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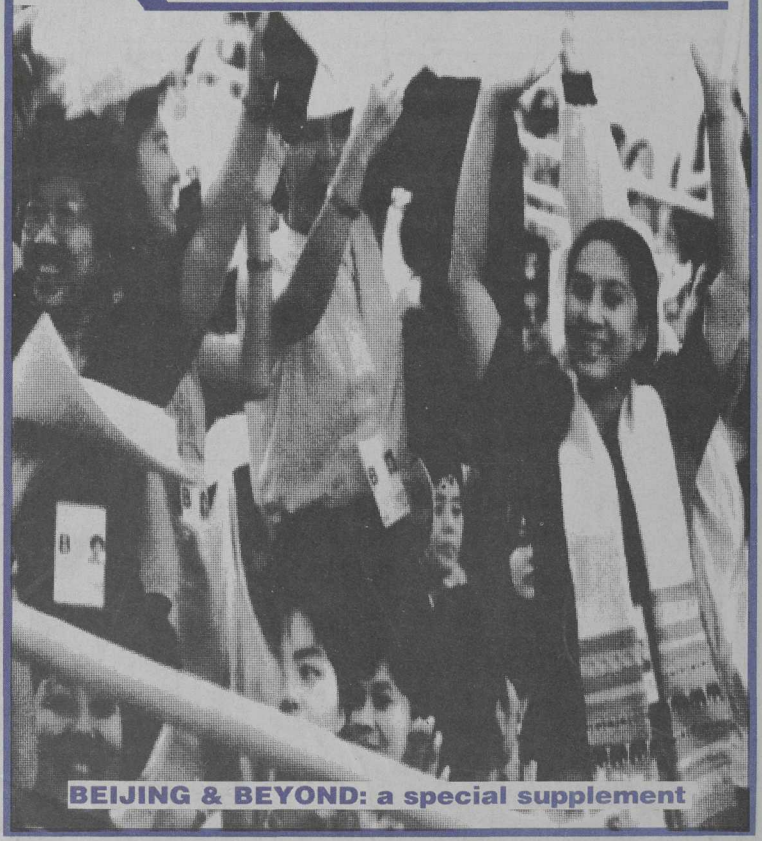
KINESIS

News About Women That's Not In The Dailies



BEIJING & BEYOND: a special supplement

INSIDE

KINESIS

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Kinesis welcomes volunteers to work on all aspects of the paper. Our next Writers' Meeting is **Nov 6** for the **Dec/Jan** 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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Thai women at the opening ceremony, 4th World Conference on Women, Beijing, China
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.

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Passionate about women's issues?
Want to see those issues in these pages?
Come to the next Writers' Meeting on Monday November 6 for the Dec/Jan issue, at 7 pm
at #301-1720 Grant Street, Vancouver.
Telephone: (604) 255-5499

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Here's an update on an update we brought to you last month in As *Kinesis* goes to press. In our October 1995 issue, we reported that women's reproductive rights in Alberta were dealt a blow when Ralph Klein announced his Covnservative government would no longer pay for abortion services...except in cases where abortion is "medically necessitated." That was his plan.

But it seems his master plan had a little glitch...he needed someone to define that little phrase, "medically necessitated," Klein tried to get doctors to play 'dictionary,' but they didn't want to play that game. They told Klein the decision of whether or not to have an abortion was between a woman and her doctor...and told him to go away.

So now poor Ralphie, doesn't have a definition, and he's had to scrap his whole anti-choice plan...lucky for women in Alberta.

On this side of the Rockies...pro-choice advocates in BC are going to get a chance to see whether or not the province's Access to Abortion Services law...or more commonly known as the "bubble zone" law...has any teeth. Next month, an anti-abortionist caught doing anti-choice things outside the Everywoman's Health Centre and inside the bubble zone will be making an appearance in court on charges of violating the bubble zone. We'll keep you posted on the verdict.

More on the topic of bubble zones...some good news for women in BC from south of the border. Early in October, the US Supreme Court rejected a constitutional challenge by a group of anti-abortionists of that country's version of the bubble zone law—they don't violate freedom of speech or freedom of religion.

So the thinking up here is that, if the courts in the US—the supposed great defenders of free speech and individual rights—have given the okay to bubble zones there, then there's a good chance the courts here will do the same...but that's not for sure. But we'll have to wait for a constitutional challenge first anyway before we'll find out the answer.

As *Kinesis* goes to press, Quebec is about to go to the referendum polls. And the question of the month is....what did you think about Lucien Bouchard's comment blaming white women in Quebec for not having enought (white) babies? Without dwelling on it anymore, we just needed to say we're totally disgusted with the big B's blatantly racist and sexist comment. And apparently over 3,000 women in Quebec were a bit pissed off at his remarks and held a rally to tell his so.

We just (literally) received a letter from the Centre for Women's Global Leadership in New Jersey announcing the 5th annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence Campaign (November 25 to December 10.) The theme of this year's campaign is "Bringing Women's Human Rights Home," and they're calling on women everywhere to take up actions. They'd also appreciated know about actions being planned...so if you're working on one, drop them a note at Douglas College, 27 Clifton Ave, New Brunswick, NJ, 08903; or fax: (908) 932-1180.

What would As *Kinesis* goes to press be if we didn't take the opportunity to comment on Mike Harris and the Ontario Conservative government. Hopefully sometime soon we won't have any cuts, cuts and more cuts to report from back east.

Just when we thought they were being mean and nasty by cutting welfare spending by 22 percent, they get even meaner and nastier by talking about changing the definition of "disability" so the Conservative government can disqualify the "not-really-disabled-people" from receiving social assistance for people with disabilities.

But hey, just when we thought there was no hope for Harris and company, they actually turn around and show us how caring they can really be...Last month David Tsubouchi, minister of community services, thought he'd be a nice guy and give budgeting lessons to people receiving welfare.

Apparently, according to financial planning wizard, Tsubouchi, it only takes $90 to feed oneself for a whole month...that is, if you like to eat a lot of bologna, and other processed things. He also suggested that poor people should barter for everything to get the lowest price possible--keep your eye out for that 69 cent can of tuna...Tsubouchi swears it's out there.

It seems we have to spend a lot of time as feminists, as activists, debunking the great myths the media tries to pass off as news. According to the media, women who attended the 4th World Conference on Women were too mired in mud rain, and too harassed by Chinese security forces to have gotten any work done. So, if you were looking for news about women at the NGO Forum...period...it definitely was not in the dailies.

We've been talking to our own Fatima Jaffer whose had been hobnobbing with lots of international gals she met at the NGO Forum, and she's found out that it wasn't just the mainstream media in Canada that had no idea what was happening in Beijing...apparently, almost all media outlets jumped on CNN's lead an focussed on fighting with logistical problems as the main happening at the NGO Forum.

If you want a taste of what was really going on at the Forum, check out our firt special supplement on Beijing...and if you're still hungry after sampling Part One of our coverage...well then, you'll just have to wait til *Kinesis* goes to press again for another bite.

VANCOUVER • STATUS • OF • WOMEN

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 October:

Winona Baker, Cathy Bannick, Barbara Curran, Patricia Dubberley, Elaine Everett, Mary Frey, Marilyn Fuchs, Michael and Connie Geller, Teresa Gibson, Erin Graham, Lynda Griffith, Heidi Henkenhaf, Jennifer Johnstone, Barbara Karmazyn, Angela Kelly, Barbara Lebrasseur, Karin Litzcke, Jane McCartney, Kathy McGrenera, Bea McKenzie, Lolani Moreau, Christine Morrisey, Gail Mountain, Margaret Ostrowski, Emi Pech, Carol Pettigrew, Neil Power, Dana Putnam, Patricia Sadowy, Andrea Saunderson, Mark Schneider, Dawn Simpson,, Gale Stewart, Jeanne St. Pierre, Sheilah Thompson, Gale Tyler, Karon Webber, Lynne Werker, Elizabeth Whynot, Shelagh Wilson, Rita Wong, Barbara Young.

Thanks so much for your support!

It's fall in Vancouver. The sun peeks through the c..c..chilly clouds as the trees shed their red-gold leaves on the heads of *Kinesis* volunteers comfortably attired in layers of *Kinesis* t-shirts as we dutifully show up for production, day after day after beautiful day.

We've got a whole heap of thank yous to say this month, mostly to all the women who helped make the *Kinesis* benefit a huge success. We raised enough money to put a smile on Andrea, our hard-working fundraiser's face, and everyone seems to have had a great time. Funny about *Kinesis* benefits, no matter how much time or effort we put into it, whether it's big or small, it always brings out the best bunch of women, and is one of the fun-est events in Vancouver every year! (It's not just us who thinks so; everyone says that, honest!)

So, thanks to all the women who came out to our Benefit this year. Thanks to our entertainers (who were a hit with all of us): Elaine Stef, May Zhu, Eileen Kage, SKY Lee, and Frannie Sheridan. Thanks also to Judy Senang for doing childcare. And many, many thanks to the women who helped sell raffle tickets and who volunteered their time and energies at the event: Erin Graham, Fatima Jaffer, Laiwan, Dorcas Wilson, Anthea Whittaker, Centime Zeleke, Jennifer Johnstone, Faith Jones, Winnifred Tovey, Andrea Imada, Moira Keigher, Balbi Bazran Kalia, Melina Udy, Rose Gilbert, Janine Fuller, and Cat L'Hirondelle.

More thanks to the wonderful women who showed up for production for their first experience of proofing, pasting up and partying in the production room: Manuela Lucchese and Sharyn Carroll (hey, and they're both from Ontario!)

Thanks also to new writers: Rebecca Harding, Aung San Suu Kyi, Winona LaDuke, Rebecca Sevilla, Winnie Wun Wun Ng, Sook C. Kong, Guadalupe Lesca Jolicoeur, Janet Askin and Manuela Lucchese.

Join this illustrious group of women...show up at the next *Kinesis* writers' meeting on Monday, November 6th at 7pm or call Agnes at (604) 255-5499.

Cheerio.

Sexism and racism at UBC:

Deal of denial

Rebecca Harding

After some last-minute backroom dealing, the University of British Columbia (UBC) lifted a suspension on admissions to the graduate program in the Political Science (PoliSci) department. With this move, the university sends a clear message to women and people of colour that it will not tolerate any challenge to the sexual and racial discrimination and harassment students say is rife in the department.

The lifting of the suspension came just hours before the Senate—the highest decision-making body on academic issues made up of student representatives, faculty and administrators—was expected to vote on a motion to re-open admissions to the Poli Sci graduate program.

Student activists at the university contend the lifting of the suspension on admissions was a "power play" to subvert what many anticipated would be a clear majority of the university's senate for the continuation of the admissions ban.

New admissions to the PoliSci department has been suspended since June, on a recommendation in a report written by Vancouver lawyer Joan McEwen. The report concludes there is a basis for allegations of pervasive sexism and racism in the department *[see* Kinesis *September 1995.]*

Since the release of the McEwen Report four months ago, the university and the PoliSci department has offered no apology to students who filed the harassment and discrimination complaints recorded in McEwen's report, nor have they formally acknowledged that a problem exists in the department. As well, no disciplinary action against any faculty member has ever been taken.

So when student senators showed up to the Senate meeting on October 18th, they were fully prepared to participate in a discussion on the admissions suspension and on issues of harassment, discrimination and equity in the Poli Sci department. Students also showed up to witness the senate vote.

At the meeting, students were greeted with a surprise announcement by the administration that a decision had already been made and that the planned voting and debating would not occur.

In a memorandum, UBC's administration, the Political Science department, and the Dean of Graduate Studies announce they have reached a deal, and that admission to the PoliSci graduate program would be re-opened immediately. The memo was signed by John Grace, the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Up until then, Grace—the only person with the authority to make decisions concerning admissions to graduate programs—had been adamant about his support for the suspension.

One week before the senate meeting, the Graduate Council, made up of faculty and students in graduate studies programs, held its own vote on a similar motion to lift the ban. The grad council defeated the motion in a landslide. At that meeting, Grace had encouraged people to vote for a continued ban.

He said, "overturning the suspension would send a message to many graduate students that a narrowly conceived notion of Faculty priviledge is more important than providing an appropriate and hospitable learning environment for students...It would also send a message to women, visible minorities and other disadvantaged groups that their efforts to achieve equity will continue to be overridden."

It therefore came as a shock to many who attended the senate meeting that Grace had struck a deal with the PoliSci department and the University administration.

Grace says he lifted the suspension because the PoliSci department agreed to take steps towards creating a more equitable and harassment-free environment.

The memorandum sets out the seven terms the PoliSci department says it will comply with if the suspension is overturned. The changes are more administrative than substantive, such as the agreements to announce publicly its commitment to educational equity; to commit itself to deal promptly with allegations of harassment and discrimination in full accordance with University policy; and to issue three reports on its actions in 1996.

Students at the meeting were visibly frustrated that the senate debate and vote on the admissions suspension was stopped before it even started. A number of students heckled Dean Grace as he addressed the senate meeting.

During the speech given by acting head of the PoliSci department David Elkins, students were heard chanting, "Down with white supremacy." One student hung up a dummy as a representation of the practices towards women and people of colour within the Political Science department. The dummy was later burned outside of the meeting's place.

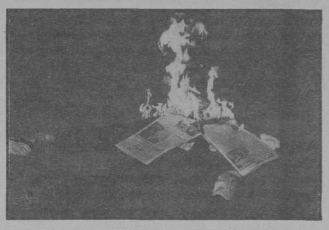
All along, there has been a barrage of coverage in the local and national media, most of which delegitimizes the McEwen report and the students who filed the complaints. As well, the original issues of racism and sexism have been buried under the charges of "assault on academic freedom," made by faculty members of the Poli Sci department.

In a bizarre twist of political mudslinging, the media and the critics of the McEwen report labelled the participants and defenders of the McEwen Report, "Red Guards," "McCarthyists," "hysterical feminists" and "dissidents."

Students at UBC are in an uproar about the high-handed behaviour of the academic administrators.

Annabel Webb of the Alliance of Feminists Across Campuses says she is shocked by the power playing that went on in making the backroom deal. She says it was made with no student input, and in fact most students were caught unaware that a deal was even being negotiated.

Amanda Ochran, a graduate student in geography and a former PoliSci student, says she suspects the deal, which the mainstream media calls a "compromise," was struck because the university administration wanted to put a stop to all the media attention UBC had been getting as a consequence of the McEwen report.



Students burn a dummy outside the meeting place of the university's senate.

She says she believes the PoliSci department has orchestrated the media attention in support of their position so that the administration, desperate to minimize the unwanted press, would have to cut a deal with the department.

"The PoliSci department got what it wanted by behaving worse and worse," says Ochran. "If admissions to Political Science had remained cut off, it would have set a precedent for universities nationally and internationally, and it would have generated more bad press for UBC."

She says if the vote had been allowed, the senate would have likely voted to keep admissions to the PoliSci graduate program closed. As of October 13, caucus leaders within the senate and student lobbyists confirmed that at least 43 of the 90 senators would have voted to keep PoliSci admissions closed. Only 10 senators publicly admitted supporting the reversal of the suspension.

"With those kinds of numbers, it would have been almost impossible for them to get a vote to lift the ban on admissions," says Ochran.

Kamila Rashid of UBC's Women's Centre says that one week ago, maintaining the suspension of admissions seemed like a done deal, at least until steps were taken to address the allegations of racism and sexism. She says she doesn't understand how the environment in PoliSci could have changed in just one week.

Rashid says that everyone knows the deal is wrong, "Dean Grace knows its wrong, the students know its wrong, faculty in the department know it's wrong. This was not due process."

To students, the lack of interest UBC has shown for due process was apparent even before the lifting of the ban when UBC President David Strangway threatened students with a possible libel suit for putting up posters expressing their opinion of the Poli Sci department and the university's response to the McEwen Report.

The posters went up a week before the Senate meeting all around campus. One advertised the senate meeting with the words, "Stop PolitiKKKal Science." A political cartoon of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, who was critical of the McEwen Report, appeared on another poster.

Strangway ordered campus security to take down the posters, saying they fell beyond "the legal limits of free speech."

UBC Women's Centre's Rashid feels that the whole question of whether or not to re-open Political Science graduate admissions is a moot point. She says, "Focusing on whether to re-open or keep admissions shut shifts the discussion away from the substantial issues, such as creating an environment free from harassment and discrimination."

Meanwhile, women and people of colour who have reported incidents of sexist and racist harassment and discriminition, and those who have been vocal on the PoliSci issue, are now the most vulnerable.

As Ochran says, "it is now open season on them."

Rebecca Harding is a pseudonym for a student at UBC.

Sarah Balabagan: migrant workers' rights:

Fight for freedom

by Agnes Huang

Sarah Balabagan, a sixteen-year-old Filipina domestic worker convicted of murder in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) won't have to face the firing squad, but she may not get to return home to the Philippines in the near future either.

In mid-October, the family of her employer—the man Balabagan is accused of murdering, Mohammad Abdallah Al-Baloushi—agreed, in accordance with UAE's Islamic law, to accept "blood money" and withdraw their demand that Balabagan be put to death.

One month earlier, the UAE court of appeal convicted Balabagan of pre-meditated murder, dismissing her claim that she had acted in self defence and had stabbed her employer with his knife because he was raping her *[see* Kinesis, *October 1995.]* His family had pressured hard for Balabagan to be given the death sentence.

Women's and migrant workers' rights groups in the Philippines and internationally launched a concerted campaign to pressure the President of the UAE Sheikh Zaid Bin Sultan al-Nahayan and Philippine president Fidel Ramos for a full acquittal, unconditional release, and immediate repatriation of Sarah Balabagan to the Philippines.

While the UAE and Philippine presidents would not push for full acquittal for Balabagan, they did call on the Al-Baloushi family to withdraw its demand for the death sentence in favour of a lighter penalty.

Although the execution order was withdrawn, Balabagan was not acquitted of the charge and may still face a prison term. She is scheduled to appear before the UAE Sharia court to determine her innocence or guilt on October 30th—the second time she has appeared before the court.

The first time, the court acknowledged Balabagan had been raped, but still sentenced her to seven years in prison for manslaughter and ordered her to pay her employer's family 150,000 dirhams (US$40,000). The court also ordered his family to pay Balabagan 100,000 dirhams (US$27,000) in damages.

GABRIELA, a national alliance of women's organizations in the Philippines, says that "without a doubt, actions on a local and international arena calling for justice for Sarah Balabagan played a significant role in the decision of the UAE president to persuade the family." Numerous protest actions were held not only in different parts of the Philippines, but in other countries as well, including vigils and letter-writing campaigns in Vancouver. Groups in Vancouver coordinating actions around Balabagan and other migrant workers' rights are the Philippine Women Centre, SIKLAB (an organization for migrant workers), and the BC Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines

In a joint press release, the groups say, "these protest efforts not only created a groundswell of international outrage, but also contributed in exposing the connivance of the UAE government and the Ramos regime in the exploitation, oppression and neglect of migrant workers."

The groups add that while Ramos may claim that the dropping of the demand for the death penalty for Sarah Balabagan was due to his government's own diplomatic efforts, it is his policy of exporting cheap labour that put women, like Sarah Balabagan, into situations where they are vulnerable to oppression, abuse and exploitation.

Balabagan was only 15 years old when she left the Philippines to work in the UAE, and was forced to leave to help support her family because of lack of jobs in her home country.

"Without a doubt, actions on a local and international arena calling for justice for Sarah Balabagan played a significant role in the decision of the UAE president to persuade the family"— GABRIELA

Women and migrant workers' groups say the campaign must continue to ensure that rights of Sarah Balabagan and other migrant workers are protected.

"Sarah does not deserve a single day in jail, nor should we pay a single centavo to bail her out for a crime she did not commit," say the BC based groups.

