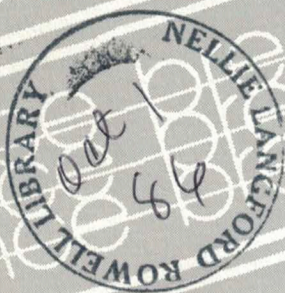


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fall 1986

Vol 5: 1

Breaking the SILENCE

a feminist quarterly

Danger to Women:

Free Trade

Canada's New Prostitution Laws

Women's Struggle for Freedom:

A South African Activist Speaks

Indian Women:

Denied Family Law Protection

Pornographie:

la mort dans le coeur

plus conference reports, reviews and
Hot Flashes, a new regular feature.

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collective

Sherralee Galey, Joan Riggs, Ellen Adelberg, Joan Holmes, Gabrielle Nawratil, Martha Muzychka, Ellen Lesiuk, Annicle Amyot, Virginia Howard, Alyson Huntly, Tünde Nemeth, Linda Dale, Louise Guénette



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about *Breaking the Silence*

For too long women's voices—our struggles, and joy—have been silenced. Living in a patriarchal world, we have been separated from one another and from the mainstream of society.

The *Breaking the Silence* collective is committed to giving women a voice. In particular, we provide a forum for discussion on the social welfare needs of women—needs such as support services for survivors of violence, affordable housing, sufficient and good daycare, adequate pensions and employment.

We are committed to moving toward a world absent of oppression: be it sexism, racism, classism, homophobia or ageism. We are committed to helping to build a peaceful and humane world where women's ideas, experiences and activities are heard and made visible.

from the collective

Receiving letters to the collective is always exciting and often enlightening. Receiving a visit to the collective in response to an article is a little frightening.

In the last issue of *Breaking the Silence* we printed an article called "On Being Older and Wiser." The article was about a group of older feminists called the Crones. One of the women from the group, Marjorie Nightingale, came to a collective meeting to voice her concerns regarding *Breaking the Silence's* treatment of the article (See *Letters*).

Marjorie pointed out that by choosing to use a lace border around the article, and by changing the title from "The Crones: Feminist Elders" to "On Being Older and Wiser," we perpetuated some stereotypes that we, along with the rest of society, share about older women. We assumed that older women feel that they are wise, and that they surround themselves with lacy things such as doilies and crocheted shawls. Even though the article focussed on older women who are involved in the women's movement, we did not reflect this in the design and the title.

While embarrassing, the visit did provide us with a valuable opportunity for growth. She did not assume that we were out to get her, or that we were confirmed ageists. Instead, she assumed that we were simply ignorant of ageism and set out to educate us. Many of the questions she asked us about how we perceived older women, including the Crones, were difficult to answer because all too frequently we had not given them much thought. Perhaps that explains why we grabbed onto the stereotypes so readily.

This incident reminded us that no matter how conscious we think we are as feminists, we have in fact been socialized to accept more stereotypes than we realize. It does not serve the women's movement well to assume that any woman fits a stereotype that immediately comes to mind. Moreover, it shows a lack of respect for individual women. How many times have we looked at someone who is blonde, or older, or holding her baby, and assumed that she would not be interested in feminism? It is difficult but worthwhile to look at each woman as an individual struggling with her own definition of herself.

The greatest gift we can offer one another is to hear what the other is saying and not impose our values. We thank Marjorie and the Crones for taking the time to talk to us about ageism and broaden our vision of women's diversity and abilities.

bts

L . E . T . T . E . R . S

Breaking the Silence would like to encourage women to write—to make this a forum for your ideas, engage in dialogue on the issues that affect you, or respond to the articles published in BTS. We welcome your input!

articles they print; once one is aware, ageist wording stands out as clearly as does sexist language. It is good that *Breaking the Silence* is giving this issue some publicity. I hope that this is the beginning of an ongoing dialogue.

Majorie Nightingale

Dear *Breaking the Silence*,

I would like to make a few comments on the presentation of the article by Jane Taylor in the last issue of *Breaking the Silence* (Volume 4, #3/4). I am a member of the Crones, the group that Jane wrote about. The article was submitted under the name "The Crones: Feminist Elders." It was changed to "On Being Older and Wiser" and appeared in the theme issue entitled "Women Missing from the Women's Movement." The article appeared on a lacy-edged border.

The way the article was presented distressed and angered me as I saw feminists taking a stereotypical view of old age. The title was presumptuous, as we do not necessarily grow wiser with age, and the lace border smacked of stereotypical images of older women... granny glasses, rocking chairs and lace shawls. The article, appearing in that theme issue, contradicted its own intention, which was to say that, as elder women, we are important contributors to feminism.

I indicated my reaction to the article and was invited to a meeting where we struggled to communicate across the wide gulf which was plainly between us.

My thinking since the meeting has led to the realization that this is another issue that can be traced to the artificial setting in which women live. From girlhood, women are conditioned to believe that, to be correct, they must have clear, unblemished skin and shiny hair. Even if these requirements are met, it is not enough. They must enhance their faces with eye, cheek and lip make-up; special treatment must be given to their hair, and their body must be a certain shape and size. To ignore this is to face being penalized by mainstream society. In addition, there is the knowledge that, as time passes, wrinkles will appear. The body, in spite of diet and exercise, will

become less than perfect. The struggle to postpone this is part of a woman's daily life.

We old women have lost the struggle: with our wrinkled skin, gray or white hair, less than ideal body shapes, we are the visual evidence that the struggle eventually will be lost. It should come, then, as no surprise that younger women have mixed feelings about old women.

What can be done? At the individual level, we can keep reminding each other that it is society's conditioning that leads to distress about getting old. We can watch for ageism in our words and attitudes. We can share feminist material with an older female friend or relative and ask for and listen to her comments.

At the public level, ageism must be seen as an issue of high priority in the feminist platform — every woman has a stake in this. Editors must weed out ageist material from

Dear *Breaking the Silence*,

Here is my subscription plus a bit to help share *BTS* among all women. I've enjoyed every issue, but found the last one (Spring/Summer 1986) particularly interesting as it faces the issue of women the movement doesn't reach. I wish we knew how to reach one another across our social/cultural/educational barriers. I agree with Roxanne that language as such is not the main obstacle. Her specific examples were interesting in pointing out some of those cultural differences — how we meet, what we do in our meetings, the degree to which we emphasize efficiency or "achievement" in our meetings can all establish "boundaries" instead of "bonderies".

But at least our minds are open to learning, so there's hope. One thing is sure — women together is the only hope there is.

Sincerely,
Alma Norman

We'd love to hear from you! Send letters, poetry and art work, including cartoons. If you'd like your work returned please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. We may have to edit letters for length.

If you have an idea for an article, please contact us! Upcoming theme ideas include: women and justice, the how-to of putting feminism into practice, a lesbian issue and women's culture. Articles on other topics are always welcome!

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hot flashes

Defining Pornography... and Making all Depictions of Sexuality Illegal

It appears the complexities of the discussion on sexuality vs erotica were just too much for John Crosbie, former Minister of Justice. So he just decided to blunder forward, making legislation that sweepingly outlaws all depictions of sexuality. Crosbie's proposed legislation restricts the depiction of everything from individuals making love to a woman breastfeeding her child. And did you know that visual depictions of menstruation have been banned? You see, it is alright to show pictures of people bleeding because they have been violently assaulted; it is not appropriate to show a natural part of life. Crosbie's motto is: if you can't understand the complexities then ban everything!

Crosbie's definition of pornography is in four parts:

Pornography: "Any visual matter showing vaginal, anal or oral intercourse, ejaculation, sexually violent behaviour, bestiality, incest, necrophilia, masturbation or other sexual behaviour."

Degrading pornography: "Depictions of one person defecating, urinating, ejaculating or spitting on another, bondage, lactation, menstruation, penetration of body orifices with objects," people treating themselves or others as "an animal" or "any act in which one person attempts to degrade himself or another."

Pornography that shows physical harm: Any real or simulated portrayal of one person physically hurting another.

Sexually violent behaviour: Depiction of sexual assault and "any behaviour shown for the apparent purpose of causing sexual gratification to or stimulation of the viewer, in which

physical pain is inflicted."

It is important that we make our concerns heard to the Minister and your Member of Parliament. He has stated that he has proposed these changes in response to thousands of letters from Roman Catholics, Baptists, Anglicans, Mormons and Methodist Churches and the Salvation Army who "oppose the recommendations of the Fraser Committee."

Bill C-114, an Act to Amend the Criminal Code and Customs Tariff, is a rather innocuous title that hides serious concerns that must be quickly looked at and addressed. The Bill will be discussed in the House of Commons this fall.

If you want more information on the proposed Bill, call 996-8418 and ask for Navel Avison or write the Department of Justice at Justice Building, Kent & Wellington, Ottawa, K1A 0H8.

Write Ray Hnatyshyn, Minister of Justice, House of Commons, Ottawa, and your Member of Parliament regarding your concerns. (Remember, mail to the House of Commons doesn't need a stamp.)

Former Minister for External Relations Takes the Lead

Three cheers to Monique Vézina, former Minister of External Relations. She announced that \$25 million of the \$150 million project called "Africa 2000" will be geared solely towards projects initiated by women. The money will go to research grants on food technology, scholarships for women to study in Canada or Africa, money for loan guarantees and technical training, money to finance credit activities launched by Canadian organizations in Africa, and

funds for African women refugees. Ten million dollars has been set aside specifically for projects integrating health into development projects.

This will prove particularly invaluable as an estimated 500,000 women in Africa and Asia die every year because of complications associated with pregnancy. Or, as Vézina so eloquently put it, "How would the international community react if every four hours a jumbo jet crashed with 250 passengers on board? Throughout the world there would be an extraordinary strong movement to halt such a loss of human lives. To my knowledge these deaths provoke no reaction."

An interesting note is that Canadian women receive only \$15 million in taxpayers' dollars through the Women's Program of Secretary of State, in an attempt to further women's progress in Canadian society. It appears that Ms. Vézina is way ahead of her Conservative colleagues.

Hysterectomies: A new form of race control?

Researchers in the United States were surprised to discover from a recent study done that hysterectomies are performed twice as often on black women as white, and those whites who are sterilized by the procedure tend to be less educated. Also, if a woman is "older, heavier and less-educated" then there is a greater likelihood that she has had a hysterectomy. "You wonder when the differences are so great by race and education and you don't see any difference in disease, what can explain those differences?" asked Elaine Meilah, an epidemiologist at the University of Chicago. It isn't too difficult to understand the results if you have any understanding of systemic discrimination in this society.

The Struggle Never Rests:

An Interview with South African Activist Jessie Duarte

by Sherralee Galey
and Ruth Scher

As Canadian activists who rarely risk life and limb for political principles, we often wonder what it would be like to work under the threat of imprisonment, death or even torture. Would we have the courage to continue the fight? Would we find the strength to suppress our fears, to persevere in spite of the risks?

Those were our thoughts when we first met Jessie Duarte. While interviewing her we were struck by the obvious strength behind her quietly assured presence. But Jessie would flatly deny that she is unique. She feels that she is just one among vast numbers of black South Africans who have become extraordinary through extraordinary circumstances.

Rooted firmly in a working-class background, Jessie was raised in a family of nine. Reflecting on her childhood, Jessie explains that in her community "you never knew when the next meal was going to be." A native of Transvaal, Jessie describes a catalytic childhood experience which brought home the crushing reality of apartheid. "Something sticks in the back of my mind when I ask myself, 'why am I doing this?' I had a friend, Mantua, who had to move to Meadowlands because she was African. I couldn't understand why. When I grew up, I understood the Group Areas Act. I never forgave (the Government) for that."

The Group Areas Act, which forces South Africans to live in areas

limited to their racial groups, is but one of the hundreds of intricate laws which constitute apartheid. Classified as "coloured," Jessie learned at an early stage that her life choices would be limited at best. Enraged at her inferior education and employment opportunities, Jessie began to act.

More than two decades later and now in her mid-thirties, Jessie is still firm in her resolve to oppose apartheid and all its vestiges. As the Publicity Secretary of the Federation of Transvaal Women (FEDTRAW) Jessie is equally committed to working for both the liberation of South Africa and the liberation of women.



Illustrator unknown

look at equality in terms of women's rights, we actually look at equality in terms of everyone inside that country too.

In some areas women have to have a bit more emphasis. In the workplace, women are at the bottom of the pyramid. They are also the poorest people in the country. They are the people who lose the jobs first. They're the people who are taken off agricultural farms when farms are turned into cash crop farms. They're the people who ultimately make the choice about whether or not a child is fed.

BTS: *It seems that the different situations and experiences of women lead to different forms of resistance and different forms of organization. Could you explain why the forms of action taken by women are different?*

Jessie: Women believe in mass action and I understand that. When you are with many women and you are protesting something, you feel safe, you feel protected, you feel that you are speaking with one voice.

In the Pass Laws campaign, twenty thousand women marched to Pretoria. One might ask why twenty thousand went. Why didn't you send a delegation of ten women? They would have been able to give the message to the Prime Minister at the time. But ten women do not have the same impact on history as twenty thousand women have. We believe that there is strength in unity and there is definitely strength in majority numbers.

I know how I feel when I go out on a picket and there are five hundred women. I feel safe. But if there are five of us I don't have the same sense. I feel insecure. I feel exposed. Women together are very challenging people. We belong together, we have the same problems, we understand those problems together.

BTS: *What are the dangers involved in being a political activist in South Africa?*

Jessie: Our position is that we're engaging the South African government very openly. We're not subver-

sives; we're not doing this clandestinely; we're doing this openly. We're saying that these are our rights, we want those rights. We don't want to negotiate about them. We want to choose our own leadership.

All that has danger because we are dealing with a sophisticated government that wants to hold on to what it's got at all costs. We're also dealing as women with absolute racism and sexism. Racism is the infrastructure of the apartheid capitalist regime and sexism is also part of that regime because women are used as the ultimate cheap labour force.

When you become involved in politics in South Africa, you realize that there's a risk that you're taking, everybody does.

There have been women who have been shot in the marches, as early as the sixties. When women marched in Sharpeville, women were shot in the back. When women marched in Mamalodi recently, women and children were shot in the back.

Women have been sentenced to death. We have one woman, Theresa, from the Vaal region who has been sentenced to death.* It's a struggle that many, many people would say is worth giving your life for. I agree with that.

BTS: *Do you personally feel a daily kind of fear? Does it ever go away?*

Jessie: Many of us fear violence. I share that. Women fear violence because we don't like to see our children die nor do we want to be robbed as mothers of sharing a life with our children.

