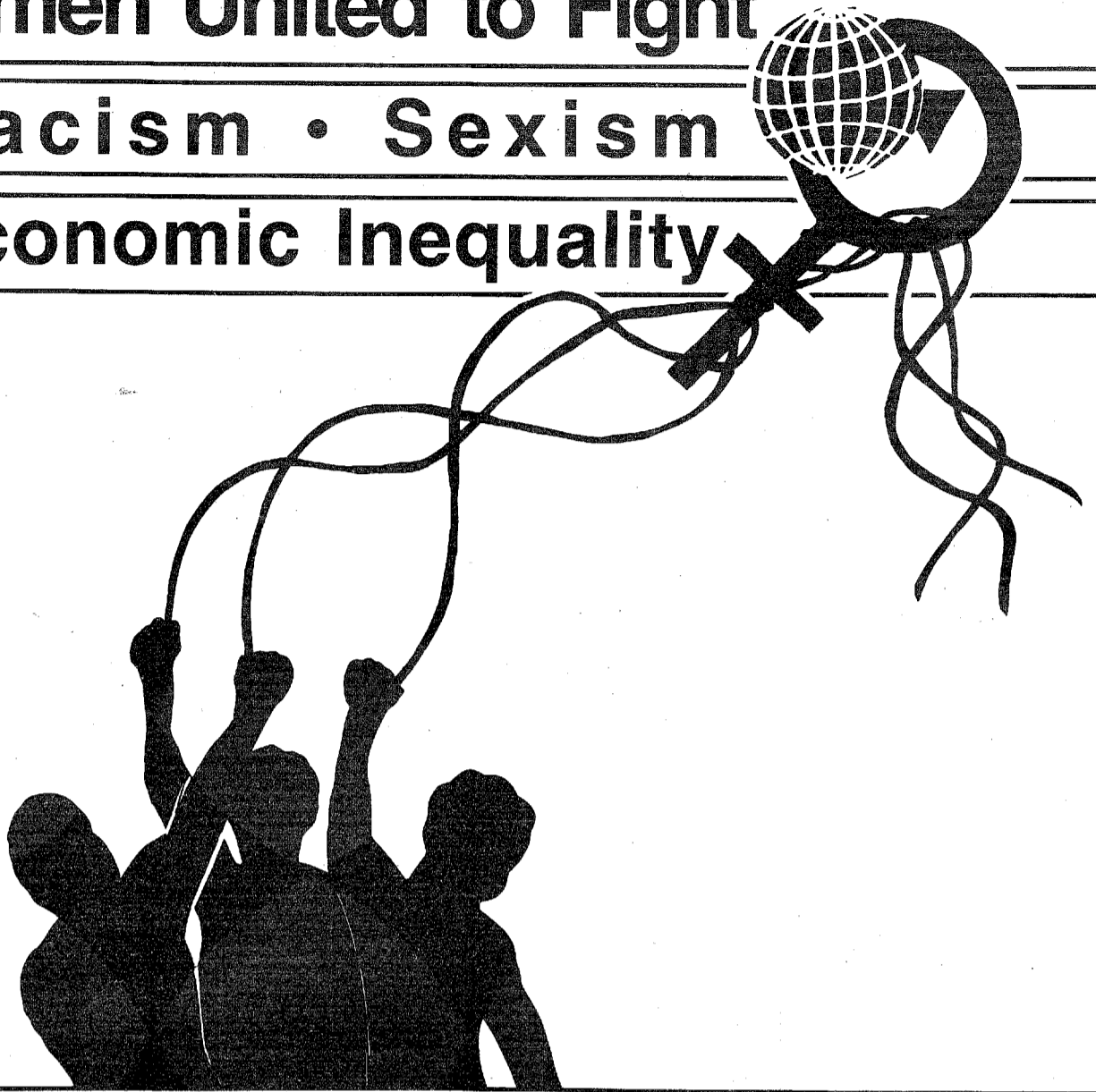


Women United to Fight Racism • Sexism Economic Inequality



International Women's Day, 1988

INSIDE BROADSIDE

FEATURES

STATE SUPREME? The recent Supreme Court decision striking down the abortion law does not leave women in control of our fate, as the chant goes. And pro-choice activists could well put their energies into a fight against the medical establishment. Lisa Freedman explores the recent decision, and gives a run-down of the judges' comments. Page 5.

ISLAMIC ORDINANCE: The recent introduction of the Islamic penal code—the Hudood Ordinance—into Pakistan's body of law is a step backwards for the status of women. The law and its interpretation has a strong anti-woman bias. But women are fighting back, in ever-increasing numbers, against the Islamic Revival. Nuzhat Amin reports. Page 8.



Women demonstrate in Pakistan

NEWS

SUSTAINING SUPPORT: At a Central American Solidarity Conference in Toronto, a Guatemalan woman spoke to the difficulty of sustaining political support in North America: "We are fighting because we are hungry." The conference told of the oppression in Central America, and suggested more useful forms of aid. Page 3.

A QUESTION OF IDENTITY? A conference in Amsterdam—"Homosexuality: Which Homosexuality"—explored the social construction of lesbianism, but didn't come up with any answers. But as panelist Monique Wittig said, heterosexuality is also hard to define. Ingrid MacDonald reports. Page 3.

COMMENT

FAMILY LIFE IN GUATEMALA: El Quiché Indian Rigoberta Menchú talks to *Broadside* about the effect of Guatemalan government oppression on women and children. As more women become involved in the struggle, there are more rapes; and children are stolen and sold. Interview by Amanda Hale and Lynn Hutchinson. Page 4.



OUTSIDE BROADSIDE: Don't miss this month's calendar of Toronto women's events, for March 1988. Page 15.

ARTS

COFFEE BRIGADES: A rhythmic intercutting between interviews with Nicaraguan coffee pickers and journal entries of brigade workers, Marusia Bociurkiw's video *Bullets for a Revolution* portrays the suffering and struggle caused by the Contra war and American trade embargos. Page 11.

VIRILE OR BUST: Two "wildly divergent films"—*Vera* and *Nuts*—say something important about the politics of gender. *Vera* is a young lesbian who thinks she is a man because she loves women. Barbra Streisand, playing a hooker on trial in *Nuts*, becomes a powerful icon. Reviewed by Susan G. Cole. Page 12.

BOOKS: Susan Crean reviews Ottawa journalist Susan Riley's witty *Political Wives*, subtitled *The Lives of the Saints*; and Helen Lenskyj reviews *Women and Education: A Canadian Perspective*, edited by Jane Gaskell and Arlene McLaren. Page 13.

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Sentence's Message

Broadside:

The following letter was sent by the Riverdale Women's Action Committee of Toronto to Judge Lyon following a Sault Saint Marie judge's sentence of 90 days for a man convicted of sexual assault. The sentence was subsequently appealed:

Canadian Judicial Council
 Judge Lyon
 Suite 1803

400 University Ave.
 Toronto M5G 1S5
 Ontario

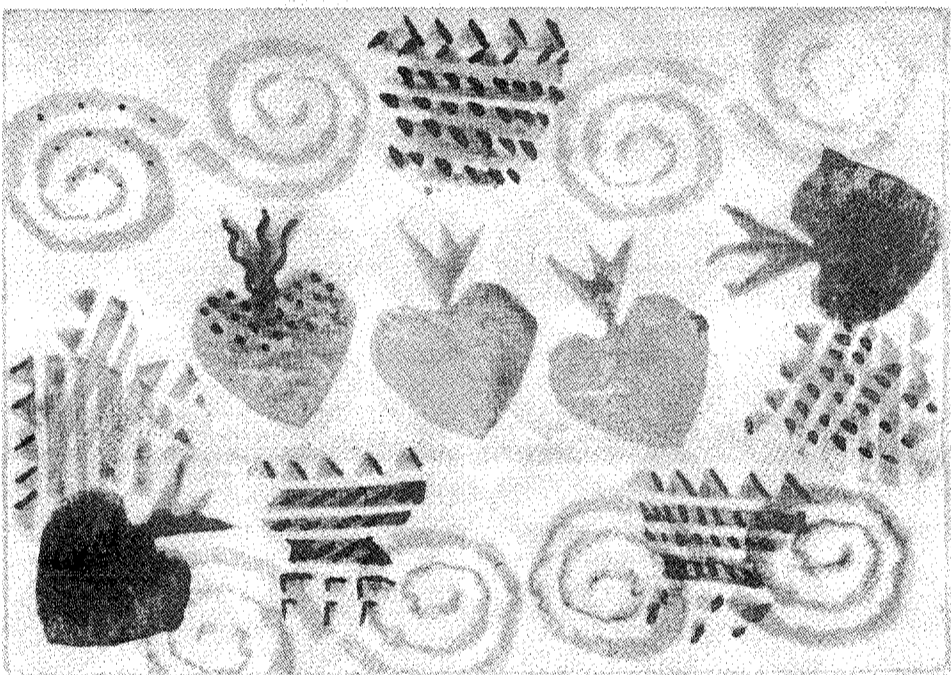
Your Honour:

We, the women of the Riverdale Women's Action Committee, strongly protest the sentence of 90 days to be served on week-ends which was given to Bruce Glassford by Judge I. A. Vannini for the crime of violent sexual assault.

The sentence falls far short of even the minimum 2 years in federal penitentiary for crimes of this nature. The sentence sends a message to society that violence against women is not considered a serious crime by our judicial system. The sentence makes women in this country more vulnerable to violent sexual attacks.

We consider the statements made by Judge Vannini about this case to be irresponsible, dangerous and contemptuous of women. We demand that the crown attorney in Sault Saint Marie appeal this preposterous sentence immediately and that all judges receive information on the impact and prevalence of rape and sexual assault on thousands of women and children across this country.

Riverdale Women's Action Committee
 Toronto



Vegetable print by The Girls Upstairs, Canterbury, UK

Quote of the Month

"The long-range goal of Planned Parenthood is the creation of a 'master race';" US Republican presidential contender Marion (Pat) Robertson said recently. "[Birth control advocate and Planned Parenthood's founder] Margaret Sanger," he continued, "and her disciples wanted to sterilize Blacks, Jews, mental defectives and Christian fundamentalists."

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EDITORIAL

Grasping Grassroots Control

Women's groups and abortion rights activists are doubtless still recovering from the momentous Supreme Court decision that brought down Canada's antiquated and misogynist abortion laws. The judgement reinforced feminist claims that the law violated women's fundamental right to control our own bodies—or security of person as the Justices would have it—and signalled a gratifying victory for which women have been struggling for close to 20 years.

But now that the Criminal Code has been hauled off the backs of pregnant women, women's health activists have to be assured that abortion services will be made available to women without provincial intervention. It is plain from the various bizarre reactions to the Supreme Court decision from the provincial premiers that this will not be easy. BC's Bill Vander Zalm, in possible violation of the National Health Act, is refusing to release any provincial funds to help women pay for their abortions. In less conservative provinces like Ontario, health ministers are gearing up to find some way to maintain state control over abortions. In the meantime, the federal government is busily drafting a new abortion law that it hopes will pass Constitutional muster.

As we wait for this political dust to settle, feminists have the temporary freedom to recall

initiatives undertaken in Ontario ten years ago to implement free-standing women's health centres. These health facilities were proposed to be wholly autonomous, wholly integrated services, designed to meet the specific health needs of women, including the need for comprehensive abortion services. The proposed clinics, with women run boards and an all woman staff, were models for women's control over our reproduction. Dennis Timbrell, then Minister of Health in Ontario, predictably balked at the idea.

Now, a decade later, Health Minister Elinor Caplan has been considering similar plans, but from what little she has said publicly, it appears she will situate such clinics in hospitals, thus failing to keep the services at the required arm's length from the institutions that have traditionally made it hard for women to get the information and medical help they need. At the same time, a group of relatively privileged women has begun to make some headway with yet another proposal, this one for a genuine free-standing women's health facility in Toronto's downtown core. While this woman-run clinic has the potential to be a vast improvement over Caplan's hospital plans and even over the abortion services run by brave but controlling male doctors, the proposed clinic cannot be the service it has to be unless the or-

ganizers enlist some grassroots support. The driving force behind the project is a group of activists whose commitment is unquestionable but whose grasp of the dynamics of the women's community has yet to be proved.

This is a crucial period in the struggle for women's reproductive rights. We have to express our unwavering support for government funding of free-standing abortion clinics, including the clinics currently run by doctors Morgentaler and Scott. The current OHIP fee schedule for abortions, a paltry \$103, has to be increased if these doctors are going to be able to provide the full range of services women require. And we have to press our MPs to dispense with any ideas for new abortion laws. We don't need laws, we need reproductive rights.

But as we lobby and push for these improvements in abortion services, we have to maintain our vision of what women's real control over our bodies would look like. Imagine an independent, women-controlled health facility providing PMS counselling, sexual abuse counselling, birthing alternatives, birth control information and comprehensive abortion services. Imagine a facility like this maintaining accountability to the grassroots feminist community. And then let's fight for it.



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Central American Update

by Amanda Hale

Mirna Anaya—lawyer, former Justice of the Peace and legal advisor to the Non-Governmental Human Rights Commission of El Salvador—spoke at a Central American Solidarity Conference in Toronto last month about the political situation in El Salvador, and about the continuing violation of human rights by the Napoléon Duarte government. Mirna Anaya's husband Herbert, former president of the Independent Human Rights Commission, was assassinated last October while taking his children to school.

Mirna Anaya, now living in Canada with her five children, makes an urgent call to Canadians to put pressure on the Canadian government to suspend economic aid to El Salvador. Bilateral aid resumed in 1985 after a four year suspension. Foreign monetary aid channelled government to government goes towards the military budget and not towards health, education or any of the many services which could benefit the people of El Salvador instead of contributing to their torture, death or disappearance. It is suggested that aid be channelled through well-known non-government organizations if it is to help anyone other than the military.

Rigoberta Menchú, currently exiled in Mexico, also spoke to the conference on behalf of the Guatemalan people, and as a representative of the Committee of Peasant Unity (CUC). Rigoberta is a 29-year-old Quiché Indian whose political awareness stems from bitter experience. From a very early age she accompanied her family to the coastal plantations each year to work in the fields under conditions of slavery. Her brother died as a result of pesticide inhalation: the crops are sprayed from the air while the peasants are working. As a result of her father's solidarity with the campesino protest movement to reclaim their land, both Rigoberta's parents were killed. In her mother's case, death came after many days of rape and torture. Addressing an audience of Canadian solidarity workers and Central American refugees, Rigoberta acknowledged the difficulty of sustained solidarity work for North Americans. "We are fighting because we are hungry," she said, "because are parents burned, because our children disappeared. . . . Not even with

our stories can we civilize the world?"

