

# cayenne

Nov/Dec 1984



a socialist feminist bulletin

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**cay·enne** (kī-en'), n. [<native Braz. kynnha], 1. a very hot red pepper used widely in India, China and Caribbean; 2. a female spice; 3. a long-lasting irritant; 4. hot stuff.

Cover Photo: The "Pickettes" on the line at the Metro Toronto Library. See "Library Workers Scapegoated" in this issue.

## Our Side of the Story

Have you ever been in the midst of a political struggle and sorely wished you were somewhere else? Well, that's how we feel right now.

We'd like to be writing a jubilant editorial launching CAYENNE, a Socialist Feminist Bulletin, talking about how, when we started the IWDC newsletter, we sometimes (late in a bar after working on typewriters and light tables all night) let ourselves dream of something ambitious. And how, encouraged by some of you and our own decision to make the newsletter a priority, we've worked to improve and slowly transform it with every issue. We'd like to be telling you how we came up with the name CAYENNE (which we hope you'll love), after trying every politically correct name in the book. Unfortunately, those aren't the stories you'll be reading today.

Recently, you received a letter from IWDC stating that we in the newsletter committee had left IWDC and that from now on both IWDC and our committee would each be publishing a newsletter. We're sure you're puzzled.

First, we should confirm that, yes, we have left IWDC. We left as a result of political disagreements within IWDC and not because of the newsletter per se. We, among others who have left IWDC in the last year (and years), have felt it almost impossible to have any serious discussion and debate within the group, especially over such critical issues as strategy, accountability, political direction and internal organization and development. This lack of focussed political discussion often resulted, we felt, in a small-group and sometimes sectarian attitude towards other groups and individuals; internally, this problem made it difficult for all of us to find effective ways of working and developing politically. Thus, although we individual IWDC members continued to

be involved in many activities in the city, IWDC came to have less of a coherent identity and practice, and, thus, was not able to maintain the more important political role it had played in this city in its earlier times.

However, the main issue for us is the newsletter. Over the last year, our committee has worked hard to develop the newsletter from its original format of two 8 1/2x14 sheets. And, as discussions of the newsletter kept getting put off within IWDC, and as we became more excited about the possibilities of a publication that might really serve as a vehicle for socialist feminists, we in the newsletter committee were becoming less and less connected to IWDC as a group and functioning more independently.

Certainly IWDC was one reference point for us but so were the socialist feminist women we talked to who had ideas, criticisms and suggestions but who were not in IWDC. Initially we spent a lot of time pressuring IWDCers to write for the newsletter but by the last three issues, we had acknowledged to ourselves and to IWDC, that the newsletter was not a priority for the group, thus we became not only the editors but the writers/reporters as well.

So we were in a situation where we as individuals had decided that we could not continue to work in IWDC and, as a committee were committed to continuing the project we had been working on for the last year. We decided to put forward a proposal that the IWDC newsletter separate from IWDC and become an independent socialist feminist bulletin, a proposal that, in some ways, only formalized what was already in fact a reality.

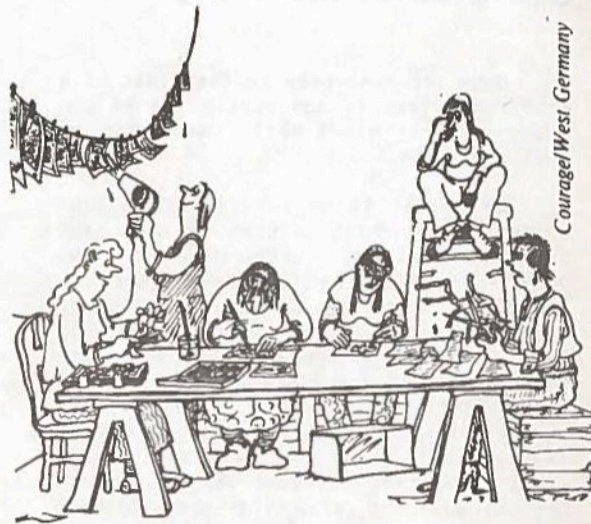
It is always difficult to break old links. Nevertheless, we saw the proposal as a positive step for IWDC, the bulletin, and our constituency of socialist feminists. Two years earlier, IWDC had initiated a new publication, one that had grown significantly and now had

the potential to develop into something better and more strategic. We hoped that IWDC would also be excited (and proud) that the newsletter had become stable enough to take on a life of its own. We believed that in order to grow and develop, the newsletter needed to have a broader base than being IWDC's newsletter could provide. It had outgrown being a single organization's vehicle, and in fact had stopped being that months earlier. For our part, we needed to involve new women and new ideas and let this project develop, controlled by the people putting time and energy into it.

As part of our proposal we offered IWDC a regular section in the new bulletin to use as they please. We were very surprised when they turned this down and instead made the decision to put their energies into publishing a newsletter similar to the one we had developed. Rather than seeing CAYENNE as something that could complement their work and that they could use, they chose to see it as a threat.

We're still excited about developing CAYENNE. In the editorial of our last issue (IWDC: Sept. '84) we outlined some of our ideas to you. We continue to be committed to producing a vehicle for socialist feminists in Toronto, and hope to cover more issues across Canada and internationally. And most importantly, we want to contribute to deepening the level of political analysis and debate in the Canadian women's movement. Socialist feminists have so much to learn from and share with one another, yet so much of our truly strategic discussion takes place in small meetings, dinner tables and in bars. That's great, but much too limited. In order to move forward we need to find ways of sharing our criticisms, visions, concerns, hopes and fears. We want CAYENNE to be an important tool in this process.

So that's our story: in the end you will decide. We hope that you'll support us by letting us know what you think, writing a letter to the editor, or



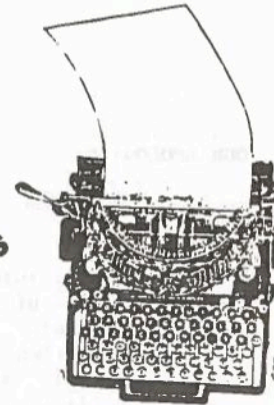
contributing a short piece--it doesn't have to be long or the final word. We need a lot of feedback from you, especially at this critical time, even if it's just in the form of a sub or an extra donation.

In case you're wondering which publication you've subscribed to with your last contribution, we have reached an agreement with IWDC (although we realize this is not clear from their recent letter) that subscribers will be able to allocate their monies to one or the other publication, and we'll divide the money based on your requests. We realize all this is very confusing but this seemed the fairest way to handle what is clearly a messy situation.

Finally, we thought carefully about airing criticisms about IWDC. We have no wish to malign them and hope to work productively with them in the future. However, we felt it was important that you know where we stand, and feel that in fact we should have shared some of this with you in our last issue, as events were beginning to unfold.

Marie Lorenzo, Christina Mills and Lynda Yanz.

## Write On, Sisters



Whitehorse, Yukon Territory

Dear Friends:

Further to your appeal, I would love to see the Newsletter expand to a national bulletin for socialist feminists in Canada. Being rather isolated here in Whitehorse (I have yet to find another woman who would describe herself as a socialist feminist), I feel it's important to share information and dialogue on socialist feminist organizing/developing theory. It would be easy to get isolated and narrow-focussed here without stimulation and news from the southern urban women's movement. So, my hope is that the newsletter will expand to encompass a more national focus.

The sixth Annual Yukon Women's Conference was held last weekend (Sept. 28-30) and by all accounts was a success. About 160 women attended from all over the Yukon. The theme was "Women: A Creative Force", and workshop topics included Womencraft, Erotica, Consensus, Decision-Making, Indian Women in Transition, Homophobia in the Women's Movement, Pornography, Women and the Constitution, and Grassroots Organizing, to name a few.

Women came from a variety of backgrounds, and many would not see themselves as feminists. Many women in attendance do not have an analysis of institutionalized sexism nor do they have consciousness of class

differences or racial oppression. This made the conference rather unique in that a lot of "ordinary" (*i.e.* not highly politicized) women attended. However, some groups of women did not attend--most obviously, Native women. This is an ongoing problem, since the Native and non-Native women's movements are quite separate. Clearly there needs to be more communication and interaction between the two groups.

On the whole the conference was a positive experience, although it is impossible to please everyone. Hopefully the conference will be impetus for the next year's work in the women's movement in Yukon.

In sisterhood,  
Jan Langford

*Editors note: Letters like this are a great way to help us break out of our south urban isolation. Write on, sisters.*

England

To the editors:

Thank you for sending me your latest (September 84)... I'm surprised that Christina was surprised that a feminist analysis should infiltrate a nutrition workshop, because women seem to be turning up in a whole range of debates about "development" and Third World issues these days--invited or not! I don't claim that my analysis was fool-proof, and in fact I was a bit nervous that speaking to nutritionists about food and subsistence I might be told I didn't know what I was talking about--but they were very kind. What I would like to stress is that we have to put a lot of pressure on our governments to improve their disastrous aid programs which so often ignore women. By comparison with the British aid program, CIDA looks wonderful--I leave you to deal with them. There are women and development networks

in Australia and New Zealand as well as many Third World countries and some industrialized ones.

(If anyone is visiting Britain in January, there will be a two-day conference on the 11th and 12th on British aid, to which you are welcome--write to me and I'll pass along the details.)

Finally, please don't take any feminist writer's or speaker's words as holy writ. Christina writes some bits were unclear and others she did not agree with. This seems to me the only healthy response, especially when we are trying to grapple with something as diffuse and as contradictory as the "aid" programs operating in Third World countries, let alone the concept of "development," whatever that is supposed to be.

In sisterhood,  
Barbara Rogers

Dear Friends:

The Queen's Women's Centre in Kingston held a three-day conference on pornography last February. We videotaped the speakers, with the intention of creating a series of discussion tapes for people concerned about the issue. Now, we are going ahead. It is our hope that feminists currently doing research on pornography--be it theory, effects, data, or legal reform--might be interested in sending us their papers as we are planning to cover a wide range of issues, including a critique of current legal and psychological analyses. We will be distributing the videos with comment papers and an extensive bibliography. We badly want feminist references. Also, we would like to make contact with action groups to include a list of feminist groups struggling against pornography at the community level. Please write us at Queen's Women's Centre, 51 Queen Crescent, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 3N6.

--The Pornography Collective

#### OUR APOLOGIES

In our last issue, the following errors were made:

pg. 19--In the interview with Chai Chu Thompson, the reference to a Voice of Women peace conference should have read: "It was organized by Halifax Voice of Women and held at York University." instead of "It was organized by Voice of Women from York University."

pg. 20--Further, in a reference to the audience at the same conference the last sentence should have read, "So, someone from the audience said, o.k., if you don't want to use 'Third World' . . ." instead of "So, one of our members said, o.k. if you don't want to use 'Third World' . . ."

pg. 32--At the bottom of the NEW BOOKS section, the following should have been included: "The above books are available at the Toronto Women's Bookstore, 73 Harbord Street, Toronto. List compiled by Ellea Wright."

#### DON'T BUY A MAGNIFYING GLASS JUST YET!

No, it's not your eyes, it's our type-size. We realize it's too small, and coming next issue we will have a new, bigger typeface. Thanks for your patience, and sorry about the strain!

Graphics in this issue have been borrowed from: Paranoia, ISIS, Breaking the Silence, Forward Motion, Everywoman's Almanac, Womenews, and the Health Education Project Newsletter.

Special thanks to Donna Scagliotti for help in producing this issue.

#### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 1985: ORGANIZING THE MARCH 8 COALITION

This year IWDC has pulled back from its role as initiator of the March 8 Coalition and instead called together a group of women from various areas, who had participated in the March 8 Coalition in the past, to form an ad hoc Steering Committee. This Committee began meeting in late September to try and hammer out a proposal for the first actual Coalition meeting, which will be November 21 at 7:30 p.m., at St. Christopher House.

Proposals or recommendations from this Steering Committee will not be binding on the Coalition. Though the Steering Committee will try to save the larger Coalition some time and frustration by working out a proposal for International Women's Day 1985, other proposals will be welcomed from other Coalition members.

So far the proposal from the Steering Committee is not much different than the last two years, except that the Fair would be the Saturday before the main rally, March 2, with a mixed dance in the evening. Throughout the week the Coalition will hold a series of forums and community events. One community event being organized by a Committee initiated by the Congress of Canadian Women, is an address by Angela Davis on Friday, March 8. Finally, on Saturday, March 9 a large rally and demonstration would take place followed by a women-only dance in the evening.

