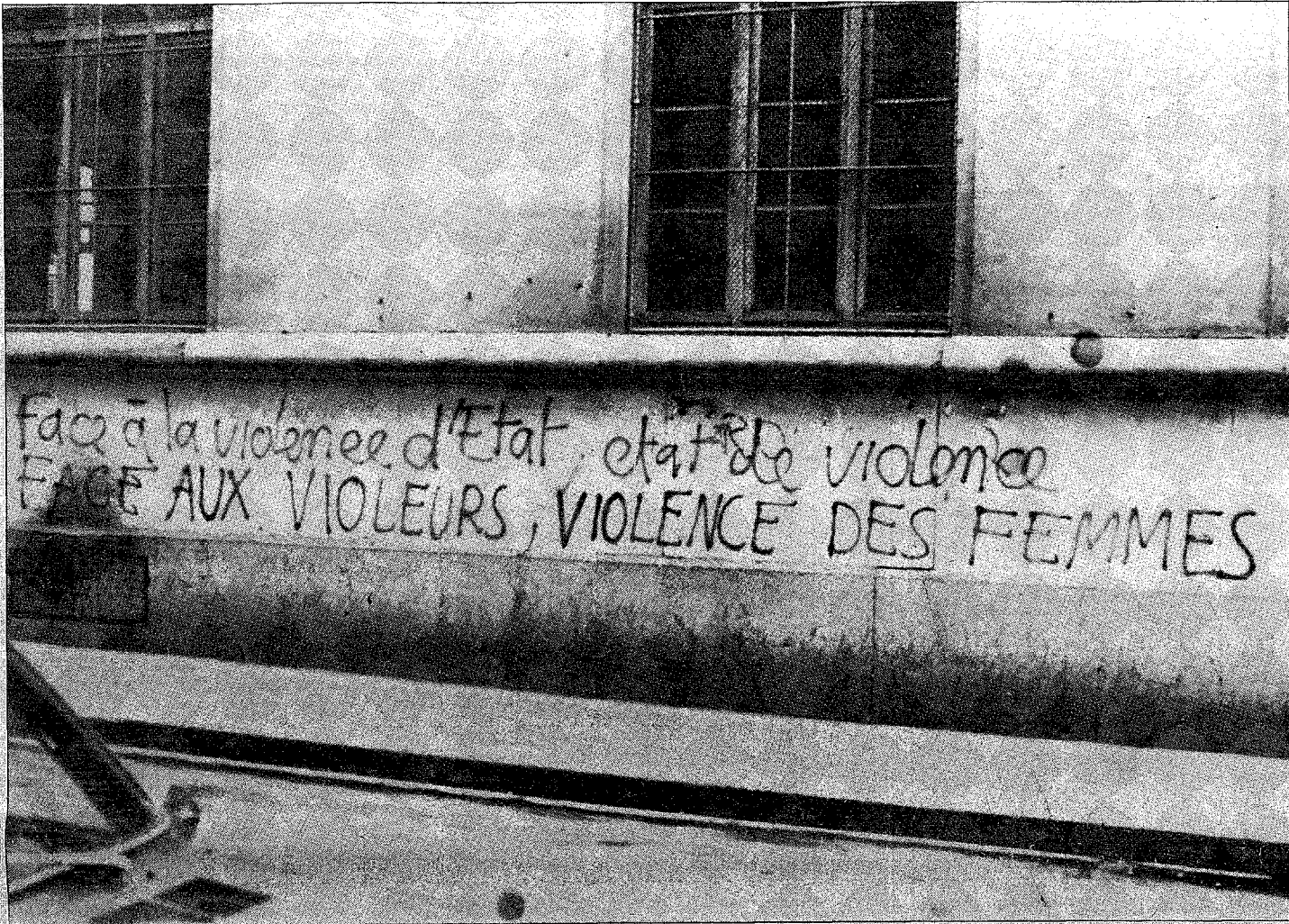


Broadside

Volume One, Number Seven

\$1



A scene from *Le Viol*, Jacqueline Geerings's film shown at the Toronto Feminist Film Festival, April 19 and 20. See story page 14.

Parliament Opens

Can Axworthy Cut It?

by Eve Zaremba

On April 14, 1980 Canada's Parliament opened with the usual ceremonies. Two events were of note. One, Jeanne Sauvé was unanimously elected the first woman Speaker of the House of Commons. Two, Governor General Ed Schreyer read a reasonably literate Throne Speech which specifically promised federal initiatives for women — job creation, affirmative action in federal service, and reform of the rape laws.

Having a female Speaker of the House does have some symbolic significance but little in the way of substance. Essentially it is an umpire's job in a game where only top ranked players really count. As part of Quebec's Liberal establishment and as a firm supporter of the status quo, Sauvé is unlikely to make any decisions which run counter to prevailing interests. Sauvé is one of those politicians who does not want or intend to understand that to be so-called 'neutral' vis-à-vis women is to be anti-women. Her position in this respect is a matter of record. She will make a perfect Speaker, indistinguishable from her male predecessors. No great joy to be found on this count.

The inclusion of women's concerns in the Throne Speech, while not totally unprecedented, has somewhat more promise. Of course, 'promise' is the operative word. As we all well know, throne speeches tend to be constructed out of assorted planks of the governing party's platform, loosely held together by uplifting rhetoric. Campaign promises by any other name are not

something to bank on. However, perhaps this time there is a modicum of reason for qualified optimism.

There are two factors which just possibly might make some difference. One of them is new blood on the Advisory Council on the Status of Women. This is an appointed body, traditionally tending towards niceness. Research papers and briefs to government have been their forte. Governments are practised in ignoring such things.

But with the appointment of Doris Anderson and a number of other Liberal Party luminaries (Hellie Wilson, Trudeau's ex-corresponding secretary, for instance) we have members with more political clout, should they chose to use it.

Broadside's informers on Parliament Hill indicate that it was pressure from the Council, the National Action Committee and other lobby groups which managed to persuade the Feds to begin considering violence against women a problem meriting attention. Will this mean more money for women-run rape crisis centres, hostels, legal and counselling services, or merely more government lip-service? We will wait and see.

The second factor which might distinguish this set of promises from others is the presence of Lloyd Axworthy, the new Minister of Employment and Immigration ('Manpower' is no more, and good riddance). Axworthy, a bright young thing from Manitoba, is the minister responsible for the Status of Women (the Advisory Council reports through him). Not only did he reportedly request this post — competi-

tion wasn't very stiff — not only does he call himself a feminist, but he is quoted as actually saying that principles such as affirmative action and equal pay must be put into effect and enforced by government. This is a pretty heretical position for any Cabinet Minister. Would Axworthy be in the Cabinet were he not one of the two flickers of Liberal light west of Kenora? Maybe not, but who cares *why* he is where he is. What matters is *how* and *when* Axworthy can follow his fine words with deeds.

It is clear that job creation programs without a substantial budget are a farce. Some of the other federal initiatives — protection for domestic workers, for instance — require real co-operation from the provinces. If federal money is available who will control it? What about changes in the Criminal Code? Abortion?

All that being said, Axworthy's commitment is encouraging. Much can be done within the system to lift the most glaring inequities in many areas off the backs of women. A lot of jaded, sharp and persistent feminists will be watching Axworthy and the Council waiting for real action, real budgets, real results.

Unfortunately, violence against women in all its ramifications does not lend itself to simple one-shot solutions. Neither good intentions nor Cabinet directives will accomplish much in this most ultimately radical of issues. It will take constant pressure by women to make a dent in a misogynous society. But we can use all the help we can get.

INSIDE BROADSIDE

NEWS

WHO ARE THEY KIDDING? Sex-role stereotyping is "no problem" according to some broadcasters and members of the advertising industry. *Broadside* reports on the implications of the CRTC Task Force on Sex-role Stereotyping in the Broadcast Media. Page 10.

FROM HERE TO 1990: For women, the 1980s will be a decade, says Myrna Kostash, of doubt, desperation and determination — the future could be rosy. Page 5.

WHEEL CHAIR ACTIVIST: Agnes Macphail's 1948 campaign manager, Sara Binns, is interviewed by *Broadside*; and Binns herself describes the trials of being elderly and handicapped. Page 4.

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NUCLEAR REACTION: The anti-nuke movement catches fire around the world and women are in the foreground. A report from Australia: Movement Comment, page 19.

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IN MEMORIAM: Tillie Olsen reads from her novella "Tell Me a Riddle" at a memorial service for Chaika Waisman, dollmaker and mother of writer Adele Wiseman. Page 13.



FILM: Toronto was the scene of a recent Feminist Film Festival at the Funnel Experimental Theatre. Page 14.

BOOKS: *The Bleeding Heart*, by Marilyn French, author of *The Women's Room*, is reviewed by Susan G. Cole. Page 15.

THEATRE: *Murielle*, a stage adaptation of Simone de Beauvoir's story *La Femme Rompue* is reviewed by Kathryn Morgan. Page 16.

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The Broadside Collective does not necessarily share the views contained in any article, even if the by-line belongs to a collective member. Views of the Collective are expressed only in editorials, and essays signed by the Collective.

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One of *Broadside's* aims is to create dialogue among women, something which rarely, if ever, happens in the mainstream press. Ironically, sometimes it isn't allowed to happen in *Broadside* either — and by feminists.

A case in point is the recent decision by Vancouver Rape Relief not to talk to 'the media' about the controversy resulting from their adoption of confrontation as a tactic in dealing with rapists.

The tactic, developed in the United States, has been used several times in Vancouver since the end of 1979. It has been used only if requested by the victim.

About fifteen women — representatives of Rape Relief, the victim herself, and friends or other supporters of the victim — confront the rapist and make it clear to him that his identity is known but that there are opportunities for him to discuss the consequences of his action, if he so chooses, with men who support Rape Relief.

Predictably, the tactic has generated much controversy. Various lawyers, Civil Liberties Association representatives, and private citizens have expressed reservations if not outright objections to confrontation. Lawyers point out that the legality of the tactic is questionable, that it in fact could be considered harassment. Civil Liberties people think it is to be censured as an invasion of privacy. (So what is rape if not an invasion of privacy?) The Vancouver women's community itself is split over the issue.

Subsequent to Canadian Press coverage of the story, as well as a fifteen-minute report on CBC Radio's Sunday Morning program on March 30th, Vancouver Rape Relief decided to suspend discussion of the issue with the media.

Presumably, and understandably, the women at Rape Relief want to assess their position. They want to decide whether confrontation is a tactic worth continuing, whether energy should be concentrated on

the more conventional method of promoting change in rape laws, or whether the two can continue to be used simultaneously. It may be, too, that Rape Relief is under some pressure from the Attorney-General's Department of British Columbia, by whom they are funded, to suspend use of confrontation. It is unlikely that the department appreciates the debate.

But all the above is mere speculation. We would like to have been able to discuss Rape Relief's position with its members and to have presented readers with an up-to-date and comprehensive report on the whole issue. Who else is likely to do so with any understanding of the social and historical effect of rape on women if not feminist media such as *Broadside*, *Upstream*, and *Kinesis*? Yet when a member of Vancouver Rape Relief was in Toronto recently, she was unable to discuss the issue with *Broadside* because the stricture against the media includes this paper. Ironic, isn't it?

The Broadside Collective

Oui, Non, Maybe

Although *Broadside* will include in its next issue a centrespread dealing comprehensively with the issue of women and Québec separatism, the fact that this month Québécois will vote on the question of sovereignty association has compelled *Broadside* to comment on the historic event.

The issue of separation is a tricky one in its present context. As feminists, we have an immediate sympathy with the Québec aspirations for autonomy. After all, we have learned the value of women organizing separately from men, have insisted that as a political tactic anyway, it is vital. And yet the isolationist version of Separatism (i.e. Lesbian separatism in its extreme form) is a phenomenon with which we have enormous problems. The word 'separatism' has many complications for the women's movement. It is hard enough to sort them out and, of course, equally difficult to come to a clear-cut conclusion on the Québec debate. The fact that the Parti Québécois organizers (supporters of the side we would initially support) have employed questionable tactics in trying to win the referendum — specifically, by asking a meaningless ques-

tion — makes it even more difficult to lay down the line.

What we can do is devise certain principles — find a feminist methodology, in fact, to form a framework for approaching the discussion. For example, we sense a yearning among federalists for the safety of numbers, and a fear that without Québec we are not the large impressive nation we are with Québec's huge population and land mass. This glorification of bigness and the instinct for centralization (read: mass bureaucracy) project the values that our society perpetuates, but that we do not find viable.

In the women's movement we have experienced the liberation of our creative energy once the hand of an alien authority has been lifted. If that hand has been benign we have had to shrug it off. Sometimes we have been forced to pry it loose. Either way, we have insisted on the opportunity to develop some kind of women's culture, a unique sensibility and an understanding of our own history.

Certainly the assertion of Québec aspirations has gone hand in hand with the celebration of Québécois art, cinema, folk tradition and their special place in the

Canadian context. That the Québécois may want to take that culture out of a Canadian context should make sense to feminists who have sought cultural autonomy even without that critical component that makes Québec's cultural demands so compelling — the language.

At the same time, we have doubts about nationalism in any guise, more specifically doubts about the nation state, the defence of which has historically provided a justification for the harassment of a non-indigenous population, and of course for war. Statehood is exactly what Québec is after. Our initial reaction to the state is one of suspicion, suspicion particularly of a state that is bound to be controlled by sexist authority. The best we can do is examine the Québec legislative record, which does reveal the passing of the equivalent of Ontario's Bill 3 (Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value) and to remark that Henry Morgenthau is alive and well and practising in Québec without harassment. These are features that distinguish Québec from the rest of the country and suggest to us that Québec has the potential to be a nation state at least no worse than any other.

The Broadside Collective

LETTERS

Broadside:

We read with interest the review Darlene Chase did of Anne-Claire Poirier's film *Scream from Silence* (March) and we are taking this opportunity to respond.

Although Ms. Chase has worked for the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre in the past, she no longer does. She does not represent the views of the TRCC collective. In fact, after a special screening of the film, the members of the TRCC's collective voted unanimously to endorse and publicly to promote Anne-Claire Poirier's film.

We feel that it is a powerful indictment of woman-hating in all its forms and guises.

We agree with Ms. Chase's observation that the film leaves the viewer with little hope for change. But we feel that her suggestion that there is hope to be found in the work of rape crisis centres is false.

Rape crisis centres do finger-in-the-dam-work. We give support to the victim of sexual assault and we lobby for law reform, but this will not change the misogyny inherent in the system. We are committed to the work we do but we are also realistic about its limitations.

The eradication of rape, incest, gynocide, genital mutilation and other forms of woman-hating will only come about through feminist revolution (fundamental social change).

Scream from Silence is not a "balanced view" of violence against women. A "balanced view" would not be totally honest. Although we recognize the merits of Bonnie Kreps' film we also feel that its factual approach forces the audience to be distanced from the subject, to deal with it intellectually and not personally.

Many of the women at the TRCC work with a special kind of white heat energy that comes from being angry. *Scream from Silence* can put women in touch with that anger, that sense of outrage. It is an important film.

Laura Rowe
 Toronto Rape Crisis Centre

Broadside:

Re: *Framed Again* by Susan Sturman (April). To me, the point is that posters and publicity shots are supposed to communicate something. We have to ask ourselves, what do these particular illustrations (or any illustrations) tell us. All three that were depicted could have easily been contributions to *Ms's* "No Comment" section of sexist unspeakables. None of them bears

a special feminist logo which communicates "by women; hence, ok" because of course they are not ok.

All three shown give a mixed or confused message hence they do not achieve their purpose. A sense of humour is a fine thing but we should not rationalize our internalization of the misogyny in society and call it parody.

