

TIGER LILY

MAGAZINE BY WOMEN OF COLOUR



YOKO ICHINO
Marva Jackson

**THE VERTICAL MOSAIC IN CANADIAN
PERCEPTIONS OF VISIBLE MINORITIES**
Susan Korah

**THE JESUITS AND
CANADA'S NATIVE PEOPLE**
Susan Daybutch Hare

BEVERLY SALMON
Zanana Akande

**THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT IN LATIN
AMERICA: BALANCE AND PERSPECTIVE**
Luz Helena Sanchez Gomez

**THE PEACE MOVEMENT
WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE INT'L ARENA**
Margarita Papandreou

Denied personhood, and so the right to the vote until 1921, women in Canada are latecomers to the political scene. Women had burst into the political arena after many years of collective opposition to the status quo. But the aggressiveness and determination which characterized their successful struggle to achieve their political rights has not spanned the years to achieve any more than women's token representation in the legislative assemblies of our municipalities, provinces and country.

Their goal, the franchise, achieved, women's collective aggression dissipated; wrapped in the security of the possible, they turned their attention to moral questions. This was a dimension considered more appropriate for their focus, although the real leadership was left to male church ministers and preachers.

In 1988, 67 years after women's personhood was recognized in Canada only a handful of women have been elected and appointed seats in the Federal government. The Provincial governments do not boast consistently greater percentages, and the Municipal arenas add only an occasional increase to season the political pot.

When we focus on the existence of visible minority women in government the numbers are too often reduced to zero. Identifying as they do with two groups whose political rights were bitterly opposed, one on sexist and the other on racist grounds, they came late to the meeting.

And when they came, impeded and retarded by the fears and reality of bias, they preferred to apply their skills, knowledge, and dedication to the necessary, but often unrecognized activities of the political manoeuvrings behind the scenes. Many assumed the detailed and endless tasks of political parties, helping to form policies, raising funds, launching campaigns, canvassing for votes. Others preferred to work from outside the political ranks, championing causes; battering the politicians

to perform as they thought they should; pushing them to legislate social reform which protected the powerless, provide for those without, and established services to respond to changing social patterns.

Such political roles, though too often unrecognized, or acknowledged as only secondary, are as necessary to politics as the front line politicians.

Gradually, but steadily, more women are concluding that their causes might be best championed by women who share their interests; or that it might be more expedient to carry the torch rather than only to light it and hope that it will be used to illuminate the issues of importance to them. For ultimately the results depend on the effectiveness of the politicians.

Now, bolstered by years of suffrage, and the examples of successful women politicians, still too few, but existing in numbers at least sufficient to deny exceptional status, increasing numbers of women are standing for election.

This issue of *Tiger Lily* features and will continue to feature thumbnail sketches of women politicians in different political settings. Their causes and issues may include those of special interest to women, but more importantly, they bring to the legislature an analysis of all issues to reveal the possible affects on the many constituents within the population. Such analyses are generally more complete, perhaps for three reasons: i) They are done by a group sensitive to the concerns of women, concerns which were and still are too often ignored or under-represented. ii) They are studied by a group for which the fair achievement of the goal is key, for the equitable and fair treatment of all groups will ensure these achievements for women. iii) The importance of the relatively minor and personal issues seems, in women's view, undiminished by the larger political picture.

Zanana Akande

Publisher
Ann Wallace

Editor
Zanana Akande

Editors
Marjorie Agosin, Zanana Akande,
Ayanna Black, Margaret Chen,
Leah Creque-Harris, Marva Jackson,
Victoria Lee, Susan Korah,
Karen Tyrell

Contributing Editors
Luz Helena Sanchez Gomez,
Susan Daybutch Hare, Rosario Ferre,
Margarita Papandreou,
Marlene Philip

Research Editor
Adrienne Shadd

Cover Photograph
David Street

Art Director
W. Horak

Director of Photography
Cathy Belleslies

Business Manager
Gloria Fallick

Advisory Board
Gay Allison, Glace Lawrence,
Ana Mendez, Ann Noonan,
Arun Mukherjee, Beverly Salmon,
Leslie Sanders, Anita Shilton,
Rita Zikas

- 1 **EDITORIAL**
- 3 **SOCIAL ISSUES: THE VERTICAL MOSAIC IN
CANADIAN PERCEPTIONS OF 'VISIBLE MINORITIES'**
Susan Korah
- 5 **HISTORY: THE SHADD SCHOOL OPENING**
Adrienne Shadd
- 9 **ESSAY: THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT IN
LATIN AMERICA: BALANCE & PERSPECTIVE**
Luz Helena Sanchez Gomez
- 12 **POETRY**
Marlene Philip
- 14 **HISTORY: THE JESUITS AND CANADA'S
NATIVE PEOPLE**
Susan Daybutch Hare
- 16 **EDUCATION: BEVERLY SALMON**
Zanana Akande
- 18 **FICTION**
Rosario Ferré
- 21 **PROFILE: YOKO ICHINO**
Marva Jackson
- 23 **ESSAY: POLITICS: WHERE VISIBLE MINORITY
WOMEN ARE INVISIBLE**
Susan Korah
- 25 **ESSAY: THE PEACE MOVEMENT:
WOMEN'S ROLE IN
THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA**
Margarita Papandreou
- 27 **VISUAL ART: DREAMS & REALITY**
Margaret Chen
- 29 **HEALTH: THE POLITICS OF WOMEN'S HEALTH**
Victoria Lee, M.D.
- 32 **BOOK REVIEW:
JAMAICAN STORIES**
Leslie Sanders

Tiger Lily Magazine is published by Earthone Women's Magazine (Ontario) Inc. P.O. Box 756, Stratford, Ontario N5A 4A0. ISSN 0-832-9199- Registration: 758390. Authors and artists retain copyright 1988. No part of this magazine may be reprinted without prior permission. Unsolicited manuscripts or artwork should include a stamp self-addressed envelope. A writing guideline is available upon request. Tiger Lily Magazine receives financial support from Women's Program, Secretary of State.

The Vertical Mosaic in Canadian Perceptions of 'Visible' Minorities

by Susan Korah

Racism in Canada? Eyebrows shoot upwards and a startled, incredulous silence freezes the air whenever I take a deep breath and plunge into the topic. "The woman must be crazy or paranoid or both", my white fellow-Canadians seem to suggest, although few are impolite enough to say so openly.

What with the recent explosion of racial violence in the U.S. and the brutal fact of apartheid in South Africa confronting us day after day in screaming banner headlines, it seems like an act of sacrilege, or at least a violation of the rules of polite society, to talk about racism in Canada.

Yet as an emigre from the so-called "Third World", (India), I will gather up all my resources of courage and maintain that yes, racism is alive and well in Canada.

It may not be the stuff of banner headlines. It does not take the form of slow-simmering anger and hatred exploding in scenes of violence and carnage across TV screens.

Racism in Canada may not take such spectacular, dramatic or institutionalized forms, but nevertheless it is here — subtle, insidious, difficult to pin down and measure, next to impossible to fight.

Feminists (of all colours) have recognized one form of it and have called it sex-role stereotyping. Today, thanks to the persistent and conscientious efforts of the most articulate of them, mainstream Canadian society has become a little more sensitized to the damaging effects of sex-role stereotyping.

Yet a curious parallel to sex-role stereotyping exists in white Canadian perceptions of other races that make up the majority of the world's population. I would call this race-role stereotyping and those of us who happen to be female, as well as "visible" are operating under a double set of obstructionist forces — sexism as well as racism — that seem to defy our best efforts.

Yet to my knowledge, nobody seems to talk about race-role stereotyping and very few are even aware of it. By attempting to break the Great Wall of Silence and to start a dialogue on the subject with white Canadians (even those with feminist leanings), a member of a "visible" minority like myself runs the risk of appearing to be a zany Don Quixote, tilting away erratically at windmills.

This race-role stereotyping colours the attitude of the vast majority of Canadians of European extraction, and can be subtly damaging to non-white minorities. It can be a very real stumbling block in the job market for example, or the education system or even in personal relationships with white Canadians. (Would you be eager to pursue a relationship with someone who assumes at first meeting that you must be a cleaning lady?)

Race-role stereotyping, in my view, very often occurs at an unconscious or subliminal level. Because of deep-rooted and complex historical processes — mainly several centuries of colonial domination of the world by the "white" races — most white Canadians (and Americans and Europeans for that matter), carry a kind of "vertical mosaic" image of race relations, deep within the innermost recesses of their minds.

Often working at an unconscious level, the "vertical mosaic" model of the world's races pictures the white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant male at the top of some hypothetical hierarchy, and other racial groups arranged in a kind of descending order, with women of the "visible" minorities at the very bottom of the heap. This translates itself into the notion that all other races are somehow inferior to, or "behind" Anglo-Saxons in everything from material prosperity to articulate intelligence.

To put it another way, a nearly unassailable assumption of Anglo-Saxon dominance and "su-

periority" is built into the mental conditioning of most North Americans of European descent.

These unconscious mental processes reveal themselves in various ways. One is through a phenomenon that I call "The Empire Strikes Back!" This is the hero-worshipping tendency of most North Americans to regard all Europeans, particularly British people, as highly cultured, "urbane" and sophisticated, and conversely to imagine that all "Third World" people, particularly Africans, and to a lesser degree, Asians, Latin Americans and Caribbean people, are doomed to eternal backwardness and under-development.

Thanks in part to the high profile Royal Family, the afterglow of the (British) Empire still lingers on. Although Canada is economically and materially ahead of Britain, and is an independent sovereign nation with its own flag and constitution, Canadians are ever ready to pay homage to an English accent, to English "manners", and to just about anything perceived as English. Never mind if the accent is from the coal mines of Yorkshire or the slums of London; it is nevertheless invested here with an aura of sanctity which many Britons themselves find surprising.

There is a certain cachet to being English in Canada, and Englishness is associated with certain kinds of prestige, with royalty, aristocracy and therefore with "class".

At the other end of the spectrum, being black and female is linked with the humblest and lowliest stations in life. A friend of mine (white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant) once told me of a show he had seen on a CBC channel. It showed a very real incident that had taken place in the Supreme Court of Ontario.

"Will the counsel for the defense please stand up?" requested the judge at the appropriate time. A petite black woman stood up. "Will the counsel for the defense please stand up?" repeated the judge, completely missing the fact that the black woman was attempting to address him. "Will the counsel for the defense STAND UP?" he demanded impatiently, all the while naively unaware that despite his own personal stereotypes, the Jamaican-born woman was a qualified barrister, perfectly competent to speak in a Canadian court of law!

Similarly, being East Indian or Chinese, or Vietnamese is somehow perceived as being "backward" in some vague, nebulous way, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

Because of Canada's highly selective (some would say highly discriminatory) immigration policy in the late 1960s and early 1970s, many Canadians from the South Asian subcontinent are highly educated people, with years of training behind them. Their highly specialized skills and

persistence have enabled many South Asian men, and to a lesser extent women, to gain entry level positions in fields such as medicine, teaching and engineering.