Some concerns that have come up in relation to other years' March 8 Coalitions were the question of accountability within the Coalition, in particular financial accountability, the role of the Coordinating Committee of the Coalition, how to focus on different communities, and the need to be more broad-based. There is ongoing discussion about the political content of the event, weighing the trade-off between broader, community events, and a tighter political strategy.

For more information on how you can get involved or just an update, call Carolyn Egan at 789-4541.

#### WOMEN'S LIBERATION WORKING GROUP

After an incubation period of almost a year, the first concrete service of the Women's Liberation Working Group is nearly in place. A Women's Information Clearing House (WICH), consisting (for the moment) of a recorded message of various political and social events; an information line staffed several nights a week; and proposals to run consciousness-raising and other groups for "new" women, will be in place in early 85.

The Women's Liberation Working Group, conceived from a proposal presented by Action Day Care to the 1984 March 8 Coalition which organizes International Women's Day, was originally designed to try to meet the needs of the Toronto women's movement. The group identified the need to improve the media presence of feminism, to facilitate entrance of women into the movement, to promote debate and discussion among active feminists, and to build a visible and forceful face to the women's movement. The proposal suggested organizing a broadly-based coalition of groups and individuals, based on a statement of principles to meet these objectives.

Support for the proposal was high, and the first public meeting on June 3 attracted nearly 100 women. Despite the high turn-out, few women joined the working group, and summer planning was

#### FANTASIES



Nicole Hollander

slow. The second public meeting, on September 10, saw a greatly reduced turnout of 25 women. Despite this, women present expressed excitement and enthusiasm for the Clearing House proposal, and a committee to establish it was struck.

Original members of the working group, who have been nurturing the proposal since International Women's Day, are now working on two committees; one to try again to get a working coalition off the ground, and one to begin the Clearing House. While the time may not be right for a Coalition to begin, the Clearing House will be started, and may act as a nucleus around which further organizing can begin. The committee working on the coalition is still hopeful that another public meeting, perhaps in the next few months, will see the establishment of a coalition.

Whatever happens with the next public meeting, the objective needs identified in the proposal for a coalition still face the women's movement in Toronto--now more than ever, given the increasing air-time being given to "women's issues" by the press and politicians. The Clearing House will perform an important role by making information visible and accessible, and providing a concrete service to both women currently active, and those looking for a place to be active, in the women's movement.

Slowly but surely the pieces are falling into place. The Women's Liberation Working Group is alive, and--if not exactly kicking--is making progress. For more information, or to get involved, call Connie at 534-4919 or Susan at 977-6698.

--Susan Prentice



## Labour Struggles

### LIBRARY WORKERS SCAPEGOATED

On October 1, 1984, Metro Toronto Library workers were forced to go out on strike when the Employer refused to withdraw the 107 takeaways of existing rights and benefits it tabled at the beginning of negotiations. All three CUPE locals in Metro Library are out, that is, the clerical workers and assistants, the maintenance workers, and the professional librarians. The strike involves 400 people altogether, 85% of whom are women.

There is no doubt that this is a women's strike, not only because of the large percentage of women involved, but because it raises the issue of female job ghettos and technological change in a particularly dramatic way. Management has just spent \$2.6 million in new computer hardware and software and is clearly looking to reduce labour costs substantially to make up the expense. Technological change underlies management's position, and in this it will be setting an important precedent for other parts of the service sector.

Furthermore, because library workers are essentially in a female job ghetto, wages are kept lower than comparable work in other sectors and the work itself has less value in the eyes of the public than other types of work usually performed by men. As well, one of management's takeaways is to remove seniority accrual during parental or adoption leave. Part-time work is also being threatened in that the employer would like to create a new category of temporary part-time, a position denied any union protection.

This is a critical strike, particularly because of "tech change", an issue which is becoming a nightmare for labour everywhere. One conclusion that can be drawn is that the rationale is to obtain more control over the

workforce. Another, rather pathetic reason is simply that Metro Library, as is so often the case across North America, is run by technocrats who simply want to have the latest in the field for their own self-aggrandizement. This is a possibility that was substantially explored by labour recently at the Controlling Technology Conference held October 19 and 20 sponsored by the Toronto Metro Labour Council. Many of the speakers argued that in fact most new technology being brought into workplaces is not checked for cost effectiveness, and is in fact not increasing productivity. Justification for the new technology is not forthcoming, and, naturally, employers are not accountable to anyone.

Of course new technology has the potential to benefit library workers. It could eliminate much repetitious, stressful work so that workers could be freed to do more creative work, or spend time improving their skills, or gain more leisure time. But this is not on management's agenda.

This strike is also significant in terms of labour relations in Canada, in that the negotiations are about management's demands for takeaways, not the unions' demands for improved working conditions. This is a radically different situation than that experienced by most unions in Canada in the past, and is indicative of the labour situation in the country today. The unions at the Metro Library have been very strong in the past, and the Employer is trying to undermine that strength. One of the ways it is attempting to do so is through the takeaways concerning layoffs. Management would like to eliminate present contract language that stipulates layoffs must occur in the order of the least seniority, and gain the ability to layoff workers in any way they please. Further, they are proposing to remove at least 40 members from union protection. As well, they would remove the present clause that a worker cannot be transferred without consent, meaning they could transfer workers to positions that

are not protected by the union. The employer would also like to reduce union representation and introduce electronic monitoring of work performance with the new automation.

The Metro Toronto Library Board, the official negotiator for management, is in theory an autonomous Board, but the library is entirely funded by public money; so why has Metro Council refused to intervene? To whom is the Metro Toronto Library Board accountable? Meanwhile, the Board is sitting pretty and acting like it can afford to ride the strike out while our money is being frittered away in exchange for no services.

The CUPE unions are very well-organized and have received quite a lot of public support, yet the strike goes virtually uncovered by the mainstream press. Why?

Make your outrage known by putting pressure on our municipal government, complaining to the press, and coming out to the mass support pickets held weekly on Wednesdays from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. at the Metro Toronto Library at Yonge and Bloor.

Marie Lorenzo

#### UNION RESOURCES ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, A Discussion Paper (March 1980), The Women's Rights Committee, BC Federation of Labour and the Vancouver Women's Resource Centre.

"Sexual Harassment: An Issue for Unions," by Susan Attenborough, in Union Sisters, Women In The Labour Movement, Linda Briskin and Lynda Yanz, eds., Women's Press, 1983.

"A New Look At Co-worker Harassment," by Debbie Field, in Union Sisters.

Sexual Harassment at Work (1980), by Susan Attenborough, National Union of Provincial Government Employees.

## CEIU ACTS ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Women's Committee of Canadian Employment and Immigration Union (CEIU) is launching a campaign to combat sexual harassment in the workplace. This issue is one which we have been able to identify as a major concern to women in our union -- one which the vast majority of women have experienced directly and one which most women also feel the union is not adequately prepared to tackle seriously.

Who can wonder about a certain cynicism when it is possible to read as late as this spring in a proposed procedure on sexual harassment by PSAC:

Unless the member's (the complainant) case is acknowledged as factual by the alleged harasser (the respondent), the Local Steward/Officer should have the matter reviewed by the Local Executive or Local Committee designated for this function. . .

and

Where a complaint is deemed to be factually supported, the Local Steward/Officer must provide assistance and representation to the complainant. Where a complaint is deemed not to be factually supported, the Local Steward/Officer must inform the complainant accordingly with reasons for not

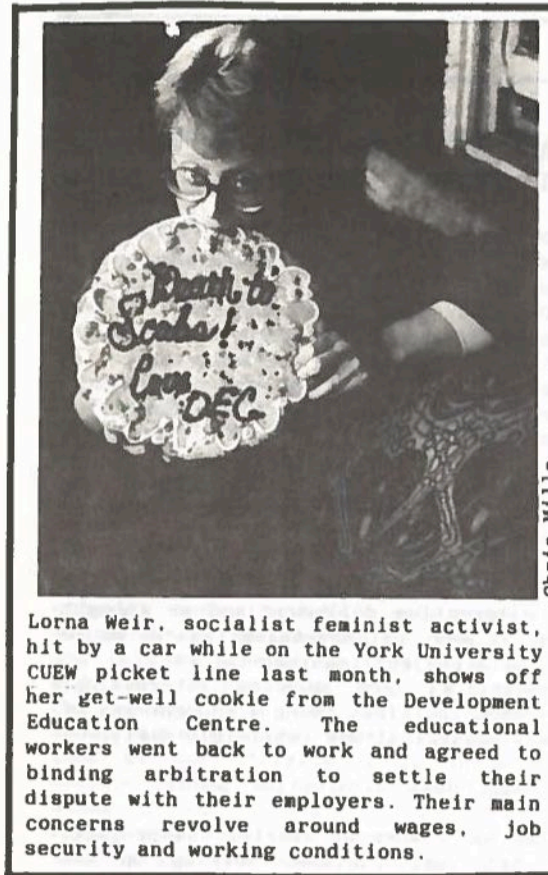
proceeding with the complaint. (I emphasis mine).

Obviously, it is critical that part of our focus on sexual harassment this year be around internal union policy and procedures which are supportive of the complainant and which don't shirk such difficult areas as member against member grievances/complaints.

Initially, though, the major focus of our campaign will be to educate ourselves about sexual harassment and how to organize to counter it. We will be stressing empowerment through group actions, in an attempt to break through the silence and isolation surrounding sexual harassment.

Presently, we are in the process of setting up training sessions for a core group of women who will act as facilitators for 2-3 day training sessions. These will be held throughout the province during the winter and spring of 1985. We have had far more women respond to our call to participate than we ever dreamed of. We hope, through this campaign, men in our workplaces will find that it is dangerous to sexually harass and that, through standing together, women will begin to break the power imbalance so crucial to perpetrating this social disease. No More Sexual Harassment!

--Penni Richmond, CEIU  
Women's Committee



Chris Mills

Lorna Weir, socialist feminist activist, hit by a car while on the York University CUEW picket line last month, shows off her get-well cookie from the Development Education Centre. The educational workers went back to work and agreed to binding arbitration to settle their dispute with their employers. Their main concerns revolve around wages, job security and working conditions.

## SUPPORT NEWFOUNDLAND TELEPHONE WORKERS!

One thousand employees of Newfoundland Telephone have been on strike for four months over parity with other Atlantic provinces, as well as better working conditions, and equal benefits for women.

The company tried to hit what they thought was the weakest link by locking out the clerical staff (98% women) when they struck for a first contract. But the union wouldn't knuckle under: the technicians (mostly men) and operators went out. Now negotiations have broken down and the strike may well last of Christmas.

To find out more details and give your support, please contact the Ontario Regional Office, of the Communications Workers of Canada at 977-6678.

## DOROTHY SMITH ON GENDER, CLASS AND POWER

Before a Marxist Institute audience of over a hundred people on September 27, Dorothy Smith "thought aloud" about the problem of women's relationship to power in capitalist society.

Smith situated this relationship in terms of two processes inherent in capitalism from its origins. The first process is the extension of capitalist market relations from a local to a global basis. The second is the differentiation between intellectual and manual labour within the productive enterprise. With the progress of capitalism, the development of these two processes results in a characteristically bourgeois organization of power in which political rule is no longer integrated with local and particularized settings but is abstracted from them.

Smith emphasized the implications of the second process. The differentiation between intellectual and manual labour is associated with the emergence within the productive enterprise of a class division and the appropriation by the capitalist of the "knowledge, judgement and will" which was previously exercised by the individual labourer. The harnessing of intellectual labour to the requirements of capital accumulation provides the basis for the emergence by the end of the nineteenth century of bureaucratic institutions concerned with the management of relations between capital and labour and of all other social relations, including those within the family.

Smith contended that a gender division of labour within the capitalist class is fundamental to the organization of power as sets of social relations divorced from the local.

In the early days of capitalism, the extension of market relations is premised on a separation of the spheres of activity of men and women.

## Culture

Involvement in extra-local market relations becomes an "arena of masculine action"; organization of domestic life becomes the arena of feminine action. The activity of women frees men for participation in economic and political relations which take place outside the local community.

In this century, participation in the abstracted relations of power has required that men of the ruling class be able to separate their personal life from their professional life. This is the criteria of "rationality" which governs the operation of bureaucratic institutions and which is at the centre of the socialization of ruling class men and of the ideology of masculinity which governs their behaviour.

Smith maintains that no individual can live entirely in these abstracted spheres of power. It is the women of the ruling class who provide the link for the men with the "world of particular others" i.e. with specific human beings inhabiting particular localities. It is they who look after "the bodies whose heads are in this other space."