Sherrill Cheda
 Toronto

**LetTe r s
 WANTED!!**

Front Wheel Drive to War

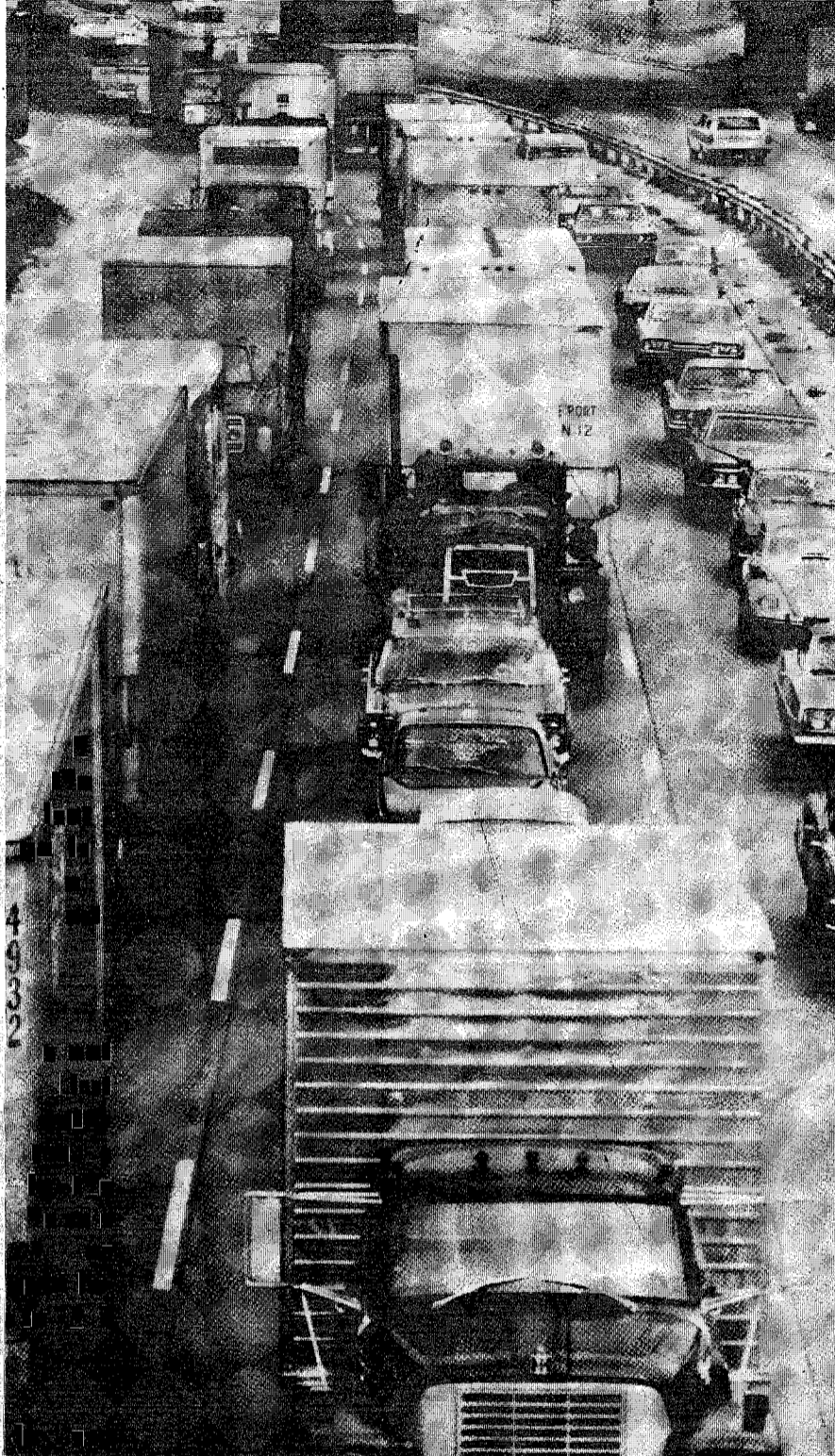
by Susan G. Cole

Watch out for the inexorable. The American auto corporations make cars that puff and fume and aren't fuel efficient. Then we run out of oil (the oil companies don't) and GM, Ford and Chrysler can't develop a downsizing programme fast enough.

In the recession, American cars are not the hottest consumer item. In the first quarter this year, sales of American autos were down 14% and the sale of trucks plummeted 29%. Americans still in the market are going for Japanese cars: the sale of Japanese cars soared 20% in 1979. For the first time in the history of the auto industry Japan will produce more cars in 1980 than the United States.

The American auto industry is in deep trouble. The downsizing scheme is costing \$80 billion and for the first time in five years, General Motors, whose profits plummeted from \$2.9 billion to \$450 million last year (yes, my friends, everything is relative) is considering borrowing money for the first time in 5 years. Ford has already gone to the market for \$250 million, Chrysler has been on its knees for handouts from government, handouts that Chrysler claims are the only way the corporation can survive.

And the layoffs begin. Ford let go of 5,000, Chrysler 5,000 and GM (at the time of this writing) 131 in Canada alone. There are presently 212,259 hourly-rated unemployed United Auto workers members in the United States, victims of the corporations' decision to slash payrolls. This last development has its own repercussions apart from the dissatisfaction of workers who are now without jobs. The federal unemployment insurance budget in Canada comes under new and unexpected pressure and the Ministry of Employment and Immigration has its job cut out for it trying to deal with the new unemployed population.



In the US, auto companies trying to avert too heated a confrontation with the powerful United Auto Workers are attempting to lobby congress for import restrictions on foreign cars. This will not thrill all those Datsun and Toyota devotees, and neither will it please the Japanese who, by the way,

have plans of their own to build their own car plants on American soil. Ford, Chrysler and GM blanch at the thought, but the American government has a trade relationship with Japan at stake and chances are Datsun and Toyota will settle in comfortably within the next five years.

This will not significantly relieve the pressure on American companies and as corporations the likes of Ford and General Motors do not go down without a struggle, we should take note of a possible Doomsday scenario. Remember that there is a parallel development in the plot. Ronald Reagan is actually being described as a possible winner and he wants to pare down every sphere of government except defence. President Carter, succumbing to the new hawks (they're the same old ones but with a revitalized voice), wants to increase the defence budget as well. Britain has announced that it will increase its defence budget by \$1.6 billion in the next five years and plans to spend \$10 billion on the introduction of American Trident I missiles.

The lead story in the New York Times *Week in Review* (April 20) reports that President Carter is taking the US on the road to military confrontation with Iran. The Pentagon and other champions of the Cold War whose competitive instincts tend to go haywire are outraged by the fact that the USSR outspent the United States by \$240 million on defence during the last decade.

If the trend continues, the struggling auto industry (and by association the steel industry, rubber industry, etc., all of whom are victims of the recession), confident that there will be dollars forthcoming to the arms industry, will ease the unemployment burden by creating jobs in the guns and tanks department.

Who gets the last laugh? Well, the very same folks who brought you the cars that puff and fume and aren't fuel efficient. And how is that? Well because the world's largest producer of arms is you-know-who — General Motors. Isn't war convenient.



To all those subscribers who have not been receiving their copies of *Broadside*:

Each month, your newspaper is folded, taped, labelled, sorted, coded, bundled, tied, tagged, bagged and driven to the Postal Station.

At that point, *Broadside* loses control — and the Postal Station regularly loses *Broadside*.

If by mid-month you have not received your copy, please let us know. Phone 362-4528 on Monday or Thursday afternoon, or write. We will fold, tape, stamp and mail your missing issue.

BROADSIDE

invites all women to an

OPEN FORUM

to discuss and share views of the progress and direction of *Broadside* after its first year of operation. Everyone welcome.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 1980
7 pm

YWCA WOMEN'S
RESOURCE CENTRE
15 BIRCH AVENUE,
TORONTO

Sara Binns Wheelchair Activist

by Patricia O'Leary

Sara Binns is 78 and lives alone in Toronto's East York. She has had rheumatoid arthritis since the age of 24, and spent most of that time in a wheelchair. She has also been a political activist for most of her adult life; and is still involved in issues and activities today: she managed the election campaign of Agnes MacPhail in the Ontario provincial election of 1948; she thinks the NDP aren't radical enough; she is active in the Canadian Arthritis Society; and she is a feminist.

The day I arrived to interview her, I was immediately pressed into service. The lunch had already been made, the table set, but I took the tuna casserole out of the oven and put it on the table. Sara Binns can turn on the stove from her wheelchair with a special long-handled tool, and she has other gadgets, like a special stand for the kettle that tilts so she doesn't have to lift it. She can do everything for herself, but she doesn't refuse a little help.

The apartment is light and plant-filled, pleasantly cluttered, in a way that suggests everything is to hand. The sofa cushions are placed to support her back; the table in front of it has a radio, kleenex, a book, various types of medication, a spot for a coffee mug. The wheelchair, brakes on, faces the sofa so she can get herself from one to the other.

Sara Binns has a beautiful smile and a sense of humour. She hates it when people condescend to her because she is old and disabled; she doesn't walk much since a fall she had last year, but her mind is as active as ever. Over lunch we discuss sales clerks who always talk over her head to the friend pushing her wheelchair ("Does she want this?" asks the sales clerk. "Maybe you'd better ask her", says the friend.) Or the staff at the Senior Citizens Day Centre she sometimes attends, who treat the old people like children. ("Some of the old people don't seem to mind being patronized, but I do.")

After lunch, I make tea, and we get down to the business of the interview. I am interested in a couple of things about her: her political involvements, and her struggle with her illness, which could have demoralized and incapacitated her at any time during the past 55 years.



Sara Binns talks with therapist.

Sara Binns had been a garment worker before she got married. She had even gone on strike and been on the picket line, much to the horror of her parents. "My father was a Conservative, my mother was a Liberal, and I was an only child!", she says, laughing.

Soon after she was married, she began to notice her hands would swell and become sore in the mornings. For a while she kept the pain at bay by soaking her hands in hot water, but finally her husband and her mother insisted she see a doctor, a GP who diagnosed rheumatoid arthritis.

"Go home and learn to live with it, take an aspirin once in a while," the doctor said, that being the treatment in the 1920's. "OK", she said, and it wasn't till the pain and swelling spread to her legs that she

realized she had something serious. The disease progressed rapidly, and fairly soon she needed a wheelchair.

"I was bound and determined that I was not going to have a wheelchair," she says. "But finally, my husband and I were taking a trip by car. We had to stop for a little while in Peterborough and he drove right up to the Woolworths on the main street. He suggested we go in and look around. 'Don't be silly, you know I can't do that!' I said. And then he went around to the truck and brought out a wheelchair he had rented for a month. So I was actually thrilled to be able to get around."

In the 1930's the Binns were hard hit by the Depression. Sara was unable to work, and her husband had no job for 10 years. The welfare food allotment for childless

couples was \$3.05 a week. Later, they were cut off altogether, and the welfare department issued seeds to grow food, even though at the time the ground was frozen.

It was at that point that they became politicized. The East York Workers Association was formed, largely from a group of people who met in the Welfare Office trying to get some sort of help from the government.

Later, the Binns joined the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) — forerunner to the NDP — and they both became very active politically. In their work as organizers they met such colourful figures as the late True Davidson, who became Reeve of East York and who was a brilliant and eccentric personality in local politics for many years, and Agnes MacPhail.

True Davidson was a genius, in Sara Binns' estimation. She was very bright and strong. She could afford to be a character. "She used to come dashing out of her little doll's house on the way to a meeting. My husband would be there to drive her. She would have her nylons in one hand, her dress would be unzipped, she had a cup of soup in the other hand and some papers under her arm. She would hop in the car and say, 'Would you mind zipping up my dress? I want to put on my stockings and my make-up.' She would do that whether she knew a person well, or not."

One time, the Binns were asked to supper at Davidson's house. "She didn't have the money to pay her hydro bill at the time, and her electricity had been cut off. When we arrived, she was cooking our supper over a little fire in the back yard."

Agnes MacPhail was another interesting figure. She was a very fierce woman to meet at first, "but I just grew to love her," says Binns. "She was a compassionate person, always on the side of the underdog." In 1948, she asked Sara to be her campaign manager in the election, "I was scared to death. But of course, I said yes." Several of the men were shocked. One of them said, "Why choose her? She can't walk!" MacPhail just looked at him and said, "It's not her feet that I want, it's her head! And I expect you to drive her around!" MacPhail won the election.

continued page 18

At Home in a High-rise

by Sara Binns

"It's good to be home." How many times have we all said that to ourselves? Perhaps I especially appreciate it because after two and a half years of hospitalization I was sent to an institution with foot-high letters on the wall telling the world this was a "Home for the Aged." After seven months of tolerating many indignities, I signed myself out and moved into what I lovingly call 'Cloud 9', an apartment on the top floor of a high-rise building. 'Cloud 9' has been my home for over six years and I sincerely hope it will be for many more.

Living alone when one is elderly or handicapped (especially when one is both) has more advantages than one realizes. But if one chooses to live in a private high-rise, one must expect to improvise and to put up with a few inconveniences.

To simplify life I use a number of gadgets. When I first moved into 'Cloud 9'

my main delight was the kitchen which was big enough for my wheelchair. The electric stove stood out like a precious jewel. BUT the switches were all at the back, out of reach from a wheelchair. So I called the Canadian Arthritis Society and a therapist came and made a gadget that enables me to turn the switches on and off at will. I had always liked baking so I remember I tried cornmeal muffins first. I sat in front of the stove watching the muffins rising, then browning. Finally they were ready and I took them out with a pride that matched the world's greatest chef.

Lifting a kettle of boiling water is dangerous, especially with an unsteady hand, so I had a "tilt-box" made. Now when my kettle is boiling I just have to tilt it to fill my teapot. Simple, eh? An elevated seat on my toilet, a seat across the bath-tub equipped with hand shower and grab rail make my bathroom duties safe and easy. A feather duster on a long handle allows me to do my housewifely chores with ease. I feel pride that I can keep 'Cloud 9' clean and tidy — maybe not "squeaky" clean in

all the corners, but then who looks in the corners?

That reminds me of a story Margaret Atwood tells: "Why did Prince Charming marry Cinderella? She was the only one in her family who would do housework." (I'm not looking for a Prince Charming.)

I cannot help wishing that our government would recognize the need for the elderly and handicapped to live with privacy and independence and to retain dignity and pride. What is needed, from the government and the public in general, is a changed attitude, i.e., away from thinking that disabled and elderly people should be the ones to adjust and accept conditions without question.

Much is being done in Sweden, where specially designed apartments to suit the elderly and handicapped have been built. In Canada I understand now quite a few

apartments are being reconverted to accommodate handicapped citizens. But these apartments are in already existing buildings and remodeled at very great expense. If the idea had been put into effect when the buildings were under construction, the cost would only have been raised 10%; now the cost is 25-35% more.

In case you are wondering what an elderly handicapped woman does to put in the time, my problem is not enough time. I am treasurer of a craft group — we take work out to shut-ins who require it — and I do much hand work myself. I am also president of TASK (Toronto Arthritis Social Klub). We meet monthly so there is always lots of preparations on the go. I have also taught English (by phone) to a Spanish woman until she became a Canadian citizen, and I'm looking for another pupil.

These duties, along with occasional other affairs, exercises, housework, etc., fill my days. And, of course, I must take time out for relaxation and reading. "I have many promises to keep, before I sleep."

