



Girls in Sport

SEE STORY PAGE 4

FEATURES:

THERAPY IN QUESTION:

The Women and Therapy conference in Toronto last November sparked controversy (several workshops), guerrilla action (an anti-porn demo in the hotel lobby) and serious comment on the Catch 22 of being a woman. Reports from Yvette Perreault, Theresa Dobko and Mary Stern, plus an interview with keynote speaker Phyllis Chesler by Jacqueline Swartz. Page 8.

THE GODDESS IS

COMING! In the first of a 5-part cartoon strip by artist Beth Walden, the Goddess begins her return journey to Earth in 1984. Don't miss the unfolding story! Page 3.

NEWS:

INTERCONNECTIONS:

International connections among feminists are essential for the survival of the women's movement, says Monica Riutort, who attended last summer's Latin American and Caribbean Feminist conference in Lima, Peru. Riutort is interviewed by Amanda Hale. Page 4.

INSIDE BROADSIDE

SPORT REPORT: When the Ontario Human Rights Code was revised in 1981, a special exemption gave the male-dominated sporting establishment *carte blanche* to continue discriminating against women and girls, says Helen Lenskyj in her report on the task force to investigate equal treatment of the sexes in sports. Although there are some useful recommendations, the task force generally argues the status quo. Page 5.

BILL OF RIGHTS? The Action Daycare proposal to this year's International Women's Day coalition meetings in Toronto included plans for a feminist Charter of Rights and a women's building. The proposal was turned down in favour of the IWDC's themes and demands for this year's March 8; but who can tell about the future? *Broadside* presents the Action Daycare proposal, an IWDC editorial on the subject and a comment by Eve Zaremba. Page 6.

ARTS:

SNAKES AND LATHERS:

The Medusa Head, Mary Meigs's autobiography (part 2), refers to the image of Andrée, the third woman in the tempestuous and obsessive love triangle with Meigs and Marie-Claire Blais. Although not turned to stone, both Meigs and Blais were caught for over a year by the charms of Andrée. *Broadside* excerpts a portion of *The Medusa Head*. Page 10.

UNSUNG WOMEN: Penney Kome, in her book on the Constitution struggle, *The Taking of Twenty-Eight*, chronicles the story of ordinary women who fought for our equality in a few high-pressured months of 1981. Reviewed by Sheila McIntyre. Page 11.

IN SEARCH OF SURVIVAL:

Carroll Klein reviews Beatrice Culleton's *In Search of April Raintree*, a novel which

describes the narrow limits of life for Dene and Métis women in this country, and the life of two sisters, April and Cheryl Raintree. Page 12.

SONGS AND TEARS: Barbra Streisand sings her way through *Yentl*, the film about cross-dressing and role-reversal. A woman and daughter team wring our hearts in the "woman's weepie," *Terms of Endearment*. Both films are reviewed by Donna Gollan. Page 13.

WINTER/OFFENSIVE:

Dionne Brand is a poet, according to reviewer Alexa DeWiel, able to call on rage and rejoicing in the same breath. In *Primitive Offensive* (1982) and *Winter Epigrams* (1983), Brand evokes acute observations of a young Black woman travelling in Europe, and camouflages her winter apartment with the essence of summer. Page 12.

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OUTSIDE BROADSIDE:

Don't miss this month's calendar of Toronto women's events, for February 1984. Page 15.

LETTERS

Disabled Women

Broadside:

I am writing this letter because I want to tell all the women's groups in Toronto that disabled women are tired of being left out of women's events because of inaccessibility. I just finished phoning a women's group who are holding a dance in February 1984. I asked if it would be accessible to women using wheelchairs. No, we are sorry, but there are stairs, they said. Doesn't anyone know that women using wheelchairs want to go to dances, want to go to rallies, want to go to International Women's Day events, want to go to all the places that women go to?

Women's groups don't seem to realize that accessibility is an important issue. Deaf women need sign language and I rarely see that except at Womynly Way events and the odd women's event. Blind women need information in braille or on tape. I wonder how many women's groups offer this.

For years I have worked in the disability rights movement and I have always brought up feminist issues to disabled people and tried to make them understand how important and necessary the women's movement is. And yet the women's movement continues to discriminate against disabled women who try to be part of it. Every time you hold a meeting or conference or dance or whatever in an inaccessible facility you are denying disabled women the right to participate as equals. I

also don't like being carried upstairs which is the only option I am usually offered. My dignity and independence is stripped away by this act.

Disabled women are tired of being second class women in the women's movement. I hope someday when *Broadside* prints their Toronto Women's Events Calendar that I will see the international wheelchair symbol listed beside the events that are accessible. Right now I have to make numerous phone calls to each event to check that out. I hope someday that *Broadside* will be available on tape so that blind women will be able to access it. *Broadside* should be a newspaper for all women - not just ones who are non-disabled.

I am usually proud to be a feminist but sometimes I am filled with anger when I see what my disabled sisters and I have to go through. I look forward to the day when we can truly be part of the women's movement and feel welcome in it - not shut out of it as we are now.

Pat-Israel
Toronto

Women's Bookstore

Broadside:

The Toronto Women's Bookstore would like to thank everyone who has encouraged and supported us since the store was destroyed in July. Many people have been curious about how the store is operated and what our future plans consist of, so we thought *Broadside* would be the appropriate vehicle.

The bookstore opened in June 1974. For the first year and a half we operated as a collective and then in February 1976 we incorporated as a non-profit business, which the store still remains. We (Marie Prins and Patti Kirk) have run the store as co-managers since 1976. For a portion of time Joy Wilson and Karen Prins were also co-managers. As the store grew and could afford it, various women were hired to help us. Just prior to the fire the store employed five full-time women and one part-time woman. Since the fire we have had a complete staff change-over. Ellea Wright (full-time), Lisa Freedman and Wendy Wortsman (both part-time) are now working for us.

As most of you know, we are temporarily located at 296 Brunswick. We have been restocking to the best of our ability and have new books arriving every day.

Our permanent home will be at 73 Harbord St. (right at Spadina). Due to some problems in obtaining the location and then the building permit, we will not be moving until April 1984. We have arranged for a five year lease with the owner and the building is undergoing major renovations. We will have the whole house, which includes a ground floor for selling space and a second floor which will house our offices/work spaces and a lounge/bulletin board area for our customers. We are planning to have a ramp by the fall to make the store accessible to wheelchairs. Although the owner is absorbing many of the renovation costs (naturally, this will be reflected in our rent), it is our responsibility to pay for things like flooring, lighting, shelving, security, etc. This is how we intend to spend the donation money we have received.

Many of you were here during the Christmas/Chanukah season which helped us cover some of our expenses. This also gave us the moral support we need to keep on. Our operating insurance terminated in mid-December. At the moment business is slow and we are finding this somewhat discouraging. We know that we are difficult to locate and we are often out of stock on books and records due to cash flow difficulties and space and work limitations. (We would appreciate input on new and old titles you don't see on our shelves). We are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel though, thanks to the generous and continuing support from the women's community. There's no way we could have done it without you.

Patti Kirk
Marie Prins
Toronto Womens' Bookstore

Night Mares

Broadside:

We are the Night Mares.

The actions we did on the eve of Remembrance Day were just the beginning for us. (Ed. note: The Nightmares sprayed glue in the locks of five Ottawa businesses which perpetuate violence against women, on November 10, 1983.)

For centuries, since the dawn of patriarchy, womyn have found and created ways to oppose what men have done to us, are doing to us, and are now planning to do to us in the future. Night Mares is proud to be part of this heritage, this herstory.

The patriarchy has distorted and poisoned all that was once powerfully positive in our lives - the night, our blood, our bodies, our planet. We, the Night Mares, join with womyn all over the world in resisting the patriarchy, and reclaiming that which was once ours.

This act of reclaiming is for them an old-fashioned patriarchal night-mare. For us, it is a dream coming true.

Until next time, with love and sisterhood.

The Night Mares
Ottawa

Commodore Boycott

Broadside:

Your readers have probably read about the sexual harassment of immigrant women workers at Commodore Business Machines Ltd. in Toronto. Six Latin American immigrant women who worked at the company's Warden Ave. plant under foreman Rafael DeFilippis in 1978 and 1979 accused him of sexual harassment and were awarded a total of \$21,800 in damages, lost wages and interest in a precedent-setting decision by an Ontario Human Rights Commission inquiry in October.

Many of us celebrated this decision as a victory for all women workers, as indeed it was. But we would like to ask you to look at the situation in more detail.

First of all, it is important to remember that Commodore is appealing the decision in Divisional Court, which means that there is a "stay on the order." The women haven't received their money and DeFilippis has not only *not* been reprimanded, but since the whole thing began he has been promoted to assistant manager of the Pharmacy Ave. plant. Since his promotion, four more complaints have been received and are under in-

Broadside

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

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EDITORIAL

Hit and Miss: Speech from the Throne

1984 is with us; can a federal general election be far behind? The Speech from the Throne, at the opening of the Second Session of the 32nd Parliament of Canada on December 7, 1983, provides a good indication of what the Liberal government plans to offer to us voters.

What have the Feds promised specifically to Canadian women? Here are some items of interest, scattered throughout the Speech, which refer to women directly, or which affect women disproportionately:

- "...Changes will be introduced to the Canada Labour Code to improve occupational safety and health, to establish labour standards relating to sexual harassment, and to upgrade standards on parental leave. . . ."
- "...Consultations on pension rights and fringe benefits for the part-time work force will be undertaken with provincial governments, labour and business."
- "The Government is committed to improving the adequacy of our retirement income system at the earliest possible date and in a manner that will not impede economic recovery. . . . Reforms to be pursued under the Pension Benefits Standards Act will include improvements in coverage, vesting, portability, survivor benefits, benefit protection and

mandatory splitting of pension credits.

- Hard core pornography, which often emphasizes violence and degradation of women, has no place in Canadian society. The Government will act immediately to introduce amendments to the Criminal Code on pornography. It will also consider further legislation. . . on pornography and prostitution; and sexual offences against children.

- . . . You will be asked to consider a new Divorce Act to make this painful legal process more equitable and less complex. Work will continue with provincial governments to strengthen procedures for enforcement of maintenance and custody orders.

- More funding will be provided for women's voluntary organizations and for research on women's issues. The recommendations of the Federal-Provincial Task Force on Family Violence will be pursued by continuing to allocate social housing units to provide shelters for victims of such violence. The subject of day care has been placed on the agenda of a federal-provincial meeting of ministers responsible for the status of women to be held in the new year. A progress report on the decade since the United Nations International Women's Year will be prepared.

- . . . The Government will introduce a bill to remove the longstanding grievance of discrimi-

nation against Indian women under the Indian Act. . . ."

Most of this is not new; much is vague and hedged with qualifications ("consultations," "with provincial governments," "in a manner that will not impede economic recovery," "placed on the agenda," "report will be prepared," etc.). Perhaps vagueness is in the nature of a Speech from the Throne, but too much has been left out altogether. If you missed any references to abortion, equal pay, affirmative action - just to list a few areas of vital concern to women - well, you didn't miss anything. They were not mentioned. The government stands pat on these issues.

This package is plainly not good enough, but at least we know what the Liberal Party of Canada has to say to women in this election year.

What do the Progressive Conservatives, as candidates for power, have to offer or to promise us? They haven't told us and probably don't intend to. We should be asking. And asking.

There will be a general election in 1984. (Note: Full text of the Speech from the Throne is available free of charge, from Canada Supply and Services - look in the back of your telephone book for the address.)

Artists!

Broadside is looking for submissions from graphic artists: illustrations of all types and sizes (black and white) on general topics of interest to women. Send material to *Broadside*, PO Box 494, Stn. P, Toronto, M5S 2T1. Or call the office: 598-3513 (afternoons).

vestigation by the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Secondly, the women involved have suffered far more than any monetary award can repay. One of them spoke to a women's group at the Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples about what it feels like to receive obscene phone calls and be pointed out in the street and laughed at. Some of the women were fired and one's marriage broke up in the process.

The fact that Eneyda Mejia can say that in spite of everything, it was worth it because it might encourage other immigrant women to come forward, testifies to the strength and courage of these women. Unfortunately, they have received little support from those of us who should be the most understanding and appreciative of what they have gone through. Many of us read about the case for the first time when the inquiry began last summer. But we did nothing, thinking that other women would surely be supporting them. However, that was not the case - but it is not too late to help them out and show them how much we care about what they have done.

We would like to suggest four areas of action:

- 1) Support the women: call and talk to them; invite them to your group - to talk about the case or just to share in your activities; think about what support you would like to receive from other women if you were in their situation.
- 2) Protest Commodore's continued violation of human rights: write letters to the editors of newspapers; write letters to the president of Commodore.
- 3) Inform others about this situation: write about it in your newsletter or bulletin; talk about it whenever you have the opportunity.
- 4) Boycott all Commodore products: the Business and Professional Women's Club of Ontario has called for a boycott of Commodore business machines to protest the com-

pany's decision to appeal the decision of the inquiry; section 25 of the Ontario Human Rights Code prevents the provincial government from having any contracts with a company found by a board of inquiry to have infringed on human rights; Commodore makes a well-known and wide range of business equipment and machines, including computers; No more Commodore!

Let's show Commodore that the women of this province will not let them get away with continued sexual harassment of their women workers.

Let's show the women involved in the case that we support them, that we applaud their courage, that we care about their suffering.

Monica Riutort
Gini Dickie
Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples
Toronto

Lesbians and Men

Broadside:

I had looked forward to the December issue of *Broadside* with great anticipation and was sadly disappointed when it arrived.

I expected some written response to my article ("Lesbians Who Sleep with Men"). I had hoped that it would serve as a catalyst for further dialogue. Many women approached me at various public events and thanked me for writing. Others pointed out related areas of discussion: lesbian prostitution, lesbians who sleep with men to have children, and bisexuality. I was saddened to realize that nothing has yet appeared regarding these issues.

Nevertheless, I wish to thank all the women who supported me while I wrote the article and all those lesbians who for a few moments shared with me a secret part of their lives. It

meant a lot.

Lilith Finkler
Toronto

Wymyn's Liberation

Broadside:

Your letter (November 1983) concerning the scheduling of the first event of "Sisters Step-in Out" on Yom Kippur brought back memories of discussions on the subject of womyn and "official" religious or political events.

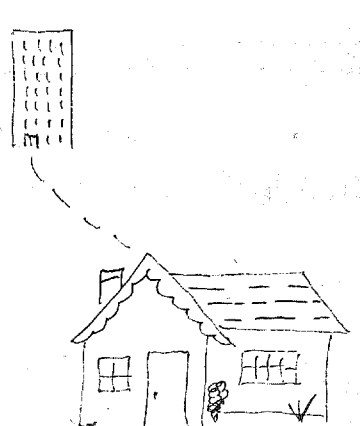
Here are my thoughts on the subject. I have long given up identifying myself as anyone or anything else than a womyn. Sometimes I throw in 'feminist' because if there is a political, philosophical and spiritual collective I should adhere to, it is *the* only one. I also think that womyn ought to reconsider their thoughts on all the traditional and conventional mainstream groups they belong to, whether religious, political or professional, because we tend to be put at their service. (We occupy subservient, underpaid and token positions).

If we as womyn really want to win our struggle, we must achieve solidarity first. We are re-building the world, let's not do it on rotten foundations.

I feel that except "feminist," any other label, whether spiritual, philosophical or political, is oppressive and extremely detrimental to our solidarity and worse, to our identity. It is a fact and my firm belief that men invented most of the existing cults and ideological parties to segregate, divide and conquer all human beings, and especially womyn.

I love you all, although sometimes you make it difficult.