Yet the "immigrant-from-the Third-World" stereotype persists. Implicit in the comments, questions and reactions of most white Canadians is the assumption that such highly valued attributes as intellectual achievement and cultural sophistication are the exclusive property of white people.

Compared to Britons for example, immigrants from the "Third World" have enormous difficulty selling themselves in the job market. Their talents, educational qualifications and skills (when acquired outside North America or Britain) are brushed aside with cavalier disdain, manifesting itself in a range of reactions from polite skepticism to outright disbelief in their validity.

Age-old myths and stereotypes die hard. Such well-established inhabitants of the Western imagination as the black-in-chains, the "backward" Indian woman from a poor, rural society and the "inscrutable and corrupt" Chinese cannot be banished overnight. Yet it is in the best interests of Canadian society as a whole that we work at dispelling these negative stereotypes that prevent significant sections of our population from achieving their highest potential.

It is up to the stereotyped minorities, working in co-operation with the more enlightened members of the majority — and there is an encouraging number of these — to try and erode the damaging stereotypes. It is also up to the majority, particularly the leaders and moulders of public opinion in Canada to realize that in the increasingly competitive world of international business, racist stereotyping is highly damaging to everyone, not merely to the so-called victims.

Multiculturalism involves far more than annual Caravan festivals celebrating the food and entertainment traditions of other cultures — admirable as these projects may be. The influx of immigrants from all over the world has made Canada's largest cities into colourful, cosmopolitan and vibrant places, with a proliferation of exotic eating places and exciting ethnic events.

But until all of us — including the minorities — become more open and flexible in our attitude to all races, multiculturalism boils down to a mere tourist attraction. When that judge in the Supreme Court of Ontario and others of his ilk have no more difficulty acknowledging persons of any racial background or sex in positions which were once reserved for Anglo-Saxon males only, we shall have created a truly multicultural society.

Susan Korah is a corporate communications consultant and a freelance journalist with a special interest in women's issues.

The Shadd School Opening

by Adrienne Shadd

This past spring marked the occasion of an historic event in Toronto, Canada. On Thursday, April 16, 1987 the official opening of the Mary Shadd Public School took place in Scarborough.¹ It was the first time in Canada's history that a public institution had been named after a Black woman. We could take pride in the fact that one of our own was being recognized and her achievements were celebrated by the entire community.¹ It was as if, through this one gesture, the contributions of Black people — their mere existence — was finally being acknowledged by the wider society after 350 years of history. Although it was not nearly enough, April 16th certainly felt good.

Upwards of seven-hundred people filled the small gymnasium-auditorium to capacity and another 150 had to be accommodated in a tent outside the building equipped with a television monitor of the proceedings inside. The school-children's artwork decorated the hallways and paper cutouts and drawings of trains throughout the school symbolized the Underground Railroad by which many early Blacks arrived in Ontario. The school motto "Freedom To Be", painted across the walls of the gymnasium, had been carefully chosen to reinforce this theme and the fight for equality and dignity of freed slaves which Mary Ann Shadd had waged.

It was a very moving affair. Dignitaries such as the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario Lincoln Alexander, federal member of Parliament for York-Scarborough David McCrossan and Alvin Curling, Minister of Housing in the Provincial Legislature joined many other honoured guests in celebrating the event. A 140-member choir, a school band, and the Mary Shadd singers provided music and songs about the woman and her life. Articulate young students of all nationalities thanked the guest speakers and presented them with gifts from the school.

As a Shadd descendant, what made the occa-

sion particularly memorable was the presence of so many Shadd relatives (eighty-three in all) who had come from all over Ontario and the United States to share in this tribute. Some had travelled from as far away as Miami, Florida and San Jose, California to be there, making it a truly unforgettable family reunion.

We were there to honour Mary Ann Shadd, but found ourselves equally inspired by the participation of family members in the official ceremonies. Carolyn Shadd Robinson, a great-great niece of Mary Ann Shadd, spoke of the school opening as "more than a significant landmark in Canadian history", and as a "symbol of our family and ethnic pride". She introduced internationally-known portrait artist and sculptress Artis Lane, also a great great niece of Shadd, who had flown from Los Angeles to unveil an oil portrait of her famous ancestor. Commissioned by the family to create a lasting tribute to the occasion, Lane described how it took "three efforts" to arrive at the final likeness, an experience in which she "felt her presence" and stunningly captured the qualities of strength and determination that were so much a part of Shadd's character.

Dorothy Shadd-Shreve, great-granddaughter of Mary Ann's father Abraham and resident of North Buxton, Ontario² delivered the keynote address. With a lifetime of achievements as a teacher, author and community worker, Dorothy couldn't have been a better choice to represent the Shadds as keynote speaker. In a very personable and "down-to-earth" speaking style, she reviewed the life and significance of Mary Ann Shadd. Describing how, as a young woman, she had corresponded with Mary Ann's daughter Sarah Cary Evans when the latter was seventy-three years old, Dorothy provided a living link to our past and the person whom we had all gathered to honour.

In retrospect, it was no coincidence that the three representatives of the Shadd family on the

stage were women. As breadwinners, activists, and the mainstay of church, school and social organizations, Black women have quietly and unpretentiously made their mark on the community. And as guardians of the thread of family which is handed down from one generation to the next, they have been the chief communicators of family history through stories and photographs. How touched Mary Ann Shadd would be to know that so many descendants were present to share in this posthumous distinction, and how gratified to realize that the Shadd legacy which she helped to create is being carried on by the talents and contributions of these three women.

The school naming could not have been a more fitting tribute to a woman who devoted her life to the education of her people as a teacher, writer, lawyer, and the first Black woman editor of a newspaper in North America. Mary Ann came from a family which stressed education and it was this belief which prompted Mary Ann's father Abraham to move to Pennsylvania when his children were barred from the schools in Delaware. Her Quaker education was put to use immediately upon graduation, and she taught Black children in Delaware, New Jersey and New York City, many of whom would otherwise have gone without an education.

In 1851, Mary Ann and her brother Isaac moved to Windsor, Canada West after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, which jeopardized the liberty of free Blacks as well as slaves. She was hired by Black parents to teach in a private school for their children which became one of the first integrated schools in Canada. Despite a number of setbacks, Shadd, who taught ten subjects including reading, geography, history, botany and grammar, was considered a gifted teacher and received the praise of the community. However, a dispute with Henry Bibb, editor of the *Voice of the Fugitive*, over what Shadd considered his abuse of power led to her dismissal from the teaching position. She became convinced of the need for another newspaper, free from Bibb's influence and hence *The Provincial Freeman* was born.

The paper began publication in 1853. As one of the foremost leaders of the emigration movement of Blacks to Canada, Shadd, through the "Freeman", advocated Canada as a place of settlement for Blacks. In addition, it supported abolition, temperance, and the women's movement. It attacked the management of several Black communal experiments, particularly the practice of "begging", and segregation. Mary Ann initially thought it wise to conceal the fact that the editor was a woman by using only her initials as a byline. To raise funds, she travelled extensively through-

out the United States as a lecturer, often enduring hardship and racist abuse along the way. In her absence, Isaac took over the helm of the newspaper.

In 1856, she married Thomas F. Cary, a barber from Toronto, and they settled in Chatham. There, Shadd continued her involvement with the newspaper until it ceased publication in 1859. In 1860, Thomas died, leaving Mary Ann with a young son and daughter.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Shadd Cary was commissioned by the Union Army as a recruiting officer — probably the only woman to be so hired. She was offered \$15 for every Black man she could enroll and was reported as successful as any recruiter in the government. After the war, Mrs. Cary moved to Washington D.C. where she taught and later served as principal to three large schools.

At age 46, Mary Ann returned to school and became the first woman law student at Howard University. However, because of her sex, she was not permitted to graduate, and three years later Charlotte E. Ray (her Howard roommate) became America's first Black woman lawyer.

Increasingly Shadd Cary's activities centred around women's rights issues and, in 1880, she organized the *Coloured Women's Progressive Association*. She also became a member of the *National Women's Suffrage Association* a year later, although she herself had successfully registered to vote as early as 1871, challenging the country's restriction on woman suffrage using the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Nearly a decade after her first attempt, Mary Ann Shadd Cary returned to law school and, by 1884, was a practicing attorney. She died on June 5, 1893, at the age of seventy.

Frederick Douglass once said: "She is a pioneer among coloured women, and every coloured lady in the country has a right to feel proud of her. Such a woman demonstrates the possibilities of her sex and class". In 1976, the Washington house in which she lived was declared a national monument in tribute to a woman who had dedicated her life to the fight for dignity and equality.

But who exactly was responsible for the naming of the Malvern District school after Shadd? What were the forces behind, and which culminated in the historic evening of April 16, 1987?

Certainly from the point of view of demographics, the face of Scarborough has changed over the last twenty years. Originally a predominantly White middle- and lower-class suburb, Scarborough inhabitants now encompass a sizeable immigrant and non-White population, of which Blacks are well-represented. From this

standpoint, it makes sense that a Mary Shadd Public School should have come into being here.

However, the questions raised earlier must be understood in the context of what many Blacks in the Toronto area view as the intransigence of Metro School Boards around the issues of racism and multiculturalism. They are especially critical in light of the controversy which erupted just two weeks prior to the Shadd School opening when a Scarborough Board of Education Trustee attacked the name of Mahatma Gandhi, which had been proposed for a newly-planned school. Calling him a "crank" and "not particularly admirable", the Trustee described Gandhi's pacifism



Photographs by Roy Greene

as "remarkably shallow" and said, among other things, that he had a "fixation with bowel movements".

Although it can be argued that the Board's rejection of the proposed name on the grounds that Gandhi was not a Canadian is justified, it leaves one stunned by the seeming contradictory turn of events. The very Board which was about to officially open the Mary Shadd School found itself embroiled in controversy over the racist comments of one of its Trustees.

Ten years ago, Dr. Daniel Hill, respected historian and author of numerous works on Black history in Ontario (for example, *The Freedom-Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada*), first proposed the Shadd name for a school in the Scarborough area. Little attention was paid to the idea at the time. In subsequent years it was put forward on more than one occasion without success. However, when it was announced in 1984 that a new school would be built in the Malvern subdivision of Scarborough, David Owen, a Scarborough Trustee who had taken up the cause, and a small group of Black parents with children in the Scarborough school system planned strategy.

Formed five years ago to address the educational problems of Black children, the Scarborough Black Education Committee (SBEC) was concerned about the lack of Black history and culture being taught in the schools, and the degree to which it might be incorporated into the secondary school curriculums of Scarborough. According to then chairperson Lloyd McKell, the Mary Shadd School campaign provided the perfect opportunity to sensitize the Scarborough Board about the rich Black history in Canada.

The SBEC, led by McKell, current chairperson Simeon Benjamin, and vice-chairperson Emogene James got to work. A massive letter-



writing campaign was staged from people supporting the proposed name, and a petition was organized in the Malvern District to rally the support of the residents of the area. In addition, each and every Board member was telephoned, ensuring that nothing would be left to chance.

