



No. 64/65 - Fall/Winter 2004/5

Women & Environments

international

Globalization and Feminist Activism

**Privatization of
Public Services:
What Does it
Mean for
Women?**

JANE STINSON

**Eco-spirituality,
Neo-Paganism
and the
Hindu Right**

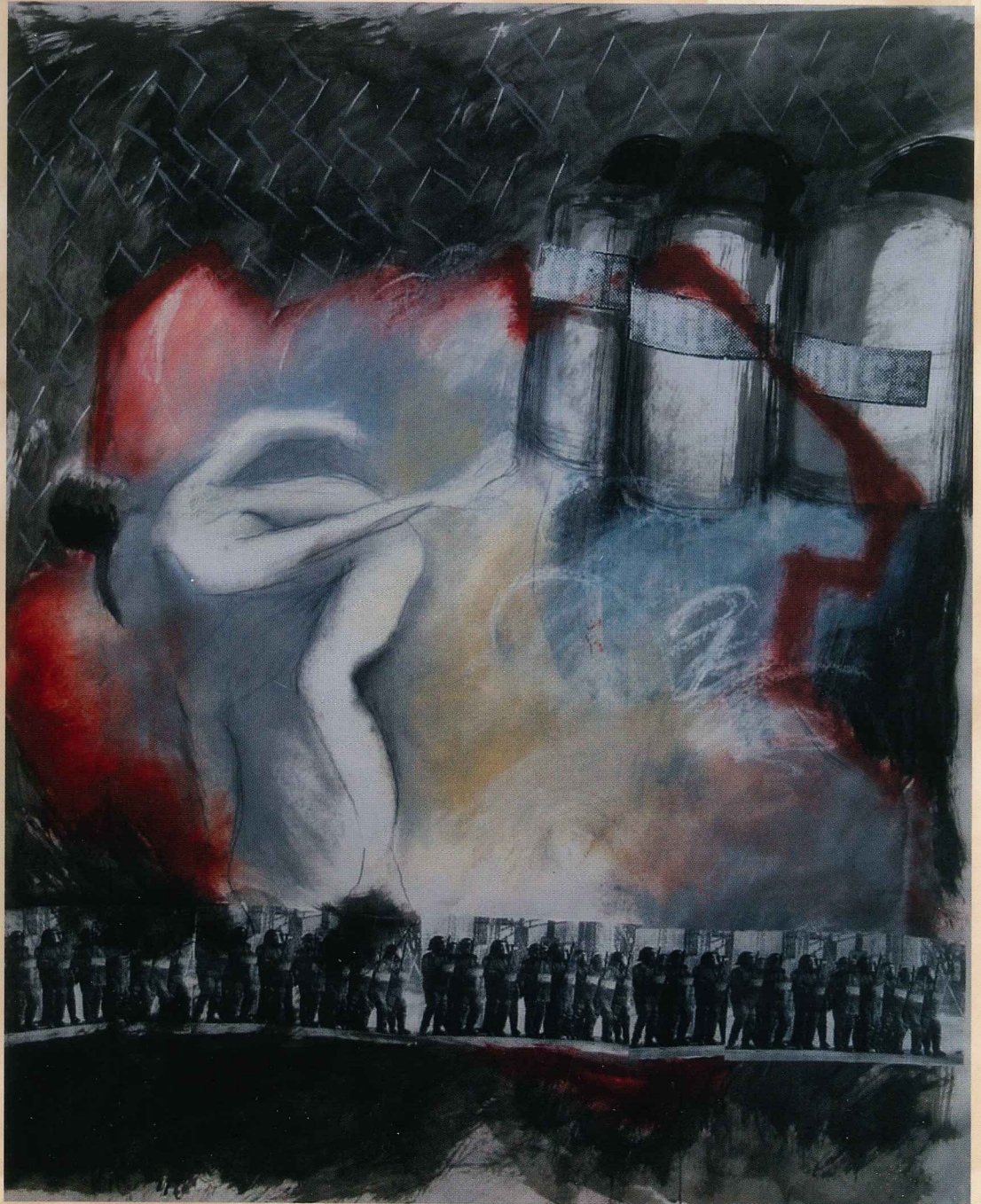
MEERA NANDA

**Is Anti-
Capitalism
Enough?**

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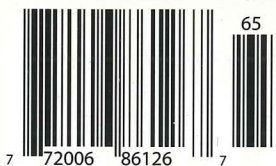
**Women and
Globalization
in Ireland**

REGINA COCHRANE



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Mission Statement

Women & Environments International is a unique Canadian magazine, which examines women's multiple relations to their environments — natural, built and social — from feminist and anti-racists perspectives. It has provided a forum for academic research and theory, professional practice and community experience, since 1976. Produced by a volunteer Editorial Board the magazine contributes to feminist social change. The magazine is associated with the Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Studies at New College, University of Toronto.

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We are working on the following issue themes:

SPRING 2005 Young Women Working in Local and Global Environments — The impacts of globalization on young women appear contradictory at best. Young women in the North have made advances in education and professions. Yet they have still not achieved equality in the workplace, and continue to bear main responsibility for unpaid, caring work. They also are increasingly pitched against their even more exploited sisters of the South.

FALL 2005 Feminism, Transnationality, and the Nation — This issue will explore the topic through text and visual media focusing on various aspects of the nation and nationality both inside and across borders, including but not limited to human rights, national 'identities' and technologies within the context of a transnational world.

SPRING 2006 30th Anniversary Issue: Women and Urban Sustainability — This special 30th Anniversary issue will focus on the issues of urban sustainability from the point of view of feminist organizing, research, practice and theory. The publication will contribute to and be part of the World Urban Forum III that will take place in Vancouver in June 2006.

Your participation in issue teams, ideas, articles, news and funds are critical to the survival of Women & Environments International Magazine. For Editorial Guidelines, Calls for Papers and more visit our website: www.weimag.com

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Canada

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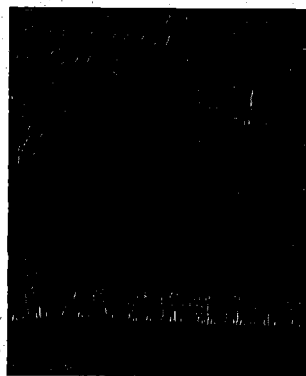
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ON THE COVER

"Quebec 2001" by Margaret Adams

Margaret Adam is a Toronto-based artist, illustrator, and graphic designer working with a broad network of groups fighting for social justice. This mixed media work was inspired by newspaper images of the demonstrations against the FTAA Summit in Quebec City in 2001.
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WEspeak

Feminism in the AGM

Feminist Activism in the Grassroots Anti-Globalization Movement, North and South

When asked, at the turn of the millennium, about the state of the contemporary women's movement, American feminist Gloria Steinem is reported to have quipped: "Seattle is the women's movement." Steinem alluded to here the massive protests against the World Trade Organization that erupted in the streets of Seattle in November, 1999. This "battle in Seattle" is often used by commentators, in the West at least, to signal the birth of a new social movement that has commonly — but not unproblematically — been dubbed the "anti-globalization movement" (AGM). Steinem saw that the anti-globalization movement was the newest and most important forum for contemporary feminist activism. The gendered impact of corporate globalization — the "feminization" of work and poverty caused by the erosion of the welfare state in the North and the imposition of structural adjustment programs in the South — has drawn many feminist activists into this new movement. The "new politics" of this movement, in turn, is having a significant impact on the way feminists are now organizing at both the local and global levels.

Feminists, in the North and the South, who are allying themselves with the AGM are doing so by embracing different modes of organizing, a variety of activist spaces, and a range of feminist political orientations. Some are involved in autonomous feminist groups, and coalitions of such groups, that are coming together or reorganizing in order to challenge corporate globalization. Most, however, are active as feminists within mixed organizations such as unions, NGO's, church-based social justice groups, and grassroots activist collectives. Feminists from both types of organizations are participating in community struggles, street protests, and/or anti-globalization forums. In doing so, the politics they espouse ranges from second-wave liberal, cultural, socialist, and Marxist feminisms to new postmodern and postcolonial feminisms and re-incarnated anarchy-feminisms. Given this diversity in modes of organizing, activist spaces, and political orientations, tensions and contradictions inevitably arise.

In this issue of *Women and Environments International*, we are attempting to provide a sampling of feminist anti-globalization activism that exemplifies some of this diversity, critically analyze some of the tensions and contradictions to which it gives rise. In so doing, we are also casting our gaze around the world to look at what is happening with feminist anti-globalization activism in Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Greece, India, Ireland, and the United States and in international arenas like the World Social Forum and the Social Forum of the Americas. As well, we are looking at how feminist anti-globalization activists are dealing with issues related to race, class, sexual orientation, and environmental degradation.

This particular issue of *Women and Environments International* has been put together in Calgary, Canada's neoliberal stronghold. Yet, partly because of its politics, Calgary — or at least the mountain resort of Kananaskis, 100 km west of here — was chosen as the site for the meeting of the G8, in June 2002. This brought the AGM to Calgary. While on a smaller scale than in Seattle, it led to a resurgence in local activism. In putting together this issue, I have worked with four young feminist activists — Stephanie Garrett, Alexis Holizki, Farhana Khatri, and Gillian Oneil — who were integrally involved in these protests and the local activist groups to which they subsequently gave rise. I first encountered these young women in my "Women, Work, and the Globalized Economy" course at the University of Calgary. During the past few months, under the aegis of a directed reading course entitled "Feminism in the Grassroots Anti-Globalization Movement," they have been using this activist experience as the basis for writing book reports and "In the Field" (or feature) articles for this issue.

So, flip the page and hop on the feminist AGM express. The first stop after leaving Canada is Brazil. ☸

Putting This Issue Together

The 3600 kilometers between Calgary and Toronto proved to be a tough challenge in long distance communication and collaboration — even with email.

Regina Cochrane conceived the issue concept. She was responsible for most of the content — including her trips to the WSF in Mumbai, India and the ASF in Quito, Ecuador. She teaches in the Women's Studies program at the University of Calgary and has been an activist in various social movements. Her area of research is feminist green political theory. She collaborated with four young feminist activists, Stephanie Garrett, Alexis Holizki, Farhana Khatri, and Gillian Oneil in this issue.

Stephanie Garrett has a BA in Women's Studies and Spanish from the University of Calgary. She is currently completing a Masters degree in Gender, Development and Globalization at the London School of Economics.

Alexis Holizki is an undergraduate student in International Development Studies at the University of Calgary.

Farhana Khatri is finishing her BA in Women's Studies and Sociology. She is an anarchy-feminist who has been involved in the activist community in Calgary for the past four years.

Gillian Oneil is an undergraduate Social Work student at the University of Calgary. She is passionate about women's issues, international activism, and human rights.

Prabha Khosla, at the Toronto end, gathered all the bits and pieces, helped fill in gaps and took on the intensive task of readying the issue ready for layout. Prabha is a planner and researcher. She consults internationally on issues of urban sustainability, gender mainstreaming and participatory planning. She is a member of the Gender & Water Alliance and the Editorial Board of *Women & Environments International Magazine*.

Globalization

Privatization of Public Services

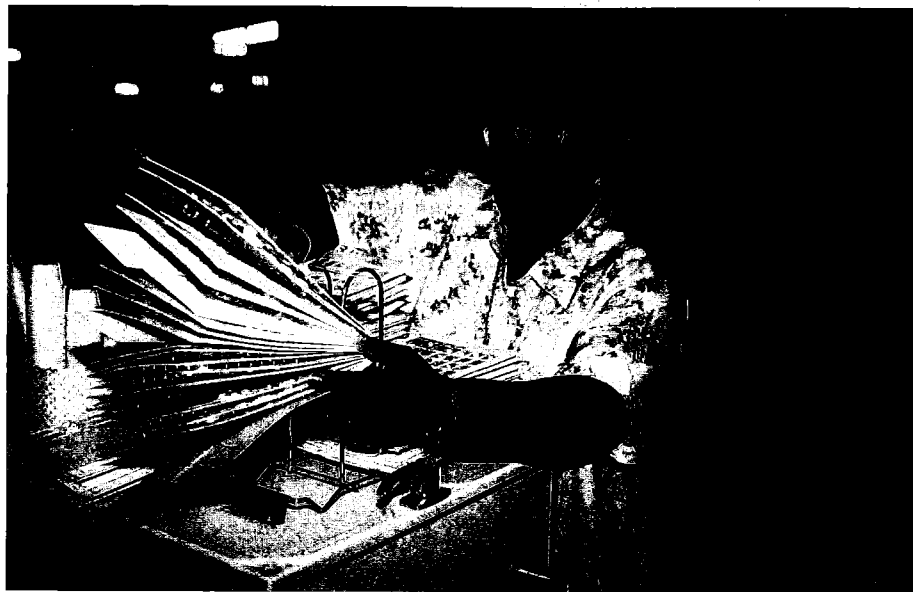
What Does it Mean for Women?

Jane Stinson

Women, in Canada and around the globe, have a lot to lose with the privatization of public services. Good jobs for women in the public sector are being replaced with insecure employment at about half the pay, a heavier workload, and fewer union rights. Public services such as child-care, health care, and education, designed to support women's participation in the labour market and society, are being dismantled and eroded by market principles. Privatization is also increasing women's household responsibilities by intensifying, if not increasing, the amount of time spent on domestic labour and household relations. The privatization of health and social services is particularly problematic for women since the nature of work in these sectors is most similar to the unpaid, domestic reproductive labour done by women in the home.

Despite the drawbacks for women, many governments around the world are embracing the privatization of public institutions such as hospitals, schools, and recreation centres, and of infrastructure such as roads and water delivery systems. This global trend is buoyed by claims that greater efficiency can be achieved through the market. Privatization is being pushed by powerful, global corporations keen to increase their market share and their profits. Supranational organizations like the World Trade Organization are promoting, entrenching, and enforcing privatization and deregulation of the public sector, especially through the ongoing negotiations of the GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services).

We hear a lot about the power of global capital but less about the power of global solidarity by women and men who oppose privatization and who favour greater pub-



Woman sorting medication.

lic ownership and control of our economy and common wealth. But people's movements against privatization are strong and gaining force as new bonds are formed for sharing information and developing strategies to fight it. As global corporations have grown stronger, fortunately so too have networks of global solidarity.