GABRIELA is calling on a coordinated mass action to ensure justice for Sarah Balabagan. Together with MIGRANTE (International Alliance of Filipino Migrant Workers) and BAYAN (New Patriotic Alliance), GABRIELA will be staging a picket at the UAE Embassy in Manila on October 30, at the same time when Balabagan's case is being heard. *[Kinesis will cover the court's decision in its Dec/Jan issue.]*

Women's and migrant workers' rights groups in BC are calling on supporters to send letters to the ambassador of the UAE calling for a complete acquittal, unconditional release and immediate repatriation of Sarah Balabagan.

Write to: His Excellency Al Shaali, Ambassador, Embassy of the United Arab Emirates, 3000 K St. NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC, USA 20007; or fax: (202) 337-7027.

Send copies of all responses to: SIKLAB, PO Box 127, 6416 Fraser St, Vancouver, BC, V5W 3A4; or fax: (604) 322-9852.

Women interested in understanding more about the situation of migrant workers, the Philippine Women Centre will be holding a grassroots women discussion group to address the issue of 'What are international human rights?' Wednesday, November 8th at 7pm. The meeting will be held at the Centre, 1011 E. 59th Ave, Vancouver. For more information, call (604) 322-9852.

Agnes Huang has been following migrant workers' rights issues for Kinesis.

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Federal cuts to post-secondary education:

More rainy days ahead

by Ezekiel Samuels

Last month, students in British Columbia organized demonstrations to protest the proposed cuts by the federal government to social program spending, and specifically to education. The cuts, which will become effective when the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) is implemented on April 1, 1996, will take $90 million away from funding of post-secondary education in the province.

On October 11th, students at the University of Victoria (UVic) held a mock trial of the federal ministers responsible for the cuts in front of the BC provincial legislature. Prime Minister Jean Chretien, Finance Minister Paul Martin, Minister of Human Resource Development Lloyd Axworthy, and Revenue Minister David Anderson were all convicted and sentenced to life times of poverty for their assault on post-secondary education and social programs in Canada.

The demonstration in Victoria coincided with a national day of action called for by the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) to protest cuts to federal transfer payments for post-secondary education. The CFS called for the day of action in mid-September, and while many campuses did participate, several student unions found it difficult to organize actions and mobilize students on such short notice. The weather was also a factor in the relatively low turnout at UVic's demonstration, where about 200 people braved a downpour.

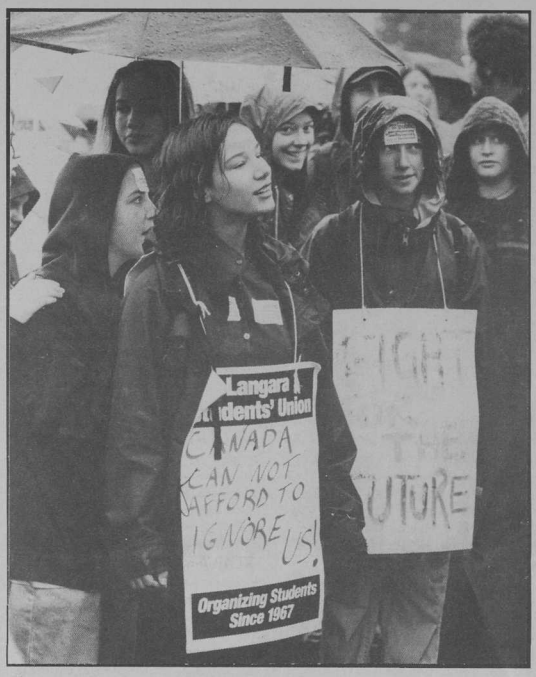
Two days later in Vancouver, the Alma Mater Society of the University of British Columbia (UBC) held its protest march against the cuts. UBC students were joined by students from Simon Fraser University and Camosun, Langara, and Capilano colleges, and by community groups and unions.

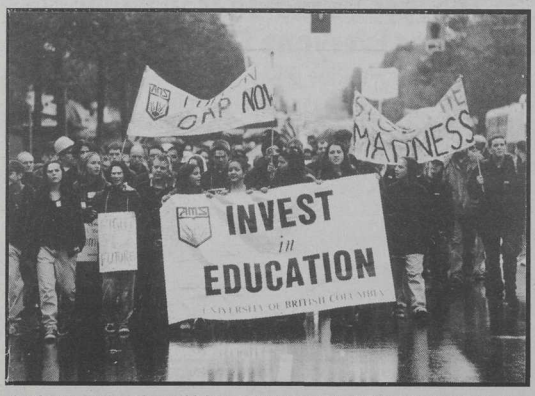
UBC's AMS decided to hold its "great trek" on October 13th to coincide with the university's annual open house. The open house brings a lot of people from the general public onto the campus, and student protesters used the occasion as an opportunity to send a message to the public about the threats to access to post-secondary education because of the pending cuts. The organizers said they wanted the public to be aware that if federal cuts to social spending go unchecked, more and more people could be denied the right to education.

The Vancouver protest also took place in pouring rain. The initial crowd that gathered at Connaught Park for the start of the trek was around 200 people. But as the marchers worked their way along a main street leading to the UBC campus, lots more joined in. By the time the trek arrived at UBC, 1000 people were a part of the demonstration. Slogans such as "education is a right" and "stop the madness" were chanted fervently.

Once at UBC, a rally was held with speakers from student organizations, feminist groups and unions. The speakers addressed the links between the various cuts to social spending—cuts to education, to social assistance, to medicare. They also spoke about the urgency to present a unified force against the cuts.

A number of speakers referred to scenarios that would likely follow the implementation of the CHST, such as a single mother having to choose between buying food for her child or paying tuition to get job training.





Students, community and labour activists trek to UBC to protest federal funding cuts to post-secondary education. Photos by Chris Nuttal-Smith.

Shazia Islam of UBC's women's centre made it clear that cuts to education and the resulting rise in tuition fees would make post-secondary institutions even less accessible. And referring to the university's response to charges of racism and sexism in the political science department *[see Kinesis September 1995, and page 3]*, Islam pointed out that UBC's "chilly climate" for women students—and in particular, women of colour students—was already pushing women off campus, adding that increased tuition costs would push them even further.

On April 1, 1996, the federal government plans to bring in its Canada Health and Social Transfer program, replacing the current federal provincial transfer payment system—transfer payments are used to fund health care, social services and education in the provinces. The CHST will combine the current federal transfer payments into a single block funding to each province. One dangerous component of the CHST is that it will dismantle national standards for welfare *[see "Cutting off CAP," Kinesis June 1995.]*

In total, the federal government plans to cut $6.6 billion in transfer payments for social programs. For BC, this will mean approximately $840 million less in funding for health care, social services and education. Currently, 11 percent of federal transfer payments goes towards post-secondary education. After CHST comes into effect, approximately $90 million less will be available for universities and colleges in the province.

And each year following the implementation of the CHST, the federal government plans to transfer less and less money to the provinces. In seven years from now, BC will have lost all its federal transfer payments. By the years 2008/2009, all block funding from the federal government to the provinces will be eliminated completely.

UBC has been told to expect an eight percent cut in its federal operating grant for next year. And because UBC has a policy whereby students must compensate for inflation and decreased funding, students are bracing themselves for a jump in tuition fees. The Alma Mater Society has predicted an 80 percent increase in tuition for the next school year.

Students participating in the protest actions in Vancouver and Victoria say the federal government must stop targetting students and poor people for the country's deficit problems. At the heart of the two protests was a call for the Liberal government to balance the federal budget by reducing the $7.2 billion in coporate tax breaks and subsidies, rather than by cutting funding for social programs.

Ezekiel Samuels is a pseudonym for a student from UBC.

Violence against women:

Band-aids not solution

by Agnes Huang

In response to a series of highly publicized murders of women by their former male partners, politicians and police are scrambling to come up with solutions to ease the fears of the public.

Over the last month, the mainstream media has focused attention on domestic violence, following a spate of murders of women in Vancouver that featured prominently in news reports. In particular, two recent cases have received more media attention than is usually given to the hundreds of other cases of domestic violence that happen in the province.

In one case in Coquitlam, a man murdered his former in-laws outside a church, before going to the home of his estranged wife and killing her. In the other case, a man is being charged with stabbing deaths of his former wife and her boyfriend.

Following these two murders, BC's Attorney General, Ujjal Dosanjh, directed his senior ministry staff to look into electronic monitoring systems as a means of combatting violence against women. With electronic monitoring systems, an alarm would be triggered if the electronic bracelet came within a certain proximity of a woman's house.

Laraine Stuart of the Battered Women's Support Services (BWSS) says that politicians pick up on measures such as electronic monitoring because they are seen as concrete and practical solutions. But in reality, while they may be well-meaning solutions, they are only band-aid solutions because they do not address the systemic nature of violence against women.

What is needed, says Stuart, are very long-term, systemic solutions, such as changing society's attitudes towards violence against women and battered women. But she adds, few politicians are willing to make the breadth of commitments needed to bring about societal changes.

One major limitation of electronic monitoring is that a man would have to be under a court-imposed restraining order before he could be required by law to wear an electronic bracelet.

Stuart says she also fears that electronic monitoring will give women the false sense that they are safe from abusive male partners and ex-partners. But since electronic monitors trigger alarms only when a man approaches within a certain distance of a receiver device, there would be no warning or protection for a woman if she were not near a receiver. Receivers would be placed only in a woman's home and workplace, and there would be nothing to stop a man from being violent towards the woman outside of those places.

As another response to the heightened public awareness and fear of domestic violence, the Vancouver Police Department recently announced plans to establish of a special unit that would do follow-up work with women in high-risk cases involving serial criminal harassment. The special unit would consist of a police officer and a social worker.

BWSS' Gail Edinger, who with Laraine Stuart coordinates a program on violence against women in relationships, says her organization supports the idea of a special unit for domestic harassment cases. But, she says, the follow-up team should include a battered women's advocate, and not a social worker.

Edinger says, given that social workers would have to work within the constraints of the Family Services Act, the support women would receive from social workers would be more limited, and may be biased. She says advocates involved in the follow-up team would be a more ideal model because they are independent and separate from any system.

Edinger and Stuart are both members of a Coordination Committee of over 50 active members who work on numerous areas within the broad spectrum of violence in relationships. Edinger says the Committee has talked at length over the years about developing a follow-up response team made up of a police officer and a battered woman's advocate. It hopes to be able to work with the Vancouver police department to influence the make up of the special unit.

Federal cuts to employment programs:

Single moms program axed

by Andrea Imada

Federal Finance Minister Paul Martin is wielding the Liberal axe again and once again, young single mothers in Vancouver looking to reenter the workforce are feeling the brunt of the attack.

The Vancouver YWCA recently got word that effective December 31st, federal funding for Focus, its pre-employment training program for young single mothers, would be gone. [Federal funding for the program comes from the department of human resources and development.]

To make up for the pending federal cutback, the program applied to the provincial ministry of skills, labour and training for funding, but was turned down.

The YWCA Focus program is intended to assist young single mothers, between the ages of 16 to 24 years, to prepare for and access further education, vocational training or to obtain suitable employment. The program provides young mothers with a diverse range of personal development programs, education and skills training, coupled with support services such as childcare and parenting information. The combination is one that helps overcome some of the fundamental obstacles that single mothers face in trying to enter the workforce.

Laurel Johnson, who works with Focus, says it is the only program of its kind serving the needs of this specific group, and she fears that if the program goes under, young single mothers will be left to "fall between the cracks."

Over the past four years, 136 young mothers have participated in the program with more than two-thirds securing jobs or further education opportunities.

Johnson say the YWCA is looking at all avenues of funding in order to continue the Focus program, including sponsorships and donations. But they are also appealing to the community to write letters of support to local MLAs and MPs, and to Human Resources and Development, and the Ministry of Skills, Labour and Training to prevent the cancellation of the program.

Letters should be directed to: Duncan McRae, CJS Manager, Human Resources and Development, #415-757 W. Hastings St, Vancouver, BC, V6C 1A1; and Dan Miller, Minister of Skills, Labour and Training, Room 109, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, BC, V8V 1X4.

For more information, contact YWCA Focus, 806-750 W. Pender St, Vancouver, BC, V6C 1G8; tel: (604) 688-4666.

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MOVEMENT MATTERS

listings information

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

by wendy lee kenward

Happy birthday *Sojourner*

This September marked the twentieth anniversary of *Sojourner: The Women's Forum*. Over the years, *Sojourner* has been a forum for women to inform, challenge and encourage each other.

Sojourner started out as the women's newspaper of the Massachussets Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1975, and grew into a national newspaper covering news, issues and debates in the US from a feminist perspective.

In celebration of *Sojourner's* anniversary, Karen Kahn—its editor for the past eight years—has compiled an anthology of some of the best written and most compelling articles published over the past 20 years. *Frontline Feminism*, which is being published by Aunt Lute Books, gathers together over 100 past articles published in *Sojourner* to recreate some of the hot debates and heated discussions that were covered in *Sojourner's* pages.

A few changes have been brought about in celebration of their 20th birthday. *Sojourner* is planning on adding a few new things to the paper, such as an expanded arts section with more film, book and music reviews, columns and interviews. As well, *Sojourner* is hoping to bring readers more investigative reports on feminist activism around the US and worldwide.

To enable it to continue publishing for another decade (at least) without always being caught in a financial crunch, *Sojourner* has launched a 20th Anniversary Campaign. *Sojourner* hopes to raise $125,000, and so far, they've raised a third of that goal. Women interested in making a contribution to the 20th Anniversary Campaign can send donations to *Sojourner*, 42 Seaverns Ave, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130 USA.

Comfort women redress

The Canadian Coalition for "Comfort Women" Redress (CCCW), a Toronto-based group, is working to disseminate information and increase awareness in Canada of the issue of "comfort women." Comfort women is a euphemistic term used to describe women who were exploited by the Japanese army during World War Two to provide sex to Japanese soldiers.

It is estimated there were over 200,000 comfort women. The majority of them were Korean, but Dutch, Chinese, Filipino, Indonesian, Malaysian and Taiwanese women and girls were also forced into this sexual slavery. Many women and girls were lured away from their homes with false promises, or were threatened or kidnapped, and many were raped repeatedly—some by 20 to 30 soldiers a day.

The Coalition has been actively protesting to the Japanese government to apologize and compensate individual former comfort women. So far the Japanese government has done little except to admit its involvement in "recruiting" the comfort women and operating the "brothels." It continues to deny that women and girls were forced to work as sex slaves for Japanese soldiers and has refused any redress.

CCCW is currently raising funds to publish an advertisement in a major Canadian newspaper. Petitions and letter writing campaigns have been ongoing strategies for protesting the refusal by the Japanese government to take responsibility for forcing women to be comfort women. The group is also planning a major exhibit of photographs to imform people about the issue of comfort women.

For more information about the Coalition's work in support of comfort women, contact the Canadian Coalition for "Comfort Women" Redress, c/o the Korean Canadian Women's Association, 789 Don Mills Rd, Suite 312, Don Mills, ON, M3C 1T5; or call (416) 421-2220.

Action guide for welfare

The National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO)—has produced an Action Guide to help people organize to protect national standards for social assistance.

NAPO has launched a nationwide campaign to mobilize people against the federal spending cuts to social programs and the elimination of the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP). On April 1, 1996, when the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) takes effect, not only will social program funding be cut by $6.6 billion, but also four of the five national standards for welfare guaranteed under CAP will be gone.

CAP has been in existence since 1966 and sets out guarantees of the right of all Canadians to social assistance, including the right to welfare when in need; the right to an amount that meets basic need requirements; the right to appeal welfare decisions; the right not to have to work for welfare; and the right to welfare regardless of what province you're from. After April 1st, only the last guarantee will remain *[see* Kinesis *June 1995]*.

NAPO's Action Guide, entitled *30 Million Good Reasons to Have National Standards For Welfare*, is a 12 page newspaper which gives substantial information on national standards for welfare, and suggests actions that individuals and organizations can plan.

The guide discusses what national standards for welfare are; how national standards implement basic human rights; why we need them; who is attacking them; and what you can do. The pages detail the rights of poor people, workfare, and the competion for and scarcity of jobs. And the Action Guide suggests actions such as organizing a public forum, or building up an anti-poverty group.

For more information or to order copies of the Action Guide, contact The National Anti-Poverty Organization at 316-256 King Edward Avenue, Ottawa, ON, K1N 7M1; or call (613) 789-0096.

by Patty Gibson

Organizing for medicare

Women's organizations, including the Vancouver Status of Women, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, The DisAbled Women's Network, and the Vancouver Women's Health Collective, have joined with seniors, people with disabilities, anti-poverty activists, other community groups and health care unions to promote and protect Canada's public health care system.

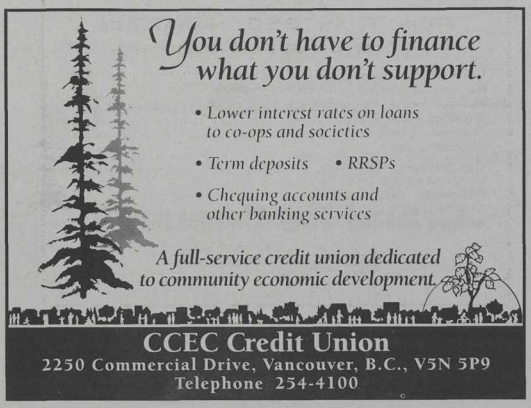
The BC Coalition for Health Care Reform was formed several months ago to respond to the provincial government's plan to regionalize the delivery of health care services in BC, as well as to the increasing attack on medicare.

The Coalition is holding its first public event on Thursday October 26 as part of a community-based public awareness campaign, designed to challenge the increasingly popular notion that Canada cannot afford its public health care system. The event is a kickoff event for National Medicare Week.

The Coalition plan to launch an eight page brochure entitled *Medicare: can we afford to lose it?*, which debunks many of the myths about Canada's medicare system and explains why any move to an American two-tier scheme will result in a system that is accessible only to those who can afford it.

Organizers of the event say the public does not yet realize how dangerous the federal cutbacks to healthcare and other social programs will be, pointing out that the federal transfer payments to BC for all social programs will total approximately $800 million next year. Within six years, federal support will be eliminated altogether.

For more information about the Coalition's work, contact Patty Gibson, BC Association for Community Living at (604) 875-1119, or Jean Greatbatch, BC Nurses Union at (604) 433-2268.



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The Women's Studies Department at Simon Fraser University is seeking a senior candidate with an outstanding academic and either professional or activist record for the Ruth Wynn Woodward Endowed Professorship in Women's Studies. This is a two-year limited term appointment which will begin in September 1996. The area of specialization is open. Applicants must have appropriate academic qualifications. Responsibilities will include teaching, public lectures and community outreach. Salary will be that of a senior scholar.

In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements this advertisement is directed to people who are eligible for employment in Canada at the time of application. Simon Fraser University is committed to the principle of equity in employment and offers equal employment opportunities to qualified applicants.

Candidates should a) send a curriculum vitae and b) arrange to have sent directly three letters of reference which include an evaluation of their teaching, research, professional and community service, to:

Mary Lynn Stewart, Chair
Women's Studies Department, Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6 - Phone: (604) 291-3593

Completed applications must be received by the Women's Studies Department no later than **15 January 1996**. This position is subject to final budgetary authorization.

MOVEMENT MATTERS

by Shannon e. Ash

Supporting women in former Yugoslavia

Women Supporting Women in the Former Yugoslavia is a group of Vancouver-area women which formed in March 1993 to respond in a meaningful way to the war in the former Yugoslavia—a war in which over 80% of refugees are women and children and in which there has been systematic use of rape as a war strategy.

The Vancouver women initiated contact with a woman's organization in Zagreb, Croatia to ask how they could help. The groups' activities include raising financial aid and humanitarian support for refugee women; providing information and education to the public; and lobbying for the prosecution of rape as a war crime. The group also sponsored two training trips to Zagreb to assist women's organizations to develop skills to support traumatized women.