At the Board level, Owen's lobbying efforts proved indispensable. As well as submitting the name for the Board's approval, Owen thoroughly researched the history of Shadd and personally visited North Buxton to speak with her descendants. Owen must be given full credit for spearheading the drive to name the Malvern school after Mary Ann Shadd, and his commitment to this end was undoubtedly a key factor in the Board's ultimate decision.

The vote took place in the spring of 1985. Lloyd McKell and Ken Jeffers of the Harriet Tubman Organization³ of Toronto addressed the Board, appealing to the sense of history which it would create, and calling attention to the contribution which Shadd had made to the development of early Ontario. In addition, someone spoke on behalf of the name Martin Luther King, injecting a little healthy competition into the proceedings.

In the end, however, the Board voted unanimously in favour of the Shadd name.

Now that the Mary Shadd Public School is a *fait accompli*, one hopes that it will serve as a source of inspiration and achievement for children from all walks of life. As for Black children, whose need for positive role models is critical, the Mary Shadd Public School will hopefully instill a deeper sense of pride and self-esteem. Certainly, if the official opening is any indication, the reinforcement of Black pride and history which appears thus far to have taken place at Mary Shadd provides an atmosphere unequalled at any other public school in Toronto. And if the educational system is to be truly responsive to the needs of its citizens, we look forward to a time when schools will bear the names of the great figures in history regardless of race or cultural background — figures of the stature of Mahatma Gandhi — because these racial and cultural backgrounds are to be found right here in Canada, as part of our Canadian mosaic.

As for the Shadd family, the school opening was a very proud moment, one in which history had come full circle. A woman who had devoted much of her life to the education of her people was being honoured almost one hundred years after death by the naming of a school after her. For all who were present, there was a sense not only of the importance of our heritage, but also that we were witness to the making of history — one in which, as Black people, we would finally begin to take our rightful place as co-builders of a nation.

Adrienne Shadd has her M.A. in Sociology. She is a researcher and currently working on a book about Black Canadian Women.

NOTES

¹ The City of Scarborough, Ontario is a municipality within greater Metropolitan Toronto, with a population of approximately 480,000.

² North Buxton is a small rural Black community located near Chatham, Ontario whose residents are for the most part descendants of the inhabitants of the famous Elgin Settlement, haven for slaves in the pre-Civil War years. Many members of the Shadd family currently live in the Buxton-Chatham area.

³ The Harriet Tubman Organization, which takes its name from the famous eighteenth-century Underground Railway "conductor", provides counselling, development and activity programmes for Black youth in various locations across Toronto.

REFERENCES

- "Exclusion of Gandhi as school name called abhorrent", *Globe and Mail*, Wednesday, April 1, 1987, p. A12.
- Giddings, Paula,
1984 *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*, New York, William Morrow and Company Inc.
- Hancock, Harold B.,
1973 *Mary Ann Shadd: Negro Editor, Educator and Lawyer*, *Delaware History*, Vol. 15, pp. 187-194.
- Hill, Daniel G.,
1981 *The Freedom-Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada*, Agincourt, Ontario, The Book Society of Canada.
- MacDonald, Cheryl,
1987 "Mightier than the Sword", *Woman's World*, Vol. VIII, No. 15, pp. 36-37.

The Feminist Movement in Latin America: Balance and Perspective

by Luz Helena Sanchez Gomez

translated by Janice Molloy

Participation in the processes of social change is not new to Latin American women. Each historical moment has been witness to a particular form of participation by women, based on the institutions that were available, and women's psychosocial conditioning and levels of consciousness. Nevertheless, women are almost absent from official historical accounts for three reasons: invisibility from positions of power and authority; the almost complete lack of specific victories for women in larger social and political struggles; and the media's silence about women and their struggles.

Despite the silence concerning women's achievements before the 1960s, the earlier part of this century was characterized by increased access to education, the conquest of the right to vote, and participation in political and social organizations. These modest but important breakthroughs permitted women, in a broader sense, to begin to speak the language of power in a male-dominated world. Also important is the fact that women on the continent have often played a crucial role in periods of political crisis or social change. It is enough to remember the key participation of middle-class women in the fall of the regime of Popular Unity in Chile, or the history of participation of Central American women throughout the long period of conflict in the region.

Women's political activities in the earlier part of the century reflected a form of survival developed in the domestic space: the strategy of influencing men to achieve desired objectives. This approach made the development of alliances and cooperation among women difficult. Thus, the approach that in one moment and context meant survival, became an obstacle in a different historical setting. For this reason, Latin American women found themselves in the following decades marginalized from the direct exercise of power and perpetuating the absence of their own agenda. The archaic, internalized forms of behaviour stood in the way of change.

The women of the continent have spent many years trying to obtain the right to a space in the world of men, something that has not been easy. The expression of urgency to have a unique female voice and agenda is not a phenomenon new to the 1970s and 1980s, although it has been presented that way in official thought and has been accepted by women themselves. It is important to realize that there has been a continuum from women's first projects outside the home in the early part of the century to the present, when women finally emerged as a social subject, a subject with a voice of her own. We must document the genealogy of this emergence, and rescue women from silence and historical neglect.

The 1960s and the first years of the 1970s were climactic moments in the linking of women to the political parties formally associated with change on the continent. Women's experiences within these organizations mirrored those they had attempted to leave behind: the men ordered/the women obeyed; the men wrote, thought, spoke/the women transcribed; the women organized/ the men disorganized; the women collected the money that the men spent, distributed the men's pamphlets, shouted for them and voted for them.

In this way, women who had left their families, criticizing their values, found themselves face to face with their worst nightmares. The ritual

collectivize their experiences for the first time. The First Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Conference was the setting for a harsh confrontation between "proletariat" women, who wanted to continue to work with male-dominated political groups, and proponents of the autonomous movement. This marked the beginning of a complicated identity crisis for Latin American women.

The first to break completely with the male-dominated groups were the "witches" and "crazy women", witches for knowing, crazy for being bold and throwing themselves into unexplored social territory. These women essentially wanted and needed to bear themselves in a second birth: the one that had not been possible within the



Photograph by Paz Evrazunez

of the exercise of power assumed new clothes but in essence was the same. The participation of women in the new setting demanded the perpetuation of old roles, now in the name of the salvation of humanity and with a set of doctrines that forbade questions at the risk of being accused of being a traitor to the cause.

Some women began to doubt their ability to make progress within these organizations, and sought to abandon the illusions of a change that would be incompatible with their vital need to grow and break societal bonds in the process. They started to break with the male-dominated political groups, timidly at first. Individually, yet simultaneously, women began to publicly articulate the need to isolate themselves, to join together with other women to reflect upon what was happening and to publish works that would reach others. Little by little, a personal problem became a political issue.

The conjunction of the individual rebellions was the framework that made it possible for 300 women to meet in Bogotá, Colombia in 1981 to

patriarchal structure of the family, the one that their mothers had not been able to provide but to which they had contributed by creating the necessary strength and courage. For this reason, the Conference in Bogota was and continues to be idealized: because women collectively gave birth to new selves and were reborn in hope.

The feminist activity of the last 12-15 years has developed its own discourse and coherent goals. The changes in the focus of women's organizations have been paralleled by legal changes and a certain legitimizing of women's suffering. This new acceptance of women's issues was most dramatically represented by the declaration of the "Decade of Women" by the United Nations. The funds that resulted from this official recognition served partially to support alternative projects: spaces so that women's pain and silence could be converted into a creative gesture, into the word of life, into work, and into fissures from which it would be possible to confront the suffering of others.

The academic world was sensitive to the

need to investigate women's issues and to develop new techniques for scrutinizing the patriarchal world. A tone of legitimacy was achieved and problems that before were deemed to be "non-existent" within official thought were addressed: physical and psychological violence against women and children; abuse of domestic servants; the alienation of women from their bodies and sexuality; contraceptive methods that correspond to a masculine model of sexuality and that invade women's bodies with foreign substances; and discriminatory educational practices. Childbearing was questioned as the only means for defining womanhood. The social productivity of domestic work and the role of women in the reproduction of the species were examined for the first time.

Unequal socio-economic development and different political systems reflect the various expressions of feminism on the continent. The Colombian situation demonstrates a unique relationship between the old political and social structures and the newer ones. The level of participation of women in positions of authority in Colombia is without comparison in any other country in Latin America. Women are ministers, vice-ministers, governors, mayors, economic advisors, bank presidents and technical advisors to important institutions. The absorption of women into the public sector reflects the way in which the Colombia state has traditionally been able to transform demands from civil society into its own project. Feminism coexists with this system with undeniable and surprising advances, but contradictorily, the women's movement is still too weak to articulate demands.

In Peru, while women have not achieved the same level of public representation as in Colombia, changes have occurred in the female consciousness. Women have been affected by the implications of having the right to vote and participating in a process previously prohibited to women.

Despite major setbacks to the feminist movement in Mexico, the unequalled ability to have maintained the only specialized women's magazine on the entire continent stands out. Also important have been the rural and working-class women who have worked tirelessly in small communities.

Many of us know of the theoretical elaborations, the media attention and the number of investigations of women's issues that have taken place in Argentina. Nevertheless, at the Third Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Conference, an Argentine woman claimed that there did not exist a feminist movement in her country. Her statement helps to spotlight the differences in development and interpretation of the women's movement in each Latin American country.

And what can be said of the Chile of Pinochet, where, to the surprise, admiration and respect of

everyone, feminists demand "Democracy in our country and in our homes," linking in a creative and vital form the most heartfelt vindication of both women and civil society. Will it be possible to pursue freedom and equality in one sector but not in the other?

There does not exist a single country on the continent without at least one feminist group, at least one centre and at least one investigation into women's issues. Does it matter if women proclaim themselves to be feminist as long as there are more women all the time working to restore dignity to being female?

There are spaces where feminists from all these different contexts and perspectives come together to share their gains and setbacks. The locations of various conferences focussing on women's issues have begun to form part of the geography of women on the continent: Cochabamba, Bahia, Chiclayo, Culiacan. In addition, a number of magazines and journals have surfaced that serve as vehicles of solidarity, the democratization of knowledge and the growing written theory of the movement.

Out of necessity, feminism must move toward actions of greater social impact and must search for connections with institutions, parties, churches, unions, community organizations, the legislature and the judiciary. Feminists must become involved with all of these institutions, while still remaining vigilant and suspicious of those who call for complete integration.

There is great diversity in the women involved in women's groups in Latin America. The networks of solidarity that have been woven must keep this point in mind: it is necessary to count on the respect and credibility of others. Working within the system and outside of it are equally important. Women must constantly seek to connect the work of within the system with the outside, above with the below. It requires hard work to produce social solidarity among women, to not abandon the ones working within the system, to not copy the patriarchal exclusion/isolation game. It is necessary to find a meeting point to share abilities and interpretations.