My union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) — Canada's largest, with over 500,000 members, of whom more than half are women — is frequently in touch with those engaged in anti-privatization struggles in other countries. For example, a visiting Colombian member of parliament inspired delegates to our national anti-privatization conference in March 2003 with a riveting account of how the municipal workers of Cali, Colombia, stopped the privatization of municipal services by occupying their local government offices. They were successful because for years they had offered their services freely to the poor in the barrios to compensate for the lack of government assistance. This laid the foundation

for the community support needed for success in their occupation.

In the area of health care, CUPE follows closely what is happening with privately financed hospitals in the UK. It uses horror stories from the UK experience to argue against embracing this model of privately financing, owning, and operating hospitals and other public institutions in Canada. CUPE is also monitoring the struggle against privatizing our municipal water systems, as part of a global struggle by unions, citizen groups, environmental activists, women's groups, and social justice organizations.

From Keynesian welfare state to neo-liberal state

Privatization is a general term that covers many specific practices whereby public services are reduced and the private sector takes on a much larger role in their financing and delivery. Private financing of public services may take the form of individuals paying more for public services, for example through user fees, rather than

having the costs covered by taxes. It also includes encouraging corporations to pay for developing or renewing the infrastructures of public institutions such as hospitals and schools. Governments like this form of public-private partnership because it reduces public debt even though it costs more in the long term and often means loss of public ownership and control. Probably the most common form of private delivery is the transfer or sub-contracting of the operation of a public service, such as the cleaning of a school or hospital, to a private company. A gendered perspective reveals another important form of privati-

neo-liberal state affects what we think of as public and private, especially in the relationship between private households and the state. As the state withdraws or weakens public services in favour of greater individual responsibility, labour costs are lowered through women's unpaid domestic labour, job cuts, and contracting out.

The post-World War II period to the early 1970s saw tremendous growth in public services such as health care, education, social services, and childcare. Many women were hired to provide these public services, not only because the strong growth of the economy required

lic-sector jobs, including health care, education, and some social services, are the main source of unionized jobs for women. Feminist and union organizing has significantly raised wages in the public sector above the private sector norm for women, and has improved benefits such as pension plan coverage, paid sick leave, and vacations. As a result, unionized women in Canada make, on average, \$5.44 an hour more than their non-union sisters. And over two-thirds of women in the public sector have a pension, compared to fewer than one-third of women in non-union jobs.

Privatization undermines these union advantages by rolling back the gains made through collective action over the past 20 to 50 years. Nowhere do we see this more clearly in Canada than in the contracting-out of health care services in the west-coast province of British Columbia (BC).

Sub-contracting used to roll back working women's gains

The BC provincial government paved the way for contracting out support services in hospitals and long-term care centres by legislating the cutting of key job-security provisions from the collective agreement of the Hospital Employees Union (part of CUPE). The change to private service delivery meant that thousands of workers, mainly women, lost their jobs as the responsibility for the services they delivered was transferred from health care institutions to private, multinational companies. Hourly wages for hospital cleaners were cut in half (from over \$18.00 to \$9.00 an hour), demoting these workers from the highest to the lowest paid in Canada for comparable unionized jobs. Hours of work were reduced and employment became more insecure. Pension-plan coverage was eliminated and workers paid more for extended health care benefit plans. Most of the workers affected were immigrant women.

The Hospital Employees' Union, which represents these workers, has fought back, launching a successful drive to recertify those workers who are now employed by private contractors. HEU seeks to raise wages and benefits, and strengthen workplace rights for these workers through collective bargaining. But



Union members marching on Labour Day 2004.

zation — the transfer of paid, public-service work, which is mainly provided by women, to the private sphere of women's unpaid, care-giving work in the home.

Privatization undermines a key element of the Keynesian welfare state — the notion of collective, social, or public responsibility, argue Brenda Cossman and Judy Fudge in their book on women and privatization. This is replaced by a market system based on labour flexibility and individual self-reliance. The transition to a

more workers to enter the paid labour force but also because these new jobs resembled women's unpaid work in the home. The Keynesian welfare state assumed responsibility for some previously unpaid work, primarily of women in the home, and it expanded the range of services available. Thanks to collective efforts on the part of unions, such public sector jobs became a source of good jobs for Canadian women workers.

In Canada, as in many countries, pub-

broader political action is also necessary. The union is engaged, together with the BC labour movement and other popular organizations, in a campaign to mobilize voters to dump the current government in the provincial election of spring 2005. Public scrutiny of the experience of privatization, including the implications for patient health and public safety, is another weapon in the union's public relations arsenal. The inadequate training and heavy workloads associated with privatization raise concerns about increasing the spread of infections and of diseases like SARS.

New forms of international solidarity

Almost halfway around the globe, our sister union, the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU), has also been fighting privatization. With support from the union's Global Solidarity Fund, CUPE is working with SAMWU and a team of academics in an action research project called the Municipal Services Project (MSP), that looks at the consequences of municipal privatization. The work of MSP in documenting the consequences of water and electricity privatization in South Africa has been valuable in informing strategy in Canada and elsewhere.

Another MSP project examines the gender consequences of privatizing municipal waste collection. It recently concluded with publication of a popular book entitled *Dumping on Women*. This study found that privatization of waste management took advantage of, and often worsened, women's lower social status. Privatization affected all workers negatively; however, because of the gender division of labour in the workplace, community and home, men and women were affected differently. In most cases, black women workers and community members suffered the most.

Waste management work in South Africa is organized along gender lines, with men using the trucks to collect the garbage and women performing the manual street cleaning (picking up the garbage and sweeping). Privatization changed how the women's work was done. The women street cleaners were no longer assigned fixed routes. Instead, they were sent wherever they were needed and they worked alone

more often. This increased their exposure to the risk of assault and rape. Some of the women's work was transferred to community volunteers, also female, on a largely unpaid basis. This did not happen to the male employees, although their work was sometimes contracted out.

Women were less likely to have facilities for changing and washing, access to toilets, protective clothing, and proper equipment, their needs being considered less important than the needs of male workers. Women street cleaners were hardest hit by staff cuts since garbage collection (men's jobs) was more highly valued. As well, women workers had lower wages and less protection against arbitrary treatment because they were not covered by the truck industry's bargaining council, which only covered the male garbage truck workers.

The same gendered division of labour does not exist in Canadian waste collection. However, these findings still raise important questions about the gendered implications of privatizing and sub-contracting public services in Canada for women's paid and unpaid labour.

Does privatization translate into more domestic labour for women?

We need to know more about how privatization is affecting the amount and complexity of women's unpaid work in the home. Statistics Canada tells us that married women aged between 25 and 44, with full-time jobs and children at home, experience the greatest stress of all Canadians. This is partly because women, in addition to working outside the home, do more unpaid (domestic) work than men, especially during the early years of childrearing. Women aged 25 to 44 provide most types of care, including all forms of child-care and personal care to household adults, as well as transportation, housework, cooking, and other types of unpaid help to adults outside their own households. Not only are women more likely to perform unpaid care giving, but they also spend more time than men doing so.

The value of this unpaid domestic work by women is staggering. Statistics Canada has estimated it to be \$50.9 billion in 1998, if comparable services were purchased on the market. That was more than the labour



By-law officer.

income generated by the health care and social assistance industry (\$42.1 B), education services (\$40.1 B), or the finance, insurance, and real estate industry (\$43.4 B).

If even a small portion of these hours of informal care were shifted from the home to the paid labour market — for example, the 156 million hours women spend annually in the home providing medical care to those discharged prematurely from hospitals — it would be equivalent to approximately 77,000 full-time jobs. Imagine what moving this informal caring work to the (paid) labour market could do to improve women's economic status and to free up time for women.

Building a global movement to stop privatization and improve public services

Privatization threatens women's economic equality by attacking the higher wages and working conditions won in the public sector through trade union struggles. It also threatens greater equality in gender roles by cutting welfare state social programs. Privatization is eliminating and eroding public services that women, in particular, rely on to aid with social reproduction — child care, health care, and education.

To prevent this outcome, we will need to build a strong resistance to corporations and government that want to privatize pub-

lic services. This resistance needs to be firmly rooted in our communities but it must also reach out, around the globe, to others engaged in similar struggles. Success in the fight against privatization is firmly rooted in community struggles but these also benefit from provincial, national and international links.

Given our direct involvement, as workers, in witnessing the changes that privatization brings, we and our unions can play an important role in exposing the negative consequences of privatization. Unions need to call attention to the impact of privatization on the quality as well as the quantity of services. Identifying the practical implications of privatization policies, for both workers and the public, is important in order to encourage greater community involvement in countering privatization and improving public services.

A gendered analysis of the changes introduced by privatization — changes that lead to disproportionately negative consequences for women — is also needed. Developing a more precise and nuanced understanding of the implications of privatization can build a foundation for reaching out to concerned women and women's groups that want a change. It is crucial to press policy makers to assess privatization in terms of other social goals, such as equality and equity, by focussing on the consequences for disadvantaged groups. And while it's important to show who is paying the price for privatization, we should also show who is benefiting — i.e., the corporations that make profits by privatizing public services.

However, we have to be careful not to let governments off the hook by focusing only on the role of global corporations. Corporations are guilty of many things, but it is essential to keep the focus and pressure on governments — local, provincial and national. Elected governments, not corporations, are the ones making the decisions to privatize public services. Corporations push for and make use of international trade agreements, but it is our national governments that are opening the door to privatization and establishing the rules for carving up the public sector globally. We need to find ways to be more effective in influ-

encing our governments' decisions. We need to develop broad, locally based coalitions to push governments at all levels for more information, public debate, and transparency on decision-making in relation to the privatization of public services.

It is essential that the restructuring of the state and the privatization of public services doesn't occur on the backs of women. Women must not be made to bear the greatest costs of declining labour market conditions — less unionization, lower wages, fewer benefits, weaker workplace rights, more precarious employment, uncertain work hours. Moreover, women must not be forced to take on more onerous unpaid, domestic labour and more responsibility for family and household work because of the erosion of public services. If we are to advance the cause of women's equality and equity, men must take more responsibility in the home. This would also allow women to become more engaged in community organizing and political action in order to lobby for more and better public services. Trade unions have an important role to play, along with women's organizations and other social justice groups, in building broad community-based coalitions to oppose privatization. Such coalitions must also press for the improvement of public services in order to promote greater social

and economic equality.

Jane Stinson is the Research Director for the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Canada's largest trade union with over half a million members. Her research interests focus on promoting equality and fighting privatization.

Further Sources:

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Water Without Dams

Women Organize in the Amazon Region

Edna Maria Ramos de Castro
Translated from Spanish by
Blanka Bracic

Since 1988, local activists have paralyzed several attempts to construct a dam at Altamira on the Xingu River in the Amazon region of Brazil. Men and women have worked together in the social movement opposing the dam; but of particular interest to us is the mobilization of women in defence of their rights. Rural, urban, and indigenous women organized for more than a decade to stop this energy mega-project. They opposed the dam due to its social, economic, and environmental impacts on local communities, and because it would be the first hydroelectric installation in Brazil to be privatized.

The recently awakened global interest in water is related to world market pressures on this resource. In the 1990s, international agencies started to define the concept of a global water crisis with the goal of "water for all by 2020." Water has become a central issue for the UN and financial and economic agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The World Bank has been the principal financier of large hydroelectricity, mining, and infrastructure projects in the Amazon. And the Bank's financing accounts for a significant portion of Brazil's external debt. Water, therefore, is



Indigenous peoples from Brazil at the Social Forum of the Americas, Quito, July 2004.

a key item for Brazilian policies in terms of the international economy, and government discourse has sought to justify the need for energy mega-projects and to exploit forest resources to pay off the external debt.

The Frontier of Resources and Large Dams in the Amazon

The traditional model of territorial occupation in the Amazon has been through its rivers. Throughout history, the rivers played a fundamental role in the structuring of social and economic life in the region. The rivers defined the models of land occupation, the use of resources, the processes of exportation, and the formation of an economy based on the exploitation of natural resources.

Halfway through the last century, this model of occupation started to change with pro-development state policies that involved the unification of all Brazilian regions. To achieve this, the state employed a strategy of large highway construction, and one of the highways built in the 1970s was the Transamazonica. Thousands of peasants left the northeastern and southern states of the country and moved into the region where this highway meets the Xingu River. Parcels of land

were distributed by lottery. Families built a strong social and economic organization to cope with both the absence of state services and the frequent violent conflicts of the 1970s and 1980s.

The Movement for the Advancement of the Transamazonica and the Xingu (MDTX) was born in the 1990s with significant participation by small family farmers and their organizations. Other workers, students, clergy, and women's organizations joined them. They came together in response to immediate needs in the struggle for land and land claims as well as for neighbourhood roads, maintenance of the Transamazonica, the export of local products and the organization of services such as transportation, schools, water supply, and low-cost or free medical clinics and pharmacies. The Movement grew with its use of more consistent forms of communication. At first, through the unions and later finding new means of expression through associations, cooperatives, and political parties. MDTX is made up of 113 organizations. It opposes the economic model of large privatized projects and special economic enclaves and instead proposes one of development based on debate and the collective struggle of earlier decades.

Belo Monte: The First of the Xingu River Dams

In 1975 the Brazilian state-run company Eletronorte proposed construction of several dams on the Xingu River, including the Kraraô (later called Belo Monte), and the Babaquara. In 1980 Eletronorte carried out studies on the Hydroelectric Complex of Altamira, comprised of these two dams which would flood 8,000 square kilometres of land. The Conference of Indigenous Peoples of the Xingu, meeting in 1988 in Altamira, united dozens of indigenous nations. There, the India Tuíra nation became a symbol of struggle against the dam construction by confronting a principal of Eletronorte with a dagger — a gesture that expressed the position of the indigenous peoples who demanded that the Xingu River be free of dams.

