

# Broadside

A FEMINIST REVIEW

Toronto Women's  
Calendar Inside.

Volume 4, number 5

March 1983

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Pam Isherwood

**GREENHAM COMMON:** Women scale the walls at US Air Force cruise missile base in Berkshire, England. 44 women were arrested and charged with disturbing the peace. See story page 8.

## FEATURE

### SHARPEN YOUR CLAUSE:

Inclusion of equality provisions in the Charter of Rights does not automatically guarantee equality for women. The courts will be busy interpreting these clauses until 1985, when they become law, and until then all feminists, not just legal "pros", must join the struggle to ensure our rights. Sheila McIntyre reports. Page 8.

## NEWS

### CLINICALLY FREE:

Though abortion is not illegal in Canada, it is increasingly impossible for many women to obtain. Diana Meredith of the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics writes of the process of organizing to open free-standing abortion clinics. Page 5.

### MOVEMENT MATTERS:

Teresa Hibbert is acquitted on a technicality of spray-painting sexist TTC/Sanyo ads; Emily Stowe Shelter for Women opens in Scarborough, Ontario to help battered women; Women scale the walls of the US Air Force cruise missile base at Greenham Common, England. Page 7.

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**BOMBS AWAY!** Militarism, says Marian Sinn, is more than weapons and national defence. It's an attitude, a value system, an approach to life, and is a primary source of women's subservient status. Women have learned to solve conflict without force, and should not support the cowards' way out. Page 4.

**IF THE SHOE FITS:** Imagine life in a size 11 shoe. Sarah Sheard broke the manufacturers' norm-barrier at the age of 13, and has been looking for reasonably fashionable footwear ever since. Page 14.

## ARTS

**SLENDER MEANS:** Whether fat or thin, women are often obsessed with the look of our bodies. We contort ourselves in order to obtain the ultimate image: a boy's shape. Carroll Klein reviews Kim Chernin's book, *The Obsession: Reflections on the Tyranny of Slenderness*. Page 10.

## PHYSICS AND FEMINISM:

The new physics deals with the integration of matter and energy and has a lot in common with the new feminism, says Robin Morgan in her new book, *The Anatomy of Freedom: Feminism, Physics and Global Politics*. Reviewed by Gillean Chase. Page 11.

## RHYTHM AN'

**HARDTIMES:** Lillian Allen is a major exponent of DUB poetry in Canada, says her bio. Curiosity led Elaine Johnson to attend Allen's performance of jazz, dub, reggae and "just plain cussing poetry" at York University. Page 11.

**OUR ELDERS:** April Kassirer reviews Barbara Halpern Martineau's documentary film on aging, *Tales of Tomorrow: Our Elders*, which premiered at the Baycrest Jewish Home for the Aged in Toronto, and will be screened at International Women's Day celebrations around the country. Page 13.

**A GIANT STEP:** Directors Kate Lushington and Susan Padveen have formed a new theatre company, Mean Feet, to counter the problems of women actors and to create opportunities for women playwrights and directors. It's a step long overdue in a very male-dominated profession. Page 13.



**TALES OF HOFFMAN:** Dustin Hoffman, says Susan G. Cole, will do anything to become a better person. This time (in *Tootsie*) he becomes a woman to become a better man, and ends up, according to the film, a better woman than other women, as well. Page 12.

**OUTSIDE BROADSIDE:** Don't miss this month's Toronto Women's Events Calendar for March 1983. Page 15.

# LETTERS

## Broadside:

It is with deep concern that we are responding to your editorial (February 1983) which criticized the nature and intentions of the March 8th Coalition and the involvement of the International Women's Day Committee. It is clear that Broadside has not been able to distinguish between the two groups and we would like to take this opportunity to clear up the confusion.

The March 8th Coalition is this year, as it has been in the last few years, a group of approximately 80 women who come together to plan, build and organize events for International Women's Day. We come from a wide variety of backgrounds, interests and groups. We are trade unionists, teachers, immigrant women, lesbian women, artists, day care workers, cultural workers, health care workers, students, community workers and so on. Our basis of unity is the statement we print in our leaflet.

The International Women's Day Committee plays a vital role in initiating the March 8th Coalition each year and in providing the continuity of knowledge and technical expertise learned from past years. Members of the International Women's Day Committee participate in the March 8th Coalition but are not in any way the sole members of the Coalition.

The characterization of the March 8th Coalition as exclusionary is definitely unwarranted and unfair. It is especially unfair to the many women who put enormous amounts of work and energy into building International Women's Day.

International Women's Day is a day of celebration, rejuvenation and unity for all women and it is with this goal in mind that the Coalition functions. We hope the confu-

sion in your editorial will not have diminished your readers' participation in and enjoyment of the events planned around March 8th this year.

Co-ordinating Committee  
March 8th Coalition, Toronto

## Broadside:

While I find it nice that my letter (February 1983) was printed in such entirety, the two omissions you did make I find both puzzling and disturbing: "A small portion of Letty Cottin Pogrebin's article has to do with Black anti-Semitism" — to leave out 'Black' makes the sentence nonsensical; to omit that the woman was raped in Toronto (where such racial incidents are a lot more common than here) making it seem like it happened in Vancouver, and that it was recent, when the women's press hasn't covered it at all, gives a false picture.

By the way, Anne Cameron's article on porn ("Hard Core Horror", February 1983) was fantastic. Now I have a weapon against the sexual liberationists.

Phoenix  
Vancouver

## Broadside:

I would like to answer the question that Barbara Halpern Martineau asks at the end of her review, "Telling Pictures" (Dec/Jan Issue) about Frances Rooney's slide show, "Finding Lesbian History": Why is it important to know if a woman is or was a lesbian? What immediately struck me was whether you would ever ask why is it important to know if a woman is or was a feminist?

First, the fact that you were struck by the magnitude of the event should indicate to you how much lesbians are still "invisible" in this society. And doesn't it also explain why it is important to identify the women depicted in the slide show as lesbians? A her-story or "story", as you prefer, doesn't grow from a few "infamous" women. It comes from unknown numbers of women who are hidden until they are given a name.

I am reminded of Adrienne Rich who says: "Whatever is unnamed, undepicted in images, whatever is omitted from biographies, censured in letters, whatever is misnamed as something else, made difficult to come by...this will become not merely un-

spoken but unspeakable." (*The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action*, apologies for the shortened version.)

You wish for a more meaningful context, ie: how being a lesbian affects women's lives. Women who name themselves, or are named lesbians, don't need to be told about the devastating effects. They live with them every day. As you point out, the purpose of the show was to present lesbianism in a positive context and I would add, *in public!* Judging by the audience reaction you mention, it was successful.

You don't understand Rooney's "need" to prove particular women were lesbians and you quote "lesbianism should not be defined or dealt with primarily as a sexual act", even though that appears to be the only distinction you make between lesbians and other women together, throughout your review. The word you overlook in the quote is *primarily*. Sexuality, including the "sexual act" is an integral part of lesbianism. The joy and freedom to choose to love women sexually will allow heterosexuality to be a choice.

Rape, battering, pornography, and all sexual violence are menacing reminders of enforced heterosexuality. Again and again we are shown that we are intended to be available to men and on whatever terms they choose. Lesbianism is naming an active choice and whether expressed or acknowledged, it is a rejection of the institution of enforced heterosexuality. It is the refusal of the concept of "womanhood" as defined and shoved down our throats by the existing patriarchal structures, whether capitalists or socialist.

Women have always lived together for reasons other than *wanting* to — lack of money, loneliness, necessity, family ties. Women spending time together, living together, may have nothing to do with lesbianism or feminism. Too often, it is seen as second choice, a temporary state, a "failure" — lack of a man!

How can you lump lesbians and women living together into the same category and say it doesn't matter what they name themselves or are named. What if you told your mother that the two women teachers of whom she spoke so matter of factly were not just living together, but were lesbians. I suspect her reaction would be quite different.

I must confess to Barbara, that while my opinions are directed to her review, my tone is directed at *Broadside*. I often enjoy reading it but I am becoming increasingly angry

at the inadvertent or intended invalidation of lesbianism as a radical and essential aspect of feminism and change.

One last point about lesbian herstory. We won't know what it has to offer until we uncover enough to see a shape. First attempts, by definition, are tentative and full of gaps, but they are the foundation to build on. If a discovery starts with a tickling at the base of a woman's skull, then perhaps our bodies are more aware than our intellects. After all, wasn't it a pleasurable sensation in a woman's body that blew up the myth of the vaginal orgasm?

R. Greene  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

## Broadside:

Mariana Valverde's "Confessions of a Tomboy" (February 1983) was a delightful piece of reading — first for the keen-edged humour, and second because it dares to question the all-too-pervasive lesbian ethic that visual blight makes right.

Why should lesbians, who presumably find beauty in women, go to such lengths to stamp it out, and end up looking more-masculine-than-thou?

Of course the Playboy plasticity of our society makes heterosexual as well as homosexual feminists recoil from pop femininity. But women who affirm the value of women — and the right of women to express female sexuality (which also means sexual attractiveness) — should refuse to have it repressed and distorted by the values of patriarchal society.

This society has polarized women into Tomboys and Cheerleaders. But the feminist movement has made it possible for both of them to break out of the mold.

Two thousand years ago the lesbian poet Sappho celebrated women's beauty. Eighty years ago in Paris the literary lesbian Natalie Barney was the centre of a brilliant — and attractive — circle of female artists who continued Sappho's tradition.

The sexual revolution didn't die in the 1970s, it's an ongoing struggle. It should continue until women at both ends of the sexual stereotype spectrum are truly liberated and secure as women.

Olivia Ward  
Toronto

## Broadside

### EDITORIAL

Philinda Masters, Editor  
Layne Mellanby, Calendar  
Susan G. Cole  
Carroll Klein  
Catherine Maunsell  
Deena Rasky  
Judy Stanleigh  
Jean Wilson  
Eve Zaremba

### BUSINESS

Susan Cole, Distribution  
Catherine Maunsell, Circulation  
Judy Stanleigh, Advertising

### THIS ISSUE:

Judy Gilbert  
Elaine Johnson  
Morvern McNie  
Carol Rowe  
Wendy Wine

### Collective members:

Beverly Allinson, Susan G. Cole,  
Philinda Masters, Catherine Maunsell,  
Layne Mellanby, Deena Rasky, Judy  
Stanleigh, Jean Wilson, Eve Zaremba.

### Address all correspondence to:

Broadside  
P.O. Box 494  
Station P  
Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2T1  
Tel. (416) 598-3513

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## EDITORIALS

### Broadside Bulletin

**Item:** Bring bingo into your life — come to *Broadside's* BINGO NIGHT, on Saturday, March 19. Don't miss the fun, prizes and home-made refreshments. It's free admission, pay as you play. Children (under 16) are welcome, but unfortunately the law says they can't play. Prizes so far include a dinner with restaurant critic Joanne Kates, tickets to a Tafelmusik concert, a gourmet confection for your sweet tooth, records, books, and of course, a *Broadside* T-shirt. Come to the Church Street Community Centre, 519 Church Street, Toronto, 8 pm. (A production of the Women's Information Centre of Toronto.)

**Item:** Fundraising. So far, on this leg of our "25/200" phone fundraising campaign, we've raised almost \$1000 in pledges. That brings the total, from the beginning of our campaign last October, to almost \$4500.

We'll be carrying on this campaign on a continuous basis, so don't worry: if you haven't heard from us this month, wait until April!

**Item:** Since *Broadside* relies for our existence mainly on our own generated income (not on fairy god-mothers) we are always looking for ways of increasing our revenue. One of the best ways right now would be to have 300 more subscribers. We could send out 300 more papers without having to print more of them (meaning it wouldn't cost us anything). So, if less than one-third of our current subscribers took out *one* gift subscription for a friend, we'd reach our goal.

**Item:** Another major source of income for *Broadside* is our advertising. Advertisers like to know that readers actually go to their store, buy their book, eat at their restaurant as a result of the ad. Otherwise they figure it's not worth it, and being on tight budgets they can't afford to advertise. So, for our sake and theirs, *tell them Broadside sent you.*

**Item:** *Broadside* is always looking for helpers for newspaper production and distribution. If you want to hone up on, or test, your skills at lay-out, paste-up,

proofreading, folding or random socializing, come to *Broadside*. Look for the relevant dates in the masthead of each issue (ie on page 2).

**Item:** Our May *Broadside* (two months from now) will be a special Book Review issue. Our reviewers will include Myrna Kostash, Mariana Valverde, Joanne Kates, Alexa DeWiel and Betsy Nuse, writing on Canadian feminist classics, novels, short stories, poetry, and more. Look for the May issue on your newsstand, or better still, subscribe now and guarantee your own copy.

## March Winds of Change

Around this time of year, women all over the world make International Women's Day the occasion to reveal the state of the women's movement. Whether we are marching in the streets, dancing, exchanging information at women's fairs or watching feminist cabaret (Toronto women can choose any or all of these, see calendar), we are celebrating our commitment to make changes in our lives and in our cultures. It's a day that touches all women.

It was with this spirit that *Broadside* published an editorial last month criticizing the IWD organizers for perpetuating confusion in women who were not sure whether the socialist organization was the IWDC, where the C stood for Committee, or the

IWDC, where the C stood for Coalition. Knowing that the Coalition wants to be open to all women, we worried that some women would feel excluded as long as there was some doubt. Perhaps it would have been simpler to say that one of the organizations — and we suggest it be the socialist Committee, whose activities range beyond the limits of International Women's Day — change its name.

We want to wish feminists of every stripe — anarchist feminist, socialist feminist, radical feminist, socialist lesbian feminist and the good old-fashioned unhyphenated feminist — a joyous International Women's Day.

## Broadside:

Your editorial on spousal deductions "Making Allowances" (February 1983) showed all the contradictions in much feminist thinking on housework and housewives. You admit in one sentence that having a wife who works only in the home is an asset, not a burden, to the husband. Yet in the next sentence you say that the spousal deduction should only be abolished if the money is given to childcare and family allowances. If, as you correctly point out, the full-time homemaker is an asset to the husband, then the spousal deduction should be abolished no matter what is done with the money. After all, if the wife did all the same work she did as a wife but was not married to the man for whom she was working, not only would the man not receive a \$3,300 spousal deduction, but he would have to pay UIC, CPP, minimum wage, etc.

There are many good reasons why all feminists should oppose the spousal deduction. The wife does the housework; the husband receives the benefit. A poor husband is helped little or not at all by the deduction; the husband earning \$60,000 or more a year can receive a \$1,600 tax rebate. The deduc-

tion does not even go only to families with young children; about 1/3 of all women who work only in the home have no children at home, and about 1/3 have children over six. Finally, and most important, the spousal deduction encourages women to work only in the home. If both spouses work, and there are no children under 14, neither could deduct one penny from their incomes to pay for a housekeeper.

