



Bernarda Alba at CentreStage Theatre. SEE STORY PAGE 12.

INSIDE BROADSIDE

FEATURE

IMAGE OF INCEST: Sylvia Fraser talks with *Broadside* about her experience of incest and the personality masks she wore to cover the truth. "Until four years ago I thought I was normal, but the child inside me was always on the alert for ways to survive," says Fraser. Interview by Susan G. Cole. Page 8.

NEWS

POST-JUNTA: Margarita Papandreou talks about the struggle of Greek women to organize, during the seven-year dictatorship and after. During the junta, women's organizations were dissolved, "which suggests they were afraid of the power of women," says Papandreou. Interview by Betty Notar. Page 5.

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OUTSIDE BROADSIDE: Don't miss this month's calendar of Toronto women's events, for December 1987 and January 1988. Page 15.

MOVEMENT MATTERS:

Read about free trade and women; about Voice of Women defence demands; about International Women's Day, 1988; about NFB films on loan; and more. Movement Matters, page 7.

COMMENT

US GIRLS/THEM GIRLS: Debi Brock and Jennifer Stephen comment on the recent book *Good Girls/Bad Girls: Sex Trade Workers and Feminists Face to Face*, and the prostitution debate. "The real difference in how feminists regard prostitution is in how power is conceptualized," they say. Page 4.

QUESTION OF RACISM: Toronto Women's Bookstore refutes charges of racism published in Black women's newspaper *Our Lives*. "We have been silent too long on this issue," says the bookstore staff in an open letter. Movement Comment, page 6.

ARTS

BOOK FAIR: The third annual International Feminist Book Fair, "one of the largest and most exciting gatherings of women in the world," is being planned for June in Montréal. Forces are gathering for publicity and fundraising, and Canadian women are being invited to help host the event. Betsy Nuse reports. Page 10.



A SAFER PLACE: Incest survivor Shirley Turcotte describes how she learned to

leave her body on the bed while her father abused her, and go to a safer place "where he couldn't get me." The NFB film *To A Safer Place* is reviewed by Helen Lenskyj. Page 11.

HOUSE ARREST: A Spanish matriarch confines her daughters to the house after the death of their father in Federico García Lorca's play *The House of Bernarda Alba*, at Toronto's CentreStage Theatre, a play that explores the destructive force of repression. Reviewed by Susan G. Cole. Page 12.

SANITARY SCENARIO: MediaWatch advocate Tova Wagman looks at the "private" nature of menstruation and how it translates into "feminine hygiene" commercials in the media. Campaigns to remove the ads are often prompted by embarrassment, not objection to sexist content, though these ads are not among the worst offenders, says Wagman. Page 13.

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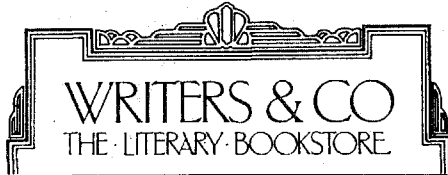
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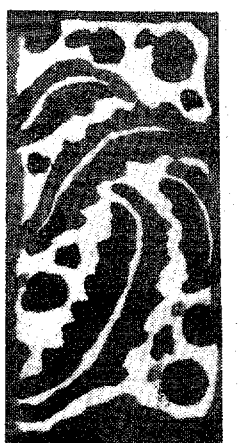
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Broadside:

In Margaret Buist's excellent article, "One Foot in the Door" (October 1987), she described the continued fight for women's equality and how the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is being used for and against us. It is important, I think, to clarify one essential point. The author states that just five years after fighting to have our rights entrenched in the Charter when it was first formed, it is necessary for us to do so again as a result of the Meech Lake Accord. She says that "in those few hours of bargaining at Meech Lake, it appears that the men did not even consider section 15, or worse, they considered it and rejected its significance."

I believe that the intention was far more serious. On the last day of its hearings, the Commons-Senate Committee on the Constitution heard from Senator Lowell Murray, the Minister of Federal-Provincial Relations, and Norman Spector, Secretary to the Cabinet for Federal-Provincial Affairs, who told the members that the first ministers examined and then rejected the idea of inserting equality guarantees for women. Spector said that this exclusion was not an oversight, and that the ministers had had their longest discussion over the relationship between the "distinct society clause" and the Charter of Rights.

The Prime Minister and the first ministers know full well that the Charter would be affected. Their decision was not only deliberate, it was critical to reaching agreement. Had section 15 been altered to include women, Spector testified, there would have been no deal. The ministers were motivated by "political reasons," as they believed that a distinct society subject to review of the Charter would be "meaningless."

Once again, women were used as a bargaining chip in a constitutional deal. Once again, women lost. It is critical that we know this, as it will inform our strategy in the upcoming months.

Maude Barlow
Ottawa

NDP Defence

Broadside:

I was disappointed with the misleading editorial in the October 1987 issue of *Broadside*. Although good points were made about respecting women's choices to run for any political party, and offered some useful criticisms of the New Democratic Party, the editorial did not leave an accurate impression of the relationship between women and party politics.

The editorial mentioned that in the Ontario election over 90 women vied for public office but did not mention that 45 of them—half of them—were NDP candidates.

The NDP is the only major political party to be based on participation by women and men. The Tories and the Liberals are rooted in an older all-male parliamentary tradition, and it shows. The NDP's precursor, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) had strong women guiding party philosophy and policy from its beginnings in 1932-1933. Canada's first woman MP, Agnes McPhail, was a CCF member.

The Liberals and Conservatives are funded mostly by big business. We all know how much big business cares about women. Political parties cannot afford to alienate their financial supporters. The NDP has a policy *not* to accept donations from large corporations, to keep itself honest. The largest contributor to the NDP is the Canadian labour movement, which has advocated equal pay, childcare and parental leave.

The Liberals/Conservatives have generally only come through for women as a result of public pressure, opinion polls, or at NDP insistence. The NDP, however, has pushed for progressive legislation even in the face of great public opposition. The NDP has its idiots like every party, but when the heat is on, its philosophy of human rights and dignity for everyone and not just those who can buy them, delivers.

Those of us who are lesbians or bisexual women appreciate that it was the NDP who put sexual orientation on the Ontario Liberal agenda. In fact, the original Liberal human rights bill did not include sexual orientation. NDP MPP Evelyn Gigantes introduced the amendment to the bill that would end legal discrimination against non-heterosexuals. Only Manitoba (NDP), Yukon (NDP), Québec (under the previous Parti Québécois administration) and now Ontario, have such legislation.

There is no question that there are currently a few feminists in parties other than the NDP. But to think that this handful of people will completely change parties founded on profit/power motives is ludicrous! Although I admire the courage of feminists who decide to reform the Libs/PCs, the bottom line is that an elected member must vote along party lines when required if she wishes to remain in the party. The party stance engulfs the individual. Have you ever heard Flora MacDonald, Barbara McDougall or Pat Carney criticize Conservative actions that hurt women, such as free trade or cuts to the family allowance?

The NDP leads in the development of policies to help low-income people, 60% of whom are women. Under NDP governments, the minimum wage and welfare payments are

above the Canadian average. The CCF in Saskatchewan introduced socialized medicine into Canada. The NDP is the first party to bring in pay equity legislation (Manitoba), the first to set up a special fund to help women candidates, and to have a gender parity policy for decision-making bodies. The Manitoba NDP government includes a woman Status of Women minister, while the Ontario Liberals have reappointed a man to direct policy affecting women.

There is no doubt in my mind which political party is most concerned about women, and which is most accessible to strong, committed participation by women.

Marika Morris
Ottawa

I. S. Invitation

Broadside:

The following is an open letter to the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics from the International Socialists, and an invitation for a public debate on the way forward for the Abortion Rights Movement.

In recent months a debate has occurred through the pages of various journals (*NOW* magazine, *Broadside*, *Rites*, etc.) and at various public events concerning the content of the video "The Struggle for Choice." The video is produced by Nancy Nicol, an independent video artist and also a member of the International Socialists.

This debate is welcome. Abortion rights are under attack across Canada and the women's movement is on the defensive. It is extremely important to argue through differences in order to develop the most effective strategy to defend women's rights that do exist and extend them where possible.

However, some aspects of the debate have been confused, clouded with innuendo and quite apolitical. It is necessary to put the debate onto a political level. The video was not a production of the I.S. However the International Socialists stand completely behind the key political arguments contained in it. "The

• continued page 7

Ed. Note: In a recent issue of *Broadside*, a letter was printed which, subsequent to receipt and publication, was found not to have been for publication. *Broadside* regrets any embarrassment and inconvenience this may have caused. In the future, any letters not intended for publication should be clearly marked on the face of the letter.

EDITORIAL

No More Power Plays

"Tiny moppet" was the term one newspaper used to describe four-year-old Jodi Weiss, the kid who was dumped from a Scarborough hockey team because she is a girl. And Jodi's problem with the Cedar Hill house league got front page coverage.

Of course we are delighted that major newspapers played their part in raising public awareness about women's sport issues. But we have been exposed to more than twenty years of journalistic enthusiasm over girls who are able to play "boys' games." And we have human rights codes and a charter that prohibit sex discrimination in sport, while at the same time protecting female-only sports under the provisions for affirmative action programs. One might ask why these incidents of sex discrimination in sport keep coming up.

That a sizable percentage of girls and women can perform as well as boys and men on the playing field or the ice rink is no longer especially newsworthy. Research dating back fifty years has documented the overlap in athletic performance between the sexes. Feminist science has convincingly demonstrated that sex differences in strength and endurance can be explained more adequately in terms of social and cultural factors than by the value-laden concept of "female biology." We are all aware that there are girls who can run as fast, swim as

far (and further), and catch as well as most boys. And, although this is a well-kept secret, exercise physiologists know that the gap between the sexes is getting smaller, and is expected to disappear in activities such as distance swimming, running and cycling in the next couple of decades.

The questions that newspapers cannot be expected to tackle, questions that feminists and progressive men in sport are beginning to explore, go beyond equality issues to challenge the nature of sport as presently constituted. Advancing the liberal argument that, if it's good for boys, then it's good for girls too, they are asking whether competitive team sports are good for *anyone*. And, in this specific case, why are four-year-olds of either sex being directed into organized sport? Are parents or coaches simply deriving vicarious pleasure from shouting encouragement (or, in some cases, abuse) from the sidelines? Are kids being indoctrinated into the value system of mainstream sport—and, by extension, mainstream business and politics—at this early age as a form of social control? Are they absorbing the win-at-all-costs mentality so that they will fit into the capitalist system? Are they being regimented and trained at a time when freedom and fun on the ice would be more appropriate?

Alternative forms of sport have been devel-

oping in North America in the past decade, and it is not coincidental that this trend is occurring at the same time as the contemporary women's movement. One of the best known in women's communities is the lesbian feminist softball league. In Toronto, the Notso Amazons have just completed their fourth season; in many American cities, these leagues have histories of ten years or more.

Feminists in the sociology of sport are realizing that these leagues are a vital part of the feminist project of transforming sport. Organization of women-only sport takes a different form, operating on a collective rather than hierarchical committee structure. Child care and car pools are organized. The issue of recreation vs. competition arises as collectives debate whether to have playoffs, whether to make rule changes, even whether to keep score. And, in leagues where feminist principles are up front, women are sensitive to the different ages, physiques and ability levels within the league and develop a competitive style that does not belittle the efforts of other players.

It's time that newspapers paid as much attention to these women as they do to the four-year-olds who make it in the world of organized competitive sport.

Which We Is Who?

by Debi Brock and Jennifer Stephen

In *Good Girls/Bad Girls: Sex Trade Workers and Feminists Face to Face* (Women's Press, 1987), editor Laurie Bell asks sex trade workers, "Are we your sisters?" She also asks feminists and sex trade workers, "How can we be redeemed in each other's eyes? What are we asking of each other?"

Of course, we don't have the answers to those questions, and are not going to pretend that we do. What we can do is talk about what our experiences have been working in feminist organizations. But before doing that, we want to talk about this "we" thing for a minute.

First of all, not everyone realizes that there is no monolithic bloc called the "Women's Movement." There are real separations within feminism. Between socialist, liberal and radical feminists there are real differences in how we see things and how we think about what we should do. We even set up the problems differently and we've seen what those differences are around pornography. In fact we sometimes work in opposition to each other and there's nothing unsisterly about that. So we do think that Laurie's "we" needs to be clarified a bit.

We also think that sex trade workers don't hear about the differences which exist among feminists. And no wonder. It practically took a bulldozer to get the National Action Committee on the Status of Women to take up prostitution in a way that did not see every woman in the business as a victim and every man as a pimp. In many ways, that action was instigated by CORP (Canadian Organization for the Rights of Prostitutes). And the fight is not over yet. So again, we need to talk about the "we" business and what real differences do exist among feminists about prostitution and about women in the sex trade.

The real differences in how feminists regard prostitution occurs around different ways of conceptualizing power and where power comes from. We have differences in how we think power is enacted in sexuality—including the way the state is used to regulate our sexualities (and just about everything else we do, for that matter). For example, radical feminism contends that the sex trade generally is dangerous terrain for women. Period. Why? Because sex, generally, is dangerous terrain for women. This is not to say that radical feminists are anti-sex, but that patriarchal sex is the primary site of women's subordination and the only way that women experience sexuality in our culture.

Further, from this perspective, because the sex trade is so intrinsically bad for all women, it must be eradicated. How? By whatever means necessary, including through the use of state power. Use legislation, use the cops to bust the pimps, use social services to save the "women-victims" from the pimps and the tricks so that women can escape the business. Radical feminism does support a partial program of decriminalization in supporting the repeal of Section 195.1—"communicating for the purposes of prostitution"—but primarily for the purpose of rescuing women from the business.

