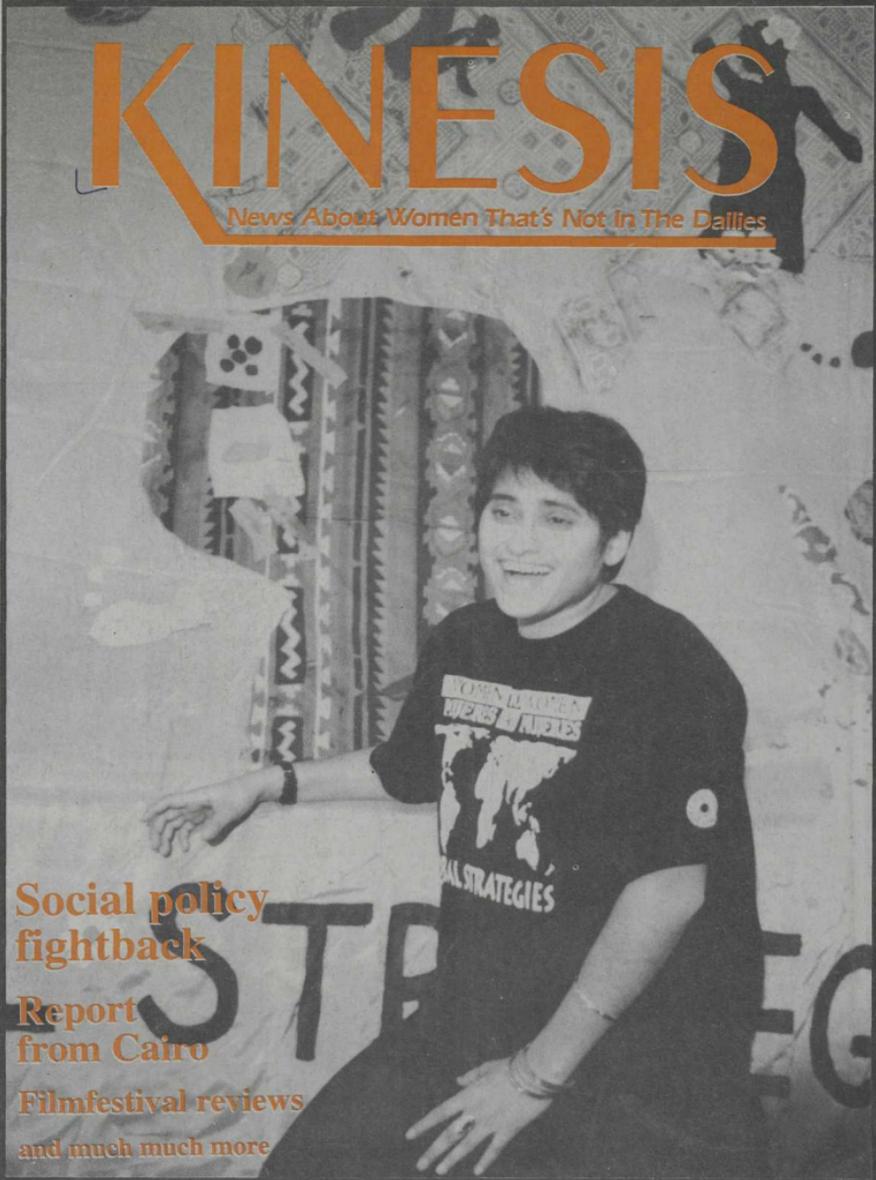


5P
NOVEMBER 1994

QUEBEC AFTER THE ELECTION Special CMRA \$2.25 Collection Serial

KINESIS

News About Women That's Not In The Dailies



**Social policy
fightback**

**Report
from Cairo**

**Filmfestival reviews
and much much more**

INSIDE

KINESIS

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Vancouver, BC V6L 2Y6
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Kinesis welcomes volunteers to work on all aspects of the paper. Our next Writers' Meeting is Nov 1 for the Dec/Jan issue and Jan 3 for the Feb issue, at 7 pm at Kinesis. All women welcome even if you don't have experience.

Kinesis is published ten times a year by the Vancouver Status of Women. Its objectives are to be a non-sectarian feminist voice for women and to work actively for social change, specifically combating sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, ableism, and imperialism. Views expressed in Kinesis are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect VSW policy. All unsolicited material is the responsibility of the Kinesis Editorial Board.

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FRONT COVER

Nandita Sharma with the
Women to Women Global Strategies
social policy banner
Photo by Fatima Jaffer

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SUBMISSIONS

Women and girls are welcome to make submissions. We reserve the right to edit and submission does not guarantee publication. If possible, submissions should be typed, double spaced and must be signed and include an address, telephone number and SASE. Kinesis does not accept poetry or fiction. Editorial guidelines are available upon request.

DEADLINES

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KINESIS

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS
1974-1994

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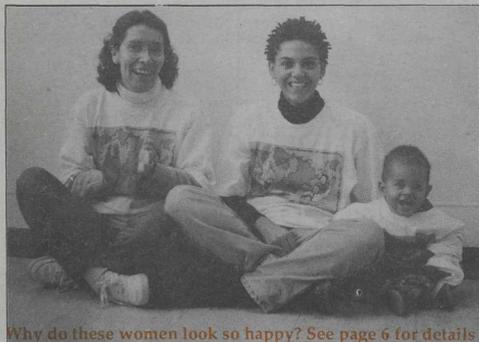
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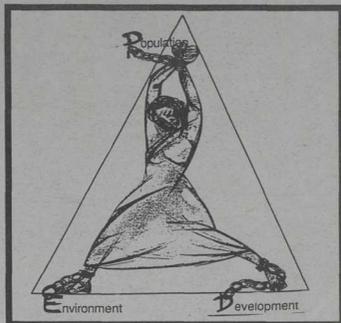
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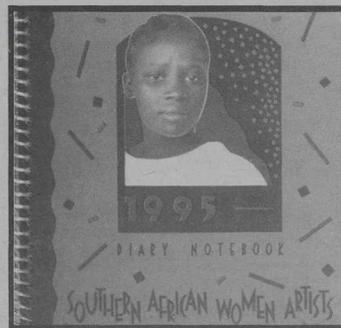
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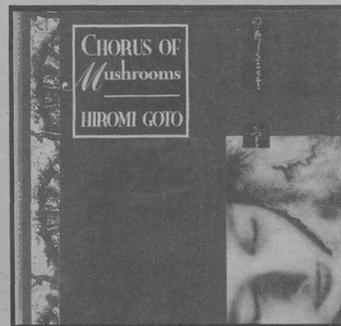
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It's been a busy Fall so far. Across the country. Everything seems to be happening at the same time and so fast...to some extent, it always feels that way at *Kinesis*: the deadlines chase each other and you get caught in the middle of them...all. That doesn't seem to be happening to women across the country who are organizing to put a stop to the draconian (overused but apt word) cuts to social policy [see page 3], to immigration, or, as we found out in Paul Martin's mini-budget late last month, proposed cuts to just about every social program, cuts that hit women the hardest! We thought maybe someone had discovered that 72-hour day we are always whining about but, as we investigated further, we found there is in fact an incredible groundswell of solidarity building among women...workers...seniors...anti-racist and anti-poverty activists...and and and...

About 34 actions across the country protesting Human Resources minister Lloyd Axworthy's proposed social policy review cuts are taking place as *Kinesis* goes to press. Most of the actions were held on October 25th, 28th or 29th, organized by various unions or women's groups...in St John's, Nfld...in Halifax and Sydney, Nova Scotia...in Richibucto, Moncton and Fredericton, New Brunswick...in Charlottetown and Montague, PEI...in Montreal, Quebec...in Toronto, Guelph, Belleville, Waterloo, Ottawa, Kingston, Windsor, London, St. Catharines, Stratford, Thunder Bay, and Kenora, Ontario...in Winnipeg, Manitoba...in Melville, Saskatoon and Regina, Saskatchewan...in Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta...and in Victoria, Prince George and Vancouver, BC...and in Yellowknife, NWT.

These are only the actions we know about; there were probably actions in other towns or regions we didn't hear about. There were leaflettings at soup lines, press conferences outside MP offices, rallies, guerrilla and street theatre, information booths, postcard campaigns, fax protests, and a costume party (in Victoria, BC. The theme was "Nearly dead." Participants marched to MP David

Anderson's office, then on to an AIDS housing group to join picket lines of workers who have been on strike for 13 weeks.) In Calgary, demonstrators handed out lemon candies (Liberals leave a sour taste in the mouth), in Halifax, MP Mary Clancy received a "pink slip" from some constituents, and in Kingston, protestors actually found a hockey game on (junior league) and leafletted windshields...

Among actions planned for November [some are listed in our Bulletin Board section] are a rally on November 4th in Guelph, Ontario--noon in front of the CEC on Wyndham St, with guerrilla theatre and leafletting, a coalition of seniors conference "United Seniors to Protest Social Programs" in Vancouver, at 411 Dunsmuir Street, with about 1,000 organizations invited; a lesbian and gay conference on social policy in Vancouver on November ..., and many more...

Concurrent with these protests, there was a cross country action protesting Immigration minister Sergio Marchi's proposed cuts to immigration, in particular, protesting the ministry's proposal to abolish the Live-in Caregiver program.

Intercede, the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers Rights and Vancouver's Committee for Domestic Workers and Caregivers Rights, West Coast Domestic Workers Association, NAC-BC, the Women's Social Policy Coalition, and Philippine Women's Centre, as well as organizations in other cities, held protest marches on October 28th to demonstrate opposition to the continuing discrimination against domestic workers and immigrants of colour. We'll have more on that next issue.

Intercede has also initiated a postcard campaign, calling on Sergio Marchi to reform the Live-in Caregiver Program by removing the discriminatory conditions it currently imposes on domestic workers. Marchi's proposals for changes to immigration legislation is due to be introduced in the House of Commons early November.

To support actions against the changes, send donations to Intercede, 489 College St, Suite 402, Toronto, Ont, M6G 1A5, or to CWDCR, 727 East 38th Ave, Van, BC, V5W 1H9.

Also as *Kinesis* goes to press, about 150 women attended a conference on global restructuring in Vancouver cosponsored by UBC, OXFAM, Women to Women Global Strategies, and others. We hear it was an excellent conference, and we hope to have more on it in the next issue. At strategy sessions at the end of the Vancouver conference, women stressed the need to focus energies on new ways of reaching out into the mainstream and of building alliances with a broader range of groups. Among the more concrete suggestions was to organize activism-skills building workshops, and to work more with visual artists ("in order to reach young people, we must recognize we are a visually oriented society.")

Touching on similar issues raised at the conference, in this month's paper [see page 11], Evelyn Zinagwa writes about the impact of global restructuring as it specifically impacts on women in Africa. And the latest issue of *Asian Women Workers Newsletter*, an excellent workers' paper published in Hong Kong, focuses on the impact of global economic restructuring on women in Hong Kong in a story on Hong Kong called "The Invisible Unemployed--Women over 30s." (The newsletter is available for in-house reference at the Vancouver Status of Women.)

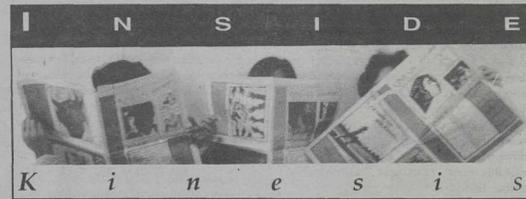
As *Kinesis* goes to press, news is that the Liberal government has finally put a dollar and official commitment to reinstating the Coart Challenges Program, as per their election promise. The program, which was scrapped by the Tories in 1992, will get \$2.7 million a year (the same when it was disbanded) to finance and advise equality-seeking groups' court challenges under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Previous court challenges funded by the program included the legal battle to return treaty rights to Aboriginal women and efforts to ensure free choice in abortions.

Last month, we said we would run a feature on the "peace process" in Ireland...things were unfolding so quickly, there were daily changes and too many developments to write the story. We will bring you that feature in the next issue. We are also working on features on the situation in Haiti and in Cuba...

We hit a few snags with our feature on Quebec (those pesky deadlines again) and so decided to make it a two-parter. In Part Two, we hope to run interviews again, including with Jackie Kistabish, president of the Quebec Native Women's Association-QNWA is holding its AGM in early November at which it will come up with strategies for the upcoming "referendum" year.

In this issue, we review a couple of the films [see pages 18-19] that screened at the 1994 Vancouver International Film Festival last month. Because the festival fell close to *Kinesis* copy deadlines, we were unable to review more films and hope to bring you these next month. On the Festival though--there seemed to be more cutting-edge political commentary (both in the documentary and feature film categories) this year, most of it outstanding.

New in Vancouver: a collective of individuals organizing against fascist skinheads and neo-Nazi groups has set up an Info-line in Vancouver called "No Footholds for Fascism." The line is meant for people who would like to report or receive information on Nazi/Hate activities and anti-Nazi/anti-Hate organizing. The number to call in Vancouver is (604) 290-0409. This is not a Help-line, an answering machine will record messages, and someone may call you back. That's it for this month. We've minutes to make it to press, minutes to rest, and then hopefully, many minutes (that 72-hour day!) to work on the news, features and reviews we plan to bring you in our next issue...



Kinesis volunteers, Editorial Board members and staff got together in October for our annual retreat. We looked back at our achievements over the last year, and discussed ways to improve the content of the paper and the processes at *Kinesis*. Suggestions ranged from increasing the type size of the text and running more regular columns to broadening representation of women from various communities on the Editorial Board and strengthening our volunteer base through activities such as consciousness raising meetings, social get-togethers, and production training workshops. The sky was the limit--it was a very clear day--on our brainstorming, and

many of the changes proposed are going to take a little time and organization. We'll keep you informed as we go along. We have however decided to throw out the suggestion of the 72 hour day.

Welcome to our new writers this issue: Evelyn Zinagwa, Michelle Roy and Marie-France Dubois, Feroza Ahmed, and Phoolan Devi. And welcome to our new production volunteers this issue: Noreen Kamal and Rita Wong. If you're interested in writing or doing production work, call us at 255-5499. We'd love to have you.

See you next month.



THANKS

Our thanks to Vancouver Status of Women members who support our year-round memberships and donations. Our appreciation to the following supporters who became members, renewed their memberships or donated to VSW in October:

Marsha Arbour * Mary Boname * Barbara Curran * Fran Darling * Lynda Griffiths * Rebecca Holmes * Angela Kelly * Barbara Lebrasseur * Alyson Martin * Monique Midgley * Chris Morrissey * Margaret Ostrowski * Neil Power * Sharon Robinson * Andrea Sanderson * Marie Scarlett * Janet Shaw * Dawn Simpson * Janet Smylie * Sheila Thompson * Judith Walker * Sue Watson * Geri Werther * Barbara Young

We would like to say a very special thank you to the following supporters who have responded so generously to our annual fall fundraising appeal. The ongoing support of VSW donors, as well as the support of many new donors, is crucial to the expansion of VSW's vital services and programs in the face of continued government cuts to our funding. We are very thankful to:

Margaret Andrusiak * Liz Bennett * Melanie Conn * Gail Coyer * Ellen Dixon * Karen Egger * Catharine Esson * Kylie Goeldner * Jo Hinchliffe * Jam. Ismail * Lorraine Johnston * Janet Kellough-Pollock * Jennifer Kirkey * Bonnie Klein * Inger Kronseth * Sharon Lambright * Jackie Larkin * Kerry Moore * Carol Pettigrew * Leona Ransom * Mollie Rawling * Johanna te Boekhorst * Penelope Tilby * Michele Williams

We would also like to thank the volunteers who stuffed, sealed and stamped so many envelopes for our fall fundraising drive. Michele, Hilary, Amy, Dawn, Heidi, Anik and Toni!

Finally, the Finance and Fundraising Committee would like to bid a fond farewell to Alex Maas who is leaving after more than five years on the Committee. It is the dedication of volunteers like Alex that keeps VSW thriving and we are very grateful indeed for all of her hard work!

Corrections

In our October issue, we misspelled Magaly Varas' name in the bioline of the centrepiece interview with Patricia Fernandez [page 13]. And on page 3, Cenen Bagon was identified as a member of the Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers and Caregivers (VCDWC). She is with the Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers and Caregivers Rights (CDWCR). In the photo coverage of Take Back the Night [page 11], we lost a bit of text identifying the Pyrodesiacs, who performed at the rally. We're working on getting a stickier brand of wax.

Moving back an issue, in Coop Radio ad in September, we incorrectly listed the times for *Obaa* and the *Lesbian Show*, which had

changed. *Obaa* is on Tuesdays at 7pm, and the *Lesbian Show* is on Thursdays at 8pm.

And finally, we need to correct our "Corrections" from last month, as part of the text didn't make it onto the page. Apologies to Shree Mulay and Agnes Huang for a mistake we made to their conversation on the International Conference on Population and Development [page 9]. The phrase, "because it violates and contradicts the basic principles of feminism" should have been tagged on to the end of Huang's question on the declaration from the People's Perspectives on Population conference and not to the end of the first paragraph of Shree Mulay's response.

Federal government's social policy review released:

From bad to worse

by Shannon e. Ash

Women's groups and other popular organizations are gearing up for the struggle they predicted was coming following the release of the Liberal government's review of Canadian social policy last month. Up for discussion are more funding cutbacks, more loss of universality, and more erosion of the rights of welfare and UI recipients.

The 89-page "discussion paper" was released by Human Resources Minister Lloyd Axworthy on October 5. The consultation process which preceded the paper began in January. In February, the federal budget saw cuts to Unemployment Insurance benefits and welfare, continuing the tradition of previous Tory government cuts, which the Liberals had denounced only the year before.

Advocacy groups taking part in the consultation say the review is not being done in good faith, but is driven by a Finance ministry eager to cut spending on social programs to feed deficit payments.

The review covers Unemployment Insurance, Welfare and the Canada Assistance Plan, Child Benefits, and Post-Secondary Education—UI is solely a federal program, while welfare and education are run by the provinces but partly funded through federal transfer payments. The review does not deal with old age pensions, health care, and social spending for First Nations, which will be dealt with in individual reviews.

Jean Swanson of Vancouver's End Leg-islated Poverty and current president of the National Anti-Poverty Organization says the consultation report does not reflect the views of most groups who have already made presentations to the government. The government's consultation process is to continue this month, coming to Vancouver November 16 and 17.

Most groups criticize the review document for its limited scope—not looking at all aspects of the system, including the tax system and job creation—and its lack of analysis of the impact of these changes.

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) says the review, for example, doesn't recognize the link between violence against women and access to social programs. Access to income assistance and housing are vitally important for women

trying to escape violence, says NAC president Sunera Thobani.

Julia Brooke of the Vancouver Women's Health Collective agrees, saying women's health also cannot be separated from social policy. "If one's income cannot provide for safe, affordable housing, nutritious food, and [safety] from violence," women's health is in danger. Most women with disabilities already live well below the poverty line, and need the support of social programs. Increased poverty and competition could make First Nations struggles for land rights more difficult.

Jeanette Armstrong, an activist from the Okanagan nation, speaking at a Vancouver conference on women and global restructuring, said the struggle to maintain or get back land use rights and prevent exploitation is being met with hostility "because of the wage and labour economy." It means jobs to cut down trees, it means jobs to clean the rivers out of fish...Poverty [is used] to create dependencies, and people are pitted against each other."

A government document leaked just as the review was released states the "real goal" of the social policy exercise was to cut costs. Human Resources minister Lloyd Axworthy says the document was only a briefing paper and there was no evidence it came from the Human Resources or Finance ministries, but admitted that cuts were a "major reason" for the proposals.

Finance minister Paul Martin, in a presentation made one week after the release of the Social Policy Review discussion paper, reiterated the emphasis on deficit reduction. Martin says he is absolutely committed to lowering the deficit by half by 1997, and is focusing on spending cuts. Martin had said earlier that raising taxes would be a "last resort."

The government has no mandate to carry out this program, says NAC's Thobani. "Consultation is a false process if we are only offered options...which attack the most disenfranchised groups in society."

Welfare and CAP

Current formulas between the federal and provincial governments for sharing welfare costs may be "scrapped," and the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP), which ensures national standards for welfare, may be replaced.

CAP standards, or rights, state that any Canadian in need is entitled to money for basic requirements, no matter which province she is from, and that she should not have to do work or training to receive assistance. An appeal process is also guaranteed.

The loss of these standards "would be a disaster," says Swanson, and the attack on CAP is designed to force "employable" people off welfare, and single parents into working poverty.

Workfare—making people work in order to receive assistance—is another suggestion in the review. A similar program is underway in Alberta right now. At a national conference on women and social policy held in Regina in September, it was reported that Alberta health care workers had been laid off after cuts. Their positions, which paid \$12-\$14/hr, were replaced by jobs paying \$6 to \$6.50/hour which people on welfare had to apply for if they wanted to receive assistance [see Kinesis, Oct 1994 for more on Alberta cuts].

