# INSIDE


**2** "Single moms grow stronger" especially when they go to the Single Mothers Symposium. Our roving reporters attended three workshops

**7** South Africa: an over due tribute to a prolonged struggle. Black women under apartheid endure triple oppression

**9** The women of Northern Ireland are not new to struggle or hardship. Nonetheless, Armagh Prison is taking its toll.

**10** Pensions: something we ignore until it's too late. Reform is happening now and women should be a part of it

**11** Childbearing becomes a social responsibility with the victory of CUPW workers. What are the implications? How did it happen?

**14** From coffeehouse poets to circus sculpture, we focus on Women in Focus — the gallery where women's culture is celebrated

**16** Media Watch is down on the tube. . .the television tube, that is. Don't just tear out your hair, fill in the form and let the network know how you feel

**18** Music and culture are explored at the West Coast Women's Festival. And so are racism and classism. Two views remind us of the diversity in our movement

**21** Circles and cycles: a how-to page on some little known skills

**24** "Daughters of Copper Woman", the new book from Press Gang, pays respect to the native Society of Women.


COVER: Strong woman in "Circus", an exhibition of clay sculpture by Persimmon Blackbridge.

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NOVEMBER '81


# KINESIS

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**news about women that's not in the dailies**

## CIRCUS

by

**Persimmon Blackbridge**

## CONFERENCES

# Single mothers share strength and renewal

by Diane Morrison & Evelyn Hollander

In 1981 there were over 30,000 single parent mothers in Metro Vancouver. More than half of these single parent women live below the poverty line; nearly 40% are on welfare.

This was just some of the information presented at the Third Annual Single Mothers Symposium, held October 16-18 at the Vancouver YWCA. Its theme was "single moms are growing stronger".

Nearly 100 women, capacity for this yearly event, met to exchange and develop resources, express needs, gain suport and friendship, and renew feelings of dignity and self-respect.

More than fifteen workshops were held during the three days of the symposium. This article will feature three: Alternative Lifestyles, Sex and the Single Mother, and Dealing with Human Resources and Welfare.

### Shared parenting can work

Housing being what it is in Vancouver, much of the discussion in the Alternate Lifestyles workshop was about shared housing. It seems to be one of the only ways single mothers can afford adequate accomodation.

Large houses suitable for co-ops, or existing co-ops with available space, are hard to find. Some local organizations to check with are Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Columbia Housing, the Community Alternatives Society, and Inner City Housing. The YWCA is also looking into co-op housing for single parents. Women interested in co-op living are advised to get themselves on as many co-op waiting lists as possible.

Darlyne Jewett

Women present at the workshop thought that if the right dynamics exist in a co-operative living arrangement, the system is a good one. Sharing the care of children, and receiving support from other single parents who have similar experiences and understanding, can be rewarding, and it provides more opportunity for a mother to nurture her "single" self.

It's not all roses, of course. Resentment and jealousy sometime develop among children of different families over not wanting to share mom, or comparing parental attention.

To what extent single mothers should expect a love partner to share in parenting support is less clear. Shared parenting can put a lot of strain on a relationship.

Most women felt it was important for children to have men to relate to. For a long time men have had the privilege of leisure time to play with kids, and single mothers don't need to be hasty in giving away to men "special times" with their children. But with societal roles changing so much, it's good for kids to see men involved in "non-traditional" situations. Men can provide a different and important point of view for children.

Nancy Jackson, facilitator of this workshop (along with Mary Schendlinger), commented that never before have women been expected to work, raise children, and create a healthy home atmosphere on so few resources. Jackson sees the trend to childrearing in "extended family" situations, with women creatively exploring alternate lifestyles, as a very good thing.

### But what about men?

The workshop on Sex and the Single Mother was led by Pearl Denny, a family skills counsellor for pregnant teenagers. Denny asked mothers to examine their pasts for messages and attitudes which had been communicated to them about unmarried women.

She urged them to shed the negative attitudes with which they had been indoctrinated, and to accept themselves and their sexuality in a positive way. "That's easy to say," replied one mother, "but how can I be liberated when I have to deal with unliberated men?"

Women brought up stumbling blocks they had encountered in their efforts to achieve good relationships, sexually and otherwise: men's frequent incapacity to show simple affection, feelings on the part of some that a woman cannot be sexual if she is also a mother, interference and jealousy of children. Suggestions which emerged from the discussion ranged from not involving the children in a relationship until it has become more solid to organizing co-op babysitting.

### Control of our lives—in spite of GAIN

With the recent cutbacks and reclassifications of women on welfare, Dealing with Human Resources and Welfare was a hot issue at the symposium. Marilyn Callahan and Marjorie Martin led this workshop, as well as Saturday afternoon forum (attended by more than 35 women) on the same topic.

The real goal for women who are on welfare, according to Callahan and Martin, is for them to come out of isolation and find out what options there are and how to access them. Then, armed with information, they are more able to take an active role in decision-making and financial independence.

One tool provided to women at this symposium was a booklet co-authored by Martin and Callahan called *Welfare Rights and GAIN*. The booklet, which is distributed by Vancouver People's Law School, is a good, step-by-step summary of welfare law and how to apply for assistance.

In familiarizing women with the book, Callahan and Martin emphasized that welfare regulations and policy are not simply decided at the whim of the government, they are law, as embodied in the provincial GAIN (Guaranteed Available Income for Need) Act. "An ironic title," says Callahan, "given that welfare seems to be neither guaranteed, available, nor sufficient to meet needs."

Martin and Callahan, in the workshop, described a recent program of the Ministry of Human Resources called the Individual Opportunity Plan (IOP). This program is supposed to help people evaluate career goals, personal skills, re-training options and job hunting techniques, leading eventually to a paying job. However, Martin stressed that that goal doesn't have to be met quickly. A two year, or even a five year plan might be eminently reasonable.

For one of the realities expressed often by single mothers is the need to re-enter the work force slowly because of the very real workload that mothering already imposes on them, and because children's needs also have to be taken into account. Day care subsidies are possible, though not necessarily automatic, under this program.

Getting on the plan may help some women retain the higher welfare rate, but Martin advised that mothers consider the IOP only if outside employment is a feasible and desired goal. Other means, such as appeal of re-classification, may be the best route for mothers who decide it is best to stay home with their children.

There are twenty-three groups for single parents in the Greater Vancouver area, and a number of single mothers attending the symposium represented these groups, some newly formed. Organizing and collective action is rife in this heretofore powerless sector, and from what we saw at the Single Mothers Symposium, we can only echo Marilyn Callahan, who said, "Power to the people ... power to women!" ♀

**KINESIS**

KINESIS is published ten times a year by Vancouver Status of Women. Its objectives are to enhance understanding about the changing position of women in society and work actively towards achieving social change.

VIEWS EXPRESSED IN KINESIS are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect VSW policy. All unsigned material is the responsibility of the Kinesis editorial group.

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Our new phone number is 873-1427.

# ACROSS B.C.

## Welfare Coalition seeks support

The Welfare Rights Coalition is seeking support in its efforts to stop welfare cutbacks.

The Coalition is composed of people on welfare, including seniors, single parents, handicapped people, the unemployed and the underemployed, and their supporters.

They say that cutbacks in social assistance will cause great hardship. Shelter allowances are minimal at a time when housing is costly. Support allowances are likewise minimal: $295/month for a single parent with one child, and up to $205 for a single parent. Monthly payments to adults who are reclassified as "employable" would be reduced by $55 under the new regime.

The Minister of Human Resources, Grace McCarthy, is insisting that "employables" find work at a time when Manpower training programs have been drastically cut back, and with a day care system which cannot possibly absorb the children of parents forced off welfare.

The Coalition's strategy for the immediate future is to broaden its base, as well as encouraging and providing support for welfare recipients to officially appeal cutbacks.

People on assistance cannot be cut back during the process of appeal, and the Coalition hopes that large numbers of appeals will convince both the government and the general public that these cutbacks will have a devastating effect on recipients.

Their next meeting is Nov. 4 at 1 pm, at South Vancouver Family Place, 4932 Victoria. Help say no to welfare cutbacks! ♀

## Campuses define harassment

Post-secondary institutes in B.C. held a week-long campaign highlighting the problem of sexual harassment on campuses October 5-9.

Campuses distributed to students a two-page survey, prepared by the B.C. Students Federation. The survey defines sexual harassment as "unwanted or unreciprocated sexual advance in the forms of comment, looks, suggestions, or physical contact possibly sexual proposition or sexual assault which can cause mental or physical anguish."

Because of statistical problems, the survey will be used for information purposes only. *(The Gohard, Sept 24/81)* ♀

## Contract breakthrough for VDT workers

Employees at the Open Learning Institute in Richmond have achieved a breakthrough clause in their new contract. OLI workers are members of the B.C. Government Employees Union (BCGEU).

The clause, covering video display terminals (VDTs), gives pregnant workers the option of being transferred away from the terminals, and provides 10-minute rest breaks each hour for workers who are regularly exposed to VDTs.

It also stipulates that the employer pay for eye examinations for workers using VDTs, and for any protective eyewear that may be required to work on these machines.

This is the first contract the BCGEU has negotiated which acknowledges the potential dangers of VDTs. *(Van Sun, Sept/81)*♀

## Give Eaton's "Fashion Miss" a miss

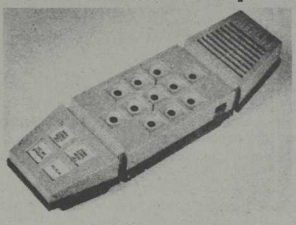
**Irwin's Crayon fashion make-up just like the big girls. For your little fashion miss**

Following swiftly on the bat wings of Hallowe'en comes the big push for Christmas shopping.

And part of Eaton's campaign this year are full-page newspaper ads for children's gifts...stereotypical as ever.

For the "little fashion miss" we have Irwins fashion make-up ("just like the big girls"). The kit includes "a complete set of fashion make-up for hours of fun ...choose from two shades of lipstick, nail polish, eye shadow, lipgloss and blush" (each $3.59).

**Boys get ready for challenge. Match wits with Parker's Merlin a most remarkable computer!**



Boys, meanwhile, "get ready for challenge" and "match wits" with a remarkable intelligent computer" that "tests "strategy, memory, logic and skill" ($32.99).

Also advertised are dolls ($7.99 through $27.99), bake shops ($27.99) and stitch kits ($9.99) for girls, and building sets ($32.99), work benches ($12.99) and robots ($23.99) for boys.

If you have some suggestions for Eaton's and their advertising directors, call or write Ms. Bewley at Eaton's, 712 Robson Street, Vancouver.

## NDP women move on childcare, rights of older women

B.C. NDP's provincial convention last month passed a number of resolutions which, when acted upon, will add to the momentum that feminists have created around a number of important issues, among them rights of older women, child care, and technological change. At the convention, the Women's Rights Committee proposed, and received approval on, the following resolutions:

- that the Women's Rights Committee take responsibility for the development and implementation of policy designed to meet the needs and concerns of older women, with top priority to be given to concrete proposals for action in the areas of finances, employment, housing and health in the years 1981-82
- that the BC NDP reaffirm (its) 1973 policy of community-controlled childcare which is free, universally accessible, and available at any time of the day or night
- that childcare be the responsibility of a single Ministry, the Ministry of Education, and that a special (childcare) division be created within that Ministry
- that specific responsibility for childcare be removed from the jurisdiction of the Women's Rights Committee (of the NDP) and given to the Education policy committee
- that an NDP government (if elected) would set an example for other employers by implementing the concept of equal pay for work of equal value in government funded jobs
- that the Women's Rights Committee of the NDP establish a working group to undertake an in depth study of the social, political and economic implications of technological change, in particular as it relates to the present and future situation of women in the workforce, and report to the 1982 convention with proposals for political actions to resolve these problems.

The Women's Rights Committee put forward a number of other resolutions which they hope will be dealt with during the coming year by the provincial executive.

For more information about specific resolutions proposed by the Women's Rights Committee, or for a free copy of the Report of the NDP Task Force on Older women, contact the NDP Provincial Office, 517 East Broadway, Vancouver. ♀

## Cartoons, graphics wanted

A collective in Nelson, B.C. is making a list of artists interested in contributing to social change.

Here's the idea: if you draw cartoons and illustrations on current social issues, and mail them to the co-ordinator, Anne Orcas, she will mail them out to newsletters and papers in the province.

A mailing list is being developed of interested groups and papers. For more details, write Anne Orcas, #1-723 Hendryx Street, Nelson, B.C. V1L 2B1. ♀

## Law should protect women, children

A Burnaby woman has appeared before Burnaby municipal council asking for their support in pressuring for changes in rape and murder laws, to prevent a re-occurrence of the series of violent murders which hit the Lower Mainland this summer. She has also written to member of the United Nations asking for their support.

Barbara Gudmundson thinks that lifetime incarceration of people convicted of violent rape and murder, and changes to the trial system to increase the rate of conviction, will serve to better protect women and children.

Gudmundson is asking for support for her campaign. Write: B. Gudmundson, c/o Ted McNabb, Internal Relations Officers, SFU Student Society, Burnaby, B.C.

# ACROSS CANADA

## Geologist proves wrongful dismissal

A female geologist, dismissed in 1978 by Eldorado Nuclear from a summer geological survey camp in Northern Quebec, has been awarded $9,500 by an independent human rights tribunal.

The tribunal found that Marthe Archambault's dismissal had been motivated partially or totally by her sex, and was therefore discriminatory according to section 7 of the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Archambault and another student, Isabelle Cadieux, were the only two women in a party of 15 based 180 miles northwest of Schefferville, Quebec. Both were dismissed ostensibly because their tent was used for informal parties which disturbed some employees. None of the male participants were cautioned or disciplined.

The tribunal observed that the real motive for Archambault's dismissal was that, having dismissed Cadieux for disciplinary reasons, the camp director felt that the presence of only one woman could cause quarrels among the men. *(Woman Today)*

## Garment workers strike for contract

An 18-day strike of garment workers in Winnipeg's Notre Dame Tan Jay plant ended in victory August 18. The 120 strikers, of whom 105 are immigrant women, are members of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.

Their new contract includes wage increases, increased maternity benefits, enforcement of the existing overtime clause, notification of impending layoffs, and a "bridging of service" clause guaranteeing seniority gains to Tan Jay workers (there are three Tan Jay factories in Winnipeg) who need to take a leave of absence from work.

Management refused, however, to agree to a sexual harassment clause, which organizers see as essential in the garment industry, with its preponderance of immigrant workers. Unskilled and semi-skilled immigrant women form fourteen percent of garment workers nationally, and the percentage is even higher in Manitoba.

Immigrant workers are vulnerable to exploitation at the workplace for many reasons. But one big threat is the 1978 Immigration Act, under which immigrant workers who dare to protest and organize for better wages and working conditions, can be harassed and even deported from the country.

Tan Jay also forced the union to back down on a previously won right to organize in any plant a former shareholder might establish. The new clause stipulates only that this particular plant will remain unionized if the plant should relocate.

The plant's previous contract expired March 31, 1981. Workers went without a contract for over two months while union representatives bargained with Peter Nygard, Tan Jay's owner. On June 7, the company finally agreed to the union's demands.

However, Nygard then proceeded to sit on the contract for seven weeks, refusing to talk to the union. When he did, it was to try to make changes to the already agreed upon contract -- among other things, insisting that the union seniority clause go, and that any increases in minimum wage would be counted as part of negotiated wage increases.

In August, the workers went on strike to force the company to sign the contract. For eighteen days they maintained solidarity in the face of intimidation and threats, until the company was forced to concede defeat. (info from *Herizons, September 15/81)*

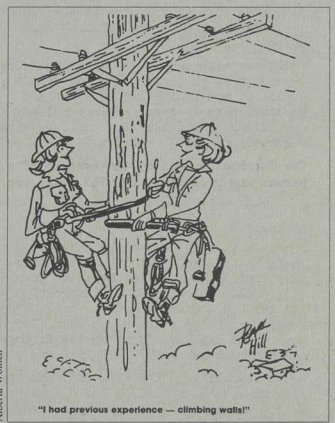
## Midwifery supporters petition festival

A petition lobbying for the recognition of midwives was signed by more than 30 women at this year's Northwest Women's Festival.

The petition, organized by the Maternal Health Society, supports the legislation and recognition of midwifery "as an important complement to the existing obstetrical services, and to provide safe alternatives for our birthing population."

In B.C. a number of groups are lobbying for change in the law, including several childbirth associations who believe that midwifery is "an essential service that provides equality of choice."

Over 200 women attended the 2nd Northwest Women's Festival held in Kispiox, B.C. As well as the midwifery workshop, women attended other events and seminars such as: the safe use of chain saws, native women, the collective process, medicinal plants, and self-worth. *(Northern Times)*



Alberta Women

"I had previous experience — climbing walls!"

## Women students caucus for support

OTTAWA (CUP) -- Sexism is alive and well, and present in post-secondary institutions across the country, agree 50 women representatives from student councils.

This was the consensus at a women's caucus, held at the opening of the founding conference of the Canadian Federation of Students October 14.

The closed caucus served an educative role and was a personal forum for the women participants. "Having a women's caucus gives me encouragement to face the struggle, meeting people who are going through the same issues I am," said Catherine Glen, of the Carleton University Women's Centre.

"As we develop, we do it alone, there's not a type of networking," said Glen. "We don't have a role model and that type of thing (struggling alone) gets discouraging."

Lorraine Mitchell, executive officer of the Federation of Alberta Students (FAS) suggested that women begin "to examine their own level of leadership." This would include determining the political structures of a student administration, where women fit in, who makes the important decisions, and who does the actual work.

Of the fifty women present (more than 75 per cent of the total female delegates) only four were presidents of their councils. Many were external vice-presidents.

Esther Tailfeathers, of the Alberta Native Students Association, described the Indian society in which she lived as based on remnants of the old culture. She said those who have power, the middle-aged population, were reared in a sexist society. "This is where women have a certain role and men have a dominant role."

"I just hate it because I'm not taken seriously. I think the worst thing is the attitude," said Tailfeathers.

Delegates expressed their frustration in dealing with means of combating sexism. "You can't legislate attitudes," said Paula Sypnowich, of the McGill Women's Union.

The participants agreed a process of education was a primary goal.

Citing heterosexism as a problem of lesbians and gays, Kerry Burke, an Ontario Federation of Students fieldworker, said one of the tools culture uses against women forming in groups is the whole phenomenon of rape and violence against women. Another tool is abuse hurled at women for participating in women's affairs, for example, men assuming that they are all 'dykes'.

Not only were men's attitudes criticized, but also those of some women. "Sometimes our straight sisters turn against us because they are afraid to be labelled dykes," said Burke.

"Women who gather in groups really scare society, which benefits a certain part of the male population," said one delegate.

Janet Mrenica, external vice-president of the Concordia students' association, said the caucus "provided one of the best forums for personal scenario. It was a reflection of what most women face in the university, college and CEGEP set-up." ♀

## Alberta programs push trades skill trading

Jack Bredin Community Institute is a private, non-profit organization which provides an opportunity for women to acquire skills in traditionally "feminine", as well as non-traditional, occupations. The Pre-Employment Carpentry Program, funded by the federal government and operated by the Institute, caters to the special needs of women. Lasting six months, it teaches women how to identify and use carpentry tools effectively in order to attain a more competitive position in the labour force.

Courses function in the same manner as in the work place, in both hours and instruction. For more information contact: Jack Bredin Community Institute, 12604-126 Street, Edmonton, Alberta. T5L 1C8.

Also in Alberta, the Agriculture department in co-operation with Alberta Advanced Education and Manpower, has created the Green Certificate Program. The program aims to train individuals to fill key positions in the agricultural industry, such as general farm operators, farm herders, and owner-operators. Past experience has shown the program rewarding for both women and farmers.

The Canada Employment Centre will sponsor women in this course. *(Alberta Women)*

# ACROSS CANADA

## Daycare coalitions spark action across the country

It's called Action Day Care in Toronto, Action Child Care in Saskatoon, and Action Coalition here in B.C. But by whatever name, in the past year these organizations have tried to deliver what they promise: some action on the present crisis in good day care.

In Saskatchewan supporters held a public dialogue on the need for day care and rallied outside the site of the NDP convention in November 1980. They initiated the rally to demonstrate support for stable, high-quality day care, one which they say should not be dependent on parent volunteer labour or charity.

They point to the underlying problem evident in government's attitude towards child care:

*"...an assumption that day care is an individual family responsibility instead of a social responsibility -- parents must pay all the operating costs of their children's day care .... We in Saskatchewan don't think one's income should determine one's health care. Why does our government insist on treating child care this way?"*

They also challenge the tendency to consider day care as a makeshift temporary need. *"The idea of quickly renovating church basements and hence establishing cheap centres is totally out of kilter with reality -- the need for day care is widespread and long-lasting."*

In Toronto, day care activists held their rally on October 16 of this year. The

group plans to present a brief to Metro Council, and to sponsor a Phone Drea Today campaign. (Frank Drea is the Minister of Community and Social Services in Ontario).