Some socialist feminists have begun to develop an alternative approach to prostitution. The porn debates provided a catalyst for an alternative critique of sexuality and power to emerge—one that is a major departure from the radical feminist view. Socialist

feminism is attempting to uncover the interplay of power relations in sexualities which are developed on the basis of race, class and gender. We are also pretty concerned about the role of the state in maintaining relations of exploitation in all its forms. So some of us are starting to think about the position of women in prostitution in a way that recognizes state regulation of sexualities, and in a way that does not isolate prostitution as an institution or prioritize gender as the dominant mode of exploitation.

Women who work in the sex trade are workers, just like women working at GM or in any of the service industries. Women workers are exploited, not strictly on the basis of our gender or through our sexualities, but instead through an interplay of social class, race and gender. A walk through any clerical or secretarial pool, past the office dividers and the VDTs will demonstrate women's work for low wages (like \$5-\$6 per hour) and for long hours, in a job setting that's as exploitive as the street track.

When we do make the separation between the person working in prostitution and the institution of prostitution, we do so in order to compare the work women do in prostitution to the other kinds of work women do, and not to use this separation as a shield to be sisterly to prostitutes while carrying out an agenda for rescue and rehabilitation. We do it to recognize that an institution and people who fill particular places in it are not the same thing. For example, we can organize a support picket with striking workers at a factory, but this does not lend support to the employer or to capitalism. We say that work-relations are oppressive under capitalism, but this does not mean that we are anti-work. We say that the conditions under which we work are oppressive: that the pay is too low and that the conditions are bad. We do not criticize women for working low paying jobs for long hours: we demand higher wages and better working conditions. We do not overlook the fact that it is primarily immigrant women and women of colour who work as cleaners and in the garment trade. We organize to demand pay and employment equity; we expose and fight against the barriers set up by racism and sexism.

Is offering 30 minutes of sex for \$80 worse than working 8 hours in a sweatshop for \$4.50 an hour?

But there are two differences between work in prostitution and other areas of work that women do for pay. The first difference is what's being sold—sex. But is offering 30 minutes of sex for, say \$80 really more awful than working for 8 hours in a sweatshop and earning \$4.50 an hour? Some of us don't think so. The second difference concerns the power of the state to criminalize, organize, regulate

and police the working environment and the danger this poses to women.

There is an entire State apparatus that is used to regulate the business of prostitution. This apparatus begins at the level of legislation which criminalizes every aspect of the business, and extends right through to the power of social service agencies. These same agencies have the power and the authority to remove children from women in the business. Women engaged in prostitution are considered unfit mothers, as if earning money to support yourself and your children makes you an unfit mother. These agencies act as self-appointed counsellors, to rehabilitate women, to tell them who they can and can't live with, and to tell them how screwed-up sexually they are. And potentially, the state can use its power to make prostitutes undergo forced testing for AIDS, just as they have been made to undergo forced testing for STD (sexually transmitted disease).

and isn't a pimp, and to impose "rehabilitative therapy" on women whom they assume need to be rescued from prostitution.

Again at NAC's 1987 AGM, a resolution which would have required that NAC oppose the mandatory testing and quarantening of prostitutes for AIDS and other STDs was amended to refer to people, generally, not to prostitutes alone. This amendment, on the surface, sounds fine since we are clearly opposed to the forced testing of anyone, including gay men. However, the debate from the floor clearly demonstrated that the association of prostitutes with the spread of AIDS was rigidly fixed in the minds of most women at that conference. It seems that many women are buying into the media hype linking prostitution to the spread of AIDS, despite the fact that prostitutes are safe-sex practitioners (and have been for longer than anyone else), and that the female-to-male transmission rate of the virus is almost negligible.

Some feminists, it seems, are more likely to view prostitutes as social pariahs than as "sisters." Here, again, there is an insidious link to the rationale which the state uses to control prostitutes. Instead of uniting in support of sex trade workers, NAC chose a civil rights defence as its fall-back position. A civil rights defence of all people on this question is fine. But not all people are under attack around the scapegoating for AIDS. Like gay men, sex trade workers have been singled out, and NAC claimed to be prepared to support that struggle: it has not come through.

When the idea of urine testing for auto-workers was suggested by management in order to see if anyone was doing drugs while on the job, the labour movement united to fight it. Why could NAC not join with sex trade workers to fight the scapegoating of prostitutes as key transmitters of AIDS?

Speaking as socialist feminists, we think that the continuing and developing dialogue between feminists and sex trade workers is critical. However, we think that "we" as feminists have to be clear about what our differences are, and, that those differences have got to be communicated effectively and clearly to workers in the sex trade.

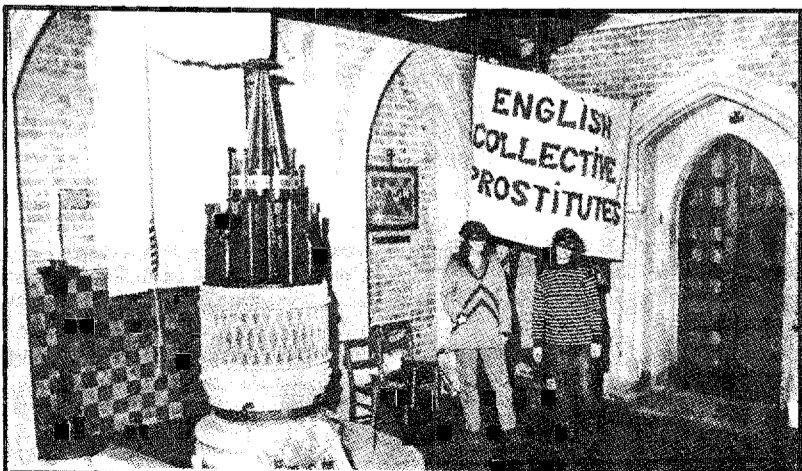
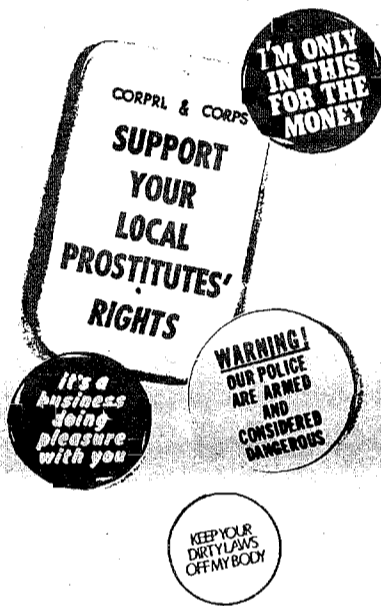
We must also recognize that our task is not to organize workers in the sex trade: that kind of momentum must come from within the sex trade itself. Nor is it the task of feminists to unilaterally organize and provide social services for women on the street or in the escort services: those services are most effective when they are organized and coordinated for and by women working in the sex trade. These services, offered without fear of legal penalty, can provide what sex trade workers want—how to get a lawyer, where to get general medical and health care, and abortion referrals—when it's wanted and when it's needed. CORP is proposing exactly this kind of service: it's called Maggies. It will be run as a self-help project for prostitutes, and be run entirely by and for prostitutes. We can all work to make sure this project gets off the ground.

We can also work in solidarity with women in the sex trade. We can use our own organizations to demand full decriminalization: the removal of communicating, living on the avails, procuring and bawdy-house laws from the Criminal Code. There are other sections of the Criminal Code relating to extortion, assault, and sexual assault which can be used to deal with the violence and coercion when it does occur.

Our task must also include working to improve the social and economic conditions for all women, so that all women can make real choices about our work and the conditions under which we will agree to work—both in the sex trade and in our straight jobs.

Feminists need to be very clear about the implications which our strategies and tactics might have where sexual regulation through the state is implicated. We still have a long way to go toward articulating our differences, as feminists, around prostitution. Moreover, there's been very little action around prostitution on the part of feminists, while the cops have been having a field day.

Debi Brock and Jennifer Stephen are members of the International Women's Day Committee, a Toronto-based socialist feminist action group.



Prostitutes demonstrate at a London church, 1972

PAM ISHERWOOD

Margarita Papandreou:

Oracle of Change

Betty Notar was recently in Greece where she spoke to Margarita Papandreou, American-born wife of Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou, at the official residence in Athens. Margarita Papandreou is a leader of the Women's Union of Greece.

Interview by Betty Notar

Betty Notar: Greece appears to be a very patriarchal society? Is this true?

Margarita Papandreou: People often say to me that they have an impression of Greece that is almost that of a jungle society. They can't believe that a woman can go out with a woman friend of hers and have a drink somewhere. They have this image of a woman walled away at home with the extended family. Greece is not that far behind in the ways women are treated in other countries. Here it's more obvious, so it hits you right between the eyes and seems a little more brutal. Sexism is more subtle in other countries.

B.N.: How do you manage to get women's issues promoted in Greece?

M.P.: First you select the wife of the prime minister and ensure she is a feminist. For as we know being a woman prime minister is not enough. Just look at Margaret Thatcher (laughter).

B.N.: You were instrumental in organizing the Union of Greek Women [a nation wide women's organization, ideologically oriented to the Pan-Hellenic Socialist party, PASOK, which has claimed a membership of 15,000]. How difficult was it for you to do this, being a non-Greek? What difficulties did you face?

M.P.: It wasn't taken seriously, it was treated like a group of housewives. They attacked the party, they attacked Andreas, they attacked me. I don't like the dirty tactics that comment on what I'm wearing or where I went and who I danced with. These are putdowns and they tend to be done much more towards women than towards men.

B.N.: How did the military dictatorship affect the women's movement in Greece?

M.P.: During the seven-year dictatorship, women were unable to organize. There were rules that you could not have more than five people in your home without police approval. The interesting thing is that the military dictatorship dissolved all women's organizations within the first two weeks of taking power, which suggests they were afraid of the power of women. During the dictatorship, Greek women could only follow the women's movement through foreign newspapers and books. When the dictatorship fell, women were quite ready to organize again. That's what made it possible to move ahead. What I could offer, more than anything, was organizational techniques because I had been trained as a community organizer. I have been an organizer since I was a young girl. This is typically American. Ameri-

cans are known for being able to organize well. I brought these techniques with me, and the women were eager to learn in order to push for the things they thought were important.

B.N.: How did you become involved with women's issues in Greece?

M.P.: The Greek women were eager to move ahead. It's been a nice combination of cultures. The Greeks are very spontaneous and enthusiastic. I tell the story of the journalist who asked me, "When you were a little girl, in the plains of Illinois, did you ever imagine that one day you'd be the wife of the prime minister of Greece?" What a stupid question. I said, "The wife of the prime minister? I dreamed I would be the prime minister." I considered it very funny, but then it got into the Greek newspapers and it was said that I wanted to take over.

My first conscious awareness of sex discrimination had to do with sports. When I was a sophomore in high school, I was on the girls' basketball team. There were tryouts for the boys' team, which travelled to other schools. The girls only travelled as cheerleaders for the boys' team. I knew I was a good player so I went to the coach and said I'd like to try out for the boys' team. He paused, then said I couldn't because I was a girl. It was like a light went off.

B.N.: How did your stay in Canada shape your views?

M.P.: Canada was a good experience because I had the chance to be in touch with feminists there. All the time, I was saying to myself, if we ever get back to Greece, I will turn my attention and political skills to the equality of women. I was so committed that the second day I was back in Greece, I started calling women. We didn't even have furniture in this house, but I started getting in touch with women. I put into practice something that was burning inside me.

B.N.: I heard there was a new shelter for assaulted women opening up in Athens.

M.P.: This will be the first shelter in Greece. There is a big need. We've had no experience in this area, so several women were sent abroad to Ireland, England, Germany and Belgium to learn how their shelters were run. This new shelter will run as a pilot program and eventually we hope to have shelters in all the regions of Greece.

B.N.: What is being done to address the issues of incest and child sexual abuse? It's only been in recent years in Canada that the silence has been broken on those problems.

M.P.: The whole question of incest is very difficult to address in Greek society. About five years ago, two Greek women made a film about their own stories of being sexually abused. When they approached TV executives and tried to have it aired, the executives, who were men, said no. They were embarrassed and denied that this was a problem. It's a big problem and needs to be dealt with.

B.N.: What about access to birth control and abortions?

M.P.: Abortions have been legal and available in state hospitals since 1985.

B.N.: In Europe and North America, gays and lesbians have organized and are now part of the political agenda. Ontario passed anti-discrimination legislation last year. What is the status of gays and lesbians in Greece?

M.P.: (long pause) I'll tell you a story of a friend of mine. Her husband had a top job with economic affairs here in Greece. She was one of these types who does a lot of charity and did a lot for the island of Lesbos. The island decided finally to recognize all that she had done for the island and they wanted to make her an honorary citizen. So one day, I get this phone call and she says "Margarita, would you like to see me become a lesbian?" I said "What! I can think of nothing more interesting!" (laughter). So we went together and she became an honorary Lesbian.

The public attitudes towards homosexuality here are not as progressive as they are in some other countries. You can't talk easily or be open regarding homosexuality. There is prejudice and antagonism towards any expression of homosexuality. The worst thing you can call someone is a homosexual. This is a curse. It's also true that lesbians in Greece have not been a powerful force, they have not organized in such a way as to state their case, their beliefs. They are really hidden.

B.N.: You've taken an active role internationally in women's issues and were one of the delegates to the 1985 World Conference marking the United Nations Decade for Women in Nairobi.

M.P.: When I was in Nairobi and gave the report for the Greek delegation, I said in strong words that the women's movement is a

political movement. There was such a response to this that I had to realize it had not been defined that way, that it had been defined as a social movement of some kind.