Social program costs contribute less than six percent to the deficit increase. Both NAC and ELP point out that the deficit is largely caused by interest rates and unpaid corporate taxes. Canada's corporate tax rate, which has been steadily declining, is one of the lowest among the industrialized countries. ELP has called for higher corporate taxes.

Swanson says the social policy review is part of a "cheap labour strategy" to force people to accept low wages and fewer rights [see Kinesis, Jul/Aug 1994].

This strategy is part of a global agenda, according to Nandita Sharma of Women to Women Global Strategies. "It's a policy that's been decided at an international level between states at meetings of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) and GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade)," she points out.

Nations are under pressure to "restructure their workforces" for the benefit of highly mobile capital. In essence, Sharma says, it is a Structural Adjustment Program—something people in many developing countries have been suffering from for some time.

The guest-worker program in Canada is an example of the kind of model preferred for the workforce, says Sharma. Guest work-

ers have no union rights, are not protected under labour legislation, and have no access to social programs.

Sharma says the social policy review is connected to the immigration review, also currently under way. Domestic workers, for example, may lose the right to apply for landed immigrant status [see Kinesis, Oct 1994, and pages 9-10, this issue]. Employers can bring in guest workers and pay them less, undercutting other workers. This allows the targeting of immigrants as scapegoats.

The Liberal government cites polls that show 85 percent of Canadians believe social policies are in need of reform as evidence of support for their social security review.

Many women have been arguing for reform for years—but it's not the kind the government is proposing. Says Swanson, "You can take a bad system and make it better, or you can make it worse." This is worse.

Unemployment Insurance

There are two proposals to change the UI system. The first cuts back on the current program, making it harder for people to qualify for benefits by increasing the length of time and hours one has to work to qualify; and reducing the level and duration of all benefits. And while currently, eligibility for UI is adjusted depending on an area's employment level—in high unemployment areas, one needs to be less work to qualify—under this proposal, eligibility may be standardized across the country.

The second proposal is to create a two-tiered system. People who only occasionally claim UI will have a system similar to the current one. People who claim UI frequently—more than three times in five years, according to one figure—will have reduced insurance, possibly tied to "family income"—that is, if a partner or family member is earning income, the benefits given to the unemployed person, often a woman, may be limited depending on this income.

As well, training and "community service" will be emphasized—those who refuse may get reduced or no benefits. Frequent claimants (and employers) may have to pay higher UI premiums.

Women will be adversely affected, both by general cuts and the two-tiered system as women tend to be frequent UI claimants—many work in insecure employment sectors, as seasonal workers in fish plants or tourism, and as temporary and contract workers.

Tying UI to "family income" will take away women's autonomy and increase their dependence on men, according to NAC president Sunera Thobani.

There is also a proposal to "top up" low-paying jobs for about 50,000 Canadians on UI for up to two years, to encourage them to accept work that pays less than their previous jobs—in effect, wage subsidies to employers.

The proposals seem to be based on the myth that UI premiums are "too high" and discourage job creation. ELP's Jean Swanson however points out that UI is actually one of the few programs where employers contribute to social costs. Government subsidies to employers are what Swanson describes as part of a move to "get individual taxpayers to pay business costs."

Post-Secondary Education

The government proposes to end federal cash grants to provinces for post-secondary education. These payments account for 25 percent of current post-secondary funding, another 25 percent is paid by students as tuition fees. These cuts would mean that tuition fees would at least double.

The government proposes to replace cash transfers with a loan fund, which will be available to all, and would be repayable depending on income after graduation, unlike the current student loans program. Some grants for "low-income" students would mean that tuition fees would at least double.

While an "income contingent" loan fund might sound like a good idea, says Michelle Kenter, BC Chair of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), the proposal is "completely flawed." The minimum student debt load would be \$40,000. Loan payments would be a per-year amount based on one's taxable income for that year. Those who get jobs in the higher-paying sector will pay off their loans more quickly and thus pay less interest. Those with the lowest incomes will end up paying the most.

Payments will be deferred if unemployed, but interest will continue to build up. Women are more likely to be in the lower-paid job sector, or to take time off work to raise children. Kenter says that it could take up to 36 years to pay off a loan, and women would be unable to save for future needs, such as housing or retirement—or more education, given the government's proposal that people pay for their own job retraining through a tax-sheltered savings program (similar to RRSPs).

The alternative to the government's proposal, says Kenter, is a "truly progressive tax system." Corporations should contribute, through the tax system—CFS proposes a one percent tax to go directly to post-secondary education. The right-wing argues that only individuals benefit from education. Kenter disagrees. "It is society that benefits from post-secondary graduates."

Child Benefits

In 1993, the Tory government scrapped family allowances and replaced them with child tax benefits. Now, the review paper proposes limiting these benefits to low income families only. Payments to families who qualify as "low-income" would be raised, supposedly to help alleviate child poverty.

However, says Swanson, the proposed increase is "miniscule" and "won't put a dent in child poverty."

A guaranteed annual income for low-income families is also suggested in the review, but is likely to be rejected as the paper describes it as too costly.

The Liberal government's election promise to create more daycare spaces (150,000) when economic growth reaches 3 percent over three years is repeated in the review, but no specifics are given. What comes through though, says Jocelyne Taugers of the National Child Care Advocacy Association, is signs of a "patchwork approach," and not a national program.

WHAT'S NEWS

Update on the child support tax policy

Women are waiting for the Supreme Court to rule on a landmark case that challenges federal laws requiring women to pay income tax on child support payments.

"Thousands of women are waiting for this decision," Suzanne Thibaudeau told reporters in Ottawa after lawyers argued her case before seven judges in early October.

Thibaudeau, a Quebec woman who has been fighting the unfair tax law since 1989, won a lower court ruling in May that taxing the child support payments was discriminatory. But the federal government appealed that ruling to the Supreme Court, and other similar cases have been adjourned until the Thibaudeau case is settled [see *Kinesis*, June 1994 and July/August 1994].

The current taxation system means that, in 1991 for instance, women paid about \$330 million in taxes on child support payments, while men got tax breaks totalling more than \$660 million.

On October 4, the Supreme Court hearings on Thibaudeau's case ended. It could be several months before the court hands down a ruling.

In Ottawa, several of the judges questioned the arguments made by lawyers representing Thibaudeau and a coalition of women's and poverty groups granted intervenor status in support of Thibaudeau.

Later, Thibaudeau told reporters the law must change no matter what decision the judges make. "I'd like them to come and live the lives of women and children, come and see we live that discrimination every day for years," she said. "I'm convinced the law has to change."

Meanwhile, a federal government committee continues to study the child support system. Sheila Finestone, committee chair and secretary of state for the status of women, said the government isn't close to a solution. "We don't have a package ready yet at all," Finestone said in early October.

Karlene Faith wins VanCity Prize

Unruly Women: The Politics of Confinement and Resistance, written by Karlene Faith and published by Press Gang Publishers, has won this year's VanCity Book Prize.

"I hope this work helps demystify the women behind prison walls and encourages people to rethink the way we punish people for their transgressions against social order," Faith said, after winning the \$4,000 award, BC's largest literary prize.

Faith, a Simon Fraser University criminologist, has been a community activist for human justice since the mid-1950s. She began advocacy work with women prisoners in 1972, and later co-founded the Santa Cruz Women's Prison Project, which offered university courses, cultural workshops and artistic performances to women prisoners in California.

"It's my hope that the publicity this award generates will contribute to broader public awareness and political action in support of women whose lives are mangled by the pains of social injustice," she added.

"The strength of this book is not only its scholarly analysis but its activist approach," said author Jane Rule, one of the three women who judged the entries for this year's prize.

As part of the award, the winner designates \$1,000 to a women's charity. Faith has

chosen Strength In Sisterhood, a newly-formed group of former women prisoners who are setting up a program to help incarcerated women with their transition back into society after release.

The other finalists for this year's prize are Sharon Brown's *Some Become Flowers*, Anita Robert's *The Last Chance Cafe*, and MAC Farrant's *Raw Material*.

Little Sister's goes to court

An impressive line-up of supporters are testifying for Little Sister's during the court case now underway in Vancouver.

After years of delay, the court case finally began October 11. The Vancouver lesbian and gay bookstore and the BC Civil Liberties Union filed suit against Canada Customs in 1990 to challenge book seizures at the Canada-US border.

During the trial, expected to last at least six weeks, a wide range of witnesses are testifying for Little Sister's. Among the 27 witnesses are Vancouver artist Persimmon Blackbridge, novelist Jane Rule, Duthie Books owner Celia Duthie, Sandra Haar of the Toronto Women's Bookstore, and US authors Pat Califa and Sarah Schulman.

Others who have testified include Canadian author Pierre Berton, Professor Anne Scales of the University of New Mexico School of Law, and Jearid Moldenaur, the founder of Glad Day Books in Toronto and Boston. Moldenaur will testify with respect to the early days of Glad Day and the problems encountered with Canada Customs from 1974 to 1990.

The case is also receiving support from PEN Canada, the Canadian Writers' Union anti-censorship group, and the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF). LEAF sent a letter to the minister of National Revenue, who is responsible for Canada Customs, focusing on Customs Canada's discrimination against lesbians in its actions against the bookstore.

Little Sister's is arguing the Canada Customs Act violates the Charter of Rights' freedom of expression clause by empowering Customs to detain and seize books it deems to be violating the Criminal Code's obscenity act.

The bookstore's lawyer Joseph Arvay is also seeking to establish that Canada Customs deliberately discriminates against gay and lesbian bookstores, since other bookstores carry many of the materials that have been seized en route to Little Sister's bookstore. In her testimony, Celia Duthie will testify that Duthie Books, a major Vancouver bookstore, ordered a shipment of books identical to one ordered by Little Sister's. Duthie's shipment arrived untouched, while the shipment destined for Little Sister's was seized.

The federal government does not dispute Little Sister's argument that the seizures infringe on their Charter rights to freedom of expression, but is arguing that, because the seized materials violate the Criminal Code, Customs Canada's actions are justified.

As in the months leading up to the trial, Canada Customs' harassment of the bookstore has continued if not increased, resulting in seizures of books that do not even involve obscenity laws, like the seizure of the children's book *Belinda's Bouquet* [see *Kinesis*, Oct 1994].

Meanwhile, Little Sister's continues to fundraise to finance the costs of the case. To date, the store's legal costs have risen to over \$200,000.



photo by Fatima Jaffar

DEMONSTRATION AGAINST SUPREME COURT RULING

by Sue Vohanka

Women in Vancouver rallied on October 6th to protest a recent Supreme Court ruling that allows a man to use "extreme drunkenness" as a defence in a sexual assault case.

The rally outside Vancouver's law courts was organized by Women Against Violence Against Women Rape Crisis Centre (WAVAW) within days of the Supreme Court decision.

"The implications of this case are going to be more men getting away with beating, raping, harassing and killing women because they were drunk, while less women will report because they know the criminal justice system is not for them, but for men," said Zara Suleman of WAVAW.

"All this talk in the media, government, and legal system about violence against women, when really nobody cares that women's rights are being taken away," she added.

The Supreme Court ruled that a Montreal man can use drunkenness as an excuse for raping a 65-year-old woman in a wheelchair. The court ordered a new trial for the man, who argued he was too drunk to have formed the criminal intent required for a conviction.

"This is just another disgusting example of once again how the courts fail to protect women from being assaulted," said Miche Hill, of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

"We need some training and education within the court system," Hill told *Kinesis*. "There's just too much of a bias in the system against women who've been assaulted. It's not going to get any better until they start taking sexual assault seriously, until society starts treating sexual assault as the crime it is."



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New Code of Conduct at SFU:

School silences students

by Teresa McCarthy
and Wendy Lee Kenward

Student activists at Simon Fraser University (SFU) in Vancouver have formed a coalition to fight new policies that could be used to restrict the rights of students to protest and organize on campus.

In July, SFU's Senate, the university body which governs academic activity, approved a set of policies and procedures designed to ensure student discipline. These regulations include a new Student Code of Conduct, which students fear will limit student activism.

Maya Russell, a member of the steering committee for the newly formed Student Anti-Code Coalition, says the Code of Conduct "written by the Senate with very little student input, puts in place some pretty tough enforcement policies."

The Code of Conduct, which was once a short description that informed students of their responsibilities under law to the university community, is now a detailed description of what the university deems "unacceptable" student behaviour.

The aims of the new Code are to "define students' basic responsibilities as members of the academic community, to define inap-

propriate student conduct, and to provide procedures and penalties to be invoked and applied if they engage in such unacceptable behaviour."

...one such "code" in the department reads:

"No student shall deface any University building or property."

Referring to a statement in the Code that says, "No student shall by word or action disrupt university activity," SF-PIRC's Atkinson says this could be used to violate the right of students to gather, protest, speak out against the status quo, and of the unions to organize picket lines.

The difference between SFU's Code of Conduct and the codes at universities like the University of Victoria and Queen's University in Kingston, says Maya Russell, "is that SFU's code deals not only with academic behaviour but also limits where students can go and what they can do."

Despite the risks of student organizing following the new Code of Conduct's adoption, students are organizing against the Code. Concerned students and representatives from groups as diverse as the Teaching Support Staff Union (TSSU), the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSU), SF-PIRC, and the stu-

dent Senators who were on summer leave when the Code was passed have come together to form the Anti-Code Coalition. Nazmin Bhatia, of the Simon Fraser Students' Society, says it is crucial the student body be aware that many students are organizing together over this issue. "Students should know that this [activism and organizing] works all the time."

The Coalition's Russell says one possibility of getting the Code revoked is by mobilizing the SFU student community around the question of the Senate's right to pass such a code.

"If there was significant public pressure, and if the document became embarrassing for the administration, there might be some movement. That's why it's so important also for people who do not go to SFU to know about this," says Russell.

To increase awareness both on and off SFU's campus, and to build public pressure on the administration, the Coalition is setting up events such as an Anti-Code open stage night on campus, and giving interviews to the media. The Coalition has established three working groups to organize such events and to research, publicize, and agitate around discriminatory issues in the Code.

SFU's student newspaper, *The Peak*, is closely following the student activities protesting the Code of Conduct. This semester, the paper has run stories on the changes to the Code, corporate funding at universities, SFU's campus security, and the academic freedom backlash. As *The Peak's* news coordinator Sophie Leake points out, "all these issues are connected."

Leake says the Code comes at a time when SFU's campus is relatively quiet. "The administration wants to put [the Code] through now because they want the power to deal with people who get out of line later," she says. Leake points out that issues like sexual harassment and date rape are heating up on some US and Canadian campuses and that these and issues of academic freedom will probably explode on most Canadian campuses in the near future.

Leake adds the Code also perpetuates the "so-called apathy" among Canadian students and their unwillingness to get involved in activism because it speaks directly to their fear that activism will put bad marks on their record and therefore make it more difficult for them to find jobs.

The Code is designed to make students "less likely to become vocal, more likely to become part of the corporate world," she

The move towards soliciting greater corporate funding also comes at a time of government cutbacks in spending on education, increased tuition costs for Canadian and international students, a decrease in scholarship monies and bursaries, lack of subsidies for single mothers, and cutbacks in student spaces, such as common rooms, and student resources, such as computers.

Russell is particularly concerned about the effects corporate funding will have on public accessibility to an education. "You have to seriously question what effect corporate involvement will have on who gets into universities, academic freedom and on the mandate of the university," she says.

"Corporations certainly don't care about the issues that women students face, such as lack of accessibility, poverty, and harassment."

Atkinson points out that a lack of policies regarding admissions contributes to a situation where "getting into the university tends to be accessible only to those who have more money."

She says that, "Traditionally, women have had to fight their way into academia, and in many ways that's what being a feminist at university is all about. Our job is to make trouble and to continue to open doors."

The cutting edge of political activism on campus currently tends to be the women's centre on campus. As well, most student activists tend to be women.

Atkinson cites sexual harassment, assault, and the misogyny, homophobia and racism in the curricula, as well as of professors and students, as some of the issues women are raising on campus.

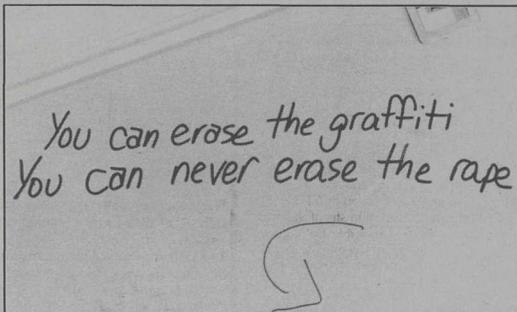
"Because these are potentially the most threatening issues to the administration, as women we should be really worried about the new Code," she says.

"At a time when First Nations, African Americans, gays and lesbians and other underacknowledged groups in general are demanding that curricula, departments and universities reflect more diverse realities, universities in North America are all passing codes of conduct and similar regulations to ensure the status quo which is based on euro-centric traditional elitism," says Atkinson.

"These changes are about making the campus safe for capitalism," says Atkinson, "but what that means for students is that they are basically taking away our voice for social change."

Teresa McCarthy works for Simon Fraser Student Society and lives in the shadow of the University. Wendy Lee Kenward is a recent graduate of SFU and a regular writer for *Kinesis*.

photo by L. Atkinson



"The Writing's on the Wall"—Graffiti at SFU

And because professors "already have academic freedom," the code further "silences student challenges and new ideas and protects the privileges of those in positions of power."

Laura Atkinson agrees, pointing out that "The Code's policies contradict the Canadian Human Rights Code," especially in sections that limit student participation in the issues that affect them.

Protests and public gatherings have long been tools of demanding changes in the status quo for disenfranchised groups. On campuses, protest and alternative forms of information sharing are sometimes the only avenues available to students by which to challenge the actions of administration.

Under the Code, Atkinson says, what the university may deem "disruptive behaviour" might actually be the student's right to challenge the university canon.

"If you look at it from a feminist perspective around protecting human rights, this Code targets one of the least protected groups on campus... Students are not protected by unions, faculty associations or tenure. If we contextualize this with the documented human rights abuses at the university, the majority have happened by those with power," says Atkinson.

Most student activists say the increase in conservatism on SFU's campus coincides with the increase in corporate co-sponsorship of SFU in the 90's. One example of such sponsorship is the substantial funds given towards the building of the downtown campus of SFU by multinational corporations such as MacMillan Bloedel.

"These changes are about making the campus safe for capitalism."

- Laura Atkinson -

MOVEMENT MATTERS

listings information

Movement Matters is designed to be a network of news, updates and information of special interest to the women's movement. Submissions to **Movement Matters** should be no more than 500 words, typed, double spaced and may be edited for length. Deadline is the 18th of the month preceding publication.

by Carmen Benn

Women get credit

WomenFutures, a non-profit society based in Vancouver, has produced *Women Get Credit: An Introductory Kit on Alternative Financing*, designed to assist women and organizations to learn about and initiate alternative financing activities in their communities.

WomenFutures Community Economic Development Society has provided education, research assistance, and consulting services for women and women's groups in British Columbia and Canada since 1985. The society also operates a Loan Guarantee Fund that assists women to obtain credit for initiating or expanding group-oriented projects.

In *Women Get Credit*, WomenFutures offers four alternative strategies based on research that shows women experience discrimination and rejection when trying to access credit through conventional institutions such as banks.

The four strategies are Savings Groups, Lending Circles, Barter Systems, and Loan Guarantee Funds. *Women Get Credit* presents information on each alternative, how each can get started, benefits and limitations, and suggestions about where to find more information. Each section provides practical information about developing alternative financing strategies to enable groups to discover which strategy is appropriate for their goals and needs. There is also a sample document attached to each section to give readers an idea of how groups do their work, and lists of names and addresses of organizations that are willing to share infor-

mation and provide resources for new initiatives are given at the end of each section.

Women Get Credit is available through WomenFutures, 217-1956 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC, V6J 1Z2 or by calling (604) 737-1338. The kit costs \$8 plus \$3 postage for individuals or \$10 plus \$3 postage for groups and organizations.

Victoria women and the arts

Victoria, British Columbia, will hold its first annual festival for women in the arts in February next year.

Focus on Women Arts Festival, is presented by the Intrepid Theatre Company and *Focus on Women Magazine*. The festival will be a multi-venue, multi-disciplinary event featuring works initiated by women and will include music, theatre, the visual arts and film.

Modeled on Vancouver's Women in View festival, the Victoria festival will feature three or four international theatre pieces as well as a strong component of local representation in all four disciplines.

To assist with production or to participate as an artist, contact Jennifer Lord at (604) 383-2663.

Call for longer sexual assault sentencing

The Fernie Women's Resource Centre in Fernie, British Columbia, is circulating a petition to be sent to the House of Commons calling for Parliament to amend section 271 of the Criminal Code so that it include a minimum sentence of five years where a person pleads guilty to or is found guilty of a Level One Sexual Assault.

Level One Sexual Assault presently carries a maximum penalty of ten years. However, Canadian courts give an average sentence for Level One Sexual Assault of only six months and 90 percent of sexual assault perpetrators receive a sentence of less than two years.