Their campaign centres on the Direct Grant demand: that government provide direct grants to non-profit day care centres proportionate to every child enrolled, regardless of whether that child receives a subsidy or not.

The Toronto group uses the example of a parent who presently pays $12 a day for a pre-schooler. The government could contribute an extra $5 a day to the daycare to be put toward increasing day care workers' salaries and reducing parents' fees. They say that fees in Ontario now range from $2,600 to $6,400 a year -- still not an affordable figure for most working parents.

A very similar proposal is the focus of the B.C. Daycare Action Coalition.

This newly-formed group believes that women have a right to work outside of the home and therefore daycare is a necessary service. They want to see high quality daycare available to every child and family in B.C. who wants it.

"Every child should enter the daycare on an equal basis," says Rita Chudnovsky of the Action Coalition, "not some subsidized, some not." After all, as she points out, it's similar to balance billing. Right now, even subsidized parents are forced to pay some of the expense out of pocket. When we were billed for our health care in the same way, we protested loudly.

Some other concerns of this group are that child care be available on a 24-hour basis and that we see an increase in the present pitiful salaries of day care staff.

If you would like to get involved with the B.C. Daycare Action Coalition, plan to attend their meetings on the first Thursday of every month (held at different locations). The next meeting will be at Douglas College, Room 706, at 7:30 on November 5th. Contact Rita Chudnovsky at 521-4851 for information. ♀

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## RCMP implicated in Quebec firing of 'Pratt Three'

The Pratt Three Defense Committee is asking for financial help in its campaign to have three Quebec women who were fired for political reasons re-instated in their jobs.

Pratt and Whitney of Longueuil, Quebec is a multinational corporation, part of the conglomerate United Technologies. (Alexander Haig, currently Secretary of State in the Reagan administration, is a past president of United Technologies.)

The women fired - Katy LaRougetel, Wendy Stevenson and Suzanne Chabot - were production workers at Pratt and Whitney. Pioneers in the fight of women to work in non-traditional jobs, all three are active unionists, feminists and socialists. They were fired on November 16, 1979.

The firings are a clear example of political discrimination, according to Quebec Human Rights investigators, and did not result from "personnel surplus" as Pratt has claimed. Visits by an RCMP officers to the company apparently played a decisive role in Pratt's decision to fire the workers.

On April 11, 1980, the three women were "coincidentally" fired a second time from new jobs: Chabot and Stevenson from Canadair (a Crown corporation) and LeRougetel from Canadian Marconi. The Quebec Human Rights Commission is currently investigating this second round of firings.

In their campaign to be rehired by Pratt, the women have spoken to and won important moral and financial support from civil rights, women's and labour organizations.

However, the next months will see a big increase in expenses as the case comes again before the courts. The women have also applied to both the Canadian government (under the Freedom of Information Act) and the U.S. government for copies of any government files existing on them. They hope these may shed light on the firings, and RCMP involvement.

Pratt and Whitney, for its part, has spent many thousands of dollars and used a host of top lawyers to delay court proceedings.

A victory in this case is important for civil liberties and labour and political rights. Financial contributions are urgently needed, and could be a decisive factor in the outcome of this case.

The Pratt Three Defense Committee can be contacted locally at #3-2095 Stainsbury, Vancouver (874-0985).

## Farmworkers still suffer despite media attention

The Canadian Farmworkers Union is asking for moral and financial support in its struggle to organize the 12,000 people who do farm labour in B.C.

The plight of these workers has received much media attention in the past year, yet farmworkers still have few legal rights. They are not protected by minimum wage, workers' compensation or safety regulation laws.

As a result, they earn as little as $1.50 an hour for backbreaking labour, are victimized by unscrupulous labour contractors and are faced with housing conditions on farms which are often squalid and unsafe, and usually excessively expensive.

"It is a disgrace that farmworkers today live and work under such conditions," comments Raj Chouhan, president of the CFU. "Over 90% of farmworkers are new immigrants - primarily East Indian and Chinese. This exploitation of their labour fuels the fire of racism in this province."

The Canadian Farmworkers Union has launched a campaign to end legislative discrimination against farmworkers. Send letters of support and donations to CFU, 4730 Imperial Street, Burnaby, B.C. V5J 1C2.

## Three B.C. bands cease discrimination

Three Indian bands, the Massett band in B.C. and the Carcross and Carmacks bands in the Yukon, have been granted exemption from that section of the Indian Act which removes status from Indian women who marry non-Indian men.

This brings to twenty-seven the number of bands who have passed resolutions requesting the waiver. Fourteen of the bands are in B.C., two are in the Yukon, one is in the N.W.T., two are in Manitoba, six are in Ontario, one is in Quebec, and one is in Nova Scotia.

Indian Affairs Minister John Munro announced two years ago that he would exercise his statutory authority to waive section 12(1)(b) of the Indian Act where band councils passed resolutions requesting waiver of this discriminatory clause.

The exemption, however, does not apply to those Indian women who have already lost their status because marriage to non-Indians. Retroactivity has been a major objective of Indian Rights for Indian Women, the group which has been leading this battle with government and band councils. -- *FAPG News, Oct/Nov '81* ♀

# INTERNATIONAL

## Feminist zap action ends in fines

Washington DC -- The six members of the Women's Liberation Zap Action Brigade were convicted September 29 and each fined $100 for "disruption of Congress" during Senator John East's (R-N.C.) hearings in April on a bill that would make abortion murder. The maximum sentence is six months in jail and/or a $500 fine.

During the April hearings, the women held signs and shouted slogans saying "What about the lives of women?", "A woman's life is a human life", and "This bill would put 1.5 million in jails, in hospitals, in fear." (Approximately 1.5 million women have abortions every year.)

The bill, S. 158 or the "Human Life Statute" would put into law for the first time that human life begins at fertilization, permitting states to pass laws making abortion, IUD's, some pills and amniocentesis crimes of murder.

Nationwide reports of the Women's Liberation Zap Action Brigade's action played a role in arousing massive opposition to the bill, leading to its being temporarily shelved after passage by East's Senate Judiciary subcommittee on Separation of Powers in early July. The hearing process itself became controversial because Senator East refused to allow pro-choice or pro-abortion groups such as the National Abortion Rights Action League, Planned Parenthood, American Civil Liberties Union, Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, and Reproductive Rights National Network to testify, insisting that his hearings were only on the question of "when does life begin?" and that abortion could not be mentioned.

## International meet on Women and Health

Over 500 women, including two from Winnipeg, from over 40 countries attended the Third International Meeting on Women and Health in Geneva this past June.

The conference was sponsored by ISIS, an international feminist information network, resource and documentation centre located in Geneva and Rome and by the Dispensaire des Femmes, a women's health centre in Geneva. It brought together women involved in the direct delivery of a wide range of women's health services; those doing research, organizing women's health programs, and the politics of health care systems.

Workshop topics reflected the broad involvements of the participants. Included were: health, poverty and racism; population control and imperialism; women and madness; sexuality; contraception, pregnancy and childbirth; breastfeeding and nutrition; abortion; lesbian health, menopause; and research done by women on natural medicine.

The meeting was particularly significant because of the strong presence of women from Third World countries and the opportunities it offered women from Western Europe, North America and the Third World to exchange ideas, experiences and stategies. There were many examples of such exchanges.

Women from Mauritius and the Philippines told women from Canada, England and India about the Free Trade Zones in their countries and exchanged information on health hazards to women working textile and electronic plants.

Third World women documented how contraceptives and pharmaceuticals banned in North America - such as the three month injectable contraceptive Depo-Provera - were promoted aggressively in their countries by drug companies, international development agencies, and governments - and Italian women noted that tampons recently taken off the market in the U.S. have been dumped in Italy. Delegates from Brazil, Belgium and others working to legalize abortion in their countries strategized with Italian women who had recently won a major victory in their abortion legislation.

Women involved in campaigns against compulsory sterilization in Costa Rica and Puerto Rico could confer with women from India who have long and hard experiences with the U.S.-sponsored family planning programs.

Midwives from the Ivory Coast and other health workers from Zimbabwe, Kenya and Bangladesh discussed the training of paramedics and the development and delivery of good preventive health programs with women involved in European and North American self-help groups.

In the workshop on menopause, women discussed how this stage in a women's life was seen as a natural and positive phenomenom in Third World countries where maturity and aging were valued, but an illness in western countries where aging for women indicates a decline in productivity and sexual attractiveness.

For more information about the conference and ISIS and its excellent publications, contact Sari Tudiver or Lois Kunkel c/o Herizons, Box 551, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 2J3 *(Herizons, Oct. 17/81)*

## 'Ripper' now in print

Cambridge, England--Women Against Violence Against Women have protested to the distributors of a magazine called *The Yorkshire Ripper*. The firm, Cemas, agreed that this publication - said to tell 'the complete, gruesome, grisly story' of Sutcliffe is making them a lot of money.

But what if it encourages other attacks on women, glorifying, as it does, this mass murderer? It's not breaking any laws, say Cemas... *(Spare Rib)*

## Charwomen unite

Women cleaners are among the most exploited, badly paid and poorly unionized group in the community.

Last May the first woman cleaner's co-operative, called the "Grime Squad", began in Glasgow, Scotland. The women range in age from early twenties to late sixties. They say: "Cleaning is the only way that we could earn any money. We know that we have been exploited in the past but this is one way of fighting back. More cleaners should form co-operatives. Take heart and do what we did." *(Herizons)*

## DES daughter wins suit, sets precedent

New York State's highest court has struck a major blow to Eli Lilly Co., maker of the drug DES.

Lilly was sued by 28-year-old Joyce Bichler a cancer victim who charged the company with marketing an ineffective and unsafe hormone drug, which her mother took while pregnant. Bichler had to have extensive surgery to her reproductive tract as a result of the cancer.

In deciding the case, the New York Court of Appeal unanimously dismissed Lilly Co's appeal. "Joyce Bichler was awarded $500,000. in a jury trial and is still today the only DES daughter in the nation to have won a lawsuit," said Alfred S. Julien, her attorney.

DES families have formed a national support group called DES-Action, which helps DES-exposed individuals to get vital health care services. The National Women's Health Network estimates there may be as many as three million DES daughters in the U.S. who need specialized medical care. DES sons also have reproductive abnormalities including infertility and cancer in rare cases. -- *from New Directions for Women, Sept/Oct '81* ♀

## Depo-Provera study attacked

Depo-Provera (DMPA), the injectable contraceptive, is rapidly becoming the drug-of-choice of family planning programs around the world, especially in Third World countries.

(The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has refused to approve DMPA for domestic use because of findings that it causes malignant breast nodules in dogs, and cancer of the uterine lining in monkeys.)

The findings of a study done on a few women in the Thailand province of Chiang Mai, where more than half the female population have used Depo-Provera, have been used to promote widespread and long-term use of the drug.

But Stephen Minkin, in a recent issue of *Mother Jones*, says the report was unscientific, studying only a carefully selected fraction of the 60 diagnosed cases of endometrial cancer in Thailand.

Only nine of the 60 cases were studied, and none of these had used Depo-Provera, throwing into question the study's relevance to the Depo-Provera controversy.

Yet Indonesia, Thailand and other Third World nations have stepped up their Depo programs since publication of the report. A confidential report from the World Health Organization, released after the Depo study, says "there has been a marked increase in admissions for cancer of the cervix and breast in Chiang Mai. The report doesn't say how many of the cancer victims were users of Depo-Provera.

The study, carried out by the International Fertility Research Program, was funded in part by U.S. AID (Agency for International Development), which is devoted to "shortening the time between the development of new fertility-control technology and its use in family planning."

Depo-Provera is produced by the Upjohn Company of Michigan, but because of the ban imposed by the FDA in the United States, the drug is manufactured by Upjohn in Canada and Belgium. (info from *Mother Jones*, November 1981)

INTERNATIONAL

# South Africa: tribute to a prolonged struggle

*"When women become massively political the revolution has moved to a new stage."*
*Vietnamese Women's Day 1970*

by Mary Morris

I hope in this article to pay tribute to my sisters in South Africa suffering under the burden of apartheid, to many thousands who are spending time in jail and for those who heroically defy the system in the everyday struggle for a new and democratic society.

Under apartheid, black women suffer a triple oppression. First there are the general apartheid laws which affect the lives of all blacks: where they may live, what employment they may seek, where they can travel, who can attend school, who can own property, whom they can marry and even where they may be buried.

Women carry the extra burden of sex discrimination. For example, under what is now termed African Customary law, unless an African woman has been 'emancipated', she is deemed a perpetual minor, always under the guardianship of a man (firstly her father and when she marries, her husband).

Only unmarried women, widows or divorcees can apply for 'emancipation' to a Native Commissioner's Court, which takes into account the woman's 'character', education, other abilities and whether she owns immovable property.

If granted emancipation, the woman becomes free of her guardian's control. As it stands, however, women cannot own property in their own right, claim inheritance, or act as guardians of their children. They cannot enter into contracts, sue or be sued, without the aid of their male guardians.

The system is designed to ensure a largely docile, subservient reserve army of cheap labour to be brought into capitalist production when it is needed, discarded when not.

## 'Homelands' are desolate reserves

The South African government recognizes four main racial groups:

- 4 million whites
- 2 million coloured, i.e. people of mixed descent
- Africans, who number 20 million
- 2 million Asians

All of these groups are segregated into separate areas across the country and all are prohibited by law from living outside their classified group areas.

Although Africans make up 70% of the population, only 13% of the land has been designated as black 'homelands'. Individual Africans cannot own land in these reserves. The reserves contain few industries and no important source of employment. The land is badly eroded in most parts and completely desert in others. People are unable to eke out a living, so most young men must leave in search of work to the so called 'white areas' as migrant labourers.

Women are forbidden to leave in search of work and are therefore separated from sons, husbands and lovers for many months out of the year. A woman, when she says goodbye to a son or husband, might never see him again, for many never return. Many are killed in mining accidents, or

*Black women in South Africa have been involved in prolonged and often violent political struggle for nearly 70 years.*

P. Magubane/South Africa—Connexions

put into farm prisons. Often these women are not notified of accidents or imprisonment.

Malnutrition kills 50% of all children before the age of five in the 'homelands' and of course women wait eagerly for money to be sent. Many women have defied government law and moved to the outskirts of the 'white cities' to be near their husbands.

This action carries with it a prison sentence. They have erected squatter camps, but on many occasions government bulldozers move in and destroy the settlements, and sometimes have opened fire on residents, killing and wounding many. Women have set up committees to organize against these attacks.

In urban areas blacks live in so-called 'townships'. Under apartheid, blacks in these townships have no permanent rights of residency. They are, by law, considered foreigners.

The townships are surrounded by barbed wire fences and armed guards. The residents are subjected to police raids on their homes at all hours of the day and night. Many women are raped during these night time raids.

At the age of sixteen every black must by law carry a pass book giving full particulars of life history. This pass book dictates where you may live and work. Thousands of pass law arrests occur daily. Many times both wife and husband are arrested, leaving the children to the kindness of the neighbours.

In many instances women and men living in the townships live in single sex hostels; they are not allowed to have their families in their rooms with them. Women have been locked up in punishment cells for having their children in their room with them.

These hostels are also surrounded by barbed wire fences and search lights glare down on them at night. Windows and doors can be electronically sealed off in times of unrest.

If a woman is lucky enough to share a house with her husband in the township, she must remain married, because as soon as the marriage ends, her 'right' to remain there ceases. If her husband dies she is given 72 hours in which to leave the township and make her own way back to the 'homelands', even though she may have been born and lived all her life in that township.

Many women are now being employed in the industrial sector of the economy, mainly in food processing and canning, textile and garment manufacturing and laundering, with a smaller number entering teaching and nursing. However, the majority of women are still employed in either domestic service or farm labour -- the traditional concept of a 'woman's role'.

Domestics are paid an average wage of $20 a month. They live in the back yard rooms of their white employer, with no running water and in most cases no electricity. They are not allowed to have their families on the premises, and only see their children on brief vacations.

## 'You have touched a woman'

Women have for many years played a militant role in the forefront of the struggle against this crime against humanity. In the 1950's women organized massive protests against the government's extension of pass laws to include women. Thousands of women in every part of the country burned their passes. When men saw this they too joined the women in burning their passes.

On August 9, 1956, 20,000 women marched on parliament to present their demand to the government. They sang songs such as:

"You have touched a woman. You have struck a rock. You have unleashed a boulder. You will be crushed."

This wonderful show of strength is today remembered as South African Women's Day. But despite their actions, women were issued passes.

Women have also organized together with men against government increase in public transportation costs. During 1957 thousands of women and men could be seen walking from the township 15 miles to their place of employment in the 'white city'. This action was known as the defiance campaign, which lasted three months.

Continued on page 22 ►

INTERNATIONAL

# Filipino revolutionaries add feminism to agenda

*Speech delivered in a "Women Against Imperialism" forum by a member of the International Association of Filipino Patriots.*

The growing Philippine labour movement has made it starkly clear that Filipino workers nationwide face acute exploitation and instability.

But women workers in the Philippines face exploitation on two fronts. As labourers, they must deal with the same depressed wages, oppressive working conditions and job insecurity as their male counterparts, while as women they face sexual exploitation by their superiors.

Blatant discrimination against Filipino women in the workplace is made possible by deeply ingrained male supremacist cultural norms. These norms are derived from the continued existence of feudal social relations, the particular influence of Hispanic Catholicism, and the pervasive role of American cultures.

Not only does US imperialism bring Hollywood cultural norms, it has also harnessed the feudal sexism of the Philippines and reinforced it with capitalism. With capitalism, women have become more systematically exploited -- exploited in whichever way is more efficient and profitable, so that degradation affects all women.

The dual exploitation of women is very evident in the Bataan Export Processing Zone (BEPZ) in Mariveles, where 80% to 90% of the workforce is female.

Cheap, docile labour is what export processing zones are all about. An integral part of the Marcos regime's 'export-led growth' policy, these zones offer multinational corporations tax exemptions, a fully developed infrastructure and, most importantly, a cheap labour force held in check by the dictatorial regime.

If the oppressive conditions under which the young women of this processing zone work make them susceptible to any offer of escape, society-wide concepts of a woman's role make them easy targets for sexual exploitation. The hybrid feminine ideal of woman as passive sex objects is deliberately reinforced by the multinationals in the interests of perpetuating a passive, docile workforce.

Mattel, manufacturer of that personification of beauty, the Barbie doll, and other companies regularly sponsor beauty contests among workers. Well-advertised in the companies' free publications, these events encourage the women who spend their days assembling Barbies to look at themselves as living, breathing Barbie dolls.

## 'Lay down or lay off'

Another familiar sight are women seeking additional cash beyond their below-subsistance wages -- working as waitresses, or 'hostesses' in nearby beerhouses. But most women are confronted with the unwritten code of most zone factories: "Lay down or lay off."

Workers testify that they are often approached by their superiors asking if they have any financial problems which might be resolved in exchange for sex. Behind the offer lurks the threat, spoken or unspoken, of losing an already tenuous job if she refuses.

Workers themselves say that at least 50% of the women are willing to have sex with their superiors for economic reasons. But for the woman forced to sell her body to escape from oppression, the oppression, in fact, intensifies.

Philippine Liberation Courier

Exploitation of women does not stop in the work areas. Aside from the export-oriented industries, tourism is another industry under the Marcos dictatorship that is almost wholly based on the economic and social exploitation of women.

In this crisis-ridden, US-dominated economy, women are forced to take whatever work the ailing system offers. It often offers nothing -- the Marcos regime has made prostitution a tempting alternative. Although the regime denies that it encourages prostitution, the tourist industry is in fact dependent on the thinly-veiled sexual come-on promoted by the regime.

Accredited tourist agencies employ 'hospitality girls' as part of their package tours. In the standard Japanese 'sex tour' men are taken by bus to a club to choose partners for the evening. There, numbered women are displayed behind glass panels.

The prostitute receives little of the standard $50 fee: $14 goes to the local travel agent, $16 to the hotel, $10 to the Japanese tour guide, and only $10 to her. If she is not picked, she receives nothing.

Women get little or no protection under this system. The customer is protected from the prostitute should she attempt to 'make trouble'. Prostitutes must leave cards issued to them by the government's Office of Social Hygiene with their pimps and/or bar managers.

Prostitution is present not only in the country's tourist belts, but also in areas where US military bases are situated. Subic Naval Base is located in Olongapo City; Clark Air Force Base in Angeles City.

In Manila and other large cities, prostitutes look at their work in purely monetary terms. Only in Olongapo and Angeles do US servicemen, with one or two year tours of duty, offer the possibility of marriage, escape from poverty, and the realization of the 'American dream' -- being able to emigrate to the US.

The 'success' stories are common enough to continue the flow of women into the trade. For most of the approximately 30,000 prostitutes at Subic and Clark, however, marriage to a serviceman remains a dream.

Many of these women die before they grow old because of drugs. Other women are reduced to performing lewd acts in clubs after they lose their sexual desirability.

At best, women face a life of constant insecurity made particularly tragic by the children they bear and cannot support. The streets of Olongapo and Angeles are full of children whose looks would place them comfortably in any American suburb but whose heritage is one of abandonment and suffering.

