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For All Women

60^P
issue no 10

LAST ISSUE AS WE KNOW IT
NEXT ISSUE A NEW BEGINNING
A NEW NAME



POEMS ARTICLES REVIEWS + LOTS MORE

EDITORIAL

a herstory of change

FROM THE FRONT COVER YOU'VE GATHERED (WE HOPE)
THAT THERE ARE *BIGGER* THAN *USUAL* CHANGES
HAPPENING.
HERE IS THE BEGINNING OF WHAT THEY ARE ALL ABOUT

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE.

Lysistrata

Lysistrata began as a women's peace magazine. The idea of it was to 'link up peace groups and spread news about peace actions that were happening up and down the country and overseas'.

Over the issues Lysistrata's focus gradually changed - - the definition of 'peace' was one that broadened to not just mean 'peace' as opposing the nuclear threat and other threats of military war, but included all threats to and violations of womens' lives, whether by able-bodied elitism, ageism, anti-lesbianism, anti-semitism, classism, male violence or racism. Furthermore, by saying that we were fighting for 'peace' we understood that for some womens' lives non-violence is an impossible strategy. To condemn it as contradictory to the aims of 'peace', as the mainly white, able-bodied middle-class womens peace movement was doing, was simply a demonstration of their lack of understanding and respect for these women. Those violations of 'peace' mentioned above were clearly being regarded as unimportant side issues. We were trying to redefine it as meaning a condition that all women were struggling for in whatever way that was not oppressing other women.

The collective

The collective of Lysistrata started off as mainly white/non-jewish (read: wasp). Since then it has changed many times and this has been reflected by the changes in the magazine during its 10 issues.

Now, with the new composition of the collective the magazine has inevitably changed once more; this time it will include a name change which reflects and expresses the significance and extent of these changes as part of a new beginning.

We are a non-wasp collective, women of different ethnic minority groups, who have found our struggle not to be defined solely in terms of male oppression but also in terms of cultural oppression. Our position outside wasp culture makes us aware of our shared vulnerabilities and the responsibility each of us carry in creating and strengthening already existing bonds between different ethnic groups, both in this country and overseas. This does not mean that we neglect our commitment to struggle for all womens liberation, but we assert a safe and specific space from within which we can do so - - alongside a wasp-dominated womens movement.

We want the magazine to be like a conversation between readers and collective, and between readers themselves, and hope that this way we will all gain and extend an understanding of the kinds of oppression, whether of male dominance or cultural prejudice, that affect and shape our lives.

And just as Lysistrata tried to provide a public space for women otherwise deprived of access to such a space, so our commitment to this continues.

We welcome therefore contributions of all kinds - - - written-, spoken- (on tape), and 'art'-work - - - that share an interest and concern for these issues.

in sisterhood

Rivka
Kris
Penny
SARA
Karen

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Apologies....

OOPS!

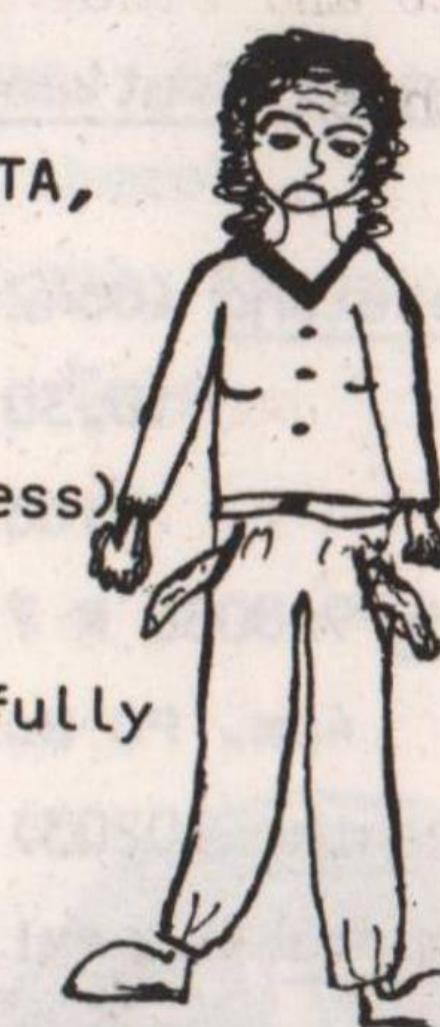
In last issue of Lysistrata we said on the back page "...for info about round banners see inside back page".but we forgot to put it in. APOLOGIES to Greta who designed it.

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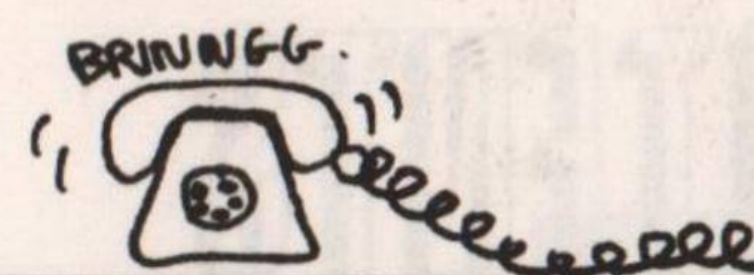
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3

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rape crisis centres

If you have been raped or sexually assaulted, no matter how long ago, and would like some information, advice or just someone to talk to, you can contact any of the following Rape Crisis centres. All Rape Crisis centres have only women working there, and will treat whatever you say in utter confidence.

Days indicated as follows M,T,W,Th,F,Sa,Su. Times are pm unless otherwise stated.

Aberdeen (0224) 575560 M 6-8, Th 7-9. Answerphone. P.O.Box 123

Belfast (0232) 249696 M-F 1-6, T&F 7-10. P.O.Box 46

Birmingham (021) 233-2655 (office) 233-2122 (24hr line) P.O.Box 558

Bradford (0274) 308270 M 1-5, Th 6-10. Answerphone. BRCC c/o BRC 93-95 Little Horton Lane, Bradford, W.Yorks.

Brighton (0273) 699756 T 6-9, F 3-9, Sa 10am-1pm, P.O. Box 332, Hove.

Bristol (0272) 428331 M-F 10.30am-2.30pm. Answerphone. 39 Jamaica St. Stokes Croft.

Cambridge (0223) 358314 M 7-9, W 6-12, Sa 11-5. Box R, 12 Mill Rd.

Cardiff (0222) 373181 M 7-10, W 11-2, Th 7-10. c/o Box 18, 108 Salisbury Rd. Cathays.

Central Scotland (Falkirk) 48433 M&Th 7-9. PO Box 4 Falkirk

Cleveland (0642) 225787 M-Th 10am-3pm, Th 7.30-10.30. Answerphone. PO Box 31, Middlesbrough.

Cork 968086 M 7.30-10, W 2-5, F 10am-1pm, Sa 10am-4pm. PO Box 42, Brian Boru St.

Coventry (0203) 77229 M-F 11am-3pm, M 7-10

Cumbria (Kendal) 25255 M7-10, W 12am-3pm.

Dublin (0001) 601470 M-F 'pm-'am, Sa-Su 24hrs. Answerphone. PO Box 1027 Dublin 6

Edinburgh (031) 556-9437 M 1-2, 6-8, T-F 6-8 Th 7-10 PO Box 120

Exeter (0392) 30871 M-F 10am-5pm. Answerphone

Glasgow (041) 221-8488 M,W,F 7-10. PO Box 53

Grays Thurrock (0375) 30609 M 6-9, W 1-5 Answerphone

Highlands (Inverness) (0463) 22079 M 6-8, Th 7-9, C/o Womens Group, IV06, Ardconnell St.

Leamington Spa 832529 T 7.30-10

Leeds (0532) 440058 Every day 12-4, M-F 7-10 PO Box 27 Leeds LS2 7EG

Leicester (0533) 666666 T 7-10, Sa 2-5.

Liverpool (051) 734-4369 M 7-9, Th&Sa 2-5, Answerphone.

London 01-837-1600 24 hrs. PO Box 42, London N6

Luton (0532) 33526 M-F 9am-5pm, M 7-10.

Manchester (061) 228-3602 T&F 2-5, W&Th&Su 6-9

Norwich (0603) 667687 M 6-8, Th 8-10, F 10am-2pm. Answerphone.

Nottingham (0602) 410440 M-F 11am-5pm, c/o 37a Mansfield Rd.

Oxford (0865) 726295 W 2-10

Reading (0734) 55577 Su 7.30-10, Box 9, 17 Chatham St.

Scunthorpe 853953 PO box 38

Sheffield (0742) 755255 M&F 10am-1pm, T&Th 8-10, W 2-4, Sa 12-3pm, PO Box 34

Swansea (0792) 475243 T 7-9, F 10am-12n. Answerphone.

Tyneside (0632) 329858 M-F 10am-5pm, Sa&Su 6.30-10 PO Box 13 Newcastle Tyne and Wear.

lesbian lines

ABERDEEN (0224) 26869 W 7-10

BRADFORD (0274) 305525 Th 7-9

BRIGHTON (0273) 603298 T 8-10, Fri 2-5, 8-10 PO Box 449, Ship Street.

CAMBRIDGE (0223) 246113 F 6-10

CARDIFF (0222) 374051 Th 8-10.

COLCHESTER (0206) 870051 W 8-10

COVENTRY (0203) 25991 T 7-10 (Friend Womens Line)

COVENTRY & LEAMINGTON (0203) 77105 W 7-10

DUNDEE (0382) 21843 T 7-10

EDINBURGH (031) 556409 Th 7.30-10 (always a woman on duty, if a man answers, ask for a woman) (Friend Womens Line)

GLASGOW (041) 2484596 M 7-10

LANCASTER 63021 W 6-9

LEEDS (0532) 453588 T 7.30-9.30

LEICESTER (Friend) (0533) 826299 T 7.30-10.30

LIVERPOOL (051) 7080234 T&Th 7-10

LONDON 01 251-6911 M&F 2-10pm, T&W&Th 7-10

BM Box 1514 London WC1N 3XX

MANCHESTER (061) 2366205 M-F 7-10

MERSEYSIDE 7080234 T&Th 7-10

IGRM, MUNSTER, CORK (021) 505394 T 8-10

NEWCASTLE (0632) 612277. 7-10.

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE (0782) 266998 F 8-10

NOTTINGHAM (0602) 410652 M&W 7-9.30

OXFORD (0865) 242333 W 7-10

PETERBOROUGH (GPG) (0733) 238005/265181 up till 10pm

PLYMOUTH (0752) 261251 T 7.30-9.30

ST. ANDREWS (0334) 72604 M 7-10

SHEFFIELD 581238 Th 7-10

SWANSEA 467365 F 7-9

WEST MIDLANDS (B'HAM) (021) 6226580 W&F 7-10

EIRE, DUBLIN (NFG) (0001) 710608 Th 8-10 (Switchboard)

- LESBIAN - NEWS -

ILIS Conference

(International Lesbian Information Service) STOCKHOLM APRIL

Workshops on Fascism

Workshops at the conference were:

1. Fascist traits in society and within governments.
2. Fascism and lesbianism.
3. Fascism and action strategies.

Reports came in from Norway and Holland of increasing fascism, stronger fascist parties, less control over government and police, action against immigrants. (Sounds like you-know-where.)

It was suggested that democracy and fascism are the same cards, just the rules are different, the strong relationship between power and ideology, the one reinforcing the other.

The conference decided:

* To fight against fascism is to be offensive, especially against patriarchy.

* To define who we are, an autonomous lesbian movement. Alliances to be made only from positions of strength (ours).

They say, "Look at what is in common between fascism and patriarchy in its extreme form of men's violence and power." "Fascism is a daily rape."

Further debate centered around practical issues such as winning support from other non-lesbian groups in the struggle, doing posters and leaflets, to gain support.

It sounds like a good conference, but where were the British? 5

For Lesbians

The new London Lesbian and Gay Centre hopes to open in September. Lesbian groups are backward in coming forward to support this project (because men are involved maybe?) but it will be our space when finished. The lesbians in the work make sure, "that the steering committee keeps to the original proposals that lesbians would always be equally represented and that women only space is allocated." Sounds like hard work for some of us. London lesbians, are you there? The project is at 274, Upper Street, London N1. Tel: 01 359 7372.



Lesbian Feminist Writers

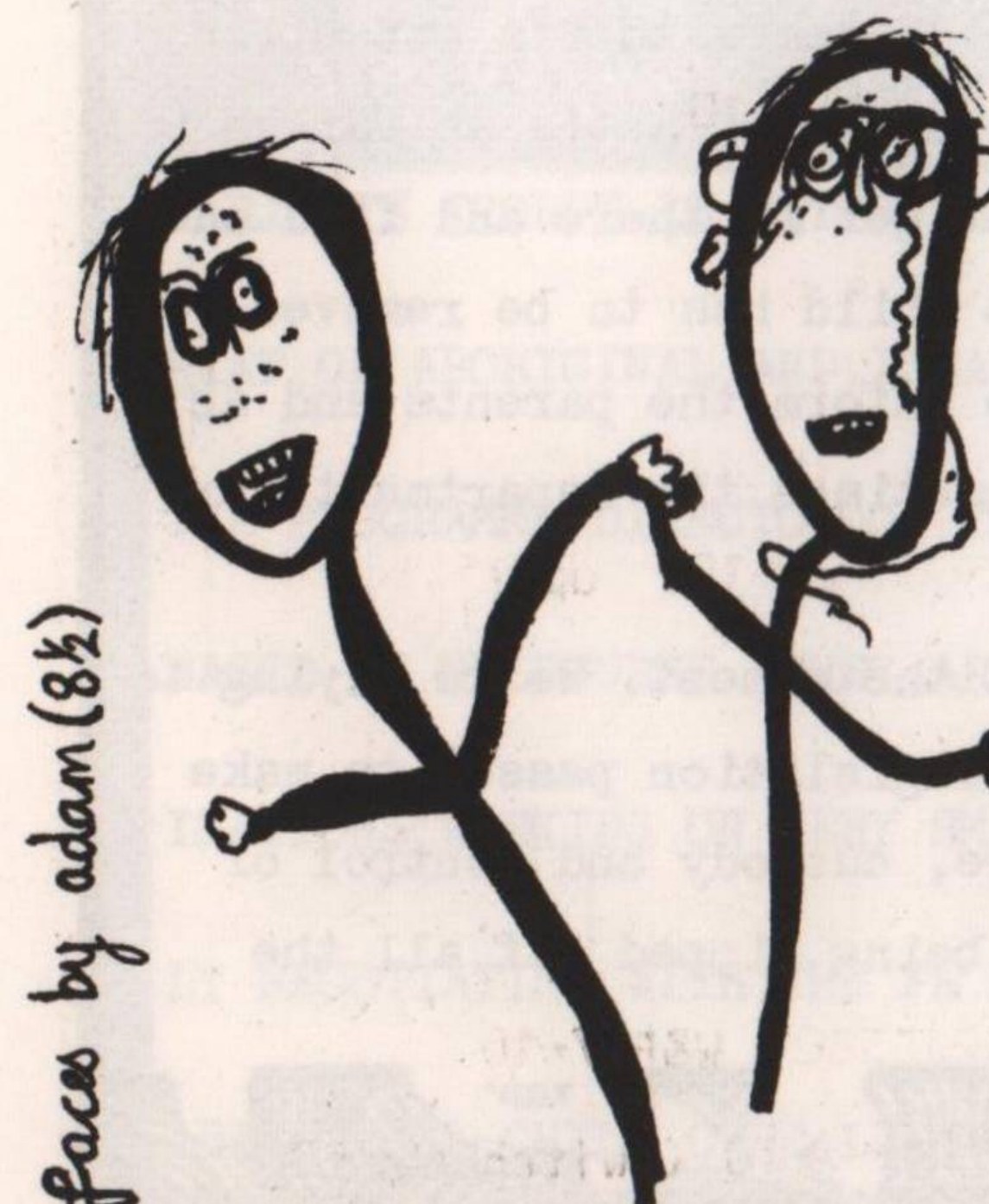
** ** THE WOMEN'S PRESS is aiming to publish a collection of lesbian feminist short stories next year.

Contributions from all lesbians are welcome.

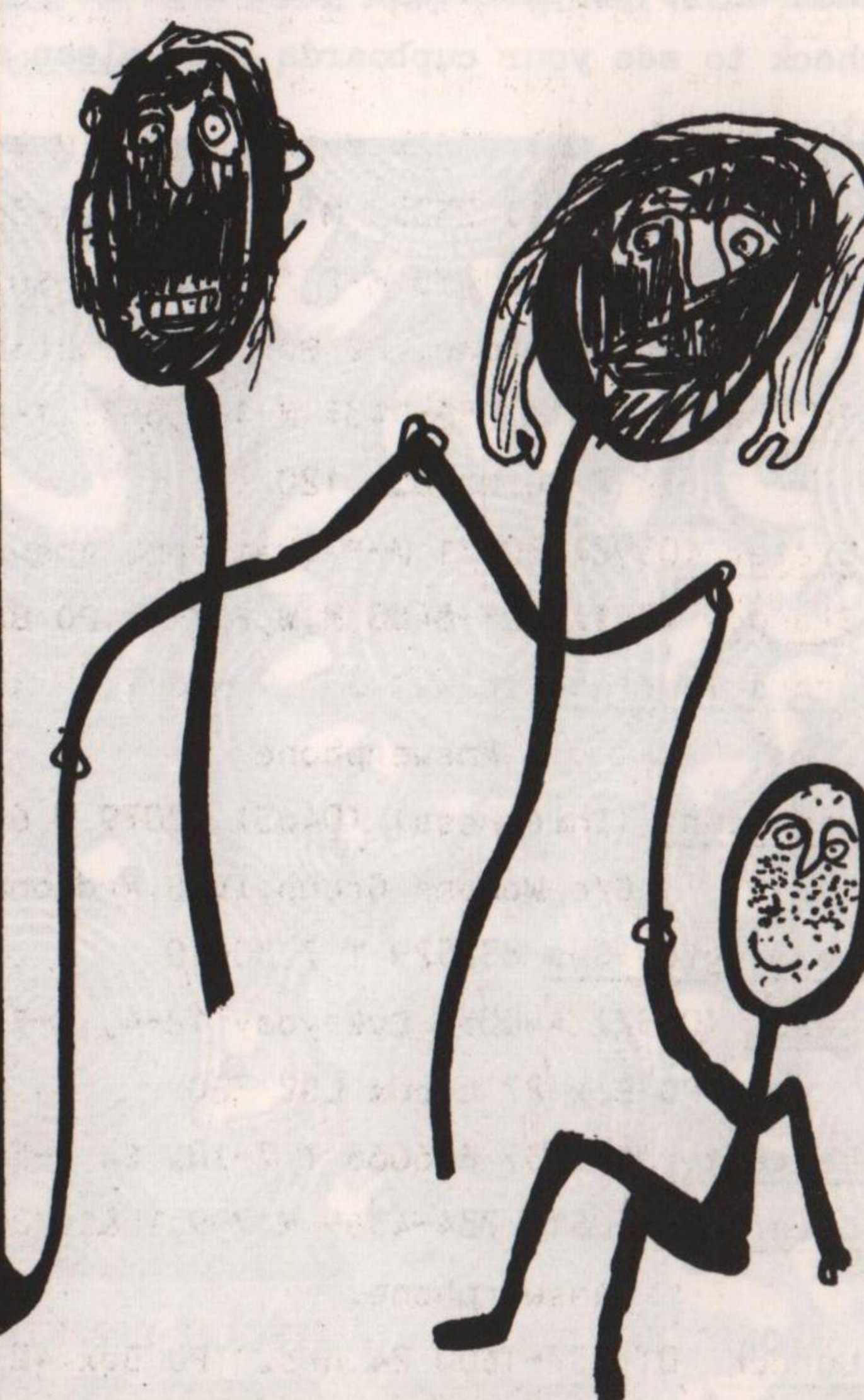
Contributions from lesbians who are not white, gentile, middle-class, able-bodied, and between the ages of 25-35, are especially welcome.

Please send to:

Jan Bradshaw and Mary Hemming,
The Womens Press,
124 Shoreditch High St.,
London E.1.



faces by adam (84)



PACIFIC

the

removal of

the children

ties

They wanted to wipe us out. The Australian government tried to kill us off, shoot us down, poison our flour, put us on reserves, virtually starved us, and made us dependent on foods like sugar, white flour and jam. We were denied our natural foods -- a lot of people died.

They took the land off us, but they took our children too. Police cars would go into the reserves and take the kids to institutions. Parents didn't even know where the kids had gone. A film has been made under Aboriginal direction, using archival material from the thirties and forties, showing the removal of Aboriginal children from their families. They were sent to institutions to be trained for household help or as labourers on farms or cattle stations. Once hired they often didn't get paid.

I remember my grandmother talking about leaving the reserve and the same situation happened to her. All this in the name of assimilation.

Every meeting we go to where we are talking about child welfare issues we ask people, "How many of you can remember someone in your own family being removed?" Almost everyone puts up a hand.

I can remember social workers coming into our home and checking our cupboards out and questioning us. Were we going to school? Going to our school and checking us out. I was only young but I used to feel really angry that white people could just walk into your house and check to see your cupboards were clean and you couldn't stop them.

It's still going on in places like W. Australia. Every Aboriginal child who goes to court is made a ward of the state. So there are 2000 Aboriginal wards of state in W. Australia. There's no recognition of the different lifestyle of Aboriginal people. How can a magistrate judge whether an Aboriginal tribal mother is looking after her child properly. It is not for him to decide. Aboriginal people tie the removal of their children closely with the taking of the land, the children are the only resource we've got. We're fighting to get our land back but we say, what's the use of it if they're taking our children.

In Victoria we've developed a relationship with State Welfare Department. If any child comes to its attention we have to be notified and consulted. That's as far as we've got, but we can at least get in there and find out what the exact story is. If a child has to be removed then we make the decision. We inform the parents and act as advocates for them. But sometimes the Department forgets to notify us.

That's what we're fighting at the moment. We're trying to get Aboriginal child welfare legislation passed to make sure that we maintain the care, custody and control of our own children, instead of being ripped off all the time.

closely with the taking of the land

Aboriginal children who are put into institutions or made wards of the state are often adopted by white parents who want a nice cute little Aboriginal baby. We don't believe in adoption, it's alien to our culture. We're demanding a moratorium on adoption. One woman rang us up, and she said she had an Asian child and a white child (her own) and she just wanted to have an Aboriginal child to make the set.

We have cases where kids can't identify with being Aboriginal because they have been raised as white children. They've been told that they're white, even though they've got black faces. They really freak out. So we get kids trying to scrape their skin off with razors and painting themselves with white Twink. People start freaking out then. They think "this kid's not what we thought he'd be". A lot of kids are dumped back into institutions at 10, 11 or 12. The streets are full of kids who have

come back looking for their Aboriginal identity or their family. They come to us and it's really difficult because there are no records. So these kids are caught between two cultures. They're thinking white, they're black in the colour of their skin and nobody wants them because it's really hard to come back into an Aboriginal community and live like a koori, an Aboriginal person, after living as a white person. It's difficult for Aboriginal people to accept them, although we try and help them.

