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COVER: Our feature this month is birthing, and to VSW staffer Patty Moore it's a timely issue. Photo by Michele Wollstonecroft.

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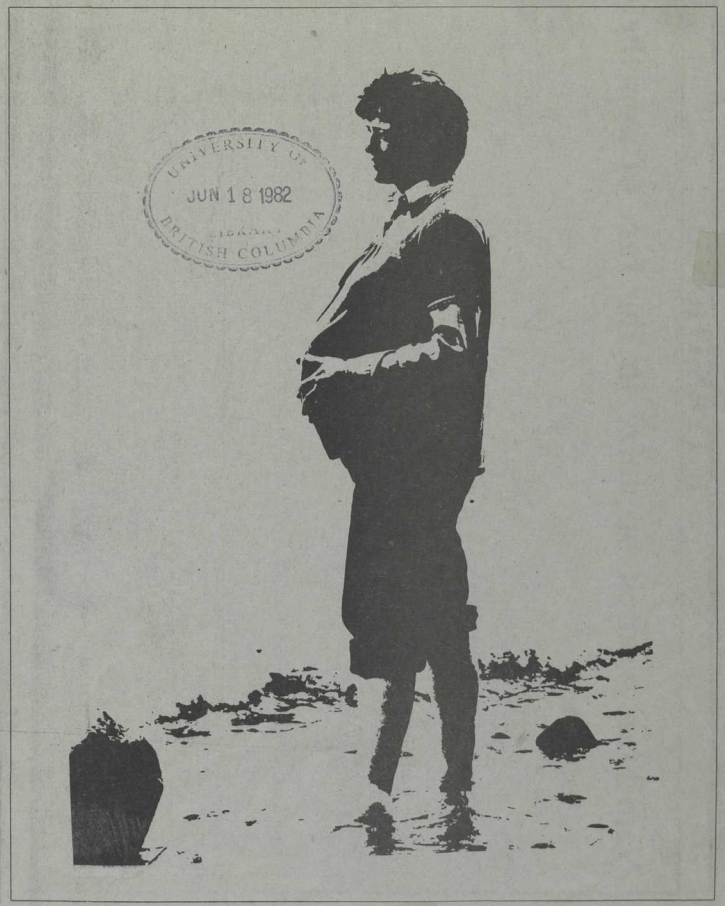

Namibian women organize in the face of apartheid

by Mary Morris

South Africa illegally occupies Namibia, brutally enforcing a policy of apartheid through the army, police and courts. The situation can only be compared to the oppression that existed under Hitler's rule. Under apartheid, black Namibian women suffer a triple oppression - as blacks, as women, and as workers.

During a recent lecture in Vancouver, Namibian representative Pashukeni Shoombe spoke about her country and the liberation struggle the Namibian people are waging against the illegal occupation of their country.

Women's council dispatches skills, aid

Namibia, still called South West Africa on some maps, was placed under trust to South Africa before the Second World War. Following the war, when the United Nations ruled that South Africa should phase out its administration of Namibia (the people's chosen name for the country), South Africa refused to withdraw. Instead, it advanced troops and guns into the country. That occupation has continued to this day.

In the early 1960's, the South West African Peoples Organization (SWAPO) was formed to wage revolutionary armed struggle against this illegal occupation. One of

SWAPO's successes in the work of mass mobilization was to release the tremendous revolutionary capabilities of large numbers of women.

Namibian women have shown tremendous strength and courage in their struggle for liberation. Many have been imprisoned, brutally tortured and expelled to isolated areas for their ideas.

Despite these dangers, they continue to struggle. Over many years women have shown their strength through strikes, boycotts, and even by refusing to have children because they did not want their children born to a life of slavery. They continue to demonstrate successfully against the mass removal of families from urban areas to desolate regions of the country.

In 1970, SWAPO established an organization of Namibian women known as SWAPO Women's Council (SWC). Through SWC, women are being trained in medicine, as truck drivers, mechanics, tailors, nutritionists and typists. SWC has also organized literacy classes.

Pashukeni Shoombe, who is a member of the SWAPO Women's Council, added that SWAPO provides 24-hour day care for orphans and for children of women undergoing skills training. Women also help the Peoples Liberation Army on a daily basis by supplying food and shelter, administering medicine, and carrying messages and guns across the country.

Food, medicine scarce in refugee camps

In 1975, a large number of Namibians, many women and children, fled the country to escape the brutality of South African forces. Many of the younger women underwent combat training in other African countries, returning to Namibia to join the guerrilla forces, while the older people and children went to refugee camps in Angola.

Pasukeni Shoombe, who lives in one such camp, described life in the refugee camps and difficulties facing the people. She said that food and medicine are in short supply. People try to grow sufficient food, but their camps are under constant bombardment by the South African air force. Many have died in these raids, which South Africa justifies as necessary incursions into dangerous SWAPO "nests".

Despite the difficulties, the struggle continues. As Canadian women, we can support the struggle of the Namibian people by educating ourselves and our organizations about the current situation there.

Write letters to your local M.P. and to the Minister of External Affairs to express your concern about Canada's role in the western contact group - a five-country group mandated to negotiate South Africa's withdrawal from Namibia. (Shoombe feels negotiating delays may be a smokescreen while South Africa continues to pour troops in the country.)

You can also protest Canadian corporate involvement in Namibia and offer financial support to projects providing ongoing support to the Namibian people. For more information write: SWAPO Women's Council, P.O. Box 953, Luanda, Peoples Republic of Angola.

KINESIS

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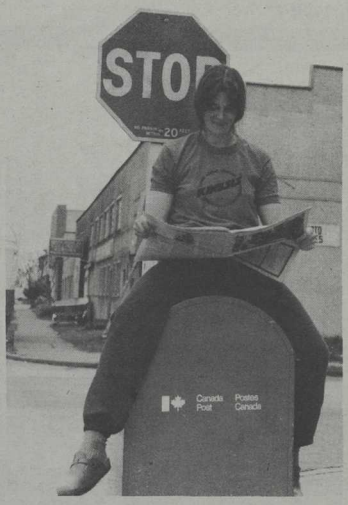

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ACROSS B.C.

Leader of Domestic Workers Union forced to leave Canada

Daphne Williams, president of the Domestic Workers Union, left Canada May 6. She was forced by immigration officials to leave "voluntarily" to avoid deportation.

Williams, who came to Canada nine years ago from Jamaica in order to provide for her five children there, had not been allowed to work since March 1981, when immigration officials discovered she no longer had a valid work permit.

Around that time, Daphne helped to found the Domestic Workers Union, and became its first president. The union, which now has 55 members, is fighting to achieve permanent landed immigrant status for all domestic workers brought to Canada to fill a labour shortage.

Currently, foreign domestic workers come to Canada with a temporary work permit, and are tied to a specific job (to change jobs, the work permit must be renewed). This arrangement has encouraged employers to exploit domestic workers with regard to salary and working/living conditions.

Immigration authorities, in particular Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Employment & Immigration, have so far refused to budge on the matter. Present policy is racist in effect; it also perpetuates the idea that domestic labour is of little or no value by confining domestic workers to a work permit system.

Daphne Williams, as she left Canada, said to her friends and fellow union members, "You must keep fighting so that my leaving means something. This must never happen to another domestic worker. I am determined to come back."

Triforine put on health hazard alert

Parts of the Fraser Valley are being sprayed with a pesticide that could cause stillbirths, early childhood cancer and adult cancers, according to an Ontario genetics researcher. Dr. Joe Cummins, a professor at University of Western Ontario, says that blueberries are being sprayed with the agent Triforine.

Although Triforine is registered for use by Agriculture Canada, the U.S. laboratory that tested the chemical is now closed, its owners having been indicted on charges of falsifying data for health and safety tests. While the work of Industrial Biotest is being re-examined, Triforine continues to be used.

Other studies have shown that Triforine, when combined with nitrates - present in many foods and in the air from sources such as diesel fumes - is highly carcinogenic.

According to Cummins, Triforine is very similar in composition to a natural chemical found in China that has been found to be the source of a massive cancer death rate in one area of China.

It is crucial that steps be taken to avoid a buildup of the Triforine-nitrate combination in sprayed areas. Health & Welfare Canada officials are only just beginning to pay attention to the threat posed by Triforine in the Fraser Valley. *(Vancouver Sun)*

SORWUC wins trust company certification

The Service, Office and Retail Workers Union of Canada has won the first union certification of a trust company in B.C.

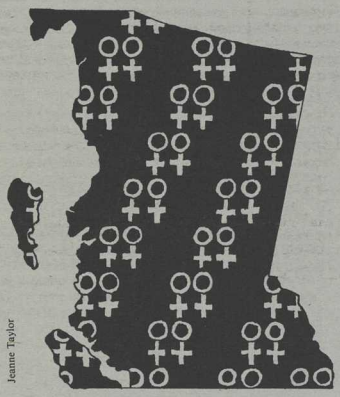
In a supervised ballot, Vancouver employees at Victoria and Grey Trust voted 6-5 in favour of SORWUC representation. Union organizer Jean Burgess believes it is only the second trust company certification in Canada.

Although the vote was held in August 1981, the ballot box was sealed while the B.C. Labour Relations Board considered issues arising out of the organizing drive.

The union's frustration at what is considered an inordinate delay in resolving matters sparked a week-long sit-in at the LRB last month by a Victoria and Grey employee. The employee was suspended as a result. She laid charges of unfair labour practices, and was awarded $10,000 with the understanding that she would not return to the company, nor pursue further unfair labour practice charges. Her sit-in was successful in prompting a Labour Relations Board ruling on the certification vote.

The company fought hard against union certification, according to Burgess. "There were a number of firings and layoffs. The company was just like a brick wall, far worse than the banks."

She said the main demands in first contract negotiations will be increased wages and job security. *(Vancouver Province)*



Jeanne Taylor

Lesbian day of action celebrated province-wide

Five British Columbia cities were the sites of organized lesbian activity against the right March 27.

The national day of action was planned at last May's lesbian conference in Vancouver. In B.C., coordination was provided by the Lesbian Action Committee of the B.C. Federation of Women.

While only small numbers of women attended a workshop on lesbians and the law in Vernon and a video screening in Terrace, both centres have formed lesbian support groups as a result.

Northern Lesbians, based in Terrace, has established links with gay people in Prince Rupert and Alaska, while Vernon has already arranged a social event involving lesbians from all over the Okanagan Valley, including women from mixed gay organizations in Kelowna and Kamloops.

In Victoria, a series of social and educational activities was organized by an ad hoc group of lesbians from the Lesbian Caucus of Rape Assault and the Vancouver Island lesbian newspaper *Flagrant*.

A group of eight Vancouver women took only three weeks to pull off the most ambitious of the March 27 projects. Festivities ranged from a Saturday lunch, to a rally emceed by comedian Lorna Boshman and entertained by singers Maura and Luna, to a march led by marshalls wielding lavender pom poms. A day of workshops took place on Sunday. *(Chris Bearchell/The Body Politic)*

Child advocates hit by legal services cutback

The Attorney-General's ministry has said it will no longer appoint lawyers to act for children under B.C.'s Family and Child Services Act except under "highly exceptional" circumstances.

The decision affects victims of child abuse and children 12 years or older who are involved in custody, maintenance or protection battles.

In addition, lawyers will be limited to a maximum of eight hours out-of-court time per case, and a maximum of one hour preparation for every four hours in court. Previously, there was no restriction on the number of hours a family advocate could bill the ministry on a case.

The restraints are aimed at controlling family law expenses. According to A-G Alan Williams, "We've brought spending under control in other areas. We're now looking at what is being done in family law."

Grace McCarthy, Minister of Human Resources and instigator of recent welfare cutbacks, claims there will be no curtailment of services for children as a result of legal aid cutbacks.

NDP MLA Rosemary Brown, however, disagrees. She called for an emergency debate on the changes, saying they violate the rights of children. *(Vancouver Sun)*

You can't be civil (at least in court) if you're married

Another piece of legislation which discriminates against women surfaced in a case last year, and in it the judge states that the law is crying out for reform in B.C.

In a situation, for example, where there is a motor vehicle accident in which the husband is driving his own car, the wife is a passenger, the car is involved in an accident which is completely his fault, and the wife is injured, she cannot sue him in civil court for tort (which is "a wrongful act, injury or damage, not involving a breach of contract, for which civil action can be brought").

If any other person were injured in the same situation (including the husband's mother, sister, brother, child, friend or stranger) they would have the right to sue and get compensation from the insurance company for their injuries, wage loss, and other expenses such as medication or physiotherapy. Only a spouse does not have that right. (In practice, this law works against women, who so often in marriage have little access to family income and property.)

The law in question is the *Married Women's Property Act* and it is basically a (rather substantial) remnant of the concept that marriage is a union creating one person - and how could you sue yourself? In England, the law was changed in 1962 so that a wife or husband could sue each other "as if they were not married". Other provinces in Canada have straightened up their acts; B.C. is still sitting on yet another piece of outdated legislation which needs immediate reform.

Address letters urging reform to: Attorney General Alan Williams, Legislative Buildings, Victoria, B.C. with a copy to MLA Rosemary Brown.

ACROSS CANADA

Service workers win compensation, wage parity

The federal government has agreed to pay $17 million in compensation for past discrimination to 3300 public employees, a majority of them women.

The dispute began in 1979 when three groups of general service workers, mostly women, began fighting for wage parity with four other groups of workers, mostly men, and some of whom earned up to 40% more.

The women worked as kitchen help, laundry workers and cleaners, while the men worked at building messenger, custodian and supply jobs.

A 1979 Canadian Human Rights Commission ruling held that the wage discrepancies violated federal laws guaranteeing equal pay for work of equal value.

Broadsheet

The final $17 million settlement, worked out in March between the federal government and the Public Service Alliance of Canada, does not fully compensate for past discrimination. The government refused to pay back wages to March 1978 when the equal value law was passed. (A human rights official last July publicly estimated that $30 million would be required to provide full compensation to the workers.)

The most recent contract negotiated between the union and the government provides wage parity for all general service workers. *(Sue Vohanka/Toronto Clarion)*

Daycare surplus blamed on lack of demand

The Ontario government has ended its fiscal year with $3.66 million left unspent in its daycare budget. The money was part of a much-publicized $10 million increase in funds to daycare services in that province last year.

Of the $3.66 million, $1 million will be returned to the province's general revenues. It was slated to be spent on the salary increases for daycare workers; however, the government claims that Metro Toronto and Ottawa were the only municipalities to ask for the money.

"Nobody else asked for it...If there is no demand, there is no demand," said Frank Drea, Minister of Community & Social Services.

Susan Colley, co-ordinator for Action Daycare, thinks there are other reasons for municipalities' lack of demand for the funds. Either the municipalities could not afford or did not want to pay their 20% share of increased salaries, or they realized that if salaries were increased, fees would also have to be increased, both to the province for subsidized spaces and to fee-paying parents. "Most parents couldn't afford the increase," says Colley.

Drea claims the remainder of the budget surplus ($2.66 million) will be added to next year's daycare budget and spent as proposals from community groups, employers and municipalities are accepted. He adds that carrying over money from this year's budget will not adversely affect next year's budget, though critics are not so certain.