If the past decade of Marcos' rule has intensified the exploitation of women, the same decade has also seen the increasing involvement of women in the resistance.

More than at any other time in Philippine history, women are participating in the struggle for national liberation not as passive followers, or with specified women's roles, but as active participants in a process where their liberation from sexual oppression is part and parcel of national liberation.

Women have always participated in people's struggles far into the Philippine past, in the hundreds of peasant rebellions that marked Philippine revolution of 1896, and in the workers' struggles of the American period. But it is only recently that the liberation of women has been explicitly and conscientiously integrated into broader liberation struggles.

The formation of the Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (Makibaka, Free Movement of the New Filipina) in 1970 was a historic step in this process. Although Makibaka was declared illegal and abolished together with other national democratic mass organizations soon after the declaration of martial law in 1972, its goal of introducing women's liberation as a vital dimension in the national democratic struggle is now being served by other mass organizations.

## Cultivating principled relations

One measure of the seriousness with which this goal is being served is the struggle to purge sexism within revolutionary ranks.

The struggle against sexual opportunism, a vestige of the feudal 'double-standard', for example, is an ongoing process in national democratic collectives. The Communist Party of the Philippines, the leading organization in the National Democratic Front, has produced a "Guide to Relations Between the Sexes" which has become the standard for principled relationships among party and national democratic cadres.

The rooting out of sexist attitudes within revolutionary ranks is by no means over. While they are in principle equal to men in the assignment of tasks (in fact, more women are rising to leading ranks) there is still a tendency to not assign them to so-called dangerous tasks traditionally performed by men.

As one national democratic activist put it: "This can and should be corrected. The underestimation of women's capacities, especially by males, should be criticized."

Filipino women revolutionaries have grasped that women cannot be liberated from exploitation and oppression if all the Filipino people in the country are not themselves freed from exploitation and oppression.

At the same time, they have learned that by struggling against male supremacist attitudes in the revolutionary ranks, they are laying the political and social conditions for the equality of the sexes in the new Philippine society which will arise from the ashes of the old. ♀

# Irish prisoners struggle for freedom and recognition

by Maeve Moran

The first invasion of Ireland by England occurred in 1169, but it wasn't until the seventeenth century that England finally conquered that country. Cromwell, sent to quell the rebellion of the native Irish Catholics, initiated a campaign of extermination and extensive confiscation, and Irish land was settled by imported Scottish Protestant farmers.

Because the rebellion in the north-east corner of Ireland was more successful, it was here that the British concentrated their greatest energy. It was here that the greatest numbers of settlers were sent and it was this part of Ireland, by the early twentieth century, which contained 3/4 of Irish industry.

Thus when Britain was finally being forced to leave Ireland it was from the Protestant capitalist class in the north-east that the greatest opposition was heard. They saw it as more advantageous to their position to belong to the British Empire.

In 1921 Ireland was divided and the six north-eastern counties were called Northern Ireland. This new state contained the main Irish industries, a two-to-one Protestant majority and a police force with sweeping powers of search, arrest and detention of the native, nationalist population.

## Brought up on hardship and struggle

Even before its inception as an artificial state, the women of Northern Ireland were the main breadwinners of their families. Given that much of Northern Irish industry has been centered around linen mills, (traditional ghettos of female employment) the men of that state have long carried the scars of unemployment.

Their mothers, sisters and wives have worked double days -- a gruelling day on the factory floor and a second shift in their homes doing all of the household chores and having and caring for large families. The women of Northern Ireland are not new to struggle or hardship.

When the Civil Rights Movement started in 1968, women took to the streets in large numbers, just as the men did. The majority were working class women who had few options in their lives and wanted a less bleak future for their children. They knew that this future could not be won within the sectarian state of Northern Ireland, where housing and jobs were allocated along religious lines.

The internal conflicts of Northern Ireland, instituted and encouraged by British imperialism, have been successful in dividing the working class. When Scottish settlers were given tracts of Irish land they were used to keep the displaced native Irish in line.

The animosity thus created has succeeded in making very clear demarcations in Northern Ireland by dividing people according to their religious background. So instead of working class people uniting to fight the common oppressor, Westminster has encouraged them to see each other as the enemy.

When the Nationalist population of Northern Ireland was forced into a position of arming itself against the 'peace-keeping' tactics of the British army, it was mainly the men who joined the IRA and other para-military organizations.

The women, already used to their roles of breadwinner, mother, and housekeeper, were now the ones sheltering the many men on the run, trying to keep their children off the dangerous streets, organizing demonstrations, and visiting their menfolk in Long Kesh Prison.

Thirteen years of war plus lack of constructive planning in Northern Ireland have made jobs even more difficult to find. In 1979 unemployment was 11.5% and Northern Ireland had the lowest individual earnings in the U.K., the highest rate of emigration, double the U.K. prison population per thousand people, the poorest housing standards, the highest rate of infant mortality, and the lowest life expectancy.

Irish women have also been involved, right from the beginning, in the armed struggle. Until 1976, political prisoners in Northern Ireland had political status, but since March of that year special category status has been denied. Although these prisoners have been tried in no-jury courts and are kept in special prisons, they are treated as criminals. There are at any given time, 30 women political prisoners in Armagh Jail.

The women in Armagh, although denied political status, are not compelled to wear prison uniform. Most of these women are in their teens or early twenties, and have been in jail for an average of four years. They have grown up in a war environment and have been on demonstrations, erecting barricades to protect their homes and seeing their family members being killed in cold blood for almost all their lives.

Because the war has torn apart families and communities, many of these young women have already had children and have struggled while on the outside to bring them up on welfare stipends with little support.

Until February 1980 the female prisoners were restrained (from outside the prison) from joining the 'dirty' protest of their male comrades for political status.

Then the three Delaney sisters, all serving sentences in Armagh, decided to hold a commemorative ceremony for their dead brother. During the ceremony, they wore the quasi-military black skirt uniform of Cumann na mBan (women's wing of the IRA).

A week later, while the prisoners were lined up for their midday meal, they were surrounded by some 60 male and female warders. Panic broke out. Women were kicked and punched until order was restored. They were locked up while their cells were searched, ostensibly for the black skirts. They were returned to their cells after individual searches and were beaten by guards in riot gear. The toilets were locked and the prisoners were confined to their cells for twenty-four hours.

In the words of one prisoner, Anne-Marie Quinn, giving an account of that day's events:

"I turned to lift my dinner and turned back to see two male officers trail Shirley Devlin into a doorway, so I ran towards them. Before I got near them a male officer put his arms around my head and throat and started manhandling me. He tripped me judo style and landed me on my back with full force."

Inevitably during a 24 hour lockup, the women's pots filled up with urine and excrement and the women poured the contents out the spy holes of their cells. The spyholes were nailed shut and they then started throwing the contents out of their cell windows. These windows were subsequently boarded up. By February 12th a full scale 'dirty' protest was in operation.

## 'No wash' protest dangerous for women

A year and a half later, most of these same women are living in the same horrific conditions. This type of protest, when carried out by women, has very far-reaching effects in terms of the easy spread of infection.

There are never enough sanitary napkins given out. Each woman receives the same

Continued on page 22 ►

# Don't let them die!

ON MONDAY, December 1st, 1980, we, the undersigned, began a hunger-strike as a critical part of our four year protest for political status. We have reached this decision after suffering years of cruel and inhuman treatment and after having exhausted all other means of protest.

In August of this year, Cardinal O'Fiaich, who had met Humphrey Atkins, was able to say that he was 'cautiously optimistic' about a breakthrough, but, alas, his many efforts came to nothing, so intransigent and inflexible was the British government.

The full responsibility for the Armagh jail and H-Block situation lies with the British government, who for four years have treated the issue with the utmost contempt, have ignored all protests and widespread expressions of concern, and have allowed the problem to drift to this final stage.

We women in Armagh wear our own clothes, but we refuse to do prison work, or to co-operate with the prison regime, which is under orders from the British government to criminalise us in an attempt to criminalise what we believe in and have struggled for – Irish freedom. The cause of Irish freedom is not a criminal cause, but a political cause, and in order to assert this we are going on hunger-strike.

Our demands are: the right not to do prison work; the right to organise educational and recreational facilities, and the right to one weekly visit; parcel and letter; the right to association with other political prisoners; and restoration of remission lost as a result of the protest. We also fully support the demand of our H-Block comrades: the right not to wear prison uniform.

We call upon the Irish people to support us in our stand, and we especially call upon our sisters in Ireland and throughout the world to stand and be counted with us in the grave days ahead.

We are prepared to fast to the death, if necessary, but our love for justice and our country will live forever.

Signed,
*Mary Doyle,*
*Mairead Farrell,*
*Mairead Nugent,*
'A' Wing, Armagh jail.

**Part of a broadsheet promoting the stand of hunger strikers.**

## PENSIONS

# The Great Pension Debate: stand up and be counted

by Joan Wallace

The Great Canadian Pension Debate has been raging for several years, yet women's voices have been noticeably absent, according to a new study entitled *Pension Reform with Women in Mind*, recently published by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

The 96-page report, the first ever published in Canada on women and pensions, is a stinging indictment of the treatment of women not only by the private pension industry but by the Canada Pension Plan as well.

It emphasizes that unless women intervene very soon to defend their interests, the appalling poverty in which most elderly women live will get worse rather than better.

### Women suffer most from inadequacies

The report points out that major reforms to the pension system come only once every 15 to 20 years and urges women to get organized now to insure that their input is heard before changes are made. (Refer to end of article for a list of pension conferences planned for B.C.)

Prepared by Louise Delude, legal consultant and researcher who has written many earlier CACSW studies, *Pension Reform with Women in Mind* examines:

* what is wrong with the present pension system
* what women need from a pension system
* proposals for reform that will provide fair and adequate pensions to all women, not just those who spend full time in the workforce.

The CACSW report gives a women's perspective to a debate that has so far concentrated on improving the benefits of male earners while completely ignoring the needs of women. To quote from the report:

"Every report on pensions issued in the last few years - and there have been many - starts off by declaring that women are the prime victims of the inadequacies of the present system. Having said this, nearly all of them go on to recommend 'reforms' that would mainly benefit typical male workers and ignore women's needs almost entirely.

"This male-centred view flows from the traditional notion that the world is composed of two all-inclusive categories: full-time participants in the labour market and the people they support. If you provide adequate pensions to the first group, it is widely believed, the second one will automatically be taken care of.

"Unfortunately for women, the benefits of such a system produces for them are usually inadequate and almost always unfair."

### CPP ignores women's realities

The Canada Pension Plan, which was set up in 1965, did not deliberately set out to create the present imbalance between the incomes of elderly men and women, but because the plan was based on the stereotyped view of women prevalent at that time, it has reinforced the fact that far more elderly women than men are living in poverty today.

The CPP failed to meet the needs of women because it:

* ignored women's work in the home
* reduced benefits for mothers who spend most of their lives in the labour market but stop for a few years to work in the home without pay
* adopted a benefit formula that mirrors the low wages women get in the workforce
* failed to provide for the fact that marriage breakdown deprives thousands of divorced women of survivor's benefits which they would otherwise have received on their husband's death

### Private pension plans are worse

Private pension plans have an even worse record in their treatment of women. Employer-sponsored pension plans were the first to be established in Canada and many people still consider them to be the primary source of income for retired Canadians. In reality, the CACSW report says that they account for less than 10% of the overall income of senior citizens.

The prime target of private pension plans is upper-middle-income males who worked non-stop for the same organization all their working lives, rising steadily through the ranks as they got older. As one businessman pointed out to me, the main objective of these plans was to keep top-level executives from moving to other companies, not to provide adequate pension incomes for all employees.

These pension plans almost always exclude part-time workers and seldom provide benefits to surviving spouses. Many plans in the past charged women more for pensions than men and set tougher entrance requirements for women employees.

***Pension reform comes in waves. From the shape of Canada's pension system today, it is obvious that in every wave of the past women were unrepresented and forgotten. But this time, things will be different . . .***

### CACSW proposals

The CACSW report makes several proposals which they believe would help to provide fair and adequate pensions to women as well as to men. They suggest:

* an increase in the size of pension benefits of female earners by a) giving the CPP a benefit formula that would provide proportionately higher benefits to low-income workers, and b) reducing the penalties now suffered by women who leave the labour force temporarily because of family reponsibility.
* the integration of homemaker's work in the CPP by requiring the husband, who is the main beneficiary of the homemaker's unpaid work, to pay her CPP contributions
* an equal sharing of pension credits earned by the spouses during their life together, which could be accomplished by dividing the CPP credits of the spouses on the day the younger of them reaches the age of 65.

These proposals, and many others, will be debated at women's pension conferences now being planned across Canada. *Your* participation is vital. Plan now to attend.

November 28, National Action Committee, Status of Women, Calgary Inn, Calgary. Transportation costs provided for one delegate from each member organization. Contact Jillian Ridington, 738-0395.

January 30, 1982, B.C. Women's Liberal Commission, Vancouver, place TBA. Open to all, fee $20 including lunch. Contact Renate Bublick, 263-8448.

January or February 1982, Women's Resource Centre, 1144 Robson, noon hour lectures, date and place TBA. Contact Anne Ironside, 685-3934.

March 6, 1982, "Pensions - Focus on Women", an educational forum sponsored by a coalition of B.C. women's organizations, Hycroft, 1489 McRae, Vancouver. Contact Edith Nee, 732-0834.


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## LABOUR

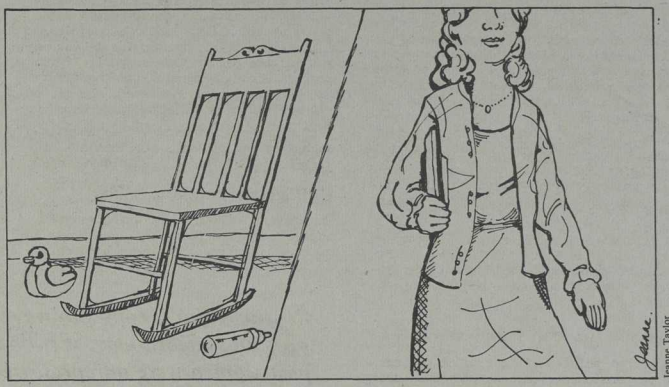
# Paid maternity leave major victory for postal union

by Micki McCune & Marion Pollack

Working women in Canada have won a major victory in the signing of the August 1981 collective agreement between the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the Treasury Board. The "summer of '81" strike won women postal workers the right to 17 weeks paid maternity leave at 93% of salary, and leads the way for other organized women workers in the public and private sectors.

Since this demand was won, the Clerical and Regulatory Component of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), who went on strike for the first time in October 1980, has announced that they will fight for maternity leave in their next negotiations. The B.C. Government Employees Union (BCGEU) has also stated that in their next round of bargaining, paid maternity leave will be a major demand.

The provisions in the new CUPW contract are identical to those gained by 200,000 public sector workers in Quebec, as well as those that AUCE members in B.C. have enjoyed for five years. These victories laid a solid groundwork for the CUPW campaign.



Jeanne Taylor

### Childbearing a shared responsibility

The CUPW gain goes a long way toward ending the last major form of wage discrimination against women workers in the post office. Under the previous agreement, a woman who went on maternity leave lost over $4,000 in wages, and also lost vacation and sick leave credits (which means that she was entitled to less paid vacation and sick time).

This victory has other dimensions. Primary is the validation of the social needs and responsibilities of working women. After years of denial, women's childbearing responsibilities are finally being recognized as more than hers alone.

Women can learn from this experience that we don't have to keep silent about our choices to be childbearers and rearers, and the effect that a job has on that function. Our social experience is real, valid and important. It deserves to be struggled over in the workplace as are other issues that relate to the liberation of women in the world.

When CUPW embarked on this strike on June 30, the prospects looked bleak. The chief negotiator for the employer, Treasury Board president Donald Johnston, had refused to accept the recommendations of the Conciliation Board. He said no to a ban on closed circuit tv (CCTV), no to any improvements in health and safety, and no to better vacations. He refused to discuss paid maternity leave, saying that it should be 'studied'.

Six weeks later, Johnston was forced to sign a contract meeting these demands. The new contract bans the further use of investigative CCTV, and establishes the right to refuse dangerous work, the right to first aid attendants, the right to monitored noise, dust and temperature levels, and finally, the right to fully paid maternity leave.

### Maternity leave has roots in the 40s

The right to paid maternity leave has been a long time coming in the federal public service. During World War II, an influx of women entered public service jobs. Maternity leave was available; however, the restrictions that employers placed on the leave meant that virtually none was taken.

A woman could retain her right to re-employment, but she had to produce a medical certificate saying that her child no longer needed her care. In the family oriented '40s this was extremely difficult.

By 1958, maternity leave theoretically became more accessible to women. The granting of leave, however, was totally dependant on the discretion of the deputy head of the department. In 1962, maternity leave became an automatic right on paper, though not in reality. Women still reported working until two or three hours prior to the birth of their child, and returning from unpaid leave just two weeks later.

It was during the 1960's that the conflict between the stated philosophy of the government and its practice began to crystallize. In 1962, the Glassco Commission, a Royal Commission on Government Organization, stated that "the government in employing women, is not precluded from pioneering new standards in the community."

Yet almost twenty years later, Treasury Board Donald Johnston would say, "CUPW should drop its demand for paid maternity leave, as it could set a precedent for the private sector."

### Economy needs women—as workers and as producers of workers

The government reacted against the maternity leave clause not because of the actual cost - 2¢ per hour per member of the CUPW bargaining unit - but because our economy is based on the exploitation of women.

The economy needs women as workers, and as producers of workers, but neither function is socially recognized or economically validated.

Employers need a constant supply of workers, yet do not find it in their economic interest to pay for the work required to produce and raise future labourers.

Employers maintain and profit from the ideology that women feed on the economy and make it more unstable by having and caring for children. They also benefit from perpetuating the belief that they have no social or economic interest in the future generation; that childbearing is an individual responsibility.

Employers have historically used women as reserve pool of labour. When the economy is changing or booming, women are encouraged to go out to work, but when the economy slows down, women are forced back into their homes to take care of the children. Using this tactic, employers have attempted to keep women's wages lower than men's.

### CUPW membership shows strength

In spite of all this, CUPW has won paid maternity leave. How was the government made to back down from its original adamant opposition?

First, the strength of the CUPW membership was unsurpassed in this strike. Most locals reported solid picket lines. This in and of itself was a major achievement since both government and the media had attempted to divide the membership by publicly distorting the issues of wages and maternity leave. CUPW had also embarked on a national program of secondary picketing of companies that were delivering, distributing, or storing mail.

Second, the labour movement came out in full support of CUPW. In 1978, lack of support from the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) proved decisive in the government's decision to unleash a brutal arsenal against the union. In that year, CUPW members were ordered back to work under an imposed collective agreement, four regional offices of CUPW were raided, and Parrot was jailed for advising workers to defy the back to work order.

In 1981 rank and file pressure caused Dennis McDermott, president of the CLC, to pledge its full assistance to our struggle. The Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU) a long-time friend of CUPW, continued this tradition. Unions such as AUCE, CUPE Canadian Farmworkers, and the National Union of Provincial Government Employees, all passed messages in support of CUPW's demands and struggle.

CUPW also implemented programs to get support from the women's movement by mailing information about the maternity leave demand to women's groups across the country.

Locally, Rape Relief and the Vancouver Women's Health Collective were among the first to pass motions in support of CUPW, and attended all the rallies. The NDP Women's Committee gave CUPW a very strong message of support, both in word and deed. Bread and Roses, a Vancouver socialist-feminist group, showed their support for the struggle by organizing a very successful solidarity meeting and support picket.

Continued on page 23 ►

## HEALTH

# Contraceptives conference marred by contradictions

by Vancouver Women's Health Collective

On the weekend of September 12 and 13, Planned Parenthood of B.C. presented the second of its annual update conferences on contraception.

According to their brochure, the weekend was to be packed with lectures revealing important information to doctors and family planning personnel about the latest developments in birth control. One of the main focuses of our work at the Health Collective is contraception, and we are always interested in new developments, so we planned to attend.

What disturbed us about this conference, however, was that a good deal of the money that made it possible (we learned this from the brochure) came from several large drug companies, all of whom manufacture and sell birth control products. Our suspicions were aroused. How could information presented in this context be comprehensive? Would the entire time be spent quoting statistics from medical research, or would the feelings and experiences of women who use birth control be taken into account and discussed?

In the last ten years we at the Health Collective have spoken to many women about their experiences with contraception. Our conversations with these women, together with our research and personal experience, have led us to our present position on birth control: that the risks of methods such as the pill and the IUD far outweigh the convenience they offer us by not having to directly associate birth control with intercourse.

The pill and the IUD are profitable and easy to administer. The serve the interests of drug companies that make them and professionals that give them out far better than they serve the interests of women who use them.

Ironically, these are the methods we have come to think of as the only ones available to us. Safer methods that women can control more, such as the diaphragm, cervical cap, foam and condoms, and fertility awareness, are not researched or advertised nearly as much.