The 80s: Decade for Digging In

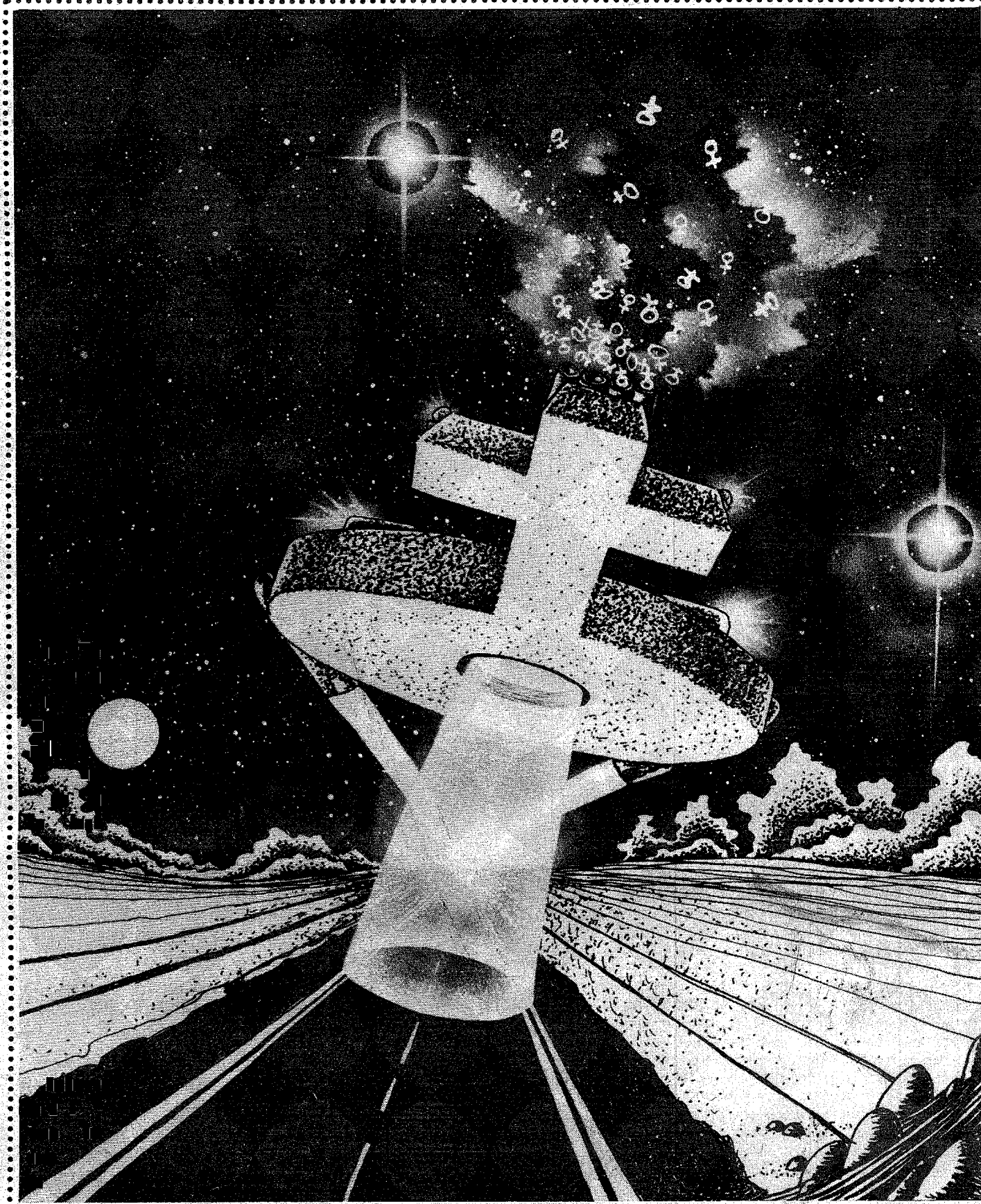
by Myrna Kostash

When we crossed the Rubicon into the eighties a few months ago, there was a deluge of articles in the popular press about what this decade may hold in store for us. I read these assiduously, with one question in my head: what was going to happen to women? Locating the answers was a depressing exercise indeed. In the first place, very few of those who were asked to pontificate prophetically bothered to concern themselves with women and our estate: in all the speculative ramblings about technology and foreign affairs and economics and the arts, not a word was written about how half the planet's population was going to be affected.

In the second place, when commentators did mention women, it was with the skimpiest of references. Here they are, in distillation: the number of children per woman will continue to decline from the present 1.8, the nuclear family will proceed towards its inevitable devastation, there will be more old women than old men, more and more women will be working at shift-work as the economy gets tighter, women will continue to reject much of the anti-woman doctrine of the Catholic Church, and TV models will have wrinkles. That's it. That is our future, in all its roundness and plenitude.

Of who we might be as politicians, artists, athletes, nothing; of the impact on our daily lives of resource scarcities, a Cold War, labour upheavals, social service cutbacks, education cutbacks, cybernation, not a word. I could hardly believe it. Is this what our movement had come to: after a decade of demonstrations and manifestos, organizations and committees, publicity, propaganda and pressure, after a decade of whoop-'em-up in which at long laborious last we were being taken seriously as a social and political constituency, in which our perspectives and programs and visions were held to be of considerable account, this miserable little scenario of our childbirth rate and our television face was all the future we were being awarded?

Throughout 1979 I had been announcing to friends that I, for one, was very excited about the prospects of the eighties. I confess that I imagined a kind of rerun of the sixties, a period in which we women would shake off the soporific self-absorption of the seventies and hit the streets again with full-throated, joyous and uncompromising demands for justice and restitution, and delivery from the cheap and trivial depiction of our "liberation" served up by advertising and the soap operas that are our mass culture. I still wish to believe in that scenario of the street-fightin' women, especially since, as I've pointed out, the general commentary would have us in old age homes, withered from infertility! But I am also coming to believe that we will be in the streets not so much for the joy of it this time but in desperation, dread and wrath. We will be there because we have no choice.



Anne Quigley

Consider: the gap between a man's average income and a woman's is widening every year, our unemployment rates are escalating, our isolation in job ghettos intensifying. "We are becoming impoverished. Oh yes, there will always be women who "make it" into powerful, lucrative positions, but I see such women and the image of their "liberation" being used to evade the realities of the lives of the rest of us.

I see that in the urgency of the economic crises the demands of the women's movement will be dismissed as a "luxury", as anti-social even: how dare we demand higher wages, daycare centres, women's studies courses and access to abortion when all about us is inflation, bankruptcy, closure and disintegration? We will be told that our society cannot afford our emancipation. I see that women will be made to pay the price of the "energy crisis": is it poor people (the majority of the poor are women) who, relative to their incomes, will be crippled by energy costs in spite of the fact that they use less energy than higher-income people. (Look at who rides the buses and the subways and then look at who is driving in lonely splendour in his

Buick on the freeway.) It is women who, under pressure of the imperatives of the "conservative society," will be expected to forego the benefits of technological innovation: from the purveyors of the "new age" we hear much about the virtues of the pre-technological household which, when translated into the language of your life and mine, means women at home canning vegetables, grinding flour, recycling cans and washing sheets on a scrubboard — as though the energy a washing machine uses were the problem! When was the last time a "new ager" spoke of de-technologizing men's labour? Come to think of it, when was the last time you heard a spokesperson from the environmental and conservator movements speak up for women's rights? Beware any attempt to fix up the social mess by keeping women "in their place"!

For all these reasons, and more, I see women in the streets, saying, shouting, that we will not dumbly pay the price of the costs of a social and economic crisis that has penalized us for a generation already. But I see us saying something more, too: that our refusal is not mere obstreperousness but is the voice of social change.

We resist because we can see an alternative future, on in which, women triumphant, life on the human scale is achieved.

I see us reassembling family life in communes of friends and comrades where every adult is a parent to the children, where resources are pooled and redistributed, and labour shared equally. I see us living more equally alongside men than we have done for a long time now — and just as easily living without them. I see urban neighbourhoods where every citizen is politically responsible to her community: women will see, are seeing, that to get women's rights fulfilled we must also fight for our workers' and consumers' and students' and ethnic and sexual rights, for in all these aspects our our social being we are vulnerable as women. I see women continuing to be insatiable in their appetite for an intellectual and cultural life that recovers the lost power and dignity of women: ten years ago we bloomed with our newly awakened female pride and there is no force on earth that can make us hate ourselves again. I see, I see — well, I see what some women saw a hundred years ago: "as we come marching, marching, we bring the greater days."

Feminist Party of Canada:

First Principles

The FPC is being formed at this time in response to a number of political and social realities. The first of these is the rapid development of the Women's Movement. At the same time, entrenched interests, indifferent or hostile, seek constantly to erode the possibilities and potential of women participating in politics, having a voice in the determination of our individual futures, and providing for our children a destiny which holds any promise for a rational and creative life.

The FPC believes that feminism is the major transforming politics in today's world, a politics which embraces vision, action and thought. Feminism is an interpretive ethical, realistic, imaginative analysis of the strengths and defects of the world that men have made. Feminism insists that the denial of women's rights and the neglect and disparagement of women's creativity is not and has never been a biological destiny or a theological commandment. It is an historically determined and rigidly structured social produce which can and must be changed. It is, we believe, a form of social life which not only oppresses women but impoverishes human, historical achievement and potential. Women have always participated in struggles against racial, economic and political oppression, but are simply aspects of a huge system of oppression which persists because sexism, the deepest and most persistent level of that system, has never been systematically challenged.

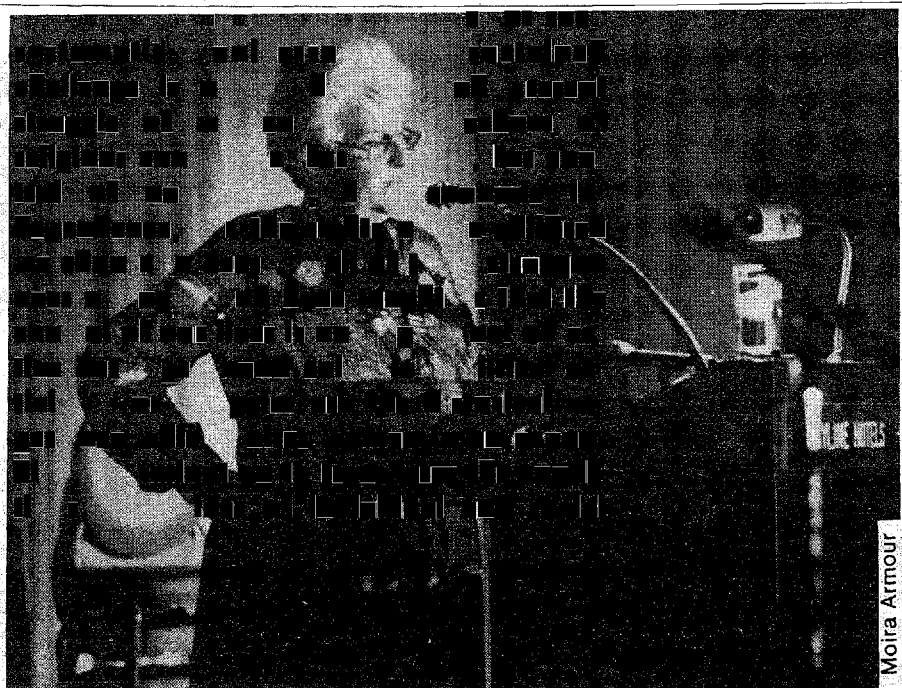
The FPC believes that the time for such systematic, universal and sustained challenge is now. The past and present struggle of women — for freedom of religious conscience, for the vote, for control of our bodies, for economic independence, for the rights of the children we choose to bear: — all of these struggles over a long period have taught us that the control of our lives is not a personal objective but a profound collective political activity. Our struggles are the historical experience which unites women in an expanding determination to transform the conditions and values of individual and social



Feminist Party of Canada at International Women's Day March, Toronto, 1980.



Margaret Evans



Mary O'Brien

life. It is a struggle which teaches us the reality of power, power which divides people from people, separates women from women, creates gross inequalities in economic life, responds to problems of nature with a runaway and lethally uncontrolled technology. It is a struggle in a world in which men, impotent in the face of the history which they have made, increasingly bring vengeance savagely to bear on women and children — in the home and the workshop, on the street, in the sophisticated media of communication, in the shop at the corner, on playing fields and bill boards, in courts of law, in bars and brothels and bedrooms. Oppression is the produce and the failure of the history of Mankind which vandalizes great cities and violates the good earth.

The FPC has no Utopian blueprint for the future: it has the determination to act now, to act with a sense of urgency to restructure society, to make political systems respond to the mounting resistance of women to those powers which are currently paralyzing our present and jeopardizing our future. It has the determination, the willing and the courage to redefine life, to assert the value of integration over separation, of sufficiency over poverty, of collaboration over conquest, of creative work over drudgery, of peace over war.

The FPC will become a vortex of action for women and men who believe that the process of making decisions about the disposal of the wealth we create and the conditions of our lives must become an integrated, democratic, community-based process. We shall struggle to learn, to teach, to resist, to create, to be hard-nosed and visionary, to be constructively enraged. The FPC has no illusions about the difficulty of these tasks, but we confront them with a superb confidence born of the knowledge that feminism is an irresistible progressive force in history, and that the struggle in Canada is our part of an international movement which is rapidly gathering the strength to overcome the resistance it creates.

The Principles and Objectives have been prepared by a group of FPC-PFC members over the last few months. The Principles and Objectives are neither binding nor 'writ in stone' but are presented for study by all members of FPC-PFC.

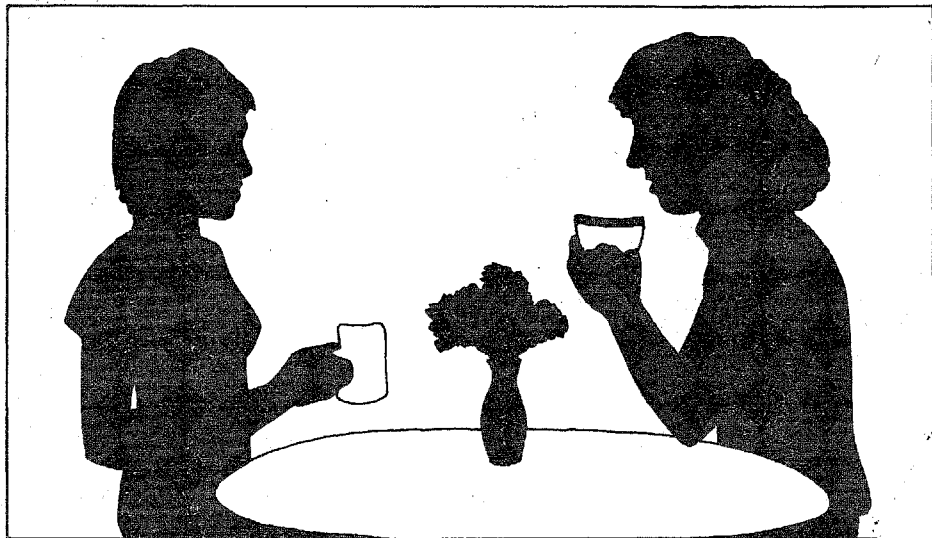
FPC, Box 5717, Station A, Toronto,
Ontario M5W 1A0 (416) 960-3427

OBJECTIVES

1. Control over the rewards and quality of productive and reproductive labours. We oppose the appropriation of our productive and reproductive labours by special interest groups.
2. Protection of the quality of the environment and all living species from industrial, military and technological exploitation.
3. Determination of the quality of our own intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual lives.

4. Elimination of violence, torture and all forms of brutality, whether physical or mental, individual or institutional.
5. Encouragement of both personal and political growth throughout one's life.
6. Abolition of discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, age, race and ethnicity, disability, religion or occupation.
7. Creation of a society based upon responsibility rather than control, in which a transformed ethical consciousness will govern political life.

CONVERSATIONS



Susan Sturman

As war looms large on the world horizon and the referendum looms medium-size in Quebec, Connie and Jane resume their lunchtime conversations for consideration.

"Connie, have you been following this business about the Yvettes, the women in Quebec who are supporting the no vote against sovereignty association?"

Connie nodded. Jane had been out of town for a while, and this was their first lunch together in months. They'd been talking nonstop, catching up on matters of love and work and spiritual growth and how much weight Jane had gained and Connie's newest Jewish-mother joke and now, over coffee, they would turn to politics — Connie sighed, just slightly, for it had been a long and tiring winter.

Jane, on the other hand, was bubbling with energy. "You know, when I first read about the Yvettes I thought of those Chilean women with their pots and pans who went out on the streets and demonstrated against Allende — they got

so much coverage as "ordinary housewives" protesting against high prices. It was really hard to find out that they were the wives of wealthy businessmen and bourgeois landlords, very much in the minority, totally unsupported by the masses of poor women who were solidly behind Allende. So I assumed that something like that was happening in Quebec, that women had taken on their husbands' politics, and sure enough, this morning's paper had a picture of Claude Ryan's wife and mother, Madeleine and Blandine, arms raised à la Nixon as the crowd cheered."

"Yeah, I saw that picture," Connie lifted her arms, grinning, and then waved to the waitress that, no, she didn't need anything. "I also heard on the radio that they talked at the rally last night about issues like daycare, equal pay, and the need to resolve them on a national level. It's a pretty sophisticated use of women's issues to serve Liberal ends, I'd say."