The petition cites that one in four women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime, that every six minutes a woman in Canada is

sexually assaulted and that every seventeen minutes a woman in Canada is raped.

The Fernie Women's Resource Centre petition was issued following the December 1993 case in Elk Valley where a man sexually assaulted his ex-girlfriend three times and threatened to murder her. He pleaded guilty and then received an 18-month sentence. A sentence the Fernie Women's Resource Centre doesn't think is adequate.

For copies of the petition, write to Fernie Women's Centre, Box 2054, Fernie, BC, V0B 1M0, or call (604) 423-4687. Completed petitions are due back at Fernie Women's Centre by December 15.

NOVA transition house gets TTY/TDD

Nova Transition House in Richmond, British Columbia, has installed a TTY/TDD line for Deaf women. The TTY/TDD line allows deaf and hard-of-hearing women to access many of the services provided by Nova House.

Nova House is a ten-bed shelter for physically and emotionally abused women and children. Full-time and auxiliary counsellors and a childcare worker provide peer counselling, advocacy services, information and referrals. The outreach programs provide follow-up services to women who have used and left Nova House.

Nova House does not provide 24 hour service, although on-call staff are available through Emergency Services between 10 pm and 9 am. TTY/TDD calls during those hours will be asked to call the Emergency Service after hours TTY/TDD number.

Other services provided at Nova House for Deaf women are closed captioning, phone/doorbell signalling systems, alarm clocks with vibrator, and a strobe/smoke alarm system. For inpatient, Nova House can also obtain ASL to English interpreting services.

Nova Transition House is a program of the Chimo Personal Distress Intervention Service in Richmond which also offers a crisis centre, suicide prevention counselling and education, a women's outreach program and a children's program.

The TTY/TDD number at Nova is (604) 270-4900. The crisis phone number is (604) 279-7070. For more information, write: Nova

Transition House, c/o Chimo, 120-7000 Minoru Boulevard, Richmond, BC, V6Y 3Z5.

UN conference on social development

Leaders of governments from around the world will attend the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in March next year. They will propose ways to create an enabling environment for world peoples as an alternative to current structures that increase poverty, unemployment and social disintegration, and violence.

For more information, contact the global feminism committee at CRIAW (Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women) at #408-151 Slater St, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5H3. Tel: (613) 563-0681, fax (613) 563-0682, TDD (613) 563-1921.

Equality, development and peace conference

The *Women Creating Change* conference on equality, development, and peace will be held November 18-20 in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

The conference is sponsored by the Saskatchewan Action Committee on the Status of Women, the Prince Albert YWCA, the Aboriginal Women's Council, and the non-governmental organization CUSO.

Conference organizers intend the conference to be a forum for local, national, and international women's groups and women activists to share and gather information and develop alternative models for change. As well, the conference will attempt to input the existing Saskatchewan Women's Agenda (a list of priority issues for Saskatchewan women) into international initiatives such as the United Nations World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in September 1995 [see page 10].

Through intensive workshops, participants will attempt to come up with a concrete plan of action. Workshop sessions include topics such as elder women, employment, environment, health, sustainable communities, and violence against women.

WOMEN ACROSS THE WORLD



MOVEMENT MATTERS

The deadline for registration is November 1. The conference will be held at the Marlboro Inn, Prince Albert. The registration fee is \$25 which includes lunch and child care. Some travel subsidies are available.

Mail applications to the Saskatchewan Action Committee, 2343 Cornwall Street, Regina, SK, S4P 2L4, or fax them to (306) 757-4548. For further information, contact Carol Hansen in Prince Albert by calling (306) 263-5812 or the Saskatchewan Action Committee in Regina by calling (306) 525-8329, or faxing (306) 757-4548.

16 days campaign against violence

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, which takes place November 25-December 10, was initiated in 1991 as an international campaign to raise awareness of women's human rights and pressure governments for actions to secure human rights for women. The campaign is coordinated by the Centre for Women's Global Leadership in the United States.

During previous 16 Days campaigns, women have organized events to challenge the invisibility of women's human rights locally and globally. Campaigns have included more than 120 countries and events included petition drives, speakouts, hearings, vigils, rallies, film festivals, newsletters, magazines, posters, T-shirts and buttons.

The 1994 16 Days, using the slogan "Awareness, Accountability, Action: Violence Against Women Violates Human Rights," will focus attention on the violence associated with violations of women's reproductive health, and will highlight outcomes from the recent International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo.

As well, women in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean are currently organizing hearings around issues such as domestic violence, trafficking in women, and violence against women who are dispossessed following the death of a spouse. In addition, hearings will be convened at the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995.

A number of annual events in different countries fall within or are part of the 16 Days. November 25 is International Day

Against Violence Against Women, declared by the First Feminist Encuentro for Latin America and the Caribbean in 1981 in Bogota, Colombia. The day commemorates the Mirabal sisters, who were brutally murdered by the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic in 1960.

December 10 celebrates the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed in 1948. December 1st is World AIDS Day, and December 6th is the anniversary of the killing of 14 women engineering students at the Université de Montreal in Canada.

Advocate for women with disabilities

The BC Coalition of People with Disabilities (BCCPD) has added a new service under its Advocacy Access program for women through the provision of a Women's Advocate. The Women's Advocate, Cindy Marshall, will specialize in providing information and services to women who have disabilities.

Over the past several years, the BCCPD's Advocacy Access program has attempted to help people with disabilities receive the services and benefits to which they are entitled. The Women's Advocate will service women and assist with income assistance rights and responsibilities, application for Handicapped Benefits, the process of appealing denial of any benefits, and gaining medical, dental, and CPP benefits. Marshall has experience in Handicapped Benefits and CPP Benefits, and is also a strong advocate for people with head injuries.

Marshall works out of the Advocacy Access office Monday-Friday, 9 am-5 pm. For more information or to set up an appointment, call 872-1278 in Vancouver or call toll-free long distance at 1-800-663-1278. The TTY/TDD number is 875-8835. Write to BC Coalition of People with Disabilities, at 204-456 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC, V5Y 1R3, or call (604) 875-0188.

Report on electoral systems

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) has produced a document called *Electoral Systems and Representative Legislatures: Consideration of Alternative Electoral Systems*. The report was commissioned in order to determine which electoral systems are most likely to achieve outcomes that are representative of the population and to generate discussion on ways to increase the representation of women and minorities in the House of Commons.

The report is intended for members of parliament, policy-makers, women's groups, and others evaluating the Canadian electoral system and its present failure to adequately represent women and minorities.

To obtain a free copy of the report, write to the CACSW at 110 O'Connor Street, 9th floor, Box 1541, Station B, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5R5, or call (613) 992-4975, or fax (613) 992-1715.

CACSW report on taxing child support

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) has produced a document called *Tax Treatment of Child Support: Preferred Policy Options*, which was the CACSW's submission to the recent federal Task Group on the Tax Treatment of Child Support.

The brief approaches the taxation of child support payments from an integrated perspective, looking at the combined impact of income tax, family law, and income security policies. The brief also notes that the present tax system does not work satisfactorily for many custodial mothers.

The CACSW makes several recommendations in the brief, including calling for the repeal of the deductibility of child support payments from the payor's taxable income as well as the repeal of their inclusion in the recipient's taxable income. The CACSW also recommends that non-custodial parents who make child support payments in the year in which they are due should be entitled to a limited refundable tax credit.

The CACSW was set up in 1973 by the federal government on the recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. The CACSW is composed of a maximum of 30 members appointed by the federal Cabinet.

To obtain a free copy of the brief, write to the CACSW at 110 O'Connor Street, 9th floor, Box 1541, Station B, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5R5, or call (613) 992-4975, or fax (613) 992-1715.

Gay and lesbian video collection

The National Film Board of Canada is promoting its new *Gay and Lesbian Video Collection* composed of ten videos, which reflect "the lives of gays and lesbians as they battle prejudice, and live and love with dignity and courage."

The collection is particularly being targeted for use by community workers, counsellors, and educators to enable them to facilitate discussions, workshops, and counselling sessions.

Titles in the collection include *Out: Stories of Lesbian and Gay Youth*, a portrait of two Jewish women in their 60s in *When Shirley Met Florence*, Diome Brand's *Long Time Comin'* which explores the works and lives of Grace Chanmer and Faith Nolan, Aeryn Weissman and Lynne Fernie's *Forbidden Love*, *Sandra's Garden*, which centers on the struggle to cope with the trauma of incest; *Toward Intimacy*, a compelling video about how four women with disabilities confront physical and attitudinal barriers regarding their relationships; and one of a four-part series of films about women and alcoholism called *Lorri: The Recovery Series*.

The collection of ten videos can be purchased for \$224.95 and individual video prices range from \$21.95 to \$34.95. To order by mail, write the National Film Board of Canada, Gay and Lesbian Video Collection, D-5, PO Box 6100, Station Centre-Ville, Montreal, Quebec, H3C 3H5. To order by fax: (514) 496-2573 Attention: Gay and Lesbian Video Collection, and for more information, call toll-free at 1-800-267-7710 (Voice and TDD).

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Interview with Shree Mulay on the ICPD conference in Cairo:

More on population...

as told to Agnes Huang

The United Nations World Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) took place in Cairo, Egypt, September 5-13. The ICPD was comprised of two concurrent forums—one for government representatives from UN member countries, one for non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Two months ago, Kinesis interviewed Shree Mulay, who was on her way to Cairo to attend the ICPD's NGO Forum as the representative of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). Mulay has also been involved with the South Asian Women's Centre in Montreal. Here, Mulay talks with Kinesis about what took place at the conference.

Agnes Huang: When I interviewed you before you went to the ICPD in Cairo, you said you had mixed feelings about what would come out of the conference. How do you feel now about what happened in Cairo?

Shree Mulay: I still have mixed feelings. The Plan of Action that came out of the Cairo conference is a departure from those of the two previous UN conferences on Population and Development in that it made a great attempt to put women in the centre. It recognized that, if one could raise the status of the woman herself, that might in fact result in a reduction in the number of children that the woman has.

On the other hand, when it comes down to the actual budget applications, the figures reveal that the people who are the movers and shakers behind the conference are still in the family planning mode. Sixty-five percent of the \$17 billion which was identified for the execution of the Cairo Plan of Action over five years is allocated for family planning. That means the part of the program which calls for education for women, fighting HIV/AIDS, and so on, only gets 35 percent of the budget.

When I raised this at the forum of government delegates, I was told it was easier to work out the amount of money needed to be promoted family planning programs, but they had no idea how much it would cost for promoting reproductive health for women. So with one program, they had firm numbers, with the other, they didn't. I don't accept this argument because, if you are trying to demonstrate that this Cairo Plan is a departure from the others before it, then this departure should be reflected in the kind of budget you project, even if you're wrong about it. Politically, the budget has to reflect reality.

Huang: Can you elaborate a bit on what is in the Plan that is positive for women?

Mulay: Chapter Four talks about the empowerment and status of women. It talks about how to raise the status of women, and addresses the need, for example, for establishing mechanisms for equal participation and representation. It talks about ending violence against women and other issues that you can find in previous UN documents such as the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women of 1979 as being essential to raising the status of women.

In specific, the document addresses the need to eliminate all practices that discriminate against women, in terms of reproductive rights and access to reproductive and sexual health. There is a specific section on genital mutilation, for example, which I thought is an important landmark in this particular Plan. So from this perspective, empowerment of women is situated as a core of this document.

When it comes to aspects such as development, the document is weak. We heard

this at the NGO forum over and over again. I was hearing from women that the main problem they face in achieving equality is basic survival and that survival depends on eliminating poverty. What is absolutely crushing women is that they are not able to get work and when they do, their status is very low.

The second concern about women's reproductive rights is that, while all targets [for population reduction] have been eliminated in this document—there are no targets mentioned except that of trying to reduce the fertility rate of women over a period of time—because more money has been put into the family planning program, this may lead to two negative outcomes.

One is reduction in funds for the family health care services. For example, there was a woman at the International People's Hearing at the conference who said that, when she went to her family health clinic, she

because she said she was 32 years old but she looked older than I, and I'm in my 50s. She agreed to the tubal ligation because of her poverty, but when she got sick, the clinic would not help her. There were many testimonies from women of such brutality.

One strong sense I came away with was that the ICPD Program of Action does not guarantee sufficiently that these kinds of abuses will be eliminated from population policy programs that have always had this history of abuse in the past.

The chapters of the Program that got the most publicity were Seven and Eight because they were opposed by the Vatican...

Huang: ...and because they dealt with abortion?

Mulay: Abortion was one of the issues. The Vatican did not want to directly or indirectly endorse abortion in any shape or form, even if it was done to treat the consequences of unsafe abortion.

clause on young people than on the abortion issue.

The other big debate was around recognition of other kinds of relationships between people. The Catholic Church was not the only one opposing the possibility that the document might sanction or recognize same-sex couples—the Islamic countries were strong in making sure that notion was not accepted.



graphic from People's Perspective, December 1993

"I somewhat disagree with people... that the abortion issue took too much time at the ICPD."

could have a selection of any number of contraceptives but could not get access to aspirin—which she needed because she had a fever. Because more money is being put into family planning programs, there may be more of this disparity, where basic needs are not met but contraceptives are available.

The other thing is more money for family planning could result in greater coercion of women. I heard, for example, women from Brazil and Bangladesh talk about the brutal ways in which these family planning programs actually work in the rural areas and the fields, where they become another way of subjugating women. So there was concern that the human rights of women may be violated, despite the positive words in the document.

One of the proposals that came out of ICPD's Women's Caucus was that there needs to be a monitoring system, an ICPD Watch by women as a group from around the world to make sure that the ICPD programs do not in fact result in this kind of coercion of women.

Huang: Women from the South had planned to bring forward stories of women who had been abused by coercive population control policies. Was it at the International People's Hearing that they did this?

Mulay: There were two such hearings. The other, which I didn't attend, was organized by the Committee for Global Leadership, a US-based organization. The one I was a part of included women from Brazil and Bangladesh, organizational presentations from India, and testimonies by women with disabilities from Japan and Zimbabwe. The women with disabilities, for example, talked about how their rights are not really recognized, how their disabilities are used as a reason by people who tell them they cannot have children, or what kind of contraception they should use or even to coerce them into having hysterectomies [surgical removal of uterus].

Then there was a woman from Bangladesh who agreed to be sterilized in return for a little money, but the tubal ligation was done in such a brutal way, she became sick. Actually, I almost wept when I saw her

I somewhat disagree with many people who said subsequently that the abortion issue took too much time at the ICPD, and there was not enough time spent on, let's say, development issues. In fact, I don't think it was part of the conference organizers' plans to focus on development issues anyway, even though many countries brought those issues up.

This debate at the ICPD was really a struggle for the repudiation of the 1984 Conference on Population. I think the Vatican needed to defend what they won at the 1984 conference, when the Vatican, together with the US government which was led by Ronald Reagan, made the abortion provisions very restrictive, so that a country in which abortion was legal could not qualify for aid from the US government.

With the change in the US government [now under Bill Clinton's Democrats], the Vatican's defence was not only its traditional position, but was also a kind of struggle for leadership globally in this particular area. In that sense, the Vatican did lose, even though people claim everybody won in the end.

But abortion has not been an issue in the South as it has in the North because women, whether abortion is legal or illegal, continue to die—all abortions done in third world countries are done in unsafe conditions, even in India where abortion is legal. Women die from abortions because they don't have access to safe abortion conditions. But the issue of US aid being tied to whether a country legalizes abortion was important and in that sense, women won.

But I think the Vatican's real resistance was to the notion of what constitutes reproductive rights and reproductive health. One of the biggest debates was with respect to young people, around recognition of parental authority. The document overcame that particular problem because the UN's Rights of the Child document was used widely to try to show that parental authority at some stage has to end, that young people become individuals and autonomous. In the end though, more restrictions were put on the

Huang: Was there a lot of agreement between the women in the ICPD's Women's Caucus on how to frame the issues?

Mulay: Although the Women's Caucus at the ICPD's structure was similar to the preparatory meetings [held in New York, prior to the Cairo conference], it actually didn't function as one. One problem was around location—the NGO Forum and the Conference hall were about ten minutes apart, but because of the security and the fact that only people from accredited organizations could have access to the galleries at the Conference room, the Conference hall was not accessible and NGO women were not able to lobby the government delegates directly. And while the government delegates were free to cross over and go to the NGO Forum without any problems, in order to be able to enter the official Conference room itself, you had to be on a government delegation.

This changed the way the Women's Caucus functioned. It became simply a forum where announcements were made as to what was happening and what issues were coming up. Direct input was more difficult. Also, because it was an open meeting, it became an place where groups, like REAL Women [anti-choice North American group], would stand up and make a lot of noise—about how they were being excluded from the debate, how undemocratic the whole process was—so that some people began to think that REAL Women represented all women.

Huang: Were there any opportunities for feminists from the South and the North to get together to discuss some of the issues or a women's action plan?

Mulay: Not really. The NGO Forum had a lot of events and good symposia, but there was never any discussion of what is a feminist plan of action. For example, when we

Less on development

had a meeting [organized by] the Feminist Majority Foundation of the US—a very small group between Canada, the US, and Mexico as part of NAFTA—to talk about common interests and how things might move, even in that little group, because of the time allowed and the way the issues were framed, it was not possible to talk about a plan of action. We basically presented the Canadian Women's Report at that particular meeting. [Ed note: The report was written by an ad-hoc coalition of women in groups known as the Canadian Women's Committee on Reproduction, Population, and Development as an alternative and a response to the official Canadian government National Report presented at the ICPD.]

At the Women's Caucus, the only notion that was put forward was that women should undertake an ICPD Watch. But some women volunteered to do a written follow-up after ICPD in order for us to have something concrete.

Huang: Could you talk a bit about the ICPD's discussion of the global migration issue?

Mulay: There was a whole chapter on migration in the document and Canada had quite a bit to contribute to that. When I say Canada, I mean the Canadian government, which is considered to have moved the whole issue of international migration and the recognition of the rights of people to better their lives—which is different from recognizing the right of people to flee war, for example.

There was some disagreement on the concept of the reunification of the family, because there was a feeling—and this was particularly voiced vociferously by the European Union (EU)—that when you talk about the reunification of the family, the notion of family is different in different parts of the world, and because of that, everybody and his monkey's uncle could be included in that, that it would open the floodgates to migration. And Canada said that all countries should attempt to harmonize their national laws to enable the widest definition of the family as it is practised in different parts of the world.

But when I came back to Canada, I found that a paper written for Immigration minister Sergio Marchi had been leaked to the media. The paper indicates the government is considering reducing the number of migrants from 250,000 to 200,000 [see Kinesis, October 94]. After hearing it said that [Canada's] track record is so wonderful on the international stage, to come back and find this is what they are doing feels like a betrayal.

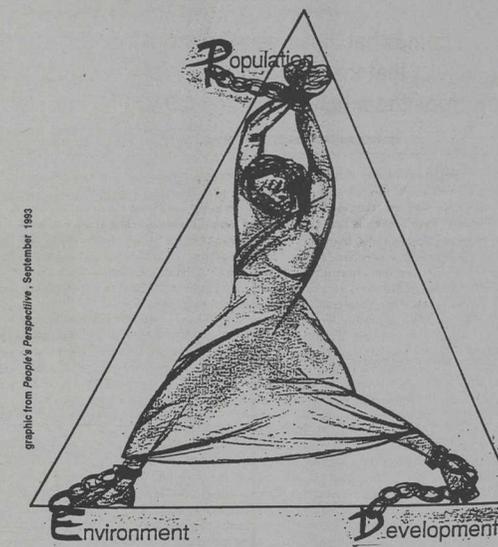
This particular chapter of the [Cairo] document also talks about the responsibilities of host countries in integrating immigrants. But in fact the leaked immigration document talks about charging user fees for the certain services, like language services.

I guess I found that, internationally, Canada takes a progressive stand but that is not always reflected in domestic policies, at least the way I would expect it to be reflected. There has to be cohesion between the good international stance that the government takes and the way these policies are executed on the ground, at home because that is the true test.

Huang: In the leaked document, the government also indicates it wants to decrease the number of immigrants coming in through the family class and also eliminate the Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP), by which domestic workers presently come to Canada.

Mulay: Those are two features which the government specifically talks about [in the leaked paper]. It affects women primarily, both in the family class and the domestic caregiver class. How can you talk about improving the status of women and recognizing the diversity of the family with one breath, then talk about decreasing these numbers?

In October, NAC had a meeting with the government and I asked them point blank, "How come there's such a discrepancy between our international stand and our domestic policy?" They said, "Well, there are all kinds of forces... The policy has to be completely in tune with the needs of the country." So there is a bit of hypocrisy there in their progressive public international image and their national policy.



graphic from People's Perspective, September 1993

On the issue of hypocrisy, I want to note that mostly when [the North] talks about the ICPD document, the Program of Action, they have in mind something that is happening out there, in third world countries, countries which have high fertility rates, and so that is where policies would be implemented. But in fact, Canada itself does not have a specific reproductive and sexual health policy.