Dana Zwonok
Montréal



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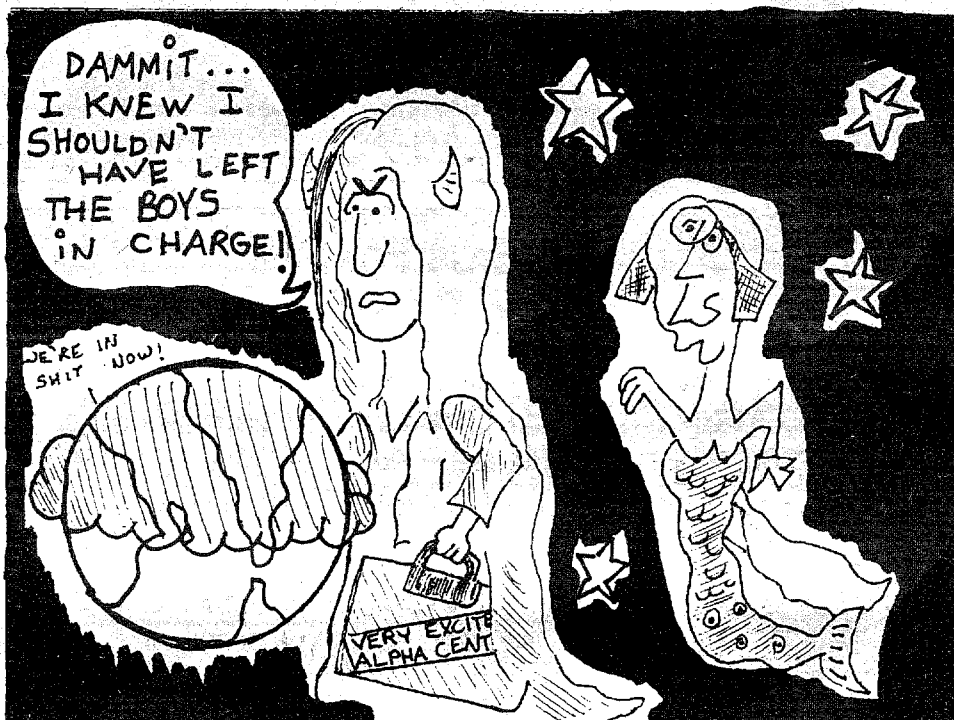
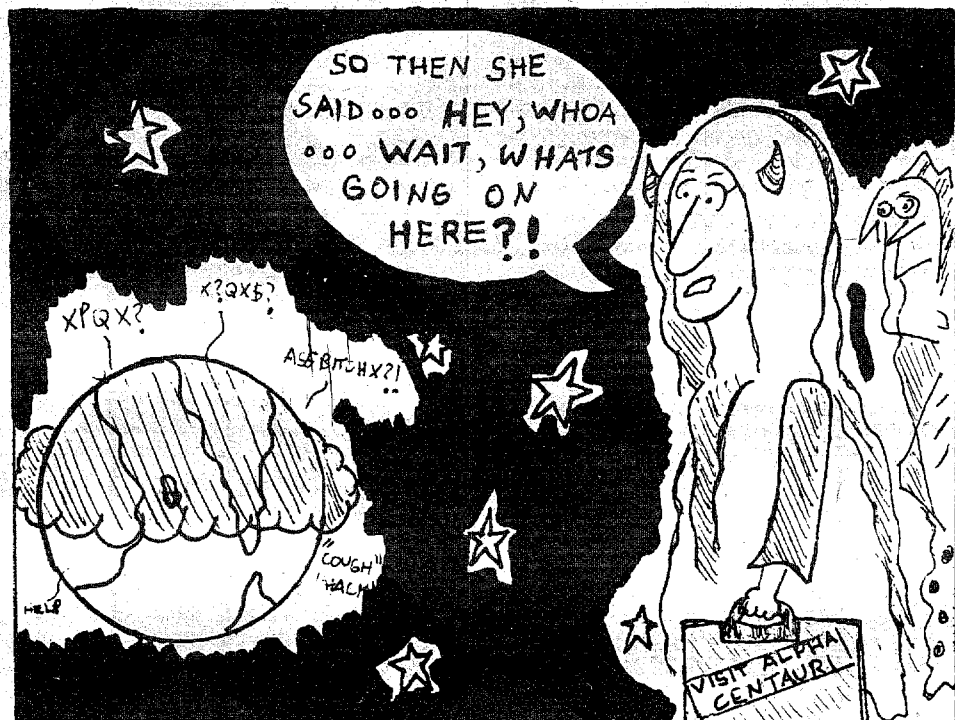
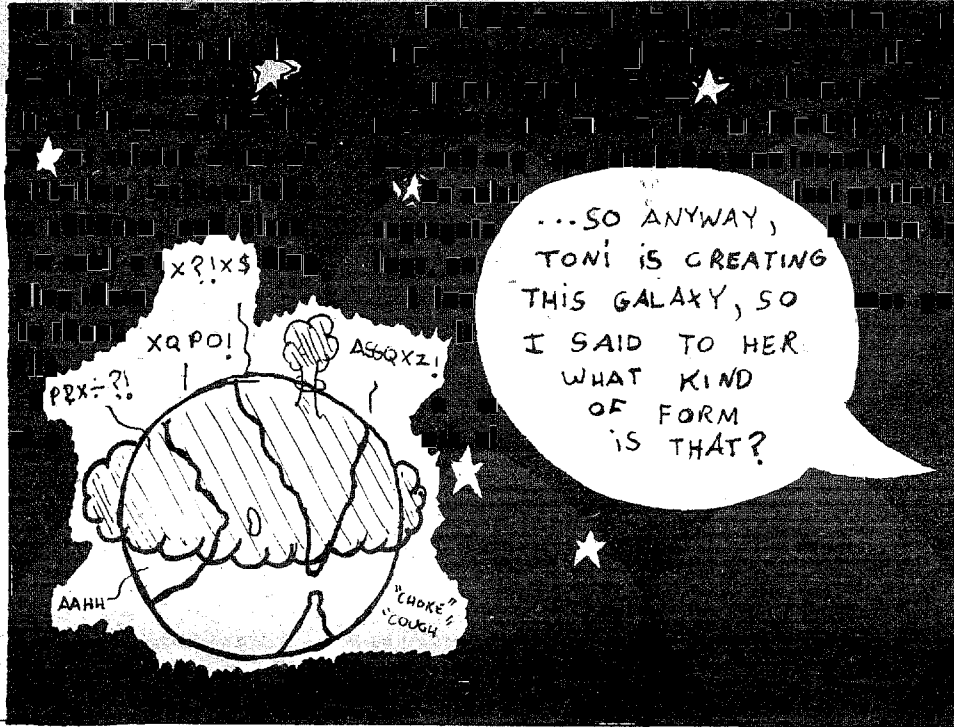
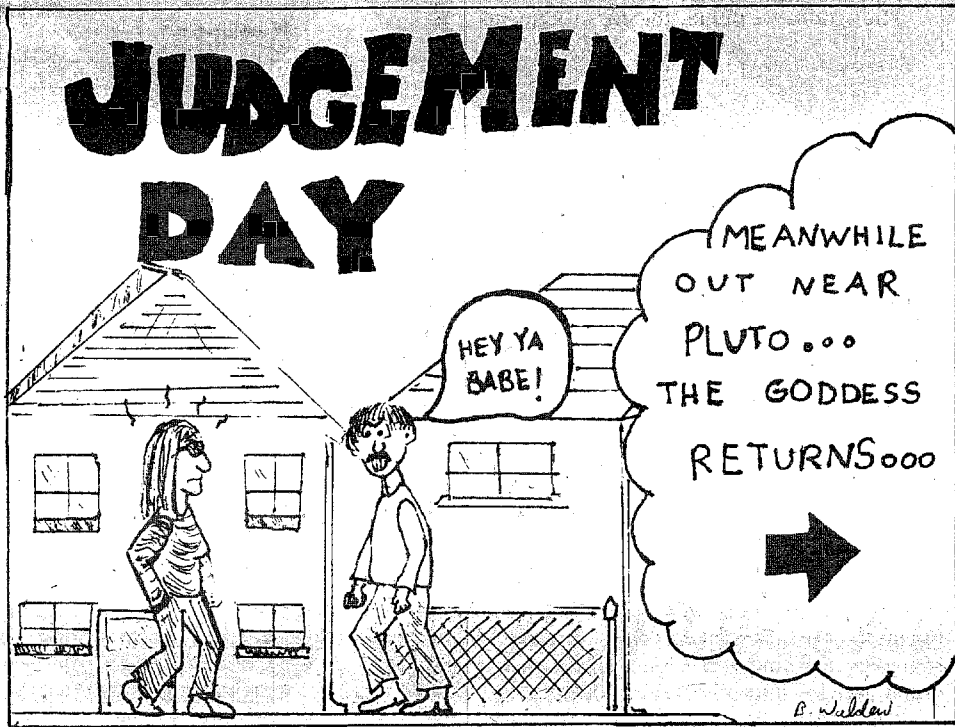
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CONTINUED NEXT MONTH

No Sporting Chance



by Helen Lenskyj

The Ontario Human Rights Code guarantees equal treatment with respect to goods, services and facilities, regardless of sex. Right? Wrong!

In 1981, when the code was revised, a specific exemption (Section 19(2)) was made with respect to membership in athletic organizations. Participation in athletic activities and access to the services and facilities of recreational clubs. This had the effect of giving *carte blanche* to the male-dominated sporting establishment to continue the practice of excluding girls and women from sporting activities to which they were demanding access. When the exemption took effect in 1982, there were more than twenty unresolved cases of sex discrimination in sport filed with the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

In the face of this embarrassment, the Ontario Ministry of Labour set up a task force in April, 1982, headed by Toronto lawyer and former Argo player John Sopinka, to investigate whether the rules and policies of government and other agencies determining partici-

pation in sport are fair in terms of according both sexes equal treatment. Supporters of women's sport hoped that the task force would recommend the repeal of section 19(2), or, alternatively, that it would propose adequate funding for the development of separate-but-equal programs for girls and women. When Volume I of the report, entitled *Can I Play*, was released last November, reaction ranged from disappointment to outrage. This volume, reporting on the first phase of the inquiry, deals with amateur athletics in the community, a level of activity in which gentle government persuasion — for example, withholding financial assistance to sports governing bodies and municipalities which discriminate against females — would prove particularly effective. Sopinka, however, opted for the "Strasbourg goose" argument: You can't stuff sexual equality down the throats of reluctant coaches. After all, these dedicated folks, mostly men, volunteer their time and energy to coach boys teams and many would quit if forced to include girls. This blackmail tactic, usually accompanied by emotional outbursts on the magic of male bonding in the

locker room, has worked in the past, and Sopinka's report virtually ensures that it will continue to work. In fact, it is difficult not to dismiss *Can I Play* as an endorsement of the status quo when one reads statements like the following: *Separation of competition (by sex) is deeply rooted in the psyche of our society (p. 90).*

Perhaps the same may be said for other forms of sexism, or racism, or ageism, but it does not follow that "deeply rooted" wrongs cannot be righted. Integrated competition is one of several possible solutions to the problem of discrimination against female athletes; Sopinka's appeal to some undefined social "psyche" to dismiss integration is not an adequate substitute for reasoned discussion of all the options. *Integration would require that girls be admitted to boys teams and vice-versa... therefore complete integration would have to be written down to integration one-way only (p. 94).* Or, more succinctly, an affirmative action program would need to be established, permitting talented female athletes to join male teams in order to have equal access to the level of competition for which they are qualified. Male players, however, would not be admitted to female teams.

This arrangement would improve the situation for the top female players, while ensuring that male players did not swamp the female team. Since most team sports, as presently constituted, emphasize speed, strength and endurance, top male players (after puberty) have an advantage over top female players. Therefore, a temporary solution which permits one-way movement, while the gap between the sexes persists, seems a fair one. Moreover, this kind of rule is not unknown in sport: weight categories which operate in combat sports, for example, permit movement up to a higher level (of weight/difficulty) but do not allow movement down. No, says Sopinka. "Equality in only one direction is a concept that is foreign to human rights legislation (p. 95)." The fact that affirmative action programs operate elsewhere in the community is ignored. *(In integrated teams) forms of physical contact offend against*

public decency. I mention rugby as an example where contact with the genital area is inevitable in some of the sport manoeuvres (pp. 92-3).

It is significant, of course, that this genital contact is desexualized when players are male, but becomes charged with sexual overtones when women and men, or women and women, compete together. Curiously, body contact between female mud wrestlers seems to titillate, rather than offend, male spectators (and there is no doubt that TV exercise shows perform the same function.) In view of this trend, it could be argued that body contact (male/female and female/female) in the sport context might have a positive outcome: contact, whether it be touching or tackling, need not have sexual connotations, and men's power to distort it in this way limits women's access to the full range of sporting activities.

A unique problem of the female athlete relates to breasts (from Appendix 6, on female physiology). When the day comes when a female physiologist writes, "A unique problem of the male athlete relates to the penis," we will know that the revolution is at hand. A problem-oriented approach to sports gynecology currently pervades both medical and popular literature. And Sopinka's report is no exception. The concept of "female biology" is used to justify various limitations to be applied, regardless of ability, to all female athletes. As Harvard scientist, Dr. Ruth Hubbard argued so convincingly in the 1983 Bronowski Memorial Lecture at the University of Toronto, human biology cannot be explained solely in terms of gender: social practices, environment, diet, etc. are more, or as likely to be, responsible for differences between individuals, across the sexes and across cultures. On the breast issue, for example, it is both inaccurate and ludicrous to suggest that the alleged problem is experienced in the same way by the pre-pubescent gymnast, the 100 lb marathoner and the 150 lb soccer player, simply because they are all females.

Despite the glaring inadequacies of *Can I Play*, some of its recommendations, if implemented, might improve the situation for girls and women in sport. Sopinka proposed an amendment to section 19(2) of the Human Rights Code providing for the appointment of an equality coordinator, whose job it would be to "exercise a broad discrimination in determining whether equality was denied" to an athlete. The "ultimate sanction" of the equality coordinator in relation to sport governing bodies would be the withholding of public funds. The proposed amendment also sets out the steps available to these organizations if charged with denying equality of opportunity to either sex. Failure to provide either integrated or separate but "comparable" teams in the same or "equivalent" sports, equal training opportunities and equal allocation of public funds or facilities, and failure to include members (an unspecified number) of one sex on the board of directors of an organization, all constitute denial of equality of opportunity. Among the responsibilities of the equality coordinator would be the tasks of determining what is "a comparable level of competition" and an "equivalent sport."

It appears likely, however, that the Ontario ministers concerned, Reuben Baetz of Tourism and Recreation and Russell Ramsay, Minister of Labour, will not implement this recommendation without public pressure. Therefore, it is important to make your views known by writing to them, at Queen's Park, urging that they establish the equality coordinator's position and take steps to repeal the discriminatory section of the Human Rights Code. ●

Helen Lenskyj is currently writing a book on women and sport.



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LUGEM & LEEVUM

The Southern Connection

by Amanda Hale

In July 1983 the second Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Conference took place in Lima, Peru. Monica Riutort, who works at the Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples in Toronto, attended the conference as the only representative from Canada.

Originally from Chile, Monica has lived in Canada for ten years and came to feminist consciousness here. She learned of the conference by chance and was able to make the trip to Peru with funds provided by Education Wife Assault, the United Church Women's Group, and private donors. Since moving to Canada, Monica has returned to Chile on several occasions to visit family, but since the trips were brief and family-oriented, they did not provide her with an insight into social and political developments. She was surprised to learn at the conference of the strong and growing feminist network in Latin American and Caribbean countries. "The movement has become international," she says, "and we don't even realize it. The survival of the feminist movement depends on international links."

The first Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Conference took place in July 1981 in Bogota, Colombia. It was organized by the group "La Conjura" from Venezuela but, since circumstances made it impossible to hold the conference there, Colombia took over as organizer and host. "That initial

"The conference was organized by a collective of Peruvian women formed by representatives from different feminist groups including the Flora Tristan group, the Manuela Ramos group and Mujeres in Lucha. Peru has a particularly strong women's movement, with many women's organizations. The conference broke down into eighteen workshops focused on such themes as health, middle age, violence, sexuality, domestic work, peasant women, methodology, the church, women in exile, lesbianism, women in literature, the family, and daily life.

There were continuous showings of slides, movies and videos made by different women's groups concerning their work and women's theatre. Some of the presentations were: "Vida de Angel" by the Colectivo Cine Mujer, Mexico; "Todas Ibamos a Ser Reina," Cine Mujer, Circulo de la Mujer, Chile; "Sobre Violacion," Alcira Sanchez, Mexico; "Miss Universo," Grupo Chasqui, Peru; "Y su mama, que hace?" Colombia. Every night the Circulo de la Mujer de Chile was in charge of different theatre presentations. And there were recreational activities such as dances and sing-alongs.

This second Latin American conference took place in the context of a deep national and international crisis. The

Feminism is indeed a primary issue in that the entire decadent structure of western society is built upon a bedrock of misogyny, from which spring poverty, war, and exploitation. Many women have come to realize this while working with leftist political organizations. Revolutionary movements have been useful in providing a consciousness-raising environment for women. Many of the women who sparked the US feminist movement in the 60's came from a background of leftist political activism. And now, out of the political turmoil of Latin America, a strong feminist consciousness has risen, like good bread. But revolutions, peace movements, spiritualist movements, and all other forces working for change within the patriarchy and claiming to be of prime importance, can in fact be great deflectors of female energy. Although Monica's report from the Lima conference is encouraging, it is obvious that the nationalist spirit is still deflecting a lot of the energy that should be flowing into the wider channel of international feminism.

For instance, the absence of Nicaraguan representatives at Lima last summer may be somewhat understandable in terms of the crisis in Nicaragua and the threat of American invasion. However, Nicaraguan women were urged to attend and money was sent from Peru specifically for this purpose. Unfortunately, no one from Nicaragua turned up in Lima, although representatives from Nicaraguan women's organizations did attend a Solidarity

travel was wholly or partly financed by political groups or private donors. "It was an enriching experience to find myself together with so many women who are working with minimal resources," Monica said. "Despite the financial handicap, progress is being made. For example, houses for rape victims have been opened in Colombia and in Mexico. The Colombian Rape Crisis Centre is funded by the Ford Foundation, but the Mexican Centre is run entirely by volunteers. Brazil also has a women's help centre with a minimum of financing."

