

**ACTIVISTS  
ORGANIZERS  
PROGRESSIVES  
HEROINES  
VISIONARIES  
WITNESSES  
PACIFISTS  
SISTERS  
COMPANERAS  
AGITATORS  
RADICALS  
LEFTWINGERS  
DISSIDENTS  
FIREBRANDS  
REVOLUTIONARIES  
SUBVERSIVES  
PROVOCATEURS  
YELLOW-BELLIES  
BLEEDING HEARTS  
BIG MOUTHS  
BRA BURNERS  
CASTRATING BITCHES  
COMMIE SLUTS  
PINKO DYKES  
**HERESIES  
ISSUE 20****

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# HERESIES

## A F E M I N I S T P U B L I C A T I O N

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### On the back cover:

A photograph by Ruth Putter, Counter-demonstrator's reaction to a peace rally held at Sampson State Park, near Seneca Army Depot, Seneca, New York, on October 22, 1983.

*Heresies* is an idea-oriented journal devoted to the examination of art and politics from a feminist perspective. We believe that what is commonly called art can have a political impact and that in the making of art and all cultural artifacts our identities as women play a distinct role. We hope that *Heresies* will stimulate dialogue around radical political and aesthetic theory, as well as generate new creative energies among women. It will be a place where diversity can be articulated. We are committed to broadening the definition and function of art.

*Heresies* is published by a collective of feminists, some of whom are also socialists, marxists, lesbian feminists, or anarchists; our fields include painting, sculpture, writing, anthropology, literature, performance, art history, architecture, filmmaking, photography, and video. While the themes of the individual issues will be determined by the collective, each issue will have a different editorial staff, composed of women who want to work on that issue as well as members of the collective. *Heresies* provides experience for women who work editorially, in design, and in production. An open evaluation meeting will be held after the appearance of each issue. *Heresies* will try to be accountable to and in touch with the international feminist community.

As women, we are aware that historically the connections between our lives, our arts, and our ideas have been suppressed. Once these connections are clarified, they can function as a means to dissolve the alienation between artist and audience, and to understand the relationship between art and politics, work and workers. As a step toward the demystification of art, we reject the standard relationship of criticism to art within the present system, which has often become the relationship of advertiser to product. We will not advertise a new set of genius-products just because they are made by women. We are not committed to any particular style or aesthetic, nor to the competitive mentality that pervades the art world. Our view of feminism is one of process and change, and we feel that in the process of this dialogue we can foster a change in the meaning of art.

The Heresies Satire Collective wishes to apologize to the author of the letter on page 19 of Issue 19 for having listed her name accidentally in our Table of Contents. We thus compromised the intended anonymity and the collective nature of the piece ... which we think is a strong piece of work.

### Stars and Starlets at Kamakaze

*Heresies* would like to thank all the artists who donated their work for our benefit night at Kamakaze. Both visual and performance artists contributed to the evening. Special thanks go to Ethyl Eichelberger who M.C.'d the performances and Redy Story, Laurie Carlos, Constance de Jong, Karen Finley, and Holly Hughes who performed. Vanalyne Green has our appreciation for organizing the performances.

We especially thank Lauren Ewing, Jenny Holzer, Faith Ringgold, Nancy Spero, and Rhonda Zwilling for donating artwork to our raffle. Because of them, it was a big success and helped *Heresies* go on to produce this issue.

**Help!** If you are a committed feminist with skills in magazine production—copy editing, word processing, typesetting, mechanicals—or if you are just a good speller and willing to read proofs, *Heresies* needs you. Contact our office at 212-227-2108. Page production on Issue 21 begins in the fall.



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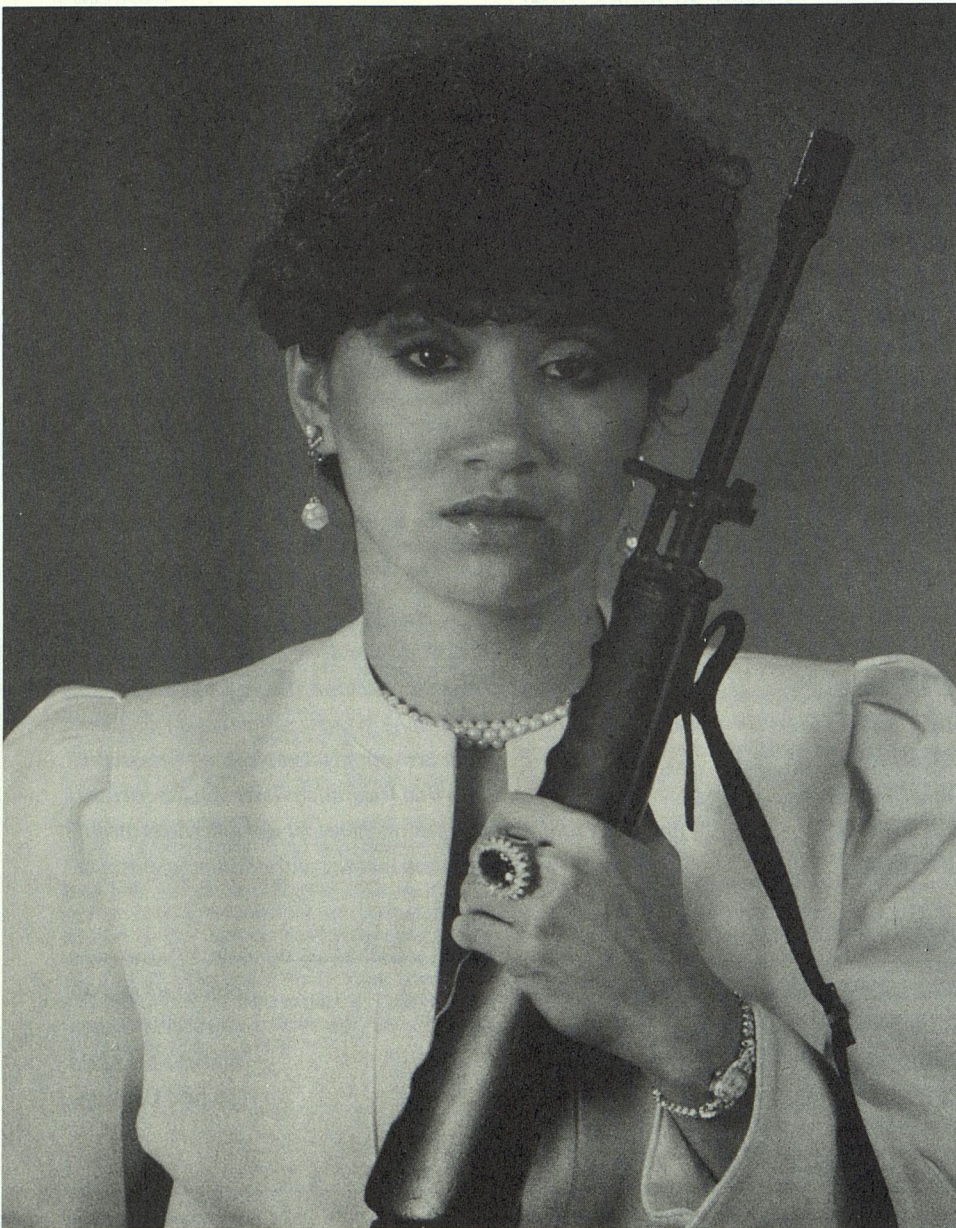
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# The story of HERESIES 20...



**Margaret K. Hicks, CENTRAL AMERICA, WILL THE REAL CULPRIT PLEASE STAND UP?**  
number one of two, b/w photos, 10" x 8" each

The artist has been head of the Art Department of Navarro College, Corsicana, Texas, since 1966.

parallels that of its subject, women's activism, as the thread of its original idea kept encircling more and larger issues, slowly turning into a tangled knot. And we members of the collective, like all activists, swung from enthusiasm to perseverance to frustration and back.

The original premise sounded simple—the issue was to be the story of women working in the peace movement. The difficulties arose as soon as we tried to define the term 'peace movement.' The members of the collective firmly believe that one of the overwhelming contributions of feminism is its insistence on seeing the connections—that the world view which determines the United States' involvement in Central America also defines an attitude toward race and gender. Feminism wants it acknowledged that our treatment of the homeless has a great deal to do with our abuse of the earth and our attitude toward class.

So, still with great enthusiasm, we solicited articles on everything that connected, in the broadest sense, with the peace movement. We then ran headlong into the problem encountered by most organizers of demonstrations, and many painters and writers and, indeed, all responsible people. If you try to tackle everything, do you end up with nothing? But if you focus and make things clear and straightforward, have you left out the connections which were your *raison d'être* in the first place?

That knot was loosened by following the line that most strongly affected us. In reading the work submitted, we found that we were impressed by the lives of women who became activists, by the choices they made and their reasons for doing so. At the risk of sounding sentimental, we were touched that, in a time of emphasis on career and investment opportunities, these women had made a



decision that a political and social commitment were more important.

We wanted to know more about these people and the work they do. In order to reach as many as possible, including those without the time to write an entire article, we developed a questionnaire asking individuals how they became activists and how that decision affected their personal, moral and political lives.

The writing of those questions required hours of discussions as we tried to put language to beliefs and experiences that had never before needed such explicit definition. At the beginning we found ourselves concentrating on the negative aspects of political involvement, forming questions that reflected our own frustrations with commitments, time, guilt and belief. We found ourselves inadvertently saying that we knew the good parts, what we needed was help in getting through the bad. We changed that emphasis, realizing the positive aspects need reinforcing, especially in the current political climate.

Political differences surfaced when words and phrases at times seemed to assume a specific ideology. We tried hard to be aware of how the stating of a question can manipulate the answer, and to develop ways of asking things that were open to varied social or political beliefs. Yet we also wanted enough structure so that a respondent had a base on which to build her replies, a starting point for her thinking.

It seemed that in every phrase of this project the same conundrum arose—how to include the broadest range of issues and not lose the primary focus. Some of the major concerns of activists today were lost. On the other hand, we



**Margaret K. Hicks, CENTRAL AMERICA, WILL THE REAL CULPRIT PLEASE STAND UP?**  
number two of two, b/w photos, 10" × 8" each

gathered unexpected resources—a woman from Northern Ireland telling a personal story of horrible violence, a report from the women who left their homes to set up a new kind of community at Greenham Common, an interview with a woman in jail because of her beliefs.

In the end, the tangled skein remains

just that—we followed one line through but no great unraveling of the knot took place. Here are the voices of many women, saying who they are and what issues deeply concern them and what they are doing to change their lives and the lives of others. This magazine is a celebration of these women and the work they have done. □



# QUESTION

## What led to

*Was there an external influence, an issue or catalyst?  
Or was there an internal*

I fell in love with a woman at age 18—the contradictions of my religious tradition made me angry. The catalyst was this first relationship. In it I recognized the profound sickness of our culture, especially racism and homophobia. Later I became aware of sexism. I began to realize that I was as capable as anyone else of being a leader and of bringing about change.

*Rev. Karen Ziegler*

Our son Michael was killed by a drunk driver and buried on his 17th birthday. MADD had just been formed nationally and the Long Island chapter was formed months prior to Michael's death. Deborah Davidson, MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving)

It's the personal experiences that keep me going: Cleaning a migrant camp in Oregon as a high school student and finding the school records of a child who attended 6 different schools in one year. Sharing homesickness with a Portuguese woman cleaning the hall where I lived in Paris. A Lebanese student in Paris telling me I'd never understand his country. My embarrassment when I asked a Mexican woman at the cannery where I worked what a phrase in my Spanish poetry book meant and she replied that she couldn't read. The confusion of a woman whose house I cleaned when she realized I had more education than she. Meeting a peasant in the hinterlands of Ecuador who went from naive responses to looking through my binoculars to probing political questions. Meeting a police officer in Bolivia who was soon to go to Washington DC for six weeks of "special training." The profuse apologies of people who mistakenly identified my infant son as a girl if he wore pink. My mother telling me about being locked up in the chicken house with her sisters while their parents picked cotton as sharecroppers until she was 5 and old enough to work in the fields. A tour of San Jose's County Jail...

*Janet Burdick*

Realizing at an early age that the way things worked (the system) was cruel to me and those I loved. The "external" influence, issue and catalyst were racism and being born Black in 1946. I grew up during the Civil Rights Movement which dramatically transformed Black reality and was undoubtedly most influential in shaping my commitment to change.

*Barbara Smith*

Well, I had been involved in the anti-war movement beginning in my student days. In 1970 I moved to L.A. to be a "faculty wife." I had a one-year-old son. I was painting in the bedroom. I had no community and felt completely isolated. Another faculty wife asked me to join a consciousness-raising group, and then everything changed.

*Joyce Kozloff*

It almost seems that the question should be not what leads to activism but what stops it? Why doesn't meeting with injustice cause people to object? How can we not say no? From the beginning, from the first time? There was a recent book on what kind of people helped European Jews hide from the Nazis; and how they differed from those who thought "but I will put my own life and my family's in danger if I do this" The book's authors found that they were not necessarily ideological: They were stubborn, outspoken people, people who couldn't take being pushed around, old women who said don't you dare, peasants who were implacable, just not bendable.

*May Stevens*

I was raised by a single working mother and feminism was a given. One of the other factors is that it was always expected of me to be informed about politics as these things were always discussed at dinner. At some point I moved a bit too far to the left and the discussions had to be dropped, but the point is I was raised to assume that politics were my business.

*Robin Michals*

Being born a Jew was a powerful genetic and social influence. The holocaust and the trial and subsequent execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg exposed the dangers of complacency and blind faith in government. Then the McCarthy Era and my forced initiation into the Silent Generation sealed my belief in the importance of activism.

*Arlene Carmen*

My parents, in spite of the Red scare, were unabashed in their support for civil rights and civil liberties. When I was ten I wanted to vote for Kennedy and told my best friend I was a Communist (she didn't talk to me for weeks after). By the time I was 12, Kennedy was threatening nuclear war because of missiles in Cuba—so much for Democrats.

*Claudia Hommel*

The external influence in fact is the aggressive American foreign policy, especially the frightening thoughts of American leaders, such as Reagan, who recently suggested that an eventual limited nuclear war in Europe doesn't need to be out of the question and can be won.

*Vrouwen Tegen Kernwapens, The Netherlands*

I'd always felt discrimination because of my gender...my father wanted a son...high school authorities would not allow me to participate in sports even though I could outrun everyone in the county. And then when I was 25, living in San Francisco, the vice cops framed me for prostitution. I fought back, winning an appeal two years later.

*Margo St. James, Coyote, Prostitute's Rights*

# Q U E S T I O



# your activism?

*process or point of recognition?*

*Was there a combination of both?*

# QUESTION

For those of us born in underdeveloped countries, the idea of being free is born with the individual. In my case as a woman, as an adolescent, in the time of the Somoza dictatorship, to be a woman meant to be nothing. It was in those fires that the FSLN together with the Revolutionary Student Front organized activities in which the participation of all the population, including women, was taken into consideration. In that time, even though I was only 14 years old, I took as my own the activities of the FER.

*Josefa Murillo (Josefina Ellizander)*

I trace my activities as a "political" singer to a tradition my mother learned in her childhood in pre-WWI Poland, when any politically active person might very well have been a culturally active person also. Before my mother emigrated to America to work in the dress factories of NY, that tradition of politics with culture had already crossed the ocean and had met its American counterpart in the songs, parodies and street theatre of the Wobblies and the American trade union movement in general. It was into that fine international stew that I was born.

In the '30's and '40's people who worked for social justice were often called soap-boxers, flag-wavers, do-gooders, mud-slingers, damn Bolsheviks, or at the least rabble rousers, all of which sound less respectable than "activists" but more specific—and somehow more active. A young and impassioned person doing what seemed appropriate to do under provocative circumstances tended to ask, "Well, what do they mean, rabble rouser? What is rabble, anyway?" In the end she might have become even clearer about what she was doing and with whom she identified.

*Ronnie Gilbert*

Vietnam war.

*Donna Martin*

I became "hard-cased" for the (feminist) cause as I realized that our fair agenda was not only not being acted upon in a positive way, but that what we were doing and talking about was being twisted and being turned against us. Also, the personal experience in 1972 of having my daughter legally kidnapped from me made me realize how far the patriarchy was willing to go. The experience made me feel that everything had been taken from me and that I had nothing else to lose—the most dangerous kind of human being.

*Mary Beth Edelson*

In our society, activists are frequently presented as persons with personal "gripes" or deficiencies which lead them to lash out at the world. So normal, healthy self-examination and questioning can easily be refashioned into a weapon against the newly aware, socially-critical self. Without the support of a few others, the initial positive response to injustice (and the will to change it) becomes a personal sore-point, a distortion.

*Holly Metz*

My mother was the external agent. The internal process was one of transforming her battle into mine. The feminist movement was the other external source; it saved me. Instead of my mother's eccentric, desexualized intellectual, I could be a thoroughly normal woman in struggle.

*Pat Mann*

My conscience said "Don't just sit there and let others do."

*Sylvia Moore*

I was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and lived there until I was 28. During this time the government changed alternately from civilian to military, and the politics swung from left to right or the reverse many times. I have the fortune, (or the misfortune), therefore, of belonging to a generation who perceived oppression not as a fixed and immutable condition, but as an extreme which could be transformed. I do not see one's interior world as separated from one's social existence, for the two nourish each other to form a dialectical unity. What led me to activism in Argentina was the recognition that you can't become human under conditions of oppression and that the oppression could not be transformed except collectively.

*Silvia Malagrinó*

From the day I was born, my personal life has been inextricably connected with politics. I was born in Tule Lake Japanese Internment Camp in California where my mother and father had gone to work after my father declared himself to be a conscientious objector. He worked as an organizer in the camp; my mother taught. We lived there until I was close to two. After that, until the late 1950's, my father organized farmers throughout the United States, from California to Vermont. I would be hauled along from one farmhouse to another for meetings. I would be put to bed in the parlor off the kitchen and lulled to sleep by discussions of farm issues.

Almost all the memories of my formative years are set against this background of politics. Because of this I had almost no concept of being political or not political. In fact, in the sixties and seventies when everyone was having intense talks about being political, I felt as though I wasn't. I suppose because it was so deeply ingrained, I couldn't separate enough to see it. It wasn't until much later, quite recently in fact, when my friends were re-treating from politics that I saw that my commitment was still there and that indeed I'd always been a political person. Even in the earliest childhood pieces, politics was present. In terms of being active, in my mind I guess being a person and being politically active are one and the same thing. In a way there was almost no choice involved for me, except to figure out where to put my energy.

*Marnie Mueller*

I didn't know it was called activism... when I made art of it, my mentors said it wasn't art.

*Martha Wilson*

N N A I R E



# ONE SUMMER

## A LESBIAN FEMINIST

by Judith McDaniel

The sign read PINKO DYKES GO HOME. I slowed my car to look at it that last Sunday in July. It was hot and sunny, hot enough to feel like it had to rain soon, and the humidity was gathering thunder clouds on the western horizon over the lake. The men and women standing by the sign looked angry and defiant and hot and a little embarrassed. The men wore t-shirts or short-sleeved sportshirts and jeans or khakis. The women had on blouses and bermuda shorts or slacks. They held flags, small ones. They didn't hold them easily. It's hard to cross your arms defiantly over your chest and still hold a flag, but some of them managed.

A year of planning had gone into the demonstration against the installation of Cruise and Pershing missiles at Seneca's army depot. There were months of out-reach to the local upstate New York community about issues of disarmament and economics, about conversion from military employment to non-military. There had been a recent history of women-only peace actions in countries all over the world. Still the sign read PINKO DYKES GO HOME.

I wondered what would happen if I stopped the car and got out and went over and introduced myself as a Pinko Dyke. But I didn't do it. For ten years now I have lived in rural northeastern farming communities. For two years I was an assistant Girl Scout leader in a village the size of this one. Our troupe went on hay rides and climbed mountains and sold cookies with the help of mothers and fathers who dressed and looked and felt much like these citizens. But in my own community, I am still an outsider. Although I have built my home there, I have never been at home there, never been open about my sexuality. I have depended on the almost inevitable separation of village and city for my anonymity, speaking as a lesbian in an event in the city, keeping that identity discreetly pocketed at Girl Scout events in my village. So when I looked at the Pinko Dyke sign, I felt like I was seeing my friends and neighbors standing behind it. When I turned my head and looked across the road at the base, I was looking at my other home, the home of my childhood.

I was a war baby, born at Ft. Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas. My father was away for most of my infancy. Meeting him when he returned in 1946 is one of my earliest memories, a memory I share with many of my generation. For several years we lived in Indianapolis where my father worked as a meatpacker for Armour and Company. Why he went back into the military in 1950 was never discussed in my family, but I assume he was attracted by the class mobility the military seemed to provide. During wartime, he had been promoted from private to major. When he re-enlisted, he was sent to Officer's Training School in Alexandria, Louisiana. I remember because I was seven and learned to swim with water wings in the pool at the Officer's Club there. I swam in the ocean for the first time off Cape Cod when we were stationed at Otis Air Force Base. A tomboy girlfriend taught me to spit accurately at a target twelve feet away in the family barracks at the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia, and another taught me to play "splits" with a jack knife on the manicured lawns of Langley Air Force Base. I learned to ride a horse western style on the flight line of Tinker Air Base in Oklahoma, graduated from Gen. H.H. Arnold High School in Wiesbaden, Germany, and went home from college for my first Christmas to Griffiss Air Force Base in Rome, New York, only a few miles from the Seneca Army Depot I was driving by. So the Army Depot looked like home to me and the people who stood on the other side of the fence looked like friends and family. How did I come so far from being a part of that community, I have wondered. What were the assumptions of that life and how must they have changed if I was standing here and those people were standing over there?

I was raised in an orderly military life, a life that felt safe and protected. Today that sounds like a contradiction. Then, the military meant safety to me, and predictability. I may have lived on some of the most active—in fact, vulnerable—Strategic Air Command bases in this country. But to me, a scramble was something all dads did in the course of a work day. It was one of the rituals, like the ritual I observed every day of my childhood at 5 p.m. when the loud speakers sounded taps and the flag was lowered. No matter what base I was on, what country I was in, cars stopped, men, women and children stopped walking and faced west. Men in uniform saluted. The rest of us stood self-consciously with our hands on our hearts. It was a pause in the day ob-



Kristin Reed, *LA MUERTE SE CONFUNDIRA CON*  
The artist is a painter, muralist, photographer, and



# R AT SENECA LOOKS BACK IN ANGER

served by every member of the community. In my memory, it was always sunset.

That life was contained. We lived within walls, within fences and gates and barbed wires. Sometimes we lived within language and culture barriers—a contained life. I moved twenty-one times before I left home to go to college. As children, my sisters and I each had a toy box. What it could contain went with us to the new base. I don't remember what happened to the toys that didn't fit into the box—the uncontainable. But there was a certain comfort in knowing exactly what I possessed and where I could find it.

When I was growing up, the military community was homogeneous, like the rural farm community I live in now. I never had a childhood friend of a different race. A few were Catholic, but we all attended the same military chapel. I never met a Jew, or knew I had, until I went to college. Many of my peers lived in Germany or England or Italy for two or three years and never met a European person, never learned a word of the language, never stepped off the base and into a foreign culture. That life was contained, predictable, and safe.

So I sat in the car with the engine idling and decided not to walk over and talk with the men and women standing by the Pinko Dyke Go Home sign. I don't look like them anymore. I don't cut my hair or contain it. I laugh too loud. I make love with the wrong sex. I was wearing a lavender t-shirt with a Peace Encampment symbol on the front and the word Sappho on the back. But inside, the me that wasn't visible to them, the me I sometimes forget about, was struggling to say to them, "Hey, I'm one of you. I'm o.k. Don't hurt me. I belong here too."

The day before, in the village of Waterloo, wearing my Sappho t-shirt, I had walked straight into their anger. I had expected that everyone would behave well; I had believed that we might be having a difference of opinion here, but they would in the end see that we were reasonable and nice, enough like them that the waters would part and we would be allowed to pass. I was wrong. What they said and did told us that we did not look familiar to them at all. In fact, it told us we looked so unfamiliar we ought to be killed. One man carried a sign that read, NUKE 'EM TILL THEY GLOW, THEN SHOOT THEM IN THE DARK. It became a slogan, shouted over and over, along with 'Lezzie go home,' 'Commie go home,' and racist epithets shouted at an Asian woman who walked with us.

We had walked through Seneca Falls to the Peace Encampment. As we passed the new National Park Office for the Women's Hall of Fame, past the corner where the first Women's Rights Convention had been held, past some of the homes where the women lived who gathered to have tea and discuss political strategy and draft the Seneca Falls Bill of Rights. About one hundred of us walked past Saturday morning shoppers and a few people who came out of their homes to see what we were up to, past drivers who stopped to take our leaflets and those who accelerated and called us crazy, past the town line of Seneca Falls and into the village of Waterloo, birthplace—a sign proclaims—of Memorial Day. As we walked, the crowds on the street grew larger. Many were waving flags. We began to get reports that the American Legion was planning a counter demonstration on a bridge the other side of the village and, as we approached, the hostility in the air increased. Cars went by and people screamed at us out of the windows. Two well-dressed women on the streetcorner told me I was an asshole as I tried to give them a flyer explaining the purpose of the walk.

The crowd closed in behind us on the narrow bridge. I can remember clearly the violence and hysterical anger in the hot July air, and I could see that many of the men were drinking, that some of them were armed. When the village sheriff told us we were on our own, he had no intention of escorting us through the mob, some women behind me began to sit in a circle while a few of us stood around them, our clasped hands trying to hold back the screaming citizens of Waterloo. I stood for three hours

ON  
and  
TUS SUENOS, 1983, mixed media on paper, 9" x 6"  
graphic artist living and working in New York City.

Writer JUDITH MCDANIEL was a member of the Witness for Peace delegation captured by the contras in summer, 1985. Her novel, *Winter Passage*, was published by Spinsters Ink.



eyeball to eyeball with some of the angriest people I have ever seen. And I thought two things: I should try to understand why they were angry, and I should try to let them know that I wasn't really that different from them.

"You seem very angry," I said to a grey haired woman waving a small flag. She had just finished screaming that we were filthy assholes. She was neatly dressed, in her early sixties, and she looked like a mother, a P.T.A. type person, like one of the Girl Scout leaders I knew and worked with in my own village. "Why don't you tell me what you are angry about?" Fear made my voice awkward, professorial.

"We're trying to raise children here," she snarled, "and those women are making love right out on the lawn. It's disgusting. We don't want our children to see that."

There it was. I didn't have any way of knowing what that

—arriving every day from all over the United States and jumping out of their cars and grabbing women they hadn't seen for months or years and hugging and kissing them in a public display of affection that was probably not common in Waterloo. Still, under different, less stressful circumstances, it might not have been perceived as obscene in Waterloo.

Contained. Predictable. Safe—that was the life she wanted for her daughter. What she saw in women at the Peace Encampment was, I believe, an energy that was not contained or predictable. It was (and is) the energy of self-empowered women and, like most positive energy, it is—at its source—erotic. "There are many kinds of power," Audre Lorde reminds us in *The Uses of the Erotic*,

The erotic is a resource within each of us that lies in a deeply female and spiritual plane, firmly rooted in the power of our



**Christy Rupp, GAS ORPHANS, 1985.** Pesticide misuse backfires killing thousands of humans in Bhopal. Steel, 3' x 3'

The artist is a sculptor living in NYC, whose work focuses on economics and its impact on the environment.

woman had actually seen, what anyone in town had actually seen, because I had only been at the encampment for a few hours. But in her mind the major issue wasn't that we were stupid or unpatriotic for thinking there was something wrong with what was going on at the Seneca Army Depot. She believed we were obscene and corrupt. She believed we were invading her town with values and opinions she did not want her children to know existed.

She was right that we were invading her town. Whatever she had seen on the lawn, it was undeniable that there were hundreds of women—lesbian and heterosexual and bisexual

unexpressed or unrecognized feeling. In order to perpetuate itself, every oppression must corrupt or distort those various sources of power within the culture of the oppressed that can provide energy for change.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, as women living under patriarchy, we are taught to separate this erotic energy from every part of our lives except the specifically sexual, and we are taught to contain the sexual part of our lives to heterosexuality, to one man, to a few child-bearing years, to specific and limited and allowable expressions. To go outside those limits is to be branded—whore, nymphomaniac, lesbian are the most usual brands.



Because the Peace Encampment did not admit men, that energy was seen as lesbian. Much of that energy was lesbian. Lesbians were active at all levels of planning and carrying out this event. So were heterosexual and bisexual women. At the Encampment itself we talked about these differences: what it meant for all of us to be working together, how a "straight" woman felt when a hostile heckler called her a lesbian, how lesbians felt about the need to continually defend the reasons for a "woman-only" action. There was pain and growth in those dialogues.

One vignette in particular recurs to me whenever I consider this issue, however. On the morning of the August 1st demonstration, two of us were wondering together how many of the women at the Encampment were lesbians. My friend was in her sixties and had been a lesbian all of her adult life. "I can't tell," she said with some chagrin. "You know, I always used to be able to tell, but I can't any more." We decided—on the basis perhaps of nothing but wishful thinking—that probably 50 to 75 percent of the women there that day were lesbian, and the subject disappeared until later in the afternoon.

After hours of standing in the heat waiting for the sheriff to allow the march to proceed, we finally approached the Depot gates where the civil disobedience was taking place. Across from the Depot was a small chapel where a woman had set up a microphone and speakers, and, as the demonstrators filed in front of her, she sang revival hymns and invited them to leave their wicked ways and find true peace with Jesus. My affinity group had been assigned to the rear of the march where a group of about fifty men who supported the action were walking, local men—farmers, business men and teachers. As we approached the chapel, the gospel singer began to take down her microphone, her work finished, when she saw the men at the end of the march. "My God," her voice boomed across the lawn, "They've even got some men with them." Then she came back to the microphone. "Shame on you," she called to the men, "shame on you. Go back to your wives. Aren't you ashamed to be seen walking with lesbians." I was too stunned to respond, but the minister walking next to me called out, "I'm proud to be walking with lesbians."

It was quiet for a moment and then I called to the friend walking ahead of me, "Hey, do you remember that question I asked you this morning?" "Yes," she replied without hesitation. "That woman thinks the answer is 100 percent." The whole rear of the march started to laugh because everyone knew what the question must have been and several admitted to me later they had been wondering the same thing themselves. The answer, in fact, doesn't matter. The perception does matter—one hundred percent.

To come to the Peace Encampment was, for most women, an act of self-empowerment. It was an act that said, "I am capable of judging the terrible destructive power of these weapons and I choose to say no to their use, their existence." It was an act that recognized the power of women bonding together, recognized that ancient and healing power. It was an act that, at one level, excluded men, but at another level it encouraged men to make their own action or give support to this action that women had chosen. Some men did one or both, leaving behind in their decision to do so the inherent power they control under patriarchy. Men did childcare and carried water at the demonstration and ran the shuttle bus between the State Park and the Encampment while women went to meetings and planned actions and made political choices and policy decisions. As these women tried to create a world they wanted to live in with their children and lovers and friends, they felt empowered. To the citizens of Wa-

terloo and the citizens of the larger world reached by national media, that empowerment was seen as lesbian and it was seen as threatening, so threatening that at times those citizens wanted to destroy it—and us.

Our response to that perception, to that accusation, is the key. We must not deny the lesbian label. The pain and the struggle that such labeling brings with it is, in fact, a gift which marks change so profound, so life-enhancing, that it feels life-threatening.

What I have learned about myself in recent years—and I think I am like my neighbors and the angry citizens of Waterloo and some of the women who came to the Peace Encampment and left disaffected and angry because it was not what they expected—what I have learned is that I do not suffer change gladly. I don't mean the surface changes. I can move from place to place and that seems like change, but as long as I can bring my box with me, containing the familiar things in life, then I'm not in trouble. I think that when the people who work at the Seneca Army Depot are confronted with women who want a specific missile out, that is a surface change. When we talk about wanting to convert the Depot to other forms of production, that is more basic. But neither is as basic to the way Americans live our lives as our assumptions about family and social relationships and responsibilities. However painful the change, those assumptions *must* change if we are to survive.

That day at Waterloo, standing facing the angry, shouting crowd, I began to talk with three young women, teenagers, who did not seem so angry. They felt safe. They were out for a little adventure. When it went on longer than they expected, one had to run home and put her sour cream and onion dip back into the refrigerator. They wanted to know was I on welfare and who was taking care of my children? When I told them I was a teacher and a Girl Scout leader but had no children of my own, they seemed surprised, interested enough to keep talking to me. Finally one screwed her courage up for the BIG question. "Are you gay?" she asked. "Yes," I answered and they stepped back, physically withdrew a few steps. "Does it matter?" I asked. "Oh, not to me ..." she insisted bravely, "but ..." and she gestured over to where her brother was shouting at some of the other women peace marchers. She seemed confused. "How can you? But you said ... What about?" ... she stood staring at me trying to understand where I fit into what she had heard about lesbians.

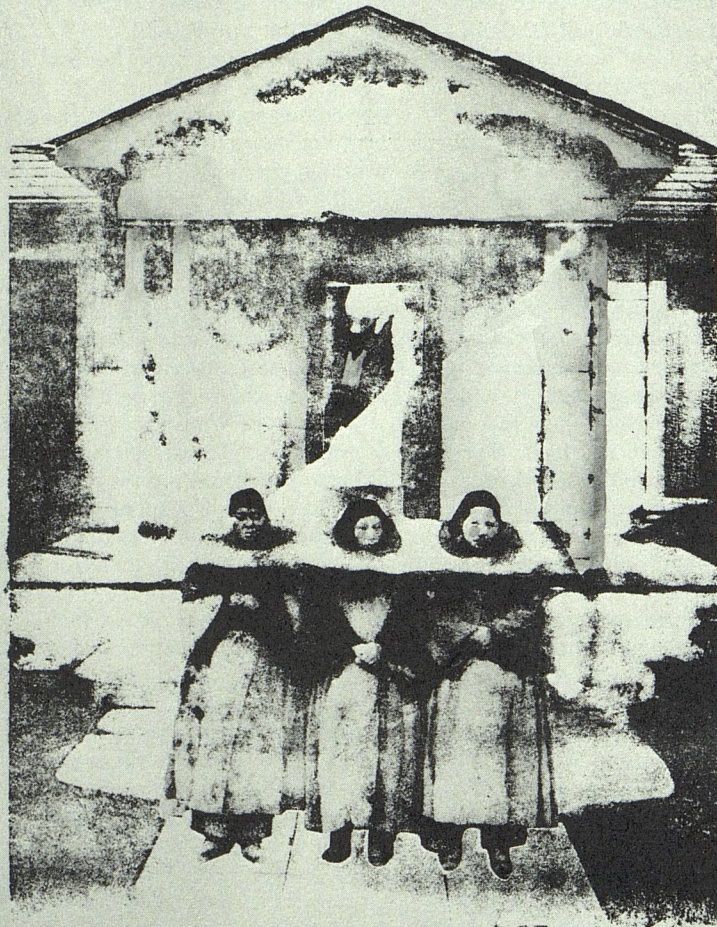
Later in that long afternoon one of the same young women asked me, "Are you scared?" "Yeah," I said, my voice letting her know it was true. "Aren't you?" She said no, at first, looking again toward her brother. I knew she was thinking he was there to protect her, that I was the one of us at risk. Then she hesitated. Well, maybe she was a little scared, she admitted.

I don't know if she could see the hand weapons bulging out of pockets. She knew, as I did, that a man had been arrested when he dashed into the crowd waving a loaded rifle earlier that afternoon. She had not heard the sheriff when I asked him if he knew some of the men in the crowd were armed and was he dealing with that potential problem? "This is America," he snarled at me, "citizens have a right to bear arms."

But I don't think that was what her fear was about. She was afraid of me, and she was afraid of what she was learning. I don't ever want to apologize for being the source of that fear. When we—any of us—have that urge to apologize for causing doubt and fear and pain and anger by being who we are and speaking for what we believe in, then I think we need to step back and look at the expectations we are bringing to the event, peel back the layers of our own "shoulds" and "ought-to's".

When I do that for myself, I realize several things. In the past, I





**Susan Willmarth, UNTITLED, 1983, lithograph 17" x 12"**  
The artist, born in New Mexico, currently works in New York City as an illustrator and a bookstore manager.

have described myself as working best within a clearly defined hierarchy, one in which I know my place, to whom I report, and to whom I give orders. It was very early patterning and, for the eldest of three sisters, very relevant. I have also said to myself that I learn most readily when I am not threatened, when I am comfortable.

But, in my honest moments, I know that I do my best work in a very different situation: among peers, when I can challenge and be challenged. I know, too, that my important learning has not taken place when I was most comfortable, not even when I was sort of comfortable, but when I was dragged kicking and screaming through some of the most painful experiences of my life.

So I wish we wouldn't worry so much about alienating people. Not when we are doing the work we believe we need to do. It is a mark of change. It is the price of change.

Finally, I do not believe we can talk about disarmament only in terms of missile deployment and megaton destructive capac-

ity, or strategic and tactical, or long, medium, short range. To change the structure, to change the hierarchy that builds, supports, and deploys—and may someday use—nuclear weapons, requires more than knowledge, more than statistics. It requires changes in our human selves and human lives that are so basic and deep they must seem at times life threatening.

I respect the anger of the citizens of Waterloo. I am myself an angry woman. Neither they nor I could control the final results of that walk through the town of Waterloo in the summer of 1983, but I believe it was an encounter that will have far reaching and positive results if we do not deny who we are, if we do not deny the source of our energy and power.

**Writing and research time for this article was supported by a grant from Holding Our Own, A Fund For Women, Albany NY.**

\*1 "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power" *Sister Outsider* published by The Crossing Press Feminist Series (Trumansburg, NY: 1984), p. 53.



# Who Drowns The Birds

*on the fifth anniversary of the Nicaraguan revolution, July 19, 1984*

There is a season when all wars end:  
when the rains come.  
When the landscape opens  
its own eyes  
and laughs at your talk of dying.  
When all the dead trees open their hands  
to the sky  
and bleed scarlet flowers  
from their fingertips,  
and then you remember, before the blood,  
red was the color you loved.

There is a season when every ancient anger  
settles, conceding  
to water the grass.  
When nights are split by the bright  
electric voices of your ancestors,  
and the ones who owned your ancestors,  
calling to one another  
between earth and sky,  
and all of the old grudges  
fall, one by one,  
on the roof of your house  
sounding so much alike  
they lull your babies to sleep.

This is the season that renders  
all things equal:  
the season of the arsonist-Creator.  
When sun sets a fire in the clouds  
that is indistinguishable from morning.  
When "sunset" and "fire"  
and "morning" are all the same word.  
When "woman" and "man" are the same word.  
When "justice" is not a word  
because it is air  
and we breathe it.

Even the animals will remember this season:  
those that curse,  
and those that dance because  
in the rain they are equal.  
The timid ones

creep from their secret wet homes  
to move with their thicker-skinned brothers,  
to move from the predator's shadow.  
Today there are no shadows.  
The hunted creatures are cloaked in rain, invisible  
and fearless.

And the hunters,  
the North American birds of prey  
foraging too far from their own territory,  
each laboring under its one  
slow, beating wing:  
the hunters grow heavy.  
Even the natural laws that propel them  
are foreign in these hills  
of the other America  
when the rains come  
finally.  
Their raven mouths suffocate  
in clouds,  
drown in the wet air.  
From your distance,  
you see the horizon shimmer where  
they fall, one by one  
into the hills.  
A great orange flower of heat  
rises quietly from each grave.  
This is the season when all wars end.

And after,  
when the children of your  
children ask you about this day,  
you will tell them:

On the eighth day God made justice,  
On the eighth day God sent the rains  
to the other America,  
to drown the birds, and give us a fighting chance.  
And the little ones will believe you because  
in those days children will grow  
with their hearts intact.

**Barbara Kingsolver**

BARBARA KINGSOLVER is a Tucson-based writer concerned with women's issues and struggles for social change. Her work has appeared widely.



# FIRST STRIKE FOR PEACE

BY LUCY R. LIPPARD

**I**t has been suggested that survival is the only modern topic, and artists

seeking immortality in the nuclear age must confront the notion that there may be no posterity. In this context, art can be seen either as an escape or as a strike for peace. It is the artist's job to conceive the inconceivable, and to move us—to move us closer to realization, to empower us to imagine, even to imagine the most dreadful things. But artists are as scared as everybody else to get too close to the fires of extinction. Contemporary art is a clear reflection of how the American people fail to cope with reality. Just as images of Hiroshima or the atomic bomb rarely surfaced in the high art of the 1940s and '50s, there is little imagery today that deals with contemporary reality—with all those issues that are integral parts of our global predicament, issues like racism, invasions in the Third World, multinational complicity in governmental corruption, the feminization of poverty, and so on and on and on.

Many women are among the artists who have found it necessary or possible to cope directly with the fear and trembling that lies beneath so much contemporary art. Whether or not you agree that survival is a "woman's issue," a glance at the last ten years of "political art" (and its subcategory, anti-nuke art) turns up more work by women than by men. Nancy Spero's proto-feminist "Bomb Series" of 1966 remains a classic and coura-

geous attempt to picture not only a potential holocaust, but its origins in imperialism, male supremacy, even religion—and to make the connections between the Vietnam war and gender issues. The "Bomb Series" consists of small works in pen and gouache and sometimes collage, on fragile rice paper, their physical delicacy belying the terrifying harshness of their imagery. Bombs, mushroom clouds, and helicopters were nightmarishly transformed into monsters, victims, lumps of shit, penises—and sometimes breasts, acknowledging women's participation in the human race and the fact that no one is absolved from responsibility. In its references to militarism and the apocalypse, the series was prophetic of the Jerry Falwell/Ronald Reagan "Armageddon" theory of the '80s, in which the good guys will be "raptured out" of this world while the rest of us blow it.

Other early antiwar pieces were Lil Picard's wild happenings about wounds and cosmetics from the late '60s (when she too was in her sixties); Carolee Schneemann's visceralized and sexualized 1967 *Divisions and Rubble*, with its cycles of birth and decay, creation and destruction tied into the wasteful attack on Vietnam; May Stevens' "Big Daddy" series fusing male supremacy and militarism from cops to soldiers to the KKK; and Anita Steckel's often-banned collages connecting male sexuality and brutality. But it was not until the later '70s that nuclear war in particular became a "popular" feminist subject. This came at a point in the left/feminist art movement when self image had given way to social image, as though a decade of self-exploration had provided the confidence to take on the world.

For some time, a major debate has raged within the Women's Liberation Movement about whether environmental, military, and all fundamental human rights are "women's issues," or whether, as Radical Feminists contend, the broadening of feminism's focus has diluted and diverted it from its primary goal—the termination of male supremacy: "If everything is feminist, then nothing is feminist."

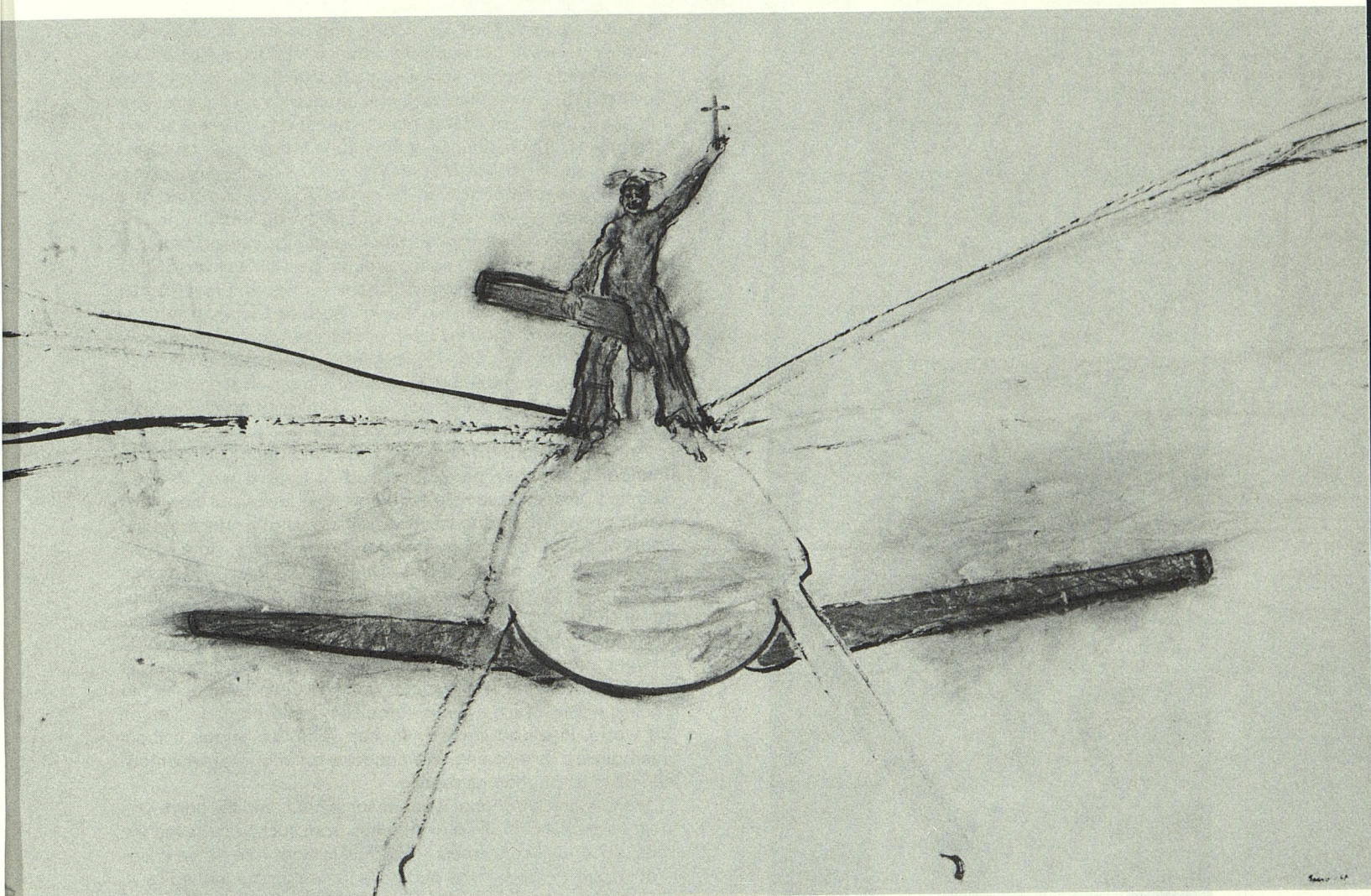
The traditional, if romanticized, connection between women and the earth has made the environment a special concern for many women and women artists. Pacifism and antiwar work have become almost inseparable from "earthkeeping" itself (the title of *Heresies'* 1979 ecology issue), as was made supremely evident by the "Women and Life on Earth" conference on "eco-feminism" in Amherst, Mass., in March 1980. Culture was for once acknowledged as a major component of the agenda. Workshops ranged from "The Politics of Diet" to "The Ecology of Creativity" and "Art as Health and Healing." May Stevens wrote the general statement on the conference's brochure, saying in part: "Like poetry and art, women are supposed to be ineffectual in the face of the heavy stuff: governments, hardware, money, and so forth. But we helped start both the anti-war movement and the ban-the-bomb movements of the '60s... What women stand for and what art and poetry stand for are what we must preserve for any future we'd want to live in." (Stevens herself is currently embarking on a major new series on the Greenham Common Peace Camp, and the history of women in resistance.)

