

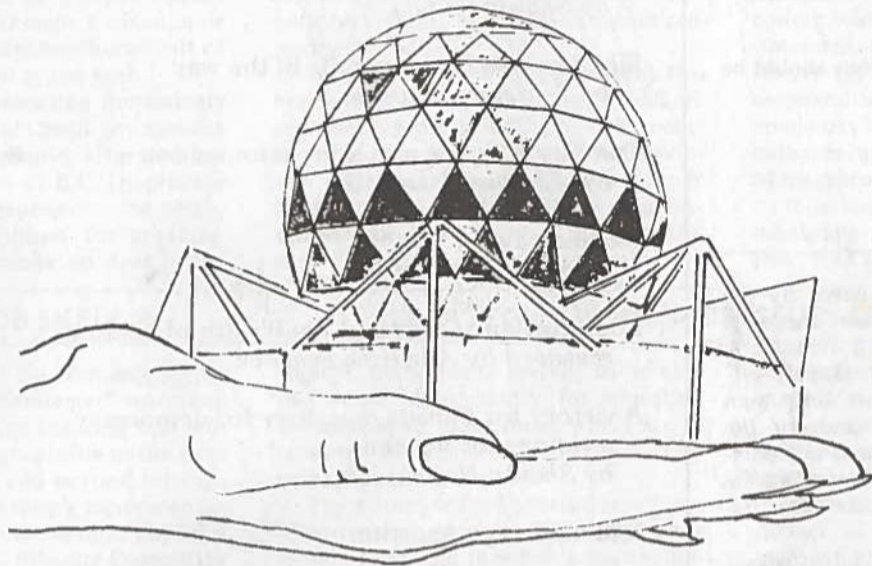
PRIORITIES

A
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SOCIALIST
PERSPECTIVE

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Megaprojects

***How are they
affecting women?***

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"The issues and demands raised by the Women's Liberation Movement are integral to the development of a democratic socialist society. The NDP actively encourages and provides support for women organizing around the demands of the Women's Liberation Movement and commits an NDP government to creating the legislation necessary to realize these demands."

— NDP Policy on Women's Rights

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WRC strategies for political change

EDITORIAL

Community has always been a fragile thing in British Columbia. Its resource-based company towns are no strangers to boom and bust cycles. Generations of women in this province have struggled to build liveable communities out of raw bush. The activities of women's centres around the province demonstrate that women continue to be the fire-tenders of community, although women now struggle to make neighbourhoods out of urban jungles as well as the bush.

Their task is becoming increasingly difficult as the Social Credit government imposes one megaproject after another on the communities of B.C. Despite the promises, these megaprojects—the perennial Sacred prescription for anything that ails us—have made no dent in the

unemployment rate, have brought us no closer to "recovery" and, in some cases, are even coming under fire from the business community.

Northeast coal, for example, is now being described in the business press as a disaster due to falling world coal prices while southeast coal towns in the Kootenays decline in the face of competition from government-subsidized northeast coal.

What is not often documented by the economists, however, is the impact of such megaprojects on individual communities. The human side of the southeast coal story was told us by former WRC vice-chair Louise Marakis who described how the closure of mines in the east Kootenays had led to increasing

HOW MEGAPROJECTS AFFECT WOMEN

anxiety among families who had expected to raise their children and spend their lives in Kootenay towns like Cranbrook. Dedication to building the community was replaced by feelings of being transients just passing through.

The premier's televised speech to the province February 18 promised more of the same: a natural gas pipeline to Vancouver Island, free economic zones. His statement that his government would "never try to impose anything on the communities of B.C." must sound like a cruel hoax to communities devastated by cutbacks, unemployment and the impact of megaprojects.

It is the NDP's task to develop economic alternatives to strengthen, not destroy, B.C.'s vulnerable communities. ♀

WRC HOSTS BOB SKELLY

On February 16 the Women's Rights Committee held a "Strategies" workshop to develop a plan for ensuring that women's issues are high profile in the next provincial election and beyond into government. The workshop's recommendations were presented the next day to a meeting of the WRC Steering Committee and its guest, party leader Robert Skelly.

The workshop began with an introduction by former chairwoman Shelly Rivkin who documented the failure of the party in the last provincial election to address women voters, despite the efforts of the WRC and of Shelly herself on the Election Planning Committee. She contrasted this failure with the successful campaign waged by the federal party last summer which focussed dramatically on women's issues.

Workshop participants challenged the B.C. party to develop the political will *now* to highlight women's issues in the next election. Participants concluded that, to be successful, the work must begin immediately and that, if the party delays until an election is called, it does so at its own peril. Our elected representatives have been in office long

enough, participants agreed, to be able to assume responsibility for educating themselves on those issues which are of concern to more than half of their constituents.

The women wished to avoid repetition of an incident which occurred during the federal campaign in which a male candidate approached the Women's Committee for a quick lesson in women's rights. It is not the role of the WRC to provide a quick fix to candidates, nor should the burden fall on Rosemary Brown, debate leader for the status of women. The entire party must shoulder the task and all candidates must develop the ability to express themselves with credibility and conviction on women's issues. Specific recommendations were:

1. The leader's staff must include a feminist to advise and educate the leader and screen public statements for sexist language, as was done by Ed Broadbent.
2. A caucus researcher must be assigned specifically to women's issues. The Women's Organizer cannot add full responsibility for caucus education to an already heavy load.
3. The leader should write to all con-

stituencies urging nomination of women candidates.

4. Caucus members must focus on women's issues now, starting with the upcoming budget debate.

5. Debate leaders must point out the impact of government policies on women and present viable alternatives.

6. Each critic area should be examined for its relevance to women's concerns. Debate leaders must inform themselves so that all—not solely Rosemary Brown—are talking women's issues.

7. The NDP must speak out on women's issues, with the public or media focus not on MLA's alone. Our public image should include party activists and leaders concerned with specific issues, e.g. committee chairs.

8. Caucus research staff should ensure that facts presented are accurate.

9. As a first step, the Women's Rights Committee requests that Bob Skelly participate in International Women's Day and make a public statement on women's issues and the impact of government policies on women.

10. The party should discard the idea that women are not independent voters.

STRATEGIES WORKSHOP ISSUES CHALLENGE TO PARTY

by CATHY JONES

THE CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

I would like to extend my greetings and best wishes for the New Year. The WRC Steering Committee had its first meeting for 1985 at which our program for the new year was outlined. Five areas of activities were outlined: the completion of the Task Force on Techno-

logical change, the development of a handbook on the WRC and its policies, outreach to women, economics workshops and strategies to ensure that women's issues receive a high profile in the next provincial election.

The Tech. Change Task Force is

entering its final phase and is now aligned to the NDP's regional economic policy conferences—the exception being Vancouver. The hearings and workshops will be held over a two-day period. Anyone wishing to submit a brief should

Concluded on page 16

Introducing Frances Birdsell, new NDP Women's Organizer

by Sharon Shniad

Following the recent resignation of Margaret Birrell after five years as Women's Organizer for the B.C. NDP, Provincial Secretary Gerry Scott, in consultation with the Women's Rights Committee, has hired a new person for the position. She is 35-year-old former Terrace resident Frances Birdsell who brings to her new job a solid background in grass-roots women's organizing and constituency-level NDP work, as well as a firm commitment to trade unionism. While Frances has many contacts among the various women's organizations in the Lower Mainland, she has a special understanding of the needs and problems of northern and rural women.

Work in Terrace Women's Centre

In her involvement over the past six years with the Terrace Women's Resource Centre, Frances has worked as volunteer, lay counsellor, project manager, community organizer, workshop facilitator, lobbyist, public education planner, member of a collective, and chairperson of the society.

She wrote the original funding submission for the centre and, in 1981, organized a lobbying effort that brought paid staff positions to women's centres across Canada. She also helped establish a women's co-operative tree nursery business.

Last summer, she added "union negotiator" to her list of jobs when the Terrace Women's Centre earned the distinction of being the first unionized women's centre in Canada, negotiating a contract as a feminist, worker-run collective. Frances is now the proud president of CUPE 2012 (Women's Centre Local) and was a delegate to the B.C. Federation of Labour convention in November 1984.

Frances also has a particular interest in Third World development and liberation struggles, with a special concern for related women's issues. As Chair of the Northwest Development Education Association, she has worked to promote connections between development of the Third World and the B.C. northwest.

Perhaps the most intriguing item in Frances' employment history, which includes "data analyst" and "statistical



Photo Stephen Brewer

technician," is the one which reads, "Summer 1978: First female fisherperson on the Digby Neck, Nova Scotia!"

In the following interview, Frances talks to *Priorities* co-ordinator Sharon Shniad about her experiences in the north and her goals for the future as women's organizer.

Q. This issue of *Priorities* focuses on the effects of Socred economic policies on women and their communities. How have cutbacks and unemployment affected northern B.C.?

Frances: The cutbacks have been very drastically felt in the smaller communi-

ties because, by and large, we didn't have the full spectrum of services available in the more major centres. You're looking at a different kind of reality facing people in small outlying areas.

That was our *existing* situation. When you add to that cutbacks, you're looking at major problems.

My own familiarity is in working with women. I've worked for six years at the Women's Centre in Terrace. In talking with women about problems they're facing when they come in to see us, we are overwhelmed by the hardships women are facing and the horror

stories that people are bringing in because of the cuts to social services.

It seems to women that every time you want to do something, there is a roadblock put up. You can't get daycare to be able to go to school. There are all sorts of cuts, and they are hurting women drastically.

We were not living in an ideal situation before. But you had some hope that you could work through the system, that you could inch your way along. Some feeling of forward motion. Now we're just trying to slow down the tide going backward.

It's really heartbreaking when women come in and say, "Well, why can't I do such-and-such?" We talk to them about why, about what the Socred policies are. We talk a lot to women about the ideas of the Fraser Institute, such as, "If welfare didn't exist, there would be no single mothers." We love to throw that one to them because women just go bananas when they hear it.

Consciousness raised

There is a high level of consciousness developing in the communities. People are beginning to see that this government blames the victim and tries to take power away from people, even the minimal power that people might have to make choices and change their life situation.

In Terrace we've had a 40 percent unemployment level for quite a number of years, so it's nothing new. We've been trying to deal with it for a long time. A lot of things have happened in our community as a result of that. One of the more popular schemes for employment—and one of the biggest employers in our area—has been the program called Section 38 under Canada Works.

Under this program people who are

on unemployment insurance receive a top-up to bring them up to the maximum of about \$300 a week. There was a great protest from the trade union movement about having to work for your UIC and about the fact that if you were getting near maximum UIC already, the extra funds hardly made it worthwhile.

I have problems with working for UIC and the government's whole job creation approach. But, on the other hand, women making \$300 a week are delighted. It's more than they've ever made! And most of the jobs are in non-traditional fields such as forestry. So they're working with chain saws up there in the bush, and a lot of women are really happy with it.

Q. Women don't have difficulty getting those forestry jobs?

Frances: No, because the men don't seem to want them! So a lot of women have learned some forestry skills as a result of the program. But, some of the jobs are so miserably make-work that people are in the woods raking pine needles. That is soul-destroying work. And that is a problem.

Q. But it feeds your kids.

Frances: Yep!

