

PRIORITIES

A
FEMINIST
SOCIALIST
PERSPECTIVE

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We Can All Do Something



- *Abortion Clinics*
- *Women of South Africa and Latin America*
- *International Women's Day*
- *Women MLAs Fight for Pay Equity*
- *Interview with Mike Harcourt*
- *Tribute to Rosemary Brown*

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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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Contents

Chairwoman's Report	1
<i>by Jan Taylor</i>	
Rosemary Brown, Feminist Socialist	1
Pay Equity: Women MLAs Lead the Way	2
<i>by Adrienne Peacock</i>	
Mike Harcourt on Women's Issues	5
Resolution on Gender Parity	6
Crisis for Alberta Women	7
<i>by Theresa Kiefer</i>	
Abortion Clinic for B.C.	8
<i>by Sharon Hager and Theresa Kiefer</i>	
The Winnipeg Experience	9
<i>by Carol Rosset</i>	
Letters from Omineca	11
REAL Women's Agenda	13
<i>by Jane Evans</i>	
IWD: A Call for Action	15
<i>by Karuna Agrawal</i>	
South African Women in the Liberation Movement	16
<i>by Gillian Brewin</i>	
Solidarity with Women of Latin America	18
<i>by Janet Vesterback</i>	
A Future for British Columbians	20
<i>by Swee-Sim Tan</i>	

Cover graphic:
Nora Patrich, from a poster for the 5th
Canadian Conference in Solidarity with
Women of Latin America.

Chairwoman's Report

by Jan Taylor

The results of the provincial election were disappointing on a number of levels. Not only did we not form the government, we elected only 5 women. We did, however, run one of the best campaigns on women's rights issues ever. We must use this progress to build towards the federal election campaign in 1988 and even the next provincial election campaign in 1990.

Congratulations to our 5 new women MLAs. These women have already formed a strong, cohesive caucus and I know we can look forward to a productive working relationship between the "A Team"

and the Women's Rights Committee.

The WRC has hosted a number of events from January through to the Provincial Convention in April when a new Steering Committee will be elected. These events included a Federal Women's Conference in February, a celebration for Rosemary Brown, a Leadership Forum, a Steering Committee meeting, and a Convention Skills Workshop for Women in March. I hope you had a chance to come out to some or all of these events.

We will also be very involved with the Clinic Coalition. It is clear that the attack on women's rights which we experienced under Bill Bennett will continue and intensify under

Bill Vander Zalm. The establishment of a clinic will be at the forefront of our fight-back efforts. The right to reproductive choice is, I believe, the most fundamental women's rights issue. A report of the Coalition's initial meeting appears elsewhere in this edition.

Finally, I want to thank all the women who have served on the WRC Steering Committee since our last Provincial Convention two years ago. I especially appreciate the support and hard work of members of the Table Officers. Please plan to attend the women's caucuses held at Convention. We need to elect an energetic and enthusiastic Steering Committee to carry on the work of the WRC. ♀

Rosemary Brown, Feminist Socialist

"The doors through which we walked when we entered politics were opened for us in large part by women who had the courage to fight for the right to take their place alongside the statesmen of their day... We can do no less. We must open doors and we must see to it they remain open, so that others may pass through."

May 1973, address to Women for Political Action

by Robin Geary

After 14 years of active political life fighting for women's equality, Rosemary Brown decided that the doors were indeed open and that she could leave politics and move to the next stage of her career.

Rosemary burst onto British Columbia's political scene when she was elected in 1972 as a member for Vancouver Burrard. She quickly became known as a forceful, articulate spokesperson on women's rights and poverty issues.

As a government backbencher, Rosemary played a major role in obtaining funding for services for women, including Women's Centres,



Rosemary Brown at dinner held in her honour.

Rape Relief, the Health Collective, Post Partum Counselling, and Transition Houses.

Within government she pushed for the creation of the Provincial Co-ordinator on the Status of Women, affirmative action within the public service, the Women's Economic Branch, and the Family Relations Act.

In 1975 the National NDP Women's Conference voted to seek a candidate for the federal leadership

of the NDP who was committed to socialism and feminism. Rosemary was asked by women across Canada to be their candidate. The Brown campaign was not built around the personality of the candidate, but on socialist and feminist principles. Rosemary was defeated only after the fourth vote, polling 42% of the vote.

The Brown campaign was an important step forward in encouraging the participation of women at all

Photo by Janet Vesterback

levels of the NDP. Women gained the confidence to run for all positions within the party and to seek nominations to represent the party in elections. Rosemary Brown's leadership campaign opened many doors for women in the party, doors which have remained wide open.

Re-elected in the 1975 provincial election in Vancouver Burrard, Rosemary continued her fight for women's equality through speeches and through the introduction of Private Member's Bills advocating equal pay for work of equal value, affirmative action, domestic workers' coverage under all labour legislation and regulations, and the Change of Name Act.

In 1978 Vancouver Burrard was eliminated by Social Credit redistribu-

tion and Rosemary moved to Burnaby Edmonds where she successfully obtained the nomination and won the seat for the NDP in 1979 and again in 1983.

As a member of the Official Opposition in the B.C. Legislature, Rosemary continued to be outspoken in her support of the poor, minority groups, and women's rights. Rosemary protested the dissolution of the Vancouver Resources Board with her 13½ hour filibuster. Groups across the country invited her to be their guest speaker, and her work on behalf of women was recognized by a number of national and international awards.

After Rosemary announced her intention to retire from politics she was offered the newly created Ruth

Wynn Woodward Chair of Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University. During this one year position, Rosemary will teach a course on "Women, Power and Public Policy." In this role she will continue to be an inspiration and a mentor to women.

For over a decade Rosemary was a passionate advocate for women in the British Columbia Legislature. In the political arena she will be greatly missed. ♀

"I have always maintained that the struggle for liberation that women have embarked upon at this time, and which we refer to as feminism, has to be a cornerstone of any socialist party."

Rosemary Brown

Pay Equity: Women MLAs Lead the Way

by Adrienne Peacock

Our team

According to Darlene Marzari, our new NDP MLA for Vancouver Point Grey, it all started when the 5 recently elected women MLAs for the New Democratic Party sat down for lunch together. They discovered that they liked each other, liked the idea of working together and had a common commitment to work for the advancement of women. They decided to make their mark on the legislative session. Our own "A" team.

But what should be the priority? Darlene and Surrey-Guildford-Whalley MLA Joan Smallwood went to the Women's Rights Committee and said, "Here we are. We're looking for direction. Where should we put our efforts to advance women?"

Pay equity the priority

After considerable discussion, everyone agreed that legislation on pay equity was long overdue in British Columbia, and just the issue for a Private Member's Bill in the legislative session. A committee consisting of Elaine Bernard, Nadine McDonnell and Mae Burrows accept-

ed the task of researching and preparing the first draft. Then, as Darlene describes the process, "We'll take it to our friends in the women's movement and labour and say, 'Rip it to shreds—we want a bill you can support,' and then we'll reassemble our legislation and take it to the broader community."

As of this writing, a third draft is in preparation and everyone is hopeful that the bill will be ready for this legislative session.



MLAs Darlene Marzari and Anne Edwards

Why pay equity?

As Joan Smallwood explained to Provincial Council on March 7th while chairing a panel on pay equity, "It's a logical follow-up on last fall's election platform. The one issue in the last election that was most consistently popular, in the polls and in the street, was pay equity. It's the logical first step in an Economic Bill of Rights for Women, and it's consistent with fairness and justice."

Anne Edwards, MLA for Kooten-

ay, agrees, "This issue is beyond its time. This legislation should set up a way in which pay equity can be achieved."

Anita Hagen, MLA for New Westminster, "Pay equity is a priority because it's the first step in developing an economic agenda for women. We need to use the pay equity issue to address the whole issue of reasonable wages for work in our society. Women are increasingly key people in the economic rebuilding we all know has to happen in British Columbia."

"I live in a riding which has way above the average number of single parent families, and I'm aware of the tough time those women are having. Pay equity is a way to help my community."

Lois Boone, MLA for Prince George, concurs, "Many women are doing jobs which are just as important and valuable to employers as men's jobs, but they're not being paid appropriately. I see it all the time."

Pay equity is clearly a concept whose time has come. Women are the working poor, making up 67% of minimum wage workers in British Columbia. On average, women still earn only 62% of the wages paid to men doing comparable work. In 1911, women earned 53%. At this rate, women can expect to close the wage gap in about another 200 years! (See Table 1 for statistics on the wage gap between men and women.)

Discrimination does not end with the fact that women are paid less than men for doing comparable work. More than 60% of working women are segregated into three main occupational categories (sales, service and clerical), jobs which are characteristically female-dominated and low paid. Pay equity legislation addresses the larger question of the value of the work that women do, and insists that work done by women be valued fairly in spite of a sexist society.

Equal pay for work of equal value, or pay equity, ensures that women and men in different jobs receive the same or similar pay if their jobs provide the same or comparable value to the employer.

Table 1
Female-Male Earnings Gap
Canada, 1971

Variable	Female/Male Earnings Ratio
Age:	
15-19	.89
20-24	.77
25-34	.66
35-44	.56
45-54	.56
55-64	.60
65+	.59
Marital Status:	
Single	.83
Married and spouse present	.56
Separated, widowed, divorced, married and spouse absent	.64
Education:	
Elementary or less	.55
1-3 years high school	.58
4-5 years high school	.60
B.A. or first degree	.64
M.A. or Ph.D.	.71

Source: M. Gunderson

Not a new idea

Pay equity has a lengthy international history. In 1919 equal pay for work of equal value was included as one of the founding principles of the League of Nations. In 1951 the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted the Equal Remuneration Convention which has been ratified by 105 member states. In 1979 the United Nations included the principle of equal pay for work of equal value as one of its basic human rights standards.

Canada gave its commitment to pay equity in 1972. As a result, the federal government introduced pay equity as part of the Canada Human Rights Act of 1977. But while legal protection against wage discrimination is important, experience shows that the existence of legal provisions will not, in itself, ensure adequate implementation of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. That is why we need pay equity legislation.

Whether it's called equal pay for work of equal value, pay equity, or comparable worth, such programmes strive to eliminate the part of the wage differential between women and men that is directly attributable to gender. While pay equity legislation cannot solve all the problems women face in the labour market, it can substantially reduce the wage gap.