The measure of all actions must be found in the questions: Was this worth the effort? Did it strengthen the movement? Widen the discourse? Create more connections? Only the strengthening of the movement and the constant work from theory and practice guarantee that feminism remains an alternative and does not lose the ability to subvert. To remain entrenched on the edges, to create a fixed conception of society and the struggle, to forget how to adapt to different moments, means to die by suffocation within the knots of closed spaces.

Luz Helena Sanchez Gomez is a physician and activist. She lives in Bogotá.

Meditations on the Declension of Beauty by the Girl with the Flying Cheek-bones

by Marlene Nourbese Philip

If not If not If
Not
If not in yours
In whose
In whose language
Am I
If not in yours
In whose
In whose language
Am I I am
If not in yours
In whose
Am I
(if not in yours)
I am yours
In whose language
Am I not
Am I not I am yours
If not in yours
If not in yours
In whose
In whose language
Am I...

Girl with the flying cheek-bones:
She is
I am
Woman with the behind that drives men mad
And if not in yours
Where is the woman with a nose broad
As her strength
If not in yours
In whose language
Is the man with the full-moon lips
Carrying the midnight of colour

Split by the stars - a smile
If not in yours

In whose

In whose language

Am I
Am I not
Am I I am yours
Am I not I am yours
Am I I am

If not in yours

In whose

In whose language

Am I

If not in yours

Beautiful

African Majesty from Grassland and Forest (The Barbara and Murray Frum Collection)*

Hot breath
 death-charred
winds
 depth-charged
words:

 rainfall
 magic
 power
the adorn of word
in meaning,
the mourn in loss
safe safety save
mute
muse
 museums
 of man —
Berlin, London, Paris, New York,
revenge seeks the word
in a culture mined
 to abstraction;
corbeaux circle
 circles of plexiglass
 death;
circles of eyes
circles for the eyes —

wanderers
in the centuries of curses
the lost I's
the lost equation:

you plus I equals we

I and I and I equals I

minus you

alone or I
alone circled
by the plexiglass of circles —
in a forest made-believe
 filtered of fear
by light and the au courant of fashion
the wisdomed wood
stripped of reason
restored to 'living
proof' of primitive aesthetics:
"the African influence" on-

Braque, Picasso, Brancusi...
defies

the blame in absolve
absolves

In the elsewhere of time
head knees eyes drop
earthward — they would have...
not now

 feet pace
 the circumference
plexiglass of circle that circles
prisons and prisms the real in once-

 upon-a-time-
 there-was
 mask reliquary fetish

memory

ancestor

to adorn the world with meaning
to mourn the meaning in loss

*Marlene Nourbese Philip is a Toronto writer.
Her poetry collection **She Tries Her Tongue**,
won Cuba's 1988 Casa de las Americas literary
prize for the best unpublished manuscript.*

*Art Gallery of Ontario Exhibit

The Jesuits and Canada's Native People

by Susan Daybutch Hare

To many people who will see the movie "Mission" — this movie will signify the relationship between Native peoples and Jesuits, or members of the Society of Jesus. However, the relationship between Native peoples and Jesuits is stronger, deeper, and like all relationships of long duration, also knows love, hate and pain. Yes, we are connected — and continue this connection today.

Native peoples in Canada have had contact with Jesuits since Champlain's arrival in Quebec in 1608.

In 1640 Jesuits Claude Pijart and Charles Raymbaut established the mission of the Holy Spirit to administer to the Native people of Lake Nipissing near North Bay. Today, the parish at the Nipissing Reserve is still called Holy Spirit Parish.

In 1648 Jesuits from Huronia founded the mission of St. Pierre to minister to the Algonquin peoples living along the north shore of Lake Huron and Manitoulin Island.

In 1649 the Iroquois overran the mission of Huronia at Midland and tortured and killed Jesuits there. In 1984 the Pope visited Midland and, as in the rest of his Canadian visit, specifically asked to meet with Native people.

In 1671 the mission of St. Simon was founded and ministered to the Mississauga Indians, the Odawa's of Manitoulin and the Nipissings. In present day locations the mission would include the triangle from Blind River to Manitoulin Island to North Bay.

In "Manitoulin (1666-1800) It's First Inhabitants, It's First Missionaries" Rev. Couture, S.J. states: "When Champlain made the acquaintance of the Odawa's they were engaged in drying blueberries for their winters' store. They were a sedentary tribe, and cultivated maize. Champlain has described with complacency their industry and uncommon neatness. They were great hunters, great fishermen and great voyageurs". The Jesuit

Relation for 1665 says of the Odawa that they were "better merchants than warriors".

While the harm done to Native culture cannot be minimized, neither can the courage of the Jesuits be minimized. In present day society, in 1988, many non-Native people are still afraid to set foot on an Indian reserve. City Indians are considered one step up the ladder of civilization than are "reserve Indians".

The Jesuits were described in many Native languages as "black robes." Many of these Black Robes were not only courageous but used their intelligence in dealing with the Native people. Some Jesuits won the respect of Native people by first learning to speak their language. They lived with the Native people, learned their language and customs first — and then proceeded to try to convert them. Some may call it diabolical — some call it intelligent.

Most Native people over 35 years of age in 1988 grew up in residential schools run by Jesuits and other religions. One 71 year-old Ojibway woman remembers being taught all of the basic homemaking skills, which she appreciates to this day. Some remember being strapped and beaten for speaking their Native language. Some remember the residential school as a good place, where they learned to work, to enjoy sports and had an opportunity to meet other Native children from across their area. Residential schools are a whole subject area in itself — and I will leave that to others — but the Jesuits continued to have an impact on Native children during this time.

The Garnier Residential School in Spanish, now closed, was named after Charles Garnier, a Jesuit who was killed by the Iroquois in 1649.

In recent years, the Jesuits continue to be a major part of Native peoples lives — but it is a more equal relationship, and one of choice. It has also become a learning relationship for the Jesuits. The Roman Catholic Church has made great

strides in incorporating Native spirituality into its ceremonies.

On the reserve of West Bay on Manitoulin Island a Church sits which espouses the very best of Jesuit-Native relations. The Church is built in a circle (a concept very important to Native people). It is also built right into Mother Earth. The paintings of the Stations of the Cross are an Ojibway rendition by artist Leland Bell of the Wikwemikong Reserve. Mass on Sundays is celebrated mainly in the Ojibway language. Although the tourists enjoy hearing Mass said in a Native language — the idea is far more important to the self-identity of the Native children on the reserve. Using the Native language during Mass is a very real manifestation of the validity of the Native language.

Past crimes against the Native people will forever be a blemish. A continued positive connection may serve to again strengthen Native culture.

Susan Daybutch Hare is an educator and writer and lives in Thunder Bay.



WILLIAMS-WALLACE PUBLISHERS

192 Cobourg Street, Stratford, Ontario, Canada N5A 3E8

Women Writers

**Sans Souci
and other Stories**

088795-073-6 h.c. \$19.95

088795-072-8 paper \$10.95

Dionne Brand

**Towards an Aesthetics of
Opposition-Essays and
criticisms**

Arun Mukherjee

**The Conception
of Winter**
Poetry

Claire Harris

Subscribe to:

Broadside

A feminist monthly
newspaper providing
analysis of politics, arts,
updates, comment and
humour.

\$16./10 issues

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

CODE _____

**Broadside,
PO Box 494, Station P,
Toronto, Ontario M5S 2T1**

Beverly Salmon, Alderman, Ward 8 City of North York



Beverly Salmon's arrival on the political scene was predicted by *Chatelaine* magazine as early as 1970 when she was named in an article about women who would succeed in politics. It was at that time not among her plans, though not antagonistic to her interests. Beverly Salmon's election to the position of alderman in North York Municipal Board in 1986 was the result of her interest in community, her commitment to active participation in improving the status quo, and her demonstrated knowledge of the issues. The lady does her homework!

The Toronto-born daughter of West Indian immigrants, Beverly Salmon is a graduate of Jarvis Collegiate, Wellesley School of Nursing,

and the University of Toronto. After graduation she worked in community nursing for the Victorian Order of Nurses. During this time she met her husband who was studying medicine and moved with him to Detroit for his continued study.

The timing was opportune for honing Salmon's already kindled interest in community. The sixties was a period of high civil rights activity, and speakers such as Martin Luther King and Thurgood Marshall visited Detroit to motivate the Black community toward even greater cohesive action. Beverly was moved by their ideas and influenced by the community commitment of the leaders. It was the same community commitment that had been demonstrated by her father through-

out his life.

On her return to Toronto, Beverly's involvement began to expand from the church to the University Negro Alumni Club which focussed on areas of social outreach, to the Black Heritage Education Program, initiated in the seventies. The latter focussed around the organization of a Saturday program to teach the children and youth about their heritage.

Involvement with the children in the project, and discussions with their parents led Beverly and others to strike the Black Liaison Committee to meet with school officials and classroom teachers to assist them in understanding the new immigrants. It was her hope that such understanding would sponsor some changes in school policy and practice. The committee was well-received by the Toronto Board of Education and was used as a resource by several other boards.

About that time, Beverly's home district demanded her attention. She joined in the fight with her neighbours against the closing of the local school. This struggle and Bev's contributions to it attracted the attention and earned the respect of her neighbours. She demonstrated the ability to analyze the situation and focus on the central issues, clearly asserting her opinions, using diplomacy and tact when necessary. As a result, Bev was called upon to lead in many community issues such as the prevention of a six-lane thoroughway through the district, access to Sunnybrook Park, and some public transportation service into the area. Her leadership earned her the position of president of the Glen Orkey Ratepayers Association from 1976 to 1986.

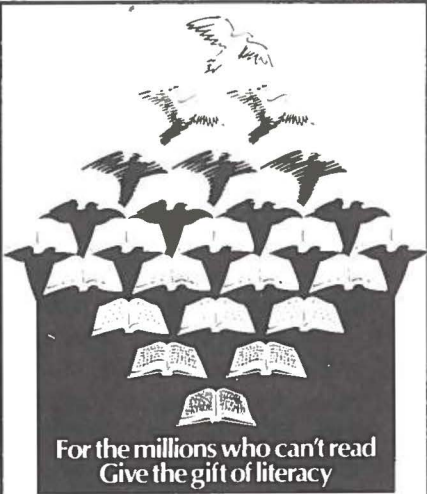
During that time Bev Salmon's abilities were not unrecognized in other areas. She sat on the Education and Community Council of the North York Board of Education, and on the North York Status of Women Committee. In 1978 she was appointed to the Ontario Status of Women Council, and subsequently to the Human Rights Commission. During that time she was also an active member of the Urban Alliance.

Although she has generally enjoyed the support and encouragement of her community, Salmon's move into politics has not been without opposition. In 1985 an interim representative was necessary to fill the position temporarily left vacant by the omission of Barbara Greene, during a conflict of interest hearing. In spite of the overwhelming voter support of the ratepayers for Bev Salmon to fill the position, another candidate was selected.

In 1986 Bev Salmon, nominated by the community she had served so faithfully, was elected to council. Her platform was, as one might expect, to maintain the integrity of the neigh-

bourhood and community, and to ensure that her public position is representative of the views and concerns of her constituents.