B.N.: I understand you've also become more involved with the peace movement.

M.P.: Women must play a role in the international arena, especially in the peace movement. Women's ways of dealing with conflict come out of the experience of being marginalized. They don't have the weapons, the positions, the power, the physical strength. The patient, non-violent ways women have for resolving conflict, these values should be incorporated internationally.

B.N.: Do you feel peace is possible in a patriarchal society?

M.P.: The answer is no. When we struggle for change, for peace, we must change the patriarchal values which form the basis of our society: patriarchy is based on a global war system. The women's movement must join the peace movement in order to make the peace movement more accountable for women's issues. We must have parallel struggles, but we must understand the interconnections.

Betty Notar is a third generation Greek Canadian and a feminist active in issues of violence against women and children.

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MOVEMENT COMMENT

Process and Politics

The following is an open letter from the staff and board of the Toronto Women's Bookstore:

The Toronto Women's Bookstore would like to respond to the letter/article entitled "There's no Racism There" written by Pauline Peters, a collective member of *Our Lives* (a Black women's newspaper in Toronto) and a former staff member of the Toronto Women's Bookstore. This article appeared in the July/Sept. 1987 issue of *Our Lives*.

We have been silent too long on this issue. We have a responsibility to the community that we serve, live and work in politically to give some background as to why this question of racism arose. As an organization that is actively involved in anti-racist work in Toronto, we know that it is important to clarify any allegations being made about us.

In January 1986, this non-profit organization became a collective after a long, hard struggle to gain recognition of important organizational and political issues. The new collective inherited an eleven-year legacy that included a vertical management, a small board of three, staff with no voting power, a huge deficit and a primary representation in the store of a liberal white women's movement perspective. The TWB was not transformed overnight when the organization became a collective; rather we have been in a state of transformation since January 1986. We are committed to struggle, and have been in continual process for change. Our ever present self-scrutiny recognizes that there is a long way yet to go and a lot to be learned.

In forming the new collective in January 1986, one South Asian woman and two Black women came into the organization, one as staff and two as board members. Nine months after the formation of the new collective, a part-time position came up. The advertisement encouraged non-white women to apply. In October 1986, Pauline Peters came into a nine-month-old collective that was very much in the process of change. At the time of her hiring we were preparing to set up mediation for the development of models for conflict resolution between co-workers.

Pauline came into the collective as a probationary member (like all new employees), due for evaluation within a certain period before she became permanent staff. At her evaluation in March she stated clearly that her interests were outside the store. She explained that because she was involved in so many other things she couldn't concentrate well on the job. Her own expectations remained unstated until shortly before she resigned in June 1987, when

she said it was "just a job."

In February, Pauline brought a proposal to the collective, in which she presented "ways of incorporating a non-white woman's perspective into the store." In contrast to Pauline's account of our response to this proposal, it was not greeted with "cold criticism," her proposal was individually and collectively supported. What we did point out to her was that her proposal marginalized and also made invisible the previous contributions and work of the South Asian woman and the white working class staff members. She is correct in reporting that we said her label for us as a "white middle class collective" was inaccurate. We would like to make it very clear that before Pauline joined us we were not an all-white organization. Any information or implication that states otherwise makes invisible the work and contribution of the other woman of colour on the collective as well as the hands-on work of the rest of the collective with regard to race and class, and the hard-won changes that have actively been in process.

At present, the Toronto Women's Bookstore possibly has the largest selection of any bookstore in Toronto of book titles by women of colour writers (over 400). There has been a 300% increase in the book titles and stock items of Black women, Native women, South Asian women, Latin American women and immigrant women, from a few scarcely promoted titles that were in stock at the bookstore before January 1986.

Although we strongly felt that these changes should be acknowledged, we also recognized that there was a long way to go in making the bookstore equitable in terms of representation. This was discussed with Pauline and it was agreed that we would actively work as a collective and continue making the TWB much more accessible to a larger community of women.

Pauline suggested that as a collective we meet regularly to talk about our experiences as women of different races. We welcomed the idea and felt that it would make us stronger as a collective. This was done in April at Pauline's house. Each collective member spoke about her personal experience of racism. Pauline, who spoke last, did not mention racism as part of her experience at the bookstore.

In setting up conflict resolution models to deal with accountability issues between co-workers and to provide better communication between us, our meetings were facilitated by a mediator (a Black woman). We had the first mediation in March and a second session in April. It was at this session that issues came up about Pauline's work at the bookstore.

The day after this mediation we received a call from Dionne Brand, a collective member of *Our Lives* newspaper, who stated: "We want to meet with you regarding Pauline, who is having a hard time at the store." We were quite open to meeting with these women despite the suddenness of the request. However, the collective felt it was important first to meet with and inform board members of the existing situation at the bookstore. We set up a meeting with the collective (inclusive of Pauline) and the board, which would be facilitated by a mediator. This was to be a group of six white women and five non-white women. When Pauline arrived at this meeting she was accompanied by four Black women whom she stated came in her support. She informed the group present that she had not come to participate but to read a statement. The content of the statement was that she was quitting and that she wanted one month's compensation and a letter of apology. (This was the first time Pauline used the word racism.) Then one of the women who had come in her support read a statement she had written on working in an all white collective.

As board and staff members of the TWB, we were never against Pauline bringing the support of others to the meeting. We did find the way it was done was without respect in that: (1) the collective and board was not informed; and (2) the content and implications of Pauline's and her supporters' statement made the South Asian woman on staff and the Black board members as well as the facilitator invisible.

They left after they had said their piece and we did not hear from them again.

Weeks later, after this meeting, we received a letter from the Ontario Coalition of Black Trade Unionists on Pauline's behalf requesting we pay her compensation and produce a letter of apology. In our response we stated that Pauline was hired on a probationary basis as are all employees of the TWB; that her evaluation was informal as it was with the other new employees present at the same time. Moreover, as a co-worker in the collective she was part of the process that set up procedures to review personnel. During the course of the informal evaluation it was brought to her attention that there were concerns with her work; these were fully discussed, she was aware of them and said they were legitimate charges due to her over-extension outside the bookstore. In our view we felt we had dealt fairly with Pauline and that she terminated her employment with us of her own free will. In those circumstances we did not feel we owed her any further compensation. We never heard from the coalition

again; and there was no further communication from the individual who called regarding Pauline. Therefore we were very surprised when we saw the two page article in *Our Lives*, and its call for a boycott of the TWB. We felt that we could not carry this particular issue on our shelves, not only because it made serious and false allegations about the bookstore but it invalidated the life experiences, work and struggle of women of colour on the staff and board.

The women of colour on the board and staff take strong exception to the articles "There's no Racism There" and "Anatomy of Working with a White Collective" in *Our Lives* that call into question our integrity. We find it particularly offensive that another group of Black women can sit in judgement and discredit the work of other women of colour on the basis of whether they choose to work with white women. We hesitate to think that because we have chosen to work in racially mixed groups we are automatically branded as sellouts and Uncle Toms. We resent our work being belittled and being referred to in this way by Black women who do not share our vision of a multi-racial women's movement working together for political change.

The metaphor of the "necklace" when applied to women of colour in these times is not an innocent one. We are not "sellouts." We have experienced racism. We know what it is. We name it. Because we have chosen to work in a racially mixed group does not mean that we "lack consciousness of our own origin." It does not make us less Black. It does not make our lived experience in the world any less harsh.

In this political climate of conservatism it is alarming to see this waste of energy between two progressive alternative groups. This hostility, this discredit, this name calling of other women of colour makes us very tired. We cannot help but ask who is the beneficiary of all this? Is it the state?

The fragile nature of our links *does* need mature thought and consideration by all of us. To realize any vision of a world changing we must acknowledge our differences and work together in our struggles against racism and imperialism. A separate closet can only stifle change.

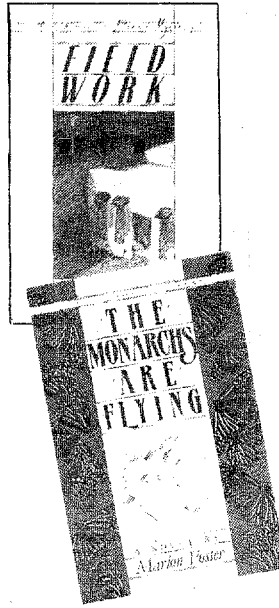
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MOVEMENT MATTERS

Free Trade: Dynamic or Disastrous?

Prime Minister Mulroney:

• This is a good deal, good for Canada and good for all Canadians. . . This deal is going to give us greater access to the biggest, richest, most dynamic market in the world.

Department of External Affairs:

• The agreement will lead to the creation of hundreds of thousands of new jobs.
• The service sector is today the largest source of employment and economic activity in Canada. The Free Trade Agreement will create new opportunities for trade in services, giving both Canadian and American service industries the right to do business on either side of the border. The Agreement sets a global precedent by creating rules to ensure that the US treats Canadian businesses in the same way as American businesses and vice versa.

• The agreement offers Canadians a vision of the future—a prosperous, confident and mature society with a flourishing culture and compassionate social system.

Ontario government study:

• Forty-four percent of the women now working in manufacturing jobs are vulnerable to the free trade deal. Women with less than grade 9 educations who do not speak English will not walk out of a textile plant and into a 'hi-tech' job. It is far more likely if they find employment at all, it will be in the service sector in jobs like cleaners, or waitresses, possibly part-time, and almost certainly at minimum wage.

Lynn McDonald, MP

(NDP - Broadview-Greenwood):

• Canada's freedom to promote its cultural sector has been limited by a narrower definition of culture, by abandoning tariffs on printed materials and recordings, by eliminating differential postal rates for US and Canadian periodicals, etc.

• What Canada got: some access to the American procurement market at the federal (but not the state or local) level; protection for breweries from imports of American beer; staged phase-outs of tariffs for particularly vulnerable sectors.

Marjorie Cohen, representing NAC in the Coalition Against Free Trade:

• If a US firm feels its Canadian competitor is selling too cheaply or able to do so because of some government program, it can sue before the US International Trade Commission. . . The United States can continue to define an unfair subsidy in virtually any way it wants. . . It can continue to harass Canada over such issues as regional, provincial and local developments; aspects of its unemployment insurance program. . . Canada will have even more to fear from US complaints if its social and economic programs aren't sufficiently similar to those south of the border.

• The US cultural industries have long demanded greater access to the Canadian market. In negotiating a new subsidies code, it is likely that many of Canada's current practices will be considered unfair barriers to trade.

• US service firms will be able to challenge any Canadian practices that tend to inhibit their ability to compete here. For example, private US health-care organizations or day-care facilities may be in a position to claim equal access to government financing as a right to national treatment.

Defence Demands

TORONTO — Voice of Women/La Voix des Femmes (VOW) is joining a growing number of organizations across Canada demanding withdrawal of the White Paper on Defence. This document offers only "nineteenth century solutions to counter twenty-first century weapons. These weapons, if used, could destroy this planet and its peoples," says VOW.

On Friday, November 13, members of Voice of Women met with Minister of Defence, the Honorable Perrin Beatty, at his constituency office in Fergus, Ontario, to discuss with him VOW's response to the Defence White Paper which is called *Challenge and Commitment: A Defence Policy for Canada*, and to offer alternatives for lessening world tensions, reaching peaceful solutions and abolishing the divisive and outdated concept of a perennial "enemy."

A Good Lesbian Read?

Come on out to see what the Lesbian Manuscript Group at Women's Press is up to and give us your ideas. We need new volunteers who are interested in finding, reading and commenting on manuscripts. The group is currently made up of two white lesbians and two lesbians of colour. We welcome all lesbians to an information meeting. Please call Maureen or Michele at (416) 598-0082 for further information.

International Women's Day, 1988

TORONTO — A group of Asian, Black, Native and white women have started organizing for International Women's Day, 1988, to be held March 5, 1988. All women are invited to join the March 8th Coalition, and to attend the initial meetings to discuss the direction for the Coalition and the day itself and ideas for themes for the day. (The dates and times of the meetings are December 2 and 9, 1988, 7:30 pm to 10:30 pm. They will be held at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto.)

The March 8th Coalition is composed of

women from many different backgrounds who have chosen to work together. As women, we are all discriminated against in most areas of our lives, as in housing, employment, childcare and reproduction, and we are discriminated against because of our race, class and ability. Looking at the effects of all of these is a crucial part of the Coalition.

One of the goals of the March 8th Coalition is to use International Women's Day as an occasion for drawing large numbers of people into the streets to fight against injustice. For more information about the Coalition, call Judy Vashti Persad (416-530-4117, 9:30 am-5:30 pm) or Carol Allen (416-462-9331).

New Welfare Regulations for Single Mothers

The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) recently commended the Ontario government for introducing new welfare and family benefits regulations which diminish long-standing discrimination against single mothers. The new regulations, which came into effect on November 1, end the "spouse-in-the-house" rule which disqualified single parents from social assistance if they did not "live as single persons."

This is a significant step forward for single mothers, according to LEAF. "Welfare assistance used to be based on the out-dated presumption that if a man was involved with a woman, he was automatically the head of the household and assumed financial responsibility, whether or not he actually provided any degree of support," said executive director Christie Jefferson. "It is now recognized that women are financially independent when there are no support obligations." The new regulations provide a measure of real protection for single mothers, she said. "Either they are eligible for social assistance as a single parent or they have an adult with a legal obligation to support them."