When we were allowed off the reserves -- this is in Victoria, people still aren't allowed off the reserves in Queensland -- we were brought into the cities where we thought we could get jobs. If we did get a house with the Housing Commission it would put one family ten miles away from another. It scattered people throughout Melbourne. Keep us apart and hopefully fade us out. You can imagine Aboriginal people coming in from the reserves, who hadn't been exposed to white people or that way of living. Imagine how those people were exploited. When they went back to the reserves, they had half-caste children, a lot through rape.

Aboriginal people are afraid to go to Social Security, they are ashamed to go to the doctor. But they come to the centres that we are setting up because they are happy there. They don't feel harassed, no-one's putting pressure on them. After a while they get involved in programmes we're running. So you see we're maintaining our autonomy. The people themselves are doing it, people with no education.

MARJORIE THORPE IS NATIONAL CO-ORDINATOR OF THE SECRETARIAT OF ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER CHILD CARE (SAICC) AND THE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR OF THE VICTORIAN CHILD CARE AGENCY BASED IN MELBOURNE. THEY ARE GRASSROOTS ABORIGINAL ORGANISATIONS WORKING ON VERY SMALL FUNDING. SAICC IS CURRENTLY NEGOTIATING WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ON NATIONAL ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE LEGISLATION.

TORTURE TRADE

WHAT IS TORTURE?

It is difficult to define torture because so much 'ordinary' treatment of prisoners could be called torture. It is not appropriate to have a continuum of torture because each individual's experience is so different. But some things can definitely be said about torture. It is the deliberate infliction of extreme pain, distress or humiliation by someone(s) in a position of relative power over someone placed in a position of powerlessness. Of course, a lot of women are living in this situation, be it in mental hospitals or marriage, but for the purpose of this piece I want to talk about what goes on in prisons all over the world and who is behind much of it.

Torture is - now - called by names like 'Anti-Terrorist Activity', 'Deep Interrogation' etc. It has become more subtle & sophisticated, with the use of drugs, psychological torture and sensory deprivation becoming widespread. At the same time, more obviously brutal and mutilatory practices are increasing.

WHO IS TORTURED?

Women, men and children. As women become more active in fighting for their own liberation, as well as in causes like national liberation struggles and world peace, they are more frequently imprisoned, tortured and/or killed. Women are tortured in the same ways as men and in ways especially used for women. For example, women are raped, often by men using instruments of torture designed for other uses. If a woman is or becomes pregnant, she may miscarry, or the child may be damaged or killed by the mother's ordeal. Medical care is usually poor, if existent. Torture of women often brings the reality or the threat of sterility.



BRITISH INVOLVEMENT

This has several forms. Firstly, the British government uses a variety of torture methods in its own prisons. Examples of this are the treatment of women in Armagh, Durham and so on. Body belts are also used in women's prisons. These consist of thick leather straps fastened round the waist, with handcuffs attached to a ring on either side.

Secondly, Britain is the world's second largest exporter of 'internal security' equipment. To promote this trade, the Ministry of defence mounts a biennial exhibition of 'British Army Equipment', to which representatives from many countries are invited and shown a range of weaponry and torture instruments. Needless to say, the public is not invited to attend. An example of the sort of 'equipment' on display at the last exhibition in 1982 is the electric shock baton. This has been used to rape women prisoners.

There are some questions about the torture trade that the government refuses to answer. First; who these instruments are being used by, on whom and how? The British government won't release details of who it sells what to, although it says it won't give export licenses if it suspects that equipment would be used to torture. There is no way of checking up on this. For example, Norman Tebbit says that leg irons, shackles and gang chains will only be exported to South Africa for museum purposes. In 1983 he is reported to have said that if Britain didn't sell these to South Africa for use on prisoners, someone else would. Second; if Britain is making, storing and selling this equipment, it seems likely that they are being used in Britain's prisons. Some places, like Durham, rarely have much contact with the outside world so it is difficult to know what really goes on there

POLICE VIOLENCE IN BANGALORE

Three women's organisations in Bangalore, Vimochana, Manini and Women's Voice had planned to take out a demonstration on March 8 in protest at violence against women. Since prohibitory orders were in force in the city, they applied for police permission. Late on the evening of March 7 the police refused permission. It was then too late to inform all the members of a change in programme so they decided to gather at the appointed venue, Mayo Hall and there decide the course of action. However, as women started to arrive, from 3.15 onwards, they were arrested and dragged into police vans. Policewomen showered abuses on them, pushed and pinched them and pulled them by the hair. One woman's sari was torn and another severely bruised on the head. Altogether, 50 women were arrested and taken to Wilson Garden police station where they were detained for three hours. They were not allowed to use the phone or contact their lawyers.

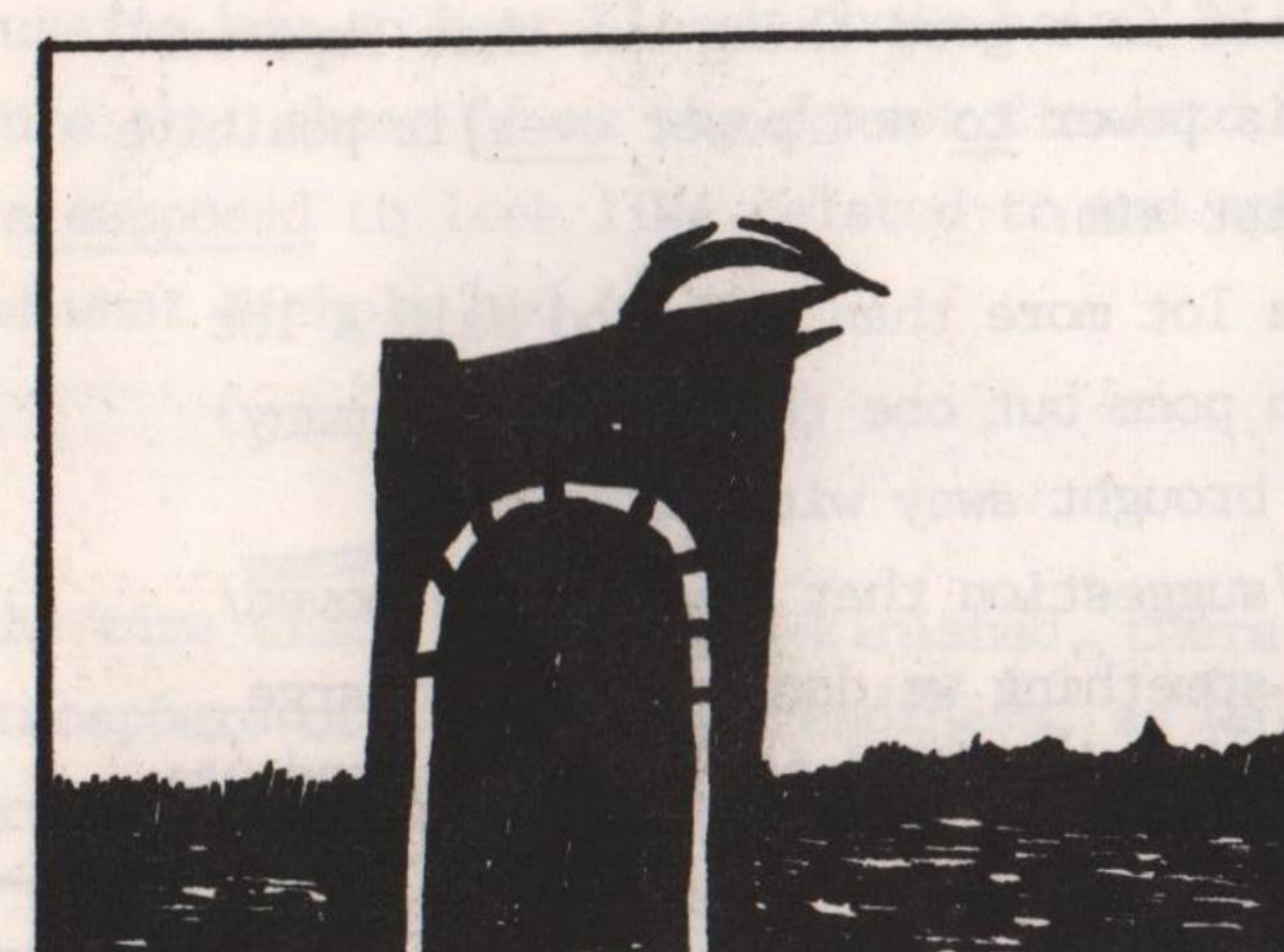
At 5.30, 18 members of the Muslim Students Organisation, an Iranian organisation, reached the venue to extend support to the women's protest. They were also promptly arrested. It was only at 6.15 that the demonstrators were released on bail. At 7pm, law minister Laxmisagar met the aggrieved women and promised to look into the matter. Vimochana is demanding a judicial enquiry into the police brutality and the deliberate disruption of a peaceful women's march.

Taken from Manushi. #21

WOMENS SAY NO

TORTURE TRADE cont.

Third, there are implications for imperialist control of 'Third world' countries by the U.S., and Britain's role in supporting that. For example, some of the 97 countries invited to the '82 event are known to be controlled by the U.S., like the Philippines.



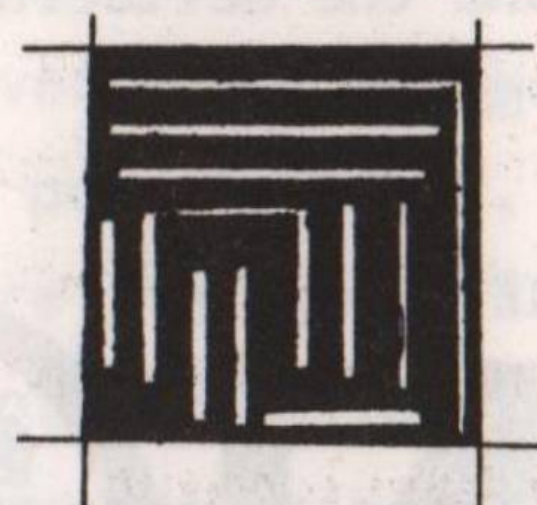
Behind Prison Doors...

*what can be
done?*

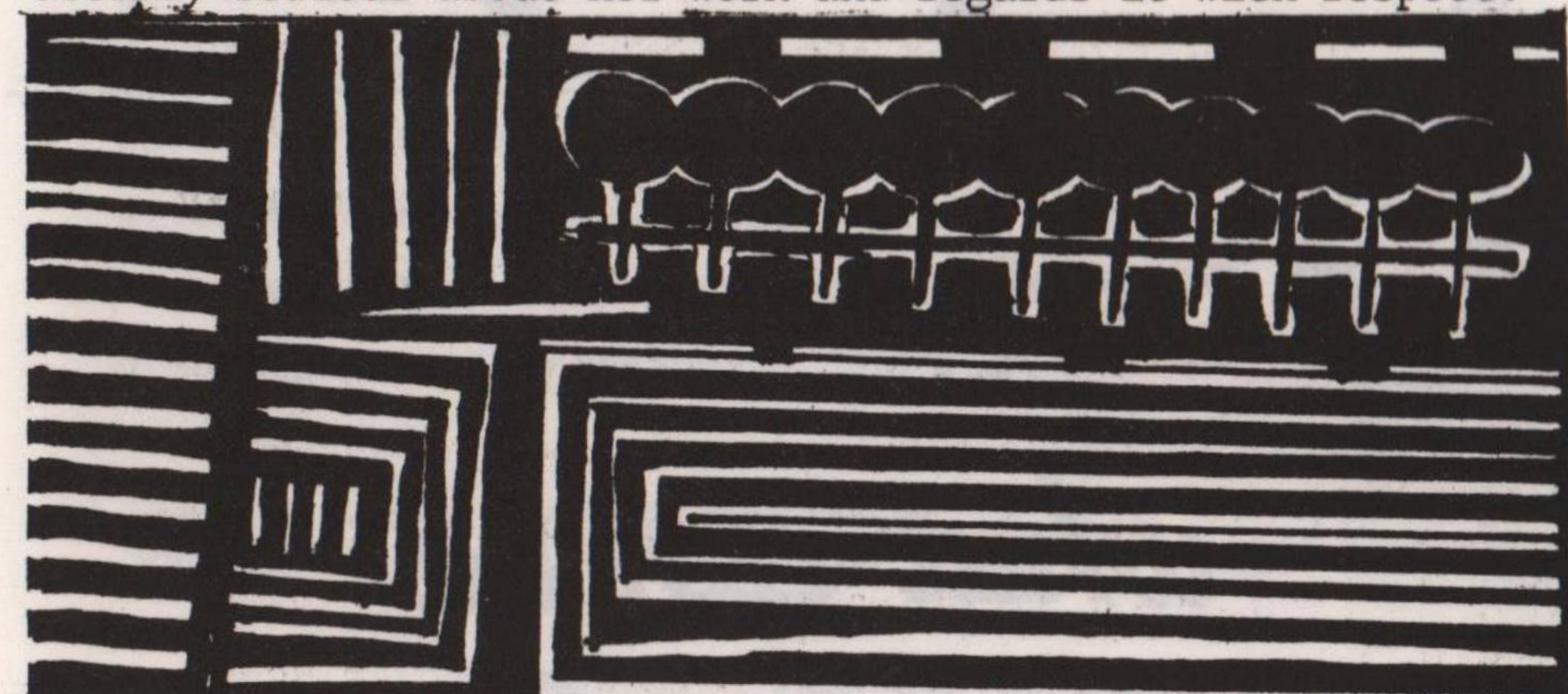
There isn't a lot we can do to make the government answer these and other questions except put pressure on them. There is work being done by Amnesty International (who have a Women's Section now) that anyone could participate in. There is a point in making demands of the government, at least to draw attention to what it's doing in this area. ('Pressure' can take various forms, of course, not all of it letter writing! depending on what women are keen on doing.) Many people (including many feminists) believe that Britain's involvement in other countries ended with the 'empire', and don't realise that it condones and actively supports the repression of dissent all over the world.

3 Women

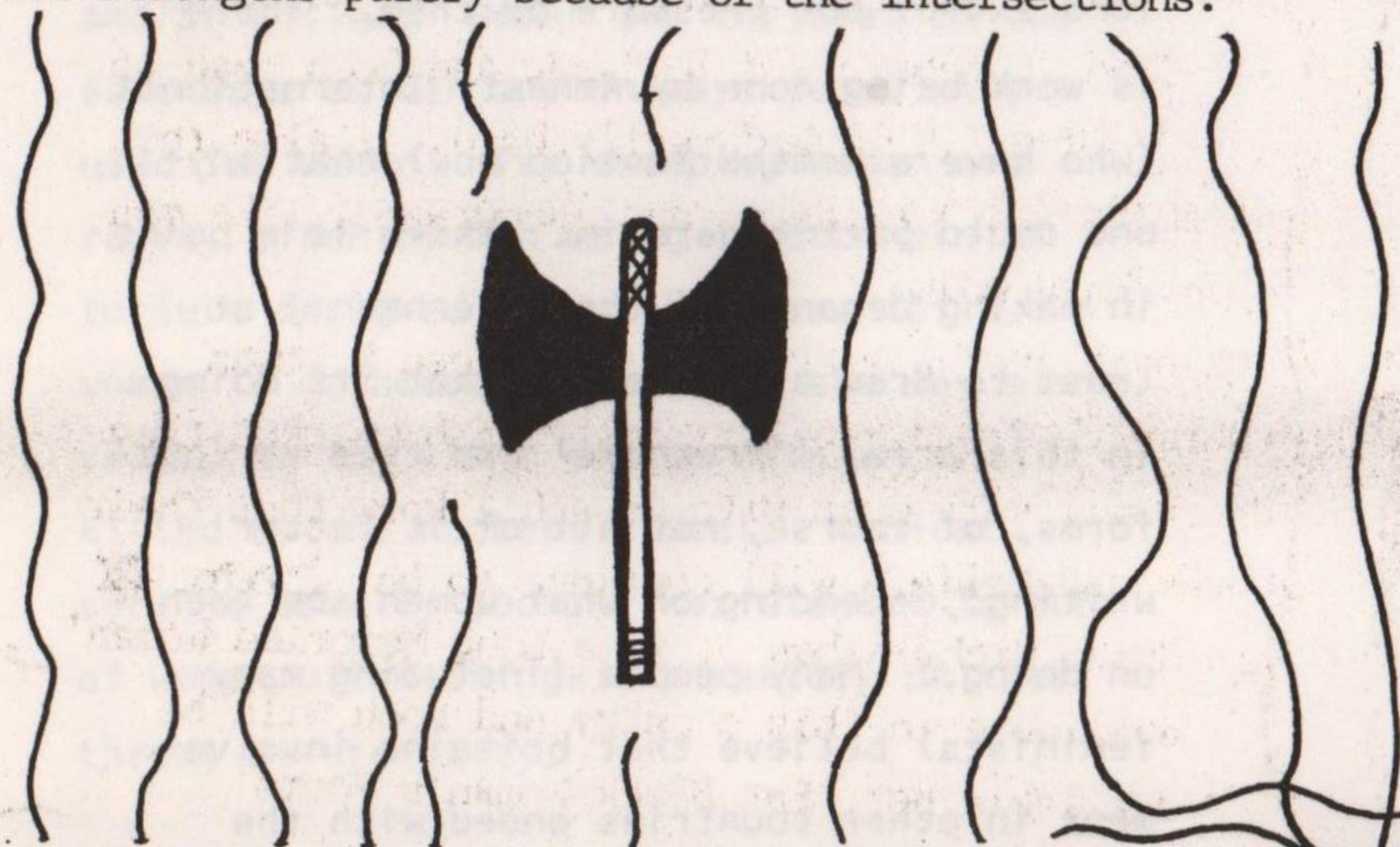
I was lucky enough to go to the opening night of the 'associated events' of the bookfair, which was a poetry reading by Audre Lorde, Grace Nichols and Adrienne Rich. (Who these women are, briefly... Audre Lorde is a Black Lesbian poet, born and brought up in New York. Grace Nichols is a Black feminist poet, from Guyana, who has lived in England for the past few years. Adrienne Rich is an Ashkenazi Jewish Lesbian poet, brought up in the Southern states of America.



Audre Lorde read first. I was struck by her sheer presence. She seemed to envelope the room and all the women in it yet remained aloof, calm and distant from us. It's very difficult to describe how and what she read except to say that she delivered her work/self with power and control. Lorde is utterly serious about her work and regards it with respect.



Lorde also read about the intersections of peoples' lives and oppressions - about how nothing is separate or separable. This spoke to me particularly about how important it is to make links across/with other oppressions and how the differences are strengths partly because of the intersections.



Audre Lorde has a lot of work published that is available in England...her latest work is 'Sister Outsider'.

I was very excited at the prospect of experiencing Lorde and Rich interpreting their own work as I'd read a lot of it and it had always had a deep and lasting effect on me, often coming back to me long after reading it and making more or different sense in the context of my own life. I was interested and excited at the prospect of hearing Nichols read because I'd never read anything of hers.

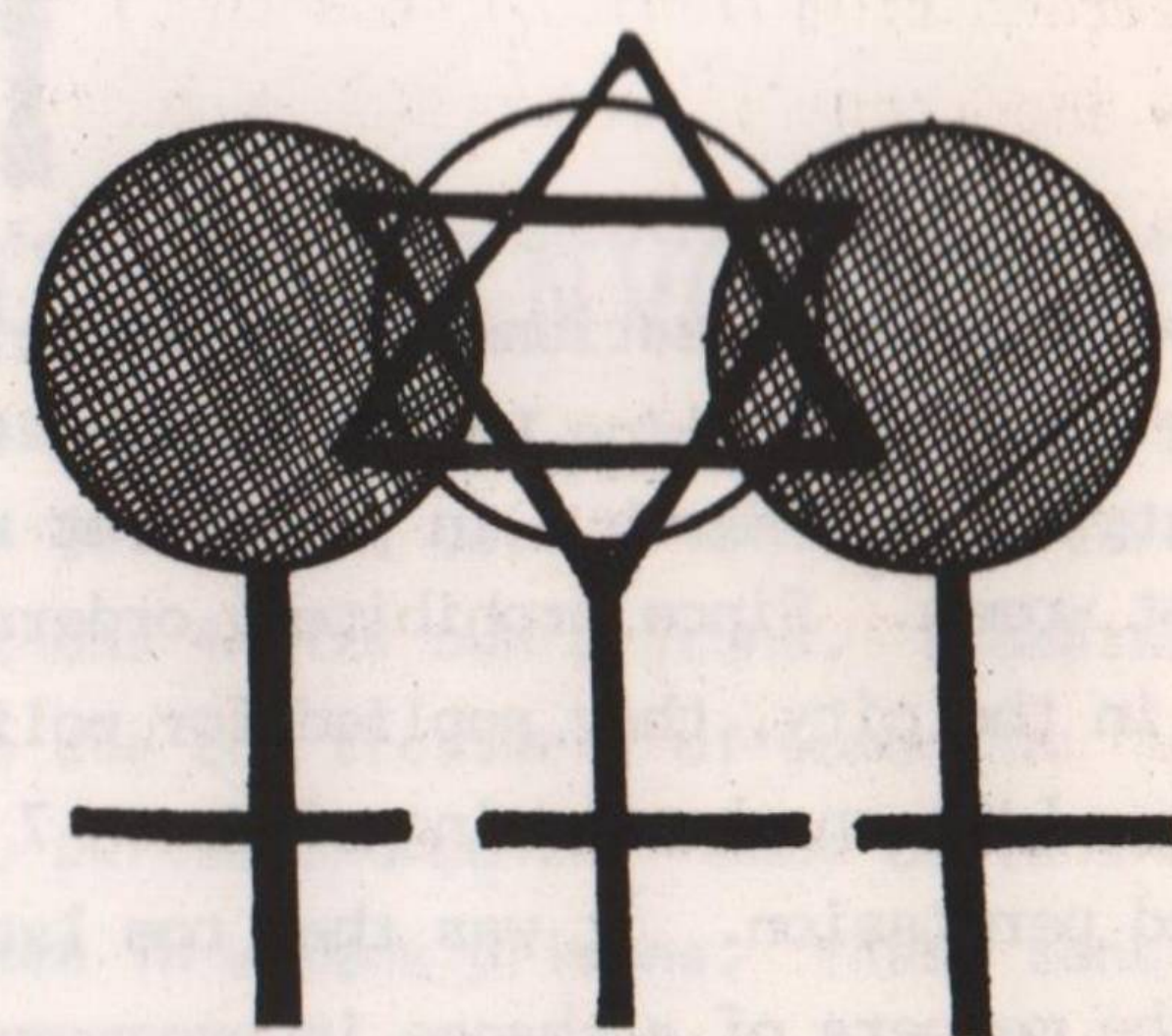


She also demands that 'this is circular', that it works in all directions. Lorde talked about how we are not made up of coincidences - how no one 'happens' to be Black, Lesbian, Woman...which spoke to me about how essential it is that women do not leave anything of themselves outside or behind if it can be avoided and that women must not be made to do this, by sisters, selves or society - about how as a Jewish Lesbian, I will be expected to talk as a Lesbian OR as a Jew but very rarely as both, hardly ever as a Jewish Lesbian with other characteristics.



Finally, Lorde read about power and how this can be wrested from destruction - not that destruction in itself is a good thing but that empowerment (that is power to not power over) is positive and a feminist aim.

Lorde read a lot more than this and said a lot more in each poem but one thing (amongst many) that I have brought away with me is her instruction/suggestion that when we are moved/affected by something we don't just discharge it there and then but hold it, absorb it and use it in our work.