Smith concluded her talk with some reflections on the response of the women's movement to the organization of power in our society. She argued that the emphasis on the local and on the personal which is characteristic of feminist organizing is a source both of strength and weakness. The potentially subversive quality of the feminist approach to organization is limited by the absence of a class analysis of the modes of power which it criticizes. She suggested that the women's movement has to find a way to raise local forms of organization to more general forms if the increasingly centralized exercise of power in capitalist society is to be challenged effectively.



Barbara Cameron

### SMALL WONDERS: CONVERSATIONS WITH FEMINIST ARTISTS

*Cate Cochran and Shuster Gindin are two feminist artists who are currently working together on a project to build a series of four to six miniature dwellings based on existing urban structures. Marie Lorenzo talked to them about their project, for which they hope to get a Canada Council Explorations grant.*

Q: Can you describe what the idea is behind your project?

Cate: The idea originally was to create an alternative dollhouse and we thought that it was just something that we would do as a project together for fun.

Shuster: It just sounded interesting; you know the first thing I thought was of a dollhouse that was completely dirty.

Q: What does alternative mean?

Cate: Well, when we started the project, we had just finished working on the Women's Perspective DESIRE show, and we wanted to work on building an environment in which we spent time developing the ideas for it and then actually doing it. We wanted to have a month to work together building a life-size environment. And then we got the idea of an alternative dollhouse and that quickly turned into an idea for a whole series of dwellings so that we could show more possibilities, so that we weren't prescribing a certain lifestyle, but rather suggesting ways people could organize their life. So the idea is to take existing, or what is possibly existing housing in an urban centre and use the vehicle of miniatures to raise new ideas--because the whole world of miniatures is a very popular hobby. In our proposal to Canada Council we talk about how people can read miniature houses; it's easy for them to relate to it as a form of demonstration. Usually people who build dollhouses build

established, traditional households, but what we want to do is take this form, miniatures, and use it in a more contemporary way.

Shuster: Cate originally said "alternative dollhouse" and it made us examine what it means to be alternative when you're thinking about housing...and the fact that housing is still built for mummies and daddies and the kids, and yet so many people don't live that way. We looked at what a home means to people and how a house works and how it could be re-organized so that it is accessible. Many people can't afford to buy a house and most people don't live the way a house needs them to live.

Structures have an influence on the way you behave. For instance, who actually cooks if there's only space for one permanent person, and no room to sit and talk to them while they're working, and many things like that. Miniatures can really draw you in to thinking about housing--it's something you can look at more intellectually in a way because you're not in it. An environment seems to work on a lot of different levels and sometimes there is so much that is familiar about a house that you wouldn't necessarily see it if you were in it.

Q: You mentioned that you started to work together during the Women's Perspective art show DESIRE last spring. Do you see this as an artistic venture as well?

Cate: Well, it is, I mean, it came out of the DESIRE show; Shuster and I didn't know each other before that really and we got together a couple of times for coffee and talked about how we both felt the process of putting together the show fell short of what our hopes were. We found that we were thinking in similar ways. And that's when we started talking about a life-size environment. Now, the point of an environment at all is to use a form of visual representation to raise ideas, a non-esoteric way of making people think about the ways in which they

live and positing some new ideas. So, we approach the whole notion of culture in that way, which is in some ways a non-traditional approach and definitely a feminist approach to art-making.

When we went to the miniature scale, again we're doing the same thing. We always thought of the alternative dollhouse as partly playing with ideas that we had carried around ourselves. There's an interesting combination in what we're doing of both the theoretical, intellectual work that is attached to it, and then the artistic side; we couldn't do one without the other.

Also, the point of using this form of visual representation is that it is a popular form of culture. It's generally a working-class hobby. And so what we ended up talking about was taking these ideas, i.e. early twentieth-century feminist ideas, and current ideas about the domestic and built environment and its effect on women, and putting those together with a popular form of cultural expression and see what happens.

Shuster: We're trying to make art that isn't a commodity--something you buy and put a frame around. It isn't for the



kind of people who go to a gallery to buy something on the wall. It's something to stimulate ideas, and also--to be fun, to make people want to look at it and touch it and open the doors and that sort of playfulness, but in thinking about real life not just fantasies. It doesn't have to be labelled art, it's more like the experience of art rather than the label of art.

Q: You mentioned early twentieth century feminist ideas about housing and environments, and also the more contemporary feminist critiques of space and housing--can you elaborate on these influences?

Shuster: Once we had the idea, I started devouring books like crazy and found the whole subject really stimulating. I learned more about capitalism reading this stuff than I ever have. I don't think it's as simple as men designing space--that's a little simplistic, but certainly all the things about what tradition is, what culture is, and how things just go on the way they are until enough people are dissatisfied with some parts of it. And just ideological reasons why houses are the way they are, the fact that people in North America expect to own their own house.

There were various utopian ideas throughout North America in the last half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Feminists did a lot of work on how to re-organize domestic life. There were designs for things like apartments without kitchens, sort of like an apartment-hotel for women with kids and there would be just one central kitchen and dining area. They had daycare and laundry facilities, all the sort of things that freed women for professional life--which have their problems, but nonetheless these things were thought about.

Although a lot of them were not built, some were. There was a community of women like this in Texas, which is a pretty conservative place. They were treated like lunatic old spinsters. Gradually, they constructed a hotel and

supported themselves running it and they all worked in the cooperative, no one had jobs outside of it. There were several communities like that. But more than that there was a lot of thinking about it, a lot of writing about it, people concentrating on building a different way of life from the nuclear family.

Q: Why is it feminist art?

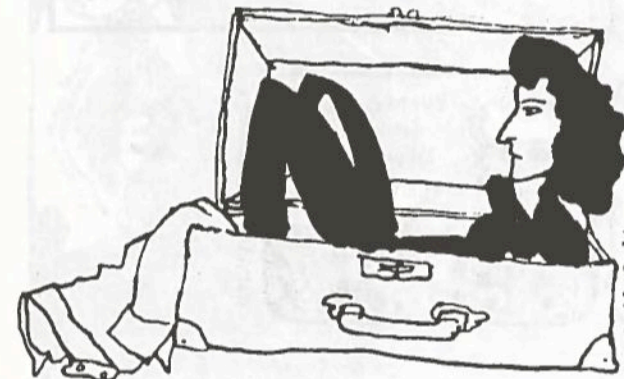
Shuster: I think it is really important that feminists think about homes, houses, how people live, domestic relations. We must examine who we live with and how we live, who does what, and what we don't like about it. A house does structure a lot about our lives; I'm not saying we're limited only to that, but it is an important aspect.



Cate: Women respond to this whole idea immediately, on a gut level. For example, the whole notion of what a kitchen means to you. It's incredible the power that a kitchen has, and I've discussed with other women the way that they relate to their kitchens. Now, why is that? What is that relationship to that part of the house?

An article in Heresies I read recently talked about how many domestic stories are played out in and around a kitchen and how much women are psychically involved with their kitchens, what that means, what happens there, what are our notions of our mothers, of ourselves, and our children in the kitchen. It's very powerful. What we're trying to do is step back and take a critical look at this domestic world that everyone lives in and use a socialist analysis, but also a feminist analysis, I think a combination. But it's fascinating how this whole world is so important to women.

I know at least three single women who are at the stage in their lives where they want to consider having kids, but they don't have a significant relationship with someone else, or they choose not to, but they do want to have kids. I've been party to many discussions about how one can organize one's life so that you can have a child and live within a supportive environment where people can share the task of childrearing. In this day and age there are many, many women who are not married:

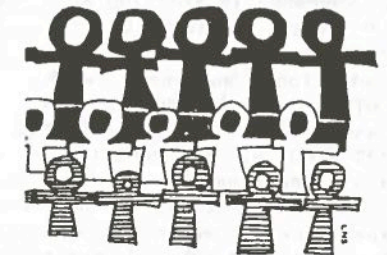


we hope to demonstrate different ways of organizing lives so that you don't have to be part of a conventional nuclear family in order to have a home that meets your needs.

Q: Where will you exhibit your work?

Shuster: We'll build something even if we don't get the grant, if we do get it we'll just be able to build more. At this point we've only spoken to a small Toronto gallery, but we'd be interested in places like Harbourfront, the Metro Toronto Reference Library Gallery.

Cate: It will take us at least a year to complete it, if we're talking six different units. It's a lot of work, and the attention to detail is really important. We're already collecting, and we've talked to craftspeople who are expert at building miniatures, but generally we want to build it ourselves.



Priceless quotes from the election campaign:

John Turner: "Sixty percent of the poor in this country are single women alone." (Oh really, are they single because they're alone or alone because they're single?)

Brian Mulroney: "I know about multiculturalism . . . I have to speak four languages just to get my cheerios in the morning." (Hmm . . . did it ever occur to you that in this day and age men might be expected to get their own cheerios?)



## RAINBOW WOMEN IN THE ARTS

The unique women's multi-cultural festival taking place this weekend, November 16, 17 and 18, has brought together many talented women in an extraordinary organizing effort sparked and driven primarily by Toronto musician Faith Nolan.

Native Earth Performing Arts (Makka Kleist and Monique Mojica), a theatre and dance group. The Ring Ensemble (formerly Toronto Chinese Chamber Ensemble), classical and contemporary music played on traditional instruments, Rina Singha, classical North Indian dance, The Paradise Women (Faith Nolan, Sheila James and Susan Howlett), original contemporary music, Audrey Rose and the Cheetah Dancers, and poets Himani Bannerji, Dionne Brand, Joy Kogawa and Nancy Woods will be performing at the large concert performance on Saturday night, November 17, with M.C. Salome Bey.

The festival kicks off with a dance on Friday, November 16 starting at 9 p.m. in The Buttery, Trinity College, 15 Devonshire Place.

In addition, workshops with the artists will be held during the day Saturday and Sunday at Trinity/St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. W., covering dance, poetry, music and theatre.

The entire festival provides a unique experience for women performers of different cultural backgrounds and artistic fields to creatively interact with each other and share their knowledge and experience. As well, it provides a unique opportunity for the general public



to be entertained and educated in the role that women artists play in Canada.

For more information, contact Faith Nolan at 961-3078.

RAINBOW. CANADIAN BLACK HERITAGE SERIES. CHILDREN'S SONGS

Three new tapes from Faith Nolan, available at DEC Bookroom, Third World Books, Pelican Books, Toronto Women's Bookstore (and better bookstores everywhere).

\$6.95/\$7.95



Nicole Hollander

## International/Solidarity

### "IF ANYONE STANDS IN FRONT OF US, WE ARE GOING TO CRUSH THEM!": WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

1984 has been commemorated within South Africa and internationally as the Year of Women--"to pay tribute to the embattled but struggling womenfolk of our country and to honor their historical achievements."--Oliver Tambo, President of the African National Congress.

Not so long ago--ho hum, a familiar story--a silence prevailed as to the nature and extent of women's resistance in the history of the struggle for liberation in South Africa. Not because the struggles of South African women were all silenced individual ones, as so many women's struggles throughout history have had to be. Far from it. In 1956, 20,000

women from all over South Africa converged on the government buildings in Pretoria in protest against legislation which required them to carry passes--the dreaded lynchpin of the system of migrant labour and Bantustans. Who knows how many women were involved in the wave of rural protests in the late 1950s in Natal (an estimated 20,000, with 1000 arrested), in the Eastern Transvaal and other areas? The histories of even male rural protests are barely recorded. The anti-pass protests of African women in South Africa in the 1950s were "probably the most successful and militant of any resistance campaign mounted at that time." And there were many campaigns in those militant years--against Bantu Education, against bus fare increases, against the Group Areas Act which racially zoned the urban areas, and within the labour movement. Popular resistance resounded on all fronts. Yet, as Cheryl Walker notes, "in one of the major general histories of black opposition in South Africa for this time, E. Roux's, Time Longer Than Rope, the women's anti-pass campaign warrants barely a mention." The intervening years of feminist scholarship, which is increasingly having an impact on South African historiography, render this omission remarkable. For the women who fought those campaigns, but whose accounts have not been heard, that silence is yet further vindication of the struggle they continue to wage.

