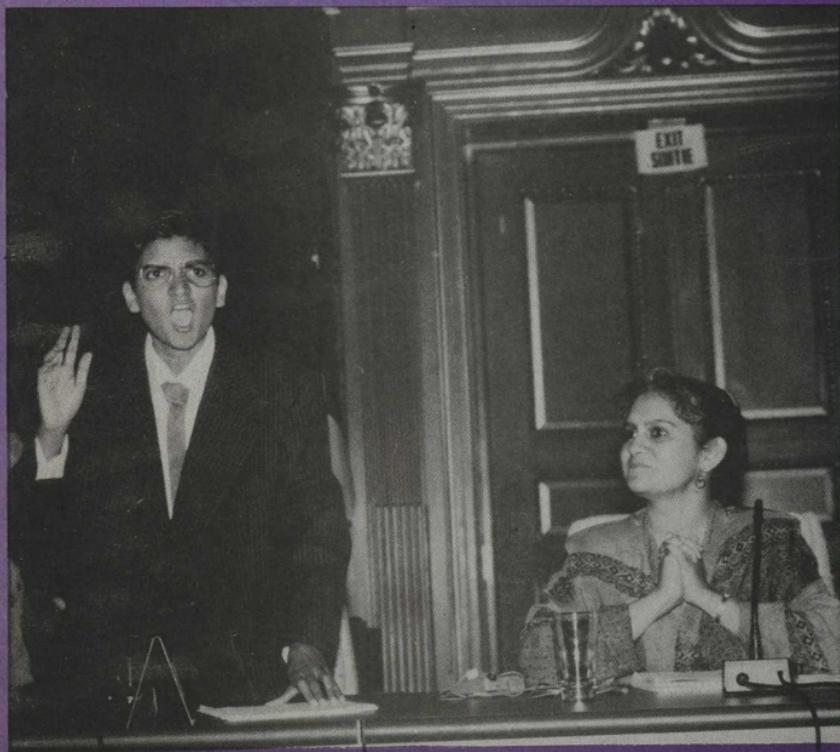


# KINESIS

News About Women That's Not in the Dailies



**Preston Manning meets with NAC...Not!**

- March against poverty in Quebec
- Press Gang turns 20!

# INSIDE

# KINESIS

News About Women that's Not in the Dailies

## KINESIS

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Kinesis welcomes volunteers to work on all aspects of the paper. Our next Writers' Meeting is August 1 for the September issue, and September 5 for the October 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 combatting sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, ableism, and imperialism. Views expressed in Kinesis are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect VSW policy. All unsigned material is the responsibility of the Kinesis Editorial Board.

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Sheila James (aka Preston Manning) & Sunera Thobani at the National Action Committee on the Status of Women's (NAC) annual lobby of federal political parties.  
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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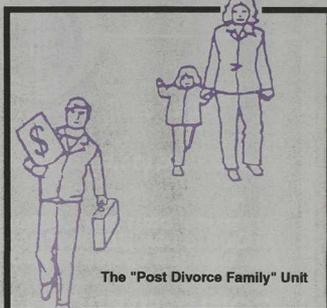
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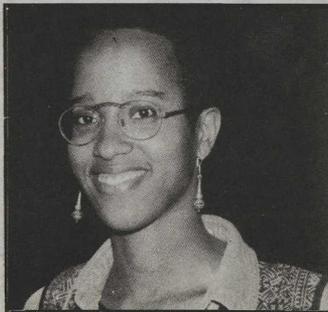
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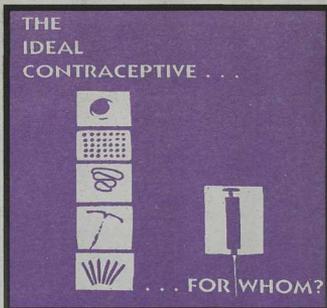


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Here's the *Kinesis* question of the month...How can being so Right be so Wrong? Well, just ask women in Ontario for the answer, now that they have a new right-wing premier named Mike Harris. How Wrong is Mike Harris for women and anyone else who's not intimately linked with the Bay Street bankers? For some thoughts on this question, turn to Judy Rebick's analysis on page 7.

Of course, women and progressive people in Ontario were not going to run and hide even after such a depressing election result. On the day Harris and his regressive...uh, we mean, Progressive Conservative party was sworn as the government of Ontario, thousands of people staged a demonstration outside the provincial legislature in Ontario to let Harris know that his attacks on women, single moms, people of colour, First Nations people, poor people, working-class people, people with disabilities...will definitely, definitely not go unchallenged.

Here in BC, as *Kinesis* goes press...once again, the NDP government has foiled us. Usually, when the NDP does something like release its budget or pass a law affecting women, it picks Press Day to do it! So here we go again...there's now an update to our

story on the proposed legislation to restrict anti-choice protests around abortion clinics and the homes of abortion service providers [see page 5]—It's been passed into law.

And as we expected, the BC Liberal caucus couldn't let the legislation pass without causing a stir. Just as the vote on the bill was about to be held, two Liberal party members dashed out of the House missing...avoiding...the voting.

Here's some more on the legislative side of things...Now it's been confirmed—men who sexually assault women and try to get away with it by claiming they were "too drunk" will no longer have that excuse. The federal government just passed a law to prevent the use of the extreme drunkenness defense in sexual assault trials.

The new law wipes out the recent Supreme Court of Canada decision which overturned Henri Daviault's rape conviction [see *Kinesis*, December/January 1995]. But of course, every silver lining has its dark cloud...here's some news you likely didn't hear in the dailies.

Even though the Supreme Court ordered Daviault to be tried again for rape, he didn't have to spend much time in a courtroom. The trial judge and the Crown dropped the charges against Daviault

because the woman he raped had died two years ago—No witness, no crime. Isn't it encouraging to know that justice is being served? Please...enough already!

Back to the Supreme Court...given its ruling in extreme drunkenness case, it shouldn't have surprised us when the Court ruled against Suzanne Thibault's challenge to being taxed on child support she receives [see story page 3]. Clearly, it looks like the Supreme Court is swinging farther and farther (or is that further and further?) to the Right. Hey, could it have anything to do with the fact the Supreme Court's located in Ontario? Is Mike Harris on the Supreme Court? Okay, let's stop these scary, scary thoughts.

Oh hey, here's a funny little gem for you...The Pope is now saying that the Roman Catholic Church is "a leading force against sexual discrimination and oppression [of women]." Of course, the Pope still maintains the Church's against contraceptives and abortion and women priests, and...

Well, this just adds to our evidence of how far the anti-progressive forces will go in co-opting our language and using it against us. Want more examples? (Do we need more examples to know it's true?)...then check out Kiké

Roach's speech at the NAC Annual general meeting on page 11.

After *Kinesis* goes to press with our September issue, we'll be off to Beijing for the 4th World Conference on Women. And while *Kinesis* is in Beijing, women around the world will be celebrating on September 6th an International Day of Action.

We've heard that all the Take Back the Night rallies against violence against women in Canada will be held on the same day in solidarity with women's struggles worldwide. In our September issue, we'll be letting you know about many of the actions and events being planned for September 6th.

So here's a surprise. A report just released has blasted the University of British Columbia for not dealing with the "widespread racism and sexism in its political science department." Poli Sci departments, university sexist and racist? Isn't it shocking!

We'll be bringing you all the details and analysis about the UBC Poli Sci story next issue, along with lots of other stories on women and education.

Until then, we're taking a month off to rest...on the beach of course...so we hope you too have lots of fun in the sunshine. See you in September.



## THANKS

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

The Blue Wave \* Barbara Curran \* K. Davidson \* Michael and Connie Geller \* Adonica Huggins \* Andrea Imada \* Inger Kronseth \* Barbara Lebrasseur \* Patty Moore \* Gail Mountain \* Louise n'ha Ruby \* Angela Page \* Neil Power \* Claire Robillard \* Margot Rosenberg \* Janet Shaw \* Jeanne Shaw \* Joanne Taylor \* Lorraine Wall \* Lynne Werker

We would like to say a very special thank you to all of our supporters who responded so generously in June to our recent fundraising letters:

Janet Bell \* Murlin Beltain \* Jean Bennett \* Liz Bennett \* Somer Brodribb \* Judith Burke \* Janet Calder \* Carole Cameron \* Karen Clark \* Comox Valley Technical Institute \* Marlene Coulthard \* Gillian Creese \* Gail Cryer \* Rhona Davies \* Johanna Den Hertog \* Marian Dods \* Caren Durante \* Elsie Eccles \* Elaine Everett \* Karlene Faith \* Terry Fletcher \* Jan Forde \* Anita Fortney \* Catherine Fretwell \* Helen Garry \* Beverley Gartrell \* Deborah Gibson \* Lynn Girard \* Leona Gom \* Joan Gordon \* Sherrill Grace \* Gloria Greenfield \* Ellen Hamer \* Judith Harper \* Alison Hopwood \* Shayna Hornstein \* Jam. Ismail \* Alice James \* Mark Jarvis \* Lorraine Johnston \* Barbara Karmazyn \* Naomi Katz \* Janet Kellough-Pollock \* Deirdre Kelly \* Sarah Knoebber \* W. Krayenhoff \* Gudrun Langolf \* Andrea Lebowitz \* Heather Leighton \* Celine Leonard \* Karin Litzcke \* Heather MacFadden \* Glenda MacPherson \* Kathleen Macrae \* Karen Malcolm \* Catherine Malone \* Alyson Martin \* Patricia Matson \* Jane McCartney \* Vera McIntyre \* Bea McKenzie \* Lolani Moreau \* Myrtle Mowatt \* Jane Munro \* Lou Nelson \* Denise Nereida \* Karen Nordlinger \* Angela Page \* Laura Parkinson \* Joy Parr \* Susan Penfold \* Marion Pollack \* Judith Quinlan \* Dirk Ricker \* James Roberts \* Hulda Roddand \* Renee Rodin \* Adrienne Ross \* Jane Rule \* Catherine Russell \* Pat Sadovoy \* Bettie Scheffer \* Linda Schlutz \* Eva Sharell \* Helen Shore \* Sandy Shew \* Carrie Sleep \* Margaret Slight \* Helen Sonthoff \* Catherine Souliere \* Gale Stewart \* Ginny Stehman \* Mayling Stubbs \* Pam Terry \* Penelope Tilby \* Jill Trotter \* Roderik Vehmeyer \* Susan Wendell \* Elizabeth Whynot \* Diane Wiesner \* Phyllis Wilson \* Lynda Yanz \* M. Yuzak

It's summertime in the city and at *Kinesis* as we prepare this summer double-issue. Resisting the lure of sunshine and Vancouver's nude beaches, hardy *Kinesis* volunteers showed up to ungrudgingly put in time on the paper—insuring we make it to press on time. But don't worry, folks, we'll get to enjoy some much-needed time off for those trips to the beach in July when *Kinesis* closes down for the month.

June was a busy month as far as volunteer time goes. We completed production of the *Kinesis* marketing materials, and the 1995 *Kinesis* subscription drive is up and away. Women on the receiving end of our sub drive are Canadian *Ms Magazine* readers, women who used to receive our Halifax-based sister newspaper *Pandora* (which shut down last year due to burnout and finances), patrons of Sister Vision Press, and other currently non-subscribing friends-of-*Kinesis* nationally.

Many thanks are due to women in the Sub drive Stuffing (envelopes) Parties: Susan MacFarlane, Alex Hennig, Rebecca Knowles, Grace Wandolo, Michele Hill, Agnes Huang, Laiwan, Fatima Jaffer, Dominic Wandolo, Charlen Wandolo, Jon Wandolo, Lissa Geller, Teresa Drewicki, Robyn Hall, Wendy Lee kenward, and Patsy Catsy.

Special special thanks to Grace Wandolo, who coordinated the marketing project for *Kinesis* over the last two months on a Section 25 grant and who developed the sub drive materials. We couldn't have finished the sub drive without her perseverance and good humour at a time when *Kinesis* was undergoing major staff and other upheavals. Thanks, Grace!

Special thanks also to Rebecca Knowles, who volunteered her time and expertise with Canada Post procedures to help us sort the mail into the correct batches and bundles and...yes, she taught us the strange, but surprisingly catchy Canada Post lingo too!

We've got some great news that will allow *Kinesis* to bring you original and on-the-scene reports from the United Nations 4th World Conference on Women and NGO Women's Forum in Beijing, China. Former editor Fatima Jaffer was chosen by the Canada Beijing Facilitating Committee to be an official Canadian NGO delegate to Beijing. Since we figure Fatima will be unable to talk to all 40,000 women at Beijing during the ten-day-long forum, *Kinesis* has decided to send cute and improved *Kinesis* editor Agnes Huang too! But we are a long way from raising the \$4,000 we need to send Agnes to bring back all the news about women at Beijing that won't be in the dailies. We'd like to say a big Thank You to the Women's Research Centre in Vancouver for being the first to generously donate towards this end. If you'd like to help, call Agnes at 255-5499.

And now for the new writers who contributed to this issue. Thanks to: Aradhana Seth, Kay Pamela Ray, Fay Bileen, Kalpana Mehta, Luiza Bairos, Eileen O'Brien, Kike Roach, and Francoise David.

That's it for this month. We'll be back in August to work on our September issue, when we will bring you the when-where-and-who'll-be-there of the 1995 annual *Kinesis* benefit and raffle. Meanwhile, if you'd like to volunteer on production or write, call Agnes or Laiwan at 255-5499. Until then, have a great summer!

Taxing child support:

## "Power wins against justice"

by Sue Vohanka

A recent Supreme Court of Canada decision—upholding a 1942 rule that makes women pay income tax on child support payments—is a major setback in the struggle for equality.

Women's groups are now calling on the federal government to change the Income Tax Act and create a fairer system of child support, following a 5-2 Supreme Court ruling in May against Suzanne Thibaudeau. The Quebec single mother had challenged the provision in the tax act—the inclusion/deduction system—that forces custodial parents (98 percent of whom are women) to pay tax on child support, while giving a tax break to non-custodial parents (mostly men) who pay child support.

Suzanne Thibaudeau is disappointed and angry that her five-year battle against this discriminatory tax law has ended this way.

"The government knows I'm right, but power wins against justice. I'm ashamed to live in a country like this, where women and children are not important and the government chooses to maintain women and children in poverty," Thibaudeau told the media. "It's clear that the law is made by men for men. Women will pay the price for this bad judgment."

Sunera Thobani, president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) says that the Supreme Court has betrayed custodial mothers and dealt a blow to equality rights.

"The Thibaudeau decision penalizes single mothers for raising children. It is a major setback, and ultimately, children will pay the price. Taxing mothers who receive payments while rewarding fathers who make them by giving them a tax break is clearly unfair," says Thobani.

NAC was part of a coalition of women's and anti-poverty groups which intervened in the case to argue that the inclusion/deduction system violated women's guarantee of sex equality rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The other members of the coalition were: the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF), the Federated Anti-Poverty Groups of BC (FAPG), and the Charter Committee on Poverty Issues.

Since 1942, the Income Tax Act has contained an inclusion/deduction scheme which treats separated parents as a "family unit" for tax purposes. Under this system, women pay \$330 million a year in taxes on child support payments, while men save \$660 million in taxes.

Brenda Schaff, a North Vancouver mother who has also taken the govern-



**It's clear that the law is made by men for men.  
Women will pay the price for this bad judgment.**

— Suzanne Thibaudeau

ment to court, isn't impressed by the judges' notions about the "post-divorce family unit." Her ex-husband doesn't even see his kids. "We're no family unit. He doesn't even send them a birthday present," says Schaff.

Sunera Thobani says the Supreme Court ignored reality in basing its ruling on the assumption that the "family unit"

assume that taxing child support does not place a burden on custodial parents.

"[The Supreme Court's decision] seems to be based on a conception of familial relationships that is detrimental to women," says Hardie. "In their analysis, the rights of women become obscured by the notion of the role of a couple in our society. It doesn't recog-

**We're no family unit. He doesn't even send  
[the kids] a birthday present — Brenda Schaff**

as a whole is not harmed after a divorce or separation. "They seem to ignore that the issue [of child support] arises precisely because that unit has broken down," says Thobani. "In the real world, benefits that accrue to the father do not "trickle down" to the mother. They stay with him while women and children sink further into poverty."

Many women never receive child support payments—even court-ordered ones. About 600,000 women in Canada,

nize the independence of a woman in that relationship."

Many single mothers anxiously waited for a decision in favour of Suzanne Thibaudeau. They had been hopeful given an earlier ruling by the Federal Court of Appeal in Thibaudeau's case that the tax on child support is discriminatory on the basis of family status [see *Kinesis*, June 1994].

Following the Court of Appeal's decision, more than 20,000 women ap-

**In the real world, benefits that accrue to the  
father do not "trickle down" to the mother.  
They stay with him while women and children  
sink further into poverty — Sunera Thobani**

63 percent of whom are single mothers, receive no child support from their ex-husbands and partners. And across the country, 75 percent of men are in default of child support payments. In Ontario alone, more than 90,000 fathers are in arrears.

Katherine Hardie, a lawyer with the BC Public Interest and Advocacy Centre and one of the lawyers who represented the coalition at the Supreme Court, says the majority of the judges was wrong to

because I owe quite a lot of money," she says. Schaff says she may have to consider declaring bankruptcy if she's forced to pay back taxes.

FAPG's Gisele Guay says that with its ruling, the Supreme Court failed to appreciate the reality experienced by single parents, especially those who are poor. "Child support payments are already too low. Single parents living in poverty cannot get their child support payments increased to provide adequate food and clothing, let alone to cover the cost of the tax on child support," says Guay.

The Court ruled that the issue of adequate child support settlements—enough to cover taxes—should be dealt with in the family law courts, and not by changing the tax law.

Sunera Thobani says the suggestion that women who are not satisfied with child support settlements seek redress before the family law courts is ludicrous. "Very little legal aid is available for family law cases, and many women are fearful of returning before the courts to face hostile ex-husbands," Thobani says.

Judy Poulin, president of SCOPE (Support and Custody Orders for Priority Enforcement), an Ontario-based custodial parents rights group which also intervened in the Thibaudeau case, adds that the comments of the male judges showed they have no understanding at all for the plight of single mothers. The five judges who ruled against Thibaudeau were men; the two judges deciding in her favour were women.

Poulin says women now need to press politicians to change the child support system, but she adds that it will be an uphill battle. Last year, the federal government sent a task force on child support to hold consultations across the country, but still no changes have been made.

Poulin says that even though the government heard quite clearly that child support shouldn't be taxed, they've left the inclusion/deduction system intact. "The government should be looking at what's best for the kids in this situation, and that's not what they're doing," says Poulin. "They're trying to come up with the way they can save the most money."

To send a message to the federal government that the inclusion/deduction system is discriminatory against women, write to: Finance Minister Paul Martin House of Commons, 515-s, Centre, Ottawa, Ont, K1A 0A6; Justice Minister Allan Rock House of Commons 448, Confederation, Ottawa, Ont, K1A 0A6; and Prime Minister Jean Chretien House of Commons, 309-s, Centre, Ottawa, Ont, K1A 0A6.

Sue Vohanka is a regular contributor to *Kinesis* living in Vancouver.

Women in Quebec march against poverty:

## For bread and roses

by Denise Nadeau

### Sunday May 28, Saint-Hyacinthe The South Shore march

12 noon: Over 200 tired and thirsty women crowd into the basement hall of the cathedral. Lunch is being hosted by the Saint Hyacinthe Bread and Roses Committee. About 20 women are in the toilet line-up on the far side of the old church hall. Another 30 or so are sitting on the shaded lawn outside, most with shoes and socks off as they rest their blistered and aching feet. They have walked 10 kilometers this morning after a hard night sleeping in two-school gyms.

Two days before, thousands of women had gathered at three locations in Rivière-du-Loup, Longueuil (South Shore march) and Montreal (North Shore march) and started off on a ten day, 250 kilometre trek towards Quebec City, marching to draw attention to issues of poverty for women in Quebec. The march had been organized over two years, and would bring together 15,000 women from all regions of Quebec and from all walks of life.

1:30 pm: The march is about to leave the cathedral. Everyone is in formation in the square at the front of the church, waiting for the last few women in the washrooms. Some are doing stretches on the lawn; others are filling up their water bottles, adjusting baseball caps against the hot sun, chatting and laughing with new friends. The age range of the group is wide—from late teens to early 70s. Several men from the local CSN (Confederation of National Trade Unions) are accompanying us on bicycles.

Suddenly the march is moving, a surge and then a loud chant, "sonnez les cloches" (ring the bells). A local police car leads off, followed by the banner carriers. In the rear is the musician with two loudspeakers which alternate between playing the song, *Du Pain et des Roses* (Bread and Roses), and broadcasting the voice of a woman leading us in chants and songs adapted from popular Québécois tunes. The Quebec Federation of Nurses van follows, providing medical supplies, bandages and beds for anyone who feels sick or too tired to go on.

