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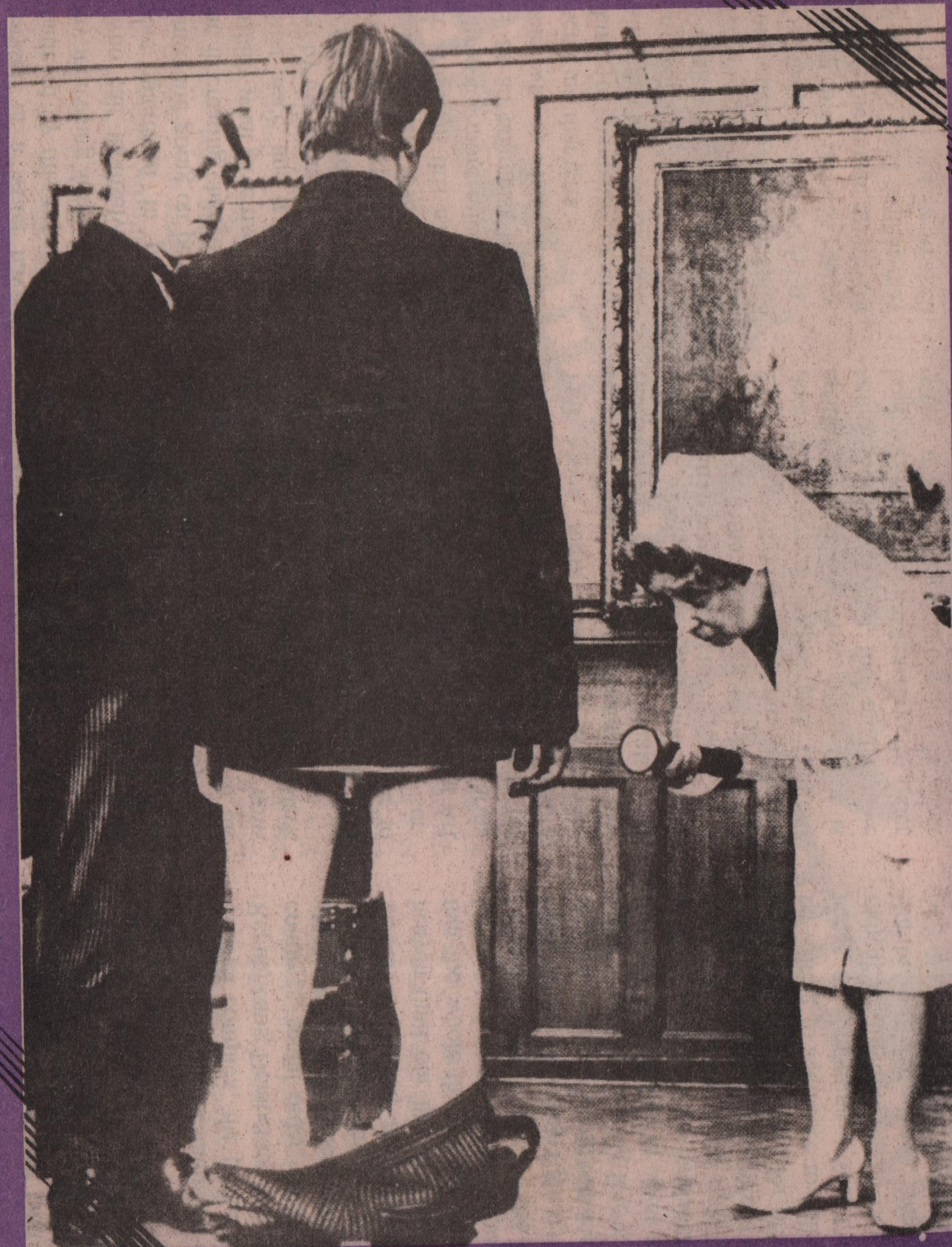


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# KICK IT OVER



Matrilineal descent of the artist, Lynna Landstreet

INTERVIEW WITH  
LIZZIE BORDEN

HERSTORY OF  
ANARCHA-  
FEMINISM

GENITAL  
MUTILATION

GREENHAM  
COMMON  
MEMOIRS

THE "OTHER"  
WOMYN'S MUSIC

WOMEN IN INDIA



No. 18 ANARCHA-FEMINISM SPRING 1987 CANADA - USA - AUSTRALIA - \$1.50 UK 75p

**Transcription, Editing and Introduction by Glynis Sherwood**

Lizzie Borden, a New York filmmaker, visited Toronto in September 1986 when her film, *Working Girls*, an empathetic portrayal of prostitution as an economic choice, premiered at the annual Festival of Festivals. *Working Girls* is Lizzie Borden's second full-length feature movie. Her first film, *Born in Flames*, depicts a futuristic scenario where a variety of feminist groups, from underground radio stations to anti-rape squads, to a Women's Army, attempt to revolutionize society along radical feminist lines. KIO collective members, Alexandra Devon and Catherine Tammaro, interviewed Lizzie Borden during her stay in Toronto.

Lizzie Borden has adopted a strong anti-censorship stance which is critical of the anti-pornography movement. Her position illustrates the divisions in the feminist movement in response to both the negative images of women conveyed by mainstream pornography and the overwhelming ability of the state to silence artistic expression. The KIO collective, while abhorring government interference in any area of life, including censorship, also acknowledges many of the arguments and analysis put forward by the anti-pornography movement. The goal should be not to enhance differences by siding with any particular "camp", but to find ways of dealing with and eradicating misogyny, in any form, while rejecting censorship so that we may be free to create our own images as feminist filmmakers such as Lizzie Borden have begun to do.

**Alexandra Devon:** Tell us how you came to your current views on prostitution.

**Lizzie Borden:** My interest in prostitution and my coming to a totally different opinion about it [occurred when] I began to meet women who really "worked". I had mixed feelings about the anti-pornography movement from the beginning because it seemed too moralistic and a little too contemptuous of imagery without seeing how it worked. Also, there was a holy attitude that I objected to. But when I started to meet women who actually "worked" I began to see that it was wrong to see them as victimized or degraded. The more women I met, and the more houses I visited -- it was mostly brothels that I visited because those were the women I met -- the more I realized that they did not fit into the stereotype I had of working girls. They didn't wear short skirts or stiletto heels, they looked like any of us and they worked in houses and they chose to do it for many, many reasons.

There was a lot of controversy when *Not A Love Story* came out<sup>1</sup> in the States, and I actually was very critical of that film because I felt that what it did was make women who worked in the sex industry feel as if they were doing something wrong. There are a lot of women who are victimized by prostitution obviously: for example, an under-aged girl arriving at Grand Central Station caught up by a pimp and put out into the street is victimized. However that comprises only a small percentage of women who work as prostitutes.

When *Not A Love Story* came out with that back to nature mentality -- you know Tracy Lee cavorting along the beach at the end of the film and everything is back to normal -- the idea of an awakening to a choice was one thing, but a lot of women have chosen to work as prostitutes. For me it's an economic choice in this culture, where work is so abominable most of the time. To choose to work two to three shifts a week as a prostitute and make the same money or more as working a forty or

fifty hour work week, where the work is demeaning, exhausting, not necessarily in somebody's field of passion so that it's morally dispiriting, is a real choice. Obviously in a future society where we would rethink the work ethic maybe there's a way that not only prostitution won't exist, but people can choose to work at the things they want to work at. Basically, my film *Working Girls* is about the idea of a woman choosing prostitution as an economic choice and not being pushed into it. She doesn't have a daddy problem, she doesn't have any psychological problems, she doesn't hate men, she doesn't have any axe to grind, in terms of doing it, except for the fact that she wants her own time. The other thing that I found too is that there are some prostitutes who love their work, there are others who tolerate it, but it's not that it's hurting them tremendously.

There aren't many women -- there are some but no more than the ordinary woman in the streets -- who get raped, attacked and hurt. Prostitutes are more visible in the streets so the percentage of rapes and attacks is relatively higher. But what practically every movie about prostitutes makes us think is that a hooker is a walking target, and there are so many prostitutes hurt by the end of these movies that you think it's the unsafest profession in the world. Women are smarter than that. There are a lot of safety mechanisms involved. What I found out about brothels is that there were safety mechanisms against violence in many forms from "Johns", but also from the police. There was a direct line to the police station in case somebody problematic came in. Say a customer had a gun or something, then they could buzz the police station. These women couldn't get arrested because they weren't calling the vice cops. There were also health protections. A lot of the women who "work" are healthier than most ordinary women, they're more educated about their bodies.

The major problem I saw was a bit of schizophrenia, if anything. You know just that sense of being touched/not being touched, having a sense where you have to do work and somehow cut your body off from feeling. There was an incredible labyrinth-like ability of these women to have another working name and then, when they leave work, become themselves again. Some of them had really decent relationships with lovers, male or female. Some of them had problems of course but who doesn't in this culture. Also I found that in a brothel a lot of the codes and rituals reproduce what we see in heterosexual social codes and rituals in places other than in a brothel, like singles bars. Any kind of a job that a woman has where she services mostly men has many, many parallels to prostitution. Waitressing, being a stewardess, being a PR person, working on many levels, like in the music industry, you have to service men. A lot of the exchanges I thought were really similar. For instance, "Would you like to sit down, make yourself comfortable, can I get you something to drink," etc. That was shocking to me in a way when I first saw the parallel.

When I finished this film, a feminist came up to me and said, "How can you do this, this is very anti-feminist, your stance is anti-feminist." People saying you are making an apology for prostitution, refusing to see it as an equivalent exchange. What I tried to do in *Working Girls* was to show that Molly, the lead character, or the other women, but especially Molly because we follow her throughout the whole day, is not exploited by the men. It's an even exchange, and there's a lot of humour and even some compassion back and forth. She knows what she's getting,



photo by Bill Banning

## Anarcha-Filmmaker:

### An interview with Lizzie Borden

she wants money, she'll be able, during that hour or half-hour, to do her job as well or not as well as she can. She has a commodity so she can choose the conditions, the framework, who she sees, who she doesn't see, the amount of involvement -- all of that. Because she has that to rent, not to sell, it's an even exchange.

Who I did find was the enemy was the Madam, just as a pimp would be the enemy because of the profiting off the bodies of the workers. So it ends up being like a regular employment situation. I didn't see it as that much different, always trying to get the most work for the least return. Of course, the girls in the house try to redress that imbalance by ripping off the Madam -- not counting their sessions, not writing down the right number of hours, etc.

**AD:** How did you become a feminist?

**LB:** Around 1972, I got really interested in what could be said to be the beginnings of radical feminism. It just brought everything together for me. Somehow the whole Vietnam thing was so male oriented, and a lot of the issues were about men. The women's movement brought things together in such a vital way that I was able to start to see parallels in almost every other political situation, from anti-war movements to libertarian struggles in other countries, all of that, but through the viewpoint of feminism.

At that point I was a painter and an art critic, when I first came to New York, and then realized that I didn't like the visual and the verbal so separated. I was really jealous of people making films. I would see people making films, like Goddard, and think, "I'm really jealous of this." So then I thought, "OK, I should be making films if I'm responding this way." So I taught myself everything. I just decided that I'd had too much of school -- school had destroyed art for me, really. I knew too much about it. I didn't want to learn anything about film other than what I needed to know -- to shoot, do sound and edit. I loved editing, it's so much like writing, and I became good at it so that I was able to support myself as a film editor -- usually small films and documentaries.

Making a film was a way to get involved politically. I never was involved in

consciousness-raising groups. Somehow making a film itself was a political process for me. *Born In Flames* came out of a lot of the inequalities I saw when I came to New York. Also, the alternative movements -- the gay movement, the women's movement -- were very divided and reproduced the divisions of the dominant culture. For example, Black women were still very isolated from white women, who were very isolated from Latin and Asian women, who were invisible. So that was one of the things I was interested in doing *Born In Flames* about. I began to be involved with Black women for the purpose of making the film. I wanted to construct a paradigm that I didn't see happening in the culture. For me, film is a political exploration. I'm totally not involved politically except in so far as I make films. I mean I don't go to meetings, I don't go to anything! But the films are a way to have a reason to be involved. The film about prostitution is the same thing. That, as opposed to being overtly political, it is, in fact, still a very political film because it is asserting a position. Every time you assert a position it has to be somehow standing against some dominant position you see or somehow trying to present another way in. I don't know why, I think I felt that I could be more influential or helpful or make a stronger statement by making a film. I'm really bad at meetings, I'm bad at panels, my brain stops working. Although I sign petitions, I may have gone to maybe one march in my life. Sometimes I feel guilty, I go "maybe I'm not politically involved enough". But making films is all about exploring an issue that I find absolutely fascinating and difficult. That's my way to motivate myself, to start to do research and explore it, and I put myself totally within it. In *Born In Flames* I was totally within the framework of what it's about. The women involved in it were who they really were. By doing the film I learned a lot. I always want to do a film about something I know nothing about and use that process to educate myself. So that to me is my main reason.

**Catherine Tammaro:** I wanted to ask you a couple of questions about your visual concerns in the film *Born In Flames*.

I'm a painter myself, and you mentioned that you started out as a painter and then gave it up to make film. What were your visual concerns in that film, and do you feel that they were well carried through or well represented? Were you perhaps making a political statement by the visual sparseness of the film?

**LB:** *Born In Flames* was a response to having very little money. The film was done for no more than \$40,000 and no less than \$30,000 over a period of four or five years. I couldn't pay people very much, and I had to do it over a long period of time, so my aesthetic had to be about grabbing images, and getting them without worrying about a well-defined aesthetic which would combine everything. Starting from an aesthetic of "cheapness" I then had to develop a kind of visual aesthetic which I decided was going to be montage<sup>2</sup>. I decided that I would not worry about what each individual looked like, but really try to create an energy about the juxtaposition of images. I couldn't worry that people gained and lost twenty pounds from one six month period to another, or that they shaved their heads or did strange things. I had to somehow manage to bind together a lot of images without having people worry too much about that. The structure of it also reproduced a lot of political ideas that were at the bottom of *Born In Flames*. I couldn't have an aesthetic unity based on consistent lighting, continuity and all of that because that wasn't what the film was about.

my god, *Working Girls* doesn't look anything like *Born In Flames*, like shock." But each idea has its own needs. Wild shooting would have been too subjective. *Born In Flames* is all about subjectivity, really. With *Born In Flames*, what seemed to me interesting was to try to get something very raw whether or not people really believed in it as actors or not. They were never intended to be actors. But they were almost playing out their fantasies of the characters, somewhere between who they were and who they fantasized themselves as being. In *Working Girls* it was strictly actors. I was really lucky to get Louise Smith who played the lead role of Molly because she had to do a lot of very hard work. In fact we did a week and a half of bedroom scenes and she really felt like a hooker. By the end she did everything. She is a nice Catholic girl who'd never been in a film and had never taken her clothes off before. But she was so willing to stretch herself to the experience. What was interesting to me in dealing with actors was overcoming their prejudices of what "working" girls were. They came to rehearsals in stilettos and I made them all go to the real place that the film was based

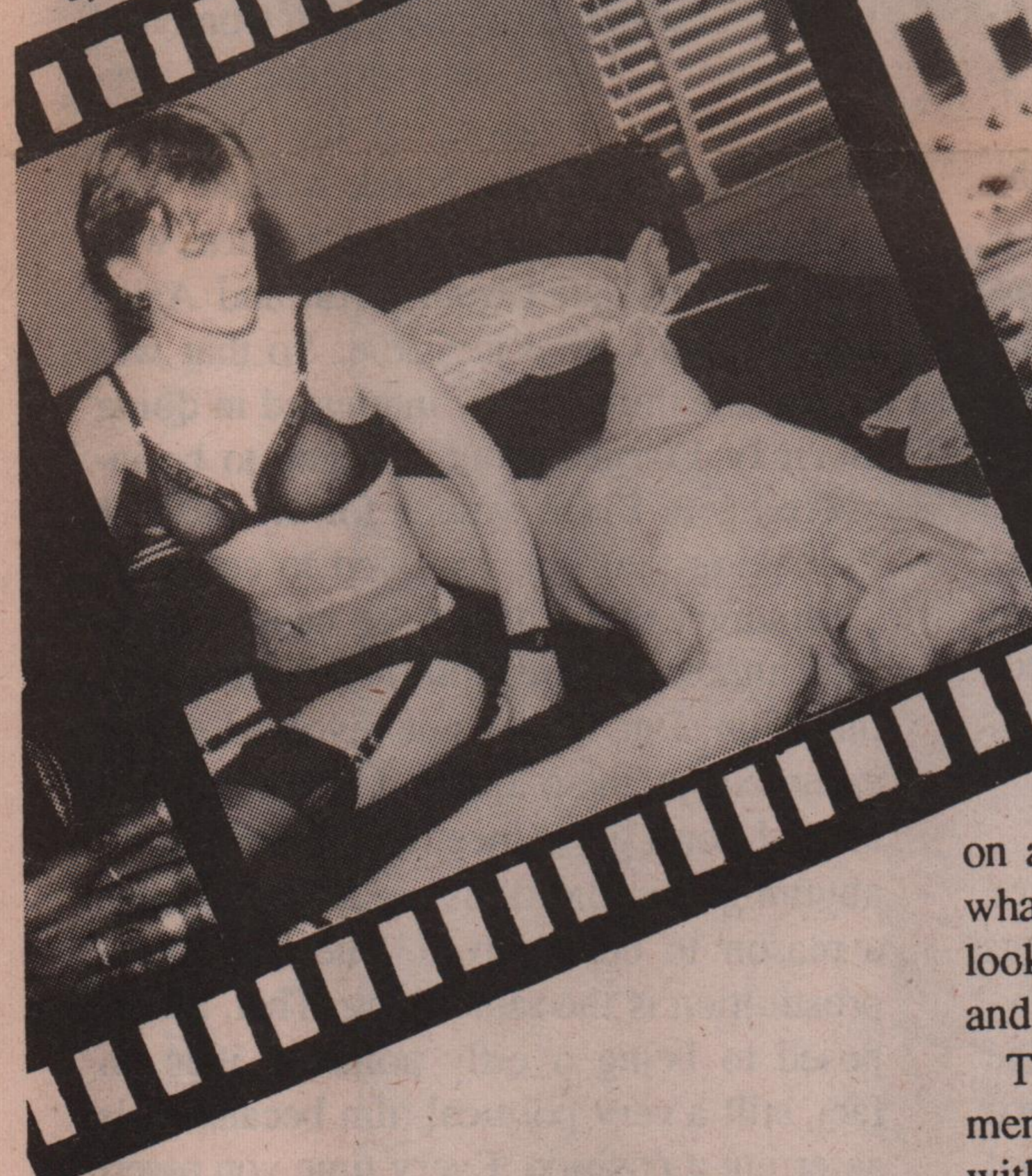
appealed to me simply because it's always calling into question that which is. I somehow see anarchism as that. I see it as not necessarily excluding different political identifications. For example, on one issue it might be possible to side with a socialist stance, on another issue a very Western stance. But the thing about anarchism is that it allows you not to have to be over-programmed. The other thing is about feminists. What gets me now is people saying that they're not feminist anymore. Feminism is such a mild word for how I consider myself, that I'm absolutely a feminist. Anarcha-feminism to me has always been about stirring things up. You try to constantly ask those questions which will prevent stasis from setting in. Even at the expense of sometimes being seen as contradictory or saying things that go against what you said a year before or a minute before. For me it's a process. We all know what's wrong with Western capitalism and we all know what's wrong

In the US, there is at least a chance, you know what the situation is. You can always put something up and have some people come to see it.

**AD:** What were you trying to say about feminism in *Born In Flames*?

**LB:** One of the points of *Born In Flames* was about "feminisms" -- the plural rather than the singular. That's been the problem of some political movements and feminism too -- the idea that you have to codify a platform. There are a million feminisms, there are a million types of different women who consider themselves feminists but don't have the same agenda. The idea of plurality as opposed to democracy is something that is really, really difficult. Especially where there's this

by Robyn Turney



on and apply for a job so they could see what the girls who really worked there looked like, what the Madam was like, and they changed their opinion.

The reason I didn't want to do a documentary was that I felt that I would deal with a lot of restrictions, and I also wanted to go into the bedroom and demystify the sex that happens in that prostitute/"John" relationship -- I couldn't have done that in a documentary. I did a lot of research and forged ahead. A friend of mine worked in a particular brothel on 24th Street and I went in there with a tape recorder and took notes, and met women and even clients. They weren't defensive since I wasn't going to use them -- their images. I was going to base characters on them and then spend a lot of time writing the script.

**AD:** I've heard in number of articles you described as an anarcha-feminist. Are you in fact an anarcha-feminist? Is this a label people have put on you? Are you comfortable with it?

**LB:** I'm comfortable with it by process of elimination because I never quite figured out what it is, but I feel closer to it than any other political identification. I'm so critical of any kind of organized left wing just because of bureaucracy really becoming another class, and the relationship of women to whatever organized left there is. So the idea of anarchism has always

with the extreme left, so anarcha-feminism -- it just seems to be the only viable identification, if one is to identify at all.

**AD:** Would you tell us some of the problems you've had with your films getting censored.

**LB:** When *Born In Flames* came out I went through this big thing with the [Ontario] Censor Board. The same thing occurred with my "dick shots" in *Working Girls*. This year it's been pretty outrageous because the film was appealed, then they decided I had to make one cut. Since I had to make that cut for American distribution, I said alright. As it turns out, I just put tape over that scene. But in a way the controversy about the censorship of my film made it possible for the Andy Warhol film, which has twenty-eight minutes of a blow job, to just breeze right through. That I resent tremendously.

But the irony is that censorship by the economic market is just as strong. No distributor is going to take my film unless I cut that scene out. They say, "Fine, you can have that shot in your film but we're just not going to distribute it." And if it doesn't get distributed it doesn't get seen. So, in fact, that's a form of censorship as well. I feel that a lot of feminist issues get cut down in the market place. It's fine to deal with certain issues and people say, "Sure, go right ahead." But it's harder to get grants, it's harder to get the film seen and you get torn apart totally. It's something which I feel is highly contradictory and does end up being a form of censorship. Here in Canada at least it's overt, you know what your fighting against, which is the only advantage. Still it's hard because it means nobody can see things.

myth in America, and probably in Canada too, of the melting pot. To melt together, to become uniform, to agree on a platform. It will never exist and there's no reason to have it exist. In fact, one of the issues, in terms of race, is how do you allow, encourage, appreciate racial autonomy with all of its distinctions, and at the same time not discriminate because of all those things? How do you allow people to not feel that they have to conform to a white feminist program? One of the things about *Born In Flames* was that each of the different sub groups, the Black underground radio station, the white underground radio station worked together without losing their autonomy. For me it seems really important to make those links. That was also a response to a lot of NOW<sup>3</sup> platforms. NOW was afraid to have lesbians work with them. They were afraid to have this group and that group because of one national image that they were promoting, which I thought was highly damaging and still is.

