and the author's preface. The book is enhanced by an introduction by Anne Hicks, who supplies biographical information on Beynon and her family, analyses the novel's content, and places the story in its historical context, against the background of late Victorian patriarchy.

In her preface, Beynon states clearly that her intent in the novel, and indeed throughout her entire life, is to resist tyranny in all forms. "My mind refuses to make any distinction between the tyranny of radicals and the tyranny of conservatives. As I see it, tyranny wears many wigs, but he has only one complexion." Her weapons are feminism and pacifism.

The autobiographical form is well-suited to Beynon's

purpose. In tracing Aleta's life from childhood on she is able to identify the many forces that shape our lives and often oppress us:

- parents -- "Mother and Father began when Jean and I were barely out of the cradle to perform the task called 'breaking our spirit', which seemed to them essential to our well-being";
- school -- "Already the public school had taught us to titter when authority laughs, which is one of its great functions in society";
- religion -- "Father's favourite [passage was] ... 'Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands.' He never failed to read this advice of Paul's when he and mother had had a quarrel."

Aleta defies all these forces to become a feminist activist.

While the individual issues -- votes for women, the prohibition of alcohol -- differ from those of today, the underlying concern -- women's right to self-determination -- remains the same. Aleta gives speeches on women's suffrage in outlying villages and participates in rallies.

However, we learn little about early Canadian feminist meetings, for in describing these activities, Beynon is strangely distant. The excitement and solidarity that must have been present on such occasions is absent (with one notable exception -- the description of a suffrage parade with all the women dressed in white and wearing orange sashes inscribed "Votes for Women" across their shoulders.

Perhaps Beynon was still overshadowed by the anguish and turmoil of the war years which culminated in exile from her homeland. Or perhaps she felt alienated from her feminist colleagues -- in 1916 she had had a public quarrel with her friend, the suffragist Nellie McClung, who in a private meeting with Prime Minister Borden advocated the disenfranchisement of 'foreign' women (women born in Eastern Europe) as a temporary war measure. (This period of Beynon's life is the subject of Wendy Lill's play **The Fighting Days**.)

Aleta viewed herself as a coward, yet in many ways she spurned convention, remaining unmarried and living away from home in an age when the family was of prime importance. Although, in her words, she had lost the power to fly she retained "the will to rise above the clouds of bigotry and prejudice." As she matures

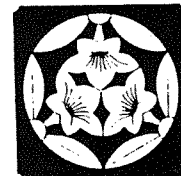
she gains the courage to defend her unpopular belief in pacifism, even to her friends, Pauline an ardent suffragist, and Ned, the socialist lawyer. Her statement -- "for one person to act as the proprietor of another is a crime. It is a local expression of all the intolerable tyranny in the world" -- is a cry from the heart.

Even in love she remains true to herself in a way that many of us will envy: "It is true that I loved McNair and I wanted him to love me, but I could not pretend to be other than I was to gain that end."

But what of her relationship with McNair? How can she resolve the conflict created between her feminist principles and her love for a right-wing, patriarchal male? A reviewer in 1919 praised Aleta for her "trusting love" but modern readers will find the romanticism offputting.

Fortunately, in the introduction Anne Hicks sheds light on the character of McNair, explaining that Beynon was attempting to pay tribute to a lover killed in the war -- with little success. Hicks also suggests that McNair functions as a symbol of Canada's "intellectually and emotionally" senile late-Victorian conservatism. Indeed, both McNair and the socialist, Ned Grant, symbolise social and economic forces of the period and as such act as foils for Aleta's convictions.

Aleta Day is a charming and accessible heroine, plagued by questions and



doubts, but endowed with wisdom and self-deprecating humour. Softened by loving descriptions of the Manitoba landscape, and spiced with wit and humour (picture the young Aleta deflecting a minister's inquiry into the state of her immortal soul by chasing flies about the parlour), **Aleta Day** deals with timeless moral concerns in a Canadian context. With this republication, Francis Marion Beynon's forgotten novel of social conscience can take its rightful place in our literary heritage.

Janet Wason, lives in a farm near Waterloo with her cats. She is an editor with a background in dance.

