RADICAL WOMEN'S NEWSPAPER

BI MONTHLY ISSUE 6 £1

* Exclusive ZAPATISAS report

A Interview with FAB film-maker



ECO-* GLOBALISM

JUUE DASH

* FANTASTIC competition scrummy prizes to be won

maria mith

WORLD CAPITALISM Joer it again in SOMALIA and women organire

Plus bogey women unite, the revolting underclass, disabled lestians take no crap, shady deals with the LEB plus light my fire, - fuck VAT!

Bad Attitude? Bosses, misogynists, and the ruling classes of the world were heaving a giant sigh of relief. Yes, the scourge that called into question their very existence, that screech of strident feminism, that fanner of the flames of discontent is no more. That spectre haunting their most dreaded nightmares had been exorcised! Bad Attitude, good riddance!

Meanwhile, anxious subscribers wondered whether BA had bitten the dust. Have we taken the money and run? Has yet another women's project joined the ranks of the deceased?

The Pog Ale It

No, we haven't spent the proceeds of your subs on huge quantities of illicit drugs (sniff, sniff). Neither have we absconded with the funds for a dirty holiday in... Southend?

So what's the excuse? Right ... you've already heard about threats from fascists, evictions, illness and general knackeredness. What have we got to say for ourselves this time? Er, in addition to the previous...THE DOG ATE IT.

OK, now that's out of the way, we'll let you know now that we're alive and kicking and we'll be re-launching as a quarterly. This will not affect subscriptions and rates. One sub still gives you six issues at our usual bargain price!

We apologise for any inconvenience to our subscribers, readers, and advertisers. We intend to get back to regular publication over the next year. In the meantime, bear with us and be assured we're not going away and you will be getting your sub's worth.

And come to our Bad Activities Day (9th July), if you want to get involved or just want to meet other women with attitude problems. See back page for details.

Cover photo: JoJo Whilden Cover design: Susan Skill

- New/
- New/
- New/

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- Underclass was criminal crap bill & the 7 government's contribution to homelessness
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Dear Baddies

I was somewhat surprised when I read in ish 5 that women in ancient Greece had no rights. From research I have concluded that women had a respectable position in Ancient Greek society. I don't want to comment on 'democracy' because it's another subject and it was going on in Ancient Athens. Other places in the geographic area called Greece had other government systems. Women in the ancient world were sexually free, free thinking and politically acting members. The Greek Pantheon was divided equally, six goddesses, six gods. Women were in the philosophic schools; women also had their schools. They were philosophers-teachers. There are famous women poets, doctors, astronomers, etc.

When the fascist Christians spread, they



they had rights. In other places women were really

powerful and equal to men and were treated as respectful persons.

Peggy Androvitsanea

- Books: can patriarchy be therapeutically 21 marraged out of existence? & 'India's Bandit Queen': Phoolan warn't fooling
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can get down to living the life of a REAL LIB-ERATED woman, just like I dreamt about when I had all those women's lib marches in the '70s. I have to admit to being brighter and happier and certainly more FEMININE. Guys are even looking at me now and I no longer feel uncomfortable when changing at the badminton club.

I am even thinking of looking for a man to settle down with. My mother is very relieved and my girlfriend has hardly complained

me some advice I stopped using deoderant because I want to be more natural/more right-on/less reliant on cosmetics. The consequence is that my armpits do sometimes get quite smelly. I wash them often but I'm still worried. People I have contact with may be unpleasantly surprised and keep their distance. Should I return to using deoderant (cruelty-free of course) or get used to

my own body odour???

I would like to add a couple points. Firstly, I have exceptionally armpit long hairs. Does this mean I get more smelly? Should I trim my arm pit hairs or would

destroyed all that didn't 'fit' or was radical. So we now study Plato and Aristotle. The poetry of Sappho, the astronomic work of Ypatia and the work of all women, thousands of books, were burnt. Women in the Byzantium were considered by male Christians as less than slaves. I think that the power of women in Ancient Greece (and not only there) was not everywhere the same and maybe in Athens women lived in patriarchy. But even

Dear Aunty Attitude,

I've just made an AMAZING discovery!! Last night I noticed a slight imbalance in my brow line (I am known as a 'lipstick lesbian'). Well, of course I had to tear out the offending eyebrow hair with my tweezers. But, behold, attached tightly to the hair follicle, hanging on grimly (and manfully) was a

BA: Interesting, but is this idealising the situation a little? Sorry about the massive editing - NO SPACE!

Dear Sisters

Thankyou for the last issue of Bad Attitude and the publication on the Palestinians. Keep up the good work. It's a great magazine, wonderfully anarchic (my personal view). Sue Spelling (PSC)

strange little white blob...

Out came the microscope, and under strict laboratory conditions, I have located the first ever defective gene for girly gays! It came complete with a limp little penis, short shaved head, and (giveaway) a rather worn set of denim dungarees.

With this debilitating, nasty gene gone, I

since I told her to shut up or I'd get the tweezers on her next.

Please

spread the word the amongst gay girly readers and advise that all tweezers must be sterilised.

Yours,

A newly liberated woman.

Go ahead, enjoy life while you can and take those tweezers along. Why not incorporate fashion and hang them round your neck for those moments when defective spiky genes unexpectedly sprout again!

Dear Aunty

I am in a dilemma and hope you can give

that damage my 'cred'?

Both my lovers seem to like my smelly armpits (neither of them get very sweaty) so it doesn't adversely affect my more intimate moments. Furthermore I am allergic to certain right-on deoderants. (Also I can not spell deoderant.)

YOURS SMELLILY, Nelly

Call me old fashioned but no one likes a smelly pit! And as for your allergy problems be sure to use Mum.

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ast April the African National Congress won the elections in South Africa, signalling the end of the apartheid system after years of popular and armed struggle, and the end of the last bastion of white

HANGE

Apartheid has left a brutal class system that can't be dismantled by an election. A powerful racist right is active, with considerable international support from fascist groups. But there is also exhilaration and hope in for real

change. Over the past two years women have met in communities, factories, and shops. From this came a African South Women's Charter which called for women to have control of their lives and equality in all areas. They also demanded shelters and counselling for

survivors of male violence; and the right to choose whether to have an abortion. Issues such as polygamy, and lesbian relationships were discussed in meetings, but not dealt with much in the Charter.

Black women in the townships want major

to the townships. The white women's worries: who would pay for these programmes? Our taxes? Will the ANC nationalise the mine, or bring a minimum wage for domestic workers? The black women responded that

they were asking for very basic things; SA is very rich in resources and everyone could benefit from them.

Catriona also describes meeting a woman ANC activist who could have stood for election, but decided to pull out so that she could continue working "on the ground". She first wanted to see how the ANC would operate as a party in power.

direct rule in Africa. Well, does that mean everything's hunky-dory over there? Should we all rush out and buy Cape apples? Is it time stop averting our eyes when we come to the shelf for South African wines in Tesco's?



The future's so bright, we gotta wear shades!



economic changes. Here race and class divisions become obvious. Catriona Ruan, an Irish woman, describes a meeting between black women activists and 'progressive' white women who operated a mine. The black women talked about the need to bring electricity, water, sanitation, and health care

FGHH HANDERS

Campsfield 'Detention Centre' (read: prison) in Kidlington, near Oxford, reached boiling point again on Sunday 5th June. Detainees staged a roof-top protest against the rumoured deportation of Ali Tamarat, from Algeria. The subsequent riot went on through the night, and £20,000 of damage was estimated. HA! Six people escaped, although one has been recaptured. The 22 people 'centrally involved' have now been moved from the prison.

So...the struggle continues!

Info: Women's News (Belfast) Off Our Backs (USA)

Home Office statements regarding injuries differ from those of the inmates - the Immigration Minister reported only 6 people receiving injuries, while film evidence shows at least 8 people being taken away in ambulances.

Cherif Taoua, also from Algeria, is one of 3 people who gave an interview to the Guardian on Wednesday 8th June. He had been released from Campsfield and was waiting to hear news of his appeal. By an incredible coincidence, he was re-arrested the following day, and immediately deported. **BASTARDS**.

There are regular pickets and demonstrations for the closure of Campsfield (300 people on Saturday 4th June).

Contact:

Campaign to Close Campsfield, c/o 111 Magdalen Road, Oxford OX4 1RZ.

> even shaved the heads of male offenders!

Lilley's Shown the Door

On 25th January 20 protesters from the Campaign

itself

Against the Child Support Act daubed the front door of Peter Lilley (Social Security Minister) with slogans.

This is just part of the resistance of the Child Support Act - a vigourous campaign against the Scottish and English CSA headquarters has been mounted, including abusive phonecalls, bomb hoaxes and boxes of shit through the doors. In fact, unpopularity is running so high that the CSA agency office in Falkirk couldn't even manage to get a booking for their Christmas Party - Ho, ho, ho.

media The been have focussing on those poor dad-

dies who have to pay more than they can afford, but meanwhile it's women who lose out most, and it's women who are resisting, with many groups up and down the country starting advice leafleting and poster campaigns. Get in touch if you need/can help:

Edinburgh CACSA, PO Box 87, EH1 3LJ London CACSA, PO Box 297, NW6 5QU - Tel 071 837 7507

Info from Counter Information No 39

Barbie group calling Vengeance is Mine! the

Barbie Liberation Organisation have been up to Great Good, sabotaging over 300 Barbie and GI Joe dollies by switching the computer chips that make them talk. "Vengeance is Mine!" and "No Escape for the Guilty" are Barbie's new catch-'em phrases, while Joe screeches "Let's have a dance contest" and murmurs "Ken's such a

dream". The 'corrections' were done by

This situation results from the abuse of

Thailand and its poor by economically pow-

buying dolls (shame they didn't nick 'em) from different stores across the country, switching the chips, repacking them and replacing them on shop shelves. So far no one's made any complaints. WHAT A LAUGH!

Thousands of women in India have joined together to force a ban on the sale of cheap liquor, due to the increase in violence against women caused by its sale. Despite violent police attacks on demonstrators, the women continued to march, attack liquor shops and

PISS OFF, PISS HEAD

hailand: In a bid to save money, the Thai health ministry is launching a programme to counsel pregnant HIV+ women to keep their babies.

At present, many children are left with the hospitals. This is proving expensive and the aim, now, is to keep the baby with the 'family', even if the mother later dies. In this situation a woman, herself probably in medical need, will be caring for an infant with a It's great to hear

about women attacking battering husbands, but hopefully this movement won't go the way of the old US Prohibition against alcohol - a state weapon against the poor and a great boost to big business/police 'organised crime' rackets.

30% likelihood of developing AIDS. The average lifespan of Epidemic of Capitalism such a child, in Thailand, is 18 months, comparing with 10 years in the West.

The national average of women with AIDS, in Thailand, is 1%, of whom many are of childbearing age. Six per cent of women in erful nations. It is terrifying that people, primarily women, can be used as a sexualised cash crop and then be further destroyed by the economic disaster that follows as a result

Meanwhile, the exploiters are laughing all the way to the bank.

Info from Richard S Ehrlich

bad attitude 3

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Chiang Rai City, an area greatly affected by HIV/AIDS, tested positive for HIV.

of this. The 'AIDS epidemic' results from the sex trade and it is typical that the cost will be borne by the women traded, rather than those who have used and profited by this trade.

Info from Off Our Backs No 2, Vol xxiv.

New Year's Day 1994 a worker from the Victoria Jute Mill in Calcutta died of starvation. His family hold the mill owner, British businessman Reginald Brealey (owner of Sheffield United Football Club), responsible for his death. Brealey has also siphoned off £2.5m in pensions and statutory benefits and more than six months' unpaid wages from the workforce.

In 1989 when Brealey became chairman of Titaghur plc, which controls the four jute mills of the Thomas Duff group, he told the workers "I am not an Indian... I don't lie." He promised to pay back the workers the money he owed them.

Make the

Footie Bastard

Foot the Bill

British Raj. The line rooms where the workers live - as well as conditions in the factories - remain virtually unchanged since Victorian times. And like the colonial 'managing agencies' the new British management has no interest in investing, but simply aims to drain resources through exploiting its cheaper labour.

Recently Brealey has brought 12 British managers to Calcutta. On 16 March workers came to the Head Office of Titaghur plc in Calcutta to present their demands. The response of two of these managers, Whitcombe and Vigors, was to taunt the

> workers' delegation with racist abuse. The workers refused to tolerate this final insult and the managers were dragged out of their offices and had to be rescued by senior police officers. This was followed by a mass picket of the British Deputy High Commission in Calcutta demanding an apology

Back to Basics International

In a bizarre twist, Brealey has just bought a 16,500 acre estate in a remote part of Scotland for



Even though the price of jute has risen sharply on the world market, the 20,000 workers, mostly women, are living on the edge of starvation, with the mills closed for weeks.

In 1990 the company made profits of over £6m. But the 2000 people who have retired since Brealey took over have not received their pension. Brealey has also been charged under the Foreign Regulation Act 1973.

Reggie the Raj

The Indian government and the West Bengal government have given Brealey full support. When Brealey visited Calcutta in February this year, they even gave him a police escort to protect him from the workers' anger, all in line with India's new economic policy as dictated by the World Bank and the IMF. This allows foreign 'investors' unlimited freedom to exploit Indian workers under inhuman conditions.

Instead of modernising or investing in the mills, Brealey is actually attempting to increase the workload while reducing the number of workers. For example, his latest offer to workers in one of the mills involves laying off 500 workers, abolishing the nightshift and reducing the working week to four days. Despite their desperation the workers turned it down.

Brealey clearly sees himself as a successor to the owners who controlled the Indian jute from Dundee in the days of the

£2.5m (the exact amount owed to the Indian jute workers). The

estate will be used for setting up a project to 'train young people who have been in care'. The project, named 'Back to Basics', will be run by a retired army colonel and will involve visits to the jute mills in Calcutta: "Youngsters will see how people earn their living and change their attitudes."

The workers and their supporters have faced continued police repression in the fight to get their demands met. A worker is feared dead after he

was taken away from his home by the police; others have been beaten and their homes raided. However, the workers are determined not to be driven away. On 24 February they set up a camp outside the Angus Mill, which is being kept up by donations. In June they plan a series of actions to draw attention to their demands.

The Titaghur plc workers demand:

1. Brealey's extradition to face charges;

2. Re-opening of the mills under conditions which provide a living wage;

3. Repayment of back wages owed to the workers;

4. Repayment of the pension fund and other statutory benefits (a total of £2.5m) which legally belong to the workers;

5. Unconditional release of all those arrested.

Gut GATT

Solidarity and co-ordination between struggles here in Britain (eg the recent strike led by Asian women workers at Burnsall Ltd) and struggles like those of the Calcutta jute workers are more important than ever to effectively resist the new colonialism (through GATT and the new Dunkel Treaty) being imposed on countries like India. It's a globalisation which affects us here also, as Britain desperately tries to attract multinational corporations on the basis of the 'cheap' labour of black workers, women workers and other low-paid workers who are being forced to work in conditions similar to those in India.

Info from: South Asia Solidarity Group, c/o Londec, Instrument House, 205-217 Kings Cross Rd, London WC1X 9DB, tel: 071-713 7907.

SO, IF WORDS CAN Peace Tour '94

(KED-



ucking Hell, when will this shit stop? Small and medium-sized businesses will have less restrictions on them than the bigger Here's the latest in the war effort against working people - the government's ones - anything to do with less union strength, perhaps? Already three construction attacks on health and safety at work. These workers A WEEK have died over the last things will go: • Safety standards from independent experts decade, and 70 A WEEK die prematurely from industrial diseases. What?! - companies will set their own. • Limits on the weight workers are told to lift Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI), which has actually been around for 100's of years, has and carry. · Regulations on computer screens and pronow been officially ruled out of medical books. So it doesn't exist. No, nobody's got it. vision of eye tests and glasses. • Proper toilet facilities and minimum work-And if you have, you've just got to "get a grip", according to Judge Prosser. Well FUCK place temperatures. Provision of protective clothing to tempo-**RIGHT OFF, YOU TOSSER.** The Health & Safety Executive is already rary workers. heading for privatisation and is it any coinci-• The rights of safety reps to stop unsafe dence that half the members of the practices, and grants for training reps. • Also, fireproofing regulations on children's Construction Deregulation Task Force (I hear clothes, standards for private old people's brass bands, military anthems...) have funded the tories with £MILLIONS? homes and controls on toxic waste dumping.



Support Jane Brown

The headteacher hounded for being p.c. For more info, contact: Kingsmead Support Group, HTA, 219 Mare Street, Hackney, London E8.

the (Wo)Menwith Women's Peace Camp 19th-22nd August, focussing on links between racism and the cycle of war. The tour includes visits to military sites in Wales, Scotland and England and to armaments corporations. We will meet local activists to network and publicise the campaigns.

omen on the Road Peace Tour starts in

Liverpool on 20th July and finishes at

All women welcome - bring bedding and tents, weekly donations needed for food (possibly waived for no/low income women).

WE NEED MONEY! - let us know ideas before July for fundraising for publicity, petrol/ vehicle costs.

DONATIONS! - make cheques to 'The Wider Web' - 15 Greenheys Road, Toxteth, Liverpool, L8 0SX (051 727 6025).

If you can't afford a donation but want a tour report, just send an SAE.

Please join us for all/part of the tour and pass this information on!

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Disabled People's Direct Action Network

he Disabled Peoples' Direct Action Network (DAN) organised a protest attended by over 100 disabled people at Leeds City Station on Monday 28 March. Jimmy Saville was due to open a garden for disabled people at the station, which British Rail had obtained \$40,000 for from local sponsors. However, disabled people consider this gesture an insult while the station is not fully accessible and train travel is difficult for many disabled people.

There is no passenger lift at Leeds station. Instead disabled people have to use the goods lift and be escorted onto trains.

At best there is only one space for wheelchair users per train - at worst disabled people travel in the guard's van.

After preventing the opening of the garden

from taking place, protesters went on to handcuff themselves to an Intercity train to London at an adjacent platform. The train was delayed by 40 minutes but passengers supported the action.

After leaving the station, many of the disabled activists blocked a main junction at Leeds City Square, bringing city centre traffic to a standstill. As a queue of buses formed, they chanted: "We're DAN, you're trapped, get used to it!"

This was the second of DAN's national actions. DAN is an organisation of disabled people fighting for disabled people's liberation and specifically legislation to end discrimination against disabled people - not just in transport, but in all areas of life. Info: Gill 0532 746989



They might be getting there but how do you get on?

Women hit back

O n February 19th 1994, 150 women hunt saboteurs descended on the predominantly male Hursely and Hambledon Hunt in Hampshire, proving themselves capable of defending both their own and the animals' rights.

The woman who organised the sab did so after experiencing repeated sexual assault and harassment from the male hunters and their terrier men. At first, she attempted to take out an injunction against the prime culprit, but found the police to be very uninterested (surprise, surprise) and that she could not get legal aid to enable her to go to court. This appalling treatment of women hunt sabs is, in fact, widespread.

Taking matters into their own hands, women from all over the country got together for what was a very successful 'hit', showing these creeps exactly what women are capable of.

Unfortunately, the women's plans to organise in secret were sabotaged, resulting in the main culprits staying away from the hunt on the day. Nevertheless, due to the large number of women there and their skilful work (apparently, the women-only nature of the sab led to more co-operative and skilful sabbing), the event was an enormous success.

Although many participants found the whole thing inspiring and would be keen to repeat the event, the forthcoming Criminal Justice Bill could well rule this out - having as its main premise the idea that people (eg. hunters) should not be prevented from carrying out their lawful (bloodthirsty) activities. - AS.

Radio Mujer is everywhere

'Radio Mujer' is Nicaragua's new and only feminist radio station, and has proved to be an important communications breakthrough as it reaches women in the barrios (working class communities), markets, and women in prison, ie, $\frac{9}{29}$ Radio Pirate Woman is a radio station formed in 1987 to celebrate & promote women's culture. They have many links with women's groups internationally. And q they're inviting you to send review copies, demo. tapes, info & other things to them. Contact: RPW, 10 St Bridget's Place (Lower),

Prisoner needs support

Patricia Harper writes to us from the small town of Houlton, Maine, USA where she is currently serving a life sentence for the murder of a male friend. She has been imprisoned since 1989, for the most part in segregation in institutions with no provision for female prisoners. The few rights and programmes available to male prisoners have been denied her. She is appealing her conviction a second time. She actually won a previous appeal, but the State decided to retry her and convicted her in a trial where she was denied counsel of her choice.

"My innocence is a factor that does not even matter at this point...until my appeal and/or post conviction remedy won again. But the discriminatory conditions that I will be subjected to merely due to my gender will continue throughout my incarceration unless groups and feminist organisations let it be known that they are watching the situation and will not allow it to continue in silence. For more information, you may contact me or my attorney, Candy Gonzales, at:

23 Court St. PO Box 746, Houlton, Maine 04730 (0101) 207 -532-4034 FAX 207-532-9875

Taslima Nasrin death threat

Bangladeshi feminist writer Taslima Nasrin has been facing strong reactions to her literature - a death threat issued by the Council of Soldiers for Islam. Late in 1993 5,000 people marched through Dhaka, the capital, demanding her execution. All this is because Nasrim advocates sex outside marriage, open marriages and that women should be able to have 4 husbands (under Muslim laws, men can have 4 wives). Despite the death threat being retracted, Nasrin is not able to leave Bangladesh as the government has seized her passport, after banning her last novel, which dealt with Muslim abuse of Hindus, calling her an 'Indian agent'

Taslima has since been in hiding. On 10 June 10, 000 people demonstrated in Dhaka shouting "Death for the infidel", according to the Guardian. Questions to ask: have people been pressured to take part in these actions? And what actions have thre been in support of her?It's reported that she is not backed by all women's groups - the Bangladesh Women's Council have questioned Nasrin's focus in a country where 87% of women are illiterate and 75% are married by 15. Info from Off Our Backs, Jan 94

kets, and women in prison, ie, poor working class women previously excluded from feminist 'circles'.

The station doesn't play women-hating music and analyses news from women's perspective. There are plans to have regular programs on health, sex education and ecology, and also to offer space for programs by women's organisations throughout Nicaragua.

INTERESTINGLY enough, when director Luz Monterrey went to the Sandinista Party for support, she was informed that the project was not necessary for their movement. Well, what a surprise - **Stuff it, Sandi!**

It seems there are women's radio stations popping up all over the place! Some more: Galway.
 ADAI is new, alternative news agency in Barcelona - with special emphasis on women's issues. Contact: ADAI, Pasage Madoz 6, 2/0, 2/a, 08002
 Barcelona, Catalunya/Spain.

And here in Britain too there's been **Brazen Radio**, a women's radio station which was on the air for a fortnight this March, broadcasting to north and central London (so sadly not into the Bad Attitude office). This was a pilot period and they're now applying for a broadcast license for Greater London. Contact them at 23 Bevenden Street, London N1 6BH.

Let's talk about pigs

Mushroom Bookshop in Nottingham, a longtime supporter of the lesbian and gay community, was attacked by a group of fascists on Saturday 15th January. Within the space of 4 minutes, the bastards managed to damage equipment, wreck bookshelves and injure a worker and a customer. It seems that Blood & Honour claimed responsibility, and the pigs got hold of 30 people heading south out of Nottingham later in the day.

And, talking of pigs, guess who else has been doing similar sort of jobs up and down the country? Well, suspicions are growing that a high level conspiracy is behind the recent wave of raids and attacks on the lesbian and gay community by police, in a bid to discredit the campaign to change the gay male age of consent.