It is one thing to say that we should not let a wedge be driven between housewives and women who work outside the home. It is another to say that as feminists we should be indifferent to whether women work outside or only inside the home. As long as women work only in the home they are dependent on their husbands, often unable to leave a situation where they and/or their children are being battered, unable to save for their old age, not protected by any employment standards law, likely candidates for divorce, widowhood, desertion, or separation, to become one of the 40 percent of single women or female-headed families living below the poverty line, and reinforcing the role of women as homemakers to the world. We are

not helping either individual women or women in general by saying that there is nothing wrong with this exploitative situation.

Suggesting that family allowances be increased is another way of avoiding the issue. In an era when many lower-income families are suffering from great poverty, the last thing we should do is increase an allowance going equally to poor, middle-class, and wealthy families. First, this suggestion assumes that all women who work only in the home have children who qualify for family allowances. But over 1 million who work only in the home have no children at all, or children who would not qualify. Second, this suggestion encourages the myth that the family allowance is some sort of wages for housework. But the family allowance is for the children, not the mother. If we want to compensate women for their work in the home, let us do it openly, with the money going to the women for themselves. Women do the work; women, not children, should receive any compensation. And the compensation should be paid by those whom your editorial acknowledges benefit, their husbands.

If we want to encourage women to work outside the home so they have an independent income, we should abolish the spousal deduction and use the money for the child-care deduction. If we want to encourage women to work outside the home and help poor families with children, we should abolish the spousal deduction and use the money for both the child-care deduction (which should really be a credit) and the child-tax credit. If we want to compensate women for their work in the home in a way least likely to perpetuate this oppression of women, we should make the husband pay any compensation, including pension contributions. After all, if any of us hired housekeepers, we would have to pay their CPP. Finally, if we want to encourage women to work only in the home where they are dependent on their husbands, if we want to help rich families rather than poor ones, if we want to help families without children rather than families with children, by all means let us support the spousal deduction.

Reva Landau  
Toronto

## Exploring the Porn-Again Male

### Open Letter to Marcela Pap

As you wrote in "Porn-Again Male" (*Broadside*, December 1982), you found violent hard porn in an intimate friend's bedroom cupboard, and now nothing is making much sense. You probably feel used. You probably wonder how many times you thought your friend and companion, a renowned professional who has often been asked to act in an official capacity for women's groups, turned to you after being turned on by porn. You probably have wondered how many times you were virtually cast in a porn flick in his head without your knowledge, how many times, without anyone telling you, you were unwitting under-study for Marilyn Chambers.

You probably feel and are searching for a vocabulary to express a deep sense of betrayal. You probably feel your relationship with this gentle and sensitive man has been a lie. You probably feel you have been lied to from the start. I think, if that is what you are feeling, that you are right on, and have every reason to be angry.

You seem upset that you did not handle this "nicely" or "properly," you describe your responses to it as "hysterical." You are SUPPOSED to feel that somehow YOU have done something wrong, you didn't handle it in a "ladylike" fashion. If society has conditioned you well enough, you will soon feel that not only did you respond wrongly, you, yourself, are wrong for objecting to something he is convinced he had every right to buy, peruse, study, and collect. He is convinced he had every right to ogle those pictures and play with himself.

You're not going to change his mind. You aren't going to be able to sit down and rationally discuss this. There isn't going to be the tender scene from a daytime soap where he looks at you with tear-dewed eyes and says, "I didn't realize what it was Really all about. Please, help me get over this terrible addiction. You're right, and I've been insensitive." And if he *does* say it, he isn't going to mean it. And, of course, that's what part of the pain is all about for you. This man, you thought, was different. This man, you thought, had awareness and could spot the disgusting roots of sexism, and was your proof that not "all" men were pains in the face, and you have probably defended your relationship with him. And now there you are, and there he is, and there is that collection of hate stuff, and where does that leave you?

Why should you have to re-read Andrea Dworkin so that you can explain to him what it is about the pictures that is ugly? Why should you have to use your energy to find a vocabulary he can pretend to understand so you can try in vain to explain to him that the porn mags are training manuals in a war against females.

No wonder so many men are sexist! No wonder so many women look as if years of their lives have been wasted in the rearing of sons who turn out to be sexist! We are still, however feminist we may want to be, conditioned to feel that vocal protest is somehow just not nice. We must never upset people. We must never get strident, we must not re-

fuse to laugh at what everyone else says is funny.

What you have done is reacted *personally*, you see. Now those with power insist one must at all times be objective. Detached. Acceptable. If you aren't detached and objective you will be denied credibility, and without that, then what you say is tripe. And so we get detached, or we pretend to get detached, and we are trained to cut off our feelings, and somehow, when we do that long enough we become emotional cowards, moral jantarts and the eminent, powerful, and respectable collect porn as if it was anything other than shit in a fancy wrapper.

I have seen a feminist theoretician stand and accept her young son's expressing his anger by punching her repeatedly in the stomach. I have seen feminists sigh helplessly while their sons picked on younger children. I have seen feminists look pained but not protest when their gentle sensitive men made remarks that were downright stupid. We still accept "boys will be boys." Only when we are up against suitcases full of misogyny do we react. And then we are told we have "overreacted," and our anger is discounted and denied, and if we express it loudly we are told we are not "real women" because "real women do not get that angry."

And what can you *do*. Well, you could invest a few dollars in some printed stickers and attach them to his office door, his office window, the side of the office building, maybe his car, his friends' doors, and let as many people as possible know "Mr Perfect Collects Dirty Pictures" or "Mr Perfect Fantasizes to Porn" or "Mr Perfect is a Dirty Old Man."

You quote Susan G. Cole: "His success depends on our silence." Can you really get into "personal is political"? Next time you're somewhere where he is smiling and showing his "feminist" side, can you ask him "Hey, have you quit jacking off to pornography, yet?" Maybe you can greet him with "Why, how nice to see you, I haven't seen you since I found six suitcases full of pornography hidden in that closet I was going to tidy up for you. Did you renew your subscription?" What about the next time he is nominated as spokesman, or whatever, for a women's group, you standing up and saying I object to nominating this man because he collects pornography and so is supporting anti-woman, anti-feminist hate literature.

You have to realize he will not like you any more. He will not smile and say, one of the things I admire about you is your mind. He will not say, possibly the most exciting thing about you is your precise logic, and he will stop telling his powerful, influential, respectable friends "she has a mind like a man's, but she's all woman, believe me."

My oldest son is almost twenty-two. Gentle. Sensitive. Guitar playing. Non-threatening. And suddenly there were shit magazines in the house. When I talked to him I got "Oh, mom, there you go again. Come on, nobody forced these women to pose, they get paid good money, it's their career, they chose it, what about freedom to choose, what about censorship, what about...." and

inevitably, "Oh yeah, well when *aren't* you pissed off about something." What I wanted to do was beat his gentle sensitive head to a pulp with the closest brick. I wanted to say, you god damned twerp, you wouldn't even breathe if...and lay the blood of my blood, bone of my bone and what about MY milk that kept you alive.

And then the young woman he was living with asked me if I had anything at all on pornography. Did I? Poor young woman, nineteen years old, inundated with three years of research.

Well, that wasn't the only reason, and it might not have been the biggest reason, but I'm sure it was a factor, but my son has at least read some of the feminist anti-porn stuff, says he found it "interesting" and that he's "thinking about it" and isn't convinced but isn't easy with what he previously accepted. And he and the young woman no longer live together. It isn't porn's "male-ness" that's the problem, it's the pernicious ever-growing presence of the stuff. Eaton's of Canada and the Royal Bank of Canada are major shareholders in a company that is going to bring Playboy and porn to pay-TV.

The Wimmin's Fire Brigade in Vancouver got more action with a few bottles of gas than many of us had managed to get over a couple of years with peaceful and respectable objections. Maybe if Eaton's is stickered, or the Royal Bank has a run of cancelled accounts, or First Choice Pay TV's cablevision transformer falls over when a charge of dynamite takes the tower down, someone will think twice. Maybe if your

friend starts to lose respectability, starts to lose his ego-stroking spotlight because he is labelled as a porn-freak, the acceptability of this garbage will diminish. Maybe if we don't accept that they have the right to punch us, physically or emotionally, and make the boys grow up, there will be less trash around in the future.

It's power dynamic, and since we can't, because of the way society is structured today, get more power than "them," we have to find ways to diminish their power. Close the bank account, send back the credit card, spray paint, sticker, confront and name them for their complicity.

First Choice says, after all, why should everyone be so upset, their porn isn't hard core, they like to think it's eroticism, and anyway, it will only be three per cent of their programming. That mere three per cent is costing thirty million dollars in the first year. Just for the *Playboy* programs.

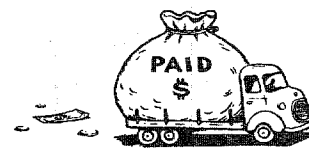
Last year porn was estimated at being a 50 million dollar a year industry in Canada. Add to that the 30 million First Choice is putting into the *Playboy* insult, and the porn industry in Canada is nearly twice as big this year as it was last year.

You couldn't make too much noise! You couldn't object too violently! Start with His Royal Self, your friend with the smut in the closet, and go on to the bank, and the "family" bargain store.

And good luck.

Anne Cameron  
Nanaimo, BC

### Broadside



## BINGO NIGHT

Fun! Prizes! Refreshments!

March 19, 1983  
519 Church St., Toronto

(A production of  
Women's Information Centre)

# Women & Militarism: Patriarchal Powder Keg

by Marian Sinn

The ultimate expression of the patriarchy is the military state, where domination is ritualized and aggression organized. It is a set of institutionalized values enforced by violence. So when women talk of liberation, it is not from men but from the nihilistic value system that exploits all people and all the earth.

Militarism is the quintessential manifestation of male domination. The majority of the world's nations are ruled by military dictatorships and the rest depend on the military to assure their continued existence. All modern states rest more or less comfortably on the unspoken assumption that "power grows out of the barrel of a gun" — Mao Tse Tung voiced what men, including our own democratic politicians, take for granted. "We must match the Soviets gun for gun," said Pierre Trudeau on March 19, 1982, in defence of Canadian participation in the United States military build up.

The foundations of the social and political order of most modern states are the military values of obedience, discipline and centralized power. The state jealously guards its monopoly in the use of armed force for a wide variety of purposes including the resolution of conflict, the preservation of law, order and "peace." Arms and armed forces are more important to governments than is money.

Militarism is an attitude, a value system, an approach to life. The militarist habitually anticipates and premeditates armed solutions to conflict situations. The 79,000 members of the Canadian Armed Forces do not dominate our nation, but the militaristic power concept dominates the thinking of our politicians and military planners. Canada's commitment to the policy of nuclear deterrence pays homage to the same notions which move the men in the Soviet Central Committee, the PLO, the Israelis, the Argentine junta and, for that matter, Mrs. Thatcher: we must show the other guy that

we can destroy him or he will destroy us. And if, like Canada, we cannot do it directly then we must have a friend who can do it for us.

Yet in the midst of growing armies, skyrocketing arms sales and expenditures, the limits of the usefulness of armed force are becoming apparent to anyone who watches the 6 o'clock news. The use of armed force is fast becoming counter-productive even for such stately male objectives as safeguarding the nation, preventing chaos, protecting women and children and preserving the "peace." The growth of armed force has reached the inflationary stage where more is becoming less. The predominant concept of power is in the process of going bankrupt. Armed force is hard pressed to preserve its credibility and guarantee results. It is the uncontrolled growth and spread of armed force itself which makes it an unreliable means of preserving stability and security. Everything points to the necessity of redefining the concept of power. If we go along with the prevailing male concept of power much longer we will define ourselves right out of existence.

In the search for alternatives to the prevailing custom of solving problems by armed force, women seem to have an advantage over men. Women are used to solving problems without brute force. We employ methods of persuasion which do not involve physically threatening or beating our opponent into submission. At the personal level we have become proficient in the art of unarmed persuasion and we are beginning to make visible gains in the public realm. One of the best and most recent examples is the defeat of the attempt by Canada's provinces to have a section dealing with women's rights deleted from the new constitution. With determination, political savvy and organizing skills a number of women thwarted the objectives of the provincial premiers. There is no reason why we should not even-

tually become just as effective as the international level.

Becoming effective is not necessarily a matter of going out on marches and demonstrations. It does not have to be a protest. It is more a matter of knowing and making up our own mind — to go for it and refuse to be intimidated or discouraged. It is a matter of identifying and methodically developing those means of persuasion and resistance which have served us throughout the ages in our domestic lives. There is great scope for the increase and perfection of our capacity to influence the political process and to build permanent structures and institutions capable of coping with situations which traditionally have only yielded to armed force.

There are, of course, many examples from history of women using armed force. Women have often been on the war scene, albeit in the background, but nevertheless actively supporting the war effort. We have also shared in the spoils of war, lived on the resources and land which formerly belonged to other people.

Women have learned to accept and respect armed force as a source of power and means of persuasion. Unfortunately many women are still overwhelmed by the seemingly all-pervasive power and logic of the male endeavour and identify with and support it. It will be for future feminist historians to establish the extent to which our male oriented society survives through the support of women.

To believe that women are "naturally peaceful" and only harbour compassionate and nurturing instincts is naive. The notion that as women equally participate in the electoral process, a more humane society will automatically result has been contradicted many times. Women, along with the poor and powerless, tend to live and vote conservatively. We have learned through countless years to keep our heads down, go with the crowd and say, "Yes, sir." There is a long process ahead of unlearning old and developing new habits.

A great number of women have identified militarism as the primary source of our subservient status and are now actively and explicitly opposing it. The resurgence of the peace movement in the 80's is largely due to the initiative and leadership of women. The strong bias of the movement toward democracy, cooperation, consensus politics, decentralized decision-making and respect for the individual has come about under the influence of, and is strongly supported by, women.

For many women, work in the peace movement is an uphill struggle and will remain so for some time to come. There are still many people who are trying to eliminate the symptom, the threat of nuclear annihilation, without coming to grips with the disease, militarism and the patriarchy which it upholds. Faith in the almost magical qualities of armed force and in the wisdom of the patriarchy is still so widely shared that people dare make only the most timid disarmament proposals.

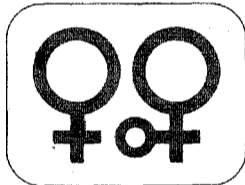
Canadian men are so used to deferring to "their superiors" and "the authorities," that they will shrink from accepting responsibility in international affairs. In turn, Canadian "authorities" at the federal level seem to have great difficulty in acting on proposals for peace and disarmament which come from the people. The government seems fearful of losing the initiative in a field about which it knows little or nothing: how to order, control and protect the interests of a large society without the use of armed force. One of the recurring nightmares of most governments must be the thought that people may lose their fear of and respect for armed force.

Mere increase in public pressure without change in long-cherished attitudes, values and behavior patterns will not produce a less volatile world, not to mention peace. We can expect that as the pressure increases politicians will become more stubborn, nervous, fearful and apt to make bad decisions.