While women have genuinely and forcefully identified with the cause of peace, it is still questionable whether women are innately more peaceful than men—a contention heavily contested within the women's movement. Cultural feminists implicitly or explicitly defend women's moral (and even biological) superiority. As Dr. Helen Caldicott puts it, "Males are particularly adept at the denial of unpleasant emotions. Perhaps it is

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LUCY R. LIPPARD is a writer and feminist art critic and the author of ten books on contemporary art.





Nancy Spero, **CLOWN AND GUNSHIP**, gouache and ink on paper, 1968, 24" × 36"

this defense mechanism that sublimates the urge to survive and allows politicians to contemplate 'first strike capabilities' or 'limited nuclear war.'" And Dr. Lynne Jones sees hope in the "political processes emphasized by the women's movement—shared decisionmaking; non-hierarchical, leaderless groups; cooperation and non-violence" as opposed to "the hierarchical and authoritarian systems that prevail in mixed groups."

The Radical Feminist Organizing Committee's basic position—that gender is not innate but socially constructed—disallows the premise that "women are somehow responsible for life on earth" because they bear children. "The equation of motherhood (nurturance) and womanhood (as part of the human species) reinforces polarization ... How can women have a 'special' interest in nuclear war? A nuclear disaster would be the most equal event in the history of the world." Ellen Willis charges that the Women's Peace movement, by focusing on men's and women's character traits, "ignores the structural aspects of male supremacy. The claim that women are superior to men is nothing new; when men make it, it's called 'putting women on a pedestal.' Men will gladly concede our superiority so long as they get to keep their power ... If the women's peace movement were seriously concerned with the imperialism of the government, it would be working to change or overthrow that government" instead of identifying with the victims of imperialism and thus

escaping its inherent responsibility for it. "It amazes us," she continued, "that a woman should be asked to set aside the question of her right to control her body in favor of a campaign to preserve the human race. One's opposition to war should be based on political and personal reasons that have nothing to do with being a woman."

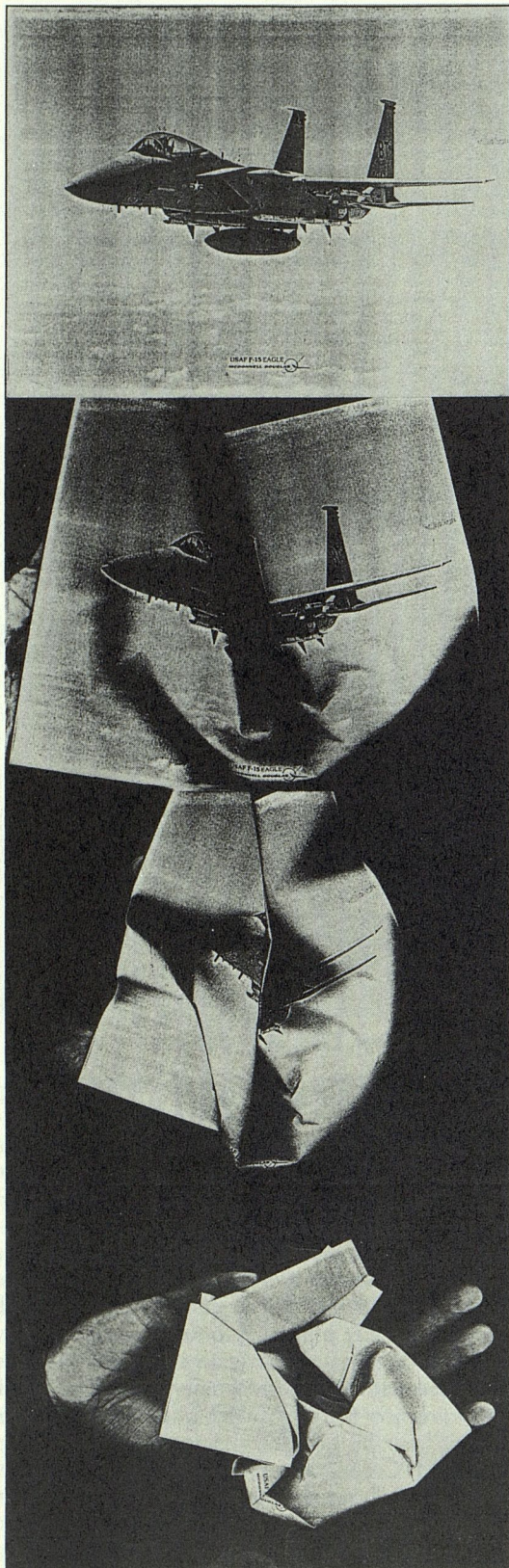
My own position as a socialist and cultural feminist is that women cultural workers are uniquely challenged to integrate radical social change with our concerns for women and their bodies (raped, forcibly pregnant, tortured, victimized by poverty, or on the front lines of liberation struggles). Not because we are women but because as women we bring a different experience to radical theory, conflict, and imagery—an experience that has been historically missing and/or invisible.

The women at Greenham insist that the international women's peace actions "have nothing to do with excluding men. It's got to do with, for once, including women." The spontaneous art woven into the barbed-wire-topped fences around the US missile-base continues the Women's Pentagon Action tradition

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Artist NANCY SPERO began her activist career in the anti-Vietnam War movement and went on to feminist work focused on women's lack of parity in the art world. She is a founding member of the A.I.R. Gallery, a women's cooperative now in its 14th year.





Sheila Pinkel, *NUCLEAR POWER*, silverprint and xerox, 11" × 36"

SHEILA PINKEL is an artist currently living and working in Santa Monica, CA.

of fusing women's lives, work, arts, and politics. As such, it has been an effective participatory esthetic. The image of 30,000 women holding hands, surrounding the 9-mile periphery of the base in 1983, is a compelling one unequaled by the strongest "high art," which of course acts in an entirely different sphere and manner. The metaphor of the web—"fragile in its parts and strong in its whole," as Marina Warner has put it—has spread as a hopeful symbol around the world, in forms as varied as a postcard chain to wish for peace; a 75,000-foot "Ribbon" around the Pentagon and other government buildings in the summer of 1985; the feminist performance group Sisters of Survival (SOS)'s European tour; Donna Henes' "Chants for Peace;" Joyce Cutler Shaw's "Messages from the World" (such as "Survival" written in ice sculpture outside the UN); or Helene Aylon's "ceremonial art"—the Women's Sac Project, which collected earth near Strategic Air Command bases and put it in pictorial pillowcases ("because we don't sleep so well") displayed on clotheslines and in "dream-ins" all over the world.

Any anti-nuclear art has three basic and often contradictory mandates: to make people terrified of nuclear war, to keep people from feeling so helpless before their terror that they won't act to prevent it, and to inform—to help us all understand the roots of our terror in domestic and foreign policy, state terrorism, profiteering, and other underlying causes. There was a point in the mid-'70s when I was glad to see any picture of a mushroom cloud, but since then a developing progressive and feminist imagery has demanded more complex images. The poverty of our current symbolic vocabulary is directly linked to the fact that subject matter like nuclear war has been a taboo in the context within which esthetic complexity is developed—i.e. the art world. In an art context, we can "like" an image without internalizing its meaning. We can take an image of war more seriously as art than as reality.

Without organizational work of some kind, and the hard-won political esthetic analysis that comes from such work, even the most sincerely "concerned" art tends to float free of the crises that inspired it and of the audience that might be moved by it. By organizational, I don't necessarily mean going to a lot of meetings, but substantial esthetic depth seems to demand at least some kind of interconnection with and mutual support among artists with similar concerns, as well as with those people organizing in the "real world"—a relationship rife with frustration as well as vitality.

Ominously, much art that purports to deplore the end of the world seems to be modeled on images of fantasy, natural disaster, or Acts of God, as though the enemies came from some occult "other world" rather than living in our own towns, our own countries. Nuclear holocaust has become a disembodied bugbear, apparently unconnected to local political issues, virtually impossible to concretize in form. It's been made abstract, and therefore in control of those who are inaccessible to us. Like natural disaster, it is treated as something impersonal, seen by tele-vision or long distance. Artists often treat the aftermath, the day after, rather than the cause, the day before. The bomb comes from "above," from "heaven," producing a deadly fatalism encouraged by those who prefer to manipulate a powerless, silent populace.

There is, of course, a basic contradiction in the creation of a profound art about death. Art is a creative act; it's supposed to be committed to life. There are times when refusal to depict the wholesale death that may be awaiting us is a cowardly act; there are times when it is an act of courage, as Jonathan Schell has noted: We have to respect "all forms of refusal to accept the unnatural and horrifying prospect of a nuclear holocaust."





Sisters of Survival, SOMETHING IS CLOUDING YOUR FUTURE, 1985, billboard

On the other hand, with recognition comes responsibility. Just how can art be made about silence, apathy, inertia? How does a visual artist, concerned with envisioning by concrete means, confront what Schell calls "the unthinkable, but not necessarily the undoable."

Artists can't change the world alone. Neither can anybody else, alone. But art is a powerful and potentially subversive tool of consciousness. Avant-garde art is traditionally defined as oppositional, worming its way out of prescribed channels. Even the weight of the current system should not be able to extinguish totally that time-honored function. An artist's best chance to survive ethically and economically is to resist confinement to a single cultural context. Feminists have an advantage here. There is still a network (if a faltering one) or context within which feminists, like politically dissident cultural workers, can work to escape the iron fist of unstated censorship and the velvet glove of self-censorship that control the mainstream.

The mid '80s offer a curious little pocket of air in which more or less politicized art can breathe within the art world, provided

the messages are not too pointed, too angry, too close. This has facilitated an uneasy dialogue between art worlds, just as overly feminist art was able to infiltrate the art community in the early-to-mid-'70s. If socially concerned art doesn't sell real well, and socially involved art doesn't sell at all, nevertheless this is a moment that should be exploited for all it's worth, not just to get more art shown, but to get more responsible and responsive artists heard and understood, and to spread the word that these taboo subjects are indeed "artworthy," so they can be taken on by a broader esthetic and social spectrum of artists.

With Gorbachev's test ban proposal lying on Reagan's doormat and Star Wars the most potentially disastrous art concept around, the following parable (from *The Washington Spectator*) has a moral for artists and feminists alike: A California high school class was asked by their teacher if they had hope for the future. Twenty-nine students answered "no," and one answered "yes." When asked why she had hope (I like to think it was a girl), she said "My parents, both of them, are working hard to find an answer."

SISTERS OF SURVIVAL is an anti-nuclear performance art group founded in 1981 by Jerri Allyn, Anne Gauldin, Cheri Gaulke, Sue Maberry, and Nancy Angelo. Although not an order of nuns, the feminist group nevertheless uses a nun's image symbolically.

Passages from this article first appeared in a lecture commissioned by Ohio Wesleyan University in 1984; others are from the rough draft of a book on feminist art I am co-authoring with Harmony Hammond and Elizabeth Hess, to be published by Pantheon.



# QUESTION

## *How have your polit* *Has your focus* *since your initial*

For an "activist" there is a great advantage to growing old (I am looking forward to it). So far, my years seem to be showing me that there is no way to predict when and how something will pay off. The fact that a course of hard work has not brought the desired result doesn't mean it won't ever. We must realize that change doesn't happen in convenient increments or at convenient and expected times. It is a great advantage to have survived some politically gruesome times; you know they will pass.

*Ronnie Gilbert*

When 9 of my 11 sons became draft eligible from 1962 to the end of the US involvement in the Vietnam War, my ideas and morality, my ways of looking at ethical questions began changing rapidly. I began working with people who were exploring ways to resolve conflict in non-violent ways. I had first become involved in national politics when I realized that Richard Nixon might become president in 1960. I learned a lot about power during this time. There have been many points of recognition for which I have been surprised and grateful, considering my age.

*Macy E. Morse*

My interest in social change was not an inherited trait. My parents were very conservative, religious, working class people with middle class values. My father stood politically to the right of John Birch. I graduated college with a B.A. in Art without a capacity to think critically. In graduate school I was introduced to Marxism which became a tool for analyzing the world. Coupled with my exposure to the Women's Movement of the early '70's and my own identity crisis, I developed an understanding of the nature of race, class and sex oppression. Subsequent travel to the German Democratic Republic, China, Cuba and Nicaragua strengthened my commitment to the need for structural change in the USA while my involvement in civil disobedience provided me with my first taste of real satisfaction from meaningful activity.

*Donna Grund Slepack*

...Began as a community organizer, worked on tenant issues, environmental.. was troubled by feeling like an "outside" organizer, e.g., working with public housing residents when I didn't live in public housing. I found women's issues were most relevant to my life.

*Carole McCabe*

Shifted..instead of isolating the nuclear issue and gearing protest at the Pentagon, I believe more strongly in working on a local level; the violence in everyday life won't end with a nuclear freeze. "Activism," one-on-one, is as important as marching to DC.

*Christine Robinson*

I resist single-issue feminism, i.e., militating on behalf of reproductive rights or equal pay issues. I guess you can say as I get older my focus has broadened—I recognize the systemic discrimination against women and minimization of their contributions, needs and desires.

*Carrie Rickey*

Since 1974 with "Torture in Chile" I have been speaking out in my artwork on women's status under male control. I record the most extreme instances of victimization—women political prisoners or woman as a victim of man-made wars. On the other hand, I portray woman as the activator, a positive force, an historical presence. Many of the figures are bouyant and athletic, signifying woman in control of her own body in a non-phallocentric world, in a world that is not threatened by extinction.

*Nancy Spero*

Narrowed at first to focus on the issues I was most confused about...I had to be separate from men to allow space for anger/distrust, and I took the side of women on every issue. Now my analysis is more centered—anger dissipated by understanding of our culture's complexities.

*Jan Phillips*

More and more I feel that education is very important. As a college teacher I try to get students of both sexes to participate in class and to think critically about unsupported statements made by people in authority.

*Janet Ruth Heller*

My ideas have become more complex, more involved with psychoanalytic and theoretical issues—a lot from British and French feminist theory—and with the language of representation itself. But in a sense I was always interested in that language and how it intersected with the social positioning of women and the significance of gender.

*Linda Nochlin*

Q U E S T I O



# ical ideas evolved?

## broadened or narrowed participation?

I hope they've broadened! For me the stages were consciousness-raising, then political organizing with other women artists and then trying to reach a broader public. For the last 7 years I've been doing public art, mostly in subway stations. This is so much more satisfying than what I was doing before, and it feels like a natural extension of my political beliefs. *Joyce Kozloff*

Falling in love with a woman caused my political ideas to narrow quickly onto myself and how I was affected by patriarchy, sexist, etc. Later, moving to New York City and becoming more comfortable with my sexuality served to broaden my political ideas considerably. I now know that poverty, racism and sexism are inextricably bound together. *Carrie Moyer*

Narrowed to the specific issue of apartheid... I have come to see it as a manifestation of much larger issues.

*Victoria Scott*

My focus has broadened. My initial "rage stage" as a feminist led me toward separatism and women's spirituality. I chose to work in the church because it enables a common language with many different kinds of people, including our enemies (the far right). Also, because if it is the root of the problem, it must also be part of the solution. *Rev. Karen Ziegler*

I would always hope that political ideas evolve so that one doesn't become a prisoner of absolute certainty and the beholder of ultimate truth. I have at times found myself acting rigidly, but this condition negates reality and is an obstacle to emancipation. Since my first days as a student activist, I have attempted to consider myself not as the owner of the truth, but simply as a person with concrete experiences who was participating in the construction of a world which would be easier to love and be more just. *Silvia Malagrino*

I would say that I have gone back and forth... broad in the '60's with anti-nuke... narrow in the '70's with straight feminism... in the '80's again broadened taking feminism to ecological wisdom. My political ideas have evolved to believe that women must get into the mainstream (or make us the mainstream). Separate exhibitions patterned on the type we had in the '70's with the same people may have a negative effect... giving mainstreamers the out of having done a "women's show." These are usually less funded, get second-class treatment and are not usually well-curated... making women's work show up less well.

*Mary Beth Edelson*

There are issues I am sensitive to because of my own gender, class and background, but I have never worried about addressing issues not particular to the details of my own life. Injustice does not stop at the boundaries of our own experience. I refer to the statement of the German-Jewish philosopher, Hannah Arendt, who, when asked if she was ashamed to be German because of the atrocities committed by the Nazi during World War II, replied: "I am ashamed to be human." *Holly Metz*

Children and grandchildren and now great-grandchildren as well as all other children are my reasons. My convictions are stronger... my legs, weaker. I write a lot of letters.

*Lillian Wexler*

My ideas and commitment have become clearer. In 1963, when I left the country to work as a Peace Corps volunteer/community organizer in Guayaquil, Ecuador, I believed my power as an American to make change. I returned two years later with a profoundly despairing sense of what damage even I could do to people of an entirely different culture. *Marnie Mueller*

My focus has narrowed, possibly because by keeping my focus broad I found that my energy was dissipating. In most activist groups, I've found that the major work is done by a small core group and, for me at least, energy has to be conserved.

*Sarita Hazen*

All an American has to do is read their own history in depth, compare it to the version instilled in us from youth, and recognize our actions at home and abroad compared to what we are taught this country is supposed to stand for. Focus automatically broadens, a frightening process!

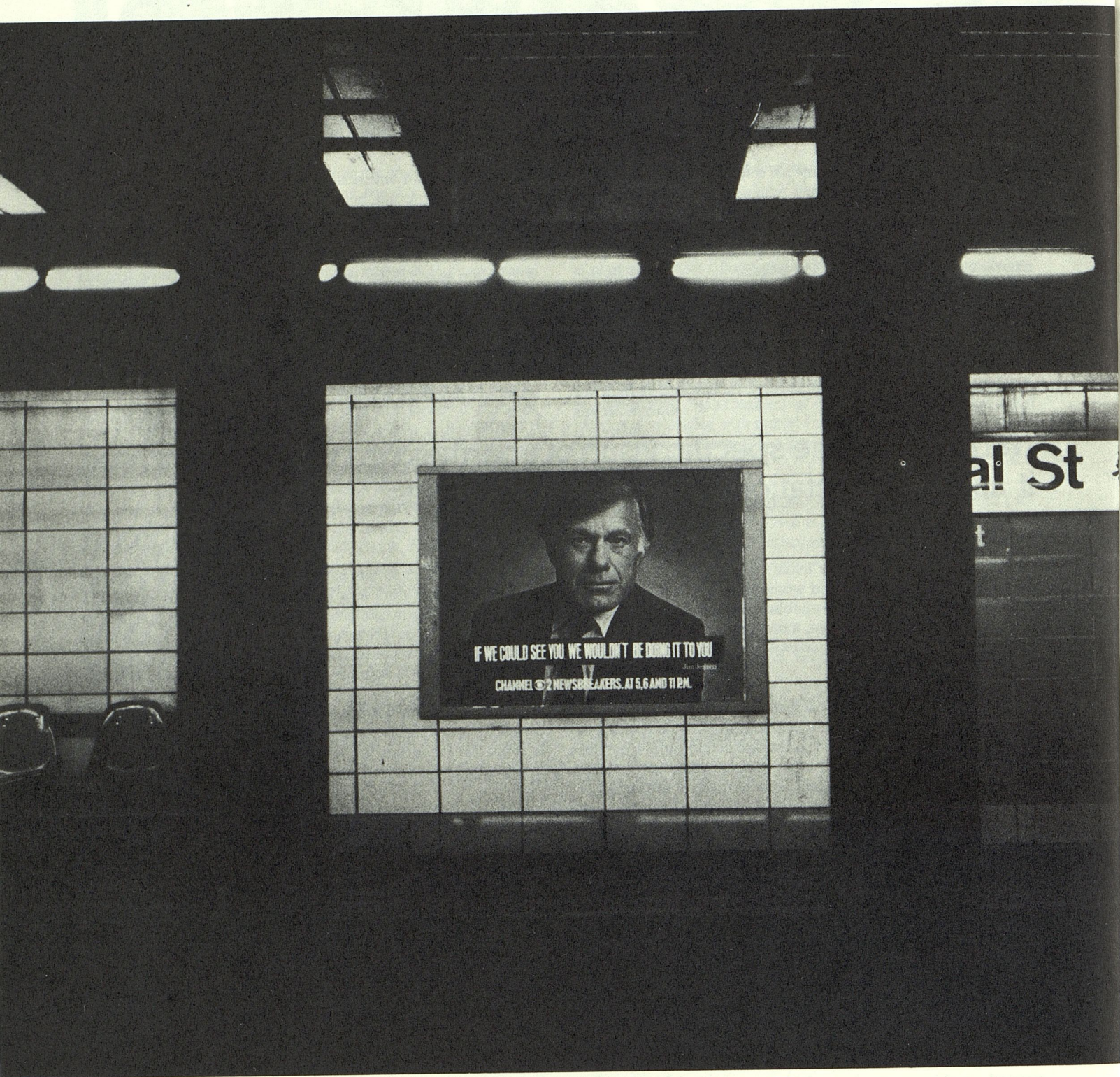
*Martha Eberle*

Think of the world and everything in it as all made of the same stuff, like a sweater stretched over the earth's surface, over its hollows and protuberances. The density of the weave, its texture, even its color change, deepening and clotting when it falls in the open spaces, thinning as it stretches over the rises. But it's all the same. Light catches differently and tension relaxes or pulls to near breaking, but everything is connected, part of everything else. Our lives depend on knowing this and acting on it.

*May Stevens*

N N A I R E





Shelley Silver, IF WE COULD SEE YOU... subway installation, 1982

SHELLY SILVERS is a video artist living  
in New York City.



# THE NEW YORK EIGHT

BY JOAN HARMON

In October, 1984 a group of black community activists were arrested by the Joint Terrorist Task Force on charges of conspiracy. The arrest was the culmination of two years of surveillance and millions of dollars spent by the government. The defendants were acquitted of all criminal charges and were to become known as the New York 8. The following is an interview with Collette Pean, one of the New York 8, and Olive Armstrong, who spent eight months in jail for refusing to testify against her comrades in front of the grand jury.

*What did you call yourselves before you were the New York 8?*

**Olive Armstrong**—We were the Mobilization Committee Against Police Brutality. We had a parent organization called the Sunrise Collective. From that grew other organizations like Jazz Comes to Fight Back, The Black Unemployed Youth Movement, which dealt with getting jobs for teenagers and promoting their development, and the Mobilization Committee Against Police Brutality.

*What is the relationship of this organization to the Black Liberation Movement?*

**Olive Armstrong**—It is part of it because our aim was and is to struggle for the liberation of black people.

**Collette Pean**—We participated in different types of organizations to try and speak to some of the different aspects of the work. The Mobilization Committee

Against Police Brutality was in response to what we thought was a very sharp attack on our community—police murders aimed at keeping people terrorized and too scared to fight back. So we did outreach and education on these killings. Jazz Comes to Fight Back was an attempt to bring a monthly jazz program back into the Harlem community. The Black Unemployed Youth Movement was targeted toward the fact that 80% of our youth is unemployed—they never learned how to work and they are totally inexperienced in terms of dealing with the real world. A number of us from all around the city came together to try to educate people through forums and outreach and to just bring people together. The police killings had been going on for many years and so we saw that there was a need to address that. That while people would become upset whenever a killing took place—Randy Evans, Clifford Glover—and would come out and demonstrate their anger, it was something that died down after awhile. We thought that there was a need to educate people to the fact that these police killings were not accidents.

It is a direct attack on our lives and they kill us in many ways but the sharpest form of our destruction is the bullet. We thought that it was necessary for us to continue demonstrations against these killings but at the same time move it to a higher level of understanding because we wanted to make people understand that we are at war and that we have to prepare for that war and that the only way that we can change the quality of our lives is through revolution.

*What was the New York 8 charged with and were any of you convicted?*

**Collette Pean**—Let me start with the arrests. On the night of October 17 they sent over 500 agents of the FBI-NY Police Department Joint Terrorist Task Force out on the streets of NY to arrest eight people. What that meant was that in my house on Bedford Street in Brooklyn they knocked the door down. There were cops all over the neighborhood—surveillance units, unmarked units, FBI, SWAT, NYC police, transit police, housing police. The situation was repeated in Queens at Viola Plumbers's house, down the street from me on Midwood, at Robert Taylor's house, at Coltrane Chimurenga's house—six houses in all were broken into and I mean literally the doors were battered down. SWAT ran in with their shotguns, bazookas. They blocked off an entire block on Midwood. Several of the houses had small children in them—it was 12:30 at night. They had their guns pointed at the children, a baby one year old had a gun at its head. At my house we had a 15 year old—my roommate's daughter; they terrorized her, came close to arresting her, handcuffed her, threw her against the wall and down on the floor. They held her there while they proceeded to take the two adults, in handcuffs under arrest, out of the house.

The entire operation is what they call a pre-emptive strike. We had, according to

JOAN HARMON is currently working on a video, *Straight Ahead*, about the institutionalization of the right wing and the criminalization of political activity in this country.



them, committed no crime yet. Their rationale is that they're going to move on us to prevent bloodshed before we commit a crime. This comes from a military strategy that they have developed in Central America and that Israel uses against the Palestinians. You blow them away before they do anything and you don't have any problems. It places our case in the context of what they're trying to do internationally.

The next step in our case that I think is important for folks to realize is that we were held under preventive detention. A few days before our arrest a new law was passed that says that a suspect can be arrested and held without bail pending trial if the government alleges and can prove that they are dangerous to the community, and that there is a risk of flight. It was targeted very much at the overall community—not just the eight of us who were arrested, not even to the other over 20 people who were subpoenaed for the grand jury and requested to testify, eight of them ending up going to jail. As they knew they would—they knew they wouldn't testify; they were in jail even longer than the defendants for refusing to testify before the grand jury. It was targeted precisely at our communities to terrorize them. People woke up at 12:30 at night—the doors were being busted down down the hallway. They heard voices saying, "Keep your head in the door else you'll get it blown off." An attempt was made to portray us as people no one would want to know because obviously we must have done something. No one gets arrested by 500 agents of the Joint Terrorist Task Force in such a manner, certainly not just any criminals.

To get back to what we were charged with; we were charged under the RICO Act, which is racketeer influencing corrupt organizations. They said all of our families, friends and principal political affiliates, which is what the grand jury resisters were, were also members of the enterprise. So the resisters were not indicted just yet but they knew the resisters were all members according to them. They said that this criminal enterprise's purpose was to rob armored cars and break people out of prison. They said we were the successors to Brinks. Brinks was an expropriation attempt by a group of people who had worked in various political movements and felt that money that was being stolen daily from the people in this country needed to come back to the people and so they were going to go get it. It did not work.

I guess part of the reason that we were

targeted is that we fought back against the grand jury—the witch hunt that went on in the black community after that [the Brinks case] happened. The FBI was all over the community—breaking down doors, subpoenaing right, left and center; it wanted to paint all political demands as part of a terrorist conspiracy. We very much stood up and said the real terrorists are the ones who are letting our grandmothers get blown away by the cops\*, letting children die because police officers shoot them, the terrible conditions. We very much fought against that as being a terrorist act. So they use our political sympathy for the question of the black people's right to struggle by any means necessary and our open support for armed self defense as one of the reasons why they targeted us.

It had been two years of intense surveillance culminating in video cameras in the hallways of two houses, there were video cameras installed across the street, there were still cameras all over the city. In this building they took pictures of people coming in and out of the building at all times—all the people even if they had no relationship to us. They would follow people who were just walking down the street, people would pass us on the street and they would follow them. Other times people would come out of a building after us and they would say "Aha!" and they would send teams of agents scurrying all over the city following people. They spent an unbelievable amount of manpower on the case because they had agents following us, up to a hundred a day, and towards the end of the investigation, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They had three bugs in my apartment; they put one in the kitchen and living room and they said "Aha, they aren't saying anything; obviously they have high security, let's put a bug in the bedroom." They still didn't catch anything criminal so they put another one in the bathroom.

The amount of money, resources, and manpower expended is unbelievable; they never saw us committing what is called an overt crime. One of the agents who testified said that that might be true, he never saw Coltrane Chimurenga, who he followed all over the city, commit a crime. But he knew he was justified in continuing his surveillance because he believed Mr. Chimurenga was planning a crime since he could see it in his eyes. You know, it sounds real funny and cute,

\*Eleanor Bumpers, a 64-year-old woman was shot dead by the police in her apartment in October, 1984. She was two months late on her rent.

but you know, on the basis of this fool's testimony, my co-defendant Coltrane Chimurenga spent from October 17 to the end of April locked up in the Metropolitan Correctional Center because they were able to get a judge to say he's at risk of flight, is a dangerous terrorist and our mastermind.

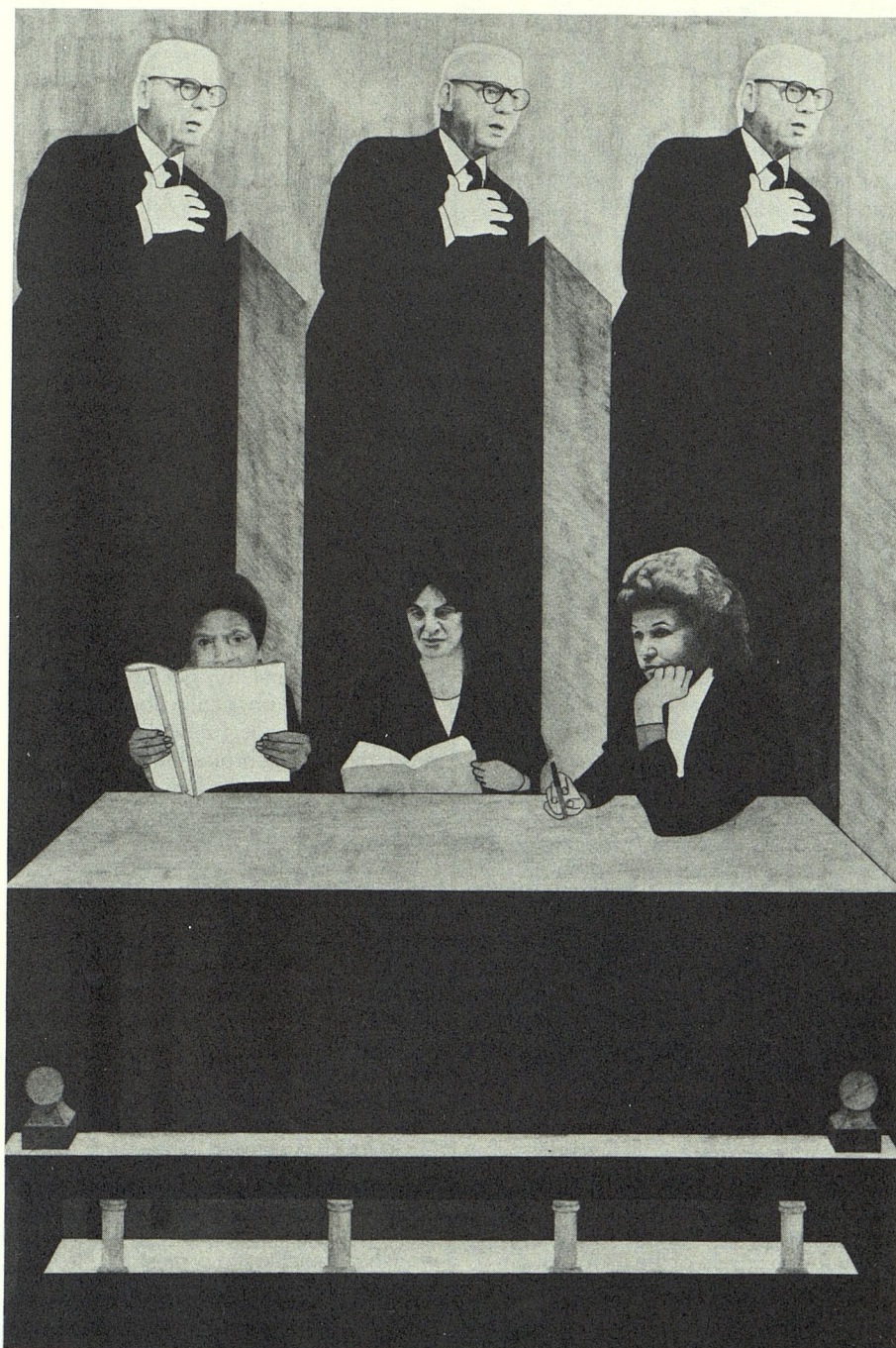
Coltrane Chimurenga is the one they admit to having started the first dossier on. That was back in '68 when he subscribed to the Black Panther newspaper. So much for the free press and the right of free speech. Another agent said he knew he was on the right track with his criminal investigation because he saw us handing out a political newspaper, and he knew he was on the right track because the newspaper had the red, black and green color of the black liberation flag on it. Since he was investigating the black liberation movement, he knew he was on target. Which again speaks to what the real purpose of the Joint Terrorist Task Force is, a political police squad that blends the FBI and all the little local police units into one national secret police that goes around and, from the most mundane transit cop all the way through to the FBI special agents, [becomes] one national apparatus designed to keep track of all activists, in our case black activists.

Our defense strategy was to lay out very clearly that this is a government conspiracy going on here, attempting to criminalize our movement. We don't deny that we had guns, we think that people need to have guns for self defense. Certainly they don't have any problem with the Klan having guns or the Aryan Nation or the Order or any of the right-wing groups; they only have problems with black people having guns and people having a right to armed self-defense.

The government brought their case, which they thought was airtight, to trial. We were able through our strategy to win. Because people came to court consistently, the community was very, very powerful in terms of their support of us. We beat the government's conspiracy case and exposed their attack on the black liberation movement. We were acquitted of all the major conspiracy charges. We contested everything the government said we had done; we proved that we were not criminals.

**Collette Pean**—We see that fascism is on the rise, the organized move to legally use terror as the means of control now. What is happening in the economy is the ever increasing concentration of the





Robin Michals, *ASSESSING THE FACTS: BHOPAL*, 1985, graphite on paper, 40" x 30"

ROBIN MICHALS is an artist who lives and works in New York City.

wealth, the number of people controlling the economy becomes smaller and more concentrated and totally dominated by finance capital, the banks are now in charge of everything. How are they going to take care of no more jobs? They are going to say women don't need to work anymore. Women should go home and have babies—that's what women are really about. You have the whole campaign culturally that women have no right to work. Very subtle—women really want to have babies, and they ignore that women work not because they don't want to have babies but because they are human beings and have a right to work.

So I think the government thought of us as being so dangerous because we consistently put out there that people have the right to struggle by any means necessary. I think that it's not just a race problem—it's that people in this country are oppressed by capitalism and need to find each other as allies to fight against that. What's happening is that in many different areas people are being attacked and they need to fight back. People that have one issue or two issues in which they can see the government's repression need to organize to push back the tide now. We say, build a popular front against fascism.

We're not saying everybody has to agree with everything but we have to be able to dissent and to raise our democratic rights and to struggle together for what we want to see. First of all we have to beat back this tide of oppression that is increasing legally—our case being an example of the legal apparatus being put to work to jail activists, stop political activity. Militarily the next step is to straight up and kill people as they do at random now through the police. The CIA has trained death squads around the world. We already know they know how to do that and should not be surprised when that happens—that's the mood of the country.

People need to come away from reading this article with a clearer understanding of how they're under attack. I hope our case gives them some insight into what's happening around the country that directly affects their lives and into how they need to take that up where they're sitting because it's an issue that's crucial to their lives.

Collette Pean is presently being held as a high-security risk at Alderson prison in West Virginia for receiving \$1,500 in welfare money under a false ID.



## DIRECT ACTION

# AGAINST SEXISM IN ADVERTISING

### Carole McCabe

A giant outdoor whiskey ad in downtown Ann Arbor, Michigan features a blond woman in a low-cut black velvet gown and an exposed knee, who urges drinkers to "feel the velvet."

For four years, the billboard has been routinely defaced by women who have spray painted "offensive to women" or "sexist" over the ad.

This year was slightly different, however. Two Ann Arbor feminists, both 21 and both University of Michigan students, were arrested on March 7th for allegedly defacing the billboard. Police arrested them on a felony charge and put them in jail overnight. The next day the prosecutor reduced the charge to a misdemeanor.

The billboard is an advertisement for Black Velvet brand Canadian whiskey, which bills itself as the "smooth Canadian." The ad, mounted on a 14-foot by 48-foot billboard two stories above the northwest corner of Main and Ann streets, is floodlighted at night and can be seen for miles around. On March 7th, unknown persons painted "Objects Never, Women Forever", "sexist", and "Women—RISE!" on the ad.

Mary Emanoil and Jennifer Akfirat, who have been accused of the crime, have entered a plea of not guilty and will go on trial May 23rd in 15th District Court. Both women have been active in the Ann Arbor feminist community, both working on the annual Take Back the Night March, and participating in a January sit-in at the University of Michigan protesting the university's stance on sexual assault. Mary has been a volunteer at local battered women's shelters, and Jennifer is the daughter of prominent local woman Jane Myers, who is a columnist for the Ann Arbor News.

Jennifer and Mary have received the full support of local feminists who immediately mobilized around the issue.

CAROL McCABE has been working on issues of violence against women for five years. She lives in Ann Arbor, MI.

Phones began ringing at 7 a.m. on the day of their arraignment, resulting in a large and visible presence in the courtroom. A local group, Women—RISE! (Women Rebeling in a Sexist Environment), organized an informational picket and vigil at the billboard. A defense committee, called Community Action Against Sexist Advertising, formed soon thereafter. Their three goals include: getting rid of the billboard through legal means; supporting Mary and Jennifer; and educating the community to draw the link between sexist advertising and violence against women and children.

Those wishing to see the billboard removed have emphasized connections between degrading advertisements and violence. In relation to the slogan "Feel the Velvet", local feminist Susan McGee said: "Our question is: what exactly are we being asked to feel? We object to, and will not tolerate, the use of women's bodies to sell products." "There's no question in our minds that the sexism, violence and general disrespect towards women in advertising and the media is a contributing factor to rape, battery, and child sexual abuse," said Carole McCabe, a former staffer at the local battered women's shelter.

"As soon as you make women objects to sell things, they are no longer people. And it's easier to abuse objects than it is to abuse people," said David DeVarti, owner of a local publishing company. "That's why we don't want this ad."

"I'm in CA<sup>2</sup>SA because I think it's time men started taking responsibility for changing the victimization of women."

A good example of the interrelationship between the media and abuse is the way children have begun to be portrayed in film, TV, and advertising. "Children are being eroticized by the media," said Susan A. Smith, M.S.W., who counsels children who have been sexually abused. "Seeing children as sex objects helps perpetrators of sexual abuse rationalize their acts and make excuses for their behavior. An atmosphere is created where it's okay to see children in a sexual

way. And that's intolerable."

Says Cheryl Stevens, Coordinator of the Women's Crisis Center in Ann Arbor.

"Let's face it—all women in our country have been harassed by a man at some point in their lives. And one out of three have survived rape or attempted rape, 28% are sexually abused by the age of 14, and one out of two are battered in an intimate relationship. Ads that use women are just rubbing salt in our wounds—they intensify feelings of victimization. The billboard has got to go. We can't have it in our community."

"The billboard is not long for this world," said one local feminist who chose to remain anonymous. "I hope CA<sup>2</sup>SA succeeds in getting the company to change the billboard. But if not, it's going to be spraypainted until they get the idea."

"Women are physically abused in this culture by such ads. I view destroying property that celebrates that abuse as a creative act of self-defense," said Maureen Fitzsimmons, another local feminist.

Central Advertising (who owns the billboard) repaired it after the March 7th incident. But on April 28th, women struck again, this time writing "Women Insist, Persist, Resist," replacing the word Velvet in Black Velvet Whiskey with "Slime", and writing the words "Take Me Down."

Feminists haven't had much response from the companies responsible for the billboard. Tom Reir, of Central Advertising in Jackson, refused to meet with members of Women—RISE! who wanted to present petitions to him. Advertising man Bill Free, who created the ad, was asked what he would say to protestors. He responded, "I try not to talk to the feminists, being a chauvinist myself." (We never would have guessed). Heublein spokesperson Sandy Beckwith claims she researched the ad campaign from a feminist standpoint and found nothing wrong with it. She insists the ad is not seductive, but admits that it's designed to appeal to men.

Although Heublein and its recently fired ad agency, Lawrence, Charles and Tree, claim that the Feel the Velvet campaign,



I'd like to make it with her. Maybe I'll get her into bed. You didn't have to work very hard to get into her pants. I'm going to go out and get a piece of ass tonight. I hope I score tonight. I can wear down her resistance, I'll score. She wouldn't put out for me. You were great last night. You could learn a lot from me baby. I could teach her a thing or two. Boy, did I make her moan! I got her so hot. I've never had to pay for pussy. Do you know any available women? I'd like to have her for a night. She's good snatch. I'd like to cop some ass. She was the best piece of ass I ever had. What a dish! She's a cute thing. She's a nice chick.

xy. Let's see if we can shoot some squirrel. She's really a dog. What a bitch! She's a cunt. I'd like to bang her box. I beat my meat last night. He knocked her up. He shot his load. I'd like to make it with her. Maybe I'll get into her pants. You didn't have to work very hard to get her into bed. I'm going to go out and get a piece of ass tonight. I hope I score tonight. If I can wear down her resistance, I'll score. She wouldn't put out for me. You were great last night. You could learn a lot from me baby. I could teach her a thing or two. Boy, did I make her moan! I got her so hot. I've never had to pay for pussy. Do you know any available women? I'd like to have her for a night. She's good snatch. I'd like to cop some ass. She was the best piece of ass I ever had. What a dish! She's a cute thing. She's a nice chick.



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Penelope Goodfriend, from *ROLE MODELS AND REALITIES*, color photograph, 16" x 30"

"was one of our best campaigns, one of the best of all times," recent sales history for Black Velvet indicate otherwise. Sales data presented by Business Week, May 17, 1985 indicate that while the nine largest marketers of Canadian whiskey have increased sales by one half of one percent between 1980 and 1984, the sales of

PENNY GOODFRIEND's photographs are part of a series, *Role Models and Realities*, inspired by a passage in the Talmud: "We do not see things as they are, we see them as we are."

Black Velvet have declined by 1.2% during this same period. This decline is notable in that Canadian whiskey is one of only three categories of liquor that are gaining in popularity in an otherwise slumping industry.

"Not only is the billboard tasteless, ugly, sexist and offensive," said CA<sup>2</sup>SA member Jim Niland, "but it's not selling whiskey very well."

The furor that arose from the billboard arrests is just the tip of the iceberg as far as feminist activity in Ann Arbor goes. "There has been a dramatic rise in

social change activities in Ann Arbor in the past year and half," said U of M Social Work Professor Beth Glover Reed. "Particularly in the area of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child sexual abuse, there's been a marked shift from only providing services to survivors to doing prevention work, systems advocacy, and direct action." "I think it's excellent," said Susan Contratto, clinical psychologist and Women's Studies instructor. "I believe the rise in activity has begun to result in real change in our community. I'm delighted by it."



# DOAN

## dance

Doan Ket, a women's political dance group based in New York City, was started in 1983. Our name means solidarity in Vietnamese, and it was chosen from the title of a poem by Meridel LeSeur written during the Vietnam War.

In 1984 our collective visited Nicaragua as part of a cultural-solidarity brigade to let the people there know that not everyone in this country agrees with Reagan's interventionist policies. We worked with the Sandinista Association of Cultural Workers and performed in schools, hospitals, day care centers and for the militia, and we also taught at the National School of Dance.

When a national poll in this country revealed that 72% of college students preferred Reagan in the presidential elections, we decided to visit different universities to present a cultural-educational series. With the collaboration of Kristin Reed, we gave a slide show on Nicaragua and performed four dance-theater pieces, followed by a discussion period.

One dance, "Miskito Lawana," choreographed by Susana Reyes, is based on traditional dances from the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua. It portrays the agricultural activities of the indigenous Miskito Indians. In this celebratory dance of fertility and abundance, we recreate the rush of the wind and clouds and the blossoming of the crops. It is said that the Miskitos dramatized these elements as they worked the earth.

During our discussions with students, a common question concerned the "atrocities" that the Sandinistas had allegedly committed against the Miskitos. The Reagan administration had accused the Sandinistas of trying to impose their language and culture on the Miskitos and of forcing them off their lands. In fact, the Miskitos, together with five other ethnic groups on the Atlantic Coast, have a history and culture different from other regions in Nicaragua. For centuries they have been kept in complete isolation. It was the idea of the Sandinistas to change this, but problems inevitably resulted from their cultural differences. The contras and the Reagan administration took advantage of this to make a series of false accusations. The Sandinistas themselves had admitted making mistakes, but the facts are very different from what is reported in the news.