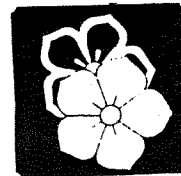
An excerpt from **Aleta Day**, by Francis Marion Beynon, 1919, reprinted, Virago Press.

So I had blundered along for months, sometimes protesting, sometimes letting things pass and often hating the other side with a ferocity which gave the lie to my pacifist convictions, and always I hated myself for hating. Daily I prayed that if there was a spiritual force that came to the help of human beings it would help me to acquire the spirit of love and mercy and kindness which my mind saw so clearly were the only irresistible forces in the world. So I might have muddled along to the end had not the government begun to forbid us to discuss the war at all, except favourably.

I found that my personal telephone was being tapped. One day ... I used my own telephone. The blur in sound, which I had noticed for some weeks, came as usual, and the gentleman who answered grew very wrath about the listener.

"There's someone on the line," he bellowed at me.

I answered sweetly: "Yes, there seems to be."



"Get off," he roared; "get off this line." The extra receiver went up with a soft thud.

I could hardly take his message for laughing. But although I laughed there was something in this that bit. I, a Canadian of Canadians, whose parents and grandparents had hewed their way in this new harsh country against great odds; I who had given all of myself that I had to give was being treated as a criminal because I insisted upon discussing the aims for which my countrymen were being asked to die...

A call from the censor warning me that I must say nothing about the proposed conscription measure ... crystallized my irresolution into action. Since when had Canadians relinquished the right to discuss unmade legislation? Was this Prussia or Canada in which we lived?

Well anyway, I began to distribute pamphlets demanding the freedom of speech and of the press be preserved, and one day I was arrested and sent to jail. (pgs 215-217)

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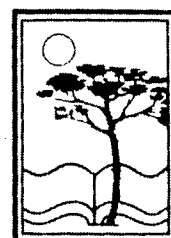
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# A Young Person Speaks out on AIDS

by Tamara Bond

I'm trying to imagine if one of my friends got AIDS - how would my other friends treat the person? Would they still like him or her? How would teachers react to the situation? Would parents let their kids still be friends with the person?

First, I think the teachers would definitely make us more aware of AIDS, and understand it completely. It's a shame that we would need someone in our school to get AIDS before we learn more about it.

In our health and guidance class, we were taught a little bit about AIDS because it was in the program. I'm sure a lot of kids in my class learned quite a bit but I didn't learn much I didn't already know. I'm fortunate that my parents are aware of AIDS and teach me about it. I still have a lot more to learn though.

Now, how would my friends treat the person differently? My girlfriends know a bit more about AIDS than my guy friends. They understand that you can't get AIDS from talking, touching or even kissing, so most would act normal.

My guy friends, though, would be really scared of this person, I think, partly because most people my age have a real fear of gays and lesbians. The guys automatically assume that gays are the majority of AIDS victims.

Most would probably turn away from their friend until they found out the hard facts.

I think that shows that we need more information. Facts are really important and everybody should know them.

Tamara Bond is 13 years old, living in Eastern Ontario.

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## L'Annuaire des Femmes du Canada

### L'Annuaire des Femmes du Canada 1988

Un répertoire bilingue des groupes de femmes à travers le Canada vient de paraître: l'Annuaire des femmes du Canada. Cette publication des Editions Communiqu'Elles contient près de 2000 adresses de groupes et d'associations de femmes regroupées par province et par territoire.

Des centaines d'adresses ont été compilées afin de produire un guide pratique et facile à consulter. Les centres de femmes, les maisons d'hébergement et de transition, les services pour femmes immigrantes de même que les groupes contre le sexisme sont

autant de références contenues dans l'Annuaire des femmes du Canada. On y retrouve également les principaux organismes gouvernementaux de la condition féminine, les maisons d'édition et les librairies féministes, les comités de condition féminine ainsi qu'une foule d'autres regroupements de femmes.

L'Annuaire des femmes du Canada 1988 est maintenant disponible au prix de 9,95\$. On peut le commander aux Editions Communiqu'Elles, 3585 St-Urbain, Montréal, Québec, H2X 2N6, en ajoutant 1,00\$ pour les frais d'envoi. Les commandes téléphoniques sont aussi acceptées: (514) 844-1761.