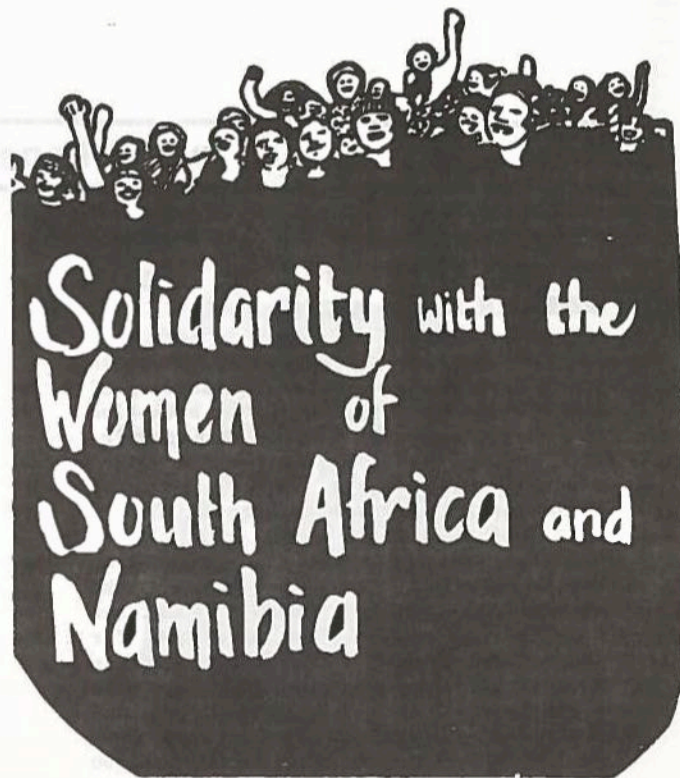
The Soweto uprising of 1976 heralded another noisy phase of mass resistance. Against the sound of gun-shots, barking dogs and bulldozers, we have heard the voices of the Women's Committee of the Crossroads squatters' camp loudly proclaiming their rights to live with their families and not be banished to rural wastelands. We have heard the marching of feet as women lead protests against rent and bus-fare increases, their cheers as women strike for the recognition of their unions.



Today, a flurry of organizational forms expresses the resistance of women to their specific and intense oppression under apartheid. Ad hoc local women's committees are responding to particular issues and linking up with wider political campaigns. Community women's groups are collectivizing childcare and initiating self-help consumer and health schemes. Women's groups are uniting to strengthen the voice of women. The United Women's Organization was formed in 1981 in the Western Cape. It argues that women's oppression is based in capitalist exploitation but recognizes the need to organize women around their specific oppression within the broader democratic struggles against capitalism. The Federation of South African Women, formed in 1954, whose 30th anniversary is being commemorated in the Year of Women, was the main organizing body behind the anti-pass campaigns in the 50s. Though never formally banned during the post-Sharpeville repression and suppression of the liberation movement, it was rendered inactive by the jailing, banning and exile of many of its leading members. It has in recent years been revived, with a number of its original veteran leadership, and like the UWO, has affiliated to the United Democratic Front.

The revitalization of South African women's struggle against apartheid has involved a collective remembrance and symbolic resurrection of their history of resistance. The green and black uniforms of the Federation of South African Women have been dusted off or remade and are proudly worn at women's gatherings. South African Women's Day, August 9, the anniversary of the 1956 anti-pass protest, is commemorated in all the major urban centres of South Africa. At a Women's Day rally in Johannesburg this year, one speaker criticised the tri-racial parliament provided for in South Africa's amended constitution and condemned those standing for election as "betraying the children of 1956."

The rediscovery and reassertion of South African women's history of



resistance in symbol and practice is being reflected in the recovery and recording of that history. Women are more and more appearing on the pages of South African historiography--yes, much of it in commatized form (to use Mary O'Brien's apt term), in residual chapters and special cases. But also slowly, gender divisions are being taken into account in the actual analyses of the development of the specific racial capitalism in South Africa, under the pressure of feminist scholarship and critiques of gender-blindness and androcentrism (See Pepe Roberts' important review in Review of African Political Economy, 27/8 1984).

Cherryl Walker's Women and Resistance in South Africa (Onyx Press, London, 1982) is a seminal and excellent contribution to the important political project of documenting South African women's history. It traces the development of the Federation of South African Women until 1980, putting it in the context of the changing economic position of women within the development

of capitalism, and the interplay of the various organizations of the liberation movement. Judy Kimble and Elaine Unterhalter (Feminist Review, 12, 1982) looking at the changing organizational forms of the ANC Women's Section in relation to ANC politics, usefully situate their topic within a discussion of the relationship between Western feminism and women in national liberation movements, a critical question that has recently been addressed in a number of publications.

Beata Lipman's We Make Freedom (Pandora, London, 1984) captures, through interviews with various South African women, some of the experiential flavour of their lives. Lipman's choice of interviewees from a range of contexts--urban, rural, trade unions, etc.--is important in giving the reader a sense of the specificity of the constraints and possibilities of struggle and indeed, survival, in those different situations. African women are too often presented, in analysis, as constituting an undifferentiated category, as being "at the bottom of the pile" (a depiction Lipman herself slips into in her introduction). Such a formulation may be useful as a point around which to mobilize a unity of resistance, but it doesn't particularly enhance our understanding. It may in fact prevent our appreciation of the range and priorities of issues of struggle for the variously situated women--the leaders of the women's organizations are generally urban-based and do not capture the full range of women's issues in their statements--and blind us somewhat to the continuing processes of ethnic, racial, class and gender differentiation and divisions which the ruling class and state, now, more than ever before are promoting.

There are various studies of women as agricultural workers, industrial workers, in squatter camps, in townships, in service professions, in rural settlements--some incidentally, others explicitly, focussing on women--in a

variety of publications. Maids and Madams, by Jacklyn Cock (Ravan Press, Johannesburg 1980), is a revealing study of the specific lives and conditions of African domestic workers, their relationships with their employers, and the general context of oppression of Black women. Gaitskell et. al. (ROAPE 27/8 1984) similarly look at domestic workers and service, how it is structured by class, race and gender. Makeda Silvera's Silenced (Merlin, 1983) on immigrant women domestic workers in Canada could instructively be read alongside these.

These are but a few examples of the more recent writings on South African women's struggles. There are many others, and there is room for more research, recovery and recording of their resistance. In direct and more abstract ways the project of documenting and analysing women's historical struggles informs and supports their on-going practice. The published form allows for the extension and deepening of the understanding of, and solidarity with, South African women's resistance among progressive women internationally. The published form also attests to and affirms that resistance, effecting a more permanent de-silencing. It is the power of that history which prompts veteran freedom-fighter Frances Baard to say: "We are on the march to freedom. If anyone stands in front of us, we are going to crush them."

-- Linzi Manicom



## WOMEN PUBLISHING IN ZIMBABWE

Women of Africa is the title of a new series of books by and for women being published by the Zimbabwe Publishing House (ZPH), founded in 1981. The series will concentrate on three areas: handbooks designed for the extensive network of women's groups in Zimbabwe, creative writing and theory and research.

The first books appearing in the series are handbooks written and/or edited by Kathy Bond-Stewart. She writes, "The books were developed directly through leadership courses with representatives of rural women's groups, and English courses with ex-combatant women.

Creative writing covers a wide range of possibilities. Jester Tshuma and Anni Holmes write, "We hope to encourage women novelists, story-writers, playwrights and poets. We want to publish creative writing by women who are not usually heard. Young Women in the Liberation Struggle was written by ex-combatants, and the authors of Women's Stories include a domestic worker, a student and a spirit medium. Intellectuals do not have a monopoly on literary creativity. Women's publishing houses elsewhere point to an inspiring precedent: making women's creativity available encourages other women to write and express themselves.

The series will also focus on theory and research. "Like working class and Black women internationally, African women are challenging the definitions of their oppression articulated by 'mainstream' feminism (i.e. white, middle class, Western women). While we do not wish to denigrate the work done by other women around their own sites of oppression, we hope that our series will provide a forum for analyses and strategies developed by and for African women."

For more information contact: Jester Tshuma and Anni Holmes, Zimbabwe Publishing House, P.O. Box BW 350, Borrowdale Harare, Zimbabwe.

## ALGERIAN FEMINISTS ARRESTED FOR OPPOSITION TO NEW FAMILY LAW

A wave of repression of people's democratic organizations has been renewed in Algeria. A large number of people are being detained in military prisons. Since December 1983 the number of arrests has increased dramatically. A significant proportion of those arrested are well-known feminists who are seeking basic freedoms for Algerian women.

In 1982 Algerian women fought a successful battle against the introduction of a Family Law which would have denied Algerian women their civil rights. It required women to be legally represented by male family members in matters relating to marriage, divorce and the right to work. This was the first time since independence in 1962 that Algerian women took to the streets to fight for their rights. During this struggle a group of women emerged, expressing feminist positions and demanding human rights for women.

Many women have been arrested for their ideas and opinions, including Fattouma Ouzangane, Luiza Hannoun, and Leila Souidi, whose arrest in December 1983 was not announced until March 1984. When the international press began writing about their cases, they were transferred to other prisons. An international campaign was mounted on their behalf and they were freed, along with others. The Committee for the Liberation of Algerian Detainees credits the international campaign as a significant factor in their release, but stresses that the political situation has not changed substantially: more people are being arrested, and some form of Family Law which denies women their rights will likely be approved in the near future.

For more information contact: Committee for the Liberation of Algerian Detainees, c/o Marie-Aimee Helie-Lucas, 251 Badhuisweg, 2509 LS, The Hague, The Netherlands.

-adapted from ISIS International Women's Journal Supplement No. 1

## No Intervention in Central America

**ALERT! RED ALERT! RED ALERT! RED ALERT! RED ALERT!**

Despite intensive, even frantic, organizing efforts on the part of millions of progressive Americans, Ronald Reagan has been elected to a second term as President of the United States.

Even the most optimistic of us knew that it was a probability, but that does not seem to make it any less like a kick in the guts with a lead boot. The question now is not whether but when the US will discard all pretense of respect for international law and make its longstanding intervention in Central America hideously overt.

Activists in solidarity movements all over the world have been preparing for this possibility/probability for months. In Toronto, several solidarity, labour, peace, church, and community groups have been meeting to plan a strategy conference for a broad-based coalition which could respond quickly to specific events in the area. The day-long conference will take place Saturday, December 8, (location TBA), and all concerned individuals and groups are invited to take part. For further information contact Julie Salverson at 960-9321.

**ALERT! RED ALERT! RED ALERT! RED ALERT! RED ALERT!**

## FOCUS ON GUATEMALA

The response to the formation of WISCA has been gratifying and we now have a core of committed women, most of whom are also active in other solidarity organizations. We have decided to take on a regular "column" in Cayenne as one way of communicating with Canadian women about the situation of women in Central America and about our work. This issue our focus will be Guatemala, the Central American country whose struggle continues to be least known.



On October 11, the Development Education Centre kicked off the anti-racist film festival, "COLOUR POSITIVE," with When the Mountains Tremble, a stunning film about Guatemala. The film uses the life of Rigoberta Menchu, a Native Guatemalan peasant woman who has become a national leader, to tell the story of Guatemala and in particular the suffering and resistance of its indigenous peoples.

The film provides an excellent introduction to the situation in Guatemala; a good follow-up to it would be to read the book, I, Rigoberta Menchu: an Indian Woman in Guatemala (Verso Editions, 1983), which goes into much more detail about Rigoberta's life and about the culture of the indigenous peoples of Guatemala. A powerful oral history in the tradition of Let Me Speak! (the testimony of Domitila de Chungara, a

Bolivian woman militant), her story is simply told and as readable as a novel, but packed with information about the history, politics and culture of Guatemala. Readable though it may be, however, it is not the sort of book to try to read at one sitting--Rigoberta's accounts of the horrendous cruelties inflicted on her people are among the most painful, moving, and enraging passages I've ever read whether in history or fiction; sometimes I just had to put it away for a while in order to be able to continue to read.

The week following the showing of When the Mountains Tremble, we were privileged to have a visit from Rosa Maria Mendez, a member of the Guatemalan women's association, IXQUIC. At a meeting with WISCA Rosa Maria spoke at length about the situation of women in Guatemala and about the work of IXQUIC both in Guatemala and the exterior. The following is a transcript of her remarks; unfortunately it does not include her frank and illuminating responses to the many questions WISCA members posed. If you want to learn more about IXQUIC contact WISCA.

### I COME FROM GUATEMALA AND I BRING WITH ME THE VOICES OF GUATEMALAN WOMEN

I am a member of IXQUIC, an organization of Guatemalan women which is actively involved in the search for solutions and alternatives to the present situation of injustice and repression in our country.

We would like to tell you about the situation of Guatemalan women, but in order to truly understand, you must first start with an overview of the economic, social, political and cultural reality in which we live.