Pay equity works in other countries

Prior to the introduction of pay equity legislation in Australia, women's pay amounted to 66% of men's. Pay equity, which included the private sector, was phased in between 1972 and 1975. Today women earn 85% of men's wages. At the same time there has been no increase in unemployment for women. Other countries show the same result. The wage gap narrowed appreciably in New Zealand, Ireland, Finland, Norway, and Sweden after the introduction of pay equity programs (see Table 2).

Pay equity in Canada

In Canada, pay equity legislation has been introduced for civil servants and crown corporations federally. Quebec has a pay equity program, and draft legislation has been introduced in Ontario to cover workers in both public and private sectors.

In July 1985, Manitoba passed pay equity legislation to cover civil servants as well as agencies which receive substantial government funding, such as universities, hospitals and all crown corporations. Prince Edward Island has just introduced draft legislation that, according to some analysts, may be the best legislation yet.

Pay equity in B.C.

After reviewing existing legislation, the committee drafting the pay equity bill outlined some of the provisions which workable legislation must contain. These are:

- a strong introductory statement of principle and philosophy (because education is an important part of any pay equity program)
- a Pay Equity Commission to pro-

Table 2
Ratio of Average
Female-Male Earnings
19 OECD Countries, 1968 and 1977

	1968	1977
Australia	.70(1972)	.82
Austria	.67(1960)	.74
Belgium	.67	.70
Canada	.54(1961)	.50(1971)
Denmark	.74	.85
France	.86(1972)	.86
Germany	.69	.73
Greece	.68	.70
Ireland	.55	.61(1973)
Japan	.43(1960)	.58(1975)
Luxembourg	.57	.65
Netherlands	.74	.81
New Zealand	.70(1972)	.79
Norway	.75	.80
Portugal	.64(1974)	.73
Sweden	.78	.87
Switzerland	.64	.68
United Kingdom	.60	.72
United States	.66(1973)	.66

Source: OECD

vide a strong monitoring role, with the power and resources to lay its own complaints

- a complaint-based mechanism available to individuals, groups, and third parties in both the public and private sectors
- a prohibition against any reduction in wages for male-dominated jobs
- effective penalties for non-compliance with the legislation
- contract compliance for companies tendering for government contracts
- a flexible approach to the definition of gender predominance using a range of factors and avoiding arbi-



Anita Hagen, MLA

Photo by Catherine Kerr

trary numerical cutoffs. While pay equity legislation applies generally to jobs where women predominate, it is important to ensure the equal value legislation responds to the needs of both male and female workers where gender influences the rate of pay.

- flexibility in the determination of equal value which uses a collective bargaining approach. Unions must be involved in the process from the outset and job evaluation programs must be jointly established and conducted.
- a direction to seek out and remedy undervalued jobs and gender-based inequities within a specific time frame.

Equal value: how do you compare apples and oranges?

The determination of equal value is usually done by comparing specific criteria. This is where critics argue that pay equity is impossible because you cannot compare apples and oranges. But just as weights, calories and nutrients of apples and oranges can be compared, so dissimilar jobs can also be compared in terms of skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions.

In fact, it's already happening in a number of places. In Minnesota where the first pay equity program in North America was implemented, job evaluation exposed a wage gap of 20% for jobs of equal value. Women's wages were increased an average of 20% over the next four years. Payouts equalled only 1.25% of the total state budget for each of the four years. Manitoba estimates pay equity can be phased in over a four-year period if employers set aside the equivalent of about 1% of the total payroll each year.

One concern about the use of gender neutral job evaluations is that the weights applied to each component of the evaluation system can obviously bias the value attached to each job. Clearly flexibility and consultation are the keys to devising a job evaluation system which satisfies the basic purpose—fairness and justice in the workplace.

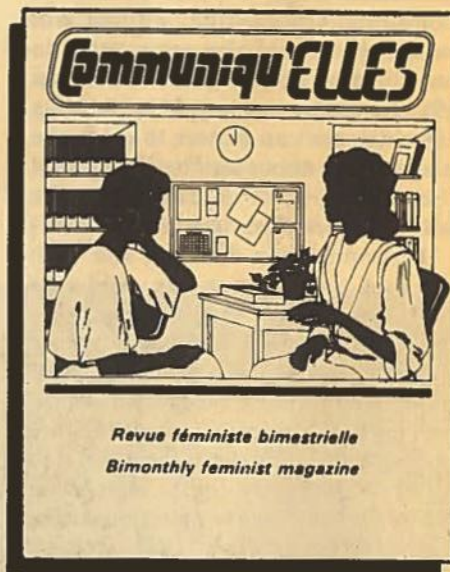
There are other objections. Some critics claim that pay equity will

create negative consequences for women, such as increased unemployment. This suggestion is not supported by the facts. In Australia, pay equity was phased in over a three-year period, from 1972 to 1975. Employment of women continued to increase an average of 3.6% a year throughout the period from 1973 to 1977 while employment for men increased by only 1.1% a year on average during that time.

Women MLAs lead the way

There are 5 New Democrat MLAs who intend to see pay equity legislation reach the floor of the legislature. As Joan Smallwood said to Provincial Council, "Obviously the party has a mandate—a challenge to work on. We're building a platform for the next election. I challenge Council to carry that mandate forward." It's a challenge the women MLAs hope every New Democrat will accept.

Pay equity programs may not eliminate every economic discrimination against women, but pay equity will put more money in many women's pockets. That in itself is a worthwhile challenge. ♀



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Mike Harcourt on Women's Issues

At our provincial convention on April 10, 11, 12, we will elect a new party leader. So far there is only one declared leadership candidate, Mike Harcourt. Priorities submitted a list of questions on women's rights issues to Mike for his response.

Priorities: Our 5 women MLAs are drafting a joint Private Member's Bill on pay equity. While you were Mayor of Vancouver, civic workers went on strike. One of the major issues of the strike was equity. What is your position now on this issue?

Mike Harcourt: My position on pay equity then in 1981, as now, is positive. We had equal pay in effect in 1981. The issue of equal pay for work of equal value surfaced for the first time after the 1981 strike commenced. I immediately asked our City's negotiators to prepare a proposal with the Vancouver Municipal and Regional Employees Union negotiators for ratification by the Vancouver City Council. We in essence became the first municipality in B.C. to implement equal pay for work of equal value in 1981 when we eliminated the clerk pay grades 5, 6, and

7 so that women and men at Vancouver City Hall now receive equal pay for work of equal value*.

Further, in 1981 I had the equal employment officer reappointed to establish a vigorous program to increase opportunities for the hiring and advancement of women, visible ethnic minorities, and the disabled. I am committed to pay equity.

Priorities: What legislative changes would you implement or support to deal with street prostitution problems in Vancouver and elsewhere in the province? In addition to legislative changes, what other changes are needed?

Mike Harcourt: I would push for tougher penalties for customers involved with children. I would put greater emphasis on programs that allow women to leave prostitution: pay equity, education and training, childcare, and income support. We need to address the main issue causing prostitution, which is poverty.

Priorities: Older women in this province live in poverty, isolation and despair. What forms of assis-

**Editor's note: The VMREU negotiated its 1981 contract with the Greater Vancouver Regional District, and Mike Harcourt's voice was only 1 of 15 on the employer's bargaining unit. The 1981 strike lasted 13 weeks.*

Priorities discussed the issue of pay equity with a VMREU spokesperson who felt that equal pay for work of equal value for municipal workers has not yet been achieved. Here are some examples using 1986 figures:

- Someone who picks up paper outside, usually male, starts at \$11.98 per hour. This is the bottom level entry position requiring no special skills. It is equivalent in pay to the 5th step of a clerical worker on pay grade 17, usually female. This is considered to be a very good clerical position and the worker would have to have excellent skills to hold

this job. Pay grade 13 or 14 is considered to be a medium level job.

- A labourer 1, usually male, (the lowest entry level after the paper picker) receives \$3.12 per hour more than a clerk typist 2, usually female. The labourer 1 requires no special skills; the clerk typist 2 needs good skills. In the first year alone, a clerk typist 2 earns \$5785.62 less than a labourer 1.
- In 1981 the wage gap at wage entry levels was \$2.90 per hour. By 1986 it had grown to \$3.12 per hour due to the constant percentage increase which provides bigger increases to those earning more. Also the government's compensation stabilization program has effectively removed bargaining flexibility.

tance (financial and otherwise) are you committed to providing these women?

Mike Harcourt: I advocate an immediate increase in income assistance programs which have been frozen for four years; proper housing programs, i.e. co-op and non-profit housing, restoration of the renter's grant, the rentalsman, rent regulations; access to affordable and efficient transportation; and proper pensions.

Priorities: Our federal caucus is currently dealing with the availability of childcare. At the provincial level, under what Ministry should childcare fall, how should public childcare be funded, where should it be available? What role should unions play in providing and funding childcare?

Mike Harcourt: Childcare should fall under the Ministry of Human Resources, or possibly the Ministry of Education. Funding for childcare should be through the Canada Assistance Plan and the care should be available to all in the community based on facilities or in the workplace where appropriate. I support and encourage unions that raise this issue in collective bargaining. The real aim is to have public childcare available to both the organized and unorganized.

Priorities: What structural changes would you suggest to increase the involvement of the Women's Rights Committee in the party's decision-making processes?

Mike Harcourt: My suggestions include gender parity in the party, caucus adopting women's issues as a major priority for legislative and political action, and assuring the involvement of the Women's Rights Committee in important party bodies such as the election planning committee.

Priorities: The production, sale and distribution of pornographic material within British Columbia is a serious problem. What steps would you take to control or eliminate the

Resolution on Gender Parity

WHEREAS the New Democratic Party has increasingly encouraged greater participation of women, real sharing of power among men and women will not be achieved until it is ensured that substantial numbers of women are on every decision-making body of the Party, and

WHEREAS there is no conscious intention within the New Democratic Party to practice discrimination, evidence shows that systemic discrimination prevails at all levels of the Party structure, i.e. the general practices or systems may appear neutral in their treatment of women but operate to exclude women for reasons which are not related to the job. Systemic discrimination is supported by the following assumptions:

1. Lack of available and representative women.
2. The New Democratic Party is a democratic party and all members, men and women, have equal chances for nominations or elections.
3. Gender parity will happen voluntarily because members of the Party believe in it.