Monica participated in several workshops at the conference. She was particularly interested in the workshop on Women and Violence since her work at the Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples focusses on the issue of domestic violence. "The Centre has been a pioneer in the development of community and educational work around domestic violence in Toronto," she says. "Our work has been used as a model in other communities and we have been consulted extensively by other community organizations." Attending the workshop on violence were women from Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, the United States, and Switzerland. The discussion centred on the setting up of more rape crisis centres and women's shelters. But first the law must be changed because, in some places, if a woman leaves her house she automatically loses all her rights, including custody of her children. Obviously there is little point in setting up shelters until this aspect of the law is reformed.

Monica referred to a conference on Women Against Violence held in Amsterdam in 1982, at which a network was formed, extending to Latin America. Monica is representative for Canada in the network. It is a system similar to Amnesty International whereby letters are mailed to representatives of all the countries involved, informing them of a specific case which requires their support. Each representative contacts all the people in her particular national network and encourages them to write letters and bring pressure to bear on the authorities in the case involved. Monica hopes to use this network regarding the recent Ottawa rape case in which the victim was imprisoned for a week while the two accused rapists were discharged. Monica's current priority, however, is eliciting support for the victims of sexual harassment in the Commodore sexual harassment case, in addition to her full-time work at the Centre, and the care of two young daughters.

Another workshop Monica attended was on Women in Exile. Most of the Latin American women in exile are political refugees from Chile. Or, more often, it is the husbands who are politically involved, and the wives follow them into exile. Many have been exiled ten years and are now allowed to return if they wish. But, it is difficult to go back after ten years of living in a North American culture and undergoing all the changes that involves. A new consciousness develops and it is difficult to readjust. Most families choose to remain in Canada or the United States. There was discussion during the workshop about the tremendous pressure exerted on women in exile by husbands relying on them totally for emotional support. This pressure, in addition to the difficulties of dealing with a new language, an alien culture, lack of work, insufficient funds, and poor accommodation, often leads to marriage breakdown.

Attendance at the lesbian workshop was very high, not because all the women were lesbians but, according to Monica, because this was the first opportunity these women had to discuss the issue of lesbianism. Consequently there was a great deal of testimony from women talking publicly for the first time about their personal experience as lesbians. They received strong support from the heterosexual women. Again, with the sexuality workshop, there was powerful and important communication because it was the first time many of the women had spoken publicly about their sexuality. Subjects discussed at a workshop on aging were the myths concerning loss of beauty and sex appeal, and the fact that many women would welcome the aging process if it were accompanied by reverence for their wisdom and knowledge. A desire was expressed to do away with the negative image imposed by mother-in-law jokes and witch tales. And of course, the difficulties encountered during menopause were discussed.

When asked about the condition of the feminist movement in Caribbean countries, Monica singled out the Dominican Republic

CONTINUED PAGE 14



Monica Riutort

Women and Sexuality workshop *al fresco* at Lima, Peru.

meeting provided the possibility for Latin American and Caribbean women to be together for the first time," Monica said, "to talk about what was happening in their lives and countries, to get to know each other and reaffirm the great struggle they were undertaking, the search for identity, not only as women, but also as free nations." The conference is now established as a bi-annual event, and the next one will take place in Brazil in 1985. Monica Riutort hopes to organize a group of women to represent Canada at that time, if sufficient funds can be raised to fly them to Brazil.

Participants in last summer's conference included women from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Bolivia, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico, and from Austria, Canada, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, the United States, and Italy. The response was overwhelming. Two hundred women were expected; seven hundred and fifty attended. The facilities originally intended for housing the participants were washed away by the flooding of a river, and seven hundred and fifty women crowded into an alternative space intended for two hundred and fifty. The atmosphere was good, Monica says. She met many strong and committed women. They worked for a week from nine in the morning until nine in the evening, attending workshops. The following is an excerpt from notes made by Monica Riutort on her return:

economies of the Latin American and Caribbean countries are going through one of the most difficult periods of their history and peace in the area is precarious. The Central American situation was a constant preoccupation and a resolution was sent to the Nicaraguan people expressing solidarity and denouncing American intervention, especially the sending of the American fleet into Nicaraguan waters. While declaring ourselves anti-patriarchal and anti-capitalist, Latin American and Caribbean feminists want full democracy and a change in political, economic and social structures which oppress our individuality, our personal relations and our domestic and daily lives.

The women were searching for a profoundly Latin American and Caribbean identity but realized that this was linked to the viability and future of the international feminist movement. During discussion of feminist issues we were conscious of other urgent issues facing the continent: poverty, peace, dictatorships, and the exploitation by multinational companies. However, there was a consensus that feminist issues were not secondary ones and that feminism must propose a broader political vision aimed at fundamentally destroying the power of patriarchal society."

Conference in Ecuador, held at the same time as the Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Conference.

It all comes down to a question of priorities. We attend first to what hurts most, but women have been hurting so long that pain is often accepted as a dull given. Consciousness-raising enlivens the pain, which is why many women resist it and fail to give feminism priority over the safer, less personal issues.

The separations between feminism, patriarchal politics and economics are breaking down, Monica Riutort says, and the women of Latin America and the Caribbean are gaining a broader perspective. In the process it becomes apparent that it is not a question of one cause being worthier than another, or warranting higher priority. Everything is linked. The social fabric is a multi-threaded cloth.

The issue of economic dependence often requires that women's groups align themselves with political parties, and this can of course necessitate compromise to some degree. For instance, many women's organizations, dependent on political parties for funding and support, must define themselves as women's organizations rather than as feminist. In Chile, Monica says, the only women's organization which defines itself as feminist is Circulo de Estudios de la Mujer. The rest are linked with political parties in relationships of financial dependence.

Many of the women attending the conference were able to do so only because their

MOVEMENT MATTERS

The following article is an editorial reprinted from the Toronto International Women's Day Committee Newsletter. It was written in December, after the first meeting of the March 8 Coalition. Its purpose was to clarify the IWDC's political motivation for putting forward a proposal calling for specific themes and demands.

At the second meeting of the Coalition on January 4, 1984, Action Daycare presented an updated version of their original proposal, one that drew on the discussions that had taken place among interested women throughout December.

This new proposal (see accompanying article), and the discussions in the meeting on January 4, raised several important and interesting political questions about the place of International Women's Day within an overall strategy of building a women's movement, and what that might mean for our focus on the day.

The editorial reprinted here does not explicitly address these questions and issues. The discussion that took place on January 4 marks a critical beginning in a process of moving forward to build a larger and stronger women's movement in Toronto. We will be discussing these issues within IWDC, and look forward to further political discussion and strategizing within the Toronto women's movement as a whole. - The Newsletter Committee.



For some time now, International Women's Day has been organized around themes and demands, and although this practice evolved from a conscious political perspective, after a while it became a habit. So, while we don't want to reinvent the wheel every year, as it were, we do need to rethink through what we are trying to achieve with IWD, and the best way to do it for each year.

The Action Daycare proposal has acted as a catalyst. By presenting the March 8 Coalition with a choice of focus, we are moved into a position where we must think clearly about our goals, objectives, and strategies - for IWD, and for the whole year.

For members of IWDC, this opportunity to rethink IWD has meant looking again at themes and demands as an organizing focus. Re-examining this practice has not, however, resulted in our choosing to do away with it. Instead, when we asked ourselves, why are we suggesting these themes and demands, and what do we want for the celebration of IWD, we found ourselves returning to themes and demands with renewed faith in their viability, and a sharpened political perspective. We want to share some of our thinking on this subject.

We began by looking at our overall goals and objectives. We are trying to build a mass movement for women's liberation that is linked to other progressive movements for social change, such as the trade union movement, solidarity movements, community movements, etc., since women are also workers, immigrants, and community members with overlapping concerns.

We see IWD as a key time in our overall strategy of building a movement. It's a time when women from various movements and constituencies come together, and work together to build a celebration of women's potential and history, putting our voices and strengths together to make our demands. Those demands come out of our struggles over the past year, and lead as well into the work of the year ahead. They are grounded in the reality of the women's movement, reflecting both our theory and our practice.

One of our objectives for International Women's Day is to bring out large numbers of women to the various events. In order to reach the thousands of people we want on the street on March 10, and to ensure participation in the public forums, events or whatever we hold, we have to be saying something that interests the women we want to reach. That means that International Women's Day has to be about something, other than a vaguely defined demand for women's rights/liberation, which may not have great meaning for women who do not already consider themselves feminists. The success of the March 8 Coalition in

IWD - '84 Reaction to Action

On these pages are two articles, about organizing for this year's International Women's Day, one by the International Women's Day Committee, and one from Action Daycare. I want to comment on both.

The International Women's Day Committee has provided us with a lucid rationale for continuing to organize International Women's Day in Toronto around themes, and for staying with the well-tryed structure of events. Obviously these arguments were persuasive to the women at the January 4 Coalition meeting. Sixty of the 100 or so women present agreed to work on IWD 1984 according to the Committee's proposal. Thus, IWD in 1984 promises to be not unlike that of 1983 in structure, organization and content (without, however, some of the errors of political judgement which marred last year's events.) The March 8 Coalition can proceed with the knowledge that it has the support of the great majority of feminist activists and the women's community generally.

Another proposal, from Action Day Care, takes us further afield. It calls for a radical reorientation of our efforts, from once-a-year-women-in-the-streets to a year-round Toronto Women's Liberation Movement organization.

Over the years, many of us have wanted to see (again) in Toronto an organization with the liberation of women, in its broadest sense, as its sole focus. Not as opposed to, or instead of, single-issue groups (like abortion, day care, equal pay, etc.) or feminist involvement in other movements (union, peace, solidarity, gay, anti-nuke, etc.). These have their place. A single-issue approach is often strategically the most effective, and generally, it has served us well. Many women sincerely support other movements and actively participate in struggles in which women's liberation is *not* a priority. That being said, there can be little doubt that what we need is a structure in which feminism is a priority rather than an add-on, and where we can integrate all the single-issue work.

Why, then, don't we currently have such an organization in Toronto? Women new to the movement or to the Toronto scene ask this

question, sometimes with impatience. The short answer is: it's damned hard to get any permanent, large organization functioning effectively. That's not to say we should not try, but let's understand that the problems are generic and not a function of our shortcomings. There are reasons why we have worked for years in small collectives and ad hoc groups.

I would suggest three fundamental reasons why it's hard to get such an organization off the ground and keep it operating effectively.

One: Feminism is not a secular religion like some of the other isms. We have no heavy-duty authorities to tell us what to do and how to do it; we are deeply suspicious of hierarchies; we like to work in small, intimate and responsive groups; each of us is loath to submerge her hard-won independence of thought and action in a common effort of long duration (unless it fulfills most of her expectations, which it won't). In other words, feminists come in so great a variety of stripes, colours, shapes and sizes, contrary to prevalent myth fostered by our enemies, that it is difficult to get any agreement in large, permanent groups. A general 'basis of unity' document will take some doing. And that's not the same as ongoing consensus on structure and strategy.

Two: Attempts to get an umbrella Women's Movement organization going are always subject to sabotage. This is not paranoia, believe me. Over the years, we have experienced both overt and covert attempts by various left-wing groups and so-called progressive movements to prevent women forming wide-ranging organizations of our own. This is not surprising. Each of those groups or movements is struggling for a constituency, and especially for the work and commitment of women. Of the methods used to sabotage us, the most effective over the years has been the ploy of priority or precedence as in: peace, anti-imperialism, anti-nuke, gay rights, environment are more important, more urgent, more feminist and so on). Women, prone to guilt, and used to thinking of others rather than ourselves, fall for this stuff like nine-

pins. The left groups have used more subtle, internal methods. A favourite is splitting women into categories and setting them against each other. Thus some women are more worthy, more oppressed, more radical, more political than others. This can work like cancer to destroy unity and trust. That's just a sample of what can happen. So let's be warned.

Three: The other issue I want to mention is structural. (Don't go away. This is serious. An attempt at forming an Ontario Federation of Women, on the BC Federation of Women model, floundered on this issue.) Should the organization be a federation or coalition of Toronto groups, as suggested in the Action Day Care proposal, or an individual, member-based organization? Each has its pros and cons; each fulfills some needs better than others; neither will answer all requirements. This seems a dull, 'institutional' problem which few want to tackle or bother to understand. Yet this is an absolutely vital question which must be decided *up front*. Quite simply, these are two totally different kinds of organizations, with power and responsibility distributed according to different patterns. Each must be set up differently; we must know before we start what it is we are trying to put together.

For those three reasons, among others, it is sure to be hard to get our act together. Should we be down-hearted? No: we don't have to reinvent the wheel; there is lots of experience among us. We know at least some of the problems and traps in our way. If we do it right, International Women's Day in 1985 might really see some New Directions.

Just a word about the women's building mentioned in the Action Day Care proposal: this should not be tied to or dependent upon the formation of any Toronto Women's Liberation organization. That's a big enough job in itself. However, there are a number of feminist groups presently paying rent in various parts of Toronto. If we were to get together, we could support a building with space to spare for all sorts of other activities. Perhaps it's another idea whose time has come.

- Eve Zaremba

Toronto over the years is due in part to the way the Coalition has succeeded in making IWD a concept and a day of relevance to a wider number of women every year.

So we need to say we are *for* something, and we need to be for something that matters to the women we want to reach. And the women we want to reach come from a variety of constituencies. So how do we choose our theme, how do we state it?

This year the IWDC proposal calls for three themes: Choice, Jobs, and Peace. These themes were not randomly chosen. They reflect the main issues women have been organizing around over the past year, yet are not limited to the demands of a specific campaign. For example, women have been very active in the struggle for free-standing abortion clinics. Our theme of Choice includes a demand for abortion clinics, but it also includes demands for an end to violence against women, and for the right of lesbians to make their own choices about how they will live. In this way, the themes/demands reflect the issues that women have identified as key issues for them this year, but within a slightly broader context that enables us to make the links between issues, and to raise consciousness. For example, a woman who supports the campaign for free-standing abortion clinics, and who wears a 'Choice' button, may never have really thought about the wider issue of choice in women's lives, about the way our choices are limited by violence that restricts our movements or by discrimination against women whose sexual choices do not mirror the heterosexual ideal. By having wider themes and specific demands, we can draw this woman's interest and support of IWD, and at the same time, through connecting her issue - abortion clinics - with lesbian rights and violence against women, we lay the groundwork for ongoing political development.

Women's economic independence is a basic goal of the women's movement, and until women can make choices about how we will live, knowing that we can support ourselves and our families, women's liberation will not

be able to advance much farther. We believe the current economic crisis has put more and more obstacles in the way of attaining this economic independence. The theme of Jobs comes out of this goal, and it reflects the activity of women who, over the past year, have been organizing against cutbacks and unemployment, and for workplace equality in various ways including affirmative action, job creation and equal pay for work of equal value. This theme is essential because of its outreach potential *and* because of its educational potential. By having a theme, and demands, focused on workplace issues, we are able to do outreach among both organized and unorganized labour, and get people to events where their issues are placed in a wider political context that makes connections between workplace and discrimination and the lack of reproductive freedom, for example.

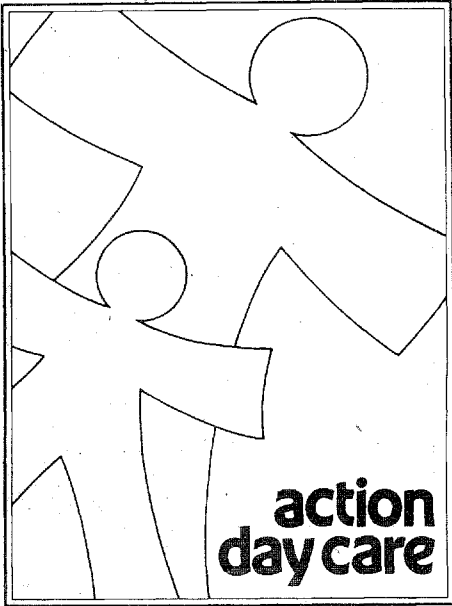
The theme of Peace stems from the importance of being responsive to issues raised in the community. Last year, the initial proposal was for only two themes. The third theme of Women's Right to Peace was added later when women active in the peace movement pointed out that peace was an issue of major importance to women in Toronto, and that it would be a serious mistake to ignore women's efforts in this area. Not only would we fail to mobilize a potentially large segment of the community, but we would miss out on the opportunity to discuss the issue of peace from a feminist perspective. These arguments were compelling, and the Coalition overwhelmingly voted to add Peace as a theme. The success of that decision became apparent in the added numbers at the march, and in much of the feedback. Over the past year, connections between the peace movement and the women's movement have continued, and we note with satisfaction the strengthened feminist voice within the peace movement. The peace movement is not only still going strong, but is presently one of the major movements in Toronto (and the world); we feel it is crucial to have a Peace theme this year. The two demands under the Peace theme - No to the



Cruise, and US out of Central America - highlight demands coming out of the various demonstrations and public meetings that have been held in Toronto over the past year. These two demands also represent two streams of protest that are sometimes carried on independently of each other. We see IWD as an opportunity to discuss the connections between imperialism and the nuclear arms race, just as we try to discuss the connections between abortion clinics and lesbian rights.