If you'd like to know more about Women in Solidarity with Central America (WISCA), write us at 386 Bloor Street West, Toronto M5S 1X4. Or call Chris or Lynda at 961-8638 or 532-8584.

Guatemala is the largest country in Central America. It shares a common border with Mexico to the north and with Honduras and El Salvador to the South. Half of its seven-and-a-half million inhabitants are women. Sixty per cent of the population are indigenous; 70% are peasants. But there is an unequal distribution of the land: 2% of the population own 80% of the land, the richest and most productive; while the other 98% possess the remaining 20%. These people live in the highlands where they have been progressively forced to retreat since the Spanish conquest.

The native people are subject to constant racial discrimination. This situation has existed since the conquest in the 16th century, but in recent years discrimination has taken more sophisticated forms. This situation has been denounced by such organizations as Survival International, Americas Watch, Oxfam America, the World Council of Churches, and the 1982 and 1983 General Assemblies of the United Nations.

The Guatemalan woman is a victim of discrimination and contempt in all social sectors, to a greater or lesser extent depending on her social group and economic situation. Native women suffer most, because they are at once women, poor, and indigenous.

Data collected by the Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL) shows that 86% of the economically active population are men and 14% women. It is within this 14% that we find the lowest salaries, and lack of technical training and social



services. In rural areas women maintain the workforce by preparing meals and looking after their families. Minimum wage is US\$3.20 per day, but working women usually earn only half that amount. Studies done in 1983 by the National Council for Economic Planning showed that the minimum income for a family of seven people was US\$12.40 per day. During the same year unemployment was estimated at 47% and it is thought to have reached 68% in 1984.

Thirty-five per cent of economically active women work in domestic service, with no right to any social benefits, frequently victims of sexual and other abuse from their employers. In the industrial sector, women's wages are lower than men's; there is a lack of technical training. Working the "double shift" at work and at home generates frequent tensions and problems. In the service sectors, teachers, secretaries, and professionals might have good technical training, but are still the victims of discrimination. They are the group most easily manipulated by advertising and the consumer society,

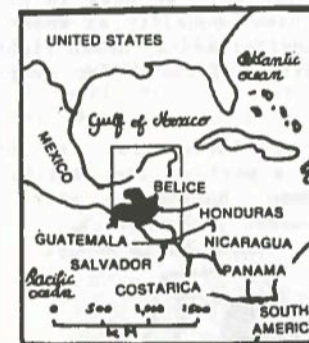
which in many cases prevents women from clearly perceiving their real situation. Sixty per cent of women are illiterate; 90% in rural areas.

The Pan American Health Organization quotes a crude death rate of 30.6 per thousand, mostly due to malnutrition. A woman's nutritional status is invariably the worst of her family, and is worsened by frequent pregnancies without medical attention. Data from the 1977 census revealed that only 16% of registered deliveries had some medical assistance; 18% were done by midwives. Only 35 of every 100 children born will reach age 15.

Before the 1976 earthquake, the housing deficit was officially estimated at 800,000; sixty out of every 100 families were without houses. After the earthquake the housing deficit reached 900,000. Consequently there are huge problems of overcrowding and sanitation, affecting women most of all, since it is they who spend most time at home.

The 1976 earthquake brought to light the critical social and economic situation of Guatemala. A number of women began to meet regularly: workers, peasants, housewives, teachers, high school and university students, religious workers, and professionals. Fierce repression unleashed by a succession of military governments broke up our work in several rural communities and from 1981 we were forced to look for new ways to continue our work within the country and give it an international dimension. In May 1983 we began our work abroad as IXQUIC.

Over the years the military have taken more and more control over the social structures of the people. The Model Villages, for example, are really concentration camps for Indians, and are one of the more brutal ways of breaking down community life and traditions, such as religion, land tenure, dress, language, and cultural heritage. This communal life has allowed the indigenous peoples to have a collective integral



About Guatemala

Area: 108,889 km<sup>2</sup>  
 Population: 7.5 million  
 Life Expectancy: 41 years in rural areas, 56 in urban  
 Infant Mortality: 81 per 1000  
 Average Industrial Wage: \$2/day US



# IXQUIC

LA MUJER EN GUATEMALA

### About "Ixquic"

According to Popol Vuh, the Book of Counsel of Quiche, Princess Ixquic is the Mother, the Creator Woman, the one who transmitted to her children the the wisdom and the cultural tradition of her people, the Maya-Quiche. In 1983, Guatemalan women formed an organization to defend and promote their rights and gave it the name "Ixquic" to emphasize the important role native women have played in preserving indigenous culture.

identity which has given them strength to resist for more than 450 years. The military hope to break their resistance by destroying the fabric of cultural life. And it is women in this culture who are the guardians and transmitters of culture, which is why the military attack native women with particular venom.

According to reports and direct testimonies of Indian peasant women who have fled the repression, the army has destroyed their crops and villages, killed their husbands, and forced the people to join the Civil Patrols, the purpose of which is to divide the population. Some examples:

• A recent press report stated that aid intended for 63 widows and orphans in Paquinac, El Quiche, was intercepted by the civil patrols. A resident of Joyabaj, El Quiche, reported that single women and widows are being victimized by the Commander of the Civil Patrol in that village demanding that women participate in it or pay someone to take their place.

• A few days ago (Oct. 1984), the Mexican press published a secret report from the Guatemalan army saying that 800 women had been raped by the soldiers in Chimaltenango in the last two months; 500 of them now are pregnant. The majority of the victims are minors.

• One week previously the Youth Tribunal reported that there were nearly 150,000 orphaned native children in the states of Quiche, Quezaltenango, San Marcos, and Huehuetenango. In Alta Verapaz there is a village where all the women are widows. In response to this situation a person close to the Guatemalan government proposed the solution of putting the orphans up for adoption in other countries because it would be a good source of foreign currency.

Throughout the history of Guatemala, women have taken part in the social, economic, cultural, and political life of a people which have been marginalized, oppressed, and discriminated against. We have played an important role, but far from being recognized, our role has been denied. Reflection on this historical reality has convinced us of the importance of the role we have to play. In order to achieve equality as women we must win the most elemental human rights, self-determination, freedom for people, and peace.

With this brief information, we have tried to share a part of the reality of Guatemalan women, hoping to start an exchange with women in Toronto.

--Rosa Maria Mendez

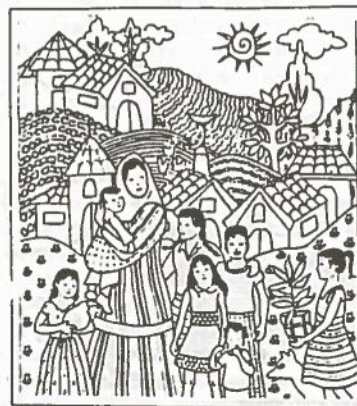


### AMES APPEAL

Toronto Friends of AMES (Association of Salvadorean Women) are appealing for support for AMES' Children to Children Aid campaign. The campaign aids the Luz Diliañ Arevalo Childcare Centre directed by AMES in Managua, Nicaragua. This centre provides security and fulltime day care for Salvadorean refugee children between the ages of two months and six years. Most of these children arrive showing overt symptoms of starvation, disease, and emotional problems arising from witnessing tortures and assassinations in war-torn El Salvador. We would like to provide our children with the basic rights of childhood.

With very limited resources, our centre tries to meet crucial medical, nutritional, and emotional needs, and also tries to create a sound learning environment. Similar childcare centres are now being set up in El Salvador itself, despite the disruptions of Salvadorean government military operations and bombings in the countryside.

AMES will be initiating the Children to Children Aid Campaign from November 1984 to April 1985, with direct mail appeals, speaking tours, publicity and benefit performances by various artists. Our aim is to raise \$150,000.



In Toronto, Friends of AMES will be holding house meetings, children's parties, and doing outreach to daycare centres and other organizations to support this campaign. We will be showing a slide/tape show for children about the AMES sponsored daycare centre in Nicaragua. We will also have buttons, posters and photos available. If you have ideas or contacts that might be useful to us, please give us a call.

By allowing us to use your name as a sponsor on our publicity brochure and possibly in letters accompanying that brochure, you would help us secure urgently needed concrete assistance for thousands of displaced Salvadorean children. To date, sponsors include Adam Hochschild, contributing editor to Mother Jones, Richie Havens, performer, and Carolyn Forche, poet.

Please let us know how you can help. I can be reached at 533-0680 (work) and 783-5146 (home).

--Axelle Janczur  
Toronto Friends of AMES

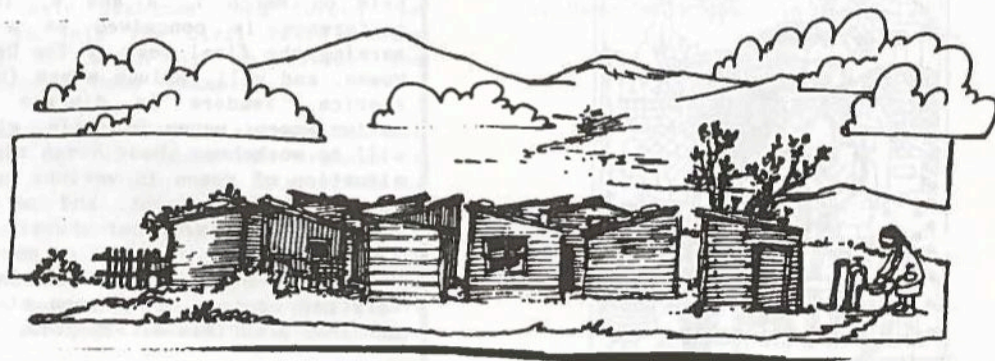
### SOLIDARITY WITH WOMEN OF LATIN AMERICA

The Frente Amplio Feminino (The Broad Women's Front), a coalition of Latin American women, is preparing for a Conference of Solidarity with Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held on March 7, 8 and 9, 1985. The conference is conceived as a way of marking the final year of the Decade for Women, and will include women from Latin America, leaders in diverse sectors, native women, women in exile, etc. There will be workshops about human rights, the situation of women in various countries, peace and disarmament, and so forth. A letter will be sent out shortly inviting all women's organizations to participate. Meanwhile, anyone interested in knowing more can contact Iris Mason at 588-1629 or Jinny Arancibia at 923-2649.

## CHILE: WOMEN DEFEND THEIR RIGHTS

Events in Chile have recently brought it international attention again, eleven years after the coup which overthrew the democratic government of Salvador Allende. I spent the month of September in Chile, visiting with human rights organizations in Santiago, the capital, in Concepcion, a city to the south, and in Valparaiso, a port city near the capital.

Chile today is a country which is organizing on all levels to oppose the military regime, to demand respect for human and social rights, and for a return to democracy. Women have played and continue to play a crucial role in this struggle. After the military coup, because of the high level of repression against the political parties, initial organizing against the regime took form on a public level in the human rights arena. Families of the political prisoners, the disappeared and the detained began to form associations to demand respect for the human rights of their family members who were victims of military repression. Women appear to have been the principal organizers of such organizations. Today, in Chile, women play a significant role in all of the human and social rights organizations.



Women are in the leadership of many of these organizations, such as the Association of Families of the Disappeared and Detained, Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the People of Valparaiso, and in a number of neighbourhood organizations within the poblaciones (poor neighbourhoods).

Women have formed their own organizations, recognizing the need to organize in defence of their rights as women. There are a number of such organizations, although the one with which I had the most contact during my stay in Chile was CODEM, the Committee for the Defence of Women. CODEM is one of a number of social and human rights organizations affiliated with CODEPU, the Committee for the Defence of the Rights of the People. On the political spectrum it falls within the category of organizations supportive of the principles of the MDP, the Popular Democratic Movement, and identifies itself as an "independent democratic" organization. However, there is a concerted effort by the social and human rights organizations to maintain an independence of and a clear distinction from the political parties and movements. CODEM, like many other organizations, applies this principle, and so membership is not limited to any particular political tendency or party.

In one meeting with CODEM women in Valparaiso I was told CODEM was a socialist feminist organization, but that it could not be assumed that the other CODEPU organizations would agree with this. On the other hand, CODEM women in Coronel, a small town outside of Concepcion, told me in no uncertain terms that they were not feminist and clearly held a negative view of feminism. They considered feminism to be what we might term bourgeois feminism. CODEM women in Santiago told me that the various interpretations of "feminism" still confused many women. There is a debate now within CODEM about this and a conference on the theme was planned for October. Basically, however, the women I talked to were not so much concerned about whether they called themselves feminist, but rather, with how in practice they could best advance the rights of women, organize, raise consciousness among themselves and within the opposition as a whole about women's role and rights in society, and how they could best participate in the overall struggle for democracy and human rights.