As federal transfer payments have decreased to the provinces, the budgets for sex and reproductive health education have decreased provincially. That is a matter of great concern. And when one looks at access to reproductive health services [for women in] rural areas, for Aboriginal women, and so on, I think the track record is much worse.

There is one person in the federal government responsible for reproductive health. There's no budget for her. She is one individual and all she does is monitor things that

are happening in this area. There is no actual initiation of any programs around reproductive health. So to me this Cairo plan of action is not just about providing aid to third world countries for family planning programs, but has to be for implementation in Canada itself.

Huang: This conference was supposed to focus on population and development. You said earlier not much was discussed around the development issues. Were there any chapters of the Cairo plan of action that dealt with issues of sustainable development, overconsumption in the North, or the exploitation of migrant labour?

Mulay: Chapter Three is the only one that deals with that. It's a very short chapter—consisting of five pages. In earlier versions of the document, this chapter was quite comprehensive. It was gradually whittled

down during the ICPD so there is little substance left. When it came to actual discussion of what is to be done in these areas, as at other international conferences there was tremendous resistance from Northern countries to talk about targets for reducing overconsumption. This was the reason for the tension between the Southern countries and Northern countries.

Huang: What is your sense of how women from feminist and progressive organizations in both the South and the North are feeling about the program of action that came out of the ICPD? Is there a sense we can work with this plan of action?

Mulay: I look at this particular plan of action as a tool we have in our hands, just as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women is a tool. How effectively we are able to use the tool depends entirely on how things develop with

"...Canada itself does not have a specific reproductive and sexual health policy."

Cairo conference in Ottawa last month, the government was simply talking about the mechanics of how it was to move through the UN process at ICPD and so on. When I specifically asked what they were concretely going to do with respect to Canada, they said that they hadn't thought about it as yet—they are going to meet and talk about it.

But we know that, as the federal review on health issues begins, we are going to have to insist that women's health be defined not just as it relates to disease but women's state of well-being, that reproductive health be a part of that debate, and that the review be funded properly. There are parts of Canada where women cannot have access to safe abortions so this is where we need to improve the status of women. In this, the Cairo document could be of some use to us.

Huang: Is NAC or the Canadian Women's Committee on Reproduction, Population, and Development planning any actions to hold the Canadian government accountable to the Cairo plan of action?

Mulay: The Canadian Women's Committee will meet in December or January, after the Cairo document is passed by the UN general assembly, to try to figure out in what ways we can put pressure on the government and which areas need work. The review of health care has come at a good time because these questions are going to be re-opened and we should be lobbying really hard, asking women's groups across the country who are active in the health fields to give their input as to what they would want to see [in terms of] reproductive health.

Agnes Huang is a Chinese feminist activist and a regular contributor to Kinesis.

WHAT'S NEWS

by Lissa Geller

Pride Day in Japan

Members of Tokyo's lesbian, gay and bisexual communities held their first ever Gay Pride Parade on August 28 this year.

Between 300 and 1,500 lesbians and gays turned out to march with pride in the streets of Tokyo.

"Japan is not an easy place to live if you're a lesbian," said lesbian organizer, Akiyo Ohya, "so, organizing this is a way of reducing stress." Ohya points out that Japan's lesbian, bisexual and gay communities are largely closeted.

"This is a landmark day for us," said one anonymous lesbian participant. "We're able to prove that we're alive and that we exist in this society."

New law on medical testing in India

Social activists are celebrating a law which has been passed by the Lok Sabha, India's lower house of Parliament, which aims at cracking down on medical tests that lead to thousands of abortions of female fetuses.

"I think it is an important step which will be a tool in the hands of social action groups," said Mira Shiva, a spokesperson for the Voluntary Health Association of India. Shiva adds that women in India have been campaigning against sex selection since 1982 and the new law is a victory.

The lower house voted unanimously to regulate the use of amniocentesis—which is meant to track pregnancy disorders but which also indicates the sex of the fetus—and ultrasounds, which have been used to detect sex. The bill forces fertility and genetic counseling services to register and monitor complaints of abuse and the use of the two techniques. Centres will face closure if there are complaints of abuse. As well, it is illegal for doctors to advertise sex tests or to disclose the sex of the fetus. The legislation is expected to be passed in the upper house of Parliament without incident.

While the number of female fetuses aborted is difficult to quantify, India is currently facing a declining male to female ratio. In 1921, there were 955 women for every 1,000 men. In 1991, the ratio of women to men had dropped to 927 women for every 1,000 men. Social discrimination against women and girls is largely blamed for this drop.

"Sex tests are a part of our social fabric of prejudice," said Communist MP Malini Bhattacharya.

In part, because of the expensive dowries paid by families of women, girl babies are largely considered a social liability. "Dowry is to a large extent the problem in what someone called demographic fundamentalism," said Shiva.

The bill, which took three years to pass the lower house, is expected to challenge this discrimination and enforce some accountability for the technology and the people using it.

Abortion in Australia

A woman's right to choose is virtually non-existent in most Australian states and a Supreme Court decision in New South Wales (NSW) has set a precedent making that right even more difficult to achieve.

A woman's attempt to sue her doctors for concealing a pregnancy diagnosis from her for five months to prevent her from aborting the fetus has been quashed by the NSW Supreme Court.

The court ruled in April that she could not claim the "loss of an opportunity to perform an illegal act."

The court's decision runs contrary to a precedent set in 1972 which allowed for the liberalization of anti-abortion legislation and provided circumstances under which abortions could be legally performed.

New women's shelter in Victoria

A women's shelter is being constructed in downtown Victoria in an all-woman project aimed at providing training and employment for street women.

The project, which will employ 12 women, will build a 15-bed emergency shelter specifically for street women in downtown Victoria. The women will receive four months of classroom training followed by six months on-site doing construction and renovation work. The program is open to women who are inadequately housed and spend or have spent time living and/or working on the street.

Existing services for people in the downtown core are mainly geared towards men. "This new shelter will be planned, designed and built by the community of women who will use it," said Minister of Women's Equality Penny Priddy, as she announced the \$600,000 project in conjunction with the city of Victoria and the Greater Victoria Women's Shelter Society.

The shelter, which will be a community drop-in and sleeping environment, will employ five women when it opens late next year.

Lesbian bashing in Parliament

Oh puh-leeze!! Just how long are we going to have to put up with this nonsense?!!

Liberal Nova Scotia backbencher Roseanne Skoke has just joined the dubious ranks of other anti-gay and lesbian bigots in Parliament by announcing in the House of Commons that she thinks lesbians and gays are immoral, unnatural and "undermining and destroying our Canadian values and Christian morality." Frankly, we're shocked she couldn't think of something even marginally original to say.

To top it off, Reform Party MP Myron Thompson has made the profound realization that the Bible's mythical garden of Eden was staffed by Adam and Eve and *not* Adam and Steve! Who are these people's speech writers anyway?

Roseanne Skoke's comments have failed to raise an eyebrow in the Liberal caucus and even MPs like Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre) who courted the gay vote in Vancouver's West End during the last federal election, are claiming Skoke is just exercising her freedom of speech.

Svend Robinson (NDP—Burnaby Kingsway), Canada's first openly gay MP's call for Prime Minister Jean Chretien to ex-

pel Skoke from caucus has been completely ignored.

Meanwhile, the bill that stirred up Skoke's bigotry, C-41, is expected to be sent to committee soon for a more detailed examination. It calls for stiffer penalties for people convicted of hate crimes against others for their race, gender, religion or sexual orientation. Justice Minister Allan Rock has warned Liberal MPs that C-41 is a government bill and they will be expected to support it.

New services for immigrants

The Burnaby Multicultural Society has begun providing information and settlement services to immigrants moving into the Vancouver suburb. The services, which include counseling and referrals for employment, housing, education, health care, legal and banking needs and others are available in a variety of languages including Farsi, Punjabi, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Urdu, Hindi, Arabic, Amharic and others.

The BMS has received federal and provincial grants to run the services which are now a permanent addition to the centre and include the hiring of six settlement workers.

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Global restructuring in Africa:

The impact on women

by Evelyn Zinanga

The following is based on a presentation made at the National Action Committee on the Status of Women's annual general meeting in June. Evelyn Zinanga has worked with the Zimbabwe Women's Research Centre in Harare. She is presently based in the Hague, Netherlands. Zinanga submitted this article to Kinesis as a contribution to Kinesis' ongoing coverage of how economic restructuring impacts on women in different countries, within both the Northern and the Southern hemispheres.

It is no longer debated but widely accepted that African countries are in an economic crisis. In a bid to improve their economies, African countries are going through economic structural adjustment programmes, dictated jointly by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. These policies, it is said, will open up the African economies to the world market competition, promote exports and control domestic spending. Theoretically, if these policies succeed, they will create a climate conducive to investment and consequently enhance economic growth.

Several impacts of economic structural adjustment have been realised by African countries. I shall focus mainly on the impact of these programmes on the situation of women in Africa, and look at women's coping strategies.

Early economic restructuring

I am not an economist but a feminist activist, so I will not go into details in economic terms, but will give a brief historical background of the economic crisis experienced by African countries today.

In the early 1980s, many African countries experienced economic crises, indicated by high inflation rates, stagnation, huge deficits on state budgets, and the failure to repay the interest payments on their foreign debts. There were many different factors which contributed to this, one being that the import substitution industrialisation strategy of most African countries was proving unsuccessful—prices of imports needed for economic growth were increasing at a faster rate while export prices were diminishing. On the other hand, the world recession of the 1970s lowered world prices, and reduced the demand for the primary commodities exported by African countries.

African countries found themselves in a tight situation because of competition in the international market. Countries of the North introduced measures to protect their own industries at the expense of products from the South. Products from the South were priced low and this resulted in a decline in terms of trade for developing countries in general.

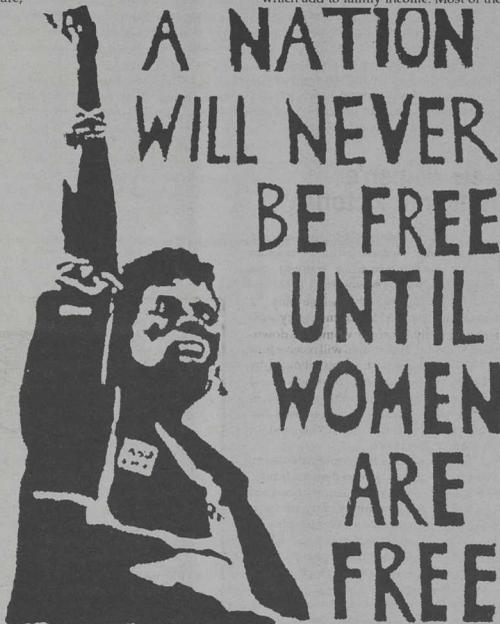
Furthermore, the oil crises of 1973 and 1979 contributed to the African countries' economic crisis. Non-oil producing African countries were confronted with major problems in importing enough oil to meet their national consumption needs.

To solve most of their problems, and to maintain a certain level of economic growth, African countries borrowed from international institutions. In the 1980s, interest rates on international financial loans were increased and African countries faced more difficulties in trying to meet debt repayments. It became increasingly impossible for these countries to even repay the interest on their debts. The balance-of-payment deficit became the most important problem to deal with.

In view of the above developments, stabilisation and economic structural adjustment programmes (ESAPs) became a condition for African countries to get re-scheduling of debt repayments and new credits. The IMF and World Bank started authorising packages of economic reforms that were applied evenly in most developing countries in the 1980s.

The IMF and World Bank packages are aimed at reducing the balance-of-payment problems experienced by African countries in the 1980s. The ESAP package includes the following conditions:

- Reduction in government expenditure;



- Privatisation of state-owned enterprises, including those which provide services and production alike;
 - Elimination of price controls and trade restrictions;
 - Elimination of barriers to international trade such as quotas, taxes, subsidies;
 - Devaluation of the local currency.
- African countries started implementing ESAPs in different years and the 80s are often cited as the period when the effects of these programs could be noticed.

The impact on women

Traditionally, African women are responsible for the maintenance and well-being of their families. African women have been shouldering most of the burdens brought about by the economic crises experienced by their countries. As if this was not enough, they have to overcome the problems brought about by the structural adjustment programmes.

Most African countries have devalued their local currencies, to make them cheaper in relation to foreign currencies. This results in an increase in prices of local commodities,

because manufacturers will have to pay more for raw materials, and worse still for imported raw materials. Real wages have been falling. Higher prices for commodities, coupled with the removal of subsidies on staple foods have had adverse impacts on marginalised people in Africa, especially women, who are responsible for feeding their families. The fall in real wages has also forced women to sell their labour at very low prices, for example, working as domestic servants for the upper and middle classes.

Because of their multiple household responsibilities, women are left with little or no options besides engaging in activities which add to family income. Most of these

Africa rely on government health services and cuts to these services have caused serious problems in most African countries.

In Tanzania, where statistics are available, government reduced expenditure on health from nine percent spending in 1973-1974 to 4.9 percent in 1985-1996. Women and children have been seriously affected. Maternal death increased due to poor health services, as did malnourishment among lactating women and children. The data is not complete because not all women attend maternal and child clinics; deliveries often take place at home. However, maternal deaths are estimated at 3,000-4,000 per year. This shows how reduction of government expenditures on essential services like health can cause serious problems for marginal groups in society like women.

With cuts in spending on education by most African countries, this may lead to a

African women have been shouldering most of the burdens brought about by the economic crises experienced by their countries

reduced number of women and girls entering schools because of the patrilineal and patriarchal nature of most African societies. School fees are likely to rise due to price hikes and reduced subsidies. When parents do not have enough money to send all their children to school, they are left with little or no choice except to prioritize. It is probable that in many African families, boys or men will be prioritized, because male supremacy is still prevalent.

Conditions are becoming harder and harder; the social, economic and political condition of women is deteriorating daily. Women are faced with huge responsibilities, with no assistance from the state. Some women, who have found themselves under desperate conditions, have resorted to prostitution as their last resort.

The little there was in welfare provisions has been eroded by harsh economic restructuring conditions, which do not have a human face. Women are made to pay for loans whose borrowing they have never been a part of.

However, due to differences in society, in terms of class, race, ethnicity and gender, the impact of the structural adjustment programmes have affected people differently. The rich are benefitting from ESAPs at the expense of the poor. The gap between the poor and the rich is widening by the day. ESAPs are mainly focused on economic indicators, and pay no attention to social implications. This is why the measures end up adversely affecting the position and situation of women. ESAPs take away from women whatever they have fought for economically, socially and politically. Women are being disempowered and marginalised in terms of their access to productive resources and decision making.

graphic from Haki Dec 1991

Women and Québec

On September 12th, the Parti Québécois won the provincial elections in Quebec, setting in motion the PQ's drive for Quebec independence. A referendum on Quebec sovereignty is expected to be held in Quebec next year.

This is Part One of *Kinesis*'s feature on what women in Quebec are saying about some of the implications for women of the new government in Quebec, priorities for women's organizing in the period leading up to the 1995 Quebec referendum, and the ongoing work and strategies of the women movements in Quebec. Part Two will appear in the December/January issue of *Kinesis*.

Interview with Michelle Roy

as told to Marie-France Dubois

The Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ) was founded in 1966 and is a political pressure group working in collaboration with various groups towards equity, equality, respect and better living conditions for women. The following interview with the FFQ's Michelle Roy, took place in French in Montreal last month.

Marie-France Dubois: What has the strategy for the FFQ been in the pre-election campaign?

Michelle Roy: The FFQ was active around the federal election in 1993 with a coalition of women's groups in Quebec called Coalition Femmes 93. This same coalition was shortly reinstated as Coalition Femmes 94 for the provincial elections. This coalition included about 25 provincial women's groups, each of them including numerous other groups, such as union groups. We attempted to get a debate on women's issues by the leaders of the parties around the federal elections but it failed because the leaders refused to participate. We did not think it was realistic to put our

energies towards trying to get a leaders' debate for the provincial elections.

We decided to try to make women's voices heard throughout the campaign through various interventions within the media. Coalition Femmes 94 organized a press conference before the televised leaders' debate. We got quite good coverage. We asked the questions relevant to us and our message to the political leaders was that they should talk about the real problems, those unacceptable realities of women's lives which need urgent changes: the poverty of women who are the heads of households and their children; harassment of women on welfare; violence against women; inequities and inequalities on the job; racism and discrimination of Aboriginal women and women of colour; the silence and ostracism toward lesbians, especially those who have children; the isolation and non-recognition of women's work at home and the non-respect of women's experience in children's education; the marginalisation of older women and their poverty... the list of those well documented issues

is long. Some of those questions were addressed in the televised debate, although very evasively.

It was clear that women's issues were not on the agenda of the political parties, neither at the federal nor at the provincial levels. The referendum issues of sovereignty for Quebec eclipsed all the other issues in the provincial election evidently. We can say that women's issues were among the excluded ones...

Dubois: Do you think the FFQ will have better allies in this new government?

Roy: We can say that it is more promising because some deputies come from the women's movement. Some of them were part of provincial groups or community groups for ten, fifteen years. For example, Jeanne Blackburn and Louise Harel. Those women are better informed of who we are and what we want because they fought for women's rights too but we can't be convinced of their unconditional support. It's all the question of how once women enter politics, you become tied to a party line. But we do have closer links with some women in the government now than we did with the Liberal government.

At one point in the campaign, the Parti Québécois made promises and at the moment, there are signs that they are working on some of them. For example, there is a committee made up of some newly elected women M.L.A.s who are coming directly from the women's movement, as recently as 6 months ago. I refer to women such as Celine Signori and Lise Leduc. This committee has started to consult with some groups for the implementation of an automatic perception system alimonies (family maintenance programs). At the moment the committee is looking at the Ontario model and other models. They are attempting to decide which model would be best for Québec... It's clear that something is going

Interview with Madeleine Parent

as told to Ellen Woodsworth

Madeleine Parent is a feminist based in Montréal, who worked in the union movement in Canada for 41 years before retiring in 1983. She was a founding member of the Confederation of Canadian Unions in 1968; of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) in 1972; a member of the Fédération des Femmes du Québec (FFQ), La League de Droite et Liberté, a civil rights movement in Québec, and is active in the abortion rights movement in Québec. Parent spoke with Kinesis in October.

Ellen Woodsworth: Could you tell us what stage you see Québec at this time?

Madeleine Parent: Right now, people want change. People in Québec are discontented with what is going on federally, as well as with the policies of the previous Liberal government in Québec, which really never fought for our rights and interests.

We've been given promises by the newly elected Parti Québécois and there is a watchful sense amongst the people of Québec and amongst the women. We will begin to see how the new regime develops its policies and the women's movement is preparing to be active on the issues that concern us, as well as concern the people of Québec.

We are also much affected by the development of the free trade policies, the influence of the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund on the policies that our governments have been putting into practice. There is considerable unemployment in Québec. Many factories have closed, never to open again which makes the situation very different from 20, 30 or 50 years ago, when there was a recession, but the economy would eventually bounce back. This is not in the cards now.

Because of the great discontent, there is a need to involve people much more in developing the policies that are needed to help to restructure the economy in a way where competition is not the only goal, but where the interests and the social conditions of the people are the important thing.

Woodsworth: What has the impact of free trade policies been on women?

Parent: Many many people have been laid off and women, of course, have been very severely affected by the closing down of factories. The garment industry, for example, which employs at least 75 percent women, has been deeply affected—it has gone down drastically. Women have also lost a lot of jobs due to the cut-backs in social

services by the previous government, made under the pretext that the debt is too great and we have to cut back.

Women have lost jobs in the health service sector in much greater numbers than ever before, and many women can only get part-time jobs or precarious jobs under contract—since the terms of contracts are limited, a woman may get a job for six months and then she has to run and look for something else. This has meant a great step backwards in the conditions of women in the workplace.

We also still don't have the social services which are required to free women to be able to get more decent jobs and give their time to it—health care, social welfare and childcare are not up to what is needed. All of these burdens fall on the shoulders of women.

Woodsworth: So these are some of the crucial factors that led to people wanting a different type of government?

Parent: Absolutely. The handling of social welfare policies by the previous government was absolutely brutal. In [former Québec Premier] Robert Bourassa's day, the Québec Liberal government launched a public campaign saying that too many people on social welfare were defrauding the public treasury, in the interests of giving the public the impression that there was so much abuse, the government had to do something drastic.

Then the government developed a core of investigators who would go into the homes of people on welfare—many of them women—and open the refrigerators or look under the bed for men's socks or shoes, to see if there was a man around who wasn't declared as a supporter or a companion. It was a terrible campaign, impacting on course upon the women, frightening them. But it was also intended to give the public the impression that many women on welfare are frauds. It was an absolute violation of the right to privacy of women who receive welfare.

This campaign against people on welfare has continued and expresses itself in the form of obliging people on welfare to accept work under greatly inferior monetary conditions. If they refuse [this workfare], not only do they not get the very small pay—less than minimum wage—for these jobs, but their regular welfare pay is cut. So they are forced into, for example, providing certain health services or services to elderly people, that undercuts the pay standards and conditions of the regular workers who once did this work. In that way, the government was destroying the validity and the strength of the minimum wage and labour standards legislation.