Hornshonk. People wave. We move onto a sidestreet. Women come out of their houses or yards to wave and watch. Some *Du Pain et des Roses* posters are posted in windows. A few houses have placards on their lawn saying "No to poverty," or "Poverty of women is a scandal". Some of the marchers hand out pamphlets explaining the nine demands of the Women's March Against Poverty (see box). Some women with their children and a few men join the march.

3:30 pm: The march arrives in Saint Rosalie and is greeted by the Saint Rosalie Committee. Here the marchers will board their buses and drive to Granby where they will finish the last five kilometres of their day.

### May 30, Trois-Rivières The North Shore march

6:00 pm: The women have just arrived at the Cathedral hall. Dinner tonight is chicken and fries from a local low-income co-op business. The women are assigned to their billets—one bus to the Ursulines; one to the Oblates (a Catholic religious order); the third to a highschool in a suburb.

8:00 pm: At the Trois-Rivières Cultural Centre, four women are being honoured with gifts of bread and roses as the "godmothers" of the march for the Maurice/Bois Francs region. One is a 70-year-old great grandmother who has fought for pensioners rights in her region; another, in her sixties, has been an anti-poverty organizer and *militante* for years; the third is the coordinator of the Louiseville Women's Centre and has helped organize the women's movement in the region; and the fourth is Suzanne Thibaut, who had just lost her Supreme Court challenge against paying taxes on child support payments.

Five international guests—from Peru, Nicaragua, Mali and Mozambique—give brief solidarity greetings and explain how the impoverishment of women is an international phenomenon. The evening closes with a funny play about women's roles put on by the Trois-Rivières Women's literacy group.

### May 31, Trois-Rivières

9:00 am: The marchers are gathering at a park by the St. Laurence, the sun glistening on the water. Several local dignitaries—a member of the National Assembly, the social affairs representative of the Quebec Catholic Bishops, and a municipal councillor—give greetings from the podium. The MNA announces there is progress in the negotiations in Quebec City with the march's spokeswomen... three of the demands are already met. Loud cheers. A woman with a cellular phone reports on the other two marches—the South Shore group is two hours behind and marching in pouring rain; the Rivière-du-Loup group is doing fine and sends their love. More cheers.

These were a few brief moments I experienced in two of the women's marches to Quebec City. All three branches of the 10-day Quebec Women's March Against Poverty converged on the National Assembly in Quebec City on June 4, and were met by 15,000 supporters.

Premier Jacques Parizeau and Employment Minister Louise Harel met the marchers to announce that seven of their nine demands had been partially met. Yet the marchers could not be bought off. They greeted Parizeau with loud boos when he announced the minimum wage would be raised only 45 cents.

The march was successful in reaching some of its demands and in making women's poverty visible in the Quebec

media. It was one of the most well-organized campaigns in recent Quebec history.

The idea of the march was initiated by the Fédération des Femmes du Québec more than a year ago. It was timed for June, close to the referendum date [on the Quebec sovereignty issue], when the government would be wanting women's votes.

More than 40 groups, ranging from unions, anti-poverty groups, immigrant groups, and women's organizations, joined in on the planning. In each of the 12 regions of Quebec, a regional organizing committee was struck.

In February and March, a popular education "animation kit" was sent out to all member groups. It explained the nine demands, raising for discussion these questions: Why this demand? What are the issues? and Why just women?

In Quebec, where 21 percent of women live below the poverty line; 49 percent of single women are poor; 82 percent of single parent families are headed by women, and 58 percent of these live in poverty; and 61 percent of minimum wage earners are women, the march's demands struck a sympathetic cord. Over 1000 volunteers in 30 towns supported the 600 women marchers, and hundreds more showed up at each of the public events along the way.

The decision to use the theme *Du Pain et des Roses* recalls the demands of the American women textile workers at the turn of the century. The decision to march on Quebec City recalls the historic march of Quebec women for the vote in 1940. In making these symbolic choices, Quebec women reaffirmed that the women's movement is a force in history to be reckoned with. While the gains won are barely a beginning in fighting against women's poverty, the victory lies in affirming for all of us that women do have the power to take back the political agenda.

*Denise Nadeau grew up in Quebec and is from a mixed anglo-francophone heritage. She joined the march for two days in Saint-Hyacinthe and in Trois-Rivières. She lives in Courtenay, BC.*



The organizers of the Women's March Against Poverty presented nine demands addressing women's poverty to the Quebec government. Here is how the government responded:

- 1) \$25 million will be allocated to the "social economy" to generate accessible jobs in the social sector for women—caring for the sick and elderly, environmental protection jobs, etc. Women's groups will be allowed to be represented at the regional planning level, and a program for the creation of women's small business will also be set up. [Women asked for a social infrastructure program with accessible jobs for women]
- 2) a proactive pay equity law will be introduced this fall in the National Assembly
- 3) minimum wage will be increased by 45 cents to \$6.00 an hour as of October 1, 1995. [Women had asked for \$8.15 to raise minimum wage to above the poverty line]
- 4) basic employment standards will be extended to all workers on workday-type programs, but only beginning in 1996
- 5) child support payments will be deducted automatically
- 6) five percent of new social housing (1200 units) will be set aside for poor women [Women had asked for a minimum of 1500 units a year]
- 7) five places for every 15 in training courses in non-traditional trades will be reserved for women, and two of these will be for women without UI or welfare benefits. [Women demanded access and financial support for job training]
- 8) the length of sponsorship for immigrant women sponsored by their husbands will be reduced from ten years to three years, and will be retroactive for all women who came to Quebec before 1994
- 9) student fees will be frozen for 1995 [Women had demanded a freeze and an increase in bursaries for students]

Access to abortion services in BC:

## Zoning in on safety

by Agnes Huang

Women in BC are pleased that the provincial government has taken seriously the safety concerns of women who use abortion services and the providers of those services.

In June, the New Democratic government tabled legislation to restrict the harassment of anti-choice protesters outside the places where women access abortion services. The Access to Abortion Services Act sets up safe access zones around abortion clinics, doctors' offices and the homes of doctors and abortion service providers.

Within these zones, people using or providing abortion services may not be harassed, photographed or interfered with either physically or verbally, or subjected to protests on the issue of abortion.

The Act sets out access zones of ten metres from offices of doctors providing abortions; up to 50 metres (half a block) from clinics providing abortions; and 160 metres from the homes of doctors and service providers. The Act provides penalties for violation of these safety zones of a fine up to \$5000 and maximum six month jail term for a first offence; and a minimum fine of \$1000 and a jail sentence of up to one year for a second offence.

Outside of the safe access zones, the Act also prohibits anyone from approaching, following or watching another person providing abortion services, or from exhibiting threatening behaviour in person, by telephone or through other electronic means, with the intent of dissuading them from providing those services.

Joy Thompson of the BC Coalition for Abortion Clinics (BCCAC) says she is thrilled and delighted with the legislation. "It's been a long time in coming. This legislation sends a clear message to the public at large and to anti-choice protesters that they don't have the right to interfere with individuals going about conducting their own business."

Penny Priddy, BC's minister of women's equality says that her government has always stood for the principle of choice with regard to reproductive health services. "This legislation ensures that commitment and that women's access to abortion services will be protected and maintained."

The new legislation is the first and only one of its kind in Canada.

Anti-choice activities have gone beyond mere leafletting and placard waving to threats, force, hostilities and violence. The Everywoman's Health Cen-

tre in Vancouver has been consistently targeted by anti-choice harassment tactics. And earlier this year, Garson Romalis, a Vancouver gynecologist who performs abortions, was shot twice in the leg while at his home.

"This is not peaceful protest or merely information dissemination," says Thompson.

As expected by pro-choice activists, just as the legislation was introduced, anti-choice protesters cried foul and screamed, "freedom of speech."

Joy Thompson responds that it is an issue of equality, justice and humanity, and not of free speech. "Targeting people at the point of accessing services is not a freedom of speech issue, rather, it's a targeting of those who are most vulnerable."

Priddy says her government did seek a legal opinion on the issue of whether the Act would withstand a constitutional challenge. The response was that the legislation does not violate an individual's freedom of expression.

Joy Thompson says one of the key features of the legislation is that the definition of "service providers" was expanded to include not just doctors and healthcare professionals, but also

lay counsellors, volunteer advocates and security people around clinics. This is critical, Thompson says, because most of those service providers are women.

Penny Priddy says the legislation comes about from the powerful voices of women and men service providers fighting for the rights of women, and of women who've come forward with their stories [of accessing and providing abortion services].

"We hope this legislation will send a positive message to services providers about their own safety to ensure that women, particularly in smaller communities, have access to abortion services," she says. Priddy notes that there has been a decrease in the number of doctors providing abortion services in BC, in both urban and rural areas.

The legislation has just passed second reading and will be sent to a legislative committee for review. Priddy says there is no doubt that it will be passed into law before the provincial legislature recesses for the summer.

The opposition Liberal party has yet to come up with their opinion of the new legislation. Liberal leader Gordon Campbell has admitted there is a split in his caucus on the issue of abortion rights.

Supreme Court of Canada decision in Egan and Nesbitt:

## Mixed message on lesbian rights

by Shannon e. Ash

Lesbians have received a mixed message from the Supreme Court of Canada about their rights. In its decision handed down on May 25, the Court ruled that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms bars discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, but that lesbians and gays can be excluded from certain spousal benefits.

Lesbian and gay rights activists have celebrated the former and criticized the latter.

The specific case the Supreme Court dealt with involved Jim Egan and Jack Nesbitt, two gay men who have been partners for over 40 years but who were denied a spousal allowance under the Old Age Security Act.

In its decision, the Court was unanimous in ruling that sexual orientation is included as a prohibited ground of discrimination under the equality provisions of the Charter. While the Ontario Court of Appeal ruled in 1992 that sexual orientation should be "read in" to the Charter, and the Canadian Human Rights Commission has been taking complaints of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation since then, the Supreme Court's ruling is seen as a confirmation of human rights protection for lesbians and gays. The federal government has still not legislated this protection into the Canadian Human Rights Act.

On the specific issue of same-sex benefits, the Court split 5-4 on whether Egan and Nesbitt were entitled to the old age spousal allowance. The Act specifies a definition of spouse that excludes same-sex couples.

Of the five judges who ruled against Egan and Nesbitt, four said that denying a spousal benefit was not discrimination, while the fifth justice agreed with the minority position that the Act was discriminatory, but said that this discrimination was justifiable. The majority judges argued that the Old Age Security Act was meant to protect poor older women in heterosexual relationships who had worked in the home and had no other pension support.

Diana Smith of the Lesbian and Gay Benefits Society says that "many heterosexual families aren't the model of what the law is supposed to protect, but they get the benefit anyway." And, she says, the argument that denying lesbians and gays spousal benefits isn't discrimination doesn't wash. "What is a lesbian? It's having a sexual orientation toward someone else," says Smith. If her relationship is not recognized, then

a woman is not being recognized as a lesbian.

National Action Committee on the Status of Women president, Sunera Thobani asks, "had it been Jane Egan and Joanne Nesbitt would the Court have found in their favour? Or is it that poor older women matter only if they're heterosexual? Are they really interested in poor women? Their decision on Thibaudeau suggests they are not." [see article, page 3]

On a positive note, a majority of the Supreme Court did rule that it is discriminatory not to extend benefits to same-sex couples, but it was a slim majority. Still, Smith believes it could have a positive legal effect on other spousal benefits cases, but cautions that "we have yet to see how successful that will be." Spousal benefits are being negotiated in some cases without legal struggles—with some private sector employers and recently for the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW).

Egan and Nesbitt have said that they are not in financial need of the benefit, but are concerned with having their relationship recognized. Smith agrees that the struggle for same-sex

spousal benefits is a "way to fight homophobia."

She does acknowledge the concern that the spousal benefits system may benefit only a few lesbian and gay couples who most resemble the traditional heterosexual marriage. It might be better, she says, to distribute benefits based on relationships of "emotional and financial interdependence. Family law in general seems to be quite outdated."

However, Smith believes the lesbian and gay community should not have to hold the ball and fight for fairer benefits for everybody. "We have our hands full fighting homophobia... We could join with other groups" to fight for fairer legislation.

In other recent decisions affecting lesbian rights, Bill C-41—a federal bill to increase penalties for hate crimes, including gay-bashing—was passed, and legislation was introduced by the BC provincial government on adoption which will allow lesbian and gay couples to adopt children.

The Lesbian and Gay Benefits Society holds workshops on homophobia in the workplace. They have recently published a training manual for workshop facilitators, "Time for Change: Recognizing the Rights of Lesbian Workers." For more information about the activities of the Society, call Diana Smith at 876-1465.

Shannon e. Ash is a regular contributor to Kinesis.

International Day of Action for Women's Health:

## Keeping our breasts healthy

by Caitlin McMorran Frost

The health of our breasts is an issue of major concern to women, and yet we know so little about how to keep our breasts healthy and what our options are when we find out they are not. Breast cancer is a reality for one in nine Canadian women and touches all our lives whether we face the disease ourselves, through someone we love, or simply as a part of the risk group because we are women and we have breasts.

While many organizations, groups and individual women do work hard in their own ways to address the issues of breast cancer and breast health, we still face limited funding and a deficit in research. We also lack a coordinated multi-faceted approach to dealing with breast health that considers all of our physical and emotional needs—that considers our breasts as part of who we are in the many contexts that they take part in our lives, as part of our sexual identity, as nourishment for our children, and so on. As women, we still find ourselves having to make crucial decisions that affect our breast health and our overall health, without the information and support we need.

Every year, on May 28th, women around the world celebrate the International Day of Action for Women's Health—a day for initiating local and regional action toward improving women's health. This year, the Vancouver Women's Health Collective held a day long forum: "Healthy Breasts: Women Taking Action," bringing together grassroots and medical women and organiza-

tions to share information and initiate action around breast health.

For two months preceding the forum, a working group of women presenting a range of community women's and health groups came together to share ideas and work toward a comprehensive action plan. This process has led to strong links between individual women and groups with the clear aim of addressing a wide range of women's health needs.

The goal of the forum was to provide breast health information and dialogue that incorporates both a political analysis as well as traditional and non-traditional approaches to breast care, prevention and treatment. The stage was set for the day with an opening panel called "The Breast in Cultural Context" with discussion of the ways culture affects how we view and care for our breasts. The panel included a historical analysis looking at the medical view of the breast as an 'oversized gland' and the objectification of the breast, and a presentation on Indo-Canadian perspectives on breast health and breast feeding by Ranjit Dhari of the Vancouver Health Department. The overall impact of cultural pressures on breast feeding was also discussed.

Other panels included a focus on "Keeping Our Breasts Healthy" with a strong environmental perspective from Miranda Holmes of the Save Georgia Straight Alliance, followed by practical breast health nutritional advice from herbalist Chanchel Cabara.

Lunch was shared with Rosalind MacPhee, author of *Picasso's Woman: A Breast Cancer Story*, who spoke about her

own experience with breast cancer and showed a short documentary of her life, *With My Boots On*. In a strong and emotional speech, MacPhee offered hope, advice and inspiration and called for more action on the disease that is claiming so many women. With so much to think about and so much pain, the inspiring voices of the Vancouver Lesbian and Gay Choir lifted our spirits and gave us the strength for the rest of the afternoon.

The afternoon session provided an opportunity for women to have their questions about breast cancer addressed by a panel of doctors, oncologists and survivors. Questions ranged from how to do daily tasks after mastectomy, the safety of mammograms, to what to tell young children when you find out you have breast cancer. The panel offered an opportunity to consider many of the different aspects of dealing with breast cancer, and the chance to discuss it from a range of perspectives.

The final session brought together all the different elements from the days work and moved the information into a space of action. Representatives from the action planning coalition put forward the outline of the proposed Action Plan for Breast Health.

The Action Plan is the product of the work of many Vancouver women from different backgrounds, experiences, organizations and perspectives, who joined together in the belief that women need access to a solid and diverse base of information, that we need to create dialogue, and that we must coordinate our action to support women in need to make real change happen.

The Action Plan has six components for community action: education for young women (to raise awareness and try to prevent disease); education for women over 50 (who are in a higher risk category for breast cancer); an environmental lobby (which recognizes the links between environmental issues and health); a clearing house for information on breast health (to provide quick and comprehensive support to women in need); a lobby to address the links between poor diet and fast food and breast health problems; and a lobby to support alternative therapy research (to recognize the need for a range of treatment and health options beyond the medical model).

The coalition will continue to meet and organize, and will investigate resources to support the Action Plan. The forum gave us all a great deal to think about, and a great deal to act on. While the Action Plan is a first step toward coordinated action, it is an important one, and was recognized as such by participants who were very clear that it is real action that is needed—action to meet the needs of the women who are facing breast cancer now, and action to prevent more women having to face it in the future.

For more information about the Action Plan for Breast Health or to take part in the coalition, please call Raine MacKay at the Vancouver Women's Health Collective at (604) 736-4234.

Caitlin McMorran Frost is, among other things, a volunteer with the Vancouver Women's Health Collective.

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Provincial election in Ontario:

## Right turn leads to dead end

by Judy Rebick

Women and progressive people in Ontario were left reeling after the province elected a right-wing premier. On June 8, Mike Harris and his Progressive Conservative party swept away the New Democratic (NDP) government winning a majority of the seats in the provincial legislature.

The Conservatives claimed 82 seats in the 130-seat legislature with 45 percent of the popular vote. The Liberal party came in second, winning 30 seats, while the NDP dropped out of government to third-party status, managing to win only 17 seats. Before the election, the NDP held 74 seats in the legislature.

Judy Rebick, former president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and co-host of CBC NewsWorld's Face Off, provides Kinesis with her analysis of the reasons behind Mike Harris' win, and of what people in Ontario can expect from his right-wing agenda.

Rather than the Common Sense Revolution, Ontario's new premier Mike Harris might better call his program the 'Counter Revolution.' On the surface, Harris plans to eliminate the few positive measures adopted by Bob Rae's New Democratic government. If Harris' agenda were only to roll back a few pieces of legislation passed by the NDP, I, for one, would not be so worried. The reality is that Harris was swept into power on a wave of anger and frustration at the disadvantaged in society—who are being blamed for all the economic and social problems in Ontario. It is Harris' ability to speak to the anger and frustration of much of the working class and middle class that makes his government so dangerous to all of us who value social justice and equality.

At the beginning of the election, Harris was a distant second trailing Lynn McLeod's Liberals who appeared to be riding on the coattails of prime minister Jean Chretien. Harris' Common Sense Revolution had been out for a year before the election, and was mostly ridiculed by the press. The general pundit wisdom—including on the Right—was that Ontario was too moderate to elect someone with such a radical right-wing agenda.

Harris' most popular campaign pledges were:

- a 30% tax cut (in the provincial portion of taxes);
- mandatory work for welfare recipients (workfare);
- the repeal of the "quota bill" (Ontario's new employment equity bill, which far from having quotas has almost no real enforcement mechanism); and
- the repeal of Bill 40 (the anti-scab labour bill that also makes it easier to organize the service sector).

While it is true that both the NDP and the Liberals ran lacklustre campaigns, there is no question in my mind that voters were attracted by Harris' program. The decline in Ontario in real income and quality of life over the past ten years due to neo-conservative policies has created an anger and frustration in voters. The election of an NDP gov-

ernment five years ago was an indication that voters were looking for an alternative to the tweedle dee and tweedle dum of Conservative and Liberal policies that meant less and less opportunity and hope for the majority of people.

But Bob Rae did not deliver a different kind of government. The NDP government failed to deliver tax reform,

### It was the failure of the Rae government to provide a left alternative to frustrated voters looking for change that set the stage for the Harris 'Counter Revolution.'

which they promised in setting up their Fair Tax Commission. [The Commission was established to review the provincial tax system and recommended, among other things, a minimum corporate tax rate. The NDP failed to implement a number of the Commission's recommendations and moderated a lot of its recommendations.]

The NDP failed to democratize government to respond to the increasing desire among the population to have more accountable government. They

of abortion clinics, women's centres and transition houses; and appointments to the judiciary and various government agencies of women, people of colour, Aboriginal people and people with disabilities.

Now, all of these measures are at risk. Even more importantly, Harris' promise to undo everything Rae has done will mean that much of his fire will be directed against poor people, women, people of colour, Aboriginal people and people with disabilities—as these are

of Harris' first moves were to appoint a woman as the top bureaucrat and to announce that as soon as his cabinet meets he will cut welfare benefits by 20 percent. The appointment of a woman in this powerful position is meant to calm the fears of professional women that Harris' election is the result of a backlash against women's equity rights. With this election, the representation of women in the Ontario legislature plummeted from 22 to 14 percent.

the people who did see gains some under Rae's government. Even Harris' use of the term 'quota bill' to describe employment equity legislation is a barely disguised appeal to the rising racism and sexism in the province.