We want to achieve several things. One is to build a mass movement for women's liberation. A connected objective is to put forward a politic of feminism that will be taken up by other movements working on issues that also concern women - such as the trade union movement, immigrant groups, solidarity movements, etc. And we want to provide support for the many active, feminist women who work in these struggles. For all these reasons, we believe that the themes and demands we have proposed will enable us to build a spirited and powerful International Women's Day, with more women in the streets than ever before. We are confident that the Coalition will amend and polish the selected proposal so that it best reflects the issues that the women of Toronto have identified as the most important for 1984.

- The IWDC Newsletter Committee



International Women's Day has been a significant and successful event in Toronto over the past five years. It is an annual event which draws together approximately 5000 women to celebrate sisterhood and to protest against our oppression. IWD is now established, is recognized by large and small organizations alike, and supported by hundreds of individuals. It is an event which was conceptualized and developed by the progressive, radical and socialist elements of the women's liberation movement, all of whom shared a notion that some kind of major social change would be necessary in order to win women's liberation. Women who share this notion come together each year to plan and organize International Women's Day. We come from service groups and organizations, political groups, single-issue movements, the lesbian community and as individuals concerned about women's oppression and anxious to see change.

International Women's Day has been well organized and successful, especially in raising consciousness of women's issues and forming links between the women's movement and other progressive movements working for social change. But because we have found a way to successfully organize the day, it does not mean we can keep on organizing the same event with the same success forever.

Organizing a large demonstration once a year is not the same as organizing the women's movement. Getting people out on demonstrations has been successful - involving all those women in the women's movement has not been so successful. It is true that every year there's a surge of "fresh blood" into the various women's groups. The numbers are small however, and often women leave groups shortly after joining because it is difficult to participate if you have no previous political experience. There's no place to go to get involved in "the women's movement," as opposed to a "specific interest" group. It seems time to reflect on this, begin a discussion of why this is so, and how we can effectively bring more and more women into the struggle for our liberation.

It is time for a change. We cannot continue complacently with what we know will be successful, doing the same things we always do. We cannot keep marching with the same demands of peace, choice and jobs year after year, content to see a few hundred more bodies on the street.

Action Day Care, an organization which presented a new proposal to the March 8 Coalition this year, has been involved in IWD for much of its history here in Toronto. It

began with the conviction that we needed change. In the process of discussing why change was needed and in a specific discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the day, we realized that we wanted to see the women's movement herself undergo change. March 8 is more than just a day to have a demonstration; it is a symbolic, important day to the women's movement. Our proposal is as much about how we see the women's movement as it is about what we would like to see the day become.

We think there are four major areas in which the movement is weak.

First, we have no coherent platform to present to our supporters, our opponents, to the government or the media. It seems that everyone *but ourselves* defines our movement, defines feminism, says what we do or do not mean or want. We lack any organization or grouping that can attract members or support. We are fragmented into many organizations, groups and individuals, with no coordination except once a year for March 8. Not only is this confusing and alienating to many "new women," but there is no place for those of us involved in the movement's many issues to come together and discuss strategies or theories or action, as the women's movement.

Second, the women's movement does not have an organized presence in the political arena. As separate groupings we have a presence: the pro-choice movement, the equal pay movement, or the day care movement. But we have no voice as the women's movement. The labour movement has a strong united voice and presence; the peace movement certainly has a presence. What happens when an issue comes up that's a women's issue? We need a voice and a presence of our own.

Third, the same situation applies when we look at our impact and presence in the media. Rarely are the views of the women's movement presented in any kind of coherent or real way. Once again, we do have Rape Crisis Centres being contacted when an issue of violence or rape comes up, and the press knows where to find spokeswomen on abortion or daycare, but we are still small voices in the wilderness when it comes to the media.

And fourth, we have not won any *major* victory in the realm of women's rights, with the much-debated exception of our inclusion in the Constitution. We, as a movement, have not done enough work that will win us legislative change. Without the full force of the women's movement, we will not win the fight for abortion clinics, or equal pay. As long as we stay scattered, and fight for our many issues in isolation, we are not using our resources, skills, experience and energy in the most effective way.

We think that here in Toronto, we are at a turning point. We have developed a lot of strength over the past five years, and there are thousands of women (and men) who support our aims. It is time to find a way to draw on these strengths, rather than have them dissipate.

As part of the process of the history of the women's movement in this country, it has been both necessary and inevitable that we have dispersed and scattered the way we have. The struggle for women's liberation is rooted in the very experience of how women are forced to live. From control of our reproductive systems to control of our economic status, a myriad of issues form our concerns. In our trade union locals and our rape crisis centres we have come to understand our issues, and learned much about organizing, theorizing and carrying out action. It is now time to search for a way to bring all this

together again. We need to find a way to fight effectively for what we want; more importantly, to get what we want.

When we first began the process of putting together this proposal, we envisioned a women's building in this city that would bring us all together under one roof. The women's building was the way we made these feelings of a need for change concrete. In thinking this through, we realized that a building was not necessarily the starting point for this process of change, that we needed other steps on the way. The women's building is still very much a part of our dream, and we hope it will become reality in the future.

This year, March 8 should be the beginning of the process of coming together as the women's liberation movement. March 8 should be the springboard for the formation of an ongoing Toronto Women's Liberation Organization. This organization would be organized around a Charter of Rights as a basis of unity. We would use this Charter of Rights to set down our vision of what women's liberation would be, what it is we stand for. We would develop an organizational structure that would enable us to strategize around advancing the position of women. We would develop educational workshops for women who were interested in participating in the movement but who have no previous political experience. We would ensure that we had some kind of body that would respond to and be on top of every area of life that affects women, we would have a strong voice politically and in the media.

It is because we understand that this will not be either easy or immediate that we made this proposal for this year's March 8. We need to make a beginning, and we need to begin right now. If this is to be successful, we need to involve as many women, from as many parts of the women's movement, as possible. There's no better time than during March 8 Coalition meetings, when we are all together.

This article was written after the vote on proposals submitted to the March 8 Coalition, but before discussions of amendments

to the proposal (if this is confusing - you should have been at the meeting!). That vote was 60-30: 60 for the approach of themes and demands (IWDC proposal) and 30 for this Action Day Care proposal (see box). However, a follow-up conference or meeting became part of IWDC's proposal at the January 4 meeting.

From that meeting, and our discussions with many feminists, it has become clear that there is a strong enough base of agreement with the idea of some kind of ongoing women's liberation grouping, and that a strategy conference will happen. Even though the proposal itself has been defeated, its essence sparked discussion, enthusiasm and a willingness to begin organizing. It is clear that, somehow, March 8 won't be the same this year after all.

- Sue Colley and Wiesia Kolasinska

Action Day Care Proposal*

1. That on March 10, 1984, women will proclaim a Womens' Liberation Bill of Rights (or Manifesto of Liberation, or a Charter of Rights). An official proclamation of the Bill will be made after the demonstration on March 10. This will take the form of a gala event interspersing the Bill of Rights with music and drama, etc.

2. That a Strategy Conference be held on March 3 as an integral part of International Women's Day, 1984. This conference would involve Toronto feminists in a discussion about how to effectively organize around women's issues. The Bill of Rights will serve as a basis of unity and a reference point to guide the work of this new organization.

* Defeated 60-30, January 4, 1984 at March 8 Coalition meeting.

IWD-84

TORONTO-The Celebration of International Women's Day will be held on Saturday, March 10, 1984.

There will be a mixed dance sponsored by the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics on Saturday, March 3 and a women's only dance sponsored by Branching Out on Saturday,

March 10. Meetings of the March 8 Coalition are held every Wednesday at 7:30 pm at the Metro Library, Meeting Room D. For more information call 789-4541. All women are invited to help in the building of the International Women's Day Events.

Women's Archives

TORONTO-The Canadian Women's Movement Archives has grown out of, and is part of, the women's movement in Canada. It is ours. It belongs to all of us engaged in every struggle which gives us more autonomy in our lives.

It is an organized archival collection maintained through consultation with other archivists, and is accessible to all unless dona-

tions have specific conditions to be closed to the public.

Send in your material (clippings, photos, documents, posters, buttons) and use the resources.

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Catch 22

If a woman decides to use therapy to root out the enemy within, it is essential that she finds the right kind of therapist, one who understands from the inside the differentiation between women's and men's neuroses, i.e., a woman therapist. "People" too often means "men" and women definitely don't need therapy designed for men because they have not been conditioned as men. The conditioning of females and the implanting of the self-hater is part of a complex but clearly defined procedure.

Paula Caplan, in her workshop on "The Myth of Female Masochism," at the Women and Therapy conference, spoke of the Catch 22 of female behaviour. If you're passive and sweet and submissive, you're a masochist - you're sick. But if you're active and angry and aggressive, and therefore unfeminine, you're still sick. In fact one can try on the entire closet of female costumes but, what it amounts to in essence is, if you're female you're wrong, by definition. The only way out is to become a man; the kind of (fe)male imposter Phyllis Chesler spoke of in her keynote address, pursuing artificial goals produced by the media-hype of the patriarchy.

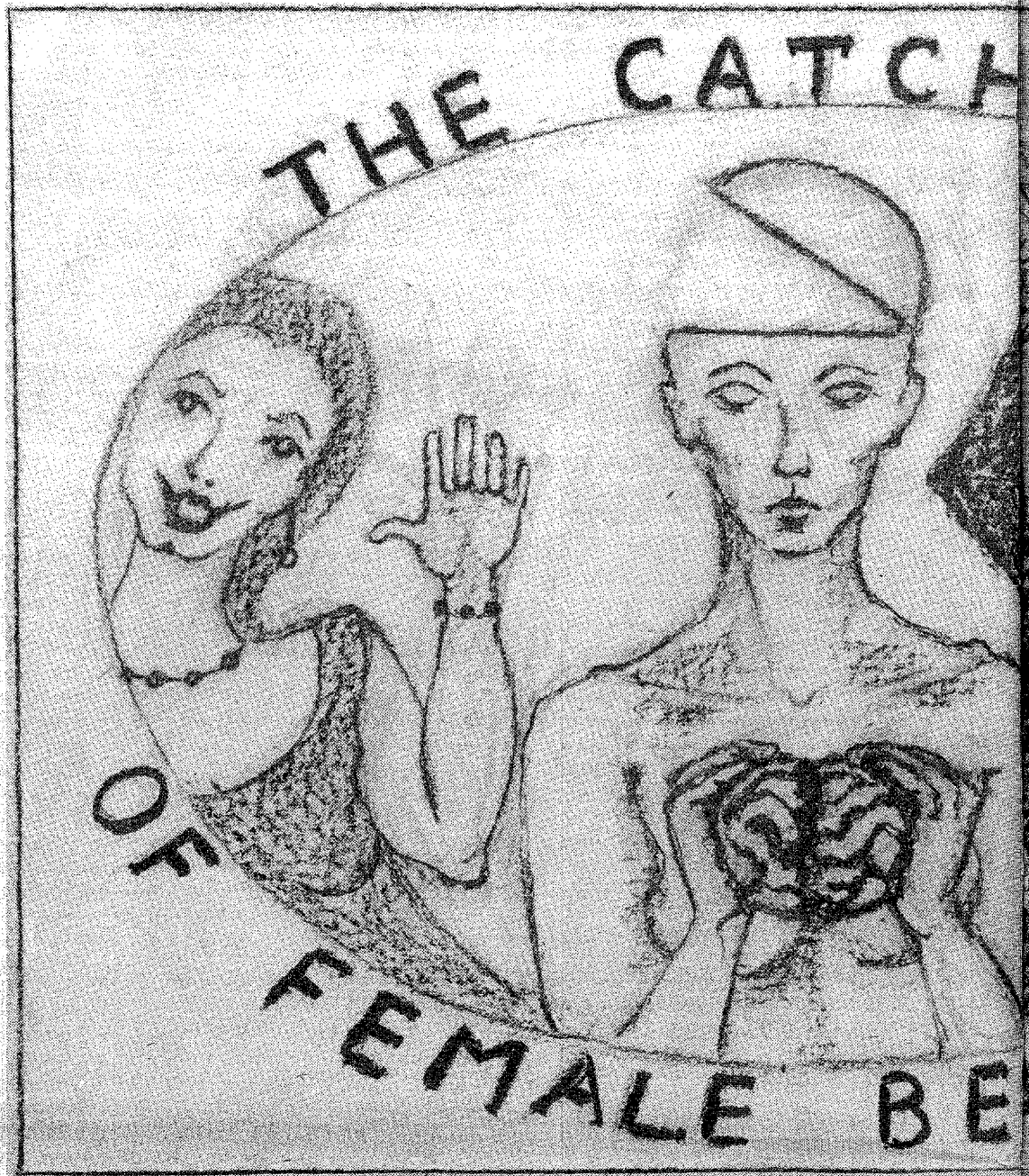
Caught in the Catch 22, most women react by becoming men and harboring the enemy in their collective bosom in the form of self-denial, self-hatred, woman-hatred. They enlist as foot soldiers in the war on women, which is very convenient for the boys who can then get on with running the world into the ground. We are accused of paranoia when we accuse the men of sabotage. It's not paranoia; it's the twisting of the knife within that scares us.

It is woman hatred which has defeated us, including the kind of woman hatred that comes from other women, and from the self. The majority of women go into therapy because they get depressed. They get depressed because they hate themselves. They hate themselves because they hate all women. It is a grotesquely conflicted way to live. It is not masochistic. It is, as Paula Caplan says, "survival of the oppressed" (learning to cope with bad situations). But, to continue with it is masochistic, now that there is a way out. As women, we now have a collective vision of the truth of our experience, and of the kind of therapy that will put us back in touch with our selves, in harmony rather than hatred. The balance between the yes-woman and the angry woman can only be achieved by intense self-reflection, both painful and exhilarating as the truth often is.

The victim is not to blame, but she must help herself out of the situation, which is tantamount to taking the blame. Many women cannot face the pain of rooting out their inbuilt personal enemy. As Phyllis Chesler said, "Most people prefer to live lives of quiet desperation until they die of natural causes." These are the lethal ones whose lives are a denial of everything. It requires enormous courage to live through the pain of digging out the self-hater. Women who take the route of therapy must be ruthless and uncompromising. The societal wedge has a razor thin edge.

- Amanda Hale

Women and Therapy: Putting Our Heads To



The Conference by Yvette Perreault

There were approximately 350-400 women in attendance at the Women and Therapy Conference in Toronto last November, with a sprinkling of quiet, unobtrusive men. The majority of women there seemed to be therapists, counsellors, mental health professionals, or workers in women's services. I had a difficult time identifying the patient's advocacy or patient's rights groups, and there was a noticeable lack of women of colour and immigrant women - although, considering the registration fee of \$140, I am not surprised. Had my work place not sponsored me, I would never have been able to attend.

The women came from across the country to participate; women were there from Courtenay on Vancouver Island with displays and an unscheduled workshop about their Self-Help Network; I met a wonderful woman from the Women's Centre in St. John's, Newfoundland, a centre that does a little of everything for women in that city; women had come from Québec, struggling with information that was not available in French. A great many women appeared to be from outside of Toronto, places where access to ideas and contact with alternative groups are limited.

From the workshops I attended and conversations during breaks and over the terrible lunches, the majority of women, certainly the more vocal and visible ones, were feminists. I found it very reassuring to find that feminism, as a pro-woman perspective, was the commonly accepted framework for approaching discussions of women in all areas of therapy. Feminism was not up for debate, as it would have been 10 years ago. What was also mentioned often was feminism that includes not only the specificity of sexism as our common oppression as women, but also encompasses facets of racism, classism and homophobia.

The lounge area was the central meeting place - set up with coffee, and tables for T-shirt and book sales, displays and lots of information about a variety of groups and resources, primarily geared to developing alternatives to traditional forms of therapy. Films were running from early morning, throughout the workshops and lunch-hours - although how any woman managed to juggle her schedule to fit them in is beyond me.

I noticed that many of the women there could have been the same women sitting in workshops with me 10 years ago, debating feminist theory, the politics of government funding, effective consciousness-raising, developing grass-roots services to exist as alternatives to traditional institutions that oppress women, etc., are now the women who are the professionals - the social workers, psychologists, therapists, and counsellors who are trying to make a living from their work, and struggling hard to find support and make sense of their feminist values, and practise within structures and organiza-

tions that too often leave them isolated, frustrated and often ineffectual as feminists.

Much to my amazement, the plenary sessions were held in a large ballroom with no mikes set up on the floor. This meant the speakers at the front of the room could be heard, but participants had to yell out questions from the floor, or walk all the way to the front to get to a mike. Somehow, the set-up left me suspicious about whether or not the plenary sessions were intended to encourage audience participation!

The Remembrance Day Ceremony on the morning of November 11 was moving - with women holding hands in chains across the plenary floor, chanting and remembering our strengths as women, our role as "agents of change," remembering that wars are not of our doing, remembering the women who have suffered terribly in all the wars, remembering the wars we are fighting even now, not only in armed battles, but for basic survival.

Telegrams of support were prepared during the conference and accepted by the plenary. These included a telegram to the Solidarity Coalition in BC to support the workers that were striking, and one to five immigrant women who had just won their case of charging their employer with sexual harassment.