Woodsworth: How did the women's movement help to get rid of the Liberals and bring about the change in government?

Parent: By protesting, of course. We have a common front of different popular organizations, some of which work with the Fédération des Femmes du Québec (FFQ) or groups such as Solidarité Populaires Québec, which is a coalition of women's groups, youth groups, unions and so on.

Woodsworth: How broad-based is the women's movement in Québec today?

Parent: There is a network of women's centres, which is called "R" des centres des femmes which has 85 or 90 women's centres all over the province. The members are housewives as well as women who work outside the home, mostly women in precarious jobs or not well-paid jobs. The centres also work with the women's committees of different unions.

There's been a considerable improvement in the women's movement in Québec over the last four years and, consequently, the FFQ is working in harmony with other women's groups, with unions and beginning to reach out to women of colour groups, which they did not before. There is still some progress to be made, because in working with [marginalized groups], they must understand that [marginalized groups] must be assured that their input is welcome.

There is also cooperation between the FFQ and NAC, as was evidenced at the recent conference on social policy in Regina that was co-sponsored by a group at the University of Regina, NAC and the FFQ in a significant gesture of cooperation.

The FFQ are currently organizing a Québec women's march which should be held in late May or early June and we hope that people from all parts of Québec will participate.

Woodsworth: How does the women's movement work with sectors of women such as seniors and lesbians?

Parent: There's a fairly active lesbian and gay movement here in Québec and the main women's organizations are very sympathetic to it. And of course, many lesbians are part of the women's movement.

There's an organization called AQDR or L'Association Québécoise de Rétraite which is the Québec Association of Retired and Pre-retired—women over 50—which has been very active and dynamic. They've been working with all of the organizations, including NAC, the FFQ and Solidarité Populaire Québec.

Woodsworth: Many of the larger organizations tend to be based in Montréal and Québec City. Could you touch on the relationship of rural women to these urban-based organizations?

Parent: As an example, there's a women farmers' union which is called L'Association des Agricultrices de Québec. The union is very active, efficient, and works on various issues—

to happen. The position of the former Liberal government has been that they did not want to penalise, with an automatic system, those who made the child support payment! [mostly men].

Also, following a strike last year in daycares demanding increased wages for daycare workers, the Liberals accepted to fund a \$1 per hour increase for daycare workers wages for 6 months. The PQ just renewed this grant for another 6 months and created a working committee on this issue. Although these are very temporary gains and even though we can never take anything for granted, we hope that the PQ will be consistent with them.

Dubois: How is the FFQ going to work with the issues of the referendum and the various positions on the issue with different populations of women in Québec?

Roy: Last year, at the AGM, we did not know if there was going to be a referendum. We decided to be actively involved in the pre-election campaign and if there was going to be a referendum, we would consult with the membership of the FFQ as to the actions to be taken. Like everyone else, we don't know when the referendum will be held and we have not consulted the members yet. However, we know now that we need to be ready for it and that it's going to happen quite soon.

The position as to how and on what we will be consulting the members will be discussed by the board of directors on October 22 and 23. The action will be decided from the position of the majority of the group members. We are going to do a large consultation, not only by phone or in writing but with debates and meeting in the regions.

It's clear that the referendum is going to be a crucial moment in Québec. How we are going to be consistent with our desire to get closer to and collaborate with Aboriginal women, immigrant women, and Anglophone women and other minority women's groups in Québec and agree on a particular position we can defend which does not attack the links we are building right now with all these groups. Right now, with the actual membership of the FFQ, we know that there won't be a majority for the NO. However, we also know that outside the membership, there is a population of women which might be more divided on the issue. How are we going to consider that? At the moment, I don't know. What I know is that we don't want the position we are going to take to put an end to our relationships. Does that mean we

economic and social questions, such as child care for women on farms, which isn't the same as urban day care. There are other similar groups which are spread out throughout the province that are considered to be within the women's movement.

Woodsworth: What is the relationship between the Québécois women's movement and the Aboriginal women's movement?

Parent: Women [of colour and Aboriginal women] have tended to be the majority in NAC-Québec for many years, and so have taken the initiative. NAC, and particularly NAC-Québec, worked with Aboriginal women in the 70s and 80s, who were fighting to change the Indian Act so that women who lost their Indian status through marriage or through taking a non-status Indian partner could recover their Indian status. That was one of the great endeavors of joint work.

While that law was changed, its application in terms of making it possible for these women who wish to resettle into their communities, has met with a lot of obstruction. Aboriginal women have had to resort to the courts to ensure their rights against discrimination under human rights legislation and Charter. The Québec Native Women's Association was the outstanding provincial association working on that issue. NAC, and NAC-Québec in particular, supported that work.

This is not the overall situation in Québec but at least now there is a desire among organizations to be broader. In some situations, that desire becomes an urgent one, especially in the case of the FFQ, where they're organizing the women's march so they are reaching out, and consulting, and inviting. I think a lot will be learned in the process.

Woodsworth: At this stage, is the women's movement supporting the Aboriginal women's struggle around land claims?

Parent: We've not been asked to do it. We discuss with Aboriginal women's groups to find out what they want us to support and then we do it. In other words, we do not initiate the subjects on which we support them. They've been involved for quite a long time in a campaign on violence against women and we have supported that. Also, we have supported their work in their campaign on child care.

Woodsworth: Do you have any sense whether women in the women's movement will vote for or against Québec's sovereignty in the upcoming referendum in Québec?

Parent: The Parti Québécois has made a certain number of promises and it's too early to say how many of these promises they are going to deliver on. If they do deliver on a lot of them, then their credibility in the referendum will be much greater. If they disappoint people, they don't stand much of a chance.

are not going to say or do anything...all of this remains to be thought through.

Dubois: What do you think of the reaction of the PQ to the Social Policy changes proposed by Minister of Human Resources Lloyd Axworthy?

Roy: We were quite disappointed with the reaction of the PQ with regards to the Axworthy reform. They reacted by saying that the federal government is infringing on provincial territory so that it is even more appropriate to

“...the PQ has to prove that they can do a better job for the people in Québec.”

realise the independence of Québec. We were expecting this reaction but we would have expected a counter attack addressing issues such as who is affected by this reform, what is going to be lost, and the impact this reform will have on the poorest, least privileged and most penalized people who are directly attacked in these plans of reform. We are directly concerned with those who are going to pay for these changes.

In that sense, the PQ has lost a good opportunity to gain supporters at a time when the PQ has to prove that they can do a better job for the people in Québec. This Axworthy reform is a priority for the FFQ this year. We are actively involved with other groups in Québec and in Canada to analyse this issue and to participate in the consultation process in order to mobilize against unacceptable cuts in the budgets. We do not want the government to start calculating revenues on the basis of a family income nor do we want to see them impose employability measures on everybody without any protection. There are a lot of issues which are unacceptable to us. In Québec we are involved in a joint project of consultation and information with the NAC and other women's groups.

Dubois: What other priorities has the FFQ for this year?

At this point, the PQ have named some very interesting women ministers to the provincial legislature. And of the six cabinet ministers on the priority committees, three are women.

Also, during the election, the PQ made a promise they would take action on pay equity legislation. They haven't gone into it yet, but the Minister of Labour, Louise Harel, who is one of our best women in the Québec legislature, plans to follow through on that promise. And we intend to remind her. “Look, we expect that you are going to deliver on this.” Harel is very solid in her constituency, which is a working-class constituency in the east end of Montréal, and she is one of the women on the priority committees of Cabinet.

The Québec legislature opens on November 29, and we will see from the speech from the throne what they intend to

“...the Bloc's social consciousness as a group is greater than that of the Liberal Party and certainly than that of the Reform party.”

follow through on in terms of their election promises, and we'll go after them. I say our work is well cut out if we are to expect anything from this government or any government. We've got to be organized with a plan that's worked out amongst the different groups and we've got to go after it.

Woodsworth: Do you think having the Bloc Québécois as the official federal opposition party in the House of Commons is useful to women in Québec in particular, and to women in Canada in general?

Parent: The Bloc exists mainly to ensure Québec has a voice in the parliament, that is, the Québec that is fighting for change and is pro-independence. But they also take their responsibilities as the official opposition very seriously.

When we held the NAC lobby with the main federal political parties in Ottawa last June, we were received by a very serious delegation of Bloc MPs, headed by Bloc leader Lucien Bouchard. We got a good hearing and there was quite an important exchange. It was certainly better than Preston Manning and the Reform Party's refusal to meet with the NAC lobby or to have any of his delegates caucus with us, hence that demonstration against the Reform Party last June.

NAC put a question to the Bloc along the lines of: We respect whatever decision the people of Québec will make as to independence or federalism. Will we support Québec women in whatever decision they make. We understand that, with respect to social legislation and other laws, the people of Québec will want to do it in a different way but, as people in the rest of Canada, we are concerned that the Bloc's

Roy: The third priority which is very important for us is a project of a 10-day march for next spring to mobilise against women's poverty. We have already been working on this project for about five months. About 35 groups in Québec are involved so far. This project in particular is one where we have been developing links and unity in practice with groups of cultural and other minority groups. The march will involve hundreds of women leaving in groups from Montréal, Longueuil and Rivière-du-Loup to meet in Québec City. There will be events in the towns and villages where women will stop, with a great emphasis on raising awareness in the general public about poverty issues women are confronted with. As well, we will raise the ten *revendications* (demands) chosen by the women's groups involved. One a day would be announced. These demands are going to be very specific and aimed at providing concrete improvements women need to fight poverty in the short term. For example, we will lobby for a specific deadline to obtain our demands and we hope that when thousands of women mobilize around this march, the multiplying factor of going through a large number of municipalities as well as the media focus on this event will create a momentum for concrete changes. This project has brought us closer to groups we were not in contact with in the past, so that is a positive step.

This project is very dear to us because it's women who initiated it as opposed to the Axworthy reform or the Québec referendum, which are being imposed on us and we have to deal with them even though we'd rather put our energies to more constructive projects. However, the political context in Québec is good in some ways at this time because we can put some pressure on the PQ which should at this time be more open to listen to Québécois.

In the long term, women need to find a new power balance in the current context where women in this country are confronted with worse than the status quo; we are actually losing some of the gains we made in the past. The challenge for us is to be more representative of the diversity of women in Québec, especially minority groups. We need to develop better understanding of the realities of minority groups and that can only be done by working together more.

Marie-France Dubois moved from Québec to BC 5 years ago and works for Réseau Femmes Columbia-Britannique, a francophone women's network in BC.

focus on dealing with the situation in Québec not threaten our national social programs and other guarantees we have obtained over the years. We ask the Bloc, as the official opposition that, when you are taking a stand for Québec on legislation, you also consider our legitimate desire not to break up our social programs piecemeal and leave them at the mercy of every other provincial government.

Bouchard asked for a repeat of that question, took a little bit of time thinking about it and then said: “Yes, I agree with you.” But Bouchard can only do something about it if he's asked. He won't be there if all he is pressured to do is speak for people in Québec and is ignored by others. In my opinion, the Bloc's social consciousness as a group is greater than that of the Liberal Party and certainly than that of the Reform Party.

Woodsworth: So, you're saying that the women's movement in the rest of Canada could go to the Bloc and ask for their support to, say, fight the federal social policy review?

Parent: Yes. And I think that when a group puts out a communique protesting something, it should make sure that the Bloc get it.

Woodsworth: Could you suggest ways the women's movement in British Columbia can work with the Québec women's movement to strengthen both our social movements?

Parent: It would be good if women in BC held some kind of a conference or discussion and invited four or five women from the women's movement in Québec to discuss our common interests with respect to social programs, fair taxation, child care, education, global restructuring and human rights. At least you would get the point of view of women in our movement from different aspects of life here.

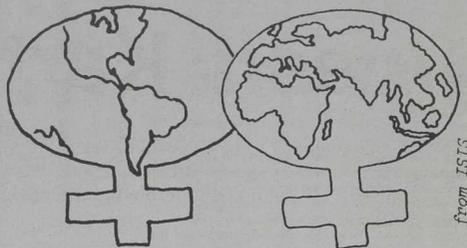
The other thing is that, not only for women in BC but for feminists across the country, we need to develop a thorough and efficient united fightback against [Human Resources minister Lloyd] Axworthy's cuts to social programs. Women who have precarious jobs in greater numbers than men will be hit more often and punished more if Axworthy goes ahead with his plans to change unemployment insurance.

If we can work together on these priorities, we will develop a kind of solidarity and understanding which will mean that, whichever way Québec votes in the referendum, the solidarity between women in BC or in the rest of Canada and women in Québec will be preserved.

Ellen Woodsworth works with Women to Women Global Strategies and the Action Canada Network. Thanks to Kira Schaffner for transcribing.

Fourth UN World Conference on Women:

Beijing '95 — getting in



compiled by **Fatima Jaffer**

Women in countries across the world have been preparing for the upcoming fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing, People's Republic of China from September 4-15, 1995.

Previous World conferences were held in Mexico City, Copenhagen, and Nairobi [see "Background."] The World Conferences have tended to be dominated by men and their agendas—for example, at the 1975 Mexico conference, only 20 percent of the delegates were women, and most were wives or family members of male ministers of state, and therefore were not allowed to vote on the World Plan of Action developed the conference. In addition, information gathered and produced within these World conferences is relayed to various countries predominantly by male journalists, many of whom do not seem to understand the aims and accomplishments of the conferences.

As is the case with most United Nations conferences, women have found the non-governmental conferences held at the same time as the world conferences much more useful. The Mexico conference for example was the first time that so many women of the world got together to discuss their problems from a global perspective.

The NGO Forums are a venue for women to learn more about the issues women from other countries are organizing around, share strategies, discuss or argue differences, network and lobby collectively on an international stage to exert pressure on individual nation states for social and political change.

These are some of the better things that have come out of the world conferences. As September 1995 comes up, women in both the South and the North are already pointing out that, despite promises made at the 1985 Nairobi Conference, in many cases conditions have actually worsened for women over the last ten years. Still, it is expected that, at Beijing, there will be greater participation of grassroots women and radical activists than ever before.

The following is a preliminary summary of information on the 1995 Beijing conference, mostly to enable women in Canada (and elsewhere) who are not already plugged in to larger organizations access to information on the conference preparations to date: what it is; how to participate in the World Conference without leaving home; how to register for the NGO

Forum, where to get more information; why you should care/not care; et cetera.

Background

1972: 1975 was proclaimed International Women's Year (IWY) by the United Nations to focus attention worldwide on the situation of women.

1975: The UN World Conference of IWY was held in Mexico City June 19-July 2. The conference's main theme was to promote equality between men and women, but was largely attended by government leaders and representatives (men) from about 140 countries (1,500 delegates).

A Tribunal was held in Mexico City simultaneous to the conference for non-governmental organizations, including women's groups and unions (women).

At the Mexico conference a World Plan of Action was adopted to provide governments with guidelines for national action over a ten-year period. Goals included increased literacy; civic education for women; increased employment opportunities; equal eligibility to vote and seek elected office; increased health services; recognition of the economic value of women's work in and outside the home; and the promotion of women's organizations.

1975-85: In December 1975, the United Nations declared this ten-year period from 1975 to 1985 the Decade for Women, Equality, Development and Peace.

1979: The UN General Assembly adopts the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Convention on EAFDAW.)

1980: A mid-decade Second UN World Conference on Women was held in Copenhagen July 15-30.

The Copenhagen Program of Action accepts the subthemes of the Copenhagen conference—education, employment and health—as the priority areas of action for governments. Other priority areas set were: food, rural women, child care, migrant women, unemployed women, single mothers, and young women.

Fifty-one countries ratify the Convention on EAFDAW—the US refuses to sign.

1985: The Third UN World Conference was held in Nairobi, Kenya, July 16-30. The Conference was entitled "Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace."

Conference subthemes were: equality, health, education, peace; development, employment, aging, women and the Media, refugee and migrant women, women in

emergency situations, and girls and young women.

About 8,000 women and men attended the conference and the corresponding NGO Forum.

Beijing 1995: Why?

Out of the 1985 Nairobi conference came *Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women*, intended as a blueprint for action to improve the status of women through to the year 2000. However, UN reports note that in many countries, women are worse off than they were 10 or 15 years ago.

Some of the questions the Beijing Conference will be expected to answer are: What has happened since Nairobi? What needs to be done?

Numerous pre-conferences towards the Beijing conference have already been held in the various regions (Africa; Asia; Europe and North America; Latin America and the Caribbean), as well as within each country, with a view to deciding the agenda of the 4th World Conference.

As well, the conference will be called on to ratify a Platform of Action put forward by the UN Commission on the Status of Women—the key issues in this document were apparently identified at a first review of the implementation of the *Forward Looking Strategies* at a 1990 conference. Key issues include: health, violence, poverty, education, effects of conflict, access to economic structures, power and decision making, national machinery, human rights, media and the environment.

Canada participated in last month's Vienna conference, at which women from North America and European countries were to develop their input to the Platform for Action. *Kinesis* will have a report from a young feminist participant from Vancouver in our next issue.

Who gets to go to the World Conference?

The 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women is an official United Nations meeting. It will be attended by delegates from UN member states—national governments—and some non-governmental organizations. In order to be admitted as [non-voting] observers to the Conference, members of NGOs should request applications for accreditation before January 13, 1995 from: NGO Accreditation/World Conference on Women, 2 UN Plaza, Room 1204, New York, NY 10017, USA, or fax (213) 963-3463.

What is Forum 95?

The NGO Forum on Women takes place August 30-September 8, and is open to all in Beijing interested women and men who can afford to attend and who register in time. Forum 95 will be made up of workshops, films, displays, and networking.

It is designed as a forum to bring women from around the world together to exchange information and ideas, celebrate achievements, and draw attention to and develop strategies to fight the various forms of discrimination against women worldwide.

A registration package, which includes information about the Forum, a registration form, visas and hotel rates, is available from: NGO Forum, 211 East 43rd Street, Suite 1500, New York, NY 10017, USA.

The registration fee is US\$50 and the deadline for registration is April 30, 1995. No registrations will be taken on site.

On travel and lodging

There are no travel subsidies. Each woman or her organization is responsible for making her own way to Beijing.

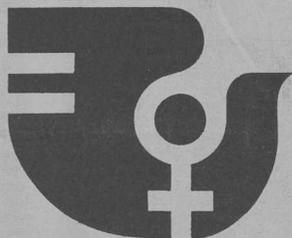
All hotel accommodations for the NGO Forum will be coordinated in Beijing by the China Organizing Committee. The registration package for Forum 95 includes a form detailing hotel rates and other hotel arrangements.

How to get more information

- The United Nations publishes information about the Conference. Contact Department of Public Information, United Nations, Room S-1040, New York, NY 10017, USA; or call (212) 963-1262 or fax (212) 963-4556.

- The Canadian government has established the Canadian Preparatory Committee (CPC) which is chaired by Status of Women Canada. It made up of federal government representatives, NGOs, and academic and research bodies. It publishes a series of Conference fact sheets called *Beijing Updates*. For more information, contact: 1995 World Conference Secretariat, Status of Women Canada, 360 Albert Street, Suite 700, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 1G3; or call (613) 995-7835; or fax (613) 957-3359.

- The Canadian Beijing Facilitating Committee has been set up to coordinate the participation of women and women's groups in Canada. For more information, contact: Canada Beijing Facilitating Committee, c/o CRIAW, 408-151 Slater Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5H3; or call (613) 563-2550 or fax (613) 563-8658.



The emblem for the 1975 World Conference on Women consisted of "a stylized dove; the biological symbol for women; and the mathematical sign for equality."



Symbol of the 1995 World Conference on Women, developed in China.

ARTS

Review: ZWICCT Diary:

Women in cultural work

by Llawan

1991 was the eleventh anniversary of Zimbabwe's independence from colonial rule and Rhodesian apartheid. The nurturing of the imaginations of young women and children had become important in relation to the development of the status of women in particular and of the nation as a whole, especially in the context of the struggles of the post-colonial imperialism most countries and people in the South face.

With this in mind, four women and I came together to start a task-based trust called Zimbabwean Women in Contemporary Culture Trust (ZWICCT) in Harare, Zimbabwe.

pations other than the traditional or stereotypical—as secretaries, nannies, clerks, bank tellers, wives, childbearers etc.

The tasks that ZWICCT prioritized were:

- locate women in Zimbabwe who work in traditional and contemporary cultural forms—from basketweavers to radio DJs to bottle-top painters to club singers—and to collate a database by which to link these artists. This database can be accessed at the Zimbabwean Women's Resource Centre and Network in Harare (ZWRNC, Box 2192, Harare, Zimbabwe).
- To produce user-friendly publications that highlight the lives and realities of these artists. Since 1992, ZWICCT has produced a Diary-Notebook that profiles individuals and groups of women and their work through photographs and excerpts of interviews. The first diary was sponsored financially by Sida (a Swedish non-governmental organization) and WomanKind (a feminist organization in the UK), and CODE (Canadian Organisation for Development through Education) supplied the paper. Because paper is scarce in Southern Africa, books are expensive. This has meant that many women were unable to purchase our publications. ZWICCT thus published 4,000 Diaries in 1992 and gave half of these to women's organizations, women artists and schools for free. This practice still continues. The newest Diary is hot off the press.