Rigoberta's story is documented in the testimonial book *"I, Rigoberta Menchú. . . An Indian Woman in Guatemala."* (For an interview with Menchú, see page 4.) She spoke of the more than one million campesinos undergoing forced labour in "model villages"—the Guatemalan government's name for what are essentially concentration camps. These villages are militarized zones, and one of the many abuses of human rights which occur there is the massive sterilization of peasants, most of whom are indigenous people of Mayan descent, like Rigoberta herself.

Rigoberta Menchú is a very powerful and dignified woman. She brought the entire conference audience to its feet with her lucid political analysis, and with the knowledge of what it took to bring her from a Guatemalan village to a position of international notoriety and respect. "It has not been easy for us to become aware," she said. "There are many paths. Walk with us." She told of the large demonstrations and conflicts which occurred in Guatemala during the end of January and beginning of February. The people are demanding that the Cerezo government keep its promises of change. Wages have been frozen since 1980 and the Association of Guatemalan Nutritionists revealed last year that 70% of the population lives in total poverty. Housing, sanitation, electricity and medical care are totally inadequate. There are four children dying every hour in Guatemala. Out of the 3,400 doctors in the country, 70% of them work in Guatemala City, the capital. Illiteracy runs at around 70% although the official figure is 53%. And the Cerezo government's National Literacy Committee, which promised to teach half a million people to read and write in a year, has not yet had an effect.

Cerezo, a Christian Democrat, was elected president, in January 1987, of the first civilian government in many years. So far none of the economic and social reforms promised have materialized. And although Cerezo states that violations of human rights have diminished since he took power, tortures, deaths and disappearances continue at an alarming rate. Repression is merely being applied in a more sophisticated and clandestine manner. And Canadian tax dollars are contributing. In



November 1987, following Joe Clark's trip through Central America, bilateral aid to Guatemala was resumed.

The Conference provided updates on Honduras and Nicaragua, as well as on El Salvador and Guatemala. Julie Leonard, recently returned from Honduras, described it as, "the lynchpin of the militarization process in Central America." Eleven airstrips have been built or revamped in the past few years. Murders and disappearances have increased recently and, as usual, the targets are union leaders, student organizers, peasants, and human rights activists. On the evening of January 14, Miguel Angel Pavon, President of the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights, and Moises Landaverde, President of the Teachers' Association, were shot and killed as they sat talking in a car after a meeting.

And while the US Congress decision not to renew funds to the Contra is cause for celebration, Nicaraguans continue to suffer the effects of the war. There have been over 47,000 casualties, with more than 20,000 Nicaraguans killed since the war began in 1981. Inflation is rampant. In March 1985 the cordoba was worth 670 to \$1 US. Now it is 21,000 to 1. The government recently declared a state of emergency in basic grains. Because of drought 75% of the last harvest's bean production was lost. Also, there was an estimated 50 million cordobas worth of damage in the production of cotton, coffee and sugar cane, all of which had lower yields. Nicaragua needs emergency food aid. Meanwhile the new constitution brought into effect a year ago reflects the humanity of the Sandinista revolutionary government. It guarantees equality for women, the right to work and housing, and autonomy for Native peoples, in marked contrast to the war of genocide being waged against the indigenous peoples of

Guatemala and El Salvador, and to Canada's treatment of its own Native peoples.

The Ortega government has been exemplary in its compliance with many aspects of the Esquipulas II peace accord. *La Prensa* has resumed publishing, the amnesty program continues, allowing contra forces to return safely to Nicaragua. The national reconciliation commission is chaired by Cardinal Obando y Bravo, a long time critic of the Sandinista government.

The Conference provided hope, information, inspiration and openings for those who wish to become involved in assisting the brutally oppressed people of Central America. Workshops included information from Canadian Action for Nicaragua, Tools for Peace, Salvaide, and the Toronto Guatemala Committee on providing people to people material and political aid; how to carry out public education; how to use the media; how to organize tours to Central America; how to run cultural events, and so on. There was also a workshop on how we should plan for the Group of Seven economic summit to be held in Toronto this June. In a short presentation on Canadian government policy in Central America, NDP critic Jim Manley, and Tim Draymin discussed how the public can pressure the Conservative government on issues such as refugee policy and bilateral aid to Central American governments in contravention of the Human Rights code. According to Draymin, the Conservative government, unwilling to go against Washington, is more interested in its public relations image than in the reality of international policy. Apparently 35-40% of the mail Brian Mulroney receives concerns Central America.

With an election likely coming up in the fall, we as voters have power to demand some answers on foreign aid and refugee policy.

Constructing Our Essential Identity

by Ingrid E. MacDonald

AMSTERDAM—"Homosexuality: Which Homosexuality?" was an international conference held in December in Amsterdam to explore a debate between two prevailing theories in current homosexual research: essentialism and social construction theory.

The opening address of the conference showed which side of the argument the organizers were backing. It was given by a woman whose name has become synonymous with social construction theory: American anthropologist Carole S. Vance. Best known as the editor of *Pleasure and Danger*, the soft-spoken Vance carries a big stick in the realm of female sexuality. "Sexuality has been a final frontier" of an essentialist stronghold, and "the violation of sexuality as 'natural' has allowed for the investigation of variation at all levels."

"Naturalist" definitions of sexuality have been employed by lesbian and gay activists, especially in civil rights struggles. By emphasizing that persons are "born gay," a strong claim can be made for entitlement to basic liberties. Claiming that sexuality is a predetermined factor counteracts the accusations of detractors who believe that lesbians and gays pervert or recruit those around them. Writers and historians wanting to beef up the profile of lesbians and gay men can not resist the temptation to bend the identity continuum backwards to welcome Plato and Sappho, Michelangelo and medieval abbesses into the ranks of our current struggles for recognition and equality.

The conference as a whole had a decidedly academic crust to it, yet the bulk of it was palatable, with many of the 70 workshops presented by grassroots types: activists, archivists, community and health care workers.

Indeed, one woman, a health activist from San Francisco, works right on the streets. Gloria Lockett, an ex-prostitute, is project director for Cal Pep, a community project that focuses on educating working women about the HIV virus. Lockett reports that 79% of prostitutes use condoms and that positive HIV antibody tests are usually a result of drug use

and not sexual activity. "I do lots of outreach on the streets," Lockett says, "and I talk to everybody—lesbians, latino boys, elderly latino and black women. If you know these kinds of families then you know that the grandmothers are the route of information into many homes."

Writer and historian Joan Nestle was on hand to underline the long connection between prostitutes and lesbians, as many prostitutes are themselves lesbians. Speaking of the Lesbian Herstory Archives of New York, of which she is a founder, Nestle said that, "History projects are giving working women back their own history. Like lesbians, whores were part of the 50s bar culture." This culture has been the sight of renewed understanding of lesbian butch/femme identity.

Gloria Anzaldúa, co-editor of *This Bridge Called My Back* and author of a new book, *La Frontera*, observed that lesbians and gay men too often speak of their own reality in a distanced or disowning manner and she cites this as a form of self oppression. Drawing on her own experience as an American chicana, Anzaldúa said, "As a colonized people we have been assimilated into the dominant culture through osmosis. Unless we become aware of the way that the white-anglo culture looks at us, then it will be the way that we see ourselves. So often women of colour write about ourselves as if we were writing of an object, not as the subject."

Interestingly, there were no workshops specifically about sex; however sex talk did play an important part in a series of workshops on current issues in lesbian relationships. San Francisco therapist Marni Hall, author of *The Lavender Couch*, identified "intercourse" as a major psychological obstacle to happy sex lives for lesbians. To Hall, intercourse is a heterosexual monolith that lesbians have unconsciously brought to their beds. "I believe in sex," said Hall, "but I always put quotes around it in order to clearly designate its source, which is intercourse. Intercourse is fine so long as you role-play it and are enjoying it. By role-playing it you are robbing it of its power to tyrannize, to

dominate your way of thinking. You can take it on consciously and then it stops tyrannizing you." Hall would say that intercourse has obstructed thinking on sex to the point that lesbians are left without a sexual language of their own. "We don't have our own language of silliness, play, eroticism, masturbation, fantasy, role-playing, and all the other things that aren't 'sex.' 'Sex' in quotes, I believe in!"

Dutch therapist and couples specialist Coby Langenkamp would agree with Hall on the problems of elusive sex in relationships. "Sexual problems often stem from a non-functioning idea of what sex really is. Often it is trying to pile intimacy on top of more intimacy." Langenkamp prescribes playful exploration to her clients, and admits to meeting with some reluctance. When women experiment in the bedroom they often come too close to the "whore" part of themselves. Langenkamp explains, "As women, being sexual is not a developed strength. We surround sex with shame and fear."

Celia Kitzinger, author of the recently published *The Social Construction of Lesbianism*, would argue that psychology is having too great an impact on current lesbian self definitions, despite the successes of therapists like Hall and Langenkamp. By seeking out therapy in almost epidemic numbers, lesbians, Kitzinger speculates, are buying into a science that until recently was an enemy, as works like Perimmon Blackridge and Sheila Gilhooly's *Still Sane* painfully show. Kitzinger says that psychology maintains the status quo and circulates terminologies which pathologize lesbian relationships with terms like fusion, dependency, etc.

If the assimilation of psychology is fretful news, it is comforting to know that the church is still targeted for revolution. Theologian Mary Hunt, a gregarious American, is doing the lesbian nuns one better by developing a lesbian theology for Catholics. This is the latest frontier in the multi-aspected approach of liberation theology. Hunt says that lesbian theology could only evolve once feminist theology had been established. "The primary contradiction

is not that we are lesbians, but that we are women. This primary contradiction has in the past prevented the construction of a female theology. But having done the groundwork (as women) we can now do the real lesbian stuff."

Philosopher and author of *Le corps lesbien* and *Les Guérillères*, Monique Wittig addressed one of the closing lectures. With prose as dense as paste, Wittig—in a dark suit and a pristine white shirt—spoke of women's role within the confines of the social contract. "Heterosexuality is difficult to define," admitted Wittig, "as it is both imaginary and real. In it homosexuality appears like a ghost which is hardly seen."

That "hardly seen ghost" proved difficult to define even at this lesbian and gay event. A panel of academics who were asked to define lesbian identity made a nearly futile attempt to capture the nature of current lesbian self-definition. When a member of the audience asked how it was that there was not a woman of colour on the five-person panel, and another asked why the panel was held in the only inaccessible room at the conference, an organizer gave defensive and condescending explanations, which only made the whole event seem perilously inadequate. All questions remained unanswered.

It might well be that the "What is lesbian identity?" question can not be answered in a way that gives justice to difference and diversity among women. Perhaps the more burning question would be "Is it important?" Reports that I heard throughout the weeklong conference indicated that quality of life and the struggle for full entitlement to rights and freedoms in an era of increasing prejudice seemed to be a priority. Nonetheless, with an ingenuity that I can say typifies the modern lesbian, I can assure you that many lesbians are living fulfilled and happy lives even while this question of identity is left incomplete.

Ingrid MacDonald is a former Broadside collective member now living and writing in Canterbury, England.

Rigoberta Menchú:

Witness to Genocide

Interview by Amanda Hale & Lynn Hutchinson (Translation by Lynn Hutchinson)

Amanda Hale & Lynn Hutchinson: Since the Guatemalan government oppression causes such extreme pressure in people's lives, what effect does this have on family life? Is this oppression experienced differently by women than men? And what about the issues mentioned during the conference, such as forced sterilization, and the sale of children for organ transplants?

Rigoberta Menchú: It is important to understand that we have approximately 46,000 widows in my country. As a result of the assassination of their husbands, they had to flee their birthplaces. They are part of the population of internal refugees. This is a new element in the history of our people, the history of our suffering. How are these widows going to find respect when, during our entire history, there has been no respect for the women of Guatemala? The women have had to flee with enormous numbers of children, with orphans, with their own sons and daughters, and search for a way to survive.

Undoubtedly the situation has been very hard for women, because they are committing a crime in the eyes of the authorities, the state, the army; and their principal crime is their participation in the struggle. The authorities are not accustomed to seeing women participate. They are used to seeing women as menial workers who do not demand their rights. The cruelty against women is terrible, because they know that women have become enemies of the army and the security forces. Before, the women didn't have such a prominent role in the struggle. Now, the fact that they are participating, or that the army may find them carrying information from one place to another, has led to so many more rapes.

Perhaps those who suffer the most severely from the war are the women and the children; women have a much greater sensitivity, and to face this situation is tremendously difficult. Of course the situation remains difficult but women have gained a great awareness and the potential to change and participate in the struggle—to become cadres, leaders—because this is born out of life and experience.

In the case of sterilization, this is practised almost exclusively against the Indian population. That is not to say that it is not carried out amongst the poor Ladino sectors: it is, but massively against the Indians. This is very important because sterilization has been practised in other countries on this continent, and on other continents. It is not new. It is practised in order to do away with the Native peoples. We know about the experience of other Native peoples—the Navajo, the Hopi, the Sioux in the United States. We realize that the campaign of forced sterilization against the indigenous peoples has been going on for many years in Guatemala. And this, little by little, has created a situation which could eliminate new generations of Indian children—children who would

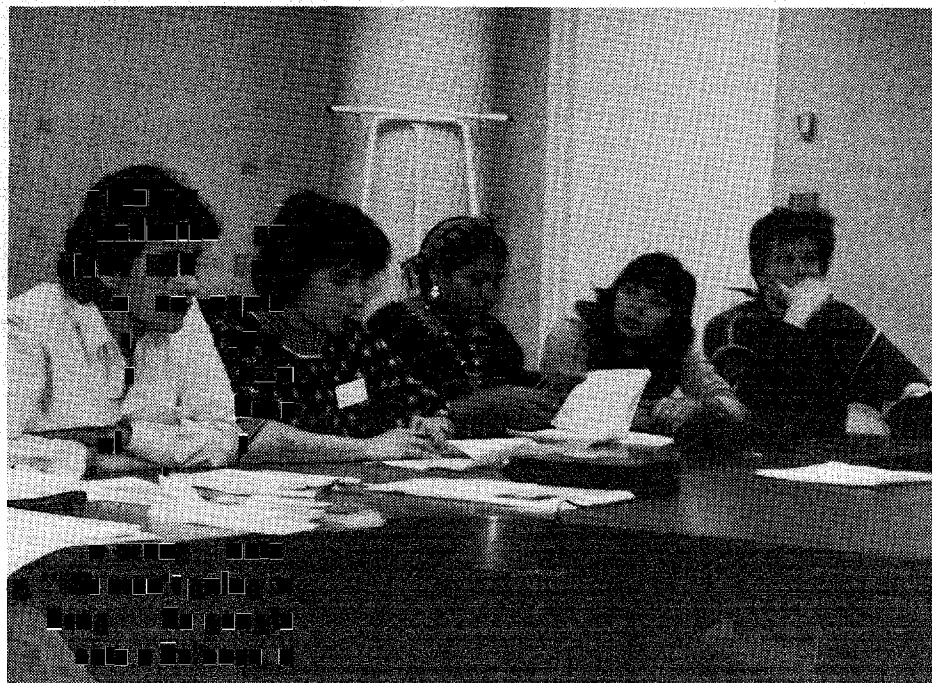
follow the Native tradition.