I found the lack of a strong closing plenary problematic. I attended my last workshop, wandered around a bit saying good-bye to new friends, and left. I would have liked the final hours of the conference to have been spent hearing summaries of other workshops, or hearing recommendations for actions, or hearing how participants were planning to take all this information back to their homes, groups, workplaces. At least we could have had a speaker to pull together the threads and events of the conference, sending us off into our separate workplaces inspired and committed to ending the violence women experience at the hands of traditional therapists, or leaving us renewed with feminist fervour and resolve to act on the ideas, and at least prepared to grapple with some of the uncomfortable questions that had been raised in so many of the workshops.

It was very disappointing to find that no childcare was being offered by the organizers, nor were there funds available for those women who had to find childcare in order to attend. Participants raised \$300 out of our own pockets during a lunch-hour to offset any woman's childcare expenses, with the remaining money to go to Jessie's - a Toronto centre for teenagers and teenage mothers. When will women organizing conferences for women learn that childcare is a necessary item to address, financially and practically?

I was left unclear about the purpose and intention of the organizers in pulling together this conference. Certainly there was a profit motive - but I had expected more of an "agenda"

than simply inviting a dozen or so speakers to pass on information. 400 women together for two to three days could lead to all sorts of things. After all, the promotional material for Women and Therapy, and I expected some resolution to the equation: Women and Therapy equals... what? More oppression? Profits? More jobs for alternative therapists? Healing? Control of the oppressed? Maintaining the status quo?

What captured the media's attention, and certainly was a high spot for me during this conference, was the anti-porn action. It reinforced for me the constant battle to integrate theory and action, and to use opportunities for unaction whenever possible. I truly loved the fact that we decided to do something about the violence against women that was there in front of our noses, not simply to sit back in safe rooms and talk about how terrible pornography was, but to leave it to the women who are in less sensitive positions, or those women who "like doing actions" to make our criticism public. The women staying at the hotel where the conference was held (Holiday Inn-Don Valley), noticed that there were "soft-core" porn movies being offered for TV viewing, so women brought to the plenary's attention the numerous porn magazines available in the newsstand across from our registration desk. There were enough angry women at the conference to pull together a quick, spontaneous, but planned action. Suggestions for the action came from the pornography workshop and from an unscheduled workshop, "Creative Ways of Dealing with Feminist Anger."

The action was designed to lay the groundwork for a national boycott of all Holiday Inns until they are pornography-free. Women agreed to send letters of protest to the manager of a particular Holiday Inn, with copies to the president of the chain, and to return to our groups and workplaces and inform others about the boycott. (Notable in the *Toronto Star's* coverage of the action was the Holiday Inn manager's refusal to take this protest seriously. I intend to write a strong letter letting him know just how unacceptable I consider it to promote hatred and violence against women and children. Please see the same.)

The second part of the action was our destruction of all pornographic material from the newsstand in the lobby - in front of the TV cameras. I think the Holiday Inn was extremely fortunate to have a conference made up of such well-mannered women! After all, we purchased the porn from the newsstand (what could they possibly have done if 300 of us had simply marched into the newsstand on our coffee break, taken the magazines from the racks, and begun ripping them up, there? Adding to the profits the porn industry already makes off our backs seemed a bit much. Anyway, women did have an opportunity to stand together, say a loud "No" to porn!

Phyllis Chesler Interview

by Jacqueline Swartz

Jacqueline Swartz: What do you mean when you say there is a war on women?

Phyllis Chesler: There's no other way to describe the systematic, unacknowledged, devastating, built-in hatred of women. It's a war; a hot war, not a cold war. Hot because the services of so many women are needed: we have to be curbed, tamed, domesticated and kept at bay in each generation, in each new marriage. As if, like nature, it is feared we will rise up, that we somehow have the power to devastate, haunt, break free.

Men as we know them – not as they should be or once were – savagely separate good from bad women, the private from the public. The private is behind a wall, behind a veil: it is female, it is owned, it produces children, which men own. Public is male: men as we know them are not comfortable with women in public, think of them as either mothers, and therefore sexless, or as only for sexual purposes.

Men have been so powerfully taught to keep away from their mothers sexually that they have extended the taboo to all women. If a man must renounce his mother, he can marry a woman just like her – but then he has no sex with her after she becomes his wife. Or very little sex, or not very passionate. And he looks for younger and younger women to have less mind/body contact with.

What about the optimistic images of the new man, the new couple?

They happen to be unrealized, premature and not very widespread. A recent 10-year study of couples showed, for instance, that men have not begun to do housework or childcare. Even educated men – when it's expected of them, they divorce. Of course there are exceptions.

Also, men have always been happy to have women not only raise the children and do the domestic work, but earn money and bring dowries. But who is going to do the women's work? When men do it, they do less of it than women and they get more credit. So the liberated two-career couple that we read about in magazines is very rare. Besides, men change their minds as it becomes clear that there are other women around who are not so passionately feminist, who don't mind being obedient.

Is the situation different in Europe?

In Mediterranean cultures, there is a greater intimacy and connectedness with women as mothers. This doesn't mean that men want mother-women to go and run the country. But it does mean there are still vestiges of fertility worship.

As feminist anthropologists and economists have pointed out, when you begin to have industrialization, the status of women goes down. There is a coldness, a distance. If women are no longer valued as mothers – and in Protestant North America they are not – and if women were never wanted or valued as workers, only as drones and slave labour, then is there any value at all placed on women? The answer is, not much. Compare this to Mediterranean societies. There, men may be unfaithful, they may kill for honour, they may own their children. But there is still a sense of loyalty, familiarity, sympathetic connectedness with women as mothers which does not exist here.

Is the male ethos of corporate success setting new artificial goals for women?

Yes, to the extent to which the misinterpreters of a feminist vision succeed and women become male imposters, smiling a lot, hiding the fact that they are women. The message they embody is that every woman can succeed, so you should. This anaesthetized image has very little to do with feminism. There are some women who have been so mesmerized by self-hatred and hatred of other women, that they have less difficulty in advancing themselves competitively as token women against other token women. It's like a black man who tries to enter the corporate structure by saying he's not like other blacks. Women who enter that marketplace at a high level often have to suppress feeling like women, at a high price to themselves: look at the imitation male attire they wear.

Did feminism bring this on?

No, it would happen with or without feminism. There's a strong class factor. You find that wives and daughters of wealthy men, who can get an advanced education, are the first to be slotted into the positions that must go to a woman. The class laws operate as usual, only now they can be expanded to women.

CONTINUED PAGE 14

Creative Anger

by Mary Stern

During the Women and Therapy conference an unscheduled workshop was held on creative uses for feminist anger, which produced some criticism of the conference and an exciting direct action event involving the public destruction of pornographic magazines.

The conference itself seemed to suffer from a "schizophrenic" or dual purpose. The resource people included several women who have been active feminists for years and who presented their workshops rooted in their politics and their experience. The other group of resource people appeared to be academic experts, private therapists or knowledgeable women who did not present their workshop with a clear feminist perspective.

The women who attended seemed to fall roughly into three groups. The first were women who were employed by funded organizations in human or health services and displayed a primarily professional interest in the conference but who may not have identified themselves as feminist in their politics; the second were women working full time in feminist controlled or influenced services such as rape crisis centres or women's shelters who seemed to identify themselves as feminist and who could express their politics in their workplace at least in a limited fashion; and the third, those whose primary identification was with the women's movement at large but who were not currently involved in a specific job or professional role.

In general, there were highly varied expectations both from the resource people and the women who attended the conference. While many workshops met the needs of both resource people and attendees, in several, serious conflict was apparent and was expressed by participants in a variety of ways. The informal ad hoc workshop on anger which occurred provided an opportunity to throw some light on the sources of frustration among some participants and also led to some direct action later in the day.

The Creative Anger workshop occurred for two reasons. Phyllis Chesler, in a tough and spirited keynote address, asked if there was an anger workshop on the program, while reflecting on the difficulty for feminists to be so constantly aware of the scope and meaning of the violence and brutality that we are all subject to in this male defined world. Then, the incident which created an opportunity to proceed with the ad hoc anger workshop occurred in the workshop I gave, discussing the female ex-psychiatric patient's experience in the community. My workshop presentation was based on my four years of work with chronic ex-patients as the coordinator of a program centre in the Parkdale area of Toronto funded by the Ministry of Health.

The conference organizer had requested that I allow someone from the Ontario Friends of Schizophrenics to present her viewpoint during my workshop. This did not work out well and it provoked an interesting but angry confrontation between several people in the workshop over the politics of mental health resulting in some people walking out of the workshop. I felt that it was in the long run a good illustration of the politics of mental health. After the workshop, I volunteered to set up a small workshop on the creative use of feminist anger. About 39 women came to the session, which was one of the most productive discussion groups I have ever been involved with.

Therapy with Lesbians

by Theresa Dobko

In Phyllis Chesler's keynote address at the Women and Therapy conference, she admonished women to stop expending energy on internal struggles and focus instead on those critics of the women's movement. While sympathetic to her line of reasoning, I fear anyone who does not also monitor from within. Demanding purity of intention from others has a hypocritical face when we fail to examine our own performance.

At the session on integral therapy with lesbians, we were exposed to mixed statements about the value of living as a lesbian. The third-person focus of the talk, in which facilitator Linda Page referred constantly to lesbians as "they" and to herself, the audience and the straight world as "us," seemed to reflect not only her discomfort at the possibility of having to identify herself as straight or lesbian, but also a strong dose of lesbophobia. Page insisted that in order to understand the needs of lesbians in therapy we must examine some "not particularly helpful ideas" concerning lesbianism.

Her first "not so helpful idea" was that "lesbians are not born or caused to be such." She spoke of lesbianism as a "creative choice," as an "art form." I agree with her point that living as lesbian reflects a choice, but the origins of women-identified feelings is a question too complex for any of us to make conclusions. Furthermore, the question is irrelevant: one could just as soon ask, "What causes heterosexuality?"

Page spoke of one client with a traditional father who taught his children in an authoritarian manner. The mother of this client allowed her children more freedom. The young girl was described as identifying more with the female perspective as a result. (Lesbians are not caused to be such. . .) A second client, offered as proof of the lesbian choice, had three opinionated brothers and grew to resent the power they wielded in the family. She became a lesbian as well. (Lesbians are not caused to be such. . .)

Lesbians are not born or caused to be such, says Linda Page, unless of course they have authoritarian fathers or domineering brothers. While supposedly denying any causal basis to being lesbian, Page offers one anyway. Even more dangerous is the fact that her arguments were andro-centred. In Page's world, women choose to be lesbian solely against a male backdrop. Certainly it is true that living as lesbian, in its fullest, most wonderful extent, embodies a rejection of hypermasculine values and the patriarchal system. What she failed to say is that the lesbian choice is a movement toward women rather than a mere rejection of males. She never once addressed the issue that one could love women solely for the pleasure of loving women.

The breaking-point for the audience was Page's next point: that if a gay female client comes to her and states that she fears living as a lesbian but "cannot" live as a heterosexual, Page

CONTINUED PAGE 14

(Note: Due to space limitations, we were not able to print all the notes on the conference sent to us. We thank all the women involved.)

ther



Illustration: Amanda Hale

tel, then gloriously rip up the pages of *Penthouse*, *Hustler* and the like. The feeling in the lobby was almost powerful! It was totally incomprehensible to me why women then bent down and picked up all the pages of porn, and quietly dumped them into a trash box, all in front of the TV cameras!

What confusing messages! "We are so angry at this hate literature that we are destroying it, and doing it publicly so other women will know women can take action and so men will know we are very serious about making this trash unacceptable. . . We want to create a stir right here in your lobby and make men ashamed to be caught with this stuff. . . We are furious and outraged and demand that you stop selling and buying porn. . . But, do let us not really put anybody out – we will even clean up our own mess after the minutes of outrage so no one will have to notice we were even here!"

No one was made to deal with repercussions of our action – not the ones who make money off us, and not the hotel management. I do realize that the cleaning staff, who are likely migrant and poor women, would have been asked to clean up the mess; at the very least, we could have left the mess on the floor until the TV cameras had gone, and the media had departed.

All in all, several of the workshops, Phyllis Chesler's keynote speech, and contact with individual women did a great deal to reaffirm my identity as a feminist. I am indeed a part of a large wave of women who breathe, live, fight, create, take action, and survive with this shared feminist perspective. It reminded me that our small pockets of resistance and activism have a framework, a history and a vision that are part of the women's liberation movement. I can sit in a conference and hear feminist analysis being articulated with years of experience, activism and experiments that give substance to the ideas. Feminists and feminist organizers are not marginal. The task is not to lose sight of the purpose and vision – freedom for all women.

There are a great many of us not talking about changes that simply mean a bigger piece of the pie, for some. It was particularly exciting to sit back and hear speakers like Chesler, whose ideas were radical and whose perspective of feminism clearly encompassed all the ways women are held down: race, class, sexual orientation, motherhood, etc. The next step will be our continued creation of alternatives and the building of alliances that deepen that radical perspective so these ideas also become commonplace.

I am, however, still anxiously awaiting the kind of conference that more precisely names what "therapy" must be for women: women plus support, education and action equals feminist therapy!

Audette Perreault is on staff at Women's Habitat, Toronto.

CONTINUED PAGE 14

ARTS

The Medusa Head:

Mary Meigs is familiar to *Broadside* readers both as a contributor and as the author of *Lily Briscoe: A Self-Portrait* (1981). That book is primarily an exploration of her formative relationships with family and friends such as Mary McCarthy and Edmund Wilson, and of her growing awareness of her own creative and sexual self. With respect to the latter, Barbara Deming and Marie-Claire Blais play important roles in *Lily Briscoe*, being two points of a triangle of which Mary Meigs was the third.

That triangle, however, was not the first, or last, in which Mary Meigs has been involved. In her new book, *The Medusa Head* (Vancouver: Talonbooks 1983. Pp. 162. \$8.95), she describes with compelling vividness "the torturing mechanics" of yet another triangle involving her and Marie-Claire Blais. This time the third point is "Andrée," a French novelist with whom first Marie-Claire Blais and then Mary Meigs fell in love. Ultimately, eleven years ago, all three lived together in Brittany for a tempestuous and destructive year. It is that year that is the main subject of the book. Andrée is the Medusa figure, gentle and loving and angry and venomous by turns.

Triangular compromise proved particularly difficult for the obsessive and possessive Andrée, and so the three women parted company, Mary Meigs and Marie-Claire Blais to continue their relationship — though "it could never again have its old freshness, and we could never again have our original confidence in each other. We were free, but each inhabited a separate domain of freedom." As well, both Marie-Claire and Andrée exorcised some feelings about the affair by writing about it, Marie-Claire Blais' novel being *A Literary Affair* (1979). Interestingly, both it and Andrée's book (not identified) make the relationship heterosexual. According to Mary Meigs, however, the characters are easily identified, radically different though the point of view of each writer is. Mary Meigs' description of the affair in *The Medusa Head* is yet another point of view.

In the excerpt below, Mary Meigs ponders the differences between Marie-Claire and Andrée's fictions and her own version of the "truth." Don't be satisfied with just an excerpt, however, read the book. It's a sensitive and moving portrait of a curious triangle.

— Jean Wilson



Book cover: Jovette Marchessault

by Mary Meigs

If I don't write fiction, it is not because I would not like to, but because I was born without the gift for making creative use of my memories of the truth. Sometimes I hear the call, like the faint music of Pan in the distance, of that other, richer truth of the novelist, or the novelist-autobiographer. My intent is to give my own evidence, and yet again and again, I realize, my memory has betrayed me; no one could have confidence in me as a completely accurate witness. I fail to see exactly, would be unable to tell you what you said last week or what colours you were wearing. Marie-Claire remembers the details of yesterday or a week ago, and her fine-tuned memories often deceive me into thinking that hers is the truth, and mine some sloppy simulacrum of it.

When I read Marie-Claire's book about Andrée (*A Literary Affair*), I am dazzled by her skill at turning exact memories into fiction, for Madame d'Argenti in the book is the Andrée of real life in her most visible and audible aspects, caricatured for the sake of comedy, yet she is not the frightening woman we knew, at whom we did not laugh. Madame d'Argenti is voluptuous, bad-tempered, vulgar, worldly, dangerous for others, but not so dangerous that Mathieu, the young Québécois writer who falls in love with her, is unable to escape. The portrait of Andrée is both truthful and wholly fictional, because Marie-Claire in the person of Mathieu Lelièvre appears merely as a foil. The heart of the real-life struggle, the triangle, is absent; Mathieu's affair with Madame d'Argenti has made him

sadder and wiser but has left him morally unharmed. Marie-Claire has removed the elements of violence and tragedy, withdrawn as Andrée's adversary, reduced her own power and exaggerated her own guilelessness. If Andrée read the book, she must have felt, along with her rage at being laughed at, the rage of knowing that her only defense lay in the evidence that had been omitted. Her book was written after Marie-Claire's and smells strongly of vengeance. But if I were asked to say which writer had most effectively destroyed the other, I would choose Marie-Claire, since the weapon of comedy can be deadlier than the deadliest poison.