### Harris' promise to undo everything Rae has done will mean that much of his fire will be directed against poor people, women, people of colour, Aboriginal people and people with disabilities...

broke their promises, like bringing in public auto insurance, and defended unethical behavior among their cabinet ministers. They even joined the unjustified attack on poor people by hiring two hundred welfare cops to ferret out welfare fraud.

But most importantly, instead of standing up to the barrage of attack from Bay Street—home to corporate Ontario and most of corporate Canada—and mobilizing their supporters for the struggle against savage capitalism, the NDP caved in to the right-wing attacks and betrayed their supporters with a social contract that violated the basic principle of trade unionism and free collective bargaining. [The social contract passed by the legis-

lature in July 1993 imposed wage restraints and rollbacks on public sector workers.]

There will no doubt be recriminations against those in the labour movement—like the Canadian Auto Workers' president Buzz Hargrove—who decided to sit out the election rather than support an NDP government that had so betrayed labour. In the end, it

### Harris will move to hit us hard, hit us fast, and he won't even blink.

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There will no doubt be recriminations against those in the labour movement—like the Canadian Auto Workers' president Buzz Hargrove—who decided to sit out the election rather than support an NDP government that had so betrayed labour. In the end, it

welfare if they choose to stay home and care for their children instead of going out and raking leaves or participating in other workfare projects.

Workfare will provide cheap labour for employers, putting downward pressure on already low wages in the service sector. Workfare will mean unemployment for some people working in low income areas and lower wages for others. And most of these workers are women.

Repeal for employment equity legislation will create a climate where hiring and promoting women, people of colour, Aboriginal people, and people with disabilities will no longer be seen as priorities. While the legislation itself is weak, it nevertheless set into motion a process of employers' examining barriers to hiring and promoting the four designated groups. Similarly, repeal of the labour bill will make it much harder to organize women in the service sector.

But Harris' rapid move to cut welfare benefits is even more troubling. It may be true that Ontario's benefits are higher than other provinces, but so is the cost of living in cities like Toronto and Ottawa. Cuts in benefits will mean more homeless people and longer lines at food banks. And the more visible poverty is, the more vulnerable poor people are to attack.

These are the politics of polarization so clearly displayed in [US Senate majority leader] Newt Gingrich's 'Contract on America'—cut the poor off assistance, force them into crime, then build bigger prisons. By turning citizens' anger against poor people, the Harris government will attempt to sidetrack people from his real agenda—to increase benefits for the already rich people. The 30 percent tax cut will primarily benefit those in high income brackets, particularly because Harris intends to rescind the health tax on employers and put it back on individual tax payers. [Currently, the costs of the Ontario Health Insurance Plan are paid for through taxes on employers.] No doubt Harris will also make liberal use of user fees of various sorts, so middle income people will see little, if any, net gain.

'What is to be done,' as someone once said. Ontario delegates to the Annual General Meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women have called a demonstration for June 26, the day the Harris government is to be sworn in. Social movements should learn from the experience of Alberta and New Zealand—Harris will move to hit us hard, hit us fast, and he won't even blink.

There is no time for balance sheets, defenders of social equity have to move just as fast in organizing visible opposition. We have to convince Harris, and more importantly his Bay Street backers, that the price to pay for rolling back the gains made by the last two generations of workers, women, people of colour, Aboriginal people, and people with disabilities will be too high.

While Harris has said he will exempt single mothers with children under the age of three from workfare, single mothers with older children will be cut off

# MOVEMENT MATTERS

by Robyn Hall

## World breastfeeding week

August 1st to 7th has been set aside as a week to celebrate breastfeeding around the world.

This year's theme, *Breastfeeding: Empowering Women*, focuses on ensuring that women have the ability and the right to breastfeed; the right to legal protection and social support for breastfeeding in public and at work; and the right to correct information and skilled counselling and support.

To promote breastfeeding during the week, the BC Ministry of Health is producing an information kit outlining specific ways women can become empowered to exercise their right to breastfeed, and support the choice of other women to do the same.

For more information contact the British Columbia Breastfeeding Society, 9131 Evancio Crescent, Richmond, BC, V7E 5J2.

## 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.**

## Conference for Asian lesbians

The third Asian Lesbian Network (ALN) Conference will be held August 11th to 14th in Taipei, Taiwan. The conference is a time for Asian lesbians to get together, share stories, and gather information and ideas for grassroots organizing.

The conference is open to all Asian-identified lesbians living throughout the world. Previous conferences were held in Tokyo, Japan and in Bangkok, Thailand.

A Constitutional Conference will be held for ALN representatives two days before the official conference from August 10th to 11th. The goal of the Constitutional Conference is to finalize a constitution or set of guidelines for the ALN as an organization.

The cost of the ALN Conference is NT\$4000 (US\$150), and includes all conference materials, room and board. Participants are advised to book their airline reservations early, and to obtain their visas to enter Taiwan.

For more information about the conference, write to: V. Shyu, ALN-Taiwan, PO Box 7-760, Taipei 106, Taiwan; call or fax: 886-2-391-3401; or e-mail [rebwofff@transnet.com.tw](mailto:rebwofff@transnet.com.tw). For further information about the ALN, contact the ALN secretariat at ALN Nippon, c/o Regumi Studio Tokyo, JOKI, Nakazawa Building 3F, 23 Arakicho, Shinjyuraku, Tokyo 160, Japan.

## Ten years of the Charter

*Ten Years Later: The Charter and Equality for Women*, a symposium to assess the effectiveness of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in establishing equality between men and women will be held October 15 and 16 in Vancouver. 1995 marks a decade since the equality rights provisions (section 15) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms came into effect.

The symposium will cover several topics: children and reproduction; safety and violence against women; health and environment; economics and labour; and the politics of rights. The symposium will also present an opportunity to look at other avenues for achieving equality, such as the work of community/advocacy groups. The conference is open to the general public, and is being sponsored by the Feminist Institute for Studies in Law and Society of Simon Fraser University's School of Criminology.

The full registration fee is \$225; and the fee for women working with community service and non-profit organizations or who are volunteers with such bureaucracy is \$95. A small number of bursaries are available.

For more information or to register contact Vaune Adams—address: Public Policy Programs, Continuing Studies, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, V5A 1S6; telephone: (604) 291-3792 or 291-4940; fax: 291-3851; or e-mail: [Vaune\\_Adams@sfu.ca](mailto:Vaune_Adams@sfu.ca).

## Lesbian battering project

The Vancouver Lesbian Connection is undertaking a 12-month project designed to increase awareness regarding violence in lesbian relationships. In particular the project will address the barriers experienced by abused lesbians when they try to access support services for battered women and their children in Greater Vancouver. Often when lesbians attempt to access services, they experience homophobia/heterosexism, and a lack of information about the needs of lesbians who have been abused.

During the course of the project, workshop formats will be developed and delivered to medical, transition house and legal workers. The workshops will include the effects of race, class and ethnicity on heterosexism and violence in lesbian relationships. A resource manual will also be produced.

An advisory committee is being formed to work in consultation with Sonya Boyce and Tina Hurd, the researchers/facilitators of the project. The committee will publicize the project, explore sources of funding, exchange information and suggestions and evaluate the project. Committee members must identify as lesbians.

The first meeting of the Violence in Lesbian Relationships committee is scheduled for Wednesday, July 5, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at the VLC, 876 Commercial Drive.

To participate in the advisory committee or for more information contact Sonya Boyce, 254-2052, Tina Hurd, 254-8458.

## Want to know where to find *Kinesis* in BC?

**Vancouver:** Women In Print • Vancouver Women's Bookstore • Duthies Books (UBC & 4th Ave) • M Gabriel • Agora Food Coop • Banyen Books • Capers • Mayfair News • Vancouver Women's Health Collective • Kestrel Books • Spartacus Books • Octopus Books • Hearts • Amplesize Park • Peoples' Coop Books • East End Food Coop • Manhattan Books • Little Sisters • Maggie Magazines • the Book Mantle • and the UBC Bookstore

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## Domestic worker conference

A conference of Domestic Workers will be held in Vancouver from August 5th to 7th. This gathering is a follow-up to the 1994 domestic workers conference held in Ontario, and sponsored by INTERCEDE, the Toronto domestic workers' rights organization.

At the 1994 Conference, domestic workers and their supporters launched the Points Campaign to push for the rights of domestic workers in Canada. The campaign included petitions to scrap the \$975 immigrant head tax.

This year's conference is being sponsored by the Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers' and Caregivers' Rights (an INTERCEDE affiliate). The agenda for the conference will include assessing the status of the Points Campaign, sharing experiences about domestic worker services, and organizing for the 4th World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing in September.

For more information, contact Julie or Lorina at (604) 874-0649.

**Next writers' meeting on Tuesday August 1st at our office. Come brainstorm for our next issue!!**

# WHAT'S NEWS

by Lissa Geller

## New law allows same-sex adoption

After years of lobbying from various groups, the British Columbia government has introduced legislation that will bring sweeping changes to the province's Adoption Act.

The proposed amendments to the Act will regulate private adoptions; allow lesbian, gay and common law couples to adopt; and substantially increase the information available to adoptees about their birth families.

Current legislation in BC allows only single people and legally married couples to adopt, and gays and lesbians are not allowed to adopt each other's children. By granting same-sex couples the same adoption rights as other couples, the government has "moved us another step towards equality" said gay United Church minister Tim Stevenson.

However, Barbara Findlay, a human rights lawyer and member of the December 9th Coalition, a lesbian and gay legal rights group, says the provincial government did not have a great deal of choice in the matter. "The Supreme Court of Canada has said it is illegal for governments to discriminate against lesbian and gay partners. The courts in Ontario have recently held that means that lesbians and gay men cannot constitutionally be forbidden to adopt."

The legislation also increases regulations for private adoptions. Under the new law, anyone applying to adopt must undergo a screening process including a home study, criminal record check and a personal reference check.

Adoption rights advocates are also pleased that the law will allow adoptees greater access to their own adoption records. When BC passed its current Adoption Act in 1957, birth mothers had few options when it came to planning for their children and many were influenced by the society's condemnation of unwed mothers.

Concern has been expressed, however, that the new legislation could violate the privacy rights of birth mothers. The government intends to engage in an education process with existing and potential birth mothers to inform them that the adoption records of their children will be opened upon the request of the child when they reach the age of majority. However, critics charge that this amounts to "negative marketing" since women will have to specifically opt out of information sharing if they do not want to be contacted in the future.

The new legislation has met with the usual opposition from the right wing, because of the inclusion of adoption by lesbian and gay couples. The opposition Liberal Party is divided, and has agreed to allow members a free vote in the legislature. But with the only vehement opposition coming from the small Reform Party caucus, the legislation is likely to pass in this session of the House without much commotion.

## Kiss and Tell wins Lambda award

*Her Tongue on My Theory*, created by the Kiss and Tell collective and published by Press Gang Publishers of Vancouver, has become the first Canadian-

published book ever to win a Lambda Literary Award. Kiss and Tell is a lesbian feminist collective in Vancouver made up of Lizard Jones, Susan Stewart and Persimmon Blackbridge.

The Lambda awards, presented by the Lambda Book Report of Washington, DC, are given to recognize and honour lesbian and gay literary excellence. More than 360 publishing people, booksellers and writers gathered in Chicago at the American Booksellers Association Convention to witness the presentation of the 20 awards.

This year was the first in which Canadian books were eligible to be nominated for the "Lammies." One other Canadian book was nominated in 1995, *The Very Inside*, edited by Sharon Lim-Hing and published by Toronto's Sister Vision Press. The book, an anthology of writings by Asian and Pacific Islander lesbians and bisexual women, was nominated in the Lesbian and Gay Anthologies/Fiction category.

Nominated in both the Small Press and Lesbian Studies categories, *Her Tongue on My Theory* beat out stiff US competition to win in the Small Press category.

The catalyst for *Her Tongue* was Kiss and Tell's multi-media performance *True Inversions*, which was performed in western Canada in 1992 and received widespread publicity following the publication of a critical column by homophobic syndicated reporter. The ensuing backlash inspired the Kiss and Tell to create a "daring collage of lesbian sexual imagery, erotic stories and provocative analysis imbued with humour."

## Settlement for breast implants

In response to numerous suits brought by women in Canada, the international pharmaceutical company Bristol-Meyers Squibb has negotiated an out-of-court settlement with women who used their silicone gel breast implants. Only women in Quebec and Ontario are eligible for this settlement since they are the only two provinces with class action legislation. [The BC government recently proposed legislation to allow class action suits [see *Kinesis*, June 1995].]

A lawyer associated with the case, Michael Eizenga, noted that the effects of the settlement could be more far-reaching than just the two provinces, particularly since it might encourage other manufacturers to reach settlements with women.

Under the terms of the settlement, Bristol-Meyers Squibb agrees to pay out over \$28 million to women who've suffered health problems from their silicon gel implants. Problems may range from the hardening of the breasts to autoimmune disorders to cancer. The money will be paid out over 12 years and will likely be administered by an insurance company.

An advertising campaign will inform women not involved in the original class action suit that they may have a claim to compensation if they suffered from any illnesses commonly attributed to breast implants, and if their implants were manufactured by Medical Engineering Corporation (MEC), a subsidiary of Bristol-Meyers Squibb. Approximately 20-25 percent of women in Canada with breast implants are thought to have ones manufactured by the company.

## Fourth World Conference on Women:

# Out of site, out of mind

by Smita Patil

Women won some and lost some in their demand that China find an appropriate site for the UN NGO Women's Forum or else lose the opportunity to host the forum, along with the 4th UN World Conference on Women.

Following recent negotiations, it seems China will continue to host the conference and the NGO Forum in September, but will grant visas to the up to 40,000 women participants registered, up from 20,000 women, the previous limitation they had imposed. This number is supposed to include Tibetan women, prostitutes and lesbians—three groups China has been reluctant to allow in.

As well, China's conference organizers say they will try to address some of the logistical problems associated with the new site they have proposed for the NGO Women's Forum—a feat most women say may not be possible in the time left before the forum begins on August 30th.

It all began less than five months before the conference and overlapping NGO Women's Forum were scheduled to take place in Beijing. The conference and forum preparations had been almost

three years in the making when the Chinese government apparently realized having tens of thousands of women activists descend on its capital city would not be such a good idea.

Abruptly, and apparently without consultation with the UN, they moved the site of the NGO Women's Forum from Beijing to a rural town, Huairou, which is 60 kilometres outside Beijing. The excuse given was that the Workers' Stadium site in Beijing originally scheduled to house the forum is structurally unsafe. However, the stadium continues to host and hold bookings for major sports events both before and after September. The only cancellation has been the NGO Women's Forum.

As well, China has refused to consider alternate sites in Beijing, such as the Capital Gymnasium and sites within the Asian Games Village, which is where the conference will take place.

Women launched an international protest, successfully lobbying the UN and several national governments, including Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, to challenge the Chinese government's overt attempt to sabotage NGO efforts to lobby at the world conference.

Since much of the language of the documents to come out of the conference has yet to be agreed upon, the access of NGO representatives to the conference is crucial. But with about 1,300 NGOs (almost 40,000 women) accredited by the UN to attend the NGO Forum, transportation from the Huairou site to and from Beijing is expected to be a logistical nightmare.

As well, the new site in Huairou has no space big enough for women to hold plenary meetings, and inadequate facilities for translation, interpretation and communication. The site also is not accessible to women with disabilities.

China has now agreed to provide additional buildings, tents and spaces in Huairou, so that all activities registered can be accommodated. As well, they will provide a second "satellite" site in Beijing (50 square metres of space) near the conference site for NGO representatives to meet. There will also be up to 3,500 international phone lines set up in Huairou, and arrangements for bus service between Huairou and Beijing.

But the main problem of the remoteness and inadequacy of the new site remain. Contact between NGOs, media

and governments will be extremely difficult to maintain.

Most women and groups from across the world have mixed feelings about the compromise reached between China and the UN organizers of the conference. But the possibility of a boycott of the conference is being dismissed by most, largely because it may be counter-productive at this stage. Women say they will attempt to work around the difficulties and get on with organizing, mobilizing, lobbying and making changes.

Stay tuned for *Kinesis*' on-the-scene coverage of the Beijing conference and forum in our October, November and December/January issues.

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# FEATURE

NAC AGM:

## Taking stock, making plans, spoofing Manning

by Fatima Jaffer

The night most delegates arrived in Ottawa on June 8th for the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC's) annual general meeting was the night Ontario elected a right-wing government and premier Mike Harris [see article, page 7].

According to some of the 350 women who attended the AGM, this news was partly why the atmosphere at this AGM was more quiet than usual. Others attributed the tense but subdued atmosphere to activist exhaustion following a busy year of fighting back against proposed and actual social program cuts and the stepping up of assaults on women, the poor, immigrants, people of colour, people with disabilities, single mothers, youth and the unemployed. Still others attributed it to the conference organizers, and the fact that time and space was structured to allow women to meet in small groups to discuss and clarify the key policy matters before coming together to vote on them.

A highpoint of the AGM, titled *There is Another Way: Women Fight Back*, was when the women, representing NAC's 600 member groups, re-elected Sunera Thobani as president for her second two-year term. Another came when Françoise David of the Fédération des Femmes du Québec described the activity of the women who organized and participated in the ten-day, cross-Québec, anti-poverty march in May/June. When the anthem *Du Pain et des Roses* (Bread and Roses) played at the end of her speech, the women at the AGM spontaneously rose in a standing ovation, holding hands as they sang the refrain [see article, page 4; and speech, page 12].

Delegates also elected three new vice-presidents who will serve on this year's executive: Vancouver Status of Women's Michele Hill, Marianne Roy from Solidarité Populaire Québec and CUSO-Québec; and Sue Genge, a representative of the Canadian Labour Congress.

The new treasurer elected was Joan Grant-Cummings of Toronto's Women's Health in Women's Hands. Members at large elected were: Amy Go of the

Chinese Canadian Council; Nandita Sharma from numerous organizations in Vancouver, nominated by Women to Women Global Strategies; Vuysiswa B. Keyi-Ayema of Women's Health in Women's Hands and Keyi Consulting Services; and Shree Mulay, a second-time member-at-large from the South Asian Women's Community Centre in Montreal and a co-organizer of this year's NAC AGM.

After meeting in small discussion groups to evaluate and discuss NAC's work in 1995-6, the membership chose to continue to make social policy reform a priority campaign for NAC. Tentatively titled: "There is Another Way: Social Justice and Equality," the campaign will be regionally based, and is to include educational, media, action and lobbying strategies. The second priority campaign adopted is an organizational development review of NAC, intended to develop a more effective infrastructure within the organization. A consultant has been hired to conduct the review, and the membership is to be kept informed of developments over the year.

A key resolution was to move more quickly on incorporating anti-racism measures throughout NAC, particularly by ensuring all NAC committees be co-chaired by a woman of colour.

There were numerous resolutions on social policy, including that NAC oppose the Canada Health and Social Transfer block funding proposal. Resolutions also passed called for opposition to new anti-immigrant, racist measures. There were also numerous resolutions on violence against women (some of which had to be passed by the executive due to lack of time on the floor). [Kinesis will have more on these resolutions in upcoming issues.]

An unprecedented number of resolutions on environmental issues were passed on the floor. In an emergency resolution, NAC groups voted unanimously to stand in solidarity with Innu women in the Labrador communities of Davis Inlet and Sheshatshui in their struggle against genocide caused by military

jets flying low-level over their territory, as well as for the cessation of minerals exploration on Innu territory before a proper assessment and consultation with the Innu takes place.

Present at the AGM to speak to the resolutions was Katie Rich, the first woman chief of Davis Inlet. Rich was also the recipient of the 1995 NAC Woman of Courage award. [Kinesis will publish excerpts of her speech in the September 1995 issue.]

About 100 women stayed for the annual post-AGM lobby on Parliament Hill with the federal political parties. NAC women sent a loud message to the Liberal government that NAC will not allow them to continue to renege on their Red Book promises [containing their pre-election promises], in particular those having to do with social programs, immigration, childcare, violence against women, and lesbian and gay rights.

In our meeting with the Bloc Québécois, NAC women demanded the Bloc play a stronger role in opposing social program cuts outside Quebec.

The Reform party again refused to meet with NAC this year...or that's what we thought until a "tanned" Preston Manning—looking suspiciously like South Asian actress Sheila James of The Company of Sirens—showed up. James as Manning, together with masked Reform Party members Myron Thompson (Judy Rebick), Art Hanger (Anne McGrath), Jan Brown (Andrea Ritchie), Herb Grubel (Linda Chen) and Deborah Grey (Kike Roach) had the NAC delegation in fits of laughter as they spoofed the right-wing party's positions on race, gender, poverty and sexual orientation.