• To research and network with women cultural workers in the Southern African region. This was done through the 1994 Diary, which includes women from Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The 1995 Diary also features women from Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. This is a remarkable achievement because of the difficulties of telecommunications within the Southern African region, as well as because of the economic and civil destabilization caused by foreign agendas in a few of these countries.

With each year, the Diaries have increasingly become a day-to-day, practical

symbol of alliance and exchange-in-friendship between Southern African women. In an excerpt from the preface to the ZWICCT 1994 Diary, the ZWICCT trustees write: "The intention is not to speak with one voice, but to present and celebrate the diversity of our experiences, media and perspectives in the region."

"To spotlight women inevitably provokes the challenge: 'Do you want to put women, and women's art, in a ghetto?' In reply, we suggest that women are already in a ghetto. One day women will have the same encouragement, opportunity, training, financial reward, promotion and recognition for their creative work as men have. Until that day dawns, we need to meet each other, find strength in each other's resilience and vision, and organize ourselves."

...We hope that our readers will be as inspired as we were by meeting our sisters around the region."

The trustees of ZWICCT today are Tisa Chifunyise, Ann Holmes, Lorraine Kaseke, Fiona Lloyd, Joyce Makwenda, and Margaret Waller.

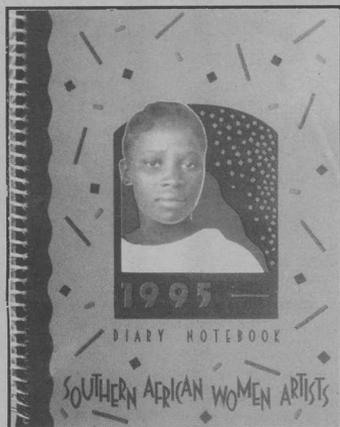
ZWICCT invites your participation in its growing network. Books, magazines, resource guides to cultural production and work by women can be sent for library and

networking use. Write to ZWICCT first before you send anything—postal customs levies can be expensive on books and you'll need guidelines on how to send things.

If you are from the Southern Africa region, ZWICCT welcomes your entries for their next publication and their database. Let them know about your work, your organizations, your ideas and your needs from ZWICCT.

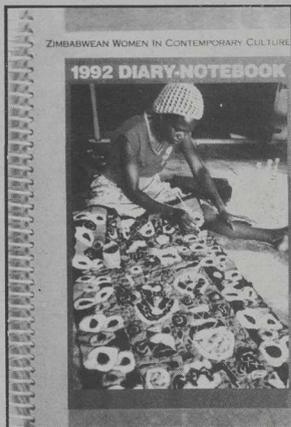
If you are not from the region but from any other country of the South—South-South dialogue—or are an indigenous organization in an industrialized nation, ZWICCT encourages and welcomes your letters. You can also support ZWICCT by ordering 1995 Diaries. Write to ZWICCT, Box 2192, Harare Zimbabwe, or call ZWICCT at (263) (4) 787608. In Canada, expect the Diaries to cost about US\$20 (to be sent in US funds), depending on postage and handling.

Llawan is a Zimbabwe-born, Vancouver-based volunteer writer for Kinesis and an honorary ZWICCT trustee since leaving Harare in 1992.



Task-based mean that we were primarily to bring to the forefront the works of women and to facilitate networking between women working within the spheres of cultural production. It also meant each trustee had a specific task—such as editing, photography, researching, desktop design, distribution—without hierarchy.

This trust was conceived to focus solely on the work women were doing in contemporary cultural/artistic production. The reason for this was we realised how young women and children had very few visible role models for alternative careers or occu-



"Lately I've been feelin' ...you know... kinda like raisin' hell."

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Hiromi Goto's Chorus of Mushrooms: Story within a story

by Monika Kin Gagnon

CHORUS OF MUSHROOMS

by Hiromi Goto
NeWest Press, Edmonton, Alberta

"It was hard growing up in a small prairie town, the only Japanese-Canadians for miles around. Where everybody thought Japan was the place they saw when they watched Shogun on TV, Obachan laughed when she saw it. I thought it was a good story."

Hiromi Goto's novel, *Chorus of Mushrooms* opens with a couple lying languorously in their purple Shogun-size futon, as one asks the other, "Will you tell me a story about your Obachan?" We revisit the place of comfort and storytelling some dozen times through the course of this novel, and it is from here that stories within stories intertwine through a variety of voices and temporal spaces. The publicity write-up for a novel by what might be considered the second Japanese-Canadian woman novelist (after Joy Kogawa), uses a metaphor of a peony's unfolding petals to describe these stories inside stories. Choral rather than floral, would be a more accurate descriptive, as 28-year-old Goto's first novel is a resonant chorus of women's voices which situate a post-World War 2 immigrant family within two colliding cultures, Japanese and Canadian.

Set in the small Alberta town of Nanton, Goto's novel elaborates on the relationship and conflicts between three generations of Japanese Canadian women: Obachan Naoe, her daughter Keiko and granddaughter Muriel, who Obachan calls Murasaki. In some ways, this is Naoe's story which Murasaki is witness, a story Murasaki speaks to her lover, and through this very act of telling, affirms familial complexity with her grandmother.

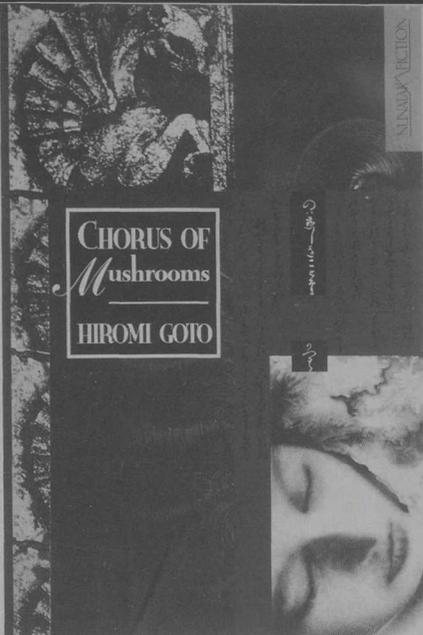
It is through Naoe that Murasaki reclaims and reconfigures a buried Japanese heritage which her mother, Keiko, has tried so hard to efface. In negotiation with a Canadian prairie reality, the family's Japanese culture is restored as grandmother and granddaughter lie intimately together in bed drinking sake, eating dried squid and osembe rice cakes.

While Naoe and Murasaki alternately speak in first person, we learn of Keiko only

through their depictions. Keiko, suggests Murasaki, thinks she's as white as her neighbours and she thus "became an other," more unforgetting, she also has a culinary blind spot. Naoe characterizes her as a "Nutrasweet woman [who] doesn't take any cream", and who "converted from rice and daikon to weiners and beans." Keiko is the mother who agrees with Murasaki's elementary school teacher, much to Murasaki's own horror, to dye her daughter's hair blonde to be a more convincing Alice in Wonderland for an upcoming school play. But as Murasaki will concede, "Mom isn't the wicked figure in the Walt Disney cast of good guys and bad guys. It was another thing of parent/child conflict. Add a layer of cultural displacement and the tragedy is complete."

Most powerfully, Goto's often hilarious novel effectively breaks against enduring stereotypes of East Asian-Canadians, in particular of women. (The patrilineage of the family's surname, Tonkatsu, literally a deep-fried pork cutlet, is itself irreverently assigned humorous and precarious origins.) Being Naoe's story, *Chorus of Mushrooms* portrays her in an emotionally complex, sensual and rich way, full of raunchy humour, aching sexual desire ("Eighty-five years old and horny as a musk-drenched cat," she describes herself) and a voracious appetite for Japanese food which Keiko denies her. Naoe's voice is a stream of consciousness with sprinkles of Japanese throughout, animated by the many stories she tells Murasaki, by her ensuing adventures in which her fantasies are fulfilled, and some startling moments of magic that erupt unexpectedly (including the hilarious ending which will remain unspoken here).

There are specific elaborations between East Asian cultures and their inter-relations in white-dominated society: the Vietnamese mushroom farm workers, and the Chinese Shane Wu, who Murasaki describes from her childhood: "I never talked about him in my entire life. He never talked with me. Instinct born of fear... That Oriental people in single doses were well enough, but any hint of a group and it was over."



Naoe's decision to flee the family home unannounced (not without her daughter's Mastercard and a bit of cash, nonetheless) precipitates a series of unexpected events in which Keiko is most deeply affected, and through which Murasaki will unearth family secrets which positively destabilize her sense of knowing and her modes of perception within the economy of her family. In many ways, however, the narrative events are secondary to the overall momentum of entwining voices and stories, the complex inter-cultural spaces which are imagined by Goto in such attentive detail, the kooky exchanges and the sensuality that is a consistent undercurrent: a care and pleasure of the body, an enjoyment of foods, floods of word-sounds, a profusion of scents, such as the mysterious fushigoi odour of mushrooms which the Tonkatsu family farms.

Chorus of Mushrooms is interspersed with Murasaki's reminiscences which are highly resonant of the insidiousness and pervasiveness of racism: a teenage boyfriend who wants the mystery of "oriental sex" revealed, much to her perplexity; inquisitive assaults on her by fellow shoppers about unfamiliar vegetables in the "ethnic Chinese noodle Tofu-patties exotic vegetable section of Safeway"; and her distaste for Valentine's Day because of the "press-out oriental-type

girl in some sort of pseudo kimono with wooden sandals on backwards and eyes all slanty slits" cards that she repeatedly receives.

This is also a story about storytelling and there is a constant sense of slippage and fluidity in the language and structure of stories within stories, that is a recurring evocation or orality. "God! Did I just make that up or is it true? I don't even know anymore. Saying it out loud can make it so..." Murasaki exclaims in response to her own storytelling. Eventually, the implicit love story in the storyteller's purple bed seeps into the stories she is telling and their conflicts begin overlapping both contexts. And within is the love story between Obachan and granddaughter, as their head chatters collide despite their separation, and their "conversations" eventually give Murasaki the confidence and power to speak her own stories. "Trust me," Naoe assures Murasaki "I'll be there. And if you falter, I will fill in the words for you until you are ready again... Murasaki-chan we can do almost anything."

Monika Kin Gagnon writes on culture, feminism and race. She is Japanese-French-Canadian and is based in Vancouver.

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VIFF Review: Father, Son and Holy War:

Religion and patriarchy

by Yasmin Jiwani and Feroza Ahmed

FATHER, SON AND HOLY WAR

Directed by Anand Patwardhan
India, 1974
Vancouver International Film Festival
October 1994

Two South Asian feminist from Muslim cultures got together to debate some issues arising from the documentary *Father, Son and Holy War* for Kinesis. The film is the third of a three-part series by the same filmmaker on the communal violence in India. All films in the trilogy record the rise of fundamentalist violence in India, using free footage from events in the 80s and the 90s, and interviews, mostly done with people in the streets. In the first film *In Memory of Friends*, looking at Sikh separatist movement and Punjab as the "breadbasket" of India. The second film, *In the Name of God*, explores the economic reasons for the rise in communal violence. *Father, Son and Holy War* is further divided into two parts—*Trial by Fire and Hero Pharmacy*. In both, Anand Patwardhan, the male producer and director of the film, focusses on making connections between religion, violence and the patriarchy, as well as on how communal violence has impacted on women in India.

Yasmin Jiwani: The filmmaker's argument seems to be that when in ancient days India was ruled by goddess worship, woman culture did not engage in violence, and that, since the advent of patriarchy or male worship, men in the name of religion and—although he never clearly mentions this—of nationalism are initiating the violence.

The argument then goes, the violence is related to the impotence men are feeling, which begs the question, "Why do they feel impotent?" You have to look around at the social conditions to find out what is it that makes the man feel that way.

He seems to locate it back into the conquest of India by the Muslims—even though this is not overtly stated, this is what I got as a viewer.

Feroza Ahmed: I agree. At first, I was struck by the film's attempt to focus on the positioning of women in Indian society and around this communal violence. But it focuses on male impotence as the impetus for this violence—and only Hindu male impotence, not Muslim male impotence.

In one part, the narrator talks about colonization and how the British colonizers tended to place Hindu men as effeminate and weak. He traces the current violent feelings of Hindu men as being based in their fears of being impotent, effeminate, or like a woman. The violence is their way of getting their "manhood" back. He doesn't explain why Muslim men don't feel impotent as well, since they too fought the British side by side with Hindu men.

Jiwani: That's because his idea depends on seeing Muslim men as warriors, based on the fact that Muslims were the colonizers of India at one point in time.

Ahmed: That is the same argument that Hindu fundamentalists use to justify the violence against Muslims—that the Muslims are invaders and colonizers.

Jiwani: That's right. This kind of perspective is too superficial. It doesn't really take into account all of the factors that go into creating a sense of nationalism.

Ahmed: One of the things that stands out in the film is the look at mainstream media literacy—cinema and television—as tools for inciting the communal violence. Men talk about how they mature when they watch rape scenes in the movies, how masturbation at the movies reduces their sperm count, makes them sexually impotent. In another scene, we see the

statue of the Indian actress Mandakini, half-naked, being used at a Hindu fundamentalist gathering. A man explains they are using the statue as a symbol of how Muslim men see Hindu women basically as objects of rape.

Jiwani: The film does look at different forms of communication, such as street communication—we see men talk about whether they are sexually potent, and you see street "hero" pharmacy at work, with men selling medicines to increase potency in men and so on. Those parts were fascinating and completely new for me.

Ahmed: It was pretty unique. I was stunned when one of the men being interviewed said, "When I see a rape happening, if I know the woman I'll save her; if I don't, I want to join in." I guess that being a male filmmaker, he had more access to that kind of information, horrific as it is.

Jiwani: But again, the problem is that the narrator does not bring the connections out. Things are left hanging and you feel like saying, "Alright, all of this is going on, there is a revival,

Ahmed: The problem with the film is that we don't ultimately get what his message is.

Jiwani: Well, one message that stands out is that patriarchy is stupid.

the revival seems to be traced through the popular dissemination of Hindu mythology, men are feeling impotent, so what?"

One link he suggests is that the Hindus were viewed as effeminate in colonial times and now want to prove their manhood. Yet, if you look at studies on the relationship between the colonized and the colonizers, you notice that the attribution of the feminine persona to the colonized was common throughout.

Ahmed: And in the film, we see that language now being used by the Hindus against the Muslims. The narrator points out that in speeches by the Hindu revivalist parties, the language is full of references to the seed of man, things like, "Hindu men should start acting like real men." Meanwhile, the politician refers to Muslims and anyone who opposes fundamentalism as "They should wear a sari."

The biggest problem I had was that, other than couple of interviews with Muslims mostly as victims of the violence, the only real scenes with Muslims were of a Muslim fundamentalist stalking onto a podium, and of Muslims celebrating *Mo'arram*, the sacrifice or martyrdom of Hasan where the men flagellate themselves, which is only observed by one small sect of Shia Muslims.

Jiwani: It is also a Shiite sect which I would argue has in its mythology characters similar to those in Hindu mythology. Where is the line being drawn here? And by whom? This is where I would ask the director, "Okay, if you're making these linkages, why suddenly is there an "othering" of the Muslims and what are the factors involved in this othering?"

We must remember, we are not talking about a clear, historically based "us" and "them" situation. If you look at the Muslim conquest of India, there was in fact a lot of integration and assimilation on the part of the Muslim.

Ahmed: But the film doesn't begin to make the distinction between Muslim colonization and Western colonialism.

Jiwani: The hallmark of Western colonialism has been the total breakdown of the indigenous economy...

Ahmed... whereas Muslim colonization has always been an integrating force, where Muslim invasions tended to add to the indigenous economies, also for example in Africa, where it took the form of an exchange between equals.

Jiwani: The second thing about Western colonization was it leads to a breakdown of the traditional morals, values and customs of the colonized peoples. You see that clearly when you look at the relationship between the First Nations and Western colonial powers in Canada. But that again did not happen with Muslim colonization of India.

Ahmed: Coming back to the film, you are saying the film plays into this dominant, or fundamentalist view of Muslim colonization.

I think what makes it worse is the film doesn't do anything to flush out an understanding of Muslims in this communal situation. Briefly, we get Muslim as victim or Muslim as fundamentalist—there is no progressive Muslim voice to shed light on anything we don't already know. The director is a progressive Hindu, so we do get the progressive Hindu point of view. When we get footage of anti-fundamentalism demonstrations or women's demonstrations, he does not distinguish between Hindu and Muslim women—one gets

"Which came first?" and "Did the Muslim fundamentalist really spring up as a reaction to the Hindu fundamentalist?"

Ahmed: The problem with the film is that we don't ultimately get what his message is. It is also dangerously irresponsible with the Muslim side of things—raising issues, then not dealing with them. But the film is important in that it shows how communalism has attacked women first and foremost.

Jiwani: Well, one message that stands out is that patriarchy is stupid.

Ahmed: Though he uses amusing Western Feminism 101 language to get that point across. I can't help thinking the director's discovery that patriarchy plays a key part in communal violence is probably amusing for the women who have been saying this all along.

Jiwani: When I saw the film, I was first struck by parts that reminded me of the National Film Board's Goddess trilogy: *Goddess Remembered*, *The Burning Times*, and *Full Circle*. The filmmaker mentioned he was aware of this work. Parts of *Father, Son...*, so closely resemble *The Burning Times*, it seemed like the film had imported Western stuff to explain the situation in India.

But in fact it is actually quite a contrary history to that in *Burning Times* because, yes, you did have goddess worship and yes, the religion has shifted to a male emphasis around the phallic, but the critical question is, "What are the factors that promoted this shift?"

When you look at some writing by Indian feminists, you find out that the notion of *sati*, for instance, was a practice that actually came in after the British colonial India. The British, by pushing the Brahmin-caste to the top in terms of economic cultural power, meant that this practice, just like the practice of foot-binding in China, was elevated to a court practice which then spread, making its way to the other classes in their attempt to raise themselves up the class system.

Historically, when that practice was elevated, the British used it as a platform to enter India, saying, "Well, look at these people. They're barbaric. Look at the way they treat their women."

Again, the whole rescue image comes in. There's a lot of that kind of contrary stuff about Islam too. So to pinpoint one culture as this film does, saying, "Well, it's sexual impotence causing the fundamentalism," and another culture saying, "Well, there's a natural warrior element there," is essentializing.

Ahmed: Actually, the film begins with his attempt to contextualize the point he is making about the shift to patriarchy and subjugation of women. It has footage of the white burning genocide of women in Europe, and it tries to make parallels with other religious cultures, pointing out how religion has always been used to persecute women, how what's happening in India is not peculiar to India, the rise of fundamentalism is everywhere.

Jiwani: But why use historical material to make that point which makes it easy for the West to say, "You see, the whole notion of progress is really true; we already bypassed that whole period and you guys are still involved in it." If he had wanted to make that link, why not go into Bosnia or get footage from there? Ultimately, it feeds into the notion that India is still embroiled in its struggles toward progress and equality.

Ahmed: I remember the first thing you said when I asked you what the movie was about was, "Oh yeah, it's basically about how fundamentalism in India has arisen because the Hindu male is feeling impotent." I hadn't seen the movie yet but I thought, "Oh no, is that like saying violence against women happens because men are feeling impotent?"

Jiwani: Yeah. But I have to say, it certainly wasn't a boring film.

the impression that these are Hindu women, they are not dressed in Muslim dress and are obviously Hindu-led. Again, there is no progressive Muslim.

This would not be a problem had he then showed only the fundamentalist Muslims without showing the progressive aspects. It unforgivably plays into the kind of unchallenged Muslim bashing we see everywhere, especially in the West.

Jiwani: At one point, the director does talk to a Muslim Imam [leader] of one of the mosques who says some interesting things...

Ahmed: ...but within minutes, the filmmaker turns around and discredits the speaker when he brings up the question of the low status of Muslim women. So, on the one hand, he lets the Imam speak, and on the other, devalues what he had to say by introducing a non-progressive, in fact, reactionary element. Once again, the Muslim he just talked to becomes yet another fundamentalist, definitely insofar as women are concerned.

Jiwani: He does try overall to fit together two sides of the story, yet his only notion of balance in the film is to show a theatrical group performing plays that promote integration and communal harmony, yet ignores the question: are those two sides as clearly demarcated as they are presented? Or is it this particular condition that is causing them to be clearly demarcated.

For example, he talks about a street where most of the stores were Muslim-owned. What is the demarcating feature there and how is it being used as a targeting of that particular minority? One of the men mentions he knows the Muslim stores by the names. So it's through names that you can tell who is a Muslim.

Ahmed: The man on the street also says, we know who is Muslim because we've all lived in this neighbourhood for a long time.