3 WOMEN

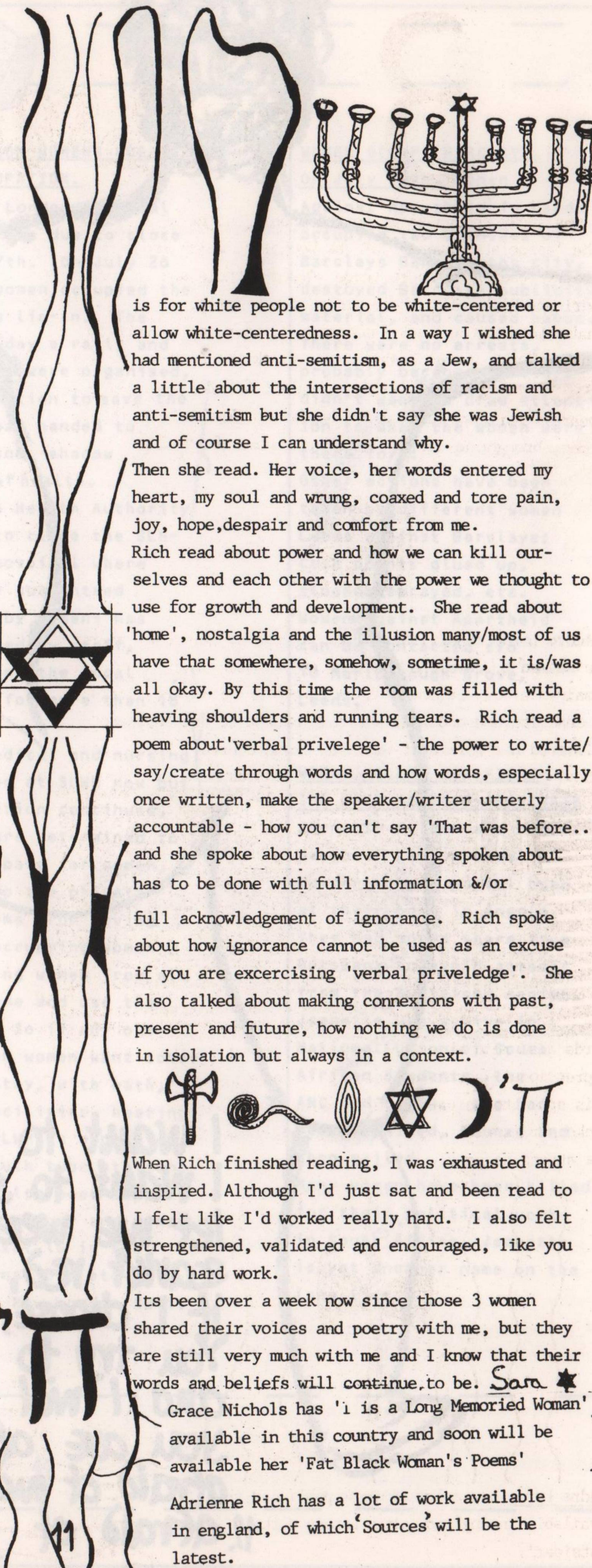
Grace Nichols' style and presentation was very different from Audre Lorde's and I think it is very important to view them as separate entities and not 'compare' one with the other. I was captivated by Nichols. As she read, she became, before my very eyes, who & what she was reading about - a fat Black woman shopping in England, Sisters in rural Africa...I had a real sense of all her own and collective pasts, presents and futures and of all the different places she has been to. She involved the audience. I'm sure everyone there could relate to someone in the poetry, even if it was the shop girls, 'exchanging slimming glances'.

I'm looking forward to reading Nichols' work for myself, partly because her delivery almost overpowered the work itself. I felt that you have to work hard at Nichols' work and this wasn't easy to do, because of the untrustworthy environment/audience and because Nichols swept us along in a wave of movement, music, laughter, emotion, passion...which left little opportunity to consciously absorb her work - although I know it has gone in. I will be reminded of it and it will continue to be relevant at different times. Nichols has much to say that is of importance to all women.

I was disconcerted by some of the audiences' reactions. I wasn't easy that everyone there was not laughing at the fat Black woman - so often abused as an object of ridicule, and I wasn't convinced that Nichols' message about beauty being defined in WASP male terms (slim, blonde, white) and the need to assert and be proud of our different beauties came across to everyone there, or, rather, that they weren't all open to that idea. (A WASP woman said to me afterwards, about Grace Nichols, "She's not fat, she's beautiful") and I overheard a group of white women afterwards discussing how to best bleach their hair !!) But I am sure that those of us who do not fit into what we're supposed to look like related to and appreciated what Nichols had to say.



By the time Grace Nichols had finished, there was an atmosphere of openness and readiness, as well as a certain amount of rawness and vulnerability left over from Audre Lorde's work. It was into this mixture of emotions that Adrienne Rich spoke. First Rich spoke about white racism and how it's a white responsibility - about how important it



is for white people not to be white-centered or allow white-centeredness. In a way I wished she had mentioned anti-Semitism, as a Jew, and talked a little about the intersections of racism and anti-Semitism but she didn't say she was Jewish and of course I can understand why.

Then she read. Her voice, her words entered my heart, my soul and wrung, coaxed and tore pain, joy, hope, despair and comfort from me. Rich read about power and how we can kill ourselves and each other with the power we thought to use for growth and development. She read about 'home', nostalgia and the illusion many/most of us have that somewhere, somehow, sometime, it is/was all okay. By this time the room was filled with heaving shoulders and running tears. Rich read a poem about 'verbal privilege' - the power to write/say/create through words and how words, especially once written, make the speaker/writer utterly accountable - how you can't say 'That was before...' and she spoke about how everything spoken about has to be done with full information &/or

full acknowledgement of ignorance. Rich spoke about how ignorance cannot be used as an excuse if you are exercising 'verbal privilege'. She also talked about making connections with past, present and future, how nothing we do is done in isolation but always in a context.

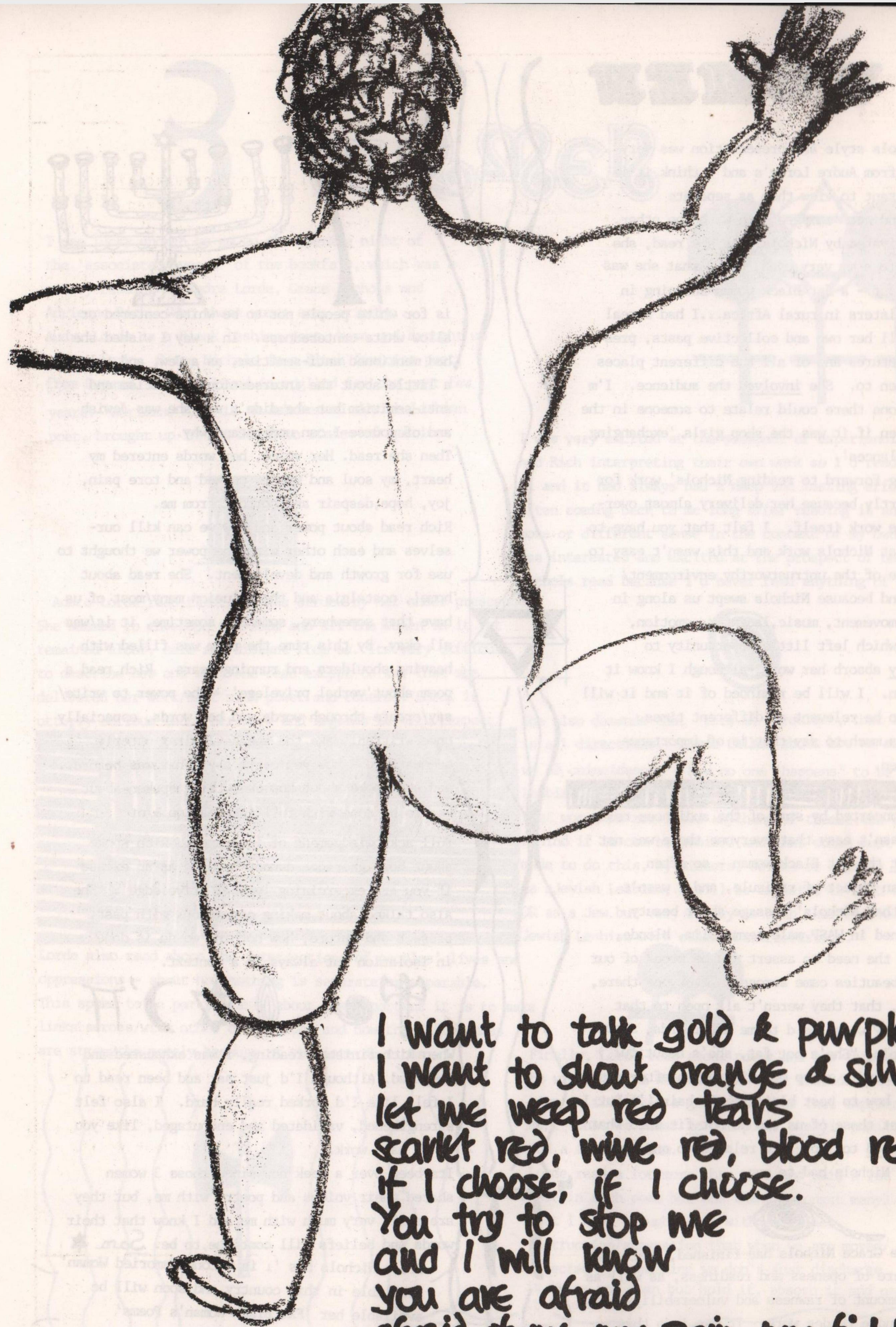


When Rich finished reading, I was exhausted and inspired. Although I'd just sat and been read to I felt like I'd worked really hard. I also felt strengthened, validated and encouraged, like you do by hard work.

It's been over a week now since those 3 women shared their voices and poetry with me, but they are still very much with me and I know that their words and beliefs will continue to be. Sara ★

Grace Nichols has 'I is a Long Memoried Woman' available in this country and soon will be available her 'Fat Black Woman's Poems'

Adrienne Rich has a lot of work available in England, of which 'Sources' will be the latest.



I want to talk gold & purple
I want to shout orange & silver
let me weep red tears
scarlet red, wine red, blood red
if I choose, if I choose.
You try to stop me
and I will know
you are afraid
afraid of me, my pain, my fight
12 afraid of yourself.



NEWS

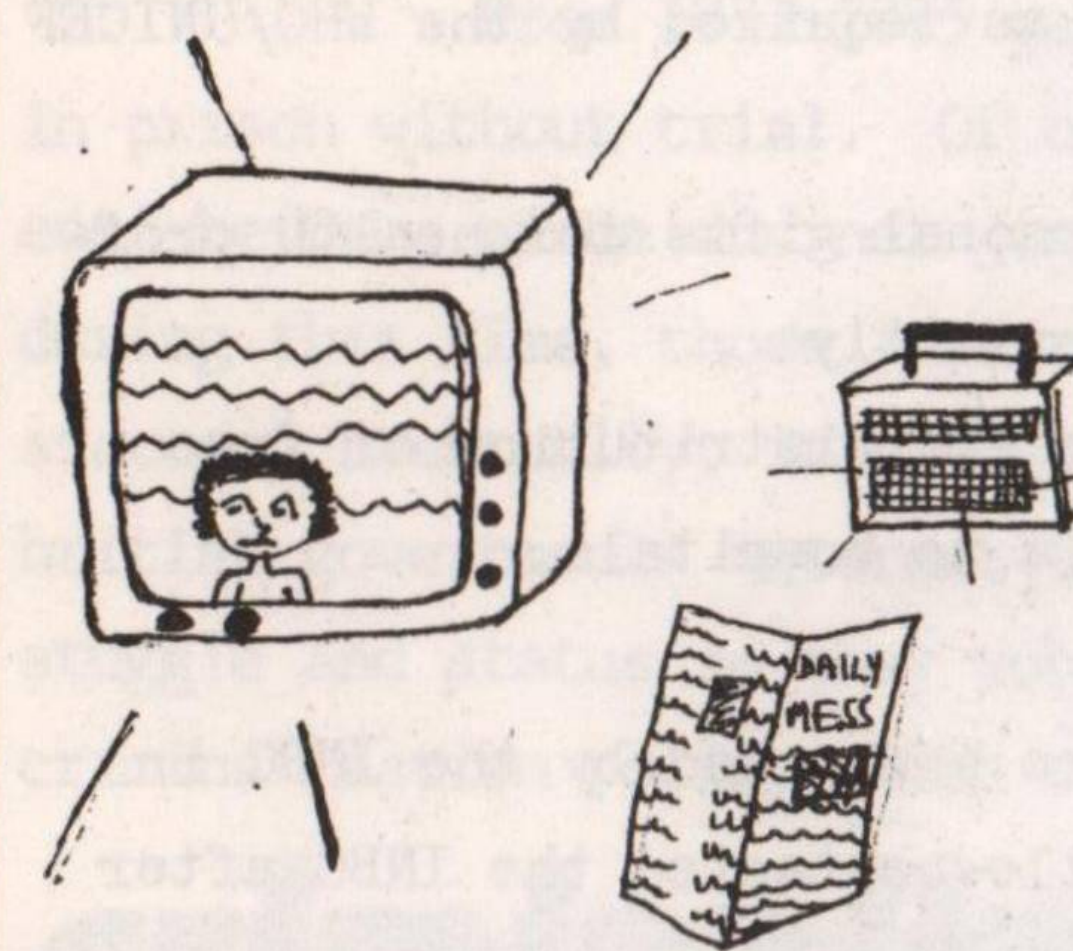


The British arms trade continues to profit from sales to Indonesia. Despite evidence of repression throughout Indonesia the maltreatment of indigenous peoples, and the illegal occupation of East Timor, the West continues to supply aid and arms to Indonesia. A consortium of banks which includes Lloyds International recently granted Indonesia a loan (on favourable terms) of 750 million dollars, in response to a request for only 500 mil. Australia, which only recently granted independence to Papua New Guinea, also provides substantial aid. Some British MPs tabled an Early Day Motion recently, called for an embargo on arms sales to Indonesia; this seems unlikely to succeed. Indonesia was represented at last week's British Army Equipment Exhibition by a large party of high-ranking officials. For details of arms sales to Indonesia contact: Campaign against Arms Trade, 5, Caledonian Rd., London N1.
from PeaceNews.

SOUTH LONDON WOMENS HOSPITAL OCCUPATION.

The South London Hospital for Women was due to close on July 27th. On July 26 over 100 women occupied the wards in a lie-in. The following day a rally and mass picket were organised, and a petition to save the hospital was handed to Frank Dobson, shadow minister of health. Wandsworth Health Authority decision to close the SLH - the last hospital where women were guaranteed treatment by women - has been opposed by staff, patients and the local community for more than 18 months.

All the medical and nursing has stopped at SLWH now but the occupation continues, as women are determined to keep the space for women, and to stop the private health firms from moving in. The occupying women are inviting women from all over to come and use the hospital. So if any outside London women want somewhere to stay, with bath, kitchen facilities, heating etc, the SLWH is opposite Clapham South tube station! The women also need support in terms of money and women on the picket (& in the beds!) Donations etc to 19 Vardens RD. London SW11.



WOMEN OCCUPY BARCLAYS.

On July 19th, 'Women Against Apartheid' in Leeds occupied two branches of Barclays Bank in the city, destroyed Barclays publicity material, and caused havoc. There were no arrests, probably because Barclays didn't want to draw attention to what the women were there for! Other actions have been taken by different women Leeds against Barclays: Cash points glued up, slogans sprayed, etc. 'Women Against Apartheid' can be contacted c/o 10 Marlborough Grove, Leeds.

WOMAN KILLED FOR FIGHT- ING BACK AGAINST APARTHEID

Jeanette Schoon and her daughter Katryn were murdered by a parcel bomb at their home in Angola. They had moved there from Botswana to avoid attacks from the S.African regime. Jeanette was active in National Union of South African Students, the ANC and SACTU. She had been detained, banned and then exiled. Many women have been killed for their political work in South Africa, Jeanette is yet another name on the Long List.

JUANITA

As reported in Lysistrata, issue 9, Juanita Thomas - a Black woman and mother of five children - is serving a life sentence for first degree murder in the Huron Valley Women's Facility in the USA. She was convicted in June 1980 after killing her boyfriend in self-defence.

Juanita is surviving and remains strong, according to the Support Group for Women in Prison. Last winter she was hospitalised for removal of a growth in her neck that made breathing difficult. Fortunately it wasn't cancer.

You can write to Juanita at :

Juanita Thomas #161091
3511 Bemis Road
Ypsilanti, Mich. 48917, USA

The Support Group for Women in Prison desperately needs money to help Juanita. You can contact them:

Support Group for Women in Prison, PO Box 471,
Dimondale, Mich. 48821, USA

still in jail

Nestle boycott suspended

After five years of boycott activity in Canada (and elsewhere), Nestle has finally agreed to demands to halt all its infant formula promotion in the Third World. Boycott-endorsing groups are being encouraged to suspend the boycott for six months while Nestle activity is monitored to ensure compliance with the agreement.

Last Autumn, the Steering Committee of the International Nestle Boycott Committee (INBC) did an extensive analysis of Nestle's policies and practices. The Steering Committee identified many improvements in Nestle's policies over the past years but also quite a few areas where they were still not in compliance with the WHO/UNICEF code. Of those four major concerns were set as priorities:

- the need for adequate hazard warnings on labels;

A letter from Juanita to her supporters:

I would like to thank everyone who have been nice to me. I been in the hospital had throat surgery also stomach surgery it was along, family and friends wasn't allowed. But Vicki, come to visit me, the hospital staff didn't act no different toward me knowing I was a prisoner.

I had a private room, all the officers who sit with me during my stay was very nice. I plan to still fight legally for my freedom, I have had two sit backs in court but I won't give in to this un-justice that was done to me. Last week was bad, I received more bad depressing news from the courts, there is one more to appeal to. Seem my name is growing worse, but I can't give up, I am not towell now I have a tube in my stomach its to be taken out some time in May. Prison life is a real living hell, each day grows worse. I have never in my life had friends like Ann, Vicki, Janet, Billie, Priscilla. I was never good with words but I love them dearly. I plan to devote my time to some women's group once I am out, I feel I could help someone. I will answer all letters, but if someone is in prison write me, I hope its a 'battered woman' like my self, I find it hard to relate, one have to really be in a prison to really no whats its like, I only hope justice can be done for my, being a woman also black are stakes against me. we as women must must push on and never give up and we all will some day reach our goals.

- the requirement to include information on the risks/hazards of formula feeding in literature for mothers and health professionals as required by the WHO/UNICEF code;
- the elimination of personal gifts for health professionals; and most importantly
- severe restrictions on the distribution of free supplies of infant formula to hospitals.

These four priorities were announced by the INBC in mid-December, 1983. Nestle contacted the INBC after the December announcement and indicated that they were ready, for the first time, to enter into direct discussions with the INBC.

There are, however, many challenges ahead, including getting Nestle to apply the agreement universally, and having the other formula companies come up to Nestle's standards.

Information from Kinesis

POLICING IN NORTHERN IRELAND / ENGLAND

- what it means to womens lives

background

In 1922 Northern Ireland was set up as a state, separate from the rest of Ireland. Since then, laws have been brought in as 'emergency legislation' which give the police sweeping powers. These laws mean that what people in Northern Ireland can and can't do changes suddenly and that the police, a para-military force, have vast powers of discretion, ie its up to them how they interpret which law when and on who. Of course, different sectors of the Irish people are treated differently eg the catholic areas are more subject to spot checks for anything from arms to electrical equipment.

In 1969 the english government put english troops into Ireland and since then there have been three distinct phases in the strategies used by the government.

internment

From 1971-1975 people were being held in prison without trial. Of course, this has happened before, since and not just in Ireland, but during this time, those interred had political status. Eventually, it was no longer in the british governments interest to allow political struggle and status so they substituted the criminalisation policy which continues today.

criminalisation and torture

This policy was an attempt to make political struggle an actual crime in the north. It was done to defuse and make trivial the forms of political resistance that were going on at the time. It also meant that the legal system

had to be twisted and the rules changed to convict. It became necessary to obtain 'confessions' in order to convict - obtained in interrogation/torture sessions, when women were sexually abused and threatened with rape... In protest at this, women in Armagh and men in Long Kesh prisons went on dirty protest, when they used their cells as toilets, refused to wash or change. (read Margaretta Darcy's 'Tell Them Everything' for an account of the protest in Armagh) International outcry about the tortures made the government change tactics:

criminalisation & paid perjurers

The tortures haven't stopped but now the RUC (Royal Ulster Constabulary) are using supergrasses - paid &/or tortured perjurers to give evidence against someone the government wants convicted. There are special courts (called Diplock courts) with one judge and no jury for these prisoners, who don't always get to court anyway.

legal powers

There are two main legal powers in force; a) The Emergency Provisions Act '73 (EPA)

- changes the rules about evidence so that its difficult to challenge 'confessions'
- makes it difficult to get bail, resulting in long periods of remand
- extends police powers of stop and search
- allows up to 72 hours detention on suspicion
- extends police powers on the streets
- removes the right to legal advice once arrested
- allows Diplock trials

- makes someone guilty until proven innocent in cases of alleged arms possession

...the similarities between this law and the Police Bill are not difficult to find!

b) The Prevention of Terrorism Act '74 (PTA)

- consolidates and extends the EPA
- extends detention period to 7 days
- extends powers of stop and search
- allows exclusion from Ireland/England

POLICING IN IRELAND

the most important thing to remember about this is the role of the army and the war situation. The army works to a) back up and protect the RUC, lots of street harassment and patrolling. b) overall direction and control of security policing. c) provide 'specialist' services, eg psychological warfare, interrogation and coordination of surveillance on the nationalist population.

The RUC

With criminalisation, Kenneth Newman became Chief Commander. (He's now Chief Constable of the Met.) The RUC is the model and experiment for English policing methods. Its main features include:

1. Reorganisation

- with a) specialist squads
- b) Computerisation - i. links between army and RUC
ii. mass computerisation of 'facts' on population (over 1/2 million people on record in 1979) means the RUC can run fast spot checks on the street.

iii. Weaponry developed to include more 'effective' machine guns, MI Carbines as well as the plastic bullets, CS gas...

2. Multi-Agency Policing

the 'total approach' to policing, where all state bodies and voluntary agencies are linked to the police. eg the RUC control the planning of housing estates so they're built with few exits and so the army can use buildings as barricades.

3. Targetting And Surveillance

certain groups, areas, streets or houses are saturated and harassed on a massive scale. (Like Operation Swamp in London which resulted in the '81 uprisings.)

4. Community Policing

the 'soft approach' where the RUC obtain street information from the youth, by having discos etc for young people.

POLICING IN ENGLAND

New laws include: Police and Criminal Evidence Bill
Prevention of Terrorism Act -

extended to include anyone fighting for liberation struggles. Strategies include a) Specialist squads
b) Computerisation - lots of information (not just on known criminals) is kept and linked to computers in Home Office, Scotland Yard, DHSS, NHS...

c) Multi-agency Policing - especially increasing powers and scope of the Home Office and increasing use of local social services and voluntary organisations, which is especially relevant to women as it is us who use these most. Housing estates are being planned with the Met. in London, with fewer walkways between blocks of flats (increasing women's isolation in the home and, thus, male control over women.)

d) Community Policing - specials, Neighbourhood Watch schemes, which often become white vigilante squads.