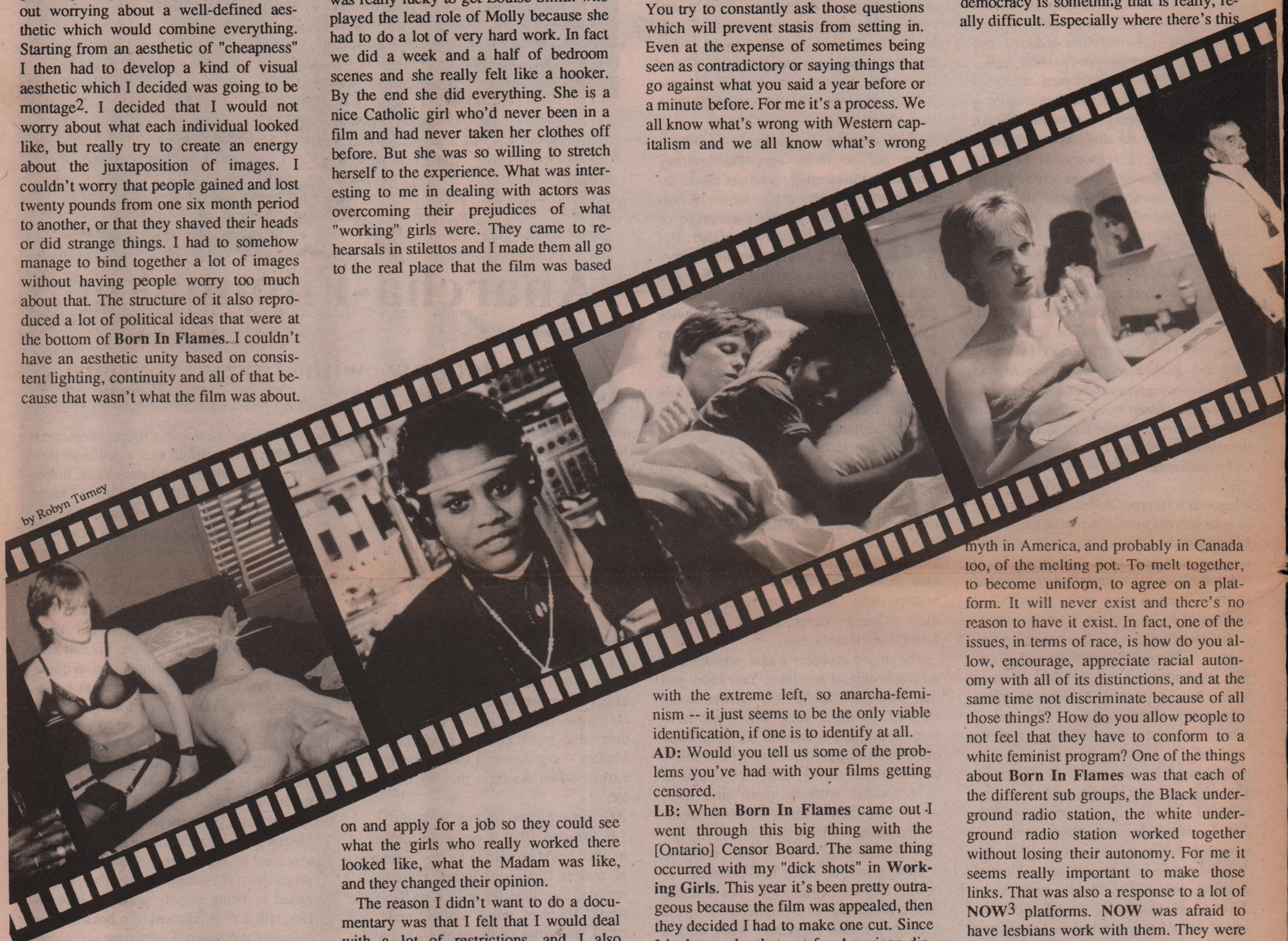
Now all of a sudden everything has wound up in the women against pornography movement, at least until a few years ago. It ends up being an issue that people have to feel one way on. Then there's a lot of hatred against the women who try to have another viewpoint. So that the Andrea Dworkin<sup>4</sup> types are totally against the women who are saying, "Hey look we don't want to be censored." Then there's the women who are much more exploratory in terms of sexual practice. It ends up tearing everything apart -- which is great -- the media loves it! It allows potent movements to be so diffused that nothing can happen. That's scary!

**CT:** I wanted to ask you a question about the white radio station in *Born In Flames*. It's a different topic but appropriate in terms of a wider vision of anarcha-feminism. Adele (the disk jockey) makes a statement about the return of a female prophet, about a spirit. What are your feelings on spirituality and how they

It was so much about discontinuity and dysfunction. It was about different groups somehow coming together and the explosion of when that happened. I thought much more about diagonals, as opposed to horizontals or verticals or anything that would lead to continuity of visual experience.

You try to make virtues out of your problems, and with *Born In Flames* I really tried to do that. It would have been impossible otherwise, because so much of the film was constructed in the editing. I would get a piece of something where there was no script to start with. So much of it was trying to be open to what the ideas of these women I was working with.

In *Working Girls* I had to have a completely different visual aesthetic. I had \$100,000 for production, and that in itself is not very much. But when I decided I was going to make the film all take place in one day I knew that I had to have a very good looking image that was very controlled, otherwise people would get tired of looking at it. I couldn't use any kind of wild editing really. It actually surprises me sometimes because people say, "Oh



fit in with a unified vision of anarcha-feminism?

LB: I don't think there is any fitting into a unified vision of anarcha-feminism. That character, the female prophet, she's very much like that in any case, as a representative of a kind of artist/poet type. What generates a lot of poetry is some kind of a connection to notions of spirit. It's not a political notion so much as an artistic one. She's somebody who very consciously within the film kept saying something different. She was identified first with Arabs and she had a headdress on. Then she had corn rows, and then it was reggae stuff, and then it was rock. So it was all about that kind of shifting identification which is very suspect. I wanted her to not be this person you could totally identify with, but somebody who was hopping all over the spectrum of what was possible. To deal with some of the ideas, because that's in fact how people learn and how people grow within any sort of artistic imagination. Her sources would have been very different from the Black underground woman whose source would be much more a sort of local oppression, a certain kind of way of seeing. Her speeches came a lot from Malcolm X<sup>5</sup> but transposed to feminism, whereas Adele, the artist/poet, was all over the place. It was all about music too, and what music generated and the kind of poetry that spontaneously comes out of life's events. So, in fact, Adele was very anarchist because her response to everything was totally spontaneous. It was, "I feel like saying this, and I feel like saying it right now."

I personally have been such an atheist all my life that I have no views on spiritual stuff, except in so far as passion is spiritual, or the need to make something is spiritual, and the need to come together is spiritual. Spiritual in that there is a collective body of feeling that ends up being bigger than the sum of its parts. Not that there's an external goal - I don't believe in "The Goddess", I don't believe in any of those things, because I never have. I've never had a God that I had to shift to Goddess. But I think spirit is about a sense of something greater, and that greater can be what gives you the courage to keep fighting in the face of a lot of cynicism. So, for me, that's the only spiritual knowledge or feeling of passion I have, which is transcendence of a current situation and hope. It's the hope that sends a spark when you do come together with other people. There is a sense of power. So spirituality is that kind of power, not power over but power to transform. That's a magical feeling in a way. But you also

know it as an artist. When you're writing, you have an idea and every little bit of your being tingles. That feeling can also be expanded to larger things. Even seeing those anti-rape marches with everyone with candles -- there's something so extraordinary.

For me spirituality is also about aesthetics. There is something of beauty that has to transcend the ugliness and sense of despair that you see. That's why at the end of *Born In Flames*, Adele says this thing about turning shit into gold, which is her own formulation. She's a wacky person, she's so much playing herself in that film and she wrote her own stuff. One of the things I liked to do with people was to have them, well some of them, say what they wanted to. So Adele would come one day dressed one way and speaking one thing. That's the way that kind of person is. She reminded me of a lot of artists that I knew. There is a "devil-may-care" and even what one may call political irresponsibility on the part of the artist. I'm attracted to that, on the one hand, because a more considered, responsible position can sometimes be more solid but it can also be a drag. I saw that element in the women's movement. One can become a prisoner of logic.

One of the reasons I decided to concentrate on work was that, as I said before, so much of the work in this culture is spiritually draining. It flattens you out, there is no spirit. You give time for so little return that it's horrifying. That diminishment of spirit is something which I was concerned about. That's a point that I wanted to make in *Working Girls*. There were a lot of things I know that I wanted to have read through without necessarily having one statement. One of my ideas in terms of making the film was that of choice. Sometimes, time to develop yourself is more important than whatever the culture may think of you renting your body for sex, if you can make so much more money that way. I really think that it's a choice in this culture. It's something that people just can't have a ready moral judgment about. What happens is that the moral judgments are handed down. What is extremely dangerous is for any woman to have the scarlet "A" on her who has happened to work as a prostitute for any length of time -- for six months, for six years, for her life. To be seen as a fallen or degraded person or woman is a horror. That has to be revised, simply because for others to decide who is degraded and who isn't is really hard.

When people ask me why *Working Girls* is feminist, my feeling is that

women have to control our images and prostitution, too. If prostitution exists in this culture -- and it has existed and probably will exist for a very long time -- we can't just say it's bad, that it's feeding into the male trip of power over women. If it exists, we as women cannot only control the images of prostitution, but all of the works about it -- for example, movies. If women in prostitution can be seen as not necessarily victims, or if, in fact, some of them can be allowed in this culture to achieve a position of strength, it can only help. It's a feminist position, women being powerful in any area is feminist. Even within prostitution, if one can say 3,000 years from now hopefully there will be no prostitution that's great, we all hope that. As long as it's here we need to deal with those images a little bit differently. I'm just so tired of some of these movies -- high class call girls or street hookers who are addicts. There's a million kinds of prostitution just like there a million kinds of feminism. But what happens is that the media makes it look like there's one kind, one judgment upon it, and that's simply not true. We don't deal with one kind of businessman or one kind of secretary.

LB: Anyone who knows women who "work" would have a different opinion than mainstream portrayals of prostitution. Men who have gone to prostitutes have a different opinion. It's the people who have never had any experience that buy into pictures of prostitutes in the media, which is a little much.

AD: What is next for you?

LB: I have a lot of ideas but it's hard to talk about it right now because I just finished *Working Girls* for the Cannes Festival<sup>6</sup> in May and haven't had a lot of time to evolve other ideas. I've been writing -- I'm a slow writer. I always like to go into areas of the forbidden, so it will be something -- I'm not sure.

At this point too I think that what happens is the more films I make, and the more expensive they become, the more I start to see what a financially restricting position I am in. You can't get grants that will allow you to make films. You have to deal with ideas that can be a little bit commercial, but I don't want to deal with things only on the basis of commercialism. You start to wonder how practical it can be to make films.

I would also not be adverse to working on someone else's script if I got a script that was interesting, just because with the last two films I've either written them in the editing room or, as with *Working Girls*, written the scripts myself. I do have

some ideas. One is about a reform school, the other is about a Black jazz musician who discovers a cure for drug addiction. There's these different ideas. The drug addiction/jazz musician one is about a two million dollar movie -- God knows where I could get that money.

The reform school one, actually written by Adele who plays the punk in *Born In Flames*, is based on her experiences in reform school. It might be a reform school musical. That's another example of stereotyping too -- reform school movies are usually horrible, they're real snake pits. Even the Miles Edderling film *Scrubbers* that everybody loves, I really didn't like. Adele was moaning on the floor saying, "It's not like that." So these things are being written, and in some cases I'm helping with an overall plot and somebody else is writing it, or I'm co-writing it.

The other idea I have is the exploration of the sexual relationship of two people over the age of fifty-five because nobody ever sees sex between older people. I'm interested in all these things, but which happens first is so much a question of financing at this point. I'll never not make movies; if I have to I'll go back to the *Born In Flames* way which is to shoot once a month. You begin to learn that there are ways of getting movies made and it's based a lot on scripts and who you go to. *Working Girls* should make it easier. So one of these will be next. Hopefully not too many years in the future. □

NOTES

1. *Not A Love Story*, a Canadian-made film, circa 1982, is both an expose and condemnation of pornography and the sex industry as a form of degradation and violence against women.
2. A "montage" is the combination of elements of different photographic pictures.
3. NOW (the National Organization for Women) is a powerful US womens' lobby group with a membership comprised of millions.
4. Andrea Dworkin is the author of many radical feminist works, including the well-known Minneapolis anti-pornography legislation which was adopted then repealed recently in that American city.
5. Malcolm X was a Black nationalist orator who was something of a competitor in the early 60's with Dr. Martin Luther King (unlike King, he advocated liberation "by any means necessary"). His assassination in 1965 is believed to have been carried out by agents of the police or by former Black Muslim associates.
6. The Cannes Film Festival is an annual mega-event held in France, which premieres, and grants awards to, big budget mainstream films, and occasionally alternative films, primarily from Europe and North America.

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# Anarcha-Feminism: The Power to Transform

by Alexandra Devon

"Power to no one, and to every one; to each the power over his/her own life, and no others."<sup>1</sup> This rallying cry of the Women's Liberation movement of the early seventies is an inherently anarcha-feminist statement. It focuses on "power over" (in whatever form it takes) as the problem and individual and community empowerment as the solution. Not all feminists have shared this antipathy to "power". While feminists have longed for and worked towards the "withering away of male power", many of these women have longed to share this power whether in the corporate boardroom or state offices of a capitalist or socialist society. This is only one of the splits which divide feminists and which shows that while women share a common oppression, we do not share all the same oppressions. For example, the concerns of working class women, lesbians, Native women, women of colour, differently-abled women would not be served by a group of white middle-class able-bodied women getting into positions of power. Not only do we not share all of the same oppressions, we do not share a common vision. While feminists have identified many of the symptoms which make the body politic sick, we have been less unanimous in prescribing a cure or even a definition of what constitutes health. We agree that patriarchal attitudes and institutions are the problem but do not really agree on what the "patriarchy" is and how to do away with it. Many feminists have had personal experiences which demonstrate how far apart we actually are on many basic premises.

When at a meeting of feminists discussing the peace movement, I suggested that, as feminists, we could make a unique contribution to the peace movement by linking up with our sisters in the East to criticize both the patriarchy in the USSR as well as the US, I was so soundly denounced by the five group leaders of the workshop as a "cold warrior" that I began to feel the full force of the slogan

"sisterhood is powerful". In many feminist groups and communities, there's more hierarchy, hidden agendas, star worship, discrimination and lack of attention to process than one would think is sisterly possible. A more thorough-going analysis of power on a personal and political level, an explicitly anarchist critique, would go far toward improving feminist process, strategy, and the creation of a future vision. The movement which gave birth to the slogan, "the personal is political," and which has raised awareness of many different types of oppression among women, needs to be more self-conscious in recognizing that power in all forms is the problem and not simply the patriarchal manifestation of it.

In this issue we have tried to show how anarchism and feminism complement each other. While the other hyphenated feminisms are more widely known and written about, anarcha-feminism is unknown to many who might be sympathetic to it. Susan Brown's theoretical article offers a definition of anarcha-feminism and compares it with radical and socialist-feminism. Although very few women identify as anarcha-feminists, the anarcha-feminist impulse is not new or rare; it exists whenever a feminist sensibility rebels against the power of the state or patriarchal oppression in a spirit which sees all oppression as reprehensible (see "The Herstory of Anarcha-Feminism").

This issue of KIO is not homogeneous. There are many differences of opinion and approaches; not all writers or those written about are anarcha-feminists, nor is this issue the last word on the subject. Anarcha-feminism is very much a developing field of thought. Aside from herstory, theory and analysis, you'll find in these articles sadness, rage, and hope; it's in the spirit of the latter that we offer this issue to you. □

1. "Lilith's Manifesto" from **WOMEN: A Journal of Women's Liberation** (Fall 1970).



by Monica Sjöo

# Why Anarcho-

by L. Susan Brown

## INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS ANARCHISM?

To most people, anarchists are *men* in long dark coats who throw bombs and assassinate presidents. In centrist and right wing newspapers, the words chaos and anarchy are used interchangeably as if the words are synonymous. Marxist communists also misconstrue and twist the philosophy and politics of anarchy. Karl Marx himself accused anarchism of being a bourgeois movement<sup>1</sup>, which, in a Marxist sense, is to condemn it to counter-revolutionary status. I would like to argue that anarchism is none of these things, and that it is essential for women's liberation.

What is anarchy? Anarchy means, literally, "without a ruler"<sup>2</sup>. Central to anarchist thought is the conviction that hierarchy and domination must be eliminated from our social and political relations. According to the noted American anarchist Emma Goldman, anarchy

...stands for the liberation of the human mind from the dominion of religion; the liberation of the human body from the dominion of property; liberation from the shackles and restraint of government. Anarchism stands for a social order based on the free grouping of individuals for the purpose of producing real social wealth; an order that will guarantee to every human being free access to the earth and full enjoyment of the necessities of life, according to individual desires, tastes, and inclinations.<sup>3</sup> Anarchists engage in active struggle against all forms of domination or hierarchy, whether it be the state over individuals, individuals over other individuals, men over women, or humans over nature.

## ANARCHISM AND EXISTENTIALISM

It could be argued that anarchism contains within itself an unrealistic view of the abilities of human beings to live together harmoniously. This argument lacks both imagination and courage. Anarchism, like existentialism, acknowledges that human beings are themselves responsible for the creation of their world. For the existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre, to deny that we have choices and that we choose freely, is to "live in bad faith"<sup>4</sup>. Existentialists place the burden of our actions squarely on our shoulders. In his succinct though sexist work *Existentialism and Human Emotions*, Sartre justifies this burden of responsibility by arguing that for human beings existence precedes essence.

What is meant here by saying that existence precedes essence? It means, first of all, man exists, turns up, appears on the scene, and, only afterwards, defines himself. If man, as the existentialist conceives him, is indefinable, it is because at first he is nothing. Only afterward will he be something, and he himself will have made what he will be. Thus, there is no human nature, since there is no God to conceive it. Not only is man what he conceives himself to be, but he is also only what he wills himself to be after this thrust to existence

...(If) existence really does precede essence, man is responsible for what he is. Thus, existentialism's first move is to make every man aware of what he is and to make the full responsibility of his existence rest on him. And when we say that a man is responsible for himself, we do not only mean that he is responsible for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men.<sup>5</sup>

This self-conscious responsibility that Sartre speaks of is necessary for the realization of an anarchist society. It is both a freedom and a responsibility that human beings can and must create themselves.

It demands courage to live without rulers, to abolish the numbing comfort of hierarchies. As Nietzsche asks in his aphorism "Of the Way of the Creator" in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*,

Can you furnish yourself with your own good and evil and hang up your own will above you as a law? Can you be judge of yourself and avenger of your law?<sup>6</sup>

The anarchist must be able to answer "yes" to Nietzsche's questions. Existentialism enunciates the philosophical foundation upon which anarchism is predicated. If existence precedes essence, then it is possible for human beings to create themselves and their world in any one of an infinite number of ways; it is even possible to create a world without rulers.

If one accepts the existentialist argument, then anarchism is not utopian, for we can choose to live without hierarchies, just as we now choose to live with them. As Emma Goldman said of anarchism at a Chicago Press Club luncheon meeting in November, 1914,

You call it a dream, gentleman; well, I plead guilty. But when we can't dream any longer we die. That's what is the matter with you. You've lost your dreams.<sup>7</sup>

We must dare to dream, and we must not let politically motivated cries of "utopianism" silence us.

## ANARCHISM: STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

The anarchist vision is a clear one: a world absent of domination. The question becomes one of how to realize this aim.

Anarchism and Marxism share the conviction that liberation involves the abolition of private property, but to replace private property with state control, even if just provisionally, is, for anarchists, unthinkable. By doing so simply trades one form of domination for another.

For anarchists, ends and means are seen to be inseparable, and as a result the means used to achieve a certain end must be compatible with that end. Thus anarchists do not believe in the seizure of power, but rather in the dissolution of power. Peggy Kornegger, in her article "Anarchism: The Feminist Connection", states:

Whereas many socialists call for a working class government and an eventual "withering away of the state," anarchists believe that the means create the ends, that a strong State becomes self-perpetuating. The only way to achieve anarchism (according to anarchist theory) is through the creation of co-operative, anti-authoritarian forms. To separate the process from the goals of rev-

# Feminism?



photo of womyn from Greenham Common

olution is to insure the perpetuation of oppressive structure and style.<sup>8</sup>

Social, political and economic change is, then, a continual process. Anarchists believe that by organizing in anti-authoritarian ways now we are helping to create an anti-authoritarian future.

For anarchists, organization is voluntary and decentralized, as centralization is conducive to relations of domination. By rejecting organization from above in favour of organization from below, anarchists believe that community can be created where the interests of the individual are in harmony with those of the collective. Process is emphasized, with consensus decision making replacing the vote. Democracy is recognized as the tyranny of the majority over the minority. As Robert Paul Wolff argues:

I can neither find nor think of a way of making majority rule compatible with the moral autonomy of the individual. The problem is always the same: Either the minority submit to the majority, thereby conforming to laws which they think are bad and against which they voted; or else the minority reserve to themselves the right to defy those laws which they consider too evil, in which case the fundamental authority of the state is negated.<sup>9</sup>

In consensus, there is no minority that is effectively disenfranchised on every decision. The witch Starhawk, while not an anarchist, provides us with a clear explanation of the process of consensus.

When we vote, we are still in the framework of duality. "Here are two alternatives," we are saying, "choose one over the other. The choice most people make is the one we will act upon - whether the others like it or not." The majority wields power over the minority.... With consensus, we tell a new story. We say that everybody's voice is worth hearing, that all concerns are valid. If one proposal makes a few people - even one person - deeply unhappy and if we ignore it, we are likely to make a mistake. Instead of spending the group's energy trying to force or manipulate people into agreeing to something they don't want, we can drop either or both alternatives and look for a new solution, a more creative option that can satisfy all concerns. We can afford to do this because the universe is not truly divided into either/or choices. It is rich with infinite possibilities.<sup>10</sup>

This of course assumes that the consensus making group is a voluntary one, and therefore those involved are truly interested in coming to consensus. This type of organization not only ensures the unity of the individual and the community, it is also fluid enough to allow for individual spontaneity.

The identity of means and ends, small scale organization from below, and con-

sensus decision making: these are all aspects of anarchist theory and practice. It is impossible, however, to put forth a blueprint for anarchist social change - to do so would be decidedly authoritarian.

Anarchists recognize that each situation is different, and as such calls for different responses and initiatives. Anarchism is flexible enough to allow for a multitude of approaches and strategies.

While a hard and fast blueprint is not possible, anarchists do advocate certain strategies to achieve positive social change. Action which directly challenges the institutions of domination are seen as having a twofold purpose: 1) to undermine the existing power structures and thereby weaken their effectiveness; and 2) to provide for others examples of alternative forms of living and organizing. Thus the strategy is to challenge and undermine while educating. Through this, anarchists attempt to bring about social change. According to Emma Goldman, (d)irect action against the authority in the shop, direct action against the authority of the law, direct action against the invasive, meddling authority of our moral code, is the logical, consistent method of anarchism.

Will it not lead to a revolution? Indeed, it will. No real social change has ever come about without a revolution. People are either not familiar with their history, or they have not yet learned that revolution is but thought carried into action.<sup>11</sup>

Direct action can take many different forms. I myself refuse to marry the man I live with, and thereby affirm in my life my commitment to freely chosen relationships unhampered by state regulation. I have known anarchists who refuse to pay income taxes and who have spent time in jail for that refusal. Some avoid taxes by establishing underground workers' collectives that are "invisible" to the government. Direct action can even take place within the more radical labour unions; in Montreal a few years ago the subway workers undermined the government not by striking but by refusing to collect fares. This strategy not only challenged the state, but gained the union support from passengers who ordinarily would have been inconvenienced by a walkout. The boycott of Nestle products a few years ago and of South African products today by ordinary consumers is another example of effective direct action. These are only a few examples; it is possible to imagine many different ways to oppose the existing relations of domination. The aim, as Peggy Kornegger argues, is to take part in "...a 'hollowing out' of the present system through the formation of mental and physical (concrete) alternatives to the way things are."<sup>12</sup> Thus, for anarchists, social change is a process of thoughtful action that undermines the present system in preparation for a new world.

## ANARCHISM AND FEMINISM

How then does anarchism relate to feminism? I will argue here that feminism is inherent in anarchism, while anarchism is not necessarily inherent in feminism. Anarchism includes but goes beyond feminism in its commitment to end all forms of domination, while feminism, in itself, is insufficient for the liberation of all human beings.

Anarchism, as a political philosophy that advocates the elimination of domination, must, if it is to be self-consistent, advocate the elimination of sexism. The sexual hierarchy of patriarchy is as repugnant to anarchists as is the hierarchy formed by the state over the governed. To be sure, sexist anarchists have and do exist, but only by contradicting their own anarchist principles. Anarchism is inherently feminist, while transcending feminism in a critique of all relations of domination. This critique of domination is what differentiates anarcho-feminism from other forms of feminism. To better understand anarcho-feminism, I would like to compare anarcho-feminism with both Marxist-feminism and radical feminism.