Zanana Akande is a school principal and lives in Toronto.



**For the millions who can't read
Give the gift of literacy**

More than four million adult Canadians can't read well enough to fill out a job application or understand the directions on a medicine bottle. You can help. Give money, volunteer with a literacy group, write to your MP, and read to your children.

For more information, contact:
**Canadian Give the Gift
of Literacy Foundation**
34 Ross St., Suite 200,
Toronto, Ont. M5T 1Z9
(416) 595-9967

The Canadian Give the Gift of Literacy Campaign is a project of the book and periodical industry of Canada, in partnership with Telephone Pioneers of America, Region 1-Canada.

The Youngest Doll

by Rosario Ferré

The old aunt brought her rocking chair out on the balcony overlooking the canefields, as she always did when she woke up wanting to make a doll. As a young woman she used to bathe often in the stream but one day, when the rains had turned the currents into violent whips, she had suddenly shivered, perceiving a snowlike sensation in the marrow of her bones. With her head submerged in the swarming waters that poured from the rocks she believed she had heard, mingled with the sounds of the waves, the bursting of the niter dust on the faraway beaches, and she was certain that her hair had finally flowed out to sea. Precisely at that moment she felt something terrible grip her by the calf of the leg. They brought her out of the water screaming and carried her away on a litter, twisting over with pain.

The doctor who examined her declared it was nothing, she had probably been bitten by a vicious river prawn. Nonetheless, the days went by and the wound refused to heal. At the end of a month the doctor arrived at the conclusion that the prawn had settled itself in the softest part of the calf where it had evidently begun to fatten. He prescribed that a poultice be applied to it, so that the heat would force it to come out. The aunt spent a whole week with the leg stretched out rigid before her, covered with mustard from ankle to thigh, but at the end of this cure she discovered that the sore had become even more inflamed, covered over with a slimy, stony substance which it would obviously be impossible to remove without peril.

She then resigned herself to live forever with the prawn curled up inside the nest of her leg.

Once she had been very beautiful, but the sore that she hid beneath the long muslin folds of her skirts had stripped her of all vanity. She had locked herself up in the house, refusing to see her suitors. At the beginning, she had devoted herself to the rearing of her sister's daughters, dragging her monstrous leg around the house with consid-

erable agility. By that time the family was living immersed in a past which had begun to disintegrate around them in the same indifferent and melodious way that their crystal chandelier slowly fell to pieces, over their dining room table. The girls loved their aunt. She used to comb their hair, bathe and feed them. As she read them stories they would sit in a circle around her; then, without her noticing it, they would delicately lift the starched flounces of her skirt so as to enjoy the odour of ripe sweetsops which emanated from her leg in moments of repose.

When the girls became older, the aunt began to make them dolls to play with. At first they were just ordinary dolls wadded with cotton, with stray buttons sewn on for eyes. But in time she came to refine her art, so that she won the respect and reverence of her whole family. The birth of a doll was always an event for sacred rejoicing, and this explained why it had never occurred to them that the dolls perhaps be sold, not even when the girls were already grown and the family had inevitably fallen into greater need.

The aunt had progressively enlarged the size of the dolls so that they would match exactly the size and measurements of each girl. Since there were nine of them and she would make a doll in the likeness of each girl a year, soon it became necessary to set apart a special room in the house for the dolls to live in. When the eldest celebrated her eighteenth birthday there were a hundred and twenty six dolls of all ages in the room. If someone happened to open the door, he would be overcome by a sensation similar to that of suddenly having walked into a dovecot, or into the doll room in the palace of a Russian princess, or into a warehouse where a long row of tobacco leaves had been left spread to dry.

Nonetheless, the aunt never entered this room in search of any of these pleasures. She would turn the lock on the door and she would lift

each doll up lovingly rocking as she sang to them: "You were thus big when you were one, thus big when you were two, and thus big when you were three", reliving the life of each by the size of the space they left hollow between her arms. On the day the eldest girl turned ten, the aunt sat down before the canefields and was never seen to get up again. She swayed in her rocking chair for days on end, watching the running tints of the cane leaves sweeping over the fields like streams of emerald water, and she would only rise from her lethargy when the doctor came to visit her, or on those special days when she woke up wanting to make a doll.

She would then begin to clamour, summoning all the members of the household to come and help her. On that day, the labourers of the plantation could be seen running in constant relays to and from the town like merry Incan foot soldiers, bringing her wax, bringing her porcelain clay, bringing her lace, needles, spools of an infinite variety of colours. While the errands were being taken care of, the aunt would call to her room the niece that she had seen in her dreams that night, and she would take her measurements. Then she would make her a delicate wax mask, which she would cover on both sides with plaster as though she were placing a mobile face between two morbid ones; then she would make a minute perforation on the chin, through which an endless blond thread of wax would begin to melt.

The porcelain she used for the hands was always translucent; it had a delicate ivory tint to it, which was noticeably different from the curdled whiteness of the bisque faces. When she was ready to make the torsos, the aunt would send for twenty of the shiniest gourds to be brought her from the garden. She would place them on the open palm of her hand and, with an expert whorl of her knife, she would slice them one by one into polished skulls of green leather. Then she would lean them against the walls of the balcony, so that the sun and wind would dry their cottony brains out. After a number of days she scraped out this filling with a silver spoon, feeding it patiently to the dolls.

In the course of all this confectioning, the only foreign object the aunt would allow herself to make use of were the glass balls for the eyes. She would elaborate all the materials herself, but she would have the eyeballs mailed to her from Europe, in a variety of colours. She would not make use of them immediately, however, for she considered them worthless until she had them soaking for a number of days at the bottom of the stream; there they would inevitably be forced to recognize the stirring of the feelers of the prawns. Only then would she rinse them in ammonia

before putting them away, glittering like gems on beds of cotton, at the bottom of one of her tins of Dutch cakes. In spite of the fact that the girls were growing up, she always dressed the dolls in the same style: the young ones in Swiss embroidery and the elder ones in silk guipure. On their heads she would always tighten the same bow, wide and white and tremulous like the breast of a dove.

The girls began to get married and leave home. On their wedding day, the aunt would make each of them a special present. She would kiss them on the forehead and she would offer them the doll she had just finished making, whispering to them with a smile: "Behold your Easter Sunday". Then she would pacify the grooms, assuring them the dolls were nothing more than sentimental bibelots, of the kind that used to be sat as decoration on the lid of grand pianos. From the height of her balcony the aunt watched the girls descend the wide front stairway of the house for the last time, holding in one hand their modest cardboard suitcases decorated with printed plaid and winding their other arm around the waist of their exuberant doll created in their own image and likeness and shod in kid slippers, their fine valenciennes pantalettes barely showing under snowlaced skirts. The hands and faces of these dolls, however, were noticeably different from those of former dolls: they were transparent. This dissimilarity concealed a more subtle one; the wedding doll was never wadded with cotton but heavily filled with honey.

The girls had all been married and only the youngest one was left in the house when the doctor paid his monthly visit to the aunt. This time he came accompanied by his son, who had recently returned from the North, where he had finally finished his studies and obtained his medical degree. The young man lifted the starched fringe of her skirts and stared at the enormous bladder which oozed continually a perfumed sperm from the tip of its greenish flakes. He brought out his stethoscope and examined her carefully. The aunt believed he was listening to the breathing of the prawn, verifying if it was still alive, and so she tenderly took his hand and placed it on the exact spot where he could clearly perceive the constant waving of the feelers. The young man let the skirts fall from his hand and looked at his father. "You could have cured this long ago," he told him. "That's right, my son," his father answered him, "I simply wanted you to take a closer look at the prawn which has paid for your education during the last twenty years."

From then on it was the young doctor who visited the old aunt every month. His romantic inclinations towards the youngest of the girls was soon obvious and the aunt was able to begin her

last doll with ample timing. He always came visiting with starched collar, polished shoes and pompous Oriental pearl pinned to his stock tie, as is usually the case with most despicable beggars. After examining the aunt he would sit in the living room, leaning his thin shadow against the oval frames of the paintings, and always offering the youngest the same bouquet of purple immortelles. She would offer him gingerbread cookies while fastidiously picking up the flowers he offered her with the tips of her fingers, as if they reminded her of sea urchins turned inside out. She made up her mind to marry him because she was intrigued by his drowsy profile, and perhaps also because she was curious to discover what dolphin flesh was like.

On her wedding day, when she was about to leave the house, she embraced her doll around the waist, and was surprised to find it warm.

She forgot about it immediately however, so amazed was she at its exquisiteness. The hands and face were of rare Mikado porcelain, and she was to recognize in its secret, half-sad smile, the complete collection of her milking teeth. There was, moreover, another peculiar detail: the aunt had set, inside the glass irises of the eyes, her diamond earring drops.

The doctor took the youngest with him to live in town, in a house which resembled a cement cube. He would force her to sit out on the balcony every day, making it evident to the townspeople that he married into society. Motionless within her block of heat, the youngest began to suspect that her husband didn't just have a paper profile, but that he also had a paper soul. She was soon able to verify her suspicions. One day he dug out her doll's eyes with the top of his scalpel, and pawned them for an extravagant gold pocket watch with a long embossed chain. From that day onwards, the doll continued to sit on the lid of the grand piano, but with modestly lowered lids.

A few months later the doctor noticed that the doll was missing and he asked the youngest what had become of her. A sisterhood of pious ladies had offered him a considerable sum for the hands and face of Mikado porcelain, which they thought would be perfect for the Virgin on their altar piece next Lent. The youngest answered him the ants had finally discovered that the doll was filled with honey, and they had probably devoured her before the night was over". As the hands and face were of such exquisite porcelain, they probably mistook them to be glazed with sugar, and at this very moment they are probably gnawing away in a frenzy at the remnants of fingers and lids in some subterranean burrow". That night the doctor dug up the garden around the house, but failed to find what he was looking for.

The years went by and the doctor became a millionaire. He had taken over most of the patients of the town, who did not mind paying excessive fees if by so doing they managed to get a closer look at an authentic member of the extinct feudal aristocracy. The youngest still sat out on the balcony, motionless in her lace and muslin skirts, always with lowered lids. When her husband's patients, heavy with necklaces, feathers, and canes, came to sit complacently next to her, burrowing their rolls of flesh deep into their chairs with a riotous ringing of coins, they would suddenly notice a peculiar odour which made them think of a slowly supurating sweetsop. They would then feel an overwhelming desire to rub their hands together as though they were honing them.

Only one thing disturbed the doctor's perfect happiness. On a certain day he noticed that, while he had begun to grow old, the youngest still had the same incredibly smooth skin as when she was young, and he used to visit her at the plantation. One night he made up his mind to visit her room, so as to examine her asleep. He noticed that her chest was perfectly still. Placing his stethoscope over her heart, he heard a distant swish of water. At that very moment the doll lifted her lids, and from the empty sockets of her eyes he saw the feelers of the prawns begin to come out.

Translated by the author.