FOR EXAMPLE: At the end of January, 67 pigs raided the Warehouse Sauna in Darlaston and nicked twelve users - there have been similar raids in Manchester and other cities.

On 1st February the Met's 'Operation Framework' went public, with dawn raids on homes across the country. Their excuse was that they were looking for child porn rings -TRY LOOKING IN THE CHIEF'S DESK, DICK-HEADS!

Following the Mushroom Bookshop attack, there was a demo, 'Nottingham Untied against Racism and Fascism' on Saturday 26th Feb.



Women's squat centre - Yugo women will meet again!



asandra, a feminist lesbian group from Ljubljana, Slovenia, have organised a work camp to renovate the Women's Centre, which is the first women-only space in Ljubljana acquired after squatting the old Army barracks. The story is interesting, but has been heard thousand times before. There was a guy, a journalist called Janez Jansha, a symbol of the anti-military movement in ex-Yugoslavia. He nicked some top secret papers from the late Yugoslav Peoples Army a few years before the war, published it, and was arrested. Different people, including feminists and lesbians of ex-Yugoslavia supported him, signed the petitions etc, and he got out of prison.

of Defence!

At least the YPA was thrown out of Slovenia, leaving behind Metelkovo, a huge block of army barracks in the very centre of Ljubljana. Jansha promised the space to women's, lesbian and gay, animal rights, and different alternative groups; but he somehow forgot the promise. Until one day in September, someone passing by the barracks saw the bulldozers preparing to knock the buildings down. The phonelines were hot! People, including feminists and lesbians, organised themselves in a few hours & squatted the place that night. Now, part of the block is the Women's Centre run by Lilit, Luna, Women's Counselling Project, and women active in other projects/groups. Since September they've organised lots of different events, celebrating that, for the first time in the herstory of their existence and activity they

have gained their own space. They organised an international camp, inviting women from all over including ex-Yugoslavia to do extensive repairs. The purpose of the camp is also "to extend the links and exchange experiences". Kasandra plans even more events at the Centre, including an International Women's Summer Camp in August "as an attempt to revive the traditional Yugoslav Feminist Meetings which lapsed during the war." The camp starts 12 August and lasts for ten days. All women welcome! Interested? Contact Mojca Urek, Glavarjeva 12a, 61000 Ljubljana, Slovenia; phone: 010386 61 342 645 (home); fax: 010386 61 133 70 11

NEWS SHORTS Not a false memory

America: Ellie Nesler shot the man accused of molesting four young boys at a church camp - among them her twelve year old son as he sat in court. Although the jury deemed her sane, Ellie has been found guilty of voluntary manslaughter, the most lenient conviction possible but still carrying a maximum sentence of 18 years. Her defense fund has been flooded with letters of support and thousands of dollars in donations. Question would she have been treated so lightly if she'd shot her OWN abuser?

Info: off our backs

Berlin queers keep centre

HURRAH! Thanks sent from the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Centre in Berlin, which was threatened with closure. Due to the effort of lesbians and gays in Germany and over 400 letters of support world wide, on November 5th '93 the senate of Berlin decided to give full financial support to the centre in 1994. HURRAH!

Suddenly, the war in Slovenia started, soon it was finished and, oops, our hero Jansha became the new Slovenian Minister

Also, help with revovation will still be needed. If you've got building skills or want to help financially, contact the above number.

 Info from Lesbian & Gay Solidarity Newsletter No 6 (Australia).

Too flash for words

Sexual harassment will soon become a thing of history thanks to an ingenious invention from the USA. The Harasser Flasher is a pin brooch which can "send a light-and-sound signal when someone issues an inappropriate remark". At the touch of a button the device, which resembles a little traffic light, flashes a red light and sounds a siren.

The brooch's inventor, Sandra Weintraub, believes it could have prevented the USA's most famous sexual harassment case of recent times. She says, "It's the kind of thing where if Anita [Hill] had had one, she would have let Clarence [Thomas] and witnesses know he was being obnoxious."

Yeah right. The main problem with sexual harassment is that men don't know they're doing it. Up till now they hadn't realised it was annoying. But at last they've got a chance to understand. Where a million words have failed, your jewelry can explain.



Your children or your life

he Autonomous Women's House, Zagreb and the Ministry for Social Affairs have been in talks concerning the rights of the Ministry to unrestricted access to the House (shelter). We have to announce with great anger that after the failure of these talks, the ministry has created a new regulation that women in refuges automatically lose custody of their

where a mother sought custody of her children they must have the right to freely enter the House without prior notification, and to interview the women...allegedly to collect evidence. We know that they don't believe the women's own statements that they are happy in the House and that they are able to care for their children there.

Please send letters of complaint to: Helena

Ujevic, Mistarstvo Rada I Socijaine Skrbi (MInistry of Labour and Social Welfare), Ulica Baruna Tremka 42, 41000 Zagreb. Tel: 385-41/491 555. FAX 385 41/430 592.

Please send us a copy of any correspondence so we can build up a case.

Michaela Rosa, Centar za Zene, Dordiceva 6 41000 Zagreb. Phone: 385-41-434189 Fax: 385-41-433416

children.

We call on all women outside of Croatia to join our protest by writing to the Ministry. We know that our government is affected by international public opinion. It is vital that they know that their treatment of women during war time is being monitored and that it is unacceptable.

Any women seeking refuge for herself and her children from domestic violence, has a very stark choice forced upon her, she has to chose between having contact with her children or having protection for herself.

We know that this new and oppressive ruling will keep more women in violent home environments, for it will discourage them from seeking protection. And it follows that the children will also be still subject to the atmosphere or the acts of violence.

The Ministry claimed that in every case

UN brothel-

'peace keepers' in Bosnia have N been regularly taking part in the rape and murder of women forced into prostitution, according to Muslim witness and the local Serb commander.

UN personnel have previously ignored information from the Bosnian government concerning a concentration camp set up in a bunker by Bosnian Serbs, and instead have been using the 'facilities'. Local witnesses have reported frequent visits by UN troops and personnel to other places hotels, restaurants - in Vogosca, six miles

north of Sarajevo, mainly in 1992.

keeping force

A Bosnian Serb commander at the detention centre confirmed reports of women being forced into UN armoured personnel carriers, which then followed the UN vehicles to an unknown destination. Not once did the UN investigate the bunker. At one particular restaurant, Muslim witnesses said they believed most of the women held there were killed after they had been raped.

Info from Women Living Under Muslim Laws Newsheet Vol V No 4 1993

back now!

Women in Hong Kong are demanding the right to inherit land. The New Territories, part of the Chinese mainland administered by British authorities in Hong Kong, still keeps the pre-communist ban on inheritance by women which was long ago repealed in China.

Development is spreading rapidly, farmland is being sold for building high rises, and men are determined to keep valuable land for themselves - land goes to distant male relatives rather than daughters.

Women have been holding small demonstrations and lobbying Hong Kong's Legislative Council, who voted in October to urge the government to change the law. So far, this hasn't been met with great enthusiasm. Info from off our backs Jan '94

issue 6 • jun/jul/aug 1994

Underclass War! It's Criminal - It's Crap Keep on Squatting

f ever there was something to make a person wonder what 'justice', 'criminal', etc. mean, the new Criminal Justice Bill is it. It's in committee stage at the moment. Without a small, riotous, Summer miracle, it'll be law by August. The Bill creates a vast new category of criminal acts.. And you, dear reader, are very likely to be amongst the criminals enacting them.

Various practises, that have been in force in Northern Ireland for a while are now making an appearance in Britain. The right to silence is to go, ie. say nothing when you're arrested and it can be evidence against you in a trial. 'Prevention of terrorism' powers are to be extended.

It'll be an offence to be in possession of an article 'in circumstances giving rise to a reasonable suspicion' that it might be used for 'terrorist' purposes. Or information that might be 'useful to terrorists'. Surely 'reasonable' is very variable? What is a terrorist? What is useful info? And do alarm clocks count as dangerous articles? Also extended to Britain will be police powers to stop, search, question, detain and arrest people for up to twenty-eight days in a designated area. No longer needing a

committed.

(ooh, big menace to OAPs in of aggravated trespass and holding or attending trespassing assemblies.

hunt sabs alone? Does it rain : look at what we're up against. 'Diamond White' on my birthday? In against currently legal protests (already circumscribed by the road demos, protesting outside private property, etc.

travellers/ravers has been put to good use. The police will have new . recently re-debated in the Comseize vehicles and sound equipment and stop people proceeding to an event.

suspicion that an offence is being • quatters' Rights date back to 1381. It is therefore ironic that Riding on the hunt sab. scare : they are under threat from a government which wants to get Southwark), there are new offences . 'Back to Basics'. Squatting is not • illegal and is not going to be made • 'illegal'. But for anyone who doesn't Will these clauses be applied to own where they live outright, let's

This latest attack on squatting practise, these could/will be used • comes as part of the Criminal Justice • and Public Order Bill which is · about to reach Committee Stage in Tories), such as trade union pickets, the House of Lords. Committee Stage in the Commons was bad enough. Nine out of the sixteen Similarly, media scapegoating of . Tories on the committee had voted • in favour of hanging when it was powers to end outdoor festivals, mons. Olga Maitland even suggested that private tenants in rent arrears should be treated as squat-• ters! Squatting is not being treated There's much more, including • as a symptom of homelessness by prison ships, prisons for children, • any of the major political parties. The Labour party has decided to abstain over the whole bill as they do not want to be seen to be soft on crime. So this bill's course through parliament looks smooth enough and at this rate it will be reaching the Queen for Royal Assent in July. However, the bill talks about an 'Interim Possession Order' (IPO) and at present this doesn't exist. The Lord Chancellor's Department (another part of the legal system) still has to create IPOs before they can be used. After that this is how things are going to work. Your landlord, the council, or • whoever legally owns the property, will take you to court 'ex parte', that is, without your knowledge. You "When the cat's and I finally " will not be allowed to attend the arrived home, the devastation was court hearing or to defend yourself. unbelievable. They'd taken every- . So even if you have a tenancy thing. The lightbulbs, the bath, the • agreement, you will not have an roof, the floors, the walls - every- opportunity to show it to the court. thing. In fact, there was only this . The first you will hear about it is brick left. And they sprayed 'Fuck : when the police come round to tell

you you've got 48 hours to leave. You will be able to appeal against the decision after you've left the property, provided you've got time in between looking for a cardboard box or deciding which shop doorway to doss down in. If you stay longer than 48 hours, even if you are able to show the police that you are not a squatter, you will be arrested and that is when you will face a £5,000 fine and/or a six month prison sentence. The police will have no powers of



police being allowed to forcibly take hair, etc. for 'analysis', keeping people's fingerprints without conviction, squatting (see article), etc. So there you have it. Nowhere to

party, nowhere to live, harassment. And if you protest about it, you can get nicked. Crap.

For more info., contact: Liberty, 21 Tabard Street, London SE1 4LA.

Squat A Disgrace!!!!

EVIL STANDARD reporter Judy Halfwit searches behind the unwashed face of Britain's growing social problem.

he government is planning a fresh onslaught on squatting. What will this mean in human terms? Are squatters evil scum who would tip a babe from a pram to claim it for themselves, their dogs, their drugs and their all-night parties? Are landlords really property profiteers, extorting a basic human need for shelter into cash? In an effort to answer these questions for myself, I spoke to some people with a first hand experience of this particular urban phenomenon. "The new legislation comes too late for me." Says Mary (not her real name). "Even now, I wake in the night screaming, reliving the horror." Mary's nightmare began four years ago. Nipping from her comfortable Brixton ter-Fuck Yg raced house to the corner shop for a pint of milk: "I returned to find the locks changed, a notice informing me of the legal rights of these ... squatters pasted to the door, a rave going on and my cats taken into care." It took Mary almost a year to get her house back and another six months to regain custody of her cats. Mary claims the cost of her

legal battle nearly destroyed her, both financially and emotionally. Worse was to follow.

You Capitilist Scum' on it."

Mary's experience is extreme but not unique. However, Skye, clean,

at the same time running drumming workshops and people's markets. well-spoken and from one of Really involving and involved with the local community. Besides, how else can a girl drop out and save for a mortgage?" However many of these idealistic squatters there are, the truth remains that many of the homes squatted are actually council homes. So, paradoxically, those who take their need for housing into their own hands are actually preventing others, who have waited obediently, from being housed legitimately. Mrs Prole and her five children slept on a succession of friends' floors for ten years before being housed in a semi-detached coal bunker in New Cross.

discretion, they'll just be doing their job.

Just in case that wasn't bad enough, they slipped in some new clauses. Anyone found on the prem-

ises that have been vacated by use of an IPO within the previous month "shall be presumed to have been in occupation of the premises at the time of service [ie when it was evicted] unless he proves the contrary." It goes on to say how the police can arrest anyone in this situation, who will then face a prison sentence/fine. So we're going to have to get used to doing a bit more research on the empties we're thinking of filling in future.

New Clause 71, allows displaced occupiers and intending occupiers to use, or threaten to use, violence without the police being present to secure entry to the premises. However, the person being evicted must have seen a certificate before this can happen, so do remember to ask those angry council bailiffs to show

beautiful, everything I've ever dreamed of." But she's bitter about her wait, blaming Tory corruption and government War on the Poor: "Around here, council officials are selling keys to properties at £1000 a go. They pocket the money and you still get P.I.O'd." Stephen Bastard, a council official, sees it somewhat differently: "Basically, family homes, meant for people like Mrs Prole, are being squatted by selfish scroungers, living off the fat of the land in councilowned luxury. Take Mrs Prole's new home. Before she moved in, it was squatted by just one man and his dog. It's disgraceful; a home for six people and he alone kept them all homeless."

it you before they 'brush you aside'.

Current statistics claim 3.1% of squatters are women escaping domestic violence, a third of squatters are families, many of them headed by those dreaded single parents we've all heard about. Homelessness among women is rising more dramatically than any other social group. The clauses on squatting in this bill may not be a direct attack on women, but we're talking 'trickle-down' effects here, and the effects don't need spelling out. So let's get active and stop the bastards grinding us down.

Juno Lucy

For more info. about SQUASH, (Squatters Action for Secure Homes) , contact us at 071 226 8938, or 2 St Paul's Road, London N1.

don't agree, claiming that all but the properties unsuitable for human habitation are being sold to friends of council members. "If they want to live here rather than on the streets, that's fine by me," says Frances. "Besides, it's crap that public property gets sold on the private market and becomes a virtual slush fund for the Tories." Similarly, many liberal lawyers are claiming the new legislation is a Very Bad Thing. Even law-abiding rent payers may find themselves fighting a wrongful eviction from a cardboard box if they complain to the landlord about the dodgy hotwater boiler.

Britain's oldest families, claims there is another side to the story:

"For every case like that, there are literally a hundred where the squatters have left the premises in a better condition than they

found them."

She mentions the group currently squatting and restoring the Alexandria Palace and questions the wisdom of evicting a group of squatters occupying the Albert Memorial.

"It's madness. There you have a group of people prepared to put back everything into Society. Renovating a monument that the government is going to let fall apart and

"I'm so happy to be here. It's

The local tenants' association

Obviously, if this is true, we should all be concerned and write a firm letter to our MP about it.

bad attitude 7

folks what they knew about Somalia. "Not very much" they said, even those usually aware of events in the Middle East or Latin America. For there's little accessible info on Somalia and Africa except for the media shite full of words like 'warlords', 'looters', 'violent bands', 'random violence', 'chaos', even 'anarchy'. There's been nothing relating to women, even in oppositional papers. So an introduction is in order, giving some history and political context.

We've heard many times how 'we' had to intervene to 'to feed starving people'. So when the US mounted 'Operation Restore Hope' late 1992, they had the support of liberals who had opposed intervention elsewhere. The US had claimed 80% of food aid was stolen, but this was contradicted by Rakiya Omaar (Africa Watch director, sacked for not giving the government's line): relief organisations cite loss of 5 to 10%, a constant figure in all famine relief. Many relief workers have complained that the US/UN intervention have hindered them. Of course there's the question of just what a big business all this 'aid' and charity is!

Somalia When preparing this article I asked some

Agricultural Development Projects wasn't about giving people tractors and tellies, but forming new class and ownership relations. Likewise, in Northern Somalia the nomadic peoples' ways of surviving were rendered impossible by the rise of private property and governments determined to contain them within national borders..

As nomads are almost impossible to tax, conscript, or control, governments of all persuasion have waged war on them, putting them into forced labour 'agricultural communes' and refugee camps. Though life had been tough, mass starvation on the scale we see today was rare. We're led to believe that famines just come from natural disasters and peoples' 'backward ways'; but not only are

from behind desks.

For example, 40 families in Hufey on the river Juba had been growing maize and vegetables for generations. Armed men appeared in June 1983 and drove them out. New owners had obtained registration documents by describing their venture as a 'cooperative' farm. Bulldozers flattened irrigation channels and cleared trees, and only one corner was planted. This was land for speculation, not cultivation. This 'land registration' programme was largely financed by US aid money, and some of the biggest seizures were financed by World Bank and Italian development funds. (Alex de Waal/Rakiya Omaar, African Rights, Guardian)

Thus the IMF and World Bank policies concentrated land ownership within a few giant corporations. Small holdings became plantations for growing crops (mostly bananas) for export, others were simply used for speculation. Anyone who tried to take bananas, maize, or even grass to feed themselves and their families risked execution, with some landowners displaying corpses at the farm gates.

ered 1 billion barrels and obtained exploration licences from the Barre government in 1986. By the time of his overthrow in Jan 91 they held 'rights' to oil concessions amounting to 2/3 of Somalia. Later, Conoco let the US use theircorporate compound as headquarters.

When guerilla resistance groups captured more territory. Barre boasted that the rebels might control the countryside, but he had Mogadishu. But the the majority of Mogadishu's population rose up against Barre, forcing him to flee. The rebel groups met that July to form an interim administration. Divisions between supporters of General Aideed, a military leader of the United Somali Congress and Ali Mahdi, a former hotel owner, sparked off warfare that killed over 500,000.

Meanwhile, Western banks and agencies have replaced the imperial powers. Significantly, it's not just the US intervening in Somalia, but the armies of the United Nations. African Rights, published in July 1993, is an extensive report on repression by the UN troops starting with the June 1993 series of US/UN bombings and attacks in Mogadishu, featuring 4000 US ground troops with four warships from the Persian Gulf.

State Manufactured Starvation

But famine and war in the first place results from capital's moves to exploit the region; all the chaos we hear about comes from attempts to impose a brutal central authority, not by its collapse. In the 1970's Somalia was

self-sufficient in food production, but by the mid-80's one of the most food-dependent countries in Africa. Much responsibility goes to the biggest and most lethal clans of all - the IMF and the World Bank. It is only in areas where **IMF/US** measures were fully imposed that conditions of hunger, disease and disruption are prevalent.

In the background is a VICTIM fierce resistance against 19th ROBBERS century colonialism, which 1984 1984 forced the British to settle for partial control at the end of WW1 and trade other other regions to Italy, France, Kenya and Ethiopia. Due to this resistance colonialism was unable to destroy communal claims to land use; it is why struggles around them continue to have an impact throughout Africa. For example an article in The Economist (May 3, 1986), complains that except for Kenya and Zimbabwe - "practically everywhere on the African continent, customary land-use laws prevail, which recognize ancient, communal rights to the land." Investors must pay the community "for each tree, for firewood rights, for the grazing of women's goats, for grandfather's grave."

they man-made they are state manufactured. Its also important to point out that warfare between clans is a legacy of colonialism and 'modern' government.

Britain and Italy pulled out in 1960, leaving a parliamentary government. Siad Barre, a former police officer, led a coup in 1969 intending to institute 'scientific socialism'. Allegedly on behalf of the masses, State ownership of industry only put power in the hands of Barre and his pals. Under the banner of 'eradicating clannism and tribalism' Barre centralised administration in the capital, with inevitable bureaucracy and corrup-

Resistance!

Resistance to the regime and these measures met with brutal repression. In the late 80's the government massacred 150,000 in former



"Alright say it. I've met all your conditions, Haven't I?"

Humanitarian raid

Attacks include the bombing of Digfer Hospital, a helicopter raid on a political meeting with at least 54 killed, and troops firing on demonstrators 12/13 June, killing 20 Somalis. Many other killings of unarmed civilians are reported; also forced "relocation" of Mogadishu residents with the demolition of their homes. "These are not cases of undisciplined actions by individual soldiers, but stem from the highest echelons of the command structure." US, Pakistani, Canadian, Tunisian, Italian and other troops have been

> involved. African Rights reports widespread harassment of the local population Belgian UNOSOM by forces, including the killings, throwing children into the Juba river, beating, theft. Later in October '93 500 Somalis were killed in a battle starting in a Mogadishu market.

So much for 'humanitarian intervention'! Many Somalis regard the UN as an army of occupation. It had all been in aid of 'arresting' Aideed and supporters, but many clashes between UN troops and Somalis have been with unarmed civilians rather than Aideed's troops. There have been many riots against the UN. According to the publication Wildcat "On occasions residents of working class districts in Mogadishu have built barricades which even Aideed's militia are not allowed to pass". But just how often and widespread are these 'occasions'? In the following interview, Zainab Jama of African Women in War also looks at forces for revolutionary change that cut across clan lines women, who have no stake in that system. Women take the brunt of IMF/World Bank policies - and are central in resisting them. Partly because women are most often responsible for feeding and providing for the

New tractors...no land!

The article concludes that African land "must be enclosed, and traditional rights of use, access, and grazing must be extinguished." 'Modernisation' as defined by the World Bank

tion. To bolster up his power base Barre invaded the Ethiopian Ogaden region to take former Somali areas. He succeeded until the Soviet Union switched its support to Ethiopia. So he went to the US and World Bank, who were only too willing to help! Of course, in return for this "help" the IMF and World Bank imposed a series of stringent regulations.

Looting with a pencil

Subsistence farming - most of it done by women - in the southern agricultural areas had been vital in sustaining people. But under Barre's regime skilled cultivators lost their land through the widespread seizures of the '80s. With all the stuff written about 'looters', not much has been said about the 'pencil looters', the new wealthy and wellconnected land owners who did their looting

British Somaliland, and destroyed northern towns like Hargeisa - with the help of South African bomber pilots and US logistical back up and diplomatic protection. More than half a million Somalis were made homeless and forced across the desert into Ethiopia. Rising food/fuel prices and shortages sparked riots in Mogadishu, August '87.

When they backed Barre, the US and world capital had many interests in maintaining a stable, 'friendly' government in Somalia. In return for arms deals, Barre offered the US use of military facilities at Berbera and Mogadishu, with strategic access to the Red Sea, Indian Ocean, and Middle East. Then there's the four major US oil corporations who've had their fingers in there - Conoco Amoco, Chevron, Phillips, and briefly Shell. Hunt Oil had also discov-

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African Women in War

Zainab Jama announced the beginning of African Women in War on International Women's Day 1993, at a rally against the rape and abuse of women in war. Though much attention had been focused on rape as a weapon of war in former Yugoslavia, she found that "people were treating Bosnia as a separate and different entity because it was happening in Europe. That is one of the reasons AFWAR was formed, because the feeling of neglect of African women who had similar experiences. And personally I feel there is a lot Eurocentric attitudes. For a long time only AFWAR was talking about the rape of Somali women.