It is in our interest that as we strengthen our opposition to Canada's military strategy of nuclear deterrence we also achieve greater clarity about the alternatives we want to adopt and promote. Women should take the leadership in the exploration and development of new directions. We should feel encouraged by the advantage of our experience. We can draw on that part of our past which has taught us how to defuse conflict situations without loss of dignity and to live and successfully cope with pending threats of violence without threatening retaliation. We need to value these skills and understand their application in the national and international context.

As we develop new skills, seek new paths and create new possibilities in human relations, we will let the militarists know that theirs has become the lazy way of coping with life and that we will not carry their burden any longer.

*Marion Sinn is active in the peace movement and lives in Perth, Ontario.*



Freedom of choice  
Liberté de choix

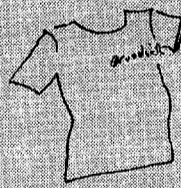
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(CARAL)  
Annual General Meeting**

April 30, 1983  
Ryerson Polytechnical  
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Toronto, Ontario

*Morning session* — Reports from across the country on local abortion situations; update on abortion battles.

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by Diane Meredith

*How do you "do" politics? What are the actual step by step moves you take to make social change? In this instance the social change I am interested in addressing is the abortion issue. I take an active part in the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC), but I am fairly new to politics and I often trust the more experienced women rather than really understand each of our political moves. How does an ad in a national newspaper help our final goal? Why do we want letters from around the province to go to politicians? I brought my questions to two experienced OCAC women — Ruth Miller and Judy Rebick. This article is based on my talks with them and on OCAC discussions about strategy.*

In the summer of 1982 a group of Toronto women came together to act on a situation they felt was unjust — the lack of access most women in Canada face in trying to get an abortion. These and other women had already submitted two briefs to the government pointing out this injustice and had suggested the government resolve the situation by opening free-standing abortion clinics using the Québec model. Nothing was done. The women decided to challenge the law and set up a clinic on their own, risking prosecution. They realized that the only way this could be successful was if enough other people also saw the injustice of the law and put pressure on the government to change it. With this understanding, the group of women called up other people they knew, many of whom were in groups which took a pro-choice position and all of whom wanted the same goal — ready access to abortion for all women. These other people formed OCAC. This group's purpose was not to take part in opening the clinic but to gather together, to organize as many people as possible who agreed, not necessarily with a possible act of civil disobedience, but with the injustice of the laws governing abortion and with the need for clinics providing safe, OHIP-covered abortions.

After OCAC had formed, we had to figure out a strategy to both gather our support and to let our every growing voice be heard by the government. One of our first tactics was to come up with a slogan which focussed the direction we were taking to effect change: "Legalize Free-standing Abortion Clinics." As Judy Rebick explains, "This slogan directed attention towards the demands we were making on the government. We're talking about an action that has to be taken or not taken by the Ontario government. It is not just a question of a small group of women establishing an abortion clinic. Something has got to happen in terms of the state."

Our next tactic was to organize a massive telephone campaign to raise money and gather names for an ad in the national edition of the *Globe and Mail*. While we were organizing this, Dr. Henry Morgentaler, who is an advisor to the group starting the clinic, publicly announced the opening of the clinic. The press picked the story up and all hell broke loose. Our ad came out on November 12, 1982 in the middle of this media furor. The ad moved us forward, put us that much nearer our goal, in three different ways: (1) before Morgentaler made his announcement, our phone calls had already alerted a lot of people that something was happening; (2) the success of the campaign let us know that there was a lot of support; and finally (3) it showed that we were a force. Anyone who had been involved in political organizing knew that it was not insignificant to get enough money to place an ad like that. Ordinary people were amazed that so many people would sign an ad publicly saying they supported abortion rights.

Organizing a large public meeting was our next step. Over 1,000 people came out on November 18. This in itself was a mobilization — that is, people were actually acting

and showing their support. At the meeting people learned more about the abortion issue; it was a more effective form of education than reading literature. It also made people feel a part of the process of change. Television cameras were there; people were shouting and singing. The feeling, the spirit of the meeting was tremendous. People could feel a sense of their own power as a group wanting to make change. It was at the public meeting that many of the organizers felt that this battle, this struggle for the legalization of free-standing abortion clinics was going to become a movement.

Judy says, "Whenever you are fighting for social change the goal is always a movement. A movement is a struggle that affects large numbers of people. It 'moves,' brings into motion thousands of people from different walks of life, different milieus." People act by writing one letter, or talking to two neighbours, by coming out to a demonstration, or by organizing other people. Their lives in some way take up the process of change. Our struggle has quickly grown beyond OCAC. Now we are getting letters and phone calls from other groups and individuals wanting help organizing or just telling us what they are doing in their areas towards our common goal. A group of women in Sault Ste. Marie have organized a radio program about the abortion issue for March 8, International Women's Day. In Saskatoon an organization called the Saskatoon Abortion Rights Association wants to open a clinic and wants to know how to gather support. Many newsletters and magazines are carrying pro-choice articles. The forces of change are in the air and it is OCAC's job to keep them there and to harness them into a common, purposeful direction.

After the public meeting, OCAC sat back to look at its strategy. While the clinic was not opening as soon as we had previously thought, we still needed to keep people's attention focussed on the issue. We also needed to continue gathering and voicing our support. We came up with a five point strategy: (1) circulating a petition; (2) outreach; (3) International Women's Day activity; (4) lobbying; and (5) plans for a defence when the clinic opened. We also set up internal structures to keep ourselves educated about abortion and to administer money, correspondence, and a quickly growing mailing list. We held a petition day on February 5, 1983. It was successful, not only because we gathered more signatures and received good press, but also because we involved more and more people in the process of change.

It is because of this need to have greater and greater numbers take up the issue that outreach is so important. At the public meeting we had speakers representing many different parts of society. A trade unionist, a United Church spokesperson, an immigrant woman, a doctor who sits on a therapeutic abortion committee, and others all spoke out about how this issue concerned their constituency.

"In order for change to happen there has to be unity in different struggles," says Judy Rebick. "No force is strong enough by itself. If only the women's movement is fighting for women's rights, we are not going to win. We have to have allies. Part of the process of change, then, is building alliances — fighting together on issues we support in common." OCAC is organizing in the trade union movement, in universities and high schools, in women's groups and community organizations throughout Ontario.

At the annual convention of the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) a resolution supporting the legalization of free-standing abortion clinics was passed. This resolution allows further organization. Union activists can try now to get support in their locals or other pro-labour organizations with the backing of the OFL. It makes the individual voice stronger. That resolution helped women from the OFL convince others in the Ontario NDP of the need for the NDP to take a strong stand on abortion rights. Strong pro-choice resolutions were passed at the Ontario NDP women's committee convention. It remains to be seen if these resolutions continue to snowball and help convince the Ontario NDP provincial council and caucus to take a strong stand on the issue.

As a one-issue coalition it is important to realize that individuals and groups within OCAC don't have to agree on everything. Our unity is based on agreement about our common issue. Within that framework, there is room for disagreement on many things. Sometimes we have to take majority votes to settle our disagreements, other times we can compromise. We may even have differences as to the best strategies for making change. Politics, after all, is not an absolute science. Some people think demonstrations are the best road to change, others lobbying. We are a large enough and strong enough organization to encompass both of these strategies.

"It is a commitment for people to go out on the streets," says Rebick. "It means that an issue is important to them. We're trained to be very passive. People work 40 hours a week. They're tired, they want to watch TV

or go to a movie." OCAC is putting time and energy into this year's International Women's Day. The group organizing the day — the March 8th Coalition — has had a number of meetings prior to the day itself focusing on different issues. One of the issues is A Woman's Right to Choose, which highlights the abortion struggle. OCAC is also partaking in the massive demonstration that the March 8th Coalition builds every year. For people to take time and demonstrate shows real support; it also "demonstrates" our collective strength to ourselves, to potential supporters and to politicians.

As well as demonstrations and good press, an important part of being heard is lobbying via letters, briefs, petitions and personal visits. Ruth Miller from the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL) and OCAC says, "Politicians need to hear our voice in a number of ways. There isn't just one way. Lobbying lets politicians know our group exists, what its viewpoint is and that it is important for him or her to listen and to act, as our viewpoint represents the majority of Canadians."

One of the most important reasons to lobby is that it is one of the key strategies of the anti-choice forces. Remember — this is a battle. The anti-choice forces have a ready-made network — the Catholic Church and other orthodox and fundamentalist churches — to plug into, and we don't. We do have some networking of organizations, but we're not monolithic, we're not authoritarian. We can't just go and tell people to do things. We have to educate people and invite them to act.

Building a movement is not like building a house by yourself. You can't set out to build a movement. All you can do is move when the time and place are right and provide as many materials and tools — nuts and bolts and hammers and wrenches — as possible, and then hope that many, many people will come and raise this building together.

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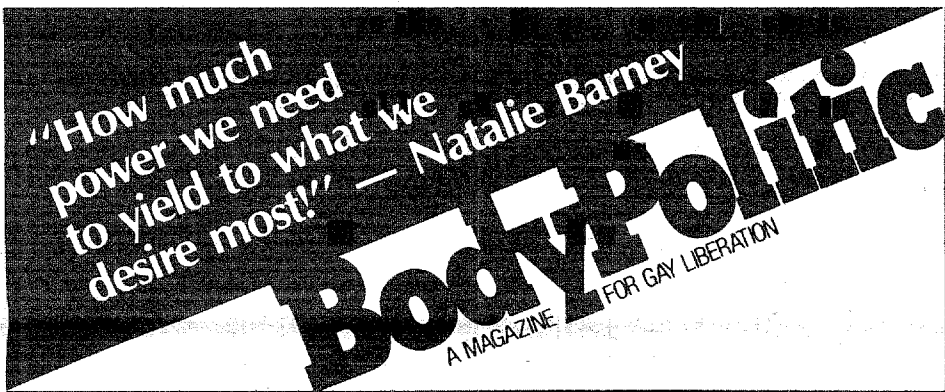
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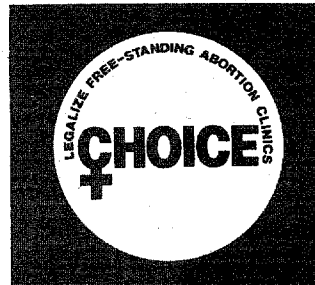
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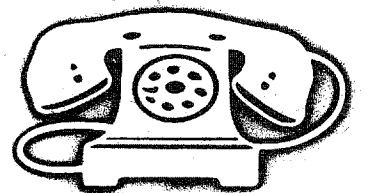
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# MOVEMENT MATTERS

## Greenham Common Women

Greenham Common is changing more women's lives faster than any movement since the suffragettes. Tens of thousands have visited the camp, which surrounds the US Air Force Base in Berkshire, England; 30,000 gathered there on December 12, 1982 to hold hands in a chain around the nine-mile perimeter fence. This date marked the third anniversary of NATO's secret decision to site a new generation of US nuclear missiles (cruise and Pershing II) in Europe. In December of this year, the base is due to receive the first 96 cruise missiles.

For the women who have camped there since September 1981, stopping cruise has become a way of life. That winter was the coldest in Britain this century, with massive snowfalls. The small group of women who weathered it, with little public attention but great determination, slowly but surely captured the nation's imagination.

At present, 40 women live at the camp and new women arrive daily. Thousands more support them on an occasional basis. A strong women's culture is growing up around the camp: women are painting, sculpting, inventing and singing songs and writing, in response to the new life they are creating. Some women have come to Greenham leaving husbands and kids: there are women from their teens to their seventies,

with politics ranging from radical feminist to liberal Christian. A mix of lesbian and heterosexual women live at the camp and are involved in the support network around it. Until now few women of colour have been involved.

In November, 23 women who had occupied a sentry box inside the base and interfered with the laying of sewage pipes went to prison for two weeks. The magistrates ordered them to be put on probation, but the women refused, saying that they had been acting for a greater peace. They made national press headlines when they chose to go to prison, recalling the spirit of the suffragettes.

Women are using a variety of political tactics to disrupt the base. After the mass symbolic demonstration on December 12, 2,000 women stayed behind and succeeded in stopping work at the base in a brilliantly organised blockade. Spontaneous direct actions happen continually, such as mini-blockades, forays into the base, verbal confrontations with guards and soldiers, and events in the town of Newbury nearby. In March and April, women's groups from all over are invited to come to the base and take autonomous direct actions along the theme of 'snakes and ladders' — there are only two ways to get past the fence and onto the base!

*The Women's Peace Camp, Main Gates, US/RAF Greenham Common, Newbury, Berkshire, England.*

## Hibbert vs. TTC

(TORONTO) — On January 26, Teresa Hibbert appeared in court on a charge of damage to public property. She had been caught on June 24 by Toronto Transit Commission employees after spray-painting Sanyo (Panasonic) "Audio-Mate" advertisements on the sides of several buses parked at a TTC garage. Police were called and after she was questioned and driven around the neighbourhood at 3 am in search of her accomplice, Teresa was taken to 52 Division where she was charged, body-searched and fingerprinted (damage to public property can proceed as either a criminal or summary offence). She was then driven to her home to retrieve her ID, where police not so inconspicuously looked through private papers and literature. At 7 am she was released.

In the following weeks she and several women joined forces under the ad hoc name of the Women's Coalition Against Sexist Advertising. A petition was drawn up stating why the Sanyo ad was sexist and offensive and demanded that the TTC remove it from all their vehicles. Given the TTC's past record for displaying sexist advertisements (e.g. Angel Wing Jeans, the anti-abortion Toy Soldier ad), the petition also demanded they establish a policy for non-sexist advertising. Petitions endorsed by approximately 2000 individuals and 40 women's groups were sent to TTC and Sanyo.

On August 6, six women met with representatives from TTC and its advertising arm, Metro Trans-Public Advertising Ltd. to confront them with the petition and to discuss their advertising policies. These men denied sexist content in the ad (one said he thought it was "silly"), stated that establishment of non-sexist policy was impossible for budget reasons and because it was impossible for them to screen every ad they used, and made the pronouncement that as far as they were concerned advertising "preferences" were a matter of "personal judgement." (Any argument/judgement made by the coalition was called a personal, minority viewpoint,

and an attempt at censorship.) Nothing productive came of this meeting simply because the TTC never intended to do anything but placate "a vocal fringe group" of women. Specific proposals for non-sexist advertising policy guidelines were made by us, and although the TTC "promised to look into them," we have not been contacted and have no reason to believe the TTC is considering such policy for the future. The significance of the numbers supporting the petition was dismissed on the basis that many of the endorsements were "solicited" from people on the streets rather than "freely given." The ad remained on buses until its contract terminated and the TTC was endorsed as knowing "the better way" by those who run it.

The trial proceeded on a not-guilty plea by Teresa, but the charge was dismissed after the crown failed to prove the advertisements were in fact public (i.e. TTC) property. It became evident through contradictory evidence given by two crown witnesses that no one, including the TTC, actually knows who owns advertisements displayed on TTC vehicles. Teresa won on a technicality. While she was pleased the charge was dismissed, she had been prepared to argue political reasons and motivation for "defacing" the ads in defence of her not-guilty plea.

