

Broadside

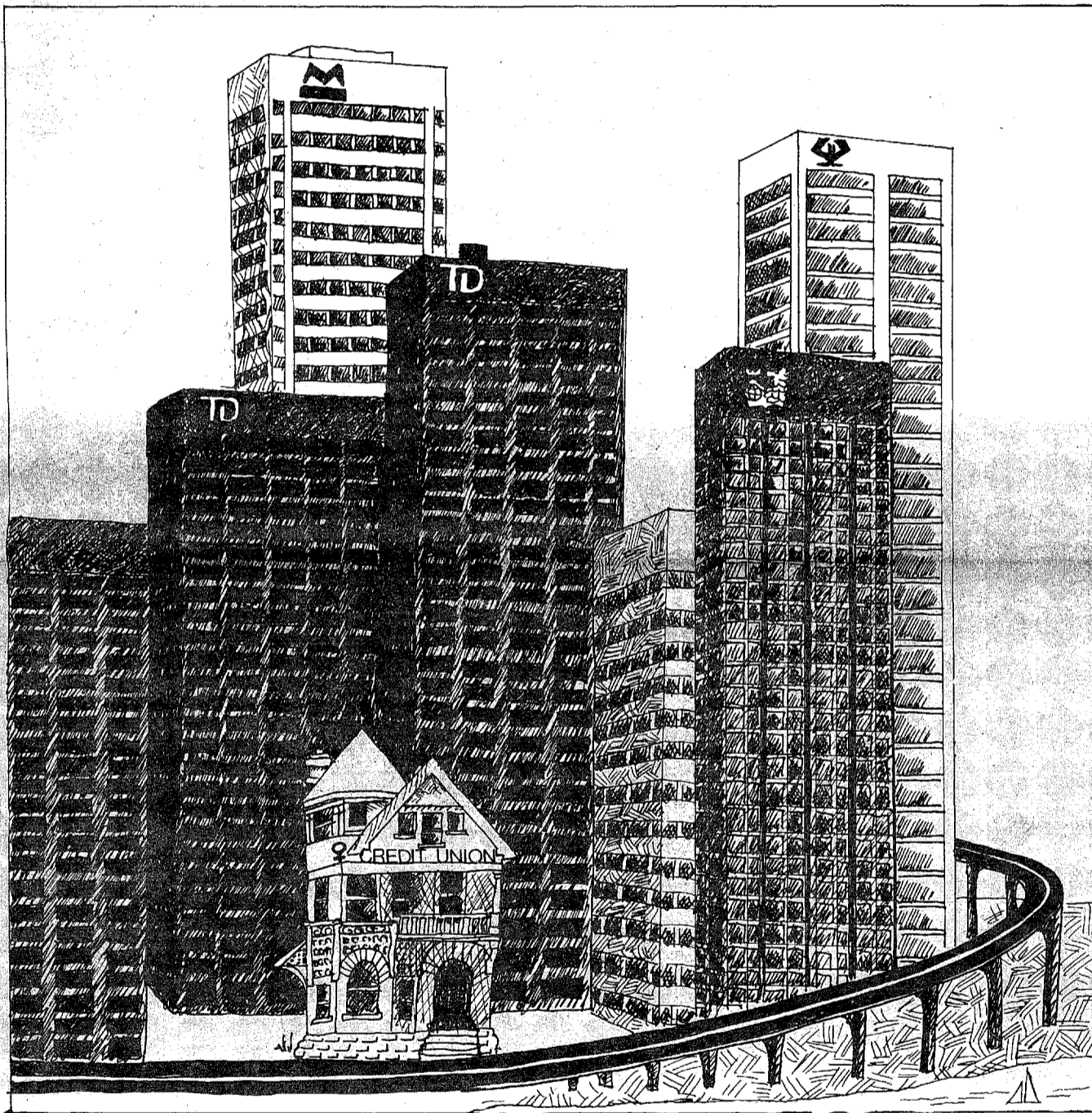
A FEMINIST REVIEW

Volume 2, number 4

February 1981

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Credit Union ... Caught In the Squeeze



Anne Quigley

SEE STORY PAGE 4

What Price Status?

On January 20, Doris Anderson, President of the federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women resigned her post in protest against government manipulation of the Council executive. Anderson's departure made public the Council's ongoing dilemma concerning its role in government, its effectiveness and its credibility. Women across the country were disturbed by the incident, in part because the spectacle of women in conflict is always unpleasant, but mostly because the issues surrounding the Council and its function continue to remain hazy.

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women was established in 1973, an outgrowth of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women which recommended that the government establish an advisory body to research and implement programs that

would end discrimination against women. The Council was to be the next phase in the government's initiatives on women's issues. But whereas the Commission recommended that the Council be an independent body which reported to Parliament, the structure set up by the Liberals compelled the Council to report to a Minister placed in charge of the Status of Women. The question of whether the Council could ever be an independent advocate of women has plagued the Council ever since.

The first presidents of the Council to be appointed by the government reflected the government's desire to render the Council a benign part of the bureaucracy. Dr. Katie Cook, the Council's first president, was a seasoned bureaucrat who had no real connections with the women's movement in Canada. Second president Yvette Rous-

seau's political ties were more with the Labour movement than with feminism and during her tenure, she developed Affirmative Action programs that applied mostly to government agencies in the bureaucracy. It wasn't until Doris Anderson was appointed that the Council was led by a woman with a high profile across the country. She was certainly the first vocal women's advocate to ascend to the Council's presidency.

Anderson resigned because the Council voted 10-10 to postpone what she thought was a vital national conference on the subject of women and the constitution. The idea for a conference was sparked in September when the Liberals began drawing up the details of the new constitution.

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Abortion: Condition Critical

Abortion has never been an easy issue for feminists, but it has always been an important one. It touches on the essential question of how much the Church and State have control over our lives, and therefore has a very specific political context. However, by focussing on the more abstract political aspects of abortion, we remember slogans like "control of our bodies" and forget the very tangible fact that the abortion issue is a health issue for women.

The disregard for the health of women entrenched in the medical and political establishments is one critical aspect of the abortion situation. Another is the increasing strength of the political right which is harnessing its financial and political clout to form strong opposition to the availability of abortion.

As our centre spread reports this month, we are in a crisis as far as abortion is concerned. As more doctors opt out of provincial medical insurance plans it is becoming more and more difficult not only to find a doctor who performs abortions but to find a doctor who will perform the procedure under the plan. Consequently, abortions are getting expensive and inaccessible to women in low income groups. Most doctors out of the plan demand money before they will perform the operation. This is an up-front charge that is unique to therapeutic abortions.

If a woman finds a doctor who will

terminate her pregnancy, her application for an abortion then drifts through the sluggish bureaucratic machinery sanctioned by the Criminal Code. This machinery is burdened most by the Therapeutic Abortion Committees that must exist in hospitals that perform abortions. The danger associated with the abortion procedure increases with the length of pregnancy. The search for a doctor and the machinations of the Therapeutic Abortion Committee cause delays that endanger the health of the pregnant woman.

It is plain that the safest way to deliver abortion services is to provide free standing abortion clinics that will perform the procedure with minimum delay and that will be staffed by supportive counsellors. But the federal government has refused to change the Criminal Code and the Ontario government has steadfastly refused to set up free standing clinics.

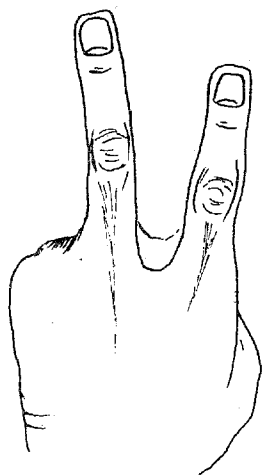
The critical bottom line is that reproductive freedom is the fundamental right of women. When and under what conditions we have children is the choice we have the right to make. These are choices about the quality of our lives and the lives of the next generation. It was the feminist value for reproductive freedom that spawned the movement for birth control at the turn of the century. Whereas the right wing charges hysterically that feminists are pro-abortion, the women's movement has consistently opposed compulsory abortion, as well as com-

pulsory pregnancy and forced sterilization. The movement for reproductive freedom is pro-choice.

As it is, the wonders of modern patriarchal technology can take us to the moon but have not yet produced the 100% effective and safe method of contraception that would be the first step to women's freedom of choice. The Badgley Commission reported in 1975 that 70% of the women in Canada seeking abortion became pregnant because of the failure of a birth control device. Until we have a form of birth control that is reliable and without deleterious side effects, thousands of women will be forced to complete pregnancy or to wander through the abortion maze.

The forces of the New Right, wedded as they are to the traditional nuclear family and determined to eliminate alternate lifestyles, have systematically opposed the dissemination of birth control. Instead they have concentrated their efforts to lobby strongly in favour of an increase in defence budgets, in favour of the development of nuclear technology and against gun control. In other words, the forces of the Right-to-Life support the instruments of death.

As they use their access to electronic media and their plentiful funds to oppose women's right to choose, our stand in favour of abortion must be as strong as ever. Access to abortion is both a health issue and a crucial component of one of feminism's most important political principles.



In the midst of gloomy predictions for the coming year, it is somewhat reassuring to be able to report a few small victories. The least of these is that the University of Toronto's militantly revolting sexist engineering newspaper, *Toike Oike*, suspended publication for a week in response to pressure from women on campus. Early hopes that the suspension was permanent fell, however, with the revelation that a new editor is undertaking to resurrect the paper. This editor has said that he will try to improve the content as far as women are concerned, but added that if he receives only

Small Victories?

sexist contributions from fellow Engineering Society members he will have to publish them for want to anything better.

Women engineering students seem fairly sympathetic with the paper, taking a "boys-will-be-boys" attitude towards their fellow students. They commented that women as well as men write for the paper, and added remarks such as, "It doesn't affect me," "No cause for alarm," "If you don't like it, don't read it." *Broadside* will continue to maintain contact with the Women's Commissioner on campus and monitor the situation with the newspaper.

At the local level, Toronto reports a triumph with the celebration of the fifth birthday of their Women's Counselling, Referral and Education Centre. WCREC (pronounced "wreck") has survived the usual funding and personnel crises that beset women's organizations and presently offers an extensive referral service to feminist counsellors and therapists in the Toronto area. It has published as well a directory listing these therapists, each of whom has been interviewed by WCREC staff for inclusion in their annotated guide.

WCREC's funding is raised from a variety of sources including the City of Toronto, United Way, donations from foundations and individuals, Secretary of State, fees for service, revenue and sale of the counselling directory, and CEIC.

WCREC's gala fifth birthday party, covered in detail elsewhere in this issue, brought together staff, counsellors, clients, donors, and the great number of friends to whom WCREC is a vital service. A real spirit of rejoicing and celebration prevailed at the brunch, as the women joined to reflect on this five years of accomplishment.

Small victories come to all Canadian women from the changes in the constitutional proposals resulting from the presentation of briefs and the testimony of witnesses. After strong recommendations from the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women under Doris Anderson and from other women's groups and individuals, the committee has proposed amendments which to some extent reflect the concerns of women about the Bill of Rights. The contentious phrase, "equality before the law", which assured women equal treatment in court but did not protect women against laws which treat men and women differently (such as the Indian Act), is replaced by "equality before and under the law." Other amendments provide protection for women against discrimination in payment of unemployment benefits, ensure that affirmative action programs will not be ruled unconstitutional, and change wording so that right-to-life groups cannot claim inclusion for fetuses. Doris Anderson reported that the "coupon campaign," through which women all over Canada registered their concern that the original constitutional proposals did not ensure women's rights by sending their protests to Ottawa, brought a great response and shooed the government that Canadian women were actively involved with constitutional issues.

Broadside welcomes news of "small victories" from our readers across the country; please send in any possible reason for good cheer.

This is Broadside

One of *Broadside's* main sources of revenue is our advertising sales. It is essential for our survival that we sell as much ad space as possible in each issue. But as a feminist newspaper we have a responsibility to our politics and to our readers: we will not run ads that are offensive.

Accordingly, we have developed an ad policy which deals with two main concerns: (a) the nature of a potential advertiser, and (b) the content of an ad.

As to the first, in some cases our choice to accept an ad or not is made easy. We would not, for example, accept ads from Nestlé, Ontario Hydro or the South African

Government — their offenses are well known and documented. In other cases the choice is more difficult and we rely on information provided us by our readers — if you know that the activities of a client advertising in *Broadside* are opposed to feminist principles or are generally offensive to women, please let us know.

In some cases, the reaction to a particular client is an individual matter — whether, for example, to choose the services of a therapist or an astrologer — and we leave decisions to the discretion of each reader.

With regard to content, the advertising committee follows the same policy as with

source (the client). We reserve the right to refuse ad copy which is offensive to us.

Again, we encourage feedback from readers — if you are concerned about the presentation of a particular ad, let us know.

Broadside has a very active advertising committee and our ad revenue has greatly increased with each month of publication. We encourage readers to patronize the advertisers whenever possible. If our community supports our advertisers, they in turn will continue to use *Broadside* as a means to communicate the services they have to offer. And mention to advertisers that you read about them in *Broadside*.

LETTERS



Broadside:

No postal mark anywhere to give any suggestion when Broadside (Oct./Nov.) might have left Toronto. But it arrived on Vancouver Island, by phantom mail, December 13.

Just thought you should know so you can expect the December mailing to be even more humbugged.

Your front page alone, "Mothers of Confederation" made the long wait insignificant. Also the marvelous pages on the Arts Festival...smacks of real sincerity. Thanks.

Edna Whitlam
Ladysmith, BC.

Broadside:

In the sixties many Americans came to recognize that we'd been lied to when taught that our country, unlike other great powers, is not imperialist in nature. The liberation struggles of the Cuban and Vietnamese people helped force this recognition; and the struggle of American blacks — treated as a colonized people within our borders. In the seventies feminists began to ask those who named themselves anti-imperialist to recognise a further truth: that women are treated as a colonized people — here and everywhere. That men's claiming ownership of women and children was, in fact, historically the original imperialist act, and all other imperialisms spring from this. We live at a point in history when the compulsion to treat other peoples — and the earth itself — as mere property threatens not merely the general welfare but the persistence of life on this planet. What is scary about the new president and new senate is that we know they will be even more responsive than the old to demands from those who try to see this compulsion as strength, not disease. But what is scary too is that those of us who do see it as diseased are not at all united in our analysis of what to do about it or even what the exact nature of the disease is. I believe the feminist analysis to be the most profound. But although many whites took part in the black struggle, and paid close attention to the

words of black leaders, men on the left have paid no comparable attention to the words of feminists. They may now speak up for the ERA, but I myself know only one man who has read more than a token one or two of the extraordinary books feminists have written over the past few years. It is not that radical men read these books but disagree with them; they don't even read them. That they haven't yet dared to do so is alarming a fact as the results of the election.

Barbara Deming,
Sugarloaf Key, Florida

(Note: Letter also sent to *Peacework*, a newspaper of the New England American Friends Service Committee.)

Broadside:

Considering that at least one of your collective has been a member, I'm a little surprised that no mention was made, in listing anti-nuclear groups (December 1980) of the one Canadian Women's group which has been anti-nuclear since 1960 — bombs, power, missiles — the works — and is still at it:

Voice of Women National Office
175 Carlton Street, Toronto, M5A 2K3
(416) 922-2997
British Columbia, New Brunswick, Nova

Scotia, Winnipeg, Calgary, and other centres have Voice of Women groups. New members, requests for information and volunteers are always welcome. Recent actions have included briefs to External Affairs, opposition rallies against nuclear plants, NATO, NORAD, and missiles, presentations re: Hydro's nuclear plans (to the Porter Commission in Saskatoon and New Brunswick) and demonstrations against Trident in the West at Comox, B.C.

We need help from anyone who is interested in survival.

Kay Macpherson
Toronto



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• Advisory Council, from page 1

The government's initiatives showed an alarming lack of sensitivity to women's rights and the Council began preparing briefs, outlining its proposals for the entrenchment of women's rights in the constitution. The Council also felt strongly that their efforts ought not to take place in a vacuum and proposed that a national conference of women be held to discuss entrenchment of rights, Québec women, Native women and the question of government jurisdictions over services like day care and interval houses.

The date of the conference had to be postponed in November because of the translators' strike: women on the Council did not want to cross the picket line. But the delay made the Conference's organizers edgy. They were concerned that the Constitutional debate would continue without any input from women. A new date was set for February 14th.

On January 17th, Joanne Kates interviewed Anderson for *Broadside*. Then still president, Anderson explained her reasons for insisting that the conference take place. To begin with, five briefs have already been prepared at some cost, that would provide valuable information to women across the country. Postponement of the conference means that the briefs will either have to be scrapped or updated. She felt that Council had been successful so far in making changes in the constitution, particularly, in the wording of clauses one to fifteen. "We pushed hard", she said, "and we made the government see what they had to do... That's a beautiful example of what the Canadian public should be doing." Anderson wanted public support for the Council's early initiatives and recommendations on how to proceed.

"Her main complaint with the Constitution as it is presently being drawn up is that it gives the provinces jurisdiction over certain aspects of family law that have a direct effect on women. "The message has to come from the people who have not been

heard from," she explained. "Women need to say: while you're fixing up the constitution, don't use family law as a pawn in the trade off with the provinces."

Other members of the Advisory Council, in particular the four other members of the Executive, did not find the matter so pressing. Hellie Wilson, explained in an interview with *Broadside* that "the conference could be held at a more opportune time... now, we'd be in a vacuum, talking about something they (the Government) aren't talking about."

Not coincidentally, Lloyd Axworthy, the Liberal Minister in charge of the Status of Women, did not find the matter so pressing either. In fact, he knew that a conference of women could be embarrassing for the government. Not only would there be provocative briefs presented at the conference that could be used as ammunition for the opposition, but as Anderson put it, "I guess they (the Government) are afraid that if you bring six or seven hundred women to Ottawa, things might get noisy. You can't control a conference."

"The exercise is to demonstrate publicly that the council is not timid," Anderson went on. "It has been accused of being a bunch of party hacks, and of never wanting to do anything that might embarrass the government". But while Anderson was out of town, the four other members of the Council executive met with Axworthy and emerged from the meeting with a decision to cancel the conference. Anderson announced that if the full Council voted to postpone the conference, she would resign. The Council voted in favour of postponement and Anderson stepped down, angry that her colleagues had buckled under government pressure.

What Anderson calls buckling under is what her opponents would call an exercise in real politik. This is, in fact, the underlying issue of the controversy. How can the Council be most effective? Anderson has always been convinced that the Council has to be an independent, vocal advocate for women, that it cannot be hampered by the Minister's political machinations, and that it should report directly to Parliament. Wilson, a talented bureaucrat, sees the ad-

vantages of working within Government structures, and of engaging in the give and take with the powers that be.

"We're (the Council) really a quasi-government body," Wilson explained to *Broadside*. "We're absolutely funded by the government. We work with government departments. In order to do our work properly, we have to have an idea of government policy as it's being formed." In other words, a Council, structured as it is now, cannot be effective unless it knows how to function on the inside.

This is, of course, a classic dilemma for women working for change. Do we operate "from the inside" or do we adopt the adversary role. Wilson would argue that the more vocal the Council gets, the less credible it can be with government. Anderson argues that a quiet Council is a Council easily manipulated. The approaches of the two women are entirely different. Anderson is a long time member of the Fifth Estate, and as such sees the intrinsic value of independence. She also thinks it important to use the press as a means of communicating with women. Wilson, on the other hand, who plainly stated that "she is accountable to Council members" and not to the press is confounded by the fact that the recent incidents have become a media event. She is accustomed to working behind the scenes and not under the watchful eye of the public.

Wilson also sees the advantage in the structure of the Advisory Council that Anderson finds cumbersome. If Council reported to Parliament, Wilson says, the report would fall into a void and there would be no one to implement changes recommended by the Council. The advantage of reporting to a Minister is that the Minister then takes the information to Cabinet where concrete policy is formed.

Wilson has a point, but only if the Minister in charge of the Status of Women fulfills his mandate to lobby Cabinet on behalf of the Council. Lloyd Axworthy does not appear to be doing that. In fact, he seems more interested in his own political ambitions and in the perpetuation of the Liberal's power on Parliament Hill than he is in women's issues.

When the Council on the Status of Women presented its first brief on the entrenchment of rights to Axworthy in September, he didn't immediately read it and neither did any member of his department. And Axworthy, concerned that the brief's contents would do damage to the Government, scrambled across the country to assure various assemblies of women that everything was going to be all right. As *Broadside* reported (Oct/Nov, 1980) he was not received warmly, and he has been worried about the matter ever since.

A man with aspirations for the leadership of the Liberal Party does not appreciate controversy or noise of any kind. Axworthy who fancies himself leadership potential, cannot brook controversy, especially from women: he consistently cancelled meetings with Anderson and stated clearly that he'd rather the conference be postponed. While Wilson and other members of the executive may believe that they were ultimately working in the interests of women when they agreed to cancel the conference, it is evident that Axworthy's interests were in his own political future.

The sad conclusion of the matter is that the Advisory Council on the Status of Women lost a President who was vocal and committed to women. Even sadder are the implications for the future of the Council as part of the Canadian political system. By retaining its independence and reporting directly to Parliament, the Council may gain visibility for a day, but there is no guarantee that the ensuing brief Parliamentary debate will produce tangible measures on behalf of women. If on the other hand the Council reports through the Minister to Cabinet, thereby going to bed with the Government, it runs the risk that Government will roll over on top of it. Either way, the Parliamentary system does not appear to be a viable vehicle for change for women or for any disaffected groups.

This article was written by Susan G. Cole, with Jane Hastings, Joanne Kates, Judith Lawrence, Philinda Masters and Susan Power.

Caught In the Squeeze

Women's Credit Union



Beverley Allinson

by Eve Zaremba

Summer 1980 marked an important point in the five-year history of the Metropolitan Toronto Women's Credit Union. (Don't go away. This is interesting and relevant to everyone, not just Credit Union members.)

