

Free

# The Womanist

Winter 1991

A feminist newspaper distributed nationally

Vol 2, #3

*Journée internationale des femmes*



*International Women's Day*

*Día Internacional de la Mujer*

- Coverage of the war
- Cross-country International Women's Day events
- Reproductive technologies
- Feminist Throne Speech

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**To subscribe:** To have the paper delivered, the price is \$10-\$25 a year. Institutions \$25, \$15 for non-profits.

The Womanist was created to empower and enable women. We want to get back to the basics, the common ground that built the women's movement, while celebrating our differences.

What can we agree upon? That we as women are important and that we have a right to be heard, to be respected and to be trusted.

As a movement we have a responsibility to enable all voices to be heard, equally. That is the commitment in this newspaper - to empower with ideas, information and inspiration.

The Womanist appears 4 times a year.

# Womenspeak



Dear *Womanist*,

I would like to respond to Julie Rouse-Kyle's article "The Fear of Rape" which appeared in the Fall 1990 issue of *The Womanist*. Ms. Rouse-Kyle quite rightly points out that women should be able to dress however they wish, at whatever hour they like and walk alone if they so choose. She relates how she has been told to dress differently if she dislikes attention and defends her right to wear shorts, sundresses or whatever else is comfortable. I agree that this is her right. However, I must point out that it does not matter what women wear. We may be threatened while resembling the Michelin character!



This fact became clear to me one evening as my friend and I were walking home in a university town. She had recently cut short her beautiful long blonde hair in an attempt to stop the leers and jeers to which she was frequently subjected. In addition, we were both wearing mukluks, bulky coats, wool hats and mittens. We looked downright hellish. In fact, one could hardly determine our gender! That did not stop a car full of young men from yelling obscene comments at us from the window of a passing car. All we could do was laugh at the absurdity.

My point is, women are abused no matter their dress, whatever the hour and despite their numbers. Every day we must be aware of our environment, plan our route and be alert to danger. Women are continually attacked and threatened, raped and

## Corrections:

In our last issue, we listed the names of the women killed in the Montréal massacre, but inadvertently left out Maryse Laganière and Annie St-Arneault. Our apologies to their families.

Also in our last issue, the article by Bobbie Boland was laid out incorrectly. We would be happy to provide a copy of the correct article to anyone interested. Just call or write us at (613) 233-2621, or 541 Sussex Drive, Suite 201, Ottawa K1N 6Z6. Apologies to Bobbie.

humiliated in broad daylight, in our neighbourhoods, in public and even in our own homes. Young or old, Vogue fashion plate or regular "Jill", we are the targets of violence.

We must not forget this so as not to fall into the trap of believing that horrible things happen to other women who are strangers and never to us or the women we know. As Ms. Rouse-Kyle suggests, we cannot allow ourselves to become complacent.

Awareness is our protection. Action is the key.

Sincerely,  
Stephanie M. Gilman,  
Nepean, Ontario

Dear *Womanist*:

It is easier for black youth in Canada or the United States to go to prison, or to go to war, or to go to Heaven than it is for black youth to get an education and to get a job.

Black people have fought and have died and have returned wounded physically and emotionally from every war fought by imperialist countries like Canada and the United States. These wars have not been fought against racism and apartheid; these wars have not

(continued on page 46)

## Definition of Womanist

Definition of Womanist

1. From womanish (Opp. of "girlish", ie, frivolous, irresponsible, not serious.) A black feminist or feminist of colour. From the black folk expression of mothers to female children, "you acting womanish," ie, like a woman. Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or willful behaviour. Wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered "good" for one. Interested in grown-up doings. Acting grown up. Being grown up. Interchangeable with another black folk expression: "You trying to be grown." Responsible. In charge. Serious.

2. Also: A woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and women's strength. Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or nonsexually. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health. Traditionally universalist, as in: "Mama, why are we brown, pink and yellow, and our cousins are white, beige and black?" Ans: "Well, you know the coloured race is just like a flower garden, with every colour flower represented." Traditionally capable, as in: "Mama, I'm walking to Canada and I'm taking you and a bunch of other slaves with me." Reply: "It wouldn't be the first time."

3. Loves music. Loves dance. Loves the moon. Loves the Spirit. Loves love and food and roundness. Loves struggle. Loves the folks. Loves herself. Regardless.

4. Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender.

From *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens*, Womanist Prose by Alice Walker.

# International Women's Day events

pages 21 - 26

## Editorial

It has become clear over the past months, to anyone who was not already painfully aware of it, that, to this government, protecting economic gain is far more important than preventing or alleviating human suffering.

The two events which have dominated our news media recently are only the latest and most glaring in a long line of similar actions. Both the Canadian involvement in the Gulf war, and Finance Minister Wilson's last budget fly in the face of Canada's historical commitment to human dignity, not to mention every aspiration and belief of the women's movement.

Over and over again, when faced with choices and options, this government consistently throws its weight on the side of the powerful, the wealthy, and short-term gain. Some of the articles in this issue discuss in more detail the Gulf war, driven by the need for guaranteed American access to oil, and the budget, designed to meet the needs of big business while kicking out what few supports Canadians have to get us through this Wilson-created recession.

The government attempts to imply that there is ultimately no choice in these matters, that they are only acting in our best interests, making prudent

decisions under trying circumstances. In fact, that is not the case. There are options, and we are pleased to present you with some of them in this issue.

The Feminist Throne Speech is an indication of some of the options Canadians could be considering. It is visionary, but responsible. It represents an investment in the future not only of this fragile nation, but of this even more fragile planet.

We offer it as a modest contribution to the continuing

debate.

Canadians apparently no longer have a federal government interested in strengthening the fabric of our communities, our nation, and our world. Just because they have abandoned their responsibilities, let us not abandon ours. Each of us individually, and all of us together, have the capacity to bring about our visions. As Audre Lorde says, let us use our resources in the service of what we claim to believe in. Much work lies ahead.

As we tackle our work, take time to honour women's accomplishments. Happy International Women's Day to everyone!

The breadth of IWD activities listed in these pages is only a part of what is happening in Canada around March 8, which is only a tiny fraction of what is happening around the world. The vibrant energy and commitment of women at the community level is our greatest resource. Celebrate!

## After the war

Although the Gulf war is over, some important questions remain unanswered.

1. Why was the UN set aside in this process? Although the coalition forces based their legitimacy on a UN resolution, they did not follow the steps set out for UN action against member countries (eg, there was no formal decision by the UN that the sanctions were not working and therefore military intervention was needed). Nor were the military forces organized under UN command, as happens in peacekeeping forces or other similar situations. Instead, Canadian forces were under American command.

2. Why did the U.S. decide to intervene in Kuwait, but did not in other situations where sovereign countries were invaded or occupied militarily? (eg, Namibia occupied by South Africa, Jordan's west bank by Israel, etc.)

3. Why did the U.S. see Iraq as an ally when it was using chemical weapons on civilian populations during the Iran-Iraq war, but an enemy when it invaded Kuwait? The international community knew that Iraq was using germ warfare, and that women and children were dying from it, yet did nothing. Why are some aspects of international law more important than others?

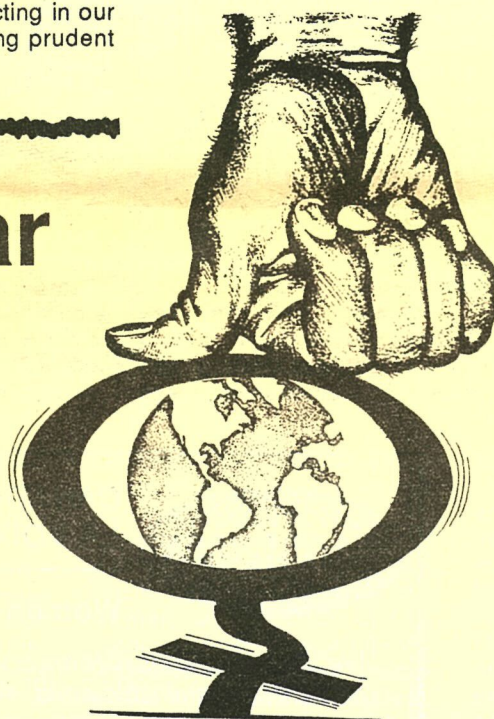
4. Why did Canada's role change from the defensive enforcement of UN sanctions, to invading Iraqi-occupied Kuwait? This dramatic shift in Canada's foreign policy of the last 40 years was not decided by public debate, or by Parliament, or even by Cabinet. It was decided by one man, Brian Mulroney, after a discussion with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. Do we still live in a democratic country?

5. Were Canadian armed forces responsible for any of the civilian deaths in Iraq or Kuwait? Information about the war is stringently censored by the Pentagon, but we know that the Canadian pilots flew missions over Kuwait when the

smoke was so thick that, by their own admission, they could not see what was being bombed.

6. Who will determine the future of the nations and peoples in the Middle East? The U.S. has already let it be known that they want Saddam Hussein deposed. Their primary interest in the Middle East seems to be access to oil. Other considerations (self-determination, historical boundaries, cultural aspirations, peace, etc.) will likely be secondary.

7. The next time the U.S. invades a nation, under whatever cause, will Canadians follow blindly? Under this government, that seems a distinct possibility.



**More on the war**  
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# Journey to Baghdad: The Implications of

Maude Barlow, President of the Council of Canadians, was part of a fact-finding tour of Iraq with an international women's delegation before the commencement of the war. She was interviewed by Lynne Tyler from *The Womanist*.

## What was your trip to Iraq like?

In early January, I was honoured by an invitation to join an international delegation of women on a peace mission to the Middle East. Organized by Margarita Papandreou of Greece, the group also included a Soviet delegate, two Americans, an Egyptian, and a Jordanian. I was the only Canadian, and was asked in part, because of the Council's stand that Canada should have an independent foreign policy.

It was a phenomenally intense eight days. We were hosted by the Iraqi Women's Federation. We formed a great friendship among ourselves and with the women in Iraq. My sense of the trip is filtered through that discovering of these wonderful women in Iraq.

I met women in Iraq working on the same kind of effort we are working on, albeit under very different circumstances.

I found a country on the eve of war, and at the end of war. They have just been through an eight-year war, and the women in particular were most articulate about how terrible it was and how terrified they were about the prospect of facing more. They would be careful not to be disloyal, and not to sound like they were speaking out against the war, but there was no question that this war was something they did not want to happen.

I also found the country very resigned. It's part of the faith, and when you don't have much of a say in what your government does, there's a sense that you better just accept what comes. Everybody talked very much about God's will, and if it is what God chooses for us, then that's the way it's going to have to be.

At the same time, Baghdad is a wonderful, vibrant, fabulous city. Who knows what's left of it now, but it's the seat of a very rich and ancient culture. When I think of them bombing it, ... it's awful – and wrong.

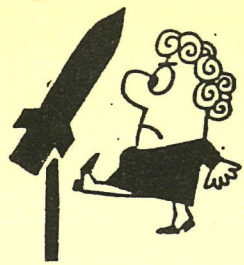
Tragically, our mission and so many others failed. We did not even receive a reply from the United States to present our peace proposal to the White House. But I deeply believe that every voice that

was raised, every attempt to find a solution, was worth the risk. The people I met in Iraq were human beings – just like us. They have suffered under a military regime for many years, and had just come out of a long, tragic war with Iran, a war effort supported by the very forces now allied against Iraq. We cannot judge the people by their dictator, and it is imperative that we understand the extent of the suffering this war has caused all the people of the region.

It is my personal opinion that the forces allied against Saddam Hussein helped create him, and we in Canada should be taking a long hard look at our involvement in this process.

## Why is Canada in the Gulf?

First of all, I'll start with why the Americans are there. The Americans are there because it is the new world order. The Soviet Union has become bankrupt, and the U.S., which is also financially almost bankrupt, is moving to secure its position of power into the next century.



On this continent, it's taking the form of what I call "Fortress North America", the extension of hemispheric free trade, the re-structuring of the entire North American economy along the American free market line, with the tying in of all North American resources, which are now going to include Mexican oil.

In the Middle East, it is done militarily. I do not believe the American interests there are in any way connected to Kuwait. I think they are in every way connected to securing a permanent American presence in the area, to safeguard its resource interests.

Canada is there because over the past many years, but particularly over the past four or five years, we have integrated our defence production systems so totally with those of the Americans, and have deepened our military connections to the Pentagon so much that Canada no longer has the financial or economic ability to have an independent foreign policy.

If we want financially to

continue to get defence contracts, and we don't want those Canadian companies involved to go under, we just jump when the Americans say "jump".

To our eternal shame, this government activated the Canadian navy at the direct request of George Bush. Actually, I should say the Prime Minister activated the Canadian navy. Not even Cabinet was involved in that decision – forget Parliament, they've become irrelevant to this government!

In essence, what we are dealing with is an issue of democracy. This government now goes to Washington and takes its orders directly from there.

The "Open Skies" policy is another perfect example. Everybody – both airlines, all the unions, the airline pilots' union, and a three-party Parliamentary Committee have all said, in essence, don't bring in free trade through this "open skies" policy, the airlines cannot survive. Yet Doug Lewis (Minister of Transport) is going ahead, and it turns out that he is working directly with an American private airport lobby group.

At least with the Free Trade Agreement, this government was working with their own Canadian business

interests. In this case, and in the Gulf war, we are just bypassing Canadian interests altogether, and taking orders fairly directly from the Americans.

When our Parliament is debating whether we should be in this war a full week after it has started, and a week and a



half after our Prime Minister and our Foreign Affairs Minister stood with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and committed Canada to the war in front of the whole world, then clearly this government has no respect for democracy.

## What are the long-term consequences of this, in Canada and in the Gulf?

For the Middle East, the long-term consequences are appalling. Everything that was unstable before, is dramatically more unstable.

Israel is less safe than it was. Jordan is going to be financially bankrupt – they are on the eve of a terrible financial crisis, and an awful food crisis. It is a dramatic situation for Jordan. Whatever happens in Iraq can only be terrible. Fuelled by bitterness, the fundamentalist Arab movement across the Arab world will come together.

The one positive thing that I see is that some regimes are going to topple, and I think they know it. In Kuwait, I don't think the Prince will ever be back, and if he is, he won't be there for long. The days of the Saudi rulers are numbered.

This war has exposed who they serve so clearly, that they are just barely keeping the lid on the people in their own country.

If there is any good that will come out this terrible mess, it is that the Americans are going to find that they are wrong if they think they can

(continued on page 5)



## CANADIAN VOICE OF WOMEN FOR PEACE / LA VOIX DES FEMMES

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# Canadian Involvement in the Gulf War

dictate what happens in the Middle East. But the way that is going to happen will be so ugly, and will involve so much long-term pain, and so much environmental pain.

Women in the Middle East are struggling for self-determination, for equality and for their place in society. But now, it has to be submerged and subverted back into the war effort.

The fundamentalists use the war situation to put women back into a limited role. Their theory, basically, is that women are the weaker sex and therefore are more vulnerable to "evil" western influences. Therefore, they are forced to show a visible proof that they support Arab self-determination, they will take the veil.

The women are caught, and I feel for them. At one level, they are furious at Western domination, and the brutality of this war. And yet, they are striving for the freedom that Western women have. But the two are being linked and being used against them. Their fight will be set back years.

What this does to Canada is that it further tarnishes our international reputation. I'm not one to say we had a perfect reputation in the first place - I think we did have some reputation as a moderate force. But we have to be honest about the fact that our armaments, small as they were, were in the Middle East, too. That terrible fuel air explosive weapon that spews out bits of glass and other things (they say it's like a small nuclear bomb) was developed here in Canada, at the University of Toronto. So we'd better not pat ourselves on the back for being pure.

On the other hand, we have taken a giant step in the wrong direction, not just in

getting involved in this war, but in failing to use opportunities to work for peace. At no point are we using our influence with the Americans.

The Soviet peace proposal was a perfect example. Canada should have been urging restraint and caution on the American side, seeking time to give the initiative a chance to work. But we were not doing that, we were just saying whatever the United States said.

As a result, we have lost our international reputation as a somewhat moderate nation.

The domestic implications in Canada are that we are turning our attention away from the fundamental economic and social changes that are going on here.

The government wants to bring in massive devolution of power in this country, as a response to the Québec situation. This is going to serve the same corporate interests that brought U.S. free trade. Less government can only be good for the big transnationals' agenda.

We are in a fight for the soul of this country, and yet we have to deal with this war.

We are turning over financial, economic and political energy to the war, while our country is being dismantled. Aside from the financial cost, and it's obvious that is going to be taken out of many programs, the more serious long-term implication is that there are too many fundamental changes to Canadian society that are going by unchallenged.

The government just passed Bill C-69 which is a further erosion of social programs and most Canadians don't even know about it. In another time and place, we would have been up in arms about it - it would have been

the major issue facing us.

But there's so much else to do now! Trying to save the CBC, dealing with the privatization of everything in sight, "open skies", loss of control of our energy sector, the talk about the ending of universality (which they've already done anyway, but now they mean even further erosion of universality and family allowance).

I mean, you just don't know where to start.

To top it all off, we've all just finished the GST fight, and now we find out that - surprise! - they are going to make a tremendous amount of money on it, and somehow they didn't notice at the time.

Canadians are feeling overwhelmed.

If our government wanted to help build an industry in environmental clean-up technology, we couldn't do it. But they can give as much money as they want to the production of components for American weapons systems, in an increasingly militaristic world. Forget the peace dividend: the economic benefits of diverting resources from military expenditures and investing in social, economic, environmental improvements. We talked about it for three months and nobody is talking about it anymore.

We are losing our manufacturing base in this country. The future manufacturing base in Canada is going to be in arms production.

Canadians have to put this together. The response from the Mulroney government to Québec will have everything to do with this larger picture.

It's about removing democracy, it's about turning control of our country and our institutions over to the private free market, mostly American, corporate sector. We will lose ourselves as an international entity, and the world will lose what has been, not a perfect, but a more moderate voice.

Although we should fight all these issues individually, we must put the analysis together. I would especially urge women to do that, because we tend to get involved in our individual fights: reproductive rights, violence and pay equity. Every one of those is a worthy, important and essential fight, but, in this new system that is being imposed, those fights will all have to be fought over again.

It's like sitting in a boat, bailing out the water one thimbleful at a time, and meanwhile, the back half of the boat has just been cut off. As women, we have to concentrate on the larger analysis right now.

Meanwhile, I remember the ninety-year-old Jordanian woman who rocked in her chair all day, moaning over and over "the bombs, the bombs, when will they come?" Or the young Israeli mother who showed me in tears the brochures her children had brought home on chemical warfare which ordered people to seal off their homes in case of attack, and not to open the door for anyone, not even family members. Or the Iraqi woman who had lost two brothers, a nephew, and a husband in the Iran-Iraq war, and whose only remaining brother - an eighteen-year-old - had just signed up for the front. I was very well aware, that, as dangerous as our mission undoubtedly was, I was able to get on a plane and fly to safety, and my new friends were not. May there be a workable resolution.



**Where do we concentrate our efforts, given this huge challenge?**

We have to concentrate our efforts on our analysis of how these things come together. They are not unconnected.

We are becoming part of a "Fortress North America", an economic and military hemispheric force that serves the American and corporate new world order. Canada is not only following along, we seem to be a pretty willing participant.

We have turned over our energy resources to the service of this new world order. Canadians should remember that there are only two areas in the Free Trade Agreement where government subsidies are allowed.

One is the search for new energy supplies - well, the Americans are happy to let the Canadian taxpayer pay for that, because we have to guarantee them a proportion of all the energy resources we find. The other industry where subsidies are permitted is defence and arms production.

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# The 1991 Federal Budget: What Effect Will it Have?

by Lynne Tyler

## Short Term Effects

Overall, there will be considerable suffering by most Canadians because of the most recent federal budget. There is no relief for the unemployed, the wage constraints will mean a drop in the standard of living for many Canadians in the public sector and private companies that follow suit; there will be cuts in health, post-secondary education and social services, job losses in these sectors, continued bankruptcies, etc.

could work. If the provinces do not have the money, especially the poorer ones, how can they be forced to provide the same level of services as the richer provinces?

Cohen indicated that Alberta already has plans for a two-tiered health system, and Newfoundland is rumoured to be facing severe cuts in health care, perhaps as many as 600 hospital beds, as a result of the cuts in transfer payments.

"This government is destroying Medicare", Cohen continued "but they are not doing it openly and honestly,

attempt to placate Aboriginal people by not obviously cutting their funding. However, Aboriginal groups have pointed out that the existing funding has already been seriously eroded by inflation and population growth, and previous budget cuts. More importantly, this does nothing to address the real issues of concern to Aboriginal people, such as land claims, self-determination and sovereignty.

Unemployment will continue to stay high as a result of this budget. Most jobs in Canada are created by small businesses, not large corporations (in fact, big business is often responsible for a net job loss in Canada) but small business got no support or reprieve from the budget. There was a 61% increase in personal and business bankruptcies over the last year, in the wake of Wilson's last budget, which helped create the "made-in-Canada" recession.

Social housing starts will drop. This gives the construction industry, currently with high unemployment, no solace. It does nothing to relieve the mounting pressure on temporary shelters, or the needs of the homeless, let alone Canadians who cannot afford a home or might lose theirs because of the recession (and now the wage constraints under this budget), layoffs, and high interest rates. As Cohen said, "It is extraordinary, at a time when there are more homeless people in Canada than there have ever been, that this government is actually cutting social housing programs by 15%."

The burden of this budget is much heavier for some regions of Canada, than for others, according to Cohen. The cuts in transfer payments shift the whole problem of meeting social needs to the provinces. In provinces which are wealthier and which are committed to providing the services (eg, Ontario), people will not be hit quite as hard. However, in other parts of the country, such as the Maritimes, people will really suffer.

Spending in defence will grow. This is the last area where we need expenditures, when social and economic needs are so pressing. As most defence expenditures are capital-intensive rather than labour-intensive, this will not have nearly the economic benefits that similar expenditures would have in the areas that Wilson cut (e.g. health, education, environmental protection, etc.).

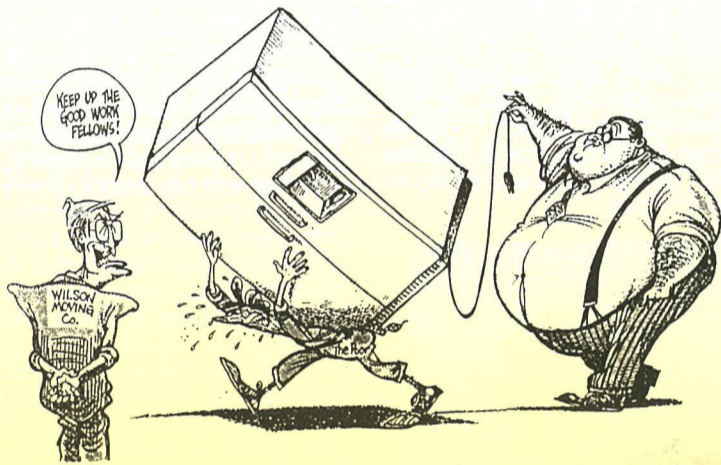
## Medium Term Effects

Finance Minister Wilson claims that the budget will bring down inflation, which, in his opinion, is the key to economic health. Unfortunately, his projections have been off target before. For example, the deficit this year is \$2 billion higher than he said it was going to be in his last budget, only a year ago. A number of economists and observers, including many in the business

sector, have expressed serious doubts about his projections in this budget. (Among other things, Wilson projected that economic recovery will start by the second half of this year!)

"Business confidence" is expected to grow as a result of this budget. Big business, by and large, is happy with the budget. Wilson expects this means they will invest in

(continued on page 7)



The cuts in transfer payments to the provinces will hit health and social services hardest. According to economist Marjorie Cohen, "Within four years, there will be no cash transfers to provinces." Without the leverage of cash transfers, how will the federal government enforce standards under the Canada Health Act? Finance Minister Michael Wilson said the government would introduce legislation to do this, but it is hard to see how this

because the Canadian people would never allow them to get away with it. Instead, they are destroying it piece by piece, by completely eroding funding and enforcement."

This budget will further delay addressing urgent and pressing environmental problems. Canadians have repeatedly indicated they consider environmental issues one of the highest, if not the highest, priority the government should tackle.

The budget is a cynical

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## What was in the Budget

### Programs being cut

### Total cuts over 5 years

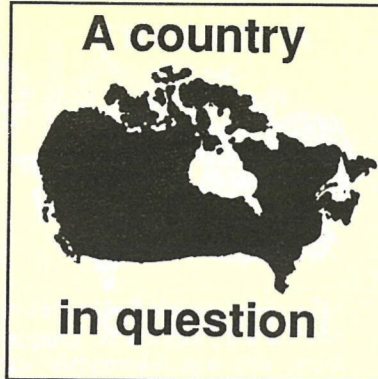
- 1. CAP** \$2.1 billion  
Under the Canadian Assistance Plan, the federal government pays 50% of the cost of certain provincial social assistance expenditures. The budget limits increases in the federal share to 5% per year, for Ontario, Alberta and BC. CAP funds welfare and social service expenditures, eg, transition houses.
  - 2. International aid** \$1.6 billion
  - 3. Green Plan** \$600 million  
The federal government's environmental protection plan, announced with much fanfare in December, will be funded over six years instead of five.
  - 4. Established Programs Financing** \$2.3 billion  
EPF transfers are the largest single source of federal assistance to provinces. These transfers will be frozen at their current per capita levels. EPF funds post-secondary education and health care.
  - 5. Grants and contributions** \$575 million  
Grants for science and technology will be capped at 5% growth for one year, and 3% for the following years. It remains to be seen which other programs are affected by the cuts. It appears that grants under the Women's Program, Aboriginal Women's Program, and Multiculturalism Program will not be affected.
  - 6. Social housing** \$411 million  
Canada Mortgage and Housing provides funds to provinces and territories for various programs to provide affordable housing. The budget provides a 15% cut in these social housing expenditures.
  - 7. Canadian Jobs Strategy** \$100 million  
Job creation, training and related economic development programs are funded under CJS.
  - 8. Public service** \$3.6 billion  
Departmental budgets will not increase to allow for any wage increases under collective agreements - in other words, any increase in salary for unionized staff will mean a loss in jobs. In addition, no wage settlements beyond 3% will be considered by the federal government. Finally, non-wage expenditures are frozen for one year, followed by tight constraint.
  - 9. Other program freezes** \$440 million  
The Canadian Film Development Corporation, the Export Development Corporation, and the transfer to provinces of federal income tax collected on private utilities, have all been frozen.
- Total cuts: \$1.1 billion in 1991-92 or \$12 billion over 5 years.** (CAP and EPF cuts do not come into effect until 1992-93)

### Exempted from the cuts are:

- Defence
- Indian and Inuit programs
- old age security, family allowance, UI benefits and other transfers to individuals.

# Plastic Shadows: Leadership Without Vision

by Luanne Armstrong

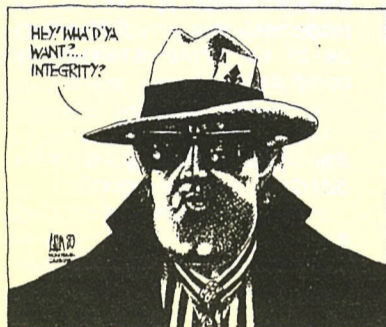


There's a crisis in this country. There's always a crisis in this country, but now the country is threatening, even more than it usually threatens, to disintegrate like a piece of old tired ice, and nothing much has changed for women, and poor people and native people and the Meech Lake agreement is gone and so what do we get?

Something called the Spicer Commission, which even the people who usually take these things seriously, like civil servants and the media, had a hard time remembering to talk about, and which people dutifully went through the motions of making presentations to, but which no one could bring themselves to even try and believe in. That's too bad, because it's a good idea, talking to people about their vision of Canada...it ought to be done more often, probably in some kind of regular way. The other problem of course, and it's a big one, is that if you're going to ask people for their vision of Canada, people have to believe that speaking will do some good.

My son spoke to the Spicer Commission, earnestly, and angrily. He's eighteen, and just getting involved in the political business of the world. He's wary, cynical, yet wanting to

believe. He said what he thought: repeal the Free Trade deal, we must have economic independence, we must settle Aboriginal land claims, we must regain our role and image in the world as a peacekeeping nation. He believed in the words as he said them, but he couldn't bring himself to think that they could be heard.



We are still a community in this country, however illusory, fragmented, divided and irritable. We are bound together by our shared history, our shared pain, and right now our shared irritation. Leadership is important in any community, not just for what it does, but for what it is. It represents, or could represent, the best that's in us, what we wish ourselves to be. Leadership is necessary in any community, however small or large, both for what it

symbolizes, and for what it gives us to hold on to.

But in Canada, just as in the United States, we live with plastic illusions for leaders. Our leaders are flat images of people mouthing words in which we try with some desperation to find meaning. We live with betrayal and illusions, knowing that the words should mean something, knowing in our hearts that words are magic, the making of words are magic, the naming and knowing of words. As words are the power of making and truth, they are also the power of unmaking and denial. We live in quiet terror in a world of shadows where nothing means what it should... "a kinder, gentler world...", "a new world order...". These words come at us as if saying them could make it so. But it doesn't...however many people would still like to believe, would like to hold onto faith in the process we are all supposed to believe in.

The primary disease symptom in a dysfunctional family is dishonesty and denial, where something is said to be what it's not, where children grow up in a world of illusions and shadows, not knowing what's true, not knowing their rights, or their boundaries, or how they are entitled to be treated. We are children still,

although we are adults; we are left floundering in a world which makes no sense, because the words which would construct it into something logical have been stolen from us.

The plastic illusions on television move and speak the words; our lives are far removed from them. They are uninvolved with us, although they have the power to affect us. We don't believe that they hear us, or listen. They seem to have little to do with us. There's been a war on. Far away, people move and speak and die and hurt each other, and our pain and indignation goes unheard. If the media chooses, even our protests become invisible, unheard.

The mood in the country, rather than one of anger, is of despair and frustration. Turned in on ourselves, we become passive. Of what use is our despair and anger when no one is listening, when our leaders don't care, when we don't believe in the processes which are supposed to serve us, but do no longer. What I see around me is fear and passivity, in the newspapers, in the public, people holding onto whatever piece of clichéd comfort will let them continue in their daze.

So we have the Spicer Commission, and involvement in a war that no one wants. We

have money set aside for advertising about domestic violence when what we want and need is a belief that our leaders are actually listening, not just serving their own ends. What we want is a right to say whether or not our money and our lives are committed to war, and what we want are real services that meet our needs, not vaguely worded advertisements about "domestic violence".

In times of crisis, we need leaders who can think past their own needs and their own fear and their own denial of reality. What we need is simple, honest information, space to be heard, the belief that someone cares and will listen, trust that this community we are all a part of is a caring one, and will sustain us. Without this, we retreat more and more into fragments, looking where we can for what we can hold onto. As the world shrinks into a global community, this fragmentation is an ironic and sad refuge for people with a steadily eroding faith in even the possibility of real leadership.

Luanne Armstrong is a teacher at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology in Merritt, B.C.

(continued from page 6)

## Federal Budget

Canada and help the economy recover. Wilson does not apparently know that most new jobs in Canada are created by small business. Small business organizations, for the most part, are angry and upset at the budget because it does nothing to help their sector, and in fact, burdens them with increases in Unemployment Insurance premiums.

Contrary to Wilson's expectations, economist Marjorie Cohen suggests that the budget will contribute to a downward spiral: less income (because of wage controls and tax increases) means less spending, which in turn generates fewer jobs.

### Long Term Effects

The damage to the social safety net (health care, education, social services, unemployment insurance, etc.) will take years to repair. We will be suffering the consequences for a long time.

Investment in the next generation of workers is one of the single largest impacts on future economic health. The Wilson budget cuts education spending by cutting over \$2.3 billion from Established Program Financing.

Continued investment in scientific and technological Research and Development is crucial to Canada's economic

future. Capping expenditures in this area and then further reducing them, when we are already far beyond other industrialized nations in this respect, is foolhardy. It is also contrary to promises made by this government on several occasions.

In addition, entrepreneurs who have been bankrupted or severely undermined by the recession, the GST, and free trade will have difficulty recuperating.

### Impact on Women

Women will be among the hardest hit by this budget, for several reasons:

- Women are usually the first fired in times of recession.

- The cuts in social and health services will affect women workers most because women predominate in these sectors - women will lose their jobs, and those who remain employed will likely see wage controls.

- Women are the majority of entrepreneurs starting new businesses. They will be hit by this budget far harder than big corporations (e.g.

Unemployment Insurance premium increases will be very difficult for small businesses, while larger corporations can more easily absorb or pass on these costs).


- Wage controls in the public service will hit women harder, because women are concentrated in the lower paying jobs, which are always penalized more heavily in any across-the-board wage freeze, such as this. Secondly, as National Action Committee spokesperson Huguette Léger stated, "It is difficult to imagine that the freeze on wage increases in the federal civil service will not seriously affect

pay equity programs and settlements."

- Women will be expected to take up the slack in health and social services, e.g., by caring for aging parents, making alternative child care arrangements, etc.

- There will almost certainly be no new child care policy, because the government has vowed to spend no new money on programs without first cutting something else.

- According to NAC, women will be hardest hit by the education and training cuts, as women are more likely than men to use these programs to re-enter the workforce and to make job changes.



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## A country



in question

# Canada's Future: A View from the Spicer Commission

*Carole Corcoran is a Commissioner on the Citizens Forum, also known as the Spicer Commission. She is the former chief of the Fort Nelson Indian Reserve in northern British Columbia and she is also the representative to the First Nations Congress for the Tribal Association of Treaty Number 8. She was interviewed for The Womanist by Lynne Tyler.*

## What are the objectives of the Commission?

The stated objectives are to engage citizens across the country in a national dialogue on the future of this country, on a few specified issues, such as Aboriginal issues, official languages, multiculturalism, regional diversity and those types of things.

Those are the stated objectives. The unstated objective that we hear about quite often is that this is another way of the government buying some time to avoid dealing with the issues. I suppose that's a possibility, but less cynically this is perhaps a way of the government getting some direction on how they can be more responsive to the needs of the Canadian public. That might be idealistic.