We are very worried about the quantity of sterilizations, especially in the areas of Quetzaltenango, Totonicapán, Huehuetenango, Chimaltenango, and El Quiché. What does this mean? The majority of the Indian population lives in those areas. And it is a total campaign to try to destroy them. It is well known that Indian couples who can no longer have children are traumatized psychologically; they are scorned in their communities. It's a shock, it's the same as raping a child, or someone's wife: it is a terrible shock. In many Guatemalan villages people say, "We aren't going to take this medicine, it's a drug." The people themselves are starting to create a defence, a way out of this. How do we know whether sterilization is produced by an injection, a pill, by food, or any other product that our people consume? This is very difficult.

Now I am going to tell you about the sale of children. We know about towns, entire communities, such as Cuartopueblo, a village in Ixcán, where the army came one Sunday. All the children were staying at home with their older brothers and sisters while their parents went to the Plaza to sell their produce in the market. The army came, the soldiers occupied the Plaza, and captured 400 people who were there: children, women, old people. But most of the children were at home. And after they had killed the 400 people in the church, in the Chapel of Cuartopueblo, the army gathered up the children from their houses and took them away. It's a campaign to take children. Where did they take them? They took them somewhere. What did they do with those children? We are certain that those children were sold and their organs put in flasks and exported for the foreign market.

We can't believe those children are being brought up somewhere else. We can't believe that. Who knows how many Guatemalan children were captured in the offensives, in the massacres, in the flight of the people? We have exact numbers of children of our internal refugees in the mountains, children who were captured because their parents couldn't take them out in time when the army took the villages. The army took them away. No children's bodies were found in those areas. Generally, when the army kills it leaves the bodies. The bodies of children were not found. Nothing was found. There are many witnesses who say that the children were removed to military detachments, and from there nothing more was known. An enormous number of children was captured in the war zones and in the military offensives. How is the army not going to negotiate, how is the army not going to sell them? They have become a national product. Nobody answers for them, their parents have died, their brothers and sisters are dead or, if they're alive, who knows where they are? Who is going to claim these children?

Many so-called *cunas* (crèches) have been discovered, especially in the capital. In August 1987 one was found by some people helping a woman whose child had been kidnapped. She



Speaking Out: (from left) Rosa Niola from Salvaide, Nancy Farmer from Tools for Peace, Rigoberta Menchú, and two translators.

tried to find out who the kidnappers were. She called the neighbours. She had a relative who was in the National Police, who recognized the car that took the child, and the people began to search. They found the *casa cuna*. It was a place for forty children, with apparatus installed: surgical equipment, flasks, quality control export stamps, medical installations, and food for the children. First they fatten them, as one does with a pig, or any animal before it is killed. They give them a series of treatments and then they remove all their organs, all of the useful organs in flasks. And they are sold on the foreign market. Also, we know of a search for a group of officials involved in this, but we have to find ways to validate our information, and this is very difficult.

AH & LH: In your book *I Rigoberta Menchú* . . . you talk about the Indian becoming *conscientizado*, or politically aware. What happened in your community to make the people politically conscious?

RM: It happened the same way that it happened in many communities. Little by little our people began to be conscious of our needs. Our life is not easy. It is hard to see brothers and sisters die, to see sons and daughters die. And the lack of resources: the majority of the people in my community didn't know how to read or write—nothing. Why? Because there was never a school there. And we had barely started a co-operative when it was destroyed. Little by little we began to understand the larger role played by our leaders, our local leaders, who helped determine our political consciousness. Our leaders were there for many years. They understood that the land is ours, that we have dignity, that our ancestors lived there. All this our people began to understand,

and this understanding was changed into a great struggle. And that is what we experienced in every corner of Guatemala.

It has been very difficult because we also encounter cultural shocks as the oppression destroys elements of our culture in the villages. And for women it was not easy that they had to leave their parents. And for the parents it was also very difficult to say, "My daughter is going to join the struggle!" It was very difficult but the people were capable of sacrificing everything and constructing an alternative. I would say that it was in our daily lives that we began to learn many things. It wasn't automatic, it was a process that took a long time.

In Guatemala history can never be turned back because so many of the women are already involved politically. They were born into the hardest and most difficult conditions; they were born of the symbols of oppression. The women became our *compañeras*, our leaders, shaped not only by the oppression which they had lived in the past, but also by other cruel experiences which the struggle and the war taught them—to have to flee your community because it is being bombed, to have to sacrifice a child. Many of our *compañeras'* children died while fleeing, many of the women who were pregnant miscarried while fleeing.

All these events, then, must introduce a very great change in the life and history of our struggle. I always think, thanks to the struggle of our leaders, thanks to the struggle of our parents, many of us have been able to follow a political path, a path of struggle, a path on which one cannot turn back.

Lynn Hutchinson is a Toronto visual artist and feminist. Amanda Hale is a Broadside collective member.



PHOENIX RISING

Voice of the Psychiatrized

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Abortion: Still in the Hands of the State

by Lisa Freedman

January 28, 1988 will long be remembered as the day the Supreme Court of Canada struck down this country's archaic abortion law. It was a day of celebration for pro-choice activists across the country. In Toronto, at a demonstration in front of the Morgentaler Clinic the familiar cry rang out, "Not the Church and Not the State, Women Must Control Our Fate."

As I was listening to the celebratory voices raised in unison I couldn't help but feel that someone had their signals crossed. It appeared to me that in fact it was the state that determined women's fate. And not only was it the state, but it was the state, three male doctors and one male lawyer working through the courts, a state apparatus, that in the end determined women's fate, and it will be predominantly male legislators that will ultimately decide the issue. Now I may be overly cynical, but I couldn't help wondering where the voices and concerns of women fit in this whole debate.

The decision made me reflect back on the pro-choice movement in Ontario and its role in helping to finally determine this question. The two main players in the pro-choice arena have been for the most part CARAL (The Canadian Abortion Rights Action League) and OCAC (the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics). In the case of CARAL the group was started mainly to fight to repeal the abortion law (indeed CARAL's initials originally stood for the Canadian Association to Repeal the Abortion Law). CARAL is a well organized group with chapters across the country and an advisory board that cuts across all political and religious affiliations. OCAC on the other hand does not have the history of CARAL. It was originally an offshoot of CEAC (the Committee for the Establishment of Abortion Clinics) and its purpose was to lobby politicians and educate the public about free-standing abortion clinics.

Throughout the entire abortion debate over the past five years, OCAC members have on many occasions vociferously separated themselves from the legal fight by arguing that they did not have a monolithic strategy. On the contrary they have put themselves forward as the group that is mobilizing the people. Originally started as the group that supported publicly funded abortions, they were quickly aligned with Morgentaler's private clinic and indeed at one point organized the escort service that helped women weave their way through the picket lines.

The value of the efforts of these two groups goes without question. My question is though, did their efforts have any effect on the outcome of the legal decision? In effect, what role does any lobby group have on what is ultimately found to be a legal question?

The fight to win women access to abortions was almost right from the start characterized as a legal battle. The first Morgentaler Defence Fund was set up in 1973 to help defray the costs of the legal battle being launched in Quebec. Since then the law has constantly been under attack, but not necessarily by pro-choice groups. It was Morgentaler's battles in Quebec that finally resulted in the newly elected PQ government's declaration that the law was unenforceable and their declining to prosecute Morgentaler further.

Why couldn't the pro-choice movement ever get the fight out of the courts? The simplistic answer, of course, is that it was always a law that we were fighting. Women were criminals if they got an abortion because the law said so. Morgentaler was a criminal for performing abortions because the law said so. Free standing clinics were illegal because the law said so. The fight became, out of necessity, women against the law.

The fight never could properly develop into one between women and the state as both levels of government declined to be players. Whenever the federal government was lobbied on the issue of abortion it always defended the law and said

quite clearly that any inequities in the abortion delivery system were the responsibility of the provinces as they had jurisdiction over the delivery of health care. The provinces quite predictably blamed any problems on the federal government's law. And so the ball got passed back and forth, with no one willing to catch it.

Furthermore, after the Morgentaler Clinic was established in Toronto, the provincial government closed all ears and refused to entertain the pro-choice lobby, giving the stock answer that the clinic was illegal and they would not comment, or entertain discussion while the case was pending in the courts.

The fight had to be a legal fight. The governments refused to move. It was only through the courts that the issue of the legality of the abortion law could be determined. The groundswell of support for pro-choice could not move the government. The findings of its own commission report could not move the government. The governments could not move each other. Only the courts could ultimately move the government.

But pro-choice activists did have another fight that was generally overlooked. Aside from the fight to repeal the law, the delivery of abortion services could have been improved if the pro-choice movement had turned its considerable energies against the medical establishment. It was the medical establishment that dictated who got an abortion, that set its own restrictions on the number of abortions to be performed in any given hospital. It has always had the real power. As Susan G. Cole pointed out in her 1983 *This Magazine* article, "Doctors are the kings of their institutional castles and they can and will protect their territory if they are so moved." Perhaps the pro-choice movement should have moved them.

I'm quite willing to say that I don't know if the pro-choice groups made any difference in the legal struggle to nullify the law. There are too many instances of people winning rights for many others in the courts without any active lobbying movement behind them. Indeed that is the purpose of the courts—to decide individual cases on their own merits, and to protect minority rights against the tyranny of the majority.

I am also quite willing to say that the pro-choice movement did have an impact in a number of ancillary ways. The legal cases of Dr. Morgentaler were for the most part funded by the pro-choice movement: people donated money because they believed in pro-choice (and to a lesser degree free-standing abortion clinics); people believed in pro-choice because of the educational work done by the pro-choice movement. Newspaper editorials for the most part have been pro-choice over the years, thanks

in large part to the groundswell of support for pro-choice. This groundswell was generated by the work of the pro-choice movement.

Finally, I think that one of the most important things that the pro-choice movement has done for women is to bring a lot of women to feminism. A woman's right to control her body is one of the basic tenets of feminism and on this personal level thousands of women became political.

Regardless of the impact of the pro-choice movement up to this point, now is really the time that pro-choice groups will make a difference. The fight, for the most part, will move out of the courts and into the political arena. Now is the time that the pro-choice movement must inap out its strategy in the face of a perhaps more difficult fight than it has seen before.

If the experience in the United States is any indication, the abortion situation may get worse before it gets better. In the US since the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision made abortion legal, opponents of choice have been organizing to overturn the Court's decision. Groups which oppose a woman's right to choose, in close alliance with leaders of the New Right and the so-called Moral Majority, have stated their opposition loudly and aggressively. They have resorted to an incredible range of tactics, from blatant propaganda and harassment to personal intimidation and legal action. Their "hit list" mentality targets pro-choice Congress incumbents for defeat. The situation there is at a crisis proportion. Pro-choice groups, like NARAL (National Abortion Rights Action League), are waging a fight against:

The Hyde Amendment, passed in Congress every year since 1976, prohibits Medicaid funds from paying for abortions. This amendment makes it virtually impossible for poor women to obtain abortions.

Only 15 states currently provide funds for abortions for poor women. Five of those states only provide funding because the courts have ordered them to do so.

At least 29 states have proposed legislation to restrict the ability of young women to exercise their right to abortions.

The Smith Amendment prohibits abortion coverage on the insurance of any federal employee.

The Foreign Assistance Appropriations Bill bans the use of federal funds to cover abortions for Peace Corps volunteers.

Incidents of clinic violence—arson, bombings, harassment of patients—increase daily. The nationwide violence has made it difficult, often impossible, for some women to obtain abortion.

• continued page 14

Justices Prevail

On June 15, 1983, Dr. Henry Morgentaler opened an abortion clinic in Toronto. On July 5, 1983 Metro Toronto Police raided the clinic and arrested Drs. Morgentaler, Scott and Smoling and charged them with a variety of offences under the Criminal Code. The case did not initially get to court until July 20, 1984 when the Supreme Court of Ontario rejected the doctors' contention that Canada's abortion laws violated the Charter of Rights. The doctors subsequently went to trial and were acquitted by a jury on November 8, 1984.

On December 4, 1984, then Attorney General Roy McMurtry announced that the Crown would appeal the verdict. The appeal was heard before the Ontario Court of Appeal which on October 1, 1985 ordered a new trial. This decision was appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada which heard the appeal in October 1986. On January 28, 1988 (4½ years after the clinic opened and 20 years after Morgentaler performed his first abortion) the Supreme Court of Canada struck down Canada's abortion law. Four separate decisions were rendered by the Court.

The first decision was written by Chief Justice Brian Dickson and concurred in by Justice Lamer. The judges found that at the most basic, physical and emotional level, every pregnant woman is told by the current abortion section of the Criminal Code that she cannot submit to a generally safe medical procedure that might be of clear benefit to her unless she meets criteria unrelated to her own needs. Not only does the removal of decision-making power threaten women in a physical sense, the indecision of not knowing whether an abortion will be granted inflicts emotional stress. Dickson found that the law clearly interferes with a woman's bodily integrity. In a strongly worded statement, he found that forcing a woman, by threat of criminal sanction, to carry a fetus to term unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations, is a profound interference with a woman's body and thus a violation of her security of person.

Given that the government has the power to infringe rights if it complies with certain principles of fairness (known as the principles of fundamental justice), Dickson went on to discuss whether the defences as outlined in the law (having the abortion approved by a therapeutic abortion committee, having it done in an approved or accredited hospital, and only approving those where the continuation of the pregnancy would or would be likely to endanger her life or health) were fair. Dickson found that the procedure and re-

strictions stipulated in the law for access to therapeutic abortions made the defences little more than illusory. The requirement that at least four physicians be available to authorize and to perform an abortion in practice makes abortions unavailable in many hospitals, as one quarter of all Canadian hospitals have less than four doctors on staff. The restrictions attached to the term "accredited" automatically disqualified another 500 hospitals from undertaking therapeutic abortions, and the requirement of provincial approval of a hospital for the purpose of performing therapeutic abortions further restricts the number of hospitals offering the procedure as the provincial Minister of Health is under no obligation to approve hospitals. In addition, even if a hospital meets all of the above criteria, there is no requirement in the law that the hospital need perform abortions at all.