Ontario's daycare budget for the next fiscal year is set at $75 million, up $11 million from this year. *(Sylvia Stead/Globe & Mail)*

Treasury Board loses in maternity leave case

The federal Treasury Board's practice of preventing public servants from using their accumulated sick leave or vacation credits during maternity leave is sex discrimination, an independent human rights tribunal has ruled.

Loraine Tellier-Cohen of Montreal complained to the Canadian Human Rights Commission in October 1979 that she was forced to take leave without pay for 20 days surrounding the birth of her child.

The tribunal ordered Tellier-Cohen reimbursed $1912.20 lost pay for the 20 days, and awarded her $2000 as special compensation for loss of self-respect.

Lucie Dion, a tribunal member, stated that Canadian arbitration case law has established that the period surrounding the birth of a child is a "period of disability", during which there is pain, discomfort and physical sickness which prevent a woman from performing her duties.

Agreeing that this period is therefore "an illness within the meaning of a collective agreement", Dion concluded that Tellier-Cohen was "entitled to use her sick leave during the period of disability due to pregnancy." *(SWAG News)*

Greyhound height barrier bites the dust

A woman who was refused even an interview for a job as a Greyhound bus driver because she was less than 5'8" tall, has been awarded $3500 in lost wages and general damages by the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

In addition, Greyhound Lines of Canada has agreed to discontinue the practice of requiring women to be 5'8" for drivers' jobs. Two women under 5'8" have been hired since the original complaint was resolved.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission will monitor driver application records at Greyhound for one year.

Calgary feminists attacked by press, police

Calgary women "took back the night" for the first time on April 16. More than 350 women attended a rally in King Edward Park, then marched through Calgary's downtown streets carrying bright-coloured banners and signs, enthusiastically singing and chanting slogans.

At the outset, a speaker for Feminist Town Hall, the organizing group, explained to the crowd that they would be marching without a permit, and thus without police escort, as the purpose of the march was to illustrate that women have the right to be out at night - and safe - without men's protection. The crowd loudly endorsed the decision.

The rally was highlighted by New York feminist and writer Andrea Dworkin, who spoke out strongly against all forms of violence against women.

Calgary news media gave the march a lot of coverage - unfortunately, none of it about violence against women. So far, the papers and TV have speculated that charges may be laid for obstruction of traffic and parading without a permit, even announcing the names and addresses of six "organizers" who allegedly have been charged. According to the media, the court appearance was scheduled for May.

Despite these reports, none of the women mentioned had yet been contacted by police or given a summons. Feminist Town Hall is organizing a fight back campaign that will include a press conference dealing with the issue of violence against women.

This march was the first these women have organized. They need your support in their fight against this attack from the Calgary police. Send them letters and telegrams of support for their action, as well as histories of other marches where community groups went ahead without parade permits but weren't charged. Send letters to: Calgary Status of Women, c/o YWCA, 320 - 5th Avenue S.E., Calgary, Alberta.

Wife-beating no laughing matter

Wife-beating in Canada is a grave social problem. Each year, thousands of women are battered - often severely, sometimes to death. But recently in the House of Commons, the issue was treated far from seriously. In fact, many members of Parliament found it something to laugh at.

Several weeks ago, MP Margaret Mitchell (NDP - Vancouver East) told the House that, according to a recently tabled parliamentary report, one in ten men beat their wives. Immediately, laughter erupted among many male MPs. Mitchell, who was momentarily prevented from continuing her question because of the laughter, found such a reaction far from humorous.

The laughter that greeted Mitchell's remarks incensed women's groups across the country. In a *Globe & Mail* article, Luci Pepin, president of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, said, "I'm really appalled they consider violence among 52% of the population a laughing matter."

Mitchell said the Canadian public shared the outrage as well. "We've just been flooded with telegrams and letters from not only women's groups but people generally," she said in a telephone interview from Ottawa.

MPs later countered that it was not the issue of wife-beating itself that sparked the cacophony, but rather the preamble to Mitchell's remarks.

But Mitchell dismissed this explanation, saying the laughter followed her report that one in ten men beat their wives, not her preamble. "It was a very instinctive kind of response," she said.

While Mitchell was disturbed by the incident, she did say it has had a positive effect. "In the long run, it's been very good because it's created such a national protest," she said. As well, she noted, it has given male MPs an extra worry: "The men (members) are all very embarrassed," she said. "They must now reassure their constituents that it wasn't them laughing." *(Ann Gibbon)*

INTERNATIONAL

Spanish trial ends in abortion rights victory

The trial of eleven Spanish women charged with illegally procuring or performing abortions has ended in victory with the acquittal of nine and a suspended sentence and a pardon for the other two.

Some of the alleged offenses date back nearly ten years. The women were brought to trial in 1979, but the case was adjourned amid widespread protest from feminist organizations, liberal lawyers and politicians. In support of the defendants, many prominent Spanish women openly admitted to having had abortions.

The accused, most of them married and with children, are all working class women from an industrial suburb of Spain. They had carried out abortions at a time when contraceptives were illegal. Contraceptives were made available by prescription in 1978; however, abortion is still illegal in Spain.

Controversy over the illegality of abortion is raging in this heavily Roman Catholic country as a result of this trial. Prosecution had originally recommended a sentence of 60 years for one of the women and 55 years for her daughter, who was charged with helping to perform the abortion. *(WIN News/ Vancouver Sun)*

Auto workers protest concessions to General Motors

Members of the United Auto Workers union in the U.S. recently approved a concessions contract which will save General Motors $3 billion over the next 2½ years.

By a narrow majority, workers agreed to a 30-month wage freeze, a 9-month deferral of cost-of-living increases, and the elimination of 24 paid holidays, in return for protection against plant closures. Three plants slated for closure this year will remain open, a profit-sharing clause has been instated, and veteran workers are guaranteed "lifetime" cheques.

Many workers think the concessions were unwarranted because of GM's high profits. They are convinced that the money GM saves will be invested in automation that will make their jobs obsolete.

Women workers are protesting the contract for additional reasons. The Women's Committee of the UAW in Fremont, California sent the following letter to union officials:

"We are members of local 1364, women employees of the GM Fremont plant which was shut down 'indefinitely' on March 5.

"We feel that the agreement arrived at between the UAW International and the General Motors Corporation is a slap in the face to us.

"The corporation failed to hire women in any numbers at our plant until 1972, thereby violating the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

"The Guaranteed Income Stress" excludes all the women who worked at our plant. 95% of us have less than 10 years seniority and all of us were laid off before March 1. We are also hurt by the provision to reduce Supplemental Unemployment Benefits by 50% in order to repay the money we got from Trade Reimbursement Act. We need these SUB benefits to live on!

"At a time when the percentage of women in GM's blue collar work force has dropped from 17% last year to 16% this year, we ask you to take a stand against the discrimination embodied in this agreement." *(Union Wage)*

El Salvador elections involved coercion, manipulation

Ana Castillo, Canadian representative of the FDR (Revolutionary Democratic Front) was in Vancouver in May to publicize the effects of the March elections in El Salvador.

"The elections," said Castillo "were primarily a political manouver. The objective was to legitimize a new government and the possibility of an external invasion."

It is clear from information not often available in the regular press that the election process was manipulated. For example, in the cities (the only area of significant voter turnout), the army maintains strict control and many people believed that a refusal to vote would almost certainly condemn them to paramilitary death lists.

In addition, public employees and bank employees were told that a failure to present their identity cards with the stamp that indicated they had voted would result in a withholding of their paycheques.

The long lineups at voting stations (seen by North Americans on television and given as an indication of the high voter turnout) were the result of the fact that only 13 such voting locations were set up in San Salvador, a city with a population of a million people.

Furthermore, people in the countryside, where a majority of the population lives, did not vote. It is here that the FDR maintains controlled zones and where, in general, there is less control by the military. Journalists covering the elections were in general restricted to the urban centre of San Salvador.

Journalists covering the elections were in general restricted to the urban centre of San Salvador. Many were threatened for stepping outside this restriction, and in the course of the elections, four Dutch journalists working outside the urban centre were murdered.

Castillo said that the FDR is reconfirming their position; that the struggle continues before, during and after the elections. She warned about the increased threat of a direct U.S. intervention in the foreseeable future.

She also spoke with women's organizations about the specific position of women in the Salvadorean revolution. She encouraged Canadian women to develop links with and support for AMES (Association de las Mujeres de El Salvador/Salvadorean Women's Association). She spoke of the continued repression of AMES and other popular organizations within El Salvador. For example Ana Maria Gomez, a founder of AMES, was kidnapped last year. No word of her has been heard from that time.

Toxic shock suit fingers Proctor & Gamble

A second trial blaming Proctor & Gamble's Rely tampons for toxic shock has opened in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Michael Kehm charges that his wife Patricia died of toxic shock four days after she first used Rely tampons.

Broadsheet

Two researchers working independently of each other have done experiments showing just why Rely tampons may be dangerous.

Both doctors' work pinpoint carboxymethylcellulose, the synthetic absorbent used in Rely. The material breaks down into a sugar which encourages the rapid growth of vaginal bacteria, and inhibits the action of white blood cells, the body's natural defense against infection.

Though Proctor & Gamble reject the studies, other manufacturers have switched back to more traditional absorbent materials such as cotton and rayon. *(Big Mama Rag)*

Columbian matriarchy earned a reputation

Complete political control by women in Tibasosa, Columbia ended recently with the resignation of the town's mayor.

Described in *El Espectador* of Bogota as "the longest-lived, most peaceful, and most profitable matriarchy in Columbia", the town earned a reputation for solving problems without violence during the years of rule by women. In addition, it set an example of cleanliness and developed a calm lifestyle to match the town's limited resources. *(Big Mama Rag)*

Military spending means lost jobs for women

The $135 billion 1980 U.S. military budget cost nearly 1.3 million their jobs, according to a recent study which challenges Defense Department contentions that cutting the defense budget will mean lost jobs.

The study, "Neither Jobs Nor Security", is one of a series of publications by Employment Research Associates, a Michigan group which studies military spending and its impact on the economy.

The study translates the expenditures lost or foregone in civilian categories into the number of jobs lost in each state, and contrasts them with the number of jobs created through military contracts and salaries to show which states lost and which gain from military spending.

According to the study, women lost jobs in 49 out of 50 states when the military budget goes up, and a $1 billion increase means 9500 jobs lost to women. Only Virginia gained jobs for women as a result of Pentagon spending in 1980. *(Union Wage)*

CONFERENCES

NAC celebrates a decade as national women's lobby

by Hilarie McMurray

Four hundred women from across Canada gathered in Ottawa from March 12-15 for NAC's Annual General Meeting. The conference was also a birthday party - the National Action Committee on the Status of Women celebrated her first decade.

NAC grew out of the Committee for the Equality of Women in Canada, which had fought for the establishment of a Royal Commission on the Status of Women. Fifteen years ago when Laura Sabia told a reporter that one million women would march on Parliament Hill to demand a Royal Commission, she was probably relieved not to have to test her threat.

NAC represents 190 diverse affiliates

Today, NAC represents one million women through 190 affiliated national and regional organizations. The diversity of NAC's membership is striking. Counted among its member groups are trade unions, and women's organizations as diverse in focus as the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs and the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League.

Vancouver women attending included Joanne Ranson and Hilarie McMurray, Vancouver Status of Women (VSW) delegates; Nadine Allen and Debra Lewis, delegates for the Women's Research Center; and Jillian Ridington, representing the Vancouver Association of Women and the Law.

The conference agenda was ambitious. Friday evening's programme took us back to 1972 with Moira Armour's film "Strategy for Change", which showed us how far we have come, yet how far we have to go. This was followed with a speech by Laura Sabia, a founding mother of NAC, a woman whose political perspective VSW doesn't share, but for whom we maintain a critical respect.

Job sharing of regional duties sought

Late Friday evening, B.C.-Yukon delegates met to discuss our desire to support both Jane Evans (Armstrong,B.C.) and Jon Leah Hopkins (Whitehorse, Yukon), candidates for B.C.-Yukon regional representative.

B.C. women's needs are too important, too diverse, and too geographically disparate to be represented by one woman; no woman, no matter how committed and energetic - and last year's B.C.-Yukon rep, Alicia Lawrence, is certainly both of these - can deal with such diversity.

We drafted a resolution asking that the job be shared, a move that was supported by all B.C.-Yukon delegates. Unfortunately, it was found to be constitutionally impossible.

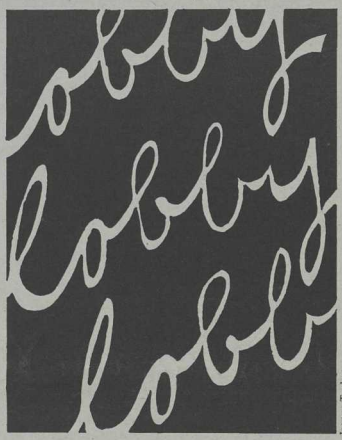
The Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre in Whitehorse brought a proposal to the April NAC executive meeting requesting the job-sharing amendment again; we will keep you posted as to its progress.

Saturday morning's business meeting was technical and frustrating for many women as they attempted to follow procedural maneuvering. All NAC member groups who wish to participate effectively should ensure that they acquire a basic understanding of NAC's constitution and rules.

After lunch, Marilou McPhedran, one of the major organizers of the Ad Hoc Committee on the constitution, gave a constitutional update. She emphasized that the Charter of Rights falls far short of meeting women's demands. It appears women must continue to do the work ourselves.

The Saturday afternoon workshops, tense 1½ hour sessions requiring thorough advance preparation, were the forum for developing policy resolutions. There were workshops on sexual assault, prostitution, media watch, employment, survival, reproductive rights, pornography, federal/provincial fiscal arrangements, and family violence.

The NAC executive was elected Sunday morning. Although it is difficult to judge on the basis of 2-minute candidate speeches, the new executive appears to be representative of NAC's membership, both politically and geographically.



Jeanne Taylor

The 82-83 executive is: Doris Anderson (Ottawa), president, Kathy Coffin (Halifax), Chaviva Hosek (Toronto) and Jillian Ridington (Vancouver), vice-presidents, Jill Schooley (Newfoundland/Labrador), Silvia Isener (Maritimes), Maria Peluso (Quebec), Lynn Beak (Northern Ontario), Pat Keyser (Manitoba/Saskatchewan), Janina Vanderpost (Alberta/Northwest Territories), and Jane Evans (B.C.-Yukon), regional reps, Moira Armour (Toronto), Lousie Dulude (Ottawa), Pat Hacker (Ottawa), Wendy Lawrence (Ottawa), Kay MacPherson (Toronto), Gerry Rodgers (St. John's), Michelle Swenarchuk (Ottawa) and Billie Thurston (St. John's).

At the afternoon plenary session, resolutions from workshops were considered. Most of NAC's policy corresponds closely to VSW positions, although we do have significant differences in some areas such as sexual assault and pension reform.