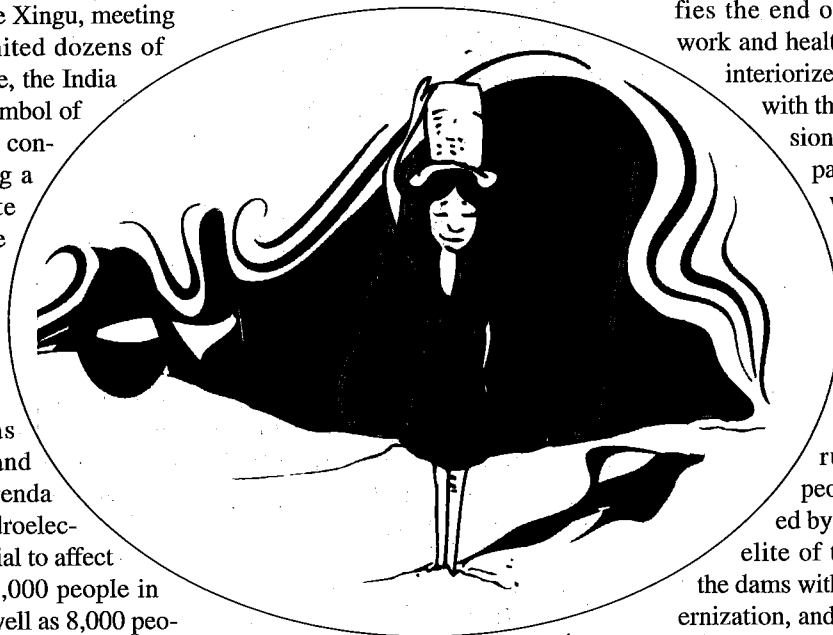
The project was recently reformulated and updated. Now on the agenda is a complex of five hydroelectric dams with the potential to affect by flooding at least 100,000 people in three municipalities, as well as 8,000 people in indigenous settlements.

The place where Eletronorte plans its largest construction is at the Large Turn of the Xingu. This is a mythical place filled with symbolism and significance in the culture of the peoples of the forest. The construction will profoundly alter the natural course of the river. The company has tried to discredit arguments that speak to the social and cultural effects of their projects. Meanwhile, 14 rural-urban towns and three mining settlements occupy the area to be flooded.

Eletrobrás is the company responsible for supplying energy in Brazil. It estimates that in the long run, dozens of hydroelectric dams will be constructed in the Amazon Region to take advantage of the potential of its rivers. The Araguaia and Tocantins rivers present an alternative to the national energy crisis, with 14 hydroelectric dams that could generate 20,000 megawatts of energy. In opposi-

tion, the Fórum Carajás network, together with the National Movement of Those Affected by Dams (MAB), the Western Amazon Forum (FAOR), the International Rivers Network, and other NGOs, are promoting the “Water Without Dams” campaign, which intends to publicize information about the impact of the proposed dams.

Eletrobrás is taking up the Belo Monte project again, with the dam planned to



begin operation in 2008, thereby heading off the next potential national energy shortage. The government's decision to be only a minority player in the dam, which would have significant private capital involvement, is a setback to environmental organizations. The major corporations in the energy sector originate in rich countries and have set their sights on the big business of energy markets, and with this development surely come openings for new interests in the region's water and natural springs. Indeed, a representative of the World Bank confirmed in a March 2004 presentation in Brussels that the Bank's interest in financing large dams has to do with both resources: water and energy.

The effects of the Xingu complex that worry the local population are similar to those observed when the Tucuruí dam, the fourth largest hydroelectric dam in the world, was built. Its construction brought

changes in the water quality of the river and its tributaries, as well as in the dynamics of waterfalls and the size of lakes, islands, and small waterways.

In opposition to the dam, the local population affirmed their rights to maintain their traditions: to use the river for fishing, irrigation, navigation, bathing, rituals, and as sacred places, as well as to preserve niches of reproduction for fauna and flora. To them, river pollution signifies the end of a diversity of forms of work and health care. For them, water is interiorized as an element of identity with the land and with the dimensions of life. All of this forms part of the arguments that the women of Altamira articulate in their struggle against the construction of large hydroelectric dams on the Xingu River. Their position is shared by a number of groups, both urban and rural, and by indigenous peoples — but is not supported by the political and economic elite of the region, who associate the dams with notions of progress, modernization, and development.

The Movement of Women of the Country and of the City believe that energy generation through the “privatization of the river,” as the process is called in Altamira, could have many negative consequences:

- The usurping of the rights of local communities to use the material and symbolic services provided by the river — even the supply of potable water can be affected by alternative uses making women's lives more difficult as they search for cleaner or safer drinking water elsewhere.
- Dam construction indicates the transfer of rights from the communities who have lived in the area for centuries to private companies.
- Appropriation of the Xingu River for economic purposes will significantly affect the knowledge and practices of fishing, the “igapós,” the river basin, the fauna and flora, as well as knowledge about biodiversity.

- As the river forms part of water courses that cross through different municipalities and states, it also forms part of diverse cultural systems, ways of management, and expectations of different social uses. Eletronorte has systematically ignored these realities.
- Despite its construction being initiated by Eletronorte, the public company, the dam would be handed over to the private sector. Local stakeholders would be vulnerable to those businesses that have interests in other products and services associated with the river; this has been the case with the subsidized energy provided to the region's multinational producers of aluminum.
- Global policies fail to recognize that advantages to private interests can result in negative impacts on the host country. The external debt increases for the country in exchange for benefits for transnational companies that not only promote a socially non-progressive form of modernization, but create conditions that heighten the potential for future conflicts.

Water and Free Trade

There is recognition of a world water crisis in the arguments put forward by multilateral agencies and the World Bank. The Bank and some multi and bi-lateral agencies propose that the privatization of water and water services is a solution to the growing global water crisis. In the late 1980s and through the 1990s, the Bank stopped financing large dam projects as a result of pressure from social and environmental movements. Belo Monte, on the Xingu River, was one of the projects in Brazil paralyzed by this lack of funding. However, there have been changes since then. The Bank is now in agreement with the Report of the World Commission on Dams and with the Johannesburg Summit (2002), whose recommendations include giving incentives to private-sector services provision and to the prioritizing of large infrastructure projects. In Brazil, the tendency is to liberalize the business of hydroelectricity within the objectives of GATT. This confirms the anxieties of the Movement of Women because the

damming of rivers serves the interests of the global energy market.

In the case of the Brazilian market, the interest of the large water-sector corporations is already clear. In cities such as Manaus-Amazonia, the state allowed the public water and sewage systems to be privatized. The company, Aguas de Amazonas is a Suez-based company that has not complied with its obligations in the three years of its contract. As a result, the legislature has proposed a judicial action to stop a 31.5% rate increase and to annul the contract, as Aguas de Amazonas has failed to fulfill almost every clause of its contract.

Hydroelectricity is not an exactly direct path to the privatization of water, but the association between hydroelectric power generation and the "privatization of the river" is articulated by the movement opposed to construction of the Xingu River facility. Their opposition is based on the experience of groups dealing with the impact of the construction of the dam at Tucuruí. These groups are still active after more than 15 years of struggle.

Women's Rights and Proposed Actions

The women of the social movements question the market perspective within which certain companies seek to appropriate the potential of the rivers of the Amazon. The women propose national policies that will ensure:

- A transparent and egalitarian system that considers access to water to be a citizen's right and therefore guarantees the right of everyone, including women, to potable water and sanitation.
- A Xingu River free of dams and free of negotiation or privatization contracts.
- Opportunities for work and income for women, which are not assured by the model of concentrated economic activity of a single large company.
- A model that is able to encourage development appropriate for the Transamazonica and the Xingu, while preserving nature and production.
- The transfer of negotiations underway on the Free Trade Area of the Americas and the WTO commercial accords, as well as their relationship

with the construction of hydroelectric complexes on the Xingu River and other rivers, to larger public and international forums.

The latest decisions of the Brazilian government in May 2004 confirm the intent to build Belo Monte, although with less power, and with attempts to mitigate the social and environmental impacts. However, the state company is maintaining its minority role in the dam, thus permitting the significant involvement of private capital.

The women's movement in Altamira held many public protests, calling on a general mobilization around a citizens' campaign in favour of rivers without dams. Clearly, the debate about water and the dangers of privatization through construction of a large hydroelectric project on the Xingu River is associated with the struggles for better health and sanitation, as well as the democratization of the use of the river.

The Altamira women continue to promote this debate and hope to influence the dam project and the private uses of the Amazonian rivers during a time of increasing globalization, and the ascendancy of neo-liberal interests in Brazil and in the rest of the world. ✽

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Greek Women Experience Corporate Globalization

Interview with Andriana Vlachou and Sissy Vovou

Reggie Modlich

Reggie Modlich, managing editor of WEI, interviewed Andriana Vlachou and Sissy Vovou in June 2004 at the Athens University for Economics and Business, Greece. She writes, "The innkeeper in Astypalaea, a tiny, sunny Greek island where I transcribed this interview, told me of her seafaring husband sailing home from China via Chile. One of the women restaurant owners spoke of her home in Ecuador. That's when Andriana's and Sissy's comments about the effect of globalization on Greek women became real in both historical and geographical terms."



NIKOS EVIDEMON

WEI: Is the European Union (EU) a force for or against corporate globalization, and is it affecting women?

ANDRIANA: Throughout the 1980s the EU had more of a social democratic orientation, specifically the Keynesian kind. In the 1990s, however, we experienced the rise of neo-liberalism in Europe. This means that markets had to open to the free movement of capital (and labour). The trend was led by the US and the UK and was first implemented in Europe by Thatcher's massive privatization campaigns. Neo-liberal policies were getting institutionalized throughout Europe as part of the completion of the Single Internal Market for EU and, as a result, any protective tariffs or regulations are being removed.

In Greece, this process has not occurred to the same extent as in England or the US, but still you can see the pressures. We can no longer have independent economic policies within a nation-state. Capital votes with its feet in this environment. If a state establishes restrictive poli-

cies, imposing limitations for the protection of the environment or of local enterprises, capital leaves the country.

In this framework, the policies of the EU reflect the process of corporate globalization. The EU is an economic and political integration within the global capitalist system and, in this context, it competes with the US and Japanese capitalist economies. For this competition, it is claimed that a strong European economy is necessary. Yet European socialists claim that, compared with the US, they still can safeguard some social democratic policies.

Social programs and public services are hit hard because we have experienced a financial crisis of the state with major deficits. The government is continually cutting expenditures and so the funds available for education and child care centres are increasingly limited. The government is slowly privatizing, for example, the municipal child care centres — already limited in numbers — and asking parents to share the cost of child care.

SISSY: Child-care centres were previously

Above: Economist Adriana Vlachou (left) in her office at the Athens University of Economics and Business and Greek feminist and journalist Sissy Vovou (right).

run by the state, the Greek Ministry of Health and Social Security. In the past two years, the Greek government passed all such services to the local municipalities. However, they transferred this responsibility — which is better handled at the local municipal level — without giving the local municipalities any funding to operate these services. So the number of child-care spaces in these publicly run centres is not large. They are reserved for the most needy, based on income. Often, this means immigrant and refugee families. Some Greek parents resent being grouped with "foreigners" or having to find places in private centres where they have to pay for the full cost of care.

ANDRIANA: Greece is also privatizing utilities such as electricity and telephone. In the past, the government had committed large amounts of public funds to keep the prices low and affordable to those on limited incomes.

SISSY: This privatization is happening gradually and the telephone service is already partly on the stock market.

ANDRIANA: In some countries, such as the UK, electricity has been fully privatized. Here in Greece we are at a different stage of development. Due to relatively poor infrastructure, our productivity and therefore profitability is lower, so these utilities don't find it easy to compete with other countries for investment. Many enterprises, especially small ones, here in Greece have gone under and we have an increasing rate of unemployment. The first to be hit by increased unemployment are women. In the 1980s the general rate of unemployment was approximately 6 to 7%. In 1994, this had risen to 9.6%; the rate for women was 15.6%, while that for men was 6.3%. In recent years, it has increased further because of the internationalization of capital and neo-liberal policies, only to fall back to 9.9% in 2002.

SISSY: For the last four or five years unemployment has stood at 10 to 11%, with the same constant 2:1 ratio of women to men.

ANDRIANA: These are the official government statistics, which monitor unemployment by gender and age. They show that 39% of women under 25 are unemployed, compared with only 20% of men.

SISSY: Many young people study until the age of 30. Then they can't find jobs until they are 35. Fifty-four percent of all students in Greece are women.

ANDRIANA: Given the shortage of jobs, women have to take under-paid and part-time jobs, which are not covered by social security programs such as old age pension, unemployment and health insurance. In addition, women sometimes have to put up with sexual harassment because of the insecurity of their jobs. Over the last 20 years, women (especially working class women) have got more and more into the double roles of paid work while still having to shoulder the heavy unpaid work of caring for the family — elderly, children and looking after the house. These women are exhausted. Yet middle-class women, including professionals who are usually overworked and paid less than their north European colleagues, are able to pay for household help, often immi-

grant women. Immigrant women tend to be even more underpaid, without social security, and even more insecure. They get the most unrecognized and often trying jobs, such as care for the elderly.

WEI: The role of immigrant women in Greece appears to be a major issue for women. Can you expand on this?

SISSY: We have something like 10 million people in Greece. Approximately 10% are legal or illegal immigrants. The left has fought to have illegal immigrants get legal status so that they can receive social security. In 1998 and 2002 they were invited to seek legal status. More than 800,000 responded but few, probably not more than 200,000, have actually received a legal work permit.

The influx of immigrant women has changed our lives in two major ways: one through their role in our families and the other through their role in the sex trade. A big percentage of immigrant women look after the elderly. They are paid a small salary, usually without social security. They have to stay with the elderly 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 30 days a month; they may get half a day off. But this liberates the Greek women from this very difficult task. We never had a very strong social security system and still don't have one, and by working in this way, immigrant women are substituting for a system of social security that should ensure decent care for the elderly.

WEI: Are these women doing anything about this exploitation?

SISSY: Several foreign communities have their national organizations. There are also anti-racist organizations. Yet these groups do not address the special problems of women migrants and immigrants. Dimitra Malliou, an Albanian married to a Greek man, recently started a network of immigrant women encompassing different nationalities. This new group hopes to organize and mobilize migrant and immigrant women and to draw attention to their problems. The group also participates in the Greek Network of the World March of Women.

The other problem concerning immigrant women is prostitution and trafficking in women. In 2000 there was a great push

by the UN for laws against trafficking in persons, especially women. Until recently, Greece had no effective law to deal with this problem. The only law available in this field was against "procuring." But when the women were caught they were arrested and then deported. When the procurer came before the court there was no witness available and most men walked away free. The women's movement pressed to have this law changed. Now the women are retained as witnesses and supported as victims. Infrastructure, including shelters, have been promised but are very slow in being provided to support the victims in a meaningful way.

ANDRIANA: In Athens and Thessalonica, and also in many mid-sized cities, the problem of prostitution and sexual abuse is quite visible. The left has made strong interventions to stop these social evils.