## What's your sense of the Commission now that you have been involved for a while? Are you happy with how things are proceeding?

It's been really tough, because we have been under such a strict timeframe. It's difficult to figure out the best way of engaging a public consultative process in a very short period of time. We are running into problems, too, because we're trying to find the most effective way very quickly, while we're doing it.

Other than that, people are very, very responsive to us, and I'm constantly surprised at that.

## What do you feel is the best possible outcome for the Commission?

That the government will listen! I don't know whether that's a possibility or not, but I guess that will be determined once we have completed our project.

## Why did you agree to be on the Commission? Do you have any regrets?

I'm no less cynical or skeptical than the average Canadian with some semblance of intelligence or opinion. I considered very carefully the possibility of whether the Citizens Forum could really make a difference on any of

## What are the basic issues that you hope to have some effect on?

When I talk to people, I try not to raise their expectations that this process is going to be a panacea for anything. Because ultimately, what becomes of our report? It's basically going to be a political decision. All of our findings are going to be handed back to the government, and it's going to be completely up to them to decide what they are going to do with it. In that sense, it's really out of our hands.

However, what I'm hoping is that we can get mad enough or interested enough to become involved. And that's what's been happening. People are saying, "We're sick of government not being responsive to us. We're sick of government not dealing with some of the issues that are confronting us. They're ruining the economy. They're not enabling people to progress in certain communities and certain groups", and so on. The whole thing is frustrating people at all levels.

Hopefully, said enough times, maybe somebody might listen!

## Some of the criticisms have been about the procedures related to public consultation, meetings by invitation only, etc. Could you explain the Commission's thinking about this?

We have trained moderators working for the Commission in all the provinces and territories. We use these people to encourage people to set up their own sessions. The reason we suggest groups of about fifteen to twenty people, is that, if the group is much larger than that, people often feel uncomfortable or don't really get a chance to discuss the issue.

The impression is that these meetings are crafted or manipulated, whereas the meetings are basically generated by the groups themselves. A couple of the meetings were very public, in fact televised. Apart from that, the groups themselves decide how they want the meetings conducted, who is there, etc.

## For those who do their own session, how do they get their views incorporated into the Commission's report?

We want to feed all that information into the process, so it becomes part of the report. Aside from the meetings, we accept written briefs, and calls into our 1-800

"idea line", which are all recorded. I don't know all the details, because there is a planning meeting going on right now in Québec to discuss how we will prepare the report (unfortunately, I was unable to attend that meeting). I know we are tabulating some of the responses in a way that allows us to do some analysis by computer.

## Are you planning a wide distribution of the report?

We are definitely designing it so it can be very easily read by a lot of people. We will also prepare video versions. We might even be able to televise it. It's going to be very public. We are committed to reporting back to the public as we are going along - we have newsletters and press releases regularly. We are staying completely away from any idea of secret meetings, or anything like that.

## What has been the Aboriginal participation so far?

At the start, there was a lot of skepticism, a great deal of frustration, and suspicion of the government's motives. But I can tell you that the Aboriginal people are feeding into this process, I think much for the same reasons that I became involved. That it's an opportunity to publicize our issues, and perhaps convey to some of the non-Aboriginal people out there what some of our aspirations are.

## What are people saying about Aboriginal issues?

It's painful how uneducated and ill-informed a lot of the public are. They are admitting this to us.

Essentially, they are saying, "We don't understand Native issues. We know they have gotten a raw deal historically from the government, and we really think the government should resolve these issues, but we



really don't understand."

There is a desire to understand more, and, hopefully, with that understanding will come more tolerance, and we might be able to make some headway on some of these issues in the next millenia.

## Are there any other issues coming forward?

Other than the most obvious ones, Québec and Aboriginal issues? When you get into the East, the Québec issues are much more prevalent than they are in the West. The West is much more concerned, as they historically have been, with representation, political accountability, and the whole sense of being left out of the process. That tends to bring up regional and economic disparity.

On a very basic level, we hear a lot of people who are concerned about their jobs. They are starting to feel the impact of the recession.

## Why do you think people are participating?

I think they're just tired of not being able to have a say. If there's a chance to make a difference, we better take it. We criticize and complain all the time, so maybe we should play our part, and spend a couple of hours talking about these issues. You almost don't want to say it, because it starts to sound like national psychotherapy, but people come out of these meetings and say things like, "I'm really glad I became involved in this, because I got to hear what other people feel about these issues, and I discovered I'm not the only one who is frustrated." Once you know that people are willing to talk about this, there may be hope for us after all.

## Canada.... It's your call

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the issues. Being the only Aboriginal member on the Commission, that was very much a concern to me.

I decided that I had to be committed to doing whatever was possible to change the status quo, because clearly fundamental changes are needed to address some of these longstanding issues that are affecting, first of all, Aboriginal people, but also just about everybody out there who is feeling very frustrated at government.

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# In Solidarity With the People of the Pines

by Ellen Gabriel

*Ellen Gabriel works for sovereignty and land rights. She was a primary negotiator for her people at Kanesatake with the police force in Quebec and the Canadian Armed Forces. She was chosen by the women of the longhouse to be their spokesperson, and spoke in Toronto in January 1991.*

So many things happened over this summer that could have been avoided had there been mutual respect from the non-Native governments and the Iroquois nations. Kanesatake is an ancient village and means "place of the crusty sands". The beautiful pine trees which we fought for over the summer, and are still fighting for, were planted over a hundred years ago by my people and some French people to stop the erosion of land. Our dispute is over two hundred years old.

When your Prime Minister said that he would not negotiate at the point of a gun, I thought he was a mad man because it was his government who were pointing weapons at our heads. On July 11, they pointed their automatic weapons at the heads and hearts of the children of the Mohawk Nation, at the women of the Mohawk Nation and the men.

Recently, we had a visit from three members of the European Parliament. We showed them the bullet marks in the trees and they listened to the tape of the event of July 11 and they could not believe it. Why was such force used on such a

small community? Why didn't they talk to us? We believe it is because this government which represents you puts economics ahead of people's lives. Throughout the summer, the psychological torture that was inflicted upon my community and the community of Kahnawake and the people who came to help us, was at times unbearable. I know of people who contemplated suicide because the stress was so great.

We talk about the healing of our nation. What good will it do if your government is sick, we continually have to deal with sick leaders? On December 2, our food bank was raided by the army and the Québec police. They were looking for weapons. They were on the school ground, where the children were, looking for weapons. This past Friday an



SQ [Sureté du Québec, the Québec provincial police force] car was parked in the school grounds as a speed trap. The children were frightened. They started running to the windows and crying and said, "they're coming back, they're coming back!" Two women went out and asked them to leave because they were frightening the children.

When you are young, you are told to go to a policeman for help because they are there to help you, they are peace officers. Our children will not go to a policeman. They have no respect for that authority.

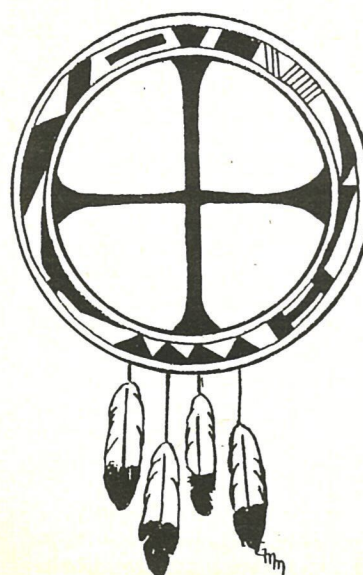
Your government lied to you when they said that they bought the land that we fought for this summer. They bought land close to the golf course, but we do not have ownership over what we fought for this summer. Our men and women are facing jail sentences. We don't want them to go to jail for nothing. They were defending the land. We defended our

mother earth. Our native philosophy is to respect our earth, our mother, because she nourishes us; she helps give us life and helps sustain us. Until non-Native societies start believing that everything has a spirit, everything has a life, and start respecting things which are not human, then our mother earth will die.

I can understand how the Iraqis feel. You are given an ultimatum, which is what we were given, a deadline to negotiate on the government's terms or else a violent force will be placed upon you. That's not negotiations. They bully people. They bully Native people into submission by intimidation.

In 1990, Brian Mulroney said, "It is time to remind ourselves what it is like to be a minority and to treat minorities with the same tolerance and generosity of spirit that we would want to be treated with, if the situation were reversed." Then, gladly, he broke Parliamentary laws to lend the army to Québec, quoting the constitution saying that the rule of law must apply equally to all. We are fighting for our traditional lands. We have tried negotiations and we are met with deaf ears. I heard an elder speak recently and it really surprised me because she was a peaceful person, a pacifist. She was talking to this man who is working for the government, trying to unite the non-Natives and the Mohawks in Kanesatake and she said, "The Indians have been backed into a corner and now we're fighting back and the government wonders why, why we are defending ourselves? If someone came into your home and tried to kill your family, what would you do? Are you a terrorist? Are you a criminal?"

Canada has a history of using excessive force against Native communities. But the best one so far was on my own community of Kanesatake. They used food as a weapon knowing full well that there were children inside; knowing full well that there were elders who refused to leave their homes because they said, "This is my home and nobody is going to make me leave it". In the community of Kanesatake, away from the cameras, once the army had moved in, there was razor wire in the ditches, razor wire around certain homes, and tanks sitting on the front lawns. Some people say forgive. There is no such word for forgiveness in my culture, I know I will never forget; neither will the rest of my



community or the people who were there. But I know we can try and understand each other better. And maybe it's too soon to forgive, because we're still under siege. We still feel the effects of oppression and our Native and ancestral lands are still being threatened by encroachment.

We are not a reserve in Kanesatake; we are not a unified landbase. We are a territory and the women of the Mohawk Nation know that we have never sold and we have

never ceded any of our lands. We keep hitting a brick wall, a patriarchal government who refuses to respect a matriarchal government. We want peace. We have given respect to our non-Native brothers and sisters, we would like some of that respect given back to us. We know that if there is no peace for Native people, there will never be peace for non-Native people either.

I would like to say thank you to all the people who, during the summer, had vigils and prayers for us, who gave us food, who sent us good thoughts, who sent us beautiful letters of support and let us know that we were not alone. I hope that one day we will have peace. I don't know if it will be in our lifetime, but if we continue to struggle for peace for future generations, perhaps we can see that light down the end of the tunnel. I can see it; I feel it. I hope and I pray for the people who are suffering throughout the world over the wars that are being enacted. I hope that the innocent will not pay much longer for the blunders, and selfishness of politicians who make people, innocent people, fight their dirty wars. I hope we can all work together and make this whole planet a much better place to live in.

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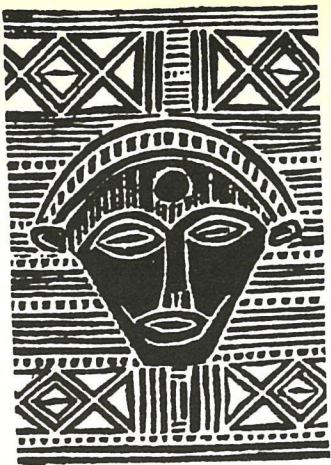
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# "I Am Your Sister"

Audre Lorde speaks

(excerpts from an article in  
Lambda Book Report Jan/Feb.  
1991)

by Jyl Lynn Felman

Audre Lorde, Black feminist poet and writer, spoke at the Conference honoring her in Boston, October 5 - 9, 1990.

Amandla! Amandla! Amandla! You know, it isn't often in my life that I find myself without words. That is how I feel. I also feel the wonder of the difference and diversity of us here and the energy.

Thank you. Thank you for bringing the energies together, for beginning, because this is what this gathering is all about. We are here, women, we are here, men, we are here as part of communities that are gravely under threat. But we are part of communities and all over the

got to contribute to the struggle because everything they do is grinding us into dust and we will not be ground. I thank the women who enabled us to come together. I charge each one of us with the privilege of carrying this energy on. I thank my Latin American sister for the words that she spoke today. I ask her, I beg, I plead, that the next gathering she and her sisters make happen we will help in whatever way we can. Make it what you want it to be! My sisters, we do not have to become each other in order to work together, but we must work together because our earth is dying.

Many of us in this room are citizens of this country. We

anybody listen. You've got a piece of their ears, use it, use it!

To my sisters of the African diaspora, our sisters in all of the world are looking to us. We have a piece of the fact. Women of the South Pacific bear children who have no bones because of nuclear testing. That is a piece of us. Feel the power in this room, the energy. Our sisters in Soweto look to us, not to answer their problems but to give them what we have, our support, our resources and an insistence that their lives not be forgotten! Our sisters in Mississippi do not ask that you starve your children or yourselves but that you use your mouths, your computers, your hands and your ability to write in the English language to petition for the fact that their children must eat. This is supposed to be the year of children, in the most deeply child-hating country in the world, with the exception of South Africa. We do not have to become each other in order to work together.

The energy that I feel from you I cherish. This is what it has always been about for me, that the work be used. I cannot do it alone. None of us can do it alone, but it will be done and we will do it together! My sisters of colour, if we make a place for you to do it, you must do it yourselves. We cannot speak with your tongue, we can only listen and learn to hear you. What is not here for you, I beg that you use the energy to create, to learn. I am no longer alone but the next step is difference. Do not let the differences pull you apart, use them, examine them, go through them, grow from them. That is empowerment.

Our earth is dying. We need ourselves, all of who we are. That is the function of culture. I am a cultural worker. I believe in poetry. I believe that all art makes us more powerful to become who we wish we can. We must be all we become because we need our energy for the battle and war it is! I choose the earth. We choose the earth and the edge of each other's battles. The war is the same. If we lose, someday women's blood will congeal on a dead planet, but if we win there is no telling. We seek beyond history for a new and more possible meeting. I look to meet you on whatever barricades you erect or choose. Amandla! Amandla! Amandla! Amandla! Amandla! Amandla!

The earth moved beneath my feet. And it's still moving. That's what happened to me, and 1,000 other women, youth, and pro-feminist men at the first international conference inspired by and in honor of Audre Lorde's writing, vision, political activism, and poetic artistry.

For three days we gathered in Boston, Mass... USA -- from Ireland, Belize, St Vincent, St. Croix, Germany, South Africa, the Netherlands, Australia, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Venezuela, Mexico, Jamaica, Trinidad, Suriname, the Philippines, Brazil, Canada, Tobago, Barbados, and the United States -- including Hawaii, Kentucky, California, Minnesota, and Washington State -- to celebrate, strategize, network; to boogie, get-down, salsa, sing, mambo, waltz, and line dance long after the midnight hour.

In self-defined "eye to eye" sessions we did laugh, scream, and cry at the sisters in our own families. At other times we met around the mesmerizing printed words of Audre Lorde. We spoke of poetry as essential to our lives; how we need new tools to bring the Master down; and of the erotic shaking fire in our bones. We compared strategies, told individual and unique stories

limb. We came together oath-bound, inter-connected without diluting difference, obscuring multiple identities, or denying the unequal distribution of wealth. We met as sisters not as identical twins. Separate but not severed. Not yet equal as we faced each other. We convened believers and nonbelievers, Moslem, Jew, and Buddhist, Goddess-worshippers and Native Peoples in an ornate, Jesus-blessed-sacred-space-christian-church that was not fully accessible to almost anyone spiritually or physically but especially not to our disabled sisters who could not climb the high steep steps to the precious altar without a platform that was never built. Yet we met and did not separate. And yes, the hallowed beauty of the space was finally revealed when draped anew in handmade quilts of red and black, purple and green, stitched together by the Freedom Quilting Bee of Alberta, Alabama, and the Zamani Sisters of South Africa. Orange and yellow, blue and brown. Woven squares. Exquisite fabric from Guatemala, Nigeria, India, and New Zealand. Vivid quilts purified the altar of our gathering.

We lived with contradiction but it did not tear us apart limb from limb when our Spanish speaking sisters told us they were completely marginalized in spite of simultaneous translations. We dreamed big; we must dream bigger still so that the application process does not test our love for each other, nor hurl class privilege across the dotted line. Yes we made mistakes and yes, we met each other face to face where 50% of us were Black, of color, or impoverished women.

Everywhere we moved we saw the truth of who we are/that we belong together/no matter what they say. We must hold on to this vision. Monday morning right before we said goodbye I heard the words of Audre Lorde. She stood before us momentarily speechless with what we had accomplished and what we set in motion. She told us no matter how high we build our barriers, she will climb. And climb. And climb. She will not be defeated, not turned back by any single barricade. She will reach and so must we. I Am Your Sister. Soy Tu Hermana. Soy Tu Hermana.



while trying hard to listen to the stranger sitting next to us. These were not academic formulaic meetings. We met in multi-ethnic, mixed class, threes and fours to facilitate and encourage dialogue. At times we failed. Meetings were too big, lacked sufficient leadership and direction; other times we succeeded grandly. We learned that we must learn to lead each other without fear of domination or subordination.

For three days, we lived with contradiction, but unlike the past and much of the present it did not tear us apart limb from

## AUDRE LORDE Powerful, Political, Erotic!

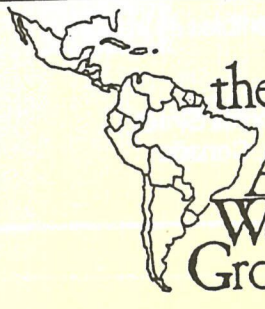
Audre Lorde's life and writing has transformed countless women and men the world over. Enter the world of Audre Lorde; listen to her read from her own work and find yourself transformed also.



world people of the earth are saying, "You took my land, you didn't use it well, you abused it, you polluted it, you didn't pay for it, give it back!" That is what we begin with. Bernice Reagan often says, "We are here because somebody did something to get us here". That is concrete political action. Having enough kitchen table flyers in your house so that when you go to the supermarket you give them out, you go to work and pass them to other women. That is concrete political action. I got a letter once from a woman who said, "The woman who does my hair gave me this and..." It is knowing all the time in all of our lives that everything we do has

are sliding into war. We are sliding into war for cheap oil, not even oil, cheap oil. Meanwhile the Congress of the United States refuses to pass a bill that requires cars to get forty miles an hour out of a gallon because it is not economically feasible.

What do you do with your spare time? Write a letter. Get ten other women to write a letter or ten other men. Get ten letters out saying this is not an acceptable way for me and my children to die! That is your privilege. A lot of the rest of the world cannot do that, they do not have an ear. Living as an African Caribbean woman for the last three years, I know what it feels like not to have



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# Black Women: An Endangered Species

by Joan Grant-Cummings, Simone Hammond, Vuyiswa Keyi, and Carolann Wright

The Martin Luther King Day Commemorative Committee of Toronto invited us to plan a forum presentation as part of a one-day event in January 1991. We designed a forum that we entitled "Black Women: An Endangered Species" as a window to try and initiate some interest and generate some concern for the plight of Black women in our community. To date, the Black community has not formally addressed the issues of choice, sexuality, AIDS and other STDs, poverty, parenting, mental health, violence in its many forms, sexism, poor housing, under- and un-employment, etc.

These issues affect the health of the community, and in particular, the Black woman who has to deal with them everyday and has to be the constant enduring factor.

are also in many cases sole support mothers, we are caregivers of our children! They are our future. What good can it serve our community if we have not progressed beyond the hardships our grandmothers and mothers had to endure? They endured these hardships so that we would "have it easier". Instead, we seem to be reinventing the hardships in different forms and in fact have it harder!

As a community, we need to examine why more Black women will die from breast cancer than white women, yet fewer of us suffer from breast cancer! Why is it that women cannot even stop for check-ups until they are on the brink of death? The same goes for cervical cancer, why is it that women of other races are seeing a decrease of the

frontlines see the effects daily of the community not attending to these issues. Phrases such as "lost generation" are used by speakers for sensationalism, not realizing that this is a reality many of us see when we look into our children's and Black sisters' faces.

Black women have been unable to speak about their condition, not because we can't, but because when we do we are denounced as dividers of the community, as lesbians, as opportunists, as man-haters, as not acting from a historical perspective! It is because we know the history and we can trace the beginnings and see the present-day effects that we are able to speak out. The time has long come for Black sisters to start "dealing", to speak with one another, to recognize our

# Stop Racism Now!

## Black Heritage Month

The Nova Scotia Picture

by Donna Truesdale

February was Black Heritage month. Like many other areas in Canada, Nova Scotia's black history has, at times, been bleak. In New Glasgow, it wasn't until the mid to late sixties that black people were allowed in the front door of restaurants, and permitted to sit elsewhere than the balcony at theatres. Today, most of these obvious signs of racial discrimination have disappeared; nevertheless, no blacks live on the West side of New Glasgow, the "better" area of town.

the remuneration for house cleaning being at the lowest end of the wage scale. There are no black nurses at the local hospital, and of approximately 150 teachers, only 6 are black.

A black woman is at the bottom of the hierarchical heap. White men, black men and white women, then black women. Like white women in relation to white men, a black woman has to be better and try harder than a white woman in similar circumstances. If a black woman wants to better her employment situation, she



In spite of some difficulties in having our program accepted as we had planned, we went ahead with our part in the event. We had to adjust our presentations somewhat, but managed to retain the essence of what we thought should be presented to the community.

At the forum, Black women in the audience felt silenced, for two reasons. Males as usual spoke up on our behalf as to what they thought our problems were and the solutions to those problems. White women in the audience also gave their analysis! A number of sisters confided to us at the end that they felt they couldn't speak, with these two groups speaking for them with such authority. It was disempowering for them!

Black women were not made to endure and love hardships. We have had to, because of the holocaust of enslavement, but it is not our lot.

The fact that in North America 50% of Black women describe ourselves as being in a state of mental distress, way above the population norm, should send cold shivers down all our spines. Remember, we

disease in their populations while we are seeing an increase? It has been projected that the fertility rate (our ability to reproduce) will be drastically lowered as more and more of our young women contract infections such as Chlamydia, that may lead to Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), or other complications, affecting their ability to have children. Black women and Latino women are the two groups of women now most at risk for contracting the deadly HIV virus, leading to AIDS. This means our children are also at risk! Where is the hue and cry about this in our community? How long are we going to fool ourselves that it is not our problem or blame the victims? We have to look at the roots of all these ailments if the health of our community is to be any better. This affects us all. It affects our children, our partners, our ability to attract and maintain suitable employment, our ability to fight against racism and to take an active part in our children's education.

Those of us working on the

pains, our daily struggles, to realize that we are not alone in our struggles. The unfortunate hard truth is that many of us are experiencing the same things. We have to deal with this before it destroys us. If it destroys us, it, in effect, destroys the bastion of our community. We have to start trusting one another again, opening our hearts to the needs of our sisters. As one of my mentors says, "If it affects one of us, it affects all of us!" One of us sitting in Parliament will be of no value to us until the condition of all our sisters is improved.

Black women, we must be allowed to speak for ourselves, to say what truly ails us. As Fanny Lou Hammer says, over and over: "We are tired of being sick and tired!"

Joan Grant-Cummings, Simone Hammond, Vuyiswa Keyi, and Carolann Wright were members of the panel of "Black Women: An Endangered Species", held in Toronto on January 21, 1991.

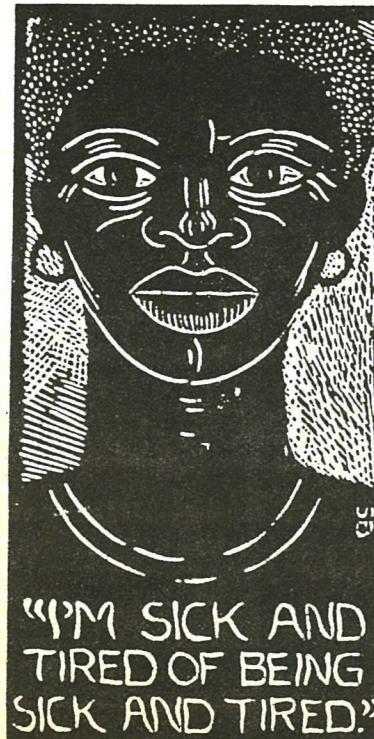
Most of the employment available to blacks in this area are jobs with low pay and limited scope. As well they are usually sex delineated, i.e. garbage collector for the male, house cleaning for the female,

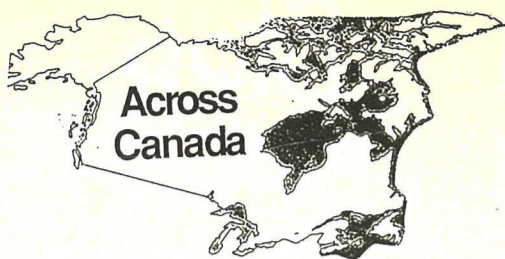
MUST have the absolutely correct education and experience. The white woman may be granted leeway of education in view of life experience, but with a black woman the standards are rigidly enforced.

Socially the black community is still centered around the church. The church is changing but very slowly. Much of the attitudes depend on the specific Minister. However, the church generally reinforces the traditional role of family: a husband should have complete control of the family (keep his wife in line); a woman should not really work but if she does, her job must not impede the family in any way; a man still gains status if his wife does not "have" to work.

There is a code of silence around the issue of racism in New Glasgow. Most are aware of its presence but are uncertain of how to deal with it. The issue may be moot. Opportunities for young black women and men are so bad that

(continued on page 12)





## Saskatchewan Women's Agenda

by Marj Brown

The Saskatchewan Action Committee recently sent women's groups in Saskatchewan an invitation to participate in a Women's Agenda project.

The project will enable women's groups to develop their own list of priorities. The time is ripe, women's programs and services have been hard hit over the last few years. An election is imminent in Saskatchewan and we will be ready to greet the next government with coordinated, concrete demands from women. We want to let them know that women's groups are standing together in this

province, that we expect positive changes and that we have established our own priorities.

Women in this province are tired of responding to cuts and attacks on services. We want to do more than react. By defining our own needs we are taking control of our own futures. If you want more information contact Saskatchewan Action Committee, 2343 Cornwall St., Regina, Saskatchewan, S4P 2L4, (306) 525-8329.

Marj Brown is the Provincial Coordinator of the Saskatchewan Action Committee, Status of Women.



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(continued from page 11)

# Stop Racism Now!

they are leaving. The black families have been raising their children to have higher standards and expectations for education, housing, and salaries then can be attained in the community. Recognizing the limitations of systemic discrimination here, the youth are heading for Halifax or Toronto, and the young women are going as well.

Advice for these young women? Get a good education. Set goals. The attitude should be: I am good enough, I can do it and I will do it. Have that confidence regardless of skin colour. "You gotta believe in yourself cause nobody else is gonna!"

Please note that the information regarding the black experience for women in Pictou County is based on reminiscences from Doreen Paris. Ms. Paris has been a member of the black community of New Glasgow for twenty-five years (a newcomer) and is co-chair of Tearmann Society for Battered Women. She has been a wonderful source for all my questions and the story is really hers.

## "What Do Those Women Want Anyway?"

by Donna Cameron

It has been a strange year for women's centres in B.C. and across the country.

We were reeling after the announcement of funding cuts in February of 1990 and set about demonstrating, occupying Secretary of State offices, having protests, "Weiner roasts", picnics, and writing countless letters to have the funding reinstated. And not only reinstated at the pitiful levels we had been surviving at, but to increase funding to levels which would allow us to do the work expected of us.

We recognized the jurisdictional debate the federal and provincial governments were having - the federal government doesn't want to pay for social services and the provincial government doesn't



want to pay for lobbying and advocacy. The truth is, of course, that women's centres do both.

In response to the cuts, in March of 1990 the B.C. government rode into the sunshine with an announcement of support and money for the women's centres. Within hours, the federal government made their announcement to reinstate funding. The province then rode away into the sunset with their money, saying "women's centres are okay; they don't need provincial money". **They both missed the point!**

In January of this year, the Minister Responsible for Women's Programs, Carol Gran, announced there would be pilot project money available to women's centres who had previously been funded by Secretary of State. (It's an election year here in B.C.)

So centres were busily writing grant applications for the provincial money. Then the news came that the federal Department of Secretary of State Women's Program will fund the women's centres and advisory councils in Canada on an ongoing basis because of "their commitment to the equality of women".

Well, I'm confused. We are now in the position of having to say "thank you" to two levels of government for funding which was inadequate to do the job three years ago. There have been no increases in funding, although there have been

significant increases in costs (remember the G.S.T.). The federal government says they don't have to publicly announce the funding for 1991 because they were committed all along. The province did announce their funding because they're committed too! With all this commitment, why don't I feel secure?

In the meantime, while



which so clearly put women and children at the bottom of their priority list? Is it possible for women to begin voting as a block for candidates and a party who do consider the equality of women to be a top priority. Is there such a party?

I guess the issue of funding women's centres is only a symptom of the problem. I don't know if we can consider the reinstatement of funding to be a victory of our own making, or if women have, one more time, played the game without knowing the hidden rules. While we've been busy fighting for funding and survival, perhaps we have been less vocal in identifying and speaking out on the emerging issues in our communities. It's time now to work on the issues which keep us silent and to ensure that equality issues are front and centre in every political debate in our country. I still don't feel secure.

Donna Cameron is the Southern B.C. representative to National Action Committee on the Status of Women. She is on the Lobbying/Negotiating Committee of the B.C. & Yukon Assoc. of Women Centres and works as the Coordinator of the Penticton Women's Centre.

waiting for the political dust to settle, women's centres continue their work. Lack of affordable housing, hungry kids, inadequate welfare rates, lack of affordable child care and the alarming increase in violence against women and children keep the centres frantically busy. The problems have increased and we have spent an inordinate amount of time chasing government dollars.

The next debate must be, why do we continue to chase our own money? Why do we continue to elect governments

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# About Change, About Justice:

## What an NDP Government Would Mean for Canadian Women

by Audrey McLaughlin, Member of Parliament,  
Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada

In the last year, since I was elected leader of the federal New Democratic Party, there have been perceptible shifts in the Canadian political culture.

A heightened awareness of environmental issues is showing up in public polling and environmental organizations are signing up record numbers of new members.

Among Aboriginal people, frustration led to a summer of protest that included an armed confrontation with security forces at Oka, Québec and railway blockades in British Columbia and Northern Ontario.

And, for the first time in Canadian history, a New Democratic Party government was elected in our most populous province - Ontario.

I believe that the Canadian people are going through a shift in the value system underlying our political culture. If our political culture is indeed changing, it may largely be a result of an increasing consciousness that the traditional patriarchy is no longer able to reflect the concerns of a majority of Canadians.

The New Democratic Party has a history of incorporating the concerns of the traditionally disenfranchised, whether that is women, Aboriginal peoples, visible minorities and ethnocultural communities, or the differently-abled. This is reflected in our policy statements and resolutions, formed at biennial conventions by the grassroots membership and affiliated groups.

As a federal government, our intentions would be to build on the genuine commitment we have demonstrated within the party and work towards implementing the goal of full equality for all Canadians.

Democratic socialism in Canada has had considerable influence over the years in shaping Canadian public policy, especially in the areas of social programs and equality measures. The New Democratic Party has made a concerted effort in the last decade to incorporate the goal of equality for women from all affirmative action target groups into the basic philosophy, practises and operating structures of our party.

Our party constitution now requires gender parity on all governing bodies. Presently,

the NDP is studying new ways to attain the objective of fielding 50% women candidates to contest nominations in the next federal election.

Important policy direction has been set on issues like economic inequality, pay equity, affirmative action, child care and violence against women. The NDP's established policy and consistent stand in support of reproductive choice stands in marked contrast to the anti-choice sentiments of both the Liberals and Conservatives.

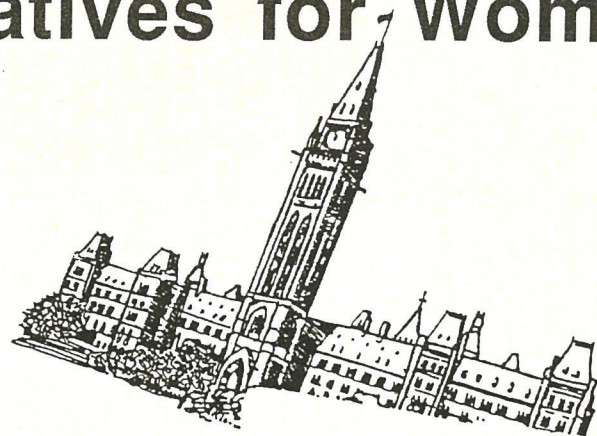
The House of Commons is of course the forum where policy is implemented. However, we must look to a new open and consultative dialogue in communities across Canada to arrive at those parliamentary decisions. The decision-making structures inside government must also be reformed. During the term of the NDP government in Manitoba, for example, every new policy and program initiative included a specific cabinet review of its impact on women. The recent election of a majority NDP government in Ontario with its record number of women elected, and the appointment of women to 46% of cabinet posts, is a clear harbinger of things to come at the federal level.

The 1990's have so far seen a host of historic firsts, internationally and at home. In the midst of acutely troubling times, we see signs of the push for peoples' empowerment and the enrichment of our lives through meaningful participation in political process. Equality of opportunity is not enough. We must work towards equality of results. The growing strength of the environmental, peace and Aboriginal rights movements here in Canada and around the world are encouraging examples.

Although there is clearly more to be done, I believe the NDP's genuine commitment to women's equality is changing attitudes. By challenging old stereotypes and changing attitudes, we can make the positive and constructive reforms necessary to achieve true equality for women.

I look forward to the challenges ahead and invite you to join with me in helping to build a Canada that offers justice and equality to all.

# Conservative Government Initiatives for Women



by Mary Collins, Member of Parliament,  
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

As Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, I am proud to co-ordinate our government's initiatives to promote equality for women in Canadian society. We are committed to creating conditions that will enable women in Canada to achieve their full potential in all spheres of activity.

Since 1984, this government has made progress in many areas towards the goal of equality. As the following record of achievement shows, we have worked hard to improve the standing of women in Canada.

Here are some examples of that action:

### Violence Against Women and Family Violence

In the past five years, the government has brought forward several new programs to address violence against women and to help support victims and their families. In 1986, a five-year, \$25 million Child Sexual Abuse Initiative was launched. In 1988, a four-year Family Violence Initiative began, providing \$40 million for a variety of projects, including the creation of up to 500 shelter spaces for battered women and their children.