You go through periods when you're absolutely frightened out of your wits. You see a policeman and you think, "Oh my God, they're after me." There's a whole paranoia attached to that. Strange things happen to you. Your telephone is tapped, or suddenly the wiring in your car burns out on a busy highway, or you notice when you go to work that there's a certain person who always goes with you.

BTS: *Jessie, you're here in Canada as a representative of the Federation of Transvaal Women (FEDTRAW). Why did women in this area decide to form a separate women's organization and what were your objectives?*

Jessie: We decided to have a separate women's organization because the issues around which women organize are very separate from the broader national democratic movement. They are issues such as child care, literacy training for women, special project training, agriculture training, learning to sew, learning to bulk buy so that the food that you get from the stores isn't so expensive.

Women also feel more comfortable in South Africa politically when they organize together. It gives strength to the organization. It allows women to understand the issues that mean the most to them as political issues. We can ask, "Why is it that we have to bulk buy? What are the causes?"

Having said that, there is also a tradition in South Africa which dates back to the early 1950s where women organized separately around issues. That's a tradition we've just followed. We also have the strongest leadership in the country in women's organizations. When the discussion about FEDTRAW came about, we were very fortunate to have all the women in the old Federation of South African Women living right there in the Transvaal. They had been through the Pass Laws Campaign, the defiance campaign of the fifties and so on.

BTS: *How does your organization fit in to the broader political struggle for liberation in South Africa?*

Jessie: We are affiliated to the United Democratic Front (UDF). All the other progressive organizations in the country are also affiliated to the UDF, so we have a common base. We see our struggle as a parallel struggle. There isn't a separation between women's issues and political issues. Our feeling is that women's issues are political issues and that while we



Eventually the fear and the paranoia go away. They go away after you've made the resolution that you're doing this because you want absolute change. Fear is part of the change. Many of us are frightened... not just afraid of those people... but we're frightened of the change we're working for too.

BTS: *What is it that keeps you going in spite of the fear? Don't you ever want to say, "I just want to take a rest for a year and not think about it"?*

Jessie: The struggle never takes a rest so you can't take a rest. Very often you feel frustrated because it seems like your efforts are meaningless. But when you sit quietly and analyze it, something small happened that meant something. It gives you courage to go on. You do get tired. I'm human. I get to the point where I say, "when is this going to end?" I'm also human enough not to want it to end violently.

BTS: *How do men respond to the fact that women have begun to organize independently, and in so many cases are the heads of households and manage without them? Do men resist or are they changing?*

Jessie: Culturally, men have been brought up to be chauvinistic, to be the heads of households, even when they're not. And there is some resistance. For instance, in Crossroads, the men organized a men's committee which would knock the progressive women's committee all the time.

It's very difficult to undo three hundred years of servitude and it's also very difficult to undo cultural instincts which are very strong. Men have been brought up to believe that they are the superior sex. Men are challenged by women's strength and often have difficulty accepting the leadership of a woman.

But, now there's more respect for what women do. Many men cooperate, and men and women cooperate together toward national democratic struggle. We don't have so much a sense of a political difference



between men and women at the moment. There might be after independence or whatever, but at the moment — no.

BTS: *There seems to be a stereotype of western feminists in the Third World — that we're angry, self-serving, bourgeois, man-hating etc. Has your experience in Canada challenged that view or confirmed it?*

Jessie: I've found that in Canada a lot of women aren't just fighting and angry but they're working productively toward concrete change from a class perspective and to me that is very impressive and heartwarming.

But there is an impatience with what are called REAL women. We have black, reactionary women in our country too. You know, they cook and clean and believe in pro-life and all that kind of thing. We say that they're not separate. Those are the most oppressed women because they still believe they have to be like that. And I think there's a responsibility for progressive women to pull them out of their cause if you can.

BTS: *You've just been on a cross-country tour with Oxfam. What did you hope to accomplish? Do you think there is a basis now for solidarity between Canadian and South African women?*

Jessie: The major objective from our viewpoint was that we would provide education and information to Canadian women about our position inside South Africa — what work we do, how we do that work, and to talk about apartheid and how it affects our daily lives. I certainly felt that people were very receptive.

Even though we work in different groups in South Africa we have a common threat and that is fighting for national democracy. There is room for solidarity. But I'm not so sure that solidarity is going to be now. Canadian women have a lot of

struggles with poverty and racism too. It's almost like we should have a United Democratic Women's International Front. I would feel guilty if Canadian women only worked on our issues and they forgot their own issues here.

* On December 13, 1985, Theresa Ramashula became the first black woman to be sentenced to death in a political trial. She had been found guilty, along with five men, of killing the deputy mayor of Sharpeville in September 1984. While in custody, she was tortured — she was forced to strip, electric shocks were applied to her breasts and her arm was broken by police while she was being driven to court.

There are many community resistance trials taking place in South Africa at the moment and the death sentence is being used increasingly to legally kill opponents of apartheid.

Write to P. W. Botha, State President, Union Buildings, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa, stating your opposition to the death sentence imposed on Theresa Ramashula.

Afternote: On her return to South Africa, Jessie was detained at the airport and interrogated at great length by the police. She was presented with a file of all newspaper articles written about her in Canada and a video of her T.V. appearances. The authorities had been watching her carefully. She was subsequently released.

In June, the South African government reinstituted a State of Emergency and imposed strict censorship on the media. Our last information (as of July) was that Jessie, along with many other activists, had gone into hiding.

bts

Sherralee Galey works at MATCH International Centre. Ruth Scher is the coordinator of the Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) at Carleton University. They are both committed to bringing a global perspective to feminist work.

Women's Lives Under Apartheid

Jessie is just one of millions of women whose lives have been irrevocably shaped by the institutionalized racism that is called "apartheid." Pronounced "apart-hate," it is an ideology and practice that justifies and maintains white power and privilege and black exploitation.

South Africa is the only country in the world where racial oppression is enshrined in the constitution, embodied in the law and enforced by the full apparatus of an efficient police state.

Even though blacks constitute three-quarters of the population, they are denied the right to vote and are relegated to 13 per cent of the land — barren areas called "reserves," "homelands" or "bantustans." These areas are so poor and overcrowded that 50,000 children die there every year. In contrast the white minority claims 87 per cent of South Africa's territory as their "homeland." In these areas we find all the country's urban centres, industries, ports and mineral wealth.

Apartheid rests on a complex and repressive set of laws. Life revolves around a system of migrant labour designed so that whites can use cheap, black labour to exploit the country's mineral wealth while ensuring the separation of the races. The government exerts extensive control over the movement of the black population through their systems of pass laws, influx control regulations and forced settlement. Workers move in and out of reserves in tune with the needs of the white-controlled economy.

All blacks suffer under apartheid but women's experience differs markedly from men's. As one commentator pointed out, "the iron cage of apartheid twists the lives of women in specific ways which give them special needs and special insights in the struggle to overthrow it."

For one thing, families are torn apart. Women are confined to the bantustans while their men work in the white areas, returning only once a year to visit. About half of the African labour force in urban areas are

migrants whom the state calls "temporary sojourners." Wives are regarded as "appendages," not human beings with abilities, aspirations and needs of their own. Men's wages are inadequate to support their dependent families, and the lack of employment options in the reserves means that women are destined to desperate poverty. The shortage of arable land makes it difficult for women even to undertake subsistence agriculture. Women's subordinate legal status as "minors" makes matters even worse. Because they can't own property or enter into contracts, and are always subject to male authority, their capacity for self-reliance is further blocked.

There is a total embargo on African women from the rural areas entering the urban areas. Many ignore it because they are desperate for work, but because they are illegal they cannot challenge their low wages and poor working conditions.

Women also set up squatter camps outside urban areas to be near their families. Women have created viable communities like Crossroads outside Cape Town in open defiance of the law. It is women who defend their communities in the face of brutal efforts to destroy them.

Women also bear the brunt of the forced population removals that began in the sixties. Four million people (the majority of them women, children and the elderly) have been moved, often at gunpoint, from "black spots" in white rural areas and from urban areas where they are considered "unproductive units." They are torn away from homes, land and community support networks, and dropped in a desolate, inhospitable countryside where they are expected to eke out a living with no resources. Hilda Bernstein, author of *For Their Triumphs and For Their Tears*, calls these "the most dispossessed people of our times" and tells us that they are "literally, thrown away."

Women's domestic labour subsidizes the apartheid regime. While the majority of women in the labour force are poorly-paid domestics in

white households, women's unpaid domestic labour raises the next generation of exploitable African workers.

One could describe an endless litany of injustice and suffering for women under apartheid. The conditions of women domestics, farm workers, factory workers all cry out for change. Good sources for further information on the topic are *South African Women on the Move* and *For Their Triumphs and For Their Tears*.

Jessie's experience shows us that even though activism is severely repressed by the South African state, women today are organizing and rising up in resistance. This comes out of a clear history of women's leadership in the struggle, the most notable achievement being the mobilization of 20,000 women to march on Pretoria on August 9, 1956, against the Pass Laws. It was here that women chanted, "Now you have touched the women, you have struck a rock." (August 9 is now commemorated as South African Women's Day.)

Since the early eighties, there has been a revival of women's organizations within the liberation movement that reflects the experience of women struggling in trade unions, squatter camps and community organizations.

Many of these women challenge male authority in their own lives and at the same time bravely take on the extreme power and might of the patriarchal, militarist South African state. Against enormous odds, women are fighting for a free and just society, free from racial oppression, class exploitation and sexual inequality. Their struggle never rests.

Resources

Hilda Bernstein, *For Their Triumphs and For Their Tears — Women in Apartheid South Africa*. International Defence and Aid Fund, 1978.

Vulcani Makhosikazi Collective, *South African Women on the Move*, Between the Lines, 1985.

Where is Katimavik on the Young Feminist's Map?

by Virginia Howard

On March 9th of this year, Senator Jacques Hébert staged a hunger strike to protest the Conservative government's decision to dismantle the Katimavik program for youth. His fast lasted 22 days, during which time considerable debate arose in several quarters. Hébert and Katimavik were both villified and praised in editorials, on talk shows and in roundtable discussions the Senator had with the public at his encampment in the Senate lobby. The government's main objection to the program was that, in teaching life skills instead of hard skills like welding (1), Katimavik reflected rather poorly the Conservative ideal of material gain. Therefore, it declared the annual \$20 million budget serving 20,000 participants to be a waste.

My sisters Jennifer, Lisa and Susan, aged 14, 19 and 20 respectively, went to visit the Senator on the

Hill. A snapshot taken on the occasion shows them striding toward the camera, wearing John Lennon glasses and flowing dark overcoats, against a background of neo-gothic parliamentary architecture. It gave me, as photographs wont to do, the sense that significance beyond the original moment had been recorded.

Out of sisterly and feminist concern, I began to wonder about my sister Lisa's experience as a feminist within Katimavik, and about the aspirations of young women in general. What parallels could be drawn between individual and general cases for young women? Finally, in light of this enquiry, what position should feminists take toward young women and the Katimavik program?

Youthful Optimism

I looked up a study published by the Canadian Advisory Council on

I. de Cedu

the Status of Women called, "What Will Tomorrow Bring?" (Maureen Baker, March 1985) to get an idea of what the aspirations of young women are. The composite portrait that emerges from this book is a disturbing one; the Canadian She between the ages of 15 and 19 aspires to marriage and a family of her own, along with a job that could be left or made part-time while she was having children. She does not foresee the harrowing effects of unemployment, divorce, inadequate daycare, sexual discrimination or entrapment in the pink-collar ghetto of clerical, sales and service work. Nor is she prepared to meet the likelihood of becoming the sole supporter of her family.

Feminism and Youth

The remedies proposed by the study to change the disempowered women's situation, present and future, involve unprecedented government spending in the area of social services. This in turn would mean that the government endorsed a welfare state ideology, which is an improbable scenario in the near future. Again and again, the essentially radical nature of feminism surfaces in critical approaches to women's position in society. Knowing that the young woman in Baker's study has an uncritical yet hopeful view of the future, how can such radicalism be made relevant to her?

A necessary step toward conciliation between feminism and youth is the politicization of youth. Both the report of the special Senate committee on youth and Baker's study recommend that youth be made politically aware. The Senate's report calls for youth to be shown the means to demystify institutions, and that "the government make a serious effort to appoint (them) to administrative and decision-making agencies, boards and commissions" (2). Baker's study was intended for the use of the young women concerned, and attempts to do two things for them: give them a clearer picture of how their aspirations are formed, and encourage them to analyze "the structure of the labour force, alternative lifestyles, or social problems" they might face in the future (3). Should

young people become politically mobilized as is envisioned in the above, then a golden opportunity presents itself for the feminist movement to extend its influence.

The feminist position toward Katimavik

Returning attention to Katimavik, my original bone of contention: with its mandate tinted in leftist colouring, does it politicize youth and, if so, does feminism figure in the political identity imparted to participants?

The answer to the first part of the question is yes: for the occasion of Senator Hébert's hunger strike, Katimavik's were mobilized and encountered the Senator and the press because they knew their opinions mattered. I attribute the root cause for my sister Lisa's activism at that time to be the special bond formed among participants. As Lisa described her experience more fully, this bond acquired a peculiar significance for me, and provided the answer to the second part of my question about political identity.

Living as they did, cheek by jowl in a group for nine months, the first Katimavik lesson is that of Tolerance. Lisa avowed that she learned "to tolerate jerks," and was richly rewarded for her pains. She was free to discover the joys of character study, and to recognize and cherish enduring human qualities in everyone. There was a hidden cost, however, which on balance she counted as very little; although sexist attitudes were exhibited by individuals in the group, she found it expedient to curb her expressions of feminist concern. I can well imagine the pressures that would exist for her in any group, where feminism can have the status of feminine complaint, female chauvinism or personal superstition. I can list them a little better now than I could when I was a teenage closet feminist. What struck me forcibly in this case, however, was that in the course of a so-called tolerant and appreciative exchange of ideas, the group missed their chance to "tolerate" feminism.

From what I've read I must conclude that the feminist position toward Katimavik may be a sympathetic one considering its leftist

ideology, but that after all the task of making itself relevant to a young woman's experience lies elsewhere.

The movement needs to overarch the Katimavik 17-20 age group and touch the younger group surveyed in "What Will Tomorrow Bring?" Feminism should redesign the tools for change and put them in the young woman's way; whether through the agencies of schools or social programs, she should be given the statistical overview, the cogent arguments born of a constructive critical practice. Only then will she want to challenge a sexist society with her ambition and desire for autonomy. It came as a revelation to me that feminists must deliberately and directly work to instil this sense of ambition, autonomy and self-esteem in young women.