SISSY: Some conservative women have even organized against immigrant women "stealing their men." Generally however, Greece is a rather tolerant society. There is racism, of course; yet there is also struggle against racism. We also have systemic racism expressed through actions by the police and the state's approach to granting legal status to migrants and immigrants.

WEI: Are women active in fighting against global threats to the environment, such as genetically modified food?

SISSY: We don't have specific ecofeminist groups in Greece. Of course, many women participate in the ecological movement; perhaps they are even the majority. But the kind of ecofeminism that we know exists in many other countries does not exist in Greece.

ANDRIANA: At least the EU has established ecological policies that are relatively advanced. Because Greece is not very competitive economically, the government hesitates to implement strict environmental regulations from fear of scaring away potential capital investment. The EU can impose higher standards, overriding the resistance of certain national governments and, in that way, the EU can be more protective of the environment.

WEI: What is the status of the women's movement in Greece?

ANDRIANA: Many independent women's groups developed in the period between the fall of the junta in 1974, and 1985. For a short time there was one unifying women's organization: the Movement of Democratic Women. However, its members gradually departed, many to become connected to political parties later. This divided women, since they tended to follow the party line on critical issues.

SISSY: This is correct, but at the same time we also did have some autonomous women's groups. We also have to keep in mind that women in Greece gained the right to vote only in 1952.

ANDRIANA: There was a women's group around the periodical *Dini*, but this periodical did not last long. Another group of women formed around the periodical *Scoupa* (Dustpan) but after two or three years, they couldn't keep up publishing their journal.

SISSY: The autonomous women's movement at the time had its strength; it produced theory and made political interventions. While it was not massive, it was visible and society heard its voice.

ANDRIANA: It was quite radical in terms of theory, compared to the groups within the established parties.

SISSY: After 1985 we really had a crisis of the independent women's movement. One stopped and another one came up. We always have a presence; it is weak but it is there, relating to women's lives. Since 1997 we have a new movement that carries out impressive activities. It consists of several groups. Now, even the groups affiliated with the parties, such as the one in the Communist party (the one in PASOK, the Greek social democratic party, practically no longer exists), try to appear more autonomous.

ANDRIANA: I am inclined to believe that a major reason for the weakening and disappearance of the women's organization of PASOK is that in 1981, when PASOK came to power, the General Secretariat for Women's Equality, a state institution, was established. It did achieve quite a number of institutional improvements in the status of women. At the same time, many leaders of women's organizations became part of the Secretariat and other state institutions.



Greek feminists in Athens protest the war against Iraq.

SISSY: We called it state feminism. Some friends claim that it is a progressive development when feminism becomes accepted and absorbed in the state; but the reality is that the movement is being liquidated in this way.

ANDRIANA: Co-optation is a problem for many protest groups, be it the environmental, labour or women's movement. When a leader becomes strong, s/he gets invited to become part of a state institution. And from that position they can "handle" issues with their movements.

SISSY: All liberation, women's and environmental movements felt let down by the performance of socialist and social democratic parties, and of course the fall of the Soviet Union. This resulted in disarray on the left and lack of a strong vision of an alternative. Strong protest movements need a clear vision.

WEI: Is gender mainstreaming, as required by the EU, being implemented?

SISSY: No, it has not been implemented in Greece. They follow in theory, they vote for policies; but in practice the state does not do anything. They have to be pushed very hard; we push as much as we can.

Another issue is women's representation in parliament. It was 9% until the recent (2004) election when it rose to 13%. We calculated that at this rate of increase women will achieve 50% in 34 years. We now have as many women in cabinet as Afghanistan — two. In the European Parliament the percentage of women is also quite low. It is amazing that in 22 years the Greek Left has never yet elected a woman to the European parliament because the men are such

careerists and don't want to give these seats to women. This time (June 13 elections to the EU Parliament) Papandreou (the leader of PASOK) presented a slate with 50% women. He listed them in alternating sequence rather than leaving them at the bottom of the list. He gave high priority to a disabled woman, who is confined to a wheelchair. This woman will go to the European parliament. This is very good, even though he did it for his own reasons of internal party politics.

ANDRIANA: There is also a new party in Greece — "Women for Another Europe." They put up a slate of women in the European parliamentary elections. They are a group of strong activists, to the left of the major parties and anti-hierarchical. They were not anticipating winning any seats, and they did not.

WEI: Where does the Greek women's movement stand in terms of the global movement?

SISSY: The Greek Network of the World March of Women attracted many groups that participated in the 2000 World March. It continues to be active against women's poverty and violence against women. As a follow-up we held a conference in May of 2003. About 30 groups attended but many were reluctant to commit themselves to becoming part of the network. But when we do something they come. We cannot say that we are fully accepted yet because the groups are afraid that they will lose their autonomy. We also participated in the recent Social Forums.

In fact, in Athens in June this year the World March of Women's Network held a public meeting to discuss the "Women's Charter for Humanity," an international campaign of the World March of Women. Women's groups around the world are discussing it and comments on the initial draft had to be submitted by the end of June. The idea is that we, the women and feminists who participated in the World March of Women, draw up a charter not only for women but for humanity. The presentation of this Charter is planned for 2005, accompanied by a number of international activities. It is a very ambitious project and we hope it will consolidate

our movement at the national and international level.



Andriana Vlachou is Associate Professor at the Athens University of Economics and Business, with a PhD in economics from the University of Massachusetts. Her fields of teaching and research include Marxism and environmental and resource economics. In addition to her many contributions to journals, she has edited **Contemporary Economic Theory: Radical Critiques of Neoliberalism** (Macmillan & St. Martin's Press, 1999), and is an editor-at-large of **Capitalism, Nature, Socialism**.

Sissy Vovou is a feminist activist and journalist, active in the anti-nationalist and anti-war movement. She joined the Trotskyist movement in 1965, the feminist movement in the 1980s, was active in the Greek section of the European Forum of Left Feminists from 1988 to 2002, and now in the Feminist Centre of Athens and the World March of Women. She writes regularly in the left newspaper "EPOHI" and others. She edited the book **Bosnia Herzegovina: The Struggle for the Multiethnic Society**.

Another World Via "Diversity?"

Eco/Feminism at the 2004 World Social Forum

Regina Cochrane

The World Social Forum (WSF), according to its website, is "an open meeting place where groups and movements of civil society opposed to neoliberalism and a world dominated by capitalism or by any form of imperialism ... come together" to share experiences, debate ideas, and network for action. France's Association for the Taxation of Fair Transactions for the Aid of Citizens (ATTAC) and some Brazilians affiliated with Lula da Silva's social democratic Worker's Party (PT) initiated the first WSF in the PT-stronghold of Porto Alegre in January, 2001 as a counter-gathering to the World Economic Forum. Approximately 15,000 people participated; attendance rose to 60,000 in 2002 and 100,000 in 2003. The 2004 WSF, which I attended, took place from January 16 to 21 in Mumbai, India, and attracted as many as 130,000 participants.

Although it is best known for its signature slogan "another world is possible" — a challenge to the neoliberal dictum that "there is no alternative" to globalized capitalism, the WSF has another defining maxim. It calls for "no single way of thinking." The forum questions not only the monolithic economic system of corporate globalization but also the "unitary" politics of an authoritarian, hierarchical Marxist left that has tended to reduce all oppression to class. The "other world" advocated by the WSF is therefore one that is built on respect for diversity, inclusiveness, and the possibility of many alternative worlds. As Peruvian Virginia Vargas, of Articulacion Feminista Marcosur (AFM), emphasized at the 2002 WSF, "to achieve [another world], there is no one recipe, nor any single alternative or actor, but rather a multiple range

of social stakeholders contributing their manifold forms of resistance."

Indeed, diversity is an apt motif for the WSF. The WSF's actors include "delegates" from NGOs, trade unions, indigenous and peasant movements, women's groups, environmental movements, Church-affiliated bodies, organizations advocating on behalf of racial/ethnic and sexual minorities, youth groups, and activist collectives as well as individual, academic, and media "observers." The forum itself encompasses a myriad of events — plenary sessions, conferences, public and solidarity meetings, panels, roundtables, workshops, seminars, cultural events, rallies, and marches — featuring a multinational cast of participants, predominantly from the South, communicating in many languages and espousing divergent political views. These events address many intersecting themes that are implicated in a number of social struggles and a multiplicity of specific campaigns. The WSF sees such diversity as necessary to include and respond to oppression and resistance in all spheres of life. The WSF only excludes representatives of governments, political parties and organizations that engage in armed struggle from participating.

Given the severe impact of neoliberalism on women, and second-wave feminism's rise out of a patriarchal New Left that marginalized women's concerns, the WSF's attempt to create an open, inclusive, and "horizontal" space in which to challenge corporate globalization is especially interesting to feminists. As Canadian Dianne Matte, who coordinates the World March of Women, emphasizes, "another world, without feminism, ... is impossible." Indeed, the Forum's chal-

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lenge to monolithic thinking is central to contemporary feminist debates focusing on the notion of "diversity." Although it involves some worthy aspirations and efforts, the WSF's project to foster the birth of another world via diversity ultimately turns out to be problematic one.

Feminism and Ecofeminism at the Mumbai Social Forum

The first three Forums drew heavily from the relatively affluent and mostly European-origin population in Porto Alegre and environs and were largely white, male-dominated, middle-class affairs. In contrast, the Mumbai Forum was predominantly non-white and women played a prominent role. As India's industrial and financial centre, the megacity of Mumbai, with its ritzy, international hotels and shops, and its hordes of homeless beggars, exemplifies the "hour-glass society" to which globalized capitalism is rapidly giving rise. The Forum was located on exhibition grounds at the edge of the city, near some of its worst shantytowns. Participants faced these extremes on every trip to and from the WSF site. Each time my auto-rickshaw stopped at a traffic light, while passing through these shantytown areas, I would be confronted with dozens of hands pushing through the open windows, begging for money. Many of these hands, even in the late evening, were shockingly tiny because they belonged to very young children. Others were small for another reason — they were fingerless, leprous stumps.

The first thing that struck me about the Mumbai WSF was its sheer enormity and its mind-boggling choice of events. Days were divided into three-hour sessions, each offering one gigantic plenary "conference," three to seven large public meetings, and 75 to 100 seminars or workshops. And these events competed with innumerable cultural activities, a seemingly endless succession of lively and colourful marches, a gigantic exhibition hall where participating organizations displayed their wares, a special exhibit on the 2002 massacre in Gujarat, and several immense food-fairs. The first day was dedicated to registration and to a grandiose opening ceremony with cultural performances and big-name speakers, including Booker-



Diverse Women for Diversity Workshop, WSF Mumbai, 2004.

Prize-winning novelist and environmental activist Arundhati Roy and Iranian human rights lawyer and Nobel laureate Shirin Ebadi. The final day was devoted to a march and an equally impressive closing ceremony in downtown Mumbai. This left only four days — or, at most, a dozen sessions — to sample all the rest.

In keeping with the South Asian context, the Mumbai WSF broadened the spectrum of issues considered beyond neoliberalism, war, indigenous peoples, sexism, and homophobia to include racism, communalism (religious sectarianism and fundamentalism), casteism, and patriarchy. Taking advantage of this context, I went to a highly informative seminar on "Dalits and Globalization." The session examined how corporate globalization is further marginalizing Hinduism's "untouchable" caste by undermining "reservations" (in educational institutes) and minimum wage laws, and forcing Dalits out of contractual agricultural labour and into the cities in search of work. I also attended seminars on "Academia and Activism" (which emphasized the strong relationship between the two in the South), on new reproductive technologies and a meeting of Canadian participants. Yet, my primary political interests were sessions dealing with feminism and ecofeminism.

Most feminist sessions at the Forum responded to the call for diversity and fea-

tured a multinational slate of speakers. The opening plenary conference on women and globalization, included feminists from Indonesia, India, Uruguay, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia who talked about how corporate globalization in their countries is eroding women's rights and leading to an increase in economic and sexual violence against women. The most interesting presentation was by Uruguayan sociologist and AFM member, Lillian Celiberti. She discussed the links between economic, religious, and cultural fundamentalisms, and the AFM's campaign "Against Fundamentalism, People are Fundamental." Neoliberal globalization gives rise to homogenizing tendencies and stable identities that provide a fertile field for fundamentalists, she argued. Fundamentalists target women's bodies and imprison their sexualities. In Latin America, for example, the Roman Catholic Church is playing an increasingly reactionary role with its conservative postures on abortion and lesbian/gay relationships. For Celiberti, the "other world" that the WSF promises to help usher in will be a world that would accommodate all women and men. Hence, the WSF functions as a space for the broadening of rights, for the construction of a social project wherein "everyone has the right to have rights."

Another feminist event with internationally diverse presenters and a theme that res-

onated with Celiberti's was the "The Many Faces of Fundamentalism," a seminar organized by DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era). Here the focus was on how fundamentalists' exclusion of diversity in thought, or dogmatism, in the social realm, creates "Others" whose "difference" is portrayed as a threat to the well-being of the majority. This manifests itself in various contexts. In countries such as the Philippines, market fundamentalism insists on the neoliberal dogma that markets are free and socially neutral and ungendered and that neoliberalism is delivering the growth it promised. Yet, facts prove these claims totally unfounded. The "Others," in this case, are the "basket case" country and the "evil enemy" that defies the capitalist order.

Catholic fundamentalists in Brazil are attempting to attain state power to outlaw recently introduced abortion services and block same-sex marriages. George Bush's Protestant-fundamentalist government in the U.S. adopts a punitive, moralizing view on foreign policy issues related to AIDS and reproductive health. In both cases, the women and sexual minorities become the excluded "Others." Hindu fundamentalists use nationalism to argue for a unitary Hindu India and to justify what amounts to an ethnic cleansing wherein women's bodies become a vehicle for assaulting the Muslim "Other."

Given feminists' concerns with fundamentalism and its denial of diversity, it is not surprising that several of the main speakers in a seminar on the related topic of "Globalization and Social Exclusion" were also feminists. Tackling the issue of social exclusion, India-based socialist feminist Gail Omvedt went so far as to insist that the main enemy in India today is not globalization but a fascistic Hindu fundamentalism. Dalits tend to prefer to work for globalized corporations rather than high-caste Brahmins, observed Omvedt, because corporations are more willing to employ "outcasts" and they treat them more equitably. Picking up on Omvedt's point about the role tradition plays in social exclusion, Bina Agarwal argued that, for women in the poorest parts of the developing world, globalization is "the whistle of a distant train."