Last month, a new \$136 million program for the elimination of family violence was announced. This represents more than twice the level of funding committed since 1986. Women are a particular focus of the new measures, designed to improve public awareness of family violence, strengthen our legal framework and increase housing for victims.

As well, under the Canada Assistance Plan, the Federal Government contributes over \$1.2 billion annually to the provinces to assist women and their children who are victims of family violence.

I am also working with my provincial and territorial counterparts to develop new

strategies in our respective jurisdictions to end violence against women, with a particular focus on education and prevention. The framework for the development is contained in the Lake Louise Declaration issued in June of 1990 by my provincial colleagues and myself.

In December last year, I appeared before the Parliamentary Subcommittee on the Status of Women and requested the Committee's advice on appropriate mechanisms to further address this issue, keeping in mind the pivotal role of the provinces and territories.

The Women's Program at the Department of the Secretary of

State provides ongoing financial support to women's groups for projects that promote the equality of women.

These projects deal with such issues as family violence, sexual assault, pornography, and the portrayal of women in the media.

Since 1984, the Women's Program has distributed over \$56 million to women's groups, more than four times the amount allocated between 1980-1984. Most recently, \$1.2 million was allocated to continue funding of women's centres in the future.

(continued on page 14)

## Taking our place

## Prenons notre place

To help more women take their rightful place in the House of Commons, the New Democratic Party has created a special fund to give financial support to women candidates.

With your support for the Agnes Macphail Fund, women candidates will have a better chance. And that means women will have a stronger voice. In 1988, the Agnes Macphail Fund helped 84 New Democratic women who sought election to the House of Commons.

Pour aider les femmes à prendre leur place légitime à la Chambre des communes, le Nouveau Parti démocratique a créé un fonds spécial qui soutient les femmes qui se portent candidates.

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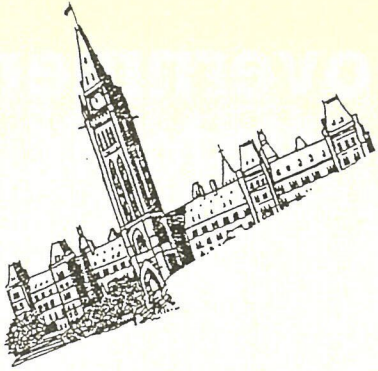
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Send your donation to the New Democratic Party, Agnes Macphail Fund, 600-280 Albert St., Ottawa K1P 5G8. Contributions are eligible for tax credit on federal income tax.

Faites parvenir votre don au Fonds Agnes Macphail, Nouveau Parti démocratique, 600-280 rue Albert, Ottawa K1P 5G8. Les contributions vous donnent droit à un crédit d'impôt fédéral.





# A Liberal Canada: A Vision for Women

by *Mary Clancy, Member of Parliament,  
Liberal Status of Women Critic*

(continued from page 13)

## Child Care

Child care is recognized as a priority by all jurisdictions. Our national responsibility includes federal contributions under the Canada Assistance Plan toward provincial expenditures on child care.

The national Strategy on Child Care, announced in December 1987, enhanced the tax assistance available to families with young children, and established a \$100 million Child Care Initiatives Fund to encourage the development of innovative solutions to child care issues.

Through these measures, we are now contributing \$1.0 billion dollars toward Child Care across the country. Through the payment of Unemployment Insurance Benefits for infant, newborn and adoptee leave, our government contributes another \$1.0 billion dollars toward the care of children in this country.

Work is continuing within the government departments concerned, as this government remains committed to putting a national child care program in place before the end of its mandate.

## Employment

The Federal Employment Equity Act, requiring employment equity for women, disabled persons, Aboriginal people and members of visible minorities was adopted in 1986. The Canadian Jobs Strategy, to assist those most in need, was launched in 1985 and continues to be effective in meeting women's training needs.

Recent amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act

are of special interest to women. New parental leave benefits now provide 10 weeks of parental leave for either parent or shared between them. This is in addition to the current 15 weeks of maternity benefits and 15 weeks of sickness benefits.

A number of initiatives have been launched to help immigrant and visible minority women. For example, there are programs that provide for the resettlement of refugee women who are in particularly difficult situations, and language training for immigrant women at home.

## Women in the Justice System

Last fall, as a result of the recommendations of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, we were able to announce the closure of the Prison for Women in Kingston. Fifty million dollars has been committed to establish five regional facilities in its place, including an Aboriginal healing lodge.

To address gender equality in the justice system, the Canadian Judicial Centre has launched an education program for judges on the issue. A national conference on Women and the Canadian Justice System will be held this June.

I am proud of the progress we have made so far and I realize that much remains to be done. This government will continue to foster partnerships with other levels of government, with women's groups, with non-government organizations and with concerned individuals. By working together, we can achieve our common goal: full equality for women in Canada.

The history of Liberal Governments is a history of the development of the social safety net. Old Age Pensions, Family Allowance, Unemployment Insurance, CPP, and the jewel in the crown, Medicare, are accomplishments of which my Party is proud. The overall policy of universality of these programs, ostensibly to maintain human dignity, is another facet of our social policy to which we are committed.

Critics and the current Tory government say the system is antiquated, and there are certainly flaws, but the Tory government's response, using the clawback and the decimation of Unemployment Insurance, is not the answer.

A Liberal answer would address income security and reform of the tax system to ensure a basic decent standard of living for all Canadians. We have all suffered too long under a Tory theory where the wealthy are sacrosanct, the middle class is taxed to death and the poor are ignored.

These issues are the reasons many Liberals go into politics. They certainly were part of the force that propelled me. It is simply unacceptable in Canada that women are beaten, that children go to food banks, that people sleep in the streets of our cities.

It is wrong that the young people must leave their families and their provinces to seek a decent living. It is abhorrent that the first Canadians, with their reverence for the lands, the forests and the waters, are ignored and disregarded.

The daily tragedies of life cannot all be avoided. Governments cannot solve all problems. We will never create a perfect society but we must never cease to try. It is the abdication of responsibility by government, the Thatcherian belief that most of the woes can be settled by big business and private charity that is anathema to Liberals.

Here in Canada we are shaped by our immense geography, our varied climate and our small population. A sensitive government is not blind to these facts. A sensible government recognizes and acts to create balance and fairness for all Canadians. Canada is unique and must be treated as such. A government that ignores this does so at its own peril.

Overshadowing even these social inequities however is our Constitutional crisis. While the Prime Minister's policy of "rolling the dice" definitely exacerbated a difficult situation, we can't blame it all on him. For 124 years we have lived as two solitudes. Now in 1991 we face a Canada with nine million citizens who are neither French nor English.

But another Liberal tradition is national unity. Today all Canadians fear for the future of our country and everyone longs for the leadership needed to provide for a new constitutional accord. A Liberal government would work to bring us back together. We must look closely at our constitutional arrangements and create a Canada that will go in peace and unity into the 21st Century. It means long and arduous negotiations but it also means a renewed sense of regional equality and worth. We cannot and will not sacrifice one region's interests for another.

Doomsayers and pessimists say it's too late, it can't be done. I say the break up of Canada is unthinkable and therefore the just compromise needs to be found. I believe we can do it and I believe we will.

Twenty-four years ago Pierre Trudeau called for a "Just Society." Somehow in the intervening years we have lost our belief that this can happen. For women and children, for natives, for the poor, the elderly, the disabled and for that much abused person "the ordinary Canadian", we must get back our inspiration and our national soul. We can live multiculturally, bilingually and adequately in our portion of the globe.

This may be our last chance. We cannot afford to lose it for ourselves and for our children.

## Mary Clancy, M.P. Official Opposition Critic for the Status of Women



*Best wishes to the  
Womanist, its  
staff and readers in  
the battle for true  
equality.*

*Mary Clancy*



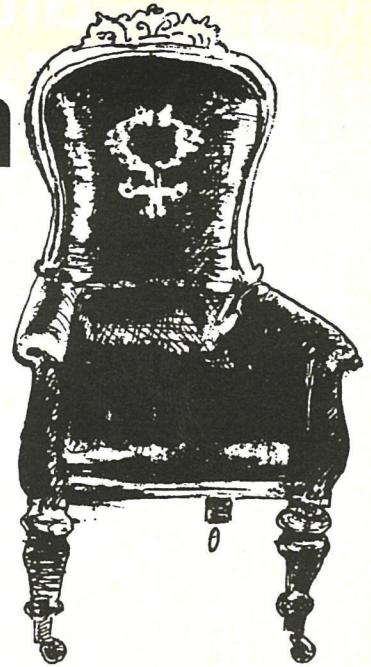
Long term advocate of women's rights; dedicated to the creation of equal rights, pay equity and the elimination of violence against women and children.

**Marilyn Churley, MPP**

517 Pape Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M4K 3R3  
(416) 461-0223

# The Feminist Throne Speech

This is a fictional Speech from the Throne that represents what women would do if we were in power in the House of Commons.



## Finance

Good afternoon Madame Speaker. I rise today to present a budget which I hope will indicate clearly the new direction in which we wish to move Canada. Our primary focus in this budget will be to redress the damage done to the economic well-being of major segments of our population during the last decade, and to move forward to lay the foundations for a more just future.

After careful study, and consultation with various women's groups, popular organizations and labour, we have concluded that we should focus our efforts on improving the lot of women, and that through those efforts we will also be addressing both poverty and quality of life issues for other parts of the population, especially children and working people.

Our plan has the following key elements:

First, national pay equity legislation, to apply to all workplaces, with pay equity to be achieved within four years. We realize that this will provoke considerable dislocation in certain workplaces, especially small businesses, so we are setting aside sufficient funds to cushion the impact in those businesses which are extremely vulnerable. However, the underlying principle will be that pay equity related salary adjustments will take precedence over both corporate profits and management salary increases. We realize that this may mean the demise of cheap for-profit restaurants and other services which rely on under-paid female labour, but as you will hear later, we have other alternatives to propose.

Socialization of much of the work now performed in the home is an essential element, if we are not to merely increase the number of women suffering the double burden of paid employment followed by a second shift at home.

In part, this can be accomplished by a significant

expansion of funding for child-care and elder care, which is the second element of our plan.

However, in examining the magnitude of the problem, it became apparent that expanding child-care and elder care services alone would not suffice, since housework and meal preparation constitute a considerable part of the "double burden" carried out by women in the employed workforce. Approximately 10 hours per week is spent in dishwashing and housecleaning alone in households with children.

know this may be seen as harsh in some quarters, but long and careful consideration of both the nature of the problem itself, and the experience of other countries in their attempts to correct this injustice, lead us to believe that other solutions of a more voluntary nature will not work. We hope that after three years, Canadian males will have re-oriented their energies.

We realize that this will not address the problem of the double burden carried by single parents, most of whom are women. Therefore, we will



Therefore, the third element of our plan is legislation which will encourage men to contribute equally to housework when both parents work outside the home. During the first three years after the introduction of the legislation, we are asking families to compile data on the amount of time each spouse devotes to housework. We will then incorporate such information in our calculation of taxes owing, so that, for example, in the case of households where over the course of a year it is found that the male has failed to perform 50% of the housework, the woman will receive a tax rebate which corresponds to the male's unperformed portion of housework and the male will then have to submit to the government a corresponding amount. Male partners consistently in arrears will have their wages garnished. We

introduce legislation so that the housework burden is also factored in to the calculation of child support payments owed by fathers after separations.

We will also provide the option of hiring household help, through the establishment of locally-based community controlled housecleaning services. Single parents with young children will be issued monthly coupons along with their family allowance cheques, with which they will be able to purchase occasional cleaning services. (We rejected the ideal of simply adding on a comparable amount in cash, since some families might be tempted to try to hire housecleaners privately, at sub-standard wages and working conditions. We are determined not to have the housecleaning burden merely shifted on to the backs of other underpaid, exploited women.)

Mr. Speaker, I might add that we noted considerable resistance to this idea in discussing it with our male colleagues, who expressed grave concern about "the loss of privacy in the home." We allayed their concerns when we reminded them that well-to-do people have been making ample use of housecleaning services for many years, with no negative effects on their mental health.

We will also be investing considerable amounts of funding in other services which we believe will lighten the load of all parents, which brings me to the fourth element of our plan: the establishment of a comprehensive national system of neighbourhood-based non-profit restaurants.

In discussing this issue with various groups, and I might add, the other women in the cabinet, we realize that although we wished to preserve the custom of family meals, there was no reason whatsoever for the burden of meal preparation to fall solely on the parents of children, especially the mother. Therefore, we have decided to create a system of non-profit (thus low-cost) - neighbourhood kitchens, where families can eat simple but nourishing meals at the end of the day during the work week. We have not yet decided whether or not this should be accomplished through nationalization of one of the large fast-food chains, or through the creation of a totally new Crown Corporation. Over the next three months we will be touring the country and gathering public opinion on this. In the meantime, we are imposing an emergency order in council to inhibit the removal from the country of the physical and financial assets of those fast-food corporations which might be up for consideration for nationalization.

We do expect that this will significantly ease the physical burden of caring for children, but since the emotional and social responsibilities are in

themselves quite substantial, we believe it is the least our society can do.

All of the above are consistent with the new organizing principle of our economic policy, announced last week by the Prime Minister during her visit to Vancouver, which I will reiterate here. Children and the elderly are the responsibility of the whole society, not merely of their closest female relatives.

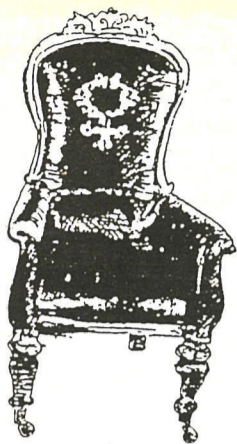
We will also be introducing legislation to mobilize pension funds for purposes of restructuring the economy in line with the above proposals. Currently these funds, which constitute about a third of the deposits in Canadian banks, are in the hands of male corporate executives. We think they can be put to better, more socially useful purposes.

We hope that as these changes are introduced and publicly discussed, there will emerge a consensus on the importance of these steps. The improved quality of family life which, we believe, will result from the release of women from at least part of the burden of the double day should be adequate compensation for the loss of some disposable income from high income-earners. For average income families, it is likely that the increase in taxes will be more than offset by the savings as they are released from the financial burdens of paying for child care. Obviously the people who will gain the most will be poor women, and their children.

We also know that the above measures will not by themselves reverse all of the economic problems facing women, and that there are many cultural and psychological barriers which will have to be overcome. But we are taking up this challenge energetically. In the coming months we will be touring various communities across the country to consult with women about the implementation of these changes.

Joan MacNeil,  
United Electrical, Radio and  
Machine Workers of Canada.





# The Feminist Throne Speech

## Economic Blueprint

This will be a budget based on the philosophy of sharing wealth and power among all humans as equals.

The government you have elected will use this budget to end obscene poverty and equally obscene wealth in Canada. The coming legislative session will end income taxes on people living in poverty. Wealthy people, inheritors of over \$1 million dollars, profitable corporations, and people with high incomes will make up the difference. We will repeal the GST and replace it with a tax system based on ability to pay. My government will restore the corporate tax rate to the 1986 level (to raise \$7 billion), collect some of the \$40 billion in deferred corporate taxes (to raise \$6 billion), apply a net wealth tax of 3% on the wealthiest 20% of Canadians (to raise \$3 billion, and restore the capital gains tax to the 1984 level (to raise \$1 billion).

To help the rich and the giant corporations cope with their reduction in income and profits, this government will set up free budgeting lessons, counselling, and self-help programs.

We will enact legislation to raise the federal minimum wage to \$8 an hour and index it to the cost of living.

We will enact legislation to end wage discrimination based on sex, disability, race, or any other irrelevant factor.

The government you have elected will repeal Bill C-69, the Bill that will make medicare, old age pension, and family allowances self-destruct over the next decades. We will expand social programs to meet the needs of Canadians.

We will repeal Bill C-21, the law that reduces Canadian unemployment insurance down to the U.S. level, and replace it with an unemployment insurance plan that meets the needs of unemployed Canadians.

This government is committed to ensuring that a

decent job exists for every Canadian who wants one.

Our priorities include:

- initiating a universal, quality childcare system in Canada, accessible to all children who need it;
- ensuring that homes are available for all Canadians;
- guaranteeing that all Canadians receive incomes above the poverty line.

We will give 6 months notice that we intend to end the Canada-U.S. free trade deal. This government will work in solidarity with people in Mexico who are attempting to get more democratic control of their economy and produce to meet the needs of their people. We will withdraw from the tri-lateral free trade negotiations with the U.S. and Mexico.

The government you have elected will co-operate, not compete. It will work to ensure that Canadians produce in Canada what we need for satisfying lives. It will implement a trade policy based on selling to others what they need and buying from them what we need. We will ensure that our trading partners do not exploit the environment or workers. We will work in solidarity with people in other countries who are attempting to equalize power and wealth and ensure that human needs are met.

This government will send representatives to the International Monetary Fund and World Bank who will work to ensure that these institutions are used to meet the basic needs of poor people throughout the world, and foster democratic, not corporate, control of countries and economies.

Jean Swanson  
End Legislative Policy

## Taxation

Our government realizes that Canada's national debt is a serious problem. It is the second highest per capita debt in the industrialized world.

Much of Canada's debt was incurred as the result of global events: the energy crisis of the early 1970's; the resulting inflation, which accounted for more than half of the increase in the annual deficit between 1975 and 1980; and the global recession of the early 1980's, which increased the annual deficit by 300% (from \$10 to \$30 billion) between 1980 and 1984.

However, much of our debt results from past government policies: high interest rates, which were maintained in order to "wrestle inflation to the ground"; high unemployment rates, which were the trade-off for lower inflation; and revenue restraint, which relieved corporations of their fair share of income tax.

Since 1975, the share of income tax revenue contributed by corporations has fallen from 52% to less than 12% (an 80% decrease), while the share collected from individuals has risen from 48% to more than 88% (an 83% increase). Between 1986 and 1989 alone, while corporate profits rose by 34%, corporate taxes were reduced by 20%. Of the 67 most developed nations, Canada now collects the lowest share of income tax revenue from corporations, and the highest share of income tax revenue from individuals.



The shift in the tax burden was allegedly introduced to make Canadian businesses more competitive. However, Japanese corporations, which are surely the most competitive and successful in the world, contribute three times as great a share of income tax revenue as do Canadian corporations.

Despite the fact that by 1989 the annual deficit, as a percentage of Canada's gross domestic product (the value of all goods and services produced), had fallen by 73%, the previous government responded to the deficit, not by reducing interest rates or raising revenue from profitable corporations but by increasing taxes for low- and middle-income Canadians, introducing a consumption tax (the most regressive form of taxation), and slashing social programs.

Individual Canadians are among the lowest-taxed people in the industrialized world, but the burden of taxation is not fairly distributed. Since 1984, so-called "tax reform" has increased the burden of taxation for our lowest-income tax filers at 15 times the rate for the highest-income tax filers.

Bill C-21 cut benefits for the unemployed and ended the federal contribution to unemployment insurance. Bill C-28 clawed back old age pension benefits and ended the universality of income security programs. Bill C-69 capped social expenditures for British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario, and proposes to reduce, and eventually to terminate, federal funding of post-secondary education and medicare, thereby shifting the entire financial burden to the provinces and, consequently, to the users of these programs. This will, necessarily, exclude those who cannot afford them.

Those who suffer most from these actions are the poor. Since 1976, the number of Canadians living in poverty has almost doubled. One Canadian in seven now has an income insufficient to provide an acceptable standard of living, despite the fact that more than

half of our poor are employed. The majority are, of course, still women. Further, the depth of their poverty is increasing: they really are getting poorer with every day that passes.

Even more disturbing is the fact that one Canadian child in six now lives in poverty; Canada now has the second highest rate of child poverty in the industrialized world, a situation which bodes ill for our country's future.

Our government does not believe that slashing social programs is an appropriate response to the debt problem. We will restore benefits to the unemployed by rescinding Bill C-21. We will reaffirm the universality of social security programs by rescinding Bill C-28. We will maintain federal funding for post-secondary education and medicare by withdrawing Bill C-69. We will rescind the Goods and Services Tax.

Instead, our government will, in addition to restraining its own expenditures, and those of our elected representatives, institute meaningful tax reform to increase government revenue.

Our government will restore the balance between individual and corporate shares of income tax revenue. Profitable corporations will no longer be able to defer or avoid paying income taxes. Further, the corporate tax structure will be made fairer and more progressive: small businesses, which are creating the majority of new jobs, presently carry a heavier tax burden than do major corporations.

Our government will initiate policies to encourage companies who sell in Canada, to produce in Canada. Tax incentives for corporations will be tied to local long-term job creation. Businesses which produce in Canada, and provide jobs for Canadians, will be given most-favoured status. The scrutiny of foreign acquisitions of Canadian companies will be intensified to ensure that Canadians benefit from such investments.

Our government will introduce a program of tax reform which will make the tax system fairer and more progressive. We will restore full indexation to protect low- and middle-income tax filers from inflation. We will close loopholes which allow higher-income tax filers to avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

Poverty carries high human, social and economic costs, costs which this country cannot afford. Our government will introduce a guaranteed adequate income program through a series of expanded refundable tax credits. This program will provide income supplementation for our employed poor, and income support for those unable to find or accept employment because of age, illness, disability, or family situation. It will replace the patchwork of inefficient and ineffective welfare systems which guarantee only poverty and humiliation for those who are forced into them.

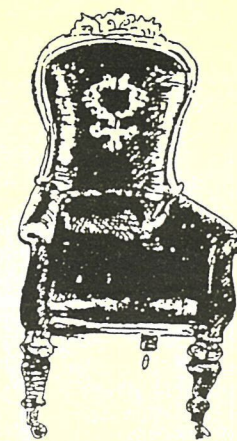
Every Canadian must have the opportunity to grow and develop to the outermost limits of his or her potential, not to be constrained from doing so by social or economic considerations. Social justice requires economic justice; they cannot be separated.

Gus Long  
Burnaby, B.C.





# The Feminist Throne Speech



## Security

Our country faces great danger, the worlds people face great danger, and we lack a unifying vision of security -- one that we can all share -- of how to manage our relations in a peaceful and constructive manner. We need to move beyond the question of national boundaries when we talk about security. Security should be a holistic principle the security of each person knowing that their human rights are respected, that there is food and shelter and that basic human needs will be met.

We need to strive for a "common security" where every person has the right to these things.

At a national level, our relations between the Aboriginal people who have occupied Canada for several thousands of years, as well as the two European peoples who have settled in Canada these past 400 years, remain unresolved. From this time forward, we must realize that all three nations of people must feel secure, or none will be secure. We are all interdependent and must share a sense of common or mutual security.

Our domestic relations encompass our shared social and economic life, where conflicts are often sharp and deep. Our country is a microcosm of an immensely complex, multicultural, multi-ethnic world, so that no one interest can be served at the expense of the others. As a society and as a Government, the challenge is to build attitudes and policies that are mutual, collective and holistic. The widening gap between rich and poor must be steadily narrowed, realizing that "there is enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed".

Our relationship to the natural world, to Nature, has in the past often been thoughtless and careless, resulting in great damage and destruction of air, water and soil, the very basis of life. In solving the problems of the environment we again are interdependent. We cannot achieve a cleaner environment for ourselves at someone else's expense, by putting our garbage, our toxins, our polluting emissions either in someone else's backyard, down stream or down wind. Again, our security has to be mutual, collective and holistic.

It is a truism of political life that a nation's foreign policy, and thus its defence policy, must grow out of its own culture, its own values and needs. We maintain, that by paying attention to the basic security needs of Canadians in this framework of Common Security, the rest of the world will not take long in observing us closely. And when Canada is seen to be implementing a security policy at home amongst its own diverse peoples that is participatory and democratic, and actually solving problems, that will be an opportune moment to take our message to the United Nations.

In the United Nations, Canada will announce that she is taking steps to move out of military alliances, NATO and NORAD, and in future will be devoting her resources and energies to building the United Nations and the Helsinki Accord signed in 1975. Canada is in the unique situation of being able to assure each, the United States and the U.S.S.R., that her territory, particularly her northern

security; (2) social, economic and environment; and (3) human rights, especially of Aboriginal Peoples.

Most immediately, as part of the emerging high priority we give to the CSCE structure, we will establish an Institute for Mediation and Conflict Resolution. Such an Institute will first of all, promote the learning of these social skills at all levels: in schools, in business, in workplaces, in government. There are a growing number of young people who have already learned skills of mediation and conflict resolution, and they will be called on to teach others. Such an Institute will be complementary to existing Canadian institutes, such as the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security, and the newer International Centre for Democratic Development and Human Rights.

These three Institutes will help provide the research and development information base, available to both government and INGO's, which will be required for a permanent

than are military alliances. Canada faces no military threat, and any other threat posed by either superpower neighbour, north or south, should be resisted and repelled non-violently by our active citizenry.

Should Canada be required to offer such non-violent resistance to a take-over of our institutions, either overtly or covertly, communications in such resistance would be dependent on a good public broadcasting system. Therefore, the Departments of External Affairs and the Department of Common Security (formerly Department of National Defence,) will recommend that the CBC's budget be increased at regular intervals, until deemed to be sufficient to protect Canada's democratic institutions.

*Peggy Hope-Simpson,  
Wolfville, Nova Scotia*

## External Affairs & International Development

As Minister responsible for the merged functions of External Affairs and International Relations, responsible for Canadian overseas development assistance, I'm proud to share my vision of Canada as a national and international leader in what I will be calling in this speech and the future "one-world policies".

Canada is part of one world. We know that economically, and we know it environmentally. Yet many of our social institutions and policies were formed when narrow time-frames and narrow national interests seemed to be all that mattered. And many of our institutions are bound by that inherited narrowness, incapable of responding to citizens' contemporary needs for secure relationships, locally and globally.

We commit ourselves to a consultative public process involving Canadians in a review of our international affairs, to determine ways to reduce the fragmentation and separation of people from each other, and to develop comprehensive, integrated goals for our relationships with other nations and people.

Recognizing the many inter-linked causes of global

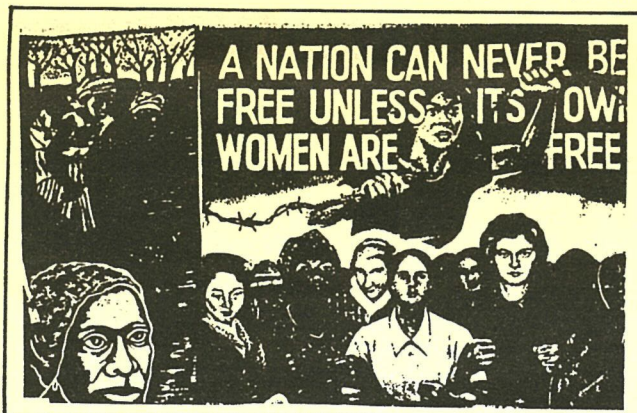
insecurity, Canada reaffirms its Overseas Development Assistance charter, especially commitments to the poorest of the poor, and to partnership as a means of achieving meaning full development. We plan to significantly increase the resources allocated internally within the Canadian International Development Agency to implement the two policy priorities that must be fully integrated - environmental sustainability, and women in development - and to increase project implementation by non-governmental organizations.

Development means human and social development, and Canada will be placing less emphasis on infrastructure and large economic projects. Ignoring the human dimensions of development, or by acting as though these can be cleaved away from political or geopolitical events, is against our own long-term interests of survival, security and well-being.

In addition to affirming and strengthening overseas development assistance - raising that budget from just over half a percent to 1% of our gross domestic product, we are also fully untying aid, so no development assistance is tied to the purchase of Canadian goods and services. We believe that Canadians can compete successfully, and that our partners have the expertise and experience to work with us to make the best decisions about development.

We are also taking a stronger position on human and democratic rights. Notice of suspension of Canadian aid to countries known to be violating either of these rights of their people is being communicated now, with details on reasons. Canada will no longer provide even non-military aid to countries whose governments practice human rights abuses, or who are maintained in place by oppressive military means. We will be inviting more formal involvement of non-governmental organizations and people's groups in our deliberations and policy development.

(continued on page 18)



Itis - Women in Action, 1986/5

territory, will not be used in a threatening or offensive manner to the other by providing military infrastructure, (e.g. for runways, missile launchers, etc.), or terrain for testing of weapons systems of a foreign power.

Therefore, in lieu of the Canada-United States bilateral North American Aerospace Defence Agreement (NORAD), our government will in co-operation with all other Northern powers, i.e. the U.S., the U.S.S.R., Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Denmark and Greenland, actively continue to develop an Arctic Conference will be an extension and integral part of our Canadian Conference on Security and Co-operation.

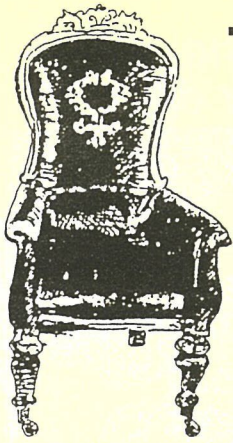
It will have as its mandate the three traditional "baskets" of concern: (1) peace and

Canadian Conference on Security and Cooperation.

Such a Canadian Conference would be available to the United Nations for emergency quick response to developing conflict. Had such a Mediation Rapid Response Team been available at Oka and during the weeks of August, 1990, following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, international light would have been shed on the region and on the United Nations Security Council, to persuade all neighbouring states and the U.S. and U.S.S.R. to face up to their obligation under the United Nations Charter to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

Such a Canadian Conference on Security and Cooperation is the necessary political side of our traditional peacekeeping military role, and is more appropriate in today's world





# The Feminist Throne Speech

Acknowledging that trade has more of an impact on most countries than aid, and that the debt crisis continues to cripple most of the countries to which our development aid is directed, Canada has opened negotiations with Canadian and international development banks on ways to stop the hemorrhage of the third world because of international debt. The Canadian people will be kept fully informed what they can do.

Canadians have always been proud of our country's peace-making role, our capacity to mediate and negotiate, to reach a compromise. But our pride has slipped badly in the last decade, and now it is time to re-examine Canada's role in



the world from the point of view of peace. Nowhere is the need for new models more evident than in the area of global conflict resolution, and Canada commits itself to the same consultative process through which we as a people can decide what our involvement in NATO and in the UN Peace-keeping Forces will be, and what Canada's involvement in military trade will be (in particular, uranium and weapons systems).

Part of the vision in Canada's one-world policies is integrity and consistency between domestic and international policies. This means

Acknowledging the sovereign nationhood of aboriginal peoples within Canadian boundaries as well as elsewhere.

Working with economists and the financial community, Canada's national and international machinery will be involved in a holistic cost-benefit analysis to reformulate our measures of productivity, the task being to factor in all ecological and human costs and benefits. We look forward to the assistance of tribal and community-based people in helping systems tuned to another time retool in as sustainable and positive way.

Rather than kick aside its network of international relationships and stand on its own, Canada wants to work within those relationships to



strengthen them. Our representative to the World Commission on Environment and Economy, Maurice Strong, some years ago described the kind of structure needed for global sustainability - an hourglass, wide at the base where people in community are involved, narrow at the middle where presently provincial/state and nation boundaries are most powerful, and wide again at the top where much-strengthened international agencies coordinate and monitor the global effect on human activity on the planet. We share this general vision and believe our one-world policies will contribute to its realization.

Some people may be afraid that this direction undermines Canada as a nation. I and my colleagues believe the opposite. Relationships between nations are of many different kinds, influenced by many things other than national boundaries, especially when those were originally drawn by colonizers without reference to reality on the ground. Economic trading blocks are already cutting across boundaries that fiercely divided nations in the past. Yesterday's allies are today's

enemies. Canadians need a solid value base from which to conduct our relations with each other and in the world. A strengthened international system that recognizes values other than economic, to parallel that development, is viewed as a priority in the long-term interests of us all. As we face the last decade of this century, we believe that Canada's transformatory role in implementing one-world policies will contribute significantly to ensuring a future worth living.

Patricia Keays  
British Columbia

## Environment

Our government is committed to establishing a sound policy toward environmental issues which will establish Canada as a world leader in re-generating the environment. This approach is necessary both as a means toward ensuring our children's future as well as providing opportunities for prosperous business and healthy communities today.

Now is the time to expand our way of thinking to include a philosophy of the Environmental Age. We are chipping away at the belief that says nature is only a resource to be used for human needs. There is a value to maintaining a balanced ecosystem, apart from human concerns for material well-being. We are committed to protecting that value by developing policy solutions to the apparent trade-off between the demand of industry, business and economic development and the integrity of the environment.



We believe in an environmental ethic that recognizes that the ecosystem and the human system are intertwined. We are acknowledging that by taking care of the environment we are taking care of ourselves.

We recognize that there have been hidden costs to industrialization which up to now have not been captured by the market. Resources such as land, air and water were undervalued because they were in abundance. The high quality and vast quantity of these resources during the early stages of industrial growth implied a false sense that the system. This government recognizes the need for policies which support, rather than detract from, our environmental consciousness. Right now, many of the incentives, subsidies, taxes and accounting approaches used support activities that ruin the environment. We will redirect public policy so that it supports the environment.

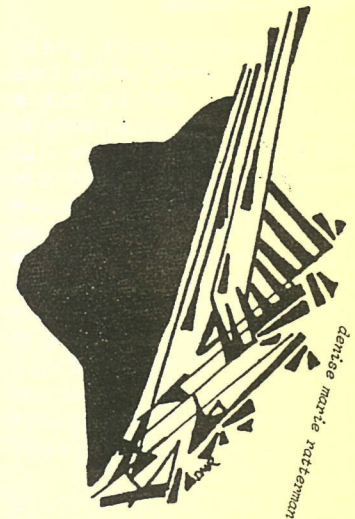
A major first step towards this goal is for increased initiatives from the federal government to establish growth opportunities for businesses committed to environmental protection and enhancement.

Emphasis will now be placed on "reducing, reusing, and recycling". Since we value saving resources, we will introduce subsidies that make it beneficial for business and industry to adopt this approach.

