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breaking the SILENCE

a feminist newsmagazine on social issues

in this issue . . .

A feature story on the Ottawa Women's Credit Union — Economic power for many or few?

Justice for whom? Bonnie Robichaud's fight against sexual harassment continues.

The Grange Commission Report provokes nurses' reaction.

Social policy — The Tories step up their attack on universality.

R.E.A.L. (?) Women Challenge Canadian feminists — see 'call for action'

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About Breaking the Silence

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

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

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

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on the policy front

Universality Under Attack

by Joanna Dean

Once again universality has become a political football. Despite Mulroney's pre-election promise that universal social programs were a 'sacred trust', the Tories have since suggested that universality is one of those extras that will have to be cut in an era of fiscal restraint.

Their position sounds reasonable. Why give pensions to a millionaire or family allowance benefits to a wealthy mother? Surely it would be more sensible to direct government aid to those in need. Money saved from benefits could go to the truly needy - or, one suspects, toward the deficit.

As they describe it, opting for selective benefits saves money without really hurting anyone. Eliminating universal social programs allows the Tories to be fiscally and socially responsible at the same time. Or does it?

Changing from universal to selective social programs is not just a matter of redirecting a few dollars; the two approaches are based on entirely different concepts of society. With selective social programs, society is divided into two groups, the givers and the receivers. The givers, who hold the money and power, decide who the receivers will be and dole out the benefits as they see fit.

Universal social programs are designed to do the opposite, to unite society. Recognising that we all go through periods of dependence -

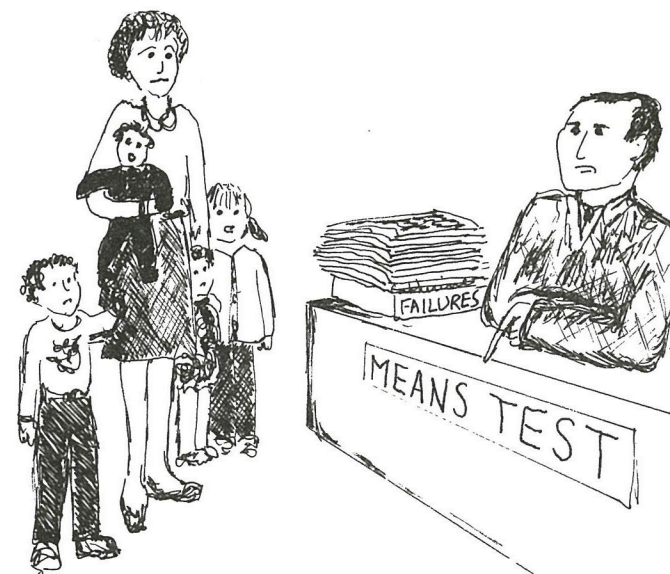
old age, childhood, unemployment - we as a society work to help each other through these times. According to a British sociologist, Richard Titmuss, our choice of social programs has a direct effect on society: "the ways in which a society organizes and structures social institutions - and particularly its health and welfare systems - can encourage or discourage altruism in man; such systems can foster integration or alienation; they can allow the 'theme of the gift'...of generosity towards strangers to spread among and between social groups and generations." (*The Gift Relationship*, 1981)

Because they are shared by everyone, universal social programs have been shown to be more resistant to penny-pinching politicians. If the Tories reduce family benefits or pensions they will have to explain themselves to every Canadian. Cuts to selective programs go unnoticed because they only affect the poor and powerless.

Apart from the larger issue of universality feminists have a special stake in Family Allowance Benefits. The family allowance is generally only paid to women - the benefits are specifically directed to the mother of the family. Cutting them would be a direct blow to women.

For many women the baby bonus is their only independent source of income. If the family allowance were made selective many middle class women would lose it on the basis of their husband's income. Yet for many it is essential - the only money they have complete control over.

There are other problems with selective programs. They inevitably involve some form of means test which is degrading to those who must apply. Applicants are singled out as poor, and therefore 'failures' and as a result many deserving people are too ashamed to apply. A means test may encourage cheating, and actually discourage the work ethic, because any extra money earned or saved is deducted from the benefits.



When proponents of selectivity talk about cost cutting they often neglect to calculate the cost of administering a means test and checking up on recipients. They also usually forget that universal benefits are taxable so that wealthy recipients are already returning a proportion of their benefits to the government in the form of taxes.

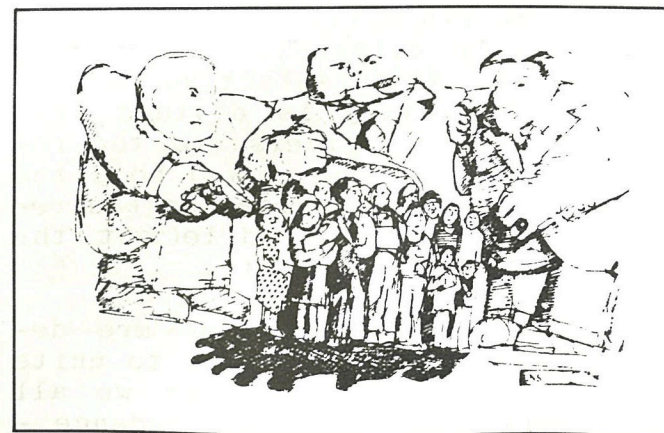
Those who support selectivity are often conservatives who are ideologically opposed to the redistribution of wealth through the state. They resent the growth of the welfare state and see cutting back on universal social programs as a way of reducing the power of the government.

This bias has led them to focus on universality and ignore other, more effective ways of achieving their stated ends. To choose one example, it has been suggested that family allowance benefits should only go to those who demonstrably need them. This would save money, some of which would presumably go into increasing benefits to the needy.

However it would not save as much money as might first appear. Family allowances are taxable and a portion is already returned to the government. And there would be the cost of administering a selective program; as it is the family allowance is one of the cheaper programs to run.

A much more effective way of saving money would be to eliminate the tax exemption for dependent children. This exemption is worthless to the poor, who pay no taxes, and its value increases as one's income and tax rate goes up. If the Tories were really sincere in wanting to eliminate handouts to the rich this would be the place to start.

But of course there is a lot more than this to the current attack on universality. At stake is a whole vision of society. A return to selectivity would involve a fundamental restructuring of our social system and a return to the days when the rich handed out charity to the deserving and invisible poor.



The Young Offenders Act: A Brighter Tomorrow for Young Women?

by Carolyn Siebert and Ellen Adelberg

From 1908 until 1982, Canada's under-age offenders (in Ontario, anyone under the age of sixteen), were charged and dealt with according to the Juvenile Delinquents Act. As "juvenile delinquents", young men and women, and boys and girls were subject to judgement in Juvenile Court, and to possible terms of imprisonment in training schools (often referred to as reform schools). After decades of criticism about the treatment of youth under the Juvenile Delinquents Act, the Young Offenders Act (YOA) was finally passed by the Federal Government in 1982, with the stipulation that implementation begin in 1984.

The spirit of the YOA is a positive one. It attempts to allow youth more responsibility and greater access to alternative programs than they had under the Juvenile Delinquents Act. However, the spirit of the Act seems to be losing its sparkle, particularly for young women, in the process of implementation.

Phase two of the Act stipulates that the legal age of adult offenders become 18 in every province by April of 1985. In Ontario, this means that 16 and 17 year olds may no longer be held with adults in prison, nor be allowed to stay in community residences which also house adult offenders. While in theory it may make sense to separate young offenders from their older counterparts, in practice 16-17 year olds might lose out on the few programs and resources that were previously available to them as adult offenders.

Lack of agreement between the provincial and federal governments re-

garding the implementation of phase two has resulted in make-shift adjustments to existing programs. For young women in conflict with the law in the Ottawa area, the problem is particularly acute. Due to their relatively low numbers, incarceration will now likely mean serving a sentence in solitary confinement. So far, the "new program" for young female offenders consists only of having a separate entrance for 16-17 year olds installed at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre. As well, partitions have been planned to separate the young women from the general area for women.

Rumour has it that lack of preparation or allocated resources may cause the Ontario Ministry of Corrections to postpone the date for implementing phase two of the YOA for two or three years. Given the current climate of government spending restraint, particularly in the area of social programs, one is left to wonder if postponement will result in any solution to the dilemma which young female offenders will face. They may be too old for the special attention paid to 12-15 year olds by the Ministry of Community and Social Services (the ministry now responsible for 12-15 year old offenders) and too young for any special attention paid to adult offenders such as those programs run by the Elizabeth Fry Society.