Senator Hébert believes that youth are the ablest Utopians, because of their boundless idealism and hope. My sister, then, should never be made to think herself a flyweight in the struggle for larger human concerns, nor to consider her ideals expendable.

(1) *Toronto Star*, 9 February 1986, p. A8.

(2) Hon. Jacques Hébert (chairperson), *Youth: A Plan of Action* (Report of the Special Senate Committee on Youth, February 1986).

(3) Maureen Baker, *What Will Tomorrow Bring?: A Study of the Aspirations of Adolescent Women* (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1985), p. 157.

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Resources

What Will Tomorrow Bring?: A Study of the Aspirations of Adolescent Women (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, March 1985), can be obtained from the Canadian Council on Social Development, 55 Parkdale Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, K1Y 4G1; phone: 728-1865. Cost per copy: \$4.95 plus handling.

Illustration: Catherine O'Neil

porn

Illustration: Catherine O'Neil

They are also forced to make themselves more vulnerable to attack in order to attract clients. Some prostitutes have taken to "hitch hooking," where they stand on the street pretending to hitchhike and solicit once in the car. Other women have

started to advertise their personal addresses and phone numbers to ensure that they can get business. All of these practices expose them to being attacked, to being more vulnerable.

Prostitutes have reported that more "weirdos" are on the street because they know that street prostitutes are desperate for money and will risk jumping into a car without having a buddy to take down the driver's licence or without really checking the guy out. And the incidence of assault and murder of prostitutes has increased.

The women that the Bill specifically targets are already the most vulnerable: women on the streets. They do not have the resources or contacts to be in the "safer," less visible lines of prostituting, such as massage parlours, stripping and escort services. They are often young girls, drug addicts or women who just want to make a few bucks to pay for expenses at the end of the month.

The majority of women on the street are women of colour. More than 90 per cent of prostitutes in Regina are Native women. In Montreal at least 60 per cent are Black women. The racism inherent in Canadian society prevails on the street. Women of colour are recruited, not for regular escort services, but for services that emphasize race. Examples include "Hungry Savages," a service "specializing" in Black Women and "Your Wish is My Command," which capitalizes on the servile image of oriental women.

Prostitutes have primarily ended up in the escort services. In Ottawa, the number of escort services has almost doubled in the past year. Escort services can have from one to eight prostitutes working for them. They provide the prostitute with a flat rate of \$5 to \$10 out of a fee of around \$40. It is up to the prostitute to negotiate with the customer for any extra service. The negotiation now goes on inside a private room rather than on a relatively safe street corner. Other prostitutes have moved across the border or have gone into massage parlours.

The Bill did not seek, nor pretend, to protect prostitutes. By making prostitution a criminal offence and giving prostitutes criminal records the

Bill further ensures that they will have difficulty in trying to get jobs and establish an alternative identity should they try to get off the streets.

And for those of us who want to ignore the legislation because it simply doesn't really relate to us, well look again. The Bill has been accused of challenging the basic civil liberties of all women as it puts into question any form of communication in any public place in Canada. Depending on the interpretation of the law and the discretion of the police officer, a young woman who walks down the street and waves to a male friend in a car can now be arrested. A wink, a nod, a smile or any form of communication can now be interpreted as soliciting. This legislation allows the police to lawfully harass a woman who may be in any public place going about her business. In the face of this legislation, freedom of speech and expression become non-existent rights for women.

There are alternatives, many of which were proposed by Canadian citizens during the Fraser Commission public hearings. There is legislation presently in the Criminal Code that prohibits public nuisance, and which can be used for persistent soliciting. Many municipalities have enacted by-laws that keep prostitutes away from residential areas without forcing them off the streets completely. The suggestion of legalized houses of prostitution "bawdy houses," have had wide support even from the police.

Bill C-49 in no way attempts to be comprehensive and responsible legislation that would strike a balance between citizens' needs and prostitutes' rights. For that reason the Bill has been opposed by almost all women's groups in the country, including the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes and the Canadian Organization for the Rights of Prostitutes. It has been condemned by the NDP and was the only option explicitly condemned by the Fraser Committee.

Given the wealth of information available to this government in designing this legislation (the Badgley report, the Fraser Commission, numerous field studies by the Department of Justice, two national

organizations for prostitutes, the increased awareness and knowledge within the women's movement and a national study done by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women) they have acted no less than irresponsibly in producing this legislation.

Legislation like Bill C-49 cannot deal with the economic and social causes of prostitution. Prostitution reflects the broader problem of exploitation and degradation of women in this society. Emma Goldman said it clearly 60 years ago: "Nowhere is a woman treated according to the merit of her work, but rather as a sex. It is therefore almost inevitable that she should pay for the right to exist, to keep a position in whatever line, with sexual favours. Thus, it is merely a question of degree whether she sells herself to one man, in or out of marriage, or to many men. Whether our reformers admit it or not, the economic and social inferiority of women is responsible for prostitution." However, the legislation could have been more responsible in its approach, minimally acknowledging women's vulnerability in a sexist society.

What is the Conservative government saying about the worth and value of prostitutes' lives and for that matter, all women's lives? Primarily that we are dispensable. To demand that prostitutes be invisible is to destine them to a life of arrest, fines, jail sentences, criminal records and back to the street. It is to further their dependence on pimps and elements of organized crime that view women as commodities to be bought and sold. Legislation designed to protect prostitutes would at least acknowledge that they exist and that they have a right to be protected from what is, at the best of times, a dangerous job. It is a frightening and degrading vision of women that the Conservative government has given us. bts

(1) "The Traffic in Women," *Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), p. 179.

Joan Riggs is an Ottawa activist and writer. She has worked for the Breaking the Silence Collective for the past four years.

by Inge Ferner

On the

My friends had dropped me off at the train station. Here I was, on the night train to Paris, with my newly-purchased statue of an Amazon. Six hours on the train ahead of me, with no refreshments being served, no alcohol, not even mineral water. After four weeks of socializing and heavy drinking I was by myself, in that compartment, the train to Paris being the first step of my journey back to Canada.

You must have come in after we had crossed the border. You said your name was Patrick. Somebody to talk to, I thought. And indeed, you were an interesting person to talk to. You spoke German and French. I hadn't realized before that I was missing something not being able to communicate in French, and this mixture of French and German suited me just fine. You happened to be knowledgeable about a lot of subjects that were on my mind and close to my heart at that time.

After some disillusion about lesbian friends, I had gotten to appreciate the company and the support of my straight friends in Germany a little more. There had even been one man whose main credentials used to be that he had been the lover of one of my best friends for ten years, but who turned out to be a real friend, somebody I could count on, and — it doesn't make me happy to say that — more supportive than many of my lesbian "friends." So I was ready to ques-

tion my uncompromising attitude towards men, not as a species, but to give some chosen individuals a chance. I didn't have to wait long. Along came Patrick for this test.

I remember we talked about Boris Vian. You knew a lot about French "chansons" as well. You smoked Gauloises and asked me if you could try one of my "roll-your-own" Van Nelle. We shared our cigarettes and our pasts. You came and sat beside me, put your arm around me. I didn't mind. You were about ten years younger than I was. I felt more like your mother, and you were cuddling up to my breasts like a little boy who wants to be comforted. But you kept crawling closer to me; so I decided I did not like that and switched to the opposite seat. I tried to explain to you that there were defences I did not wish to be trespassed. You didn't want to accept that, we kept switching seats. Each time you came to sit beside me and didn't accept my boundaries, I changed to the opposite seat. I explained to you that as long as we were just holding hands it was O.K. with me. After all, I was a radical lesbian who hadn't had and hadn't wish-

ed to have any sexual contact with a man for almost ten years (except for some "weird" dreams I used to be ashamed of). You seemed to have gotten the message. I started again to enjoy your company, but the peace lasted only a couple of minutes at a time; and we were back at the old attack/defence game.

At some point I made some compromises: "O.K. you are allowed to touch my breasts." It felt nice, but after a while I felt your tongue in my mouth, and I didn't like it. I changed seats again, feeling I could handle it/you better at a distance. I tried all I could to make you understand, changed from angry outbursts to soft pleas. To no avail.

Sitting across from me, you pulled your pants down, begging me to satisfy you. I felt disgusted. I said "I won't touch your penis, I don't want to dirty my hands." But a little while later I found myself rubbing your balls between my feet or more correctly: between my socks. I felt in control toward this young man whose whole being now seemed to be incorporated in his penis. I don't

NIGHT TRAIN

from Germany to Paris

remember it clearly, but I think you finally had your orgasm. Yes, you did. I remember scolding you for having wet my socks. Then you fell asleep (hadn't it always been like that?), and I decided to sleep for a while, too.

When I woke up, it was nearly dawn and we were approaching Paris. We had made a plan before: you would help me carry my two suitcases and the Amazon and we were to go and have breakfast: croissants, café au lait, mineral water and champagne. You were still sleeping when I went to the bathroom. When I came back, the seat next to the window was empty. You were gone.

I felt betrayed. And I immediately made the connection, remembered, re-felt this same blend of feelings I had experienced a long time ago: I had been fourteen then, and my aunt's husband hadn't come back to our house, to my bed where he used to sneak in "to warm his feet." He had deserted me after having succeeded in forcing his huge penis upon me by perfidious methods of blackmail and abuse of my love and trust. A vague feeling of guilt, too, for having had a little bit of pleasure somewhere along the road.

Back to Patrick, I had been looking forward to the champagne as well and how was I going to carry all my stuff with only two hands which I needed for the Amazon alone? Well, I did manage to get all my luggage from the train station to the airport. On the plane I made ample use of the free booze, knowing it would be the last time for me. (I had decided I was going to give up alcohol once I had put foot on Canadian soil again.)

My lover came and picked me up at Mirabel Airport. Leaving my hesitations behind, I finally decided I would tell her right away about my little "affair" with Patrick. She was not pleased. I pleaded: we have to give men a chance – the same argument she had used on me almost a decade ago when we had first met. But I was confused: why give them a chance if they only ended up in betraying and deserting you anyway if you let them get too close?

I spent a terrible first night of withdrawal; luckily I didn't know then that this was only the beginning of a difficult and painful process. And

I didn't realize before the next day that this whole episode on the train was very likely to have been nothing more than a hallucination. It still makes me feel very uncomfortable that I will never know for sure.

One of the clues that I had made all of this up was that Patrick failed to answer my questions concerning his career. I didn't know what I wanted to do as a career at that time, so I hadn't been able to make up an answer. Another clue was the convenience of the fact that he had no luggage. I was very preoccupied about how I would carry my too heavy suitcases and get this Amazon onto the plane undamaged.

It took me more than 16 months and another sleepless full-moon-night to write this down. There are parts of it that make me want to laugh: seeing myself playing two parts all the time, frantically switching seats back and forth. And there is, more importantly, the scary part of all this, which is that maybe it was necessary for my survival to keep myself awake in that way. It is revealing to me in a lot of ways, and I think I still haven't figured out the whole meaning of it all.

I guess it's called trying to survive.

bts

Indian women have practically no legal right or entitlement to family property on reserves. An Indian woman's right to matrimonial property is only protected by law if she holds a certificate of possession to reserve property. This means that the majority of Indian women have no legal right to occupy their family homes, to retain possession of furniture and other family property, or to get a court order to bar an abusive man.

The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that Indian spouses who live on reserves are not protected by provincial family laws. While this lack of protection applies equally to men and women, Indian women and their children will suffer the worst consequences because of conditions on reserves. The seven-judge panel was ruling on two cases of Indian spouses who had sought rights to family property under British Columbia's Family Relations Act.

The court's decision was based on the constitutional principle that provincial legislation, such as family laws which deal with the division of matrimonial property upon divorce, cannot apply to property on Indian reserves. The judges confirmed the principle that control of reserve land falls exclusively within federal jurisdiction. Furthermore, they ruled that laws governing division of family property are in actual conflict with sections of the Indian Act, which catalogues or codifies the transfer of property on reserves.

The Supreme Court ruled that the court could order some compensation in order to adjust the division of family assets between spouses. While this compensation would help to lessen the unequal division of property, it is only a real help if the couple has a family home that could be sold or other assets which could be divided. Unfortunately, most families living on reserves have very little money, and their housing has a very low market value. In some cases, an order for compensation could grant each divorcing partner a equitable portion; in most cases, however, it could simply mean that both would be without a home and with very little cash in their pockets.

This ruling on B.C. cases has im-

Indian Women Unprotected by Family Law

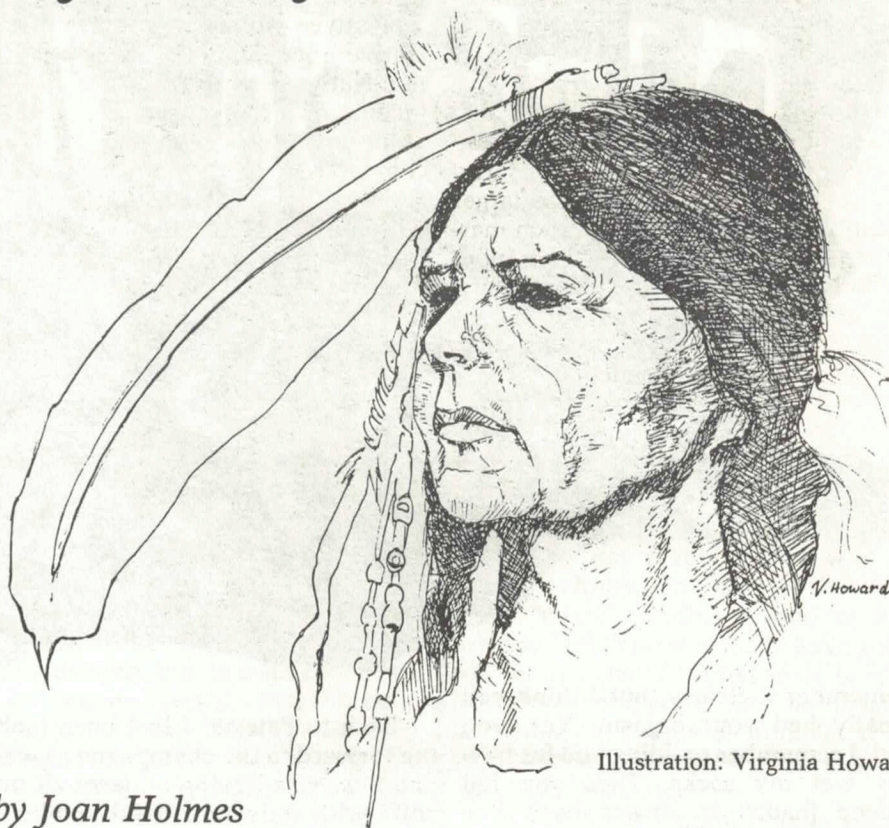


Illustration: Virginia Howard

by Joan Holmes

plications for Indians suffering marriage breakdown on reserves all over Canada. Because the Indian Act does not make any specific regulations for the division of reserve property upon divorce or separation, and provincial laws do not apply, most Indian women are left with no rights whatsoever to family property, and especially to the family home.

