

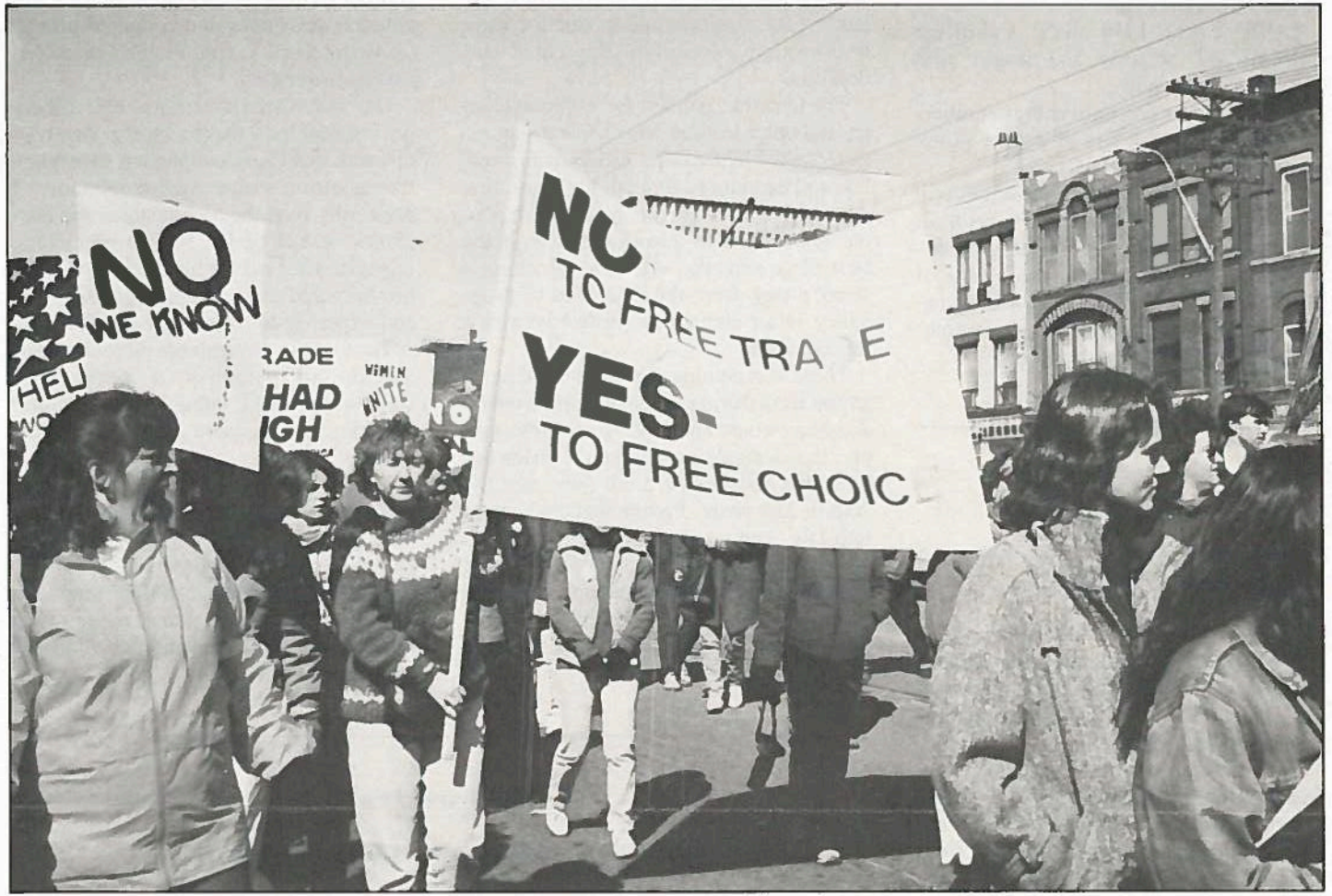
Women's rights

BULLETIN

APRIL 1988

Ontario Federation of Labour Women's Committee

Women say no to free trade on International Women's Day



International Women's Day March in Toronto

Thousands of women and men participated in IWD marches, fairs and rallies. NO TO FREE TRADE was one of the major themes for the day's events.

On March 2, 1988 women's and labour groups started IWD week by holding a press conference releasing a Women Against Free Trade manifesto and announcing that women across Canada were mobilizing against the free trade deal.

As one of the speakers at the Toronto rally, executive vice-president Julie Davis spoke to a crowd of 6,000 at Convocation Hall. She reaffirmed the commitment of the labour movement to join with our sis-

ters to defeat this deal. Sister Davis stated that "this deal flies in the face of the gains fought for by both the labour movement and the women's movement". She called on women to join their voices in calling for an election to defeat the Mulroney government.