There is a general shift in emphasis in policing in England from street crime to preventing and punishing any form of political activity that is not on the state's interests (ie doesn't include the NF!)

Over the past few years, we have seen in England the criminalisation of certain sectors of society eg presenting 'mugging' as a Black crime, the treatment of Baldev Gill, as well as the deportations of Black people and people of colour for being simply that.

Just in case you're wondering what all this has to do with women, specifically, please think about who bears the brunt of the measures, in Ireland and England, of the enforced poverty and deprivation of privacy and safety, who worries when the door is broken down at night, who is vulnerable to sexual abuse, who has to leave their children when they are arrested and spending days in remand...

The info in this article came out of the Women And Policing Conference Spring 1984.

-Sara ★

On Saturday 23rd June 1984, there was a Lesbian Strength Parade in London. The police managed as per usual to turn an otherwise peaceful event into one that could have been a riot. Just as the parade was due to arrive at its destination they managed to arrest four Lesbians - three of whom were Jewish one who was Black - as well as a gay man.

This poem was written as an account of what happened by Kris one of the Lesbians arrested.

dear mum,

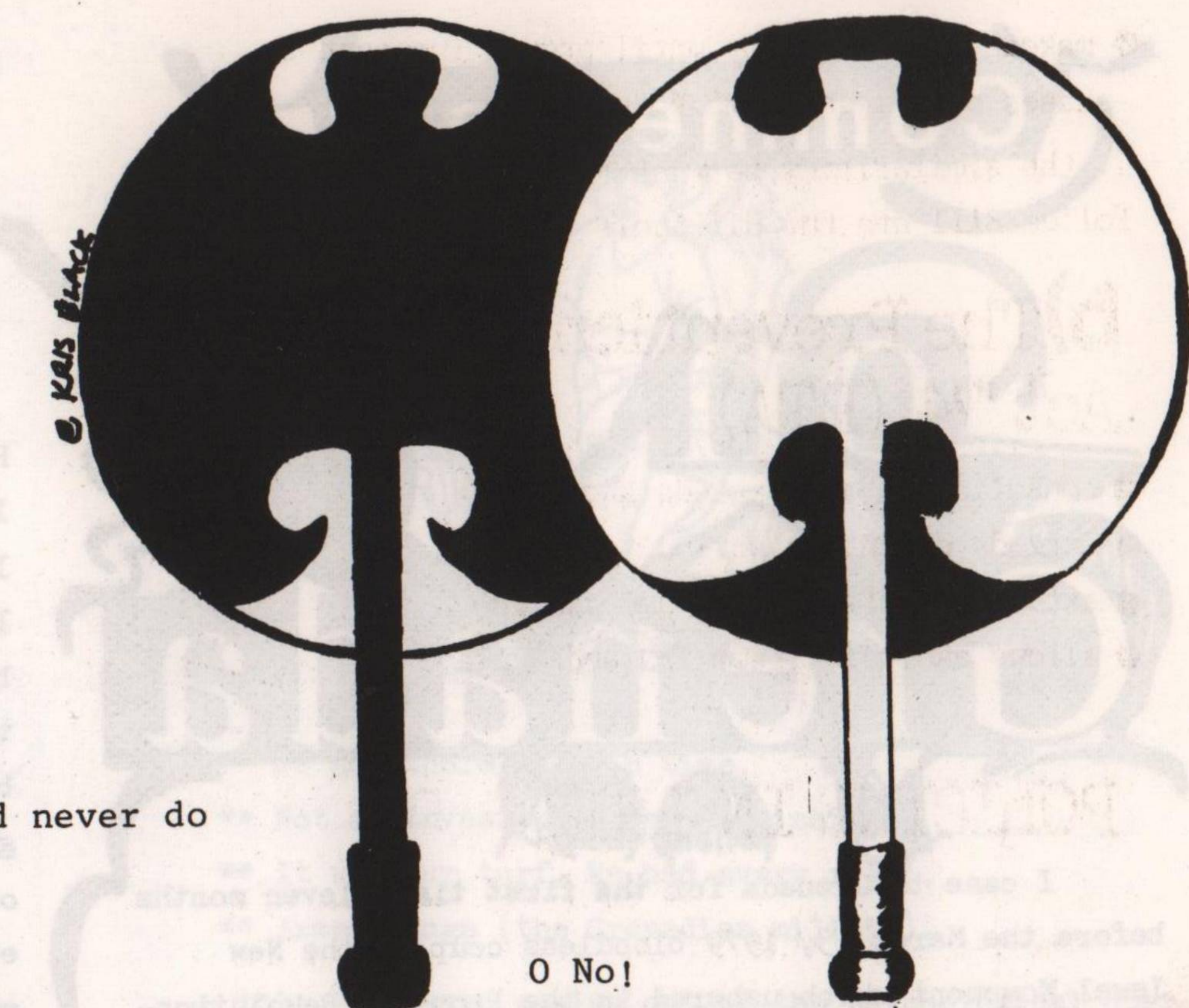
Y E S T E R D A Y
again
your
dearest eldest daughter
was arrested.
falsely
of course
by some fascist cop
(who looked just like
uncle jim).
i was only doing my
i'm-on-a-Lesbian-march-
and-i-have-every-right-
to-be-on-one-impression
(honest i was mum!)
and what do they do?
- arrest me!
well mother
this time
i got off lightly
if that's the right
word?
it could have been worse
i could have
got me
stropky black
lesbian head
kicked round the
police station
cells.
or i could have
ended up on a
trumped-up
charge of
'obstructing a police
officer in his lawful
duffing up of a lesbian
sister and a gay brother'.
and how dare i even
march as a
Black Lesbian
on a
Lesbian Strength March?

that would never do
now
would it?
i suppose
they would
have arrested
all
the Black Lesbians
on that march
(if they could)
because we shouldn't exist
you see.
oh sure
we're all right in our
rightful place
which is
ACCORDING TO THEM
on the pages of
racist pornography
or cleaning up
their shit
after them.
but stand up and say
that we don't need
or want
their pricks
and oh dear
does that mean
T R O U B L E !
we shouldn't
get uppity
about our rights
you know!
except
that they hadn't reckoned
on the power and strength
of Women that day
you see
cause me sisters
weren't about
to let them take
the four of us away

O No!
that was the day
that
over 1000 Lesbians
of all shapes and sizes
and ages and races and
colours and creeds
sat down
in the road
and
would not move!!
- til they let us out
and were they quick
about it too!
they couldn't wait
to see the backs
of those four
stropky dykes
and their thousand sisters
but next time we won't
be so lucky
or maybe
i shouldn't be so pessimistic.
so don't worry about me mum
i'm doing fine
cos
i've got me sisters
with me.
love and hugs
to all at home

Kris

PS
did you see
the headlines in the papers?
DYKES TAKE ON THE MET.-
AND WIN!
-no, neither did i!!
24/6/84



Commentary on Grenada

I came to Grenada for the first time eleven months before the March 13, 1979 bloodless coup of the New Jewel Movement which ushered in the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) of Grenada under Prime Minister Maurice Bishop. This was an end to twenty-nine years of Sir Eric Gairy's regime -- wasteful, corrupt and U.S. sanctioned.

Grenada, tiny spice island, is the 2nd largest producer of nutmeg in the world. Its cocoa has a 4% fat content and sells for premium prices on the world market. But Grenadians pay 8 times more than that price if they wish to drink processed hot chocolate, all of which is imported.

The second time I came to Grenada I came in mourning and fear that this land which I was learning had been savaged, invaded, its people maneuvered into saying thank you to their invaders. I knew the lies and distortions of secrecy surrounding the invasion of Grenada by the U.S. on Oct. 25, 1983; the rationalizations which collapse under the weight of facts, the facts that are readily available, even now:

1. That the St. Georges Medical School students were in danger. Officials of the school deny this. Students deny this.
2. That the U.S. was invited to intervene by the signers of an Organiz. of Eastern Caribbean States Treaty. This would only have been internationally legal had Grenada invaded another island. The decision to invade was made by 4 out of the 7 signatories. The invitation itself was actually drafted by the U.S. State Dept. and sent down to the E. Caribbean nations.
3. That Grenada threatened U.S. security because of the construction of a military airport and the stockpiling of an arsenal of modern weapons. Grenada's new airport is a civilian airport built to accommodate tourists. According to the British firm who underwrote the project, the airport was being built to civil not military standards. All U.S. reports on Grenada now stress the necessity of this airport for a Grenadian tourist industry. The "stockpile" of weapons was less than 2 warehouses. Of 6300 rifles, about 400 were fairly modern

and the rest were old, some antique.

revolution

A nation decides for itself what it needs. How best to get it. Food. Dentists. Doctors. Roads. When I first visited Grenada in 1978, one 1/3 of the farmable land in the country lay idle, owned by absentee landlords who did not work it. The PRG required that plans be filed either for farming that land, turning it over to those who would, or deeding it to the state. Small bananas collectives started. Fishing co-operatives. Beginning agro-industry. The World Bank notes the health of the Grenadian economy, surpassing all other Caribbean economies in the rate of its growth and stability despite the opposition of the U.S. Unemployment dips from 40% to 14%. Now there is no work again.

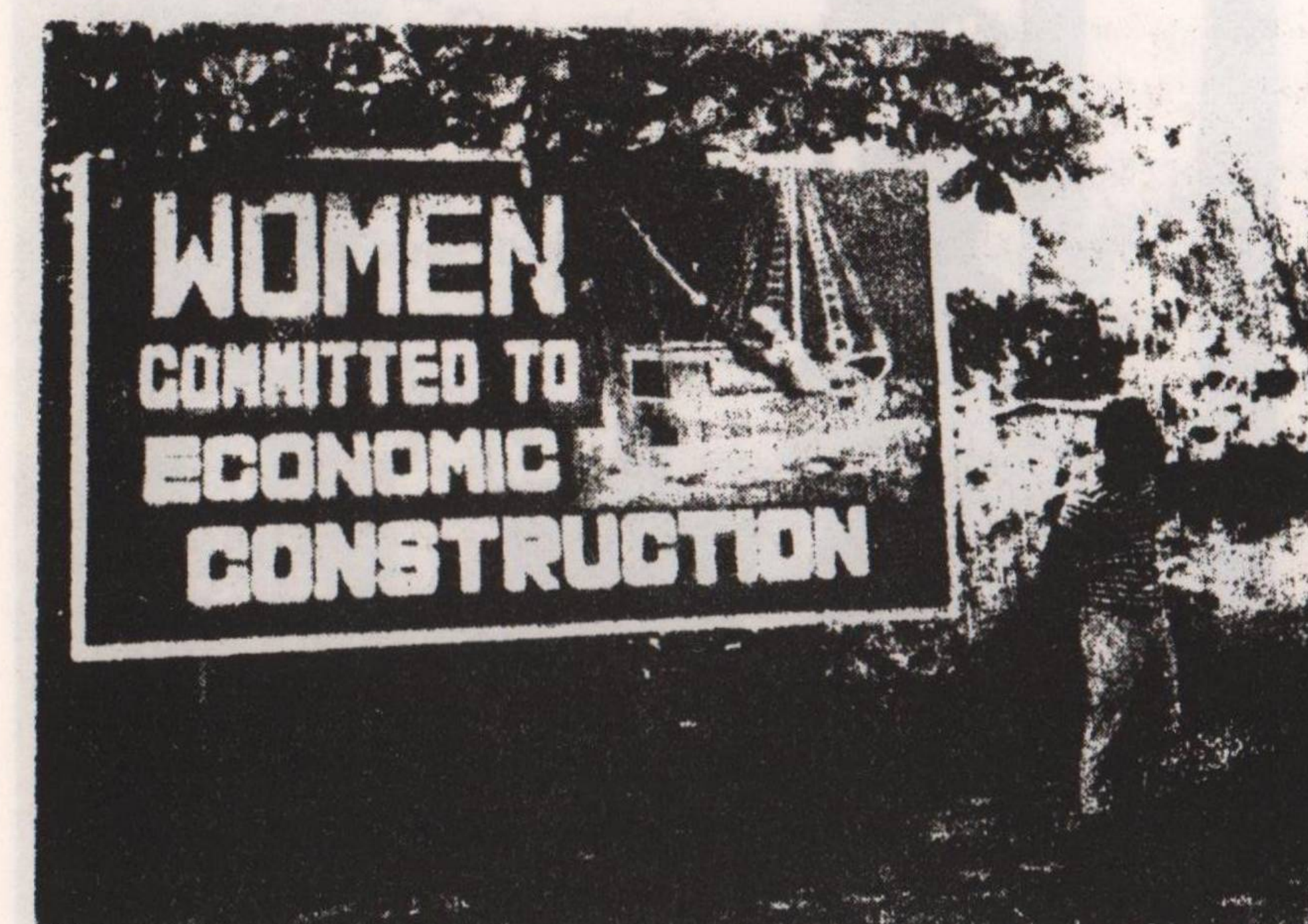
dangerous precedent

4 years ago, the U.S. acted through the International Monetary Fund to assure that there would be no western money available for the Grenadian economy, much less for protecting her shores from an invasion threatened by Gairy operating out of San Diego, California, where he had sought asylum. When the PRG sought economic aid from the U.S. in 1979, to help rebuild the infrastructure of a country fallen into despair during the 29 years of Gairy's regime, the U.S. response was to offer the insult of 5000 dollars from an ambassador's discretionary fund! Now in 1983 post-invasion, and the conquerors are promising Grenadians welfare, their 2nd main exportable drug. 3 million dollars thus far, administered under U.S. guns, so long as the heads that take it are bowed. Had the amount this invasion cost each one of us in taxes been lent to the PRG when it requested economic aid 5 years ago, the gratitude of the Grenadians would have been real, and hundreds lives could have been saved. But then Grenada would have been self-defined, independent; and of course that could not be allowed. What a bad example, a dangerous precedent, an independent Grenada would be for the peoples of Color in the Caribbean, in C. America, for those of us here in the U.S.

Beginning in 1981, the U.S. rehearsed the invasion of Grenada openly. It practiced the war game Ocean Venture in which it bombed the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, calling it "Amber of the Amberdines" (Grenada of the Grenadines). In this grisly make-believe, a situation is supposed to occur where americans are held hostage. As we know this was the first excuse used to justify the invasion of Grenada. We must remember that it also calls for the assassination of the Prime Minister of Amber.

-- the Pentagon has admitted in secret Congressional briefings that it knew of the coup against Bishop 2 weeks before it happened. The Ranger unit participating in the invasion had spent 6 days between Sept. 23 and Oct. 2 1983 practicing the takeover of an airport and the liberation of hostages, a maneuver about which the Pentagon had requested no publicity.

The action in Grenada served many purposes for the U.S., provided the grounds for many tests. : : a major one was addressed to the concern long expressed by the Pentagon as to whether or not Black american soldiers could be gotten to fire upon other Black people. This becomes a vital question as the U.S. military-industrial complex executes increasingly military solutions to this country's precarious position in the Third World, where the U.S. either ignores or stands upon the wrong side of virtually every single struggle for liberation by oppressed peoples. : : in addition to trying out new armaments, there was the question of whether the marines liked their new Nazi-style helmets. They did not because they couldn't shave in them. And whether the new army uniforms were too heavy to be worn comfortably in the tropics. They were.



- ** we got there just in time.
- ** Not an invasion, a rescue mission.
- ** It was our turf. We had every right.
- ** Armed thugs (the Grenadian militia).

-- this language, coming out of the psychological operations unit of the U.S. occupation forces, is calculated to reduce a Black nation's aspirations in the eyes and ears of white americans already secretly terrified by the Black Menace, enraged by myths of Black Progress, at the same time encouraged by government action never to take the life of a Black person seriously.

* * * WHOSE COUNTRY WAS GRENADA * * *

Hundreds of Grenadian bodies are buried in unmarked graves, relatives missing and unaccounted for, survivors stunned and frightened into silence by fear of being jailed and accused of "spreading unrest among the people". No recognition and therefore no aid for the sisters, mothers, wives, children of the dead, families disrupted and lives vandalized by the conscious brutality of a planned, undeclared war. The true casualty figures will never be known. No civilian body count is available.

For the first time in an american war, the american press was kept out until the stage could be set. When the american press was finally admitted after the cosmetic clean-up, we were treated to photographs of smiling Grenadians welcoming their conquerors (look what your tax dollars have bought). But no photos of the signs calling for information about neighbors. No photos of the signs throughout the countryside calling for an end to yankee imperialism. The american medical student who witnessed the shooting of the first american marine killed landing on Grenada resists the prompting of her TV interviewer "POCKETS OF RESISTANCE. CUBANS HIDING IN THE HILLS". "Oh, no, he wasn't shot by Cubans. It was an old man and his son, firing from their house.". The old man and his son defending their home were not Cubans. They were Grenadians who dared to believe that they could have a

right to define themselves and the future of their nation independent of the U.S.

I came to Grenada my second time 6 weeks after the invasion, wanting to know if she was still alive, wanting to examine what my legitimate position as a concerned Grenadian-american was toward the military invasion of this tiny Black nation by the mighty U.S.

I also came for reassurance, to see if Grenada had survived the onslaught of the most powerful nation on earth. She has. Grenada is bruised but very much alive. Grenadians are a warm and resilient people, and they have survived colonizations before. I am proud to be of stock from the country that mounted the first Black english-speaking People's Revolution in this hemisphere.

by
audre lorde

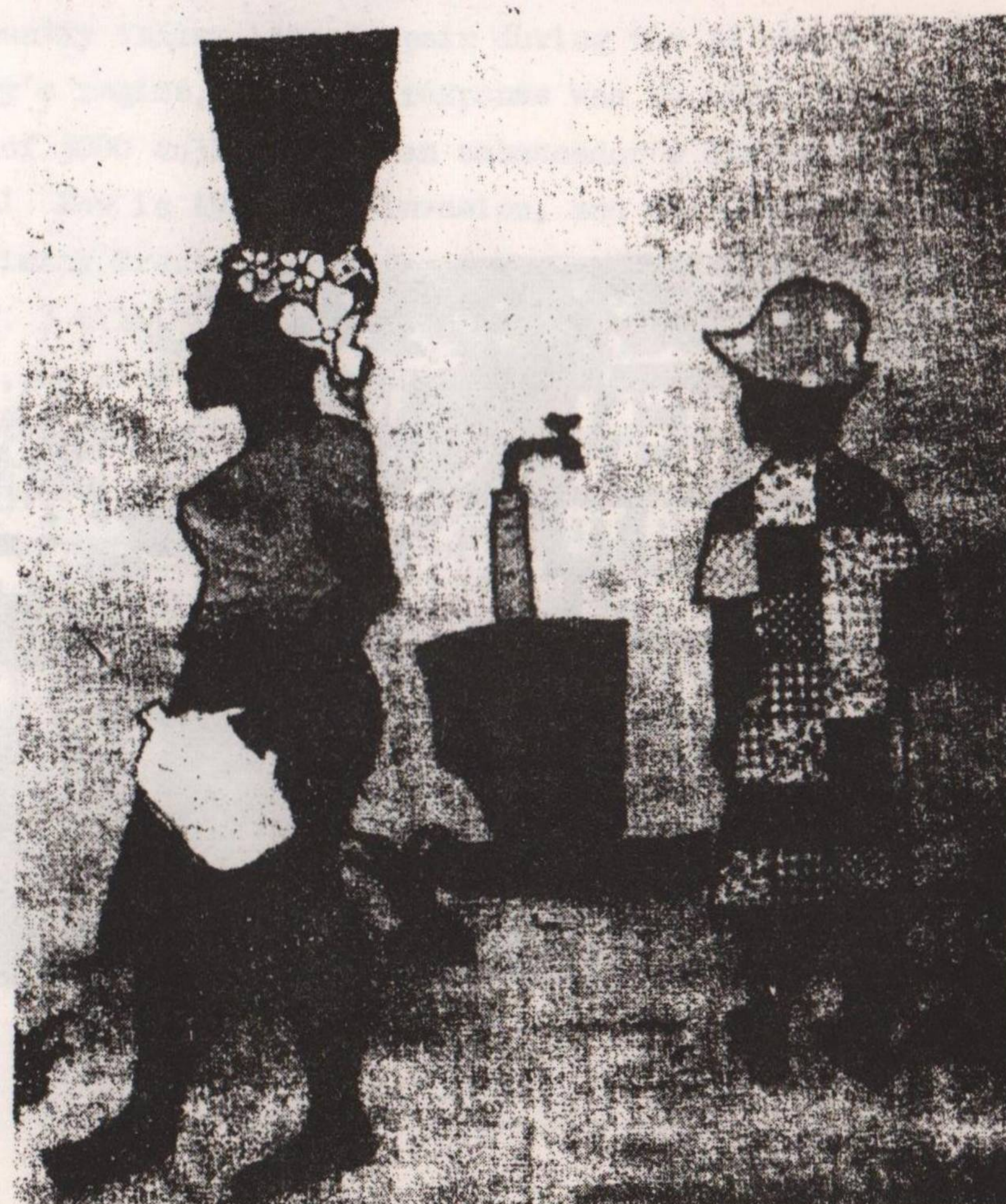
EXTRACTS DRAWN FROM "GRENADA REVISITED", RE-PRINTED IN OFF OUR BACKS, A U.S. FEMINIST NEWSPAPER (APRIL '84) THE WHOLE ESSAY IS PART OF A BOOK ENTITLED: "SISTER OUTSIDER: ESSAYS AND SPEECHES", BY AUDRE LORDE.



Grencraft

"Before the revolution the craft industry was virtually dormant, and women just took to selling their spices to earn some money", says Yvonne Palmer. She became the director of Grencraft, a government craft outlet set up in 1981 under the PRG. Pre-invasion it was the largest outlet for exclusively national handi-crafts in the Caribbean. This was just one of the areas that provided new opportunities for women.

(from Off Our Backs, April, '84, Betty La Duke 1983, who also took these photos of these burlap applique wall hangings, designed by Miriam Samuels).



FREE THESE WOMEN!! in jail overseas

NIGERIA

Five women, Bahia Shambi, Patience Mbakwe, Marie McBroom, Alice Okiki & Elizabeth Philips have been detained in Lagos since February by the National Security Organisation (NSO). Since the military coup on December 31 '83 nearly 500 traders and politicians associated with the former government have been detained.

It is feared that these women have been detained because they are suspected of having information about the members of the government of ex-president Shagari.

HEALTH CONCERN The women are believed to be in overcrowded conditions with inadequate medical treatment. Alice Okiki has been beaten with an iron bar and Patience Mbakwe has breast cancer.

YOU CAN

... write appeals to Brigadier Tunde Igiagbon, Chief of Staff, Supreme HQ, Independence Bldg, Tafawa Balewa Sq. Lagos, Nigeria, making enquiries about these women's health and requesting that they be released unless charged.

Info from Amnesty International

PARAGUAY

Maria Margarita Baez de Britez was seized by the authorities in February '83 on suspicion of being a communist. When her lawyer applied to have her medically examined, he was refused and then physically attacked and threatened with deportation.