Women Supporting Women in the former Yugoslavia has no nationalist or religious affiliations, and supports survivors of rape and war, regardless of ethnic identification.

On Friday November 17, the group will hold a benefit for "Women Survivors of War" at 7:30pm at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main St, Vancouver. The event will feature a screening of the newly released video, *To Hear Her Name*, about reponses of women in Canada and the former Yugoslavia to the war. As well, there will be speakers from Bosnia and Canada, Bosnian snacks and entertainment.

Admission is by $30 donation and includes a chance to win two nights at a bed and breakfast on Saltspring Island. Tickets are available at the door, or at Banyen Sound and the Vancouver Women's Bookstore.

For more information about the event, or to make a donation (tax receipts will be issued for amounts over $10), contact: Women Supporting Women in the former Yugoslavia, #3-3664 E. Hastings St, Vancouver, BC, V5K 2A9; or call (604) 299-3539.

Life quilt for breast cancer

The Life Quilt for Breast Cancer Project, a grassroots community initiative based in Vancouver, is creating a Life Quilt in support of women living with breast cancer and their families. The project was inspired by Judy Reimer, who has been living with breast cancer for over five years.

Using the traditional quilt, the Project will provide a forum for women and their families to talk about their experiences dealing with breast cancer and the need for community support. As the quilt travels around British Columbia, quilting bees will be held where all those affected by breast cancer can tell their stories.

"The Life Quilt is about the practical day-to-day realities of living with breast cancer. We need a strong social fabric to support women so they can live with breast cancer and not just die from it," says Raine McKay of the Vancouver Women's Health Collective, which is sponsoring the Quilt Project.

The initial phase of the project involves creating three quilts, designed by artist and teacher Gay Mitchell. Project organizers are asking women across Canada to contribute bordering squares which reflect their individual feelings, thoughts and experiences with breast cancer. Once assembled, the quilts will be displayed in a variety of community venues throughout BC and subsequently across Canada.

The second phase of the Project will involve conducting a needs assessment, and then working to provide the assistance needed. "Our vision is a network of volunteers who will offer direct, practical help—help defined by those in need," say organizers of the project.

For more information about the Life Quilt, please contact The Life Quilt for Breast Cancer Project, #219-1675 West 8th Ave, Vancouver, BC, V6J 1V2; or call (604) 736-4234.

Mexican women workers' rights

The Mexican Women Maquila Workers Network is conducting its first campaign in support of Mexican maquila women workers—the Campaign for a Just Wage. The Network is a Toronto-based group recently formed to promote solidarity between Canadian, Mexican and Central American labour and social movements.

The Network has called for this campaign because the devaluation of the Mexican peso and inflation have drastically lowered the standard of living of maquiladora workers in the Mexico/US border region. Although a just wage is guaranteed by Mexico's constitution, this right is being ignored by the Mexican government. US corporations have greatly increased profits due to the peso's devaluation, but the workers' situation has worsened.

The Campaign has two focus areas:

• to provide maquila workers with information to help them calculate the real losses they have suffered since the devaluation in order to make wage demands;

• to pressure the Mexican ministry of labour to enforce Constitutional provisions guaranteeing a just minimum wage.

The Network is calling for letters or faxes to be sent to the Mexican ministry of labour expressing your support for their demands.

Send letters to: Lic. Javier Bonilla Garcia, Secretario del Trabajo, Secretaria del Trabajo y Prevencion Social, Periferico Sur 4271, Col. Fuentes del Pedregal, Mexico, DF 14149; or fax: 011-52-5-645-5594.

For more information about the campaign and others in support of workers' rights, write to the Maquila Solidarity Network, 606 Shaw St, Toronto, ON, M6G 3L6.

Project Censored Canada

Project Censored Canada seeks to identify and publicize stories which the dominant national media have overlooked or under-reported. The project was founded in 1993 by the Canadian Association of Journalists, the School of Communications at Simon Fraser University. The Department of Communication Studies at the University of Windsor joined the project this year.

The purpose of the project is to draw attention to the gaps in the reporting of significant national news. The primary tool for doing this is an annual top 10 list of under-reported stories—the list was first released in 1994. Many of the 1994 top ten stories originated in whole or in part in "alternative" publications. Besides the top 10 list, the project is also building up a computerized inventory of under-reported stories as a research resource.

The project is currently seeking nominations for the top ten under-reported stories in 1995. Nominations must fit the following criteria:

• The story must be national or international in scope, rather than local;

• The story must affect, or have relevance to, a large number of people or intensely affect a few;

• The story must have received minimal coverage in the national news media;

• The story must have appeared in print or on air in 1995, and it must be well-documented.

To nominate a story or radio piece, send a clipping or transcript to: Project Censored Canada, School of Communication, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, V5A 1S6. The deadline for nominations is December 15, 1995.

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Theme areas for Forum '95

* the economy
* governance & politics
* human/legal rights
* peace & human security
* education
* health
* the environment
* spirituality & religion
* science & technology
* media
* arts & culture
* race & ethnicity
* youth

Thirty thousand women gathered from across the world in Huairou, China, August 30-September 8, for the Non-governmental (NGO) Forum of the 4th United Nations World Conference on Women.

Forum '95 was a venue for the international women's movement (and others) to meet, share strategies, debate, and raise awareness of crucial issues affecting women's lives in the different nation states and regions of the world.

It was modelled after the Nairobi NGO Forum in 1985, which took place concurrent with the 3rd UN World Conference on Women. Many women have attributed international networking at the Nairobi Forum for the proliferation of women's NGO activity in most countries of the world over the past ten years and the globalization of the women's movement.

The slogan of Forum '95, "Equality, Development, and Peace," spells out its three main objectives. There were, however, 13 general theme areas which the 5,000 workshops, plenaries, panels, lectures, exhibitions and other events addressed [*see box below left.*] The theme areas were decided on at numerous national and international preparatory conferences which took place in the two years leading up to the Forum.

Another objective of Forum '95 was to influence and lobby those attending the UN 4th World Conference on Women, which took place in Beijing September 4th-15th. In particular, women sought to affect the wording of and commitments to the Platform for Action, a document to be agreed upon by the 6,000 government leaders, governmental and non-governmental representatives accredited to the world conference.

The Platform for Action is the blueprint for UN member state governments to initiate action over the next five years for women's advancement throughout the world. The Platform is intended to review and appraise the progress made by women since the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000, drawn up at the Nairobi World Conference on Women.

In about 362 "paragraphs," the Platform for Action lists critical areas of concern, identifies obstacles to women's equality, and makes recommendations to international bodies such as the United Nations, to national governments, and to NGOs.

While the Platform is intended to set the agenda for nation states on the issue of women's equality in their countries, women look at it more realistically as a tool for women's organizations in efforts to lobby their governments for social change.

But after two years of organizing, strategizing and making plans to attend, women almost didn't make it to Huairou and Beijing.

The Non-governmental Forum was initially supposed to take place in Beijing—close to the conference site—to enable women not accredited to the conference to influence decision making at the governmental conference. Five months before the Forum was to begin, the hosts of the conference, the Chinese government, nervous at the prospect of 30,000 feminists descending on their capital city, changed the venue of the forum to Huairou, a small town about an hour's drive from Beijing.

Women protested the move, lobbied the United Nations to demand China change its mind, and even considered a global boycott. Concessions were made to facilitate travel between Huairou and Beijing among other things, and women decided to go ahead.

In this issue and in our December/January 1996 issue, *Kinesis* presents two supplements on Beijing '95. We focus on Forum '95 because, to most NGO women, it is the "real conference," where women's organizing is front and centre. Or as some women in Huairou put it, "the conference talks; Huairou acts."

The supplements are coordinated by Fatima Jaffer, who represented *Kinesis* on the Canada-Beijing Facilitating Committee (CBFC) delegation, composed of 43 representatives of non-governmental women's and other organizations from across Canada.

All photographs in this supplement are by Fatima Jaffer.

***This is part one of Fatima Jaffer's diary of the Huairou NGO Forum. The diary will continue in the December/January issue of* Kinesis.**

Members of the CBFC delegation and their baggage pose at airport in Beijing.

Monday - August 28th

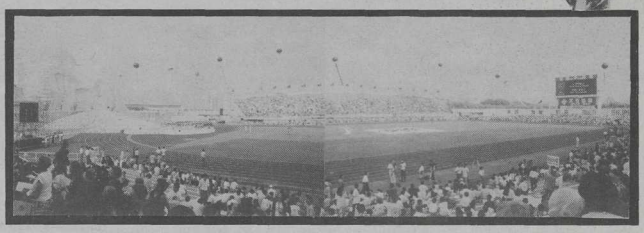
The air crackles with anticipation, a sense of shared purpose and sheer excitement on the plane from Hong Kong to Beijing. After months of preparations, waiting to receive confirmation of registration from the United Nations (a month ago), visas from China (two weeks ago), and tickets from the travel agency (three days ago), we are a mere hour away from landing in Beijing.

On the plane, I meet women from the United States, the Dominican Republic, Nepal, Uganda, and of course Canada. The 43-member CBFC team is travelling together. We swap rumours and newspaper clippings about what to expect when we arrive. There are horror stories of immigration and customs and everyone begins to panic a little. I wonder if some Customs officer is going to part me from the 200 copies of *Kinesis* in my bags!

It takes us minutes to sail through the special channels prepared for women arriving for the Forum. The immigration officer barely glances at my visa; the customs officer doesn't look at our heaps of baggage and fastidiously filled-out forms. There are hundreds of Chinese volunteers in blue-and-white t-shirts waiting for us, and an abundance of wheelchairs with attendants for women who need them. [To this day, there are reports of only one woman having anything confiscated—a page from a book—at Beijing customs.]

I have no time to feel "cheated" of confrontation as we are promptly whisked off in a bus to the Workers' Stadium to pick up our NGO Forum passes. Again, there are none of the lineups and bureaucratic delays we had been warned about, and we are soon off again, this time to our hotel in Beijing.

This anti-climatic feeling becomes a familiar feature over the next ten days. We keep hearing rumours of danger, chaos or Chinese conspiracy, then find out these have been grossly exaggerated. It's not like most women aren't used to dealing with bureacratic nonsense and heavy-handed authorities in our own countries anyway.



At the Olympic Stadium, Beijing for the official opening of the NGO Forum.

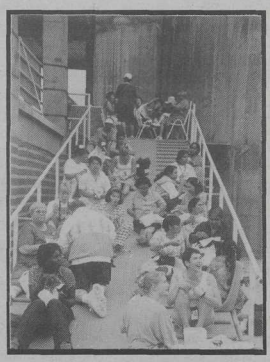
Wednesday - August 30th

Forum '95 is not yet officially open but many of the 30,000 women attending the Forum have arrived and are staying at various hotels, school dormitories and trade buildings. I am impatient to see the site, and share a cab with others making the hour-long trek to the Forum.

Huairou is buzzing with activity. I cannot begin to describe the excitement I feel. The town has been taken over by women from around the world, though the Forum site itself is confined to only one large rambling part of the town and you need NGO Forum passes to get in. There are tents of all sizes, schools and other buildings, a vast outdoor area with hundreds of parasols over tables and chairs, large and small playing fields for performers and demonstrators, and numerous food and vendor stalls.

The residents of Huairou seem remarkably friendly, considering we have just invaded their lives and town, depriving some of them of their livelihoods while we are here, whilst spending thousands of dollars in approved shops and restaurants. [I find out later our presence is keeping peasants from Huairou county from coming into town to trade.]

We pick up the Forum programs: 5,000 workshops, lectures, panels, cultural activities and plenaries over 10 days; a festival of women's films; exhibitions of photographs, ceramics, costumes, documents; women will speak on lessons learned from the liberation struggles of Eritrea, and South Africa. Iranian, Tunisian, Algerian women will speak on the persecution of women speaking out against the governments of those countries. Canadian women will speak on migrant workers' rights. There is a workshop on the use of the cervical cap as a contraceptive device, and workshops on how to use statistics on gender. There are sessions on money and credit, on sex and sexuality, on voice and dance, on empowerment and anti-racism, on reproductive technologies, on affirmative action, on sexual harassment, on youth, and on genetic coding of Indigenous people.



Lunchtime in Huairou. Women find a spot...wherever.

Women get creative in efforts to publicize their events and attract the attention of passers by.

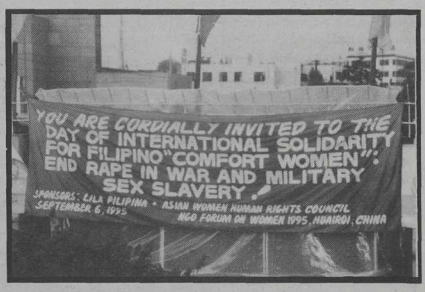
I visit an area where six large tents have been set up to house organizing activities of the various regions. There are five regional tents—Europe and North America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, African and Arab countries; the sixth houses women from the host country, China.

The Africa tent is hopping with activity *[see photo]*. Women are gathered in meetings in every corner of the tent, speaking French, English, Swahili, Zulu, Xhosa, Ibo, and dozens of other languages. They are singing, dancing, arguing, hanging things up. Women have spilled over into the neighbouring and comparatively quiet Europe and North America tent *[see photo]*. The only sign of Canada in the tent is the banner of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC).

The Latin America/Caribbean tent is so full, I can only peer in. I see women putting up the giant patchwork banner that will adorn the walls of the tent, embroidered with fruits and vegetables meant to symbolize the diversity of women's lives.

I head over to the Asia and the Pacific tent, also filled with women who are decorating the tent. Different parts of the

Continued on page 16



Burma:

The struggle for democracy

by Aung San Suu Kyi

Aung San Suu Kyi is the leader of the National League for Democracy in Burma. In 1990 when her party was elected as the government of Burma, the military annulled the vote, and placed Aung San under house arrest. Just earlier this year, she was released from house arrest. In 1994, Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded the Nobel Peace prize for her work in Burma's democracy struggle.

She was scheduled to speak at the opening plenary of the NGO Women's Forum, but was unable to attend. Instead she sent her message to women via videotape. Below is an excerpt from her plenary speech.

It is a wonderful but daunting task that has fallen on me to say a few words by way of opening this Forum—the greatest concourse of women (joined by a few brave men!) that has ever gathered on the planet. I want to try and voice some of the common hopes which firmly unite us in all our splendid diversity.

But first I would like to explain why I cannot be with you in person today. Last month I was released from almost six years of house arrest. The regaining of my freedom has in turn imposed a duty on me to work for the freedom of other women and men in my country who have suffered far more—and who continue to suffer far more than I have. It is this duty which prevents me from joining you today. Even sending this message to you has not been without difficulties. But the help of those who believe in international cooperation and freedom of expression has enabled me to overcome the obstacles. They made it possible for me to make a small contribution to this great celebration of the struggle of women to mould their own destiny and to influence the fate of our global village.

The opening plenary of this Forum will be presenting an overview of the global forces affecting the quality of life of the human community and the challenges they pose for the global community as a whole and for women in particular as we approach the 21st century. However, with the true womanly understanding the Convener of this Forum suggested that among these global forces and challenges, I might wish to concentrate on security, human rights and democracy. I would like to discuss these issues particularly in the context of the participation of women in politics and governance.

For millenia, women have dedicated themselves almost exclusively to the task of nurturing, protecting and caring for the young and the old, striving for the conditions of peace that favour life as a whole. To this can be added the fact that, to the best of my knowledge, no war was ever started by women. But it is women and children who have always suffered most in situations of conflict. Now that we are gaining control of the primary historical role imposed on us of sustaining life in the context of the home and family, it is time to apply in the arena of the world the wisdom and experience thus gained in activities of peace over so many thousands of years. The education and empowerment of women throughout the world cannot fail to result in a more caring, tolerant, just and peaceful life for all.

If to these universal benefits of the growing emancipation of women can be added the "peace dividend" for human development offered by the end of the Cold War—spending less on the war toys of grown men and much more on the urgent needs of humanity as a whole—then truly the next millenia will be an age the like of which has never been seen in human history. But there still remain many obstacles to be overcome before we can achieve this goal. And not least among these obstacles are intolerance and insecurity.

This year is the International Year for Tolerance. The United Nations has recognized that "tolerance, human rights, democracy and peace are closely related. Without tolerance, the foundations for democracy and respect for human rights cannot be strengthened, and the achievement of peace will remain elusive."

My own experience during the years I have been engaged in the democracy movement of Burma has convinced me of the need to emphasize the positive aspect of tolerance. It is not enough simply to "live and let live"—genuine tolerance requires an active effort to try to understand the point of view of others; it implies broad-mindedness and vision, as well as confidence in one's own ability to meet new challenges without resorting to intransigence or violence. In societies where men are truly confident of their own worth, women are not merely "tolerated," they are valued. Their opinions are listened to with respect; they are given their rightful place in shaping the society in which they live.

There is an outmoded Burmese proverb still recited by men who wish to deny that women too can play a part in bringing necessary changes and progress to their society: "The dawn rises only when the rooster crows." But Burmese people today are well aware of the scientific reasons behind the rising of dawn and the falling of dusk. And the intelligent rooster surely realizes that it is because dawn comes that it crows, and not the other way round. It crows to welcome the light that has come to relieve the darkness of night. It is not the prerogative of men alone to bring light to this world—women with their capacity for compassion and self-sacrifice, their courage and perseverance, have done much to dissipate the darkness or intolerance and hate, suffering and despair.

Often the other side of the coin of intolerance is insecurity. Insecure people tend to be intolerant, and their intolerance unleashes forces that threaten the security of others. And where there is no security, there can be no lasting peace. In its Human Development Report for last year, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) noted that human security "is not a concern with weapons—it is a concern with human life and dignity." The struggle for democracy and human rights in Burma is a struggle for life and dignity. It is a struggle that encompasses our political, social and economic aspirations. The people of my country want the two freedoms that spell security: freedom

People must be allowed to play a significant role in the governance of their countries. And "people" include women who make up at least half of the world's population.

from want and freedom from fear. It is want that has driven so many of our young girls across our borders to a life of sexual slavery where they are subject to constant humiliation and ill-treatment. It is fear of persecution for their political beliefs that has made so many of our people feel that even in their own homes they cannot live in dignity and security.

In my country at present, women have no participation in the higher levels of government and none whatsoever in the judiciary. Even within the democratic movement only 14 out of the 485 members of parliament elected in 1990 were women—all from my own party, the National League for Democracy. These 14 women represent less than three percent of the total number of successful candidates. They, like their male colleagues, have not been permitted to take office since the outcome of those elections have been totally ignored. Yet the very high performance of women in our educational system and in the management of commercial enterprises proves their enormous potential to contribute to the betterment of society in general. Meanwhile, our women have yet to achieve those fundamental rights of freedom, association and security of life, denied also to their menfolk.

The adversities we have had to face together have taught all of us involved in the the struggle to build a truly democratic political system in Burma; there are no gender barriers that cannot be overcome. The relationships between men and women should, and can be, characterized not by patronizing behavior or exploitation, but by *metta* (that is to say loving kindness), partnership and trust. We need mutual respect and understanding between men and women, instead of patriarchal domination and degradation, which are expressions of violence and engender counter-violence. We can learn from each other and help one another to moderate the "gender weaknesses" imposed on us by traditional or biological factors.

This Forum of non-governmental organizations represents the belief in the ability of intelligent human beings to resolve conflicting interests through exchange and dialogue. It also represents the conviction that governments alone cannot resolve all the problems of their countries. The watchfulness and active cooperation of organizations outside the spheres of officialdom are neccesary to ensure the four essential components of the human development paradigm as identified by the UNDP: productivity, equity, sustainability and empowerment. The last is particularly relevant—it requires that "development must be *by* people, not only for them. People must participate fully in the decisions and processes that shape their lives." In other words people must be allowed to play a significant role in the governance of their countries. And "people" include women who make up at least half of the world's population.