Native women's rights, prostitution priority issues

Resolutions passed included a reaffirmation of NAC's opposition to wage controls; a reaffirmation of freedom of choice on abortion and a call for regional clinics; opposition to the new exemptions ("labour shortage" and "technological change") to the equal pay for work of equal value provisions of the Canadian Human Rights Act; and opposition to the new federal policy on domestic workers. Two of the priority issues for 82-83 are Native women's rights and prostitution.

Mary Two-Axe Early gave a moving speech on Sunday detailing Native women's long struggle for equality. Section 12(1)(b) of the Indian Act currently legislates discrimination against Native women by revoking their status rights if they marry non-Indian men.

As for prostitution, NAC's justice committee is developing a position based on the following principles: a) prostitution is a reflection of the social and economic condition of women and not a matter of public morality, b) soliciting and keeping a common bawdy house are not the proper subject of criminal law, and c) public nuisances attendant to prostitution (such as noise and traffic obstruction), if any, must be dealt with through bylaws at the local level. VSW has worked on this issue for several years and intends to have input on NAC's Justice Committee.

All of these activities led to the lobby of party caucuses on Parliament Hill on Monday. NAC uses the lobbying techniques developed by Diana Ellis, a VSW member and ex-staffer, techniques which provide for skill-sharing and participation in lobbying by newcomer and expert alike.

Each political party is invited to meet with NAC representatives for one hour. NAC always begins with the NDP. Ed Broadbent and most of the NDP caucus were present and responsive to NAC's position. Margaret Mitchell, MP for Vancouver East, is the NDP women's critic. She and MP Pauline Jewett treated the B.C. women to lunch in the Parliamentary dining room. The exchange of ideas and the opportunity to get to know these women in a social setting was a useful and enjoyable experience.

The Conservative party was next, and they evidenced interest in NAC's concerns. Flora MacDonald was particularly impressive - she is committed to pension reform for women and stated that government has the responsibility to lead the way on equal pay for work of equal value. Leader Joe Clark was in favour of the repeal of S12(1)(b) of the Indian Act, and action on the CRTC task force on sex-role stereotyping. Predictably, the Conservatives support contract compliance and equal value legislation only in principle.

Fewer than ten Liberal members attended the lobby session. The disdain for NAC shown by the majority of the Liberal caucus overshadowed the strong positions taken by Judy Erola, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. She came to the lobby well-prepared and endorsed most of NAC's resolutions. Unfortunately, it is clear that women's issues are a low priority with the Liberals and that Erola will have to struggle to be heard in caucus.

For the last few years, VSW has been debating whether or not to maintain NAC membership. This conference, marking the 10th year of the national women's lobby, allowed us to observe, participate and evaluate VSW's relationship to NAC.

NAC's raison d'etre is to be the national feminist lobby and the organization has proven itself to be an effective lobbying force. The magnitude and quality of the work NAC does is considerable, and accomplished by volunteers along with two part-time staff people. Thus, VSW's executive has decided to remain a member of NAC. We came to that decision acutely aware that "for those among us who believe that more far-reaching and radical changes are necessary, that alternative systems and institutes must be developed, action on many other fronts continues to be necessary." (Jillian Ridington, "Reflections on NAC", *Kinesis*, April 1978).

Human rights director aims for accountability, easy access

by Mary Woo Sims

Following is an interview with Hanne Jensen, Director of the B.C. Human Rights Branch. Jensen, who has been with the Branch for over seven years, took over as Acting Director in July 1981 when former Director Nola Landucci was abruptly asked to leave her post. Jensen was appointed Director on March 15, 1982.

Mary: You took on the job of Acting Director of the Human Rights Branch when Nola Landucci was fired. Is there a difference in your approach to the position now that you are the Director?

Hanne: I took over as Acting Director in July 1981. At that time I had been with the Branch for seven years and I certainly was aware of the dimensions of the job and the pressures. However, it wasn't until I was actually in the job that I appreciated the magnitude and the complexity of the demands made on the person who accepts that position.

I have been on a steep learning curve in order to develop skills and knowledge to function in the job, but the more I know about the area and the more confidence I develop in my ability to do the job, the better the results will be.

Mary: Did you have any personal reservations about accepting the position, given the history of your two predecessors, Kathleen Ruff and Nola Landucci?

Hanne: Of course there were reservations. I think I approached the job then and now with realistic apprehension, because I am fully aware of the expectations the community has on that particular job, whoever assumes the position.

Partly, the expectations stem from what I think is a misunderstanding of the role and function of the Director, vis-a-vis the Human Rights Commission, as a result of the style developed and perfected by Kathleen Ruff. I think most people remember Kathleen Ruff as a very vocal, very outspoken advocate for individuals and for the issues. I know that this part of her job was one she knew belonged with the Human Rights Commission. However, for a variety of reasons, she felt she had to take on that particular role and she did so.

This style having been established, there are great expectations that anyone in this job will use the same style. I think Nola Landucci felt that pressure and I am certainly aware of that pressure. I haven't really figured out how to reconcile the expectations with the realities of the structure of the job, which is a public servant under the Ministry of Labour with a very specific mandate. There is a real need to balance the role of the Director vis-a-vis the Commission and the community.

Mary: What do you see your responsibilities as Director of the Human Rights Branch being? And how does this fit with the realities of working within a bureaucracy?

Hanne: Well, the reality is that the Director is a bureaucrat. I'm a public servant within a bureaucracy. There is a job description for the Director of the Human Rights Branch, which spells out that it is the Director's responsibility to make sure the program is delivered as effectively and efficiently as possible.

That means the community has to be made aware of the rights that exist under the code, and employers made aware of their responsibilities. Where individual complaints come to the Branch, these complaints are dealt with as effectively and efficiently as possible. It is also my responsibility to achieve the greatest pattern of change in discrimination possible.

That means the community has to be made aware of the rights that exist under the code

Mary: You state that you wish to run the Branch and enforce the code as effectively and efficiently as possible. Your immediate predecessor, Nola Landucci, reportedly had problems dealing with staff and minority communities. What are you doing differently to show your commitment to human rights and enforcement of the code?

All human rights agencies across Canada suffer from the chronic problem of being short-staffed . . . I think the director has a real responsibility to clarify the causes of delay to people who complain.

Hanne: I think the fact that I have been with the Branch for such a long time and have worked closely with people in the women's movement, ethnic minority communities and other constituencies, as well as having developed the confidence of staff, has put me in a different position.

In fact, it places me at a disadvantage, because I am quite aware of the pressures focused on staff and in particular, on human rights officers. They have the very difficult task of investigating and attempting to conciliate complaints of descrimination. They are the ones who feel the frustration of complainants expecting justice and who experience the emotionalism of employers who don't like to be accused of being "bad guys".

What I want to do is to achieve a sense of unity, of people working together to achieve clearly identified objectives. I also want to work more closely with the Commission to utilize its strength as spokesbody for the issues and new directions that human rights is moving in, both in the province and in the country generally.

Mary: What is your role with regard to the Human Rights Commission?

Hanne: The statute makes the Director the Chief Executive Officer of the Commission. This means that all staff within the human rights program come under the Director through various reporting relationships. The Commission itself does not have any staff, but relies on the Director to deliver the back-up to carry out its mandate of promotion and education in the area of human rights.

Mary: In terms of recommendations made by the Human Rights Commission, what is your role in convincing the Minister of Labour that those recommendations should be brought to the Legislature for a change in the legislation?

Hanne: The Commission is an independent body of people who have been appointed to be responsible for promoting human rights. One of the roles they have taken on is that of advising government of the shortcomings of existing legislation, and making specific recommendations for meeting the needs of people in the province. The Director does not join the Commission in the public arena of advocating specific changes to the Human Rights Code.

Mary: Will you be working at all with the Deputy Minister responsible for women, Isabel Kelly?

Hanne: As yet (May 12), I haven't had the opportunity to meet with her. I don't know to what extent her office, the Human Rights Branch and the Commission will be working together. I look forward to being able to do that after she's on the job. Her appointment starts June 1.

Mary: How do you intend to communicate and work with the women's community on issues relating to women's rights?

Hanne: I know it's very important to maintain personal contact with people who work in the various constituencies, and who are concerned with the protection existing under the Code and effective delivery of that protection. Between myself, staff, and the Commission, there will definitely be on-going consultation with those communities, including the women's community.

Mary: How can women express to you their outrage or support for your position on issues, and would you be open to the community's criticisms?

Hanne: I think the Director is accountable to the public at large for the delivery of the program and I am very open to criticism and advice. I have already been getting both, on the record and off.

Mary: Is there a message you would convey to women to dispel their fears that the Human Rights Branch is a bureaucratic agency under a Social Credit government and will do nothing for complainants?

Hanne: I would be very upset if individual women were deterred in lodging complaints under the code because of fears and impressions of the futility. I encourage any individual who feels there has been a violation of the law to bring it to the attention of the Branch, the agency responsible for delivering what has already been promised under the human rights code. I suggest that women assess how effectively their complaints have been dealt with and if they are not satisfied, to so indicate.

All human rights agencies across Canada suffer from the chronic problem of being short-staffed, and right now, are having to meet, in court, several challenges to the effective delivery of anti-discrimination legislation. I think the director has a real responsibility to clarify to people who complain, the causes of delay, and the resulting frustration when the resolution is not what the individual had in mind. I intend to make sure that women understand how the system operates, and further, to make some assessments as to necessary changes.

INCEST

Examining the myths: a feminist view of incest

by Julie Brickman

Julie Brickman is a feminist therapist and clinical psychologist whose special area of interest is violence towards women. She has worked in the areas of rape, incest, pornography and battering as a therapist, teacher and researcher, not to mention in her less official capacity of woman, (ex)wife and friend.

This article is an edited version of a keynote address delivered over the past year at several conferences on sexual abuse of children within the family.

1. There is a strong bias against incest in our society.

False. As things stand now, despite the fact that everybody claims horror at the very idea of incest, it continues to flourish. The bias is against uncovering it, talking about it, exposing its existence, then looking at how some of our most cherished institutions and values support it.

2. Incest is another word for rape, by a relative.

True. When we talk about incest we are talking first and foremost about force and coercion, forced and coercive sexual acts, or rape. We are talking about daddy or uncle forcing a six-month old or six-year old or 16-year old daughter or niece to gratify him sexually. Yet so deeply buried is this secret we don't even have words to describe it.

The word incest, in the dictionary, is not defined as forcible sexual intercourse, only as sexual intercourse between two people so closely related as to be forbidden a sexual relationship by law. That is why I prefer to place it back in the context of rape. Rape implies force.

Furthermore, we have no adequate words for the people who commit incest. We continue to call them fathers, which seems to me to fail to distinguish them from a whole other group of people who do not rape their daughters. Or we call them offenders, which again fails to distinguish them from any number of other people such as peepers and flashers.

I would like to suggest we begin to use words that describe what we are talking about. Words like daughter-raper or niece-molester. It will help us keep our goals straight if we think of this guy in front of us as a daughter-raper rather than a daddy.

3. Incest is a disturbance in the functioning of a family unit.

False. No doubt by the time of intervention, the family unit will be disturbed. Perhaps it always was. This is NOT, however, the cause of the incest. Instead, it is likely to be the consequence of incest.

Again, clarity is very important. It's important to keep in mind who did what to whom. Dad molested daughter. What happened after that? Everything in the family got twisted around.

Looking at it this way, and bypassing all those tempting textbook theories about the role of moms and daughters, keeps the source of the disturbance very clear. The source is the man who raped his daughter, or molested his stepchild.

The fact that mother is out every night making campaign speeches or is having an affair with George next door or appears to be dirty and unkempt is all very interesting, but about as relevant to the occurrence of incest as the fact that the teapot has a handle missing.

Des Luttes et Des Rires

4. If father and mother had a normal sex life, father wouldn't commit incest.

False. Difficult as this may be to accept, father and mother's sex life is also completely irrelevant to the occurrence of incest.

There are lots of fathers who are not satisfied with their marital sex lives. Some of them get divorced, some seek counselling, some find mistresses, some masturbate. They do not necessarily rape and molest their daughters. As a matter of fact, many daughter-molesters have perfectly "normal" sexual relationships with their wives.

Let me emphasize the implications of this. Just ASKING the question: "How is your sex life?" opens the door to scapegoating marital sex lives and mothers for the occurrence of incest. It offers fathers an out they are only too glad to take.

5. Mothers often unconsciously encourage incest in order to evade some of their responsibilities as wives.

False. There are lots of mothers who would like to evade the more dreary tasks that are considered part of their responsibilities, who would prefer not to vacuum or do dishes or take care of the children. And there are lots of wives who do not consider it their duty to be available sexually to their husband any time he might wish.

But they do not do this thinking their husbands will use their daughters in their place. They don't want - consciously or unconsciously - to dump on their daughters. It would not even occur to them that their husband might consider it his right to turn to his daughter to fill his needs.

My experience is that most mothers are completely stunned when they find out.

They had no idea, and this is a crisis time for them. Their whole world is shaken to the core and they, too, need individual help and support, need to be put in touch with other mothers in the same boat.

It is in this area that we have to shake off learning which teaches us that the role of the mother is to serve everyone's psychological needs in the family, and that the role of the father is to provide economic security. If we do not shake these beliefs, we will tend to see mothers as at least partly responsible for incest, and will scrutinize their ability to fulfill their role until we find some flaw or failure.

And believe me, daughter-molesters will go along with this. They are often men who make impossible demands on their wives anyway, who see burnt toast as a personal affront.

6. Incest victims are fully aware of what is happening to them at the time.

False. Incest victims know something awful and (literally) unbelievable is happening to them and that it is happening with someone they loved and trusted (not always, some dads are violent and overbearing).

But once it starts to happen, they expend most of their psychological energy trying to distance themselves, either by somehow teaching themselves to disappear from their bodies so as to anesthetize those parts, or by a psychological dissociation of selves, that bad self who is punished by a monster every night vs. the good girl who is always kind to everyone.

Having no categories to understand what is happening, they develop their own explanations, ones that fit the nature of their experience, which is that someone they love and trust is hurting and betraying them.

And the only explanation that fits is that they are horrible, worthless pieces of scum, unfit, unlovable filth. Why else, so the psyche insists, would anyone do this to them? They are sure that if somehow they were different human beings or had behaved differently, this would not have happened to them, they could have controlled it.

Soon after the incest has started, this belief will be quite firmly in place and very difficult to shake. The only weapon

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INCEST

INCEST, continued from page 8

we have against it is our own deep belief in their innocence, admittedly often difficult to maintain in the face of self-mutilation, prostitution, drug abuse, and all the ways they have of demonstrating their own worthlessness. In fact, while most incest victims have a deep need for warm human contact and love, they also have a need to keep the people they value at a distance, for if they let us come close they are afraid we will see their slimy, semen-filled, ripped and shredded, ugly insides, their true awfulness and be repelled.

So, incest victims are not fully aware of what is happening. With lots of encouragement and support, they can tell us what happened, although they will resist that, sometimes because they can't remember, sometimes because they think you won't believe it if they tell all the gory details. In fact, they will often reverse their story at the first sign of opposition or disbelief.

What they cannot ever tell us is why it happened. The job of those who work with victims is to slowly, patiently teach them to connect their own misery to the fact that someone they loved and trusted used them, dumped all over them, inflicted pain on them.