TORTURE

Margarita Baez was held in a secret detention at the HQ of the plain clothes police and her arrest not made public until June. She says that after her arrest she was tortured - tied up by a rope and hung from her hands for 6 days without food or sleep, taken down to be beaten and burned. She was then tied up in a foetal position for 42 DAYS and a drug injected into her spine. She was urged to sign documents that would be her statement.

PLEASE WRITE COURTEOUS LETTERS URGING THAT

- * she be treated humanely while in detention,
 - * the torture of this woman be impartially investigated, as called for in the UN declaration against torture and that those responsible be brought to justice.
 - * torture in Paraguay is stopped by clearly forbidding all members of the security forces from torturing prisoners and by providing safeguards that relatives, lawyers and doctors have prompt and regular access to detainees.
- TO
Exmo Sr Presidente de la Republica, General de Ejercito Alfredo Stroessner, Palacio de Gobierno, Asuncion, Paraguay.
Exmo Sr Ministro del Interior, Dr Sabino Augusto Montanaro, Ministerio del Interior, Estrella y Montevideo, Asuncion, Paraguay.

Exmo Sr Presidente de la Republica, General de Ejercito Alfredo Stroessner, Palacio de Gobierno, Asuncion, Paraguay.
Exmo Sr Ministro del Interior, Dr Sabino Augusto Montanaro, Ministerio del Interior, Estrella y Montevideo, Asuncion, Paraguay.

DANGEROUS

*in the
office!*

LIVING

Secretarial work is considered 'Womens Work' by many. Indeed, it is mainly women who do this sort of work, be it copy-typing, filing, P.A., switchboard operating... It stands to reason, then, that technological 'advances' in the office will (and are) directly affect women. The widespread introduction of machines like the VDU (Visual Display Unit, otherwise known as word processors, micro-computers, visual display terminals and so so) have meant not that womens work in the office has become easier but that we are either being made redundant (often with men taking over the 'high technology' aspects of the work) or jobs are becoming MORE monotonous, degrading and actually DANGEROUS.

In many countries, there have been studies done into the effect on the health of people (usually women) working with the new technology. All of these studies have found that people working with VDU's face the prospect of rapid deterioration of their eyesight and ultimately blindness due to cataracts caused by low-level radiation emissions from the equipment. The Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union (APTU) found other risks to health, including:

* Cataracts from the ionising and non-ionising radiation from the machines, including the ultra-violet and infra-red rays put out by the machines.

* Eyestrain and short-sightedness from the way the screens are designed, the way the characters flash up on the screen, glare, screen brightness, causing symptoms including - soreness and fatigue

- conjunctivitis
- headaches
- double vision

* Backache and muscle fatigue from badly-designed work stations, stressful work conditions, (making women sit at the screen for long periods and work overtime and at speed so that they can be paid enough 'bonus' to earn a decent wage) and poor working environment (eg having the screen at the wrong angle or height)

* Repetition injury of the fingers, arms, shoulders and hands due to excessive speeds and poor design of the terminals.

* Miscarriages and birth deformities thought to be linked to X-ray emissions. Studies done in Australia suggest that there is a link between the amount of miscarriages women have while



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TERMINAL ILLNESS .cont...

working on the VDU's, the amount of machines in the room and the heat generated by radio frequency radiation.

* Stress and depression caused by the depersonalisation of working with a highly-demanding, unrelenting machine, with no contact with sister workers, and the constant pressure to hurry up. The work is intensely monotonous, it used to be quite a skilled job to be a VDU operator because the women had to know about many aspects of computing and computers. Now, the interesting parts of the work are handed over to the boys and the womens work has been de-skilled. There is virtually no prospect of moving on to better things, as VDU operators are really used just as an extension of the machine.

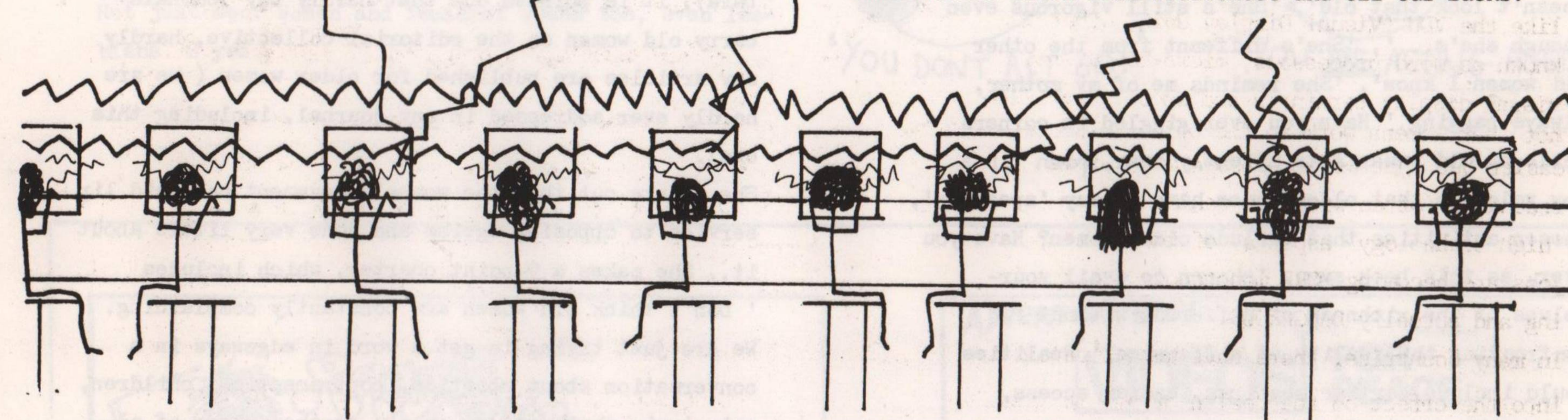
Women in several countries are organizing around the health hazards of VDU's. The American national association of women office workers '9-5' has done surveys of women working with VDU's and found that there was a high rate of miscarriages amongst women working with the machines.

Sweden and Canada are both planning to do independent studies to research the links between working with a VDU and pregnancy problems.

In the US., protective legislation is being met with resistance from computer firms, who are claiming that there are no hazards attached. 9 to 5 is asking that, for once, dangers are identified and dealt with before thousands of women suffer.

It seems that this is an issue T.U.'s in Britain should be taking up, along with sexual harassment at work and other hazards. Perhaps the 'better' unions such as NALGO could be persuaded....or perhaps this is the time for women office workers to unionize.

Information taken from Broadsheet and Off Our Backs.



DO-IT-YOURSELF OFFICE SAFETY

'Office Work Can Be Dangerous To Your Health', a new book by Dr Jeanne Stellman and Mary Sue Henifin, was published recently in Canada. The book is designed as a 'working guide to setting up an office for maximum health and safety.' Major chapters discuss the use of video display terminals, the use and design of office furniture and equipment, office lighting and fire safety, office space and indoor air pollution. Readers are provided with an extensive checklist to enable them to go through their own offices and critically examine the conditions described in the book.

23

The chapter on VDT's, for instance, asks such questions as, 'Does the VDT workstation have the following features: a. nonglare walls, ceilings, and work surfaces? b. adjustable, nonglare lighting, shielded and indirect? c. screen at right angles to windows? The discussion on indoor air pollution points out the possible presence in the office environment of such hazards as asbestos, formaldehyde, cigarette smoke, germs in heating and ventilation systems, radon in construction

materials, and microwaves from broadcasting antennae. This chapter features a page long table listing some of the estimated 2,000 constituents of cigarette smoke and their known health effects. Office Work Can Be Dangerous To Your Health is available from: WOHRC - School of Public Health, 21 Audobon Ave, 3rd Floor, New York, New York 10032, USA.

Information from Kinesis

'on AGEISM and AGING'

It is true the women's movement suffers from its 'isms' - racism, classism, anti-semitism and so on - and it is true we talk about it, even set up groups to combat them, even, on occasion, admit to them ourselves. But ageism?

The writers in the book 'Look me in the Eye' (Barbara MacDonald with Cynthia Rich) Spinners Ink Publishers - suggest that a cloud of silence lies over ageism. I think they're right.

REALITIES

Consider the following. Have you ever said 'She doesn't look that old', 'She's still vigorous even though she's...', 'She's different from the other old women I know', 'She reminds me of my mother, always nagging.' Have you ever giggled in corners while an old woman sits silently near, spoken in a low voice so that older women have to say 'speak up', chosen activities that exclude older women? Have you ever, as this book says, 'chosen to avail yourselves of the richness of difference without confronting the reality of difference?' Realities could include earlier meetings, easier access, responsible positions for older women.

If we change the world for younger women can't we change our little piece of it for older women?

But I go too fast. Where are the older women in the women's movement?

LESBIAN

It is true we have Older Feminist Network and now we have OlderLesbians (40+) both London-based of course. These organisations, while useful to us oldies, also serve to make us even more invisible. And in the women's movement we are not only invisible we are silent.

ANGER

This book, written 'because old women struggle without a history, a literature or a politics and with almost no confirmation', seeks to break that silence. For me it broke it into pieces of anger.

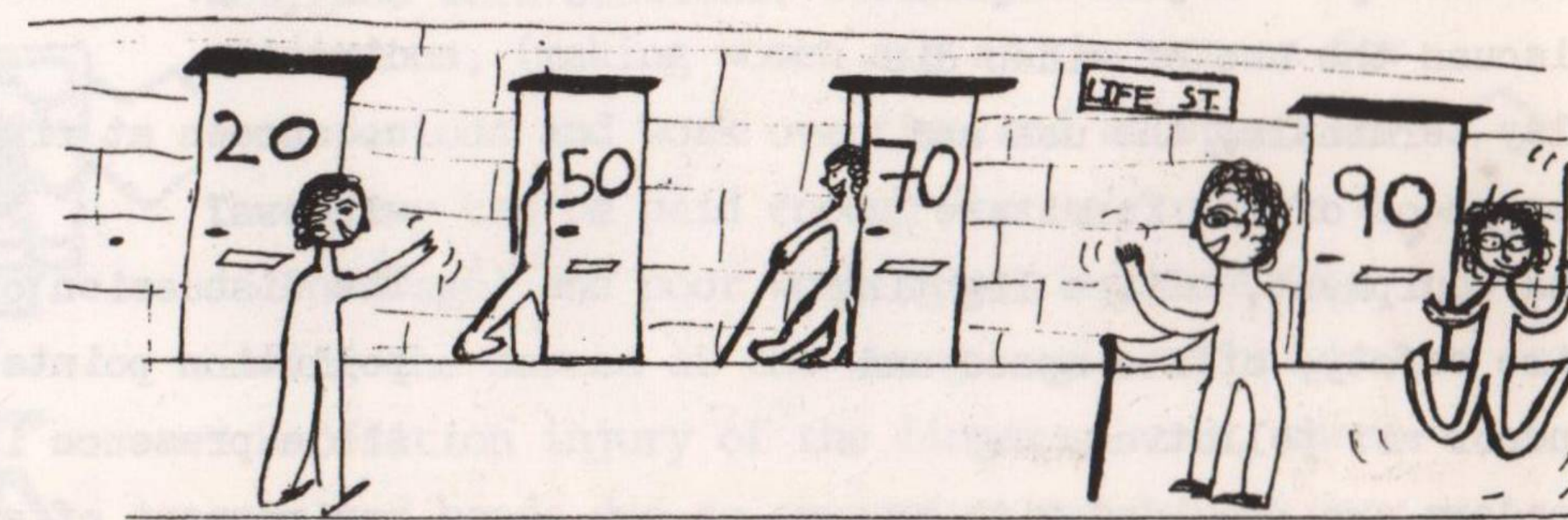
DEGRADED

I suddenly saw how I am seen. I suddenly put a name to all those uncomfortable remarks, the silences, the tolerances. I think it's called consciousness-raising (remember that in the old days of feminism?). I see now why I cannot reconcile myself to the degraded ways I am seen. I see now why I am bored, impatient, at meetings. Simply they are not for me and I am impudent in even being there. I am too old.

PROCESS

In 'An Open Letter to the Women's Movement', (Barbara), it is pointed out that hardly any journals carry old women on the editorial collective, hardly any articles are published for older women (we are hardly ever addressed in any journal, including this one).

She points out that the women's movement has paid lip service to opposing ageism and done very little about it.. She makes a 9-point charter, which includes 'Don't think old women are constantly complaining. We are just trying to get a word in edgeways in a conversation about abortion, contraception, children, pmt, toxic shock and so on. '. Another piece of advice to the young is to 'Remember old women are in the process of ...' We're on our way to being 70, 80, even 90 (for me too!); Our knowledge of the future could be shut out by you, as well as our present. She reminds us of how we all grow old - - even you, at this minute, on the way to death like us. (Is that what frightens you about us? That we look as if we are on our way? That's what men think and say.)



'aging & ageism' cont..

But it is Aging Ageism and Feminist Avoidance that the book most shows its intelligent and analytical strength. It is a chapter that would not benefit from summary, but let me quote :

' All women are under curfew, for old women the curfew begins much earlier. Male violence is an even more powerful social control for old women. '

' An important strategy for preseving personhood is " information management " (Trying to pass for younger/wiser/with it) '.

PASSING

' Passing is a threat to selfhood ' they say. But who sets up the situation where we need to ' pass '? , where we need to pretend, dissemble, act a part ? Not just men. Women and feminist women too, even lesbians. O yes.

This is a book all young women should read. I It is up to us all to break the silence surrounding ageism and to recognise it in ourselves and do something about it. But don't look to me for help, I'm too old.

josephine zara



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-AND MORE PACIFIC

EXTRACTS FROM A TALK WITH HAWAIIAN WOMEN ABOUT PROJECT
KAHO'OLAWA 'OHANA, AN HAWAIIAN ORGANISATION WHICH
AIMS TO STOP U.S. NAVY AND RIMPAC BOMBING OF THE SACRED
ISLAND.

THE RIMPAC EXERCISES

RIMPAC stands for both the nations which rim the Pacific and the large-scale military training exercise sponsored by the United States in which these nations participate. Beginning in 1971, the U.S. has invited the nations of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and since 1980, Japan, to participate in this joint military training exercise, an exercise which has included the bombing of Kaho'olawe one of the eight major islands of Hawaii. In 1984, there is a great possibility that France shall join the RIMPAC nations in these military manoeuvres.

The size of the RIMPAC exercises is awesome. In 1978 it included the nuclear aircraft carrier SS Enterprise and 41 other warships, 255 military planes and 22,000 personnel. In 1983 the exercises involved 60 warships and submarines, including the aircraft carrier USS Ranger, 120 aircraft, and 29,000 sailors and marines.

PROJECT KAHO'OLAWA 'OHANA

PUANANI FERNANDEZ The Hawaiian movement really started in 1969 in the Kalama valley on the south side of the island of O'ahu. For decades our people had planted taro and farmed pigs there but this valley was threatened by the expansion of Honolulu. The developers came in with state backing and tried to put up upper class housing, housing costing around 250,000 dollars. Our people resisted. That was our first political fight and we lost.

That struggle is considered to be the beginning. Since then there has been more along the same lines.

LUANA BUSBY In 1974, Hui Alaloa started, which was a grassroots organisation from Moloka'i. It was anti-development and anti-activist, just people who were into spiritualism. The people wanted access to areas of land which had kapu signs on them meaning private ownership. From Hui Alaloa Project Kaho'olawe 'Ohana began. We went over to Kaho'olawe to check it out. We could see it was being bombed from Moloka'i but we weren't told anything about it. We knew it was just a pile of rocks that the military were using for national defence purposes. When we actually got to Kaho'olawe we found historical sites there. We started asking kapuna (elders) about the history; it was a very sacred island holding a lot of Hawaii's past links with Polynesia. It was a place where our kapuna learnt how to navigate, to tell tide currents, and gained a lot of knowledge about the stars.

The movement started on a very grassroots level. When it first started the media made everything seem silly. Those Hawaiian people were crazies and wanted to go back to something that could never be again. A lot of Hawaiian people didn't buy it either, they thought it was a bit crazy. But it was people who worked on the land, who worked in the rural areas who began to relate to what we were doing.

Puanani: The media called us racist against America, said we didn't like America because we didn't want to be protected by the navy. They kept throwing in our faces "Remember Japan", "Remember Pearl Harbour", "We could be speaking Japanese now". Well, we're speaking English, and that's a foreign language! But a lot of our own Hawaiian people don't always make that connection.

Kaho'olawe is in the middle of all our islands, its like our "piko" (belly-button), its a very unifying thing for us. If we can get Kaho'olawe back it would be a real boost for our people. But we are not just after Kaho'olawe, we will move on.

We have had one most significant win, we have a consent decree with the US navy which is the basis of our negotiations. The Navy has to get rid of all the goats which are destroying the native flora by the end of this year. They also have to instruct the foreign military about the cultural significance of Kaho'olawe. So they learn about us before they bomb us!

The Navy sent in an archeological team which found 544 sites remaining on the island. After 30 years of bombing there are still 544! That brings it back again to how important a place it was to our ancestors. There is a reason there is so much there, and we are still searching for it. With every bomb that is dropped, it is harder and harder for us to find.

Luana: When we go there we can feel it, the island has a lot of mana. As soon as you step on it you can feel it. It's a hurt vibe, it is wounded, sad. The shape of Kaho'olawe is the shape of a fetus. Kohe Malamalama O Imanalao, the original name for this island, means "the shining vagina of Kanaloa". It is like a birthing spot, like a womb. The whole of Polynesia is connected by it.

Puanani: After all the archeological evidence was exposed, the island was put on the US register of historic sites. That means Kaho'olawe is put in the same category as the White House and Mt. Rushmore, where the presidents' faces are carved into sacred Indian land. Kaho'olawe has the distinction of being the only historic spot that is being bombed! Dammit,

this is cultural arrogance!

I knew all along I was Hawaiian even though our teachers would make us pledge our allegiance to the American flag every morning. If you were Hawaiian you were always the largest number in the category of every thing "bad" and smallest in the category of everything "good". Inside I was really angry, although I didn't have a political consciousness, I felt it inside me. I went to college in San Francisco. I helped organise the United People of Colour for National Liberation, a group of black Americans, Chicanos, Asian Americans and the "Skins" - American Indians. I started to understand my own anger and the situation of my people back home. I was unable to make the connection that indigenous people do have special rights in their homelands. I read an interview in magazine with some of our people about the Rimpac exercises. As I was reading I started to cry. It made me real angry. I heard the same people were going to speak in Chinatown so I went and I met members of the Ohana there. I realised I could act to fight for the goals we have as Hawaiian people.



PUANANI FERNANDEZ AND LUANA BUSBY

Both 'Pacific' articles taken from Broadsheet 118, New Zealand's feminist magazine.

Young ♀ + Dis/ability

a resource list

Organisations

(None of these lists are complete. Many will refer you to other, equally or more appropriate organisations. Fuller lists are available in the 'Disability Rights Handbook for 1984' (see publications) including local contacts and self help groups.

RADAR

25 Mortimer Street, London W1. (01 637 5400). Mobility Information Service, Copthorne Community Hall, Shelton Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 8TD. (Shrewsbury 68383). Information on cars etc. Mobile assessment unit for centres, exhibitions available.

LIBERATION NETWORK OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, c/o 1 Lewey House, Joseph St, Bow, London E3 4HN. Publish magazine: In From The Cold.

PHAB (Physically Handicapped Able-Bodied) 42 Devonshire St, London W1N1LN. (01 637 7475). Clubs and holidays to bring together physically handicapped and able-bodied people as a bridge to full integration. Will be linking in with local youth organisations for International Youth Year. SHAPE

9 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 6AE. (01388 9622 / 9744). Will provide free arts workshops for groups of people with disabilities.

SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEME FOR YOUNG DISABLED PEOPLE.

Information from Housing Officer, RADAR, 25 Mortimer St, London W1N 8AB. (01637 5400)

SISTERS AGAINST DISABLEMENT, L. Wilde, 2 Mere-worth Drive, Shooters Hill, London SE18 (01 854 6561).

GEMMA,

BM, Box 5700, London WC1N 3XX. National organisation of lesbians with/without disabilities, all ages. Newsletter, penfriends, socials.

NORTHERN IRELAND COUNCIL FOR THE HANDICAPPED, 2 Annadale Avenue, Belfast BT7 3JH. (Belfast 640011/2/3) Forum of over 40 organisations. COUNCIL FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COMMUNICATION WITH DEAF PEOPLE,

The Old Smithy, Catterlen, Penrith Cumbria CA11 0BQ. (0228 48694). Can provide interpreters c/o Stuart Simpson.

TELEPHONES FOR THE BLIND,

Mynhurst Leigh, Nr Reigate, Surrey. (0293 862546) Fund provides grants towards the cost of installation and rental.

TALKING BOOKS FOR THE HANDICAPPED

National Listening Library, 12 Lant St, London SE7 1QR. (01 407 9417). Postal service of books on cassettes for anyone who can see but is unable to read.

ALTERNATIVE TALKING NEWSPAPER COLLECTIVE

Box 35, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8 2NS

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF GATEWAY CLUBS 117 Golden Lane, London E17 0RT. (01253 9433) Clubs for mentally handicapped people.

WOMEN'S TAPEOVER,

c/o A Woman's Place, Hungerford House, Victoria Embankment, London WC2. (01 836 6081)

SISTERHOOD OF SIGNERS

c/o A Woman's Place, above.

ANOREXIC AID

National Headquarters, The Priory Centre, 11 Priory Rd, High Wycombe, Bucks. (0494 21431).