## ANARCHO-FEMINISM AND MARXIST-FEMINISM

Marxist-feminism, as a political movement, has arisen out of an attempt to modify Marxism in order to account for the oppression of women. Marxism itself does not inherently contain a feminist critique; rather, feminism has had to be grafted onto a theory not originally intended to deal with women. The result is Marxist-feminism, a theoretical perspective that tends to relate women's oppression to class conflict. In Marxist-feminism, the battle against capitalism often takes precedence over the battle to end sexism. It is obvious that the terms Marx used to analyze men's paid labour exclude women's labour in the home. Concepts like use value, exchange value, and surplus value, despite great mental contortions, do not apply to women's traditional work, and tell us little of women's actual experience of oppression.

In Carol Ehrlich's anarcho-feminist reply to Heidi Hartmann's Marxist-feminist position, Ehrlich points to the lack of a Marxist-feminist critique of power and domination:

Clitoridectomy destroys a woman's orgasmic capacity; infibulation controls her reproductive freedom. On one level, this brutal practice can be explained by Hartmann's [Marxist-feminist] analysis of the control of women's sexuality in the service of patriarchy's need to control her labor power. But there is more involved: the infliction of such pain, the often severe physical problems that follow, the destruction of a human's right to

sexual enjoyment and her right to control her own sexuality, the use of women (in some cultures) to do this to other women - this is sheer physical and psychological domination. It makes one wonder why women fail to resist, to refuse this assault on their bodies, and to refuse any part in helping to cripple other women. These practices represent power relationships in their most extreme, most pathological form. They, and all other forms of ritualized, culturally condoned violence of one sex, class, or race against another, are maintained by hierarchy and authority. They will disappear only when we create forms of organization which do not permit power relationships to survive.<sup>13</sup>

Marxist-feminism does not criticize power and relations of domination *per se*, but tends to concentrate on a particular form of domination: capitalism. Unlike Marxism, anarchism, with its critique of domination, is inherently a critique of patriarchy. Feminism does not have to be grafted on, but is rather an integral part of anarchism. Domination in any form, whether it be men over women or state over governed, is criticized. Within an anarchist framework, transferring men's control over women in capitalism to state control over both men and women in state socialism would only perpetuate domination and exploitation. It would take a greater reorganization of society to truly liberate all people: an anarchist-based revolution.

## ANARCHO-FEMINISM AND RADICAL FEMINISM

What is the difference between anarcho-feminism and radical feminism? Many of the characteristics of anarchism that I have discussed are shared by some radical feminists: decentralized organization of small, consensus based groups and the unity of means with ends are routinely practiced within the radical feminist community. Peggy Kornegger even argues that "...feminists have been unconscious anarchists in both theory and practice for years."<sup>14</sup> I believe Kornegger's statement is overly simplistic, as there are some radical feminists who are definitely not committed to anarchist principles. Some radical feminists, for instance, focus on patriarchy itself as the root of all domination, while anarchists have a more broad conception of power relations. For example, the Westchester Radical Feminists state that "(w)omen's liberation is not human liberation and we place the cause of women above all other causes."<sup>15</sup> In making this statement, the Westchester Radical Feminists establish a hierarchy of causes. Anarcho-feminism is opposed to all hierarchies, and does not place any one cause above the others. All forms of domination are equally undesirable, and the fight against domination

must be fought on many different fronts.

Some radical feminists actually see the adoption of anarchist principles as a major weakness of the women's movement. Carol Hanisch, for instance, argues that the anti-leadership strategy used by the women's movement of the late 1960's actually weakened the effectiveness of the movement as a whole. Hanisch states that

(t)he no leadership/total equality line had damaging effects on the women's liberation movement... The major effect of the no leadership line was to stop the pro-woman faction from continuing to take their politics to the masses of women. It simultaneously served the personal ambitions of some.<sup>16</sup>

Hanisch argues that the anti-elitist no-leadership strategy effectively split the movement into ineffectual groups, thereby "liberalizing" and deradicalizing the women's movement. Hanisch cannot understand the strength inherent to a decentralized movement, nor can she see the authoritarianism of her own position. A decentralized movement is less easy to infiltrate, and certainly less easy for the state and other groups to control. Strong leadership can easily turn into authoritarianism, and only replicates the relations of domination that anarchists are fighting to destroy. Hanisch, while being a radical feminist, is, in her pro-leadership stance, certainly not an anarchist.

Other radical feminists, like Jane Alpert, envision the ending of oppression to be predicated on the establishment of a matriarchy.

...(T)he point of *Mother Right* is to reshape the family according to the perceptions of women, and to reshape society in the image of this new matriarchal family. Because motherhood cuts across economic class, race, and sexual preference, a society in which women were powerful by virtue of being mothers would not be divided along any of these lines.<sup>17</sup> [original emphasis]

This reasoning is, from an anarchist viewpoint, problematic. There is no guarantee that a matriarchy will be any better than a patriarchy, or any other "archy" for that matter. Alpert, instead of arguing against all forms of power and domination, argues in favour of a matriarchy that will somehow be benevolent. The benevolence of other rulers has been historically fickle, whether they be kings, queens, popes, or presidents. Why should women be immune to the corrupting nature of power? Alpert does not address this, and cannot, because she is not an anarchist.

Sally Miller Gearhart, in her article "The Future - If There Is One - Is Female" lays out an argument that perhaps best typifies a radical feminist stance that is non-anarchist. Gearhart argues that

...if the world is to move away from the escalating violence that shapes all our lives, then the affairs of the world, and of the human species specifically, must be placed in the hands of women.<sup>18</sup>

Gearhart continues her argument by stating that we should "...begin thinking of flipping the coin, of making the exchange of power, of building the ideology of female primacy and control."<sup>19</sup> How does Gearhart propose to do this? She urges the reduction of the male population to 10%.<sup>20</sup> This female supremacist argument is nothing short of fascism. Anarchism is about the dissolution of power, not the exchange of power. No anarchist would support genocide of any type, sexual or otherwise.

It is obvious that the abolition of power relations in all aspects of life is not an inherent part of radical feminism, although

some radical feminists could conceivably hold such a position. Only by consciously embracing anarchism can feminism become a movement to liberate all people from all forms of domination.

### CONCLUSION

Anarchism is both a philosophy and a political strategy that endeavors to eliminate all forms of domination. It is based on the assumption that human beings freely create themselves and their world, and are responsible for both. Through the constant challenging of relations and institutions of domination, anarchists undermine the current system. By themselves adopting non-authoritarian, non-hierarchical processes, anarchists further "hollow out" repressive structures.

I have argued that anarchism is inherently feminist, and that feminism is not necessarily anarchist. Marxist-feminists implicitly assume that the transference of power over women's labour from men to the state will result in liberation; anarchists believe the state to be inherently repressive. While it is possible to be a radical feminist and an anarchist, not all radical feminists agree with anarchist principles. In fact, some advocate authoritarian methods, while others aim to establish a matriarchal society, which is, by definition, hierarchical. Only anarcho-feminism provides a political philosophy that opposes all hierarchies and all forms of domination, whether sexist, racist, classist or statist.

The ideas presented here are part of a process, a process involving both thought and action. It is a process that is never finished, but is always in the state of becoming. And in that process of becoming, we create ourselves. As Emma Goldman once said,

"What I believe" is a process rather than a finality. Finalities are for gods and governments, not for the human intellect... In the battle for freedom, as Ibsen has so well pointed out, it is the struggle for, not so much the attainment of, liberty, that develops all that is strongest, sturdiest and finest in the human character.

Anarchism is not only a process, however, that marches on with "sombre steps," coloring all that is positive and constructive in organic development. It is so absolutely uncompromising, insisting and permeating a force as to overcome the most stubborn assault and to withstand the criticism of those who really constitute the last trumpets of a decaying age.<sup>21</sup> □

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The Kick It Over collective wishes to acknowledge that this article raises issues which can only be touched on briefly given the nature of the article. Is there a human nature? How is "free will" conditioned by factors of race, class and sex? Have anarchists done enough work on vision and strategy? And is anarcho-feminism a qualitative leap beyond anarchism itself? These are some of the questions which come to mind. We encourage feedback from our readers on these topics.

### PERHAPS YOU WILL REMEMBER

Submissions are now being accepted for a forthcoming magazine and anthology featuring material by Black people in Canada. Short stories, poetry, journal writing, science fiction, cartoons, black and white photography and other forms of creativity are welcome. Send submissions by September 30 to: Maya, 170 Booth St. (#311), Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 7W1/ (613) 234-9628.

### HAYMARKET II!

Persons interested in another continent-wide gathering of anarchists, such as that held last year to commemorate Haymarket, should contact: Chris Gunderson, c/o The Back Room Anarchist Center, 2 East 27th St., Minneapolis, MN 55408. The conference would likely be held in Minneapolis in June or July.

Connexions, a directory of Canadian organizations for social justice, is now available. Organized by subject area and geographical region, the directory is \$17.95. People who subscribe for \$23.00 receive, in addition to the directory, a quarterly digest with updates, "how-to" articles, and summaries of major articles in the alternative press. To order a directory, with or without subscription, write to: Connexions, Suite 529, 427 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1X7.

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of November. There were two womyn and several cats and dogs sitting round the fire at Blue Gate. Carved pumpkins hung on a fence. Across the road was parked their beautiful van, painted with anarcha-feminist, pagan, lesbian and other womyn's symbols. We slept in a bender, a sheet of plastic hung over the fence (or a rope) to make a large tent. I shivered all night since I hadn't taken enough bedding, but the animals loved snuggling into all the warm bodies in the bender.

By the next day, many of the womyn had returned. Other visitors arrived, and in the evening, womyn from other gates came around. It was wonderful -- a big fire, warm vegan food, lots of womyn singing and getting high.

It almost sounds idyllic. And there were great times while I was there. Like when I stayed at Yellow Gate in May. It was warm and womyn lay in the sun, some naked in the clearing. And when I was there for a full moon ritual, and when we saw the fox in the woods. (And when I heard that they celebrated Beltane -- on May Eve, a springtime ritual - by building a big fire in the middle of the road.)

But there were also the bad things. The convoys, the base, the abuse, the soldiers

pers. I have never stayed in a mixed camp, and after hearing this, I was glad I hadn't! But womyn who have, said that they had a completely different atmosphere - it was much more combative.

**Jane:** *You see so much male violence (from bailiffs, cops, soldiers and vigilantes) that you end up not wanting to see men at all. You get so angry that it feels really good to lump all men together (as terrible, violent people).*

The second important aspect of Greenham is its anti-authoritarianism.

**Jane:** *To me, anarchy means not only taking responsibility for yourself, but responsibility within the community. Anarchy is not a permanent state of affairs. you are constantly trying to go forward and keep reassessing judgments.*

There are no hierarchies; people take responsibility for cooking, setting up benders, washing up, getting shopping, as they feel fit. It is expected that visitors will do as much as they feel comfortable with doing.

**Jude:** *Do womyn slip into the same patterns of living as in regular society? We need to recognize responsibility to ourselves. We shouldn't be afraid of being rebuffed if we make ourselves vulnerable. We must have space so we are not emotionally territorial...If I can have feelings about myself in a way that doesn't acknowledge the morality the military has, I've negated it. I feel nothing will change outwardly until I change myself.*

The convoys and evictions are two of the more difficult facts of life at the camp. While womyn are there, to a large extent, to stop/delay the convoy, it is a very powerful and anger-creating experience. The convoy of missiles and other death-weapons travels to Salisbury Plain (I think this is a couple of hours south of Greenham) where the soldiers play war games for a week. Before it comes out of the main gate, (at 1 or 2 in the morning), van loads of cops ride up and barricade the road leading up to the base. Watching this, I felt a really deep rage and sense of powerlessness. Several womyn were crying.

It can, though, also be a very empowering experience. Some womyn ambushed the convoy with paint bombs and blocked the road to slow the convoy down. Others of us rode in a car to Orange Gate where the support vehicles came out. We managed to get in front of them and drove at about 10 kilometres per hour (much to their frustration!). We succeeded in keeping them at this snail's pace for a good hour; none of the trucks was able to pass us. Eventually, the cops had to come and rescue them. They cut us off and allowed the convoy to zoom past. That action helped me and the other womyn there feel much stronger, but, for myself, I still had a lot of anger left in me that I didn't really know how to deal with.

As for the evictions, well, they're part of the continued official harassment of womyn. The bailiffs come by daily to each gate. They are accompanied by a garbage truck and two cops. Womyn have to take everything off the land - food, firewood, benders, tents, personal belongings. The bailiffs try to get their hands on as many items as possible and throw them in the truck. They kick out the fire and can be verbally and physically abusive to womyn.

This created a dis-abling feeling as well. It never failed to make me feel frustrated and often angry. How could the evictions be prevented? No permanent structures could be on the land -- thus making living conditions harsher than they might have been.

**Izzy:** *The worst things are not having much time and space to yourself and not*

*to be able to do things you're interested in because we've got no permanent living structures.*

**Rebecca:** *It's hard just to wander off with someone. You need to be here for the bailiffs. The aspect of fun has definitely gone out of it, which I identify with the bailiffs and constant evictions. I'm used to going on long walks alone or with another. I get a real sense of joy out of that. But now I can't do it because I have to worry about my car; whether there are enough womyn to handle an eviction.*

Each day started in a sort of limbo until after the bailiffs had come. And even afterwards, there was always the possibility that they would return.

**Jude:** *Sitting and talking can sustain me for a while and I'm more able to face evictions.*

This kind of pressure obviously wears on the womyn and there is a great need for support. With all the womyn in the same situation, this can be very hard to give. While I was there, several of the residents left to stay with family or friends to recover.

**Izzy:** *In a lot of situations, if a womyn needs support, it would be immense. But in everyday living, a lot of things are unnoticed and support is often not there. It's sometimes a question of priority. When the convoy comes do you pay attention to that or womyn around you? Do you talk to visitors or with womyn you're living with? Does it have to be either/or? When womyn put a lot of energy into actions, tiredness and tenseness grows after that.*

**Jude:** *The pressure can be very heavy and sometimes I have no energy for other people.*

**Rebecca:** *A home has the same conflicts between personal and practical problems, where you put your immediate energy.*

**Izzy:** *I find it difficult to balance the two. I'll put a lot of energy into womyn visiting and into actions and then I can't do that. I feel intruded on by other womyn and things happening.*

**Jane:** *I've seen womyn who badly needed help but have been left because womyn haven't had the energy to do it. It sometimes comes down to your or her survival.*

Greenham life can be terrible, but it can also be a wonderful time of making connections with other womyn.

**Izzy:** *It's trying to survive in this world without damaging other people. Finding somewhere where you sort of fit and feel more comfortable and happier than before. There are sometimes amazing conversations around the fire at night. It's very fascinating the way different womyn react. Womyn don't always say what they're feeling. I like it when womyn sit and listen. They find out who womyn are and what they're actually about, things they wouldn't ask. It creates an awareness in them.*

**Rebecca:** *You make connections with womyn who don't live here but who you've gone through a lot with and you feel like they live here. Others visit often and you don't feel like they live here.*

**Jude:** *I find it very difficult to keep leaving and coming back.*

My dream has developed from my experiences at Greenham. And I think we can create more than just a vision from the Greenham Common womyn; we can really learn from both their mistakes and successes. They have an anarcha-feminist community, and as we look to creating an anarcha-feminist reality for ourselves (I hope with womyn and men), their experiences are invaluable and inspiring. It makes me (at least) look to the future and say -- hey, it's true, nothing is impossible!

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# Greenham Memoir

## living the dream

by Madeline

*The U.S. Air Force Base at Greenham Common is situated near the town of Newbury, in Berkshire -- about a one and a half hour bus trip west from London. It has a 9-mile radius with 8 gates - only one (Yellow Gate) is permanently open to traffic. The Greenham Common Peace Camp is womyn only. The womyn maintain camps at each gate, which are referred to by colours: Yellow, Green, Blue, Emerald, Indigo, Violet, Red, Orange. The womyn are of all ages, spiritual beliefs, sexual orientations and are mostly white, though there are some womyn of colour. They come from all over Great Britain and are supplemented by Americans, Canadians, Japanese and Scandinavians (while I was there). They are from a wide range of class backgrounds, and are mostly vegetarian/vegan. Many permanent residents live off the dole (welfare) which is about \$40 per week. Some womyn work; many people donate money or food to the camp. The convoys occur when missiles and military equipment are taken to Salisbury Plain for a week of "war games". Evictions when bailiffs and cops come daily to force womyn to clear the land of all possessions, tents, vehicles, food, etc., are a continual form of harassment. All womyn quoted here live(d) at Yellow Gate. Many thanks to them for talking with me!*

Sometimes I dream of living and growing within a community of womyn. I was able to get glimpses of the actuality of that dream during the time I spent at the Womyn's Peace Camp at Greenham Common.

It was a short experience - a matter of a few weekends - but one I will always remember. As Jane said, "The biggest problem you get here is being addicted to it...it's one of the only places I know where I can be myself."

I really didn't know what to expect on my first visit. It was cold; the beginning

and cops, the daily evictions, the cold, the dirt, the personal conflicts, the arrests...

I think I was able to spend enough time at Greenham to realize that life there could be very difficult, but also very rewarding.

Greenham is more than a peace camp. It is very much a womyn's community and a home, a fact which I don't think has been widely recognized.

**Izzy:** *This is my only home. There are times when I need it as a home and not a peace camp. If there were no convoys or evictions it would be more homelike. There would be more permanency. It would be different.*

**Rebecca:** *Sometimes I want to be only with the 'home' womyn and for visitors to have another space. I don't want to have to say anything to visitors because it breaks the concept of being at home. A visitor may come and break into the conversation and you need to respond to her needs or she may feel alienated.*

**Izzy:** *It's important that womyn come here and feel they can come back again.*

**Rebecca:** *It's every womyn's right to live here. But they must recognize it's not my responsibility to live with every womyn.*

There are two important aspects which have made the camp what it is. The first is the womyn-only rule.

**Jane:** *One of the most wonderful things about Greenham is that there are no men. I don't like men visiting because I get very angry when womyn dash around making coffee for them and make fools of themselves.*

Men are allowed to visit the camp until sunset, but at Green Gate, a camp set in a quiet, wooded area, no men are ever allowed. I found that many men came with the attitude that womyn would pay a lot of attention to them. Several seemed to have no respect for the fact that this is a womyn's camp and they were only visitors, often unwelcome at that.

At Molesworth, a mixed camp, three womyn were raped by male peace cam-

# The Other Womyn's Music

by Lynna Landstreet

We all know what "womyn's music" is like, don't we? It's nice and soft and gentle and peaceful, *never* noisy, aggressive, angry or disturbing, right? Well, this is certainly what we are led to believe. Many feminists I have encountered think there is something seriously wrong with me because I would rather listen to someone pounding on scrap metal than strumming an acoustic guitar, but the fact remains that I -- and many other feminists too, particularly of the anarchy-variety -- like nasty, noisy, disturbing music, and in fact think that the Holly Nears of this world are -- well -- pretty boring, really.

So for those who share my musical interests, and, perhaps more importantly for those who don't yet, but would like to find out more, here's an overview of some of the *other* kinds of music that womyn are making. Of course, this is by no means a complete list, and is basically a

boyfriend thinks/Does he like my cunt/Does he think it stinks?") are "pornographic" and thus can't come into the country lest the moral fabric of society begin to deteriorate or something like that. Isn't it nice to know that the State's so concerned about us?

## Annie Anxiety

*Barbed Wire Halo* single (Crass Records)  
*Soul Possession* LP (Corpus Christi)  
*Eyes of the Blind* and *Tropical Depression* (poetry books) (XNTRIX)

I've seen her album filed under hardcore in some record stores, presumably because of her association with Crass, but she's a lot closer to industrial. Her music ranges from dense "difficult listening" tape collages to the darkly melodic, hypnotic songs which make up most of the album. The lyrics are mostly personal but disturbing, occasionally veering into the explicitly political, such as in the anti-psychiatry song, "Burnt Offerings". Her

tapes consist of mostly Toronto bands, with an emphasis on weird/uncategorizable music and womyn's bands. The fanzines are mainly made up of materials pertaining to the bands on the tape, i.e. lyrics, graphics, interviews, etc., but usually include other material as well, leaning in a generally feminist/gay-oriented direction. Fifth Column themselves, as one might guess from this, make fairly uncategorizable music (too weird to be pop, too poppy to be really weird), with vaguely feminist/gay-oriented lyrics. The most prominent characteristics of their music are the horror-movie style organ and precise, almost military-sounding drumming. Fifth Column are on the surface accessible enough to lure in the occasional unsuspecting commercial music listener, but leave her/him feeling definitely unsettled...

## Frightwig

*Cat Farm Faboo* LP (Subterranean

by the Greek junta of 1967-74 (in "Tragouthia Apo To Aima Exoun Fonos (Song From The Blood Of Those Murdered)" to AIDS and its use by the religious right (the theme of *The Divine Punishment* LP). However, probably the most infamous of her political views are those concerning womyn and violence. She has often discussed her "rape prevention squad", the Black Leather Beavers, who she says "run around town performing ritual castrations". She has also said that womyn need to "stop sitting around weeping in their stupid little pussy-ass feminist weep sessions... (and) get their cleavers out." She feels vigilanteism is the only option for womyn because "the police state and the prevention of rape are mutually exclusive."

## Inflatable Boy Clams

*I'm Sorry* EP (Subterranean Records)

This band is a combination of the female members of various other bands that

refection of my own particular musical tastes, which centre around hardcore and industrial music (mainly the latter, these days). But it's a sampling of some of what's around, anyway. It's true that womyn are under-represented in these types of music, and the womyn that are there are more often in mixed bands than in all-womyn groups, so my basis for deciding what's "womyn's music" and what's not has had to be, not whether it's exclusively produced by womyn, but whether womyn play a prominent role in the band and whether the lyrics seem to reflect womyn's experience. Thus, although Swans and Poisongirls each have only one womyn in the band, Vi Subversa obviously plays a much more central role in Poisongirls than Jarboe does in Swans, so Poisongirls make the list and Swans don't, even though they're one of my favorite bands too. I know this reinforces the hierarchical view that vocalists are more important than musicians, but I can't figure out any way around it, and besides,

poetry is more painful and difficult than her lyrics, relentlessly violent, with the recurring themes of heroin, TV, psychiatry, sex, and death. I don't know if either of the books are still in print, write and find out. One of my favorite artists.

## Crass

Lots of records; the most womyn-centred are:

*Reality Asylum/Shaved Women 45*  
*Penis Envy* LP  
(But they're all worth getting.)

Anyone who's at all into alternative music knows about Crass. They've been around for about 8 or 9 years at least and are sort of the archetypal political punk band. They've taken a lot of shit for being out in the front lines and there are probably more people who hate them than love them (it used to be the other way round, but politics seem to have become passe in the hardcore scene). Some say they're arrogant, self-righteous, negative, preachy, depressing, humourless... all

Records)

*Faster, Frightwig! Kill! Kill!* LP (Caroline Records)

Less overtly political but more fun to listen to than most of the bands in this article, Frightwig are a fairly noisy and raunchy all-womyn band whom many compare to Flipper, probably because many of their songs share the same grinding, deathly-slow tempo ("I'll Talk To You And Smile" is probably the most painful of this type). However, the slow songs are combined with more upbeat ones, for those with a low tolerance for that sort of thing. Most of the lyrics are centred around sex and sexual politics, but their approach is far from formula feminism. Example: "Yes, there are times when I resent being alone/Yes, there are times when I just want to be owned/Yes, I base my worth on who I get to fuck me/Yes, I'll rut tonight, but *you* won't be so lucky!... Why the hell should I fuck you/When my crotch does not say go?"

I'd never heard before, who apparently got together just for this recording (a two-45 set). Most of it isn't all that interesting, but the title track is absolutely brilliant, a cover of an old song from 1926 played softly in the background, with two womyn talking over it, apologizing to each other for a series of situations that get progressively funnier and more horrible.