Social exclusion, for such women, is primarily a product of traditional, gender-based social norms that define division of labour. Corporate globalization makes the situation of women worse by increasing material inequality. However, according to Agarwal, globalization is also leading to a reduction in "ideological inequalities" by allowing for the spread of information. This makes it possible for women to challenge traditional gender inequalities and to create new social norms.

Omvedt's and Agarwal's more nuanced understanding of the links between globalization, fundamentalism, and diversity resonated strongly with points made in another multinational seminar, organized by AFM, entitled "Political Bodies: New Emancipatory Struggles that Feed a Radical Democracy." Feminist panelists in this seminar did not assume that diversity per se is always a positive value. While feminists have praised plurality and diversity, warned a speaker from France, the extreme right has done the same. Citing the example of France's law forbidding veiling of schoolgirls, she insisted that we have to be very careful how we use diversity so that it does not feed into fundamentalism. Picking up on this point, American academic Charlotte Bunch asked: What happens when mainstream and/or conservative forces use identity politics and ours does not necessarily challenge theirs? What we need to do is to avoid the false dichotomy of universal rights versus cultural difference, insisted Bunch. Human rights are universally applicable when they are examined via a complete diversity of human experience.

Challenges to diversity as a contemporary feminist ideal cropped up as well in another seminar entitled "Critical Analysis of Feminism." Sponsored by les Pénélopes of France, this panel included speakers from various European and Latin American countries. They emphasized the importance of acknowledging diversity to deal with power differences among women, two Latin American presenters also complained about over-fragmentation and the lack of alliances, shared spaces, and common ideas in the women's movements in their countries.

Diversity, as a norm of contemporary

feminist practice, was also raised in the seminar "Issues of Working Women: Post-Globalization Scenarios." Organized by the National Federation of Indian Women, this session involved panelists from India, Cuba, Brazil, Jordan, Italy, Vietnam, and Sudan. The most interesting presentations were by Indians, who looked at how corporate globalization was impacting the most vulnerable in India — Dalits, adivasis (indigenous peoples), and women. Using case studies, they described the brutal conditions facing female (often Dalit) construction workers, who frequently ended up delivering and caring for their babies on construction sites, and women in the fish-processing industry, who were being treated "like animals" and even "bonded slaves." Given that 95% of women workers in India belong to the informal sector where labour laws do not apply, the NFIW president called for the Indian women's movement to "join hands with trade unions." In spite of the afternoon heat and the three-hour duration, the large tent where this event was held was packed. In contrast to other feminist panels, the audience here that was very "non-diverse." Virtually everyone attending was Indian and female. Where were all the Western feminists who attended the other feminist panels? Is economic diversity not an issue of concern to the global feminist set who frequent the World Social Forum?

Diversity as a norm of feminist practice was also an issue in the Diverse Women for Diversity (DWD) seminar on "Women and Water." Founded by Indian feminist Vandana Shiva, one of the world's best known ecofeminists and anti-globalization campaigners, DWD describes itself as an "ecofeminist movement for the defense of biological and cultural diversity." I was taken aback to encounter an all-white panel. Presenters included prominent Canadian liberal and free-trade critic Maude Barlow, Shiva co-author and ATTAC member Maria Mies, a blonde woman from Mexico who spoke with a German accent, a Canadian affiliated with a Church-based social justice organization, and a young Dutch woman. The composition of this panel, I found out later, reflected the fact that Shiva is seen by many

Indian feminists as an elitist who hobnobs with Western elites. Many Indian feminists — Agarwal and Omvedt are but two — are highly critical of Shiva's neo-Gandhianism which views subsistence agriculture, as practiced by Indian peasant women, as the alternative to corporate globalization. The presentations were not particularly informative or insightful. On the way out, I picked up a very glossy pamphlet "Navdanya: Seeds of Freedom." It listed millionaire Edward Goldsmith as a member of Shiva's educational institute, right after Shiva herself. Goldsmith has been strongly criticized for his connections to Europe's New Right and for his espousal of a "Gaian" politics with anti-immigrant and anti-feminist implications.

Diversity was an issue as well at the seminar "Women's Possible World: A Gift Economy" which was organized by International Feminists for a Gift Economy (IFGE). Based on the work of American philanthropist and self-described Marxist witch Genevieve Vaughan, the IFGE group wants to "go back" to a gift economy such as indigenous peoples had before markets destroyed it. In more practical terms, explained one IFGE member, this would involve supporting the liberal welfare state in the short-term while working on a longer term strategy of bringing up boys with values of care. Most striking was the tiny number of people this panel drew — barely a dozen — in Mumbai, relative to Toronto. What this perspective offers in the way of a diversity that goes beyond liberal multiculturalism is questionable. In historic practice, both the "maternal feminism" — for example, of Canadian suffragette Nellie McClung — and neo-paganism in which it is rooted have ended up becoming complicit with racist nationalism.

Diversity versus "Diversity" at the WSF

Using diversity to examine power differences and thus to address oppression in all spheres of life is a worthy political project. Challenging monolithic systems of thinking and fundamentalisms of all types is vital. Including people from different oppressed groups and from many parts of the world is an essential part of this process.



WSF Mumbai, 2004.

Insofar as the WSF facilitates this type of political encounter, it is contributing to social change. However, the approach to diversity embraced by WSF organizers and most participants is a far less critical one.

While the WSF features a multicultural cast of actors, there is really not much substantive diversity in the politics most espoused. The emphasis is on lobbying for rights within the existing system — for "better control over globalisation" through measures like the Tobin Tax on corporations proposed by ATTAC — rather than working for fundamental change. Even the Dalits, who were mostly brought to the Forum by NGOs and Church-based organizations, were basically asking for the restoration of liberal welfare-state affirmative action programs. This is supported by Samir Amin's observation that WSF participants "must [only] make it clear that they are opposed to neoliberalism — not to capitalism necessarily — ... [and] to militarisation of globalisation — not necessarily imperialism, which means much more." Various Marxists critics in India have a harsher analysis. Describing the WSF as a mixture of NGO activism and social democracy, they see it as a safety valve for venting anger against imperialist globalization and for diffusing the struggle against capitalism.

That the WSF falls far short on substantive political diversity is directly related to its celebration of an uncritical pluralism that verges on relativism. Assuming that all groups at the WSF, despite their diverse approaches, are part of the same struggle is dangerously simplistic. Most "anti-globalizers" at the WSF oppose globalized capitalism rather than capitalism per se; some actually embrace or end up becoming complicit with a highly problematic nationalism

that feeds into rising right-wing and even fascist currents. The sheer size of the WSF and its multiplicity of events work against open debates and the questioning of such political stances by marginalizing critics from within. Hence, as some commentators have recommended, a more effective approach might be to emphasize local forums and reduce the size of the WSF by making it a forum of delegates from various local and regional forums. ✽

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Eco-Spirituality, Neo-Paganism and the Hindu Right

The Dangers of Religious Environmentalism

Meera Nanda

In recent years, neo-pagan eco-spirituality has found a welcome home in the women's movement. Inspired by the ecofeminist writings of Starhawk, Charlene Spretnak, and Vandana Shiva, the growing popularity of eco-spiritual activism in the environmentalist and, more recently, the anti-globalization movements shows that many women (and men) are attracted to the pagan vision of nature as a living, conscious, and sacred entity. They seek to replace the patriarchal and distant Father God of the Judeo-Christian tradition with the loving and welcoming Mother Earth of the pre-Christian, Native American, and Eastern religious traditions. By and large, this turn to the goddess tradition is seen as politically progressive, for it is seen as a powerful motivating force for environmental, feminist, and other forms of activism.

I want to initiate a rethinking about the place of the sacred in environmental activism, including environmental activism within the anti-globalization movement. We can refer to the example of Chipko (the famous women-hugging-the-trees movement from India) to argue that when new social movements invoke the sacredness of nature for environmental causes, they run the risk of aiding and comforting the religious right and the ultra-nationalistic politics it stands for. While the turn to goddess and pagan traditions might be seen as counter-cultural

in the West, this kind of religiosity is a part of the *dominant* Hindu culture in India which has had a long history of patriarchy and caste hierarchy.

Lessons from India, however, apply to the new social movements in the West. For one, as mentioned above, the tendency to sacralize nature — to turn rivers, trees and soil into objects of worship — is gaining ground among the deep ecology, eco-feminist and neo-pagan movements in the West. Second — and this is more problematic — the Hindu Right cannot be treated as a domestic problem of India alone, for it has aspirations to become the leader of worldwide, anti-Judeo-Christian, neo-pagan movement. Hindu nationalists want to project India as the sole surviving nation that has preserved its polytheistic, pagan culture and therefore as the natural leader of neo-pagan revivals around the world.

What is Paganism?

According to the most recent social scientific data collected by James Proctor, a geographer at University of California, and reported by Catherine Albanese in her remarkable book, *Reconsidering Nature Religions*:

- Only 32% of environmental activists in the US are secularists; that is, they think that nature is important but not sacred in itself.
- About 25% or so are Christian theists;

that is, they think that nature is sacred because it was created by God.

- The largest percentage, about 40%, are eco-spiritualists; that is, they think that nature is sacred in itself because it is animated by the presence of a cosmic life force.

It is in this last category that we see a revival of a vast range of neo-pagan ideas. From deep ecology, eco-feminism, and New Age to witchcraft, Druidism, and other practices oriented around ancient gods and goddesses, eco-spirituality is presently thriving. All forms of eco-spirituality share two defining features. First, they see divinity as manifested in entities and processes of nature. For the pagans, God is not up there in the sky, but down here in trees, rivers, birds, animals, and human beings. Second, they are holists or anti-dualists. Because they see all things as manifestations of the divine, they reject distinctions between the spiritual and material, sacred and secular, humans and gods, or humans and other species.

Because they venerate nature, nearly all modern pagans consider it their sacred duty to protect the earth. Some groups, like Earth First! or Vandana Shiva's Research Foundation in India, are more aggressive in the commitment to defend the earth. Others are more inward-looking, more drawn to life-style rituals than political activism. But in all cases, those who see earth itself as

sacred embrace environmentalism with a religious fervor. This conscious application, to contemporary environmental concerns, of a religious attitude toward nature is what I call *religious environmentalism*.

Overlap between Paganism and Hinduism

There is a great overlap between this neo-pagan paradigm and traditional Hindu beliefs and practices. Hinduism is a religion of nature. Traditional Hindu texts teach that the natural world is not just dead matter, but rather the body of God: the same spirit or *Atman* that animates human beings, animates all natural objects, living or non-living, big or small, from the humble rocks and rivers to bacteria and trees. Thus, all entities of nature are alive, animated, and deeply connected to all others. At a more philosophical level, Vedantic Hinduism teaches that all distinctions and dualisms between sacred and profane, spirit and matter are illusory, because all that exists is a manifestation of the *Brahman*, or the World Spirit.

One can see why religious environmentalists in the West would be attracted to Hinduism and other Eastern traditions. The cult-status of Vandana Shiva in the anti-globalization and environmental movements is one indicator of the wide appeal of Hindu eco-spirituality in these movements. After all, what is Shiva's claim to fame? She has learned to couch the concerns of the left with environment, technology, and global trade in the worldview of traditional Hinduism. But the connection goes deeper: Arne Naess, the founding father of deep ecology, and a growing number of those who subscribe to pagan and other religious environmentalist movements, profess a deep admiration for the staunchly Hindu and deeply romantic ruralism of Mahatma Gandhi and the idealism of Vedanta. Not surprisingly, the Indian environmentalist movements bear the impress of those elements of Hindu worldview that resonate with deep ecologists in the West.

Right-wing Paganism

The problem is that environmentalists, both inside and outside the anti-globalization movement, are not the only ones



Vandana Shiva

drawn to India's eco-spirituality. A more right-wing, nationalistic variety of Western neo-paganism, whose major concern goes beyond the protection of the environment to the revival of their local, blood-and-soil, pre-Christian gods, is also turning to Hinduism for inspiration.

Organized, deeply anti-Christian, neo-pagan groups have emerged in Europe, notably in England, Ireland, Germany, Iceland, Belgium, Lithuania, Norway, and even in Russia. From what I have read of these movements so far, they seem to attract those who have never forgiven the Judeo-Christian tradition for putting an end to the local, nature gods of pre-Christian tribes. As Koenraad Elst, a Belgian supporter of paganism and Hindu nationalism, puts it most expressively: "with the coming of Christianity, the sacred fires at the altars to Vesta, Zeus, Lug or Wotan were extinguished, their worship suspended. ..."

Not surprisingly, a strong relationship seems to be developing between these Western neo-pagans groups and the Hindu nationalists. Neo-pagans turn to India as the one country where paganism is still alive. Hindu nationalists, for their part, welcome them with open arms, for two reasons:

- Crusade against all monotheistic faiths: for the Hindu nationalists, the rise of the neo-pagan movement in the West offers the hope of an ultimate

pay-back to the Western colonizers. That is, Hindu chauvinists see Western neo-paganism as a way to challenge the Judeo-Christian tradition of the West — against which they harbour deep animosity, resentment, and hatred — from the inside.

- Their ambitions to make Hinduism more global: for all its denial of the missionary impulse, Hindu gurus and "godmen" have long been engaged in propagating Hindu practices and beliefs in the West. The popularity of goddess and other esoteric traditions in the New Age, environmental, feminist, and anti-globalization movements gives them an opportunity to enhance Hinduism's prestige and presence on the global scene.

The threat of Fascism

All neo-pagans are not fascists. Indeed, neo-paganism can stand by itself as a genuine religion, with no necessary connections with fascist, racist politics. And I have no evidence that the neo-pagan groups that Hindutva is trying to bring into its own fold have any overt connections with Nazi or neo-Nazi groups.

Nevertheless, I am concerned about the nationalistic uses of paganism for the following reasons:

- There is a long history of Nazi and neo-Nazi involvement with the occult and paganism. Most people don't realize that Nazism was a revolt against the universalistic, rationalistic, and secular elements of the Enlightenment tradition, which the Nazis ascribed to the influence of the Jews. Indeed, the contemporary feminist, deep-ecologist and post-colonial revolt against Enlightenment ideals shares many features with the Nazi critique of universal civilization.
- There are deep affinities between ultranationalistic politics and pagan conception of nature and God. To begin with, local gods are more blood-and-soil gods, sanctifying the natural geography for the people whose gods they are. Indeed, Hindu nationalists routinely present the landmass of India as the body of the Goddess, clearly claiming the country for Hindus only.