## Dykes, Disability & Stuff

A new publication has been launched in the United States, for disabled lesbians. Called **Dykes, Disability & Stuff** the newsletter will be published in Boston, Massachusetts.

There will be several regular features such as upcoming legislation; networking among women with similar health concerns; personal stories; reports on conferences and other events of note; book, movie and art reviews; and information about

groups or conferences of interest to disabled lesbians.

A particular focus will be accessibility in the women's movement. The newsletter will publicize names and addresses of places within the movement that are accessible, and what that means. There will also be success stories of how women have "convinced someone to build a ramp, use an ASL interpreter, plug in an air cleaner, or hold an event in an accessible place."

The newsletter will be

quarterly or maybe bi-monthly to start with, and hopes to become monthly as soon as possible.

Although the first issue was distributed free as a promotional one-page flyer, publisher Catherine Lohr needs subscribers to begin regular publication.

Subscriptions are \$8-\$20 (U.S. funds) for a quarterly newsletter, payable to "Catherine Lohr", P.O. Box 6194, Boston, Mass., U.S.A. 02114.

## Distribution Information

**The Womanist** is free. But, like all other publications we must rely on ads and subscriptions to cover our costs. We are free because we believe that all women, whatever their economic situation should be able to get news about women.

We have noticed that most women's periodicals do not get distributed much farther than the women's community. By being free we find that we can distribute **The Womanist** to places where women are, but most feminist periodicals are not, such as laundromats, corner stores, and community centre.

We need your help to make **The Womanist** accessible!! Please subscribe or advertise. OR. Write us and tell us where you think **The Womanist** should be distributed in your community. Help us insure that all women who want the news about women can get **The Womanist**!

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# Tracy Chapman

by Nedra Lee Prisk

So much has been said about this Boston based artist, I don't know where to begin. It started as a murmur; everywhere you'd turn people were talking about a revolution (the woman herself, of course!). I knew her name long before I knew her music.

Tracy Chapman has been compared with a great many legendary, times-changing recording artists. This comparison has caused me great concern. For a relatively new artist releasing some very personal works, I think she's done a fantastic job. To those who would dare to compare (in a negative way) I say "leave her alone!" The woman evidently is who she is: an individual, herself first. What she has comes from within.

I believe her music to have a spirit of its own, which firmly grasps yours and soars off with it. In my mind, this intangible quality is a bonus! The possibilities for time utilization with this release are endless. When I play Tracy's music I drift off, not because it's dull, boring and listless, but because I am taken to a place where the energy is high, the times are fast and the people are results of their own

convictions.

When I hear "Mountains" I go wild. My opinions are validated; it's all right to not want to be caught up in the material rat race. And after hearing the words "she's got her ticket, I think she's gonna use it, I think she's going to fly away", I feel better able to follow my life's path, no matter where it might lead me.

As you can see, Tracy Chapman's music is a tool that has served to empower me. I have realized that if you've got goals and dreams and wishes, floating around unfulfilled, that is how they will remain unless you take hold of your life/ambitions and charge forth with them, choosing to change the things you can.

How is it that Tracy's music says all this to me? How is it that through listening to her

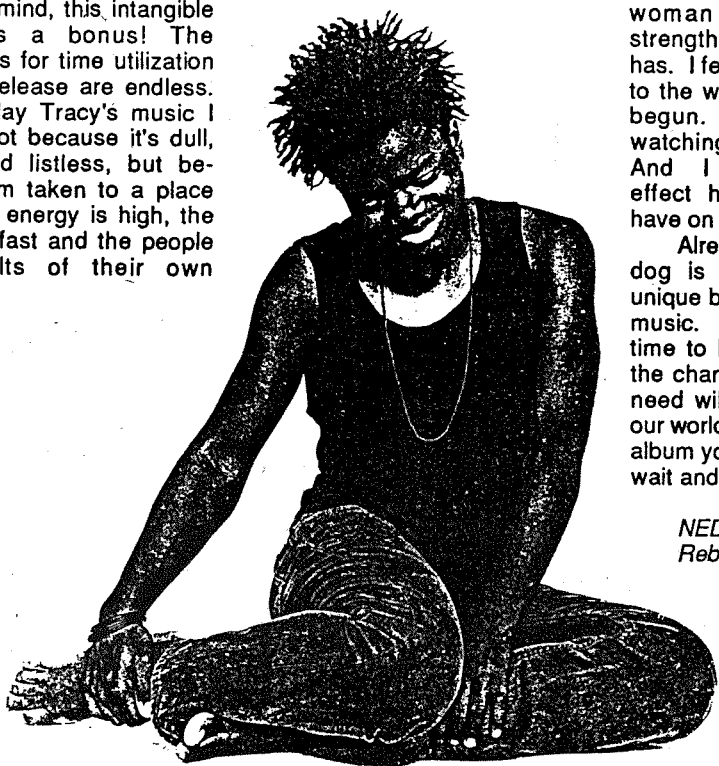
I am able to have all of these major life revelations? I just don't know...But, to be sure, it has happened!