The Badgley Committee, in its report on abortion, discovered that, in 1976, of the 559 general hospitals which met the procedural requirements of the law, only 271 hospitals had actually established a therapeutic abortion committee. Indeed Statistics Canada reported that in 1982 the number of hospitals with therapeutic abortion committees had actually fallen to 261, and not all of these hospitals actually performed abortions.

With respect to the requirement that the therapeutic abortion committee must find that the continuation of the pregnancy would endanger a woman's health, Justice Dickson found that this failed to provide an adequate standard for therapeutic abortion committees and therefore was a further flaw in the law. For some committees, psychological health is a justification for therapeutic abortion; for others it is not. Some committees routinely refuse abortions to married women unless they are in physical danger; for other committees it is possible for a married woman only to show that she would suffer psychological harm if she continued with a pregnancy; and others do not grant approval to married women at all. Some committees refuse to approve applications for second abortions unless the patient consents to sterilization, while others routinely require psychiatric assessments of all applicants. It is usually impossible for women to know in advance what standard of health will be applied by any given committee.

During the Supreme Court hearing, the Crown contended that women who face difficulties in obtaining abortions at home can

• continued page 14

Abortion
PROCURING MISCARRIAGE—Woman procuring her own miscarriage—
 "Means"—Exceptions—Information requirement—Definitions—"Accredited
 hospital"—"Approved hospital"—"Board"—"Minister of Health"—"Qualified
 medical practitioner"—"Therapeutic abortion committee"—Requirement of
 consent not affected.

251. (1) Every one who, with intent to procure the miscarriage of a female person, whether or not she is pregnant, uses any means for the purpose of carrying out his intention is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for life.

(2) Every female person who, being pregnant, with intent to procure her own miscarriage, uses any means or permits any means to be used for the purpose of carrying out her intention is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for two years.

(3) In this section, "means" includes
 (a) the administration of a drug or other noxious thing,
 (b) the use of an instrument, and
 (c) manipulation of any kind.

(4) Subsections (1) and (2) do not apply to
 (a) a qualified medical practitioner, other than a member of a therapeutic abortion committee for any hospital, who in good faith uses in an accredited or approved hospital any means for the purpose of carrying out his intention to procure the miscarriage of a female person, or
 (b) a female person who, being pregnant, permits a qualified medical practitioner to use in an accredited or approved hospital any means described in paragraph (a) for the purpose of carrying out her intention to procure her own miscarriage, if, before the use of those means, the therapeutic abortion committee for that accredited or approved hospital, by a majority of the members of the committee and at a meeting of the committee at which the case of such female person has been reviewed,
 (c) has by certificate in writing stated that in its opinion the continuation of the pregnancy of such female person would or would be likely to endanger her life or health, and
 (d) has caused a copy of such certificate to be given to the qualified medical practitioner.



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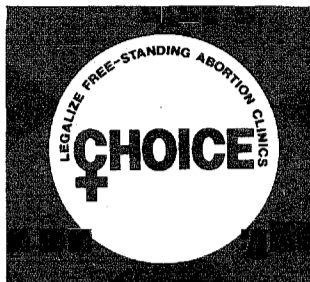
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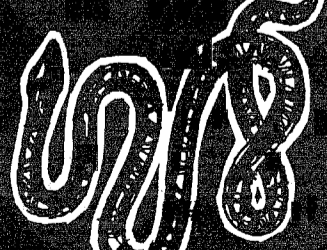
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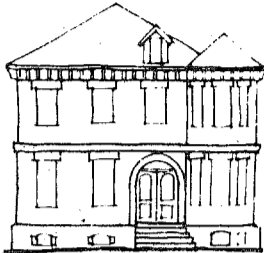
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Feminism in Pakistan: S

by Nuzhat Amin

Laws Against Women

The feminist movement in Pakistan (which was created in 1947 as a homeland for the Muslims of India), can be said to have started in September 1981 in Karachi, the country's business capital, as a direct outcome of the introduction of the *Hudood Ordinance*—the Islamic penal code—which became law in 1979.

The first death-by-stoning sentence ever in the history of Pakistan was passed in September 1981, under the *Hudood Ordinance*. The girl and boy who said they were married, were sentenced to 100 lashes each to be followed by the stoning-to-death sentence on a case of *zina*—sexual intercourse between two consenting adults who are not married. Ironically, the case was lodged by the middle class girl's father who wanted to annul her marriage to the man she had chosen as her husband, a bus conductor from a lower socio-economic class. But the court gave the girl and boy the death-by-stoning sentence based on its interpretation of the Islamic penal code.

by the then Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1977. General Zia then overthrew Z.A. Bhutto and had him hanged in 1979 on charges of conspiring to murder a political rival. Although he lifted his martial law in December 1985, he continues to rule the country as a non-elected president.

During his martial law and even now, self-styled scholars of Islam hold forth during prime time on the state-controlled Pakistan Television Corporation on issues such as how women should dress and behave and the evil influence of western society on Pakistani women. They perpetuate the image of women as evil-doers and as temptresses who entice men to do wrong.

Under pressure from these *maulvis* and the government, an increasing number of women are covering their heads in public and wearing long-sleeved garments in the workplace. There is also pressure on them to wear the *chadar* (a three-to-four-yard long shawl) with the traditional outfit, the *shalwar kameez*, both in public places and to work. This rule also applies to 12-year old schoolgirls who find it difficult to ride a crowded bus wearing the *chadar* and clutching their books.

The retrogressive influence is obvious in other spheres too. Whereas in the fifties and sixties, girl students at both school

and male witnesses cannot be found to testify to the rape. However, as the woman admits to having had sex (albeit forced) she is sentenced for *zina*. The blind girl, for instance, was sentenced for *zina* while her employer and his son were not given any sentence at all.

Another reason why it is so difficult to prove a man's guilt is because only males can testify. So if the rape takes place in surroundings where there are only women witnesses, such as a women's hostel, their testimony is not good enough for the court.

To date, none of the death-by-stoning sentences has been carried out, mainly because women have come out in the streets to protest against them. Their stand on this issue was strengthened when the Federal *Shariat* Court ruled in 1984 that *rajm* or stoning was not Islamic, but part of the pre-Islamic tribal law. But, although the stoning sentences have not been carried out, according to the convener of the Punjab Women Lawyers' Association, Asma Jahangir, a number of women have been flogged in prison for committing *zina*. Many of the women, says Jahangir, had actually been raped!

After the *Hudood Ordinance* was implemented, the next anti-woman move was the proposed law of *qisas* and *diyat*. Under this law, women cannot be witnesses in premeditated murder cases while the *diyat*, or bloodmoney, for a murdered woman is only half that of a man. In effect, the *qisas* law means that if a man were to be murdered in his own house—in front of his wife and daughters—the murderer would receive a sentence for manslaughter, which is much lighter than that for murder, simply because the witnesses to the murder were women!

The *qisas* and *diyat* law was followed by the law of evidence which was ratified by General Zia's handpicked advisory council—the *Majlis-e-Shoora*—in 1982 and promulgated by presidential ordinance in 1984. The original draft bill which said that a woman's testimony was half that of a man's in all matters could not be pushed through because women's groups all over the country agitated against it, and in Lahore, the capital of the Punjab province, women came out in the streets to protest against the bill. A watered-down version of the bill was then passed and is being implemented in financial matters only.

After this, came the Eighth Amendment, or Indemnity Bill, which became law in late 1985 just before martial law was lifted. The Eighth Amendment put the parliamentary seal of approval on all ordinances promulgated under martial law and which, according to leaders of women's groups, have "robbed women of being equal before the law." In effect, the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution means that all the orders and ordinances which were passed under martial law have the same status as all other laws which make up the constitution of Pakis-



Islamabad, mid-1986: Protesting the Ninth Amendment and the Shariat Bill.

Since 1979, there had been a growing concern among women and enlightened men at the way the Islamic penal code was being interpreted and the sentences which were being passed which, they felt, had a strong anti-woman bias. The sentence passed on Fehmida and Allahbuksh was so outrageous that the major women's groups united and formed a lobby-cum-pressure group called the Women's Action Forum, to protest against the harsh sentence. As a result of the militancy shown by the Karachi women, the sentence was never carried out. The Fehmida-Allahbuksh case features prominently in any history of the women's movement in Pakistan as it was the catalyst for the formation of the Women's Action Forum which has, since then, been spearheading the movement for women's rights.

Women's rights activists in Pakistan say that the introduction of Islamic laws in Pakistan in the late 1970s and the early 1980s—or rather their interpretation by the *maulvis* or religious scholars, many of whom they describe as "self-styled custodians of Islam"—has resulted in the gradual erosion of women's rights. The interpretation of these laws shows a strong anti-woman bias and, in fact, gives women a lower status than men.

The retrogressive element has always been there in Pakistani society along with the progressive element, as in any other country. But, under General Zia-ul-Haq's military rule and now presidency, this section of society has become much more vocal. This is partly due to the influence of the Islamic Revival which spread eastwards from Iran to Pakistan and Bangladesh on to Malaysia and Indonesia in the late 1970s and early 1980s. According to women's rights activists, another reason is that General Zia has given these retrogressive people licence to attack and condemn women in order to take the nation's attention away from major issues such as: When will the promised elections be held? and when will Pakistan have an elected government again? General Zia was appointed as chief of the army

and college level used to participate in sports along with boys, a ban was imposed in the early 1980s on females taking part in sports either with males or even in front of them. This meant that there could not be a male audience for any women's tournaments of any sport.

This *chadar* (veil) and *chardiwari* (four walls)—implying segregation—syndrome is a harsh reality in present-day Pakistan; a movement which, women find, is restricting their lives more and more. At the same time segregation of the sexes is becoming increasingly obvious everywhere in urban Pakistan.

Meanwhile, a number of orders and ordinances were pushed through under martial law, which was lifted in December 1985; such acts and ordinances did not have to follow Parliament procedure. These ordinances were passed under the banner of Islamisation in this Islamic country where the vast majority of the 100-million-plus population is Muslim. However, many women describe these moves as "anti-Islamic." One such step they say was appointing the federal *Shariat* court in the late 1970s and appointing *Shariat* benches in all provincial high courts as well as a *Shariat* appellate in the Supreme Court. The *Shariat* courts have passed many a harsh sentence on women. Since the Fehmida-Allahbuksh case, the *Shariat* benches and courts have sentenced a number of women to lashes and death-by-stoning. For instance, in 1983, a blind pregnant girl from a small town in the province of Punjab, who said she had been raped by her employer and his son, was given such a sentence.

Lawyers say that, because of the way the *Hudood Ordinance* is being interpreted in the country, there is no difference between *zina* and rape as the Ordinance stipulates that four male witnesses have to testify to the rape, an almost impossible condition. So, in many cases, as in the case of the blind girl, the rapist either receives a much lighter sentence than that of rape or no sentence at all, because the accused man denies the charge



Lahore, 1982: Women protest the law of evidence

tan. To amend any of these ordinances now would require the same procedure as changing any law in the constitution which is a very complicated and drawn-out legal procedure.

Since then, women in Pakistan have been fighting another bill—the Ninth Amendment to the Constitution; if this becomes law, it would mean that the *Shariat* Court (which was set up to pass judgements according to Islamic tenets but which has shown a marked anti-woman bias) would replace the Supreme Court as the highest legal body in the country.

Under the Ninth Amendment, the jurisdiction of the *Shariat* Court is being expanded to cover Muslim Personal Law which deals with matters such as marriage, divorce, custody of children and inheritance. Women in Pakistan had no protection

Surviving Against All Odds

against polygamy and arbitrary divorce until 1961 when, under a great deal of pressure from women's groups, the then government passed the Family Laws Ordinance which gives women a vestige of protection in these areas. Since 1961, a man has to have his first wife's permission in order to take another wife, whereas before that, he did not even have to inform his first wife that he had married again.

In the same way, if a man wants to divorce his wife, he has to inform his wife and register his intention in writing with the authorities. The divorce does not become final until 90 days after the registration unless the man changes his mind and states in writing that he no longer wishes to divorce his wife. The Family Laws Ordinance does not give very much protection to a woman, but it is an improvement on the pre-1961 era when a man could divorce his wife verbally, and then change his mind—again only verbally, so that a woman often did not even know whether she was married or not.

The 1961 Ordinance also gives orphaned grandchildren the right to property. Before that, their share of the property went to their deceased father's brother based on the tradition that he would look after his dead brother's widow and children and, in fact, even marry the widow. But that tradition is not common anymore and before 1961 many women and children were left penniless when the man of the family died as his relatives took away his share of the property. Since 1961, the law is on the side of the widow and her children, but it is as difficult to enforce just like the laws about marriage and divorce.

Women are still lobbying against the Ninth Amendment; it is because of their vociferous opposition that this bill has still not been passed by the National Assembly. The 1961 Family Laws Ordinance was supposed to have been just the beginning, leading to more legislation in favour of women; instead, women are now fighting to ensure that this legislation is not touched so that they do not lose the little protection that they do have in family matters.

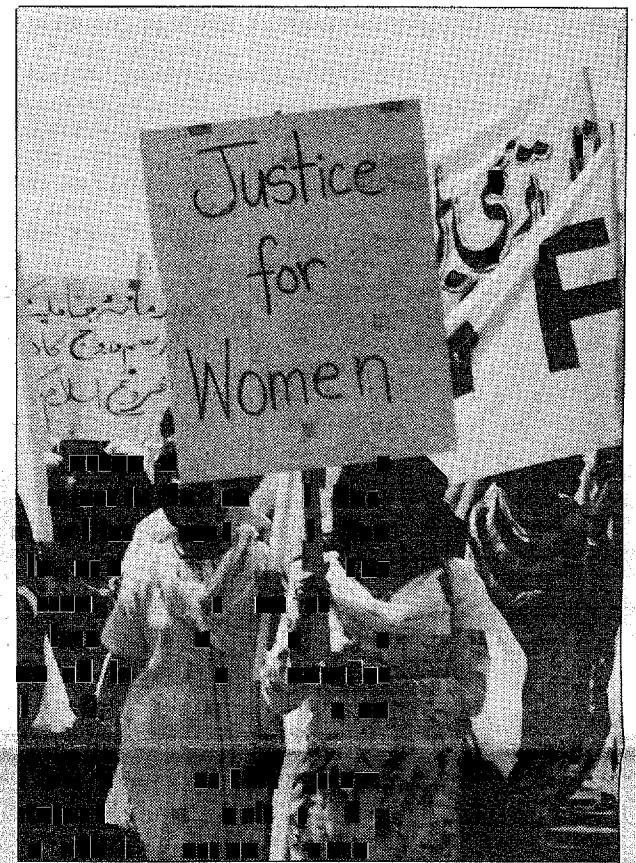
fewer schools for girls than for boys; and many parents in rural areas and even some in the cities feel that education will ruin their daughters' chances of a good marriage. The literacy rate for females and males is even lower in rural Pakistan. One study shows that rural school enrolment for girls is only five percent nationally and as low as 0.8 percent in the province of Baluchistan and indicates that hardly any women in the province's 5,860 villages can read or write. The dropout rate for girls is high in the villages; parents feel that their daughter is not learning anything useful, such as cooking and housework, and that she is required at home to help with the chores.