Thanks go out to all the people who circulated and endorsed the petition, pasted "This Degrades Women" labels on ads, tied up TTC phone lines with protest calls, wrote letters, showed support by packing the courtroom, and who are now working to collect donations toward legal fees. Legal fees incurred since June (and it was good legal footwork that won the case) are fairly substantial and any donations toward this would be greatly appreciated. Contributions can be sent to: Teresa Hibbert Support Fund, c/o Judy Posner, Dept. of Sociology, Atkinson College, York University, 4700 Keele St., Downsview M3J 1T3. (For further information contact J. Posner at 667-3704.)

—Kim Fullerton and Teresa Hibbert

## Emily Stowe Shelter

(SCARBOROUGH, ONT.) — On January 17, 1983 the Emily Stowe Shelter for Women opened its doors to assaulted women and their children. Building on the experiences of other Toronto area shelters, the Board has established two broad objectives: (1) to provide a safe environment for women who have been physically assaulted or threatened, crisis counselling, referrals, and information to help women through the legal process, deal with finances and search for accommodation; and (2) to provide information to the community on the nature of wife assault and the needs of assaulted women and their families, an active program of advocacy for law reform, and documentation of key issues such as second stage housing, social assistance programs and supervised access to children.

Board president Maureen Adams considered this two-pronged mandate as a significant victory: the experience at other shelters shows that staff have little time for community education and social action unless these tasks are incorporated in the core program at the onset. These lobbying functions are particularly vital at a time when established agencies are cutting back "frills" — outreach, education and advocacy — in favour of direct service to clients.

The shelter staff is organized on a collective structure, an idea that initially met with some resistance from Board members, says Adams. Lengthy discussions finally resulted in the decision to recommend the collective model which more explicitly reflects the feminist values fundamental to this project. The collective is newly formed and still sorting out task and process, but staff member Judy Klie said it was this opportunity to operate as part of a collective that brought her to Emily Stowe.

Klie and another staff member, Chris McGill, emphasized the central theme of self-determination, the vital process of women taking back their power. Although the general approach is accepting and supportive, the staff counsel women very directly around the issue of personal safety, for many women will return to their homes. "But they come to the shelter in crisis so even if they go back, the house has an impact,"

says Klie. It sometimes takes women several stays at a shelter to work out a plan of action and to feel ready to carry it out. After all, says Klie, "she is cutting herself off from all that is familiar and plunging into the unknown."

Nevertheless, the shelter provides a safe environment where a woman can begin to gain a new perspective on her situation. Removed from threats and ever present tension, she can share experiences with others in the same boat, which helps relieve the sense of personal blame, humiliation and isolation. "Kitchen table counselling" is an everyday event and women come to see wife assault as part of a larger picture of violence against women, including street harassment and pornography. Away from an abusive partner, "they begin to get a vision of what life could be like without him," says Klie. They learn to turn to other women for support and aid.

—Catherine Maunsell

## At Last

(VICTORIA, BC) — Every Wednesday night, 8:30 pm to midnight, there is live entertainment or listening tapes for the 40-70 women who drop in to At Last Women's Coffeehouse.

Regular customers range from 6 weeks old to 60. At Last occupies a space on the first floor of a city-owned building leased to the Fernwood Community Association. Rent is \$20 a night, with the Association supplying juices, coffee and tea at cost (no liquor is available). The building is used by other groups throughout the week (including reggae, gay and rockers nights for young people in the neighbourhood). Week-end folk nights are run by the Association itself.

At Last is the only all women's space in Victoria. Women musicians are taking advantage of the friendly stage, coming from as far as Vancouver and the Gulf Islands to perform. At Last is run by a volunteer collective. Profits from the \$1 admission are being used to support performers and women's services and events in Victoria.

(At Last Women's Coffeehouse, 1923 Fernwood (at Gladstone), Victoria, B.C.)

—Judy Liefshultz



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by Sheila McIntyre

A year ago, the infamous Axworthy sequence\* launched a nation-wide campaign by women to demand crucial amendments in the sexual equality guarantees in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There was a fairy tale quality to that eleventh hour victory because what is now the "supreme law of the land" was rewritten, not by high-powered legal experts, politicians or courts, but despite them. Undoubtedly, we would not have succeeded without the legal expertise of a small but awesomely dedicated core of feminist lawyers and academics; but they in turn could not have succeeded without a core of lay activists and the grassroots backing of thousands of women in every province who trusted their own judgment and that of legally trained feminists rather than the insubstantial pronouncements of those high-powered experts who would have sold women out.

What few women realize is that exactly the same experts who would have sold us out are now empowered to implement the Charter, both by rewriting existing laws which abridge our rights, and by interpreting the language of the Charter to define our rights. They did not champion the equality of the sexes when they drafted the Charter, when they debated it, when they made amendments in the first round of redrafting, or when the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women exposed the Charter's shortcomings and proposed secure equality protections. There is absolutely no reason to believe that in the less public arena of the courts or civil service, these lawmakers will promote egalitarian principles on their own initiative. Last year's victory does suggest that they will live up to the promises of the Charter if forced. Accordingly, women must take the initiative immediately to exert such force.

In order to understand what initiatives are most urgent, it is important for us to understand how legislatures, the courts and the Charter fit together. Legislatures pass laws; courts interpret and enforce them. Until the Charter was entrenched, government-made laws, however unwise, unfair or unconscionable, prevailed over the common law (judge-made law). The Bill of Rights was supposed to guarantee that certain fundamental freedoms would prevail over conflicting federal statutes (it did not apply to provincial laws), but the courts were consistently reluctant to interpret Acts of Parliament that judges deemed to reflect the will of the voting majority. In effect, the courts, when confronted with a conflict between rights and federal laws, balanced majority will against abstract rights and, with rare exceptions, deferred to the "wisdom" of the legislature and the will of the majority.

The Charter, in principle, is intended to eliminate such a utilitarian (the greatest happiness of the greatest number, etc.) balancing process, primarily because there is no provincial or federal law on an equal plane with the Constitution, the supreme law of the land. Individuals and minorities now have a constitutional guarantee against the state that prohibits majority-sanctioned abridgments of their rights. If any government does enact laws which violate individual rights, the court now has both the power and responsibility to declare offending portions void and of no effect.

This is the theory. However, there are several catches. Foremost is Section 1 of the Charter which subjects our fundamental freedoms and rights to "such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society." There are a host of technical legal debates about this phrase, no less than political implications, and just what the courts are persuaded to find "reasonable" will be critical in deciding whether our new rights are more than rhetorical. Some of the earliest Charter cases provide cause for despair: "Canada is free and democratic, therefore this infringement is

\*Lloyd Axworthy, then Minister of State responsible for the status of women, cancelled a conference on women and the Constitution, causing an uproar and the subsequent resignation in protest of Advisory Council president Doris Anderson.

demonstrably reasonable..." or "the reasonableness of this law is self-evident, therefore it is demonstrably justified..." Insofar as the courts have been historically reluctant to strike down legislation, and Section 1 gives them the perfect excuse to evade their new responsibilities, we need to lobby strongly and persistently that s.1 should be invoked only very rarely in extraordinary circumstances, and should never be invoked to limit racial or sexual equality.

Worse, women and minorities have much to fear whenever the courts are called on to interpret what is "reasonable." In law, this is considered an "objective" test, commonly referred to as the "ordinary, reasonable man" test — i.e., what the ordinary reasonable man would think, do, believe, if asked. Far, far, too often, this "objective" standard, when analysed closely, is what the ordinary, white, middle class male does, thinks, believes. This has had appalling results when, for instance, the amount of force used by a woman in her own self-defence is judged by the reasonable man test; or the violence triggered by a racial slur is weighed against the level of provocation likely to be experienced by the ordinary man; or the offensiveness of pornography is tested objectively against "contemporary community standards." Women cannot afford to have sexual equality subjected to a reasonable limits test defined by the elite males in the courtroom or the ordinary man in the street.

Another catch to the theory is that using the courts to assert one's rights is expensive, slow and risky. Having a law overturned may be small compensation for actual discrimination. And, where the facts of the case are unusual or of narrow application, even a victory may be of little general benefit to others in the same minority or discriminated-against group.

The final catch is that the equality provision of the Charter (s.15) does not even come into effect until April 1985 in order that provincial legislatures have time to amend those of their statutes which currently violate the Charter. But how assiduously are the various governments scrutinizing their laws, and how perceptively do they identify and define discrimination? Given the courts' historical deference to the wisdom of legislators, if politicians find little to amend, the court may use the "reasonable limits" test to find very little to strike down. And in turn, lawyers, whether out of traditional legal mindsets, or conservatism, or their own lack of familiarity with discrimination, may tailor their arguments around the stance taken by legislators and courts instead of arguing for our rights in absolute terms.

Because legislatures are mindful of the public will, and courts are mindful of legislative will, the shaping of the Charter over the next few years will be an intensely political process, potentially far more responsive to public pressure than constitutional law will be again in history. Women cannot complacently sit back and hope for the best (not the least because lobbying legal experts has already begun, and early indications from Crown Attorney offices show they would like to see the Charter interpreted very narrowly to maintain the status quo). It cannot be overemphasized that in legal battles, one does not want to be on the defensive fighting to reverse precedents once they've gone against women, or arguing after legislation has been redrafted and published that the pros should go back to the drawing board. That the Charter could be a potent tool for promoting sexual equality is proved by the intensity of the battle in the United States for and against the ERA. In s.15 and 28, we now have an ERA equivalent. However, women still face the risk that these equality protections will be narrowly interpreted or "reasonably" limited if we do not educate legislators and legal professionals before they have first crack at our rights. The only question is how do we educate them?

To begin with, without underestimating their power, we must stop belittling our own in the belief that we lack the skills to fight successfully. One of the popular myths (even among feminists) that allows lawyers and judges to command exorbitant fees and prestige, and that leads otherwise independent minds to defer to seemingly absurd judicial pronouncements, is that legal "professionals" — whether they are lawyers,

# Journey Uncha Terr

ELIZABETH THE SECOND

BY THE GRACE OF GOD OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, CANADA  
AND HER OTHER REALMS AND TERRITORIES QUEEN,  
HEAD OF THE COMMONWEALTH, DEFENDER OF THE FAITH.

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME OR  
WHOM THE SAME MAY IN ANYWAY CONCERN:

GREETING:

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS in the past certain amendments to the Constitution of Canada have been made by the Parliament of the United Kingdom at the request and with the consent of Canada; AND WHEREAS it is in accord with the status of Canada as an independent state that Canadians be able to amend their Constitution in Canada in all respects; AND WHEREAS it is desirable to provide in the Constitution of Canada for the recognition of certain fundamental rights and freedoms and to make other amendments to the Constitution;

AND WHEREAS the Parliament of the United Kingdom has therefore, at the request and with the consent of Canada, enacted the Canada Act, which provides for the patriation and amendment of the Constitution of Canada;

AND WHEREAS section 59 of the Constitution Act, 1982, set out in Schedule B to the Canada Act, provides that the Constitution Act, 1982 shall, subject to section 59 thereof, come into force on a day to be fixed by proclamation issued under the Great Seal of Canada;

AND WHEREAS you the Queen, by and with the advice of Our Privy Council for Canada, do by this Our Proclamation, declare that the Constitution Act, 1982 shall, subject to section 59 thereof, come into force on the Seventeenth day of April, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Eighty-two.

WE WILL WHICH Our Loving Subjects and all others whom these Presents may concern are hereby required to take notice and to govern themselves accordingly.



IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF we have caused these Our Letters to be made Patent and the Great Seal of Canada to be hereunto affixed.

At Our City of Ottawa, this Seventeenth day of April, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Eighty-two and in the Thirty-first Year of Our Reign.

By Her Majesty's Command.

Registrar General of Canada.

Prime Minister of Canada.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

politicians, legislative drafters or judges — have acquired intellectual tools and technical expertise beyond the reach of ordinary laypeople. So when the ordinary layperson reads the language of the Charter and finds such phrases as "equal protection" or "life, liberty and security of the person," she assumes that although she does not know their "legal" meaning, the professionals do.

This is simply not true in the case of the Charter. Certainly there are hundreds of cases where such phrases have been interpreted by the courts, and there are preferred lines of reasoning. However, the Charter, and especially the equality provisions, present the courts with powers and legal language totally unprecedented in Canadian law. The judges will therefore have to look elsewhere for the authority (i.e., legal precedents) to back their conclusions. The most obvious sources are not too helpful. England, the source of our common law, has no constitution; the US has no ERA and its equal protection judgments on sex discrimination are in an unsettled, transitional state. Furthermore the US has no affirmative action provision as we do. Arguably, women and minorities understand discrimination better, can identify it more readily, and are better equipped to propose appropriate legal remedies.

It becomes obvious, then, that we had better assert and share our expertise. And fast. Otherwise, when 1985 comes and discriminatory laws are still on the statute books, legislators can simply dare us to sue for our rights. And if we haven't already briefed the courts, then despite their unpredictability when deprived of legal precedents, one thing is predictable. They will resort to traditional legal devices and patterns of thought to lay down guidelines of interpretation, tests of reasonableness, procedures for weighing conflicting rights, and rules to generate uniformity. And as soon as they can. They will not want to reverse themselves too soon (then it will be clear they don't know what they are doing), so they will avoid rulings likely to be reversed. The stance taken by the legislators and the courts in the next three to five years will set the pattern for all that follows.

Women's efforts must focus on three key areas: lobbying politicians to amend existing laws; preparing articles and briefs for the use of lawyers and the courts which argue persuasively how the Charter ought to be read and why; and building a legal defence fund so that key cases reach the courts early and are well ar-

## Equality Provisions

s. 15 (1): Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law, without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or men-

tal or physical disability.

(2): Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic

origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

s. 28: Notwithstanding anything in this Charter, the rights and freedoms referred to in it are guaranteed equally to male and female persons.