By July membership had risen to a very reasonable 1800-plus; the asset base was a solid \$650,000 and the federal Local Employment Assistance Program (LEAP) grant had run out. The three red-rape ridden years of LEAP had enabled the Women's Credit Union to survive and grow. LEAP had paid for salaries and necessary expenses, allowed some promotional programs to be carried out, helped pay for a computer and computer training, and introduced a number of women to the mysteries of financial management. But the cost of all these goodies turned out to be high. LEAP had encumbered the infant organization and its largely inexperienced staff and volunteer board with additional responsibilities, non-essential expenses and generally an artificially inflated organizational base. When government largesse finally ceased, the Credit Union was hit with the reality of operating without a subsidy.

Since last summer, our Credit Union has had to cope with a drastic drop in income and staff; little demand for good loans at current sky-high interest rates; inability to pay competitive rates on deposits while carrying old loans at low rates; a high delinquency rate due to overly liberal credit policies in the past and very little support or understanding from its membership. All this in the midst of economic conditions which are driving long established and larger Credit Unions to fold or amalgamate.

Due to these circumstances the Ontario Share and Deposit Insurance Corporation (OSDIC) a body set up by the provincial government to insure members' deposits and monitor Credit Union operations, has stepped in at the Women's Credit Union to guide and direct the Board and Staff. My information is that cooperation and trust between the Credit Union and OSDIC people is fine.

To pull itself out of a deficit position the Credit Union has cut costs drastically, engaged a collection agency to help with delinquent accounts and tightened credit policy on high risk consolidation loans. Or the more positive side, variable interest

loans are being introduced so that rates can be flexible and better reflect market conditions and there are hopes of a move to new, more accessible quarters.

The Credit Union is fortunate in having developed an experienced and solid Credit Committee — the guts of any credit-based organization. Currently loans are better, sounder and more competitive. Generally, deterioration in the position of the Credit Union has been halted and there is reason to hope that in time the direction can be reversed.

As a founding member and user of the Credit Union I am satisfied that it is in good hands and on the right road. Members of the staff, Board and committees have fulfilled their responsibilities under very difficult conditions and have nothing to reproach themselves for.

All that being said, the fact remains that the Metro Toronto Women's Credit Union, like other institutional products of the women's movement of the seventies, has existed to date thanks to government hand-outs and may yet expire without them. It is surely vital that we ask ourselves some tough questions and carefully consider the answers. First of all, why was a Credit Union started in the first place? For whom? What was to be its role in the liberation of women?

Without going into redundant details, suffice to say that its founders believed that women should have control over a financial institution of their own. A credit union, based on cooperative principles, seemed the most likely to mesh with feminism. A women-controlled financial institution seemed important for three reasons:

- to give women access to credit in their own right;
- to enable women to acquire skills and expertise in the male-dominated realm of finance from which women had been traditionally excluded; and
- potentially to provide support for education of women in non-traditional areas and serve as a source of funds for women-run enterprises such as housing and trade co-ops.

In my view, these goals were irreplaceable and still are. Where we were wrong in 1975 was in underestimating the

response of mainstream institutions to the demand by women for access to credit and over-estimating the response to the Credit Union of the women's community it was set up to serve.

Within a few years, having realized the profit potential of competent women creditors, major banks and trust companies changed their policy radically.

Women hitherto denied credit or treated as second-class citizens now have little problem getting loans at their corner bank — and that's where they go. The Credit Union becomes a source of last resort instead of the preferred place for good sound loans. Too many requests are for debt consolidations and other high risk loans. Such loans have to be turned down to prevent any further inflation of the delinquency rate. Thus currently our Credit Union has \$100,000 sitting in the Ontario Credit Union League account collecting less interest than it pays to depositors. A Credit Union's main source of revenue consists of the difference between what it pays out in interest on members deposits and what it takes in on loan interest. The present situation is guaranteed to drive any institution into the red.

Metro Toronto Women's Credit Union's main problem is not lack of members — 1800 is ample and \$650,000 in assets is adequate — its problem is lack of turn-over. It is underutilized by its members.

This brings me to the membership base. When the Credit Union began, it was met with massive indifference by the overwhelmingly young, poor and unsophisticated activists of the women's movement. Lacking any understanding of, or historical background in, co-operatives they tended to view it with suspicion as a middle-class institution. Almost immediately the Credit Union faced open hostility from members of a small group who appeared to see themselves as too radical to care that it was women's money which was actually involved; all they wanted was an opportunity to rip some off. In this some of them succeeded, leaving behind an unnecessarily high delinquency rate and much distrust and pain.

However, defaulters are not the real problem. The trouble is and always has been, that the majority of members either do not understand or do not share the goals of the Credit Union. Most of them are not politi-

cal feminists. Most of them have no idea of what is involved in running a co-operative. In fact most members are very much like the public at large, at least with respect to their concept of financial institutions. Each is viewed as very much like any other; what determines their usage is the availability of services and convenience. It is absurd to expect that any small credit union such as ours can match the big banks and trust companies in these areas. The only good reasons for supporting it are political, however loosely defined.

Why then have 1800 women, most of whom are admittedly apolitical, joined the Credit Union over the past five years? My assumption is that their reasons were in fact ideological, although perhaps unconsciously so. As I see it, membership in and of itself can be interpreted as an act of support for women. It confers some feeling of solidarity, of group identification.

Unfortunately membership itself is not enough. A small credit union is a marginal organization run essentially by volunteers for the benefit of the membership at large. The time and energy of these volunteers should not be taken for granted, or wasted. The Women's Credit Union cannot survive, much less prosper, without a substantial core of people who use it, support it, and understand its goals and principles. That's the challenge which faces CU members.

Can such a core be found? Has our Credit Union still a *raison d'etre*, given that women can now get credit elsewhere? Are the original goals still valid? What should be the purpose and aims of a women-run financial organization in the eighties? Should we hold on to what we have no matter the cost or should we pack it up?

Such periodic re-evaluation is a necessary and often salutary exercise. Not just in this particular case, either. All our organizations would benefit if their goals, aims and usefulness was scrutinized periodically.

The Women's Credit Union Annual Meeting is being held on Wednesday, March 25 at 7 pm, Toronto Board of Education, 155 College Street. All members are urged to attend. Meanwhile let's think and discuss the issues raised by the situation at the Credit Union.

Metro Toronto Women's Credit Union, 15 Birch Avenue, Toronto. (416) 960-0322.

Ella Manuel

A Person In Her Own Right

by Judith Lawrence

In November, 1980, the Governor-General presented the second annual "Persons" awards to Canadian women in recognition of their contributions to their communities. One of these "Persons" is Ella Manuel, a seventh generation Newfoundlander who lives in Woody Point, at the entrance to Gros Morne National Park on Newfoundland's west coast. A woman of deep warmth and compassion, Ella has spent much of her life working for justice and peace. She is also a very private person, given to love of solitude and contemplation. She lives alone in a small hilltop house overlooking the village, with an ever-changing vista of sea, sky, and mountains beyond the windows of her book-lined living room. During a recent trip to Toronto she shared highlights of her life with close friends Judith Lawrence and Beverley Allinson of the Broadside Collective.

"I think from the time I was ten until I finally went away at 15, my whole family's life was geared to having enough money set aside for me to have an education, and my sister, too. If I wanted something — and I remember I desperately wanted a fountain pen; I thought if I had a fountain pen I'd have 'er made — my father and mother would say, 'We can't afford to give it to you now because we're saving up for you to go to college.' People said my father was mad, quite mad, to send two girls away to college. But we did go to college. I was sent to Boston when I was 15, but first I had to do a year of high school, because I had no sciences up until then.

"When I was sixteen I entered Boston University, and by the time I graduated it was the depression and jobs were very hard to find in Boston. In those days Newfoundlanders never thought of coming to Canada. The idea of coming to Toronto never occurred to me — it sounded just too utterly boring for words. So I went home to Lewisport. I stayed there for a year and saved my money, working with my father in the store and teaching piano, until I had enough money to go to England.

"I stayed with friends in London, and eventually got a job with Marks and Spencer as a 'welfare worker'. This involved organizing canteens in the shops (there were 200 of them at that time) for the staff, most of whom were women. They could have a hot meal at noon for sixpence and tea for four pence, and then we went on to seeing that they got free uniforms and a raise automatically on every birthday. It ended up that we had a fabulous outfit: we had doctors hired; these women got mostly free medical attention, free dental attention, paid vacations; we set up camps where they could spend their holidays — I remember spending almost all my holidays one summer in North Wales. It was a fabulous, marvellous experience."

Broadside: You married a man who worked for Marks and Spencer?

"Yes, and this was around the time of the Spanish Civil War. We realized the need to do something about the Spanish children. We persuaded the British government to allow a certain number to come in if we could prove we could sponsor them. We all donated as much as we could of our incomes, and these children, mostly Basque children, were brought in groups, and sometimes with their priests and teachers. They weren't necessarily orphans, but children who had no homes and were in

great danger and who'd been under bombing. It was supposed to be a temporary arrangement, but a lot of them didn't go back. There were about 3,000 children brought in at that time. Some of them I met later in the most extraordinary ways — I met one years and years later in Greenwich, Connecticut."

B.: When did you leave England?

"It was after my first son was born. We went to the States just before war broke out. We started working with the Jewish Joint Distributing Committee, organizing the placement of refugee children from Europe. When the United States entered the war my husband was offered an administrative job in the army in Washington because of his experience at Marks and Spencer. But I remember we told them we were peace-loving people who just wanted to continue being peace-loving, so we didn't do it."

B.: So you were a pacifist back then when it wasn't too popular, weren't you?

"Oh yes. I think we were definitely watched, then, too, because the FBI would turn up in odd places. It was very strange, because we lived on Long Island Sound, on the Connecticut side, and we used to go for walks on the beach, and that was very suspect in those days, especially after sunset. We were always in some kind of hassle — never very serious. I would have been insulted if I hadn't been watched in those days!"

B.: Did you have refugee children living with you?



Photos by Beverley Allinson

"Yes, four teenagers. And my own two small boys. But my marriage was deteriorating, and I had to find a refuge. I realized that I had started to think of my parents' home in Newfoundland as that refuge. I can't remember how I did it, but at some point I just packed up and went home, ostensibly for a holiday with my two little boys and just stayed. I never went back. We lived with my parents for a while but then I started looking for a way to support the three of us. We moved to Cornerbrook and lived there for four or five years. That's when I started doing radio work. I started gradually working my way up, and then Confederation came and I had, I can't remember how, some connection with Halifax and Toronto. Quite suddenly I became spokeswoman for Newfoundland and got all sorts of requests for 'do tell us about this' and 'what do you think of this' and somehow I had, with the things I had done with my life, a way of bridging the gap, knowing what it was that the other Canadians wanted to know about us funny people out there in Newfoundland. First I

started telling children's stories, and then I was hired to do a once-a-week program, so I got to be fairly well known.

At that time people were always coming to me and telling me what was going on and how unhappy they were, and I would say, 'For God's sake don't preach to the converted, go talk to somebody else.' But there was no way they could talk to anyone else — the newspapers were throttled and very much censored so I went to Bowaters, the paper company, and asked if they would buy half an hour of radio time and I would run a citizens' forum, if you please — when I think about it now I blush. People were so ready for it that I could get hold of all kinds of people — heads of Bowaters, doctors, business heads, all sorts of people who would come and talk, and we discussed the things that were bothering people."

B.: Newfoundlanders always seem to be Newfoundlanders first, no matter how long they are away or where they go and what they do — and not just your generation, but younger ones, too.

"Absolutely. I think the ones much younger than I are just as bad (or just as good)."

B.: What is it that Newfoundlanders identify with?

"We identify with the landscape and have a very, very unusual way of life, even now when we have roads and electricity and radio and CBC and all the other things. Our whole lives revolve around the weather and the sea and there is a sense of isolation. I can remember as a child, probably about 12, when in the winter the harbour would

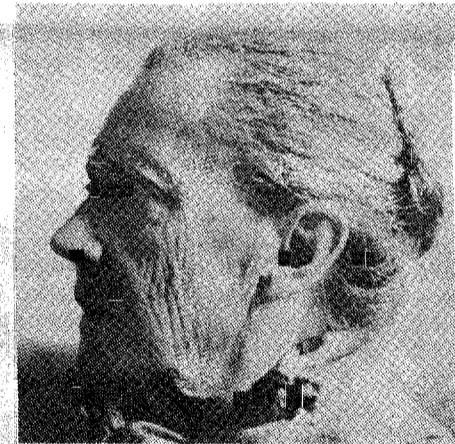
who couldn't speak for themselves. And as I remember now my main thesis was that there was no earthly reason why women shouldn't have the same opportunity for education and re-education as men were getting. Men were being sent off to trade schools and vocational schools and paid their living expenses and nobody ever did a damn thing for the women."

B.: Did you have the satisfaction of seeing any of your suggestions bear fruit?

"Yes, but I'm not sure it bore fruit because of what I said; it was part of the whole movement. Oh yes indeed."

B.: When did you find out you were not the only person who had such heretical ideas and notions in her head as far as your status as a woman was concerned?

"When I heard about the Voice of Women. I was asked by Muriel Duckworth to go to a meeting and I'd never heard of the group before, but when I left I was the secretary of the group, or vice-president — I can't remember. But when I really came to myself was when I met you younger women — feminists — and you started feeding me all the feminist literature which I sat on the hill in Woody Point and read, and said, 'Oh my God, you know the world is full of people like me.' That is when I began to look back really without a sense of failure."



B.: But isn't it incredible that a woman — a person — who has achieved as much as you have should have a sense of failure? Everything you've told us about your life is triumph over adversity and tremendous accomplishment.

"I failed in the feminine role that was set aside for me and I didn't know anything about any other role. I'm infuriated when I think about the time I wasted feeling guilty and inadequate. When I look at young women today I'm amazed. They are soaring! Sometimes I catch myself and say 'is my optimism the result of pushing seventy, or is it a result of being able to examine my own life?' But I don't think it is just that!"

B.: You've just received the "Persons Award;" what did the citation say?

"That I was somebody who had worked in the women's movement and had worked for peace, and if you stop to ask me why I got it I still don't know why — I still think somebody made a mistake! You couldn't really call any of us notable — we are just ordinary women who had all our lives been doing this, probably without thinking about it."

B.: So what do they think of this back in Newfoundland?

"Oh, they couldn't believe their ears. Now, I tell you, they pay some attention to me when I say something. About time, too!"

The Constitution in Context

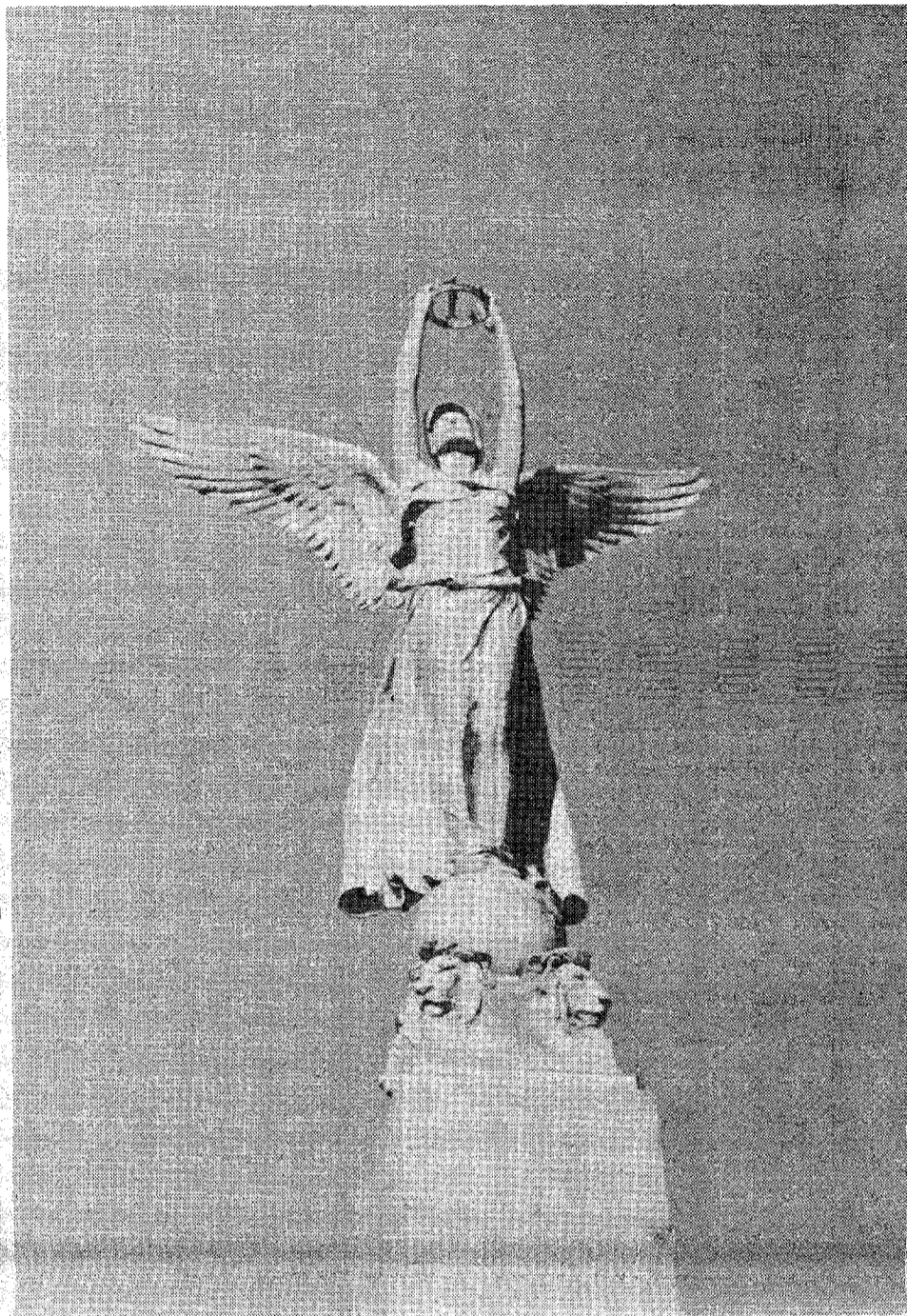
by Mary O'Brien

The Great Constitutional Debate has echoed through Canada in recent months with all the noisy vigour of, say, the sound of one hand clapping. There has been a marginally greater stir around the plan of Papa Trudeau, our permanent patriarch, to cajole from the mother of parliaments a Bill of Rights sired upon the BNA. This diversionary tactic, a public picking at Canada's more venerable cultural scabs, has precluded discussion on such important issues as the nature and functions of a constitution in a modern state. Thus, it is assumed that we must have a constitution, just as we must have a Canada from shore to shining shore, particularly an oily, gassy Canada. Dissent about the rights of minorities and of the provinces have, indeed, been aired, while the rights of Quebeckers to self-determination have supposedly been swept under the referendum rug.

One of the minorities is in fact a majority, namely, women. It is not, however, the constitutional rights of women nor the rights of men to ensure that women's rights have nothing but an inky existence that I want to discuss here. The implications for women of the proposed patriation have been presented to the reluctant ears of the Parliamentary Committee on the Constitution in a brilliant brief from the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. This effort was rewarded by a barbourous verbal ass-pinch by a Senator with all the intelligence and good breeding usually in that collection of derubberized political retreats, and a few proposed amendments. A feminist perspective on women and the Constitution has also been regularly presented by *Broadside* and other survivors of the systematic pauperization of the feminist press.

The undiscussed issues — what exactly is a constitution and who needs it — presents in a rather classic way the recurring dilemma of feminist political practice within the constitutional boundaries of the nation state, the historical form of political life which is now almost universal. Roughly stated, the dilemma goes something like this: the State is highly resistant to constitutional reform, but revolutionary activity is ethically problematic, scares voters and is pragmatically difficult to bring about. The oppression of women is sustained and occasionally ameliorated by the economic and political activities of the State, constitutionally constituted. The everyday deficiencies of the State are extensive, whether it be a liberal State attempting to disguise the fact that its legitimacy comes less from the Constitution than from the control of "legal" violence, or a totalitarian State parading its means of violence to make sure that citizens never forget their constitutional duties.

States are also indifferent, when not actually hostile, to the interests of women, minority groups and the lower classes. The State must therefore be vigilantly scrutinized, diligently criticized and constantly revitalized. But all this scrutiny, criticism and revitalization takes a tremendous toll on the energies and limited resources in power and money to which feminists have access. Further, all we may get for our efforts in concrete terms is yet another pat on our provocative bottoms.



Beverly Allinson

We have also discovered that we really don't have a lot of strategies for transforming the State. We have occasional votes where we may choose between two parties — a different two, depending on whether we are Eastern Feminists or Western Feminists — none of which are interested in challenging the actual capacity of the State to make any fundamental political changes. We can write briefs. Proportionately to our incomes and parental responsibilities women pay excessive taxes, and we can, if we are educated enough to write project proposals, sweat to get some of that back in token grants. Some of us are eligible to join Trade Unions and try to break through the wage-bound corsets of our brothers to take notice of the systematic humiliations of women's work. We can form political parties and take our place among rhinoceri, self-educated vanguards and the goons in nightshirts or blackshirts who occupy the bottom of the polls. We may and, indeed have, done all of these things, and must continue to do them, but the results are not promising.

These are, of course, the "reformist" strategies usually contrasted with the "revolutionary" option. It is not much of an option for that large segment of feminism which is also pacifist. Male dominated politics, in its many centuries of political experimentation, has produced only one successful strategy for radical change, and that is violence. The essential violence of even constitutional government is nowhere more evident than in the endless emissions from the mouths of countless guns. This storm of violence may change forms of government, but these new forms are ultimately nothing more than the replacement of one set of legitimate violators by a new, recently illegitimate, set generally thirsting for revenge.