The evidence indicates otherwise. Women were significantly underrepresented as delegates at the last provincial convention. Many constituencies with memberships of over 40% women elected less than 20% women delegates. Women represent only 1/3 of all the nominated candidates. Women are also underrepresented on the Provincial Council and certain policy review subcommittees, and

WHEREAS gender parity is something achieved on a voluntary basis, these results are not always consistent and are obtained as a privilege rather than a right. A revolution in consciousness is needed. Human behaviour is forced to change when rules are changed. The new consciousness develops as a result of new behaviour, and

WHEREAS slate-making and intra-Party elections take into account the following: regional representation, expertise, availability to serve, success in achieving public office, and a record of involvement

in Party affairs. It must also take into account gender representation,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT each gender shall occupy 50% of the positions on the following bodies:

- Provincial Executive Table Officers (Total of 6, excluding the Leader)
- Provincial Executive Members-at-Large (Total of 10)
- Provincial Executive Alternates (Total of 2)
- Provincial Executive Federal Council Delegates (Total of 2)
- Policy Subcommittee Chairs

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the provincial New Democratic Party urge the constituency associations to work towards gender parity on their executives and committees, and in their selection of delegates to Provincial Council and to the Provincial Convention, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the provincial New Democratic Party urge the Young People's section of the Party to work toward gender parity on their executives, councils, committees and delegates to all bodies of the Party, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the resolutions dealing with gender parity be time limited to be reviewed after the two gender parity convention elections, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT wherever the decision-making body is an odd-number, the 50% principle shall be adhered to the closest even number, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Convention instruct the Balloting Committee to devise an appropriate balloting procedure to ensure elections are based on equal male/female representation.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS COMMITTEE

spread of pornographic material?

Mike Harcourt: I support tough enforcement in B.C., with the assistance of community involvement, to eliminate material involving violence against women and children, and bestiality; and at the border to prohibit the importation into Canada of pornography.

Priorities: The Women's Rights Committee has submitted a resolution on gender parity to the 1987 provincial convention. Will you support this resolution? If so, will you work towards its implementation?

Mike Harcourt: Yes, I will support this resolution. Yes, I will work towards its implementation by supporting equal representation on the provincial executive and other bodies of the party, by encouraging more women candidates federally, provincially and municipally, by encouraging constituency associations to implement equal representation on constituency executives and committees, and in the election of convention delegates.

Priorities: A Coalition has been formed which will open a clinic

providing abortion services within the next year in the Lower Mainland. Will you support the Coalition in its efforts to establish this clinic? If so, how?

Mike Harcourt: I support the party position on freedom of choice, community clinics with abortion as well as other services, affiliated with backup hospital facilities, as part of the medicare system. I support the above position as expressed by Joan Smallwood, Darlene Marzari and Anita Hagen in the recent Coalition meeting. ♀

Crisis for Alberta Women

by Theresa Kiefer

Recent events in Alberta around the abortion issue have created a real crisis for women. They have also given Premier Vander Zalm of B.C. some new and frightening ideas.

It all began in September with what looked like a boon to the pro-choice movement: an end to extra-billing in Alberta—a practice which has meant that abortion had been a hardship for many women and a financial barrier for others.

The Alberta Medical Association negotiated a contract with the government which would maintain a flat \$84.50 fee doctors receive for abortion services. However, what the AMA really wanted was to have abortion services de-insured altogether, like cosmetic surgery, claiming that it is elective. The President Elect of the AMA, Dr. Ruth Collins-Nakai, has suggested that abortion should be taken out of the health plan because 14% of abortions last year were "repeats" and women must be "using abortion as a method of birth control" (see *Editor's Note*). Since October, 8 of the 11 doctors performing abortions in Edmonton have stopped. 60% of Alberta women must leave the province to obtain an abortion, up from 30% in January 1986.

After the government refused to negotiate a higher settlement, the doctors protested by charging an additional \$75.00 for a "medical legal letter" needed to refer patients through the therapeutic abortion committee procedure. This letter amounts to extra-billing, and the refusal to work within the negotiated contract amounts to blackmail. The AMA are hoping to use abortion as a test case for the idea of de-insuring other procedures, by holding women's reproductive freedom to ransom. Even the government has acknowledged that abortion is not elective surgery, but an essential

service.

The government has hardly taken a strong role in defense of women's rights. They also claim that women misuse abortion as birth control. The Chairperson of the government women's council, Marg Leahey, is not pro-choice. The government has refused to take responsibility for a medical crisis and the welfare of its female constituents.

Abortion by Choice, Planned Parenthood and the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee have begun to lobby for a solution while they apply a bandaid to the problem. ASWAC has established an emergency fund to help get some women to the United States. Since the end of extra-billing, more than 140 women have been referred to the U.S. by Planned Parenthood, and forced to travel for the procedure.

The pro-choice ASWAC caucus also organized a "Coat Hanger Vigil" on November 21 to coincide with a meeting of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Although the meeting was cancelled, the vigil was a great success. Women gathered outside the legislature bearing coat hangers and

signs that read "Never Again." The vigil ended at the offices of the College of Physicians and Surgeons as the coat hangers were hung on the front of the building. It was a clear statement about who will be responsible should a woman be forced to use such desperate methods.

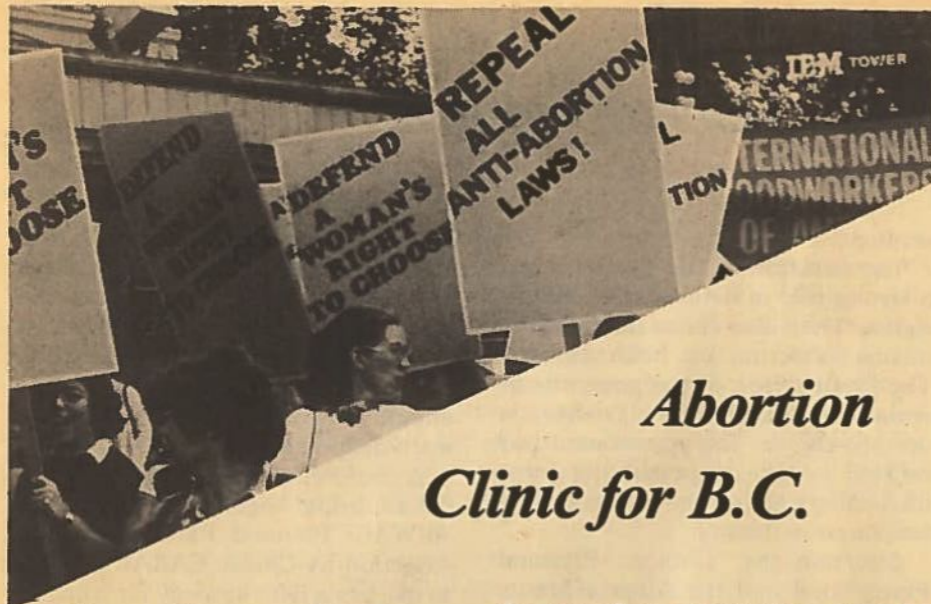
A conference was held on January 22 to bring together members of ASWAC, Planned Parenthood and Abortion by Choice CARAL chapter to discuss a joint strategy for combating the government's inertia, and to propose a comprehensive solution to unwanted pregnancy.

The women have decided to look into the possibility of setting up an abortion clinic in Alberta as the only solution to the problem of access in their province. Sound familiar? ♀

Editor's Note: Marion Powell, in a comprehensive report on access to abortion in Ontario, refutes this theory with documented evidence. The next issue of *Priorities* will carry excerpts from her report.



Photo by Andrea Waywanko, from *News* magazine



Abortion Clinic for B.C.

by Sharon Hager and Theresa Kiefer

The first 5 paragraphs of this article were written by Theresa Kiefer and previously published in Socialist Voice.

In the last few months the abortion rights movement has seen a drastic reduction of abortion services in Alberta, a raging judicial battle involving two doctors in Quebec, and an increasingly vocal anti-choice, anti-woman Premier in B.C. As well there have been earlier attacks against abortion rights in Ontario and Newfoundland.

More and more, these battles are finding their way to the courts where a small number of "experts" rule on what women may or may not do with their bodies. The most important of these court cases is the Supreme Court appeal by Dr. Henry Morgentaler which was heard in early October. The decision is expected this fall.

The consequences of a negative decision in this case would be profound. These could include new charges being laid against the doctors, permanent closure of the clinics and new restrictions on hospital abortions. Major set-backs for the pro-choice movement are possible.

The pro-choice movement has adopted the strategy of openly defying the law in order to challenge it. Lawmakers who consistently ignore

the pro-choice majority must be shown that this unjust law is unenforceable. To date four juries have acquitted Dr. Morgentaler.

The campaign to establish free standing clinics across the country has demonstrated the widespread popular support for women's reproductive freedom. This campaign is about to get an important boost from a recently formed coalition in B.C.

On January 25 over 200 people from women's groups, political and labour organizations, the health community and many others came together to establish and defend an abortion clinic in Vancouver. This clinic would be an interim step toward the long-term goal of having fully insured women's reproductive health clinics all around the province offering a whole range of services including abortion. Once a clinic is in operation the coalition plans to demand that the B.C. government accredit the clinic and ensure that its services are covered by the Medical Services Plan.

Most people are unaware of a crisis of access to abortion in B.C. Only 52 out of 115 hospitals have established Therapeutic Abortion Committees and only 10 of those perform abortions. Meanwhile anti-abortionists have been trying to take over hospital boards. Just recently a takeover attempt was averted at Lion's Gate hospital in North Vancouver but we were not so lucky in Chilliwack, Richmond and Surrey. It has become

virtually impossible to obtain an abortion in Vernon or Kamloops thanks to anti-choice campaigns.

Thousands of women have to go to the U.S. at their own expense or face delays because they are unable to have abortions in their own communities. Particularly hard hit are poor and rural women or any woman who cannot find a supportive doctor to refer her for an abortion.

Abortion clinics in Ontario and Quebec have proven to be far superior to the hospital system. Among the advantages are a more supportive atmosphere because of committed staff, fewer delays and less psychological stress, a safer medical procedure (aspiration) requiring no general anaesthetic, and cost effectiveness.

A group of pro-choice doctors calling themselves "Physicians For Choice" support the concept of free standing clinics in B.C. Although not himself a member, BC Medical Association President Dr. John O'Brien-Bell has stated that the criminal code should be changed so that abortions no longer have to be performed in hospitals.