"Oh, This Heat," choreographed by Gloria Nazario and Hallie Wannamaker, is a humorous theatrical piece in which two women represent the contradictions between American interests in Latin America and the region's political realities. As the music, "Managua, Nicaragua, What a Wonderful Town," plays in the background, the women sit on a beach and chat.

### OH, THIS HEAT

**Hillary:** This weather is just fascinating! The sun goes on and on and on ... I could be here all day soaking up these beautiful, tropical Latin rays ...

**Yiyi:** Ummm ...

**Hillary:** This is definitely the place to take our vacations. Well, with swimming pool, maid service, and color TV, it's just ... VIVA COMPLIT!

**Yiyi:** Well ... I prefer Europe ... Uummmm, those cool and romantic nights of Greece, the boat rides at Crete, the Peloponnesus, and those long, tall, thrusting temples of Delphi and Knossos, that's a whole different world.

**Hillary:** So, what brings you here?

**Yiyi:** Oh, the devaluation of the peso of course!

**Hillary:** Yes, isn't it wonderful that everything is so cheap here! Why, the other night I bought a steak dinner for only three dollars, including the ten cent tip for the waiter. And don't you just love those hand-embroidered blouses? It must take them hours to make one of those, and we can always buy them for only two dollars! Of course, I always try to bargain with those Indian women to get the cheapest price possible ...

**Yiyi:** How's Sam?

**Hillary:** [Getting nervous] Oooooohhhh ... FINE, off on one of his business trips taking care of our supermarkets in Brazil.

**Yiyi:** [Cynical] In one of those emergency meetings?

**Hillary:** [Losing control] That's right ... keeping the economy going ...

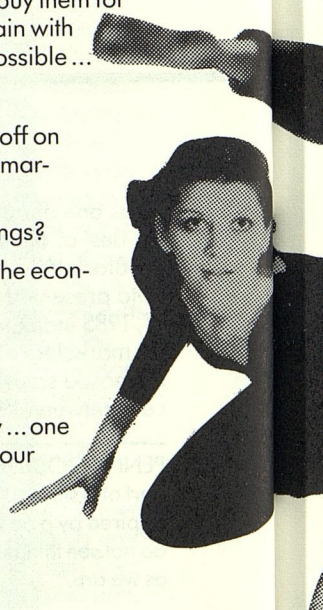
[Hillary questions Yiyi in a cynical way]

**Hillary:** How's Rogelio?

**Yiyi:** [Nervous] Well ... with him you never know ... one week he can be at the presidential palace, or at our home in Miami, or ... up in the mountains [more nervous] keeping the guerrillas in line ...

**Hillary:** Darling, it must be so difficult for you ...

**Yiyi:** ... Well ... in a way, it's exciting ... although





# KET

by Gloria Nazario

*collective*

photographs by Kristin Reed

**Hillary:** Although?

**Yiyi:** Well, lately ...

**Hillary:** Lately?

**Yiyi:** Ahhh! It's ruining my social life! [She cries]



*¡Ay Canto!*





Hallie Wannamaker and Gloria Nazario performing "Oh This Heat!" for soldiers at a military training school outside Managua.

## Scene 2

[Sitting on a terrace]

**Hillary:** So, how are things going down there in YOUR COUNTRY???

**Yiyi:** Well, of course there's the war. It's so boring how it preoccupies all the cocktail party conversations.

**Hillary:** [Angry at her] But, don't you think that you should take it more seriously?

**Yiyi:** It's just those ignorant Indians giving us a few problems; and besides...I told you...[she screams] it's ruining my social life!

**Yiyi:** So, how are things going in Brazil?

**Hillary:** OOOOhhhhh things are just...fine [she coughs]...Of course prices are a little bit...HIGH...but this is just a temporary...[she falls from the chair] SLUMP!

**Yiyi:** But I heard that people are invading supermarkets with sticks, rocks and anything, to get food!

[Getting very nervous]

**Hilly:** Oh, well it's just those leftist provocateurs. I don't know what's happening to people's morals these days...

**Yiyi:** OH, THIS HEAT!

[They dance together trying to forget about the problems]

**Hillary:** Oh, this brings me back to all those wonderful vacations...

**Yiyi:** AAAHHH...the palm trees in Haiti...

**Hillary:** The smell of the amapolla in Puerto Rico!

**Yiyi:** Those handsome waiters in Santo Domingo...

**Hillary:** And the cha-cha-cha music in the background in Cuba...

**Both:** Too bad that country had to fall into the wrong hands! [They both fall on the floor]

**Yiyi:** Well, WE have to be careful that other countries don't fall into the wrong hands!

**Hillary:** Yes, Why...[Whispering to Yiyi] You know what happened in Nicaragua? I mean, where will we buy our croissants?

**Yiyi:** Or take our vacations?

[They walk away]

END

The slide show incorporated the questions and comments of students with historical information about U.S. intervention in Central America. The idea was to discuss not only the realities in Latin American countries, but also to examine the situation in our own country and the role economics plays in the relationship between the two. As one teacher at Hunter College noted, "It is not so mysterious that this country is so rich and the other countries are so poor—one of the reasons why this country is so rich is because other countries are so poor."

This series was both a challenge for us and an inspiration for future political work. As cultural workers, we believe it is important to reach out to our audience, without mystifying reality or going around in circles while attempting to explain what is hap-





### *Miskito Lawana*

pening in this country. We feel that, contrary to what we had been taught in school, art is not an isolated act, but can be a powerful educating and organizing force.

In one of the discussions following a performance, Kristin Reed explained how she arrived at art activism, despite her years in a traditional art school environment: "The predominant ideology in art school is that art is separate and higher than life itself and should not be confused or connected with politics in any way. If you did that, it would be propaganda, and propaganda is not art. It took a long time for me to see that this was manipulation. I found myself struggling with a lot of issues and asking myself questions such as: "Is art necessary? Why are people making art anyway?"

"I started reading and understanding that art has had a functional purpose throughout history. Having visited Nicaragua and seeing the desperate situation and the injustice people were living through, I felt a lot of guilt and rage about what our gov-

ernment is doing there. My art has changed a lot. I've learned that studio work is only one side of my artistic experience and that the other side is to get out of the studio, to collaborate, to use different media, to work with different people in the community."

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GLORIA NAZARIO is a Puerto Rican who has lived in New York City since 1979. She is a dancer and a political economist, who currently works with the Nicaraguan Medical/Material Aid Campaign (NIMAC).

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#### **Doan Ket Dancers**

**Sigrid Aarons**  
**Andrea Arroyo**  
**Carrie Emerson**  
**Gloria Nazario**  
**Hallie Wannamaker**

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**Solo performance of Nazario's "El Potro de Chefa" about the struggle of Vieques, P.R., with music by Roy Brown.**





# QUESTION

## What books and/or traditions have influenced you? Who are your role models?

Emma Goldman, Native American Culture, especially Hopi, Paulo Freire, Talking Heads, Bob Marley, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Dorothy Day, Susan Schechter, older black women who lead, unacknowledged, the Civil Rights movement—like Fannie Lou Hamer and Daisy Bates, Barbara Deming, Marx, Herbert Marcuse, James Baldwin, my grandmother and my mother, Elaine Reuben, Joan Roberts, Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*, Willa Cather, Lois Weber, Dorothy Arzner, Georgia O'Keeffe, Lee Krasner, George Cukor, Mitchell Leisen, Barbara Stanwyck, Ida Lupino, Elizabeth Baker, Linda Nochlin, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Little Women*, Gloria Steinem, Katharine Hepburn, May Sarton, Ada Wilcox, I.F. Stone, Andrew Phillips, Martin Luther King, Jr., Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Jesus, Mary Daly's *Beyond God the Father*, *The Bible*, O'Connor's *Call to Commitment*, Levine's *Who Dies?*, Peck's *The Road Less Traveled*, Alice Walker, Audre Lorde, Hans Haacke, Helen and Newton Harrison, Daniel Ortega, Joseph Beuys, Ernesto Cardenal's *Zero Hour*, Roque Dalton's *Poems*, Jim Scully's *Apollo Helmet*, the brave women who fought for the Sandinista revolution, Phyllis Greenacre, Margarete Yourcenar, Natalie Sarraute, Nancy Grossman, my older sister, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, Rosalind Coward, Griselda Pollocks, Jane Gallup, Shoshana Felman, Kaja Silverman, Annette Kohn, Dorothy Dinnerstein's *The Mermaid and the Minotaur*, Judy Grahn's poem "A Woman is Talking to Death," Trotsky's *The History of the Russian Revolution*, Lucy Lippard, Charles Frederick, Juliet Ucelli, Dame Smith, Jim Paul, Margarete von Trotta, Diane Kurys, Lina Wertmüller, Jane Austen, George Eliot, Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics*, Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*, Susan Sontag, Monique Wittig, Louise Bourgeois, *The Black Book of Poland*, Julie Mimmack, Kathryn Bell, Seneca Peace Camp, Holly Near, Alix Dobkin, Kate Clinton, *Sisterhood is Powerful*, *Womanspirit Rising*, Baez's *Daybreak*, *Shadow on a Tightrope*, *The Dream of a Common Language*, *The Color Purple*, *Nice Jewish Girls*, Judaism, Quakerism, civil disobedience, *The Communist Manifesto*, George Orwell, Redstocking's tradition, Susan B. Anthony, Lenin, Mao, Patricia Due, people of Nicaragua and the FSLN, Faith Wilding, Neda Al-Hilali and Nancy Buchanan, Ursula LeGuin, my mother once I was old enough to see her strength, Segal's *America's Receding Future*, Kurt Vonnegut, Maya Angelou, *The Nation*, Candida Flores, Alice Carse, Berryman's *What's Wrong in Central America*, Ohland's *National Revolution and Indigenous Identity*, Herrera's biography of Frida Kahlo, Bradley's *The Mists of Avalon*, Jerry Kearns, Eva Cockcroft, Thomas Merton, Art Against Apartheid, Artists for Nuclear Disarmament, *The Catholic Worker*, *The Progressive*, *Sojourners*, *Upfront*, *Heresies*, *The Other Side*, Strong's *I Change Worlds*, Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, Marge Piercy's *Living in the Open* and *To Be of Use*, Langston Hughes, Barbara Morgan, Helen Levitt, Eleanor Roosevelt, Miriam Shapiro, Bread and Puppet Theater, Ben Shawn, contemporary women street artists, my uncle Bill, Albert Schweitzer, Clarence Darrow, Lillian Hellman, Ted Williams, Pete Seeger, Mother Jones, Truman Warner, Agnes Smedley, American Indian writers such as John Lame Deer, Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, Macy's *Despair and Personal Power in the Nuclear Age*, Highwater's *The Primal Mind*, Gablik's *Has Modernism Failed*, H.G. Wells, Aldous Huxley, Doris Lessing, Anne Herbert, Berman's *The Reenchantment of the World*, MaryBeth Edelson, Griselda Pollocks, Joni Mitchell, Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Radical Teacher*, *Whole Earth Review*, the tradition of artist as shaman, healer, visionary and provocateur, guerilla cultural traditions, *Women's Art Journal*, May Stevens, Nancy Azara, Irene Peslikis, Jerri Allyn, Holly Zox, Sari Dienes, Alice Neel, Dorothy Gillespie, Nora Estorga, Angela Davis, Winnie Mandela, Martin Buber, Vanessa Redgrave, Charlotte Branch, Ernesto Cardenal, Lucretia Mott, Barbara Jordan, Grimke sisters, Hannah Arendt, Ronnie Gilbert, my father, Rev. Carl Flemister, Rina Davila, Hermes Castro, Columbia Brava, the American co-operative movement and the left populist movement, Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, Lincoln's *Vice President in Charge of Revolution*, Dorothy Oliver, my daughters and other young women, Liz McAlister, Phil Berrigan, Helen Keller, Sigrid Undset, Gilligan's *In a Different Voice*, Iglehart's *Womanspirit*, Mae Chee Costillo, *Johnny Get Your Gun*, Golda Meir, Dorteia Lange, Pablo Neruda, Lorca, Laurie Anderson, Gertrude Stein, Robert Frank, Susan Meiselas, Suzanne Lacey, Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, Galeano's *The Open Veins of Latin America*, Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution*, Miguel Hernandez, Rafael Alberti, poets of the Spanish Civil War, Griffin's *Pornography and Silence*, Lorde's *Zami*, Rich's *On Lies, Secrets and Silence*, Buber's *I and Thou*, Moraga and Anzaldúa's *This Bridge Called My Back*, Harrison's *Making the Connections*, *Our Right to Choose*, Bonhoeffer's *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Davis' *Race, Class, Sex*, Morgan's *Lady of the Beasts*, Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country*, Tutu's *Crying in the Wilderness*, MacMurray's *Persons in Relation*, Naylor's *Women of Brewster Street*, Cardenal's *Flights of Victory*, Fromm's essay on Marx, Shiela Rowbotham, Vence's *Pleasure and Danger*, Nancy Spero, Kathe Kollwitz, Greenpeace, Greenham Common, *Alice Doesn't*, Marxism, especially as used by Janeson and Eagleton, Eva Hesse, Flo Kennedy, Elsa Gidlow, Lily Tomlin, Shiley Chisholm, Dorothy Wachter, Victoria Woodhull, Josephine Butler, Rosen's *Lost Sisterhood*, Firestone's *Dialectics of Sex*, Greer's *Female Eunuch*, Walkowitz's *Prostitutes in the Victorian Era*, Tom Robbins, Ghandi, Thomas' *Man's Relationship with Nature*, Griffin's *Women and Nature*, Stone's *When God Was a Woman*, Marilyn Ferguson, women who have lived their lives without the approval of men.

# QUESTIONNAIRE



## JABBERWOCKY

### A COMMUNITY OF THE PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY CHALLENGED

**Elain Christensen**

"When I think of speaking out I do not hear my own voice, but theirs. Or ours, mine and theirs together"

In large measure, my photographs have been about the struggle to speak out in a voice that will be recognized, literally and figuratively. I am interested in photographing small communities. Within them, there seems to be collective as well as individual empowerment that bonds its members together, draws in new ones, and serves as an example to a larger, outside group of people.

On Martha's Vineyard there is a unique community called Jabberwocky, that has convened every summer for 35 years. Originally started for children with cerebral palsy, it evolved to encompass a diverse group of the physically and mentally "challenged," as well as people who wanted to work with them. In my time there, I have come to see that their struggle is like my own: To come to terms with my own inner woundedness. I found a community that would accept me because its members had learned to accept themselves. When my preconceptions and my "awe" of them faded, I could experience intimately the communal nature of the group, a nature characterized by an interdependence that promotes independence. And I began to be able to translate my understanding into visual terms.

ELAIN CHRISTENSEN is a photographer and a member of the community of Hoboken, New Jersey.

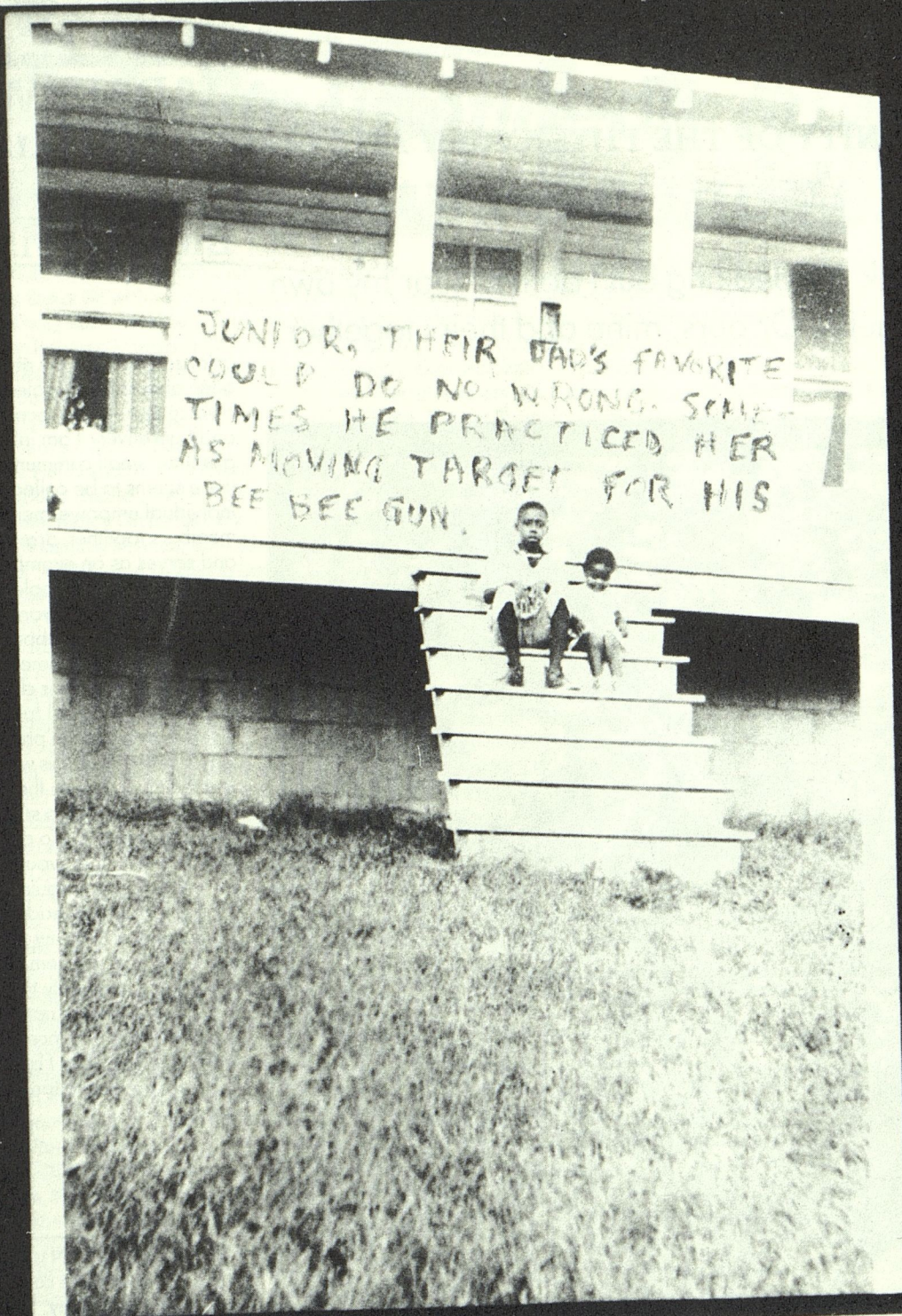
Copies of the 1986 calendar are still available for \$2, plus \$1 postage. To order a calendar or get on the mailing list for the 1987 calendar, drop a note to:

Elain Christensen  
113 Washington St.  
Hoboken, N.J. 07030



Elain Christensen, *A LETTER FROM JUDI* (detail), 1983, b/w photos, 60" x 84"





Clarissa T. Sligh, UNTITLED, b/w photo, 8" x 10"

CLARISSA T. SLIGH works from a broad range of experiences; life in NY and work on Wall Street sent her back to her rural Southern roots for images that are increasingly politicized.



# Lillian Wald

## At Home on Henry Street

**Lillian Wald, founder of the Henry Street Settlement House, has a charismatic persuasive quality. She is strong-willed but tender. Her charm radiates a warmth that could embrace the whole world.**

**She is wearing a dusty-rose silk kimono and pearl gray leather slippers. The kimono was a gift from the Kyoto Peace Society.**

SETTING Lillian Wald's sitting room/office  
The Henry Street Settlement House

[LILLIAN WALD *steals into her office, softly closing the door behind her.*]

**R**ISE AND SHINE to get a jump on time! Sleep is an interruption. I manage four hours sleep a night, and play tricks with the clock to fit thirty-six hours into each day. Except once when my friends insisted: "Lillian Wald, we are taking you to Italy for a nap."

[SHE *tears off the day's calendar from a pad on her desk. Reads.*]

May 8, 1916. Agenda.

Five AM—Answer Mr. Schiff

—Other correspondence

Six—Depart train station; peace petitions

Seven—The Washington Express

One PM—The White House

Where I am to convince President Wilson to keep the U.S. neutral and out of Europe's war. How did I get myself into this one? I know the delegation has infinite faith in my powers of persuasion—but really, Lillian.

All the ladies of the Henry Street Settlement House are sound asleep. No one even stirred as I tiptoed through each room. I wanted to hear a whisper, "Lillian, what's wrong?" I lay awake all night, my mind caught,—pacing back and forth, back and forth—caged in by the words in Mr. Schiff's letter "Caution. Caution, my dear Lillian. The country has turned towards war. By going to Washington you endanger everything you have worked to build these past twenty-three years."

Docky and I had words last night. I'm glad she didn't wake up just now when I pulled back her goose down comforter. So she could BREATHE. The first warm spring night Docky and I move cots out onto the back upstairs porch overlooking Bunker Hill. That's the children's name for America's first playground. We sleep outside every night until mid-October. Like firemen. Always at the ready to jump up and out on emergency calls.

Tante Helene is the one person I can count on to be up early. Each night she checks the Farmers Almanac, sets her mental alarm clock, and pops up at the exact minute of the sunrise to

move her way through a short Tai Chi exercise she learned during our stay in China. Tante Helene helped us create Bunker Hill. She bought the house behind so we could openly combine backyards. She is what we call here a member of the laity. Not a nurse, but an honorary member of the sisterhood. Before Bunker Hill the children's only play spaces were the streets—dangerous, littered, foul-smelling streets. The first years our playground was thronged with lines waiting to get in. A schedule was designed. Baby hammocks and young mothers in the mornings; swings or scups as the children call them in the afternoons; and evening parties under Japanese lanterns for adults. A young neighborhood man said as he wove the lucious old wisteria vine onto the trellis, "Miss Wald, this must be like the scenes of country life in English novels." The wisteria has climbed clear up to our pillared sleeping porch.

Docky and I had words last night. I can still not go to Washington. Mr. Schiff is right to question how my principles will effect the future of the Henry Street Settlement House.

The moment my meeting with President Wilson hits tomorrow morning's front page, the phone will ring. The door knocker will pound. Irate sponsors will hurl their accusations: "Unpatriotic, Miss Wald! In good conscience we must withdraw our support from the Settlement! Stay out of politics and keep to nursing. War is good for the economy."

**W**AR. ALL THE SUFFERING from war. I feel it in every fiber of my body, down to my very toes. I am a nurse! Pledged to save lives. Madness. Why can't people see the connection between war and poverty. We want to provide each child under the age of five with a medical exam and nursing care. As a right. Imagination. My favorite word in the English language. President Wilson, use your imagination.

Cold, charming, imperious Woodrow Wilson. "Miss Wald, I agree the world has gone mad. But I give you my promise to keep us out of war. Preparedness. All I ask for is military preparedness. My mind is still to let."

If he dares to use that expression on me again, do I dare ask him, 'Who's the highest bidder for your mind? The munition makers and all the politicians in their pockets, or the thousands of citizens who beseech you to lead the world away from war.'

[Singsong slogan]

"He Kept Us Out of War. He Kept Us Out of War." His campaign slogan.

"Miss Wald, please, endorse my drive for re-election. Your friend Jane Addams hopped on our bandwagon."

"Hold out, Jane Addams. He's leaning hard on Congress for the National Defense Act, giving the military carte blanche."

Jane said, "Lillian, I'll swallow two new battleships and no more."

CLARE COSS is a writer, psychotherapist, and activist. Her plays have been presented at the Interart Theatre, Theater for the New City, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Soho Rep, and many others.



How betrayed she must feel. Last week the Act passed. With the flick of a pen, military training in our schools! For years we struggle to place nurses in each school.

When I first saw Louis Rifkin through an open door in a rear tenement flat, I thought why isn't that boy in school? His mother, with a baby in her arms, stood over a tub washing butchers' aprons. She told me the school officials barred him from the classroom since first grade because of his scaly, sore scalp. Louis felt embarrassed and humiliated that he couldn't even read the names of streets on lamp posts. I examined his scalp. There was only a mild fungus disease that an ointment cleared up in no time. Louis was ecstatic. Back in school he quickly learned how to read and catch up on all those lost years.

And I quickly learned that when you see an individual suffering, you help that person out on the spot. Then you work to remove the cause. Louis Rifkin first set my mind in motion to place a nurse in each school.

War. Why not a Department of Peace, Mr. President, with well-paid full-time employees. No.

Too emotional. I must drain myself of emotion. Men avert their eyes from the impassioned pleas of women. Only facts.

"Miss Wald, show me the peace support. Hire halls across the country. Collect signatures."

Here President Wilson. Sheaves of signatures. Testimony collected by the AUAM, the American Union Against Militarism, founded right here in this room, my room, the day war was declared in Europe, August 7, 1914! We toured the nation with a six-foot dinosaur to illustrate what happens when you become too heavily armed for your own good. Extinction!

Oh, tomorrow's headlines. "Wald: Warning Voice Against Preparedness!" Just two years ago thousands of women marched down Fifth Avenue for peace! Thousands of citizens all over the country joined in a massive call for the U.S. to lead Europe to the conference table. Peace without victory. A lasting peace. No more war to end all wars. Mr. Schiff says such a peace march today would be considered a seditious act. Treason. It would. He is right. The country has swung towards war.

**D**OCKY AND I had words last night. I had asked what she thought of Mr. Schiff's warning me not to go to Washington today. "Lillian my dear, Why waste your time appealing to the President of white American men? He even refuses to support votes for women. And yet he craves your endorsement—wants your whole constituency to back him for reelection. The only salvation for politics is for women to get the vote. Join us instead. We chain ourselves to the White House gates, not waltz through them."

I said, "We cannot wait for women to get the vote! What is our alternative but to appeal to men holding the reins of power. Yes, I'm for the vote, but first things first! You suffragettes—"

"Suffragist. Ist. Not ette. Suffragette is a man's word denoting a diminutive female."

"I'm sorry, Docky. Suffragist. Ist. I apologize. Please turn around. Lavinia Dock. Scholar, pianist, nurse extraordinaire."

"My teacher—"

"You refuse to learn, Lillian, that the men in power destroy every social, every progressive reform we've dedicated our lives to."

"Docky, what good will women's votes do if we let this country become militarized. War destroys democracy."

"Wilson is not going to listen to you, Lillian. Women have to have equal political power. So we can save men from themselves."

"And where is your guarantee that most women won't vote

along with their husbands?"

"Oh, dear Lady Light, I would rather be sitting on my front porch in the hills of Pennsylvania—where my greatest concern is that the cat slapped PeeWee over the ear and scratched his eyes, and the tomatoes ripen so fast no one can eat them up."

"Dear friend, chain yourself to the White House gates, and you will end arrested and in that medieval Virginia prison again. At your age. Sixty! You will lead another hunger strike. They will brutally force feed you. Ram a tube down your nose."

"And on your visit, I will raise myself up and confide, 'My dear Lillian, the only salvation for politics is for women to get the vote.'"

The cat slapped PeeWee over the ear—

[Low chuckle]

I can still see Docky, Election Day 1896, her short roly poly body stalking furiously through the front door. A votes-for-women banner emblazoned across her jacket and pinned to her straw hat. "We stormed the polling booth around the corner and cast our votes. Lillian, the police arrested every voting suffragist and threw them into jail, except me!" Up the stairs, stomp, stomp, and slam. This is the House of Perpetual Doors Slamming. Captain Handy came by, repentant, hat in hand. "Miss Wald, please don't be mad at me. I couldn't arrest the little doc. I just couldn't do it. She nursed my son back to health herself. I had to carry her kicking from the paddy wagon steps."

The most extraordinary nurse I know is ready to risk her life for votes for women. She is so valuable—alive. Can I ever put my life on the line when my existence is so connected to the life of the community? Docky says I've defied death from my first day down here—exposed to disease, riots, exhaustion—. I guess I am risking my life right now if I go to Washington—risk losing my home, my sustenance—this center that has brought light into so many lives—especially my own.

Lavinia Dock, you have been my mainstay for over twenty years. How we propel each other on against the greatest odds—fire each other's will to continue in spite of our disagreements.

Jane Addams, you would advise me to go to Washington. Wouldn't you.

Miss Addams and I were up all night on her return from Europe's front. Count on her for surprises. I love surprises. "Lillian, let's bake bread. Tolstoy told me when I met him many, many years ago, 'Miss Addams, you must bake bread. All women must bake bread.' I've never had the time." Neither had I. We stole down to the kitchen in the wee hours and talked and kneaded and rolled out the dough. We hardly noticed the two hours it took to rise. As we buttered the first warm bite, Jane announced, "Lillian, Tolstoy was wrong. All women do not have to bake bread."

**O**H HOW MUCH YOUNGER and more simple the world seemed before August 7, 1914. Before Europe burst into flames! So much optimism—peace and utopian societies, the progressive movement Henry Street helped to build. We genuinely believed the moral forces of people had reached beyond war.

Now newspapers are saturated with pictures from all across Europe. Women and children stand in doorways, at train stations, with white handkerchiefs, waving their men off to be slaughtered. Nurses smile next to their field ambulances. Sew them up and send them back for more. It's up to women to remove the glamor from war.

At least the President HAS agreed to this afternoon's meeting with the press present. Teddy Roosevelt always invited me to



stay on for dinner at the White House. But tonight the President and his family have tickets for the circus! We do have four solid hours. Will he betray us and turn it into a press conference for preparedness? No. He's given us the entire afternoon. It WILL be more productive than a dinner.

The impossible. Tante Helene said, "Lillian Wald, you have never been stopped by the impossible. Think of when you first plunged into this noisy bustling immigrant neighborhood."

Bumped and shoved by pushcart vendors hawking overripe fruits and vegetables, I must have been the most naive person south of Houston Street. A million and a half human beings crammed into overflowing, dilapidated, unheated tenements in a twenty block radius the size of a small Kansas farm. I remember thinking, if only the people in power knew what it is like here, such horrors would cease to exist! Naive.

Twenty-three years since my baptism by fire.

I saw a small timid face peer around the classroom door while I taught a home nursing course. I beckoned the frightened girl in and she tugged on my skirt. "My mother. My mother. Baby. Blood. Come, please. My mother, here. You come. Please." She tugged on my skirt.

I gathered up the sheets of the bedmaking lesson in my hand and she led me through a steady rain, over muddied, manured streets—. I thought, asphalt, asphalt, why no asphalt—its use was well-established uptown—. Down Hester and Division we went, to the end of Ludlow. Across a foul courtyard, we groped our way up a pitch dark rickety stairwell. The sudden shock of a tiny hand on the railing came too late—I tripped over a child and we tumbled to the landing. I never overcame the fear of trampling a child in the hallways. I hoped for a sound to warn me where to tread. How long we fought for landlords to light hallways.

There inside her door a mother and baby lay on a wretched unclean bed, soaked with two days of hemorrhaging. I recognized the woman. She had enrolled in my course, hoping to qualify for nurse's training. Like most of her classmates, she did not speak English and had no access to the most rudimentary sources of sanitation. The depression of '93. Her husband could not find work. He spoke no English and had been unable to enlist help.

They were a family of seven living in two cramped rooms, plus boarders. Planks of timber lined the floors, rented out for a few pennies a night. Boarders! I had never seen such a sight as the sadness of that poor home and the sweetness of love that was there.

Impossible.

There wasn't anything else to do. I rolled up my sleeves and sent the older children down to the courtyard pump to relay buckets of water. First the newborn baby was washed and clothed warmly. Then I cleaned the woman, ministered to the other children, scrubbed the floor, made the bed with the fresh linens I had brought, sent the father out with enough to buy food staples and assured them, "I will return." Their gratitude overwhelmed me. I could hardly extricate myself from their embraces.

For half an hour I roamed, dazed, through the streets, haunted by this impoverished, uprooted humanity, forced to survive against the most cruel odds.

I walked. I walked and walked. Suddenly I felt a touch on my forehead. Here was how a nurse could work independent of the medical establishment. I was earning my M.D. So was Mary Brewster at the Women's Medical College. Why? Not because nursing duty required twelve hour days, caring for patients, polishing brasses, cleaning wards, and washing dishes. No, we wanted our own M.D.'s because of how badly the doctors treated

the nurses. As their handmaidens. I am not anyone's handmaiden. One doctor even had the nerve to chide, "Nurse Wald, you have encouraged this patient to laugh before I ordered you to do so."

He was serious.

**B**UT NOW I REJOICED. I would not have to bear the years of dissecting frogs and leaning over microscopes that lay between me and my medical degree. Right here, the voices in this teeming neighborhood desperately cried out for our direct and immediate nursing skills. I could not defend myself as part of a society that looks the other way—that permits such conditions to dominate.

I called on the sponsor of the home nursing course, Mrs. Betty Loeb, at her 38th Street brownstone. Her son-in-law, Mr. Jacob Schiff, was present. I tried to touch their hearts, flood them with my earnest appeal. "Have you seen the small boy, his face flushed with chicken pox, sitting on a low stool, stitching knee pants? The little girl in advanced stages of TB, moistening cigarette papers with her lips? The woman putting up covered pots of boiling water every Friday evening because she is too proud to

**Sarah Drury,  
FOLLOWING HER  
DEATH, 1984,  
b/w photographic construction, 14" x 88"**



let her neighbors know there is nothing to eat—as she lights the shabbus candles? The man on the curb, standing by his family's possessions thrown to the street, an eviction notice tacked to his door—children scarred by rat bites. The pride—the struggle for dignity—the mean deceit played on these new arrivals to America with their visions of open farmland, green fields, and factory employment.

Jacob Schiff and Betty Loeb agreed to pay Lillian Wald and Mary Brewster one hundred and twenty dollars a month to cover nursing supplies and living expenses in a fifth floor walk-up. Our only requirement, the convenience of a bathroom. Rumor was there were only two south of Houston Street. To detach ourselves from the stigma of charity and the missionaries, we



charged ten to twenty-five cents for a home visit. Those who could not afford to pay were able to accept our services as a neighborly act.

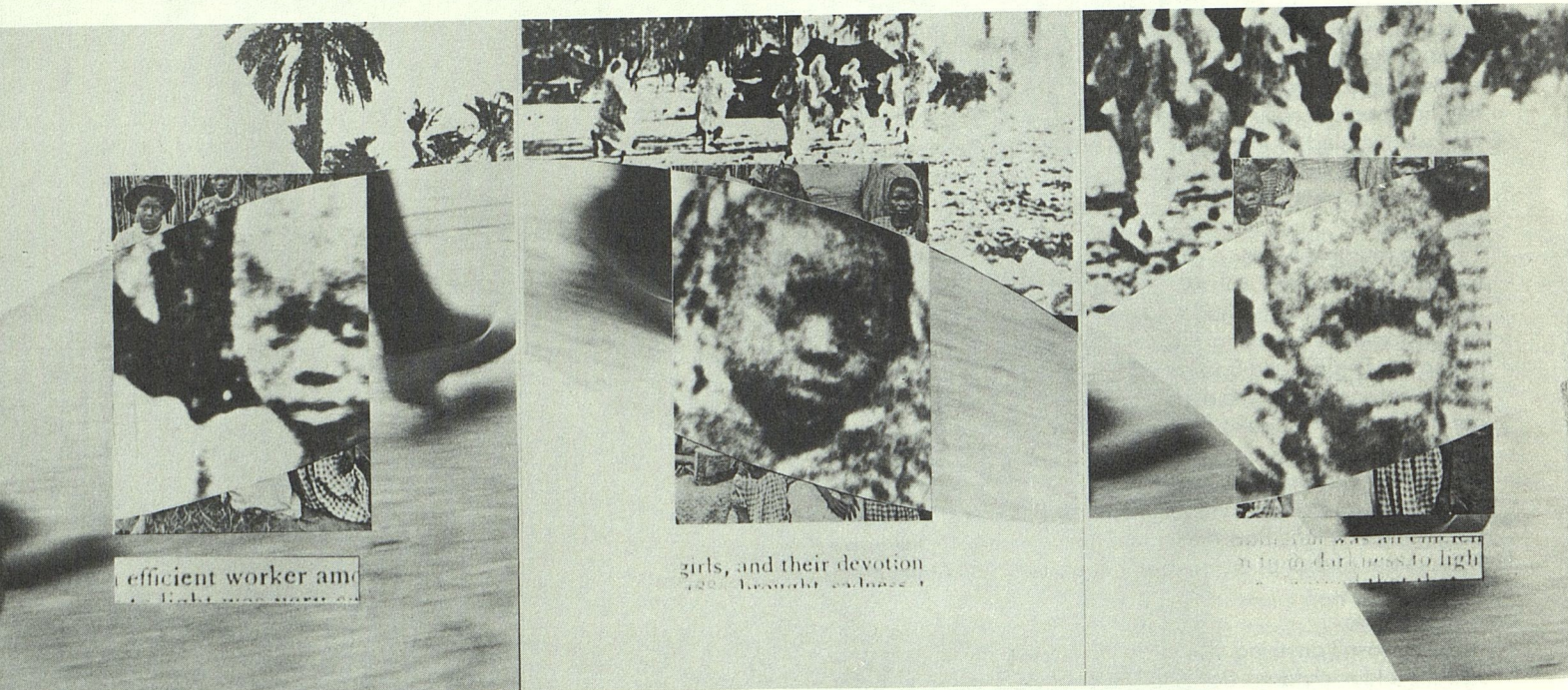
At first the neighborhood boys mistook us for missionaries. We were bombarded with decaying vegetables. But soon we had the culprits organized into the Nurse's Settlement soccer club. Little Ernie Brofsky's tearful plea: "Miss Wald, Teacher, the other teams tease and taunt us with 'Noices! Noices!' Please, please, please change the name from Noices!" Ernie's humiliation was too much for me. From then on we were known as the Henry Street Settlement House. Mr. Schiff, my friend of friends, taught me how to raise money. "Style your requests for money to fit the moods and persuasions of potential supporters. Remember their birthdays and anniversaries." He bought us this beautiful Georgian house—265 Henry Street. Built in the 1830's when lower Manhattan was fashionable. Our reputation spread quickly. "Go see the two young ladies who will listen!"

Now we have seven houses; plus one on Seventy-ninth Street for the Visiting Nurse Service; plus one on Sixtieth Street staffed by Negro nurses; seven vacation homes in the country; three storefronts for milk stations and clinics; ninety-two nurses who

for a long long time. You approved when the AUAM helped to avert a war with Mexico. We can do the same with Europe. We can try. I will remind the President how we set up peace talks between the U.S. and Mexico—taking place in El Paso this very minute. In spite of the militarists jumping up and down for us to invade Mexico. In spite of paying Nicaragua three million dollars for a naval base from which to attack Mexico. In spite of General Pershing and his troops crossing Mexico's border on the pretext of chasing bandits. Using two Negro cavalry regiments to draw fire—the NAACP made that fact public.

How can we make the people in Washington care how war and hatred and prejudice go hand in hand?

JUST A FEW SHORT YEARS AGO Henry Street's Community Hall was the only location in the entire city where colored people and white people could sit down and meet together. I suggested a dinner party at the house following the meeting. But the formal, meticulous Dr. Du Bois said, "Impossible, Miss Wald. If reporters found out the two races sat down to dinner, the papers would attack us all for promoting miscegenation. The new NAACP would be ignored." "Dr. Du Bois. two hun-



make over 200,000 home visits a year; three thousand club members; countless students in our classes. And the Neighborhood Playhouse. The most exciting, innovative theatre in the city bringing culture and beauty to the long denied.

Yes, Mr. Schiff, your predictions were right. I now spend half my time raising money. You know I want Henry Street to serve as a model for what the federal government could do for its citizens. But the campfires of war burn in President Wilson's eyes. Peace and negotiation come to be unpatriotic. Mr. Schiff, you have supported me from the very beginning. Will you continue to support me if I do go to Washington today?

5:35 AM. The train won't wait.

Mr. Schiff, this is a moment in history that may not come again

dred members of the conference cannot sit down—our house is too small. Everyone will have to stand for a buffet supper." That party was a great success. The NAACP was well launched. Dr. Du Bois was very pleased.

The lesson I learned on a house call to a Negro youngster, Bill Lattimore. A little neighbor friend pointed to me and whispered, "Bill, is she your grandma?" His clear unwounded eyes saw only my years, not my "white" skin. I lifted up that little brown boy with such a hug. It had an effect on me for the rest of my life.

At what age does the vision harden for white children—hardened, so hardened Congress can't even get an anti-lynch law passed.



5:40. Why am I not dressed by now? I'm terrified to go.

Terrified not to go. I have never missed a train. Will this be another Lillian D. Wald first? "No, no," I said to the delegation. "Don't bother to pick me up. I'll take the streetcar. It will be quicker. I enjoy public transportation. I fought for it and I'll use it."

Kitt wanted to give the house a brand new shiney automobile. The idea. No indeed. Not that kind of extravagance as long as I can hop on and off a streetcar.

[SHE reaches for the phone. Pulls her hand away.]

Oh, Mabel Hyde Kittredge, how I long to bear my soul—my doubts. I know what you would say.

"Lil, you fool everyone into forgetting you're mortal. Don't fool yourself. All you can do is make your best case to Wilson. Courage is as infectious as fear."

But do I have a right to jeopardize the settlement?

[SHE unties a packet of letters tied with a ribbon and reads from a series of ear-marked pages.]

"Come on out to Monmouth. The big restless, restful ocean is

would approve of—"

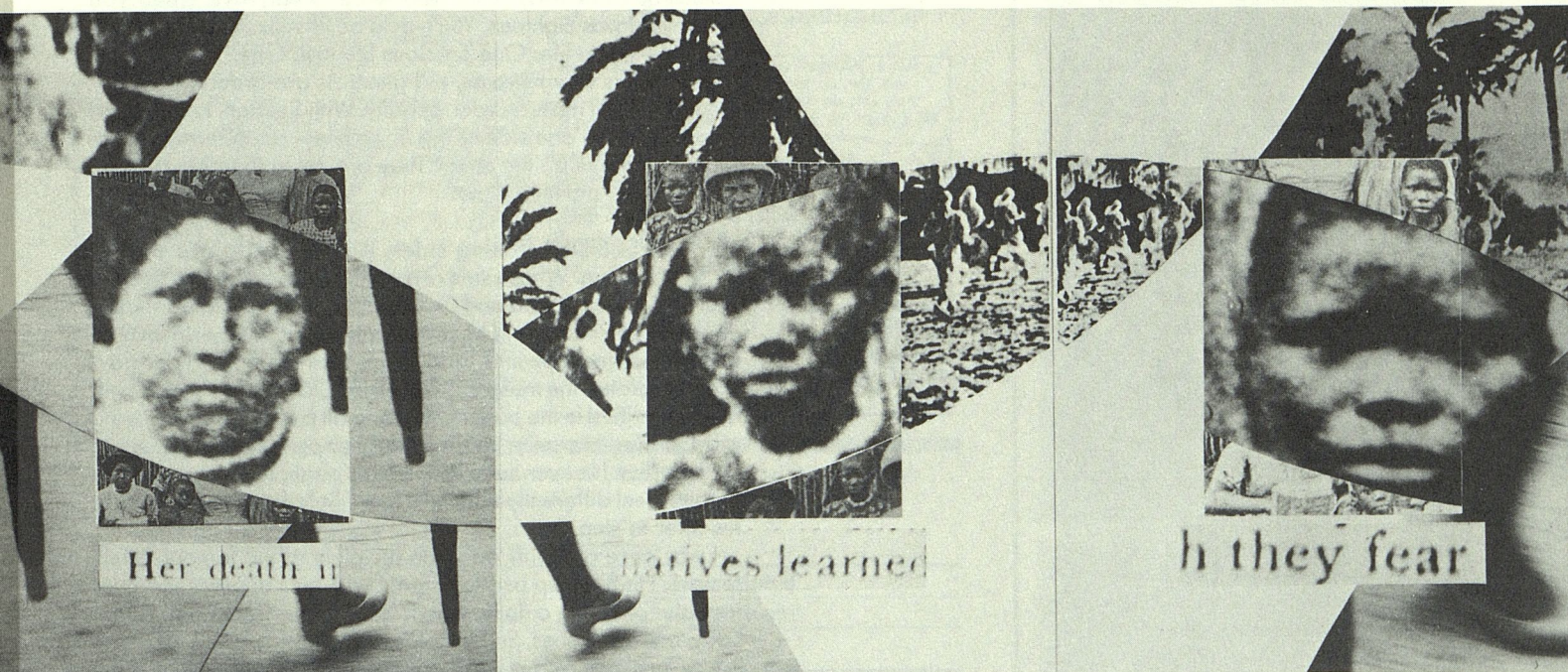
[Another letter]

"I would very much like to meet you on a desert island or a farm where the people cease from coming and the weary are at rest—will the day ever come? Or are those long, lazy drives, the quiet and yellow trees, only a lost dream? And yet you love me—the plant on my table tells me so. The new coffee tray tells me so...and a look that I see in your eyes makes me sure...I can feel your arms around me as you say I really must go."

[Another letter]

"There are times when to know that Tante Helene is standing behind one curtain, Sister Ysabella behind another, and an endless lot of people forever pressing the door or presenting you with unsigned papers makes me lack that perfect sympathy with 'work for others' as exemplified by the settlement."

Kitt, if only you hadn't tried to ease me away from my work here—. "For your health, Lil. For your own good. Jane Addams and Mary Rozet Smith have shared their lives for over twenty years." Kitt. Jane Addams and Mary Rozet Smith share a vision.



rolling to my door. Even you must want the ocean at times instead of Henry Street."

Mabel Hyde Kittredge, how tempting—.

[Picks up another letter from the packet]

"Just because you despair over the war—just because you momentarily lose your confidence—I never think you are weak because you dared to be human. Why dear I knew that you were human before Thursday night—"

[Another letter]

"I haven't got to give you entirely to humanity. I am human, too, and tonight I'd keep you up until—well later than Tante Helene

They bring out the best in each other. That's my definition of love. Someone who brings out the best in you.