There are some other things that have happened. A number of years ago when high unemployment first hit us, we were really worried about what was going to happen to families. Alcoholism was up and drinking is a way of life in our area. What we heard was happening was this... when a man was a logger, he made exceptional money. Women worried about how they were going to support themselves and their kids if they left their husbands. It meant walking away from \$40,000 a year and security. There's not much in the way of jobs for women up there, so you know you're walking straight into welfare.

But once people were laid off, and the family was living on UIC or the minimum wage for women, the difference between that income and welfare was not much. Families began to put pressure on the person with the alcohol problem. Counselling for alcohol problems increased greatly because women said, "I put up with this before, but I won't now!"

So there were a lot of things happening. The violence level in our community is incredible, and the transition house is full. I'm coming to think that violence has hit more than half of all women I've ever talked to. That's true in other areas as well, but working at a grass-roots women's centre, you become very keenly aware.

In our area, what women talk about isn't jobs or cutbacks to the schools.

It's violence. In Terrace we had three murders in October. One woman was beaten to death by the man she used to live with. He was found hanged from a tree a week later. That was the same week that the Penthouse photo (of Oriental women hanging bound from trees) was getting all that attention.

Violence is everywhere

Violence is everywhere—rapes in the public parks and people's basements—and the feeling is that it is escalating. Women are getting together on this issue, women from diverse backgrounds. Just before I came down to this job, we had a big meeting in Terrace to decide what programs the Women's Centre would undertake in the next so many months. Violence was the main concern. Poverty and the cycle of lack of choices were all discussed, but the violence...

We sketched out some things we thought we would do and realized afterwards that it would be the lifetime work of all of us just to start addressing some of those things—changing attitudes, educating kids in the schools, etc. We're talking about social change and how we are going to go about getting it. How do we change attitudes that view women as property; that say it's your right to beat women around, your right to abuse, your right to handle; that see women as inferior human beings?

Pornography has also been a main concern of ours. We mobilized around the Penthouse spread and got men from the union movement, community groups, teachers, and businesses to support us. We called a lot of stores that were selling the magazine, and we asked them to remove it from the shelves. Quite a few of them did. We worked with the police. There was a big gathering together of people within the churches to start doing something. You have to do something, even a small thing, to feel you can gain power back. It's going to take a long time to get real change, but you have to get away from that feeling of powerlessness and take action.

There's been a change in the six years that I've been working in Terrace.



Ann Weatherby/Everywoman's Almanac

We've made connections with people so that they understand our issues, and we understand what is important to them. We can now do mutual support. When we're up against the wall, we can call on our friends to help us. We all have our differences, but we respect that we also have common goals, and we want change.

Slow process

It's a slow process, and sometimes it's easy to lose heart. Even though we're reeling from cuts in services and other Socred policies, we have strengthened our bonds within the community. We're stronger now and we will stand together.

We were really active in Solidarity, and we did a lot of work with different community groups. We were out on picket lines, arranged childcare for striking teachers, sent out support pickets, prepared actively for THE DAY.

We even began to contact some of the service groups. For example, I called on the parents of our son's best friend, who are organizers for the Kinsmen, to ask, "Are you at all concerned about the proposed human rights legislation and the schools? What are we going to do about it?" They were very supportive, very, very concerned, thought it had gone too far and worried about what was going to happen. The support was there until they saw the word "Solidarity." But the concern is there. In our area, we're going to be developing those contacts because people who are Socreds are upset too.

Q. You don't find that women are burnt out or discouraged?

Frances: A lot of people are discouraged. But there's this feeling that you've got to fight. There's this anger. Instead of having it wear them into the ground, women have taken that anger and said, "Damn you, we will fight!" It has given energy and the realization that we can't quit because we *have* to go forward. If we stand still, we're just going to be washed away.

It is harder and harder to do the work in the community, but when you start getting support from areas you weren't counting on before . . . that is great! In the last federal election, the night before E-Day, I came into our headquarters and was amazed to hear a guy who's a business agent for the Labourers' Union defending a woman's right to choice on abortion to another man. He didn't refer it on to someone else. He just stood there and went through the arguments on why women must have the right to choose. I said to myself, "I never thought I'd see the day!"

A union man told me a similar anecdote about seeing burly construction trades guys working together with gay rights activists in Solidarity. And they actually talked . . . in the same room! You have to take delight at the small things and let them cheer you on.

Women's Rights Committee links

Q. The Women's Rights Committee has felt a lot of frustration in trying to make links with women around this province. We've used task forces to try to make those links, but it still is never adequate. Having been on the other end

of the communication line, do you have ideas about how we can create those links with rural and small town women?

Frances: First, I want to say that in my experience people who come in as "experts" don't go over very well at all. Everyone has knowledge, skills and experience to bring to the task. I have a lot to learn, and I'll be relying on women in the Women's Rights Committee who have a wealth of knowledge and who have worked so hard in the past. I'm looking forward to working with these women.

My own bias about how you organize effectively comes from my own background. The Task Force on Older Women was wonderful in travelling through the province and bringing people of varied interests together. It's a useful tool for helping people get together in a community, but it's not enough.

I have an extensive network of contacts in women's groups who are not necessarily NDP activists or members. Virtually all of them support the party, but they don't put their organizing efforts into the party. As the NDP women's organizer, I want to work with women at the community level to give assistance and support to whatever they've identified to be their struggles, in whatever way they're trying to improve their communities and promote the status of women.

I think I can do that by acting as a resource. By listening to people's problems and experiences and putting people in touch with each other. I can say, "A group of women on the Island have done exactly the kind of thing you're trying to do. Here is a name to call."

I'm definitely going to be pushing to work with labour and community and church groups as well. I'll be visiting NDP clubs to ask for support, for awareness of what women are fighting and ask if they would join in that fight.

We've got to get an NDP government

To win an election—because we have got to get rid of the Socreds, we have to get the NDP in government—it's not good enough just to campaign at election times and call up women's groups to ask for their members' support. We must be doing the long-term educational work to convince people that the Socreds are the enemy, and we've got to get rid of them.

If you want to have more than a vote, if you want support, then it requires people working together so that women realize that the NDP is supportive of their organizing efforts in the community.

Women who belong to the NDP might like to have an NDP women's rights committee in their own area so that they can translate their local efforts into resolutions for conventions.

Riding associations are looking at getting together in regional conferences. Maybe the women's committees could get together at these regional meetings, so that at least the committees in each region are communicating.

One of the organizing tools we use in women's centres in more remote areas is knowing your constituent groups. There are varied interests in a community. If, to get women in, you have to hold knitting classes, then that is what you do! And then, while you're knitting, you talk about . . .

And you support what people are already trying to do. People come in tentatively, saying, "Well, I wouldn't mind doing something, but I didn't get very far in school, and I've been out of the work force for a while . . ." We have to be really caring of our sisters who approach us so that we don't turn them away or lose them or have them go in another direction.

Priorities: The NDP has made formal links with labour's leadership, and we've

had parallel campaigns in the unions, but we haven't always had the results we hoped for at election time. How can we improve our links with rank-and-file women in unions?

Frances: The best way is to become involved at your own community level. Encourage and support women in raising issues at their own union meetings. Get involved in organizing efforts in your own area, your own workplace.

I would encourage women to attend their local labour council. It's amazing what issues you can raise if you want to.

Priorities: In the federal election, feminists were finally successful in making all three parties address their agenda. Our leader and candidates spoke strongly on women's issues. We have not been as successful provincially to ensure that women's issues figure prominently, despite years of effort. How can we change this before the next election?

Frances: First, we have to have the caucus "bone up" on women's issues. They have to be taken seriously. People must know what are the policies of major concern to women.

Secondly, we have to bring more women in so that policy and strategy for promoting the status of women is in

place before the next election is called.

Women want change in this province. They want to vote the NDP into power, to get rid of the Socreds. I hope they would not just do it as a negative vote against the Socreds, but as a positive vote for the NDP. When that election comes I hope that women will feel confident that the NDP will take positive, dramatic steps to improve their status in significant ways and in ways that women themselves have demanded. There has to be a strategy that will be believable to women activists.

Priorities: So we have to go beyond policy development. We need an implementation plan for the party to adopt.

Frances: You bet! And we need to develop and negotiate this plan with the members and candidates so that it's not only the WRC telling people the concerns of women, but active women in their own communities informing their candidates about what women need and want, and working with local people to develop strategies for making those changes.

[I am talking about] the *will* to look at women's concerns, include women's issues, consult with women. This has to be a priority of the party. ♀

Megaprojects create people in the way

by Adrienne Peacock

When development of a megaproject is dropped on your front door, it disrupts your life. Megaprojects, by definition, have large social and environmental impacts, and it is often women who suffer the most from these impacts. Yet Suzanne Veit's Socio-Economic Impact Study (March 1979) of the Peace River Site C Hydroelectric Development is one of few such studies specifically including a section on women.

Site C: negative impact on women

Veit was not optimistic about the nature of megaproject impacts and specifically the nature of Site C.

"Women will be directly affected by the project as members of an economically disadvantaged group and as members of the community. Although a large number of women in the impact area are employed, they are not engaged in primary resource occupations. Women have not been employed to any great extent on dam construction projects in

the past, and there is no evidence to suggest that this pattern will be altered for the C project. Thus, the economic benefits of the project will not accrue to women, and if prices rise during the "boom" period, working women will experience a real decline in the purchasing power of their wages. Women would be particularly affected by any decline in community services and by disruption of community life during the construction period."

Opposition engulfs life

Gwen Johansson is well acquainted with the disruption a megaproject can cause, even during its planning phase. Gwen and her husband jointly own a magnificent property on the banks of the Peace River, a few miles east of Hudson's Hope. In August 1976, a B.C. Hydro Information Bulletin stated that new planning studies "indicate the possible development of Site C early in 1983." Public hearings would begin in

1977 under the Water Act. (Public hearings actually began in 1981 under a new act, the B.C. Utilities Commission Act).

Almost overnight, life for the Johanssons became a paradise lost. Gwen resigned her job teaching special needs children and devoted an entire year, without salary, to full-time work coordinating opposition to the dam. All personal development plans the Johanssons had for their property came to a halt pending a decision. Their lives were devoured in opposition to Site C.

B.C. Hydro's land acquisition tactics included secret meetings with some land owners, while excluding others, like the Johanssons. Awareness of this strategy had more social impact "(at least I've lost more sleep over it) than any other single event."

Veit reported that B.C. Hydro's land acquisition policy "created confusion, cynicism, a sense of powerlessness" and "altered personal relationships among neighbours in the Valley."



To sell or not to sell

Gwen's life was further altered when her husband, a B.C. Hydro employee, felt he had to relocate when B.C. Hydro announced they intended to apply for licencing. Since May 1980, Gwen and her husband have been commuting the eight hundred miles between the Peace River Valley and Revelstoke. Consequently, in addition to all the uncertainty about dam construction, there is the further burden of family separation with all its associated social and financial burden.

The Site C dam was rejected in 1983 for the time being because there is no market for the electricity which would be generated. However, the Peace River Valley, like every other major river valley in British Columbia, is still under a flood reserve. Flood reserves are in-

tended to preserve Crown land for hydroelectric development and to inhibit private ownership. A flood reserve on a valley can make private property impossible to sell.