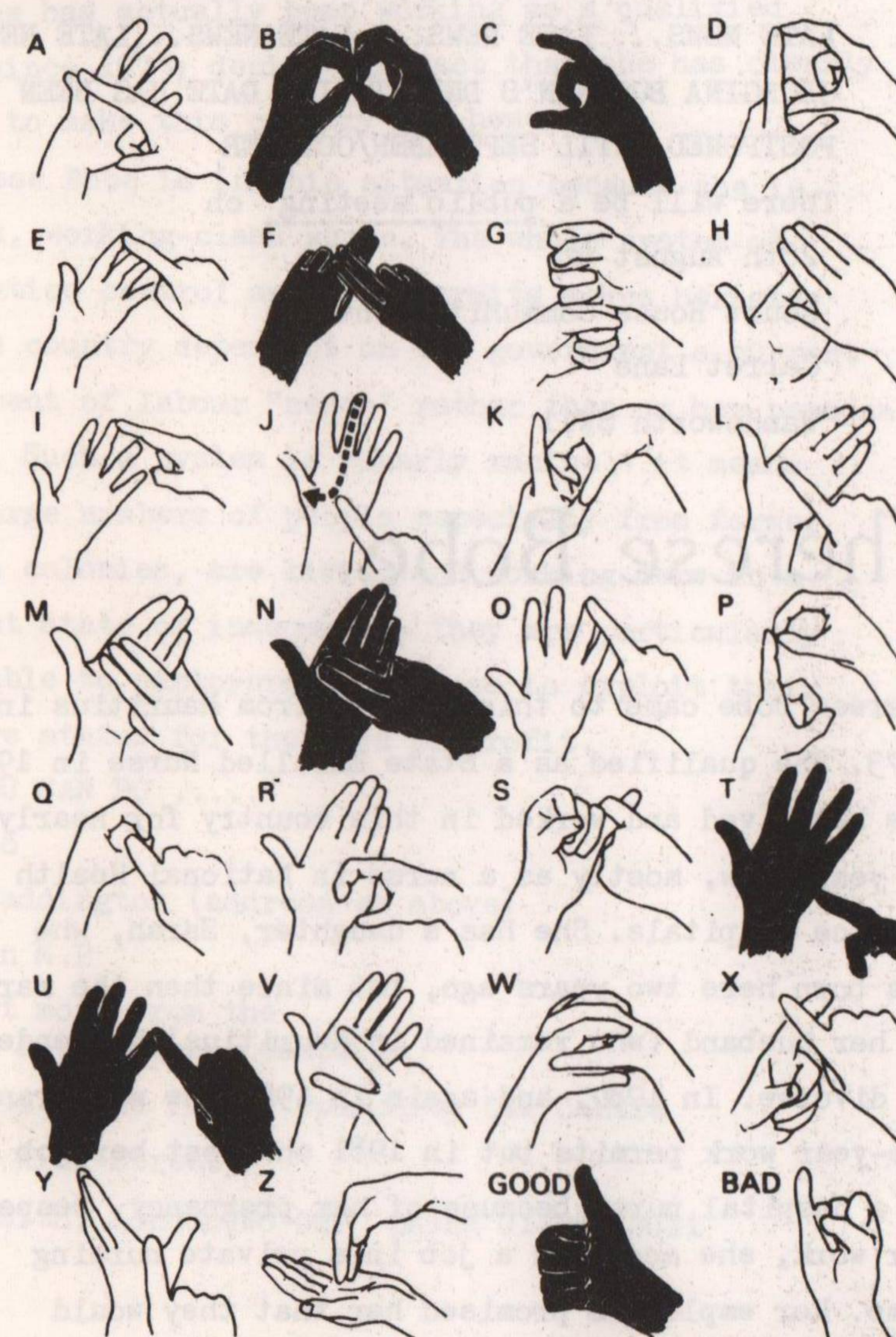
A network of self help groups, supporting sufferers from anorexia and bulimia nervosa and their friends.

Publications

DISABILITY RIGHTS HANDBOOK FOR 1984

A guide to rights, benefits and services for all people with disabilities and their families.

Edited by Sally Robertson, with Peter Townsend and Alan Walker. The Disability Alliance ERA £2. Exactly what it says; essential reading and reference book, clear and readable, includes a comprehensive list of useful addresses.



LIFT

Newsletter produced by young people; established by the Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus. LIFT is distributed free from ASBAH, Tavistock House North, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HJ (013881382)

IN FROM THE COLD

Magazine. Liberation Network of People with Disabilities. 50p each or annual subscription: £1.50 individuals, £2 organisations, £3 overseas. From: 12 Barrie Court, Lyonsdown Road, New Barnet London EN5 1HZ.

SECOND CLASS DISABLED by Irene Loach and Ruth Lister. Equal Rights for Disabled Women Campaign.

THE ART OF STARVATION by Sheila MacLeod.

Virago 1981. Describes her experience of anorexia and her recovery; analyses contributing factors for her. MIND book of the year 1981. Available @ £3.50 from MIND Bookshop, 155/157 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds LS2 3EF. (0532 453926)

ANNIE'S COMING OUT by Rosemary Cossley and Anne McDonald. Pelican Books 1982. £2.95.

Also available from MIND bookshop (above). Anne McDonald developed cerebral palsy following a difficult birth and is unable to express herself in speech. After 13 years in a mental handicapped hospital where staff believed she would never be able to communicate, a Supreme Court judge ruled that she was able to manage her own affairs and she left at 18. MIND book of the year 1982.

IMAGES OF OURSELVES: WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

TALKING edited by Jo Campling.

Routledge & Kegan Paul. £4.95. 1981.

Contributors to this book range from Sarah, who is 17, to Mary, who was born in 1907. Personal accounts from women with disabilities, from a variety of backgrounds with a variety of perspectives - all sharing the experience of living in a world organised around the needs, attitudes and expectations of the 'able bodied'. This book is compelling reading for women with, and without disabilities. As Jo Campling comments in her introduction "Able bodied women must...learn to recognise our own attitudes towards disability, relate to our experiences, isolate our guilt and work positively on our feelings. Micheline (a contributor) again, 'I realised how strong women are, especially when we have to fight to overcome something, in our case our disabilities.' This book is for all of us."

BETTER LIVES FOR DISABLED WOMEN by Jo Campling.

Virago £1.25. Jo Campling's earlier book, the experience of which led her to work on Images of Ourselves. A handbook for women with disabilities. GEMMA ACCESS GUIDE (for lesbians and gay men in London). Available in braille also. 50p from Gemma BM Box 5700, London WC1N 3XX. Contains information on publications, national groups, holidays of interest to those outside London.

SMASH IMMIGRATION

Georgina Buckman

Georgina Buckman comes from Ghana. She came to this country in 1974 as a visitor and did a secretarial course. A member of her family held her passport and she assumed that her visa had been renewed.

She lost her right to appeal against the Home Office's decision to send her back because all her documents were held against her will.

Mrs Buckman remained in this country and had two children here. They are boys aged 8 and 7, who have lived here all their lives and attend a local primary school in Tooting--Swaffield School - where one of the boys has special tutorials for children with educational difficulties. If she were deported, Mrs Buckman would have no option but to leave the boys behind in the permanent care of Wandsworth Council until they were adults...she has no home, job or family to whom she can return in Ghana, and she could not subject her children to such insecurity in a country which they do not even know.

In 1981, Mrs Buckman married a fellow Ghanaian in this country, which would normally have secured her the right to stay here. However she was still only given temporary rights because of the nature of his work. This marriage ended last year, leaving Mrs Buckman living with and supporting the two children alone.

She has been told to leave the country by the Aliens Registration Office. She has even been given a date...August 20th. So she, with the help of concerned local people, has got to persuade the authorities to relent on compassionate grounds very quickly indeed

PLEASE DO WHAT YOU CAN TO HELP THIS WOMAN KEEP HER FAMILY TOGETHER.

HOW YOU CAN HELP HER:

***Write letters supporting Georgina Buckman to:-

David Waddington,
Secretary of State to the Home Office,
80, Queen Anne's Gate,
London SW1.
and

Alf Dubs (Battersea)

House of Commons,
Westminster, London, SW1.

and

Your own M.P.

(Wandsworth Legal Resources Project,
248, Lavender Hill, London, SW11. 01-228-9462.)

LATE NEWS... LATE NEWS... LATE NEWS...LATE NEWS...

GEORGINA BUCKMAN'S DEPORTATION DATE HAS BEEN
POSTPONED UNTIL SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

There will be a public meeting on
28th August at
Court House Community Centre
Garret Lane
Wandsworth SW11

Therese Bobe

Therese Bobe came to this country from Mauritius in 1973. She qualified as a State Enrolled Nurse in 1975. She has lived and worked in this country for nearly 11 years now, mostly as a nurse in National Health Service hospitals. She has a daughter, Sarah, who was born here two years ago, but since then the marriage to her husband (who remained in Mauritius) has ended in divorce. In 1980, and again in 1981 she was granted one-year work permits but in 1981 she lost her job as a hospital nurse because of her pregnancy. Desperate for work, she accepted a job in a private nursing home. Her employers promised her that they would apply immediately for a work permit, but they failed to do so. In fact for a whole year they failed even to reply to Department of Employment enquiries. Instead they exploited her vulnerable immigration status. She was put on call night and day for very heavy work despite her condition. She was even physically threatened at work, but her employers knew she was terrified about her status. In the end Therese could take the strain no longer. There seemed no chance of her employers applying for a permit, so she left. Therese found it impossible to get another job. So the Home

LAWS

Office, because she had no job and because she had worked at the nursing home without a permit, decided to deport her.

The appeal against the decision to deport her has been dismissed- despite the fact that she has been here for nearly 11 years; despite the fact that her daughter, Sarah, is a British citizen; despite the fact that it was her employer's responsibility to apply for the permit; despite the fact that Therese herself tried hard to get a permit; despite the fact that she has actually been working as a qualified nurse since 1975; despite the fact that she has clearly chosen to make this country her home.

Therese Bobe is in this situation because she is a Black, working-class woman. The whole system of immigration control and work permits makes her stay in this country dependent on the government's current assessment of labour "needs" rather than on her personal choice. Such a system is clearly racist - it means that large numbers of people especially from former British colonies, are living and working here in a constant state of insecurity. They are particularly vulnerable to employers who choose to exploit their insecure status for the sake of profit.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Write to

David Waddington (address as above)

Your own M.P

Find out more from the
Therese Bobe Defence Campaign

Hammersmith and Fulham Community Law Centre
106/108 King Street,

Hammersmith, London, W6 0QP phone 01-741 4021

Esther Ankeli

Esther Ankeli, a Nigerian woman featured in issue no.8 has lost her appeal against deportation. She and her two children have no means of support in Nigeria and no home to go to. Please write as soon as possible to David Waddington and your M.P.

and on the subject...

On the morning of 20 December 1983 a joint police and army exercise took place at Heathrow Airport.

One police van, one army landrover with trailer and two armoured vehicles were positioned at the entrance to the tunnel leading to the central area of Heathrow. A number of police officers and at least six soldiers armed with rifles were standing on either side of the approach road. What they were doing is not clear but their presence was unmistakable.

A spokesperson for Heathrow Airport Police Station told a member of the public that it was a

'normal army routine and police movement due to the current situation... routine extra precautions like any other circumstances.'

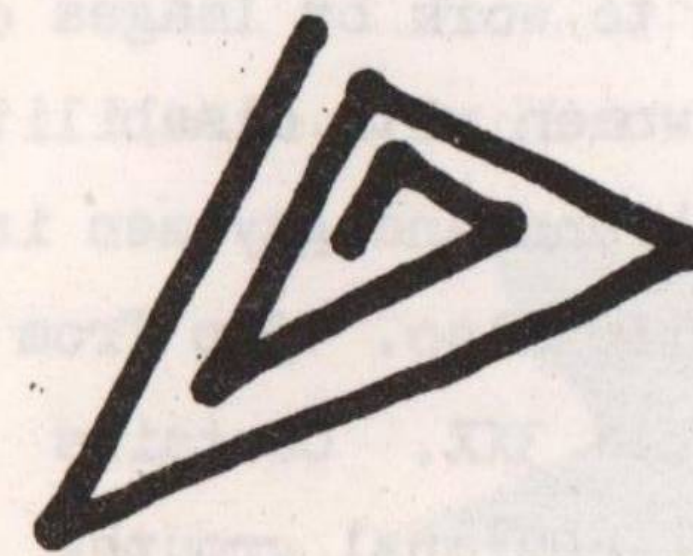
However, this exercise was not of a one-off kind. In fact another joint operation occurred on 29 November 1983 with two army landrovers and at least two police cars setting up a road block in St Anthony's Way, Hatton Cross, Hounslow. An eye witness reported that a car and a lorry had been stopped and the occupants were being questioned. Once again the soldiers were armed with rifles.

Joint exercises at Heathrow are nothing new. The first one took place in 1973 and involved troops and tanks blocking off the perimeter road and stopping all traffic. It created a lot of publicity and criticism at the time. Exercises since then have been scaled down in size and are now more usually of the kind recently seen.

What practical purpose the army's presence serves is debatable since in the case of the 20 December exercise they were in the process of departing at about 10.30am. In any case Heathrow Airport has one of the most developed security and surveillance operations in London. It has its own Metropolitan Police Division and Special Branch Officers are permanently stationed there. In addition, the British Airports Authority which owns the airport has its own security staff.

Hayes Monitor points out that these events help to accustom the people in this country to seeing armed soldiers on the streets, just as in Northern Ireland. They also reinforce the idea that such demonstrations are inevitable. What we are seeing is the militarisation of the police force, and the increasingly public presence of the army, so that the two begin to merge, just as they do under most fascist regimes.

From the Hayes Monitor, bulletin of the
Hayes Police Monitoring Group.



30
THESE



MUST

STAY



31

19 photographs

an excerpt —

This excerpt is from an autobiographical piece called Nineteen Photographs by a blind lesbian artist, Kirsten Hearn. It spans the years 0-17, and somewhat before as well, and is told in photographic descriptions and varied styles of writing, sometimes directly autobiographical in first person, sometimes written in the third person fictionalisation of various events that have happened. The following is transcribed by us from a tape sent to us from Kirsten

I'm going to give you here a sort of introduction photograph description plus 2 excerpts written in the 3rd person about being diagnosed as somebody who is going to lose their sight.

No. 15

--- The colour passport-sized photograph shows the head and shoulders of a girl whose averted face is slightly lifted up, her eyes do not look at the camera. Brown straight hair falls down about her shoulders and is parted in the middle showing the remnants of a grown out fringe. She wears a brown and white checked baker-boy hat set at an angle. Her face is slightly tanned which is set off by the pink blouse that she wears. Her shirt neck is open and reveals a purple velvet choker with imitation-pearl. Over all this she wears a black wooly waistcoat.

SUMMER 1971 --

I had resolved, since I first became conscious of my squint, that I would never look directly at a camera. I thought that the turn of my eyes would

seem less noticeable if I looked in another direction, than when I stared straight ahead of me, as I always appear to be looking over somebody's shoulder. At the beginning of the year I had entered into a prolific correspondence with an apprentice joiner called Gary. Our exchanges were mostly concerned with pop music and the free pirate radio association. My mind, by this time, was well seeped in the doctrine of teenage romance. Nothing would stop me considering this postal relationship as a significant affair. In July of 1971, I met Gary for the first time at a Radio Luxembourg disco. He had been standing at the edge of the dance floor when I recognised him from the description he had given in his letter. In the gloom of the disco and in a dark bomber jacket he looked positively romantic. We spent a cloudy afternoon walking the entire length of Oxford St. about Hyde Park and in and out of the record shops without so much as exchanging more than a couple of sentences. Despite the fact that he did not live up to the image my dreams had created for him, in day-light, I continued my fantasy and built up the ideal.

Boy friends were a sore point with me for although none of the girls in my immediate circle possessed one, many others in the class did. There was incredible pressure at all costs socially to append oneself to some specimen of the masculine sex. Although I greatly desired to have a boyfriend I never seemed to go anywhere where this one necessary piece of social furniture could be found. Besides which I was somewhat reluctant to embroil myself in any relationship which might give ammunition to my brother's incessant desire to ridicule every development of my adolescence. I also believed that I was far too fat and ugly, my background was not right, and most importantly, that on-one would want anyone with such boss eyes as I had. For these reasons, my postal friendship with Gary proved useful for I could pass him off as the absent boyfriend thus alleviating me from the all out frantic searches near at home, where my progress could be observed, criticised and laughed at.

*** PART ONE -- IN THE MIRROR ***

Kirsten stood leaning against the sink unit at the foot of the bed. She held a shaving mirror tilted towards the window. The afternoon sun splashed yellow on the purple bedspread littered with the contents of the small blue and pink flowered make-up bag. She leaned closer into the mirror, her mouth hanging open in deep concentration as the tight rhythmic stroking movement of the brush in her hand abruptly ceased. She stood still staring into the mirror. Dropping the mascara brush onto the bed, she walked slowly to the window. She turned so that her face was in full light and examined the brighter reflection. It was a pleasant, smooth face, neither round, nor square. The soft skin stretched smoothly over the contours, the pronounced cheekbones. The small even features and deep set pale eyes gave an air of expressionless and non-commitment. She peered into the mirror at that face, one eye dark, with a dilated pupil -- large black and shiny, fringed by deeper, darker charcoal grey, that was once the iris. Impatiently she flung the mirror onto the bed and stalked out of the door, slamming it. She bounced down the stairs, two at a time and burst into the kitchen where her mother stood leaning against the side door in the characteristic pose Kirsten knew so well. Her mother stood, one hand, large and pink, clutching a mug of steaming tea below her lips, the other placed firmly on her ample hips. She was squinting at the radio through her bi-focals, one eye was closed and the corresponding side of her mouth twisted and stretched crookedly in a leer born of deep concentration. Her mother turned in greeting and said, "Do you want a cup of tea, Moolie?". Kirsten ignored the question and in a matter of fact fashion described what she had seen in the mirror. "Why do you have to put that muck on?" said her mother as she steered the girl towards the light. "Come over here, I can't see there." The tall, round, pear-shaped form bent and the face moved closer to Kirsten. She noticed her mother's eyes, dark-rimmed and pale like her own, magnified owl-like

under the bi-focals. She could detect annoyance moving to alarm tinged with the scientist's curiosity as her mother examined her eye. 10 minutes later, mother and Kirsten were squeezing their way past the doctor's shiny car, crammed into the small driveway almost filling it. Dr. Bentley, a small thin white-haired frail looking figure steered Kirsten into a large black leather armchair by the window. He crouched in front of her and squinted through the lens of a long black instrument which clicked. He asked, "Can you see out of this eye?". She said she couldn't. "When did you first notice that you couldn't see out of it?". She said she could not remember. Kirsten's mind returned to the Saturday morning, 3 weeks previously, when she had been on her way to the shopping centre. She spent most Saturday mornings trailing round the boutiques, examining and fingering the fine clothes that she might one day be able to afford, but could as yet only dream about. On this particular Saturday she had stopped in the High St. on impulse and covered her right eye. All she could see was a swirling grey and white mass, opaque and diffused like the light through a thickly-frosted glass. The doctor straightened and turned to her mother. "She's detached her retina. I'll give you a note for the hospital".

Back in her room Kirsten sat on her bed amongst the lipsticks, mascara and eye shadow still scattered in the pool of bright sunshine and stared at her reflection in the mirror.

*** PART TWO -- BRIGHT LIGHTS ***

Kirsten and her mother sat silently in the front row of a neatly ordered bank of grey seats. All around them scuffled nurses, crisp and blue, bristling with efficiency. Kirsten ignored them and stared at the grey hatch in front of her, its black and white sign bright under the artificial lights. She noted critically the colour scheme of the room -- puke green walls, shit brown mats and linoleum, and stark grey paintwork. She wondered vaguely if there was any reason behind the colour scheme. She was jolted back to consciousness by the sound of her

name articulated carefully by the round-voiced nurse at the far end of the room. The nurse was arranging with dexterity small bottles on a tray as she motioned Kirsten to sit down. With an expert movement, born of long practice, the nurse bent and squirted liquid into Kirsten's eyes. She flinched and screwed them tight as the searing, stinging pain seemed to enclose and squeeze her eyeballs. Two pairs of hands took hold of her arms and led her down the corridor, depositing her unceremoniously on the seat against the wall. Kirsten opened her eyes and looked about her at the dark corridor, filled with huddled figures, their eyes closed. A voice barked, "Close your eyes and keep them closed.". The gloom of the corridor faded into salmon pink crossed by imperceptible shadowy movements of a darker pink. The distant hum of the traffic faded in and out of the clacking feet, the loud voices of the nurses, combined to weave a tapestry of sound which translated into Kirsten's mind images superimposed one upon the other. She knew she'd been to this hospital before, she sat in this very corridor on a previous day, referred from a Saturday night casualty department. Her parents had taken her there because of a splinter from a pencil sharpening which had scratched her eyelid. Her mother's voice broke in upon her thought, "It's your turn Kirstie.". Kirsten stood and allowed two pairs of hands to propel her into a small closed room. These same hands lowered her with curious gentleness into yet another plastic chair. Someone's breath, warm and steamy, smelling of coffee, brushed against her face and two fingers dragged up the eyelid of her left eye. The grey, thick, opaque light was penetrated by something bright like the beam of a headlight splashed on a rainy wind screen. "Can you see that?". She said she could, flinched and drew back from the hands, now plucking at the eyelids of the right eye. "Look left, look right, up, down, straight ahead, good girl.". The two pairs of hands propelled her across the floor and squeezed her into another seat, a swivel chair. They pushed her head forward into a machine. They jammed her chin upon a pad, her forehead upon a band. Fingers pulled open her eyes and a voice from the

other side of the machine said, "Can you see this light? "Open wide now". She said she could but the light hurt. Her eyes stung and they began to water. "Look up, down, left, right, straight. Good girl.". The room seemed crowded with people. One by one different voices commanded her to "Look up, down, right, left, straight-forward, good girl.". One by one different sets of fingers probed and pulled her eyelids, whispered, conferences were taking place all around her. Long strange-sounding biological terms and one short word repeated over and over again. She could hear her mother's voice asking questions, interested in that scientific way of hers. From behind her, a voice asked casually, "Did you poke your eye with a mascara brush?". She turned and stoutly denied using mascara at all and feeling her cheeks turn crimson as she thought of her mother listening to this lie. The voice rejoined, "Put your head back into the machine, dear.". It seemed like some strange torture. She wondered when the inane questions would cease, when the bright lights would stop. She felt trapped in that dark room as though in a prison cell with 20 curious jailers. She felt inadequate and bewildered because she would not give the them any answers despite this torture. She put her chin back on the pad.

Suddenly it was all over. Two pairs of hands gripped her and pushed her out of the room. The bright lights hurt and stung her eyes and she closed them involuntarily. The crisp nurse by the window motioned her to another chair and Kirsten sat passively allowing her to squirt something else into her eyes. She flinched and drew away. It didn't hurt this time. It was a cool, soothing feeling. She blinked, swallowed and felt the drops on the back of her throat.

Her mother was clutching a file and a piece of paper. Kirsten tried to make out the expression on her face, but the eyes were too blurry from the drops. She trailed after her down the corridor. In the first long dingy room at the far end tucked away behind a corner was another grey hatch. The black letters on the white sign danced and fused into each

other. Behind the window a figure dressed in white, sat, juggling things, - - little white pills which rattled as she shook the triangular tray. Deftly she flicked the switch onto its apex and rolled its rattling contents into a bottle. She slid the bottle in to a number of small boxes under the window.

Mother and Kirsten walked down the stairs, out into the bright sunlight. Again Kirsten closed her eyes as the glare dazzled her. On the bus, she sat looking out of the window, her mother sitting beside her smoked and talked: long biological words rolled off her tongue as she expounded the theories behind detached retinas. Kirsten ignored her as she watched the tall grey modern structure of the Fairfield Halls slide past. She concentrated on the townscape in order to obliterate from her mind the strange aching tight feeling in her eyes as though grabbed by some steel hand. She experienced a sinking feeling that accompanied the remembrance of that one word she had heard them repeat over and over again in that dark room ----- blind.

by
Kirsten
Hearn



REVIEW: Kirsten Hearn's Art Show

Kirsten's show consists of two unlit windowless spaces containing sculptures to explore and tapes to listen to. In the upstairs room, the intention is that you feel the sculptures gently with your hands as you listen to the tapes, letting the 2 experiences interact. There are 4 pieces and some maquettes (models).

The first sculpture I experienced was a sensuously curved piece made of paper coated with PVA. On the tape Kirsten read her poems, which were very direct telling intimately of moments in her life spent with other women. Although I understood the connection between the tape and the sculpture, and they both enriched each other, I found it difficult to pay attention to both at once. New poems, a new sculpture, a new way of experiencing that sculpture (by touch), and a new setting (almost complete darkness). A lot to take in at once.