Rapes not publicised

Somali women are not alone in this experience: "There were allegations of rape by the Tanzanian soldiers of Ugandan women. There was also talk of rape happening during the Ugandan civil war But these things were not publicised. And we have seen it in Namibia, and a lot of women were raped in Liberia... We heard for so long during the South African apartheid regime it was happening ... " "African Women in War caters for African women who have been caught up in conflict situations in Africa, and also those who have ran away from conflict situations and who are now in the UK or in the EEC countries." Of course the struggles don't stop for Somali women when they leave the country.. "A lot of them have lost husbands... and they are single parents coming into a new culture. Not only have they ran away from a conflict situation, but new problems are waiting here for them...they're not coping with their past but also with the present. But one of the main problems they have is day to day survival." For refugee women needing support there are mainly community organisations in different areas, which according to Zainab aren't always helpful. "AFWAR would like to hear from women who are traumatised as a result of war, no matter what experiences they had. Even if we cannot offer them help ourselves we can direct them."

war had started in Somaliland in 1988, long before it started in the South, in Somalia. Before that they had a long period of o p p r e s s i o n under the dictatorship.

"One was an organisation called Allah which Amin... used to work in the war zones and with the displaced people. And these women were well-organised grassroots women, but the the impression I got - without disre-







working always with the men. Women would always make contact with each other and do fundraising or do demonstrations, but never under the umbrella of 'women's' movement. The only time there was a women's organisation was the one established by the former dictatorship, and that was under the former socalled 'Socialist' party. And the leader of that organisation was appointed

women."

Zainab explained that everything had to start 'from scratch' in Somaliland. "As a govemment they are not recognised internationally. They're not getting loans from the IMF or the World Bank or getting aid. The government of Somaliland can't issue salaries, it cannot issue anything... In hospitals you have doctors and nurses working on a voluntary basis without salaries. All that has got done is on the back of the woman... all the informal sector is based on women... in fact, the only thing working now is the informal sector."

Fuck charity!

Not only has the rape of African women received no attention, their positive work in rebuilding and 'picking up the pieces' has also been ignored. "Its important to show that women are not sitting waiting to be fed; they are in fact going out there to feed themselves. Also I feel that the issue of charity needs to be addressed. When you look at the relationship between the media and the big international aid organisations you feel that

Grassroots Support

In Africa AFWAR is there to assist not only in publicising crimes against women, "but also to initiate projects to help women help themselves without patronising them. As a new organisation with limited resources, we haven't the actual projects on the ground yet, but what we have done so far we are networking with other womanist organisations in different parts of Africa". This includes women from Zaire, Liberia, and Angola. "We are not only trying to liaise with them, but also see where we can transfer skills. We also now have an office in Somaliland, another part of Somalia which declared itself independent. We chose there because it is a typical example of a country destroyed by war. Those who suffered the war - but particularly women and children are scarred and traumatised ... " AFWAR will support grassroots development and women's self-help projects there and elsewhere in Africa.

spect to them – that they were too oriented to fundraising, and caring,

and 'let's clean the city', and they haven't got a clear objective why they are organising themselves as women." There are also two weekly women's papers. but "they need a lot of resources, and training to produce a proper newspaper. And they also need to

by the government and usually was related

to the President. And therefore because of that history, what little history we have is not so good. And a lot of people are suspicious because of that.

"At the same time men are suspicious because if women were then organised as women the country would be different. It is in



there is some kind of collusion going on..African women are shown as if they are helpless people... women just sitting doing nothing and their child fed by an aid worker."

The history behind the war is complicated "because where do you start from? Do you start with the colonial days when Somalia was divided into five countries...that has already contributed to the problem. You have a dictatorship of 20 years which has had such an impact...for so long it was illegal to even meet in a group. After 20 years it was ended, you had that explosion, you had genocidal war. When people were being killed in Somaliland the world did not say anything... You don't know which part to blame for what's happening now, for what's been happening for the past few years.

The Legacy of Arms

On the role of the IMF and US, Zainab said she has heard about communal lands in the South being turned into big IMF-funded projects making many landless, but she has not investigated it herself. It would be 'simplifying' the matter to blame everything on the IMF. "The other problem is the legacy of arms. For a long time America and Russia in particular were supporting the former regime. Not only in terms of funding and money, but also weapons.

"Personally I try not to go into the history," she emphasized, "I feel that those left behind and overshadowed by this are women. What is important is that women get help at this stage in parts of the country where people are helping themselves. Women are now the ones leading that ... " Zainab pointed out that the majority of Somali territory is peaceful. "It seems people are creating the impression it is a country at war just because of the capital and the surrounding areas." I told her of an article I'd read on this theme. Love & Rage (Feb/March 93) quotes Said Samatar, a Somali currently teaching in the US. "...these horrors are occurring only in a limited portion of Somalia...The rest of the country is relatively peaceful and well-governed by an alliance of traditional elders and

Somali women have been organising themselves autonomously only recently. In Somaliland there are several women's organisations, with the oldest three years old. The Editors of a women's newspaper: Hargeisa, Northern Somalia

have a clear objective about what they want to do with the newsletter... Sometimes they deal with political issues, but not political awareness for women, or a view of how women think of certain issues.

"And that's because in Somali history, Somali women were always strong, but they were not organised as women. They were fact women doing everything. Women didn't start the war, then they were caught up in the war. They were the ones who ran off with the children and went to refugee camps. The first people who came back when there was peace were women and children. So, again, those who lost their homes, became disabled, and lost lives and lost children were

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ALGERIAN FEMINISTS FIGHT FUNDAMENTALISTS

coalition of Algerian women's groups demonstrated 22 March in front of the Human Rights National Observatory in Algiers. They were protesting "against the climate of terror and limitations to be imposed on women." They also held a sit-in on 8 March in front of the Presidental building. Demonstrations also took place in Oran and Constantine.

Since February armed groups of Muslim fundamentalists have been threatening women going into schools and university, and trying to impose the wearing of the hidjab (veil). In their 8 March leaflet the Algerian Union of Democratic Women write of attacks including the assassination of a 14 year old girl and a school manager. There is

a climate of fear and terror as fundamentalist groups "want to impose on us their project of a fascist society through fire and blood." On 30 March two more unveiled women were shot as they waited for a bus.

Women Living Under Muslim Laws, an international network of feminists from Muslim countries, call for international solidarity with Algerianwomen. Send messages to the Algerian Union of Democratic Women (FAX 213-2-71-89-93)

INFO: International Solidarity Network, Women Living Under Muslim Laws, Boite Postal 23-34790 Grabels, Montpelier, France.

Somalia, cont'd from page 8 'austerity' resulting in more



services and benefits, work for us, a strengthening of 'family values' where we are subordinated.

A fairly fab little book, The New Enclosures (Midnight Notes, 1990), looks at how anti-IMF/austerity struggles in Africa are connected with struggles elsewhere. In 'The Debt Crisis, Africa and The New Enclosures' Sylvia Federici criticises Westerners who see Africans either as helpless victims of governments and natural disaslimited to ters, or 'backward' struggles based on tribal allegiances..."In reality, from the fields to the factories, the markets and the schools, struggles are being carried on... unmatched in their combativeness... most 'modern' in content... (for) access to the wealth produced internationally, but not at the price capital puts on it."

attacked warehouses where maize was stored. Then they turned on other shops taking many goods, including cars, and attacked government offices such as the Presidential headquarters. Throughout the '80s anti-austerity uprisings took place in Zaire and Nigeria. (In May/June '89, the days of Tianneman Square, 400 were killed in Nigeria, with nothing in the Western media!). Along with resistance to seizures of communal lands, there's been widespread and militant tax resistance. And last year, crowds of women fought with police in Chad as they protested government austerity policies. In Nov '93 riots and a general strike against fuel price rises rocked Nigeria again. (VAT protesters take note!) Though Somalia isn't discussed specifically, the book gives insight into forces behind events there within a worldwide context..For struggles over land, work, water. and resources are not strictly African, they take place throughout the world. For example, the resistance of the indigenous highland people in Guatemala as related by Rigoberta Menchu, or the expulsion of the Palestinians from their land.

The 'New Enclosures' is an international reorganisation of capitalism that has been going on since the mid-70's. The activities of the IMF in Somalia are part of it, but 'enclosures' aren't limited to rural areas of the '3rd World.' Here these 'enclosures' often mean privatisation, price rises and cuts in benefits and health services...the appropriation of resources that we've long regarded as public property if not entirely ours. Land struggles include evictions of squatters, rent rises, or actions against motorways. Our means of subsistence and survival, the ways we have managed to defend some areas of communal autonomy are becoming drastically limited. This reinforces increased state control of 'morality' and personal life. We are up against powers international in scope and organisation, and here we find common ground with women in Africa resistance and support networks must develop internationally as well. Further, there is the issue of practical solidarity with women facing violence in Somalia. This is discussed in the interview, along with a look at what some 'traditional ways' mean to women.

family: women do the shopping and get hit first by a price rise! It is a wide area of struggle not strictly linked to workplaces or predominantly male trades. In this country we see the results of austerity policies in cuts in

She describes many uprisings, starting with Northern Zambia 1986, sparked by a government decree doubling the price of maize meal as demanded by the IMF. Housewives, youth and the unemployed

Closer to home

It has also happened closer to home with the Highland Clearances and the Enclosure Acts - common land was enclosed and people violently driven off it. The Old Enclosures took place over the 16-19th centuries, resulted in the imposition of the nuclear family, and masses of people turned into landless wandering beggars and later, waged workers. We're not just talking about the beginning of capitalism, but the way it keeps going and expanding.

Rozanne

Info from: Love & Rage: PO Box 3 Prince St. Station, NY, NY 10012 USA, Migrants Appeal c/o UPA, 416a Albany Rd. London SE5 OBD, African Rights, 11 Marshalsea Rd, London SE1 1EP, New Internationalist, 55 Rectory Rd. Oxford OX4 1BN, Organise c/o 84b Whitechapel High St. London E1 7QX, Wildcat BM CAT London WC1N 3XX (don't mention the name if you write, they say!), New Enclosures, Midnight Notes Box 204 Jamaica Plain MA 02130 USA, Race & Class, IRR 2-6 Leeke St., Kings Cross Rd. London WC1 9HS

AFWAR, cont'd from page 9

local leaders that has re-emerged in the nomadic or urban setting. wake of the collapse of the central authority ... " But what exactly is meant by "traditional elders and local leaders", particularly in respect to women's situation?

A girl is always working very hard in her family whether she is in a

There are a lot of proverbs and poetry which describes that a woman is not 'nagitomah 'a woman is no kinsman. And "A girl is not a boy, she may bring you a man", which means she may bring a good man in marriage to the family. When she gets married, she may marry a strong respectable man. And that man may be good for the clan. "OK, the elders have good influence. Women have some influence, but their influence is behind the scenes. If she comes to a meeting she is not at the meeting to participate... She's there to feed the people, or take care of seating, or cook the tea and serve them. So if by accident she hears some idea discussed, and she's got something to say about it she may not say it there, because she would be seen as 'unwomanly'. She may wait and say it in the ear of her brother or her

father or her husband what she thinks. And if the idea is good they would claim it!"

There is great pressure on the women who do speak up: "...what I consider personally, blackmail - but its cultural blackmail, its clan blackmail. You're always told if "you say this, you will be accused of being anti-Islamic.';'If you say this, you will be accused of being feminist', and what is wrong with being feminist?

"You have people who are democratising the clan system - and still women have no place. What I've found is few Somali women are aware of these issues. And if they areaware of these issues, they are too busy earning the family income and day to day practical matters. They're too busy to be concerned about political issues. But I think that's another problem. I also feel that now is the time to create that awareness... I feel that women can go beyond clannism because the culture does not offer them real membership in the clan. They as an oppressed entity can unite and with unity comes strength. If they organise themselves they are the majority of the population. And even if people do not respect them, they will fear them." .

"A lot of people like to talk about the traditional measures. Well and good, I have respect for it. But you know the traditional measures have no place for women. The leaders are traditionally clan-based. And the way the clan system works is that women do not have a place in the clan system. The clan system is patriarchal. You count the fathers and the forefathers until you reach a name, and those who share a name are a clan or sub-clan or a branch of a clan.

Women are seen by their own clan as temporary. Not part of the clan, but they are staying on a temporary basis, staying with her family until she reaches the age of marriage.

Stand by your clan?

"For example, the few times I personally have these discussions in public places it's always a man saying to me, 'but that's very anti-Islamic' or 'that's very Western in position.' But men will often take on a lot of Western ideas about politics. Yet when it comes to women's issues you call it a Western position, when it serves them you can take whatever you want. But what's wrong taking whatever you want from something, and leaving whatever you don't want?

Rozanne

CONTACT: AFWAR, London Voluntary Sector Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Rd., London N7 6PA (Tel/Fax 081-651-1317)

Cheap thrills!

63

So where do you get sex toys anyway? Let's see, there's one shop for women in the city, there's a couple mail order places. But if you haven't much money or time, there are many cheap and cheerful items to be found on any High St. And the best of the lot is Kilburn High Rd. When my girlfriend comes back from cashing her giro there, who knows what surprises are in store?

We'll leave aside the fruit and veg stalls; Brixton market would be best for that, or Berwick St. with its superb deals on avocados. Those interested in fruit and veg, especially plantains and mangos, might want to look at Audre Lorde's book Zami for inspiration.

It is on Kilburn High Road that the best selection of feather dusters can be found! Clusters of long sinuous and fluffy feathers, in such a bright array of colours; shocking pink with a bit of black, violet and purple, red, lime green. They cost a quid each. They brush and smooth over curves and crevices so light and soft, or with more firmness if that is what is desired ... and usually after an hour of "dusting" it is very much so. I recommend using two dusters at a time (or more, depending on the numbers participating). However, their life span is limited because the feathers come out easily. Still, its nice to keep coming across multicoloured feathers here and there, suddenly appearing from folds in the blankets, on the bedside table, on the ceiling! Little mementos of good times had.

cially emphasizes her luscious fleshy cheeks, bubbelah parts that demand kissing and stroking. "Guess what I got?" We'd already got our weekly supply of feather dusters a few days ago so I just had no idea.

She reached into her bag and proudly waved a vibrator. "And I got it for 99p!" I regarded it dubiously. It was white, cold, plastic. I was used to looking at (but never actually buying) the posh kind in soft latex, with clit bits, g-spot bits, nice ilittle designs in the shape of women, witches, flowers, etc.

got no result twisting the base.to turn it on. "It doesn't work."

"It needs batteries. I'll get some from the clock."

"But we need the clock!"

"No, not for a while. You're not working tomorrow, who cares about the time!"

It had a wasp-like buzz, reminding me of an electric toothbrush I once tried to use for a similar purpose. It didn't really work. But when I moved it up my thigh it felt surprisingly nice. Such a little buzzy thing managed to send big waves further down through every layer of skin. Well, you never can tell...not bad for 99p.

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Ulrating with embarrassment

Aaarg - how could they do this to me? It was just so PINK and so JELLYISH looking. Some friends of mine gave me a super-delux vibrator for my birthday and I'm sorry if this causes offence, but my first reaction was to want to batter them with it. After I'd finished hiding in a cupboard for a few hours, that is. Yeah, yeah, it's my problem, I know. I just had a bit of a prudish upbringing. Mention sex?...in my family we tried to pretend it didn't exist. And the one thing you have to say about vibrators is there's nothing ... ambiguous about them. You can't really pretend they're for anything else other than doing specific sexual things with. So when I found myself holding a box containing a bright pink vibrator with strange multi-colour bobbles inside and a cute rabbit's head design on the top, well, embarrassed is an understatement. Couldn't they have given me the parcel and warned me to open it later, somewhere discreet and above all alone?

Anyway, after this initial problem, things soon began to go better between me and my little pink plastic friend. It certainly takes all that terrible effort out of masturbation (awful, ain't it?) and I was pretty impressed with the vari-speed control. The only problem I found was that the bit with the batteries in was complete crap, so that any sudden movement (something the manufacturers could well have allowed for, I feel) caused the batteries to fall out of their resting places and bring the process to a frustrating halt. However, the story of me and my vibrator ends as sadly as it began. pathetic or what? Finally the dodgy battery compartment gave out - or maybe something else entirely gave out - either way, it broke. And instead of returning it to its place of purchase and enquiring about the possibility of repair, I wrapped it carefully in a brown paper bag and hid it under lots of other things in the bin. RIP Vibrator. You deserved better.

One day my girlfriend came in grinning widely, the mischievous sort of grin that espe-

Whitten by a wanker!

Sex for One - the Joy of Self Loving, Betty Dodson, Crown Trade Paperbacks

"This book contains adult subject matter" says the disclaimer on the front cover. Wot? Funny thing for a book dedicated to a form of sexuality enjoyed by people of all ages - masturbation. I first heard about Betty Dodson when I was in school sometime in the '70s, reading Ms in the back of the local libra'y when I was bunking off school. She booklet called 'Liberating wrote a Masturbation" and has since made a career out of being a wanker! I like Dodson's view of masturbation as a roaches the primary sexual expression; it's not just just subject with something to fall back on when you're not getting it with someone, or merely a D.I.Y. all the cheerleading and remedy for period pains (well, it beats Neurofen anyday!) "The most consistent sex thumping will be your love affair with yourself." evangelical enthusiasm Dodson, who is in her 60s, includes useful typical of information for older women. She's also got some sensible advice on sex these socalled 'sextoys, both natural and mechanical: "If you perts'. carve too close to the centre seeds, the cucumber will go limp." "There are numerous Sometimes penis-shaped, battery-operated vibrators that it's funny, other times can be used for either penetration or stimu-

It broke however when it was her turn. Her second go, actually. We kept it by the bed in hope it might miraculously revive, but after a couple of weeks we chucked it away.

Then she found another one - this one from Hackney Rd. It cost £1.99, but it wasn't as good. Really, the best is found on the Kilburn High Rd.

Maza Zoftig

PS. We have just been informed that 99p vibes are found in Peckham ... and they go for £1.99 in Brixton! So shop local, girls!

lating the clitoris, but for me, these are strictly a one-night stand." We were sent a particularly gruesome pink and veiny sample of this variety by the UK distributor and I came to the same conclusion. (This item came with an almost quaint mid-60's style softie porn catalogue,

complete with models who look like extras from a James Bond flick.)

Dodson illustrates the book with 'erotic' drawings of men and women masturbating, singly and in various combinations. Some are kind of pretty but they didn't do much for me. Contradicting some of her own message, the people pictured are young, and slim.

She app-

its annoying. When she diverges from the joys of wanking into 'politics' and philosophy I lose patience, especially when it gets to 12-step and New Age speak: "Sugar and salt are 'hard drugs'" "Colon therapists are the cosmic plumbers of natural healing." Stick to the cucumbers, Bets!

Rozanne

Also available is a video, Self Loving, Portrait of a women's sexuality seminar, from Blue

Moon Books, PO Box 11,

Biggin Hill, Westerham, Kent



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bad attitude 11

ECOFEMINISM RESTORING

For what you are about to read I give thanks to Maria Mies for talking to me, to Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva for giving the seminar on the publication of their book *Ecofeminism* in October '93, to one tape recorder for recording some before breaking and to another for responding to my twiddling and starting to record more or less properly half way through the interview and finally to the collective for their discussion of the result. Any issues or areas not covered by the interview are my fault for not asking about them. Letters and discussion would be very welcome.

The first part of the interview with Maria Mies is in my own words:

Marxism and the left

We started our discussion with criticism of the Marxist theory and various political parties on the left as we both had been interested in them but never found them satisfactory enough to join.

in Japan and not be dependent on the vagaries of the world market. Housewives belonging to these clubs have become politicised and now support a peasant movement in India where a community refuses to produce for the world market. They also understand that by insisting on home produced rice they have to accept limitations on world sales of Japanese cars. Apart from the immediate material gain achieved by clubbing, people involved gain emotionally. A group of unemployed women in Germany are doing just that by sharing things and tasks. Maria also told of pers (= his, her) own gain in sharing a washing machine and a computer with pers neighbour. This kind of consumer action has potential to undermine the capitalist world market.

Coffee and allotments



MM: Yes. That will be in Cairo. The UN conference on population. There again the population will be seen as the main cause of environmental destruction and poverty. I-S: I saw, without being able to pay full attention to it, a TV programme about archaeology which tried to establish reasons for the destruction of ancient civilisations. I think a population explosion was put out as the main reason. Over consumption, I think, was mentioned but what was emphasised at the end was the increase in the population.

Maria Mies:

"Science and gaining of knowledge in our system is based on violence.

We live in a limited

MM: Nonsense. This is nonsense. I mean these are real myths. It is a big question how old civilisations broke down. But I think that population explanation is really not satisfactory. I have written about it. Also in our book there is one chapter. I wrote an article called

Regional Subsistence Economy

Then I asked questions about the possibilities of change, the way to achieve a society which would satisfy true human needs. Important things for this would be links between consumers and producers, scaling down the production from the production of commodities for profit to the production of goods to satisfy human needs. Instead of world market we would have regional economies. The regions would have to be worked out by people themselves.

Gain through clubbing

Some of the ways to achieve this consumer revolution would be by clubbing and joining together for mutual benefit. The aim is to consume less by not buying everything on offer and sharing those which can be shared. Needs should be met by local and regional produce. An example of this is a consumers' club formed by housewives in Japan. An initial push for this club was to have a source of their stable diet, rice, available

Understanding by participation

Intermediate actions for us would be paying fair prices to the producers of the south for our luxuries, like coffee. Socalled ethical wholesalers and companies can play a role in a transitional stage, as do the middle classes because they have money. In England allotments should be encouraged. And we should find ways of forging links with farmers to buy direct. Maria told of the meeting per attended in East Germany where a suggestion to demand land for unemployed to produce their own food was enthusiastically cheered by a roomful (about 500) of people.

Infertility and population explosion

The most important point Maria made was that we have to look at the whole world and its population. Very often concentrating on our perceived needs here in the north would cause suffering to the people of the south. One example being reproductive engineering. The two sided problem has been perceived as infertility in the north and population explosion in the south. The feminists of the north received some very harsh criticism for their lack of global vision.

other world-wide, because it is an international network, of what is happening in the field of reproductive and genetic engineering. And when there is need, when there is something happening specifically, we have kind of protests, signature campaigns and such things. Like for instance, the last one was in Germany when there was this case of a young woman who died in an accident and she was pregnant. They tried to keep the foetus alive. That was the last protest. And against organ transplantation. I wrote a book in German called Against Industrialisation of Life. And many of us are giving talks all over, because in Germany there is a strong movement against genetic engineering and reproductive technology. Just a few weeks ago I got an invitation by journalists to talk against patenting of life forms. And such we have always included in that movement. We have not only just looked at women but we have looked at

plants and animals. We have looked at the third world as well as the first world. So we have really a kind of comprehensive view of this. That is very, very important, that one does not stick only to one small aspect.

Against population myth

And for instance next December we are organising, that is not only FINNRAGE but one of the FINNRAGE members in Bangladesh, Aida Akhta, is organising a conference against this population myth which we call People's Perspectives on Population. We try to produce a book together with our opposition against this population policy, against the explanation that population growth is the cause of poverty. We don't have any money. We are not funded by any organisation. We just use our own resources. And when there is need we do something. It is not a kind of systematic campaign. But our friends are in Latin America, in Australia, in United States, in Europe.

I-S: And they are all coming to this conference in Bangladesh?