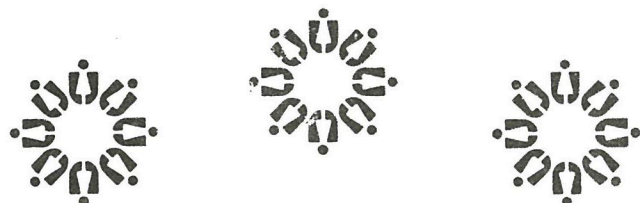
Consequently, they may well be stranded in the middle in a virtual no-woman's land. In the community, service providers have been left to guess whether the age restrictions for their programs will change after April 1.

A general impression at this stage is that very little is being planned for young offenders. To a great extent, this dampens the very spirit in which the YOA was conceived.

feature

Money, Women and Power: Where is the Women's Credit Union Going?

by Alma Estable



In the past decade, a number of Canadian women's organizations have arisen with the specific goal of increasing women's access to financial and economic resources. As a member of the Ottawa Women's Credit Union, I wonder: can such organizations go beyond serving women individually, and become useful vehicles for increasing the power of women as a group? For exerting political influence? For promoting social and economic change?

These questions were certainly not uppermost in my mind when I first became a member. I joined the O.W.C.U. without giving it much thought, in an almost automatic gesture of support for a new, local women's effort. I had experienced the second-rate treatment afforded women in traditional banks, and assumed a women's credit union would be an improvement. In many ways, this has been the case. The O.W.C.U. offers a full range of accounts and services, including assistance with financial planning, workshops and seminars on financial management, a resource centre, credit counselling, etc. As well, it's easier to take my children to the O.W.C.U., since a safe and well-designed play area keeps them entertained (and out of the way)

while I do my business. Art by local women hangs on the walls; a rack and bulletin board display an assortment of pamphlets, publications and announcements about women's and community events, as well as information about RRSP's and interest rates. The trainee tellers are so friendly and willing that they almost make up for the occasionally excruciatingly slow service.

In the Beginning

So what else is special about a women's credit union? I spoke with two women who have been intimately connected with the O.W.C.U. in an attempt to find out.

Aline Akeson currently works at the Dalhousie Community Service Centre, but has been involved with the O.W.C.U. from the start. When I asked Aline about the origins of the O.W.C.U., she claimed, with a smile, that "Actually, it was my idea", having been one of the original planners in 1978 (with Dorothy O'Connell, then of the Ottawa Tenants' Council, and Lynne Markell, at the Social Planning Council).

At the Tenants' Council, Aline repeatedly encountered the problems facing women without much money. She vividly recalls the situation of "one woman, whose son had committed suicide. She did not want him to be buried by the welfare department; she wanted some sense of dignity. And she couldn't get the money. She couldn't even borrow any money for a funeral... and she didn't want to have to go to her son's funeral in jeans and a t-shirt". The cruel reality of situations like this one made an impact on the Tenants' Council women. They started to search for ways to "mobilize middle-class women so that they know these things happen, and so they can help other women".

Women, Poverty and Affluence

Together with women from community groups, they developed the idea of a financial cooperative, "so that affluent women would be able to help less affluent women". According to Aline, "We were always on the lookout for ways of getting women training, skills. And it seemed to us that a good way of getting money to start the credit union was to go after money for training." As a result, the training programme became an integral part of the O.W.C.U. from the start.

Donna Holton, manager of the O.W.C.U. since 1982, also recalls that the planning group quickly identified a banking environment as a critical area, because "women, low income women especially, are heavily discriminated against by traditional financial institutions", often unable to cash cheques or obtain credit. Donna is enthusiastic about the Credit Union's achievements in the "real" financial world. Membership has grown from 500 to over 23,000 women, and it now has assets of over two million dollars.

The institution survived at a time when many other cooperative ventures and women's credit unions were going under. Donna feels that they are now respected in the Ottawa credit union community, and also that the O.W.C.U. is raising awareness of women's needs among other credit unions. In fact, she claims the O.W.C.U. is an asset to the cooperative sector as a whole: "A lot of women who come to us don't come because we're a credit union; they come to us because we're a women's bank".



Changing Times, Changing Goals?

Now that the Credit Union is established in the financial community, has its goal changed? I asked whether the O.W.C.U. had moved away from paying particular attention to the needs of low income women.

Donna firmly believes it has not. She feels that low income women are better served by the O.W.C.U. than by any other financial institution in town. "Low income women access credit through the credit union because they cannot access it anywhere else". However, Donna points out that "it's important that women recognize it's not a charity... We do not loan our depositor's money in any insecure or irresponsible fashion". And, in fact, the O.W.C.U.'s delinquency rate of under 2% is lower than that of both traditional community-based credit unions and other banking institutions. Donna is proud of this figure, and wants it to be made public, to show that "women are responsible with credit, at any income level".

How does the concern for serving low income women translate into practice? One frequently given example is that they will consider lending money to a woman on mother's allowance, "to the absolute horror of some banks", says Donna. The credit committee evaluates each woman's stability, her ability and willingness to repay the loan. "If a single mother has been on mother's allowance for three years, she has two children, she's been managing a household - there are quite a few things within that context that are incredible challenges, and she's meeting those challenges - our evaluation and assessment of that person is she's very stable, and she has the capacity to repay, because she has an income".

Aline does not hesitate to say that the Credit Union has turned out quite differently from what she originally expected. Although also proud of its achievements, she wonders whether it now primarily promotes the interests of women competing with men in the financial world. Aline traces this back to the original planners' determination that the O.W.C.U. would not suffer the fate of some other women's credit unions, and go under financially. Because of this concern, they actively recruited women with strong business and financial backgrounds. Aline admits the input of business women "was necessary at the start - but I don't think it was necessary to remain there".

She is not certain that low-income women are as actively involved in all aspects of the credit union as might originally have been hoped. She admits it is hard to find out what the actual income range of the membership is, and attributes this to a practice of "confidentiality around money that you learn in banks, where men don't discuss money, or say who's rich and who's not. I don't think that whole thing is natural for women. I think women would be happy to say, I have this much money in the credit union, and let's find out who we are, what are the ranges of incomes of other women". Aline is concerned that the focus of the O.W.C.U. is shifting: "I don't like the idea of a women's bank. I prefer a women's credit union, but I think it is moving towards becoming a women's bank".

To Serve or To Mobilize?

Although the percentage of low income women - and their activity - within the credit union, may appear to be less than at the beginning, Donna claims that their overall numbers have increased. She feels

that the Credit Union needs to be diversified in its appeal in order to be strong. "When the organization is strong, and very representative of all women, it best serves the needs of low income women, because it has the capability and credibility to do so". For Donna, one of the main goals of the O.W.C.U. has been to provide both low and middle income women with sensitive banking services, which avoid the discrimination women experience at all levels of banking. She feels this is being accomplished.

Can a women's credit union have a social conscience, be politically active, work for social change? "Yes, yes, yes. It has to", answers Aline. "I just can't believe that the power of that many women in one place shouldn't be utilized in terms of political action for women, if not for anything else... certainly for women's issues, and things around medicare, daycare, and those kinds of issues, it should be an extremely political group". However, Aline admits that, at present, the O.W.C.U. isn't using its potential political power. She believes the Credit Union has a duty to "politicize women. That should be part and parcel of what we're doing" (informing, organizing and mobilizing women to take political action about issues which affect all our lives). "We should be doing that with the Credit Union. We should be telling (members) about money, too, at a women's credit union. But it shouldn't just be money... that's a drawing card, everybody has to have money. But we should also be giving them other things".

Donna also believes the O.W.C.U. has potential for making a social impact. "There are so many areas for impact by an organization that has as its premises money and women's independence. I've always felt that women won't be indepen-

dent until they are financially independent. That's when you can influence - socially, economically, politically...that doesn't mean to say that women don't influence (when they) don't have a financial base; it is just that women en masse do not influence without a financial base".

What is the O.W.C.U.'s Potential?