The low literacy participation is an indicator of the low status that women have in rural Pakistan. Even in the cities women have little say in what kind of school they wish to attend, what career to follow, and who to marry, as the parents usually arrange the marriage with a cousin or the son of a family friend. Some parents approach a marriage bureau, or go through the matrimonial columns in the newspapers to find suitable husbands. Even in upper middle class families where the girl often has a university degree and is working as a doctor or chemist or university teacher, the marriage is arranged in this manner. She may meet her husband-to-be a few times, but not alone. Some parents give their daughters the final choice between a number of prospective suitors they have selected, but many do not even consult her on the matter.

Much of rural Pakistan is still feudal; under this system, women have an even lower social status than in the cities. They are valued only as workhands and as childbearers and are married off as soon as they reach puberty. As a rule, they are forced to marry within the extended family and are, even today, often given to a man in a *watta-satta* arrangement—that is, in exchange for another girl to be married to her brother or even her father. If she does not have such male relatives, then she gets "sold" to the highest bidder.

Sometimes, where a girl is not available to be given in ex-

spot an occasional woman whose nose has been cut off by her husband for suspected infidelity. The tradition by which people live in rural Pakistan considers it almost praiseworthy when a man kills his wife or sister on mere suspicion of adultery and in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) which borders Afghanistan, this is entrenched as part of the tribal law. This is also the tradition being followed by the three million Afghan refugees in the country, the majority of whom live in the NWFP. The influence of this large number of Afghans who follow the tribal code of law has had a noticeable effect on the matrix of Pakistani society.



Islamabad, mid-1986: The number of women joining the fight for justice is growing.

In the cities, divorce is not uncommon, but in the villages it is unheard of for a woman to leave her husband. If he is a habitual wife-beater and she does run away, she has nowhere to go. Her parents will not take her back and she loses her children forever and, in fact, is not even allowed to visit them. Even if she is a good, obedient wife, the husband may tire of her and throw her out of the house. He does not have to give any reason to society, to family or to the law for this decision. The wife has nowhere to go and has no means of supporting herself as the husband does not give her any money. She becomes either a beggar or a prostitute.

As women in the villages are, in practice, almost the property of the males in the family—the father, the brother, then the husband, and finally the son—it is no wonder that they have remained almost untouched by the awareness that is spreading among women in the urban areas. The women's movement has made much headway in the cities in the past five years. The Women's Action Forum has now become a definite force to reckon with. Since its formation in 1981, it has also opened chapters in the cities of Lahore and Islamabad and probably has enough following in other cities to be able to open chapters in Peshawar, Multan and Hyderabad in the foreseeable future.

Critics of WAF consider that it is not only an urban movement but that most of its members belong to the westernized English-speaking elite. When WAF started, many of the women who were at the forefront did fit this stereotype. These were women who had the means and the awareness to commit themselves to such a movement while their less privileged sisters—in terms of education and finances—were either helpless or, worse still, even unaware of the atrocities being committed against them. But since then, awareness has increased among the lower middle class and, to some extent, in the small towns close to the big cities. An indicator of this awareness is the fact that WAF's membership has expanded in these less affluent classes.

This became apparent at a demonstration in the federal capital of Islamabad in mid-1986 when WAF Islamabad held a demonstration outside the National Assembly to protest against the *Shariat* Bill and the Ninth Amendment. About a thousand women turned up for the demonstration; amongst them toothless, illiterate grandmothers from nearby villages, assembly line workers, schoolgirls, and sophisticated working women, proving that the feminist movement is now much more broadbased than it was five years ago.

It can be said that the women's movement has now come of age and all indications are that it will grow from strength to strength over the next decade.

Nuzhat Amin is a journalist who has worked in Canada, Germany and Pakistan.



Women's Action Forum fight against the Islamic penal code and its interpretation.

Another bill which women have been and are still fighting against, along with the Ninth Amendment, is the complex *Shariat* Bill. In its present form it is considered vague by many sections of the public. A statement by the Women's Action Forum says it "paves the way for conflictory and discriminatory interpretations" of the *Shariat*, which is based mainly on the practices of Muhammad, the last prophet of Islam. The stand taken by Women's Action Forum and by many other groups as well as religious minorities is that the government has to state clearly which codes of the *Shariat* will become the law of the land. Otherwise, they say, every individual will be subjected to the arbitrary exercise of authority.

The Status of Women

The feminist movement in Pakistan is mainly an urban phenomenon—understandably so when one considers the great difference between the lives of urban and rural women in all spheres, ranging from literacy, awareness of their rights and the status awarded to them by the family and by society.

The literacy rate of Pakistan is only 26 percent—female literacy is even lower than male for a number of reasons: there are

change, unborn daughters of the girl just married are promised in exchange, which means that from becoming the property of her father and her brothers, she becomes the property of her husband. Girls in rural Pakistan are married as soon as they reach puberty and are expected to produce children as frequently as they can. Often, little girls, six and eight years old, are married to men in their thirties and forties. In the province of Sind, when it is not possible to find any match at all for a girl, the family members marry her to the *Quran* (the Holy Book of the Muslims), a practice known as the *Haw Bukshian*, whereby she lives the rest of her life in seclusion. When a husband dies, the wife's father or brother can take her away and give her in exchange marriage or for money to another man. As for the children from the first marriage, the mother has no claim on them and they belong to the deceased man's family. As the man has literally bought himself a wife, he expected to get his money's worth. Apart from bearing and rearing children, she has to do all the housework, tend livestock and carry water, sometimes from as far as a mile or two for daily use, and is expected to make fresh *chapatis* (bread) for her husband's and sons' lunch and dinner.

Before marriage, the woman can be beaten by her brother for any suspected misbehaviour, like roaming around the village; after marriage her husband has that right. Even now, you can

MOVEMENT MATTERS

Politics of Midwifery

TORONTO—Billeting is required for out-of-town members attending a conference on the Politics of Midwifery to be held in Toronto on March 4, 5 and 6, 1988. Anyone who can offer any accommodation for Friday, March 5, 1988 and/or Saturday March 6, 1988 is requested to contact: The Midwifery Task Force, P.O. Box 489, Toronto, Ontario, M6B 4C2, Attention: Billeting.

Broadcast Equality

The dignity and equal rights of all individuals and groups, without regard, in particular, to race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or mental or physical disability are paramount. The programming, organization, and operation of the Canadian broadcasting system shall respect equal rights.

MediaWatch advocates the inclusion of the above principle and objective in the *Broadcasting Act*.

Consider the following:

- On-air surveys indicate that men outnumber women by approximately two to one, specifically with regard to prime time prominent characters. These figures have not changed significantly since the 1950s.

- On screen, despite the fact that women constitute 52% of the general population, and 42% of the general workforce, they are hired only approximately 30% of the time to work in on screen capacities.

- In TV news, 77% of news readers and 79% of reporters are men. 91% of expert commentators and 84% of eye witness interview subjects are men.

- Of Restricted rated pay TV programs that contained a combination of sex and violence, 92% had a female victim, and 29% had a male victim.

MediaWatch takes the following position: If the recognition of equality in the Canadian broadcasting system is to be achieved, the obligations of the broadcasters and advertisers to women must be entrenched in the *Broadcasting Act* so that the means for assessing and enforcing obligations may be established by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and so that the degree of commitment to equality is evident to and eventually accepted by the CRTC, the broadcasters, and the advertisers.

Your continued support and interest for MediaWatch is not just appreciated—it's vital. We are now initiating a supporting membership, we urge you to join us. A member fee of \$25, \$50, \$75, or whatever amount you can give will contribute to MediaWatch's continued efforts in lobbying government and educating the public, on your behalf, towards the

entrenchment of equal rights for women in Canadian broadcasting, and the promotion of the improved portrayal of women and girls in the mass media. Your membership fee will also entitle you to receive the MediaWatch News Bulletin, our target action bulletins, and, if you join now, a free copy of our 80 page report, *Adjusting the Image: Women and Canadian Broadcasting*. Contact: MediaWatch, 250-1820 Fir Street, Vancouver, BC, V6J 3B1.

FEM-DIRECT

TORONTO—The Canadian Women's Movement Archives/Les Archives canadiennes du mouvement des femmes has just launched FEM-DIRECT, the first computerized directory of Canadian women's groups. Thoroughly researched and up-to-date, this bilingual (French/English) directory indexes over 1,000 current women's groups by geographical location and 50 areas of concern. It's indispensable for women's organizations and individual feminists—increase the scope of your organizing and fundraising efforts!

FEM-DIRECT is a package of data disks with a programme disk which allows you to make mailing lists or labels for women's groups. This database package can be used by any IBM or IBM compatible PC and requires no specific software. The user's manual is directed at non-computer experts.

The complete package is available from the Archives for \$170.00, including shipping and handling. Selective mailing lists and labels may also be ordered. For more information, please contact Canadian Women's Movement Archives/Archives canadiennes du mouvement des femmes, PO Box 128, Stn. P, Toronto, M5S 2S7; telephone (416) 597-8865.

Popular Summit

TORONTO—June 19-21 1988 will see Toronto invaded by leaders of the seven strongest economic nations on earth. They will be discussing how to maintain their wealth, and how to keep the poor in line. A lot of items will not be on their agenda—items like stopping the arms race, feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, cleaning up industrial waste, and stopping the use of torture. However, these items will be on our agenda—these, and many more.

The Popular Summit is a group of groups and individuals who have come together to organize and co-ordinate events in reaction to the Unpopular Summit. The field for participation is wide open. Events already scheduled to take place are a march and rally, a War Crimes Tribunal, a non-violent civil disobedience action, and an alternative economics symposium. Other activities in the works are a 3-day vigil at the Summit site, street theatre, and cultural events.

The Popular Summit is holding regular bi-weekly meetings, and is always open to new participants and endorsers. For more information on the Popular Summit, write to Box 111, Station C, Toronto, M6J 3M7, or phone (416) 537-3520, 921-9730. For information on the War Crimes Tribunal and the civil disobedience action, write to the Alliance for Non-Violent Action, 9 Melbourne Ave., Toronto M6K 1K1, (416) 533-9507.


Poetry Group

Women's Press is restructuring! One of the changes is that a new poetry group is in the process of forming.

Are you interested in reading and discussing poetry? Come to a meeting to discuss the future. Phone Wendy at (416) 929-5208 and leave a message, saying when you're available, and a meeting will be arranged!

Meals on Wheels

TORONTO—For many frail seniors and disabled the harsh reality of winter is the danger of venturing out. You can help make sure that they get a hot nutritious meal seven days a week by volunteering for the St. Christopher House Meals-on-Wheels program. Please consider the difference you can make! Call Ruth Kells at (416) 366-3571.



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SUNDAY BEST

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2:45 p.m. - Shooting Stars **TORONTO PREMIERE**
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12:15 p.m. - Not A Love Story
1:15 p.m. - Is It Hot In Here?

TUESDAY, MARCH 8 — WOMEN FROM OTHER CULTURES

11:30 a.m. - No Longer Silent
12:30 p.m. - Dream Of A Free Country
1:30 p.m. - Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief

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12h45 - L'Éclipse
13h20 - Les Deux Marcelle

FRIDAY, MARCH 11 — THE ISSUE IS CHOICE

11:30 a.m. - Abortion: Stories From North And South
12:30 p.m. - A Mother And Daughter On Abortion
12:45 p.m. - Democracy On Trial: The Morgentaler Affair

For more information, contact:
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ARTS

Harvesting for the Revolution

by Amanda Hale

Emma Productions' latest video, *Bullets for a Revolution*, is dedicated to Jenny Green, a Canadian who died in a freak accident in Nicaragua in December 1987. Green was part of a coffee picking brigade organized by Canadian Action for Nicaragua. CAN co-produced this video which documents the experience and perceptions of members of the Augustin Mendoza Brigade which travelled to Nicaragua in December 1986 to assist with the coffee harvest.

Coffee production is a vital component of the fragile Nicaragua economy, along with cotton and sugar production. "Every coffee bean you pick is a bullet for the revolution and against US imperialism," the brigadistas are told by a Nicaraguan coffee worker. The small village of Las Rosas, north of Matagalpa, is well defended like all the coffee plantations which are obvious targets for the Contra. One night the brigadistas hear mortar fire only 15 kilometres away. "Instead of consuming news, we are inside it," writes one woman in her journal. The brigade is a mixed group of volunteers, including a Regent Park sole support mother of three, several trade unionists, a minister, Chinese and Latin American Canadians, dedicated solidarity workers such as Nomi Wall of CAN and Nancy Farmer of Tools for Peace—both on repeat trips to Nicaragua—and Marusia Bociurkiw of Emma Productions who made this video in collaboration with Nomi Wall and with technical assistance from Nancy Farmer.

Structurally, the video consists of a rhythmic intercutting between interviews with Nicaraguans and journal entry readings, accompanied by images of brigadistas and local people walking up dusty paths into the lush coffee



From "Bullets for a Revolution"

plantation. The focus is on the continued suffering of Nicaraguans due to the Contra war and the American trade embargo, rather than on the many improvements since the success of the Revolution in July 1979. Happily, as Bociurkiw notes, this video is already out of date! A week after it premiered at A Space Gallery, the US Congress voted against the renewal of economic aid to the Contra. But the scars of a seven year war are deep and the poverty extreme, with massive inflation. One of the Nicaraguans interviewed says, "We want to tell the entire world this is the fault of the war, not the Sandinistas."

The major focus of the video is on rural women, since they are the ones who endure fif-

teen hour work days, rising before dawn to pick coffee from 5 am till 4 pm, looking after the children, washing, cooking, attending agricultural union meetings where, despite their equal contribution to coffee production, they usually listen silently while the men speak. They are trying to get daycare centres in the villages. Many daycare centres, schools and clinics have been destroyed by the Contra. It has been, and continues to be, an uphill battle against US-backed military opposition and economic deprivation. It is amazing that Nicaragua has survived. It is a testament to the revolutionary spirit of the people.

This focus on the hardships rather than the triumphs is intended to inform people of the

desperate need for international help. Although Bociurkiw has a number of audiences in mind, the major purpose of the video is as orientation for brigades going to Nicaragua. Volunteers must understand the hardships they themselves will have to endure—ten hour work days, primitive living conditions, a steady diet of rice and beans.