Violent insurrection, the mere apprehending of which makes Papa Pierre so apprehensive, is not a specially attractive notion for feminists. This is not, as pop sentiments have it, because women are "by nature" passive. Elizabeth I of England, for example, — Good Queen Bess with, by her own modest admission, the heart and stomach of a king, — had a record in hanging and

drawing and quartering which makes the modern English Rippers look like modestly endowed amateurs. There are practical as well as ethical reasons for feminist pacifism. Women do not have easy access to arms, and are rarely trained in the "art" of war. Indeed, men have tried for centuries to convince women that helplessness becomes them. The aesthetic pleasure that men have enjoyed in contemplating the feminine perfection of the Venus de Milo has no doubt been enhanced by the fact that she is disarmed. Further, women have been, historically, the victims of violence, both private and public, a violence which millions of men have practiced without any constitutional blessing but without legal penalty either.

More problematic is the argument that those who are the givers of life cannot be the takers of life, a fact which Hegel, for example, saw as evidence of the political menace of femininity, which hated its sons to be dead heroes. But it is certain that all victims, if not women, are women's children, born of women's travail and quite constitutionally appropriated by men on the slender grounds of always uncertain paternity. Whatever its usefulness, the biological argument brings us back to the Constitution itself an organic notion, as are "body politic," "fatherland" and "motherland" and "native" peoples, and, of course, "patriation".

The modern state has been, since its inception back in the historical transition from feudalism to capitalism, a two-faced affair, both faces, however, being beard-bearing. There can be little argument that the modern Constitutional State has been relatively more humane than its predecessors, occasionally almost touching the edges of democracy but not quite singeing its whiskers on such a hot notion. It has, if only under duress, ameliorated the condition of working people. It has also tended to trumpet the cause of human freedom, but there is plenty of evidence that the freedom it has cherished most ardently has been free enterprise, a nice phrase for the powerful sticking it to the weak. It was a British Tory who noted years ago that the Welfare State was the ransom capitalists pay for social

peace, though they have recently been less willing to do this. The other fact of the modern State is represented in a form which many women meet first on picket lines, the face of the beefy "special task force" cop. The police represent very well the two-facedness of the modern state: they are polite and deferent to old ladies and property owners, while they practice Constitutional violence on those who show signs of restiveness in the embrace of a corrupt political economy.

The police, welfare agencies, governments themselves, however, are only parts of the State. The State itself is really an abstraction. Tremendous power is vested in this ideal which cannot be seen, touched nor heard in its totality, though some would argue that it smells. The component parts of the State can be described, but the whole is an idea, a structure of mind to which a Constitution is designed to give body. The first man-mothers of the State, Plato and Aristotle, recognized this. They reached out beyond the known world of appearance, which they didn't much care for, to try to find in the cosmos some kind of ethical protoplasm which would justify both authority and obedience to authority. The Athenian State did not, in fact, need such cosmic glue, but got along pretty well with sexism, racism and imperialism, still marvellously effective national unifiers.

But the Greek philosophers did identify one important function for a Constitution: it provided *continuity over time*. It was there when a citizen was born and still there when he died. This was great for the ruling classes, and aristocratic politics in particular made a clear connection between the continuity and stability of the State and the hereditary principle of the family. It was not so good, of course, for women and slaves, but, as Aristotle argued, their inferiority unfitted them for responsible citizenship. To be sure, it was the citizenry who had defined them as inferior, a Catch-22 situation as familiar to modern feminists as it no doubt was among Athenian slaves.

This notion of continuity over time embedded in family and polity in a conservative unity has been a staple of mainstream thought for a long time. In its perfect historical form it appeared and disappeared as absolute monarchy, though constant attempts are made by such diverse characters as Joe Kennedy and Idi Amin to revive it. The form is patriarchal; the king is father to his subjects and their families, is the sole possessor of Constitutional rights and landed property, and passes them to "his" son. The passionate republican, Machiavelli, and the nervous monarchist, Thomas Hobbes, both believed that the best hope for social peace lay in one-man government. Where they differed was on the question of continuity over time, Machiavelli giving this function to a Constitution and Hobbes opting for hereditary monarchy. Neither of these very bright men had any idealist illusions about power being an ethical force. We may note, however, that an *artificial* principle of continuity is a specifically male yearning: women *experience* continuity in the reproduction of people.

• continued next page

In the modern era, Constitution making and mongering has been in the hands of the merchant class, the bourgeoisie. Here, the question of continuity over time has had to share centre stage with the question of the inviolability of contracts, but Constitutionality must also be preserved in the interests of the stability of investments. Clearly, the larger the State the larger the application of a legal system guarding these investments, and an administrative system able to introduce "non-political" profit raisers such as metrification, universally raising profits. As far as continuity is concerned, capital itself has an almost magical reproductive quality which can be controlled absolutely by men, unlike that tiresome business of biological reproduction. Karl Marx once described capital as wealth which had learned to breed. Better to be the father of funds than the uncertain daddy of some woman's child, though this did not prevent capitalists from getting the best of both worlds for, in the days before corporate legos, what they liked best was to be able to write "and Sons" after their names.

We thus see the phenomenon in which men, who fought so hard against monarchy, still seem to crave stable and strong leadership, and even so-called communist states go in a big way for individual leaders who are larger than life. Big daddy leaders and big family states are the modern answer to political stability and continuity, and "mass" society creates little opportunity for participation at any decisive level. Western voters don't stay away from the polls because they are apathetic, but because they are astute enough to see that the

whole process is as wildly irrelevant as it is properly Constitutional.

The central problem of modern politics is not the conservation of the State so much as the creation of smaller, participatory democracies. This is hardly a modest objective, particularly if one wants to do it without violence. It is however a political objective which can unify feminist practice and help assess political priorities. Feminism can beam new light upon the discredited phoniness of Bigness and the polemics of Good Citizenship, Nation State style. To do so means several things. It means, for example, that feminist international networking must be worked at even harder. There would not be much point in dividing Canada into self-determining provinces if they were to be picked off one by one by Ronnie Reagan's Rangers, either militarily or culturally: they are already gone economically. There are no self-evident ways to convince multinationals that restrictions on production represent the last possible chance, if there still is one, of preserving and restoring the natural environment and sharing what is left of the providence of the earth. Political responsibility must have as a component, too, a dignity of labour in which reproductive and productive labour take their places as necessary but fairly shared human activities. It will not be easy to stop the manufacture of capitalism's most successful products: the arms and nuclear weapons which either rust uselessly or self-destruct and have to be reordered quickly and more expensively. If one has trouble thinking of capital as a surrogate for human

reproduction, note that we are now in the third "generation" of nuclear power plants, the tenth generation of computers, and who knows which generation of nuclear warheads? We also have that cuddly wee boy, R2-D2 to remind us that It's All In the Family.

The problem of continuity is no longer soluble with Constitutional capers, for it is no longer the polity which has to be conserved, but the planet. Feminism must develop, in the first instance, a theory of politics on a human scale which can be translated into strategic policies on an international scale. There are many things to be done while we prepare for our Constitutional revolution. We must develop systematic priorities which overcome both duplication and factionalism, the terrible twins of progressive politics. We must study and work for different voting systems, such as proportional representation, which can begin to erode the monolithic substance of the State. We must put the lie to racist sneers about Balkanization, pointing out that the smaller political entities are quarrelsome precisely because, whether in Canada or Africa, they have been arbitrarily drawn by imperialist cartographers for the convenience of exploiters. We must examine the liberal bible of freedom — in trade, in party politics, in civil rights, in consent and censorship — and ask not only what it does for women, but for the citizens of Toronto's Regent Park or the Jane-Finch corridor. We must support by vigorous participation the efforts of working women who are currently revitalizing the Trade Union movement and having their

consciousness raised in the real context of their lives. We must set achievable political representation objectives, on school boards and hydro boards, as well as at other levels of government. We must be guided by our own slogan, which does not yet have much substance:

Not the Church and Not the State,
Women must control their fate.

There is a lot more at stake here than the abortion issue. We must put all these issues, each one so important, in a wider context which appreciates that the debate on the Constitution and the Bill of Rights is politically screwed up, that the feminist political imagination has to produce alternatives. Only then can we carry a concrete political message into our recruitment and outreach endeavours. No political movement can survive on partial issues, vital though each may be. We must not only be able to say what's wrong, but what would be better. Canada, now, is fertile ground for doing just this.

*Mary O'Brien is a political scientist who teaches at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in Toronto. Her book **The Politics of Reproduction** will be published this year. O'Brien is also a founding member of the Feminist Party of Canada.*

• LETTERS, from page 3

Broadside:

Congratulations, and thank you for making this paper! I arrived in Canada this summer after growing up in West Germany, where I spent two years at the University of Munich and learned to love the discussions, debate and general activity of the liberal women's movement there. It was a bit of a cultural shock moving to Guelph, where I soon discovered a bookstore, "The Bookshelf," which stocks your paper. In my opinion, the literary style, the clarity of argumentation and the wide range of topics make your paper unique among all the Can-

adian papers I've seen so far. This is important, since I was appalled at the cramped, provincial scope of the newscoverage here. Since I live a bit too far to participate actively in your forum, I'll try to comment via the mails at present, but hopefully the situation will improve some time. So bye for now, please send me your paper, and by the way, Susan Cole's article on "Playing for Time" (Oct./Nov. 1980) pointed out several things previously ignored, and impressed me very much.

*Margaret Weiser,
Guelph, Ont.*

Broadside:

Just a quick note to say I enjoyed your last issue and to make a suggestion about an earlier one. Re the article "Singing in the Rain" (Sept. 1980) — I would like to urge readers to follow Anne Cameron's suggestion: "We need to do more to support our women singers. We should send suggestions to the Folk Festival organizers, send the names of women performers living in our own country." Vancouver Festival organizer Gary Crystal needs a lot of encouragement to engage singers other than "known" names. Urge him to have an open stage for local performers as well. Local people receive very little opportunity to per-

from and thus to become "known."

For example, Celia O'Neill and Sharon Hazelwood, who call themselves "Salal," had a six week successful tour in Britain, but because they are local performers in B.C. were not on the festival program. Celia did get to sing "Don't Get Married, Girls" because Leon Ross invited her to join him on stage. She had helped to get him invited to perform at the Festival! Celia and Sharon are two of the folksingers who should be at next year's festival. They sing feminist, political, traditional and contemporary songs and deserve an audience.

*Eva Manly,
Ottawa*

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An armed forces billboard in Toronto has been cleverly edited.

MOVEMENT MATTERS

LESBIAN MOTHERS' DEFENCE FUND

The Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund was set up almost 3 years ago in March 1978, by the lesbians from the Toronto Wages for Housework Campaign. It aimed to become a permanent resource for mothers fighting for child custody by providing:

- 1) pre-legal advice, and information on successful battles in Canada and the United States,
- 2) referrals to sympathetic, competent lawyers and other professionals,
- 3) financial assistance in building a strong court case, and
- 4) personal and emotional support.

We've been able to help many women keep or win custody, by following custody struggles around the world and amassing a solid library of transcripts, professional studies, law journal articles and case histories that we make available to mothers, lawyers and mental health experts.

And we've appeared on television and spoken publicly as often as possible, to try to impress the reality of our lives on people's minds: that lesbian mothers share the same problems as other single mothers, and love and invest the same care in their children; and that neither they nor their children will any longer accept the penalty of forfeiting their children for the "crime" of loving another woman.

Because so many mothers are coming out now across North America, the public climate is changing. It is no longer universally accepted that lesbianism equals "unfitness" to parent. Of course, we still have a long way to go before being a gay mother becomes a danger-free lifestyle.

Since 1978 the LMDF has grown to include more than 40 women from southern Ontario, and we're in touch with many more from farther afield. We stay in touch with each other and plan the Fund's activities through monthly potluck brunches. Mothers, lovers, volunteers and children of all ages come to these meetings. New women are welcomed, friendship networks spring up — and everyone goes home feeling stronger. Some of the mothers have come to their first potluck having never met another lesbian mother before.

These meetings are also a chance to share problems. We've discussed the pros and cons of coming out to the children, the adjustments in relationships when mothers have to divide their time between children and lovers, and the ordinary problems of dealing with children — problems that lesbian mothers have to face in greater than usual isolation.

The *Grapevine*, the newsletter of the Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund, is another instrument we've created for staying in contact with each other and for reaching out to the public for support. We've published three issues since the summer of 1979, distributing 2000 copies of each to women, women's groups and community and gay organizations in Canada and the USA. Our last issue (Fall/Winter 1980) contains news of custody battles, a detailed account of one woman's fight, a fact-sheet on children's rights to representation, and personal descriptions of our lives.

Call the LMDF at (416) 465-6822 or write to us at PO Box 38, Station E, Toronto, M6H 4E1, if you'd like to come to a potluck brunch, receive the *Grapevine*, or donate money or time to help our work. We're counting on *all* women to support lesbian mothers; heterosexual women are stronger, too, each time a lesbian wins the right to determine her sexuality without losing her children.

□Francie Wyland

The Lesbian Mother's Defence Fund and the Lesbian Organization of Toronto have joined together to hold a fund-raising dance on Saturday, February 14, 1981. The dance will be held at 519 Church Street, from 9 pm to 1 am. Entertainment will be provided by Sharon, Jan and Friends with a full cash bar. The tickets are \$5 in advance and \$6 at the door and may be purchased from the Toronto Women's Bookstore or the Fly By Night Lounge.

WOMEN'S ACTION

All women against nuclear power and weapons come to the third planning meeting for a women's action at Ontario Hydro in Toronto.

The meeting will be Monday, February 9, at 7:30 pm, 519 Church Street, Toronto. For more information call 968-3218. (Women only).

TORONTO WOMEN'S SERVICES NETWORK

The Women's Services Network of Toronto was initiated by the Women's Counselling Referral & Education Centre (WCREC) in January 1980. The Network holds monthly meetings for representatives of women's services. Information is shared with regard to: resources, funding, programs, and areas of concern. The informal network links its members through a telephone tree and mailing of minutes.

Network meetings usually focus on one particular problem area such as abortion

services, or on a particular service such as the Rape Crisis Centre, Nellie's or Hassle Free Clinic. As a result of a discussion about the obstacles faced by abortion counsellors, the Network struck a sub-committee called the Toronto Abortion Committee. The educational and action-oriented committee is responsible for the feature on abortion in this issue of *Broadside*.

For more information about the Network, call 924-0766 or write c/o WCREC, 348 College St., Toronto M5S 1T4.

□Ottie Lockey

LESBIAN CONFERENCE, 1981

Preparations for the 1981 Lesbian Conference, the first in two years, and the first ever west of Ontario, are well underway. It will be held in Vancouver May 16, 17 and 18 of 1981. The organizing committee is made up of approximately fifteen women from many areas of the lesbian community.

We are planning the conference to represent the interests of all of us — for, as lesbians, we continue to face lack of money and social outlets, threat of job dismissal, threat of child custody battles, and non-recognition and censorship in the arts and in sports.

We want the conference to be an enjoyable time where we can exchange experiences, information and skills, and also take away some practical organizing ideas, contacts, and networks in order to continue working together after the conference. In

Vancouver, we are already using the conference as a way to help strengthen our local organizations and networks and to establish a strong lesbian presence in the community-at-large. To date, we have had two dances and a salmon bake to start raising money, ideas and enthusiasm, and we have several more events planned. We are also planning events like film and art shows and a public meeting to run concurrently with the conference but to be open to the general public. We hope to provide English-French translation and signing. The conference will be wheelchair accessible.

We are very excited about hosting this conference and look forward to seeing you here in May.

□Organizing Committee
Lesbian Conference 1981

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, 1981

Once again International Women's Day, March 8, 1981 is drawing near and once again it is time to show our strength and solidarity by uniting around the many issues we fight for throughout the year. Over the past three years, thousands of women from feminist groups, unions, lesbian groups and community organizations, have joined together on International Women's Day to demand the right to control our bodies, the universal right to quality childcare, full employment rights, the right to determine our own sexuality, to fight against cutbacks in social services and education and to fight against violence against women. Conditions have not improved! We must continue to protest against the oppression of women and to resist the erosion of gains we have struggled long and hard to win.

Over 80 women representing some 25 different organizations and groups across Toronto attended the first planning meeting in December for International Women's Day 1981. In the lively three-hour discussion women agreed to the general themes, issues and activities for the day's events. Plans are now in works for a demonstration and fair to be held on Saturday, March 7.

Any women interested in becoming involved in organizing for the day are encouraged to attend the weekly planning meetings. Phone Carolyn Egan at 789-4541 for exact times and location. Let's make this year's demonstration the biggest, most spirited march ever.



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centre

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Abortion Referral
Women's Health Groups
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Down Shrink Alley ...

by Joanne Kates

First I want to tell you that I'm really happy to be here — because the fact that WCREC has survived for five years means something. It's a good sign — that a service that is explicitly dedicated to women's liberation can survive, cutbacks be damned.

They asked me to talk about feminism and therapy, and that reminded me of the first time I went into therapy, 10 years ago this month. Who knew about feminist therapists then? He called me Miss Kates. I called him Doctor Brown. I don't remember him ever cracking a smile, and especially not when I announced to him that I didn't need him any more. That was when he said: "You're crazy; you're much too crazy to stop now. And besides, it's resistance." Yeah right, crazy like a fox.

Up there on St. Clair Avenue, in shrink alley, in his perfect plush office, Doctor Brown was practising the art of adjusting women to the status quo. His stake in that adjustment was two-fold — 60 bucks an hour and a happy well-adjusted wife who stayed home and watched the kids and the

swimming pool for him. I remember the therapy well. I used to complain about how weird all the men in my life were, from daddy on down (or is it up) and he would always say the same thing — Yes, Miss Kates, but what are the intrapsychic implications?

Doctor Brown is part of a long and profitable tradition of male health managers who have controlled women's lives. I'm sure you all know how the experts have screwed women (in more ways than one), but let me just remind you of a few of the signposts.

The Greeks — ah, the classical age, truth and beauty. It was the ancient Greeks who named the womb hysteris and who also decided that when women were ill, they were often suffering from a disease which they named hysteria — because they believed the womb would detach itself from its moorings and wander around the body.

During the witch hunts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there were millions upon millions of women murdered. That was a male assault on women and woman-

power — the women killed were the healers and the religious leaders, the dissidents and the strong. Until then healing was a woman's art, but the witch hunts were part of its takeover by an elite corps of men.

In the nineteenth century, male doctors invented upper class invalidism for women. While working class women slaved till they dropped, with no medical attention whatsoever, upper class women were trained to be frail, ornamental and sickly. What a boon for the doctors — think of the medical bills from all those daily visits to madame in her chambers.

And then there's contemporary psychotherapy — Doctor Brown and his cohorts on shrink alleys in all the cities. They are the men who siphon off our anger and contain it in their consulting rooms. They are the men who see a woman trying to rebel against her feminine role, and call that a disease and prescribe Valium or maybe some sleeping pills. They are the men who imprison women in mental institutions for refusing to fit into the patriarchy's crazy definitions of what a woman should be. They are the men who have defined women as neurotic.

We need them like we need a hole in the head.

The best weapon against those male health managers is the women's liberation movement, because feminism is therapy. When I became a feminist, I realized that Doctor Brown was wrong — it wasn't all happening inside my head. Feminism means understanding that you're oppressed because you're a woman, and that your difficulties in the world are *not your fault*. Feminism is therapeutic because you can stop blaming yourself and put that blame where it belongs — on patriarchy and class society. Feminism is therapy in another way too — when women start to participate in the struggles for women's liberation, we're connecting in a powerful non-victim way with other women. And by doing that we climb out of some of the isolation and alienation that makes us feel neurotic. And that is a very healing thing.

The big question, though, is: What does it take for women to rise up and throw off our oppression? For some women, probably for most of you here today, all it takes is a click of understanding and years of struggle. But why isn't the women's liberation movement millions strong? I don't pretend to know the answer to that question, but I think part of it is that a great many women are so isolated from each other, so overworked and so conditioned into submission that it's not possible for them to *find* their solidarity with other women. Breaking your own mold is the most frightening thing in the world. The more you challenge your old ways of getting love, approval and security, the more scared you get, and it's easy to get stuck there.

Enter feminist therapy!

The patriarchal system has trained women to believe that we are helpless, weak creatures who can't really live without men taking care of us. We've heard those messages for so long; our mothers heard those messages, our grandmothers and our great-

grandmothers heard them all their lives. When you believe those false and negative messages about yourself, that's called internalized oppression, and it is one of the strongest forces that holds oppression in place; it's the limiting crap you have come to believe about yourself on a gut level, part of your self-definition. I'm not a whole person without a man. I'm not strong. I'm not really smart enough. I'm not attractive without make-up. Those are the messages of internalized oppression. And they get triggered day after day in women's lives. When a boss treats a secretary like a mindless slave, all those old messages that she's stupid get triggered. When a staunch feminist looks at a housewife and gets really uncomfortable, chances are it's her own internalized oppression acting up, as in: I can't stand her because of how she reminds me of my own painful struggles. Whenever a woman agrees to her own oppression, by her husband, by her boss, by her father, by a man on the street, chances are it's the internalized oppression that's in the driver's seat. She's stuck in the belief that it has to be that way and that she is powerless to fight to change her life and the world. Anybody who is full of fear and self doubt is not going to be able to think clearly and fight well. I know that's true.

Feminist therapy is the best tool I know to fight against that internalized oppression. And I don't mean with self-actualization as a goal. I mean using therapy to climb out of our agreement to be oppressed. The only way I know to get rid of internalized oppression, and I've seen it work time after time, is to go back and vent the old feelings of self-invalidation, to look at the ways in which you personally were hurt by sexism in your life, to cry and rage against those injustices, to discharge the self-blame that came with those hurts. At that point you're no longer carrying around that burden of pain and victimization, and you're capable of fighting from a position of strength, not weakness. Those old hurts won't get triggered every time you have to fight, because you're no longer carrying them in your head like a constant litany of self-blame.

A feminist therapist okays her clients' anger. She lets them know — based on her experience of the world, that they're not crazy, they're angry. She is not the aloof scientific expert, who pretends to objectivity, but a real human being who believes we're in this together. Feminist therapy understands oppression and works on that level, by helping women focus on how we've been socialized into powerlessness, and by making a safe place to vent the internalized crap that has kept us co-operating with the oppressor. That, however, is not the goal of feminist therapy, but only the means to the end. Feminist therapy is wonderful because it nourishes both women's resistance and feminist rebellion. It's only good as a tool — a tool for women to use — to re-claim our lost pride as women, to get rid of the self-hate that keeps women isolated, and most important, to give us the clear strength we need to be activists, to go out there in the world and fight for the liberation of women.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY WCREC



Well-wishers at WCREC Brunch on December 14.