I wonder whether women can achieve the financial independence and power Donna speaks of without major structural changes to the social, political, and economic institutions of the world. I question whether encouraging individual women to become more financially independent will give all women our fair share of global resources. Donna believes so. "It's the incremental changes that are also important, as well as the systemic changes". She claims that the O.W.C.U. tackles a good many incremental changes for women, individually, and as a representative of women in the financial community. As for systemic changes: "An interest-free society, now those are real systemic changes to the monetary system that, no, we haven't tackled yet". Donna laughs, shrugs her shoulders: "Maybe next week".

Aline feels there is room for improvement, and she is adamant in insisting that any change in policy directions of a credit union must come from the membership. "After all, it's your credit union - do something about it", she challenges. She also recognizes that, as women, we often feel we lack the power to make changes. "Somehow, we don't know that we can go to an annual meeting, and put people on the board, and make decisions". She fears the O.W.C.U. has not been as close to the co-operative movement as it could have been, with members relying on the board to make all the decisions with little actual input from ordinary women. Aline would like more awareness of

the need to "get women to speak out at general meetings. We've got to inform members and allow, encourage, and teach them how to come in, how to control - women don't generally know how to do that, and we haven't taught that". She would also like to see the development of "a different sense of money than the male capitalist idea of money...".

Aline is hesitant to appear to criticise the O.W.C.U. other than in a constructive manner, especially because, at this point, she isn't sure she is ready to "get back in there and work on it" herself. But she would like other women to consider getting more involved, and to jointly develop more creative ways of using the money and power of the O.W.C.U. One of her pet ideas is for the Credit Union to invest in innovative, co-operative housing for low income women - a sound financial proposition in Ottawa's tight housing market, as well as a possible vehicle for mobilization and social change. To accomplish this, however, "you would have to start the whole membership thinking in terms of doing these kinds of things - of these kinds of things really being a priority".

At the end of this exercise, I'm left with some answers, but even more questions. Could we, as members of a women's credit union, become more innovative in using our money to support the collective struggles of women? Is offering small loans to low-income women the only way of giving assistance? Should we not be looking for ways of also addressing the fundamental problems of financial inequality? How can we use fully the potential of a women's credit union to overturn government policy that maintains women below the poverty line? Will the membership ever take up the challenge, and wield the collective power of 23,000 women with money in the bank?

Answers to Feminist Crossword

by Debbie Gordon

ACROSS

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Emily <u>Murphy</u> | 24. <u>Sister</u> |
| 4. Doctor | 26. Hag |
| 7. <u>Elaine Morgan</u> | 27. <u>Sojourner Truth</u> |
| 8. Ontario Coalition
of <u>Abortion Clinics</u> | 28. Despot |
| 13. <u>Lina Wertmuller</u> | 30. Nine |
| 14. La | 32. Rule |
| 15. <u>Jane Eyre</u> | 34. <u>Robin Morgan</u> |
| 17. Hip | 35. Wen Do |
| 18. <u>Lorraine Segato</u> | 36. P.D. |
| 19. <u>Bob Guccione</u> | 37. <u>Nicole Hollander</u> |
| 21. SORWUC | 39. Cap |
| 22. My | 43. She |
| 23. <u>Georgina Binnie Clark</u> | 44. Midwifery |
| | 45. Naomi Goldenberg |

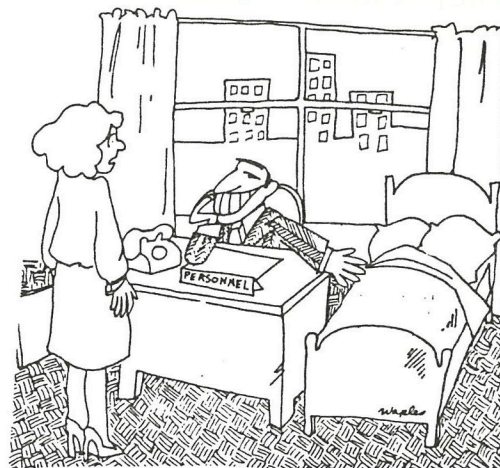
DOWN

1. Pam McAllister
2. Irene Parlby
3. Yes
5. Ontario Coalition of Abortion
Clinics
6. Television TV
9. Canadian Women's Studies
10. Rasmusson
11. Herstory
12. Wicca
16. No
17. Hugh Hefner
20. Lizzie Borden
22. Ms Magazine
25. Is
29. Tu
31. International Women's Day
33. Leah Cohen
36. Pad
38. Hay
39. Elizabeth Cady Stanton
40. Pen
41. Lady Diana
42. Of

justice

Sexual Harassment: We've Only Just Begun

by Ellen Adelberg



In 1979, while she was on probation as a lead hand cleaner at the Canadian Forces Base in North Bay, Bonnie Robichaud was asked by her supervisor to perform sexual acts with him. The acts included masturbation, fellatio, fondling of his penis and attempted sexual intercourse (apparently he couldn't achieve an erection). Bonnie, married and a mother of 5, claims that she felt intimidated by Dennis Brennan (her supervisor) into performing the sexual acts because he threatened to discipline her and sabotage her attempt to pass probation for the lead hand position, if she refused. As soon as her probation was over, she filed a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission alleging sexual harassment, discrimination and intimidation.

For a long period after filing the human rights complaint, Bonnie was disciplined as a result of written complaints about her work. Five of

the complaints were from Brennan. They resulted in a demotion, as well as social and physical isolation from other workers.

Five years later, the case seems far from finished. After filing her complaint, Bonnie's allegations were investigated by staff of the Human Rights Commission, and found to be substantiated. A tribunal was appointed in 1981 to do a formal inquiry and its decision was released in June of 1982. Richard Abbott, a law professor, found the allegations to be unsubstantiated, largely because he judged that the sexual acts described by Bonnie (and flatly denied by Dennis Brennan), could only have been carried out with her consent.

Bonnie immediately appealed the tribunal decision and a review tribunal was appointed. It ruled in February of 1983 that Bonnie had a valid sexual harassment complaint. Review tribunal members were then to hear arguments to establish the amount of damages. Before that happened, Brennan appealed the review tribunal's decision to the Federal Court of Appeal. After two court hearings, one in May of 1984 and another in November of that year, Bonnie Robichaud is still anxiously awaiting the Federal Court of Appeal judges' decision.

As Constance Backhouse and Leah Cohen documented so well in The Secret Oppression (1978), unwanted sexual attention in the workplace happens to almost every woman at some point in her life, be she a cleaner, secretary, middle manager or professional. Yet a 1983 CROP poll, (the first national poll on the subject of sexual harassment), revealed that while about 1.5 million Canadians believe they have been sexually harassed, few have ever reported the incidents, and even fewer of the harassers have been disciplined.

Given Bonnie Robichaud's experience, one can easily understand why few women bother to report unwelcome sexual contact, let alone a boss's pat on the bottom or co-worker's lewd talk about women. Backhouse and Cohen's book, and other recent writing on the subject demonstrate clearly that sexual harassment is most commonly treated as a joke by men, or else as a "fact of life" - after all now, men will be men, and girls will be girls won't they?



Bonnie Robichaud's situation demonstrates the enormity of the battle we still have to fight to be treated by men as equal beings, with equal rights in the workplace. For five years, this woman has lived each day with the repercussions of daring to speak out against gross male exploitation and violation. She lost her promotion and were it not for her union status, she probably would have lost her job. Her personal life continues to be dominated by the struggle to win her case.

We have all made some gains as a result of Bonnie's bravery and tenacity. Her claim of discriminatory treatment based on sex was the first of its kind investigated and upheld by the Canadian Human Rights Commission. Shortly afterward, the Canada Human Rights Act was amended to include sexual harassment as a form of discrimination. Her union, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, now has a written policy on sexual harassment, fought for by women unionists after Bonnie's case revealed to them the need to educate their own "brothers". Other unions are also starting to develop sexual harassment policies and to fight at the bargaining table for protection clauses. The National Union of Provincial Government Employees commissioned a booklet about the topic and how to deal with it entitled Sexual Harassment at Work, written by Susan Attenborough in 1980. However, there are many important questions we need to ask ourselves as a result of Bonnie's experience. For one, is the Human Rights Commission complaint route a worthwhile avenue? Since 1978, nine sexual harassment cases have been heard by the Canadian Human Rights Commission. One was dismissed, the rest were upheld. The largest settlement received by a complainant was \$5,000; some were as little as \$500. Many of the women were forced to quit or otherwise lost their jobs; all of the women suffered personal grief and trauma impossible to measure in dollar terms. In Bonnie's case, after five years she has yet to receive a cent of compensation for the wages she lost as a result of her demotion from lead hand cleaner.