In response to one heckler in the audience—"Why don't you have repre-



Top: Preston Manning, aka Sheila James, with Sunera Thobani and Marianne Roy. Below: Reform Party MPs, aka some wildly funny NAC women. Photos by Fatima Jaffer.

sentatives of people of colour in your caucus?"—Manning/James retorted: "We have Jan Brown and Deborah Grey. They're women of colour."

Other Manning/James retorts included: "I've purged the party of open racists. Not that I've got anything against racists. I just don't want them speaking openly."

"What I'm mad about is that the Liberals are dismantling the health system and we're not getting any credit for it."

And, "Glad to see you all acting so nice and ladylike this year," referring of course to NAC's demonstration against the Reform Party last year, which resulted in a media backlash against NAC for its "radical" behaviour.

Fatima Jaffer is a regular writer for Kinesis. She represented the Vancouver Status of Women at the NAC AGM.

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# FEATURE

On poverty politicians, bank bullies and... :

## "All-purpose progressives"

by Kiké Roach

Kiké Roach is a steering committee member of the African-Canadian Youth Initiative and the Women's Coalition for Employment Equity, and is a former member of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women executive. The following is excerpted from her presentation on the closing panel "Thinking Globally, Fighting Locally" of NAC's annual general meeting in June.

Listening this whole weekend to the voices of women talking about their struggles, about the attacks we are facing, the assaults on us, my head is spinning. And I want to talk about it all—I want it all at one time [laughter].

It seems to me that so many parallels were crystallized. A great analogy came to the fore in thinking about the story of Audrey Smith.

Audrey Smith was alone, waiting for a bus in downtown Toronto. She is a poor Black woman from Jamaica who came to Canada, ironically, for a rest. She came to Canada to visit her friends and family. Waiting alone for the bus, she was soon encircled by three racist, white cops who saw only a criminal before them, not the mother of five children, a hardworking mother.

They surrounded her, accused her of having drugs on her, and within minutes, she found herself—on late evening in the summer on a public street—stripped naked, stripped naked on a public street by three racist white cops.

And I thought about the parallel—I thought about how we, as African women, have been stripped from the continent of Africa; how we've had our identity stripped away from us; how we've had our rights stripped away from us; how we've had the control of our bodies stripped away from us; how we've been left naked and vulnerable to white male supremacist power and violence for too long.

I thought about the police who are supposed to serve and protect everyone, and how they not only abdicated their responsibility but left the woman open, vulnerable through a racist, sexual, terrorist act.

And I thought about the Canadian government, and how it has abdicated its responsibility to its citizens, how it's left us stripped naked of basic human rights, so that the flesh of equality is exposed to corporate crows who are picking away at us, bit by bit.

I thought about the fighting spirit of Audrey Smith, who wasn't going to take this crap lying down. I thought about how she took her grievance to the police, to the police complaints commission. I thought about how three tribunals have come to the fore to try to deal with her issue and each time, they've been disbanded for mysterious reasons. I thought about how the laws are not set up to work for us in the first place. I thought about the diversion of her energy, having to come up and leave her children to fight a battle that seemed like it was never going to be won. I thought about the fact that there was a witness to Audrey Smith's strip-searching in public. That witness was Lycon Nelson, who

was himself a police officer in Jamaica. I thought about the fact that as soon as the police discovered that Audrey Smith had a witness who could speak up and bring the issue to justice, Lycon Nelson was charged with possession of drugs himself.

I thought about the way that we are criminalized for pointing out crimes. I thought about NAC and how NAC is a witness to the injustices women are facing across this country; about how NAC is speaking up to fight against these injustices and is rewarded with the jingoistic journalism of flaky feminists, who profited from women's struggles, only to turn around and bash their feminist sisters for as much as they could get out of them [applause].

I thought about how it was no coincidence that NAC is being criminalized for pointing out the crimes. I thought about the fact that among the three police who surrounded Audrey Smith, one of them was a woman, and that woman was, sad to say, the most implicated in getting Audrey Smith to take off her clothes and be exposed. I thought about how that woman contributed in part to the pain and degradation of another woman; how she left another woman vulnerable and exposed and participated in her own degradation. And I thought about the times that we, in the women's movement, turn against our sisters, turn against the most vulnerable of our sisters and leave us exposed [applause] to be attacked by this male supremacist system.

I thought about the fact that if Audrey Smith can be violated so can I. So can any one of you. I thought about the corporate powers who say, "Well, if we can exploit people in Mexico, if we can exploit people in Africa, if we can exploit people all over the world, why not in Canada?" Why not? Why not bring this disposable worker order mentality here to increase our bottom line?

I thought about how, the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force was rewarded for its murder and harassment daily of the most vulnerable communities by having its budget of half a billion dollars increased, while child care centres in Metro Toronto were closed.

I thought about what this says about our world economy [to quote Jeremy Brucher] "an economy which doesn't allow people to use their resources to meet their needs, which allows tens of millions of people to be unemployed and underemployed while vast needs go unmet; which allow human energy to be squandered, destroying the environment and building weapons to defend against countries which no longer exist can surely be described as a stupid economy." [laughter].

It is this stupid economy that violates the rights of women and other living things. And I want to say I am sick and tired of pro-poverty politicians and bank bullies, who in their fiscal fanaticism and deficit dementia have sold our futures out from under us, and I will not take it anymore [applause].



Kiké Roach.  
Photo by Fatima Jaffer.

It is women who will show this world what democracy means, what human dignity means by fighting back.

These cutbacks, that are done in the name of my generation—the hypocrisy of politicians sitting around and saying, "We can't leave this next generation with this terrible burden, this terrible debt," so they want to close our schools and shut down hospitals and leave us lying in the streets with no jobs and no future.

And I thought about the fact that I want the debt problem addressed. I want it addressed by having them realize that this debt is owed to First Nations people [applause]...and this is the way this debt ought to be addressed.

I thought about how angry I am that the Right is coopting our language...that Preston Manning is a "populist," and Dan Quayle talks about "empowerment" [laughter] and Mike Harris [newly elected progressive conservative premier of Ontario] is a "revolutionary" [laughter], and I am angry that white men, rich white men are "angry" [laughter, applause]. I am angry that they are making poor white men angry at me, a potential ally [laughter].

And I'm sick at a program that turns social scorn into social policy. As a descendant of slaves, I am tired of being told that I am part of the problem. I am sick of the privileging of private decisions on public issues. I am sick of Mike Harris who thinks that of course the rich are the tiny overburdened minority, that's discriminated against; that white men are "quota law" victims, and that the upper middle class has been too long denied their basic rights to redecorate their homes [laughter, applause] with our tax dollars.

We have to take back our language. We cannot allow them to sully the beautiful word "revolution;" we have to call it for what it is—scrapping the so-called "quota law" [employment equity laws] means returning the "affirmative action for white men only." That's what it means. We have to take out "workfare" and call it "workfare." We have to say that "open for business" means "open season on workers' rights." We have to say that Mike Harris supports "wellfare," "wellfare for the rich." We have to say that Mike Harris is no "revolutionary;" he is "a human rights violator" [applause]. We have to say that he has not come here to bring us a revolution; he has come to kill the revolution we have been pressing for for so many years—the women's revolution that has won us the rights to work and study, political rights, economic rights. And we will not allow him to do that.

We know that soon we are coming to a time when there is going to be no more time for letters to the legislature or appealing with [Finance Minister Paul] Martin. We are coming to a time when we must build our movement with the grassroots. We must not fall victim to activist malpractice [laughter] which means that, in our movement, we sweep internal problems under the carpet. We must build a movement that has a place for a shared vision of all of us—we cannot be divided on class lines, on sexual orientation lines, we cannot be divided by disability, by race. We must struggle to be all-purpose progressives who have an integrated analysis of how all these oppressions work together to prevent us from having our rights. But these rights cannot be separated from the rights of women living in Guatemala or Serbia or Rwanda.

It is women who will show this world what democracy means, what human dignity means by fighting back. We are already doing that with our marches, our demonstrations.

I want to close with a quote from Martin Luther King who said, "The oceans of history are made turbulent by ever-rising tides of hate. History is cluttered with the wreckage of nations and individuals who pursue this self-defeating path of hate." But we still have a choice today. We have a chance to choose between chaos or community." I think we know which choice we could make become a reality.

Maya Angelou says there is nothing worse than a young cynic, because she has gone from knowing nothing to believing in nothing. I stand before you today saying I have learnt so much from you, saying I have learnt so much from all women who have struggled to give me a piece of the freedom I enjoy today and that I am full of hope and optimism because I know [sings] "Soon and very soon, we are going to change the world...forever, and ever, we are going to change the world."

Thanks to Fatima Jaffer for taping and transcribing.

Women's march against poverty:

## 15,000 roses in Quebec

by Françoise David

Françoise David is a longtime social worker and community organizer in Montreal, Quebec. She has worked with the *Fédération des associations de familles monoparentales du Québec* (Federation of Associations of Single Parent Families) and is currently president of the *Fédération des Femmes du Québec* (FFQ). She was a key organizer of the Women's March Against Poverty in Quebec May 26-June 4. David spoke at the opening panel at the annual general meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women in June. The following is excerpted and translated from her speech in French.

I was asked to speak to you about the long march of women against poverty [applause]. It is important to stay humble because the idea of a long march like this does not only belong to women in Quebec. I got the idea from Black women in the civil rights movement in the US in the 60s. I also know that a few years ago in Peru, women of all ages came down from their villages in the Andes mountains and marched to the capital to fight for better working conditions.

Two years ago, the FFQ questioned its future and women wanted to do some actions. When I got this idea of a march, I presented it to my board who at first thought I was kidding—"We are not going to walk 250 kilometres!...and so rapidly?" But we said "let's do it." We started to prepare. The goal of the march was adopted quite quickly by all—to fight against women's poverty. The issue of poverty is closely related to that of violence against women, and these are the two major issues that mobilize women in the movement in Quebec, and probably in Canada.

A year ago, when we had begun to work more concretely, we said: "If we want this march to work, all of us have to be together—women from all groups, all ages, all origins." This was extremely important. So on March 19, 1994, the FFQ, for the first time, got 22 women's groups together—groups that in Quebec we call "national" or umbrella groups. After the third meeting, we were 50 women from 50 "national" groups, including delegates from all the regions of Quebec. The organization of the march reached a lot of women—the majority of Quebec women are francophone, but from the beginning there were women from other communities—anglophones, Natives from the Association des femmes autochtones du Québec, and women of colour.

A big job was to determine what demands we wanted to present to the Quebec government. It was important not to have a long grocery list with 40 or 50 demands if we wanted to be able to measure our gains after the march. It would have been discouraging to have too many objectives and, after the march, feel we had gained too little. The most difficult part was choosing our priorities. It was done with a lot of goodwill on the part of all the groups present. Decisions were made by consensus...we didn't even argue!

We had criteria for how best to choose and decide on demands. One criteria was that the demands should be within provincial jurisdiction. Another criteria was that demands had to be aimed directly at the issue of poverty and facilitate economic autonomy for women. Another criteria was to be able to win those demands in the short term. Finally, we wanted to have demands that would touch or affect all women, or almost all women. Maybe women would not feel all the demands concerned them individually but least one, two or three of the demands would. [See list of demands, page 4].

We presented those demands to the government on December 7th. It was interesting that the Quebec government took six months to think about answers to these demands. They only started to work seriously on the answers two months before the march, because they had found out the march was going to be a success. We had four times the participation we had expected. It was clear women from all areas of Quebec were united in the effort to make the march a big event.

It was, I think, one of the most moving moments we have ever lived in the Quebec women's movement. It was a rich moment in terms of its meaning, and its great success at bringing women together.

As the person who had brought up the idea of this walk, it was important for me personally to walk in the march—even if it meant working for ten days by cellular phone (a horrible invention), to stay in touch with the government and the media. I was not able to walk the 250 kilometres but I walked about a 100 km, and those were the best moments in the ten days. There were women there from all walks of life. We had women aged 16 to 81 years. There were women from large cities and from small villages; unionized women mostly from the public sector; unemployed women and women on social assistance; community activists; nuns. You would see a young radical student walking hand-in-hand with an older nun, both of whom share a strong commitment to fighting against women's poverty but not necessarily using the same strategies [laughter].

We were welcomed with extraordinary warmth in the towns and the villages. In Quebec, as in other provinces I am sure, we found that thousands of people, men and women, want social change. That is very clear! People often

do not know how to go about it or who to contact, but I saw people come out of their houses, clap their hands, honk their horns, and offer us water, flowers and other encouragement. There was enormous trust between the *marcheuses* (marchers) and the population. Mayors, priests, town councils, MLAs—everybody came to see us. There was a real feeling of solidarity and of the need for social renewal.

Finally, we arrived in Quebec City, where we were expecting about 10,000 people. We had at least 15,000. In my life as an activist who has participated in about 100 demonstrations, this was the best ever. There was a celebration with a lot of women from a lot of communities, as well as with men who felt concerned with the march. Visually, it was like 15,000 roses. It was beautiful. But it was more than that—there was so much emotion, such enormous pleasure at being together, which teaches us another lesson about ways to be militants.

Then, we heard the results of our demands from the Quebec government. Regarding the raising the minimum wage, we got a raise of 45 cents, which now makes our rate equivalent with that in Ontario. But it is much below what we were asking for. The government did not make friends with us when it announced this meager raise—which is nevertheless the biggest raise given at any time ever [applause].

As for our other demands, we made some real gains. For example, the issue of the reduction of the sponsorship period applied to all men and women who came to Quebec before October 31, 1994, apart from immigrant women. The *marcheuses* along with immigrant women in Quebec, were euphoric about this gain [applause].

We also had a firm commitment in principle to get the employability programs or "workfare" in Quebec eliminated. This is where people who are on income assistance work for nothing or rather simply to get their UI cheque. We got a firm commitment that all people participating in employability programs would at least get minimum wage and that the Quebec labour law would apply to them. If we look at the dominant discourse in North America which is very much in favor of workfare, I think we won an extremely important gain, although it is only applicable beginning the end of 1996.

I won't list all the gains made because it would be a bit long, but basically we say we scored 7 out of 9 points—not counting the minimum wage demand. We won the freeze on tuition fees for students for this year, but have no guarantees for next year because, in part, of the reduction of transfer payments [from the federal government to provinces]. We also asked for a raise in the amount of grants for youth because they have responsibilities as parents, but the minister of education did not want to commit himself because they are currently restructuring the student loans system.

It is clear, however, that we also gained at another level—the rising force of the women's movement. This is an invaluable gain because it means the fight goes on. Even if we had scored 9 out of 9, we never expected poverty would be eliminated on June 4 at 5pm. So it was important that, after the march, we would be left with a stronger, more united movement to enable us to continue to fight everywhere.

The most important victory is we succeeded in staying together for one year without any major conflicts. What allowed us to be in this good position to continue the fight comes certainly from the autonomy and the dignity that was visible among the *marcheuses*. A lot of people told us they were impressed at the way we protested—it was firm, clear and, at the same time, touched people in their hearts.

In a wider political sense, it will probably be said, most probably in *The Globe and Mail* than in *Le Devoir*, that the political situation in Quebec helped us. This is clear to us—obviously when a government wants to hold a referendum, it is better for them if half the population feels like it is being heard.

There is space to make our demands. There are also a few feminists in the government who are our allies. But we have to recognize it is to women we owe the victory we are celebrating today. It was women who won this march and nobody else! [applause]

It is clear for us that the fight is far from over. The major goals remain to be attained. It has been difficult to organize this march but in the end, it was relatively easy to centre our energies on an event which had a start and an end.

What is difficult after is to remain united; to not return to the day-to-day routine where every movement is apart—unions on one side, the popular movement on another, and women on another. We need to give ourselves clear objectives. We need to channel the great energy we felt during those ten days and transform it into a determined political force in Quebec.

This is the real challenge that fascinates as well as overwhelms us because it is huge. If we as women from Quebec and other provinces, as women and men of good will get together, the governments will have to listen to us. A million thanks to Marie-France Dubois, from Réseau Femmes de Colombie-Britannique in Vancouver for parachuting in at almost literally the last minute to transcribe and translate this speech!



Françoise David, right, with Deb O'Connor. Photo by Fatima Jaffer.

**It was one of the most moving moments we have ever lived in the Quebec women's movement.**

Women against anti-fertility vaccines:

## The cost of trials & errors

by Agnes Huang

Women health activists from around the world met in Ottawa to strategize around stopping the research and development of immunological contraceptives (also known as antifertility vaccines), and to call for a radical re-orientation of contraceptive research.

In early June, 32 women gathered at the International Action Meeting, organized by Women's Health Interaction (WHI), Inter Pares and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), to further the work in the campaign to stop the research. The participants at the four-day meeting are involved with health, human rights, international development, and advocacy organizations in 14 countries.

Antifertility vaccines alter women's immune systems to create 'anti-bodies' that prevent fertilized eggs from being implanted in the wall of the uterus. The most developed antifertility vaccine to date can prevent pregnancy for up to two years. The vaccine, which triggers an immune reaction against the natural pregnancy hormone hCG, is being clinically trialed on women in India, Sweden, and the US. However, the Swedish trials were stopped because of unanticipated "side-effects."

Research on antifertility vaccines began in the 1970s. Internationally, there are five main research teams developing immunological contraceptives: the World Health Organization Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (WHO HRP); the National Institute of Immunology in India; and the Population Council, the National Institute of Child Health (NICHD), and Contraceptive Research and Development (CONRAD), in the United States.

Women who participated in the meeting say that anti-fertility vaccines interfere with delicate and complex immunological and reproductive processes, and therefore can never be safe. Their most serious concerns with the contraceptive methods are with their health risks, abuse potential, unproven efficacy, and irreversibility. [See article on page 16 for an examination of the problems with immunological contraceptives.]

Carla Marcelis of Women's Health Interaction says that safety for women is one of the greatest concerns with the research and testing of immuno-contraceptive devices. "Interference with the immune system for contraceptive purposes is indefensible at a time when primary health care systems are being dismantled, when the incidence of many infectious diseases are increasing, and when we have become acutely aware of the complexity of the immune system and the effects on the health of an individual when the immune system is com-



Graphic from *Linking Up For Action* by Judith Richter.

promised," says Marcelis. The long-term side effects of the vaccines are still unknown, but it is feared they could cause long-term sterility in women.

Nkoyo Toyo of the Society for Women and Aids in Africa adds that "a woman cannot stop using the method when she wishes; she must wait for the effects to wear off." As well, Toyo raised concerns that the vaccines offer no protection against sexually transmitted diseases.

Shree Mulay, an associate professor of medicine and physiology at McGill University and a member of

ceptive methods—a direction away from agendas of population control advocates. "We came here to resist further development of contraceptives that are designed for population control, instead of for people," says Stemerding.

One strategy of the Campaign is directed towards challenging the funders of anti-fertility vaccine projects. Research into immunological contraceptives is being backed by money from the World Bank, the United National Population Fund, the UN Development Programme, the Rockefeller Foundation, the US Agency for International Development,

The women demanded that the IDRC stop funding any research on anti-fertility vaccines, and re-direct and re-orient their contraceptive research towards methods that enable people, and particularly women, to exert greater control over their fertility without sacrificing their integrity, health and well being.

They also demanded that, given the IDRC is funding the research in India, it ensure that women who have participated in the trials be monitored for adverse affects from the vaccine. Women participating in the trials were told that the methods were 100 percent safe, even though the purpose of trials is to determine whether or not that is true. Kalpana Mehta, a participant from India, says that Saheli, a women's resource centre in Delhi, would volunteer to do follow-up work with these women.

Overall, women feel they were successful in giving the IDRC a warning that women will not stand for this kind of attack on our bodies and reproductive processes. "The meeting with IDRC was an important step towards involving potential users of contraceptives in decisions about what kind of methods will be developed," says Karen Seabrooke of Inter Pares.

Beatrijs Stemerding says that already the Campaign to Stop Research on Antifertility Vaccines has been endorsed by 434 groups and organizations from 39 different countries.

For more information about the Campaign, in Canada contact: NAC, 203-234 Eglinton Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario, M4P 1K5; telephone: (416) 932-1718; and Women's Health Interaction and Inter Pares at 58 Arthur Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 7B9; telephone: (613) 563-4801. Or contact the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR), NZ Voorburgweg 32, 1012 RZ Amsterdam, The Netherlands; telephone: 31-20-620-96-72; fax: 31-20-622-24-50.