Premier Vander Zalm has threatened to give pro-choice supporters the fight of their lives if the abortion clinic in Vancouver becomes a reality. He seems to feel that too many abortions are being done in B.C. and has suggested matching unwed pregnant "girls" with adoptive couples. He would like to build facilities to house these "girls" as a way of providing assistance to them. He has also initiated an inquiry into abortion services in B.C. to investigate how best to curtail abortions. One idea he has considered is to pay doctors less for the procedure so that fewer doctors will be willing to do it.

The setting up and defence of a clinic is part of the bigger fight to get rid of the Socred government in Victoria. The new coalition will have to respond to government attacks with mass demonstrations of support, drawing our majority into action if we hope to win this struggle.

Membership in the coalition is open to all groups and individuals who support the right to choose, the

The Winnipeg Experience

by Carol Rosset

When I heard of the plans to open an abortion clinic in B.C., I felt a surge of excitement at the prospect of once again asserting women's right to reproductive choice. I believe that the establishment of reproductive health clinics is the most effective strategy in achieving our goals. I am confident that with every province that takes this action, we are that much closer to the day when we will have control over our bodies and lives. Meanwhile, we have 18 years of experience with Section 251 and the benefit of 14 years of experience with abortion clinic challenges to that law from which to learn.

In late 1982, Dr. Henry Morgentaler announced that he would open an abortion clinic in Winnipeg. His experience in Quebec told him this strategy worked. He believed that Manitoba was ripe for the challenge as it had the usual access problems and a supposedly pro-choice NDP government.

Thus, in Manitoba, the clinic was first and foremost a Morgentaler clinic. The work of actually setting up the clinic was largely carried out by Dr. Morgentaler and his Montreal associates. Things happened quickly. Within a few months Winnipeg had a free-standing abortion clinic offering a warm, supportive environment and staffed by 8 wonderful, competent, and dedicated people.

removal of abortion from the criminal code, the establishment of an abortion clinic in Vancouver and the eventual creation of government funded, medically insured women's health clinics providing abortions and other services.

Join the coalition and help build and defend B.C.'s first abortion clinic. The fight to defend this clinic will be an important political battle with the Socred government and will help to expose that government as being anti-woman and anti-working class. ♀

Women rally around the clinic

Manitoba's pro-choice community quickly got organized. The Coalition for Reproductive Choice was formed. Within a few months it grew to encompass approximately 40 member organizations representing women's groups, labour, students, Native women, Jewish women, political organizations (NDP Status of Women, NDP constituencies, the Communist Party Women's Commission), and various occupational groups (i.e. physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, lawyers, and parents). The Coalition also formed 4 working committees: lobbying and outreach, education and publicity, organizing and communication, and fundraising. Each member organization and working committee had a representative with voice and vote on the Coalition steering committee. I was the first paid staff person. From March to August 1983, I worked as "co-ordinator" for the Coalition.

Resolving conflicts

From the outset, fundamental issues involving control and strategy between the Coalition and the clinic were raised. But the reality of the clinic's existence and the fact of Dr. Morgentaler's control of the clinic resulted in compromises on the part of the Coalition throughout the campaign. This often placed the Coalition in a reactive position, not only to the government, police, and other outside forces, but also to Dr. Morgentaler and his agenda. While there was still a lot of joint strategizing between the Coalition and Dr. Morgentaler and his lawyer, the bottom line was that Dr. Morgentaler ultimately called the shots vis a vis the clinic, because, though it is our fight, it was his money and personal freedom that were on the line.

Wherever a clinic is planned these same basic issues will arise. They must be anticipated and resolved so that we can turn our energies towards dealing with the confronta-

tion from those who would deny a woman's right to choose. Whatever is done in this regard, we must recognize the symbiotic relationship between the community supporters and the clinic and its staff, and identify potential conflicts. We need a clear statement reflecting consensus on the interests and roles of each group. There should also be a structure in place to ensure communication, joint planning, and accountability.

Anti-abortionists attack clinic

The legal challenges to the Morgentaler clinic began before the doors were even opened. In March and April 1983, anti-choice groups challenged the clinic's application for building and occupancy permits on the basis of anticipated illegal use of the premises. The Coalition petitioned the neighbourhood to show support for the establishment of the clinic by the residents, and along with Dr. Morgentaler's lawyer, presented submissions to City Council. By a margin of 1 vote, the civic committee decided it lacked the jurisdiction to consider issues of potential criminal code violations in exercising their administrative power over building and occupancy codes.

The clinic opened May 5, 1983, with the granting of an occupancy permit. Meanwhile, the Coalition had been organizing support, fundraising, and lobbying. Our main concern was to keep the clinic open. Like Dr. Morgentaler, we hoped for some measure of co-operation, if not tacit support, from the NDP government many of us had worked to elect. The Coalition's lobbying efforts were extensive. We presented government with the facts on access to abortion in Manitoba, evidence on the medical and fiscal advantages of a clinic, and several legal bases on which the Attorney-General could exercise his discretion not to lay charges.

Dr. Morgentaler and the Coalition asked the government, Larry Desjardins, Minister of Health, in parti-

cular, to "approve" the clinic as a "hospital" for the performance of abortions, in accordance with Section 251, so that the clinic could operate within the law. The government refused, conveniently citing its opposition to privately-owned facilities and relying on an opinion from the College of Physicians and Surgeons questioning the adequacy of the clinic's emergency backup facilities. Meanwhile, Mr. Desjardins, a staunch Roman Catholic, had publicly stated he would resign if the criminal law was not invoked.

As soon as the clinic opened, the government was under attack for not shutting it down and laying charges. The opposition was calling for the A-G's resignation but Roland Penner publicly presented a hands-off approach, saying that it was up to the police to investigate and lay charges if and when they had sufficient evidence. Meanwhile, Dr. Morgentaler was publicly and proudly announcing that women were coming to his clinic for abortions.

The scene outside the clinic was always chaotic. The anti-choice fringe, led by Joe Borowski, set up headquarters in a trailer parked on the front lawn of the house next door. There was daily abuse by the picketers who often left tokens such as dead birds and makeshift fetus graves on the clinic doorway. This

was in stark contrast to the scene inside the clinic where staff and volunteers worked together to create a supportive and caring environment for the women coming to the clinic, and for each other, in spite of the constant police surveillance and threat of a raid. It was decided early on that pro-choice groups would not add to the fracas by picketing outside the clinic. Coalition volunteers provided an escort for patients coming and going from the clinic.

Without warning, on Friday June 3, 1983, the first raid on the clinic took place. The staff, 2 doctors and 6 staff women, were arrested and taken in for questioning, then released without charges. The police seized clinic property as evidence: and in-sink-erator, suction machine, surgical instruments, patient files, and appointment books. That night over 500 people marched on the legislature.

Manitoba NDP government fails to support clinic

Nothing prepared us for the shock that was to come a few days later when the Crown laid charges of conspiracy to procure an abortion against all 8 clinic staff. The use of the conspiracy charge was denounced as an underhanded abuse of state power aimed at destroying the clinic. If a direct charge under Section 251

had been brought against the doctors, there would have been a trial by jury. This would have insured a true test of the enforceability of the law. As it is, the maximum penalty upon conviction for conspiracy is life imprisonment. At this point, 2 staff women resigned.

The Coalition continued to lobby the government to drop the charges and approve the clinic. Dr. Morgentaler offered to turn the clinic over to the government as a prototype public health clinic providing abortions in accordance with Section 251. The government refused while at the same time agreeing to expand abortion services in Manitoba, but only in the hospital context.

Following the raid, the seized equipment was replaced and the clinic reopened. The staff bravely returned to work until the second raid on Saturday June 25, 1983. This time the clinic staff, a Coalition volunteer (Suzanne Neuman), and several patients were arrested. The patients were questioned and released. More conspiracy charges were laid against the others, including the volunteer. As well, two direct charges under Section 251 were laid against 3 of the staff. The "accused" applied for bail to the weekend magistrate who would grant release only on the condition that they not go within one block of the clinic. These 8 women and 1 man (Dr. Bob Scott) bravely refused bail and spent the next 2 days in jail. A lengthy bail application on Monday morning resulted in their release without geographic restriction, the judge noting the questionable validity of Section 251!

The state's attack on the clinic took its toll. The cost of defending 9 people against multiple charges would be enormous, not to mention the cost of replacing repeatedly seized equipment. Of primary importance, always, was the safety of the women using the clinic. The price being extracted in human and financial terms was too great.

The lawyers waived a preliminary hearing, wishing to get to trial as quickly as possible. The process was curtailed when, on July 5, 1983, a Morgentaler clinic in Toronto was

raided and charges laid. The Toronto trial started first. The focus shifted to Ontario and the Manitoba government breathed a sigh of relief.

Clinic remains as symbol of resistance

The Winnipeg clinic has remained open as a counselling and referral service and as a symbol of our continuing fight for free-standing abortion clinics. At present, 2 staff women are there half days. The 9

people charged in 1983 still stand accused, their prosecutions being held in abeyance pending the outcome in Ontario. As a result, the Coalition's activities have diminished as they await the Supreme Court's decision.

The experience in Manitoba has once again shown that when it comes to the fight for abortion rights the systems of social democracy and criminal justice are turned against

us and we are on our own. It is exciting to see plans under way for a clinic in B.C. which will bring us that much closer to achieving reproductive freedom for all Canadian women. We have the opportunity to build a solid base of support and develop strategy for establishing a clinic which reflects our vision of the quality of health care women have a right to expect from government. ♀

Letters from Omineca

Priorities,

I am enclosing a letter which I hope you will consider publishing. The letter is on the abortion issue and raises some questions that need, in my opinion, discussion within the Party. I feel that, though our stance on pro-choice is strong, it is not understood by the general public in terms of how we come to that and why we feel pro-choice is a "must" policy.

The man who wrote the letter, Father Ken Forster of Fort St. James, is a Catholic priest. I met him on a number of occasions before and during the 1986 election. The first time was at a dinner-dance organized in part by himself to raise money to send to Chile. The second time was at a social justice meeting in Fort St. James. Father Ken has always seemed to me a very fair man, a hard worker for humanity, and a believer in equality to all and for all. I give you this background so you will understand that this is a man who in general has our political persuasion and who on most issues backs us to the hilt.

There were many voters in the Fort St. James area who are involved with the Catholic church, who are part of the social justice group that voted for us the first time in 1986. They made the decision that in spite of our stance on abortion they would vote for us. There were others who, like Father Ken, supported us publicly, but when it came to the ballot found they could not vote. I think

their questions and concerns need to be answered by us.