Rosario Ferré is a Puerto Rican poet, essayist and short story writer who was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico in 1942. She is the author of Papeles de Pandora (short stories), 1946 and Fabulas de La garza desangrada, 1984. She also wrote Sitio A Eros, feminist essays on world women authors.

Yoko Ichino

by Marva Jackson

What traditional images come to mind when most people think of ballet dancers? Pale-skinned men and women with 'perfect' body proportions and perpetually arched feet, perhaps? Well, the National Ballet of Canada has broken those stereotypes with principal dancers African-American Kevin Pugh and Japanese-American Yoko Ichino.

Ichino explains, "I toured in 1982 with Alexander Gudonov in the States and at that time the dancers of the National Ballet came down and participated in the show. I got to know them, especially one of them who is now my husband, David Nixon. I had done some work with him while he was on the tour. When he was making his first appearance in *Giselle* in Art Park, he called me and asked if I would come and see it. So I came up and of course I took classes with the company. Alexander Grant was the director at the time and he needed someone to dance with Kevin Pugh. So he asked if I would join the company which I did since I was only freelancing then".

The patient guidance of a new artistic director, the late Erik Bruhn, contributed much to the development of two personalities working extraordinarily well together. Pugh grew up in Indianapolis and that is where as a 6 year-old he began his career. Admitting to be a dominant 'showbiz parent', his mother discouraged any signs of ego in her son. Mutual sensitivity has been an important part of the process and Ichino's eagerness to share her hard earned confidence with Pugh has been an essential ingredient. For his part Pugh's natural grace balances Ichino's tendency to be too precise. The chemistry between them leaves lots of room for Ichino's passionate interpretations of the dance she discovered at age 7. Since that time Ichino has proven her talent for turning negatives into positives.

The Los Angeles native has always had problems with her feet but that didn't inhibit her

excited reaction after seeing the Royal Ballet's version of *Romeo and Juliet*. Her doctor encouraged Junet Ichino's intention to enroll her daughter in ballet classes. Junet Ichino has been a constant influence. Her own dreams of becoming a concert pianist were shattered when her family was separated and placed in American prisoner of war camps during World War II. Ichino doesn't remember the event ever being discussed as a child and she is excited to be learning more about her family history. She is very proud of her heritage.

"It seems to have been both good and bad like everything else. The difficult part was as Japanese being brought up we were taught not to laugh...to be seen and not heard. If there was a problem you didn't let it show. Being in Theatre Arts, on the stage you have to be able to express and be able to let go in a certain way, and that was very difficult for me at the beginning. On the other hand I feel it is important to hold on to what is good about my background. The discipline from my upbringing also has given me the ability to concentrate on the task at hand regardless of everything else".

In 1977 Ichino stood out in the world of ballet as the first American to win a medal at Moscow's 3rd International Ballet competition. She also stood out because of her Oriental background. She says that the thing that's against Orientals usually is their size and physique. She claims: "There are lots of Japanese companies but none really major. They're still further behind than North America or Europe and of course there's always lots of problems with the physique. They're growing taller but at this point people still want to see long pretty legs and poppy, poppy feet". By the time Ichino became aware of such differences or social conflicts like racism, the fledgling ballerina was past the point of caring about what others thought of her abilities as a dancer.



Photography by Andrew Oxenham

A soft-spoken person, Ichino has worked hard to develop strong interpretive skills. She draws from life experience, observation and the music to bring a character to life whether it's the title role in *Giselle* or one specifically written for her as in Roland Petit's French choreography *Le Chat Botte*. Constantly striving to maintain balance between the importance of ballet as an art form and its technological advances, Ichino says that, "Ballet is an illusionary art; like sculpture. As it grows more refined, more technical...more precise, we have to remember that".

This sense of balance also extends to Ichino's private life. It almost seems as though her personal life and her career have been carefully interwoven. Ichino moves easily from one topic to another; whether she's describing the long walks she takes with her husband, or reminiscing about quiet dinners with close friends, or discussing her future, with children in the picture.

When personal politics come into play Ichino feels that the most important position is "to keep personal perspective. It shouldn't matter if you're a man or a woman". Keeping her career perspectives in line Ichino has taken opportunities whenever they've been present to travel, crossing boundaries, social or political. As a result Ichino has danced with many major companies including the New Zealand Ballet, the Berlin Ballet and Baryshnikov's American Ballet Theatre. During her 4 year tenure with ABT Ichino had her first experience dancing with Rudolf Nureyev.

"It was rather sudden...I'd hardly even seen him dance before! I got a call at 9 in the morning. They said 'You have to go to Lincoln Centre Library and study the film' because Nureyev had

made a film of *Don Quixote* with the Australian Ballet and some parts of it he wanted to do during Baryshnikov's version. Then I went right to rehearsal for about 3 hours together and then we had to perform, just like that".

Ichino ended her involvement with ABT in 1982 when she came to the realization that she was no longer enjoying herself.

The prestige that is part of the elaborate nature of ballet is not enough for the self-motivated Ichino. Thankful that she's been able to learn through travel as much as she has, Ichino encourages other dancers to make use of the chances that come their way as a vital means of enriching their life experience.

Marva Jackson is a music programmer on Toronto's alternative community radio station CKLN-FM 88.1 and is currently compiling The Band File, a biography of the Canadian independent music scene.

Politics: Where Visible Minority Women are Invisible

by Susan Korah



Visible minority women of the world, unite! We have nothing to lose but the combined chains of racism and sexism that prevent us from taking our rightful place in society.

The gauntlet was thrown down by a panel of five forceful speakers at the "Women in Politics" conference held last September in Toronto shortly after the Ontario general elections. The setting for the conference, ironically enough, was 21 McGill St., that more or less exclusive citadel of white, middle-class feminism in the heart of downtown Toronto.

But leaving aside the elegant pink decor, the deferential male waiters and other perks of privilege enjoyed by its membership, a tiny, elite

minority of women (mostly white) who have reached the stratosphere of the corporate and professional worlds, the conference was a triumph and a breakthrough. A racially-mixed panel and a racially-mixed audience heard one another out in an atmosphere of calm, unimpassioned discussion. As one woman of colour after another commented on the ugly reality of hidden racism combined with sexism, her remarks were not greeted by hysterical denials from those who have never faced that powerful, double-barrelled weapon.

Organized by the dedicated efforts of Tiger Lily publisher Ann Wallace and a group of tireless, visible minority women volunteers, "Women in Politics" featured five articulate speakers —

Carmencita Hernandez, Founder-President of the Coalition of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women, Frances Endicott, the first black female trustee on the Metropolitan Toronto Board of Education, Susan Eng, Toronto lawyer and political activist, Chaviva Hosek, the newly elected Ontario Minister of Housing and moderator Elaine Todres, Deputy Minister in charge of the Women's Directorate, Ontario.

A point of crucial importance that emerged clearly was the need for immigrant and visible minority women to elect our own special concerns, which do not always overlap with those of white, mainstream feminists.

"I got into politics because I had to deal with a school board that insisted it had a lot of trouble dealing with students of West Indian origin," said Frances Endicott.

"The number of immigrant and visible minority women who contested, let alone won a seat in the last Ontario election is negligible," pointed out Carmencita Hernandez, referring to the last provincial election, hailed as a triumph of Canadian multiculturalism by the mainstream media, owing to the number of ethnic minority candidates and women candidates it returned to the Ontario legislature. What the media failed to notice was the fact that women of colour are still conspicuous by their absence in the Ontario government and most other elected bodies in the country.

Why are visible minority women so invisible in political life? The answer is that we are invisible for the same reasons that exclude us from other areas of mainstream life — the economic, social and cultural. Points raised by Hernandez, Hosek, Endicott and Eng included the following:

- Racism in the job market is a great barrier. Ethnic and visible minority women are not given fair and equal chances for jobs and promotions. Thus jobs for women matter much more than votes for women in the continuing struggle for female emancipation.

- We are missing from newspapers and other media.

- To be elected we need money. The bad news is that we have access to far less money than any other group in society. The good news is that there are legal spending limits on elections in Canada.

- We lack self-confidence — hardly surprising, when we consider our lack of economic independence.

- Family responsibilities and lack of domestic co-operation from our men can be further impediments to political participation.

Having outlined the problems, let us examine

possible solutions. As Endicott observed, "bringing women of colour to take their rightly place in society won't happen naturally" — that is, without some determined self-assertion and hard work on our parts.

As a group and as individuals, we have certain options open to us. They include the following:

- Make our concerns known to elected politicians. The role of non-elected people is to tell the truth to the elected. Make them aware that we exist and our votes counts.

- Organize. Form groups or join already existing groups. Form alliances with other groups — men or mainstream women.

- Accept even token positions on boards and committees. After all, they give us a chance to be "visible" and to say something.

Finally, thinking and talking should be preludes to action. It is imperative that we sustain the momentum created by conferences such as "Women in Politics". So let us become politically aware and active. Our economic well-being and our children's future depend on it.

Susan Korah is a freelance journalist and teacher with a special interest in the concerns of women of colour.



Room of One's Own, a quarterly journal devoted to creative and critical writings by women, invites submissions for a special issue: "Working for a Living," to be published Summer 1988. Poetry, short fiction, graphics and reviews (query first for reviews) should be sent with SASE to "Working for a Living," *Room of One's Own*, P.O. Box 46160, Station G, Vancouver, B.C. V6R 4G5. Deadline: 30 November 1987.

The Peace Movement: Women's Role in the International Arena

an excerpt of a speech
by Margarita Papandreou

It was Freud who said, "What is it that women want?" And it is women who say sometimes "Who are we?" Where do we fit in?"

There is an expression that one frequently hears — "this is a man's world". We immediately understand that, for it concerns public life, work, careers, technology, the military. Action. Decision-making. Maintenance of the war system.

But there is a woman's world, and although one thinks immediately of homes, babies, housework, and low-paying jobs there is something deeper than that — a complex, comprehensive and potent system of values shared by most women.

An American test on sex differences in values and interests produces approximately the same results for almost every society: women get high scores for esthetic, social and religious values. Men in politics, economics and technology. The *reasons* for these differences — whether they are inherent or learned — I will not discuss here. I simply state the facts. With different value systems, we must presume that the world is perceived differently by women, that priorities, goals and actions would reflect this difference.

So we come to the question: what effects, if any, the increased entrance of women in international affairs would have on public policies. Would there develop a greater equality for all people, including their own sex, a greater emphasis at the international level on cooperation and accommodation? On resolution of conflict by non-violent means? On reconciliation?

We can only develop some hypotheses. There are *so few* women in the world political arena that we have no proof of the above possibilities or likelihoods.

When women have had a chance, however, to use power in countries where there is a deep feminist consciousness and social commitment to justice such as the Nordic countries — government policies show an outstanding concern for the

goals of equality, social development and peace.

Because we live together — men and women — in the same society, confront similar forces affecting our personalities and development, it is sometimes difficult to perceive that there are two cultures which have a base in gender.

How do the two cultures differ? A woman scientist in Norway, Berit As, has looked at five aspects of these two cultures.