- Nature religions allow their adherents to develop a great deal of hubris. They feel they are acting in accord with nature itself and don't have to obey either the positive law of the land, or the traditional ethics, all of which they see as merely man-made law.
- Non-political, perfectly decent neopagans can — and do — attract racist, ultranationalist groups. For example, Wicca, or even deep ecologists who have no right-wing sympathies, tend to attract neo-Nazi groups who are into the occult and the cult of Odin.

"Hindu ecology" as the bridge between the Hindu right and "radical" environmentalism

The idea that Hinduism is inherently ecological and can teach the rest of the world how to take care of natural resources has emerged as the shared ground between the global (and Indian) "radical" environmentalists and feminists, and the global network of the right-wing, nationalistic pagan groups described above.

Through the 1990s, just as anti-Enlightenment theory was at its height, and just as Hindu nationalists had come to power, a new academic discipline called "Dharmic ecology" — or Hindu ecology — was taking shape. This new discipline came into being with active participation of Hindu philosophers, world-renowned Sanskritists and Indologists, the goddess feminists, anthropologists, religious cults like Hare Krishnas, Hindutva propagandists, and, sadly, the stalwarts of India's environmental movement, including Vandana Shiva and Sundarlal Bahuguna, the world-renowned defenders of the Chipko movement. Indeed, Chipko and the Narmada Bachao Andolan (or Save the Narmada Campaign), two of India's best-known environmentalist movements, were appropriated by the theorists of dharmic ecology as examples of Hinduism's ecological wisdom. Two major books, one by Harvard Divinity School, appeared in the last decade. The glossy new magazine, *Hinduism Today*, took up the cause, as did the magazine of the Hare Krishnas, *Back to Godhead*.

In the theoretical discourse of dharmic

ecology, every ancient high-Hindu text, from the *Rg Veda* to the *Upanishads*, along with *Manusmriti*, *Bhagwat Gita*, *Bhagwat Purana*, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, has been reinterpreted as supporting a unique eco-spirituality which encourages an ecological ethic suitable for the contemporary 21st century world. Every Brahminical Hindu concept, from the obnoxious theory of karma to reincarnation, has been appropriated as a source of ecological wisdom. Every major god and goddess has been inducted as an ecologist.

This theoretical ferment was more than matched in the practical use of religious motifs in the Indian environmental movement. In order to mobilize the masses, the mainstream Indian environmentalists eagerly invoked Hindu imagery and myths. Examples range from women tying *rakhis* to trees (*rakhi* is the sacred thread girls and women tie on their brothers' wrists for protection), mass recitations of *Bhagwat Purana* at the site of Chipko, fasts, religious vows on the river banks and temples, invocations of the God Krishna as the lord of cows and pastures, invocations of *shakti*, *devi*, *bhu mata* (or Narmada *mata*, or Ganga *mata*), *karma*, reincarnation, sacred trees, rivers, and even *jati*, reinterpreted as biological species living in harmony with their environment. All major environmental campaigns in recent years, including Chipko,

Narmada Bachao Andolan, and even, to some extent, the controversy over genetically modified seeds, have had their share of religious imagery, mixed in with the nostalgic invocations of the good old days.

What is Dharmic ecology? It is basically an unabashedly Hindu supremacist, nationalistic version of the same religious environmentalism that the anti-Enlightenment left has been preaching and practicing. Proponents of Dharmic ecology agree with their left-wing anti-Enlightenment counterparts that because Hindus find gods in nature, because they see nature as embodiment of the divine, they must therefore, by definition, have a more evolved ecological ethic; and it is because of the colonization of the mind by Western reductionist science that Indians have forgotten this holistic worldview. Revival of this "holistic," "non-dualistic" worldview is needed in order to encourage environmentally responsible development.

The difference between the two is this: the anti-Enlightenment left tries to find all these ecological virtues in the traditions and "standpoint epistemologies" of poor peasants, hill people, women, and other marginalized groups. The Hindu rightwing, on the other had, unproblematically locates these same ecological virtues in the Brahminical Hinduism itself. It makes no attempt to subalternize the Hindu ecological ethic.

The case of Chipko

The example of Chipko will illustrate how close the anti-Enlightenment left and the right are on salient points. Chipko is perhaps India's best-known ecological movement. The much-celebrated accounts of hill women in the foothills of the Himalayas protecting the forest's trees from the timber industry by hugging them captured the imagination of ecology movements worldwide. The women's involvement in saving the trees was celebrated around the world thanks to Vandana Shiva who presented Chipko as an example of the "feminine principle" in nature, informed by Hindu sacred traditions of *shakti* and *prakriti*.

Thanks to the painstaking and careful



Mananika Vilaribe / Asia International Manila

research of people like Haripriya Rangan, Emma Mawdsley, and numerous others, it is by now very clear that Chipko was *not* an assertion of traditional values or even traditional forest rights of non-modern villagers and women who were against commercial forestry. Chipko was not a rejection of commercial forestry but a struggle for a preferred access to markets, credit, jobs, and subsidies for the local people in the industry.

In the Hindu ecological literature, however, Shiva's and Sundarlal Bahuguna's interpretation of Chipko as the civilizational and religious expression of women and hill people is taken as canonical. Chipko is presented, in this literature, as the application of foundational ideas of Hindu philosophy to environmental action and as an affirmation of the spiritual value of nature. The recitation of *Bhagwat Katha* and women tying rakhi to trees are taken as evidence of the influence of Hindu religiosity.

Chipko is only one example. In keeping with the class interests of the core Hindu nationalist constituency, the Hindu rightwing has invoked the sacredness of rivers to fight against the proposed Tehri Dam. In substance, the nationalist arguments against the Tehri Dam are no different than the arguments and strategies used by the world-renowned movement against the Narmada Dam.

The political dangers of Dharmic ecology

The success of Chipko and the various anti-dam campaigns, especially the anti-Tehri Dam movement, are used as exemplars of how Hinduism can make a positive contribution to the global environmental movements. Not surprisingly, under the rule of the Hindu Nationalist BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party), the government began to actively fund temples, pilgrimage sites, and religious cults for reforestation and maintenance of sacred groves. A few examples will suffice:

- G. B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Ecology has been working with the temple of Badrinath. Scientists produce the saplings: the priests bless them and distribute them as *prasad*.

- The Indian government funded in part the work of ISKCON (Hare Krishna) in re-forestation of Vrindavan.
- The department of environment is supporting temples to maintain sacred groves.
- Ecological aspects of Hinduism have been included in the school text books of at least one state, Uttar Pradesh.

Toward a secular environmentalism

The defenders of religious environmentalism, however, might still ask: so what? Just because the rightwing is opportunistically jumping on the ecology bandwagon, and bringing foreign neopagans along, does not prove that religion cannot be an effective check against environmental degradation.

However, there is now sufficient evidence from anthropological studies that nature worship plays a highly ambiguous role in how people relate to nature. Just because people hold some rivers, trees, stones, and animals as sacred does not mean that they do it out of environmental concerns. Wish-fulfillment (e.g., for better rains, higher crop yields), fear, ancestor worship are fairly common motivations for nature worship. It also does not mean that those natural entities deemed sacred, for whatever reason, will be better taken care of. In fact, there is evidence that treating rivers as sacred actually encourages overuse and a lack of concern with pollution. The river as goddess is considered too bountiful and self-purifying to need human care. Likewise, treating forest groves as sacred has always allowed exploitation of land and labour by priests associated with those temples that have control over the groves.

My point is that the underlying assumption of religious environmentalism — that a religious attitude of sacredness and reverence toward nature encourages wise use of nature — is not supported by sound evidence from field studies.

In closing, I return to a hard-learned, but mostly forgotten, lesson of the environmental movement in India. Most poor people participate in environmental movements for *secular* reasons. Study after study has exposed the *primary* motivation of the poor people to take action on behalf

of the trees, rivers, and land as their interest in a better life materially for themselves and for their children. The poor are nowhere as technology-averse as the urban, middle-class activist "consciousness-raisers." Most of the time, they are fighting to get a better deal out of development projects, not to stop them altogether.

This secular motivation for environmental action is an untapped resource for *secular environmentalism* and, more generally, *secular activism* in other social movements such as the anti-globalization movement. Rather than drape the cloak of sacredness on nature, environmentalism in India can become a source of secularism and class-based collective action. ❧

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Women & Environments
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Poppies and Mangoes

Women's Empowerment, Environmental Conservation,
and Ecotourism in Costa Rica

Stephanie Garrett

Despite the incredible heat of a Costa Rican January evening, Damaris, president of AMAT (*Asociación de Mujeres Activas de Tárcoles* or Association of Active Women of Tárcoles), sent chills up the spines of the women listening to her with these empowering words:

We have to learn what it means to be in solidarity with one another as mothers, sisters, daughters, and friends and to walk together, united. We have to envision empowering ourselves as women in Tárcoles and to realize that we have the capacity to contribute to our own development and the development of our community.

Sitting on little wooden stools around an old blackboard in a newly constructed training centre that would house their activities, a group of eighteen women — all but two of whom have only a grade six education — brainstormed in order to come up with a logo and motto that would define the group's intentions. The image came to life of three generations of women holding hands, bordered by the motto "The Power of Women United." While their motto appears simple, the four years of struggle and experience that went into the development of this grassroots rural women's group are complex. This motto reflects the distinct but interconnected challenges that these women face: a deeply embedded machismo, severe environmental degradation which is decimating their export-fishing and tourist industries, and the increasing impact of corporate globalization. Focusing on projects related to the tourist industry, AMAT



Tamales for a Fiesta.

is attempting to combine women's empowerment with community development and environmental conservation.

The Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) negotiations were the top news story during my most recent visit to Costa Rica in January and February of this year. This reflects both the USA's increasing push towards trade liberalization in the region and Costa Rica's economic vulnerability and reliance on foreign investment. This economic dependency is particularly evident in the country's booming tourism sector which now earns more foreign exchange than the country's main export crops — bananas and coffee — combined. Eco-tourism has grown extensively since the mid-1980s and one-quarter of Costa Rica's land is now dedicated to national parks and reserves. In recent years, tourism, in the form of large-scale, foreign-owned resort developments, is also dominating the country's beach landscapes, with little consideration for local ecosystems and cultures. Since the CAFTA negotiations

are now complete, such developments are only likely to increase. Although the USA and Costa Rican governments boast about increased job opportunities and economic growth, the experience of Costa Ricans living in small and impoverished towns, like Tárcoles, reveals another reality.

Tárcoles is a small fishing village on the Pacific Coast of Costa Rica, between Carara National Park and the Río Grande de Tárcoles. It is home to around one thousand residents. While a few tourists are attracted to Tárcoles due to its lush natural beauty — its mangroves, its rare species of scarlet macaws, and its crocodiles — most only see a blur of the town as they speed down the newly paved highway toward the famous beaches and surfing resorts of the south.

A walk along Tárcoles' main dirt road reveals the town's precarious environmental and economic situation. Many rundown houses line a beach sprinkled with garbage and an ocean browned by runoff from Central America's second-most polluted river. The struggle to maintain a family on the money brought in by traditional fishing

STEPHANIE GARRETT

— an almost exclusively male trade and the town's main industry — is worn deeply into the faces of the fishermen preparing their nets on the beach at sunrise. Other male residents of the town can be found working on the construction of a foreign-owned resort development on the outskirts of Tárcoles. The youth who speak basic English wait early each morning on the side of the highway for buses that take them to their jobs in other nearby resorts.

Until recently, few families could afford to send their children to junior high school due to the cost of school supplies and the daily commute to larger towns. This changed in January when a makeshift junior high school was started in the town hall, offering students the possibility of continuing their education beyond elementary school. The extremely low level of education complicates the economic and social situation facing most families in Tárcoles. This social situation includes a deeply-seated machismo founded upon traditional notions of gender roles. Women are significantly absent from the public spaces of the town and are generally sequestered in their homes.

This vicious cycle of environmental degradation, lack of job opportunities, and low levels of education is at the root of the pervasive poverty and other problems facing this community. These problems have been responsible for a rise in drug and alcohol abuse and, intensified by traditional ideas about gender, for an increase in domestic violence. This has contributed to the low self-esteem exhibited by many of the women in Tárcoles and to a high rate of teenage pregnancy. However, despite these seemingly insurmountable challenges, many in the town, especially the women, are ready for change and are beginning to organize toward this goal. Currently, the strongest voice for change in Tárcoles is AMAT.

I first met the women of AMAT when I travelled to Tárcoles in May of 2003. As a member of a small group of Canadians and Australians working with Youth Challenge International, I spent three months helping to build AMAT's training centre. Working directly with community members rather than visiting as a tourist allowed me to gain

their trust and a better understanding of the complexities facing those living in this town. I returned to Tárcoles six months later to see the progress of the women's efforts and to undertake research on AMAT on a more formal basis. I spent one month conducting one-on-one interviews with each of the women in AMAT, sitting in on some courses that were being offered in their new training centre, attending their meetings, and talking informally with community members.

In Tárcoles, I stayed with Mayela, the secretary of AMAT and the group's driving force. This put me in an interesting position that both limited and enhanced my role as a researcher. While my "outsider" position and my non-native Spanish limited my

majority of the women are married, with two to four children, and work at home while their husbands either fish, work in hotels, or do construction jobs. Most of the women have been a part of AMAT for at least two years. They cite the need to learn skills, to work with other women, and to increase their independence as their primary reasons for joining the group.

Starting out with few resources or skills but a strong desire to improve their lives; the women took waste paper from nearby hotels and began recycling it into beautiful handmade crafts. The women quickly realized they were tapping into a unique tourist market that emphasized environmental conservation as well as local culture. As the group evolved, so did



Tarcoles

STEPHANIE GARRETT

research capabilities, paradoxically they also helped me. Many of the women I interviewed were very open with me because I was not part of their small community but had contributed to its development.

With members ranging in age from nineteen to fifty-seven and averaging around thirty-five, AMAT includes an interesting mix of women from similar backgrounds but with different personalities. Damaris, the president, is university-educated and Eunice, the vice-president, graduated from high school. The rest of the group has less than a grade six education. However, AMAT is structured democratically, with each woman having a say in the decisions made by the group. The

their desire to diversify their projects. They began to embroider linens to sell to hotels and on the tourist market. They also started taking free courses offered by the National Learning Institute, including basic English, restaurantering, and canning. The lack of space to undertake these projects and educational activities was what led to the desire for their own space and the search for funding to build their training centre.