Women's Rights Bulletin is published bi-monthly by the Ontario Federation of Labour, 15 Gervais Drive, Don Mills, Ontario M3C 1Y8.

CONFERENCE CALLS

OFL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE
April 14-16, 1988
Westbury Hotel
Toronto

ONDP WOMEN'S CONFERENCE
May 27-28, 1988
University of Toronto
Medical Science Building
Toronto

OFL HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE
June 3-4, 1988
Downtown Holiday Inn
Toronto

Major breakthrough for CUPE

Workers at the Hamilton Board of Education broke new ground in their recent round of bargaining.

CUPE Local 1344 made significant gains in job security and wages with respect to pay equity.

The employer has agreed that numbers of employees and hours of work will not be reduced.

There is also agreement that wages will not be red-circled or frozen as a result of the implementation of pay equity plan.

Red-circling has been a major bone of contention for unions pushing for pay equity. The Ontario government's pay equity legislation allows red-circling.

Labour College

I had the honour of attending Labour College in 1982 with a scholarship from my union USWA, and financial support from my local, 4592.

Our classes were Political Science, Labour History, Labour Law, Psychology and Economics — but the networking with people from different unions from across Canada was as important as the classes.

Those eight weeks at Labour College in Ottawa changed my life. I made lifelong friends who I visit as I travel. I am part of the alumni which meets at the CLC convention and informally at the OFL conventions. (The alumni are graduates from the college since its formation in 1963).

It is important that women apply. In the past five years, women averaged 30.5 percent of the student body — that's just not good enough. Check with your union, labour council and federation as to scholarships.

A brochure for the Residential Program can be obtained through the CLC.

— Lynn Spencer

Choice

Although the recent Supreme Court decision striking down the abortion law was a tremendous victory for the women of Canada, there is still much work ahead to ensure all women have full access to abortion services. The task now is to make the promise of the Supreme Court decision a reality.

As soon as the ruling was announced, anti-choice members of Parliament and provincial legislatures clamored for a new law to take its place, and looked for ways to thwart the intent of the Supreme Court decision.

The Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics and other leading pro-choice organizations united in their opposition to any new law and denounced this call for legislation as a cynical manoeuvre by the same people who wanted to stop all abortions in the first place and who are now launching a sneak attack from the other end of pregnancy in an attempt to control women's reproduction.

There was nothing in the old law that set a time limit during pregnancy after which abortions would not be allowed. Quite simply, the medical convention in Canada has been that abortions are not done past the 20th or 21st week. Putting that convention into law, and enshrining state regulation of women's bodies, would pose a real threat to women's autonomy and cannot be tolerated. The way to prevent late abortions is to ensure that women have full and free access to early abortion.

Instead of carrying out their responsibility, the federal Tories have dug in their heels and are playing along with provinces like British Columbia that are slashing all medicare funding for abortion and viciously attacking women's rights.

The federal government must allocate sufficient cost-shared funding so that every province and community has the resources to provide comprehensive reproductive health services. It must also penalize provinces that refuse to provide universal care by withholding a portion of medicare funding.

On the Ontario front, the Liberal government must make a clear policy commitment that every woman has the right to free abortion in her own community. It must fully fund the Morgentaler and Scott clinics and take up Dr. Morgentaler's long-repeated offer to turn his clinic over to the province and to use the clinic's excellence and expertise to train other practitioners.

The Ontario government must also move quickly to establish a network of community-based, publicly-funded clinics providing abortion and other reproductive care for women.

Finally, the province must recognize that women will not have true choice until they have universal child care, employment equity, paid parental leave, autonomous midwifery and the right to define their own sexuality. To that end, it must move swiftly to adopt those policies and provide funding necessary to achieve them.

CAW program wins Employment Equity Award

CAW and GM Canada were jointly awarded the Government of Ontario Employment Equity Award last November. The award was in recognition of the joint CAW-GM Affirmative Action Program that was negotiated in 1984. This was the first time that the award had been presented to a union.

In the latest round of CAW negotiations, with the big three automakers, the CAW made gains to improve the rights of women, minorities, and the disabled, both on the job and in the community.

The union strengthened its affirmative action language including the extension of company-paid time off for local union representatives for affirmative action com-

mittee work.

The CAW negotiated a childcare fund with the big three based on a formula of one cent per worker per hour. This fund is expected to generate about \$1,860,000 over the life of the three-year agreement which will mean a significant increase in childcare funding in the major auto communities. Improved childcare will be of benefit to CAW women both at work and in their union.

In another breakthrough at GM, the CAW won three hours of human rights training by CAW instructors, on company time, for all CAW members. The union also negotiated literacy training for CAW members at GM.