Legislation will be introduced to lower the tax burden for firms meeting environmental research and development criteria with further incentives if the products and services are exported. Increased charges will also be levied against companies engaged in damaging the environment.

Incentives and subsidies will be redirected. For example, agricultural policies which promote the use of herbicides and pesticides and the transformation of natural land to fields, will be altered to ensure long-term healthy soil.

More stringent regulations will be introduced to establish local industry on the leading edge of environmental sensitivity. Stringent regulations may prove beneficial in a business sense



as well. For example, being in a position to put on labels that Canadian products are environmentally friendly may prove to be a competitive edge in the international market.

An institute for environmental intelligence and networking will be established linking producers and consumers of environmental products and services around the world...a type of international banking activity for information and communication.

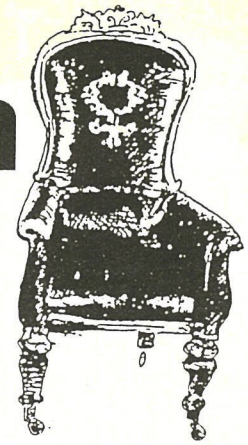
One of the greatest difficulties experienced by new industries and new firms is the access to capital. Small business, which is also the source of new job creation, has difficulty accessing seed capital, expansion capital and working capital. Community economic development activities as well, suffer from the same malaise. Our government will be introducing an environmental venture capital program to encourage and assist new businesses whose practices protect the environment.

We are committed to protecting, preserving, enhancing and nurturing the environment to meet the needs of today, without jeopardizing the needs of future generations. These policy ethics will permeate all areas of government activity and serve to guide decisions over our term of office.

Robyn Allan  
Vancouver, B.C.



# The Feminist Throne Speech



## Rural Canada

As we start a new term as the Canadian government, we will implement a fresh new approach to the policies for rural Canada, and Canadian farmers. Our government finds the Gross Revenue Insurance Plan (GRIP), and the Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA), inadequate to give farmers a fair cost of production for their products.

In view of this, we will develop a marketing policy that ensures farmers a price for their products that reflects the true cost of producing food in this country. When farm families are no longer forced to take off-farm jobs to subsidize the farm operation, the availability of jobs in rural areas will increase. Also the economy of Canada will prosper as one in ten jobs in Canada is related to agriculture. We would also conclude that this policy would reverse the trends of rural depopulation.

To further ensure the safety and quality of our food supply, we have programs planned to grow more of our own food locally, and be less dependent on food imports, and on highly processed and preserved foods. The consumers of food should have the benefits of being able to purchase nutritious, fresh produce.



Sources of food should be locally controlled, not in the hands of large corporations, whose only motivation is profit. Farmers will be able to sustain the farmland and water resources, when they could not afford to previously: no longer will continuous or monocropping be the practice.

This government also recognizes the need for the continued use of the Canadian Wheat Board, and now that we have discontinued the Free Trade Agreement, we plan to market all grains and oil seeds under the Board's power. The

Wheat Board has always ensured fair market access to all farmers, and will continue to do so.

We hope to see as a result of our policies the revitalization of rural Canada. With the increased populations of farmers being able to return to the land, there will be a need to increase the essential services available. In small communities we will ensure that every family has access to adequate health care, day care, dental care, education, and family services. The young people will be able to stay in small towns and have good employment opportunities. Our initiatives for small industries and businesses will bring new vitality to the railway transportation system that was once considered too expensive to maintain.

In conclusion, we are a government that has the best interests of all our people at heart. We know that food is a basic human right; we must support the food producers in our own country, for the common good of all Canadians.

*Lisa Chemerika,  
Woman's Vice-President,  
National Farmers Union.*

## Transportation

Madame Speaker, our Government is moving to reduce our country's dependence on the automobile. We will do so by providing accessible, affordable, and available alternatives in the form of better walking, cycling, and public transport facilities.

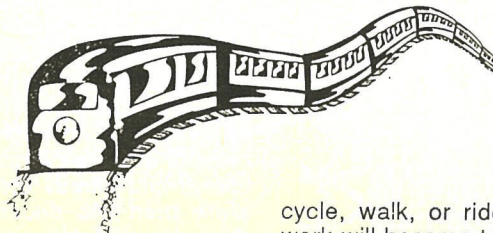
We have come to the conclusion that we can no longer afford to depend on the automobile for 85% of our passenger trips. The average urban Canadian is using three times as much motor gasoline as is the average European. The wasting of gasoline contributes to air pollution and the greenhouse effect that is warming the earth.

The population of cars in Canadian cities is growing twice as fast as the population of people. Cars are clogging our cities and making them uneconomic by gobbling up so much land for parking and roads.

Cars are also destroying our social systems. The 22% of Canadian households without

cars are isolated and impoverished by cities designed for cars. Inadequate public transport means that those persons without cars also have less access to employment and education.

The vast majority of Canadians choose cars because they have no choice. Public transport is unavailable, unaffordable, or inaccessible. People are on the highways because that is where we have invested our transportation budgets. If instead we invested in cycling, pedestrian,



or transit facilities, most people would prefer to cycle, walk, or ride transit. At least then they would have a real choice.

The imbalance of our transportation system has been caused by distortions in the way we pay for travel. The costs of public transport are highly visible and easy targets for budget cutters. Many highway costs are hidden.

If public transport is not universal and extensive, then we have to buy a car for some of our trips. Once we have paid for the car's loan payments and insurance, then we tend to use it for all our trips because most of the expense is already paid. Thus, once we have a car, we seldom use public transport. We need to break down this "up front" cost of owning a car and make the cost more visible at the time we turn the key in the ignition. Then people with cars will choose public transport more often.

We recognize that the choice to drive a car is a logical one in that we are trying to minimize our individual travel time. Unfortunately, when a majority of people try to travel at the same time we have traffic jams and everyone is worse off.

The price we pay to drive our car does not vary by time of day. Consequently, everyone tries to travel at rush hour and we are forced to build new roads that are underused at other times. We need a pricing scheme that makes it more expensive to drive a car during peak hours and encourages off peak travel.

People will cycle, walk, or ride transit if they are given the choice. In France, only 45% of passenger trips are made in cars. In Zurich, Switzerland the car only gets to use what street space is not needed for bicycles, pedestrians, streetcars, and buses.

In order to bring about an accessible, affordable, available and efficient transportation system, the Government is adopting the following policies:

- allowances paid by employers to employees who

cycle, walk, or ride transit to work will become tax free, just as free parking for car commuters is tax free

- transit passes will be tax deductible

- together with the provinces, we will ensure that rural communities have adequate public transport

- instead of expanding roads, railroad transport will be improved for freight and passengers

- public transport will be made more accessible and easy to use for the elderly and those with disabilities.

We do not propose to implement this program by raising the debt. Instead, we will pay for it by re-allocating budgets now spent on road transportation.

Investment in transit benefits everyone, including car drivers: reduced road construction costs, lower hospital costs due to fewer accidents and less pollution, fewer traffic jams. Greater access to transportation for the poor, disabled and elderly will mean more independence and disposable income for those who need it most and, as a result, a lowering of social costs.

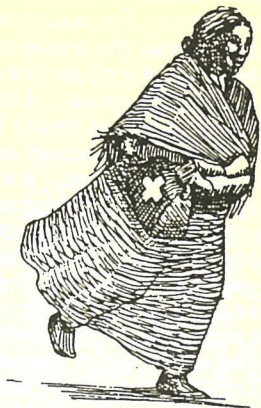
What we are proposing is not pie in the sky, it is a transport system that works at less costs, with greater socioeconomic benefit. Such systems exist in places like Stockholm, Oslo, Grenoble, Zurich, and Bremen. Why not here in Canada?

*Jennifer Richards  
Transport 2000*

## Health Care

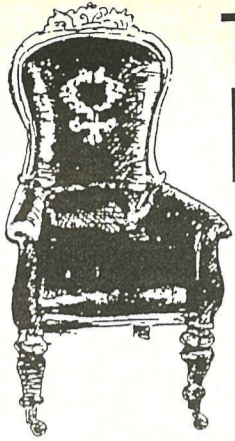
It is with pride and a sense of renewed enthusiasm for Canadian values and aspirations, that my government wishes to announce a package of reforms that clearly sets out our commitment to preserving, protecting, and enhancing the physical and mental health of our nation. We want to make it very clear that this government believes that the health of Canadians is our first and primary responsibility.

Such an undertaking is in keeping with our growing appreciation that good health means much more than the mere absence of disease. Instead we see health as a resource for living -- a resource that is determined by a wide variety of social, environmental and economic factors. We need to know more about the "health" role these factors play, so that we can target our actions and our resources more appropriately.



Indeed when it comes to protecting health, we already know that influences entirely outside the health treatment system can be highly significant. Think of the lives saved thanks to seat belt legislation, for example. Or the misery averted because young people decide not to take up smoking because cigarettes cost too much because of high tobacco taxes. Or how our strict gun control legislation has saved the lives of countless women and children.





# The Feminist Throne Speech

Although beaten, these victims managed to escape an abusive relationship and start a new life, instead of dying in a violent moment because a lethal weapon was close to hand.

The first initiative in our health reform program therefore, will be to re-instate a **nation-wide annual health survey** in order to assess these and other influences on Canada's health status. By regularly gathering this kind of information, we will find out how healthy we really are. The accurate identification of our most serious health problems will help us figure out how to prevent problems, as well as how to treat them effectively and efficiently.

The results of this first health survey will also be the basis for establishing **national health goals**, and subsequent surveys will give us the information we need to chart our progress towards those goals.

However, we are also prepared to implement some programs based on what we already know. For example, having reviewed the evidence from research, my government is quite convinced that inequality is a potent threat to health. Racism and sexism are its natural enemies; and poverty may be the biggest health risk of all. Poor people die sooner and experience more years of disability than their wealthier counterparts.

It is profoundly enlightening to review what health experts from Canada say when they advise developing nations about improving the health of their populations. Invariably these advisors tell others to: "Start with women and children first".

Well, this advice is pertinent here at home, too. Right now, our children comprise 40% of our nations poor. These are kids whose chances for a healthy and productive life can be enormously affected by government action, particularly when we realize that the fastest growing sector of the poor are families headed by single mothers.

Then too, we must realize that our Native peoples experience the deepest poverty of any sector in Canadian society. Approximately one child in three in Saskatchewan and Manitoba is native, and child poverty among Native children is epidemic. The deplorable living conditions on reserves, for which we must bear responsibility, evoke images of the Third World -- a profoundly distressing and embarrassing comparison given the enormous wealth of our country.



Accordingly, my government intends to invest in our future by introducing a variety of measures to improve child health by tackling child poverty, in the only way that makes sense -- by making sure that parents have adequate family resources to offer a safe and secure home and adequate food and clothing. We therefore will immediately lift the 5% cap on Canada Assistance Plan imposed on British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario. Half the nation's poor live in these provinces; we refuse to abandon them to the impact of the current recession.

Canadians have always been proud about our ability to offer our citizens a health care system that is the envy of the world. The program criteria of our national Medicare system -- accessibility, universality, portability, comprehensiveness and public, non-profit administration -- have proven the test of time.

The evidence is clear that Canada's system has saved the taxpayers of the nation billions of dollars over its twenty year history. We have proven that such a program is feasible, affordable, and just. Access to necessary health care is a right in this country and we intend to make sure that it remains so.

We therefore announce a package of new cost-shared programs available for the express purpose of assisting provinces to expand community care alternatives, particularly for the elderly, the mentally ill, abused women and children, and those with chronic conditions. Priority access to these funds will be available to organizations that feature multi-disciplinary teams of health care providers and will favour agencies that combine health and social services at the delivery level.

As Canada moves towards new definitions of its identity and new constitutional arrangements with the provinces, I hold a great deal of hope that this package of reforms will strike a responsive chord right across the nation. More than two decades ago Canadians fully committed themselves to an ideal -- the right to health care. Today, we need to reinforce that ideal and expand its horizons to include the right to health itself. I can think of no more worthy national ambition.

*Carol Kushner,*  
co-author of *Second Opinion: What's Wrong with Canada's Health Care System and How to Fix It.*

## Justice

The cornerstone to justice initiatives by this Government for the foreseeable future will be the promotion of equality, including equal protection and benefit of the law, for women and other disadvantaged groups in our society.

It is no longer tolerable that women and children live daily with violence in the home, school, work place, and community. We will be fundamentally shifting the purpose of the Criminal Code of Canada. The basis for such a code will be state action and sanctions for crimes against the person.

This session, we intend to remove the "reasonable belief in consent" provision of the Code; it is outrageous to have a rape law that considers the fact that a woman was raped as largely irrelevant, but rather focuses on whether the rapist thought he was raping.

The soliciting provisions will be repealed as women should not be treated as criminals for surviving in an unequal society.

We will be striking a Royal Commission on Violence Against Women to determine the extent and nature of this violence and to consider remedies that will address systemic causes.

We will be holding corporate directors liable for crimes against the person. Where corporations clearly pursue a course of action, such as was the case with mercury poison, where they know death or injury will result, they will be held accountable individually under the Criminal Code of Canada.

This government is committed to the right of a woman to reproductive control and as such will not be introducing any restrictions on access to abortions. We will, however, ensure equal access to this medical procedure



through the Canada Health Act. We will also review the findings of the Royal Commission on Reproductive Technology and prepare legislation accordingly.

The Government of Canada will introduce legislation that will facilitate civil suits of pornographers and distributors by women and others who have been harmed by pornography. Legal Aid regulations will be clarified to include coverage of these suits for those who require financial assistance. It is our intention that this legislation will eventually replace the present obscenity legislation.

Sexual orientation will be added as a ground for protection against discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Code, and will be added as an enumerated ground to the equality provisions of the **Charter of Rights and Freedoms**. All laws and policies will be reviewed and changed to comply with these new equality guarantees including definitions of spouse and family.

This Government will proactively change legislation and policies based on recommendations from women's groups and other equality seeking groups to comply with the **Charter's** equality guarantees. Changes slated for this session of Parliament include:

- amending the Federal Language Training Program policies to ensure and facilitate equal access by women and all races to this critical program;
- amending immigration legislation and regulations including eliminating the highly discriminatory domestic workers program, and the requirement that fiancées marry within 90 days of arrival in this country;
- extending the spousal allowance program to include all persons between 60 and 65 who need this assistance;
- revising the Income Tax Act to address inequalities affecting women, particularly in the area of support payments;
- change all pension plans, including for military wives and widows, to comply with fundamental notions of equality for women.

This government intends to implement compulsory employment equity in the federal civil service and crown corporations for women, persons with disabilities, aboriginal people, immigrants and visible minorities, and gays and lesbians. We also intend to enforce an effective pay equity scheme.

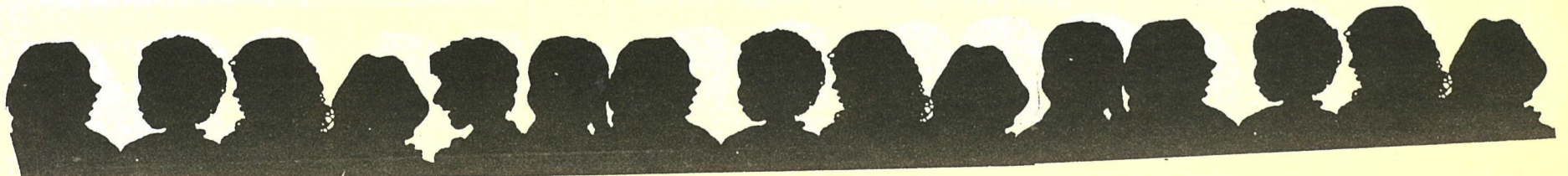
The Constitution will be revised such that one-half of all Senate seats will be filled by women, and proportional representation of all disadvantaged groups will be required.

When the Canadian constitution was repatriated, equality for women and other disadvantaged groups was entrenched under the **Charter of Rights and Freedoms**. This government is committed to a frontal attack on the inequalities ingrained in all parts of society. This is just the beginning.

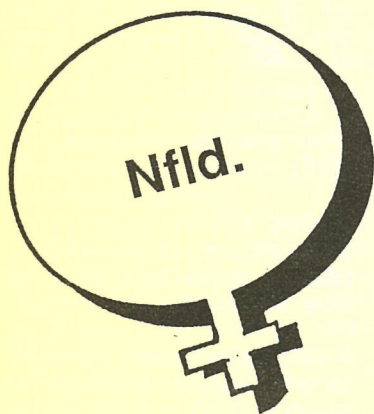
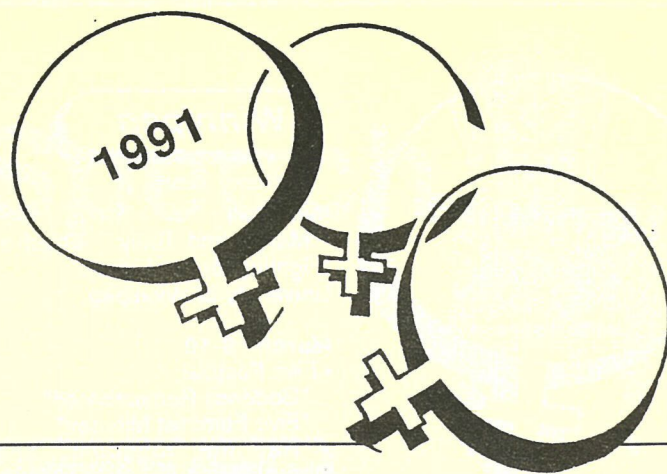
*Christie Jefferson,*  
Toronto, Ontario

**Feminist  
Throne  
Speech**

cont'd on page 27



# International Women's Day



## Stephenville

**March 7**  
 • IWD Dinner : Special guests and female entertainment troupe SSSTC.

**March 8**  
 • Press Conference: A square quilt created by women's organizations will be presented to Bay St. George communities. Wine and cheese reception.

• For information call 643-4444

## Labrador City

**March 7**  
 • The Labrador West Status of Women Council will be organizing a Roast-Beef Dinner. Guest speaker will be Ms. Heather Bruce-Veitch, Iron Ore Company of Canada. Awards will be presented to three outstanding women from the community.

**March 8**  
 • Posters display from "Youth Visions for the Future" from 2 - 5pm at the Labrador Mall.

• For information call 944-6562

## Gander

**March 8**  
 • IWD Dinner, 7:30 p.m., Albatross Hotel. Prizes awarded to winners of high school "Speak-off" on subjects of Dating Violence; Family Violence; Pornography; Women's Portrayal in Media. For more information call the Gander Women's Centre at 356-4395.

## History of IWD

Every year throughout the world, women celebrate International Women's Day on or around March 8th. Steeped in a history of women's struggles for equality, it has come to symbolize women's efforts to shape a better world.

The origins of the day can be traced back to the early twentieth century when women in both North America and Europe were fighting for better working conditions, demanding the right to vote, and as the First World War escalated, calling for peace.

A strike of female garment workers in New York on March

8, 1857, and a second strike fifty years later by similar workers still labouring under poor working conditions in New York, are often attributed as the events which gave rise to the observance of International Women's Day. Although it appears that these particular dates do not actually mark the beginning of strikes, they do reflect a period of significant labour unrest. The early twentieth century witnessed numerous strikes involving thousands of women in major centres such as New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and Montreal.

On March 8, 1908, women's

suffrage was discussed at a meeting of the New York City Social Democratic Women's Society. A year later on February 23, 1909, two thousand people in New York attended the first National Women's Day. The event sponsored by the American Socialists focussed on women's rights and suffrage. By 1911, the day was also celebrated in Europe. Louise Zietz and Clara Zetkin, two German women, had suggested at the International Socialist Women's Meeting in 1910, the designation of a day as International Women's Day.

## St. John's

**March 8:**  
 • Theme: "Gathering Our Strength"

• For information call 753-0220

• Bread and roses luncheon at the Masonic Hall, Cathedral street at 12:30pm. Guest speaker Sharon Fraser, feminist journalist. \$15.00 per person.

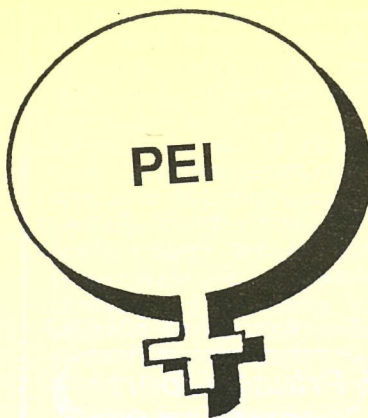
• Women's network dinner at the Holiday Inn, cash bar, - 7:00pm dinner - 7:30pm, guest speaker Jessica Hill, acting Executive Director of the Program and Planning division of the Ontario Ministry of Health, on the topic - "Major Health Policy Issues for Women". \$20.00 per person.

• Women's films at the Avalon Community College Lecture Theatre, 5:30-8pm.  
 "No Time To Stop"  
 "Fababaihan - Filipina Portraits"  
 Ethnic snacks will be served.

• All day programming on Women's Issues on CHMR-MUN Radio to celebrate International Women's Day.

**March 9**  
 • Open house at the Mosque on Logy Bay Rd.

**March 10**  
 • "Faces of Feminism" - Toronto photographer Pamela Harris will speak about her work at the MUN art gallery at 8:00 p.m.



## Charlottetown

**March 7**  
 • Greta Nemiroff, Speaking on "Interesting Times: Women in Canada 1970-1990"

**March 8**  
 • Women's Dance, music by Earthwitch 8pm, Rodd's Royalty Inn

**March 10**  
 • Films:  
 "Goddess Remembered"  
 "Burning Times"  
 2 - 5pm, Council of the Arts

## Summerside

**March 7**  
 • "Celebration of Women" - Open House and readings at East Prince Women's Information Centre.

• For information call 436-9856

St. John's, Nfld.

## GATHERING OUR STRENGTHS



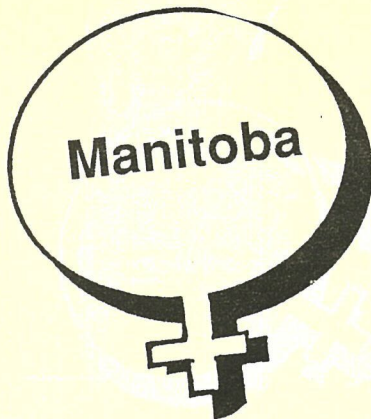
**International Women's Day**  
 March 8, 1991

**INSTITUTE OF WOMEN'S STUDIES**  
**CARLETON UNIVERSITY**

*Celebrates*  
**International Women's Week**

788-6645

Paterson 330



**Brandon**

**March 8**  
 • Films by and about Women:  
 "Adam's World"  
 "The Burning Times"  
 "Half the Kingdom"  
 "Get Back the Night".

**March 9**  
 • "Midwifery and birthing practices: An international perspective" Public information session / workshop. Speakers include qualified and lay midwives and nurse-midwives in Central America, Botswana, and Manitoba.  
 • For information call 725-2955

**Winnipeg**

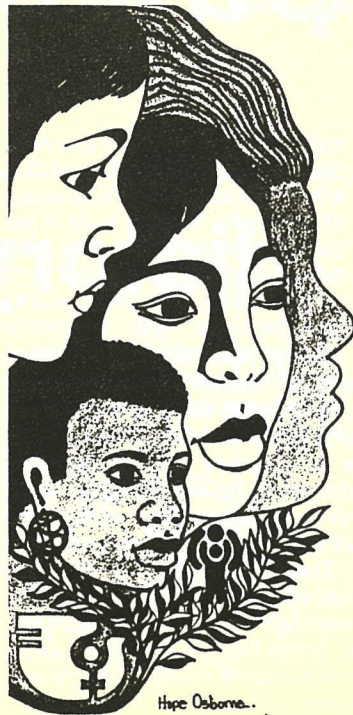
**March 9**  
 • March and Rally. Theme: "Fighting for our Lives". University of Winnipeg.

**March 8-10**  
 • Film Festival:  
 "Goddess Remembered"  
 "Five Feminist Minutes"  
 "Half the Kingdom" and others, March 8-9, 8pm., March 10, 2pm. Cinema Main, 243 Main St. Admission by donation.

**March 20**  
 • "Prostitution and the Sex Trade Industry in Bangkok", with speaker Busaba Paratacharya, from Thailand.  
 • For information call 453-3879

**Thompson**

**March 8**  
 • Celebration, featuring Innu performing artist Anita (Isaaluk) Lavalle 7:30-10:30pm, YWCA, 39 Nickle Rd.



**Whitecourt**

**March 8**  
 • Each year the Whitecourt Women's Resource centre writes an article for the local newspaper the "Whitecourt Star", in celebration of IWD.

• A display at the Midtown Centre where bread and roses will be handed out.

**Edmonton**

**March 8**  
 • Open House - Women's Program and Resource Centre. 7 to 11pm, 11019-90 Ave.

• Open House - Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues, 7 to 11pm at 1004, 10010-106 St.

**March 9**  
 • Celebration - "Imagine the Power of Women's Visions" is the theme. Assemble at Noon for presentations, march begins at 1pm, followed by speeches, potluck lunch, entertainment, afternoon dance. YWCA Bldg. For information call 421-0306

• NFB Film - Special screening of "Five Feminist Minutes" from 3 to 5 pm at NFB Theatre, Canada Place.

• Silent Auction - PASSP silent auction fundraiser 7pm in Jubilee Auditorium banquet room. Tickets \$15.00 available from PASSP (450-4777)

**March 10**  
 • Forum - Women's Action for Peace in the Gulf, forum on "Women and Peace", 12:30 to 5:30 pm in Education North Bldg. at University of Alberta.

**Alberta**

For more information call 274-7281

**March 8**  
 • Rally/March: 6:30-7:30 p.m. starting at Memorial Park (12 Ave, & 4 St. SW)

• Celebration Dance: 8:00 p.m. at the Calgary Multicultural Centre (712 - 5 St. SE) . Entertainers: Anne Loree and Same Difference

• For information call 274-4705

**March 9**  
 • NFB Film "Five Feminist Minutes". For more information call 262-1873.

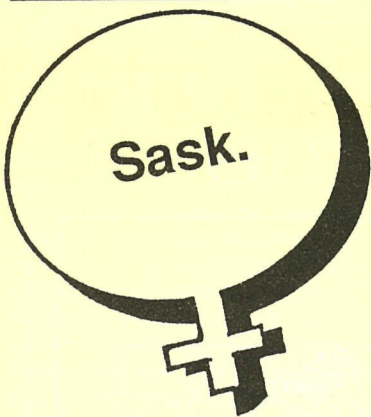
**Lethbridge**

**March 9**  
 • Theme: "Women of the World"

• Celebration, 9:45am - 4pm, YWCA, 604-8 Street South  
 - 9:50, Role of Women in the Traditional Spirituality of Ghana; Sweetgrass Ceremony by Marian Carr.  
 - Noon, Film: "Goddess Remembered".  
 - Evening Celebration.

**Medicine Hat**

**March 23**  
 • International Women's Day Conference, co-sponsored by World of Women Together and the Women's Room. At the Quality Inn.



**Saskatoon**

**March 8**  
 Theme: "Common Women, Uncommon Accomplishments"

• Women's Singing Rally - celebratory event with focus on peace. 12pm, City Hall.

**March 9**

• "Common Women, Uncommon Accomplishments" Disabled women, women in non-traditional roles, low-income women, rural women, native women, and women in the peace movement, will talk about their accomplishments.

• Art-mart: Art, Artisan and Information Fair, featuring various women artists, will continue all afternoon.

• Keynote address by the Raging Grannies.

• Women's Gathering, with poets and singers, followed by Dance.

**Week of March 11**  
 • NFB Film Series - Films by and about Women. For information call 665-2802

**Regina**

**March 7**  
 • Dinner and panel presentation on "Women's Role in Peacekeeping".

**March 8**  
 • Film presentations: "Five Feminist Minutes" and "The Famine Within". 7pm and 9pm at the Regina Public Library.

• For information call 525-8329

**Prince Albert**

**March 8**  
 • Women's Celebration / Gathering with Guest Speakers.

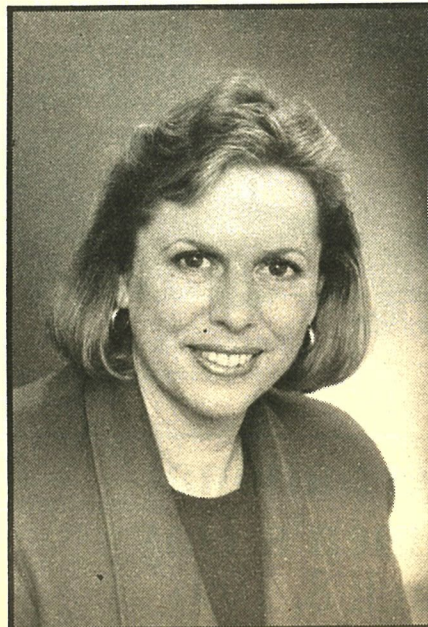
• Display of Women's Art. 7pm, John M. Cullenare Library.

• For information call 953-6229

**Calgary**

**March 4 to 15**  
 • Theme: Celebrating Womenspirit!

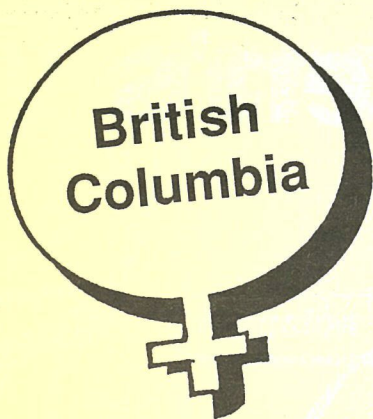
• "A Woman's Life" - Exhibition at the Alberta College of Art.



*Let neither borders nor bullets weaken feminist solidarity. Think globally on this International Women's Day.*

**DAWN BLACK, M.P.  
 NEW DEMOCRAT STATUS OF WOMEN CRITIC**

The *Women's Report* is a free quarterly publication of my activities and related developments in Parliament. To be on my mailing list, write me at the House of Commons; Ottawa, Ontario; K1A 0A6.



**British Columbia**

**Golden**

**March 8**  
 • International Buffet Dinner for women and their families, with a short presentation on women's struggles over the years. For more information call 344-5317

**Ft. St. John**

**March 8**  
 • Theme "Remarkable Women of Ft. St. John"  
 • Open house at the Ft. St. John's Women's centre which will feature a poster display of the women being honored. For more information: 787-1121

**Cranbrook**

**March 8**  
 • Speech made in conjunction with Amnesty International in

the centre of town which will be followed by a procession to the Women's Centre.

• Open house at the Women's Centre with wine and cheese and local entertainment celebrating women.

• For information call 426-2912

**Kamloops**

**March 9**  
 • "Working to save the Environment", facilitated by Recycle Now.

• Film Series: "Finding Our Roots", "Adams World", "The Burning Times"

• "The Law - What it can really do for Women", facilitated by N. Cameron, LEAF.

• IWD Dinner, with speaker Ruth Lee Taylor, entertainment by SAND, a feminist clown.  
 • For information call 374-1844

# International Women's Day

**Vancouver**

**March 9**  
 • March, Queen Elizabeth Theatre, parking lot 12 pm

• Rally, Robson Square, Georgia Street. Speakers and Entertainment with "Key Change" 1pm

• Dances and Celebrations:  
 - I.W.D. Family Multicultural Celebration, Vancouver Indian Centre 7pm. For more information call Karina at 873-3396

- Vancouver Lesbian Connection, Capri Hall. For more information call 299-2488

**Victoria**

**March 8**  
 • Annual Pot luck supper YWCA, 880 Courtney St., 6pm

**March 9**  
 • Rally and March Centennial Square, 1pm

• IWD Women's Dance and Celebration Cedar Hill Recreation Centre 8:30 pm. Cash bar.

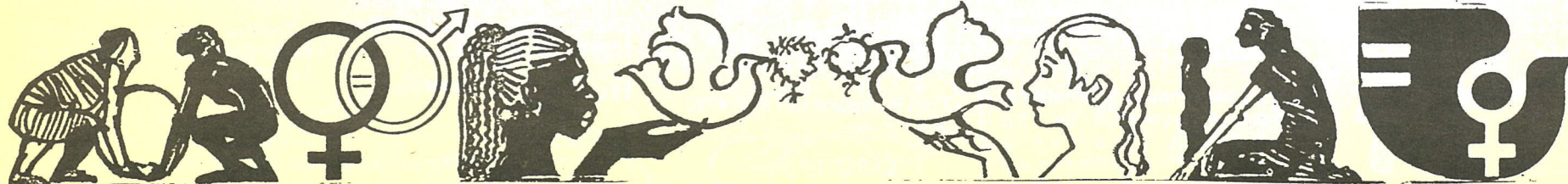
• For information call 381-1012

**Kelowna**

**March 8**  
 • Open house at the Kelowna Women's Resource Centre.

• Celebration at the Coast Royal Ann Hotel which will include: feminist readings, poetry, live music and open microphone for comments.

• For information call 762-2355

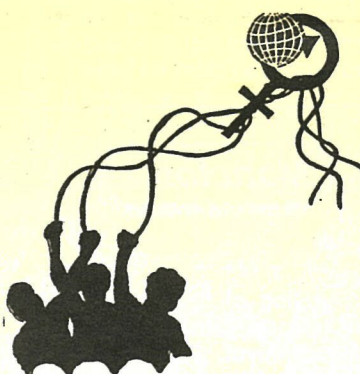


**Whitehorse**

**March 7**  
 • Talk back show - C.B.C.

**March 8**  
 • Rally, 12 noon, YTG building, 5 speakers - women's issues.

• Dinner, 6:30 pm Yukon Inn, dance to follow.

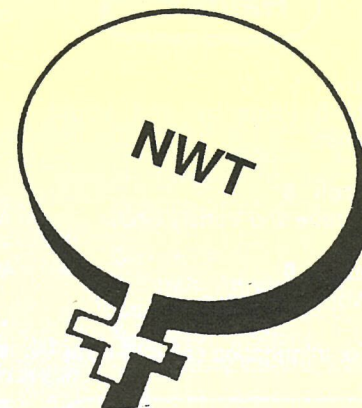


**Yellowknife**

**March 7**  
 • Lucie Blue Tremblay will perform her special brand of music in both English and French.

**March 8**  
 • Opening Night of the Women's Film Festival. Various films of different genres and subject will be shown including "Close Your Eyes and Think of England" and "Sun, Moon & Feather".