Commission ignored plight of people in the way

Although Gwen presented the case for preserving the Peace River Valley with great clarity and feeling to the B.C. Utilities Commission Site C. hearings and discussed at length the problems with B.C. Hydro's land acquisition program, the Commission's final report simply said, "Hydro should make every effort to be fair in the way it acquires additional land if Site C proceeds."

Uncertainty most difficult

Gwen and her small son still live in

their riverfront home, watching bears, beaver and moose feeding and playing along the river. In retrospect, Gwen comments, "I think the most difficult thing was the uncertainty. If we had known in 1976 that by 1982 there still would be no decision, we doubtless would have done things differently — but it was always six months away. Each year, since 1976, a decision has been "imminent."

"So, for six years, we have lived with the uncertainty — should you build that fence? Purchase that livestock? Accept that job? Should you even plant a garden?"

"It certainly does take the heart out of a person and destroys initiative. In a sense, I wasted seven years of my life."

♀

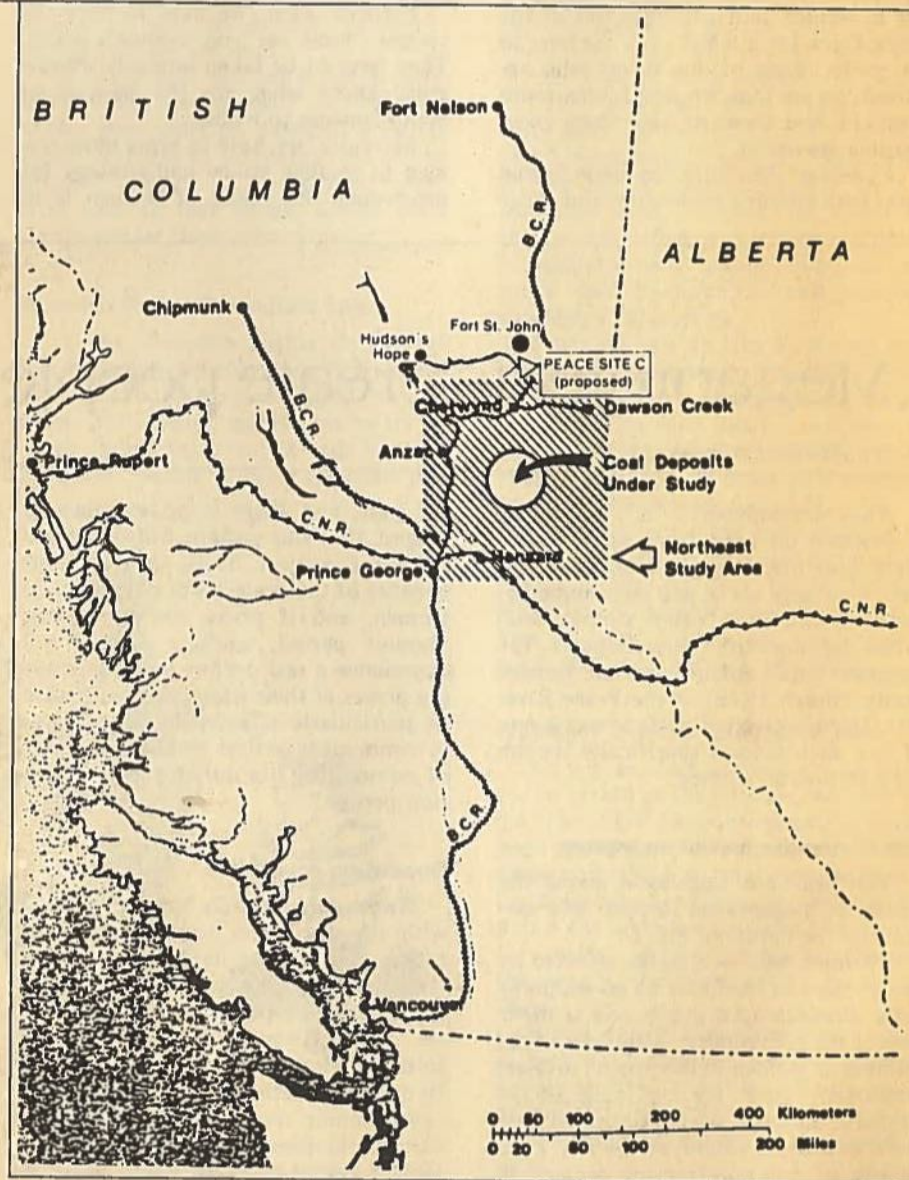
Tumbler Ridge: a new style resource town

by Adrienne Peacock

Resource industries have historically been loath to hire women in non-traditional areas. However, the new coal town of Tumbler Ridge is reported to be doing things differently. Both a local Union of Operating Engineers representative and a newspaper editor remarked that things seem to have changed; women are being hired in greater numbers than ever before for non-traditional jobs. Is Tumbler Ridge the model megaproject town where women are not only welcomed—but even hired? After talking to people who live and work in Tumbler Ridge, the bright new picture of opportunity begins to look more like a fifties re-run.

Tumbler Ridge: a controversial mega-project

Tumbler Ridge is a new coal town carved out of the bush 100 kilometres south-east of Chetwynd and 100 kilometres south-west of Dawson Creek. It was brought into existence amid a great controversy. H.N. Halvorson, a respected Vancouver mining consultant, compared the north-east coal project at Tumbler Ridge with the case of No-Sag



Spring Co. Ltd. in Richmond. The latter plant may close because its biggest customer was turned into a competitor through a B.C. government loan. Halvorson warned that development of the heavily subsidized north-east coal project will jeopardize existing coal mining towns in the East Kootenays. Critics of the north-east coal project also maintain that the huge public investment in transportation and other infrastructure will not be recovered. However, the B.C. Minister of Industry and Small Business, Don Phillips, speaks of opening up "vast new inland empire" and remains confident that the project will be a financial and social success.

Impact studies ignored

The companies selling the coal are Denison Mines Ltd. through a subsidiary, Quintette Coal Ltd. and Teck Corp. Both companies signed contracts with Japanese steel-makers before completing Stage II of the provincial coal guidelines. According to the guidelines, completion of this stage is necessary for government approval in principle to proceed. The government also waived public hear-

ings as provided for under the Utilities Commission Act in favour of direct government approval.

It was an inauspicious start. The Guidelines for Coal Development were issued by the environment and land use committee (ELUC) in 1976. They attempt to co-ordinate the government's licencing and permit-granting activities with growing public concern about environmental and social impact. However, a manager, John Anderson, said bluntly, "The environmental studies, which are requisite for Stage II (of the guidelines) are really so expensive I don't see how you can proceed with them until you have some degree of certainty that you are going to proceed with the project." The possibility that an analysis might uncover social and environmental consequences too severe to permit the project to proceed was eliminated by simply muzzling the government review process.

Thus Tumbler Ridge was born with the kind of feasibility and impact scrutiny that megaprojects received in W.A.C. Bennett's day. In recessionary times, there were many who were content to hope that the child would not

turn delinquent.

Job preference for those on site

It was encouraging for many women who moved to Tumbler Ridge with their spouse/companion employed in the mines that wives of people already working would have preference. However, despite optimistic reports of non-traditional jobs for women, a check of the Union of Operating Engineers membership shows only 84 women out of 1150 members in the bargaining unit—a mere seven percent.

Even seven percent does not accurately reflect the position of women because it includes a great many jobs from janitorial to skilled machine operators, and women tend to be concentrated in the unskilled areas. Traditionally, female income, as a percentage of male income is lower in primary occupations, (Table 1).

This picture has changed little with Tumbler Ridge development. Many more women work as labourers in the mines, in the warehouse and tool crib than in the highly paid jobs operating multi-million dollar equipment.

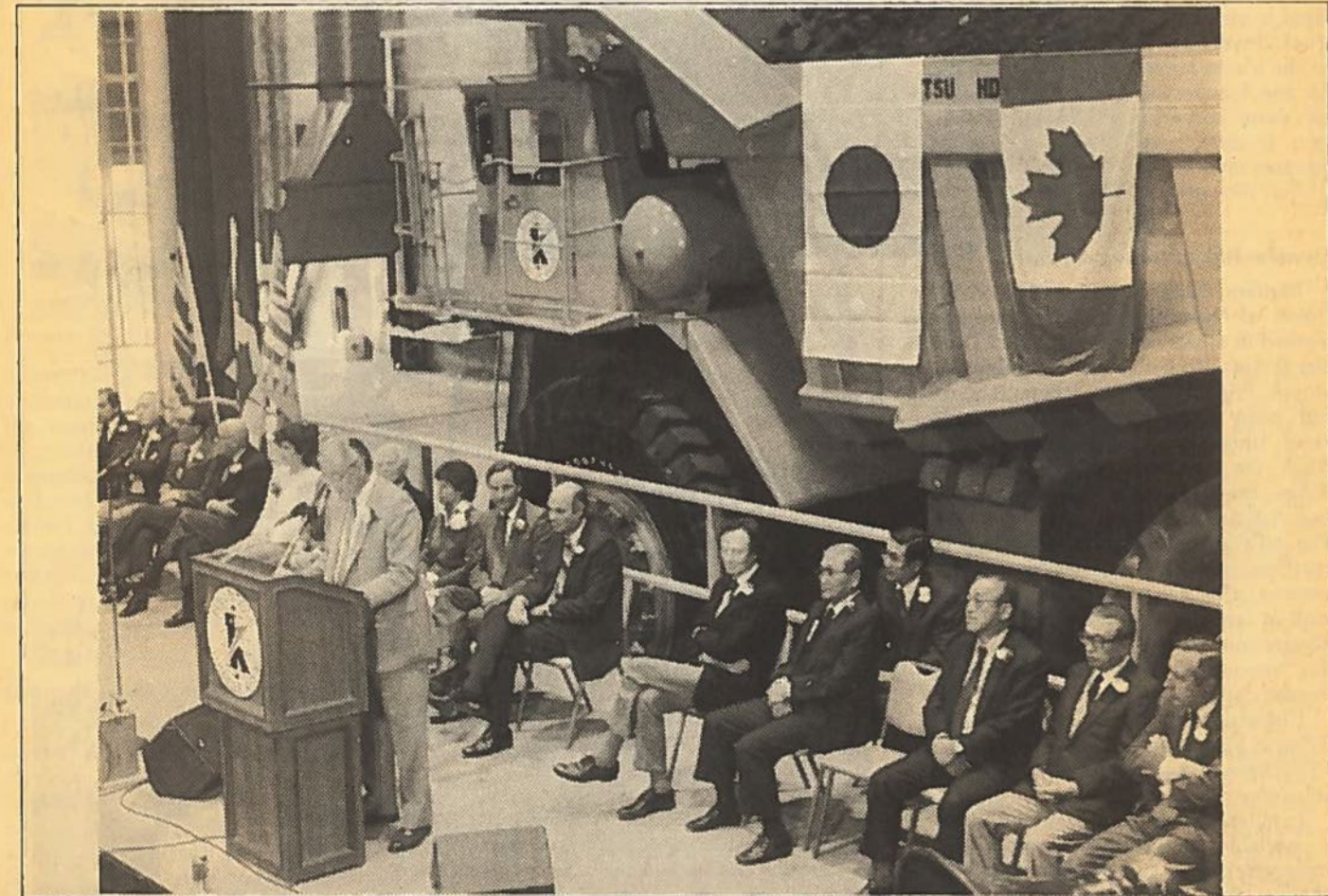


TABLE 1: FEMALE INCOME AS A PERCENTAGE OF MALE, 1978-79
AVERAGE EARNED INCOME

| OCCUPATION GROUP (FULL-YEAR WORKERS ONLY) | 1978 | 1979 |
|--|-------|------|
| Managerial | 54.4 | 59.0 |
| Professional | 61.7 | 61.8 |
| Clerical | 66.6 | 65.5 |
| Sales | 43.7 | 47.5 |
| Service | 48.1 | 49.9 |
| Primary (including farming) | n.a.* | 44.2 |
| Processing and Machining | 53.5 | 57.7 |
| Product fabrication | 52.0 | 55.8 |
| Transportation and Communications | 66.9 | 56.7 |
| All occupations | n.a.* | 58.1 |
| n.a.* — not available | | |
| Source: Phillips, Erin and Paul Phillips, Women and Work 1983 | | |

"Women are more conservative and caring than men. In time, I really think women will outclass men in the workplace, and that is what they are afraid of."