Another problem with human rights complaints is that they must be submitted on an individual basis. This means that each woman who suffers sexual harassment must decide on her own to lay a complaint,

quite possibly leaving herself open to job dismissal, and other forms of non-sexual harassment. Another obvious problem with human rights complaints is the length of time they take to be settled.

In Bonnie's case, although her own union local proved to be less than helpful, after strong lobbying by women members, her union (the PSAC) threw its support behind her and assumed the legal costs. However, only a small proportion of women workers in Canada are unionized. Where can those of us who are unorganized turn when we need support to fight against men who sexually harass us? Most of us turn inward, possibly confiding in a friend. When the harassment gets too bad, we quit our jobs, sometimes suffering emotional breakdowns in the process.

The strongest conspirator against sexual harassment is almost invisible. It consists of the socially accepted notion that men are natural sexual predators of women and cannot, or should not, be restrained within the bounds of the workplace. This is one of the deeply entrenched notions governing our interaction which we as women, must insist be changed.

Hopefully, ten years from now, we will look back at Bonnie Robichaud as a pioneer who helped to expose the gross sexual inequality that often reigns supreme in the workplace. By publicly exposing Mr. Brennan, Bonnie served notice to all men who sexually harass that at least some of us just won't take it any more.

Note: You can follow the developments in the Bonnie Robichaud case and/or show support by writing to:

Bonnie Robichaud
218 Terrace Lawn
North Bay, Ont.
P1B 7P6

The Grange Report:

Nurses Speak Out

by Dianne Patychuk

The Grange Commission issued its long-awaited report on the inquiry into the baby deaths at Toronto Sick Children's Hospital in late 1984. In Vol. 2, No. 4, Breaking the Silence ran an article criticizing the sexist nature of the inquiry and calling it a "modern witch hunt". Many nurses agree and here they speak for themselves.

Briefly, the one-man commission, Justice Samuel Grange, concluded that some of the babies had been murdered. However, an earlier court ruling prevented him from identifying any individuals he thought might be responsible.

After the report was released, Dianne Patychuk, herself a nurse and a health activist in Toronto, asked 12 nurses for their immediate reactions to the report. The nurses were angry.

"It stinks."

"It's a lot of bullshit. The whole thing was a farce."

"It was a whitewash. A waste of the taxpayer's money. My money. It left so many questions unanswered. I don't think we will ever know what happened."

"It resolved nothing. Speculation runs rife."

"I was shocked to find out that after all that, Grange made no recommendations for change."

The nurses were asked whether they agreed with Grange's conclusion that some of the babies had been

murdered by overdoses of the heart drug digoxin.

"We can't put it all down to medication errors but I'm not convinced it was murder."

"Those babies were very sick and normally they would have been in ICU (intensive care) rather than on a ward."

"I don't think there were any murders."

"The commission really didn't pay much attention to the doctor from the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal who argued that the results of the digoxin testing were useless - that there were no control groups and that other studies had shown the pure digoxin may appear several months after burial from the decomposition of the tissue."

"The studies of digoxin they used can't prove it was murder. There were too many variables. The Vancouver study raised many questions about the internal epidemiological studies and it was these that the influential study by the Atlanta Centre for Disease Control were based on."

"The money spent on the Grange would have been much better spent investigating digoxin."



The nurses criticized the sexist nature of the Commission's process and findings. They felt that after all was said and done, it was the most powerless group of health workers - all nurses, all women - who were scapegoated and who were made to suffer as a result of the Grange inquiry.

"It was sexual harassment. Nurses have an excessive workload and are run off their feet. They are held totally accountable and yet when they try to rectify dangerous or serious situations, they get no support from their employers or agencies."

"One news story was headlined 'Nurses Flirt with Perjury'. They would never have said that about doctors."

"The whole thing was biased against nurses."

"When Susan Nelles spoke to nurses' groups all across the province, the same question kept coming up - would any of this have happened if the nurses at the Sick Kids were unionized?"

"It's quite ironic that the same legal firm that defended the Sick Kids Hospital at the Grange is now working with the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario to defend a nurse suspended for refusing to have yet another unnecessary chest X-ray. These are opposite sides of the same struggle - the struggle against management power and for our right as women and workers to control our own health and to protect the health of those in our charge."

The nurses were asked about the impact of the Grange Commission on the nursing profession.

"It has done irreparable damage to the nursing profession yet it did nothing to address the structural problems that make our situation so difficult."

"It brought us together to give moral and monetary support to the nurses involved."

"It has made us wiser and more militant. Nurses are more legally aware of our need to cover our asses and to chart, chart, chart."

"One nurse cannot do the work of five. The Commission has forced us to take a defensive position. It has taught us what our priorities have to be, the necessity of writing everything down. That does not bode well for the time we will have available to meet patients' needs."

"Grange said the system worked. It worked in the interests of the state, that's all. Grange said the cops were O.K., that maybe they erred but that it is really not their fault. The prosecutors maybe should have done things differently but that's O.K. But Susan Nelles was hurt by the system - we all were. The finger to the whole system which fingers nurses who are there 24 hours a day and who are powerless."

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario has written a report outlining a response to the Grange Commission. Their address is:

33 Price Street
Toronto, Ontario

women at work

Taking Control of Microtechnology: Women and Multinationals Part II

by Jean Fairholm

There are many similarities in health and safety issues for women in Canada and women in Third World countries. In Canada Video-Display Terminals (VDT's) bring several of potential health hazards to office workers. V.D.T's, called "Very Dangerous Technology" by some, have cathode ray tubes inside them which indicate another potential risk of long term exposure to low level radiation.

Government officials in the U.S. and Canada maintain that there is no radiation hazard from these machines. However, operators report experiencing blackouts, headaches and skin rashes. There is a growing concern that long term exposure may affect the reproductive organs and cause problems in fetal development. The case at the Toronto Star is one such example where four out of seven children born to V.D.T. operators in one department had deformities. (Healthsharing, Spring, 1981, p.5)

There is also very real concern to quote Dr. M. Zaret "...that V.D.T.'s cause cataracts." (Healthsharing) At the very least, prolonged daily use causes eyestrain which can lead to deterioration and the need to wear glasses.

The situation is similar for assembly workers in developing countries who produce the technology. Women who bond the microchips have to look through microscopes for 7 to 9 hours a day, soldering hundreds of

chips to circuit boards. Each chip has many tiny gold wires finer than human hair. Headaches, dizziness and eyestrain are the norm.

When a woman is hired she must have 20/20 vision. In a plant in South Korea, within one year 88% of the workers had chronic conjunctivitis, a painful inflammation of the eye. Within three years, virtually all needed glasses.

The lack of concern for very real health risks actually works to the companies' advantage. Workers are under pressure to achieve ever increasing production quotas.

Deteriorating eyesight, which results in failure to meet quotas, gives reason for dismissal. These workers have accumulated more seniority than new workers and therefore cost the company more to keep employed. They may also be more interested in unions and strikes than new employees, having developed an understanding of their working conditions.



Dividing Workers

A major concern in the growth of the international division of labour is the isolation and alienation of workers from each other. Instead of blaming Third World workers for taking away our jobs, we need to look at the control multinational companies have over the location of production.

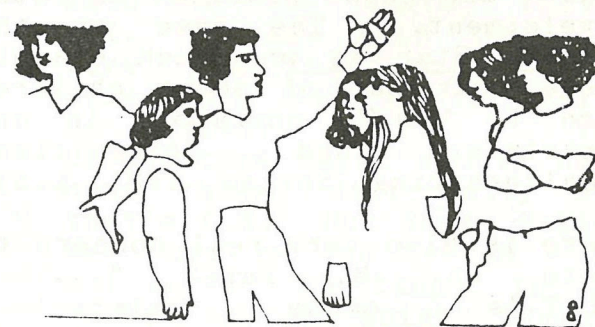
Who really benefits the most? It is not the workers. It is the company executive and the owners. In addition, we need to look at government legislation which, on one hand gives grants and tax concessions to companies, and on the other hand controls workers with anti-union and anti-strike laws.

In many ways the exploitation of one group of women is used to exploit another. Women assemblers in developed countries are threatened that their jobs will be moved to other countries, where women workers will be paid even more poorly, and will work in even more unhealthy and stressful conditions. The equipment they produce in the third world will be used in turn to put more women in developed countries into unhealthy, stressful and poorly paid job ghettos, or out of work entirely.