Excellent sources of information on antifertility vaccines are Judith Richter's book, *Vaccination Against Pregnancy: Miracle or Menace?* published by Health Action International in Amsterdam, and her paper, "Linking up for Action: In Support of the Campaign to Stop the Research on Antifertility Vaccines," produced for WGNRR.

Incredible thanks to Carla Marcelis for providing Kinesis—with courier—huge volumes of information on antifertility vaccines, the International Action Meeting, and the Campaign to Stop the Research.

**Calling the contraceptives being developed 'vaccines' is very disturbing because it shows that researchers are treating pregnancy as a disease, rather than a natural body process.**

NAC's Committee on New Reproductive Technologies, says that calling the contraceptives being developed 'vaccines' is very disturbing because it shows that researchers are treating pregnancy as a disease, rather than a natural body process. "We are concerned that this contraceptive method calls itself a 'vaccine,' when traditionally vaccines are used to prevent real diseases, such as diphtheria and tuberculosis," says Mulay.

The women participating in the meeting say that research must be focussed on contraceptive methods that are safe and that give women control over their reproductive functions. "Women want means to regulate our fertility, but we want means that do not compromise our health, our integrity and our well being," says Beatrijs Stemerding of the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR) in the Netherlands. WGNRR has been coordinating the Campaign to Stop Research on Antifertility Vaccines.

Stemerding also stresses that to achieve this would require a total change in the direction of research into contra-

the International Research and Development Centre in Canada (IDRC), and the governments in India, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Germany.

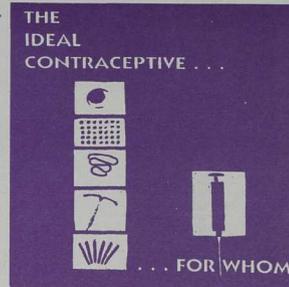
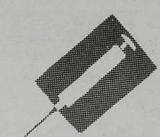
Women took the opportunity of being in Ottawa to meet with IDRC officials and to hold the IDRC accountable for their support of antifertility vaccines. The IDRC has provided \$45 million towards research conducted by the National Institute of Immunology (NII) in India, which is currently conducting clinical trials on women. There have been serious concerns about the ethics of the research methods and practices of the NII.

Before the meeting, the IDRC had issued a position statement on contraceptive vaccine research, in which they say that population concerns are not the driving force behind their research, but rather it is the improvement of the health and well being of children. The women who met with IDRC officials took them to task pointing out that the NII research team has clearly stated that their motives are to stop population growth in India.

Women and new reproductive technologies:



# Taking back control



In early June, women activists from 14 countries gathered in Ottawa to strategize around stopping research on anti-fertility vaccines [see story, page 13]. On the final day of the meetings, the Canadian organizers—Women's Health Interaction, Inter Pares and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC)—co-hosted a public forum. The forum was held to inform people about oppressive contraceptive devices and methods, about how they are being used in the North and in the South, and to mobilize support to stop the research development and use of these technologies.

The public forum was co-chaired by NAC president Sunera Thobani and Beatrijs Stermerding of the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Four women spoke at the forum—Kalpana Mehta, Luiza Bairros, Shree Mulay and Eileen O'Brien—to address different methods of contraception within the context of population control policies. Below, *Kinesis* presents excerpts from their speeches.

**"Racism and population control are dimensions strongly and deeply inter-connected."**

by Luiza Bairros

Luiza Bairros is from Brazil and is involved with the Unified Black Movement (Movimento Negro Unificado).

I think we are living in times marked by the idea of crisis—a crisis as a result of something I call "an industry that creates fear and lack of confidence." That industry has attempted to make us believe the world is not viable because of a general lack of resources.

The feeling of chaos we sometimes experience is not due to the fact we live in a world that is growing worse. The uneasiness that some of us feel comes out of a deeper awareness of the contradictions increasing in the qualities that mark the relationships between countries, between men and women, between people from different races, from different ethnic groups.

The uneasiness also comes out of the fact that we cannot take for granted anymore old patterns of relationships in which, for example non-white people—and particularly people of African descent—are forced to accept subordination as given, as something that can never be changed.



Luiza Bairros. Photo by Carla Marcellis.

Our uneasiness comes from the fact that we are not, as women for example, confined to a situation of inferiority determined by patriarchal ways of seeing the world and organizing societies. When I say that, I'm not underestimating that fact that we still have, in different parts of the world, harsh realities where authoritarians have an absolute disrespect for people's rights. I just want to stress that it is inside this contradictory picture that our presence here at this moment has to be understood.

On one hand, we have widespread actions that attempt to account for the crisis through population control. On the other hand, we know those same actions can no longer be carried out without facing the strong response of organized groups, especially women's groups, which have challenged population control paradigms from the scientific, political, and socio-economic points of view.

One of the fundamental aspects stressed during this meeting this past weekend, is that the manipulation of contraceptive methods in the interests of population controllers is being articulated internationally. The way population control manipulates the issue of contraception has absolutely nothing to do with the demands of men and women, who want to keep control not only of their reproductive functions, but also of their own lives.

I would like also to stress that the presence of Black women has brought a new approach to the movement against population control all over the world. To us Black women, putting an end to the abuse necessarily associated with population control is a fundamental part of our struggle against racism. And accordingly, it's a fundamental part of any type of struggle against perspectives based on the idea that some groups are undesirable and can simply be disregarded.

I think the relationship between racism and population control can be understood within a broader framework that attempts to dehumanize people. And in the specific case of Black people, this process of dehumanization happens through a very complex and interconnected web of racist mechanisms associated with attempts to crush our Blackness.

What I'm saying here is not just one more political statement. In a certain way, this is a reflection that comes out of my own experience with the Black movement in Brazil, and the lessons we learned in trying to stop abusive sterilization that has been going on since the early 80s.

Part of my reflections also come out of the experience of the feminist movement in Brazil in trying to stop abusive trials with Norplant. [The trials] were carried out on women from the poorest regions of the country which, not coincidentally, are also the regions where the Black population is a majority.

My reflections also come from the opportunities that Black organizations in Brazil [have had] to work internationally. And as far as we were able [to learn about] the experience of women in other countries, we can now, very comfortably, reinforce our belief that racism and population control are dimensions strongly and deeply interconnected.

**"Women need to set up defences against the abuses of yet another 'solution'."**

by Eileen O'Brien

Eileen O'Brien is the president of DAWN Canada (the Disabled Women's Network).

We need to take responsibility in Canada for our racism, for the way in which we support quietly and overtly population policies that are enacted throughout the world. Our style of life is based on some idea that there are kinds of people who should survive and others who shouldn't.

I'm not only speaking of the reality of how these new contraceptive technologies are being developed and used in a most heinous and criminal manner to control the fertility of women without their consent, and in some cases, without their knowledge. For people with disabilities, existing and reproducing in this society—a society that sees us as unfortunate burdens—has necessitated a struggle for our liberation as women, [a struggle] we experience daily as a matter of survival.

To understand that people with disabilities are devalued you must ask 'by whom and for what purpose.' I can assure you that whatever difficulties we experience directly, related to our disability, is outweighed by the difficulties we experience because of the lack of accommodation and the discrimination within our society. What is wrong with a society that creates the illusion of scarcity [to promote the] economic agenda of a few, which then defines how the majority of us live.

We know that women around the world are being given unsafe drugs to control their fertility, and this is directly related to their perceived value in a sexist, racist, and ableist patriarchal hierarchy. Within this competitive distorted reality, we as women need to set up defenses against the abuses of yet another 'solution,' that is in fact costing more lives.

DAWN Canada has already been fighting the use of Depo Provera to control menstruation and fertility in disabled women and women with disabilities who live in institutions. We are appalled that Norplant is being promoted by the pharmaceutical distributors as a wonder drug option, with no research at all into the effects these drugs may have on women with disabilities. We know we must fight against the forced sterilization of disabled women by any method, and that we must fight against the forced sterilization of women in other countries and the testing of immunological vaccines. We must join with other women to call for a halt to the testing of this dangerous vaccine and work to prevent the abuses on women by these new technologies.

We must recognize the racist and ableist attitudes that guide our governments, and [look at] our own support of policies that have led to years of medical and other abuses of Aboriginal peoples and people with disabilities. Within the disability movement, we see disability as a social construct. We do not think of ourselves as disabled. With accommodation and society's recognition of diversity, we are able.

In that context, we can then understand that to be a woman in this world is to be a citizen living with a disability. This is what fighting ableism is all about; this is what fighting eugenics and new reproductive technologies and forced sterilization and the medical abuse of women and girls for profit is all about. It's about each person feeling and knowing the beauty and strength of his or her own potential; and living with integrity, standing firm and fighting in the face of their own fears, in the face of the disrespectful and outrageous actions of the person beside them, and in the face of the actions of the state—nationally, internationally—that work against our integrity and that of others.

Many thanks to Carla Marcellis of Women's Health Interaction and Convergence in Ottawa for the tapes of the speeches and the photos. Graphic courtesy of the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights.

**"India's a country where almost every possible reproductive technology has been used."**

by Kalpana Mehta

Kalpana Mehta lives in New Dehli, India and works with Saheli, a women's resource centre.

The whole ideology of population control has been an imposition on our countries from the First World. I think a lot of us live in some kind of belief or understanding that countries like India are terribly overpopulated and therefore people are poor. And probably some of us give support to population control.

I'd like to begin by saying that actually, India can be called underpopulated. That may surprise some of you—we're close to a billion people. But the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations did a study. How many people can India feed comfortably? 1.7 billion. And, in terms of agriculture? As many as 2.3 billion.

Event today, we grow enough food to feed all our people and yet, more than half of them go to bed hungry every night. Obviously, it's not a problem of numbers. It is a problem of distribution.

India has this great distinction of having been the first country to start an official family planning program. This program was started not as an initiative of the Indian government, but of agencies like the Indian Planned Parenthood Foundation, and the [US-based] Ford and Rockefeller Foundations.

At that time, it was not at all clear to our government that a growing population was bad for the country. Every human being is born with just one mouth and two hands, so the government could not decide whether for development, it would take more hands or less mouths to feed. And this situation lasted for ten years. Even though we had a family planning program, it was not really a program of population control.

This program was supported by the Delhi women's movement. It was a program where contraceptives were made available to women. Around the 60s—when India faced its first post-independence economic crisis—we took US aid, and that aid came with certain conditions concerning population.

At the beginning of our [three year plan] period in 1960, we had a mixed economy and a huge public sector in manufacturing, mining, and services. When the third plan was started in 1962, the government suddenly said we were overpopulated. There was not actually a sudden increase in population, but rather a recognition that we were unable to all share in the fruits of development. It's not that the country wasn't developing, but with all the people, we had unemployment, hunger, and we've had some who've grown rich.

This situation kept getting worse until 1975, when we had a political emergency imposed, and then population control; that's when a really fascist voice came into full play. From 1975 to 1977, there was a massive sterilization drive in which young boys of 16 to old men of 70 were rounded up and sterilized. There were vasectomies done in very [dirty] camps; there were a large number of deaths. But these were men being targeted—not women—so they had a political voice, and they managed to overthrow the government.

This made it clear that the population control agencies could not rely on methods which were meant for men, and since then, systematically, it's women's bodies which have borne the brunt of these population control programs.

India's a country where almost every possible reproductive technology has been used. We've had sterilization. Abortion, which has been a matter of great contention in many countries, was imposed as a population control measure in India without there being any demand. We had legalized abortion because it also reduces the birth rate.

We've had two injectables—Norplant and Depo Provera. We are well on the way to accepting RU-486 [a pill that induces abortion]. We have all kinds of IUDs [intra-uterine contraceptive devices]. And of course, we have the dubious distinction of being the furthest ahead in research on anti-fertility vaccines.

Contraceptive technology has been one of the means through which the vulnerability of women is [exploited to achieve] reduction in the birth rate of the country. And now, we're heading for a population policy where democratic rights of men and women are going to be curtailed. If you have more than two children, you can't contest elections, you can't get jobs. Women who have a third child, will not get maternity leave. This is the way population control is going to be carried out.

And it's not that women in India have kept quiet. We've had a very versatile opposition to these technologies. We've had opposition to the curtailment of democratic rights. But this is one battle where the whole notion of what overpopulation is [needs to be challenged]. Unless it is attacked we cannot get very far, because the game is to coercively control how people reproduce.



Kalpana Mehta. Photo by Carla Marcellis.

by Shree Mulay

Shree Mulay is an associate professor of medicine and physiology at McGill University and a board member of the South Asian Women's Community Centre in Montreal. Mulay is also a member of NAC's Committee on New Reproductive Technologies.

I have been asked to speak on the different kinds of technologies which either have been researched, are being clinically trialed, or are being developed for future use. Basically, there are two long-acting steroidal contraceptives which are actually on the market—Depo Provera and Norplant.

Depo Provera in fact has not been approved in Canada, despite the fact that [its manufacturer] has applied for approval three times. Even though it has not been approved, it is still being used by healthcare professionals, particularly in the north on Aboriginal women.

Healthcare professionals say Depo Provera is very effective in preventing pregnancy; that it has a failure rate of less than one percent; and that it allows women to contracept secretly without the knowledge of their family. But the fact is that there are really a number of side effects associated with Depo Provera, such as irregular bleeding patterns. Most healthcare professionals absolutely dismiss these kinds of side effects because they're experienced by women and so are not given as much credence.

There is also new data suggesting that young women are more prone to breast cancer when they're on Depo Provera. And the fact that Depo Provera used at a young age depletes your bone mass, [means that] when you get older you may have to take other hormones to prevent bone loss and osteoporosis. I think it's important to note that migraines, dizziness, all of these side effects are really minimized by people in the medical field.

Norplant was approved in Canada in 1993, and it is beginning to be used by different clinics. Norplant is an implant of six elastic tubes that can last up to five years. There are a number of problems associated with it. The problems that have surfaced in the US—where about a million women now have used it—have been ignored. In all the early trials, it was said that women had no problems with the insertion and removal of Norplant, but these have in fact emerged as major problems.

All the side effects of Depo Provera are also true of Norplant. And neither Depo Provera nor Norplant have been evaluated for their risks to infants born of mothers who have used or are using Norplant and who are breast feeding their babies. The long term effects are not clear at all.

Research into immuno-vaccines has received \$4.5 million dollars over the past 20 years. One particular vaccine was developed in India at the National Institute of Immunology. All the clinical trials conducted to date have been very problematic. They have been conducted in a completely unethical manner and the animal study data are incomplete and superficial.

There are a number of vaccines being developed by many other agencies, such as the World Health Organization. One vaccine being developed produces anti-bodies towards sperm or embryo. The wide range of immuno-vaccines all have one common feature—they interfere with the body's normal immune process.

I think the concern we have is that these vaccines have tremendous potential for abuse because it can be given to women without their knowledge. There are known instances where that has happened in the Philippines and in Mexico.

One other agent which has been used but cannot strictly be called a contraceptive—it is actually a chemical sterilization method—is the Quinacrine method. Quinacrine is a drug extremely useful in controlling malaria. One particular group of researchers in the 70s began to introduce Quinacrine into the uterus of women to try to close their fallopian tubes by causing an inflammatory response.

In the 70s, this particular agent was used on 31,000 women in Vietnam, but worldwide now, there are about 80,000 women who have been subjected to this particular method of sterilization. I can assure you that if you go through the literature dealing with Quinacrine, you'll actually find a story of horrors.

I think it's very clear that these kinds of long-acting contraceptives are permanent methods of sterilization, and they are really most inappropriate. Women do want contraceptives, but they want contraceptives that meet their needs, and not something meant to meet other people's agendas.

Clearly, all the contraceptive methods that have been developed are inappropriate for women. Safe contraceptives, which are in women's control, which protect them from sexually transmitted diseases are the key, and therefore we must demand a re-orientation of the contraceptive research being done at this time.



Shree Mulay. Photo by Fatima Jaffer.

# FEATURE

The problems with immunological contraceptives:

## Risks not worth taking

Most women probably believe (and hope) that vaccines which attack certain hormones in our bodies to prevent pregnancy could only be found in late-night TV sci-fi movies, but in fact such anti-fertility vaccines are already being tested in many women's bodies.

Over 30 women from around the world gathered this past June in Ottawa to strategize further to halt research and testing of immunological contraceptive methods [see story, page 13], but it is likely that most of us have never even heard of them, let alone the risks they pose to our health, integrity and well being.

The fact that population control proponents in countries in both the South and the North are funding and promoting these vaccines, should make it so very clear to women that they're extremely harmful to our lives.

The following article lays out the problems associated with the research and testing of immunological contraceptives and with the methods themselves. It is excerpted from "Immunological Contraceptives: designed for populations not people," an article produced by Health Action International-Europe and the Women's Health Action Foundation in the Netherlands in May 1994.

Immunological contraceptives, or 'anti-fertility vaccines,' are a new type of birth control currently under development. Several different types are being developed, some of which target hormones, others part of the egg, sperm or early embryo.

The most advanced research is on methods which attack the hormone human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG) produced by the fertilized egg just after conception. [The anti-fertility vaccines] are formed by combining part of the hormone hCG with parts of substances produced by a germ, usually tetanus or diphtheria toxoids. When the body defends itself against this combined molecule, it also attacks the hormone hCG. If the attack is successful, pregnancy is prevented.

The aim of this research is to develop a method which is a single injection and prevents pregnancy for one to two years. Research on these methods began in the 1970s, and a method may be ready for marketing in as little as five years.

Vaccination against disease works by stimulating a person's body to defend itself against a specific type of germ. The vaccine strengthens the normal process of immune defense against disease. Pregnancy, however, is not a disease but a natural body process. Immunological contraceptives cause the immune system to attack a body function which would otherwise be protected. They mimic the process which occurs with immunological infertility or other autoimmune disorders, such as diabetes or rheumatoid arthritis.

### Risks of birth defects? No way to know.

Animal studies are used to test the safety of new products. One other concern about trials of immunological contraceptives is that evidence from animal studies is not sufficient to establish safety. For example there have been no studies in baboons which could show whether the method developed by the World Health Organization Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (WHO HRP) could cause birth defects.

It is hard to directly apply the results of animal research to humans because immunological contraceptives target a



human body substance. However, data on safety is crucial because these methods are so experimental and are meant for use by healthy women.

### Temporary irreversible

There is no way to stop the immune response provoked by these contraceptives until it wears off on its own. If a woman develops side effects, becomes pregnant accidentally, or decides to get pregnant, there is little she can do. No one knows what the risks for the child will be if a woman becomes pregnant accidentally while using an immunological method or is already pregnant without knowing it when she has the injection.

### Unpredictable effectiveness

These contraceptives depend on immune response, which varies from woman to woman. Users will not be able to know in advance exactly how long their birth control method will last or how well it will work. Some women might have a weak immune response, others an unusually strong response. A woman's immune response is affected by factors such as genetics, nutrition, infections, chronic disease, stress and fatigue. Different women have reacted differently in all of the trials.

The overall effectiveness of immunological contraceptives appears to be very poor compared to existing contra-

ceptives. In the phase 2 trials [in India], 40 percent of participants were not included in the calculation of the results because of an inadequate immune response; 20 percent never reached the level set by the researchers; and another 20 percent reached it for less than three months. The World Health Organization (WHO) phase 1 trials showed at most a promise of a six month contraceptive period after two injections, at the highest of five dose levels tested.

There is no argument for developing and marketing a contraceptive unless it offers an improvement of some sort over existing alternatives. Thus far, the contraceptive reliability of immunological contraceptives is much lower than that of hormonal contraceptives, IUDs, condoms, diaphragms, or fertility awareness methods.

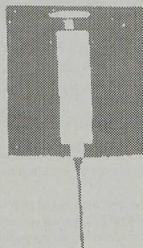
### Risks of harmful effects

Autoimmune disorders occur more often in women than men. Immunological contraceptives could lead to autoimmune disorders or worsening of existing autoimmune disease. The result of the first WHO clinical trials and some animal studies are worrying as they show some immune reactions to cells in the pancreas. These reactions are a sign that the contraceptive may be causing autoimmune attacks against other body organs.

### Unsuitable for the 1990s AIDS pandemic

A 1989 WHO symposium on immunological contraceptives recommended that they should not be among the preferred options for birth control in populations with a high prevalence of HIV infection as there are concerns about safety and efficacy in immunocompromised individuals [those with weakened immune systems].

Immunological contraceptives will provide no protection against any sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including the HIV virus.



### A design which makes abuse likely

Researchers are aiming for a method administered by a single injection which will be effective for up to two years. It will not be reversible during this time. If they reach this goal, immunological methods may be easily provided without a woman's informed consent. "My main fear is that the vaccine will be forced on people who lack information," says Gladys Siwela of Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange in Uganda.