Sincerely,
Louise Kilby

Dear Louise,

For those of us who reject "Free Enterprise" when the term is used to justify a freedom to take and squeeze the economy for corporate or personal gain at the cost of the poor, a freedom to put profit over dignity of human labour, we seek a consistent and logical alternative.

As I listened to the platform of the New Democratic Party, I became more interested. It began to resonate with my values and what I believe will cause British Columbia to become a community of caring people. You speak out against the selling of our non-renewable resources outside the province for temporary gain or momentary labour activity which can sometimes pass for development. You speak against a policy of the Social Credit government which tries to pit interest groups against one another to avoid the responsibility of resolving longstanding injustices. Our most visible example of this is the unwillingness of the Social Credit government to encourage and resolve, in partnership with the Federal government, the "land claim" issue with the native people. The Indian people need an economic base before they can be productive contributors to our province.

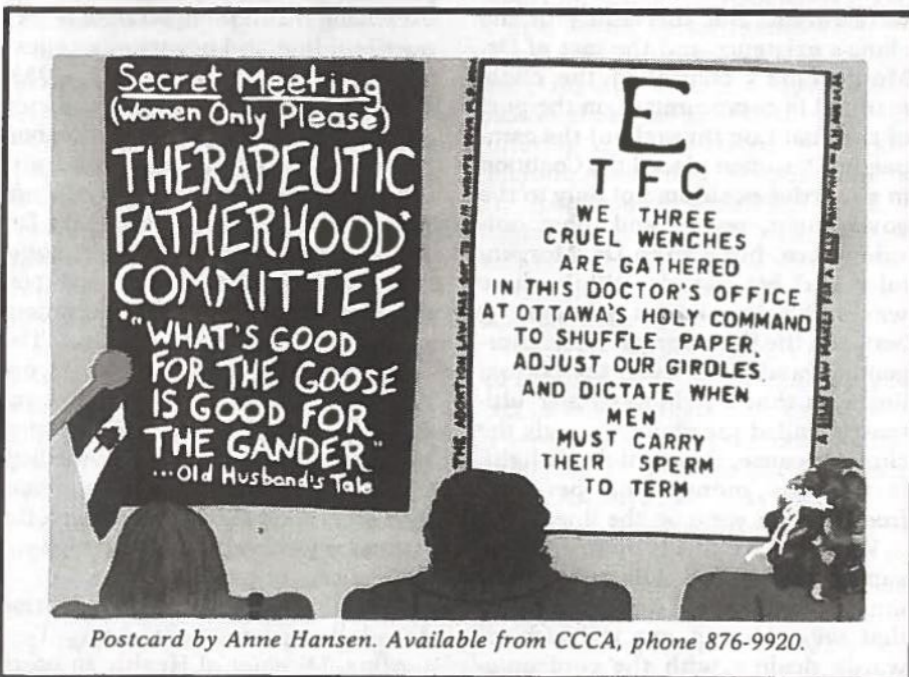
The NDP promises a greater concern for the weak, the oppressed,

and the disadvantaged. You desire to give more responsibility to regions for economic planning. You speak of a need for responsible stewardship of our resources and you respect a Nuclear Free Zone. The NDP recognizes the struggle of those on fixed incomes, especially those on social assistance.

So you know who I voted for in this past election. But do you? The NDP would want to assure the right of every British Columbian to vote through a universal voter system. At present only 75% get on the voters' list. Yet I find myself in a position where the NDP has taken away, not my right, but my possibility to vote. The NDP must become consistent and logical in its thinking. You embrace the weak and poor and say we must be a caring society ready to share our resources with all, not because all are economically productive, but because all are precious. The value of a person cannot be determined by his/her productivity. All are precious because they are human.

The NDP recognizes, and rightly so, the discrimination against women. You promise equal pay for work of equal value. But there is one glaring inconsistency: you do not recognize the rights and dignity of the unborn child. This thinking is not only in error, it puts your whole platform in question. Is there a real concern for the weak?

Perhaps in your rightful struggle for equality for women you have done what you accuse the Social



Postcard by Anne Hansen. Available from CCA, phone 876-9920.

Credit of doing in society, putting one interest group against the other and choosing the one who has the voice to support you politically—the mother. The child is indeed the weak and voiceless.

I would have liked to have added my voice to the support of the NDP but my voice has been silenced along with the 13,000 children aborted last year in our province. I would like to be able to justify my vote by saying, "But this is only one issue." Perhaps through individual elected NDP members this thinking can be changed. Yet once again this Party that wants to respect the life of the little person doesn't respect even the right of its own delegates to decide. The party platform is "pro-choice" which in reality is pro-abortion.

Louise Kilby, our candidate to represent us, clearly and strongly raised her voice, "I am pro-choice." As she did, she lost my voice and my vote. It's not one issue—it is THE issue. The platform and foundation of all our policies must rest on the dignity of each person, no matter how productive or unproductive they are, no matter how influential or hidden, no matter how young (who would dare proclaim that human life begins at birth?) or old.

I was forced to spoil my vote because I cannot support the anti-life policies of the Social Credit or the candidate who fails to stand with the weak, the voiceless, or the powerless. The unborn, the most defenceless in our society, need your support, Louise, and the support of all elected members who claim to stand for the good of society and not just one interest group against another.

I believe if the platform of the NDP truly reflected consistent thinking you would be in power today. If we are really to spend our life and energy trying to enhance the dignity of every human being, we must start with the first right of the weak to live.

I would be happy to discuss these issues further with you. You cannot expect support when positions are embraced contrary to your basic vision. Many votes of those who share your basic philosophy are lost

in this inconsistent Pro-Abortion stance.

Thanking you for your time,
Sincerely,
Fr. Ken Forster O.M.I.

Priorities replies

Dear Father Forster,

I received a letter from Louise Kilby addressed to me as editor of *Priorities*, the magazine of the BC NDP Women's Rights Committee. She asks me to address your concerns regarding choice on abortion as outlined in your letter to her.

First, I'd like to express my appreciation of your work in the area of human rights and your commitment to improving the lot of the poor and the underprivileged. The world needs more people who, like yourself, are actively working to help those outside their immediate circle of self, family, and friends.

In your letter, you refer to those who support a woman's right to choose whether or not to have an abortion as *pro-abortion*. I disagree strongly with you here. No one is pro-abortion. No one wants to have an abortion. The decision is always a difficult one to make for any woman. However, I believe it is a necessary medical procedure and

must be available to women as an alternative.

The fact is, there is no safe and absolutely guaranteed form of birth control available today. The huge majority of women who have abortions were using some form of birth control at the time of conception.

There is an ongoing debate within the Catholic church as to whether or not abortion is murder, whether the "soul" is present in the zygote at conception, whether the fetus is already human or potentially human, and so on. There is a pamphlet published by Catholics for a Free Choice, 2008 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C., 20009, phone no. (202) 638-1706. I'm enclosing photocopies of pages from "The History of Abortion in the Catholic Church" and urge you to order these pamphlets:

- My Conscience Speaks: Catholic Women Discuss Their Abortions
- An Ethical Inquiry: Where to Draw the Line
- We are the Mainstream: Dissent in the Catholic Church
- I Support You But I Can't Sign My Name: Pro-Choice Catholics Testify
- The Church in a Democracy: Who Governs?

They cost US\$1.00 each and are worth reading.

We in the NDP believe that women must have the right to control their

own bodies and thereby decide their own fates. This is part of a basic human right to self-determination. The Women's Rights Committee of the NDP supports the establishment of medically insured women's clinics that provide a range of reproductive health services including abortions. Such clinics would enable women to choose when and if to reproduce; they would give women access to abortions in the first trimester when complications and the risks to a woman's health are kept to a minimum; they would provide an atmosphere that is supportive and caring. The president of the B.C. Medical Association, Dr. John O'Brien-Bell has stated that abortion services should be handled in clinics and not tie up operating room facilities in hospitals.

No one should ever be forced to have an abortion against her will. Also, no one should ever be prevented from having an abortion if that is her choice. I do not believe that abortion is murder. Is wearing an IUD murder? The egg is fertilized but is prevented from implanting itself in the uterine wall through human intervention.

Medical science is a marvellous tool! Let us use it to improve the lives of human beings. Teenagers who cannot cope with the adult responsibility of raising a child should not be forced to experience the trauma of developing a fetus into a human baby, giving birth to it, and then having to give it up for adoption. This is cruel and unusual punishment for the young woman's "sin" of having had premarital sex or of having been too ignorant to know how to protect herself from pregnancy. Any woman at any age who conceives and feels she cannot continue the pregnancy must have a choice. Let every child be a wanted child.

Just as I would never think of forcing my morality on others in this society, so I strongly resist others forcing their morality on me or on my sisters.

Women who want an abortion will, sometimes desperately, seek one, regardless of the law. Do we want to return to the days of total

disregard for women, when many died from back street butchers, infection, hemorrhaging, etc? I think not.

I believe it is part of human nature to want to reproduce, to create a loving family environment with children. Let us concentrate our efforts on providing the social conditions in which people feel they can have children and can raise these children to adulthood without fearing poverty and the stress that all too often leads to mental or family breakdown. Children should be a blessing rather than a burden.

I do not agree with you that the

REAL Women's Agenda

by Jane Evans, B.C. regional representative to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women

R.E.A.L. (Realistic, Equal, Active, and for Life) Women was founded in 1983 in response to a question asked by Judy Erola, then Minister on the Status of Women. (Erola asked what contribution to society was made by the childless woman who stays at home.) Many of their premises, such as support for homemakers, greater respect for family life, larger family allowances, are appealing on a very deep level. Their major stated goal is to "promote, secure, and defend legislation which upholds the Judeo-Christian values of marriage and family life."

Ah, now you are beginning to feel uneasy. How about this... R.E.A.L. Women was inspired by the Eagle Forum which was so influential in defeating the Equal Rights Amendment in the U.S. They have close ties with and are rumoured to be funded by the ultra-right National Citizen's Coalition here in Canada. Examination of their promotional material shows that they have set themselves up for the sole purpose of opposing feminism, particularly the feminist National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC).

NAC is an umbrella group, with 500 member groups comprising between three and four million members. R.E.A.L. Women say they have 40,000 members but will not produce

BC NDP's pro-choice stand on abortion is inconsistent. What we must do is create a society in which people have choices. We in the NDP believe that our fight for socialism will eventually provide every person with more alternatives for living full and satisfying lives. We believe that allowing women the right to choose whether or not to continue a pregnancy is entirely consistent with this aim.