## K.U.K.L.

*The Eye* LP (Crass Records)

*Holidays in Europe (The Naughty Nought)* LP (Crass)

I like this band a lot but I can't figure out how to describe them. They're definitely not a noise band (not that I've got anything against noise bands!); in fact, they're quite melodic, with a flute, violin, bells, and who knows what else, but they manipulate this basically "nice" raw material into something very weird indeed. The vocals are usually barely connected to the music (especially on the second al-

I'm a vocalist, so what do you expect? So, ultimately it's pretty arbitrary, but here goes:

## A.S.F. (Anti-Scrunti Faction)

*A Sure Fuck* EP (Unclean Records)

*Damsels in Distress* LP (Flipside/Unclean)

Plus several songs on the *Hide: Dementia* 5 tape.

A lesbian-feminist hardcore band from Boulder, Colorado! The music's fairly standard hardcore, except for "Frat Boy" (my favorite) and some of the songs on the *Hide* tape, but the lyrics are really good, and feminist hardcore isn't all that common yet, so their records are well worth checking out -- if you can get them across the border, that is. The ever-vigilant Canada Customs has apparently decided that the cover of the EP (a rather unflattering cartoon of a naked man) and the lyrics to the song "Slave to My Estrogen" (sample: "I'm so worried about what my

slurs that should be familiar to anyone who's ever taken a stand on anything. Anyway, for those who haven't heard them, they're a mixed band, extremely political (mainly anarchist/feminist/pacifist), much more articulate lyrically than most hardcore bands, and very distinctive musically as well (their most recent recordings lean toward post-industrial tape collage). They seem to have now officially broken up after a couple of years in limbo, but individual and/or collective projects by ex-members may be forthcoming...

## Fifth Column/Hide

*Boy/Girl* EP

*To Sir With Hate* LP (Hide Records)

*Hide* Cassettes/fanzines (five so far, I think)

Fifth Column are a Toronto all-womyn band who also put out *Hide*, a fanzine with accompanying cassette, on an irregular (roughly annual) basis. The *Hide*

## Diamanda Galas

*Diamanda Galas* LP (Metalanguage)

*Litanies Of Satan* (Y Records)

*The Divine Punishment* (Mute)

*The Saint Of The Pit* (Mute)

Diamanda Galas must be the most technically proficient musician in this article, and maybe in alternative womyn's music in general, with classical vocal training and a Master's degree in music. However, she certainly hasn't let her classical background inhibit or constrain her musical style in any way, but rather puts the skills thus acquired to uses that would probably give her music professors a coronary! Her music consists of basically just her own voice, but multi-tracked and processed electronically in an immense variety of ways, sometimes so extremely as to be barely recognizable as a humyn voice at all. Sometimes there is a minimal instrumental accompaniment, but more often the voice alone is sufficient. Her topics range from the atrocities committed

bum, although at least more of them are in English on that one, making it more accessible to a non-Icelandic audience), the voices of the two vocalists (one male, one female) weaving in and out, and give the impression of a feeling of hysteria or panic, barely suppressed beneath an attempt at cheerfulness that seems hideously forced, like putting makeup over an open wound. The music itself remains semi-accessible, but with enough weird twists and turns to keep you on edge (much of what I said about Fifth Column's music also applies here, although they actually don't sound at all alike). Does that make any sense? No? Well, you'll have to listen to them for yourself then, won't you?

## Lydia Lunch

*Queen of Siam* LP

13.13 LP

*The Agony Is the Ecstasy* 1/2 LP (4AD)  
(One side Lydia, the other side The Birth-

day Party)  
*In Limbo LP*  
*The Drowning of Lucy Hamilton LP*  
 (Widowspeak Records)

*Hysterie* (LP I think, but it might be only on CD in which case I'll be really pissed off!)

(I don't know all the record labels because I don't actually have all these records. There's probably more records that I don't know about too.)

I had sort of mixed feelings about including Lydia in this article because I can't decide whether the positive qualities of her work outweigh the negative enough to make her worth promoting. But I usually feel that when in doubt, it's best to

tell all and let people make up their own minds. She's definitely not "politically correct" by any means, the question is more like whether she's politically *excusable*. She seems to hate womyn as much as she hates men, she uses her sexuality in a way that plays up far too much male porno-cliche ideas about womyn, she has been known to say things to the effect that womyn who get raped deserve it, she has a big rock-star ego problem, and in fact, it's difficult at first to come up with anything positive to say about her. So why do I like her so much? I haven't got a clue. Maybe because, no matter how fucked up she may be, she's still a very powerful womyn, who writes from her own experience of the horrible underside of our pseudo-nice society, without

holding anything back, putting all the hidden horrors out on display for all to see. That's the way I feel about a lot of artists, particularly in the industrial genre, who are not overtly political, and may seem just pointlessly nihilistic to some, but who are nevertheless doing more to expose the society we live in for the stinking cesspool it is than all the nice little lefty folksingers combined could ever hope to do.

Well, I seem to have run out of space (and energy) for this issue, so the second half of this article will have to wait til next issue (This time I *will* do the second half, I promise! Part two of "Jerk-Off Politics" I'm not so sure about...). It will include the *Matrax* compilation, Poisonsongs, Rubella Ballet, Teddy and the

Frat Girls, Toxic Shock, Varoshi Fame, Johanna Went, Wilma, and anyone else I come across between now and then who seems like they'd fit in. I know there's lots more great womyn's bands that I haven't mentioned, but I can't write about everyone at once. If you think I'm missing out on anyone vital, let me know. And you other bands out there, you might want to send me your recordings and I'll review them in future issues. I will try to restrain myself from including either of the bands I'm in, Violence And The Sacred (old band which I'm in the process of phasing myself out of) and Mourning Sickness (new, all-womyn band that hasn't really gotten off the ground yet, so there's nothing to write about anyway), in the second half of the article. □

## Animal Rights Activists Persecuted

by Lynna Landstreet

On January 19th, 1987, five people were arrested in Toronto for allegedly spray-painting a Kentucky Fried Chicken store, and it seems that the State has decided to "make an example" out of them by charging them with virtually every ALF or other animal-related action in the past year. Linda Cotnam, Gail Emo, and Jacqueline Rabazo were each charged with three counts of mischief under \$1000, one count of mischief over \$1000, possession of burglary tools, and wearing a disguise with intent to commit an indictable offense. David Barbarash and Kenn Quayle were each charged with three counts of mischief under, six counts of mischief over, two counts of possession of burglary tools, possession of a weapon dangerous to the public peace, possession of stolen property, and possession of an explosive substance. In addition, Kenn, an occasional KIO contributor, was charged with breaking and entering, in connection with an ALF raid on the University of Toronto Dentistry Lab last year.

All five are now out on bail, after being held in custody for four days in the case of the womyn, a week for the men. The womyn's bail was set at \$2000 (recognizance without deposit), Kenn's at \$7500, and David's at \$10,000, plus a surety for each of them, meaning someone who owns property signing the recognizance, so that their houses can possibly be seized if the bail is not paid. They have also been given very restrictive bail conditions, such as a curfew from 10 pm to 6 am and an order not to associate "directly or indirectly" with each other (except for Gail and Linda, who live together), except in the presence of their lawyers for the purpose of preparing a defense. This in effect means not attending any meetings, demos, parties or any other events where any of the others might be present. Kenn and David were also ordered to live with their sureties and to "seek and maintain employment".

As usually happens with any kind of major political arrests, there has been a great deal of harassment directed against not only the five themselves, but their supporters as well. Many people (including myself) have been very obviously followed by cop cars or taxis, especially late at night (when it makes you the most nervous, of course). At least two houses have been raided as well. During the raid on my house, one resident was asked if he had AIDS, many sarcastic comments were made about S/M equipment in another person's room, and we were told that there was an "overemphasis on sex" in the house. I was asked if I was

a "witch doctor" and questioned about the meaning of various Pagan ritual instruments and symbols in my room, and threatened with arrest over an unpaid fine. (All this in addition to the expected questions about whether we were ALF members, etc.) A womyn from another co-op house down the street was stopped on her way to the corner store by the same cops that night and questioned very aggressively about whether people in her house used drugs. Two other supporters were stopped in their car for no apparent reason and threatened with arrest because one of them had a Native prayer pipe. (One cop told them that "normal people don't have stuff like that".) On a heavier note, two other supporters were arrested in an altercation over a traffic accident (with a large number of plainclothes cops ap-

*faggot?" over and over again, really aggressively, so finally I said "Yes!". Later when I was changing out of my clothes into my prison uniform, he told me not to shake out my clothes because it would "spread AIDS all over the place."*

*As far as police tactics, I think the most effective one they've got is this sort of psychological warfare. They can keep us apart from our friends, make us paranoid of each other, get all kinds of weird rumours going... God, the rumours! Listen, if people really support us and support our politics, they shouldn't be asking all these stupid questions like "Did you really do all that?"*

*All the personal harassment that's going on now, plus the fact that I'm not sure where I'm living, plus not being able to be with my friends, plus my knowledge of*

*cumb to the death culture.*

The arrests have come at the crest of a wave of local media attacks on the animal rights movement, mostly centred upon the so-called "takeover" of the Toronto Humane Society by "animal rights activists"/"radicals"/"militants"/ whatever and upon THS president Vicki Miller in particular. The media have been trying for months to create some kind of link between the THS and the ALF and are now having a field day with the allegation that all of the five are THS members (big deal -- so are 3500 other people) and that David was allegedly working as a researcher for the THS. In addition to helping the media on their little hate campaign, the cops are probably also trying to "clear their books" and rid themselves of the embarrassment of all those unsolved ALF actions.

Of course, as described earlier, any kind of political arrests also provide a handy excuse to harass and intimidate entire communities, keep people too paranoid and freaked out to do anything politically, and divert what little energy people have got into support and fundraising for the arrested people. It's estimated that legal costs for this case may be about \$50,000, and it may be a year or more before it's all over. That may not sound like much to those who were around during the Vancouver Five's arrest and trials, but for those of us who are too young to have had much first hand experience of that, this is certainly proving to be an educational experience! All that stuff about house raids, surveillance, etc. may sound kind of mysterious and exciting when you're reading about it happening to someone else, years ago, but it's something else when it happens to you!

The one good thing about the situation is how quickly the community has come back together after being pretty scattered for the past year or two. At the first bail hearing, the courtroom was so crowded with supporters that some people couldn't get in. A defense fund has been started (the Toronto Animal Rights Defense Fund), a press statement is in the works, and several benefit events are being planned. Donations are still urgently needed, though. For updates, see future issues of *Front Line News*, the ALF Support Group newsletter, available by donation. □

**Toronto Animal Rights Defense Fund:** c/o Mary C. Bartley, Barrister and Solicitor, 11 Prince Arthur Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M5R 1B2. (Make cheques payable to Mary C. Bartley in trust for TARDF)

**Front Line News:** c/o ALFSG, P.O. Box 915, Station F, Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 2N9.



From left to right: Linda Cotnam, Gail Emo, Kenn Quayle, Jacquie Rabazo, and David Barbarash.

pearing instantly on the scene and arresting only them, not the other people who had in fact started the incident) and were charged with numerous drug- and weapon-related offenses. One womyn was held overnight for telling a male cop who was sexually harassing her to fuck off.

Kenn Quayle told me about his experience of the events (I know it's politically incorrect to interview one of the men for the anarchy-feminism issue, but I had to write this in a big hurry and he was the only one of the five who was readily available at the moment):

*The other prisoners were fine, actually. At first they kept asking, what's all this chicken stuff? But when I explained that animal liberation was only one part of my politics, which also included prison abolition, among other things, we got along, no problem. There was this one guard though, who kept asking me "Are you a*

*surveillance technology -- all the things they're capable of doing -- and of state harassment worldwide, has got me more depressed than I've been in a really long time. But now I feel more angry about it than anything, I feel angry that thoughts of suicide that I thought I'd gotten rid of years ago are coming back to me. So I think I'm being fairly successful in redirecting those feelings into something more positive, I'm not going to get self-destructive.*

*I think the main effect of all this has been to strengthen my politics. The Earth could be destroyed at any time -- they could press a button and nuke us in a second, or they could destroy the rainforests and the ozone layer in which case we've got about fifteen years. In either case we're looking at total global destruction. We have to act now. I have personally dedicated my life to the preservation of life on this planet. I'm not going to suc-*

by Anil Agarwal

The following article is an excerpt of a much longer article (originally given as a talk), entitled "Beyond Pretty Trees and Tigers: The Role of Ecological Destruction in the Emerging Patterns of Poverty and People's Protests". It is reprinted with the kind permission of the author. In a future issue, we hope to reprint another, longer excerpt which deals with the causes of environmental destruction in the Third World, and what can be done about it (keeping in mind the necessity of overcoming poverty and

the routine repeats itself and year after weary year fuel and fodder collection time periods increase. In many parts the women may have literally reached their "carrying capacities".

The increasing work burden on women is affecting everything else in their lives. A study by the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad shows that five times more men than women seek treatment at primary health centers. Women do not have time to seek health care even when they are ill. A study by the Operations Research Group found in western U.P. that even pregnant women

women in preventing deforestation has been paramount in the movement. Even though many crucial household needs could be met by rehabilitating the local village ecosystem -- by planting fuel and fodder trees for instance -- the men do not show any interest in doing so. It is the women who are doing all the afforestation work organized by the *Chipko* movement.

The new culture created by the penetration of the cash economy has, slowly but steadily, psychologically alienated the men from their ecosystem. Employment to them means work which can put cash in their hands. This

management in the Himalayas and in the Ghats. The Himalayas are being described as one of the most threatened ecosystems in the world, which in turn determines the fate of several hundred million people in the Indo-Gangetic plains. But if any action for ecological reconstruction has to be taken in the hills, it cannot be done without the involvement of women. The census data of 1981 shows that all the districts in the country which have high rates of female work participation are situated in the Himalayas or in the Ghats. In the Himalayas most women workers are also classified as cultivators.

photo by Hans Weber (from New Internationalist calendar)



## Women in Rural India

### development for whom?

empowering the poor). Mr. Agarwal is affiliated with the Center for Science and Environment, New Delhi, India. The *Chipko* movement, which he refers to in several places, is a "social forestry" movement made up largely of women which has used direct action and civil disobedience to protect forest lands and to promote large-scale civilian replanting. It is largely confined to the state of Uttar Pradesh, where the women involved have become known as the "tree-huggers". Edited by Kathy Manley and Ron Hayley.

The destruction of the environment clearly poses the biggest threat to marginal cultures and occupations like that of tribals, nomads and fisherfolk which have always been heavily dependent on their immediate environment for the survival. But the maximum impact of the destruction of biomass sources is on women. Women in all rural cultures are affected, especially women from poor landless, marginal and small farming families. Seen from the point of view of these women, it can even be argued that all development is ignorant of women's needs at best, and anti-woman at worst, literally designed to increase their work burden.

Given the culturally accepted division of labour within the family, the collection of household needs like fuel, fodder and water is left to women. As the environment degrades and this becomes increasingly difficult to obtain, women have to spend an extraordinary amount of time foraging for fuel, fodder and water in addition to household work, agricultural work and caring for animals. There is almost no data which shows how the time spent by women on their daily household activities is increasing and how this increase differs across eco-climatic zones of India. But the available data on the existing work burden is downright shocking. In many parts of India, women work 14 to 16 hours every day and it does not matter whether they are young, old or pregnant, and whether it is a Sunday or any other holiday. Day after weary day

work 14 hours a day. They do this almost until a few hours before delivery and begin normal work 3-4 days thereafter. One woman told ORG researchers: "We are too much loaded with family chores. Hospitals, injections etc., are too much time consuming business for us."

Another study from rural Punjab recently described the problems faced by poor woman after the tubectomy operation. Nine out of ten women from agricultural labour households in the village who had undergone tubectomy complained about post-operative pains. All of them wanted to take rest but none of them could. Collecting fodder in the village alone took three hours. There was hardly any source of freely available fodder in the village. Most women had to bring grass and other weeds from between wheat plants in the fields. Many farmers would not allow this and landless women had to go from one field to another. Firewood meant still more work and another journey. The bending and stretching increased the pain. The women wanted to pass on their work to others, especially their children. They then ran into conflicts with their husbands and their children who wanted to play rather than work. One woman kicked and punched her daughter so hard for not working with her that she died. Such viciousness may be rare but increased family tensions are common place.

The penetration of the cash economy is affecting the relationship between men and women in a peculiar way and is creating a real dichotomy in their respective relationships with nature. Men have become more involved with the cash economy than women. Women continue to deal with the non-monetized, biomass-based subsistence economy of the household. Even within the same household, we can find cases of men happy to destroy nature to earn cash even though it would create greater hardships for the women in collecting daily fuel and fodder needs.

The *Chipko* movement has given us numerous examples of this dichotomy in male-female interests, and the role of

employment can be found mainly in the city; hence there is mass male migration, but even within the village a job to men is something that must earn cash.

There are few of those caste and class barriers in the Himalayan villages which prevent people from working together as a community. But still women continue to walk miles and miles over arduous paths to fetch fuel, fodder and water every day, while men sit idly doing nothing to plant trees in the denuded areas around them.

It is not surprising that the eucalyptus based social forestry, trotted out to be such a great success by the World Bank and the forest departments, is all in the hands of men, all planting trees with the cash motive. Other than employing women as cheap labour in nurseries, these agencies have nothing to show in terms of involvement of women -- the very people who deal with fuel and fodder and the government too still gives this the name of Social Forestry. But maybe this should not be surprising. Making a fast buck, even at the expense of society and ecology, is probably the most social thing we can do in a cash economy.

Male migration -- another major phenomenon in modern society -- also increases the work burden of women, who then have to take care not only of household needs but also have to devote more time to the family's agricultural needs. But as the time needed to collect fuel and fodder grows, agriculture gets neglected. A study of three villages in the Kumaon region of Uttar Pradesh, for instance, shows that the ratio of human energy spent in collecting fuel and fodder is already 2.5 times more than the energy spent on agriculture. As time for fuel and fodder collection grows and firewood becomes scarcer, the traditional practice of manuring fields will be given up. Cow dung will be used as fuel, as in the plains, but with the lack of manuring, these fragile soils will soon be exhausted. It will be a disastrous situation for both the local people and the environment.

Because of the increasing intensity of floods, there has been considerable talk in recent years about integrated watershed

Therefore, any program which aims at ecological rehabilitation in these areas will have to involve heavily overworked women, unless of course labour is brought into these areas from outside, which will create tensions of another kind.

Fortunately, the experience of the *Chipko* movement shows that despite their 14-16 hour back-breaking work schedule, women in these parts are extremely keen to participate in such work, especially in tree planting. Once the women are organized and mobilized, they work with great keenness and they fight any obstacles that may be created by men, and as a result, some of the highest tree survival rates in afforestation efforts are obtained. It has also been found that when women get involved in afforestation, they tend to demand fuel and fodder trees, trees which can meet household needs, whereas men demand trees that can generate cash. The biggest ally in the demand for an ecologically and socially sound nature is, therefore, womankind.

As exactly similar experiences have been noted in East and West Africa, in Kenya and in the Sahelian countries, there is every reason to believe that this differential interest in nature between men and women is cross-cultural in character. "Male" trees and "female" trees is now even becoming something of a jargon amongst those interested in involving communities in afforestation.

All this should not be taken to construe that poor rural households do not have any need for cash. The unfortunate thing is that much of the cash generated by the male does not get spent on household needs. A reasonable proportion of this gets spent on things like alcohol and tobacco and such artifacts of modernization as transistor radios.

Thus, what we see in India today is a growing conflict over the use of natural resources and, in particular, over biomass between the two sectors of the country's economy: the cash economy or the modern sector on the one hand and the non-monetized, biomass-based subsistence economy, the traditional sector on the other. □

# Consciousness-Sharing Groups

## A SAMPLE AGENDA

## how to start your own

by Alexandra Devon

Living as we do (artificially) in a linear world, it feels good to reconstruct one's life in circular terms. Since we're brought up to accept hierarchy from family life to school to workplace and learn that giving and receiving usually entail sacrificing, demanding or, at best, exchanging, it isn't always easy to imagine a new way of interacting. Increasingly, I find myself working or being with circles of friends which provide mutual aid, support and a more harmonious way of working together. My women's support group, in particular, has given me a model of what is possible.

The idea of a healing circle of wise women is not new but it is a form of organization which needs to constantly be rediscovered. In the late 1960's, in the early days of the most recent women's liberation movement, consciousness-raising groups sprang up everywhere. Out of these groups came an understanding of a common ground of experience. Women realized that the ways in which they were inhibited from realizing their potential had psychological, institutional, cultural and material roots. In short, it was not neurosis that made them fearful of walking in the dark, defeatism that made them feel they couldn't achieve in a male environment or psychosis that made them feel that they would prefer to be in an intimate relationship with a woman. These types of realization of shared oppression became a form of empowerment once they were recognized and acted upon. When the self-blame and self-hatred were lessened or eliminated much of that energy could be turned outward to deal with the problems of the patriarchal institutions and world view which women, as well as men, are indoctrinated with.

The women's groups of the 60's provided the basis for understanding a lot of what is taken for granted today about women's oppression. It seems as though the consciousness-raising groups of the early 70's have largely been replaced by the action groups of the 80's. Without arguing against the necessity of action groups, I would like to suggest that it's a mistake to ignore the power and support possible in a consciousness-raising or consciousness-sharing group. These leaderless, anti-hierarchical circles, the heart and soul of the early women's movement, and inherently anarcho-feminist as they are, are the prototypes of the cells which might make up the tissues

of a new body politic.

When the woman who initiated the group which I am now a part of, first contacted me, my immediate reaction was one of panic. (My first women's group was a near exemplary case of how not to conduct a support group, how not to build trust and how to be cured of the desire to engage in group activities ever again.) I was also wondering how I could cram another meeting into an already over-busy schedule.

The subsequent meetings of the group changed my attitude considerably. I came to appreciate the benefits that such a group could offer; friendship is obviously an important one. Even if we have many friends, because of the frenetic lives many of us lead, we get out of touch easily. Especially in large cities where one rarely runs into one's friends accidentally, getting together requires, scheduling, travelling and more energy than most of us have after working or looking for work and any personal/political activities we're involved in. Having a set meeting once a month eliminates a lot of the guesswork and ensures that you stay in *continuous* contact. It cuts against the superficial, one-dimensional nature of most relationships to know and be known over a period of time.

It's very "centering" to be in this kind of group. For those people who have issues about themselves or their lives which they want help in resolving, a support group can often be a solution. While therapy relationships can be (although they aren't always) disempowering situations which leave us dependent on "experts", a self-help group offers an egalitarian base which allows people to give and receive help from a position of equal power. For people who have difficulty asking for and receiving support (and are often in the position of giving it, creating an enormous emotional deficit) the built-in expectation of reciprocity is a welcome relief.

From what I have observed there are a few things to keep in mind to help ensure a satisfying and enduring group. The first is that the group should share some common ground in terms of values. In the case of our group, one woman called together a group of women that she felt would work well together. Her intuition happened to be right. In other cases, I've heard of groups forming around various issues of shared concern or experience such as issues of class, racism, sexual preference to name a few.

The following is an agenda which could be drawn from to start a support group off.

1) **The welcome.** The person or people who have called the group together welcome the people who have come and explain their intention. The importance of building trust is stressed.

2) **Explanation of the agenda.** A flipchart with an agenda can be posted or an agenda can be read out. The times for the various stages should be included. Any time negotiating should be done at this time. Someone from the group can volunteer to be the time keeper.

3) **Personal introductions.** Everyone in the group pairs off with someone they don't know and for five minutes each person tells the other anything they'd like about themselves. After two and a half minutes, time should be called so that both people get equal time.

4) **Introductions to the group.** The group comes back together and each person, in turn, introduces the person they were paired with.

5) **Why I came.** A brief go around allows people to say why they came and how they feel about being there.

6) **Break.** A break early on for tea and a snack allows people to connect informally.