**H**ENRY STREET is my love. In all the world there isn't any group with more sparkle, more ability to abandon themselves to genuine good times than the people who are not absorbed in their small cosmos. At yesterday's breakfast Florence, Annie, Ysabella, Helene, Docky, Mary, everyone passed my green felt hat around the table. Each woman tossed in a piece of paper. They truly had me foxed. I couldn't imagine what they were up to with the mysterious ceremony. Florence Kelley declared, "An offering for 'That Damned Nurse Troublemaker on the Lower East Side.'" A name Boss Tweed first gave



me during the women's riots for cheaper milk and meat prices. Each woman had researched out three prospective backers to help me make up for the loss that will hit Henry Street if I go to Washington. There are good surprises on this list. The dears. They rally round even though they don't all agree with my anti-militarist position. Florence said, "Dear Lady, if anyone can, you can convince the people on this list what a privilege it is to give to Henry Street. Remember how the governor introduced you in Albany—"She Who Must Be Obeyed."

Tante Helene fussing all the while—"We're worried about you. Stop overdoing. Don't drive yourself until you drop again. You keep us on an even keel."

I must keep going for two months. At least until July. Then to the country and drop if I must. The torture chamber of losing sponsors. Now Leonard Lewisohn is wavering in favor of the war. I can't believe he would walk out on me. He is a true friend to Henry Street. It was a blessed day when he brought his grown daughters down after their mama died. "Dear Lady, my girls are so grieved, please may they work with you for awhile. Teach piano or voice, a dance class or two." Alice and Irene. Alirene I call them. I have my crushes, but I became their big crush.



SARAH DRURY is an artist currently living in New York City.

"We each want to earn our L.D.W. degree." "Leading Lady, we are renouncing marriage to dedicate our lives to the welfare of the East Side immigrants and to our greatest love, the theatre."

Who would have thought their magnificent street festivals with casts of thousands would lead to our beautiful Neighborhood Playhouse on Grand Street.

Lily Lubell, our big darling at the Playhouse, was brought to us by her older brother to perform in the first Street festival in 1912. Lily instantly captured my heart with her first role high up on a ladder as a daisy in the "Three Impressions of Spring." She played a daffodil after that. And has become a featured performer.

Everything we do here creates controversy. We lost two conventionally minded sponsors with our first production. "The dancer's feet were bare! Bare!" I explained, "Irene Lewisohn studied with the great Kongo Son when we were in Tokyo. It was a rare honor, breaking a taboo of tradition that the Noh Theatre is for men only." "Miss Wald, this is civilized America and bare feet are lewd!" Watching Irene's measured, balanced steps with the grave old priest is a moment of eternal beauty in my mind. The stylish uptown crowd enjoys making our theatre a stop on their evening excursions. They pass through Chinatown to the greatest sight of all: "the ghetto." The number of Rolls Royces and Bentleys outside the theatre on a Saturday night! We're sold out for every event. Uptowners can only be assured of tickets if they are sponsors. Maude Adams, Ethel Barrymore, Ellen Terry, Jacob Ben-Ami, our own dear Lily Lubell, and Blanche Talmud, Paula Treuman, and the Indian poet Tagore with his long white flowing beard. One child asked if he was God. I said, "No, but they're good friends." Actors seek something here the white lights of Broadway cannot offer them. A depth of feeling—an appreciation.

Whenever I step foot in the play house my dear brother Alfred flashes before my mind. Alfred and Julia and I performed hundreds of plays on the little backyard stage mama had built.

Alfred. I am forty-nine. You were twenty-five when you drowned. I was eighteen. You would be fifty-six. Alfred was one life. One single life. One precious life lost. One.

And at this very moment, old generals are ordering young men to commit mass murder. Legally. With Russian, French, and English lads on one side of the firing line—and German, Austrian, and Turks on the other. They are given the right to hate. Hatred fairly paralyzes me.

**S**IDES. SIDES. Taking sides. And the sides are always changing. Whose side are you on? Mr. Schiff has refused a loan to Britain and France because it would be shared equally with Russia. And Mr. Schiff will not aid Russia. In 1909 he personally went down to Teddy Roosevelt to demand our government protest the massacre of Jews in Odessa. Now Mr. Schiff is being vilified in the papers here and all over Europe for being pro-German. His entire law firm has been censored and smeared by the press. He even submitted his resignation because his colleagues feel differently about the loan. But of course they refuse his offer to step down.

I was once and only once the recipient of the famous Schiff temper. He filled up my doorframe with his tall presence, eyes icy blue, shaking a holly wreath from off the front door. "Dear Lady, nativity scenes, St. Nicholas, and a holy night angel atop your Christmas tree are tempting Jewish children away from their faith at an impressionable age!"

I felt as if I had been struck! Pointing to the menorahs in the windows I countered, "Mr. Schiff, this is a non-sectarian house. I never lead Jewish children away from their faith. Like you, I believe in assimilation in language and dress—religion is a personal matter. As a member of the Ethical Culture Society, I have nothing but respect for your devotion to the Temple Emanu-El."

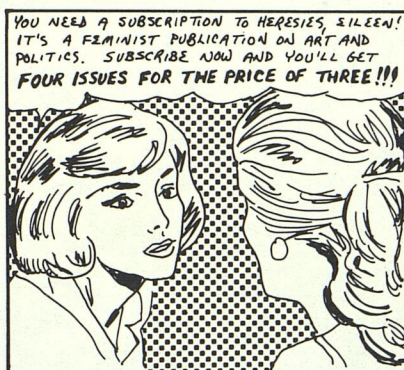
I immediately had the Christmas decorations removed. "Lillian, Lillian, stop. I only object to them at Jewish children's gatherings." "That is not feasible," I countered.

"You know as well as I do that we are an integrated house." "Please, Lillian, do not deprive your gentle co-workers from the pleasure of a festival that is peculiar to them." It was years before I recovered from the anger—the insult. Years before there was another Christmas tree here at the house. Unmerited censure wounds me deeply.



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## UPCOMING ISSUES

### FOOD IS A FEMINIST ISSUE

From kitchen conversations to recipes to food obsessions and avoidance to the politics of food to advertising to images of nurturance and body size. Is food a theme in your art, writing, film, performance? We want both critical essays and creative pieces that attempt to define and reclaim women's farming and cooking heritage and its transmutation in rich societies to women's obsession with how not to eat.

### NEIGHBORHOOD/ COMMUNITY ARTS

From murals to graffiti to street theater, this issue is on art that lives in the community. Send us proposals, visuals, discussions, interviews with neighborhood activists, makers, and viewers. We're particularly interested in examining the relation between the artist and the community, as well as funding questions and cultural friction.

### COMING OF AGE

As the women's movement itself matures, it's time to confront the issue of aging and being elderly. The search for role models, the stratification of generations of women, all feminists, who confront the problems of their time and feel alienation from other periods. How do we cope: with being young, being middle aged; with being old?

### GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Each issue of HERESIES has a specific theme and all material submitted should relate to that theme. Manuscripts should be typed double-spaced and submitted in duplicate. Visual material should be submitted in the form of a slide, xerox, or photograph. We will not be responsible for original art. All material *must* be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope for it to be returned. Please include a short biography with your submission. We do not publish reviews or monographs on contemporary women. We do not commission articles and cannot guarantee acceptance of submitted material. HERESIES pays a small fee for published material. Send all submissions to: HERESIES, PO Box 766, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013.



*Finally, I hope you'll write this issue in such a way that readers will understand what "activism" is really about. I worry when "activists" are lionized that people will say, Oh, that is such an extraordinary person—look at all she does—she must be some kind of Superwoman. We all want models and examples to inspire us. But it seems to me that the single mother who campaigns for daycare is the activist, the woman who works for battered women, the ex-battered woman who turns her experience into a teaching project for school children, the precinct worker, leafletter, petition circulator, the person who supports with letters and money and/or her physical presence the fight for reproductive rights or divestment from South Africa, who opens her doors or her church's to Central American refugees, who takes whatever small but firm bites out of her small or large resources to end religious, racial or political persecution ANYWHERE, and she who gives of some part of herself to prevent nuclear disaster—she is where the action is.*

*Ronnie Gilbert*



Mr. Schiff, you urge me not to go to Washington. You've cautioned me before: "Remember the stalwart sponsors lost when you supported the Lawrence millworkers. The funds withdrawn when you helped organize the cloakmakers union. The angry criticism when you refused to come out against votes for women. I'm only thinking of your health, dear lady. Your appeals for peace will draw fire on Henry Street."

[Begins to write]

"Dear Mr. Schiff, you are one of this country's most generous philanthropists and patriots. I am so sorry, my friend of friends, that the papers continue their vicious attack over your denied loan to Britain and France because it includes Russia. I, with you, encourage a Russian revolution that will remove the tyranny of the Cossacks forever. We are all hopeful that Russia can fulfill this dream of freedom—of one nation to be truly run by and serve its hard working people. What a beacon of hope that would become on this earth. Time will tell. Time will tell.

Last night at Narcissa Vanderlip's dinner party—her sister, Sunset, lives up the Yangtse in China—your unswerving ideals emboldened me throughout the evening.

A group of Wall Street and business magnates cornered me at cocktails. The men always rush to engage me in controversial debate. 'Miss Wald, we want you on the pro-war bandwagon. You are losing your reputation for wisely considered, constructive, sane thinking.' They were that blunt, even though it was a party.

When we sat down to dinner the gentleman on my left launched in, convinced of my error. 'Miss Wald, conscription would be good because the working men do not know how to obey in this country. It would teach them their place and the necessity of doing what they are told.' It was all I could do to keep my Moselle from splashing his walrus moustache. I said, 'To be docile and obey when you are underpaid for someone else's profit would indicate a disturbing level of stupidity.' Forks stopped in mid-air. 'Fortunately our unique system of education teaches people to think and act for themselves.' Conversation stopped in mid-sentence. 'We have to make war obsolete.' 'Miss Wald,' he forced a merry chortle, 'War will always be with us.' Our hostess coughed, warning me off, but it had gone too far. 'I disagree. That is what they said about slavery and it took courageous women and men, Negroes and a thimbleful of our own race, to risk their lives to end the evil practice.' The room stopped breathing.

Narcissa quickly introduced the subject of Enrico Caruso's RIGOLETTO."

[To herself]

There are members of society who would not be found dead at a play. They prefer to sit on their red velvet thrones in their gilt boxes at the Met. The formality and predictability of grand opera makes it safely reliable. Nothing unexpected or "vulgar"—having to do with social issues. Whereas one can never be sure what one will encounter at a play. To walk out of a play changed—that is the essence of the art.

[Back to the letter]

"Mr. Schiff, at least part of my well-earned reputation is still in place: 'It costs five thousand dollars to sit next to That Damned Nurse Troublemaker at dinner.' In the time between the aspic-truffled pate and the poached pears chantilly, the gentleman on my left and the lady on my right accepted the privilege and opportunity to help those served by the Visiting Nurse Service. They agreed a poor patient has as much right as a wealthy

patient to call a nurse. For five years they will each contribute annual salaries for two nurses! But yes, the comfortable people are jittery and try to turn away from all but the Nurse Service."

[To herself]

Why should I have to limit my vision? Blind myself to injustice in order to exist. People must be able to choose a world based on cooperation.

[Looking down, out of the window, startled.]

Sunrise. Tante Helene moves steadily through her Tai Chi. Always steady. Steady on her course. Still time to dress and catch the streetcar!

JANE ADDAMS is called the most dangerous woman in America. She is even labelled a traitor for reporting the facts from Europe's front. Young wounded lads, lying in helpless pain, waiting too long for the field ambulance, called out constantly for their mothers, beseeched their mothers for help. Delirious soldiers again and again possessed by the same hallucination—the act of pulling their bayonets out of the bodies of the men they have killed. One soldier grasped her hand, "Tell them a bayonet charge does not show courage, but madness. We are fed stimulants to charge forward like insane men. Cannot the women stop this war?" Jane Addams receives threats on her life for reporting these facts. Except from soldiers who have been in bayonet charges—they thank her with tear-stained letters.

Little Ernie Brofsky is draft age. I don't want to see a bayonet grasped in his hand or breaking through his ribs. The first time he spent two weeks in one of our fresh air camps, he came running up the hill from his bunkhouse. I was reading THE BLUE-BIRD to Edith Segal who had just turned six. She said on her return to the city after her first trip, "Miss Wald, the buildings swayed like trees for weeks." Well, Ernie flew into my lap. "Teacher. I must have swallowed a tadpole in the lake this afternoon. It's alive inside of me here." Together we discovered the lubb-dup, lupp-dup, lupp-dup alive inside of him here. Living on Grand Street with the traffic roar, he never had the chance to hear the beat-beat-beat of his heart.

Yesterday his mother cried, "Miss Wald, we thought we left beautiful bleeding Europe behind us." The reaction of our Henry Street neighbors to the fact of war is sheer bewilderment. Captain Handy pleaded, "Miss Wald, how can a great, modern, intelligent nation become involved in war?"

The stakes have never been higher. In spite of the risk to Henry Street, I'll find sponsors if I have to go door to door.

[Back to her letter to Mr. Schiff.]

"Mr. Schiff, like you, I will not turn away from my conscience. I must do everything in my power for peace and justice and hope that Henry Street will survive and thrive proudly and all the better for it. Lovingly, Appreciatedly, Devotedly, Steadfastly, signed, Lillian D. Wald."

One hundred thousand French boys died in the first month on the fields of Flanders. President Wilson: No other animal exposes its young to danger. Every species on earth protects its young with its own life. So can we.

## CURTAIN

Lillian Wald: *At Home on Henry Street* is a working draft. The completed play will be produced by Woodie King, Jr. at Henry Street Settlement's New Federal Theatre, opening October 9, 1986.



# QUESTION

## *Has your attitude changed towards nonactivists?*

I used to proselytize. Now I mind my own store.

*Martha Wilson, aka Redy Story*

I've come to believe that almost no one is a non-activist. When a person's self interest is in jeopardy, he or she usually becomes active. Whether it's an upper middle class, upper west sider whose sun is going to be blocked by the next Trump Tower, or an Eritrian who wants the national identity of his or her country to remain separate from Ethiopia; when the desire to live a prideful life is threatened, most people will roll up their sleeves and get to work. If anything, it's this kind of self-interest activism that I've grown to trust more than one based mostly on theory and sympathy. My attitude toward non activists on the other side of my issue is "may they remain non-active." *Marnie Mueller*

It sometimes gets to me that some folks are inactive even when their own backyards are at stake (like the people of Bay Ridge who seem unconcerned that cruise missiles are going to be put right off shore ...not the people who want the cruises, the people who don't care!!). *Virginia Maksymowicz*

I understand increasingly why more working class people are not on the left in this country. Sometimes I think the left is a bit like religion, offering us pie in the sky. I understand perfectly well wanting to make one's life a little bit better, now rather than ideal in the future, which in this country means advancing on the economic ladder a rung vs ditching the whole ladder. *Robin Michals*

The most annoying type of person to me is the one who recognizes the importance of issues; but instead of getting off their collective asses and doing something, pat me on the back and thank me for what I am doing. *Martha Eberle*

No—I always knew that change could be accomplished by a few people. *Deborah Davidson*

I am less quick to judge than I used to be for I prefer the quiet, peaceful life of people who shut off the radio and tend the garden to the "activists" who wear the badge of the Ku Klux Klan, etc. I wait and see. *Christine Robinson*

No: I still get pissed off by arm-chair generals. Also by women who are fond of saying they don't trust other women. *KDF Reynolds*

I have greater understanding of the risks that women take when they speak out. I lost one job because I confronted a male supervisor who was trying to undermine the program that I coordinated. I also have greater understanding of the amount of time that being a wife and mother takes. These commitments make it difficult for women to be as active as they want. *Janet Ruth Heller*

Yes, I am critical of them, particularly as I see women co-opted due to career or financial pressure ("feminist" friends who took jobs in the Army or CIA, for example), or women who refuse to acknowledge the multi-faceted natures of their oppression (Marxist friends who deny their Jewishness, gay women who scorn feminism). In these times I respect pacifism, but not neutrality. *Bonnie Morris*

In one sense I have more patience with people who cannot move past their own problems/situations, who are either crushed or immobilized dealing with their own lives. *Kathy Goldman*

No, I still believe, and recently have begun to say in public talks, "If you're not a part of the solution, you're part of the problem." This is something taken from the sixties which is even more applicable today since we are living under a regime that is doing everything possible to move the country toward fascism, which also affects the fates of millions and millions of people on the rest of the globe. I don't trust non-activists, particularly those who have several oppressed identities, for examples, Lesbians of color. I feel like they're not dealing on a number of levels and also that they're depending on other people to make the quality of their lives better. Not everybody needs to "sacrifice" themselves and every other desire they have in life to work in the movement. In fact no one should sacrifice themselves to be an activist, because that's the wrong mentality, you should love or at least like working for freedom. But I do believe there is something that everybody can do to make change, to improve this situation, even if its to get some different information about what's happening in the world and stop believing the lies they tell on tv and in the papers. *Barbara Smith*

Finally I believe some people do not care. Yet I am still amazed. *Carolyn Mecklosky*

No. I try not to forget how I felt when I was in the closet, my fears then and how I had no idea I would ever "come out." And, on the animal liberation side, I remember how for 30 years I ate animals, so I have no room to point the finger at anyone else. I feel we come to the various forms of self-liberation when we are ready for them. *Elsa Beckett*

Yes, it has become either more aggressive, more cynical, or both. *Marithelma Costa*

I used to feel I could only relate to people who were wholly committed to the work of human emancipation. Now I am less interested in being isolated within the movement. Sometimes I want to dive into the historical examination of my every encounter, it's rootedness in the social order, my ideas about how to change it; sometimes I want to eat popcorn and stare at the cat or the TV set. Often these require two different sets of people. *Susan McCarn*

# QUESTIONNAIRE



The doors of the D train open. A woman steps in and sits at the end of the last car, alone. She looks around her, reaches into her bag, and pulls out poems. She slaps them onto the walls of the train and moves on.

### The Portable Face

There's a variety of faces to choose from  
Here in my briefcase  
Filed neatly with the documents

There's one for business  
one for strangers  
one for friends

I'm going home now  
I need to find my real face  
It's in here somewhere . . .

Erin Green

she lives beneath him

& i don't mean in the apartment below

Lucinda

If you think you shouldn't read  
this poem 'cause it didn't come from some  
reliable  
source, you should check out the  
people who own the newspapers you buy & see  
what they do with your money.

Mi Nombre

i could tell  
the man w/ the gun  
wasnt mad at me  
in particular  
but somehow that didnt matter

wwolf

We first hit the trains of New York City on February 4, 1984—women writers, using pseudonyms, posting our poems on the walls of the trains and stations—hoping to reach everyone: women, men, workers, parents, lovers, children—everyone.

The impetus for the Train-ed Poets project began in the fall of 1982 when Mi Nombre worked as a receptionist for an all-male, racist, and sexist advertising agency. Riding the trains on

her way to work she watched people read the ads on the subway car walls. She soon grew disgusted and angry at the grab-bag view of life the ads depicted, the way they reduced people's lives to which brand of soda or hand cream to buy.

# RELIABLE SOURCES

by The Train-ed Poets

Surrounded daily by language used to exploit and deceive, Mi Nombre wanted to create an alternative. Influenced by the graffiti artists of New York City, she would use the trains and buses as her medium.

Mi Nombre shared the idea with other members of her writing group—Erin Green, Lucinda, and wwolf.

Together, we further developed the concept. We wanted to be read by all the people who might never enter a bookstore—working-class people who are not encouraged to read poetry, or to read—or to think (and who are denied crucial sources of learning and power). And so we broke from the traditional form of the book—a form that has become unapproachable to so many people.

Within two months, we wrote over seventy poems specifically for the Train-ed Poets project. During the next year, the Train-ed Poets filed copyrights, sought legal advice, received guidance from consulting artist Manuel Gómez-Rosa on the use of dry transfer lettering, letterset the poems (spurred on by Lucinda), found affordable printing services, and obtained a post office box.

The final step—actually posting the poems on the subway—was met with a mixture of fear, apprehension, and excitement: Posting poems is not legal. Like many activists of the past and present, we risk arrest for the most dangerous of activities—encouraging people to read, think, and question.

For Erin Green and Lucinda, posting the poems is the most thrilling part of the project. Embracing adventure the way they do, the illegality of the project makes it all the more appealing. "However," says Lucinda, "realities like the murder of Michael Stewart frighten us deeply, and even more horrifying is the fact that the killers were set free. But that's precisely why we're out here doing this."

The first year of posting was hardest for Mi Nombre. Getting on the subway late at night, sometimes alone, having to be equally on guard against muggers and the police, meant confronting some very real dangers. By challenging and, at the same time, respecting her fear, Mi Nombre makes posting a way of asserting her freedom as a woman and as a human being.

Through the hard work, courage, and creativity of our small but fiery group, the poems are on the trains.

Mail started coming in as soon as the poems were up. It meant, yes, we were reaching the people we had set out to reach. A thank-you card to Lucinda said, "Good stuff. Let's see or hear more." Others wrote requesting copies of poems, some shared poetry of their own, many were curious to know more, and still other folks wanted to let us know that a poem on the train had brightened a moment in their day.



Not everyone liked our idea. One letter began, "I must say that I disagree with your method of promotion." But later on in his letter, this writer asked if we would accept his poems for our project. The Train-ed Poets project also received attention from the media: the Franklin Furnace, *Presstime*, New York magazine, WNYC radio, and *Feminine Connections*.

All of the response gave us the inspiration to continue.

Erin Green, to whom much of the mail is written, writes the way she lives—with spontaneity, humor, connecting to others so naturally. She shares from such a personal place that she can, and sometimes does, use lines from her diary.

I am tired  
of being the food for your ego.  
Please find  
another restaurant.  
Erin Green

Lucinda speaks from her gut. With refreshing honesty and sharp vision, she exposes essential truths.

culture  
is all the ways you are,  
so don't ever let anyone tell you to go get some  
culture  
Lucinda

Mi Nombre writes of the people she loves, knowing—and wanting them to know—that their lives are precious and must not be ignored.

Accepting a nuclear war as part of life?  
I guess  
when people  
are made to feel worthless  
we don't demand  
the right to live.  
Mi Nombre

The Train-ed Poets are provocative.

nigger/faggot/bitch/kike/spic/wop  
chink/pollock/whore/slug/mick/dyke  
Sticks and stones will break our bones  
And words like these oppress us.  
Erin Green

We reach out to  
the very people we come from;  
to those who need, yet fear, change.

To break another myth,  
the Equal Rights Amendment  
does *not* mean that women  
will stand up to urinate.  
Lucinda

Our poems make connections where connections have been alarmingly overlooked.

It's no coincidence  
that abortion rights are threatened  
in a time of massive military buildup.  
In war,  
the government will need bodies  
as well as bombs.  
Mi Nombre

Some poems are subtle reminders of often forgotten and misplaced humanity.

am forgetting  
my dreams  
remember  
to write them down  
wwolf

Most, however, are not so subtle.

"When are you going to give me a baby?" he asked.  
i had to remind him that life is a gift  
you give the baby, not the father.  
Erin Green

The Train-ed Poets have posted nearly 4,500 poems in and under New York City. We feel the project has been a success.

MI NOMBRE is the founder of the Train-ed Poets. Her poems recently won prizes in POW's women's poetry contest.

ERIN GREEN has been a pre-school and kindergarten teacher for 12 years. She enjoys helping children express themselves in words.

LUCINDA works to raise reading levels in Harlem, designs non-traditional greeting cards, and writes autobiographical prose.

wwolf has been writing ever since she can remember. She works in an animal hospital.

This article written by Erin Green, Lucinda, and Mi Nombre.

#### Contact:

To contact Mi Nombre and wwolf, please write to *Reliable Sources*, P.O. Box 256, Wakefield Station, Bronx, NY 10466.

To contact Erin Green and Lucinda, please write to Train-ed Poets, Box 336, Jerome Ave. Station, Bronx, NY 10468.



## FEMINIST TAX RESISTANCE

## Joanie Fritz

As far back as Aristophanes' *The Lysistrata*, women have demonstrated their power to affect peace. They rendered Greece's armies hostage by denying them sexual favors and forced the priapic warriors to lay down their arms for "love." Such a strategy no longer works in today's context, for any number of reasons.

Women have traditionally embraced peace organizations comprised of both men and women. Such groups happily embrace women, but not necessarily feminism. In the arena of political activism, women find themselves struggling for visibility and equal recognition among their peers, in addition to working on issues.

Among the politically active movements, there is a fringe element known as the war tax resistance movement. War-tax is the 63% of every tax dollar directed to military expenses. This resistance movement is dedicated to diverting funds from the military by refusing to pay part or all of "owed" taxes.

In looking at how this issue pertains to women, I spoke with some members of a group called Feminist Tax Resistance Assistance about how the issue of taxes in general affects women. FTRA has been in existence for nearly two years. It was formed out of a need expressed by women who had previously felt verbally repressed or ostracized for being "divisive" when expressing feminist concerns within mixed groups. The following are anonymous quotes from FTRA members:

"Tax resistance is a very individual choice. I was involved initially with the peace movement. The way I came to tax resistance was just realizing that it didn't make sense for me to spend my time working for peace and, at the same time, allowing the IRS to take money out of my check to pay for the very thing I was working against—the military.

"The first couple of years I resisted. I didn't pay any taxes or I withheld as close to 100% as possible, other than what was automatically taken from my

paycheck. I filed an accurate return, showing the correct amount owed, and enclosed a letter explaining why I refused to pay. Last year I withheld the 63% marked for the military. I paid by money order rather than check so they wouldn't know where my bank account was and place a levy on it. To cover my employers, I sent a formal, signed memo to the accounting department to be forwarded to the IRS: 'My job situation is temporary. I might change jobs soon. I may be moving shortly. Therefore, I can receive mail at an organization I work with.' And I gave the War Tax Resistance office address.

"Tax resistance is a serious thing. I think about the fact that resisting my taxes means I'll be in a contest with the IRS for the rest of my life, and their power to intimidate is amazing. We all feel it every time we get a threatening letter in the mailbox. But in truth that's their most efficient collection procedure. People get scared and send in the money. The likelihood that you're going to get thrown in jail is almost nonexistent. I'm not going to say it's impossible; but it's usually for side issues, like refusing to give information to a judge or failing to produce records."

In its brief history, Feminist Tax Resistance Assistance (FTRA) has spent a great deal of time defining itself through analysis of its policies and positions. Its basic focus is on feminism and tax resistance, and how these two issues relate. Tax resistance groups in general are usually insular and often have a pacifist or religious focus. Since women earn 59 cents to every dollar a man earns, and since a large percentage of poverty-level heads of households are women, it may be necessary to re-examine the entire taxation system, military taxation notwithstanding.

"We strive for a recognition of this whole thing. We look at what's getting funded, as well as what's not getting funded. And what is the whole tax system, anyway? That's a focus the traditional tax movement has not always had. Traditional tax resistance groups tend to focus on how much money is going for which particular weapon, and whether the world's going to blow up. For my part, regardless of what they do with the money, they're not me. They don't represent me. They're old white men taking this money and doing their stuff."

The FTRA gives interviews on television and radio, publishes public statements and brochures, and holds workshops in tax resistance, most notably for the Women's Study Program at New Paltz University. When asked if visibility has proven to be a risk factor for tax resisters, one woman replied: "They know we're here. We've been in the media, and sure, there's the possibility that they'll see someone's name and decide to pick up on her just because she's out there. But the reason we do this is because we want to educate and encourage others to resist. And the only way to do that is to go public."

FTRA places a strong emphasis on the diversion of tax monies into community and people-related projects and organizations. "Several women from the group either put money into the People's Life Fund themselves or serve on its board, or both," a spokesperson said. "Those of us in that position have made a point that we need a commitment of a certain percent of money to go specifically for women's groups that have limited resources or opportunities for funding." Last year they gave grants of \$300 to groups such as Madre, New York Women Against Rape, Seneca Women's Encampment, and the St. Mark's Lesbian Health Clinic, as well as to food co-ops and homelessness projects. This obviously has a direct impact on the lives of women in lower income brackets.

FTRA also exerts energy in trying to get a couple million people to withhold a small amount from their Federal returns. In this way, a massive public protest could really be felt by the IRS, and it would be done at a very low risk to resisters. "Symbolic protest is an excellent way for people to experience tax resistance. If you start small, then maybe the next year you'll decide not to pay taxes at all."

## Contact

1. National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee, P.O. Box 2236, East Patchogue, New York 11722, (516) 654-6227
2. War Resisters League, 339 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10012, (212) 228-0450. WRL Guide to War Tax Resistance (E. Hademann, ed.), 1986 (\$8 plus postage).
3. People's Life Fund, (212) 675-7084, 929-4833 evenings
4. Feminist Tax Resistance Assistance, (718) 981-5581

JOANIE FRITZ is an actor and a founding member of Protean Forms Collective, a theatre group. She works with New York War Tax Resistance.



I'm delighted to have as my guest today Dr. Gloria Joseph. Dr. Joseph is a black revolutionary-spirited feminist of West Indian parents and she views the world from a black perspective with a socialist base. She has travelled five continents, held various teaching and counseling positions at four universities and is an accomplished photographer, a noted lecturer and author. She has been in the academic world for over fifteen years and, along with many papers

some concern to the political aspects of women on a global basis. That's not to say that I'm against pleasure or luncheons, but I just felt that at this particular time we should take advantage of the opportunity of having groups of women together to put forth at least one single phase of a political aspect of women. So therefore I decided not to attend this "pure pleasure" luncheon but instead to urge the women to make a financial donation to send to the oppressed peoples of South Africa.

Now, let me also say that, prior to this, I had become familiar with Ellen Kuzwayo, who is a 71-year-old South African

woman and activist, and author of a book, *Call Me Woman*. I met her in the film "Awake from Mourning." That film was made in South Africa and was concerned with women's self-help groups that formed and began to become active as a result of the uprising in Soweto.

questions like who the members are now and how others can participate in support of the Sisters of South Africa. But, I think that one of the terrible facts about your—frankly—terrible story is the real unconcern among so many—and I can speak as a white academic—among so many white academics and feminists, to what is going on in South Africa and, indeed, to what is going on in our own country when it comes to the terrible issues of homelessness and poverty and starvation and, indeed, race. I think that in terms of South Africa, it's very hard for us in the United States to get a very clear picture of it because in South Africa we have a totalitarian situation, and totalitarianism depends on propaganda.

There is a tremendous amount of ongoing violence, which is a daily reality for the people of South Africa, and almost none of it gets into the U.S. press. Ellen Kuzwayo and people like Dr. Gloria Joseph, who have been to Africa, are very important connections for us to know more about it. Because the great obstacle, I think, is just knowing what is going on under Reagan's policy of "constructive engagement."

But, first, could you tell us about the founding mothers, the purpose of SISA, and more about Ellen Kuzwayo.

**G.J.**—The founding mothers are colleagues of mine and they are from universities throughout New York City. There's Johnetta Cole and Audre Lorde from Hunter College, Andrea Nicole McLaughlin and Zalla Chandler from Medgar Evers College, and Barbara Riley from New York University. Those five, plus myself, comprise the founding mothers. Then we also have about 50 other members who are active in SISA.

The primary purpose of SISA is fundraising for the oppressed peoples of South Africa and educating the public about the everyday realities of black life in South Africa. To this end, SISA members have spoken at various events and raised funds; these funds are sent directly to two women's self-help groups in South Africa. We have also purchased a copy of the film "Awake from Mourning," which gives a very accurate and graphic picture of everyday life in South Africa for many of the people there. Ellen Kuzwayo is one of the major figures in that film, and the two self-help groups that we send funds to are groups seen in the film.

One group is called the Zumani-

BLANCHE WIESEN COOK is a biographer, journalist, and political activist. She is a professor of history at John Jay College, City University of New York.

**B.C.**—I want to ask you some very specific

# SISTERS IN SUPPORT OF SISTERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

and articles, is the author of a very important book, *Common Differences: Conflicts in Black and White Feminist Perspectives*, written with Jill Lewis. That book was first published by Doubleday and is just being reissued—by South End Press. Gloria is also the author of "The Incompatible Menage A Trois: Marxism, Feminism and Racism," which is in Lydia Sargeant's edition of *Women in Revolution*, also a South End Press Book.

But today I want to talk to Gloria about South Africa because she is the founder of what I think is a very important organization, which will become increasingly so as the situation in South Africa continues to build. That organization is SISA, which is Sisters in Support of Sisters in South Africa. SISA also means mercy in African dialects.

There are a lot of things that we should talk about, but first could you tell us about SISA, how you began to think about this organization and how you started it and what you hope it will do.

**G.J.**—Well, briefly, in terms of SISA's origin and history: In November 1984, while I was working at Hampshire College, there was an event sponsored by the feminist studies group that was titled "A Pure Pleasure Luncheon." I felt that at this time in history, women's groups, particularly on a college campus, should be giving

So, I decided at the "pure pleasure" luncheon that the faculty,

staff and students should make a donation to an Ellen Kuzwayo fund for oppressed peoples. I took an empty coffee can, wrapped a piece of paper around it, and wrote "The Ellen Kuzwayo Fund for Oppressed Peoples". And that is how it began.

Well, the can came back with a meager amount of money and I guess that this was the inception of SISA. I felt that, okay, I've done enough fighting the tide, let me flow with the current. By that I meant, if this group does not have the intensity and depth of my concern for supporting the women of South Africa, I would form my own group of women who would do just that. So I convened a group of black women and we called ourselves the founding mothers of The Sisterhood in Support of Sisters in South Africa.



## AN INTERVIEW BY BLANCHE WIESEN COOK

who needed small amounts of money in order to return to school, in some cases \$25 or \$5, to buy books or to pay a bill. And, as I said, it touched me to the core to hear these letters and to see the women having to make the decision to help, maybe, half a dozen. This is what made me think, okay, here's something that we can do that will directly help all those students whose letters were read. So funds raised for the Maggaba Trust go directly to the Trust to enable more students to attend higher education.

**B.C.**—That's really wonderful. You know there's one thing I think most people don't know, Gloria, and I have to say I didn't know it for a very long time. Although people talk a lot about Soweto, I don't think people realize why the riots in Soweto happened. Actually the riots in Soweto came out of a demand of the students to have smaller classes and more quality education. When they began to protest, it was not yet a boycott; they would picket outside the schools after school, demanding more literacy. And that pre-boycott picket was met by the most vicious violence, machine-gunning the young children of Soweto. So there is something perfect, of course you know, about your fundraising doing so much for literacy. Because what we are really dealing with here is that most of the people of South Africa are not supposed to be literate, are not supposed to be prepared to live independent lives, and are supposed to be essentially nothing more than slaves in the vicious South African economic system, which the U.S. government supports. Until you read details of this economic system, you don't realize the way it absolutely destroys people—I mean, what happens when you don't have enough food, when you don't have enough water to drink. These new settlements that are supposed to be "homelands" for black Africans are nothing more than arid strips of land where people are taken after being removed from fertile lands near water and forests, the Africans' ancestral lands for hundreds of years; Africans are brought to barren lands where frequently there isn't even a water pipe and there is rarely sanitation. This vicious system, which the U.S. is supporting, will require so much effort on the part of so many people to change. SISA is just beginning and I hope that a lot will be done through SISA and



Sue Williamson, CAROLINE MOTSOLEDI, collaged print, 1985

The artist is a Capetown printmaker, whose series of prints, *A Few South Africans*, are of fairly unknown women who have played important parts in the struggle. Caroline Motsuledi has been a prison widow since her husband was jailed for life along with Nelson Mandela.

Soweto Sisters Council. The Council is a group of women who work to establish self-help groups and assist women in those groups with sewing, knitting and dressmaking. Prior to the development of this group, in one village there was just one sewing machine. Ellen Kuzwayo and other African women would teach women in the community how to use the machine, how to knit and crochet, and how to use the products for themselves and for sales. About four or five years later, the Zumani Council was involved in a major building project, which had a meeting room, a room for teaching literacy, and a room where women can knit

and crochet. Some of the funds we raise go directly for this building project. A literacy project is also a major aspect of this Council.

The second group is the Maggaba Trust. This group of women provides financial assistance to high school and university students and assists old-age pensioners and the disabled. They help them with payments on their house rents and give them food parcels throughout the year. In the film, "Awake from Mourning", I was particularly touched by a group of women in the Maggaba Trust sitting around a table and reading letters from high school and college students



through other organizations.

Let me ask you to tell us more about Ellen Kuzwayo.

**G.J.**—There's so much to say about Ellen Kuzwayo. Let me just start by saying that she is an extraordinary woman but, as Ellen says in her book, *Call Me Woman*, there are thousands of African women

relocation centers. In the Philippine War we called them *concentrado* camps, and of course Hitler called them concentration camps. I think that we should not pussyfoot around: that is essentially what they are, on a massive township scale with thousands of people in them.

**G.J.**—Ellen Kuzwayo is also very symbolic

Kuzwayo being responsible for the women and children in these homelands who frequently are alone. I think the other thing most Americans don't realize is that black men in South Africa are taken away from home to work, whether it's for General Motors or for the vast number of computer projects. 70% of South Africa's computer operation is American; 44% of South Africa's oil operation is American. For all you've heard the Reagan Administration say, "well, we're doing good things for the people of South Africa," what happens is that the men are forced to live in another kind of concentration camp, the single sex work hostel. They are removed from their families for weeks and weeks at a time. They may get to see their families maybe one or two weekends a month...

**G.J.**—A year.

**B.C.**—We are really dealing with a slave situation here; there is no reason to give it any other name even if there is some money exchanged.

Gloria, it seems to me that the biggest issue for us here in the United States is that we need to know a lot more, we need to learn a lot more, we need to read your work and the work of Ellen Kuzwayo and the work of so many other people who are in fact beginning now to write about this in a vigorous way. I can recommend an article by Salla Booker, who is a staff consultant with the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa for the U.S. House of Representatives, a black man who recently visited South Africa and pointed out that it was not unlike a Jew visiting Nazi Germany. His article is in *Trans-Africa Forum*, the summer 1985 issue. If people want to know more about South Africa, this is one of the many journals they can read.

We also need to do organizing and fundraising, and that's one of the biggest things SISA is about. Is there any last thing you want to say about SISA and the future?

**G.J.**—I think it's fitting to say that the two organizations, the Zumani-Soweto Sisters Council and the Maggie Muggaba Trust, embody the struggle of black women in South Africa against the dying—and it is dying—racist Apartheid system, their struggle for the reconstruction and creation of a free society. They, the women of South Africa, are carrying on the long tradition of black women's central role in liberation struggles, and SISA carries on the long tradition of struggles by black women in the United States against racism and sexism here and elsewhere.



Nina Kuo, *NO TWO ARE ALIKE*, b/w photo, 11" x 14"

The artist uses photography in her visual works and currently teaches art in Chinatown, NYC.

who are very much of the same ilk. By that I mean their lives are a daily struggle. They are very much concerned with the younger generation.

Incidentally, the film "Awake from Mourning" is related directly to Soweto. The feeling was that the mourning period has to be over, and we have to get on with the business of building our communities.

Ellen is also a victim of the white resettlement of what are called "black spots;" that is, there was land in her family for close to a hundred years, and when the white South African government simply decided that they wanted this land, land that had been her family's for close to a hundred years was no longer theirs. This is part of the removal that you were speaking about.

**B.C.**—Bantustans like Soweto are really

of the women who (in most cases they are African women) are the ones who are left on the reserves, the Bantustans, whatever political name they give them. They are responsible for the livelihood of the old people, of the children and of themselves. Ellen is a social worker and has also been a school teacher. She was imprisoned and, to this date, she still does not know the reason why. As I said, she is 71 and was recently on tour relating to her book; she visited the United States lecturing at many universities across the country. She is now back in South Africa and was the chairperson of the Maggie Muggaba Trust. SISA is in direct communication with Ellen and other women on the Council via letters and, when they are in London, via telephone conversations.

**B.C.**—You talk about women like Ellen

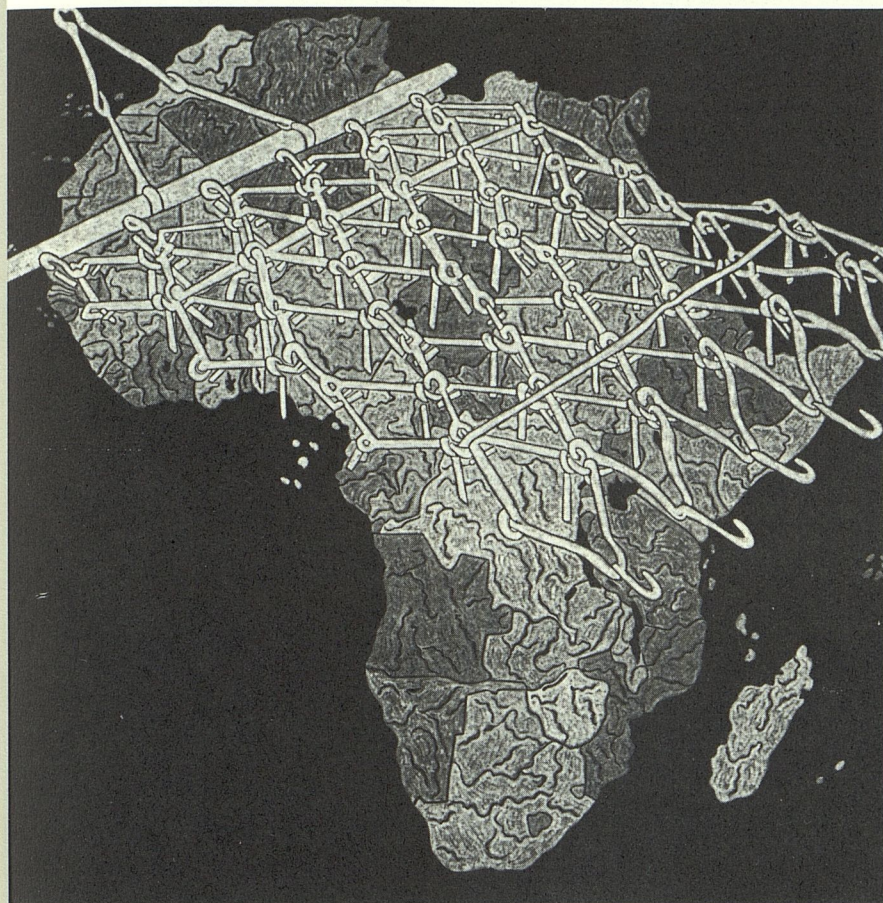


I would like to close by reading a statement from one of the South African women in correspondence with SISA. What she said was "We have a chain that must stay strong and linked with love. The Sisterhood that you are express-

ing to us gives so much support, and we feel strengthened in all our efforts. Your donations will go a long way in assisting our self-help projects, which we hope to spread all over the countries outside Soweto."

I think that's a message the public can hear and, hopefully, will respond to.

**contact:** SISA, 719 Washington Street,  
Newtonville, Mass 02160



**Nancy Chunn, AFRICA, 1983, 108" x 108"**  
The artist lives and works in New York City. Her work is represented by the  
Ronald Feldman Gallery.

## By Susan Ortega

audiences about the seriousness of apartheid's devastating effects on the people of Southern Africa as well as about the United States' complicity in perpetuating the racist regime.

What started out as an idea for one exhibition among several FCA board members evolved into a national fall/winter 1984-1985 apartheid cultural campaign of over 75 exhibitions and cultural events in the metropolitan New York area and cities around the country. It is endorsed by many people and organizations prominent in cultural life as well as by the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid and the African National Congress. Over 400 visual, literary and performing artists created work specifically on the apartheid theme. This spoke to thousands of people in churches, community centers, libraries, schools, galleries, and offices at the same time as their television screens showed apartheid troops occupying Black townships, violently putting down massive protests, and increasing the repression of the liberation movement.

The success of our campaign and the ever growing crisis in Southern Africa spurred us to continue the organization. We spent several months regrouping and attempting to set up an ongoing structure. However, due to the mounting crisis in South Africa, we were constantly asked to put on shows and help organize activities. These necessarily diverted our energies away from long-term organizational goals. Because we felt it a priority

In the three years of Art Against Apartheid's existence we've experienced rewards, challenges and problems that may be common to other cultural organizations and activists. We hope that a brief background and history of our programmatic and organizational issues will be helpful.

Art Against Apartheid started as a project of the Foundation for the Community of Artists (FCA) in response to the growing repression in South Africa and Namibia. It came out of FCA's special May 1983 *Art & Artists* anti-apartheid issue and a need to reach even broader

# ART AGAINST APARTHEID

## A history and some thoughts on an organization



to respond to requests, we continued to put off dealing with serious organizational questions. Shifting from a temporary structure designed to mount a series of events in a concentrated period of time to an ongoing organization proved to be a challenge.

We also were now working with fewer people due partly to burn-out from the fall activities and partly to the fact that many had made a commitment to work only through the campaign. During the 1984 build up, a committee structure with representatives serving as a coordinating committee oversaw the work and decided on policy. As we moved into 1985, the coordinating committee became more and more the group that did the actual work instead of coordinating the committees.

Another problem we faced was how to get people involved. In 1984 we held regular general meetings where people could plug into committees. With the increased amount of requests and fewer people, we found it difficult to take time out to hold general meetings. We now had to find different ways to involve people.

In mid-1985 we mutually agreed to end FCA's sponsorship. Art Against Apartheid had to decide whether to incorporate as a non-profit organization and seek tax-exempt status or to function as a purely activist group. After a great deal of debate and investigation, which took the good part of a year, we decided to go the non-profit route, as that fit best with our goals and enabled us to receive tax-exempt contributions.

Another serious obstacle was a growing lack of the administrative backup to continue ongoing work. Art Against Apartheid is an all-volunteer organization with almost all of its activists having full-time jobs in addition to pursuing their art work. Even picking up phone messages, dealing with the mail or sending out minutes sometimes became troublesome. The need for a paid staff person was agreed upon early; having the funds for that person's salary was and still is another matter.

Early on in our reorganization discussions we agreed on the following goals to guide our work:

1. To use the medium of art to help create a greater public awareness about the issue of apartheid and the situation in Southern Africa.