It's time for us to join with our sisters in other countries to break this exploitation and take control of the New Technology. Instead of blaming our sisters in Third World countries for taking away jobs, why not find ways to make contact with them? to share information on our situation as women and workers? to analyse together our situation and ways we can support each other? Let's no longer be part of an international division of labour. Let's be part of an international united network of support and action.

Building the Links

In many Third World countries actions are being taken by people working for different multinational companies. In the Philippines, women labour organizers from the Free Trade Zones held a workshop in Dec./82 to discuss their situation as workers and develop solidarity among women. A Centre for Women's Resources has been opened in Quezon City, Philippines, to link women's groups in the country with each other and with international groups. The Christian Conference of Asia - Urban Rural Mission, in Hong Kong, is one of the socially active religious groups in South-East Asia. In support of women's struggles they set-up a Women Workers Desk as a liaison for information on women workers activities for change, and in 1983 published a small book called Struggling To Survive, Women Workers in Asia, with case stories from women in Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Hong Kong.



Groups in developed countries are also supporting the actions of workers in the Third World. For example, Indonesian workers have received support from Dutch groups like the Indonesian Documentation and Information Centre (INDOC),

based in Leiden, Netherlands. This group put out a document called 'Indonesian Workers and their Right to Organize', following the labour disputes with P.T. Fairchild Semiconductor in Indonesia.

Women in Canada have also been active in organizing to inform ourselves and make international connections. World Interaction, a resource centre on international issues, held a workshop in Ottawa in September (1984) to make links between the concerns of women's and labour groups in Canada, and the situation of women working for microelectronics multinationals in Third World countries.

A number of resources are being produced by various groups:

- The New Technology Working Group produced a booklet in 1984 entitled 'Microfutures: Who Pays?' It provides an analysis of how technology affects women's lives in Canada.

For more information on the following groups call Jean - at World Interaction 238-4659.

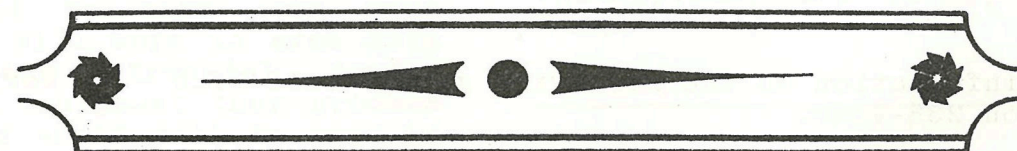
INTERNATIONAL:

- Christian Conference of Asia - Urban Rural Mission, 57 Peking Rd., 5/F, Kowloon, Hong Kong.
- Center for Women Resources, Room 403 FMSG Building, New York Street, corner D. Rodriguez SR. Boulevard, Quezon City, Philippines.
- Center for the Progress of Peoples, 48 Princess Margaret Rd., 1/F Homantin, Kowloon, Hong Kong.
- Global Electronics Information Project, c/o Pacific Studies Centre, 867 Dana St., #204, Mountain View, California 94041, USA.
- ISIS International Women's Journal and Supplement, P.O. Box 50, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland.
- Women's Newsletter, American Friends Service Committee, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19102, U.S.A.

continued

CANADA:

- Communication Workers of Canada, 141 Laurier West, Suite 906, Ottawa.
- Canadian Union of Public Employees, 21 Florence St., Ottawa, Ontario.
- Development Education Centre, 427 Bloor St. W., Toronto, Ontario.
- Les Production Contre-Jour Inc., 5354 Waverly St., Montreal, Quebec.
- MATCH - International, 171 Nepean, Suite 401, Ottawa, Ontario.
- New Technology Working Group, 104 Albany Ave., Toronto, Ontario.
- National Union of Provincial Government Employees, 204-2841 Riverside Dr., Ottawa, Ontario.
- Ottawa Microtechnology Working Group, c/o OPIRG-Carleton, Rm. 513, Unicentre, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario.
- Participatory Research Group, 386 Bloor St. W., Toronto, Ontario.
- World Interaction Ottawa, 78 Daly Ave., Ottawa, Ontario.
- Waterloo OPIRG, Rm. 217, Campus Centre, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario.



reports

Equality, When?

by Magda Seydegart

The recent release of the Report of the Abella Commission on Equality in Employment has inadvertently provoked, once again, the non-productive debate about "quotas" in affirmative action.

Judge Rosalie Abella was enlisted by the federal Liberal government in the summer of 1983 to examine the employment practices of 11 major crown corporations in light of current job inequalities faced by women, native people and visible minorities. Her 240 page report is a valuable source for researchers

and also presents over 100 wide-ranging recommendations.

These recommendations are not limited to the findings regarding the employment practices and conditions in the crown corporations, but emerge from an examination of the current Canadian employment picture. They are variously addressed to policy-makers, law-makers, employers, employees, educators, voluntary organizations and equality-seekers.

The report argues for the adoption of the term "employment equity" instead of "affirmative action", to enable productive discussion without the interference of emotion-laden connotations of affirmative action. The goal of employment equity is to assess progress in terms of results, not to measure discrimination in terms of motive. Both deliberate discrimination and unintentional, but widely-practiced, discrimination (such as height-and-weight restrictions) need to be eliminated.

The report contains many excellent graphs, analyses and recommended directives for action. Among the most important are the recommendations urging a dramatic increase in the accurate collection and use of data to correct numerical inequalities. Data collection processes, the report suggests, should be standardized and centralized through Statistics Canada and the performance of employers should be appraised in comparison to other employers in the same industry or region and with each employer's previous performance. Recommendation 18 states that the enforcement agency (which could be the Canadian Human Rights Commission, or possibly a new agency) should make public the employer's data, the Statistics Canada analysis and the enforcement agency's assessment by tabling a report in Parliament.

It is argued that all of these efforts would make the employers publicly accountable. Nevertheless, the Abella Report stops short of "quotas" or "goals and time-tables" and this is why it is being criticized by some women's groups. If you cannot measure against a specific set of objectives, how will you know if you have achieved any significant gains? By the same token, can a just penalty be measured for non-compliance?

This is a serious issue since it is by now clear that voluntary affirmative action is making no appreciable difference in advancing the rights of women to equality in employment.

It seems that the most effective response of women to the Abella Report would be to applaud those aspects which are really constructive - specifically in data-collection and enforcement - and to call for mandatory affirmative programs and contract compliance.

It is not very likely that there will be another commission or task force on this matter in the foreseeable future. Neither stymied debates on quotas nor total rejection of this report will contribute to the desired goal of greater employment, pay and job opportunities for women.

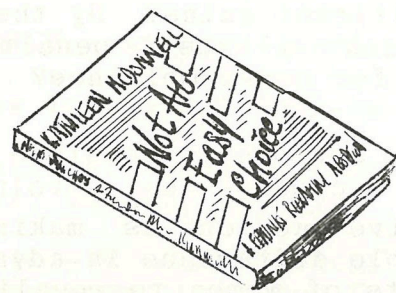
Rumor has it that in March, the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission will release a statutory or policy response to the Abella Report. If you want to make your views known, write to:

The Honourable Flora MacDonald
Minister of Employment &
Immigration
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

book reviews

Abortion: Not an Easy Choice

reviewed by Deborah Gordon



My own belief is that the ambivalent, paradoxical nature of abortion will always be with us, and that this is in many ways a good thing. What we need, if we are to avoid getting stuck at impasses as we explore some of these thorny questions, is new ways of thinking and talking about abortion.

Kathleen McDonnell
in Not an Easy Choice

Kathleen McDonnell's book, Not an Easy Choice, provides precisely this. Her book expands and deepens the feminist view of abortion because it treads in areas that we have so far shunned, ignored or feared. Those areas include women's experience of abortion, the moral dimension of abortion, developments in medical technology and the science of eugenics, men's role in reproduction, and the contradictions between being supportive of abortion on request, and at the same time, being non-violent and respectful of life and the ecosystem.

McDonnell encourages feminists to talk about all our ambivalent feelings discussed or validated by fem-

inists. The Right-to-Life movement, McDonnell points out, is talking about them, and is active in providing support services for women experiencing post-abortion grief or doubt. "Feminists, (however) are the ones who should be talking to these women," McDonnell affirms.