In solidarity and toward a better society for all,

Janet Vesterback
Priorities Co-ordinator

membership list. NAC, which they label as radical feminist, has among its members traditional homemakers, the United Church of Canada, political caucuses and farm women's groups. Indeed, one of the strongest letters received by the Minister on the Status of Women, David Crombie, urging him to deny funding to R.E.A.L. Women was from the president of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada.

Pro-family or anti-women?

These right-wing women have appropriated the "pro-family" label. Feminists have been insufficiently supportive of the stereotypical nuclear family. This has left us open to accusations by R.E.A.L. Women of being anti-family.

To counter this, we have only to look at the work done by political women over the last twenty years. Every piece of legislation which has benefitted women and their children has been directly influenced by feminist action and principles.

R.E.A.L. Women repudiate these gains. According to Catherine Bolger, one of the speakers at their first AGM in 1985:

Since the beginning of the sexual revolution, for which feminists are responsible, there has been more violence, more bondage, more abuse, more battering, more divorce, more single parent families, more female suicides, more VD, more cervical cancers,

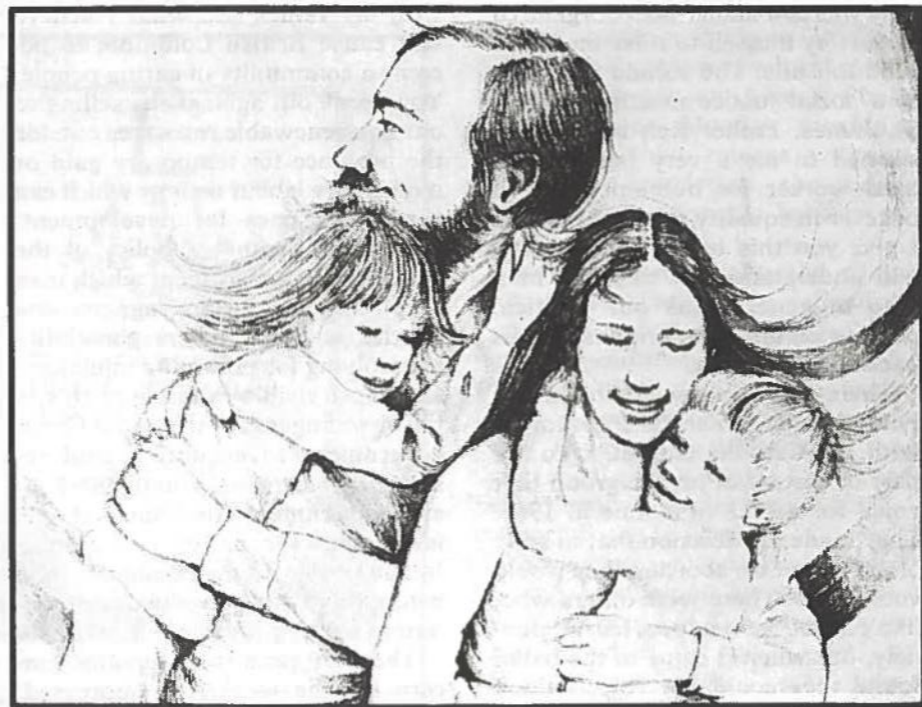


Illustration by Kay Choroa, from Ms.

more abortions, more IUDs, more ectopic pregnancies, more hysterectomies, more ulcers, more breast cancers, more handicapped children, and more incest.

This sickening diatribe shows that they are too dangerous to take lightly. In any case, they would be unable to substantiate any of the above statements as they have great difficulty with statistics. Their research tells them that our divorce rate (which is approaching 40%) is only 1.18%. This is from their Nov. 18, 1986 brief to MPs. Their material on wage parity induces in the reader the same sense of disorientation. They agree that there is a wage gap. "BUT HOLD ON! . . . what evidence is there that the wage gap is caused by discrimination against women?" (Quote from a R.E.A.L. Women promotional pamphlet.) They conclude that marital status is to blame.

Should government fund R.E.A.L. Women?

The recent controversy over their application for federal funding has been worth more to them than any money they could have been granted. The denial of their funding has added a dimension of martyrdom to their contention that they represent the underappreciated women of our society.

On Dec. 11, 1987, Gwendolyn Landolt, legal counsel for R.E.A.L. Women, presented a brief to the Standing Committee on Secretary of State which consisted of one page of exegesis and eleven pages of attack against NAC, specific civil servants, and in passing, *Kinesis*, the newspaper of the Vancouver Status of Women.

At the end of the presentation, which was greeted as "a breath of fresh air" by one member of the Committee, B.C. Conservative MP Bob Wenman wished Ms Landolt "all kinds of success, particularly in British Columbia."

It's not so much what they're for that is disturbing but what they're against, and the extreme ways in which they express this opposition, often using misrepresentation to support their views. They are against



Illustration by Brenda Fahrman

abortion, of course, and in an argument against sex education in the schools, Peggy Steacy, B.C. representative, said:

When people say that there are fewer abortions when there is sex education in the schools it is not true. They've found that in Sweden, very strongly.

In fact, they've found the opposite in Sweden. When the Swedish Minister for the Status of Women was in Ottawa in November, she stated that the abortion problem had disappeared because of the program of sex education, particularly in the schools.

On equal pay for work of equal value, R.E.A.L. Women are not only opposed but they have joined the National Citizen's Coalition to fight against it. When discussing the need for universal, safe, affordable day care, they talk of institutionalizing children and favour the payment of a tax credit to families: ". . . give the money to the family and let them determine what is best, and often it could be a neighbour who will take them in."

Another of their pamphlets was issued specifically to stop the inclusion of sexual orientation in the list of prohibited grounds in the Ontario Human Rights Bill. The pamphlet claims that ". . . homosexuals prey on the young because they are unable to procreate." Ms Landolt admitted

knowing that far more heterosexuals assault children than homosexuals, but the pamphlet remains inflammatory and unchanged.

Feminism under attack

R.E.A.L. Women's main thrust at NAC is that the organization does not represent all Canadian women and that it is against families. They also suggest that feminists have not shown enough respect for women who choose to be homemakers. NAC assuredly does not represent all Canadian women, but nearly four million women is a hefty voting bloc and we are certainly not anti-family.

There is, however, some truth in the last contention. Feminists have underestimated the lure of the power that can come from the role of the traditional wife in a nuclear family. This role can also be a shelter from the big bad world.

We know that only 14% of families follow the traditional pattern of working father, stay-at-home mother, and 2.2 children. This trend is not a consequence of the growth of feminism. Feminism grew in response to the need to ameliorate the lot of those who were losing out in the enormous social changes that have taken place in the last twenty years.

Older feminists hear an echo in the statements of some women who declare their sympathy with the aims of R.E.A.L. Women. These statements are reminiscent of those made by women in the sixties who were not yet ready for the realities of feminism but who were intensely aware that their lot was not entirely a happy or fair one.

The development of political awareness can be uncomfortable. But all of the interaction between members of the family and their interaction with the outside world becomes political with the embrace of feminism. It may be that, as R.E.A.L. Women raise the political consciousness of women not yet reached by the women's movement, their extremism will cause a falling away of support and their converts will come to see in the feminist movement the true force for social change for women. ♀

IWD: a Call for Action

by Karuna Agrawal

Karuna Agrawal was a member of the organizing committee for International Women's Day activities in Vancouver. Her keynote address at the rally on March 7th reflected the ideas and feelings of the entire committee. The theme of this year's International Women's Day was peace, equality, and development for women. In her speech Karuna focuses particularly on the need for unity in the struggle against racism and other forms of discrimination.

International Women's Day is the one time each year when we come together as women to examine our common struggles. It is the one time each year when we take the opportunity to look back at the year behind us and look ahead to the future. We do this together in the spirit of a movement that moves and grows and changes with the needs of women everywhere.

Attacks against women

What has happened for women since this time last year when we stood on these very grounds and celebrated the struggles and victories of women around the globe? We can see a number of challenges on several fronts. When we look at the record of the past year we understand why women must unite.

We've been challenged on our right to choose when, where, how, and if we give birth. We've watched the steady rise of homophobic hysteria that continues to deny lesbian women basic human rights. We've listened to the media and the government attempt to create a climate where Canada can clamp down on immigrant and refugee women coming to this country. In B.C. we've seen the election of a Premier who would impose his own fundamentalist Christian views on all women and who has consistently demonstrated his contempt for women and their needs. At the same time, so-called "R.E.A.L. Women," another

branch of the anti-abortion movement, have managed to find a platform in the media and with government for their anti-choice and anti-woman views. In 1987, two task forces later, we are still without a single step toward a universal child-care system in Canada.

Solidarity with all women

In order to mount a real fightback we must unite in all our diversity. This is not always easy, but it is essential if we as a movement are to grow in spirit and in strength. We must not separate the woman making her living as a prostitute on the streets of Vancouver from the woman refused refugee status at the U.S.-Canadian border, from the woman living on welfare, possibly as a single mother, from the woman working as a domestic or a farm-worker with no labour rights whatsoever, from the woman of colour confronting the racism of our society on a daily basis, from the teenager who runs the risk of becoming pregnant in an anti-choice climate, from the women who have worked hard all of their lives—old women, our mothers and grandmothers—who come to their senior years without



Illustration by Brenda Fahrman

security or respect.

We must not forget women on trial throughout Canada for everything from prostitution to midwifery; women who are losing their children in bitter custody or apprehension battles; women who are criminalized by a justice system that continues to imprison the most vulnerable amongst us.

On IWD, we are reminded of women who have struggled, throughout history, in all parts of the world, against oppression in all its forms. We are reminded, as we work to forge our struggles together, that there is no government at any level which is encouraging women to build a united fightback against the numerous barriers and discriminations in our lives, our futures and the futures of our children. Together we must create an effective political campaign embracing women of all races, a movement that will meet the needs and aspirations of working class women. Together we must confront the racism and the class discrimination that keeps our own movement based primarily in the middle class. We know that striving for anything less is unacceptable and that we organize in the face of opposition from government and the dominant culture in this society.