The new family benefits policy follows two court cases launched by LEAF in 1985, which challenged the legality of the "spouse in the house" rule under sections 7, 15 and 28 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. There were out-of-court settlements in both the case brought on behalf of Sheila Beaudette of Ottawa, who had been cut off benefits because her child's father with whom she was not living helped her get credit for some furniture purchases and sometimes took the child on outings, and the case on behalf of Brenda Horvath of London, who lost her benefits because a male friend helped her get a phone and guaranteed the lease on her apartment. As part of the out-of-court settlements, the Ontario government and Social Assistance Review Committee agreed to consult with LEAF, women's organizations and welfare groups on the formulation of new regulations.

Quote of the Month

"To the extent that jobs will be lost, it's a woman's problem. To the extent that free trade might be a job creation measure, it's a man's world."—Ontario Labour Minister Greg Sorbata in a report on free trade impact.

NFB Titles

The following videocassettes are available from all National Film Board Distribution Centres on a first-come-first-served basis in VHS format only. In addition, many NFB titles are also available from Public Libraries. The following are of particular interest to women:

Abortion: Stories from North and South (1984): Filmed in Thailand, Japan, Ireland, Peru, Columbia and Canada, this cross-cultural survey shows that only a small percentage of the world's women has access to a safe, legal operation.

Behind the Veil: Nuns (1984): This film records the turbulent history and remarkable achievements of women in religion, from the pre-Christian Celtic communities to the radical sisters of the 1980s.

Dad's House, Mom's House (1985): This documentary about child custody visits with two couples who have worked through their hurt and anger to reach joint agreements, and with a third couple in the midst of a bitter divorce. The opinions of the children involved, as well as those of mental and legal professionals, bring further perspectives to the custody issue.

Democracy on Trial: The Morgentaler Affair (1984): For six years, Dr. Henry Morgentaler waged a battle in provincial and federal courts because he felt it was his moral duty to change a law he considered unjust. This docudrama unravels the complexities of a case that began as a challenge to Canada's abortion laws but that became a precedent-setting civil rights case.

D.E.S. An Uncertain Legacy (1985): The children of women who took D.E.S., a synthetic estrogen, during their pregnancies are prone to a host of ills ranging from sterility to cancer. This informative film focusses on Canada's first D.E.S. action group, urges possible victims to seek treatment, and questions important issues related to health care.

Dream of a Free Country: A Message from Nicaraguan Women (1983): A film about the women of Nicaragua who, according to many, were the backbone of the revolution that overthrew the Somoza dictatorship in 1979. The film includes interviews on the revolution and shows the women's continuing and dedicated struggle for social and political change.

Is it Hot in Here? A Film about Menopause (1986): With humour, anger and insight, women discuss the events and attitudes that shaped their menopausal years. The film also contains archival and contemporary images that illustrate past and present views on menopause, as well as interviews with doctors and health activists, and a look at the controversial hormone replacement therapy.

Japanese Woman (1984): This film examines the status of women in modern-day Japan through a fascinating blend of archival footage, interviews and candid scenes of women at home and at work. The women stress that any change in their status must be achieved through consensus, without disrupting the social harmony of family life.

Margaret Atwood: Once in August (1984): Despite her international stature, author Margaret Atwood remains an elusive figure. In a quiet encounter on Atwood's island retreat, the film's director seeks to discover what shapes this celebrated writer's fiction.

No Longer Silent (1986): This film is a revealing look at discrimination against women in India, exemplified by the age-old dowry system, and at the determined efforts of some Indian women to bring about change.

Speaking Our Peace (1985): This film makes visible the workings of global militarism, suggesting that World War III is already claiming victims through nuclear pollution. The film also reveals the crucial role women are playing in the international peace movement.

• LETTERS, from page 3

Struggle for Choice" is a video presentation of some of the arguments contained in many of our pamphlets and our paper *Socialist Worker* over the years—that the struggle for abortion rights is fundamentally a class issue, that it is working class women who have suffered most from the limited access to abortion rights in Canada, that the struggle for abortion rights was only as successful as it was in the 1970s because of the links consciously made between the women's movement and rank and file trade unionists within a general climate of political upturn, and that the setbacks faced by the women's movement in recent years are intimately linked with the setbacks faced by the workers' movement in Canada as a whole.

We are therefore proposing to OCAC that our two organizations engage in a public debate, jointly sponsored and conducted, on the way forward for the abortion rights movement. Nothing would be more fruitful than an open, public, comradely airing of differences and criticisms in the context of a genuine search for an effective strategy to further the struggle for choice in Canada. We believe it is a debate that would attract considerable interest among those looking for a way forward in today's defensive climate.

Steering Committee
International Socialists
Toronto

"Simulated" Sexism

Broadside:

The following is a copy of a letter sent on November 2, 1987 by the Ontario Public Interest Research Group to U of T's Dean of Engineering:

Dear Dean Heinke:

As a graduate student organization, we would like to express our outrage and opposition to the event that occurred on September 8, 1987 outside the Engineering Student Orientation. We are referring to the simulated sexual assault of a woman, portrayed by a life-size female doll and "real" male U of T Engineering students.

Although we are certain that you will attempt to curb this kind of behaviour in the future, we think that the "perceptual" or attitudinal problem underlying sexual assault and violence against women still needs to be addressed. As Lois Sweet (Toronto *Star*, October 7, 1987) points out, this kind of behaviour by Engineering students is not an isolated event.

In our view, attitudes and behaviour are not unrelated. The September 8 incident contributes to a social environment that gives permission to a variety of behaviours, such as sexual harassment and sexual assault, much the

same way as racist jokes and bigoted remarks contribute to very real, racist behaviour. Attitudes have real consequences for real people.

It is usually shocking for most members of the public to find out about the frequency of sexual assault, harassment, wife battering and incest. We need not discuss statistics here. Suffice it to say that the pervasiveness of this kind of violence against women and children demands that we ask ourselves some difficult questions.

We would suggest, Dean Heinke, that your commitment to prevention go beyond curbing the Engineering students' behaviour. The U of T Women's Centre has proposed that, in addition to imposing some visible sanction against those students involved in the incident, that the Engineering Faculty sponsor and organize some educational sessions on sexism, violence against women, etc. We support this request and, in fact think that it is necessary for you to take such decisive action in order to reaffirm the role of the University in promoting positive societal values and to redress the damage to the reputation of the University as a result of the incident. Just as the incident gained public notoriety, so we would expect a public response.

Ruth Beck
on behalf of the
Ontario Public Interest Research Group
Toronto

Sylvia Fraser: Survivin

Interview by Susan G. Cole

Sylvia Fraser has been something of an enigma on the Canadian literary scene ever since she published her first novel, Pandora. The most mystifying aspect of her work was the sexual content of her fiction. It was violent and shocking, so much so that even when celebrating her craft, reviewers found it necessary to query the point of all the nastiness.

Now, with the publication of My Father's House, a novel of Fraser's self-discovery, the key parts of the puzzle have fallen into place. As Fraser tells it, four years ago she realized that she had been sexually abused by her father and only then did she even begin to understand the subtext of her own fiction and the forces that shaped her own life. She began to understand her own motivations for things that she did, relationships that she lost, and she understood that the descriptions of child rape and exploitation that she described so meticulously in her books were the words of an incest survivor trying to come out.

The key to her survival had been her ability to keep an alter ego functioning, another personality who was the victimized child, a frightened and tormented creature. The alter ego existed only in her father's house, a place she never allowed any of her school friends to visit. Her real self suffered convulsions, interpreted by teachers and other observers as the behaviour of a recalcitrant child, and hated her father for reasons she never could understand. In her adult life she completely buried the experience of sexual assault. During her process of personal revelation, she was able to take herself back to the point at which her personality split, a point at which the child with the secret could exist and could continue to be abused without her conscious self knowing it.

Her decision to write about her experiences and to travel the country promoting the book is a brave one, as any survivor knows. It also resonates for me personally, for I had been one of those reviewers of The Emperor's Virgin who had slammed Fraser for becoming one of what I referred to as a new breed of pornographers (see Broadside, February 1981). She was furious and wrote an angry letter to Broadside (March 1981) in which she denied exploiting anything or anybody. Now that she knows what she knows and has written about it, I realize that I may have been right in my heart but I was wrong on paper. I was wrong in calling Fraser a pornographer, but I was right about The Emperor's Virgin. It was a document of female subordination: I just didn't know whose subordination was at stake. I certainly didn't know Fraser had been and would continue to write about child rape and male power because she was blocking the truth about her own life.

She spoke to me while she was in the middle of an intense promotional campaign for My Father's House.

Broadside: You are on the road promoting a book that is more personal than anything you have ever written. Does it feel different from the media work you have done with your other releases?

Fraser: The response has been so positive. I thought I'd have to fight my way through people doubting my statements, doubting that I could remember.

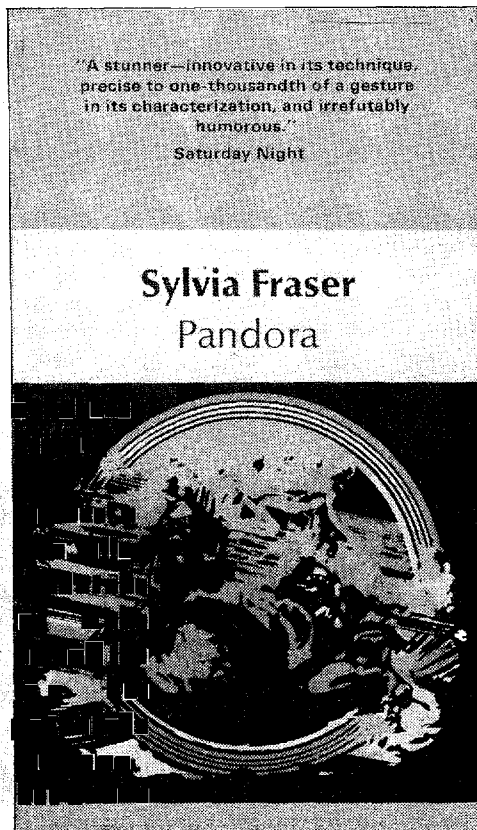
The truth is, I wrote the book on the basis of my own convictions, and with my sister's support. It was only after my mother's death that I got total corroboration. I could hardly help but feel jagged about the timing of my mother's death. I had told her about the book. We had worked it out, but not entirely, and I felt jagged for having stressed out the last part of her life. After the funeral, I listened for the thousandth time about what a saint she was, how much she would be missed—and I knew she would. She was a cheerful woman, always around the Church, looking after other people. Then a man came up to me and said what a wonderful man my father was. That just tripped me right out. Nobody ever thought that about my father.

I began losing my sense of reality, thinking "How do I know this book is true?" Then another man started talking to me about what a hard time my father had given my mother and suddenly it seemed to me that I was having a real conversation. I told him, "I have a desire to tell you something," and he said, "Tell me." I told him that my father sexually abused me and he said, "I knew that, everybody in the neighbourhood knew that." I told him that I had just found out.

Broadside: I don't know if you know this or not, or whether you did any work on the issue before you started writing the book...

Fraser: ... I deliberately avoided all research...

Broadside: ... you have described what we know now is a pattern: the tantrums at an early age, the drawings you discovered in your drawer, the types of drawings that are used now for incest therapy for young children. I was especially interested in how others sexualized you and how surprised you were when that happened. You also write about a number of incidents of victimization at the hands of people other than your father, incidents in which you were paralyzed, unable to react or defend yourself. You write that somehow men could smell your fear. An ignorant person might even say you consented to these



things because you didn't resist hard or fast enough.

Fraser: As a child I had a lot of sexuality about me. Our boarder Mr. Brown sensed that. He sensed that I had "victim" written all over me. Also, the split in my personality made things happen in certain ways. All my aggression was in my conscious personality and all my anger. Women are brought up to convert anger into fear and men are brought up to convert fear into anger. It's the social norm. But throughout my life I feel like I was compelled in all my decisions. Everything I did was compulsive.

There are all kinds of pictures of me as a child that show all kinds of seductive details. I was made precocious and seductive. Some power was to be gained by that, despite the price: the power in being the keeper of secrets, and being the other woman in my mother's life. I had learned that there was power in sexuality. When I was in public school, because I was this wretched thing, I turned it around and created myself as a princess. I wrote in *A Casual Affair* a fairy tale that is about as accurate a description as could possibly exist about the scullery maid who thinks she's a princess. I required all the little boys to have a crush on me. It was a requirement. It gave me status among girls even though it wasn't as important as what we girls did together.

Then I got to high school, when that extraordinary thing happens: what girls think about you doesn't count at all. It's what all the boys think about you. I felt that for my own status and the front I was trying to keep up, I had to keep those sexual feelers going.

Broadside: But then you seemed so surprised that boys saw you that way.

Fraser: Everybody in the movies had bleach blonde or flaming red hair. There were no brown heads in those days. All I did was bleach my hair and that caused a sensation. It was the most damaging thing I could have done. There were other things too. I felt so much sexual guilt, with a reason, so I was attracting reasons to me. I had a set of emotions for something I was blocking out, so I had to create reasons for the sexual guilt. Yes, I knew I was doing it. No, I didn't know I was doing it. I was just frozen in terms of boys. I had to keep attracting them because I went through them so quickly. Only two dates and I couldn't stand to see them again. But I had to keep getting dates, so then I became more blatant. I gave off sexual signals to hide the fact that I was frigid.