The author also looks at the larger issue of morality and abortion: an issue which feminists, she concedes, are not addressing, and therefore losing the potential confidence and support of a great middle ground of people who have moral qualms about abortion. What these people need, she asserts, is simple reassurance that feminists are aware and concerned with the moral questions surrounding abortion.

Advances in the fields of genetics and prenatal diagnosis have given rise to abortion (for fetal abnormality) as opposed to social, economic and psychological grounds stressed by feminists. It is crucial, McDonnell stresses, that feminists examine these developments very carefully and ask ourselves the question: how does this kind of selective abortion of defective fetuses fit in with our right to choose?

In one of the most thought-provoking chapters in her book, McDonnell addresses the question of men and abortion. The author points out that there is a grave inconsistency between the eagerness of feminists' to involve men in all aspects of reproduction except abortion. Abortion is, after all, a woman's choice. What we have encouraged in men, from this author's perspective, is a passive, auxiliary role in abortion, permitting them to participate in a way that is helpful, but perhaps not truly meaningful. "But," McDonnell states, "if we are serious in our efforts to, in a sense, right

nature's imbalance and make reproduction a truly joint effort, it behooves us to make more room for men in the abortion process, to allow them a meaningful role that acknowledges their part in procreation."

McDonnell also urges feminists to take into account the dissonance between our stance on abortion and our stance on other issues. "Isn't abortion, in some cases, an act of violence?" she asks. Is there a contradiction here? If there is, McDonnell makes the point that it need not frighten us. Life is full of contradictions. Facing them can only lead to a deeper understanding of our values and beliefs, she argues.

Clearly, McDonnell is saying that we need a much more comprehensive view of every aspect of reproduction. Just as feminist theory in the areas of violence against women, pornography, women in the family and women's spirituality have expanded, feminists need to go beyond the pro-choice slogans we have marched with since the early seventies.

McDonnell asks questions throughout her book which compel us to examine our real feelings about abortion. Not an Easy Choice is, in essence, a validation of our ambivalence about abortion and our procreative powers in general. It is the kind of work that does not let us divide our politics from our authentic feelings. Isn't this one of the most important principles of feminism - to integrate the personal with the political?

I believe that Not an Easy Choice is a book which will begin to deepen our understanding of both feminism and the reproductive process so that when we say abortion is a woman's choice, we'll say it with more heart and soul than ever before.

IN BRIEF

by Deborah Gordon



Our Right to Choose (Beacon Press, Boston, 1983, \$14.50) is another very important feminist work on abortion which I urge feminists to take a close look at. This book, written by Beverly Wilding Harrison, an ethicist and theologian, picks up on the issue of morality where McDonnell's Not an Easy Choice leaves off.

Our Right to Choose is written for those of us who feel that there is a dire need to weigh the abortion controversy in a moral context that affirms and advocates women's well-being. Harrison argues that once the economic and social conditions exist to make procreative choice possible, there are excellent moral reasons for seeing it as a right all women should have. "No society is adequate morally which does not organize its life to encourage the existence and extension of procreative choice," Harrison claims.

According to Harrison, if we are to achieve our right to choose, we must develop a feminist moral perspective on abortion. Feminists must stand strong against the claim that the ethics of abortion are owned by anti-choice proponents. As the author argues, feminism is a moral claim in itself because it is a commitment to advocacy for women's well-being and to social change.

Although Our Right to Choose is not written in as simple a style as McDonnell's Not an Easy Choice, it is well worth the time and concentration it takes to read it.

OFF THE PRESS



Taking Sex Into Account: The Policy Consequences of Sexist Research, ed. Jill McCalla Vickers, Oxford University Press, paper, \$8.95

The papers contained in this volume represent part of the proceedings of the Conference "Sexism in Research and its Policy Implications" sponsored by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW), and held in Ottawa, November 1982. The book contains three sections; 1) Sexism in Language 2) What is Sexism in Research? and 3) The Policy Consequences of Sexist Research. It unfolds the dilemmas presented by sexist inquiry and communicates the most recent developments and insights in non-sexist investigation.

Not Just Pin Money, Selected Essays on the History of Women's Work in British Columbia, eds: Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro, Camosun College, \$12.00

This book of 450 pages contains 30 original essays about B.C. women's work: child care, health care, housework, volunteer work, war work, social work and paid labour. There are sections on Native women, Asian women, gentlewomen, education, social legislation, unpaid workers, labour and auxiliaries, health, politicians and World War Two.

The Pornography Workshop for Women: A Leader's Handbook, by Margaret Smith and Barbara Waisberg, Education Wife Assault, \$11.00

The authors provide an educational tool for women who want to work on the issue of pornography in their own communities. Workshop leaders are directed to follow a process which is based on fundamental principles of adult education and feminism. The participating women are encouraged to explore their own perceptions and feelings and to develop their own strategies for action. At every stage, women's experiences are validated through individual and group exercises and discussions. This book can be used by any woman involved in her own community as a professional or as a volunteer. For copies, write to:

Education Wife Assault
427 Bloor St. W.
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 1X7

Women and Legal Action: Precedents, Resources and Strategies for the Future, by Elizabeth Atcheson, Mary Eberts and Beth Symes with Jennifer Stoddart. Canadian Council on Social Development, \$4.95.

This book proposes a systematic approach in using the courts to strike down discriminatory legislation and establish precedents to consolidate positive changes in the law. **Women and Legal Action** surveys landmark Canadian legal cases, examines Canadian advocacy groups, and assesses the structures and mechanisms most suited to conducting legal prosecution in Canada under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

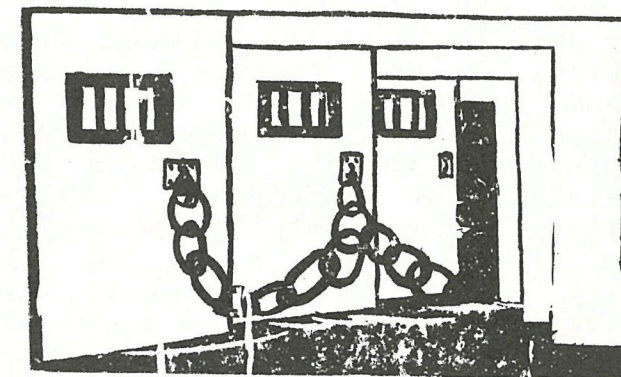
upcoming events

newsflash!

MARY DALY will be speaking at Carleton University, Ottawa. 1:30 pm Sunday March 31st, 1985. Porter Hall. Admission is free. For more information call 231-3779. Sponsored by the Carleton University Women's Centre.

Saturday, 20 April
Central America Day of Action

The Ottawa Coalition against an Invasion of Nicaragua is joining solidarity groups across North America in organizing demonstrations in local communities on April 20. The Ottawa Coalition has support from a broad spectrum of Ottawa's political community, including peace, women's, labour, solidarity and student groups. Groups are encouraged to plan to participate in the activities in the manner which is most appropriate and meaningful for them. For further information, call Pam Fitzgerald at 230-3076.



25 Day/25 Year Campaign
May 13 to June 6

A campaign against the present minimum 25-year life sentence for murder will be held in Ottawa and other Canadian communities from May 13 to June 6. In addition to calling for a reduction in the present minimum 25-year sentence, and a continued abolition of the death penalty, the campaign will provide a critical analysis of our prison system and prison conditions including psychological and physical abuse, discrimination against women and Natives, prison costs, the need for public accountability, problems faced by prison staff and prisoners' families, and steps towards prison abolition.

In Ottawa, there will be a 25-day vigil and information sessions on Parliament Hill, and four Wednesday evenings of public events. All groups are encouraged to participate and are invited to plan a workshop on how the role of prisons in society relates to the issue that is of particular concern to their group, such as prisons and welfare, prisons and militarism, prisons and violence against women, etc. For further information call Helen Durie, 238-4629, or Liz Elliott, 828-5294.

Women and Economic Development

The Ottawa Women's Credit Union is currently planning a conference on "Women and Economic Development" for June 14-16 at the National Arts Centre. It will feature a women's forum exploring such issues as systemic barriers to women's equal employment, women's education and training for employment, alternatives for economic independence, the prospects for women in the third sector (non-government, non private options) and the needs of women in transition. An information and resource centre will be offered as well as seminars, films and an art exhibit. Call Kethi Blauer at the Ottawa Women's Credit Union for more details, 233-7711.