"What makes me gulp," said Jane, "is the strength of the reaction to that Yvette

remark by Lise Payette — you know, every single newspaper article has painstakingly explained that Yvette is 'a well-known submissive character in a widely used Quebec primer,' and that Payette's remark that women who voted no were Yvettes has rallied, not just Quebec women, but women across Canada who, as the *Globe and Mail* put it, belong to a particular kind: 'the woman who is a housewife and mother and proud of it.' That's what sticks in my gut — it's all these years of distortion by the media, so that now feminists are perceived as being against housewives and mothers, and all these women, who've felt unappreciated and invalidated, and rightly so, are turning those feelings, not against the patriarchal system which has invalidated them and all of us, but against the attempt to change that system. It's the classic case of divide and conquer — use the downtrodden against the downtrodden, and what makes you sick is the sense that we've so totally failed to communicate. I've never heard a feminist say that women shouldn't stay home and raise children — the point has always been that women shouldn't have to do that if they don't want to. If they want to, fine, and let's recognize the value of the work they do — that's how the whole new women's movement started, with the politics of housework."

"Hold on, Jane, calm down, don't stop breathing...now, that's it. I think you have to look at the specific politics of this issue, and realize that it's another case of the boys fighting amongst themselves — in one sense I think a lot of the women at that rally were just expressing a sense of frustration because their needs aren't being met by anyone, not the PQ, not the Liberals, not the women's movement, and certainly not their husbands."

"Yes, but the point is you have to start somewhere, and surely with a party based

on principles of local autonomy, which has made improvement of public transportation and purification of the waterways a major fiscal commitment, and boosted spending for the arts, and started implementing some major demands of women, I'm talking about the PQ, even if they haven't performed miracles yet, still, I would think that if the issue weren't clouded by so much distortion and emotion that women would see they have a much better chance there than will the Liberals."

"I think that women do see that, Jane — women all over Quebec do see that. In the long run a more autonomous Quebec would do better by all its women, and set a good example for the rest of us. But you know how easy it is for women to get support and coverage and lots of attention the instant they show any sign of rallying behind the dominant system, and that's what's happening. It always does."

"I know, I know — I keep thinking about the women in Ontario and their telephone network, the one who said, 'We're non-political homemakers,' and I think, why don't they get involved in environmental issues, and start thinking about who's really screwing them, y'know?"

"Well, there are women doing that — I heard one on the radio today who's been working for months to organize her community in Ajax — it's just that, obviously, the mass media isn't going to get behind those women and make a big deal about what they're doing, because it's too threatening. When motherhood really gets on the move, well, ..." Connie stood up and Jane did too — they clasped their hands and raised them high in the air, like the two Ryan women, then hugged each other. The waitress grinned and left their cheques on the table.

□ B. Moon

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MOVEMENT MATTERS

YWCA WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE

"Please help me — I just don't know where to go". "What can you suggest for me? I'm 45 years old, I want a job but I haven't worked for 25 years." "Can you recommend a feminist gynecologist... therapist...lawyer?" "Does the YWCA offer Assertiveness Training?"

It's calls like these that keep the Women's Information and Referral line, a service of the YWCA Women's Resource Centre, a constant challenge for its co-ordinator and eight volunteers. From our own files, we offer up-to-date information on the various women's groups and services throughout Metro. Many callers require legal advice or may have concerns in the area of women's health (emotional or physical), employment, housing or programming.

Thirty to forty calls a day come in from women of all ages, all backgrounds; some calm and collected, some frantic and desperate. It's not a counselling service we offer. It's a warm and sensitive person at the end of the line who'll listen to callers, help define their needs and then suggest one or two calls that should bring results.

To reply to legal queries, we house a free Women's Legal Clinic staffed by female law students from the University of Toronto. Appointments can be made morning, afternoon or evening, usually within a day or two, by calling 925-1154.

We publish a listing of "Women's Groups in Toronto". For women new to the city, or Torontonians interested in becoming involved in the women's movement, this pamphlet, with concise informa-

tion on approximately one hundred groups, is extremely useful. It can be obtained from us at 15 Birch Avenue at a cost of \$1.

The other major service provided by the Women's Resource Centre is a comprehensive library of materials on all women's issues. From violence against women to day care, from women's history to women in the labour force, our collection is the largest of its kind in the province. It is supplemented with some fiction and non-sexist children's books. The books all circulate for a two week period; the periodicals and vertical file of news clippings can be used at the Centre or photocopied. The cost of our library card is \$2 yearly.

Visitors to the Centre include high school or university students researching topics for papers they are writing, women in the work force planning conferences or workshops, participants in courses available through the YW and community colleges and feminists from the community who use our library for personal reading, and enjoy the contact with other women sharing similar interests.

The Women's Resource Centre has been operating at 15 Birch Avenue since 1975. It is a well used and significant community resource providing a variety of services to women of all ages and economic groups. The number of women served continues to increase steadily with the cutbacks in social services, particularly women's services. Our hours are: Monday to Friday 9:30 to 4:00 p.m.; Tuesdays from 9:30 to 8:00 p.m. We're easy to find, just one block south of the Summerhill subway. Drop by or call us at 925-3137 or phone our Information and Referral line at 925-1154.

□ Barbara Peltz

ASSERT YOUR RIGHT TO WALK AT NIGHT

WOMEN TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

We need women who won't be cloistered, who are angry and who want to fight back.

The Toronto Rape Crisis Centre is holding a march in the Beaches on Tuesday, May 6 at 9:30 p.m. Acts of terrorism against women are intensifying. We cannot let our fear immobilize us; we have a right to walk in safety. Join us at Queen St.

Library (corner of Lee Avenue and Queen St.). Bring noisemakers (police whistles, screamer alarms, pots and pans) and a flashlight.

For further information, or if you are interested in helping organize this demonstration, call Laura at 964-7477.

WOMEN AND EDUCATION

On February 23rd a group of women from schools, colleges and universities met in a workshop to form an organization called the Ontario Association of Women and Education.

We saw these needs:

- A need for women educators to share information about what is happening currently in education in Ontario that is of concern to women;
- A need for women in Ontario to get together to talk about common problems and issues for women in education;
- A need to assess the consequences of educational changes for women and girls;
- A need for a network of women in education at all levels in Ontario both within the institutional structure and in the community;

- A need for greater public awareness of educational issues for women.

The O.A.W.E. is organized to respond to these needs. We are planning the following in our first year:

- An information and views interchange among members
- A series of mini-conferences and workshops in different parts of Ontario
- Task groups putting members in touch for information and action on issues of common concern.

Membership links you to others sharing your concerns for women and education: JOIN!!

For information, contact: Jay Allison, 75 Chester Le Blvd. Townhouse 44, Agincourt, Ontario M1W 2K7. Phone (home) 493-1317.

WCREC LIVES

The Women's Counselling Referral & Education Centre, is pleased to announce that it is alive and planning an active year. WCREC is located at 348 College St. (3rd floor) in Toronto and provides referral to screened non-sexist and feminist therapists, women's self-help groups, and information about a consumer approach to mental health. WCREC will publish a directory of

feminist and non-sexist therapists in the fall of 1980.

As *Broadside* goes to press, several fundraising applications are still pending. Our fundraising future looks rosier. We hope to have full-time staff (again) and regular hours in the fall. Meanwhile, our phone referral number is open only Monday through Thursday between the hours of 1 and 4 PM (924-0766).

□ Oattie Lockey

WOMEN IN TRANSITION

Women in Transition is an innovative social service in Toronto, addressed to alleviating a most neglected area of social need. It is a temporary residence for mothers and their children during crisis circumstances. The majority of our clientele are battered wives.

Over the past few years there has been a tremendous examination of the question of women, their rights and the conditions of their lives. One of the conditions that has surfaced is women with children at the point of marital breakdown. Married women frequently possess no personal income and are totally dependent on their husbands for financial support. In addition, all societal practice, custom, and law presupposes such financial support to be the responsibility of the husband. This financial dependence poses no problem, or sometimes only a slight one, as long as domestic relations remain harmonious. When, however, domestic relations deteriorate, and the marital situation sours, the matter of financial dependence becomes an insurmountable problem.

When marriage breakdown combines with domestic violence, i.e. physical brutality on the part of the husband, the condition becomes pathological. Wife battery, promised and actualized threats, and the kidnapping of children back and forth, are the all too common activities which seem to accompany marital breakdown. For the women involved, this breakdown is savage. They have no place to turn, no money, no alternatives, much agony, and frightened children.

Women in Transition houses women and their children who have been forced to suddenly depart their homes, women who must

confront marital breakdown and single support parenthood simultaneously, against the backdrop of immediate homelessness.

Women in Transition opened in February 1974 on George Street, Toronto. We relocated to our present residence at 143 Spadina Road in June 1975. In January 1978, we became a member agency of the United Way. At present the demand for accommodation is far outstripping our capacity, so we are considering relocation to larger premises.

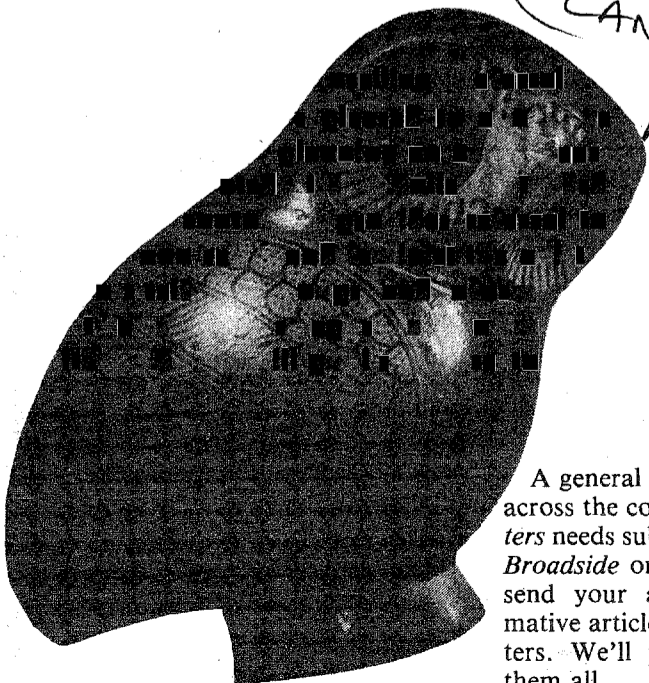
Our service delivery is highly individualized and is carried out in an informal and supportive atmosphere. Our attempt is, in the short time we have, to tap the potential skills and hidden personal resources of each client so as to enhance her self-confidence and enable her to begin to set and pursue realistic goals for herself.

We would also suggest appropriate referrals for the client — for legal counsel, ongoing counselling, life skills and job retraining. Length of stay is a function of individual circumstances. Although our maximum length of stay is six weeks, all decisions are made with a high degree of flexibility, and in keeping with the individual needs of each woman.

We are staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Although the staff is responsible for the administration of the house, the residents play a crucial role in food planning, preparation of meals, and general upkeep of the house.

Our intention has been to create an environment which will house, protect and assist women who previously were totally overcome and isolated in violent family situations.

WHO'S DOING WHAT ANYWHERE IN CANADA?



A general call to women's groups across the country. *Movement Matters* needs subject matter. Please put *Broadside* on your mailing list and send your announcements, informative articles, reports and newsletters. We'll publish some and file them all.

MEDIA WATCH

ROLL OVER JEAN-PAUL

He may have placed himself firmly on the side against the establishment and couldn't have cared less personally, but nevertheless, Jean Paul Sartre got short shrift from the New York Times Service. The remarkable put-down that the Times passed off as an obituary (carried by the Globe and Mail, April 16) suggests that a representative from America's supposedly greatest newspaper is totally out of touch with worldly matters, and is a product of the American isolationist dream. The first half of the obit contains thirteen short paragraphs and as many slams. Fortunately, the Star carried the news report and obituary drawn from Paris UPI and it provides a useful and informative contrast to the trip the New York Times service had to offer.

The New York Times version begins steadily enough: "Jean-Paul Sartre, who influenced two generations of thinkers throughout the world with his existentialist philosophy died yesterday at 74". Paris UPI: "French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, high priest of existentialism and one of the major thinkers of the 20th century has died from lung disease at the age of 74." UPI gives to Sartre the proper title of philosopher and grants him his place in the development of this century's intellectual history. You can see the difference in tone between the two pieces already. You'll notice that UPI saw fit to give us the cause of death. This tidbit of information is omitted completely by the illustrious Times — in an obituary.

"Sartre", the NYT intones "contributed profoundly to the social consciousness of the post Second World War through his leftward political commitments which took him away from his desk and into the streets". The notion that Sartre's contribution to consciousness was political leftism only shows a total lack of regard for the fact that Sartre's politics were rigorously integrated with his philosophical thought. But our Times reporter is obviously obsessed by Sartre's left leanings, no doubt

because the reporter does not share them. And this silliness, implying that Sartre is something of an intellectual reprobate, is belied by the information provided by UPI which reports that Sartre, blind in his declining years, put in an eight hour day dictating essays and articles to a secretary.



Jean-Paul Sartre in 1946

More American media madness: that Sartre's "points of view were heeded less in the 1970's as he became a maverick outsider on the extreme left"; "his last substantial book, a rambling biography of Gustave Flaubert...provoked only limited interest in literary circles"; "he used his prestige to defend the rights of ultra leftists"; "...in recent times his stature has been that of an ancestor figure whose conceptions had lost their force"; "As a philosopher, he was increasingly criticized for his unsystematic approach and for the retractions in his later writings." The overall impression is that Sartre's influence, grudgingly recognized by the Times in the opening paragraph, was downright pernicious.

The CBC national news did much the same thing, dwelling on Sartre's later life activities, selecting as an example of Sartre's political activities his visit to the West German prison cell that incarcerated the terrorist Bader. This and the Times approach to Sartre's life would allow the eventual obituary of an American luminary like Buckminster Fuller to read as follows: "Fuller, who in his later years grew increasingly incoherent, was famous for 3 hour lectures that drove his non-comprehending audience out of the lecture hall". Now this may be a true statement, but you can bet it will not be included in Mr. Fuller's obit. Fuller, after all, has the right nationality for the Times.

"After backing the Algerian nationalists in their struggle with France", NYT explains, "he (Sartre) moved steadily leftward and after the French demonstrations and street fighting of 1968, was an active militant." This last is a riotous piece of historical fiction, ignoring Sartre's deep involvement with the resistance movement in the Second World War. The Times chooses to gloss over Sartre's participation in the resistance as the activity of a "free-wheeling leftist" who supported the Communists.

But surely fighting fascism in the underground is active militance. The Times claptrap may have been penned by an under thirty type who has no idea what WWII was about. More likely the obit is the product of that particular American experience that has not confronted the terror of war on its own turf since 1861 and has never known the trauma of occupation. The Times implication that Sartre came out of the woodwork as an active militant in the late 60s suggests the preposterous definition of "active militance" as the participation in street demonstrations. The Times writer does not understand that the Second World War had a dramatic political context, and that Resistance to fascism was active militance of the most inspired kind. The Times posture, typically American, is bred from that collective experience of war as the act of sending the boys away to fight for notions as vague as the American Way or for principles as bankrupt as "Peace with Honour".

And so, according to the Times, this Resister, philosopher Sartre was "a rebel with a thousand causes, a modern Don Quixote". This depiction of Sartre as a left-wing eccentric, wielding his pen like a sword against non-existent enemies (Nazi Germany, a windmill? Really!) indicates that the Times reporter hadn't enough sophistication to understand that Sartre was, in fact, exactly the kind of lefty the east coast liberal establishment usually goes for — independent, determined to break with Moscow over the invasion of Hungary. And in the 1950's, long before Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote *The Gulag Archipelago* and his other works (over which, I hasten to add, Americans have been slaving their approval in near embarrassing ways), Sartre exposed the excesses of Soviet labour camps in a series of articles for *Les Temps Modernes*.

Whereas other baffled readers of the New York Times obituary of Jean-Paul Sartre have commented to me that the piece is but another example of red-baiting. I suspect that this is not the case and that the Times' reporter in Paris (and of course the editor who didn't chuck the obit out the window and demand a rewrite was a narrow-minded incompetent to isolated from real experience to know how to interpret the myriad clippings used to research the obituary, too badly informed people despite his resources, entirely unfamiliar with Sartre's work and hopelessly ill — equipped to place a complex character like Jean-Paul Sartre on the political spectrum.