Call for meaningful action

Unity is nothing more than an abstract concept unless it is accompanied by action. But where do we begin? How do we turn a concept like unity into meaningful action at this time in the history of the women's movement? I suggest as an immediate example uniting against the unjust immigration policy of the Canadian government. The issue is on our doorstep now. This policy must be rejected by every woman here, by every women's organization working against the structural discrimination that affects us all.

Every door in the so-called "open door policy" for refugees has been shut and now the immigrant com-

munity must struggle against arbitrary arrests, deportations, and sub-human refugee camps. We can no longer afford to be purists and stand outside this struggle watching the sincere racists with their clarion call to the nation to beware that this country is being swamped by people from a different culture. The rationale for racism is no longer confined to exploitation, but is based on repatriation; it is no longer oppression but repression, enforced at the ideological level through the media and effected at the political level through the forces of law and order, the police and the courts.

We hear much these days about the feminization of poverty and understand that when we speak about the poor in Canada we are speaking primarily about women. But when we analyze poverty we are increasingly aware that double and triple oppression compounds economic discrimination for many women. For example, disabled women face an unemployment rate of 85%.

When we consider the wage gap between men and women, we must realize that Indian women, for example, do not earn an average of 60 cents on every dollar earned by a man, but 44 cents. When we look at the unfair working conditions experienced by the vast majority of women, we must be aware that there are women, farmworkers and domestics, who work on a daily basis with no labour protection whatsoever. They do not have the right to refuse to work in unsafe conditions, or to insist on decent hours of work at a living wage.

There is no question that the objective conditions are there for alliances between anti-racist and working class struggles, and that the time is ripe for a fightback. So commit yourself to working in every way you can to build a movement where women, everywhere, can stand united: united for freedom, united for justice, united for dignity and united for change. ♀

South African Women in the Liberation Movement

by Gillian Brewin

Parts of this article are excerpts from Southern Africa Report and Spare Rib.

Recent events, such as the forming of the United Women's Organizations in 1981 and the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983, and the state of emergency, have revived women's organizations in South Africa and renewed their activities in the liberation struggle.

This renewal is an aspect of the general upsurge of anti-apartheid resistance. But is that all it is? The political involvement of women tends to be presented by the liberation movement and its supporters in terms of numbers ("mobilizing the other half of the population") or as "drawing women into the struggle," implying that the struggle has a fixed structure. Even those who don't take the class content of the liberation movement for granted somehow overlook its gender content. And so we get the question of women in the liberation movement discussed in the "add-on" terms so familiar to women elsewhere who are treated more or less as an afterthought.

A closer look at the organizational efforts of South African women reveals that they are very clearly structured by the context of the broad resistance movement. At the same time, however, women's struggles have helped to shape the movement. Women's resistance has raised new issues for the liberation movement, or has raised old issues in different ways, ways that reflect the perspective of women and their specific oppression under apartheid.

"We thought we must stay together": the women of Crossroads

The internationally publicized fightback of women in the Crossroads squatter camp against the forced removal of their community has had both strategic and symbolic

importance for women's organizations, and for the liberation movement in general. The Crossroads women were refusing, physically, and with courageous determination, to comply with the regime's favourite and often effective tactic of sowing division among the oppressed. This divide and rule tactic is most recently evidenced in the Riekert legislation which offers some small taste of security to those with legal urban status while defining everyone else, mostly women, as permanently migrant. The Crossroads women were



Photo by Margie Bruun-Meyer, from Southern Africa Report

also refusing the appellation of "surplus people" who could be dumped in the bantustans, out of sight and out of mind.

When the police began raiding the Crossroads camps and demolishing nearby squatting areas outside Cape-town in 1975, the women of Crossroads decided to form a committee. It was mainly women who were "utlegal" (not legal), who faced arrest and deportation. The committee played a watchdog function, keeping track of raids and arrests, and visiting lawyers and officials. The state, with tear gas and whips, persisted in its persecution and its plans to erase urban squatting settlements. Hundreds of women were arrested and sent to the Transkei, only to return on the next train.

When bulldozers came, women sat down in front of them.

The Crossroads women attribute their remarkable tenacity to two things: the degree of their suffering and their unity.

That unity was realized and reinforced in the way that the women organized—holding frequently open meetings, electing representatives, reporting back immediately after each new development. The women again—as in numerous instances in the history of South African women's struggle—showed an amazing disregard and disrespect for red tape, trampling over channels and protocol in dealing with government, in situations where men, long subordinated to bureaucratic discipline, would supplicate and compromise.

The men unilaterally decided to take over the leadership of the community soon after the Minister of "Cooperation and Development" had conceded to the Crossroads community the right to stay in the Cape area, if they moved to another site. There was considerable frustration felt by women, now wearied by years of defiance, when they perceived that the men were basically messing things up and creating divisions and mistrust in the community.

South African women build "community"

For all their personal and political tensions with men, the women of Crossroads did not see their organization as being in opposition to men. But they did see themselves as that much more competent, brave and obstinate than men, and better versed in the ways of the community. No doubt this reflected the extremely disproportionate amount of work that black women put into building and maintaining "community" in South Africa.

Throughout the history of the South African women's struggle, the activities of the women's organizations have imparted a sense of political tradition and power. The integration of "women's issues" and "political issues" characterizes their campaigns. The slogan in 1983 for the United Women's Organizations makes the connection: "GST (Gen-

eral Sales Tax) is buying guns to kill our children!"

For Canadians the issue is sanctions. We must actively urge the Canadian government to stop all financial, political and cultural contact with South Africa. We must not assist the South African government in any way. To do so supports the South African government's present policy. By demanding sanctions we

will be joining others in isolating South Africa. This is an important step in the fight to establish people's power and women's rights. Even if Canada won't impose full sanctions, as individuals we can boycott South African goods and refuse to handle them at work. This is a concrete act of solidarity with the millions of women demanding basic rights and freedoms in South Africa. ♀

Letter

We are concerned that, due to press censorship in South Africa, apartheid will cease to be documented and challenged.

For readers who are also concerned and who think that sanctions against the South African government and white-run businesses are an effective way for Canadians to support black South Africans, we would like to suggest a couple of phone calls that might help.

Both would be aimed at stopping Canada's largest (dollar-wise) export to South Africa—sulphur. South Africa gets almost one-quarter of its sulphur from a Vancouver-based company, Cansulex, which ships it out through a North Vancouver port. If enough people phone them, at 688-1501, maybe they'll be persuaded

to end their trade with South Africa.

A second phone call could be to Pat Carney, federal Minister for International Trade, at 687-3330. Get her office to pass on a message to the Federal Government that if it supports sanctions, it should end exports to South Africa, not just put restrictions on some imports from that country. You could point out that the Federal Government has additional leverage and responsibility since, through indirect corporate links, it has shares in Cansulex.

The situation in South Africa is desperate. We must keep up the pressure on the South African and Canadian governments to end apartheid so that, at least, those who have been killed protesting this system did not die in vain.

Carolyn Jerome
Diana Hawthorne
Vancouver Centre NDP

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Solidarity with Women of Latin America

by Janet Vesterback

Since 1981 women have come together every two years for conferences in solidarity with the women of Latin America. The aim of these conferences has been to inform people of the situation of Latin American women, either at home or in exile.

The conference was held in Vancouver between February 27 and March 1 at the very beautiful and little known Indian Centre. An enormous circular fireplace in the central room warmed participants and drew them together throughout the proceedings.

Margaret Mitchell, NDP MP for Vancouver East, gave a rousing introductory speech which put this conference in the context of furthering the aims of Nairobi 1985 for peace, development and equality for all women.

I shall focus on just three of the topics discussed: the external debt of Latin America which was a constant theme of the conference and deserves a broad audience; the situation in Honduras, not because it is "more important" than Nicaragua, El Salvador or Guatemala, but because information on Honduras is harder to get; and the effect of the on-going war in Central America on world peace.

Much of the information is taken from handouts from the conference.

Latin American women and the external debt

Latin America is experiencing one of the most difficult moments in its history. It is in a profound economic crisis; its countries are being bled by the International Monetary Fund. In the name of international agreements, human life is being destroyed by high interest rates that cause hunger and poverty.

The external debt amounts to \$360 billion. During 1983 and 1984, an amount of \$56.7 billion was paid just to cover the interest. Every dollar paid toward the debt is a dollar taken away from solving the problems of hunger, health, housing,

employment and education.

The burden of the debt crisis is doubled for women because of gender inequality and discrimination, on-going for generations. Studies done by the UN show that at a world level, women are 50% of the population, work 60% of all working hours, make 10% of all the income and have only 1% of all property.

Latin America is a continent rich in raw materials and human potential, but there are 50 million people starving and 1 million children dying every year as a result of hunger and malnutrition. 45 million Latin Americans are illiterate and more than half of them are women. Unemployment and underemployment affect over 52 million people. The Latin American people did not choose this way of life.

The conference repudiated the external debt on the grounds that it is technically unrepayable and deeply immoral.

Honduras: an occupied country

This Central American country has a strategic location, similar to that of Bolivia in South America. It borders El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua. With a population of 4 million, it is the poorest country in the region: in Latin America and the Caribbean, only Haiti is poorer. Honduras has been controlled for most of this century by the military, who have taken turns in power through coup d'états using them as a method for personal enrichment. Nevertheless Honduras is a different country from what it was ten years ago.

After the Nicaraguan revolution, an unprecedented military buildup began in Honduras. The U.S. turned the country into the military power of the region. Terror and the violation of human rights have been institutionalized since 1980. Security forces have been responsible for the majority of abuses. The U.S. embassy had an open role in developing a hawkish attitude toward Nicaragua.

Since the U.S. decided to convert Honduras into a military power fa-

vourable to its interests, the population has suffered. Though not at scale to El Salvador or Guatemala, the consequences are grave among the weak and impoverished.

In 1980, U.S. military spending in Honduras was US\$49 million. In 1985, it was US\$179 million. From 1980 to 1985, the U.S. has given US\$716 million in military aid to Honduras (excluding the construction of military infrastructure, aid to the *contras*, or C.I.A. funds.)

There are 1,200 U.S. soldiers permanently stationed at the Palmerola base, and during the exercises or military manoeuvres the number has reached 6,000. At the same time, Honduras has the greatest number of Peace Corps personnel and C.I.A. agents in all of Latin America. Since 1983, the U.S. has constructed or repaired and reconditioned 10 military airfields: Palmerola, La Mesa, Trujillo, Puerto Lempira, El Aguacate, San Lorenzo, Cucuyagua, Jamastran, Goloson and Morocon.