• For information call 920-8775



**Yukon**

## Burning Times: New NFB Film

It has been called "the women's holocaust." Between 1560 and 1650, at the height of the witch persecutions, it is estimated that as many as 9,000,000 people in Europe were accused of heresy, tortured and burned at the stake. Of these, eighty-five percent were women. A new hour-long Studio D documentary, **The Burning Times**, exposes the persecution, torture and mass burning of women as witches in Europe from the 14th to the 17th century.

This turbulent period of history is brought to life through selections from trial records, readings from witch-hunting manuals, and the art and literature of the time. Interviews with scholars and historians, among them Dr. Barbara Roberts, Margot Adler, Theodora Jensen, Starhawk, Irving Smith and Dominican theologian Matthew Fox shed new light on the film's historical perspective.

**The Burning Times**

proposes that what led to the persecution of women as witches was the collision of two utterly different systems of belief -- the Church and the State, with their emerging values of profit, power, domination and patriarchal authority, versus the ancient traditions that honored and revered both women and the earth. With the massive witch-burnings, a matriarchal way of life was destroyed. Women's control over their own bodies and reproductive systems became the business of men. Positions of religious authority and political power became exclusively male domains.

"It's clear that attitudes have not changed much since 'the burning times,'" says film director, Donna Read. "Our ideas about power still center around accumulation and control. They can be seen in the continuing widespread violence against women and the deterioration of our environment".



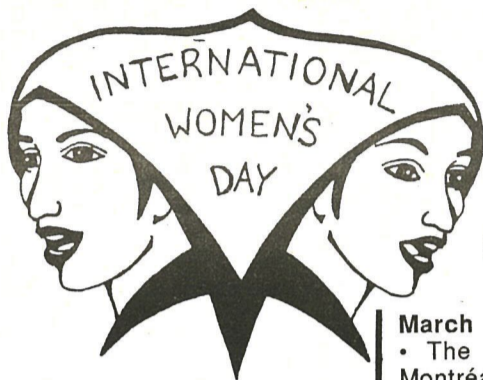
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 Tobias questines, Jan Donnewaerts, Robert Jans, ellet (1992) - was

# International Women's Day

## How to Celebrate International Women's Day?

You can:

- organize a dinner
- participate in an International Women's Day event
- wear a rose
- talk to friends, colleagues and neighbours about the "day".



### Montréal

**March 8**  
 • The Women's Centre of Montréal will have an open house and day-long events.

• Conferences, workshops, discussion groups, films, videos and theatre presentations relating to women's struggle to survive the recession.

• A play entitled "Levons le voile" will be presented.

• For information call 842-4780

### Gatineau

**9 mars**  
 • Thème: "l'Indépendance, faut y voir". Souper et soirée (animation-musique) à 19h30 au restaurant au Bord de l'eau.

### Québec

### Québec

**8 mars**  
 • Thème: "Femmes et démographie - Des choix pour l'avenir".

• Presentations et conférences de 14h00 - 17h00

• Cocktail pour toutes de 17h00

• Théâtre Parminou - L'égalité brille pour tout le monde de 18h00

• Prix Reconnaissance (soirée) avec la participation spéciale de Winnie Frohn, Maria De Koninck et Simone Monet-Chartrand. Au Salon de la femme de Québec Parc de l'Exposition provinciale de 20h30.

• Pour information: 877-1001

### Aylmer

**7 mars**  
 • Souper conférence avec Hélène Pedneault, auteure. À 16h30 à l'Agora de l'école sec. Grande Rivière à Aylmer, toutes les femmes du milieu enseignant et autre.

### Hull

**9 mars**  
 • Thème: les femmes et le pouvoir. Conférencière: Madame Nicole Dorin. Entre 16h00 et 19h00 à la salle des Fêtes de la Maison des Citoyennes de Hull. Confirmez votre présence en composant le 595-0365.

### Nova Scotia

### Halifax

**March 5 - 8**  
 • NFB Films by and about women

**March 8**  
 • Parade and Variety Show

**March 9**  
 • Women's Dance

• For information call 426-6014

### Pictou County

**March 8**  
 • The Pictou County Women's Centre has an open house. For more information: 755-4647

### Antigonish

**March 8**  
 • Antigonish Women's Resource Centre - Open House featuring the handwork and art of Aboriginal Women (Mic Mac Women from our neighboring Afton reserve)

• Restaurants in Antigonish will join in the celebration by once again offering a free cup of coffee to all their women customers.

• Second Annual International Cabaret presented by the Antigonish Women's Association. Local Women will showcase their music, dance, and literary talents as well as other forms of entertainment.

• For information call 863-6221

### Bridgewater

**March 8**  
 • Open House at Second Story Women's Centre

• "Women and the Law", with speaker Anne Crawford.

• For information call 543-1315

### Sydney

**March 8**  
 • 14th Annual Women's Day Concert and Dance. Entertainment by local women, featuring Rita Joe, Joella Foulds, Joan Andrews, step dancers, fiddlers, and more. 8pm, Cedars Club.

• Workshop on "Gender and Language", 11:00-1:00, at the Royal Canadian Legion.

• For information call 564-5926

### Moncton

**March 7**  
 • Opening of the Exhibition: "Transformations", works by Elaine Amyot. Sponsored by Support to Single Mothers.

• For information call 858-1303

**March 9**  
 • Theme of the 1991 celebration is Women/Community.

• A special program featuring ten women speakers from the community will cover diverse topics.

• Special entertainment including singers and the Breeze Vente Quintet.

• For information call 858-9472

### Saint John

**March 8**  
 • New Brunswick branch of the United Nations Association of Canada will be presenting Certificates of Appreciation to outstanding Women in Communities in Saint John and throughout the province. For more information call (506) 634-7320.


### New Brunswick

### Bathurst

**8 mars**  
 • marches au flambeau seront organisées contre la violence afin de dénoncer ce fléau social. Pour de plus amples renseignements, contactez le 548-4337

### Fredericton

**March 8**  
 • Pot Luck Supper, with theme of "Women and Peace". Followed by Women's Theatre Collective performance at 8pm. For more information: 454-5581.



**PEI  
 ADVISORY COUNCIL  
 ON THE STATUS  
 OF WOMEN**

Salutes  
**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**  
 March 8, 1990

Linda Gallant, Chairperson

Conseil consultatif sur la condition de la femme **NB** Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Peace & empowerment is our hope for women on March 8.

95 Foundry St., s. 207, Moncton, NB E1C 5H7



# Day across the country



1991

## Kingston

- March 2**  
 • Theme: "Women Breaking the Chains of Democracy"  
 • Women's Dance, Steel Workers Hall. For further information call 545-1379

## Guelph

- March 5**  
 • Pot Luck dinner and celebrations
- March 7**  
 • Movie "Born in Flames"  
 • For further information call 824-4120 ext. 2629

## Kitchener-Waterloo

- March 7**  
 • Information Displays at University of Waterloo
- March 8**  
 • Women's Dance  
 • IWD Art and Craft Show  
 • Coffee House and Dry Dance
- March 9**  
 • Peace March and Rally  
 • For information call 888-4042

## Sudbury

- March 5**  
 • Film on Women and Development at Village International. For further information call: 671-2648
- March 8**  
 • Pot Luck dinner and discussion - Women and peace in the Middle East. Call: 671-1050
- March 9**  
 • Dinner with guest speaker Jennifer Keck at Steel Worker's Hall. For further information call: 674-3858

## Windsor

- March 6**  
 • The 3rd Annual International Women's Day Dinner and Presentation of the Frances Horvath Memorial Employment Equity Award.
- March 8**  
 • Workshop on the Reality of Feminization of Poverty, led by women featured in the film, "We'll all be Heard".  
 • For information call 944-8989

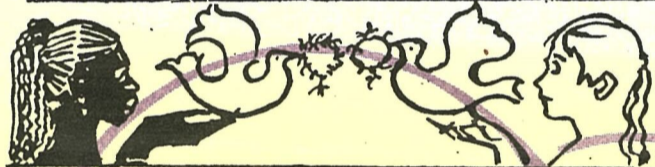
## Ottawa

- March 6**  
 • "Lesbian Voices in the Women's Movement." Experiences of lesbians in the women's movement will be the goal of empowering all women while also strengthening the lesbian community. 7 - 10pm, Arts Court
- March 7**  
 • "Women and Development: Our Stories." Workshop to draw on women's experience in dealing with the dynamics of race, class and gender in community activism both in Canada and overseas. 7 - 9pm, Arts Court
- March 8**  
 • Women's Celebration Dance 8pm - 1am, Congress Centre

- Canadian Artic  
 "Nice Coloured Girls"  
 "Reframing AIDS"  
 "SKIN"  
 "Slaying the Dragon"  
 7 - 10pm, Regional Building, 111 Lisgar Street
- "Women on the Hill...Rally and March!" 11:30am, Parliament Hill
- For information call 594 - 8707

## Hamilton

- March 7**  
 • "Global Feminism" - Panel Discussion/Presentation by Half the Sky Feminist Theatre Company



- March 9**  
 • "Examining our Power." A panel presentation and workshop, topics include: A Community for Change; Class, Poverty and the Women's Movement; an Anti-racism for White Women". 10:30am - 3:30pm, 111 Lisgar Street.
- Panel Discussion: "Violence Against Women: A Development and Human Rights Issue".  
 Chair: Glenda Simms  
 Facilitator: Rosemary Brown  
 Panelists: Charlotte Bunch, Eugénie Aw, Blanca Noemi Coto Estrada, Marlene Pierre (tba), Marnie Girvan  
 Panel will be held at the Government Conference Centre, 9:30am - 12pm.
- Closing:

- March 8**  
 • "Women and Change" - A day of Workshops and Celebration 8:30am - 4:30pm, Gilmour Hall, Council Chambers
- International Women's Day Dance 9pm - 1am, Army/Navy Hall
- March 9**  
 • Information Fair, Rally, March and Entertainment 12 noon, Downtown YWCA
- "Childbirth Information Fair" - presented by the Midwifery Task Force of Ontario, 10am - 4pm, Spectator Auditorium.
- For information call 522-0127

## Kenora

- March 12**  
 • Lucie Blue Tremblay in concert, at Inn of the Woods.

## Toronto

- March 9**  
 • Theme: "Women say stop the racist war from Oka to the Gulf". Make the links:  
 - Self-determination for Aboriginal people, Palestinians and blacks in South Africa.  
 - Racism Kills: Confront it! Oppose it!



## Thunder Bay

- March 7**  
 • Discussion: "Women and Politics: Women Making a Difference"
- March 8**  
 • International Women's Day Breakfast; Confederation College, 8:00 am  
 • Feminist Information Fair, with women's groups and agencies  
 • Festival of Feminist Films Art Gallery, Agora, Lakehead University, 10 am - 2 pm, celebration at noon.
- March 9**  
 • Tenth Annual IWD Party / Celebration, Food, Entertainment, Dancing, Oliver Rd. Community Centre, 6:30
- March 13**  
 • Concert by Lucie Blue Tremblay, Prince Arthur Hotel, 7:30 pm.  
 • For more information, call the Northern Women's Centre at 345-7802

## Status of Women Council of the NWT

wants to know ...

Are you concerned with professional ethics? Has the unethical behaviour of a professional affected your life (eg, doctor, therapist, police officer, teacher)?

This information would be useful to us for research. Address your comments in confidence to:

Status of Women Council of the NWT  
 Box 1320  
 Yellowknife, NWT  
 X1A 2L9  
 Attn: Lynn Brooks, Executive Director

or phone (403) 920-6177 fax (403) 873-0285

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

M A R C H 8<sup>TH</sup> 1 9 9 1

## Renewing Our Vision

I see old women dancing  
dancing on the earth  
I hear old women singing  
singing death and birth

I see old women dancing  
dancing through all lands  
foremothers with them joining  
all of their hands

dance on, old women,  
dance amidst the strife,  
sing out, old women,  
sing for life

Margaret Laurence  
"Old Women's Song"

*An open letter to the women of Ontario...*

Dear Sisters,

Times are tough for the women of Ontario. The effects of the recession, poverty, lack of affordable child care, violence against women — on the street, at work, at school, in our homes — and the fact that we are still the last hired and first fired are just some of the hard realities in our everyday lives.

These times call for renewed vision and fresh unity among women. The women's movement has grown and changed. We are native women, women of color, working women, disabled women, lesbians, francophone women, older women ...working together for the common goal of true empowerment of women.

It is a source of great pride for me that our government has more women in cabinet than any other in the history of Canada. We hope to be an example and a challenge to other governments, employers and unions to do the same in their decision-making bodies.

Since we took office on October 1, 1990, this government has made women's issues a central part of our work.

The door has been opened. Pay equity is being extended to more women. Child and family support payments are to become automatic. Parental leave time is longer. Five thousand new subsidized child care spaces are becoming available. Lesbians and gay men in the Ontario Public Service are now eligible for spousal benefits. Abortion is a part of our health service in Ontario, and through joint efforts with women's groups, doctors and many others, the federal Bill C43 was defeated in the Senate.

International Women's Day is a time when we celebrate our strengths and victories and define the tasks ahead of us. We are standing on solid ground created by countless hours of women's work and persistence. As Minister Responsible for Women's Issues I am committed to working with you, the women of Ontario, toward our ultimate goal of economic, social and legal equality for all women.

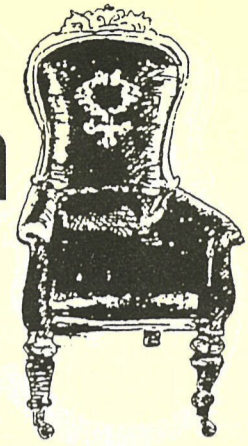
In solidarity,

Anne Swarbrick  
Minister Responsible for Women's Issues

... from Anne Swarbrick - Ontario Minister Responsible for Women's Issues



# The Feminist Throne Speech



## Women's Safety

The government of Canada recognizes the constant inequality experienced by the female population of Canada due to fear, limitations to freedom, and victimization at the hands of male perpetrators of violence. We will work to end the violence imposed on women and children.

We recognize that there is not a single woman in Canada who is unaffected by the spectre or the reality of male violence. The constant and frightening possibility of attack or abuse is a permanent drain on the energy of all Canadian



RESIST ABUSE

women. The lifelong results of having been a victim, and the costs of struggling to survive male violence, are not only a burden on women and children, but a critical pressure on Canadian society as a whole.

Our legal, health care, and social service systems spend millions of dollars, directly and indirectly, on the results of male violence. In addition, the hidden costs of women's unrealized potential, limited by fear and poor health resulting from violence, must also be recognized.

The Government of Canada is committed to identifying this major problem, examining its roots - sexism, sexist attitudes, - and male aggression, and bringing in measures to immediately free women and children from its grip.

A massive public education awareness campaign against sexism and all its manifestations will be launched this year. It will be financed by the federal government, and its multi-media products will be available to the provinces and territories. It will include posters, pamphlets, film,

video, and commercials, providing examples and information for an anti-sexism campaign.

In addition, the federal government will finance projects within provincial Ministries of Education to develop an anti-sexism curriculum for all schools. Encouragement and project funding will be made available for the development of self-defence training for all girls in school physical education programmes.

With respect to public violence, various measures to increase women's safety will be immediately instituted. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation will earmark funds for the development of woman-only housing, particularly in urban areas. Such housing would be designed by women, for women, to not only increase safety and security, but also to foster a sense of community among women residents.

Funds for safety audits of public buildings and areas will be made available immediately to women's groups across Canada. Several experimental projects will be launched restricting selected outdoor zones to women and children only, particularly after dark, to allow women freedom of movement without fear of attack.

Sexual harassment, both verbal and physical, in public and in places of employment, will be defined under the Criminal Code of Canada, with penalties of fines and prison terms.



Two measures are being introduced to further encourage victims of sexual assault to report such crimes. One, the admissibility of evidence regarding prior sexual history with the accused will be immediately eliminated. Two, special women's police forces will be established, trained specifically to respond to women and children victims of violence. It is this

government's intention to guarantee all female and child victims a female investigating officer within three years.

With respect to violence within the home, such as woman and child abuse, the government is taking immediate measures to guide the creation of legislation, policy and procedure with police forces across the country. This will allow intervention orders to be used for the removal of violent men from their places of residence, thereby leaving women and children in their homes, and will ensure economic security for these women.

Recognizing the long term and often delayed effects of childhood sexual abuse and incest, the government is committed to the development of adult incest survivor services, in non-medical, consumer controlled settings. Such services will offer therapy and legal advice to adult survivors, to enable them to both psychologically and legally address their victimizers.

And last, while this government is committed primarily to improving the situation of all women and children who have been, or fear being, victimized by male violence, it recognizes that too little is known or understood about the male perpetrator.

Therefore, research and treatment funds will be made available for projects designed to identify the characteristics of male perpetrators of violence, men who consume pornography, and men who exhibit sexist behaviours that devalue women. Such research is intended to lead to the development of further legislation, education, and treatment to reduce male violence toward women and children.

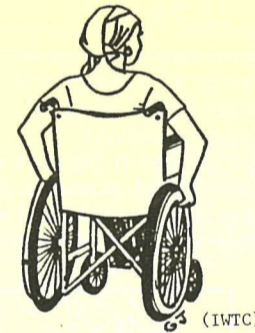
In these ways, the government will begin to address women's inequality due to the fear and reality of male violence against women and children.

Lorraine Greaves,  
London, Ontario

## Differently Abled Women

*(The Throne Speech given on behalf of disabled women. Disabled women are all too aware that there are also disabled children and men. However, this is a unique occasion for us to put forward our visionary mandate for disabled women.)*

As women, we are well accustomed to being on the outside of the established power structures. But being women and disabled has meant that the "corridors of power" have been completely inaccessible to us. However, after a decade of working as part of the disabled movement, women with disabilities are now throwing off the shackles in which they have always been marginalized. Thus, we are now ready to bring forth our revolutionary agenda.



The activists among us have worked for the last decade on the issues of violence against disabled women, we have been the leaders of mandatory Employment Equity, we have fought for total accessibility, for transportation which treats disabled women as First Class Citizens, rather than Third Class Citizens.

We face challenges, and real barriers, which no other group in society faces, because we are women, and because we are disabled. But, working together, we are overcoming each obstacle one by one. We will no longer allow ablest attitudes to dictate where we can live, what we can do, who we are or what we are. We are human beings and everyday, we undertake "our walk to Selma".

Before this new government came to power, disabled women lived in abject poverty, without adequate transportation, without access to the workforce, without access to education, without access even to restaurants, theatres, basic services. With all of these deprivations, disabled women also lived under the constant threat of violence - physical, verbal and sexual. We were placed in the degrading positions of prisoners and prey. Was it not enough that each disabled woman had the personal struggle of confronting and learning to love and come to accept her disability? It is a mad society which places on the disabled woman additional burdens and barriers to her already challenging situation!

But that was before. And now is now...

The sweeping reforms of this new government became implemented the minute you had a larger vision of how your life should be. So, some of you may be asking yourselves, "Just what are these sweeping reforms?"

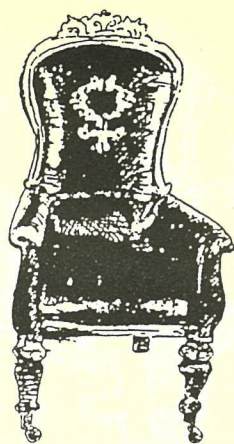
Five giant steps out of poverty by way of a large increase in the disability pension, so that each disabled woman cannot **only** pay her rent and buy her food, but also, have enough money left over to indulge in a few small, dignified luxuries to which every woman, disabled or not, is entitled.

The next reform is housing for disabled women which includes disabled units for disabled parents (yes, they exist) and their children. We intend to keep a registry which will be available to all disabled women seeking housing, so that, at any time, there will always be a safe place for our disabled sisters.

Disabled women are the only members of the female population who do not have access to local transportation, education, day care, and many areas of recreation. All of these things have been

(continued on page 28)





# Feminist Throne Speech



designed by able-bodied men who never think that there may be people with different needs than themselves. Our immediate priority here will be to make all buildings accessible to disabled women, and to assure disabled women that they will have adequate transportation...wherever they may be.

The fight for mandatory Employment Equity has been led by a disabled woman, whose tireless dedication to this concept has made it a reality. No matter what level of government in this country has to be confronted and fought, we will ensure that this work will never be undone.

Violence against women with disabilities will be our primary focus. This government will mount the greatest educational campaign ever seen in this province, using television and radio advertisements on all public and private stations and networks. In no case will the media be allowed to oppress disabled women in any way. Disabled women who have been survivors of violence will not be exploited for the sake of a "story". This government will place advertisements in each of the major papers in the country. But it will not stop there. Posters regarding violence against women will be placed in every beer, liquor, grocery and convenience store. The legislature will pass a law prohibiting the production and distribution of pornography in print and video. Any store caught selling pornography will have its license suspended and will be threatened with closure.

The Film and Video Boards of each province will have its mandate overhauled and the members of the Board will be made up of women from the grass roots community as well as other women's groups. No film which depicts violence or hatred against women will be shown on the screens of Canada.

Further to these measures, we will seek the cooperation of school boards and all educational institutions, and ask the Disabled Women's Network to make itself available to speak to classes, particularly in elementary and secondary schools. Other

educational materials, such as pamphlets, brochures, videos and tapes about violence against disabled women will be made available to all communities.

This government intends to smash the idea that it is o.k. to beat, rape or batter disabled women and children.

We are dedicated to the implementation of these reforms. You are the constituents and no reform will go forward without your input. We will have consultations with you about reforms, and each of you will be notified. In short, you will have access to the creation of this new vision.

Our mandate is to fight for the rights of the disabled.

Liz Stimpson  
Assisted by M. Best  
DAWN Toronto

## Reproductive Rights & Responsibilities

In the aftermath of the defeat of Bill C-43, an act respecting abortion, the government announces it will never again attempt to address this basic human rights issue by use of criminal sanctions.

Legislation in this area will be protective of women's health rather than punitive and will be enshrined in a strengthened

Canada Health Act. Abortion will be addressed as a health issue and subject to the same legislation as any other health concern. We firmly believe that the best protection for the fetus and for children is afforded by the woman involved. The decision to have children is a serious one and the best social environment to allow women to choose



parenthood is achieved by a strengthened commitment to day care, social programs aimed at raising living standards for women; and improving the general status of women in Canada.

Access to comprehensive sexuality education and contraceptive and abortion services will be available equally across Canada. The federal government will provide strong leadership in this area by increasing funding to National Family Planning organizations and by providing funds for increased research in the area of reproductive health.

Educational materials will be funded at the national level, but also cognisant of the need for regional diversity. The Family Planning Division of Health and Welfare Canada will be reinstated and provincial incentives to strengthen preventive services will be directed through this department.

We see a much strengthened role for the Federal government in the area of access to health services and equality of services from coast to coast.

The full strength of the Canada Health Act, including financial disincentives, will be imposed upon provinces refusing to comply in areas of access to abortion services, the provision of comprehensive sexuality education services and access to contraception. Programs will be community based and comply with regional needs.

Bonnie Johnson,  
Planned Parenthood  
Federation of Canada.

## Child Care

This government recognizes that child care is an essential service for women, children, families and society. Today, I am delighted to

announce the introduction of a publicly-funded, high quality child care program to serve Canadians from coast to coast. I believe that this program will help ensure that women have full equal opportunities, that children can thrive, that families are well-supported in childrearing and that society derives full benefit.

We believe that high quality child care requires adequate wages and good working conditions for well-trained child care staff, not-for-profit administration by local governments, school boards and community-based groups and programming which is developmentally appropriate, anti-sexist, anti-racist and culturally sensitive.

As part of this government's view that families must be supported in childrearing, we will introduce a comprehensive, flexible system of paid family leaves to accommodate childbirth, adoption and the requirements of parenting and caring for family members.

We will work with community groups from across the country to ensure that we are responsive to the needs of Canadian women, children and families.

Martha Friendly  
Child Care Committee  
National Action Committee  
on the Status of Women

Canadian  
Advisory Council  
on the Status of Women



Conseil  
consultatif canadien  
sur la situation de la femme

- **Male Violence Against Women: The Brutal Face of Inequality**
- **Primed for Power: Women in Canadian Politics**
- **The Glass Box: Women Business Owners in Canada**

These are just a few of the titles published by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and available free of charge.

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) is an independent organization, funded by the federal government to advise the

In the Montreal region, plan to attend: "Who's Holding the Purse-strings?" An address on Women and Poverty, by Glenda Simms, Tuesday, March 12, 1991, Holiday Inn - Crowne Plaza, 420 Sherbrooke St., West, Montreal.

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# To Disentangle the Truth: The War on Iraq

## Commentary on the war



BOX / OLIVER WILLIAMS

By Aida Graff

Ironically, one of the first American casualties in the Gulf War tragedy was a woman, U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie. As the transcripts of her meeting with President Saddam Hussein released to ABC News in September showed, she clearly told him that the U.S. would not interfere in any border disputes between Arab States, and implied that the U.S. would take no action if Saddam invaded Kuwait: "We have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreements with Kuwait."

Ambassador Glaspie, however, was only following her superior's directives. For as Murray Waas wrote in an article in the *Village Voice* of January 22, "James Baker admitted on a Sunday morning talk show that there was... a cable signed by him" with instructions to Ambassador Glaspie. She has since been relegated to an obscure position and blamed for the deliberate obfuscation of U.S. intentions vis-à-vis Iraq. But it is her government that deliberately misled Saddam Hussein. For had they conveyed the strong message that the U.S. would not stand for an invasion of Kuwait, this tragedy might have been averted.



The public has been told time and again that this is a first-time demonstration of world solidarity against an aggressor upon a weak and defenseless country. If that is so, why then has that first-time ever coalition not given sanctions more time to work? Surely, if sanctions took so long to work against South Africa at a time when unanimity of purpose was lacking amongst the family of nations, one would have

thought that with this new-found world co-operation there was more of a chance of success than ever before.

The Head of the CIA himself testified before a Congressional Hearing that sanctions were already biting, and that a few more months would reduce the Iraqi economy. The little that would have trickled in through porous borders would have been totally insufficient to service the Iraqi army. All that was required then was a few more months of patience. But George Bush let the whole world know that his patience was running out; and since Russia no longer counted much in the balance of super-powers, the Bush administration had the field to itself to practice diplomatic cajoling and arm-twisting. Thus when Yemen voted against Security Council Resolution 678, its ambassador was told by the U.S. representative that this was going to be one of Yemen's most expensive votes. The U.S. has since cut down its aid to that country to a mere trickle.

Was Saddam justified in his aggression upon Kuwait? Of course not, even if the boundaries between Iraq and Kuwait were originally artificially drawn by the British in the 1920's after the demise of what was left of the Ottoman Empire. The Turks, who had been allies of the Germans in World War I, saw their Middle Eastern possessions divided among the French and the British. The British deliberately deprived Iraq of access to the sea, and made sure, as well, that all the oil in the area was not concentrated in any one newly created state.

Kuwait has been an independent state since 1961. This was officially recognized by Iraq in 1963 although it never relinquished its claim to two uninhabited islands off the coast of Kuwait in its bid for access to the sea. For Iraq to take Kuwait by force is a clear-cut act of aggression by one country upon another. But

Iraqi grievances against Kuwait are not just limited to obtaining access to the sea, which the latter had refused. Iraq also felt that by fighting the eight-year long war against Iran it thereby protected the whole Gulf area against Khomeini. Saddam felt that the least all these oil-rich states could do was to forgive Iraq its debts. Instead, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates over-produced oil, driving its price down to as low as \$14 a barrel when Iraq was trying to convince them and OPEC to raise the price to \$25 a barrel. This had a devastating impact upon the Iraqi economy. Furthermore, Kuwait was also slant-drilling into Iraqi soil under the Rumaila fields. Saddam Hussein viewed all this as acts of aggression on the part of Kuwait.

To complicate matters further, each Arab country played its own self-interested game. Egypt wanted to return to its accustomed leadership role in the area after its reinstatement to the Arab League from which it had been ousted following the Camp David accord. Iraq's arch enemy, Syria, which had supported Iran during the war, saw here an opportunity for some fence-mending with the oil-rich states. The Israelis were getting uncomfortable with such a strong Arab military power as Iraq, and America wanted more direct control in an area that, despite the end of the Cold War, was of extreme strategic and economic importance for it.

The U.S. does not need the Middle East for its oil reserves. The U.S. does not obtain the bulk of its foreign oil imports from that area. But most of Europe, especially Germany, does. So does Japan. That is why whoever controls the countries that own some of the largest oil reserves in the world, controls the flow of that oil. More importantly, the direction of the flow of petrodollars coming in from the sale of that oil to Europe and to Japan can be controlled. Since the bulk of Saudi and Kuwaiti investment is in the U.S., their economic interests are too closely tied up with that country for them not to spend their petro-dollars there rather than in Europe or in Japan. Thus most of the mega-projects for the future reconstruction of Kuwait have been or are being allocated to U.S. firms.

It is a mutual support club: the Saudis and the Kuwaitis pay the Americans to come and fight for them, and in return they spend their petro-dollars in the States rather than in Europe or in Japan. Egypt gets part of its debt forgiven for joining the club (or coalition, as it is officially known), Syria gets a free hand in Lebanon, and Israel receives money in the billions for not responding to Saddam's scud missiles.



Only Jordan risks losing all by attempting to remain neutral. With more than 60% unemployment, with little oil reserves, and having earned the displeasure of the U.S., who knows how much longer it will last. Meanwhile, President Shamir of Israel continues to repress the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and vows to settle Russian Jews in that area in open defiance of U.N. resolutions, and even U.S. stated policy. The U.S. is trying its best to retain the Arab member states of the coalition by restraining Shamir's hawkish aims. But his cabinet is made up of a majority of members who favour the expulsion of Palestinians from the West Bank.

War is not going to solve any of the above problems of the region; if anything, it will exacerbate them. It will solve short-term belligerent aims. Iraq has conquered Kuwait. That will not last long, for it cannot possibly withstand the might of U.S. technology. Meanwhile, members of the coalition are pounding the life out of it. There is no drinking water throughout the country, sewage plants have all been destroyed, there is no electricity and very little fuel. Epidemics will erupt and claim children as their first victims. Since children constitute 50% of the population, the toll upon the country will be devastating. Coupled with field losses in life, the coalition will have waged a

genocidal war against Iraq in order to redress its aggression against Kuwait. Last but not least, the carpet bombing of Iraq has already destroyed for humanity an irreplaceable world treasury of records of our ancient civilization. The oldest church there has been bombed, as have been priceless Muslim shrines. If the devastation of Kuwait was a crime, the laying waste of Iraq is even a greater crime.

So what on earth is Canada doing in the middle of all that? It looks as if once we agreed to Free Trade, we have had to hitch our fortunes to those of the U.S. That is why we so assiduously supported the U.S. in the Security Council and quickly sent our three tired ships to the Gulf. As our involvement became more evident through the participation of our air force, we have earned an assured seat in the Free Trade talks with Mexico and the U.S. We are, of course, having to spend increasingly on the military at a time when the country is going through a serious recession.

Needless to say, there are bound to be cut-backs in our future budgets in order to subsidize this military campaign. The first sectors to be hit will be our social services, our education, our medicare and all the good things that made Canada a more humane society compared to that of the U.S. The first to suffer will be the children, women and the disinherited, both men and women. And Canada will look more and more like the U.S. as our streets fill up with the homeless. Meanwhile, the U.S. will get all the contracts from the oil-rich countries, and we may, if we are compliant, get a few bread crumbs. Thus, if we will have participated in the destruction of Iraq, we will also have seriously eroded the quality of Canadian life for a long time to come. Welcome to the New World Order!

*Dr Aida Graff is a member of the Association for Middle East Women's Studies and specializes in development and social justice in the Middle East.*



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## Commentary on the war



If the direct toll on human life by this war were not enough, there are environmental consequences that will continue to be felt long after the actual fighting has ceased.

Some 500 fires are burning in Kuwaiti oil fields. Scientists estimate that between two and ten million barrels of oil are burning daily. Oil from almost all of Kuwait's oil fields naturally gushes to the surface with no need for pumping. Consequently, once a well has been set alight, it becomes a self-sustaining inferno.

According to Basil Butler, managing director of British Petroleum, the usual method of "blowing out" well-fires using explosives may not work because of the close proximity of wells to each other (about one-half mile apart), which can threaten re-ignition. An alternative technique, involving drilling new wells alongside to relieve pressure on ignited wells would take far longer. Butler estimates one well per week could be extinguished this way. However, a Houston-based well-fire "expert" believes it could take up to six weeks to bring each sabotaged well under control.

Smoke produced from these burning oil fields could reduce global temperatures by several degrees, disrupt the African and Asian monsoon rains and devastate world harvests. Smoke would result in local and regional ozone holes. Temperatures in the area of burning wells could reach 160 degrees Fahrenheit, while temperatures underneath the massive smoke-soot layers could plummet by 68 degrees Fahrenheit or 20 degrees Celsius.

# Casualty: Earth

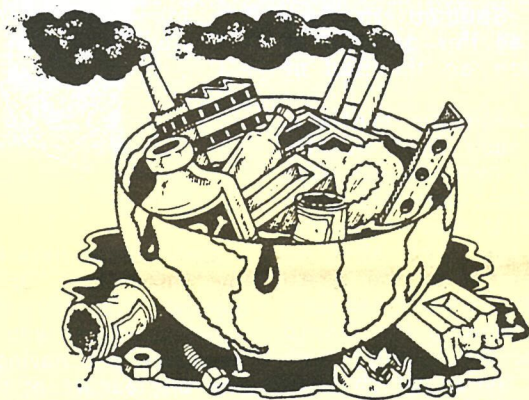
Compiled with information collected by the office of Jim Fulton, MP, NDP Critic for the Environment by *The Womanist*,

British chemical and environmental engineer, Dr. John Cox, warns that within 1000 miles of Kuwait, the pall of smoke could be as great as predicted by nuclear war computer simulations; and almost without exception, these models predict failure of the Asian monsoon rains. Cox says a year-long oil field conflagration in Kuwait could influence the onset, duration, intensity and character of the monsoons in Asia.