Paris UPI, whose reporter was plainly more in touch, commented that Sartre "provided a new vision of life for generations of young people" and that "he dominated intellectual life in The City of Light." Given the New York Times' mindless failure to give Sartre his due, I suspect that the Times reporter responsible for the travesty would, upon reading the UPI statement, question first where the City of Light is, then follow up that query wondering exactly what an intellectual life is. Now familiar with the later notion, our intrepid reporter would proceed to argue that there is no intellectual life off the island of Manhattan.

by Susan G. Cole

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CRTC Takes TV to Task

TASK FORCE ON SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPING IN THE BROADCAST MEDIA

by Philinda Masters

Air waves, those invisible undulations that buffet us, vibrate our ear drums, bounce off the earth's atmosphere or float endlessly around space, were long ago declared *public property*.

It seems reasonable, but public ownership in this respect is a questionable concept. The public, in typical free-enterprise tradition, generally refers to who gets there first and carries the biggest stake. You and I may, legally speaking, own the air waves but much good it does us.

The crux of the matter is who controls the means to harness the air waves: transmitters, relay towers, receivers, etc. How many of your friends own a TV or radio station?

There is public access to some forms of broadcasting. Ham radio is a widespread hobby, but its uses are strictly regulated and its usefulness therefore curtailed. Citizens' Band radio (CB) sounds democratic, but the range of the average transceiver is only four to 12 miles and "skips" (transmissions that bounce up to the atmosphere and back to pick up, say, a trucker in Kentucky) are illegal.

Other forms of access are not easily tolerated. You may have heard of those mini radar-dishes people erect in their back yards to intercept air waves and provide themselves with unlimited television viewing (including pay TV). You won't hear about them for long; they're sure to be banned by some sector of the public in whose interests they aren't.

Pirate radio stations — those little concerns that set themselves up on a bell-buoy in the North Sea and transmit whatever they damn well please, outside any government's control — are the number one sin in broadcasting circles.

Pay television, another attempt at access, is a big controversy these days: isn't the concept of paying for the use of something we already own (those air waves) contradictory? What are we paying for? Quality, lack of commercials, the privilege of seeing the movie *Jaws* in our living rooms as often as we want?

And don't forget the cable TV companies which pipe in programs from the US and take all the business away from CBC and CTV, not to mention Canadian advertisers.

What we have here is a schmozzle — everyone vying for control of something you may never have thought of before (you probably spend all your time worrying about rent, food, car payments, love, etc.).

So, why? Consider the following: *money* — advertising in the broadcast media is Big Business. A 30-second commercial may cost anywhere from \$350,000 to \$1 million, so you can be sure it's worth every penny; *propaganda* — TV is where you learn, from an early age, how to tow the line, who to feel superior to, what heights to aspire to. — supplanting Mother's Knee; *opiate of the masses* — television is the largest selling tranquilizer in Canada, probably outstripping Valium.

It's a big deal, this control of the air waves. Which is where the CRTC (ie, the Canadian Radio-Television Telecommunications Commission) comes in. It was set up some years ago as a licence-granting body to help combat runaway telecommunication. It seems harmless enough. So far, it's best known for its Canadian content regulations. It is seen by some as the right (left?) hand of Civil Liberties — you know, to protect our rights. You may even think it's a dry old stick of a commission up to nothing much.

But politically speaking, it is a function of control. It may not do much overt controlling these days, but it's there in the wings just in case. Don't forget there's more to this story than TV or radio (there's Telex, satellite transmissions, banking by computer, conference calls, all sorts of glorious technological innovations that are the currency of our electronic age) but we'll save those for a rainy day.

Right now, our concern is with the CRTC's Task Force on Sex-role Stereotyping in the Broadcast Media (you thought I'd never get to the point?). As soon as people began to realise the enormous impact broadcasting content could have on our malleable psyches, women began complaining about the portrayal of women in programming and advertising.

In 1968, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women set out a number of recommendations concerning the matter. Of course nothing happened. At regular intervals since, women have been raising a fuss — no response.

In 1978, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women presented briefs to the CRTC concerning the role of women in the CBC and CTV. All sorts of people clucked and flapped their wings, but nothing changed.

In early 1979, Jeanne Sauvé, then-Minister of Communications, asked CRTC then-chairman Pierre Camus to set up a task force to look into the matter. Later that year, during the Interregnum, then-Minister of Communications David McDonald said an inquiry wasn't enough — a committee was needed to write guidelines to be followed by broadcasters and the advertising industry.

This committee is made up of a cross-section of the Canadian public — CRTC staff, industry people, and the general (female) public. The ad industry has opted out of sitting on the committee. Its representatives say there is no problem with sex-role stereotyping (only women complain about it) and anyway they plan to canvas themselves and present a report of their findings to the committee. It is rumoured that the committee's report, due this June, will be pushed back a few months to accommodate the advertisers' poll results.

Meanwhile, top brass in the ad industry are telling their women members to get onto the committee to make sure there's no chance of regulations or enforcement of guidelines. Enforcement would amount to censorship, a horrifying concept to those in control.

But wait, in the past the ad industry has avoided enforcement by coming up with its own guidelines to follow (there's not law against cigarette and beer commercials, advertising to children, feminine hygiene products, etc., but the industry vets itself). So what's the problem? All they have to do is set up their own guidelines and stick to them. They just don't want to.

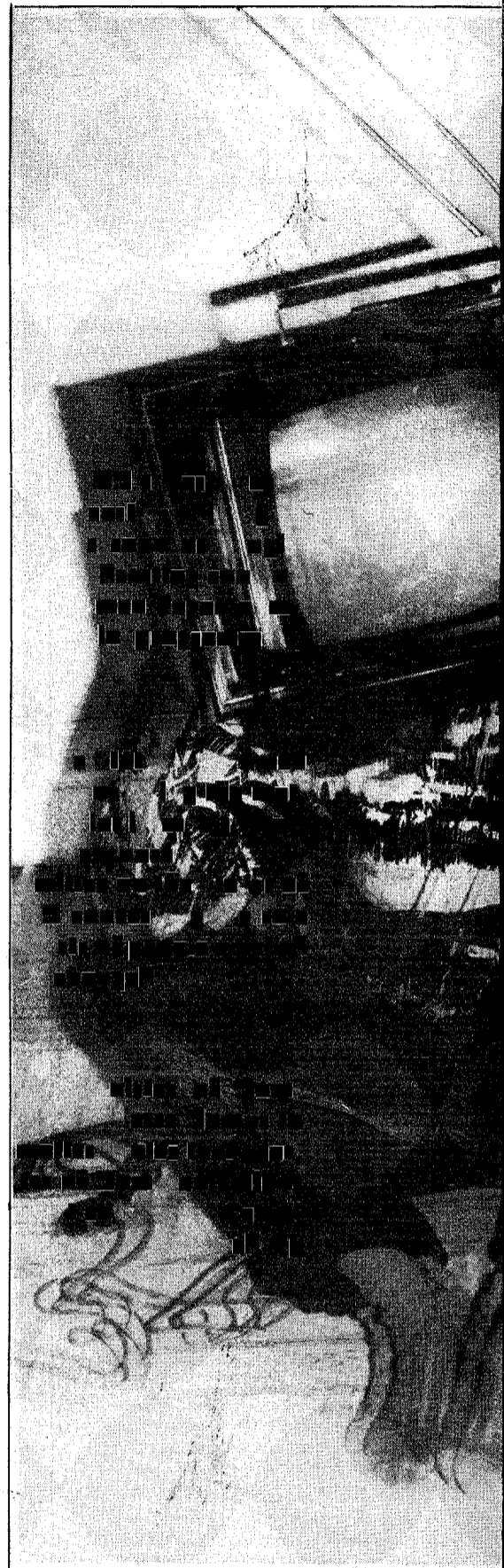
As to the broadcasting industry — CBC and the private sector — the response is generally unedifying. The CBC says: "Yes we see your problem but we can't think of a solution." And CTV says: "There's no problem, so shut up."

But women who presented briefs to recent CRTC hearings gave ample documentation of the problem. Even a few men came to the hearings to say they didn't like the portrayal of men in the media (not to be taken seriously: the portrayal of men reflects the *reality* of their behaviour).

There's no doubt a problem exists, and the CRTC Task Force is not going to let people off the hook. If gentle prodding doesn't work, a monitoring body with the power to enforce regulations may have to be set up. And that won't be very popular.

If the industry doesn't back down and set up its own guidelines as it's done in the past, we may have an even bigger fight on our hands. There are those who think the CRTC shouldn't be allowed that kind of control, and they could be right.

But the fight may be waged in another arena. The Broadcasting Act (1968) states that the CBC and private stations must be responsive and responsible to the public, and must express the interests and concerns of all Canadians. Women make up more than 50% of the Canadian public. So it may just be that sex-role stereotyping is illegal, that broadcasters and advertisers alike are indulging in illegal use of their air waves. Our air waves.



... Lesbians face the same stereotyping as other women. We too strongly advocate that material which reinforces the myth of male superiority or of female inferiority should not be used. It is incorrect and destructive to women.

However, we don't wish to devote much time to exposing or eliminating that stereotyping, because we figure other women will do a good job on that score in their briefs to this committee.

Heterosexism is the assumption that everyone's sexual orientation is towards the opposite sex, the assumption that women need men.

Even though 99% of radio and TV material makes this assumption, it is not a realistic assumption. Just as a large percentage of the population is not white, so a large percentage of the population is not heterosexual...

... When I told my mother "I am lesbian", she said, "Oh, don't be silly", as if there were no such thing. Invisibility is another problem we encounter. How are gay people ever going to be able to develop positive images of ourselves if the media gives the impression that we don't exist? ...

st Your Set

And Now a Word to Our Sponsors

by Eve Zaremba

There is something about the advertising industry which leads its members to make fools of themselves over and over again. For so-called communication experts, advertising people have remarkably little political and public relations savvy. The industry is currently up in arms against the CRTC Task Force on Sex Stereotyping in broadcast media, which of course includes advertising. High profile people are making intemperate statements denouncing the purpose of the Task Force, bad-mouthing its members and mobilising people in the industry — many of them women — against this supposed attack on their livelihood.

Had any of them bothered to check public perception on the subject it would have been clear that many people like to believe the issue settled: Sex Stereotyping is a **BAD THING** and should be/is being done away with. Period. People want to count it one of the least controversial demands of the Women's Liberation Movement, and one which is safely acceptable to most reasonable people. I am of course referring to the public's perception, not to reality. But since for advertising people it is perception rather than reality that counts, one would have assumed that, for their own sake, they would be careful not to shake this cosy idea.

Instead, they are making it abundantly clear not only that sexual stereotyping is alive, well and living in our commercials but also that the industry likes it that way and has no intention of changing. In other words, the poor fools are awakening to an issue in which win, lose or draw, the advertising industry is going to look bad.

It is incontestable that many people don't like advertising (especially commercials) and that stereotypical presentations of women, men, children and minorities bother a variety of people, not only feminists. It is essentially a liberal, middle-class issue and therein lies its danger for the advertising industry. No amount of cheap attack on the Task Force will transform its members into wild-eyed radicals. Doris Anderson is just not credible as a revolutionary enemy of society. But she, together with her colleagues on the Task Force are perfectly credible as serious representatives of middle-class Canada.

This being the case, why is the industry so dense? Surely a better strategy would have been to pretend cooperation and then to sabotage any attempts at change from the inside. That way the industry could have appeared to be on the side of equality and progress without any real danger of having to take a hard look at itself. Overt hostility has blown an opportunity.

It's not difficult to imagine how and why industry spokesmen took on this indefensible position.

When considering the advertising industry it is important to realize that it has for decades seen itself as a much misunderstood underdog. This may be hard for the uninitiated to believe. Its creations surround us, its power appalls us.

But from the inside things look a lot different. First of all, within the business community itself advertising has very little prestige. To the accountants, bankers, engineers, and lawyers who control large scale business, advertising is a necessary evil, an unavoidable expense and advertising people are nowhere. The real heavyweights tend to view advertising with distaste (just like the rest of us) and people who carry out this unpleasant task, with condescension. So ad people spend a lot of time and effort proving themselves to Daddy.

On the other hand, the public at large tends to see advertising as all pervasive and all powerful. Its high visibility makes it the fall guy. It is blamed for all the ills that the commercial greed of the Big Boys visits upon us.

Thus the poor benighted advertising industry is constantly caught in the schizoid position of having to prove its power and efficacy to the business biggies while trying to persuade the rest of us that it is harmless and without influence on anything — really! (The case of advertising to children is a good example of the industry's attempt to prove simultaneously its effectiveness and its lack of effectiveness.)

It's a situation calculated to produce misplaced hostility, loss of contact with reality, hysterical over-reaction and other more or less minor neurotic symptoms.

Which brings us nicely back to the ad industry spokesmen who have been so stupidly vociferous about the CRTC Task Force. They have a constant need to rationalize the very existence of the industry with which they identify. They feel that industry is threatened. From their point of view they are right. It's not paranoia.

Advertising is the whipping boy of both the left and the right. It has lost battles on tobacco, booze and children's advertising. It has been blamed for such varied things as waste, pollution, destruction of the work ethic, build-in obsolescence, debt, break up of the family, and sexual/racial stereotyping. Just to mention a few. In fact it is the once and future villain. And it's guilty of it all. For the essence of advertising lies in its lack of principles and its total subservience to the mighty. The industry will do what its clients want and will pay for.

Why is anyone talking to these flunkies at all? Let's acknowledge that non-sexist advertising is a contradiction in terms. Let's recognize that a certain amount and kind of sexual stereotyping is inevitable in advertising and the struggle — should we agree to accept it — is over what and how much is 'acceptable'. Let's face that the industry will never understand what we are about and will not change except under duress. Let the Task Force try to supply that duress by going over the industry's head to the boys who pay the bills.

While we do all this let's never forget that the problem is not with the shmuck who creates a given commercial but with the role that advertising plays in our economic and social system. And no CRTC directive is about to do much about that.

Brief Cases

... to combat heterosexism it is time that we saw women together (outside of being housewives, secretaries or laundresses talking shop) who enjoy each other's company for intellectual, spiritual, physical and romantic reasons.

— excerpted from *Political Lesbians United About the Media*, brief to CRTC, March 1980.

...Although some ads have clearly attempted realistic portrayal of women — and some, although not enough, have succeeded — one unfortunate result in some cases is replacement of the housewife with the equally unrealistic superwoman. The model who walks her fingers through the yellow pages while floating briskly around the house, coping calmly with a thousand-and-one chores while looking like a fashion mannequin is also not true-to-life. She is more a male fantasy than a female reality; the male concept of a liberated woman. Housework leaves little time for looking like a fashion plate; it is also highly impractical for working around the house.

Advertisements frequently misconstrue the relationship between men and women. The woman is a shrew, a manipulator, or the so-called typical nagging wife. Beer ads specialize in this. Note the man who has gone away for a weekend of fishing — always with "the boys" — who knows he'll have to shave off his beard because "Joyce won't like it". The off-screen nagging wife or the decorative female addition to a social situation are the only two contexts in which women are shown at all in these types of ads. Male bonding is particularly strong in beer commercials, whereas female relationships are not shown at all. The beer industry, along with many others, has not taken into account the fact that women also buy and drink beer. Again the advertising industry is ignoring a major segment of its potential market. At any given time an dplace, with women comprising more than 50 percent of the population, the potential in terms of sales is staggering...

— excerpted from *Feminist Party of Canada brief to CRTC*, March 1980

V. LANGUAGE

Reference to groups of people should be worded so that no group is presumed to be all male or all female.

a) Universal Words

<i>Current</i>	<i>Preferable use</i>
mankind	humanity, people, human race
manpower	workers, workforce, labour force

b) Diminutives

usherette	usher
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c) Slang and Euphemisms

girl	woman
the fair sex	women

d) Sex Distinguishing Endings and Modifiers

fireman	firefighter
salesman	sales person, sales clerk
poetess	poet
lady principal	principal
housewife	home maker

— excerpted from *Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario brief to CRTC*, January 1980.