# Through rtered tory

## ELIZABETH DEUX

PAR LA GRÂCE DE DIEU REINE DU ROYAUME-UNI, DU  
CANADA ET DE SES AUTRES ROYAUMES ET TERRITOIRES,  
CHÈF DU COMMONWEALTH, DÉFENSEUR DE LA LOI,

À TOUS CEUX QUE LES PRÉSENTES PEUVENT DE QUELQUE  
MANNIÈRE CONCERNER,

SALUT :

### PROCLAMATION

Le procureur général du Canada  
**CONSIDÉRANT** :  
 qu'à la demande et avec le consentement du Canada, le Parlement du Royaume-  
 uni a déjà modifié à plusieurs reprises la Constitution du Canada...  
 qu'en vertu de leur appartenance à un État souverain, les Canadiens se doivent de détermi-  
 ner pour modifier leur Constitution du Canada...  
 qu'il est souhaitable d'inscrire dans la Constitution du Canada la reconnaissance d'un  
 certain nombre de libertés et de droits fondamentaux et d'y apporter d'autres modifications;  
 que le Parlement du Royaume-uni, à la demande et avec le consentement du Canada, a  
 adopté en conséquence la Loi sur le Canada, qui prévoit le rapatriement de la Constitution  
 canadienne et sa modification...  
 que l'article 58, figurant à l'annexe B de la Loi sur le Canada, stipule que sous réserve  
 de l'article 50, la Loi constitutionnelle de 1982 entrera en vigueur à une date fixée par  
 proclamation sous le grand sceau du Canada...  
**NOUS PROCLAMONS**, sur l'avis de Notre Conseil privé pour le Canada, que la Loi  
 constitutionnelle de 1982 entrera en vigueur, sous réserve de l'article 50, le dix-septième  
 jour du mois d'avril en l'an de grâce mil neuf cent quatre-vingt-deux.  
**NOUS DEMANDONS** à Nos loyaux sujets et à toute autre personne concernée de prendre  
 acte de la présente proclamation...  
**EN FOI DE QUOI**, Nous avons rendu les présentes lettres patentes et y avons fait apposer le  
 grand sceau du Canada...  
 Fait en Notre ville d'Ottawa, ce dix-septième jour du mois d'avril en l'an de grâce mil  
 neuf cent quatre-vingt-deux, le trente et unième de Notre règne.

Par ordre de Sa Majesté

Le registraire général du Canada

Le premier ministre du Canada

DIEU PROTÈGE LA REINE

gued. All of these tasks fall as logically to laywomen as to legally trained feminists. In fact, because minority women, working class women, disabled women and rural women are so under-represented amongst feminist professionals, I would argue the Charter initiatives cannot and should not be entrusted solely to women "experts." Indeed those women professionals already working on the Charter want lay input. Perhaps, more to the point, these will be political battles and we need all the bodies we can muster.

The most urgent focus of action must be Section 15, which guarantees to every individual equality before and under the law, equal protection and benefit of the law, and prohibits discrimination on *any* ground. Although this clause goes on to enumerate certain grounds of prohibited discrimination—"race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability"—these specified grounds are not exclusive. In theory, discrimination based, for instance, on sexual preference or marital status is also prohibited by s.15 and is vulnerable to a Charter challenge.

Anyone who has fallen victim to an existing law which is discriminatory on any ground has the credentials to lobby her legislature to change it; to show why it is discriminatory and how it should be amended. Similarly any special interest group — whether a union, a battered women's hostel or an immigrant community centre — can direct its expertise to preparing briefs or lobbying politicians to change offensive laws. The beauty of it is that if we act before 1985, reforms may be effected on government time and money and no individual will have to bear the onerous costs of suing under the Charter.

According to insiders who have observed some of the work being done to clean up the statute books, many of those assigned to this task have no idea what discrimination really is, how it works, or how to draft language to prevent it. Nor do they agree on the nature or extent of amendment necessary.

Generally speaking, there are three types of discriminatory legislation which should be the focus of our lobbying. The first is the most likely to be identified by government staff, provided they are seriously intending to rewrite their laws: laws discriminatory on their face. For instance, in Ontario, a married couple cannot give their child the wife's surname, but may only use the husband's name or a hyphenated conjunction of the maternal and paternal surnames, provided the

husband's comes last. Such laws should either be deleted or amended.

The second type is a law which appears egalitarian on its face, but leads to inequality when implemented because it ignores women's inequality in society. Under Ontario's family law, for example, each spouse has a duty to support her/himself and her/his partner, according to need and ability. However, there is no provision instructing the court to calculate a woman's ability to support herself (and her need for spousal support) in the context of the differential earning power of women and men. Such a principle should be written into the law.

Finally, there are laws which are neutral on their face but which have been interpreted in a sexist fashion by the courts. Federal divorce law and Ontario family law allow courts to alter their original support awards when the circumstances of one of the parties change significantly. If Mrs A is awarded \$500 a month support upon her divorce from Mr A, and later begins to live with Mr B, the court is likely to grant a request by Mr A to have his support payments terminated. The usual argument is that now Mr B has the duty of supporting Mrs A. Fine. Except Mr A can also seek a reduction, and often wins it, if he remarries. His plea will be that he cannot afford to support two women. Sometimes this is true, although his new wife knew his financial liabilities when she married him. The problem is that the court will not consider the second wife's income or acknowledge her spousal duty to support Mr A, when calculating Mr A's new domestic budget and his ability to maintain his support obligations. The court sometimes argues that the new wife should not be asked to subsidize the old wife. Yet Mr B is not deemed to be subsidizing Mr A. Basically the courts continue to see women as dependents, not as partners, in an economic union. Even if Mrs A2 is loaded, even if Mr A is not strapped for money given his new wife's contribution to domestic expenses, the original Mrs A may lose her only means of support because of the court's "gallantry" towards the new wife.

All three types of discriminatory laws must be erased or amended if equality rights are to be written into our statutes by 1985. In my view, only the most obvious type will be perceived and rectified unless we lobby and educate our governments effectively.

On the assumption that our efforts in legislative lobbying will not be wholly successful, we must also build a body of research on how the Charter ought to be interpreted and applied. This research needs to be in the form of both scholarly and popular writing, published in straight legal journals, circulated to legislatures and visible to the press. There are dozens of topics which need discussion and resolution. Should pregnant women be barred from certain worksites because of risk to the fetus? If so, is this discrimination? Is the regulation or censorship of pornography a reasonably justified infringement of freedom of speech? Do the Charter's protections of native rights permit the loss of native status of Indian women if they marry non-Indians? Are there any circumstances in which it is reasonable to discriminate on the basis of sex? What remedies are most appropriate

to rectify sex discrimination which has been entrenched by law for so long that simply voiding the law cannot compensate women adequately? Are affirmative action programs which institute a quota system likely to be found discriminatory despite Section 15? More generally, what judgments do we wish to adopt from US equal protection jurisprudence and which do we want to criticize? On what basis do we wish to balance conflicting fundamental rights: for instance, freedom of the press and prohibitions against sexist discrimination in advertising?

Some of the more technical legal arguments must be left to people with some legal training, arguments such as how broadly the Charter applies to government actions (does it bar hiring discrimination by employers funded by government?), whether the provinces can opt out of the sexual equality provision in Section 28, and whether a citizen can challenge a law before her rights have been abridged (for instance, can we sue if City Hall gives advance notice it will ban marching on International Women's Day?). However, we could greatly extend the research available if teachers of law, history, politics, and Women's Studies assigned Charter-related research as essay assignments; if students choose to write papers and theses on civil liberties issues; if interested women form study groups to focus on topics that concern them. Law librarians (usually women) may be eager to join such groups and share their skills, or, at least, will help laypeople find their way to necessary materials. Human Rights Commissions often have staff members willing to give answers to lay questions. Law students are usually looking for ways to put theory into practical form and may welcome an invitation to help such study groups. All of this research can also feed into political lobbying wherever it suggests the need for pre-1985 statutory reforms.

Finally, women's groups had better start organizing now to build a legal defence fund and to establish the principles by which legal aid will be allocated. Few victims of discrimination can afford to launch a lawsuit. Yet some legal battles may be more crucial to establishing key precedents than others. As well, we need to decide who should be our spokeswomen if the Supreme Court invites intervenors to present briefs in cases of national importance (the Borowski abortion challenge, pornography cases, affirmative action cases).

It is almost impossible to emphasize how urgent this activity is. Or how critical the involvement of women at the grassroots level will be to its success. There is no woman who lacks the ability or self-interest to take on at least one of these tasks. For women who believe that legal reform will be one of the keys to the promotion of sexual equality, there will be no forum as vital in the next few decades as Charter litigation. Because both governments and the courts are cautiously feeling their way, our input will never be so timely or so open to reception again. Governments are (finally) sensitive to the potential clout of the "women's" vote so we must exploit our momentum to hold them to their constitutional promises.

*Sheila McIntyre is a Toronto freelance writer, and currently a law student at the University of Toronto.*

## Charter of Rights Educational Fund

In Toronto, a number of Charter initiatives are underway. Under the sponsorship of The Charter of Rights Educational Fund, two superb conferences have been held at City Hall to focus the process of educating and mobilizing laypeople and legal professionals around sexual equality lobbying and research.

It is hard to describe the high of sharing in a process where over two dozen feminist lawyers and academics (all women) share their expertise, invite lay responses and concerns, even staff the coat check counter and coffee tables. (I cannot imagine the Canadian Bar Association or the Law Society not recruiting students or paying (low) hourly wages for such "menial" tasks).

As of January 25th, discussion groups had started around the following areas of law targeted for amendment before 1985: Family, Corporate and Commercial, Native Rights, Employment, Health, Real Estate and Landlord/Tenant, Criminal, Child Welfare, Tax, Insurance and Pensions, Government Services and Human Rights. Work is also being done to define discrimination, brainstorm on what we can learn or improve from American and Canadian judgments; to develop a strategy on how the interlocking clauses of the Charter should be read; and on anticipating the

arguments of the opposition.

Feminists interested in contributing to the Fund or in participating in one of more of the discussion groups should write the Fund, c/o 111 Richmond St.W., Suite 320, Toronto M5H 3N6. Outside of Toronto, feminists might look to Women and the Law caucuses at university law schools, legal aid centres, women's studies programs or the women's caucuses of local political parties.

In Toronto, these initiatives are already underway. Under the sponsorship of the Charter of Rights and Educational Fund, two conferences have been held in which feminist lawyers and academics have begun the process of educating, organizing and mobilizing laypeople and legal professionals so that lobbying and research begin immediately. Working groups have been formed to focus on specific fields of legislation needing reform before 1985: Family, Corporate, Employment, Real Estate, Landlord and Tenant, Health, Criminal, Tax, Child Welfare, Insurance and Pensions, Native Rights, Government Service and Human Rights laws. Feminists interested in participating on one or more working groups should contact the fund.

## ARTS

## An All-Consuming Obsession

by Carroll Klein

**The Obsession: Reflections on the Tyranny of Slenderness**, by Kim Chernin. Harper/Colophon Books, 1981. \$6.95.

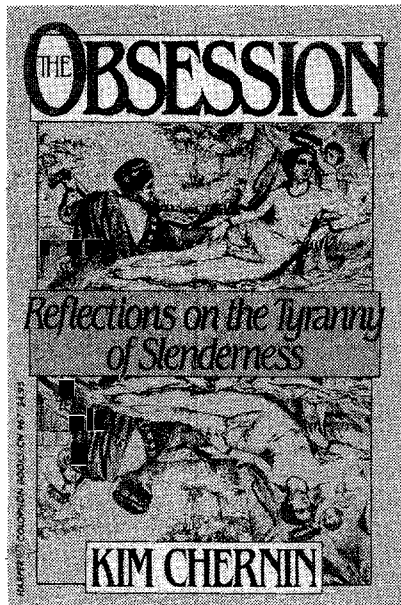
*Scene:* I am five years old, walking home from the swimming pool in my bathing suit. My father, who came to fetch me, has bought me a soft ice cream cone. Some people pass by. My father leans down and says, "Those people are staring at you because you're so fat." I have my first moment of real angst.

*Scene:* I am twenty-one, sitting in a bar in Yellowknife where I have a summer job at a gold mine. A very drunk woman lurches toward me and speaks: "You disgust me. Look at you, letting yourself go at your age." She stumbles off. I am mortified, hoping that my companions, somehow, have not heard.

*Scene:* I am thirty-one. A friend gives me a book of poetry he has just published. There is a fat-lady poem about me in his book; it describes my size as a reflection of what is lacking in my spirit. I am outraged by his presumption though I know it is a common attitude.

*Scene:* I am thirty-five. A concerned feminist friend who is conscious of her own otherness as a lesbian and a woman of colour hugs me earnestly. "Don't you see how beautiful you'd be if you were thin? You *must* lose weight." I am confused, near tears. If my sisters will not accept me as the person I've become, who will?

*Scene:* Today I am reading a letter from a friend of considerable wit and size. She writes: "I find the politics of thin-ness fas-



inating, too. Obviously if we're busy perfecting ourselves, between Weight Watchers, exercise classes, reading the fashion mags and diet books, going to the salon for depilatory, bleaching, massage, and makeup sessions, we haven't time to figure out what the issues are, let alone do anything about them. It's so clever. I wonder if someone should take a real look at the case of that woman who murdered the diet doctor." I laugh, set free, for a time, by her words.

It is not easy being a fat woman in western society. We are not taken seriously. We are obliged to wear tacky polyester clothes. We are often ignored by men and condescended to by other women. Many of us labour under the burden of self-hate that has been encouraged by our families, by lovers, by the multi-million dollar diet industry, by fashion, by cultural attitudes that foster the illusion that only thin-ness in women can be beautiful. Disgusted by our bodies, we postpone our lives, waiting for the magical day when we, too, can slip into a pair of size ten trousers and become beautiful, much-loved, successful, and sought-after. But until that size ten moment arrives, our lives are in abeyance.

The moment seldom arrives. For those of us who do lose significant amounts of weight, the prognosis is depressing: only 2% manage to keep their weight down permanently. For the rest there is a return to guilty binge eating, disgust, and more dieting. And so it continues.

While fat women have particular problems, some of which are grounded in the public nature of their so-called affliction, they are not alone in despising their bodies. I have thin friends who moan constantly about their shapes, about hips that are not in

perfect proportion with their bodies, breasts too large and too small, stomachs that curve outward rather than being flat. I believed once, lacking understanding, that this was a posture, a conceit, or a subtle means of denigrating my silence and apparent acceptance of my size. I have listened to women complaining, *ad nauseam*, in the middle of wonderful meals, about what food is doing to their carefully-tended bodies. Shut up, I've wanted to say, shut up and relax and enjoy what you're eating.

Recently I read excerpts from the diaries of Michele Murray, an American writer who died of cancer in her forties. After her first major operation, a radical mastectomy, she wrote: "I, who have always hated my body, now am justified — it has betrayed me and turned ugly and deserves to be hated." While this statement sounds anguished and extreme, I suspect that it is merely an extension of an attitude that is pervasive among women in our society.

Little has been written about the relationship women have with their bodies. Susie Orbach's ground-breaking *Fat is a Feminist Issue* (1978) was a curiously unsatisfactory book, predicated on the assumption that all women want to be thin and will become so once they understand the issues from a feminist perspective. Marcia Millman's *Such a Pretty Face: Being Fat in America* (1980) is an interesting but limited analysis interspersed with painful personal testimonies of the problems of being an overweight woman. Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (1978) addressed some of the substantial concerns but they were a small part of her complex vision and the book itself requires more patience than some will be prepared to give it.

The recent publication of *The Obsession: Reflections of the Tyranny of Slenderness* by Kim Chernin, will be welcomed by all women, fat or thin, who recognize that the shape and size of their bodies has taken on a perverse and destructive importance in our society.