The last six years afforded me much time and food for thought. I came to the conclusion that the human race is not divided into two opposing camps of good and evil. It is made up of those who are capable of learning and those who are incapable of doing so. Here I am not talking of learning in the narrow sense of acquiring an academic education, but of learning as the process of absorbing those lessons of life that enable us to increase peace and happiness in our world. Women in their role as mothers have traditionally assumed the responsibility of teaching children values that will guide them throughout their lives. It is time we were given the full opportunity to use our natural teaching skills to contribute towards building a modern world that can withstand the tremendous challenges of the technological revolution which in turn brought revolutionary changes in social values.

As we strive to teach others we must have the humility to acknowledge that we still too have to learn. And we must have the flexibiliy to adapt to the challenging needs of the world around us. Women who have been taught that modesty and pliancy are among the prized virtues of our gender are marvelously equipped for the learning process. But they must be given the opportunity to turn these often merely passive virtues into positive assets for the society in which they live.

These, then, are our common hopes that unite us—that as the shackles of prejudice and intolerance fall from our own limbs we can together strive to identify and remove the impediments to human development everywhere. The mechanisms by which this great task is to be achieved provide the proper focus of this great Forum. I feel sure that women throughout the world who, like me, cannot be with you, join me now in sending you all our prayers and good wishes for a joyful and productive meeting.

I thank you.

Indigenous women's rights:

Framing the questions

by Winona LaDuke

Winona LaDuke is an Indigenous and environmental activist, the co-chair of the Indigenous Women's Network, and the program director of the Environmental Program of the Seventh generation Fund.She spoke at the opening plenary of the NGO Women's Forum in Huairou on August 31st.

I am from the Mississippi Band of Anishinabeg of the White Earth reservation in northern Minnesota, one of approximately 250,000 Anishinabeg people who inhabit the Great Lakes region on the North American continent. *Aniin Indinawaymugintok. Megwetch Chi-iwewag, Megwetch Ogitchitaikwewag, Nindizhinikaz, Beenaysayikwe, Makwa nin dodaem, Megwetch indiawaymugunitok.*

I am greeting you in my language and thanking you, my sisters, for the honour of speaking with you today about the challenges facing women as we approach the 21st century.

A primary and central challenge impacting women will be the distance we, collectively as women and societies, have artificially placed ourselves from our Mother the Earth, and the inherent environmental, social, health and psychological consequences of colonialism, and subsequently rapid industrialization on our bodies, and our nations. As a centerpiece of this problem is the increasing lack of control we have over ourselves, and a long-term security. This situation must be rectified [not only] through the laws of international institutions such as the United Nations, but as well through the policies, laws and practices of our nations, our communities, our states, and ourselves.

The situation of Indigenous women, as a part of Indigenous peoples, we believe is a magnified version of the critical juncture we find ourselves in as peoples and the problems facing all women and our future generations as we struggle for a better world. This conflict is manifested in the loss of control over decision making, loss of human security, militarism, the globalization of the economy, the further marginalization of women, increasing intolerance and the forced commodification and homogenization of culture through the media.

While I am from one nation of Indigenous people, there are millions of Indigenous peoples worldwide. An estimated 500 million people are Indigenous peoples of some 5000 nations of Indigenous peoples in the world today. We are in the Cordillera [of the Philippines], the Maori of New Zealand, we are in East Timor, we are the Wara Wara of Australia, the Lakota, the Tibetans, the peoples of Hawaii, New Caledonia and many other nations of Indigenous peoples.

We are not populations, not minority groups; we are peoples; we are nations of peoples. Under international law, we meet the critieria of nation states, having a common economic system, language, territory, history, culture and governing institutions. Despite this fact, Indigenous nations are not allowed to participate at the United Nations.

Nations of Indigenous peoples are not, by and large, represented at the United Nations. Most decisions today are made by the 180 or so members states to the United Nations. Those states, by and large, have been in existence for only 200 years or less, while most nations of Indigenous peoples, with few exceptions, have been in existence for thousands of years. Ironically, there would be little argument in this room that most decisions made in the world today are actually made by some of the 47 transnational corporations and their international financiers whose annual income is larger than the gross national product of many countries in the world.

Most [of the] decisions made in the world today are actually made by some of the 47 transnational corporations and their international financiers whose annual income is larger than the gross national product of many countries in the world.

This is the centerpiece of the problem. Decision making is not made by those who are affected by those decisions—people who live on the land—but by corporations, with an interest entirely different from that of the land and the people, or the women of the land. This brings forth a fundamental question. What gives these corporations like Conoco, Shell, Exxon, Daishawa, ITT, Rio Tinto Zinc and the World Bank a right which supercedes my human right to live on my land, or that of my family, my community, my nation, our nations, and us as women?

What law gives that right to them? Not any law of the Creator, or of Mother Earth. Is that right contained within their wealth, which was historically acquired immorally and unethically through colonialism and imperialism, and paid for with the lives of millions of people, and species of plants and entire ecosystems. They should have no such right. And we clearly, as women and as Indigenous peoples, demand and will recover that right—that right of self-determination—to determine our destiny and that of our future generations.

The origins of this problem lie with the predator/prey relationship industrial society has developed with the Earth, and subsequently, the people of Earth. This same relationship exists vis-à-vis women. We are often in the role of prey, whether for sexual discrimination, exploitation, sterilization, absence of control over our bodies, or being the subjects of repressive laws and legislation in which we have no voice. This occurs on an individual level, but equally, and more significantly on a societal level.

It is also critical to point out at this time that most matrilinial societies—societies in which governance and decision making are largely controlled by women—have been obliterated from the face of the Earth by colonialism and industrialism. The only matrilinial societies which exist in the world today are those of Indigenous nations. We are the remaining matrilinial societies, yet we also face obliteration.

On a worldwide scale and in North America, Indigenous societies historically, and today remain in a predator/prey relationship with industrial society. We are the peoples with the land and natural resources. The wealth of the United States—that nation which today determines much of the world policy—was illegally expropriated from our lands. Similarly the wealth of Indigenous peoples of South Africa, Central and South American countries, and Asia was taken for the industrial development of Europe, and later for settler states which came to occupy those lands.

Today, on a worldwide scale, we remain in the same situation as one hundred years ago, only with less land and fewer people. Today, on a worldwide scale, 50 million Indigenous peoples live in the rainforests, a million Indigenous peoples are slated to be relocated for dam projects in the next decade (thanks to the World Bank)—from the Narmada Project in India, to the Three Gorges Dam Project here in China, to the James Bay Hydro Electrical Project in northern Canada.

Almost all atomic weapons which have been detonated in the world are also detonated on the lands or waters of Indigenous peoples, most clearly evidenced here in China and in the Pacific with France's obscene proposal to detonate atomic weapons this upcoming month.

Today, over 50 percent of our remaining lands are forested, and both Canada and the United States continue aggressive clearcutting policies on our land. Over two-third of the uranium resources in the US and similar figures for Canada are on Indigenous lands, as is one third of all low-sulphur coal resources. We have huge oil reserves on our reservations. And we have the dubious honour of being the most highly bombed nation in the world—the Western Shoshone Nation—on which over 650 atomic weapons have been detonated. We also have two separate accelerated proposals to dump nuclear waste on our reservation lands, and similarly over 100 separate proposals to dump toxic waste on our reservation lands.

We understand clearly the relationship between development for someone else, and our own underdevelopment. We also understand clearly the relationship between the environmental impacts of types of development on our lands, and the environmental and subsequent health impacts on our bodies as women. That is the crux of the problem.

We also understand clearly that the analysis of North versus South is an erroneous analysis. There is, from our perspective, not a problem of the North dictating the economic policies of the South, and subsequently consuming the South. Instead, there is a problem of the "Middle" consuming both the North and the South. That is our situation. Let me explain.

The rate of deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon is one acre every nine seconds. Incidentally, the rate of extinction of Indigenous peoples in the Amazon is one nation of Indigeous peoples per year. The rate of deforestation of the boreal forest of Canada is one acre every twelve seconds. Siberia, thanks to American corporations like Weyerhauser, is not far behind. In all cases, Indigenous peoples are endangered. And there is, frankly, no difference between the impact in the North and the South.

Uranium mining has devastated a number of Indigenous communities in North America. Uranium mining in northern Canada has left over 120 million tons of radioactive waste. This amount represents enough material to cover the TransCanada Highway two meters deep across the country. Present production of uranium waste from Saskatchewan alone occurs at the rate of over one million tons annually.

Since 1975, hospitalization for cancer, birth defects and circulatory illnesses in that area have increased dramatically—between 123 and 600 percent in that region. In other areas impacted by uranium mining, cancers and birth defects have increased to, in some cases, eight times the national average. The subsequent increases in radiation exposure to both the local and to the larger North American population are also evidenced in broader incidences of cancer—such as breast cancer in North American women—which is significantly on the rise. There is not a distinction in this problem caused by radiation whether it is to the

The rate of deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon is one acre every nine seconds. Incidentally, the rate of extinction of Indigenous peoples in the Amazon is one nation of Indigeous peoples per year.

Dene of the northern Canada, the Laguna Pueblo people of New Mexico, or the people of Namibia.

The rapid increase in dioxin, organichlorides, PCBs (poly-chlorinated byphenols) in the world as a result of industrialization has a devastating impact on Indigenous peoples, Indigenous women and other women. Each year, the world's paper industry discharges from 600 to 3200 grams of dioxin equivalents. This quantity is equal to the amount which would cause 58,000 to 294,000 cases of cancer every year, based on the [US] Environmental Protection Agency's estimate of dioxin carcinogenicity.

According to a number of recent studies, this has increased significantly the risk of breast cancer in women. Similarly, heavy metals and PCB contamination of Inuit women of the Hudson Bay region of the Arctic indicates that they have the highest levels of breast milk contamination in the world. In a 1988 study, Inuit women were found to have contamination levels up to 28 times higher than the average of women in Quebec, and ten times higher than that considered "safe" by the government.

It is also of great concern to our women, and our people, that polar bears in that region of the Arctic have such a high level of contamination from PCBs that they may be facing total sterility and be forced into extinction by early in the next century. As people who consider the bears to be our relatives, we are concerned about their ability to reproduce as a consequence of this level of bio-accumulation of toxins. We find that our communities, like those of our relatives the bears, are in fact in danger of extinction. Consequently, it is clear to us that the problems found in the South—like the export of chemicals and the bio-accumulation of toxins—are also very much our problems, and the problems are clearly manifested in our women. These are problems which emanate from industrial societies' mistreatment and disrespect for our Mother Earth, and subsequently are reflected in the devastation of the collective health and well-being of women.

I have presented these arguments for a purpose—to illustrate that these are very common issues for women, not only for Indigenous women, but for all women. What befalls our Mother Earth, befalls her daughters, the women who are the mothers of our nations. Simply stated, if we can no longer nurse our children, if we can no longer bear children, and if our bodies themselves are wracked with poisons, we will have accomplished little in the way of determining our destiny, or improving our conditions. And these problems are also inherently resulting in a decline of the status of women, and are the result of long-set historical processes—processes which we as women will need to challenge if we are ultimately to be in charge of our destinies, our own self determination, and the future of our Earth, our Mother.

It is our belief, at Indigenous Women's Network, that:

1) Women should not have to trade their ecosystems for running water, basic housing, health care, and basic human rights.

2) Development projects, whether in the North or in the South, whether financed by the World Bank, or by the coffers of the Rio Tinto Zinc and Exxon, often replicate patriarchy and sexism, and by and large, cause the destruction of matrilinial governance structures and land tenure, and cause a decline in the status of women. By denying us the basics on which we live, and the clean food and streams from which to eat, and instead offering us a wage economy, in which privilege is often dictated by class, sex and race, Indigenous women are frequently moved from a central role in their societies to the margins (and as refugees) of industrial society.

3) The industrial knowledge systems today often negate or deny the existence, and inherent property rights of Indigenous people to our cultural and intellectual knowledge. Transnational corporations and international agencies call us "primitive," while they steal our medical knowledge, plants, and even genetic material (as in the Human Genome Diversity Project). This situation affects Indigenous women, as a part of our communities, but on a larger scale, has affected most women.

4) Subsequently, our women find that the basic human right to control our bodies are impacted by all of the above, through development policies aimed at non-consensual or forced sterilization, medical testing, invasive genetic sampling, and absence of basic facilities and services which would guarantee us the right and ability to control the size of our families safely and willingly. These same development policies are often based on tourism which commodifies our bodies and cultures (the Pacific and Native America as prime examples), and causes the same for women internationally.

Collectively we must challenge this paradigm, and this international arena. I call on you to support the struggle of Indigenous peoples of the world and to recognize that until all people have self-determination, no one will truly be free—free of the predator, and free to control our destiny. I ask you to look into the Charter of the United Nations, Part One, Article Three which provides "...All peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right, they may freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and political development."

"All peoples," should be construed to mean Indigenous peoples have that right to self-determination. And, by virtue of that right, they may freely determine their political status, and freely pursue their economic, social and political development. Accord us the same rights as all other nations of peoples. And through that process, allow us to protect our ecosystems, their inherent biodiversity, human cultural diversity, and those matriarchal governments which remain in the world.

We believe that the right of all peoples to self-determination cannot be realized while women continue to be marginalized and prevented from becoming full participants in their respective societies.

And, with the Unrepresented People's Organization (UNPO), we reaffirm that definition of self-determination provided in the International Covenant on Social Economic and Cultural Rights, further recognizing that the right of self-determination belongs equally to women and to men. We believe that the right of all peoples to self-determination cannot be realized while women continue to be marginalized and prevented from becoming full participants in their respective societies. The human rights of women, like the human rights of Indigenous peoples, and our inherent rights to self-determination are not issues exclusively within the domestic jurisdiction of states.

So long as the predator continues, so long as the "Middle"—the temperate countries of the world—continue to drive an increasing level of consumption and continue to export both the technologies and drive for this level of consumption to other countries, there will be no safety for the human rights of women, rights of Indigenous peoples, and basic protection for the Earth. Consumption causes the commodification of the sacred, the natural world, cultures, and the commodification of children, and women.

The United States is the largest energy market in the world. The average American consumes seven times as many wood products per capita as anywhere else in the industrialized world, and overall that country consumes one third of the world's natural resources. By comparison, Canada's per capita energy consumption, is the highest in the world.

Levels of consumption in the industrial world drive destruction of the world's rainforests and the world's boreal forests, drive production of nuclear wastes and production of PCBs, dioxins and other lethal chemicals, which devastate the body of our Mother Earth and our own bodies. Unless we speak, and take meaningful action to address these levels of consumption and the subsequent export of these technologies and levels of consumption to other countries, we will never have any security for our individual human rights as Indigenous women, and for our security as women.

If we are to seek and struggle for the common ground of all women, it is essential to struggle for this issue. Frankly, it is not that women of the dominant society in the so-called First World countries should have equal pay, and equal status if that pay and status continue to be based on a consumption model which is not only unsustainable, but causes constant violation of the human rights of women and nations elsewhere in the world. It is essential to collectively struggle to recover our status as Daughters of the Earth. In that is our strength, and security, not in the predator, but in the security of our Mother, for our future generations. In that, we can ensure our security as the Mothers of our Nations.

Megwetch mi go minuk megwetch.

LESBIAN DEMONSTRATION —Lesbian Visibility March, September 5th NGO Forum '95 site, Huairou

by Fatima Jaffer

For many, it was undoubtedly a highlight of the Forum.

Thousands of women-loving-women from all over the world participated in the Lesbian Visibility March September 5th, making it the largest demonstration at the Huairou site. Many wore blue buttons that read "Lesbian rights are human rights: Beijing '95" in English and Spanish, which was how out-lesbians identified ourselves and each other on site. Others came out to support. There were banners and signs from all over the world, as well as the ones made by women at the Lesbian Tent.

The March lasted hours, as we walked, chanted, sang, laughed, and called attention to ourselves all over the site. We were met with applause and cries of support, curiosity and confusion, as well as hisses of derision from women at the various tents, buildings and on the "streets" as we marched along.

A lot of worldwide media were there, including the Chinese media.

(The next day, however, the "independent daily" newspaper of the NGO Forum, *Forum '95*, gave the March only a token mention. Failing to report the largest and most controversial demonstration on site on September 5th was too obvious an "oversight" to be mistaken for anything but homophobia.)

Apart from raising visibility on site, and calling on women to unite and not let homophobia divide us, the purpose of the March was also to call on the 4th World Women's Conference in Beijing to:

- Recognize the freedom to determine one's own sexuality as an inalienable human right and a necessary precondition for equality, development and peace;
- Recognize and integrate the needs and concerns of women of all sexual orientations throughout the Platform for Action;
- Direct governmental, non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations to address the concerns of lesbians and bisexual women in the formulation and implementation of all programs and policies which result from the Platform for Action;
- Make this a Conference of Commitments, with a concrete plan of action to guarantee for all women the full exercise of their civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights.

Issues of sexual orientation and sexuality were major points of contention at the world conference in Beijing. *Kinesis* will bring you the story of what was won and lost in our next supplement in our December/January 1996 issue.

Meanwhile in Huairou, our victory was obvious. Lesbian visibility and issues of homophobia were raised in an unprecedented scale on an international level. And it was a helluva rush!

Lesbians strategizing against conservatism:

The ethic of diversity

by Rebeca Sevilla

Rebeca Sevilla is a lesbian activist from Peru, and was the official representative of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) at the the 4th UN Conference on Women. She spoke at a Plenary Session on the "Rise of Conservatism" focussing on strategies from a lesbian perspective for confronting conservatism in all its forms. Below is an excerpt from her speech in which Sevilla also talks about the "ethic of diversity."

Look at the issue through lesbian eyes. For lesbians, the oppression has always been high. Lesbians usually live invisible, silent, secret lives. Sometimes, lesbians lived openly for a time, but then soon came witch hunts, concentration camps, electric shock treatment...and social rejection. Today we are speaking out. Not because there is less conservatism. But because there is a stronger women's movement. And a stronger lesbian movement.

Let's have a look at the United Nations Women's Conference. In Mexico in 1975 [at the first World Conference on Women], lesbians spoke out, but were criticized by some feminist sisters. Too many women were at that time afraid to be labelled and discredited as lesbians.

In Copenhagen in 1980, lesbians organized informal workshops. A photographer caught some women sunbathing topless in a private garden. The photo became world famous with the caption: "lesbians in Copenhagen." Should we conclude that all women sunbathing topless are lesbians?

Before Nairobi in 1985, because of the photo, there was trouble about lesbians attending. But ILIS (International Lesbian Information Service) was part of the NGO Forum program, and for the first time the lesbian issue was raised by a Dutch Minister at the official UN conference.

Before Beijing the same story re-emerged. Rumours that lesbians would be refused visas. Newspaper stories that the Chinese were most worried about lesbians taking off their tops and kissing each other. Police women are supposed to have been specially trained and issued with sheets to quickly throw over any such disturbance. (We lesbians do actually like to take off our clothes, kiss and...but mostly in private.)

[In Huairou,] we do have our own tent [among the other diversity tents], and have been invited into major panels and commissions. Sexual rights are an important lobby issue in the final United Nations document [the Platform for Action]. This is a positive story—a story of gain for the lesbian movement, but also a story of the conservative reaction.

Newspapers in China and elsewhere focussed on the lesbian issue in a negative way. Lesbian material in Chinese was removed from the tent. The European/North American tent did not want to announce a lesbian workshop, but the Cyprus tent invited all the lesbian caucus to join their party. Young Chinese volunteers were interviewed and said they knew from the Hite report that homosexuality exists, that they have learned a lot from the lesbian tent, and that lesbians are humans and repression is not a solution.