Under the current Indian Act, possession of lands on a reserve can be allotted to individual members of a band by the Band Council and subsequently approved by the Minister of Indian Affairs, who then issues a certificate of possession. Members holding certificates of possession may transfer them to another band member or to the band. The transfer must again be approved by the Minister. Most certificates of possession are held by men and their legally married or common-law wives have no right to the property regardless of how long they have lived there or what their contribution has been to building a family home, farm or business.

Less than half the bands in Canada use the certificate of possession system, the others assign reserve land based on tradition without any formal approval from the Government. Traditional systems vary; they may favour the rights of women or men or treat them equally. Traditional practices, however, are not recognized as laws in Canada's courts and therefore even if the system does give women fair treatment, it is difficult to depend upon tradition as a legal right. Under traditional systems a woman's access to family property is at the mercy of the good will of the Band Council and the resources of the band.

The impact of this situation on Indian women becomes more clear if we consider the situation of Native women in the family and the conditions of reserve life.

Indian women are less likely to be legally married than non-Native women and are more likely to have children (1). Regardless of her marital status, a woman has no legal rights to the home she shares with a mate and

her children, unless she holds a certificate of possession in her own name. If her relationship flounders, and she does not have a certificate of possession, she has no legal right whatsoever to live in the family home, to remove family furniture and possessions, or to stop an abusive man from entering the home and harassing her. She is completely unprotected by the laws of this country.

Native families tend to be larger than non-Native families. When marriages break down, children more commonly stay with their mothers than with their fathers. According to the 1981 census, over 20 per cent of Native families are headed by a single parent. Of all lone-parent Native families, 80 per cent are headed by women. The number of Native women raising children without a partner is particularly high in urban areas. In 1981, for example, nearly 35 per cent of all Native families in the Winnipeg area were lone-parent families and 92 per cent of these were headed by women (2).

A divorced or separated woman's right to own or at least to occupy the family home with her children is particularly critical considering the gross lack of adequate housing on most reserves in Canada. Overcrowding affects 40 per cent of families living on reserves (3). The 1981 census shows that, on average, non-Native households have more rooms than people. Over 30 per cent of Native households in northern areas, however, have more than one person per room and nearly 10 per cent have more than two persons per room (4).

Where do women go with their children if they lose the right to live in the family home and alternate housing is limited or non-existent? Often they have no choice but to leave their children with relatives and move to the city.

A woman who left her own reserve to live with a man on his reserve may have lost the right to reside on her reserve, or may not be able to find a place to live even if she were welcomed back. Again, with children to support and no place to live her options are very limited.

The 1981 census shows that more Native women than Native men live in urban areas (5). Is this the result of women being forced to leave because

they have no place to live? Women may have many reasons for wanting to live off their reserves, but lack of rights to property should not be one of them.

Native women earn less than Native men, non-Native men and non-Native women. On average, the income of a Native woman is about 36 per cent of the Canadian male income (6). How can a woman hope to support herself and her children without a home to live in, and with very poor prospects of earning a decent living?

It is very difficult for a woman and her children living off-reserve to maintain their Native language and culture. Because of this, lack of property rights for women must be recognized as a cultural issue that threatens the continuity and growth of Native societies.

The discrimination that Indian women face regarding family property is a part of the larger problem of inappropriate and inadequate laws imposed on Indian people by the federal government.

The Indian Nations are now struggling to achieve the right of self-government and therefore don't generally favour piecemeal changes to the Indian Act but are instead creating a new system of Indian control over their lives and reserve lands. This by necessity must include full control over marriage, divorce and property matters.

Women throughout Canada have fought a long battle to have a wife's right to family property protected, and many provinces have recently improved family law in response to lobbying by women's groups. When Indian people gain the right to govern their own reserves and to control the social laws on reserves, it is hoped that they will develop systems that protect the rights of women to family property and reverse the effects of the unequal and discriminatory non-Indian laws. An examination of the strengths and weaknesses of existing provincial legislation could help Indian women to develop laws and practices to protect their own interests and those of their families. *bts*

(1) See: *A Demographic Profile of Registered Indian Women* (Ottawa: Research Branch, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program, DIAND, 1979), p. 10.

(2) Pamela M. White, *Native Women: A Statistical Overview* (Ottawa: Secretary of State, 1985), p. 22.

(3) *Indian Conditions: A Survey* (Ottawa: DIAND, 1980), p. 30.

(4) *Native Women: A Statistical Overview*, p. 29.

(5) *Ibid.*, p. 9.

(6) *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

Joan Holmes makes her living as an independent consultant, researching women and Native people. She lives in Ottawa with her husband and young son, and has been a collective member of Breaking the Silence for three years.

Resources

White, Pamela M. *Native Women: A Statistical Overview*. Ottawa: Secretary of State, 1985.

Published in English and French.

This booklet consists of statistical information from the 1981 census on Native women. The statistics refer to all Native women – Indian, Inuit, and Métis – without making distinctions based on Indian status.

The information is presented on maps, charts and graphs, accompanied by brief written comments. Topics include: population by region, mother tongue, labour force participation, education, occupations, income, family structure and households.

Guide to Bill C-31: An Explanation of the 1985 Amendments to the Indian Act. Ottawa: Native Women's Association of Canada, 1986.

The Native Women's Association of Canada prepared this guide to explain the details of Bill C-31, the federal government's attempt to eliminate discrimination against Indian women from the Indian Act.

In simple, non-technical language, the guide lays out the major changes brought about by the amendments. It explains who is entitled to have federal status and who is excluded. The distinction between the right to federal status and band membership is clearly outlined, and continuing areas of discrimination are explained. The process for applying for registration and protest and appeal mechanisms are also explained.

LESBIAN

by Tamarac

As long as there have been women, there have been lesbians. However, our existence has been covered up by the dominant patriarchal culture. Not only have we been denied the right to be lesbians but we have been annihilated. Many lesbians were tortured and burned as witches between 1400 and 1800. In the 1940s,

when the women's movement and the present culture. We have been unafraid to demand the radical, to be living examples of a woman's right to walk alone in the streets, to insist on a woman's right not to marry.

Many of us have pioneered work to stop physical, sexual and psychological abuse by men. We have pooled knowledge and resources from within the lesbian community to assist women in healing. We have done this, while usually hiding that we are lesbians, as we are

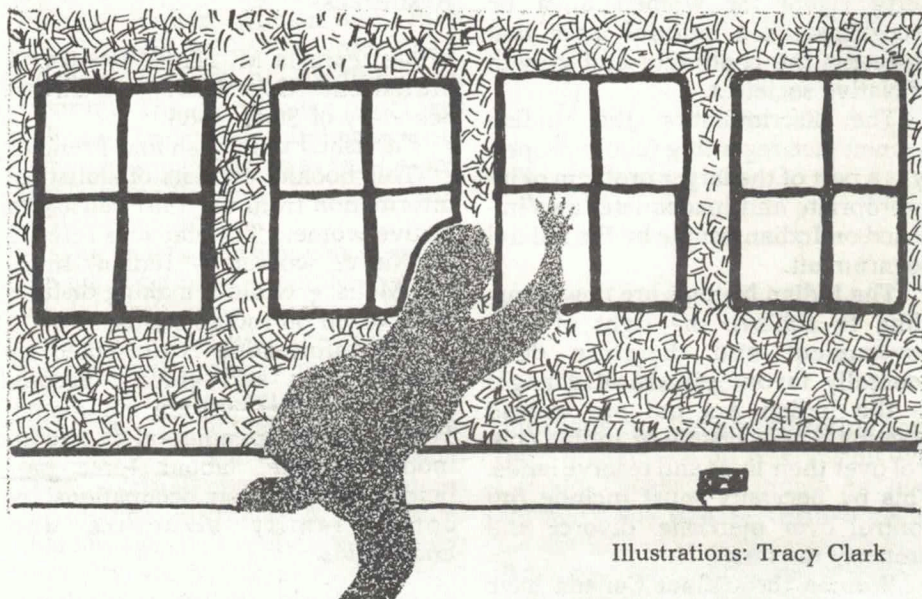
bianism. We have spoken out on our lives and have been told that "it's nobody's business what goes on in the bedroom."

Yet women continue to identify and organize as lesbians. To deny our existence as lesbians is to deny ourselves the opportunity to be part of a proud heritage and a growing and diverse lesbian culture. The recent attacks on feminists, and lesbians in particular, have acutely affected the lesbian community and must be addressed by the larger women's community.

In August 1985, the Charlottetown Rape Crisis Centre organized a conference for the Atlantic provinces' rape crisis centres, transition houses and women's centres. The objective of the conference was to share information and develop skills. At the opening of the conference, women were asked to speak about how and why we work in the women's movement. It was made clear that the discussion was confidential and many of us spoke candidly about our lives. Some of us spoke of our lives as lesbians. Many of us spoke of our experiences as survivors of incest, rape and other forms of brutality by men.

One woman, who did contract work for Pictou County Women's Centre, left the conference early, stating that it was not what she had expected. Breaking confidentiality, she went to local church organizations and, with the support of a local minister, launched an attack on the Pictou County Women's Centre and all other centres which hire lesbians and receive government funding. The information from the conference was twisted and distorted and the discussion of our lives was summarized as negative, man-hating sentiment.

Lesbians and radical feminists bore the brunt of this attack. As is often the case at women's centres, there are lesbians working at the Pictou County Women's Centre. Their credibility as workers, the Centre's ability to serve the women's community and their funding was called into question. The reputation of other



Illustrations: Tracy Clark

lesbians were one of the groups targeted for extermination in Nazi concentration camps. Today, we insist on being visible and on our right to create our own community. Our visibility has resulted in a false assumption on the part of many that discrimination against lesbians no longer exists. However, the recent past has shown that the number of attacks against lesbians is on the increase.

Lesbians love women, and because we do, many of us have been integral to the women's movement, dedicating our lives to changing the situation for all women. There is nothing more satisfying than to see another woman grow strong and live her life with less pain. As lesbians, we have acted as a buffer zone bet-

well aware that women have been taught to fear us.

With each other, we have tried to break the silence and isolation we face as lesbians. The fear of being openly a lesbian is connected to survival: physical, emotional and financial. For identifying ourselves publicly as lesbians, we are accused of dominating. For attempting to locate each other in meetings, to initiate a communication between lesbians, we are accused of "ghetto-izing" or being "exclusive." We have lost our homes, our children. We have been scorned by individuals, misrepresented in the media, fired from jobs, denied access to other countries and abused by male pornography. When we write about our culture, we have been censored and accused of promoting les-

WITCH HUNT

women's groups attending the conference came under attack, as they were viewed as being pro-lesbian.

As an invited speaker, I was publicly identified as a lesbian. Articles I had written on incest from a radical feminist perspective were taken to my employer as evidence to fire me.

The witch hunt was quickly taken up by REAL Women, who published inaccurate information about the conference in their newsletter entitled *Reality*. They stated that lesbian organizations are the primary recipients of government money and cannot be tolerated. They called for a letter-writing campaign demanding that Secretary of State investigate all groups receiving money and stop funding organizations that support and/or hire lesbians.

REALW are concerned with the preservation of "the family." They are against abortion and no-fault divorce. They do not support equal pay for work of equal value, affirmative action and Section 28 of the Charter of Rights which guarantees equality. They are against daycare, sex education in the schools and lesbianism.

Their actions against lesbians are particularly disturbing as they so closely resemble the tactics used by Nazis in Europe in the 1930s and 40s. At that time, Jewish groups, gypsies, lesbians, catholics, gay men, feminists and others who didn't fit the mold of "traditional" Aryan culture were slandered. They had their businesses ruined, and hate literature was circulated promoting misinformation on the groups. As we know, these people were eventually imprisoned, tortured and murdered.

As lesbians, we are alarmed that any degree of intolerance to our lifestyle be accepted. We have only to look to recent history to know that prejudice can escalate to genocide. The REALW intolerance of different lifestyles, their demands upon the government to impose economic sanctions and their circulation of hate literature parallel a frightening history.

A recent and direct attack on lesbians came through the *Aylmer Bulletin*, a local paper in Aylmer, Quebec. The headline of the article read "Women's Activist Misled Aylmer Group; Incest Victim Almost Sent to Lesbians." My name and that of the Healing Centre for Women, where I do work, was mentioned.

The article referred to a workshop on incest that I had presented to the Aylmer Women's Centre in the winter of 1983. It also mentioned a group for incest victims that I organized for girls between 4 and 12 years old in 1985. In presenting the workshop, and in organizing the group, I did not identify myself as a lesbian. I came as a woman knowledgeable about working with victims of incest and I shared ideas about incest.

The article slandered lesbians as promiscuous, anti-male and often sadomasochistic, and inferred that lesbians, the Healing Centre and myself were dangerous to children. This latter insult has been hurled at lesbians from every direction, despite the statistic that 98.2 per cent of sexual attacks on children are by men and despite the overwhelming evidence that we are often working to heal and rebuild the lives of women and girls who have been subjected to male violence. Hurting a child does not enter my mind. Cleaning up a mess I had no part in creating and that is directly related to male violence does.

Out of the frustration at the prejudice we are facing as lesbians, and well aware of the recent escalation of attacks and our limited resources, lesbians in Ottawa have begun to meet more regularly since the spring of 1986. During International Women's Week, lesbians met in various workshops. We discussed the problem of addictions in the community and the connection between addictions and the pressures we face as lesbians. We spoke about our visions and our need to organize. We looked at available services and agreed on a need to expand our options for

meeting each other. Since that time, the network of lesbians wanting to remain drug- and alcohol-free has grown stronger and lesbians are now meeting to organize a variety of events. In addition, a political action group called the Lesbian Amazons has formed.

Lesbianism is not a lifestyle to be voted on by others. Lesbians have existed as far back as what is labelled



"pre-history." We have survived the witch hunts and the Nazi holocaust. We want to see an end to this persecution.