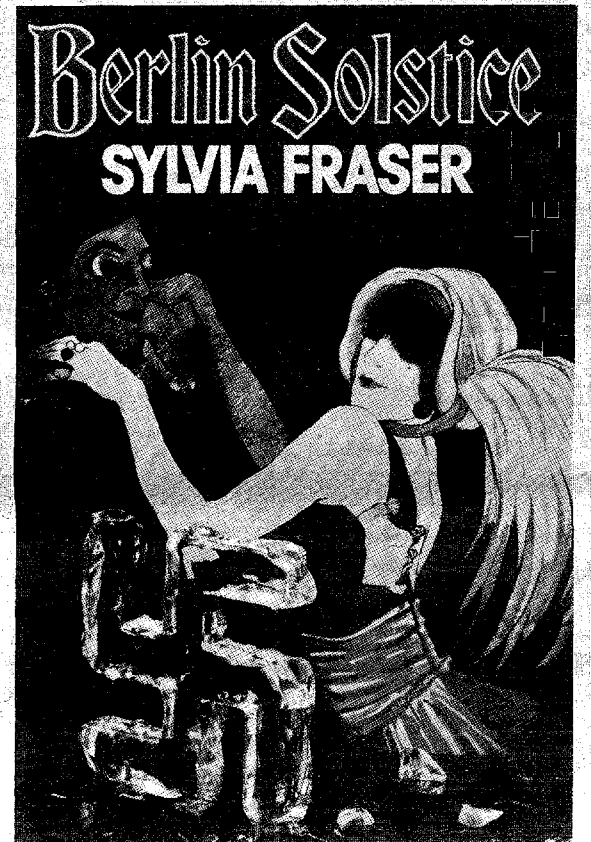
There was so much hypocrisy then. The boys whistled at some girls and took out others. The thing that saved me was that I was smart. The cliché was "dumb and sexual and blonde." But I was smart. I was able to maintain a kind of power. I wanted the whole thing to crash at the same time as I was desperate to hold it together. There were so many things operating at the same time that I just lived in a state of confusion. But I really wasn't doing anything. We lived in such a restrictive society. My bust size hasn't changed as far as I know and yet everyone remembers me as having a huge bust. I didn't have a huge bust. It was an image thing.

I've been caught in an image thing all my life, partly of my own manufacture. I paid a lot of attention to appearances. That's a big part of the defence mechanism. As an adult, people would think I was wealthy because I always wore silky stuff or velvety things, but that was still the princess thing. I did it all with trailing robes, but I did it very unconsciously. My hair was

blonde: princesses always have blonde hair. It really bothered me when my hair began to go dark. There were textures, furs, off the shoulders. It's all complicated. There was a "me" and a "not me." So the business of wearing the right clothes or having the right hair and a lot of makeup, that was to emphasize the "me." I also had a fear of pregnancy because it would have been a nine month rape. It would have been like having something inside me that I couldn't get out. I now believe I feared pregnancy because my memory would have been too jogged.

Broadside: In fact, you concocted many masks for yourself in order to survive: the princess in your early childhood, the cheerleader in high school, the eye-glassed philosopher in university...

Fraser: ... and then I got married, so the healing had begun. And we were being the best couple on the block. It was somewhat of a mask too, and he enjoyed it. But the reality of the feeling between us was not a mask, and so our relationship was a good one. But it was like re-parenting, though he wasn't like



my father. He was more of a mother. In fact, he and my mother were born on the same day and they died precisely six months apart. The launch date for my book was set for September 15 and I thought, "Wonderful, a completely innocuous date." But then they moved it to September 22, which is my mother and ex-husband's birthday. There were a lot more coincidences, but I had to leave them out of the book because I was worried that my credibility might suffer if I reported them all.

Broadside: It is hard for the people closest to incest survivors to go through it all with them...

Fraser: He wouldn't let me suffer enough. He would only hold me at a level of sludginess. Here is what happens. As long as you are out there struggling to survive on some level, you're fully engaged, and the problem is on hold. But at the point where I would relax and be happy, I couldn't be happy because the little ragamuffin in me, that other child, would come and say, "Now it's my turn."

This is why we're so often called neurotic, because when everything is in order and we should be happy, then all those things from the past come to the one in four women [as reported in the Badge Report on Sexual Offenses Against Children] who have been sexually abused when they were young. There are depressions. Had I not chosen the route I did, to be a writer and to explore this, I would have spent my life having periodic depressions, being suicidal, being given Valium and being considered neurotic. But something inside me led me deeper. So whenever I had a depression, I went into it.

I did a fundraiser for the Elizabeth Fry Society and asked them what the statistics were in terms of abused women and women who are in jails and they told me it was something like 95%. That blew my mind. I've been quoting that data all over the country. I've now come to the conclusion that incest is the cornerstone of all female self-destructive behaviour. It's like discovering that one virus creates most disease.

Broadside: There are all kinds of incest victims that do not have your survival techniques and who do not become famous writers. That has to do with your gifts and the sacrifices your working class family was prepared to make for you. Can you talk about your process of self-discovery, and when you figured out that there was a victimized child struggling to get out from inside?

g In Her Father's House

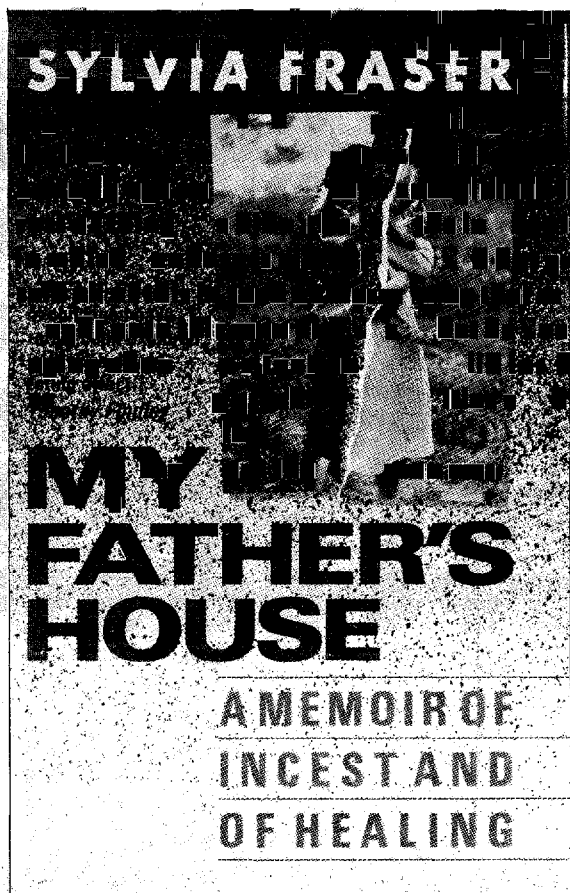
Fraser: It started earlier than you might think. My father really did love me. It's a funny thing to say. But at some point I knew my father loved me. It actually made me feel attractive. My home was stable. My mother was a good woman. Everything else was in order. If I had had to move around and change schools I would have been thrown a great deal. But because of the absolute predictability of the environment...

Broadside: But that would have made it harder. The fact that something horrible is going on in the midst of this ordinariness can be very crazy-making.

Fraser: But the split worked. It's called a creative neurosis. I got enough support when I went to school. Boy, was I over-motivated. I was supposed to be smart. My sister had been smart too. I developed a lot of fast social skills. I turned my situation with my father into being a princess, powerful. It was my defence. So I was able to get enough strokes from the environment. The personality I threw up that went to school was almost without fear. Anger I had a lot of, but no fear. All the fear and passivity was in the other personality. And because the existing personality was so strong, I was able to confine that other personality to my father's house. It never left the house.

Until about four years ago, I thought that I was pretty normal. I had met someone casually with the release of *Pandora* [Fraser's novel about the astonishing and sometimes frightening adventures of an eight year old girl]. A reviewer had said that children were not innocent, that children were seductive at an early age and that women complained too much about this sort of thing. He didn't believe the incident with the breadman in which Pandora is almost attacked but gets away in time. He said all of this in such a smarmy way that my other self instantly caught onto this man and knew that he knew more than he was saying about the situation. The child inside me that knew my secret was a very psychic and intuitive child, always on the alert for ways to survive.

Then I found out that this man was a sexual abuser. So, what my other self knew and what I myself was understanding just



came together. In an instant I understood all the codes in my book *Pandora*. It was like a microchip going into a computer. I was ready to remember, or it wouldn't have happened. And if it hadn't happened, something else would have. When I found out that the reviewer was a sexual abuser, I didn't experience it as just an incidence of sexual abuse from a hypocritical man. It took me right back to my book *Pandora*. Suddenly all the metaphors clicked. I felt like a bomb had gone off in my chest. As the conversation continued I just felt stranger and stranger. I got up and said, "I think my father raped me." And as I said that I just knew it was true. I walked home in a state of near euphoria, because suddenly I knew.

I had been dropping in and out of therapy, but I didn't think I had a problem. I was just curious. But I was collecting all sorts of information so that by the time I started to remember the abuse, the last thing I wanted was therapy. I wanted to preserve my own fragile memories. I knew very well that if you go to a Jungian therapist, you dream Jungian. Anyway, I knew enough not to be panicked by what was happening.

It is a huge leap, to think that your father sexually abused

you, and then even worse, to face the fact that it went on long after your memories of other things begin. I went four times to a hypnoterapist and every time I went something important happened. I went to a psychic a few times. Once he asked me, "Why does your father look so sad?" and I answered, "Because he sexually abused me until I was five." And he said, "It was a heckuva lot longer than that, wasn't it?" And I didn't react. But that night I went into a state of anxiety and I understood why the images of the child inside my head was so much older than what I would have had to be to fit into my game plan of being abused until age five.

I went to a Freudian therapist too. My dreams were full of incest and they confused me because I knew that I hated my father and that I never would have wanted him to touch me. Well, the Freudian gave me a convenient way to discount what had happened because he had all that Freudian lore about the innocent father and the seductive daughter. I should say though that he got me writing, but he really retarded my deep understanding of what was happening to me.

Broadside: Are there any therapies that you think would work for you now?

Fraser: I always found it easier to believe what I spontaneously remembered. My body was damaged and my head had taken over. My body had been left behind. Doing massage at points where the tension formed brought back memories and culminated in memories I had through convulsions. I think that many incest victims are too far into their heads, so any therapies that work on the body can be useful.

Broadside: You have a lot of compassion still for your father. I was amazed that you could write at the end of your book that "there are no villains here." Through my discussions with others who have read the book I've found out that this may have been the most controversial statement you make. Personally, I feel we have to respect the ambivalences women feel in these relationships. Yet still, I found it hard to accept that after all of this, you don't see your father as a villain. Do you see him as responsible? Blameworthy?

Fraser: I see him as responsible, not blameworthy. As a fiction writer I never would have guessed this, but the irony is that I hated him until I discovered the cause. But as soon as I knew the cause for hating him, my hatred flew out the window. I couldn't have predicted that. I could only see him as pathetic. Another thing I could never have understood unless I had lived through the experience, was that when I regressed back to the point when my psyche had split in two, I actually felt that I caught that moment, and the sense of helplessness was so deep, so bottomless, that I understood why as a child it had been better to become my father's accomplice and to feel that I was in control: I was choosing to be bad. You can't live helpless. Survival demanded that I take that rescue station and identify with his power. Once you've done that, you're forever part of the crime. So as long as you work within the blame system, you're stuck, because you can't help blaming yourself too.

A lot of people who survived the concentration camps felt guilty too, because there was no way to survive except at someone else's expense. Even if it meant just being silent, you had to collaborate to survive. One of the problems with victimization, particularly with incest when it happens to someone so young and the psyche is so unformed, is that it has such a dirty connotation. I don't mean sexual dirty, I mean dirty in terms of guilt. What is happening to me now is that I have become activated on behalf of incest victims, but not projected by any personal anger at all. That's done with.

On the criminal level though, it's the man's crime. I want to make that clear.

Broadside: As you know, in the discussions of incest, mothers are often blamed for not protecting their daughters. Can you tell me how you would react to the statement that your mother was to blame for what happened to you?

Fraser: I feel that my mother was as profoundly split as I. I honestly don't know what she could have done differently. The times were such that even the word divorce—we're talking the thirties and forties—was not spoken. She'd been through the depression with a family that had all sorts of problems. They covered up so much trying to look ordinary. My mother was a fine woman, a compassionate person. She certainly was there for me when I needed her, when I told her. I had a very positive experience. If she had flown at me or attacked me, it would have been really hard. I don't think my mother was prepared to face her own victimization and how deep that was, not just by my father but by life in general. She really hadn't put together a real person for herself, in terms of an identity.

Broadside: What about your writing? I sense that your perspective on it has changed since you've worked through your personal revelations.

Fraser: I began to realize that something had been missing from my writing. At the point when I had my first memories, I was writing *Berlin Solstice*, and I suddenly understood why I was writing the book. I felt embarrassed—that's a light word—that I was writing about a period of time for which so many people paid so profoundly with their own blood and scars. Yet here I was writing about it, and I had a very compelling urge to do so. I understood the literary codes. I understood that I was writing it because my father was German and I had all these dreams of being tortured by Nazis. So I identified with all that sado-masochistic sexuality of the Nazis—the women with shaved heads, stripped naked, and all that leather. I recognized that I was writing the book to study my own victimization.

Broadside: What about *The Emperor's Virgin*?

Fraser: That was about as autobiographical a book as I've ever written.

Broadside: Did you know that at the time?

Fraser: I hadn't the slightest idea. It was written before things came together. The emperor was Daddy of course. As for the vestal virgin who was buried alive for breaking her vow of chastity, at the time I thought that came out of the fifties and that I was making a statement about women in the fifties. But when I think about the guilt the vestal virgin felt because she had enjoyed the emperor's eroticism, and Marcus, the man who was her rescuer, it was obviously a glamorized version of my father and my husband. It was a personalized metaphor, only it was so close that I sealed up without recognizing it.