On December 14, 1980, the Women's Counselling, Referral, and Education Centre (WCREC) held a birthday party to celebrate its fifth year as a vital woman's service in the Toronto community. A brunch was held at the Chelsea Inn and was attended by over a hundred supporters. WCREC Board member Judith Lawrence was MC for an afternoon of entertainment which included food, speeches and song.

Darlene Lawson and Wendy Wildfong, both members of the WCREC Board, spoke about WCREC's past and present, drawing together the many people and ac-

tivities that have made up the Centre's history. Alderman Anne Johnston and Globe and Mail columnist Joanne Kates spoke in broader terms about feminist therapy and the need for women's action in the political arena (see accompanying articles). Susan G. Cole lightened the day with her songs, mixing her own compositions with others of a more traditional nature.

For WCREC a celebration of this magnitude was important, since the Centre's survival is the result of a number of hard working, committed women who deserve credit and thanks.

...To the Horse Palace

by Philinda Masters

After Wendy Wildfong thanked a co-worker for helping her put together notes for her speech to women at the WCREC brunch, the next speaker, Alderman Anne Johnston, thanked Metro Chairman Paul Godfrey for helping her.

Johnston mourned the loss of Mayor John Sewell last fall and the ensuing change of climate at Toronto City Hall. "In 1972 the people won. There was euphoria at work. Sewell helped get people like (former Mayor David) Crombie and myself elected. Sewell did a lot of work on council, and a lot of the talking. Once in a meeting he said, "Hey, what are the rest of you going to say?" and he was right. The test is now for the handful of us (reform aldermen) left to carry on Sewell's work."

Johnston's main target was Paul Godfrey. "Godfrey's not all that popular outside Metro Toronto, but we don't stop him because we don't try. We must." She said that women are in a much stronger position now than in 1972, but we must rally around and help fight for women's issues. "We should stop grieving and get involved," she

said. "The system is still open, and we should get in before the liberal democrats close it up."

Issues of concern to women and for which Johnston will fight include day care, the environment, transportation and the general misappropriation of public funds.

"Women must fight the TTC (Toronto Transit Commission) fare increases. It's women and other low income people who use TTC most, but more public money goes to road building."

The same goes for STOL — the plan to build a short take-off and landing airport on Toronto Island. "Who will use STOL? The 4% of businessmen who travel frequently to Ottawa and Montreal, not women. If women go to Montreal, we go by train or by car with a full load. We should fight to have money put into trains, not STOL."

As to environmental issues: "You never hear about it from politicians at the municipal level. They want to wait to see which way the wind blows. They're doing nothing, so we must."

"In his coronation speech," said Johnston, referring to the swearing-in of the Metro Chairman on December 9, "Paul Godfrey slipped in his plans, worth \$100's of millions, to build a new metro city hall. I suggest the Horse Palace at the CNE. We'll continue to work at City Hall and Paul Godfrey can queen it at the Ex."

Another of Godfrey's plans is to build a cover for the CNE Stadium. Referring to the drastic cut backs in day care and the thousands of children waiting 'in cold storage' for day care space, Johnston said, "We can't cover our children and he wants to cover the baseball players!"

According to Johnston, the only time she has managed in the past to beat Paul Godfrey was over the Equal Rights Amendment in the States. Council voted that members could not go to conferences, etc., in states that had not ratified the ERA. But Johnston is not optimistic about the future of that victory: "Godfrey will try to sneak through a change soon."

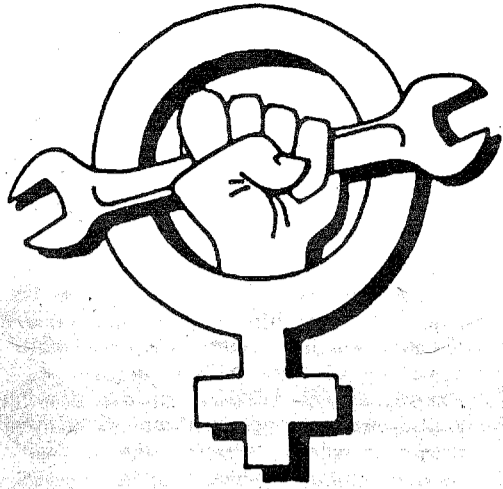
Now that Johnston's not on the Execu-

tive, Godfrey has seen to it that she does not sit on the Social Services Committee. "But my contribution for the next two years will be to go to those meetings and make as much noise as if I were an official member."

Johnston hasn't decided whether or not she'll run for the office of mayor in 1982. "I said, in a tipsy moment on election night, that I'd run for Metro Chairman and Mayor, and I've been punished ever since." She wouldn't run for mayor, she said, unless she really wanted the job because it's one that demands respect; and she wouldn't do it just to have a woman mayor because it's a job that requires a lot of support on council to be effective.

"And anyway," she added, "you have to chair interminably boring meetings. You can't even go outside for a cigarette."

Meanwhile, if her future is uncertain, she told singer Susan Cole she'd always wanted to be a drummer in a rock band. "If you want me, I'm all yours."



On December 10 Audrey Swail, head of the Ontario Women's Bureau, gave a speech entitled "Counselling Women for Non-Traditional Jobs." Her audience was a group of federal women's employment coordinators from across Ontario. Audrey told the crowd that for the last twenty years women have been entering the paid labour force at twice the rate of men but the gap between their wages has widened. She noted that over half the women who work are married, have children under 12 and will be widowed or separated before retirement.

Estimates are that 20-40% of clerical jobs will disappear in the next five years due to advance in word processing and information retrieval. In the meantime there is a shortage of workers in the skilled trades, which are high-paying and offer women a chance to advance or be self-employed. Unfortunately women are not entering the trades in any great numbers, although a few are beginning to do so. Toronto and other Ontario groups of Women in Trades have formed to enable women to support each other and organize for political action. A provincial conference for Ontario Women in Trade groups will be held April 24-26 in Hamilton.

The following statistics provided by Audrey at the conference show that women now constitute significant proportions of those in professional schools, but not so for apprenticeship in the trades, (see tables in this article).

For more information on women and non-traditional jobs contact the Ontario Women's Bureau, 965-1537 and Women in Trades, c/o Times Change Employment, 932 Bathurst, Toronto, 652-1699 (evgs.)

□Judy Liefschultz

Tradeswomen to the Rear

FEMALE STUDENT ENROLLMENTS IN NON-TRADITIONAL DISCIPLINES — 1980

Discipline	University	% of female students
Engineering	Queen's	14
Engineering	Toronto	7
Engineering	Waterloo	6
Medicine	McMaster	55
Medicine	Queen's	31
Veterinarian	Guelph	55
Pharmacy	Toronto	70
Law	Queen's	26
Business	Queen's	58

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING IN ONTARIO 1979-80

Trade	Female enrolment	% of total enrolment
Construction	2	.07
Motive Power	8	.2
Service	566	60.1
Industrial	0	0
TOTAL	595	5.6

Interceding for Domestic Workers

by Karen Black

There are 75,000 people in Ontario who work 60-80 hours weekly for as little as \$1 an hour and are allowed no regular days off. These workers are locked into this variation of slave labour because they are nearly all female and because 80% of them are foreign-born and many are from Third World countries. This group of workers has never been considered worthy of being included in those safeguards presently in existence for all other workers in Ontario: the Employment Standards Act, the Workmen's Compensation Act, the Labour Relations Act and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

To make matters worse Immigration policy-makers came up with a clever and insidious scheme in 1973 that ensures Canada an adequate supply of workers willing to be employed under these conditions. While Canadian Immigration policies have made it virtually impossible for women from Third World countries to come to Canada as independent landed immigrants, the 1973 Employment Visa system allows a woman to enter the country because she is willing to do work that most Canadians are unwilling to do, namely, domestic work.

Under this work permit system a woman is able to enter Canada as a domestic but can only remain in the country as long as she is employed at this specific job. She cannot even change employers without informing Immigration. Because the woman's legal status in the country depends on her having the job, most women will suffer the injustices and indignation without complaining too loudly. For the women who come from Third World countries anything may be better than what they left behind.

In November 1979 INTERCEDE was formed from a coalition of the Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre, the Housewives' Initiative, Wages for Housework and Labour Rights for Domestic Workers. Its purpose was to organize support at the provincial, national and international level for the struggle to achieve domestic workers' rights. It has since grown to include 25 women's community and church groups.

On December 16, 1980, INTERCEDE and the Ottawa-Carleton Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO) presented Ontario's Minister of Labour, Robert Elgie, with a brief which analyzes the inequities faced by domestic and makes recommendations for legislative changes. The brief quite pointedly stated that domestic worker's exclusion from protective legislation stems from the fact that society and government view housework as having no economic value. For those who recall Elgie's statement last spring, ("There is no government more committed to the rights of women than this one.") it should prove interesting to follow government opposition to some of INTERCEDE's recommendations.

So far, Elgie has agreed to guarantee domestic workers' vacations with pay along with paid statutory holidays. He has also agreed to a minimum wage of \$132 per week or \$568 per month, but there are no provisions for limiting the number of hours actually worked. Elgie also told INTERCEDE that domestics would be covered by the Human Rights Code but this bill probably will not pass final reading until after the spring election.



Though Elgie's concessions are not very impressive, INTERCEDE feels a start has been made and at least domestic workers' rights have been identified as an issue. INTERCEDE hopes to keep up the momentum gained so far and plans are being made to make domestic workers' rights a hard is-

sue in the spring election. (Contact INTERCEDE at 348 College Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 1S4; 929-3240 or 537-3037.)

Karen Black lives in Toronto and currently works in the actuarial department of an insurance company.

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John Lennon: In His Life

by Susan G. Cole

My generation, the one that grew up in the sixties, considers itself more fortunate, more aware, more sensitive than the generations of the repressed fifties and depressed seventies. We're bigger, demographers tell us, and if we think we're better it's in part because Bob Dylan and the Beatles made us that way.

Bob Dylan died for me when he was born again. John Lennon was gunned down in December by a maniac.

The Beatles embodied much of what we wanted out of the sixties. First of all, we wanted out of the fifties, away from conformity, away from authority, away from sexual repression. Everything the Beatles gave us seemed to be new and fresh. We were having a good time and all of a sudden, that was all right.

It wasn't only a good time. The music was good too, especially the music of John Lennon, the Beatles' co-founder and most vocal member. The strength of Lennon's art lay in his willingness to take risks with the popular song. No one else was doing that. If a time signature had to be changed in the middle of a song, he would do it. If the tape didn't sound quite right, he'd try running it backwards. If the song needed fleshing out with a full orchestra, so be it. One fleeting idea from the Beatles became the seed of someone else's entire career. Individual rock musicians, the entire music industry in fact, capitalized on the risks the Beatles took.

John Lennon could write a ballad like "Julia" or "In My Life", but it was his wit rather than his rarer sentimental moments that served him best. Along with Bob Dylan, he is responsible for relieving the pop song of the lack of articulation that characterized the hit parade for twenty years. Dylan styled himself the prophet of his age, celebrating and encouraging alienation, but Lennon didn't take himself so seriously. A self-styled prophet when asked by the press, "How do you find America?", would have waxed eloquent on the subject. But Lennon knew a pointless question when he heard one. "Turn left at Greenland", he'd answer.

Inevitably, he threatened the establishment with his impudence more than Dylan did with his outrage. When Lennon claimed that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus, his statement caused an international uproar. But Lennon at the time wanted no part of causes or bandwagons. He didn't want to be a symbol of anything. He merely wanted to tell the truth.

And he was skilled enough at verbal gamesmanship to say what he thought. His early songs, stronger musically than lyrically, settled for pop lyrics of the "I'll Get You", or "You're Gonna Lose That Girl" variety. But in his later work, Lennon's thinking was pretty clear. In "I Am the Walrus" and "A Day in the Life," he snapped at the hypocrisy of middle class society. While leftists harboured illusions about boogying up the stairs of the White House to take over the State, Lennon wrote "Revolution," calling them on their adventurism and sloganeering. By the time he wrote "Happiness is A Warm Gun," a song whose sexual ambiguity was intentional, he had already begun to fathom patriarchy and what makes it tick. Yoko Ono was already in his life.

As an artist, he was superb. As a man, churning out rock and roll in the mid-sixties, he was a disaster. The Beatles dominated the pop world fifteen years ago. Ringo was the buffoon; George, already taken with eastern philosophy was benign; Paul was pretty. John was the visionary and the mind of the Beatles.

He was also the prick. You could tell not only from his swaggering self-confidence, but from what he wrote. The song "Run For Your Life" is an exercise in psychological and sexual terror. In "It's Getting Better All the Time," he sang "I used to be cruel to my woman, I beat her and kept her apart from the things that she loved." He meant it. John Lennon was a violent man who had no idea what to do with his brutality. In short, he was a regular guy. He had close friends with whom he worked and hung out and he was devoted solely to the work he was doing. His personal life was defined by pushing women around and a loveless marriage that bore him a son he never really knew. He had, in fact, no emotional life at all.

ferent from anything I've ever known. This is something other. This is more than a hit record, more than gold, more than everything. It is indescribable".

Lennon's entire life plan changed when he explored his own capacity to love. He developed an emotional vocabulary and it began to seep into his political consciousness. Naive as it may have been, "Give Peace a Chance" came straight from the heart. He had come upon a truth so many men refuse to see — that there is value in an emotional life, that anyone who does not try to love is not living.

There was, however, a problem. People loved the Beatles and nobody wanted to see

roll business toward women like Yoko Ono was contempt, and a rocker who falls in love with such a woman is contemptible. "She was changing him all right", was the message. "She was emasculating him".

Lennon didn't want to disappear. He had some new ideas and he wanted them to influence the counter-culture as much as his music had in the sixties. Lennon was among the few pop stars who used his access to the public forum, giving encouragement to those other men and women who were trying to sew the seeds of liberation. While potentially influential musicians and movie stars eschewed any responsibility to the society that had nourished their art, Lennon was out there trying to reconcile his art and the way it was produced with his new-found values. That is why he thought the idea of the Beatles' reunion absurd. He wasn't the same person he was when he wrote "I Wanna Hold Your Hand." His love affair with Yoko Ono was intrinsically bound with his art. It was a public matter and he wanted it so. His determination to make his private life known to the world was not a publicity stunt, it was a political act.

Working together as musicians, Lennon and Ono became too experimental for pop enthusiasts. Who cared if "Woman is the Nigger of the World?" Nobody wanted to hear that. They wanted "She Loves You" and "Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," a demand Lennon believed was like asking him to go back to high school. At the time, people were baffled by Yoko's music. As it turned out, it was the forerunners of much of the New Wave that record buyers can't get enough of now. By the mid-seventies, Lennon couldn't imagine himself performing on stage without Yoko. But the response from the critics was lethal, and where it counts most, in the record stores, there was nothing doing. John Lennon retired.

"I'm the one who's come a long way," said Lennon of his personal changes. "I was the pig. And it is a relief not to be a pig. The pressures of being a pig were enormous". And so Lennon swung around to find out what it was like on the other side. Yoko gave birth to their son Sean, and Lennon resolved that he would not lose this chance to become a house-husband, to bake bread and tend his child. The role reversal was double edged. Not only did Lennon reverse his self-image, Yoko helped to reverse the sex roles within the marriage, by taking on the family business, trading real estate and prize cattle, and managing Lennon's vast financial resources.

House-husbandry, in fact, is a misnomer that obscures the complete reversal that Lennon went through. Change his gender and he was the complete housewife, as wrapped up in hearth and home and the well-being of his spouse as is any traditional housewife. And he was *not* making music. The lifestyle may have had a salutary effect on an ex-Beatle, but this ex-Beatle's talent was too formidable to be harnessed for the purposes of removing ring around the collar. Some of us resented his retirement. Besides, hidden role models aren't role models at all. When Lennon and Ono vanished from the public eye for five years, their absence was disturbing to those of us who knew that Lennon could have influenced a generation that was juggling alternative lifestyles and needed a little help from its friends. As a housewife, secluded in his New York apartment and with no signs of another album, Lennon was simply not very useful. He may have had his head together but he was keeping that most precious instrument to himself.

• continued page 21



John and Yoko

His life was for all intents and purposes the ultimate male fantasy — money, power and its accoutrements including women, talent and seeming total control over his own work. But the reality of rock and roll fame was something of a drag for Lennon: the adoration he perceived as mindless; the thrill of performing was wearing off; he was forced onto the road when he really wanted to record; McCartney and he were not getting along and internal tensions were coming perilously close to unmanageable.

Other of Lennon's ilk ended up dead in a pool of their own vomit, cranked up full of junk or wrapped with their motorcycle around a lamp post. Lennon had done enough drugs to come close to that. He had indulged himself to the point where his work wasn't all it should be (*Help*, a movie made through a euphoric haze is plain silly) and he knew it. He was a survivor. Something was missing and he wanted out.

Far from wrenching him away from the Beatles, Yoko Ono appeared as something of a *deus ex machina* to be the catalyst Lennon needed to leave the group and rethink his life. "I was looking for somewhere to go," Lennon said in his recent interview in *Playboy* magazine. "But I didn't really have the nerve to step out on the boat by myself and push it off. But when I fell in love with Yoko, I knew, my God, this is dif-

ferent from anything I've ever known. This is something other. This is more than a hit record, more than gold, more than everything. It is indescribable".

While his relationship with Yoko was smoothing his roughest edges, providing him with a revelation he thought many times more valuable than those that had inspired his million dollar songs, Lennon's associates loathed his lover's influence. John Lennon, symbol of the independent male macho rocker, was changing before everybody's eyes and people were finding it hard to take — John Lennon, influenced by a woman? It was the distaste for this fact that led so many to deem Ono a virago destined to blunt Lennon's impact on a counter-culture he had played a large part in creating.

She doesn't smile a lot like so many women do; born into a wealthy Japanese banking family, she couldn't be accused of fortune hunting; she was no groupie; she even had what were called "Artistic pretensions" of her own; and she was smart, creative, and strong. She had to be. Lennon wouldn't have been interested otherwise. But the collective attitude in the rock and

Abortion — It's No

by the Toronto Abortion Committee

INTRODUCTION

It is our hope that these articles will heighten your awareness of the abortion crisis and make you angry. It is essential that we as feminists do not indulge ourselves in a false sense of security with regard to the abortion issue. *Fact:* physicians, not women, continue to decide whether an abortion shall be performed or not. *Fact:* it is getting harder and harder to obtain an abortion. *Fact:* highly organized right wing forces are working to limit the availability of abortion in Canada.

Despite the myth that abortion is widely available, many of us have to struggle against incredible sexism, discrimination and humiliation (to say nothing of the red tape) for the privilege of terminating an unwanted pregnancy. And our silence condones these struggles. With our silence we turn our backs on those women who need an abortion. As well, our silence endangers the paltry gains we have made toward reproductive freedom for all women.

The women's movement has spent a decade creating itself. We've been swamped with issues — each one as important as the last. We've challenged the very fibre of our social environment, taking on such major institutions as the nuclear family, heterosexuality, militarism, the law. Often we've been frustrated at the pace of change; often we've lost faith after battling each other. We're tired and we face major problems — too little money, organization and clout.

Despite the obstacles and setbacks, however, feminism stands as perhaps the most important social change force of our time. In this climate of change it is especially important for us to continue reminding women's rights advocates that reproductive freedom is the most basic of all human freedoms.

Our goals are clear:

1. We want abortion to be removed from the criminal code;
2. We want access to safe and effective birth control;
3. We want free-standing women's clinics;
4. We want abortion patients to be treated with dignity and respect;
5. We want medical coverage for the abortion procedure and an end to up-front payments for abortion patients;
6. We want reproductive freedom.

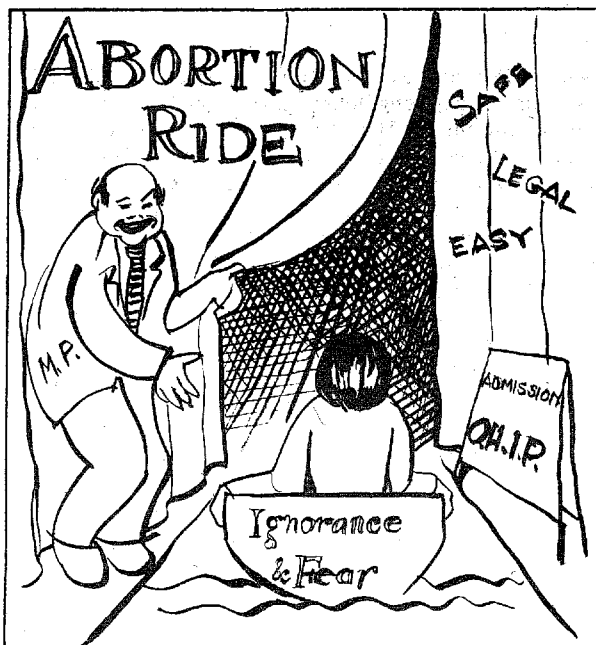
Much of what needs to be done will require organization and commitment to this issue. Not all of us can participate but your awareness and your personal commitment is crucial. We ask that your awareness lead you to act in very personal ways: write letters to the media and to your politicians, keep abortion alive as an issue in your social and professional circles, support organized campaigns, pass the word that the abortion struggle has just begun.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In the past 15 to 20 years there has been a world-wide liberalization of abortion restrictions, including Canada's Omnibus Bill of 1969, owing in part to an international concern over population control, in part to increased urbanization and industrialization, increased participation of women in the workforce, and the relaxation of sexual mores. Of all the factors contributing to abortion and contraceptive reform, what has been noticeable by its absence is a concern for the individual woman's right to control her own fertility.

The ideology of population control and to a large extent the modern "birth control" movement have little interest in women's control of reproduction. Population control seeks a reduction in birth rates, an end that justifies some rather suspect means including testing contraceptives on Third World women, dumping products, forcing sterilization and approving unsafe contraceptives.