One of the most frustrating facts of working with victims, especially longterm victims, is their very insistence on seeing themselves as responsible, their complete lack of anger and outrage at what happened (in contrast to our sense of discomfort and outrage when we hear what has been going on).

They don't know. They don't know they had a right to anything different, and they won't be able to learn this until they are safe, and have been shown there can be affection without abuse.

7. All men who commit incest display some form of psychopathology (craziness).

False. These men don't have a problem, they ARE a problem. Whenever they get anywhere close to experiencing insecurity, pain, anxiety, lovelessness, they inflict this pain on other vulnerable people, usually small children, rather than feel it themselves.

That is, to me, one of the worst things that happens; these men force others to feel their pain and conflicts for them. That is what victimization is all about, the ability to get other people to carry your burdens for you so you don't have to.

So we see victims who are broken with shame and self-loathing and fathers who seem perfectly fine and conflict-free. Perhaps a bit authoritarian, or a bit misogynist, maybe even a tad of a wimp or an isolate, but a reasonable family man, not at all crazy by any of our standards.

The point, for those who do treatment, and indeed for everyone concerned about this issue, is that we have to reverse all those assumptions we were taught about how everyone is a victim. Here we have an entirely different kettle of fish. We have a man who has to learn to experience his own pain rather than inflict it on others. Then and only then can we help him deal with his pain and conflicts and allow him to consider re-entry into the family.

8. Incest can best be understood as a sexual disturbance.

False. I think by now it is clear that incest is primarily a disturbance in power, in the right to control or have authority over oneself or someone else. This victim has too little. The molester has too much.

If we persist in treating offenders as if their disturbance is sexual, and fail to look at their need for power and control in other areas of their lives, we will fail every time.

The issue is power; the arena in which it is fought is sexual. Because the arena is sexual, and because of our own basic belief in the importance of healthy sexuality, we tend to get sidetracked here, with regard to both victims and offenders.

9. Some incest victims are so beautiful and seductive that it is only natural for any man, even father, to be overwhelmingly attracted to them.

False. This reflects our society's tendency to sexualize young children, especially young girls (e.g. Lolita, Tatum

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The Sexual Abuse of Children: A Resource List

GROUPS

Child Abuse/Neglect Helpline for Children - Zenith 1234.

Group for Mothers of Incest Victims, Family Services of Greater Vancouver, 1616 W. 7th Avenue, Vancouver, 731-4951.

Advisory Committee on Sexual Abuse, Vancouver Health Department. Contact Karen Lamica (East Unit, 2610 Victoria Drive, Vancouver, 872-2511) or Sharon Clark-Teng (North Unit, 1720 Grant Street, Vancouver, 253-3575). Development of policy, information sharing and review re sexual abuse for health department practitioners.

Sexual Abuse Pilot Project, Ministry of Human Resources Medical Clinic, #304-1541 W. Broadway, Vancouver, 732-3371. Dr. Carol Herbert, Dr. Liz Whynot. Provision of medical assessments, medical/legal documentation, court testimony and counselling to any child where sexual abuse is suspected. Social worker involved must accompany the child to appointment.

Act 2 Counselling, Sexual Abuse Treatment Program, #209-2571 Shaughnessy Street, Pt. Coquitlam, 942-5115.

Sexual Abuse Victims Anonymous (SAVA). North Vancouver Island based. Contact Linda Halliday, RR #1, Campbell River, 287-9118.

TRACY (Taking Responsible Action for Children and Youth) Sexual Abuse of Children Preventative Education Task Force, 1811 W. 16th Avenue, Vancouver, 732-3305. Sponsors pilot theatre program on prevention of sexual abuse in some Vancouver elementary schools.

CARE Productions (Child Abuse Research & Education Productions), 15670 104th Avenue, Surrey, 581-6016. Jan Sipple. A preventive teaching program for kindergarten to grade 3 has been piloted and is now being evaluated. Teaching kits should be ready by September/82.

Hands Off Our Kids, 1034 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, 255-4858. Provides educational programs for parent groups on protecting children from sex offenders.

United Way Child Sexual Abuse Project, Social Planning and Research, United Way of the Lower Mainland, 1625 W. 8th Avenue, Vancouver, 731-7781. Has basic information /resource kit available (for $3.50) plus other bibliographies and publications. Will produce a resources pamphlet mid to late 1982. Ongoing research. Contact Flora Macleod, Andy Wachtel.

Child Abuse Team (1) Ministry of Human Resources, North and West Vancouver. Call 668-2631 (after hours 668-3111), (2) Ministry of Human Resources, Fraser Valley, 931-3444 (after hours 524-3661).

Mothers Groups, Incest Survivor Groups, and Individual Counselling sessions are offered by some therapists and counsellors who are also involved with the Feminist Counselling Association. Contact Dr. Ingrid Pacey, 738-8013, for more information.

VISACS (Vancouver Incest and Sexual Abuse Society), #1-2629 W. 4th Avenue, Vancouver. Has developed a project proposal for opening a centre to provide early intervention services to victims of incest and childhood sexual abuse and their families. Awaiting word re funding.

For information in developing or co-sponsoring cross system professional and public education programs in sexual abuse, contact Community Programs, Justice Institute of B.C., 4180 W. 4th Avenue, Vancouver, 228-9771. Pat Ross, Marje Burdine, Diana Ellis, Shelley Rivkin.

FILMS

Incest: The Victim Nobody Believes, 16mm, 21 minutes, 1976. Three women discuss early childhood experiences as victims of incest. Available from Justice Institute Resource Centre (4180 W. 4th Avenue, Vancouver, 228-9771) or Ministry of Human Resources Library (800 Cassiar Street, Vancouver, 299-9131).

Who Do You Tell?, 16mm, 11 minutes, 1979. Aimed at young children, this film explains well the question of sexual abuse and to whom they should turn for help. Available through Justice Institute Resource Centre (4180 W. 4th Avenue, Vancouver, 228-9771) or Ministry of Human Resources Library (800 Cassiar Street, Vancouver, 299-9131).

BOOKS

The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children by Florence Rush, Prentice-Hall, 1980. Written from a feminist perspective.

Father-Daughter Incest by Judith Lewis Herman, Harvard University Press, 1981. Hardcover.

Conspiracy of Silence, the Trauma of Incest by Sandra Butler, New Glide Publications, 1978. Hardcover.

Female Sexual Slavery by Kathleen Barry, Avon, 1979.

PROCEEDINGS/WORKSHOPS

Sexual Abuse of Children Within the Family: Tools for Understanding and Intervention: proceedings of 1980 conference at Justice Institute of B.C. Includes keynote addresses by Roland Summit, Lucy Berliner, and others, plus workshop reports, and a list of audio-visual materials. Available for $6 from Community Programs, Justice Institute of B.C., 4180 W. 4th Avenue, Vancouver, 228-9771.

A Series on Offenders: Sexual Abusers and Batterers, October 11-12 on Sexual Abusers in Vancouver; October 21-22 on Batterers, in Victoria. Call Justice Institute at 228-9771 for a series flyer.

Birthing: The Co-optation of Experience

by Maureen Minden

and Bobby, who helped me focus the anger that came out of my body and spirit

Consider the following: Women give birth / Birthing is a female experience / The social organization of birthing makes this mysterious / To make mysterious is to conceal what is really going on / Childbirth has been stolen from women.

The medicalization of birth

The devastating effects of the medicalization of birth have been substantiated in study after study by knowledgeable and concerned people from diverse backgrounds.

Anthropologist/mother Margaret Mead wrote of the violence done by hospital obstetrics to both infant and mother. Educator/theologian Ivan Illich coined a new term, iatrogenesis, meaning doctor-made disease. More recently, in *The Theft of Childbirth*, feminist/mother Adrienne Rich has detailed how childbirth has been stolen from women.

Violence is done to mother and baby in the process of: separating the birthing woman from all that is familiar, comforting and supportive; limiting her mobility; promoting drug use and "just in case" measures such as IV's and fetal monitors which themselves cause problems; enforcing the "flat-on-your-back" lithotomy position, a position which obstructs gravity and maximizes pressure on major blood vessels; using forceps, episiotomies and placental manipulation on a routine basis; separating the mother from the sight, sound, smell, feel and sucking of her infant, and the infant from its soft, warm, rhythmic, nurturing mother.

The relentless imposition of the medical method on healthy women with normal courses of birthing is a tragic victimization of women and their babies. Why has it not led to an outcry for women and midwives to reclaim birthing? Why has none of it even affected obstetrical practices?

How did we get in this position?

A lot of history has gone into making birth a medical event. The problem may well have begun when, as mythology has it, Zeus "gave birth to Athena". This reversal of reproductive roles was reinforced by early theology, where Adam was made responsible ("gave birth to") for Eve. For a very long time, men have wanted the giving-of-birth to be theirs, and have worked to make it thus.

According to early religion, woman was meant to suffer the pains of childbirth and to do so passively and with humility. God decreed it as punishment for "original sin".(One Agnes Simpson was burned at the stake for interfering with God's edict that women suffer in childbirth. She had offered herbs or opium to birthing women to relieve their discomfort.)

University medical training emerged in the 13th century. Only men were admitted, and training meant philosophy and theology. The physician to Edward II (who held a bachelor's degree in theology and a doctorate in medicine from Oxford) prescribed for toothache writing on the jaws of the patient: "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen".

Such was the state of medical science when witch-healers were being persecuted for being practitioners of magic.

Nevertheless, until the 18th century, childbirth was overwhelmingly in the hands of women. Women, of course, had first-hand knowledge of it, and men had reasons for "leaving it to women" - it was beneath the dignity of a male physician.

The misogyny of the church fathers also affected this. Women, especially their reproductive organs, were viewed as inherently evil and men were forbidden to attend births.

Male birth attendants appeared in the 17th century. Though they did not attend normal births, we must assume they learned about childbirth from midwives. These men worked only in upper class circles and soon began to proclaim the inferiority of the midwife, linking her with dirt, ignorance and superstition.

Nancy Walker

Now technology was used to further concentrate control of childbirth in the hands of men. Obstetric forceps were designed, used and kept secret for three generations of male-midwives in one particular family (it was a lucrative business monopoly).

Later, they were classified as surgical instruments and women were legally barred from using them.

Church inspired witchhunts from the 14th to the 17th centuries resulted in the execution of millions, 85% of them women. This effectively cleared the way for the rise of an elitist male medical profession, which by the end of the 18th century was gaining control of the practice of healing.

These medical men were engaged in a battle for power and control. And since men wrote books and women did not, the art of midwifery, the expertise accumulated and passed on by the midwives practising it, was lost. The male takeover of birthing meant that only the history of male obstetrics was passed down in print.

In the 19th century, another notable medical advancement occurred. Chloroform was used for the first time in childbirth by Queen Victoria. Ironically, while breaking through the religious dictate that women should suffer, it furthered, quite literally, the (convenient) passivity of women.

As time, and the medical profession, progressed, the role of the midwife was effectively wiped out. The birthing woman's environment became the hospital and her midwife was replaced by a medical man.

Birthing no longer flowed from the woman's experience, but was superimposed by a medical version of how she "ought to be" feeling it. The situation was alienating, thus woman became alienated from her giving-birth experience.

Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English offer an enlightening perspective on the history of women and medicine in *For Her Own Good*. They show how the relationship established centuries ago between women and medicine is still in effect today.

The historical theological/medical version of being female, its equation of passive suffering with the archetypal female experience of childbirth, is still the most prominent feature of medicalized birthing today.

Adrienne Rich suggests that the male effort to control birthing is bound up with the sexuality and sensuality a woman experiences in pregnancy, birthing and suckling. Motherhood and sexuality are "wedged resolutely apart by male culture."

As Alice Rossi states, "...it is to men's sexual advantage to restrict women's sexual gratification to heterosexual coitus, though the price for the woman and child may be a less psychologically and physically rewarding relationship."

This long struggle for control over childbirth, the long course of wresting it away from those who give birth, has done much damage and promises to do more. For today we must ask what "test tube babies" are really about. They are, in fact, the beginning of the final appropriation of reproduction by technology.

"Humanistic" obstetrics betray commitment to medicalized birth

When "childbirth" became "obstetrics", the heroes had to be doctors. Writers concerned with changing childbirth - by now a surgical event performed on a passive anaesthetized female's body - tend to fall into two categories: women such as Margaret Mead, Shela Kitzinger, Doris Haire, Raven Lang and Susanne Arms, and doctors such as Dick-Read, Guttmacher, Lamaze and Leboyer. It is the doctors who have been permitted to affect childbirth. And the ways in which they have altered hospital birthing have permitted them to maintain total control of women's birthing experience, while appearing to be "responsive to people's needs and wishes".

Dick-Read is seen as one responsible for a breakthrough in (medicalized) birth. His early training was to chloroform women and then "deliver" them. But one day he attended a slum birth where the woman refused anaesthesia, saying it did not hurt, was it supposed to?

Dick-Read then formulated his fear-tension-pain theory and established a plan whereby prospective mothers would be "trained" (implying a trainer, of course) to relax and breathe "properly" (he defined what properly was), and so on.

This man did not seem to question whether the slum birth avoided his fear-tension-pain problem because the woman was in her own environment. Instead, he put emphasis on calm, supportive birth attendants, especially the doctor, who was to act as a source of confidence to the woman. His was a very paternalistic attitude.

Dick-Read was essentially a patriarch. He wrote in *Childbirth Without Fear* of the "inborn dependence of women", stating that "biological motherhood is her desire" (whatever that means). For Dick-Read, childbirth is a woman's glory, her purpose in life, her peak experience. However, he said, because she is totally dependent on men, it is men who must "deliver" her. (How did women manage before medical men arrived on the scene?) It is implicit in Dick-Read's analysis that women do not have agency, the ability to cause outcomes, the personal strength to make things happen. They merely respond - to training and to a strong male.

Then came Lamaze. After visits to maternity clinics in the USSR, Lamaze decided to develop precise and controlled breathing patterns for every stage of labour. His patients would give birth using "conditioned reflex". Militant control would be maintained from the outside over one's body and experience.

Lamaze's term was "psychoprophylaxis", which he was quick to state was not synonymous with laziness. He felt a woman must be imbued (passive creature that she was) with responsibility for the success or failure of her birthing. (This, even though she is not in her own environment and has no real control over the situation.)

What Lamaze did was make it possible to blame women for unfulfilling, difficult births while medicine, not the woman, dictated every facet of her birthing.

Now we have Leboyer. His "birth without violence" really means "birth without violence to the infant", and Leboyer himself has decided what constitutes violence.

Twelve years ago, Leboyer underwent psychoanalysis and then primal therapy. This experience led him to feel he had been able to relive his own birth. He decided his terrible birth, premature and with forceps, had affected his whole life (he never married and has no children).