At times the realities that are exposed can be painful. In the song "Behind the Wall", violence against women is the focus. When I first heard the lyrics I was stunned. "This doesn't happen in my world," I wanted to shout. But, it has happened; to my family, my friends. The powerlessness, the frustration that we all feel is allowed to come out in each of us as we sit, rigidly, uncomfortably listening to the song. You might want to jump up, to turn the stereo off, in order to block out such harsh realities, but don't. I had to allow myself to hear the words, and to feel the emotions that were brought out within me. Yes, and even to cry.

I don't know where this woman has gotten the strength, the power that she has. I feel that her contribution to the world of music has just begun. I look forward to watching her grow, expand. And I also anticipate what effect her next release will have on this society of ours.

Already everyone and their dog is tuning in to Tracy's unique blend of realisms set to music. If we can all take the time to hear, to listen, I think the change we so desperately need will be brought about in our world today. All by one little album you say? Well, let's just wait and see...

NEDRA LEE PRISK  
Rebel, Poetess, Woman



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID J. RYAN



## Rumour has it

Jean Augustine, President of the Congress of Black Women of Canada, has been appointed Chairperson of the Metro Toronto Housing Authority. She replaces John Sewell, former mayor of Toronto.

Marjorie Cohen, sociology professor at OISE, and on the NAC Executive, has been made Chair of Women's Studies for Simon Fraser University.

Brenda Thompson, former welfare recipient who took a Nova Scotia cabinet minister to court and won on for revealing confidential information was an NDP candidate in the recent Nova Scotia election. She lost her bid for a seat in the election.

Marylou Murray, ex-NAC Parliamentary Liaison and Pat File, formerly of the National Association of Women and the Law have started a consulting business offering lobbying assistance to groups in the social justice sector. Two of the best!!

Sharon Sholzman-Gray, is leaving after many years as Executive Director of MATCH International. We wish her luck!

The new executive of the Native Women's Association of Canada is: Speaker, Linda Jordan; East Region: Barbara Martin; North Region: Jean Gleason; West Region: Sharon McIvor; South Region: Shirley O'Connor.

Congratulations to Lucya Spenser of the Ottawa Immigrant Women's Centre and Lynn Zimmer of the Peterborough YWCA who has recently been appointed to the Ontario Advisory Committee on the Women's Issues.

Christine Famula, former staff person of NAC, is now working for the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

Women Working with Immigrant Women, a newly formed support group, will be meeting Oct 7, 10 am., at the Ottawa Immigrant Women's Centre, 18 Louisa.

## Conferences

### Sexuality '88

September 22-23  
St. John's, Newfoundland

A conference sponsored by Planned Parenthood Newfoundland, for professionals involved with sexuality counselling. Theme is: "Sexuality throughout the lifespan."

Planned Parenthood  
203 Merry Meeting Road  
St. John's, Newfoundland  
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### Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport

October 12-15, 1988  
Ottawa, Ontario

Annual conference of CAAWS. Theme is "Policy: A Tool for Change?"

CAAWS  
323 Chapel, 2nd Floor  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1N 7Z2

### CRIAW: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women

November 11-13  
Québec City, Québec  
Annual conference of CRIAW. Theme is: "Women and Development: Women from Here and Elsewhere."

CRIAW  
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### Empowerment Through Childbirth

October 14-15, 1988  
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Main speaker is Sheila Kitzinger. There will also be several workshops related to the birthing experience, such as breastfeeding, midwifery, post partum depression.

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### Manitoba Women's Agenda

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