CODEM is organized into base committees, small groups of women who work within their own sector or neighbourhood. The main organizing drive is by women in the poblaciones to organize on a broader and broader level, and it appeared to me that the strongest CODEM base came from the pobladoras, poor women who live in neighbourhoods where there is high unemployment and many social and economic problems. These areas are the targets of military repression, and organizing is the only method of dealing with the kinds of lives they are forced to lead.

CODEM committees participate as member organizations of the neighbourhood Popular Organization Coordinating Bodies. In conjunction with other popular organizations they support neighbourhood activities. Marches and demonstrations in opposition to the military are actively and publicly supported by CODEM. At one of the CODEM meetings I attended

in Santiago, there was a debate about whether they should continue supporting and participating in all of the demonstrations they were asked to support. This meeting was held at the end of September, and the women felt like they had been out on the streets almost every day that month supporting various causes. The number of activities planned in opposition to the government is tremendous and this high activity level is not likely to decrease, but rather increase as time goes on. The concern in the meeting arose because the participation in so many demonstrations was detracting from organizational activities. Most of the women felt that they had reached a stage where they had to carefully set priorities for their activities in light of their objectives and resources, because there was a clear danger of spreading their energies in too many directions and losing their focus in the process.

In addition to joint activities with other organizations, each CODEM base committee decides its own priorities based on the realities of its participants. With younger women, for example, some of the committees have organized educational on sex, as there is a lack of sex education in the school system. Other base committees have decided that they wanted to know more about their legal rights as women or their "rights" to oppose the government,



what they can and cannot do legally and what happens to them if they are arrested.

When I was in Concepcion, I had the opportunity to attend a two-day CODEM workshop, at which about thirty women and twenty children were present. The women were from various backgrounds, most of them poor. The purpose of the workshop was to develop the women's perspectives about their role as women, socially and politically. The larger group broke into small groups covering questions such as the nature of our struggle as women, and whether once the dictatorship is gone we would have to continue our struggle as women (they decided in the larger group that women's struggle would really have then only just begun). Some of the time was spent role playing and in discussions among all the women. Some of the older women were shy, but overall there was a very strong feeling of solidarity and comfort with each other during the weekend.

In the evening, the "Battle of Chile" was shown. Rather than play the whole movie through, it was stopped every half hour or so to allow for questions and discussion about what happened to destroy the Allende government and why the dictatorship continued to exist. The weekend was very impressive. And I was only sorry that I had to leave the workshop early, because on the afternoon of the second day the women had invited their male friends and husbands to a discussion about their attitude towards women. A number of women whose husbands and friends were progressive complained that while men supported women in theory, their practice left a lot to be desired. I had the impression that the meeting would be very interesting.

The kind of work now being done by women in Chile despite repression by the military regime, leaves one with the feeling that the struggle will not only continue but with time will be successful.

Barbara Jackman

## WOMEN ORGANIZING IN THE PHILIPPINES

*Previously, we have included some basic information on the formation of GABRIELA, a new women's coalition in the Philippines. In this issue, we have three pieces on the Philippines. The first is an interview with an activist in the Philippines, who has been involved in GABRIELA from its beginnings. For security reasons, we are not publishing her name.*

LY: Tell us a bit about the current situation in the Philippines.

EB: The gravest thing we are faced with is the economic crisis; even middle class women find themselves getting more and more impoverished, like their peasant and working class sisters. As housewives we have great problems with prices. We have had two devaluations. The Philippine exchange rate is 18 pesos to US\$1 whereas in the early part of the year it was 11 pesos. So women have joined mass actions protesting the economic crisis. In one



mass action, for example, poor women marched along with middle class women, carrying empty pots to demonstrate that they don't have anything to cook anymore.

Apart from the economic situation, in many parts of the Philippines the dictatorship has spawned a series of militarization policies. In one region there have been bombings and strafings of peasant communities. In an area in the south, they have instituted what we call the hamletting program, where they get all the people from the barrios and relegate them to a place where they can be guarded around the clock. They say this is so the people cannot provide support to the New People's Army. This has created a lot of hardship for women and children in terms of the food situation, as well as the problem of services like water. And the farmers find it a problem to go to the fields because there is a curfew hour in which they have to work. In areas where they have sent battalions of soldiers, there are cases of rape and sexual abuse of women.

As a result of the strength and organization of the people's movement, there are an increasing number of political prisoners in the Philippines, and women political prisoners have been subjected to rape and other forms of sexual assault.

So these are the issues that women address themselves to when we speak of a beginning women's movement in the Philippines. So, for instance, in the last election in the parliament, women were very much involved in the movement to boycott the election. One women's group called itself Women For the Ouster of Marcos And Boycott of the Elections. We showed that women did not believe in the election as a genuine means to obtain democracy, that it is used as a show window by the present government to show that there is democracy in the Philippines.

LY: We've heard some about the

mobilization of the opposition, what is the role of women within it?

EB: After the Aquino assassination--let me say, even earlier than that, the protest movement in the Philippines had become very strong, with the establishment of people's organizations, primarily the workers movement, the students movement, the urban poor, and other sectoral associations, Filipino tribal groups, progressive religious groups. What is new since the Aquino assassination is that a lot of middle class people--businessmen and executives--joined the protest actions. Even people considered to be very conservative have at least manifested their opposition to the dictatorship. Women executives, for example, organized themselves. After the Aquino assassination and because of their exposure to the movement, these middle class women have joined forces with other organizations, for instance under the women's coalition GABRIELA.

LY: Could you talk about GABRIELA? How did it get formed?

EB: Women have been working for over two years to form a coalition. Women from some of the service organizations had been very concerned with building up a women's movement. There are so many organizations already established for the different sectoral movements, and there are women active in those sectoral associations who have not addressed themselves to women's issues, but to general national political issues. There was a feeling among many women that women's issues must also be addressed. Initially it was a few organizations like the Center for Women Resources, the Women's Center, with very good contacts, who through the celebration of International Women's Day worked to form what is now GABRIELA.

For two or three years now we have been trying to organize women in various institutions and sectoral organizations for a celebration of International Women's Day. GABRIELA was actually

formed last International Women's Day, which was of course the biggest because it was after the Aquino assassination and a lot of middle class women were vocal already and wanted some action. The field was fertile for organizing the coalition.

Our IWD celebrations were usually symposia where women would speak about the national situation from a women's point of view set in the context of the Philippine struggle for justice and democracy. The focus was on general issues, women concerned with political issues as citizens of a Third World country under a dictatorship.

In fact the celebration last March was the one that actually dealt more explicitly with women's issues, in part because of the work done over the years by the women working to organize the coalition, and also because many new women's organizations had formed.

Five hundred women representing different organizations attended the founding assembly of GABRIELA on International Women's Day 1984. Of course, we have had difficulties with different interpretations of women's problems. For example, the Muslim women were very much against the dictatorship. But while we saw their situation as Muslim women as an extreme of feudal patriarchy, they did not see that as a problem. So even within GABRIELA, there are varying levels of consciousness about women's issues. Some have joined it for more political reasons. Others are more feminist in the western sense. There are many different kinds of groups coming together.

At the Assembly we had our first election of officers and we set up working committees to work on the different programs as identified by the group. There is a campaign group in charge of handling protest actions on particular issues. There is the education and research group which is putting out a primer for women about what it means to be a woman in the

Philippines, about the issues that concern women.

LY: How was representation on the executive decided?

EB: There was allowance for sectoral groups to assure representation for all the different sectoral organizations. We also had national figures involved because we wanted to have names of people who would have some influence and stature nationally.

LY: What activities is GABRIELA involved in?

EB: GABRIELA has been very active in several mass mobilizations. One group within GABRIELA organized protest actions using popular theatre methods to protest against violations of human rights. They had actors from different popular theatre groups dressed in costumes, marching, and doing street theatre. Some were acting out forms of torture, harassment, and beating. It was a very unique thing in terms of protest marches.

One important recent activity was a symposium GABRIELA organized for middle class women to discuss issues. This was a priority because the middle class plays a very key role in the Philippines right now. We have strong workers' and student movements, and the peasant organizations are also becoming stronger. But in the Philippines it is very important to have the middle class with you. They play a very strong advocacy role buffering the harsh repression of the state. For instance, in protest marches when you have upper middle class women at your negotiation panel to negotiate with the police, the authorities have second thoughts before taking the tear gas or stopping you right off.

And they have access to media and thus a voice that can reach out to unorganized and less politically aware people, who are still quite numerous.

But of course because they are more

vocal and more articulate, they tend to hog control. That is why within GABRIELA's structure we have representation based on popular and women's organizations. It is these organizations and the women workers and students who have a longer experience of being organized, and so even though middle class women are articulate, they cannot control or lead the organizations.

Right now we are in the midst of planning for next International Women's Day. We want to make sure that every year something is planned for IWD.

LY: What about the role of women within popular and sectoral organizations?

EB: Within popular organizations the situation varies. When you go to peasant organizations or some sectoral organizations there are very few women in the leadership. In urban poor organizations women are the leaders; in fact they are the ones who speak in protest actions. Among students, we have men and women within the leadership. In the religious groups it is a mix of both women and men. For tribal groups again it would be men. In trade unions, while there are many women, men are the majority of the leadership. It is still a struggle for women to be more visible in leadership roles. Of course in the day-to-day administrative work the majority would be women, in service groups.

LY: What about the role of women in the New People's Army?

EB: The New People's Army is present right now in 54 out of 70 or so provinces and as has been reported in the papers of arrests and encounters there are quite a number of women guerrillas, some of them in leadership positions.

There are also women medics in the New People's Army, mostly peasant women with very little educational background but they say are even doing surgery.

Then of course we hear about women in the underground and their problem with children. Some get married, and some have children. The problem is how to combine the two, how to be a mother at the same time as being a militant. So some women have left their children with peasants who take care of them. Some bring their children with them to a certain point and then have to leave them with families.

LY: Can you speak about women political prisoners in the Philippines?

EB: Political prisoners in the Philippines are in special camps. There are several in Manila but they are also in the provinces. There are often hunger strikes. Prisoners are organized in the camps, but also relatives of prisoners are organized to work for the release of prisoners. Women relatives are the most active, they are the ones who go to court hearings, petition the government, write letters; usually the mothers and the wives write.

Prisoners often make cards with different snatches or poems about freedom and struggle, and other kinds of crafts. This is because conditions in the political camps are such that they don't get enough food, and often their families are so poor that they cannot supplement the prison food.

There are special campaigns to have women political prisoners freed before their time is up, especially those women who have given birth in prison or are nursing mothers.

In fact even at the opening session of the GABRIELA Assembly the women prisoners sent a greeting saying that there are a lot of women political prisoners all over the Philippines, that they were in prison because of their commitment not to be blind to the situation of men and women in the Philippines and thus they had chosen to follow the path of Filipino



heroines. They said that it is not easy to be a prisoner, especially for those who have families. But that it is not enough to work for the release of political prisoners because there will always be political prisoners as long as there is no true democracy in the Philippines.

LY: You've mentioned that GABRIELA is working to build the women's movement in the Philippines. What do women activists in the Philippines think of the North American women's movement?

EB: In some international meetings where Filipina delegations attended, one issue that was raised was the question of linkage between national liberation struggles and the women's movement. And of course there were arguments that women's liberation can only come about after national liberation. Others were only concerned with women's liberation apart from national liberation. The Philippine representatives have the position that national liberation and the women's question are not separate. It cannot be one and then the other. So for instance in the Paris meeting there was this great debate where European women

were saying national liberation is not a guarantee that women's liberation would come, and they put more stress on women's liberation.

This is still something that for us has to be more clearly elaborated. Women who are involved in the women's movement in the Philippines were first and primarily involved in the national liberation movement. We are only now beginning to articulate what we mean by having a women's movement in the context of a national liberation movement.

LY: What can we in the women's movement in Canada do to support women in the Philippines?

EB: Well from a practical point of view there are some immediate needs. We need the tangible, material and moral and political support of women in other parts of the world. When we say moral and political support it could simply mean a support statement for one of our protest actions. Or in terms of material support it could mean that books or publications are made available to women's groups in the Philippines which will give us a working knowledge of the women's movement in other parts of the world: what have been the gains; what have been the weaknesses of different experiences; what are the practical experiences of women in the west. Like for instance in your last newsletter there was an interview with Sandy Steinecker and letter from Nancy Adamson about the problems encountered by women trying to work together. This is of some practical value even though the context is different.