From this he concluded that birth is like torture (not that hospital births are like torture), and that mothers cannot manage birthing except if they follow the Lamaze techniques. According to him, "The bodies of women in labour (prior to Lamaze) were nothing more than a mass of spasms, tensions, frantic heavings, locked muscles...mute testimony to their crazed panic and terror." (my emphasis)

And as to "whose hands should hold the child? (the, not her child) The mother's, naturally, provided these hands know... everything we (read I) have been saying (for the last three pages)...How many mothers have hands that are still, lifeless, lacking in understanding!" (my emphasis and inserts)

Leboyer assumes that the hospital setting solves all the mother's needs and problems, that it is the baby that needs help - not its mother's help, but Leboyer's!

His writings betray his misogyny: "...all this force, this monstrous, unremitting pressure that is crushing the baby, pushing it out toward the world - and this blind wall which is holding it back, confining it - these things are all one: the mother!...It is she who is the enemy... The monster bears down one more time."

The mother is the enemy, the infant is the victim and Leboyer is the hero. He caresses the infant, he stretches the infant in special ways, he bathes the infant.

Leboyer, like all doctors who operate within the context of medicalized birth, does not ask himself whether perhaps all the problems he has so wonderfully resolved weren't caused by the very situation doctors have created for birth: hospitals, drugs, lithotomy position, bright lights, a great drop between the woman's vagina and the floor, cold institutional temperatures, and on and on.

The whole rationale for the "Leboyer birth" disappears in a home birth context. Even "humanistic alternatives" in obstetrics betray a commitment and allegiance to medicalized birth.

Birthing: two accounts

Birth, a book filled with legends, lore, superstitions, exaltations and customs ancient and modern, contains two first-hand birth experiences, one by a father describing a home birth, one by mother describing a routine hospital birth.

Both authors are poets, articulate and skilled at translating their experiences into words. Yet close reading shows the qualitative difference between their experiences.

The father's account is of a wonderful home birth which proceeded smoothly and according to plan. Yet somehow in his telling, the birthing woman remains in the background, never developing into someone involved in the intense experience of giving birth.

He concludes, in fact, with an emotional tribute to the doctor! "I shake his hand and try to state how I love that hand which would garden if his land were good. That hand that brings life into the world."

The father, under these best-of-all-possible conditions, is a participant-observer and his experience of the birth is as such. His is not a birthing account, but the account of someone witnessing/participating at a birth. It is an "other" account.

The mother's account (Daphne Marlatt, in "Rings") includes all of the harsh treatment, intrusions and absurd situations that arise in the foreign environment of a hospital. It speaks of being in-volved, while from the outside being reprimanded, bullied, treated as an errant child.

Yet she is alone in the primary experience of her birthing: "Even the blood trickling down is comfortable. It's me. It's happening as if I KNEW how it would be." As the baby emerges, "I feel something like a loss, like the end of a sigh, A cry!"

Leboyer has decided that women upon giving birth "do not know how to touch their babies. Or, to be more exact, do not dare. They are paralyzed." He further tells us that mothers find their babies ugly, and transmit negative feelings to them.

The birthing mother says: "He's crying. I can't stand it, I want to hold him, PLEASE. And they lay him snuggled in a blanket on my stomach. He's perfect, bawling, little blue fists. Small & perfectly HERE. He's here, I say to Al, & he's beautiful. Al's bending over, a little shy but grinning too. And he is, & I say to everybody, he's beautiful. Most of all to him, because he's come through that ring of flesh, into our light, He's BORN, tight-fisted in my arms, eyes screwed shut, shutting us out. Yet he can hear, & maybe feel someone cradling him against her, hush. hush. I hold him. It's all right. You're born."

Woman is the primary experiencer of birthing; the father, the doctor are at best participant/observers. Isn't it incredible that the experience of "the other" has come to dominate the social organization of birthing!

Should it not be, rather, that the birthing woman's experience is the organizing matrix, and that midwives who have access to this experience should support her in her birthing?

Isn't it even more incredible that many women have come to distrust their own feelings about what is happening to them, have been encouraged, pressured, induced to see/feel birthing from the eyes of the observer!

Conclusion

Birthing is a socially organized event. When its history is put into context it becomes evident that a male-dominated culture has produced the medicalization of childbirth. This has obscured the fact that it is women who give birth, at the expense of the birthing mother and her child.

We need to create a situation which will give precedence to the experience of mother and baby. Doctors, fathers and caring others will play a supporting role, the nature of their support being determined by the needs of the birthing woman.

The wisdom of a midwifery version of childbirth makes this a real possibility. Women and their midwives must reclaim birth.

Nancy Walker

A reading list is available upon request from the author c/o Kinesis.

Performance art invokes experience from the inside out

by Colleen Tillman,
Lyla Smith and Val Powers

Although performance art has been practised for approximately 70 years, only within the last decade has it begun to receive widespread recognition as an art form.

Performance differs from theatre in that one does not have to be (nor is encouraged to be) a dramatist, there does not have to be a script (although there might be), and it does not require talking or even human participants. Performance art presents subject matter in a special way. Ideas may be expressed abstractly or realistically; there may be formal structure, there may not.

Performance includes many different elements, some of which may be slides, dance, music, video, talking, poetry, lighting, and a variety or absence of props. Popular topics are technology, ecology, feelings, experiences, political issues, spirituality, 20th century urban problems, sex and sexuality, as well as some shock value ("taboo") subjects.

Both Rachel Rosenthal and Giuditta Tornetta demonstrate their power to touch deeply and inspire the inner worlds of their audiences.

Rachel Rosenthal and Giuditta Tornetta are performance artists based in Los Angeles, California. Their centre there, "Espace DBD", functions as a studio space for training, lectures, classes, workshops, new music and performance art.

Rachel Rosenthal has been called the "grandmother" of performance art in L.A. She has had a varied background in the art world, including extensive work in theatre, dance and sculpture. In 1956 she founded a small experimental theatre workshop in Hollywood called Instant Theatre - this at a time when experimental theatre did not exist there in any form. In the '70s she founded Womanspace, the first feminist art gallery in southern California.

Karen Fredrickson

Giuditta Tornetta in "Limits and Limitations"

More recently, Rachel has been doing performance art pieces which are autobiographical, theatrical, and metaphorical. She engineers each performance with dexterity and intense thought and feeling, writing scripts and using materials which support each other while carefully controlling the stresses and tensions she so skillfully evokes.

Likewise, Giuditta Tornetta, an Italian performance artist, works from her particular vision, using her own internal environment and the environment around her. She too has been involved in many areas of study and teaching, including workshops in sound and movement, theatre work, shiatsu training, and writing poetry and children's stories.

Utilizing this background and drawing on her own continual exploration of life, Giuditta employs a more loosely-structured approach in her work. She works on the shape and form of each performance, and by also allowing herself to absorb the unique environment created by each new audience, she blends choreographed sections with improvisation to communicate her ideas and feelings.

Both these artists demonstrate the power to touch deeply and inspire the inner worlds of their audiences. As part of their first Canadian tour, they performed two solo pieces at Women in Focus in May.

Rachel's performance was delivered with humour, drama, slides, sound, poetry, music and props, and the guest appearance of her pet rat (Tatti Wattles). Giuditta's performance included video, dance, music, champagne, a great deal of interaction with the audience, and a vast amount of subject matter. This peice was unified by dance and movement.

Following are extracts from interviews by Colleen Tillman while the performers were at Women in Focus.

Colleen: How do you see yourself using performance art as a tool?

Rachel: I started to use my performance art as a tool for redeeming my life, like a kind of exorcism...and it seemed the deeper I went into the personal the more universal it became. At first I was really worried that it was too private, and then I realized that the more personal I made it, the more people could identify with it.

From the beginning my interest has been one of communication, sharing, of putting out experiences that are personal and yet, universal...experiences that people can relate to, through which they can transform their own lives as I was transforming mine, or through which they could get an experience that would put them in touch with their own lives. That's what was happening.

In a sense, those pieces were very healing and also confronting, but not in a clobbering way. I don't like that. I feel a very strong connection and responsibility to an audience. I feel that artists, when they put themselves out in person, have to know what they are dealing with. Performance is a force, a very, very big force.

Karen Fredrickson

Rachel Rosenthal in "Traps"

Colleen: You mean they have to know what power they have?

Rachel: Exactly...You need to take those feelings which are diffused in society, focus them and make them very conscious, give them direction. People just don't realize the power they have. I think that's something that has to be released, concentrated, talked about and made visible. It's there, it's very strong, and if people really took hold of that and took hold of their power, they could change the world. They could do everything.

Colleen: What is important to you when you perform and where did your motivation to perform come from?

Giuditta: My need to perform comes from a need to share ideas, feelings and passions with other people. What I'm interested in is reaching the audience's guts, not their minds as such. I need a type of communication that goes beyond words, beyond intellectualization, and that is really a part of feelings.

I have done different kinds of work, from autobiographical to conceptual, always trying to create total emptiness to be able to filter in what the environment gives me. I've always been concerned with touching my audience, communicating with every sense: hearing, visually, tactile sense. What I want to say in my work changes all the time. I feel a great responsibility to consider the time that I live in, historically, and to make a political statement with my work.

...As a woman it is very important to me to somehow stir up, from the inside, other women, to reach the power, strength and the great things we have inside. It's like when you read a book and you can never formulate those things you've just read, but you know you have them inside. So I'm not talking about anything unusual, new or surprising. I'm talking about some things that some poeple have never been able to talk about, and reach them in that way.

I look at myself in the video and I think I'm pretty weird looking. And yet, at the same time I think everybody can sort of say, "Ya, I understand what you're talking about".

I don't believe in pulling myself out of the system to fight it. I'm within, like a bullet that penetrates inside and then explodes.

There's more than meets the eye in *Ambiguities*

by Michele Wollstonecroft

Ingrid Yuille is a two-dimensional image maker who over the past three years, using photography, mixed media, oil paints, coloured pencil and her local environment, has created a series of works entitled *Ambiguities*.

The series consists of more than forty 16" x 20" colour photographs, a large body of 8" x 10" black-and-white photographs, and a series of SX-70 polaroids.

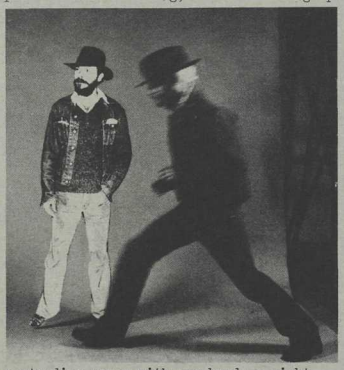
In *Ambiguities*, Ingrid has taken her subjects' images out of the context of their own lives to caricature her perceptions of memory, emotions and human situations.

Using photographs outside of their own context is not new. The technique was first used by a group of artists in the Dada movement, which began in Switzerland around 1915. The advertising industry has made much of this method, as have "pop" artists (for example, Andy Warhol's silkscreens of Elvis Presley and Larry Rivers' "cut out" reproductions of famous masterpieces). Hinda Avery (one of the artists in "Womansize") has also used cut out photographic images in her sculpture.

Ingrid's *Ambiguities*, however, are unique to her particular world. Her photographs are funny, frightening, surreal, rude, sentmental, mysterious documentations of human activity. Ambiguities exist both within the form the photographs use, and the subject matter itself.

Some of the photographs appear to record the ordinary: a man driving a steamroller at night; a woman asleep on a park bench; people getting into a car; two women attending to a baby; a man about to drink from a glass...

Others present strikingly "odd" relationships: two men conversing, one of whom appears to be levitating; a child holding up



a standing woman with one hand; a night scene with a group of people lurking cult-like in a woods.

Yet, even in the seemingly ordinary shots, something is not quite right. There is something distinctly out-of-the-ordinary about the woman asleep on the park bench. The man holding the drink, in his other hand holds a bodyless but very lively foot! And why would anyone drive a steamroller at night with dark glasses on?

The truth is that many of those portrayed in the photographs are fabrications, both of Ingrid's wonderful imagination and her skill as an artist.

In other words, the people are not real, but rather two-dimensional cut outs - photographs Ingrid has enlarged to different variations of life-size and dry mounted onto a foam background. The cut outs are then hand-coloured, further removing them from their original character.

Once complete, the cut outs are placed back into the three-dimensional (real) world and photographed. These photographs (28 in all) make up *Ambiguities*.

The dynamic of each photograph is determined by the environment, the lighting and how the figures are positioned, both within the

photos by Ingrid Yuille

frame of the shot and in relation to other figures.

The content of each photograph is also affected by the viewing angle, as well as whether it is colour or black-and-white. The colour prints appear more surreal than the black-and-white prints because they emphasize the hand-colouring of the cut outs.

The cut outs in *Ambiguities* are used repeatedly within different contexts. They appear alone, grouped with other cut outs, or with real people or animals.

The figures may portray a front, back or side view of a person, and that person may be crouching, turning, sitting, or demonstrating "frozen" action.

There are photographs of cut outs in the house, standing by the telephone, walking up the stairs, sitting in a real chair. One photograph combines two cut outs, one male and one female, looking out over night waters from the Lions Gate Bridge (cut out romance?).

In a few of the black-and-white photographs cut outs are combined with their "mother" images (the real person), who in the photographs act out their fantasy and narcissism.

These particular photographs, shot against grey background paper, exclude any sense of environment. Many combine the still "frozen" moment of the cut out, side-by-side with the real person moving through the time/space of the frame.

Artist first, technician second

Each of Ingrid's prints is a work of art in itself. (With rare exception, Ingrid does all her own printing.) The black-and-white prints she individually hand tones with a selenium toner, to add richness to the blacks and the shadows. Ingrid also uses the technique of split toning to add a mauve tone to her prints.

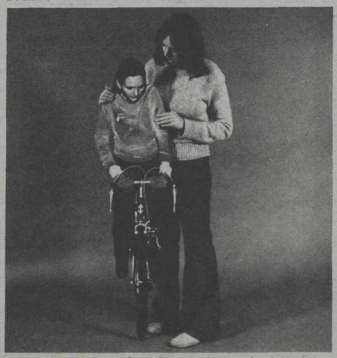
Ingrid downplays her technical expertise, however. Acknowledging that she knows her trade, she emphasizes that she is only interested in technique as a means to creating her art. "I use photography as a tool, but I'm not a photographer - I'm an artist,"

Ingrid's work has met with much success. In October 1979 she had a solo show at the Arts Club Theatre, comprised of twelve hand-coloured black-and-white prints of houses. As with her cut outs, Ingrid used mixed media, oil and coloured pencil to reconstruct the images according to her own imagination.

She has also participated in a number of group shows, including the Fifth Viennese International Biannual "Photographic Developments" in Austria (1981); "Womansize" at Women in Focus in Vancouver (1981); "Seven Photographers" at the Surrey Art Gallery (1980); and at Vancouver's Helen Pitt Gallery (1978 and 1979).

Ingrid has won several awards, the most recent being a Canada Council grant to ready *Ambiguities* for a solo exhibition at the Burton Gallery in Toronto this June. For those fortunate enough to be in Toronto, the show will run from June 3 to July 3.

Ingrid is a part-time instructor in photography with the outreach program of Emily Carr College of Art. She has done photographs and prints for numerous commissions, designed album covers, and had her work published in several magazines and periodicals.