2. To encourage the creation, display, publication and distribution of visual, literary and performing art pieces which examine apartheid critically.

3. To focus our cultural efforts on a grass-roots level by working with community organizations and centers, religious centers, schools and universities, union, and labor organizations as well as cultural centers and galleries.

4. To be a cultural resource for educational groups and organizations working around Southern African issues.

5. To provide a cultural/educational mechanism through which artists can contribute their work to groups working on education around, Southern Africa, issues.

However, other than these goals and a few procedural guidelines, little was decided about internal organizational needs. We continued to put serving the community first over setting up a firm structural base and by-laws around which to work.

Throughout 1985 and into 1986, Art Against Apartheid ran several successful programs. We sent a large exhibition through the east coast, organized an artist protest at the South African consulate, participated in demonstrations, performed and made banners for the Columbia University Blockade and spoke at several United Nations anti-apartheid conferences. In November, we held "South Africa Will Be Free" in which over 20 poets and musicians performed to raise money for a South African artists' scholarship fund. In December 1985 we mounted an exhibition at Brooklyn's Boricua College with work specifically created on the themes: Apartheid and the family; divestment; and parallels, apartheid/U.S. racism. For Black History Month 1986, we held an exhibit at Brooklyn Medgar Evers College. Our February Limelight Club event provided educational information about Southern Africa to a totally new audience. There is also a California Bay Area Art Against Apartheid that has been carrying on similar activities on the West Coast.

One of the most ambitious of our projects saw the light in March 1986 with the publication with IKON magazine of *Art Against Apartheid: Works for Freedom*.<sup>1</sup> Over 150 visual and literary artists contributed work to this unprecedented anthology to which Alice Walker wrote the introduction. The volume also has a special Southern African section of interviews with leading anti-apartheid figures, poets and photographers.

Future plans include events centered around the anthology and other traveling exhibitions, and a material aid campaign to raise money for the art supplies, musical instruments, books, films and video equipment needed by cultural

workers in the liberation movement. We hope that any readers who can contribute to this effort will get in touch with us. We are also interested in starting a children's project.

At present, Art Against Apartheid continues to have a very committed multiracial coordinating committee and group of volunteers who have a range of political and organizational experiences. Working together has been a learning and growing experience for all involved.

We still face several organizational challenges: a need for paid staff; a need to find creative ways of involving people who can devote major time in a coordinating capacity as well as of finding volunteers who can take on projects, work or committees without getting burnt out from too many meetings; a need to sharpen our goals and tighten our organizational structure and of course a need to develop a more solid approach to fund raising.

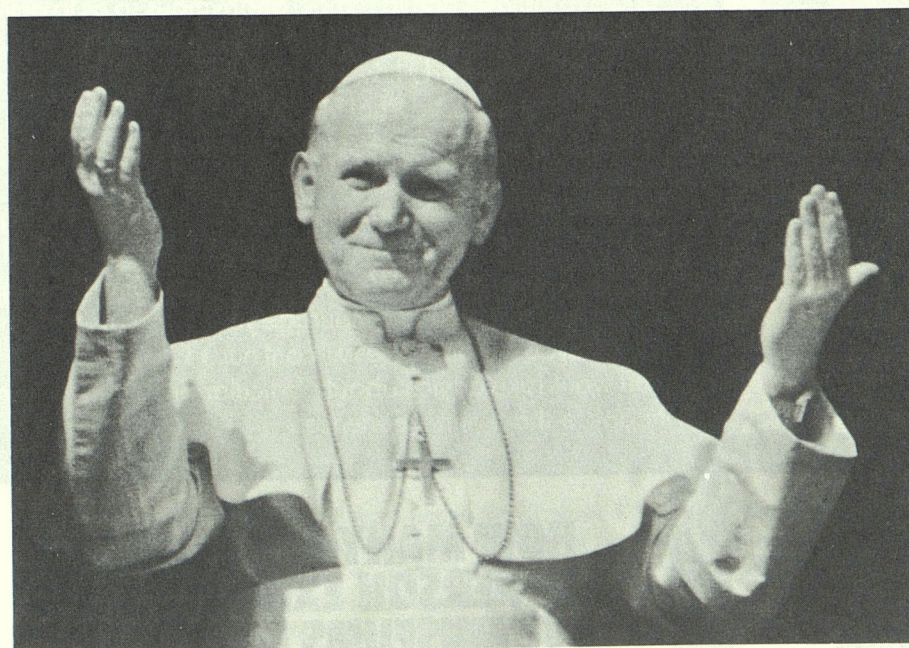
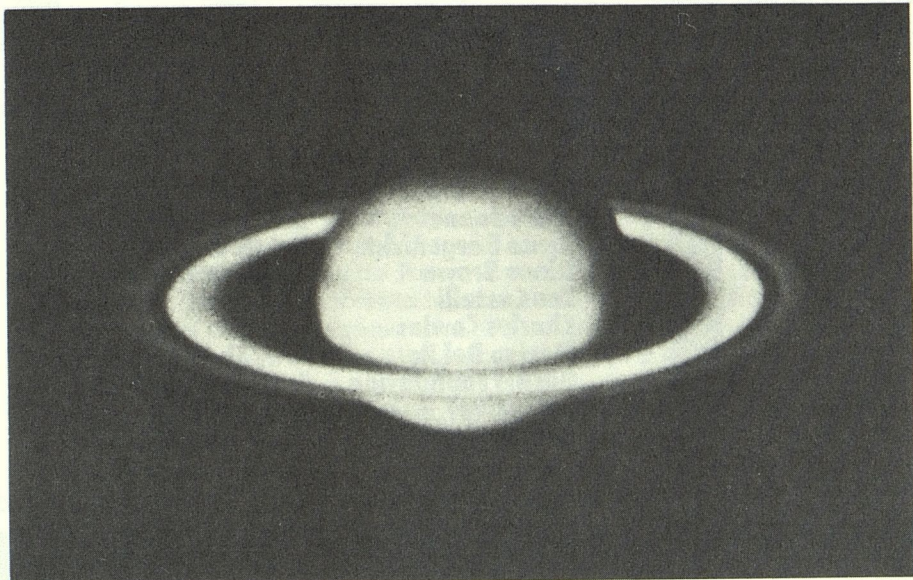
In evaluating our work over the past three years we can say that the expression "A picture is worth a thousand words"—if we understand "picture" to mean the arts in general—has been reaffirmed a thousand times over. In each community we have worked with, in each gallery and community center, we have been reassured of the power of art to explain, educate and engage the viewer and the listener in the experience of others. We have met with people young and old who did not know what apartheid is and who go away changed by the knowledge. We have met with many who, knowing much or little about the situation in Southern Africa, have wanted to help to make a change, to contribute their time, their energies, their creative abilities, whether they could give one hour or several hundred hours.

Art Against Apartheid demonstrates the commitment on the part of U.S. artists to work in an educational capacity as cultural workers. As we move towards our fourth year we seek your suggestions and involvement in working for a free South Africa and Namibia. Please send comments and contributions to Art Against Apartheid, 280 Broadway—412, NYC 10007 or call (212) 222-5567.

<sup>1</sup>This volume is available at \$7.50 plus .75 postage from Art Against Apartheid, 280 Broadway, Suite 412, NYC 10007.

SUSAN ORTEGA is a visual artist who focuses on murals. She is co-director of Art Against Apartheid and vice-president of the Foundation for the Community of Artists.





Look. That's "Susanna and the Elders."  
She's naked in the garden.

*She's very beautiful?*

Yes. They lusted after her. They waited,  
day after day, for the time when they  
could take her.

*The sun is overhead. Susanna had gone  
into the garden?*

Yes. She wanted to bathe because it was  
hot. She sent her servants to close the  
garden gates.

*She was alone?*

No. The elders, they were hiding. They  
were watching and waiting.

*They rose and ran towards her. They  
overpowered her?*

Yes. They said, "We are alone and desire  
you. Lie with us. If you refuse, we will  
plot against you."

*She sighed?*

Yes. "I am hemmed in on every side. If  
I lie with you, I will die. If I don't, I will  
not escape your hands. I choose not to  
do it."

*She cried out?*

Yes. But the elders shouted against her.  
They roused the people who gathered to  
judge her.

*The elders ordered her unveiled?*

Yes. They wanted to feed upon her beauty.  
They put their hands on her head.

*They testified against her falsely?*

Yes. Susanna cried out, "These men have  
borne false witness against me. And now  
I'm to die. Yet I am innocent."

*But the people believed the elders?*

Yes. Because they were the elders. And  
so the people condemned her.

Ellen Rumm, *NATURAL HAZARDS* (from *Susanna and the Elders*), 1981, photo collage and text, 40" × 60"

ELLEN RUMM is an artist living in NYC. Her  
sculpture and installations explore the pas-  
toral tradition from a feminist perspective.



# GUERRILLA GIRLS

## CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

### WHAT DO THESE ARTISTS HAVE IN COMMON?

Arman  
Jean-Michel Basquiat  
James Casebere  
John Chamberlain  
Sandro Chia  
Francesco Clemente  
Chuck Close  
Tony Cragg  
Enzo Cucchi  
Eric Fischl  
Joel Fisher  
Dan Flavin  
Futura 2000  
Ron Gorchov

Keith Haring  
Bryan Hunt  
Patrick Ireland  
Neil Jenney  
Bill Jensen  
Donald Judd  
Alex Katz  
Anselm Kiefer  
Joseph Kosuth  
Roy Lichtenstein  
Walter De Maria  
Robert Morris  
Bruce Nauman  
Richard Nonas

Claes Oldenburg  
Philip Pearlstein  
Robert Ryman  
David Salle  
Lucas Samaras  
Peter Saul  
Kenny Scharf  
Julian Schnabel  
Richard Serra  
Mark di Suvero  
Mark Tansey  
George Tooker  
David True  
Peter Voulkos

THEY ALLOW THEIR WORK TO BE SHOWN IN GALLERIES THAT SHOW NO MORE THAN 10% WOMEN ARTISTS OR NONE AT ALL.

SOURCE: ART IN AMERICA ANNUAL 1984-85

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM GUERRILLA GIRLS  
CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

### THESE GALLERIES SHOW NO MORE THAN 10% WOMEN ARTISTS OR NONE AT ALL.

Blum Helman  
Mary Boone  
Grace Borgenicht  
Diane Brown  
Leo Castelli  
Charles Cowles  
Marisa Del Re  
Dia Art Foundation  
Executive  
Allan Frumkin

Fun  
Marian Goodman  
Pat Hearn  
Marlborough  
Oil & Steel  
Pace  
Tony Shafrazi  
Sperone Westwater  
Edward Thorp  
Washburn

SOURCE: ART IN AMERICA ANNUAL 1984-85

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM GUERRILLA GIRLS  
CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD



**WOMEN IN AMERICA EARN ONLY 2/3 OF WHAT MEN DO.  
WOMEN ARTISTS EARN ONLY 1/3 OF WHAT MEN ARTISTS DO.**

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM GUERRILLA GIRLS CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

Guerilla Girls was formed in 1985 to combat sexism in the art world. We decided to use tactics and strategies appropriate to the 80's and to remain anonymous so as to draw attention to issues, rather than personalities. Beginning last spring, we plastered New York City's Soho and East Village with a series of posters that bluntly state the facts about sexual discrimination in galleries, museums and art writing.

We would like to encourage people in other cities to begin Guerrilla Girls cells. Each branch takes its own name and initiates its own events. We would like to remain in dialogue with all the groups and encourage you to send us examples of what you're doing. We will continue to do the same. If you would like advice about particular problems, we are happy to share our experiences.

### THESE CRITICS DON'T WRITE ENOUGH ABOUT WOMEN ARTISTS:

John Ashbery  
\*Dore Ashton  
Kenneth Baker  
Yves-Alain Bois  
\*Edit de Ak  
Hilton Kramer  
Donald Kuspit  
Gary Indiana  
\*Thomas Lawson  
\*Kim Levin  
\*Ida Panicelli

\*Robert Pincus-Witten  
\*Peter Plagens  
Annelie Pohlen  
\*Carter Ratcliff  
Vivien Raynor  
John Russell  
Peter Schjeldahl  
Roberta Smith  
Valentine Tatransky  
Calvin Tomkins  
John Yau

Between 1979 & 1985, less than 20% of the feature articles & reviews of one-person shows by these critics were about art made by women. Those asterisked wrote about art by women less than 10% of the time or never.

SOURCE: ART INDEX READERS GUIDE; ARTFORUM; ART IN AMERICA; ART+NEWS; VILLAGE VOICE; NEW YORK TIMES

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM GUERRILLA GIRLS  
CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

### HOW MANY WOMEN HAD ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS AT NYC MUSEUMS LAST YEAR?

Guggenheim	0
Metropolitan	0
Modern	1
Whitney	0

P.O. BOX 1056 NEW YORK 10276



# QUESTION

***When have you been most effective?***

When the odds against me aren't too great. I did good work in the Peace Corps, but it was destroyed in the end by my own government and, by being destroyed, did more harm than good. My work in East Harlem during the Poverty Program was very successful. We had money, access to legislators and a president, and ways of infiltrating bureaucracies. When I worked for New York City under John Lindsay, if I were tricky enough, I had access to money and power that I could use in defense of the programs I supported, e.g., the Panthers. We did some amazing work that way. At WBAI we had the power of the media at our disposal and a populace that was open to hearing what we had to say. We had great influence on the course of things. Sometimes too great I now think, but that's another issue.

*Marnie Mueller*

Probably during actions. Preparations for action make us forget the very little influence we have.

*Vrouwen Tegen Kernwapens, The Netherlands*

I have been most effective in times of collective participation. When individual combat fused with the community's. When there is no separation of the "I" and the "we", the experience of communal action takes on a sacred quality.

*Silvia Malagrino*

Working in small groups with a pressing deadline—when you just push to get something done real fast.

*Joyce Kozloff*

**When the issue has been one involving how my life will be lived.**

*Maureen Lahey*

I have been involved in food/hunger issues for 20 years. Effectiveness has come from sticking to an issue and becoming very knowledgeable about it—knowing more than the enemy. Whenever we have been able to involve people who are affected by the particular issue or problem, added our expertise and together caused change.

*Kathy Goldman*

In meetings and public speaking, and always when I am most honest...when I lay myself on the line...when I am filled with feeling as well as idea...when I talk not only about my political analysis of a choice of action but about why it will change my life in this moment.

*Susan McCarn*

When I talk, write or teach; I'm not much of a marcher-zapper.

*Linda Nochlin*

I have been most effective when presenting the work of other Latino artists in their community because these artists were able to see the quality of work they were capable of doing. While appearing on panels with other third world women artists, I have brought white women to see the unusual experiences of being bicultural in this society.

*Sophie Rivera*

When I have no emotional investment in being opposed. Women who had been illegally denied unemployment insurance (EDD/Boren—California) had an unfairly short deadline to apply for benefits they should have received in the first place. While the decision affected millions of women, they had only the summer months of 1985 (May through August) to apply. No one in local media was covering it, so I called TV assignment editors and told them. It took me three hours one day and two the next on the phone. The story was on the 3 local news stations (ABC, NBC, CBS) with Belva Davis of KRON (NBC) going into advocacy journalism with her anchor woman.

*KDF Reynolds*

When I have been arrested or jailed, have been most effective in getting other people's attention and getting them to move. It's like I'm moving over and making a space for another to fill.

*Macy Morse*

When my artworks have reached people, making them feel something they didn't know, they could feel, making them see something they couldn't see otherwise.

*Bonnie Donahue*

Avoiding didacticism, being funny.

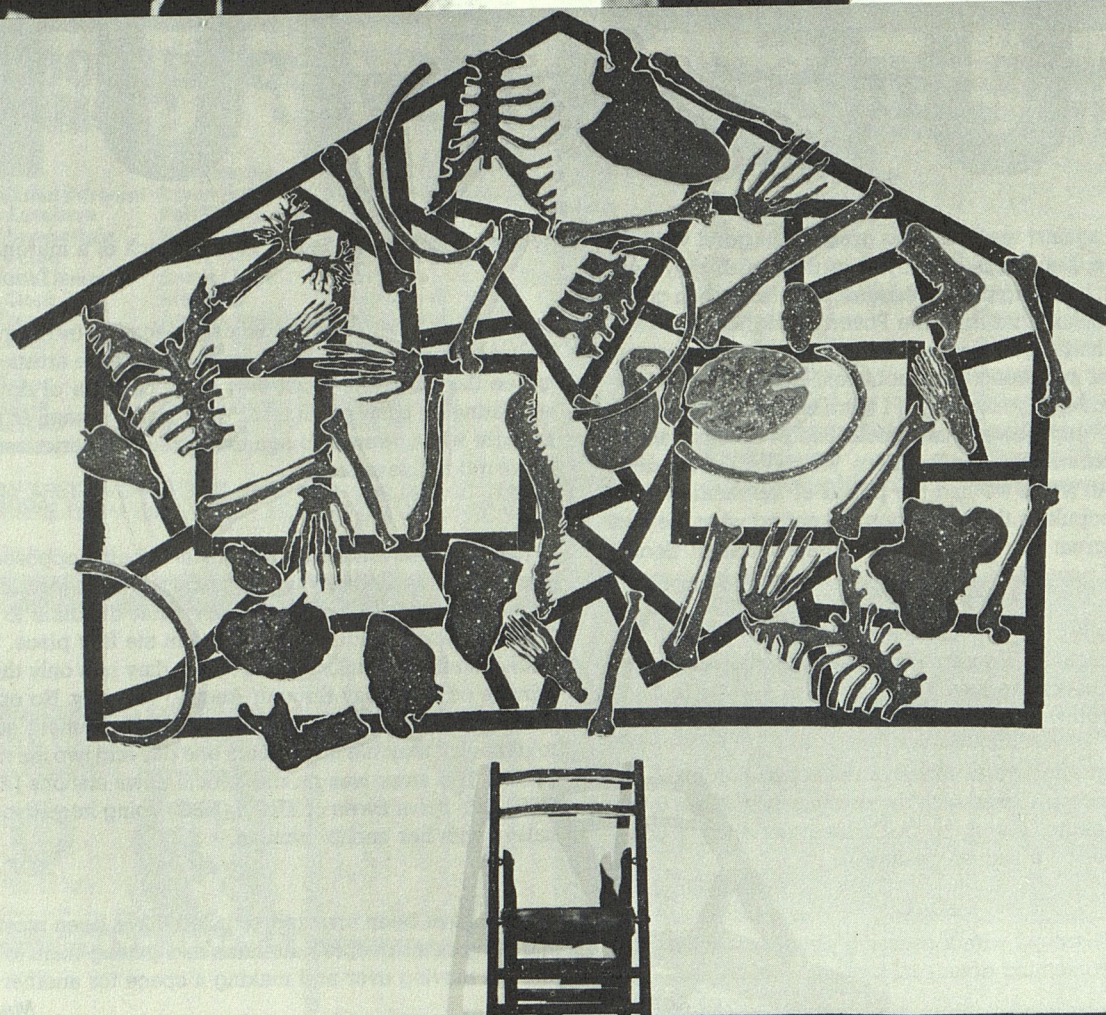
*Martha Wilson*

Who knows? I believe in every little bit making a difference. When I remember my awakening activism and even the impetus to continue to be active, I recall all the different comments, posters, phrases that set me off. I feel most effective when I am totally convinced about what I am doing and have at least some support from others.

*Janet Burdick*

# QUESTIONNAIRE





Kathy Grove, *HINDSIGHT* and detail, 1983, mixed media, 84" x 84"

KATHY GROVE is an artist living and working in New York City.





Donahue/Wada

In 1969, I hadn't a political clue in my head—not a thought of politics. The thing was, the troubles started in 1969, and I got married in 1969. There is no way in the North that you can divide your personal life and your political life. Even people who aren't involved, they see soldiers standing on the street. If their husbands are politically active, they're being raided. If their husbands are locked up, they are affected. Their private life is a reflection of the political situation.

Every time Ronnie was arrested, it was on a 7-day order. People used to say, well, you must be used to him being arrested by now. But, you never get used to it, because each time he is lifted, he might end up charged and away for a lot of years. There's no way to know. If it's a 7-day order, you have to wait, and some wives go through mental agony, because there's so many times when they're beaten up in there. One time in 1971, Ronnie was put on the floor and they hooded him. He doesn't know what they used, but he had "UVF" hacked into his arm. It happened at Castlereagh, during interrogation. So when he came out, he made an official complaint about it. Then he was charged and convicted of making malicious allegations against the police. He was fined £200, but then he went to High Court, and the judge said that there was no way the wounds were self-inflicted. The charges against Ronnie were dropped, but the judge stopped short of saying that the RUC did it.

He was constantly being threatened by the RUC; because of his Protestant background, they just couldn't believe he would be a Republican. A couple of the Specialbranchmen at Castlereagh went to school with Ronnie, and they'd say: "If anything happens to my family, I'm going to hold you personally responsible."

BONNIE DONAHUE is a video artist based in Cambridge, Mass. She is currently working on a documentary on South Africa.

# belfast control zone

**AN INTERVIEW WITH  
SUZANNE BUNTING**

**By Bonnie Donahue  
and Werner Wada**

Believe it or not, that was the first time he'd ever been arrested—the time he was tortured. But after that, he was continually arrested. They arrested him three times in two weeks once. In fact, that was a couple of months before he was killed, in August. He was arrested on a Friday and held for three days, then he was arrested on the following Friday, and on the following Friday again. A lot of it was just harrassment, but sometimes they'd just want him off the street, like on August the 9th, the Anniversary of Internment. They would lift him on a 3-day order so he couldn't participate in demonstrations, then they'd release him.

Ronnie was surely killed by Loyalist paramilitaries, but they could only have done it with information given to them by the Army or the RUC Specialbranch—but it was most likely the Special branch, because they knew the house inside-out.

They bashed the door in with a sledgehammer, and they were up the stairs instantly. If your life depended on it, and you had to jump to bolt the door, how long would it take you? About a second. But they were so quick...they were up my stairs. There were seven doors at the top of the stairs, and unless you knew where our bedroom was, it would be the last door you'd see. Ronnie and I were pushing the door, trying to close it. They were so quick, they had gotten there before we could get the bolt on. There were two of them on the other side—I had seen them just as we reached the door. They were all dressed in khaki—khaki ski masks, with just the eyes cut, they had Khaki pullovers, army-style, with suede shoulderpads and suede elbows, ribbed. They had khaki trousers, tucked in their boots—it was almost like an army uniform. So, we were trying to shut the door—apparently I was screaming. I

WERNER WADA is a photo and video installation artist from New York City. He teaches at Ramapo College of New Jersey.



must have been thinking if I scream loud enough, somebody would hear it—maybe somebody would get help or phone, or something.

Then I heard a couple of shots. I thought they were shooting through the door, and I jumped back. I hadn't realized I had been hit on the hand. He'd got his gun blindly around the door, and my hand got it. You know, it was nerves—you don't realize—I didn't know I'd been shot. I fell back then. I knew then that Ronnie had no chance. There were two of them, and they both were armed, and I couldn't do anything to help him,

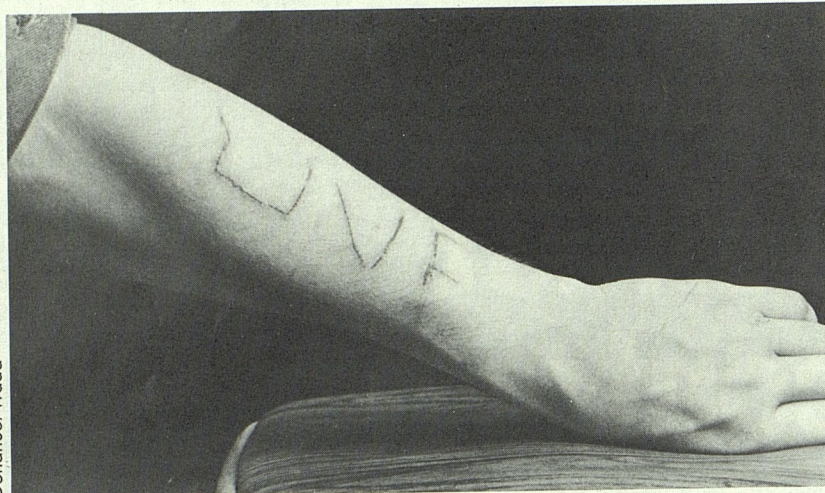
to have a go at me, but he couldn't break loose. The other one was at the top of the stairs—they were so professional—because with me struggling with his friend, he was shooting at me and got me twice more. He hit me once through the collarbone and the other went through my right armpit. Well, then I was hit three times, and I had to fall back. I couldn't hold him. He climbed over me then, and he went down the stairs, much the way the Brits would—one went down forwards, and the other went down, you know, covering, looking backwards. I was at the top of the stairs, against the

was there. He died afterwards, because his lung had been perforated, and he bled to death. The two other children ... the two girls came out of the back room. Fionna was seven and Dierdre was three, and Dierdre was screaming, and Fionna ... I don't know how she did it, she was only a wee seven ... she was squealing and crying ... but she was still a bit sensible. I had my back to them, you see, and Fionna kept saying: Mommie, what will I do? What will I do? I tried to tell her. I tried to say: "Get out and get help", but with the bleeding, she couldn't understand me, and I had to say it three times. She stood there and waited 'til I had said it three times and when she understood what I had said, she had to climb over her daddy's body ... he was across the top of the stairs, and she had to climb over him, and go down the stairs. So she went over next door, then all the neighbors came running in, and they were horrified, you know, to walk in and see two dead men and me. I told them to get the children ... I wanted them away.

I never lost consciousness. I didn't want to be touched or moved, because I knew how bad my injuries were. The nurses were holdin' me up and moving me at different angles, because before I could be operated on they had to know what sort of injuries I had. So, it seemed ages, and they put me in a small room, and I kept asking to be put out, and they kept saying: "Not yet". I was shot at half-past three, and they gave me anesthetic at quarter past five.

He said the reason he couldn't was because I was six and a half hours in the theater, and he said it was very dangerous to have someone under an anesthetic for such a long time. He said if I'd been a smoker, I'd have been dead, that my lungs had to have been strong in order to hold up to six and a half hours of anesthetic, and that if they had given me anesthetic earlier, I'd have been out too soon, and may not have survived. There were three different teams that worked on me. One of the teams worked on my mouth. They spent three hours working on my mouth, and my tongue. They had to stitch all my gums, stitching my mouth up, and then I had to have a tracheotomy, and fixing my hand, and all, they stitched it there. It took six and a half hours.

They didn't know for the first forty-eight hours if I was going to live or not. It was touch and go, but after the first forty-eight hours or so, the doctor said I started to show some improvement, and I was out of danger then. But, I was in the



Donahue/Wada

you see? In my mind, I thought: "I don't want to see him being shot". I knew he was going to die. I didn't want to have that picture in my mind ... for the rest of your life, you'll see your husband actually gunned down. So I fell back on the bed and just turned away. I wasn't looking then. I expected to hear maybe two shots—because that's all it would take to kill him. But, they kept ... bang, bang, bang ... shot after shot, and I couldn't understand what was happening, and I looked up. Well there must have been a bit of a struggle, because Ronnie was no longer in the doorway, he was lying across the landing. I could see the bottom half of his body, and this *bastard* is standing over him, pumping him with bullets ... continually firing into his body ... and it was obvious that he was already dead, but my mind just really blew then ... I just lost control ... the only thought in my mind then was: "Just leave him alone". So I jumped up ... I don't know how I managed to grab him with my hand all shot up, but I grabbed his jersey and got a good hold of him, and I was shouting at him: "Leave him alone! Leave him alone!" I was trying to pull him, trying to get him away from Ronnie's body. He was trying to get 'round

wall. I looked down, and I could see Ronnie was dead, because his body was completely white, and his eyes were open, staring, so I knew he was dead then, and they were on their way out ... and the one I had been struggling with, he just lifted his gun then, and shot me in the mouth. So, I thought then, I was dying. When you are hit in the mouth, you don't usually survive, and all I could think about was the children, you know? So, when I was shot in the mouth, then, the blood started to go into my lungs. I was drowning, I couldn't breathe, because of the blood, and I had to get down and around to get the blood up. So I turned 'round and got down, and the blood was coming up, and what I thought was bones ... I kept spitting things out ... was my teeth. I lost all my teeth then, and when I was bent down, I was then facing into the baby's room, and there was a single bed and the baby's cot, and the baby was standing in his cot, having hysterics. He'd seen the whole thing. He's 15 months old, and he saw everything. And he was hysterical. I could hear this funny strange noise ... gasping ... and I remember seeing then ... it was Noel's feet. They'd gotten Noel too. I'd forgotten in all the panic that Noel



intensive care for ten days, and after that I was in for four weeks all together. The doctors were amazed that I managed to recover so quickly. I had to learn to start swallowing again, because I was fed through a tube with all my throat damage. I can't eat without something to drink, because it sticks there, you know? And a lot of times if I am irritated, with a tickle in my throat, I cough and you think I'm gonna choke—you're gaspin'—it doesn't happen too often, but it frightens people sometimes. But, by and large, all things considered, by the injuries I had, I came out of it sort of pretty reasonable. At the time, I'd have thought that I'd be left with, you know, really horrible injuries.

My spine is still damaged—I have to see the specialist to consult him again in a couple of months. My own doctor says he doesn't think there is anything that can be done about the spine. It's just too painful, you know, if I overdo it. If I work too hard, I have to have a rest. There are pieces of it missing.

The consulting doctor has said that the bullet had gone into my mouth, had knocked my teeth out and part of my tongue, and my whole mouth was badly damaged. The bullet had hit my spinal column and ricocheted across and rested beside the main artery. He said if it had hit the main spinal column dead on, it would have travelled to the brain and I'd be dead. You also could be paralyzed from the neck down. There have been a number of people in Belfast shot who are paralyzed from the neck down. So, he said it was lucky it was touching the main artery. It was actually leaning against it. It could have punctured it if it moved just a fraction more. But, I recovered pretty quickly, you know: four weeks.

When I came out of hospital, I got the children back and I went back to the same house because I had all my friends and neighbors that I knew were there. I didn't want to go to a strange environment, you know, where you know nobody. And I had to have friends stay with me for about a month, and I had to have friends stay with me at night, in case I needed help during the night. Because when I lay down, I was wearing the neck brace, and when I lay down—I wore one of those high surgical collars for about two and a half months afterwards—I even had to wear one when I was sleeping, so it meant that if I woke up in the middle of the night, I couldn't get up. So I went to the same house, but the children were very upset for a while. The baby was fifteen months, and I thought

he would be alright, but when I tried to put him in the same room again, he took convulsions—he was screaming, he went purple in the face, he was chokin' you know? He just panicked when I put him in his crib in that room. He'd play in that room during the day, but when you'd put him in the cot in that room, he just went completely hysterical—just stiff, rigid. And I took him out, I thought it was my imagination, and I'd put him back a couple of hours later, and he'd just do the same thing again, he just took hysterics. You see, he'd seen his father killed and he'd seen Noel killed. Noel was lying beside him on the floor, and he'd seen me shot, you know, and it must have registered. So, I had to move his cot into another room. He's in with the girls now. He won't sleep in that room. I never tried him back there again. I didn't want to upset him.

Dierdre is three and she cried for her Daddy for three weeks. She kept saying, you know, she wanted her Daddy back. Both her grandparents told her that her Daddy was in heaven, and that he wouldn't be back. So she said she wanted to go to heaven to see her Daddy. And I says, you can't you know—it's only dead people that can go there. She was only

that she doesn't want me to die. And I say, "I won't die, I'm young." I say, "I won't die 'til you're grown up." So she says, then: "I don't want to grow up then, Mommy, I don't want you to die." I went out once and left her with a neighbor. I told her I was going to the Post Office. I was gone about an hour, and when I came back she was sitting on the doorstep screeching her head off. Normally, she's a very stable child but she was screeching. She thought something had happened to me because I was gone for so long. She is just completely obsessed with the idea that something else is going to happen to me. It left her insecure. So, that's the three children.

People do one of two things here: they end up on Valium or they become stronger. Becoming a feminist and getting involved in women's politics helped me tremendously, because it gave me an interest outside of Ronnie's activity. Becoming aware of myself as a woman and as a feminist, gave me an awareness of my own situation. Before, I always considered myself just in terms of Ronnie and the family. Now I mainly think more of myself, and it gave me much more strength because when Ronnie died, I was able to stand on my own two feet



Donahue/Wada

three, and she couldn't understand, you know, that he couldn't come back, and that she couldn't go to heaven. So she cried off and on for about three weeks. There's nothing you can tell a three year old to comfort her. But after a while, she just sort of accepted it. But, the oldest one is seven, and she knows what happened. She knew that we'd all been shot, you know? So, this is ten months now, and she's still getting upset. She gets very upset about me. She seems to be very possessive. Not possessive that she'll follow me everywhere, but when I go out, she worries that I'm not coming back. She's worried about me dying—she says

with my children. I knew it would be hard, but the prospect didn't terrify me as much as it might a woman who wasn't a feminist. After I was released from hospital, I wasn't physically well for about 6 months. I got invitations for holidays, so I went to Germany for a month, and to New Orleans for two months. When I came back, I became more politically active myself. I could accept Ronnie's death, but I could never accept him dying for nothing. One way to insure that was to help the struggle to continue—to help keep it going. So now I go to England and to the United States, on speaking tours.



From my first glance at June Beer's apartment, it could have been in Greenwich Village instead of in the remote tropical jungle town of Bluefields on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. In the main room where June eats, paints and entertains, the white walls are covered with an international collection of paintings and drawings. Beside her easel and a table containing oil paints and brushes is a group of canvases awaiting her impressions. An eclectic collection of books, both Spanish and English, ranging from poetry to politics and history, are neatly arranged on shelves throughout her apartment.

After four years of annual travel to Nicaragua, between 1981 and 1984, to interview artists about the relationship between their art work and their revolutionary experiences, I was still missing an important link. I had never visited Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast, nor met the well-known and respected artist June Beer. In 1985, I was determined to meet her and was not disappointed. June Beer's life and paintings reflect five decades of Nicaragua's history from a unique Black and feminist perspective.

June is an attractive woman who fills a wide rocking chair to capacity. For five intensive days we talked together on the balcony of her apartment overlooking a bustling market, her stories punctuated by her wonderful warm laughter.

As yet, June Beer is the only painter who has emerged from Bluefields, a town of 40,000 people, to receive national and international recognition. Self-taught, she has forged her own artistic pathway, emulating neither the abstract tendencies of most Nicaraguan professional artists nor the detailed landscape style of the popular "primitive", self-taught Solentiname artists.

Born in 1933, June has dedicated herself since 1956 to documenting her Black heritage in the daily life of her people. They were first brought as slaves from Africa to Jamaica and Haiti, and then to Nicaragua's Atlantic coast region in the 1600's. Nicaragua's Black, English-speaking population is centered mostly in the port town of Bluefields. The Rama, Suma and Miskito Indians, each speaking their own dialect, are another component of the population of the Atlantic Coast, which stretches from the Honduran border to Costa Rica.

In contrast, Nicaragua's dominant Pacific region consists of people who are Spanish-speaking and Mestizo of Spanish and Indian heritage. Their colonial history, customs and traditions are distinct from those of the Atlantic coast peoples. Of the total national population of approximately three million, only 10% are located on the isolated Atlantic Coast.

One can travel the distance from Bluefields, located at the mouth of the Escondido River, to Rama only by boat, a five or six hour journey. On the semi-enclosed deck, two women set up a little food stall, selling meat and salad on palm leaves or fruit drinks in knotted plastic bags to the passengers. Along both sides of the river there is dense, impenetrable tropical jungle with an



BLACK SANDINO, 1983, oil on canvas

# JUNE BEER



# By Betty LaDuke

occasional house of bamboo and thatch. At Rama, a small rambling town, there are old buses that take passengers to Managua on another slow and exhausting five-hour journey.

June recalls that "politicians made jokes about the U.S.-financed highway from Managua to Rama", saying that "if the Somoza government hadn't embezzled all the money that came from the highway construction, they could have paved it with gold."

During the Somoza era before the 1979 revolution, Bluefields, according to June, "was a region that was forgotten and ignored. No one was encouraged to dream, to think of the future, or of art, but only to make a little money for subsistence." The message that schools gave people was "not to make a better society for everyone, but only to work for self-improvement."

During those years of economic struggling to maintain her children, she resorted to her childhood work experience of collecting empty whiskey bottles and plastic containers, which she would sell in Managua. There she used the money to buy fresh vegetables to resell in Bluefields.

"I used to paint pictures of people coming from the marketplace, carrying baskets on their heads; men working on the docks or planting in the fields; women grinding corn, washing clothes or cooking. Sometimes I just painted pictures of flowers." At this time June gave away most of her work. "I never dreamed," she said, "that I could make a living from my painting."

The encouragement to pursue her career came in 1968 from another painter, a Dutch ship captain. "I told him ... 'When my children are out of school, I will dedicate myself full time to painting.' He said to me, 'Why wait? Why not paint now?'"

"So in 1969," June relates, "I went to Managua to make myself a name. Fortunately, in Managua I was constantly making paintings and selling them, and then there were orders for more."

At the end of the year, June returned to Bluefields. Occasionally art collectors came to buy her work. However, she laments, "I was not well organized. I was subjected to many people who were like alligators and they often took a big bite out of me. They were so greedy."

"I used to paint on the porch of my house (in the Beholden district), where anyone could see my work as they passed by. I'd make a whole batch of paintings and then take them to Managua. I couldn't stay away very long, I had my kids in Bluefields, so I practically gave my paintings away. ... Bluefields residents would never buy my work. They would rather buy a plastic ornament for their walls."

She returned to Managua for two more years, 1971 and 1972, integrating with the professional artists—Roger Perez de la Rocha, Orlando Sobalvarro, Leonsio Saenz, Leonel Vanegas and others. But she didn't exhibit with them at the Praxis Cooperative Gallery in Managua. She was often criticized because her paintings weren't like the detailed primitive paintings from Solentiname. She told them that "my reality and the Solentiname reality are two different things. In Bluefields we have space and my paintings reflect this."

I asked June about her political development. She told me that she had read books about Sandino and the poetry of Pablo Neruda. June said, "That did help, because in Bluefields we only used to hear about Sandino being a *bandido* or bandit. Later I could transmit different ideas to my children. So when the FSLN or the Sandinista Liberation Movement came to Bluefields, about 1978, my children were ready for it."


Many Nicaraguan artists had been jailed during Somoza's epoch for their revolutionary activities. I asked June if she had been in jail and she quickly told me, "Twice." In 1971, she recalled, five or six of the professional artists were working together in one of their studios, making the final arrangements for Sobalvarro's exhibit at the Praxis Gallery. That evening, the Somoza Guardia broke into the studio, "tearing the place apart, on the pretext that they were looking for drugs." But, June said, "they really suspected us artists of anti-Somoza political activities ... Sure enough, no drugs were found, but the artists were all taken to jail."

June was released the next day. The others were kept in jail for three days, with hoods over their heads. Protests were held by university students to demand the artists' release.

June still has nightmares about an earlier incident with the Somoza Guardia of Bluefields, an incident that did not go away so easily. When I asked June why she had been in jail, she didn't want to describe the exact details and summarized this event with the phrase "for standing up for my rights." Her feisty attitude had provoked the authorities to dehumanizing acts.

She drew me sharply into her present Bluefields reality with the comment: "Don't come knocking on my door too early tomorrow ... every Friday night I have guard duty from 11 P.M. until 2 A.M. at our neighborhood CDS or Sandinista Defense Committee. All the neighborhood residents have their particular

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# HER'S STORY



hours for the 24 hour *vigilancia* or vigil that we keep in order to warn everyone if there are any strange or counter-revolutionary activities." (I soon realized the importance of the CDS when Bluefields was attacked by the Contras within three days after I left. In the exchange of gunfire seven residents were wounded and 24 Contras were killed.)

I asked her about Somoza and the situation in Bluefields right



Margaret Randall

June Beer at Exhibition *Cuatro Mujeres*, 1983

before the "triumph", which would bring me up to her present situation.

June said, "Since I'm outspoken, everybody in Bluefields knew that I was against Somoza." She described the Guardia as "old thieves that scrape out the last drop of blood from the country before they leave. The only thing they can't take away from us is our revolutionary fervor!"

At the beginning of the eventful year 1979, June's son Camilio, then about 16 years old, frequently wrote and read papers at the student assemblies telling of various supportive FSLN activities that the students could also join, such as a protest or a strike.

Eventually the Somoza Guardia came to June's house. "To pick up my son," she said, "but they let him go. The *comandante* talked to me: 'Senora, I heard...you worked hard to maintain your children, your husband never helped you with them. We just want to know who gives your son the papers he reads at the assemblies.'" She told him, "My son just comes to school and finds a paper already on his desk, and then he just reads it."

The *comandante* didn't seem to believe her, so June recalls, "I looked him straight in the eye and said, 'I have four children, and Camilio is the most truthful one. Please talk to him because he can get into trouble.'"

She compared the Guardia to a "bush that has tigers and snakes, animals that can eat you. These animals that are in town are more dangerous, so whenever the opportunity comes, you leave."

Soon after, Camilio went to the mountains where he joined the Sandinista guerillas and fought against Somoza. June proudly says, "My son was politically convinced and knew it was right, it was the right thing to do. I encouraged him in his political development."

Shortly before the "triumph", her youngest daughter, then 15, also wanted to join the guerillas. June packed a small bag for her and told her, "...to look out for...male opportunists who, instead of leading you to the guerillas, take girls into the bush

and take advantage of them. Check...to smell if your guide has been drinking."

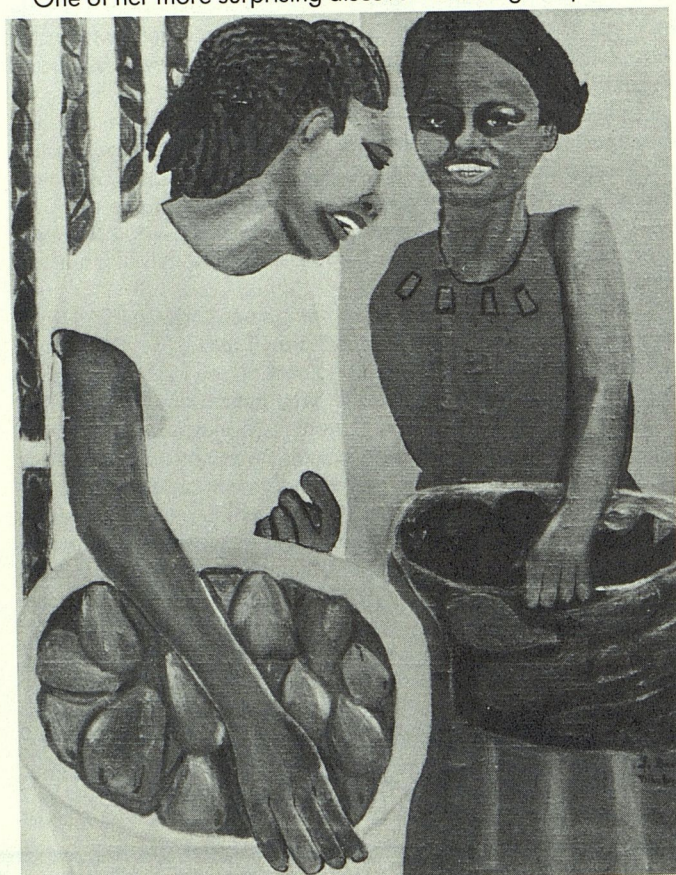
Sure enough, her daughter returned without letting the guide lead her to the guerillas. She said, "he not only smelled of liquor...but also of cologne."

Soon after, she and June left for Costa Rica. Shortly before the revolution, June said, "The Guardia were walking the streets of Bluefields with their guns aimed at the people. The people were told by them that 'Somoza has some nice candies (bullets) for you.'"

Each day one to two boatloads of people were leaving Bluefields for Costa Rica. During the two weeks June remained there, she assisted in coordinating facilities for receiving the influx of Nicaraguan refugees. Immediately after the July 19th triumph, she returned to Managua.

June ventured forth to the newly formed Cultural Ministry, where a new career opened up for her. They needed someone to make an inventory of books on the Atlantic coast, and June offered to do it. She considered it a good opportunity to learn more about her own Miskito Indian heritage.

One of her more surprising discoveries during this period of



FRUIT VENDORS, 1984, oil on canvas

travel along the Atlantic coast was the diversity among the various Miskito tribes. She was moved by the grave sites and said, "I saw the graves, each one with a little tin roof over it. The Miskitos thought it was their duty to protect their loved ones from the rain, and, for the first time, I understood that very well."

June candidly described the contents of the Bluefields library, established during the Somoza period, as being "full of shit." The main collection of books consisted of "old romance novels from the 1800's, which couldn't help these people solve their problems. Before the Somoza Guardia pulled out, they looted



all the good books, especially those of the history of the Atlantic Coast." June also told me that "during the Somoza period only townspeople whose names appeared on a select list could borrow books. Others had to rent them by paying the price of the book."

June was asked to help establish two new Atlantic Coast libraries, at Pearl Lagoon and at Cukra Hill. At the end of 1980, she was appointed by the Cultural Ministry as head librarian of the Bluefields library and, with her two assistants, went to Managua for training. Upon her return, she "took the responsibility of throwing away a large part of the library's old romance novels." She had to fight with the town's administration to support the library. She said, "I even invented laws that they didn't know were not on the books, because they couldn't read. I did this in order to get their support."

When I visited the Bluefields Library, a large square building along the main street, I found the environment pleasant. Anyone could now come to do research or sit and read. Anyone from town could now borrow books, free. A librarian offered to help me, but I had only come to photograph June's 1978 portrait of Sandino, displayed on the library's back wall.

General Sandino, the heroic symbol of the Nicaraguan Revolution, is compared to an eagle. A series of blood-red feathers drift downward along one side of Sandino, above the head of a wounded eagle.