In fact, this Beijing conference—the NGO forum and the official United Nations conference—is about the political battle between progressive and conservative forces, such as the Roman Catholic church in all issues: human rights; violence against women; economic issues; exploitation of women; education; health; development issues; reproductive rights or oppressive family planning.

And being honest...there are some conservative forces within the women's movement too. It is not so easy to know these days who is conservative and who is progressive. More economic and political insecurity means more fear, and therefore more fundamentalism.

Women are the topic over which progressive and conservative forces are fighting. Can we control our own lives, and our own bodies? Can we choose our own sexuality?

The lesbian issue evokes tremendous emotional reaction and conservative backlash, because it is (quite correctly) the symbol of women's freedom and independence.

So often we hear that lesbianism is a "western disease" *caught* by Southern women. But a look in our own histories shows that in all cultures and countries, lesbians "popped up" every now and then. Today, lesbian groups are active in all continents and in most countries in the world.

It is not Europe or the US, but South Africa, which has the most progressive legislation—with laws against discrimination and making it possible for lesbians and gays to adopt children. Nelson Mandela, the African National Congress and the Lesbian and Gay Coalition worked together and understood that democracy also means fighting gender-apartheid and homophobia.

Most lesbians have to discover their own feelings in isolation—without [having] information or role-models. Many lesbians reject their own feelings at first. In cultures where women suffer from clitorectomy, incest, or arranged marriage, women have little or no control over their own lives or bodies. But still, we know, women love women everywhere, in any social, economic or political condition. And now we are speaking out internationally about our lesbian lives, our lesbian love.

We are learning to be proud, not ashamed. We are learning to be visible and loud, not secret. We are not satisfied with a lesbian tent. We want to be included in the political agenda.

Of course, then, we can expect backlash. Not only because of the general rise in religious, cultural and economic fundamentalism. But also because we lesbians are the *symbol* of the battle between the sexes; the symbol of the independent, autonomous women. We do not need men. I am a lesbian. I have good friends who are men. But emotionally and sexually I prefer women. This makes some men, and some conservative political movements, very nervous indeed. Because if women can choose to be lesbians, how then to control us?

It does also make some women nervous. Why? Because lesbians challenge any woman to think about her choices and her own sexuality. How many of you today have been able to explore your own sexuality to discover for yourself what you like or dislike? Young women—the next generation—can take this issue further, and hopefully claim more freedom.

I want to ask all women and progressive men to realize that democracy should be based on respect for differences, respect for different choices in life. Women's rights and sexual rights, and therefore lesbian rights, are human rights.

I want to introduce a new concept to you. I call it the "Ethic of Diversity." We are all so different at this conference, from so many backgrounds. In order to avoid international conflict, in order to start solving problems in this world, we must develop an ethic of diversity.

We need to meet. But more than that, we need to get to know each other, to ask each other questions. We need to discover what we have in common, but particularly, to respect our differences. We need to put effort into meeting each other half way, and into learning from each other. The ethic of diversity is different from religious ethics or political values which we hear so much about because the ethic of diversity does not claim one truth, but aims to deal with differences. To respect and accept.

The daily practice of this ethic means that we build networks and organizations which include everyone: Indigenous women, western women, straights, lesbians, bisexuals, women with visible or invisible abilities, migrants or refugees, rich women or poor women, women with AIDs—in fact, any of us.

An ethic of diversity means building a culture of respect—a rich culture which will allow us to find new solutions to old problems. New solutions based on agreement and peace, not on fights.

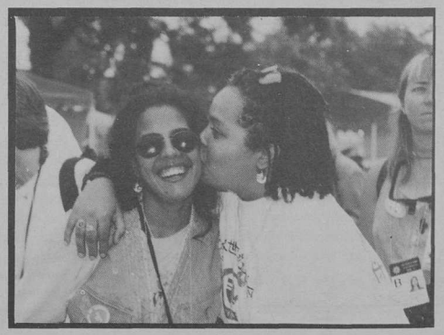
The ethic of diversity is a strong strategy to stop conservatism, because conservatism is based in fear, on greed and on divisions between people. Developing an ethic of diversity, especially a daily practice, is our challenge.

But I want to share with you something which worries me. Too many religions, political and economic systems have preached freedom, but practise oppression. The women's movement too sometimes shows seeds of intolerance, jealousy and disrespect.

And now back to lesbian rights and some strategies. If you are a teacher: talk about sexual diversity and different lifestyles. If you are a health worker: don't assume everyone is only heterosexual; ask me whether men or contraceptives are relevant topics to me. If you are working on human rights: work on the issues of women's rights and lesbian rights and violence. If you are working with media: include realistic reports about various aspects of lesbian life. If you are a lesbian: come out and speak out, and make a link with others, with other diversity issues.

Lesbians have multiple identiites. If you are involved in politics: fight this week [in Beijing], and in your own country, to ensure that sexual rights are part of any constitution, and that local, national and international laws fight against homophobia instead of supporting it.

We don't want just a tent or a parade. We want sexual rights in all political documents and in practice...not only for lesbians, but for all women from all over the world.



tent are set up for the various Asian and Pacific nations in the region. In one corner, Cambodian women are sewing together a giant Ribbon of Hope, a project also called "Women Weaving the World Together," made up of banners and quilts from women all over the world *[see photo]*.

Women at the Arab tent are also busy setting up. There are posters on the outsides of the tent walls on the effects of recent warfare on Kuwaiti women, in particular, chemical weapons used by Iraq. Like the other tents, this one houses the more established, government-sponsored groups. Unlike the other tents, there are numerous men in the tent.

I walk over to where my map says the diversity tents are located: these are the smaller tents for "smaller groups," such as lesbians, Indigenous women, women of colour and women with disabilities. On the five-minute walk over, I notice the pavement is more cracked, uneven and uphill than in other parts of the site. It's also a long way from central areas and there doesn't seem to be a road for vehicles leading to the tents. It's difficult to walk without looking down at my feet. I wonder how women with disabilities are going to get to their tent.

[Later that night, Catherine Boldt of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women on the CBFC delegation, tells me the 160 or so women with disabilities at the Forum will be protesting the lack of access. "The United Nations building in New York is not accessible to people with disabilities either, so we are not really surprised by the insensitivity of UN staff in preparing the Forum site for us," she points out.]

It is time to leave Huairou for Beijing, where the official opening of the NGO Forum is taking place this evening at the National Olympic Stadium.

The opening is a spectacular and sentimental show of pomp and circumstance. The crowd is estimated at 60,000-80,000 women, with at least 5,000 Chinese performers. The Forum organizers welcome participants. There are moving speeches by past convenors of the NGO Forums and Conferences, and even a Peace Torch that has travelled through Africa before being brought to Beijing by women from Uganda. Most of the proceedings are in English, although women representing different regions welcome participants in the other Forum languages—Russian, Spanish, French, Chinese and Arabic.

I finally know what it feels like to be at the opening of, say, the Olympics. Thousands of cultural performers perform dances and make synchronized shapes of doves, the UN logo, the logo of the NGO Forum and the Conference.

It is hard to resist feeling a little awed by the grandeur of it all and more than a little moved by the number of women there. But I wonder if others are buying into the glamour. It seems unnecessarily showy and incongruous, given what we are here to do.

Bringing me back to earth are some Thai and Filipina women beside me, who burst into peals of laughter as across the way a group of Thai women rise proudly to wave the Thai flag every time NGO Forum convenor, Supatra Masdit, who is from Thailand, speaks. The women are laughing at the nationalism and seem quite unimpressed with the goings on. I'm relieved.

After thousands of balloons and doves are released, we sing the stirring NGO theme song, *Keep on Moving Forward*, as well as, for some bizarre reason, *Auld Lang Syne*. The opening is over and we breathe another sigh of relief. It's time to get down to work!

Day one - August 31st

I get up at 5 a.m. to make sure I get to the opening plenary on time. The International Beijing Huairou Convention Centre where the opening plenary is to be held, seats 2,000 at full capacity (including aisles). I feel sure at least 20,000 women staying in Huairou have camped at the doors all night to ensure they get in to hear opening speeches by recently-released Burmese dissident Aung San Suu Kyi, Winona LaDuke of the Indigenous Women's Network, and Hanan Ashrawi, of the Palestinian Independant Commission for Citizen's Rights [who was unable to attend].

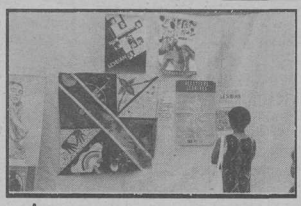
But the Convention Centre is empty when I arrive. I later hear thousands of women were waiting since dawn at another venue marked "Plenary Hall" on the map in our programs. There is near panic as they try to get into the Convention Centre at the last minute. About 4,000 women get in, some in adjoining rooms where they hear the proceedings over speakers piped in from the main hall. The hall, aisles and foyer are packed. I silently thank Judy Rebick, former NAC president, for having told me about the change in venue last night. We had no idea then that so few knew about the new venue.

As for the size of the hall, executive director of the NGO Forum Irene Santiago later tells the media that given there were 128 simultaneously held workshops taking place from 9-10:45 am. "We were not expecting so many women to come."

Women tell me it is reminiscent of Nairobi ten years ago when only 3,000 of the 13,000 participants could get in for the opening of the Forum at Kenyatta Convention Centre.

But at this forum, a scene like this gets the media's attention because it is a quick, easy, China-bashing story. So over the next few days, most of us avoid complaining publicly about the rain, the workshop cancellations and transportation glitches in case a member of the media might hear and write about that instead of the thousands of workshops and meetings and activities that *are* taking place on schedule. *Continued on page 18*

The Global Tent was a central spot for finding out what was happening; which events were cancelled; what was new, or if there was a meeting of women you'd like to connect with happening.



Posters adorned the walls of tents; in this case, the Lesbian tent.

Cracked pavements leading to the diversity tent area, where the women with disabilities tent was originally situated. After a number of protests by women with disabilities and negotiations with the UN NGO Forum facilitating committee, the tent was moved to a more central location.

On day two, women with disabilities from all over the world have a spontaneous protest on the steps of the Convention centre, after finding out a workshop for women with disabilities has been scheduled on the second floor of a building with no elevator.

A Japanese feminist performance group give a street performance with the central message: equality for women.

Performers for the Once & Future (OFAN) Pavilion, a science, technology and media exhibition. OFAN is a body of more than 70 NGOs involved in issues of gender, science and technology. The exhibition included information on everything from computers and applying for credit, to agricultural development and setting up learning circles. Media groups included the Tanzanian Media Women's Association, Feminist International Radio Endeavour (FIRE), and the bookstall of Women Ink., the publishing arm of the International Women's Tribune Centre.

Conference strikes out:

Forum hits home

by Sunera Thobani

Sunera Thobani is the president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), the largest coalition of women's groups in Canada. She attended both the NGO Women's Forum and the 4th World Conference on Women.

Just three days before I was to leave Canada to attend the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, a reporter phoned asking if I had received my visa. When I said yes, she asked if I knew anybody who had been denied a visa. The newspapers had carried a number of stories about the Chinese government allegedly denying women visas to attend the conference. I said sorry, I couldn't give her any names, everybody I knew had got a visa. Checking around, I had been told that almost four hundred of the estimated six hundred Canadian women who had applied had got their visas! No conspiracy here by the Chinese government to stop Canadian women from attending, I laughed to the reporter. She did not call me back.

Unfortunately, the anti-China bias in the media coverage of the Conference did not stop. The stories pouring out of China focussed on security problems; harassment of delegates by authorities; tents collapsing in Huairou; and on and on. And, as many of us feared, by focussing on these stories, the substantive issues which women had gathered together to work on were thrown by the wayside. They received no media coverage.

The biggest stories out of the Conference should have been about the dynamism and the vitality of the international feminist movement. The media should have told the world that as the shift to the Right in our countries has grown stronger, women's movements have become more radical and militant, and are challenging right-wing forces globally. With over 30,000 women participating in the NGO Forum, this was the largest gathering of women activists in this century. And all the media could talk about was leaking walls and collapsing tents!

The NGO Forum and the Beijing Conference were timely. The current phase of globalization is creating rapid change—every country is undergoing major upheavals as governments scramble to transform their economies to keep pace. Everywhere, women's lives are being affected. Many of the gains we have made in the past are being destroyed as the backlash intensifies. New challenges are emerging as conservative forces grow stronger and more organized. Violence against women has reached horrendous levels, the poverty of women and children increasing sharply, and women and children make up the majority of the one billion people who go hungry every day.

In this climate, the NGO Forum provided a much needed opportunity for women to come together to address these critical issues. With over 5,000 workshops at the Forum, women had the opportunity to discuss each and every issue impacting our lives.

The NGO Forum began with plenaries assessing the status of women, as well as strategies women have developed in different regions to advance equality rights. Speakers addressed the globalization of the economy, women and politics, women and the media, women and militarism, the rise of conservatism, as well as regional issues. Workshops and discussion groups provided much needed space for exchanging information with sisters from different countries, and learning from each other's work. The coalitions which were formed as a result will serve women's groups well in the coming years. Indeed, this coalition-building was probably the most important achievement of the NGO Forum.

Almost as soon as the NGO Forum began, women from the South were organizing demonstrations and protests against their governments. It was intriguing that although the governments of the North are far more powerful—with disproportionate impact on the global state of affairs—women from the North were not organizing any actions against their own governments.

NAC delegates and member groups got working right away to put that straight, we organized a demonstration against the G-7 countries [seven industrialized nations] on September 6th—the International Day of Action for Women's Equality. Two members of the NAC team were Chinese-Canadian sisters and they also turned this demostration into a protest against human rights violations by the Chinese government. Many women from the South joined us in the demonstration, and this is one of the strongest memories of the conference which has stayed with me. There were tears as sisters remembered Tiananmen Square; there was laughter at the songs sung by sisters from India. In the pouring rain, wet and cold, being with this group of women seemed to me to be one of the most wonderful reasons for having come to China.

The official Conference, however, was a different matter. While it is a major achievement of the international women's movement that we have pushed our governments—and the United Nations—to address women's equalities, existing UN structures have not served women well. Governments adopted the Forward Looking Strategies at the last UN Conference on Women a decade ago [in Nairobi, Kenya], and not one country in the world has implemented it. In Beijing, democratic accountability of economic and political institutions to the women of the world therefore became a priority.

In the last five years, a record number of United Nations conferences have taken place, addressing a diverse range of issues. With each successive conference, the women's movement has successfully lobbied to transform the United Nations agenda by putting women's rights at the centre.

At the UN Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) [in Rio de Janiero, Brazil in 1992], women's relationship to the environment was defined as critical, and women were seen as being central to achieving sustainable development. Women's inequalities and poverty were directly linked to environmental destruction.

At the World Conference on Human Rights [in Vienna, Austria in October 1994], women's rights were defined as universal, inalienable, and indivisible, and violence against women was recognized as a fundamental violation of the women's human rights.

At the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) [in Cairo, Egypt in September 1994], women's health and reproductive rights were recognized as key to population and development issues.

This was the largest gathering of women activists in this century. [But] all the media could talk about was leaking walls and collapsing tents!

At the World Summit on Social Development (WSSD) [in Copenhagen, Denmark in March 1995], women's economic and social empowerment were defined as central to eradicating poverty and achieving social integration.

There was an expectation that the Beijing conference would build on these previous gains, and would result in a major breakthrough in setting the agenda for governments to advance women's status. There was an expectation that maybe now governments could be galvanized into taking long overdue action.

However, this was not to be. The Beijing Platform for Action broke no new ground. The Platform is seriously flawed in its approach to women's economic rights. There is no recognition that the existing global economic system is increasing women's inequalities. There is no acknowledgement that the current model for economic growth and globalization, based as it is on "free" market principles and reducing the role of government in re-distributing wealth, devastates the lives of women.

Because the document does not address the causes of women's poverty, it is unable to address how to end it. The power of international financial institutions, of corporations and multinationals, remains unchallenged. No questions are raised about the accountability of these institutions to the women of the world.

The Platform for Action does nothing to counter inequalities between the North and the South. Women from the South have been calling for the cancellation of the debt burden of their countries. Many countries are trapped in the cycle of debts they have no possibility of ever repaying. These countries continue getting deeper into debt as they borrow more to keep up with previous repayment obligations. Not only does the Platform not call for debt cancellation for the poorest countries, it also does not deal with the accountability of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank for the devastating structural adjustment programs (SAPs) they have imposed on countries in the South.

The gains for women are few and far between in the Platform for Action—the losses are too many to list. Protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation was dropped from the final document. Although the Canadian delegation had pushed this issue onto the agenda at previous meetings, at the critical moment for negotiations in Beijing, the Canadian delegation did not introduce the language protecting the rights of lesbians.

One of the gains for women in the Platform is the recognition of women's unwaged work, and the call for governments to measure and value unwaged work. The Platform also calls for an end to discrimination against girls on the issue of inheritance rights.

The committment of governments to implementing the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies as well as the Beijing Platform for Action can be measured by the resources they are willing to commit. Nowhere was the hypocrisy of the governments of the North—including Canada—more evident than on this question. While these governments are quick to condemn the countries of the South on women's rights, it was the countries of the North that blocked committing new and additional resources to advance women's rights. Without these resources, the commitments made in both the Forward Looking Strategies and the Platform for Action remain nothing more than hollow words.

Achieving women's liberation, and ending the different forms of inequalities to which women are subject can only be achieved by transforming current power structures. For this, women have to become central to the political process, becoming involved at every level of governance. We can achieve this with the emergence of women as a strong, political force, working in our movement to transform our societies. This is the job the international women's movement committed itself to in Huairou.

欢迎来自五大洲的姐妹们

Welcome Sisters from the Five Continents

After the plenary, I wander around the site, trying to get my bearings. For me, it's a day of figuring out where things are and how to get around, where the shortest line-ups for lunch are, and who's located where. There are so many workshops, thousands more than anyone could imagine were being planned.

I have a hard time deciding which one to attend, so I choose by proximity of location to where I happen to be standing. I notice women standing around an outdoor stall, and find an overflowing workshop on affirmative action in progress. I join the women standing outside the circle

Over the next few days, this is to become a common occurrence. If you get there late, chances are you may not get into the workshop of your (first) choice. Today gives me the feeling that it is not going to be easy to decide what to do, where to be, and how much I can absorb over the course of the next ten days.

Even after the powerful words at the opening plenary, I can't help wondering what we are all doing here. What can we achieve in a forum of this size? It's overwhelming!

Still, as I listen to women from different parts of the world describe affirmative action in practice in their countries, I realize the incredible power of dialogue between women who would never otherwise find themselves in the same room.

In time though, the women from Namibia who called the workshop seem to be getting a bit frustrated with the numerous women from Canada and the US in attendance, who talk about backlash against affirmative action in their countries. Their experience is quite different, and they speak from a different place. Women from South Africa point this out. The workshop continues, with everyone being polite and trying to communicate across the differences that are only being acknowledged by some. I look forward to the days ahead when the discussion must surely lose its politeness, and women will really begin to talk with each other; to debate, and not to shy away from confrontation.

The Arab tent

Before the Forum begins: Women from Francophone Africa find a quiet corner of the Europe/North America tent to meet, plan and debate.

Inside the Africa regional tent.

An overflowing workshop on affirmative action in practice by the Namibian Women's Organization.

Day two - September 1st

There is no *Forum '95* newspaper today. *Forum '95* is "the independent daily of the NGO Forum on Women: Beijing '95," published primarily in English with an occasional article in French or Spanish. It is the paper that keeps us abreast of cancellations, new additions to the workshop schedule, and keeps us informed on who's doing what and where to go on site. It also keeps us informed on what's going on in the "outside world," as there are no international newspapers on site or in our hotels.