AMAT's new training centre has three main spaces. There is a large room for training courses (which will eventually hold computers, when they have the funds to purchase these). A second room houses a restaurant that will employ several of

the women and will generate funds to sustain AMAT. The third space will be a work area for their embroidery and paper-recycling projects. It will also contain industrial-size pulp-making machines for a future project involving the canning of mangoes which are abundant in Tárcoles during the rainy season.

With the centre complete and a new year ahead of them, AMAT's future activities are becoming more complex. Many women in the town have been unable to participate in AMAT's activities because they have young children. AMAT has therefore acquired some property near their centre where they are planning to set up a daycare. On the edge of the town along the beach, the women have also acquired several hectares of unused land, with a diversity of plant-life, including mangroves, and of birds such as toucans and the endangered scarlet macaw. In order to attract eco-friendly tourists to Tárcoles, the women of AMAT plan to create a "Poppy Maze" here by planting poppy-tree hedges around the existing flora. They also plan to plant almond trees that will attract more scarlet macaws to the area and to establish a botanical garden and a butterfly sanctuary. Aside from providing an excellent site from which to sell their handicrafts, the construction and maintenance of this Poppy Maze will generate jobs for the unemployed, especially the youth. These will be jobs that combine tourism with environmental conservation and sustainable development.

AMAT's projects fulfill three interconnected goals: women's empowerment, community development, and environmental conservation. However, these goals are complicated and often contradictory. While AMAT's activities are based on tasks traditionally associated with women — such as craft-making, sewing, and food preparation — bringing such activities into the public sphere and using them to generate profits is challenging traditional notions of women's role and of productive labour. This challenge to the town's machismo is reflected in the resistance that the women's projects are inciting. As Yamilette, a member of AMAT, explains:

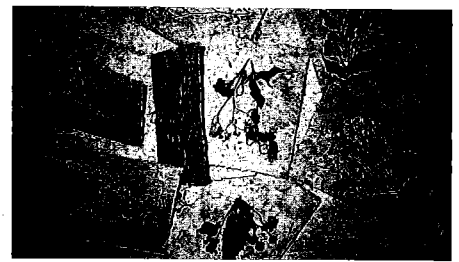
A lot of people say it is a waste of time, that we don't learn. And they hold

onto the idea that women aren't worth anything, and that we can't learn. But we can improve ourselves and change the system and people's ideas. We are capable.

While the effect of the machismo is evident in many women's feelings of low self-esteem and in AMAT's ongoing battle to gain the trust of the community, their fight is getting easier as the results of their activities become increasingly visible. The women of AMAT are gaining the education and skills necessary to become more independent. As they become more experienced in developing and sustaining their projects, they are becoming increasingly self-sufficient. Many of the women I interviewed explained that the education and income they are receiving has given them a new sense of confidence. It is allowing them to slowly gain the trust of their husbands and of the entire community. Damaris is optimistic about AMAT's role in community development. "The community is changing its ways of thinking, and living and its hopes for the future," she observes.

Although AMAT's initiatives contribute to community development in Tárcoles, such development is still problematic given that it relies upon the often precarious and unstable tourism sector. While AMAT's linen embroidery project caters to large-scale resorts, its other projects attract a more sustainable eco-friendly tourism. When I asked them about their reliance on the tourist industry, AMAT members acknowledged this but said that, at the present time, they have no other alternatives. They are very aware of the situation in nearby towns where tourism is fuelling the drug and sex trades. "Logically there are two types of tourism — tourism that comes and causes growth and tourism that comes and destroys," explains Damaris. Mayela adds pragmatically, "We have to run the risk. To receive the good parts of tourism, we have to be prepared for the bad."

The women of AMAT are attempting to resist some of the more problematic aspects of corporate globalization without rejecting all aspects of the modernization that it is carrying along with it. At the level of community development, AMAT and the people of Tárcoles, more generally, are determined to maintain control over their projects and



Recycled paper cards.

industries by keeping foreign-owned developments out of the town. In order to promote women's empowerment, AMAT members are encouraging women to take on more public roles in the community. At the environmental level, AMAT emphasizes projects, such as paper recycling and fruit canning, that use local resources in a sustainable manner. Moreover, future projects such as the Poppy Maze will work towards improving local environmental conditions while simultaneously educating community members, especially the youth, on the importance of improving their ecological situation.

Many factors that will ultimately determine the success of AMAT's projects remain out of their control. Their municipal government continues to ignore the town's request for aid in developing a beach clean-up project. Higher levels of government continue to turn a blind eye toward the devastating river pollution that affects communities situated on the Rio Grande, including Tárcoles. It is difficult to speculate on what sort of effect the new, foreign-owned resort development on the outskirts of Tárcoles, which is nearing completion, will have on the town and, especially, on the women's projects and lives. Concrete and positive social change is being realized by the women of the Asociación de Mujeres Activas de Tárcoles. Their struggle to challenge machismo and poverty and to educate and empower themselves is inspiring.

If you would like to learn more about AMAT or offer them some support, please contact them at carlyfam@racsa.com.cr

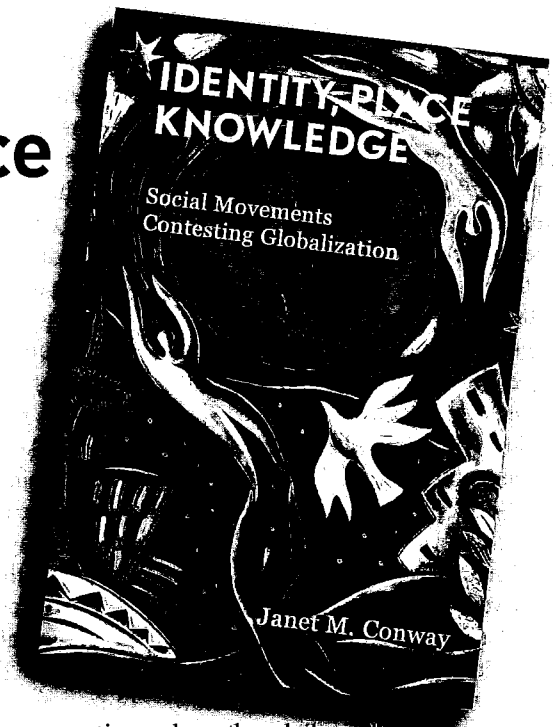
Stephanie Garrett has a BA in Women's Studies and Spanish from the University of Calgary. She is currently completing a Masters degree in Gender, Development and Globalization at the London School of Economics.

The Global Significance of Local Resistance

A Feminist, Postmodern Look at Anti-Globalization Politics

Interview with Janet Conway

Anika Henderson and Shalvin Singh



Janet Conway co-founded in 1992 and served on the steering committee of Toronto's Metro Network for Social Justice (MNSJ), and has been extensively involved in the anti-globalization movement. She currently teaches in the Department of Politics and the School of Public Administration at Ryerson University. Anika Henderson and Shalvin Singh talked with Janet at the 2004 Congress of Humanities and Social Sciences in Winnipeg about her recent book, *Identity, Place, Knowledge: Social Movements Contesting Globalization*, which examines the MNSJ, a non-profit coalition of over 230 progressive local movements and organizations dedicated to promoting social and economic justice in the city of Toronto, in the context of a globalizing world.

WEI: Is your new book a feminist work? A postmodernist work?

CONWAY: The book is feminist in its spirit and in its method, in the sense that it argues that activist practice is an important source for the creation of new kinds of knowledge grounded in women's experiences and women's lives. In this work I am arguing that social movements are producers of knowledge, and though that knowledge is practical, unsystematized, and tacit, it is an essential knowl-

edge for politics aimed at generating alternatives to neo-liberal globalism. I also explicitly talk about feminist epistemologies, feminist-standpoint epistemologies in particular, as helpful ways of thinking about how to situate and analyze knowledge derived from feminist and non-feminist social movements. The MNSJ is a particular, women-led activist space which did not call itself a feminist space, but feminist practices remain central to the MNSJ, practices which I am concerned to analyze and illuminate.

What I think is important about the postmodern, or maybe more accurately the poststructuralist turn is that it has disrupted all claims of master narratives. As a result, critical social movements are operating out of very different discourses and yet are finding each other, becoming connected. I would say my book is postmodernist in the sense that I really want to listen to all perspectives, and am suspicious of attempts to impose one theory or narrative over enormously diverse political activity. What came in particular out of the work of second wave feminists, and has become central to these social movements, is that all knowledge is socially situated and therefore partial, limited, and positional, that there is no universal, objective, or value-free perspective. These social movements regard any political tendency that claims to

have the whole as dangerous.

WEI: What would you say to those who argue that post-structuralism advances a relativistic conceptualization of knowledge?

CONWAY: I think certain postmodernist or poststructuralist theorists have been rightly criticized for ending up in a politically nihilistic or politically relativistic position. What I argue in this book is that it is very possible to acknowledge the partial character of your own knowledge, the diversity of perspectives that people bring, and to also collaborate concretely, and do politics based on partial, imperfect knowledge — that you don't need perfect knowledge in order to act together. Politics is possible even though people have to become very self-limiting in their ideological claims, and that is part of what is really new about this period.

WEI: Do you see a disconnect between feminist activists and feminist academics? And more generally what is the relationship between activists and academics?

CONWAY: There is a huge chasm in Canada between academia and activism. Feminism as a theoretical tradition is to me more promising because there is still that movement there, within which feminist academics are in some way situated, which pushes them on the question of praxis. The same is also true of Marxists, although there aren't the same kinds of vibrant

Marxist movements as there are women's movements. Many academics have not felt that activist spaces are essential and privileged spaces for knowing the world.

WEI: Many activists see the work done in academia as abstract, disconnected from the real experiences, the real problems that people daily face. How would you respond to those critics?

CONWAY: There is a lot of truth in that. A lot of activism is extremely instrumental and many activists are impatient with the kinds of questions and discourses that are not immediately useful. On the other hand, many academics do not feel the need to make those connections with activists so there is a mutual unintelligibility between the two.

WEI: Whom do anti-globalization movements, progressive movements target?

CONWAY: I think there are many, many targets. There is no one neo-liberalism, nor any one place, source, or institution in which power is concentrated. Movements that identify themselves against neo-liberalism are still engaged in struggles with their own national governments, with corporations in their own communities, with international institutions; they are defending their rivers, squatting land in their cities; the so-called anti-globalization movement is made up of this incredible diversity of movements. These movements engage a variety of forces simultaneously — even one single movement engages forces of various kinds — so it makes no sense to talk of a single strategy or a single moment or struggle because, if you look to the practice on the ground, it tells us something about the character of power, that these movements engage power in many different ways, that not all is won or lost in one place.

WEI: You mentioned that “anti-globalization” as a term is problematic, but you still decided to use it. What are the implications of this?

CONWAY: The term “anti-globalization” is problematic in the sense that it doesn't say anything about what the movements really stand for. It was created, to my knowledge, in the context of Seattle by the American media and what it did was to recognize that these hugely diverse

strands of activism were somehow connected and, as a result, the movements also began to recognize themselves as connected. Most strands in the movement, though not all, are not opposed to globality, but to the dominant or hegemonic form of the globalization project. Most movements are at work in their own localities or in their own nations, but see themselves as part of this global movement, not necessarily endorsing a single global alternative project but seeing themselves as part of the opposition. The term obscures as much as it reveals.

WEI: What connection do you believe the MNSJ has to movements in the Global South?

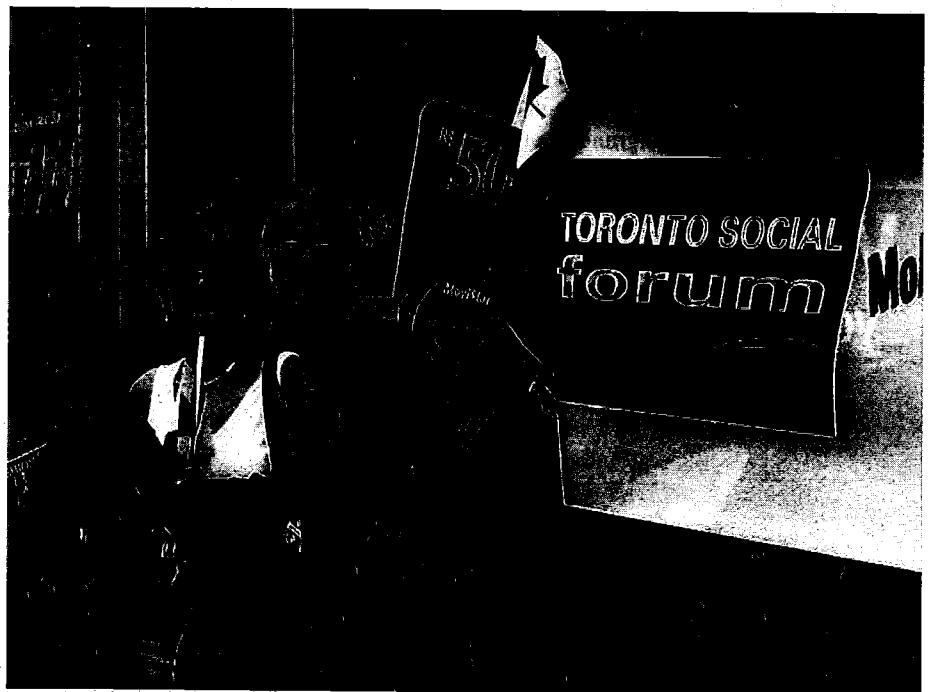
CONWAY: Historically, the most concrete connection that existed would have been with the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, where a working group on NAFTA in the MNSJ had direct links with Chiapas and was involved in getting aid to Chiapas. Secondly, there were international development and international solidarity organizations that were members of the MNSJ and, even though the concrete political practice was oriented towards the Toronto city budget or social policies and so forth, the MNSJ invited all these organizations in and

they became part of the fabric of the MNSJ. Not to collapse the differences, I would say these new movements, North and South, have some shared characteristics.

WEI: What makes your book a global ethnography?