Jiwani: How has that kind of difference between Hindu and Muslim been kept alive in the first place? Of course the filmmaker has the prerogative to focus his vision where he wants but, in this case, it is a question of how much of one fundamentalism is being used as a counterforce for the other fundamentalism. Clearly in the film, Muslim fundamentalism doesn't really effectively counterforce Hindu fundamentalism because you're left with the questions,

VIFF review: Of Women by Women:

A token sampling

by Laiwan

OF WOMEN BY WOMEN: NEW WOMEN'S FILMS FROM JAPAN

International premieres at the Vancouver International Film Festival, October

Three short films were shown under the title "Of Women By Women, New Women's Films From Japan" at the recent Vancouver International Film Festival. I attended because I was curious to discover the promises such a title offered.

Yes, each film is made by a woman, each subject is a woman, the works were experimental, I guess they are new since each was made within the last two years, and they are longish shorts (from 15 to 36 minutes in length). So far so good.

But then again, I get stuck on the "New Women's Films" part. Does that make it a film by a new woman or is it a new film by a woman? Now, you may think I'm being a smart-aleck and rhetorical because we all do assume it's the latter. But the films seen in the context of this categorization made me question how we are set up to enter the films with an expectation of some kind of universal representation of "women", and to come away with comprehension of a situation.

Before I can elaborate, perhaps I should describe the films.

Water In the Ear/Mimi No Naka No Mizu by Keiko Utagawa explores the anxieties a young woman has—that her breasts are too small, and that someone is in her ear whenever she submerges her head in her bath water. She consults experts to no avail. Set in an urban city, most of the scenes are shot indoors.

Although this description of the film alludes to some sort of linear narrative, the film is neither linear nor with narrative. Repetitive imagery of the young woman deliberately falling backwards into her stainless steel bath (more like a large sink), remaining motionless submerged in the water, and repeating this back and forth between two baths that are next to each other confounded me about what was being expressed. Are these complex personal rituals, compulsive pathological experiences, experiments in surrealism or all of the above?

The write-up of the film notes "her desire to solve these problems eventually leads her from the private space of her bathroom to the public

space of a communal bath in a health centre." This description makes the film appear to have a linear, even a socio-political narrative. The scenes in the public bath felt removed from the women whose bodies the camera captured. To a degree, the scenes felt surreptitious. I thought the camera may have been hidden. The voiceover, noting the "long drooping breasts" of the older woman, emphasized the voyeuristic positioning of the filmmaker and, inevitably, the viewer.

This illustrates to me again how the assumptions in the programmer's write-up project and impose another narrative onto a work.

Formally, the film uses a walking handheld camera and stationary camera techniques, diary-type visual and audio vignettes (that were simultaneously translated; however, much could not be heard because the film's soundtrack was louder than the translator's mike), and a lot of water was challenging. As an experimental film not much was responding to the medium of film, surrealism, or the developing of its metaphors beyond expressing its internalized subjectivities. However, it did win the Special Jury Prize of the Image Forum Festival in Tokyo this year—I explore the meaning of this later.

Silhouetted Light/Kage No Akari by Yuki Saito is described as a "psychodrama of shattering vehemence and intensity—about a young woman who has no place of her own when the wind dies down and shadows disappear". Beginning with a young woman crouching in her kitchen with a soundtrack of a woman having sex—it hints at the formation of a conventional narrative. This later proves to be untrue. The young woman goes out into the street, again the setting is in an urban city. She sees a young man—who seems stoned, attempting to light a bag of garbage on fire and then throw it unlit over the next building—and she follows him through the streets. This cuts to intense images seen in her kitchen that can be read as the unfolding of her complex internal life expressed through surreal symbols. The key scene is her act of

separating her black goldfish, who live in an aquarium, by putting them into tiny little glass jars where they can hardly survive, then killing them all, collecting their eyes and later letting these float out of her hand in a sewer-like stream at the outskirts of the city. Then follows disturbing images of anguish that show this young woman ripping off her clothing. She is left sitting naked on her kitchen floor—lost, abject and abandoned.

This film filled me with despair at its depiction of such intense isolation. I cannot (won't) say any more about it.



Silhouetted Light

The last film *Cordyceps Sobolifera/Tochi Kaso by Fumie Kamioka* is more visually experimental than the others. Using digital effects to layer images of trees, indoor spaces, floating petals and water, Kamioka adds more layers with sparse, haunting soundtracks, especially one of wooden clogs walking on gravel with a full moon on screen. The title refers to a parasitic fungus that enters fruiting plants through their roots. There is a glimpse of a portrait of an elderly woman, but there is no evidence of who or what she is in connection to. The write-up for the film describes it as "a haunting reverie only just this side of delirium...It's up to you (if you feel so inclined) to disentangle the metaphors from the dreams; many viewers will be happy simply to surrender to Kamioka's construction of a state of mind in which past, present and future intertwine."

I found this film to be long and tedious. The film is a personal delirium in itself that needed editing. I had no choice except to move along with it—in hopes that it would move me, in passions or in dreaming states. In the festival program write-up, we read that this film is in part about visiting her grandparents in the country though I had no clue of this from the film. The film also won the Special Jury Prize of the Image Forum Festival in Tokyo.

My wish is not to unravel the films themselves, but to unravel their constructed framework by the Vancouver International Film Festival. It is not that these films are without merit, nor do I question the realities of their expressions and experiments. I just don't think they can be called "Of Women By Women"—us—the great mass of women, yet represented in these films mostly in anguished, pathological, isolated realities. "New Women's Films"—is that like post-feminism?

In the curatorial notes we learn that the programmer, a white man, was a member of the jury of this year's Image Forum Festival in Tokyo. I asked what this Image Forum Festival was and was told by a film festival receptionist that it is a company that distributes short films in Japan. This made me wonder what it means to win the Special Jury Prize from the company that distributes the films; whether these young filmmakers are the chosen few to be distributed internationally, and what are the limits of the agenda of a white man in Asia who is a jury member in the company that distributes these films? Can we really get unbiased, qualitative programming within such a set up?

These three films felt like student films to me. This program made me realize how tokenized we are that our works may still be developing, and, yet they are snatched up and categorized to be representative, without the benefit of the contexts of what they are representing being shared with the audience.

How many women filmmakers—lesbian filmmakers included—don't get shown at international film festivals because they don't get picked up by a distribution company as did these films? Having seen experimental and radical videos shown at alternative art/video venues, I also know that not all Japanese women are limited to these internal subjective states as represented by this program.

While watching these shorts, I remembered that 1995 is the 50th year after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and that the anti-war organizing by Japanese women is to be remembered and honoured.

The women's movement exists in Japan and their struggles are as tough as ours. Contrary to the conclusions that this program of shorts conveyed—we are not alone. Tokenized, yes; Alone, no.

Laiwan is an interdisciplinary visual artist, born in Zimbabwe of Chinese origin.

VIFF film:

Bandit Queen

BANDIT QUEEN

Directed by Shekhar Kapoor, India
Vancouver International Film Festival, October

The *Bandit Queen* has been the subject of much discussion at a number of international film festivals. The subject of the film is a woman, Phoolan Devi, who was recently released from prison after serving an 11-year term for banditry and the murders of 30 men she says she did not commit. The film, which bills itself as a "true life story," claims Phoolan Devi was sold as a man's bride at the age of 11, repeatedly raped and abused by male villagers and, later, bandits, became a bandit's lover, terrorized men of upper castes and led the massacre of 30 men.

In an open letter to the director of the Toronto Film Festival in September, Phoolan Devi requested that he withdraw the film from the festival. The film was not withdrawn. In October, *Bandit Queen*

played at the Vancouver International Film Festival. Many in the audience had heard of the letter, but there were various versions of its content. The description of the film in the Festival program only mentioned that the film is "controversial" and that it has been "banned" in India. In fact, the film had not been "banned," but its release in India would be subject to the director agreeing to cuts proposed by the Indian censor board because of the film's graphic violent and sexual dramatizations.

Kinosis has decided not to review the film and, to explain why, we are reprinting Phoolan Devi's letter:

Dear Director Sahib,

My name is Phoolan Devi. I cannot read or write. So I am asking a friend to write this to you.

I have been told that at your festival, you are showing a film called *Bandit Queen* that is supposed to be the story of my life.

I have never met the people who made the film, and I have not been shown this film. I have asked them to show it to me, they have refused. They have given everybody the impression that I am being contradictory and that I did not want to see it. This is totally untrue.

I have been told that the main theme of this film is about how I was raped. And how many times. I have never once spoken about my rape. To anyone.

I would like to ask you, sir, and you your audience, what you would feel if you knew that the most private and humiliating moments of your life were being screened for other people's entertainment. Without your permission, without you having been shown the film.

If this film had been about the rape and humiliation of your daughter, of your wife, your mother or your sister, however well-made the film was, would you have shown it at your festival? Would you sell tickets for the show? I think you must be a man, just as the makers of this film are men. I cannot imagine that a woman would do this to another woman. Anything else, but not this.

My humiliation and my shame is not for sale. Not for any price.

While you watch this film about me, while you enjoy my misery, I want you to know that I will fight for as long as I have breath in my body. Tomorrow, an Indian Judge at the Delhi High Court will hear my plea. [Ed Note: Her lawyers won an injunction preventing the film from being screened in India, cuts or no cuts, until her case against the filmmakers has been heard.]

As soon as I can find the money to hire a lawyer abroad, I will sue you and your festival and everyone else that is party to this shameful exploitation.

I request the public of Toronto not to participate in my humiliation. I would not go and watch you being raped, if I knew you didn't want me to. Please don't go and watch this film. At least not until I have seen it.

Please try and understand that whatever I may have done, I am a human being. I am an animal. I have feelings. I have a family. I have spent eleven years in prison.

I am 32 years old, and have a life ahead of me.

Phoolan Devi
New Delhi, India

LETTERS

dear reader

Kinesis loves receiving mail. Please get your letter to us by the 18th of the month.
If you can, keep the length to about 500 words. (If you go way over, we might edit for space.)
Hope to hear from you very soon.

Love,
Kinesis

Thanks Gloria, I'm a subscriber

Kinesis:

I am embarrassed to say that I needed Gloria Siemsen at the University of British Columbia to remind me that I have a women's newspaper in my home town that I was not supporting. I regret not having done this sooner.

Looking forward to receiving my first issue...and sending gift subscriptions for Christmas!

Sincerely,
Sue Watson
Vancouver, BC

Julie Linkletter, identify yourself!

Kinesis:

I'd like to comment on the letters from Sumera Thobani and Julie Linkletter on the 99 Federal Steps in your last issue. The first thought I had was why didn't Vancouver Rape Relief and Transition House itself write to *Kinesis* to defend its own document and process? Is there something that happened that you aren't telling your readers? What makes me wonder is also the fact that Julie Linkletter wrote under the auspices of DAWN Vancouver and not Rape Relief, and yet, someone mentioned to me that she also works for Rape Relief. I didn't know that when I first read the letter and I'm sure many other of your readers didn't either. It's unfair to readers who only know that Julie is speaking for women with disabilities in her defence of 99 Federal Steps and don't know that she could also be writing in defence of a document written by members of her organization. You would read the letter quite differently if you knew that.

I'm not actively involved in the controversy around 99 Steps except through my friends who work in transition houses here in Vancouver, but I have been reading *Kinesis*. I would like to know more about the issues that women have with 99 Steps. I expect we shall read about it if NAC is going to work on building a policy on violence against women, which I believe is important and I support NAC for doing so. Fortunately NAC, unlike Julie Linkletter, believe rural women, for example, should be involved in the process. I base this on the fact that Julie writes "I doubt that they [rural women] would be as articulate in their recommendations to the federal government as the author of 99 Federal Steps."

I do not intend my letter to attack Rape Relief. In fact, I support the work of that organization. I merely think it is important to inform the reader as much as possible about what you publish.

Thank you for all your hard work. I enjoy reading the magazine.

Sincerely,
Juliette Reynolds
Vancouver, BC

An Editorial Board note:

It is *Kinesis* policy to notify writers of letters concerning their articles or letters and to allow them to reply in the same issue in which the letter appears.

Julie Linkletter responds

I am writing in response to a letter sent to you regarding my letter in *Kinesis* last month. It was not my intent to discount the experiences and knowledge of rural women or anyone else. I realize that is the message I conveyed though and I am regretful.

I wrote in support of 99 Steps because I am convinced that it contains recommendations that if carried out would improve the status and lives of disabled women in Canada. I wrote knowing that my group was in support of 99 Steps. If DAWN Vancouver had not been, I would not have written the letter. My response, then was from DAWN Vancouver, not Vancouver Rape Relief.

I was sent to the NAC AGM by DAWN Vancouver and was their representative there. After the NAC regional meeting, I reported to DAWN Vancouver the discussions and debates that took place as well as the decisions made. At that time we began to discuss 99 Steps. Before the NAC AGM, I asked members of DAWN Vancouver for their judgements about resolutions on which I would be voting, including the resolution to adopt 99 Steps as policy. I also contacted a member of DAWN Canada to check out where the national group stood on some of the issues. When I returned from the AGM, I again reported to DAWN Vancouver.

I did not misrepresent myself when I wrote to *Kinesis* on behalf of DAWN Vancouver. I am a disabled woman. I organize with other disabled women a group for the support of and political activism of women with disabilities. I am also a member of Vancouver Rape Relief. My involvement with DAWN Vancouver as well as Rape Relief means I am learning so much about violence against all women, as well as about the lives of disabled women in general. What I learn in each group I can pass on to the other. This integration is useful and necessary for me and other women as the lives of disabled women are very much interrelated to those of all women. Women with disabilities, in addition to suffering from conditions directly related to their disability, also experience racism, classism and sexism. It is because of this interrelatedness that I am in two different women's groups.

I hope this makes my intentions clearer and helps to address some of the concerns of Reynolds and other women.

Julie Linkletter
DAWN Vancouver

Survivors excluded from conference

Kinesis:

Radical Survivors is a newly formed group of lesbian survivors of girlhood physical and sexual violence. We have serious concerns about a "Dissociation, Mind Control and Ritual Abuse" Conference that was held at a posh Vancouver hotel September 24 and 25. Registration fees were \$225 to \$290 and hotel rooms were offered at the reduced rate of \$115/night. Although we sent two letters to the organizers (Aug. 8 & Sep. 20) asking about the planning, purpose and costs of the conference, they have yet to respond to our questions in writing.

We want to know, for instance, if there were many feminists on the organizing com-

mittee. We assume there were, given that Cowichan WAWAW and Battered Women's Support Services were on the Abstract Review Committee listed on the promotional brochure.

We also wanted to know if there were any survivors of ritualized abuse involved in the planning of the conference or giving presentations at the event. Whether or not there were a few survivors involved, it's clear this was not a conference for survivors because survivors were not invited to the conference. Only so-called professional helpers (counsellors, psychotherapists, psychiatrists and front line workers, medical practitioners, social workers and nurses) were listed under "Who Should Attend".

Yes, this is 1994. It is still possible for feminists to organize a conference that deals with a particular group of people and not invite them. It's the brand of "feminism" that says "you poor victims need our professional help and we're going to give it to you in 50-minute sessions." It's the sort of "feminism" that takes over many battered women's shelters and sexual assault centres.

It wasn't so long ago that survivors were the experts on male violence. We were the ones who knew what was going on in families, fraternities and cults. Now feminist therapists and counsellors are the experts. They get all their information from us, then they write papers and then they organize conferences to demonstrate their expertise, advance their careers and get invited to the next fancy ritual abuse conference.

As survivors, we are sick of being studied and psychologized by professionals. The mental health industry has always looked at women to fill their offices, hospitals and outpatient programs. It used to be male psychiatrists and psychologists who found us interesting and good subject matter for academic research. Now we have feminist therapists and counsellors jumping onto the bandwagon to get a piece of the pie. Our pie, that is.

In the process, the feminist community gets divided up into the helpers and the helpeses; sexual, ritual and cult-related abuse becomes depoliticized; and survivors lose ownership of what rightfully belongs to us: naming our experience. I have no doubt there are therapists and counsellors with good intentions, but good intentions are a poor substitute for accountability.

The fact that survivors were not invited to this conference or visibly involved in the planning and presentation sends out a message that the mental health industry would like everyone to believe: ritual and cult-abused survivors are too damaged to take care of ourselves, let alone contribute anything worthwhile to academic discussions of our abuse. That "feminist" therapists are behind the patronizing message is appalling. That they are willing to meet psychiatrists as peers but survivors only as clients shows how far we have to go before the simple ABC's of feminism are really understood in our movement.

Lys Souvienne
Radical Survivors
Victoria, BC

BWSS responds

I am writing in response to the letter by Lys Souvienne of Radical Survivors. As a collective member of Battered Women's Support Services (BWSS), I was part of the Ab-

stract Review Committee for the Making It Manageable conference on ritual abuse, multiplexity and dissociation and attended the conference.

Souvienne suggests that survivors were not involved and were not visibly present at the conference. Survivors did take part, both as organizers, participants and as presenters. However, Souvienne is right when she says that survivors were not visible. One of the key factors in healing of abuse of all kinds is safety. The safety issues for survivors of ritual abuse are different than for survivors of childhood sexual abuse. While I can't speak for the organizers, I assume they anticipated that active cult members would be attending this conference and did not want to present them with opportunities to harass or contact survivors. To the best of my knowledge, no survivor was prevented from identifying herself as such at the conference. However, all the survivors I know are extremely cautious about [to whom] and where they disclose in order to create safety for themselves. As a member of the Abstract Review Committee, I received three hang-up phone calls starting at 1:30 am and ending at 5 am the morning after the conference. While I don't know for sure that this was cult harassment, I believe it was. While this kind of harassment may not be life threatening (unless some self-destructive programming is activated), it's annoying and could be very threatening to a survivor.

I don't agree with Souvienne that the message was that survivors cannot take care of themselves. I think the message was that survivors do know how to take care of their own safety needs and were doing so at the conference.

I also agree with Souvienne that there needs to be ways for survivors to meet, share experiences and support one another in the healing process. However, this has to be done in a way that creates safety for survivors and respects the right to privacy. I would like to remind Souvienne that being a cult survivor still has a stigma attached to it. For cult survivors who are also in the helping field, this disclosure could jeopardize their livelihood. If Souvienne has any ideas on how survivors can meet and support one another while staying safe and maintaining privacy, I would like to see the ideas in this newspaper.

Sincerely,
Connie Chapman
Vancouver, BC

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BULLETIN BOARD

read this

Bulletin Board listings have a maximum of 50 words. Groups, organizations and individuals eligible for free space in the Bulletin Board must be, or have, non-profit objectives.

Other free notices will be items of general public interest and will appear at the discretion of *Kinesis*.

Classifieds are \$8 (+\$0.56 GST) for the first 50 words or portion thereof, \$4 (+\$0.28 GST) for each additional 25 words or portion thereof and must be prepaid.

Deadline for all submissions is the 18th of the month preceding publication. Note: *Kinesis* is published ten times a year. Jul/Aug and Dec/Jan are double issues.

All submissions should include a contact name and telephone number for any clarification that may be required.

Listings will not be accepted over the telephone.

Kinesis encourages readers to research the goods and services advertised in Bulletin Board. *Kinesis* cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information provided or the safety and effectiveness of the services and products listed.

Send submissions to Bulletin Board, *Kinesis*, #301-1720 Grant Street, Vancouver, BC, V5L 2Y6. For more information call 255-5499.

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EVENTS

WANNA GET INVOLVED?

With *Kinesis*? We want to get involved with you too. Help plan our next issue. Come to the Writer's meeting on **Tues Nov 1**, 7pm at our office, 301-1720 Grant St, Vancouver. If you can't make the meeting, call 255-5499. No experience is necessary, all women welcome.

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

Ever wonder how *Kinesis* is put together? Well...just drop by during our next production dates and try your hand at designing and laying out Canada's national feminist newspaper. Production for the **Dec/Jan** issue is from **Nov 16-23**. No experience is necessary. Training and support will be provided. If this notice intrigues you, call Agnes at 255-5499.

VSW WANTS YOU!

Want to get more involved but not sure where to begin? Join us—become a volunteer at Vancouver Status of Women. VSW volunteers plan events, lead groups, raise funds, answer the phone lines and help to connect women with the community resources they need, organize the library and other exciting tasks! Come to the committee meetings: Finance/Fundraising, **Mon Nov 21**, 6 pm. The next volunteer potluck and orientation will be on **Wed Nov 16**, 7 pm at VSW, 301-1720 Grant St. For more info, call Jennifer at 255-5511.

POLITICAL ACTION GROUP

The Women of Colour and First Nations Women's Political Action Group meets once a month. For more info please call Miche at 255-5511.

EVENTS

SEXUAL HARASSMENT SUPPORT

The Sexual Harassment Support Group meets twice a month at the VSW, 301-1720 Grant St. For more info, call Miche at 255-5511.