The implantable contraceptive Norplant provides a vivid illustration of the possibilities for abuse. Studies in several countries have found that "removal on demand did not occur to the satisfaction of the user." In the USA, judges have sentenced women convicted of child abuse to Norplant. Immunological contraceptives would be even easier to provide without consent than Norplant as no surgery is needed. Women have had trouble getting Norplant taken out when they no longer want to use it; with immunological contraceptives, they will have no choice but to continue to use the method until the effects wear off.

### What these methods mean for users?

Based on current knowledge, immunological contraceptives will bring:

- unreliable protection against pregnancy;
- irreversibility during an unpredictable period of effectiveness;
- risks of autoimmune disease and other immunological adverse effects;
- unknown risks for children exposed before birth;
- possible interactions with malnutrition and disease;
- no protection against STDs, including AIDS; and
- a high potential for abuse.

For more information about the work of HAI-Europe and the Women's Health Action Foundation on immunological contraceptive methods and programs, write call or fax them at the following:  
HAI-Europe—address: Jacob van Lempekaade 334T, 1053 NJ Amsterdam, The Netherlands; telephone (+31) 20-683-36-84; fax (+31) 20-685-50-02. Women's Health Action Foundation—address: Postbus 4263, 1009 AG Amsterdam, The Netherlands; telephone: (+31) 20-665-20-02; fax: (+31) 20-665-30-02.

# COMMENTARY

**Backlash against the First Nations:**

## Never ending robbery

by Fay Blaney

In recent times, many disadvantaged groups have been able to put the almighty white middle-classed man in check with the strength and the correctness of our politics. As a Homalco First Nation woman, this has meant that it is easier for me to say when I was experiencing racism, classism and sexism.

But with the backlash of the reactionary right-wing, we have witnessed a move back to the way things used to be. It is again becoming acceptable for the rich to hoard; for the white fishermen to condemn Aboriginal people for exercising our right to fish; for the mega corporations to control state laws and institutions.

What is especially unnerving is the growth of this right-wing element in the form of a popular political party—the Reform party—with the support of the propaganda machinery of several radio stations here in Vancouver, and in the form of fundamentalist Christians and white supremacists, such as Charles Scott, who promote racism and hatred.

This is very sad for all people of colour. We remember the systems of domination in the colonial age, when it was acceptable for our oppressors to believe that Chinese, South Asians, Japanese, Blacks, Jews and Aboriginal people were inferior, and therefore, less worthy than white people.

For colonization and control of the land and resources to be successful, the Europeans had to destroy the many nations which occupied lands on the continents. The removal of our children from their families was one of the main strategies employed by the British colonizers.

Residential schools were created throughout North America, as well as on other continents. The first residential school in BC opened in 1861 and continued to operate until 1986. The violence, atrocities and torture committed by Arthur Plint brings to light the experiences that Aboriginal children had in the residential schools. [Plint was a supervisor for many years at the residential school in Port Alberni.]

The 1894 amendment to the Indian Act which made attendance at these institutions compulsory shows the degree of commitment the Canadian government had to the cultural genocide of the First Nations. While some Christians and academics have gone to great pains to highlight the benevolent intentions and benefits of these institutions, efforts of such First Nations as the Caribou Tribal Council have provided quite a different picture.

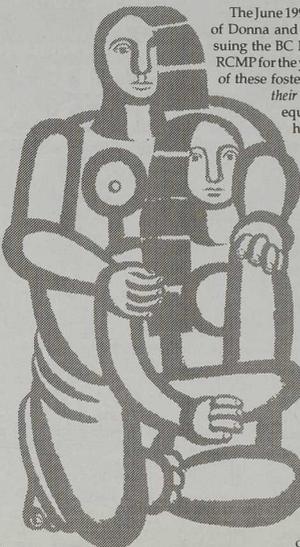
In her book, *Victims of Benevolence: Discipline and Death at the Williams Lake Indian Residential School: 1891-1920*, Elizabeth Furniss describes starvation, corporal punishment and forced labour that children endured. With the many attempts to run away, Furniss says that one boy in her study and likely several others died while trying to escape. She also says that a suicide pact between nine boys was the result of excessive beatings.

Conditions were such that some children chose death rather than existence under that system. What better way to gain control over an entire population than through our children.

The internment of First Nations children into residential schools overlapped with the kidnapping practices of the provincial child welfare authorities in Canada. Aboriginal children were taken in drastically large number in the 1960s, a time which became known as "the sixties scoop". Again, legislation and Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) policies showed a clear commitment to the cultural genocide of Aboriginal peoples. Although the 1951 amendment to the Indian Act legislated that provincial programs and services be provided to Native people as well, BC refused to administer these services unless DIA provided financial remuneration to the province to cover Aboriginal recipients.

In the early 1960s, a federal-provincial agreement was reached in which DIA agreed to pay BC for each child in the care of the Superintendent of Family and Child Services. Clearly, it was an impetus for social workers to apprehend and place Aboriginal children into white foster homes, rather than to implement support services for our families.

**Despite the fact that our textbooks do not provide this kind of information, we, First Nations women, know that these genocidal policies have been and continue to be levelled against us.**



The June 1995 issue of *Kinesis* reported the story of Donna and Marie Lewis, two sisters who are suing the BC Ministry of Social Services and the RCMP for the years of sexual abuse suffered in one of these foster homes. [The sisters recently settled their suit outside of court.] While inadequate information is available on this horrific legacy of generations of Native children, this experience is probably quite prevalent throughout the country.

The eugenics movement of the early 1900s is another poorly documented issue in the Aboriginal colonial experience. Scholars such as Angus McLaren have studied eugenics practices in Canada, but have only looked minimally at the numbers of Aboriginal people who were sterilized. During the Depression, both BC and Alberta passed sexual sterilization acts, which cleared the way for the sterilization of those deemed to be mentally defective. The Board of Eugenics in each province, made up of members of the ruling class, made the determination of whether an individual was "feeble-minded" or not, based upon the clearly culturally-biased test of the day.

McLaren states that in Alberta, of all those who were sterilized, 25 percent of these were Aboriginal people.

With the influx of people of colour immigrating into this part of the country, evidence indicates they were also the ones whose populations were being controlled to ensure "social order" and white dominance.

Despite the fact that our textbooks do not provide this kind of information, we, First Nations women, know that these genocidal policies have been and continue to be levelled against us. Many women of our families and our communities are unable to bear children because of forced sterilization. Because we have been denied our right to bear children, our right to raise our own children, and our right to maintain our cultural identity, we have been reluctant supporters of the feminist struggle for the right to choose birth control or abortion.

It is ironic that during the so-called "second-wave feminism" of the sixties, First Nations women suffered a second phase in the loss of our children. While state authorities persisted in the conspicuous implementation of its cultural genocidal laws and policies, ruling class women turned their backs on us while we were being annihilated. What is ever so frustrating is the fact that "first" and "second-wave" feminists spoke using race and class interests as a focal point, yet still today they are refusing to acknowledge current day issues of land claims and self-government.

While First Nations people are becoming much stronger and more vocal about our poverty, our experiences as recipients of cultural genocidal policies and the deliberate tactic designed to keep us in a position of disadvantage, the backlash against us is on the increase. Hatred of Aboriginal people can be found in the streets, on the radio and in the papers—a ploy designed to "manufacture [the] consent" of the Canadian public to extinguish Aboriginal rights and title to the land.

The media continually condemns us for "poaching" fish, and other wildlife, for scamming the welfare system, for blocking the roads, for demanding constitutional recognition for our title to the land, for demanding admissions for wrongdoing, *et cetera*, and yet our non-Aboriginal supporters are silent. The silence of our allies indicates that the gap has not yet been bridged.

While forced birth control and population control are being enforced upon the so-called Third World as a means of hoarding the wealth and resources, the Canadian government simply carries on its practice of dispossessing the First Nations—by robbing us of our ability to resist—through our children.

Fay Blaney is a member of the Homalco First Nation, member of the Indian Homemakers Association, currently pursuing a Master of Arts Degree at Simon Fraser University, and is mother of two.

**While First Nations people are becoming much stronger and more vocal about our poverty, our experiences... the backlash against us is on the increase.**

**The internment of First Nations children into residential schools overlapped with the kidnapping practices of the provincial child welfare authorities in Canada.**

# ARTS

Review of *Miscegenation Blues*:

## Identity, community, belonging

by Kay Pamala Ray

MISCEGENATION BLUES:  
Voices of mixed race women

edited by Carol Camper,  
Sister Vision Press, Toronto, 1994

The increasing visibility of racially mixed people challenges traditionally held notions about race. The presence of mixed race people breaks down the hierarchies of race and ideologies of white supremacy, troubling the whole notion of who belongs and who doesn't.

*Miscegenation Blues: Voices of Mixed Race Women* is a collection of writings by more than 40 women of mixed racial heritage. Carol Camper, who edited this anthology, is a mixed race woman of Black, white and Native North American ancestry. Camper explains that *Miscegenation Blues* emerged out of a deeply felt need of women "to end isolation and to understand racial multiplicity within our own bodies, families and cultures."

Camper is not a stranger to cultural isolation and loneliness. She was adopted as an infant, by a white family, and grew up in London, Ontario. Like many mixed race women, she looked different from the people she saw around

her, and consequently she began to question her background. What happens to your psyche and sense of self when your appearance, culture and community are not affirmed? Questions about who we are, who we look like and the longing for connections and community are some of the themes explored by the various writers in *Miscegenation Blues*.

Racism, colonialism, internalized racism, and family betrayal—these are some of the experiences that mixed race women discuss in *Miscegenation Blues*. For some of us who are mixed race, racism was not always learned on the streets, but learned at home. Home—that place which is supposed to provide safety—was the place where we learned race hatred. These betrayals are deep and lasting, and are explored poignantly in several pieces, including Nila Gupta's poem, "Rage is My Sister" and Lorraine Mention's "Journal Entry: Thoughts On My 'Mother,'" a short reflection on betrayal, misunderstanding and longing that arises out of the unexamined racial hatred that can happen in our own families.

Other sites of betrayal are in schoolyards, in children's words and in

children's games. Nona Saunders poem, "Children's Games," describes those summer days and schoolyard games, when the games are replaced by racial slurs.

Ijose, a poet and visual artist born in Nigeria—of a Nigerian mother and a Chinese father—writes of the violence of children hurling stones and name calling. In her short story, "Two Halves-One Whole," she also describes an encounter in an immigration office. Suspicion and mistrust define the moments of the encounter as the woman behind the desk wonders why a Black woman has a Chinese name. Was it marriage? Is it immigration fraud?



Carol Camper.  
Photo by Michael Chambers.

Not all of the poetry and prose deals with themes of pain and betrayal. However all of the pieces are a coherent whole that explores our divided sense of self, and our struggles for self-definition.

*Miscegenation Blues* represents a unique contribution to our emerging sense of Canadian cultural identity, and will be an important work in women's studies, cultural studies and literary studies classrooms for years to come. Most importantly, it is highly readable and should be of interest to all women who are interested in themes of identity, community and belonging.

Kay Pamala Ray is a mixed race woman of South Asian heritage, a mother of two and a graduate student living in Toronto. This is her first article for *Kinesis* and definitely not her last.

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# ARTS

Review of *Dream Girls*:

## Gender bending with papa's blessing?

by Laiwan

### DREAM GIRLS

Directed by Kim Longinotto and Jano Williams  
Screened in Vancouver at the Out On Screen Festival, June 1995

How to explain my feelings of exhilaration after viewing this documentary even though it shows evidence of a rigid, patriarchal tradition and the results of a Confucianism that affect the lives of generations of women?

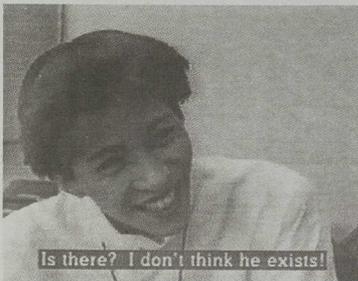
*Dream Girls* is about the Takarazuka School and Revue Company, which was started by the owner of the town's railroad — a Mr Kobayashi. His motive for starting the school was entirely capitalistic: to encourage more riders for his trains.

Entrance to study at this school is highly competitive and difficult. Girls come from all over Japan to try to make their dream of singing and dancing with the Takarazuka Revue come true. Only forty are chosen each year from thousands and the selection process is a highly emotional affair.

So is catching a glimpse of the star — usually the women who play male roles on stage. These stars are mobbed by hundreds of female fans in an adoring, pop-mania, screaming style every time they are in public. From schoolgirls to housewives, emotions of devotion, desire, loyalty and romance come pouring out of otherwise 'good,' reserved Japanese women. Stars receive thousands of letters, usually hand-delivered by fans, and bouquets of flowers that fill rooms.

So what is taught at this school? From the speeches of the headmaster and some of the classes, one would assume that this music-dance school only teaches highly ritualized cleaning methods along with highly defined roles of gender subjectivity to younger women by older Japanese men. From the beginning, these girls choose whether to be a player in male or female roles. These roles look stereotyped and one dimensional. But in a scene of older students tutoring the younger students in choreography, including gender role playing, we see how the students translate these stereotypes of gender for themselves. On stage, this results in performance where the highly defined gender roles become appropriated for the uses and fantasies of both actors and audiences, all women. Some scenes during performances are very sexual.

Even so, it seems the school does teach its students skills in performance and creativity. One scene that shows students learning a very subtle exercise in painting an imaginary scene and learning how to describe it without telling a story was so fascinating, I wondered how such an exercise is used for performance.



Above, top star Anju Mira talks about her future husband, while below, students at Takarazuka sing the school anthem. Video grabs courtesy WFMM.



This documentary is about paradox. On the one hand, the Takarazuka School is rigid and disciplined. The hierarchies that exist among the students remind me of the convent I attended in Southern Africa where mundane tasks were ritualized to teach discipline. An example in this film is where the first year students get down on hands and knees to pick up lint with gaffer tape. Along with this hierarchy at Takarazuka comes a strict indoctrination into the proper ways to take (or not take) space, to respect authority and to know your duties within these spaces — such as cleaning the gravesite of Mr Kobayashi, getting lessons in marching and bowing from the local military unit, or never leaving the rehearsal room with your back facing the room.

On the other hand, amid this rigidity and discipline, within their drab, gray uniforms and obedient conformity, these young women blossom as soon as they perform, like exultant butterflies freed from their tightly controlled cocoons. With majestic costumes and flamboyant feathers and props, all is sensual, seductive and awesome.

Even though the school's repertoire is limited to a genre like western theatrical musicals (similar to *West Side Story*, or *Cats*) and sometimes with content similar to Harlequin-type romances, the reality is these women can truly sing and

dance. They are beautiful, talented and know how to ham up their performances with the right amount of fun, pomp and seduction. It is dragging at its finest.

The two British women filmmakers have carefully woven scenes of this documentary together. Without explanations or outing of queeresses, they have created a documentary that is self-evident, stated by inference, of an undoubtedly queer subtext at the Takarazuka School. Western perspectives may get upset that the inference is not a more conscious statement or naming, but that necessity to explain and name in the east can be an insult because that being explained and named is so obvious. Here, the obvious is a blatant and enthusiastic adoration for women by women and a support of a gender bending culture.

Given that the film is a BBC production, it makes me wonder to what degree the filmmakers are outsiders to the culture portrayed in *Dream Girls*? What is revealed then by those being interviewed is limited by the assumptions and projections of what is deemed proper and respectable for the west to see.

As with all documentaries, this one creates its own fiction by the nature of what is omitted. By this I mean that within the limitations of, say, a patriarchal, homophobic environment, you will only succeed in getting certain types of statements during interviews — for example: getting married and moving on in life will be more commonly stated than, say, wanting to be a drag-king forever and living happily with your girlfriend. In the only statement from a Takarazuka graduate who used to be a player of male roles and is now a 'mature, married' woman, she describes the crisis point at age twenty-five for all performers and her choice to leave the school to get married.

This begs the question: where are all the other graduates and why does only one graduate speak? Maybe she was the only one who wanted to, or, maybe all the answers would have been redundant. However, I don't think that, after

this intense schooling in such a cultural environment, all these hundreds of women would make the same choice.

A subtle hint of other realities is made when current star Anju Mira states confidently: "Is there a man big enough to marry someone as selfish as me? Is there? I don't think he exists." Or, when a housewife joyfully admits her excited sensations when she first saw Anju Mira perform, how she steals away from home to see performances and to meet her friend to talk about Anju Mira along with other 'womantalk'.

The tradition of gender bending in Asian culture is old, as shown in Peking and Cantonese Operas or the mythologies of god-goddesses like Guan-Yin, who as a male deity transformed him/herself to become a female deity. Meanwhile, there is a contemporary nightclub for women in Japan where all the employees and performers are women in male dress and roles. Many of the clientele go there for an atmosphere of romance, to relax after work, and to not get harassed. What is revealed then in *Dream Girls* isn't really a surprise.

What is a surprise is how this school, under the strict rule of men, allows and nurtures these gender bending performances on such a grandiose scale. This is significant on a symbolic level because it makes visible complex questions about the sexuality of women. What is fascinating is how the stars of *Dream Girls* flip the construction of gender through their performances and how the flocks of audiences participate in this sabotage, and again, on this large scale.

What becomes evident is the understanding among performers and audience of the separateness between the 'real, practical' world these women are bound and controlled by, and the 'fantasy' world they imagine, create and live. The *Dream Girls* culture is about bringing all these worlds together, letting them exist and flourish within the real and the imaginary, within the sensual and the rigid, between the east and the west, within gender constructions. The paradox is our human ability to compromise ourselves, to be submissive and herded, and yet, still able to be challenged by a courageous spirit of resilience, within creativity and imagination, even under the strictest rule of patriarchy and capitalism.

In the end, what is exhilarating is seeing the social construction of women's identity and gender counterpointed with wonderfully, wild images of women breaking loose, singing and dancing, expressing desire and seduction... for other women... and all possible within the narrow definitions of the patriarch.

*Laiwan dreams of joining Takarazuka but is trapped in this current life as a writer / artist living in Vancouver.*

Reviewing the viewing of *When Night is Falling*:

## When dykes are stalking

by Sandra McPherson

WHEN NIGHT IS FALLING

directed by Patricia Rozema, 1995

My point of view and critique of *When Night is Falling* is twofold. The first has to do with the reviews and interviews of the film—how the film has been socially constructed and the second has to do with the film itself—how Rozema constructed her film. I want to raise some questions about the film I think all viewers and fans should be asking.

I read four reviews and interviews of *When Night is Falling*—in the *Georgia Straight*, the *Westender*, the *Vancouver Sun* and *Maclean's Magazine*—before seeing the premiere screening in Vancouver. They all pretty much summarize the film as a love story between a repressed, Catholic, heterosexual academic and an avant-garde, bold, lesbian circus performance artist. None of the reviews or interviews mentioned or asked Rozema about race.

Rozema deliberately casts a Black woman to play the role of Petra, the circus performer who seduces Camille, the white academic. So why did none of the reviewers think it important to question or mention the use of race in *When Night is Falling*, and why did Rozema want a Black woman to play the lesbian seductress role?

I asked white friends about the absence of dealing with the race issue in the reviews and they all basically said that race didn't matter. Inter-racial couples, they said, are not a big deal anymore. Granted all of my friends partners are

white, but they had friends who are in inter-racial relationships.

Pressing, I said: OK, but since this film is art and Rozema deliberately constructed a particular image, are we not forced to acknowledge that she was trying to convey something specific? One friend mentioned that she thought that it was sort of 'politically incorrect' these days to mention race. It really doesn't matter what colour the people are anymore. My friends all thought that I was trying to make something out of nothing.

But I think they're wrong. I even think that Rozema is kidding herself when she said in an interview with *Maclean's* that "[*When Night is Falling*] is a classical romance. I wanted to use all the old conventions with one key twist." Rozema too, does not want to deal with race. She wanted the lesbian relationship to be the "one key twist." For her to suggest that she can separate race and sexual orientation in Petra—the Black lesbian in the "lesbian" relationship—is indeed an old convention and a fantasy.

The reviewer in *Maclean's* wrote that "*When Night is Falling* represents a kind of coming out. She [Rozema] had wanted to make a lesbian romance for some time, she says, 'but earlier in my career, I didn't want to be known as the lesbian filmmaker.'" Even now, she remains wary of being typecast. "With this film, I'm introducing the subject of sexual preference, but I'm still uneasy about discussing mine publicly. I guess I would have called myself bi six or seven years ago. I don't know."

In the same article, Rozema adds that "since this subject isn't completely palatable, I wanted to make everything around it warm and easy to digest, as sensual as can be, admit in every frame that it's about pleasure." Who, we might ask, would find this subject not completely palatable, but still find sensual pleasure in every frame? Patricia Rozema! *When Night is Falling* is her own "lesbian" fantasy. Only a wannabe ("but I can't make up my mind") would portray lesbianism as something that happens to a het when she is being stalked by a dyke.