Chernin is an American writer and therapist who works with women who have problems with body image. While never overweight herself, she suffered for ten years from an obsession with eating, convincing herself that her body was gross and despairing over her inability to impose control over her wayward mind. In her late twenties, she experienced an epiphany of sorts. Fantasizing that her body was lean, muscular, stripped of the roundness she despised, she finally acknowledged that she held her feminine nature in bitter contempt:

Until now, all I had been able to behold was my body's failure to conform to an ideal. Now, I realized that what I had called fat in myself, and considered gross, was this body of a woman. And it was beautiful...I could no

longer doubt that my alienation from my body was the key to understanding my troubled relationship to food, to my appetite, and to my very identity as a woman.

What has caused women who are intelligent and perceptive in other aspects of their lives to be so uneasy about their bodies? Why do so many fat women hate their curves? How can anorexics possibly see themselves as fat? What can possibly motivate a woman to induce vomiting every time she eats? Is it normal for a woman who was initially interested in becoming fit to come to a point where she says, "I don't care how long it takes. One day I'm going to get my body to obey me. I'm going to make it lean and tight and hard. I'll succeed in this, even if it kills me."?

Chernin looks to our culture for answers. She identifies the inherent division of mind and body, thought from feeling, man from woman, as critical components of the schizophrenia that manifests itself in an inordinate regard for "higher" concerns — spirit and mind. Rather than integrating spirituality with the physical, we have chosen to spurn our bodies, to identify them as disgusting, unworthy, and uncontrollable. Only by the imposition of strict regimes, of rigid dieting and obsessive exercise, are we able to contain the sensuality that has lost its sense of uncomplicated delight and has become part of our nature that must be denied. An obsession with food, Chernin states, expresses a yearning for permission to enjoy our sensuality. Since our society is based on the Judeo-Christian assumptions of the worth of denial, we are caught between the flesh and the devil. Reconciliation between the spirit and the body can only occur when a woman is at peace with the natural side of herself, which is characteristic of the matriarchal vision.

The right to be a woman in our culture, to grow and develop our sense of female power, has been sidetracked, emerging as an obsession with standards of physical beauty that have been determined by those who would have power over us. Many women have willingly accepted this condition, some because thin-ness allows them to negotiate their way into the world of men. A woman whose physical presence is unmasculine may feel herself to be part of a world of freedom, autonomy, with all the rights traditionally reserved for men. Other women, feeling the need for male protection, may assume the bodies of young girls which, in their vulnerability, are attractive to men who are disturbed by the bodies and minds of mature women.

Feminism has given women a sense of their "authentic power," of their abilities and potentials freed from the limitations imposed on them by society. The compulsion to lose weight, Chernin states, is a need to impose control on one's appetites, to confine impulses and control the hungers of the self, a metaphoric shrinking of womanhood. While our culture may reward us when we lose weight, it does so at a price. Chernin points to Margaret Atwood's *Edible Woman*, who, as a hunger artist *par excellence*, divorced herself from her power and identity as a woman. Women must free themselves from the illusion that control of the body will resolve the dilemmas that we face. It is only from within, when women acknowledge the feelings that drive them to eat or not to eat, that our bodies will express, in various sizes and shapes that we have chosen, our kinship with nature and our own female power.

Chernin's thesis is far-reaching in its implications; a précis does it no justice. It is much more than a series of well-constructed excuses for overweight women, though some may construe it as such. It is, rather, a sensitive, intelligent, well-written analysis of women's relationships with their bodies. It is a book about coming to terms with who we are.

Fat or thin, voluptuous or lean, full or angular, a woman's authentic beauty first comes into existence when her body expresses her self-acceptance — the harmony or the condition of fully conscious creative struggle she has achieved within herself.

Carroll Klein was an editor with Room of One's Own in Vancouver, and has recently joined the editorial group of Broadside.

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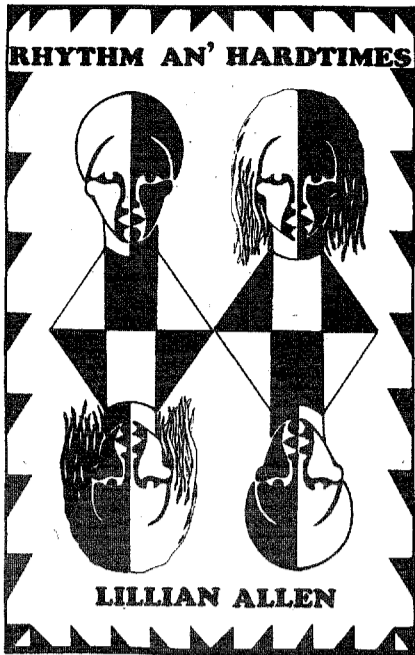
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# Poetry That Swings



by Elaine Johnson

On one of the coldest nights this winter, I was dragged out by my curiosity, to the wilds of Toronto suburbia, York University to be exact, to see a poetry performance, billed as an evening of rhythm an' hardtimes. The flyer I saw promised "jazz, dub, reggae and just plain cussing poetry...a fascinating evening of poetry and rhythm."

I had a preconceived idea that poetry was something to read quietly in a corner, or to write when you were in the depths of misery at the end of a love affair or even at the heights of foolishness in mid-affair. As for dub, I vaguely connected it with discos and dee-jays. But the five poets, two women and three men, who performed that night set me

straight and delivered exactly what the flyer had promised.

Lillian Allen, author of a book of poetry titled *Rhythm an' Hardtimes* was one of the performers. The bio on the back of the book identifies her as the person who introduced DUB poetry to Canada and "its foremost exponent here." I found it interesting that a woman was performing dub poetry since the roots of dub poetry are reggae and I could almost count the number of well known female reggae artists on one hand. Dub is a direct offshoot of the music. Often reggae is recorded with words and music on one side of a record but the melody only, maybe enhanced a bit, on the flip side specifically for dubbing. The dee-jay at a dance, club or disco can then ad-lib over the music using his own particular brand of patter, which ranges from rhythmic and poetic to funny, even mildly erotic, sometimes with specific references to the various couples dancing. Dub poetry has more serious intentions, its content being more political, or revolutionary, but at the same time it moves, with or without the background music.

Lillian Allen performed without music, although she told me later that she is preparing a tape to use as background and has performed with musicians from Toronto bands such as Truth and Rights. But I didn't notice any lack of music in her performance. The lilting sound of the Jamaican dialect used in many of her poems provided the melody while the structure of the poems and the repetition of words and phrases added the pulse. She writes about people: women, male/female relationships, and the struggles of those who are black and immigrants in a cold and often closed culture. She writes with anger, pain and a lot of loving humour. Her subjects are real and her words are unpretentious but right on target. She says in

"A Poem Against Things" that she "writes poems like a weapon" and she uses her poems to fight back at racism and injustice, as in "I Fight Back":

ITT ALCAN KAISER  
Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce  
These are privileged names in my  
Country.

But I AM ILLEGAL HERE  
My Children Scream  
My Grandmother is dying  
I came to Canada  
And Found the Doors  
Of Opportunities Well Guarded

I FIGHT BACK  
They label me  
Immigrant, Law-breaker, Illegal  
Ah No, Not Mother, Not Worker,  
Not Fighter

I FIGHT BACK  
Like my Sisters Before Me  
I FIGHT BACK  
I FIGHT BACK

Although she speaks of both women and men in her poems, it is the women that really touch me. She describes them in "Black Woman's Blues" as "Misused/Abused/Confused," but somehow from somewhere they find the strength to survive, and more. Lillian's women are warm and feisty. They love, fight, forgive and laugh at their situations. These poems, "Belly Woman's Lament," "Marriage," "Back Chatting" and a number not included in her book are the ones that must be performed to be fully appreciated. Lillian says, "My work is definitely not meant to lie still on the written page, but to be performed." So she performs as much as she can, treating her audiences to the joys of childbirth as well as the pains that

no-one had warned her about, or to a wonderful comic story about two Jamaican women who take a trip to France and try out their French on the Parisians. She performs in a wide variety of places from the streets of Kensington to community functions and gatherings such as the one sponsored by the Atkinson College Students' Association and the Office of the Master at Atkinson College, as well as at local bars such as the Cameron House.

Lillian Allen will be performing at the International Women's Day annual fair which will take place from 1 to 5 pm on March 5, 1983, and later the same night at the benefit dance for the Midwives Association at the Rivoli, 334 Queen Street West. Her book *Rhythm an' Hardtimes* (published by Domestic Bliss) can be found at the Toronto Women's Bookstore, 58 Harbord Street, or at Third World Books & Crafts Inc., 738 Bathurst Street, Toronto.

Elaine Johnson is a Toronto clay artist and regular behind-the-scenes worker at Broadside.

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## Quantum Leap for Feminism

by Gillean Chase

**The Anatomy of Freedom: Feminism, Physics, and Global Politics**, by Robin Morgan, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York 1982, \$21.95

*The Anatomy of Freedom* is an almost woeful exploration by Robin Morgan of parts of the self with which she, and by and large, the women's movement, is uncomfortable. The impetus of the women's movement, a visible, coherent vehicle for social change, can be gauged by the tremendous backlash of conservative opposition which follows its re-emergence in our century, and by the degree of malevolence and uneasiness towards the very word "feminism." In such a climate no one is very sure what a feminist is, and certainly no more clear about the nature of freedom. What is more clear is that one can nonetheless call oneself a feminist and have at least a glimmering of what that, and freedom, mean on an existential basis.

It is also clear that if feminism can be identified with spokespeople, then Robin Morgan is as qualified, and as justified as anyone can be, in representing the women's movement. Earlier books, *Sisterhood is Powerful* and *Going Too Far*, both represent her active involvement and whatever the labels "radical" or "militant feminist" have earned her in the way of both credibility and notoriety. *The Anatomy of Freedom* fills out the dimensions of Robin Morgan's feminism, and may earn her labels as diverse as "reactionary" and "visionary."

Some of the problem is the very complexity and range of Robin Morgan's ideas. Her concerns address overpopulation, displaced peoples, environmental pollution, poverty and illiteracy, death and dying, the armaments race and religious fundamentalism, in addition to "traditional" feminist concerns (birth control, abortion, day care, aging, violence towards women and children, pornography and control over the technologies of reproduction, medicine and physical science). Add to these her concern with demystifying romance and enlarging the concept of "families" to include all sexual, racial and political groupings, and one has an attempt on the part of one valiant feminist to analyze (and comprehend) the world. Morgan re-defends marriage, that much maligned institution which distorts the sex-

ual commitment "of at least two people," and tries to separate marriage from its economic and legalistic role in heterosexist society. That is, she extends her concept of committed relationships to include people of any gender combination, in groups of at least two, who are mutually committed to struggle and growth with one another.

Morgan posits that "the relation between the sexes is the primary cause/model for racism, class division, nationalism, war, poverty, and ecological disaster" (pp. 175-6); and that "the central reason for women's lack of independence is the (unacknowledged) dependency of men." If men "seriously could admit their dependence," then this "would lead to an expanding, participatory universe," in which men and women are equal partners in consciousness and therefore in responsible action (p. 178). The view of Woman as Other (soft, helpless, overemotional and carnal, i.e. non-man) means that she is denied spirituality, intelligence and vocational dedication, considered to be qualities of maleness. Her reproductive role is mystified and her usefulness beyond menopause considered to be minimal. Women are regarded as custodians of birth and death, and traditionally have been relegated to the dubious role of tending to both the young and the dying. Thus has society dealt with birth and death, about which it is equally uncomfortable.

As a long-term activist, Morgan deals with political strategies for effecting change in all those areas claimed as the domain of feminism: ecology, race, class and sex discrimination, disarmament and third world issues. Added to this mandala of universals is Morgan's sense that the "technological illiteracy" of women may be of fundamental concern to gaining critical control over the world of the future: the world of the physical sciences.

The new physics has upset our sense of the universe as a relationship of causalities predictable in their determinism and in their materiality. Using the theories of relativism of Max Planck, Albert Einstein, and Verner Heisenberg among others, Morgan tries to illustrate that time and space are relative concepts and that matter and energy are interchangeable facets of the same thing. From this basis, Morgan attempts her own "quantum leap" into the future: feminism,

because it is capable of change, is "discontinuous and energetic," operates like subatomic particles and so is in harmony with the very nature of matter itself. Feminism is therefore the new metaphysics and "the DNA/RNA call for (human) survival" (p. 283). And why are women the hope for the survival of our material world? (1) women are the majority; (2) women represent the suffering of humanity "across the barriers of age, race, class, nationality, culture, sexual preference and ethnic background" (p. 282); (3) women's physiological reality is based on change (menarche, menopause, pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum and lactation) all of which give women a less rigid attitude towards physical existence; and (4) having been trained to "humanism, pacifism, nurturance, ecoconsciousness and reverence for life," women have a moral edge on approaching change from such a strategic base. Women, by being open to the subconscious (dream symbolism and im-

agery) are also the natural artists and scientists of the new metaphysical age. The energy of feminism stems from joy, insatiable curiosity and the boundless desire to comprehend reality in a playful, fearless way.

If this analysis has not frightened you away, you are ready for Robin Morgan's latest update of her awareness of feminism in the eighties. Whether or not one accepts the logical basis for her analysis of meta-physics/meta-feminism, there is enough in *The Anatomy of Freedom* to challenge our concepts of feminism and of reality. For both reasons, I acclaim the courage, integrity and dedication of Robin Morgan in addressing so many controversial, volatile issues between the jackets of one single book.

Gillean Chase has been active in the women's movement for many years and is currently a free-lance writer in London, Ontario.

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# Queen for a Day



by Susan G. Cole

Goodness! The things Dustin Hoffman will do to become a better person. Last time out, in *Kramer vs. Kramer*, he became a single parent and the experience really helped him grow and develop. Some viewers even felt that he was more loving, gentle and tender than his wife, the mysterious and almost malevolent Meryl Streep. Lately, he's gone beyond fatherhood and donned the clothes of a woman to become a better woman than all the women in his life in the Hollywood comedy *Tootsie*.

Hoffman plays Michael Dorsey, a struggling actor who changes his identity to Dorothy Michaels to perform in an afternoon soap called "Southwest General." As Michael, he is having a casual affair with Sandy (Teri Garr), another actor. As Dorothy, he has captured the fancy of the actor who plays the chief resident at Southwest General (George Gaynes), and the fancy of Les (Charles Durning), Julie's father. Julie (Jessica Lange) is another actress who plays one of the nurses on the soap opera and she has captured the fancy of Michael, except that Julie only knows Michael as Dorothy, and Dorothy has not told Julie that she's really a he.

You get the point. Michael cannot possibly reveal his true identity to Julie because he (Dorothy that is) has captured the fancy of millions of American viewers who would flip out if they discovered that Dorothy was really not Dorothy at all.