MM: No, this will be a small thing. But we did have a big conference in Rio in 1991. We have international conferences regularly. The next one will be in Melbourne, Australia. We all come together there.

world. Catching up development is not only not possible for those who have not had it but it is not good for those who have had it. Catching up development, and that means the concept of permanent growth of our economy, has to be opposed. We have to come to another concept of economy where this growth mania is given up."

> 'Consumption patterns of the North are the cause of poverty and environmental destruction of the South. And not the population.' I-S: In these kinds of programmes they hint at other reasons but then always seem to come back to the old one of the population explosion.

> **MM**: Of course. That is why they make them. They are ideological preparation for this kind of conference. It is so popularised now that population is the problem. That means women are the culprits. Particularly the third world poor women. So they should be brought under control. This is the thing. By all means. I hear this now at all conferences. It is being accepted as the number one explanation. We have to do something against this nonsense.

Over consumption in the North

Nobody talks of over consumption here. And yet these things are known. That 80% of the world's resources are being eaten up by 20% the population who lives in the north. And about 75% of the world's toxic wastes are produced by us^{*}. And that is known. The demand for a change of lifestyle in the north has been mentioned. But if you look at what happens, nothing is happening in that direc-

I-S: In yesterday's seminar, both you and Vandana Shiva talked about involvement in the movements of our time. Vandana said that "understanding the world around us comes out of participating in the processes of the world". What kinds of processes have you been involved in?

MM: We were involved in a number of struggles in the women's movement. We got, of course, involved in the peace movement as feminists helped organise many demonstrations. I got personally very much involved also or was one of the cofounders of this international network of resistance to reproductive and genetic engineering called FINNRAGE. We started that in 1984. And I am still active in that.

I-S: How do you actually campaign in that? MM: We started like - just informing each

UN and the population myth

I-S: The conference in Bangladesh has something to do with the UN conference in 1994?

Some facts brought up in the seminar and in the interview by Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva:

- The oil reserves would be finished in 4 years, or according to some, in 19 days, if the living standards of an average worker in Germany or America were generalised to the rest of the world's population.

- In produce the south is supporting the north but even financially five hundred billion dollars excess capital flows from the south to the north to the perversions of the capitalist economic system.

- 80% of the world's resources are eaten by 20% of the population in the north.
- 75% of the world's toxic waste is produced by the north.

12 bad attitude

LIVING INTERCONNECTIONS FOR SURVIVAL Vandana Shiva: "The issue of diversity has been transformed into an inability to interact. And I

tion. Except a few people like us who keep talking about it and trying to do it in small ways. Who talks of a change of lifestyle here? It is necessary to reduce our consumption styles.

I-S: Catching up is still the thing.

MM: Exactly. And then for instance when the car industry does not grow any more, it is a catastrophe. Instead of saying we have enough. We don't need more cars.

I-S: They are widening the roads here all the time to have more and more cars.

MM: It is an absolutely irrational, destructive system. And I think it is time we talked about it. Make big campaigns. And destroy these myths. Of course, I think most of the consumers go along with this because they don't want to change anything. They don't want to see that they themselves are also accomplices in this whole game. I-S: Television programmes and ads try to influence people to acquire more and more. MM: This is precisely the problem. This catching up mentality. I-S: It is difficult to break that.

of commodities. Including our own bodies. Because it is now also ourselves who are being treated like raw material. Like for example, organ transplantation industry. Or reproductive technology. So that means we have to learn to respect all life forms for their own right, not only because we can use them. These creations, or creatures, have a right to live in their own right and not only because they are useful to us. That is a totally different attitude which has to be brought about. And then some people may choose, okay, I will not eat meat at all.

I-S: I don't eat meat. I was interested to find out just recently that vegetarians start menstruating later and enter into menopause

*The collective questioned the use of 'us' here. It is too simplistic, implying that all the classes and groups within the capitalist economic

equally



see it as part of the inability to have the diversity. In fact, the way difference is being articulated in academia here is a product of a highly fragmented mind. The issue of diversity to me is living with difference and interacting through the difference. In fact, diversity only survives through symbiotic interaction.

Isn't it fascinating that it is third world women who should be recoding GATT and not the feminist econo-

mists of the north. ... And that is fascinating about free trade: it has to be forced. It is so free that it has to be forced. It can't happen on its own. It needs highly coercive treaty making. It needs bullying by states and super powers. It doesn't happen in freedom. It can only take shape in total unfreedom. ... knowledge and intellectual property rights as codified in GATT are in my view the ultimate of the patriarchal qualification of what knowledge is. So [for people in the north] it is not the question of coming down from the standard of living but coming off people's backs."

Worse than Bombay

MM: It is difficult. I agree. But at the same time I feel more and more people are more and more fed up by this kind of supermarket and catching up mentality, because it costs. When I travelled, for instance, in London this morning in a tube I thought this is like Bombay. And worse. I think my god this is a civilised big city and everybody wants to be here. They think this is life. So it means the quality of life is going down rapidly. And the more people use such goods, more cars etc, and pack the cities with them the more the life becomes intolerable. And that is why for our own sake and for the sake of the better quality of life we have to stop this machinery.

I-S: You talk about life in all its diversity. What do you think about exploitation of animals? And the poisons put in them in the process destroy our health? Is vegetarianism or veganism an answer?

earlier.

Changed attitudes for survival

MM: Of course, these things could play a role. And they show the interconnectedness of all living beings and all living systems. That is another thing which ecofeminism stresses. That the symbioses, which we constitute ourselves and within which only life can be preserved, have to remain intact. And they have been dissected by modern science, technology and industrial society. This has been considered as freedom.

I think we have to oppose this and to restore the living interconnections. That demands a totally different attitude. And a totally different frame work. Many people start with their own health problems. Because they realise that we don't have quick technical solutions to all those problems. But we have to really be much more integrated. We get inspired by people who fight for their survival. In the full sense of the word. In the midst of plenty we have to fight for our human survival. It is no longer a luxury. It is survival as human beings. Let's see what we can do.

This article raised much discussion among the collective about class struggle and the world-wide control of wealth and resources, and about how these structures can be dismantled. Some questioned whether consumerism can be used to effect a revolution and whether we can leave the accomplishment of a bright new future to the middle classes. Also, how much of a cut can the working classes of the 'west' be expected to take? On the other hand, it was argued that the middle class have a role as catalyst, to be pushed further by the working classes. Also, since unlimited economic growth is not possible, it is necessary for everyone to reduce consumption. We would welcome further discussion on women, class struggles and green politics.

ignoring the power structure and unaccountability of those in power. While this is true, I believe all of us must accept responsibility to the extent where we are able to do anything at all to change any part of the situation, however small.

Ecofeminism by Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva (Zed Books, £12.95).

Maria Mies is a sociologist involved in women's and environmental movements in Germany. Vandana Shiva is a physicist and philosopher involved in environmental movement in India. Both had left the academia behind "by choice" as Vandana said. Maria told me that academic rewards and acclaim were not what they wanted.

Instead in their involvement "in the processes of their time" they have been forced to look at the world and its problems and forge theories and solutions from the historical and ecofeminist perspective. They say in their introduction to their book: "The following chapters are informed by our basic understanding of ecofeminism as a perspective which starts from the fundamental necessities of life; we call this the subsistence perspective." In the introduction Maria and Vandana tell us why they came to write the book together. They look at the differences and show the commonalities between themselves and between women worldwide. Underlying all issues in the book is their concern for "survival and the preservation of life on this planet, not only of women, children and humanity in general, but also of the vast diversity of fauna and flora." They look at the issues critically in their historical development, giving examples of past and present actions, philosophies and theories around the world. Between

them they show a vast amount of knowledge not only about their own fields but also about areas like biotechnology, ecology, economics and history.

I found the book very relevant for the problems of our society. Anyone trying to understand and find solutions for these should read this book. For me personally it made connections I had been looking for. It helped me to realise that my dissatisfaction with Marxist theory had very good grounds. It gave me a perspective which does not demand the denial of myself. Most of all, it gave me hope. I had been getting increasingly despondent about the possibility of change, the possibility for revolution. I had desperately tried to believe, but believe in what?

This book had everything. It looked at historical development, at philosophy behind ideologies, at politics locally and globally, at global market forces and at subsistence at regional level. It also gave examples of present grass roots movements for change in India, Japan and Germany. The book is published by Zed Books Ltd, 7 Cynthia St, London N1 9JF, UK, and 165 First Avenue, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, 07716, USA, by Spinifex Press, 504 Queensbury St, North Melbourne, Victoria, 3003, Australia, by Kali for Women, A 36 Gulmohar Park, New Delhi, 110049, India, and by Fernwood Publishing, P.O.Box 9409, Station A, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3K 4C3, Canada.

No safe place any longer

MM: We get poisons from plants also. There is no safe place any longer. We cannot say: here we are safe. This kind of illusion I do not have any more. We have to live with this kind of poisoned nature around us. As far as animals are concerned, I think, okay, if people feel vegetarianism is helping then that is good. Personally I am not a strict vegetarian. I eat meat sometimes. What I feel, for some people to become vegetarians is good. But it is not a kind of recipe that should be followed. That we all must become vegetarians. But we should learn to have respect and not use animals just as raw material. We have to change our attitudes to animals, to plants, to human being, etc. And not use nature as raw material for the industrial production process

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TAKING THE

I'm speaking to Julie Dash, the first African-American woman to get national distribution for a feature length film...

SA: I know it hasn't been easy, how long did it take?

JD: To complete this film Daughters of the Dust, the research, scripting, prodicution, post-production and distribution process was a total of fifteen years. During those fifteen years I made other films and this became my eleventh film production. So it took a while, but I think it was worth it. It doesn't necessarily have to take this long, but maybe this was a long gestation period, maybe it needed to take this long for this particular type of film. SA: Why did you choose the story of the Gullah or the Gechee people? JD: I think it is important that we look at that region and those people. It is the area of the heaviest African retention because they were isolated on these islands, and also because my father's people come from the Carolina lowlands. So I grew up amongst the Gullah culture.

Greek tragedy, which is the single hero, one character telling a story, and going towards a more West African way of thinking, a more New World/African way of thinking which is how stories are told, they weave in, they weave out, the whole family is doing during this day. It's episodic, but rather than basing the characters on Greek gods and doing a Greek tragedy, I based them on African deities and tried to tell a New World kind of story.

works for Eulah's speech about Ibo landing. I think her book was set in the 1950's, but still this girl was recounting what her grandmother told her, and I thought this is what I need, and she was gracious enough to allow me to use it.

SA: You also say that Gloria Naylor came down to the location.

JD: Oh God yeah. She was down there when she was writing Mama Day as a screenplay SA: Great, I didn't know there was going to



SA: Yes, you also deal with the tensions between the religions.

JD: It was like Christianity versus everyone, versus the traditional African religion, versus Islam. Christianity is always trying to wipe out all the other religions.

SA: What about the Native American aspect of the film? You have one character, St Julian Last Child. Not many people acknowledge the connection between Native American and Black people. JD: The Sea Islands were originally the land of the Cherokees and they were driven out by white colonists. I wanted to include them, it was the holistic thing to do, to recognise their presence and influence on the new world African-American, so that's why he's in there. Also, no one really talks about how the African-American and the Native American came together and became family. I thought it was important to take a look at that. Just like the story of Yellow Mary and Trula; people say why didn't you go into it? That was a sub-plot and it wasn't meant to be gone into, the viewer has to go into it on their own.



SA: So it was a very different experience for the slaves in the Sea Islands of the South?

Swamps

JD: Yes, it was a horrendous experience. The reason that they were isolated from Western culture, and for the most part white overseers and white landowners, was because it was swamps. They lived in such a mosquito ridden place that there was yellow fever and malaria. The life expectancy there at the time was not very long; it was, as Nana says in the dialogue, "The worst place to be born" during slavery. If you were on the mainland Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, you'd be a slave, but it was a lot easier, the life was easier, relatively, of course.

Multilayered

SA: Daughters is about memory and recollection and you've used this idea to transform the film from a straightforward narrative structure to a multi-layered structure allowing different voices and stories to be told. JD: Basically I think our lives as survivors of our own holocaust is very diverse and multilayered, very triumphant, and I wanted to do a film that celebrates that. I did not want to do a film about the African-American experience as being victimized by the outside world. I wanted to do a film that takes a look at how we are children of those who chose to survive; a lot of people chose not to survive as an African captive, but we are the descendants of those who chose to survive. SA: I noticed in the book of the screen play for Daughters you scribbled in the margins of your manuscript which gods and goddesses the characters represent. To me the film is a very holistic experience. There is no direct hero/heroine, no focussing on just one person's life.

A still from Daughters of the Dust

Griot story telling

SA: In Daughters of the Dust and the other films of yours that I've seen, you use women's voices to tell your stories. In Daughters of the Dust there's even the Unborn Child who is a girl child, and Nana Pezant, who is the griot.

JD: I had to come up with a new structure, because there has to be an underlying logic to everything. That's why I decided to tell the story in a West African way. It's very experimental, but I tried to apply the griot structure. I'm not an expert on African griots, but I've done a lot of reading about them. I also noticed the way my grandmother tells me a story, the way my aunts tell me stories is very much like the way in griot story telling, they don't start with once upon a time, that's very Western they start telling a story like Toni Cade Bambara writes a story. It goes off here for several pages, and then it goes off here, and goes off there, and it comes back in, so it's a story that is very much woven in and out.

be a film. So, you've had Gloria Naylor helping as a production assistant, and contact with Paule Marshall...

JD: And I was at a public presentation of a film screening and Toni Morrison asked me a question during the discussion and I could barely answer her.

SA: I'd like to talk about celebration. In the film you caught those people on a day of celebration, yet you have managed to show some of what it means to be a slave. You talk about colour, sexuality, rape, and you talk about religion as well, but it's all quite subtle. JD: Well, I think we all know our history to some degree or other. You know there are incidents like the Rodney King incidents where it just makes you see like, damn, like, it's right up in your face, but I think for the most part in the average person's life the racism is subtle. The reaction and the healing from rape is subtle; it's something that the whole family suffers, it's not just the one individual. So that's why I wanted to look at it from that point of view, the husband's, the Unborn Child's, who could possibly be the child of the rapist, but as we see, she's not. The whole question of colour, the colour caste system, how we deal with that in our families. How a younger generation always strive in any culture, in any country, they strive to move forward. Everyone wants to grow up and move away, because there's

SA: Yellow Mary is supposed to be a new type of woman.

Independent means

JD: I see her as a business woman, one of the first Black women entrepreneurs. I wanted to have a business women coming from the mainland, having experienced the science and technology, all the New World stuff, and going back home. But in my research I discovered that there was no business that she could have done other than prostitution. So the prostitutes then were the the first entrepreneurs. I see her as a woman of independent means.

SA: And she also has an independent sex life, she goes back home with her girlfriend. JD: Oh yes, because a lot of the prostitutes during that period were bi-sexual. It wasn't termed gay at the time, I don't even know if the term lesbian came up at the the time. But Yellow Mary and Trula are certainly lovers. SA: And she is not for domesticity? JD: No. I mean, she wouldn't have time for it. She shops, if she wants something to eat she goes out and buys it. That's why she brings home a tin of biscuits as opposed to some home baked bread. Just like the women today, you know, they shop. They bring in stuff and you microwave it or something. SA: Let's talk about the costumes and the hair styling. You've mentioned that there's been criticism, saying the film is about hair. JD: Yeah, "ostensibly about hair" that was a comment from Michelle Wallace. She's not a

JD: One of the things that I discarded long ago for this particular project was the notion of using the format or the paradigm of the SA: What about the influence of Black women writers on your work?

JD: I read Praise Song for the Widow, by Paule Marshall, and I had already written a passage for Ibo landing; but she's a much better writer than myself, so I had my attorneys contact her and see if I could use her

14 bad attitude

fan.

SA: So is there tension between women competing?

JD: No, that was surprising. I never met her, but she is adamant about it, she can't stand the movie.

Gorgeous!

SA: Well, I came out of the film feeling so gorgeous, you made Black women look beautiful.

JD: But it is interesting that some people have problems with it looking good, mostly white people, the beauty of the film undermined the story. Now what kind of bullshit is that?

SA: Our lives are always supposed to be harsh and painful. But you researched those hairstyles.

JD: Pamela Ferrell, she brought it all to me. She has this company called Cornrows and come up and explain how I was able to do all these short films and they were doing really well. So I was courted, as they say by the studios. They wanted to know what kind of ideas I had that I would like to do there. I gave them my screenplays and then from each and every studio I eventually received a letter saying, oh, we love your work, but we hope you find a 'home' for it somewhere. SA: And what did they mean by that?

JD: What I took them to mean is, you better make that in your own house because that doesn't belong in our house.

SA: Your films are women focussed, was that a problem?

JD: That was one of the problems; all my ideas are firmly based within the African-American experience.

SA: You're an independent film maker, do you want to stay that way?

JD: I'd like to be able to remain independent Company, which I think is really cute. She like Spike [Lee]. He gets to be able to do film. Can you talk about that personal woman

interview

An

with

money, and they still looked at it and said no. SA: And they view your film as a foreign film? JD: As a foreign film because it's so different, so alien to the mainstream.

SA: Now you have international distribution. JD: My other films were distributed internationally also, they have been for twelve years, they were short films.

The personal side

SA: Well, we've talked about the racism and sexism of Hollywood, you've obviously had to be very focused. You had a daughter, a family. You chose to have an abortion during the time you were involved in making the side of being a film maker?

woman and a white woman in Georgia in the 1940's during the war. It's a feature length film, but I'm going to carry on doing shorts, because everything is not supposed to be a feature length film.

JULIE DASH

SA: And what do you say to aspiring film makers?

JD: If you want to be a film maker you have to very focussed and clear about what you want to do, because all along the way, not just with the financial obstacles, you're going to meet people who'll tell you that it's hopeless. You also have to be willing to take the risk and do a film, knowing it may not be a financial success. But if that's the film that you want to make, then you have to make it.

has books written on it, with photographs. That's why I called her and she just flew on down. I mean it's amazing how Black women will bond together. It's not like I could pay her a lot of money. And she personally did every head, I mean she even did Yellow Mary and Trula because the hair was woven one, they had long weaves.

Illusions

SA: I understand that Daughters is one of a series of interconnected films about Black women's lives.

JD: I did another film called Illusions in 1983, also a part of that. I still have films to make in that same connection. The next film is not, but it's a life-long goal, to make those films

SA: I saw Illusions quite a long time ago, at an independent cinema, and I was amazed by the story. I've read novels about passing but when you actually see it, you wonder how many people are living like that, it's incredible.

Passing – just like

JD: Especially during the war. I



JD: Yeah, you're always an African-American woman before you're a film maker, but also I knew that I was the first African-American woman to receive that kind of money to do a film. It wasn't a decision that I made alone. Arthur J, the cinematographer, was my husband at the time, so it was a decision that we made. We were in pre-production and that time might not come again. It wasn't like I could say oh well, let me just have the baby and I'll come back next year. We were on location so we had to come to a quick decision about it, it almost seemed like a test that God was saying, you've got to do this, you've worked for this, let's see what you're going to do. Have the baby and for the rest of your life talk about "I was going to make a film". When you get money it doesn't mean that you'll have it always, because they don't send it all to you, they can take it away. That just happened to another friend of mine who has money from the same source.

Sheila Auguste



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Women...

a joke

From Daughters of the Dust

had an aunt who passed during the war. She passed during the day and then she came home at night to her Black family. Every time you see a Hollywood film about passing they're all neurotic, they hate themselves, they want to die, but in the real world people passed because they were able to get better jobs and they weren't all sick about it. It was just like a joke to them. They'd go pass and then come back home. It was no big thing.

SA: When you were trying to make Daughters, did you try to approach Hollywood?

JD: Well, I did try because Hollywood beckoned me. Around 1985 they wanted me to

large films, he goes into a co-production deal with a studio. I would like to do larger films and the only way I'm going to be able to do that is to do a partnership with a studio. Because I'll never be able to raise millions and millions of dollars, it's hard enough raising the \$800,000.

SA: Yet they told you there wasn't an audience for your film.

JD: Oh, absolutely. Even when the film was completed they didn't think that there was any audience for it. Which is pretty bizarre because you're handing someone a finished product and saying let's distribute this together. So they didn't have to put out any SA: What I've heard about the way the music was arranged sounds interesting.

JD: John Barnes is an incredible musician, and you'd be very surprised to know he makes his living writing for Michael Jackson, Quincy Jones, Lionel Richie, mean hot stuff. But there is a spiritual side to him. He had a reading by a Native American woman a month before I called him and she said he was going to be working on a project that was about his spirituality and it was going to change his life. He didn't know what she was talking about, and here I come.

Next up

SA: What about your next film? JD: The next one is coming up in November, it's a kind of buddie film. It's about a Black

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In the last six months, the political situation in the six counties of Northern Ireland has received more news coverage than in the last 10 years. Due to media censorship very few people in this country have either known or

cared what went on in the north of Ireland. People on the left in Britain who marched against apartheid and supported the Intifada become strangely quiet when the subject of Ireland crops up. Yet over 3000 people have

been killed since 1969, thousands more injured. These last 25 years are merely the latest phase in a war which has been going on for over 800 years, and the most recent 'development' is the Downing Street **Declaration.**



The present phase began with the building of the civil rights movement in 1968. At this time, as at present, the catholic minority in the six counties suffered considerable discrimination in housing, employment and basic human rights. For example, the right to vote was only given to householders, but it was extremely difficult for catholics to obtain housing. The partition of Ireland in 1922, despite the overwhelming vote in favour of Sinn Fein (nationalist party) in the all-Ireland election of 1918, led to a dominant unionist majority, who exercised their dominance by practising routine discrimination against catholics. The civil rights movement was met with state repression, eg, police beatings of protestors, and ultimately the redeployment of British troops onto the streets of Northern Ireland in August 1969, allegedly to 'protect' the catholics. For 25 years the British state has used a variety of tactics of oppression against the nationalist people of the six counties. These include the use of rubber bullets (subsequently replaced by plastic bullets) by troops and police who opened fire on civil rights protestors. Since 1972, 17 people, seven of them children, have been killed by plastic bullets; countless others have been badly injured. Internment was introduced, whereby anyone suspected of involvement in 'terrorist offences' could be imprisoned indefinitely without trial. The SAS operates in the six counties, carrying out a 'shoot to kill' policy. Hundreds of people have been killed by members of the security forces, yet only one soldier has been convicted of murder - and he was given his job back after two years!

oners losing acknowledgement as political prisoners, and the ensuing hunger strikes for the re-instatement of this special category status. Britain has been severely criticised by the European Courts, Amnesty International and Liberty for its abuse of civil rights in Northern Ireland.

Street Declaration itself, it is important to examine the context in which the declaration came about. Following successive failed British policies, Sinn Fein (who received 12.5% of votes cast in the most recent six county elections) puba joint statement was issued on 25th September '93. John Hume has described these talks as representing the best chance of peace in 25 years. The contents of their discussions were presented to John Major, who again ignored them.