It is important to read Rozema's words and see her film to understand how deeply racial stereotypes are ingrained, accepted and not so innocently perpetuated in this culture. Rozema sees only one twist in her film—a 'love' relationship between two women.

It is clear that Rozema wanted her viewers to sit back and live the fantasy of being seduced by a lesbian. She made the lesbian Black so that she could use the old convention of using the Black woman as existing strictly to gratify the desires of whites. Rozema defined Petra as a Black lesbian so that she would not have to create a context or content for the character—she isn't real. So why does she not use a white lesbian? Petra could not have been white because the beautiful white women who travel with the circus are acrobats, or the wives, lovers and assistants to the magician or ringmaster—these women are real.

Rozema constructed Petra as some sort of sexually promiscuous nurse/

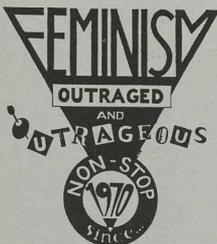
maid protector, who has some psychic ability to know that if she stalked Camille long enough, Camille would finally admit that she always wanted to be a lesbian and run away with the circus. Petra is predictable but coy as she starts rubbing Camille's leg, thigh, back, crawls up on the bed, lifts her shirt, and undoes her bra. The audience I saw it with saw that scene coming and they loved it. They were making noise, interacting with the film, gettin' into it.

Maybe I don't know what it's like to be starved for such an intimate scene between lesbian lovers on the big screen. That must be what the fans of the film around the world are celebrating, because the depiction of the Black woman in this film is stereotypical and racist, and that's nothing to celebrate or encourage.

OK, you might be saying that it's only a movie. Yes, it is only a movie but think about what I've written. Look at the kind of exploitation you are consuming as entertainment. It isn't by accident or coincidence that Petra is Black. Nor is it mere oversight that reviewers and interviewers do not mention race. The depiction of Black women as the transient, without family, freakish, exotic other is, sadly, so expected and accepted in this culture that few have deemed it necessary to discuss.

Sandra McPherson is a Canadian of Jamaican heritage who now lives in Vancouver.

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# ARTS

Press Gang Publishers:

## 20 years of taking risks

by Emma Kivisild

Allow me to praise the 70s. Allow me to wish I had been a lesbian leftist feminist artist then, in Vancouver, in what must have been heady times. In the 90s, the city is awash in 20th anniversaries—celebrations of institutions of national and international importance begun by various scruffy groups of idealists: *Kinesis* (1974), Vancouver Status of Women (1971), Vancouver Co-operative Radio (1975), Video In (1973), Western Front (1974)...

And of course Press Gang Printers and Publishers (1970 and 1975).

*Kinesis* readers will remember the demise of Press Gang Printers in 1993, [see *Kinesis*, October 1993] after 23 years as a worker-controlled print shop, and the last feminist worker-controlled print shop in North America.

Yet Press Gang lives on, as Press Gang Publishers, a consistently risk-taking collective, with an expanding list of diverse feminist writing. My personal involvement with Press Gang as an author (and sometime office help) is recent, but an honourable history stretches twenty years. From humble beginnings as a volunteer sub-group of the printers, Press Gang Publishers has gone on to carry 44 current titles, spanning fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. Two Press Gang poets are award winners (Joanne Arnott and Chrystos). Karlene Faith's *Unruly Women* won the 1994 Vancity Book Prize, and Kiss & Tell's *Her Tongue on my Theory* this year became the first Canadian title to win a Lambda [see *What's News*, page 9] literary award.

Impressive. Not to mention the intangibles—the commitment to putting out voices we rarely get to hear: of Native women, Black women, Asian women, ritual abuse survivors, lesbians... With such authors as Chrystos, Lee Maracle, Beth Brant, Anne Cameron, Ann Decker, Makeda Silvera, Betsy Warland, Marusya Bociurkiv and SKY Lee, to name a few. Most Press Gang authors defy categorization, straddling cultures, genres, and styles.

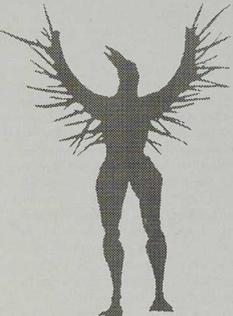
OK OK OK. But how did it get there from here? How did it start?

Press Gang Printers began in 1970, and became an all women's collective in 1974. A year later, in 1975, they decided to support local women writers by publishing books initiated by the collective.

"Pat Smith was the force behind the publishing," says long-time Press Gang worker Sarah Davidson. "There were lots of other women involved, but she had the vision."

Pat was a Press Gang Printers collective member who "got tired of printing all the time," says Penny Goldsmith, who helped with distribution in the publishers' early days. Davidson recalls that many Vancouver writers were self-publishing, using Press Gang as their printer, but not getting very good distribution.

The first book that finally came out under the Press Gang Publishers' imprint was *Women Look at Psychiatry*, edited by Dorothy Smith and Sara David.



In the early years as a publisher, the books came out irregularly—as time and money permitted, and as local feminist women came forward with manuscripts. Still, Pat Smith said, "If feminist publishing aims to uncover and transform the symbols that shape women's lives, then Press Gang is proficient, if not prolific." (Pat Smith was killed in a motorcycle accident in 1985.)

In 1982, the publishing collective began to operate separately within Press Gang, making its own decisions and managing its own finances, though the two collectives—printers and publishers—continued to share ideals and work space. The formal separation was necessary because of the different needs and timelines in printing and publishing—the immediacy of the work schedule for a printing job, as opposed to the longer process of editing, producing, and selling a book.

For several years, the work of the publishers was divided between a small (one, then two women) staff and a volunteer collective. As the business grew, this gradually became untenable, largely due to the high rate of volunteer turnover. In 1987, the decision was made to dissolve the volunteer component. The staff committed themselves to increasing the number of books published per year, and to working more as a business.

In 1988, Press Gang books stopped being printed "in house"—that is, Press Gang Printers no longer exclusively printed the books. This was a decision of financial necessity on the part of both the printers and publishers. In 1989, the publishing collective became registered as Press Gang Publishers Feminist Co-operative. And at the end of 1993, the Press Gang Printers closed its doors, the publishers moved out of the old press building on Powell Street to their own offices at 17th and Main.

Barbara Kuhne is the present Managing Editor. Asked why Press Gang continues at a time when small presses of all kinds are in trouble across Canada, she says "Yes, things have changed, and there are some opportunities out there with larger publishers. Some larger presses are developing lesbian lines of books, for example. But particularly some of the more radical books we've done might have had trouble finding



*Women Look at Psychiatry* edited by Dorothy E. Smith and Sara J. David, the first book published by Press Gang in 1975, and *Breasting the Waves* by Joanne Arnott, forthcoming this fall, celebrate 20 years of feminist publishing at Press Gang.

another publisher, small or large. At Press Gang we consider things like 'this is a real first, nothing like this has been done before.'"

Press Gang's genesis and survival is firmly planted in the we-can-do-it miraculously (there's no other word for it) women-in-print movement. Feminist publishing as we know it began in the early 70s as a stack of stapled pamphlets on literature tables at women's liberation events. Though the feminist print shops are gone now, they were an integral part of a network of printers, bookstores, and publishers that has defied financial and logistical obstacles to get feminist news and ideas out there when no one else would.

And sisterhood is not dead—feminist publishers help each other. For example, the Women's Press in Toronto and Press Gang had a co-distribution agreement for many years which expanded to include the first books out of Toronto-based Sister Vision: Black Women and Women of Colour Press.

Press Gang author Joanne Arnott points out that feminist publishers are essential for her to reach her audience. "My work very rarely appears in any kind of mainstream magazine. My audience reads feminist publications." She says Press Gang has offered her invaluable encouragement and support in developing manuscripts.

Press Gang's mission statement says they are "committed to publishing a wide range of writing by women which explores themes of personal and political struggles for equality." They prioritize Canadian women writers, and aim for an international market. In one document they say, "Publishing writing[s] by women who have had no previous publications, and producing books that are considered too 'risky' by mainstream publishers is an assumed part of our editorial policy. Clearly that is not all we aim to publish. [We] hesitate to say who our press speaks for:

Breasting the Waves

ON WRITING AND HEALING



Joanne Arnott



ultimately each book can only speak for itself. Each author is one voice, not a spokesperson for any community for women."

The chorus of these voices has become an invaluable addition to small press publishing and a transformative force for the legions of women reached by Press Gang books. For feminist writers, the press represents an opportunity to speak out without compromise.

Barbara Kuhne says, "I feel like I have a responsibility to our authors, and to the larger community that supports and reads our books. Authors are taking a lot of risks, both personally and professionally, as writers, and as artists. The larger community needs that diversity, needs the more radical books, needs the broad range."

Press Gang will celebrate their 20th anniversary with a gala event in November.

In 1975 Emma Kivisild was in high school in Calgary, Alberta, listening to Supertramp and watching Monty Python.

### Recently released and soon to be released books from Press Gang Publishers

#### Spring 1995

- *Where the Rivers Join: A Personal Account of Healing from Ritual Abuse* by Beckylane;
- *Choral* by Karen McLaughlin.

#### Fall 1995

- *Restricted Entry: Censorship on Trial* by Janine Fuller and Stuart Blackley;
- *When Fox is a Thousand* by Larissa Lai;
- *Bending at the Bow* by Marion Douglas;
- *Fire Power* by Chrystos;
- *Breasting the Wave: On Writing and Healing* by Joanne Arnott;
- *Large Print Edition of Daughters of Copper Woman* by Anne Cameron.

# ARTS

Review of The Legacy of Malthus:

## Pop goes the theory

by Deblekha Guin

### THE LEGACY OF MALTHUS

Directed / written by Deepa Dhanraj  
Associate director: Mary Daniel  
For BBC Developing Stories, 1994

In many respects, *The Legacy of Malthus* picks up where *Something Like a War* (1991) left off. *Something Like a War* is the powerful and disturbing documentary by Indian filmmaker Deepa Dhanraj which looks at coercive sterilization programs in India aimed at poor women. It screened across Canada in 1992 at various alternative and progressive spaces, and has since become an essential resource for people interested in learning more about the global impact of new reproductive technologies (NRTs).

In *Legacy of Malthus*, Dhanraj joins forces with Vancouver-based filmmaker Mary Daniel to create a documentary tackling the broader historical and global context of the politics of poverty and population control.

As the title suggests, *The Legacy of Malthus* critically examines the historical origins and continued legacy of the argument that overpopulation is the primary cause of poverty—an argument first put forward by Thomas Malthus, a political economist writing at the turn of the 18th century. By blaming the 'excessive' breeding of the poor and the 'unfit' for the economic and social tensions emerging in the newly industrialized

Britain of the 1700s, his theories offered a convenient moral justification to those whose interests lay in preserving their privileged positions in the rapidly widening gap between rich and poor.

Nearly 100 years later, the vested interests in supporting this theory remain much the same. But one of the differences is that today, western and "third world" elites use the alleged population explosion to explain not only hunger and poverty, but unemployment and environmental degradation as well.

The two main 'story lines' threading through *The Legacy of Malthus* explore alternative explanations of poverty, destitution and environmental destruction—problems that have been and continue to be ascribed to overpopulation.

The first story, told through archival photographs and dramatic reenactment, documents the ordeals of an early 19th century peasant community in the Scottish Highlands. The peasants were evicted from their homes and land and replaced by (more profitable) sheep.

The second story, told through the compelling accounts of rural women in Rajasthan, India, is the present-day tale of women attempting to resist the commercial exploitation of common lands and subsistence resource-based economy.

As the stories unfold, we learn of the tragedies and ordeals caused by the appropriation of common land and the environmental degradation created by the introduction of inappropriate agricultural technologies by western development organizations. The film also portrays the gradual dissolution of subsistence-based living and the increased dependency of the communities on a cash economy (promoted by western-controlled aid organizations like the International Monetary Fund).

In the film, we are introduced to Gyarsi Bai, one of the 40 Rajasthani women who, armed with fence posts, heroically fought to reclaim a small portion of their appropriated land. At one point, she asks in bewilderment why, when one considers all of the conditions which cause her poverty, "are the rich so concerned about the sterilization of women like me?" Later in the film, she answers her own question: "They're afraid of us. If we increase in numbers, we might demand what they have."

Throughout the film, these sorts of accounts are intercut with clips of advertisements (sponsored by organizations such as the Population Council) which promote the importance of "making the population crisis an international priority." One ad features US actor Charlton Heston talking about how "helping them (as we are shown images of hordes of generic brown people) con-

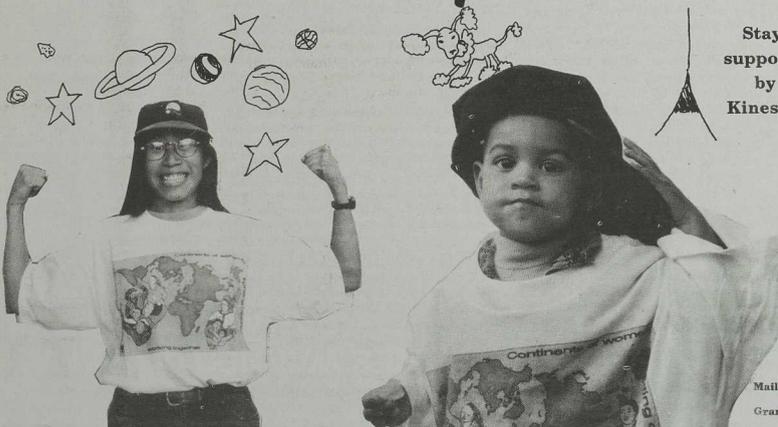
trol the size of their families is the only chance of preventing catastrophe for all." Within the context of the rest of the film, these ads expose the absurdity of treating population as the primary problem of 'development.' They also make the racism at work in the population control propaganda unquestionably clear. In addition, they help illustrate the insidious ways in which the rhetoric of 'helping others' can be used to help ourselves, and obscure the inequitable social and economic relations underlying the problems that population is said to cause.

By blending the personal accounts, critical historical analysis, and a sampling of propaganda campaigns, *The Legacy of Malthus* is an incisive and moving look at modern population control programs, the agendas that lurk behind their operation, and the often brutal means used to execute them.

For more information about *The Legacy of Malthus* and/or how to get a copy of it, call Mary Daniel at (604) 879-4652.

Deblekha Guin is a South Asian communications student at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. She co-organized the *Spectacular State Anti-Fascism* series in Vancouver, which included two panels on eugenics, population control and NRTs. She would like to thank Mary Daniel for generously sharing her research information on these subjects.

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Portrayal of women in Indian cinema:

# Profiting from pain

by Aradhana Seth  
as told to Fatima Jaffer

Aradhana Seth is a documentary filmmaker from India, whose credits include *Invisible Hands*, *Art for Cry*, and *Juvenile Justice*. She is currently working on the South Asian section of the Women's Global Film Project, a five-part documentary series on the major contributions women have made to global progress. The series is being produced by Maryland Public Television in the US and upon completion, is slated to be shown on 300 public broadcasting stations.

Last March, Seth gave a presentation at the UNESCO International Symposium on Women and the Media in Toronto titled, "Women's Image in Developing Countries." In it, she pointed to the new trend of women-oriented films, noting that the only accepted alternative to the portrayal of women as the objects of male sexual fantasy is the portrayal of women as "beaten, broken, humiliated" victims of male oppression.

To illustrate her point, she looked at how the film *Bandit Queen* profits from the portrayal of woman as victim. *Bandit Queen* claims to be a true story of Phoolan Devi, a lower-caste woman bandit in India who spent ten years in prison for the murder of 30 high-caste men, crimes she says she did not commit. The film essentially tells the story of a woman who is repeatedly raped and eventually guns down her rapists.

Producers of *Bandit Queen* say they based the film on oral diaries made by Phoolan Devi while she was in prison, which were transcribed into a book by Mala Sen. [Devi is illiterate.] But Phoolan Devi has criticized the film as not being an accurate representation of her true story. She was not shown the film before it was released.

*Bandit Queen* drew huge crowds at last year's Toronto and Vancouver International Film Festivals [see *Kinesis*, November 1994] and is currently playing at theatres in some North American cities. Seth points out that while *Bandit Queen* has been hailed as the definitive feminist film from India, it is in fact a reincarnation of the long-favoured, stereotypical tradition of rape-and-retribution films in popular cinema. Ultimately, she argues, the "market" continues to be the determining factor in how women's lives are depicted in the media.

Fatima Jaffer: At the symposium on women and the media, someone pointed out that we should be discussing the issue of who owns the media and who profits from images of women...

Aradhana Seth: As a TV-filmmaker, I'm always nervous about taking a camera and photographing people because of the issue of privacy. On the other hand, if it doesn't get done, it'll never get shown. For example, when somebody finally did a good report on what was happening in Rwanda, it mobilized a lot of people to pay attention.

The question is, how do you tell an honest story without victimizing the person, or making it slushy and sweet. You have a responsibility to the person you're filming, to your audience, and to the message you're giving out.

Jaffer: In your presentation, you mention that the male filmmakers of *Bandit Queen* are profiting from what is essentially a revictimization of Phoolan Devi. The film is receiving a lot of attention, and *Time Magazine* in the US even named it among its top ten films of 1994.

Seth: There have been rave reviews of the film in the West and in India...that also say...this is among the best films to come out of India. An extremely well known reviewer in England, Derek Mann, wrote that if the film hadn't said "This is a true story," at the beginning of the film, it might have been too unimaginable a story to take seriously.

I don't believe I would have taken this film as seriously as I have if it wasn't supposed to be based on a true story. I was really curious to see the film because it was based on Phoolan Devi's story.

Jaffer: In the book written by Mala Sen, Phoolan Devi says she did not want to talk about being raped, yet the alleged rapes are central to the film.

Seth: Ultimately, the issue is not about whether Phoolan Devi was raped or whether she murdered the men who raped her. The issue is, can you take somebody's life and, without her consent, use it. Phoolan Devi did not want to talk about whether she was raped, and the filmmaker made a film about her without even meeting her. How

**The issue is,  
can you take  
somebody's life  
and, without her  
consent, use it.**

could you do justice to the story? You have to put it into a context.

On some level, every film about a living person is going to get flak, but something like this is going too far. As it is, women are reluctant to come out and speak about rape because there's such a stigma against it. Now someone could make a film about it for a ticket-buying audience who could [in turn] say, "I'd like to see her being raped 16 times," or something.

Jaffer: You used *Bandit Queen* as an example of a message you wanted this forum to address. Could you tell us what that was?

Seth: There are three messages. One is that cinematically, this film is an art-house remake of the regular rape-and-retribution film seen in Indian cinema. It's a mainstream film with a slightly non-mainstream look, and because of that, people are seeing it as this brilliant masterpiece.



Aradhana Seth  
Photo by Fatima Jaffer.

Just because the woman sits on a horse, wears trousers and uses language women aren't supposed to use, it seems different. What also bothers me about the film is that Phoolan Devi is a bandit, yet the times we see her in a raid she's doing something benevolent, like handing an ankle back to a little girl and saying, "Keep that for your wedding." It's stereotypical.

The other thing that bothered me was the scene where she is married off. Later her husband takes another wife. After she becomes a bandit, she goes back to that village and whips him. In the book, she also whips his new wife. The film doesn't show that because, from the filmmaker's point of view, women shouldn't lash out at other women. If they had shown this, Phoolan Devi wouldn't be pitied by the audience because she's a bad woman for beating up this other woman.

At another point, Phoolan's bandit lover is showing her not only how to use a gun, but how to live in the ravines. But she has lived and worked in and already knows the ravines. He doesn't have to teach her. It's like you living in Toronto and somebody comes along and says, "Come, I'll show you how to take a subway."

Jaffer: What's your second message?  
Seth: It is the issue of whether you can show a woman's rape, [and if so,] how you do it, and whether you have to have her consent to do so. I don't think the filmmakers expected Phoolan Devi to be released from prison [after the film was shot] and to start talking publicly against the film. If she hadn't done that, the issue of consent and other concerns surrounding the film would not have blown up to this extent.

The filmmakers haven't shown her the film. They screened it for the "beautiful people" [mostly upper class/caste

elite], and then said, "She didn't want to see the film."

Jaffer: The director says he invited Phoolan Devi to see the film in Cannes but she couldn't travel...

Seth: She doesn't have a passport [as a former prisoner] and he knew that. But the first time he showed the film in Delhi, it was in a cinema a stone's throw from where Phoolan Devi lives, but she wasn't told it was showing.

Jaffer: What is your third message?

Seth: The issue of the rights to somebody's story when she may not have a sense of her own rights. The question is, would they have made a film like that about me? They would have been scared to do that. But Phoolan Devi is illiterate and was in prison when the film was being made.