Failure of the monsoons could affect one billion people who depend upon the annual rains for crops and water supplies. Cox says even partial monsoon failure could cause more deaths than the total population of Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia combined.

The oil slick which spilled into the Gulf late in January is now 120 kilometres long, and the approximately one billion barrels of oil are moving down the Saudi Arabian coast towards water purification plants that millions of people rely upon. The oil has already begun to coat the sea bottom and destroy marine breeding grounds.

The desert and Tigris-Euphrates delta ecosystems are threatened also. Tank warfare in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq would not only destroy nomadic grazing lands, but could potentially trigger massive duststorms and dust clouds that would adversely affect agriculture in Saudi Arabia and other more fertile areas in the region. Scientists



The oil spilled into the gulf will also have grave consequences. The Gulf is a source of livelihood to many peoples, cultures and nations. It is home to shrimp, many species of fish, marine mammals, sea turtles, sea birds and many exotic species.

According to the United Nations Environment Program, "the Gulf is already 43 times more polluted than any equal area of water in the world", because of oil spills and toxic contamination during the Iran-Iraq war, on top of years of pollution from oil tanker traffic, sewage, industrial wastes and neglect. United Nation's studies note the Gulf "is regarded as having one of the most fragile and endangered ecosystems" on earth.

warn that it could take generations for desert ecosystems to recover. The North African desert has still not recovered from the World War II desert campaigns 45 years ago that caused such severe duststorms.

The Tigris-Euphrates delta is one of Iraq's richest agricultural areas, where one-quarter of the country's population work to produce dates, rice, wheat, barley, livestock, poultry, fruits and vegetables. Massive bombing of Baghdad-area military targets has distributed massive quantities of dangerous chemicals and radioactive materials into the air and water. These toxic materials will eventually be flushed down waterways to the

Dear George:

We just wanted to write to congratulate you on your proposed nomination for the Nobel Peace of the Graveyard Prize. We can think of no-one more deserving of this prestigious honour. You have, after all, done so much for world peace, especially in these past eight months. We assume that it is your war that has gained you this honour.

George, there is so much that could be said in this regard. It is your ill fortune to live in a world that persists in thinking that human life has some inherent value. Thank you for showing us that rich lives have more value than the lives of the poor, and white lives more value than black, and Arab lives no value whatsoever. Now we understand why your sons and daughters, and the sons and daughters of your rich neighbours were not fighting for freedom in the Gulf. We had not known before that freedom can be bought, especially at so low a price. Thanks for letting us know.

Thank you, also, for not using body bags any more, George. Body pouches were so much more cost effective, and with the money saved you can make more weapons so we can maintain of this prized Peace. We are also very happy that your surgical strike was so drawn out. We enjoyed the coverage so much it will be a shame not to watch it on TV anymore. Now it's back to all that usual depressing coverage of South Africa and

Latin America and environmental degradation.

We're not depressed any more, George. We had a great laugh at that little slip-up with the oil spill when your media showed the Exxon Valdez cormorants dripping with oil in the Persian Gulf. We don't know how you shipped them out from the Alaskan coast, but congratulations on pulling it off. As loyal fans, we suggest that next time you use a bird that actually lives where the oil is spilled. All this environmental awareness has got people into identifying birds and animals and things.

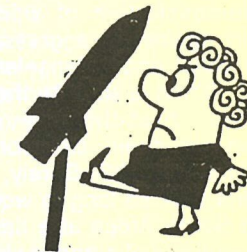
Another word of advice, George. We think you just about overdid it with the coverage of soldiers' wives and kids and puppies and kittens saying goodbye. We who admire you were getting a bit worried that people wouldn't be able to take that kind of saccharine for much longer. The old gag reflex is pretty close to the surface these days and you don't want to cause messes on the carpet now, do we?

Give it a think, George. There's that prize just waiting for you in Brussels. You don't want to lose that. Just put together a tidy little peace plan that will ensure American access to all that Middle East oil. No one will object, as long as you keep the old saccharine coming. So keep it coming, George. We're waiting!

Lorrilee Wright  
Josie Wallenius  
Thunder Bay, Ontario

delta and into the Gulf.

No party is blameless in this war. As peace is being arranged, all must take responsibility for the wounds to the earth and the effects that they will have on all life in the region and globally.



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# The Victims of War

## Commentary on the war

by Joy Langan, MP



I sat with a hollow, empty feeling in the pit of my stomach, praying that it was some awful mistake, yet knowing it was happening. We had been recalled to Parliament to debate a motion put forward by the government that said, "Moved that this House reaffirms its support of the United Nations in ending the aggression by Iraq against Kuwait".

How sterile that motion was -- how devoid of the reality of what it committed us to do -- how empty of any hint that the war that was being contemplated was to affect people.

And, as the debate began -- even as the first shots of the war in the Gulf were being fired -- what shock I felt as member after member on the government side of the House rose and spoke of the war exploding in the Middle East in the most abstract and macho of terms.

Where are the people in this war? Where is the concern for women and children? And where is the input from Canadian men and women?

In the ensuing weeks, as the war has been reported minute by minute, why is the face we are seeing in this war being put forward only by men? Why do I feel that this war is being portrayed as a giant chess game taking place on the desert sand with wooden or ivory "men" instead of on a board with flesh and blood pawns?

Why is the message out there that to be in favour of peace is to be weak? To be concerned about innocent women and children is to be naive in the face of the facts, and that to want Canadian troops to be removed from an aggressive role and into a humanitarian role is to be traitorous and unpatriotic?

I am a woman. I am being treated as though I can hardly be expected to understand the importance of this war to the world -- and, of course, as if I can be expected to be faint of heart and whimpering.

I have turned to my feminist roots for answers and for comfort.

When in the history of the world have women been consulted about war? Never. When has our opinion been sought about sending our children to the "theatre" of war? Never. When have women been asked about a n alternative to war? Never. When have women been invited to lay before the world the extent of their suffering? Never. When have women held the balance of power to make a

different decision? Never.

When a woman raises these questions, of course, she will be reminded of Cleopatra, Joan of Arc and Margaret Thatcher -- and told in no uncertain terms that this is proof positive that women in power would be no different.

Cleopatra was a queen whose cabinet and mentors were all men. A woman whose very survival depended on the good will of those who "served" her well, as history so clearly illustrates through her death.

Today, as I write this, there is a report that allied bombings hit a shelter in Bagdad and anywhere from three to five hundred women and children died. The American briefing said, "What went wrong? Nothing. What went right? We hit the target." The rationale, of course, was that in fact the shelter was also a military headquarters, and the fact that women and children died was the fault of Saddam Hussein. Somehow, that makes it all right.

for peace today?"

Mr. Siddon did not ask if the women and children of any middle east country were asked if they want to be trapped in a theatre of war. He did not ask what is the world doing to help those innocent victims. He did not ask who sold the arms that gave Saddam Hussein this dispicable power.

Mr. Siddon and Mr. Clark and their colleagues must be made aware that throughout history, women have been confronted with war without consultation; have been faced with mothering children to see them maimed and killed in war; have been pressed into patriotic service by providing solace, through baking and knitting, to our children on the fronts, and finally, have been left the task of rebuilding our shattered families and nurturing our shattered children when the war ends.

Women entered this decade with hope. The tumbling of the Berlin Wall became a symbol of a "New World Order". Now, a mere one year later, we discover that the new world order is a sham -- that man's history, to war against his neighbours, is to continue.



Joan of Arc was a soldier used by a male church to "inspire" the troops and who, when she was no longer of use, died by burning at the stake.

Margaret Thatcher was a head of a government that had few women members and was virtually devoid of women at the cabinet level. She clearly made her decisions regarding the Faulklands War at the urging of her male colleagues to consolidate their political fortunes and retain power.

What these women had in common was isolation. They too could be said to be "victims" of war.

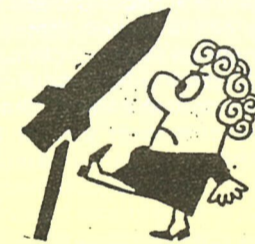
What might the outcome of their decision-making have been, had they been surrounded by women advisors and not holding power at the pleasure of their male colleagues?


When Joe Clark briefed the Commons Committee on External Affairs, I was struck by the fact that even he suggested that if only Saddam Hussein would give up Kuwait, this could all be avoided.

When I spoke of the war in the House of Commons during the debate, I spoke of concern for children being issued gas masks that do not fit. The Honorable Tom Siddon, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development asked, "Why were the people in Tel Aviv last night wearing gas masks? Which nation upon this earth has chosen to use poison gases and perhaps biological weapons in an attempt to exterminate another neighbouring country?... Shall we sit back and wait for more missiles to fall? Would Canada stand idly by? Would we pause

The New World Order is not to be for women around the world until we have the ability to support each other in changing the way we address and solve problems, and until we hold the balance of power in every Parliament and every government in the world.

Joy Langan is an N.D.P. Member of Parliament for Mission-Coquitlam, B.C.





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## Commentary on the war



I work with refugees helping them to settle in Canada and fulfill their dreams of living in peace. This is only band-aid work. The real problem is that the vast majority of refugees are victims of the many wars and dictators around the world. Most wars are being fueled and encouraged by rich countries for their own self-serving reasons. With the world spotlight on the Persian Gulf, the nature of war has become clearer.

This war is about OIL and the ability of the United States to dominate and control. In spite of Grenada and Panama, Korea and Vietnam, the United States has sold its own people the idea that by ruthlessly bombing and killing the helpless people of Iraq the world can be saved from a ruthless dictator.

People are moved to respond as they are programmed by centuries of wars. They rush to join in the slaughter and encourage their children to give up their lives and to kill the children of the "enemy".

Sanctions were not allowed sufficient time to force Saddam Hussein to leave Kuwait. Peace negotiations were stifled before giving them time to work. Now it appears that Bush and his advisers had already picked the date to start the land war long before negotiations were started. We are deep in it now and the tragic results will be with us for many years.

Wars are often fought with weapons supplied by rich and powerful countries who have their own agendas, which include controlling the governments and the people of the poor countries. Let us not forget that Iraq was a friend of the United States up until very recently. Where did Iraq get all its weaponry?

## War and Refugees

by Nancy Pocock

The human race has divided agendas. One agenda is for power and control over the earth and all our fellow beings. On the other side, we seek to help refugees and send development aid to poor countries. We spend millions on medical research hospitals, training doctors and nurses to save lives. We consider murder the most serious crime, yet we spend trillions of dollars on weapons research and the most efficient way to kill in war. We maintain a military system to train our young to kill - it doesn't make sense. Until we can build a world in which people are more important than money and power, when the brightest brains and resources are used to find ways to build true peace, then we, the people, will continue to pay with our lives the terrible price - the loss of our children, our earth and our hope.

Countless individuals have worked to make a peaceful world in which the vast resources of this world would be used to enhance the lives of all human beings, not to destroy them - we need to learn Love not Hate.

I am angry that I have spent this beautiful Saturday February 22, 1991, trying to write an article about refugees, periodically listening to radio and television to see if they have launched a war that will make thousands, maybe millions, more refugees. I hear their stories every day and know what they face - I will leave you with one story.

A man from Somalia came to see me the other day to ask my help in bringing his family to Canada. He was well-dressed and obviously well-educated. He had been in Canada for four years as part of our huge backlog of asylum seekers waiting for a refugee determination hearing. He had his hearing, was accepted and received his final papers which take at least a year after being accepted. He is entitled to have the family he had to leave in Somalia join him. But his wife and five children were now in

Mogadishu, in the middle of a dreadful war with the city being bombed. Their house was destroyed and they were moving from place to place to avoid being killed. He could communicate with them by phone but there was no way they could get here.

Canadian officials had left his country and until the family could be contacted and be interviewed to receive visas they were unable to come to Canada. He sat beside me and cried bitterly. I was unable to help him.



He returned a few weeks later to tell me that he had been told by other Somalians, who had heard from a relative in a refugee camp in Kenya, that his family was in the camp. He managed to talk to his wife by phone and she told him they were running for shelter from bombing and his oldest daughter of fourteen years was behind the rest of them and had been hit and killed. The other four children and his wife had been able to get on a small boat, and after a dreadful trip in which they were sick all the time, had reached a refugee camp in Kenya. The camp is merely a few tents with no beds or furniture and little food or water; it is full of mosquitoes (danger of malaria) and flies but hopefully the Canadian officer can either get in touch with her there or she can get to Nairobi to see him. I got a friend in External Affairs to send a telex informing the Embassy in Nairobi of their presence in Kenya. The father was crying over the loss of his daughter. I find myself crying over his loss, realizing this same story is being repeated over and over in Baghdad.

*Nancy Pocock is a founding member of the Voice of Women and past Coordinator of the Toronto Refugee Affairs Council.*

## The Gulf War: its Impact on Canadian Children

by Elissar Sarrouh

Many of us, mothers and concerned Canadians, watched the news of a possible war in the Gulf with deep fear. As the calendar of events accelerated and a war became inevitable, the fear turned to a nightmare that haunted every child and every mother everywhere.

Thousands of miles away, the war broke out in the Persian Gulf, claiming thousands of lives, children and women, leaving thousands homeless, and destroying an ancient civilization that once was the source of knowledge and culture to all humanity.

Here in Canada, the community of Arab-Canadians has been under tremendous stress ever since the war broke out. On one hand, the restrictions implemented by the Department of Immigration on visas to Iraqis and Palestinians have hurt all Arab-Canadians deeply and instilled in them a sense of insecurity as they were singled out from amongst other ethnic populations. On the other hand, the continuous flow of reports and news from the Gulf of bloodshed, destruction and the loss of human lives, and the extremely high cost that Canadian tax payers are paying as a result of Canada's involvement in the war, have created a sense of anger, of hatred and resentment towards the population of Arab-Canadians.

Unfortunately, these feelings of resentment and anger have rapidly found their way to the school yards, and turned our students into aggressive and offensive individuals, every time the subject of war came up or a student of Arab-origin happened to be around. In one incident in a high school, a sixteen-year-old boy was beaten up by a handful of students, simply because he was an Arab-Canadian and did not share his schoolmates' opinion of the war. An eight-year-old boy came home from school crying and asking his mother not to send him back to school because his friends were making fun of his name (Hussein) and teasing him of his origin. Another student was offended by her teacher, when she was telling the whole class that Saddam Hussein is a mad man, and the war is justifiable since it is the only way to remove him from power.

These are just a few incidents that children in schools have been going through since the war broke out. But what does that mean? What does that do to our society? Children of Arab

origin, were born in this country, identify with it, and have a deep sense of loyalty and belonging to the one country they know as their own. What happened all of a sudden to make them feel insecure and subject them to these experiences of discrimination?

What is obvious is that we lack a sound knowledge on Human Rights issues, an educational system that understands the different elements and components of our society, and multicultural policies and strategies within government that encourage the infusion of all cultural backgrounds in one strong, rich and unique society, our Canadian society.



A lot of these problems could be avoided or solved. An awareness campaign in schools on the different issues involved should help the students put things in perspective and see things more clearly. We, as mothers, play the key role in this educational campaign. We start at home by: a) instilling in our children the values of equality, peace and appreciation; b) making all sources of information on the war and its impact on our society accessible, so that they can analyse and perceive its reality and consequences; and c) we in women's organizations can reach out to the public by sponsoring and participating in speeches, lectures and educational conferences on issues such as the gulf war, the sense of belonging and respect for each other as Canadians, regardless of colour, race and religion, and most importantly, our responsibility and commitment to peace.

We must bring back a sense of security, peace and stability to our children and our society.

*Elissar Sarrouh is a member of the Palestinian Arab Women's Association of Ottawa.*

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# The New World Order

by Harriet Friedmann

The "New World Order" which the U.S. is organizing through the Gulf War is a military monopoly financed by many allied countries. The bold U.S. mobilization of international forces against Iraq set an agenda for a world order based on combined military power under U.S. command. Since the U.S. is losing ground economically to Germany and Japan, it is attempting to redefine power in ways that it can win.

The Cold War left the U.S. economically weak and militarily strong. Military spending, for the Vietnam War and then for Reagan's Star Wars, created chronic inflation and an enormous government deficit, worsened by a recent history of tax cuts. Since the early seventies, the U.S. has pursued an aggressive, nationalistic monetary policy, which has angered other countries and has allowed the U.S. to avoid investing in the civilian economy. At the same time, a strong domestic lobby (with a narrow popular base) supports military spending no matter what the Soviets do.

Beneath the rhetoric of liberating Kuwait is a militaristic agenda which threatens peace, democracy, and economic stability. The U.S. is trying to consolidate its military dominance before the new European superstate creates a European Defense Community. It has managed to get Japan and Germany, its major economic competitors, to pay a lot of money for this war. The U.S. has also received money from the Emir of Kuwait and the Saudi princes. It will almost certainly try to get more after the war, along with agreement to have a U.S. military base in the Gulf. Saudi Arabia has rented a superpower, but it may have difficulty getting rid of it.

During the Cold War, the military power of many countries was partly given over to one of the two superpowers, through the Warsaw Pact and NATO. After the Cold War they lost their reason for existence. The Soviet system of alliances has gone, but NATO, which puts the U.S. in command of the integrated military structure of the whole North Atlantic, has not. If the U.S. is to retain its military dominance, NATO must be redefined. That means that all other countries in NATO will also have a redefined role.

One possible solution to the outdated "Free World" alliances is, of course, to dismantle them. Without the U.S. presence and the "little" arms races all over the world, the people of each country would be a better match for their own states and have better prospects for democracy.

Instead of dismantling the "Free World" military alliances, represented in U.S. bases throughout the world, the U.S. may for the first time try to establish a permanent military base in the Middle East. If the U.S. establishes a system of dependency in the Middle East, it will strengthen its power over each allied country. Many third world countries, including quite a few in the Middle East, are dependent on U.S. military aid to stay in power. A deepened alliance system would put the U.S. more directly in control over each country than ever during the Cold War competition between superpowers. The arms that the Saudis bought from the U.S. and its allies, like British, French and Canadian arms, were during the conflict integrated and controlled by the U.S. military.

The present alliance in the Gulf War is full of tensions and contradictions, and the present U.S. agenda may not prevail domestically or internationally.



After the Gulf War, there is sure to be a struggle over the organization and control of the military in Europe (and in Japan). In the Middle East, conflict will arise between states dependent on U.S. military support and popular opposition to U.S. intervention.

If this system of U.S. control over many countries continues, it will be a recipe for economic instability. It increases inflation because of military spending, is grounded in aggressively nationalist monetary policies, and offers little prospect for international regulation. Third World debt and state deficits in Canada and elsewhere will not be reduced and social programmes will seem even more "expensive".

An autonomous United Nations is not feasible, at least for the time being. The best hope is a quick end to the Gulf War, followed by democratic scrutiny of the role of allied countries, including Canada, in relation to the U.S. agenda. In

# The UN Role in the Gulf Another Point of View

by Nancy Gordon

The United Nations, that organization which began in 1945 "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" has, in 1991, sanctioned a war against Iraq. What is going on here? Why is an organization, so often associated with attempts to keep the peace, embroiled in a war?

Perhaps the major principle motivating the founders of the UN when they wrote the charter at San Francisco in 1945 was collective security. That is, state or national boundaries would be guaranteed by the combined will of the members of the United Nations, and any state which attempted to violate the borders of another, would face the sanctions of the international community. The people who drafted the United Nations Charter had vivid memories of the 1930's when attempts by the League of Nations to protect small countries from the aggressive designs of more powerful countries had failed, and between 1939 and 1945 the world had fought a bitter war. They were determined not to make those mistakes again.

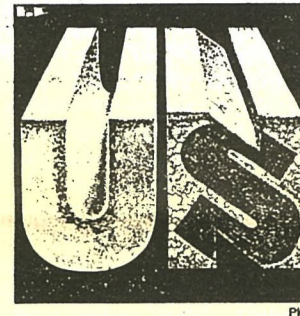
The Charter lays out in specific details, methods by which states should settle their disputes peacefully. If they fail to do that, the Charter spells out the means by which the Security Council should authorize sanctions, and if sanctions fail, force. Article 42 of the Charter says:

"Should the Security Council consider that the measures provided for in Article 41 would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action may include demonstrations, blockades, and other operations by air, sea, or

land forces of Members of the United Nations."

Through a series of 12 resolutions in the autumn of 1990, the Security Council addressed itself to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The Council authorized the use of economic sanctions, of a blockade and eventually the use of force to remove Iraq from Kuwait.

While it is true that the United States has been by far the predominant military force in the area, it is also true that the Security Council voted in favour of the use of the force. None of the permanent members vetoed the resolutions, as they had the right to do. To claim that this is simply a US action and that the rest of the world has somehow been bullied by the United States to go along with it, is to ignore the realities of the world



situation, to ascribe unreasonably strong and successful pressure tactics to the US, or to assume that the rest of the world is unduly meek and has no will of its own.

It is also wise to remember that state boundaries, however oddly they came to pass, have achieved a sanctity amongst all states, small and large, new and old. In the mélange which makes up the world community, there have to be some rules, some order, which protect the weak from the strong and which allows the normal transactions of everyday life to go on. That order, which protects us from an anarchical Hobbesian world, is based upon the sanctity of state borders. What the world community has done in the Gulf is enforce its rules.

# Commentary on the war



Some Canadians have deplored the role of the UN in the Gulf, claiming with dubious logic that the UN should confine itself to peacekeeping, and should have no role in the sometimes nasty games of power politics which members of the world community still play. Peacekeeping is not mentioned in the Charter: it was invented by Lester Pearson and a few others because, in the days of the Cold War, the Security Council was paralyzed by the enmity between the UN and the USSR and could not act. Peacekeeping can work only if the combatants agree to a cease-fire, and allow a peacekeeping force to come between them. The UN can play a useful role in this regard now that the fighting has stopped, keeping former enemies at bay.

No-one likes war. The brutality, the killing, the destruction of women and men and children, of bridges and airports and schools, is an anaethma to every human person. And yet, in order to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" some rules must be enforced. As a last resort, the world community engaged in one war in order to avoid future wars, to begin the process of building a wider world order. With its new found capacity for action, the Security Council and the UN can now turn its attention to some of the outstanding items on its agenda.

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## Commentary on the war



A Polish immigrant woman, when asked how she communicated with her ethnic neighbours, replied, "Mothers understand each other in any language." True. True of all women.

However, it's not the language of women that's being used to dehumanize the events in the Persian Gulf conflict. Nor is it the language of veterans of past wars, who have reminded us -- lest we forget -- war is hell. It's an evasive language, a mixed jargon, that relies heavily on euphemism and metaphor to sanitize the real horror of this war.

Except for a few token women serving in the military forces and the nurses, the ever-present angels-of-mercy in all wars, women appear to have had no part in this conflict. But it's doubtful that women dealing with war - if they were heard at all - would accept or be bound by the cool detachment of the jargon in the reports we have been getting.

The jargon of commerce, for example: on schedule; meeting our objectives; unloading the inventory. The jargon of sports arenas: making an end run; this is the real game, the big one. And the jargon of the military referring to the destruction of enemy aircraft: as airborne sanitation.

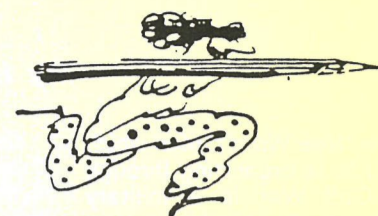
The language of women is apt to be more emotional, more like that of the Iraqi woman, her clenched fists upraised, confronting the TV camera crews from the top of a rubble heap: "You're all to blame! Get out of my country! Get out!"

No. It's not the language of women that dispassionately reduces the loss of three fighter pilots to "minimum casualties"; that benignly portrays carpet bombing as dispensing scores of little bomblets, not much bigger than the size of one-litre paint cans; that unemotionally describes the first ground battle at Khafji as "a little excursion; - enemy ground forces neutralized", in spite of the deaths of eleven marines by "friendly fire."

Bewildered, women ask, "Who is the enemy?"

# Words of War

by Wynne Millar



As long as the conflict persists, the jargon will continue to depersonalize all the horrors of war -- except rape. Rape, it seems, has been assured of a place in the jargon as an atrocity. At least, when it's been committed by enemy soldiers in Kuwait. But until it's considered an atrocity on every street of every town and every city, women will wonder if the term applied is anything more than a propaganda ploy.

While casualties mount, women silently communicate, sharing the grief, anxiety and despair of all women, who are or have been hostages to military might. They weep with the woman at the site of the devastated bomb shelter in Bagdad. Distraught, hysterical, her arms outstretched, she cries...

"What for, the war? What for?", as human debris is being removed from the shelter. Women repeat, "What for?"

A cold-eyed military analyst reports the bombing as "a regrettable error. But militarily speaking, a success. Well planned. Well executed. Nothing went wrong."

Stunned, women ask, "Nothing went wrong?"

When the ground war begins to reap its grizzly harvest of maimed, dead and human debris - the visible carnage of weapons delivery - the jargon, the evasive language, may give way to threats and curses as eloquent and terrifying as those of Saddam Hussein:

*"The blood of our martyrs shall burn you!"*

*"Your corpses will be piled in pillars!"*

*"You will swim in your own blood!"* As bloodthirsty as they may be, Saddam's threats do put a human face on war.

Whatever the outcome of the war in the Persian Gulf, women know only too well that the aftermath of war - a "just" war, or just a war - will be theirs. Theirs will be the broken homes to rebuild; the maimed bodies to tend; the shattered hopes to restore; and the young lives, un-lived, to mourn.

And women will forever ask: "What for, the war?" and their voices will blend with those of veterans of wars past to remind us... Lest We Forget...war is hell.

*Wynne Millar is a free-lance writer living in Mississauga, Ontario*



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# "No Life Like It"

When asked whether I would write about my reasons for entering the military, my expectations on doing so, and my thoughts on the prospects of serving in the Persian Gulf War, I agreed with the stipulation that I could never speak for the women with whom I had served. The Canadian Armed Forces system can be viewed as a monolith, but the women who enter it, whether for a career or for part-time employment, are hardly a homogeneous lot.

My reasons for entering the military were purely economic. (Okay, maybe I was seduced partially by the "No Life Like It" television ads.) I had finished my second year of university and I needed a summer job. I joined the Summer Youth Employment Program with the Canadian Forces Naval Reserve for an intended two month stint and ended up staying six years.

It was while I was in the summer program as the equivalent of a private, that I became enticed by the idea of applying for the Officer Training Program. It would guarantee me three consecutive years of summer employment away from my family, and part-time work throughout the year while I attended classes full-time and completed my undergraduate and graduate studies. At the end of my university education, I wouldn't be burdened with an unmanageable student loan debt and the pressure of fast tracking into a career to make regular payments.

It had never been my intention to pursue employment in the Armed Forces as a career. I could get experience in office settings as a career manager, instructor and administrator, and feel the adventure of driving ships and being at sea with like-minded women without making a lifetime commitment. With the Reserves I could come and go pretty much as I pleased. I could be released from the service, at any time, the same way I had joined - voluntarily. If I had wanted a career, I would have joined the regular force Navy.

I had expected all of these things and a challenge when I was finally accepted for Officer Training. I got them, and much more.

I hadn't expected that many of my friends would be rounded up by members of the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) of the Military Police, to be interrogated for hours and made to break down and name names in their systematic witchhunts for gays and lesbians. Meanwhile, I couldn't help them, for risk of exposing myself.

All of my friends who were rounded up were members of the "non-commissioned" ranks. In other words, they weren't officers. Officers and other ranks aren't supposed to fraternize, though they often do socialize together off base. This occurs much more frequently in the Reserves where people both in the ranks and in the officer corps are a much more homogeneous mix than in the regular force. People in the Reserves are much more likely to be attending university while



they're serving and it is not uncommon for officers and ranks to be classmates, peers, and close personal friends while maintaining the officer/"other ranks" professional distance at work. I called it the "schizophrenic existence". This existence made it improbable, if not impossible, for other gays and lesbians to approach me for help. Could I be trusted? Was I one of them, or one of "the enemy"? I also found it more than curious that even though my sexual orientation became quite common knowledge, I was never approached nor interrogated by the SIU.

I also had not expected to encounter sexism at every turn.

Before I went aboard a regular force Navy ship as one of the first five women to train for my bridge watchkeeping ticket, the all-male crew there had been briefed by the captain about the language that was permissible to use in the presence of "the ladies". After a few weeks of hauling on lines, staffing the ship's helm, navigating and swearing as liberally as "the boys", any misconceptions about what was and was not vernacularly permissible vanished. This honeymoon was short-lived though, as several crew picked their favourites among us and began to squabble over their jealousies, while we women were blamed for initiating shipboard romances and thereby became regarded as the root cause of crew dissension. We were hauled in front of the ship's captain to be "dressed down". It couldn't be

accepted at face value, either by the crew or the captain, that we weren't aboard to impress anyone but the ship's captain, and that we were only there to impress him with our ability to do our jobs.

It quickly became a "no-win" situation, for in order to become accepted, we had to act like, and in some ways become, what we weren't - men. When we acted as ourselves, all the negative stereotypes of what constituted "women" guided the men's behaviour towards

us. If we did not respond to the men's advances, we couldn't be considered "real women", yet we weren't supposed to be interacting with them anyway because we were officers and they were merely "the crew". All of this was pretty laughable to me - the lone lesbian in my class.

Before this ever happened, however, I worked through an era when it was not permissible for women to train at all as "ship drivers", as it was classed as a combat position from which women were excluded.

Of course all of that has changed now, as women and men from our Armed Forces are serving together for the first time in the Persian Gulf War.

I applaud those Canadian women serving in their combat roles because they are pursuing their chosen careers as pioneers, while putting up with inane coverage by mainstream media who insist time and time again on focussing on them as extraordinary superwomen. They are just doing their jobs. The only thing that makes them extraordinary is that there are few of them there and they're the first to be in their positions. But that wasn't their decision.

However, as much as I applaud these women, and as much as I questioned the sexism in not allowing women into combat roles while I was in the Forces, I also know that, given the choice, I would not be in the Persian Gulf. I remember how I felt the first night hostilities broke out and it isn't much different from how I feel now. I was absolutely shocked, horrified, dismayed

by Brenda Barnes

and disgusted that women and men in the Canadian Armed Forces were going to be put in harm's way because of a political decision on the part of the Canadian government and others in the U.N. Security Council to follow the United States into their manufactured crisis.

I haven't supported this war. I don't believe we should have been there. I don't believe for a moment that this action has had anything to do with the liberation of Kuwait or the restoration of its democracy. Before Kuwait was invaded by Iraq, it was a sheikdom with one of the highest per capita incomes in the world because of its oil reserves. I believe we should let the Middle Eastern countries handle their own disputes while we develop alternative energy resources and cease our economic dependence on oil.

I think we should stop and think when people in the peace movement like myself are called traitors because we hate unnecessary bloodshed. People who say this think that I haven't supported the troops in the Gulf. That's just not true. It is a common tactic for people in power to create artificial differences between people to make us seem as if we're not on the same side, when we

## Commentary on the war

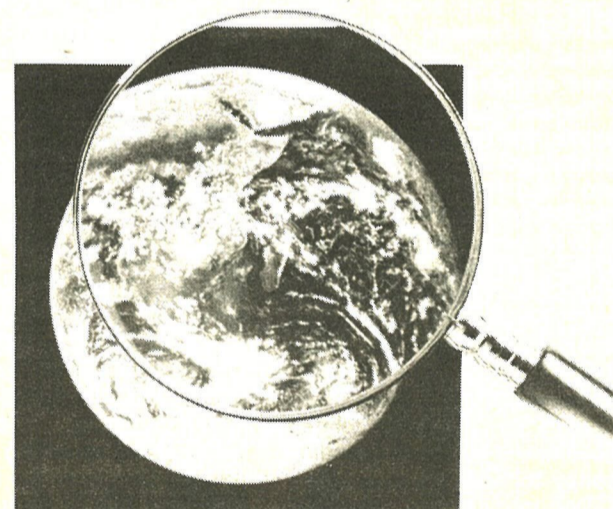


actually have common sentiments. I can't think of anything more supportive of these people than wanting them home alive.

Last month I went to a Navy funeral in Halifax. It was for a friend's husband who had died in a diving accident off the coast of Portugal while his ship, HMCS Margaree, was with the NATO fleet. No, he wasn't in the Gulf, but that's hardly the point. His death is as senseless as the losses of lives in this war, both civilian and military. Looking into the faces of family and friends, seeing their loss, it was outrageous to think that any sacred life, sacrificed for whatever cause, could be relegated to a balance sheet, to be measured in the cost of victory.

*Brenda Barnes is a former Navy Lieutenant, in the Canadian Armed Forces Naval Reserve, and now Current Affairs Director, CKDU-FM, Halifax.*

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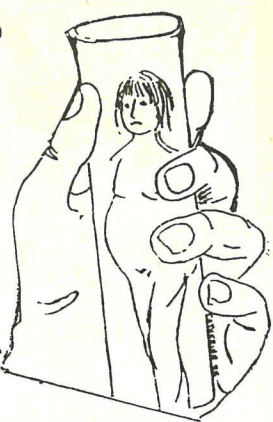
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Royal Commission on  
New Reproductive Technologies



# A Technological Handmaid's Tale

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women believes that the discussion on the new reproductive technologies is urgent. We view the present proliferation of these technologies as highly dangerous for women as a group, for children and for men. These technologies are continuous with and provide the basis for highly dangerous genetic technologies. Taken as a whole, NAC believes these technologies represent the wrong direction in solving the problems of infertility and infant disability.

NAC takes as its starting point the experience and long-term well-being of women. Because of women's centrality to reproduction and therefore to the well-being of children and future generations, NAC believes that with respect to the new reproductive technologies, this should be society's starting point as well.