The Feminist Periodical Conference

to be held June 14-16, 1985 in Montreal will be an opportunity for women who are involved with the feminist print media to gather and discuss similar problems, strategies and triumphs. If you are involved in a feminist periodical and are interested in attending the conference contact Susan De Rosa before June 1, 1985 at:

Les Editions Communiqu'elles
3585 St. Urbain
Montreal, Quebec
H2X 2N6
(514) 844-1761



NAC Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women will be held in Ottawa at Carleton University from May 10 to May 13. For more information, contact the NAC office at 40 St. Clair Avenue East, #306, Toronto, Ontario, M4T 1M9, (416) 922-3246.

The Urgency for True Security- Women's Alternatives for Negotiating Peace

One-million, three hundred thousand dollars were spent every minute on the arms race in 1983, yet we are no closer to true security. In fact we have never before been so endangered. In response to this crisis, representatives from twenty-six broadly-based women's organizations met in Toronto in June 1984 and initiated plans for an international conference. The conference will take place June 5-9 in Halifax and will include fifty women from other countries. The participants will: define true security; analyse the current status of international negotiations; trace the links between all forms of violence and the threat of war; share skills, experiences and ideas on alternative ways to transfer global resources from arms to development. The organizers, the Canadian Coalition of Women's Groups, are asking women's groups to endorse the conference and to contribute to help cover the cost of bringing women from developing countries.

For more information, contact:

Women's International Peace
Conference
Mount Saint Vincent University
166 Bedford Highway
Room 9, Seton Annex
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3M 2J6

resources

Let's Talk About Sexual Assault

This is the name of a new 20 page booklet written for adolescents between 13 and 19 years old. The booklet is intended to help teenagers understand the problem and help us talk to them. It's a comprehensive resource for kids, parents and professionals who work with kids. Let's Talk talks to teenagers about sexuality and relationships; assertiveness; self defence; how to reduce the risks of being assaulted; what to do if they are assaulted and what to expect from the police; at the hospital, in court, from themselves and their family and friends. For a copy, contact:

Victoria Women's Sexual
Assault Centre
1045 Linden Ave.
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 4H3

(cost: \$1.50 plus postage)

Workshops for Educators on Militarism and Peace

Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg is offering to lead workshops on a free-lance basis using the latest audio-visual and printed materials. The workshops are intended to stimulate awareness of alternatives to militarism. They are suitable for leadership training at university seminars, professional development days and community animation programs. For more information, contact:

Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg
4972 Carlton Ave.
Montreal, Quebec
H3W 3H5

MATCH International Centre: Where Development Is a Women's Issue

MATCH International Centre believes that international development is a women's issue. Located in Ottawa, with a full-time staff of six and hundreds of volunteers and supporters across the country, MATCH strives to generate financial support for projects planned and carried out by women's groups in the Third World. Equally important is MATCH's effort to provide opportunities for Canadian women to bring an international perspective to women's issues and to understand the similarities and differences between the situations women face throughout the world. Its work is based on the notion that sisterhood is, in fact, global.

In the course of its work, MATCH has made contact with thousands of local, regional and national women's groups throughout Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Each year MATCH receives about 200 requests for financial assistance and is able to support 25 to 30 projects. The contributions of individuals and women's groups are matched by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and sent overseas. Since its birth in 1976, inspired by International Women's Year in 1975, MATCH has supported 150 projects in more than 35 countries. A wide range of Canadian women's groups have assisted MATCH in this work and in so doing have made international solidarity among women a concrete reality. The projects are small, with total budgets ranging from a few thousand to \$35,000, but each one has a significant impact.

One example of international cooperation between women in 1985- a women's group in Ghana asked MATCH for assistance to obtain seeds, hoes, fertilizer, and a tractor for

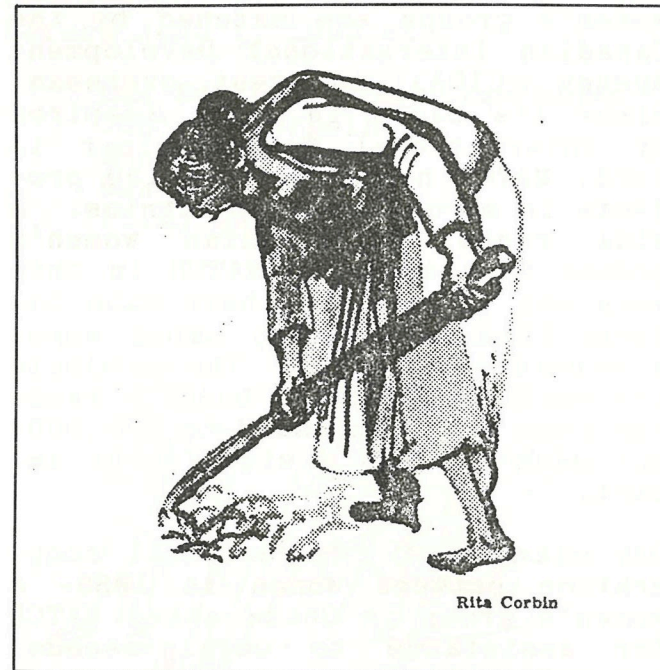
their group farm. They wanted to be able to improve their own local food production and reduce their dependence on costly imported food. In Ghana, much of the land has been devoted to the production of cash crops such as coffee, cocoa and coconuts with little left to feed its own people. Other MATCH supporters contribute toward projects that promote women's health, cooperative enterprises, literacy, vocational training and legal assistance.

Individuals and groups are invited to join MATCH and obtain access to a wealth of information on women and development and global women's issues through our quarterly newsletter, speakers, audio-visual and print resource material.

To obtain more information or to support MATCH, please contact:

MATCH International Centre
401-171 Nepean Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 0B4

(613) 238-1312



Towards Community Solutions to Sexual Violence

The proceedings of a Toronto conference in May of 1984 which brought together feminists and prison abolitionists are now available. The conference focussed on exploring means of abolishing prisons and other institutionalized violence, while ensuring that women are protected from male sexual and physical violence. See Breaking The Silence Spring/Summer 1984 for an overview. For copies of the proceedings, contact:

The Quaker Committee on Jails and Justice
60 Lowther Ave.
Toronto, Ontario
M5R 1C7

(cost: \$3.00, plus more for postage if you can)

Slide Shows for Social Change

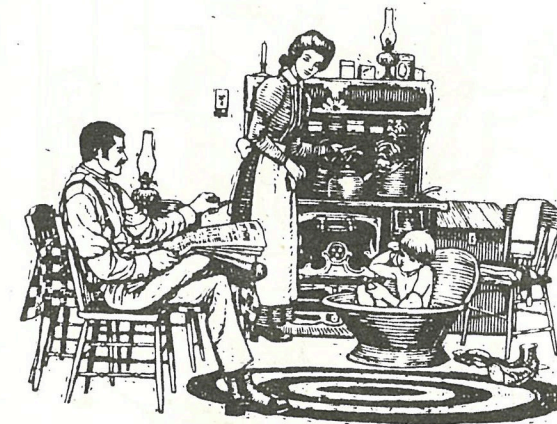
Kai Visionworks is a social change media collective dedicated to empowering grass roots organizations. Its large catalogued slide library is available as a resource to others. Categories in the slide library include Women, Peace, Men and Violence. The collective also makes its own slide shows, and offers assistance to other organizations in putting together their shows. Charges for the use of Kai's materials and resources are based on labour plus costs. For more information, contact:

Kai Visionworks
P.O. Box 5490, Station A
Toronto, Ontario
MSW 1N7

(416) 964-1278
Weekdays 10 a.m. till noon

help

realwomen



Call for Action

by Suzanne Pilon

Many of you may by now have heard of R.E.A.L. (Realistic, Equal, Active, for Life) Women of Canada. They describe themselves as "...a national, non-sectarian organization of independent women who wish to promote equal opportunity and advancement for women, but not at the expense of the well-being of the family...we believe traditional values, which have served society well in the past, can be preserved and put forward into contemporary society to form a more stable and better society today. Our motto is 'Women's Rights but Not at the Expense of Human Rights'." (Reality, Fall 1984, p.3). R.E.A.L. Women emphasizes the importance of marriage and family life, and works actively to promote women in their traditional role as "the nurturers and guardians of generations to come". They oppose the equality clauses in the Charter of Rights on the grounds that "...women would lose their special position in society, which now provides them with at least some protective legislation to enable them

to be the nurturers of their families." (p.4)

R.E.A.L. Women was established in 1983 to provide "...an alternative voice for women...for whom the government-funded Status of Women Councils and National Action Council (sic)...do NOT speak." (p.2). They claim a membership of around 15,000 and provincial chapters of R.E.A.L. Women are being established across Canada.