It's not just an issue of the rapes. The caste portrayal in the film is also incorrect. She's going to have to face the consequences of what they portrayed, not only because the film says, "This is a true story," but because film is such a powerful medium that the film story becomes the "true" story regardless of the story itself.

Jaffer: One of the recommendations made at this symposium is "to promote the true image of women." During one of the debate sessions, someone raised an objection, asking how and who will define that "true" image, whose truth will it be, and do we even want to come up with a "true image" of women. Can there be a true definition given sexism in societies...

Seth: ...and women's own socialization?

Jaffer: Exactly. As a responsible woman filmmaker who is trying to change the stereotypes and images of women in media, what does one do to ensure women are not victimized by the medium itself?

Seth: That's a damn tough question. One is always aware you're falling into some trap. You start with the truth. You don't distort facts.

Jaffer: Is this why you work in documentary?

Seth: Even documentary has a lot of problems because you're real one in a room with this technology making decisions. The question is, do you only make films about people who are similar to you? Do you make films about people who have a different situation from yours, perhaps a different educational background? How do you do it and still keep their own story base?

I'm aware of what I want to hear or that the way I see something may be completely different, so I try to condition my mind to those possibilities. You also have to think about why you decided to make a film about a particular person or a particular issue. You have to take responsibility for that because, no

(Continued in SETH page 24)



# 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.

## INVOLVEMENT

### WANNA GET INVOLVED?

With *Kinesis*? We want to get involved with you too. Help plan our next issue. Come to the Writers' Meeting on Tues Aug 1, 7pm at our office, 301-1720 Grant St, Vancouver. If you can't make the meeting, but still want to write, call us, 255-5499. No experience is necessary, all women welcome. Childcare subsidies available.

### CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

Are you interested in finding out how *Kinesis* is put together? Well...just drop by during our next production dates and help us design and lay out Canada's national feminist newspaper. Production for the September issue is from Aug 16-22. No experience is necessary. Training and support will be provided. If this notice intrigues you, call Lillian at 255-5499. Childcare subsidies available.

### WOMEN IN BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Seeking women in business...with an eye for the social—as well as financial—bottom line. The Vancouver Status of Women is compiling a directory of women in business who incorporate their social principles into their business practices. For more info or for our self-audit questionnaire, call 255-5511 or write VSW at 301-1720 Grant St, Vancouver, BC, V5L 2Y6.

### 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 volun-

## INVOLVEMENT

teers plan events, lead groups, raise funds, answer the phone lines, organize the library, help connect women with the community resources they need, and other exciting tasks! The next volunteer potluck and orientation will be on **Thurs Jul 20** at 7 pm at VSW, 301-1720 Grant St. For more info call Jennifer at 255-5511. Childcare subsidies available.

### HEY VSW VOLUNTEERS

All VSW and *Kinesis* volunteers are invited to gather at VSW, 301-1720 Grant St, Vancouver, on the first Thursday of every month to share stories, make new friends, and listen to interesting speakers from our communities. Invite other women who may be interested to join us. The next gathering is a volunteer picnic **Thurs Jul 6**, 2-7pm at Trout Lake Park. Join us for food, fun and a scavenger hunt. 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 Michele at 255-5511.

### FEMINIST NETWORKING

Feminist Networking group meets once a month. Call Michele for more info at 255-5511.

### ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING

The Vancouver Status of Women's Assertiveness Training Program will be starting soon. If you would like to volunteer or participate please call 255-5511.

## EVENTS

### HOT FLASHES CAFE

Women are invited to a new hangout in Victoria, Hot Flashes Women's Cafe, to be open for women-only on the last Friday of the month from 8-11 pm. (Next dates are **Jul 28** and **Aug 25**). The Cafe features outrageous desserts and fresh coffees. The Cafe is located at St. Alban's Church, 1468 Ryan St. Admission is \$2.

### CARIBBEAN DAYS FESTIVAL

This year's *Caribbean Days Festival* events include Plazarama **Sat Jul 29** at the Plaza of Nations, Vancouver from 5pm-midnight with a steel band, reggae groups, a Latin band, limbo dancers and more. Advance tickets are \$20; for children \$10. The festival continues on **Sun Jul 30** at Waterfront Park, Lonsdale Quay in North Vancouver from 11am-7pm featuring a family day of fun, foods, music, dancing, and arts and crafts. For more info call 278-1300.

### LYDIA KWA

Lydia Kwa, author of *The Colours of Heroines*—her first collection of poetry, will be reading **Tues Aug 8** at 7:30 pm at Women in Print, 3566 West Fourth Ave, Van. For more info call 732-4128.

### SINGLE MOTHERS PICNIC

The 10th annual *YWCA Single Mothers Picnic* will take place on **Sat Jul 8** at Central Park in Burnaby from 11 am-3pm. All women in the Single Mothers Group Network are welcome! There will be games, food, face painting, and art for kids!

### WOMEN IN COMEDY

This year's *Vancouver International Comedy Festival* takes place from **Jul 27-Aug 6**. The festival begins with "Women in Comedy", featuring some of today's brightest rising female stars on the comedy circuit **Thurs Jul 27** at the Arts Club Revue, on Granville Island.

### WEST KOOTENAY WOMEN'S FESTIVAL

The *West Kootenay Women's Festival* will be held from **Aug 11-13** in the beautiful Slocan Valley. A genuine Kootenay event by, for and about Kootenay women, featuring a literary cabaret, dancing, workshops, a craft fair, an off-site children's festival, and concert. Camping is permitted. For more info call (604) 352-9916.

### TANGLED SHEETS LAUNCH

*Tangled Sheets*, stories and poems of lesbian lust edited by Rosamund Elwin and Karen X. Tulchinsky and published by Women's Press in Toronto, will be launched in Vancouver **Sat Jul 29** at The Lotus, 455 Abbott St, 7:30 pm. The launch will include readings by contributors: Chrystos, Kiss & Tell, C. Alyson Lee, Karen X. Tulchinsky and Jana Williams. Admission is by donation. Proceeds will go to the Little Sister's Defense Fund.

### EROTIC READINGS BY WOMEN

West Coast Women & Words presents *Hot Summer Night...Erotic Readings by Women*, **Fri Aug 25** 7:30-10pm at Cafe Deux Soleils, 2076 Commercial Dr, Van. Admission is by donation. For more info call 730-1034.

### DYKE WORDS

*Dyke Words*, readings by local dyke writers, featuring Jackie Haywood, Tova Fox and Weatiz will be held **Thurs Jul 6**, 8:00 pm at The Lotus, 455 Abbott St, Van. Admission is \$1-4 sliding scale.

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# BULLETIN BOARD

## EVENTS

### JENA HAMILTON

Jena Hamilton, author of *July Nights*, will be reading **Tues July 11** at 7:30 pm at Women in Print, 3566 West Fourth Ave, Van. For more info call 732-4128.

### GRRRRLS WITH GUITARS

Grrrrs with Guitars features Evani Goll and 10ft. Henry **Wed Jul 26**, 10pm at The Lotus, 455 Abbott St, Van. And Sandy Scofield, Carmen, Dhyan Roberts and The Insnormics **Mon Jul 31**, 10pm at The Railway Club, 579 Dunsuir St, Van. Tickets for both events are \$3-\$5.

### BUMBERSHOOT

*Bumbershoot*: the Seattle Arts Festival's 25th anniversary celebration will be held from **Sep 1-4** at the Seattle Centre. The festival will feature fifteen outdoor and indoor stages with over 500 Northwest, national and international artists in all genres of performing, literary and visual arts. Amazing roster includes 10,000 Maniacs, Michelle Shocked, Ani DiFranco, and many more. Tickets are affordable and accessible. For more info call (206) 682-4-FUN.

### AMAZING GREYS III

*Amazing Greys III*: celebrating the adventure of aging, will be held from **Sep 29-Oct 1** at the Island Hall Beach Resort, Parkville, BC. This is a cooperative festival featuring workshops, networking, a Croning Ceremony, and more. To register or for more info write Else Kennedy, 2871 Henry Road, RR #1, Chemainus, BC, V0R 1K0, or call or fax her at (604) 246-3347. Registration is limited.

### NOT SO STRICTLY BALLROOM

Lesbians of all ages practicing jive, rumba, tango, cha cha, two step and other dance steps - will be holding a 6 week dance session on **Wed evenings** starting **July 5**. If you're interested, call Hazel at 255-1937.

## EVENTS

### NORTHAMPTON LESBIAN FESTIVAL

The 6th Annual *Northampton Lesbian Festival* will be held **Jul 14-16** in Northampton, MA. Workshops, a craft fair, and evening performances at five indoor venues. For more info, call (413) 586-8251.

### MICHIGAN WOMYN'S FESTIVAL

The *Michigan Womyn's Music Festival* will be held **Aug 8-13** in Ocean County, Michigan. Performers include Mary Watkins, the Topp Twins, Holly Near, Linda Tilley, Margie Adam, Kate Clinton, and many more. Workshops on women's culture, politics, organizing and healing. Details about performances, workshops, childcare, accessibility, and registration can be found by contacting WWTMC, Box 22, Walhalla, MI 49458 or by calling (616) 757-4766. Tickets range from \$40 for 1 day to \$250 for 6 days, sliding scale.

### HARRISON FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

The *Harrison Festival of the Arts* will be held from **Jul 8-16** in Harrison Hot Springs, BC. This festival brings together a celebration of world music, theatre, dance and visual arts. For more info and tickets call (604) 796-3664, or write Harrison Festival of the Arts, Box 399, Harrison Hot Springs, BC, V0M 1K0.

### THEY'RE BACK!

The Topp Twins, popular yodelling lesbians from New Zealand, bringing new music, humour, traditional Maori songs and harmonies that will tear your heart out! **Wed Aug 2**, 8 pm at VECC, 1895 Venables. Tickets \$12-\$16: Women in Print, Little Sisters, Urban Empire; for credit card reservations; VECC 254-9578.

### DO YOU WANNA DANCE?

You're invited to A Women's Tea Dance and Sounds & Furies' 5th Birthday Party. **Sun July 2**, Strathcona Community Centre, 601 Keefer (at Princes) Festivities include dance music by DJ Dorothy, live lessons with Gwen, door prizes, food and drink bar, 50/50 draw and lots of wimmin! A fundraiser for the '95 Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade. Advance tickets: \$8 at Women in Print, Urban Empire, or Little Sister's. \$10 at the door. Info: 253-7189.

## GROUPS

### WOMYN OF COLOR GROUP

A womyn of color group is looking for members. The group is involved in theatre, reading group, anti-racism work, community education and various other things. Please phone Taylor for more information at 876-5840.

### VANCOUVER LESBIAN CONNECTION

The Vancouver Lesbian Connection (VLC) is undertaking a 12-month project on violence in lesbian relationships. We want to hear from lesbians who have been abused by their partners. The VLC is also looking for lesbians who want to join our Violence in Lesbian Relationships committee. The first meeting will be **Wed Jul 5**, 6:30-8:30pm. For more info about both these projects call Tina or Sonya at 254-8458.

### POWELL STREET FESTIVAL

*Powell Street Festival*, an annual celebration of Japanese Canadian culture, to be held in Vancouver **Aug 5-6** is looking for volunteers before and during the festival. If interested call 682-4335.

### VANCOUVER PRIDE SOCIETY

Registration forms are now available for this year's Vancouver Gay Pride parade which will take place **Mon Aug 7**. Entry form are available from Little Sister's Bookstore, the Gay and Lesbian Centre, Harry's off Commercial, or by contacting the Pride Society at 684-2633. The Pride Society is also seeking submissions from performers for the Pride Day Concert at Sunset Beach park following the parade.

### BATTERED WOMEN'S SUPPORT SERVICES

Battered Women's Support Services (BWSS) will be offering volunteer group facilitator and peer counsellor/advocate training in the fall. If you are interested in working with battered women as a volunteer at BWSS and would like to be considered for the training program, call 687-1868 for an application form. **Deadline for applications is Aug 25.**

### LEGAL CLINICS

Battered Women's Support Services (BWSS) and the UBC Law Students Legal Advice Program are co-sponsoring free legal clinics for women to be held every **Wed** from 2-8pm until **Aug 9**. For more info or to make an appointment call BWSS at 687-1867.

## SUBMISSIONS

### MAKE US LAUGH

The Federation of BC Writers is holding its annual Canada-wide literary competition, *Literary Writes IX*. This year's focus is "Make us Laugh". The Federation invites submissions of up to 2000 words of humorous fiction or nonfiction, or a maximum 36 lines of comic poetry. First prize is \$500 and publication in *Wordworks*. For a complete list of competition rules, send a SASE to Federation of BC Writers, 4th Fl-905 W Pender St, Vancouver, BC, V6C 1L6. **Deadline is Sep 8.**

### EROTIC READINGS

West Coast Women & Words invites women writers/poets/performers to participate in *Hot Summer Night... Erotic Readings by Women*, **Fri Aug 25** at Cafe Deux Soleils, 2076 Commercial Drive, Van, 7:30-10pm. Mixed audience, ten minutes per reader. Advance booking required, leave name, number, date/time of call at 730-1034 before **Aug 11**.

### ABUSIVE FATHERS

Often children are forced by the courts to visit or live with abusive fathers. I am writing a paper, possibly a book, based on the experiences of adults and teens, men and women, who, like me, experienced this as children. This paper will be used to advocate, educate, and work towards change and the protection of children. If you were abused by your father on access visits or if your abusive dad got custody of you, and you would be willing to share your thoughts and experiences, contact Nicole at the Custody and Access Support and Advocacy Network in Vancouver 734-5722. Completely confidential and anonymous.

### LESBIANS AND POLITICS

Canadian Woman's Studies/Les Cahiers de la Femme is calling for submissions for their Winter 1995 focussing on the question: Is there a lesbian politic? Essays, research reports, true stories, poetry, cartoons, drawings and other artwork are welcome. For more info and submission requirements write or call Canadian Woman Studies, 212 Founders College, York University, 4700 Keele St, North York, ON M3J 1P3, (416) 736-5356, fax (416) 736-5765. **Deadline is Sep 15.**

### FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL

Submissions are now being accepted for the sixth annual *St. John's International Women's Film and Video Festival*, to be held **Oct 12-15**. For more info write to PO Box 984, St. John's, Newfoundland, A1C 6C2, call (709) 772-0358, or fax (709) 772-4808. **Deadline is Fri Jul 14.**

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# BULLETIN BOARD

## SUBMISSIONS

### QUEER WOMEN'S SHORTS

Out West Performance Society is looking for short plays, 15 to 30 minutes, by queer women for their 1996 season. All submissions will receive a written assessment. Works which have not been produced before are of special interest. Send scripts to: *Queer Women's Shorts*, The Dramaturgical Committee, Out West Performance Society, P.O. Box 93582, Nelson Park Postal Outlet, Vancouver, BC, V6E 4L7. Deadline for submissions is Aug 31.

### WOMEN IN VIEW

Applications are now available for participation in the 8th Annual *Women In View Festival* to take place **Jan 24-27, 1996**. The festival showcases work initiated by women in the performing arts, both emerging and established. For more info, write to *Women In View*, 314 Powell St, Vancouver, BC, V6A 1G4, call (604) 685-6685, or fax (604) 683-6649. Deadline for applications is Aug 31.

### YOUNG WOMEN

Seeking published and unpublished short stories, poetry, non-fiction and creative non-fiction on any subject for an anthology of young women writers under the age of 30. This book will examine the issues important to the daughters of the second wave of the women's movement. Send work, short bio, including age, and a SASE to *Daughters of the Revolution*, Sarah Katherine Brown, PO Box 385, Kingston, Ont, K7L 4W2. Deadline is Oct 15.

### WOMEN OF COLOUR

Sister Vision Press is inviting women of colour under 30 to submit poetry, stories or journal entries on experiences of incest and sexual abuse for a new anthology. Please send hard copy or work on IBM disk with SASE to Sister Vision Press, PO Box 217, Stn E, Toronto, Ont, M6H 4E2. Deadline is Sep 30.

### YOUNG LESBIANS AND BISEXUALS

*Wet Behind the Ears: An Anthology About Young Lesbian and Bisexual Women* is seeking submissions of poetry, erotica, photography, art, essays, comics, prose, and short stories from women aged 26 years or younger. Submissions should be no longer than 2500 words or 10 pages. Send submissions and a short bio to The In Your Face Collective, c/o Women's Press, 517 College St, Suite 233, Toronto, Ont, M6G 4A2. Deadline is Oct 15.

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## Homesharing Network For Single Mothers

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photos: Mona Oikawa by Fatima Jaffer / Sawagi Taiko by Linda Chlief

### POWELL STREET FESTIVAL

This year, catch the powerful drumming of Sawagi Taiko while enjoying the sun, food and games. Sawagi is Canada's only all-women taiko group. Also a treat will be seeing writer Mona Oikawa, the co-author of *All Names Spoken* published by SisterVision Press, at the Powell Street Festival writer's events.

The 19th annual *Powell Street Festival*, a celebration of Japanese Canadian culture, will be held in Vancouver Aug 5-6 from 11:30am to 7:30pm each day at Oppenheimer Park (400 block of Powell St). This year's festival also includes special guest artists: the Oyoyo Sisters, Kyo MacLear and the Northwest Asian American Theatre. For more info call 682-4335.

## CLASSIFIEDS

### BACK-TO-SCHOOL GUIDE

*The Back-to-School Survival Guide for Women*, published by the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women, is intended to help women make informed choices about learning. Available for \$10 plus \$3.75 shipping and handling. While supplies last, women who cannot afford the cost can receive a free copy. Please phone 271-2665 or toll free at 1-800-665-8002.

### GENERAL PRACTITIONER

Joan Robillard, MD, Obstetrics, General Practitioner for all kinds of families is now located at 203-1750 E 10th Ave, Van. Phone 872-1454, fax 872-3510.

### WOMEN ONLY WORKOUT

Trout Lake Fitness Centre is offering an all women's workout evening **Tuesdays**, from 7:30 to 9:30 pm, beginning **Jul 11** for a trial period of six weeks. Check out the stairmasters, concept II rower, bikes, apex equipment, free weights, sauna and whirlpool. Workout out in a comfortable relaxing atmosphere. Drop in is \$3.55 at 3350 Victoria Drive, Van. For more info call 876-9285.

### EXCELLENT ENERGY AND BODYWORK

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### MICHIGAN WOMYN'S FESTIVAL

Organizing a carpool. If you are driving and have space for others, or you need a ride please phone Taylor at 876-5840.

## CLASSIFIEDS

### KARATE FOR WOMEN

Shito-ryu taught by female black belts. Learn a martial art for self defense, fitness, self confidence! At the YWCA, 535 Hornby. **Mon, Tues, Thurs, 7:15-9 pm. \$45/month.** Beginner groups start **Jul 4, Aug 1, Sep 5, Oct 2.** Call 872-7846.

### ROOMMATES WANTED

Feminist collective wants two women to join two male and one female community activists within an adult homelife. Clean house at Nanaimo station. Smoking, gay/straight, immigrants welcome. No pets. Rent/Utilities \$320, plus food. Call Ema or Marcel 874-9048.

### SPINSTERVALE

Are you travelling on Vancouver Island or need country retreat? Rustic cabin for rent; sleeps two. \$7.50 per person/night. Also, work exchange offered; food and accommodation for three hours/day. Workshop space available. Call Sunshine or Liberty at 248-8809.

### GUEST HOUSE FOR WOMEN

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## CLASSIFIEDS

### WOMENFRIENDS MUSIC CAMP

Enjoy a weekend with women where your infinite creativity and musicality can find expression. Play, sing, chant, jam, perform, compose, meditate, give or take a workshop, or simply relax. **Nov 3, 4, 5, 1995.** Camp Alexandra, Crescent Beach. Sliding fee \$150-\$250 including catered meals and accommodations. For more information and registration call Penny Sidor at 251-4715.

### LYDIA KWA, PSYCHOLOGIST

I'm pleased to announce the opening of my private practice in clinical psychology (Granville Island office). I'm a feminist therapist and I work with clients on a variety of issues. I welcome new clients, especially survivors, gays and lesbians, women of colour, artists and writers. Call 255-1709.

### SOCIAL GROUP

Looking for womyn interested in weekend social outings with other womyn to go camping, hiking, rollerblading, kayaking, etc. (Mainly outdoor recreational type activities.) Phone Taylor at 876-5840.

### SALT SPRING RENTAL

Salt Spring. Two bedroom house from **Sep 1st/15th**. Recently constructed Beddis Rd house with ocean view, beach access and gardens. Appliances, wood stove. \$800.00 per month, lease available, ref required. Call 1-604-255-6240 evenings.

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