You and I had an altercation about that at some point. At the time I was accused a lot of exploitation, and it didn't fit. It's extremely difficult to read reviewers who try to impute motive to you, to say you're doing this to make money or to exploit. It didn't feel that way and I had enormous frustration about that. Now I realize that I was not able to write with the depth and insight so close to that which was autobiographical and yet I felt compelled to write it. I knew it was coming from some place deep but I was wordless to explain it.

I stand by the book. I stand by all my books in a certain kind of way, but I recognize that I was running a two-legged race with one leg, because I was compelled to write out of the area on which I was most blocked. It was a tease. My other self would present the topic and then disappear just at the moment when I wanted to close in on it. What I see about *Pandora* now is that I got myself right up to the darkness and then the metaphor went over the edge. I haven't reread everything myself but I'm sure that everything is metaphorically or accurately a portrayal of my new book. *My Father's House* is like the Rosetta Stone of all my other books.

Broadside: So what happens with the next book? Do you feel any pressure?

Fraser: It'll be way off this kind of thing, if I ever write again.

Broadside: Why wouldn't you write again?

Fraser: Because my impulse to write may have been that of the healing; in which case, then I'm healed. ●



Fraser, then and now

ARTS



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by Betsy Nuse

Feeling lonely, far from home, have you ever sought out a local women's bookstore or coffee house? Have you ever travelled miles and hours to attend a women's music concert? If you remember the way your isolation dissolved when you entered these places you have tasted what awaits Canadian women on a grand scale next summer in Montreal.

One of the largest and most exciting gatherings of women in the world is now in the planning stages. The Third International Feminist Book Fair will be held at the University of Montreal campus from June 14-19, 1988. Not just a business meeting for publishers, this fair will offer a dazzling array of events open to the public. A person with enough stamina and energy might in any one day browse for several hours at the "world's biggest feminist bookstore" (booths of wares from book and periodical publishers all over the world), attend several readings, a lecture, half a dozen panels, pop into an art show and cap the day with a full evening of entertainment. And it's proposed such richness will be available not just for one day but an entire weekend!

It would be impressive enough were this event national in scope. Organizers expect that Canadian women will take the largest part in the official program. But at least 200 writers, booksellers, publishers and translators from around the world will be invited to participate. Of course there will be strong representation from the US, UK and Western Europe. But concerted efforts are being made to insure that numbers of women come to Canada from Latin America, Africa, Australia and Asia. What all will have in common is a love of words—in many languages—and a feminist commitment to women. Whether working in traditional forms or on the cutting edge of experimentation, the participants in this book

Fair Exchange

fair will bring to one location for one week an extraordinary pool of talent and energy which any of us are invited to share.

The Third International Feminist Book Fair continues a tradition begun in London, England. The First International Feminist Book Fair held there (June, 1984) was such a success that organizers were nearly overwhelmed. Exhibits seemed continually crowded and readings were always packed. At the second fair held in Oslo, Norway (June 1986) the public again responded enthusiastically to readings, panels and events.

That Canada, not the US, should be the first venue for this fair in our hemisphere delights the Canadian women who are organizing the event. Margie Wolfe of The Women's Press and Ann Wallace of Williams-Wallace Publishers are Ontario co-ordinators. As Margie observed, "Canada is more than just the place where the fair will be held. Canada is such a diverse society! What better place for women from all over the world to converge, bringing expressions of their own cultures, that can be echoed in the different communities of Canada?" Ann Wallace expects that this fair means that Canada's publishers for the first time will be taken seriously in the world community. "Previously, when booksellers and readers have thought 'publishing' they've thought of the UK or the US, or Europe. But Canada has top notch writers and publishers that sell well in our own markets. For the first time, the world will be seeing what we can do, have done and plan to do. What better opportunity for booksellers and book buyers to see the incredible range of women's work?" Ann also emphasized that the Montreal event is a book fair, not just a literary event, so that women's non-fiction writing—about the peace movement, in scientific disciplines or theology for example—will be part of the picture. "In centres like Toronto, feminism is synonymous with the left. But in smaller centres, women working for change may seem to be in the centre or even right. We want to bring all these voices into the arena: young women and grandmothers and everyone in between—any and all working for change at the grassroots, nationally and internationally."

Those planning the fair now are trying to insure that women from every corner of this country, every ethnic and racial community, will have an opportunity to participate. The Third International Feminist Book Fair will be completely bilingual in Canada's two official languages. But organizers hope it will be possible for the fair to be multilingual, offering as much material and simultaneous translation in other participants' languages as funding and energy can afford. And for those who can't

come to Montreal, Ann Wallace hopes to see booksellers across the country co-ordinate a national Women's Book Week at the same time as the fair. "Imagine every bookstore in Canada putting women authors in the front window for that week. What sales and publicity!" Bookstore promotion of this kind begun in England in 1984 has now become an annual tradition, Ann pointed out.

At the moment this remarkable organizing effort needs our donations. It's estimated the book fair will cost between \$500,000 and \$750,000 to stage. Expenses will include space, translation, telephone, postage and printing and a good deal, it's hoped, for travel subsidies that will guarantee that women from Third World countries can attend the fair. Every level of government—national, provincial and local—bureaux and arts councils are being approached for funding. But until the grant machinery clanks through its paces, the fair is cash poor. One woman in Montreal working full time for no pay as an organizer during the day works in a bar at night to support herself. Regional representatives who go to Montreal for planning meetings pay all their expenses out of their own pockets. If you can afford a cash donation—it does not matter how small!—please send a cheque or money order payable to the Third International Feminist Book Fair in care of Women's Press, 229 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M5T 1R4. If you can't donate, but know an individual or organization who should be approached, contact the book fair organizers in your region. And even if you don't have financial resources but have time you could volunteer, check with your local group. There is much work to be done between now and June 1988 in all parts of the country.

"Publicity will be our next big effort," explained Ann Wallace. To get the mainstream media to pay any attention will require months of effort and an avalanche of information.

There seems to be no doubt that the fair will happen. But how many women can participate, from how many different places, depends largely on the work and fundraising Canadian women can accomplish now. Margie and Ann both hope thousands of women will be able to attend the fair. As Ann Wallace reminded me, "Statistically, women are the greatest buyers of books, not men. We support the publishing industry, but we haven't asked enough of it for ourselves." Don't wait to enjoy the sense of community that comes from participating in a feminist event of this scale. Plan to be in Montreal in June 1988, but offer some time or money now to your regional co-ordinators and help the dreams become reality.

Betsy Nuse is a Toronto bibliophile.

CULTURE IN CONTENTION

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Making "Private Business" Public

To a Safer Place, a film directed by Beverly Shaffer, produced by Studio D, National Film Board of Canada.

Reviewed by Helen Lenskyj

One out of six women experience incest before the age of eighteen. *To a Safer Place* is the story of one of these women. Shirley Turcotte's story will evoke anger and pain in every woman who sees it, and will undoubtedly be the catalyst for many women to recall incest experiences from their own childhoods. It represents one more step in women's struggle to make the issue of child sexual abuse public, to make it safe for girls and women to disclose their experiences of incest and to name their abusers.

The film uses a combination of narrated scenes and unscripted conversations between Shirley and her mother, her brothers and sister, two former neighbours, and her psychiatrist. Shirley does not talk to the camera; she is always an active participant in the scene and this is one of the film's strengths. She played a leadership role in its production, as subject, "expert" and interviewer. In many of the dialogue scenes, we see Shirley probing for details about her childhood that she has forgotten, or details that she never knew: what she looked like (because there were no photographs); what her father did for a living (because there was no communication between him and his children, only abuse); what effect the abuse had on her brothers and sister.

In the interview with former neighbours, Shirley makes no attempt to hide her incredulity when she asks them whether they ever suspected what was going on in the house next door: four children confined to the basement, neglected, abused, unloved. The neighbours' responses are illuminating. The woman assures Shirley that, under the same circumstances today, she would definitely intervene. The man then preempts his wife's reply by announcing that "we would have to think about it!" because what goes on in the home is the father's private business—after all, he is at "the top of the hierarchy!"

In one of the most wrenching scenes in the film, Shirley goes back to the basement of her childhood home and looks at the bed where the rapes took place. We hear the strong, calm voice of a survivor saying: "I learned how to leave my body on the bed and to take myself to a safer place where he couldn't get me."

That Shirley Turcotte was able to face reliving the horror so explicitly in the making of this film attests to her strength and determination to break the silence and to end the cycle of violence in which she and her family were trapped. The film suggests that she has emerged a stronger person than her sister and her two brothers. Both her brothers suffered extreme physical abuse; Wilfrid has been in prison several times on drug and assault charges, while Larry is just beginning to live a normal life with a loving and supportive wife. Like many survivors of abusive childhoods, they all live with self-blame, regretting that they were not able to make the situation better for their siblings, and slowly realizing that their own personal struggles for survival exhausted all their resources.

Shirley's sister Linda was sexually abused from infancy and as an adolescent bore her father's child. Linda is also coming to terms with her past and feeling good about herself and her new career. But for Linda there is a new agony: one of her daughters was abused by a neighbour, and she asks herself whether this happened because she herself was abused. "Does it say 'sucker' on your face?" she asks. Of course, the vulnerability lies in the single fact of being female in a woman-hating society.

Shirley's mother is a frail, shadowy presence in the film. Neither Shirley nor her brothers and sister attach any blame to her. They are quick to point out that she was powerless, a victim herself, afraid of her husband's violence, isolated, unable to take care of herself or to protect her children. And while her brother Wilfrid still mourns the "normal" father he never had, Shirley has let go of her unrealistic hopes to have a "normal" relationship with her mother and to be a loved child. Now she gets love from other people.

The interview between mother and daughter is painful and stilted, and this is perhaps the only point in the film where we feel that we are intruding, that we have no right to witness this

woman's private anguish. Her story comes out in pieces: her husband was "a loving man" until the babies were born, and then the beatings started because he didn't like crying. There was no one to turn to. The police told her to go home and sort it out. Eventually, the marriage broke up and the children went to foster homes.

Many of those who are battered and raped as children do not survive, or emerge with their spirits destroyed by the experience. Shirley has made peace with the horrors of her childhood, but only after nine years of therapy, a long-standing friendship with a woman, the support of her husband and her active involvement in incest survivor groups. Both her sister and sister-in-law see her as "liberated," (by which they probably mean feminist). She has a successful career in the non-traditional field of communications engineering; she is regional director of Support, Education and Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children in BC and leader of several self-help groups for survivors; and one of her primary relationships, one she refers to as her "first long relationship," is with a woman whom she has known since Grade 11, a friend who listened to her and told her she was strong.

Interestingly, the press kit makes a point of the fact that there are "good" men in Shirley's life: her husband, her psychiatrist, and her two brothers. But their existence hardly counters



Director Schaffer

the offstage presence of the violent, woman-hating man who abused his wife and sons and raped his daughters. It is of little consolation that there are individual "good" men out there, when misogyny and male violence against women are sanctioned throughout society. The people to whom these children turned for help—in the school, the church, the community—all failed them. No one believed their stories, because they were children, because they were female, because "a man's home is his castle." In giving Shirley and her family a voice, *To a Safer Place* challenges male power and male violence. In stating unequivocally that child sexual abuse is a major social issue, it will give a voice to the one in six women in the audience who is an incest survivor. And this is just the beginning. •



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Poetry of Repression



The House of Bernarda Alba.

by Susan G. Cole

Federico García Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba* is the third in a trilogy of plays the Spanish author and poet wrote to evoke the destructive force of repression in rural Spain. Because his focus is most explicitly sexual in *Alba*, and because all the play's roles are written for women, this revival by Toronto's CentreStage company had the potential to be especially fascinating for feminists interested in exploring radical approaches to sexuality. Lorca, after all, was a radical himself, prepared to take artistic and political risks for which he was eventually assassinated by agents of Spain's fascist regime.

The play is set in the house of Bernarda Alba, a tyrannical and wealthy widow who has

just lost her second husband. In the wake of the funeral she confines her daughters to eight years of mourning during which they are not allowed to leave the house. Only the eldest, Angustius, a plain woman without much humour, escapes the sentence. Since she is the sole heir and the daughter with the dowry, her suitor, Pepe Romero, is allowed to court her, but only at an appointed hour and through the grill of her bedroom window.

The other four sisters suffer varying degrees of indifference or jealousy over Angustius's privilege: Amelia, a middle sister, is simple and doesn't care much; Magdalena, the least attractive, is bitterly resigned to spinsterhood; Martirio, a hunchback, is seething with pent up sexual feelings and has already been frus-

trated by her mother's refusal to let her marry a labourer who had come courting; the youngest, Adela, is the most recklessly sexual, determined to break through the strict moral codes—she has already started the process by trysting with Pepe after each of his visits to Angustius.

The play, in spite of its themes of repression, is an expansive poetic piece from one of the most stunning lyrical poets of the century. Once in a while there is evidence of a heavy Mediterranean hand at work, especially considering that the names Angustius and Martirio do mean Anguish and Martyr respectively, and sometimes the images in translation seem a little too intense (as in "my heart will burst like a pomegranate"). But most of the time the language combines with the author's awareness to

create some wonderful moments.

Lorca was plainly sensitive to the contradictions of hierarchy: Bernarda treats her servants like inferiors, even though her maid La Poncia has been with her for 30 years and is the only one who talks to her as an equal and with any insight. His metaphor for mistrust and distortion in the countryside—the fact that no river runs through the plain and thus the deep-driven wells that are easily poisoned are the only sources of water—is powerfully eloquent. And the author was acutely aware that the insane can speak prophetic truths as Bernarda's mad mother roams the house quite rightly warning of doom. The drama weaves these themes into a play that is full of progressive ideas.