The Augustin Mendoza Brigade was in Nicaragua over Christmas and the video documents a brief interlude with modest celebrations. A pig is killed for a communal meal. Inspired by rum, the gringos sing Silent Night. There is a piñata for the children. There is some wonderful footage of children, their faces open and curious. But the predominant image is of work, and particularly women's work. "We tried to show repetitive images of people working," says Bociurkiw. "Fifteen hours a day—that's most of your life." Although she had some misgivings about going down to Nicaragua armed with video equipment, looking like a voyeur, Bociurkiw and her team found the people extremely open and accepting. "We explained what we were doing and the people were very supportive. It was wonderful to see the connection between the cultural and political aspects of the Sandinista Revolution expressed in a community."

The brigadistas left Las Rosas on New Year's Day and were in Managua for the celebrations following the signing of the new constitution in January 1987. Bociurkiw arrived back in Canada with twelve hours of video footage and some tough editing choices in order to make this half hour video. A particularly painful exclusion, she said, was the interview with the Mothers of the Heroes and Martyrs of Matagalpa.

Emma Productions has a fine record of documentaries and dramas, including *No Small Change: The Story of the Eaton's Strike* (1986) and *Playing With Fire* (1986), a 75-minute drama written and directed by Bociurkiw. Another Emma production, *There's No Place Like Home*, premiered at A Space Gallery in February. It is "a wry feminist postscript to the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless." Bociurkiw's next project is a video called *Night Visions* which contrasts the struggles of a Native single mother fighting for child custody and an artist challenging the censor board. Bociurkiw hopes to provide different perspectives on censorship and state intervention with this video, and also to broaden the debate on racism.

Drama provides more scope for innovation than documentary, and it is also artistically satisfying. "I feel I'm a writer as much as a maker of video images," says Bociurkiw. Much as she enjoys working on documentaries which allow a more direct approach to social and political issues, she likes the switch into drama and the opportunity to work with actors, to write from improvisations, and to crack a few jokes.

(*Bullets for a Revolution* is available for viewing or rental at V/Tape, 183 Bathurst St., Toronto M5T 2R7; (416) 863-9897. ●

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Vera Goes Nuts

by Susan G. Cole

Two wildly divergent films evoke some interesting questions about how and under what conditions movies can raise consciousness about the reality of women's lives. *Nuts* is Hollywood's star-studded account of a prostitute's attempts to prove her mental competence in the wake of a murder charge, and *Vera* is the brilliant Brazilian low-budget tale of a lesbian who thinks she must be a man because she loves women. *Nuts*' stance is typical of the liberal, socially-conscious mainstream and its director Martin Ritt has shown these colours many times before, most notably in *Norma Rae*. On the other hand, *Vera* is laden with experimental techniques that, fortunately or unfortunately depending on your point of view, will consign the film to cult status. What happens when a Hollywood film tries to convey pure feminism? Does it work? What happens with a film like *Vera*? Does it promote stereotyped views of lesbians as hopelessly depressed misfits?

We meet Vera Bauer as her mentor Professor Trauberg helps her find a job at a university library. Dressed in denim on denim, eyes cast down, Vera is obviously wholly alienated from the world and excruciatingly uncomfortable in her body. At age 18, she has been released from an orphanage where, as we discover through intermittent flashbacks, sexuality is repressed and cruelly distorted. Now out of the institution and into a more open environment, Vera's social skills are negligible. She decides that because she must be a man, she ought to dress like one—in full business suit—much to the astonishment of her co-workers. When she is attracted to Clara, a video technician, she publishes a love poem dedicated to her in the library newsletter. The poem, laced with sexual innuendo, mortifies Clara. But Vera carries on, lip synching I'm Your Man for the object of her desire. She even considers a sex change.

What makes this movie so fascinating is its ability to give us the inside of someone. At times I was tempted to yell out to Vera, "Wake up, honey, this is the 80s." (Indeed there is a wonderful segment featuring a post-feminist all-female rock band meant to convey that there is an "alternative" lesbian community

out there and that Vera simply cannot relate.) But at least the movie takes great pains to explain how Vera got into her psychological predicament. The flashbacks to the orphanage are enormously powerful and meticulously document the institutional assault on Vera's spirit and sexual integrity. Vera starts out as a gentle soul, given to risking punishment so that she can pass on an overcoat to a young girl serving time in a frigid courtyard. But the strict hierarchy of older butch girls and their younger punk femme girlfriends wears away at Vera's nurturing side, and when the heaviest butch has to leave the orphanage at 18, Vera is left with the role of chief protector of the orphanage girls, tough and uncompromising.

In the meantime, the ruthless orphanage administrators spend their time dreaming up ways of compromising the emerging sexualities of the orphans. At one point, the chief lines up the butch population, snidely demanding to see their pricks. The first one to break down in tears is forced to wear a skirt. In another pivotal sequence, the administrators organize a social for the girls' institution and an all-male orphanage—purely, it seems, to orchestrate a situation where the girls will be forced to watch their girlfriends dance with boys. The experience deepens Vera's sexual crisis. After one social, she flees to masturbate furiously in a mad moment of false consciousness that shapes her emerging belief that if she has such an intense desire for girls, and girls dance with boys, then she must be a boy.

Eventually she does develop a relationship with Clara, the technician she almost drove away with her love poem, but the present tense relationship with Clara is fraught with problems. Clara is attracted to Vera, but this is her first lesbian relationship and her closet tendencies coupled with Vera's blatant drag pose all kinds of difficulties. Most important, she is not happy with Vera's sexual distance and wants equality in the bedroom, something Vera cannot tolerate. It is not that she wants power over Clara or that she is "into roles." What looks like stone butch behaviour is really Vera's refusal to give Clara any flesh and blood information that will help Clara topple the framework that constructs Vera's view of her own sexual identity.

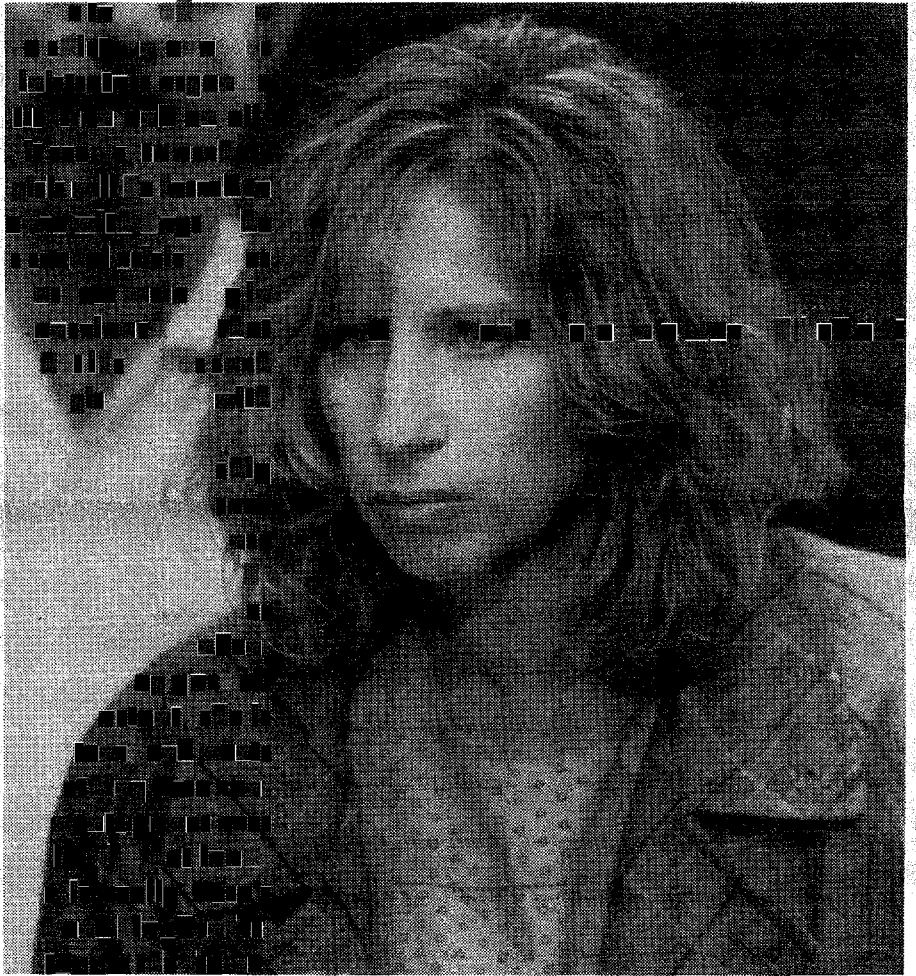
I have been astonished by the number of lesbians who have hated this movie and have been trying to figure out what is so offputting about *Vera*. Perhaps the problem is that lesbians yearn for a woman-loving feminist comedy and that the universal themes of alienation (shot in sterile colours and lines, the story could have taken place in any modern locale) are not as appealing as a contemporary girl-meets-girl tale set on familiar streets. And there seems to be resistance to the film based on the fact that it is written and directed by Sergio Toledo, a Brazilian male. In my view, Toledo, a gay man, could never have concocted such a film without a profound awareness of what constructs sexuality and desire. *Vera*'s many layers take us on a moving journey into the soul of a tortured creature. Using experimental techniques, especially videos that convey with irony the sterility of the male culture Vera aspires to own, it is simply loaded with ideas and is one of the most enlightening portrayals of institutional life that I have seen anywhere.

Admittedly the film is a downer. The final scene shows Vera, Clara having left her, visiting Professor Trauberg only to retire to his bathroom where she either genitally mutilates herself or is horrified at the sight of her menstrual blood, the surest sign of her womanhood (the scene is purposely ambiguous). Thus the main complaint about *Vera* is that we do not need "The Well of Loneliness goes to Rio" or movies that perpetuate stereotypes of lesbians as screwed up women who secretly wish they were men. But a film that delves so deeply into a character cannot be accused of taking a cursory stereotyped view of lesbians. The women who cannot take *Vera* remind me of those who wish we would stop talking about sexual abuse because such discussions keep women victimized. The fact is that women are sexually abused. And another fact is that not all lesbians are happy-go-lucky sexy gals secure in their love and identity. There are plenty of women emerging from institutions—reform schools, prisons—who are desperately searching for sexual meaning in their lives. *Vera* sheds light on their stories and has the nerve to talk about a population some women would rather keep invisible.

Whether *Vera* perpetuates stereotypes for homophobic audiences winds up being a minor issue since this film will never be mainstream enough to lure homophobes into the theatre. *Nuts*, on the other hand, is packing in all kinds of people who know nothing about sexual abuse and prostitution and who are



Vera (l.) and Clara: in a movie billed as the story of a woman longing to be a man.



Streisand in "Nuts": high on politics, low on art

learning a thing or two. The film tells the story of Claudia Draper, a high class call girl, who kills a psychopathic john out of self-defence. Because she is a prostitute, the authorities offer her no respect. Because she is a product of a privileged background, they assume she is as mad as a hatter. After all, what kind of privileged kid turns tricks? Clara (played by Barbra Streisand) knows that legal proof of insanity will confine her to a mental facility for life, and so she enjoins the reluctant Aaron Levinsky (Richard Dreyfuss) to defend her.

The screenplay offers a wonderful indictment of hospital and prison authorities' methods of dealing with the insane (or the not insane in this case), questioning the supreme power of small-minded psychiatrists who panic when they are not controlling everyone and everything around them. But the dramatic tension of the film is constructed through the slow revelation of Clara's sexual abuse at the hands of her stepfather. We find out that he used to fuck her and slip cash under the door of her bedroom. The film will thus upset sex work advocates who would like to make the issue of sexual abuse disappear from the debate on prostitution, but perhaps Clara's energetic defence of her profession while she is on the stand will placate those promoters of the sex trade.

All the elements are there for strong feminist content: a critique of the mental health system; an elucidation of the connection between incest and prostitution; an assault on hypocritical attitudes towards prostitutes; even a reconciliation between Clara and her mother, at the

end of the movie. But the film has an aura of unreality to it. Part of the problem stems from the fact that it was originally written as a play and had to be adapted for the screen. Written as a courtroom drama in which the courtroom is the main location, all kinds of unlikely things occur while witnesses are on the stand (like the revelation of abuse) and way too quickly. Further detracting from the credibility of the tale are the stellar members of the cast who have a tendency to act with a vengeance. Karl Malden as the abuser and Eli Wallach as the hospital psychiatrist you want to throttle, and together with Maureen Stapleton as the forbearing mother, they take on a "we are the great actors of America" posture that is only exacerbated by the voracious presence of Streisand. We wind up with La Barbra larger than life. What we need is a dazzling unknown (like Ana Beatriz Nogueira, whose Vera is so breathtaking) to give us real life instead.

But therein lies the basic contradiction of mainstream moviemaking, for if Streisand were not in the film, fewer people would see it. (*Vera*, on the other hand, is so dense, so decidedly not into "happily ever after" that not enough people will see it.) Although *Nuts*, its structure and its telling are wholly incredible, the issue of sexual abuse is given added credibility by Streisand's involvement. In other words, as art *Nuts* fails, but as politics, it's a roaring success. So hats off to Streisand. She is a powerful icon and she uses her power well here. And a salute to Sergio Toledo for making a film about the pain of our sisters, even if it deserves a far larger audience than it will ever get. ●



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Political Wives: The Lives of the Saints, by Susan Riley. Toronto: Deneau, 1987; 191 pp.

Reviewed by Susan Crean

If the world were evolving according to a feminist agenda, political wives would be on the endangered species list next to the Eskimo Curlew which once flourished on this continent in hearty numbers but is now so rarely sighted that it is presumed extinct. Instead, in this *fin de siècle* era of post-feminism and primetime electioneering, she has made a startling return, a comeback which has been completely scripted and staged. The unlikely conservationists in this case are the handlers, consultants and "cold-eyed operatives" who mastermind political campaigns and package the candidates, treating their wives as just another piece of visual imagery, "as inanimate and crucial as the right campaign logo."

Ottawa journalist Susan Riley has written a wonderfully witty book about the phenomenon in *Political Wives*, aptly subtitled "The Lives of the Saints." Like a reincarnation of Emily Post with all the social trappings of the compleat consort, fifties style, the eighties political wife is a walking anachronism. All the old rules about suitable hobbies, dress codes and demeanour are being re-enforced but it still adds up to a job that's not fit for a brain-functioning adult. Who, asks Riley, makes up these rules, and why do women continue to obey them?