The current birth control movement was born out of socialist feminist struggles in the early 1900's to legalize contraception for working class women. In spite of women's involvement, the birth control movement has been co-opted, and to what end?



Although the recent advances in birth control technology and the liberalization of abortion restriction in no way address the real feminist concern of reproductive control, that fact seems to have been obscured for many women who breathed more easily when it became possible to get a legal abortion. Abortion reform has given us some relief from the tyranny of our biology but has offered only an illusion that we are close to achieving control of our bodies. Recent advances have done nothing to alter the status quo: control of reproduction, whether by sterilization or abortion, still rests firmly with medical, legal, political and religious institutions.

The illusion of reproductive choice is beginning to shatter as the sociocultural pendulum swings from a high point of liberalism in the early 70's to what appears to be a dramatic and repressive swing to the right. We are now witnessing a tightening in abortion services and the threat of regressive reproductive health policies.

As our bodies continue to be buffeted by social forces it becomes increasingly clear that our struggle for reproductive rights and indeed for equality itself has just begun. Reproductive freedom is the basic and essential condition for the equality of women. Until we control our own persons, no amount of tokenism, media hype, or social reform should mask the reality that we are not equal partners in this society.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In all societies throughout history abortion has been part of women's experience. Women have always attempted to control their reproductive capacities regardless of societal controls or sanctions. Several factors determine the status of abortion in a particular culture at a given time: the definition of the beginning of life, the perception of ideal population size, and the influence of the medical profession.

Until the late 19th century no society punished abortion in the early stages of pregnancy. The Greek city states and ancient Rome made abortion the basis of a well-ordered population policy. Christianity infused the fetus with a soul but debated for eighteen centuries exactly when the fetus became animated by the soul, thereby making abortion a serious crime. Early Christian theologians defined the beginning of life as 40 days after conception for a male fetus, and 90 days after conception for a female, although no methods of sex determination were specified. By the 13th century abortion was tolerated as a less serious sin up until the time of "quickening," usually the fifth month when a woman could feel the fetus move. It wasn't until the mid 19th century that the Roman Catholic Church tightened up its official stand against abortion. Pope Leo XIII at that time declared life to begin at conception and as a result abortion became defined as murder.

This decision was rationalized in a number of ways. First, a mid-19th century wave of humanitarianism pressed for abortion laws to protect women from infection and death at the hands of male medical professionals. Until antiseptic techniques became prevalent, an abortion in the first three months of pregnancy was 10 to 15 times more dangerous than delivery at full term (today legal abortions are one-eighth as dangerous as childbirth at full term). Second, biologists began to understand conception, and women were therefore able to practice more effective birth control — a good motive for the tightening of abortion laws. This had ramifications for all countries where large families were essential to farming communities. Third, and much more subtle, English puritanism flourished in the 19th century and espoused the idea, still current today, that sex for pleasure was bad, that pregnancy was a punishment for

pleasure, and that fear of pregnancy would reinforce degenerating modern morals. It was in 1873 that a US federal law banned from the mails any literature, medicine or article to do with contraception or abortion. The 20th century has seen a series of movements directed toward the repeal of the 19th century laws prohibiting abortion.

Access to abortion in any culture is directly related to its economic needs and therefore to its perception of an ideal population size. Historically, nomadic peoples have always limited their population by whatever means available, usually abortion or infanticide, yet in pre-industrial agricultural societies large families were an economic asset and abortion more difficult to obtain.

The USSR's official policy on abortion since 1917 has changed according to its population needs. Immediately after the revolution, when economic conditions were grim, free abortions were readily available. After severe population losses incurred in World War II, the USSR banned abortion and in 1944 the title "Mother Heroine" was given to women who had raised more than 10 children.

In Germany, before the Nazi takeover, abortion was generally available. But under the Third Reich, existing abortion and contraception facilities were closed down. In 1933 a law was passed eliminating women from the workforce, and the punishment for obtaining an abortion was death. It is obviously a country's economic and political needs, rather than a concern for the rights of the individual woman, that dictate its policy on abortion.

A major influence on access to abortion was the emergence of the male medical profession. Until the development of scientific medicine in the late 18th and 19th centuries a wide range of healers performed medical tasks. The female "witch healer" and midwife played important roles in the community and were often the only general medical practitioners for people who had no doctors and hospitals. As European medicine became firmly established as a secular science, it was increasingly threatened by women healers, and the profession played an active role in the witch trials which spanned more than four centuries. By the 18th century male practitioners had also made inroads into the last preserve of female healing — midwifery. The invention of forceps enabled male professionals to claim that a surgical instrument must be used by experts. The job of the midwife — who had been, for most women, the only source of information on childbearing, contraception and abortion — was thus narrowed in scope, downgraded and confined to the women of the poor. Matters of reproduction among the middle and upper classes was transformed from a neighbourly service into a lucrative business and remains so today.

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

On a global perspective, the availability of abortion is directly related to religion and the part women play in the economy. It is no surprise that countries which have very restrictive access to contraception ensure that women are trapped into the role of breeder whether it affects their health (from multiple pregnancies) or not.

- Early progressive abortion reforms started in 1929 in Denmark, Sweden and Norway. In 1946 the term "anticipated exhaustion" became part of the criteria for allowing abortions, as part of the physical and emotional health of the women-seeking the abortion. But by the mid-1960's the Scandinavian countries started exerting tighter controls and women were forced to seek abortions in Poland. The Eastern bloc countries had fairly progressive "abortion on demand" policies in the mid 1950's but with political upheaval in these countries in the early 1960's tighter controls began to prevent unlimited access to abortion.

- Abortion policy in China is strictly related to population control. When an abortion is performed within 50 days of conception, a woman receives 10 days off work at a loss of pay — more an incentive not to get pregnant again than a benefit to women's rights. At least in China contraceptives are more widely available than other countries, and some male birth control methods are being researched.

- Not only is contraception not available in Ireland or Spain, but in Spain, a recent law was approved whereby "all living things have a right to life." Women either leave the country to seek abortions or risk an illegal abortion.

- In Switzerland abortion is very costly and is available usually in private clinics. In some cases a woman is forced to see a psychiatrist.

- In the Caribbean, especially in countries which are still part of the Commonwealth, abortion is contained in the Criminal Code or Penal Code and the definition of physical and mental health is still a decision largely in the hands of male practitioners. This applies to the Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda and the Virgin Islands. On smaller islands like Antigua or a Central American territory such as Belize, abortion is only performed if the woman's physical health is at risk.

Not Free and Easy

• In the world today it is estimated that there is one induced abortion for every three births, with illegal abortions representing a leading cause of death among women of child-bearing age.

It is a tragic irony that during the 1970s, several countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Britain and Fiji undertook costly studies to see how abortion laws were being applied. In many instances where it was shown that the law gave unequal access to abortion (as in Canada), or that hospital gynecological services should be upgraded (as in Britain), or that the father should have no power to veto an abortion aim (New Zealand) there have been no attempts to act on any of the recommendations.

The woman is not present during the TAC meetings which consider her request for an abortion. If she is refused an abortion by the committee, she has no right to appeal the decision. Hospitals are not prevented by law from setting quotas, and the longer the woman must wait for her abortion, the greater stress it puts on her and her health.

Another stumbling block in this procedure comes from determining who is responsible, legally, for requesting the abortion. Two-thirds of the hospitals with TAC's require consent forms signed by the spouse as well as the woman wishing the abortion. In some cases, even if the woman wishing the abortion is separated, mutual consent is required. This is a hospital policy, not a legal requirement. In September, 1980, the Canadian Medical Association passed a resolution to ask hospitals to stop requiring consent forms for abortions.

Because of the arbitrary procedure in establishing and operating Therapeutic Abortion Committees, abortion is not available to many groups of women. Rural women often have no access to safe abortions within their local communities. In larger centres women from low socio-economic groups are unaware of the complex procedures required to obtain an abortion and if their own doctor is opposed, they are not usually referred to a doctor who is supportive.

THERAPEUTIC ABORTIONS AND THE LAW

Although an abortion under medically approved conditions is a relatively safe operation it is the most difficult operation to obtain in Canada. It is a mistake to assume that abortions are unconditionally legal in Canada: the federal Criminal Code in 1969 made abortion 'legal' only under certain conditions. In practice the interpretation and

implementation of the law is left up to doctors, hospital administrators and strong lobby groups such as the anti-abortion movement. The important issues of where an abortion can occur, under what conditions a woman may receive an abortion and who shall decide if she meets these conditions are all set out in the law. However, none of these important issues are determined by the woman and are basically decided by strangers. The abortion law allows for the formation of a Therapeutic Abortion Committee (TAC) in 'accredited or approved hospitals.' The law requires that a woman prove the pregnancy will endanger her life or health. These committees are empowered to implement the law by using a legal definition of a woman's 'health' to determine whether or not she can obtain the abortion. The World Health Organization defines health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of infirmity or disease.' However, each committee can determine what constitutes a danger to a woman's health in a very arbitrary manner.

The TAC consists of three doctors appointed by the board of governors of a hospital. Hospitals with medical staffs of three or fewer physicians are ineligible for establishing these committees: of 1348 civilian hospitals in 1976 in Canada, almost one-quarter were not eligible to establish therapeutic abortion committees. Of those eligible, only one-fifth did in fact establish committees — the law does not insist that hospitals set up committees. Hospitals which have not established TAC's have generally based their decision on religious, moral and/or professional ethical grounds.

Two-fifths of the population live in communities which do not have eligible hospitals. In Ontario, approximately one-third of the hospitals have set up therapeutic abortion committees. But of these, 21 have never approved or performed an abortion, another 81 performed only 136 abortions in one year, and the remaining eight hospitals served the entire province of Ontario.

A fundamental question is why are there not more hospitals providing abortions. In some cases, the answer is pressure exerted on publicly-funded hospitals by anti-“choice” groups. In others it is a lack of interest in women's concerns.

Once a committee is established, there are no guidelines for how often it should meet. In some cases it has never met, in other cases it meets infrequently. Since the physicians are appointed, they are not necessarily sympathetic or supportive to a woman's choice regarding an abortion. These physicians on committees are mostly, if not all, male medical practitioners. Their responsibility for determining if a pregnancy is a threat to a woman's 'life or health' becomes an awesome one. These doctors are being asked to act as advocate, judge and surgeon, using professional, moral and psychological grounds for their judgements.

This can hardly be an atmosphere where doctors are making objective, impartial decisions. They have not created or used any body of legal precedence. Because of this, the law is acted on differently in different provinces and where committee membership changes, various interpretations occur from committee to committee.

The bureaucracy first confronts a woman when she must see a physician to confirm her pregnancy. Only a member of the medical staff at an 'approved or accredited hospital' can apply to the TAC to request an abortion for the woman. If a women's physician is not a member, she must be referred to one who is. If the TAC decides more information is required, it may adjourn and request such information, thus further prolonging the pregnancy and potentially endangering the health of the woman.

The law as it now exists not only results in long, red tape procedures using vague, ambiguous guidelines, but it endangers the health of the woman by the very nature of its structure. The process takes far too long in providing safe abortions for women seeking them. Many women do not know their legal rights and if a woman's personal physician is opposed to abortions she may never get past the first legal loophole. The bureaucratic nature of establishing the therapeutic abortion committees and administering them results in a process that is unwieldy and puts the total procedure in the hands of the medical profession, lobby groups and hospital administrations, and out of the hands of women.

WOMEN AND MEDICINE

Traditionally, the doctor-patient relationship has been similar to that of parent and child. The doctor is seen as the god-like, all-knowing, all-powerful expert who dispenses cures; the patient is the grateful, passive recipient of the doctor's knowledge and skill. Feeling ignorant, vulnerable and scared, especially during an illness, many people prefer to give responsibility for maintaining their health or curing their illnesses to the doctor. And of course, many doctors are only too happy to fill this role.

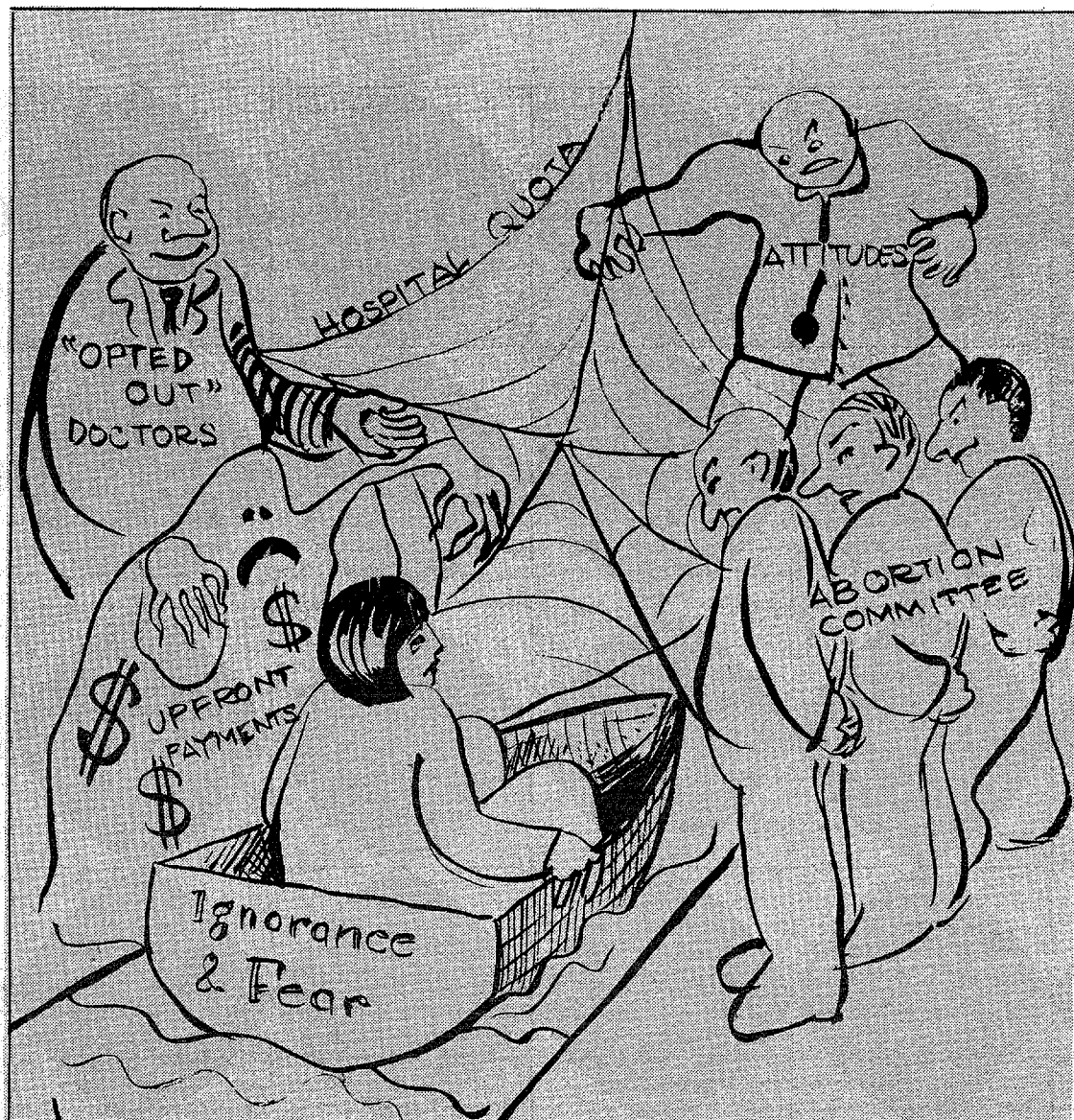
Most often the doctor-patient relationship consists of a male doctor and female patient. Only 7% of the doctors in the United States are women, less in Canada. In 1977, 26% of the medical students at the University of Toronto and 53% at McMaster University in Hamilton were women, an improvement over the past. But still most doctors in Canada are men.

As of 1978, in the United States, there were fewer than 2000 female obstetrician-gynecologists out of 20,000 and almost no senior female faculty members training the current generation of gynecologists. In Canada, approximately 92% of gynecologists are men.

Although men are in the majority as doctors, women are in the majority as patients. According to a study done nationally in the United States, it was found that "women average 25% more visits to the doctor each year than men, we take 50% more prescription drugs than men and we are admitted to hospitals much more frequently than men". Part of the reason we are prime consumers has to do with our relationship to pregnancy and childbirth and the effects these changes have on our bodies.

The image of the woman patient as an emotional, hysterical hypochondriac still exists today in the minds of many doctors. The traditional concept of the weak female suffering from the "sicknesses" of puberty, pregnancy, childbirth and menopause has left its mark on today's medicine. A textbook on obstetrics and gynecology published in 1975 advises that "the traits that compose the core of the female personality are feminine narcissism, masochism and passivity."

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M. Bruun-Meyer

The Toronto Abortion Committee is a sub-committee of the Women's Services Network in Toronto. The committee was formed out of our realization that women's services and the public in general are not aware of the crisis situation surrounding the abortion issue in Toronto. Our objective is to research and provide educational information on the law and existing conditions locally. We hope that by providing the information in these articles we will motivate individual women to speak out, to lobby, and to become more active and less complacent on the abortion issue. The committee members are Marilyn Reinwald, Selma Savage, Shelley Glazer, Deborah Bartlett and Judy Stanleigh.

This was the first of a two-part series on abortion. Next month, the Toronto Abortion Committee will provide information on: Getting an Abortion; the Abortion Situation in Toronto; the Finances of Abortion; the New Right and the Anti-Choice Movement.

ARTS

Hollywood: Liberation Within Limits



by Barbara Halpern Martineau

In 1969 Nelly Kaplan, an Argentinian-born film maker living in Paris, completed *La Fiancée du Pirate* (*A Very Curious Girl*), a film about one young woman's revenge on the village which had mistreated her mother and herself. The film was an inspiration to the newly self-conscious women's movement, and it generated a lot of discussion about our need for fantasies of power rather than escape. Now, eleven years later, Hollywood has gotten the message. The result is a new type of film, the liberation fantasy, represented so far by *Private Benjamin* and *9 to 5*.

All Judy Benjamin (Goldie Hawn) ever wanted in life from the time she was eight years old was a nice house, two cars, lots of clothes, and a husband. Why, then, when she was such a good Jewish girl, and pretty, and lively, and willing to do anything she was told in order to achieve her dream, did God punish her? Judy Benjamin, sitting in a motel room eight days after her second marriage has ended in tragi-comic disaster, wails into the telephone to a radio DJ: "I feel like I'm being punished, and I didn't do anything wrong!" In the ensuing account of how Judy learns to take responsibility into her own capable hands, husbands, fathers, even mothers and God notwithstanding, *Private Benjamin* makes the awesome point that *chutzpah* is all a girl needs. As Judy marches off into the unknown at the end of the film, our faith follows her — she will prevail!

Goldie Hawn, who plays Judy Benjamin with such crooked-grinned grace, was also executive producer of the Warner Bros. film (yes, Warner's, a major stockholder in *Ms.* magazine). Now *Private Benjamin* has its problems: for instance, the implication that the US Army is a positive alternative to anything; for another instance, a snide hint that the female villain is, after all, just a nasty old dyke. But the film is a celebration of female solidarity in the ranks — the scene where the trainees sit around a campfire smoking dope and swapping stories of their first orgasms is a classic, guaranteed to warm the heart of every fun-loving woman with an ounce of *chutzpah*. So is the scene where Judy, faced with the dilemma of being fucked in a plane by General Thorn or jumping into the blue yonder hoping her parachute will work, jumps (and it works) — we need these moments of joy now and then. So, on the whole, I'm glad a woman with Hawn's obvious supply of *chutzpah* was able to produce *Private Benjamin*, just as I'm glad that Sherry Lansing, president of Twentieth Century Fox, and Jane Fonda, associate producer, with a lot of help from a lot of other women, came up with *9 to 5*, another brave Hollywood fable of winning women.

It's 7 am, alarm clocks ringing, all kinds of clocks — efficient digitals, decorator brass, round-faced Baby Bens, all ringing time to get up and join the working world. Run for the bus in rape-me heels and vulnerable nylons, stare through the crowds of freshly-painted faces, tired eyes, thoughts of unpaid bills dancing in the air. Through the glass doors, into the jammed elevator, up and out to confront the ranks of typewriters, word processors, more freshly-painted faces and tired eyes. "Here we are at the front," Lily Tomlin says briskly to Jane Fonda in Twentieth-Century's "Christmas Bonus" for millions of workers in the "pink-collar" ghetto. Secretaries and sympathizers, we've been flocking by the millions to plunk down the price of a good pair of pantyhose in order to laugh and dream of revenge.

There's another hilarious dope scene, this time shared by three secretaries united by anger at their boss and dreams of revenge. Their brilliantly executed fantasies, each done in the style of a particular Hollywood genre (gangster film, Western, Disney cartoon) offer rare reversals of the usual macho messages. Jane Fonda would shoot the hapless villain after a violent chase; Dolly Parton would rope him like a steer and turn him slowly on a spit; Lily Tomlin would poison him and chuck him out the window, aided and abetted by Thumper, Bambi, and a chorus of Walt Disney bluebirds. All three would humiliate him first, and so, in this movie where "reality" follows the blueprint of marijuana daydreams, that's what they do, releasing the potential for a million similar fantasies in the minds of oppressed secretaries all over the corporate world. "You're a lying egotistical sexist hypocritical bigot" is the phrase which will flash behind the obliging smiles of untold numbers of coffee-fetchers and lunch-bookers, shoppers, copiers and procurers. My favourite line comes from Dolly Parton at her wide-eyed, casual best: "I think," she says, referring to their boss, presently tied up and fuming in his bedroom, "we should hire two wranglers to go up and beat the shit out of him."