Arse-licking for votes

What the talks between Adams and Hume did do, though, was to put pressure on the British government, which was seen by many, particularly abroad, to be obstructive by their invalidation of talks. This pressure increased when details of 'communications' between the British government and Sinn Fein became public in November. Britain clearly had to respond in some way. It has since become clear that the communications between Sinn Fein and the British government had ceased in the summer of '93 due to John Major's reliance on the unionist votes in the House of Commons. The pushing through of

Blaah, Blaah, Blaah

As usual, the fatal flaw with the declaration is that it doesn't address the root cause of the conflict - Britain's presence in Ireland. The 'troubles' of Northern Ireland are presented as tribal warring between two rival religious groups, with Britain as peacekeepers. This enables the government to persuade an all too easily convinced British public that billions of pounds are better spent on maintaining a military presence in Ireland than on the National Health Service, Social Security, etc. The declaration doesn't acknowledge the discrimination and oppression suffered by the nationalist people of the six counties; whilst talking of the necessity for Sinn Fein to renounce violence, there is nothing to say that British troops, who are responsible for much of the violence, will similarly lay down arms. The declaration offers little or nothing to nationalist people, who



Women have often found themselves at the forefront of the struggles undertaken by nationalists; it was women who formed a large part of the civil rights marchers; who formed the backbone of the relatives' action committees during the hunger strikes, supporting the strikers and campaigning on their behalf; it was women who were left to face the destruction caused by troops and police when they entered houses to arrest and intern their partners/brothers/fathers; women who suffer sexual harassment on the streets from troops; and women who have borne the brunt of strip-searching policies pursued by the Armagh then Maghaberry prison authorities.

Top of the Flops

During the present phase there have been several attempts by the British government to solve the 'problem' of Northern Ireland. In 1972, the Stormont Parliament was abolished, and direct rule from Westminster was imposed. In 1973 there were the Sunningdale talks, which led in 1974 to a power sharing proposal involving unionists, the nationalist SDLP, the British and the Irish governments. This was known as the Northern Ireland Executive. This failed however, when loyalists called a general strike and unionists refused to participate in the talks. The next 'breakthrough' was the Anglo-Irish agreement of 1985. This again involved the British and Irish governments, and was hailed as the way forward to a resolution of the conflict but faded into oblivion. And now we have the 'Downing Street Declaration', the latest of Britain's failed policies.

Rosemount, Derry. An army observation tower overlooking a housing estate. From this tower, the **Photo: Joanne O'Brien/Format** army can listen to conversations inside people's homes.

lished a paper, Scenario for Peace, which outlined its strategy for peace in Ireland. Sinn Fein has been consistently excluded by Britain, who the Maastricht Treaty would have been impossible without the support of the unionists and so he couldn't afford to alienate their allegiance by acknowledging any possibility of a withdrawal from Ireland. Rather than responding positively to the Hume/Adams agreement, on 15th December '93 John Major and the Irish Prime Minister, Albert Reynolds, announced the signing of the Downing Street Declaration, between the British and Irish governments. Despite being hailed as a major development, and the basis for a lasting peace, the declaration itself only reiterates the government's pandering to the unionist veto by assuring unionists that the people of Ireland as a whole will not be allowed to determine their own future.

have borne the brunt of the occupation of Ireland.

This may be the first step in a peace process. But in order for there to be a just and lasting peace, the injustices and inequalities of the six counties must be eradicated. This can only begin with a withdrawal of Britain from Ireland, leaving the Irish people as a whole to determine their future. It is time that people in Britain took an interest in what is happening in the six counties. The death and suffering cannot be ignored. The British government must be urged to begin all-inclusive talks with Irish political parties and to commit itself to withdrawal, the only realistic way of bringing about peace. How much longer can they talk about talks?

Criminalisation

As well as the day to day repression of the army patrolling nationalist areas, a policy of criminalisation was pursued. This saw the introduction of the Diplock Courts, where the defendant does not have the right to a trial by jury; the **Emergency Provisions Act, permit**ting detention of a suspect without charge for seven days; and eventually, republican and loyalist pris-

An Irish solution?

So will the declaration bring peace? Before looking at the Downing claims that it has no mandate to speak for the nationalist people this despite its showing in the elections, and the fact that it had an MP up until the last general election.

As a follow up to this paper the document Towards a Lasting Peace was published. Both documents declared that all peace processes pursued by Britain had been based on partition, and were thus doomed to failure. A negotiated settlement with all parties, including Sinn Fein, was inevitable, and it was time that Britain accepted an Irish solution. Gerry Adams, on behalf of Sinn Fein, and John Hume, the leader of the SDLP, became involved in extensive talks, as a result of which

Happy New Year

The peasant uprising in the Southern Mexican state of Chiapas began on 1 January. The date was chosen to protest against the signing by President Salinas of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which came into force with the New Year. The effects of NAFTA would drive down wages, force migration, and give yet more land to the multinationals and big landowners.

The population of Chiapas is 80% indigenous people, descendants of the Mayan Indians. The big landowners see them as a cheapo source of labour, and the government regards them as non-persons with no rights. But the Indians of Chiapas have a long history of resistance to the exploitation of the system imposed on them by the Spanish colonialists and their successors.

January 1 was also an important date for strategic regions. Most of the cops and soldiers were pissed out of their skulls at the time! The Zapatistas were then able to smoothly occupy five towns. On 2 January the Zapas left the towns on a march to the forest of Lacandona, where they created a "liberated zone".

From a number of accounts it appears women have been active participants in this uprising, which is strongly influenced by anti-authoritarian revolutionary traditions. Hopefully, it's not just another case of "Tote your gun, sister – but back to the kitchen when the fighting's done".

went into the Lacandona jungle with Subcommander Marcos and the Zapatista delegates who were returning from negotiations with the Mexican government in San Cristóbal. In a red, railed lorry loaded with armed insurgents wearing balaclavas, hanging onto a bar, I watched the unpassable rearguard of the Zapatistas growing further away, from where some journalists were eyeing me jealously and cursing their own bad luck. We



Zapatista's Here

Among the Insurgents in Zapatista territory, March '94.

also frying tortillas. These three things compose the miserable daily diet of the indige-

their day. Lorries arrive, full of women Zapatistas. When it's already night, when the airforce no longer keeps us on guard and you don't have to keep under cover, the party begins. The whole town turns out, women, children, old folks. Marcos forms up a column of male insurgents opposite one of women. "Now the companions are going to give a rebel salute to the women companions on International Women's Day," proclaims the Sub. Afterwards some Zapatistas make speeches. They talk of the women of Chicago, of the struggle, and sing revolutionary songs. It's Captain Irma who moves us most with her speech: "The majority of the women can't even read or write because they only want to keep them humiliated like always," and goes on, "Women companions of all the country, so things don't continue like that, we have to join with the men in taking up arms, now we're tired of it, now we don't want to live like animals, with someone always telling us what to do and what not to do ... "

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drove down a dirt track and into guerilla territory. The driver and Marcos were talking about the taking of the town of Ocosingo, the subcommander asking for explanations, in a friendly tone: What happened with the lorry that got bogged down? What did they do in the market? Why didn't they withdraw from the town in time?...

The lorry pulls up in the middle of the track and we climb down. We are received by Major Mario and his troops, about 90 men and women. We're allowed to interview, talk and take photos, something we can never do without an explicit order; we're also subject to military discipline. Mario forms up in front of Marcos. Then they talk like old friends: they haven't seen each other since before 1 January.

Again the lorry makes its way along the earthen road. Further ahead it stops again and we are informed that we'll be left here. There's nothing but vegetation all round, but Marcos goes behind a bush and up a path. He reappears with Captain Irma and tells us that she will take charge of us. Marcos jumps back on the lorry and is lost in the distance. Irma, an indigenous woman 26 years old, carries a sub-machine gun, 'recovered', she says, from a court policeman during the taking of Ocosingo. She gives instructions: "No photos without asking first and with balaclavas on; the companions will watch you." We arrive at the top of a little hill, there are 20 militia people among us who begin taking off their uniforms and dressing as civilians. They pack their rucksacks, leave some of their arms and go. They've been on duty for two weeks and now they're going home. That's the difference between the insurgents, who are the regular army, and the militia: the former live always in the mountains, they wear black pants and dark coffee coloured caps, while the militia are country people who only act when called on, and wear olive green pants and caps.

nous people. But the insurgents are privileged, they have a sack full of dried salted beef: the cows of the oppressors, the ranchers, are providing protein to the risen people.

We eat till we're full. Arturo and Lieutenant Leonel, two Tzeltal indians, ask me where Spain is. I tell them the world is a ball and my land is across the sea. They look at me and laugh. Later they're fascinated to find out that my first language is Catalan, like theirs is Tzeltal, and that we've all learned 'the Spanish' later. We begin an exchange of words, Tzeltal and Catalan.

Little by little the night falls. The people from a village approach the little camp, exchange greetings: "Buenas tardes, compa." They also start talking to us, explaining the origins of the EZLN, until Captain Irma takes our informant aside. The explanations finish. She must have told him not to shoot his mouth off, because he doesn't say anything more.

Rifles in bed

Two Zapatistas take out their guitars and the villagers sit round them. They begin playing and singing songs, their rifles between their knees. The night falls and with it the cold. The people from the village say goodbye and return to their homes. We move into a type of rustic wooden bunk beds. We sleep beside the Zapatistas, among their rifles, which they don't let go of, even in bed. A day later, at midnight, the 'Sub', as the soldiers call Marcos, arrives to collect us. Once more we travel in the railed lorry, to a different place. Here the facilities are less. They install us in a school (four posts with laminated roof and wood floor) and put a guard on us. As the days pass I get used to going to the toilet behind a bush with a guerilla posted, gripping his rifle, not three meters away. The military discipline surprises us, as well as the level of organisation. Every day we're more amazed and say to ourselves, "How have these unfortunate people been able to put together such a great army?"

Party!

The music begins. The women of the village dance together: tiny and incredibly thin, they contrast with the Zapatista women who are clean, well fed and self-confident. They don't speak Spanish, they have no learning, barefoot, in coloured skirts, carrying their babies with them from the age of 13. The insurgent women are talking, laughing and appealing to their men companions, following and captivating them. They've learned Spanish and writing in the EZLN, they pull the men out to dance, they ask me to take photos. The darkness is total in this open air dance, where couples, civilians and armed, balaclava'd rebels, mix together. The following night, shut up in the school, we see arriving the representatives of the villages and communities who have to meet with the Comité Clandestino (underground committee) to take the government's proposals to their respective assemblies. They are hundreds and hundreds of country people in their white hats. Marcos tells us that to get a reply it's necessary to follow a long democratic process that will take weeks. This is the way the indigenous people do things and the essence of Zapatism. In this way the war was decided, and in this way must be decided the peace. **Guiomar Rovira Sancho**

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The cows of the oppressors

We go into a palm-roofed, earth-floored hut, with inch-wide gaps between the slats that form the walls. "All this is very poor, very poor. You should see the villages, pure misery," says Irma. At one end of the rectangular room there's a wood fire and some pots where they're cooking frijoles and coffee and

The men get cooking

8 March approaches and the Sub orders four pigs to be killed for the Women's Party, as they do every year. The men do the cooking, the women are exempt from all duties, it is

Bad Fiction • Bad Fiction

don't think anyone realises how ill I am. I've been lying in bed all day too weak to move and not one of my household have come up to my room to visit me. I thought they cared but now I see it all. I could be dead and they wouldn't even know.

This is all the more cruel since it's actually their fault. They took me out raving, they obliged me to take drugs. Now look at what's happened. Take drugs, get sick: it's all too tedious for words. Seems like I'm just not one of God's ravers.

And to make matters worse, we're getting evicted next week. How will I ever move my stuff when I'm as ill as this? What if I can't get anyone to help? I'll lose all my possessions and probably die in the attempt. Then I'll be dead as well as destitute - and both in the same day, too.

But that's not to forget just how bad I feel now, with my body hurting all over and too hot or too cold, though I can't decide which. I can't get comfortable whichever way I lie and I'm sweaty and smelly and it's all quite unpleasant. Manky clothes and bits of rubbish are gathering round the bed like hyenas. I can certainly tell I'm not well. I could really do with a glass of water but all the strength has left my body and I'd never make it to the bedroom door, let alone down to the kitchen. For a few hours I think about crying out for help, but the embarrassment prevents me, besides which, I haven't the energy. I feel so lonely it's almost indescribable and though I've been in bed for less than a day it seems like weeks since I last saw a human face - or even a feline face or a hamster-ine one, for that matter. Why haven't my girlfriend or my boyfriend come round to see me? Surely one of the fickle bastards could have got here in a situation like this. The obvious reason is that they're in bed with other people. Which is absolutely typical and means I'm going to have to leave them both - if I survive that long, that is. And all the time I'm getting hotter and hotter (or is it colder and colder?). I'm drifting in and out of sleep and I don't quite know what's going on. And then I have the most horrible dream.



What a terrible business it is. I have to wipe a few sneaky tears from my eyes. You might not think I'd be sad to leave a place in this condition. Two years without a bathroom or hot water, freezing cold in winter. But still with so much work I kind of felt we'd made it ours. What a shame the courts don't agree.

So we pack our belongings into boxes and binliners, pile it all into borrowed vans and shopping trolleys and prepare ourselves to leave. Our pets are upset and so are we. Over the last few weeks as we searched for new places we've all been going a bit mental. Even the two ravers of the household have been showing the strain, which isn't like them at all. For my part I've been taking it embarrassingly badly, with



which I could definitely do without: the devilthing hasn't gone away. At first all I see is his horned silhouette. I peer harder and notice that he's deep blue in colour.

"There's no need to be afraid," he says. Even in my terrified state I resent this, since there's clearly every reason to be scared out of my wits.

"I've come to make you an offer," he states in his appalling bass-speaker voice. "You're going to get a key meter for the electricity. But you've got options. Don't forget."

Why on earth has he come to tell me this, I want to ask? But since I still can't move a muscle, the conversation looks to stay pretty one-sided.

"I can make you a deal," says the devil-type creature. "Think about it. I'll be back."

Think about what, I try to say? But the fucker has vanished. No messing with doors when you're a demon.



"Are we getting a key meter?" I ask as he pulls on his clothes.

I dream that I'm still sick in bed, but I wake up with a jolt to find a stranger's come into my room. Act like you're not scared, I decide. So I try to speak to demand 'What the fuck ... ?', but I get no response from my mouth. I try to scream, but again no result.

The figure takes a step towards me. I'm concerned to find that I'm paralysed with fear. My eyes strain in the darkness and I make out two horns on its head. There are tiny blue sparks leaping and flickering between them. This devilish figure takes another step forward, which is more than I can stand. And my eyes spring open. At first I'm still numb and paralysed but then my body begins to unfreeze and I reach for the light. After a minute or two of staring dementedly round the room I begin to believe there may be really no one there. My heart is pounding at a mad rate and I'm even sweatier than before. Jesus, that was the fright of a lifetime. Fucking hell I'm sick. And why hasn't anyone come to look after me?

lengthy panic attacks during which I can't breathe or sleep to any useful extent. Free valium for squatters, why don't they give it out with council housing forms?

I take a last sentimental tour of the house and wave goodbye to my sea-green bedroom and look at the bright winter sky through the holes in the roof. I hug and kiss my housemates and the cats and wiggle my finger at the hamster - a gesture it's never seemed to appreciate, as it happens.

Our household is going its separate ways and once again I wish I'd found somewhere better to live. As I carry my boxes into my boyfriend's flat, there's a feeling like lead in my stomach. It says I really don't want to move in with him.

My boyfriend, Stuart, has acquired the keys to someone else's council flat. I've only been seeing him for six months and I'd never have thought of us living together, but I don't know where else I can go. If the council finds out we're not the real tenant we'll be evicted (or is it executed?). Plus it leaves me nowhere to sleep with my girlfriend. But what can I do? I'm just stuck. My boyfriend is a pessimistic ex-punk with a fair sense of humour and occasional bad tempers. I think he's asked me to move in because he'd like to settle down, though this is not my heart's desire. Still I feel kind of calm when I'm with him, which I like, and also weirdly mature. It's a feeing that's somehow familiar, though I don't know when it's happened before. So we carry my things over the threshold and pile it all up in the bedroom. Soon the carpet is nowhere to be seen. How did I ever get to have so much stuff, I keep wondering? I

was wrong about the move not being a threat to my health: all that lifting and carrying has left me half dead. And why hadn't I noticed how small the flat is?

"I think we're going to need some shelves," observes Stuart.

Furthermore the real tenant has had the electricity turned off, which seems unjustifiably unfriendly. So for the moment we have to live in candlelight. I ought to be playing my records to help me settle in, but this is now made sadly impossible. It's like cats doing whatever they do when they move house, though I can't remember what that is.

I try to cover up how unhappy I'm feeling, since this wouldn't be fair on my flatmate. We get a few cans to celebrate and things start to look a little less gloomy.

"Course we are," he explains. "Oh."

"Bastards aren't going to give us credit, are they? Bad risk area. They won't give you quarterly bills anymore. Great, eh?" He puts on his boots. "Money runs out in the middle of the night, you're fucked. And if you're broke, likewise. No cash, no lecky."

The door slams behind him and I ponder this piece of news. It's certainly unnerving. I'm not immediately sold on this business of dreaming things that turn out to be true. My heart has started the familiar beating-too-fast routine that marks the onset of a panic attack. What a pain. I thought I'd be done with all this anxiety once I'd got through the eviction. Now it seems like there's no end to it. I lie in bed looking at the pile of boxes and bin-liners filling the room and wonder if I'll ever reach a point in my life where I'm free of serious worry.

I plan to ask Stuart what he thinks about the dream. However, twenty minutes later he returns in a door-slamming fury. From my not-very-relaxed position in bed, I learn that his signing-on officer has marked him as latesigning twice running, though he was only half an hour late, and has warned him that if it happens again he'll have to sign on every day of the week and lose his benefit for any day that he misses.

"Oh, that's terrible," I say, somewhat stating the obvious. "I've never heard of that happening to anyone else."

ne week after that night comes the day of our eviction. Fortunately I've recovered from the flu and I can move my things with no immediate threat to life.

18 bad attitude

've been suffering a lot of insomnia of late, but tonight I am soon in a beerassisted sleep.

But then to interrupt my peace the dreadful devil-thing reappears, the same one I dreamt about when I was ill. My eyes are closed but my eyelids become transparent and so does the wall of the bedroom, because I suddenly see him in the hall. He pushes the bedroom door open, walks in and stands over the bed.

I try to nudge Stuart awake but once again I can't move. I hear him snoring away beside me, oblivious.

"Help!" I try to whisper, but again I can't make a sound.

"Open your eyes," says the demon. His voice is gut-manglingly deep.

My eyes open and something happens

This seems to be the wrong thing to say, because Stuart starts stamping round the room again. Cosy, cosy, I think. Just me, him and his bad temper in a flat the size of a shoebox. Never mind that I don't feel so great myself, with the anxiety attack settling in for the day.

So I decide it would be nice to go and walk aimlessly around the park. It's cold, windy and generally nasty, but still preferable to dire claustrophobia. When I get back I find that Stuart's gone out and I've therefore missed my chance to make demeaning attempts to cheer him up.

o I don't get round to mentioning my dream to him that day. Apart from anything else, I feel so weary and so panicky that I couldn't hold a conversation if I tried. The world around me seems

too remote to contact and I realise my dream shows once and for all what a ridiculous person I am.

By nighttime I'm dog-tired but very reluctant to go to sleep. I blow out the candles in the bedroom and lie in the dark, stiff and alert, ready to fight off any apparitions that are considering coming my way. The hours crawl by and Stuart snores on and off by my side and I elbow him violently in the ribs, which is what he deserves for sleeping so soundly.

"It doesn't make any difference whether you go to sleep or not," says a low voice in the wall beside my head. The demon steps into the room and leans casually by the bed. "Have you been thinking about what I said?" he asks.

Of course I bloody have, I think.

"Yes, I thought you would," he answers. "I've got some things I want to show you. It's decision time. Close your eyes."

The creature bends down and does just about the most horrible thing he could, which is to touch me. He reaches a large hand towards my face and puts it over my eyes. His touch is disgustingly cold and this cold floods in an instant over my face and down my body. For a suffocating moment I think I've fainted, but then I find I can still think, only I seem to be floating near the ceiling somewhere. I look down and see myself and Stuart lying in bed below me. my future self turns over in her sleep, causing the duvet to slip off and knock over one of the candles. A second later flames are jumping gently up the edge of the duvet. Then thankfully the vision disappears.

"Will you just piss off," I hear myself say in a whisper. These are the first words I've spoken to the demon in all three times I've seen him. To my mind this is getting to be too much.

"That vision is a few months' time," he says, remorselessly. "You run out of money for the meter and forget to blow out the candles. It's stupid. You should have been more careful."

Well, yes, put like that it does look stupid. But at least now I'll know and I won't let it happen.

"It doesn't work like, that. You won't remember these visions," says The Thing beside me. "But as I said, you've got options – and I don't mean Economy 7. There's another possibility. Look."

I look down again and see a scene I don't recognise at all. It's a small room full of clutter. At the sink in one corner is an old woman opening a tin. She looks a bit familiar.

"It's you," I'm informed by the demon.

'Kin'ell. Well, now I look again it's obvious. It is indeed me, but very old. My God, what was the point of all that Nivea, I ask? I watch as I finish opening the tin, which looks to be catfood, then sit down in an armchair and tuck in with a fork. My very old self gets halfway through the tin, then puts it on the floor beside her and unbuttons her cardigan. "Fuck, it's warm in here," she murmurs. "It isn't warm," reports the demon know-all. "Hypothermia. You think you're hot, but "It's not true, is it?" I plead.

"It's your other possible death," the blue devil-thing answers. "But look, it's not so bad. At least you had a long life."

"Long and happy?" I suggest.

"Whatever," he replies. "Anyway, it's time to make your choice. You can take the longer life, but there's a price."

"Uh?"

"Quite a traditional one, I'm afraid. Modern times, you know, it doesn't change so much. And I'm sorry, but I'm going to have to rush you."

I take the form he offers me and peer at it in the darkness. With unpleasant irony, he picks up a candle from the floor and lights it so that I can see to read. Skipping nervously down the print, my eye catches the word 'soul'.

"You're kidding," I say, still whispering. "You can't do that."

"We've got an arrangement, you see. With the London Electricity Board. Obviously the directors should be going to hell for what they've done, but they've offered us something better. They're off the hook if they can come through with enough souls to make it worth our while. Ten for every one of theirs, if I remember right. It's nice, I have to say, but

Megadrive, for instance."

The demon looks at me with the flicker of a raised eyebrow.

"And I'd like some games to go with it: Sonic 1, 2 and 3. And Aladdin."

He strokes his beard. "Aladdin as well. Hm, no. That's pushing it."

"OK, but all three Sonics."

"All right, I think we could run to that." He hands me a pen and with a shaky hand

I sign the form.

"Good," he says. "I'm glad we could do business. Thank you for your cooperation. Goodbye then. Or rather, till I see you again."

"Er, yeah. Right, goodbye." But before I even speak the words, he's gone.



So were my weird dreams for real? And what the hell have I done? I need advice. I need to visit my friend Dawn. She'll know what's going on.

"What do you think?" I ask her at the end of my story. "Is it really possible? And did I have any choice?"

Hey, trippy, I think. The old out-of-bodyexperience bit.

"No it's not," says that unbearable voice beside me. "It's the future. I'm showing you a vision of the very near future. It's your death."

Oh Jesus Christ, oh God, I'm sorry for things I did, but please make this stop, oh God... I look down again and notice two candles burning in jars beside the bed. I watch as you're dying of cold." The old woman sits back in her chair and

closes her eyes. I find myself lying in bed again and no longer floating around, which is something, at least. not the first time we've done deals of this nature.

"But as I say, I've got a schedule. So which is it to be?"

My God, what do I do? I'm in a quandary here. But then I get a spark of inspiration. A bit of negotiation, that's what's called for. I know what's what. I went on holiday to Turkey once – in these situations you have to haggle. So I think it over for a second, but there isn't much doubt in my mind.