REVIEWS

Braided Lives a powerful reminder of silent era

by Cy-Thea Sand

Women's lives are shaped like cheap coffins. Marge Piercy

Braided Lives, Marge Piercy's seventh novel, details Jill Stuart's remembrance of things past. At forty-two, Piercy's heroine is a respected writer, finally confident enough in her own abilities to recall her adolescence and early twenties.

Braided Lives,
by Marge Piercy.
New York: Summit Books, 1982.
441 pages, $20.95 hardback.

Born into a working class Detroit family, she grew up in an era that historian Godfrey Hodgson says has "to be measured in assumptions unchallenged, in questions unanswered, in problems ignored for a decade":

It's March of 1953. I am sixteen soon to be seventeen. The Korean War seems to be winding down; the Rosenburgs are convicted and waiting in prison; Eisenhower has been president since January and Washington emits clouds of grey fog on the news every night; times are pretty good in Detroit for the workers on the line.

Child of a Celtic father and Jewish mother, Jill is harassed in school for looking both Chinese and Semitic. She dreams of escaping the rough urban poverty of her neighbourhood by going to college. Her closest friend is a Jewish boy named Howie, whose bubbe (grandmother) has saved her husband's insurance money for her grandson's education: "We are alike, fat boy, skinny girl, staggering out of our brutal sickly childhoods with arms clutched full of books."

Reproductive rights is central theme

Jill eventually wins a scholarship to the University of Michigan, where she rooms with her cousin Donna. The intense friendship between the two young women gives the novel its title and essence. Jill is fiercely intellectual, an aspiring poet, and determinedly independent. Donna is studious but less ambitious than her cousin, hopeful of finding a secure heterosexual relationship she thinks will ease her deep feelings of self-doubt.

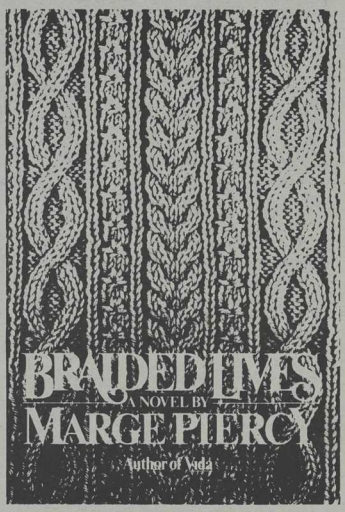
Jill and Donna's friendship, family problems and romantic obsessions are told from Piercy's feminist point of view, and can be understood as an example of the *Bildungsroman* - a novel of youthful development and self-education.

The difference with *Braided Lives*, when compared to traditional and popular literary explorations of the lives of young women and men, is its woman-identification. Piercy writes popular feminist fiction without apology. In her previous novel *Vida* (1979), Piercy's background in left politics fostered an exciting tale of women in the Underground. In *Braided Lives*, the issue of reproductive rights for women guides her pen.

At one point in the book, Piercy dramatizes the horrors of unwanted pregnancy. Pregnant by her boyfriend Mike and desperate to continue her studies, Jill tries all her mother's home remedies for self-abortion: hot baths with Epsom salts, hot baths with pennyroyal, quinine and mustard. None work. She finally opens her womb by force:

If it were a couple of years ago I would tell you more, but if I do so now, desperate young girls, desperate middle aged women, the victims of rape, incest, battering, far more numerous than we like to believe, all the women who simply do not believe in catching a baby as you might the flu or pneumonia, would be tempted to do as I did, just because I survived it but barely. There have to be better ways. I cannot include a recipe for action that is likely to kill you.

Piercy does not spare the reader as she takes us through torment. Jill's mother, afraid that Jill's cries will alert her father to what is happening, insists she be quiet throughout her ordeal.



This scene crystallizes the distortion, under patriarchy, of the mother/daughter relationship. Mrs. Stuart has been robbed of woman's traditional knowledge of safe birth control and abortion techniques by a medical hierarchy which now denies its knowledge to her daughter. The two women together form a conspiracy of silence, but it is a conspiracy of ignorance and fear, not strength. It is the silence of defeat; the agony of self-abuse never forgotten:

Twenty-odd years later pain makes me mute. Since that day I have never recovered my voice when pain touches me hard. When I burn my thigh, when I cut my hand deeply, when I drop the typewriter on my foot, my vocal cords seize up as they never do in anger or danger. I weep but cannot speak until the pain ebbs.

A war for independence

Braided Lives is a blatantly political novel. In it, Piercy juxtaposes Jill and Donna's drive for education and economic independence with their lack of biological autonomy. Theirs is clearly a struggle to overcome biological imperialism in order to embrace culture as freely as men. That conflict is not resolved by the novel's end. Instead, Donna hemorrhages and dies from a back street abortion. Jill, for her part, has to forsake her marriage plans to Howie because he cannot accept her dedicated work to legalize abortion. Howie, left-wing intellectual that he is, is unable to imagine a relationship between two equally active individuals. He simply follows the dictates of his socialization in demanding that Jill be a wife; that she forfeit her cultural work to nurture him, his work and their prospective children.

The novel's theme of restrictions of female sexuality reminds me of Edith Wharton's classic work *Summer*. Published in 1917, *Summer* is one of the best examples of Wharton's preoccupation with the stifling of women in society. Edith Wharton actually suffered from breathlessness, a fact reflected in her use of images of constraint and imprisonment.

Piercy's women fettered by pregnancy

Marge Piercy's women move much more freely than Wharton's Charity Royall, but like her, their lives are forever influenced by the fact of pregnancy. *Braided Lives* records a much different era than does *Summer*, but both novels are concerned with woman's lack of freedom to be active in society, unencumbered by sexual limitations. Both Wharton and Piercy are passionately concerned that women be allowed to move in society with authority and confidence.

There are shortcomings in *Braided Lives*. Piercy's language is often flat; the narrative sometimes bogs down in unnecessary detail which robs the dialogue of its purpose in providing information and thematic tension. But there is rich characterization here, some suspense and drama, and a sensitivity to working class perspectives.

Reading this book forced me to relive my backstreet abortion - without anaesthetic - in Montreal fifteen years ago. Chronic pelvic inflammatory disease followed, only relieved by a hysterectomy ten years later. As I write, Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion are marching in downtown Vancouver to fight Joseph Borowski's Supreme Court challenge of Canada's abortion laws. In the United States, the human life amendment threatens to wipe out safe, legal abortions.

Right wing forces are gaining power, and *Braided Lives* is a powerful reminder that the politically repressive mentality of the fifties, so threatening to women's lives, is never far away.

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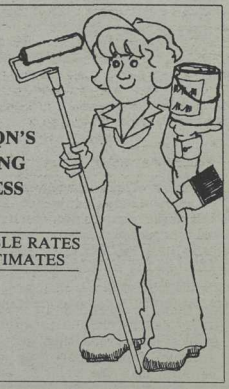

REVIEWS

Phases: music to call up fantasy, enchantment

by Chantale Laplante

Marcia Meyer is a Vancouver songwriter, performer, recording artist and music educator who has just released a record entitled *PHASES*.

Marcia, who majored in music history at University of Western Ontario, began her musical career performing in coffee houses in Winnipeg in the late 60s. Although mainly a solo performer, she has also worked with other musicians in the role of piano accompanist.

PHASES
recorded by Marcia Meyer, 1982
Happy Onion Music Publishers
P.O. Box 86183
North Vancouver, B.C. V7L 4J8

PHASES contains a variety of original compositions for classical guitar, flute, harmonica, piano and voice. These instruments give a natural sounding, medieval flavour to the album. It relaxes the mind, without pretension. That is probably what I appreciate the most about *PHASES*. The arrangements are simple and, I think, well done.

Marcia Meyer is a performer of classical music. In one of her instrumental pieces, "Phases I", she shows us how agreeable piano and flute can be when played and mixed together in their high register. The effect flows and soothes.

And so it is with "Valzer Variation", adapted from F. Carulli (a composer of the Classical period), and "Song of Gnomes", with its impressionistic texture.

Marcia sings in a very high register and though it fits the whole feeling of the album, I think she loses too much volume trying to reach such high pitches. On the other hand, she sings right on pitch without swooping up, which is particularly hard in the context of a recording studio.

Marcia's vibrato is great - she should use it more often. For instance, in "City Strut", where she scats between verses, she is more comfortable. Here her voice shows us the strength it contains.

PHASES is meant to call upon people's fantasies. The music leaves a lot of room for daydreams and "magic thoughts". With her optimistic songs, she strives to "create enchantment", and I think she does. This is a very good record for those who do yoga, or have just come home from an exhausting day at work and want to let go.

Marcia made this album because she wants to share the "symphonies" she has in her head. There is already another record on the way, and this time, she will add violins, viola and cello. In the meantime, Marcia Meyer's *PHASES* is a record to welcome!

INCEST, continued from page 9

O'Neal). Young children are simply NOT sexy or seductive unless adults have taught them to be that way.

Furthermore, it is NOT NATURAL to see young girls as sexual objects, although most men have been socialized to sexualize their relationships with women and girls.

On top of this, men are NOT overwhelmed by testosterone (the male sex hormone) so that they suddenly cannot control themselves and simply have to rape the next woman in sight, be she six or 36. In fact, this runaway hormone theory presents a rather ridiculous image.

Certainly men have strong sexual urges (as do women), but they are perfectly capable of controlling them. The beauty or "seductiveness" of a young girl, then, is not relevant to a decision taken by father or uncle or stepfather to rape or molest her.

10. Many little children have sexual fantasies about their opposite-sexed parent.

False. This theory, the sexualization of young children as if they were adults, is one of the biggest disservices Freud and his followers bequeathed us.

Many of Freud's patients reported father-daughter incest to him, a fact which he wrote about in his letters to Fleiss, a fellow physician and close friend, letters he subsequently ordered destroyed (he did destroy his own end of the correspondence).

At first he believed these accounts, but eventually, due to his own problems, he came to view them as fantasies. From this, he developed his theory of childhood sexuality, of kids as sexual beings.

Remnants of this theory abound to this day. So when victims of incest finally get up the nerve (or remember) to tell about what happened to them, they are often told this is a fantasy on their part, that all little kids really wish their fathers would rape them.

In fact, the reverse is true. Adults sexually desire children, sexualize them, seduce them, rape them. If a child reports a sexual fantasy about an adult, we can be sure that the adult is sexualizing the relationship to some extent.

11. As with any child, what is best for incest victims is to grow up in an intact family.

False. What is best for the incest victim is to grow up in a safe, loving, protected environment, one which allows her the space to develop freely.

This may or may not be her family of origin. It may be some part of her original family, e.g. kids and mother (often the preferred choice) or it may be with relatives, friends, in an incest survivors home or by herself, whatever comes closest to fulfilling her needs.

An incest victim does not only need the incest to stop to be able to breathe freely again. She needs the FEAR of incest to stop.

12. Incest victims are deeply scarred especially in terms of their sexuality.

False. Incest victims may or may not be deeply scarred. It depends on how long and how badly they were used, and on how they are treated once it begins to surface.

The scarring that is present must be examined in terms of basic human rights and dignity, not in terms of sexuality. Though it may show up in the sexual arena - - the area in which they were most obviously used - it is their worth and dignity that is most scarred.

It is important not to believe that incest victims are damaged goods (no matter how they see themselves). We must avoid thinking of them as "nothing buts", but see the whole person, encourage strengths and creativities and conversations about everyday living. They really can reclaim their lives, it IS possible.

13. It is impossible to understand or identify with incest because it is so far out of the bounds of our everyday experience.

False, although this is where we usually start. We begin by thinking, my god, how could this happen, how could it occur so frequently. Eventually, we come to see that incest is simply an exaggeration of the relationships condoned by our social structure.

Marriage, as we know it, is modeled on father-daughter relationships, although not, of course, between relatives. What we have is a union between an older, richer man who goes out into the world and provides, and a younger woman who stays at home, serves his needs, is poorer, depends on him.

Now, I know to some of you this will sound utterly absurd. Still, I maintain that after a while it is the only explanation that fits. Suddenly, all kinds of other little phrases and social rules that perpetuate this come to mind, e.g. sugar daddies.

14. In the long run, what incest victims need most is a good sexual relationship with an understanding man.

As might be clear from my previous answer, this is false. Incest victims need help in two areas: nurturance and affection, and basic rights and assertiveness.

Incest victims need nonsexual nurturing, affection, support, hugs, love. Usually they need this from a female, and whenever possible, a strengthening of the bond between mother and daughter. They do NOT need affection that is tied in any way to a sexual relationship.

They also need to learn that they have rights, that people, no matter who they are, do not have the right to intrude on them sexually, physically or psychologically. They do not know this. And until they do, they will have no way to get angry, to begin to connect their feelings of worthlessness and misery to someone else's taking advantage of them.

I cannot emphasize this too much. It is NOT their sexuality that is in need of definition, but their basic human rights. They need to learn they can have some control over their own lives, that their word actually makes a difference, has an impact, will be taken seriously by someone else and acted on. They need some say, some power over their lives. This is what they have been deprived of.

MOVEMENT MATTERS

Chantale Laplante

Maura and friends sang to an appreciative crowd at Grandview Park on Mother's Day.

Feminist Party to meet in Vancouver

The Feminist Part of Canada (B.C.) will hold a public meeting on Sunday, June 20 at 2 p.m. in Vancouver's Robson Square Media Centre Theatre. The program will include readings, music, an introduction to the Party, speakers and open discussion from the floor.

Although women comprise over 50% of the Canadian population, they make up less than 5% of the federal MPs. At this rate, equal representation will take another 842 years. We firmly believe women will never be equal partners in the Canadian political system unless women themselves provide the vehicle.

The Party has been fromed with the intention of providing a feminist perspective in the Canadian political arena. It will be the political voice of our time of a movement that has been known and felt in all times.

For further information contact 922-6077.

'Unaffiliated' feminists respond to WAVAW-Rape Relief crisis

To all of you who may be worrying that the women's movement in Vancouver is falling into ruins...a whole lot of us who describe ourselves as unaffiliated feminists are working hard to help resolve the situation.

We held one meeting (May 16) where a hundred of us began to discuss and plan how to respond to the situation from the point of view of the women's movement as a whole. A meeting with Vancouver Rape Relief is planned where they can clarify their position and respond to criticisms. Another meeting for the "unaffiliated" will follow.

The Lower Mainland Region of the B.C. Federation of Women (22 groups) has called a special meeting on June 2 to come up with a position on government funding of rape crisis services.

Many of us are determined to see the situation move past the present polarization to a place where we can continue to fight our real enemies. More information will be in future issues of Kinesis.

The following groups will be kept up-to-date about future meetings: Vancouver Status of Women (873-1427), the Women's Health Collective (736-6696), Press Gang (253-1224) and the Women's Bookstore (684-0523).

For clarification of the above, call Diana Smith (253-5654) or Melanie Conn (736-0935).

Lavender-Orchid Ball will support LIL

Vancouver's Lesbian Information Line is holding what promises to be an exciting fundraiser June 26 - The Lavender-Orchid Ball. (See Bulletin Board for details.)

LIL was formed to offer information to women not yet involved in the women's community. The LIL phone line (734-1016) operates two nights a week - Thursday and Sunday - from 7-10pm.