June painted the portrait clandestinely. In order to maintain inspiration, she would play a cassette of revolutionary songs, or of poems read by Ernesto Cardenal. She recalled how "my blood pressure sank down to my ankles while I was painting Sandino, and an official of the Guardia stepped out of his car, came to my house and said, 'I have a telegram for you.' It was from the Italian Embassy confirming an exhibit of my paintings."

From several reviews of her work, I also became interested in a particular painting from a series she did in the late '70s titled "The Funeral of Machismo", or "The Funeral of Male Domination."

While the form of a proud, beautiful rooster dominates the canvas, painted above it is a horizon line upon which four women are standing. They are a child, a young woman, a pregnant woman and a grandmother, all shaking their fists at the rooster. June comments about the common plight of most women, "Even if you're a doctor, lawyer or teacher, when you come home from your job, you work at home while your husband sits down. He sits and watches you work."

Since the Revolution, apart from her library work, June has been integrated into the Artists' Union and the ASTC, the Sandinista Association of Cultural Workers. These organizations arrange for national and international exhibits, the purchase of art supplies, and a general interchange among the artists.

In 1981, June traveled with others, at government expense, to the Festival of the Caribbean in Barbados. Eight of her paintings were on display there, and she described the colors she used at that time to depict skin tone as being "pure brown, like the color of instant coffee."

June relates that, during the Festival, another artist "looked at my painting of Bluefields' people and said, 'This is what you call Black? This is not Black. These are hybrids. Black skin has a tinge of blue.'"

June continued, "So I came home and experimented until I got my own black skin color, and that was the turning point in my painting."

Since the Revolution there have been many changes in Nicaragua and in June's life. When she looks back upon her 52 years,



**SANDINO AND THE WOUNDED EAGLE, 1978, oil on canvas**

she says, "I never expected some of the good things that have happened ...the achievement of painting something, when I have the idea to do it,...and to be free to paint what I want."

Besides selling her work with ease through ASTC, June has received special awards in the annual July 19th exhibits of Nicaragua's artists. In 1983, she won the first prize for the portrait, "Black Sandino". I found this painting and others at the Gran Hotel Performance and Exhibition Center in Managua. Among them was the "Fruit Vendors" The two women seem to converse and laugh together as if they are enjoying a good joke or some gossip. One woman holds a basket of mangos, the other avocados. But it is their facial expressions, their open mouths revealing carefully painted white teeth in contrast to their dark-black skin, that seem to be the focus of this painting.

June concluded her story with these thoughts: "The goal that I set for myself is also for my people. I would like to leave a heritage for coming generations, a museum of paintings, here in Bluefields.

"I want this museum to include the work of all the different artists of Nicaragua. What I'm doing now is exchanging one of mine for one of theirs, in order to make that collection of paintings. I have a long way to go, but I'll make it."

#### IN MEMORIAM

*At the stroke of midnight on March 14, 1986, June Beer suffered a heart attack and died at her home in Bluefields. At her children's request, there was a service for her at the Moravian Church in Bluefields. Padre Ernesto Cardenal, Nicaragua's Minister of culture, attended and read some of her poetry.*



# QUESTION

## *What are your greatest pleasures in activism? What is your criteria for success?*

VICTORY.

*Sandi Cooper*

To be taken seriously. The moment government actually considers hearing both parties: NATO and the Peacemovement. In a democracy, people have the right to be heard.

*Vrouwen Tegen Kernwapens, The Netherlands*

I love the feeling of being obsessed, of putting all my time and energy into one activist art project, and saying "no" to everything else in my life. I find that kind of intensity very energizing, at least for the short time. Unfortunately, being obsessed to that extent puts great strains on personal relationships at home. In addition, I experience incredible "post-project depression" when the event is over.

*Donna Grund Slepack*

There are inner joys of getting under the skin of one's own people and sharing their pain and struggle. Sometimes there are tangible results to gauge some measure of success. For instance, the first big campaign against sex tourism resulted in a drastic reduction by 25-35% of male tourists from Japan, the closure of two flights daily from Tokyo to Manila, changes in ads, etc.

*Sister Soledad Perpignan, Philippines*

In a way, the interaction with other women is the greatest pleasure, but I guess I'd measure success by how much trouble you stir up and how uncomfortable you make people. *Joyce Kozloff*

Sensing and seeing the empowerment of activists ourselves. Acting, doing something together, gives us energy, hope, even joy. My criteria for "success" have changed considerably during the last decade: I now believe that acting on behalf of justice is a moral end in itself. At the same time we need to be politically clever, astute and well informed in order to increase our chances of impacting social structure.

*Carter Heyward*

I love when I can wheat paste graffiti art for life, hope, peace, growth, choice... in a public space and on the street so people are confronted unexpectedly with some information that can reach a gut level.

*Carolyn Mecklosky*

My greatest pleasure is the same as my criteria for success; namely, to see women develop their own power.

*Miriam Schapiro*

I don't think "success" is a very appropriate term to me. You can be in the midst of struggle or not in the midst. The pleasure of being in the midst of struggle is that there are often others there with you.

*Pat Mann*

My greatest pleasure is reaching out beyond myself. One of the most seductive traps of our dominant ideology is the myth of individualism, both fanning our egos and isolating us. Art History of the 20th Century, as it is written, is like an ode to this myth. It is no accident artists are particularly plagued with it. Success is empowerment. Success is active, moving from being spoken for and done to, to speaking and doing.

*Robin Michals*

Seeing effort bring a kind of result: Seabrooke is not on yet; Viet Nam did end; abortion is still available; Reagan is not quite in Nicaragua but he is busting his butt.

*E. Turchinets*

Helping to maintain a feminist business that pays "30+" part-time employees per month.

*KDF Reynolds*

The mental stimulation and excitement of serious theoretical collaboration... achieving (and being able to recognize) success... winning concrete gains when there is a worthwhile cost/benefit ratio.

*Judith Brown*

Seeing my ideas implemented... with fundraising my criteria is 25% profit... with people it's getting a warm welcome and a warm farewell and seeing my quotes and influences in books.

*Margo St. James, Coyote*

# QUESTIONNAIRE



## —an excerpt from the performance—

1/How to realize the substance of your own life while retaining some perspective on the flow of, well, history.

A decade spent on the question whether we can change ourselves and the way things are by willing it. (What role does consciousness play?) A mistake was to get stuck in remaking the cultural, slighting its bases. It is true that people decided to change things. It is true that now it seems like everything we achieved, inadequate and distorted as some of it was, is to be revoked by the radically reactionary regime. Hard to understand that the scale of change exceeds the scale of a person's life. She realizes she is, they are, a decade older and in some ways still the persons they decided not to be any more. It is true also that he (and he, and he) has learned a lot about How to Think About Women. The truth is, it's hard to make changes stick. Yet things change. (Nuns sue their bishop.) All things change. ('Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will' becomes a consoling slogan.)

Times change, people move. There is the question of ego. 'Mobility.' The development of self. The self, learning to cut itself off from others, looks for its best setting, like a jewel.

2/ She had moved to California a decade earlier to find a breathing space, away from city struggle, pollution, high rents—and found real estate, urbanization, pollution, high rents. People moved in together, in groups. (Later the two of them, now 'a couple,' move in alone.) You make a household, apportion tasks, make things rational... But the self is not rational (as women learn). Easy to console yourself with certain notions of human nature, some of them bad, oppressive, when you get scared, bored, angry. When change is demanded by your friends, when accommodation is necessary. Or—let's come to the point—when change was demanded by his lover, he found it easiest to repress. The point is that men and women are still men. and women. She worries. He represses. It is worthwhile, she thinks, to rummage through their unspoken deal.

3/ They each question the nature and possibility of unity. Was political unity, to pick a safer, worldly example, a fiction smoothing the way for a most extreme individual privacy, defined by the notion of 'choice?' Or, conversely, did unity mean a total loss of choice? Or was it a struggle within and without, inside the group, against it as well as for it, for a perhaps only utopian collaborativeness-in-general, to occasion individual freedom? Easy for him: he misunderstood the struggle against domination to be a struggle for raw freedom. It was not. It was an abstract struggle for the *right* to freedom, and thus implicitly demanded a commitment to a long collective effort. The freedom to give oneself freely to something without bondage. But he could not even consult with her about doing the laundry. Often their solidarity was enacted on the level of fantasy.

4/ He uses words that interest her: truth, weakness. Curiously old-fashioned for a 'reformed' man. But his old self longed for the conservative stability of family and class. He could not effect a synthesis. He is stubborn in protection of his private self. They try to talk. He is angry to be seen as angry. The truth is, you could tell her anything about herself, and she'd believe it. (Easy to criticize the 'counterculture's' commune life; but why dismiss the effort to create a self freer in the give and take?) Years of struggle have shown her she struggles with the same dependencies as ever—yet it is human to need support. Paradoxically, she has come to believe more and more in the possibility of change.

As a child he had taken a vow of silence. By being silent he was free to make any judgment whatsoever... The breathtaking

## OPTIMISM / PESSIMISM CONSTRUCTING A LIFE

advance in freedom meant a certain loss of potency in the world. Still, he would endure. It was their custom.

5/ She imagines that by moving on, she will make a better, changed self. She is adventurous and cowardly, a rotten combination. She moves East while the balance of profits moves West. She discovers what it means that bankers and real-estate operators have captured New York, her hometown. No longer a hometown, now it is a monstrous machine for speculation and the gratification of the rich. A machine of success and failure in the public world. One tries to advance while keeping one's commitments, confronting the usual issue of selfinterest versus decency. The difficulty of erecting a life in the debased context of high finance and planned urban collapse. Whom do you displace by moving to Brooklyn, Astoria, the Lower East Side? Harder and harder to have the freedom to do your work, with-

## —Martha Rosler—

out someone's fortune to support you, without some grave compromise. The city uses artists as wedge against the poor, creating new real estate that will displace them too, the swelling army of dispossessed. (Policy advisers say we suffer from too much democracy. Could we become a police state? That would suit some people just fine.) He won't face his fears of New York City. He suspects her of feeling exhilarated on the subway. She moves to Brooklyn, after all. He comes to look, and flies home shaking his head. He decides not to come. She flies West. She cries that he is as impermeable as a rock in an ocean tide. Determined, he endures. But unlike the rock she sees him as, he feels, hears, sees. Wracked by unvented emotion, he chokes and shakes. Calmer, he says, 'Behind every no there is a yes.'

6/ The problem is how people can maintain commitment to change and to each other. She returns East to start constructing a life: We enter the new bleaker decade in which the matter of freedom is reshaped. The wrong people try to patent the word 'freedom.' The new regime seeks renewed control and profits and plays vicious world games with old words ('terrorism,' 'authoritarianism,' 'totalitarianism'). More people than ever in the world know the words mean life-or-death. The problem is how to seek freedom while acknowledging that the unbridled self is not free (or even the real issue). Through the decade the fashion for cooperation faded. For him and maybe for her, without external support, cooperation was not a reflex but a matter of persuasion, choosing one's own private interest undisturbed by a wider vision. Each of them felt the strain. It seemed almost a relief to part.

Back in Brooklyn where she started—what happened to the decade? Well, she's, we've, learned a lot. The problem is how to do one's work and work with others, not to fall away in private defeat—or success. How to recognize that answers aren't given in advance, that freedom must be fought for, that change takes longer than a lifetime. The problem is how to live your life while recognizing the scale of history. The problem is how to fight to keep some things while learning how to keep others. The problem.

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# PEACE by PIECE:



## The Creative Politics of Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp

*Artists are the traditional interpreters of dreams and nightmares, and this is no time to turn our backs on our chosen responsibilities, which is what we would be doing if we refused to share in the deep anxieties, terrors, and hopes of human beings everywhere. What is the choice before us? It is not merely a question of preventing evil, but of strengthening a vision of a good which may defeat the evil. — Doris Lessing<sup>1</sup>*

The creation of the Women's Peace Camp at Greenham Common NATO Air Force Base in southern England, although not your ordinary museum piece, is a work of art—one which is a product of the heights of human creativity. The very name "Greenham Common" has become synonymous with the peace camp rather than the military base.

In searching for the artist, or creator, of Greenham, one might consider Anne Pettit, who organized a protest march against Cruise missiles<sup>2</sup> from Cardiff in Wales to the Greenham Common military base, located 50 miles west of London, in the late summer of 1981. But very quickly one would also discover that Greenham was also created by the 36 women and four men who made up the march. They, like Anne Pettit, were "worried, anxious, and isolated" (words familiar to all artists) about the threat of nuclear missiles and wanted to express their feelings in a visible, public way. When they arrived at the end of their ten-day march, four of the women decided to chain themselves to the fence surrounding the base and swore to stay there until the British Minister of Defense would discuss the Cruise issue on live television with them.<sup>3</sup>



Regardless of who was "first," the creation of Greenham is, by no means, finished. It is still being created today. An open, evolving work in a perpetual state of flux, Greenham is a leaderless entity of women (men visit but do not live there or take part in the actions). It ranges from small handfuls of camper-activist-creators to tens of thousands who come to take part in the large, organized political events occurring there year-round. If you pulled up the international peace movement of the '80s by its roots—firmly planted in the soil of human collectivity—you'd find Greenham Common. The first of 102 peace camps in Great Britain, it has served as paradigm and inspiration to activists throughout the world.

In September 1981, when the first camp was spontaneously set up at the main gate to support the four women chained to the fence, the base commander strode out to utter the fateful underestimation: "As far as I'm concerned, you can stay as long as you like."<sup>4</sup> Since that time, thousands and thousands have stayed, sometimes a day, sometimes for months, at one or several of the nine campsites at each of the gates around the base. If you go there, you will find at least a small band of "the people who never give up" gathered at each of the color-identified gates (named for the colors of the rainbow by Greenham women).<sup>5</sup> Soon it will occur to you that you are not just an observer. By being there, by seeking it out, you have already taken a stand at some level and become a part of the flow that is Greenham.

The lifestyle in the camps is, both of necessity and by ideology, extremely spartan. Ideologically, dependency on the modern "necessities" of life is seen as a predatory attitude, cultivating greed and competition. But the campsites are also kept portable for another reason: eviction. There is a consistent effort by local and national governments to silence or disperse the women. Bulldozers are brought in, cars are impounded, camps demolished, women arrested. But Greenham continues—it refused to go away.

As a newcomer, you'll be attracted by the camp's welcoming spirit. Drawn to the campfire, where hot water for tea and meals-in-a-pot are made in charred-black pans, you'll begin to take in the scene. Plastic is thrown over branches (carefully so as to avoid damage to trees)—and these "benders" are home. There are no toilets. Only a few lawnchairs. But banners strung in the air or on the fence nearby convey messages of peace and poetry. As you look about, or sit on the ground with your cup of tea, the assaults on your mind are from the explosions of conventional myths:

It's too barren here/where are their "things"? Who is the leader/they don't have one. Where do they sleep/there aren't enough tents. What do they eat?/where is the food?/does it just appear?/No one is worried/am I?

What is the magnet that draws new people to the peace camp every day? It is something that, in the mainstream of daily life, could be called an endangered species: imagination. Again and again, when one reads about or talks with people who have been there, there is reference to Greenham's ability to "capture" the imagination. For Greenham is a studio of imaginative ideas for actions. Like politically conscious artists, these women are driven not just because they have fears (they do), but because they are not afraid to imagine.

With direct action as the medium and nonviolence as the content, their civil disobedience defies categorization (some actions seem to be activist art, others more like artistic politics, still others theatrical performances). The Greenham women invade territories of art and politics with equal irreverence, and their joyful smashing of decorum has become the banner of a new form.

## by Carol Jacobsen

Whatever their title, Greenham's designs are contributions toward structural change. They have a directness and a communicative accessibility that stem from a desire to bring both art and politics out of their class and out of their "high art" and "international politics" towers.

The ideas for actions may be anyone's, even yours, although no one is expected to participate unless they want to. The ideas are discussed, sometimes altered, often sent around to the other gates (to avoid "gatism"—the hoarding of plans or information). There are frequent evening gatherings, with discussions



Carol Jacobsen

held in a circle to allow all voices to be heard and to encourage listening and equal participation. The intention is to share knowledge and to teach each other in a supportive, nonhierarchical way. There are almost no solitary actions, but there are many with only a few people, and some with large numbers. All are pieces in the expanding collage of world-wide nonviolent confrontations that have brought disarmament to life.

As you walk from gate to gate along the nine miles of fence surrounding the base, you can see evidence of these actions. Some bunkers and buildings have huge whitewashed signs that read "For Rent"; others are covered with peace and woman symbols. The fence itself is pinned with pictures and messages of peace, and it has become a literal patchwork, woven together by the soldiers who must constantly repair the damage done by Greenham women. Rejecting this barrier that separates inside from outside, the women cut through, crawl under, or climb over the nine-foot-high chain-link enclosure topped and reinforced by rolls of barbed wire. In their almost nightly forays, they have occupied watchtowers and sentry boxes for hours at a time, even sending out signals undetected. They move about on base, raiding kitchens, planting flower gardens, staging sit-ins, and holding performances. In one action ashes were scattered everywhere by women dressed in black; in another, a "Teddy Bears' Picnic" was held with women dressed in animal

CAROL JACOBSEN is an artist and activist for women's rights and a feminist point of view on international issues.



costumes and children in attendance.

There are also persistent efforts to sabotage machinery and supplies on base in daring attempts to point out the kinds of violence taken for granted by soldiers and usually kept invisible to the public. In July 1983, following a NATO exhibition and sale of air arms on the base, eight women threw red paint and scrawled "LIFE" and woman symbols on the spyplane "Blackbird." For their vandalism they were thrown in jail, but the charges were quickly dropped in a coverup by both the American and British Air Force, neither of whom was willing to accept responsibility for this embarrassing exposure of their guarded myth of "security."<sup>8</sup>

**S**ome actions are spontaneous. There are, for example, "flying blockades," in which campers hurl themselves into the path of arriving equipment or officials. Or they may block the passage of trucks loaded with Cruise missiles in supposedly secret deployment rehearsals. In one incident, a convoy got itself stuck in a narrow lane for hours, giving its own "demonstration" of the fallibility of careful, expert military planning.

Other ideas take advance planning, as when the women sealed the entire base with heavy-duty locks. After unsuccessfully attempting to cut the locks, and realizing that there were no open routes in or out of the base, the soldiers themselves broke down the fence to get out, and then later had to repair their own damage.

All acts are kept as unpredictable as possible so that authorities cannot plan ahead or formulate rigid responses. They also change in style, scale, and form with the shifts in populations of the camps and because of individual input. Effectiveness is measured in terms of the amount of disruption caused to military discipline; the success in presenting moral choices to soldiers and workers on base (such as whether they should carry out orders that would injure the protestors); and the public visibility produced by the action.<sup>9</sup>

Reactions of military men have sometimes been violent (women have been beaten), sometimes poignant (a group once presented some campers with a hand-carved wooden stump engraved with a peace symbol and messages of hope), and sometimes supportive (base workers have testified on behalf of the women in the ongoing series of trials). The encounters have also forced a reaction from the Air Force itself, which has had to keep soldiers at Greenham on frequent rotation, has issued orders against violence to the women, and has even awarded achievement medals to some American soldiers for their engagements in the peace "skirmishes."

In addition to this "barrage" of small-scale actions, there are large events at Greenham, which bring an opportunity for creativity on a grand scale and are often scheduled to mark holidays or political occasions, including Greenham birthdays. The first of several massive actions was held in December 1982. Hoping for enough people to reach all the way around the base, the Greenham network transformed itself into 30,000 women who encircled the nine-mile fence and linked hands in an "embrace of the base." Then, at a festival in 1983, called "The Rainbow Dragon," 2,000 women gathered to put together a five-mile-long serpent with patches sent from all over the world. It was woven in and out of the base and later became a traveling artwork to symbolize their demand for peace. Later, in December 1983, over 50,000 women gathered, each one holding a mirror toward the base in a statement of self-reflection that was both symbolic in its message and astounding in its scale.

One of the most celebrated actions—probably because of the wildly controversial image it produced—took place on New

Year's Day in 1983, when 44 women climbed over the fence at dawn and danced on the missile silos. The image, appearing in commercial media throughout Europe, reverberated between two usually opposing poles: life/celebration/female/art (the photograph looks like Matisse's *Joy of Life*) and death/burial mound/male/politics (as in "step aside, leave it to us, this is men's work").<sup>10</sup> A year later, in January 1984, the women created another image by floating a huge web over the base with helium-filled balloons.

From almost the beginning, Greenham women have carried their message beyond the fence at the base. They have organized blockades on the streets of London (to protest the Falkland War and to demonstrate against Ronald Reagan's visit, for example). They have also traveled in small groups and lectured throughout Europe, Asia, and the U.S. At times they have found themselves on stage with military generals, who gave slide shows and video-accompanied programs to pump the arms race, and they have been asked to present the "other" side.<sup>11</sup> Many have formed alliances with peace groups throughout Europe for the purpose of organizing international actions. And Greenham-at-large has initiated a lawsuit against Ronald Reagan and the United States in U.S. Federal Courts for threatening peace and illegally deploying Cruise missiles on British soil.<sup>12</sup>

The work of Greenham has had a price for many of the women. Some have lost jobs, left families, broken with friends; over 3,000 have been jailed. Usually the charges are, ironically, "breaching the peace." But the trials themselves become forums and theaters for peace, as well as opportunities for discourse on the ills of England. The scene at these trials brings to mind Virginia Woolf's literary confrontation between "educated men," the public fathers brought to power by the sacrifices of their sisters and mothers, and the all-woman "Outsiders' Society," whose creed is: "As a woman, I have no country. As a woman, I want no country. As a woman, my country is the whole world."<sup>14</sup>

Both the courts and the prisons have served their purpose. The publicity they generate does double-duty. Greenham and



Raissa Page





its peaceful activism get coverage, while the injustice of archaic laws and prisons becomes more visible as well. After one of the early evictions from the camp in 1982, 400 women appeared in court with affidavits declaring Greenham their home and demanded their right to vote there. They were awarded residency.<sup>6</sup> In a different instance, at Holloway Prison, six Greenham women climbed out onto the roof and protested treatment of the inmates there. They were again arrested and tried, this time for inciting a riot, but they were found not guilty. They then held their own mock trial on the courthouse lawn, where they made public the coverup of a death at the prison.<sup>15</sup>

Greenham is not without its detractors, however, even among feminists. A critical anthology has been published by radical British feminists criticizing "The Greenham Syndrome," which it sees as usurping women's energies for their own struggles into the "greater cause" of peace. In the past "greater causes" have repeatedly swept women and their specific oppression under the tide of human or global issues. This analysis fears a divisive factor moving women away from themselves.<sup>16</sup>

Other criticisms are based on Greenham's motherhood/ caretaker image, which was largely constructed by the media in its "biology-is-destiny" logic, or the later lesbian image, also a media creation, which arose out of homophobic attitudes. Both of these distortions gloss over the real diversity of Greenham women in an attempt to rush in with inadequate language to fill the gap that inevitably occurs between habitual thinking and initiative.<sup>17</sup>

There is a strong, overriding concern shared by almost all the women at Greenham, which serves as a motivating force: fear. Their fears and the nightmares are the same ones that haunt millions of us: the threat of total and irrevocable annihilation of our species and our planet, either by design or by accident. We

have all been exposed to statistics and warnings of crisis: there would be a 90% death rate within 30 days of the onset of nuclear war; 49% of the British people think a nuclear war is likely in their lifetime, and 87% believe that they would not survive if it occurs; the Pentagon operates on the assumption that a nuclear war will occur in the next 10 years; the world is spending a million dollars a minute on arms—with over 50,000 (known) nuclear warheads—enough to destroy the planet and have 49,000 left over.<sup>18</sup>

**A**ll of us are victimized by tactics meant to support the pretense that the arms race is a safeguard for peace. But the fact is that the increasing buildup of nuclear arms and energy is matched by an increasing danger of radiation exposure for humans and the environment. There is a growing problem of radioactive waste disposal and an ever-increasing chance of planetary destruction by an irreversible poisoning of our ecosystem.<sup>19</sup>

The entire support structure for the perpetuation of war—kept intact by bureaucrats and politicians who see nations as empires—is drilled in the tautology and pathology of violence and power. Words like "honor," "victory," "patriotism" are the prescriptions for emotional release, which might otherwise erupt in questioning or examining or even raging against an obedience to masochistic destruction. The scale and pervasiveness of legalized power claimed by this mentality, and the threat and abuse it represents, both against itself and the "other," are all enough to justify fears in the ability of humans to have a future. But it is precisely a new vision of the future that Greenham women and others like them are now actively creating. They do not see the future in terms of massive institutions and nations of profit built on space-age technologies, which are only world-exploiting strategies. Nor do they see global markets and eco-



nomic charts as gauges of "progress" or as values-in-themselves, when in reality the northern hemisphere is cannibalizing and enslaving the southern hemisphere.<sup>21</sup> What they do see is the need for radical revisions in lifestyles and in thinking; the urgency of confronting—with nonviolence and with empathy—those they refuse to call "enemy"; and the potential of change and creative solutions within every individual.

Virginia Woolf wrote: "We can best help you to prevent war not by repeating your words and following your methods but by finding new words and creating new methods."<sup>22</sup> This sentence, printed on one of Greenham's most popular posters, is emblematic of the commitment of these creative activists to molding nonviolence into a force for change.

<sup>1</sup>Doris Lessing, *A Small Personal Voice* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975) p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Cruise missiles have fins and wings, fly close to the ground in order to avoid detection by radar, and are propelled by a rocket or jet motor. There are several types: air launched (ALCM), sea launched (SLCM) and ground launched (GLCM). The 96 Cruise missiles now installed in the silos at Greenham Common Air Force Base are the ground-launched type and have a range of 1,500 miles, a target probability circle of 1,000 yards, and contain nuclear warheads of 200 kilotons. American contractor is General Dynamics Corporation.

<sup>3</sup>Greenham Women, *The Greenham Factor* (London: Greenham Print Shop, 1983) p. 1; Barbara Harford and Sarah Hopkins, eds., *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire* (London: The Women's Press, 1984) pp. 1–8.

<sup>4</sup>Harford and Hopkins, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup>"The People Who Never Give Up," *Newsweek*, Aug. 20, 1984, pp. 6–7.

<sup>6</sup>Greenham Women, "Greenham Common", *Women's Encampment Resources Handbook*, Women's Encampment at Seneca, eds. (Seneca: The Handbook Committee, 1983) p. 27. For specific examples of brutality to Greenham women by police or soldiers, see for example, Ann Snitow, "Holding the Line at Greenham" *Mother Jones*, Vol. X, No. 11, Feb./Mar. 1985, p. 47; Harford and Hopkins, pp. 146, 162.

<sup>7</sup>Lynchcombe, *At Least Cruise is Clean* (London: Niccolo Press, 1984) pp. 20–40. Petra Kelly, *Fighting for Hope*, London: The Hogarth Press, 1984) p. 35.

<sup>8</sup>Harford and Hopkins, p. 156.

<sup>9</sup>For a dateline and list of actions, see Harford and Hopkins, introduction.

<sup>10</sup>Lucy Lippard, *Issue: Social Strategies by Women Artists* (London: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1980) p. 13.

<sup>11</sup>The group that toured in the U.S. was followed, intimidated and terrorized by U.S. Government agents throughout their trip. See Harford and Hopkins, pp. 126–131.

<sup>12</sup>The suit was filed in U.S. Federal District Court on November 9, 1983, on behalf of Greenham Women, by the Center for Constitutional Rights and two U.S. Congresspersons.

<sup>13</sup>For an analysis of structure and methodologies of Greenham's style of networking, see Lynne Jones, ed., *Keeping the Peace* (London: The Women's Press, 1983) pp. 131–152. For a relevant analysis of the innate order arising out of chaotic innovation, see Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers, *Order Out of Chaos* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1984).

<sup>14</sup>Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1938) pp. 122–126. For a contemporary documentation of the poverty in England, especially among the working class, see Beatrix Campbell, *Wigan Pier Revisited: Poverty and Politics in the 80's* (London: Virago Press, Ltd., 1984).

<sup>15</sup>Harford and Hopkins, pp. 109–112.

<sup>16</sup>Brenda Whisker, Jacky Bishop, Lilian Mohin, Trish Longdon, *Breaching the Peace* (London: Onlywomen Press, Ltd., 1983).

<sup>17</sup>Alice Cook and Gwyn Kirk, *Greenham Women Everywhere* (London: Pluto Press, Ltd., 1983) pp. 91–107; Ruth Wallgrove, "Press Coverage" *Spare Rib*, No. 142, May 1984, p. 21. Gail Chester, et al, *Piecing it Together: Feminism and Nonviolence* (London: The Feminist and Nonviolence Study Group and War Resisters International, 1983) pp. 46–49. Snitow, pp. 32, 46. For an analysis of the "biology is destiny" logic, see Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974) pp. 3–68.

<sup>18</sup>Jonathan Schell, *The Fate of the Earth* (New York: Avon Books, 1982) pp. 56–59. Dr. Helen Caldicott, lecture given at The University of Michigan, March 11, 1985. Penny Strange, *I'll Make a Man of You* (Nottingham: Mushroom Books, 1983) pp. 5–8, 24. Cook and Kirk, pp. 11–25.

<sup>19</sup>The Pentagon acknowledges more than 35 nuclear accidents and over 100 incidents involving nuclear weapons over the past 30 years.

<sup>20</sup>See, for example, Rick Atkinson, "Scientists, in Pentagon's Sleaziest Job, Rehearse World War III to Test Effects," *The International Herald Tribune*, June 13, 1984, p. 7, and Ian Mather, "Pigs Shot in War Games," *The Observer*, March 17, 1984.

<sup>21</sup>Michael Redclift, *Development and the Environmental Crisis* (London: Methuen Co., Ltd., 1984) pp. 20–59. Krystina Stimakovits and The Confederation of African Women, "Arms and Food" *Spare Rib* No. 142, May 1984, pp. 52–55.

<sup>22</sup>Woolf, p. 164.

<sup>23</sup>Greenham Women, "The Greenham Factor" poster. (London: Greenham Print Shop, 1983).

<sup>24</sup>Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1962) pp. 118, 33–35.

<sup>25</sup>These include the Shibokusa women of Japan, the Dutch Women for Peace, Petra Kelly of the Green Party in West Germany, Dr. Helen Caldicott of Australia, the Seneca Women's Encampment, and the Women's Pentagon Action in the U.S. For a more complete list, see Jones, and The Cambridge Women's Peace Collective, *My Country is the Whole World* (London: Pandora Press, Ltd., 1984). Jones, pp. 1–6.

<sup>26</sup>Mohandas Gandhi, quoted in Greenham women, *The Greenham Factor*, p. 8.

## Resources

compiled by Gwyn Kirk

### Addresses for Women's Peace Camps in the U.S. (some former peace camps are now working as affinity groups).

Ann Arbor Women's Peace Encampment, 1416 Hill St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

Big Mountain Support Camp, c/o Kee Shay, Box 203, Oraibi, AZ 86039.

Blue Ridge Peace Valley, c/o Box K, Bluemont, VA 22012. Tel.: (703) 554-8707 or (202) 234-2000.

Minnesota Women's Camp for Peace and Justice, c/o Women Against Military Madness, 3255 Hennepin Ave., S. Minneapolis, MN 55408. Tel.: (612) 827-5362.

Puget Sound Women's Peace Camp, PO Box 22756, Seattle, WA 98122.

Seneca Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice, #5540, Route 96, Romulus, NY 14541. Tel.: (607) 869-5825.

Silence One Silo, PO Box 9203, Missoula, MT 59807, or c/o Species Life House, 401 E. Spruce St., Missoula, MT 59807.

Silicon Valley Peace Encampment, c/o Mary Kline, 160 Lincoln St., Palo Alto, CA 94301.

Tucson Peace Encampment, c/o Casa Maria, 410 East 26th St., Tucson, AZ 85713.

Women's Peace Camp, Alameda Naval Air Station, c/o de Rita, 1835 Clay St. #302, San Francisco, CA 94109. Tel.: (415) 441-6238.

Women's Peace Encampment, Savannah River Plant, c/o Athens WILPF, Georgia University Station, Box 2358, Athens, GA 30601.

Women's Peace Presence to Stop Project ELF, c/o Madison Peace Office, 731 State St., Madison, WI 53703. Tel.: (608) 257-7562.

### Books

Catherine Alport, *We Are the Web*. New York: Seneca Photographs, 1984.

Alice Cook & Gwyn Kirk, *Greenham Women Everywhere*. Boston: South End Press, 1983.

Barbara Harford & Sarah Hopkins (eds.), *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*. London: Women's Press, 1984.

Lynne Jones (ed.), *Keeping the Peace*, London: Women's Press, 1983.



Pam McAllister (ed.), *Reweaving the Web of Life*, Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1982.

Jane Meyerding (ed.), *We Are All Part of One Another: A Barbara Deming Reader*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1984.

Participants of Puget Sound Women's Peace Camp, *We Are Ordinary Women*, Seattle: Seal Press, 1985.

Ann Snitow, "Holding the Line at Greenham," in *Mother Jones*, February/March 1985.

## Visual Media

*America: From Hitler to MX*, by Joan Harvey (16mm). Distributed by Parallel Films, 314 W. 91 St. NY, NY 10024. Tel.: (212) 580-3888/877-1573.

*Carry Greenham Home*, by Beeban Kidron & Amanda Richardson (16mm & video, 66 mins.). Distributed by Women Make Movies, 19 W. 21 St., New York, NY 10010. Tel.: (212) 929-6477.

*Commonsense: Greenham/Actions/1982*, by Gwyn Kirk (video, 40 mins). Contact: Greenham Women Against Cruise Missiles, c/o Women's Pentagon Action, 339 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012.

*For Life's Sake, Let's Fight* (filmed at Greenham, 1982) by Margareta Wasterstam (16mm & video, 60 mins.). Distributed by Women Make Movies.

*Look to the Women for Courage* (stories from the Seneca Encampment for Peace and Justice), by Joan E. Biren (tape/slide show). Contact: Washington Peace Center, 2111 Florida Ave. N.W., Washington D.C. 20008.

*Louder Than Our Words* (women and civil disobedience), by Lydia Pitcher & Harriet Hirshorn (video, 36 mins.). Distributed by Women Make Movies.

*Mushrooming at Greenham Common*, by Margaret Gosden (a series of monotypes inspired by the women at Greenham). Available for exhibition from the artist, 33 Ocean Ave., Massapequa, NY 11758. Tel.: (516) 798-4401.

*Stronger Than Before* (Seneca, Summer 1983), by Boston Women's Video Collective (video, 27 mins.) Distributed by Women Make Movies.

# Skulls in Neat Rows

Perhaps they would seem different  
in color on the family room T.V.  
Rows of skulls in black and white  
hold an order not unlike tumblers  
in the cabinet. Behind these skulls,  
bones, which once defined the stride  
of humans, are stacked like knives  
and forks waiting in drawers.

I have a son of fifteen whose voice  
reaches for its pitch in the same way  
the Cambodian boy's voice reaches  
for a steady tone. I hear instead  
that sound beyond pain as he tells  
the film crew how this just uncovered find,  
this order of skulls holds father,  
grandmother, and mother.

When he was nine death came daily.  
I put plates and dishes on the table  
just like I do every day. Not blinking  
he tells, "We were children without play.  
Watching death was our recess,  
war our education." He speaks of children  
whose eyes went blank as the eye sockets  
of skulls.

I remember being an American woman  
in the sixties. Every evening I cooked  
while American boys came out of a jungle.  
I remember pouring out gravy while one  
recoiled and fell among the trees.  
A boy from my high school died that day  
in Vietnam.

In my American kitchen in the eighties,  
I have no answer for that Cambodian boy  
whose voice is far past accusation.  
I long to turn off the deaths in Lebanon  
and eat with my family in air free  
of horror. Over the decades, so many,  
too many have died in black and white.

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VICTORIA GARTON has been writing poetry for eleven years. Her work has appeared in over forty literary magazines, including *Heresies* #13, *Feminism* and *Ecology*.

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## Victoria Garton

HERESIES 65



# A POLITICAL TO

## BY JENNY DIXON

In his recent book, *Street Art*<sup>1</sup>, Allan Schwartzman reminds us of the ancient relationship between art and politics. Under the leadership of Pericles, the central building of the Acropolis, the Parthenon, was built by misappropriating the Greek states' international defense fund. Though he built the Parthenon as a monument to democracy, Pericles had behaved autocratically.

Two thousand years later, government remains active in the public art process through patronage and the issuance of permits. Who the public is and their role in the process often becomes misappropriated by government representatives and arts professionals in the selecting, funding and granting of permits in the public arts process. Panels who are making decisions on behalf of the "public" often attempt to represent common concerns and tastes. Because the public is intangible and virtually undefinable in terms of having one point of view, often "easy" art like Muzak prevails. For these reasons, compromise is often expected of artists working in a true public—"democratic"—situation.

The notion of beauty as standing for a truth higher than ourselves, and art as beauty, is no longer totally valid as the sole purpose of the artist. Artists wishing to make a public statement, be it a sculpture in a plaza, the facade of a building, functional amenities, graffiti, ephemeral installations or a parody of Madison Avenue propaganda, have a great deal to contend with. A plurality of intentions and concerns exists amongst artists choosing to work in the public environment, varying from pure aesthetics to an intent to heighten public awareness.

In the late 1970's, a political art started to emerge in New York City. Artists, both formally and informally trained, took to the streets. Their clandestine efforts were seen on subways cars and in neighborhoods throughout the city in the form of

graffiti, stencils, posters and xerox images. Fashion Moda was a nurturing ground for this unauthorized, no permits sought, type of public art. Collaborative Projects, born at the same time, was made up of artists who choose to work expeditiously in an uncompromising public manner. In a short time, the commercial system embraced and perhaps co-opted this new, often raw energy. However, the official "purveyors" of public taste shied away, offering only minimal exposure.

Jane Dickson, an artist active in Colab, approached the Public Art Fund (PAF) in 1981 to develop an outlet for much of this work on the Spectacolor screen, a computer-generated billboard in Times Square. Permission to use the sign at reduced rates was granted by the owner of Spectacolor, George Stombly, and NEA funding was secured. An artist-message ran for 1 minute, every 20 minutes, for 2 weeks. Despite controversy about messages, which brought up the issue of censorship, the project continues.

Perhaps the notion of censorship is endemic to this type of public art. The PAF had made a contract with George Stombly, a sponsor and owner of the Spectacolor screen (a commercial venue), specifying his right to review and reject any material prior to its being run. Artists were made aware of this limitation.

Barbara Kruger was the first to be censored. Her message equated the size of a man's penis with the size of a country's weapon arsenal. The copy which accompanied the images stated that the hottest show in town was the 5:00 news. Apparently Stombly did not review Kruger's message prior to its being run. A few days after the message had begun running, Kruger realized that her image was no longer being seen on the sign.

George Stombly said he had pulled the message as a lot of people and clients, though he couldn't name a specific one, had complained. However, people at PAF replied that, according to their agreement, it was his right to pull or ask for changes in a message before it ran.

But it was quite another thing to pull the artwork once it had begun. Press coverage, coupled with the PAF's efforts, caused Stombly to back off and the piece was returned to the screen to run in its unabridged form. Stombly then began to carefully monitor the computer images, in storyboard form, before the computer graphics part of the project had begun.

The issue of censorship was handled differently by those involved in "Critical Messages: The Use of Public Media for Political Art by Women", organized by Chicago's Artemesia Gallery for the spring of 1984. Eighteen women artists were invited by Artemesia curators to design subway car ad posters. After setting out very general guidelines, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) rejected 10 out of the 18 pieces. Asked for reasons of rejection, the CTA replied:

"The CTA's primary function is to move large numbers of captive riders quickly and inexpensively in an environment that will not disturb them and that respects the fact that they are a captive audience while riding the CTA."

Unlike Kruger's successful resolution, Artemesia took their case to the ACLU. In this instance, the situation is not a matter of tangible fear regarding loss in profits, but rather government acting as a purveyor of public taste. Normally, citizens do not have a choice regarding the ads they are exposed to, but the CTA had decided to act on the public's behalf in this case.

Regardless of the artist's intent, people involved in the public art process need to be simultaneously shrewd and diplomatic in seeking public approvals. The title of the Artemesia project may have caused undue paranoia amongst the "purveyors of public taste". Seeking and identifying a modern day Pericles within the government, who is enlightened regarding the mass appeal of such art and its power and intent to open minds, is necessary though not always possible. Public art of all sorts seems to thrive in cities where there is a commitment at the highest levels of local government.

Norman Steisel, former Commissioner of the New York City Department of Sanitation, sanctioned and supported Mierle Lederman Ukeles' "Touch Sanitation" project in his department. He saw the benefit of promoting a project that honored the sanitation workers and edu-

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# PUBLIC ART

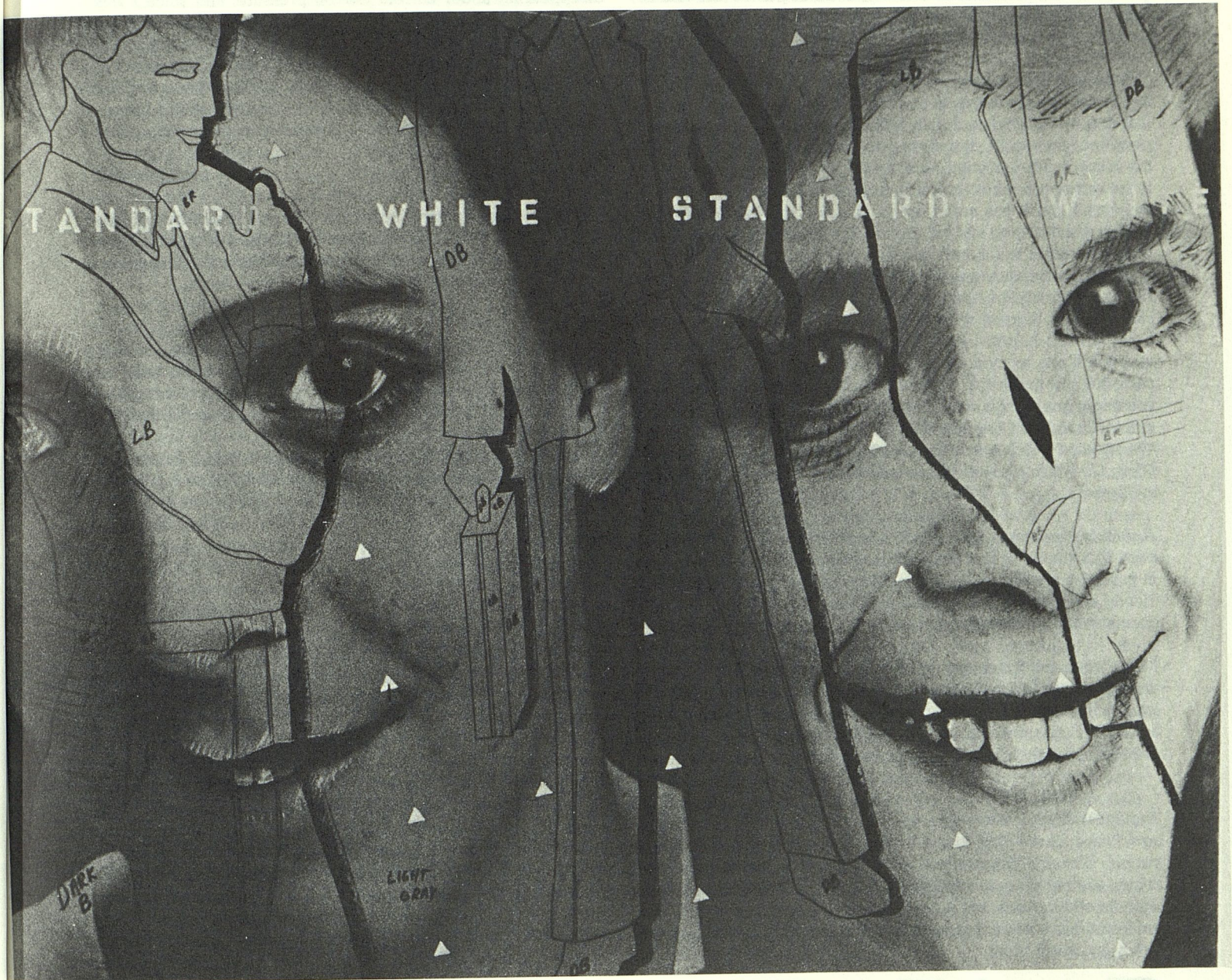
cated the public about their crucial role in the life of the city. The Department of Sanitation also asked Keith Haring to do a series of buttons on the theme of "Don't Be A Litter Pig", in spite of Haring's reputation as a graffiti artist. The buttons, and Haring's affiliation with the campaign, were well covered by the media, benefiting the department and its program objectives.

The word censorship is imbued with

aggression and anger in the accuser and with suspicion and guilt in the receiver. The legal system offers some recourse for retribution, be it perceived censorship or malpractice. However, in a situation such as the one involving the Artemesia Gallery, one needs to ask who is really gaining in the proposed law suit? If Artemesia wins its case, the CTA will more likely be reluctant to allow future artists to exhibit. They may, in fact, change

their whole public service advertising policies and guidelines for their subway cars. Isn't the process of costly, time-consuming litigation antithetical to the original intent of the art and artist? Although recourse is important—a renegade artform deserves to thrive with the non-legitimized energy that created it.

<sup>1</sup> *Street Art*, Allan Schwartzman, 1985, Dial, Doubleday, Garden City, New York.



Jan Ballard, *WHITE STANDARD*, mixed media photo mural, 41" x 52"

The artist, who lives and works in Chicago, has been influenced by Schwitters, Haacke, Beuys, and Breder.



# QUESTION

## What particular frustrations have you experienced in your political activities and how

In the beginning people did not know what I was talking about. I had to be on my toes all my waking hours, explaining, explaining. Burnout is natural. After burnout activities become more personal, more meditative. One acts in a less public, less visible way. One does one's work and presents "development" and power through one's own work.