Then down a flight of stairs was a small space with stones on the floor like a beach, and cloth stretched taut across parts of it. The stretched fabric reminded me of a dream I had as a child where there was a skin across the sky; it gave me an uneasy feeling. There was an 8-minute tape to listen to. I sat down on the uncomfortable stones and listened. The tape is about a handicapped woman feeling that as far as the world was concerned she was alive by default. This reading is interspersed with peace songs. The room evoked the desolation of a post-nuclear age and the tape made me aware of the connection between disrespect for any particular form or sort of life, (in this case the life of a handicapped person), and disrespect for all life, (the development of the means to destroy it).

I found the show moving on many levels. An important thing it did for me was give me a tourist's eye-view of what it might mean to be blind. Although experiencing one sculpture without using my eyes can in no way be compared to actually living my life without eyes, it has made me more aware of what my sight means to me. This show is not only about being blind or being a woman or being a lesbian. It is also much more than that: the expression of the particular sensibility of one woman who is all three of these things and obviously a lot more besides. I think it is a brave and moving show and I would recommend any woman to go along and enjoy and learn from it.

Caroline Hearst.

* * * * * Kirsten's exhibition has since finished. She can be contacted via the Royal College Of Art * * *

FEDERATION of SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN - an interview

Sechaba: Could you give us a brief account of the events which led to the formation of the Federation of South African Women?

Ray Alexander: The Federation came about as a result of the development of our women's struggles. Its birth must therefore be seen not merely in terms of the conference on 17 April 1954. As far back as the days of the Second World War our women had begun getting organised for the struggle against food shortages and high prices of food. Food Committees were formed, and these fought for the fair distribution of goods, particularly to the areas outlying the big cities. Thus on 1 April 1953, a meeting was organised in Port Elizabeth, which was attended by leading women in the African National Congress and Trade Union movement. I recall a few names: Florence Matomela, Frances Baard, Marya Williams, Gus Coe, Mary Moodley and others. We had a representative meeting of African, Indian, Coloured and White women. We also had a special guest, Mr Pemba, (an artist).

We were all excited by the role women had played in the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign, but felt that there was a need to bring together women of all racial groups in one national organisation that could effectively ensure the fuller participation of women in our national liberation struggle. We then took a decision to work towards the creation of such an organisation.

militant

S: Would you say that the ground was laid for the creation of a federal organisation of women?

RA: Yes, our women had shown in actual field of struggle that they could be organised into such a body, although we knew that it was not going to be an easy task. We immediately set about getting on contact with women in other provinces. We contacted

Ray Alexander was elected General secretary of the Federation in '54. On the Federation's 30th anniversary, Sechaba interviewed her about the Federation and its work.

Dora Tamana, Gladys Smith, Katie White and other women in Cape Town; Hilda Bernstein and other women in Johannesburg; Hendrietta Khuzwayo, Bertha Mkhize, Fatima Meer, Mrs Singh Fatima Seedat and other women in Natal. In Port Elizabeth we already had militant organisers like Florence Matomela and Frances Baard, who helped organise women all over the Cape.

ANC

S: Since you did not operate under any established organisation, didn't you find problems in your work of organising, particularly since there already existed a national organisation of the people, the African National Congress, which had its own Women's League?

RA: We encountered no problems at all. Actually, we received a lot of encouragement from Comrade Walter Sisulu, then secretary general of the ANC. Comrade Wakter had before then undertaken a trip to some socialist countries, and was very impressed with the level of women's organisations there. Of course, there was some scepticism about the wisdom of another women's organisation from some comrades, who thought that the Federation would be in competition with the ANC Women's League. But these fears were soon dispelled by the representation at the conference, where all ANC Women's League branches were represented. As to the invitation to attend, this was a letter to all interested individuals and organisations, signed by a number of women who acted as convenors.

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South African Women contd.

S: What questions did the conference address itself to?

RA: A wide range of issues were discussed. Delegate after delegate spoke passionately against the white racist regime that keeps the majority of our people in poverty, ignorance, ill-health and slave labour conditions. The subjects covered showed the real political awareness of the delegates, who linked the question of women's rights with their own struggles and problems, the Bills that were then before parliament, and the political issues of the day. Women spoke of the conditions under which children were brought up, lack of proper family life, amenities and education opportunities, the need for schools, creches, maternity homes, the high rents and poor houses. Over and above everything, delegates emphasised the fight against unjust laws, the Bantu Education Act, the Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act, the Population Registration Act and the pass laws - all of which greatly affected the lives of women and their families.

Mobilise

S: The impression one gets when looking through conference records is that in addition to the bitterness prevalent against the regime, there was another degree of bitterness - against men. For instances, one delegate was loudly applauded when she said that if it were not for the husbands, many more women would have attended the conference. Another delegate angrily lashed out: 'If the men stand in our way, we shall sweep them aside for our rights.'

RA: It is true that we were and still are primarily subjugated and oppressed by the system of apartheid, which is the main cause for the misery of millions of our women. But we are still aware that because of the laws of apartheid, because of tradition and custom, women are further victims of oppression in their own homes. Women more often than not fail to attend meetings and contribute fully towards the work of our struggle because they have to be home to cook, feed and look after their families, and have to do a lot of other chores without the help of their husbands. We thus resolved to 'teach the men that they cannot hope to liberate themselves

from the evils of discrimination and prejudice as long as they fail to extend to women complete and unqualified equality in law and practice.'

This position is sometimes misinterpreted to mean an attack on the menfolk, but we in the Federation, like all democratic women in our country, have always strived to maintain the link between the inferior status of women under apartheid and the inferior status to which our people are subjugated by discriminatory laws and colour prejudice. Thus the need for women's organisations is to enable women to mobilise others to win specific demands for them and their children. These organisations will not and should not be a divisive force, but a force for greater mobilisation of women into struggle for total national liberation. Through these organisations we must teach our men that we are half of the population, and without this massive potential being fully engaged in the work of our struggle there can never be progress.

The Federation of South African Women

Our women have created strong organisations throughout the country - the United Women's Federation, the East London Women's Organisation, the Port Elizabeth Women's Organisation, the Durban Women's Organisation as well as many other self-help and other clubs.

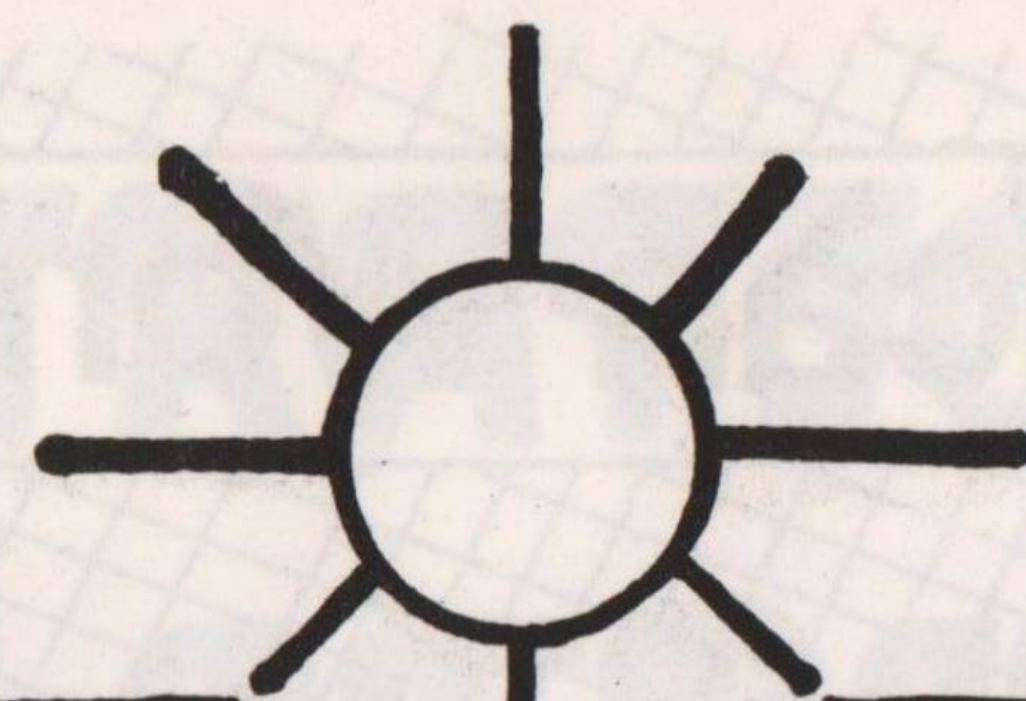
It is in recognition of the militancy of our women and as a means of consolidating the ranks of the democratic women's movement that the African National Congress has declared this as 'the Year of the Women'. It is indeed a fitting tribute to the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Federation of South African Women.

WOMEN!



Taken from African National Congress (ANC). Further details may be obtained from ANC, PO Box 38, 28 Penton St. London N1 9PR, UK.

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♫ You Cant Kill The Spirit ... ♪ ♪

A VISION UNFOLDS

Naomi Littlebear Morena is a Chicana Lesbian Feminist. Her song "Like A Mountain" has been adopted by the womens peace movement. This article shares the inspiration behind her work.

In the spring of 1974 my lover and I took a trip to Mexico. We were both recently unemployed and living in our '57 chevy panel truck. Our quest was to find the "perfect" dyke community or possibly find our selves. Kristan knew of two Mexican Dykes living in a restored hacienda in Oaxaca. The women were inviting people of variuos skills to come and contribute to creating an alternative community. I did not think much about what this trip might mean to me in terms of my cultural heritage. I had over the years unwillingly transcended my racial identity. Running the gauntlet of California racism I emerged ignorant and self-denying.

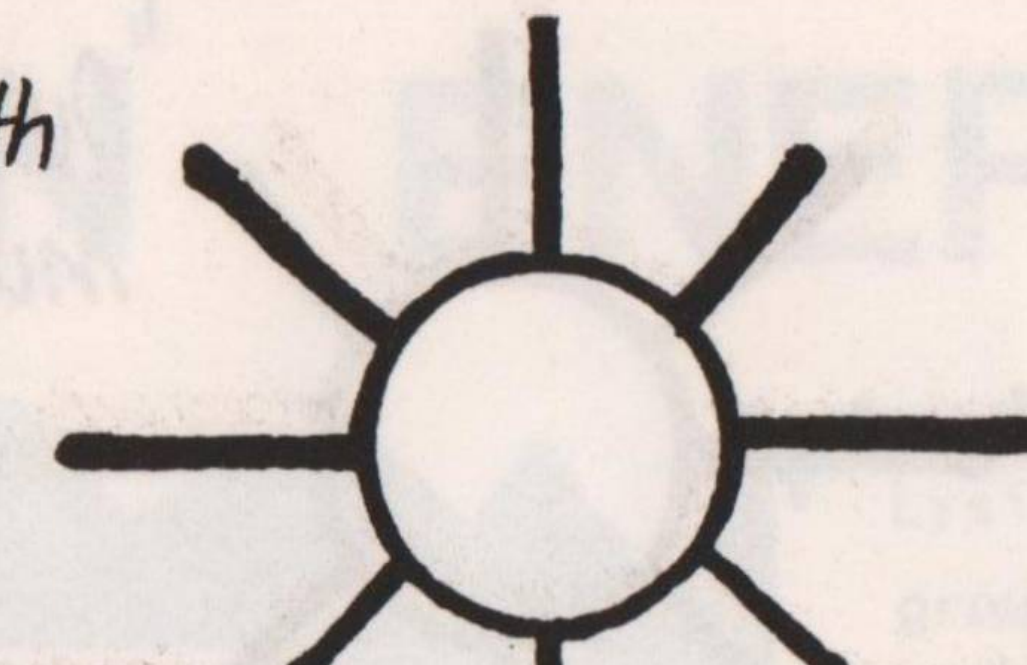
We were to meet two of our Portland friends in Mazatlan. From there we caravanned south to Guadalajara, my grandothters' birthplace. It was at that point that my pride in being Mejicana began to stir ever so gently. I started to feel awkward in my blue jeans and short hair. Throughout my childhood I spoke Spanish as my first and primary language. I was frustrated at how much I had forgotten. I had the vocabulary of a 12 year old and my braids which once hung long and thick were no longer a visable flag which linked me with my culture. More than anything I was afraid people would think I was an Americana, which in the states meant white. It was the first time in my consciuos life that I wanted to disassociate from white people all together. I had long lost myself in the fight for approval and acceptance amoung anglos, that they may acknowledge my intelligence and find me an exception to the myth that Mexicans were stupid. The struggle now seemed a pathetic illusion that was failing miserably to uphold or enhance my self concept. Of course none of

my travelling companions knew what I was feeling; it was barely known to my self. As americanized as I was, I felt as if I belonged, if only in color and spirit.

After more endless driving we wound down a verdant canyon thru' a lightening storm into the tiny village below. Extending confident welcomes. I found the two women to be somewhat upper class politicas. They were very articulate in letting us know immediately what was expected from their visitors. Though we had just arrived we were reminded that next time bring more supplies such as swiss army knives, peanut butter, record albums and clothes. Kristan had apparently been instructed to bring such items and they quickly noticed the oversight. We were told that regardless of how poor we were it could not compare to the poverty of Mexico, that we in fact were wealthy in comparison. The guilt trip seemed to work for my middle-class companions, but the level of poverty I experienced living in the barrios of America may have been a few degrees above the homeless and hungry of Mexico, it was nonetheless humiliating. It was insensitive to measure and judge states of depravation. To me these women seemed somehow aristocratic in their manner, the way they carried themselves and the ease in which they ordered people around.

That evening a meal was prepared by two young women who scurried about when commanded. They set before us a lavish feast of black beans, tortillas and tropical fruits. It turned out that these young women were hired to cook

"We cannot build a new world with outdated tools. In this new world there must be more than white voices leading us in song."



"It is important that people know that a Chicana Lesbian woman is behind the inspiration."

♫ She is like a mountain... Old and Strong... ♪

and clean. They were, in more blunt terms, servants. So began a discussion.

"Isn't it a bit bourgeois to have servants, to exploit these poor Indian girls, can't you clean your own rooms"

and so on. Naturally there was an argument. The money these girls were earning was crucial to their survival besides they were generally unmotivated and in fact it was a favour to provide work for them and so on. We knew nothing about the culture so it was inappropriate for us to judge, they declared. I had refused to let myself be served by young women whose skin was as dark as mine at the behest of the fairskinned land owners regardless of what their political intetions were. I left the hacienda and headed towards the fields. I felt overwhelmed by everythting. The strange beauty of the land, the curious glances of the people and the absurd theatre of events at the hacienda. I sat down in mental exhaustion, holding myself, as tears began to fill my eyes. Unable to keep myself upright I lay down onto the cool comfort of the rich, brown earth. As I grew calm, my mind silent, images began to enter behind my closed eyes. I felt an aching and heaving in the heart of the earth, it was as if she was in pain. I envisioned the earth-mother making an attempt to shake off her predators. She was wounded and from her wounds spirits of women and animals were released. The spirits were of those violently destroyed by men. They were the spirits of women killed because they were woman. They were now joined in one powerful voice crying out with the mother against the murder of their innocent flesh. This violence must stop was the thundering message. I saw the spirits entering into the hearts of women in the physical world giving them

strength and insight to oppose and resist male violence and to bring it to the attention of all.

The survival of earth and the true spiritual nature of woman was dependent on their work. The images soothed and warmed me like sunlight and soon faded into the present. I felt refreshed and peaceful. There was an Indian woman walking toward me with a basket balanced gracefully on her head and another in hand. As she neared I greeted her and offered my help. She politely accepted and invited me to her home for supper. She lived not far from the hacienda in a tiny hut. There was a tiny baby sleeping in a wood cradle in one corner and her cooking fire at another.

As fate would have it, she was the mother of the two girls who worked at the hacienda. Between the patting of tortillas she told me that she felt the girls were being taken advantage of and that they were often late in being paid if they got paid at all. I listened intently and promised I would speak with the dueñas on her behalf. She was happy about this and after I finished my meal reminded me that I would always be welcome in her home.

We stayed only three days at the hacienda. In the three weeks of actually being in Mexico I had awakened considerably to my identity as a Mexican-American and as a woman.

A full year had passed before I thought about my vision. I wrote a song about it called Million-Eyed Woman.

I anticipated that any day women would take to the streets in protest to patriarchal violence against women and the earth. Needless to say the years went by uneventful.

"People of Colour have traditionally given the gift of song in the face of struggle and white people have traditionally capitalized on them."

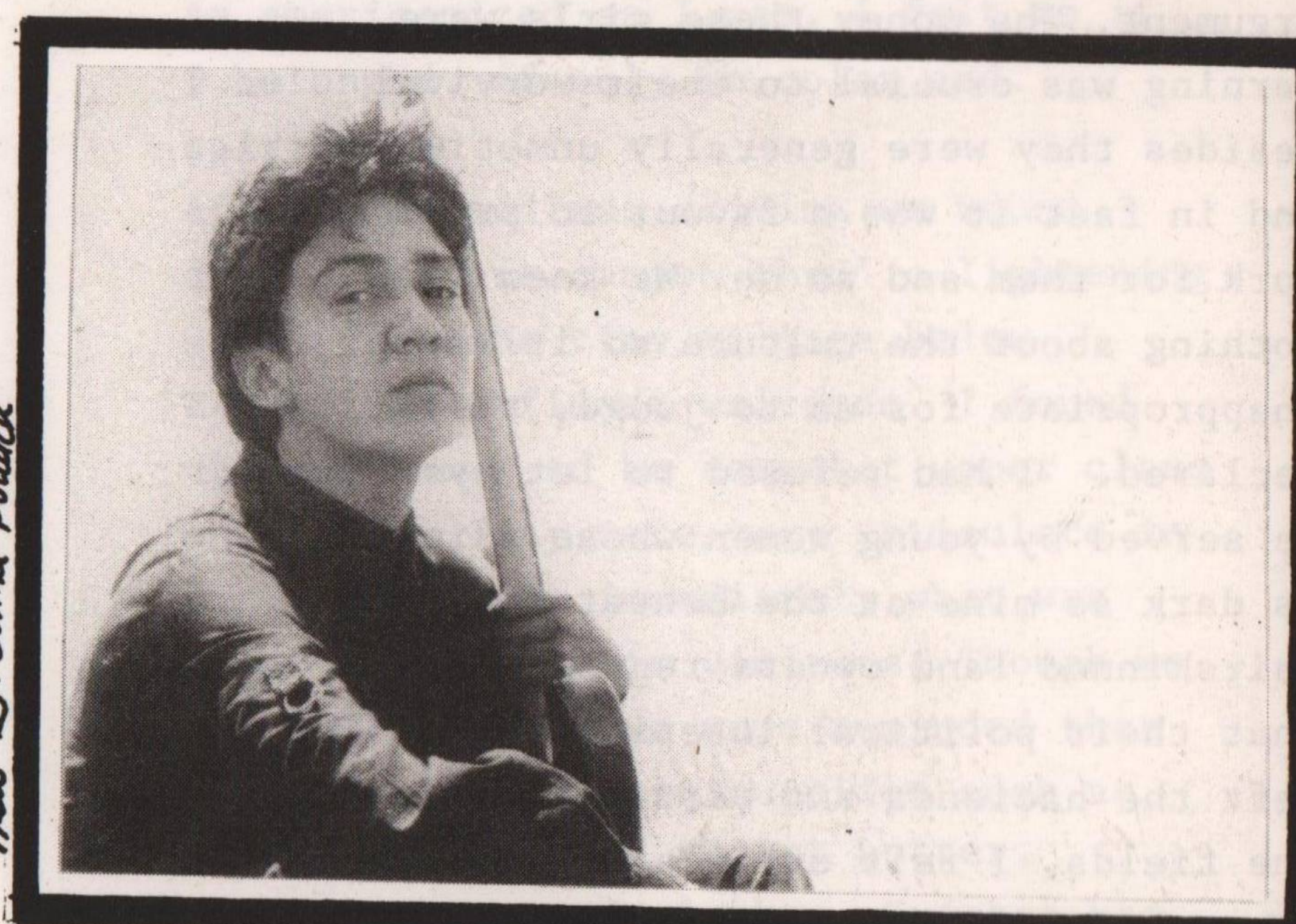
"Our contributions to herstory must be known not ignored the origins of our creativity must not be overlooked."

She goes on and on and on....

1984 - I now feel the vision is fulfilling itself after all.

In 1981 women surrounded the Pentagon actively defying the military backbone of this country. 1982, women in Europe surround the Greenham Common missile base, earlier declaring that they will stay there until the missiles go. So as men escalate in the battle within themselves thrusting their missiles for the ultimate rape of all. The hearts of women all over the world grow strong with conviction, their minds clear in perspection. Though I was not physically present at those demonstrations, a very vital part of me was there.

Photo by: Joanna Pollack



It is time we broke this sometime well meaning yet oppressive tradition. Our contributions to herstory must be known not ignored, the origins of our creativity must not be overlooked. If you know of anyone wishing to capitalize or exploit this song for their own personal gain please inform them. We cannot build a new world with outdated tools. In this new world there must be more than white voices leading us in song.

Respectfully Yours
Naomi Littlebear Morena

I will be in Europe Sept 15th - Nov 15th
I still need contacts. I hope to bring my music and energy to share with as many sisters as I can.

Write in care of Maggie Cloud
3737 S.E. Salmon
Portland Or. 97214

LESBIAN ENERGY !

LESBIANS AGAINST MALE VIOLENCE (LAMV) is an on-going group of Lesbians who want to organise/campaign/fight against male violence (all forms). We haven't been going very long and are still deciding what we really want to put our energy into. So far, we have decided to make a slide show about pornography, like the american one, drawing links between advertisement porn and other forms. We want this to be versatile enough to take to schools and to feminist groups/conferences. We are also going to make an exhibition for schools/libraries/community centres, womens centres etc about the media reportage of violence against women. For this exhibition and the slide show we want to show some examples of women fighting back, in the form of graffiti'd ads, reports of direct action, etc.

We need women from all over to send us any press cuttings of reports of violence against women and girls (especially from local papers). We also need, for the slide show a large variety of porn and of photos of offensive ads. Please send us any you may be able to get hold of. Please also send photos of decorated ads.

Although we are London-based, we want to have as much contact and liason with groups of women outside London doing work against male violence as we can. So please can groups let us know what they're doing.

Any Lesbian who is against male violence is welcome to join the group, which meets in London. Please contact us (& send the stuff we've asked for) c/o LAMV, A Womans Place, London WC2

- * Different kinds of relationships between Lesbians - friendships, celibacy, monogamy etc...?
- * The experience of Lesbians in the Womens Liberation Movement.
- * Recognising our differences.
- * Power imbalances in Lesbian relationships.
- * Why is Lesbianism threatening to men and how to make it more so.
- * Is Lesbian sex in itself revolutionary?

If any Lesbian would like to talk about a possible contribution, please contact us at Sisterwrite Bookshop, 190 Upper St. London N1.

Lysistrata has recieved a letter from a Lesbian group about a book they are editing, to be published by The Womens Press, which they want lesbians to write for. Here is what they say: "We are a small group of Lesbians who are revolutionary feminists. We are Black, Jewish, white, middle and working class women. We would like there to be a book about the politics of Lesbian sex and sexuality. There has been virtually nothing published in the UK about the politics of Lesbianism and we think it is essential that this situation is changed.

We think that such a book could express the very different experiences of Lesbianism that exist, how women have come to name themselves Lesbian and how important Lesbianism is to us both politically and in our personal lives.