### Contraception: a world-wide business

Over the past twenty years, contraception has become a $3 billion world-wide business. Out of the $4000 per doctor per year that drug companies spend on advertising, a great proportion is spent to promote contraceptives. We were concerned that the Planned Parenthood conference would provide drug companies with yet another forum to promote their most profitable products and would not be in the interests of women who use birth control.

Planned Parenthood's reassurance that they had planned the conference and chosen the speakers themselves failed to allay our fears for two reasons:

- doctors get most of their information on birth control directly or indirectly from the pharmaceutical companies
- we believe that, when an organization depends upon corporations to provide large sums of money for their conferences, that dependency will, in the long run, affect the kind of information that is offered.

We wrote to Planned Parenthood with our concerns and our questions. We went to the conference and distributed our letter to the participants in hopes that our opinions would be of interest to them. We are writing this article in order to communicate our views to the general public -- women who were not represented at this conference.

We found ourselves faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, we agree with Planned Parenthood's position that birth control information should be readily available and that access to abortion should be a woman's right. On the other hand, we disagree that information about contraception should be monopolized by drug companies and professionals.

Our dilemma has its roots in the early history of the birth control movement. Margaret Sanger and other leaders of that movemement, from 1910 on, were both feminists and socialists. They wanted to change the lives of working class women.

Accordingly, they opened the first birth control clinics in poor, working class districts, where women toiled long hours each day in the factories and returned to over-crowded, miserable housing to tend to the needs of their large families.

Women who operated the clinics were persecuted through the legal system. Simply handing out literature about birth control was a crime under the obscenity laws, in most places. Many women went to jail in order to obtain the legal right to reproductive control for all women.

In an attempt to obtain legal status for birth control clinics, some of the women involved with them began to lobby for changes in legislation. There were differences of opinion among them as to what was the most effective way to obtain legal status.

Mary Ware Dennett and her colleagues in the Voluntary Parenthood League fought for changes which would remove discussion of contraceptives from all restrictions for anyone.

Margaret Sanger and the American Birth Control League set themselves a more limited goal: that of changing existing legislation to strike out all restrictions on *doctors'* rights to prescribe contraception, giving doctors unlimited discretion. This latter view predominated, and the birth control movement passed out of the hands of women and into the hands of male professionals.

### Women's health not a priority

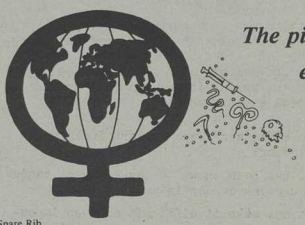
The consequences of Sanger's decision to ally with the medical establishment were well illustrated at the Planned Parenthood conference.

Doctors made it clear that what they know (or think) about issues concerning health is often different from what they tell us.

During one workshop, the issue of whether or not the Pill should be discontinued for women undergoing surgery was raised.

Doctors present agreed in theory that they should be stopped (in order to prevent possible fatal blood clots), but in practice none of them do so. One man chuckled, "So, if we're all doing it and no risks are obvious, then it seems we're getting away with it."

"Reassuring the patient" was a commonly heard phrase. If a woman complains that her periods have stopped since she started using the Pill (and switching her prescription doesn't help), then "reassure her." If she continues to complain, prescribe Provera to bring her periods on.



Spare Rib

***The pill and the IUD are profitable and easy to administer. They serve the interests of drug company and doctors far better than they serve the interests of women.***

If she says she is depressed on the Pill (and vitamin B6 doesn't work), then prescribe anti-depressants. If she complains that her new IUD is causing her a lot of pain, "reassure her" and prescribe some pain killers or anti-prostaglandins.

Managing women with drugs and reassurance does not seem to us to be the best way to deal with the discomforting or harmful effects of pills or IUD's.

Women's health was clearly not a priority for these doctors. We were annoyed at how often "risks" referred to legal risks for doctors rather than risks to women's health. We were shocked by the amount of questionable or obviously false information given to us by these "experts".

### Promiscuity and PID: false link

One guest speaker declared that IUD's do not cause PID (pelvic inflammatory disease) -- promiscuity does (!) and that the loss of fertility from use of the IUD is minimal.

A local doctor stated that he has found no link between the use of the Pill and yeast infections ("personal hygiene" being the problem). In yet another instance, we were told that there are no long term side effects associated with tubal ligation.

These claims are not only disproven by the medical literature, but more importantly, by our own experience as women and that of the women we meet daily in our work at the Health Collective.

There were two lectures and one workshop that deserve mention in a more positive light.

Charlene Berger, a psychologist from Montreal General Hospital, spoke on research she had done on women having "repeat" abortions. She admitted starting with a bias, expecting to find these women very different, ie with a less responsible attitude, from a lower socio-economic background, and having more sexual partners.

Continued on page 13 ►

# HEALTH

Continued from page 12

Instead, even though these women were studied from 75 different variables, the only differences between the women having "initial" abortions and the "repeaters" were that the latter tended to be older, more educated, and possibly in a more involved relationship with a man. The results changed her thinking considerably, especially about stereotyping women who have had several abortions.

Although she faced male doctors, Berger criticized both men's lack of responsibility for birth control and doctors' lack of attention to it with their male patients. She discussed society's attitude toward women and sexuality, and the unreasonable expectation that young women will seek out and use contraception effectively when they have been taught primarily about taboos and virginity.

Berger rejects "better medical and surgical technology" as the answer, saying that without changes in sex role behaviour and social attitudes towards young people, effective birth control use will not increase.

In a lecture on "natural family planning" presented by the Serena organization, a married couple spoke from their personal experience, providing useful information on methods of fertility awareness. This was the one instance in the conference of lay people promoting a safe method of birth control.

What we didn't like about their presentation was the inclusion of slides showing fetal development that seemed designed primarily to promote Serena's anti-abortion stance. Their message was clear: "natural" family planning is meant for "natural" married couples (who won't "destroy" human life).

Finally, a Sunday workshop given by women counsellors attempted to deal with real adolescent counselling situations. In an amusing exercise, participants were blindfolded (to represent darkness) and asked to simulate the use of foam and condoms in the back seat of a car.

The difficulty of this excercise demonstrated well the problems teenagers face using birth control. But once again, anxiety about teenage pregnancy tended to encourage birth control pills as a solution to the unpreparedness and awkwardness of teenage sexual encounters. (Earlier in the conference, the IUD was strongly recommended for young women by a doctor who considered them to be of "minimal intelligence".)

Overall, the conference seemed very much thwarted by contradictions:

· Planned Parenthood, an organization intent on providing options for women and active in the pro-choice-on-abortion movement, invited speakers from an anti-abortion group to talk about natural birth control

· Although their stated interest is in the health of women, Planned Parenthood advocates the use of hazardous contraceptive methods with the rationale that abortion is more dangerous than the Pill

· Although their intention is to provide accurate contraceptive information so that women can make informed choices, they refuse to see the subtle yet pervasive effect that drug company money and involvement has had on our health care. ♀

## Depo-Provera survey underway

Have you, or has anyone you know, ever received an injection for birth control? If so, you may have been given DEPO PROVERA.

Depo Provera is a hormone that circulates through the bloodstream and prevents pregnancy for three to six months. Although Depo Provera has been given to women all over the world, it has not been proven safe as a contraceptive.

Some effects of Depo Provera include the following:

· it has been shown to cause breast cancer and uterine cancer in animals

· it may make it difficult or even impossible for a woman to get pregnant in the future

· it may cause women to have longer periods, irregular periods, or no periods at all

· it passes through the breast milk to the infants of nursing women who receive this drug

· it is associated with birth defects

· it inhibits bone growth

· it is associated with headaches, dizziness and weight gain.

The long term effects of this drug are not known.

In 1978, the American FDA rejected Upjohn's application to approve Depo Provera as a contraceptive on the grounds that, in experiments, it showed increased incidence of breast cancer in beagle dogs. In the FDA's opinion, the benefits of this drug did not outweigh the risks.

In spite of this decision in the States, it is estimated that 3-5 million women worldwide are given the drug for contraception. This situation represents another massive experiment like those with the Pill, DES, and Thalidomide, which caused severe and unnecessary damage to thousands of women and some of their children, as well.

Recently, the Upjohn Company has appealed to the FDA to seek approval of Depo Provera for use as a contraceptive. If this happens, no doubt Canada will be close behind in approving the drug for contraception. Again, as in the case of the Pill, controlling fertility will be a priority over safety and women will be the victims on whom Depo Provera is experimented.

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective is gathering information about the use of Depo Provera in Canada. If you have been given this drug, or know anyone else who has, please write them at 1501 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1W6, or phone (604)736-6696. ♀

## Vancouver Status of Women Programs

Having problems with your landlord? Want to know about your rights if you leave your husband? Need to appeal a cutback in your welfare cheque? Want a divorce after a three-year separation?

A WOMEN'S LEGAL ADVICE CLINIC is now being offered at Vancouver Status of Women Wednesday evenings from 7:00-9:00 p.m. to assist people with problems like those above. The Women's Clinic is one of several clinics run by the Law Students Legal Advice Program throughout the Lower Mainland. The clinic is free, and is intended for those who cannot afford a lawyer. (Who can?)

Helen Roberts, the Clinic head, organizes the staffing of the clinic by women law students, who are supervised by lawyers from VSW's list of feminist lawyers. The clinic is run on a first-come first-serve basis.

If, after talking to a client, the student needs to research an area of law, or is going to write letters on behalf of the client, she will take the file to UBC to work on. The client will be asked to come back when the work has been done.

The law students will spend as much time as necessary with clients to enable them to understand what the law is in the area of their problem and what their options are.

If someone has a problem that the student can't deal with -- for instance a court appearance -- then the student will explain what is going on, and what to expect from a lawyer, and refer the individual to a lawyer.

VSW's list of feminist lawyers was compiled from a survey of women lawyers. VSW had to get an exemption from the Law Society's rule against lawyers' advertising before those lawyers were entitled to bill themselves as feminist lawyers.

Women who are referred by VSW to lawyers are asked to report back to VSW if they have any problems with the lawyer so that the service can be monitored. ♀

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ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING GROUPS begin soon at Vancouver Status of Women.

In AT, we talk about our rights as women, why it's difficult to say what we think and feel, and learn specific assertiveness techniques. For more information on the groups, contact Patty Moore at VSW (phone 873-1427).

WOMEN WORKERS IN THE HOME is an organization of women concerned about the status of women in the home, and the lack of support and money available to us.

We have put together a speakers package to share our experience and skills, and we want this package to be used by existing women's groups, family places, community centres and church groups.

Speakers topics include: legal rights, assertiveness techniques, health issues, welfare rights, wages for housework, day care, immigrant women, shared parenting, lesbian motherhood, housework and your health.

If you or your group is interested in arranging for any speakers on these topics, or for more information, call Patty Moore at VSW (873-1427).

**MANPOWER TRAINING PROGRAM CUTS**

**PUBLIC HEARING**
**ROBSON SQUARE MEDIA CENTRE**
**NOV. 13 7 p.m.**

**Moderator: Mayor Harcourt**

**Sponsored by: Vancouver Status of Women, B.C. Student Federation and Women in Trades**

# CELEBRATING OUR CULTURE

## Women in Focus

## Support needed for Gallery

Women in Focus has been active as a feminist arts and media centre since 1974. In January 1974 we added an art gallery to exhibit the works of women visual artists in addition to our activities of video and film production, distribution and screenings.

Our recent move to 456 West Broadway has been especially beneficial to the gallery, providing a better location and a large, beautiful exhibition space. Our exhibits have met with great interest from women artists, the feminist community and the general public.

The gallery provides a cultural space for women, where we can exchange ideas and gain validation for our images and ideas in a world that oppresses women and other groups. It directly supports the important work of building a women's culture.

In this alternative space we exhibit images made by women which reflect women's lives and experiences. These images and self-concepts challenge male defined portrayals of women in both subtle and overt ways.

Unfortunately the gallery program of exhibiting visual art may have to end. We are running out of steam in our efforts to raise funds for the gallery and are exhausted from attempting to organize art shows and events with no money.

Our efforts to generate operational funding for the gallery have not yet been successful. Although project funds are possible, they require continual applications and only contribute towards occasional short term exhibits and events.

Alternatives to government funding such as dances, benefits, auctions and other fund-raising activities are possible but require more energy and time than we are presently able to give.

We have many ideas for gallery programming and have been approached by numerous women artists who wish to have gallery exhibits here. But publicity, rental of space, and material costs mean that some kind of ongoing budget is essential. Any kind of gallery programming also necessitates a great deal of organizational work including staffing the gallery and dealing with the public.

Unless we receive operational funding or raise money through women's energy in the community, the gallery program of Women in Focus will be suspended as of January 1, 1982.

If you value having a feminist gallery that exhibits and encourages work by women artists and can give organizational energy and commitment to it, we need your help.

*Please come to a special meeting on November 18th, 7:30 p.m.* if you can contribute to the work of fundraising, organizing gallery programs, staffing the gallery or any other aspect of Women in Focus. If you can't make the meeting but are still interested, call us at 872-2250. ♀

Through November and December, Women in Focus will present a unique series of five concerts of music composed and performed by women.

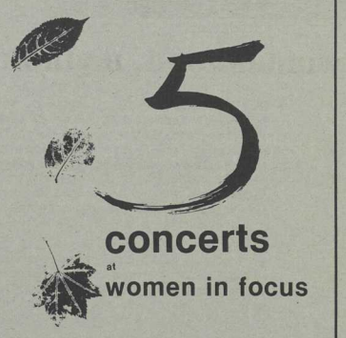
The series will combine a diversity of musical styles and genres offering the audience an opportunity to explore an exciting range of our contemporary musical world. Jazz and contemporary improvisation on traditional instruments will be juxtaposed with elements of world music such as performance on Japanese koto and Indian sitar.

The individual activities of the musicians participating in the concerts illustrate further the musical range of the series.

Beverly Dobrinksy and Haneefa Karriem improvise with non-traditional instruments and percussion, explore the potential of the human voice, and involve children in their music-making. Hildegard Westerkamp is well-known as a composer of electro-acoustic music, and for her concern with the sounds of the environment and sound pollution.

Karen Oliver, violinist, and Kira Van Deusen, cellist, both perform in the contemporary string quartet with backgrounds in free improvisation and jazz. And harpsichordist Doreen Oke, who is active in the Vancouver Society for Early Music, peforms frequently in Vancouver.

For the first time in the Vancouver area, women involved in diverse aspects of contemporary music have come together to share their work. This series is a celebration of the active and creative presence of women in contemporary music. ♀




**Strings and Motion** — **Sun., November 1**

An evening of music for string instruments and dance—flavours of early and new music and jazz. Julie Bloomenthal—piano, Janet Brook and Marie Fraser—dance, Karen Oliver—violin, Jane Phillips—viola da gamba, Kira Van Deusen—cello.

**The Soundscape in Concert** — **Sun., November 8**

An evening of environmental compositions and sound, presented by Hildegard Westerkamp, featuring Holly Arntzen on French Horn.

**Sound Feelings** — **Sun., November 29**

With Beverly Dobrinsky—voice, guitars, and Haneefa Karriem—vibes, percussion: Featuring the Banana Band Children's Ensemble. Visuals by Lorna Mulligan. Special Guests include Cindy Melon—flute, voice; Revellie Nixon—drums, percussion; Karen Oliver—violin, and Kira Van Deusen—cello. A celebration of being.

**Chamber Music** — **Sun., December 6**

Catherine Lewis—soprano, Dewi Minden—cornet, Doreen Oke—harpsichord, and Elissa Pople—baroque flute.

**Violinistics/String Sound** — **Sun., December 13**

Rhythmic, harmonic and vocal format featuring violin/musical diversities for string instruments. Violin, cello, percussion, voice, tape, berimbau, harp, koto and sitar.

**Tickets:** Single Evening $ 3.00; Concert Series $11.00

**Available at:** Aniel Books 2766 West 4th Ave 733-3511; Women's Bookstore 322 West Hastings 684 0523; Black Swan Records 2536 West 4th Ave 734-2828; or at the door on the night of the performance

**Times:** All concerts begin at 8:30 p.m.

Sponsored by the Canada Council and Women in Focus

## Honouring local talent

by Nicky Hood

Not since the Full Circle Coffeehouse ceased to exist a couple of years ago have there been so many local women presenting their words and songs to appreciative audiences.

The women who attended the Lesbian Conference were treated to two excellent evenings of music, poetry and dance. And, in the past two months there has been a varied selection of readings by feminist writers.

Two of these evenings have featured readings by young, unknown writers. "Women's Words" is an ongoing series of readings organized by Laura Foster, herself a poet. The original concept of Women's Words was to have informal readings in women's homes. This gradually evolved into a more structured concept and took form as a series of coffeehouses at the Women in Focus Gallery.

Most of the women reading at Women's Words are new to the experience of sharing their work. Laura has succeeded in creating an atmosphere that is not intimidating to a woman reading for the first time.

This is largely accomplished through the bill being shared by five or six women with no one woman expected to carry the show. Even with the presence each evening of one somewhat more experienced poet, the strength and quality of the evenings has come from the combined performances and works of all the women.

As the producer, Laura hopes that eventually the readings will be successful enough that writers will be paid for their performances. She would also like to see a discussion group for writers form.

Other events have featured authors who are more widely known. The women from the *Common Ground* anthology of short stories provided an evening of readings from unpublished materials and works still in progress. The Lesbian Show's "Poetry Show" was the same evening.

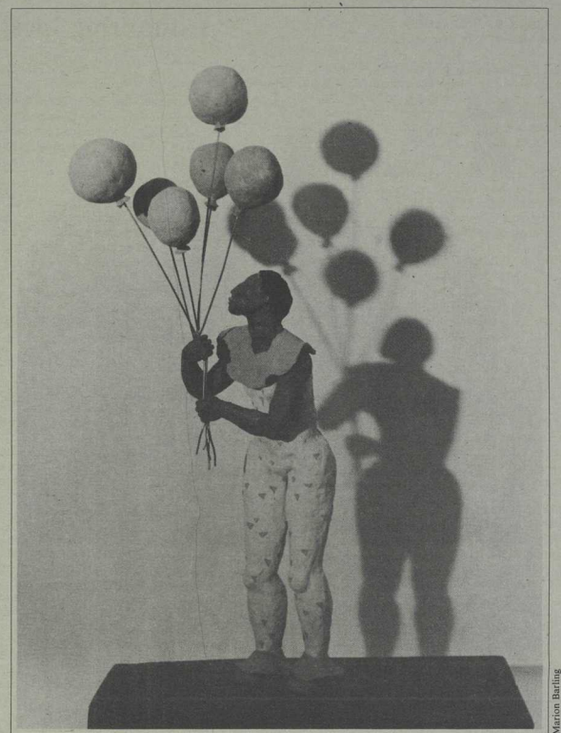
Press Gang celebrated the long-awaited release of Anne Cameron's book *Daughters of Copper Woman* in October.

This coming month has two events scheduled which will feature both poetry and song. The Festival '82 coffeehouse, cancelled in October, has been rescheduled for late November. And "New Weave, A Tapestry" will have the music and song of Chantale LaPlante, Luna and Eileen Brown along with the poetry of Cyndia Cole. Scheduled for mid-November, the performers intend this evening to be a sharing and celebration of women's voices.

It is exciting to have attended and noted these events. Our lives are mirrored in the work that is being produced. Our love for one another, our sorrows, our triumphs, our strength and unity are all reflected.

Women's culture is as vital to our lives as any other segment of the feminist movement. Woman-centered healing, art and spirituality must surround us to affirm and protect us in our political work. Thus we should support and cherish women performers and the art they produce.

There is ample opportunity these days to hear and enjoy local arists. Don't pass it by. ♀



Marion Barling

## Circus celebrates womanhood, mythology

by Michele Wollstonecroft

Women in Focus Gallery hosted a slide presentation October 17 entitled "Women, Art and Politics". The slide show was co-ordinated by Persimmon Blackbridge and Claire Kujundzic.

Twenty-six Vancouver women artists were represented in the show. Each woman had submitted five slides of her work and a statement about the political nature of her work.

The meaning of "political art" varies considerably among artists. Some think that art represents our life and struggle, regardless of content or style (ie. abstract or figurative). Others think content should make a direct political statement, in order to "put in our word" and counteract the messages of mainstream media like TV, advertising, and billboards.

A common problem experienced by most artists who are also political people is that they do not make an adequate income from the thing that they do best--be it ceramics, film, painting, printmaking or a combination of these.

Work that does not support the status quo is usually unpaid. Galleries are not interested in artwork that is different from the type of work that the "art world" has decided is the "creative expression that represents us all."

Consequently, most of this work has been made in these artists' spare time. Their knowledge and skill in marketing their work is undeveloped.

Many of these artists do not want to sell their work through the galleries either. They have too little time to do their artwork, much less research relationships with galleries, become familiar with grants or put together a good documentation of their work. As a result, some very beautiful artwork in the slide presentation was not documented as well as it could have been.

Many of the works documented represented a strong sense of woman images. Marsha Arbour, for instance, showed body prints, in which the image was created by inking her body and taking an impression on paper.