"Well, I think I might be interested, but I don't know about the price. Maybe if you threw in something extra, like a Sega She's been doing the washing up as I speak to her. Now she stops and dries her hands. She turns to me, looking very bemused, which makes two of us. "Maybe," she says. "I don't honestly know. I've never heard of anything like it. So you reckon you've sold your soul in exchange for quarterly electricity bills and a Sega machine?"

"Yes, I think so," I reply.

"Well," she says after another pause, "I hate to say this, but I think you could have done better."

Katy

'Should men mind their manners?', 'Feminism tanism', 'Should you mind your language?' were only a few of the workshops advertised as part of the annual RCP conference, 'The Perils of PC', last November. Where once students had attended leftie conferences like Young Socialists and Young Communist League to discuss organising against racism, fascism and injustice, now, a sign of the times, coachloads, thousands, of young people would be treated to two days of proto-right wing, Orwellian Newspeak.

Well, needless to say a few of us old-fashioned, feminist harridans were horrified. We wrote the response printed below and knee-jerked on down to the University of London Student Union. We stationed ourselves outside the main entrance where conference-goers, thinking they were being handed schedules of the event, happily accepted our leaflet. The main response we received, upon discovery of what we were really distributing, came from several peeved young men, who triumphantly informed us that they were 'Marxism Now', not 'Marxism Today'. This, they told us, obviously discredited our leaflet. about the few constraints on violent/child pornography, or occasional constraints on sexual harassment or verbal abuse, our lives are on the line. We, by the way, are a group of "dour, hate-filled, hatchet-faced feminists" (Guardian, 8/11/93). We subscribe to the simplistic, old fashioned, reprehensibly prepostmodern beliefs that:

Rape and sexual harassment exist. Frequently.

They are Bad Things.

Male violence damages women, children and men.

This is a Bad Thing.

Men control culture.

Women don't get much say.

Men have created a violent, alienated, pornographic

rape culture.

This damages everyone.

but honest. And we are going to hound you until you realise that:

OUR LIVES ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOUR PRICKS.

Therefore, we would ask you to consider our point of view today as you sit comfortably discussing the finer points of:

• 'Should You Mind Your Language?' (Read: Of course not! You should give vent to your hostility to women and minorities at your discretion. Under no circumstances should you be constrained by cunts, wogs, perverts and crips from exercising your sacred white male imperative and spewing forth invective!)

• 'Feminism and Sexual Correctness' (Read: It is very important if there is a hole in the vicinity that you get your prick in it. Fast. Consent, communication, and the humanity of female human beings is irrelevant here.)

• 'The New Puritanism' (Read:

All in all, a good day's work.

If you are interested in doing

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future zaps, get in touch. Send letters, marked prominently: FFFF, to Bad Attitude, 121 Railton Road, Brixton SE24, and they will be forwarded.

NOW, 'The Perils of PC' is certainly a catchy title designed to pull the punters and help Marxism Today (and their Daily Telegraph friends) make a buck. It's certainly pulled you! But while you sit here today and moan

The Perils of Male Power are greater than The Perils of PC

Things are getting worse because of violent, male control.

Our Lives Are More Important Than Your Pricks.

Now, despite our physiognomatic deformities (that's ugly faces to you), moral reductionism, and chronic frigidity, we actually have more fun than you! Yes sir! That's because we tell the truth! We call a prick a prick. We call capitalism capitalism, and technocratic mind fuck... well, we call it just that. We are poor Getting a leg over is, again, the issue here. Never mind consent, never mind the violently repressive, authoritarian nature of the porn industry. Never mind the millions of women throughout the world who have no choice but to grin and spread their legs or STARVE. Your prick is what's important.)

So, we are asking you to remove your heads from your trousers for a

moment to consider: who really has power over public opinion? Who is it that REALLY gets censored? White men and their pornographic imagination? (We don't think so!) While the RCP host cozy panels with the Daily Telegraph, WHO is left without a voice? A white male libertarian state is NOT the answer.

LET'S GET OUR PRIORITIES STRAIGHT!

By FFFF - Feminists For a Fun, Free Future.

SNAPPY BOOK REVIEWS

Fiction

Without Wings Jackie Manthorne, gynergy books (Turnaround), £7.99. A collection of stories, the characters linking tangentially to make a book – continuing characters & style of *Bar Stories*. Written with skill, depth & credibility & informed with a feminist sensibility, it's a book you could take on holiday with you & not regret packing.

Women Writing In India vol. 2, ed. Susie Tharu & K Lalita, Pandora £16.99. This is a huge volume. The quality & care of research is breathtaking: A readable yet precise & illuminating introduction; historical & literary histories to place the collection in context; an outstanding range of authors collected, with individual biographical details. It exudes pride & belief. Serious readers of women's writing are going to want this book.

Keeping Secrets, Penny Micklebury, Naiad (Airlift), £7.99. Compulsive, well-written detective novel, the plot circles around the problems of yuppiedom & coming out. The author is one of the few black writers on the Naiad list. As with all Naiads, works as escapist fantasy or potentially camp birthday gift.

Head Above Water, Second Class Citizen, In The Ditch, Buchi Emechete, Heinemann, £5.99. Reissues of B.E.'s books. Not a politically unproblematic read, the author is often not 'right-on' in her semi-autobiographical writing. Truly fascinating as a documentary of poverty & racism in London. I'd say 'in the Sixties' but it hasn't changed that much, there's a narrative drive that make these books unputdownable. Japanese bestseller & a surprisingly hip & swinging alternative to the masochistic, 'sadistic samurai' novels seen recently. Food, mothers, transexuals, spookiness & death weave a modern yet dreamy discourse in *Kitchen*. Sister-brother sex, the quest to translate a set of poems with a suicidal curse upon them, love's regeneration, spookiness & death produce a less satisfying *NP*. More sexually than politically 'liberated' & reminiscent of a depressive Francoise Sagan.

International Feminist Fiction, ed, Julia Penelope & Sarah Valentine, Crossing Press (Airlift), £10.99. Varied & interesting collection of stories. Some names are familiar, many, for me, were a new find. Exciting & invigorating compilation, with the emphasis on 'feminist' rather than women's writing.

In Her I Am, Chrystos, Press Gang (Turnaround), £7.99. A pastoral, sexy & reflective collection from Native American, lesbian poet. Chrystos discusses SM practises & 'community' responses, ethics & responsibility, both in poetry & an afterword. It sounds heavy but actually is sensual & lascivious poetry with politics.

Non-fiction

How To Suppress Women's Writing, Joanna Russ, Women's Press £6.99. Reissue of Women's Studies compulsory text. Witty & zippy race through the history & methods of suppression of women's writing. A mercifully upbeat read. Updated to be more inclusive of people of colour & the working classes. That said, there are few of these groups actually quoted. Lesbian & Gay Studies Reader, ed. Henry Abelove, Michele Ana Barale, David M. Halperin, Routledge, £14.99. After feminism, homosexuality gets the academic treatment. There's a good representation of I & g of colour, & a good few feminist theorists. Audre Lorde, Monique Wittig, Adrienne Rich are in, Chrystos, the Radicalesbians & Sheila Jeffries are not. Butler & Kosofsky Sedgewick lend intellectual weight & at the size of a small telephone directory, it surely weighs in as value for money. Critical Condition, Women On The Edge Of Violence, ed. Amy Schroder, City Lights Books (Turnaround), £8.99. A book form of an American exhibition dealing with violence against women. Photos, transcripts of performance art readings, stories etc. Refreshing proof that not all artists replicate a gynophobic culture. An impressive, well put together collection that has an 'up' feel & is thoughtful. Give them an Arts Council Grant.

from the activist photos by Pam Isherwood to stylish, tits-out-&proud images of Lola Flash & Laurence Jaugey-Paget.

Playing In The Dark, Toni Morrison, Picador, £4.99. Transcription of three lectures & resultantly less complex than her fiction. They also bear the hallmark of a white audience: Several works by famous, white authors are examined for evidence of the damage racism affords white people. OK as far as it goes but TM on TM would be more satisfying.

Challenging Conceptions, Lisa Saffron, Cassell £9.99. As previewed in BA ish 4, the groundbreaking look at pregnancy & parenting beyond the traditional family. Examination of not just 'Hows' but also 'Whys': Parenting as conscious choice. A fascinating examination of lesbians' lives in the late 20th century.

Bodies That Matter, Judith Butler, Routledge, £10.99. Queen of Postmodernism, whose previous bests have included examining the lesbian phallus, deconstructing gender & proving that sex is not naturalistically predetermined, now has the body itself in her headlights, scarey: What constitutes 'woman'? Why link it to reproduction? Important questions.

Contemporary Lesbian Writing, Pauline Palmer, Open University Press, £12.99. Accessible overview of fiction & theory. Possibly the first in Britain. The mix of personal activist history & opinions with 'objective' argument is pleasantly feminist. Grumbling: Could be longer; history of lesb. theory is condensed & reduced to two camps with x & y 'religious' beliefs. Similarly, only an 'elite corps' of fiction is discussed & nothing before 1970!

Wouldn't Take Nothing For My Journey Now, Maya Angelou, Virago, £9.99. Hardback edition for one of America's best-known poets. Not poetry but a collection of thoughts on subjects such as integrity, covert sadism & fighting back. Pricey but will be extremely welcome to those that carry M.A.'s books around with them. And before you say anything, yes, I do know someone who does. Mustn't Grumble, ed. Lois Keith, Women's Press, £7.99. Loads of BA contributors in this one! Collection of writing by disabled women, which is an eloquent & essential addition to the WP disabilities list. Contributions are narrative, semi-autobiographical, poetry, humorous, experimental, angry, questioning... Excellent! Lesbians Talk Making Black Waves by Valerie Mason-John and Ann Khambatta, Scarlet Press, pb. The concise and inclusive discussions outlined in this milestone of a book provide the first documentation on the lives of Black lesbians in Britain. It tells ". the herstory: the first-ever conferences, groups and publications in the UK; lesbian lifestyles in other countries • the debates: Black as an umbrella term, race versus sexuality, separatism • the struggles: coming out, homophobia in the Black communities, racism in the lesbian and gay communities • the future: the desire to create a strong sense of community" - and it does all this, also providing the essential lists of groups, contacts, further reading, films and videos. Dynamic and inspiring, we've waited too long.

Fat Skeletons, Ursule Molinaro, Serif, £7.99. Set in New York present & Prague of the recent past, the 'story' is a plot of literary ownership & theft, mother/daughter bonds, love & other 'big' themes. Slick & hip but a bit glib.

Love, Jacky Fleming, Penguin, £4.99. Cartoons from probably the best known feminist cartoonist around. This is pretty much exclusively heterosexual stuff but it's guarantied to raise a smirk or five from everyone and some of the jokes could raise a laugh from a table.

Paperback Romance, Karen Kallmaker, Silver Moo, £6.99. I'm politically opposed to romantic fiction of all sexual persuasions and yet...This is a fond send-up of those kitsch, lesbian classic Naiad romances. A case of having your cake & eating it, the story combines frothy lurve quest with a tang of satire.

Fools, Pat Cadigan, Harper Collins, £4.99. A novel from the best known female cyber-punk (trendy SciFi) writer. Confused? You will be. Cadigan goes mental with the concept of identity: personalities for sale, personalities stolen, junkies addicted to other people's memories... Plus a good bit of futuristic urban low-life. Slightly annoying, fairly enjoyable.

NP & Kitchen, Banana Yoshimoto, Faber, £4.50 & £5.99.

heba Feminist Press has been publishing women's poetry, dreams, theories, rants politics and wanton sexual fantasies from 1980 until now. That's 14 years, several revolutions in feminist thinking and cause for celebration.

In this bright future, when you can buy

Postcards From The Edge, Scarlet Press, £7.99. 42 postcards, about 20p each. Bargain & a good option considering the scarcity of dyke images in shops. Across the political range,

collective members, to women such as Roz Asquith (cartoonist in The Guardian), Jackie Kay (poet), Carole Spedding (organiser of Feminist Book Fortnight), Sue O'Sullivan (feminist activist), etc, etc.

That willingness to see talent where mainstream publishers saw only their own prejudices and to perceive ommission with a feminist eye led on to publishing lesbians and women of colour. The admitted economic and critical success of Audre Lorde, Sarah Schulman, Suniti Namjoshi etc has led to a sort of amnesia regarding the recent history of silence of these women in publishing terms. It's worth thinking about the initial ground-breakers when you're curled in front of the fire reading a lesbian thriller from some opportunist press. As a feminist press, Sheba were centrestage in the 'sex wars' around lesbian sexuality. Publishing Joan Nestle's Restricted Country (which included writing on butchfemme relationships) and the Serious Pleasure series (an erotic fiction collection, which included SM relationships). Once again, controversial publishing moves at the



women's books in railway stations across the nation, in WH Smith's from Preston to Penzance, it's all too easy to forget the importance of an independent feminist publishers. But ask yourself this question: When you're seeing more of Camille Paglia than your own dear mum, does it fill you with the ecstasy of standing on the cusp of a rosy new dawn?

Indeed, there's more to being a feminist book than meets the eye.

Sheba are feminists that dare speak their name. As part of feminism, Sheba books have mirrored and instigated the changes of the feminist movement.

Initially established to publish the firsttimers and working-class women that other more mainstream presses to take a risk on, Sheba has been home, as authors and/or classics in a history of feminist voices. Serious Pleasure 1 and 2 are bedside favourites in many a dyke home and the speed with which they raced from booksellers' shelves was a sign other publishers took note of.

A feminist press is an important voice for women. The

books published present our Adynamic history and our present, provoking debate, joy, argument, laughter. (Sheba's published a good many cartoon anthologies.)

Feminist publishers produce work that validates our reality and writes towards the future, actually changing the way women read, creating and locating new sources of pleasure, exciting new tastes in a reading



A dynamic Sheba collective! Photo: Jean Fraser

public, surprising isolation into community by giving it a voice. All this combined with the sheer sensuous, nosey, invigorating, stimulating pleasure of reading itself.

Sheba is one of our finest feminist presses. Why are you still reading this article? Go out and get one of their books now.

Changing Our Minds: Lesbian Feminism and Psychology, Celia Kitzinger & Rachel Perkins, Onlywomen Press

FT GAME FROM GALIFORNIA!!!

Following a heated discussion in 1986, an American visitor said apologetically, "I'm sorry, I just had to vent myself."

My friend looked perplexed, then understanding dawned: "That's alright," she assured her, "I farted too."

Would we hear such a sensible reply nowadays? No, it would probably be: "I really hear what you're saying... I have similar energy around that issue." Once thought to be con-

fined to California and a few small areas of the USA, therapy, 'selfimprovement' campaigns, and their jargon have spread... and spread. Kitzinger and Celia Rachel Perkins look at this, and attack therapy in all its forms.

They don't just aim at

as 12-Schlepp particular brands such Programmes or the fondling of crystals, or criticise class/race elitism and inaccessibility. They've got no time for real feminist therapy on a sliding scale. Distinguishing between different therapies, they say, is like a vegetarian choosing between pork and beef. The book definitely has some funny moments. The authors quote real gems about integrating stuck energies, getting in touch with and healing inner children, reaching those centred places. Allegedly dedicated to 'honesty' and 'expressing feelings', this version of lady-like speech censors strong language, robbing conversation of any guts or humour. With this language come political assumptions taken up even by women who have nothing to do with therapy. And it seeps into the speech of normally sensible folk. Recently a fellow collective member described herself as a "control freak". Hmmm, does that translate to "bossy cow"?

ment", instead of "a political issue requiring social change". But here many women would object that therapy doesn't have to take away from activism. It has in fact helped many become stronger, more rebellious and able to fight for political change as well as survive.

The response: hear about the animal rights activist saying meat-eating gives her energy for animal rights demos? That argument views

> therapy as a hobby "with no ethical or political implications in and of itself." They acknowledge therapy has helped some women survive and feel better, but at great costs to "our lesbian politics and communities." For the influence of psychology has

left us with "communities made out of wounded individuals each defined by that which hurts her...places where we bind each others' wounds and nurture each others' recovery from a toxic world." As opposed to

"a radical and feminist community that is vital

and politically active - creating lesbian femi-

of needs that can and should be met by friends

and 'the lesbian community'. When we resort to

paid therapists, it shows a devastating weakness

in a community "deskilled by the belief that

coping with distress is a special job...we should

be looking at ways of supporting and helping

each other, and of dealing with our unhappiness

porting women experiencing mental illness or

'disabilities of thought and feeling. They suggest

the politics around physical disability be

expanded to include mental distress; that we

In our community we must find ways of sup-

Women 'helped' by therapy are really speak

nist possibilities in the world."

collectively and politically."

politics and culture more accessible to these women. They discuss what support and relief we can immediately provide, and the long-term need to develop safe tolerant places of refuge.

It's great how the authors storm into and rip apart the full range of accepted liberal concepts and phrases. But we're dealing with more than a piss-take. The book is also a piece of criticism and theory, and the underlying theory is a huge problem despite agreement with specific points. This is revealed when they blame therapy for the moral decay of the lesbian world!

"The question 'is this right or wrong?" becomes 'is this going to work for me?" Attempts to build a radical lesbian 'ethics' is "eroded by a psychological framework which

strokes for different folks".

So lesbians now wear make-up and dresses, bonk boys, indulge in bondage, and prefer watching safe sex videos to Reclaiming the Night! (Of course, dabmunity excluded many women and frankly wasn't much fun to be around.

Many arguments are rooted in the 'killjoy tendency' of radical feminism: if something makes us feel good or just somewhat better, we're sternly reminded it takes place under patriarchy and is therefore tainted by it. True, we need to look critically at where desires come from, but does that automatically mean abstinence and self-denial? The authors say psychology/feminists stay within Western individualism, yet many of their own views are equally culture-bound to stiff-upper-lip anglo Puritan traditions.

Also, the limited terms of their argument are not acceptable - therapeutic liberalism vs activist feminist moral values. Yes, we need

> more politics, sharp criticism and action. But political 'judgment' is not moral 'judgment'. The first comes from anger, desire, and other much-maligned 'gutfeelings', shared and acted collectively. Not on through allegiance to abstract 'ethics', to 'morals' outside us and our struggles. In writing it's the dif-





In the therapeutic outlook, oppression becomes "a private issue requiring adjust-

think of how we can reorganise to make feminist 0070 VOI chan PHOOLAN DEVIKIN JA!!! LONG LIVE PHOOLAN DEVI!!!



after 11 years. She was jailed without trial in 1983 after a spectacular public surrender. A low caste poor working class woman, at 24 years of age she had escaped capture by the police of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh states, after four years of 'terrorising' the rich land owners who exploit so many lower caste and non-caste people. India's Bandit Queen: the true story of Phoolan Devi details her life from early childhood to her long imprisonment. Mala Sen got her story after meeting with Phoolan in prison, and then via 'prison diaries' translated and passed on with Phoolan's consent. Despite the dull bits at the beginning about long conversations with high-up chappies in the police force, and the patronising description of toff journalist's first meeting with wild, wayward prole, the book is definitely worth a read. There's lots of background information on Phoolan's life, and the bandit culture in India,

bling in just one leads to the whole lot!) The authors call for more 'judgments', more

'values', making a point of saying 'right', 'wrong', 'bad', 'good' at every opportunity. I felt like I was getting a good scolding from teacher.

Therapy appears as the only cause behind declining activism. They don't say much about other political and economic factors. This reflects a view of the 'lesbian community' as totally separate from other communities. They speak of lesbianism as the only basis of community, while many of us take part in struggles and networks that aren't strictly lesbian. And does this community really exist in the first place for many lesbians? It's implied that there was community, activity and ethics aplenty in the good old days. But that wonderful com-



IM AUDIDING

BRD

backed up with interviews with tamily, friends and supporters. This sometimes makes for fragmented reading, especially with the reprinted newspaper articles and information on the politics of India at the time. But it does all come together, and Mala Sen has successfully put Phoolan's life into a political, religious and social context, which is pretty useful if you don't know much about India.

Phoolan suffered multiple oppression, but fought back from an early age. After years of persecution by her own cousin over land stolen from her family, she was kidnapped by a gang of bandits paid to get rid of her. Within two years she had formed her own gang and soon became famous as a working class hero, who took money back from the rich and returned to the poor. Allowing for a tad of romanticism, this does seem to be what the gang did. Two other motivations were to avenge the death of Phoolan's lover, killed by a rival gang, and to rip the bollocks off the Thakur (high-caste) men who had kidnapped and gang raped her. Phoolan had much to say - and more to do - about the rich bastards who, apart from keeping working class people in virtual slavery, regularly raped and abused women.

ference between an incitement to action and a scolding.

In conclusion, Changing Our Minds is 'good' as an attack on the reactionary aspects of therapy, and it is 'bad' in its underlying political basis - 70's feminism calling for its version of 'back to basics'. But it's readable theory without obscurity that got the brain cells going!

Rozanne

Cartoons adapted from Body Memories - Radical perspectives on childbood sexual abuse, Summer '92: 'Not a road to recovery, but a road to revolution.'



actions and views on caste and class exploitation, or more because she was a working class woman doing these things. Certainly, her popularity with so many low caste and Dalits* people all over India backs up the fact that the establishment, made up of rich high caste men, were mainly worried about her potential as a leader of organised working class fight back, whatever her sex. Reports suggest that since her release she plans to stand as a candidate for the Dalits in the Uttar Pradesh state elections.

Phoolan Devi with members of her gang

India's Bandit Queen: The true story of Pboolan Devi, Mala Sen, Pandora, £7.99

In mid-February, Phoolan Devi, aka India's 'Bandit Queen', was released from prison

It's hard to say how much of Phoolan's 'notoriety' was because of her revolutionary

The book isn't the exciting adventure story I thought it might be, but it does give a detailed picture of the plights and pleasures of being a revolutionary bandit women in India today. And it definitely feeds deliciously into personal fantasies of gunning down gang rapists and/or members of the ruling class. LET'S DO IT.

Paula

* 'Dalits' is the name recently claimed by the radicals in the Harajan (non-caste) people of India. Previously known as the 'Untouchables', 'Harajan' was Mahatma Ghandi's suggestion, and means 'children of god'. This being just a tad condescending, it's been replaced with Dalits, which means 'oppressed'.

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Different Views

Different Views is a diverse collection of photographic work by disabled people. Most are accompanied by words; straightforward, poetic or puzzling. This review is about the contributions by disabled women.

One of my favourite images from the exhibition is Self Portrait (No. 2) by Lydia Popowich from Newcastle. The image shows Lydia standing against a background of charity posters. Lydia says, 'I am often seen not as an individual personality but as a victim of a medical condition, labelled and judged inferior quality.' To illustrate this her photo shows the charity posters in clear focus, while Lydia is blurred with a photo processor's 'Quality Control' label across her body. Yet somehow her image is strong. Her eyes are shut and mouth pressed closed in defiance of voyeurism. She smiles to herself and is selfcontained. The joke's on the disabling world. Click, a disabled women's photography group from Leeds, have produced five self-portraits. My favourite of these is Disabled People are Lesbian and Gay by Beccy Healey (see photo). Beccy appears self-confident, friendly and fun. In the colour version of the photo light bursts from her face producing smudged shadows of brightness all around her. The other four women's photos didn't work so well for me. In striving to seem strong they take aggressive stances often used by men to intimidate others. I preferred Beccy just being herself.

coats and brollies. I know the feeling. A self-portrait by Doris Williams uses photomontage, drawings, graphics and space within a large outline of her head and body to create different moods and expressions within the same image.