I walked out at the end thinking, this movie comes out against pig bosses, for bonding among women, humane working conditions, job-sharing, equal pay; it's funny, it shows women being strong, resourceful, wacky, winners — how come Twentieth Century, that big corporation, got involved with this movie? Maybe it means something, after all, to have women in key corporate positions. *9 to 5* reminds me of the "working-girl" movies of the '30s and '40s, with the benefit of new feminist awareness. And the best part is — the women never change their appearance. Jane Fonda is just as ruffled and suburban at the end of the

movie as she is at the start, minus only her hat; Dolly Parton remains plungingly bosomy; Lily Tomlin glitters like a cobra. The changes are behavioural — by the end the women are a solid trio, united by a shared drive to survive.

However, even the combined genius of Fonda, Tomlin, Parton and their screenwriters doesn't overcome the Machiavellian determination of their boss. He outwits them, with the help of his unsuspecting wife (she's the most unfortunate stereotype in the film — hopelessly stupid, she persists in loving the creep). It is only the intervention of a *deus ex machina*, the company director, that saves the women from a disgraceful defeat. In a nutshell, the women have managed to "increase productivity," that magic phrase in the strange world of multinationals, by changing personnel policy in their boss's name. Their reward is the removal of their boss to the jungle of Brazil. The women are left to run the show at home (er, the office). They have happy workers, bright decor, a company day-care centre — all any secretary could want, or is it? The Big Boss likes all the changes they've made except for one, equal pay — that obviously is not to be tolerated. The one change that really would matter to everyone concerned, the formation of a union, is obviously not about to happen. All the energy has been directed against the awful boss — now that he's been magically whisked away, well, what? In fact, company day-care is viewed with suspicion by day care organizers — it ties workers to their jobs and recalls all the problems of "company towns." Bright colours and split shifts are nice, but if there's no job security all these goodies can be whisked away whenever the company pleases, and who dares complain? Lily Tomlin won't — she's been promoted to management. Jane Fonda's remarried (to the Xerox representative?!) and Dolly Parton's a country-and-western singer.

Both *9 to 5* and *Private Benjamin* are delightful films, tributes to women's wit and creativity, and firmly based in the Hollywood tradition of showing contemporary issues without proposing any real change. That's no reason why they can't be used for radical analysis — a good laugh is a great starting point.

9 to 5 is a more "refined" product that *Private Benjamin* — Jane Fonda goes cross-eyed in her role as the well-brought-up girl from the suburbs when the boss mentions cutting the balls off the competition, whereas Goldie Hawn merely sighs and goes to it when her new husband orders her to suck him off in the parking lot during their wedding celebration. But both films work on the principle of fantasy released, conjuring up images of beautiful women oppressed by stereotyped villains (the villains are more imaginatively developed in *Private Benjamin*, and to its credit, there are many of them). At a crucial psychic and narrative turning point (the scene where Judy's parents come to rescue her; the bar scene in *9 to 5*) there is a CLICK! and *chutzpah* takes over.

Chutzpah is present from the start, in varying degrees, in the women of *A Wives' Tale*, another film of interest to women which opened in Toronto just before Christmas, but not on the mainstream circuit. *A Wives' Tale* is a 16mm documentary from Québec about *Wives Support the Strike*, the group of Sudbury women who organized to support their miner husbands in a strike against Inco Ltd., a multinational. Unlike the secretaries in *9 to 5*, and certainly unlike Judy Benjamin as either Jewish princess or Army private, these miners have a long history of union organization and strikes. And what has it gotten them, or their long-suffering wives? In an odd sort of way, *A Wives' Tale*, produced on the raggedest of shoestrings by a radical trio from Québec, resembles *9 to 5* and *Private Benjamin* not in Hollywood gloss, but in focussing on the experiences and aspirations of women rather than on the traditional "issues" of union politics. Which is not to say that *A Wives' Tale* is not pro-union. On the contrary.

• continued next page



Scene from *A Wives' Tale*

Courtesy DEC

Sizzlers from Our Sisters

by Susan G. Cole

The December 1980 issue of Playboy magazine features a remarkable article on the subject of sexual office politics. The article is inspired by the presence of a new phenomenon in the corporate board room — women, and according to the author, these female executives are as hungry for sexual clout as they are for corporate influence. Whereas the subtitle for the piece is "A Guide for the Eighties", it is no such thing. There is no "how to" here, because no matter what strategies the male underling may employ, he simply can't win: you see, the difference between male and female executives is that men will trade a few perks for sexual favours. Women, on the other hand, won't bargain one for the other. They want sex and power. Playboy readers are left with the terrifying news that the female aggressor, the one who knows her sexual needs and goes about getting them met, has power and is here to stay.

Where did she come from? She certainly wasn't around in the sixties when the sexual "revolution" dictated that any sexual reluctance on the part of women be construed by the rejected male as a sign that women were repressed and not "ready" for liberation. She is without doubt a post-feminist consciousness phenomenon, a product of the ideology that gave to women a sense that sex ought to be for us too, that there were many ways for us to define our own sexuality and that we could not only say no, but we could even say "Come to bed" and take some initiative.

In a way, Erica Jong has to bear some responsibility for the new sexual image of women. Her first book *Fear of Flying* sent shock waves through the literary establishment and the reading public because the heroine Isadora Wing couldn't get enough sex. The insatiable female per se isn't an original concept but she is usually the product of a male writer's imagination. Never had the craving for sex been the confession of a best-selling female author — and it was astounding. I for one found the book refreshing and Jong smart, particularly for having come to the conclusion that the elusive and now famous zipless fuck is in fact nothing but rape.

Irrespective of the novel's virtues, its author, having given us Isadora Wing, gave birth to a monster that multiplied with the help of less gifted and clever writers. Erica Jong gave way to a host of other randy female authors who wrote of their sexual adventures with painstaking and boring detail. The proliferation of sexual confessions prompted Gore Vidal to comment bitchily but astutely in his throwaway novel *Kalki* that, "In their fictions, Jewish princesses tried to become Jewish princes. The result was not erotic. They tried to describe the genitals of men in the same way that they thought men described those of women," and "Where the true shape of the scrotum was not possible to describe upon the page...the preparation of shrimp ramoulade, a lobster salad, a sumptuous casserole served on Royal Crown Derby." No doubt Vidal refers here to food critic Gael Greene's *Blue Sky No Candy*, a catalogue of sexual exploits the foreplay for which usually takes place in a restaurant over rich food. Greene's is possibly the most offen-

sive of this new genre of books written by women who, along with their editors, think that someone cares about the quality of their orgasms.

The celebration of an author's wantonness is one thing. The fact that the rendering of random lust has become pornographic is quite another. It is no coincidence that Playboy is warning its readers against female sexual aggressors while female writers are writing about aggressive and violent sex with utter glee. This is new — pornographers, female, on the bestseller list.

I use the word pornography in the way we're accustomed to using it, defining it as an attitude toward human sexuality wherein women are exploited and reach sexual frenzy not through communication with another human being but through the mechanistic manipulation of one or more erogenous zones. Variations are essential be they on the numbers and sexes of sexual participants or on the myriad external aids the pornographer can dream up. Pornography usually blends sex with violence.

Pornographic literature is that which focusses so totally on sexual and violent events that development of character is secondary to the descriptions of characters' sexual proclivities and/or penchant for violence. Plot exists simply as a means of moving from one sexual orgy to the next. A pornographer philosophically committed to his or her task is the true sexual objectifier, so able to remove sex from any other human endeavour, that he or she becomes obsessed with the Essence of Fuck (or Brutality, or a combination of both).

Sylvia Fraser's latest novel, *The Emperor's Virgin*, careens from dismemberment to decapitation to rape to bestiality to gladiatorial orgies of violence in so breathtaking a way as to suggest that Fraser is a pioneer among the new female pornographers. So taken was Fraser with her subject matter, the rule of the tyrannical Emperor Domitian of Rome in 95 AD, that she rigorously researched the daily life and ritual of the crumbling Roman Empire. Her descriptions are as accurate as they can possibly be. All the correct numbers of people are in the arenas or in the parades and they are dressed just as they would have been in Roman times. It's still pornography. Fraser's attention to detail simply makes it well-researched pornography.

The pornographer's formula demands scene after scene depicting sex and violence of a fringe nature culminating in the ultimate fuck, usually between the only two (or more) people in the book worth rooting for. So it goes in *The Emperor's Virgin*. Penises are lopped off, horses decapitated, young boys buggered against their will and then finally the hero Maximus Marcus, the defender of what was Rome's greatness, and Cornelia, a priestess of the Temple, couple ecstatically — a welcome relief from the castration and subjugation that characterizes the book. This change of pace is what is called in the trade "redeeming social value." Even so, Fraser can't capitulate to romance and has Maximus and Cornelia going at it in the mud. Fraser's point in writing the book, one assumes, is to say that she can write about brutality as well as her brothers and has the formula down as

securely as any pornographer.

But Erica Jong purports to be a feminist and so the pornographic content in her recent novel *Fanny: Being the True History of the Adventures of Fanny Hackabout-Jones* is all the more unsettling. *Fanny*, written in Fieldingese style complete with capitalized nouns and archaic language usage, has a plot and some insightful feminist analysis of the lot of women in eighteenth century England, but it gets lost amidst the fucking and sucking. Like Fraser, Jong scoured libraries and archives to ensure verisimilitude. If it is any consolation, meticulous research, it seems, will be the hallmark of the new pornography.

The raison d'être of the first two hundred pages of Jong's latest novel is the account of Fanny's sexual development. Remember the pornographic formula: no healthy straight ahead communicative love-related sex until the very end where Jong delivers with a rollicking foursome. But first Fanny is deflowered by her step-father, ravished by a dwarf, led into a wham bam thank you ma'am threesome (two women, one man), then a fivesome (four women, one man and a dildo). She becomes acquainted with bondage, drag queens, and so on until she has become an all around good lay. Jong's goal is to provide a treatise on prostitution, and she uses pornography to achieve it.

There is a brief respite during which Jong pays some attention to other aspects of the plot but then we are back to defecation and water sports. Jong, who is no dummy, senses that maybe there's something wrong here and writes an apology for her chronicles, protesting thus:

For tho' I wish neither to inflame nor to disgust by writing of my Life with all its Vicissitudes, yet I must assume — or I would not have chosen this perilous Profession of Scribbler — that describing Vice is oft' the best guarantee of future Virtue, whilst describing Virtue is no Guarantee against the powers of Vice.

Many foolish and credulous Folk believe the Opposite. They accuse the Chronicler of Vice as if he were the Creator of it; ...Do they not understand that we Scribblers must scourge the World to bring it to its senses? Do they not understand that an Author doth not necessarily approve the Sins his Love of Truth causes him to chronicle?...

The lady doth protest too much methinks. Or better put: Who are you kidding, Erica?

We can certainly give Jong the benefit of the doubt and say that she doesn't approve of all these bedroom shenanigans, but whereas female pornographers don't celebrate the acts they describe as male writers often do, one gets the disturbing feeling with both Jong and Fraser that they are taking some pleasure in donning the mantle of the pornographer. In short, they are getting off. It's pretty clear that Jong wants to perpetuate her lascivious reputation. *Fear of Flying* started it. *Fanny* is bound to keep her reputation intact. Fraser's earlier novels promised something like *The Emperor's Virgin*. It remains to be seen whether she'll challenge Jong as the premier female pornographer.

There are some who may approve of the fact that women are encroaching on otherwise male territory. There was something about that Playboy article that made me laugh and think that the female sexual terrorization of men at the office, or Playboy readers at the office, could have a temporary salutary effect. These female execs have nerve anyway. But I doubt that sexual bullying will have a long term positive impact on women.

Similarly it could be argued that Erica Jong and Sylvia Fraser are gutsy writers, taking risks and willing to explore where other female writers dared not tread. Many of us believe that there are so few female pornographers because "women don't think that way." Well, they can and do and Fraser and Jong prove it. Whether theirs is a noble pursuit is another matter entirely.



Erica Jong



Sylvia Fraser

A Wives' Tale is the most ambitious labour film ever shot in English Canada — a bilingual film released first in French in Québec, it is in the tradition of militant Québec documentary pioneered by Arthur Lamothe, who shared with Nicole Lamothe the post of executive producer for *A Wives' Tale*. All the more glory, then, that it is first and foremost a film about and for women. Keeping it that way was a struggle for filmmakers Sophie Bissonnette and Joyce Rock — their colleague, Martin Duckworth, is quick to admit that he brought a load of male attitudes about what is interesting and "filmic" as well as valuable experience to the shoot. The dramatic, exciting scenes of the film are those shot underground, or in the foundry, shots of molten metal streaming golden down the hillside from great vats tipped against the indigo sky. There are scenes of intense conflict, where the union men demand signing power over cheques issued by the Wives, and one woman argues eloquently against them. Later, the women argue among themselves about their loyalties and responsibilities. One woman who has been very active announces: "I'm not for the strike, I'm for my husband...and if my husband decides

to go back to work, then fuck the strike!" Other women applaud. Cathy, one of the 30 women on strike (there are 11,700 striking men), retorts: "It's not your strike, it's everybody's...this is history in the making." These are scenes any documentary filmmaker would look for — they engage the audience, provide colour, focus, identification. But the real struggles of the Wives went on in less dramatic ways, in their roles as wives with a small w, in their kitchens and bedrooms and with their children, their husbands, inside their own heads:

As the women became increasingly involved in the strike, they questioned more and more their traditional supportive role. This provoked many heated discussions among the women...upsetting husband, family, union — and company.

It is difficult (impossible) to take 'pretty' pictures under these conditions: kitchens are small and don't suit the movements of a film crew; children scream and cry in the microphone...we often packed up our equipment and decided not to shoot an otherwise important scene because we felt it would be a betrayal of the trust we had established with the women...

So we shot a film that doesn't show 'everything,' hoping that what is not obvious comes from between the lines, between each frame of the film.

—the filmmakers' statement

Two of the most important scenes in the film, for me, are scenes about what isn't shown — they both centre on a young woman who is one of the pivotal figures of the film. In one scene she is having a quiet but intense encounter with another of the Wives and Cathy, the striker. They're discussing how the men are reluctant to involve the women in their decision-making process. "They're afraid of us," she says with amazement, "our own husbands." "But we have a right to be there," she insists. "It's our lives, too."

• continued page 21

Coming next issue: Notes on women, writing, and film: Tillie Olsen's *Tell Me A Riddle*, directed by Lee Grant and produced by the Godmothers; and the Art Gallery of Ontario series running Sunday afternoons Jan. 11 - March 1: "The Women Who Wrote the Movies."

Picking Up the Pieces

by Mariana Valverde

Beyond the Fragments. Sheila Rowbotham, Lynne Segal, and Hilary Wainwright, London: Merlin Press, 1979. Pp 253. \$7.95.

Beyond the Fragments is a text originating from political practice, notably socialist, feminist, and community organizing in Britain. Despite the fact that it constantly refers to local experiences, it is being widely read and discussed in Canada as well as in Britain, especially by women and men whose commitment to feminism has led them to question some hallowed dogmas of socialist politics. To understand why this long and sometimes dreadfully written book is having such an impact, it is necessary to place it in its historical context.

The feminist and community movements of post-1968, according to the three authors, have been successful in generating much healthy grassroots activity, changing the consciousness of various sectors of society, and bringing about many specific changes. However, their very grassroots nature, and the lack of an overall theory and strategy, prevents such movements (anti-racist, gay and anarchist groups are here included, as well as feminist initiatives) from building a stable, ongoing structure to link up the various struggles and to provide for radical changes in the whole society. Many socialists would claim that the Leninist (or Trotskyist) party is just what we need to go beyond the fragments: but the three authors, especially Sheila Rowbotham, present a powerful argument for why socialists ought *not* to recreate Leninist organizations. Her argument is also a reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of feminist politics, and thus deserves to be read by feminists committed to social change, not just by disaffected ex-members of socialist organizations.

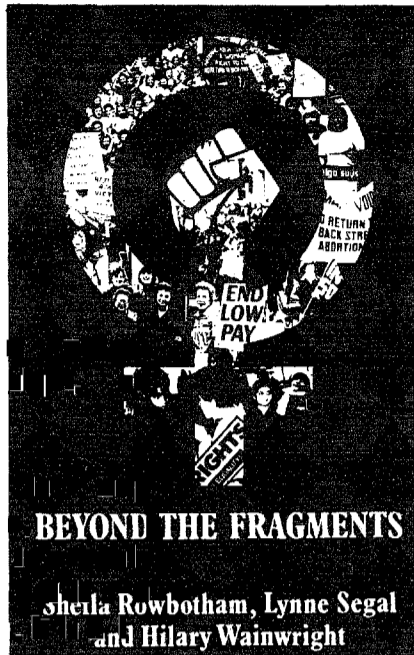
IN THE BEGINNING

Although isolated women had been rebelling against patriarchal privilege for centuries, it was only in the mid-nineteenth century that a movement was created to give individual rebellions a context and a history. The reasons why the women's movement began when it did help to explain its complicated relationship to that other nineteenth-century movement, socialism.

During the 1830s and 1840s, French and English women who participated in the birth of socialism quickly realized that the concept of oppression, which had been developed to explain the condition of the working class, was applicable to them as women, not solely as workers. Flora Tristan, who has a claim to being the first socialist-feminist, wrote in 1844 that "women are the proletariat of the proletariat." In the United States women involved in the abolitionist movement came to realize that their own condition was comparable to that of the slaves, and in Russia the emancipation of the serfs had a similar effect on women's consciousness.

The early socialists — Owenites in England, Saint-Simonians in France — were not members of parties with central committees and electoral programs. Their groups were loosely knit, easily formed and disbanded, and advocated all kinds of 'utopian' schemes for the regeneration of society, of the body, and even of the universe itself. They wanted to replace wage-labour and competition by co-operation; and they believed that the oppression of women and the repression of desire were slated to disappear. Women were often key members of these groups, and personal politics had a prominent place.

The early socialist movement, however, came to a bitter end. In France, the massacres of 1848 and 1871 remain to this day a reminder of the cruelty of the bourgeois state; while in the more polite England, the Owenites disappeared into Chartism, which in turn dissolved itself into the respectable trade unions of skilled (and



therefore male) workers of the second half on the nineteenth century. By the 1880s, Marxist ideas about organizing began to replace the earlier libertarian approach. Although workers were rather slow to join the new, tightly-run organizations, with their official intellectuals and their obsession with state power, the Marxist-Leninist approach eventually replaced all other forms of protest (excepting some quaint revivals of anarchism).

The rhetoric of orthodox communism was very much influenced by the need to combat the armed power of the state with effective methods. Each worker's corpse became an argument for centralizing socialism and imposing a discipline. The party was seen as an army on the eve of battle: its triumphalist rhetoric concealed a profound bitterness over past defeats and a sad resignation to give up all personal hopes until after the Revolution had been won.

The militarization of socialism meant that many elements of early socialism had to go. The plan for communal meals and collectivized child-rearing, the speculations about what free sexuality would feel like, were all put away in a jar on a high shelf.

Women thus became marginalized from the movement they had helped to create. They were acceptable only if, like Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg, they dedicated themselves to building class solidarity and worried about 'the woman question' only in their spare time. Such women got very angry at the chauvinism of socialist leaders, but since sisterhood took second place to class consciousness, their anger remained just that, anger.

Alexandra Kollantai, the only high-ranking socialist woman to question seriously the Leninist abandonment of sexual politics and the anti-feminist implications of authoritarian party structures, was notably unsuccessful in her attempt to have the Bolsheviks incorporate the legacy of the past. The Bolsheviks did indeed pay attention to those issues condescendingly labelled 'women's issues': but they could not take up the feminist challenge to Marxist-Leninist concepts of theory and organization. Only in the late 1960s did Kollantai's challenge, backed this time by a powerful women's movement and by libertarian trends within socialism itself, begin to really affect communist parties.

FEMINISM AND THE PARTY

As Hilary Wainwright points out in her introduction, the revival of personal politics called into question not only Leninism and Stalinism, which were already pretty discredited — especially in feminist eyes — but even the supposedly trendy Trotskyist organizations. Trotskyists opposed Stalinist methods of eliminating dissent within the party; but, in their relation to the ordinary people outside the party, they continued to rely on the assumption that "the manipulation of people is justified by the supposedly superior knowledge which leaders of revolutionary groups presume to possess."

Feminism, in its struggle to validate the experiences and thoughts of all women, must reject manipulation. It can never hoodwink people for their own good. This is one of the reasons that has led many women to reject the Leninist concept of the 'vanguard party,' about which Sheila Rowbotham has a lot to say.

The vanguard party consists of a small number of dedicated militants who 'intervene' in the struggles of the 'masses' in order to transform everyday conflicts, such as strikes, into revolutionary situations. This type of organization arose out of a real need, insofar as any oppressed group in struggle has only a limited vision of society and often finds it difficult to generalize from its own experience. However, what the vanguard party ends up doing is to create an elitist division: on the one hand there are the chosen few, the martyrs, who devote their whole lives to leading the masses to the promised land, and on the other hand there are the faceless multitudes of passive victims.



Rowbotham rejects the vanguard party because it sets up a victim-saviour pattern, and also because it relies on a one-dimensional view of consciousness. Vanguard parties assume that there is only one road between the present and the future, and their theory is largely concerned with figuring out where exactly on that road everybody is. (Some Trotskyist groups acknowledge that women or racial minorities are sometimes more revolutionary than the orthodox winners of the race, the industrial workers, but the model remains unchanged.) Rowbotham denies that there is only one road, and that, even if there were, any small group could know where it was: "The feminist approach to consciousness perceives its growth as many-faceted and contradictory. The model of the vanguard doesn't fit into this way of thinking."

Socialist parties tend to live only for the future. Questions about how to live our lives *now* are answered (or dismissed) by saying: "Well, it might be a good idea to do X or Y, but after all, what can you do under capitalism?" Echoing the utopians, feminists point out that we happen to be living under capitalism: socialism must profoundly change our present as well as open up the way to the future. In the jargon, forms of living and organizing which embody the ideals of socialism (collective control, equality, etc.) are called 'prefigurative political forms'; and as Rowbotham points out, the contemporary feminist movement has helped socialists recover the legacy of the utopians, in this respect. To construct a prefigurative form means to live out our ideals — as far as that's possible, which may admittedly not be very far — instead of always repressing our political desire for the sake of the Great Revolution in the Sky.