Portland Frank submitted examples of her "anti-psychiatry" work, black and white block prints that she used to illustrate her anti-psychiatry bibliography.

Colette French showed paintings of women. One especially beautiful work was a piece on black women singers, which played with patterns of colour/shapes across the canvas.

Sarah Diamond submitted slides documenting her portrayal of her relationship with her mother (from her video "The Influences of My Mother"). The slides included Sarah holding a photograph of her mother at Sarah's age. Other slides were of Sarah's mother wearing a particular hairstyle and expression, followed by slides of Sarah wearing a similar hairstyle and expression. Her work celebrated the concept that "our mothers are our sisters."

Kiku Hawke's colour photographs of belly dancers depicted the fluidity and power of the dancer's body. The areas of stress, volume, tension and strength of form were transformed by Kiku's sense of composition into beautiful abstractions.

The slide show took place amid Persimmon Blackbridge's *Circus*, which are presently on show at Women in Focus. *Circus* is more than a circus. It is a celebration of womanhood, mythology, working women, carnival time, kinetics, and superstars. Not to mention Persimmon's talents as an artist.

Persimmon has included 26 pieces in this show that, despite their small size, are not small pieces. On the contrary, even the Young Trapeze Flyer (approx. 4" tall) demands a large space for her performance.

The performances take place as one moves around the room. We turn from a woman diving into a shallow pool, just in time to see an acrobat standing on one hand. The Audience characters are fascinated by the Human Cannonball as she flies through the air, her hair streaming in the wind. One member of the Audience, however, is absorbed in her popcorn, forever seeking that buttery morsel.

The circus animals join in the fun with brilliant plumage, toothy grins and mischievous gestures. A group of clowns merrily dance together in one corner while two more clowns caricature sadness in another ring.

There is a Balloon Seller and a Popcorn Vendor. Spectators, male and female, are scattered among the acts. A woman riding a beautiful coloured bird is followed by After The Animal Act, a woman shoveling a conspicuously feathery animal dropping.

The movement, gesture and command of space are created by the clay forms. But the joy and exaltation is the result of the delightful use of colour and pattern that is repeated over and over, and yet varies with each piece. The walls of the gallery are covered with streamers and balloons, which add to the movement and festival environment.

The performers' costumes are carefully painted in colourful patterns of circles, diamonds, squares, triangles, and stripes. The details on the figures are beautifully complete with buttons, buttonholes, shoes, shoelaces, toes, fingers, eyes. Each performer has her own circus ring, painted with patterns that either emulate or contrast her figure and add to the merriment.

Many of the performers' costumes are decorated with designs that illustrate their act. Fish Woman wears a little fish on her tunic, Fire Eater is decorated in flames, and Popcorn Seller wears a popcorn patterned shirt. Human Cannonball has little triangles on her costume that add speed to her movement. As we glance around the room bright stars, moons, polka dots and squares of colour meet our eye.

The circus animals are unlike any creatures we know. The wolf in Wolf Woman has a patterned coat. The bird in Bird Woman wears brightly coloured scales that give her a fish-like appearance. Black birds scavenge popcorn and accompany acts in many of the pieces.

One becomes so involved in the circus atmosphere that the technical elements are forgotten. But we must eventually remember that the *Circus* pieces are clay and admire Persimmon's accomplishments with the medium.

The Balloon Seller's ware, despite the appearance of floating, is clay. The Dancers, with arms spread, moving around each other on one foot, are clay. The Trapeze Flyer, her body tensed as she moves through the air, is clay.

Persimmon has taken a product of mother earth and created circus women, daughters of clay; has manifested for us a new creation myth.

# Sexist advertising—watch out!

by Sylvia Spring

Tired of kicking the 'Boob Tube' (pun intended) every time you see another 'dumb slob' housewife ad? Lost all your hair from pulling it out every time you hear the likes of Pat Burns patronizing women (or worse)?

Well, Media Watch has a more positive and less painful solution to dealing with sexism in the media. It's called COMPLAIN!! We've made up a handy-dandy complaint form so that your voices will be heard and dealt with ... or else!

For years women have been complaining individually and collectively about the insulting, inaccurate and stereotypical treatment and portrayals of women on radio, television and in print.

Finally the CRTC (Canadian Radio-Television & Telecommunications Commission) set up a special Task Force on Sex-Role Stereotyping in the Electronic Media. That was in October of 1979. Two years later the guidelines to curb sexist content have still not been agreed upon.

I am a public member of that Task Force and have written several times in KINESIS about the incredible hassles we've gone through over those two years. It took one whole year to convince the advertisers and broadcasters that there was in fact a problem and the second year has been a tug-of-war over how far they would go 'voluntarily' towards cleaning up their acts.

The CBC, CAAB (Canadian Advertising Advisory Board) and CAB (Canadian Association of Broadcasters) have all come up with what they call 'self regulatory guidelines', which they have two years to prove effective (see below for CBC and CAAB guidelines. CAB policy is still being fought out.)

But their big line now is that since they're not receiving any complaints re sexism, there mustn't be much left on radio, TV or in print.

Get it? See why we need a Media Watch and lots of complaints being sent to the boys in the East? We have to keep up the pressure, keep on their backs and never let them forget that their female audience is the majority of viewers and not a 'silent' one.

## Will it make any difference?

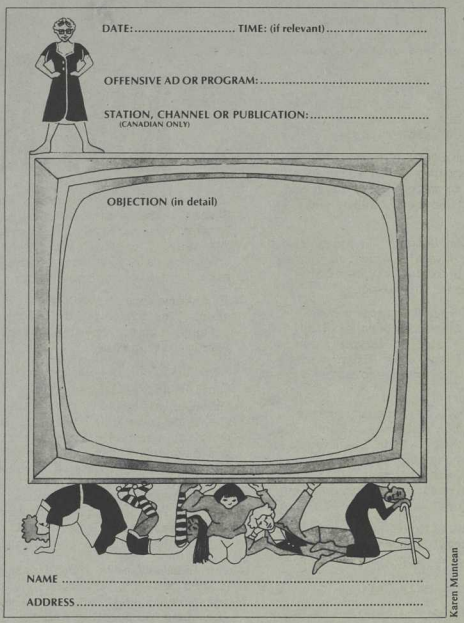
So many women have told me about shows or ads that infuriate them. But when I ask if they have tried to complain, most say no, because it's too complicated. Who would they complain to? Would it make any difference?

Well, Media Watch's four-ply complaint form can make a difference. All the relevant addresses are indicated clearly on the form. One copy goes to the guilty organization's head office, one copy to the CRTC and one copy to Media Watch, so that we can keep track of how many complaints in fact are being made.

Even if the boys don't clean up their act totally within two years (pie in the sky), we'll at least have good evidence that lots of women complained and that 'self regulation' hasn't worked. Then it will be time to bring out the big guns.

Media Watch is a sub-committee of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) chaired by Alesia Lawrence of Vernon, who is also B.C.'s rep to NAC.

Continued on page 17 ►




Send copies to the following:

1. CBC & Radio Canada (TV and radio, programs and ads)
   c/o Louise Imbeault — Coordinator - Portrayal of Women
   1500 Bronson Ave., Ottawa, Ontario K1G 3J5 or
   For all Advertisements (private radio & TV, and print)
   (CAAB) Canadian Advertising Advisory Board or
   1240 Bay Street, Suite 305, Toronto, Ontario M5R 2A7
   Programming for all private Radio and TV Stations
   (CAB) Canadian Association of Broadcasters
   P.O. Box 627, Station B, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5S2
2. C.R.T.C.
   c/o Secretary General's Office
   Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N2
3. MEDIA WATCH
   Box 46699 - Station G
   Vancouver, B.C. V6R 4K8
4. One copy for your own records.

## CBC Guidelines

Programming should:

1. avoid the use of demeaning sexual stereotypes and sexist language;

2. reflect women and their interests in the reporting and discussion of current events;

3. recognize the full participation of women in Canadian society;

4. seek women's opinions on the full range of public issues.

## CAAB Guidelines

1. Advertising should recognize the changing roles of men and women in today's society and reflect the broad range of occupations for all.

2. Advertising should reflect the contemporary family structure showing men, women and children as equally supportive participants in home management and household tasks, and as equal beneficiaries of the positive attributes of family life.

3. Advertising, in keeping with the nature of the market and the product, should reflect the wide spectrum of Canadian life portraying men and women of various ages, backgrounds and appearances actively pursuing a wide range of interests, sports, hobbies and business, as well as home-centered activities.

4. Advertising should reflect the realities of life in terms of intellectual and emotional quality of the sexes by showing men and women as comparably capable, resourceful, self-confident, intelligent, imaginative and independent.

5. Advertising should emphasize positive personal benefits derived from products or services and should avoid portraying any excessive dependence on/or excessive need for them.

6. Advertising should not exploit women or men purely for attention-getting purposes. Their presence should be relevant to the advertised product.

7. Advertising should reflect the contemporary usage of non-sexist language, e.g. hours or working hours, rather than man hours; synthetic rather than man-made; business executive rather than business men or business women.

8. Advertising should portray men and women as users, buyers and decision-makers, both for the "big ticket" items and major services, as well as small items.

9. Advertising should reflect a realistic balance in the use of women, both as voice-overs and as experts and authorities.

# PORNOGRAPHY

by Julie Wheelwright

The image of a young woman flashes on the screen. She is naked except for her sparkling spiked heels, sweating under the hot, pink lights of the cabaret. She gyrates, thrusts her belly forward, close, too close to the leering men in their respectable three-piece suits, who watch with moist eyes.

Her body is my body, reviled, made an object of desire but shame. Discomfort fills me. But this is *Not a Love Story*. This film is about pornography.

The National Film Board's recent documentary about pornography is as difficult to assess as it is to watch. The film and its makers are to be both lauded and criticized.

The film was shown October 20 at a private screening by the Women's Research Centre and the NFB, with executive producer Kathleen Shannon in attendance.

Shannon explained that director Bonnie Sherr Klein and other members of Studio D (an NFB forum for women filmmakers and their concerns) began with Klein's eight year old daughter first discovering pornography.

In a sense the film is like a journey into the unknown for the audience. Sherr Klein and Montreal stripper Linda Lee Tracey set out to explore porno through interviews with the men who run the peep shows, the porno publishers, photographers and the women who work in live sex shows and clubs.

The images are horrifying and one cannot easily forget them. The camera records an interview with a peep show manager who willingly shows Tracey one of his films. It is entitled, "Beat the Bitch".

A crudely made black and white film flickers on. A man, encased in leather, forces a woman onto a table and begins to chew at her nipples and pull brutally at her pubic hair. "What does that do for you," asks the manager. "That hurts, that really hurts," says Tracey.

Another shot of a woman in a booth, behind glass, talking into a phone to a customer. She spreads her legs, working the straps of her dress down and urging her customer to "take it out". She explains to Sherr Klein afterwords how many women grow to hate men because of their jobs.

Then a shot of a young girl, sitting on a medical table. A man approaches with a huge erection and the child reaches out to stroke it.

An interview with a couple who perform a live sex show on New York's Forty-Second Street. The woman explains that this is better than turning tricks on the streets: "At least I can be with the man I love." They are paid $25 twelve times a night to make love under a spotlight.

An interview with a Canadian porno publisher: "The biggest turn on for a man is to have a woman kneeling at his feet performing fellatio."

Says David Wells, editor/publisher of Hustler and Elite magazines, "I would say that the standards are a little rougher. The magazines (now) are more explicit, possibly because of women's liberation. Men have started to fantasize about women. They prefer to dominate these women."

In an interview with Suze Randall, a Playboy and Penthouse photographer, the same theme emerges. "This is all play-play, it's fantasy. It's not anything serious."

The film succeeds in disturbing. The filmmakers make the important link between pornography and violence -- men fantasizing about dominating women. But the problem is that we are left disturbed. No connection is made to our own lives.

There is one shot of an advertisement, a Calvin Klein jeans ad, which makes that connection. The pornography on Forty-second Street can be seen in watered down version everywhere and the principle is the same: women are treated as commodities.

Between the scenes of horror are interviews with feminists who have researched the problem of pornography. Says author Kathleen Barry, "It may be just simply how you treat your secretary four weeks from now. It may be what you decide you want your wife to do because she isn't as interesting as what you see in the films. But somehow it (pornography) gets translated back. And that's why all of us remain as potential, if not real, victims of what goes on in those theatres."

The film also tends to get side tracked into the personal. The story is not how Linda Lee Tracey realized that porno is wrong by making the film and giving up her eleven year career, but about violence against women. But at times the film dwells at this personal level.

At the film's end, Tracey and Klein are sitting on a beach and Tracey reads a poem she wrote in response to posing as a model for Suze Randall.

The poetry is good poetry and its sentiment valid. But it weakens the film. Pornography is a problem we must all face and deal with. To reduce it to one woman's realization is to downplay the film's message.

Another irritating scene is a shot of Klein's daughter, who precipitated the project, as she walks into a corner grocery store and sees a man perusing a copy of Penthouse. The voice over explains that Klein's daughter being curious, wanted to know about the pictures. Voice over alone would have been sufficient.

At times the technical quality of the film is lacking. There are one or two scene changes which are interrupted by a series of black frames. The film also stopped once; however, perhaps this was simply the NFB projector.

The film is a valid attempt to present the problem of pornography to women. Whether it will, or should, reach the general public is another question. According to NFB regional distribution manager Bruce Pilgrim, there is no plan to show the film publicly in B.C., although it will be available to women's groups beginning next month. ♀

**MEDIA WATCH** continued from page 16

Our committee wants to encourage Canadian women not only to complain about sexism in the media, but to play feminist watchdogs in all aspects of the media.

For instance, every radio and TV station in Canada must have its licence renewed every four or five years by the CRTC. At licence renewal hearings, public groups or individuals are asked to speak up if they think there is a reason why that licence should not be renewed, i.e. their programming is *sexist*.

If a person in Nelson, for instance, knew that a local radio station's licence was coming up for renewal within six months, she (with a little help from her friends) could monitor it for a week to get a sampling of its content. (Media Watch can help set up monitoring criteria.)

Then, based on her findings, she could present an intervention proving sexist content.

Media Watch intends to warn women's organizations across Canada whenever CRTC hearings will be held in their areas so that local stations will be made to account for themselves.

Another area that Media Watch wants to address is the 'invisibility' of women on public and private TV and radio. Watching TV news and public affairs shows, one might think that the vast majority of people on this planet were male. It seems that when we're not being misrepresented, we're not there at all.

To change this, we will continue to push for better and more coverage of women's issues, and the seeking out of women experts and women's opinions on all subjects.

We intend to speak to any issues that arise within the media world that we feel will affect women's lives in negative ways. For instance, I have just presented a brief on pay TV to the CRTC Hearings.

Pay TV will bring subscribers a 'bonanza' of Hollywood blockbusters, first run movies, 'adult films' (i.e. porno and violence) and children's films. I expressed our concern for the way women are portrayed in most of these films, and called for the CRTC to draw up licencing regulations that would eliminate sexist, exploitive use of women.

In December, the CRTC is holding an enquiry into the granting of broadcasting licenses to 'religious organizations'. We intend to be there and speak up for the interests of women.

In other words, we intend to stay on their backs until they get off ours.

If you're interested in taking part in this media blitz, do contact us. There's lots to do. If you can't get actively involved, drop us a line and we'll send you a pile of complaint forms.

Put them next to your TV and radio, and next time 'they' get you roaring mad, don't hit the ceiling, hit those forms. Get it out and off your chest, constructively. Spread the word about Media Watch. Our mailing address is: P.O. Box 46699, Station G, Vancouver B.C. V6R 4K8. Or call Jillian at 738-0395 (Vancouver), Sylvia 539-5478 (Galiano) or Alesia at 542-4525 (Vernon). ♀

## CULTURE

# California festival raises questions of race and class

by Cy-Thea Sand

I was drawn to this festival by the writers scheduled to speak -- Kate Millet, Valerie Taylor, Charlotte Bunch, Audre Lorde. I wanted a "fix" of radical feminist thought; I wanted to learn from women writing, to browse around booktables, to listen to writers old and new.

I was only partially satisfied. Audre Lorde was not present, to my great disappointment. I *did* find a copy of her latest book of poetry though (*The Black Unicorn*). There wasn't much of a literary scene at this festival. Music and politics competed for women's attention, and I was reminded of the profound complexity of our movement.

I shared four days with 4,000 women with all their love, rage, dignity and power. I was elated at times, depressed and fed up at others. I was both disgruntled at the dust and dirt, and thrilled by my sisters' brilliance. It was a week-end in the life of herstory and it was exciting.

### Connecting with our lesbian roots

As I am currently working on an analysis of our lesbian literary tradition, I was interested in Valerie Taylor's workshop: "Our Lesbian Roots". Valerie Taylor is a lesbian grandmother, feminist and anti-war activist who has published ten books. She honoured the aircontrollers' strike in the United States by busing to the festival from her home in Tucson, Arizona. Morever, she was a personal friend for over twenty years of Jeannette Foster, to whom this festival was dedicated.

Jeannette Foster, author of the unprecedented *Sex Variant Women in Literature*, died in July 1981 at the age of eighty-seven. A librarian by profession, Foster is considered to be the greatest authority on lesbians in literature.

Valerie Taylor established a Sisterhood Fund for Jeannette's nursing care expenses in her final years. It was sustained by feminists, gay men and writers. Just hearing Valerie tell her story about Jeannette Foster brought me closer to what one could call my lesbian roots.

Essentially, Valerie attempted to fill in the literary gaps between Sappho's poetry, Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) and Rita Mae Brown's *Rubyfruit Jungle* (1973) ... in just one hour. Unfortunately the process was reduced to title and author calling. She did manage, however, to impress upon the small crowd in attendance, the need for a louder and louder lesbian voice in literature.

Taylor is concerned that when her generation dies off, there will not be enough young lesbian writers to take their place. At one point, a woman from the audience introduced her friend, Jane Futcher, as the author of *Crush* (Little, Brown 1981), a young adult lesbian novel. This woman turned out to be Elza Gidlow's editor as well.

Elza Gidlow is an eighty-three year old lesbian who has been writing poetry since her early youth. Her poem "For the Goddess too well known", written in 1917, is the first poem in the anthology *Lesbian Poetry* (Persephone Press, 1981). I had hoped that Elza would be at the festival as she lives just outside San Francisco, but, alas, she dislikes travelling.

When Valerie Taylor's workshop ended,

*Second Annual West Coast Women's Music and Cultural Festival, Yosemite National Park, California, September 10-13th, 1981*

Cy-Thea Sand

Robin Tyler urged the cheering audience to honour our lesbian elders, to respect their lives of courage and resistance.

Kate Millet spoke at the first evening concert on the political significance of this "City of Women". She spoke with an almost mystic reverence for the potential of the women's movement.

I found her language to be beautiful and deeply moving as she expressed her belief that this festival of 4,000 women was in and of itself a metaphor for what women are capable of. She extolled the creation of such an event, and said that it represented a new level of achievement in the women's movement.

Kate spoke of the festival as an empowering reality -- a reality that can become political fact. She explored the amorphous term "community", asking questions about its nature, process and definition. She spoke of the need for women to have the time and space to share ideas, concerns and dreams. Millet then briefly referred to the artists' and writers' colony/community she has established in New York State.

Kate then changed the focus of her address to speak of Sita's suicide. (Sita was the subject of Kate Millet's 1976 autobiographical work entitled *Sita*). As she spoke of the death of her lover and friend, the audience was forced to change its celebratory mood into one of solemnity. This shift was jarring and confusing; her discussion of community was thereby tabled, and many women were irked.

Despite this, most of us were deeply affected by Kate's reading of her poem to Sita -- a work Kate herself described as "possibly the first lesbian elegy."

Perhaps Kate's intent in shifting the focus was to juxtapose the despair of a creative woman with the joy of the festival. She may also have been underscoring the need for emotional support services in feminist inspired communities. I don't know.

Early the next morning in her scheduled workshop, "The Community", Kate Millet continued her discussion of the political significance of the festival.

Continued on page 19 ►

by Diana Smith

I'm still not sure why I went to the West Coast Women's Music and Cultural Festival September 10-13 at Yosemite National Park in California. "Wimmin's" music often seems a bit wimpy to me and lesbian culture (because although it was called a Women's Festival, I think this is another example of something called 'women's' when actually 'lesbian' would be more accurate) -- anyway, lesbian culture never feels quite like my cup of tea.

But I went, prejudices and all. I am still wondering if peeling and chopping garlic for 4,000 women was my punishment for my unfriendly ideas. However, where the garlic failed to change my ideas, one song from Sweet Honey was enough to put a little sugar in my tea. But that was at the end of the weekend.

Cy-thea's (accompanying) article gives a friendlier, realistic account of the Festival as a whole, but I think a series of incidents to do with race and class which happened during the festival are worth expanding upon. I got a better sense of *where* lesbian-feminists are at in California and I learned some things being in this artificial community of 4,000 women-cum-lesbians-cum-feminists for four days.

The first I heard of discontent was a brief announcement at the concert Friday night about a meeting, the next day, to discuss racism and classism at the festival. The meeting was instigated by about twenty Latina women who had not been allowed to read a short statement outlining their concerns, at the concert Friday night.