7) **Establishing ground rules.** At this point, it's important to discuss confidentiality so that people feel safe in being open. It's also good to ask people to try not to judge or interrupt and perhaps suggest that people try to begin their sentences with "I" to avoid generalizing and speak from personal experience. Other ground rules which participants feel to be important should be brought up.

8) **Go around.** This go around should answer the question "How am I feeling about myself these days?"

9) **Planning.** Ten minutes should be put aside to discuss the structure of the group and the rotation of facilitators who plan the meetings. People are asked to make a commitment to the group, if they decide to stick with it. If they want to leave the group they should come to a meeting and explain why rather than just stop showing up. The group should decide on whether or not they are open to new members.

10) **Evaluation.** Ten minutes should be set aside to evaluate the meeting.

11) **Next meeting preparation.** Finally, the next meeting should be arranged, including time, place, facilitators, snacks etc.

Suggestions for topics for the next meeting could include one person telling a half an hour story of part of their life. Other topics which each person could speak to might include relating early childhood memories, talking about an early best friend, one's relationship to a parent or any number of such subjects.

After the first meeting it's important that the responsibility not rest with the person who initiated the group to set up the next one. Another person or two should take responsibility for planning the structure of the next session. A group can easily flounder if one person gets saddled with the responsibility for making sure things happen.

Although our meetings began as reasonably structured, the pattern which has

emerged for us is one of dealing with whatever immediate concern each woman might have. Each woman will talk uninterrupted for about twenty minutes, more or less. After she is finished, she can ask for advice or answer questions from other members of the group.

Not only do you get support and validation from the group in dealing with your own problems and experiences but your own experience is extended and enriched by that of others. Rather than being in a situation of having no background in dealing with a life crisis until it is upon us, such an intimate sharing over time means that you understand by seeing someone else journey through an experience, what's involved. You also have the security of knowing that you won't be facing difficult times alone.

In our group, in the year and a half we've been together, we have explored desires for and frustrations with motherhood, the difficulties and pain of caring for an aging parent, the pleasures and pains of love, jealousy, creativity, healing, spirituality, to name a few. When I look ahead, it makes me feel more confident to know that there will be this healing and strengthening circle to turn to, come what may; it is, for me, a "still point in a turning world." □

*Thanks to my women's group for the inspiration to write this article.*

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## Anarchy for Beginners, Part 3

## A Herstory of

by Ron Hayley (with thanks to Susan for help with sources)

This article, the third in a series, grew out of an article on the history of anarchism (see KIO #12) that was criticized (justly so) for focussing primarily on white men. Part II (in KIO #16) dealt with anarchism and the Third World. This is Part III.

In order to be able to put the historical material in something of a context, it might be useful to consider some of the contradictory pulls that have exerted themselves in the feminist movement -- a tendency to agitate for autonomous action by women vs. an attitude of "waiting for the revolution" to solve things, a tendency to conceive of women's liberation as a spiritual/cultural struggle vs. one which aims to change the material and social circumstances surrounding women's lives.

The recent feminist movement is largely the story of these contradictory pulls. At one end of the spectrum are the separatists advocating an entirely independent women's movement (able to unite women of all races and classes); at the other are those holding the traditional socialist (and often anarchist) expectation that, by subordinating their struggle to that of workers, women will get what they deserve "after the triumph". Moreover, there are "cultural" feminists (emphasizing the uniqueness of women and the necessity of spreading a feminist sensibility and spirituality) and the political feminists (be they "radical" or "socialist") who advocate improving women's situation vis-à-vis economic and reproductive rights. Anarchist women (including those consciously feminist) have embraced all of these positions (and all the shadings in between) and, to this day, do not have a united stance on any of them.

#### Anarchy and Matricentric Societies

Since, in the words of Alexandra Devon (KIO #17), "Many tribal peoples were anarchists long before the term meant anything to...Europeans," it makes sense to start with the women-centered cultures of ages past -- societies which practiced an anarchy-feminist vision in reality, if not in theory. Erich Fromm, in his book *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, describes the Neolithic village of Catal Huyuk, which was unearthed in this century in what is now modern Turkey. The oldest discoveries date back to 6500 B.C. "Neolithic" is the term used to describe the "stage" in human (technological) development beyond hunting and gathering, involving the domestication of plants and animals (I am not equating "beyond" here with better). It is worth noting that women are generally credited with the development of agriculture. Fromm describes some of significant characteristics of this society: "There were apparently many priestesses, but there is no evidence of a hierarchical organization.... [T]here is no evidence of any sack or massacre during the eight hundred years so far explored.... Furthermore...among the many hundreds of skeletons unearthed, not a single one has been found that showed signs of vio-

lent death."

Another of the characteristic features, according to Fromm, "is the central role of the mother in their social structure and their religion.... The mother, as goddess (often identified with mother earth), became the supreme goddess of the religious world, while the earthly mother became the centre of family and social life." Monica Sjoo, in her *The Great Cosmic Mother of All*, has explored the multiplicity of forms taken by the great goddess and has attempted to reconstruct some of the cosmology destroyed by the religions of patriarchy. This displacement is indirectly described in some of the great myths of ancient civilizations, such as the one of Babylonian origin in which the "Great Mother" of the Universe, Tiamat, is overthrown by a coterie of gods led by her son, Marduk, and her body destroyed to make heaven and earth. Lewis Mumford has said of the new patriarchal, urban cultures that "To exert power in every form was the essence of civilization; the city found a score of ways of expressing struggle, aggression, conquest -- and servitude."

Erich Fromm has a similar appraisal: "One of the most significant features of the new urban society was that it was based on the principle of patriarchal rule, in which the principle of control is inherent: control of nature, control of slaves, and control of women and children."

The Iroquois were, prior to and for a short time after the European conquest, an approximate North American equivalent of this pre-patriarchal Neolithic culture. According to an eighteenth century Jesuit missionary, "All real authority is vested in [women]. The land, the fields and their harvest all belong to them. They are the souls of the Councils, the arbiters of peace and of war. They have charge of the public treasury..." Half of all religious practitioners were women, and clan mothers distributed food according to the needs of each family. "[Hospitality] rested chiefly upon the industry, and therefore upon the natural kindness of the Indian women." Says one anthropologist of women's impact on the ambience of the culture, "Women's activities were celebrated in the ceremonial cycle, and female virtues of food-providing, cooperativeness, and natural fertility were respected and revered." Jake Swamp, Chief of the Wolf Clan (see KIO #14), describes the role of Iroquois women in choosing and, on occasion, deposing the traditional chiefs, something which continues to this day.

Another example of female power in pre-capitalist societies is the (African) Ibo practice of "sitting on a man" (see KIO #7). In New Caledonia, in the Pacific, Kanak women have organized their own separate groups to deal with the problem of patriarchal attitudes among Kanak men, while fighting side by side with the men to seize control of their country from the French settlers (see KIO #15). Throughout human history, women in all cultures have struggled against domination, but, in the words of Sheila Rowbotham, this is largely "hidden from history". Unearthing this movement is a daunting task confronting feminists and others sympathetic to a feminist perspective.

#### Women in Europe

Because of our historical ignorance and pro-Western bias, most accounts of feminism begin with the late eighteenth century and Mary Wollstonecraft, and we must now pick up where they do. Like all revolutions, the French Revolution generated a lot of "sidecurrents", one of them being the demand for women's equality. Many women distinguished themselves on the barricades leading to the overthrow of the monarchy, but as Mary Wollstonecraft wrote, "Easier was it to attack the sacred majesty of kings than to question the inequality of the sexes." Many women demanded equal rights in the new Republic, but their efforts were rebuffed. One ac-

lebrand, protesting the decision of the post-revolutionary Convention in Paris to deny political rights to women. In fact, she adduces an anarchist argument, saying that "tyranny, in whatever part of society it rears its brazen front, will ever undermine morality..". In other words, freedom is indivisible. She goes on to say, "Let there be...no coercion established in society, and the common laws of gravity prevailing, the sexes will into their proper places."

Wollstonecraft was married to an anarchist, though the term hadn't yet acquired popular currency. William Godwin was one of the foremost political philosophers of his generation, and both he and Mary Wollstonecraft had a profound influence

by Catherine Tammaro and Alexandra Devon



tivist, Charlotte Corday, for reasons having nothing to do with feminism, undertook to assassinate Marat, a main leader of the dictatorial faction, for his role in murdering thousands of his fellow Frenchmen.

Mary Wollstonecraft's was one of the first professional treatises on the subject of women's rights (as already noted, there were lots of grassroots feminists who agitated in other ways). By today's standards it is fairly conservative: it is first and foremost an appeal to men's "reason", and it is largely concerned with the problems of women of privilege. *The Vindication of the Rights of Women* opens with a letter to the French minister, Tal-

lor, protesting the decision of the post-revolutionary Convention in Paris to deny political rights to women. In fact, she adduces an anarchist argument, saying that "tyranny, in whatever part of society it rears its brazen front, will ever undermine morality..". In other words, freedom is indivisible. She goes on to say, "Let there be...no coercion established in society, and the common laws of gravity prevailing, the sexes will into their proper places."

After Wollstonecraft's death (in childbirth), other reformers began to raise the issue of women's freedom and their equality with men. The issue of women's liberation was given far more emphasis by the early English socialists, led by Charles Owen, than by the Marxists of one and two generations later. What Sheila Rowbotham said of the anarchists applies to the Owenites: "there was a very strong tendency to live out the ideals of the future society within the existing world." One of the innovations that the Owenites came up with was to replace the pub -- a

# Anarcha-Feminism

preserve of male bonding and exclusivity -- with a sort of political club, where people of both sexes could go to socialize and discuss politics, and where everyone felt on equal terms (for more on this period, see *Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* by Barbara Taylor, Pantheon, New York, 1983).

## Flora Tristan and Louise Michel

Across the English Channel, Wollstonecraft's ideas had influenced Flora Tristan, better known as the grandmother of French painter, Paul Gauguin. Tristan was born of a French mother and a noble-born Peruvian father. However, owing to

survived and her husband was sentenced to twenty years hard labour.

Flora lived an incredibly independent lifestyle for a woman of her time, even travelling to and around Peru without a man. In theory, she was an advocate of "free love", i.e. that women should enjoy the same freedoms as men, but in reality she was completely devoted to the cause of social change, to the point of being a martyr. In 1844, she died of overwork.

Flora was extremely knowledgeable, and was the author of works of fiction and non-fiction. In 1839, she travelled to England and investigated the social conditions of the working class, authoring *Promenades des Londres*, an unacknowledged precursor of Frederick En-

she believed that workers had to organize for themselves, and agitate for social justice regardless of the consequences. It was she and not Marx who uttered the famous phrase that "the emancipation of the workers must be brought about by the workers themselves," and she sought to implement this by devising the scheme for a "worker's union", an organization supported by voluntary donations which would defend on a nationwide scale the interests of workers against capital. Considered too radical by most publishers, she was unable to get her proposal into print, and had to traverse the streets of Paris on foot, visiting anyone who would listen. After collecting donations from the novelist George Sand, amongst others, she finally published it herself. On the road promoting the book and aiding workers wherever they were engaged in struggles against the bosses, Flora finally died of a cerebral hemorrhage. She was only 41 years old.

Louise Michel, like Flora Tristan, was both a feminist and a partisan of working class struggle. In fact, she took the class struggle orientation in Flora Tristan's work, and made it even more explicit. Born out of a dalliance between a peasant girl and the son of an estate owner, Louise was raised by her paternal grandparents who allowed her a carefree, non-sexist childhood and, despite their class position, instilled in her all sorts of radical Republican ideas.

Louise was highly educated and completely fearless in her beliefs. Like Tristan, she wrote novels and poetry and corresponded with major figures, like the novelist Victor Hugo. When the Paris Commune uprising erupted in the wake of the Franco-Prussia War, Louise was on the barricades, and fought with a regiment of the people's National Guard. The Paris Commune was a curious phenomena: half patriotic uprising against the capitulation of the bourgeoisie in surrendering Paris to the Prussians, half social revolution. "The proletarians of Paris," the proclamation of the Commune announced, "in the midst of the defeats and betrayals of the ruling class, have come to understand that they must save the situation by taking the conduct of public affairs into their own hands.... They have realized that it is their highest duty and their absolute right to make themselves the masters of their own fates and to seize the power of the Government." On the 16th of April, 1871, the Commune ordered that all factories and workshops not working be registered, and ordered plans for their being run by the workers who would form co-operatives. Furthermore, these co-operatives were to be amalgamated into one great co-operative organization for the entire city.

The Paris Commune was crushed by the federal government with the connivance of Prussian troops. Michel was among the last group of fighters to be captured and disarmed. She could have escaped, but had chosen to fight until the end. When the fighting ceased, a bloodbath began in which the government massacred 25,000 men, women and children. Fortunately, Louise slipped away but, when she learned that the government had taken her mother hostage, she turned herself in. At her trial, she declared, "It seems that the

only rights granted to a heart which beats for freedom is in the shape of a bullet. If that is so, I want my rights.... If you let me live, I shall never cease to shout vengeance on you who have killed my brothers.... If you are not cowards, you will kill me." As it happened she was banished to a penal colony in New Caledonia in the Pacific Ocean. On route to the port city of Marseilles, a workman standing by a small town station saw the prison train pass and shouted, "Vive le Commune!". This boosted Louise's spirits and gave her the courage she needed. During her stay in New Caledonia, she became an anarchist. After eight years, she was pardoned and allowed to return to France. Several years later -- in 1883 -- she was arrested for leading a procession of unemployed workers who broke into shops and distributed bread. She was sentenced to six years. When her mother (to whom she was completely devoted) died two years later, she was offered a pardon, but refused and had to be carried out of prison.

Shortly after her release, at the age of 59, she was giving a speech in a large hall, when a drunken man, incited by a priest, shot her in the ear. She refused to prosecute the man and, in fact, hired him a lawyer. The next year she was again arrested, and this time her jailers slipped wine into her beverage and succeeded in getting her drunk before her court appearance, with the aim of having her discredited and sent off to an asylum for the "mentally insane". The plan was exposed, and Louise moved to England where she continued to lecture. Towards the end of her life, she developed an interest in Russia, and said prophetically of that country: "Watch developments in Russia.... You will see in the country of Gorky and Kropotkin tremendous events will occur. I see a revolution rising and growing which will remove the Tsar... and what will be most surprising will be the fact that in Moscow, in Petersburg, in Kronstadt, in Sevastopol, the soldiers will side with the people." In this, she was absolutely correct.

Louise remained a proud, independent woman until the end. Commenting on Moliere's remark that woman was the "soup" of man, Louise said, "I have refused to be any man's 'soup'." Louise died during a speaking tour of France in 1905.

## Charlotte Wilson and Lucy Parsons

Another anarcha-feminist of note is Charlotte Wilson, co-founder along with Peter Kropotkin of the *Freedom* magazine in London, and of Freedom Press. Both are now into their 101st year of operation. She was also a member of the Fabian Society, whose other notables included Bernard Shaw and Beatrice Webb. In a pamphlet published by the Fabians, she wrote:

*Life in common has developed social instinct in two conflicting directions, and the history of our experience in thought and action is the record of this strife within each individual, and its reflection within each society. One tendency is towards domination.... The other... is towards equal brother-*



various circumstances, Flora grew up poor and remained so for the rest of her life. Tristan's radicalism was partly a product of her father regaling her with tales of his old friend, Simon Bolivar, the "liberator" of South and Central America. At 18, Flora married a lithographer in whose shop she worked, but five years later, tired of the boredom and hypocrisy of her middle class existence, she "deserted" him and struck out on her own. Outraged by her uppityness, her husband spent the next several years hounding her, abducting her children and trying to get her fired from her various jobs. One day he tracked her down and shot her in a Paris street in broad daylight. Fortunately, Flora

gels' more famous *Condition of the Working Classes in England*. Her experience of patriarchal oppression lead her to say that Mary Wollstonecraft's treatise "was an imperishable work... because the happiness of mankind (*sic*) will depend upon the triumph of cause defended in this book." Though known for her advocacy of women's rights, she is better known for her role as a forerunner of *syndicalism*. Tristan was not an anarchist, but she did believe that improvement in the lives of workers was not going to come about through fantastic schemes for social reconstruction or from appealing to the inherent "reasonableness" of the oppressing classes. Though non-violent by nature,

hood (sic), or to the self-affirmation and fulfillment of the greater and true human self, which includes all nature, and thus dissolves the illusion of mere atomic individualism.

Before the First World War, feminism, with the suffragists movement, was a hot topic on the anarchist left. Most took the traditional socialist position that the women's movement had to subordinate itself to the workers' movement. However, in a pamphlet for Freedom Press, Lily Gair made the following interesting observation:

...in free communal life it will be found, not that women are to be emancipated by becoming lawyers



and doctors and what not, but that men are to be emancipated by withdrawing from such abnormal occupations and returning home to home and garden and field as the true sphere of human life.

An important contemporary of Charlotte Wilson was Lucy Parsons. Of Black, Mexican and Indian parentage, Lucy was born in Texas in 1853 and was destined to become a major leader of the largely white labour movement in Chicago in the 1870's and 80's. Her husband, Albert Parsons, was one of the five, mostly anarchist, labour leaders who were martyred by the state of Illinois for their alleged role in throwing a bomb at police at a demonstration for the eight hour day (in reality, they were innocent of the charge). Arrested in 1886 and hanged in 1887, their death served as the political catalyst for the two people we're going to talk about next: Emma Goldman and Voltairine DeCleyre. Lucy Parsons continued to speak out about the barbarity of the "Haymarket massacre" and worked tirelessly for the liberation of working people, becoming a founding member of the International Workers of the World (IWW). She was arrested innumerable times, and yet kept up her fight until her death in a house fire in 1942. At the age of 89, she was considered such a threat that the FBI and the Red Squad seized

what remained from the fire of her personal papers. Originally, an advocate of "propaganda by the deed" (i.e. acts of individual terror), she gradually abandoned this belief and anarchism altogether, becoming a member of the Communist Party. An apt metaphor for her whole career is an incident which took place in 1887. The police in Orange, New Jersey had banned her from speaking. She kicked in the door of the lecture hall and spoke anyway. Such was her spirit, her determination.

#### Emma Goldman and Voltairine DeCleyre

Much has been written about Emma Goldman. She espoused anarcho-syndicalism and anarcho-communism (see KIO #12 for more on these), but, unlike her contemporaries, she placed more emphasis on the importance of individual transformation, in a way which anticipates a more contemporary approach. Emma didn't have a lot of faith in "masses". She believed the masses to be fairly inert and herd-like, and saw the impetus for change coming from determined minorities. She also believed that each individual had to undergo a moral revolution if society was to move forward. But, despite her pathbreaking work as an advocate of women's liberation, this occasionally led her to "blame the victim". For instance, time and again, she dismissed improvements in the lot of women as being relatively trivial, while seeming to suggest that women could overcome their oppression by an act of personal willpower, or even that women were somehow to blame for their oppression. Of course, this was not the overriding aspect of her work (for a more comprehensive treatment of Emma's contribution to feminism, see the last chapter of *Significant Sisters: The Grassroots of Active Feminism, 1839-1939* by Margaret Forster, Knopf, N.Y., 1985).

One of her last major contributions was to travel to Spain during the Spanish Civil War and to lend support to the social revolution/civil war waged by the anarchists and others against Franco and the forces of reaction. She made special efforts to help *Mujeres Libres* (or Free Women), an autonomous women's group that sought liberation for women in the context of the wider struggle.

Voltairine DeCleyre, Emma's contemporary, spent her adolescence in a convent in Sarnia, Ontario and developed a keen hatred of religious authority. Like Emma, she became an anarchist through the Haymarket experience. Like Flora Tristan and Louise Michel, she had the unhappy experience of being shot by a man. Severely wounded by a former pupil (she tutored various subjects to make a living), she refused to prosecute and Emma Goldman raised money to aid in her recovery (she once stood in for Emma and made a speech at a strike after Goldman had been arrested). This was a few years after a certain Senator Hawley, during the anti-anarchist hysteria of the early 1900's, offered a \$1000 to have a shot at an anarchist. Voltairine had sent Hawley her address and offered to serve as a target if he would first let her explain to him her anarchist principles.

Like Emma, Voltairine took inspiration from various home-grown anti-authoritarian traditions, and once wrote: "...the great manufacturing plants will break up, the population will go after the fragments, and there will be seen not indeed the hard self-sustaining, isolated pioneer communities of early America but thousands of small communities stretching along the lines of transportation, each producing

very largely for its own needs, able to rely upon itself, and therefore able to be independent" -- an anticipation of today's interest in a decentralized society. On the subject of women, "Let woman ask herself, 'Why am I the slave of man?' There are two reasons why, and these ultimately reducible to a single principle -- the authoritarian, supreme-power, God-idea, and its two instruments, the Church -- that is, the priests -- and the State -- that is, the legislators."

Towards the end of her life, she developed a keen interest in the Mexican Revolution, and in the fate of Indian peoples, in particular. She was studying Spanish and preparing to join the revolutionary Yaqui Indians when she died in 1912 at the age of 46.

#### Two "Fellow-Travellers"

A contemporary of Voltairine DeCleyre was Rosa Luxemburg. Rosa was no anarchist. In fact, she married one to gain German citizenship and promptly divorced him, in the words of one of her biographers, as "she did not want to be associated even indirectly with the anarchist movement." However, she did attempt to "rehabilitate" for Marxism the idea of the *general strike*, which derived from Bakunin and others. She also entered into some conflicts with Lenin which revealed a certain anti-authoritarian bent. As she wrote in 1904, "The self-discipline of social democracy (Marxism) is not merely the replacement of the authority of the



bourgeois rulers with the authority of the central committee." In 1918, she wrote (of the Russian Revolution), "Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for members of one party -- however numerous they may be -- is no freedom at all. Freedom is always exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently." Another dissident Communist, Alexandra Kollantai, wrote a couple of years later that "The harm of bureaucracy does not only lie in red tape....The harm lies in the solution of all problems, not by means of open exchange of opinions or by the im-

mediate efforts of all concerned, but by means of formal decisions handed down from the central institutions....Some third party decides your fate: this is the whole essence of bureaucracy." Luxemburg, of course, was murdered in 1919 with the connivance of her fellow "socialists" who had inherited the government from the monarchy after the defeat of Germany in the First World War.

#### Anarcha-Feminism From the Thirties On

Even more impressive than either the German or the Russian Revolution was the Spanish Civil War, in which a quasi-anarchist society was established for a short time in several parts of Spain. Caught between a rock and a hard place, several "leading anarchist" militants joined a Republican government controlled by right-wingers and Communists which, along with the anarchists, was doing battle against Franco supported as he was by the fascists in Italy and Nazi Germany. One of these, Frederica Montseny, became the Minister of Health.

At a more grass-roots level, a group called *Mujeres Libres* was formed which dealt with women's unique concerns (usually ignored by the political honchos), while still working in tandem with the anarchist movement. At its peak, *Mujeres Libres* involved 20,000 women. Many women fought in front-line combat, and this included some women from foreign countries. French philosopher Simone Weill fought briefly with the Durruti (an anarchist) Column, but scalded herself while cooking and had to return to France.

One of the main critics of the anarchist leaders' capitulation to the Republicans was Camillo Berneri, an outstanding theoretician and activist from Italy. Berneri was murdered by members of the "International Brigades". His wife, Giovanna Berneri, later founded the anarchist journal, *Volonta*, which, to this day, is a stimulating source of new materials on anarchism and anarchist theory (in past issues, *Kick It Over* has published edited translations of pieces from their magazine). Their daughter, Marie Louise Berneri, moved to London and helped edit *Freedom* magazine and Freedom Press during the war years. She wrote an excellent history of utopianism called *Journey Through Utopia*, and another book called *Workers in Stalin's Russia*. She is well-known for her famous remark, "When a government puts people in jail for their political opinions, we do not ask the nationality of that government. We are always on the side of the victims of state tyranny." Mary Louise faced a promising future, but unfortunately died in 1949 at the age of only 31.