Fragments of Self by Samena Rana I found disturbing. wrote, Samena There is a confusion about my 'self' and identity... bonded with the themes of immigration, womanhood and (dis)ability.' The photos show a knife, blood, long plaited black hair, bangles and a doll. As the series progresses the blood becomes 'a diffused, pink legacy', but I didn't feel the 'balance and harmony, defiance and challenge' she said she aimed for. Perhaps ence this sequence differently.



posters to selfempowerment. Questions are asked such as, 'Who, or what do you think the photo is for, where will it be seen?' or 'How do you think the person being photographed felt?'

The booklet also includes a photolove story by Liz Crow. Fate Made Her A Monster, is a spoof on 'disability horror stories' in women's magazines – 'She was beau-

tiful, sexy, intelligent - then a horrific car crash/ terrible disease marred her chances for happiness.' Liz says, 'We have to start taking images like these seriously... they restrict our opportunities every bit as much as the inaccessible transport, housing, education and leisure facilities we are campaigning to replace.'

Mary Duffy, in her challenging article 'So You Want To Look? I'll Give You Something To Look At ...', says her world came tumbling down when two close friends could not understand why she was upset when offered a job in a circus shaving men from the audience with her feet. Her friends also praised what they thought was Mary's belief that her disability didn't matter. Mary says her disability does matter and she began to create her own images as a proud, disabled woman. Mary talks about her performances and the shock it causes when she appears naked. She explains her reasons and how she feels.

Different Views was jointly co-ordinated by Armley Resource Centre, Leeds, the Museum of Film and Photography, Bradford, and VALID, a Bradford Disability Arts initiative.

Andrea Lamb's photo Assumptions shows a very fed-up woman wheelchair user buried under a pile of other people's shopping bags, Accompanying the exhibition is the Access to Image Photo Work Book which presents Disability Photography Issues. This 37 page booklet contains 34 black and white and 19 colour photos, many from the exhibition. The back cover shows the stunning slide installation Contact from the Click group, Barnet, in which differing back-

lenge' she said she 'Traditionally, women have been shown as objects of sexual desire and disabled people aimed for. Perhaps as asexual objects of fear and pity... I cast off the limitations of both of these others will experi- labels, in an effort to find my trae self.' - Lydia Popowich

> grounds are projected behind an empty wheelchair. This produces a variety of effects and emotions.

The workbook includes a resource section which details how to get adaptations for photographic equipment and discusses working with an assistant. Eight photographs of disabled people are used to illustrate different aims, from the much-hated charity-style Sue Napolitano (who gave a scintillating performance of poetry at the launch of the exhibition in Bradford) writes that an extrater-restrial visitor 'Would wonder why (disabled people) are expected to have no voice, no place, no visibility.' Sue thinks the visitor would 'Be glad that we are getting behind the camera and showing the world our own point of view.'

Mustn't Grumble is VALID's theatre group of disabled women. Their performances are funny, relevant and irreverent. Two Mustn't Grumble videos are available: *The Wych Report* and *Carry On Alice*. To order these or book a performance contact: Mustn't Grumble, Bradford Community Arts Centre, 17-21 Chapel Street, Little Germany, Bradford BD1 5DT, tel. 0274 721372.

Different Views has been on exhibit in Ireland, in London, Manchester, and Edinburgh. For hire or further tour information contact Impressions Gallery, 29 Castlegate, York, YO1 1RN (0904-6547724). It will be available until February '95.

Alison Silverwood

Disabled Women's Photos

FIRST DISABLED LESBIANS' CONFERENCE!

The first conference for disabled lesbians in Britain was held in London on March 19th. Getting off to a good start with a performance by 'The Tokens', closing with a sing-along of the Tokens' number 'I am a Tower of Strength', a message of solidarity to Jane Brown and a minute's silent solidarity with victims of racism (and the TUC anti-racist march going on that day), the conference was a storming success. There were workshops on fighting fascism and racism, body fascism, examining stereotypes, etc, and the Disabled Lesbians Mental Health Survivors' Group intends to continue meeting and set up a network (contact: Survivors Speak Out 071 272 0653).

The conference also produced the Disabled Women's Social Posse, which will storm lesbian venues in London which aren't accessible (contact: Brenda, GLAD, 071 274 0107).

The money for all this good news was from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, which funds a disabled women's project and there are plans for a black disabled women's event in the near future. Funding runs till May, so the

organiser's will be looking for funds again soon. "We had a bloody good time," says Brenda (of GLAD). Let's hope it won't be the last. Subscribe to Women's News!

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Don't expect me to put up with your shit!

hange is happening slowly in the lesbian community but I don't think lesbians as a whole notice who isn't at the meetings and social events which are organised for everyone. I don't think it's taken seriously enough to make events accessible to ill and disabled lesbians.

Buildings are used as an excuse sometimes when it's thought more important to have a bar rather than an adapted toilet and level access. Readings and writing workshops are still organised without sign language interpretation being offered. Smoking is seen as an issue of choice by many rather than an access issue for those made ill by it. The vast majority of events still take place after 8 or 9pm.

Chronically sick and disabled lesbians' needs are often denied, ignored or disbelieved. Belief is crucial and isn't helped by the prevalent idea that we somehow choose to be ill.

Some lesbians want to 'catch us out'. For

LESBIANS AND DISABILITY

believe that if I say I am disabled that means there will never be any hope of recovery because I will assume a sick role. We need to take a political view of so-called 'sick roles' which are used to keep the sick under control.

During the fifties and sixties there was a joke amongst doctors – the woman who presents with TATT. It stands for 'Tired All The Time'. It was assumed those women had psychosomatic ⁽¹⁾ illness, as a result of which they weren't allowed to rest. Many of those women must have had ME and some MS – another underdiagnosed illness. When you're pressurised by those around you to pretend you're well you push your body beyond it's limits and become more ill. It's not living, it's barely existing.

Another oppressive idea is 'co-dependency'. This theory says you shouldn't help a disabled woman who, for instance, might me, what a lot she's taken on etc. It belittles me. There's the assumption that every aspect of a lesbian relationship has to be equal. Disabled lesbians don't always have that choice.

As lesbians we aren't immune to influence by the patronising and restrictive views about physically or mentally disabled women prevalent in society. A lot of consciousness raising needs to be done.

Some lesbians have been supportive. I've had my wheelchair painted, my garden dug, bags carried, stories read onto tape. Lesbian friends have taken me to hospital and fetched me when I've had a collapse and can't get home. Some smokers never smoke in the same room as me, some friends don't wear perfumes. Some have stopped burning incense or lighting open fires when wisit. Some rinse cups and plates to get the washing up liquid off so I don't get diarrhoea. Many friends visit me more than I visit them because travelling is tiring for me. Some lesbians ask me how I am and are genuinely interested in the answer. I have close lesbian friends who notice when I need help and don't force me to ask. One friend organised a party in the daytime which is the only party I've enjoyed for years. The local disco now

holds alternate smoking and non-smoking nights. Two lesbians have raised money on a sponsored walk for the newsletter for lesbians with ME.

I want us to make our social and political spaces accessible. I want us to be determined to include all lesbians. I want us to employ sign-language interpreters and put effort into contacting disabled lesbians. Its a learning process which could become automatic.

I'd like us all to care enough to change and I include myself in that. I'd like smokers to figure out ways they can smoke without harming lesbians with asthma or allergies. Smoking is an access issue and it should be clear whether it will be smoking or nonsmoking on publicity and advance notices for events. At the moment we have majority (smokers') rule.

I've compromised a lot because I was so isolated in the first place by my illnesses. I don't expect miracles but I want change and more thought. It is hard for instance when locations and venues are changed at the last minute. Disabled lesbians have to plan what we can cope with.

instance, a physically impaired lesbian is seen walking, dancing, or swimming so it's assumed she could do this 100% of the time if she tried. Or a mentally distressed lesbian is seen to be 'together' for five minutes so it's assumed the rest of the time she's putting on her inability to cope with life and need of care. Speaking for myself, other lesbians only see me when I'm well. They have no way of knowing what preparation or after payment is exacted for attending a lesbian event.

We should question ourselves when we doubt women because denial is a strong attitude in our work-orientated society. Disabled lesbians shouldn't have to put up with other lesbians' negativity. I've been called a hypochondriac and accused of forgetting when it's convenient (my disability affects my cognitive abilities). One lesbian asked how I was and accused me of having a negative attitude when I told her. It's bad enough being ill without having to put up with ignorant, unexamined moral reproof. I work at my attitude to life and healing and it's infinitely more positive now than when I was non-disabled and didn't need to think about it.

I've been patronised many times by lesbians who think they have the Answer. Usually I've already tried everything they suggest or am in fact using it daily.

No one knows better than me the powerful force towards health. I know that my body is trying all the time to be well. I marvel take an hour by herself to fasten her coat. She will become dependent and you will become co-dependent – needing to help her. Let's ask the disabled lesbian what she needs. There's nothing wrong with help if it isn't forced on you, is appropriate and not used to control you emotionally or physically.

I'm fed up of lesbians saying how marvellous my lover is - all the things she does for If you are non-disabled don't take it as given that will always be the case. If you try to make life safer and more accessible for disabled lesbians now you may be making things easier for a future you.

Aspen

(1) 'Psychosomatic' is being reclaimed by some lesbians to recognise the unity of mind and body in sickness and healing. In the outside world it is used to deny people benefits, help and care. It is used as an insult. Being labelled psychosomatic by the medical profession can have disastrous effects on a woman's self-image and financial situation. The effect is to reduce her real options for healing as she is policed by herself and those around her to pretend to be well when she is not, thus draining the drive towards healing.

This has been written with the support of an ill/disabled lesbian group but ill/disabled lesbians are individuals and don't necessarily agree with everything I've said or the way I've said it.





at it, rejoice in it, I do what I can to help. Firstly this involves not denying it. When you deny it you use head power to drive your body through things it can only manage by draining the healing it's trying to do. This is applauded by our culture; you don't lie down to illness, you pretend it's not there, you work till you drop. I've done all that. I'm trying to work with my body now.

Lesbians have questioned why I've joined an ill/disabled lesbians group. It's for support, information and validation. Our illnesses and disabilities are often ignored – especially if they're invisible – first by ourselves and then by other lesbians. It's partly because of lesbians' attitudes to illness that we have to claim the labels. Why should we hide? Illness and disability are realities in our lives.

I have faith in my body and mind. I do not

Photo by Beccy Healey of the Click photography group; from Different Views exhibition

Bad Attitude is now available on tape from issue 4 onwards. To subscribe, send us the normal subscription price, plus four 90minute tapes and an RNIB free postage tape envelope. (Envelopes from RNIB, Customer Services, PO Box 173, Peterborough; price £1.30.) Alternatively we can invoice you for the cost of the tapes and envelope. See back page for subscription rates.

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ermaculture empowers the individual to be resourceful, self-reliant and a conscious part of the solution to many problems facing us both locally and globally. Which makes a lot of sense, really.

The word 'permaculture' was coined by an Australian, Bill Mollison, to describe a radical approach to agriculture. It's the conscious use of ecological principles for self-sustaining food, fibre and energy producing ecosystems. The idea is to set up systems for human use that are sustainable. It's based on co-operating with nature and caring for the earth and its people. That's us!

Permaculture can be done in every situation, you don't need a large garden or allotment. In a flat you can sprout seeds, grow cress, herbs and tomatoes on the window-sill. In a small garden the most important crops to grow are salads as they need to be eaten as fresh and unpolluted as possible. On an allotment, self-sufficiency crops such as beans, greens,



fruit, nuts and seeds. Cloches are a practical alternative to greenhouses in a smaller garden, and extend the growing season.

The basic aims of permaculture are:

• Emphasis on perennial rather than annual crops, especially trees (ie plants that are there all the time.

Recycling of all materials.

• Big diversity of species, with close planting.

• Use of '3D' space – trees, shrubs, vines and low-growing plants, using different levels of soil and light, and increasing total yield.

• Minimum tillage – encourage the worms to do the work.

Using small scale machinery and hand tools.

• Energy conservation and use of solar energy.

Which all translates into more grub for less slog for longer.

Other tips

Work With Nature – toads will eat nasties such as slugs, aphids and mosquitos. Thrushes eat snails which would otherwise damage your plants. Hedgehogs eat millipedes that like potatoes. Lacewings and their larvae destroy aphids. Centipedes eat slugs' eggs and ladybirds get through aphids by the thousand.

Wild Foods are Free – take a stroll around woodlands and green spaces and you will find: Fruits – elderberries, juniper berries, sloes, rowan berries, mulberries, crab apples and bilberries. Nuts – sweet chestnuts, beech nuts, ash keys, walnuts and hazelnuts. Fungi – field mushrooms, chanterelle and shaggy ink caps. Weeds – shepherd's purse, nettle and dandelion are all edible. *Companion' Plants* – some plants may help the growth of neighbouring plants. Mixing marigolds and herbs in the vegetable garden to confuse or repel plant pests. You can work out which plants attract pest predators and parasites away from your crops.

Worthy tomes

 Permaculture – A Designer's Manual by Bill Mollison

- The Permaculture Way by Graham Bell
- Forest Gardening by Robert Hart

Companion Plants by Helen Philbrick & Richard Gregg
Wild Foods by Roger Phillips
Future Work – jobs, selfemployment and leisure after the industrial age by James Robertson

pumpkins, marrows, potatoes, cereals,



n our modern toxic society diabetes is increasing at an alarming rate. Since the 1950s it has trebled in Finland. Between 1973 and 1988 new cases doubled each year in the UK. In Samoa, however, diabetes is almost unknown.

Diabetes is very much connected to nutrition and to the production of insulin in our pancreas. Insulin is vital in keeping our blood sugar level within the narrow range needed for good health.

There are two kinds of diabetes: insulin-dependent (= Type I) and non-insulin dependent (= Type II). Type I usually develops in childhood whereas Type II usually develops after the age of 30. Type II diabetes is inherited more often than Type I. In Type I the body's immune system destroys the cells making insulin; it is an autoimmune disease. In Type II the body has become resistant to insulin although the pancreas still produces plenty of it. antibodies. These antibodies may then at some stage of the child's life start attacking the insulin producing cells in the pancreas. In about five years the child will have diabetes and need injections of insulin. The peak incidence is passed at 16 years of age. However, these so called genetic markers are in 40% of all children, but only 3% of children develop antibodies. Only one third of children with antibodies develop diabetes. And not all children with diabetes have genetic markers, only 90% do.

Triggers

An environmental trigger is being looked for to explain the development of diabetes. The qualifying mainstream medical establishment. Dr Robert Mendelsohn, who calls perself a medical heretic, has stated the connection between the measles vaccination and the Type I diabetes in pers books.

Cow's milk versus breast milk

The nutrition connection is proved by various studies. A study of Samoan children in Samoa and in Aotearoa (= a Maori name for New Zealand) found that those living in Aotearoa developed diabetes at a similar rate to other children there whereas the incidence in Samoa is very rare. The difference was in nutrition. In Samoa cow's milk is not taken by children. In industrially developed societies where cows are now bred to produce less fatty and more protein-rich milk this is a possible culprit. Other studies have shown that the risk of developing diabetes is reduced by between a third and a half if a baby is breastfed for a prolonged period. There are three big studies around the world testing methods of prevention. To me the logical and humane way would be to advocate very strongly prolonged breastfeeding to all mothers. Then screen babies with developed antibodies for observation and possible testing and treatment. Of course, with full consent of parents who have full knowledge of all relevant known factors. Yet the advocacy of breastfeeding seems to be missing from this programme of prevention. In fact, the main medical establishment still dithers in their 'neutral' stance so that artificial baby milk companies can go on making profits. The latest comment by a

TV doctor I heard was that after six months' breastfeeding there is no (added?) benefit. And bottle feeding with something other than breastmilk does no harm.

The studies dealing with the harmful effect of cow's milk, which is increasingly used in baby milk, do not follow a logical direction to me. The attempt seems to be to deal with the harmful properties of milk rather than with the harm at its source, that is, the harm done to cows. The exploitation of cows by interference in their natural life continues. It is still all right to give them all kinds of things which are not natural to them and which can cause harm to humans also.

I-S

Is there still a women's movement in this country? What's happening for women? Where? Why? How? Find out in this month's issue.



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Development of diabetes

The cause of diabetes is estimated to be only about 20% genetic. And this genetic cause cannot be attributed to one single gene. It is estimated that only about half the genes connected to diabetes have been isolated so far. As far as I understand, the course of its development is as follows: A child who has a genetic marker *may* develop factors are the increase of incidence within the last 40 years and an attack on a child within the first twelve months of pers (= her, his) life. The areas studied are: virus infections, vaccination programme and nutrition.

The virus connection is discounted by some because the incidence of diabetes does not coincide with the incidence virus epidemics. The vaccination connection is stronger. There is evidence that vaccination changes our immune system and can lead to an auto-immune response. Measles vaccination, for example, can increase the likelihood of Hepatitis B. This is said by the

Nell McCafferty on Ireland

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24 bad attitude

lone parents

one parents are in for a hard time. Struggling to survive on benefits; poor housing provision; often coping alone with the effects of the Child Support Act. Now we're the latest scapegoat of a government intent on blaming problems on anyone but themselves.

It's clear that in the wake of Back to Basics, anything not about twee twosomes and their children must cause all manner of social evil and wrongdoing. Lone parents suffer a media portrayal similar to that of gay men and lesbians (questioning our ability to bring up our children), black people, travellers, anyone not fitting the 'norm' laid down by Major and co. The attacks on lone parents, most of whom are women (90% of over a million one parent families

d time. pected to take care of me for the period of time I would be dependent on benefits. 18 g alone months later I returned to work – however, I still cannot manage without benefits. Family credit makes up my salary.

Waiting for Father Xma/?

Some would say that I should have waited to have a child. Waited until when? I don't believe in marriage.and it was never on the cards for us. Anyway, what's that but a way of tying a woman economically to a man? When I decided to have a baby, I thought that I would be able to work again in the near future; that I would be able to afford childcare; that there would be well-paid work for me to go to. Instead I find myself tied economically to the state - and am berated for it. GIRO EALL My response is anger. When I examine these attitudes, I find lies, hypocrisy and a complete lack of respect. I will not feel ashamed in taking the pittance of Family Credit and Housing Benefit while the government wastes money on arms and payoffs. Meanwhile, services available on the NHS are restricted, I'm charged for dental services, my entitlement to benefits is cut and my friends live in hostels with their children or out on the streets if not deemed a 'priority'. I feel pride in providing my daughter with love and the friendship of other people like me. People who are being called deviant, subversive, who are being legislated against for their sexuality, for their beliefs and their choice to live differently.

someone we have known for about a year. Living this way is different: I don't get so lonely these days, which counts for a lot. The love and support of a partner smooth the edges of an often bitter existence. However, I still see this bitter existence when working with lone parents living in rural areas of North Yorkshire, where loneliness and isolation are often intensified by geographic isolation.

Home /weet hell

Janine, aged 26, lives in rural North Yorkshire with her two children. Home is a privately rented flat without a bathroom, windows that don't open and no heating provided. The living room carpet is wet. The house has been condemned by the local Environmental Health Officer. The children suffer throughout winter with colds and flu. Her youngest child has asthma. Janine and the children all sleep in the tiny bedroom. Attempts to have the family rehoused have so far failed. The landlord is refusing to undertake repairs, choosing to sell rather than spend money on the property. The council reckons that Janine's squalid flat is her home. The fact that the house is deemed unfit for human habitation counts for nothing. Janine is a lone parent but she cannot jump the housing queue. She relies on benefit because her ex-husband will not pay maintenance, She does not have an oven because the last one blew up. The Social Fund is dry and can't loan her the money for a new one. Before Janine left her husband, he had beaten her every week for a year and was threatening to kill her and the children. She lived then in a house 12 miles from the nearest town and had very little money and no SCAPEGOAT transport. When LONE PARENT she left him he snatched their daughter and took her to his mother's, some 30 miles away. It took Janine six months to get her back.

co-operate with laws and legislation handed down from on high.

The dog ate my Dad

Tear up our Child Support Agency forms, lose them, deface them, have your children's father long gone on a New Age convoy. Do not co-operate with an Act that is corrupt, brought in on the back of publicity about absent fathers and mothers depen-

dent on Income Support – in reality hitting those fathers who already pay and hitting them hard. Mothers suffer even more in this scenario. Maintenance paid regularly for years, increased by the CSA, suddenly stops. Fathers refuse to be fleeced by an agency that has its chief on performance-related pay, who gets paid more, the more she rakes in. A moral outrage? You might think so...

to create bogeywomen, hiding the reality of a continued programme of benefit and housing cuts, and an attempt to deter young women from having children out of marriage because it costs the state money.

in Britain are headed by

women), are an attempt

As a lone parent myself working with other lone parents in North Yorkshire, I am increasingly concerned that lies about lone parents are becoming accepted fact – at least by people who know little of lone parenthood other than what they are told by the media. I hear stories of young women getting pregnant for local authority housing, which are similar to racist lies told about immigrants taking jobs away.

The reality of bringing up children alone is very different. We must educate and inform as wide an audience as possible about this reality.

Six years ago I gave birth to my daughter. Her father was living many miles away with another woman, also pregnant by him. We'd had a long-term relationship but never planned to live together. I did not expect him to be involved with my daughter on a long-term basis. I am therefore a woman who 'planned' to have a baby on the



Feeling invecure

Rented on a month-by-month basis, our home is not secure but it is warm and safe. Since my daughter was born we have moved house six times. One year we moved three times. Oh for a council house! I have been on the list for almost 10 years. If I'd got pregnant to jump the housing queue I'd have

I wonder sometimes who could blame a woman who did get pregnant

Daily struggle

The Child Support Act and changes to homelessness law are just the beginning. The time to act is **right now**. If lone parents are to find other ways of living and coping we have to try and make connections, lend support and ideas and prove to ourselves that it is still possible to make a difference to our lives. At every opportunity we must tell the truth about our lives, or we will become voiceless victims of this constant stream of negative propaganda. We need alternative housing options, help to find the energy and resources to form housing co-ops and child-minding circles.

> We must learn and teach alternative ways of supporting ourselves. Of course for many lone parents these options are limited by time and resources and in many cases by a lifetime of struggling in poverty, where it takes all the strength available simply to put food on the table. Working with women in poverty, though, has taught me never to think a situation totally hopeless.

We can support each other and give our children positive images of ourselves and

The state. in which I had invested eight years of tax and national insurance. Which I ex-

welfare

state.

issue 6 • jun/jul/aug 1994

disapbeen pointed. Now that waiting lists and council housing have been virtually abandoned and I am no longer living alone, the only option is short-term lets or a housing co-op. Even if I believed in buying houses I wouldn't be able to. I'm locked out of long-term security because I don't fit the system. We are now a 'two parent' family, with

in order to set up home. What hope is there for school leavers these days? Conscript employment schemes; dole for those old enough; further education means running up vast amounts of debt with little prospect of work at the end of it all. Who could blame women who managed to get themselves a house for their family? One thing is certain: there won't be many more allowed to take the same route. We are living in an elected dictatorship, with most of those voting suffering from

there won't be many more allowed to take the same route. We are living in an elected dictatorship, with most of those voting suffering from apparent brainwashing. It's no use arguing for mainstream political change now. A different party won't make a difference after such a harsh regime in power for so long. We must bring about our own changes – starting with a fight against legislation which restricts our access to Income Support. We must refuse to

we must keep alive an inkling of possible change in the future.