Behind these elements of farce, and one of the key points of the whole thing, is the idea that going in drag can be a consciousness-raising exercise. Think of it as a comic *Black Like Me*, except with a sexual, not a racial, reversal. Michael does not get spat on or thrown to the back of the bus, but he does

find out that bellowing for a cab in a man's voice gets better results than trying to get attention with Dorothy's soprano pipes. His high heels drive him crazy. He discovers while getting ready for the set that it takes hours to prepare for the day. The scenes of Michael's ordeal speak eloquently of the many more hours than men women are forced to spend in front of the mirror. There's really nothing Michael does as Dorothy, with the possible exception of hiding his hair under a cap and shaving his face, that millions of women don't do every day. But what is most rankling to Michael is that Ron, the director of the soap (played by Dabney Coleman, best remembered as the villain of *9 to 5*) calls him, and every other woman on the set, Tootsie.

In his guise as Dorothy, Michael plays the hospital administrator in "Southwest General," an older woman, a character of independent thinking who, both on and off the set makes impromptu speeches on the dignity of her person and who, in order to deliver these pearls, likes to surprise the crew by changing the script every time someone has written a self-deprecating bit of dialogue for her. These forays into the public speaking arena, and her tendency to be supportive and loyal to the women around her (him), make Dorothy enormously popular and an enlightened inspiration to the entire soap project.

Of course, for Michael to be such a terrific lady, the rest of the women in the film must be either weak or hopelessly neurotic. With the exception of the director and one of the camera operators (both of whose appearances are unfortunately infrequent), the women Michael/Dorothy encounters need all the help they can get. Julie, a single mother and a conventionally beautiful blonde destined to be typecast as the ingenue for

life, has already established a pattern of loving men who think she's worthless and treat her accordingly. And Sandy is an actor, broke like Michael, who is weaned on rejection and who leaps into bed with men who don't care about her at all. She sets up heart-break for herself so predictably, that she can tell Michael everything that is going to fail in the relationship before it even begins. Compared with these women, Dorothy's a real winner.

In spite of the presence of wimpy women, the jokes on sex roles usually hit home successfully, but the inevitable jokes on sexuality prove much trickier. They surface every time Dorothy fends off the advances of the men who want her and every time s/he tries to figure out a way to get through, sexually that is, to Julie. The film's (and the rest of the world's) ambivalence toward homosexuality makes for some uncomfortable moments.

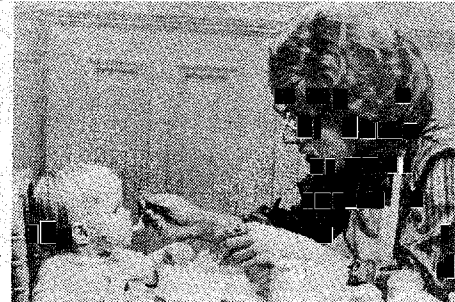


Are we supposed to chuckle when the perfectly sweet Les asks Dorothy to marry him? It's hard to let go of a real belly laugh when we know that most viewers are laughing at how grossed out Les will be when he discovers who he's really asked to be his bride. And there were audible "oh no's" from the audience when Dorothy touched Julie. Viewers reacted to the lesbian advance with real fear. The situation is not helped by the fact that, Hoffman's face being what it is, Dorothy is a most unattractive female predator. As the beauty and the beast tales unfold, *Tootsie* serves up some dangerous stereotypes. In both Dorothy's relationship with Les and with Julie, the humour plays heavily on homophobia and one's tolerance of the ploy depends on whether you believe that the film, as far as its attitudes to gayness go, redeems itself in the end.

It certainly tries, whether consciously or not. After Les learns the truth, he and Michael have another encounter which is an honest attempt to get Les to confront what happened to him. And Julie. She leaps up from the couch and surprises everybody: she doesn't call Dorothy a pervert. She doesn't become enraged. She says — are you ready for Hollywood 1983 — "I'm not together enough for this." There must be progress in there somewhere.

Eventually, though incidentally, Julie tries to do what countless straight women have done to their lesbian friends who have revealed their sexuality to them. She decides that she cannot see Dorothy any more and tries to throw her out of her life. This is a profound moment in the film, the poignancy of which screenwriters Larry Gelbart and Murray Schisgal could know nothing about. How they could have struck such gold is a mystery.

But the most winning parts of the film have less to do with the ins and outs of plot and more to do with the plight of desperate actors in New York. The opening sequence in which Michael is seen auditioning for roles he'd do anything to get (and finally does do anything) is a convincing evocation of the life of unemployed artists. The portrait is enhanced as Michael's political commitment (what he really wants to do is raise money for a play that is politically correct but artistically bankrupt) is rightfully revealed as more than just mildly ego-laden. Michael's scenes with his agent (played to perfection by director Sydney Pollack) crackle with energy, and Hoffman's exquisite reading as Dorothy of



that most perfunctory of comments, "Let's have lunch" is the movie's sharpest commentary on the shallowness of show biz dealers.

But best of all is the insight *Tootsie* provides into that great specimen of Americana, the soap opera — the pressure to tape every day regardless of anyone's mood; the agony of having a John van Horn in the cast, one of Southwest General's fixtures, irreplaceable even though his eyes dart too noticeably to the strategically placed cue cards; the panic when something goes wrong and the show must go on the air taped live (Dorothy loves these situations most — since there's no turning back s/he makes a point of fiddling with the script); the fact that soaps are influential enough to get Dorothy on the cover of every major American magazine; the fact, for that matter, that through his character in a daytime drama, Michael finds the most subversive vehicle for raising consciousness.

Which brings us back to whether Michael is the consciousness-raiser he cracks himself up to be. He concludes during his term as a woman that what women need is a little more of what men have: spunk, the desire to fight back, the refusal to be put down. It's the man in Michael that makes him such a fabulous woman. And vice versa, having brought out the woman in himself, he's become a better man. It all sounds perilously close to the notion that androgyny is the ideal answer to all our problems, a solution Mary Daly quite correctly dismissed as simply scotch taping John Travolta and Farrah Fawcett together — not exactly the revolution.

In all, *Tootsie* is probably just a bit of froth unworthy of close analysis. But the relationship between the sexes ought not to be trifled with unless the product can stand some careful scrutiny. While it is most salutary to witness Hollywood's recognition of the disparity between men and women and to watch Michael's transformation from a self-centred man to an aware and caring friend, the central dynamic of the film is only a liberal variation on the theme in which men, in this case director Pollack, writers Gelbart and Schisgal, and actor Dustin Hoffman, wind up telling the women on the screen and in the audience exactly what it is that will change our lives — a little assertiveness please. Happily the prescription is more palatable than the one we've been given in the past, but it still boils down to the fact that these resourceful and creative gentlemen still find it necessary to tell us "what we need."

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# No Mean Feet

by Amanda Hale

An abbreviated version of Rina Fraticelli's report commissioned by the federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women in Canadian Theatre appeared in the September 1982 issue of FUSE magazine. In this report, "the invisibility factor" regarding women in theatre is spotlighted in two ways: first, statistically — in a 1978 to 1981 sampling of 1156 productions staged at 104 Canadian theatres only 10% of the plays produced were written by women, 13% of the directors were women, and 11% of the artistic directors were women; and second, verbally by quotes from women who have either written on the subject of theatre or who have been interviewed by Rina Fraticelli during her cross-Canada research. For example, from a director: "One isn't just up against one's own feelings as a woman. One is up against a whole external establishment of a man's world created for men, by men, where the rules are entirely theirs." In short, the world of theatre is no different from the world at large, despite a tradition of tolerance within theatre for the less conventional members of society.

Fraticelli's report has been sent to artistic directors across Canada (89% of whom, as we already know, are male), there has been a meeting in Ottawa, someone has been assigned to write a report on the reports (this someone has subsequently been relieved of the task and has not yet been replaced), and business continues as usual. As with most issues concerning women, no attention has been paid by the mainstream press or by the establishment in general — predictably so — just as no attention will be paid by the 89% male artistic directors of Canada, because people in positions of privilege just don't care about the underprivileged. But the women who are trying to make their lives in theatre do care, and some of them care enough to take affirmative action. A group called Women in Theatre has formed as a direct result of Fraticelli's report. There are 45 or so women who meet once a month to address the issues underlying "the invisibility factor." And two of these — Kate Lushington and Susan Padveen — have gone further and formed a company called Mean Feet, the aims of which are to give visibility to the problems women encounter as a result of gender stereotyping, and to create opportunities for female directors and playwrights, as well as helping them to develop the skills

required to capitalize on those opportunities.

Kate Lushington and Susan Padveen are both directors. Lushington is originally from England and Padveen is from Montréal. Both have lived in Toronto for several years and their work experience has followed a similar pattern. As well as directing shows whenever the opportunity has arisen, both women have filled administrative and teaching positions. According to Lushington, one is relatively isolated as a female director because there just aren't that many women to talk to who are in the same line of work. The same holds true for women playwrights, but not for women actors, who have plenty of competitors vying with them for roles which are scarce. Isolation breeds paranoia, an obsession which paralyzes. Susan Padveen remarks that Fraticelli's report, in setting down the facts regarding women in theatre, and in revealing the common experience of Canadian women in theatre, helps to end this paranoia, and thus makes it possible for women to move in the direction of improving their lot.

Mean Feet's first and only production to date took place in early December of last year. The theme of the show was fathers and daughters as exemplified by David Mamet's taped piece, "Dark Pony," directed by Susan Padveen, and Joanna Glass's "Canadian Gothic," directed by Kate Lushington. The show was funded by a project grant from the Ontario Arts Council. It was a first-class production and received very favourable reviews. Although they have no concrete plans as yet, Lushington and Padveen are both bursting with ideas on plays they would like to direct, and they hope that the next Mean Feet production will take place in July. One possibility is another double bill of one-acters, consisting of a new play teamed up with a classic. This is of course dependent upon funding.

Lushington emphasizes that Mean Feet is a partnership more than a company and they intend to keep it small so that the focus can be maintained, that focus being the support of women as writers and directors. Both Lushington and Padveen are feminists of the liberal, broad spectrum variety rather than the separatist perspective, and they intend to reflect this in their work by giving visibility to the feminist perspective without "contributing to ghettoization," as Lushington says,

by dealing with isolated "women's issues." They do not wish to present agitprop theatre, but they do wish to contribute to a change in their audiences' perception of the stereotypical roles of the male and the female. Above all they wish to challenge the invisibility of women.

The old story of a woman having to be better than a man to succeed in her field holds true in theatre and has been experienced by both Padveen and Lushington. An artistic director, says Lushington, is unlikely to take a risk on a director because this puts the entire production at risk. And he is even less likely to take a chance on a female director because her traditional image inspires less confidence than does that of the male. Furthermore, when a woman director fails, her failure reflects on all women directors, whereas failure on the part of a male is treated as an individual case; hence added pressure and responsibility for the woman director. Nevertheless, Lushington and Padveen feel that they must compete on the open market rather than retreating into "women only" theatre justified by the all-too-true excuse of discrimination. And they appear to be succeeding on the open market as they both have work lined up. Amongst other upcoming projects, Susan Padveen is working on a "drama with music" for Comus Music Theatre. The script, entitled "One Day in May," is to be workshopped during the winter, and produced next season by Comus, with Padveen directing. Kate Lushington will direct a play called "Bombs in Edmonton" in March, and will be directing a show for Montreal's Playwrights' Workshop during the winter. So Mean Feet is far from being a vehicle set up for themselves as directors. It is a partnership which, if it continues and receives the funding it needs to mount productions, could have far-reaching, positive implications for women in theatre. While 51% of the population is female, according to statistics only 3 in 10 characters in a typical cast list are female, and this is high, says Lushington, compared to her experience. The problem of a lack of roles, and

certainly of interesting roles, for women in theatre will only be solved by encouraging female playwrights (who obviously write from their own experience and hence use a majority of female characters, as men write predominantly about male characters) and by producing the already accomplished women playwrights.

Padveen and Lushington see the future of Mean Feet not as restricted to actual theatrical productions, but as undertaking projects which would involve members of the community with no theatrical background. One example cited was the possibility of doing a project in a girls' home. And they will not necessarily stick to conventional theatre environments. Mean Feet's first production was staged at the Maggie Bassett studio, connected to Tarragon Theatre, which has a solid reputation for professional theatre, but the summer production may well play in a community centre or park.

A peculiarity of theatre is that it is a social art and this distinguishes it from many of the other arts such as painting, sculpture, fiction or poetry. A theatre person is reliant on a network of colleagues, without the co-operation of whom she is unable to practise her craft. All too often that network is the "old boys' network," as Fraticelli points out in her report. The majority of teachers in theatre schools are male. The positions of power in the professional theatre are filled almost exclusively by men. In theatre, as in life in general, career opportunities depend largely upon who you know, who you've worked with, how well "in" you are with the club. Some women turn into men in drag on their way up, and become accordingly reluctant to help other women up. Mean Feet has a mandate to support women in theatre, an undertaking which Kate Lushington and Susan Padveen, as energetic and committed feminists, are capable of fulfilling. They are contributing to a growing network of feminists in theatre, and their contributions promise to be strong.

Amanda Hale is a Toronto painter and poet.

## Ageless Truths

by April Kassirer

The beauty of *Tales of Tomorrow: Our Elders* is that filmmaker Barbara Halpern Martineau has captured the lives of real people — speaking their own thoughts and feelings, and sharing some poignant moments.

Sarah and Alex, the two principal subjects, are not Hollywood's version of the ideal (*On Golden Pond*) aged, but rather these people represent a part of reality we seldom see on TV or film.

Sarah Binns, a strong, happy, independent woman, is not only one of the featured personalities, but is also the narrator of much of the film. In her eighties, virtually bound to a wheelchair, she maintains her own apartment with very little outside help, and keeps herself busy with a variety of activities. Against the advice of health professionals, she chooses to live alone away from an institution.

The other central figure, Alex Kielish, has chosen to live at Baycrest Jewish Home for the Aged in Toronto, in order to be with his wife, who requires institutional care. Through him, we see some excellent group activities and therapy offered to the aged, and we feel the despair he experiences watching his wife deteriorate from Alzheimer's Disease.

That the film is one to which people can relate very personally may be as much due to Martineau's sensitivity to her subjects and subject matter, as to the feminist perspective she brings to the film. Martineau says she consciously chose to stress the strength and intelligence of women (who are in fact the large majority of the elderly) and she believed it important to have people who *could* and *would* speak for themselves. This latter decision eliminated the need to have a third

party (narrator, geriatric professional) who might create an objectifying distance between the central personalities and the audience.

As a viewer, I was pleased not to be confronted with an endless barrage of "experts" and "authorities." However, I *did* want a context — *some* information or statistics on geriatric care, facilities, research, future possibilities, etc. — into which to place the two main figures. This would have given the film added interest and a better sense of focus for me. (Why not have some information on Alzheimer's Disease, or the availability and affordability of good physical and emotional care?)

The transition from the short and very general introduction to the rest of the film is also problematic. In combination with the opening title, we are lead to expect a considerable amount of the film to be about old age in general. Instead, we are presented with only two tales of two elders.