ARTS

Lina Wertmuller:

Swept Away Again

by Barbara Halpern Martineau

The woman in 'Swept Away' wasn't really a woman at all. She was 'a symbol of bourgeois enlightenment,' Wertmuller said. 'She represents the man. That's what women didn't understand. The Mariangela Melato character was really a man.' There's no arguing with this kind of thinking; obviously, the political ideas in Wertmuller's films are anything that suits her convenience. If one asks 'Why are the working class women in 'All Screwed Up' such avaricious petit-bourgeois climbers?' she'll say 'That wasn't a woman, that was the Shah of Iran.'

— Pauline Kael, "Seven Fatties," The New Yorker Feb. 16, 1976.

(Wertmuller) is not only a female woman hater — a type that has actually surpassed the Jewish anti-Semite in popularity — but a woman hater who pretends to be a feminist. She pities the benighted masses and calls it radicalism, evades responsibility for what she says and calls it comedy.

— Ellen Willis, "Is Lina Wertmuller Just One of the Boys?," Rolling Stone, March 25, 1976.

At several points I was very offended by the idea of love won by brute force. As a Wertmuller fan I'd like to explain this away by stressing that this is an allegory of class war, not sex war. But that is not true. For the brilliance of 'Swept Away...' is that it is everything at once... It may seem strange that a woman director, probably the most successful woman director... would create this impossibly bitchy female.

But Lina Wertmuller is a great writer.

— Barbara Garson, "A Reviewer Under the Influence," Ms, 1976.

In addition to illustrating the well-known fact that the politics of Ms magazine suck, the above quotations suggest some small measure of the shock waves created by "the most successful woman director" in film after film celebrating machismo and the 'aesthetics' of violence. *Swept Away* (1974), *All Screwed Up* (1974), and *Seven Beauties* (1975), are the most blatant examples of the Giannini vs. women films, but collectors of female misogyny should not overlook the notorious scene in "Mimi the Metalworker" in which Giannini and the camera conspire with Wertmuller to ridicule the large naked posterior of a mother of five. Feminists have been justly outraged by the films and the feeble defences offered by Wertmuller — not too long ago I decided to give *Swept Away* a second chance, just to check my initial reactions, and, strong-stomached filmgoer that I am, I came close to vomiting in the rape scene when the rapist demanded, and got, his victim's adoration!

My own anger at Wertmuller was intensified by frustration, for like the mealy-mouthed Barbara Garson I too was a Wertmuller fan, enormously impressed by her first film, *The Lizard* (1963) and her third, *Love and Anarchy* (1972), both films which seemed to me to express with compassion the plight of women living in a male-dominated world. The fact that Wertmuller consistently disassociated herself in public from any connection with the women's movement, at a time when Italian feminists were being attacked, physically, on the streets, was disillusioning, but didn't invalidate for me the potential of her films for feminist analysis. But then, as film after rape-filled film proceeded to draw applause, laughter and money from chauvinist audiences around the world I withdrew my early admiration and decided to concentrate my critical attention on the films of Marta Meszaros, the only socialist/feminist director, I was fond of pointing out, to have made a body of feature films, and thereby to have had the opportunity to develop her vision.

I didn't stop going to see Wertmuller films — I simply walked out when the celebration of machismo started to



Giannini, Loren and Mastroianni in *Blood Feud*.

peak. *The End of the World in Our Usual Bed in a Night Full of Rain* (1978) was a pleasant exception, and I found, as before, that when Wertmuller was not being unbearably misogynist her talent and insight created wonderfully deep moments of vision into the structure of female/male relationships. To clarify, *Night Full of Rain* is neither violent nor sarcastic towards women, and I found the portrait of the woman played by Ingrid Bergman illuminating and moving. I also found the film's analysis of a marriage breakdown in a breaking-down social structure intelligent and effective. I was not surprised that the film had considerably less commercial and critical success than *Swept Away*.

Given this background I went to see Wertmuller's most recent film, *Blood Feud*, with hopeful misgivings. After the first viewing I was delighted — the film offers a portrait of a strong and witty woman, Titina Paterno (Sophia Loren), who holds her ground well between the two men, the socialist lawyer (Marcello Mastroianni) and the Americanized gangster (Giancarlo Giannini), who supplant her murdered husband in her affections. *Blood Feud* is a strange mixture of tragedy, melodrama, and farce set against the dramatic and beautiful backdrop of Sicily in the 1920's, just as Mussolini was coming to power. Recalling the vision of *The Lizards* of Sicilian beauty (land and people), poverty, machismo, and women who endure incredible privation in silence, recalling also the whore's-eye view of Fascism presented in *Love and Anarchy*, *Blood Feud* holds fascists and male hypocrisy, rather than women, up for ridicule. Titina acidly admits that if, as the socialist has told her, the great Karl Marx sired a son with his maidservant and did not acknowledge the boy, then "he too was a shit." In another scene she defends the illegal abortions she has performed for poor peasant women as humane acts for which she will gladly risk prison. Most interesting of all is

the brief scene near the end where another woman offers to find help in getting rid of Titina's illegitimate baby, and she remarks, "It's not the baby I need to get rid of."

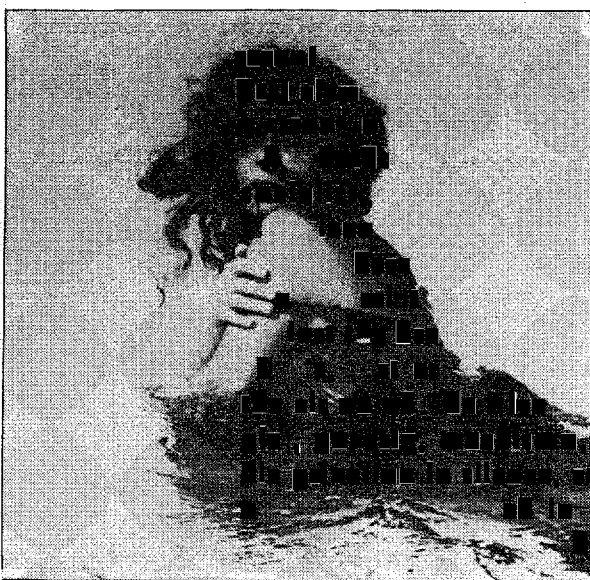
My first reaction to *Blood Feud* was that it is a stunningly beautiful film which shows a woman to be a larger and more admirable person than any of the men surrounding her. She makes choices among them, preferring the idealistic socialist and the compassionate gangster to the Fascists and their followers, but she remains independent, and all of them, lovers and villains alike, fade into a farcically horrible blood-spattered background from which her black-clad figure wearing trousers under her skirts emerges as the only image of sanity and possible survival.

That was the first reaction. When I saw *Blood Feud* a second time I noticed how consistently Loren is portrayed as a primitive by the camera, sensuous, strong, rather like Faulkner's famous earth mothers, or the Noble Savage of white male mythology. That is the only consistency. In terms of style the film is a weird jumble of reference to Greek tragedy (Loren sweeping along the ruined columns of an ancient temple, her eyes deeply rimmed with black, swearing vengeance on her husband's murderer), romantic melodrama (Loren's tear-stained face freeze-framed between her two dying lovers), and commedia dell'arte farce (an operatic duet and quick cutting between closeups of Loren, Mastroianni, and the smiling photographed face of the late Angelo Paterno in the scene of the Widow's First Seduction). The effect is brilliant and confusing; the film itself I find finally confusing, and I find myself wondering why, at a time when clarity about the unmistakably bleak situation of women under fascism old or new is so badly needed, Wertmuller has instead come up with a character who remarks that she still "belongs" to her dead husband, who is foolhardy enough to go after a Black Shirt with a rifle she doesn't know how to use, and whose most profound observation is that there are three kinds of men: men, half-men, and shits.

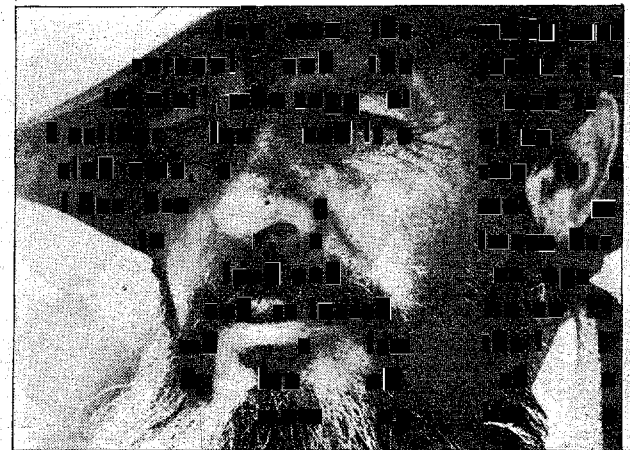
Wertmuller, like Leni Riefenstahl, has proven that women can make films as brilliantly as men. We look elsewhere for an alternative vision.



Giancarlo Giannini



Sophia Loren



Marcello Mastroianni

Tillie Olsen:

Reading in Requiem

A memorial service for Chaika Waisman, mother of the writer Adele Wiseman, was held on April 12th, at Trinity United Church in Toronto.

The event was unique in many respects. Tillie Olsen, American feminist and writer, read her novella, "Tell Me a Riddle," to an audience of 150. The story details the slow death of an old woman afflicted with cancer. Chaika Waisman died of cancer.

Tillie Olsen had recently read *Old Woman at Play*, Adele Wiseman's account of her mother's folk art of doll making, and had wanted to meet both mother and daughter. She learned of Chaika's death in January of this year, and came instead to meet Adele, whose work (*The Sacrifice* and *Crackpot*) she had long admired, and to read her story as a tribute to Chaika.

A few friends were to gather in the Wiseman living room, but the list grew until it became evident that a different format was necessary. The result was a wide assortment of women, many from the literary community, and many from the Feminist Party of Canada, whose communication network attests to the strength of the feminist community in Toronto. One of the writers in the audience was Anne Cameron (Cam Hubert), author of *Dream Speaker*, *Rites of Passage*, and the CBC TV drama, "Drying up the Streets", which won the ACTRA award for best televised drama of 1979. Her account of the evening is published below.

by Anne Cameron

Tillie Olsen's "Silences" came to me as a Christmas gift from my agent and good friend, Nancy Colbert. The book arrived in my life at the precise time I most needed it and I devoured it the way I devoured books when words were new and fresh to me and both the world and I were younger and less tired.

I've been in Toronto most of the past year, working very hard and feeling increasingly homesick for the West Coast, and when Liz Brady told me Tillie Olsen was going to be in Toronto doing a reading as a memorial to Adele Wiseman's mother, an expression of her respect for Adele's work, a "thank you" for the profound effect Adele's writing had had, I knew I had to go. Had to go.

Both before and after the reading, Liz Brady said she couldn't begin to imagine someone like Norman Mailer coming north



Tillie Olsen at the Chaika Waisman memorial reading.

to share with an audience of men because of Pierre Berton or Farley Mowat.

It was wonderfully and uniquely Woman. Woman Truth, Woman Sharing, Woman Response, Woman Love, and most of us wept, openly and even happily. Totally fitting that the experience happened in the basement of a church; I doubt the building has been better used in the past fifty years, and I know, the way I know that though it is raining as I try to write this, the sun will shine again, if not tomorrow, soon, it was a truly pure expression of the power of Love that moved us all so deeply.

Tillie Olsen is a small woman with soft grey hair and a face that mirrors her every emotion and reaction. A lifetime of hope and hurt, puzzlement and joy is written there. I felt as if I was falling into her very eyes and yet I couldn't tell you what colour they are. Her voice is soft, and she uses it to heal, she takes words and loves them with her mouth, tongue and voice, gives them to your ears, to your heart, and makes you feel whole again. In no physical way does she resemble my grandmother, her accent is totally different, and yet many times during the evening I was again on my grandmother's lap being strengthened and loved. A room full of people were mothered,

sistered, and they responded and gave back the love they were offered.

Tillie spoke of feeling very much in touch with and part of a stream, a force, an "arterial connection" with Canadian women, Canadian women writers. She spoke openly and simply of the feeling of connection she felt with the work of Margaret Laurence, Alice Munro, Marian Engel and Adele Wiseman. She told us that coming over the border had been a tremendous emotional experience for her, and it felt wonderful to be here. She said she had only once before, years ago, been in Canada "and then just to B.C." (JUST TO B.C.!! JUST?) Twice she said she was surprised at how much talking she was doing, that she wasn't by nature a voluble person, but that being here, being with us, she wanted to talk, and share.

It was an incredible night for me. I'm the one who has been trying for five years to compose a fan letter to Margaret Laurence, and there she was, sitting in front of me, openly weeping with joy, relief, and recognition while the soft voice of Tillie Olsen picked up words, phrases, sentences, and wove and re-wove her own particular vision through the threads and fibres of the fabric of our lives. Rhythm, cadence, speech pattern and timbre played counter-

point to partial repetition and restructuring of words, and language again, for a brief time, became a living, breathing communication of sharing, blessedly free of linear structure and precise grammatical construction. Tillie Olsen writes and shares the love and reality of 'ordinary' people; who are, of course, no more 'ordinary' than any of us, but, like all of us, are each individually unique and precious. In the challenge and frustration of common lives, she redefines for us the uncommon, the rare, the miraculous.

In the loving silence that followed the standing ovation, Tillie Olsen stood, deeply moved, holding a bouquet of flowers presented to her by Tamara Wiseman-Womanchild. The hands that have cradled and nurtured babies, washed dishes and floors, ironed and toiled, stroked and gripped, soothed and cherished, are now obviously the hands of a woman no longer young. They are not the hands of the skin cream advertisements or the nail polish commercials, they are not the hands of the pampered or indulged. They could be the hands of my mother, my aunts, my grandmother. They are strong, and capable. They touched, stroked, caressed, and accepted the flowers, stems, leaves, and made that bouquet of flowers a part of the woman holding it. And we all sat, eyes damp, being part of that, too.

I wish my daughter could have been in the church basement to see and experience the Womanbonding. I wish my sons could have been there. I wish my sisters, my mother, my aunts, my grandmothers could have sat with me in the flesh; certainly they were there in spirit. I know my mother would have wept with joy to see and hear the core of her life reality spoken aloud. Tillie Olsen is more than a writer, more than a wordsmith, more than a woman. She is the voice of Womanexperience, and she speaks bravely and honestly for centuries of women denied their voice.

There was no ego in that church basement. Tillie Olsen has the guts, the vulnerability and the integrity to allow herself to become the medium through which the words happen, and the story she tells becomes the experience of which we all become a part for it grows from our common heritage, our mutual reality.

Tillie Olsen will go with me, to be shared with the women in my life, the men in my life, the children in my life who will one day be men and women, each individually unique and precious, each very 'ordinary' in that extraordinary arterial connection of which Tillie Olsen spoke. And in those long black nights when the typewriter does not seem to hold the words I need to infuse sentences with life, Tillie Olsen will be with me, reminding me of the gestation and healing in silence, the validity of waiting, and the loneliness will not be part of being Alone, as it once was.

SIDELINES

NORMA RAE

"Marty Ritt is Norma Rae," she said. When Sally Field strode up to the mike to accept an Academy Award for her role as Norma Rae, she thanked everyone except the people really responsible for her success — Crystall Lee and the workers in the textile mill whose story was taken by Martin Ritt and Tamara Asseyev without so much as a bye-your-leave, one year after Barbara Kopple (*Hurlan County*) had started working with the mill workers to develop a script which would show the collective basis of union organizing. Sally Field's omission of any reference to those workers or their principles was in line with the star-centred in-

dividualism of the film Ritt directed—it stands as a grotesque exploitation and betrayal of the very people whose exploitation was the subject matter of the film.

SEMIOLOGY

"Semiology," or the study of signs, is a word frequently used by film scholars, sadly too often to mystify rather than clarify contentious issues.

In brief, semiology is a tool for understanding systems of meaning specifically non-verbal systems. As applied

to film study then, semiology takes into account such elements as lighting, blocking, props, costume, make-up, 'background noise,' music; and consider how these elements carry meaning.