In the mine operation, most women are lower paid truck drivers rather than shovel operators—only about one half of one percent of shovel operators are women.

Even allowing women to drive trucks is relatively new. Apparently, management is pleased with the result. Women truck drivers are easier on the vehicles, so the trucks are less costly to maintain. As one female worker put it, "Women are more conservative and caring than men. In time, I really think women will outclass men in the workplace, and that is what they are afraid of."

Tumbler Ridge housing expensive

Barbara Buck is a member of the Union of Operating Engineers and had worked in mines before coming to Tumbler Ridge with her husband, a mine employee. Prior to Tumbler Ridge, Barbara had been working part-time to have more time with her young children. When the Bucks arrived in Tumbler Ridge, they realized they would need two full-time salaries to buy a house. The only other option was renting an apartment but they decided against this because the apartment buildings are built in large units of 50 with very little playground space. The apartments in this "model" town seemed a poor place to raise children.

Unfortunately, housing in Tumbler Ridge is atrocious—the price is terrible. "You have to pay \$75-80,000. There is no choice at all."

In older mining towns, rental housing is available at subsidized rates. This arrangement constituted a worker benefit for working in a single resource town.



Tumbler Ridge is doing things differently. The worker now takes all the housing risk. The company will advance a loan which can be forgivable if the employee stays five years. However, "the minute your job is terminated, for whatever reason, the money is due back in full."

This large investment in housing makes Tumbler Ridge residents feel "very precarious and very paranoid about the future of this place." Some people built their own homes but most consider this a "huge risk." To compound the insecurity, there are constant rumours about lay-offs and terminations. One worker commented that he had "never seen money wasted like this. I don't think it's going to last very long. Multi-million dollar machines will become inoperable for two and three weeks at a time for want of a ten cent part that has to be flown in from Germany at great expense. Some workers believe the break-

Barbara had been working in the tool crib and began applying for transfer to lube-service in February. It was an attractive position, both because Barbara is quite mechanically astute and because it pays two dollars an hour more than her job in the tool crib.

Barbara was turned down several times before she was finally transferred to lube-service in September.

When a young male with less seniority than Barbara got the job in mid-summer, in preference to Barbara, she decided to talk to her shop steward. For many women, this was a brave act by itself.

Father a mechanic

Her union rep explained that the young man had been considered over her because "his father was a mechanic and he had probably developed a mechanical aptitude working with his father."

"But my father was a mechanic," Bar-

job will provide stepping stones for other women."

Another woman who started to apply for transfer at the same time as Barbara was turned down again and again, like Barbara. Finally she spoke to her shop steward about it. Management claimed they weren't sure she was serious in wanting the job because she had applied for several different positions! Finally the frustrated woman prepared to file a grievance and only then did she get the posting.

Are male shop stewards doing enough to help their female members? Barbara notes one criticism of the union: they are very slow in educating shop stewards. The union does offer courses but attendance is voluntary.

Although many employees are hired at the bottom rung, men move up to higher paying positions in about three to nine months, whereas it took Barbara over one year and much worry and



Premier Bill Bennett cuts the ribbon officially opening Tumbler Ridge. Beside him is Pat Walsh, Mayor of the town.

downs are a consequence of choosing hydraulic shovels, which they consider the wrong equipment for the rigorous climate in Tumbler Ridge. They also cite examples of other poor management decisions. When the equipment first arrived, nothing was sized right—loaders would be too small for the truck, for example. All the real and rumoured problems result in "a very scared community."

Difficult to get non-traditional jobs

As a woman working in a non-traditional area, Barbara has also had other problems. Barbara works in the maintenance shop, lubricating and servicing heavy machinery. She is one of two women of about 40 people working in her area in the lube-service department. It wasn't easy getting the job.

Barbara exclaimed, "and a machinist and a carpenter. I went out on construction sites with my Dad from the time I was a small child." The shop steward relayed this information to the supervisor.

Filing a grievance lands the job

The next time a job came up and Barbara didn't get it, she filed a grievance. "I felt totally enraged. I went and got the article which described the posting and I wrote two pages describing why I should have had the job. Usually this takes only a paragraph. I understand it found its way to middle management. I lost the grievance" (on a technicality; she was on vacation and filed late) "but I got the next posting."

"So many women are reluctant to use the channels: they think they will get in trouble. I hope my action in getting the

effort to move up the pay scale. She cites the example of a female janitor who was hired over two years ago as a truck driver—but the woman is still working at the lower paying janitorial job. Because she is over 45 years old this woman doesn't feel able to apply for the intermediate labourer stepping stone positions. Age and sex have confined her to the lowest rung of the wage scale.

Discrimination has many forms

Discrimination can take other, less obvious forms. Barbara has asked to go out to the mine pit to service the large machines. She has been refused because "we want to wait until you know what you're doing." It seems fair—except that one of the males hired at the same time as Barbara has been going out to the pits for months. He is physically about the

same size as Barbara, possibly an inch shorter, and he previously worked as a cook.

Pornography in the workplace

Women working in non-traditional jobs frequently have to deal with the pornographic predilections of their co-workers. A nasty incident occurred when Barbara worked in the tool crib area. One of the men insisted on displaying a particularly offensive pin-up. A female co-worker decided to deal with this problem by spray painting pants on the pin-up. Then several women brought in centrefolds from Playgirl magazine and stuck them on the man's toolbox. Pictures went up and down, everyone was irate, but there was no satisfactory resolution.

Shortly thereafter, Barbara found herself in the lunch room, the only woman among 20-25 men, facing an obscene picture. "I suddenly felt very uncomfortable." Later, when everyone had gone, Barbara pulled down the offending picture. The next night she was faced with a lewd picture in the foreman's office. Because it was in the foreman's office, Barbara could not simply remove it. She decided on another course of action.

Letter gets results

Barbara wrote a letter to the manager in charge of the whole shop, three levels above the foreman. "I simply said that I have a right to a pornography-free workplace. This is discrimination. I explained that I was only trying to create the best

possible working environment."

"I sent copies to the foreman in question, the general foreman, the Industrial Relations Board and the Union. All the women were shocked and scared. But the next night, everything was down. It was effective. However, I've had unbelievable feedback and intimidation from many of the foremen. Fortunately, my present foreman is good to work with."

"I know I'm a target, but it keeps me honest — and determined."

Job stimulates artistic release

In spite of the frustration and turmoil of dealing with a male-dominated workplace, Barbara loves her work. She is also an artist with a strong background in weaving and pottery from two years of study at the New Brunswick Craft School. She believes she creates her best work under tension, and the workplace provides the right foil for her work. Her success in blending these two worlds together is illustrated by the fact that she was one of 143 artists from Dawson Creek to be financed to attend the Penticton B.C. Arts Festival.

Tumbler Ridge gets mediocre rating

Barbara has lived and worked in four mining towns now. While Tumbler Ridge is not the worst resource town she has lived in, it is a long way from the best. With about 5,000 people in town now, there are social problems. Even though there is a multi-million dollar recreation centre in town, only one room is availa-

ble for teenagers. With little to do, many youth turn to vandalism and delinquent activity is high. One woman sent her 13-year-old son out of Tumbler Ridge to live with her mother because, with both parents working and limited social outlets, he was getting into serious trouble.

Social problems

Social problems are predictable in a single resource town, where insecurity and job turnover rates are high. Many men are single or leave their families behind where they have built a home. There are men in town who commute from as far away as Prince Rupert, Prince George, Fort St. John and Dawson Creek. It is a difficult life.

For single women, life in a mining town is very difficult. Even Barbara, with a stable home life, finds her willingness to meet and be open with people is often misinterpreted by men living in this isolating environment. "It usually takes about two months before even the men I work with realize where I'm coming from."

No women's centre

There is no Women's Centre, although one was promised in the planning stage. Barbara feels the need for one is great but believes it will take someone with a lot of time and energy to develop one. A sign on a door in the Recreation Centre announcing a meeting suggests others also feel the need; Mothers Who Are Concerned About Their Sanity.

Although Tumbler Ridge has many

new expensive facilities, it seems very much in the mold of a single resource town with new problems. Perhaps the most destructive is the air of insecurity which hangs over the town. It is difficult to put energy into a community when there is a great cloud of doubt about its economic viability.

Government documents leaked to the NDP caucus in 1981 showed that senior civil servants in the Ministry of Industry and private consultants under contract advised the government to delay rather than expedite northeast coal development. The justification for this project seems to be entirely political.

It will cost over \$200,000 to create one permanent job in the northeast coal project, vastly in excess of that required to generate equivalent growth of income and employment in secondary manufacturing.

Although a few more jobs in non-traditional areas have opened to women as a result of Tumbler Ridge, it is only because women have fought hard, and are continuing to fight, to get them. The social, environmental and economic



stresses put extreme pressure on women. As Barbara Buck comments, "The sharing of information among women is lacking because we are under such a strain to survive, we usually can't reinforce each other."

"I was struck when I saw this town by the amount of planning that went into it. I thought this must be a long-term viable project. Now I wonder if it was just an enormous tax write-off for someone." ♀



Government Information Service

Women pay for Expo

Expo's impact on the downtown east side of Vancouver

by Sharon Shniad

Rising from the shores of Vancouver's False Creek is an 800 million dollar fantasy world of flying saucers, magical spheres, and phantom ships designed to make us all forget B.C.'s economic problems in the summer of 1986.

From her vantage point in the Hope Mission on East Hastings Street, however, NDP member Donna Lee watches the nearby construction of Expo with increasing anger. Like others in the downtown eastside of the city, she worries about the impact the fair will have on the residents of the area.

A music therapist who works with the chronically ill, Donna Lee remembers coming to the downtown eastside as a young runaway from Ontario. She has returned recently to work at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, which provides services to women when the Mission is not serving lunches to the long lines of men who shuffle through from 11:00 to 1:00 every day.

Donna became involved as a volunteer with the Centre at a time when it had just lost its funding and its co-

ordinator. She helped the Centre apply for a Canada Works grant and now receives a small salary for her work. She has introduced the women to the idea of developing a collective, an idea which was met with great enthusiasm, and she is helping them explore the possibility of setting up a small worker-run collective so as to be self-sufficient. The Centre is now looking forward to moving to a new home on Hastings Street.