One related project we have been working on is to link women's groups in the Philippines with women's groups or organizations in other countries, for solidarity and exchange of experiences so each can learn from the other, and not set up just a one-way relationship of providing support.

We have a tremendous task ahead of us. We have much to learn, and much experience to share with others.

## OVERSEAS MIGRATION OF FILIPINO NURSES

Every year, some 2,400 Filipino nurses go abroad for employment in the hospitals of the U.S., Canada, Europe, and the Middle East. We are, in fact, the world's number one supplier of nurses. The outflow of nurses causes a drain of the educational work force primarily charged with the promotion of people's health. Around 20,000 graduates are produced annually by some 132 nursing schools and colleges in the country, and consequently, graduates are continually added to the growing pool of nurses--where only a fraction is absorbed into employment.

Government expenditure for health is too low to provide the salaries of health personnel. This is aggravated by the unequal distribution of the national income and the low priority given to the health budget in a country where a large section is unable to pay for private health care.

Conditions of unemployment, low wages, understaffing and lack of the right to self-organization in the midst of spiralling prices of goods and services confront the nurses. The spectre is mirrored in the rest of our society.

In the midst of this scenario and in the face of the growing restlessness of the unemployed, the government adopted its "export policy" in a desperate attempt to stem the growing clamour for better work and living conditions for hundreds of nurses, doctors and other professionals. So now the Philippines exports anything from commodities to human beings.

The kind of education received by nurses serves to reinforce the government's export policy. What is taught in schools is geared to providing health care based on the health situation in developed countries. In the Philippines, where 90% of diseases are preventable, cure rather than prevention

continues to be emphasized. The curriculum is basically disease, cure, drugs and hospitals--in short, Western-oriented. Consequently, graduates are equipped to work in plush tertiary hospitals rather than in the countryside where the vast majority of Filipinos lives.

Every year the Filipino people pay for the education and training of nurses through their taxes. This is an ironic fact when considering the great numbers of nurses who take flight.

A UN study pointed out that through continued outflow of health workers the Philippines contributes 1.5 million US dollars to the U.S. economy each year. According to UNCTAD, between 1961 and 1972, the developing countries gave the US, Canada, and United Kingdom close to 44 billion US dollars in the form of some 231,000 skilled nurses, doctors, engineers, teachers, labourers, added to their labour pools. The grim reality therefore is a brain and money drain of all sectors from "poor" to "developed" countries.

Meanwhile, the health picture in the country continues to grow bleaker. Recently, the Ministry of Health's National Nutrition Service reported that 70 out of every 100 Filipino pre-schoolers are malnourished. Six out of ten Filipinos drink dirty water. Poor sanitation, poor sewage disposal, and congestion render thousands of people in rural, workers', and squatters' communities easy prey to communicable

**TALES OF THE FILIPINO WORKING WOMEN** is a new booklet published by the Committee for Asian Women. In it different women tell the stories of their lives, their work and their struggles. To order write the Christian Conference of Asia, 57 Peking Road, 5th Floor, Kowloon, Hong Kong. Price: US\$2.



Center for Women Resources

diseases. The Philippines has the highest rates of tuberculosis, schistosomiasis, and polio in the entire Western Pacific Region.

Unemployment among nurses is a grim reality. Many are forced to seek jobs unrelated to their chosen profession--some even find themselves in massage parlours or in drug companies as sales agents. At the same time, millions of their compatriots are deprived of the basic health care their taxes supposedly ensured through the subsidization of nursing education.

\* The complete report can be found in Migration Today: Current Issues and Christian Responsibility, No. 30, published by the World Council of Churches.

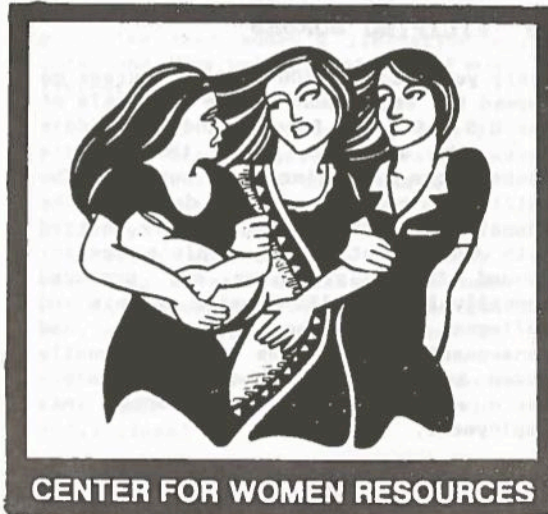
### PROSTITUTES IN MARCOS' "NEW SOCIETY"

While the present regime continues simultaneously to emit rosy forecasts and to negate responsibility in the nation's economic plight, all evidence points to national bankruptcy looming just around the corner, a situation caused by deliberate and grand-scale government misuse and mismanagement of national resources.

The real state of the economy is reflected in uncontrolled inflation affecting the whole country. When the prices of essential commodities become prohibitive, it is always the woman who feels the shock first, and the poorer the woman the harder she is hit.

If inflation hurts the middle class woman, it appalls the grassroots mother who must, of necessity, consume less in order to futher stretch a pitiful income, if indeed she is fortunate enough to have one.

In the midst of international economic crisis, a new type of trained and attractive young woman has emerged



from the low income middle class bracket. Frustrated in her professional and economic expectations, she breaks with Philippine ties and jumps into a dubious fate abroad by answering mail-order catalogue advertisements for a Filipina bride. All too often, she ends up a mere object for the European male to exploit and even to discard when her services are no longer desired.

Tourism is the country's third highest foreign exchange earner. Under normal conditions a flourishing tourist trade is highly welcome. However, the government's sick reliance on the tourist trade as illusory remedy for the nation's monumental foreign exchange dilemma has led it to build up glamorized fleshpot centres, the better to coax the tourist into spending his dollars in the Philippines.

According to Liwayway Calalang, an official of the Ministry of Labour, an estimated 150,000 women supply the tourist demand for prostitutes. The government's reported \$344 million tourism earnings in 1980 does not include the off-the-books cost of women procured in government-sponsored 5-star emporiums, licenced cocktail bars, massage parlours and go-go joints. Were these undeclared

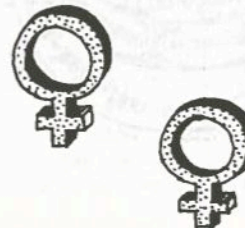
earnings taken into account, the reported government income on tourism could easily have been doubled. Thus sex tours, the main lure for Japanese tourists, are very well publicised.

Survival through prostitution in these times of crisis is rampant, not only among women, but also very young boys and girls. The most heartbreaking element in the seamy business is the child prostitution racket; boys and girls, some as young as nine, can be found waiting for foreigners to pick them up in beer gardens or in shopping centres in hotel districts. Purportedly, many children from rural areas have been sold into the sex business by their own parents from rural areas who fall prey to recruiters claiming that the children will be able to send home desperately needed cash.

The prostitution problem greatly disturbs the network of militant women in the Philippines. In digging into the root causes of prostitution, these concerned women conclude that many prostitutes are victims of poverty and of a system that has driven them to play out a degrading and self-destructive role in the government's pursuit of the lifesaving dollar.

Faced with intolerable injustices and inequalities integral to the Marcos rule, women all over the country are becoming more and more militant in asserting their legitimate rights as women. Singly, they may not carry much weight, but united, they would indeed be a great force to contend with.

-excerpted from "Womennews", Vol. 1, No. 4, Davao City, Philippines. April-June 1984.



### NAIROBI 1985

Some of you no doubt have heard rumblings about the huge women's jamboree being planned for July 1985 in Nairobi. Actually two conferences will take place. The purpose of both the official UN Governmental World Conference, as well as the non-governmental (NGO) world gathering known as FORUM 85 are to "review and appraise the achievements of the Decade for Women and to formulate strategies to the year 2000."

The Nairobi conferences will be the third set of international events held around the UN Decade for Women launched in 1975 at a government conference in Mexico City, where over 100 nations attended the UN Conference and 6000 women participated in the concurrent NGO conference. The scenario was repeated "mid-decade" in Copenhagen in 1980, this time with 8000 women.

The Nairobi NGO FORUM (July 8 through 17) is being coordinated by a Planning Committee of NGO representatives responsible for fundraising and logistics. They are also responsible for the very political task of processing requests from organizations and groups for time and space to hold workshops at the FORUM.

Four thousand women are expected to attend, down from Copenhagen's 6000 because of limited accommodation and other practical nightmares (like the lack of water and food resulting from the last year of drought), and problems with currency. Another complicating factor is the Kenyan government's concern with controlling the number of women to ensure there won't be any embarrassing "political" incidents to contend with. (In Copenhagen there were a number of these as women spontaneously, and in different configurations, determined not to lose the opportunity of highlighting their concerns and showing their anger in the presence of government representatives at the other "official" conference.)

The FORUM won't be like most conferences we are used to. For one thing, just the sheer numbers mean there won't be any time when we are all together. There will be no conference statement issued, no resolutions. On the positive side this means we won't spend endless hours in plenary listening to the officials of the women's movement, or trying to reach agreement with women of literally every political persuasion. But it also means there's no way to really affect the FORUM in an substantial or overall way. It is simply a "forum" for different groups to organize workshops to share experiences, resources, and (on a limited basis) to share strategies on the conference's eleven themes: health, education, employment, older women, young women, media, peace, development, equality, women in emergency situations, and refugee and migrant women.

If you are interested in organizing a workshop contact the Planning Committee. Your application will go to the relevant theme sub-committee for approval. Then of course you have to find funds to get there, since most of the monies raised so far are ear-marked for Third World resource people.

The UN conference will take place immediately after the FORUM, and will be attended by member states of the United Nations, and by representatives of NGOs with what is called "consultative status." The idea is that through these official organizations, the concerns and ideas of women can be integrated into the new "plan of action" that will likely emerge from the conference. The possibility of having a real impact on the government conference is viewed with scepticism by even the most liberal of feminists. However, on some issues UN resolutions and member country commitments could be very important for furthering the work of different groups.

Nairobi in July with 4000 women will be quite an event, a perk for those that manage to get there. But realistically,

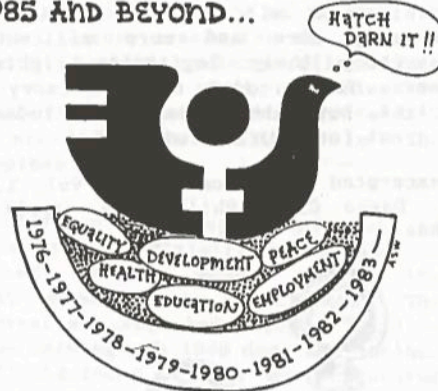
the conference and forum are likely to have little, or no, effect on the work of activists in Canada. Remember International Women's Year, a lot of fancy talk by government, funds for a few meetings, and then, the same intransigence on our real issues. But for many women's groups in the Third World, Nairobi will be important and they are very clear about how they can use Nairobi.

For groups like IXQUIC, for example, it is a chance to pressure UN agencies and other governments to take a stand against the repression in Guatemala, to demand that the Mexican government improve the appalling living conditions in refugee camps, and to stop forced repatriation. It is an opportunity to make contact with funders who might support their work. And most importantly, it is one chance to meet with women from different countries, who are involved in different struggles, and to strengthen the growing international women's solidarity movement.

--Lynda Yanz

For information write the NGO Planning Committee, 777 UN Plaza, 11th Floor, New York, N.Y., 10017.

### THE DECADE FOR WOMEN... 1985 AND BEYOND...



## Reviews

### CHALLENGING IMPERIAL FEMINISM

Feminist Review No. 17

"Many Voices, One Chant: Black Feminist Perspectives"

"Many Voices, One Chant", a special issue of the British feminist journal Feminist Review, challenges the prevailing tenets of Euro-American feminism by dissecting what is secret in it: its assumptions and its hegemony.