When they write about themselves, writers tend to choose aspects of themselves that are not really incriminating. Thus Mathieu Lelièvre is the innocent victim of Madame d'Argenti, as Marie-Claire might have been if I'd never entered the picture; she is relieved of the moral implications born of the triangle. Andrée in her book is also a victim, but her suffering is born in the inferno of the triangle, and in this sense the book is a more direct attempt to get at her own "truth," — she is wronged, humiliated, a sort of Christ-figure who is scourged and mocked by his tormentors. My own truth, too, is filtered through my perceptions, which seem to me so indisputable, but are subject to failures of memory, to the scrambling of time, to ego-distortions, which require me to emerge from this ambiguous period of my life with some shreds of personal honour intact. The imperious need to rationalize and exonerate often turns autobiography into fiction. We are all born with, or develop, the gift of transforming ourselves, and transforming others to fit the image we have of ourselves. The autobiographer is much more present and therefore much more vulnerable than the writer-magician, who is able to make people believe that she is not there. Marie-Claire at least is able to do this, though Andrée is always visible as the real-life Andrée, like a puppeteer. But for both, life is fiction, turned to fiction by the process of magic.

Andrée is visible, but even visible (to those in the know), the novelist profits from the convention of invisibility; she can deflect any squawks of indignation from readers who recognize themselves with the claim that it's all invented — everything, including herself. Thus Marie-Claire can say of Madame d'Argenti-Andrée, "She isn't Andrée; she doesn't look like her; she's fat and has grey eyes." Novelists hide behind these transparent white lies and actually feel invisible, feel insulted, in fact, if you insist too much on resemblances, for you seem to cast doubt on their creative powers. And now I have blown Marie-Claire's cover by alleging that Andrée and Madame d'Argenti are the same person and I have drawn her out of her safety zone into my more dangerous no-man's land. But isn't Andrée, too, a fictional character; don't I have my own little safety zone or my own discreet veils?

The Marie-Claire I know isn't the one she knows or would write about, but I am responsible for mine in a way that she was not responsible for Madame d'Argenti; as Andrée was not responsible for Blanche, her Marie-Claire character. I have to be careful about what I say, but each warring novelist could inform her readers that the other was a monster, as long as the monsters were physically disguised enough to discourage anyone from bringing suit (and in this case either victim would hesitate to proclaim that she was the subject of the portrait). Each intended the other to recognize herself and yet each dances behind her novelist's veils and, with a look of injured innocence, cries, "But she's fat, her eyes are grey, her hair is red," etc. etc. I am glad that I read Andrée's book, and reread the two long letters Marie-Claire wrote me before the final break-up, after having written my own version of the truth.

I was relieved to find that my sense of Andrée's character was not changed by reading her book, but confirmed and enlarged. In fact, I had underestimated her furious need to justify herself, her powers of twisting and turning, her magical ability to flash her distorting mirrors so that I asked myself just as I did when we were together, is she telling the truth? I have learned that I will never be quick enough to see how she does it. As for Marie-Claire, I have given up the idea that I can arrive at her truth. She defends it, less perversely than Andrée, but with as much skill, with the same fictional magic. She cannot be caught. "Did you do this? Say that? What really happened?" She will not tell me what really happened; she defends it as though it were part of her magician's properties. In my hands it may be misused, she seems to think, though in fact I am just as likely to misuse my tantalizing and contradictory glimpses of it.

Two months before Andrée left, Marie-Claire wrote from Montreal; "Since last October we've lived in such a concentration camp that even people far away have felt it, and if our relations don't change for the better, that is, radically, they have to end; otherwise we'll lose both our health and our lives. Every day I see people here who don't make me play a part but allow me to live as I am. I assure you that allows me to see in almost terrifying clarity the falseness, the emptiness, the uselessness of the lives we live in Sulniac and Paris. It isn't life but death. . . You, and I, unless Andrée changes, aren't in the same animal struggle that governs Andrée almost entirely in this affair; inevitably we'll lose all human feeling since there will never be any real affinity between the animal who only thinks of devouring all the fodder by every possible means, even the cruellest — and the person who has a sense of the Other, and who is capable of living in human society. Right now, if the struggle is so intense, it isn't because there are three of us (you see, I think the triangle is just a pretext of being one's worst self) . . ."

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Angles on Triangles

Do we so enjoy being our worst selves that we need a *pretext* for being them? This is one of Marie-Claire's most cherished illusions — that one's worst self has no connection with the torturing mechanics of a triangle but can be deliberately chosen among all the others for use as a weapon. But an inevitable component of every triangle is at least one worst self, which frequently sets off the others in a chain reaction. In the Andrée triangle, our worst selves would come and go depending on the stresses and strains of daily life, on who was with whom and for how long, but as the end drew near, each of us became her worst self, which, in the fatal human chemistry of triangles, is precipitated by interaction. The interaction of Marie-Claire and Andrée merely intensified the Medusa alter ego of Andrée which was always lying in wait, her punitive "état de désarroi," her devil-may-care amorality; that was her worst self, so intimately twined with her best self from her childhood on that she came to think of them as one. Notions of best and worst, of guilt and innocence, provoked her scorn, and her morality lay in niceties of taste rather than in those of behaviour. Guilt-feelings are hypocrisy, she thought, and I remember that any confession of guilt she ever made was a perfect im-



Jane Hastings

itation of a little girl parroting a confession, with hands clasped in front of her and eyes cast down.

Due, no doubt, to our religious upbringing, both Marie-Claire and I separate good from bad, and thus we distinguish between our worst and best selves. Not that Marie-Claire ever admits that she has a worst self, but she sometimes confesses in writing to small sins: naivete, egotism, etc., which have led her along the thorny path of self-sacrifice. And yet when she says later in her letter that the "real-triangle is *there* — in the insuperable moral gulf," I know what she means. She means that both of us, in states of self-searching, recognize our shadows, whereas Andrée had absorbed hers into her bloodstream. Both of us know when we become our worst selves; we have a sense of shadow ("get thee behind me, Satan!") which has to be kept in its place or else it will invade one's inmost being. Andrée's shadow was internalized and then bleached by some burning substance like Clorox, so that looking in her magician's mirror, she saw a person who was shadowless and blameless.

But don't we really have a perverse fondness for our worst selves; doesn't this make it much harder to get rid of them? Andrée ab-

sorbed hers; she loved it as a necessary part of herself. I do not love mine, and yet there are times when it seems to woo me, as temptations woo, lying there, wagging its tail, like a dog who brings you a stick. The temptation to throw the stick, i.e., to say the thing that will precipitate the quarrel, the quarrel which has *worst self* as part of its formula, is irresistible. Does one hope that for once the game will remain a game, simply a stick being thrown and brought back by an amiable dog (for a quarrel can begin amiably)? Yet one knows that the irresistible sentence, once spoken, will provoke the same old responses, the same old accusations and the same rage, and mixed in with the rage is a sick pleasure because those resentful thoughts one has kept to oneself now have an excuse to fly out and rain on the adversary, an excuse for open warfare. One's worst self is excused, one reasons, by the violence of the adversary's worst self, just as in a real war, atrocities are "justified" by those committed by the other side. Something of this is in each of us, the instinct to defend oneself to the death, the willingness, in extremis, to kill in one way or another. "I could find it in my heart to wish you dead." For the beloved friend must suffer one's own humiliation a thousand times over. ●

The Telling of Twenty-Eight

The Taking of Twenty-Eight: Women Challenge the Constitution, by Penney Kome. Toronto: The Women's Press 1983. \$6.95

Reviewed by Sheila McIntyre

I have never had much money for personal possessions but I once bought a Laura Nyro album I could not afford because, although nine cuts on the album left me flat, the tenth has (still) the power to make me smile from deep in my belly no matter how depressed I am. We all need ready-to-hand pleasures to keep out the cold sometimes, and I think *The Taking of Twenty-Eight* might do the trick when the news on sexual equality seems unremittingly grim. Whatever one's attitude to reformism through established political channels (Rosemary Billings' thoughtful introductory essay on this subject raises all the questions I hope will be dealt with in future books on women and the Charter), the story told by Penney Kome is right up there with Laura Nyro for banishing the feminist blues.

The entrenchment in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms of an unqualified guarantee of sexual equality is a fascinating, inspiring, in turns infuriating and funny and, above all, dramatic story. Penney Kome captures the drama. She introduces and gives life to the ingenious, gritty and seemingly tireless unsung women who were at the centre of the battle, as well as dozens of ordinary women (the meaning of "ordinary women" has been radically redefined by the Charter story) who forced amendments from the Liberals and later, pressured every single provincial premier to back down on including section 28 (the equality guarantee) within their power to override the Charter. Kome also recreates the impossibly high-pressured and madcap atmosphere of the major campaigns. Her journalistic style is fast-paced, richly anecdotal and given to the telling caption rather than to narrative depth. The villains are dispatched with devastating precision. Florence Ievers, one of the five executive members of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women who voted to postpone the CACSW conference on women and the constitution at Axworthy's request, has only one line in the book — "We should start being nice to the government. So if this conference is going to be an embarrass-

ment to them, let's play it their way and cancel it" — but what a line. Similarly, I don't know Brigid O'Reilly, but her one cameo spot suggests all I need to know to want to give her a great retroactive hug: \$8000 needed to be raised urgently for a newspaper ad — "I went through my Christmas card list telling everybody to send me five dollars right away, and I'd explain later. The did it." The women embraced in Kome's narrative positively shine and generate the smile-from-deep-in-the-belly worth the book's purchase price. The Charter battle is simply an amazing story and Kome's version provides a rollicking, heartwarming and astonishing read.

However, the dramatic and engaging quality of the story line is achieved at the expense of political or legal analysis, or the historical and biographical detail that might have made the book a classic of Canadian feminist history. For instance, the critical two week period culminating in Doris Anderson's resignation as President of the CACSW is covered in a far too brief three pages. The five Council members who resigned along with Anderson, are not even named. Kome supplies virtually no background on the history, politics, philosophy and personnel of the CACSW, no account of the exact objectives or agenda of the conference postponed at Axworthy's request, no disclosure of the factors — other than Liberal party loyalties — that led 17 of the 27 members of the Council to side with Axworthy and against Anderson, and no analysis of the way that the CACSW was then perceived (or is now perceived) by major feminist groups.

Similarly, Kome squeezes dramatic mileage from the fact that the Ad Hoc conference was nearly torn apart over the issue of entrenchment, but she does not explain what constitutional entrenchment signifies, what the debate entailed, or what women might have lost by entrenching equality.

The entrenchment debate is only one of several places where Kome's précis of the basic legal issues being debated and of the CACSW and Ad Hoc position of these issues is too cursory. A more expansive text would have vastly improved readers' understanding of what rights were at stake, what



Lynne Gordon, Linda Ryan-Nye and Jean Wood at a November 1981 press conference. Their banners say "Notwithstanding."

Moira Armour

was actually gained by the early lobbying and which of the Ad Hockers' recommendations were abandoned (leaving, one assumes, significant holes in the Charter). In several places Kome's legal reporting is plain wrong and, I suspect, had the text been more detailed, the editors would have caught the errors. Finally, I cannot understand why the full text of the Charter and of the sequential amendments to the original language were not appended. Women's Press and Kome have clearly opted for a popular book unburdened by political theory or legal analysis.

The dedicated core of Quixotic feminists who steered this victory deserve chronicling, and I enjoyed making their acquaintance. Too, those of us aware that women won a major battle but fuzzy due to under-reporting about the details, ought to get their history right. And I promise that there's a smile guaranteed in some of the anecdotes Kome selects. There's good reason, then, to buy this modestly priced little book. But be forewarned. Aside from Billings' introduction there is very little food for thought. Kome's text is just an appetizer. There's an entire book alone in Linda Ryan Nye's epilogue: "Twenty-eight was a helluva lot to lose... but it was not a helluva lot to win." If you want to know what exactly it is we did win, what it means to sexual equality, and what compromises we made that may haunt us in the long run, you want another book.

Sheila McIntyre is a freelance writer, and law student at Queen's University, Kingston.

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Dionne Brand

No Odes to Fried Eggs

Primitive Offensive, by Dionne Brand. Toronto: Williams-Wallace 1982. 59 pg. \$5.95 paper.

Winter Epigrams/and/Epigrams to Ernesto Cardenal in Defence of Claudia, by Dionne Brand. Toronto: Williams-Wallace 1983. 38 pg. \$5.95 paper.

Reviewed by Alexa DeWiel

Ever kowtowing to regionalism, the poetic community in Canada has triumphantly claimed Trinidadian born Dionne Brand as its own up-and-coming Toronto poet. Her reference points, however, are the world at large, everywhere black identity and history is alive.

If you are white and have loved black or you are black and have loved white, if you happen to dislike the expression "women of less colour" which has recently become the fashionable expression among enlightened feminists, both of these collections separately and together, are relief reading. Although it is difficult to call on rage and rejoicing in one breath, Brand is an able poet who is able to do both and to treat the subject of misery and anger and oppression with humour and respect.

Primitive Offensive, published in 1982, and *Winter Epigrams/Epigrams to Ernesto Cardenal in Defence of Claudia*, published in 1983, were evidently written during the same period in what must have been a revel of productivity. They follow the 1979 publication of *Fore Day Morning*, and *Earth Magic*, a book of children's poetry published in 1980.

Primitive Offensive is a long poem comprising 14 cantos. The language is vivid, filled with primordial keening which builds in intensity and acuteness as Brand searches "to find a map, an imprint" of her ancestral lifeways using images of stone and spittle, broken pots, chicken blood, a concoction fit for a shake-down of "ancestor, old woman, old bead, why didn't you remember the name of our tribe?/ why didn't you tell me before you died".

Brand's strength is in her crashing imagery. Witness Canto V, which begins: "still I can eat flour/ I can eat salt/ I can eat stone/ and oil/ I

can eat barbed wire/ I can eat whatever is left," building to a climax of mutant behaviour: "my mouth waters/ for radioactive morsels," beyond the resistant survivor pains to a new renaissance, discovery of a new world where "another slavery/ will surprise me/ consorting with a boa constrictor."

Brand is able to evoke the achingly astute observations of a young black women travelling in northern Europe, among the beautiful German and French folk who love to buy aboriginal art, and where black faces from Madagascar and Senegal trigger the memory of slavery as well as the revolution of slaves. She points to the ironies of the latest white fashion model sporting corn row hair, trinkets in the windows, relics of the hunt: "fertility gods, monkey tail flyswatters/ filling up our room/ wanting/ lion skins for mats/ pricing our genitals for tassels, victory regalia/ don't look at me, man/ we need the business." As she says later in Canto IX, which is dedicated to her disgust at Henry Rockefeller: "what a morning!/ You bought it/ You bought what I get for free."

The *Winter Epigrams to Toronto* are utterly charming. Brand has no use for autumn with its sentimental transitional songs ("no one notices/ the tree in the front yard/ of the next building/ is dead, again" and "they think it's pretty, this falling of leaves/ something is dying.") We all rail about old ice fingers winter and these verses are a new twist on the same complaints. Here is someone who hates winter sports and attempts to camouflage her apartment into an oasis of wall hangings and bamboo curtains to wait it out inside with fierce concentration. These epigrams are less lyrical than the poems in *Primitive Offensive*, more stark and precise. They suit the mood, and the change in style is a mark of Brand's ability: "Two things I will not buy in this city,/ mangoes and poinsettia;/ exiled,/ I must keep a little respect." Bravo.

Epigrams to Ernesto Cardenal in Defence of Claudia takes up the remainder of this 38 page publication. They are, as the introduction tells us, a reaction to several poems by Ernesto Cardenal, Nicaraguan priest, poet, Marxist

and humanist. Cardenal's representation of Claudia is that of a bourgeois woman of leisure. Brand has her turn on her heel and stand her ground against the assumptions of the patriarch: "If you don't mind/ can't I just sit here today? Can I not be amusing please?" and "At least two poets, one hundred women that I know, and I,/ can't wait to become old and haggard/ then we won't have to play co-

quette/ or butch/ or side up to anything."

Both collections of poetry are filled with poems which will appeal to readers who usually don't have the stomach for poetry. No odes to fried eggs and feelings, but a full recognition of *la condition humaine*.

Alexa DeWiel is a poet and writer of short stories living in Ottawa.

April Raintree

The Cost of Survival

In Search of April Raintree, by Beatrice Culleton. Winnipeg, Man.: Pemmican Publications Inc., 1983.

Reviewed by Carroll Klein

Women are only beginning to break their silence, a silence that bewilders, frustrates and angers us all. We have seldom been privy to the knowledge and power that gives us the means — and the self-confidence — to either produce or publish a literature of our own. Even now, the elusive qualities of time and energy to persevere often belong only to women of privilege; those of us who must support ourselves at wage work are thwarted by our lack of access to quiet, to long, uninterrupted hours in which we can write. Sometimes, remarkably, women produce works of literature in spite of it all.