That same year, Simone de Beauvoir published *The Second Sex*, a major work that provided much of the theoretical underpinning for the "second wave" of feminism in the late 60's and early 70's. De Beauvoir inclined towards Marxism, but her incipient critique of "historical materialism" (the theory that economics determines culture) would prove useful to later generations of anarcha-feminists. Meanwhile, in the U.S., Mildred Loomis, co-founder of *The School of Living*, was continuing her crusade for decentralism (see KIO #17), and wrote about her experiences in a book called *Decentralism*, published in 1980.

As mentioned in "Anarchy for Beginners (Part 1)" -- KIO #12 -- the radical feminism of the late 60's and early 70's had strong anarchist overtones. In her landmark book, *Sexual Politics*, Kate Millett wrote, "an ideal politics might simply be conceived of as the arrangement of human life on agreeable and ra-

tional principles from whence the entire notion of power over others should be banished..." Around the same time, Shulamith Firestone, declared the goal of feminist revolution to be "communistic anarchy", though her overall politics were fairly authoritarian. **Begin At Start** by Su Negrin, published in 1972, was a pioneering book which attempted a holistic analysis of power and oppression, and sought to fuse the personal and the political. Negrin was very much influenced by anarchism, by the writings of Murray Bookchin, in particular. The mid-seventies also saw the publication of two feminist utopias -- Ursula LeGuin's **The Dispossessed**, and Marge Piercy's **Woman On the Edge of Time**. Both have publically acknowledged the role that anarchism had in helping them formulate these works.

Around 1975, radical feminism began making the "self-conscious theoretical step" to anarchy-feminism. With the publication of essays by Peggy Kornegger and Carol Ehrlich and others, anarchy-feminism as a distinct tendency was born, and these works became its founding texts.

### Anarchy-Feminism and the Synthetic Tendency

Like many movements (including anarchism), feminism is prevented from achieving its full potential because of unresolved contradictions in theory and practice. Anarchy-feminism is one attempt to answer some of these contradictions, however incompletely (see "What is Anarchy-Feminism?" in **KIO** #11). Anarchy-feminism offers the perspective that all forms of oppression are equally important; therefore no one movement need exert its hegemony over the others. It also argues that the roots of oppression are neither exclusively material or cultural, that both kinds of change (socio-economic and spiritual-cultural) are essential to overcoming women's oppression and creating a new egalitarian society.

This tendency to "anarchize" feminism is evident even where the label is not used -- for instance, in the proliferation of writers who have sought to make connections between the domination of nature and the domination of women (e.g. Susan Griffin, Rosemary Reuther, Elizabeth Dodson Gray, and Carolyn Merchant). Many eco-feminists are sympathetic to an anarchist perspective (see "From the Age of Power to the Age of Caring" in **KIO** #17). In the magazine, **Harbinger** and elsewhere, eco-feminists like Ynestra King and others have managed to heal the split between "cultural feminism" and "political feminism" -- treating women's nurturing traits as derived from socialization, but not taking the standpoint that they ought therefore to be discarded; rather seeing them as worth preserving and extending to men.

Other women (like Barbara Deming, Pam McAllister, and the women at Greenham Common, many of whom identify as anarchy-feminists) have focussed on the interconnectedness of feminism and pacifism. Among the more noteworthy efforts is a pamphlet published in 1983 entitled, **Piecing It Together: Feminism and Non-Violence**, which presents an essentially anarchist analysis of the interconnectedness of war, patriarchy, statism, racism, and imperialism. And, finally, there are feminist psychoanalysts like Dorothy Dinnerstein and Nancy Choderow who are attempting to show how exclusive sex parenting by the mother and the sexual division of labour perpetuate the dualistic thinking and emotional life that characterize our patri-

archal society. Some, like Marilyn French, in her book **Beyond Power**, are going even further and are attempting to develop a whole theory of *power itself*. Needless to say, these are all welcome developments, and augur well for the future of feminism and anarchism.

### Conclusion

This survey of the history of anarchism and feminism has certainly not been complete. I did not discuss Dorothy Day, Milly Rocker, Theresa Claramunt, or Mollie Steimer. However, hopefully others will be inspired to write about them. The following is as complete a bibliography as I could produce. I have not read all of these by any means; I list them as references for further study. □

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A group of anarchy-feminists in Montreal are compiling and publishing materials on anarchy-feminism. To date, they have published three very handsome pamphlets: "Feminism As Anarchism" by Lynne Yarrow, "Anarchism and Feminism: Women Workers and Trade Unions" by the Direct Action Movement, and "Untying the Knot: Feminism, Anarchism and Organization" by Jo Freeman and Cathy Levine. To contact them, write to: BOA, Box 988, Desjardins, Montreal, Quebec H5B 1C1.

by Awa Thiam (thanks to Theresa Hibbert for her help and some of the information used in this foreword)

The following article is reprinted from the *International Social Studies Journal* (Vol. 35, No. 4, 1983). Its author, Awa Thiam, was, at the time the article was published, a researcher in the Department of Cultural Anthropology at the University of Dakar in Senegal. She was also president of the *Commission Internationale pour l'Abolition des Mutilations Sexuelles* (CAMS-International), Villa 811-Sicap Baobabs, Dakar, Senegal, and is the author of *La Parole aux negresses* (1978). We have shortened the article for reasons of space. The section removed presented detailed organizational history, not likely to be of interest to the average reader apart from the following: "it has been very difficult for black women to work with European women, whether they call themselves feminist or not. Whenever [a particular group] opened its doors to them ....The European women tended to want to run the show..."

Sexual mutilation is not something peculiar to the "Third World". In addition to the clitoridectomies which are performed in Canada by licensed doctors, a whole raft of sexual mutilations are carried on in the name of "medical science". These range from so-called "preventative mastectomies" to breast implants and plastic surgery aimed at making women more attractive to men, to the large number of hysterectomies performed on women (one quarter of all women over the age of 50 have had their wombs removed), to episiotomies (widening the vaginal opening) -- avoidable in birth if doctors know how to perform massage, to Caesarean sections -- performed in 20-25% of all births -- which are indicated, some have argued, in only 2% of all cases. We encourage our readers to contact the CAMS address to see if it is still up-to-date, and, if it is, to send them money to aid in their work.

Since the 1970's a spirited and determined campaign for the abolition of sexual mutilation has been in progress. In Europe it was touched off by the publication in 1975 of *Ainsi soit-elle* by Benoit Groult, who must take the credit for stating the problem - within the context of women's liberation - of traditional sexual mutilation. At the same time, an American by adoption, Fran Hosken, the founder of *Win News*,<sup>1</sup> began the regular worldwide reporting of information of the same theme. Black women, including Africans, also began to speak out. This campaign has given rise to stormy debates, meetings, accusations and outbursts of genuinely felt or pretended passion, as well as racism, in Africa, America and Europe. Nowadays, many Africans, Europeans and Americans who had rejected abolitionist ideas in regard to the practice of sexual mutilation on the grounds that they emanated from women active in the struggle for women's liberation, or were basically racist, have moderated their view. This is no doubt thanks to improved information on these questions. The campaign to abolish mutilation is now being carried out on an international scale.

#### Mutilation: Interpretation and Attitudes

Sexual mutilation is of two kinds, exci-

sion and infibulation. Excision is an operation which involves either partial or complete removal of the clitoris, while infibulation consists of removal of the smaller labia and of part of the greater labia, which are then closed except for a small orifice.

Different views exist concerning sexual mutilation. Arab or Black African Muslims who support the practice of excision often back up their arguments by saying that it is a question of religion; however, nowhere does the Koran mention this practice. The only reference these Muslims can adduce as grounds for its maintenance is Muhammad's admonition to a woman performing the operation: 'Do not operate too drastically... it is better for the women.' It is not clear from the quotation whether or not the Prophet was forbidding the practice of excision; its ambiguity has led to differences of view between those who favour and those who oppose excision.

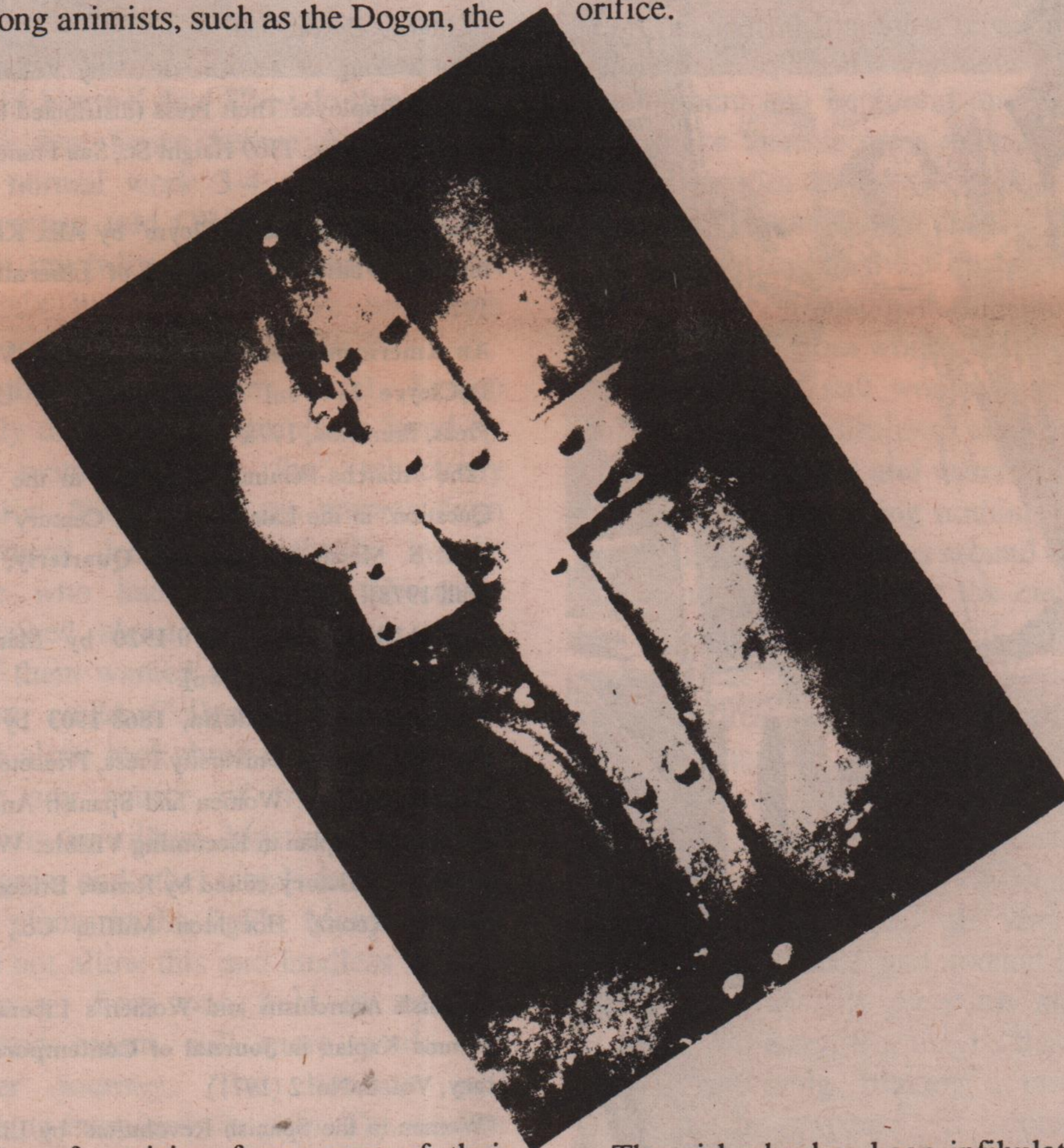
Among Black African Christians, the argument used by the partisans of sexual mutilation is that excision has been practiced since time immemorial, the religious aspect being left out of the question. This is the view among certain Diola in Senegal and the Bambara in Mali.

Among animists, such as the Dogon, the

earth. This is done by the shedding of blood that the earth will 'drink'. In the case of girls it involves cutting out the clitoris (excision), and in the case of boys removal of the foreskin (circumcision). Other interpretations also exist; for instance, the Bambara ethnic group believes that excision represents an act of purification.

Besides these aspects, excision transforms a girl into a woman, enabling her to accomplish the transition from a state of non-responsibility to one of responsibility. So according to the Dogon and the Kikuyu, the girl who has been excised becomes a person capable of receiving initiation into the so-called 'facts of life'. In this way excision becomes a rite of passage from one age-group to another.

Infibulation, in whatever region it is practiced, does not invoke any particular interpretations. Its sole function is to prevent a young girl from having sexual relations before marriage, since she must be a virgin on her wedding day.<sup>3</sup> For the married woman the aim is identical: to prevent her from having sexual relations in the absence of her husband. Partial infibulation carried out after childbirth is designed to increase the husband's pleasure as it reduces the size of the vaginal orifice.



practice of excision forms part of their cosmogony.<sup>2</sup> According to this, boys and girls are born spiritually androgynous, which makes them seem to be androgynous in actual fact. Each has two souls, one male and one female. So both the girls and boys must dispense with one of these souls so as to become either entirely feminine or entirely masculine. Dogon cosmogony singles out the clitoris and the foreskin as the elements associated with the soul that must be eliminated. At the same time, young boys and girls owe a debt to the earth. The first couple were created in fact by God from earth, so human beings have contracted a debt to it ever since. Earth is not only the matter out of which human beings are made but is also the instrument through which resurrection occurs. Past, present and future are symbolized in this cosmogony, by the earth.

So to become a complete human being with no spiritually androgynous element and belonging to a sex recognized by one's society, it is necessary to discard the extra soul and pay the debt owed to the

The girl who has been infibulated cannot have relations with a man before her 'de-infibulation', which in principle takes place only on the day the marriage is consummated - and which is terribly painful. Immediately after this is done, the woman must have sexual relations with her husband. After she has survived these sexual mutilations - from which she suffers both physically and psychologically - a woman who has been excised and infibulated not only frequently experiences frigidity as a result, but also risks death in childbirth. Among the Afars and the Issas, who practice both excision and infibulation, there is an estimated 6 per cent annual deathrate among the female population as a result of these practices.

Today, the majority of the population groups carrying out sexual mutilation do so without any initiation ceremony giving it the value of a rite of passage. Whatever the *a posteriori* justification may be, excision and infibulation, as operations experienced both physically and psychologically, are 'torture-mutilations'.

What are the psychological effects of

these practices? Girls and women who have been subjected to mutilation may come to think of themselves as different from those who have not experienced it. Their attitude may be either positive or negative. It is positive if, despite the pernicious results of these practices, they accept the arguments that justify them and support their perpetuation. It is negative if they are conscious of being unjustly amputated and experience a feeling of rebellion, whether or not accompanied by trauma.

Whether one considers Africa or the Middle East - areas where excision and infibulation are at present carried out - nobody who is objectively informed about their practice and consequences can remain indifferent to this question.<sup>4</sup> For the purpose of these practices, whether it is admitted or not, is to control female sexuality. Some indeed do not hesitate to say that the aim is to reduce women's hypersensuality. In any case the result remains the same: to make the young girl essentially a future reproductive and productive element. Hence, her life is taken over and mapped out for her from birth to death by a patriarchal society, which ensures that she is kept in her place at all stages of her development.

In face of this state of affairs, reactions are many and varied. They range from indifference, support or condemnation, to the view that proper medical facilities should be provided for such practices. Indifference reflects the attitude of those people who are poorly informed as to the actual facts of sexual mutilation, in Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere.

In Africa support is found among Christians, animists and Muslims, whether fanatical or not. But it can also be the attitude of Africans or Europeans who oppose all efforts to abolish these practices on the grounds that traditions and cultures must be respected.

Condemnation comes from Muslims who have made an objective study of the *hadiths* of Muhammad, individuals who have not been affected by the alienation which simply strengthens the patriarchal system that oppresses and mutilates women. It is also the attitude of those people who have a deep respect for the fundamental rights of human beings, whoever they may be.

The argument in favour of proper medical facilities for such practices: supporters of this argument - including African and European doctors - maintain that this is the best way to combat the infection and deaths that can follow mutilation. Do they not realize that this line of argument can become one of the worst obstacles to the campaign for abolition? In trying to convince the supporters of sexual mutilation to have this carried out under hospital conditions the argument turns, not on the necessity of abolition, but on the deaths and infections the practices can cause if they are carried out under unhygienic conditions. If they were to be maintained under supervision approved by the medical profession, doctors could be a strong influence in perpetuating them.

#### The Abolitionist Struggle

Once taboo subjects, excision and infibulation have become issues giving rise today to considerable discussion. Nobody in Africa - at least amongst the informed adult population - can now be unaware of the practice. The reason for this is that an information campaign has been

# Terrorism

## a Senegalese woman condemns sexual mutilation

carried out by men and women who are not content to condemn this abomination but are campaigning for its total abolition. The struggle for the abolition of sexual mutilation is being waged by people who are working in a systematic way to outlaw these practices; there are for example a number of certain outstanding individuals such as Benoite Groult and Fran Hosken, and also a number of women's movements.

In France, women's liberation movements of all tendencies took up positions in the 1970's attacking the practices of excision and infibulation, and appealed for solidarity with women who had been subjected to such mutilation. They organized a great many petitions, articles and meetings. Black African women from the Diaspora took a firm stand against the continuation of these mutilating practices.

As a result of this increasing awareness, the *Commission pour l'Abolition des Mutilations Sexuelles* (CAMS) was founded in 1979, with the aim of eradicating all forms of mutilation affecting the personality of women - cultural, political, psychological, economic and sexual. More will be said of this below.

The World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women held, at the midpoint of the decade, in Copenhagen in July 1980 provided the occasion for the first international confrontation between the supporters and the opponents of the continued practice of excision and infibulation.

This practice was condemned by European and American feminists. This denunciation earned the disapproval of official and non-official African women delegates. On one side were European women who, on the strength of their feminist convictions and activities, condemned specific mutilations and expressed their solidarity with women who had been mutilated and with all women campaigning for abolition. On the other side were women from the so-called Third World whose response was negative, reflecting a lack of awareness of the specific oppression from which women suffer. This oppression is found everywhere, even among the upper strata of society, though it sometimes takes less brutal forms there than among more modest circles. The generous expression of fellow-feeling of the one side was barely understood by the other due to this lack of awareness. How can one otherwise explain the attitude of certain African women, who said 'Give us food and water first' or 'Give us money and leave us alone' in response to Western women who protested against sexual mutilation? These different standpoints are described with great clarity by Renee Saurel in *L'enterree vive*. The arguments repeated over and over again by certain women delegates during the conference reflected the attitude of those on the 'receiving end' of aid, an attitude which can be found at present among governing circles in certain Third World countries. They appeal for 'aid' from the wealthy countries, pretending to be unaware that asking for and accepting such aid means playing the same game as neo-colonialists and imperialists of every kind. Because of this it was felt, in Copenhagen, that a certain collusion existed between bourgeois African women and neo-colonialism.

There were also certain African women in Copenhagen who stated, among other things, that they were opposed to the practice of excision and infibulation but were not prepared to consider the argu-

ments of the campaigners for the abolition of sexual mutilation. One must hope that the attitude of these women will evolve in the right direction. But for the moment their activities show, in practice, that they are not really concerned with the issue of the abolition of sexual mutilation. On the contrary their attitude is a stumbling-block to solidarity between European feminists and the women of the Third World in the fight for the abolition of mutilation. Some among them have told Western women that 'this problem is none of your business'. Why does this attitude, which is consciously or unconsciously racist, exist? Should Black African women adopt racist attitudes in response to the racist thinking of certain Westerners?

On the other hand, other African women have rightly endorsed the condemnation made by women of the African Diaspora of the way in which some Europeans refer to excision and infibulation, when they term these practices barbarous and primitive, like those who carry them out.

The Copenhagen Conference revealed the communication difficulties between Western feminists and women from the poorer countries. The feminism of the former was unacceptable to the other women - who were still influenced by patriarchal ideology - because they considered it to be an ideology of bourgeois origin. The negative reaction of women from the developing countries was frequently regarded by many European women as incomprehensible, primary and racist. Yet communication between the two groups is all the more necessary in view of the fact that sexual mutilation is also practiced in European countries where there are large numbers of immigrants.

In its campaign CAMS-International has so far concentrated on collecting and disseminating as much information as possible concerning sexual mutilation practices. At the same time it encourages the organization of national and international meetings - such as the international symposium held in Dakar on 27, 28 and 29 December 1982 on the theme "Women in their Societies" - so that the circulation of information is not restricted to local populations. To ensure the effectiveness of its information work, CAMS-International plans to open a research and information center on women, to launch an international women's review and draw up an action programme. The press campaign on sexual mutilation which has been in progress for over ten years has, however, produced limited results. There is, then, a problem here: either an information campaign is not enough, or else the information is not put over in a satisfactory manner. Inquiries show that in the countries concerned only the intelligentsia has access to such information. The official spoken and written language is that of the former colonizers of those countries. The people at large, who for the most part are illiterate, are deprived of information and it is among this sector that the most fervent supporters of these operations are found. This is a severe handicap in the campaign against such practices. Black African and Arab intellectuals, like Europeans and Americans, receive information concerning sexual mutilation, but not the peasant women in the heartland of Africa. In any case, the mere fact of being informed of these practices does not necessarily lead people to support the idea of abolition.

To remedy these shortcomings, CAMS-International has raised the question of whether a legal battle should be fought in order to enact legislation abolishing sexual mutilation. But the examples of Sudan, Egypt and Kenya, which have already outlawed excision and infibulation but where those practices continue, point out the limits of legislative action, though it is, nevertheless, extremely important.<sup>5</sup>

In the present author's view, neither repression nor *laissez-faire* policies represent solutions: efforts should be directed toward bringing about a change in attitudes. The abolition of sexual mutilation necessarily involves the breaking down of the social structures that now support it. However in the first instance it is necessary to develop the campaign in ways that will avoid creating antagonism and will encourage people to listen.