Support this important service by your attendance June 26.

The cross-Canada tour by a representative of AMES (Salvadorean Women's Association), originally scheduled for May and June, has been postponed until the fall.

We have been encouraged by the enthusiasm about the tour, both from locations in B.C. and across Canada. If your group is interested in sponsoring an event around the tour, contact the B.C.-El Salvador Women's Support Group, 400A West 5th Ave. Vancouver or call Hilarie at 873-1427 for more information.

See Greece through new eyes

There can be no women's liberation without social liberation, there can be no social liberation without women's liberation.

This is the motto of The Women's Union of Greece (EGE) who are organizing their Second International Women's Conference, to be held August 22 through September 5.

The EGE's aim is to "enlighten women on the nature and source of their oppression". They are active around familiar issues: equal participation in economic, political and cultural fields, day care, medical and legal counselling, protection of the aged, protection of the environment, protection of Greek culture.

The programme begins in Athens and continues with a two-week tour of the country. Participants will atend local festivities and poetry readings, and will learn about the struggles of Greek women in the anti-fascist and independence movements.

From B.C., the cost of the tour, per person, is $2200. This includes conference fee, accommodation, travel expenses inside Greece, two meals per day and entertainment. A group of women from B.C. is now being organized. Arrangements can be made to leave Vancouver before the conference or to remain in Greece longer than two weeks. And while the conference is for women, men are welcome to take advantage of the group air fare to Athens.

If you are interested, contact Colleen Bostwick, 3656 Cordiale Dr., Vancouver, V5S 4H3 (tel: 430-6900) or Doris Fuller, P.O. Box 657, Gibsons, B.C. (tel: 886-9983).

Gay librarians publish bibliography

The Gay Interest Group of the Canadian Library Association has distributed a pamphlet entitled *A Brief Preliminary Guide to Recommended Reading on Homosexuality* to B.C. libraries.

The publications included were selected "in recognition that there can be no healthy growth in individual(s) or society without a basis in truth and honesty. The list excludes works which perpetuate old prejudices." It is divided into three sections: English language titles on homosexuals, English language titles on lesbians, and French language titles.

The guide's use (and the availability of titles listed) will depend largely on requests from the reading public. Inquire about it at Vancouver Public Library (Main Branch) or at university and college libraries.

Requests for copies of the guide, as well as comments and suggestions, can be directed to: CLA Gay Interest Group, c/o Sed Millward, St. John's College Library, 400 Dysart Rd., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2M5.

WAVAW/RCG plans rape crisis service

The in-movement meeting on the 18th of May did indeed happen, and was attended by just over 250 women. We are thinking and talking about your concerns and criticisms. We are glad for your support.

We are aware that all the problems have not been ironed out and all the criticisms have not been dealt with. We see this as part of an on-going process. But, in the meantime, the work of starting a new centre must also be done.

Our time frame for the new Rape Crisis Centre is:

June 6-20: Intensive re-training session (2 weeks for us and other ex-rape crisis centre workers or women with similar experience)

June 21: Speaking to women's groups

June 26-28: National conference

June 29-July 25: Regular volunteer training session for volunteers from the May 18 meeting and friends

July 1: Move into our space and open two phone lines. Speaking to community groups

July 15: Speaking to institutions (about us)

September 15: Speaking to general audiences. Next training session

- WAVAW Rape Crisis Centre

LETTERS

Rape Relief reiterates commitment to stay open

We are writing in response to the article in the May 1982 issue of *Kinesis* written by the WAVAW/RCG. In order to respond fully, we would need 12 pages in this issue. We asked for 5 pages and were given one. A detailed reply is available by contacting Rape Relief.

This 36-page document was compiled by women from *In Struggle* and contains statements by women who have worked with us, as well as a section where we speak for ourselves.

We think that some accusations in the WAVAW/RCG article point to or hide very real political differences which we believe need to be debated by feminists even more than they have always been:

- when or whether to ally with men
- what is our responsibility to fight for classless society
- how do we best fight for women's right to sexual choice and against homophobia
- what is an effective political service
- how do we deal with splits in our collectives
- how do we deal with political differences between women's movement groups

We are pleased with the prospect of another anti-rape centre forming to provide immediate support for women as well as to "fight against violence against women on many fronts in many ways." There is room and the need in this city alone for many such centres.

Part of the work of the B.C. Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres has always been to encourage emerging rape centres. In the last few years, we have seen new centres form in Powell River, Duncan, Nanaimo, Prince George and Terrace.

However, we strongly denounce the unprincipled smears on individuals and on us as a group of women that the WAVAW group has presented as part of their announcement of existence. The major battle we all need to fight is against the government and against the male dominated system: not against each other. Our own differences need to be aired in respectful ways that allow the women's movement to flourish and grow - not to self-destruct.

It is necessary to counter some of the accusations made against us by stating a few facts about our work. For example, we have always been a woman-only collective and our position is clearly and unanimously pro-choice on abortion. We believe a woman's right to sexual choice is fundamental to our freedom. We agree to provide self-defense information or training as a way of furthering women's fight against sexist violence, and we agree to defend women who have used violence against their attacker.

Central to all our actions against rape is the belief that men, not women, are responsible for the violence they commit against us. We are committed to providing and finding options for women. Part of our work is to invent actions that directly confront men. We also provide legal and medical information and advocacy to support women who choose to go through these institutions.

The accusation that we jeopardized the funding of the anti-rape movement in B.C. is backwards. In fact, it's the government who has jeopardized the funding by demanding intolerable access to our files.

In B.C., we have always applied for money as a coalition and decided internally where it would go. At this time, our application is in for next year's funding. It has always been and remains a Coalition decision to stand firm on the issue of confidentiality and to refuse the government access to our files on the women who call us.

This position was no secret to the government officials who pushed to get more control and more information out of us. Women from Santa Cruz, California, and from as far away as Australia, as well as in other parts of Canada talk about the same battle. There is a world-wide recession going on, and as funds diminish, governments are pushing for more control over the groups they fund.

In the meantime, the provincial government, despite its earlier noises about "no interruptions in services", has announced it will not fund any rape centres until July, an action which has saved them some $60,000.

Throughout the funding crisis and throughout this new split within the movement, we have struggled to keep our centre open and our lines available. At this time, we are painfully aware that we are the only operating rape crisis centre between here and Prince George. Our first duty, again, must be to the women who call us and work with us.

Fortunately, supporters have rallied around us, making it clear that feminists and others are not abandoning us. Our supporters have included individuals, women's groups, community groups and trade unions. If you are interested in helping out, give us a call.

Joni Miller
Jiwan Fishman
Marg Panton
Valerie Ogle
Bonnie Agnew
Lee Lakeman
Nicole Kennedy
Ans Steenman
Kim Nightingale
Regina Lorek
Maureen Mills
Marie Arrington

RAPE RELIEF

We offer support to women who have been sexually assaulted, be it recently or long ago, and whether or not they report to police.

- 24 hour crisis line/7 days a week
- Emergency shelter for women and their children
- Counselling—one to one and group
- Crisis intervention
- Legal/medical information
- Support/education/action groups
- Police, Hospital, Court accompaniment and advocacy
- Third party reporting
- Community activism
- Speaking engagements—call to arrange
- Confidentiality.
- Activists welcome

WE ARE A FEMINIST COLLECTIVE OF WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN WORKING TO ERADICATE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SINCE 1973

872-8212

HERE TO STAY !

SOME STATISTICS

★ 1 woman is raped every 17 minutes in Canada
★ 1 woman in 4 will be raped sometime in her lifetime
★ 1 woman in 8 will be sexually assaulted before the age of 18
★ 54% of wives are battered
★ 60-70% of women are raped by men they know

THIS IS A POSTER
IT HAS A
RIGHT TO BE HERE

Rape is a crime of violence committed by men against women.

MEMBERS OF B.C. COALITION OF RAPE CRISIS CENTRES AND CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRES.

LETTERS

Readers respond to WAVAW/RCG letter

Kinesis:

We have read the letter published in your May/82 issue from 19 ex-Vancouver Rape Relief members regarding Vancouver Rape Relief. For the record: the Coalition of B.C. Rape Centres, including Vancouver, includes in our basis of unity the following:

- agreement that it is the function of the police and court to uphold and defend the status quo and keep women powerless. (We do not, however, deny women information about court procedure. We provide that on request, do court accompaniments and accompaniment to the police as requested. In Prince George the police informed us that they do not like women to be accompanied by an advocate as they say it makes interviewing more difficult.)
- we are pro-choice on abortion (and actively support other pro-choice organizations).
- we agree to defend women who have violently defended themselves against sexist attacks. (And do so. Consider that when you argue we support the rapist.)
- we agree to organize women against violence against women. (In so doing we engage them in a process of de-mystification which we hope will reveal the enormity of sexist repression and encourage women into active involvement in the women's movement.)

The statement about Vancouver RR and the Coalition's attitude toward lesbians is right off the wall, as is the statement regarding indoctrination in radical therapy workshops.

We are tired of hearing about the "smokescreen" of confidentiality. We'd like to know how the 19 and their supporters propose to both assure women of confidentiality and, as well, accede to government demands for access to that confidential information. We remind you it is not only Vancouver's files the government wants. Quite frankly we're tired of being called liars.

Having attended Coalition meetings (were the 19 there?), we know what Vancouver RR intended regarding money. It was to gain as much independent funding locally as possible so that they could take a lesser share of Coalition funding and thereby make more money available to other and new centres, in order that the anti-rape movement in B.C. could grow and grow stronger.

It is sad for us to see that presumably informed women are not carrying their political analysis far enough and are being tactically used by the Socred government to do that government's dirty work, i.e. debilitate the women's movement in B.C.

Divide and conquer is such an old trick. It is even more sad for us to see Vancouver RR attacked as closed and elitist. Those women individually and collectively have given a great deal of time and support, emotional and practical, to women organizing autonomous women-only anti-rape centres outside of the Lower Mainland area - a very strange practice for women who are not longer supportive of women.

Eleanor Crowe & Maureen Pfliger
Prince George Rape Assault Centre

Kinesis:

I have been involved in various ways with Vancouver Rape Relief for the past two years, both using their services and offering my own. My reaction on reading your article in last month's issue was one of total incredulity, that Rape Relief could be so maligned and misrepresented.

Political disagreements are to be expected among women's groups in Vancouver since individual perspectives are not static, and effective changes are still to be made, the nature of which we have yet barely perceived. However, there is a big difference between discussion of disagreements, or exchanging of ideas and this wanton attempt to discredit and destroy another group.

From personal experience, I find the accusations in that article to be completely unfounded. I have always been treated with respect at Rape Relief. I have been given comfort and consolation when I've needed it. My ideas have been listened to, validated and accepted. I have never been coerced into "radical therapy" workshops, nor have I ever attended any. Yet I do volunteer work on the crisis line and at the transition house.

My instructions have always been that every woman calling is to be presented with all of the available options, including offering to go to the police or through the courts if that is her choice.

I don't think this disgraceful attempt to undermine Vancouver Rape Relief will be successful, because there are just too many women out there, like myself, who have already used the services offered, and not found them to be in any way wanting.

Jacqueline B. Duffy

Kinesis:

We consider it an outrage against the whole Women's Liberation Movement that Kinesis, the publication of the Vancouver Status of Women, has seen fit to publish an attack on Vancouver Rape Relief by the WAVAW/RCG without making sure that the criticism was substantiated and documented.

It simply is not acceptable to allow one group of women and their supporters to slam another group without the critics having to spell out their differences in a way that allows us, your readers, to understand what is going on and what the political differences are.

Clearly those who have signed the statement have no concept of what principled struggle is all about, and neither has Kinesis who gives them a platform to reach readers across the country and around the world. Kinesis has permitted a clear case of trashing to take place on its pages.

As long-time readers of Kinesis and as women who consider ourselves participants in the struggle for women's liberation, we demand that Kinesis apologize for its role in this slanderous attack on Rape Relief (without substantiation, what else is it?), and that you correct your error by asking the WAVAW/RCG to withdraw its statement and to go to work on a principled document on their political disagreements with Rape Relief.

We need to know what is meant with each accusation, we need to read full documentation that would substantiate each statement, and we need to be told about the history of this particular struggle.

Until these corrections are made, Kinesis, along with WAVAW/RCG has to be seen as the most unprincipled group of women yet to emerge from the Canadian Women's Liberation Movement. Your actions discredit the whole movement.

Yours, for principled struggle,
Marjaleena Repo
Cady Williams
Peggy Smith
Antoinette Martens-Dalrymple

Kinesis:

I was very concerned after reading the article about Rape Relief, written by women wanting to form another centre, in the last issue of Kinesis. This concern is not so much because there are differences in the anti-rape movement or because of the possibility of a new centre forming. It is not the first time such a split has occurred in the anti-rape movement.

I was involved with the Montreal Rape Crisis Centre from 1976 to 1978. During this period one woman, because of a conflict between the centre and herself, formed another centre. This conflict mainly revolved around her lack of feminist understanding of the issue of rape. During her involvement at the MRCC, she had developed close contacts in the police department and in a major hospital. She had their support in seeking funding and forming a rape crisis centre.

In the past the MRCC had been publicly critical of police and hospital policies and instrumental in pressuring for changes in their procedures relating to women who had been raped. Changes were made by both these institutions which minimally ameliorated the situation. The MRCC remained critical. Obviously these institutions had vested interest in supporting another centre that would be in competition with the MRCC.

This second centre closed later when conflict developed between the director (ex-MRCC member) and her employees. Her employees refused to work with her any longer and denounced her. Needless to say, this was an exhausting and confusing period.

My concern after reading WAVAW's article was that once again conflicts were being aired in such a way as to render the women's movement vulnerable to manipulation by the government and its institutions or that two groups would compete for the same funding, bait to splinter the women's movement. It is clear to me that whatever the conflicts, we must stay united against those forces that have it in their interest to divide and weaken us as a political force.

This is not to say that the conflicts are not important or do not need to be dealt with. The printing of WAVAW's article is again evidence to me that we do not have adequate ways of clarifying or resolving such conflict within the women's movement. Also, despite the particulars surrounding the specific conflict, there are often underlying political questions that need to be addressed.

One recurring question in the anti-violence against women movement has been individual crisis work vs. political action as a priority. Since my experience in Montreal, I have thought that there needs to be dialogue between the anti-violence against women groups and the women's movement generally on questions such as:

- What is the role of individual crisis support within the women's movement?
- How do we do this type of support?
- Do we operate on a traditional social service model?
- How do we ensure the quality of this support?
- Do we work with the legal system and police?
- If so, how?
- What type of political actions do we take on rape as a feminist issue?

As women become involved in resolving the present situation, it is important to keep

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LETTERS

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in mind that the existing rape crisis centres in B.C. are struggling financially to continue their services. Doing this and working through the present crisis is no easy task.

Augusta Lokhorst

Kinesis:

I was a member of Vancouver Rape Relief for three years from fall 1978 to fall 1981. During this time I had some great times and some horrible times. When I left I was the first in several years who left without deep bitterness and fear.