We are asking Lesbians to contribute to this anthology. Contributions don't have to be long and could be in the form of personal accounts, interviews, poetry, political discussions etc.

Contributions can be written in print or on tape.

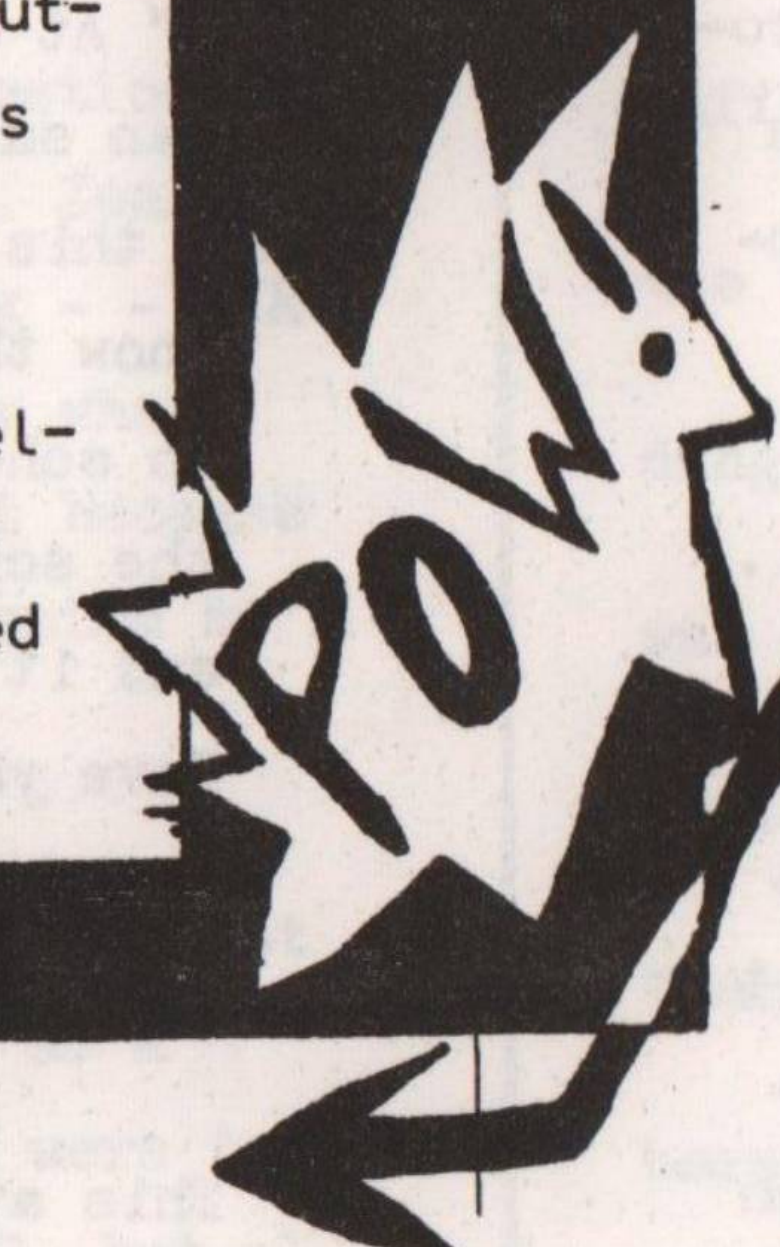
The book will include sections on:

- * How we are trained to be heterosexual and ways we resist it.
- * The role of pornography, incest and other forms of male violence in maintaining heterosexuality.
- * Self-discovery and redefining our selves and bodies.
- * What is Lesbian attraction?

We are very aware of the power we have as an editorial group. To go some way towards dealing with this, we plan to actually discuss all work recieved with the writers; we won't simply send it back! We don't want to include anything that isn't consistent with our politics but we want to encourage women to write. We all know how difficult it can be.

So - please send us your work, even if you don't think its word-perfect. We will, of course, treat your work with every care and respect and in strictest confidence (Nevertheless, please keep a copy.) and return all manuscripts. We will acknowledge everything we recieve immediately."

Lesbians are everywhere!



DYNAMITE DYKES!!

PATU!



'PG'

- a

review

* New Zealand 1983 Dir: Merata Mita 110 mins

* PATU --- TO CHASTISE, STRIKE OUT, KILL



Printed by Trojan Press 01-249 5771

With all the media coverage of confrontation between police and protesters here in this country, whether the protesters be Greenham women, CND or the miners, this film, documenting another such confrontation, presented many, what are by now to me, familiar images.

The protest is aimed at the S. African Rugby Tour of New Zealand in 1981 - - as it proceeded step by step from the time of the announcement of the tour and the mobilisation of public support, to what became an increasingly violent clash between police and protesters, - - culminating in a final confrontation which left 2000 protesters arrested and several hundred injured, some permanently.

When I say that most of the film presented "many .. familiar images", I mean that there were : --- the same liberal/left WASP men and women running the show, setting the hierarchy of involvement and participation in the campaign, and dominating it with their feelings of " shock-horror-the awful racism-going-on-over-there ". Which all made me switch off emotionally. (And listening to them, I asked myself whether white N.Zealanders have ever really thought just how closely their english accent rings of the unmistakeable afrikaans english of S. Africa) --- the same police, (wearing identical uniforms as here), with their same immobile Wasp faces, and the same token policeman from the " ethnic minorities ", this time a Maori, rather than an Asian or an Afro-Caribbean.

--- the same blatant racism coming from those white N.Zealanders in support of the tour that we know from the same racists (fascists?) here, with their,

" well, they're black aren't they ?", and when speaking to a Maori, " you're just brown ".

EXPLODING THE MYTH

Between these 2 white factions acting out THEIR conflict, stood the Maoris - - demanding to be seen and heard by the body of the white protesters, - - saying, " It's not just happening out-there, this awful thing called racism you are protesting against. It happens here too, remember, against US, and it's not very different from what goes on out-there.". With this the Maoris exploded the myth of N.Z. as a multi-racial egalitarian paradise.

" It was a very painful experience for the white liberal N. Zealander ", said Merata Mita who produced and directed the film.

" At one point in the making of the film her cameraman sat down in a Christchurch gutter and sobbed : ' this can't be happening. I grew up in this town, I know these people. I know some of the cops. I went to school with them . . . '. Merata grabbed him by the scruf of the neck and said, ' it is happening and it's your job to show people it's happening. Save your weeping till later. Get up and shoot! '. And he did too ". (from an interview with one of the collaborators on the film).

This attitude of " the awful racism out there " came over very strongly in the film, reminding me of how I felt on the most recent anti-apartheid march that took place in London, to protest the visit of S. African Prime Minister Botha. From the enormous number and variety of people who turned out for this protest you'd have thought it was a festival not a demonstration of protest and solidarity. Talk about liberal lefty trendy politics. It was there, excited and stimulated by "taking on somebody else's struggle". Whilst for some of us it is a continuation of a struggle that's part of our daily lives, and if not a threat today then in preparation for it tomorrow.

Where are all these protesters when it comes to anti-racist campaigns directed at racism taking place in this country ? ? the anti-deportation campaign, WING (Women Immigration + Nationality Group) and the smaller localized anti-racist struggles taking place in the law courts, like the Newham 8, Baldev Gill, just to mention a few.

. . . but back to the film : once public support has been mobilised, we watch the protesters attempting to stop the tour, and failing that, their repeated attempts to stop the successive matches of the tour, one by one, pushing their way onto the pitches. With each demonstration the police retaliate with increasing brutality, so that the frontliners take to wearing helmets of whatever kind they can and carrying makeshift shields, to protect themselves from the thrashing batons of the riot-police.

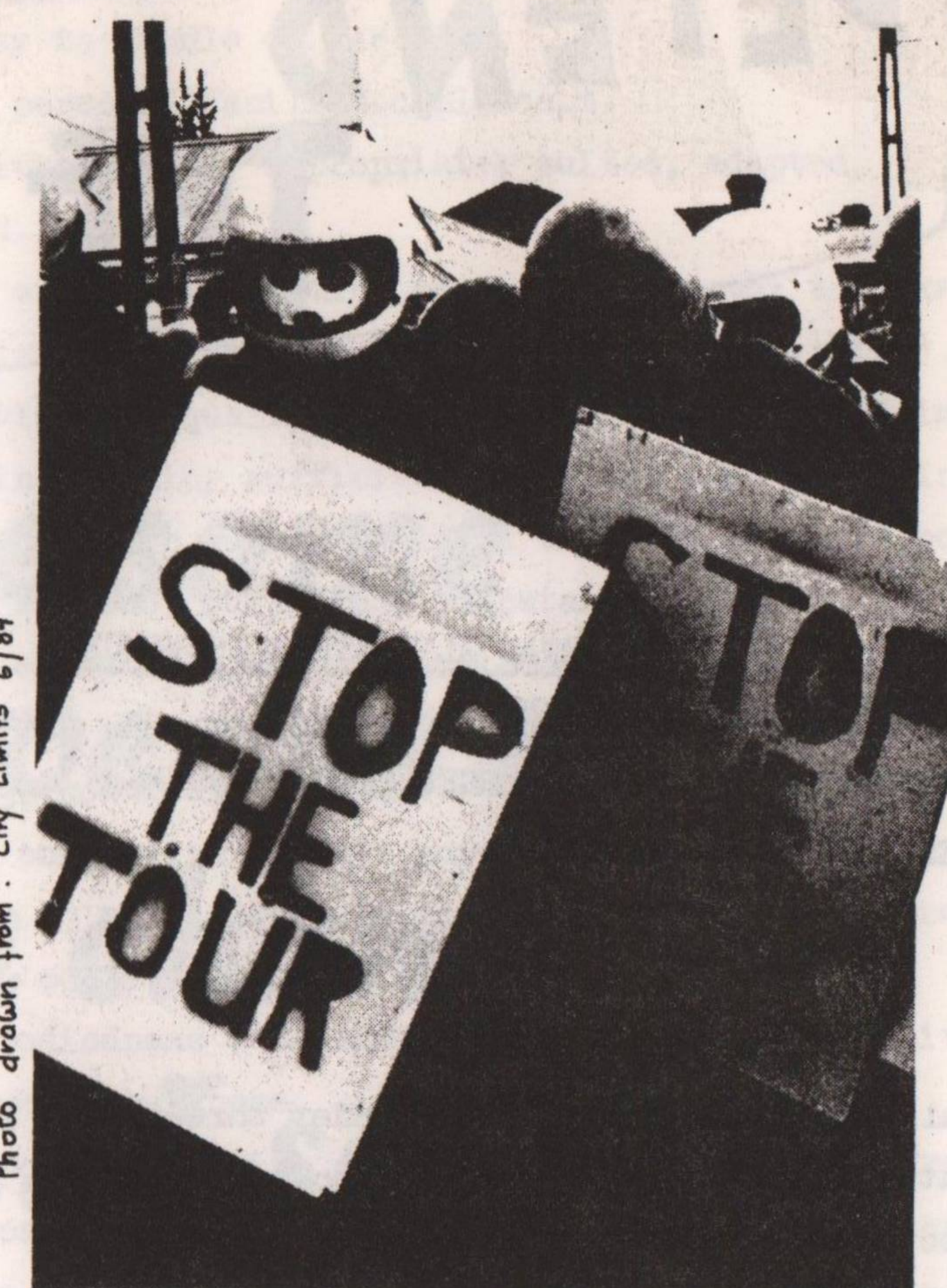
The film ends with the final confrontation when the protesters tried to stop the last match of the tour. It was violent. But again, my attention was focussed otherwise : namely at a number of dressed-up clowns who danced alongside the marching, grim faced protesters. They were clearly wishing to express their contempt and mockery of police and government, yet I had to question this stance : were their own politics really so well in order as white N. Zealanders, that they could take this stance on so grim an issue ?

The last shot of the film answers my own question for me : it showed us one these white liberal N. Zealander men knocked to the ground, lying, crying - - like the cameraman, devastated - - devastated by what, crying for what, for whom ? Definitely not because he's the one who is being ' hurt ' by the racism he's protesting against.

For all the familiarity of the film's content and images, I would like to point out, just as a friend pointed out to me, that these events were taking place in 1981, NOT in 1984, or even 1983, but already in 1981; at a time when these kind of public demonstrations did not usually end in mass arrests and injury, in the way they have become commonplace today. It was an important reminder to me of just how much times have changed.

Looking back to that confrontation, we, the audience were seeing a forecast of today's political climate : the ever-widening split between right and left, (though their methods are often strikingly similar), and the assertion of equal rights and autonomy of ethnic minorities.

Photo drawn from : City Limits 6/84



* * BACKGROUND TO THE MAKING OF THE FILM * *

The 1981 S. African Rugby Tour of New Zealand was probably the most controversial event in recent N. Zealand history. In making ' Patu! ' Merata Mita suffered frequent harassment, by the police and in the form of racist telephone calls. The filming was dangerous and difficult, and completion of the film was delayed by attempts to have the negative confiscated, by court action. Merata Mita was forced therefore to keep it outside the country and was herself prepared to be jailed for contempt if it came to that rather than betray the project.

Amiens Festival of Films against Racism, 1983: M.R.A.P. Prize with special commendation from the Jury.
Leipzig International Film Festival: International Union of Students Prize.
London and Wellington Film Festivals.

DEFEND THE NEWHAM 7

ZAFAR KHAN, PARVEZ KHAN, AMJAD ALI, ATHAR CHOWDHURY
HABIB MOHAMMED JYOTI RAJAPPAN

FACE CONSPIRACY AND AFFRAY CHARGES FOR DEFENDING
THEMSELVES AND THEIR COMMUNITY.

Once again the Black community is under threat from racist attacks and from the people who are meant to be protecting them from these attacks, the police. On Saturday 7th April, there were a series of racist attacks on Asian people in the Upton Park and Forest Gate areas of Newham by white racist thugs in a car. These attacks included a particularly vicious incident where a partially disabled 16 year old Asian youth was dragged into a car, taken to Wanstead Flats and assaulted with a hammer. Other attacks included a family shopping on Green Street, an apprentice coming home from work in St. Stephens Road, an Asian woman and a youth on Plashet Road. More attacks followed in the course of the day orchestrated by other white racists drinking in the Duke of Edinburgh Public House. When Asian youths fought back in self-defence after having billiard balls, amongst other things thrown at them from racists drinking in the pub and confronted by 15-20 racists who came charging out, the police arrived almost immediately on the scene and arrested one of the Asian youths. Over the next few weeks more arrests took place with seven Asian youths being arrested altogether. Only two youths were granted bail with the result that five of the seven spent up to seven weeks in remand because of flimsy excuses by the police who claimed that they were still preparing their case. In contrast to the treatment meted out to the Asian youths, three white youths arrested in connection with incident were neither remanded in custody nor faced bail objections by the police. At this stage charges against the defendants ranged from possessing offensive weapons to criminal damage. Subsequently they were charged with AFFRAY AND CONSPIRACY TO CAUSE CRIMINAL DAMAGE. The only 'crime' committed by these youths was that of defending themselves and the community against racist attacks. Again and again, from the case of the

Virk brothers (Newham 1978) the murder of Akhtar Ali Baig (Newham 1980), the Bradford 12 to that of the Newham 8, we have witnessed a total failure on the part of the police to take firm action against racist attacks. While the police concentrate on arresting the victims of these attacks we are still waiting for action to be taken against the perpetrators. To date none of the white racist youths in the car have been arrested. In Newham and all over East London Black people are regularly subjected to racist abuse and violence with no action whatsoever from the authorities. Just over the last three months in East London alone a Mosque has been petrol bombed, an Asian shop burned down and a ticket collector blinded in a racist attack. Plus there have been near fatal stabbings, numerous physical attacks, spittings and abusive language and whole families living in a near state of siege. In the face of this growing wave of racial violence on the one hand and total police inaction on the other hand we have but two choices: either submit to indignity harassment, brutality and ultimately murder or to defend ourselves. The charges against the Newham 7 are a major attack on all Black people and mean much more than a question of legal issues. By charging the seven youths with conspiracy and affray the State is trying to criminalise a struggle against racism and challenging a right to self defence against racist violence.

MASS PICKET

WEST HAM MAGISTRATES COURT
WEST HAM LANE, STRATFORD.
LONDON E15 (O Stratford)

FRIDAY 14th SEPTEMBER 10.00am

It is essential that we have the largest possible picket on the day to show the police and the State that we are not prepared to put up with the continuing criminalisation and harassment of Black youths. The Defence campaign calls on all opponents of racism and fascism to give solidarity and help to the Seven raise support for them and the picket in your organisation/ trade union and help make this just struggle a victory for us all.

44

Able (e b l)

1. Easy to handle or use. Obs.
- a. Of persons: Facile, complaisant.
2. Suitable, fit, appropriate; suited, adapted, fitted.
3. To endow with fitting power or strength; to make capable; to capacitate, or enable (to do anything).
4. Having the qualifications for, and means of, doing anything; having sufficient power (of what ever kind is needed); in such a position that the thing is possible for one; qualified, competent, capable.
5. To empower legally, to make competent.
6. Having general physical or material strength; strong powerful, vigorous.
7. To endow with general power or skill (of body or mind); to make strong or powerful; to empower, strengthen, confirm, or fortify.

Able-bodiedness : Soundness of body; health; ability to work; robustness.
Able-bodied : Having an able body, i.e. one free from physical disability, and capable of the physical exertions required of it; in bodily health; robust.
Ism : (The suffix -ism used generically as an independent word). A form of doctrine, theory, or practice having or claiming to have a distinctive character or relation; chiefly used disparagingly, and sometimes with implied reference to schism.

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45



AT LAST !!!
THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE BLACK FEMINIST NEWSLETTER
IS OUT!!
THIS NEWLETTER IS PRODUCED BY AND FOR BLACK
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Southall Middx



PECKHAM BLACK WOMENS CENTRE St Giles Community
Centre, Ben Hill Rd
SE5



A WOMANS PLACE Hungerford Hse, Embankment,
London WC2

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c/o A WOMANS PLACE.

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The Jewish Lesbian newsletter is about to be
produced. All we need now is contributions
and subscriptions! So, all Jewish Lesbians,
send your opinions, articles, stories, coming
out stories (as a Lesbian or a Jew), poems,
songs, events, to Box 53, Sisterwrite,
190 Upper St, London N1.

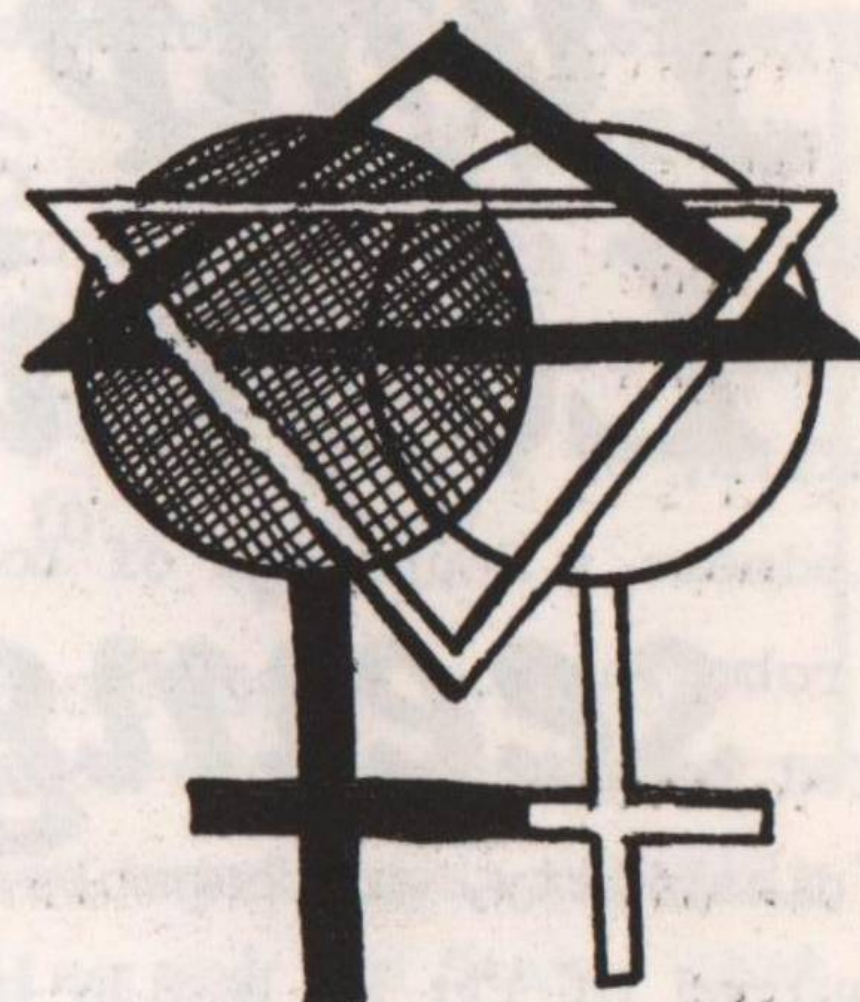
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Jewish lesbian newsletter



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Lesbians. Thank you. SHALOM.

Acknowledgements To: Sue Rebecca Kris
Josephine Imogen Penny Jane Poppy Dawn
Karen Heather SARA Jilla Lily
Ziggy Melissa Laura Gie Sarah Nicky Bessie
Adam Helena Jan Carmel Fiona Maggie Lou
And every one else who helped Lysistrata Out

AMNESTY CONFERENCE



Amnesty for Women, part of Amnesty Inter-
national, is holding a one day conference
as part of Amnesty's 'Prisoners of
Conscience' week. The conference will
be on the theme of 'WOMEN OF COURAGE'
and will feature speakers, including
women who have been prisoners of
conscience and women active in the
Human Rights movement. There will also
be workshops, a film and an exhibition.
There is no registration cost and lunch
will be available cheaply. The creche
is staffed by women and the venue is all
accessible to women in wheelchairs.
There will be a signer available.
Although the event is officially mixed,
it will be mainly women and all women
are invited to attend.

The conference will be held at County
Hall, London SE1, on 21st October;
10am-4.30pm.

For more information and booking form
contact Amnesty for Women, 5 Roberts
Place, off Bowling Green Lane, London
EC1 tel. 01-251-8371.

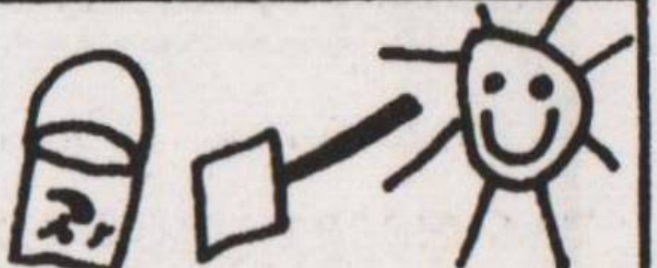
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APPEAL!

Cork 'Womens' Place' has decided
to make more books accessible to
more women by setting up a Womens
Library and working with other
women sgroups to organise and
maintain a centralized womens
information service. To do this
they need money and books. If
you can donate either, please
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BLACK AND JEWISH WOMEN

HOLIDAY BY THE SEA IN BRIGHTON

Double room (+ bed available for children)

use of kitchen (not Kosher) & bathroom.

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