For Dene and Métis women, as for all women of colour in this country, the silence has been even more resounding. It was apparent at the Women and Words conference in Vancouver last summer that this situation is changing; articulate, angry, politicized women spoke out, enumerating their problems and differences and making it clear that they would be heard. One of the women who spoke was Beatrice Culleton, an editor at Pemmican Publications in Winnipeg. She and her colleagues have already produced a formidable list of publications that deal with native issues. Among them is Culleton's own powerful novel, *In Search of April Raintree*.

Culleton's novel is the story of April Raintree, who narrates the painful story of her family and of growing up in a hostile world that holds pernicious and stereotypic notions of native people. It is also April's private journey of coming to understand who she is and of learning to forgive her family and herself for the legacy of poverty and alcohol that circumscribed her world.

April and her sister Cheryl, removed as preschoolers from alcoholic parents, suffered the indignities and insecurity of children bounced from one foster home to the next. For the most part, they were placed in different homes. Good foster parents did exist, and

illegion gives them their due, but she writes most eloquently of those who exploited and abused their wards. It is to her credit that she resists melodrama; it would have been easy to slide into Dickensian caricature rather than sustain her measured reportage. Her wicked characters are wicked indeed, but not so very different from the people some of us can remember as neighbours and relatives who cast nasty racial aspersions on anyone of colour. Because these people are so ordinary, the effect is all the more chilling. Culleton also draws some brilliant, brief portraits of social workers and teachers who blindly assume that girls like April and Cheryl can come to no good.

The sisters grow up with very different values. April, fair-skinned enough to "pass" in a white world, is mortified by her background; Cheryl, who lived for a time with a proud Métis foster mother, has been taught to love her heritage and her darker skin. Both girls manage to reach adulthood with their integrity intact and with hope for the future. They have prospered at school and, believing that their intelligence will bring them what they want in their lives, they have persevered.

The ironies that hound their lives as young women, the erosion of their faith in the separate choices they make, and the pain that brings both self-knowledge and destruction to April and Cheryl are bitterly and honestly evoked. Culleton creates a world far removed from the experience of most of us but she does so with such conviction and purpose that the lives of her characters illuminate our understanding of otherness and bring us close to the anguish of these women.

Culleton's prose is not altogether flawless. It is occasionally leaden and instructive and her dialogue does not always come to life. These lapses, however, detract very little from her riveting story. A moving novel such as this must be read. Cheryl Raintree speaks for her people when she says:

... to you my voice is like the unheard call in the wilderness. It is there, though you do not hear. But, this once, take the time to listen to what I have to say. ●

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Sentimental Journeys

by Donna Gollan

Tears of Endearment

Terms of Endearment is the sometimes funny, sometimes sad story of a mother-daughter relationship which comes to a tearful end when the daughter dies of cancer. Shirley MacLaine as the mother and Debra Winger as the daughter keep us fairly well entertained with their antics, which range from some pretty knotty battles to a deep, but too often unexpressed, love for one another.

This relationship is just neurotic enough to be believable and it is certainly groundbreaking in its attempt to show women as whole, lovable and complex human beings. Unfortunately *Terms of Endearment*, after taking this one leap forward into the 80's, slips two steps back into the same old formula of the "woman's weepies" of the 30's and 40's.

The heroine of a "woman's film" for example, must be someone with whom vast audiences of women can identify. In the thirties this simply meant a housewife and mother. During the economic recession of the eighties, perhaps this once again means a woman who works in the home. In order to render our spunky heroine truly pathetic, it is then necessary to make her into some kind of martyr or victim of circumstances. Molly Haskell, in her book *From Reverence to Rape* (a treatment of women in the movies) describes just such a heroine as "a woman whose options have been foreclosed by marriage or income, by children or age." Just to be on the safe side, *Terms of Endearment* tries for three out of four.

Now that we have established our heroine as a worthwhile subject for compassion, it is almost time to find out about her sudden-but-fatal-illness. First, however, she must do something truly dreadful so that she, in some twisted way, deserves to die. Usually this takes the form of a second lover, especially in the case of a married woman putting her own needs ahead of those of her husband, or even her children! *Terms of Endearment* does not allow any screen time to the husband's simultaneous affair, although it is understood that he is having one by the repeated appearances of his favourite graduate student. In the original weepies, the husband often held out, not actually sleeping with the other woman until his wife was dead. *Terms of Endearment* bears out this formula, at least in spirit.



Mother and daughter: Shirley MacLaine and Debra Winger.

The actual death of the heroine must be slow enough that the loved ones can come to terms with their previous callous treatment of her. On the other hand, it must be quick enough that she is able to retain her dignity, never allowing herself to fall into that nasty attitude of self-pity which robs the audience of its well-earned catharsis. We weep all the tears she bravely withholds. As Haskell puts it, "What moves — even convulses — us is not (the heroine's) self-pity but, on the contrary, her absolute refusal to feel sorry for herself."

Finally, the weepies are only complete when it is made quite clear that the image of the heroine as a great woman struck down in her prime will live on in everyone's memory, long after it is forgotten that she was ever an unappreciated drudge. As Debra Winger's Emma dies, she insists that her difficult eldest son tell her he loves her, so that he will never be sorry he didn't say so. As she dies she hugs her erring

husband and grants him permission to move on to his graduate student. And she is finally granted her mother's undivided attention.

Consider this quote from Haskell's study of the original "woman's films" and be sure to substitute the names of the characters in *Terms of Endearment* whenever appropriate:

In the woman's film, the woman — a woman — is at the centre of the universe. Best friends and suitors, like Bette Davis' satellites (Geraldine Fitzgerald and George Brent) in *Dark Victory*, live only for her pleasure, talk about her constantly, and cease to exist when she dies. In the rare case where a man's point of view creeps in, as screenwriter Howard Koch's did in *No Sad Songs For Me*, it is generally reconciled with the woman's point of view. Thus, after Margaret Sullivan dies, the husband (Wendell Corey) will marry the woman (Viveca Lindfors) he almost had an affair with. But it is with the dead wife's blessing (she has actually chosen the woman who will replace her as wife and mother), and with the knowledge that when the chips were down, he preferred the wife to the "other woman." The result is the same as that of *Dark Victory*: the two loved ones — the remainders — may unite out of loneliness, but always with the shadow and memory of the "great woman" (vivid and in her prime) between them.

It is quite usual for film critics to denigrate women's weepies simply because they are about relationships and emotions instead of the wide (male) world of adventure. This is not my intention. *Terms of Endearment* is a well constructed film; in fact, it leads us easily through a whole gamut of emotions in a very effective manner. What I don't like is the formula itself. Must it always be lethal to have an affair while your faithless husband finishes the film intact? Must we women die, struck down in the prime of life, in order to be truly loved, appreciated, and never forgotten? Personally, I can't help but feel that the "terms" of "endearment" are a trifle steep. Clearly the makers and marketers of this film feel that the frustrations women face in their marriages, work and lives have not changed significantly since the 30's. They are still offering us the same solution: Have a good cry, you'll feel better.

□

Yentl Persuasion

Yentl, based on a short story by Isaac Bashevis Singer, is the story of a young woman at the turn of the century who chafes against the restrictions placed upon her because of her sex. Barbra Streisand plays the lead role and channels all of her considerable energy into this woman's fantasy of crossing the boundaries between worlds, becoming a man just long enough to see that what she wanted wasn't to be a man, but to be a free woman.

The film opens with a particularly effective scene in the marketplace. The women are all busy with children, food, gossip and washing while the men natter on about a bookseller's wares. His cry of "picturebooks for women, sacred books for men," is a bit repetitive, but we get the point. In the midst of all this, Yentl is making comical attempts to scrape by in the kitchen, while yearning to expand her limited world with books and the strictly male secrets of the Talmud.

Resisting her father's repeated attempts to arrange her marriage — preferably to someone who does not enjoy eating — she is left utterly alone when he dies. Given the choice between providing unpaid labour for her neighbours or pursuing her studies disguised as a boy, she gives herself an extraordinarily professional man's haircut and disappears.

The scene that follows is one of the really fine moments in the film. Halfway between two towns, alone in the deep dark of the woods, she sings in order to inspire herself with courage. Now that she has taken this enormous step towards what she really wants, her fear of change is palpable. This is a fear that women know well, terrifying, yet strangely exhilarating.

Of course Yentl, now Anchl, falls in love with one of her fellow students, Avigdor. Enter plot complications reminiscent of *Victor/Victoria*. Avigdor however, loves Hadass, the embodiment of meek, beautiful womanhood. We are treated to a humorous scene at the dinner table in which Anchl-Yentl is given ample



Connubial bliss: Amy Irving and Barbra Streisand.

opportunity to envy Hadass her domestic accomplishments. But when Anchl-Yentl later asks Avigdor if he ever wonders what Hadass is thinking, he replies: "She's a woman. What could she be thinking?"

When Avigdor is refused permission to marry Hadass, he insists that his good buddy Anchl-Yentl marry her. For a while Anchl-Yentl revels in having a wife's domestic skills at her command. Problems arise when she fails to treat Hadass with the usual brutality Hadass has been trained to expect from a husband. Hadass blossoms under the treatment accorded her of respect, fun, understanding and absolute equality, and, naturally, falls in love with her husband. Anchl-Yentl quits singing "Look at how he looks at her, will someone ever look at me that way?" The song becomes "Look at how she looks at me..." and the singer becomes ashamed of her deceit.

Clearly we are meant to feel as uncomfortable as Yentl does with this strange marriage between two women. Up to this point in the film, much of the stress on the difference between the roles expected of men and women has been centred on the importance of raising children, preferably sons. While this can certainly be interpreted as thinly disguised praise of heterosexuality, it is also made quite obvious that what is at stake here is the devaluation of women altogether. Similarly, the push-pull attraction that occurs between Hadass and Yentl can be interpreted two ways. First of all it could be seen as fear of sexual love between women, which we are meant to find humorous and therefore non-threatening. On the other hand, and it is obvious to even the most prejudiced eye that there is an attraction between the two women. And, finally, it is the possibility that women can love each other which brings Yentl back to the point of loving and valuing herself, as a woman.

While Anchl-Yentl expends most of her energy avoiding sexual contact with Hadass, it is the innocent Hadass who brings the charade to an end. If there is one thing this woman has been trained to do, it is to recognize when she's loved! When she insists that she wants no more nonsense from her husband, Yentl responds by being thoroughly entranced by the changes that she has seen occur in Hadass. Finding out that this beautiful bundle of domestic virtues also has a brain and is perfectly capable of arguing in her own defence completely disarms Yentl's preconceived ideas about men and women. By admitting her love for Hadass, she discovers self-love and the possibility of a future in which she can throw off her disguise as well as her role restrictions, and accept herself as a woman once again. It's too bad that the film opts out at this point and has Yentl admit her sex to Avigdor, rather than to Hadass; some interesting developments might have occurred. The scene between Yentl and Avigdor is a powerful one, however, containing every nasty threatening thing women expect to hear from men in payment for striving for equality. As such, it is certainly a scene to go down in feminist film history.

Really, I wish more mainstream movies could be made that are this courageous. Possibly, however, there aren't too many women working in Hollywood with the energy to co-write, co-produce, direct and star in their dreams. Maybe it's true that Streisand tends to steal the show in *Yentl*. Personally, I'd say she earned every second of screen time. ●

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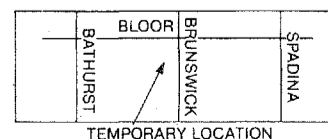
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CHESLER, from page 9

One of the most impressive things about you and your work is your poetic, mythical, visionary side. Without this, can we expect women to aspire to General Motors? Or to become lawyers, for instance, and take the safe jobs?

Men are more often allowed to become the visionaries, the activists. They can afford to, they have less to risk. Women are immediately punished. From the beginning, women are made more cautious. They're made to understand that if they step out of line they'll lose everything, including love. But you know, most people don't love truth, don't think it will make them free, don't value freedom. They will not pay a high price for it. Most people prefer to live lives of quiet desperation until they die of natural causes. They don't want to take on windmills or governments.

You talk about a lack of altruism among women. Why is this?

Part of it is because of self-hatred, body hatred that extends to other women. Anyway, it's the subject of my next book.

Did anything surprise you when you began working on it?

Yes, women's amnesia about the pain they had ever caused other women. Women were able and willing to talk to me about how other women, including their mothers, had betrayed them. But they were unwilling to get in touch with ever having betrayed their mothers. There is some sort of terrifying amnesia, and massive denial. "Some of my best friends are women" - I had to keep a straight face when I heard that. Or, "since feminism, all women have supported me and made my life possible." This is narcissistic, ahistorical, self-centred and untrue. And being eternally naive, anytime I hear something patently untrue, I'm surprised.

Is it true feminists can't bear the thought of conflict or rejection from other women?

The way I see it, you try and cleave clearly to your ideals - which are not what people on earth are capable of fully embodying. And then you look at each individual, expecting less than what a child expects, which is everything. You don't look to what label or flag people fly under to predict whether they will love you, betray you or hate you. In the end, up close, each person, male and female, has to be judged individually.

You wouldn't say, then, that you could trust a feminist more?

No. Even if you decided that a woman who calls herself a feminist was predictably more ethical, that's not everything. It has its place, but it's limited.

Feminists are women who have been brought up as women. The power of ideology is both unknown and limited. Feminists have been talking and writing about, and reeling in pain from, the discovery that people can betray their ideals, or can sacrifice one ideal for another.

Jacqueline Swartz is a Toronto freelance writer.

ANGER, from page 9

A critique of the conference workshops centered on the lesbian therapy, sexuality and beauty workshops. Most of the women who spoke about their frustration and negative experiences clearly identified themselves as feminists. Several identified themselves as lesbians who felt their existence was discounted, or that they had been objectified by the workshop presentations. The beauty workshop was criticized for its lack of social or political content. It was described by participants as a very individualistic "you too can be beautiful" kind of presentation which some women found extremely objectionable. It was not evident in the anger workshop if women who were not feminists at the conference were angry about feminist analysis of content in workshops.

The conference as originally structured provided no active way for participants to engage in evaluation or a critical dialogue. It has become a hallmark of feminist practice in some ways to allow for reflection on the process of events such as conferences. This may have been a major reason why so many women responded to the anger workshop.

The demonstration against pornography sparked by the anger workshop involved several hundred conference participants tearing up pages of pornographic magazines to express their justified anger at the hotel chain's policy of pornographic movies, the magazines on display in the lobby and the insulting attitude of the manager of the hotel when approached individually by women about their concerns. The media coverage was good for short notice and included two major television newscasts and the Saturday edition of the *Toronto Star* with a picture and story. The spirit of the demonstration was joyous and positive and powerful. After the statement was read, women shredded pages of the magazines and threw them into the air with yells and chants. Spontaneous chanting and singing then took place with circles being formed for several minutes afterward. The litter was deposited in a box marked trash and decorated with photos from *Hustler* magazine. It seemed in a way to be an expression of the solidarity of the women at the conference.

The comments I received after the conference were mixed. A few people disagreed about the exact tactics and the target. Most women I talked to who saw it on TV were pleased and moved by it. One woman told me how she and her mother had cheered.

The most exciting thing for me was to see how well we could work together, how productive we were when we tried to focus our rage in a social and collective way. Those of us who are trying to live the majority of our adult lives as conscious feminists need to develop ways to focus our anger and pain so that we don't turn it on ourselves or our friends and lovers. We need to experience the strength that is born of our anger to keep our spirits strong and intact.

Women interested in a follow-up conference to take place on Grindstone Island this summer in the area of women's mental and physical health and exploring these ideas further, should send a note to Mary Stern, 594 Logan Ave., Toronto, Ontario, M4K 3B8.

Mary Stern is coordinator of Parkdale Activity and Recreation Centre for ex-psychiatric patients in Toronto.

LESBIANS, from page 9

would tell her that this isn't true, that it is only true that she "won't" allow herself to be heterosexual - she won't examine the choice of heterosexuality. With this statement Page effectively denied all feelings of lesbian oppression. One wonders if she would tell all of her heterosexually-identified clients that they should examine the lesbian lifestyle?

The broad liberal view that seeks to find nothing but similarities between lesbians and straight women, that suggests that we can all cross over the line with ease, is tiresome. While straight and lesbian women have much that unites them, there is also much that separates. To refuse to acknowledge these differences ignores the myriad of ways in which lesbians are oppressed by virtue of having abandoned heterosexual privilege. To refuse to acknowledge these differences ignores the pain and joy of the coming-out process for women-identified women. These are the primary issues with which lesbians would present to therapy, and Page largely ignored them.

When, finally, one woman interrupted and expressed the oppressive feelings we were all experiencing, a rather painful monologue was transformed into a lively group discussion. In this discussion, all of the issues Page should have covered were addressed. Can straight women adequately counsel lesbian women (and vice versa)? Is a lesbian client responsible for educating her straight therapist about the realities of lesbian life? What issues are lesbians in particular likely to bring to counselling?

Page attempted to justify her lack of analysis by explaining that she was only offering a basic lecture to what she assumed to be a straight audience. Fortunately, the audience was not what she expected; I wonder what message would have been delivered unchallenged without a lesbian presence?