In her critique of Leninism and Trotskyism, Rowbotham does not merely use feminist arguments to point out the misogynist deficiencies of socialism. She uses her feminist consciousness to help her ask the right socialist questions, with the aim not of dismissing Leninism but rather of building a post-Leninist, feminist form of socialism. She also uses her socialist experience to ask some insightful questions concerning feminism.

Having rejected the Marxist-Leninist concept of politics as too rigid, feminism has found itself without a clear way to generate theory, write history, and carry the struggle forward, without having to invent the feminist wheel at each meeting. Rowbotham writes: "Our debates have been grounded in real conflicts but it has been difficult to generalize beyond the particular. We have no means for placing them in any context. Experience which is not theorized has a way of dissolving and slipping out of view." This rings true to me: most feminist organizations have no mechanism for passing on the hard-earned wisdom they gain; either you were there, or you weren't.

But this lack of a theoretical tradition could be seen as a creative defect. We may not have an alternative yet, but we do know that the Leninist machine for sorting all experience into Significant (strikes, reading Lenin) and Insignificant (everything else) is inadequate. It took feminism to discover that the laundry of experience does not sort itself out by an automatic process of sedimentation, and that the division between 'personal' white wash and 'political' coloured wash is to some extent arbitrary.

Beyond the Fragments leads to the conclusion that, although feminism has had a very significant impact on socialist theory and practice, the real work is yet to come. Nothing less than a new concept of politics is at stake.



This book, and by implication this review, does not attempt to give definite answers. Some people have seen this as a flaw in the book, but I see it as a virtue: the last thing we need today is utopian feminists handing out picture of Heaven. We first have to agree that we do indeed want a feminist socialism: only then will we be able to talk about how to get there. The movement to go beyond the fragments is, after all, just barely starting, and no theoretician can claim to have the True Map.

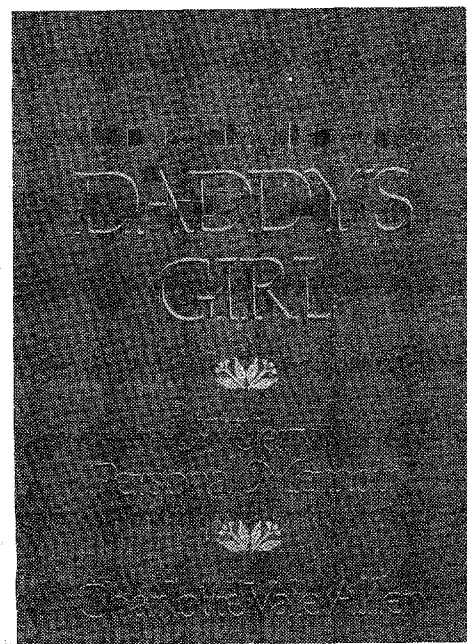
What this book does is succeed in posing some very important questions, and, as Plato said, people are only able to formulate a question once they have an idea of what they want for an answer.

Mariana Valverde is a graduate student writing her thesis on nineteenth century French socialism, and is involved with the International Women's Day Committee in Toronto.

Telling On Daddy

by **Ottie Lockey**

Charlotte Vale Allen, *Daddy's Girl: A Very Personal Memoir*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1980, pp.225 \$14.95



Daddy's Girl is a Toronto woman's account of incestuous assault. A father's sexual abuse of his daughter is graphically described from the child's point of view. For women

who have survived incest, there is a tremendous need to talk, to share the story with other women and resolve intense feelings of guilt, rage and powerlessness. In sharing the story of her family life, Vale Allen has a special impact on Canadian readers — incest can no longer appear to be a United States problem.

Charlotte Vale Allen interjects adult commentary into a young girl's recollections of family life, focusing on secret attacks by her father and the "conspiracy of silence" preventing their disclosure. Vale Allen expresses many of the fears which im-

mobilize daughters, nieces and granddaughters in this situation: threats of punishment including battering or jail, disruption of the family, loss of the breadwinner's income, and feelings of humiliation and self-disgust. Charlotte's frequent accidents and the self-inflicted abrasions on her hands, elbows, and knees were visible evidence of her desire to punish herself.

In Canada the incidence of incestuous assault is high enough to disturb social workers, crisis line workers, and women's services' staff. Despite new child welfare regulations, concerned adults rarely report a child who is being sexually assaulted in her home. Although workers are legally required to do so, few cases are actually reported. When a report is made to the police and Children's Aid Society in Ontario, the child must be examined and testify in court, a continuation of the nightmare. Doctors and social workers hesitate to report cases because of the absence of adequate services for children and offenders. Relatives and neighbours are unwilling to interfere in a family affair. Like battered women, sexually molested children are of public concern only when they are attacked on the streets.

After many years of working at the Toronto Women's Counselling Referral and Education Centre (WCREC), I can understand the child's internalized feelings of guilt, but I cannot condone so-called experts in family therapy who still assign responsibility to the child. In Toronto recently a ten-year-old girl was accused by the Children's Aid Society of seducing her foster father (see *Broadside* Vol. 2, no. 3). Irrespective of the "seductiveness" of girls, the responsibility for sexual behaviour rests with the adult.

Daddy's Girl deserves praise for clearly identifying the male aggressor's guilt and the powerlessness of the child. Many women will identify with Charlotte Vale Allen's experience and will gain strength from the example of her survival.

The key characters in *Daddy's Girl* are women: the few males don't receive the quality of attention. The only exceptions are Uncle Jake, who always appears with wonderful Aunt Brenda and young Rob, who soon dies. The most significant women in *Daddy's Girl* are Charlotte's mother, and one of Vale Allen's high school teachers, Helen McKay. McKay is sensuously de-

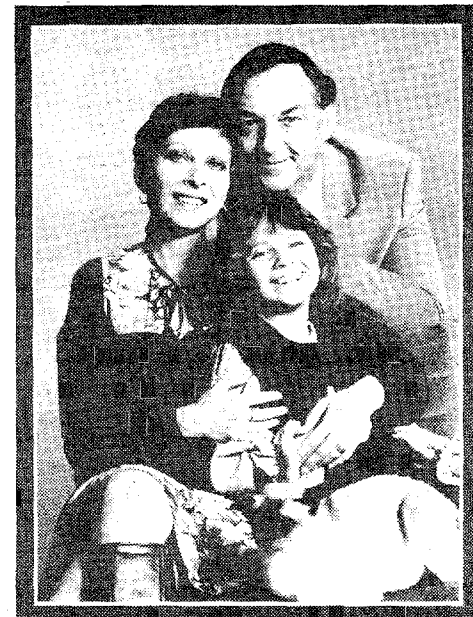
scribed whenever she appears in the book. This is a typical passage:

I gazed at my scarred hands, her perfume still in my nostrils, wanting more than anything to dissolve right into Helen so that there wouldn't be any more me but only her with the gold-brown eyes and soft-looking mouth, the elegant clothes and long red fingernails. (p. 159)

The friendship between Charlotte and Helen, pupil and teacher, is one of the most constructive relationships in Charlotte's life. The depth of feeling Charlotte expresses for Helen goes far beyond any so-called school-girl crush; it could be called a platonic love affair. Charlotte obviously feared that her feelings about Helen would be so interpreted and informs us that she is not a lesbian.

There is a popular myth about incest survivors — that they become man-hating lesbians because initial experiences with men were so bad. Recent studies show that one out of every four American women are sexually molested before the age of 18. I suspect that many women who are incest survivors would, in fact, prefer to avoid heterosexual sex. That does not make these women lesbians. In the context of lovemaking, Charlotte Vale Allen writes: "I still cannot bear anyone's body weighing mine down." Incest survivors usually try desperately hard to be 'normal' and that requires heterosexual orientation. It would be (and is) a heroic effort for an incest survivor to take on the marginality of a lesbian identification in our society, a society which is predicated upon compulsory heterosexuality.

Charlotte's changing relationship with her mother is not treated in a satisfying manner. 'Experts' tend to blame the mother in most situations of incestuous assault; it is the mother's role both to preserve the marriage and protect the child. It is assumed that the mother is responsible for an inadequate sexual relationship with her husband and for avoiding the conscious realization of sexual activity between father and daughter. In *Daddy's Girl* we don't get enough information about how mother and daughter reconnected after the father's death. We get no insight into how mother and daughter managed to deal together with the emotional residue of the incest years. Although Vale Allen explains how



trapped her mother was with three small children and no work skills, her adult compassion is overwhelmed by her childhood feeling that her mother didn't love her. Other books present a more integrated feminist approach to the mother's dilemma (see Florence Rush's *The Best Kept Secret* and Sandra Butler's *Conspiracy of Silence*).

Daddy's Girl is limited by virtue of its very personal focus. Vale Allen pays little attention to society's responsibility towards assaulted children, nor does she make connections between pornography, rape, domestic battering, and incestuous assault. But in spite of its flaws *Daddy's Girl* is an important book. Its direct, first-person account will reach many people who may not make any feminist connections. The general public will be shocked by this book. It makes the unmentionable mentionable. After the act is named, we can talk about how to provide help for the thousands of 'daddy's girls' who suffer in silence.

Ottie Lockey lives in Toronto and works at the Women's Counselling, Referral and Education Centre; she is also advertising manager for *Broadside*.

Books to Note

□Elaine Berns, Co-ordinator,
YWCA Women's Resource Centre.

Budoff, Penny W., M.D.: *No More Menstrual Cramps and Other Good News*. New York, New York: G.P. Putman's Sons, 1980.

Must reading for any woman who has suffered menstrual pain, pre-menstrual tension or who wants to avoid unnecessary hysterectomies and mastectomies.

Kaufman, Gloria, ed.: *Pulling Our Own Strings: Feminist Humor and Satire*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980.

Selections from Flo Kennedy, Claire Bretecher, Rita Mae Brown, G.B. Trudeau, and many others.

Lederer, Laura, ed.: *Take Back the Night: Women on Pornography*. New York, New York: William Morrow, 1980.

Very important collection of articles, interviews and research by Kathleen Barry, Florence Rush, Andrea Dworkin, Charlotte Bunch, Susan Griffin, etc.

Pogrebin, Letty Cottin: *Growing Up Free: Raising Your Child in the 80's*. New York, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980.

An extensive, practical guide to raising children in a non-sexist environment, covering such diverse topics as gender favoritism to sexism in the media and in language.

Russ, Joanna: *On Strike Against God*. Brooklyn, New York: Out & Out Books, 1980.

Funny, witty, well-written novel about a small-town university English teacher's "coming-out" as a feminist and as a lesbian.

Toder, Nancy: *Choices*. Watertown, Mass.: Persephone Press, 1980.

"Girl meets girl" in college, falls in love, and...What follows makes for an interesting and very readable novel.

These books are for sale at the Toronto Women's Bookstore, 85 Harbord Street, and on loan from YWCA Women's Resource Centre, 15 Birch Ave., Toronto.

"INHERENT CONHEXSHUN"

Three Toronto women are collaborating on an artistic venture called "Inherent Conhexshun" which opens February 17, 1981 at **Factory 77**, 77 Mowat St., a gallery near King and Bathurst St. "Inherent Conhexshun" is both an installation and a performance piece focussing on women's image in history, mythology and culture.

Kim Fullerton, Maureen Meriden and Barbara Watson are the three women who worked collectively to produce both the visual presentation and the performance piece at the restored warehouse gallery.

"Inherent Conhexshun" expresses our collective female image and sexuality according to Fullerton, Meriden and Watson. The installation may be seen between February 17th and 28th with a \$1 admission fee. The performances which include improvisation, sound and movement will be produced twice: Tuesday, February 17th and Saturday, February 21st at 8:30 pm. For more information, call Barbara at 960-4826.

Hannah Maynard: Photographic Wizardry

by Deena Rasky

**The Magic Box — The eccentric
Genius of Hannah Maynard —
Photographer 1834-1918, Canada by
Claire Weissman Wilks, 152 pp.
\$24.95. Exile Editions.**

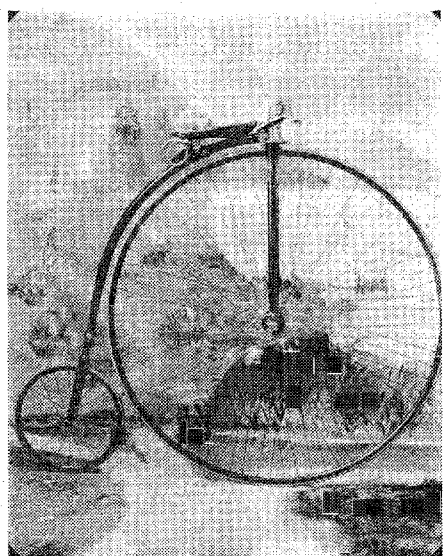
While flipping through the pages of Vanguard magazine (a Vancouver-based art publication), the most incredible photographs caught my attention. They were taken in the 1800's by a Canadian woman who was an unrecognized pioneer. The vintage photos were multiple exposures of a highly skilled nature. Even today the technique has not been perfected with all of our highly sophisticated equipment.

How did she do it? Not only was the technique so remarkable. Here was a woman, within the restrictions of the Victorian era, using herself both as photographer and model, peering at us defiantly, ignoring us and letting us catch her mockingly, surrealistically coming out of a painting and spilling tea over her own head. Hilarious, fascinating, a real discovery! This surely must have been the same way Claire Weissman Wilks felt when, while doing research for the CBC, she came across the glass negatives in the Provincial Archives of British Columbia. Years later, with the help of the surviving Maynard family, the Heritage Trust of BC and the Canada Council, this wonderful book has been made available to the public.

Hannah Maynard, née Hatherly, was born in 1834 in Cornwall, England. She married Richard Maynard, a bootmaker and seaman in 1852, then shortly afterward emigrated to Canada, settling in Bowmanville, Ontario. Here in this small provincial town she received her basic photographic training while her husband joined the gold-rush in British Columbia. He struck it rich; they and their children moved to Victoria, where Hannah set up her photographic gallery.

Her work started off along the traditional paths of portraiture, still lifes, landscapes, and family shots. Around 1880 she began to devote most of her time to making montages of children and sending them out as promotional material. She called these works "Gems of British Columbia" where she would laboriously crop photographs of children she had previously taken and re-photograph them in miniature. She would repeat this process until the human eye could barely discern the heads individually. The children might be superimposed on dieffenbachia plant leaves, or an abalone shell, or squeezed in together by the hundreds to make diamond shaped patterns or to be framed inside a beetle. Even the tiny little letters on the montage consisted of photominiatures of the children. She would religiously produce a yearly "gem", portraying all the children who entered her studio that year and reproducing earlier gems until about 20,000 individuals would be included. The technique was a testament to her as a patient, dedicated photographer (as well as a sign of the increasing population influx.)

She took great pains to have her photographs reflect the personality of her sub-



Courtesy Exile Editions

jects, whether the person was a member of her family or one of the thousands of children and their parents — a sharp contrast to the work of her colleagues with their stiff and uncomfortable looking subjects. Portrait photographers of today often speak of striving for this "natural", relaxed and unposed image that Hannah Maynard consistently achieved during her lifetime.

She experimented with photosculptures — having actual people covered with white powder posed for the camera as a sculpture. She employed mirrors to imitate lakes and even devised a mirror specially for the mug shots she was commissioned to do for the Victoria police department. In her still life photos she showed great knowledge of lighting by emphasizing certain areas and combining natural light with artificial. She also backlit her portraits, a rare technique more usually found in outdoor shots. She knew her camera inside out and made the most of the limitations, such as the inability to capture moving subjects and limited depth of focus.

A case in point is her bicycle photographs. She was almost as fascinated with this new invention as she was with her camera. She highlighted a penny-farthing bicycle by juxtaposing it against a hazy cartoon background. The depth of field was so small even the handle and front pedal are blurred. Her technique is a common one today, employed by commercial photographers for consumer catalogues. In other photographs she wanted to create the illusion of motion while still having her subjects in focus. Her solution was to attach

barely visible braces to the bikes and have herself and friends pose for action.

Hannah Maynard took her work seriously as a professional. Her equipment included elaborate backdrops and enormous reflecting screens. She was also able to hire an assistant, yet one wonders whether she needed an assistant more for photography or for domestic chores. After all, she had five children and adopted a sixth after his mother died from drowning. As it turned out, this adopted child was a real asset to her work, especially in posing for multiple exposures. Unlike her offspring who preferred dignified front photographs of themselves, this child sensed the fun and drama in photography and proved to be an animated child actor.

Hannah Maynard was also a devout spiritualist. Many of her photographs have an aura of mystery along with tribute to her deceased. How she managed to cross her matting lines with hands, fans, poles and scarves in her multiple exposures will never be fully explained unless Hannah returns in a later manifestation to give us some answers!

Whether behind or in front of a camera, Hannah Maynard conveys the presence of a seer. She preferred her profile, which emphasized the length of her nose, distinguishing her from others who look straight at the viewer. In this way she seems to be seeing something we do not or can not.

Claire Weissman Wilks gives the reader an adequate historical account of Hannah Maynard's life but I doubt she has strong feminist inclinations. Hannah Maynard had

been quoted as saying she often had to give her husband credit for photographs she had taken because she was a woman. The local newspaper of her day, The Colonist, reports that everyone was astonished at her work. And like many women who start anything new, she was for a long time boycotted by the public. Until Victoria grew accustomed to a woman photographer, Mr. Maynard continued to pretend that he had taken the pictures. Wilks disputes this fact due to lack of evidence. But the evidence is there. Richard Maynard preferred to be in the wilderness, not the darkroom. It was Hannah who taught her husband how to use a camera and even Wilks mentions there is an overlapping in their work of landscape photography. Many of the landscapes that have such an uncanny feel for composition and outstanding patterns seem unlikely to be Richard's. It is also unlikely that Hannah Maynard was exaggerating about the sad limits of Victorian women. How she managed to transcend them, even travelling alone through the very isolated parts of northern BC, is one of Hannah Maynard's many mysteries.

But Wilks did the researching, and more importantly, got the book published so that 62 years after Maynard's death her work can be appreciated by the general public. Hannah Maynard was a genius as a photographer. She was the magician behind that not so magic box. We can be grateful that Claire Weissman Wilks devoted the time and energy to making us aware of her, and that Exile Editions, the publisher, had the foresight to sense the general need for a remarkable book of this nature.

A Classical Dilemma

by Kye Marshall

Sophie-Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté, a Canadian composer who died in 1974, once remarked that in Vienna she was asked what she was writing, while in Winnipeg she was asked to preside at tea.

It is difficult enough to be an independent woman; but to express one's independence by being a composer of classical music — in Canada of all places — is certainly a challenge.

Canada is a pioneer country. It does not have a tradition of art: the vastness, the ethnic diversity, discourages the development of a uniform community where art could flourish. With this lack of indigenous art, what passes for culture in Canada is mainly hockey, Group of Seven paintings, television and imported pop culture. There is good music around, excellent folk, jazz, rock, country, etc., but unfortunately our society surrounds itself with plastic music that is either sweet and addictive or so loud that the listener is rendered quite senseless. High volume can literally produce deafness

but it also destroys our ability to *listen* to what we hear.

So classical music is not a priority with the government or our educational system. Schools do not encourage creativity, nor do they even teach very well. As a result most people grow up with no understanding of classical music and often with an actual dislike or distrust of it.

Given the limited exposure to classical music most Canadians have, it does not occur to many that becoming a classical composer is a possibility. And in many ways it is not. What would be necessary is a lengthy and costly education with little prospect of earning a living wage. There is a constant need for encouragement and moral support from friends, family and community. The process is a lonely one. And the results — what is written — many not be understood or generally accepted. The time gap between what composers write and what it takes audiences to accept has become too long.

All these problems are magnified for women. Certainly, women as a group have less money for education and even fewer opportunities of sustaining a career. There are few role models — we have been written out of history almost without exception. We have been actively discouraged by family and professionals. But it is the passive discouragement which is so insidious and deadly. Women are not considered capable of being creators of 'high' art. It is implicitly conveyed by all we have learned that we may be able to write a few ditties but nothing of consequence. This is the biggest barrier of all because it is such a deeply implanted idea. It is extremely difficult to recognize it and even harder to de-program oneself.

It could be asked, Against such odds why would someone even try to become a classical composer?

I can only answer for myself. As much as I enjoy listening and playing other kinds of music, I miss the abstract element which only classical music provides.

Music, as a reflection of our deepest experiences, by-passes problems of meaning caused by the use of verbal images. Music communicates directly. For me, classical music does so better and more fully than any other. It is the only art form I know of which combines the mental (or intellectual), emotional, physical and spiritual aspects of our being. That, plus the enjoyment of the actual process of composing, is why it is worth working at.

In time perhaps many of the difficulties faced by women composers will lessen as the women's movement expands and feminist musical culture develops naturally from the heightened consciousness of women.

Kye Marshall is a Canadian composer and a cellist who plays with, among others, the National Ballet Orchestra and her own Epic String Quartet.

Wallflowers Dance

Wallflower Order Dance Collective. Presented by Womynly Way Productions November 18, 1980 at the 519 Church Street Community Centre, Toronto. Dancers: Nina Fichter, Laura Near, Pamela Gray, Krissy Keefer, Lyn Neeley. □

'Wallflower' has been defined by the Penguin English Dictionary as a "girl who sits out dances for lack of partners." The definition reeks of sexism: the role of a "girl" regardless of age, is to wait patiently, unobtrusively for some male to grant her permission to dance. Her "partner" is in fact a superior authority figure.

