

The Red Berets

WHO WE ARE

The Red Berets are a group of socialist feminists who like to sing. We first got together to prepare songs of solidarity and struggle for International Women's Day in March, 1981. We liked the idea of raising issues of concern to women in a form that was both popular and accessible. We were well received that day and began to have a feeling for the effectiveness of the form we had chosen when we demonstrated with about 300 others against a "pro-life" rally that evening. The Red Berets led the group in the songs we had been singing all day and we were delighted to see that everyone was singing with us.

It became clear very quickly that not only did lots of women want to sing, but that singing was a useful and lively way of generating a sense of solidarity. We kept singing — with new members all the time — because we kept being asked to sing at benefits and rallies and demonstrations and on the picket line.

Now, our priorities are still the same: we are a singing group dedicated to raising issues of concern to women in a popular way. We continue to invite the participation of all interested women. We are not professional entertainers (though we do have a couple of pros in our midst).

The
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WHERE WE'VE SUNG

During the past year, the Red Berets have sung at a number of events: rallies, picket lines, demonstrations, public meetings and benefits.

Following is a list of some of these appearances:

- International Women's Day 1981
- Gays and Lesbians Against the Right Everywhere (GLARE) Day
- Fight the Right Forum (Sponsored by IWDC)
- Pro-Choice Rally, Mother's Day
- Domitilia Barrios de Chungara
- Riverdale Action Committee Against Racism (RACAR) Rally
- Lesbian and Gay Pride Day
- Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) Picket
- Parkdale Action Committee Against Racism (PACAR) Rally
- Library Workers' Benefit
- El Salvador Demonstration
- Anti "Positive Parents" Rally
- Action Daycare Rally
- Tel Air Strike (Oshawa)
- Canadian Union of Educational Workers (CUEW) Picket Line (York University)
- Irwin Toys Picket Line
- Women's Press Book Launching (for *One Proud Summer*)
- Marxist Institute Benefit

WHAT WE SING ABOUT

The Red Berets sing about women's oppression — in whatever form it takes — and this involves a number of different areas, although we stress the relationship among them all. The songs we sing include the following issues:

abortion, daycare, domestic labour, international solidarity, lesbian rights, police harassment, racism, reproductive rights, the rise of the right, sexism, songs of unity and struggle, union struggles, women united and working conditions.

When we are asked to sing, we bring our entire repertoire with us. We are prepared to emphasize a particular theme or issue on request, but it is the connection between these various areas of struggle that we have come together to sing about.

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH US

If you would like us to perform for an indoor event, we would appreciate having at least two weeks' notice. We have a more spontaneous response to singing at outdoor demonstrations, rallies or picket lines and try to ensure there are at least six Red Berets in attendance at these events.

To contact us, call (416) 555-5555 or 555-5555 or write to 115 Spadina Road, Toronto, Ontario M5R 2T1.