For workers like Donna, it is a constant struggle to build a safe, liveable community for women in a "skid-road" neighbourhood whose highly transient population is 80% male and whose social services are primarily geared towards men.

The women who live on the streets and in the run-down hotels and rooming houses of the downtown eastside are among the greatest victims of the current economic crisis in B.C. It is they who are paying the most dearly for the struggle to survive on welfare payments which do not even provide an adequate

subsistence. One of the costs of their poverty is exposure to tuberculosis.

One-third are Native women

Many of these women are transient and about one-third are Native, reports Donna. Many have gravitated to the downtown after being released by psychiatric institutions, and many are outpatients of such institutions because the Socred government has found it cheaper to maintain such patients on behaviour-controlling drugs than to care for them in hospitals and group homes. Drugs, alcohol and emotional problems are inescapable facts in these women's lives, all of which makes them easy marks for robbery and assault.

There is also a population of older women, long-time residents of the area, who live almost invisibly in the low-rent hotels and rooming houses. Like the others, they are in dire need of the food and services available on the street. But they are often afraid to go out, and the physical limitations of age make it impossible for them to stand for hours in food bank line-ups.

It is not unknown, in the downtown eastside, to find women sleeping in alleyways. "One of the greatest needs," says Donna, "is for a secure and semi-permanent residential facility. Emergency shelters are fine," she says, "but often battered women and women in trouble are going through a difficult transition period. They need time to get themselves together. They need a secure and safe place to do that. What they don't need is to have to worry about having to move on and find another place to stay."

Most of the emergency shelters in the area do not accept women. An exception is the Lookout Mission which provides a separate section for women. However, since the doors are not locked at night, women do not feel totally safe sleeping there.

It is in this atmosphere of crushing

social problems and inadequate social service funding that Donna Lee looks to the summer of 1986 with trepidation. The fair, she anticipates, will be a magnet to prostitutes and pimps, transient youth and drifters hoping to make a little money from the fair.

The results are predictable. Violence against and the exploitation of women will increase. Prostitution will be more visible than ever in a city whose wealthier residents are showing an increasing indifference to the fates of the young people of both sexes who have been driven to this dangerous occupation, often for lack of any other options in their lives.

Increased social conflict and confrontation are inevitable and we may see a repeat of the efforts to rid certain sections of the city of visible prostitution, thereby pushing women again from pillar to post. And the meagre resources of the social services agencies will be strained beyond the breaking point.

Real estate bonanza predicted

Another serious impact on the area is predicted by the Downtown Eastside Residents Association (DERA). Real estate developers, hoping to cash in on the "boom" they think the fair will inspire, pose a threat to residents of low-rent rooming houses and hotels scheduled to be demolished to make room for office towers or renovated for more "upscale" tenants. DERA worker Jim Green claims that Expo-related real estate development has already caused the eviction of about 2,000 residents and will likely displace 3,000 more. (*Vancouver Sun*, January 25, 1985).

The city is now scrambling to make provision for the relocation of these people, many of whom are pensioners who have lived in the area for decades. No one has answered the question, "Where will these low-income people go?"

Even more disturbing questions were

recently asked by Ralph Thayer, New Orleans urban planner and critic of the world's fair held last summer in that city. In Vancouver to address the Centre for Investigative Journalism last month, Thayer raised the following issues on BCTV's "Webster" show:

1. With high unemployment in the province and a ticket price of \$20, how many low and middle-income families will be able to afford to travel to Vancouver to visit the fair? How many British Columbians will attend three times each, as the fair's planners are counting on in the budget?

2. If our goal is to develop a deteriorating waterfront, why not do it directly? Why waste scarce resources on hoopla and marching bands?

3. How many people who attend will bring their lunches — as did lower-income families in New Orleans, causing many small business concessionaires to lose their shirts?

4. Is redeveloping the waterfront a greater priority in B.C. at this time than supporting social services, health services, education etc.

5. Is it right to allow the tax and lottery money of low and middle-income citizens to be used for the entertainment (and increased business profits) of the wealthy?

6. Is it right, in other words, to redistribute wealth in this province by taking from those at the bottom to give to those at the top? That is exactly what such fairs do, charges Thayer.

Expo will lose 311 million dollars

In the wake of the announcement last month by Expo chairman Jim Pattison that Expo will lose 300 million dollars and will not employ as many people as had been promised, the public asks, "Who will end up paying for Expo?"

To Donna Lee and the workers and residents of the downtown eastside, the answer has been obvious for some time. ♀

Cities and the Wealth of Nations

by Jane Jacobs (*Random House*, 244 pp., \$23.95)

Reviewed by Adrienne Peacock

Macro-economic theory has failed, Jacobs contends, because it is based on a four centuries old false assumption. That assumption "is the idea that national economies are useful and salient entities for understanding how economic life works and what its structure may be." Jacobs' thesis, developed with amazing clarity throughout this book, is that economic growth and decline are related to development of cities, not nations.

Macro-economics, that branch of learning concerned with the theory and practice of understanding and promoting national and international economies "is a shambles," says Jacobs. She systematically refutes the economic theories of Keynes, Karl Marx, Milton Friedman and even Adam Smith. According to Jacobs, there is very little theory that can help solve our economic problems.

Collections of different economies

"Several centuries of hard, ingenious thought about supply and demand, chasing each other around, tails in their mouths, have told us almost nothing about the rise and decline of wealth," she writes. "Most nations are composed of collections or grab bags of very different economies, rich regions and poor ones within the same nation." To understand the generation of wealth, she says, we must look at economic questions from an urban perspective.

Wealth is created by cities that make new work from old, by cities that replace imported goods with goods made locally. "Economic life develops by grace of innovating; it expands by grace of import-replacing." These are two essential ingredients of economic activity and both require city economies. Any settlement that becomes good at innovation and import-replacing becomes a city, thus setting off a chain of rapid growth. Conversely, any city that ceases import-replacing must decline economically.

Very concrete work

This is a very concrete work. Every argument is buttressed by examples

from real places, including several Canadian. Jacobs discards theoretical structure in favour of describing what she sees.

According to Jacobs, expansion derived from city import-replacing consists of five specific forms of growth: enlarged city markets for new and different imports from other regions and cities; increased numbers and kinds of jobs; increased transplants of city work into non-urban locations as older businesses are crowded out; new uses for technology; and growth of city capital. These five great forces exert effects far outside the import-replacing city.

The impact the city forces upon its immediate region tends to make this city region resemble import-replacing cities. However, when these forces reach into distant regions, the imports result in "stunted and bizarre economies."

"The most important among such economic grotesques are supply regions." Supply regions, whether rich or poor, tend to be "inherently overspecialized and wildly unbalanced economies, hence unresilient and fragile." They lack import replacing cities and become "helpless when they lose their fragments of distant markets."

"Dead-end colonial" characteristics

Comparing Alberta's energy dependence to Uruguay's former wealth based on cattle and sheep, Jacobs states that "an economy that contains few different sorts of niches for people's differing skills, interests and imagination is not efficient" and is locked into a dead-end "colonial" economy. British Columbia, with its excessive dependence on one major resource industry, fits Jacobs' description of a supply region. Supply regions, according to Jacobs, are not healthy economic zones.

Using specific examples, Jacobs explains why transplanted industries are doomed to failure, and why building hydro-electric megaprojects in non-urban areas will not attract industry. "In real life, build the dam and unless you also have solvent city markets and transplanted industries, you have nothing."

Jacobs comes to some disturbing conclusions about the value of transfer payments from rich areas to poor. She thinks that "prolonged and unremitting subsidies" to poor regions lead not to economic health but decline, in exactly the same way as "prolonged and unremitting military production" leads to economic decline. Yet Jacobs could not be characterized as a right-wing ideologue. There is too much compassion in her analyses.

No solutions prescribed

The book does not prescribe solutions, but does suggest an alternative to economic decline based on Jacobs' perception of how cities work. Unfortunately, she concludes that to function well and generate wealth, cities must split off from large nations composed of disparate economic regions, such as Canada.

On the basis of the information relied on and the argument developed, the conclusion seems fair, if unpalatable and politically unlikely. Jacobs describes the inevitable political resistance to such a solution as "the predicament." She notes that her 'small is beautiful' solution of separating cities into distinct political units with their own currencies and tariffs "addresses the survival of societies, cultures, civilizations and cities, but at the expense of the nation."

The Norway experience

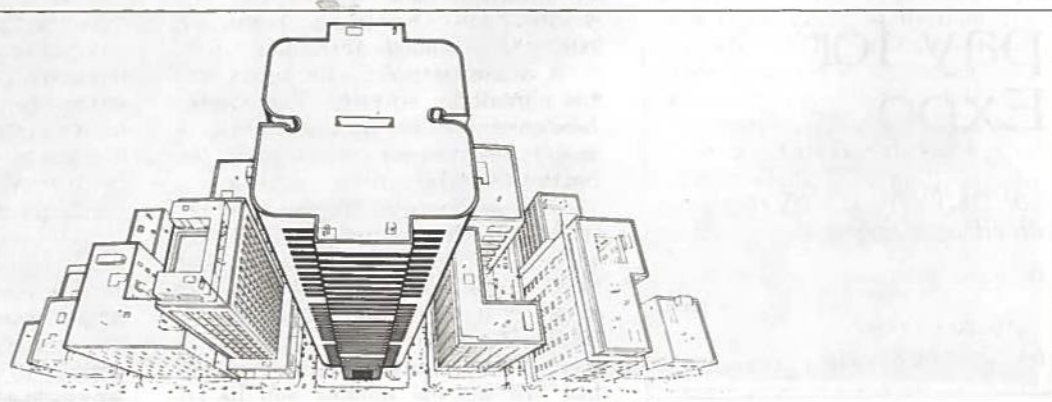
Jacobs cites two rare but successful examples where this idea has been tried: the peaceful succession of economically backward Norway from Sweden in 1905 and its subsequent development (Jacobs discusses this at length in an earlier book, *The Question of Separatism*), and Singapore's separation from Malaysia.

Jacobs thinks successful economic development has to be open-ended to be successful, rather than goal-oriented. She would not approve of B.C.'s north-east coal project or government-directed five-year plans.

Jacobs contends that our economies, like natural ecologies, are more stable when they are more diverse. Nationally or internationally mandated solutions do not work. They must evolve naturally, and they will do so within a city.