Stripped of a jargon, the study is based on common sense and offers ways of understanding the complex effects of media. So, for instance, to account verbally for the sense of uneasiness you may have had while watching *Coal Miner's Daughter*, you might point out that the humble abode of young Loretta Lynn and family was just too cute and cosy, and that the fire burning brightly in the grate, the well-scrubbed boys playing checkers at the well-scrubbed table, and good ol' Mom tap-dancing at Dad's re-

quest to cheer up the lovelorn Daughter, all conspired to signify "poor but happy." This is the great American myth Loretta eventually spills out in a song, years later when she has by dint of hard work and talent become 'first lady of country music.'

In her long white lace dress with the blue ribbon waist, Loretta Lynn sings of her poor but happy home as the daughter of a coal miner who always made sure his children had plenty of love.

The song carries one set of meanings, the long, white (Expensive) lace dress another. The cosy shack another whole set. Dominant ideology is reinforced. Semiology can be used to de-mystify.

— B.H.M.

Funnel Visions

On the weekend of April 19-20 a feminist film festival was held in Toronto, attracting capacity crowds to *The Funnel*, a small (100-seat) theatre usually used for screening experimental films. The enthusiastic audience arrived at 10:30 am and stayed till late at night, responding with interest to the three workshops offered by Toronto film-makers. One of the festival organizers, still reeling after the event, wrote the following account for *Broadside*. A more detailed analysis of the festival and the films will be printed in next month's paper.

—B.H.M.

by Jacqueline Geering

The Feminist Film Festival was organized by a small group of very different women involved in various aspects of film-making and with diverse attitudes and thoughts about film. The unifying force was the interest in seeing what other women film-makers were doing, while at the same time recognizing that the opportunity for viewing a collection of women's films was an event that only women should organize.

As women film-makers and as feminists we understand the need to radically change all aspects of a society based on patriarchal values. Since film has traditionally been used to reinforce and thus to reproduce the anti-woman attitudes inherent in our society, it is important for feminists to challenge this misogyny, questioning the very structure and methods on which film-making is based. For this reason the opportunity to see what other women film-makers are doing is important to all feminists. Women's films usually are a very peripheral part of the film-making industry and are not often seen in cinemas.

The festival was non-competitive, inviting all categories of films and open to all women, whether professional or amateur. There was no judging or entry fee and women were encouraged to submit both 16mm and Super-8 films, ranging from experimental, animation and documentary to drama, regardless of length. In this way many films were shown that would not normally be screened for the public.

Emphasis was placed on making the festival as accessible to as many women as possible, by setting low prices for day and week-end passes, and every effort was made to pay film-makers for their films.

This festival's principle was two-fold; the forum was arranged so that films would not only be seen, but also discussed. Three workshops were presented during the course of the week-end by three film-makers whose work was being screened.

Although all the films were not necessarily divided thematically, great care was taken to screen those films whose content corresponded to the topics of the accompanying workshops and would thus enhance discussion. The opportunity for dialogue was a very crucial aspect of the festival.

One important point raised was the need to change the image of women in film from one of powerlessness and passivity. One essential step towards control is the analysis of how films reflect negative social stereotypes. It was suggested that women must develop new ways of seeing. One speaker suggested that this could be achieved by choosing a non-conventional form of film-making within which feminists could define a positive reality. If the very structures of film reflect patriarchal values, then those structures must not only be challenged, but changed. One must also question whether or not more conventional types of film-making (such as documentary — the medium that most feminists use) can be redefined through a feminist analysis. For instance, the relationship between film-maker and subject is as important as the relationship between film-maker and au-



A scene from Almarinda Travassos' film *Arising*.

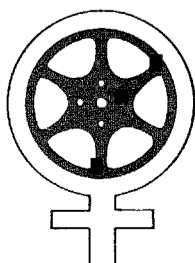
dience. The obvious presence of the camera/interviewer can be used to dispel the illusion of objectivity within the film.

Another discussion raised the issue of the audience to which feminists direct their films. If films are to be made which present meaningful alternatives for a feminist audience, then a feminist market must be established to support those films. Women film-makers usually have a very marginal position and in order to finance their films it is often necessary to work at other jobs. The feasibility of working within and being financed through institutional structures was discussed: this choice is restricted to a very few, and control over production is usually restricted, if not totally sacrificed.

Much more discussion is needed on all these points. Many feminists are just beginning to challenge these aspects of film-making; for others it has been and continues to be a struggle.

The fact that both the films and the workshops were well attended showed the awareness among many women of the importance of such a festival. The theatre was filled to near capacity throughout the two days. This was the success of the festival!

Its ultimate success, however, will be established if the energy generated by the participants leads to making this an annual event.



feminist film festival

Les servantes du bon dieu
Diane Letourneau

Augusta
Anne Wheeler

Some Black Women
Claire Prieto

Fads of the Seventies
Ellen McArdle

Queen's Women
Leslie Anderson, Maaret Koskien,
Heather Moffat, Kathleen
Osterland, Marjah Tajinntis

She's a Railroader
Barbara Tranter

D'abord menagères
Luce Guilbeault

The Thin Line
Janis Cole and Holly Dale

Central Character
Patricia Gruben

Bed and Sofa
Kay Armatage

Remembrance Day
Judith Quinlan

*More than just mild —
you're soaking in it*
Karen Tully

Music Box
Anne Quigley

It's not an illness
Claire Prieto

Ironing
Lynne Conroy

Living in Canada
Judith Quinlan

Le Viol
Jacqueline Geering

Changing Colour
Margaret Moores

Block
Beaty Popescu

Arising 79
Almarinda Travassos

Good Daycare...One out of Ten
Barbara Halpern Martineau and
Lorna Rasmussen

Pretend you're wearing a barrel
Jan-Marie Martel

Where were you in '62?
Ellen McArdle

Anastasia Oh Mon Chérie
Paule Baillargeon

Speakbody
Kay Armatage

Snoopy and the Robot
Judith Quinlan

Untitled
Nancy Nicol

Ice Melting
Anne Quigley

Gertrude and Alice in Passing
Kay Armatage

Up from the Bargain Basement
Jacqueline Levitin and
Glen Richards

Make-up
Judith Quinlan

Shutdown
Laura Sky

Larking
Lorraine Segato

Friends
Kathryn Gilman

Labrys Rising
Margaret Moores

Marilyn French: Bleeding Rhetoric

THE BLEEDING HEART by Marilyn French; Simon & Shuster, 1980; 377 pages, cloth.

by Susan G. Cole

A little more than a year ago, in elevators, or stealing time at the reception desk, alone during lunch breaks, in between house chores, or killing the time it takes to commute by subway, women were reading Marilyn French's first novel *The Women's Room*. Working women, housewives, adolescents, no matter the class or status, French was able to touch them with the story of Mira who puts her husband through medical school, has the requisite two children, mobilizes upwardly to the suburbs where she is put up and then put down and finally finds a place for herself in college and, of course, in the women's movement. A sprawling account of the experience of one woman, though deeply flawed in many respects, *The Women's Room* proved what we'd known for some time but hadn't seen in years — that a feminist novel, when it sells, can have enormous cultural clout.

In *The Bleeding Heart*, French again recounts the story of an American woman, Dolores, who has one year in Oxford, England, to do research on her doctoral dissertation. On the train from London to Oxford she meets Victor in the zipless fuck tradition that would do Erica Jong proud. The book goes on to describe the unfolding of the affair, which is, to say the least, tumultuous.

And why not? Dolores, as she never ceases to remind her lover, has had a hard life. Once married to an emotionally arrested suicide case, she has had three children, one of whom has also killed herself, and a series of unsatisfactory affairs that have forced her to conclude that celibacy is her only option. She used to melt into tears with ease but her eyes are now as dry as her sexual response, and her reaction to the wretchedness of women's condition, the intensity of which she sees at every turn, is rage and frustration that stick in her throat. The research on her thesis entitled "Lot's Wife: The Identification of Women with Suffering" is doing little to brighten her life and she has come to middle age with the knowledge that "life hurts". She is the bleeding heart.

Victor on the other hand is society's winner, a Vice President of IMO, a company specializing in electronic equipment. He is

one of America's golden boys, a minister of the nation's technology, able to espouse with considerable skill the virtues of capitalism and the viability of the American dream, even for women. He is a type, complete with the accoutrements of executive life, including expense accounts, a total absorption in his career, an "I'm all right, Jack, (isn't everybody)" world view and the occasional mistress, all of which move his wife Edith to drive her car into a wall. She survives, paralysed from the waist down, leaving Victor with the responsibility and guilt for the accident, but not enough for him to question seriously his values and politics.



Marilyn French

Dolores must question and she does it relentlessly through the 377 pages of *The Bleeding Heart*. This dialogue between lovers is the novel's essential literary device. Dolores flails at the Pentagon and venal corporations, Victor celebrates the precision of both. She sees the patriarchal miasma on the street, in the halls of academe, in historical treasures she visits with Victor; he thinks she is a fanatic.

The clatter is compelling only if one has not had the conversation before. Thinking feminists likely have and for them (us), *The Bleeding Heart* is, alas, extremely tedious.

In *The Women's Room*, French began to develop bad habits that are the pitfalls of politically conscious writers. The description of women juiced or tranked up in the suburbs, the account of a mother's reaction to her daughter's rape were dead on and hence French's editorials on the nature of sexism and the struggle between the sexes

that laced the book were bothersome gratuities that bellowed for more ruthless editing.

French's excesses were invariably excused by the fact that this was a first novel and so we have reason to expect this time around that French would have dispensed with the "I've described it, now I'm going to tell you what it means" formula. But she hasn't. When Victor is able to get the better of her in an argument, manipulating the language to make irritating and logical sense, the platitudes that follow — "So easy to be right and sure and clear if you are a man, white, interested in profit, successful" — detract from what has already been made clear in the dialogue. French's running commentary doesn't hit home, it bludgeons.

And so *The Bleeding Heart* has more the makings of a feminist tract than a feminist novel. French tries to use the dialogue as a means to soften the editorial blows but she ultimately fails in the tricky exercise of combining ideology with a specific genre. To wit:

You could not in any way talk about the equality between men and women. Someday she would have to find a way to explain that to him. How you couldn't do that because women were always salmon swimming upstream. How no matter where women went, they always found the old tradition in which implicitly men were important and women were not — in painting, in books, in the laws and customs. Women existed for men, their bodies for men's pleasure and rage, their emotions to provide the suffering witness to men's identities.

Or:

"What I want Victor is to change the world, what do you think? To make it a place where women's way of seeing, thinking, feeling is as valid as men's. Where maybe even men will join women because they will see that women's way of thinking is more decent, more humane and in the long run, Victor, more likely to preserve the human race.

The first passage is splendid feminism, but given its place in a novel, it's also unsatisfactory literature. The second, and part of the ongoing conversation between Victor and Dolores, needs only to have the name Victor deleted and replaced with "My

friends" and it makes for a rousing public address that could conceivably convince an audience to aspire to the goals of the women's movement. As dialogue goes, however, it is less than adequate.

But when she sticks to the business of description, often delivered with finesse, and character development, for which she does have a discernible knack, Marilyn French can write. Should she attempt a third novel, which despite *The Bleeding Heart*'s weaknesses, this reviewer hopes she does do, French ought to write the book, cull from it the rhetoric, assemble it in a tidy foreword and leave us with the good fiction she is probably capable of producing.

French might also consider returning to the themes that opened the eyes of the readers of her first work who were not yet initiated into the rites of feminism. *The Bleeding Heart*, which is nearly as long as *The Women's Room*, doesn't have half the latter's scope. A woman watching her husband's career come into full bloom can identify with Mira, who spends five years with one hand on the vacuum and another holding an infant while Daddy studies. A woman just emerging from a marriage that broke down in the shadow of the shopping mall and in an alcoholic haze recognized the suburbia of *The Women's Room*. A woman just grappling with feminist ideas can follow Mira's travels through the women's movement.

But chances are that the random reader is not spending her time at a university library in her middle years like Dolores. She does not have a husband dead of carbon monoxide poisoning, and if she does it is unlikely that she also has a dead daughter, another child living on a Lesbian commune (this last, curiously enough, is mentioned only in passing) and a lover like Victor who, for the sake of literary convenience, can allow the complex relations between men and women to be reduced to a war between The Black Knight (capitalism and sexism, read: men) and the forces of Truth and Beauty (humanism, feminism, read: women).

French's commitment to women can't be questioned and she surely wants her work to have an impact on the mainstream. She will find an audience for *The Bleeding Heart* on the strength of her first novel. But if she goes on at this rate, she'll end up literally preaching, and only to the converted. Doubtless there's better and more important work for her to do.

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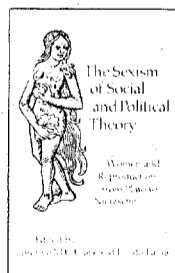
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Introduction by Susan Jackel

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Murielle: A Woman Destroyed

by Kathryn Morgan

On April 19, a one-woman show called "Murielle" opened at Open Circle Theatre in Toronto. Starring Charmion King, the play was adapted by John Van Burek from *La Femme Rompue*, a trilogy of short stories by the French feminist, philosopher and writer Simone de Beauvoir.

In *La Femme Rompue*, de Beauvoir explores three themes: a woman aging, a woman consumed by loneliness, and a woman suffering at the indifference of her lover. In "Murielle", we are drawn into the second of these stories, a contemporary morality tale of the loneliness of a bourgeois French woman. By describing Murielle as a *femme rompue* (woman destroyed) de Beauvoir plays with the pattern of associations with the word *rompue*. It suggests someone who has been broken, whose spirit has been tamed, someone who has been domesticated in the sense of a wild animal. Murielle is all of these: seemingly independent she is clearly a broken woman. Not only has she been "broken in" through her socialization into and participation in the roles of wife, mistress, and mother, she has been broken by them.

Murielle is a domesticated victim whose thwarted power and spirit is directed at others, most poignantly and devastatingly at her own daughter, Sylvie. But she is not a victim, a grotesque monster from whom we can turn away. We are with her, voluntarily trapped in the theatre, in danger of being consumed by the powerful sense of intimacy and identification which King creates in the role of Murielle. We are with her because many of us participate in the forces that have broken her — either as women who fear being broken and who have suffered this domestication or as men who prize precisely the domestically mutilated woman and who continue to support the patriarchal structures which require women of broken spirit who identify with men.

"Murielle" is a play which uses many of the conventions and themes of philosophically motivated Existentialist drama. As Murielle polishes her nails and removes the polish, the aroma of the polish and the harsh chemical odours destroy any illusion of distance. Enveloped by the same odours and scents as Murielle, we live in her apartment, we share her space. Similarly, the continuing sounds of the street, of the apartment building, impinge on our ears just as much as on Murielle's. It is impossible to be detached. We share the same life-world with Murielle. This involvement with the characters is central to the Existentialist dramatic purpose.

On the other hand, the original story is entitled "Monologue" and the explicit dramatic form is that of a monologue so that, in some important sense, Murielle's solitariness is given aesthetic form as well as being the focus for many of the emotions which swirl around in Murielle's consciousness. (Always in command of this turbulent consciousness, Charmion King's remarkably plastic face and expressive body powerfully express these emotions.) But Murielle experiences her solitariness as *loneliness*, as a devastating solitude which must be survived. This solitude can only be annihilated, for Murielle, through the



Courtesy: Open Circle Theatre

Charmion King in Open Circle Theatre's production of *Murielle*.

presence of the Other, preferably a *male* Other. While Murielle experiences this loneliness and struggles to escape it, de Beauvoir suggests that this loneliness cannot be relieved. Each of us is *essentially* solitary. Taken to its logical conclusion, "Murielle" suggests that all theatre, all life, consists of monologue whether we are with others or not.

A third Existentialist theme, which resonates throughout the play is the gloss of lucidity which camouflages deep forms of self-deception in Murielle. Murielle tells us that she is an outcast because she is clean and strong, refusing to play the myriad of social games which make all of us hypocrites. She sees herself as a cast out from the social communities of the family and marriage because she is a clear-sighted and ruthless discloser and destroyer of masks in others. She is also convinced that she is alone because of her honesty, her forthrightness, and her power to reason. At one point she says, "I reason, I explain, I force them to the truth..." "I have always been fearless, open as a book, dead straight." Her convictions about her lucidity, strength and reasonableness are what give Murielle a subjective sense of being a kind of elite martyr. And they are her most serious flaw.