You can help by:

- not allowing prejudice against lesbians to pass and responding to prejudiced remarks or assumptions;
 - educating yourself and others on lesbianism;
 - writing letters to your Member of Parliament and to the Prime Minister which condemn discrimination and prejudice against lesbians;
 - responding to letters or reports in the media that are against lesbians;
 - sending a copy of all correspondence to Lesbian Amazons.
- For further information, contact Lesbian Amazons, care of 242 Besserer St., Ottawa.

Expo Party

Equals Homeless Women and Children

by Linda Ervin

Expo 86 is the event of the year. Every night the lights and the crackling of the fireworks reminds us it's party time in Vancouver. The Prince and Princess have blessed it and the party hats and favours have been distributed to friends and cronies. The world has been invited!

Hundreds of people have been evicted from their homes in downtown hotels and apartments to make room for visitors to Expo. Many have to sleep under the Viaduct or in Stanley Park, while others have had to move out of their community entirely. The residents of the downtown eastside of Vancouver have been forced to welcome the world by giving up their homes. Some of them had lived in their rooms for sixty years.

There is no legislation that protects people living in the hotels from evictions. To provide this protection, Vancouver would have to make a change in its city charter, which needs approval by the provincial government. This has not happened, and so... evictions, evictions and more evictions. It has not stopped and there are more to come.

Ann Inkster managed the Olympia Hotel on Hastings Street. Her rent was \$750 per month. She had to pay hydro, water and gas, and repair anything that was not structural. In February, she was given 28 days' notice to move out or pay \$2,000 per month. Her tenants were elderly and not able to care for themselves. She felt a deep responsibility for them, an unusual quality in a landlord.

Ann had already spent her own money, an inheritance of \$50,000 on repairs, improvements and upkeep of the hotel. She had put in a subfloor, tiled the floors, repaired caving-in ceilings and walls, and replaced

stoves and fridges. The owner had refused to do the necessary repairs, even when advised by the City, and then refused to repay Ann when she did the work.

When she got her eviction notice, she offered to pay the new rent of \$2,000 if he would do the wall repairs. He refused. So the owner got his building with major repairs and new fridges and stoves. Ann, who had spent all her inheritance on the building, got no compensation, had to pay her own moving costs, and now lives on the fifth floor of an old building with few amenities.

Is Ann angry? Yes, but she is too tired to try to figure it all out. She took with her a 66-year-old woman, Frances, who cannot manage on her own. Ann prepares her meals and watches over her to make sure she eats and keeps her spirits up. She still keeps in touch with all her former tenants, checking up to see if they've adjusted to their new surroundings. The owner is completing repairs and will soon have a newly-renovated hotel for the Expo guests.

Frances Gray lived at the Olympia Hotel for 13 years. She had a bed, dresser, table, chair and easy chair. Her pride and joy was the fridge which Ann bought for her. The Olympia was her home, she liked the place, and it was close to First Church where she was involved in community programs. Everything was within walking distance. Now that she has been forced to move away, she has to rely on special transportation to use her community services.

It's the same story for hundreds of others.

The housing situation was already desperate in Vancouver — Expo is making it even worse. As more and

more people are forced out of work, there is a greater demand for lower cost housing. Runaways, street kids, and young people coming to look for a job at Expo are also swelling the ranks of the homeless. People on social assistance, U.I. benefits or low income could often rely on getting housing in the downtown eastside and the surrounding area. Now that possibility is gone.

The hotels and apartments are renting to the Expo guests. Women are forced to move farther and farther away from their home communities and from their support systems. Some women have even had to place their children in care with the Ministry of Human Resources while they look for housing. Women with children are already discriminated against because they have children. Where do they go? To new communities with fewer resources. To vermin-infested and unsafe housing.

The bright lights and fairyland atmosphere of Expo serves as a daily reminder that women and children go homeless. There are fewer dollars for subsidized housing and not enough housing currently being built to accommodate the people being displaced. The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre hopes to have a project soon but move-in date is a few years away. Expo was to benefit the people of B.C. but the poor will see little of the benefits and will pay for the deficit through their continuing low social welfare and lack of adequate housing.

The provincial government has responded in three ways. It has refused to allow a change in the City of Vancouver's Charter which would

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Danger to Women: Free trade Ahead

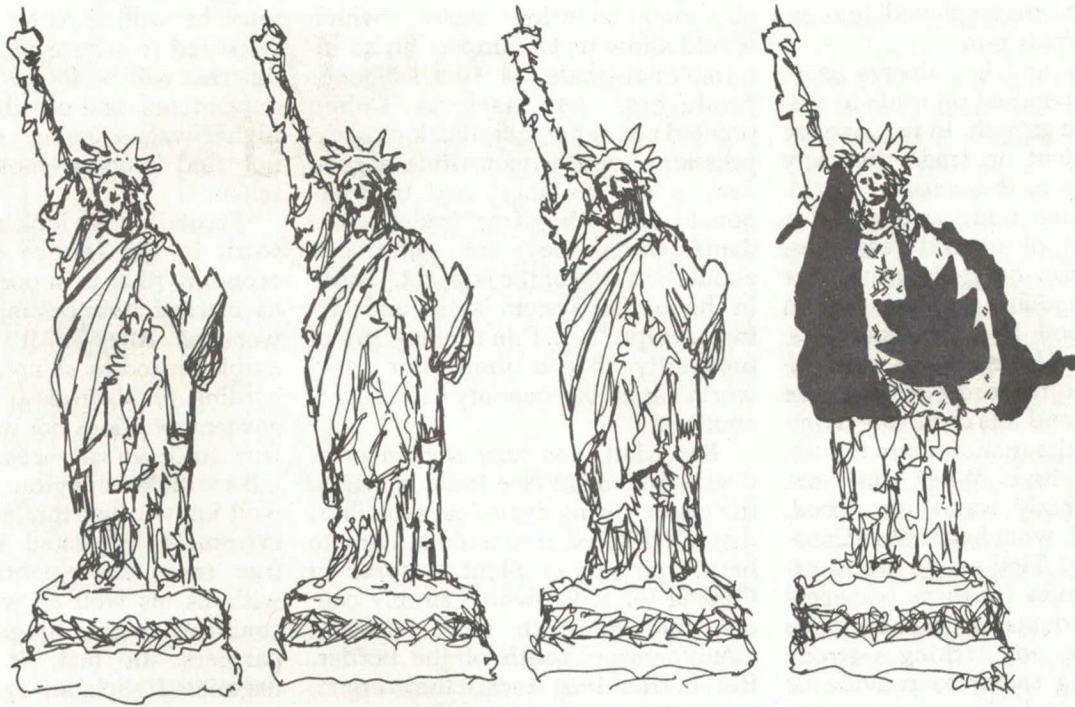


Illustration: Tracy Clark

by Ellen Adelberg

Do not turn this page because you are sure you won't understand any article that discusses free trade. You will, I can assure you. Also, please do not turn the page because you are tired of seeing those two ubiquitous words every time you open your daily newspaper. Articles in the newspaper never discuss what free trade might really mean for women. This article does.

If you have heard about free trade, but only in the mainstream media, you are likely to be wondering what all the hubbub is about. After all, what would be wrong with having unrestricted access to American-made products which, no matter what they are, are often cheaper and come in more colours and varieties than do Canadian-made goods? And why should we not expand our markets for Canadian-made goods to the millions and millions of consumers who live down south of the border? What could we possibly lose in such a deal?

Nothing, claims Brian Mulroney. Lots, claims Marjorie Cohen (a feminist economist at York University and a vice president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women). According to Cohen, if we are women, and work in a service sector or manufacturing industry, or rely on welfare payments to live, we could be hit hard by free trade. But wait a minute, you say, Brian Mulroney is a politician. If Cohen is right, why would Mulroney risk alienating thousands of voters by moving towards a policy which could have disastrous results? If you have a healthy dose of neuroticism bordering on paranoia, you may think Brian is part of the ultimate male plot, conspiring with his cronies to permanently impoverish and disempower women. If you are less prone to rashness, you may simply think Brian is not too bright, and misguided by his trusted and well-read business advisors.

In order to understand why

Cohen's concerns should be weighted seriously, it is necessary to weave our way through the seeming confusion of today's Canadian economy. No easy task, although it was one which was attempted last winter by the Ottawa chapter of Organized Working Women. It was during a series of four lectures which this group held that I chanced upon hearing Cohen speak about the clearly negative implications of free trade for women*, and thus became a convert in the rally against it. I want to state that I am not an economist; however, none of us have to feel that we need a degree in economics to understand what free trade is, or why it is just not going to do us any good.

To begin with, let's look at the type of production Canada has relied upon throughout its existence to furnish economic prosperity. Without a doubt, harvesting natural resources has always been our ticket to maintaining and increasing the general standard of living in Canada. We

have never had a very strong manufacturing sector, although in recent years the service sector (where, by the way, the majority of women in the work force are employed), has expanded at a great rate.

Canada is, and has always been, extremely dependent on trade to sustain economic growth. In fact, we are more dependent on trade than any other country in the western world. The catch is, our trade surplus is due to the export of natural resources, which employs only about six per cent of Canadian workers. When times are good in other countries, primarily the United States, and demand for our resources is high, we are able to spend lots of money to import most of the manufactured goods that are sold here. When times are bad, and nobody wants our wood, iron ore or oil, what happens to Canadian industry? Tied as we are to expecting revenues for these resources from other countries, primarily the United States, and lacking a strong manufacturing sector to provide us with goods to substitute for the ones we import, we suffer the same economic recession as the other countries upon which we depend.

This being the case, and with unemployment still hovering around the ten per cent mark in Canada, what route might we logically take to reduce unemployment and increase everyone's level of prosperity? Economists such as Cohen, Mel Watkins of the University of Toronto, and Sam Gindin of the United Auto Workers all argue that we need to develop our own industries which could produce the goods we now import, and that we need to process our resources before shipping them out. This would result in jobs and a healthier Canadian economy. These strategies need to be accompanied, not by liberalized trade agreements, but if anything, by continued import restrictions in order to protect our fledgling industries.

Why then, you logically ask, are the Tories up on their high horse about negotiating a free trade agreement with the United States? What are they hoping to accomplish? If we can assume that they have used the Macdonald report on the economic prospects of Canada as their ra-

tionale, they would be expecting free trade to result in a "radical restructuring" of the Canadian economy, leading to huge economies of scale in our manufacturing sector, which would allow us to compete on an international scale as finished-goods producers. As Marjorie Cohen pointed out in her talk, theological expressions seem to constitute a good deal of the verbiage used by Macdonald and other free trade defendants when they are questioned about the value of the concept. "Faith" in the market system is one underlying precept; "belief" in the new era of prosperity that a more integrated world capitalist economy can bring is another.

But what, you may say, in practical terms might free trade bring? In the short term, even its staunchest defenders agree, free trade is likely to herald an era of plant closures in Canada for those which simply cannot compete with more efficient manufacturers south of the border. But in the long term, they argue, some of our industries will thrive on their access to new markets in the United States and will grow as job creators and revenue producers. We are told to believe that, perhaps ten or twenty years down the road, Canada will ultimately benefit from liberalized trade with the United States.

Aside from the spectre of immediate job loss for thousands of Canadians, there is a flip side to this scenario, which, for women, is likely to be nothing short of disastrous. First of all, women tend to work in the weakest sectors of our manufacturing industries and therefore are the most likely to lose their jobs in the short run due to still competition in the United States. A tracking study done in the mid-1970s by the government, during a period of unprecedented increase in imports, showed that women who lost their jobs at that time remained unemployed longer than men, and ultimately found worse-paying jobs than did the men who were laid off.

Macdonald, indicating some sensitivity to this situation, suggested that the government should provide some form of "adjustment assistance" to women to move into the new "high

wage" industries that he has faith will flourish under free trade. However, he stressed, women must be "suitably adaptable" in the new era; that is, we must be willing to be retrained and relocated to wherever these new industries will be found. Women with dependents, and possibly attached to higher-wage-earning spouses, will not find such a transition easy to make.

Secondly, let's look at women who work in the service sector of our economy (that is in occupations such as clerical, waitressing, or hospital workers). After all, it is a significant employer today, as noted earlier. According to Mulroney, the Canadian government does not want to include free trade in services in the trade talks with Washington. However, it is well known that the United States is extremely interested in developing free trade agreements in services with us, as well as with any other countries which might be willing partners. In fact, it has already negotiated such an agreement with Israel.

Free trade in services is extremely important to the United States these days because it has lost a significant number of manufacturing jobs to third world countries. About 70 per cent of the American labour force is currently employed in the service industries. Should free trade in services occur, it is likely that even more women in Canada will be forced to work in the traditionally low-paying, non-unionized, dead-end jobs that the service sector provides; only in this case, more and more of the employers will be American, and more and more, the employment standards will be set in the United States, where "right to work" laws at no minimum wage exist in some of the southern states.

And what about the women who comprise the majority of workers in the public services? In the United States, privatization of such services is being actively encouraged. Non-unionized employers, with a tendency to hire part-time workers for less wages and benefits than full-time workers, could be given free licence to compete in the public sector if privatization were given free reign

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FEMINISM IN ACTION

TREATING ALCOHOL AND DRUG ADDICTION

by Kim Curran

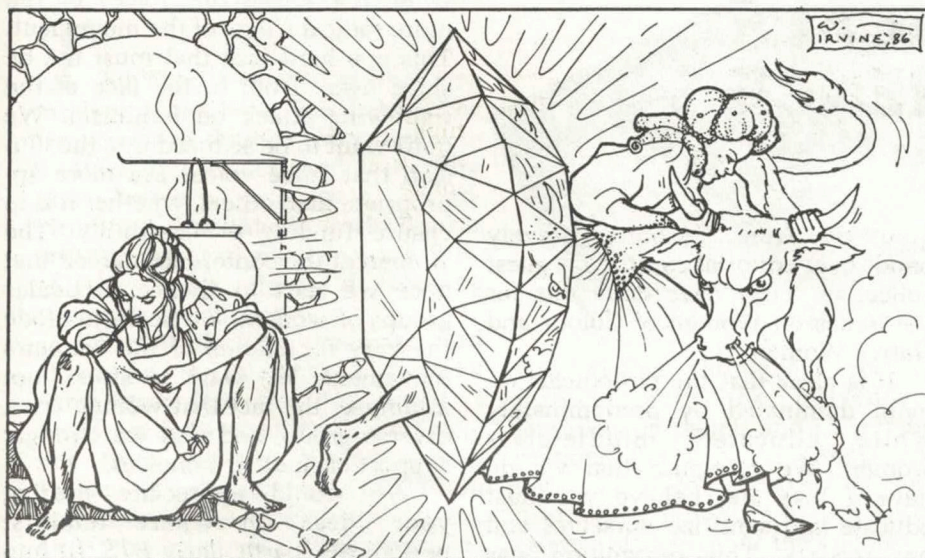


Illustration: Wendy Irvine

As grown women most of us find out that sugar and spice and everything nice is very hard to live up to. The childhood stories we grew up with – Sleeping Beauty, Snow White and Cinderella – are simply fairy tales. Nobody I know has been able to find Prince Charming or live happily ever after.