### White, middle-class culture predominant

About 150 women showed up for the meeting. The Latina women detailed the experiences that had angered them prior to, and at the festival. Things like a Spanish-speaking woman phoning the main office in San Francisco before the festival and no-one being able to understand her and getting an impatient response when she tried to speak English. Or a $65 flat fee for the concert regardless of the wide range of women's economic situations. Or no Spanish-speaking women in child care for the children whose main language is Spanish. Things like no attempts to organize car pools or buses to Yosemite (3½ hour drive from San Francisco) for women who didn't own cars.

But the main criticisms centered around the predominance of white, middle-class culture presented at a festival that should have represented the different cultures of the women present.

Friday had been declared a day of solidarity with Latin America but there was a feeling of tokenism about it -- there had been no announcements made about it the day before, the line up of speakers and musicians were situated at a side stage amid frisbee playing, swimming and craft booths. (Apparently at the Michigan Women's Music Festival the political workshop are in a special tent where those who are interested can pay attention to what's going on.)

These, and other criticisms, became exacerbated, and the resulting eruption by third world women and their supporters happened because the festival organizers

Continued on page 19 ►

# CULTURE

Continued from page 18

She compared the concept of solidarity to the idea of community. Solidarity implies a specific goal while the notion of community is larger in purpose and in vision. It is concerned with morality and ethics, social codes and the dynamics between individuals and sub-groups within the community at large.

Moreover, it presupposes living as one chooses rather than, as with solidarity, the need to fight for one's rights. The fact of community, as dramatized by 4,000 women in the woods, is an enacting of freedom rather than the demanding of it.

But even as we try to transcend patriarchy at such a gathering, Kate advised, we must be ever aware of facing Monday mornings. She said that the United States has become one long Monday morning with the resurgence and respectability of the Klu Klux Klan, Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, and the other "innumerable tinsel tunes of patriarchy".

Kate urged the crowd to risk all, to take the courage to act away with them from the festival. We must all do this, she said, even though "the dragons of the past" have surfaced again, clothed in respectability; even though the right-wing is silencing people with economic threats; even though the women's movement is but a tiny swell in a sea of repression.

Charlotte Bunch's workshop, entitled "Feminism in the Eighties", underlined Kate Millet's point that bold imaginative steps must be taken by women to counter-attack right-wing forces.

Charlotte Bunch is considered to be the major feminist political theorist in the U.S. She is a founder of *Quest* magazine and the *Furies* and writes for *MS* magazine and other feminist papers and journals.

Bunch contends that the right-wing ambience of America bids us to move from our consciousness-raising successes, from the creation of a woman's culture and community to greater and greater political power. She urges us to infuse all political issues with a feminist perspective, to encourage feminism to become international in scope, embracing all women and all issues.

Bunch feels that feminists must develop a perspective on world politics and that it must move from its special interest constituency of women to include men. Women have given birth to feminism, she argued, but men must now share the responsibility of integrating feminist philosophy and awareness into a politically viable world view.

Charlotte Bunch demands, in short, that feminists cultivate a powerful public presence. She echoed one of the themes of this festival when she cautioned that the women's movement is under serious attack by reactionary forces. She added that we do not have the luxury of time to waste on divisiveness and infighting.

There were both at this four day festival. A group representing Latina women initiated unscheduled meetings on the issues of racism and classism at the festival. They compiled a list of twenty-one grievances against Robin Tyler and Torrie Osborn, the festival co-producers.

Robin Tyler, in turn, delivered an impassioned speech against the divisiveness and trashing so prevalent in the women's movement. The Latina women and their supporters were insulted by the reductionism of her speech and met during the Saturday evening concert to strategize around the grievances.

A committee was formed at this meeting and a constructive criticism session planned for October in San Francisco.

***The "dragons of the past" have surfaced again, clothed in respectability. We must risk all to stop them from silencing us.***

As a result, interspersed with the music of Holly Near, Meg Christian, Carol MacDonald (great rock and roll), Maiden Voyage, the Teresa Trull Band and Ferron, was much tension, lobbying, anxiety and despair.

But, on Sunday morning, Bernice Johnson Reagon of Sweet Honey in the Rock, spoke to us in that powerfully soothing voice of hers, easing the crowd into a calm, contemplative evaluation of the weekend.

Her workshop, entitled "Coalition Politics and Turning the Century", could not have been better timed. In it she addressed the political strategy of coalition -- the uniting of disparate groups to defeat a more dangerously powerful force.

She spoke of the women's movement (and its social/cultural events) as a place for coalition, no longer the safe, supportive centre for like-minded women. She advised us to nurture another refuge for ourselves away from the activities of the movement.

She admonished women who expected women-only events to be conflict-free. She

Continued on page 24 ►

Continued from page 18

-- two women, Robin Tyler and Tory Osborne -- were unreceptive to hearing about them.

"Fill in your evaluation sheet after the festival, we want peace and harmony here and we will deal with racism and classism later." I learned, or relearned, several things at the festival -- one was if you don't deal with things they often get worse. They don't go away. At Camp Mathers, in the forests and mountains of Yosemite, we didn't go away.

After the meeting the group broke into two: women of colour and white women. Both groups wrote separate statements (which later turned out to be virtually identical) that were to be read at the Saturday night concert.

Another thing I learned during all this was the value and role of inspiring leadership. While the 150 or so (the number was growing) white women were debating one or two points of their statement and agreement looked like it would be a long time coming, a Puerto Rican woman, Rosa Maria (by this time the women of colour group had joined the white group), who had been doing political organizing for seventeen years in the Bronx, spoke and stressed the need for unity.

I trusted this woman and liked what she said. Apparently other women did too. When she finished speaking everyone got up, cheering and clapping, and went to the concert site.

By this time tension was mounting. In this mini-uprising I saw some of the elements that would be present in a more dangerous setting. Here none of us had jobs or commitments to distract us from following through with our action.

In a more 'wordly' setting, there would be times when the situation would demand our attention, irrespective of our commitments. Strong feelings and opinions among large numbers can feel, and be chaotic, and it was amid this atmosphere, where spontaneity and unity were necessary, that direction by women who inspired trust and whose suggestions made sense was useful.

Also, although those of us at these meetings knew what was going on, the vast majority of women at the festival didn't and were confused by what was happening. It is easy for that confusion to turn to hostility unless attempts are made to really let everyone know what is happening.

At the concert three women went backstage to negotiate fifteen minutes on stage to read the statements. Robin Tyler, the main festival organizer and the individual to whom most personal criticisms were directed, was scared that this would cause division and conflict (even though this was already happening) so the women agreed to tone down their statements.

After they had spoken, Robin Tyler came on stage and delivered a defensive tirade (that was not toned down nor did it enhance unity and peace). She said the criticisms were extreme and unjustified, that it was not an issue of racism and that as a working class Jewish woman who knew about oppression she could not be guilty of discrimination. Another lesson -- 'leaders' can be co-opted and mislead, as the three women who went backstage discovered.

During Robin's tirade, the contingent of women of colour and their supporters left disgusted, and, at the basketball court near the kitchen, had an alternative cultural and music festival.

With a flashlight for a spotlight and silence for a sound system women spoke, danced, sang and drummed. A group of black women taught a chant:

*This is what we do when there's*
*trouble in our home*
*This is what we do in our home*
*We gather our mothers (daughters,*
*sisters, etc.) around us*
*When there's trouble in our home*
*This is how we do it in our home.*

***With a flashlight for a spotlight and silence for a sound system, women spoke, danced, sang and drummed.***

Latina women led Spanish songs, and Jewish women sang a song that women had sung crossing a desert and a Native American woman said a prayer. The unity that can come during times of conflict can be something special.

At Bernice Reagon's workshop the next morning her words took on added meaning (see Cy-Thea's article) when she talked about coalition politics and not to come to events like the festival expecting things to be easy and harmonious.

At another meeting that day, again on the basketball courts, plans were made to

Continued on page 24 ►

# INTERNATIONAL

**AFRICAN WOMEN,** continued from page 7

An estimated 70,000 workers boycotted the buses. Women could be seen walking these miles with babies on their backs and bundles of washing on their heads.

This was a long and bitter struggle, but Africans were determined to show the government that they could not impose additional financial burdens on black workers.

Then again in 1961, nurses working at a tuberculosis hospital in Durban staged a heroic strike. Their list of grievances was extensive. African nurses were forced to eat apart from Coloured and Indian nurses and were fed lower quality meals for which they had to supply their own eating utensils. They were also forced to pay more for board and lodging. Their demands also included free uniforms and a minimum wage of $4.00 per day.

One of the most crucial demands was the extension of maternity leave to unmarried pregnant women. The nurses had seen too many of their friends buried after having 'backyard abortions' in order to preserve their jobs.

The nurses also organized a boycott of hospital food and set up an alternate food system. In the end they did receive some improvements as a result of the strike.

In 1976, when thousands of black school children in Soweto staged a peaceful protest against the inferior Bantu education system (designed to humiliate and degrade the intelligence of black youth), police in armed cars moved into the township. They opened fire on the students, killing and wounding many. When mothers and fathers came home they found their children dead in the streets and their houses on fire.

The next day students again demonstrated in the street, only this time they were calling for the overthrow of the apartheid government. Parents joined the students in their demands and all over the country protests spread. Over a half million workers staged a successful 3-day stay away from work.

Graphically Speaking

Since 1976 workers and students have continued their actions against the government, through strikes, school boycotts, and consumer boycotts. Women continue to play a leading role in the fight for a new and democratic South Africa.

Unfortunately space does not permit me to list all the militant actions carried on by women and men over the years, but only some of the highlights of this struggle.

## Be a part of the solution

We in Canada can also take steps to help achieve this aim. We must:

- publicly condemn South Africa's continued suppression of fundamental human rights and democratic liberties
- campaign for the recognition of African trade unions, with full rights to collective bargaining and to strike, the right to organize, and freedom of expression and association
- campaign for an immediate and unconditional release of all trade union and political prisoners
- campaign for an end to the notorious system of migrant labour
- boycott all South African products
- put pressure on the Canadian government to end all diplomatic, cultural, economic, military and sporting ties with the racist government of South Africa
- insist that Canadian companies immediately withdraw from South Africa
- stop putting money into Canadian banks that continue to finance the apartheid government.

*A special thanks to Brenda Wall who wrote, together with Ken Luckhardt,* Organize or Starve -- a History of the South African Congress of Trade Unions. Q

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**IRISH WOMEN,** continued from page 9

number. If your period began on the first of the month when you first entered Armagh, they you are given sanitary napkins on the first of the month, however irregular your cycle.

In a letter written by Mairead Farrel, six weeks after the commencement of the protest, she says:

"Since six weeks have passed, we have all gone through our menstrual cycle on the no-wash protest. It is a dangerous time, the risk of infection being very high. The sanitary napkins are thrown in to us without wrapping, we are not permitted paper bags or such like, so they lie in the dirt until used. We have nowhere to dispose of them when used."

The women change their clothes (including underwear) and their bed linen only once every three months. The hallways and cells are full of slops, excrement and used sanitary napkins. The smell is indescribable. The lights are on all day as there is no natural light.

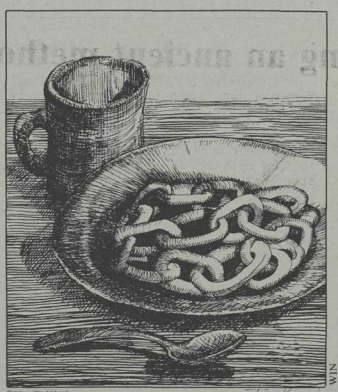
## Irish feminists join the struggle

Many of the women in Armagh are unable to go on this extreme form of protest. Women on protest lose all right to remission and food parcels, and their visits are curtailed to one per month.

In 1973, the Price sisters, Marian and Dolores, went on hunger strike in a London jail demanding transfer to an Irish jail and were force-fed for 202 days. They won transfers to Armagh and both have since been released suffering from anorexia nervosa.

Another prisoner, Pauline McLaughlin, suffers from a nervous disease, the result being that she cannot keep food down and was persuaded by her comrades to come off the protest when her weight reached 90 pounds. At 24, her hair is completely gray and nearly all her teeth have fallen out.

Until 1979 the struggle in Northern Ireland was largely ignored by the main body of Irish feminists. It was thought necessary to feminize republicans before a feminist movement could support its sisters. Happily, this coming together of republican and feminist women is finally happening.



WIN

On International Women's Day 1979, Women Against Imperialism (organized from Belfast and Dublin) staged a picket outside Armagh Jail. Eleven women were arrested, and when they refused to pay their fines, two of the eleven women, Margueretta Darcy and Liz Lagrua, served sentences in Armagh. Since then Irish feminists have been allying with their sisters in the struggle against British Imperialism.

In their statement at the beginning of the hunger strike on December 1st 1980, Mary Doyle, Mairead Farrell and Mairead Nugent called upon "the Irish people to support us in our stand and we especially call upon our sisters in Ireland and throughout the world to stand and be counted with us in the grave days ahead. We are prepared to fast to death if necessary, but our love for justice and our country will live forever."

## Women's resistance honoured at last

These women later came off their hunger strike after the British promised to grant political status. Westminster reneged on this promise and the struggle continues.

The women's struggle has been largely overshadowed by that of their male comrades. This lack of recognition has not gone unchallenged by Irish women and the world is at last getting a glimpse of the courage, bravery and determination of the women of Northern Ireland -- those behind the walls of Armagh Jail and their sisters in the ghettos of Belfast and Derry.

The Irish Prisoner of War Committee (I.P.O.W.) has since March 1931 taken up the issue of the Northern Irish struggle in Vancouver. This struggle of late has been largely centered around prison resistance, which has, since May 1981, taken the lives of ten hunger strikers.

The function of the I.P.O.W. is to build Canadian solidarity with Northern Irish female and male prisoners in their demand for political status. In the long term the I.P.O.W. supports the total withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and the right of self-determination for the Irish people.

For further information, contact the I.P.O.W. at P.O. Box 86545, North Vancouver, B.C. V7L 4L1. Q

# ALTERNATIVES

## Energy circles: channelling our power

by Cyndia Cole

Just as the energy of sun, wind and tides is infinitely available, so is the energy moving through our body/mind unlimited.

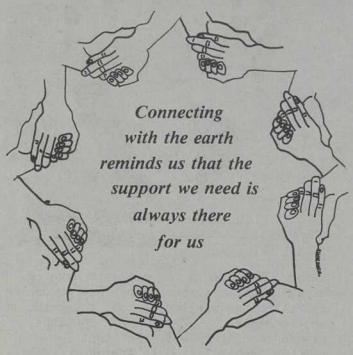
We are finding alternate methods of transforming and directing this inexhaustible energy that is within us and all around us. We can use it working together to accomplish our purposes, in healing ourselves and the earth and in building the world we deserve to live in. Energy circles are one form of doing this.

An energy circle is formed when two or more women sit or stand in a circle and hold hands. It's that simple. This form of contact allows energy to circulate and in so doing to increase in power and focus.

One way of channelling this flow of energy is by having a guide to direct everyone's awareness. A woman acts as a guide by speaking in a slow and relaxed manner. Here is an example of what she might say:

"We close our eyes ... get comfortable ... focus on our breathing ... allow our breathing to deepen and relax us ... we become aware of any heaviness or tensions we are holding in our bodies ... imagine letting these drop into the earth ... pulled downward by the natural force of gravity ... now we imagine drawing up the energy of the earth into our bodies as if through long roots ... the earth supports us ... earth energy sustains and nourishes us ... fills our bodies and grounds us ... now we breathe in the energy of the sky... of sun and moon, wind and weather ... sky energy fills us with expansiveness ... allows us to be clearer and lighter ... now we each focus on our centre point ... the core of our being ...where we feel strong and powerful ... where we know who we are ... where we know what we want and need ... energy radiates outward from our centre points until we become aware of our connection ... the energy moving around the circle ... through our hands and our bodies as we touch ... this is powerful collective energy which we create and channel by working together ... which we can direct for our purposes today ... now we gradually return to awareness of the room around us feeling relaxed, centred and powerful ... ready to proceed with the work at hand ... opening our eyes."

The exercise of connecting with the earth reminds us that the support we need is always there for us, reminds us that we change and grow as naturally as trees do, helps us stay on firm ground in our political work.




Connecting with the sky helps us remember the broad scope of our movement. Getting in touch with our centres allows us to sense our own power and respect each others. Feeling our collective energy builds unity and good intentions. The circle relaxes us so we can proceed with calm assurance. In all ways energy circles smooth and speed up the collective process.

Most often I practice energy circles as an opening when working with other women. The *Song Spinsters* began each evening of singing by forming an unguided energy circle and chanting. The energy of the sound moving through us developed our voices and brought us into spontaneous harmony. We then moved on to discuss group concerns or to work on specific songs.

I have used energy circles as a beginning to support groups, workshops, meditations and clearing sessions; before performances; during conferences and collective meetings.

Energy circles help us contact the energy we need to fuel the women's movement. After circles we are more efficient in doing group business. We less often feel drained. Our use of energy circles in a problem solving group drastically reduced the number of held resentments and paranoid fantasies.

Focusing on our collective energy before we talk builds trust and clears away minor irritableness. When we do need to expose differences and work through disagreements, we feel safer because of our circle connection and clearer for having focused on our personal power.

Using energy circles in my one-to-one therapeutic work has helped equalize our power relations and focus our energy towards creating the change the woman wants.

We can also do energy circles by themselves as a way of re-sourcing ourselves. This can be especially important for women in the city in healing our separation from the forces of the natural world.

We can use energy circles for celebration, in creating holidays and rituals that we endow with meaning and significance.

I learned to guide energy circles from Margo Adair in Applied Meditation workshops. I describe energy circles here in hopes that more women working in feminist contexts will adapt and use them. Diane Mariechild gives suggestions for energy circles in *Mother Wit: A Feminist Guide to Psychic Development* as does Starhawk in *The Spiral Dance*.

You can obtain these books from Ariel and the Women's Bookstore. And you can use your inherent creativity to invent circles to suit yourself. ♀

## Bloodrags: reclaiming an ancient method

by Eileen Brown

I like to feel the warm womb blood oozing out of my body, soaking into a soft cotton rag. Other methods of dealing with menstrual blood have appealed to me at other times, but I have come back to rags for various reasons.

I don't like having a tampon or sponge inside of me. I find it drying and irritating to my vaginal walls. And the recent toxic shock scare only reinforces that feeling.

Disposable napkins are bulky and cumbersome, and also use up many trees. For those of you looking for alternatives, you might want to try the rag method.

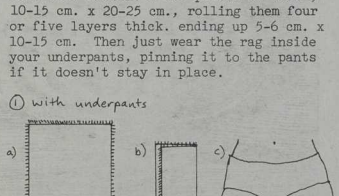
Does the word "rag" turn you off? Not surprising, as it has been used so often in a negative way ("She's got the rag on", etc.) However, I think that this word is important for wemoon, the weavers and washers of centuries.

Rags are multipurpose bits of cloth, far more durable than cellulose fibres, usually obtained from clothes and towels that have been used and loved for years. In the light of its ancient significance, it's time to reclaim the word rag.

Here are some suggestions from my experience that may help you find the most comfortable way of wearing rags.

If you wear underpants, the easiest way is to fold up a bit of old towelling or other absorbent cotton. I use pieces of towel, 10-15 cm. x 20-25 cm., rolling them four or five layers thick. ending up 5-6 cm. x 10-15 cm. Then just wear the rag inside your underpants, pinning it to the pants if it doesn't stay in place.

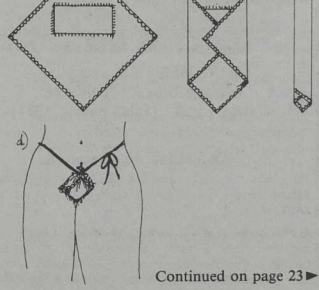
① with underpants




If you don't wear underpants, you'll need a parger cloth the size of a bandana or large handkerchief, into which you roll up the smaller absorbent piece. Fold it up diagonally, so that the corners become the ends of the rag.

Tie a soft cord (flatter, braided cords stay put better than round, twisted ones) around your hips, loosely. Then tie or pin the ends of the rag to the cord, front and back, fairly snugly. Experiment with the knots 'til you get a fit perfect for your body.

② without underpants




Continued on page 23 ►

# REVIEWS

## Dorothy Parker play rates faint praise

by Jan DeGrass

The wit of Dorothy Parker was already legendary in New York's Algonquin Hotel during the thirties. Writer, poet, critic and lunchtime drinking partner of actors, producers and comedy writers, she often stretched the bounds of friendship with her sarcasm and critical reviews.

She is author of such famous one liners as: "boys don't make passes at girls who wear glasses" (used and re-used by Ann Landers and Readers Digest), "one more drink and I'll be under the host", and, when speaking of Katherine Hepburn, "she ran the gamut of emotions from A to B."

I've seen Dorothy Parker through many eyes now. She pops up in biographies of the Marx Brothers, in the works of comedy writer S.J. Perelman and in Lillian Hellman's stories. My impression has always been that she was a pretty tough nut, a hard case New Yorker, maybe even a strong woman.