Visually, the CentreStage production is stunning, presenting a set of stark dim-pink walls and black windows and chairs that virtually shimmer with the heat of the hot Granadian plain on which Bernarda's house rests. But in spite of strong performances by Viola Léger as La Poncia, Catherine Disher as the ill-fated Adela and Shirley Douglas as the forbidding Bernarda, the cast does not work that well together. The pitch of the playing is a little too high, and that, combined with the occasionally high-strung translation, makes for some unintentionally funny moments. When a persistent crash is heard onstage and Bernarda believes that the stallion is banging at the gate, there were audible guffaws from the audience. Doubtless, when uttering Lorca's purplish imagery there is a temptation to shout it, but too often the actors fell into the trap and some of the poignancy, especially in scenes among the sisters, was lost.

Most of the members of the audience didn't mind very much. They had come to see what is an amazing work—for its time, and for its relevance to contemporary feminist investigations into sexual issues. *The House of Bernarda Alba* is about how repression breeds fear and distrust. The social code Lorca attacks is the product of a terrifying merger of the social regressiveness of Catholicism and Moorish custom. The by-product of the social code is the nun-like existence thrust upon the house and the anguish caused by a cloistered condition.

At the time Lorca wrote the play, it was proof of his rebelliousness, but in the 1980s the appeals against repression have a more hollow ring. Embedded in Lorca's text is the notion that what society needs is for these girls to get what they need—and we know what that is—as if the doing of it will solve social problems. To be fair, Lorca was not merely a sexual libertarian: the play offers the occasional assault on hierarchies and the oppression of male labourers, and Adela, who is the play's sexual rebel, suffers for it. But her suffering exists as only further condemnation of society's deeply destructive repression. The main thrust of the play winds up being a simplistic sexual politics that may not fit our times.

Some strains of feminist thinking are beginning to appreciate that sexuality has to be rethought, re-created and re-lived before it can really be an ally of social change. As an admirer of the playwright, I'll risk saying that if García Lorca were living today, he would have been an exponent of feminism.

And I am certain that he would have written a different play. ●

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Menstruation in the Media

by Tova L. Wagman

There are approximately one and a half billion people who menstruate on this planet, yet this function remains a source of shame and embarrassment for almost all women in most societies today. Menstruation is rarely talked about. It is a function that is considered highly private.

Negative myths about menstruation prevail (though some cultures view menstruation as positive—for example, in some native communities, menstruating women are seen as powerful, but these views are not the dominant view in Western society today).

Although menstruation is hidden and/or seen as negative in society, it is not hidden from us when we open up a women's magazine or turn on our TV sets. Many of the complaints received by MediaWatch over the years concern the advertising of feminine hygiene products (specifically in sanitary napkin and tampon commercials). The majority of people who complain about these commercials want them off the airwaves. Interestingly, they are not upset with the sexist content of the commercials, but rather with the issue of menstruation. Much of the sexist imagery in the media does *not* reside in feminine hygiene advertisements. In fact, these are the ads which have improved the most over the years. Many of these ads depict women in strong and positive roles.

From a very early age, television forms our diet. Each year, children view more than 27,000 commercials. A study by the Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry (LaMarsh Commission) in 1976, stated:

It would seem improbable that children could avoid acquiring much of their value system from their television experience.

another for male attention. Feminine hygiene ads are the exception. These ads *almost always* depict women alone or together as friends. The advertisers of these products have had to be more conscious of the imagery they use to advertise their product. After all, it is unlike any other product on the market. Its purpose concerns women only, and this makes it unique.

In the early 1970s, Nicole Parton, a consumer columnist for the *Vancouver Sun* found these advertisements to be an issue for people, so she designed a coupon, and asked her readers to submit it within three weeks. It read:

We, the undersigned, feel feminine hygiene advertising should be restricted to women's magazines and implore the Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to remove it from television viewing.

The response was an overwhelming 100,000 signatures. The CRTC told advertisers to regulate. The ads were to be shown at specific times during the day, and the images in the ads were to be "toned down." For example, we started seeing more flowers and doves, and less ballerinas jumping up and doing the splits. The sanitary napkin could not be shown out of its package. Modification was the key and, according to Parton, the campaign had paid off.

These stringent regulations have eased off since the 1970s, but the advertisers of these products are still careful about what they show and how they show it. Some companies, such as Cascade in Drummondville, Québec, try to ensure that women play a large role in designing advertisements for Vania sanitary napkins. Others, such as Kimberly-Clark in Toronto, are using humour to advertise sanitary pads.

Two such commercials depicted women in

woman spy is shown to be clever and able to outwit the male spies. Not only is she clever, but she runs fast, is physically strong, is independent, and is not rescued by a man. Both the ads also portrayed men holding the sanitary napkins. This is the most progressive aspect of these commercials. It has been taboo for men to go near women when they are menstruating, let alone to actually *hold a pad!* These commercials are delightful, creative and funny. They put across a message that menstruation is *part* of a woman's life, and not something we need be ashamed of.

However, there are some valid public concerns about these advertisements. Some advertisers resort to using imagery which plays on the dreaded fear women have of being in public

with men who are fully dressed. This creates an imbalance between the ways women and men are portrayed.

The Maidenform company created several advertising campaigns which specifically reflected this imbalance. One ad showed a female doctor standing with male doctors. The woman's lab coat was completely undone in the front revealing her Maidenform underwear. The men in the advertisement were fully clothed. This advertisement presented a female professional as incompetent by sexualizing her. The advertisement was targeted by women doctors and the Maidenform company removed it from magazines.

In finding solutions, commending advertisers (and programmers) is one important

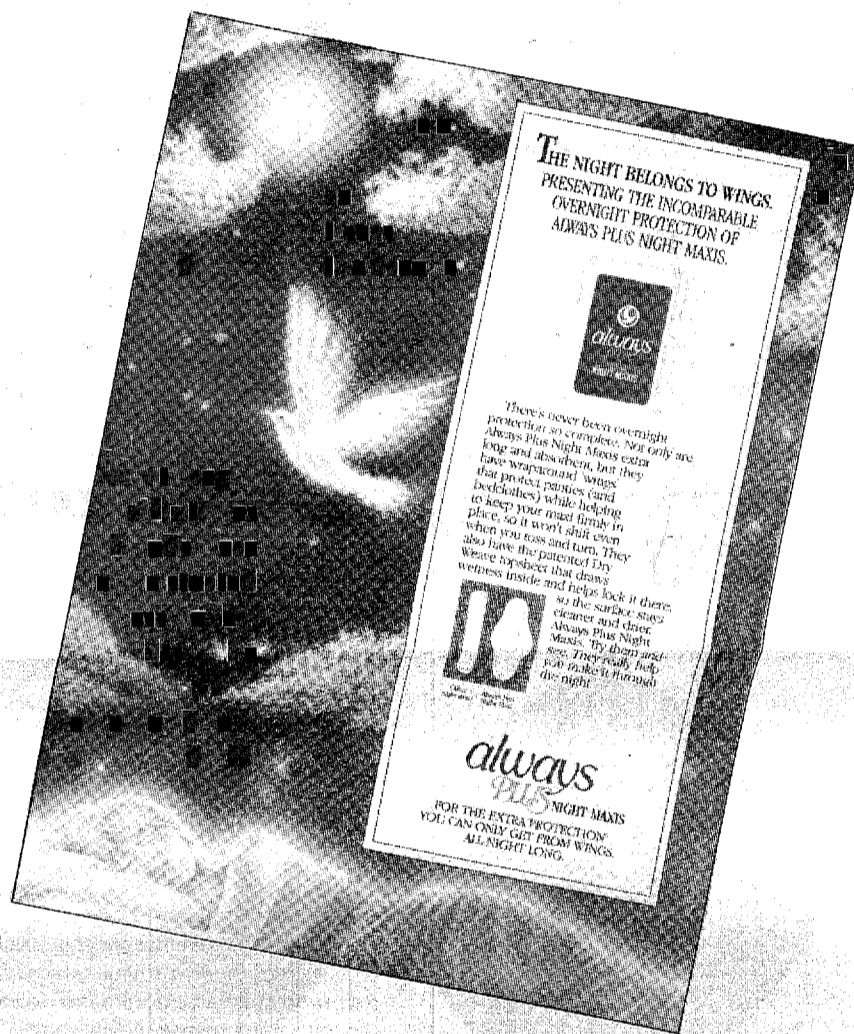


We are spoon fed images repeatedly so that after a while we begin to believe what we see. Young women attempt to emulate the images they see. Most women in the media are depicted as obsessed with their appearance. Almost all are thin, and the maintenance of an ultra slim figure is highly valued. The rise in eating disorders such as bulimia and anorexia nervosa indicate the degree to which young women strive to look like these female "models." These unrealistic images of women and girls that we see in most soft drink, cosmetic, household cleaner, automotive and fragrance advertisements (to name a few), are some of the worst offenders of our intelligence.

Most advertising depicts women in relation to men, or shows women competing with one

strong and positive roles. One commercial involved a woman and two men who were portrayed as spies. The men try to steal a "Microfilm" from the woman's briefcase, but instead end up with a packaged sanitary napkin. Kimberly-Clark have since produced a sequel to that commercial, in which a man tries to outwit the woman. She jumps across rooftops and escapes him. He eventually catches up with her and says: "The Microfilm! And no fast ones, this time!" Once again, however, he mistakes it for the "real thing" and ends up with a pad.

These commercials break new ground, not only where feminine hygiene commercials are concerned, but with reference to the images portrayed of women in *all* commercials. The



Feminine hygiene ads in a Canadian women's magazine

(at a party or school) and having their "secret" found out: for example, the use of women wearing lots of white enhance these fears. There could be no worse shame for a teenager than to have "slipped" by not wearing the right pad, and have her entire class discover she is menstruating.

The advertisers (perhaps due to their own embarrassment?) rarely provide us with much information about the nature of their product. The use of euphemisms such as "sanitary napkins" for pads, or even "feminine protection" as for one's period indicate that it is a phenomena we should be indirect, ashamed, about. The use of commonly used words (among women) such as: cramps, flow, period, etc., would enable us to feel more comfortable with menstruation in general. Advertisers have the opportunity to both educate us about an issue and describe their product. The more specific, honest coverage this issue receives, the less embarrassed women will become and the population as a whole will begin to be more relaxed with it.

While a generalized stereotype of women exists in most media, feminine hygiene advertisements do not sexualize women's bodies in order to sell their product. Women are not shown wearing skimpy, revealing clothing. Camera attention is not paid to specific body parts as it is with many other advertisements. By focussing attention to body parts, or showing women undressed, or continuously wearing revealing clothing, advertisers render women powerless, as nudity is equated with vulnerability in Western society. In advertising, these semi-clothed or unclothed women are usually

tool. This method is as important as complaining to the media industry, if not more so. Advertisers and programmers need to know when they produce a positive portrayal of women. Otherwise it is not clear *what* the public wants to see. While it is apparent that feminine hygiene ads cause viewers to react in a variety of ways, it is important that we distinguish between our reactions and what we are complaining about. Most complaints have more to do with getting the ads off the air because of embarrassment about the subject, and less to do with whether or not the ads are sexist.

Degrading and limiting portrayals are the images which teach young people narrow sex roles. Let us move away from static images of violent and angry "Rambos" and conniving, "sexy" women to images which offer a wide range of choices to young people today. Let us commend advertisers who are taking risks to create images of women that are respectful and realistic. By viewing and understanding media imagery, we can become more aware of the messages directed at us—the consuming public. This process, often referred to as media literacy, is a crucial step if we are to understand our rights as consumers. Becoming critical viewers ourselves, will enable us to teach others (specifically young people) the values of learning to de-code imagery.

Tova Wagman is Consumer Advocate for MediaWatch, a national organization working to improve the status of women in the mass media. For more information write: MediaWatch, 250-1820 Fir Street, Vancouver, BC, V6J 3B1; tel. (604) 731-0457.

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edited by Ellen Adelberg and Claudia Currie

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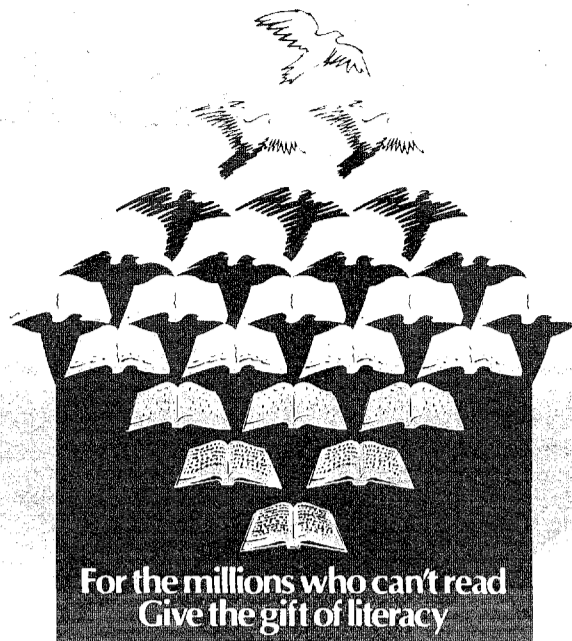
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- They present the best of the literature, prose and poetry that we produce.
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The Government in Ottawa is threatening the survival of the majority of Canada's magazines and considering measures that will significantly raise the cost to readers of those that survive.