Although many women may want to fulfill culturally-imposed expectations, very few can live up to all that is expected: the perfect lady, the passive caretaker, homemaker, uncomplaining mother who is always controlled, always nurturing, always tender, always giving and forgiving are roles set up for fictional characters, not for women living in 1986.

Trying to live up to all that is expected and often living with the unexpected (single motherhood, family violence, rape and various forms of harassment) is a continuous struggle. Our inability to achieve the impossible leaves us with feelings of frustration, anger and resentment. The opportunity to achieve personal growth and success becomes extremely rare or completely frustrated. It is no surprise that many women turn to alcohol and/or drugs to dim the pain of real-life situations.

The implication is inescapable. Many dimensions of female addiction are linked to women's powerless social situation. Clearly then, truly significant progress in the treatment and prevention of women's addiction problems cannot come about without a commitment to far-reaching changes in women's status in society. Alcohol and drug activists are well aware of this need for commitment to improving conditions for women as part of long-term solutions.

Among those actively involved in changing the way women successfully recover is the Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre. Amethyst was the first centre of its kind in Canada. A non-profit organization that opened in March 1979, it was set up by and for women. An all-female staff of 7 professionals and about 75 volunteers contributes to the success of the organization.

Women come to Amethyst full of fear, confusion and despair. To overcome this Amethyst provides a warm, happy environment and gives each woman some tools for examining her fears, dreams, sadness, pain and joy. Most important, Amethyst brings together women with alcohol and drug problems to share their explorations. At Amethyst women help each other to realize their potential

strength and individuality with pride and dignity. Amethyst doesn't pretend to have a magic formula for living right or guarantees for the future. But over the course of Amethyst's program, women solve their problems and renew their hope.

Amethyst offers a two-year outpatient program. This means that women come during the day for treatment but go home at night. Through this method of treatment they don't become attached to an artificial environment and never lose touch with their own reality.

Although two years may sound like a long time, we must keep in mind that alcohol and drug problems often take years to develop and therefore also take years to undo. There is no overnight solution. The Amethyst program is very realistic in its approach. In the beginning women come to Amethyst for individual counselling and a once-a-week pretreatment meeting. These meetings give women a chance to get to know the other women with whom they will be going through the program.

Next, there is an intensive seven-day phase during which women come to Amethyst daily for group therapy and education sessions. This part of the program teaches women about the effects of alcohol and drugs on the body, about predisposing factors of addiction, about nutrition and hypoglycemia, and about family dynamics, stress management and assertiveness training.

Throughout the two years, as well as during the seven days, the focus of the Amethyst program is on enhancing self-esteem, initiative, self-assertion, relaxation and independence. After the seven full days, a two-year follow-up program begins immediately. The follow-up is seen as the real key to recovery.

In follow-up, women must come to at least two meetings weekly. The meetings continue to promote a drug-free lifestyle. Problems are dealt with as they arise and educational sessions are also held. These meetings deal

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FEMINIST PERIODICALS CONFERENCE

by Joan Riggs

Have you ever looked at a graphic published with an article and thought that it contradicted what the author was trying to say? Have you ever wondered how publications decide on what to include in a newsmagazine? Do you know that many periodicals grapple with editorial policy to ensure that they challenge our biases and prejudices, whether they be ageism, homophobia, or classism? These were among the concerns discussed when representatives of 30 feminist periodicals from across Canada met for the Feminist Periodicals Conference, held in Orangeville this May.

Four *Breaking the Silence* women attended the conference. We came with specific questions related to our role as a periodical within the women's movement. Is our primary responsibility as a periodical to educate the general public about what feminists are doing and saying, or is it our role to push current debates forward, to continue to refine the politics of the movement? Or should we do both? How can we do that for audiences with different needs and understandings of the issues?

We talked with members of other periodicals who are attempting to address these issues also. Most of us have struggled to define an editorial policy that gently steers the content of our publications. Some publications, such as the lesbian papers, focus all their content and work on one group of women. More often than not, periodicals give attention to a particular issue or group of women through a supplement. *Fireweed*, a

quarterly from Toronto, bravely hands over editorial control to a guest collective. They have done this for the issues on Women of Colour and Native Women.

It is clear that the periodicals remain dominated by predominately white, educated, middle-class women. We recognize that we do have a bias and believe we must educate and sensitize ourselves and our readers. This recognition was reflected in our workshops and the resolutions that were passed at the closing plenary.

In workshops, we tried to identify the class and race bias inherent in our selection of articles, our editing, our use of language and our design. We shared our techniques for staying in touch with the women we serve and explored ways of reaching out to more women. We agreed to integrate race and class analysis in all workshops for next year.

There was a great deal of concern about current attacks on lesbians as individuals and as a group. Lesbians related examples of being asked to fade into the background and remain silent rather than jeopardize unstable funding. As publishers, we rejected the financial and political expediency of silencing women who have contributed greatly to feminism and to women, and resolved to encourage lesbian visibility.

We resolved that the report to the Secretary of State and other funders, and the press release, would reflect the presence of lesbian-only periodicals at the conference. Furthermore, each periodical agreed to publish the resolution related to lesbian visibility and articles, if possible, in October, to coincide with Lesbian Visibility Day in Québec.

It is our responsibility as periodicals to be as vocal and as

diverse as possible, to represent the many facets of feminism. We want to explore and accurately reflect the interests of the vast majority of women, while not losing the voices of the more radical fringe of the movement. This is a hard task that must not be shied away from in the face of the right-wing attack on feminism. We don't want to be seduced into the illusion that some voices are more appropriate than others, whether it is to ensure funding or credibility. The women at the conference agreed that once we start to silence particular groups of women, we begin to erode the very foundation of the women's movement. We want to stress, not minimize, the fact that women are a diverse group, and that we strongly support each other's choices.

We would appreciate hearing your ideas on where feminist periodicals, particularly *BTS*, fit into the women's movement. Are we to be the voice of all women's experience, or only the women who profess to be feminists? Should we talk of all issues that affect women, or only the ones that feminists are presently working on? Please send us a letter. We want to hear your contribution to this ongoing discussion.

bts

Resolution from the 1986 Feminist Periodicals Conference

It was resolved that members of the Canadian Feminist Periodicals Association commit themselves to increasing the visibility of lesbians and lesbianism in feminist publications and furthering the dialogue on heterosexism as a cornerstone of all women's oppression.

This can be done through support for lesbians within our publications, for lesbians within our communities, for lesbian publications in Canada and Quebec, for publications under attack for pro-lesbian/anti-heterosexist positions or articles.

We can also continue the education for ourselves, for our groups, communities and readers as we develop an analysis of lesbian politics and heterosexism.

FATE OF THE EARTH CONFERENCE

"We are against the environment because it takes up too much space and it's too hard to keep clean."

— *Ladies Against Women*

by Alyson Huntly

The Third Biennial Conference on the Fate of the Earth was held at the University of Ottawa from June 4 to 8, 1986. It was designed to explore links between such issues as environmental pollution, world hunger and the threat of nuclear war while, at the same time, developing strategies for change.

Knowing that the organizers had attempted to integrate a feminist perspective into the discussions, I could not help recalling this satirical line from the play *Ladies Against Women*. It contains a note of truth in that cleaning up, taking care of, etc. have traditionally been seen as "women's work." I wondered how the conference would unfold. Would women be doing what has always been our specialty, that is, cleaning up the messes men leave behind, or would it be possible to look at these issues in a new way, one that integrated a feminist analysis?

An estimated 1,000 people participated in the conference and approximately 40 per cent of the speakers were female. The women present included prominent names such as Berit Ås, Francis Moore Lappé, Dorothy Livesay, Marion Dewar and Ursula Franklin. About one-half of the participants were women and the board was led by male and female co-chairs. Clearly, women's representation was not an issue but an integrated feminist analysis implies more than equality of numbers.

According to Terry Padgham, a member of the board of directors, many members considered themselves to be both feminists and activists. "We attempted to break male hierarchical models," she said, "and to create as much participation as possible. We didn't look for resolutions or that style of working. That is why we created the workshops and 'home room' groups. We wanted not just gender parity but to represent women's viewpoint — a feminist perspective on these issues."

Certainly, a feminist perspective

was visible throughout the conference with the presence of feminists on panels and in workshops sessions. Yet Berit Ås, a social scientist, challenged organizers on the invisibility of feminism within the conference structure. At the opening session, she said, "You can't solve a problem until you have understood it correctly. Knowledge is fragmented, with scientists having one piece, theologians another, sociologists another and so on." Ås claimed that feminism provides the necessary integrative framework for a correct understanding of the intermingled problems of this world.



Ursula Franklin addressing closing plenary

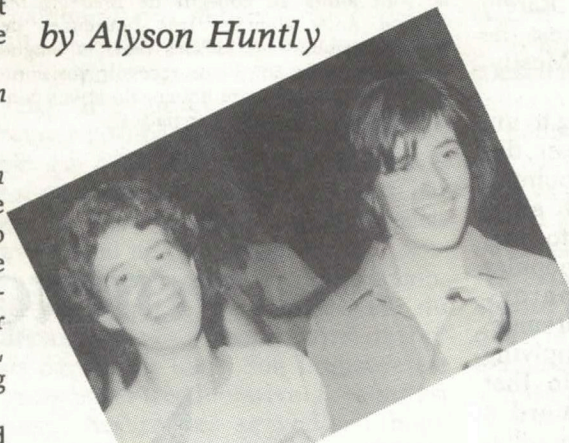
Ursula Franklin's powerful address at the closing session picked up this theme. Franklin integrated physics, social science and feminism with a profound spirituality. "There is a women's world," she said, "a world of experience that allows us to say with confidence that there is a different way of doing things." Franklin contrasted that women's world of equality, in which all contribute, with a hierarchical world that is pat-

terned by and for men.

The elements of the women's world that Franklin views as being the essential ingredients for change are: participation, valuing of experience, an integration of faith and practice and a non-hierarchical structure that allows for equality. Equality requires that "the benefits of our success are indivisible." If we achieve them, clean air, peace, and a sustainable future will be there for all. "If we are to advance in the struggle," she said, "we need these two things: the dimension of spirit and the dimension of deed." In her viewpoint, one of the great successes of the conference was that the dimension of spirit was not neglected. From my conversations with other conference participants, it was clear that there were many highly spiritual moments — moments when the personal and the political came together in very profound ways. The women's world was present to that extent. What is less clear is whether the conference truly succeeded in integrating feminism into its structure and analysis.

The agenda consisted mainly of panel discussions with 50 participants, smaller workshops and "home room" groups. There were only two plenaries because it was felt that participation would be greater in small groups. Carol Shepard, a conference participant, described male and female involvement in panel discussions. Generally, she said, panels had a balanced number of women and men but men raised 80 to 90 per cent of the questions and comments. Although some women brought a specifically feminist

breaking the silence 25



Photos: Alyson Huntly

perspective to the discussions, most of the male audience participation took the form of statements. Rarely did men ask questions or address the central theme of the panel. Mostly, they scored points.

Shepard and I talked, trying to uncover how this might have been different from an organizational point of view. She said: "A feminist alternative approach, it seems to me, would relate closely to a popular education or participatory methodology. That entails awareness, training and experience in applying that kind of methodology. In that sense, the conference maintained a very traditional structure: generally, it assumed that participation would happen. The exceptions were seen in some of the smaller workshop sessions which, because of the skill and intent of the leaders, used popular education methods. For the most part, however, the conference illustrated a need to learn from feminism how to participate and how to create a participatory process."

I asked Shepard a question I was asking myself: did the conference integrate a feminist analysis? She replied that "it succeeded in identifying how powerful feminist leadership is becoming but that is different from integrating it into the program. At the next conference, I would hope that there would be more consciousness of this at the planning stages and as a consistent thread. It became prominent at this event only because of the feminists present." When asked how that feminist perspective was visible in the conference, she said: "It was very clear to me, from my interaction with women who participated, that women are inspired, that women have taken the leadership and are finding alternative ways of doing things. I have been wondering where the hope for an alternative lies in all the gloom and doom around the themes of this conference. I felt it emerged there – a reason and a way of going forward. People were thinking in new ways, they were bringing a vision of what is possible and it is the women who were doing it." bts

Alyson Huntly works in the field of international development. She joins the BTS collective with this issue.

Quelques mots du collectif

Puisque de nouveaux membres francophones se sont joints au collectif de *Breaking the Silence*, nous sommes très heureuses de pouvoir publier des articles dans la langue française. Nous aimerions recevoir vos commentaires quant à cette nouveauté et vos contributions, françaises ou anglaises.

A word from the collective

We are pleased to publish this article after a long absence of any writing in French in *Breaking the Silence*. We are able to do so now because Francophone women have recently joined the collective and are looking forward to working in their first language. We plan to include articles in French on a regular basis, and we'd like to hear from you about this. We also welcome articles, letters or reviews in French as well as in English.

PORNOGRAPHIE

la mort dans le cœur



par Annick Amyot

Le 21 mars 1986, le Théâtre Parminou présentait "Ça crève les yeux, ça crève le cœur" à l'Auditorium des Anciens de l'université d'Ottawa. Le thème présenté faisait écho à la Semaine internationale des femmes – la pornographie et ses ramifications sociales. Dès le début de la pièce les spectateurs sont entraînés dans le va et vient quotidien d'une dizaine d'hommes et de femmes exposés volontairement ou involontairement, directement ou indirectement aux images violentes que la pornographie affiche aux quatre coins de la ville.

Celle-ci s'incruste dans la vie de tous les jours et se glisse insidieuse-

ment dans les rapports les plus intimes entre femmes et hommes. Elle altère l'image et la perception que les femmes ont d'elles-mêmes et que les hommes ont du "deuxième sexe". Elle dépouille leurs rapports affectifs et sexuels de toute dignité. "Ça crève les yeux, ça crève le cœur", dans l'espace restreint que permet une pièce de théâtre, développe les différentes facettes de ce fardeau social.