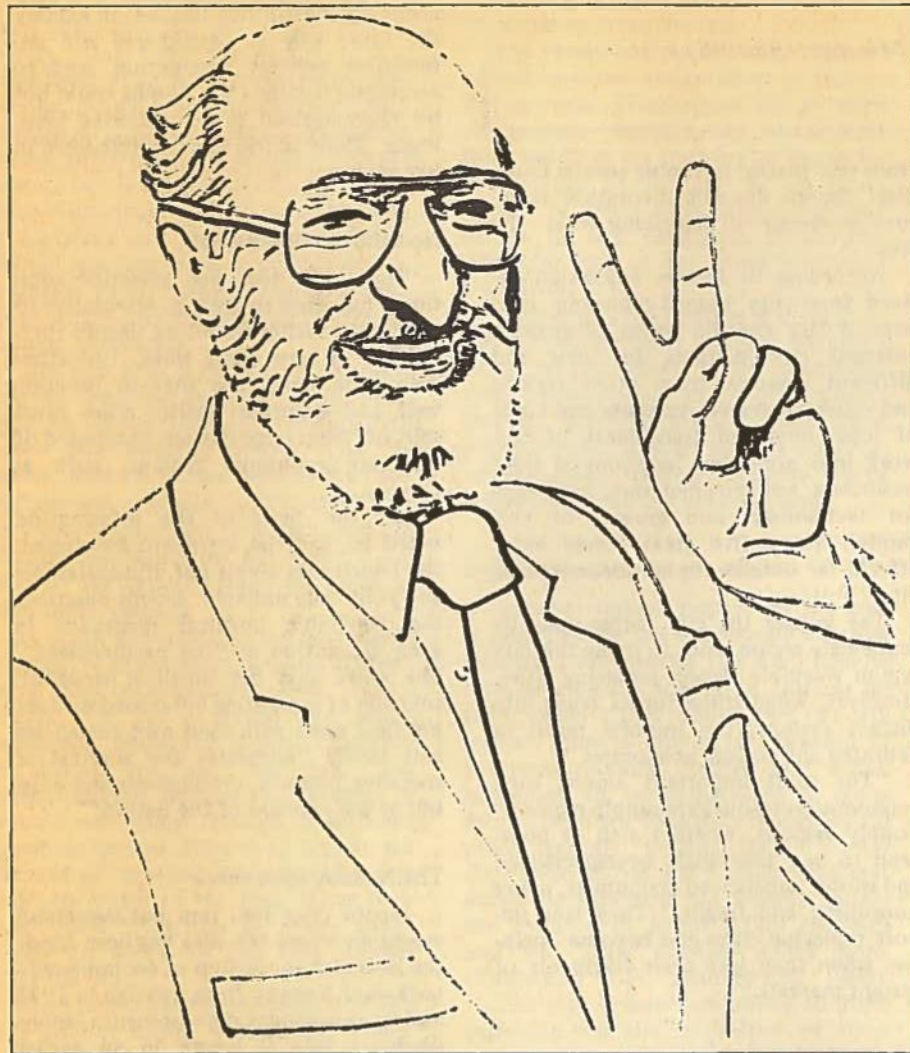
Common sense insights

This book is a delight to read and it provides many common sense insights into complex economic problems. Although her solution to our ills may seem utopian, her analyses are worth debate. ♀



A victory for Canada, a victory for democracy, a victory for women

by Sharon Hager, with approval and suggestions from collaborators in Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion



The following was to have been an article about a small but important victory for women. In the current political atmosphere, we are in need of a win.

Unfortunately, we cheered too soon. Despite the fact that a Toronto jury acquitted Dr. Henry Morgentaler of all charges as reported in Sharon Hager's article, Ontario's Attorney-General Roy McMurtry has now ordered new charges to be brought against him.

This action has heated up the abortion debate anew in this country to the point where Morgentaler's life is threatened. The atmosphere is becoming increasingly poisonous and dangerous for the doctor, as "Pro-Life" harassers begin to hurl anti-semitic epithets and slanderous, sick personal charges against him.

At the same time, the issue appears to be reaching a crisis point in the United States as well. Two dozen abortion clinics have been bombed recently, and the anti-choice forces are lobbying Congress relentlessly to outlaw abortion completely.

If there ever was a time for women to stand up and be counted on this issue, it is now.

Dr. Henry Morgentaler, on hearing of his victorious acquittal on the charge of "conspiracy" to procure a miscarriage, exclaimed, "I feel great! I feel elated! It is a victory for Canada, a victory for democracy, a victory for women and the jury system."

The Ontario justice system had hoped that, by charging Morgentaler with "conspiracy" to perform an abortion rather than "performing" an abortion, it would be easier to get a conviction and more difficult for him to use the defence of "necessity." The charge also made it possible to rope him in along with his associates Dr. Robert Scott and Dr. Leslie Smoling.

A prosecution victory on the conspiracy charge would have set a precedent that could be used against dissenters on other issues. So Morgentaler's victory is very important for the right to dissent and for the left as a whole.

Long range significance

What will be the long range effect of the acquittal and how will it affect the law? The fight is far from over. It is really just beginning. There are appeals, the new charge, and the Winnipeg charges have not been dropped.

Because Morgentaler won changes to the law previously with the "Morgentaler Amendment," jury decisions cannot be overturned by higher courts. So Ontario Attorney-General Roy McMurtry opted for a new trial, the only opportunity to reverse the decision.

If the victory is allowed to stand, it means that the present law is ineffective and cannot be forced upon three-fifths of the population. A victory in Winnipeg could alter the situation for women in Canada. It would mean, in effect, that the law is an anachronism on the statute and unenforceable in actuality.

How long it will take the law-makers to catch up to the real situation is impossible to say. Sometimes ineffective laws have been allowed to remain on the books for many years. Obviously the victory gives us the impetus to demand immediate repeal of the restrictive laws.

Contraception legalization example

An example of an anachronistic law was the one banning contraception which wasn't repealed until 1969 but was essentially won in 1936 when charges against Dorothea Palmer for distributing birth control information were dropped.

The judge held that she had served the public good and the appeal against her was dismissed. From 1936 on birth control information and knowledge spread without prosecution but it took the law-makers 33 years to repeal the law.

We cannot allow that to happen with abortion laws. We must demand immediate repeal.

Dr. Morgentaler and his associates have re-opened the Toronto clinic and will re-open the Winnipeg one as soon as possible. It may not be long before we are able to set up an abortion clinic in B.C. and have our test of the law here.

Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion hope to be able to lay the foundation for that now. The victory in Toronto helps our cause immensely and will also help us find a doctor willing to step forward and take the risk.

Why Toronto?

Why was Toronto the testing place? According to Dr. Diane Sacks' testimony at the trial, trying to obtain a legal abortion in Toronto is like a phone-in lottery. Toronto General Hospital arranges only three appointments a day. The telephone line is cut off after the third one so that if you phone at the wrong time you have little hope of getting an appointment, let alone an abortion.

Because of delays inherent in such a system, many women are forced into the more difficult, dangerous saline-induced procedure. The doctor cited a 14-year old Ontario girl who was only seven weeks pregnant when she told her parents. They sought an abortion immediately, but it took five weeks of red tape before she was able to get one.

Many Ontario women are forced to go to Quebec or the U.S. for abortions which creates further delays and emotional trauma. Many who have undergone an abortion know that their decision was difficult, complicated by guilt feelings, red tape, and delays. It was out of compassion for such women that Dr. Morgentaler and his associates set up the clinics.

Traps for the pro-choice movement

What the state has failed to win in the courts it may try to get back by confusing or fooling women with only partial reforms of the law, rather than outright repeal of the relevant sections from the criminal code. Examples would be to make abortion easier to obtain in early stages of pregnancy or if the fetus is determined to be "abnormal."

CCCA thinks such reforms are inadequate because they still leave women criminals in some situations and still limit our right to decide in all circumstances.

Abortion, like religion, must be a

matter of choice made by the woman herself according to her own conscience and views. The pro-choice movement is in favour of reducing the necessity for abortion by improved funding to Planned Parenthood and family support services. Such support helps a woman to choose to have a child as well as not to have one.

The so-called "pro-life" groups want to force women to bring children into a miserable life rather than the quality of life they deserve. A jury, representative of the Canadian people, has said "no" to a law that makes criminals out of sympathetic doctors and women seeking a quality life for their children and themselves. It is the fourth such victory and there will be many more to come, because women will win the right in Canada... to choose.

The NDP

The NDP federally, and provincially in B.C., have voted at conventions to support the clinics and to demand repeal of the law. In Manitoba official policy supports choice, but the NDP government has chosen to act against its own party policy.

When an NDP government can act in direct contravention of its democratically chosen program, it raises chilling questions of accountability of politicians to party members who elect them. NDP members across the country must demand that the Manitoba government drop the charges against Morgentaler and his associates and either take over or approve the Winnipeg clinic. An NDP government should never line up with state oppression of women and the so-called "pro-life" movement. ♀

NDP ACTION ON ABORTION RIGHTS

Federal Convention 1971: "... an NDP government... would provide adequate facilities in hospitals or special clinics for sterilization and abortion procedures."

Provincial Council, June 1983: "... the Provincial Council re-affirm[s] the policy of the B.C. NDP supporting the right to choice on abortion and calling for the establishment of community health clinics to meet the health needs of women."

Letter from federal POW Chairperson Hilda Thomas to Manitoba Premier Howard Pawley, May 1983: "... Reproductive choice is not only a federal matter. Section 251 of the Criminal Code specifies two situations in which therapeutic abortions performed by qualified physicians are legal. Therapeutic abortions performed in accredited hospitals or approved facilities are legal

if the requirements under the law for therapeutic abortion committees are observed. Approval is at the sole discretion of provincial ministers of health.

The approval of non-hospital facilities for the performance of therapeutic abortions is one way in which the gross inequities of the current law can be reduced. We therefore urge you to approve the clinic proposed by Dr. Morgentaler, and any others where approval is requested by qualified medical practitioners."

Night Letter from B.C. NDP Women's Rights Committee to Manitoba Attorney-General Roland Penner, November 1984: "The B.C. NDP Women's Rights Committee demands that the Manitoba government drop all charges against Dr. Henry Morgentaler in light of his complete acquittal by an Ontario court." ♀

WE MUST SAY: "No — to force" "No — to limited reforms"
 "No — to anyone else making our personal decisions"
 "Yes — to choice" "Yes — to repeal of the law"
 "Yes — to tolerance of conflicting moral views"

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1. Organize your constituency to write Attorney-General Roy McMurtry in Toronto and Attorney-General Roland Penner in Winnipeg (copy to Premier Howard Pawley) demanding that charges be dropped and the clinics approved.
2. Write to Prime Minister Mulroney demanding immediate repeal of the law.
3. Organize a showing of the NFB films, *Abortion: Stories from North and South and Morgentaler* and invite a CCCA speaker. (Surrey NDP women organized one in January and raised over \$1400 for the Pro-Choice Defence).
4. The Toronto victory left the defence campaign \$150,000 in debt and there are still the new charge and the Winnipeg case to be fought. So put your money where your mouth and sympathies lie because it is urgently needed. Send donations to: The Morgentaler Clinic Legal Defence Fund, c/o CCCA, Box 24617 Station C, Vancouver B.C. V5T 4E1
5. Contact CCCA to help organize Dr. Morgentaler's April tour of Vancouver.

Women artists for Battered Women's Support Services

by Ellen Ramsey

In May 1982, when Margaret Mitchell rose in the House of Commons to ask why there were not more shelters to support battered women, noting that one woman in ten is beaten by the man with whom she lives, the response was derisive laughter. This incident is related by the authors of *Still Ain't Satisfied*, who go on to say, "No other single incident in parliamentary history so vividly conveys how firmly entrenched sexism is in Canada."