*Miriam Schapiro*

The biggest and stubbornest frustration in all movements I have seen over the years has been the tendency to pull into groups that end up fighting each other. This is how the disempowered people of the world stay disempowered. To say this is to state the obvious. The question remains: What must we learn in order to treasure each other's differences and distinctions? How must we retrain ourselves so as not to abandon the field when the field is discouraging and we are bloodied? How might we stand with each other in the service of transformation?

Burnout happens to people who work very hard and don't step back enough and/or it happens to people who lose faith in the struggle. My biggest mistake when I burned out was to step back too far for too long. A rest is important. A permanent vacation leads to cynicism and depression. Getting over-tired can take you two ways: You can make a mess and get hurt, or you might go through barriers and come out of it with something extraordinary and creative that you never could have planned. We need to watch out for each other, to pay attention to each other. Co-workers need to care about one another and for one another.

*Ronnie Gilbert*

A. Anti-leadership attitudes and behavior in the Women's Liberation Movement. B. Disunity and mistrust among those who are in essential agreement. C. An inability on my own part to sufficiently and quickly recognize the errors I am making. D. Opportunism in the movement.

*Judith Brown*

I have often felt frustrated when trying to understand the fears and passivity of some Latino women artists. Often the emotional load they carry from social prejudice is so great that they feel activism is one more burden. By joining in and being active they are lightening their burdens and giving to the community.

*Sophie Rivera*

The frustrations I have experienced pertain specifically to my age. I have, in the past, found it rather trying to work with older people who are often jaded or bitter from their own experiences, as they seem to resent what they perceive to be my naivete, in other words, enthusiasm. I keep coming back because feminism takes on increasing relevance, importance and meaning in my world view.

*Carrie Moyer*

I feel at heart that the role of the US government has become more reactionary, and that both internally and externally we face hard times ahead. Many of the gains we made 20 years ago are disappearing under current federal pressure; and since I was heavily involved in those issues, I feel it as a real blow. But I am aware that whatever affects me, the people who live in poverty and hunger are the ones really affected by the viciousness of this so-called democratic system where you are free to starve. I have often felt I wanted to stop, but somehow it seems unconscionable to not do whatever is possible at a given time. I believe we do make a difference.

*Kathy Goldman*

Frustrations and burnout seem to come with the territory. The first of these usually passes. Burnout, on the other hand, often signals the end to my active involvement with a particular issue. It's one of the prices you pay for single-issue focus.

*Arlene Carmen*

Concerning the economic struggle to be politically active, I found a temporary solution. I sold my home so that I would have an income and not have to work for a few years. Now I can go to trials, do civil disobedience, write, make and pass out leaflets, etc.; all which I did while raising six children, but it is easier now as I am not so constantly exhausted. In exchange I have the problem of a tiny income and a poverty level that prohibits cultural and educational stimulation, which I really miss.

*Marie Bernard*

Don't waste time with frustrations—that takes energy—I'd rather write a letter or make a call, go to a meeting or demonstration.

*Lillian Wexler*

In order for any political movement to work, it must be brought to a simplification of its purpose. I could not deal with the simplistic attitude necessary.

*Pat Steir*

The greatest frustrations have been dealing with systems such as welfare or housing, when I've seen someone's options seriously reduced; i.e., no opening in a shelter for a battered woman who finally got up the courage to leave her husband.

*Sarita Hazen*

Burnout...in the peace movement the bottom line is death and dying. Working with this subject on a daily basis causes me to become numbed to the reality. I sometimes deny the possibility of the extermination of all life, other times I become angry with others for not doing more.

*Macy Morse*

Q U E S T I O



# have you dealt with them? Have you experienced burn- out? What brought you back?

I did burn out in the mid-Seventies, in my last years at WBAI when I was the Program Director. It was the combination of the tremendous pressure of the job and what I began to see as the hypocrisy of the left. Too many people were mouthing political pieties for their own self-aggrandisement. More and more time was spent in obsessing over political correctness than in getting anything accomplished. I realized I didn't want any part of it and that I had no enthusiasm for political work anymore, nor did I have much hope. That was the worst, I think, losing hope. And becoming cynical. I retreated and would . I did fine as long as I was putting a mailing together or organizing publicity, but when I had to sit in meetings and listen to people under the guise of a collective and in the name of political correctness not get any work done, I found I still had no patience. It wasn't until I accidentally came upon the Cortazar group in 1983 that I knew I'd found a group to work with again.

*Marnie Mueller*

I hate to attend meetings as the only woman, both in the church and in the gay/lesbian community (both very male dominated). I got tired of hostility from the church for being a lesbian and hostility from women for being in the church. Antidote for burnout: Spiritual discipline; friends.

*Rev. Karen Ziegler*

I would have to say the general backlash against women's liberation (often confused with sexual liberation) which has been fostered by the media. Also, the regrettably blase attitude among the young that they already have it all (we who fought for these benefits didn't get them) and that if a woman isn't successful, it's her own fault.

*Miriam Greenwald*

Unrealistic expectations (e.g., that the church will actually become non-sexist; that people can simply unlearn racism, sexism, classism, etc.; that Reagan is educable, etc.). Yes, I've experienced burnout. Good friends and a relentlessly determined faith in the power of justice-making have brought me back.

*Carter Heyward*

We don't practice what we preach. Agendas get pre-set. We don't spend time on process; and when we do, it isn't as honest as it could be. I get particularly frustrated with the California syndrome that clusters around Judy Chicago... one woman's project presented under the guise of sharing that (instead) exploits other women's time and talent. It's a terrible example that we all pay dearly for.

*Mary Beth Edelson*

A sense of humor is very important...usually it's a kind of gal-lows humor.

*Holly Metz*

Having been ignored and misread. One resists burnout by reiterating one's stance with new content.

*Nancy Spero*

The major frustration I have experienced is lack of class awareness in white middle class feminism and a corresponding lack of feminist analysis on the part of leftists. The worst is when male leftists think they have the authority to tell me about feminism as when I was criticized for showing women doing "traditional" labor, rather than driving a truck, for International Women's Day. I deal with burnout by being project-oriented, having a beginning and an end and a short-term goal. The choice of the next project is usually an attempt to deal with the failures of the last, always attempting to increase the ratio of success to energy expenditure.

*Robin Michals*

Yes, I get frustrated. Then I eat a lot and read a lot of novels until I get indignant about, or involved in, something else (or other people drag me back). I also belong to an ongoing, varied seminar of activists of one kind or another—that helps, group therapy, support, friendship (central).

*Linda Nochlin*

It is crazy that no organization wants 5 or 10 hours a week work from people—it's always 50 or 60 or nothing. I am most distressed by the sick work habits and lifestyles of the left—no sleep, no breaks, no personal support, no money. I spent four months of last year begging for money that was owed me; angry, tearful, hating people I adore. How can we struggle against a fragmenting and dehumanizing society if our lives are all fragmented and dehumanized. Maybe an important quality in an organizer is the ability to say "No, I can't do it."

*Susan McCarn*

I've been more frustrated by commentators who think Ms. Magazine speaks for all feminists than just about anything else. Unlike religion, feminism does not have any orthodoxies. I guess I've dealt with my frustration by arguing that Betty Friedan no more represents all feminists than Meir Kahane represents all Jews. (That's a rather odious analogy, but I'll let it stand. I don't mean, however, to imply that Friedan is a fundamentalist wacko.) I've also been demoralized by single-issue feminists who were against spending time canvassing for the E.R.A. through they supported it in spirit.

*Carrie Rickey*

Yes, I've burned out several times in the last 15 years. I come back because I miss the excitement and pleasure of working with other women and because I feel guilty after awhile just to be pursuing my own life when things are so bad out there.

*Joyce Kozloff*

N N A I R E

HERESIES 69



## Interviews: Susan Woolhandler

## STEPHANIE WOOLHANDLER

During the Sixties I dropped out of college to organize soldiers at Fort Hood, Texas. We hoped to convince them of the immorality of invading Third World countries. The soldiers, most of whom had recently returned from Vietnam, were deeply disillusioned about U.S. foreign policy. Hundreds of them joined in our anti-war demonstrations. Unfortunately, the local redneck population was less receptive, and tried to drive us out of town by refusing to rent to us and firing bullets through our windows. Today I am a doctor with a Masters in public health. I have published several articles, some in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, on the injustices of the American health system. I am active in the movement for a national health care system and recently delivered a paper on its feasibility at the Socialist caucus of the American Public Health Association.

I grew up in the deep south, the third daughter of a Jewish doctor. My mother ran one of the city orphanages as a volunteer. We always had Black maids and handymen about the house; they were part of the family to me. Knowing these people personally, I could never believe that they were inferior to me or deserved the lower standard of living they were forced to accept. I saw the vast inequalities of life between black and white and knew that it was only because of unfairness that they existed. In the deep south, this inequality is often elevated to a religious principle—that God intends life to be unjust. I could never accept this human callousness. Deep in my heart, I believe that people can make a better world.

The inequities of racism are institutionalized in the horrors of our privatized-profit-by-any-method medical system. The U.S. and South Africa are the only Western industrial nations with such barbaric health care systems. Recently I saw a young, working Black mother of three diagnosed with rheumatoid heart disease. Like many people, she was desperately afraid of having the surgery that

could save her life. We worked to overcome her fears about being in the hospital, away from her children and her job. When a prominent heart specialist arrived to evaluate her, he saw that she did not have medical insurance and flat-out refused to proceed with the patient. The woman left the hospital sick, confused, and upset, as you might expect. In order to qualify for Medicaid, she would have to quit her job. To add insult to injury, the medical staff called a meeting to discuss what to all too many of them was a big mystery: Why did this woman leave so angry and hostile?

I have worked with many community groups to stop the cuts in Medicaid and Medicare. However, Medicaid and Medicare were never great programs. At best Medicaid covered only one third of poor people's bills, Medicare covered half the bills of the elderly. It's time to go for the big one: a comprehensive health care system like those of Canada, Sweden, England—in short, every other country to which we compare ourselves. We need a system that would be completely free at the time of use and available to everyone. The amount of money our society spends on health care is more than enough to provide great health care for all and fund prevention work in communities and plenty of medical research.

I am obviously not the typical doctor. When I hang around "typical doctors," I feel strange because I am not worrying about how much money I make and spend. I prefer to spend my time with activists and other people who share my values. Believe me, I have heard every rationalization in the book for why we have to spend 12% of our GNP (more than any other country in the world) on an unjust medical scheme that leaves 35 million people without coverage. Personally I think health care is a good way to spend society's money, better than chemical warfare, Pentagon overruns, or more commissions to study commissions. But the core of the matter is this: Profits cannot come before people's health.

## FLO KENNEDY

Of course I like myself, but I get bored with people thinking I am greater than I am. Social activism is not a question of courage or bravery for me. There's no cheaper way to have fun, is there? I don't like to see activism placed on some pedestal so that people think it is difficult and boring, and I don't like to see activists give themselves airs about how wonderful they are. It is as natural to work for the things I believe in as it is to brush my teeth in the morning. Part of the psychology of oppression is to mystify these activities so ordinary people think they can't participate.

People ask how I go on, but how does any woman go on? Many women have sex on impulse and end up changing shitty diapers for three years. I go on like everyone else, taking charge of the responsibilities in front of me.

The Ladies Aid Crusade is attacking the issue of day-care in the city. We are asking employers and large building complexes to help supply day-care to their employees and the general community. We are going to Donald Trump to ask for day-care facilities in the latest fantasy city to be erected on the Times Square wharfs. Donald Trump is the best of the big developers; he has been very generous with grassroots organizations. He is our best hope. Helmsley, on the other hand, is mean and arrogant.

I want to see women and men use their economic power as consumers. We are going to business and advertising because these elements are more vulnerable than the government in general. Reagan and his pals have a hundred strategies for manipulating, stalking and co-opting citizen pressure, but they are sensitive to business pressure. We hope to get a War of the Roses going between business and the government in the interest of providing day-care. Every other first-world country has better day-care than we do, even those countries less sympathetic to feminism than America.

SUSAN WOOLHANDLER is a New York City-based writer. Her *The Good Book Cookbook* will be published in the fall of 1986.



# Ravenna

Marithelma Costa

translated by:  
Adelaida López

That afternoon  
I lay down over my father's motionless body  
over my mother's funeral stone  
that afternoon  
I lay down over my brother's open tomb

It grew darker  
the parade of greedy suns was nowhere  
the choir of fallen angels inaudible  
it grew darker  
I danced over the men's altars barebreasted  
ran naked toward the palace of the temples  
and the poets were not sleeping  
they had hung their dreams on the  
scaffolds and left them

That afternoon  
I spilled the nuclei of words that were left  
sensed suspended voices in the ground  
that afternoon  
buried the sword  
in an earth that had stopped moving

# Guatemala

Our people  
disappearing by the twenties  
towns  
ripped apart by tens of hundreds

Stripped down naked in the plazas  
it may be the bloody heat  
someone runs and takes advantage  
of more currency in marketplaces  
they unhinge our thorax from our bodies  
they are helping us indeed  
we will sit in common graves  
and toss around our heads

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MARITHELMA COSTA, born in Puerto Rico, has published poetry in various Spanish- and English-language anthologies, magazines, and newspapers. She teaches at Lehman College of the City University of New York.



Judith Linhares, *LIMBO ZOMBIES*, gouache on paper, 45" x 55"  
The artist has had four one-person shows in New York City. She is represented by the L.A. Louver Gallery, Los Angeles.



*An interview with Kathy Goldman*  
**by Blanche Wiesen Cook**

*Excerpted from two interviews aired on  
WBAI in December, 1984 and February, 1986*

# In the Midst of Plenty



**Sophie Rivera, BAG WOMAN/SUBWAY, b/w photo, 8" x 10"**

The artist has won the Portfolio Photography Magazine Competition and has taught in community outreach programs.



**B.C.**—Kathy Goldman, the founder and director of Community Food Resource Network, is one of those wonderful people in this culture who for a very long time have been providing food for the hungry and have shown serious concern for the homeless. The number of poor people in America has increased by about 10 million since 1978. In a world where we are spending 800 billion dollars a year for military programs, one adult in three cannot read and one adult in four is hungry. By way of introduction, Kathy, I want you to talk about the Community Food Resource Center.

**K.G.**—The Center, a non-profit organization, was founded in January 1980 to address the issue of hunger in New York City. Our real concern is the people who, because of lack of income, because of unemployment, because of the incredibly split society that we live in, cannot buy enough food to provide a decent, nutritious meal for themselves and their families. And in New York City in 1986, we're talking about over 1,700,000 people, mostly with families. A majority of that figure are children, women and elderly people. We try to force the government into providing better support for poor people who live in the kind of poverty that cannot assure them reasonable nutrition on any regular basis.

But I want to talk about the issue of child nutrition programs, so that you can understand how government support works. It really does connect to the military. In 1946, the United States started school lunch programs but not because anybody really cared two hoots in hell about whether kids were eating well. They were concerned because, during World War II, they found they could not draft a lot of young people who physically did not meet the army's requirements for getting killed somewhere. That's the history of the school lunch program in the United States—the reason for it. The cannon fodder would be better fed before it got to be cannon fodder.

Similarly, none of the so-called social programs, without which there literally would be tremendous starvation in this country, would be passed if they were perceived as welfare programs. They pass if they support the milk lobby by buying up all that damn milk which is overproduced, instead of letting it go on the market and lower the price. The government guarantees to buy the milk and turns it into miserable, oversalted, overpreserved cheese that people have to stand on line to get. It's a welfare system for the agriculture business in this country.

For instance, you now find (if you know anything about the surplus food program) we're suddenly getting raisins up the kazoo. Why raisins and prunes all of a sudden? It's really an interesting story. When Carter was President, the surplus was peanuts. You couldn't use enough peanuts, peanut oil, peanut butter, peanut granules, and dried peanuts. And that's because peanuts come from the area he represented. Along comes our California person and all of a sudden we've got prunes and raisins that we don't know what to do with. I got a call from a soup kitchen, and they said, "You know, we used to get some chickens; now all of a sudden we're getting prunes." It's been said that it's an attempt to regulate the poor.

It's clearly a support and welfare system on a very large scale for the old agriculture lobbies. The system has been turned around, and everyone who happens to be poor has been made to feel guilty about getting any of the benefits of these programs.

**B.C.**—I want to ask you to talk about the food program that has, with the aid of computers, figured out that to survive a family needs \$57, \$58 a week for meals. Is that it?

**K.G.**—That's the food stamp program. So you don't think that

they just arrive at some amount of money for food stamps off the top of their heads—nutritionists in Maryland figure out the least amount of food that a person needs to survive. They call that the Thrifty Food Plan. I love the kind of words that these people come up with. They plan a menu for a family of two, three, four, whatever it is, and produce this little booklet called "Make Your Food Dollars Count." It is then available to anyone who wants it and contains menus. Theoretically these people in Maryland go out and shop for this stuff and whatever it costs then determines the amount of the food stamp allocation. In the case of a family of four, this plan ended up costing \$58 a week. We went out and bought the same menu—and it's pretty lousy. It cost \$79.71 to buy the same thing in New York City, but there's no adjustment for that. So a family of four who lives on food stamps and public assistance falls behind \$21.73 every week. Now, you figure it out for yourself; if every week you fell behind that much, you'd be in a lot of trouble, and that's exactly the story. These families are in trouble. That's why they come to soup kitchens and emergency food pantries by the third week of the month. They've only gotten \$58 of assistance, and they can't make it anymore.

**B.C.**—One of the figures you cite in your *Community Food News* breaks down to 47 cents a meal. What kind of meal, you rightfully ask? This is so mean-spirited. Let's look at what a Trident costs or one of those little planes that are boom-booming over Managua right now.

**K.G.**—Let me read you a couple of things from the Thrifty Food Plan. This menu has one can of grapefruit sections, three scrambled eggs, and cinnamon toast. That's breakfast for a family of four. Peanut butter and banana sandwich for lunch. Again, you're supposed to cut a banana in three parts for three kids. This is not the way people should live. You can sit in a lab and play around and figure out exactly the amount of calories but you try surviving on that amount. And that's the way a lot of people are living. It's very hard for people who are fortunate enough not to have to live that way to conceive of what it's like to have nothing to fall back on every damn day; if you do turn to someone, it's to a neighbor or a cousin or an aunt who doesn't have a lot more than you do. You're dealing with an enormous population out there that's not working. This society is not working well.

According to the numbers given out by the City of New York, 25% of the city's population is considered to be living in poverty. That means a family of four is living on \$10,600 or less. Currently that is the poverty line. If you're living on public assistance, you get about 83% of that. How can a family of four living on \$8,300 a year pay rent, get on the subway, buy clothing or a pair of sneakers? Kids grow out of their shoes. Do you know what Pampers or a diaper service costs? How do you afford that? It's impossible.

Many people have a hard time believing the extent of hunger and deprivation in this city, where you can walk around on Fifth Avenue and see the most incredible kinds of wealth and then go just a few blocks away and find people living in the kind of poverty where the statistics translate into real life. I am not talking here about the 30 or 40 or 50 thousand homeless people who are special cases. I'm talking mostly about people with families. The people in the shelter system in this city actually number some 4,000 families, including 17,000 children.

I'm really glad to be doing this interview on a women's program because, to a large degree, the families we're talking about are female-headed households that no longer have a home. That's essentially it—a woman with two or three chil-



dren. In fact, the system is absolutely unprepared if there is a man present. There are so few men present that they don't have any place for them. The welfare hotel system is strictly for women and children. To a great extent, the hotels don't allow men on the premises, and even very good programs like the Red Cross and a group called *Women in Need in Manhattan* just don't have the facilities. It rarely happens that men are around, so they don't knock themselves out to have the facilities.

Single-room occupancy housing has pretty much disappeared in the last few years because the Koch administration has been giving away a lot of tax breaks to developers, who are converting these places into condominiums. And no low income housing is being built at all because the federal government absolutely has stopped supporting it. But it's more that a lack of federal money. The fact is that they have allowed housing that's really quite good to disappear or be made into condominiums, if it's in a great location, or be abandoned in places like Brooklyn and the Bronx. So you have the situation on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx, which has really good housing, built in 1920, 1930, quite new in comparison to the Lower East Side—and all they do is put fake windows in, with flower pots painted on them.

**B.C.**—And they spent thousands of dollars on that.

**K.G.**—Hundreds of thousands of dollars to make it look like someone lives there. Now we have a network of welfare hotels and mass shelters. The shelters are in armories and places like that, and some of them are quite terrible. The families are allowed to stay during the day, but the men have to go out even if it's zero degrees outside.

**B.C.**—And they don't have lockers. In fact, this is true for some women's shelters as well. That's why people walk around with all their possessions all day long and go back as late as possible into those unpleasant shelters. They're nothing more than a cot and a toilet.

**K.G.**—People don't even want to go there. The reason people go to Grand Central is that they're afraid of these places. A lot of the people in the shelters are part of the group that has been deinstitutionalized from mental institutions over the last few years. Many of the people are afraid of each other and rightfully so. It's a horrible system.

But I really want to talk more about the families. In New York, whatever the reason, housing has disappeared. What happens? People start doubling and tripling up. Now the city admits that, in public housing, 19% of the families are doubled up. This is unheard of. It's not even allowed. Why they let something happen that's actually against the rules, something big is going on.

These people are afraid to move because where would they go? You've got this situation where families, mostly women and children, suddenly find themselves without any place to live. You can live with your mother for a while or ask your neighbor to take you in. Then, after a while, that becomes intolerable, and you have to move out and go to one of the city's emergency shelters. There is no place for the city to place you. The upshot is that we've got this system of welfare hotels that are so horrible it's hard to imagine them if you've never been in one.

**B.C.**—And, as you've pointed out to me and others, this is something the women's movement seems not to have responded to yet. It's not part of our agenda. One of the reasons I've been so eager to talk to you is that it has to become part of our agenda. We really



Mimi Smith, *DON'T TURN BACK, 1985*, mixed media  
The artist lives in New York

have to become involved. It's unconscionable to live in a society as rich and varied as ours is and to have homeless people, as if this were Calcutta at the end of the empire.

I'd like to tell one story about how Kathy Goldman transformed the way that I personally see homeless women. One night we left a very nice restaurant and right outside the door was a freezing young woman, maybe 25. She said, "You know, can I have some money?" and my instinct is always to give young or old women who are in need some money. But Kathy didn't do that. Kathy said to her, very vigorously, "Where are you going to spend the night?" This woman was immediately transformed from somebody who didn't have a particular face to somebody we had to connect and relate to. She told Kathy where she might spend the night if she could get in. And it dawned on me that, although there are some shelters, there are so many homeless women that not everybody can get in. If this young woman couldn't get in there, she'd have no place to go. Kathy gave her a card and said, "If you can't get in, call this number."

I was impressed with the fact that each of us individually, if we have more knowledge and greater awareness, can do more. So Kathy, what specific things can we do?

**K.G.**—I think that we have to take individual responsibility as we walk around and lead our lives. You can't just keep passing





1985, mixed media, 14" diameter, 2½" deep  
 Lives in New York City.

these individuals by. If you see someone on the streets in the daytime, there is a Human Resources Administration office in every borough, which will take care of people. If it's after five o'clock—as a result of the work of a lot of people—there are now four emergency assistance units in Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Manhattan, run by the Human Resources Administration. Believe me, they're not terrific but at least there families can get formula for a baby and can stay warm while the city tries to place them somewhere.

Try to find the phone number in your borough, so you'll have it with you when you see somebody as you're walking around. At least you can give them a token and tell them this is where to go or can call up a place that can help. During the day, the Food and Hunger Hotline, a wonderful organization, helps connect people with the nearest soup kitchen or food pantry where they can get food. Their number is 406-2300. You can, in a pinch, call the Community Food Resource Center at 349-8155.

**B.C.**—You mentioned, at one point, that there's a shelter on Church Street.

**K.G.**—That's one of the Emergency Assistance Units. If necessary, people can stay there all night long. It's really a very strange

situation. For the most part, you don't see families with children in the street. Though I will say, we run a community kitchen up on 114th Street and two nights in a row a family—a pregnant mother in her ninth month, ready to give birth, a 14-month-old baby, and the father—showed up. Around Thanksgiving they had lost the place where they had been living, and it was now nearly Christmas. They had been wandering around ever since. Up to the point when they came in to our place for some food, they had been living on the A train at night.

I said to the woman, "Where are you going to have the baby?" and she said, "I don't know, it depends..." In other words, it would depend on where the train happens to be when she goes into labor which hospital she would go to. It's absolutely unbelievable that this goes on. You mentioned something the other day about someone on their way to the 65th Street Armory who had been released from a hospital.

**B.C.**—The very next night after Kathy and I left that restaurant, I began to see with new eyes the reality of helping an individual person. We saw a very old woman, very fragile, staggering on Park Avenue. She had evidently just gotten out of a car or taxi. We went over and asked, "Can we help you?"

She was looking for the big shelter on Park Avenue. We walked her over there, she could hardly walk. She had just been released from a hospital after having surgery and looked like she was still coming out of anaesthesia. When we got her to the shelter, there was some discussion about whether she was old enough to be admitted.

I said to the young man asking her these ridiculous questions—on this freezing night as she was really about to fall over—"Aren't you going to take this woman in, no matter what her age is?" He said, "Maybe, maybe not." It turned out she had been there before, and so he took her in and was very nice to her. But this is the story—each one of these individual tragedies is a history to tell and to write and to be outraged by. Every one of us does have a real responsibility to look at what's going on with much more perceptive and caring eyes.

**K.G.**—What you raised before is really the crucial thing. We know that the women's movement has always been a middle-class movement and has always been criticized because of that. But it seems to me that, at this point, the women's movement has to get its act together and begin to pay some attention as a group to what's happening to other women. We can't allow 4,000 women to live in these terrible, rat-infested, roach-ridden hotels, where to get a roll of toilet paper they have to give 'sexual favors,' as they're called, to the maintenance people. It's absolutely the most degrading thing in the whole world. Where is the women's movement? If NOW can be interested in equal pay—and I agree that that is an important issue—they also have to pay attention to what is happening to their sisters, whether they like it or not. Their sisters really need help. Where is the outrage? Where are the women who can do something about this systemically?

**B.C.**—We need organized protest and organized vision. We need to write articles about this so we can deal with our representatives who, it appears, aren't doing anything. Where are our public women who can speak? There's a whole movement that has to happen, and it is as important as the Peace Movement. In fact, it's the other side of it, the result of some of our current failures and military obsessions. The budget of the US Air Force is larger than the total educational budget for the 1.2 billion children of Africa, Latin America and Asia, and this is all coming home. It's not an accident that this is happening in New York City and every city across the US.



**K.G.**—Where are our women who have good loud mouths and are able to talk back when Mayor Koch says that the reason so many people are turning up at shelters is because they think the city is going to get them an apartment and they want better places to live? What is he talking about? They had no place to live in the first place, these people who have been burned out or who haven't been able to pay their rent or who are forced out because the building was turned into a condo. And he accuses these people of trying to get something out of the city. What are they trying to get? They are trying to get what they should have in the first place—a decent place to live.

**B.C.**—This reminds me of the great squatters movement all over Europe where the gentrification movements of the '60s and '70s made a lot of people homeless. This is ongoing. What we need is a squatters movement here. But it can't be organized by people who are as completely down and out as the homeless are in this city. We need a lot of vision as we work our way toward it. Do you have some immediate thoughts as to how we could begin?

**K.G.**—One group that did something was Acorn out in Brooklyn where there are smaller abandoned buildings, two and three family houses. They did have the help of a state senator, though,

I think. They actually opened up the houses, began renovating them, and let people move in. Of course, the Mayor had them arrested. It seems to me that what Acorn did is something we can do elsewhere.

The other thing is that the cost to the city, state, and federal governments of these welfare hotels is astronomical. They pay thousands of dollars a month for one room in one of these flea-bitten hotels. Why don't they take over one of these big buildings they just finished, take a few hundred apartments? We can afford it. It's the same money. It's probably less expensive to live in a three-bedroom apartment on the west side than it is to live in one of those rat-infested hotels.

**B.C.**—What we're really dealing with is a colossal rip-off.

**K.G.**—It amazes me that Koch and his administration are considered very clean, no corruption. It's so corrupt you don't know how bad a name to call it. They're giving away the city to these developers and nobody calls it anything. It's been exposed that Koch gets 7 million dollars for his campaign from the developers, not from me or you. It's the essence of corruption.

I would like to talk about a couple of good things that have happened—fights that we have been able to win, small but im-

**Erika Rothenberg, CITIZENS RELAX, 1986, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 48"**

The artist lives and works in both New York and California. Her work explores the way the media influences and conditions our politics.

CITIZENS OF \_\_\_\_\_,  
RELAX. THE U.S. ARMY IS  
HERE TO MAKE SURE THAT  
YOUR COUNTRY ENJOYS A  
GOVERNMENT OF PEACE  
AND DEMOCRACY.







**Howardena Pindell, THE AMERICAN WAY, 1980, phototransfer and acrylic on paper, 30" x 35"**  
The artist teaches at SUNY-Stony Brook.

portant ones, in the last couple of years.

We have been instrumental in helping to build some coalitions in New York City. There is the New York City Coalition Against Hunger, which is made up of about 100 emergency food providers—soup kitchens and pantries. Also there are borough coalitions united by the Food and Hunger Hotline. These may seem small, but they change what happens to real people. If you get burned out and come to the end of your resources in New York after 5 o'clock or on weekends and there's no place to go, the government has four emergency resource units. The most basic necessities were not available before and now there is food in these places, there is formula, there are diapers and cribs. There's not enough, it's not well handled. We had a terrible incident recently. Somebody was feeding a kid water out of a bottle, and one of our people said, "Why don't you give the kid formula?" One of the social workers said, "We're only allowed to give out one bottle of formula per shift." A child's hunger has nothing to do with a seven-hour shift. It wasn't the

workers' fault. They were following orders from above. Still the emergency units have formula now, and we can fight to have it given out more often. And it's only through the efforts of a large coalition of people that we're able to get these things for the homeless and poor.

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**Contact:**

NYC Coalition Against Hunger  
17 Murray Street  
New York, New York 10007

(for volunteers)

Community Food Resource Center  
17 Murray Street  
New York, New York 10007  
212 349-8155

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W

e want to know everything that others know, we want to learn the details of all aspects of political life and to take part actively in every single political event. In order that we may do this, the intellectuals must talk to us less of what we already know and tell us more about what we do not yet know and what we can never learn from our factory and "economic" experience, namely, political knowledge. You intellectuals can acquire this knowledge, and it is your duty to bring it to us in a hundred- and a thousand-fold greater measure than you have done up to now; and you must bring it to us, not only in the form of discussions, pamphlets, and articles (which very often—pardon our frankness—are rather dull), but precisely in the form of vivid exposures of what our government and governing classes are doing at this very moment in all spheres of life. Devote more zeal to carrying out this duty and talk less about "raising the activity of the working masses". We are far more active than you think...It is not for you to "raise" our activity because activity is precisely the thing you yourselves lack.

— V.I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*

The object of radical intellectual practice is, in the final analysis, transformation of society and all social relations. Otherwise the object remains exclusively changes in consciousness rather than in reality when it is reality itself which must be restructured and squarely set on its feet. For radical intellectuals the test is

on the ascendancy, as in the 1930s and 1960s, it is difficult to prove whether a significant number of intellectuals actually adopt radical consciousness or mere radical posturing.<sup>2</sup> Radical consciousness begins by taking responsibility for forms of exploitation which allow intellectuals as the members of the educated and educating classes to live their lives on the privileged (mental as opposed to manual) side of the social division of labor. "It is not a question of moral subtleties," nor a matter of whether I feel guilty...To the extent that I am exempt from a type of exploitation, I benefit from it...principally because when others do certain work, I do not do it."<sup>3</sup>

There is also a limit to the degree intellectuals can break with their class determinations and merge with the oppressed. For even if they transform their class positions, radicalize their thinking and enter into concrete relationships with the working class, there is no guarantee that intellectuals will gain the trust of the workers. Distrust of outsiders reflects, according to Antonio Gramsci, the fear that students and other intellectuals who gravitate to revolutionary movements are in fact acting out "an unconscious desire to realize the hegemony of their own class of people."<sup>4</sup> This distrust is grounded not only in historically determined class antagonisms. It is also based on the acute contradictions generated when alliances intellectuals form with the oppressed unfold between fixed polarities of theory and practice, discourse and action. These uneasy, attenuated relationships

# INTELLECTUALS AND

whether or not they really want change; change that will sweep away their privileges along with all other privileges that constitute the conditions and by-products of exploitation under late capitalism.

The first task for intellectuals is to overturn their own class posi-

can never span the abyss separating those who have access to knowledge and those who are excluded, those who teach and those who are taught, those who lead and those who are led.

The alliances white activists formed with black civil rights workers in the early 1960s are an example of how destructive relation-

DON'T WATCH THE UNDERCLASS  
IT'S MORE LIKELY THAT THE  
WARLORDS WILL KILL YOU

tions, positions determined and elaborated by the roles they play in bourgeois social formations. "To become 'ideologists of the working class' (Lenin), 'organic intellectuals' of the proletariat (Gramsci), intellectuals have to carry out a radical revolution in their ideas: a long painful and difficult re-education. An endless external and internal struggle."<sup>1</sup> Only after this permanent struggle is well underway will it be possible for intellectuals to transcend their class interests, revolutionize their political practice and abandon once and for all their self-serving pessimism, their self-fulfilling prophecies of a future without change, without hope.

There is a limit to the number of intellectuals, however, who are willing or able to wage war on their own consciousness. Even, for example, during periods when radicalism seems to be

ships can be between intellectual outsiders and members of an oppressed group. Many of these alliances were based on the denial that the relationship between oppressor and oppressed would have repercussions on the internal politics of the movement. The consequences of this denial are well known: whites assumed dominant positions within the movement itself, reproducing conditions of their own hegemony and setting the limits of black struggle according to white definitions of black oppression. As writer Christine Delphy points out, whether the objective is the emancipation of the proletariat or the liberation of women and blacks, members of dominant groups cannot play an unmediated role in emerging struggles for liberation. "To suggest that the nonoppressed (or rather the oppressor) can participate equally with the oppressed in exploring the nature of the oppressed's suffering is absurd."<sup>5</sup>

CARA GENDEL RYAN is a writer who lives in New York City.



How then do intellectuals form productive alliances with the working class and other oppressed groups? Such alliances, if they are to endure at all, must arise from the reciprocity not the polarities of theory/practice, discourse/action, knowledge/experience. According to Lenin, members of a vanguard party must "go out among all classes of the population as theoreticians, as propagandists, agitators and organizers," not to teach the oppressed what they already know from their own oppression, but rather to give the workers, the unemployed, the dispossessed, access to political knowledge from which they have always been excluded and can never learn from experience alone.

Intellectuals, on the other hand, must expand the scope of their theoretical work by going out into the world to study what they can never learn from theory alone: the concrete conditions of oppression: the specific forms of suffering and exploitation under capitalism—as Marx wrote, "the educator must himself be educated."

Intellectuals must realize, however, that although they produce knowledge essential for revolutionary practice, the language in which this knowledge is often reproduced creates conditions of domination and exclusion. This contradiction will remain the site of bitter class struggle unless intellectuals resolve the opposition between the language they speak and the language of the masses. "It is true," says Frantz Fanon, "that if care is taken to use only a language that is understood by grad-

oppressing and crushing the worker at every step of his life... Working-class consciousness cannot be genuine political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to all cases of tyranny, oppression, violence and abuse, no matter what class is affected."<sup>6</sup> Without this critical understanding, and without the alliances that such an understanding forges between all oppressed groups, there is no hope for the emancipation of society from capitalism.

For many Marxists the concept of a vanguard party is an anathema; the result of hegemonic struggle within the revolutionary movement itself, a struggle which insures that knowledge and theoretical practice remain the privileged domain of intellectuals. Many critics, however, who claim to have revealed this elitist tendency within Lenin's revolutionary theory, are in fact revealing their own inability to grasp the dialectical relationship between intellectuals and workers within a revolutionary movement. Contained in Lenin's statement, "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement," is a two-pronged strategy which counters both the short-term, trade-unionist mentality of the workers and the tendency of intellectuals to remain aloof from revolutionary practice. On the one hand, Lenin's strategy calls for intellectuals to provide the necessary theoretical weapons, "materialist estimation" and "materialist analysis," so that the revolutionary movement can mobilize on all fronts of the class struggle, not only the economic,

# • POLITICAL • ACTION

uates in law and economics, you can easily prove that the masses have to be managed from above. But if you speak the language of everyday, if you are not obsessed by the perverse desire to spread confusion and to rid yourself of the people, then you will realize that the masses are quick to seize every

but the political and ideological as well. On the other hand, the strategy insures that the political activity of the vanguard party does not lag behind the workers movement by forcing the party to escalate its agitational and organizing activity in response to the increasing ability of the workers to react to "every manifes-

DANCE ON DOWN TO THE GOVERNMENT  
AND TELL THEM YOU'RE EAGER TO  
RULE BECAUSE YOU KNOW WHAT'S  
GOOD FOR YOU

shade of meaning and to learn all the tricks of the trade... Everything can be explained to the people on the single condition that you really want them to understand." Lenin saw no contradiction, given the "actuality of the revolution," between an elite vanguard imparting political consciousness to the proletariat and the Marxist project of proletarian self-emancipation. "Political consciousness," writes Lenin, "can be brought to the worker only from without, that is only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers. Lenin knew that if the workers' political vision remained focused on the low horizon of economic struggle, they would never recognize that the struggles of other oppressed groups were also working-class struggles, that "the students and religious sects, the peasants and the authors, are being abused and outraged by those same dark forces that are

Jenny Holzer, from THE SURVIVAL SERIES, 1983,  
UNEX signs, each 30½" x 113½" x 12"  
The artist lives and works in New York City.

tation of tyranny and oppression." In the process of politicizing proletarian consciousness, the political practice of the intellectuals is revolutionized. For Lenin, the dialectical unity of theory and practice is actualized through alliances forged between intellectuals and workers from the material results of their reciprocal activities. It is only through the formation of these dialectical relationships that all distinctions between intellectuals and non-intellectuals will eventually disappear.

Like Lenin, Gramsci also realized that radical social transformation is only possible when revolutionary theory merges with revolutionary practice. "The problem of the identity of theory and practice is raised especially in the so-called transitional



moments of history ... For it is then that the practical forces unleashed really demand justification in order to become more efficient and expansive; and the theoretical programmes multiply in number, and demand in their turn to be realistically justified." For Gramsci, however, the identity of theory and practice can only be achieved through the formation of an intellectual stratum within the working class itself. Gramsci's revolutionary intellectuals, as opposed to the intellectuals of Lenin's vanguard party, are not class refugees from the bourgeoisie intelligentsia. Rather these new intellectuals are members of the proletariat who remain politically connected and "are conscious of being organically tied to the national popular mass." Working-class intellectuals, however, are not the only category of organic intellectuals. Every social class called into existence by its function in the economic mode of production "creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields." This concept of the organic intellectual stands in opposition to the received notion that intellectuals constitute an autonomous, "crystallized" social group independent of class determinations and outside of class struggle. All intellectuals, says Gramsci, have class membership. This membership is derived from the objective places that individual intellectuals occupy in the social division of labor, as well as the class positions they adopt in relation to their own class ideology and the ideologies of other classes. The role intellectuals play in any given social formation is not, therefore, determined by their independent activities, but rather by the specific social and political functions they perform in elaborating, reproducing and disseminating class ideology and class culture.<sup>7</sup>

The concept of the organic, working-class intellectual is an integral part of Gramsci's formidable attempts to adapt revolutionary theory and revolutionary practice to the "current situation" in the advanced capitalist countries, "where 'civil society' has become a very complex structure and one which is resistant to the catastrophic 'incursions' of the immediate economic ele-

Western bourgeoisie," writes Fanon, "has prepared enough fences and railings to have no real fear ... of those whom it exploits and holds in contempt."<sup>8</sup>

If the proletariat is to conquer state power, it must first wrest control of civil society from the bourgeoisie. Since the bourgeoisie maintain their domination over civil society by ideological hegemony, the proletariat must wage a relentless counter-hegemonic assault on all bourgeois "institutions"—political, cultural, legal, etc.—all apparatuses which function as conduits for dominant ideology; a battle for which the bourgeoisie is magnificently prepared and the proletariat not all. But "the truth of the matter is that one cannot choose the form of war one wants, unless from the start one has a crushing superiority."

Before the proletariat engages in hegemonic struggle, it must develop critical consciousness in order to identify the many guises and forms the enemy is capable of assuming. "Critical self-consciousness means, historically and politically, the creation of an *élite* of intellectuals. A human mass does not distinguish itself, does not become independent in its own right without, in the widest sense, organizing itself; and there is no organization without intellectuals, that is, without organizers and leaders." The new, working-class intellectual, as active participant in practical life, as "constructor, organizer, 'permanent persuader,'" is both the product and driving force of the struggle for proletarian self-emancipation. Because organic intellectuals maintain this double relationship with the workers, they are better suited than Lenin's vanguard elite to carry out the functions of revolutionary intellectuals. The new intellectuals help the proletariat attain political consciousness, not by importing it from outside class lines, but by developing what is already in "embryonic" form in the workers' often mystified conception of the world. But perhaps what is more important, the new intellectual is best suited, psychologically and ideologically, to help the workers actualize their own intellectual potential for "the proletariat, alongside the problem of the conquest of political power and economic power, must also pose for itself the problem of the conquest of intellectual power."<sup>9</sup>

## the beginning of the war will be secret

ment (crises, depressions)."

In these countries, as opposed to Russia "where the State was everything," revolution, according to Gramsci, can only take the form of a long, protracted war of position waged on the complex terrain of civil society. It is here among the "powerful systems of fortresses and earthworks" that the proletariat must concentrate most of its efforts. For in the advanced countries, the ruling classes maintain power not only through the state and its repressive apparatus, but through the medium of civil society, which the ruling classes consider their private domain. Ideological apparatuses, such as the education system, the church, the media, the legal system, cultural institutions, mold and manipulate general consciousness, creating consensus and giving the capitalist classes the security and luxury of ruling primarily by persuasion and consent rather than by force and coercion. "The

Unless otherwise noted, all statements by Gramsci and Lenin are quoted from: Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, New York, International Publishers, 1971; and V.I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?* New York, International Publishers, 1969.

<sup>1</sup> Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster, New York & London, Monthly Review Press, 1971, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> See Tom Bottomore, *Sociology and Socialism*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1984, pp. 152–4.

<sup>3</sup> Christine Delphy, *Close to Home: A Materialist Analysis of Women's Oppression*, Amherst, The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984, pp. 114–5.

<sup>4</sup> As cited by Jerome Karabel, "Revolutionary Contradictions: Antonio Gramsci and the Problem of Intellectuals," *Politics and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1976, p. 151.

<sup>5</sup> See Christine Delphy, pp. 110–3.

<sup>6</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington, New York, Grove Press, 1968, pp. 188–9.

<sup>7</sup> See Nicos Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism*, trans. David Fernbach, London, Verso, 1978, pp. 251–7.

<sup>8</sup> Frantz Fanon, p. 163.

<sup>9</sup> Cited by Jerome Karabel, p. 157.



## FIGHTING GENTRIFICATION

**Melanie O'Harra**

*I would be hard pressed to say whether I would have stayed and fought as I did if I had had an easier alternative.*

MELANIE O'HARRA is an artist living and working in New York City.

It's a trick of human nature that people will pay 3,000 times more attention to 3,000 people than to one person stating the same position. But it does feel different to be one of the 3,000 rather than the lonely one, hopelessly out of synch with a large, silent machine labeled "the status quo." My first political demonstration (for reproductive rights) afforded me this insight. It was empowering and even a little thrilling to stand up and be counted with a lot of other people committed to the same cause.

I happened to participate in the demonstration only by virtue of hearing about it from a friend who planned to go and suggested that I come, too. Perhaps for other people a poster, leaflet, or flyer is enough, but for me it was interaction with a friend that prompted me to attend—Jennifer Brown (now president of the New York City chapter of NOW) informed me and extended an invitation to join her.

My first long-term political commitment came a few years later through an external influence: the recognition of the progressive deterioration of the apartment building I have called home for seven years. Gentrification of my neighborhood, the Lower East Side, had not yet taken root, but its seeds were sown four years ago when fully half of the almost entirely low-income Hispanic tenants fled our dilapidated building after pleas for repairs went unanswered and rats ran free. The empty apartments were warehoused (kept off the market and empty by the landlord), and the junkies started moving in rent free, endangering us all.

My concern brought me to seek advice and assistance from a non-profit community preservation organization called Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES). As a pearl forms from an irritant, our first rent-strike and my foremost political cause, tenants rights, was born. With the guidance of GOLES and the active participation of fellow tenants, we fought and eventually recaptured our homes but not without cost.

Passive scare tactics on the part of the landlord became active scare tactics when a fellow rent-striker's home not-so-mysteriously burned to the ground while we were in Housing Court negotiating with the landlord's attorney for our rights. An elderly woman barely escaped her

burning apartment when workers renovating the empty apartments for new, more well-heeled tenants heard her screams and rescued her. The smoke was so thick by the time she awakened that, although she made it to the door, she could not find the lock to let herself out.

I would be hard-pressed to say whether I would have stayed on and fought politically as I did, if I had had an easier alternative. But I knew that if I, as an educated, lower-middle class, working, single, white woman, had nowhere to go, then certainly my fellow tenants, economically disenfranchised, generally uneducated, Hispanic, often single-mother families, had even fewer options. The recognition made me dig my heels in harder.

Those who departed the building when repairs were not made left a core group of people, myself included, with nowhere else to go and vested interests in remaining. We had fewer options and, when pushed into a corner, fought for improvements rather than slinking away to uncontested territory.

An agreement was reached, repairs made, and our homes secured. This, of course, over months of time, not in a specific memorable moment, zenith, or point of completion. But the end result represented a clear success nonetheless, one by which I gained not just the end but discovered the means: the power to change through collective action.