Karen

And a bit of recommended reading: Soul Providers, ed. Gil McNeil, Virago, £6.99. 19 reminisces and reflections on the hows and whats of single parenting. An excellent diversity is unified by careful editing which highlights the personhood of each individual. A definite antidote to demonisation. Writers have been prompted to think of certain issues, one being the lack of a male/female role model for the kids. I felt this did bow to the Tory agenda. Still, a refutation of scapegoating. There's wit and serious reflection aplenty and one thrilling tale of escape from a patriarchal nightmare. A completely fascinating anthology.

ere goes with reviews of girls' bands of a thrashy/indie/rocky nature, covering everything I've managed to get hold of since we last had a Bad Attitude. Well, I mean, our attitude's stayed pretty much the same, but I'm sure you understand. I've included things only if I could recommend them in some way.

First off there's a newish Bikini Kill single called Demirep, with New Radio and Rebel Girl on the other side. Very wonderful it is: go-for-it guitars, moving melodies, femininst politics and punky enough to please me. (On Kill Rock Stars label) We also got sent a new LP by Bikini Kill called Pussy Whipped. Good title, I think, but sad to say I'm not so keen on the music. The tunes don't seem as strong as other stuff I've heard by them and there's a fair bit of that screechy screaming which really gets on my nerves. If you really want to know, it's on Wiiija records, but I'd say you're better off any day with their previous record Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah on Catcall fans, I expect). In fact the more I listen, the more I like it and I'd recommend it a lot. Sadly I've just learnt that the band is no more.

Jey of Music

Next up is Drag King by Sister George (LP on Catcall records). Rather fucking marvellous is this. They're 'queercore' supposedly, though this category seems to be more wishful thinking on the part of their record label than a massive musical movement sweeping the nation. Sister George are 2 girls and 2 boys. It's taken me a little while to get into the CD since it's slightly less raucous than the live experience, but I'm increasingly enthusiastic. It does you good to hear music by some critically-minded punk-loving dykes and gay boys. A particular high point is the beautiful romance of 'Let's Breed'. I was also very happy to hear their version of 'sing if you're glad to be gay' and there's lots more fine angry stuff here.

Two quick ones registering medium enthusiasm: An LP called Soda Pop Rip Off by Slant 6, three girls from the USA. Not exactly heavy, but pretty pacey. The sound reminds me slightly of the Au Pairs, though fortunately less depressing. Glad to see the record is dedicated to someone's cat. (On Dischord records) Also you might want to consider a CD by Frightwig called Wild Women Never Die... They just Dye their Hair. It's a re-release by Southern Records of their 2 LPs Cat Farm Faboo and Faster, Frightwig, Kill! Kill! offering a staggering 21 songs. A few of them are pretty fab - when they're good they're wild - but to be honest most aren't. On the other hand the lyrics are often wonderful - they're fine stroppy sleazy feminists. So if this strikes a chord you might want to go for it. Apparently the band suffered from the strange curse that most of their members over the years kept getting pregnant and leaving. Just out recently is Live Through This, the second LP by Hole. Their first LP Pretty On The Inside was pretty much unlistenable but in contrast this new one has lots of good songs which stick around in your head afterwards." A marked lack of feedback, but still loud and dynamic, and singer Courtney Love

Crimpers: "No one calls the **UK Subs** an all-boy band" -Karen, vocalist.

Death by

has a good ole shout at times. It's basically alternative rock rather than British style indie stuff. Lyrics are sort-of-feminist, with a lot about sexual violence and female internalisation and masochism. Whatever you think of this, musically I'd recommend it - I've been playing it constantly myself.

Someone called Amanda has lent me a tape with a selection of riot-girl-type bands on. These are: Bratmobile, Linus, Pussycat Trash, Comet Gain and Skinned Teen. I'm not mad keen on the whole, but the songs I liked best are by Linus. Maybe I should get some proper copies of the records so that I can tell you about them, but oh dear! I haven't. I should also mention that I saw a fab allgirl (seemingly all-teenager) band called the Frantic Spiders a couple of weeks ago.

They were great - rocky thrashy punky type of thing, good and noisy and doing all the proper things with guitars. (God help me, I'm so old-fashioned.) Once again, as a useful reviewer I should find out something about how to get hold of their music... well, by next issue I definitely will.

For more info on punk bands (male & female) you can get hold of issue 34 of US fanzine Slug & Lettuce, produced by someone called Christine, available if you send an SAE to: Active Distribution, BM Active, London WC1N 3XX. Bye then. If anyone knows of any good female thrash/punk/rock bands, please get in touch and then this column will have a bit more in it.

records, which is a classic. It's got Huggy Bear on the other side and even manages to make them sound like decent human beings, which is impressive.

This is great, I don't think I get to give my opinions often enough on the whole.

At a gig I got handed a single by Spitboy with three songs: The Threat, Sexism Unimpressed, Ultimate Violations. Good punky stuff - fast beat, thrashy guitars, raucous singing, raving feminist lyrics. Seems they're Californians, but the single is available from Lookout! Records, PO Box 2301, London E17 9DA. Actually, Ultimate Violations is pretty good, the others aren't so catchy, but I'd say it was still worth getting.

Got a very attractive pink single by Death by Crimpers called Obsessive. When I heard they were a bunch of female ex-goths I was all excited, though on playing it I was momentarily disappointed, until I realised the labels were stuck on the wrong sides of the record. It's got growly vocals, a moody tune, train-coming-down-the-track rhythm and a twangy guitar riff. On Sonic records (Sega



Katy

I-S

REVIEW Holly Near: Musical Highlights from the play Fire in the Rain

had never heard of Holly Near when I was handed this tape to review. It is now the most played tape in our household. Even my eighteen year old likes listening to it.

As the name says it is from a play. The play is about the life of the singer, Holly Near. I have no idea how the songs fit into pers (= her, his) life or into the play not knowing anything about either. The paper around the tape tells a few facts like Holly is a feminist and has been involved in the peace movement. Per founded a recording company Redwood Records for producing politically conscious music. However, knowing nothing or knowing these few facts only has not made any difference to the music or the songs. They have their special meaning to me regardless.

I am probably the worst person to review a music tape as I know so little of names and styles and whatever. Only thing I can say of this music is that it sounds to me like folk music in the style of Emmylou Harris. I like the voices of both, Holly's is clearer and softer than Emmylou's. I like Holly's songs better because they are political. However, many of the songs are about personal feelings like love, fear, anxiety, love being the central theme running through the songs. Sometimes the world around us makes the very personal emotion like love political and this is brought out in the song

Available from WRPM, 62 Woodstock Rd, Birmingham B13 9BN, tel. 021-449 7041.



Review: The Joy luck Club

Amy Tan's best-selling novel given the bigtime cinema treatment by Oliver 'Right-On' Stone. It has 'women's film' all over it and aims for the tear ducts with an almost unseemly ferocity - all of which made this reviewer a bit "I'm buggered if I'm crying" by

the end.

It's good to see a film with so many big roles for women of colour. Tracing the history of four sets of mothers and daughters in America and China, it's big on loss and recovery, maternal debt and history, exile and identity. One to take your mum and your hankie to. At a big cinema near you now.

WOMEN'S MUSIC cassettes, CDs & records politics & pleasure

Holly Near's latest album Musical Highlights cassette: £8 CD: £13.50 incl p+p

For a free mail order catalogue including all Holly Near's albums, send s.a.e. to: WRPM, 62 Woodstock Rd, Birmingham B13 9BN or phone 021-449 7041

bad attitude



* Help! Are there any women out there who are into PCs and like such things as games & programming, or do I have to get a sex change to fit in with the boys' club? Chats needed. Write to BA and mark your envelope 'Asti'.

★ Attention all Rape Crisis Centres The training needs of Rape Crisis Centres in England and Wales are being two independent studied by researchers, Sue Davies and Amanda Root, funded by the Allen Lane Foundation. Any members of Rape Crisis or similar groups write to them at 65 Divinity Road, Oxford, 0X4 1LH with their Centre's address.

* Make Some Noise Any other women out there interested in making some music? I'm a bass player(!) missing being in a band, into all kinds of stuff from the Indigo Girls to Tribe 8. Experience and talent not important let's just have some fun! I'm North London based but have transport. Also have a drum kit for anyone that plays but doesn't have their own gear. Contact: via Bad Attitude, clearly marking envelope: 'Sue Rockstar'.

Library, 50 Hill Street, Gamethill G3 6RH 041 353 3312 - Mon to Fri, 1-6 pm. **+** Haringey Lesbian Youth Group. Call 444 081 2174.

* Ritual Abuse Survivors Contributions for an international an-

thology requested. Short, about 20 pages, in order to include as many as possible. Wide range of issues esp ritual abuse under non-satanic ideologies wanted, with authors of both genders & different sexual orientations, ages or racial heritages. Want info on books & resources outside US. For more info (including resource list): RA SPEAK OUT, 4104 24th Street, No.127, San Francisco, California 94114, USA.

CORNWALL

* Supportive Housing for Ex-Offenders Shepherd House Project provides temp. accom. for ex-offenders in Hackney, leading to permanent housing. Contact: 071 275 7611 for more info. Women of all races & heritages welcome.



•Also writing, drumming, gestalt.

•Small group, friendly and peaceful. ·Good value eg. all-inclusive price for a 4-night walking holiday – £135. Suitable for women holidaying alone. Free transport from station. Brochure (0752) 822609.

2474, 44 Tottenham Lane N8

* Political Art Today? Stockholm based art project no. 100022 would like to contact women working in video & photography. The project aims to explore how & where political art is to be posed today. Contact: Marie Odenstrand, Selen-Odenstrand AB, Box 2316, 10317 Stockholm. Tel/fax: 46-8-26-85-29.

* 2nd European Feminist Research Conference The Univ. of Technology in Graz, Austria will be the location of the July 5-9 '94 conference. The focus will be: feminist perspectives on technology, work and ecology. For more info. contact: IFZ (Inter-University Research Center for Technology, Work & Culture), Schlögelgasse 2, A-8010 Graz/Austria.



Get your Bad Attitude delivered! Yes, we know it's summer now, but just wait until it's wet and cold and windy and you have to get the huskies out to trek into town. And what if they've sold out!!! Be sure to get your copy popped promptly through your letterbox. Fill in the form below and send it and your ££ to: Bad Attitude, 121 Railton Rd, London SE24 OLR, UK.

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+ envelope	
Cheques/postal orders/interna-	Tel no

★ Drum tuition - working drummer, experienced in rang of styles from new wave to jazz, offers tuition at reasonable rates on full kit in studio. Will also teach drumming to children and general music workshops for under-fives

and their carers. Sheila Stocking 071-274-0373, South London

★ Comic Artists/Writers Wanted. Do you want to contribute towards a quarterly comic anthology (glossy!) called 'Scenes From Inside'? If so, contact Matthew, 20 Albany Rd, Montpelier, Bristol BS6 5LH.

★ The Hackney Lesbian Strength and Gay Pride

Festival will soon be upon us! If you want to perform, run a stall, help fundraise, steward/security (send details of experience), go to their public meeting: 7 July, 7pm, Centreprise, 136-138 Kingsland High St, E8. Tel: 071 241 4071

★ Discussion group, meets fortnightly Tuesdays north of river. For making sense of contemporary issues from a lesbian feminist perspective. Next meeting for new women. Telephone 071 249 4490 for info.

★ Call for submissions: Blue Collar

* Raging Dykes Newsletter A positive, challenging & revolutionary part of



dyke separatist lives/politics. To contribute or to get a copy, contact: RDN, C/O 36 Magdalen Street, Norwich, Norfolk, NR3 1JE. England.

* London Lesbian Line Volunteers needed! Tel: 071 251 6692 (Mon, Wed, Fri) or write LLL BM Box 1514, London WC1N 3XX, for application forms & details of next training session. The helpline is staffed by a deaf lesbian on the 1st Tues of the month. LLL positively encourages deaf lesbians to volunteer.

★ Outlinks is a group for young les-

* Women's Brigade to Nicaragua

The Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign & Community Movement are co-ordinating a project where women will work in Nicaragua making heat preserving ovens out of natural materials for four weeks. For more info. contact: NSC Brigades, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7 7QG, Tel:071 272 9619

★ Self-Defence Sharlene from Hammersmith writes to tell all you Wendo fans

(see BA 4) about a self defence course "as near as dammit" to Wendo. It's at the West London Women's Self Defence Association in Hammersmith. Contact them for details. She tells us that the Hammersmith Unemployed Workers' Centre run self defence courses free. For info: HUWC, 190 Shepherd's Bush Rd, Hammersmith, W6 7NL. Tel: 071 603 1831

* A Lesbian Counselling Project is being set up to offer support &/or counselling to lesbians who have/are currently experiencing sexual, physical or emotional violence/abuse. Lesbians are welcomed to get involved, previous counselling skills & experience unnecessary, "as we are aiming to empower & learn from each other." Contact: CLC/BLG, 54-56 Phoenix Road, London NW1. Tel: 071 383 5405. Or Michelle: 081 442 4873

(unions, colleges etc)	guage(s)?
For international rates add:	D Putting t
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Tape sub: same price as ordinary subs if you send us	Name
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invoice you for the cost of tapes	
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Chequ

BADFACTS They're terrible

Well, it's many months since Bad Attitude last came out and as you can imagine quite a lot of pretty bad facts have passed my way during this time. However, since I'm feeling a bit fed up l've decided to focus on just one particularly grim fact. This is:

36% of all homicides in England and Wales in 1991 were men killing their present or former wives or girlfriends. (Quoted in Guardian Weekend 8/1/94). So obviously one of the most dangerous things a woman can do is have a sexual relationship with a man. In that case, why aren't there public safety information films about this, like the ones telling us

to fit smoke alarms? Isn't it strange that no one warns us?

OK, it's not strange at all. But all the same it gets on my nerves that so much social myth denies this. For instance, 'Hell hath no fury like a woman spurned.' I find this a bit annoying, given that from all the cases I've heard of, it seems that the single greatest risk of violence or sexual abuse for a woman in a relationship with a man comes when you leave or try to leave him. Presumably it's something to do with male egotism and their underlying view of women as objects in their possession. So to say that women are dangerous when rejected is such a direct reversal of the truth that you couldn't even call it ironic. Perhaps this column should be called 'It drives you mental ... '

Queers! Working Class & Poor Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transgendered & Transexual People! What is 'Gay Community' & how do you fit in? Essays, poetry, biog, short stories, theoretical essays & cultural commentary wanted for anthology that'll challenge the expected image. Contact: Susan Raffo, Anthology, PO Box 8939, Minneapolis, MN 55408, USA. For 1 Oct.

★ Build a Women's Community Group of Hackney women considering building own home: raising funds, buying land, building - over a period of 2-3 years. Interested in a long term commitment? Ring 081 986 2902.

★ Looking for volunteers: Glasgow Women's Centre, 5 Dalhousie Lane, Garnethill, G3 - Volunteer nights: Mon & Wed 6-8pm And Glasgow Women's bians, bisexuals and gays. A young lesbian group also operates from the same premises. Contact: Teenage Information Network, 102 Harper Road, London SE1 6AQ

* News From Nowhere are celebrating their 20th year! A stunning achievement for an independent, radical bookseller. They're holding events, so for info about these or just news about what they have in stock, contact: NFN, 112 Bold St., Liverpool L1 4HY. Tel: 051 708 7270. And go & buy your books there if you live in Liverpool.

★ Haringey Women's Directory Haringey Women's Group are putting together a directory of services & resources for women in Hackney. If you think your group or organisation should be in this, then contact: HWG, PO Box

* Riot Grrrls Call for written dissertations, essays etc. on Riot Grrrls for book. Contact: Gonnie Rietzeld, Manchester Institute for Popular Culture, Manchester Metropolitan Univ, Cavendish Building, Cavendish St, Manchester. M15 6BX.

★ Women in Black - we organised popular vigils last autumn in support of Women in Black of Belgrade protesting against militarism in ex-Yugoslavia.

We've got together again and hope to be an on-going group active around this and other issues - we'd welcome new members! Contact 161a Seymour Place, London W1H STP.

★ McLibel Trial Date set for 27 June After almost 4 years of pre-trial wrangling, a date has been set for the High Court libel trial brought by the \$24 billion a year McDonald's Corporation against two unwaged supporters of London Greenpeace (see BA 3). If you want to support the two against McBastard's, phone the Campaign on 071-837 7557

* Anarchy in the UK '10 Days that Shook the World' meetings, gatherings, music, stalls, fun and subversion set for 21-30 October. (Look for us Baddies there, with a hot-off-presses Issue 7...of course we won't be late, are we ever?). "At a time when the institutions of the state... are held in greater contempt than ever before, anarchist alternatives can have a greater appeal than ever. Let's take this opportunity. Forget your scepticism and weariness." info: PO Box 1096, Bristol, BS99 1BW

★ Did you really read all that?

LIGHT MAY FIRE COUNT, and a further million will suffer from occupied the British Gas showrooms where they 'died' on the floor to symbolise the court warrant for disconnection force entry without one. If you

hyperthermia (Poverty Action Group figures). But communities are planning to resist, drawing on the experience of the successful anti-poll tax fight. This means mass non-payment, direct action against gas and electricity companies, local community groups and networks to support non-payers and organ-ise blockades to stop disconnections, and links with electricity and gas workers to stop dis-

they 'died' on the floor to symbolise the 10,000 deaths per year VAT will cause. Then they went on to picket the Scottish Power Showrooms in Central Edinburgh. The day ended with a successful picket of the police station for the release of a demonstrator arrested for "participation in an illegal demonstration."

In Wales, the Welsh Socialist Party (Cymru Goch) are discussing an anti-VAT campaign around mass non-payment and direct action. Loughborough Pensioners Rights Group are calling for non-payment and local groups are forming in Birmingham.

In Haringey, London, community groups organised a NO VAT ON FUEL public meeting in February. The major point coming from that meeting was "We can't rely on politicians or leaders to do things for us – we've got to organise and do it ourselves."

Points for VAT resisters:

court warrant for disconnection – they cannot force entry without one. If you can afford it and you don't see other options, you may wish to pay the remainder, then start the whole process over again – the point is to disrupt VAT collection, making it as difficult and expensive for them as possible. Otherwise you can negotiate affordable monthly payments (they don't normally disconnect anyone negotiating payment terms), or contact support groups through numbers below:

Edinburgh-Stockbridge New Town Solidarity Network 031-667-4299 Wales-Cymru Goch PO Box 661, Wrexham LL11 1QU Midlands No Fuel Tax c/o PO Box 85 Balsall, Birmingham B12 9RL London – Haringey Solidarity Groups PO Box 2401 London N8 9LR

From **Counter Information**, Pigeonhole C1 c/o 11 Forth St. Edingburgh EH1 Scotland



FUCK VAT!

ScottishPower

With April 1 we've seen the government add Value Added Tax onto fuel bills, which means electricity and gas bills going up 8% and 17.5% next April. 35,000 people die every year from the cold. Well, the scum will add another 10,000 dead of cold every year to their body In late February activists from all over the Lothian area of Scotland held a conference to organise local resistance. But they also aim to go beyond fighting VAT

connections.

to ensure everyone has an adequate fuel supply with no disconnections – we all have rights to heat, light and warmth. They also want to take up other issues such as water privatisation and anti-racist struggle.

On 2 April over 50 demonstrators from 'Lothian Communities Against VAT on Fuel' When you get your first blue electricity or gas bill – ignore it.

When you get the red reminder - only pay the main part. Don't pay the VAT part.
 Don't let the meter reader in. You can't be disconnected on the basis of an estimated bill...don't fill in any reading cards either!
 If you're threatened with disconnection or need any advice, ring or write a local group.
 If you're on a power key meter... meters must be altered so that VAT can be added. Don't let them in to do it! If you have no arrears, you can insist on getting your power key meter changed free of charge.

You might reach the point of receiving a



In BA 5 we reported that Parkside pit pickets and occupiers were attacked by 75 riot police and dogs last October, with injuries. Undaunted, masses of supporters entered the pit to take Sunday lunch to women still occupying the pump house - followed by a meeting on the manager's lawn.



Women were told later that British coal staff had abandoned the pit for the time being.

Women ended the pumphouse occupation when it became clear that without electricity the pit could not be filled in and capped (the lecky had been cut off before the police onslaught). However, the local substation has

> recently been repaired - so women suspect power can be turned on at any time.

The pit camp organised an April 1 protest against VAT on fuel, 'Repossess Our Coal'. Supporters arrived at the pit with buckets and left with them filled with coal! The women wrote: "Through taking direct action, Parkside Pit Camp Supporters are now effectively in control of Parkside Colliery. Parkside Colliery can still be fully reopened and working. British Coal have left on site thousands of tons of coal. They have claimed, at the government's behest, that there is no market for this coal. We know that this is not the case. The coal is ours to claim, distribute, and use - free of charge and tax free." But on Friday 29 April a British Coal manager gave the

pit camp a letter threatening legal action if they don't leave. The women don't expect this to happen immediately, but prepared for any threats. Over the May Day Bank Holiday they took a caravan all over Lancashire to speak at rallies including Lancaster and Burnley. At Preston they parked their caravan outside County Hall for fun and talks with supporters.

But just before 8:00 AM on18 May thirty bailiffs with 100 police and riot vans came to call! They blocked off the A49 and smashed into the camp. At the time there were three people outside and three in the Portakabin...who they forcibly removed. When one of them protested at the violent way a woman, Sylvia Pye, was being treated by the police, he got arrested for "obstruction of a bailiff in carrying out his duty." When a couple protestors lay down in front of the JCV's they got arrested for "obstructing the highway", which funnily enough was already "obstructed" by the police.themselves. Supporters held a demonstration on 22 May, and re-established the Pit Camp on the other side of the road. In the coming weeks help and messages of support may be especially needed. For more information phone 0925-221181. Any offers of help or donations can be sent to: Lancashire Women Against Pit **Closures or the Sylvia Pye National Appeal** Fund, Cavanagh Common Rd. Nurseries, Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside, WA12

Time for bad news

he strike at Timex finished at the end of '93, with the acceptance of a statutory minimum redundancy payment. That is: one week's wages for each year of work (minimum £500). This was on the condition that all support groups wind up, the boycott campaigns end, and the strike fund be distributed among dismissed workers.

Of course, many of the strikers were not happy with this. On the first vote at the 14 October mass meeting, workers turned the settlement down. AEEU leaders had been threatening them with loss of strike benefit and legal support. The union got a second vote through, accompanied by more harassment and threats from leader Jim Airlie. The final vote was 132 for, and 108 against. Mary Dolan, Timex striker, commented: "For nine months we have held a gun at the head of Timex Corporation. Jim Airlie has taken the gun and pointed it at his own members."

wo officials of the GMB, the union involved in supporting and wrecking the strike at Burnsall Ltd, have been let off after a feeble attempt at an internal inquiry. The strike by a group of mainly Asian women at the small metal-finishing factory in the west Midlands ran for a year from 15 June '93, before being closed down by the GMB, the union supposedly supporting it, ha ha.

GMBastards

An internal inquiry was proposed into the conduct of the two officials involved in the dispute. However, nobody from the support group was invited to the meeting - even the shop steward, Darshan Kaur, was excluded. As a result, the inquiry was dropped. What a shock, eh?

The strikers have each received £1000 compensation. And so ends the tale of a group of workers fucked over by bosses and union alike.