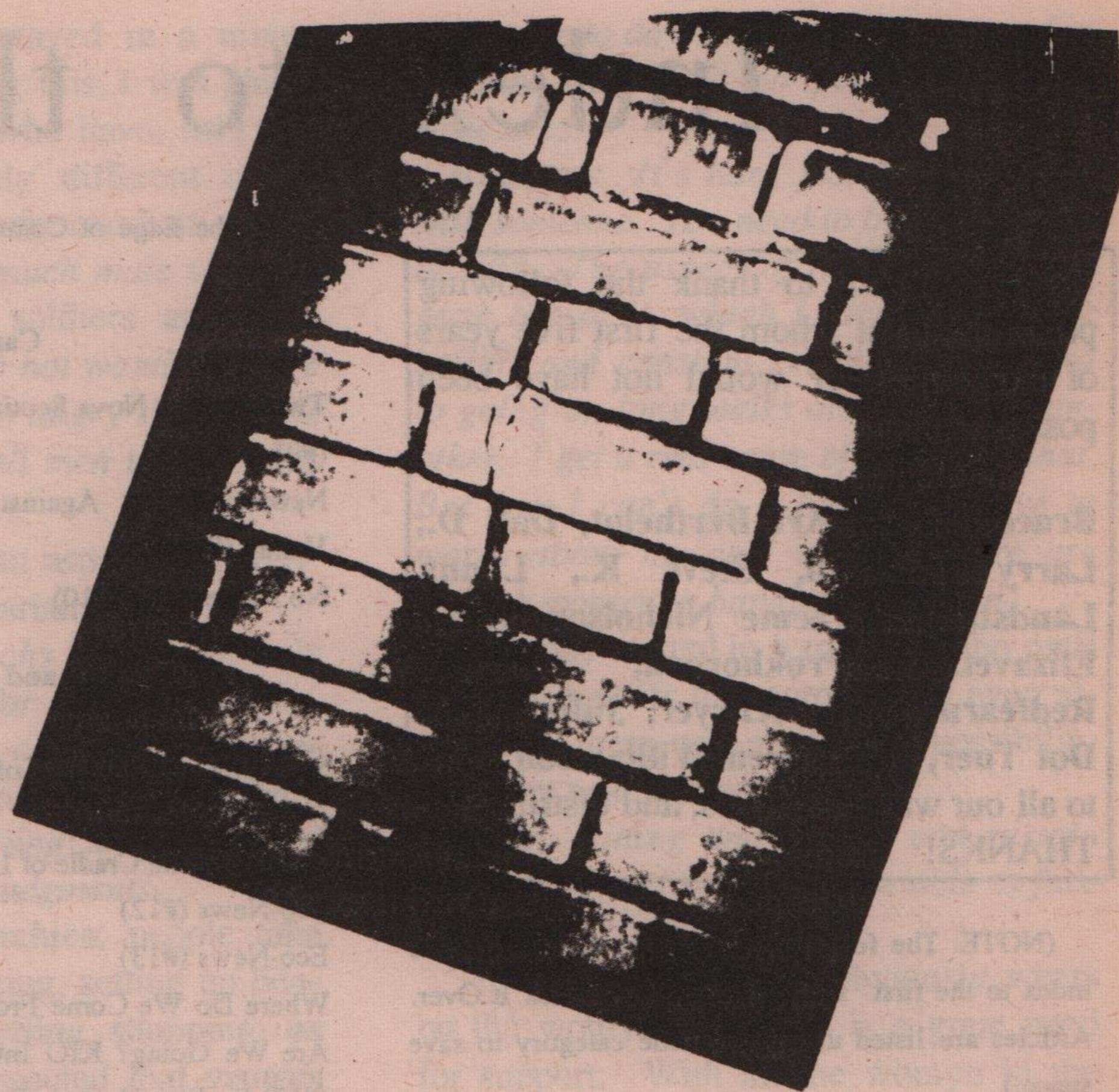
In the short term, CAMS-International advocates the drawing up of action programmes which are consonant with the actual situation of each country where such practices occur. These programmes should be designed to encourage the populations concerned to accept the notion of abolishing these practices. The devising of such programmes will require extensive research. As far as Senegal is concerned, CAMS-International envisages that this work will take about two years provided that the material means are available. These are sadly lacking in a non-governmental movement of this type, which has no other support than the determination and the convictions of its women members and the sympathy of a section of public opinion.<sup>6</sup>

In the long term it is evident that the campaign against these practices cannot succeed unless the social structures in the countries where such practices are current are challenged.

In addition, as many people in these states (as well as others) must be objectively informed so that they can take a definite stand and tackle this issue of mutilation practices. But all this action must be carried out in conjunction with the women who are chiefly concerned, and with the movements which represent the women who are fighting to bring such practices to an end.

### Footnotes

1. WIN News (Women's International Network), a review created by Fran Hosken which disseminates information concerning women.
2. Marcel Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, Paris, Fayard, 222 pp.
3. This practice no longer satisfies the expectations of traditional families which hold to the principle of the virginity of their daughters on marriage. Cases have been known of young girls who,



from *Anarchismo*

to the great surprise of their parents, have become pregnant - though infibulated - after playing sexual games with the opposite sex. The narrowness of the orifice that remains after infibulation does not prevent the penetration of seminal fluid.

4. Sexual mutilation is practiced not only in several African and Middle Eastern countries (see *La parole aux negresses*) but in Asia, the USSR and Latin America as well. In Asia the practice (excision) is confined to Muslim women in Indonesia and Malaysia. In the USSR it is practiced by the Skoptsy. In Latin America excision is carried out in Brazil, Mexico and Peru but not very extensively. More research and investigation would be required in order to map with any accuracy the zones where sexual mutilation is practised.

5. Will Senegal follow the example of Egypt, Sudan and Kenya and adopt an abolitionist policy in regard to sexual mutilation? President Abdou Diouf responded favourably during an audience he granted to the Senegalese branch of CAMS-International, when he gave warm encouragement to the campaign waged by this movement.

6. As regards international governmental organizations, reference may be made in Renee Saurel's well-documented work *L'enterree vive*. Despite well-intentioned statements and the remarkable seminar organized by WHO in Khartoum in 1979, young girls continue to suffer sexual mutilation. It has to be admitted that the role of the international organizations in the struggle to abolish these practices, where it exists at all, has proved to be ineffective.

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# Index to the First Five Years

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(NOTE: The following is a fairly comprehensive index to the first seventeen issues of *Kick It Over*. Articles are listed under only one category to save space.)

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Over the years, Kick It Over has reprinted several important articles from our magazine and made them available through the Emma Goldman Resource Group. There are two reprints currently available. One, **Radicalizing Democracy**, is a copy of the complete path-breaking interview conducted with Murray Bookchin in issues 13 and 14 on the subject of cybernetics, nature philosophy, the German Greens, and building a movement for radical democracy. Copies are available for \$2.00 (includes postage). Bulk rates are available for larger quantities. □

COMPARATIVE HISTORY: OUR STORIES

by Kate Rushin

When I look into your face  
I swear I see Russia and Rumania  
I see thousands of faces looking out from your eyes  
I see a peasant woman  
Her legs strong from the fields  
Drinking tea by the stove  
I see a man leaning over his heavy book  
I see a young girl laughing from deep in her belly  
I see them  
I see Molly, Rachel, Goldie and Flora  
I see Harry, Albert, Carl and Ben

And when I look at you  
I feel my own people gazing out from my eyes

Look and you will see a bondswoman  
Her legs strong from the fields  
Drinking tea by the hearth  
Look and see a man rocking over his heavy book  
See a young girl laughing from way deep in her belly  
Look and you can see the Ashanti, the Bambara, the Fulani  
You can see Mamie, Ama, Akiba and Snow Pearl  
You can see Walter, Kojo, Moses and Ned

Thousands of years  
Thousands of people stretch out behind us  
Like cars of a freight

How do we compare our terrible histories

The Final Solution, That Peculiar Institution  
The Slave Ship, The Death Train  
The Gas Chamber, The Lynching Tree  
The Amistad Revolt, the Warsaw Uprising  
The Burned Book, The Burned Drum  
Belsen-Belsen and Cape Coast Castle

How do we dare to compare these terrible histories

It would have been too easy for neither of us to be here  
If someone had stayed a day too long...  
If someone had left a day too soon...

But here we are  
Meeting by chance  
As people always do  
The daughter of Marilyn and Birdie, Sol and Jack  
The daughter of Roxie and Addie, George and Isaac

We are here  
To fill this moment  
With the bursting of our hearts  
We are here  
To witness the dead  
And the living  
In each other's eyes

copyright 1984 by Kate Rushin  
Kate Rushin is a poet living in Boston whose work has appeared in Conditions 5, Small Moon, Shankpainter and This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color.



from Crass Records The Eye

# Review: Books on Power

by Adrian Ivakhiv

*The Parable of the Tribes: The Problem of Power in Social Evolution*, Andrew Bard Schmookler (University of California Press, 1984).

*Beyond Power: On Women, Men and Morals*, Marilyn French (Ballantyne, 1985).

*There is never power, but only a race for power... Power is, by definition, only a means... but power seeking, owing to its essential incapacity to seize hold of its object, rules out all consideration of an act, and finally comes to take the place of all ends.*

--Simone Weil

Bertrand Russell defines power as the ability to compel obedience. Talcott Parsons considers power to be a property possessed by an actor that enables him or her to alter the will or actions of others so they conform to his/her will. A number of writers (mainly women) have recently been focusing their discussion of power on the crucial distinction between power-to (or power-from-within) and power-over, i.e., domination, control, coercion. Andrew Bard Schmookler's *The Parable of the Tribes* and Marilyn French's *Beyond Power* are comprehensive attempts to analyze the evolution of "power over" (let's call it Power with a capital-P). French writes from a feminist perspective, so she equates this evolution with "patriarchy"; Schmookler, trying to appeal to the objective (don't take that word too seriously) general audience, avoids terms that could be used to ghettoize him into any "camp". But they mean the same thing.

Schmookler begins his analysis by envisioning a scenario of several tribes living within reach of each other. "If all choose the way of peace, then all may live in peace," but if even one is ambitious for power and conquest, the others will react by choosing one of several options: they can imitate the power-maximizing aggressor, be absorbed and transformed by the aggressive tribe, withdraw to less accessible territory, or be destroyed. "Successful defense against a power-maximizing aggressor requires a society to become more like the society that threatens it;" in every possible outcome, "the ways of power are spread throughout the system." Power, which Schmookler defines as "the capacity to achieve one's will against the will of another," is "like a contaminant, a disease, which once introduced will gradually yet inexorably become universal in the system of competing societies."

In the precivilized state, human societies maintained a hunting-gathering way of life that was ideally suited to their surrounding environments, which resembled the conditions in which the evolution of our species (and thus of "human nature" took place). There was a natural "goodness" in "the fruit of the match between organism and environment." With territorial expansion and increasing population pressure, societies were forced to gradually replace food gathering with food production, agriculture, sedentary civilization (and private property). Facilitated by the development of language, abstract thought and the cultural transmission of social codes, all this led to a decisive break between civilization and the "natural" world. At the point when the biologically evolved constraints on human

society were removed, according to Schmookler, societies were freed to pursue unlimited growth, with the only external limits being the presence of other societies.

The bulk of Schmookler's book analyses the consequences of the evolutionary "selection for power", which like Darwinian natural selection, favours the development of certain social forms over others. Societies are favoured, for instance, in which power is centrally held and hierarchically organized, facilitating unity of purpose, coordination, and the sacrifice of the part for the whole. Such social systems employ several techniques to deal with the lack of motivation this might engender within individuals: ideology (such as the powerful alliance of nationalism and institutionalized religion) compels the individual to identify with the aims of the state, socialization and the moral internalization of societal norms into the psyche induces conformity, and, when all else fails, direct coercion guarantees subservience. The selective process further "favours the restless spirit over the more content and self-contained," so that "what emerges is a more and more stressed adrenalin society always poised as if to meet a perpetual emergency." Civilized social systems divert natural human energies toward their own power-maximizing ends, while destructive energies are displaced toward external scapegoats (enemy nations and ideologies).

Schmookler's critique of modern society rests on the ecological discontinuity between natural and civilized systems. Naturally evolved systems retain synergy, "wholeness" and viability: each part functions in a way that enhances the welfare of the other parts as well as its own, and the system is thereby able to maintain without diminution whatever it is upon which the whole system's continued existence depends. In contrast, the "zero-sum game" of civilization, in which parts seek to serve their own interests at the expense of the system's overall well-being, is characterized by decadence, a living beyond one's means that destroys the conditions for the healthy continuation of the present state.

Schmookler's emphasis on the role of power leads him to criticize both the capitalist market system and the Marxist analysis of it. By focusing on the economic relations of a society, Marxists tend to miss the root of the problem -- the power to compel. Of today's political options, Schmookler sees in liberal democracy "the best hope for freedom from oppression." The free market, however, is a power system in which competition forces individual actors to reject future-valuing methods in order to survive economically. The market "gives power to money, and thus to those whose ways are conducive to the making of money." Market exchanges ignore externalities (like the environment and third parties), and the greatest transactors (the rich) benefit most while bystanders (the poor) are victimized. To the extent that wealth confers political power, the wealthy are able to use the coercive power of the state to stack the deck in their favour.

*The Parable of the Tribes* is a work of diagnosis whose perspective leads beyond guilt and enmity: we are all victims of the evolutionary selection for power among human societies. Schmookler is attempting to provide a "unifying vision of our entire predicament" and to liberate the individual human spirit by driving a wedge

# BEYOND POWER MARILYN FRENCH

between ourselves and our social systems. "The treatment," he suggests, "is to find a way to displace power" by redesigning the system to serve the needs of life. He doesn't elaborate on this (his next book will), but we can speculate that such a task could move in either of two directions: toward a centralized, bureaucratic superstate, a U.N. writ large, or toward a maximal dispersion of power, perhaps facilitated by the decentralized use of communications technology. Schmookler sometimes seems to confuse the two possibilities: making no clear distinction between order imposed from above and the "tightly ordered harmonious system" of nature, he at one point asserts that "only government can restrain power in the interests of other values."

Where French's perspective differs from Schmookler's is in the way she shows interpersonal and male-female relations to be intimately intertwined with the political. The worship of Power as an end in itself, according to French and other feminists, begins with men's collective (and, perhaps, unconscious) "ambition to usurp the 'natural' position of women." Men have always viewed women as being closer to nature, as somehow representing it (through their reproductive biology, their mothering function, etc.), and thus being the inferior that is to be transcended. French has compiled a few hundred pages of evidence for this, as she examines human societies from matricentric times to the contemporary world. (Matricentry refers to the "organic" societies in which social relationships were loosely centered around the bond between mothers and children; French doubts that any truly "matriarchal" societies -- those in which women ruled over men -- ever existed.) She looks at animal societies and those of early hominids (which appear to have been close, affectionate groups of relatively gentle folk, unlike the crude, brutal, predatory "primal horde" male theorists like Hobbes -- an English political philosopher -- and even Freud envisioned), and follows through the evolution of *homo sapiens*, focusing on developments such as the invention of tools, the beginnings of fire-use, hunting, horticulture, language, and somewhere along the line, the institutionalization of sex differences. Each of these steps, French surmises, heightened the distance humans (or men, at least) felt from the natural world, and each served as a building block towards the institutionalization of patriarchal values.

KICK IT OVER SPRING 1987

Male marginality to the perpetuation of the species (it was women who gave birth and reared children) became reinterpreted as freedom, volition, a state of transcendence above and beyond the natural world, and so control was established as a value higher than those of fertility, continuation and sharing. In place of fertility goddesses, immanent and intimately related to the world, arose transcendent male gods, unmoved movers endowed with power over the created world, affecting nature without in turn being affected by it. These set the groundwork for the development of hierarchy -- the "structural manifestation of patriarchal values."

"Masculine" qualities became those that fix, that make permanent and create structure within the seeming flux of nature: codifications of laws or prestige or customs, authority, rank, status, legitimacy, right, possession, as well as the qualities that support the ability to kill (and thus dominate nature), such as prowess, courage, aggressiveness, physical skill. At their extreme, these nature-controlling and -transcending values can be found in the saintly asceticism that attempts to overcome the body and the emotions, and which paradoxically has often been harnessed by military discipline and the building of totalitarian societies. Sex and pleasure, in their mutually affective forms, have consequently been diminished; sex, claims French, has been valued primarily to the extent that it is controlled by men.

Thus, the first stratification of man and nature led to others, and to the establishment of hierarchical ordering principles. These inevitably required coercion to maintain themselves, and led to moralities (and mythologies) of fear, obedience, deference to authority, and the worship of Power. These "masculine" values of civilization French contrasts to the "feminine" values of life, pleasure and trusting mutual affection.

The bulk of *Beyond Power* consists of a comprehensive recounting of the history of male-female relations, a massively-researched compendium of injustices, and their ultimate effects on both women and men. Some of the accounts are fascinating exceptions to the rule -- for instance, early Egyptian civilization, where women worked as estate managers, physicians, architects, soldiers, musicians, scribes, poets, priestesses and merchants, or the instance of matricentric Minoan Crete, a seemingly egalitarian and peaceful Earth Mother-worshipping culture with highly-developed (for its time) technical achievements.

The present perspective, for French, looks pretty bleak (despite the gains made in recent decades): the past 500 years have led in a single direction -- towards greater centralization of control, greater institutionalization and increased instrumentality in our approach to the world around us -- in fact, French thinks, towards totalitarianism. She details how the "pillars of society" (medicine, psychology, education, law, corporations) prop up this general trend. All that is lacking, if indeed it is lacking, is the "totalist ideology" (French seems half-convinced that this is provided by the patriarchal philosophy of power). The catalyst that tilts a controlled society over into totalitarianism is a drive for "purification," and French sees an ominous potential for this in the "New Right's" drive to "Christianize America."

But there is hope, offered by what French calls feminism (which she claims is "the only serious, coherent, and universal philosophy that offers an alternative to patriarchal thinking and structures"), but which has much in common with various

forms of anarchism and ("deep") ecology, and what seems to me to be just good sense. French's feminism is a philosophy that removes the idea of power from its central position, and replaces it with the idea of pleasure and felicity. It is a philosophy that moves not by the overthrow of governments, but by influencing people and offering a vision. French examines the different types of feminism, and finds only socialist feminism particularly lacking, claiming socialism is incompatible with feminist attitudes toward nature and power. She recognizes no ideological "purity," however, no absolutes or single correct line of action. "If freedom means the absence of constraints," she writes, "then freedom does not exist," nor can it; domination, moreover, is to some degree necessary -- "it is inherent in the human condition since it is inherent in rearing children." The aim of feminism should not be some single liberation, for "we are part of a process that must continue for as long as the world endures... The end is the process: integrating ourselves and carrying integration as far into the world as we can." The aim is the integration of our lives and the development of a morality that goes beyond Power towards mutual pleasure and felicity.

Given the fact that we can hardly expect the urge to power to fade away completely, we can gather up some insights from Schmookler's and French's analyses of power, and ask: what practical forms can this "moral revolution" be translated into, to guarantee that Power will not return us into its swirling vortex again and again? Of all the political philosophies that developed during the 19th century industrial revolution, the only one that of-

fered a coherent and consistent critique of Power *per se* was anarchism. Yet the anarchistic experiments of our era have inevitably failed to persevere on a large scale for any length of time. The Spanish anarchist collectives of the 1930's, the Paris commune of 1871, the revolutionary Russian soviets, the Hungarian councils of 1956, the Action Committees of France in 1968 -- all ultimately caved in to internal or external pressures of impending hierarchy, counterrevolution, or power-wielding groups. John Clark, in his recent book *The Anarchist Moment*, acknowledges that "in all cases the most liberatory revolutionary moments have transpired during the accidental interludes in which a power vacuum occurred." What could be the preconditions for the maintenance of such a "power vacuum"?

(1) To start with, I think there would have to be a decentralization in all spheres of decision-making, economics, energy and technology, so that more people have more say (more "power") over how their lives are run (this could be seen as a kind of "withering away" of hierarchy).

(2) To the extent that such a "power vacuum" today would have to be global in scope, there would need to be some kind of democratic and decentralized, worldwide communications network that could provide the infrastructure necessary to monitor and guard against human and ecological rights violations, and that would provide for a free flow of ideas and information. (Such a network exists in embryo among various nongovernmental organizations and networks like Greenpeace, Amnesty International, Earth First! -- powerless groups, in the traditional, institutional sense, but immensely influen-

tial.)

(3) Among the information to be disseminated would have to be practical knowledge of techniques of civilian and social defense, nonviolent direct action, and, as a last resort, guerilla warfare.

(4) Yet a prior precondition for all this is the gradual disengagement of the global military-industrial complex, the Cold War apparatus that keeps the planet at gunpoint.

But, at bottom, these changes would not be enough (and would probably be impossible) without the kind of "moral revolution" Marilyn French speaks of -- the development of a "new sensibility" and morality that is ecological, that values life more than it worships Power, that values the sensitive, affective, nurturing and communal sides of human nature at least equally with the ambitious, competitive and individualistic. To bring about this change in consciousness, there would have to be a re-evaluation of the basic values underlying modern Western/industrial society, and a recognition of Power -- the urge to control and dominate nature and others -- as the root of our global dilemmas, and one replaceable by a re-evaluation of pleasure, felicity, and acceptance of and openness to life's natural cycles.

*Pleasure is a response, not a commodity; an experience, an end in itself. It can arise from a myriad of sources: from being with others, from work, from cultural entertainments and activities; from sensory and intellectual stimulation; from food, drink, sleep, warmth, closeness. There is pleasure in solitude and in company; in independence and indi-*

*viduality. There can be pleasure merely in walking, breathing, looking, feeling the air on one's face. Many things give pleasure only or mainly because they are shared.*

*...Pleasure -- a gratified response to quality -- is rooted in the senses, and for pleasure to be revalorized, the body and the senses must be revalorized too... We commonly think of pleasure as the opposite of pain, but this is inadequate thinking... Pleasure requires the self to be open to the external world and to other people, to one's own emotions and sensations; when one is open, one is open to pain too. The opposite of pleasure is power, which requires the self to be closed off from people and events in the outside world that do not relate to one's particular power pursuit...*

*The very core of pleasure is mutuality. Pleasure begins in the mother's womb, in warmth, closeness, satisfaction of needs, the comforting maternal heartbeat... But there is another nucleus of pleasure, also profound, that originates in the moment of birth: breathing for ourselves -- freedom, the sense of being a self... Freedom... is in finding a coherence, a meshing correlation between external and internal necessity... it is the sense that we are using well those parts of the self we want to use, enjoy using, in acts and states we wish to be immersed in...*

--from *Beyond Power* by Marilyn French □

## Article Appreciated

Dear Letters,

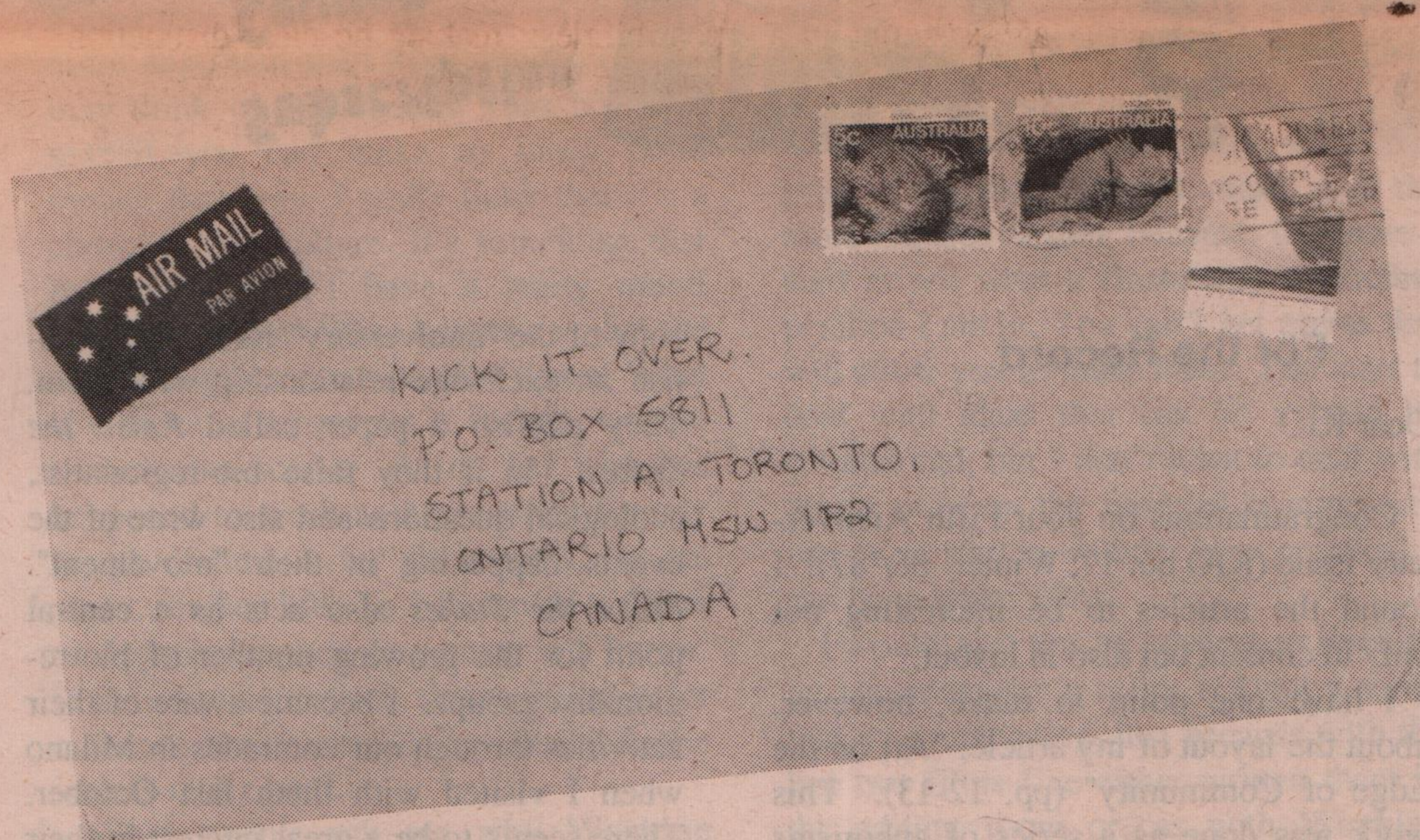
Thank you, Glen R. Harrington (of ARK II) for the "Meat is Murder" article. It is important to envision, as we modify our behaviour, what we can be moving towards, as well as what we need to avoid and why. In extreme example, if we substitute Guatemalan Antigua coffee for milk, then we've substituted Guatemalan Campesino oppression for that of cows.