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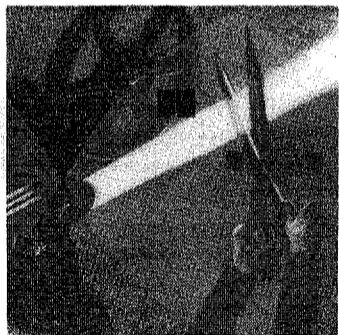


Illustration: Tony Hamilton

PORN AGAIN

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LESBIANS ON THE LOOSE

Sight Specific at A Space review by Colin Campbell

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by Marlene Nourbese Philip

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WEEK OF DECEMBER 1

• **Tuesday, December 1:** The Birth Control and VD Information Centre trailer will be located next to the 519 Church Street Community Centre until the end of March 1988. Services are free and confidential and no OHIP is necessary. Info: 789-4541.

• **Thursday, December 3:** Women's Press and the Centre for Women's Studies in Education is sponsoring a public forum on "Women in Literature—Past and Present." Board room, 12th floor, OISE, 252 Bloor St. West. Free. Info: Margie Wolfe, 598-0082.

• **Thursday, December 3:** Child Sexual Abuse: When Families Need Help, What Is Available? Panel discussion with Laurine Jarvis, Myra Lefkowitz, Peggy Turner, John Vanderhoeven, and moderator Jacqui Manning-Albert. Free, meeting signed for the hearing impaired. Ontario Hydro Building, 2nd floor auditorium, 700 University Ave. Info: Aftermath, 535-0537.

• **Thursday, December 3:** Writings/Readings/Literacies, a two-day workshop with Linda Brodkey, Madeline Grument, Kathleen Rockhill and others. 10 am-1 pm. OISE, 252 Bloor St. West. Info: 923-6641, ext. 2271. Also **Friday, December 4**, 10 am-6 pm.

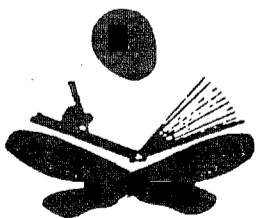
• **Friday, December 4:** Toronto Area Women's Research Colloquium presents Pat Rogers, "Female Undergraduate Success in Mathematics." Senior Common Room, York Hall, 3rd floor, Glendon College, Bayview Ave. Info: 736-5208.

WEEK OF DECEMBER 7

• **Sunday, December 6:** Womynly Way Annual Book and Record Sale. Trinity-St. Paul's, 427 Bloor St. West, 3-6 pm. For pick up and info: 925-6568.

• **Monday, December 7:** Popular Feminism series presents Ruth Goodman, "Social Work and Aging: Toward a Feminist Practice." OISE Board Room, 252 Bloor St. West, 8 pm. Discussion groups to follow. Free. Info: 923-6641, ext. 2204.

• **Tuesday, December 8:** Lesbian and Gay Pride Day organizational meeting, 519 Church St. Community Centre, 7:30 pm. Info: Grant, 862-0470.



• **Wednesday, December 9:** Learning Our History, Planning the Future. Workshop for community workers working with immigrant women. 9 am-4:30 pm, Native Canadian Centre, 16 Spadina Road, \$15 registration. Info and registration: Salome, 531-2059; Tania, 530-4117; or Lillian, 273-7461.



• **Sunday, December 13:** Feminist Interfaith Network meeting, Centre for Christian Studies, 77 Charles St. West, 2:15 pm. Info: 763-4934.

• **Sunday, December 13:** Join the Broadside collective in a fundraising dinner at Tall Poppies restaurant. \$40. 7 pm. 326 Dundas St. West. Reservations: 598-3513.

WEEK OF DECEMBER 21

• **Sunday, December 27:** Feminist Interfaith Network Solstice Party, Centre for Christian Studies, 77 Charles St. West, 2:15 pm. Info: 763-4934.

JANUARY

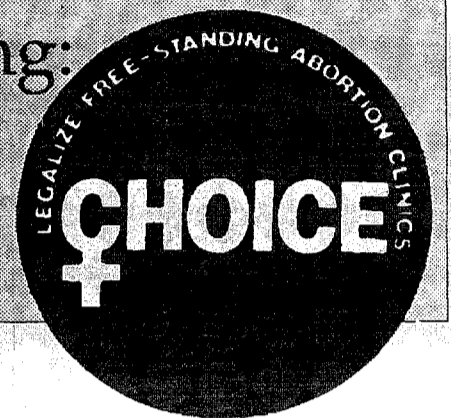
• **Sunday, January 10:** Feminist Interfaith Network meeting, Centre for Christian Studies, 77 Charles St. West, 2:15 pm. Info: 763-4934.

OUTSIDE BROADSIDE

DECEMBER 1987 / JANUARY 1988

Compiled by Helen Lenskyj

Supreme Court Ruling: Women's Right to Abortion



• **Thursday, December 10:** An Evening of Performances by Women, sponsored by the Women's Caucus of CKLN. 9 pm, Music Gallery, 1087 Queen St. W.

• **Friday, December 11:** Siren Soirées at the Theatre Centre, 191 Lippincott St., 9 pm. \$5 at door. Also **Saturday, December 12** and **Sunday, December 13** (pwy).

• **Saturday, December 12:** Wen-do registration for January and February courses at Frankland Community Centre, 816 Logan Ave. at Danforth. Free. Info: 463-0554.

• **Monday, January 11:** Popular Feminism Series presents Nikki Gerrard and Gretchen Grinnell, "Undoing Crazy-making: Feminist Therapy—a Stitch in Time Saves Nine." OISE, Rooms 2-212/213, 252 Bloor St. West, 8 pm. Discussion groups to follow. Info: 923-6641, ext. 2204.

• **Monday, January 11:** Wen-do course begins at Frankland Community Centre, 816 Logan Ave. at Danforth. Six Mondays to February 15. Info: 463-0554.

• **Tuesday, January 12:** Lesbian and Gay Pride Day organizational meeting, 519 Church St. Community Centre, 7:30 pm. Info: Grant, 862-0470.

• **Tuesday, January 12:** Wen-do course begins at Oak Co-op, River St. at Gerrard. Five Tuesdays to February 9. Info: 784-1369.

• **Wednesday, January 13:** Wen-do course begins at Bay and Bloor. Five Wednesdays to February 10. Info: 923-1168.

• **Monday, January 18:** Wen-do course begins at Davisville and Yonge. Six Mondays to February 22. Info: 368-2178.

• **Friday, January 22:** Women's winter weekend at Tapawingo. \$67 (3-day option \$89). Info: 967-7118 or 921-4755. To **Sunday, January 24**.

• **Wednesday, January 27:** Wen-do course begins at U of T. Six Wednesdays to March 9. Info: 978-4911.

• **Thursday, January 28:** Wen-do course begins at Rexdale Women's Centre. Six Thursdays to March 3. Info: 745-0062.

• **Friday, January 29:** Lecture and workshops by Jean Shinoda Bolen, author of *Goddesses in Everywoman*. Trinity-St. Paul's, 427 Bloor St. West. \$10 before December 29, \$15 after. Info: 537-6464. Also **Saturday, January 30**.

• **Thursday, January 28:** Wen-do course begins at Scarborough Women's Centre. Seven Thursdays to March 10. Info: 431-1138.

• **TBA:** When the Supreme Court of Canada announces its decision on the 1984 jury acquittal of Drs. Morgentaler, Scott and Smoling, come to the Morgentaler Clinic at 5:30 pm that day. 85 Harbord St. Info: 532-8193.

WEEKLY

Sunday: Lesbians of Colour (LOC), a social and support group for Native, Asian, South Asian, Black and Latin lesbians regardless of age meets every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month. 519 Church St. 3:45-5:30 pm. Info: Michele, 588-2930. (Out of town lesbians of colour can write for information: LOC, PO Box 6597, Station A, Toronto, M5W 1K4.)

Monday to Friday: "By All Means," a noon-time women's radio magazine show. Every day at 12:15 on CIUT-FM 89.5. Interview, reviews, commentary and chit chat. Tune in! Info: 595-0909.

Monday: The Women's Group, an open lesbian discussion group, meets at 519 Church St. 8 pm. Info: 392-6874.

Monday and Wednesday: The Women's Information Line is open from 7-9 pm. Messages may be left any time, at 598-3714.

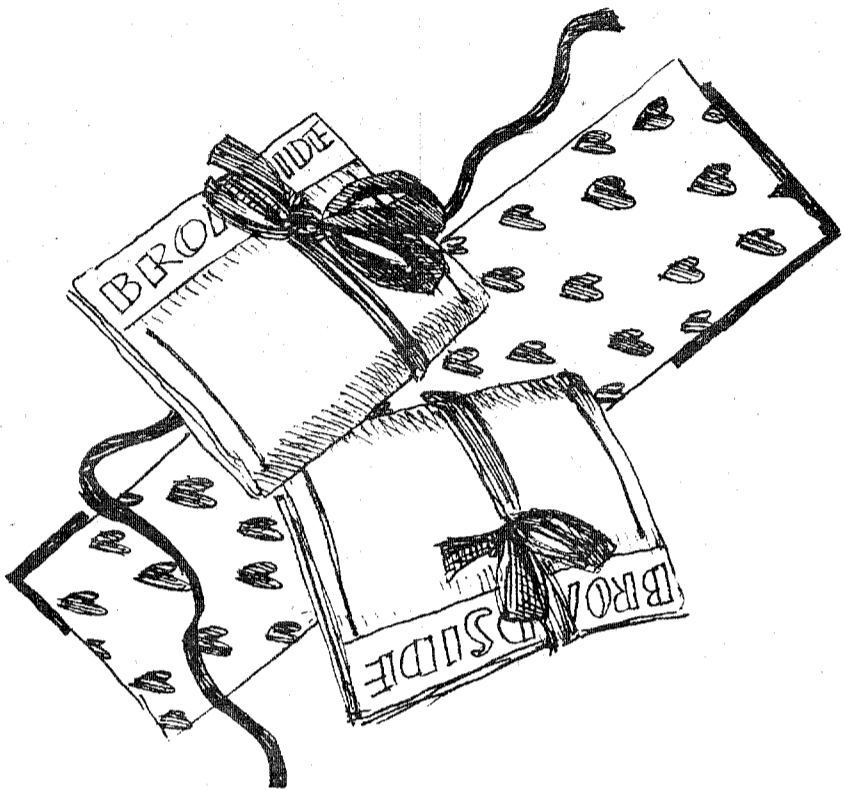
Tuesday: Lesbian fuck-the-discussion group meets for informal basketball, movie nights and other events. 7 pm., U of T Women's Centre, 49 St. George. Info: 978-8201.

Tuesday and Thursday: The Lesbian Phone Line is open for calls from women. 7:30-9:30 pm. 533-6120.

Wednesday: International Women's Day Committee (IWDC), a socialist feminist activist group, meets on alternate Wednesdays. Info: Nancy, 531-6608.

Thursday: Feminist self-help discussion group. Women and men welcome. 7-9 pm. U of T Women's Centre, 49 St. George. Info: 978-8201.

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BED & BREAKFAST for women—renovated Victorian townhouse in downtown Montreal—close to restaurants, boutiques, bars. Lindsey's B&B, 3974 Laval Avenue, Montreal, H2W 2J2. (514) 843-4869.

BED & BREAKFAST for women near downtown Montreal. Close to absolutely everything. For info call (514) 288-9890.

PLANNING A TRIP TO MONTREAL? "Lavender Guide" introduces you to many lesbian resources: at the Toronto Women's Bookstore or by sending S.A.S.E. (52¢) & \$2 to Project Lavender, CP105 Succ. DeLorimier R., Montreal, Québec, H2H 2N6.

WINTER WEEKEND for women at Tapawingo, near Parry Sound. \$67 (3-day option \$89). January 22-24. Info, after January 1: Susan (416) 921-4755, or Kye (416) 967-7118.

SUDBURY lesbian seeking circle of lesbian professionals as friends. If interested, write to Box 2806, Station A, Sudbury, Ontario, P34 5J3.

AMAZON MUSICAL collective—join for musical sharing, creativity, self-expression and fun. Regular gatherings. For info call Janice (416) 424-2964.

GOLDEN THREADS, a contact publication for lesbians over 50 and women who love older women. Canada and US. Confidential, warm, reliable. Sample copy mailed discreetly, \$5 (US) or send a self-addressed envelope for free information: Golden Threads, P.O. Box 2416, Quincy, MA, 02269, USA.

FEMINIST AND LESBIAN BOOKS by mail, English and French. New Book Bulletins published 3 times/year, free. L'Androgyne Bookstore, 3636 St-Laurent, Montreal, Quebec, H2X 2V4.

GET IN TOUCH with the history of the Canadian Women's Movement! The Canadian Women's Movement Archives needs volunteers to help collect and organize magazines, photographs and organizational material, fundraise and tell other people about us. Contact us at (416) 597-8865 or write P.O. Box 128, Station P, Toronto, M5S 2S7.

JOB OPENING: U of T Women's Centre Co-ordinator. Manager's Office/Drop in Centre. Supervisors. Volunteers. Works with collective. 20/hrs. per wk. \$8/hr. Priority given to women under-represented due to race, class, age and disability. Deadline for receipt of resume and covering letter: Dec. 18, 1987. Start date Jan. 18, 1988. Call (416) 978-8201 for more info.

PART-TIME HELPER. Disabled woman. Stay at home by assisting with personal care and meal preparation. Flexible—evenings and/or week-ends, \$5.20 per hr. to start. Contact Central Neighbourhood House at (416) 966-8595.

BICYCLISTS AND WALKERS needed year round for Sunwheel Bicycle Couriers. Co-operative, professional environment, well organized and good money. Call (416) 598-0053.

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3RD WOMAN wanted for large comfortable house near Christie and Barton. Non-smoker please. Rent \$430 (negotiable). Available Dec. or Jan. Call Myra during the day at (416) 440-0888 or Alex/Myra in evenings at (416) 534-8376.

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