Gérard et Thérèse gèrent le dépanneur du quartier. Tous deux font face à une situation économique précaire. Pour Gérard cependant, chaque article vaut son pesant d'or – le lait comme le savon, les bonbons comme les revues de mode ou les revues pornographiques. Dans cet étalage de femmes nues et

déshumanisées, humiliées, dégradées il ne voit que du feu. Ce sont des revues comme les autres. Qu'elles détruisent les notions d'amour et de tendresse, dénaturent la sexualité des femmes et celle des hommes il n'en voit rien. Il ne le perçoit pas. Pourtant ça crève les yeux.

Claire est institutrice. Elle cherche à persuader Gérard de placer dans son magasin une affiche annonçant la tenue d'un débat sur l'éducation sexuelle des enfants. Ses yeux parcourent la marchandise et tombent sur l'étalage des revues pornographiques où les femmes sont sexuellement asservies et mutilées, avilies et violentées. Elle est indignée et blessée. Elle a été touchée au cœur.

C'est ainsi fait. La pornographie bat, enchaîne, viole pour exciter sexuellement les consommateurs. Elle soumet et subjugué femmes et enfants pour alimenter des impulsions, des désirs, des phantasmes, des frustrations, des besoins sexuels. Toute une panoplie de chaînes, cordes, menottes, fouets, couteaux, marteaux-pilons même sont associés aux plaisirs sexuels des hommes consommateurs de pornographie. Rien ne manque à ces chambres de torture.

Face à ces images de violence Claire reste abasourdie. En effet, comment se fait-il que le plaisir sexuel des hommes soit lié à des actes de violence ? Pourquoi leur faut-il dominer, même torturer une femme, un enfant pour être sexuellement satisfaits ? Elle se demande aussi pourquoi l'asservissement des femmes et la mutilation de leur corps ne font face qu'au silence, au mépris et à l'insulte.

Claire reste perplexe. L'éducation sexuelle qu'elle préconise pour les enfants rencontre le tabou, l'indignation et l'embarras d'une société qui n'a pas encore réussi à faire face à cette nécessité. Pourtant Christian et Nathalie, âgés de huit ans, ont accès aux revues pornographiques. Ce matériel est à la portée de leur curiosité et innocence. Pour Claire il n'y a pas de doute. La pornographie ne peut se substituer à une éducation sexuelle saine.

Jean Consomme par contre, ne se pose aucune question. Il achète des revues pornographiques, se crée des phantasmes et les assouvit. C'est lui

qui offre bonbons et caramels aux enfants qui jouent dehors. C'est lui également qui abusera d'une petite fille et qui la laissera sans vie. Cela suffit pour que Thérèse ouvre les yeux. Il y aurait un lien entre ces revues pornographiques et l'abus sexuel qui a tué. La prise de conscience est amorcée. Elle participera au débat sur la pornographie que le conseil municipal ne pourra pas éviter.

Reste entre autres Yvan Cauchon, le pornocrate, le fournisseur du dépanneur et le propriétaire du bar de danseuses nues. Son industrie est prospère et très lucrative. Son bar est plein. Ses revues se vendent bien. Sept hommes sur dix en achètent souligne-t-il. Au Québec son industrie récoltait 500 millions de dollars en 1979-1980 (1). Il est ravi mais ne se contente point. Il exhorte Gérard à plus acheter encore — d'autres revues, d'autres gadgets pornographiques. Gérard est pris au piège. Il est endetté et c'est à Yvan Cauchon qu'il doit cet argent.

De leur côté Monique et Denis se heurtent et se bousculent. Ils ne se comprennent plus. Ils n'arrivent plus à s'aimer. Ils ne savent plus comment s'aimer. A chacun ses phantasmes. Denis ne voit plus qu'une femme génésique — un corps morcellé en organes génitaux. Monique se débat avec ses romans d'amour où les rapports de force ne sont pas exclus. Rupture, réconciliation, rupture ; c'est l'impasse.

Denis noie son irritation et son impatience dans l'alcool et s'étourdit dans un bar de danseuses nues. Il cherche une solution aux problèmes sexuels qu'il vit avec sa femme et croit la trouver dans la pornographie. Il n'y a pas d'autres avenues, aucun autre modèle n'est offert. C'est l'échec complet. Monique est outrée des scènes du vidéo — une femme attachée et violée par plusieurs hommes — que Denis propose en guise de solution. Elle aussi a été touchée droit au cœur. Son intimité et son intégrité ont été violées. C'est elle et toutes les femmes qui ont été violentées. Elle plie bagages et s'en va.

Denis reste seul. Il ne comprend plus rien. Il est incapable de traduire son affection et son amour en gestes tendres. Il est à la merci des messages implicites des revues de mode; il est la proie des revues pornographiques.

Le machisme et la violence lui sont donnés en prime. Son visage a été façonné.

Il s'insurge pourtant. La prise de conscience se dessine. Il remet en cause la caractérisation de son sexe et le conditionnement social auquel il est soumis. Il crie. "Mais qu'est-ce qu'il va me falloir pour pouvoir jouir ? Va-t-il falloir que je viole, que je tue moi aussi ?" Il est défait. "Est-ce que je sais encore pleurer ? Est-ce que je vais encore pouvoir pleurer ?" Il est vrai que le matériel pornographique banalise l'agression sexuelle et désensibilise le consommateur.

Personne n'échappe à la pornographie; c'est ce que "Ça crève les yeux, ça crève le cœur" a voulu exposé au grand jour. Les rapports affectifs et amoureux sont dénaturés. Hommes et femmes se voient reléguer dans des rôles particuliers — des agresseurs et des victimes. C'est encore cela que les acteurs du Théâtre Parminou ont voulu souligné. Plus encore ils se tournent vers les spectateurs pour les inviter à prendre part au débat et pour les inciter à recréer des rapports entre hommes et femmes sur de nouvelles bases.

bts

(1) Le Théâtre Parminou, "Ça crève les yeux, ça crève le cœur", Le Théâtre Parminou : Prospectus; La Coopérative des travailleuses et travailleurs de théâtre des Bois-Francs, Victoriaville, Québec, Canada.

Document de référence

"Pornographie et violence faite aux femmes et aux enfants", *Les cahiers du socialisme*, n° 16, 1984.

Le Théâtre Parminou est une troupe professionnelle. Les créations collectives qu'il présente depuis treize ans déjà ont pour but de sensibiliser la population à divers problèmes sociaux. C'est ainsi que "Mettez-vous dans ma peau" soulève la question du racisme; que "Le salaire brille pour tout le monde", "L'or rose", et "L'égalité en affaires" parmi d'autres créations encore, soulèvent diverses questions sur la situation sociale et économique des femmes.

Annick Amyot est une des nouvelles recrues de BTS. La Semaine internationale des femmes a porté fruits; un silence de plus a été brisé.

BOOK REVIEWS

Still Sane

by Persimmon Blackbridge
and Sheila Gilhooly

Vancouver: Press Gang, 1985

reviewed by
Gabrielle Nawratil

What is it like to be a woman who suffers and survives psychiatric abuse because she is a lesbian? *Still Sane* is that story. Through her writings and through life-size sculptures by Vancouver artist Persimmon Blackbridge, Sheila Gilhooly tells about the three years she spent in institutions.

Originally an art show in 1984, *Still Sane* received an overwhelming community response. Press Gang has recently produced the work in book form. It uses Gilhooly's complete text and many of Blackbridge's sculptures, photographed by Kiku Hawkes. Also included are several articles which complete the book.

Women's stories of pain and survival in the hands of psychiatry have, I think, been heard before. As feminists we have critiqued medical violence against women, and some of our psychiatric experiences have formed an important part of that outcry. This book moves beyond what has come before, both in choosing a lesbian's story as the central focus, and in the mixed media it uses — which disturbs and enrages in a way words alone cannot.

Through Sheila's monologue, we hear her doctors' response to her refusal to give up her identity as a dyke. She is locked up, drugged, subjected to shock treatments and



Persimmon Blackbridge and Sheila Gilhooly

treated with suspicion when she befriends another woman. Sheila's experiences in institutions did not take place in the Dark Ages, or the 1950s, but in the last decade.

The inhumanity of staff and doctors to psychiatric patients in general is drawn into sharp relief. But beyond that, we see the additional abuse and trauma a lesbian faces in that already-powerless situation. The raw and acute anguish can't be escaped, and we are not intended to be spared.

In the end Sheila is triumphant — she makes it out of the institution, but only by appearing to accept and condone an environment sure to drive sanity personified over the brink. "So there I was, trying to pass for normal, all drugged up in this place that stinks of shit and lysol and every day is endlessly boring except for the occasional flashes of violence and I'm powerless to protect myself and I'm normal. Normal women don't talk about being a lesbian and they're always cheerful. I was always good and smiling, never complaining or bothering the staff, keeping my mouth shut and smiling, always obedient and quiet and nice and smiling, in the middle of this hellhole, smiling

and smiling. And I did it. After three months I got out."

The book is interspersed with statistics which make it clear that this is not just one woman's story. The kind of people who end up in psychiatric hospitals to be "cured" is documented, as are the effects of the drugs and the shock "treatment" administered there. Other lesbians' experiences with psychiatry are also included through both the comments from the exhibit, and some of the articles at the end of the book.

The power of *Still Sane* for me is that large sections echo so closely the experiences of women I have known: lesbians who have spent time in psychiatric "care" against their will, who, in desperate and vulnerable moments, trusted that they would receive help free of societal disdain for their sexual identity. I could not isolate this story as the exception. These abuses are all too true for too many others.

The impact of the sculpture which is *Still Sane* is haunting, and so eloquently speaks the torment and the ultimate triumph of Gilhooly's text. We are faced with much more than a story. We see an artist's strong

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political statement: an affirmation of our choice to be lesbian. While what is painful is undeniably difficult to look at, it is also a call to political action against such atrocities.

To know that horrors such as those Sheila Gilhooly endured and survived exist is crucial for all of us. What emerges through her pain is a strong, visible and empowered lesbian identity. This is an important contribution to women's culture, and deserves to be recognized as our art. It is also a contribution to a saner world, so that, as Nym Hughes states in an article at the end of the book, "what happened to Sheila will never happen again."

bts

Gabrielle Nawratil has worked on Breaking the Silence for the last two years doing layout and design.

Still Sane is also available in video (60 min.) Distributed through Women in Focus, 204-546 W. Broadway, Vancouver, B.C., V5Y 1R3.

Common Magic

by Bronwen Wallace

Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1985

reviewed by
Tünde Nemeth

They say you can't judge a book by its cover. Usually, this is true. But *Common Magic* is an exception – an exceptional collection of verse by

Kingston poet Bronwen Wallace. The cover art is as simple and as profound as the poems within. Its lines are clean, spare and strong; it depicts an ordinary domestic scene with plenty of detail but no clutter. You, the viewer, stand or sit at one end of what seems to be a living room. The doorways between rooms of the house line up so that you can see bits of each room, just enough to tell what each room is for – part of a living room chair, part of a television; three chairs down one side of a dining room table, so you can imagine that there are three more plus two at the head and foot; part of a stove, cupboards, counter, table. Finally, the exception, the room at the very opposite end of the house: the doorway is slightly off-centre, door only partly open, details of the room hidden.

This sequence which the perspective makes you follow is the same as the sequence of the poems themselves. The collection invites you first into the living room, with poems that set out the general mental space, that define the poet's terms of reference. Gradually the poems become more intimate, more concerned with the inner life of human beings. It's hard to say exactly when it occurs, but somewhere in the first, say, six or seven poems, you suddenly realize that you've moved into the dining room, to the level of intimacy that you reach by sharing a meal. Then, a little later, the poems take on the intimacy of the kitchen table, the coffee and talk shared with really good friends. The final poems in the collection draw you further and further into that far, dim room where, you know without seeing, the edges of things are blurred and nothing can be explained, only survived.

Bronwen Wallace is a poet firmly

rooted in the real world, both inner and outer. Her painful consciousness of the cost of being a woman in this world constantly comes through in the poetry. Equally important is Wallace's sense of place, of geography. The two come together in "Place of Origin" (p. 11), where Wallace establishes the relationship between women and the land as being quite different from that between men and the land. "The men know land and weather, / who owns it and for how long"; women know about the lives of the generations that have lived there – marriages, divorces, batterings, number of children and how they turned out.

Wallace identifies herself with this women's way of seeing in the next poem, "Distance from Harrowsmith to Tamworth." Here, she tries to convey to her son – and at the same time, the reader – her own sense of belonging in her community, by telling him stories about his grandparents and great-grandparents, stories about how they are very much connected to a particular place.

The title poem struggles with people's isolation from each other, which seems to come from the necessity to lead an inner and an outer life simultaneously. The "common magic" is that "anything gets done/ at all": that the mechanic can concentrate on fixing the car, the letter carrier on delivering the mail; that thousands of day-to-day miracles can take place in spite of having to "move in your own seasons/ through the seasons of others."

In "Coming Through," Wallace explores friendship and the loss of friendship. The women in the poem break down the barriers and enter each other's lives intimately, although they also do lead their separate lives.

BOOK REVIEWS

The death of a friend, says the poet, not only separates you from her, but from yourself, "part of you in exile/ for the rest of your life."

Wallace's poems also deal with women's anger — anger at battering, at rape, at random military brutality, at the mentality that believes in "winnable" nuclear war. Somehow this collection of poems brings all these together under one roof, the roof of that ordinary house on the cover. My personal favorite in *Common Magic*, the one that always overwhelms me, is "Thinking with the Heart," a poem that condemns the attitude of the Law towards battered women, a poem that tries to break the silence around battering, but acknowledges the inadequacy of words. "I wish I could show you," she says, "what a man's anger makes/ of a woman's face... I wish there were words that went deeper than *pain* or *terror*."

This poetry is finely crafted, each word weighed for its implications and possibilities. Although Wallace acknowledges that words are not enough, she also makes it clear that they're all we have to bridge the gap between people. Her poetry is one of commitment, especially to women, and of survival for all of us. bts

Tünde Nemeth is a graduate student in Women's Studies at Carleton University. Her Master's thesis will be about Canadian feminist writing in French and English. She has worked as an editor and writer, and is a member of Ottawa Women and Words. She joins the BTS collective with this issue.



The Canadian Journal of Women and the Law Volume One: Women and Equality

*reviewed by
Carroll Holland*

The soft cover, in grey, white and maroon, is graphically simple and serene — as befits a bilingual academic journal with amply-footnoted essays, commentaries and reviews. But the contents of *Women and Equality*, Volume One of the *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, are anything but simple, and anything but passively serene.

This new publication is a significant development in feminist publishing in Canada. It contains vital, original research that illuminates the minute legal detail upon which heterosexual male domination has traditionally rested in our society, and it gives space for women to articulate the struggles that are essential to bringing this domination to an end.