As in all patriarchal professions, there are

hierarchies and trend-setters among political wifery, and Riley focuses on the prime-ministerial variety, in particular the three M's—Margaret, Maureen and Mila. Margaret, the flowerchild who couldn't stand life as the rose in her husband's lapel; Maureen, who made the fatal error of having her own opinions and her own name, and on keeping both (her strength was read as Joe Clark's weakness, and the Conservative Party was having none of that); and deeply superficial Mila, who single-handedly set the clock back 20 years for Conservative women by understanding women's liberation as the right to shop, for which she was named *Chatelaine's* "Woman of the Year."

To give a little historical perspective, Riley includes a chapter on Olive Diefenbaker, "Canada's first and best political wife" and her successor, Maryon Pearson, probably Canada's most reluctant political wife. These two women, whose tenure at 24 Sussex Drive predated women's liberation and whose accommodation to the office—or lack of it—passed without public comment, represent the two classic responses to the dilemma of political wifedom. Here is how Riley introduces the second Mrs. Diefenbaker: "First of all nobody is as perfect as Olive Diefenbaker was supposed to have been. Nobody, with the possible exception of the Queen Mother, is as perpetually, invariably and consistently gracious. Nobody, apart from Mother Teresa, could spend 23 years married to the most obnoxious man in Canadian public life without once losing her temper. Nobody owned that many squat, cardboard hats with scraps of net hanging untidily from the front. Yet despite these self-evident

truths, the cult of Olive persists almost 30 years after her reign." If Olive Diefenbaker became the model for political wives, Riley notes, it was "a pernicious one; one that requires tremendous guile and self-abasement." A cunning and talented woman with great political acumen, Olive poured her energies into the Chief's career, tending teas, keeping his social calendar in order and political connections intact, and always and forever stroking his ego. (And, Riley hints, stoking his paranoia.)

Maryon Pearson was a bird of a very different feather. An early hero of feminist resistance, Riley calls her, who treated the "hypocrisy and banality of Canadian public life" to her acerbic wit ("Behind every successful man stands a surprised woman") and doggedly remained her own "very private person." She certainly had views about the role of women which in some Liberal circles would still be considered avant garde today. The late Judy LaMarsh credited her with encouraging her husband to establish the Royal Commission on the Status of Women.

If Mila is Olive made-over for the eighties (the main difference, according to Riley, is that then, the wives had to be matronly, warm and efficient; now they have to be sexy, warm and efficient), Margaret Trudeau can be regarded as Maryon Pearson's revenge on the whole idea. However, her real soul-sister would probably be Maureen McTeer, who of the three latter-day saints, is the only one with a genuine feminist instinct and a grip on the reality of most women's lives. In many ways, Maureen was too good to be true; certainly she was too good for the Conservative party. And Riley's

chapter on her is the most intriguing in the book.

Political Wives is really about a political institution caught in a time warp. Not that the wives of politicians are—or ever have been—regarded as an essential part of the apparatus of power, except at speech time. Contemporary pundits only acknowledge their existence when someone slips up or speaks out. (As Geills Turner did during the 1984 election when she scooped her husband, then fighting party pressure on the nuclear issue, by telling the news media she thought, "No serious member of the human race could not be for a nuclear freeze.") So why are political wives back in vogue? Nostalgia; the patriarchal backlash; the fashion industry. Take your pick. But it also has to do with the latest American invention, by the Oval Office out of Hollywood: Ronnie and Nancy, the ultimate Political Couple. For background and definition, Riley also has a chapter on Nancy Reagan—"The Miracle of Hairspray"—which, like the rest of the book, is uncompromising in its feminist analysis. The prose sizzles, and her subjects have never hit so close to the bone. It's like the Clichettes doing "Stand By Your Man."

This is political journalism at its best, and it serves to remind us of what is missing in the mainstream. Riley's book has the kind of sharp and popular writing we ought to be able to read in newspapers but only find in the margins. Writers with Riley's instincts still have to turn to book writing to tell it like it is.

Susan Crean is the author of *Newsworthy: The Lives of Media Women*.

Women's Studies Studied

Women and Education: A Canadian Perspective. Jane Gaskell and Arlene McLaren, eds. Calgary: Detselig, 1987.

Reviewed by Helen Lenskyj

In the introduction to *Women and Education*, the editors explain how feminist approaches have advanced beyond eliminating sex-role stereotyping and sex discrimination in the school, to revaluing the female and rethinking the whole issue of women and men in gendered social settings. More specifically, second and third stage feminisms challenged the "deficit model" that labelled our lower academic achievement levels a "women's problem," not a problem of the educational system, its teaching methods, its value system, or its links to a sex-segregated labour market.

The sixteen articles in this collection comprise the first booklength, feminist overview of women and Canadian education. The contributors are academics—nineteen women and two men—from English Canada and Quebec, with a predominance of BC authors. The spark for the book came from the Women and Education Conference held in Vancouver in 1986, and many papers presented there appear in the collection. Other articles were published earlier in mainstream or feminist academic journals, some as long ago as 1975.

Since the editors give no information on the selection process, we can only assume that they chose the best papers from the conference and solicited the other articles from women whose work on women's issues in education is widely respected, amongst whom were several feminist scholars from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

The authors are diverse in their academic backgrounds, ranging from graduate students to women who pioneered women's studies in Canada, but similar—in fact, too similar—in other respects. For example, the biographical information and the subject matter of the articles suggest that most contributors were white and heterosexual. The political perspective, with some exceptions, tends towards liberal feminism, although some (presumably feminist) contributors managed to write an entire article without using the word "feminist" or articulating any feminist theoretical perspective. We need to remind ourselves that research on women is not necessarily woman-centred or feminist research. (Unlikely as it once seemed, research on women is now a hot item in some quarters; sport gynecology is a good example.)

Admittedly, no single anthology can cover every topic from every perspective, but some important voices are missing from this collection: black women, Native women, women of colour and lesbian feminists. Not only are these women absent from the contributors' list—primarily a function of the selection pro-

cess in academe that marginalizes such women—but also from the book's table of contents. Few articles discuss minority women's experiences in educational settings where whiteness and heterosexuality are the norm. Of the eight or so research studies reported, none referred to sexuality, and only one or two identified the racial and ethnic backgrounds of the research subjects. A notable exception is Kathy Rockhill's "Literacy as Threat/Desire: Longing to be SOMEBODY" which gives an insightful account of working-class Latina women's hopes and fears as they try to upgrade their education in the face of male opposition and, in some cases, male violence. And one of the most radical voices in the collection is that of Virginia Woolf, who comes to life in Ruth Roach Pierson's essay on the development of a feminist perspective in education.

The articles are grouped under four headings: Women as Mothers, Women as Teachers; Unequal Access to Knowledge; The Nature of the Curriculum; and Beyond Schooling: Adult Education and Training. The editors' introductions to these sections are one of the book's strengths: they are conceptually clear and informative, providing background facts and figures together with an overview of feminist approaches to the issue.

While it is useful that the book defines "education" in its broadest sense, encompassing everything from day care to adult literacy to job training, it is disappointing that girls' experience of schooling—what British feminist Rosemary Deem has termed "schooling for women's work"—is only dealt with in three articles, and that only one, Jane Gaskell's study of working-class girls' perspectives on course selection, uses a consciously feminist methodology and takes a critical approach to the reproduction of gender and class in the school.


There is clearly a need for more Canadian work in this area, especially on the topic of girls in science, math and computer courses. The liberal approach that characterizes most of this work to date, including the two articles published in this collection, often reflects an uncritical acceptance of the male practice of science. The authors imply that girls and women simply need to "catch up" with boys and men in the science/math/computer field, and everything will be OK. Discussing girls' low involvement with computers, for example, Betty Hollis cites as a factor the so-called Cinderella complex ("Women's Hidden Fear of Independence"), a concept that feminists have rightly criticized for its victim-blaming message and its malestream definition of achievement. Few math and science educators, it seems, are asking the more radical question that peace activist (and professor of metallurgy) Ursula Franklin has posed: "Will women change technology or will technology change

women?"

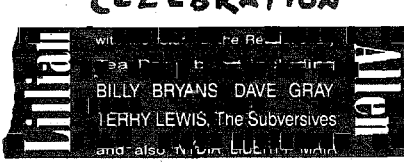
In her article, "Feminism, Women's Studies and the New Academic Curriculum," York sociology professor Thelma McCormack makes a wonderfully clear statement on the issue of control of women's studies and the implications for men. Firmly opposed to any male faculty involvement in women's studies teaching, policy-making and thesis supervision, she aptly characterizes the "new male intellectual" who wants to be involved in women's studies, and the women students and faculty who support him out of their apparent need for male approval. But, warns McCormack, these men "do not comprehend that what informs Women's Studies is an element of praxis and the subjectivity of being an insider. . . . Even 'good guys' do not understand the ethos of the movement nor its structure. But in addition they create a false legitimization of it as if women scholars need their imprimatur." (Several years ago, a feminist colleague stated that to invite a notoriously misogynist male professor to teach a women's history course was akin to inviting a Nazi to teach Holocaust history.)

McCormack goes on to explain that to exclude men is not vindictive (read "man-hating"), nor is it intended to reserve jobs for women. Her argument rests on the political nature of feminist inquiry, not on pragmatic considerations of women's advancement in academic life. Yet it seems unwise to ignore the careers of academic women. The politics of academic publishing are well known: publication in the right places is the primary key to advancing through the ranks in university teaching; the "right places" are mainstream journals and publishing houses; men are the gatekeepers of these publications. In other words, male academics are already advantaged in the publishing race, simply by virtue of being men. Therefore, to exclude men from a feminist journal or anthology can be justified as an affirmative action step, one intended to correct the imbalances of a male-dominated institution. Apparently Gaskell and McLaren did not apply this rationale to their selection process.

Overall, this book assembles work on women and education in Canada that will prove particularly valuable to women's studies students and faculty. A useful book to read in conjunction with this is Kathleen Weiler's *Women Teaching for Change* (Bergin and Garvey, 1988), which does a good job of integrating critical educational theory with feminist and anti-racist analyses. But Weiler also fails to address issues of heterosexism and the oppression of compulsory heterosexuality. The book on women's education that integrates all these facets of women's oppression has yet to be written. ●



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• **ABORTION**, from page 5

We can predict with some certainty that the fight in Canada will be fought on a number of fronts also. The legal fights will continue. Joe Borowski's first run in with the courts was in 1973 when, in defiance of Revenue Canada, he refused to file a tax return, or pay any taxes that went to fund medicare payments on abortion. His fight against the abortion law continues and indeed his day in court may finally force the judges to address the question of rights of the unborn.

The threat of the government attempting to rewrite the law is very real indeed. The Supreme Court did not rule out the possibility of another abortion law being in conformity with the Charter of Rights. On the contrary all of the judges made references to some elements of the law that they felt could withstand Charter scrutiny. Specifically they felt that there was sufficient state interest in the protection of the fetus that a law that put restrictions on abortion (at an as yet undetermined point) would be acceptable.

The issue of where abortions should be performed will probably continue to be controversial, although there was some feeling expressed in the Supreme Court decision that there was no need for abortions to be performed in a hospital, in some cases quite the contrary. As to under what circumstances an abortion may be performed there is also some disagreement among the judges, leaving it unclear if the law that would still require a woman to show that the continuation of her pregnancy was likely to endanger her health may pass Charter scrutiny. There was also a feeling among some of the judges that it was not unreasonable to require an independent doctor to approve an abortion (thereby giving rise to the new slogan, "abortion is a matter between a woman and her doctors").

The pro-choice fight now also moves to the provincial forum. Since the Supreme Court decision the provision of abortion services has reflected a patchwork of responses from the provincial governments. As health care is a provincial responsibility, the ultimate decision of how abortion services will be delivered is up to the provinces. A *Toronto Star* survey in early February revealed that the current situation is "confused."

Currently in British Columbia the situation appears to be the worst. The Government originally said that it would not pay for abortions unless they were approved by a hospital therapeutic abortion committee. This stand was later changed to require that the abortion decision be reviewed by at least one additional doctor. This stand was further toughened when Premier Bill Vander Zalm announced that the province would provide no money for abortions unless a woman's life was endangered. This would rule out abortions even in the circumstance where a woman was pregnant by virtue of rape or incest. In addition the BC government is planning a \$4 million media blitz to encourage women to seek alternatives to abortion.

The Government of Alberta is currently reviewing the abortion decision. In the meantime it will only fund abortions approved by hospital therapeutic abortion committees.

In Saskatchewan, a province which has been resolutely anti-abortion, the Government is still studying the issue.

The Manitoba government will pay for abortions in approved clinics outside hospitals, but will encourage them to operate as non-profit community health centres. In addition, all hospitals have been ordered to disband their therapeutic

abortion committees. All criminal charges pending against Dr. Morgentaler and his Winnipeg clinic have been dropped.

In Ontario, all abortions performed in a hospital, clinic or a doctor's office will be covered by OHIP, and all criminal charges pending have been dropped.

In Quebec, where the Government already funds abortions done in hospitals, community health centres, women's clinics and private clinics, the government announced that it would increase the amount it pays to private clinics.

Nova Scotia has abolished the hospital therapeutic abortion committees but it will not pay for abortions done in private clinics.

The New Brunswick government has yet to comment on the law.

In Prince Edward Island the government announced that it will pay the cost of in-hospital abortions although the province's main hospital refuses to perform them. The government will also pay for out-of-province abortions if they are approved by a three-doctor committee appointed by the health services commissions.

Although the abortion committees have been abolished in two of three Newfoundland hospitals, the government has yet to say whether it will pay for abortions in clinics.

The responses by the individual provinces raise a number of important issues, the first of which is obviously how various provinces can justify their actions when they are in direct contravention with the Supreme Court ruling. It would appear that we will now see legal cases working their way through the system on the issues of provinces requiring therapeutic abortion committees and on the issue of withholding funding from what is now a non-criminal act.

Now is the time that the pro-choice movement must be clear about its strategy. We also must be clear on what exactly the fight is. Although the pro-choice movement owes a debt of gratitude to Dr. Morgentaler (and Drs. Scott, Smoling and Colodny, and the clinic workers who all faced criminal charges) the fight was never to support private clinics. (American commercial abortion clinics have already inquired about Canadian franchises.) The fight was always for publicly funded women's reproductive health centres that would handle a full range of contraceptive advice, counselling and health care, with abortion being just one of the services provided.

The fight was also never to make the choice to have an abortion a choice between a woman and her doctor. The choice is that of a woman alone. A doctor obviously may decline to perform an abortion and a doctor would obviously be shirking her/his responsibilities if s/he did not carefully explain what is entailed in having an abortion, both physically and psychologically, but the decision must remain that of the woman alone.