The first has to do with language and communication. There seem to be unwritten rules as to when women should speak, both in social life and in public. I am often struck by the fact that although women make up a large portion of the nuclear disarmament movement, they are not called upon in TV talk shows, for example, to debate on the development, say, in the peace talks. I happened to be in the United States shortly after the Reykjavik meeting, and I eagerly pushed TV panel buttons searching for *one woman* who would be asked to express her views on what went on, and where the East-West confrontation goes from here. I didn't find one. Defense, armaments, nuclear weapons, NATO — these are still male subjects. War language is mastered by "him". In most societies words designating high positions are masculine in gender. This creates images in the woman's mind — in society's mind — as to which sex has the power and authority.

Another difference between these two cultures has to do with women's relationship to technology and to resources. A few questions will demonstrate what a vast difference exists at this level. What women have designed and constructed skyscrapers? Who designs the models of automobiles? airplanes? Who knows the technical secrets of colour TV? What women had the idea and presented the designs for Cruise and Pershing missiles? Who is determining what should be our research for a new defense system?

As far as resources are concerned, women, in the world today, own only 1 percent of all private

property, and this percentage is diminishing. Access to money, substantial amounts, which represent a form of power, is achieved in a feudal way — through inheritance and through marriage. Very few women are economically independent. And how many female millionaires do you know?

Another source of power, and a difference between male and female culture is organizations. By studying organizations in society one quickly discovers that organizations with influence and power are male organizations. Those that handle money, matters of technology and political problems have male members in the majority. Those which state humanistic goals or peace goals have a higher percentage of women.

And what about the precious commodity *time*? Do women really own their time? We all know the abrupt interference in time we have in our daily lives because of our children, husband, or responsibilities for other members of the family — relatives, mothers, in-laws. This *time*, which is a source of gaining power, which would be used to organize, is denied to us because of our role in reproductive labour. How easy is it for women to organize a campaign, attend meetings, write brochures, read political theory, while washing diapers, dispensing cough syrup, cooking meals, nursing sick relatives, cleaning houses and providing the emotional needs of family members?

In all parts of the world, and this is the last item on the two-culture differences, a woman is not worth very much. This stems from her role in unpaid production and from low wages in the labour market, if we are to take a materialistic perspective. Throughout history men and women have had different positions with respect to capital and the means of production.

The critical point I want to make after having given a brief description of women's world, of women's culture, is that this *has* given us different perspectives, different values — and that these values, arising primarily from our oppression, *can be a basis for international policy making*, can be transferred to the public sphere as a means of ultimately getting us out of this circle of fire, this worldwide war system which is leading us closer to global suicide.

On the all important question of war, women again, because of forementioned differences and because of their relationship to military acts of destruction, to territories and to the army, have different perspectives. Men are "owners", they have access to women's and children's free services in their private lives, and they become "owners" in the leadership of a country — capital goods, tools, weapons to take lands and goods, control of armies and use them for destructive

purposes. For women, their children have become the cannon fodder of history. Women's work, their life careers, are disrespected and destroyed.

I am, of course, representing a feminist point of view here, a view that for many years I must admit kept me *away* from the peace movement. This may seem strange to you since I am presenting women here as natural allies, natural members of the Peace Movement. Why did I remain aloof?

I sat down and tried to analyze these covert negative feelings. Down, way down in my psyche, was a rejection that stemmed from my feminist view of the world — what you might call raw, gut-feminism. In my mind's eye was the image of many women walking through the centuries, marching in protest demonstrations, speaking to audiences small and large, writing, doing sit-ins, blocking the entrances for missile heads at Greenham Commons, carrying banners, wheeling babies in carts draped with "Don't let me die in a Holocaust." And then, in contrast to this grass roots activism — men in huddles, working out so-called defense strategies, developing more and more sophisticated nuclear weapons with more control and accuracy, men peering through telescopes at a nuclear-blast site, taking notes, and then at the negotiating table where agreements are to be made that affect the fate of the world — all men.

As I thought more, I realized that I also rejected the terminology, the language that goes along with the whole war system. I felt if I got involved, I would have to understand that language, perhaps to use it, and the idea repelled me. The language sounds something like this:

SS-20's — Pershings — Cruises — Megatons — Second-strike capacity — Particle-beam acceleration — ICBM boosters — Heavy Jamming environment — Predelegated authority to proceed — Blast facilities. The language of power, destruction, death.

A third, but not the least of my resistance was the connection between militarism and sexism. Repression and oppression, intimidation and threat are essential characteristics of a war system. They are the means by which women have been kept down for centuries. They exclude the values of equality and equity, of nurturing and caring. And, as Betty Reardon has said, one didn't see the Peace Movement focussing much attention on women's oppression, or asking the question, *Is peace possible in a patriarchal world?*

Margaret Papandreou is a peace activist and lives in Greece.

Dreams and Reality

by Margaret Chen

Our being in this world seems to function on our hopes, some may call them dreams. Of course, there are dreams and dreams — fantastic, impossible ones or probable, practical ones that are more elusive because they hover so near and seem so tantalizingly possible — if only for artists, the gap between between our reality and our dreams can sometimes be wonderful but more often it is painful.

T.E. Lawrence said, "Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it is vanity, but the dreamers of the day are dangerous...for they act their dreams with open eyes, to make them possible". I have found that being a visual artist — sculptor and painter — is both a life-giving and a dangerous occupation. An artist is not a dilettante. It is a lonely life and damn hard work. Not only does one have to be stubborn, disciplined and willing to work without praise or pats on the back, but also one has to be open and creative. An artist thrives on dreams. Her being, the whole creative process that she journeys through work after work, makes her an extension of her dreams. In the process of creating, the movement of transformation occurs and there comes a time when the work takes over and becomes the creator; the artist the tool.

For a nation, a country to survive, to be alive and healthy, we must recognize the importance of creative people in our society and encourage and nurture their work. In Canada the support system for individual artists and their needs is very weak. In this article I attempt to articulate the numerous hardships and impediments that a practising artist faces daily.

For the majority of artists who graduate after four years at an art college or university, and for others an additional two years in graduate studies for a Master of Fine Arts degree, she or he is faced with an arid job market. Each year there are only a few job openings available in arts administra-

tion, art galleries or museums and hundreds of artists compete for them. Jobs are even more scarce in teaching art at a community college or university and the artist is often defeated by the system of tenure and seniority. The artists-in-the school programmes are helpful but not enough.

To be employed in a commercial art gallery or an artist-run centre is a mixed-bag of blessings and frustrations. Salaries are usually very low although work experience can be enriching. Most of the coordinating positions are filled by men. Women tend to be hired in lesser jobs like gallery-minding or secretarial work. When you visit Yorkville in Toronto, drop into some of the art galleries there and you will no doubt find that there are very few, if any racial minority — Black, Native, South or East Asian — women employed there.

Most artists have to accept full-time jobs out of their field — from waitressing to secretarial to factory work. They can only afford to be practising artists on a part-time basis. The situation is grim, even without the added burden of paying off a student loan.

Time and space are the greatest obstacles that the artist faces. In order to be a practising artist one needs a studio — a workplace and of course, a place to live. After calculating the present cost of a one-bedroom flat plus a studio, it becomes apparent that a single person working at a full-time job, although living frugally, would find it impossible to pay these expenses at the end of the month.

It then occurs to many artists that combining these two spaces into a live-in/workplace is the most practical and affordable answer. That is, until one looks around for a potential space. However, these places do exist. They are usually old industrial warehouse buildings where the landlord turns a blind eye to the tenants living in. One basically rents an empty rectangular room with a high ceiling. A toilet and wash basin are usually

located in the corridor which serve the needs of the whole floor. One has to absorb all the renovation costs — building a loft, putting in a shower and sink facilities. With help from friends and a strict budget, one barely breaks even.

The real dilemma comes when it is time to renew the lease. In the case of a friend of mine whose lease expires next month, she was informed by her landlord that the rent will almost be doubled for the next year. There are approximately seventy artists living and working in this particular building. Over the years they have made extensive renovations to their places. All their rents will increase dramatically whenever they renew their lease. And there is nothing they can do about it. The choices are brutally clear-cut — either pay or leave. If they leave they will have to start from scratch again with an empty room. If they stay how can they afford to pay the extra rent increase when previously they were barely breaking even?

Time is another impediment that every artist with a full-time job encounters. How can an artist who works full-time — that is, 8 hours a day, five or six days a week — find the time to do any art work? It becomes a race against time and a tremendous effort to recharge one's energies. Any creative work demands long hours, physical as well as mental and spiritual stamina. For some artists who are fortunate to have teaching jobs, most of their art work is done during the long summer break but for the rest of us who are usually granted only two weeks vacation yearly, it is tough.

Last year the Gelinias-Siren Task Force on the Status of the Artist and the Bovey Task Force on the Funding of the Arts in Canada compiled and submitted their in-depth reports to the government. These reports presented many appropriate and necessary recommendations, which reflected the needs and aspirations of artists and their organizations throughout the country. The Gelinias-Siren report dealt with important issues such as taxation, employment status, social benefits, health and safety and education, and the freedom of artistic expression. The Bovey Report dealt with funding the arts to the year 2000. According to Bovey, "assistance to individual artists should grow at a slightly faster rate than arts activities in general." The reports were thorough and sensitively carried out with the arts community across Canada being consulted and involved. As a follow-up, a committee which included some artists was nominated and now meets to propose actions to the recommendations made by the Gelinias-Siren Report.

In March of this year, ANNPAC (the Asso-

ciation of National Non-Profit Artist-run Centres) submitted a brief to the Standing Committee on Communication and Culture in the House of Commons, Ottawa. This brief commended the reports of the two task forces which had involved a tremendous amount of study. It acknowledged that now that the question of "what could or should be done" was answered; what awaits now is "what will be done and how quickly", and that action be taken by the government at the soonest possible time to implement the basic changes which had been outlined in the *Report on the Status of the Artist*.

Only time will tell whether or not there will be some positive action taken to implement the recommendations of the follow-up committee or if another committee will be elected to implement the follow-up committee's recommendations. Meanwhile the status of the artist remains in stasis. The individual artist continues to battle a tug O' war between holding down a full-time job and finding enough money, time and space to practise her profession. There continues to be a desperate and very real need for legitimate live-in/workplaces which are rent-controlled so that artists would not have to be at the mercy of landlords. At the moment the needs are basic — to be allowed the chance to be practising artists and to have enough work completed. Many artists would be more than satisfied with such an achievement. After all, we still have our dreams and a chance to pursue them would be enough, for now.

Margaret Chen is a visual artist living in Toronto.

The Politics of Women's Health

by Victoria Lee, M.D.

"Governments have a responsibility for the health of their peoples which can be fulfilled only by the provision of adequate health and social measures."

from the Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization

INTRODUCTION

The issue of women's health is important for two reasons. First, women use health care services more than men. Although we live longer, we also experience more disability, visit doctors more frequently, are hospitalized more often, and are prescribed drugs more commonly. Second, women comprise the majority of health care workers within the health care system as well as almost all the unpaid caregivers in the home for family members. Despite this strong relationship with the medical system, women's power within it is appallingly weak. Only a small minority of women are physicians or occupy administrative positions.