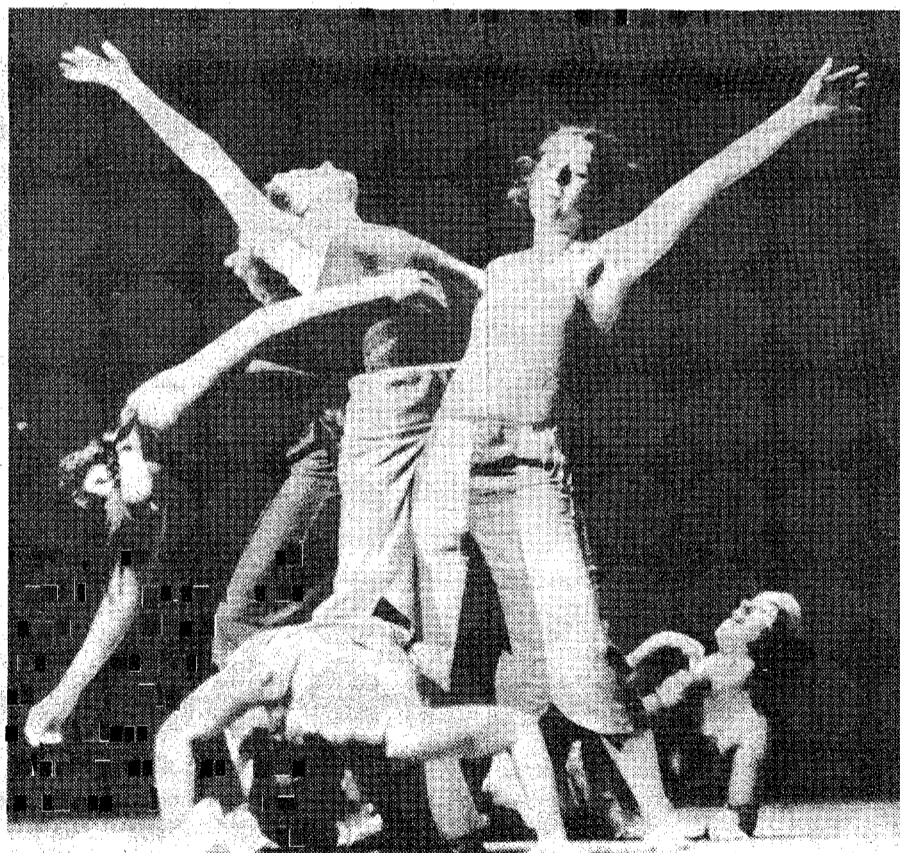
The Wallflower Order dance collective is composed of five feminists who want to destroy these sex roles and dance for the freedom of oppressed groups everywhere;

whether the group is gay, from a Third World nation, Chilean political prisoners or fighting against nuclear power. The dancers present classic situations — such as adolescents feeling awkward at a high school dance, or a lesbian being interrogated prejudicially — with political overtones. The Collective states: "We share with our audience our struggles and joys in trying to build alternatives for ourselves. Our dances reflect events that have helped us to examine and develop our beliefs."

Originally formed in 1975, the Wallflower Order's members met each other at the University of Oregon. They have toured the east coast three times and the west coast twice, including Vancouver. The dancers have a variety of ballet training and have been influenced by the schools of Merc Cunningham and Erik Hawkins. (These older modern dance groups have been documented by the words of dance critic Jill Johnson and by the photographs of Barbara Morgan.) The Wallflower members have all studied Kung Fu and incorporate this martial art into their work along with their studies in theatre, poetry, gymnastics and yoga.

An unusual aspect of the group's performances is that they sing, speak and read poetry while they dance. It is not easy to do, since breathing techniques for these arts are radically different. (This reminds me of what a youngster chirped during a ballet performance of *The Nutcracker Suite*: "What's wrong, mommy? Why aren't they saying anything?") Dancers are taught to hide their breathing while vocal performers express their breathing. The collective members agree that to a certain extent they had to relearn and adapt their technique to suit their objectives.

One of their performance pieces is entitled "Pieces of Lies" where each member relives a common childhood role. Together as a group these roles are examined and exercised. One woman clings to her school trophy, proving that she is the "best." The group convinces her that the trophy is only weighing her down and to look at others as equals. The group manages to combine its technique in a potent display. At one point Laurel sings a childhood song and through dance she grows taller and older while describing old attitudes. The collective relies on taped music of an eclectic nature — from Joan Armatrading and Fats Domino to Pachelbel and Jean Paul Rampal.



Wallflower Order Dance Collective

It is a closely knit group. In their home base of Eugene, Oregon (population approx. 100,000) four of the members share a house together. They work out together at the local Y and jog at an indoor track. When not together, they are at their part-time jobs — ranging from waitressing, baking, bus driving to being an accupuncturist's assistant. The group recommends accupuncture treatment for the sprained ankles dancers so often get. When asked for remedies for cabin fever, the group responded that they feel their beliefs are reinforced by sharing similar experiences and that a healthy dose of humour works wonders.

The groups's schedule was tight and hectic. After leaving Toronto, they arrived in Rochester the same day and put on a performance. Yet despite their schedule, and in spite of financial burdens, these women continue to have a surprising amount of positive energy and optimism. Even with

the dismal US political situation — Reagan elected as president, Nazis acquitted for killing Communists, the ERA once again being placed on hold — Wallflower members are confident of their future and that their message will be heard by more people. "We want to become as organized as the Moral Majority. We have survived and there is a continued need to fight against these forces. Organization is powerful. When we're organized, we get more things done and can reach out to other related issues."

Wallflower Order Dance Collective performed in Toronto to a standing room only crowd in November — some women had to be turned away at the door. As a result of this successful evening, Wallflower Order will be returning to Toronto in the spring, before embarking on a dance tour through Europe. They're a collective well worth watching.

□ Deena Rasky

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That Fine Summer — A Fine Read



Ella Manuel, *That Fine Summer*. Illustrations by Lise Sorenson. St. John's: Jespersen Press, 1980. Pp 93. Price Unmarked.

Although it is written for children, you don't have to be young to enjoy this book. *That Fine Summer* is about Mahala (Malie) Jacobs, Fox Cove, Newfoundland, who's "eleven going on twelve" and who happily spends the summer with her grandfather while her parents are in St. John's. She has various adventures, particularly with her friend Obadiah (Obie) Birch. (One thing that initially brings them together is their long and unusual names with which neither of them is yet comfortable.) Until this summer, Obie has been an outcast at school because he is part Eskimo and new to the outport community in which they all live.

Malie also spends a lot of time fishing with her grandfather and listening to all his stories about growing up, and especially about her grandmother, who was a marvelously strong and adventurous woman Malie obviously takes after. This book in fact is part about how family history is recreated one generation for another and about how lives past and present are interwoven. In part, too, it is about a young girl's recognition of her own independence and her ability to be who and what she wants, regardless of convention. For a while, Malie and Obie are great rivals, vying to outdo each other in fishing prowess. As

they begin to understand each other better, however, particularly when Malie recognizes that she has been scornful and dismissive of Obie simply because he is different, their rivalry becomes mutual respect instead.

Because it is set in Newfoundland, about 50 years ago according to the cover blurb though that was not apparent to me from the story, and because characters speak Newfoundland dialect, there is a regional appeal about this book that will attract children especially in other parts of Canada who will not have had the kinds of experiences Malie has had and who will probably be unfamiliar with Newfoundland now or in the past.

The few glimpses there are of Malie's mother reveal her to be a rather unattractive status-conscious woman, generally unsympathetic to a tomboyish daughter. Malie's father is more tolerant, but also less familiar because he is seldom mentioned. However, Grandfather Snow is the perfect grandparent who is loving and generous toward Malie, allowing her to do what she wants and teaching her many things, making her summer very special.

That Fine Summer came out just before Christmas last year. It is Ella Manuel's first published book for children but not, I hope, her last. □

— Jean Wilson

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• **A Wives' Tale** from page 15

Towards the end of the film she is interviewed sitting in a rocking chair. The strike has been over for six months — she talks about the difference it made for her; "I'm not afraid to go out now," she says, and tells how she used to be afraid someone would speak to her, say, in an elevator, and she would have nothing to say. Now, as we have seen, she speaks to large audiences, marches on picket lines, has assumed her own voice.

There is an element of fantasy in *A Wives' Tale*, again comparable to and very different from *9 to 5*. There, all the resources of Hollywood are available to say Fantasy! Fantasy! Fantasy! and make it seem true. Here, the tools are crude — face masks, stuffed figures, a fire. The Inco bosses are burned in effigy, under a sign that says "May they rot in Hell!", and tried at a mock trial where miners and Wives speak of suffering and death due to corporate greed. Always, the exploited, the victims, dream of revenge. At the end of *A Wives' Tale*, filmed six months after the settlement of the strike, some of the Wives, politicized by their experiences, are shown picketing for another strike in town. As they speak of their work, and then join hands in a circle dance. I'm reminded of the song Pauline Julien sings earlier in the film, a song by Anne Sylvestre called "Une sorcière comme toutes les autres" (A Witch, Like All the Others). This is strong magic, which validates women's feelings about themselves, the work they do, their right to think and speak on their own behalf. These women, witches, wives, movers and shakers, are winners too, with a capital W.

Poetesses, to your lutes! Witches to your broomsticks!

For an androgynous creation, sweet or bitter but violent!

There is genius in the veins of women (I have seen it), and it flows in full tide, but still underground.

Nelly Kaplan, *Image et Son*, April, 1974.

A Wives' Tale is available from DEC Films, 121 Avenue Road, Toronto.

• **Abortion**, from page 13

Looking at some of the traits commonly ascribed to doctors and patients, we can see how clearly they resemble the traditional characteristics of men and women in our society:

DOCTOR/MALE

active
teacher
scientific
aggressor
logical
financially secure
power
thinking
control
objective
rational
the answer

PATIENT/FEMALE

passive
student
intuitive
victim
mystical
economically vulnerable
powerlessness
feeling
lack of control
emotional
hysterical
the problem

The issue of control is a major factor in many doctor-patient relationships. This is most apparent in matters of women's health — pregnancy, abortion, childbirth, birth control, menopause — where predominantly male doctors often make arbitrary decisions regarding women's reproductive lives. A male doctor has written that many of his colleagues have a strong desire to control women and that when it comes specifically to abortion, some of them feel threatened if women can dispose of the proof of male potency — the fetus — at will. This attitude is also reflected in how judgmental doctors can become about both the procedure itself and the women seeking abortions.

Some doctors will purposely lie to patients in order to discourage them from seeking an abortion. The woman may be told abortions are illegal or are only available up to

six weeks. A doctor may harass a patient seeking an abortion by calling her at home and trying to dissuade her. He may also refuse to refer the woman to a gynecologist who performs abortions. He may lie to the woman about how pregnant she is and tell her it is too late for her to obtain an abortion.

The practice of demanding up-front payments for abortions is a prime example of the attitudes of some doctors towards women seeking this procedure. The assumption is that a woman seeking a therapeutic abortion is not trustworthy and will just skip out of the hospital after the procedure without paying.

Negative, judgmental attitudes are also held by those doctors who sit on hospital therapeutic abortion committees. This means that many women may not be granted permission for an abortion, particularly in small hospitals. At the very least, the male members of these committees often make very condescending or "humorous" comments about the women who are seeking abortions.

Another difficulty facing the abortion patient is the attitude of many hospital staff. Some nurses will go out of their way to treat an abortion patient with hostility or contempt. Often an abortion patient is placed in a room near the maternity ward or the nursery where newborns are kept.

We must not forget that in Canada, doctors rather than the pregnant woman make the ultimate decision as to whether or not she may have a therapeutic abortion. Until a woman can freely decide to have an abortion and be treated with respect and dignity we do not have control over our own bodies and we do not have full reproductive rights.

• **Lennon**, from page 11

He finally surfaced with the new album *Double Fantasy*. It is not a masterpiece. The record is charged with Lennon's and Ono's particular, and often insular, domestic fervour, and laced with some good musical "hooks" and Ono's demanding explorations. But a catalogue of inspiring hits, it is not. Nevertheless, *Double Fantasy* made the promise that as an artist, John Lennon was not finished yet.

He emerged this time not only with a new musical statement but with a renewed willingness to talk about what had happened to John Lennon the man. True to form, he had something to say:

Lennon: I've been baking bread and taking care of the baby.

Playboy: With what secret projects going on in the basement?

Lennon: That's like what everyone else who asks me that question over the last few years says: But what *else* have you been doing? To which I say, "Are you kidding?" Because bread and babies, as every housewife knows, is a full-time job. After I made the loaves, I felt like I had conquered something. But as I watched them being eaten, I thought, well Jesus, don't I get a gold record or knighted or something?

That Lennon was prepared to face the public again with those facts of life most difficult for our social order to absorb

makes his death more painful. He had begun to say to obsessive executives and to younger men still hungry for rock and roll stardom that there is more to life: "So I like it to be known that, yes, I looked after the baby and made bread and I was house-husband and I am proud of it. It's the wave of the future and I'm glad to be on the forefront of that too."

While many regret the loss of Lennon's music, and others more self-consciously regret what is the official loss of their youth, those of us who came to know that John Lennon was on our side in the most crucial political battle understand that when John Lennon's life was snuffed out last month, we lost a friend.

Usually we value art so highly that we forgive the artist his personal flaws. No one, for example, dwells too long on the fact that Pablo Picasso needed a string of personal companions, female, nubile and young, to feed his self-image of the great bull. It matters, but the fact pales against the tangible evidence of the painter's art. What separates John Lennon from most of our culture's great artistic figures is that we don't have to make excuses for his personal life in order to pay him tribute. Almost as inspiring as his music is what men and women, mostly men, could have learned from him. If only they were listening, if only he had lived.

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MOVEMENT COMMENT

Congress of Canadian Women

It was shocking to hear of the jailing of peace demonstrators in Washington, DC last fall. Toronto women gathering at the Congress of Canadian Women's 30th Anniversary Celebration voiced their protest, being sent to the United States Embassy in Ottawa. Mary Dennis, Chairperson at the meeting, read the telegram she had received from the Women's International Democratic Federation: "American women at Washington demonstration against nuclear arms' buildup were attacked by police November 18. There were 150 arrested, and 34 have been given 15 months in jail each, and 60 were indicted. Demand measures against brutal human rights violation."

At the 30th Anniversary CCW Celebration November 23, pioneers in the women's movement were honored. Tribute was paid first to Rae Luckock, the founding President of the Congress of Canadian Women, and also the first woman MPP in Ontario, elected for the CCF in 1943-44.

While Lil Ilomaki and Hazel Wigdor gave the commentary, pioneer women told of the highlights in their work in earlier years: Anna Pashka of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians; Helen Tarvainen of the Finnish Organization; Eva Brownstone of the United Jewish Peoples Order; Olive Hastings speaking for her mother, Alice Buck; Nora Rodd and Hilda Murray, founding members of the Congress of Canadian Women.

Anna Pashka shared her experiences in Saskatchewan when she was the Ukrainian organization's delegate to the Saskatoon Labour Council. Helping to organize the Women's Labour League, she and her sisters were busy fighting grievances for the unemployed. On one occasion, when the women were demanding cash relief instead of the standard clothes and shoes doled out to their children, they occupied City Hall. After midnight, the police forcibly evicted them, but their protest made the headlines next day, making the public aware of their rightful cause.

Helen Tarvainen told of the life of the pioneer Finns in Sointula, BC, where she visited in 1965. Katri Riksana, who landed there in 1901, wrote the CCW a letter which Helen read. In their effort to found an ideal society, women and men had equal rights, all receiving \$1 a day for their work, and there was community responsibility for child care. Katri, who would be 100 years old this year, had no schooling as a child in Finland, but she said the organization gave her education and molded her character. She became a writer and contributed a regular column in the Finnish and other papers under the name of "Grandmother".

Eva Brownstone recalled her early life in Canada. At 12 years old, she went to work to help her mother and family of seven. Often the children had to ask the milkman or the butcher for food to survive. She told of the efforts of the Women's Labour

League, which became like family. Speaking fondly of Annie Buller, after whom Eva's present Branch at the UJPO is named.

In Alice Buck's message, the highlight was the fight for freedom of speech. The Toronto authorities formerly threatened hall owners with removal of their licences if they should rent hall space to meetings where a "foreign" language was spoken. On one occasion, when the audience had packed the Strand Theatre, the police burst in as the meeting was about to begin. Beckie Buhay stepped forward to speak. The police threw tear gas, blinding Beckie at the time, and dispersing the meeting. In the 1930's Alice ran for public office on several occasions. Twice she was a candidate for Toronto board of Control, polling over 10,000 votes each time.

Nora Rodd spoke of her experiences in North Korea, where she was sent by the CCW, becoming the WIDF leader of the delegation to investigate atrocities and the condition of women and children during the war instigated by the United States. Nora witnessed the results of outrages committed by American soldiers — bodies of murdered civilians, including women and children. The WIDF delegation's report, "WE ACCUSE" was spread throughout the world, and Nora herself, despite cries of "treason" from a few MP's, crossed Canada, reporting to CCW public meetings and showing her slide pictures of Korea.

Her taped message and another set of slides reached women in the United States.

Hilda Murray told of the CCW efforts on behalf of the victims of the US war in Vietnam. Over \$50,000 was sent for the Mother and Child Hospital now open in Hanoi, as well as clothes for the babies and children. In 1973, Hilda led the WIDF delegation to Washington to protest the vicious war. Over 100,000 US women marched that day, and three days later, the President declared the cease-fire to end the war.

The audience was delighted with the beautiful mandolin music of Mary Kuzyk, and with the wonderful singing of Franca Romanov, both of whom were accompanied on the piano by Michael Currie. A young student from the African National Congress recited poems about the struggle in South Africa.

The Congress of Canadian Women is continuing its solidarity appeal for the ANC Mother and Child Centre for South African refugees in Tanzania. Chairperson Mary Dennis appealed for support for the new CCW campaign for 1980-81: the Canada-wide Child Care Campaign, publicly launched at the Ontario Child Care Demonstration October 23.

□ Congress of Canadian Women

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FUSE focuses on socially relevant contemporary culture which ensures comprehensive women's coverage, such as Women's Performance, the Economic Position of Women within the Arts, the UN Festival of Women Artists, 'Pornographic' Women's Art, and the Multi-media Incest Awareness Project from the Women's Building in Los Angeles. Profiles of contemporary feminist artists like Carolee Schneeman, Martha Rosler, and Susan Britton appear regularly ... and then of course there are reviews of books, films, videotapes, exhibitions, records, perfor-

mances — alternative works by and for women.

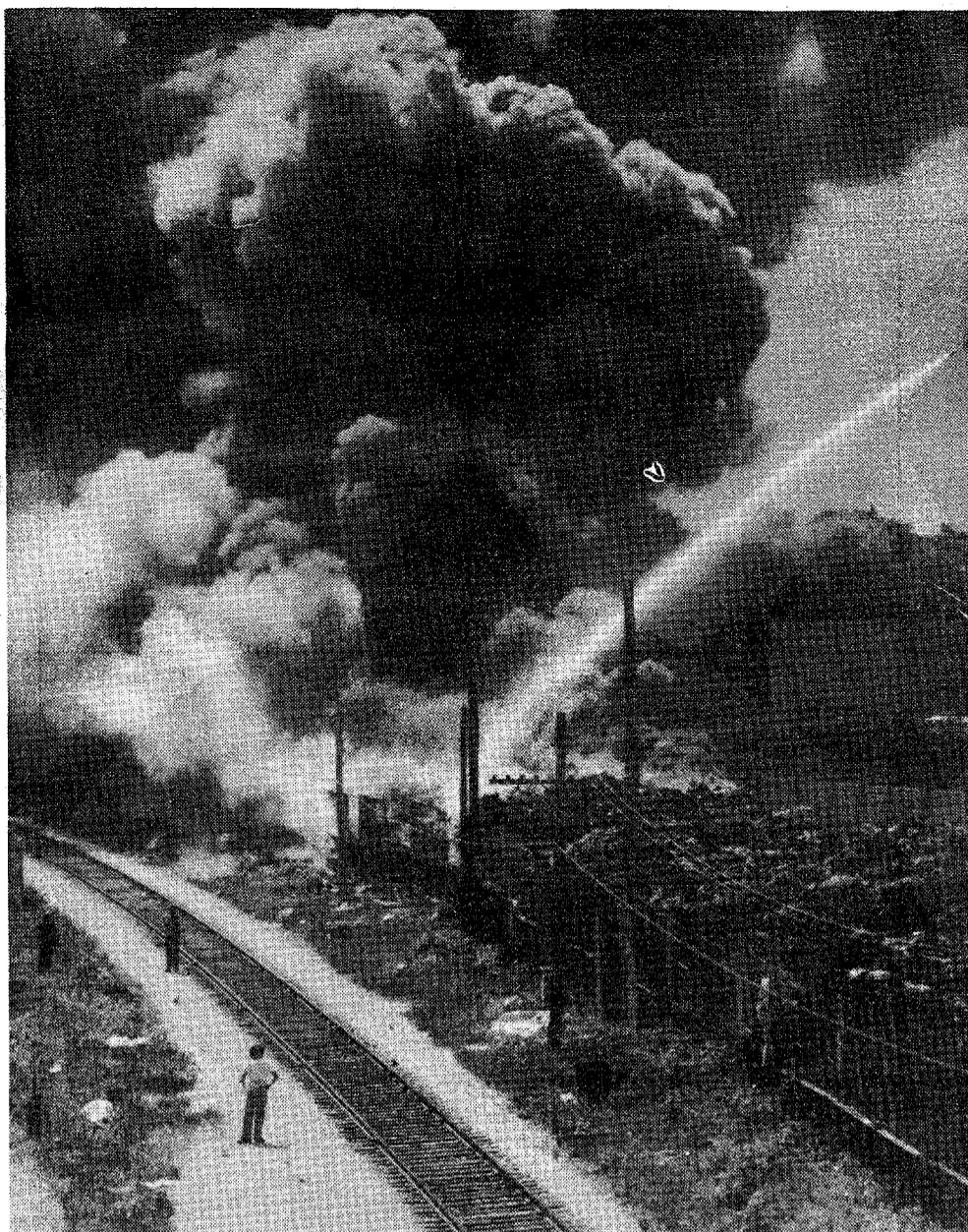
Outside of the cultural field, features on Women & Infanticide, the Criminalization of Immigrant Women, Makeup as Mask, Anorexia Nervosa, Unionized Women vs. Surveillance Systems, Censorship & Women, Strippers Unionizing, and Media Access for Women have appeared in the past two years.

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