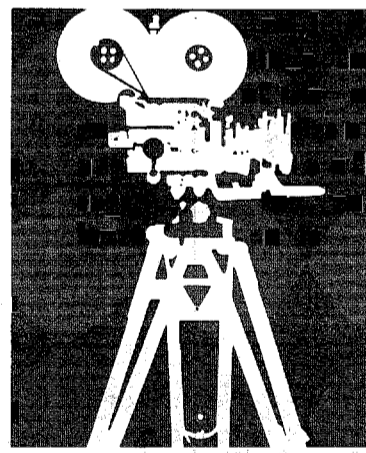
Technically, the film is smooth and the music (some composed expressly for the film by Carole Marshall) is warm and colourful and melds supportively with the visuals.

Most importantly, this film brings a hidden area of life to us in a unique and moving way. It provides much food for thought and should open discussion in an area badly neglected.

(Be sure to see *Tales of Tomorrow* at the International Women's Day festivities in Toronto, Regina, Kitchener-Waterloo and St. John's, Nfld.)

April Kassirer is a Toronto musician.

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# MOVEMENT COMMENT

## And Now for a Really Big Shoe...

by Sarah Sheard

Light she was as any fairy  
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— traditional

Shoes should not be any tougher to buy than, say, records, or books. But if you are a woman whose feet are larger than the manufacturers' norm, forget it.

My feet are not deformed or out of proportion. Just size 11. In romantic poems, women's legs terminate in delicate hooves, dainty trotters that fit the palm of a lover's hand. Lady's slippers make good champagne glasses.

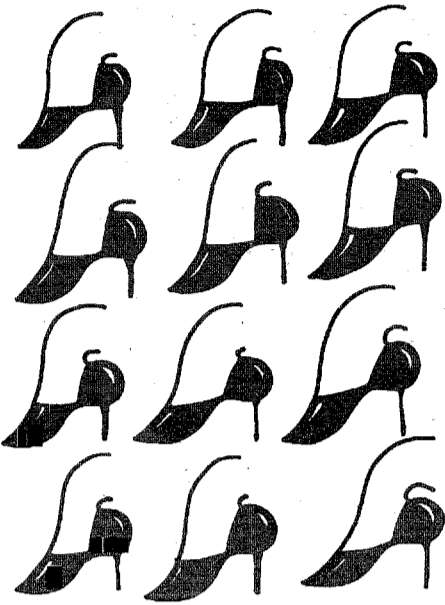
I outgrew that poetry and broke the sex foot-barrier when I turned thirteen. I remember the very day. The salesperson at Eaton's girlswear measured me, shook her head and pointed towards boyswear. And the guy in boyswear took one look down and banished me to menswear, whereupon my mortified girlfriends shucked me at the escalator. Sic transit self-esteem.

Anyway, I walked into high school wearing men's Converse hi-cut sneakers (white) with the red and blue fireballs on the ankles and later switched to Greb Kodiaks that the groovy wore half-laced.

Comparisons are odious but wasn't that what high school was about? I found myself mentally removing the shoes from other women's feet. Measuring their development against mine during the gym showers. I encouraged them to talk provocatively about their shoe sprees. The details excited me strangely. They teased me, let me hold their stockinged feet in my hand, hissed words like "pump" and "slingback" at me as I wrote exams. Ahh, the delicious agony of my first fetish.

I clumped off to university in Frye snub-nosed cowboy boots and now that it was the seventies, I got away with wearing them to formal events, funerals, etc. But the blisters. Those boots never wore in — although they did wear out.

Now it was 1982 and I was desperate for a



new look. One that didn't weigh so much. I wanted a pair of glove-soft Robin Hood fetish boots that crumpled around the calf.

So I started at Bloor and Spadina and worked my way through the stores, all the way over to Yonge. I pretended I didn't really need a pair of boots. By Yonge and Wellesley, I'd shrunk my spiel down to a pithy, descriptive paragraph, saving the punchline for the end. It was only when I held a dream boot in my hand that I would ask for it in size 11. By the time I reached Yonge and Dundas, I'd bought four pairs of socks and was actually wondering if I could sew leather soles onto them instead and save myself further humiliation.

I called my mum.

"Pull yourself together," she said. "There's a store called Tallcrest. It's in an arcade and you find it down a stairwell on the northeast corner of Bay and Adelaide.

That's the side the sun rises on, right?" She knew I was flustered. "It has lots of modern styles, dear. Check it out."

My hope rekindled, I hopped the subway. Found the stairwell, although I've walked past it dozens of times and never seen it. It appeared this time, like magic that works only when you deserve it. That stairwell led to a subterranean catacomb that other people with "my problem" shared. If Tallcrest didn't deliver, I doomed myself to custom-made orthopedic footwear — very, very expensive. It's listed, together with prosthetic devices, in the yellow pages.

The Tallcrest sign glowed like a friendly aquarium at the end of a passageway of glass and mirrors. It turned out to be a very tiny store for us long people. The precarious display of footwear propped up on glass pegs made me claustrophobic. If I touched one, I envisioned the entire display cascading to the floor on top of me. I reached past a pair of statuesque browsers and plucked a sensible loafer off the bottom peg. It was incredible. Holding it in my hand, I realised how deluded I'd been by the scale. Out of context with its mates, this shoe was, in reality, almost an arm's-length. It looked like it could talk on a child's TV show. I put the shoe back. It was time to take a chair.

There were other women sitting with their shoes off on either side. It was like a waiting room where we'd all come to see the doctor for the same unmentionable problem. A nurse — I mean a saleswoman — emerged from the stockroom with a clipboard. She whispered something about stock to the woman opposite me and her face fell. I glanced down at her "problem area" and actually blushed. The saleswoman murmured to a few other women whose faces all crumpled. There were simply not enough shoes to go around. We were like women in the Soviet Union, queuing up in vain to buy the one style of footwear they manufacture. The kind that fits either foot. My neighbour caught the saleswoman's sleeve and implored: Wasn't there anything in a snowboot, size thirteen?

Wow.

The saleswoman disappeared.

A moment later she returned, carrying a

box the size of a child's coffin. My neighbour sighed audibly when she saw it. She pulled out the snowboots, zipped them up and clumped into the middle of the room while the rest of us watched her and watched each other watching her.

In another corner, a teenaged girl, a Mariel Hemingway type, was strapping on her maiden pair of high heels. She was fifteen maybe. When she rose to walk to the mirror, she needed to support herself on either side with her mother and her grandmother, both of whom resembled Mariel Hemingway in stages of life she has yet to reach.


I watched that Douglas fir of a teenager study herself with dismay in the full-length mirror, clinging for balance and wailing with twisted lip that she was never gonna be able to dance in these, no way, and why did she have to wear heels, she already towered over her partner and ohhh, the bittersweet anguish of her predicament. She would have looked great running barefoot up mountains and straddling rivers, dancing barefoot to the end of her days.

Both her mother and her grandmother interposed their bodies protectively between the girl and the mirror as though to forestall the self-consciousness that Amazons unavoidably acquire. Watching that trio I sent out a tiny rallying call to women caught in awkward zones everywhere. To women squeezing and tugging, slouching and staggering across the planet. To women secluding themselves in private despair-towers because they'd burst the manufacturers' norm-barrier.

And if all the Clementines in this world lined their feet up heel to toe, they'd girdle the globe three times around. And if those heels and toes commenced stamping and drumming, the globe would be compressed to a hard little ball. And the tattoo, carrying to the farthest reaches of the galaxy, might just fall on sympathetic, intergalactic cobblers looking for fresh markets upwind.

To serve us right.

Sarah Sheard works for Coach House Press in Toronto.



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## International Women's Day

• **Saturday, March 5:** International Women's Day. Rally and demonstration, with entertainment, at Convocation Hall at 11 am sharp. Fair from 1-4 pm at Central Technical School (Harbord and Bathurst). All-women contingent at the front of the march. For day care, call 591-1434. A women-only dance sponsored by the U of T Women's Newsmagazine at 8:30 pm. Cash bar. Robina Ballroom, 1 Robina Ave (near Oakwood and St. Clair). \$5 (\$4 students and unemployed). More information: 789-4541.

## Week of March 6

• **Sunday, March 6:** New Dimensions. Lesbian social get-together. For more information, call Gayle: 683-8691. Also Sunday, March 20.

• **Sunday, March 6:** "Passages — Where are We Heading?" a lecture by Karen Fraser concerning survival in the computer age, time management and the future of the family. Jewish Community Centre, 4588 Bathurst Street, room 101-102, 7:30 pm. \$4.50.

• **Monday, March 7:** CBC Stereo presents "Emma Goldman: A Life of Anarchy," a series on the anarchist/feminist who lived in Toronto for a short period of time. 8:05 pm. Also Monday, March 14 and 21.

• **Monday, March 7:** The Women's Group. Support and consciousness-raising group for lesbian meets at 519 Church Street, 8 pm. For more information call Raechel 926-0527. Also Monday, March 14, March 21 and March 28.

• **Monday, March 7:** Five Canadian Poets at Theatre Passe Muraille — Daphne Marlatt, Polly Thompson, Toby MacLennan, Lola Lemire Tostevin, and Lillian Allen. 9 pm. \$4. 16 Ryerson Avenue. Information: 363-2416.

• **Tuesday, March 8:** Lesbian Phone Line: open tonight for calls from women. Every Tuesday night (7:30-10:30 pm). 960-3249.

• **Tuesday, March 8:** CBC Stereo's Ideas presents "Feminism in the Political Arena." Four programmes examining various feminist strategies for affecting change in political spheres, and the opposition to these strategies as seen by leading feminists in English Canada, Québec, Britain and the US. 8:05 pm. Also Tuesday, March 15 and March 22.

Sponsored by

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BROADSIDE**TORONTO WOMEN'S EVENTS CALENDAR**  
**March 1983**

• **Tuesday, March 8:** Women's Action for Peace. Picket outside High Tech Trade Conference (military exports and promotion) and symbolic action at War Memorial in Ottawa. Car pool, day care, contact Tricia at (416) 233-6507 or Lisa (416) 534-2813.

• **Tuesday, March 8:** The Five Minute Feminist Cabaret, an evening of performance, music, poetry and dancing to celebrate International Women's Day. 8:00 pm. Information call Women's Cultural Building Hotline 534-1682.

• **Wednesday, March 9:** Toronto Addicted Women's Self-Help Network (TAWSHN), a self-help group for women addicted to drugs and alcohol meets at Central Neighbourhood House, 349 Ontario Street, 7 pm. Information: 961-7319. Also Wednesday, March 16, March 23, and March 30.

• **Wednesday, March 9:** International Women's Day Committee meets at 7:30 pm. For more information call: 789-4541. Also Wednesday March 23.

• **Thursday, March 10:** Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) meets at 519 Church Street at 7:30 pm. Also Thursday, March 24.

• **Thursday, March 10:** "Alternative Images '83" film series: *A Time to Rise* and *Ankur (The Seedlings)*. 7:30 and 8:30 pm. OISE Auditorium, 252 Bloor St. West. \$3. Information: 978-2391.

• **Friday, March 11:** Performance of singer/songwriter Anna Gutmanis. Smokey Joe's Café, 519 Church St. 10 pm. \$1.50.

• **Friday, March 11:** Women's Independent Thoughtz (WITZ). A seminar/discussion group for the exchange of ideas, and creative endeavours in art, literature, philosophy and political thought. 7 pm. Info: 536-3162.

• **Saturday, March 12:** "Pornography: How it Affects Women's Lives." Day long consultation, moderator Doris Anderson. Sponsored by NAC and YWCA. Toronto City Hall Council Chambers. 9 am to 4 pm. \$5. Information: 961-8100 or 922-3246.

## Week of March 13

• **Sunday, March 13:** The Politics of Reproduction, a lecture by Mary O'Brien. The Sanctuary, Trinity Church, 427 Bloor Street West, 7:30 pm. Tickets \$5. OISE Women's Resource Centre, SCM Bookstore and Women's Bookstore.

**THE POLITICS OF REPRODUCTION**

A LECTURE BY MARY O'BRIEN

• **Sunday, March 13:** Violet Butterfly, a women's poetry workshop series at the Cecil Street Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street. All women are invited to bring their work. 1:30-4 pm. Free. Information: 368-8509. Also Sunday, March 27.

• **Thursday, March 17:** Canadian Images 6th Annual Film Festival in Peterborough, Ont. Complete collection of new and old Canadian films. Everyone invited. For information call: (705) 748-1400, or write: Canadian Images, 753 George St. North, Peterborough K9H 3T2. To Sunday, March 20.

• **Thursday, March 17:** "Adhesiveness: Between Friendship and Homosexuality," a lecture presented by the Lesbian and Gay Academic Society at U of T. Rose Room, Trinity College, 8 pm

• **Thursday, March 17:** "Alternative Images '83" film series: *The Lament of Arthur O'Leary* and *The Patriot Game*. 7:30 and 8:30 pm. OISE Auditorium, 252 Bloor St. West. \$3. Information: 978-2391.

• **Friday, March 18:** Gays and Lesbians at U of T present a panel discussion of pornography. International Student Centre. St. George St. 7:30 pm.

**BINGO NIGHT**

• **Saturday, March 19:** *Broadside* Bingo Night. Fun, Prizes, Refreshments. Pay-as-you-play. Admission free. 8-12 pm. 519 Church St. (at Wellesley). Information: 598-3513.

## Week of March 20

• **Thursday, March 24:** Feminism in the Eighties: "Which Way Now Mother?" Speaker and panel discussion on the future of Canadian feminism, sponsored by the Ryerson Women's Centre, 380 Victoria Street, room L72 in Lecture Hall. 5:30 pm.

• **Friday, March 25:** No Frills (yes, the band) at Hotel Isabella, Sherbourne and Isabella. \$3 cover charge. Also Saturday, March 26.

• **Friday, March 25:** Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund presents "In the Best Interests of the Children," a documentary about lesbian mothers. Scadding Court Community Centre, Dundas and Bathurst Streets. 8 pm.

• **Saturday, March 26:** The Gay Community Dance Committee presents "Mardi Gras: A Costume Ball" — disco, rock, new wave and women's music. The Concert Hall, 888 Yonge Street. Tickets \$7.

## Week of March 27

• **Sunday, March 27:** Resources for Feminist Research Spring Party and Fundraiser. 7-10 pm. Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazleton Ave. \$5, includes glass of wine and entertainment (\$1 students and unemployed). For more information call: (416) 923-6641, ext. 278.

• **Sunday, March 27:** Canadian Day of Lesbian Action. For information about events, call the Rape Crisis Centre: 964-7477.

• **Thursday, March 31:** "Alternative Images '83" film series: *Resurgence* and *Knife in the Head*. 7:30 and 8:30 pm. OISE Auditorium, 252 Bloor St. West. \$3. Information: 978-2391.



'Outside Broadside' is a monthly feature of the paper. To help make it as comprehensive as possible, let us know when you are planning an event.

In explaining your event (see coupon), keep it short — max. 25 words. Copy that is too long, or with incomplete information will not be printed.

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