This special issue is part of a burgeoning body of feminist theory by Black women in Britain, Canada and the United States. It pulls out the specificities of the conditions of Black women and in so doing exposes the fragility of a feminism which speaks to the experiences of a minority of women, even in Europe and America. One of the strongest, most deeply rooted tendencies of mainstream--or as the Review's editors term it, "imperial"--feminism is its reluctance to trace the relation between capitalism and the oppression of women:

The 'herstory' which white women use to trace the roots of women's oppression or to justify some form of political practice is an imperial history rooted in the prejudices of colonial and neo-colonial periods, a 'herstory' which suffers the same form of historical amnesia of white male historians, by ignoring the fundamental ways in which white women have benefitted from the oppression of Black people. (p. 5)

Thus, the adherents of imperial feminism confine their scope for the most part to excavations of the "patriarchy", a concept whose historical sense has vanished and which has little to do with concrete current practices. And when history is the object of imperial feminist analysis, this analysis is frequently not only partial but also

seriously distorted: "It is important to go back to the classic definition of patriarchy (see Barrett, 1980) which also encompassed the oppression of younger men by the father. Patriarchy is about gender oppression but it is also about power relations which are not always gender specific. The film Padre Padroni amply demonstrates this." (p. 9)

The lead article of the issue, "Challenging Imperial Feminism" gives us more precise tools for cutting away at the obscuring generalizations which surround gender, race and class. The naming of a particular standpoint as "imperial feminism" lends insight as well into the debate between what has previously been called "mainstream feminism" and "Black feminism". This article pins down the locations of the oppression of Black women, and identifies the breadth of the disagreements as it looks at the origins and make-up of the anti-nuclear movement, national liberation struggles, autonomous organizing, etc. and sets the tone for the rest of the issue.

"Black Women, the Economic Crisis and the British State" argues that



The relations of Black women to the British economy should be considered in the context of Black people, but must in addition be analysed in terms of gender. This is because they are not equatable with or reducible to those of Black men, or subsumable to those of the Black community. It is not simply a matter of going into detail about Black women as a subgroup. There are qualitative differences along the dimension of gender and its meaning in British society which have implications for Black women, and have textured the economic relations of Black people in general. We have played a specific role in the rationalization processes of British capitalism. (p. 25)

As well, the article examines the historical and contemporary diversity of Black women in Britain while making it clear that the right to earn a living is being seriously undermined for all Black women in Britain today.

"Asian Women in History" looks at another group of Black women in order to pull apart the notion that Asian women come from passive cultures and that they continue to be submissive, a notion still subscribed to, not only by employers and state agencies, but also by imperial feminists. Neither notion is true as even the briefest glimpse at the peasant uprisings on the Indian continent or a look at the current resistance to racist and sexist immigration laws will show.

"Becoming Visible: Black Lesbian Discussion" underscores the need for multiple layers of analysis which explore the relations of race, class and history as well as the contradictions within the community.

If you imagine oppression coming down on the black woman--so you've got racism, sexism, anti-lesbianism, and class through the different state institutions, and individuals. You've got black women at the bottom, then there's

a two-way process of struggle for us. There's coming together as Black women in our independent organizations, and that's crucial because that's the only way to find out what our priorities are and strengthen our core. Then from this strong centre we go back out taking our understandings and demands into the movements for socialism, Black liberation, women's liberation and gay liberation. So we're going back to the places we've left but from a position of unshakeable strength, and resistance to all the old shit we used to get. (p. 68)

"Black Women Organizing" takes a critical look at the internal debate which takes place among Black women activists. Within the Organization of Women of Asian and African Descent (OWAAD), the disparate interests eventually led to what was seen as the necessary break-up of the organization as Black women continue to refine their analysis and practice. Finally, the issue contains several reviews, notably one of the Fireweed #16, the "Women of Colour" issue, an issue the editors of "Many Voices, One Chant" credit with stimulating their own work.

This issue of Feminist Review is a timely one, and constitutes a crucial critique of "imperial feminism" as well as an important contribution to the struggles of Black women.

--Dionne Brand and P.K. Murphy



## ANNA MAE AQUASH: BRAVE-HEARTED WOMAN

Director: Lan Brooke Ritz, U.S., 1979

Anna Mae Aquash was one of the films featured in the recent film series on racism, Colour Positive, organized by the Development Education Centre in Toronto. It is a moving and important film--important because it clearly shows the blatant racism and oppression of the U.S. government toward Native peoples.

It is a documentary film about a Canadian Native woman who was active in the American Indian Movement (AIM) and who was murdered on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in February 1976. The story is not a straight-forward one. It is plagued by arrests, court battles, paramilitary operations in the U.S., Canadian government reluctance to press for an inquiry, and many unanswered questions.

The story seems simple enough when listening to statements from her friends and family. Anna Mae was a strong hard-working young woman. She wanted her people to be proud and self-determining, and that is what she worked for.

When listening to FBI and government officials you can easily see through the shallow accusations of conspiracy on the part of Anna Mae and AIM.

The part of the story that leaves one numb is the fact that the FBI cut off Anna Mae's hands to send to Washington for identification. It is clear that this was not necessary when dental identification could have been used. Her body was shuffled from one government morgue to another. The first cause of death was said to be exposure--that she had gotten drunk, fallen asleep and frozen to death. Because a further autopsy was demanded by Anna Mae's lawyer, officials finally concluded that she was shot, execution style, in the back of the neck.

After the showing, Chris Spotted Eagle, a Native American film maker,

UNITY  
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spoke about working with Anna Mae in an AIM office in California. His presence and short talk made the film even more real. The point brought forward by Chris was that even though FBI operations against AIM were more visible in the 1970s, there is still much work to be done against racism today. It is an issue easily forgotten in light of US aggression in Central America. We have to remember there is oppression right here on our doorsteps.

It is important that this film be viewed more widely. It is one of the few links we have to the political reality of North American Indians. The film's availability is still limited; the filmmaker has only two copies and as yet DEC has not been able to confirm distribution rights. It is essential that we use films like Anna Mae to educate ourselves about the struggle of native peoples, a struggle that continues.

--Maureen Simpkins

For information about distribution, contact DEC Films, 427 Bloor Street, W., Toronto; or write Lan Brooke Ritz, 1971 N. Curson Avenue, Hollywood, Cal. 90046.

## RE-EVALUATING SOCIALIST FEMINISM

Marxism and the Oppression of Women:  
Towards a Unitary Theory  
by Lise Vogel

After many articles and contributions to books, Lise Vogel has finally sat down and pooled her extensive knowledge and research to write a very thorough and scholarly book on this time-worn subject. She emerges as a truly gifted Marxist researcher and theoretician, as she looks at why the issue is still plaguing the left and the women's movement.

Vogel is not new to the debate; she has contributed many significant articles, generally critical of the dual systems theories under which socialist feminism currently struggles. Though she clearly disagrees with the idea of women's oppression stemming from two parallel bases (such as patriarchy and capitalism, or the mode of production and the mode of reproduction), Vogel argues that it is essential to trace the origins of these important challenges to Marxism.

A major element of her project here is to go back to Marx and Engels, as well as Lenin and Clara Zetkin, and rigorously re-examine their theories in the light of the contemporary socialist feminist challenge. Somewhat surprisingly, she traces the theoretical problems of dual systems theories in part to Engels' Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State!

Nonetheless, she draws extensively from Marx and Engels, arguing that they had more to offer the study of women's oppression than socialist feminists have considered. Partly, she believes, the fault lies in the confusion around the issue that permeated later treatments of their, and Lenin's and Zetkin's, works.

In fact, she finds the rudimentary basis for an alternative theory to dual

systems theories of women's oppression in Lenin's and Zetkin's ideas, situating it within the concept of social reproduction. Hence, Vogel comes back to the issue of reproduction and the family, and is able to draw from Marxist analyses to take a persuasive stab at a "unitary" theory, in the context of developing Marxism and Marxist categories, in order to correctly understand the oppression of women.

Although it would be impossible for me to assess whether she is successful or not in just one reading, Vogel makes significant contributions in major areas of debate. First of all, she raises the necessity of using Marxism as a tool of analysis for the study of women's oppression, criticizing the left for not having made any significant attempt to develop Marxist theory in the area of reproduction, the family and other areas which contribute to women's inequality.

Similarly, though sympathetic to the various theoretical attempts made by socialist feminists to overcome this problem, she is also critical of the lack of theoretical consistency in these attempts. Vogel does not treat this issue lightly by any means; she gives an extensive, historical overview of important socialist feminists, interpreting the phrase very broadly so that she includes a broad spectrum of developments and debates. Drawing links



among the various threads, she shows how the trend for socialist women has been to move farther and farther away from Marxist analysis, though this was originally the starting point for the debate.

Her extensive treatment of Marx and Engels in the context of their treatment of reproduction, the family or women's oppression, as well as her examination of Lenin and Zetkin, is, as far as I know, unique in its thoroughness and analysis.

Finally, her assessment and critique of dual systems theories is careful and well-argued, particularly when followed by her attempt to construct an adequate theory around social reproduction. She situates social reproduction firmly in the context of the different modes of production throughout history and looks at its specific manifestation within contemporary capitalism, carefully incorporating relevant contributions from the contemporary women's movement.

Vogel's contribution is something the left and the women's movement must consider very carefully. It has the potential to shed much needed light and understanding on the oppression of women and on our praxis.

Marie Lorenzo

AVAILABLE AT THE LATIN AMERICAN WORKING GROUP BOOKSTORE

Latin American Women--profiles of women in Latin America; ed. Olivia Harris, Minority Rights Group (Britain), 1983. \$5.00

Of Common Cloth: Women in the Global Textile Industry--a country by country analysis of the situation of women textile workers; ed. Wendy Chapkis and Cynthia Anloe, Transnational Institute, Amsterdam, 1983. \$7.95

Write LAWG at P.O. Box 2207, Station P, Toronto, M5S 2T2. Or call 533-4221.

## NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS

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STEPPING OUT OF LINE \$12.95  
Nym Hughes, Yvonne Johnson and Yvette Perreault

Finally, from Press Gang, the long-awaited workbook on lesbianism and feminism. It is an important Canadian contribution, filled with practical and analytical tools for understanding and organizing.

CHRONICLES OF THE HOSTILE SUN \$ 7.95  
Dionne Brand

This was written during her 10-month stay in Grenada, towards the end of which she was witness to the U.S. invasion. Brand's ability to alternately fill and wrench your heart reaches almost unbearable heights in this chronicle.

PATRIARCHAL PRECEDENTS \$13.75  
Rosalind Coward

The author critically examines the use of "patriarchy", and its questionable usefulness for analysing sexual relations.

NOT AN EASY CHOICE: A FEMINIST \$ 8.95  
RE-EXAMINES ABORTION  
Kathleen McDonnell

New from Women's Press, this book takes a critical look at present strategies and concepts surrounding the issue that is still very much in the forefront of the Canadian women's movement.

IN SEARCH OF ANSWERS: INDIAN \$12.95  
WOMEN'S VOICES FROM MANUSHI

A collection of the most insightful and moving articles from Manushi, India's leading journal on women, renowned for its skilful combination of scholarly investigation and committed activism.

Available in the DEC BOOKROOM, 427 Bloor St. W., Toronto. 964-6560.

Compiled by Marie Lorenzo.

## FIRST THE GOOD NEWS . . .

Since CAYENNE publishes only every two months, we can hardly aspire to competing with the Globe and Mail (or even the Sun) in reporting the latest news. Just as we were about to go to press, however, we heard the best news we've heard in many a season and just couldn't refrain from mentioning it. Despite the efforts of a judge who seemed to think he had to do the prosecution's work for them, a jury of six women and six men acquitted Drs. Henry Morgentaler, Leslie Smoling, and Robert Scott of conspiracy to procure a miscarriage. The jury's decision is a victory for women in Canada and a vindication of our position that the majority of Canadians do not support the present law which makes abortion a crime. Congratulations to Dr. Morgentaler and his colleagues, and especially to the many activists in the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics, the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League, and other organizations who have worked so tirelessly to defend women's right to choose. Let's hope it doesn't take three trials here in Ontario, as it did in Quebec, for the law to finally give in to the will of people.

## ABORTION, A WOMEN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

## NOW THE BAD NEWS . . .

Our elation over the victory for choice was dampened a bit by hearing on the same broadcast that the Ontario government has introduced legislation ordering the community college teachers back to work . . . hmmm, why don't they ever think of bargaining in good faith for a while before hauling out the big guns. . . ?

## THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES



Would you like to subscribe to CAYENNE? We publish 6 issues a year full of news, reviews, commentary, letters, and updates on topics of concern to women, from a socialist feminist perspective.

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To receive CAYENNE, or to send us your suggestions and ideas, write us at 386 Bloor St. W., Toronto, M5S 1X4.



## WHO WE ARE

We are three socialist feminists who formerly produced the IWDC newsletter together with Liza McCoy, who moved to the States this summer. The three of us are committed to producing a publication of socialist feminist news, opinion and debate. We welcome contributions--or how about a letter letting us know what you think?

Lynda Yanz, Christina Mills, and Marie Lorenzo  
Editorial Collective

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