I find out through a contact close to the organizers that the paper is missing because the China Organizing Committee (COC) has objected to an item that says "China occupies Tibet." *Forum '95* staff refuse to pull the offending item and the entire paper does not make it to press. There is no newspaper to update us on what has been cancelled, added or is in the planning.

NGO Forum facilitating committee members renegotiate the right of *Forum '95* to publish an "independent" paper on site, and also get permission for other on site newspapers in languages other than English to publish. The next day, *Forum '95* is back, but there is no explanation nor mention of the missing issue of the paper.

Back on the stairs of the Convention Centre, women with disabilities from around the world begin a spontaneous protest at the lack of access to facilities at Forum '95 *[see photo]*. This is not their first demonstration. They have already met with NGO Forum organizers to try to negotiate better facilities with little success.

The problems are many and have to do with poor planning and little or no consultation with people with disabilities. There aren't enough translators and interpretors for the deaf and hard of hearing; no braille computers for blind women; many of the buildings don't have elevators; there are only a handful of wheelchair accessible toilets, none outdoors where the tents are located and most of the activities take place.

Worse yet, the tent for women with disabilities is located in a remote part of the site, a long way from the Forum's core, the Global Tent. Their request to swap tents with the Youth Tent, which is next door to the Global Tent, is rejected by the organizers.

Despite the setbacks, women with disabilities continue to meet, strategize and organize on the issues that brought them to the Forum. They take care to acknowledge the excellent job the Chinese volunteers are doing, taking care of the women with disabilities by fetching lunch, attending women in wheelchairs, running errands, and much more.

Eventually, women with disabilities win some concessions. Their tent is moved to a central location behind the Global tent. The Swedish government loans the Forum the use of a braille computer. Other concessions are made regarding toilets and providing shuttle rides to remote corners of the site. While many problems persist, it is something to celebrate.

This afternoon, the tribunal of the Global Campaign on Women's Human Rights takes place in the Convention Centre. Twenty-two women present their stories of physical, psychological, sexual and other forms of violence, speaking for the millions of women in every country whose rights are violated over and again daily.

Tanzanian Mahfouda Alley Hamid speaks of economic deprivation because of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) imposed on their government in return for loans from the World Bank. Twenty-nine year old Agnes from Uganda speaks about how she was abducted by rebel soldiers when she was 14 years

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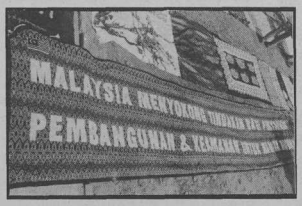

Women stitch together panels of the 10-kilometre long Ribbon of Hope and Peace at the Asia/Pacific tent. The project titled Cambodian Women: Weaving the World Together was started by women from the rural areas of Cambodia in November 1994.

Women from all over the world contributed pieces to the ribbon, originally intended to bridge the distance between the governmental conference and NGO Forum sites in Beijing. Women at the Forum who were hearing about the project for the first time were given a chance to contribute, adding to the ribbon banners made at the last minute, painted cloth and even t-shirts, to be stitched on to the whole.

The Ribbon of Hope was paraded through the "streets" of the NGO Forum site on September 6th, the International Day of Action. On Sept 7th, about 200 women left the Ribbon draped along the Great Wall of China.

Asian women's activism:

Building global movements

by Winnie Wun Wun Ng

Winnie Wun Wun Ng is a longtime labour activist and the southern Ontario regional representative of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). She attended the NGO Forum as a member of the Canada-Beijing Facilitating Committee.

The NGO Forum was an experience of a lifetime. Just spending 10 days with over 30,000 women from all parts of the world is both inspirational and empowering.

Because of the last minute change of the NGO Forum site to Huairou, I went with fairly low expectations anticipating many logistical hurdles. I was pleasantly surprised. Yes, there were problems, the major one being the issue of accessiblity for women with disabilities. But in all, the western media did the forum an injustice by focusing on the logistics and ignoring the wonderful exchanges and bonding among women.

Globalization of the economy was my focus for the ten-day forum. I concentrated on the workshops and networks under this theme and found out what our sisters in Asia are doing.

After many workshops and discussions between women from the south and the north, a global picture of the feminization of poverty emerged—women's rights, human rights and economic rights are inextricably connected.

International financial institutions, such as the IMF (the International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank, have imposed structural adjustment programs (SAP's) on countries of the South in the name of development. One sister from India said, "the whole notion of such economic restructuring is to integrate local economy into the global capitalist economy. Economic changes are political, and in developing countries, SAP's are political statements." Women expressed concern and frustration over the increasing role of local governments as agents of multinational corporations.

I attended a series of workshops on the situation of garment workers across the world. An organizer from Asian Women Advocates in California spoke about the situation for 24,000 garment workers there—predominantly Mexican, Chinese and Central American immigrant women. Seventy percent of the women are heads of their households, and have been the most affected by job losses and reduction in wages in the US, she said.

In Bangladesh, 95 percent of the 1.2 million garment workers are women, and seven to 10 percent are children. Last year, 2,000 workers were injured or died due to fire accidents.

There are one million garment workers in the Philippines. Over the past 20 years, wages have increased by only 26 percent, while inflation has skyrocketed over 100 percent.

In Australia, the use of garment industry homeworkers has increased from 30,000 in 1980 to over 330,000 in 1995.

A shared sense of critical analysis bonded us together and moved us to focus on strategies. Women stressed the importance of networking, monitoring and organizing.

As a result of this discussion, a group of us circulated a leaflet widely throughout the Forum site, exposing the hypocrisy of the American-based, multinational garment corporation Esprit, which supplied cloth bags for the NGO Forum. While priding itself as a supporter for women's causes, Esprit has done more than its share of exploiting women workers *[see photo page 20]*.

In other workshops, women talked about the shifts that have taken place as a result of technological changes. Women also talked about the conscious effort on the part of some governments to implement labour exportation strategies, playing into the demand of transnational corporations (TNCs) for a pool of cheap labour. Another concern for women in the south is rampant sex trafficking. Yayori Matsui, a Japanese feminist journalist, put forward a compelling parallel: "the women are the new 'comfort women' for the company warriors!"

One of the most exciting moments for me was attending the workshop on economic alternatives organized by Asian women. We crammed in to a small discussion tent in the pouring rain—women from Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Canada.

Women from Indonesia shared their experiences of organizing community economic development alternatives and the empowering aspects of women's cooperatives. Japanese women talked about an alternate consumer network in Japan where women boycott products made by TNCs, and only purchase products made by local cooperatives or women's co-ops from other countries in the region—for example, soap made by a Thai women's co-op.

I came out from that workshop exhilarated! There is so much we can learn and share with each other.

Another lesson I came home with is how vibrant the daily organizing efforts by women in the South were at the Forum. I was impressed with the Korean women in pressing forward the issue of comfort women [women exploited by the Japanese army as sex slaves during the second world war.] They staged daily protests; drumming, singing, drama, circles to get other women involved. For example, they brought out a ten metre long piece of white cloth and asked women to help carry it as they marched through the Forum site. The drumming and the multicolours of women's hands holding a white cloth was a symbolic and powerful sight.

There is an element of healing, bonding and solidarity that regular demonstrations and chanting can achieve; it is time for us in North America to be more creative in our organizing and getting our message across.

I have returned to Canada with a renewed commitment to international solidarity work. Just as multinational corporations are globalizing, so should labour and social movements. For the labour movement in particular, the challenge will be how to sustain anti-racism and anti-sexism organizing—how to integrate race, gender and class to provide a much more fundamental and inclusive analysis. The working class, as we have traditionally known it, has evolved and changed, going beyond national physical borders, languages and cultures. The challenges and possibilities for labour are both urgent and invigorating.

Protesting Tian-an-men

On a personal level, I also went to Beijing hoping to participate in a public action around the Tian-an-men Square massacre on June 4, 1989, [when the Chinese government cracked down on a student-led democracy protest in Beijing.] As a Chinese Canadian involved in the human rights movement in China for the last ten years, I was in Beijing for the UN conference, not to condone the present government's oppressive actions and human rights violations. That is a distinction I need to articulate publicly.

I came back strengthened knowing there are so many women in China and in every part of the world who will not be silenced.

From L to R: Amy Go, Judy Rebick, Winnie Ng & Sylvia Springer

I was driven by the sense that there are so many ordinary Chinese citizens who do not have the right to protest or mourn about what happened on June 4th 1989. We—Chinese women living outside of China—had nothing to lose except getting thrown out of China. The Chinese government would not dare arrest us.

We had talked about getting a group of women all dressed in black to go to Tian-an-men Square for a symbolic protest. But the security and logistics proved insurmountable.

Then came September 6th, the International Day of Action—the day Hillary Clinton came to Huairou. We made two banners the night before. Initially, our plan was to pull out the banners to welcome Hillary—the media and a big crowd would be there. But with the pouring rain, at 8:00 am, the conference site was a sea of umbrellas. Thousands of women were lining up waiting to get into the plenary session. There was no way we could be seen or heard.

In solidarity with other women, NAC had planned a demonstration that day at noon to protest the structural adjustment policies of the G-7 countries [industrialized nations] that have devastated the lives of women in the south and dismantled social programs for women in the north. The demonstration took place outside the main Forum centre. Our spirits were high.

After the demo, I took out the two banners. Amy Go and a number of Canadian and US sisters helped hold the banners. The banners read, in both Chinese and English: "June 4, 1989: We'll Never Forget" and "Release All Political Prisoners." You could feel the tension and the silence. Amy, standing next to me, started to cry. Tears rolled down the cheeks of many women. I stood there, saying to myself, "It is the right thing to do. We are doing this in solidarity with so many who could not be here."

It was an emotional and a sobering moment. I spoke briefly in English and Chinese. We raised the banners high so residents on the street could see it. Some Aboriginal sisters sang a prayer song. We chanted some more. A group of Indian sisters sang a humourous song of political satire. The laughter eased some of the tension in the air.

Then women spontaneously came up to the banners to speak. A sister from the South Pacific talked about the protests against nuclear testing and how they have become political prisoners of conscience. She spoke in solidarity and called for the release of political prisoners everywhere.

Sisters from Nepal, Taiwan, Chile spoke. We chanted and sang some more. Over 300 women were there in the pouring rain for over an hour. Throughout, the media's and the Chinese security's cameras were on. We had caught the Chinese by surprise. There was nothing they could do; we were in a UN-protected Forum site. The security people stood by, watched, and filmed. We did it!

On Friday—the last day of the NGO Forum—I realized I was being followed. I went to a Burmese Women's Workshop and felt strengthened after watching the video of Aung Sang Suu Kyi's address to the NGO Forum.

In the afternoon, I travelled downtown with three other Canadian women; two men [Chinese police]—one with a purple umbrella and the other in a brown windbreaker—were our "personal bodyguards." We joked about them but somehow you feel deeply the invasion of privacy. Their presence was a form of harassment and intimidation, an invisible reminder of who is in control.

What I got was only a small taste of what activists in China endure on a daily basis. To withstand such pressure and be able to continue their work is an act of courage and an act of defiance in itself.

I came back strengthened knowing there are so many women in China and in every part of the world who will not be silenced. Sisters, we are in great company in the struggle for justice and human rights. Our resolve, our presence and our actions will be a constant reminder to the powers that be that their days are numbered and truth will prevail.

old, raped, beaten, tortured, and forced to cook and clean. She escaped and was "rescued" by the military who did not feed nor clothe her, and provide no counselling or support.

Maria talked about life in the Maquiladoras (free trade factory zones) in Mexico; Nurjehan from Bangladesh could not make it to Beijing herself. She swallowed pesticide and died after being stoned with 101 pebbles in a pit by men for immorality. The woman telling her story said a human rights organization took up her case and those who stoned her were sentenced to seven years imprisonment.

Juanita talked about being HIV-positive and dealing with the medical system in the United States. Mary from Ireland talked about being hospitalized repeatedly from beatings by her husband since the age of 17 and not being able to divorce him because of Catholic laws.

It is announced a petition will be presented to the UN Conference calling for the UN to report on the steps it has taken to promote and protect the human rights of women since the International Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993. The petition has been translated into more than 30 languages, circulated in 140 countries, and is sponsored by more than 1,500 groups internationally.

Tibetan women hold a silent demonstration outside the Global Tent at the Huairou Forum site, to symbolize the silencing of Tibetan peoples by the People's Republic of China (PRC), which has occupied Tibet since 1950, and PRC's violations of the human rights of Tibetans. At a press conference following the demonstration, the 10 Tibetan women, all of whom live in exile in the US, Canada, Australia and Norway, said that China tried to stop them from coming to the Forum. Sixty-seven Tibetan women were either denied visas or faced obstacles that discouraged them from attending the Forum.

The women told stories of PRC policies to regulate the number of Tibetan children permitted to be born, unofficially since the 1980s and officially since 1992. Various means to "persuade" women not to have children included economic and social sanctions for having an unplanned child, coercing women to have abortions and sterilization operations.

The demonstration was planned with the assistance of the International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet, a US-based organization, and took place with "the permission of" NGO Forum executive director Irene Santiago. While Chinese security guards were in full attendance, the protesting women were not harassed at the press conference.

Day three - September 2nd

Forum '95 carries a story on the O.J. Simpson workshop that some African-American women put on yesterday under the violence-against-women theme. Over 100 women attend the workshop, many from "Southern" countries. There has been no verdict yet in the case of the Black American sports star accused of killing his white wife, but already women know that the verdict will be an acquittal, and talk about the connections between sexism, racism and violence.

I head over to the diversity tents for the third daily meeting of the hundreds of lesbians who are here from all regions of the world. As on other days at the Lesbian Tent meetings, women share stories of the homophobic and supportive things they have encountered on site, and information on what they are working on.

We hear about how the women from Cypress invited lesbians from the tent to dance with them in their tent. We hear about different reactions to the blue buttons with the slogan: "Lesbian Rights are Human Rights: Beijing '95" we all wear to identify ourselves and each other on site. The Chinese volunteers are curious and ask to buy the buttons as souvenirs; others ask about whether women can have children together; a Canadian woman tells me it's not my "fault;" I could have been "cured" of lesbianism if my parents had known I was "this way" when I was ten.

We hear about the hundreds of media and participants who visited the tent that day—what they asked about, how many were hostile (a few), supportive (a lot), and curious (many, many more).

We are urged to support the Tibetan women in their demonstrations because they support lesbian rights. Dozens of workshops are announced: on lesbians from the South, sexual and reproductive health, incarceration of lesbian youth in mental institutions, and so on.

At the end, as women mingle, an announcement is yelled: "Chinese and Spanish media have asked to film the left side of the Lesbian Tent so if it's dangerous for you to be identified publicly, stand on the right."

In the coming days, I make the Lesbian Tent my "home." It helps to have a place on site to meet people, leave messages, find women to talk or debate with, to organize out of, or to just hang out in. The scale and high energy of the Forum makes it a lonely place for women without colleagues or a base. Even women from organizations that could afford or were funded to send large delegations (up to 20-30 from a single organization sometimes) can feel incredibly isolated sometimes.

The tents are intended to break down that isolation, to give women a place to organize from and network.

For example, the Grassroots tent, set up by various organizations made up of or for grassroots women, invite women working on issues of housing and shelter, who have no other base, to work out of the tent. This gives women, such as Malaysian activist Susanna George of the Asian Women and Shelter Network, an opportunity to meet and work with the women she has been networking with in the months before the Forum. Every day, women working on shelter issues meet to discuss objectives and criteria of work on this issue. By the end of the forum, a worldwide network of women working on shelter issues has been formed to continue the work beyond Huairou.

Still, as one woman from the US put it, while working this way is one way to cope with the size and breadth of the Forum, at the end you feel like "Huairou is one big campus, and the only people you know are from your major."

I don't have any one major; I am alone in covering the whole Forum for *Kinesis*. I continue to take in the fragmented, many varied pieces of the whole, hoping for a day when it all suddenly comes together in one easy picture.

Huairou is not easy. I only know one thing: the women's movement, if the Forum is it, is huge and working on many different issues in many different ways. Is it largely feminist? What does it challenge? Is it one movement or many? What significance does what we do here have for the women of the world who are not in Huairou?

As today ends, I hope the coming days will tell.

Women protest the use of women as guinea pigs for new reproductive tecnologies, as well as the "dumping" of anti-fertility vaccines on the "third world," which are then forcibly imposed on women to meet World Bank targets for "population control."

Women from various South Asian organizations raise the issue of violence against women with a long and loud demonstration across the Forum site.

Almost 40,000 cloth bags, in which we received our Forum '95 programs, were provided by Esprit, the American garment corporation. Women circulated flyers calling for participants to mail the Esprit labels attached to the bags back to Esprit to protest the company's use of sweatshop labour. The flyers point out that women and girls work at dirt-cheap wages and are subject to unsafe working conditions. As well, workers in Esprit factories are forced to take birth control pills to prevent them from getting pregant and disturbing the flow of work. A few days later, the flyers were recirculated with a longer explanation on the flipside by a group called Sweatshop Watch, which outlines a history of Esprit's anti-worker history, which includes union busting, frequent labour law violations as documented in a federal survey, and moving a factory in the US where the Chinese immigrant workers were protesting to Hong Kong, where labour is cheaper and unions weaker.

Mercedes Sosa:

Voice of the Americas

by Guadalupe Lesca Jolicoeur

So often when we read about performers, we are given information that is meant to 'entertain' us. That's fine, but for some of us, the value of an artist is not based solely on their ability to entertain a captive audience. At least, this is the case with Mercedes Sosa, who for thirty years has created music and poetry that speaks of much more than just a desire for personal fame and fortune. Her name may or may not be familiar—that doesn't really matter. With Sosa, what matters is honesty, courage and dignity—not being a household name.

Her story is the story of millions of women all over the world who know what it is like to carve out a place in a society that doesn't accept who they are. She was born to a Native washer-woman in Tucuman—a remote province in Argentina—that culturally has more in common with traditional Andean culture than with the European culture of other parts of Argentina.

Being part-Native has influenced Sosa in the most profound way. In Argentina, indigenous people (women in particular) occupy the lowest rank within the social strata. In addition, continued political strife, social injustice, and thirteen years of violent military dictatorships has cemented Mercedes Sosa's commitment to social justice.

She has recorded more than a dozen albums—in all of them, she draws upon a diverse array of musical influences including jazz, folk, samba and tango. And from the beginning of her career, her music has reflected a tremendous understanding of issues such as marginalization, social injustice, humanity and feminism. One of her albums—*La Nueva Mujer (The New Woman)*—is dedicated to women and includes interpretations of Latin American songs by women.

She has collaborated with and interpreted the songs of many artists who share her social and political concerns including Silvio Rodriguez, Milton Nascimento, Beth Carvalho, Pablo Milanes, Nilda Fernandez, and the legendary Argentine Atahualpa Yupanqui. Not once have her artistic choices or her personal choices compromised her identity as a native Latin American woman. She has somehow managed to sustain a commercial career without being co-opted by commercial forces.

She sings of Latin American unity, socialist revolution, and the struggle of Latin Americans against imperialism. For many, Mercedes Sosa stands for Latin Americanism, and for justice and hope. "I know and am proud that when I travel all over the world, my success is the success of the Latin American culture," says Sosa.

As a performer, she remains magically distant and yet so tangible. She consumes the stage with her charisma and her integrity. It is these qualities—the unyielding determination to express her identity—that made her an enemy in the eyes of one of the most infamous dictatorships of our time.

Despite the thousands of "disappeared" [people gone missing and suspected murdered], the censorship, the collective silence and the indiscriminate violence that characterized the Argentine dictatorships of the 1970s and early 1980s, Mercedes Sosa and many of her fellow performers continued to sing the truth and to inspire their listeners.