Most political actions (as in my actions against intervention in Central America) do not have such uncomplicated, verifiable end goals as indicators of success. The handle (government policy in this case) is bigger and harder to grasp than issues closer to home. Again, frankly, most people don't even care enough to think to try. I'm not even sure I have entirely reached this point of altruism. My largest efforts, in housing, were first and foremost motivated by survival, and economic necessity.

I think to be politically active you have to have felt a wrong personally and seen the necessity to right it, for yourself and, hopefully, others. I suppose there are some that have been politically active for so long, against such odds, that they are impatient with, or perhaps even hostile towards, those who are not active. I cannot be so impatient because I know my political roots were slow in forming and my activism recent enough that I can remember the simple fact that all activists begin as non-activists.



# QUESTION

## *What misunderstandings or your group due to racial, sexual,*

I think the major cross-purpose I experience because of racism is that women of color are serious about eradicating racism and most white women aren't. This is of course not an issue in the groups I work in regularly. Homophobia in Third World contexts is the other major roadblock to organizing for me as a Lesbian of color. People of color aren't necessarily more homophobic, but any attack or rejection from within the group is all the more devastating.

*Barbara Smith*

As a member of the Heresies Collective, I couldn't help noticing that in 1978 we were all white, middle-class women who lived below Houston Street. That changed—somewhat—due to the activism of some of the Collective members. As a result of the meetings held to address this problem and to solve it, I became increasingly aware of the trickle-down theory held by many white, middle-class feminists. Now that we had gotten ours, we were smug and thought our newly-won advantages would benefit other women.

*Carrie Rickey*

In my experience, age-difference has caused the most misunderstanding. I have found that older women are often ambivalent about women of my generation—for good reason as many of my peers accept the world as it is, take feminism for granted and show no interest in its history or its future. In fact I know many women my age who are loathe to call themselves feminists, while they continue to reap the knowledge, power and responsibility from women like myself, who are feminists...

*Carrie Moyer*

After working for the feminist newspaper "Majority Report," I felt there weren't enough Hispanic feminists in the women's movement. Although the focus of many articles and much energy is on third world women, such women are not involved in the feminist decision-making process. The women's movement, after many years, is still too often composed of white middle-class women. Women of color should be encouraged to develop leadership qualities so they can participate in the decision-making process.

*Sophie Rivera*

My group is white, middle class, nurtured women. They are often overly guilty about the rights of others. As though they could do anything. The others have to be self-expressive and that includes hostile expression that my group doesn't like. The "others" will develop power in their way. My group cannot punish itself for being who they are and not others.

*Miriam Schapiro*

I must refer you to a collective book which I edited—The Mud Flower Collective's *God's Fierce Whimsy* (Pilgrim Press), written by black, Hispanic and white women, in which our own class, race and heterosexual dynamics nearly destroyed the writing project. We are, after all, all of us, "daughters of the white propertied male patriarchy" even if we're black, brown, poor, whatever. Therefore, we, like white propertied men, are quite able to destroy one another (and ourselves) via competitiveness, fear of "otherness", individualist assumptions about "success," projecting our weaknesses and faults onto others, horizontal violence, etc.

*Carter Heyward*

None so far. I may answer differently after we have spent two weeks together in Nicaragua.

*Anne Barstow*

The group has remained cohesive because the tragedies cross all lines. The problems are burnout, how long is it healthy to re-live your trauma with each new victim, and most people involved hold full-time jobs, so volunteer time is limited.

*Deborah Davidson, MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Driving*

# Q U E S T I O



# ***cross-purposes have arisen in class, religious, or age differences?***

Some socialist groups have great difficulty taking sexual or racial politics seriously, as more than inter-group psychological issues.

*Pat Mann*

We have little exposure to race problems and find it much easier and more comfortable to work in an all-woman group. We are able to be more honest and intimate. Degree of activism seems to be another barrier. Those of us who are arrested or protest in the streets inhibit many who are cautious about working with us. This may be an excuse. In a community which relies on military contracts for full employment such as ours, the two active peace groups (other than the Women's group) avoid participation in vigils or actions at defense (military) contractors. Also, at 65 any personal discrimination comes mainly from the male population. Some of us older women are invisible to some of the men.

*Macy Morse*

Little ageism, except I have a tendency to act differently when I am (often) the youngest person in a group. Racial misunderstandings: In anti-apartheid activism, I must deal with anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism from black activists. Class: I must deal with the fact that my working-class lover is not familiar with or interested in many of the academic and political distinctions I focus on. Sexual: Straight folks are still freaked out by dykes, hostile about men in the movement...

*Bonnie Morris*

**Political correctness and political unity are dangerous concepts. We come together on some points, not on others. Freedom is a process, not a goal.**

*May Stevens*

Not my group, other than ordinary mutiny, but with other groups taking up the issue and employing divisive tactics. And the ideologues, like McKinnan and Dworkin insisting on the victim analysis instead of empowerment for whores.

*Margo St. James, Coyote, Prostitutes' Rights*

The spiritual nature of activism is often misunderstood, dismissed or co-opted; that is, one must adopt a politically-correct approach towards spirituality in accordance with a group decision or deny that (often amorphous) part of ourselves because the group is reacting against organized religion or the over-bearing image of the Bible-toting distortions of the New Right.

*Holly Metz*

In my theatre group misunderstandings do sometimes arise out of sexual differences. When women in the group bond, work together, or express themselves in ways that men can't understand, there is a tension which occurs. And because these are men who are really trying to make an effort to embrace the feminine within themselves, there is a great deal of denial about the fact that they maybe behaving in a sexist way. We are in constant dialogue about these issues—sometimes mumbled, sometimes shouted—but we work on it. Our collective process allows this, but it often slows things down and creates problems not present when there is a woman-only group which has a "shared language." However, the men in the group might view the above as my reverse sexism, which is indeed possible.

*Joanie Fritz*

This is endless, it seems. Bottom line problem: Self esteem.

*Rev. Karen Ziegler*

In Ventana, the Central American solidarity group, the "unspoken" source of some tension is red-baiting because the participation of Socialist Party members is viewed suspiciously by some, and the whisperers pass along their doubts without bringing it out in the open. In the clear light of day, I'm proud of the Socialist Workers Party's participation. Like other Ventana activists, we have thrown ourselves into the work at hand. There's a lot to do and this particular "sectarian" misunderstanding serves no purpose.

*Claudia Hommel*

Some feminist meetings are scheduled on important Jewish holidays. This has always made me very angry. I am also concerned that publications like Ms. Magazine and Lilit tend to exclude midwestern women from their columns. Reading these journals, one gets the impression that feminism exists only in the eastern states of the USA. This is a big distortion of the truth.

*Janet Ruth Heller*

I am white and active in political and cultural spheres often dominated by blacks. Since returning to this country, I have known on occasion the cold fear that comes from being a conspicuous target in a racially tense situation in a violent society.

*Victoria Scott*

**N N A I R E**



**Anonymous witness, Christian activist. Currently serving an 8 year sentence (reduced from 18 years) for "destruction of government property, trespassing and conspiracy", the jamming of a missile silo cover with hammers. This 'dialogue' began while she was serving a shorter sentence in a D.C. jail, for a separate, earlier action.**

*Why do you wish to remain anonymous?*

I'm a bit leery of any attention paid to individuals in resistance, having seen too much of the cult of personality that develops when the focus is on the person and not on the truth of the witness. I think this is particularly important in Christian resistance. Who we are is totally unimportant. If in our witness we somehow illuminate the truth of Christ's peace, that is more than enough...

(As for) the "cult of personality," I think history has shown the danger of "leaders". I was reminded of this by a statement that the anti-nuclear movement needs to bring forth a Gandhi or a Martin Luther King. Both these giant men were catapulted into positions of leadership due to the charisma of their personalities, and people became attached to them rather than to the truth of the morality, spirituality, nonviolence which they preached. As soon as they were gone (prison and death) the "movement" they led died, and the people returned to the norm of conflict and violence. Gandhi once said his followers had caused him more anxiety and trouble than his British adversaries, and he died considering himself a failure because he had imparted to others only himself and not the love and nonviolence which could sustain them.

*How does one encourage thought, prayer, action in others without becoming a "public figure"?*

Do what you do and then duck—quickly. If the witness can't stand on its own statement of truth—exposing of nuclear idola-

with the prosecution, accepting of fines, restitution, probation, keeping the case in the courts on endless appeal (for the purpose of avoiding punishment rather than continuing the statement of truth) would not sit well on my conscience.

(2) As Thoreau said, when the true criminals (in our case, the Reagans, Weinbergers and joint chiefs) are running around free, the only honorable place for a decent human being is in the prisons;

(3) As a continuation of the witness;

(4) As an embrace of the humility and vulnerability of Christ;

(5) A living-out of the fact that unearned suffering is always redemptive;

(6) As a further exposing of the Beast;

(7) In the mystical sense that great spiritual power is released by the mere presence of good in a place of evil, love amidst hatred;

(8) The deliberate placing of one's life among the first victims of the Bomb, society's poor and outcast;

(9) As a form of prayer, the modern desert monasticism.

*Are you a member of a particular church? Why or why not?*

I'm Roman Catholic and love the Church with all my heart. As a friend once said, "She may be a whore, but she's our mother." Which is not, of course, to say that her sons and daughters need be bastards. The why is simple—Word, liturgy, sacrament, truth, life. Who can refuse such a gift?

*Why did you choose a particular form of resistance (e.g. blood spilling, especially in certain places)?*

For most religious resisters, the particular form of a witness is determined by the symbols which speak to us most clearly of the heart of existence—life, death, resurrection. Bloodpouring expresses at once the horror of the death work of nuclear sites, the blood of Christ shed in redemption, our own willingness to

# ANONYMOUS

## AN INTERVIEW

try and the call to conscientious action in light of the Gospel—if it needs the charisma of a "public figure" or any other gimmick to carry it, it isn't worth much. The writing and/or speaking that one does during or after can be handled in the same manner, especially if done from prison—numbers and blue uniforms being great equalizers. Resisters are neither great saints nor sinners, and neither to be emulated for their virtue nor rejected for their shortcomings; sanctity, in any case, being the province of God and none of our concern. If the emphasis is on the truth of the witness, the answer to the question, "Who was that masked woman?" ought to be "Who cares?"

*Why go to jail?*

(1) Partly just the inevitable outcome of taking responsibility for one's act. The maneuvers which can keep one out of jail—deals

endure suffering rather than inflict it upon others, our vital connection with all humanity in the beloved community. Other symbols spring from biblical texts—the use of hammers from the injunction to beat swords into plowshares, or from liturgy—the celebration of Eucharist (bringing life into a place of death) or ashes from burned money in repentance for our misuse of resources. Some are dictated by a particular situation, like the symbolic use of Interdict in response to the bishops' failure to condemn just war and nuclear deterrence.

The site is limited only by imagination since the nuclear monster has its tentacles everywhere, but the choice will determine the type of witness, for example, it would not be particularly meaningful (though lots of fun) to bash the White House with hammers, though nothing is more appropriate when faced with a Trident sub. Some differentiate between purely symbolic acts (blood pouring) and "disarmament" actions. I tend not to make



this distinction for myself because none of us has ever confronted a live nuclear weapon and I'm not sure what we could safely do with it if we were, other than label it symbolically. One form seems to lend itself more readily when the focus is on the human element, the second when the matter to be dealt with is the physical property itself. Both are essential. For most of us, the choice is made after much prayer, and if acting in community, through much reflection. Also essential is the element of celebration, play and pure fun. Resistance is serious but seldom grim.

The trick is not to take yourself too seriously. When you get people conspiring together in celebration, you're going to have fun. I wouldn't act in situations where this element is missing.

Part of the ability to celebrate and have fun comes in the ability to renounce the fruits of one's action. Quite the opposite of the military where the fruits are the only thing that count (number of enemy killed, territory conquered). We know that life has already overcome death, love overcome hatred. Our individual acts will not end the arms race, but our love and fidelity and obedience will. So we can relax and enjoy. The fact that we do so mystifies and sometimes angers others. I was once told by a Secret Service agent, "Stop grinning! You're in serious trouble." I'd never had so much fun in my life. It feels good to do good. Even when handcuffed to a wall for 4 hours. So much of what we do stifles the human spirit. Most Americans hate their work (therefore ulcers, tranquilizers, early heart attack), hate their families (divorce, refusal to have children, child neglect and abuse). So many don't know why they live as they live except that everyone lives that way and it's hard to stop. Resistance begins with a kind of liberation from that spiritual death, and the feeling after acting is one of enormous freedom and joy.

*Should acts of witness become "useful"? (that is, "political" via exposure to the press, or as teaching devices, or to promote further discussion, and therefore, future actions?)*

In the age of media, nothing done publicly (and little that's done

said in the future we would better accommodate him if we did not act at six o'clock on a Sunday morning. He was incredulous when we explained that accommodating him had never entered our minds.)

(And) I don't place much emphasis on the interpreting and explaining of particular actions and witnesses so that they become "comprehensible" to the public. (This as opposed to telling about the bomb and the need for resistance in general which I fully favor.) Let the witness stand alone.

*Mary Ward, a 16th-century English nun wrote "Women especially are victims of the long loneliness," a phrase that Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, used as the title of her autobiography. What is your opinion of the relationship between acts of resistance/faith and women as a group?*

I'm not the best person to ask about the women's issue because I happened to grow up in a family which assumed that people would do precisely what they wanted to do regardless of sex and which regarded the typically female tasks (nurturing children, housekeeping) and the typically male tasks (work and physical labor) as equally necessary and important. In adulthood I have always done precisely what I wanted and never once felt oppressed, repressed, or any other "essed". Never having experienced the sense of oppression and feeling personally no need for change (or vengeance), I don't look at the feminist thing the way many women today do.

In a sense, I feel that men have been more victimized than women. The requirement to be always strong, competitive, successful, dominant, aggressive and unquestioningly obedient to authority which says "fight, kill, die and don't complain" is a tremendous slavery. I suspect that most men are more creatures of society's expectations that are most women, but it doesn't really matter. What we need is not a reversal of the established order in which women become the visible slaves and men the invisible, but a new order—the liberation of the human spirit.

BY HOLLY METZ

# WITNESSES

privately) can escape becoming "political" or "useful". To make use of that exposure, to teach and promote discussion is entirely appropriate, but that's a far cry from planning the witness as a media event (in which case it's not a witness at all.) It doesn't even make sense. *The Day After* and Helen Caldicott on the *Donahue* show reach millions; our seminars, discussion groups and newsletters reach thousands, and you don't have to do 6 months for them. To manipulate the witness into the arena of the political is to deny the power of God's grace to work its mysterious, mystical magic (as in the silent prayer of contemplatives or the suffering love of a slum worker whom no one can name, as in the Chassidic legend of the Just.)

You can bet that those who do the best job of making their witness useful are the ones who have their eye on the Spirit first and the TV cameras a distant second. (Personal note: After one witness, when the press finally caught up with us, the TV guy

Resistance has meaning only if we do away with all the artificially imposed divisions that are, in and of themselves, violent, and create further violence. Rich/poor, black/white, male/female, good/bad, American/Russian—Bomb = death.

For these reasons I don't understand very well the exclusively women's actions. I see exclusion for any reason under any circumstances as an act of violence. If we disarm without building true community at the same time, we will only have a vacuum where the Bomb used to be which will quickly be filled with some other expression of our divisiveness. We conspire together or we die alone. Aren't we tired of dying alone?

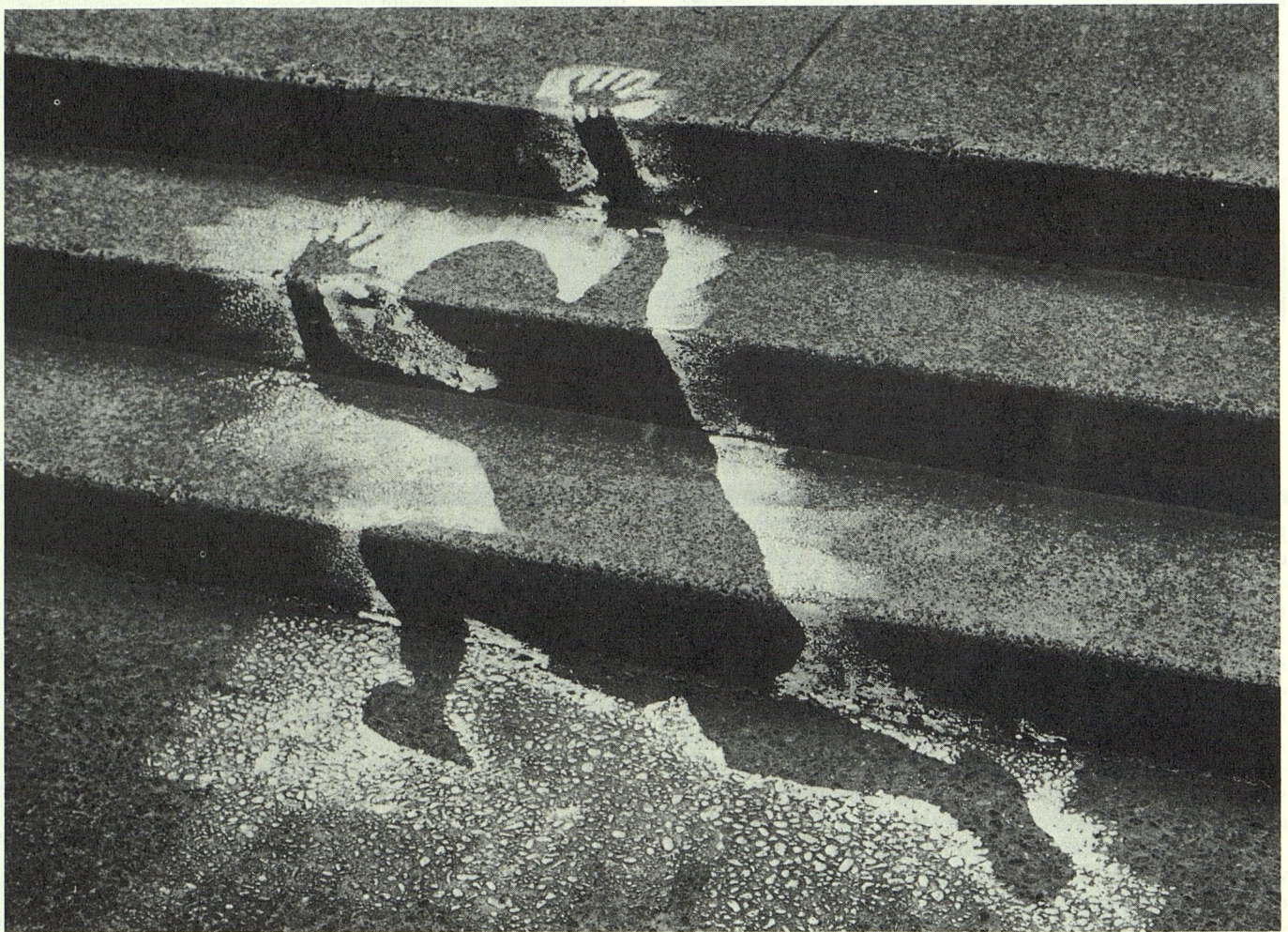
"Anonymous Witness" is excerpted from a book about 20th-century war resisters. HOLLY METZ is also co-author, with Sue Coe, of *How to Commit Suicide in South Africa*, a book on political detention.



# THE SHADOW PROJECT

When the first atomic bomb exploded over Hiroshima, human beings who were within 300 meters of ground zero were instantly vaporized by the searing heat of the blast, leaving behind only their "shadows." The remnants of these innocent victims provide the image for the International Shadow Project, a solemn memorial with a singular purpose: To help people understand and imagine the disappearance of all life through nuclear annihilation.

Before dawn on Hiroshima Day project participants paint silhouettes of human beings engaged in various activities on public streets and sidewalks in various communities around the world. The silent testimony of these anonymous human



Kathleen M. Reyes



## By Donna Grund Slepach

silhouettes dramatizes what would remain after nuclear war.

On August 6, 1985, Portland activist artists joined over 10,000 participants from around the world in producing the International Shadow Project (ISP). As a result of their action, citizens in over 400 communities in 24 countries woke up in the morning to find a grim, visual reminder of the first nuclear holocaust. A collage of human images covered the pavements of those communities throughout the world in remembrance of the 40th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima. Although the participants of the ISP spoke different languages, on Hiroshima Day they shared with the world community a language of form that introduced the human element into the nuclear debate.

The Shadow Project and the attention given to the 40th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima tended to concentrate the mind, body and spirit for a time. As newspaper clippings, photos, and videos of TV news reports poured in from many of the 400 communities participating in the ISP, one thing became evident: The shadows, though each unique and individually made, revealed a generic similarity. Shadows from the USA resembled the shadows from Hungary, which in turn resembled the shadows of Australia, England, France, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Nigeria, etc. The Shadow Project seemed to visually communicate a sense of that which unites all individuals—our humanity.

The first Shadow Project took place in New York City in 1982 and was followed by a similar one in Portland, Oregon in 1983. Following is an account of that demonstration.

As a member of the "Duck and Cover Generation" and as a person interested in activist art, I was attracted to a lecture at Reed College in October, 1982, entitled "Art in the Nuclear Age." It was there that I first learned about Alan Gussow's Shadow Project. On Hiroshima Day in 1982, 150 people, mostly art students, took to the New York City streets in the middle of the night to paint *memento mori*.

I was deeply impressed with the concept and felt it needed repetition. After the lecture I met with Alan Gussow and, along with Manya Shapiro, Grace Weinstein and Nancy Blake, began to organize a Shadow Project for Portland. Other members of FeMail Art, a group of Portland women who produce feminist postcards, decided to become involved. We began meeting nine months before Hiroshima Day to determine how we could successfully implement the Shadow Project in Portland. We joined forces with PAND, Performers and Artists for Nuclear Disarmament, and organized the Shadow Project under their auspices.

Knowing that seven participants were arrested in the New York project the year before, the first item on our organizational agenda was to contact the National Lawyers Guild. We met with attorneys and explored the idea of involving the Lawyers Action for Nuclear Arms Control. That group, however, could not conceive of any anti-nuclear action off paper. The National Lawyers Guild, on the other hand, agreed to represent us *pro bono*. Their enthusiasm about the case helped me appreciate the Shadow Project in new ways.

To properly plan for this event we needed specific information from the lawyers. We wanted to find out the legal consequences and possible charges that could be brought against us. In New York charges were dropped for some of those cited. Others had to pay small fines, equivalent to a traffic ticket. We couldn't, however, anticipate the reaction of the Portland police.

Our lawyers assumed that the likelihood of arrest was greater in Portland than in New York since New York police are used to graffiti artists on the streets and generally ignore them. We would probably be found guilty of a Class C misdemeanor in the Third Degree (mischievous misconduct), which carries a maximum penalty of \$250 and one month in jail.

I personally didn't feel that the project was radical enough to merit that fine and wanted information that would minimize the risk of getting arrested. In April,

Emily Simon, one of our attorneys, identified the high vice areas of the city, which consequently have a high police density. We marked these areas on the map and designated them as prohibited areas.

In addition to reviewing the penalties for the various types of misdemeanors, our lawyers informed us about the serious consequences of damaging federally owned property. Criminal Mischief I, Class C, carries a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and five years in jail. Such charges could be brought against someone causing more than \$200 worth of property damage to public transportation facilities and certain other public property. This meant bus shelters, mail boxes, post offices, railroad depots, as well as private property, were restricted areas.

Besides helping us determine locations to avoid, Emily also assisted in figuring out the best time to paint. In Australia there is a billboard altering campaign entitled "BUGA-UP," which stands for "Billboards Utilizing Graffiti Artists Against Unhealthy Promotions." There they found that far fewer arrests occurred when the tobacco and alcohol billboard advertisements were altered during the day. There were fewer police around and the painters could easily blend into the working environment by wearing overalls. To maximize the drama, however, we decided to work during the middle of the night at times when police shifts were about to change.

The length of time we were to paint was a critical matter. In New York painting took place from midnight until 6 am. Fearing an immediate shutdown, though, we limited our painting to 3–5 am.

By mid-May we started to organize a general information meeting to be held in July. The purpose of this meeting was to recruit members, explain the purpose of the project and demonstrate the procedure for designing and painting shadow templates.

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DONNA GRUND SLEPACK is an activist artist and co-director of the International Shadow Project. She is on the faculty of Antioch University, Seattle, WA.



We developed a simple flier that did not disclose the details of the action. We sent it to all the local peace groups and requested them to announce our project at their meetings and publish it in their newsletters. We distributed the fliers to food co-ops, book stores, art schools, progressive churches, and of course to radio and TV stations and newspapers. In addition, Portland Center for the Visual Arts had held a Public Hanging, inviting all artists in the city to participate in this exhibit. We had the good fortune to obtain their 400-artist mailing list.

The turnout at this meeting was overwhelming. Since the New York project included 100-150 participants, we anticipated that in Portland we could probably expect a sign-up of 50. To our surprise, 70 people attended the first meeting. However, our lawyers assumed if the project was so widespread, the police would certainly know about it as well. (We never found out if the police knew about the project in advance. We don't believe they did since 200 of us were able to successfully paint 2000 shadows without significant interruption.)

After the information meeting, our two lawyers met with me and the other organizers to review the material they would be presenting to the training meetings. The training meetings were a very critical part of the event. We wanted to make sure all participants understood the risks involved with the project and would know how to conduct themselves in the event they were apprehended by a police officer.

A listing of all the legal information was prepared. Essentially the shadow painters were told what to carry (e.g., identification, paper and pencil to immediately record the facts if arrested, change to make telephone calls, a \$150 money order for bail if it could be afforded, and a list of locations to avoid). They were also informed about what not to carry. Since participants could be searched, no one was allowed to have any drugs, firearms or knives in their possession.

If participants were stopped by the police, they needed to know how to act in order to prevent the situation from escalating. To avoid being prosecuted for harassment, they could not stand too close to an officer, extend a hand, or spray saliva on him/her during the course of a conversation. Furthermore, using obscene language could result in a charge of disorderly conduct. Resisting arrest, Escape III, Assault IV, and eluding an officer were serious violations that participants needed to avoid. They were

also instructed about what to expect if taken into custody.

The most difficult concept to which everyone had to agree was not talking to the police. Many participants thought they could talk their way out of arrest or convince the police officer of the merit of the Shadow Project as well as of the horrors of nuclear war. The attorneys did a superb job persuading the participants that what they said would certainly be held against them. Their conversation was to be limited to "I want my lawyer." When one shadow painter, stopped by a police officer, quickly responded as instructed the officer laughed and replied, "For such a silly thing?" (Another officer walked by a painter and complimented her on her good work.)

The presence of the attorneys during the training was crucial. It gave participants access to professional counsel, assured them of free competent legal support, and helped them to take the information seriously. In fact, the one person taken into custody was the only person who had not attended the training meeting. He neglected to carry identification. He had been briefed by one of the organizers, which probably didn't have the same impact on him.

each with its own supply headquarters. Each team of three was given five gallons of white wash, a non-permanent medium used for temporary signs. Participants were also supplied with small paint rollers and project posters. In addition, each participant received three telephone numbers. We established a hot line for shadow painters to call in the event of arrest. The people answering the phone would, in turn, call one of the 25 volunteer attorneys waiting in the wings at home.

Bail money was made available through the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Our caution even led us to consult the Guardian Angels, who assured us they would not interfere. Their interest was in protecting people, not property.

During the project, 19 participants were cited and one taken into custody. He was out by 10 am the next morning.

Due to the controversial nature of the project, the media attention was both positive and negative. A flurry of letters to *The Oregonian* that continued until September 5th expressed support for our consciousness-raising project as well as vitriolic disapproval of our vandalism. The mayor proclaimed the project a terrible



Jim Lommason

After four identical training meetings were held, we had 200 participants involved in the project, far exceeding our expectations and making the event larger than the one in New York. With such a large group it became important to decentralize. We divided the city into five zones, each led by a zone leader and

misuse of public property and *The Oregonian* editors demanded prosecution of the Shadow Painter "Vandals." In contrast, National Public Radio described the Shadow Project as a unique commemoration of Hiroshima Day on "All Things Considered." *Willamette Week* published four articles following the sequence of events,



the last as late as December 27th. Several school and university newspapers featured comprehensive articles describing the project and Joan Rudd wrote an inspiring article for the *Portland Jewish Review* contemplating the discrepancy between the "How could they?" response to Warsaw Ghetto photos and the desire to prosecute painters of nuclear war death images. Correspondence lasted a year.

The dichotomies of people's responses and priorities were amazing and instructive. Some valued the project for its disarmament message, others objected more to the temporary images on the

applies to us all, the project provided yet another vehicle to express opposition to nuclear annihilation and support for disarmament. It enabled participants to experience empowerment and a sense of community in working together for peace. Likewise, it stimulated the viewer to consider the consequences of aggression and clearly excited the human capacity to act.

By graphically depicting the effects of nuclear weapons on civilian populations, activities like the Shadow Project help galvanize the public support for disarmament. That many Shadow Projects were able to obtain endorsements and

not be immediately predicted, as the following vignette illustrates. After the 1983 Portland Shadow Project, we videotaped interviews of people on the street. One woman was visibly aghast when she learned about the prospects of nuclear vaporization, an unfamiliar concept to most people with whom we spoke. To our delight, we discovered that this same woman subsequently became active in the nuclear freeze campaign and painted shadows in the 1985 Shadow Project. Another poignant response to the Shadow Project came from a person who initially did not support it. He told me later that while walking to work one day



**Silvia Malagrino, BOMB VICTIM #17, photo collage**  
The artist, born in Buenos Aires and now living in Chicago, teaches at the University of Illinois at Chicago and Latino Youth, an alternative high school.

streets than to the permanent consequences of nuclear annihilation. Perhaps the most meaningful was the warm and supportive response of the Mayor of Hiroshima, via the director of Japan's Hiroshima Peace Memorial Hall.

By August 25 all arraignments had taken place, and no charges were pressed. The removal of the shadows, a task taking one bucket of water, one scrub brush and one minute per shadow, was the only point of contention, and that fell away.

The Shadow Project of course did not end the arms race or result in disarmament. Social change is never the result of a single event or the deeds of one individual. While the Nurnberg obligation

permits from their local city councils attests to the credibility of our cause and the maturity of the Peace Movement. Nuclear vaporization is becoming a household phrase. This was documented by the front page coverage in numerous newspapers, letters to the editor, descriptive articles accompanied by photographs, editorials, television reports and the *Time* magazine reference to the shadow images (August 9, 1985).

At the same time, media coverage is not the only indicator of success. The images themselves, with or without TV and newspaper attention, allowed the viewers to see themselves as potential nuclear shadows. The sequel to consciousness-raising of the Shadow Project can-

after the event he observed clusters of people hovering over the painted images. Approaching them he saw for the first time complete strangers talking to each other about nuclear war. Indeed, it is the goal of art and activism to motivate people to question, reflect, and act.

The United States of America was the first to develop and drop the bomb on a civilian population. Similarly, it was the first to accelerate the arms race. With this International Shadow Project, we express the hope that the United States will also be the first to set an example and disarm.

Contact: Donna Grund Slepack, 817 Brighton Ave., Oregon City, OR 97045; or Alan Gussow, 121 New York Ave., Congers, NY 10920.



# 1

We met on an evening in July  
in one of the old taverns of this town,  
two poets, unable to write, newly arrived,  
hunted and haunted. For me,  
the escape. For you,  
the return.

You said you would show me  
the Olympic Peninsula.

The road was overgrown.  
In the headlights of your car I cleared the trees.  
The cabin was vandalized, gutted,  
the twenty-six oddshaped windows  
opening onto the Straits, Canada and all the northern sky  
shot out. The sink, the pump, the stoves,  
even the doors, stolen.  
You wandered around, then out to the deck,  
seeming to forget me in the debris.

Victoria, the only human light,  
shimmered on the foreign shore.  
I heard the groan of a fishing boat below the bluff,  
a strange cry from the woods, like a woman,  
your ex-wife, the children.

We lay on a narrow mattress in the loft,  
amidst bullet shells, beer cans, mold and glass,  
the cold, hard bed of delinquent teenagers.

The moon was a broken boat through the bullet shattered  
skylight.  
We told each other.  
First words. I said  
one night stand. You said ground zero.  
I said I lost my children, my lover.  
You said submarine, fucking vandals.  
I said kids with no place to go, kids forbidden  
to love. You said holocaust. Apocalypse.  
I pulled you over on me. The volcano erupted.  
The world turned to ash. I screamed  
love cannot be gutted.  
The moon, the stars, the giant trees watched  
through a bullet hole.

# GROUND ZERO

Sharon Doubiago

*From New England Review and Bread Loaf Quarterly  
and Empty Bowl.*

*for Michael Daley  
March 25, 1982*

# 2

You moved in, installed sink, stoves, water pump.  
Sixty oddshaped windows. You sat here  
pissed as the eagle that stared from the bluff,  
the greaspen numbers on the glass  
around your brooding head  
like cabala, some secret military code.  
When I visited, I felt a vandal.  
When I left you cried deserted.  
Betrayed.

In November I moved in.  
Sheetrock. Yellow paint named Sunlight.  
My white dog, Moonlight.  
I said I'd stay until the place  
became a landscape in my dreams.

---

SHARON DOUBIAGO is a writer currently living in Oregon.



By moon's light through the bullet hole  
I began to write.  
Your words; The Duckabush, The Dosiewallips,  
The Hamma Hamma.

It snowed in December.  
You followed Coyote's tracks to the log where he slept.  
A trapper came on the deep path.  
He had Coyote. He gave you his card.  
He boasted he'd get the rest.  
He hinted that for money he could get them for you.

You were not easy to love.  
You couldn't speak. Your tongue was cut out.  
I left, screaming down the interstate,  
avoiding the road over the mountains  
to my old, equally beautiful, home.  
You wrote me. One Trident submarine equals  
two thousand and forty Hiroshimas.

In the cities I was weighted with cedar, an inland sea,  
like provisions carried on my back  
Friends I'd always respected said  
they couldn't live without culture  
I was weighted with the culture of eagle, coyote, people  
like weather, like stars, functions of nature, not  
human will, money, concrete.

---

### 3

I came back to study the language of gulls,  
the stories they scream to each other  
as they fly off their sanctuary,  
Protection Island.

You pulled me up the stairs.  
Beyond your head I watched the moon through  
the bullet hole.

You said six layers of mountains  
from the road, you said rivers  
without end. You quoted Rilke's  
*Neptune of the blood and his terrible trident.*  
You said Trident  
submarine. You said  
zero.

I came back to stare back at Eagle,  
to cut, carry, and chop our firewood,  
to piss in the tall fern, to shit  
in *the first little house you ever built.*  
I came back and broke my habit at last  
of the electric typewriter.  
I came back to our cruel and grinding poverty,  
never enough kerosene, gasoline, postage, paper or pens.  
We turned off the propane. It is so cold in our house  
the little food on our shelves is naturally iced.

I came back to listen to the woods,  
gull squawk and moandance of cedar, fir and alder,  
the high scream of wind through the mouth of Haro,  
Rosario, Deception Pass  
where the ships disappear on the inward passage.  
I came back to listen to your breath  
as you sleep beside me. Poet. Your words.  
Puma, Ish, Milosz. The children  
who once lived here.

---

### 4

You weighted me with your poems,  
like provisions. I left, drove home.  
My children were grown, gone.  
Your words lulled me back.

We climb the stairs together.  
The roof leaks, the cabin is for sale.  
I say it is ours for now. Our one night stand,  
our two hundred nights.

You tell me of this thing that is coming,  
the deadliest weapon ever made.  
Two football fields, four stories high.  
Two thousand and forty Hiroshimas.

It can be anywhere in the world, undetected,  
and hit its target within half a foot.  
It can be anywhere in the world and no one,  
not the President, not the Computer  
will be able to find it.

One day soon it will enter the Straits of Juan de Fuca.



The most evil thing ever created  
Will float beneath our cabin, then down  
the Hood Canal.

You say four hundred and eight cities  
from a single submarine. You say  
First Strike Weapon. You say  
shoot out their silos. You say  
U.S.S. Ohio.

## 5

I came upon an old man  
teaching his granddaughter and grandson  
how to shoot.

I sat here alone.  
The door banged open and four kids  
burst in. Perfume, six packs, party clothes.  
I think I frightened them  
as much as they frightened me.

On clear days the islands rise up.  
San Juan. Lopez. Orcas, white skyscrapers  
on Vancouver. How many ships, my love,  
have come and gone since we came? How many whales,  
eagles, coyotes and gulls?  
I finished my epic poem here.  
You finished *The Straits*.

Every night the human city  
shimmers and beckons on the Canadian shore.  
Every night of one whole week  
the sky wove and unwove  
the rainbow flags of all the north  
delicately over us. The Aurora  
Borealis.

Two seasons of snow, now the season of light again.  
My one night stand, our four hundred  
nights.

I saw car lights descend Protection Island  
to the water.  
The leaks in the roof washed away  
my nightwritten words.  
We saw six killer whales  
rise and fall through the water.  
You said my rejected poems. I said  
your smallminded editors. I said  
I can almost understand now  
what the gulls are saying.



Jeanne Silverthorne, *TOO*, polyester resin, 51" × 22" × 13"

JEANNE SILVERTHORNE is an artist living and working in New York and Philadelphia.



## 6

My dreams take place on an inland sea,  
a land soaked in silver shadows and blue.  
We are traveling to the heart of the continent.  
We are looking for a room to rent. We are having a baby.  
We are building a house.  
You say unrecognized. Unpublished. I say just  
wait. You say holocaust. You say apocalypse. I say  
love.

Once you went with me.  
Once you came for me.

We climb the loft together. This, you say  
is your home now. This northwest corner. This last place  
we can run.

This bed of outlaws, circle of mountains, finger  
of glacier water, dark sun of winter behind  
Mt. Olympus.

## 7

Light shoots through the skylights.  
Twenty full moons awake us.  
Moonlight sleeps below by the fire, cries from nightmare.  
The Manx, the Siamese watch us through the bullet hole.  
We lie in terror,  
watch the giant trees arch and blow over us,  
rain and wind so fierce  
we wait without words to be crushed.  
Finally I say maybe we should leave. You say  
where would we go?  
You say death like a storm that might/might not  
blow over. You say Puma.  
I say Tatoosh means Thunderbird.  
Like Phoenix, like rebirth.  
You say the last crisis is not death,  
but how to be beautiful.  
How to die  
beautifully.

## 8

Say the word Hiroshima.  
Reflect on its meaning for one second.  
Say and understand Hiroshima again.  
Say and understand Hiroshima two thousand and forty times.

Assuming you are able to understand Hiroshima in  
one second, you will be able to understand Trident  
in thirty four minutes. That's one Trident submarine.  
To understand the destructive power of the whole  
Trident fleet, it will take you seventeen hours  
devoting one second to each Hiroshima.\*

## 9

The real estate agents are lost on Old Dump Road.  
Coyote yelps. The last hunter shoots.  
The kids break through the woods  
still looking for the party.  
I throw open the window. "Here's your bed!  
Come join us! We've kept it warm for you!"  
You always pull me back to weep in your arms, where  
are my teenagers?

## 10

The volcano erupted. The world turned to ash.  
Now the planets line up; *six hundred days and nights*.  
The sun comes north  
falls into the mouth of the Straits.  
*Rhododendron. Honeysuckle. Calypso. Trillium.*  
The stunted shrub blazes up  
like a flaming heart.

And snow circle of mountains! Ring of fire!  
*Rainer, Mt. Baker, Glacier Peak, St. Helens!*  
Olympic Home of the Gods: *Sappho, Makah, Joyce, Quinault.*  
*Shi Shi, La Push, Ozette, Kalaloch.*  
How many nights my love, how many poems, my great poet  
we have awakened  
to the low moan of a fishing boat,  
someone's voice, almost,  
heard in the trees.  
*It has already left. It is on its way.*  
*It is coming around from the other side of the continent.*  
*the date is a secret.*

*It will enter the mouth of the Straits,*  
*then slip down the Hood Canal.*  
*It will move beneath your cabin.*  
*It will come through your windows.*

*You will be anywhere in the world*  
*and it will find you.*

\*From Jim Douglass' *Lightning East and West*.



# QUESTION *What do you the everyday contra*

The better I become at doing nonviolent acts of conscience, the more I become categorized as an enemy of my country.

*Marie Bernard*

The fact that in some ways the lifestyle of the bourgeois world is probably more human—it may be an alienated, repressive society, but I don't think 60 hours a week work, no social/cultural activities outside of slideshows, 10 minutes a day for relationships are a part of the human emancipatory project. It is ironic that you can work for 5 years for an organization, leave (with no plaque or watch) and not get phone calls from your associates until they want you to do something. This probably happens more often in the movement that it does at Howard Johnsons.

*Susan McCarn*

What contradictions? Do you mean would I be bothered if one day my granddaughter wanted to turn out?

*Margo St. James, Coyote, Prostitutes' Rights*

To be good at it and give oneself most wholly, it is necessary to be detached sometimes, to have a life of one's own.

*Rev. Karen Ziegler*

I often feel I'm the token disabled lesbian on committees or in other groups and that, having got me there, they tend to rest on their laurels and outreach work virtually ceases. It amuses me a bit that I may only be doing all these things because of the lucky chance of being a lesbian with disability. Were I only disabled, or only lesbian, I feel I might not have become any sort of activist.

*Elsa Beckett*

Here I was involved in a project that had motivated 10,000 people around the world to take action against nuclear proliferation, yet in my own household I have been impotent to get my partner to cook a meal.

*Donna Grund Slepack*

The more you're active, the less time you have for your own work (which is at least partly what your activism is about). The more I do, the more I produce, the more I envy women who have time to just be, and the more I see the virtues of being. Activism tends to make you simple-minded, to see things in terms of clear-cut oppositions, rather than dialogically (which is what I like) and in their complexity.

*Linda Nochlin*

...That the very same institutions one wishes to change are the ones one is dependent upon for financial and professional survival. For example, using a university as a non-profit umbrella in order to receive grants to do your work, or needing recognition, and therefore validation, by the art world establishment in order to make a living off your art.

*Jacqueline Hayden*

The tendency toward totalitarian, authoritarian attitudes on the part of otherwise enlightened liberal thinkers.

*Sheila Pinkel*

I find it ironic that while each human being is preparing herself for personal power, she is berating herself for the lack of power in others. This makes her dull in the pursuit of her own self. It all comes from being socialized as nurturant women—the one area in which the most self-effacing woman is strong. She applies that—guiltily—to others instead of being natural about the relationship between self-interest and democratization.

*Miriam Schapiro*

Most of my insights regarding how we raise our men and women from before birth come to me now after my children are grown. The very practices that made the boys independent ... now keep them from sharing their fears and my insights.

*Macy Morse*

We stress ourselves out working for peace, often forgetting that we may do more for global peace by calming down than by racing around. We spend much time focusing on cultural/political external flaws at the expense of giving attention and healing energy to the fragile inner workings of our smaller communities.

*Jan Phillips*

Q U E S T I O



# *find ironic in dictions of activism?*

...How people can see things so clearly on one issue but can't seem to transpose that understanding to other issues.

*Martha Eberle*

It's difficult to deal with individuals—yet I am passionate about human beings and all life.

*Carol Jacobsen*

There is nothing particularly ironic in the everyday contradictions of activism. It's a matter of resolving social issues with the greatest possible effectiveness.

*Nancy Spero*

The potential for divisiveness. Allies who began their work together sometimes find themselves winding up in different camps. A good example of this is the pornography issue which has split the women's movement down the middle, resulting in an alliance between some feminists and the moral majority. If that's not ironic, I don't know what is.

*Arlene Carmen*

No matter how much we "activists" do, nothing much seems to change (on the grand scale at least), but we all go on doing it anyway and we all believe, in one way or another, that something will change.

*Virginia Maksymowicz*

Working for peace amid the daily struggles with a small child. I think activism on a grand scale is easier than showing a peaceful, loving example to one's own child.

*Janet Burdick*

The separation between the line spoken and the life lived privately of many activists I knew.

*Pat Steir*

To hold certain moral values (to believe, for example, that housing is a right) is frequently threatening to "non-political" co-workers or other persons one may meet in the course of an ordinary day; therefore, one's personal conduct receives unrelenting scrutiny. I call this the bogus-\$50-watch question, or "Why are you wearing a \$50 watch if you're for poor people/on the left/a socialist, etc.?" Everyday contradictions ... How easily "non-political" individuals use those who are politically active as their surrogates for action instead of as help-mates or sources of information. The political activist becomes a cardboard saint, an example-to-us-all while the uninvolved wait for the activist to be tempted by a corporate offer, or to manifest those contradictions which make movements energetic, lively and truthful.

*Holly Metz*

... That women are not, after all, all "sisters." Sometimes it is necessary (and most unpleasant) to fight among ourselves, not only for ideologies, but also against the insecurity (or whatever it is) that makes women push each other aside for personal recognition or gain.

*Ruth Putter*

I don't think it's ironic, but it's not what most folks assume; namely, that activism and contemplation go hand-in-hand and, as such, hold the co-creative power to change the world.

*Carter Heyward*

... Reagan and Nancy getting a big hype about saving a child who needs a heart operation, while in reality they are responsible for many children dying from overt war, covert aid, poverty, hunger, etc.

*Kathy Goldman*

I am afraid the choice is that of maintaining an integrity between our means and our ends, remaining marginal and being alternative or fighting fire with fire. We live with hierarchy, alienated labor, we develop our own deceptive ideology but have a crack at the mainstream and the chance to get power in the system as it exists.

In feminism this plays itself out as whether to develop a women's culture and in many ways drop out from the system, something women are encouraged to do anyway, or fighting for the right to swim with the big boys, which doesn't address the problem at its roots. Leftists have their own version of this which in the USA is to maintain radicalism and yell at deaf ears or adopt liberalism and band-aids.

*Robin Michals*

Too often we are preaching to the converted.

*Victoria Scott*

N N A I R E



The first of these is the fact that the world is a very different place than it was a few years ago. The world is a more complex and more diverse place than it was a few years ago. The world is a more complex and more diverse place than it was a few years ago.

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