The attitude of the health care system towards women merely reflects the attitude of society at large, a society which tends to consider women helpless and powerless. Feminist critics, Ehrenreich and English, in their book, *Complaints and Disorders: The Sexual Politics of Sickness* (1973), argue the health industry "is a powerful instrument of social control, replacing organized religion as a prime source of sexist ideology and an enforcer of sex roles". Not surprisingly, reform of health care emerged as a major priority in the women's movement of the 1960s and continues to occupy a significant position today.

One of the ways in which the system has failed to meet the needs of the population, both male and female, has been in its narrow focus on illness and cure. Women's health has usually been equated to reproductive disease, as a result. Attention has therefore been paid to such "illnesses" as childbirth and menopause. A good understanding of health, however, necessitates consideration of physical, mental, and social well-being. Factors such as housing, income, nutrition, education, and women's role in society become necessary parts of the equation for health, in addition to the presence or absence of disease. To consider such factors also forces us to look beyond a woman's

reproductive function and view the totality of her needs over her life cycle. For example, appropriate areas of concern include nutrition and housing for elderly women or drug abuse in teenage girls.

If we acknowledge the significance of environmental forces on women's health, we must draw the conclusion that politics and women's health are inextricably linked. Anyone who disputes this relationship of government and personal health need look no further than the issue of availability of legal abortions.

AREAS OF CONCERN

There are numerous women's health issues which have been neglected as areas of study and policy implementation. For example, adequate controls on drugs, medical and surgical treatments for women must be enforced. Witness the tragic stories of diethylstilboestrol (DES) which has now been linked to vaginal and cervical cancers in the daughters of women who took the drug during pregnancy, and the Dalkon Shield intrauterine device which has led to death or sterility in a proportion of women. Can the high number of hysterectomies and Caesarian sections be justified on medical grounds? Mental health is another important area. Women and depression, alcohol, prescription and nonprescription drug abuse are necessary topics of enquiry. Physical and sexual violence against women are two other areas which are likely better influenced by government policy than a traditional medical approach.

Women must receive appropriate treatment but must also have access to services. One government mandate is to ensure women can afford health care. Universal health insurance is important not only so women themselves can receive health care but also to avoid dumping responsibility for caring for those without insurance onto women, the traditional unpaid caregivers at home. Health services must also be accessible in terms of

hours and transportation. Finally, health care workers must be aware of and sympathetic to women's needs.

Because women do provide most of the manpower for health care but are so poorly remunerated and have so little power, government must rectify the inequities in pay and encourage women to strive for positions of authority. This process must begin early in an individual's socialization. In school, girls should be encouraged to take up the sciences, for example.

HEALTH PROMOTION

Health care implies not only treatment of illness but also prevention of disease and promotion of health. In 1984, the WHO suggested 5 aspects of health promotion:

1. *Access to the basic resources for health.* In many of the world's countries, basic resources such as adequate food, water and shelter are lacking. Even in developed nations, large sectors of the female population lack basic necessities. The poor woman, the uneducated woman and, often, the woman of colour are at a disadvantage and thus suffer ill health. Governments must make provision for food, water and housing, help check uncontrolled fertility, ensure an adequate income, legislate equal opportunity and equal pay for equal work, for example.

2. *Development of an environment conducive to health.* Government action is required to improve women's image in society, for example, through monitoring of the media. Legislation around sexual harassment, rape, physical abuse, women's rights in marriage and divorce is important. A safe work environment is also essential.

3. *Strengthening of social networks and supports.* For example, in the case of physical abuse, shelters for women and children are needed. Adequate daycare and maternity benefits are required now that so many women work outside the home. Community supports to enable the elderly (the majority of which are women) to stay at home as long as possible and to relieve caregiver stress also require funding.

4. *Promotion of positive health behaviour and appropriate coping.* Campaigns to reduce obesity, smoking and excessive drinking and to encourage exercise are needed. The government must also concern itself with countering society's promotion of unhealthy behaviours related to cosmetic use, cosmetic surgery and excessive dieting.

5. *Increase in knowledge and dissemination of information related to health.* An educated consumer is free to make rational choices! In Canada, the government has acknowledged the

importance of a broad look at women's health concerns. At a recent conference of the WHO in Ottawa in 1983, a representative of the Health Services and Promotion Branch of Health & Welfare's Women's Health Program stated that \$2 million had been allocated in the 5 years previously for such research. As one example, she cited a national study of the usefulness of mammography in screening for breast cancer. She also described the existence of a Health Promotion Contribution fund which funds regional health efforts for example, a mobile health unit for immigrant women in Toronto. There are also programs designed in Ottawa to be carried out nationwide, for example, a breastfeeding information kit for professionals. The government has also been trying to include women's needs within larger programs, for example, anti-smoking campaigns.

Unfortunately, attention to and funding for such goals is often low. The majority of health care funds in developed nations goes towards hospitals and physician's costs. There is little financial incentive for hospitals and doctors to engage in public health activities.

ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS

Many women feel their needs cannot be met adequately by the present health care system. Alternative forms of health care delivery have therefore been advocated. Examples include birthing centres, the use of midwives, feminist therapy clinics. Self-help groups have been set up. Attempts have been made to provide information about health that gets away from a traditional, passive model of care, for example, the popular book *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, produced by the Boston Women's Health Collective. Governments need to take a look at some of these alternatives and either incorporate them within the system or at least work with them.

WOMEN'S ACTION

The government needs to gather accurate and relevant statistics reflecting women's health needs. Analysis of this data should lead to policy formulation and implementation. Most important, however, is that women participate at all steps along the way. All too often, however, social forces are so strong that women themselves are unaware of the need to involve themselves in the decision-making process. Is it no wonder then, that experts will speak for us and make decisions on our behalf?

Because health is the product of many social factors, we can easily become pessimistic that only massive social change will lead to any amelioration of our health problems. Nonetheless,

political action can go a long way. As has been suggested, concrete government legislation around pay, availability of childcare, divorce rights and the like can promote good health.

Women are total human beings with a range of health concerns. Our health is a product of numerous social forces in addition to the presence or absence of disease. To meet the challenge of satisfying women's health needs, these two factors must be considered but, above all, women must arm themselves with knowledge. In this way, we become empowered to take control over decisions affecting our bodies, ourselves.

Victoria Lee is a psychiatrist who lives in Toronto.

RECOMMENDED READING

Boston Women's Health Collective, Our Bodies, Ourselves, Simon & Schuster, Boston, 1976.

Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Women Caring and Caring, Ottawa, June, 1980.

T. Hancock, "Health Women and the Future", Health Care for Women International, Vol. 8, 249-60, 1987.

Pan American Health Organization, Proceedings of Seminar on Women in Health & Development, Ottawa, April 13, 1983.

N.F. Woods, "New Models of Women's Health Care", Health Care for Women International, Vol. 6, 193-208, 1985.

World Health Organization, Women, Health and Development, A Report by the Director-General, WHO Offset Publication #90, Geneva, 1985.

For \$14.75 Make The Dream A Reality!

Tiger Lily is a contemporary magazine by Women of Colour which focusses on issues of culture, the arts, literature and social concerns.

Please send me 4 issues of **TIGER LILY MAGAZINE:**

☐ *Individual
Subscription*

1 Year (4 issues) \$14.75

☐ *Institutional
Subscription*

1 Year (4 issues) \$24.75

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ POSTAL CODE _____

TIGER LILY

MAGAZINE BY WOMEN OF COLOUR

P.O. Box 756, Stratford, Ontario, Canada N5A 4A0

Jamaican Stories

by Leslie Sanders

Abeng

by Michelle Cliff

The Crossing Press

pp. 167/ \$7.95

The Unbelonging

by Joan Riley

The Women's Press, Ltd.

pp. 144/ \$9.95 approx.

Abeng, says Michelle Cliff, is about colonialism. So she intersperses her tale of a young girl's coming of age with forays into Jamaican herstory, history and lore. These glimpses into the past both lend coherence to her heroine's life and inform its contradictions. Light-skinned Clare Savage loves her darker-skinned childhood summertime companion Zoe, daughter of a tenant on her grandmother's land. However, Clare's greater social freedom and her unconscious arrogance, products of her class, education and skin colour, cause the rupture of her most precious relationship. At the close of the novel Clare is virtually imprisoned by her family who place her in the care of a white relative, a spinster who uses guard dogs to maintain her class privilege. It is in this oppressive household, rather than the country freedom she shares with Zoe, or even the strained but more receptive home of her dark-skinned mother and light-skinned father, that Clare reaches womanhood, noting alone the menses that she and Zoe so eagerly awaited.

Abeng is a richly lyrical novel, a moving account of how the history that we do not know, as well as the history that we know, informs our experience. In *Abeng*, it is the *Diary of Anne Frank* and Jewish history on which Clare pins her questions, unaware that they reverberate with equal meaning and greater immediacy in her own society. The history she does not know, but which surrounds her, as well as the women who are remote, or with whom she is forbidden to speak, would clarify much for her. But colonialism, the

system imposed and the beliefs internalized, conspires to keep her ignorant, and so Clare must seek truth herself.

The Jamaica of *The Unbelonging* exists only in the dreams and memories of its heroine Hyacinth. Her reality is Britain and a life so harrowing that the reader resists the novel's stark realism, hoping, like Hyacinth, that the account is no one's experience, but knowing full well that it has been, continues to be, the experience of many. Raised in Jamaica by an aunt she dearly loves, Hyacinth has been sent for by a father she barely knows. In her misery, she becomes a bedwetter, and after each episode her father beats her sadistically. Outside her home she encounters cruelty of a different sort, racial torments from her schoolmates and callousness or indifference from her teachers. Occasionally a teacher spots and attempts to help her, but her father's mistrust of whites has become her own and her pride, as well as her mistrust, prevent her from obtaining reliable assistance. Until her father begins molesting her and she flees the house.

Under the care of the state, Hyacinth finishes school and attends university. There she meets black students from Africa and the Caribbean who introduce her to the political realities of the sixties, particularly in Jamaica — realities that she cannot accept. Hyacinth's long loneliness is relentless. Blocked friendship by her pride and from sexual relations with men by the traumas of her childhood, barred from acknowledging the reality of the Jamaica to which she returns by her continuing need for her childhood memories, Hyacinth's end is as desperate as her beginning. She truly belongs nowhere, her brittle strength and determination as much a burden as a mark of her achievement. In an author's note, Riley comments that she wishes to show "the forgotten or unglamorous section of my people". *The Unbelonging* is a riveting work, heartbreaking and necessary and an unqualified success.

Leslie Sanders is a professor at York University and teaches Afro-American Literature.

Subscribe To

SAGE

A Scholarly Journal on Black Women



Africa and the Diaspora

Announcing
Vol. 3 Number 2

Make checks payable to:
SWEP, Inc./SAGE • P.O. Box 42741
Atlanta, Georgia 30311-0741

\$15.00/year individuals

\$25.00/institutions