Significantly, actual publication of the *Journal* began in 1985, the year in which all the equality provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms finally became effective.

The journal's editors selected 19 contributions by women working in a number of disciplines to demonstrate the range, intensity, variety and history of women's equality claims.

Five of the papers are in French and each item includes an introductory summary in the alternate language.

Many of the footnotes to the articles are quite interesting on their own. As well, there is a bibliography of material on the history of North American Black women. Background information is also provided on contributors.

The *Journal* is not light reading, but it is definitely essential reading. There were a few slow spots for this primarily unilingual, lay reviewer, but only a few. Positions are clearly stated and abundantly illustrated. Material is either highly topical (concerning, for instance, affirmative action; charges against Dr. Morgentaler; and legal discrimination against gays), or it reclaims lost history (including a report by Carolyn Strange entitled "The Criminal and Fallen of Their Sex: The Establishment of Canada's First Women's Prison." The multidisciplinary approach is to be applauded; at least half of the major articles are contributed by women who work in history, sociology, education, philosophy and human rights.

The lead article in the *Journal* is a 41-page essay (with photos) by Constance B. Backhouse on Torontonians Clara Brett Martin's five-year struggle to become the first woman admitted to the practice of law in Ontario. Opposition from the all-male Law Society of Upper Canada was so strong that Martin twice had to take her case to the Ontario Legislature. (In 1892, W. D. Balfour introduced a bill stipulating that the word "person" in the Law Society's statute should be construed to include females as well as males. Premier Oliver Mowat supported her case to divert public attention away from his reluctance to sup-

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port women's demand for the vote.)

In another article, I learned that the word "person" which had always been a more or less neutral word to me, is in fact far from neutral. Katherine de Jong, in her riveting article, "On Equality and Language," explains that historically, Canadian courts have turned the ambiguity of the word "person" in law to the advantage of men, by refusing to include women when interpreting legislation which confers rights and privileges on persons. De Jong points out that women have not been excluded, however, when a statute imposes burdens. For the first time, I began to comprehend fully the enormous significance of Section 28 of the Charter, which states that rights and freedoms are guaranteed equally to male and female persons.

Eighty-nine years after Clara Brett Martin gained admission to the legal profession, Canadian women still have a long way to go. Feminist perspectives have not yet altered legal "knowledge," as Mary Jane Mossman points out in her well-written essay, "'Otherness' and the Law School: A Comment on Teaching Gender Equality." In another article, Esmeralda Thornhill compellingly describes how the basically white women's movement has failed to take into account "the silenced screams of Black Women." Margaret Leopold (a pseudonym) and Wendy King document how lesbian mothers consistently lose their child custody cases in "Compulsory Heterosexuality, Lesbians, and the Law: The Case for Constitutional Protection."

But there is reason for optimism. In particular, Jennifer K. Bankier points out that the Canadian Charter of Rights calls for an important feminist goal: that is, it calls for a

standard of substantive equality or "equality of result." The remedial provisions in the Canadian Charter in fact go beyond the traditional conception of affirmative action, she says in "Equality, Affirmative Action, and the Charter: Reconciling 'Inconsistent' Sections."

The ultimate feminist goal is magnificently articulated by Angela R. Miles in her insightful historical overview, "Feminism, Equality, and Liberation":

When the principles of women's equality and specificity are together clearly articulated, feminism presents an alternative rationality which enables it to move beyond pressure politics to become a complete politics. And when the politics includes, also, an awareness of the significance of class and race, it has the potential to become the deepest and most radical challenge to domination that has yet emerged.

One of my few complaints to the journal's editors is that they handled the anti-pornography versus anti-censorship debate by having an anti-pornography writer (Susan G. Cole) review an anti-censorship book (*Women Against Censorship*). Does adoption of this approach indicate that women lawyers have a built-in bias towards legal "solutions" to problems? Moreover, why is this particular element of violence in our culture singled out for isolated treatment, in lieu of addressing the violence epidemic in all of its North American forms?

This item aside, it is fortuitous that the *Journal* should appear just when reactionary groups in Canada are on an upswing. Of particular concern to heterosexual and lesbian

feminists is the organized opposition of cupcake-bearing REAL Women, a small but vocal group of frightened, white, English-speaking, middle-class women whose societally-nurtured self-definition rests solely on their relationship to an income-earning male, and to their offspring. REAL Women's unresearched and highly derogatory statements against feminists in general and lesbians in particular are simply no match for the deliberate, reasoned, humane and specific analyses in the *Journal's* 269 pages.

The advent of the *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* is a wonderful reminder that determined, thoughtful and compassionate efforts to achieve genuine human equality are underway every day, everywhere: in our courts, in our universities, in our places of work and in our homes. But it is also a reminder that much more of this steady and deliberate work needs to be done, and that feminists must never let up on their efforts. bts

Carroll Holland is an Ottawa freelance writer, whose background includes mainstream journalism as well as the alternative press (in particular, GO INFO, the publication of Gays of Ottawa).

The *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* is published twice yearly by the National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL). A two-issue subscription to the *Journal* is \$35 for non NAWL members, \$20 for students and low-income earners. A single issue is \$17.50 (or \$10 for students/low income). Cheques should be payable to Canadian Journal of Women and the Law, 323 Chapel St., Ottawa, K1N 7Z2.

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protect hotel renters. It claims that Expo has contributed to the cleaning up of the downtown eastside. Secondly, it has established a Housing Commission to look at the housing situation. To date, the Commission has primarily focussed on the alleged

abuses of cooperative and non-profit housing. Finally, the provincial government has made and continues to make some funds available for housing, especially for seniors and disabled people. The shelter portion of welfare cheques is considered a housing program. They provide no

support for housing for women, alone or with children.

Expo wants to show the world a beautiful city by the sea, surrounded with snowcapped mountains. The glitter and beauty of Expo and Vancouver hide the desperation of the homeless women. The Expo Scream

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with different facets of women's lives, such as sexuality, career and community service. In essence, follow-up offers guidance.

There is no typical description of the women who come to Amethyst. They are from every walk of life and could easily be your mother, sister, co-worker or friend.

Over the past two years the number of women seeking treatment at Amethyst has grown dramatically. The centre recently moved to a larger location to be able to accommodate the number of women who need help. This is not to say more women are running into trouble with drugs, but that more are coming forward and asking for help. Public awareness is increasing, doctors and other health professionals are making referrals and women are finally taking a long hard look at what they've been putting into their bodies.

Hopefully in our lifetime an end will come to the altered state society. But for now we must continue to of-

fer effective programs both for men and for women to help them overcome their addictions.

bts

Kim Curran is the public relations and development officer for the Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre. She is interested in all aspects of health care but especially how they pertain to women. She is a member of Women's Health Interaction and the Ottawa Health Care Public Relations Association.

Resources

English

Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre
425 Parkdale Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario

K1Y 1H3

728-9745

Non-residential treatment for alcohol/prescription drug dependent women, educational programs for the community.

Empathy House
360 Sunnyside Avenue

Ottawa, Ontario
K1S 0S4
232-7319

Co-operative residential and non-residential programs for alcoholic women 15 years and older.

French
Maison Fraternité
242 Montréal Road
Vanier, Ontario
K1L 6C5
741-2523

Treatment centre/recovery home for sincerely motivated male/female alcoholics over 18 years of age desiring service in the French language.

Bilingual
Our House
101 James Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1R 5M2
233-0353

Drug and alcohol recovery facility for male/female clients primarily ages 13 to 35 years.

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Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5J1

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Machine drowns out the cries of poorly housed and hungry children. bts

Linda Ervin is a community worker, minister of First United Church, and Chairperson of the B.C. Alternative Housing Commission.

Resources for article: Laurel Kimberly, Downtown Eastside Women's Centre; Sandra Curie, Crabtree Day Care Centre; Ann Inkster and Frances Gray, evicted tenants; John Turvey, Downtown Eastside Youth Services; First United Church.

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here. Clearly the strength of our public service unions, which have achieved impressive wage gains for women, would be severely threatened.

There is another, and perhaps more dire threat to women who work in the service sector, regardless of whether or not free trade in services is negotiated. That threat is embodied in the American wish to make everyone play on a level playing field (this is literally the language of Washington, as Mel Watkins points out). Are we talking about National Football League franchises or exchanging goods? Neither; we are talking about the need perceived in the United States for its free trading partners to reduce any unfair advantages industries may receive in the other country (Canada, in this case) due to government policies, programs and subsidies. Such unfair advantages might be considered in Washington as government-sponsored maternity leave benefits which constitute two-thirds of women's salaries here, but only 50 per cent of women's salaries in the United States. Even Canadian medicare plans are seen in America as an unfair subsidy to our workers. While our welfare state is no doubt inadequate, do we really want to replace it with the American model, replete with its thousands of homeless citizens?

Last but not least, what about the potential effects of free trade on women who live either alone or as mothers on social assistance? There is no question that welfare and pension benefits in this country are outrageously inadequate, but they are certainly unlikely to improve if we align ourselves more closely with America, home of Reaganomics and social welfare budget-slashing.

Higher social assistance payments in Canada than in the United States may well be perceived as yet another unfair government subsidy – for complex reasons only economists could fathom.

Where then lies the support for the concept of free trade? According to the findings of a national poll undertaken in mid-January of this year, a majority of Canadians favour a freer trade arrangement with the United States. Why? Do they really know what the results might be? Apparently not. The poll revealed that most Canadians think they will be better off if a deal is struck. Expectations of gains were evidently highest among residents of British Columbia and the Atlantic provinces. The greatest irony here is that the Atlantic provinces have been part of a free trade area for the past one hundred years (Canada), yet they remain relatively impoverished compared to the rest of the country. Access to larger markets for them has meant little in the face of an unwillingness by those with money to invest in any industries other than fishing and mining.

The poll shows clearly that the general public does not have enough information to judge what the true costs for all of us might be if some form of free trade with the United States is ratified. There is no question that this is because the media has devoted little attention to airing any thoughtful analysis of either side of the issue. For women, the issue has been even more obfuscated due to the general unwillingness of even the left wing press to dwell at any length on the specific implications of free trade may have for us.

In the end, the United States may turn out to be the biggest opponent of

all to free trade. At the time of writing, it is busy slapping new import duties on shakes and shingles, due to pressure that the American lumber industry has exerted on its government. Not exactly an omen for Brian Mulroney and his highly paid free trade sales agent, Simon Reisman. In the meantime, though, it behooves us to educate ourselves about the kind of economic strategies that might actually benefit women, and to raise our feminist voices in protest against any moves that are clearly to our detriment. bts

*This article is based in large part on notes taken during Marjorie Cohen's presentation to members of the Ottawa chapter of Organized Working Women, as part of its series last February and March entitled "The Women's Economic Forum." The forum was organized by chapter members to empower themselves in the area of economics. Feminist economists were invited to share some of their insights on how our economy does (or does not) work.

Ellen Adelberg is a writer and researcher who has been involved with BTS for three years. She and another woman are currently editing an anthology of Canadian feminist writing on women in conflict with the law.

Resources

Cohen, Marjorie. *The Macdonald Report and its Implications for Women*. Toronto: National Action Committee on the Status of Women, 1985.

Watkins, Mel. "Ten Good Reasons to Oppose Free Trade." *This Magazine* 20, no. 1 (April 1986).

Gindin, Sam. "Free Trade and Competitiveness: Developing a Left Alternative." Mimeo. United Auto Workers, 1985.

Stephen, Jennifer. "Pennies from the Patriarchy, Women in the Economy." *Broadside* 7, no. 8 (June 1986).

Reid, Angus. "Coming Out Ahead in Calculating Free Trade Talks." *Report on Business Magazine, Globe and Mail*, June 1986.

For You, For Us: An Exploration of Lesbian and Gay Issues for the Helping Professional is a booklet produced by Pink Triangle Services (Ottawa). It is part of a training workshop on homophobia geared to social workers, health care workers as well as the general public. For more information contact:

Pink Triangle Services
P.O. Box 3043, Stn. D
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 6H6
(613) 238-1717 or 233-0152

If you have any **research information on Women's Sexual Imagery** (both heterosexual and lesbian) and in particular, imagery made by women for women, in photographic media (both historical and contem-

R E S O U R C E S

porary) and if you are interested in sharing research information and suggestions, please write to:

WSIP
c/o The Toronto Photographers Workshop
80 Spadina Ave., Room 310
Toronto, Ontario
M5J 2J3.

Some publications available from:
Lesbian Rights Project
1370 Mission Street, 4th Floor
San Francisco, CA
U.S.A.
94103
(415) 621-0674

Recognizing Lesbian and Gay Families: Strategies for extending Employment benefit coverage

Cost: \$5.00 U.S.

Lesbians Choosing Motherhood: Legal Implications of Donor Insemination

Cost: \$5.00 U.S.

Lesbian Mothers and their Children: An annotated Bibliography of Legal and Psychological Materials

Cost: \$5.00 U.S.

C O N F E R E N C E S

Empowering women through communication strategies, MATCH International Centre - Annual General Meeting, Saturday, September 20, 1986, Ottawa. There will be hands-on workshops on film, video and print resources. For information contact:

MATCH International Centre
401-171 Nepean St.
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 0B4
(613) 238-1312

Congress of Black Women of Canada, Thursday, October 23 to Saturday, October 25, 1986, Vancouver. For information contact:

Glenda Sims
President
CBWC
3603 21st Ave.
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 0V2
(306) 569-3610 Ext. 719

Second International Congress on Women's Health Issues, Thursday, November 6 to Saturday, November 8, 1986, Halifax. Theme: The Impact of Culture, Society and Public Policy on the Health and Care of Women.

For information contact:
Dr. Phyllis Noerager-Stern
Council General
International Council on Women's Health Issues
School of Nursing
Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
(902) 424-2535

Atlantic Women and Housing Conference, Thursday, November 6 to Sunday, November 9, 1986, Halifax. For information contact:

Jane Brackley
Atlantic Women and Housing Conference
1094 Tower Road
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3H 2Y5 (902) 421-8711

Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) Annual Meeting, Friday, November 7 to Sunday, November 9, 1986, Moncton. Theme: Feminist Research: Retrospect and Prospect - Women's movement, women and development, reproduction and the new technologies. For more information:

CRIAOW
151 Slater St., Suite 415
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 5H3
(613) 563-0681

Coming Together Again: A Women's Sexuality Conference, Friday, November 7 to Sunday, November 9, 1986, Toronto. This year's conference will feature Greta Hofmann, Sandra Butler, Deborah Gregory, The Company of Sirens and 30 exciting workshops. For more information contact:

Side By Side
Box 85, 275 King St. E.
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(416) 626-5465