Abby Hagyard's performance at the Waterfront Theatre gives me a different impression, and not one that I can agree with. This one-woman play called "Dorothy Parker: Praising With Faint Damns" is written and performed by Hagyard, who admits to a long time fascination with Parker.

But the Dorothy Parker on stage is not the hard-boiled egg I was expecting. Instead Hagyard portrays her as simpering and demure -- far, far too cute.

In one funny scene, Parker is at a party, wondering why no one has asked her to dance. Finally, a gentleman persuades her to the dance floor. Although mentally Dotty describes him as a "walking disaster area," her public voice is coy and sweet, praising the cute little step that he worked up himself (even though the cute

little step is about twice the tempo of the waltz playing on the piano). Dotty's inner voice drips poison, but her outer voice continues to stroke the poor simpleton's ego until we almost begin to see his gleaming face in front of us.

Perhaps we are supposed to understand something of Dorothy's personality from her sarcastic back biting in this scene. But I was left with many questions.

The sharp tongue that others respect surely doesn't have to mouth sweet nothings and resort to the childish trick of talking behind her partner's back. If anyone can get rid of the "excuse me, thank you" syndrome that most women fall prey to, surely Dorothy Parker should be one of those women.

During the performance we heard selections from Parker's works, her verse, her writings and critical reviews. In these she was straightforward, if not brutal. But her outward demeanour remained as sweet as saccharine. This is where the Hagyyard play falls flat. If no other reason is presented for Parker's venom, I can only assume it stems from nastiness and small-mindedness -- and why write a play about that? Surely there was some intelligence behind the wit.

In all, Parker epitomizes a time when writers like Ernest Hemingway and Lillian Hellman took up political causes, like the Spanish Civil War or socialism, only to drown their convictions in drunken literary evenings and a whirlwind round of parties and travel.

Dorothy fills us in on the level of her commitment:

"I'm a convenience crusader. I gave a public speech in support of the striking waiters at the Waldorf Astoria. But right afterwords, I crossed the picket line at the 21 Club to get to the bar. Well, I needed a drink..."

Parker's short stories are not remembered as well as her one-liners or her lovers. Too bad, because one of the high points of the play was Hagyards interpretation of the main character from her story "Big Blonde", a very poignant and realistic sketch of a woman's life. Big Blonde is always a good sport, and she goes on being a good sport for "about a thousand years". Eventually she becomes sick of it, but nobody notices.

Lillian Hellman interprets Parker's short stories as her imaginative projections of what she knew or feared for herself. If this is the case, I'm inspired to read more Dorothy Parker prose, in search of some sincerity and wisdom behind the sugar coating. ♀


**OPENING EVENT**

**Ariel Books**

**MARY MEIGS will autograph her new book "Lily Briscoe: a self-portrait" (Talon Books, 1981)**

**Wednesday, November 18**
**5 - 7 p.m.**

**Sale and refreshments from 3 p.m.**

**Ariel • 2766 West 4th Avenue, Vancouver • 733-3511**


## "Raggedy Man's" message is survival

by Cy-Thea Sand

From the moment we see two scruffy, mean looking men harass her youngest son, we know Nita (Sissy Spacek) is in trouble.

The scene is a small town in Texas, the year 1941. Nita is a divorced woman with two young sons who ekes out a $55 a month existence as the town's telephone operator.

Thus alone, but independent and dignified, Nita has incensed these two losers. They tease her boys and make plans to "share" Nita.

Sissy Spacek treats us in this film to an intellectual portrayal of a woman alone, worried but never frantic. At one point Nita has a three-day affair with a sensitive sailor who gets along well with her children. She enjoys these few days of romance without losing her self or sense of purpose.

Her emotional integrity and autonomy in this scene reminded me of the women of Newfoundland, whose years of hardship and trouble taught them to be wary of romantic notions and impractical flights of fancy.

Nita's dissatisfaction with her job builds, and one day she confronts her boss. When she learns that he has lied to her about wartime wages being "frozen", she walks angrily to the town's bus depot, buys three tickets to a bigger, better, town and heads home with her boys to pack.

An abortive attack on Nita leads this taut story to its denouement (abortive thanks to a tall, scar-faced, wretched looking soul - Raggedy Man - whose intermittent presence in the film offers a touch of protectiveness to an otherwise tense ambience.

Nita does leave town as planned at the end of the film. But I discover that I feel rage at her story, for Nita has had to survive even more than this physical attack.

Her husband has been more interested in other women than in providing for their children. Her boss has exploited her economic dependency by using the war to justify her low salary and lack of opportunity. Even the sheriff has answered her concern about strange noises outside her home with moral indignation at her divorced status and supposed "loose" morality.

Nita is a woman alone confronting a multi-layered male supremacist culture. And while I know that only a mass movement can hope to alter human consciousness, her gutsy presence emotes for me this film's message: survival. ♀

## CULTURE

# Come Alive! to the rhythms of women

ALIVE!, a contemporary jazz quintet from the San Francisco area, will make their first Canadian appearance Sunday, November 8th, 7:30 and 10:00 at the Arts Club, 1181 Seymour.

The extraordinarily inventive and flexible lead vocalist rhiannon is joined by pianist Janet Small and a competent rhythm section composed of Carolyn Brandy on all manner of percussive instruments, Barbara Borden on drums and Suzanne Vincenza on bass.

Musically, the collective talents in ALIVE! create an exciting blend of blues, be-bop and Afro-Latin sounds. Their second album, "ALIVE! Live" has just been released on Redwood Records.

They are warmly received by their ever-expanding audience, and are definitely adding a new and powerful dimension to the role of women in jazz today.

ALIVE! is being produced by an ad hoc group of several local women called "Siren Productions". At present, this production is its focus, but it may expand in the future to include both women performers, and performers on the North West Circuit.

The circuit is one result of a North West Women's Production Conference held in June, 1981. Its aim is to increase the availability of reasonably priced women's music in the region by sharing costs of publicity and transportation.

Ticket prices for the performances are $6.50 advance, $7.50 at the door. As the budget has been estimated to break even, there remains the possibility of a deficit. Therefore, the producers are asking for contributions of working capital (suggested amount $25. -- ticket price included). The surplus, if any, will be used to make future productions possible.

Kathy Sloane

Tickets are available from Octopus Books East, Passacaglia, Ernie's Hot Wax, Black Swan Records and the Arts Club Theatre. For further information, call 254-3458.

*Look for an interview with ALIVE! in the next issue of KINESIS.*

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**MATERNITY LEAVE,** continued from page 11

Across Canada this was also true. In Ottawa, over 400 women and men attended a rally in favour of paid maternity leave.

It was organized by the Women's Committee of the Ottawa and District Labour Council in conjunction with other women's groups.

In the Atlantic region, women's groups joined CUPW on the picket lines for one day. Women in Kingston participated in a support rally.

The International Women's Day Committee of Toronto passed and circulated a strongly worded solidarity motion. Organized Working Women of Ontario spoke at some of the CUPW rallies. And women's groups in Toronto were in the process of organizing a mass picket when the strike was settled.

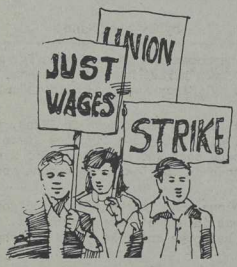
Individual women trade unionists also expressed their wholehearted support for the issues in the struggle.

For women who are active in the women's movement, this strike was an historic moment. It was a strike that not only addressed issues of concern to women in the labour movement, but inspired and activated them. And it was a time when the concerns of women inside and outside the union movement intersected. We learned that not only can we work together, but we must work together.

The success of the strike was in part due to that intersection and knowledge. If we can continue to find ways to work together we will become stronger and stronger.

The strike also mirrored the incredible growth in working women's consciousness. In many ways the strike was made possible by the Fleck women, the picketers at Blue Cross, the Radio Shack activists, the clerical workers who are members of PSAC, the occupiers of B.C. Tel, and the CUPE/VMREU strikers.

Five years ago the PSAC clerical workers in the post office would neither have dreamed of nor dared to honour a CUPW picket line. However, in October 1980, they embarked on a nationwide strike, and this time when CUPW hit the bricks, a number of PSAC women adamantly refused to cross. This increase in support was tremendous.




When CUPW members picketed B.C. Tel (for sorting and distributing telephone bills) the vast majority of workers (mainly women) respected the line and wished us good luck.

The employer tried a number of ploys to break the strike. They used the media to spread distortion, they refused to bargain in good faith, and they used taxpayers' money to run scab mail services.

Because of the solidarity of the membership and the support of others, CUPW achieved a partial victory. To those who gave solidarity, we thank you. To those of you struggling to have women's work recognized, we salute you.

*Micki McCune and Marion Pollack are activists and shop stewards in the Vancouver local of CUPW.* ♀

**BLOODRAGS,** continued from page 21

When you take it off, it's best to soak it immediately in cool water. It is then quite easy to rinse, hang dry and wear again. If you have a lot of rags, you can wear a fresh one every day, throwing the dirty ones (after soaking preferably) into a washer and dryer at the end of the bleeding days.

I find that one rag usually lasts the whole day, but on heavier days I'll carry clean ones with me, putting the used ones in a plastic bag in my purse until I get home and can put it to soak.

It may seem like a lot of work, but once you find your rhythm it really takes very little time. It's much easier for us than for our grandmothers, who had no washing machines.

Our bloodrags can be very beautiful as well as functional, helping us to celebrate the monthly bleeding as a cleansing time rather than a curse. Some of my favourite towels and scarves have eventually become bloodrags.

The cord can be as plain or as decorative as you want. A friend of mine uses an elaborate macrame cord in lavender and pink satin, with beads on the ends.

One thing I like about this method is that there is no standardized product. Each of us must assemble for herself the rags she will bleed into.

This process gives me much satisfaction -- I hope it can be a satisfying alternative for other wemoon as well.

If you already use rags and have some ideas to share, or if you have further questions about rags, please write to me c/o Kinesis. ♀

## REVIEWS

# Daughters of Copper Woman: re-telling the ancient tales

by Julie Wheelwright

Beyond the grey cement walls of the city, deep within the small towns throughout our province, the magic and mystery of the Society of Women is passed on as it has been since time began.

*Daughters of Copper Woman*
by Anne Cameron
Press Gang Publishers, $7.95

Anne Cameron, author of the recently published *Daughters of Copper Woman*, has captured the magic, the legends and the power of these women in her book. Cameron explains in her preface that these are stories from native people of Vancouver Island which have been preserved for generations through an oral history.

Cameron successfully weaves together stories about the beginnings of the society and tales told through the old women currently living on the island in communities like Tofino, Cowichan and Tahsis. The stories reflect the ideals of a people whose women were respected, and controlled their own bodies and minds.

The book is also ironic. In "Qolus the Changeable" the daughter of Copper Woman, Mowita, becomes the old woman and prepares her daughter to carry on the truth and protect it.

Though this all happened long ago, Cameron tells us, "When the Time came for the next change and the black robed men moved to destroy the Society of Women, the women Endured. Not fighting, not disputing, clinging to their knowledge, they Endured, and now it is almost Time again, and much magic is preparing, and soon the sign will be known."

The message is clear. The time has come for women to take back their power and the time has come again for native women to rejoice in their rich and beautiful heritage.

The myths reflect a pride of womanhood. When they menstruated, the women believed it was their sacred time and they celebrated. It was the society of women who taught their daughters to take pride in their bodies, that they were a source of their power.

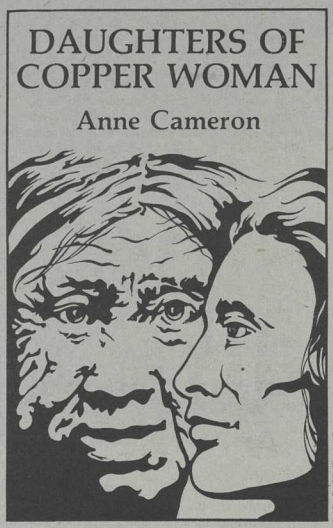
"People were living almost as they were intended to live. Almost. And the Society of Women was strong. It was inter-tribal, open to all women, regardless of age, social status, political status or wealth.

"No woman could buy her way into the society. No woman could inherit a position in the society. Each member of the society had been chosen by the society itself, and invited to join and become one of the sisters."

They taught the girls with jokes, legends and examples how to care for their bodies and respect them. When the strange white men arrive in dugouts "infested with sharp-faced bright-eyed creatures," the whole world turns upside down.

"Instead of being raised and educated by women who told the truth about their bodies, the girls were taken from the village and put in schools where they were taught to keep their breasts bound, to hide their arms and legs, to never look a brother in the eye but to look down at the ground as if ashamed of something."

Instead of teaching women that once a month they would become sacred, they were taught to become ashamed of their blood. No longer did they go to the waiting house, but they were taught to act as if they were sick.




Lyla Smith/Press Gang

PRESS GANG PUBLISHERS

When the girls returned to the villages after this terrible twisted education, they were no longer eligible for candidacy in the society.

But, according to myth, everything goes in cycles and the time for taking power will come again soon. The stories of these strong, powerful women of the society, now preserved also in Cameron's words, will survive to teach women their strength.

And the stories are not without humour. In the time when Copper Woman, the mother of all humanity, was living alone on the coast, her loneliness was great. She wept for a long time and a huge cluster of mucous fell from her mouth and nose. Remembering her instructions from her magic sisters who brought her to the coast, she saved the liquid.

The mucous grows into her first companion and she dubs him Snot Boy. But the boy never grows into a fully formed person. "Incomplete, he could catch fish, but it was Copper Woman, and later, Mowita, who knew how to smoke and cure."

Here the old order is turned around. Women are not put down because they cannot hunt and fish, but are respected because they have the knowledge to cure and smoke. Snot Boy remains a boy but Copper Woman's daughters and sons are taught her secrets and "more than Snot Boy would ever know."

Cameron writes beautifully and in her stories told through the old island women, she has captured their voices with an exacting ear. The story telling is set in houses with the old women remembering their history as they weave a basket or in the woods where Granny admonishes her grand children to get on with the berry picking.

Cameron pulls up a chair for you and lets you smell the fresh baked cookies as the wind whistles outside. Then slowly the story begins and you are enthralled.

It is also a pleasure to hear stories about areas we know so well. Chesterman Beach is an example, where Ki-Ki's Granny remembers the story of how her people fought back against the Spanish Keestadores who came to Tofino before the English. These stories have almost been lost and are never recorded by white historians from a native perspective anyway.

The stories are invaluable, for they help preserve a culture that was almost wiped out by the European settlers and their descendants. It is also worth noting that the book is a soft cover at a reasonable price rather than a hard cover which invariably would have been available only to the wealthy.

**WOMEN'S FESTIVAL,** continued from page 19

**(Cy-Thea Sand)**

asserted that it foolhardy to expect a gathering of four thousand women to be free of the racism and classism which inform the dominant culture.

Bernice wove the threads of our many-layered oppression into an articulate demand for coalition. She said that if we have felt strain and discomfort over the past four days, then maybe, just maybe some good work had been done. (Her audience cheered with relief at this point).

She reminded us that as feminists we are carrying out the political work begun with the civil rights movement. She expressed a concern for the short sightedness of feminism -- that a long range view must be taken, that revolutionaries like herself who have maintained their political principles throughout the '60s and '70s must be listened to and honoured.

In short, I think Bernice Reagon was insisting on the political wisdom and astuteness necessary for our survival.

By Sunday afternoon I was glad to be heading home. As I washed the dust and grime off my body, my mind mused on the many festival voices. I tried to feel cheered by the songs of love and struggle, but I could not shake a sense of doom. We are working so hard in the women's movement to cleanse ourselves of all the isms, while President Reagan transforms his power base in six short months. As we expand the limits and potential of human consciousness, Reagan prepares for war. I wonder what Audre Lorde would have said.

*My thanks to Sarah Shamai for helping me remember specific details of workshops.*

**(Diana Smith)**

form a group to make sure that the various mistakes at this festival would not be repeated next year -- having an organizing committee with minority groups represented, fee schedules to reflect different levels of income, more representation of cultures other than white in music, food and workshops, getting access to books to see how money is spent, etc.

Towards the end of the final concert, Robin Tyler did come on stage and admit that she had heard the criticisms and that changes would be made next year. And then it was left to Sweet Honey and the Rock to bring us all together, which they did, to perfection.

There is now a network of women continuing to meet in the Bay area who are reviewing, clarifying and taking action on the issues raised at the Festival. Next year's event, quite apart from the music, should be quite interesting. ♀

# MOVEMENT MATTERS

## Isadora's will provide a welcome alternative

by Val Embree

Music and mousse, politics and pumpkin pie -- haven't women always known that the kitchen table is where a lot gets accomplished?

On the drawing board right now is a community-based co-operative restaurant big enough for meetings and parties, benefits and political cabaret, welcoming to kids and families both in environment and price, creating at least thirty jobs in a democratic management model and establishing a community development fund to assist other co-operative, community-based undertakings.

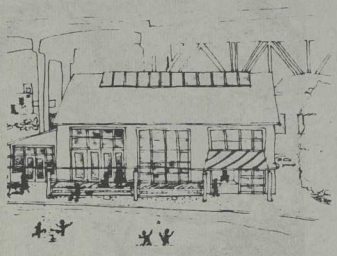
The site for Isadore's is already located; it's a large building next to the water adventure playground on the south side of Granville Island (near Waterfront Theatre). An office is operating at the site. In it, a collective of people primarily from the two initiating organizations, Total Education Society (who run Theodora's Restaurant at 4th and Burrard) and Community Alternatives Society have been working to develop the concept, work out a non-profit organizational structure and undertake fundraising for the renovations required. The collective is open to anyone willing to put in considerable time in the project.

Most restaurants don't make an effort to accommodate children, mostly because they don't make money on their meals unless they operate like McDonald's. Isadora's will have room for children: there will be a quiet play corner with various table toys, crayons and paper, headphones for music and stories. In fair weather, kids can play outside in the green space and water playground which are within sight of adults in the restaurant.

Fresh, local in-season produce will be menu highlights, cooked with nutritional value in mind. These menu policies will mean less expensive food and an investment in our own B.C. food industry. Seafoods, nuts, fruits and vegetables grown in this bio-region represent a more economical and nutritious food consumption pattern.

Vegetarian and non-vegetarian selections will be available, as well as special desserts, wine, beer, coffees, teas and juices.

The 120-seat restaurant will be open 14-16 hours a day, six days a week and will employ a staff of 30-35. Wages are projected at $6. per hour plus one third of the surplus divided among staff. Day to day operations and short and medium term planning will be in the hands of the collective; job rotation will be encouraged and education and training will be specifically built into the restaurant's activities after things are up and running.



The restaurant business is known for its high turnover of staff, tendency to discriminate on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, parental status, color, pregnancy -- you name it -- as well as thriving on competition among workers for tips, good tables, hours. Isadora's is actively opposed to all these practices.

Tipping, for example, is a supplement to an inadequate wage and permits an employer to avoid responsibility for the workers' standard of living. If a patron feels very strongly about leaving a tip, in spite of the "no tipping" policy, it will be indicated that any funds from tipping will go towards a specific project.

The Vancouver Folk Festival is involved in planning and a stage and dance floor are part of the renovations. Late night entertainment will feature favourite performers from the folk festival, local musicians and a locally produced political cabaret. Children's theatre and music are also priorities, and the space can be used for benefits for local causes. An annual members party will be held at the restaurant too.

Isadora's is also establishing a fund which will provide seed money and financial assistance to existing or proposed community based businesses and services. One third of the restaurant surplus will go into this fund. Slowly we will generate significant amounts of money and increasingly liberate our projects from the tread mill of government grants.

### Become a co-operative shareholder

Three hundred thousand dollars are needed if Isadora's is to open its doors. This money is for renovations to the large empty frame building on Granville Island.

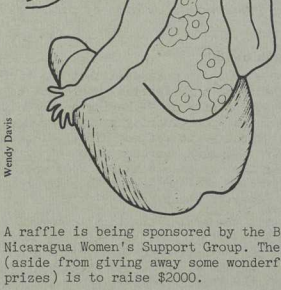
The way to get involved is through shares or loans: individual shares are $100 each, (any number can be purchased); organizational shares are $1,000.

For each $100 share purchased, the member receives $25 in food purchases at the restaurant (on weekdays) each year, as long as the share money remains in the co-op.

Loans are for a six year term at 15% interest. A trust account holds 80% of the share money until enough is raised to undertake the renovations ($200,000.); if sufficient funds are not raised to carry out the project, at least 80% of each person's share money will be returned.

But given the positive response to the project so far, there is every expectation that the project will get the support it needs. Isadora's hopes to have the money in by January 1 and begin renovations early in the new year: opening of the restaurant is set for early May.

For more information, to become a member, or join the planning group, phone, visit or write the site office: Isadora's Co-operative Restaurant, 1540 Old Bridge Street, Vancouver, 681-3748.