In 1979, after constant harassment and threats, the military banned Sosa from singing. Unable to perform—left without a voice with which to communicate with her people—she was forced into exile. For three years, Sosa lived in Europe and continued to deliver her message to the world. Her voice of justice and hope resonated for those at home and for the people outside of Argentina who knew very little about the grave injustices of the dictatorship. It was people like Mercedes Sosa, exiled artists and activists, who helped bring a condemning hand upon the Argentine military.

In another act of defiance, Sosa returned to Argentina in 1982 to sing once again. The audiences packed the stadiums and made their feelings heard as they sang along whole-heartedly with every word of every song. One year later the dictatorship fell.

But, social injustices do not miraculously disappear with the fall of a regime and Mercedes Sosa has continued her work as a messenger for women's rights, cultural awareness, indigenous people's rights and protection of the environment. She has participated in dozens of concerts and festivals dedicated to social justice, women's rights and ecology in Latin America and Europe.

In 1990, she helped organize and was a featured performer at Without Borders, an all-women music festival that toured in Latin America.

Joan Baez, with whom Sosa toured Europe in 1989, believes that Mercedes Sosa is one of the best performers around. "I have never seen anything like her," Baez said. "She is monumental in stature, a brilliant singer with tremendous charisma who is both a voice and a persona. I hadn't been so moved by music in a long time."

With the presence and power of an Andean earth mother *(Pacha Mama)* Mercedes Sosa captivates her audience and delivers a message of truth, dignity and justice.

Over the last few years the international community has recognized her great contributions to culture and social justice in the form of several honours, including France's "Award in the Degree of Knight Commander," Germany's "Order of Honour," and Ecuador's "Medal of Cultural Merit". Most recently, she won UNIFEM's (the United Nations Fund for Women) anniversary award for "Woman of the Year," which will be presented to her at her concert in November at Lincoln Center in New York City.

Mercedes Sosa will be making her only Canadian appearance at Vancouver's Queen Elizabeth Theatre on Saturday, November 18. Sosa will showcase songs from her most recent album, Gestos de Amor.

Guadalupe Lesca Jolicoeur is a freelance writer in the Vancouver area. She is originally from Argentina. She is presently working as a cultural attache for the consulate of Uruguay in Vancouver.

This publication is regularly indexed in the Canadian Women's Periodicals Index.

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Review of The Journal Project:

Conversations in women's studies

by Janet Nichol

THE JOURNAL PROJECT

Dialogues and Conversations Inside Women's Studies

Edited by Dana Putnam, Dorothy Kidd, Elaine Dornan, and Patty Moore

Second Story Press
Toronto, Ontario, 1995

For those of us who have missed the experience of a women's studies course, this collection of journal writing by students at Langara Community College in Vancouver offers an opportunity to read the thoughtful reflections of over 50 women.

In two first and second year courses—"Women and Sexuality" and "Women and Social Change"—students were regularly submitting journal assignments to instructors for feedback. The idea of publishing the journal writing came from two students who had taken the courses, Dana Putnam and Elaine Dornan, and two instructors, Patty Moore and Dorothy Kidd.

The four women recognized that a wider audience was missing out on important "conversations" (as the journal style is likened to) and "dialogues" between instructors and students. They formed an editorial committee in 1992, and then began soliciting journal writings—on a voluntary submission basis—from women who were taking or had taken one or both of the courses.

In the introduction of the book, Dorothy Kidd outlines the process of putting together the project, some issues that came up along the way, and the framework for the book. One issue Kidd addresses is that in the earlier stages of the project, there was a lack of representation in the writings being submitted of women of colour and immigrant women, lesbians, and poor and working class women. She goes on to talk about strategies the editors used to encourage "more women to submit pieces that spoke from these experiences."

Through *The Journal Project*, the reader becomes familiar with the writers, some of whom choose to remain anonymous or use their first names only, as they write openly on all or some of the four theme areas: "Beginning Women's Studies," "Naming," "Feminist Classroom," and "Integrating New Learning." These categories emerged naturally from the entries being submitted, the editors note, allowing the students to create the framework for the project, rather than having one imposed on them.

In "Beginning Women's Studies," one issue of conversation is first impressions of women's studies classes. For some, women's studies was a starting point in their exploration of feminism and political consciousness. Jackie Lynne states: "One reason I'm afraid of Women's Studies is because I feel like I'm on the brink of knowing something; and having once understood, nothing will be quite the same."

Another student, Tanis Poole writes: "A seed was planted with my first Women's Studies class—it was new/different, having women instructors...And to be among so many other women! Phew, 'scary.'" And B.J. states: "the content of the course is intensely interesting to me and when I read, I feel like a sponge."

It's not all positive talk, however. Several students also write about their discomfort and anger within the classroom/college walls. One student dreads more discussions of race issues with white people. Another is saddened that the white women in class see racism in an individualistic rather than systemic way.

Women bring insights and thoughts both from inside and outside of the classroom into their journal entries. Some write directly in response to things that happen or issues raised in their women's studies classes. After seeing a film on the Canadian writer Margaret Laurence, Varney Allis reflects on Laurence's advice about "speaking the heart's truth." Allis writes about her own desire "to live my life as I want, and not as I am 'supposed to' before I get a minute older—and certainly before, like Hagar, (a character in Laurence's novel, *The Stone Angel*) I turn ninety."

In drawing from their own life experiences, a number of women explore how the personal mixes with the political. Daphne Boxill writes about an evening seeing movies which address racism with a white friend: "I should have gone alone. I couldn't relax and fully enjoy these two films. I was worrying about her responses. The remarks she would make. I feel so caught, stuck..."

The journal entries are not all written strictly in prose form. Some women choose to include poetry, allowing their feelings to emerge, as this excerpt by Lidwina Bautista illustrates:

My children as me.
"Mom, why do you call Philippines Home?
You live here, Canada is your home."
I wonder why...

In my silence, a stranger asked
"Where did you come from"
Colour immigrants, trying to survive
"Go back to your own country, you're stealing our jobs."

Within the theme of "Naming," a number of students converse about the construction of women's bodies and images of their bodies. Suhasine Hansen links class discussion on women and the media with her family's attitudes about weight, designer clothes and "fitting in."

She writes: "I think we are all victims of the media, from race to sex, to height to weight, to other forms of appearance, etc."

And Michelle Elizabeth Neilson connects body image issues with her observations in the college cafeteria: "These two women sitting beside me saw their classmate coming towards them. They call her over to them and, before she reaches the table, one women says to the other, 'She is so thin it's nauseating.'" Michelle concludes from this that "we have so internalized this beauty criteria that we also judge our sisters according to the slenderness of their thighs and the size of their breasts."

The issue of sexuality is addressed from various angles. Commenting on a class presentation on "lesbophobia," one woman writes: "I am really glad she takes the risks she does in speaking the truth." Another student bemoans not having a date on Valentine's Day: "I know its ridiculous, but every year I buy into it." Sexual confusion is yet another student's topic as she asks: "What do I want? What makes me feel good?"

Some of the students write about their pain dealing with past traumas or current dilemmas. Elaine Dornan writes about her friends' lack of understanding about her past sexual abuse experiences: "They are well-meaning people who genuinely believe they are offering needed advice. But I bleed every time I hear those words. I feel assaulted, I try to explain how their words make me feel, but most of my friends look away, unwilling to challenge the assumption behind their words. So, reluctantly, one more time, I draw away from these friends and try to find new ones; ones who are able to listen to my story and not pass judgement upon me."

During the course of the project, two meetings were organized in which 20 women participated to give their thoughts, either on tape or in writing, on a set of questions concerning journal writing. Those taped discussions and written responses have been included in the afterword as a review of the value and process of journal writing.

Overall, students respond positively to the exercise of journal writing and the project, as Karen Egger claims: "To me I think, so what if it [journal writing] shaped me? It's an incredibly valuable tool...it's far less shaped than any other thing you ever have a chance to put out, in academia."

Some students do point out limitations, and offer important cautionary notes for instructors wanting to replicate this exercise. In addressing the therapeutic role journal writing often plays, Terry Gibson comments: "I was very fragile then, as I know others were as well. With our instructors not there to do therapy, if serious stuff gets triggered, we might find ourselves with nowhere to go." Strategies to deal with this issue are not pursued, but could be developed in future projects.

The Journal Project is unique within the genre of diary writings. Collections of journal writings in the past have not tended to come from one time and place as these do, and have not attempted to reflect a specific project, such as a women's studies curriculum. The writing isn't always polished, sometimes there may be excessive detail, but this is how we "talk;" this is our authentic voice.

The Journal Project models a democratic and trust-building editorial process, as well as providing samples for other women interesting in exploring journal writing. The fusion of women's experiences with feminist theory, as presented in this collection, indicates the vitality of women's individual and collective voices.

The editors' royalties from The Journal Project *will go toward establishing a bursary for women at Langara Community College.*

Janet Nicol is a public school teacher who uses journal writing in her instruction.

Asian Canadian women writers/performers at the Go-For-Broke Revue*:*

Literary treats

by Sook C. Kong

Last month in Vancouver, the talents showcased during the three day Go-For-Broke Revue at the Firehall Theatre (September 29 to October 1) by the Asian Canadian Writers' Workshop, featured an enticing variety of dance, theatre, music—both classical and pop—and literary performance and readings by East Asian Canadians, including both emerging and established artists and writers.

Below, Kinesis *brings you a review of the sterling performances by five Asian Canadian women writers/performers who participated in an afternoon variety program on September 30—SKY Lee, Lydia Kwa, Kay Odaka, Larissa Lai and Rita Wong.*

As one of the five women who performed in the variety matinee, SKY Lee, author of *Disappearing Moon Café* and *Bellydancer*, presented her new skit *Ghost Stories* at the *Go-For-Broke Revue* on September 30 at the Firehall Arts Theatre. *Ghost Stories* takes apart a variety of characters — from girly-girl cutey, to tough-talking take-no-shit dyke, to a 'red-neck', Port Alberni Chinese-housewife. Photo by Laiwan

SKY Lee

Ghost Stories, a skit by SKY Lee takes apart various bigoted/self-interested positions by poking merciless fun at their inhabitants. The privileged white male, the less-than-honest lover, and certain folks in the mill town of Port Alberni, BC, are among those that Lee singles out for her laser-beam treatment. To be sure, humour with an edge has multiple functions.

The irrepressible Lee, in a retro polka dot dress and squeaky clean runners with shopping bag in hand, had the audience laughing and musing over her dramatization of various character types. Her personae ranged from girly-girl cutey, to tough-talking take-no-shit dyke, to the polite next-door-neighbour Chinese-housewife—the mother "made invisible by apron and diapers."

To the liberal white male who says to all with pompous nonchalance: "Why, you are no different from me," Lee's punchy-mouthed lesbian character retorts: "That makes us all lesbians of colour!"

Lee spares no one who demonizes 'the other'—whether the other be the lesbian of colour, the beguiled lover, or the 1950s Chinese housewife-mother-type transplanted from China into an (almost) non-comprehending Canada.

The Chinese housewife-mother persona takes apart all sterotypes found behind the picket fences of small-town Canada—including of herself. Suffice it to say, politesse is not her entire being. (What are those pointed ends straining at the inside tips of her dishwashing gloves?)

At the same time the Chinese-housewife character is trying to provide small comforts—such as tea and homemade Chinese pork buns—for the abused white women next door, their cultural collision indicates that genuine inter-cultural understanding can only arise when mutual understanding goes beyond the superficial.

In a montage performance that covers much ground, Lee also weaves in an excerpt from Maxine Hong Kingston's novel, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts*, in keeping with the demons and ghosts which were the recurring themes. Lee's off-the-wall performance is pithily illustrated by this zany line from her Chinese housewife-mother persona, "Whole day fuck fuck *sang* [sound], no good."

Lydia Kwa and Kay Odaka

You know art has come alive when an unmistakeable frisson courses down your spine. This was the case with Lydia Kwa and Kay Odaka's dramatization of Kwa's long poem, "Translating Fortune: Cookie Wisdom," [published in Kwa's first collection of poetry, *The Colours of Heroines*, (Women's Press, 1994).]

In an impeccable co-performance, Kwa and Odaka take their audience into the dark night of the heterosexualized family and deal capably and artistically with a subject of utmost pain and difficulty—incest. "Tell me how you define enemy,"..."are those of us linked/by blood spared?"

Both Kwa and Odaka were dressed in black tights and Batik vests. Batik cloth, a fabric special to Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, is used as a signifier of the weave of another time and place in the life of the main persona of "Transforming Fortune"—the woman survivor. Kwa and Odaka each play one half of the woman's psyche—Kwa was 'Question' while Odaka was 'Admonition.'

Harnessing the expressive registers of their voices and the fluidity of their facial expressions, Kwa and Odaka delivered their lines—lines, such as: "i consumed dutifully/bloodied broth," "half-confessing/abuse," "mummy," "i'm scared of monsters in the closet."

Their eloquent voices, blending in poetic poignancy, captured the almost-impossible-to-capture emotional recesses and mental nuances of an incest survivor. Sometimes speaking their lines far apart from each other and sometimes speaking them huddled together, Kwa and Odaka (re-)enacted a horrendous suffering: "shield me shield me," and "wish you had shielded me. too late to stop last night's dream, his penis/gesturing at me, you dazed by the kitchen sink/his penis, twisted and upright, wrought iron spike."

"Translating Fortune" is ultimately an empowering poem, for it opens up a sliver of space between heinous hurt, slow healing, and a tentative move toward self-empowerment: "translating fortune, act of disentangle. from love and rage. leaping over walls. back into myself."

It is also about learning to listen very attentively to this laden question, in whatever form it appears: "is there anyone/who speaks my language?"

Larissa Lai

Deep passion, quietly spoken, sums up Vancouer-based writer Larissa Lai's rendition of several of her own poems. Her thought-provoking poetry ranges over bedrock issues, such as what being a diasporic Chinese woman means, lesbian desire, and lesbian love narratives.

In "The Eldest Daughter," Lai's persona talks, with heart-worn pride, about her inter-woven loyalties—to family, to heritage, to remembering, to herself. Her poem moves to its height of tremulous intensity in this section: "Tell me, should I swallow/my eye/like fat round pill/help it settle/with a cup of hot water/or should I hold it in my fist/high above the spinning world/let it look in/as though through a window."

For the generations of Chinese women who have been dispersed from their ancestral homeland of China, China, as icon, stands for myriad significances, the unravelling of which depends on the location of the speaker.

In "Under Construction," a poem about a young Chinese Canadian woman's experiences of China, her vision is doubled with a perception of a fast-modernizing contemporary

Continued on page 24: Revue

Benefit CD for rape crisis centres:

A compelling compilation

by Janet Askin

LIT FROM WITHIN

Various Artists
Nettwerk Productions
Vancouver, BC, 1995

For those of you who like sitting, drinking tea—alone or with the company of other women—and lending a careful ear to music which speaks to women, you will enjoy this release. *Lit from Within*—a compilation of songs and spoken word—is an empowering collection of strong women's voices.

All proceeds from this CD will go to rape crisis centres across Canada, enabling the centres to continue providing critical services for women in need of support and assistance. The idea for the benefit CD started with Tonni Maruyama. Maruyama gained the support of Vancouver's Rape Relief Rape Crisis Centre in Vancouver, then contacted various women artists and Nettwerk Productions about participating in the project.

Lit from Within is the first time a Canadian independent label has put out a compilation in support of a particular cause or issue. Hopefully, we will see more of this kind of effort on the part of independent record companies.

The songs and poems of the artists featured on this release deal with a broad range of approaches to the issue of violence against women and women's reactions to it.

The diverse mix of women contributing to the project range from Kate and Anna McGarrigle with their powerful vocals and the inspirational feeling of "Rainbow Ride," to Evelyn Lau's quietly spoken (but not quietly felt) poems, "Bruises" and "19."

"Snakes," the tone setting first cut of the compilation evokes memories of childhood imagery and boy violence, and is spoken in a clean and clear voice by Lorna Crozier. She captures your attention. (What women can't relate to girlhood memories of being chased, threatened, and taunted by little boys 'just having fun?')

This is a CD that demands listening with your full attention, it is not a conversation accompaniment or a musical diversion. The compelling voices of these women will not remain in the background and, through their words, the silence is broken.

Among the standouts...my favourites were Kristy Thirsk's angelic rendition of "Songbird," (from Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours* album), and Sara McLachlan's "Good Enough," which stings and rings all too true, again and again. Suzanne Little's "Swept Away" melodically carries a theme prevalent throughout the CD—a theme of change, leaving and not losing yourself. And a 'melodic musical mention' to Meryn Cadell's haunting and ardent "Safe."

Lit from Within's music and poetry speaks to women for women, and I would recommend checking music stores for this release, both for the content and the cause.

Janet Askin is first-time writer for Kinesis.

Revue

continued from previous page

China: "the only China I will rememebr/is a China under construction," and a nostalgic longing for an ancestral China: "dreaming of a China that might have been/ready any minute/to fall out the side." Her corollary point is that bridging these two faculties—the intellect and the heart—would result in a new knowledge, a more holistic perception-cognition.

In her poem, "Tell: Longing and Belonging," Lai deals with the reverberations and repercussions of lesbian desire with superb craft. ["Tell" is published in *Pearls of Passion: A Treasury of Lesbian Erotica* (Sister Vision Press, 1994).]

Feeling alternative emotion is a difficult enough business. Writing lesbian emotion is even more challenging. Lai more than meets the challenge with these lines of profoundly felt emotions that neither escape the heart nor the tongue: "tell you say your usual way/of getting information/I want to say/I *have a crush/on you* feel too shy/blush and say/ *nothing*."

The depth of the emotions felt are reinforced through the paradox of both saying and not saying—all at once. Negation is an indomitable reinforcer, while negation upon negation—that is, denegation—kick starts the generator of the lesbian heart.

It is not only that one is ambivalent about verbalizing emotions. The beginnings of certain about-to-become intimate conversations seem to be fuelled by multi-layered ambiguities. If one were to follow conversations as though they were all about linearity and mono-dimensional clarity, then one falls into a common trap—the in-built lies of structural dialogue.

Throughout "Tell," Lai teases from language both its bridge-like and its chasm-like qualities.

Apportioning and assigning are counterproductive acts between two lesbians who have long gone past their comfort zones to become intimate. Lai takes up this point, encapsulating the tensed futility of verbal contest, *after the fact*, when she says: "but you tell me whose hands/made the first motion downward/to interlock with the fingers/of yours or mine/who turned first whose/lips tongues teeth/met in the wind/ moist and hot against the cold/smell of leather vague girl smell/coming up through the skin."

If, as current research shows, 90 per cent of verbal communication is non-verbal, better that language is a point-of-departure than the point-of-arrival.

Rita Wong

Rita Wong, a former editorial member of *Absinthe*, a Calgary-based literary journal, read two of her prose pieces: an untitled account of her travels in China, and "Prosopopeia".

The UBC graduate student hooked her audience with her sinewy prose, moving seamlessly from the solitariness of introspection and observation, to incisive analysis and finely-nuanced emotion.

Wong used her silken but ever-so-slightly sanded voice to maximum effect, holding her audience spellbound with her sensitive reading. Her flawless sense of timing and rhythm texturized her living, breathing performance. Furthermore, she produced a palpable vigour in the Firehall auditorium with very minimalist body movements.

In Wong's untitled work on China, the first-person speaker turns pensive on a major question: 'How to write China without being inhabited by the almost ubiquitous tendency to exoticize a space that one only visits?' As she puts it, how does one make a "visceral" and "real" China "come alive" in language?

Instead of philosophizing, Wong continued her reading, moving on to a bus ride to Gansu province, the dustbowl of China. Via the vehicle of well-paced humour (including the self-deprecating variety), she brings to life the unexpected—the boomerang effect of one's own spitting, and the surrealistic bonding with strangers created by a chain of nausea.