I left mainly because I wanted to make a full commitment to Women Against Nuclear Technology, but I was also sick and tired of crisis work. There was a major political disagreement between myself and some of the members of the collective when I left (but it was not one of the reasons I left). As far as I know they have not changed their minds over this issue so we are still in disagreement.

Whenever I was in disagreement with some of the members it was often scary and painful, yet I never lost sight that it was either with one woman or several, but never the whole collective. When the WAVAW/RCG letter appeared I could have named who they were talking about in the collective. I didn't need to see the dossier to know who they were talking about.

During the entire three years at Rape Relief there was always one or more members that I disliked or didn't really want to work with, which meant I had to work hard at working collectively with them. Despite all this I refuse to bring my dislikes, judgements or major disagreements into the media arena. If women want to know what my disagreements are with women at Rape Relief and the mistakes I made during my time there I will tell them.

Because I might dislike or disagree politically with one or several women in the collective, there is no reason to trash any group. It only serves to create an either/or situation which perpetuates our own misogyny and serves "the man" in keeping us busy fighting each other.

When I look at the list of women who signed the WAVAW/RCG letter who were former members of the support, education, and action groups, not one was from the group I facilitated for a year. This indicates not everyone who has had contact with members of Rape Relief has been unhappy with their contact.

Certainly I have made mistakes with the women's community and with women who called the crisis line while with Rape Relief but through my mistakes I learned and got better at my job.

No matter how much disagreement we have as feminists I still find more unity within feminist groups than the world at large.

Overall, I found my years at Rape Relief a tremendous growth experience. I came knowing feminism from a book and left knowing feminism from my heart and from other women's lives. I came to Rape Relief as a lesbian and left with a political analysis of lesbianism and for the first time in my life a supportive lesbian community.

My hope is that women in Vancouver will stop themselves and each other from tearing apart the delicate fabric of a political and social community which we have worked so hard to build. We need all of us to be doing the work that is so vitally needed when there are so few of us doing it.

Krin Zook

Other comments:

I'm glad of your dedication - I think it's a necessary and cohesive force for the community. I'm impressed by the consistently high level of analysis and quality of writing. Great! (Ruth Fahlman)

Congratulations on excellent work. I would like to see more articles on religion and spirituality in the lives of women. Later this year, I would be willing to write on my present research into organizations which promote the submission of women. (Kathleen Storrie)

Just another letter from another satisfied customer!! It's great to receive Kinesis. Being in an isolated community in the North West Territories, Kinesis makes me feel just a little less "out of touch". The women's movement here by the way is alive and well. Keep up the good work and send some spring up this way! (Marina Quilty)

Incest issue well done. It appears you're all doing fine work and I certainly enjoy the outcome. You have my support and appreciation. (Ms. C. Frost)

S & M illustrates complexity of individual experience

Kinesis:

This is to clarify a couple of points raised by R. Elaine Young's reaction to your acceptance of an ad for S/M photography. There were two distinct points raised in Elaine's letter, and in your response: (1) whether or not a feminist paper should accept classified ads pertaining to S/M behaviour between women, and (2) whether or not S/M behaviour is acceptable to a feminist sensibility.

While the two questions are closely linked, there is a crucial difference between them. The answer to the first is based on the editorial judgement of a specific publication; the second is answered by personal preference and analysis. I agree that the personal is political, but I am concerned that feminist analyses might become so rigid that the radical complexity of individual experience and identity will be lost.

Cy-Thea Sand

Caught in the crossfire: a view from within

by Vancouver Status of Women staff

This month, Rape Relief responds to the WAVAW/RCG letter which appeared in the last issue of Kinesis. We have given Rape Relief one page (i.e. equal space) in which to respond.

Many letters have also come in response to the WAVAW/RCG letter. Because of space limitations, we cannot print all the letters we received; however, we have selected a representative sampling.

Because of the furor created by the WAVAW/RCG letter, some of which has been directed at Kinesis, we (the staff of VSW) think it appropriate to explain why we chose to print the WAVAW/RCG letter, and what we see as Kinesis' role in the feminist community.

At Kinesis, we start from the premise that feminist women have a right to space in a feminist newspaper, and that Kinesis has a responsibility to print submissions relating to issues within the feminist community.

In taking on the WAVAW/RCG letter, we had to decide which was worse - to stifle what was happening between WAVAW/RCG and Rape Relief by refusing to print WAVAW/RCG's submission (censorship, in effect) or to print the letter in order that the differences might finally resolve themselves as a result.

We did ask for substantiation of the charges in the letter, and went ahead satisfied that the letter-writers could document their allegations about Rape Relief. The fact that most, if not all, of the signers of that letter are respected and active members of this feminist community also influenced our decision to print the letter.

Some readers have questioned why Rape Relief was not given a chance to respond to WAVAW/RCG in the same issue. We refer these readers to the July/August 1981 issue of Kinesis where Kinesis policy regarding publication of responses is set out, along with a history of how we came to that decision.

Briefly, we do not strive for simultaneous publication (unless the parties have communicated about the criticism and both get articles in by copy deadline). The mechanics of newspaper production simply do not allow otherwise, for heated and time-consuming negotiations invariably occur when a controversial article like this one appears.

To out-of-town readers who feel that Kinesis should have provided background information to the WAVAW/RCG letter, let us reiterate that this controversy is not a new one, but in fact has been going on for nearly three years in the pages of Kinesis. It simply is not possible for us to provide an update each time a new chapter in the debate appears in print. For the information of new readers, the following issues of Kinesis contain articles and letters pertaining to this debate: September/October 79, November 79, December/January 80, February 80, April 80, November 80, December/January 81, February 81, April 81, June 81, July/August 81, September/October 81, and of course May 82.

As we see it, there is no middle ground in this controversy, and that has put Kinesis in a very difficult position in attempting to cover it. We will continue to print submissions from either side, but we don't want to see Kinesis become a battleground, where "dialogue" has become offensive vs. defensive.

There are important issues underlying this controversy, and they need to be taken up by all members of the community. Kinesis will keep you informed of debate, but in the end it is you, the readers, who must decide the controversy, not us. It is not our role.

Finally, bear in mind that Kinesis is responsible for covering many feminist issues. The space we devote to any one issue is something we do control, and we intend to maintain balance in our coverage of issues. As one of the letters in this issue points out, it may be that we need to find other means (in addition to Kinesis) to air grievances or carry on public debate within our community.

For readers who wish to contact either WAVAW/RCG or Rape Relief for further information, their addresses are as follows:

WAVAW/RCG	Rape Relief
#510-810 W. Broadway	77 E. 20th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C.	Vancouver, B.C.

BULLETIN BOARD

WIN News

EVENTS

WOMEN'S MARIMBA ENSEMBLE SUKUTAI (sister group of Gwinyai) from Seattle will play Saturday, June 19, 8 p.m. at Mount Pleasant Community Centre, 16th & Ontario. Benefit dance for Southern Africa Action Coalition. Admission $6 employed, $5 unemployed. For info call 734-1712.

3rd ANNUAL NORTHWEST WOMEN'S FESTIVAL June 18-20 at Kispiox Valley Rodeo Grounds in Hazelton, B.C. Fee $12/woman, $18/women with children. For info/registration, write Three Rivers Women, Box 497, Hazelton, B.C. V0J 1Y0 or call 872-6033.

SINGLE MOTHER'S WORKSHOPS, a series sponsored by South Surrey-White Rock Women's Place, 821 Kent St., White Rock. June workshops inlcude:

June 7 & 9 - *Budgeting* by P. Muggeridge
June 14 & 16 - *Standing up for Yourself* by Fiona Old
June 21 & 24 - *Education and Job Opportunities* by Dawn Glazier and Janet Patterson
June 28 & 30 - *Coping with Stress* by Yaya D'Andrade.
Fee: $7 for series. Free child care provided. These are daytime workshops. Call 536-9611 for more information.

CELEBRATE SUMMER SOLSTICE on Vancouver Island. Women's dance Saturday, June 19 8 p.m. at Errington Hall. Picnic and softball Sunday, June 20, starting at noon at Rathtrevor Park just south of Parksville. Camping at nearby Englishman River Falls. To get to Errington, go to Parksville, take the Port Alberni Hwy turnoff, follow signs to Englishman River Falls. The Errington Hall is 1½ miles off the highway on the way to the Falls, on the left after the general store. For further info call Mary or Sylvie at 248-9380.

ROBIN TYLER, Lesbian-feminist comedian at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre from June 14 to June 19. Monday thru Thursday at 8:30, Friday and Saturday at 6:30 and 9:30. Tickets available at Ariel, Octopus East, and the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. Monday thru Thursday $7.50, Friday and Saturday $8.50.

WOMEN & TRANSFORMATION, a conference sponsored by Antioch, July 23-25 in Seattle. The conference will explore the spiritual and political aspects of feminism and their synthesis. Susan Griffiths is the keynote speaker. Conference fee $75 ($6 for Friday evening with Susan Griffiths) Childcare provided at nominal cost. For info/tickets, call Antioch (206)323-2270.

THE FUTURE IS NOW, a conference on women and the impact of microtechnology, June 25-27 in Ottawa. VSW has a pamphlet and registration form - phone us at 873-1427 for details.

LAVENDER-ORCHID BALL, Saturday June 26, 9 p.m. at Mount Pleasant Community Centre, 16th & Ontario. Sponsored by Lesbian Information Line. Admission $5, advance tickets available at Ariel Books, the Vancouver Women's Bookstore, and Octopus East. Wheelchair accessible. For daycare or other info, call LIL at 734-1016, Thursday or Sunday, 7-10 p.m. Also, crew needed to clean up after dance at 1 a.m. for $12/hr. Call LIL for info.

2nd CANADIAN CONFERENCE ON DAYCARE will be held in Winnipeg September 23-25. Sponsored by the Canadian Council on Social Development and Health and Welfare Canada. For a preliminary program and registration forms, write Lyse Teasdale, Conference Co-ordinator, Canadian Council on Social Development, 55 Parkdale Ave., P.O. Box 3505, Station C, Ottawa, K1Y 4G1, or phone (613) 728-1865.

JUST OUT

RISING UP STRONG: Women in the 80's by Linda Briskin and Lorna Weir. 3/4" videocassette, 60 min., colour, 1981. *Part I: At Work and At Home, Part II: Control of Our Bodies* (each part 30 min.). Examines current issues in the women's movement. For more info, contact DEC Films, 427 Bloor St. W., Toronto M5S 1X7 (tel: (416) 964-6901) or Linda Briskin/Lorna Weir, 314 Lauder Ave., Toronto M6E 3H6 (tel: (416) 651-0720). Rental $25-$45 each, sale $250 each.

Pornography - A Women's Issue, 3/4" videocassette, colour; and *"Not a Love Story: A Film About Pornography" - A Discussion Guide*, booklet. Designed to be used as a kit, this tape and booklet offer suggestions, from a feminist analysis of the issue, for how to deal with questions and issues raised by the film *Not a Love Story*. Produced by Pat Feindel and Gayla Reid. Contact Vancouver Status of Women for further information.

MEDIA FROM IDERA, 2524 Cypress St., Van.
A Common Assault, slide/tape, 35 min., col. sale price $200. Produced by Peg Campbell.
A Sign of Affection, videotape, B&W, 25 min., sale price $100. Produced by Peg Campbell.
A Rule of Thumb, videotape, B&W, 25 min., sale price $100. Produced by Peg Campbell.
Women in Arms, 16 mm. film, colour, 59 min., rental $50-$100, inquire for sale price. Produced by Victoria Schultz.
South Africa Belongs to Us, 16 mm. film, colour, 55 min., rental $30-$60, inquire for sale price. Produced by Chris Austen, Peter Chappell and Ruth Weiss.
You Have Struck a Rock (on South African women), 16 mm. film, colour, 28 min., rental $30-$60, inquire for sale price. Produced by Deborah May.

LESBIAN/LESBIENNE a coast-to-coast publication by, for and about lesbians. We aim to be monthly and bilingual, and will print articles, reviews, poetry, etc. but our main purpose is to be a "news" letter. We need contacts from everywhere in English Canada and Quebec, i.e. womyn who are willing to be responsible for sending us the news in their area, city, town or village. Send subs, news and suggestions to: P.O. Box 70, Stn. F Toronto, Ont. Subs $5/year, institutions $10/yr.

CANADA-LATIN AMERICA is the theme of the latest issue of Connexions (Vol. 7 #2), Canada's grassroots resource journal. Individual copies $3, subs $12/5 issues from Connexions, 427 Bloor Street W., Toronto, Ontario M5S 1X7.

THE RADICAL REVIEWER'S Spring 1982 issue is out! It features an interview with Anne Cameron, poetry by local women artists Alleson Kase, Valerie Lamb, Kirsten Emmott and Bet Cecil, and an essay on the problems facing Canadian women writers by Montreal poet Sharon H. Nelson. Available at local bookstores, or subscribe by sending $5 for 3 issues to P.O. Box 24953, Stn. C, Vancouver.

ON THE AIR

WOMANVISION on Co-op Radio, 102.7 FM, from 7:00-8:00pm each Monday. No programme available at press time.

THE LESBIAN SHOW on Co-op Radio, 102.7 FM, each Thursday from 7:30-8:30pm.

June 3- Canadian Lesbian music.
June 10- Lesbians talk about their fathers in this feature on lesbian daughter/father interaction.
June 17- Love. Some of us fall flat on our faces in love, while others grow to love certain women in relationships that become more intense with time.
June 24- What could be the sequel to love but Breaking Up? If you have a broken heart write Aunt Lizzie (c/o The Lesbian Show, 337 Carrall St., Vancouver V6B 2J4) for advice. We'll answer your letter over the air.

RUBYMUSIC on CO-Op Radio, 102.7 FM, from 7:00-7:30pm each Friday. No programme available at press time.

For fans of country music tune in to Co-op Radio's BACK IN THE SADDLE on June 16 at 9:30pm for a feature on Women In Old Time Music.

CLASSIFIED

MEDIA WATCH is looking for women wishing to become actively involved in issues of sexism in the media (TV, radio, print). Those interested are invited to attend a meeting June 16, 7:30 p.m. Alesia Lawrence, False Creek Terrace, 1070 W. 7th Ave., Apt. B1, Vancouver.

LESBIANS AGAINST THE RIGHT (LAR). We have printed our first pamphlet focussing on the speeches given at the May 9, 1981 Lesbian Forum which was the founding meeting of LAR, an autonomous lesbian-feminist group. With photographs. Send $2.50 plus 50¢ mailing and handling charges to P.O. Box 70, Station F, Toronto.

WANTED: non-sexist, progressive adults to share accommodation, either to buy a large house or triplex, or rent. I have a 4-year-old daughter. Call Jeanne at 522-8094, or leave a message at 525-8136.

SHARED ACCOMMODATION at 33rd & Rupert, $250/month. Call 874-7915 for more info.

CARAL (Canadian Abortion Rights Action League) is asking for donations to launch legal action against Joe Borowski's fight to deny safe, legal abortion to Canadian women. Send cheques to CARAL, P.O. Box 935, Toronto, Ont. M4T 9Z9.