Wendy Davis

A raffle is being sponsored by the B.C.-Nicaragua Women's Support Group. Their aim (aside from giving away some wonderful prizes) is to raise $2000.

The money will go to AMNLAE (Association of Nicaraguan Women Luisa Amanda Espinoza) as a general discretionary fund which can be used to support their newspaper, the Women's Health Brigade, and other projects they are involved with.

## VSW Christmas Party & Raffle — join us December 4

Tickets are $2 each (more if you can). For raffle books, phone 525-8136. Larger donations should be mailed to the Nicaragua Women's Support Group, 1526 - 7th Ave. New Westminster, B.C. V3M 2K3.

The raffle prizes are:

* a sculpture by Persimmon Blackbridge
* dinner for 2 at the Mark James restaurant
* *Nicaragua*, a book of photographs by Susan Meiselas (1979)
* a Guatamalan embroidered blouse
* Boag Foundation 1982 calendar
* "Song to the Revolutionary Homeland", a new album by the Salvadorean band Yolocamba Ita

The draw will be made on December 4, 1981 at the Vancouver Status of Women Christmas Party. *Note that the date has been changed; disregard the date shown on the raffle tickets.*

Join us Friday, December 4 at 8:00 p.m. at 727A East 49th Ave. (upstairs).

Tickets are $5 employed and $4 unemployed, and are available after Nov. 15 at VSW, Ariel Books, the Women's Bookstore, and Octopus Books East.

**DANCING** **GOOD TIMES**

Bring your kids along, or make your own childcare arrangements and VSW will pay.

If you would like to volunteer for bar duty, set-up, clean-up or tickets (we'd love you for it), please contact Cat at 873-1427.

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And speaking of Good Times...

VSW needs volunteers to help with Kinesis mailout, our resource library, and general office tasks. Come and meet people at VSW - fun and satisfaction guaranteed!

# MOVEMENT MATTERS

## B.C.F.W. convention to evaluate structure

B.C. Federation of Women will hold its 8th annual convention in Vancouver on Nov. 6, 7 and 8. It is to be a working convention for delegates to reassess the structure, intent and use of B.C.F.W.

B.C.F.W. was initially organized as a non-hierarchal, democratic entity. However, over the past eight years, this structure has proved unwieldy, and as a result has been seen by many as hierarchal.

Last year's convention implemented an interim experimental structure aimed at improving B.C.F.W.'s effectiveness, and this convention will evaluate this and other kinds of structure.

The work load at this year's convention will be heavy. Because funds are scarce, most of the work of providing childcare, food, billeting, and transportation will have to be done by the women attending the conference.

Friday night's registration will take place at the Women in Focus Gallery. Registrants and other interested women are invited to gather informally for wine and cheese, and enjoy Persimmon Blackbridge's "Circus" exhibition, held over until November 6 for convention participants.

The convention itself will be held at Britannia Community Centre. Saturday morning will be devoted to understanding structural proposals, while the afternoon will allow for participation in workshops or further discussion of contentious structure issues.

Workshops being offered include Children and the Women's Movement, Reproductive Rights, Classism/Racism and Native Women of B.C. Saturday night a dance is scheduled. On Sunday, a plenary will decide the structure of B.C.F.W. for the coming year.

The B.C.F.W. convention is open to registered participants only. Non-members can register and take part in all aspects of the convention except voting.

Childcare is available by pre-registration throughout the convention, and the Friday night social and Saturday dance are open to any woman who wishes to attend.

For more information concerning registration, contact Makara at 253-8931. For other convention information, call Sue Moore at 462-7710 or Sherry McCarnan at 872-5847.

Dance tickets are available at the Women's Bookstore, Ariel Books, Octopus East and Vancouver Status of Women. Tickets are $5 ($4 for unemployed), proceeds to help defray delegates' expenses. ♀

## Lesbian Mothers Defense Fund forms

by Mary Wallace

At the Lesbian Conference last May, several Vancouver women met with members of the Toronto and Seattle Lesbian Mothers' Defence Funds. Some of us knew lesbians who needed legal, emotional or financial support in their struggle to keep custody of their children and have felt frustrated at not being able to offer more than our sympathy. So with the help and encouragement of these existing groups, we formed the Vancouver Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund.

To date we have received information from the Seattle defence fund. Materials include transcripts from successful custody cases involving lesbian mothers, and papers by recognized authorities in the social sciences that document healthy and loving environments for children of lesbian mothers.

We have also obtained a list of lawyers locally who we intend to interview concerning their interest in working for the rights of lesbian mothers and their children. And we are compiling a list of sympathetic social workers and psychologists who may be willing to serve as 'expert witnesses' in court.

Our present goals are:

- to establish and maintain a list of sympathetic lawyers and expert witnesses, to whom we could refer lesbians fighting for custody
- to provide emotional support to these women and their children
- to obtain and distribute information, documents and papers for use by lawyers in custody cases
- to help subsidize the costs of expert witnesses, and lawyers, if needed
- to educate ourselves with respect to pertinent B.C. and Canadian laws and successful custody cases, and
- to educate others through workshops, newspaper articles and interviews.

Lesbian mothers are always urged to settle out of court and, all too often, in so doing they give up their rights to family property, child support and/or alimony payments.

Until such time as going to court means that custody is awarded to a lesbian mother on her parenting abilities and the child's choice of homes, she will not be able to take advantage of the recent recognition given to women's rights to family property at the time of separation. Raising our children must be taken out of the realm of heterosexual privilege.

To accomplish our goals we need money, information, and contacts. Funds will be used to reproduce and distribute printed material, to canvass lawyers and professionals, and to reach out to women who need our help.

A women's arts and crafts show will be held on Sunday, November 29th at Vancouver Status of Women, 400A West 5th Ave., from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. All proceeds from this benefit will go to the Vancouver Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund.

For more information write: VLMDF, P.O. Box 65563, Stn. F, Vancouver, or call Mary at 251-5034. ♀

## Theatre study will evaluate status of women playwrights, directors

Status of Women Canada is undertaking a national study to assess the current status of women in Canadian theatre. The study will pay particular attention to women playwrights, directors and artistic directors.

The organization is asking for personal views, experiences and suggestions to assist them in evaluating opportunities as well as obstacles for women in Canadian theatre.

*If you are a Canadian playwright, director or artistic director or work in the theatre in any other capacity

*If you are, or have been involved in a feminist theatre, women's theatre or alternate theatre company in this country

*If you have concerns as an audience member about the characterization of women in the plays produced in this country

*If you are aware of any obstacles to the full involvement of women in Canadian theatre and/or can suggest programs, legislation or other action

*If you would like to meet to discuss this subject or suggest other individuals and groups for them to contact

then write to: Rina Fraticelli, 96A Bellevue Ave., Toronto, Ontario M5T 3N9.

Meetings will be arranged in several cities across Canada this winter. If you would like to attend one, indicate this in your letter, and you will receive a schedule as soon as one is available.

# LETTERS

## Working side by side for change

Dear Kinesis:

I read the article by Jan DeGrass in Sept/Oct KINESIS with great enthusiasm. It is a really welcome step to see co-operatives recognized as a sister to the women's movement.

Years ago I turned in my Lesbian Sweater and stopped being a part of the actively overinvolved women who make up the mainstream of the Vancouver women's movement. Later, I became involved in the food co-operative movement.

Certainly, one of the major attractions for me then was that I could get paid for working collectively in the kind of job I'd always been attracted to. As we all know, jobs in the women's movement are few and far between, and there were simply more career chances in the co-op movement.

A much more important reason for my switch was the politics of co-operativism. It seemed to me that co-operating was not just a means to an end, but like working collectively, it was an end in itself. Just as I felt strongly about feminism and lesbianism as principles which guided my life, so co-operativism became another life principle.

The organized co-op movement attracts people of all political beliefs, just as feminism has attracted and moved women ranging from conservative to anarchist, and sometimes it is difficult to work together in either movement. Some co-opers are neither feminist or lesbian aware.

In general though, I feel confident about combining the three basic principles in my life. People with whom I come into contact usually return to their co-ops after a week of warehouse work knowing more about feminism, lesbianism and co-operativism. I don't have to take the education on alone as I work with other feminists.

There is one thing that has nagged me since I started to work in the co-op movement. It seems that I have lost touch with the mainstream women's movement. Sometimes I have even felt that the women I once worked with see me as a used-to-be feminist. It's really important for us to see how we are working side by side according to similar principles for similar goals.

I hope that the article "Co-ops: Tools for Social Change?" will mark the beginning of an understanding of our similarities. Both movements can be used as a tool for changing the order of the world.

As feminists, we should be aware of the women managed co-ops in our area and use them. As co-opers we should always be aware of how close we are to the feminist movement. In this way we can build a broad based movement which can more effectively defend against the New Right.

In sisterhood,

R. Elaine Young

## Are we "not ready yet"?

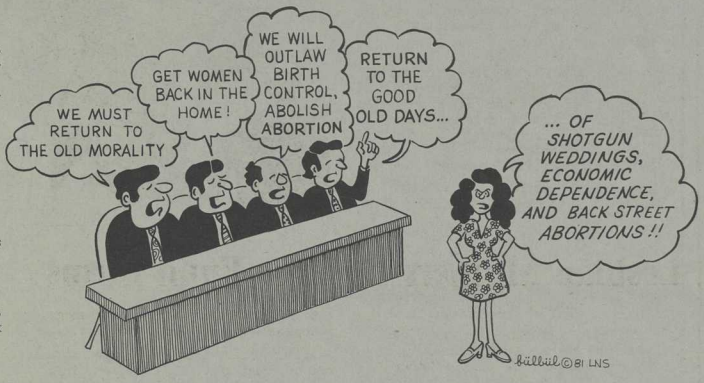
Dear Kinesis:

Tom Sandborn, for Men Against Rape, says that this group is anti-sexist, anti-racist and anti-capitalist. The latter is of basic importance, as I think that this economically unequal and unjust system produces a sick society that creates and promotes such things as sexism, racism, etc.

Tom refers to "basis for unity" and it has seemed to me for many years that men and women working together, holding meetings and conferences and discussions together, would lead to a better understanding between them, of their common exploitation by those who own control our lives.

During the pre-war Depression I was active in the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) and at that time I emphasized the importance of the sexes taking active and vocal part in all conferences, conventions, etc. and not having separate women's auxiliaries.

Some of the women said that the men were "not ready yet" for listening to women. The women were reluctant (not all -- I was never noticeably reluctant!) to speak out in front of their husbands. I maintained that they must learn to do so. How else could men learn to listen to them? And hear what they had to say?




Recently, two of my young friends have been to see me and both are women's libbers or feminists or some such. I hate to put a name on people!

Anyway, both subscribe to the idea that women must meet alone, because "they are not ready yet" for meeting with men, in discussion groups, or conferences.

When will they be? When will men and women learn to get together and talk over their problems? When will they start? Fifty years from now will they be saying "we are not ready yet"?

Baudelaire said that women were slaves of slaves.

As long as men are slaves to a boss, women will be slaves and there will be "second class citizens" of all races.

Freeing all people is the only way to enable the sexes to be free.

Eve Smith

## Winnipeg Women's Building in crisis

Dear women:

Recently, the Rape Crisis Centres held their annual regional representatives conference in Winnipeg. These women experienced first hand that the Winnipeg Women's Building is in crisis.

We are facing winter (already our fingers are freezing to the keys from the cold) with no heat, as our gas has been cut off for non-payment. Surviving the summer wasn't bad, but with winter approaching quickly, we cannot survive without donations to get the heat turned on!

The Building has never received much in the way of funding from the government other than short term summer employment grants. Our only other source of income has been rentals for office space.

At present, the building houses Wen-Do, People on Welfare, a free clothing depot, Women in Trades, a women's theatre group, a women's graphic company, and the WWCEC. The rents received are minimal as all the groups are poor, and ability to pay is the building policy.

The Building was purchased in November 1979, and opened with much fanfare nationally and internationally. Since that time, it has been a sheer struggle just to stay afloat. As far as we know, we are the only women owned and operated building in Canada, though we believe some are in the formation stages.

The women running the Building are tired, but determined and stubborn, so they plug on. Many poor women from the area frequent the clothing depot, and rely on the clothes they receive for themselves and their children. Many of these women are on welfare.

Each day, the Building grows a little colder (prairie winters are something else). We have a small wood supply that we expect will hold us for a week or two, but we can only heat one room by this method.

We believe this building is necessary and herstorical, for a women owned and operated space offers encouragement and support to women of all walks of life. Recently, a lesbian drop-in has formed, and if successful, it will enable many more women to 'come out'.

Although we know all women's groups are poor, Debbie Parent of the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre suggested this letter, when she saw the women here in such need.

So, as you have guessed we are in desperate need of money. Our heat bill is $6,000.00. We've held all kinds of fund raising events, but we can't seem to gather sufficient funds. We've also had eight break-ins in the last two years. We're asking for donations of what you can afford (we now have a tax deduction number). Any assistance will be greatly appreciated.

In sisterhood and struggle,

Yvette Parr (for Women's Building)
730 Alexander Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3E 1H9 ♀

# BULLETIN BOARD

## GROUPS

ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING GROUPS are starting at Vancouver Status of Women soon. See page 13 this issue for more details.

LESBIAN FEMINIST PROBLEM SOLVING GROUP is seeking new members. Self-help group using variety of methods, no facilitator. Free. Meets Monday nights at CRS meeting room (Charles & Odlum). Call 873-1190 or 254-3458.

THE RADICAL REVIEWER is soliciting copy for its special Spring '82 issue on *Canadian Women Writing*. Book reviews, articles, interviews and poetry welcome. Deadline: March 15/82. Send SASE to The Radical Reviewer, P.O. Box 24953, Stn. C, Vancouver, B.C.

WOMEN'S SELF-HELP COUNSELLING COLLECTIVE can be contacted at 872-3122, from 7-9pm on Tuesdays or from 1-4pm Saturdays. One to one counselling is available and several groups are beginning soon. The Counselling Collective's aim is to provide an alternative to traditional therapy. It is a free service.

PENDER-GUY SHOW (Co-op Radio) is looking for Asian-Canadian women to participate in public affairs journalism, creative writing and historical research for its weekly program. Orientation and technical training provided. Broadcast language is English. Contact the Program Coordinator at Co-op Radio, 337 Carrall St., Vancouver (phone 684-8494).

RADICAL FEMINIST ORGANIZING COMMITTEE is developing a network of radical feminists, to facilitate discussion among women who believe that radical feminism is a political movement whose *main* goal is to end male domination. Write RFOC, 109 Ellerbee Street, Durham, N.C. 27704. Enclose a small donation to stay on the mailing list.

## ON THE AIR

WOMANVISION on Co-op Radio, 102.7 FM from 7:00-8:00pm each Monday:

Nov. 2 - Alive! and Terry Garthwaite
Nov. 9 - Janie and Joy of Minimal Music playing music of Black women
Nov. 16 - Reproductive Rights, locally and in England
Nov. 23 - Selections from "Voices of the Civil Rights Movement, Black American Freedom Songs, 1960-1966"; and Meg Christian
Nov. 30 - Bernice Reagon at the West Coast Women's Festival, 1981. A report on the anti-racism organizing at this festival.

RUBYMUSIC on Co-op Radio, 102 7 FM from 7:00-7:30pm each Friday:

Nov. 6 - Love and Romance, a cynical approach; interview with Marian Lydbrooke of Moral Lepers
Nov. 13 - Gwen Avery, Bette Midler, The Mercy, Laura Lee, Carly Simon
Nov. 20 - Gospel, Part One. With gospel organist and singer Carolyn Hudnall
Nov. 27 - Gospel recollections, Part Two. More music and conversation with Carolyn Hudnall

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

Nov. 5 - Remembrance Day Show
Nov. 12 - No Theme Show
Nov. 19 - Co-Parenting
Nov. 26 - Heather Bishop Music Show

## JUST OUT

1982 EVERYWOMAN'S ALMANAC from The Women's Press is available at women's bookstores now at $5.95. Theme this year is women and health.

SPIRALE, a Woman's Art and Culture Quarterly presents in its first issue a feminist perspective on the art and culture of Canadian women. Subs: $8/yr individuals, $12/yr institutions. Write 359 Dundas St, London, Ont. N6B 1V5.

Polly Faminow/MAKARA

TWO YEARS ON THE MUCKAMUCK LINE by Helen Potrebenko, a poem written for the 2nd anniversary of the Muckamuck strike. Available at the women's bookstores. Proceeds to go to SORWUC.

WOMEN AND TRADE UNIONS, an excellent and comprehensive resource issue from Resources for Feminist Research, Dept. of Sociology, OISE, 252 Bloor St. W., Toronto, Ont. M5S 1V6. Individual copies of this issue $5 each (Vol.X, no 2, July 1981).

ANNA MAE - BRAVE HEARTED WOMAN, a film-in-progress about Anna Mae Aquash, a Cdn. Native woman who participated in AIM. She was found dead in 1976; no official investigation was ever held. Funds are badly needed to complete this film. Send donations to: Film Fund Inc., 308 11th St., San Francisco, CA.

WHO'S MINDING THE CHILDREN, an essential guide to daycare in Vancouver, Victoria and the Lower Mainland, by Erica Hill. Includes a section on how to choose good daycare, and extensive listings organized by area and type of care. $3.50.

CONNEXIONS, Canada's grassroots information sharing newsletter, is preparing a special issue on Children. Inform them of projects and publications related to this issue, esp. those where children initiate and give leadership. Write 427 Bloor St. W., Toronto, Ont. M5S 1X7. Subs: $12/yr individual, $20 institution.

NEED A FEMINIST FILM OR VIDEOTAPE? Women in Focus has just added 25 new tapes and films to its library, on topics such as feminist art and culture, health concerns, low-income mothers, the women's movement, women and nuclear energy and many more. They are available for rental now. A new catalogue is in production and will be available soon. Call 872-2250 for details.

## EVENTS

WILMAR EIGHT, a film account of women bank workers on strike in Ohio, 8pm, Robson Square Media Centre, Wed. Nov. 4. For info, call 253-5730.

BOESMAN AND LENA, a play by Athol Fugard condemning apartheid, and examining racism, sexism and poverty. Begins Nov. 6 at Carnegie Centre, 401 Main Street, Vancouver. Contact Niki Brodie, 255-0673 for more info.

BENEFIT DANCE FOR ISADORA'S November 13 at Oddfellows Hall, Graveley St, 8:30pm. Tickets are $1.50 members, $3.50 unemployed non-member, $5.50 non-member. Childcare is available; RSVP by Nov. 10 to 681-3748.

SEXUALITY WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN (A Place in the Garden), Nov. 6-8 at White Rock Women's Place. Leader: Anne Davies MA. Fee: $50. Enrolment limited. Call 536-9611 for more information.

ASSERTIVENESS WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN Nov. 21 at White Rock Women's Centre (Part 2). Leader: Michaela Johnson MA. Fee: $10. Pre-registration required. Call 536-9611 for information.

BRUNCH AT THE WOMEN'S HEALTH COLLECTIVE. Meet the women from the Los Angeles Women's Health Center who have just published a new book entitled *How to Stay Out of the Gynecologist's Office*. Sunday, November 22. 11a.m.-2p.m. 1501 W. Broadway.

NEW WEAVE: A Tapestry of Women's Music and Poetry, with Cyndia Cole (poet), Eileen Brown (singer), Luna (singer), and Chantale LaPlante (pianist). Nov. 13 at 8:00pm at Women in Focus. $3.50/$5.50. Childcare available with notice by Nov. 10. Wheelchair accessible. All wemoon and children welcome.

WOMEN ORGANIZE ALBERTA 1981 Conference, Nov. 13-15 in Edmonton. For more info, contact Alice de Wolff, 52 Sundance, 100 Ave/87 St, Edmonton, Alberta (phone 403-462-5550 days).

DANCE YOUR HEART OUT Nov. 22 at the West End Community Centre, 870 Denman, 8-12pm. Alcohol-free environment, munchies available. Open to all women. Childcare provided at the Centre. Tickets $3.00 at the door or the usual outlets. Sponsored by the Lesbian Drop-In.

FESTIVAL '82, A Celebration of Women in the Arts invites you to an evening of poetry and music Nov. 27, 8pm at Women in Focus, 456 W. Broadway. Tickets at the usual outlets, $3.75 at the door.

FIVE CONCERTS at Women in Focus Sundays through November and December. See page 14 this issue for more details.

MEG CHRISTIAN and DIANE LINDSAY in concert at the Queen Elizabeth Playhouse, Dec. 6. Tickets $8/$9 with reserved seating, available at Ariel, Women's Bookstore, Black Swan Records, Octopus Books East, and Folk Music Festival office. 8:00pm.

VANCOUVER STATUS OF WOMEN CHRISTMAS PARTY and RAFFLE in support of Nicaraguan women. December 4, 8:00pm at 727A E. 49 Ave. (upstairs). See page 25 for more details.

THE FEMALE CONNECTION, a national gathering on women in the church, in Canada and in the global community. Planned for June 7-11/82, at Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario. Open to all women. For more info, write Shirley Davy, WICC, 77 Charles St. W., Toronto, Ont. M5S 1K5

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