The fight is now in the arena where lobbying groups can have the most effect. It's now in the hands of the legislators. Both the federal and provincial governments will be major players in rewriting the abortion laws. (Although if the deafening silence heard by our Federal and Provincial Ministers Responsible for Women's Issues Barbara McDougall and Greg Sorbara is any indication, we can't expect too many allies.) Pro-choice concerns must be articulated, heard and reflected. "Abortion has no place in the Criminal Code," should be the united stand. "No law" is the only acceptable stand. The government must be made to see that the provision of health care is not a criminal matter. Now, more than ever before, is the time to make our voices heard.

• **JUSTICES**, from page 5

simply travel elsewhere in Canada to procure a therapeutic abortion, but Dickson found that the evidence established convincingly that it is the law itself which in many ways prevents access to local therapeutic abortion facilities. The enormous emotional and financial burden placed on women who must travel long distances from home to obtain an abortion is a burden created in many instances by Parliament.

Dickson concluded that the current system is manifestly unfair. It contains so many potential barriers to its own operation that the defences it creates will in many circumstances be practically unavailable to women or at the very least would force such women to travel great distances at substantial expense and inconvenience in order to benefit from a defence that is held out to be generally available.

Given all of the above, the law may still be legal. A law which infringes any section of the Charter can be saved if the party seeking to uphold the provision can demonstrate: first, that the objective of the law is "of sufficient importance to warrant overriding a constitutionally protected right or freedom"; second, that the legislative means impair as little as possible the right or freedom under consideration; and, finally, that the effects of the limitation upon the relevant right or freedom should not be out of proportion to the objective sought to be achieved.

Dickson concluded that the procedures established to implement the law impair rights far more than is necessary because they hold out an illusory defence to many women. In other words, many women whom Parliament professes not to subject to criminal liability will nevertheless be forced by the practical unavailability of the supposed defence to risk liability or to suffer other harm such as a traumatic late abortion caused by the delay inherent in the system. The effects of the limitations are out of proportion to the objective sought to be achieved which Dickson found to be the protection of the health of pregnant women.

Finally, he concluded that, to the extent that the law is designed to protect the life and health of women, the procedures it established may actually defeat that objective. The administrative structures are so cumbersome that women whose health is endangered by pregnancy may not be able to gain a therapeutic abortion, at least without great trauma, expense and inconvenience.

The concurring opinion of Justices Beetz and Estey may prove to be of much concern to women. On the positive side, they also concluded that if an act of Parliament forces a pregnant woman whose life or health is in danger to choose between, on the one hand, the commission of a crime to obtain effective and timely medical treatment and, on the other hand, inadequate treatment or no treatment at all, her right to security of the person has been violated.

They did conclude, however, that Parliament is justified in requiring a reliable, independent and medically sound opinion as to the "life or health" of the pregnant woman in order to protect the state interest in the fetus. They could also envisage a law that would require a higher degree of danger to health in the latter months of pregnancy, as opposed to the early months for an abortion to be lawful. Given this view of the objective of the law they also concluded that this would justify reasonable limits to be put on a woman's right to an abortion.

Justice Bertha Wilson, in her separately written decision, argued that the rights contained in the Charter guarantee to every individual a degree of personal autonomy over important decisions intimately affecting her private life. Liberty in a free and democratic society does not require the state to approve

such decisions but it does require the state to respect them.

She also found that the abortion law takes a personal and private decision away from the woman and gives it to a committee which bases its decisions on "criteria entirely unrelated to the pregnant woman's priorities and aspirations."

Wilson goes beyond Dickson's finding that the law subjects women to considerable emotional stress and unnecessary physical risk in arguing that the law asserts that a woman's capacity to reproduce is subject, not to her own control, but to that of the state. This is a direct interference with a woman's physical person. She is truly being treated as a means—a means to an end which she does not desire and over which she has no control. She is the passive recipient of a decision made by others as to whether her body is to be used to nurture a new life.

She goes on to say that the decision of whether or not to terminate a pregnancy is essentially a moral decision and in a free and democratic society the conscience of the individual must be paramount to that of the state. The state here is endorsing one conscientiously-held view at the expense of another. It is denying freedom of conscience to some, treating them as means to an end, and depriving them of their "essential humanity."

Wilson did, though, foresee some acceptable restrictions on abortion. She argued that the fetus should be viewed in differential and developmental terms. She would support a permissive approach to abortion in the early stages where the woman's autonomy would be absolute. The state would have no business inquiring into her reasons. These reasons for having an abortion would, however, be the proper subject of inquiry in the later stages of her pregnancy when the state's compelling interest in the protection of the fetus would justify its prescribing conditions. She posited that while this precise point should be left to the legislature to decide, it probably falls somewhere within the second trimester.

In the dissenting opinion, Justice McIntyre (who was joined by Justice La Forest) takes exception to what he views as the implied assertion by the Chief Justice that a woman has a right to an abortion. The proposition that women enjoy a constitutional right to have an abortion is, according to him, devoid of support in either the language, structure or history of the constitutional text, in constitutional tradition, or in the history, traditions or underlying philosophies of our society. He concludes that there is no evidence or indication of any general acceptance of the concept of abortion at will in our society. McIntyre does find though that there has always been clear recognition of a public interest in the protection of the unborn.

He also argues that the law was designed to meet specific circumstances. Its aim is to restrict abortion to cases where the continuation of the pregnancy would, or would likely, be injurious to the life or health of the woman concerned, not to provide unrestricted access to abortion. It was to meet this requirement that Parliament provided for the administrative procedures found in the section. This machinery was considered adequate to deal with the type of restricted abortion Parliament had envisaged. When, however, many more women would seek abortions on a basis far wider than that contemplated by Parliament, any system would come under stress and possibly fail. In so far as it may be said that the administrative scheme of the law has operated inefficiently, a proposition which he finds highly questionable, it is caused primarily by forces external to the law, the external circumstances being a general demand for abortion irrespective of the provisions on the law. — L.F.



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OUTSIDE BROADSIDE

March 1988

• **Tuesday, March 1:** CBC Ideas presents "Family Secrets," with writer and incest survivor Gail Fisher-Taylor. CBC Radio, 9 pm.

• **Wednesday, March 2:**

Socialist Feminist Discussion Series of the Marxist Institute presents: Higher Education and the State: The Case of Iran, with Sharzad Mojab. OISE, 252 Bloor Street West, 6th floor, \$2 donation. Info: Lorna Weir, 533-0798 or Kari Dehli, 536-0414.

• **Friday, March 4:** Sophia Montenegro, Nicaraguan feminist, journalist and senior editor of *Barricada*, speaks on Women in Nicaragua. 7 pm, Harbord Collegiate, 286 Harbord. \$4 donation.



Sophia Montenegro

• **Friday, March 4:** Toronto Area Women's Research Colloquium presents Pat Mills, "He Done Her Wrong: Revamping the Myths of Medea and Penelope." Respondent: Penn Kemp. 3 pm. OISE Boardroom, 12th floor, 252 Bloor Street West.

IWD

• **Saturday, March 5:** International Women's Day Rally, March and Fair. Rally at Convocation Hall, University of Toronto at 10 am, march to Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, Gould Street, where the Fair begins at 2 pm. Info: U. of T. Women's Centre, 978-8201.

• **Saturday, March 5:** IWD Dance, at the Concert Hall, 888 Yonge Street, 9 pm. All women welcome. Tickets: \$8 at door; \$7 advance (available at SCM, Glad Day and Toronto Women's Bookstore).

• **Sunday, March 6:** A Celebration of Women: free NFB films at the Bloor Cinema, 506 Bloor Street West, 2 pm. Info: 973-2236.

WEEK OF MARCH 7

• **Monday, March 7:** Popular Feminism series presents Pamela Harris, "Photographing the Faces of Feminism." Room 2-212-213, OISE, 252 Bloor St. West, 8 pm. Discussion groups to follow. Free. Info: 923-6641, ext. 2204.

• **Monday, March 7:** Nightwood Theatre and Women's Cultural Building present the 6th annual 5-Minute Feminist Cabaret. Theatre Passe Muraille, 16 Ryerson Ave. 9 pm, doors open at 8:15 pm. Tickets \$10, available at the Toronto Women's Bookstore, Pages and the IWD fair. For further info: 961-7202.

• **Tuesday, March 8:** Women Against Free Trade presents a debate on the Effects of Free Trade on Women. Info: 441-2731.

• **Tuesday, March 8:** Lesbian and Gay Pride Day organizational meeting, 519 Church St. Community Centre, 7:30 pm. Info: Grant, 862-0470.

• **Wednesday, March 9:** Scarborough Social Planning Council presents Mary Shaughnessy speaking on Changing Images of Leadership. 1:30 pm. and 7:30 pm., Scarborough Civic Centre, Committee Rooms 1 and 2.

• **Thursday, March 10:** Riverdale Women's Action Committee monthly meeting. 7:30 pm. Info: 463-5671.

• **Thursday, March 10:** A Space Film Committee presents a series of film screenings and workshops by women filmmakers. Info: 360-5423. **To Sunday, March 13.**

• **Saturday, March 12:** Women's Zodiac Dance at 519 Church St. Community Centre. Info: 533-6120.

WEEK OF MARCH 14

• **Wednesday, March 16:** The Clara Brett Martin Workshop Series on women and the law presents Dorothy Dinnerstein, "Survival Politics and its Relationship to Feminism." Solarium, Falconer Hall, 84 Queen's Park Crescent, 12:10 pm.

• **Thursday, March 17:** Launch of Dorothy Smith's new book, *The Everyday World as Problematic*. 7 pm. SCM Bookroom, 333 Bloor Street West. Info: 979-9627.

WEEK OF MARCH 21

• **Wednesday, March 23:** Dario Fo's new play, "Almost By Chance A Woman: Elizabeth" presented by Theatre Resource Centre, previews at the Factory Theatre Studio Café, 317 Adelaide Street West. Info: 864-9971. **To Sunday, April 10.**

• **Thursday, March 24:** Basic Wen-do course beings at College and Ossington, 7 pm. Info: 597-1171. **To Thursday, May 5.**

• **Thursday, March 24:** Panel discussion on reproductive technology with Margrit Eichler, OISE; Joseph Boyle, St. Michael's College; and Adrienne Drobnies, University of Toronto. 7 pm. SCM Bookroom, 333 Bloor Street West. Info: 979-9627.

• **Thursday, March 24:** Basic Wen-do course begins in downtown Toronto, 7 pm. Info: 368-2178. **To Thursday, April 28.**

• **Friday, March 25:** Women's Independent Thoughtz (WITZ), seminar/discussion group. Topic: George Eliot. 7 pm. Info: 234-5281.

• **Friday, March 25:** Assaulted Women's and Children's Counsellor/Advocate Program, George Brown College, holds a one-day meeting to discuss the program proposal. Casa Loma Campus. 9 am. Info: Sandy Fishleigh, 967-1212, ext. 4228.

WEEK OF MARCH 28

• **Saturday, March 26:** Cycling Women: A Conference for Bicycle Riders, at Monarch Park Collegiate, 8:30 am-4:30 pm. Info: 485-4141. Also **Sunday, March 27.**

• **Thursday, March 31:** Siren Soirées, 9 pm. Thursday—PWYC, Friday and Saturday—\$5. Theatre Centre, 191 Lippincott (at Ulster, 1 block south of Harbord, 1 block east of Bathurst). Info: 461-6101 or 465-6088. **To Saturday, April 2.**

• **TBA:** Launching of Libby Oughton's new collection of poems from Williams-Wallace. 7 pm. SCM Bookroom, 333 Bloor Street West. Info: 979-9627.

WEEKLY

Sunday: Lesbians of Colour (LOC), a social and support group for Native, Asian, South Asian, Black and Latin lesbians regardless of age meets every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month. 519 Church St. 3:45-5:30 pm. Info: Michele, 588-2930. (Out of town lesbians of colour can write for information: LOC, PO Box 6597, Station A, Toronto, M5W 1K4.)

Monday: The Women's Group, an open lesbian discussion group, meets at 519 Church St. 8 pm. Info: 392-6874.

Monday and Wednesday: The Women's Information Line is open from 7-9 pm. Messages may be left any time, at 598-3714.

Monday to Friday: "By All Means," a noon-time women's radio magazine show. Every day at 12:15 on CIUT-FM 89.5. Interviews, reviews, commentary and chat. Tune in! Info: 595-0909.

Tuesday: Lesbian fuck-the-discussion group meets for informal basketball, movie nights and other events. 7 pm., U of T Women's Centre, 49 St. George. Info: 978-8201.

Tuesday and Thursday: The Lesbian Phone Line is open for calls from women. 7:30-9:30 pm. 533-6120.

Wednesday: International Women's Day Committee (IWDC), a socialist feminist activist group, meets on alternate Wednesdays. Info: Nancy, 531-6608.

Thursday: Feminist self-help discussion group. Women and men welcome. 7-9 pm. U of T Women's Centre, 49 St. George. Info: 978-8201.

**Compiled by
Helen Lenskyj**

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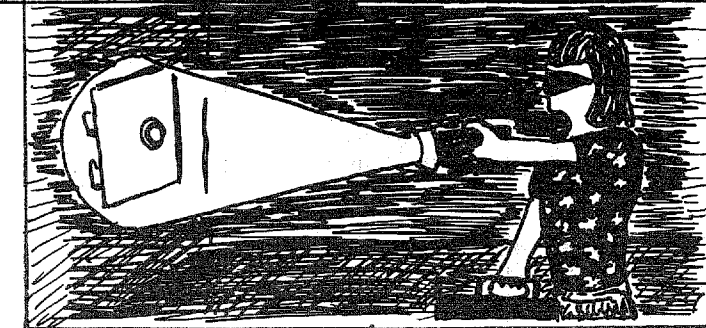
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GOLDEN THREADS, a contact publication for lesbians over 50 and women who love older women. Canadian and US. Confidential, warm, reliable. Sample copy mailed discreetly, \$5 (US), or send a self-addressed envelope for free information: Golden Threads, P.O. Box 2416, Quincy, MA, 02269, USA.

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FREE TO BE YOU is a career planning workshop for lesbian women, gay men, and gay positive persons. Next workshop starts March 22. Register at the 519 or call Allan at (416) 484-6252.

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WOMEN! The Company of Sirens invites you to participate in Spring Soirées, March 31-April 2. Feminist theatre, dance, music and performance. 5-10 minutes. We provide technical assistance. Submit proposals ASAP to: Company of Sirens, 10 Dearbourne Ave., Toronto, M4K 1M7; or phone (416) 461-6101 or 465-6088.

MARGARET FRAZER HOUSE requires full time and relief staff to work in a high support residence for women. We operate as feminist collective. For information call (416) 463-1481 or pick up application at 301 Broadview Avenue, Toronto, Ontario.

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