I don't envy anyone who attempts to speak on the needs of lesbians, whether in therapy or otherwise. To offer oneself up as "expert" on lesbian issues leaves one open to questioning from some faction of the community. Lesbians have their own internal divisions: gay vs. lesbian; feminist vs. non-political; radical vs. conservative. Perhaps as a community we should decide whether we want to present ourselves as experts at any time and whether it is profitable to make presentations for mixed audiences.

As an academic, I found Page's presentation inadequate: she never stated her assumptions as that, did not acknowledge dissenting opinions, and contradicted herself on many occasions. As a lesbian, I found her assumption of a heterosexual audience, her male-centred definition of lesbianism, her failure to discuss lesbian oppression and her apparent lesbophobia, a denial of the worth of lesbians.

So much damage can be done when one speaks on an issue without a full analysis, particularly when an already misunderstood group is the topic of discussion. I hope Linda Page will take these criticisms as they are offered: to provide a taste of how she must examine her own ideas about the question of living as a lesbian - before she speaks in public again.

Theresa Dobko is a lesbian-feminist recently initiated into the Toronto political community, and an often-reluctant graduate student in clinical psychology at York University.

CONFERENCE, from page 5

as probably the best organized in terms of services for women and a good network extending from the towns out to the countryside villages.

It seems that abortion was the most con-

troversial subject dealt with at the conference. It is a difficult issue because the Catholic Church is so very powerful in Latin America. One would think that abortion, being such a highly charged and complex issue, would warrant a workshop devoted to that subject alone, but it was dealt with in the health workshop, as only one of the aspects of health

under discussion. Monica says that more than fifty percent of the jailed women in Peru are there for abortion-related "crimes."

Since abortion and violence emerged as the major issues of the conference, it would seem that what the women of Latin America have to fight are the Catholic Church and their respective legal systems. Violence is perpetu-

ated by the legal system because a woman walking out of a violent domestic situation may lose all her rights. It is not much use being free of rape and battery if you have nothing to live for, having lost your children and the basic material necessities of life, such as a roof, cooking utensils, or clothing. And abortion is withheld from women who desperately need it by the pompous pseudo-morality of the Catholic Church, and the power it wields over the minds and hearts of much of the Latin American population.

Latin American men are notorious for their "machismo," i.e. old-fashioned, traditionalist, sexist, repressive ideas and attitudes. Monica does not see "machismo" as a problem for Latin American women any more than it is for North American or European women. "Most North American men are hostile and threatened when they encounter feminists," she says. Although she admits that most of the leaders of the feminist organizations in Latin America have lived outside their countries, Monica feels that there is little difference, as far as becoming a feminist and encountering male hostility is concerned, between women who have not had the opportunity to leave Latin America and women facing the same changes in North America.

Monica is extremely enthusiastic about the conference, which was obviously a great success in terms of communication and solidarity. It was well attended, it broke new ground, and it excavated further ground broken at the first conference in 1981. Monica was able, incidentally, to acquire many books and brochures in Spanish for the Latin American Women's Resource Centre (now at 582A College St., Toronto).

Anyone interested in attending the third Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Conference in Brazil in the summer of 1985 should contact Monica Riutort at (416) 533-8545 during business hours. It may be possible to raise funds for a group to attend. Monica Riutort will in any case definitely be attending the conference. She understands the vital importance of maintaining and strengthening the international bonds between feminists. ●

MOVEMENT COMMENT

Victims on Trial

by Elsa Schieder

In January, 1982, a young Ottawa woman was allegedly raped by two men she knew. Urged on by a friend, she pressed charges. Over a year passed. She became afraid of retaliation, should she testify.

On November 28, 1983, the case made the headlines. Ontario Supreme Court Justice Joseph O'Brien gave the woman a seven day sentence for refusing to testify against her alleged rapists. One of his justifications for the jail term is that rapists go free if their victims opt not to testify; legal precedent denies the victim the freedom to remain silent.

In the first place, as has frequently been established, only about 10% of rapes are reported to the police. O'Brien's verdict does nothing to encourage the many women who keep silent to speak up. Instead, his ruling is yet another pressure against reporting.

Getting the violent people off the street isn't the central issue. One headline reads: "Letting witness refuse to testify threat to legal system, justice says." The "justice" is right. What's really at stake is power.

Currently, a rape victim only has control over whether or not to go to the police. Then it's up to the police to decide whether to proceed with the charge - and the ratio of suspects brought to trial for reported offenses is lower

for rape than for any other crime against the person. Should a rape case make it to court, the judge does the deciding - with the result that the conviction rate for rape is lower than for any other crime whatsoever. Finally, even if convicted, few rapists get long sentences; many don't even serve jail terms.

O'Brien, understandably, doesn't mention the legal system's abysmal record in dealing with sexually assaulted women.

In the case of the Ottawa woman, for once the powers that be wanted to prosecute. One of the accused is allegedly a member of a violent motorcycle gang. Perhaps O'Brien hoped to be able to convict him on the rape charge. If so, the woman's silence thwarted the judge, and he used his power against her.

Another recent court decision corroborates that what's central is the authority of the legal system, and of the judge as its interpreter. A London, Ontario judge ruled that a twelve-year-old couldn't give evidence against her alleged assailant because, in the judge's opinion, "she didn't have the religious background to understand the nature and consequences of taking the oath." In other words, she didn't conform to the judge's conception of an acceptable witness. The judge's conception, of course, is in line with legal precedents. Once more, the victim's own desire - this time, to testify - wasn't taken into account.

Nor was her ability and readiness to tell the truth. The result? The man charged with assaulting the twelve-year-old went free.

But what about the young Ottawa woman's refusal to testify? - especially since one of the reasons she gives is that she now has a steady boyfriend and doesn't want him to know about the rape? I agree that she isn't showing a high level of sisterly concern. My strongest response, though, is that, in this patriarchal culture - as I've already pointed out - 90% of raped women don't go to the police; am I supposed to start blaming them for the anti-women violence that permeates "our" society.

There's a final question: namely, why has so much media attention been given to this case? Newspapers across the country have featured it prominently, while very little coverage has been given to the one involving the twelve-year-old girl. Probably a large part of the answer lies in the fact that the Ottawa woman conforms to the stereotypical image of the unreliable rape faker. Her mother admits the daughter used to be a liar and prostitute. If that isn't enough to make us doubt the rape allegation, there's always the unwillingness to testify. So, as the myth goes, with women like that around, how are men ever going to be sure they're safe?

It's the same old story. ●

Week of February 1

• **Thursday, February 2:** Reflections of a Senior Lesbian, a talk by Mary Meigs. Sponsored by the Lesbian and Gay Academic Society, U of T. Student Lounge, Library Science Building, 7th Floor, 140 St. George St. 8 pm. \$3.

• **Thursday, February 2:** Hearts, a group exhibition including Joyce Wieland, Carol Wood and Janice Coolen at the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Hart House, U of T. To Thursday, March 1

Hearts

• **Thursday, February 2:** Trinity Square Video: Artists and Their Work - Lisa Steele, showing videos made between 1978 and 1982. Discussion of issues raised. 7:30 pm. 299 Queen St. W. Ste 501. \$3. Info: 593-7165

• **Friday, February 3:** Arlene Mantle performs at the New Trojan Horse Café, 179 Danforth Ave. \$4. Info: 461-8367. Also Saturday, February 4.

• **Saturday, February 4:** Soap II. Dance for lesbians and gay men, sponsored by Gay Community Dance Committee. The Concert Hall, 888 Yonge St. Tickets: \$8.

Week of february 5

• **Sunday, February 5:** Toronto Poetry Workshop, with Libby Scheier. \$7. 11 am, 796 Crawford St. Info: 534-7635. Also Sundays, February 12, 19 and 26.

• **Sunday, February 5:** NFB screens "I Want to Be an Engineer." Royal Ontario Museum. \$2.50. Info: 369-4094.

• **Monday, February 6:** The Women's Group, a support group for lesbians. 8 pm. 519 Church St. Info: Raechel, 926-0527. Also Monday, February 13, 20 and 27.

• **Monday, February 6:** Trinity Square Video Workshop: Law for Video Artists. \$6. 299 Queen St. W., Suite 500. Info: 593-7165.

• **Tuesday, February 7:** Trinity Square Video Workshop: Tax for Video Artists. \$6. 299 Queen St. W. Suite 500. Info: 593-7165.

• **Tuesday, February 7:** Lesbian Phone Line, open tonight for calls from women. 7:30 - 10:30 pm. 960-3249. Also Tuesday, February 14, 21 and 28.

• **Tuesday, February 7:** Meeting to discuss a Gender Sensitive Public Alternative School based on feminist critiques and perspectives. Recreation Room, 2nd Floor, 35 Charles St. W. 7:45 pm. Info: 929-9030, 466-7147.

**OUTSIDE
BROADSIDE**

TORONTO WOMEN'S EVENTS CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 1984

• **Tuesday, February 7:** Scarborough Women's Centre, Workshop on Pre-Menstrual Syndrome and DES. 91 Eastpark Blvd., Scarborough, rms. 2 and 3. 7:30 - 9:30 pm. Info: 431-1138.

• **Tuesday, February 7:** Toronto Addicted Women's Self-Help Network (TAWSHN) meets at Central Neighbourhood House, 349 Ontario St. 7 pm. Info: 961-7319.

• **Tuesday, February 7:** "Encore" - annual concert of Toronto Secondary School Teachers' Association. Roy Thomson Hall. \$3.50. Info: leave message at 962-4871.

• **Wednesday, February 8:** March 8 Coalition meeting for International Women's Day 1984. All women welcome. 7:30 pm. Metro Library, 789 Yonge St. (just north of Bloor). Info: Mariana, 532-8989. Also Wednesdays, February 15, 22 and 29.

• **Wednesday, February 8:** Lesbian Phone Line general meeting. Interested women, prospective volunteers welcome. 7:30 pm. 348 College St., 3rd floor. Info: 960-3249.

• **Wednesday, February 8:** Actor's Lab Theatre presents Faces of the Moon by Dawn Obokata. 155A George St. To Sunday, February 12. Also February 15 - 19. Info: 461-4868, 363-2853.

• **Thursday, February 9:** "Echoes" - a play by Actors Progressive Theatre. 8:30 pm. The Theatre Centre, 666 King St. West. \$7.25 - \$5.25. To Sunday, February 26.

• **Thursday, February 9:** Suniti Namjoshi will read from her poems and fables at Les Pleiades, 316 Dupont St. 9 pm. Info: Janice 964-1839.

• **Thursday, February 9:** NFB screens "I Want to Be an Engineer" and "Attention: Women at Work." Education Centre, 155 College St. Free, but reservations required: 369-4094.

• **Saturday, February 11:** Celebration Dance sponsored by Women's Movement Archives. With DJ's Debbie Parent and Mad Mona. 9 pm, Ukrainian Labour Temple, 300 Bathurst St. \$5 advance, \$6 door. Info: 597-8865.

• **Saturday, February 11:** Forum on Socialist Feminism - panel, workshops, plenary. 1 pm. Trinity United Church, 427 Bloor St. West. Daycare available. Info: Howie, 444-1608.

• **Saturday, February 11:** "Tout une Nuit" by Belgian filmmaker Chantal Ackerman. 8 pm. Jackman Theatre, AGO, 317 Dundas St. East. \$5.

Week of February 12

• **Monday, February 13:** Broadside Dinner, at Sloane's Restaurant, 2442 Yonge St. 7 pm. \$25 for three-course dinner and a glass of wine. Reservations: 598-3513.

• **Monday, February 13:** Trinity Square Video Workshop: Lighting for Video (advanced). \$45 (Trinity members \$40). To Wednesday, February 15, 7:30 - 10:30 pm. 299 Queen St. W., Suite 500. Info: 593-7165.

• **Tuesday, February 14:** Scarborough Women's Centre, Workshop on Menopause - Myths and Realities. 91 Eastpark Blvd., Scarborough, rms. 2 and 3. 7:30 - 9:30 pm. Info: 431-1138.

• **Friday, February 17:** "Towards a Feminist Epistemology." Centre for Women's Studies in Education, Speaker Series presents Sandra G. Harding, University of Delaware. OISE, 252 Bloor St. W., Rm 2-214. 12 noon. Info: 923-6641.

• **Friday, February 17:** Women's Independent Thoughtz (WITZ). A seminar/discussion group for the exchange of ideas and creative endeavours in art, literature, philosophy and political thought. Topic: Buddhism. 7 pm. Info: 766-9496 or 536-3162.

• **Friday, February 17:** Nancy White performs at the New Trojan Horse Café, 179 Danforth Ave. \$4. Info: 461-8367.

Week of February 19

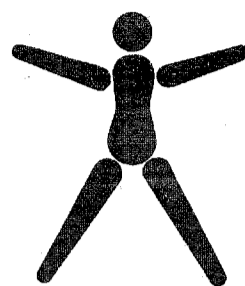
• **Monday, February 20:** Trinity Square Video Workshop: Video Interfaces. \$45 (Trinity members \$40). To Wednesday, February 22, 7:30 - 10:00 pm. 299 Queen St. W., Suite 500. Info: 593-7165.

• **Tuesday, February 21:** Action Group on Pornography. Battle local porn. Meeting of the Committee Against Pornography (CAP). Hart House, 7 Hart House Circle, U of T. South Sitting Room, 3rd Floor, east end of building. 7:30 pm.

• **Tuesday, February 21:** First meeting of support group for lesbians who are incest survivors. Open to all lesbians who have survived any type of incestuous relationship and would like to share past experiences, information and insight. Info: 964-7477 (10 am - 4 pm, Monday to Friday).

• **Tuesday, February 21:** Scarborough Women's Centre Workshop on Sexuality in the Middle Years. 91 Eastpark Blvd., Scarborough, rms 2 and 3. 7:30 - 9:30 pm. Info: 431-1138.

• **Wednesday, February 22:** Singer/songwriter Anna Gutmanis performs at Free Times Café. 9pm. \$2.



• **Thursday, February 23:** Sexuality 84 Conference: Female Sexuality, The Female Life Cycle. Keynote speaker Kate Millett. \$175. Loews Westbury Hotel, 475 Yonge St., Toronto. Registration: 675-5077. Info: Ingrid Norrish, Humber College 675-31111, ext. 4459. Also Friday, February 24.

• **Friday, February 24:** "Born in Flames" - fantastic, feminist film. Benefit screening for *Broadside* and FUSE magazines, with director Lizzie Borden. \$4 advance (\$5 door). Music Hall Theatre, 147 Danforth Ave. 8 pm. Info: DEC, 964-6901.

• **Saturday, February 25:** Resources for Feminist Research sponsors a Witches Carnival. Location TBA. Info: 923-6641, ext. 278.

• **Saturday, February 25:** Scriptwriting workshop with Lizzie Borden, sponsored by Techknowledge. Trinity Square Video, 299 Queen St. West, Ste. 501. Info: 593-7165. Also Sunday, February 26.

• **Saturday, February 25:** NDP Women's Committee annual conference - focus on strategies of raising issues of concern to women. \$17 registration (\$5 pensioners, unemployed). 9 am Queen's Park, rooms 228, 230. Info: 965-3311. Also Sunday, February 26.

Week of february 26

• **Sunday, February 26:** WOODS Mid-winter Skating Party and Pot Luck. Grenadier Pond, High Park. Swimming and sauna after. Bring a dish. 12 noon. If weather in doubt, call Cathy: 255-9663.

• **Monday, February 27:** Feminist Eros Festival opening night benefit, with Word of Mouth, Helen Porter and others. 8 pm, The Rivoli, 334 Queen St. West. Tickets: \$5 advance, \$6 door. Info: 926-0014.

• **Tuesday, February 28:** Scarborough Women's Centre Workshop on Communicating with Your Health Professionals. 91 Eastpark Blvd., Scarborough, rms 2 and 3. 7:30 - 9:30 pm. Info: 431-1138.

• **Tuesday, February 28:** The Theatre Centre previews Nemo Theatre's production of *The Fairies Are Thirsty* (Les Fées ont soif) by Denise Boucher. 666 King St. W. Also Wednesday, February 29. Play runs March 1 - 17. \$5.25, \$7.25. Info: 862-0659.



'Outside Broadside' is a monthly feature of the paper. To help make it as comprehensive as possible, let us know when you are planning an event. In explaining your event (see coupon), keep it short - max. 25 words. Copy that is too long, or with incomplete information will not be printed. We need to know well in advance: two weeks before the month your event's happening. Fill in the coupon below and send it to *Broadside*.

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BORN IN FLAMES
with director Lizzie Borden

"A wild and rousing feminist anthem" - Fuse
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Friday, February 24, 1984. 8 pm.
Music Hall Theatre, 147 Danforth Ave., Toronto

Tickets: \$4 (advance) \$5 (at the door)

Advance tickets available for opening benefit screening only, at:
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Continues February 25 to 29. 7 pm and 9 pm. Sunday matinee, 2 pm.
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DAYCARE - vegetarian, non-sexist, unionized, needs full-time ECE staff. Toronto: 656-2888 or 656-0521.

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WOMAN NEEDS WORKING PARTNER(S) for horticultural business. Rural location. Part-time or full-time. Phone (416) 661-8924 evenings or (416) 365-9700 days, ask for Jean.

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