Throughout the play, we see Murielle ensnared by contradictions and fatally skewed interpretation, desiring forms of camouflage for herself (her "loveliest times" are when she has clothes, social position, flocks of men grovelling at her feet, or showing her off), and distancing herself from other women (who are classified as sluts, piranhas, intellectual freaks, cows or queers). What Murielle fails to see is that those forms of life which she yearns to recapture, as mother of Francois and wife of Tristan, and to use as an antidote to her loneliness are forms of life in which her loneliness will be more profound. The solution she seeks is essentially an illusory one.

For de Beauvoir, Murielle is a woman enclosed in feminine forms of bad faith, of self-deception. Within this prison of femininity, Murielle acknowledges her essential dependence on a man as her source of identity and worth. (She at one point declares that a woman without a man and without money is a double zero). Trapping herself in her apartment, Murielle traps herself by her desire to be this kind of woman.

The kind of womanliness that Murielle

wants is a strange, non-physical, de-eroticized kind of life, the life of the spiritually committed non-carnal Mother. At a verbal level, Murielle has nothing but scorn for women who are sexual beings, especially if they are middle-aged or older. Using language which derives much of its power from its sexual connotations, Murielle denounces and satirizes individuals who experience and act on sexual desire. At the same time, however, there are scenes which demonstrate that Murielle herself is a very sexual woman who derives much of her sense of herself as a potential, albeit aloof, sexual object. (When she fantasizes about resuming her life with Tristan, she imagines having a bare-breasted picture of herself in *Vogue*. When she engages in a fantasy dance, she strokes her body sensuously and licks her fingers in an erotic way.)

De Beauvoir also uses the powerful image of water, the symbol of human subjectivity for the Existentialists. We see this in scenes where Murielle continually pours herself glasses of water while she indignantly describes herself as "drying up," as "withering", as dying. One feels that she is experiencing herself as a woman who is, quite literally, withering physically as she experiences menopause (although her post-menopausal mother is claimed to have a well-lubricated vagina), withering psychologically as her world constricts to a vanishing point relieved only by the sound of hostile, uncaring strangers; and withering away at the deepest subjective level is the loss in any form of significant power.

Yet Murielle is not without power. We sense this when she speaks about Sylvie, her daughter. While Murielle assures us that she was the most devoted, the most committed of mothers (who read her daughter's diary in the name of salutary honesty in relationships), we feel Sylvie's suffocation, we experience this complete engulfment and manipulation. Experiencing this claustrophobia of consciousness, I, for one, wanted to leave the theatre at that point, to flee from this terrifying woman. Yet I had to stay, acknowledging that I could imagine myself, in the name of "motherhood", engaging in those same actions. The ruthlessness of Murielle's attentiveness to Sylvie is underscored by her simultaneously narrating her disinterested forms of devotion to Sylvie as she seizes her manicuring scissors and deliberately cuts the piece of a puzzle to make it conform to the spot she has chosen for it. A brilliant, chilling scene.

But Murielle's power is essentially the power of a manipulator which depends upon there being an Other to be manipulated. Hence the depth at which Murielle experiences her loneliness as a form of powerlessness. Other than her manipulative powers, Murielle has no access to any genuine forms of power.

Charmion King is clearly in sympathetic command of her character and plays her with the intensity and subtlety that de Beauvoir demands. The adapted text by Van Burek is true to the original and conveys de Beauvoir's story with the kind of forceful directness that we have come to expect from Van Burek's rendering of Michel Tremblay's plays. Apart from the closing scene (which I didn't like at all), I think it was a first rate production. You may not like the play; you may not want to take your mother to see it (probably more useful to take your father!) but you will experience a fine performance by Charmion King, a sensitive directing job by Ray Whelan, and a deeply disturbing evening at the theatre.



Since women first obtained the right to vote and to run for office, the number of women seeking federal office rose from four in 1921 to 183 in 1980. But the number of women who won seats in those 59 years rose only from one to 14. The dismal prognosis is that, at this rate, we will need another 842 years to achieve equal representation at the federal level.

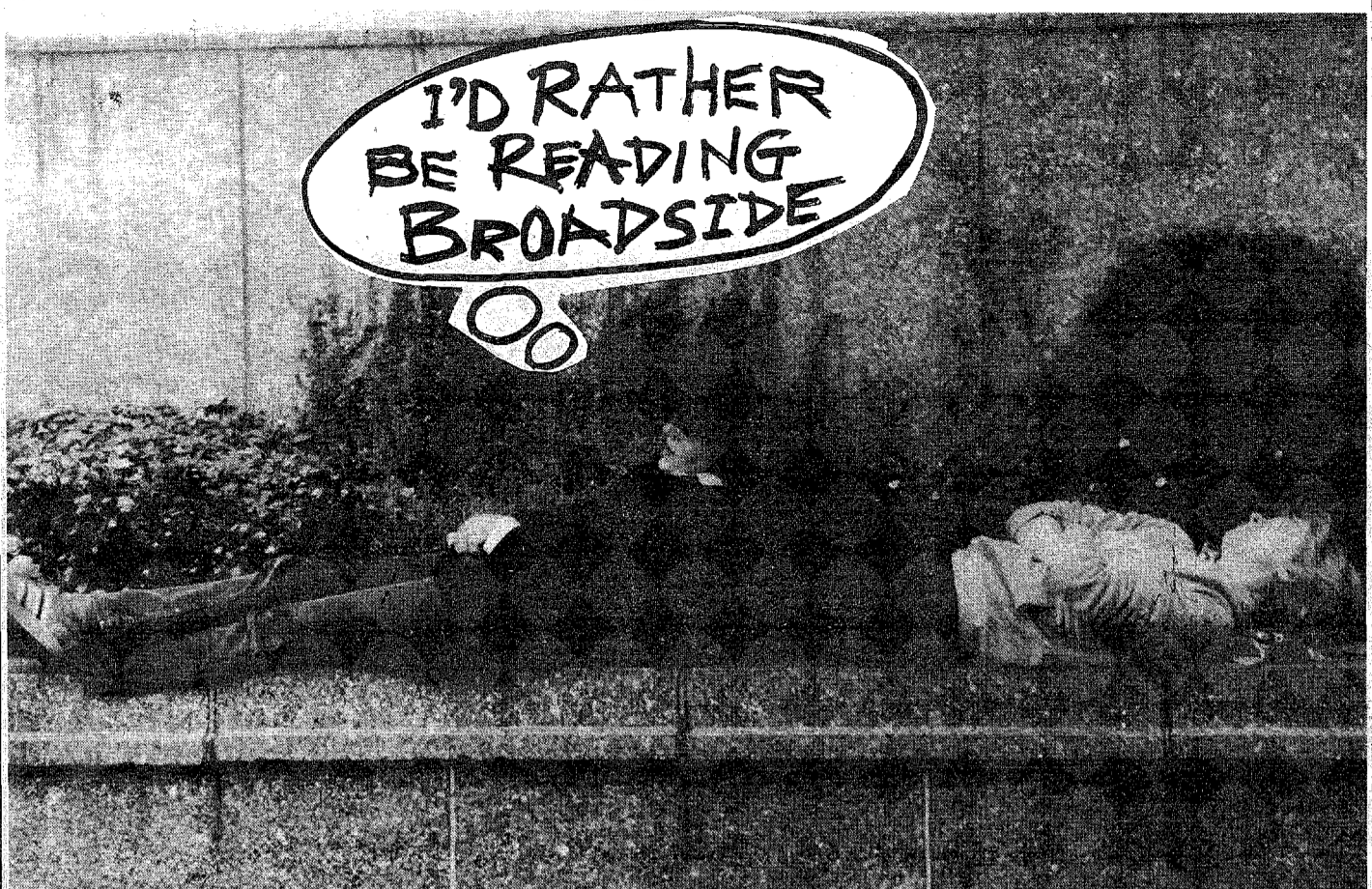
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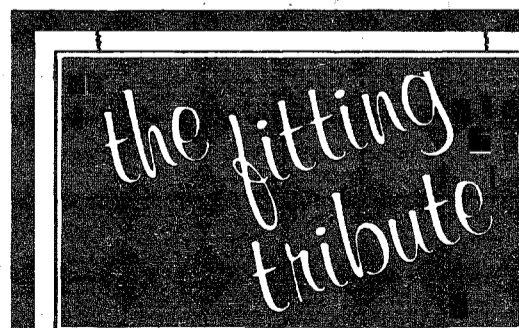
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Sara Binns from page 4

But MacPhail was easier to live with in defeat than in victory. "When she won in 1948 she thought she should have had even more votes. But when she had lost in earlier elections, she felt so badly for all the people who had worked so hard for her, she was much more gracious."

Sara Binns continued to be involved with politics for many years. She was also active with the Canadian Arthritis Society, which began in 1945; she still writes for their publication. She was involved with a group that contacted shut-ins, called the Canadian Sunshine Club, and for years she wrote a column for their magazine.

In 1961 her husband died. Sara kept the house for several years, with the help of neighbours. But gradually, as the neighbours began to move away, she decided to give it up. Around the same time, she and her doctors investigated a new treatment for her arthritis. Orthopedic surgery was very new and had never been done in Canada. Doctors felt the subjects for the surgery had to be chosen carefully for their positive outlook on life and their endurance and determination, as the procedures would take a long time and involve intensive therapy. Sara Binns was the first one chosen.

First, they had to rebuild her hands. "Which made sense, because if I couldn't hold a cane, or a walker, or parallel bars, what would have been the point of giving me new knees?" They did one hand at a time, three months apart. They gave her plastic joints and teflon tendons. Then they did the knees, a real bionic job, with new kneecaps of plastic and metal alloy, and plastic ball bearings.

During the treatment she caught double pneumonia and was prescribed a drug that put her in a hallucinatory coma for eight days. Her body swelled up so much that two hospital beds were needed to hold her. Afterwards, she had a nervous breakdown and spent 3 months recovering.

In all, she spent two and a half years in hospital, but she came out able to walk. A couple of moments stand out in her mind. The first was the day she was able to walk the length of the parallel bars by herself. "That was a great thrill. I walked to the end of the bars, and a kitchen chair was at the end. I got there and sat on the chair, and after a few moments, I let out a scream. The therapist turned sick! She rushed over and yelled, 'What's the matter?' I yelled back, 'I'm sitting on an ordinary chair — I haven't done that in 30 YEARS!' So the orderly brought out a bottle of beer, which he was not supposed to have, and we all had a glass to celebrate."

And she got shoes. After 30 years of wearing only knitted slippers, she had beautiful blue leather shoes, especially made by an orthopedic shoemaker. "At night, I couldn't bear to have those shoes sitting on the floor, so the nurse would put a chair by the bed with a pillow on it, and the shoes on the pillow. I used to wake up at night and touch those shoes. I still have them."

Finally, Sara Binns left the hospital and went to live in a nursing home. She lasted 7 months and could stand it no longer. She checked out and went to live in an apartment. When I gave my notice at the home, I was called to the office. The superintendent, and the assistant superintendent, and the head nurse, and the assistant head, and the floor nurse and the social workers were all there to tell me there was no way I could manage on my own, and I should never be too proud to come back to them and admit it!" She has been living alone for the past six years and manages just fine.

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MOVEMENT COMMENT

Nuclear Issue Activates Women

WOMEN, TECHNOLOGY AND NUCLEAR POWER

This article, which has been edited for length, was a paper presented at a Feminism and Uranium Conference in Australia and is reprinted from the Australian Women's News Service, Special Edition — Number 20.

Women have played a large and prominent role in anti-nuclear movements and have been particularly visible in community struggles against nuclear power plants. In Seabrook (U.S.), local women were the backbone of the resistance, being among the first to alert the township to the dangers. In Whyll (Germany), women from the farms and small towns were extremely active; and in Japan, the peasant women have usually been the ones to organize the villages and lead the fight against nuclear plants.

What is particularly interesting about these cases is not simply the prominence of women in a protest movement, but the fact that many of these women, who are willing to break the law and stand up to government officials, are thought to be especially backward politically. These anti-nuclear activists are farm women, peasant women, women from small towns; women who have never been involved in anything political before; women in traditional roles centering on family and community women who have been largely untouched by the feminist movement (though participation in anti-nuclear struggles rapidly switches them onto feminist ideals); women who have usual-

ly been dismissed by radical organizations as incorrigibly conservative.

I think it is important for us to understand why women all over the world — particularly women in family- and community-centered roles, whom politicians have long regarded as the backbone of the social order — have become so prominently involved in a radical movement.

We can start with the obvious answer: that women are the ones who traditionally play a nurturing role and have a life which focuses on the family and (particularly for country women) on the community. They are thus likely to be particularly concerned about anything which threatens their family and immediate environment. A woman of Whyll (interviewed in the film "Better Active Today Than Radioactive Tomorrow") explains how her absorption in farm, family and children led to involvement with the anti-nuclear struggle when she realized that the things she had worked and suffered for were threatened by the nuclear plant.

Women whose lives center on fostering family and community are fighting a war of resistance. The struggle to preserve traditional ways of doing things can take the form of a knee-jerk reaction against anything that seems to threaten the family as it exists in Western society. Encouraging women to work, child care centers, women's liberation, are seen by many women as attempts to subvert human values and deliver the family into the hands of industry or the state. But the reactionary form which this struggle can take should not blind us to the radical core of the protests of these women.

The family is usually seen by feminists as the womb of the patriarchal society, an adjunct of capitalism, and the bulwark of the social order. It is all of these things. But it is a contradictory institution, for inherent in it are ideas, values and priorities which are contrary to the logic of capitalist development and sometimes oppose it. The way many women (and men) see the family is as an island of humanity in a cold, rapacious world: the family is a haven where people can relate to each other in a non-instrumental way, where people can express themselves and communicate without fear. It is, of course, women who are held responsible for upholding and achieving this ideal. Necessarily, they fail. The patriarchal nature of the family, the narrow-minded conformism of the community, makes this ideal impossible to achieve. Nevertheless, many women strongly resist seeing the contradictory nature of the family and the inevitability of its failure and, in struggling to preserve what they know is valuable, end up supporting the most reactionary causes. But this shouldn't prevent us from recognizing the validity of the values which many women have dedicated their lives to, the role that people with these values can play in a struggle against authoritarianism. The attitudes, values, and abilities which have brought so many "conservative" women into the anti-nuclear movements are just those attitudes, values, and abilities which men see as making women unfit for high office.

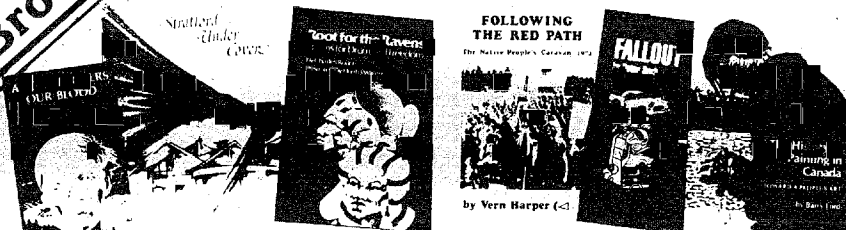
Nuclear power is the most outstanding example of technological irrationality of our times: an example which illuminates the basically anti-human nature of much of modern technology. Here is a product of

science and technology which is justified as a way to save money on energy (which in fact it doesn't do), and in exchange gives us an apparently insurmountable nuclear waste problem, a health risk, the possibility of serious accident (but these don't count, because they don't figure on the balance sheet of costs and profits). In addition, it involves the further centralization of power supplies, increasing their vulnerability and increasing the feeling of helplessness of ordinary people who are faced with something large, dangerous, and out of control. It is the climax of the technological nightmare.

The farm women of Whyll, the townswomen of Seabrook, saw the proposed nuclear power plants as, first, a threat to their families and communities in the most basic possible way — as a course of disease and death. They also saw it as an intolerable case of interference and authoritarian decision-making threatening their ability to create a satisfactory environment for the people they cared for. But they also saw it as an example of immorality — something that would cause harm to other people as well as themselves. It is often the women who act first, are often the more determined and persevering. This is not simply for the sake of their children. Men also care about their children. But men's lives are more likely to center on work outside the home, and by necessity they must succumb to the logic of industrial capitalist development; they begin to see it as inevitable, even desirable. Women, particularly women who take traditional roles seriously, don't accept it; can't accept it, for the way they identify themselves as women leads to rebellion against it.

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