Continuing her theme of yoking the expected with the unexpected, Wong read the rest of her story on China, including the section about the Tibetan monks and their corporeality. She made the monks real and visceral, without obliterating their spirituality. "[W]e chat with monks around our age who are kind of cute in that austere muscular way, monks who sing raunchy songs, monks who incidentally give us the fire in the belly to go to Tibet."

"Prosopopeia," a highly evocative piece about absences and presences, turns conventional notions of these phenomena upside-down and inside-out, as in: "myself who is so removed, so absent, a watcher...the thinker and the sometimes silent doer, but preferably not the talker" and "the problem with being the moon rather than the sun, the problem with being perceived as dependent, when really, the moon exists however we choose to interpret her."

Rounding off a most resonant reading, Wong had parts of her audience gasping when, without hint, her reading of "Prosopopeia" culminated in these achingly taut lines: "I am scared of saying something you will understand, stuck in a groove where I want to reach out to you, yet drawing back in fear of actually touching you."

Many were touched that afternoon.

Sook C. Kong is a doctoral candidate in English, specializing in critical theory and Asian women writers. Prior to pursuing graduate studies, she was an award-winning journalist.

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BULLETIN BOARD

read this

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

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

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

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

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

Listings will not be accepted over the telephone.

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

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

INVOLVEMENT

WANNA GET INVOLVED?

With *Kinesis*? We want to get involved with you too. Help plan our next issue. All women interested in what goes into *Kinesis*—whether it's news, features, or arts—are invited to our next Writers' Meetings: **Mon Nov 6**, 7pm at our office, 301-1720 Grant St, Vancouver. If you can't make the meeting, but still want to find out about writing for *Kinesis*, give Agnes a call at (604) 255-5499. No experience is necessary. 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 **December/January 1996** issue is from **Nov 22-29**. No experience is necessary. Training and support will be provided. If this notice intrigues you, call Laiwan at (604) 255-5499. Childcare subsidies available.

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INVOLVEMENT

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 Andrea at (604) 255-5511.

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 volunteers 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 Nov 16**, 7 pm at VSW, 301-1720 Grant St. For more info, call Andrea at 255-5511. Childcare subsidies available.

Want to advertise in Kinesis? Call us 255-5499

EVENTS

FREE WORKSHOPS FOR WOMEN

Douglas College Women's Centre is offering free workshops for women attending or interested in attending the college. Upcoming workshops include: Assertive Communication **Wed Nov 1,** 10-noon; Relaxation Techniques **Wed Nov 15,** 10-noon; Career Trends **Wed Nov 22**, 2-4pm; Talking Circle **Thurs Nov 23**, 4-6pm; and Time Management Skills **Wed Nov 29**, 10-noon. Workshops will be held at the Women's Centre, Douglas College, Room 2720-700 Royal Ave, New Westminster, BC. To register call (604) 527-5486.

HEROTICA 2

Herotica 2 is being performed in Vancouver until **Sat Nov 11** at the Station Street Arts Centre, 930 Station St. *Herotica 2* is directed by Katrina Dunn; written by Jan Derbyshire, Shawna Dempsey, Margaret Dragu, Marie Humber-Clements and Susan Musgrave; and performed by Mercedes Baines, Diane Brown, Melaine Doerr & Manami Hara. Show times are **Tues-Sun** 8pm plus **Sat** 5pm. Tickets are $14/$12 and 2 for 1 on Tuesdays. For more infor call (604) 688-3312.

GRRRRLS WITH GUITARS

Grrrrls with Guitars features Robin Toma with guests and Tammy Faesart **Wed Nov 22,** 10pm at the Lotus, 455 Abbott St, Van. Admission is $3-5 or 2 for 1 with coupon before 10pm. Again on **Mon Nov 27**. Grrrrls with Guitars will feature Judy Atkin/Melanie Dekker, The Lingo Sisters and Julie McGeer **Mon Nov 27,** 9:30 at the Railway Club, 579 Dunsmuir St, Van. Admission is $3/members; $5/non-members. For more info call (604) 685-3623.

READINGS BY FIRST NATIONS WOMEN

Mahara Allbrett, Vera Manuel and Gunargie O'Sullivan will present their work **Sat Nov 25** at 8pm at Western Front, 303 E. 8th Ave, Van. Admission is by donation. For more info call (604) 876-9343.

COMING OUT ON BROADWAY

A Vancouver Women's Chorus presents *Coming Out On Broadway*, a fun-filled cabaret featuring great show tunes **Nov 24 & 25** at St. John's United, 1401 Comox St. Doors open at 7:30pm. Show time 8pm. Tickets are $12 and are available at Women in Print, Harry's and Little Sister's. For more info call (604) 987-0393.

NATURAL MEDICINE

All women are invited to a lecture/disscussion on *Natural Medicine and Women's Health*, featuring Dr. Isis M. van Loon, ND, of the New Westminster Naturopathic Clinic **Thurs Nov 9**, 4-6pm at the Douglas College Women's Centre, Rm 2720-700 Royal Ave, New Westminster. To preregister and for more info call (604) 527-5148.

THE MIND OF A CHILD

The Canadian premiere screening of *The Mind of a Child*, a dramatic and moving documentary about Aboriginal, African American and Jewish children traumatized by racism, poverty and violence, and teachers who are working with them, will be held on **Wed Nov 1**, 8pm at Robson Square Conference Centre, 800 Robson St. The film will be followed by a discussion with First Nations educator Lorna Williams, featured in the film, and director Gary Marcuse. Tickets are $5 at the door. *The Mind of a Child* will also be aired on the Knowledge Network **Sun Nov 5** at 9pm. For more info call (604) 255-6596.

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Thank-You !!!

Kinesis would like to thank all of the people who contributed to making our annual benefit a success!!

Elaine Stef * Eileen Kage * May Zhu * Sky Lee * Frannie Sheridan * Erin Graham * Cafe Deux Soleils * Harry's Off Commercial * Deserving Thyme * Vancouver Women's Bookstore * Women In View Festival * Magpie Magazine Gallery * Norman's Fruit and Salad * It's All Fun and Games * Continental Coffee House * Laiwan * Doll and Penny's * Pacific Cinematheque * The Ridge Theatre * Commodore Lanes * Duthies Books * Georgina Black * Spartacus Books * Blue Ewe B&B * YWCA * Highlife Records * Judy Senang....and all the **wonderful, unforgetable** *Kinesis* volunteers and supporters...thanks for coming out!!!!

BULLETIN BOARD

EVENTS

IN HER NATURE

Women's Press will launch *In Her Nature*, a rich & warm debut collection of short stories about women, by Karen X. Tulchinsky, in Vancouver, **Sat Nov 11**, 8pm at The Lotus, 455 Abbott St. Free admission. Donations accepted to The Little Sister's Defense Fund.

BRENDA PETERSON

Mesmerizing storyteller Brenda Peterson reads from her collection of essays, *Nature and Other Mothers*, **Fri Nov 3**, 7:30pm at Women in Print, 3566 W. 4th Ave, Van. In this book, Peterson passionately observes topics from lullabies to abortion, dolphins to old-growth forests, weaving a story of the bond between women and nature. Free admission. For more info call (604) 732-4128.

UNDERSTANDING ALLERGIES

VitalAire Breathing Care Centre presents a free lecture, *Understanding Allergies*, **Wed Nov 1**, 7-8pm at #1-2190 W. Broadway, Van. Special guest Mairee Gandera, from the Allergy Information Association, will give a one hr talk, complete with videos and a question-and-answer period. Free refreshments. Space is limited, so RSVP by calling (604) 730-0859.

TIBET FILM NIGHT AND BAZAAR

Women Working For Tibetans is hosting *Tibet Film Night and Bazaar* **Fri Nov 24** at the Planetarium, 1100 Chestnut St., Van. The event is a charity fundraiser and will feature two new documentaries—*Escape From Tibet* and *Tears of Torture*—handicrafts, cards, calendars and live folk music. Bazaar begins at 6:30pm and films at 8pm. Tickets $8 at door. For more info call (604) 224-1901.

ELISE GOLDSMITH

Toronto author Elise Goldsmith will be reading from *My War and Other Poems*, **Thurs Nov 9**, 7:30pm at Women in Print, 3566 W. 4th Ave, Van. Beginning with the title poem, which recalls her experiences as a girl in England during World War II, Goldsmith offers a warm reflection on her life. The reading is free. For more info call (604) 732-4128.

DANCE! DANCE! DANCE!

Women in Music presents *Dance! Dance! Dance!*, a dance extravaganza, **Sun Nov 5**, at the Commodore, 870 Granville, Van. The featured events are: Ladies Don't Drum; Women of Motown; and Women of Rhythm & Blues. Doors open at 7:30pm; show starts at 8:30pm. Tickets are $12 in advance through Ticketmaster (280-4444), or $15 at the door. Please bring a non-perishable food item for the Food Bank. For more info call (604) 684-9461.

EVENTS

GET PONCHED

Ponch de Creme (Ponch a crema) is a 151 Proof Party for girlies of colour and friends. Featuring smokin' soca, soucous, salsa, hip hop, acid jazz, old skool, funk, dancehall, MM Music by MMM. **Sun Nov 5** at the Lotus Club, 455 Abbott St. 9 pm til close. Sliding scale $3-5.

DYNAMIC DRUM WORKSHOP

Seattle-based Ladies Don't Drum will be giving a dynamic drum workshop in Vancouver **Sun Nov 5** from 2-4:30pm at the Commodore, 870 Granville. Cost is $20. Refreshments will be available. Call Women in Music to register at (604) 684-9461.

LES PAS PERDUS

The Firehall Arts Centre Dance Series presents *Les Pas Perdus*, an evening of post-modern dance works **Nov 9-11**, at 8pm at the Firehall Arts Centre, 280 E. Cordova St, Van. 2 for 1 preview **Thurs Nov 9**, and matinee **Nov 11** at 2pm. The Series features Pipo Damiano and Susan Elliot of Frozen Eye, with guest choreographer Olivia Thorvaldson, original music composition by Francois Houle, and a short film by Bo Myers. Tickets $16/$12. For tickets call (604) 689-0926.

J. JILL ROBINSON

The Saskatoon author of *Lovely in Her Bones*, J. Jill Robinson will be reading from her new collection of short stories, *Eggplant Wife* **Tues Nov 14**, 7:30pm at Women in Print, 3566 W. 4th Ave, Van. The collection is filled with "intimate, fluid narratives...of heartbreaking, unspoken truths about human behaviour." Admission is free. For more info call (604) 732-4128.

DEANNE ACHONG

Vancouver Artist Deanne Achong will be exhibiting her work, *Lime Made*, until **Fri Nov 10** at Artspeak Gallery, 401-112 W. Hastings St. Van. Gallery hours are Tues-Sat 12-5pm.

ARTISTS AGAINST OPPRESSION

The C.H.I.L.D. Project—Children Hope in Loving Democracy—curated by Anne Laframboise-Piché and Calla Shea, will be exhibited until **Sun Dec 3** at Gallery Gachet, 1134 Granville St, Van. The Gallery supports artists who are mental health services consumers and/or survivors of abuse. For Gallery hours call (604) 687-2468.

GRASSROOTS WOMEN DISCUSSION GROUP

What are International Human Rights? Come to a discussion group at the Philippine Women Centre on **Wed Nov 8** at 1011 E. 59th Ave. Vancouver, between Fraser & Knight. For info call (604) 322-9852

EVENTS

RECLAIMING SOPHIA

Hear the voice of Sophia, "God's Exiled Female Self," as Susan McCaslin, a widely-published poet and author, reads from her new book of poems, *Locutions*, **Wed Nov 29**, 7-9pm at the Douglas College Boardroom, 4th Floor, 700 Royal Ave, New Westminster. Admission $5; $2/students. To reserve a seat call (604) 527-5440. Sponsored by the WomenSpeak Institute.

BANKING ON HERSELVES

Investigate two approaches to investing the money you earn into things you believe in, with Brenda Humber, founder and President of the Women's BANK Society and Lucy Alderson & Melanie Conn from WomenFutures **Thurs Dec 7**, 7-9pm at the Douglas College Boardroom, 4th Floor, 700 Royal Ave, New Westminster. Admission $5, $2/students. To reserve seat call (604) 527-5440. Hosted by WomenSpeak Institute.

PRESS GANG TURNS 20

Press Gang Publishers will mark its 20th anniversary **Sat Nov 18** with the launch of four new titles from Larissa Lai, Chrystos, Marion Douglas, and Joanne Arnott, and other entertainment. The gala event will take place in the Multipurpose Room of the Central Branch of the Vancouver Public Library, 350 W. Georgia St. Doors open at 7:30pm, readings begin at 8pm. The venue is wheelchair accessible. Advance tickets at Women in Print and Little Sister's, $8-15. For more info call Press Gang at 876-7787.

CRIAW CONFERENCE

Northern Visions: Northern Futures, a conference organized by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, will take place from **Nov 10-12** at the University of Northern British Columbia in Prince George. Panel discussions will include Women and Community Building; Education and Work; Environment and Sustainability. The cost of the conference is $300 and $75 for student/community or non-profit delegates (maximum 2 delegates). For more info or to register, call (604) 960-5610 or write to The University of Northern BC, c/o CRIAW, 3333 University Way, Prince George, BC, V2N 4Z2; Fax: (604) 960-5791.

FAIR WARES FAIRE

The Penticton and Area Women's Centre is holding a *Fair Wares Faire* to promote social justice through the sale of ethically produced goods, **Sat Nov 18** 11am-4pm at the Clarion Lakeside Hotel, 21 West Lakeshore, Penticton, BC. For more info call the Women's Centre at (604) 493-6822.

GROUPS

EATING DISORDER WEEK

Organizers of the Eating Disorder Awareness Week 1996 (Feb 5-11) are inviting people to attend the first General Volunteer Committee meeting to plan the Week on **Tues Nov 7**, 7:30pm at the Eating Disorder Resource Centre of BC, St. Paul's Hospital, 1081 Burrard St, Rm 2C-213. For more info call (604) 631-5313.

L'ARC-EN-CIEL

Ce mois-ci, les gens du groupe L'Arc-En-Ciel, Les Francophones et Francophiles des Communautés Gaies et Lesbiennes, vous invitent à prendre le Brunch avec nous au Café Chez Harry's, pres de Commercial, **le dimanche 26 nov**, à 11h30. Pour de plus amples informations, n'hésitez pas à composer le 688-9378, poste #1, boite vocale #2120.

REDEYE

Redeye is a collective of women and men who produce a 3 hour radio program every Saturday morning on Vancouver's Co-op Radio (102.7 FM). We work collectively to examine the arts and current affairs from a variety of feminist and other progressive perspectives. If you are interested in volunteering on an alternative media project, we can provide thorough training in the theoretical and technical aspects of radio. Come along and see what we're up to. Bring a friend. For more info call Lorraine at (604) 254-5855.

LEGAL CLINIC FOR WOMEN

Battered Women's Support Services and the University of British Columbia Law Students Legal Advice Program (LSLAP) is co-sponsoring free legal clinics for women on **alternate Tuesdays** from 6:30-8:30pm until Nov 14. For info or appointments call LSLAP at 822-5791.

VLC

The Vancouver Lesbian Centre is open **Thurs & Fridays** 11am-6pm and **Sats** noon-5pm. To find out about the VLC's groups and upcoming events, drop by Centre, 876 Commercial Drive, or call (604) 254-8458.

GLC

The Gay and Lesian Centre of Vancouver now has a province-wide toll free phone line: 1-800-566-1170. The line is open to all lesbians, gay men, families and friends looking for info, referrals, peer support. The phone line is open **Mon-Fri** 1-4pm.

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BULLETIN BOARD

SUBMISSIONS

ASIAN CANADIAN WRITERS

Powell Street Festival, an annual celebration of Japanese Canadian art, culture and history, is co-sponsoring an event with the Vancouver Storytelling Festival in March 1996. The Festival is looking for submissions from Asian and South Asian Canadian women writers, storytellers and poets. Please send submissions to: Powell Street Festival Society, 450-1050 Alberni St, Vancouver, BC, V6E 1A3. For more info call (604) 682-4335. Deadline is **Nov 30**.

SEARCHING FOR BRAVE SISTAS

Many of us grew up under the influence of religion, few of us emerged unscathed. Tales of the effects, if any, of the power religion has over our lives as children, wimmin and lesbains are needed for an anthology tentatively titled *Recovering Stories of Wimmin Surviving Religion* to be published by Sister Vision Press. Send your ideas, stories, essays, poems, journal entries, lyrics, raps, words, whatevah.Send your submissions to Recovering c/o Sister Vision Press PO Box 217 Stn E, Toronto, ON MH 4E2. Deadline is Dec 31.

QUEER PRESS

Queer Press is a volunteer-run, community based micro press dedicated to providing opporunities for lesbians, gays and bisexuals to experience the power of the written word; and especially for women, people of colour and queers living in rural areas. If you have a manuscript or if you're a community group interested in putting a manuscript together, tell us about your work. Write to Queer Press, PO Box 485, Stn P, Toronto ON, M5S 2T1. For info or writers' guidelines, call (416) 978-8201.

ASIAN SUPPORT AIDS PROGRAM (AS-AP)

Call for submissions & participants: Western Canada's first *Asian Lesbian & Gay Conference* and *Vancouver's 3rd Annual Lunar New Year Celebration* are being planned for **mid-Feb, 1996**. AS-AP is seeking: 1) proposals for panel discussions; 2) artists & performers for an exhibition and cabaret; 3) panelists & participants for the conference; 4) volunteers. AS-AP is a grassroots community-based agency that provides education, care and support to the East & South-East Asian community in the challenge of HIV & AIDS. For more info call Denise at (604) 669-5567 or fax (604) 669-7756.

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LESBIAN AND GAY SQUARE DANCING

Have a great time learning how to square dance with Squares Across the Border, Vancouver's only lesbian and gay square dance club. You don't need a partner, you don't need any experience, and you definitely won't regret it. Join us for our introductory class on **Mon Nov 6** at 7:30pm at St. Paul's Church, 1130 Jervist St. Donations gratefully accepted. All proceeds to A Loving Spoonful. For more info call Ellen at 684-0089.

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. **Nov3-5**, at Camp Alexandra, Crescent Beach, Vancouver. Sliding fee $150-$250 including catered meals and accomodation. For information and registration call Penny Sidor at 251-4715.

KARATE FOR WOMEN

Shito-ryu karate taught by female black belts. Learn a martial art for self defense, fitness, self confidence! At the YWCA, 535 Hornby. Mon, Tues, Thurs, 7:15-9pm. $45/month. Call 872-7846.

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WOMEN SURVIVORS OF THE WAR
Women Supporting Women in the Former Yugoslavia presents a benefit for *Women Survivors of the War* Friday, November 17, 7:30pm at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main St, Van. Admission is by $30 donation. Tickets available at the door and at: Banyen Sound, 2669 W. Broadway; and Vancouver Women's Bookstore, 315 Cambie St. For more info call (604) 299-3523.

CLASSIFIEDS

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CARPENTRY FOR YOUNG WOMEN

The Strathcona Community Gardeners Association and the Environmental Youth Alliance are looking to hire 10 women, 16-24 years old, to work on the construction of the Strathcona Community Gardens Eco-Pavillion between **Nov 20 & May 3, 1996**. The program is for women who are willing to do physically demanding work in an outdoor environment, and who are interested in gaining carpentry skills, learning about sustainable architecture, and working with a group of women, 30 hrs/week, and approximately $190/week and a $2000 completion bonus. Please apply by **Mon Nov 6** and send an explanation of interest to: Rachel Rosen or Susan Kurbis, Box 34097 Stn D, Vancouver, BC, V6J 4M1. For more info call (604) 873-0616.

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