Although wife battering is still an invisible, but common crime, there have been recent attempts to bring the issue into focus. *The Burning Bed*, a made-for-TV drama is one example, and the W5 documentary on therapy for wife batterers is another. A similar desire to raise concern in the community was the impetus behind the show, *Women Artists for Battered Women's Support Services*.

More positive cultural images of women

Violence against women exists because the cultural and political powers of the patriarchy allow and even encourage it. Thus, fighting sexism, as well as offering a more positive cultural image of women informed the work on show.

This second annual art show to bene-



fit battered women was organized by two women: Kati Campbell of N[on] Commercial Gallery and Ray Gabriel of Battered Women's Support Services. Their collaboration resulted in two quite distinct shows in different locations, but with the same message. In the show at N[on] Commercial Gallery (1011 Commercial Drive, Nov. 20 - Dec. 1), Campbell called for submissions that expressed "the conditional reality of women's lives," whereas Gabriel's show at the more public Isadora's Co-op and Restaurant (Granville Island, Dec. 4 - 16) advertised, *In Celebration of Being a Woman*."

Much of the work at N[on] Commercial is noteworthy by being either small in scale or employing less traditional high-art forms. Although the curators placed some emphasis on having small or affordable works—proceeds from the sale go mainly to Battered Women's Support Services—their selection of works employing alternate forms also constitutes a questioning of the cultural conditioning of women in our society.

Many of the women work outside the sanctioned virile genre of monumental painting or sculpture and without the technically-complicated, costly materials to which they have been denied access. To break down the notion of "mastery," women artists have argued for the deconstruction of the traditional singular, unitary system of representation.

This challenge to the hierarchical ranking of methods and materials occurred with the intervention of Feminism in the Conceptual Art era of the 60's and 70's which encouraged heterogeneity in contemporary Post-Modern culture.

Innovative techniques

Several of the works use collage to reveal the imposition of prescribed roles and images on women. Maureen Sugrue's *Yes rush me my complete new me* is a silkscreen of a woman whose body is covered by newspaper self-improvement ads. Mary-Ellen Lower screens onto a peach-coloured sweatshirt an ad for *Surgitex Mammary Implants* on one side and on the other the words, *All rights reserved—duplication of the original is a violation of the producer*.

Carol Williams makes a cloth book composed of small paintings and stenciled text, titled ironically *What Every Girl, Woman, Wymn Should Know*. In it, for example, she paints a Dalkon Shield, and opposite she prints: *Shield: preventative, to protect, or a Tampon with the definition to plug a wound or opening*.

Lorna Mulligan embosses *Inhabit* on her collages to illustrate the business

and commercial delusions in which women must live.

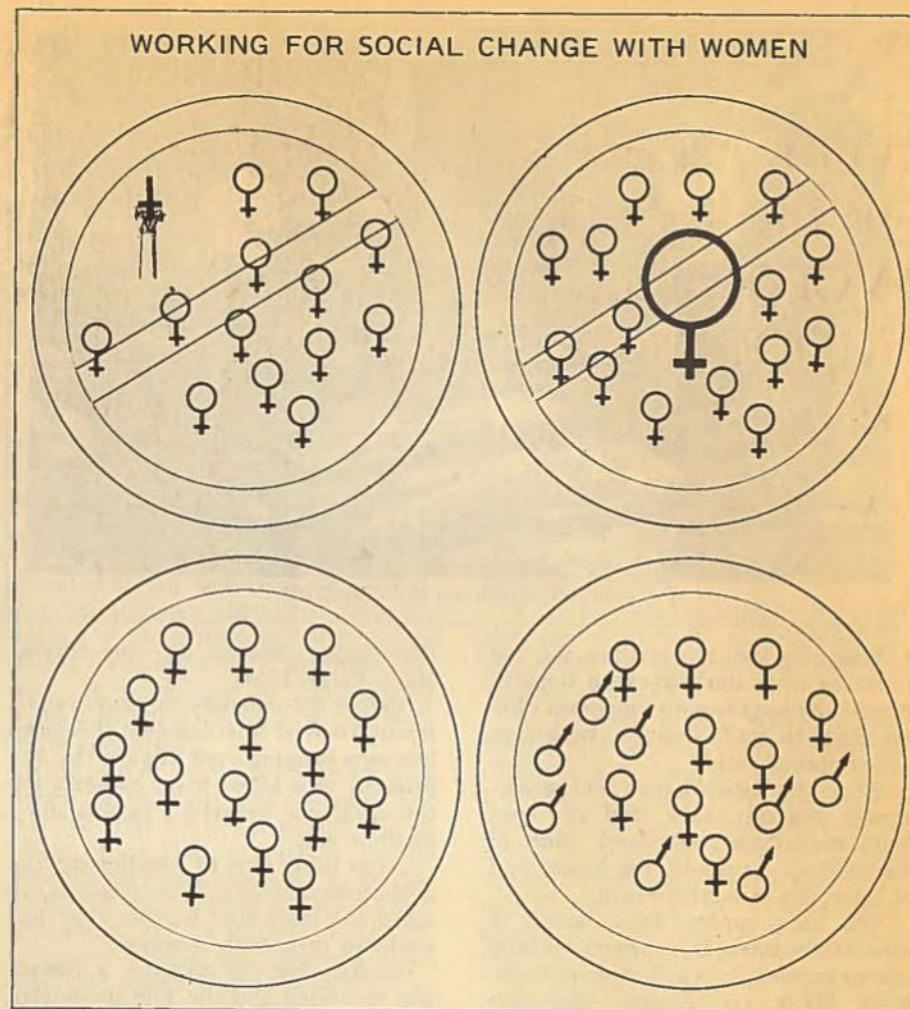
Some works are more directly political. Lorna Brown's *Publicized/Private* juxtaposes an image of a hand picking up shards of broken glass with that of another hand filling out forms for assistance.

Feminists need a sense of humour to survive, so Judy Radul and Katherine Cowie have produced a comic book entitled *Kitty Misery and Bunny La Flame Tell It Like It Is*. Diane Radmore's *Self Portrait* is an exquisite assemblage of miniature clay pot, feathers, small fish, and bones employing religious and primitive iconography.

Some women feel that political art or art with a message is negative. Others feel that the only correct art is that of the social realist genre. Still others feel that women should elevate the position of the decorative arts (quilting, needlework, pottery, weaving, etc.) within the high-art discourse.

But all attempts to examine or present an alternative are necessary to overcome the universal/male perception of us as inferior, subordinate or victim. This show encompasses the spectrum of opinions; it makes no judgements. One message, however, is clear: women must see and intervene in the political and cultural arenas, where the present power structure prevents their acquiring equality.

This was a show worthy of respect and deserving of becoming the annual event its planners hope it will be. ♀



Peruvian Gilma Torres interviewed

by Janet Vesterback

In January 1983, eight journalists travelled to Uchuraccay in the southern Peruvian Andes to investigate the killing of some "terrorists." They themselves were killed, allegedly by peasants who mistook them for more terrorists. A trial is now in progress in Peru in which three peasants have been charged with the murder of the journalists.

Gilma Torres de Retto, mother of one of the slain journalists, came to Vancouver on November 24, 1984 as part of a north American speaking tour. Since the death of her son, she has become very active in the Uchuraccay Human Rights Defence Committee in Peru.

To understand the significance of these murders, one must view them in the context of the current economic and political situation in Peru.

Peru is suffering from a severe economic depression exacerbated by an "open

door" policy favouring foreign investment over domestic production. When elected in 1980, General Belaunde promised one million new jobs, the rehiring of 5,000 laid-off workers, and improvements to benefit the poor.

Instead, about 9,000 jobs have been lost and the unemployment rate exceeds 60%. Inflation has gone from 80% in 1981 to 130% in 1984. Social services are almost totally absent and wage rates don't even cover the cost of food. In 1984, only 4% of the budget was spent on health. While 60% of all children die of malnutrition or related diseases before the age of five, almost 70% of the budget goes to servicing foreign debt and supplying the forces of repression.

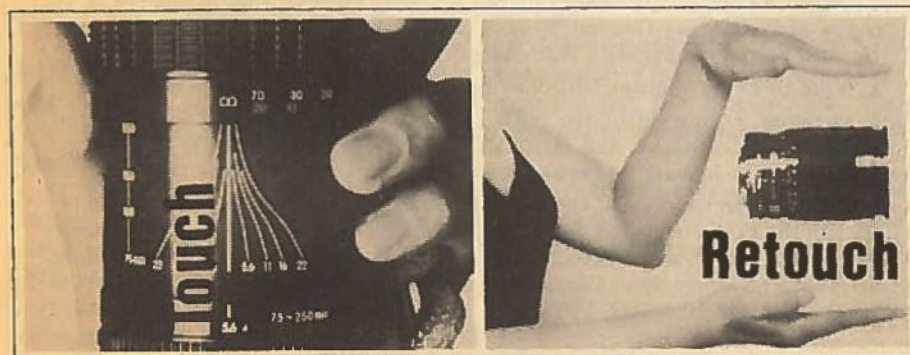
Peruvian people are fighting against social injustice with every means at their disposal. There are continual strikes, demonstrations, occupations and widely

circulated opposition newspapers.

In November 1983, this was reflected in municipal election results. Despite meagre resources, the U.I. (United Left) the largest left-wing coalition in Peru, obtained 34% of the vote in the capital city of Lima. Nationally, the U.I. took 30% of the vote, second only to the APRA (a centre-right party). A.P. (Popular Action), the party of the national government, received only 15% of the vote, failing to carry a single district in Lima where 40% of the population lives.

Belaunde's Popular Action stands little chance of re-election in general elections scheduled for March this year. By increasing repression he seems to be preparing the way for a military coup.

The state of emergency which suspended constitutional guarantees in the southern Andean provinces in 1983 has now been extended to the entire country.





Reporters massacred at Uchuraccay

Belaunde and the military use the existence of a small so-called terrorist group known as Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) to justify ferocious repression of any opposition.

Since May 1980 about 4,000 people, mostly peasants, have died and over 3,000 more have disappeared. Most of these killings occurred in the department of Ayacucho in southern Peru.

The army reports these deaths as casualties resulting from armed confrontations between itself and Sendero Luminoso. Many eye-witnesses who have escaped report that people are killed during army and police raids on peasant villages and house-to-house searches in the cities.

The army refuses to let reporters into "areas of confrontation" and will not permit autopsies to be performed on the victims' bodies.

Interview

In the following interview, Gilma Torres discusses the events specific to the murder of her son and the subsequent trial of the peasants. As well, she comments on the general state of terror existing in Peru where to speak out against injustice is to risk harassment, arrest, torture, even death at the hands of the police or military.

Q. Could you explain in more detail some of the facts surrounding the murders and the trial?

A. At first, General Noel, the chief of the political and military zone of Ayacucho, gave 24 hours of imprecise information and denials about the journalists' deaths. Then, four days after the killings, he officially confirmed the news. He appointed a three-member Investigating

Commission headed by the novelist Mario Vargas Llosa.

Before the commission submitted its report, General Noel said that the journalists were carrying a red flag and that the peasants who killed them couldn't tell the difference between a camera and a machine gun.

After thirty days of investigating, the committee decided that the peasants had killed the journalists because they had confused them with terrorists.

Luckily for the relatives, a camera was recovered and the film developed. It was my son's camera and it clearly showed the journalists identifying themselves to the peasants. There are pictures of them handing over their tape recorders and cameras.