Constructively, laying hens are relatively easy to keep at home. Give them a yard (or a hen house), scraps and grains if in a yard and they can forage (or laying mash in a coop) and *voila*, eggs from happy hens. We have a goat cooperative in Tucson where folks assist in the care of goats and receive the milk they collect. Goat milk is much more digestible than is cow's. Many greens and vegetables are easy to grow in one's own garden -- inside or out. I was recently, happily surprised at how well onions and radishes (greens and all) tasted in miso/tofu soup. So easy to grow!

Otherwise, avoid agribusiness whenever possible. Pay the extra and purchase from people growers, preferably organic. Yes -- *The Personal is Political*.

Yours is the only mag/periodical I subscribe to (although *The Nuclear Resister* comes from friends, so I get it, too). I can't send a letter to ya'll without saying how much I enjoy and look forward to KIO. It is invariably worth reading. A lot of work to put out undoubtedly and if ya ever wonder why ya do it, think of some happy informed woman in Tucson who waits impatiently for the next issue.

Thanks  
Valerie Townsley  
Tucson, Arizona



## Obscuring the Issues

Dear KIO:

Thanks for your sample copy of KIO, I'm glad there are people as committed as you are who are straight ahead with their ideas. That is not to say I agree with you on everything -- or even on most things. That's why I'm writing this letter.

The article on vegetarianism in issue no. 17 presented the same three basic arguments for not eating meat: it's ecological; it's healthy; and it's humane.

Most of the anti-vegetarian arguments have been simply to refute these claims. These arguments leave the vegetarians in a position where they are at worst harmless, at best constructive. If this were the case, the vegies would have a valid case for simply asking "Why not? It couldn't hurt -- and it might help."

In fact, vegetarianism *does* hurt. The primary way in which it is harmful is by shifting the focus from a complex political problem to a simple "nutritional" one.

For example, Glen Harrington uses the argument that "it takes about 16 kg of

feed to produce 1 kg of beef." The implication is that if people would not eat beef, there would be more grain (feed) to feed more people. This argument hurts. It hurts because it implies that the only reason people starve is because there's not enough food. The truth is there *is* enough food. Farmers are paid *not* to grow and the grain surplus that already exists is causing economic hardship to those same farmers. If it weren't for animals to help eat the surplus, even more farmers would be out of business.

People starve because of a failure in distribution. Economic systems that reward greed and punish altruism keep the surplus of one country out of the hungry mouths of others. By convincing people that "if there were more food there would be fewer starving people" actually increases the pain and suffering of those starving people by diverting efforts from creating an egalitarian food distribution method to simply creating more food. More food? For what? To rot in silos while people starve?

Likewise the health argument is destructive because of its narrow focus.

Harrington writes, "the widespread abuse of antibiotics in the meat industries results in potentially harmful residues in meat..." and there are always other associated health problems mentioned by the vegies. In fact much more harmful chemicals are used on fruits and vegetables than are used in meats. The United Farmworkers Union has complained of extremely high cancer rates in its members directly traceable to the pesticides used on the fruits and vegetables.

Certain pesticides were found to be so harmful that even the U.S. government banned their use. Of course, Americans and Canadians who produce these chemicals still make their bucks by selling these poisons to third world countries. (These countries get their revenge, by the way, by spraying produce like coffee or oranges with these poisons and then selling them back to the Canadians and Americans.) To say that one should not eat meat because of the bad things in it is to ignore the bad things in most everything else we eat.

If you're really concerned about health, you should eat non-chemical meat as well as non-chemical fruits and vegetables. Both are available if you want them. By saying that meat itself is the problem, rather than the widespread use of dangerous chemicals in order to increase profits, you give people a distorted view of health and may ultimately cause more deaths by imparting a false sense of security in the vegetarian.

An anecdote: Vegetarians are often so self-deluding that they will perceive disease as health. In Holland I met a macrobiotic whose skin was developing oozing sores from malnutrition. (He was only eating brown rice.) "See," he said to me, "I'm getting healthy. All the poisons are leaving my body."

Glen argues that "deforestation in the context of agribusiness usually means ruthless slash-and-burn destruction..." He's right. But the fault is *agribusiness*,

not meat. The same situations would exist if MacDonald's were a soyBurger company. Massive food- for- export- profit at the expense of food- for- feeding- the- locals is the problem. To link it with meat obscures that problem and makes it appear dangerously simple to solve. That in fact is why vegetarianism is so dangerous.

For better days,  
Mykel Board

### Credit Due

Dear friends,

I just read your fifth anniversary issue and think you are doing wonderful work, though I had a hard time reading over the gray screens on the "Art and Social Change" article. Why make things difficult?

As much as I loved the content of your paper, I was upset by the lack of credit on all your artwork. As a long time artist/activist/publisher of progressive artwork, I find it extremely important that artwork is credited whenever it is used. As an artist, it helps me remember there are many of us trying to make a difference; as a publisher, it is crucial in my search for significant and visionary work. It is important for us to know who is producing work that helps move us along, lift us up. I'd like to see more art that puts its lines around the contours of our lives - and I'd like to be able to get in touch with these artists, know their names, support their work, publish their images.

If you do not credit this important work, how can you credit yourselves for contributing to the making of a new culture? You are artists of a kind yourselves - word weavers, shapers of symbols, the value of affirming the work of those who are creating them.

Also, if you took the image from p.11 from our CARRY IT ON Peace Calendar you should credit us as well.

In the struggle for justice,  
Jan Phillips,  
Syracuse Cultural Workers

### Kathy Manley of KIO responds:

We apologize to our readers for the difficulty in reading the "Art and Social Change" article in KIO #17, and also for neglecting to credit the artists whose images were used throughout that issue. The more than usually chaotic layout process at that time was at least partially to blame for both of these screw-ups. We still have a lot to learn about some of the technical fine points, such as how to do color screens so that you can still read the text without severe eyestrain, but bear with us; I think we're improving.

On the second point, we agree with Jan that art is vital, and that crediting artists is as important as crediting authors. It was an unfortunate oversight that we failed to do so - we won't make that mistake again. In the spirit of better-late-than-never, we would like to thank Catherine Tammara, a local artist and KIO collective member, who is responsible for most of the images appearing in that issue. In addition to her fine work, here is a brief run-down on where we got some of the images for #17. Note that this was not necessarily their original source; many of the mags we lifted these from were equally sleazy about crediting sources. (And, no, we didn't get the photo on page 11 from the CARRY IT ON calendar.)

Thanks to Jan for calling our attention to this; that's the kind of "comradely criticism" (see Lynna's letter) we'd like to

see more of.

pg 4 - Edward Burne-Jones  
pg 6 - (photo) Green Revolution  
pg 8 - Utne Reader  
pg 11 - Big Mountain poster  
pg 15 - Robyn Turney  
pg 17 - Inside Sweden  
pg 18 - Inside Sweden  
all other artwork is by Catherine Tammara

### Greening of Anarchism

Dear KIO collective,

I enjoyed the Green orientation in your last ("Visioning the Future") issue. Anarchism and ecology are a natural fit, as Bookchin, Kropotkin, and others have shown. Now is the time to clearly put forward a new political synthesis based on bioregional and anarcho-communitarian principles. Thanks for your contribution.

Peace,  
Lance Scott  
Alliance collective  
(formerly with Rain magazine)



### For the Record

Dear KIO,

Congratulations on your Fifth Anniversary Issue (KIO no. 17, Winter '86/'87)! I found the articles to be interesting not only in content but also in layout.

I have one point to make, however, about the layout of my article, "Art on the Edge of Community" (pp. 12-13). This work was done as a series of aphorisms and quotations, some which were written by me, and some which I have quoted from others. Unfortunately, your layout, while aesthetically pleasing, confuses in places my writing with the writing of the poet, novelist and essayist, Marge Piercy. To clarify this situation, the first paragraph on Art and Politics is mine, while the second paragraph ("People tend to define...") is Piercy's. Also, the section Today's Audience: The Need for Responsibility is my writing for the first paragraph only; the second paragraph ("What I find absolutely essential...") is Piercy's. Any other section not referenced is mine; those by other writers are indicated by the reference at the end of the quoted section.

L. Susan Brown

### Open-minded Anarchism

Comrades,

I can't express in too strong terms how pleased I was with your last issue (Fifth Anniversary Issue). I'm aware of the recognizable improvement in the quality of

each succeeding issue, but this issue was especially interesting. Congratulations. The articles printed in the last issue were impressive both for their scope, and more importantly for the open attitude that they portrayed. Not only are you writing about, and reporting on events and movements that don't conform to traditional anarchist models, or may be peripheral to anarchist thought, but you seem to be able to keep your egos out of the editorial comments in which you differ with the writers' views. Thus, the groups and individuals you interview and report on are not alienated. Too often in anarchist papers, practicing the art of invective and polemic seemed to be more important than the transmission of ideas. A good example of the quality in your editorial policy can be found in the article on Bio-Regionalism. Of all the ecology groups, I find the ideas inherent in Bio-Regionalism closest to anarchist models for a decentralist, non-authoritarian society. With their emphasis on local control, decentralism and their scaling down of materialist ambitions, I find resonances in their ideas to earlier ideas of Mumford and Paul Goodman.

I would suggest that you send them a

copy of the "anniversary" issue and establish an exchange relationship with them. They publish a paper called *Raise the Stakes*. In it they raise bio-regionalist, ecological questions and also write of the events happening in their "movement". *Raise the Stakes* also acts as a central point for the growing number of bio-regionalist groups. I became aware of their activities through our comrades in Milano when I visited with them last October. There seems to be a great interest in their work among some of our European comrades.

I don't know if you are in contact with Colin Ward, but I think that he could easily be persuaded to write for *Kick It Over*. I also think that you will find his work *tres sympathique*. Well, enough for the moment. Looking forward to the continuance of your good works...

Comradely,  
David

P.S. Say hello to Art for me. Tell him I was pleased to see the interview in KIO. Also tell him that I will never forget the long evening a couple of years ago when he and Dick spent the evening recalling so many important moments in their lives and the life of the movement. I only regret that I didn't have a tape recorder going that night.

### A Call for Comradely Criticism

Dear KIO Readers,

I think the collective is getting pretty tired of printing responses to my infamous "Jerk-Off Politics: The Macho Revolu-

tionary Syndrome" article, because after all, it has been over a year since the article originally appeared, and it's never a good idea to let one topic monopolize the letters column anyway. Besides, I think we're all pretty turned off by the BB/PW-style anarcho-infighting that's become so common lately. (If you don't know what those initials stand for, consider yourself lucky). So hopefully this will be the last word on that topic to appear in this column. However, I'm still open to discussion on the article and the issues it raised, as long as it's of a constructive nature, which most of it hasn't been so far. So, anyone who still wants to talk about it, please write to me directly, rather than to KIO (my address follows this letter).

Incidentally, if anyone's wondering why I haven't been responding to most of the criticism I've received in this column, the fact is that I *did* write a response to Frankie Lee and Blueberry, which was supposed to be in the last issue, but the strip of type it was on got lost (that's an anarchist organization for you). I will respond to them personally if I can get hold of addresses for them, and also to Laure if she/he will write and tell me what she/he said, since I never got to see the original letter (I'm no longer in the collective, so I'm not around to read the mail).

However, there are a few things I would like people to know about that article. First, it was actually written about two to three years ago (with about a year's gap between the first and second halves of it), and is not an accurate reflection of my current views. Secondly, I acknowledge that the article was severely flawed (although more in its style than its content, I think) and thus wasn't even really an accurate reflection of what my views were when I wrote it (and since many letter-writers chose to totally misrepresent even what the article did say, by the time I read the letters I really feel like I don't know who they're talking to).

And thirdly, I originally didn't even want the article to be printed. I read it out in a collective meeting with the intention of getting feedback on how to change it, since I wasn't satisfied with it, but the overwhelming consensus was to print it as it was. I reluctantly agreed, but later, after thinking about it more, changed my mind, and called up when they were in the middle of layout to ask them not to run it, but it was too late, because to have pulled it at that stage would have completely screwed up the layout. This threw me into a total panic because at this point I was sure that the article needed extensive rewriting because, among other things, it was guilty of perpetuating many of the very things it was criticizing, notably the us/them view. We argued about it for quite a while and eventually decided that I would write an introduction to the article as a sort of disclaimer, but the original introduction was too long, so I had to shorten it considerably to make it fit on the page, thus resulting in what Frankie Lee accurately refers to as "the very weak forward" (one of the very few accurate statements in that letter, I might add).

I'm not saying all this in an effort to evade responsibility for the article, merely to place it in a more accurate context.

The other aspect of the situation I would like to discuss is the type of criticism I received. I'm not trying to say that the article didn't deserve criticism, it obviously did. But most of the letters I received were nothing resembling any type of constructive criticism, but more like a search-and-destroy mission, which made an already upsetting situation far worse. Readers may have noticed that I haven't written anything since then except record reviews, and not many of those. I was supposed to write a theoretical article for

this issue, dealing with sexism in the anarchist community (sort of a part two to "Jerk-Off Politics", in fact), but I couldn't do it. Just *thinking about* writing it got me too freaked out. In fact, I may never write another theoretical article again. This is partly due to any confidence I may have had in myself as a writer having been totally shattered by this experience, and partly to my increasing suspicion that most people who call themselves anarchists are more interested in playing stupid head games and going on personal power trips than in creating change. This feeling was partially what gave rise to that article in the first place, and it was certainly confirmed by the nature of the criticism I got. My general outlook on life has become far more jaded, cynical, and bitter, as might be evident even in my womyn's music article in this issue, and I've also become a lot more reluctant to identify myself as an anarchist because I'm no longer sure who or what I'm identifying with when I use that term.

I'm not looking for sympathy or anything, and I realize that the tone of the article was at least partially responsible for the tone of the responses, but you might want to consider next time you're writing a response to an article you don't agree with that there's a humyn being on the receiving end, not just some faceless enemy. When I was writing the music article for this issue -- as non-political as that may seem by comparison -- I got so freaked out just writing the section about Lydia Lunch that I was almost on the point of tears -- the simple fact that I was expressing a strong opinion instantly got me thinking "Oh no, I can't write *this*, everyone's going to hate me!" Even now, as I write this, I find myself thinking "Is it safe? How can 'they' use it against me?"

Do we want to create a community where everyone's afraid to say what they think, all dialogue seems to be based on mutual hate and fear, and writing for an anarchist zine is like entering a war zone? If not, maybe we'd all better learn to think before we write.

Lynna Landstreet  
P.O. Box 1031  
Adelaide St. Stn.  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5C 2K4

#### Christopher Alice of KIO adds:

*The collective originally approved the article because it spoke on a topic not covered in the magazines which we read. We felt at the time that what it had to say, and the thoughts it provoked made it definitely worth the time, effort and money it took to publish it.*

*The article was not without its flaws, but these were more than made up for by the overall quality of the article, and the important questions it raised.*

*Initially the entire collective enthusiastically supported printing the letter. Currently only Lynna has regrets.*

*Sometimes criticism is difficult to take, and it's something which we must learn to handle, but in this case, criticism has perhaps gone too far. At least one person in responding to Lynna's article attempted what can only be described as censorship.*

*As Emma Goldman wrote in 1937,*

*...I believe in the right of friendly and comradely criticism. It would be a great tragedy if that were no longer permitted in our ranks. We would in no way differ from those who want everybody gagged and silenced. No, I insist we must have freedom of criticism, but it must be done in a comradely tone, and it must not make us so bitter that we do not see the good for the bad.*

*--Emma Goldman to Martin Gudell in*

*Spain Nov. 15, 1937 (published in Vision on Fire).*

*Sincerely*

*Christopher Alice, for the KIO collective.*

#### GREETINGS FROM SUDBURY

Dear Kick It Over,

I would just like to let you know that I received your last issue and that friends here in Sudbury are encouraged by your work. It (KIO) is now being sold at the local corner store along with reality now. Appropriately the store is called Black Cat.

Full Moon is holding a Friday the 13th dance at the native friendship center to fundraise for Ske BeModoswin -- a survival school on Manitoulin Island that Art Solomon and a number of other caring people have been working towards for some time now. Friday the 13th is also a Full Moon night which is when we usually hold our celebration/events. Reinventing our Pagan rituals and energies which makes our connectedness to the native ways much closer.

Elsewhere the apartment block on my street has gone on a rent strike to protest poor housing conditions and landlord apathy to their concerns. Most of it is being videotaped and the media have begun to publicize the situation. In other ways I'm beginning to think that the most revolutionary way of living from day to day is in the way I relate to other people, animals and the earth. But enough about politics, I hope you're all in fine spirits and you continue to laugh and have hope. Would like to talk some more with you in the future and share our struggles.

Love and Struggle,  
Peter Pan, Sudbury, Ont.

#### No Hard Feelings

Dear KIO,

High. Dig this. Someone told me I was getting a free prison sub (Alexandra Devon, was it you?). I got one issue and I liked it so well I wrote you guys a long letter on "How to Solve the World's Problems and Save Us From the Bomb" (mass anarchy and property destruction every chance you get to whatever level of violence your heart can stand, like burning and looting). Well, I must have alienated you or something because I never got another issue. Now it's cool, I appreciate the one I got, it's better than a kick in the balls. But since I saw your ad in my November **Off Our Backs** and know you're alive, I wouldn't mind knowing if I am out of your will and have fallen from grace with the Canadian anarchists. No hard feelings. If you can't send me papers, I can dig it. But if you can, I want you to know I'm still interested, you can come back, all is forgiven. I am a Rasta in the hole in jail for refusing to cut my hair for religious reasons. I mean, how crazy can the bald heads get! Well, history always judges the caesars who try to appropriate what is God's as the bad guys. So me and William Tell and Daniel, I'm in good company.

Ok, anarchy, serious black cape bearded bomb throwing anarchy as a resolution to the world threatening social systems such as I propose has a real historical, well, at least biblical, precedent! (It does? It does!)

So like all these social orders built the bomb, they can really fuck up the world if they try or if they just oops, sorry, we pushed the wrong buttons. You dig? Well, fucking up the whole world ain't supposed to be up to man, it's the

province of God. I mean like the whole concept is such a contradiction in terms, social order producing humankind's ultimate chaos. Ok, so it happened before, and here's the example God set for us.

Long ago in Babel they decided to build a great tower to get to heaven. Well, like this pissed God off and God decided it was uncool and came down and not only fucked up the tower, but (S)He changed everybody's speech so like no one could communicate.

So much for the established military industrial complex, the patriarchal system, Republicans, Democrats, socialists, Nazis, commies, social order, nothing but anarchism. God helps those who help themselves. I propose the bomb is the new Tower of Babel, an affront to God's heaven (and our lives). And we should tear the whole thing down, fuck it up or kick it over. No business as usual, no business at all. Anarchy the shit out of those fuckers till they fight us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and run out of money. I don't care if we bring it to a screeching halt and have to live in caves and teepees and don't reinvent the airplane for another 5000 years. In fact, that's my plan. Sorry I see "anarchist organizations" as a contradiction in terms, but for practicality to be willing to acquiesce to collectives like tribes or something. See, I'm not like radical or anything. So dig, go on a Rambo, pull fire alarms, smash windows (the tinkling of breaking glass is music to my ears), light the dumpster on fire, ice pick a cop car's tires, smoke dope, break the law, help other people at all times, feed the poor, heal the sick (they busted Jesus for that one), and send me papers.

Thanks,  
Ras  
Pennsylvania

*The actions described in this letter will result in serious retaliation and repression against both the person engaging in the acts and the community to which they belong. We ask that people think about and understand the consequences of their actions.*

*Sincerely,*

*Christopher Alice, for the KIO collective.*

#### FREE AVI NAFTEL

Dear friends,

Avi Naftel is an anarchist who is serving a 25-year sentence in the Arizona State Penitentiary at Florence. Avi is a citizen of the United Kingdom and is eligible for transfer to that country under the Council of Europe Convention for the Transfer of Sentenced Persons. Upon transfer to the United Kingdom, Avi will potentially be eligible for immediate release, since the receiving country can shorten a prisoner's sentence to reflect sentences for similar offenses in that country. Avi has now spent five years of his life in prison in Arizona. With a transfer back to England, Avi Naftel could be a free man.

So far, prison authorities in England seem willing to accept the transfer but the process is being blocked by Arizona prison officials. What is needed now is some public pressure on Arizona officials as well as support for cooperative officials in the United Kingdom. I would like to ask you to take a few minutes out of your busy lives to write a letter to the officials listed below asking for Avi's transfer. Letters don't necessarily have to be typed -- a quick handwritten note is far better than nothing at all. If you only have the time, energy and/or postage for one or two letters, the Arizona prison officials are first priority. For those of you with lots of time and energy, local officials and media are other good targets.

Love,  
Boog Highberger/Free Avi Naftel!  
PO Box 1313  
Lawrence, KS  
66044 USA

Please send letters to:  
Mr. Sam Lewis, Director  
Director, Arizona Dept. of Corrections  
1601 West Jefferson  
Phoenix, AZ 85007 USA  
Mr. Phillip T. White, Director  
Office of Int'l Affairs  
Criminal Division  
PO Box 7412 Ben Franklin Station  
Washington, DC 20044 USA

*For those who want more information on Avi's case, write to Boog at the above address. You will receive a sample support letter, a doctor's report on the oppressive conditions within the Florence prison, and a letter from Avi himself explaining among other things the circumstances of his arrest. You can also write directly to Avi; his address is: Avi Naftel, PO Box B-45287, Florence, AZ 85232, USA.*

#### ERRATA

Due to an error in paste-up, Glynis Sherwood's name was left off as the transcriber and editor of *Guardian of the Dream: An Oral History with Art Berthelot*. Our apologies and thanks to Glynis for all the hard work involved.

**Queens of Heart**, a new series of mini-albums are now available from Heart Throb Records. Heart Throb #1 features Vi Subversa and Richard Famous of Poisongirls fame. For more information, write to: **Heart Throb Records**, 201 Hainault Road, London, E.11 1EU, U.K.  
**SPECTACULAR TIMES**  
Spectacular Times, a Situationist publishing project, asked us to let our readers know about their printed, audio and video materials. To receive a copy of their catalogue, write to: **Spectacular Times**, Box 99, Freedom Press, 84b, Whitecapel High Street, London E1 7QX, England.

#### Lesbian Mother Charged With Abduction

Gayle Bezaire was the first lesbian mother in Canada to win custody of her children. However, the custody was conditional -- she could not have a lover. Gayle soon lost custody of her children because she had a relationship with a woman. Custody of the children was awarded to the father. Gayle appealed the court's decision and lost, despite presenting evidence that the father had been abusing the children. During a visit with her children in 1980, Gayle discovered further evidence of physical and sexual abuse. In November, 1980, Gayle was charged with abduction. In December, 1985, Gayle surrendered to the police in Windsor (her ex-husband's home). She was charged with harbouring and abduction and now faces up to 50 years imprisonment.

Gayle's trial is scheduled for May 28th, 1987, 10 a.m. in the Supreme Court at 361 University Avenue in Toronto. It would be greatly appreciated if supporters would attend the trial as a show of solidarity. The original custody order represents a breach of all women's civil rights as lesbians and mothers and acts as an illustration of the legal system's response to so-called "marginal" peoples. All progressive groups and individuals can aid in Gayle's defense. To contribute to Gayle's defense fund, please write and send donations to:

Gayle Bezaire  
151 Gerrard St. E.  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5A 2E4