It should come as no surprise that R.E.A.L. Women has begun seeking government funding for their activities. The group has presented at least two requests for funding to the Secretary of State, Women's Program. One of these was for a sustaining operations grant of \$93,400. to help set up and run an office.

In the November 1984 Reality Up-Date, R.E.A.L. Women asked readers to support these applications by writing to the Honorable Walter McLean, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women (and Secretary of State). They were to "...request that pro-life, pro-family women in this country also be given recognition by way of a grant." While precise figures could not be obtained by the time this went to print, the grapevine has it that the Minister's office has so far received some 1500 such letters. Now that it has been announced that R.E.A.L. Women was turned down for funding by the Secretary of State Department, we can expect the letter-writing campaign and other forms of lobbying to intensify.

The whole question of funding for 'right wing' women's groups is one of utmost importance for feminists, especially given the Prime Minister's openly pro-life, pro-family views. R.E.A.L. Women believes their views represent those of the majority of women in

Canada, and they fully intend to convince politicians and other decision-makers.

Now, more than ever, we must protect the gains we have made in recent years. We cannot sit idly by and allow funding and other hard-fought-for resources to be diverted away from status of women groups. The Women's Program budget still only represents about one dollar for each woman in Canada.

Please send letters supporting funding for groups working to improve the status of women to:

The Honorable Walter McLean
Secretary of State
Jules Leger Building
12th Floor, 15 Eddy Street
Hull, Quebec
K1A 0N5

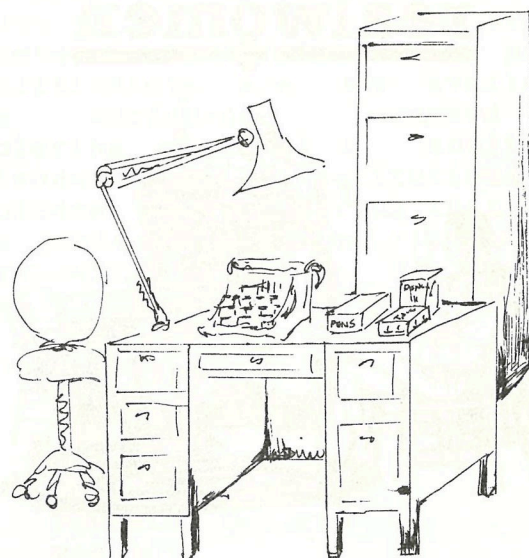
Copies of your letter can also be sent to:

- . the Rt. Hon. Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister
- . leaders of the opposition parties:
 - the Rt. Hon. John Turner, Leader of the Opposition
 - Mr. Ed Broadbent, Leader of the NDP
- . Status of Women critics:
 - Sheila Finestone, Liberal
 - Margaret Mitchell, NDP
- . your own Member of Parliament

All letters to MP's can be sent c/o House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6.

Watch for more articles on R.E.A.L. Women of Canada in future issues of Breaking the Silence.

Recycle Unused Office Materials

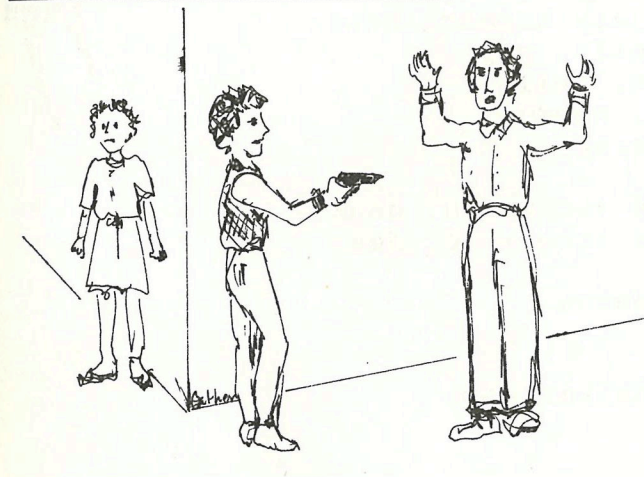


The Countrywide Poor People's Lobby (CWPL) was established in 1983 to give a clearer focus and a further vehicle for the poor people's movement in Canada other than, and in addition to the National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO). It brings together local groups working across the country to raise awareness about the issues related to poverty. CWPL is looking for donations for its office such as: paper of all sizes, pens, pencils, rubberbands, office equipment, desk lamps, cardex systems, rubber stamps and people's time. If you have something to contribute contact:

CWPL
5481 St. Jacques St.
Montreal, Quebec
H4A 2E1
or
Maxine Stata
2963 Dumaaurier Ave.
Ottawa, Ontario
K2B 8A3

rants and raves

by Suzanne Pilon



Three big cheers for:

- . Monica Jones, 28, of St. Louis, Missouri who saved a 12 year-old girl from being raped. After letting the victim into her apartment, Ms. Jones held the girl's assailant at gunpoint until the police arrived. "I was just doing what anybody should do. I'd do it again if I had to." A fine example of a woman making the world a safer place for other women!

Congratulations to:

- . Ottawa resident Rachel Dumoulin who was recently awarded \$3200 in a sex discrimination suit filed with the Canadian Human Rights Commission. She complained after her manager at Swift Messenger Service gave her an ultimatum when he discovered she was pregnant: have an abortion or be fired. All's well that ends well, though - it was the manager who was fired and Ms. Dumoulin is the happy mother of twin girls.

Thumbs Down To:

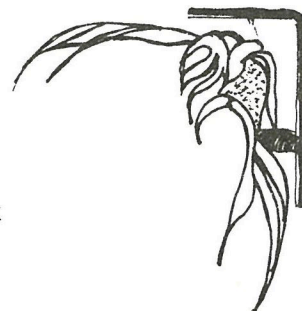
- . The Toronto police, who continue to harass Dr. Henry Morgentaler, his colleagues, and patients.
- . The Ontario District Court which found a man not guilty of incest after he testified that his daughter was "a liar, a truant and a small-time thief". Just who was on trial here anyway?
- . Roman Catholic clergy in Kenya who are fighting a government birth control initiative. As with other African nations, Kenya's population grows faster than its ability to feed, house, or provide jobs for its people. In particular, the churchmen condemn tubal ligation, calling it "a mutilation, a violation of human dignity and a contravention of natural law." Too bad the Church wouldn't be so outspoken on female circumcision...

- . In a similar burst of humanitarian understanding, the Reagan administration defended rules requiring the treatment and feeding of severely handicapped newborns by stating that the "quality of life" must play no role in deciding whether infants should live.

All Rants and Raves taken from the Ottawa Citizen.



Love in a Leather Jacket



I am the lavender menace, eat
Cold lasagna for breakfast, breath
Garlic and onions everywhere, brush
Teeth with a small jack hammer, break
Laws like peanut shells, pay
Taxes for oppression, tell
Lies to save myself, need
Love like everyone else

My mum says: you're not weird, dear
You're just a little eccentric, dear

I am the lavender menace
Watch out below

Anna Lattanzi

REFLECTIONS OF THE PAST

Where did it all go? What happened to the love,
The gentle feelings, the warmth that encompassed thoughts of him?
All that comes to mind is rage, hurt and terrible frustration.
How could he do these things to me and still claim love?

My mind has carefully screened the memories
and packed them away in boxes.
I try not to look at some of the dark
and horrible things stored there,
But a chance word brings up free association
and Pandora's box is opened once again.
There is an internal flame that occasionally threatens
to engulf me with hate and anger at my past,
But then I remember -- it is all over now.
My future, my destiny is now firmly in my hands.
I glory in my newly-won freedom; life is so exciting
that there is no place for dark and gloomy thoughts of the past.
Oh yes, there is still regret over what could have been,
But even that is tempered by what is now.
Look out, future, I am coming to claim my own at last.

KARLA

Karla is a single parent who left an abusive husband after 20 years of marriage. On the outside, he was a nice, respectable, church-going, well-paid man. She is now living on mother's allowance, raising eight children and struggling with returning to school. She does it all with hope and optimism and a strong sense of herself.