FEMINIST NETWORKING

The Feminist Networking Group meets once a month. Call Miche for more info at 255-5511.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AT VSW

As the Community organizer here at the Vancouver Status of Women, I'll be developing a Speaker's Bureau and launching a Cable TV Show. If you are interested in either or both projects, call Toni at the VSW office, 255-5511. Please don't let lack of experience hold you back. This is an exciting opportunity to get involved in a creative new initiative at the ground level.

GAYLA REID

A reading in celebration of Gayla Reid's new book, *To Be There with You*, will be held **Sat Nov 19**, 7:30 pm at Octopus Books, 1146 Commercial Dr, Vancouver. Admission is free. For more info, call 254-7191.

CELEBRATE LESBIAN HEALTH

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective invites you to celebrate the newly published *Lesbian Health Guide*, written by lesbians and published by Queer Press of Toronto **Sat Nov 26**, 7:30-9:30 pm, at 219-1675 West 8th Ave. For more info, call 736-4234.

DOMESTIC WORKERS' FORUM

The Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers' and Caregivers' Rights (CDWCR) is holding a forum on the federal government's proposal to abolish the Live-In Caregiver Program **Sat Oct 29** from 1-4pm in the Columbia Room, Holiday Inn, 1110 Howe St (at Helmcken). The forum will be followed by a protest march from the Holiday Inn to the Vancouver Art Gallery. For more info, call Julie or Lorina at 739-1894.

FRIESEN AND SAWAGI TAIKO

Folk musician Cate Friesen and the all-women drumming ensemble Sawagi Taiko will perform **Sat Nov 12**, 8 pm at the Oak Bay High School Theatre in Victoria, BC. Advance tickets \$13 (some sliding scale available) are available at Everywoman's Books, Musical Friends, Mondo Beyondo or by calling 598-2327.

STONE ANGEL

The stage adaptation of Margaret Laurence's *The Stone Angel* returns to Vancouver's Firehall Arts Centre, 280 E Cordova St,

EVENTS

opening **Thurs Nov 10**. The play is directed by Donna Spencer and features Marilyn Norry. Showtimes are **Wed-Sat 8 pm**, **Mattines Sat 2 pm** and **Sun 4 pm**. Tickets **Wed/Thurs \$12/\$10**, **Fri/Sat \$16/\$14**, **Sat Mat \$10/\$8**, **Sun 2 for \$16**. Tickets are two for \$16 for preview performance **Wed Nov 9**, 8pm. For tickets, call 689-0926 or CBO at 280-2801.

GENDER EQUITY IN SCIENCE

Patricia Keyes will speak on "Gender Equity in Science and Technology, Perspectives from International Development" **Tues Nov 8**, 7 pm, at Simon Fraser University, Harbour Centre Campus, Rm 1600, 515 W Hastings St, Vancouver. Sponsored by Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology and Gender and Development Group of BC. General public welcome.

QUEERS ON SOCIAL POLICY

Leaving us in or cutting us out: the queer view on social policy, a conference for lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals will be held **Sat Nov 19**, from 10am-4pm, at the Bidwell Room, West End Community Centre, 870 Denman St, Vancouver. Admission is free but please register by calling 683-0486. Sponsored by the December 9th Coalition.

LESBIANAS FEMINISTAS

El Cuarto Encuentro de Lesbianas Feministas de América Latina y el Caribe se realizará en Argentina en **marzo de 1995**. El encuentro es solamente para mujeres latinoamericanas y caribeñas. Para más información manda un sobre estampillado con tu dirección a *Cuarto Encuentro*, PO Box 776 Stn P, Toronto, Ont, M5S 2Z1.

LATIN AMERICAN LESBIANS

The Fourth Latin American and Caribbean Lesbian Feminist Conference will be held in Argentina in **Mar 95**. The conference is open to Latin American and Caribbean women only. For more info, send SASE to *Cuarto Encuentro*, PO Box 776 Stn P, Toronto, Ont, M5S 2Z1.

DOMINO

The National Film Board will premiere *Domino*, a film directed by Shanti Thakur about six interracial people's quest to forge their own identity, **Tues Nov 22** at 7:30pm at the Pacific Cinematheque, 1131 Howe St, Vancouver. Free admission. For more info, call the NFB at 666-3838.

WOMEN'S WORK FUNDRAISER

Women's Work will be celebrating their tenth anniversary with a party and fundraiser **Sat Nov 5** from 7-11pm at 261 East 1st St, North Vancouver. Solstice shopping from 2pm. Music with Sue McGowan, Sharon Costello and Carol Weaver. Great food and Capucino. For more info, call 980-4235.



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Fax us for a job description: (604) 876-7892, and please mail your resumé. Application deadline: November 25, 1994
Job begins: January 1995

BULLETIN BOARD

EVENTS

INTI-ILLIMANI

The Vancouver Chilean Cultural Committee to support Monte Patria Youth Centre presents the internationally renowned Chilean group Inti-Illimani **Nov 27** at 8pm in the Vogue Theatre, 981 Granville St. Doors open at 7pm. Tickets are \$20 and are available through VTC, 280-4444.

LEE PUI MING ENSEMBLE

The Lee Pui Ming Ensemble will perform on **Sun Nov 6th**, 8pm at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre, 1865 Venables St. Classically-trained pianist and composer Lee Pui Ming has created a musical language that is a unique blend of experimental improvisation. The six piece ensemble consists of musicians from Vancouver, Toronto and China. For more info, call 254-9578.

WINE & SONG, WIT WOMEN

The Vancouver Women's Chorus presents *Wine & Song, Wit Women*, an evening of fun, music and dance, **Thurs Nov 10** at 8pm at the Lotus, 455 Abbott St. The evening will feature comedienne Tova Fox, Incognito, and Synchronicity, a small ensemble of the Vancouver Women's Chorus. Tickets are on a sliding scale, \$3-8 and are available in advance. For more info, call 255-9404.

DOS FALLOPIA

Dos Fallopia, a lesbian musical and comedy duo, will be performing in Vancouver **Sun Nov 6** at 8pm at the Starlight Theatre, 935 Denman St. Advance tickets are available at Book Mantel, Little Sister's or Ticketmaster. Tickets are \$15.

PRO HOMO VOCI

Pro Homo Voci, a lesbian and gay vocal ensemble from Seattle will perform in Vancouver **Nov 5** at 8pm at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre, 1895 Venables St. For box office info, call 254-9578.

CONFERENCE ON HIV/AIDS

The 3rd Canadian Conference on HIV/AIDS and related issues in Aboriginal communities will take place **Dec 5-7** in Toronto. Through workshops, the conference's goal will be to emphasize the inclusion of all Aboriginal peoples, and embrace traditional family structures and values in addressing HIV/AIDS issues. For more info, call 1-800-559-1472.

CONNIE KALDOR

Connie Kaldor will perform **Nov 19** and **20** at 8pm, and on **Nov 20** at 3pm at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre, 1895 Venables St. Kaldor will present her brand of musical warmth, passionate songs and good humor. For tickets, call 254-9578.

WORKSHOPS FOR WOMEN

Douglas College in New Westminster, BC is offering free workshops for women. The next two workshops are "Job Search Skills for Women" **Tues Nov 8**, and "Personal Safety Tips" on **Mon Nov 14**. Both workshops are from 12-2pm. For more info, call 527-5148.

EVENTS

LESBIAN PERIODICALS LAUNCH

The Vancouver launch of the *Canadian Lesbian Periodicals Index (1973-1992)* will be held on **Wed Nov 2** at 7:30pm at the Vancouver Lesbian Centre, 876 Commercial Dr. Francine Mayer, one of the editors of the *Index* will be present at the launch. For more info, call 254-8458.

CAASHE CONFERENCE

The 10th annual CAASHE (Canadian Association Against Sexual Harassment in Higher Education) conference, *Shades of Gray: Shedding Light on Old Struggles and New Dilemmas* will be held **Nov 16-19** at the Banff Springs Hotel in Banff, Alta. The conference will be a forum for the exchange of ideas, training and professional development for sexual harassment advisors. For more info, call Shirley Voyna Wilson at (403) 220-4086 or fax (403) 284-0069.

WEAVING OF MEMORY

Weaving of Memory, an exhibit of traditional Mayan textile and painting of Zoila Ramirez and Alejandro Ruiz will be showing until **Nov 12** at the Pitt Gallery, 317 W Hastings. For gallery times, call 681-6740.

SENIORS & SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Seniors are invited to a strategy meeting to save social policies **Sat Nov 5** from 9:30-3pm at 411 Dunsuir St, Vancouver. For more info, call Ellen at 254-6207.

BC AIDS CONFERENCE

The 8th annual BC AIDS Conference: *HIV in Canada Today, Focus on Youth*. Workshops include "Reaching Women" and "Delivering Care to Women and Children". The conference will be held **Nov 6-8** at the Westin Bayshore Hotel, 1601 W Georgia St, Vancouver. Sponsored by the UBC Division of Continuing Education in Health Sciences. For more info, call 822-2626 or toll free 1-800-663-0348.

GROUPS

EAST-SIDE LESBIAN YOUTH

The East-Side Youth Drop-in for lesbian, gay and bisexual youth and their friends will be held **every Thurs** at Britannia Community Centre, 1661 Napier St Vancouver. This is a safe, confidential, non-threatening environment to discuss issues, build support and meet people. If you are between 15 and 25, want to get involved or get more info, call Jason or Trish at 253-4391.

LESBIAN SUPPORT GROUP

The South Surrey/White Rock Women's Place will be holding a lesbian support group **Thurs evenings** on a bi-weekly basis starting in mid-Nov. For more info, call Trisha at 536-9611.

GROUPS

IWD 1995

Women are invited to attend the first meeting of the organizing committee for the 1995 International Women's Day march and rally in Vancouver **Tues Nov 15** at 7:30 pm at the Vancouver Status of Women office, 301-1720 Grant St. For more info, call Claire at 322-8630.

INT'L LESBIAN WEEK

The International Lesbian Week (ILW) planning committee is holding its next meeting to organize the 1995 ILW events in Vancouver **Wed Nov 9** at 7:30 pm in Charlie's Lounge (corner of Pender and Abbott in the Heritage Hotel). ILW is a yearly event organized by lesbians for lesbians. Deadline for joining the ILW's Planning Committee is November. All meetings are wheelchair accessible and partial subsidies for childcare and transportation are available. For more info, call Mary at 254-2796.

RÉSEAU-FEMMES

Aimerais-tu donner ton temps pour aider des femmes francophones violentées dans ta communauté? Aimerais-tu participer à une formation qui te donnerait des outils pour le faire? Penses-tu comme nous du Comité Violence de Réseau-Femmes Colombie Britannique, que les femmes francophones violentées devraient pouvoir s'exprimer dans leur langue maternelle en situation de crise? Si oui, nous attendons impatiemment ton appel. Tel 736-6979, poste 332.

MATURE LESBIANS

Are you starting or continuing the coming out process? Are you looking for friendship and support? Come out and join us for lunch, and help us plan some social activities. We're "Just Out". Please call Geri at 278-8497 (evenings)

DECEMBER 6

The YWCA will be distributing Rose Buttons and informational booklets in conjunction with **December 6th**, Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action to end Violence Against Women. Buttons come in English and French. If your group is interested in selling buttons for fundraising or public education, contact the YWCA of Canada, 80 Gerrard St E, Toronto, Ont, M5B 1G6, or call (416) 593-9886, or fax (416) 971-8084. Bags of 500 buttons are \$50 each.

RADICAL WOMEN

Seattle's Radical Women is holding its next meeting to talk about "Domestic Violence: Ending the Systemic Cycle", **Thurs Nov 3** at 7:30pm at New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave S, Seattle. Radical Women will present info on why domestic violence is on the rise in the US today, how the government contributes to the problem, and what women can do

GROUPS

about it. Dinner will be available at 6:30 pm for a \$6 donation. For more info, rides or childcare, call (206) 722-6057 or 722-2453.

TEEN MOM DROP-IN

Eastside Family Place in Vancouver now has a drop-in space for teen moms on **Mons**, between 3:30-5:30 pm. Free snacks and coffee available. Located at 1661 Napier St (at William & Commercial, just off Granview Park).

WORKSHOP ON NON-PROFITS

The Vancouver Society of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women is holding a workshop **Sat Nov 5** from 8:30am-1pm at the Public Legal Education Society, 900 Howe St, Vancouver. The workshop, *Participating in the Decision-making Processes of Boards and Committees of Non-profit Organizations*, will attempt to promote the participation of women of colour in decision-making in non-profit organizations. The workshop is free, but pre-registration is required by **Thurs Oct 28** and is limited to 30 participants. To register for more info, call Surjeet Sidhu at 731-9108.

SUBMISSIONS

BLACK LESBIANS

At the Crossroads, a Black women's art magazine, is seeking submissions on the queer Black arts scene. The journal is looking for essays, articles, interviews, news, profiles, visual art, poetry and fiction from dark lesbians and bisexual women. Send submission with a SASE to: PO Box 317 Stn P, Toronto, Ont, M5S 2S8. For more info, call (416) 538-4296. Deadline is **Feb 1995**.

POETRY WANTED

Contemporary Verse 2 is calling for poetry on any topic occupying your imagination. *CV 2* pays for work published. Send submissions to *CV 2* Editorial Collective, PO Box 3062, Winnipeg, Man, R3C 4E5, or call (204) 949-1365. For guidelines send SASE. Deadlines are **Oct 30** for Winter issue and **Jan 15** for Spring issue.

CALLING PINAY LESBIANS

We are a group of Pinay lesbians working towards our visibility. We want you to be a part of this groundbreaking work. If you have written stories, essays and poetry or have illustrations, drawings, graphics, comics, journal writings, etc, we want to hear from you. Deadline is **Jan 31**. Send submission to SisterVision Press, c/o Pinay, PO Box 217 Stn E, Toronto, Ont, M6H 4E2. Include name, telephone number and address.

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BULLETIN BOARD

SUBMISSIONS

MENSTRUAL CYCLE CONFERENCE

The Society For Menstrual Cycle Research is seeking papers for its interdisciplinary conference, *Broadening Our Vision: Class & Culture Issues in Women's Health*, to be held Jun 2-4 in Montreal, PQ. The Society is calling for papers covering various aspects related to the menstrual cycle. Deadline for abstracts is Dec 1. For more info, contact Janine O'Leary Cobb, 3575 Boul. Saint-Laurent, Suite 402, Montreal, Quebec, H2X 2T7.

LESBIAN AND GAY ARTISTS

An independent researcher is writing a review article compiling an annotated bibliography of publications by lesbian and gay artists in Canada. If you have an exhibition catalogue, periodical article, book, self-published pamphlet or other publication please send copy and/or info to Calfyn Kelley c/o *Gallerie Publications*, 2901 Panorama Dr, North Vancouver, BC, or call (604) 929-8706.

QUEER SUBMISSIONS

Queer Glances, Queer Moments, an anthology of lesbian and gay short stories, is currently accepting submissions for an anthology of short stories (750-1000 words) by lesbians and gay men. The book will be an album of snapshots that reflect the spectrum of lesbian and gay life experiences. For more info and submission guidelines, write to #1002-1340 Burnaby St, Vancouver, BC, V6E 1R1. Submission deadline is Mar 31, 1995.

LITERARY ARTS MAGAZINE

Possibilities, a literary arts magazine, is currently inviting writers to participate in a special issue of book reviews which will be launched in Feb 95. Reviews of short stories, poetry, brief essays are also welcome. Please submit in triplicate with short bio by Dec 5 to #109-2100 Scott St, Ottawa, Ont, K1Z 1A3. For more info, call (613) 761-1177.

ABSINTHE

absinthe's next issue (winter 94) will focus on First Nations people's writing, stories, interviews, art, and more. The will include works created and edited by First Nations people. Inquiries and contributions should be directed to the circle of editors, c/o *absinthe*, PO Box 61113, Calgary, Alta, T2N 4S6.

WOMEN'S POETRY CONTEST

West Coast Women and Words presents their 1994 Poetry Contest for Women. The theme is "Women Moving" (e.g. self or belongings in space or time). Prizes include up to \$150 and publication in spring '95 edition of *W&W* newsletter. Deadline is Dec 15. For more info, call (604) 730-1034 or write to West Coast Women & Words Poetry Contest, 219-1675 W 8th Ave, Vancouver, BC, V6J 1V2.

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COWGIRLS 'N GHOST TOWNS

Winter holiday for lesbians. Come this winter to sunny and warm Arizona. Travel by van with a small group of cowgirls like yourself to see Arizona's Old West, ghost towns, Spanish mission, Native American ruins, spectacular scenery, and the cultural legacy of Mexico, Arizona's southern neighbour. Tour includes accommodations in upscale or historical hotels, horseback riding and cook-outs, Sedona jeep tour, and "Welcome to Arizona" reception with local lesbians. Eight departures Nov-Feb. A special invitation is extended to Canadian lesbians. Out'n Arizona Dept 85285. Tel: (800) 897-0304.

LYNN MATHERS MSW

I am a registered social worker and therapist in Maple Ridge/Abbotsford. I have a general private practice working with individuals, couples, families and groups. I have experience with addictions, grief, sexual and physical abuse, infidelity, pregnancy loss and general life concerns. Fee: \$70-\$86 per hour. For appointment, call 463-3026 or 852-4818.

GENERAL PRACTITIONER

Joan Robillard, MD, General Practitioner for all kinds of families has moved to 203-1750 E 10th Ave, Vancouver. Phone 872-1454, fax 872-3510.

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photo by Suemay Black

THE COLOUR OF HEROINES

Women's Press will be holding the Vancouver launch of Lydia Kwa's, *The Colour of Heroines*, on Thursday November 17 at 7:30pm at the Dr Vigari Gallery, 1407 Commercial Dr. *The Colour of Heroines* is Kwa's debut collection of poetry. Her work has previously appeared in various journals and anthologies, including *Many-Mouthed Birds: Contemporary Writing by Chinese Canadians*. Kwa was born in Singapore and came to Canada in 1980. She has lived in Toronto, Kingston and Calgary, and now makes her home in Vancouver. For more information, call 255-9513.

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COUNSELLING

Working with women, their partners and families. Openings for Thursdays only. Sliding scale. First half hour consultation free to explore how we might work together. Call Sandy Brooks, 224-8683.

WOMEN'S CRAFT FAIRE

The first annual *Women's Crafts Faire* in Vancouver will be held Sat Dec 3 from 11am-5pm at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main St. Admission \$0.50. A Pre-Solstice shopping extravaganza with some of Vancouver's finest craftswomen. Also, "An Evening of Lesbian Culture" from 8:30-11:30pm, featuring California's stand up lesbian comedian Monica Grant, Incognito: Womyn Cloggers, and more. Tickets \$8-15. Available at Women in

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call, 3566 W 4th; Little Sisters', 1221 Thurlow; and Bookmantel, 1002 Commercial. For table rental info, call 253-7189. A Sounds & Futures Production.

PHYSIOTHERAPIST

Physiotherapist, NZ & BC Reg PT (1991), with 2.5 years experience in private practice, seeks work in Vancouver starting ASAP. Also available for miscellaneous work during the interim: child care, outdoor education (qualified teacher), various outdoor work, cleaning, driving, etc. I am an out lesbian in a long term relationship, 36 years old, and a competent, strong, energetic and reliable work over from New Zealand accompanying my partner who is on a two-year secondment. Please contact Kate Thomson, tel/fax: (604) 669-6923.

BOOKS BY WOMEN ARTISTS



Contemporary women artists present their work and ideas. Share the vision!

Call or write for a free catalogue. *Gallerie Publications*, 2901 Panorama Drive, North Vancouver, BC, Canada V7G 2A4. Phone: (604) 929-8706

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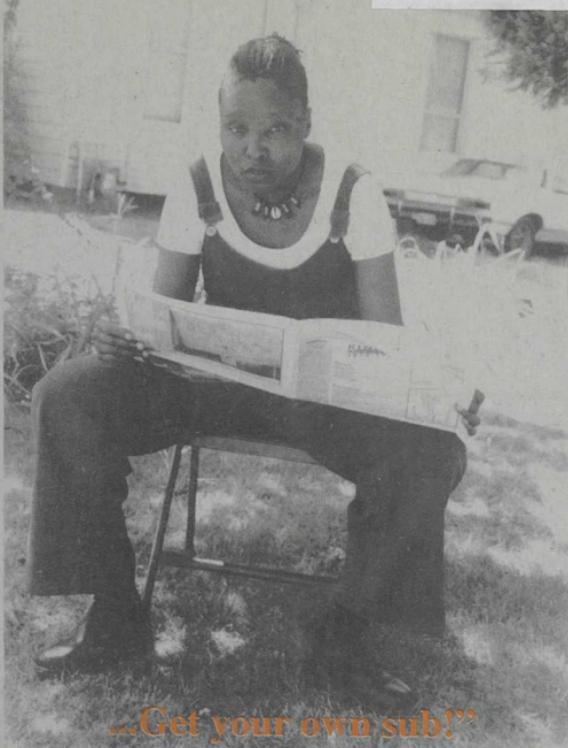
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