This country also forms the base for approximately 15,000 Somocistas or *contras* that are paid to attack Nicaragua. Hondurans refer to the *contra* as "the occupation." A Honduran leader said, "Honduras is not a country, it is a place. Reagan has put his eyes on Nicaragua, his hands on El Salvador and his feet in Honduras: he has crushed us."

Consequences of militarization

The militarization of Honduras has produced serious consequences for the population, especially women and children. These are: sexual abuse of children, venereal disease and the spread of AIDS.

In March 1986, school teachers, religious personnel and officials in Comoyagua (a community less than 3 miles from the U.S. base at Palmerola) denounced the sexual abuse of Honduran children under 12 years of age by North American troops. They reported symptoms of venereal disease in the mouths of many of the children who had been abused in exchange for the promise of receiving American dollars. A high

percentage of young people near the military bases have been victims.

Prostitution has increased rapidly with the arrival of U.S. troops. One of the doctors in Comoyagua reported that more than half the prostitutes have developed a strain of venereal disease resistant to penicillin, the same that infected GIs during the Vietnam war. Health officials have also confirmed several cases of AIDs among women of the zone. Honduras does not have a highly-developed health system: there is one doctor for every 3,124 inhabitants and 1.4 hospital beds for every 1000 patients.

The presence of the U.S. and the *contra* have had a disastrous effect on the population and there are terrible ecological implications for the future.

The population bordering Nicaragua has been displaced as another result of militarization. Unemployment has reached 20% of the economically active population; 40% are underemployed. Meanwhile, in 1984 for example, fuel expenses alone for the "Big Pine II" military manoeuvres exceeded the Honduran army's entire military budget for that year.

Women and world peace: think globally and act locally

Libby Davies, at the workshop on Women for Peace, made this statement: "Think globally, act locally." She said that although women around the world have cultural, historical and political differences, we must understand our common oppression. We need to discuss the role of women in the peace movement and understand the political and economic forces that stimulate the arms race. We must work to overthrow the exploitative economic system that strangles national development and self-reliance in the Third World.

Libby singled out multinational corporations as a major problem. They have one goal: to increase their control thereby reaping greater profits. They want cheap labour, a free flow of capital, no environmental restrictions, and no human rights protection. Their tool is the international banking system since all national policies are subject to the

burden of debt repayments. We need to draw the links between the reasons for the destabilization of Central America and the causes of our own problems here in Canada—high unemployment, environmental damage, the feminization of poverty, the arms race, and so on.

We must work towards a new international economic order to benefit all the world's people. At the same time, we must give immediate practical and political support to those fighting against oppression in Central America. Libby suggested that we should have a women's inquiry into the practices and policies of multinational corporations so we



Graphic by Nora Patrich

can educate our sisters about the root causes of our diverse problems.

The Central American conflict is a north-south conflict

After Libby spoke, Sophia Montenegro from Nicaragua took the floor. She exploded the myth that the conflict in Central America is in any sense "east-west". Rather it is "north-south", i.e. the north is rich and the south is poor. Economic forces in Central America create a worsening poverty. To divert attention from the economic reasons for the conflict, the U.S. is spreading the lie of the "evil empire" of the east, Russia,

versus the "forces of good" in the west, the U.S. Sophia asserted that the triumph of the Nicaraguan people in 1979 over Somoza was the only way her people could free themselves from poverty and terror. At present in Nicaragua, the Sandinista army is defeating the mercenary *contra* army militarily and soon the U.S. will have only two alternatives: negotiate with the Sandinista government, or send in the Marines.

Sophia asserted that if they choose the second alternative, the moment the bombs fall on Managua, the borders will disappear and the war will spread throughout Central America and into Mexico. It will be all or nothing, just as in Vietnam. The U.S. could wipe out Nicaragua in 2 or 3 days but Sophia stressed that Nicaraguans have a secret weapon, and that is the moral force of their revolution.

In all of Latin America there are 21 countries and 400 million people. If 3.5 million die in Nicaragua, it is a sacrifice they will make in order to guarantee a larger revolution encompassing all of Latin America.

Sophia talked about the sense of historical and moral duty Sandinistas feel toward all the oppressed people of Latin America. She said that by defending themselves and by proposing peace with dignity, they are working toward a lasting peace in Central America.

Women are an integral part of the struggle in Nicaragua today. They understand that full emancipation for women cannot be won if the nation doesn't survive. Women are giving their children to this fight and are seen as a strong symbol of resistance.

Women in Canada must insist that our government's policy vis a vis Nicaragua be independent of the U.S. We must be the caretakers of the continent and fight on local issues which indirectly affect all of the people living in the Americas, just as the conflagration in Latin America, should it occur, will affect everyone in North, Central and South America. Sophia warned that if we don't develop a global perspective, we will wake up one day wondering what happened to us.

A Future for British Columbians

by Swee-Sim Tan

"Fantasies are not Enough" was the title of a seminar on economic and political alternatives organized by the Pacific Group on January 24. Seminar topics were based on two recent books: *Restraining the Economy* and *After Bennett*.

Socred policy in the 1980s has been grounded in duplicity. The justification for "restraint" is shown to have its basis more on right-wing ideology than on fact.

As a result, the effect of a world-wide recession has been exacerbated: the B.C. economy set back, its long-term productive capacity lowered, the treasury depleted by bad investment decisions, and the unemployed and lower income groups made to suffer needlessly.

Economic alternatives

Two alternatives are presented: one based on fiscal policy, typified by the essays in *Restraining the Economy*; the other based on changes to the social and economic structure of B.C., a theme in *After Bennett*.

The analysis of fiscal policy examines economic forces impinging on B.C. in a Canadian and world context, and discusses the rationale and effects of government policies. It suggests a reversal of the policy of "restraint", recommending increased spending on social services and income assistance, education, and renewable resources.

In *Restraining the Economy*, "Provincial Fiscal Policies," Redish, Rosenbluth and Schworm point out that the "restraint" budget of 1983 made some undocumented assumptions: for instance, that government departments were less efficient than private corporations and that social services could be provided more cheaply by the private sector. In fact, there may be inefficiencies in any large organization, whether private or public. Moreover, it is likely that the transfer of some services to

the private sector could increase costs and lower quality.

Socred's hidden agenda

In the pursuit of "restraint", the government lowered real wages and curbed the power of labour unions, hence revealing its hidden agenda.

The Socreds justified the "restraint" policy by warning of the consequences of a budgetary deficit. However, in "Public Deficits and Public Debt", Rosenbluth and Schworm argue that deficit financing is necessary in a depression to reduce unemployment and maintain consumer spending.

Furthermore, there is no evidence of a debt crisis or a long-term deficit problem. Since 1951/52 and with the exception of 1980/81, B.C. did not have a deficit until 1982/83, when the economy declined because of the depression. While "restraint" lowered the deficit for 1983/84, it also postponed economic recovery.

During the period of restraint, millions of dollars were invested in unprofitable megaprojects. In "The B.C. Economy: Past, Present, Future", Robert Allen expresses the concern that the prospects for economic growth based on natural resources are not promising. The Northeast Coal development increased employment in the mining industry and boosted the local economy. But this project is lowering the average income of British Columbians because of a glut in coal supplies, falling prices and high transportation costs. In 1984/85, the government transferred \$430 million to B.C. Rail, a Crown Corporation, to pay off part of the debt incurred in building the Tumbler Ridge branch line ("Provincial Fiscal Policies").

Structural change needed

Essays in *After Bennett* emphasize the need for reorganization of social, economic and political structures to increase local decentralized control. They call for investing the power of economic decision-making in

communities and worker-controlled enterprises.

Warren Magnusson's "Private Enterprise and Public Ownership" advocates strong government for the protection of natural resources, worker health and safety, and basic human rights. He urges decentralizing power over local issues to regions and municipalities to ensure ultimate democratic control. Government should assist non-profit agencies and worker cooperatives as part of a strategy to reduce the control of the corporate capitalists.

In "Industrial Democracy," John Richards argues for worker participation in the management of corporations, while Elaine Bernard's "Labour Tactics To-day" suggests that labour must gain wider support from houseworkers, pensioners, the unemployed and the poor by providing an alternate vision of society and so save itself from the current onslaught by government and employers.

Wes Shera's "Community-Based Economic Development," discusses the importance of the "informal economy" (e.g. co-operatives, voluntary community organizations, barter systems) as a basis for greater democracy, community control and participatory styles of development.

No single solution

Robert Allen emphasized at the seminar that there was no single solution and expressed the need for a range of policies to tackle the problems of unemployment, poverty and alienation. There was some agreement among the participants that the left had no economic blueprint for socialist transformation while Sid Shniad called for more imaginative and creative ideas for organizing.

In holding this seminar, the Pacific Group made a commendable attempt to facilitate discussion on economic policy among left-wing theoreticians, politicians, labour groups and laypeople. We need to understand the workings of the economy, and we need to elect governments that have sound strategies for social change.

However, the small numbers of women among the speakers and audience proved a serious short-

coming, and an undebated denouncement of universal day care by panelist David Donaldson exemplified the problem. His belief that Canadians can afford universal day care only when the poor are adequately fed goes against the demands of women's groups. Government could increase public revenues by closing tax loopholes for wealthy individuals and ending tax incentives to private corporations. But in doing so it must challenge the centres of power in our society, which are controlled by men. Donaldson chooses instead to ask that women again sacrifice for the common good.

Women have to be heard, loudly and clearly. We cannot afford to be represented by men, albeit by left-wing men. ♀

Restraining the Economy
Robert Allen & Gideon Rosenbluth, eds., New Star Books, 1986

After Bennett
W. Magnusson, C. Doyle, R.B.J. Walker, J. DeMarco, eds., New Star Books, 1986

Pacific Group for Policy Alternatives
104-2005 East 43rd Avenue
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Community Bulletin Board



The 1987 *Canadian Women's Directory*, a bilingual index of women's groups, is available from **Les Editions Communiqu'Elles**, 3585 St. Urbain Street, Montreal, Quebec, H2X 2N6. \$7.95 (+\$1.00 postage and handling)

Playing With Our Health: Hazards in the Automated Office is a handbook that provides clerical workers with up-to-date information on the health hazards of VDTs and solutions to reduce their risks.

Order from **Women's Skill Development Society**, 4340 Carson Street, Burnaby, B.C. V5J 2X9. \$10 for single copies or \$7 per copy for 10 or more copies.

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