We believe that, on balance, the new reproductive technologies are oppressive to women. The technologies are not effective in preventing or curing infertility or disability. But they will contribute to economic and social trends that will damage women's overall rights, well-being and social standing.

The vast majority of cases of female and male infertility and sterility are the result of social and economic causes: sexually transmitted diseases and their consequences, medical intervention (IUDs, the drug DES, contraceptive pill-associated hormonal disruption, effects of other medical treatments), environmental and work place hazards and disability related problems. Instead of spending money to educate people on STDs, to reorient medical practice and to clean up work place and environment, instead of reorienting adoption to homes for the millions of orphaned children on a world scale, vast resources are being spent on a set of technological 'solutions' that assist a tiny fraction of women, harming others and ignoring the vast majority of those affected.

NAC believes that the path to women's fertility and to the

well-being of fetuses and infants lies through the well-being of the mother, not in the separation of mother and fetus. We ground our belief in the biological relationship between the two and in our perception of how the social realities of women's lives affect that relationship. The ideological separation of woman from fetus at the basis of the anti-abortion movement is now being physically and socially reinforced by the technological separation of mother and fetus through the NRTs.

To some, the conflict between the ideas of the anti-abortion movement and technocratic goals of selective abortion and 'embryo reduction' indicated an irreconcilable antagonism. But recent developments indicate a convergence of these trends. Recently at McGill University, Bernard Nathanson, the leading spokesperson of the anti-choice movement, advanced a proposal for solving the problem of abortion: transfer the fetuses from the wombs of women who do not wish to have a child into the wombs of those who do. In this proposition, the women are seen as interchangeable 'environments', 'homes' for fetuses and embryos whose symbiotic connection to their genetic and originally gestating mothers is rendered without importance or meaning. Embryos become equated to hearts or kidneys - with the additional proviso that transplant would be mandatory.

This scenario will seem strange to many people. Yet its main lines - the transfer of embryos from women who do not want a child to women who do - have been publicly advanced by mainstream experts, notably McGill University ethicist Margaret Somerville, an influential voice in these debates.

The generalization in law and custom of the trend to separate mother and fetus can only result in a worsening of maternal and fetal health and well-being and an assault on women's fundamental right to bodily integrity. Caesarian sections on unwilling women have been ordered by both Canadian and American courts. In the U.S., poor women have been incarcerated in order to prevent substance abuse judged harmful to the fetus. It is only a matter of time until a woman is ordered to undergo fetal surgery against her will.

The growth of this trend will institutionalize forced intervention into women's pregnancies and extend bureaucratic social control over women's bodies.

Women's extensive experiences with Thalidomide, DES, the contraceptive pill, depo provera and the Dalkon shield alert us to the dangers of the NRTs for women. When these older contraceptive and pregnancy management technologies were being implemented, women were told that the risks were minimal. Critics were branded as hysterical. But real-life experience has shown these technologies to be devastating. In fact, they have helped to create today's problems of infertility. In-vitro fertilization (IVF) clinics are full of women who lost their fertility to pelvic inflammatory disease from chlamydia or the Dalkon shield. DES daughters, unable to have children themselves, are regular candidates for implantation with embryos from donated ova. It is ironic that women must now turn to the NRTs to correct what

**The following articles are excerpted from briefs presented to the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies.**

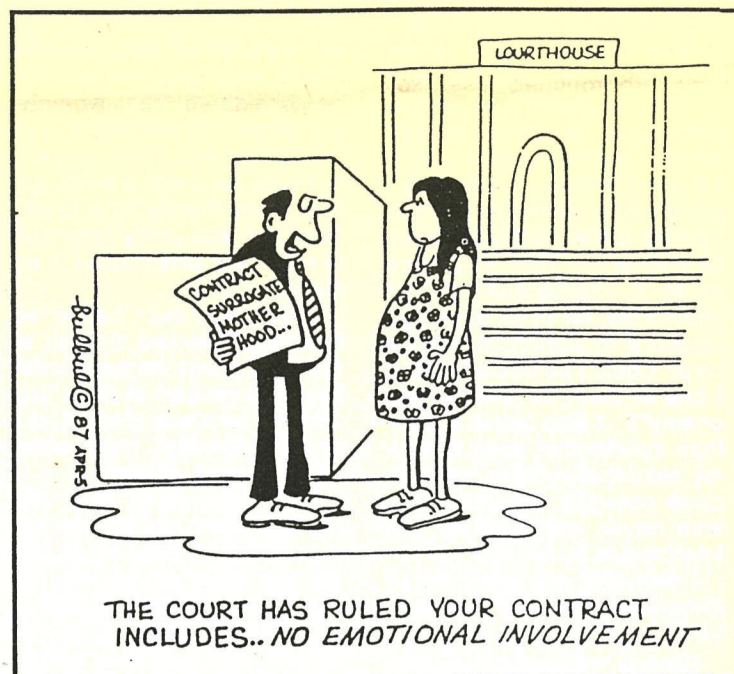
experiences of women as they undergo IVF (see below), long term damage, and intergenerational damage are bound to develop.

### **NRTs Increase Exploitation of Poor and Third World Women**

Commercial surrogacy arrangements and the buying and selling of ova and womb puts pressure on poor women to sell their reproductive body parts and capacities to increase their income. It is now

category of reproduction prostitution. Contract mothers are 20th century counterparts of the peasant wet-nurses of the middle ages who nursed the infants of aristocratic women, because their husbands wished to have sole access to their wives' ever youthful breasts. As with wet nurses, our modern technological handmaidens are exploited for their life-creating capacities and severed from the life they create.

Already, third world women and women of colour are acting as 'carrier-mothers' for affluent, first world couples. The decisions by a California court on October 22, 1990 to deny any visiting or other rights to the black contract mother who carried and had bonded with the IVF-conceived fetus of another couple, was a warning sign. It is a stark statement of the way existing constitutions of class, gender and race inequality interpret unprecedented and ethical dilemmas posed by the NRTs against the interests of the contract mothers, in the contracting women and men. The formal and financial rights of the affluent genetic parents in the case of IVF-contract motherhood, and of the father alone in artificial insemination contract-motherhood, completely dominate and displace the rights of the gestational mother/caregiver



reproductive technology injured to begin with.

Women were used as guinea pigs during the development of these older technologies, and with IVF their situation is worsening. French pioneer-turned-critic Jacques Testart said just this, in a 1989 paper with the Swiftian title, "Of Mice and Men: In Search of the Perfect Guinea Pig". As we detail below in our discussion of technologies of artificial fertilization, women are being subjected to pharmaceutical interventions whose long-term results we cannot know. But already Testart and World Health Organization officials warn that these drugs will predispose women to cancer. In addition to the nightmarish

possible for a couple in Rosedale to hire a Filipino nanny to gestate, give birth, nurture and raise their genetically linked child, while denying her any legal or social right to that child, or any call on the resources of the commissioning couple. In some U.S. hospitals, women who need hysterectomies or tubal ligations and cannot afford to pay for their operations are given reductions if they donate their ova.

Because of economic necessity, women have been forced into sexual prostitution for millennia. These technologies open up new possibilities for women's exploitation and create the new

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by National Action Committee on the Status of Women

that should justly arise from her physical, emotional, relational and labourious efforts.

From this point of view, the NRTs represent not a boon to women and society, but an extension of the marketplace right inside the human, in this case, the female human body. Such an extension undermines the value we have placed on the integrity and innate value of women's lives and bodies, undermines the values of connectedness, caring, compassion and commitment.

At the same time as billions are spent on helping few infertile women in the First World, women in the third world are used as guinea pigs for drugs (depo provera), techniques (IUDs), and surgical procedures that in fact make them infertile or sterile.

We are not predisposed to believe the reassurances of scientists, doctors, and pharmaceutical industrialists about the low risks to women and children from the NRTs. Their perspectives are fundamentally shaped by their vested interests in the technologization of procreation. While we do not doubt the good intentions of many of the doctors involved, others who have moved from low-status obstetrician and gynecologist to high-status techno-doc, have discovered a gold mine of money and prestige in the NRTs. Scientists working and attempting to control the very elements of life are also working in extremely high-status fields. And the pharmaceutical and biotechnology firms, in the constant process of creating markets for their products, are considered to be the most profitable and fastest expanding industrial sector in the world today.

We have learned, at a terrible cost, that we cannot intervene into the ecosystem at one level without precipitating consequences at another. We now know that we cannot simply exploit the earth's resources (mining, fishing, forestry), isolate those that we want for ourselves, appropriate and manipulate them at will, without causing grave damage to the planet as a whole. We now know that we cannot introduce foreign chemicals into the environment (DDT, DFDs, PCBs, nuclear contaminants), however specifically helpful they may be with a problem we have identified, without causing grave damage to environment and organisms alike.

Yet the NRTs intervene into the human body - women's



bodies, children's bodies - in much the same way that we have intervened into the ecosystem of our planet. The body parts of women are isolated, removed and manipulated, and dangerous drugs are routinely used to facilitate these manipulations. In genetic technologies we are attempting to change genetic characteristics without any overall knowledge of what such manipulations will ultimately bring about. This is despite the fact that we have learned from agriculture that many such manipulations have had disastrous effects (vulnerable strains of grain, poisonous

potatoes, pigs with rickets). As we are moving towards a greater understanding and respect for ecologically sound economic and social policies that are premised on respect for the integrity and interconnectedness of the ecosystem, we are moving in the opposite direction with respect to reproductive technologies, ignoring the integrity and interconnectedness of our bodies themselves.

No technology is neutral. In its goals, its methods and its results, it embodies the world view, economics and social priorities favoured by those

who have developed it. The NRTs are not neutral because they have developed out of a science and industry which is neither ecologically oriented, nor oriented to addressing the infertility and disability issues of the vast majority of women and children. Taken together, the NRTs represent the values and priorities of an economically stratified, male-dominated technocratic science that has driven industrialization and its attendant environmental ignorance, for which our children will have to pay.

We are standing on the threshold of a fundamentally new stage in human life with the production of the so-called surplus embryo - abstracted from its mother's body and life, floating in the frozen void. If we choose to pursue this direction, we will begin the manufacture, the man-made fabrication of human life for the purpose of all manufacturing - to sell. The frozen IVF embryo awaiting transplant may become a baby for the couple involved in conceiving it, in which case its profitability to others lies in the money its manufacture has provided for the doctors, technicians and industries that participated in its conception and implantation. It may become a baby gestated by a contract-mother with an additional commercial value (small, about \$10,000 in the U.S. today) to the gestating mother and to the lawyers (large, up to \$50,000) who act as brokers between the contracting parties. Or it may become research or pharmaceutical material, in which case its potential is completely commercialized, its value reduced entirely to its matter, totally

instrumentalized, transformed into raw material to be manipulated by those who own and control it.

Coupled with the trends that will be stimulated by the development of genetic technology, the generalization of such an approach to potential human life is a step backwards for society, a direction that will tend to underwrite, reinforce and legitimize already existing tendencies to devalue the lives of some - women as a group, children, the poor, people of colour and the disabled - for the benefit of others - men as a group, adults, the affluent, white and fully abled.

Overall, we believe that the IVF related technologies are unsuccessful technologies. Twenty years and more experience with them is enough, in our view, to demonstrate that they harm women and put children at risk. In this sense, we do not consider these technologies to be 'experimental' so much as 'failed'. In so far as women's bodies are being used as human guinea pigs, the technologies are, of course, very experimental. The findings of several studies that show as many women got pregnant during a one-year waiting period at IVF clinics as those that underwent clinical treatment, in our opinion, calls the validity of the technologies fundamentally into question.

For all these reasons, then, NAC opposes the opening of any new IVF facilities in Canada, recommends that existing facilities be scrutinized more carefully and that honest research results be made available for informed discussion about the future of these technologies.



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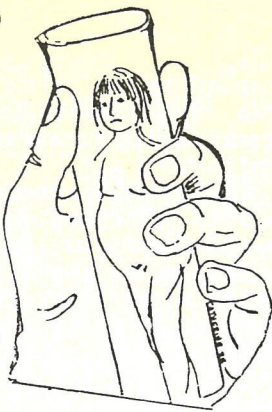
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# Playing the Creator: Who sets the priorities?

by Yukon Indian Women's Association

We, as First Nations, believe in a Creator. Creation stories may differ nation to nation, but we all believe in a spirit greater than ourselves. The Creator's most precious gift of all is that of life.

One of the reasons we have deep respect for birth is that we believe that death is simply another stage of life. The deceased person often comes back through a baby. The body may be different, but the spirit is the same. This is how we carry our ancestors with us. Sometimes the person before their death would inform relatives when or by whom they would come back. Medicine men were often part of this process and would sometimes assist in helping the deceased person come back, but ultimately it was the work of the Creator to decide who, how, and when. This belief is still very strong in many First Nations.

We have also experienced women who were barren. This was not a big problem. There were remedies which the medicine man would administer and sometimes it worked; sometimes it did not. If the woman was still without child, it was accepted as the Creator's will. She would be given someone else's child, either a sister or a cousin, or she assisted with the raising of children in her family. It was not viewed as a problem. Surrogacy and adoption as the non-native world knows it has been around in our culture for centuries. Children out of "wedlock" were not a problem either. The child was accorded as much respect as another child, although it was very important to know the father. All people had knowledge of who they were and where they came from. Everyone's lineage was very important knowledge and not kept a secret. One reason this was important was

to make sure close relatives did not marry and to ensure marriage within the correct clan.

How does this all relate to the issue of new reproductive technologies? I believe there are strong parallels and also very strong differences. We, as First Nations people, believe we are part of the great cycle of life. We can assist to make sure life does go on, but we by no means control it. We accept our role and the lot that has been given us by the Creator. We do not want to push our beliefs on anyone; nor do we want practices which go against our beliefs to be forced upon us. Everyone must have the freedom to choose; however, we caution you on the legislation and practices which have implications for all of society in and for the future of humankind.

When we accepted the task of making this presentation, I immediately panicked because I realized I knew next to nothing about new reproductive technologies. I felt somewhat better when I found out that I was not alone. The little information I read did more to confuse me, because all the material had questions of their own.

I was definitely in trouble when I tried to explain to the elders what this was all about. How do you explain to an elder the complex procedures involving manipulation of gametes, freezing of sperm, artificial insemination, and so on? Basically, I couldn't. What little I did tell them had them completely baffled. First of all, they wondered why anyone would want to do this; and secondly, they were horrified that anyone would want to play Creator. They wondered why no one wanted the many children that are available for adoption? I was also asked many other questions, but lastly, they made it very clear that I had to pass on the message of what conception and life mean to us.

As First Nations people in the Yukon and the rest of Canada,

we are at a critical stage in our quest for recognition of our sovereignty. I believe it is fair to say that reproductive technologies is not an issue for us. Our birth rate is higher in some areas of Canada than that of non-natives. Also, it is difficult to think of infertility as an issue when our overall well-being is lower and some statistics show alarming disparity with the rest of Canadians. The higher neonatal and postnatal rates, the higher rates of death by accidents, the higher suicide rate, in particular, amongst adolescents are all well known. It is difficult not to associate the quest for new productive technologies with an elite group of people in Southern Canada. This is not a poor man's issue, nor is this a First Nations issue.

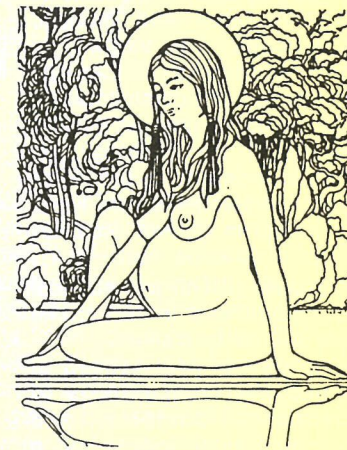
I was shocked to read about the amount of government dollars that have already been spent on infertility. Who set these priorities?



A First Nations priority in terms of this issue might be prevention. What is being done in the way of educating people about infertility? It is my understanding that infertility is caused or brought on by a number of factors, one being a common sexually transmitted disease known as chlamydia. Sexual practices and incidence of infection also can affect fertility. Another fact is that often fourth generation alcoholics many become sterile. Although many First Nations people are now leading alcohol and drug free lives, alcoholism is still our main health issue. Furthermore, we must be conscious of the generations of people affected by alcoholism and how that may affect fertility. People must be educated and made aware of these facts. Education must be provided, not only for the sake of prevention, but for potential candidates. Some of the literature indicates that often

clients at fertility clinics were anxious to try these methods after less than a year of unprotected sex. We must be careful to caution potential candidates that so much of these methods are still experimental, and there is little in the way of conclusive evidence on the long term side effects.

I would like to close by telling you a short story. When I was a young girl, my mother and I were cleaning fish. My mother had a fish she had just cut open, and she pointed to the many eggs laid bare. She said to me, "If I could have that many children, I would". As a child, I looked at the hundreds of eggs and thought "Wow!" As an adult, I realize that my mother epitomizes the role of a First Nations woman. We are the givers of life. She is an example of healthy traditional abundance to our laws. She was pregnant sixteen or seventeen times. Fifteen of those pregnancies produced live births and of those fifteen deliveries she was the only one in attendance for two. As she relates her stories to me, she reminds me that she followed the rules, and she was looked after. I am not talking ancient history; I am talking about today. Furthermore, today we have people that can assist with infertility. The proper rules have to be followed, and above all, the respect for the Creator and for life must be observed. On behalf of my mother, our grandmothers and all First Nations Women of the Yukon, we thank you.



Approximately 15% of Canadian couples of child-bearing age are infertile. Of this 15%, Dr. Heather Bryant, a researcher in the Faculty of Medicine, University of Calgary, suggests that approximately 25% experience infertility which is preventable.

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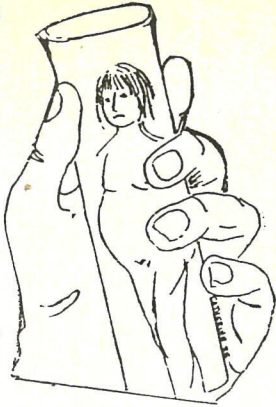
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Royal Commission on  
New Reproductive Technologies



# Hastening the erosion of northern culture

by Yellowknife Association  
of Women and the Law

People in the north are still attempting to come to grips with problems of sex without reproduction. We are now facing new problems of reproduction without sex. It is essential that we have the information necessary to deal with the issues in an intelligent manner.

Northern society has been, and it can safely be said still remains, a very family oriented society. By family, we mean all variations of family — from a man and a woman with children, some biologically related to both, some biologically related to only one of the parents, some biologically related to neither, to a woman and a child, to same sex couples. It can and often does include grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles. Communities in the north are formed from families, and as such, most people in any one community are related to each other. That is where their strength lies. It is rare, in communities outside the larger ones such as Inuvik, Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith and Iqaluit, for families not to have either a child adopted in or out. Those children remain aware of, and have strong ties to, their biological parents in most cases.

It was not so long ago that it was expected that women gave one of their children to their parents. Single mothers, or women with many children are strongly encouraged to give their natural children to childless women. All children are given great respect no matter how one comes by them.

In Inuit communities, children are commonly named after someone special, often an old person recently deceased, to continue the sense of community. Socially, that person plays the role of the person whose name it carries. This is true regardless of the sex of the child, so that a female child could carry the name of a grandfather. This remains a common practice today. If an Inuk female becomes a surrogate mother and insists on following this custom, how will this affect the social fabric of the north?

**The Great Law of the Haudenosaunee (Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy) requires that Chiefs consider the impact of each decision on the seventh generation. This principle should be the foundation for your recommendation.**

While pressures to be parents are great in northern society, those pressures are largely met through the adoptive process. Adoption has existed in the north for generations, and involves little expense, governmental intervention, psychological trauma, or family distress. Children commonly know their biological parents and have social relationships with them.

Government registration exists more for informational than regulatory purposes.

Adoption serves many purposes, including assisting mothers with too many children from caring for one more, assisting couples who want children to have them, to keeping extended families together. Because giving children up is common, and traditionally also expected, and because parents continue to have contact with their children, the psychological trauma of this practice is not what it is in southern Canada. Children grow up knowing fully who they are, and where they belong.

If children become mere products, this security of identity will disappear, creating problems that come from lack of identity.

These customs of child raising, in part, define the north. They form an integral part of our societal structure, and some have been recognized by the Anglo-American legal system for many years. We fear the effects of reproductive technologies will have severe and damaging impacts upon this aspect of northern society.

For these reasons, we are suggesting that access to reproductive technologies are **discouraged** in the north — that children already born are cared for first, and that societal pressures to bear children genetically related to oneself, as somehow a badge of "ultimate personhood" are downplayed.

Men and women, while biologically designed to conceive and bear children, need not see that as their only role in life, nor a role at all. We do not wish to deny access to a healthy alternative for those individuals who feel they simply cannot go on living without having genetically related children. We do however, wish the focus to remain on improving the health of pregnant and about-to-be pregnant women, improving maternal and child health care, day care, and generally, an improved living standard for all northerners, rather than expending ever-decreasing public funds for a medical service which has, as yet, to prove satisfactory to infertile

women, and which holds many dangers for the civil liberties of all individuals, the further subrogation of women, and the potential for changing the nature of society as we presently understand it to be.

Fertility problems in the north stem from sexually transmitted diseases, improper use of oral and other contraceptives such as IUDs, and botched sterilizations, among other things. Women are **not** in control. We want better use of public funds for nutritional and lifestyle counselling, and access to birth control which does not pose a risk to our fertility.

Birth is a woman's prerogative. To lose control over what is done, where, when and how is to foster the breakdown of relationships between people, and between family members. Women of the north are fighting to retain control of birthing processes. Factoring in these new technologies at this time will only hasten the process of cultural erosion.



Artificial means of producing children are expensive. In our view, the emphasis should be on the well-being of existing children and on maternal health, rather than developing and using costly new techniques for producing children.

However, if it is decided that certain technologies are appropriate, issues of availability must also be addressed. Unless we are to believe that the pain of

infertility is felt only by rich, white married couples, consideration must be given to the question of the costs to be borne by taxpayers generally, and what should be paid for by the individuals using the technology.

The issue of economic access to reproductive technologies is of particular concern in the north. There is presently no equality of access in the NWT in order to avail oneself of reproductive technology procedures. One must not only incur the expense inherent in the procedure, but also the cost of travelling to where the procedures are available. Therefore, choices which exist in the new reproductive technology area are choices which truly exist only for those able to access those technologies. The issues raised by many people are moot to the majority of women who are not white or upper middle class. For true economic equality to exist, the focus ought to be on making **necessary** medical care available for all.

The potential for abuse by technologies to exploit women's bodies must be put in the context of women who are especially vulnerable to exploitation by reasons of racial, economic or social disadvantage. Policies must ensure that the benefits and burdens of technologies are not allocated on a basis that reinforces pre-existing differentials between women as well as between women and men.

The Great Law of the Haudenosaunee (Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy) requires that Chiefs consider the impact of each decision on the seventh generation. This principle should be the foundation for your recommendation.



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# Exercising a difficult choice

by Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL)

Those in the abortion rights movement are familiar with the anti-choice opposition to amniocentesis. These people oppose it because some women may choose abortion should they learn that the fetus has been diagnosed with a chromosomal abnormality.

Behind this opposition to abortion is the religious belief that "ensoulment" occurs at the moment of conception. Therefore the fertilized egg is a person and to end a pregnancy is to "kill" a person. All life, fetal or otherwise, has equal value, and to seek to place more value on any stage of developing fetal life or to understand why women welcome one pregnancy and not another is forbidden. It is seen as a dangerous notion to discuss quality of life either for the child to be born or the woman who will bear it. This fatalistic attitude precludes seeking to control the outcome of a pregnancy once that pregnancy has begun.

In the feminist health community some opposition to the technologies of amniocentesis and ultrasound stems from a belief that there is an overuse of them; that women are not well informed about the risks; and that women do not feel confident to resist these procedures. Alarm has been expressed that some women are made to feel that if they do not submit to these tests their care will be compromised.

We concur with these concerns and support efforts to ensure that these technologies be offered in a non-coercive way and with the benefit of comprehensive, non-biased counselling. There will undoubtedly be differences of opinion about what constitutes comprehensive counselling. Under no circumstances should information be included for the purpose of influencing a woman's decision whether or not to avail herself of the technology. For example, opponents of abortion want each woman to hear a

description of the stages of fetal development because they wish to influence her decision negatively. Unbiased counselling includes a respectful presentation of all options, free of coercion.

Similarly, some people in the disabled rights movement suggest that women contemplating prenatal diagnosis be required to talk to people in the disabled rights movement or to parents of disabled children. This requirement, said to be part of "informed consent", seems to have the purpose of trying to dissuade women from having the tests in question or of rejecting abortion should the tests reveal some chromosomal or genetic abnormality. But for consent to be truly informed one would have to require the woman to talk with unhappy as well as happy disabled people and their families.

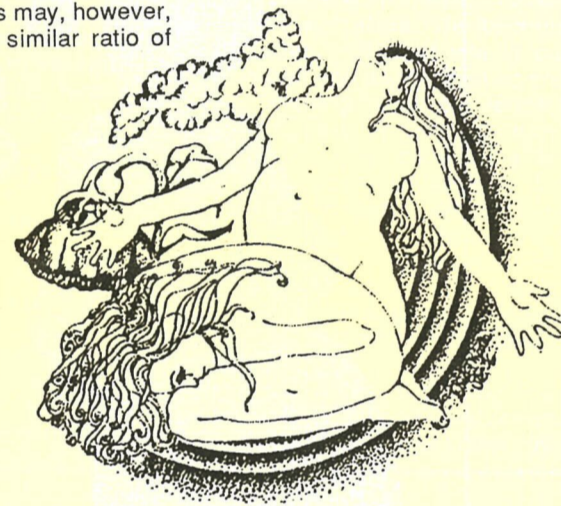
We turn now to an argument current in the disabled rights movement and in some segments of the feminist health community; namely, that to screen for genetic abnormality is to somehow demean disabled people. The technology is mistrusted not merely because it may be overused, or that it may be used without the woman's being fully informed, but that it is used to detect something that some people believe should not be detected at all. This argument is reminiscent of the anti-choice argument articulated above.

Such an argument is based on false logic and does not advance the cause of disabled people or contribute to the debate about reproductive technologies. It transfers the burden of how society cares for disabled people onto the backs of individual women already making difficult decisions. It confuses people about the real ways we can improve quality of life for disabled people. The proponents of the argument that screening demeans disabled people find

themselves in the odd position of upholding freedom of choice on abortion but denying it for the detection of abnormality. Therefore, they would permit abortion for any reason except for reasons of chromosomal or genetic abnormality. This position is as perverse and authoritarian as the position of some doctors who would deny freedom of choice but would coerce women into abortion of a disabled fetus.

## Sex Selection

Opponents of prenatal diagnostic techniques draw our attention to its use in some parts of the world to select for males rather than females. A study in India where of 8,000 abortions, 7,997 of the fetuses were female is often cited. These abortions may, however, be replacing a similar ratio of



female infanticide. Evidence does not support this worse case scenario in developed countries and certainly not in ours to date. Indeed, preconception techniques for sex selection have been known for at least twenty years, so that even if the technology for prenatal diagnosis were denied to couples, there would be methods for them to act upon any preference they may have. If the intent in denying access to technology is to combat sexism, there are less authoritarian ways to achieve this end. Sexism will not be defeated by denying people access to technology and information. People will find ways to obtain the information they desire; ultrasound, for example, can determine the sex of the fetus.

Some people wish to equate prenatal diagnosis for sex selection with prenatal diagnosis for disability. However, all things being equal, one's sex is not a handicap.

Technology often presents us with difficult choices about how it will be used. Choosing "where to draw the line" is a

continuing problem of human existence. Some technologies may, when introduced in a certain social context, produce serious social problems. The same technology used in a different society in a different period of history may produce great social benefits. In Canada today the technologies we are discussing are not so dangerous that they should be rejected outright as some may suggest. We should be able to discuss them without fear and with the recognition that we can use them for good. And our decisions should be made free of sexism, racism, heterosexism and prejudice against people with disability.

## Judicial Intervention in Pregnancy and Childbirth

A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (May 7, 1987) provides some important insights into the exact nature of how the courts have intervened in this area. The study found that:

- Court orders to control the fate of the fetus were obtained in 86% of cases. In 88% of those cases, orders were received within 6 hours; in 19%, orders were obtained in 1 hour or less; and in at least one case, the order was granted by telephone.

- 81% of the women involved were black, Asian, or Hispanic.
- All of the women involved were poor.

The study's conclusions are self-evident: a very high percentage of these court orders are granted and a very high percentage are granted within a very short time frame. There is no assessment of the complex medical issues involved, little, if any, understanding of the relevant law, no legal representation for the woman involved, and no

meaningful opportunity for appeal. In addition, the women so victimized are the most vulnerable in our society: always poor and usually non-white.

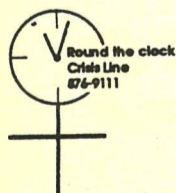
Many problems are created by such intervention. First and foremost, this alliance between some doctors and the state constitutes an attack on the legal status of women, with the result that the legal autonomy of pregnant women is overridden in a way not countenanced by our law where competent men and non-pregnant women are concerned. In the words of yet another author in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (May 7, 1987):

"The closest legal analogy would be an organ 'donation' ordered over the explicit refusal of a competent adult, and such an order would be profoundly at odds with our legal tradition."

These court orders are also profoundly at odds with Canadian legal tradition. A judge cannot order a woman or anyone else to donate one of her organs to anyone, including her own child -- how then can the same judge order a woman into surgery or confinement for a fetus? Clearly, these cases constitute a terrible exception to the concept of security of the person as it is known in our law.

We must consider the logical basis on which these orders are sought. Once we accept that women's medical decision-making can be overridden by the state, where is the logical conclusion to this line of thought? We may be looking at court-ordered prenatal screening, fetal surgery, and restrictions on the diet, work, travel, athletic activity, sexual activity, etc. of pregnant women. Given that the fertilized egg, zygote and embryo (the earliest stages of fetal development) are most vulnerable to significant damage, should we not impose restrictions on women who might become pregnant because, not knowing that they are pregnant, they may continue to eat an unhealthy diet, take risks with athletic activity, put themselves into stressful situations, etc.?

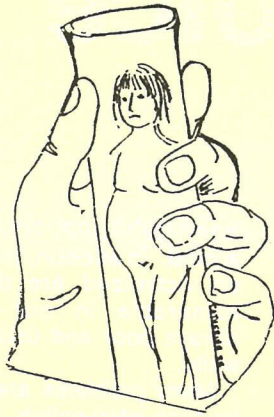
How, finally, do we legislate that women not experience the stress that surely will attend the living of a life with such restrictions? If all this seems too fanciful, consider that the argument has already been made that, after all, if surgery can be ordered, why not less invasive restrictions such as those relating to diet, work, etc.?



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# NRT's undermine women's control over their lives

by Newfoundland Advisory Council on the Status of Women,  
summary reprinted from *Tapestry*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Winter 1990

## 1. New reproductive technologies will not go away.

Although we may feel uncomfortable as individuals and as a society with the developments in new reproductive technologies, the fact remains that scientists and researchers will continue their work in this area. The tremendous growth in NRTs and the subsequent publicity that the "successes" have received have helped create a demand for these technologies, a demand which is not easily ignored or dismissed. If we cannot "stop" NRTs, then we must regulate them.

## 2. New reproductive technologies raise important questions about human values, ethics and the purpose of scientific research in modern society; as such, problems with the new reproductive technologies can be best understood as the reflection or continuation of existing problems with power and inequality in the world.

The historical but still relative absence of women in science and medicine, as well as the societal denigration of female values, is a major concern when we talk about new reproductive technologies. Feminist researchers have been at the forefront in exposing the male biases which continue to exist in what is called "objective" scientific research. Science cannot be considered value free when many women's concerns and perspectives have been ignored in the scientific and medical models that have been constructed largely by men who are unaware of women's concerns.

## 3. When feminists challenge the continued development of new reproductive technologies, they are perceived as being anti-motherhood, anti-family and anti-female.

We would like to repeat that the feminist critique of new reproductive technologies reflects our continuing concerns with the way our society is organized. New reproductive technologies have been and continue to be developed in an overwhelmingly male-dominated environment. Feminists

## 4. Society's attitudes towards motherhood and the family unit are rooted in a male-oriented structure which prescribes certain roles and expectations.

It is important to see the connection between the maintenance of current policies that are based on the traditional "nuclear" family, with its expectation that women will be primary childbearers and caregivers, and the criteria used to determine who is deserving of "treatment" for infertility with new reproductive

themselves are not entirely sure how the new technologies work, and partly because doctors have ignored women's concerns with respect to answering questions, providing information and allowing independent decisions regarding treatment.

## 6. New reproductive technologies benefit only a few women at the expense of all women as a group.

The continued development and implementation of new reproductive technologies without regard for women's perspectives is to continue the social and economic exploitation of women's reproductive capacities and desires without consideration for the effect such a process has on the political, social, ethical and economic structure of modern society.

There are tremendous social pressures on women to reproduce or to provide certain kinds of care (even when they feel these technologies are dangerous), pressures which do not acknowledge the continuing inequities of the status of women today.

There is also the pressure to "help" other women who are childless, the exploitation of low-income women through surrogacy or egg donation, and the lack of consideration for the potential exploitation in gene manipulation, genetic engineering and fetal tissue experimentation.

## 7. New reproductive technologies will further undermine whatever control women now have over their lives, not just their reproductive choices.

Men's desire to control reproduction has been established by denying women choice and access to information necessary to make certain choices. It is a position which can be seen in man's appropriation of midwifery in

the Middle Ages, in the refusal of male doctors in Newfoundland to support the training of nurses as professionals, in male judges and legislators restricting access to abortion and to contraceptives, and in male dominated church, state and scientific institutions deciding what is right and wrong for all members of society in the development of new reproductive technologies.

Any decisions on the regulation of new reproductive technologies must endeavor to balance the interests of all members of society; at the same time though, any policies which are developed must be grounded on the principle that women have the absolute right to decide what happens to their bodies and to determine their own choices with respect to reproduction and reproductive health care.