In addition, three of the journalists knew how to speak Quechua, the native language of the peasants. So, as you can see, there was a dialogue with the peasants. Also in the pictures are other unknown individuals who are neither peasants nor part of the group of journalists. These people are nowhere to be found now.

Q. Has the peasants' trial been conducted fairly in your opinion?

A. We requested over and over that the trial be held in Lima rather than in Ayacucho since the latter is a very turbulent area and there are no safeguards there. We asked every authority we could, including president Belaunde, but in September 1984 the trial began in Ayacucho.

After my son's photographs were published, the peasants in them were systematically hunted down and killed. A few days before the trial began they detained the sister of the guide who

took the journalists to Uchuraccay. They kept her for six days, beating her, raping her, and accusing her of being a terrorist. How can anyone testify when they fear for their lives?

In the trial to date three peasants have been interrogated. They deny having killed the journalists. Last night, I made a phone call to Lima to enquire about the trial. My daughter Lupe told me that the head of the Investigating Commission, Mario Vargas Llosa, made a declaration at the trial contradicting his previous report. He is now accusing General Noel of being responsible for the death of the journalists. I was very surprised to hear this.

General Noel has been called as a witness but he is presently in the Peruvian embassy in Washington, serving as a military attache. It remains to be seen if he will present his testimony or if he will simply remain in the U.S.

We, the relatives, are asking for an observing lawyer in this trial. This would help us very much, but so far we have been unable to finance the presence of an independent lawyer from another country.

Different set of killings

Q. The journalists were travelling to Uchuraccay to investigate a different set of killings. Has any further information come out about it as a result of the trial?

A. It was said that the peasants had killed terrorists in the town of Huaychao, but the truth is that only young children of 7, 8, or 9 years of age had been killed. When the journalists got to Uchuraccay, they must have found out something so important and grave that the people responsible did not want the truth about the massacre to come out.

Q. According to the military, this massacre was perpetrated by Sendero Luminoso. What kind of organization is it?

A. We don't have any idea of who Sendero Luminoso is. Only the military and the government have told us that it actually exists. Any kind of violence, the blowing up of power stations, the killings or disappearances of teachers, union leaders, journalists, is blamed on Sendero Luminoso. These allegations are never confirmed or denied by Sendero Luminoso.

One thing is for sure. If it exists, Sendero Luminoso has no links with the peasant, labour or other mass organizations. Yet, it is the leaders of these organizations who are the target of physical attack by the army and police whenever they organize protests against

injustice.

Even opposition members of parliament have been singled out for beatings in demonstrations. Many have received death threats and it is publicity about these threats that has probably prevented their being carried out.

Q. How does the current situation in Peru affect women in particular?

A. We women believed along with

men that when President Belaunde was elected in 1980, democracy would function on all levels. But with more and more control being placed directly in the hands of the police and the military this is obviously not the case.

Meanwhile, the economic situation worsens. Many women have been left as widows in desperate situations to raise their children alone. Finding work in Peru if you are a working class woman is

extremely difficult. Many women and children are doomed to a life of abject poverty, struggling to survive.

Men often desert families because the burden of trying to feed and clothe wives and children becomes more than they can manage. Under the pressure of so much injustice, Peruvian women are waking up. Increasingly, we are banding together to move ahead in our struggle for social and political justice. ♀



Participation of Women Committee maps goals

by B.C. POW representative Anne Fraser



The Participation of Women Committee of the federal NDP (POW) met in Ottawa October 25 and 26, evaluated the 1984 federal election and developed a four-year plan leading towards the next federal election.

POW commended the leader and the election planning committee for planning and running a successful campaign that appealed to women on issues of concern to them.

65 women ran in the election and three were elected. Obviously we still have a lot of work to do to get more feminists nominated and elected.

Highlights from regional reports

Janet Norgrove, the POW member from Prince Edward Island, was the first woman to run federally in P.E.I. since 1957. They were able to raise the vote from 9% to 13% (highest percentage in P.E.I. in NDP history) and provide a model for other women.

New Brunswick ran 50% women with women in the three top ridings. Two native women ran in the Arctic: Bertha Allen, president of the Northwest Territories Native Women's Association and chairperson of the NWT Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and Rhoda Innuksuk.

In B.C. we ran five strong women candidates and were able to get two elected: Margaret Mitchell and Pauline Jewett. It was emphasized (again) in all reports that a support system which releases women from the extra responsibilities they carry is essential if we are to elect more women MPs.

The Agnes McPhail Fund was reported to be an important contribution to the 47 women who applied for the funds (\$500 each). Valerie Preston, the Federal Coordinator of Women's Activities, reported that the fund "provided an early media spotlight which attracted

attention to our demonstrated commitment to attaining political equality for women." Contributions will still be sought for a capital fund. Provincial sections are encouraged to create similar funds honouring women who have been active provincially.

The role of the women's coordinator during the campaign was discussed. For the first four weeks she worked out of federal office. This was crucial as she was available for media questions, to provide media kits when women candidates were announced, and to work with the EPC to ensure women and women's issues were addressed in every aspect of the campaign.

Goals to 1988

We are still a long way from equality. POW recognized the momentum gained in this campaign as an important step to build upon. Thus we spent the bulk of the meeting identifying long-term goals as a building process to 1988. We focussed on six objectives:

1. To identify the women's vote in the 1984 election through selective polling.

2. Since economic policy is fundamental to all women's issues, to continue to deal with economic and social issues as they affect women. We must promote women as spokespeople on economic issues. We must develop comprehensive policy on technological change and the economy.

3. To have 50% of winnable ridings contested by women and to have 50% of all ridings contested by women in the next federal election. A timeline was developed towards meeting this objective to include: identification of winnable federal seats, support of women in provincial elections, provincial/territorial or regional women's conferences, candidate search, candidate schools, development of candidate support systems, and

early nominations.

4. To increase the number of women who run municipally and provincially, to provide an organizational base and valuable role models.

5. To have women active in community and feminist issues become involved in and committed to the NDP. We must make every effort to work with these women and women's groups between elections on issues of common concern. Provincial women's rights committees should list and prioritize which groups to work with, how to contact them, and who best to do so.

6. To ensure economic support for women candidates by maintaining and expanding the Agnes McPhail Fund.

These objectives were reported to the federal council, provincial council, B.C. Women's Rights Committee, and approved. They will be developed at the next POW meeting. I invite questions and ideas.

Federal caucus liaison

Margaret Mitchell, caucus women's critic, reported from caucus. She stressed the importance of liaison between POW and the caucus. She is planning to play a coordinating role on women's issues. A committee has been set up which includes Margaret, Pauline Jewett, Lynn McDonald, Svend Robinson, Linda Gallant (CLC) and Valerie Preston. Legislation coming up centres around divorce, prostitution, The Indian Act and daycare.

POW established "sister-regions" for the purpose of exchanging information and visits, preferably annually, at conventions or at election times. Our sister region is the Yukon. I look forward to improved communication.

The meeting defined goals and developed plans for implementation. It was a productive meeting. There is still much work to be done. ♀

Letters to 'Priorities'



Donna Stewart responds to Dr. John Dixon's exposition of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association's position on pornography

I regret Dr. John Dixon's accusations in his long defence of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association's position on pornography (see *Letters*, November 1984 issue), but I sympathize with his desire to disclaim his remarks. If I were he, I'd want to claim that the reporter had taken out of context private remarks about lesbians. I do have difficulty imagining a context that would make those remarks relevant, but in any case, there were witnesses. Dr. Dixon did make those remarks publicly.

The important new research that Dr. Dixon refused to look at was not "by a particular person," as I made clear when I offered it to Dr. Dixon. It is a statistical correlation of pornography consumption, rape rates and twenty-two status-of-women factors. It was done at the University of New Hampshire and published in March, 1984.

I am interested in Dr. Dixon's attack on Malamuth and Donnerstein. Are Court, Check, and Zillman all tarred with the same brush? A series of experiments is meant to confirm or disprove an hypothesis and suggest further clarifying directions. I am not a psychologist or sociologist, but I understand that process, and I would have expected Dr. Dixon to understand it too.

University of Ottawa research proposal

I have recently read an extensive research proposal from the Department of Sociology at the University of Ottawa. Their review of the literature includes no criticism of the Donnerstein/Malamuth work, but rather seeks to build on it.

My reading of the situation is this: for years when women complained about the harm of pornography, those who preferred not to have their "right to look" limited said, "Prove the harm." Now that proof is being offered, defence of the status quo requires an attack on the validity of the evidence.

Dr. Dixon and I agree on one point. We think the right to free speech is essential to democracy. I think the right to be entertained by pictures of violence to women is another thing. I think the right to masturbate to pictures of bound women has nothing to do with free speech. It has to do with male dominance.

Pornography is the censorship of women. I look forward to the day when Dr. Dixon and the BCCLA recognize that fact.

Donna Stewart
North Vancouver, B.C.

CONCLUSION OF CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

contact Frances Birdsell at provincial office. I look forward to reading the Task Force final report which is being prepared for the spring convention.

The Women's Committee decided that the time had come once again to put together a handbook outlining the history and policy activities of the WRC. It will be used by the women's organizer and the outreach committee as part of our effort to recruit women to the NDP.

We also felt the need for women to study economics in order to have a better analysis of social and political events. The economics sub-committee is in the process of making proposals on a workshop format. The first meeting was very successful. Due, however, to the Vancouver by-election the first meeting could only be held in mid-February. Once the format is established, we are willing to send out workshop kits to other interested groups.

After a year of campaigns, the WRC must now set its sights on the upcoming provincial election. The last federal campaign successfully incorporated women's issues into the NDP platform. The WRC has decided that the time is right for discussion of the strategies necessary to give women's issues prominence provincially. For further information, please contact Frances at provincial office.

Boycott Eaton's

An open committee of women and women's groups has been formed in Vancouver to build support for striking Eaton's employees in Ontario who have joined the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union. They are fighting a battle that, if won, would be a landmark victory for women working in department store job ghettos.

Poor working conditions at Eaton's include low wages, poor benefits, job ghettos and discrimination against part-time workers who make up about two-thirds of Eaton's female work force.

The strikers are fighting lay-offs and promotions based on "personal appearance" and "customer profile" rather than seniority; reduction in benefits; and promotion discrimination.

Supporters are asked not to shop at Eaton's nor to order from them or use their credit cards. The women's support committee can be contacted by phoning 255-1963. ♀

In closing, I would like to formally welcome Frances Birdsell as our new Women's Organizer. I am confident we will be able to work together well in the coming months. While she has taken on an extremely difficult and demanding position, her background and experience are more than adequate. ♀

NESTLE BOYCOTT IS OVER

The Nestle boycott is over but the baby-milk battle goes on. This is the message from Amy Dalglish who has been one of Vancouver's leading activists in the boycott campaign.

The 34th World Health Assembly meeting in Geneva in 1981 adopted an International Code on Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes. Nestle has now agreed to full implementation of this code where there are government laws or regulations applicable to the entire industry. In the meantime, among other things, they are continuing to give "discharge packs" to new mothers.

Out of 116 countries only 19 have the International Code in effect as law. So we have a long way to go before Nestle have to give up the discharge packs. ♀



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