## 8. Infertility will continue to increase; so will the demand for treatment, including the use of new reproductive technology to solve problems of infertility.

Many of the new reproductive technologies do not "cure" infertility per se; many of them are designed to bypass the problem which prevents successful conception. Studies of the causes of infertility, such as workplace and environmental hazards, sexually transmitted diseases, and age suggest that many of the problems can be better "treated" through prevention and reproductive health care programs.

The Provincial Advisory Council agrees with the Canadian Advisory Council's perspective that "future research in the area of infertility and new reproductive technologies must emphasize the broader social and community issues involved, if a healthy public policy is to be developed."



From: WOMEN'S HEALTH INFO. CENTRE NEWSLETTER

challenge new reproductive technologies not because they are anti-motherhood or even anti-technology, but because they have concerns about the reasons these technologies are being developed, the ways they are being used, and the implications these technologies have for women if the de-humanization and the fragmentation of the entire reproductive cycle, from conception to birth, continues.

There is also great pressure on women who are diagnosed infertile to consider using the more experimental technologies to fulfill their roles as mothers in society as well as to fulfill the expectations of fathers continuing their family line.

## 5. New reproductive technologies continue to be largely experimental with women being used as the research subjects.

Although the Council acknowledges that side effects are a part of any new or experimental process, the problems associated with the new reproductive technologies are such that they have the potential to do far more harm in the long run than any (limited) good they can achieve in the short run. Furthermore, the Council is concerned that women are not being given adequate information about the processes they undergo, partly because the researchers

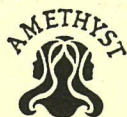
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# Immigrant and Ethnic Minority Women and AIDS

by Julie C. Black and Nancy Fillmore

As is true of previous discussions regarding women's health issues, the topic of 'Women and AIDS' is often approached from a 'blame the victim' analysis. Women have been most frequently considered in AIDS related literature and work in three ways: as caregivers; educators and/or as possible infectors of men and children. The fact that the majority of women have been infected with HIV by their male sexual partners has often been conveniently ignored or downplayed. This is also true for factors such as class, age, sexual orientation and culture, factors which all affect the quality of life and health for women.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that as of December 1990, at least two million women worldwide have been infected with HIV which can cause AIDS. As we enter the second decade of life with AIDS, the reality and impact of the disease for women remains bleak. It is projected that between December 1990 and December 1991, 200,000 women worldwide will develop AIDS and that the cumulative total of the number of women with AIDS will reach 350,000 by the end of 1992.

In North America, as is true of the Third World countries, women of color are at great risk for HIV infection. As of February 5, 1991, 266 females in Canada have been diagnosed with AIDS, of which 140, or approximately 40 percent, are women of color. One hundred and fifty-seven women in Canada have died as the result of AIDS including 105 women of color. Prior to 1987, the racial origin of reported cases of people with AIDS was not recorded, and this explains why to date over 3.0% of the women who have been diagnosed with AIDS are of unknown racial origin.

While it is recognized that use of a condom during sexual intercourse is an effective means of reducing the risk of

HIV infection, what is often overlooked in the discussion of women and AIDS is that it is men who wear (or more often do not wear) condoms, not women. So much of the male behaviour which takes place in all cultures, especially the refusal to use condoms during sexual intercourse with their partners, places women at risk of HIV infection. It therefore behooves AIDS prevention efforts to not only be culturally

maintain women's subordinate position, plus the cultural socialization which takes place in the larger society, make it impossible for women to exert and enforce the right to 'safer sex' due to the enforced imbalance of power in the relationship. In communities where women are held responsible for the cultural survival of the family which is accomplished through childbirth, the use of a condom, which is regarded as a means of birth control and thus genocide, is a cultural taboo.

themselves from many forms of violent invasion and risk, including that HIV. The relationship between economic dependence, male domination of sexual activity and HIV infection must be recognized and confronted. Therefore in order to construct an effective preventive response to AIDS we must confront and eliminate the sexism, racism and poverty which create women's vulnerability to HIV infection.

Women are further disadvantaged in the AIDS pandemic by the inadequate health care available to them in Canada. Again this issue most severely affects immigrant and visible minority women who often are unable to access

come to be reframed and expanded to include everything that would really make sex safe for all women: freedom from sexual assault, the right to control our own bodies, the right to appropriate and quality health care, and the economic and social power needed to make our own choices. A major step toward reducing the risk of HIV/AIDS for women is the removal of the structural and environmental barriers to owning and experiencing these rights.

AIDS awareness and prevention programs and initiatives which target women are starting to develop in many parts of Canada. Most community AIDS organizations which are members of the Canadian AIDS Society now include information about HIV and women in their educational programs, and some have developed materials especially for women. A few are offering safer sex workshops for women and some have established special support groups for HIV-positive women.

If you would like more information about how to protect yourself from HIV/AIDS, please contact one of the following community based groups:

The Women's Program  
AIDS Committee of Toronto  
464 Yonge Street  
Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1W9  
tel (416) 926-0063

Women and AIDS Project  
AIDS Vancouver  
Suite 302-1720 Grant Street  
Vancouver, B.C. V5L 2Y7  
tel (604) 255-9811

The Women's Program  
AIDS Committee of Ottawa  
267 Dalhousie Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
tel (613) 238-5014

Julie Black works with the Women's Educational Committee, AIDS Committee of Ottawa. Nancy Fillmore works with the Canadian Ethnocultural Council in Ottawa.



and socio-politically appropriate, but to address heterosexual men in order to convince them to act responsibly with regards to 'safer sex'.

Whatever their cultural context, a woman's suggestion or insistence that her husband or partner wear a condom is often interpreted as evidence of the woman's infidelity, domination and/or defiance, traits often responded to by men with rape and other forms of violence, including emotional manipulation, as a means of maintaining power and control in the relationship. For many ethnic minority women, cultural traditions which reinforce and

For women who come to Canada as family class immigrants under the principle application of their husbands, economic dependency and social isolation often follow. As is true of many women, due to the economic dependence on her male partner, a woman needs to remain in the relationship and sex in her relationship often serves as a means of attaining economic support. Many immigrant women are not only forced to remain in an oppressive relationship due to economic dependence but also as a means of retaining legal status within the country.

The above discussion reveals the social and political vulnerability all women have to HIV and AIDS. Women's unequal access or opportunity for education and appropriate information, independent economic security, social rights and 'choice' directly affects their ability to protect

culturally and linguistically sensitive services. Also, researchers conducting studies on HIV, on the way it affects the human body, and on drug treatments, have generally only used men in their studies. As a result, we know very little about the symptoms of HIV infections which are unique to women, and about how women respond to the complex and often toxic medications.

The concept that women's health counts as much as men's is long overdue, as is the commitment to making society a safe and health-promoting environment for all women. Too often women's daily struggles and the structural barriers to accessing good health, financial independence and control over personal decision-making are given low priority, misaddressed or ignored. In the context of the AIDS epidemic, the word 'safe' must



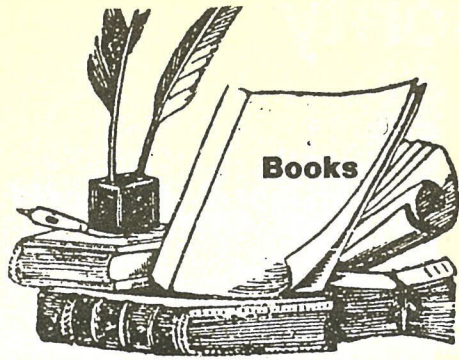
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## Book Review: Stoney Creek Woman

by Catherine Loull

Book: **Stoney Creek Woman**  
Author: Bridget Moran  
Cost: Paperback, 142 pages,  
\$10.00

**Stoney Creek Woman** is the biography of Mary John, a native mother of 12 and a member of the Carrier Indian Band living on the Stoney Creek reserve in northern British Columbia. While reading **Stoney Creek Woman**, I had the distinct feeling that I was sitting at my kitchen table listening to a dear friend tell me the story of an extraordinary woman named Mary John.



Author Bridget Moran befriends the reader from page one of her novel and doesn't let you go until the last word of the last sentence on the last page. This is the proverbial book that you can't put down. Moran carefully unfolds the story of Mary John in a direct and personable style. This book is not a dry academic account of the hardships of native life - this is a true story that resonates with real pain, real tears as well as real joy.

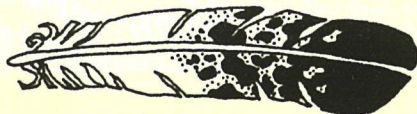
Moran takes the reader through the desperate feelings of Mary John when she was forced to leave the reserve to attend school in Fort St. James and then later at Lejac. At age seven, Mary did not understand what school meant

and when she realized that she would be away from the Stoney Creek reserve for 10 months of the year she was devastated. The treatment of native students at both the Fort St. James and Lejac schools was cruel and ethnocentric. The boys and girls were divided and not allowed to speak to one another - even if they were sister and brother. All students were severely punished if they were caught speaking their native tongue. The code of discipline coupled with the removal of the students from their homes made for a very sad and dreary environment.

In contrast to the chapter on schooling, Moran cleverly illustrates the sense of security and well-being that Mary felt at her family's log cabin at Wedgewood. The John family would go to their cabin at Wedgewood to hunt and fish and prepare for the long winter months ahead. Mary was very comfortable in this setting, learning the traditions of the Carrier band and contributing to the family.

The reader feels the fear Mary John felt when at age 16 her family arranged her marriage to Lazare John, and the sadness when tuberculosis hit her new family. Moran carefully navigates us through the overt racism Mary experienced, as well as her anger and rejection of alcohol and its effect on the native community. Through this incredible personal journey, we are exposed to feelings of empowerment when Mary John becomes active in the Homemakers Society, and later with the elders. The story of Mary John is a journey of hope and of personal cultural survival.

Author Bridget Moran was born in 1923 in Northern Ireland. She is an activist social worker and a freelance journalist. I look forward to reading Moran's second novel, **Judgement at Stoney Creek**.



The books below are ones we have received over the last year. If you would like to review these books for *The Womanist* please contact us.

### Williams-Wallace Publishers:

**Women of Smoke: Latin American Women in Literature and Life**, by Marjorie Agosin, Translated by Janice Molloy.

**The Conception of Winter**, by Claire Harris

**Caribbean Folk Legends**, by Theresa Lewis

**Jamaican Nightingale: Wonderful Adventures of Mary Seacole in Many Lands**, Edited by George Cadogan

**The Crossing Press Publishers**

**Take Me To The Underground**, by Renee Hansen

**Speaking For Ourselves: Short Stories by Jewish Lesbians**, Edited by Irene Zahava

**All Women are Healers: A Comprehensive Guide To Natural Healing**, by Diane Stein

**The Womansleuth Anthology: Contemporary Mystery Stories By Women**, Edited by Irene Zahava

**Douglas and McIntyre Publishers:**

**Disappearing Moon Cafe**, by Sky Lee

**Henry Holt and Company Publishers:**

**Widow's Journey: A Return to the Loving Self**, by Xenia Rose

### Gynergy Books:

**Someone Should Kiss You**, by Brenda Brooks

### Harbour Publishing:

**Escape to Beulah**, by Anne Cameron

**Jossey-Bass Publishers: Inc.**

**Healing Voices: Feminist Approaches to Therapy with Women**, by Toni Anne Laidlaw, Cheryl Malmo and Associates

**Lester & Open Denny's Publishers:**

**Lewis Percy**, by Anita Brookner

**Sexing the Cherry**, by Jeanette Winterson

**On Double Tracks**, by Leslie Hall Pinder

**McGill-Queens University Publishers:**

**Women and Well-Being/Les Femmes et le Mieux-Etre**, Edited by/Sous la Direction de Banaja Dhruvarajan

### The Mercury Press:

**Order in the Universe and Other Stories**, by Veronica Ross

**Sky: A Poem in Four Pieces**, by Libby Scheier

**Nightwood Editions Publishers:**

**The Book of All Sorts**, by Marion Johnson

**Crazy to Kill**, by Ann Cardwell

### Oxford University Press:

**Lives of Their Own: The Individualization of Women's Lives**, by Charles Jones, Lorna Marsden and Lorne Tepperman.

### Press Gang Publishers:

**Scuttlebutt**, by Jana L. Williams

### Quary Press:

**Thrice Upon a Time**, by Genni Gunn

**The Speed of the Wheel Is Up to the Potter**, by Sandy Shreve

### Ragweed Press:

**Prelude to the Bacchanal**, by Richard Lemm

**Jane's Loud Mouth**, by Rachna Gilmore & Illustrations by Kimberly Hart

**Talking Peace: The Women's International Peace Conference**, by Susan C. MacPhee

**Dark Jewels**, by Rita Donovan

### Raincoast Books:

**Carmen Dog**, by Carol Emshwiller

### Random House:

**The Heroine's Journey**, by Maureen Murdock

### The Seal Press:

**Past Due: A Story of Disability, Pregnancy and Birth**, by Anne Finger

**Voyages Out 2: Lesbian Short Fiction**, by Julie Blackwomn & Nona Caspers

**Gaudi Afternoon**, by Barbara Wilson

**Out of Time**, by Paula Martinac

### University of Alberta Press:

**Dance of the Sexes: Art and Gender in the Fiction of Alice Munro**, by Beverly J. Rasporich

### Véhicule Press:

**Despite the Odds: Essays on Canadian Women and Science**, Edited by Marianne Gosztonyi Ainley



# Twin Peaks: Alternative Television or Just Reruns?

by Pamela Wolfe

At first I was intrigued with the concept of **Twin Peaks** as breakthrough television and I looked forward to the season's premiere. I was not familiar with David Lynch's or Mark Frost's work, but I had heard that this new T.V. program would be surreal and offer alternative viewing.

I was anxious to see entertaining and especially surreal T.V.. I have always enjoyed science fiction and speculative writing. I wanted to see how a respected director would deal with this new material on television. I remember parts of the first episode – the dialogue was often strange, stilted and unusual. I liked the fact that all the characters seemed awkward and tense. I remembered reading how critics valued Lynch's choice of music and I noted it was appropriately odd and moody. The camera work seemed eerie enough and the plot line was clever and unique.

I was enjoying the first show and even accepting that, yes, the murder victim was a woman, as usual. I was laughing at the dedicated receptionist and dry wit of Agent Cooper. I was entertained by the strange mood swings in the music and camera angles and generally amused by the program, when the last scene came on. A man was working alone on a railway track outside the town. The mist was heavy. It was tense and silent. The man stood up and looked in shock down the rail lines. The audience was gradually turned toward his line of vision. Someone was walking down the track. We could see that the person approaching the man was a young woman wearing only a slip. She was covered with bruises, blood and filth. She was in a state of severe shock and was obviously the second victim of attempted, though failed, murder.

When that young woman appeared on the T.V. screen, walking the railway line alone, beaten and barely dressed, I suddenly came to. I was infuriated. I thought, I do not want to see another bruised and barely dressed female staggering into the arms of some man. Up to that point, I had enjoyed the first show. But when the second victim appeared and this one was also a woman, I thought no – if there are going to be anymore murders, let's be fair about it. Let's have a male victim stagger slowly down the T.V.

screen, all alone and dressed in his underwear, bruised, bloody and helpless. I was angry and frustrated because I thought, is this surreal television? Is this creative, innovative, unusual viewing material? Is this ground breaking spectacular work? No. This is very dated programming (with some effective music) from a director and writer who have no awareness of the reality of women today. It was a story portraying women once again as "victims". It was a traditional, conservative, stagnant and dangerous type of T.V. programming.



I did watch more episodes, partly out of curiosity, partly out of a sense that perhaps I was mistaken. Perhaps the program really was innovative and would become truly unique and reflect a new artistic vision of women and men and life. However, with each program it became obvious that the women were portrayed in roles as victims and/or one dimensional stereotypes.

Josie, the Sheriff's lover and the owner of the mill is involved in blackmail and murder and yet she herself is a victim of even more corrupt males who control her through threats of abuse.

Laura Palmer's cousin seems removed from many of the events in the story until she interrupts the murderer and is violently killed herself, the sole victim in a prolonged and horrific scene.

Nadine is portrayed as a manic-depressive, agoraphobic woman – insanely obsessed with her living room drapes. Though it seems the intent is to have the audience sympathize with the victimized husband, Nadine is a victim as well. She is a victim of her husband's lies and deception about his affair; a victim of his patronizing pity, and a victim of

his unspoken disapproval and disgust at her behaviour and appearance, compared to his lover.

Shelly was often portrayed as a wild, headstrong young woman and yet in her relationship with Leo she was submissive and intimidated by his unpredictable abuse of her. Even after Leo has become an invalid, Shelly is still under his thumb and must stay with him. She has not escaped Leo at all and has even come under the control of another male, her boyfriend Bobby. Bobby can run around and still have his freedom, while Shelly must care for Leo and be available

Donna.

There are many flat, deflated male characters as well. Yet the only two people on the show that seem interesting, decent and alive are both male: the Sheriff and the detective. They are able to do things. They can think clearly, morally and responsibly and follow through with somewhat interesting actions. The women rarely, if ever, are allowed to do anything that was both mature and interesting. I think that is what bothers me. The women are never portrayed as active, mature people.

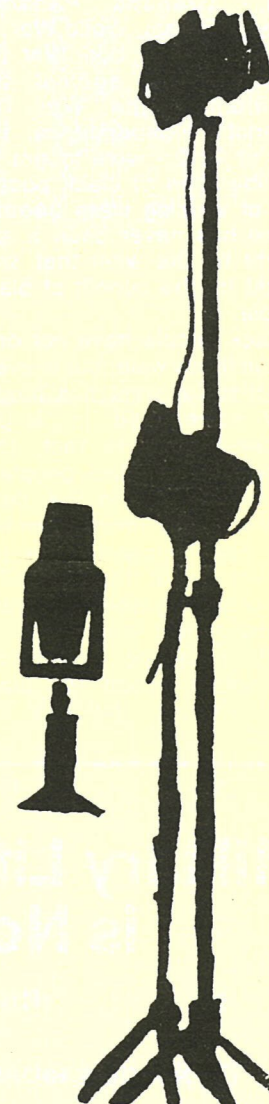
It goes without saying that the gratuitous violence towards women in **Twin Peaks** is anything but innovative. It is not only tedious, but offensive and upsetting. If "main-stream" people can passively watch such hideous violence and be entertained, we are still in dangerous times. I, for one, deplore seeing a female violated and victimized without giving the female any chance to defend or protect herself. If violence is going to be acceptable, then let the woman be portrayed as attempting to protect herself effectively. (Let's hear it for Emma Peel!) Besides which, why not have clever, intellectual combat, not physical.

Since the second season began, interest in **Twin Peaks** has apparently been dropping and it appears that the program may not be renewed. Perhaps male and female audiences are bored with a dated view of themselves and relationships. Maybe audiences want unusual entertainment and also want to see themselves portrayed with some respect.

T.V. is a powerful media but hopefully no more powerful than we are. We don't have to watch or accept material that reinforces ridiculous stereotypes of women as timid victims and ineffectual adults.

It is necessary that we continue to question and speak up about situations and ideas that are blatantly or subtly harmful to women.

*Pamela Wolfe is a feminist living and working in Ottawa.*



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# Womenspeak (continued)

## Black Families (cont'd)

been fought against sexism; these wars have not been fought against poverty; and these wars have not been fought against the transnational corporations that destroy the environment and deface humanity.

None of the wars in which black people have fought and died - Grenada, Panama, Korea, Vietnam, World War II, World War I, the Boer War, the American war against the Philippines, the War for American independence, the War of 1812 - were fought for the liberation of black people and of working class people. There has never been a war fought by the west that was fought for the benefit of black people.

Black people have not only died in these wars, but in every war that the west has fought they have died in larger percentages. In fact, the percentages of black people in the armies and in the body bags returning from the war has only been exceeded by the percentages of them who filled the prison systems and the unemployment lines.

There is no need for affirmative action for black

people to go into imperialist armies to die when they are denied affirmative action to get into universities to study and into jobs to care for themselves and their families.

We, people of African heritage, condemn the coalition of imperialists and colonized countries now ranged against the Iraqi people.

We condemn George Bush and his clique of criminals that include the likes of Mulroney for their militaristic adventures in the Persian Gulf, murdering and maiming with the criminal intention of dividing up the natural resources of the region among themselves.

As African peoples we must not forget our own history, how Africa was plundered using superior weaponry we did not possess. We, the descendants of slaves, have a direct historical link with what is happening in the Persian Gulf today. It is our duty to condemn it.

**We are Africa! We are black! We won't go to fight Iraq!**

*Black Families Against the War, Halifax, Nova Scotia.*

## NAC Funding

Dear Womanist:

Lynn McDonald's article on funding for women's groups in the Fall 1990 *Womanist* raised a number of very thoughtful points, but Lynn missed or was misinformed about several critical pieces of this debate and political struggle. She built much of her argument for individual or membership funding of advocacy groups by using the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) as an example, but much of her information was dated or inaccurate. I want to briefly correct the inaccuracies, and add another perspective to the discussion on funding.

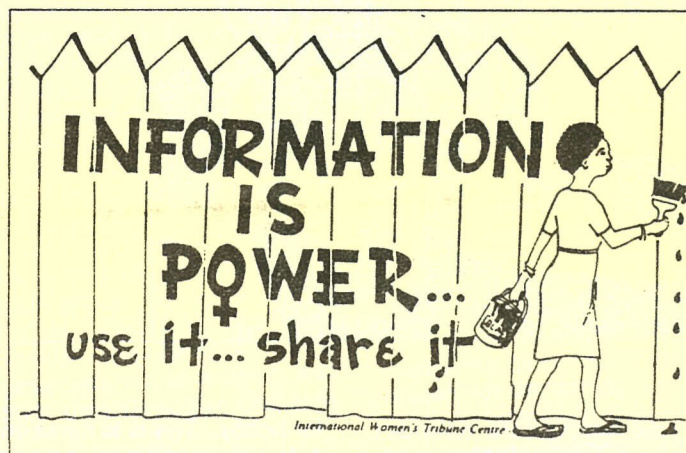
double next year - as will the amount of work. We are cautiously encouraged, but know that we are trying something that very few organizations have actually done: raising large amounts of money for advocacy work from private, non-charitable donations.

Lynn argued that NAC needs to establish individual membership in order to establish "independence" in funding. For those who are not completely familiar with NAC, the organization has over 500 member groups whose fees contribute approximately 5% of the budget. Again, to correct Lynn, NAC does have a category of individual non-voting membership called

situation because they do not receive government funds. Again, it is important to point out that NOW is a very different kind of organization, and that 30 women are employed to support their large individual membership base (NAC has 6.5 staff). Through our growing relationship with NOW we have come to understand that they often take quite cautious positions precisely because 90% of their support comes from the fees and donations of their members. Over the last year their revenue dropped from \$10.6 million to \$7 million because public support for outspoken political groups has dwindled.

All sources of funding have the potential to constrain the goals of feminist groups. In her article, Lynn states that it is particularly preposterous that the government fund the major "lobby" organization on the status of Canadian women. Most women's groups, however, recognize that "lobbying" consists of more than speaking to politicians and must be based in public education, mobilization and research on behalf of women. We think that government is responsible in part for ensuring that this kind of work occurs. Support for equality seeking groups is a completely appropriate use of our tax dollars. It poses difficulties only when it constrains groups from acting and speaking. It is important to remember that consistent, strong feminist analysis has, time after time, made it impossible for NAC to back away from controversial issues, regardless of concerns about government funding. We expect this tradition to become even stronger as our base of support broadens.

*Alice de Wolff, Executive Coordinator, National Action Committee on the Status of Women.*



First, all sources of funds require a lot of work (different kinds for different sources), none are stable and all have "strings" attached which limit or direct what a women's group can do with the money. This observation has led many women's organizations, including NAC, to develop more than one source of funding. Missing from Lynn's analysis was a discussion of the nitty gritty - the costs, and changes in the work that have to take place in order to develop and service different funding sources.

NAC is working towards a broader funding base which relies on a mix of membership fees, government grants, sales, direct mail, special events, foundation and supporting organization grants. To correct Lynn's figures, this year we have asked for support from almost 100,000 individuals and received to date approximately \$150,000. In order to do this, we have spent a considerable amount of scarce money on letters and on one and a half new staff to handle the increased work. Because of government cuts, our revenue from individual supporters must at least

Friends of NAC. To date, whether we like it or not, we are finding that women are more prepared to make simple donations than to sign on as Friends.

To be fair, we haven't gone on an individual membership drive: there is not yet organizational agreement on whether NAC's resources are best spent maintaining and servicing a large individual membership.

Lynn made the inevitable comparison between NAC and the National Organization of Women in the U.S., suggesting that NOW is in a less precarious or compromised

## Military Life for Women is No Victory

Dear Womanist,

Re: "Taking On The Canadian Military" in Fall 1990 issue.

An interview with Michelle Douglas is the substance of the above article. Initially I was attracted to the title of this article ... it's about time we took on the Canadian Military.

But I suggest we take on the military for what it is - a patriarchal institution that exists at the expense of valid social, educational, economic, environmental (the list goes on) ventures in this country and others. In particular it is women who suffer (and their children) at the expense of military expenditure, in Canada and also in Third World countries and other industrialized countries.

I do not count it cause for

celebration that any woman, heterosexual or lesbian, struggles for the "right" to belong to an institution such as the military. The vision of feminism should not be that women clamor to become a part of a violent, hierarchical, oppressive institution but that as women, all women, we struggle to see the creation of alternate institutions to those we have.

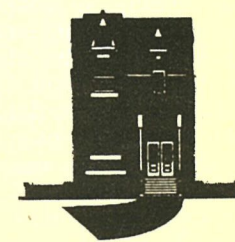
Our celebration is not one of personal victories to be accepted on men's terms and in the institutions they have created but a celebration of struggle in solidarity to re-define our society so that it gives life to us all - locally and globally.

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# Court Rules Rape Survivor Has Right to Sue Police

On Feb. 4, 1991, the Ontario Court of Appeal reaffirmed the decisions of the Supreme Court of Ontario Divisional Court and Weekly Court in ruling that a woman who was sexually assaulted by a serial rapist has the right to sue the Metropolitan Toronto Police for violation of her Charter rights and negligence in the way they handled the rapes in her Toronto neighborhood.

In a unanimous decision that took only a few moments, the three Court of Appeal judges denied the application of the Metro Toronto Police for permission to appeal the previous court's ruling in the woman's favour. The woman's case can now proceed to trial.

"This is a precedent-setting decision," said Christie Jefferson, Executive Director

of the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF). "It establishes that police can be held *accountable* for policies and practices which discriminate against women, and that under the Charter women can demand that police provide them equal protection and benefit of the law.

At issue in this decision was the extent to which police conduct regarding crimes of sexual violence against women is subject to review by the courts. The police argued that such conduct is not subject to review and that they are not legally accountable to individual women for their actions.

The woman launched her \$600,000 case against the police three and a half years ago, claiming that her rape may

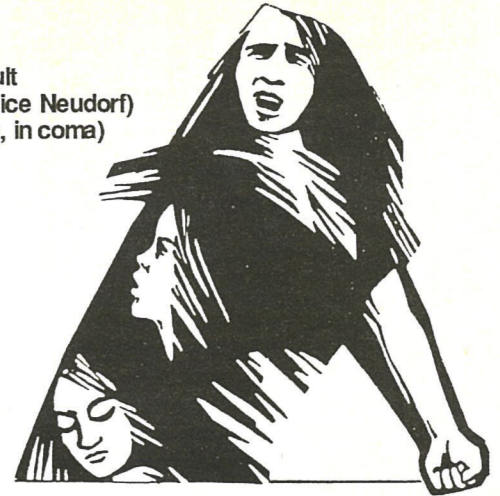
not have occurred had the police conducted an adequate investigation of a series of rapes in her downtown Toronto neighborhood and had they warned women in the area that they were in danger. She alleged police negligence in conducting the investigation, breach of duties under the Police Act, and violation of her Charter rights to equal protection and benefit of the law and security of the person.

"As governmental actors, the police have responsibilities under the Charter," says LEAF staff lawyer, Annie Bunting. "This means that police policies and practices must be free from sex discrimination, including sex stereotypes, and that police activities must promote a level of security of the person for women equal to that enjoyed by men. In the area of sexual assault, police must recognize that the targets of crime are overwhelmingly women and the perpetrators are men. They must adopt practices which promote equal police protection for women and for other disadvantaged groups who seek to make the criminal justice system more responsive to their needs."

Compiled by *The Womanist* from LEAF news releases, 1990-91.

# In Memorium

Sandy Sayer  
 Marie Lecoux  
 Caireen Dagneault  
 Johnny Bear (Janice Neudorf)  
 (still living, in coma)  
 Lorna Jones



Last month yet another Native woman, Lorna Jones, died in the Prison for Women in Kingston, Ontario. She was the fifth Native woman to commit suicide, or attempt to, since 1989. In the wake of this tragedy, the warden at the prison made further cuts to services for Native women. Many women are now being held in isolation for "rioting" in response to these events.

Aboriginal women across Canada cannot accept the numerous Aboriginal women's suicides at the Kingston Prison for Women and they support

changes to the conditions that their Aboriginal sisters must live with in Canadian penal institutions.

Racism is one of the factors in the many suicides by Aboriginal women in prison. There is systemic racism against Aboriginal people, especially women, throughout Canada's justice system that leaves them no other way out.

We mourn the deaths of our Native sisters, and urge the justice system to listen to the voices of those women speaking out for change.

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**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CENTER IN MEXICO.** "Oasis" is the name of a new international women's center in Tepoztlan, Mexico, a beautiful magic village 1 1/2 hours from Mexico City and 30 minutes from Cuernavaca. Oasis has an international library and documentation center, offers womyn's dances and rituals, space for meetings and possibilities to give concerts and workshops. Camping facilities are available at \$3 per night, as well as "sleeping in" at \$3 per night or \$5 with use of kitchen. Oasis seeks feminist and lesbian books and magazines, bedding and office supplies, plus money for running Oasis. Write in English or Spanish to: Oasis, c/o Safuega; Lista de Correos; Tepoztlan, Morelos 62520; Mexico.



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We have noticed that most feminist periodicals do not get distributed much farther than the women's community. By being free we find that we can distribute *The Womanist* to places where women are, such as laundromats, corner stores, and community centres.

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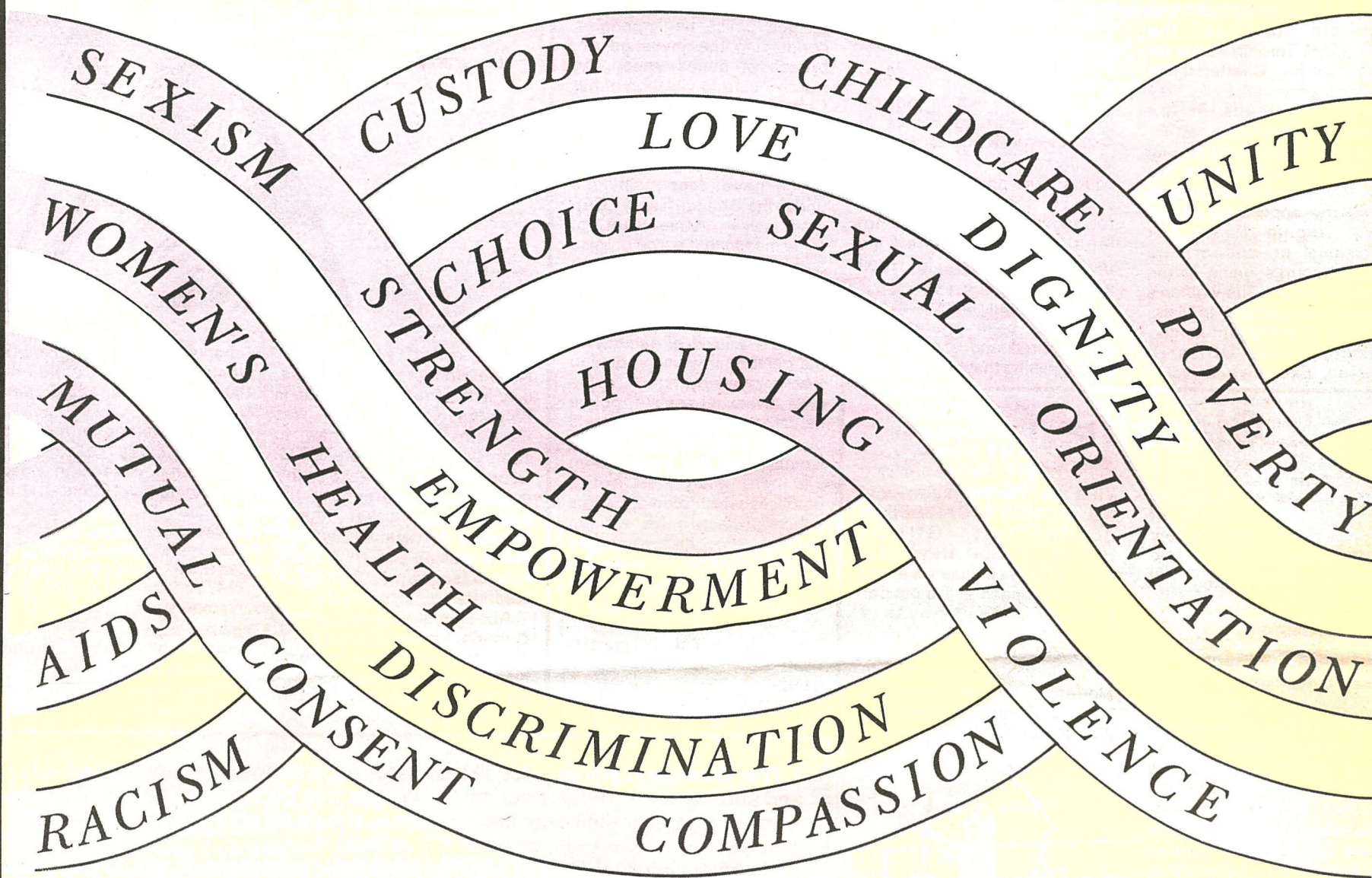
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