CONWAY: The term “global ethnography” is actually the title of a book which I talk about specifically in the section on ethnographic practice. In examining the MNSJ, I required an ethnographic approach, in which the researcher enters into a context and over a sustained period of time closely observes and describes what is really going on. In a period of globalization a specific locality or community is no longer bounded or self-contained, but is criss-crossed by forces beyond that locality, and must be understood as a much bigger historical and geographic canvas. My ethnography of the MNSJ is global in the sense that I am doing my very best to situate, describe, and analyze the concrete discourses and practices in activist spaces in Toronto in the 1990s, understanding at the same time that those spaces are happening in the world city of Toronto that is criss-crossed with economic, political, and cultural forces that are much bigger.

WEI: How do you think that the events of



Janet Conway at the WSF, 2003.

JUDY REBIK

September 11th affected the anti-globalization movement?

CONWAY: I think 9/11 affected the anti-globalization movement in more ways than people were willing to admit at the time. It really ended the whole momentum around those mass demonstrations because the terrain changed overnight, in terms of how movements would be perceived and policed. The World Social Forum, while not a response to 9/11, having existed before then, has emerged as a very fruitful alternative form of convergence. In the wake of 9/11 and the war in Iraq, you have a much more unilateral U.S. military and global economic agenda — you have a superpower dying to nuke somebody. The whole terrain really has shifted, human rights have been brought to the forefront, civil political rights are under threat; racism against Muslims, racial profiling, unjust incarceration, just a whole host of other really pressing concerns. You can't say that free trade is more important than these things — not that it is unimportant, but these other issues are also extremely pressing.

WEI: Where do social movements go from here?

CONWAY: The wonderful thing is that, regardless of what I say, the movements are moving. It is important to recognize that people are concerned with a variety of things going on in the world and movements are making different choices in different places. There is no grand strategy

and I don't think there can be one because power cannot be understood simplistically as global force/counter force. I just don't understand power that way and I don't understand change that way. I might hope that things coalesce in different ways, but I don't know; I am listening hard, though.

Anika Henderson and Shalvin Singh are graduate students at the University of Alberta, working on issues of gender, social movements, and globalization.

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The Anti-Globalization Movement, Queer Diasporas, and Cultural Production

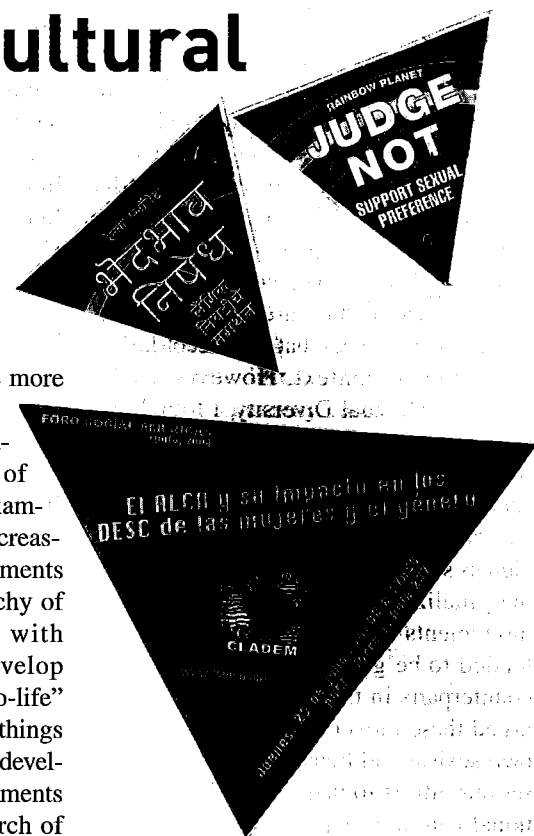
Ruthann Lee

The transnational movement of people, information, and even discourses, characteristic of contemporary neo-liberal globalization is having a large impact not only on economic relations but also on sexual identities and identity politics. New forms of lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered (LGBT) and/or queer identities and communities are emerging to question dominant models of subjectivity, sexual desire, and embodiment. Postcolonial nations are witnessing the formation of sexual identity-based social movements whose political rhetoric and strategies appear to emulate Euro-American approaches to subjectivity, sexual identity, and citizenship. Yet, these postcolonial sexual identity movements are simultaneously challenging Western ideas about the individual, the universal subject possessing inalienable "human rights," as well as the erotic. Moreover, transnational sexual diasporas are transforming the sexual politics, social environments, and cultures of nations around the globe.

Intolerance towards lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders tends to be greatly intensified in those states that are the most impacted by neo-liberalism. This is because the neo-liberal agendas of institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization deepen and even exaggerate the dehumanizing effects of capitalism. The structural adjustment policies and increased privatization imposed by these institutions has led to the erosion of social and health services, environmental degradation, increased homelessness, and rising poverty rates. In this economic climate, the regulatory

functions of the nuclear family are more crucial to social reproduction than has been the case in recent generations. Indeed, in many countries of both the North and the South (for example, the USA, Mexico, Peru and, increasingly, Canada), neo-liberal governments have joined forces with the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and/or with Protestant fundamentalists to develop aggressive "family values" and "pro-life" campaigns designed to regulate all things sexual. Moreover, while all of these developments have led to massive movements of people around the world in search of improved living conditions, racialized migrant workers — including significant numbers of sex workers and sexual minorities — have been increasingly subjected to surveillance and police brutality since the events of 9/11.

My research looks at ways in which queer diasporics use video to contest the dominant world processes and homogenizing tendencies of globalization. In particular, I ask questions, such as the following: What are the some of the strategies used by queer diasporic artists who align themselves with the anti-globalization movement? How do their works address the contradictions and complexities in late globalized capitalism, regarding issues of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, caste, language, and nationality, when people's relationships and allegiances to nation-states are becoming less stable and clear-cut? What is the activist potential of such diasporic cultural productions? In order to address such questions, I recently travelled to Quito,



Ecuador, to conduct research at the Social Forum of the Americas (ASF) and the Forum for Sexual Diversity held from July 25 to 30 2004.

The Social Forum of the Americas, a regional gathering of social movements and non-governmental organizations, is part of the World Social Forum (WSF) process. Initiated in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2001 and embracing the hope that "another world is possible," the WSF has become the largest space for the articulation of critiques of, and alternatives to, the neo-liberal order. The purpose of the Forum for Sexual Diversity, a new initiative introduced at the ASF, was to generate a space for formulating and debating proposals promoting the recognition of sexual rights as human rights. This forum within a forum included seminars, panel discussions, workshops, and testimonios organized by various LGBT and feminist organizations from the global South. One of its central goals was to convince and

social movements of the importance of acknowledging, in their pronouncements and their practices, that sexual diversity is a key component of equality. While at the ASF, I videotaped organized events such as the mass anti-FTAA demonstration and interviewed activist organizers with the intention of producing a documentary.

My experience at the ASF and the Forum for Sexual Diversity was both illuminating and challenging. It is important to recognize that LGBT/queer movements in the North and South address specific struggles and experiences that vary according to location and context. However, at the Forum for Sexual Diversity, I found that there were issues that movements in the South shared with those in the North. For example, in several of the sessions I attended, many lesbian and transgendered individuals stated that they felt excluded and/or marginalized within the sexual-identity movements in the South because these tended to be gay-dominated. Like their counterparts in the North, they therefore urged these movements to examine their own sexism and transphobia and to make serious efforts to understand the intersectional nature of oppressions. In addition, the focus of many LGBT movements in the South, as in the North, is on making rights-based claims (for example, the right to same-sex marriage) for an inclusive

national citizenship. However, such strategies tend to overlook indigenous movements' claims for sovereignty. In Canada, this is placing the "two-spirited peoples" of the First Nations in a difficult situation. In aligning themselves with the dominant queer community in order to address issues of sexuality, they distance themselves from indigenous struggles. In a similar vein, LGBT/queer groups in both the South and North — with the exception of a small number of self-identified queer and lesbian eco-feminists in the North — tend to ignore environmental issues.

Yet, in this current era of global capitalism, the politics associated with representing sexual identity movements, using media such as video, is fraught with difficulty. New information and communications technologies, including video, that are central to the process of globalization are spreading Western culture throughout the world. In this process, LGBT movements are being portrayed in standardized and often restrictive ways as "queer." Complicated even further by cultural stereotypes and colonial understandings of identity, these representations can have intense and contradictory effects on the ways that "queer" diasporic identities are lived and understood. Who is represented as "queer"? Who identifies as "queer"? How is this complicated by the way in

which the mainstream American media markets the "alternative" and/or "queer" lifestyles adopted by affluent, white North American and European gays and lesbians? In these now-globalized media images, the trendy, desirable, and hip "global queer" is rich, white, and gay.

While sexual identities are linked to gender, race, and nationality, these identities themselves arose in conjunction with the urbanization and individualism fostered by capitalism. As globalization transforms capitalism, it also transforms sexual identities — contradictorily creating both new forms of commodification and new forms of agency. The result is a proliferation of identity labels and notions of sexual choice via a focus on the "postmodern," urban individual. Identity-driven culture is connected to the "branding" of identities. Now identities, based on a multiplicity of "lifestyles," can be bought, sold, and purchased. In turn, this has led to a proliferation of sexual identities in late capitalism. While this proliferation does represent an expansion in the realm of individual freedom, capitalist states have encouraged forms of identity politics that ultimately work to obscure class inequalities and effectively co-opt identity-based social movements. Thus, while white, middle-class gays and lesbians can now benefit from unprecedented visibility, global soci-



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ety continues to rely on gendered, racialized, and class-based divisions of labour that render other sexual subjects unequal.

It does not seem surprising then that many grassroots sexual identity-based movements in the global South identify as "LGBT" rather than "queer." For example, one of the main organizers of the Forum for Sexual Diversity at the ASF in Quito was a coalition of Asian, African, Latin American, and Caribbean organizations called the LGBT South-South Dialogue. A major distinction I perceived between queer North and LGBT South movements at the Forum was that Southern connections to the anti-globalization movement appeared to be much more explicit. Such groups tended to strongly emphasize traditional Marxist and socialist discourse and praxis. The key issues they discussed were the poverty and economic injustice faced by LGBT South communities as a result of neo-liberalism. The strategies they proposed included identifying ways to lobby within unions for labour protection rights for LGBTs.

Since I had never before travelled to Latin America prior to attending the ASF, my qualms about the event centred primarily on issues of language and race. Born and raised in Toronto with English as my first language (and Korean a distant second), I was keenly aware that my "foreign-ness," both racially and linguistically, would greatly affect my interactions with both local Ecuadorians and other delegates at the Forum. While I am quite (and often painfully) familiar with the overt and more often subtle forms of racism in Canada, I was both curious and apprehensive about what I might experience at the ASF in Ecuador. I also had concerns about the way I would be "read," in terms of gender and sexuality, by those I would encounter at the Forum. How would sexism, homophobia, and heterosexism play out in this context? Would I be gendered as "woman" and assumed to be heterosexual? In addition, my class background as a privileged, "First World" citizen with a relatively middle-class upbringing would undoubtedly complicate my experiences and shape my impressions of Ecuador. How would all of this inform the way that

I shot, edited, produced, and finally distributed, the video documentary?

Many of the Latin American activists I interviewed expressed enthusiasm about being featured in the documentary. However, the more video footage I collected, the more aware I became of the power and privilege I enjoyed due to my access to safe spaces, information and resources including modes of production and distribution back in Toronto. With power comes responsibility. By producing this documentary, I could perhaps help "raise awareness" in Toronto by showing, in public screenings, what is happening "over there." But I continue to question who will really benefit from the creation of this documentary and which communities will be empowered?

Though I had read about the levels of poverty in certain regions of Latin America, actually witnessing and documenting the disparities between travellers/tourists/elites and peasants/homeless/racialized on the streets of Quito on a day-to-day basis was sobering. At the same time, however, I sensed in Quito an extraordinary level of awareness about, and resistance to, corporate globalization among the local Latino and indigenous peoples. This movement of resistance would be easy to forget if I allowed myself to become re-submerged in the mind-numbing, consumer-obsessed culture of North America. Instead, I am feeling somewhat rejuvenated — and inspired — as a cultural producer by what I experienced at the ASF in Quito.

As a videographer from the North, I still continue to face ethical dilemmas concerning the politics of representation. The more I think more about the relationship between the anti-globalization movement and queer diasporas, the more I realize that representing this relationship in video will be a complicated undertaking. It will

necessitate attending to some very complex notions of difference related to race, sexuality and nation. My hope is that by highlighting more complex understandings of identity, queer diasporic cultural producers can help create a community of affinity that is based on networks of shared interests. There are many artists who politicize their identities within public and communal spaces, simultaneously acknowledging the particularities of their histories and social locations. In producing works for diasporic communities rather than individuals, they seek to speak not only with, but also to, many different groups. An emphasis on self-reflexivity, rooted in traditional feminist standpoint epistemology, may allow such artists to candidly reflect on and critique social relations involving not only patriarchy but also racism, homophobia, and global capitalism. ❧

Ruthann Lee is a PhD student at York University's Joint Graduate Programme in Communication & Culture. Her work focuses on the relationships between diasporic communities, artistic practice, and feminist and queer activism.

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In the Field

Women and Globalization in Ireland

Interview with Siobhan O'Donoghue of Dublin's MRCI

Regina Cochrane

Corporate globalization is currently having a massive and a multi-faceted impact on Irish society and especially on women in Ireland.



Regina Cochrane talked about this with Siobhan O'Donoghue, the coordinator of Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, at the MRCI in downtown Dublin in July 2004.

WEI: What is the MRCI and what kind of work do you do?

O'DONOGHUE: We're a national, rights-focused organization, working with migrant workers. We emerged, about two and a half years ago, in response to Ireland's changing social environment. As you know, Ireland was a country of emigration until the nineties but around 1995 this started to reverse. Obviously, a lot of issues have arisen. Our core task is to support and engage in advocacy on behalf of migrant workers. We provide information and advice on issues related to immigration, workplace exploitation, and family reunification. We also undertake research and translate that into policy positions and lobbying. Another big part of the work is creating a space for migrant workers to come together and organize themselves. Last year we worked directly with over 2,000 migrant workers, from something like 65 different national groups, living all over the country.

One of the difficulties in Ireland, at the moment, is that we don't actually have a migration policy. We have rules that govern migration but they're designed for a system with only a trickle of people. So bits of rules have been cobbled together to try to respond to the demand for non-national labour. But there really hasn't been any strategic approach and there are huge issues around renewing work permits. According to the present system, the employer holds

the permit and renews it every year. Therefore, migrant workers only have job security for one year at a time.

WEI: How much of your work is done specifically with women?

O'DONOGHUE: The majority of the people who come in here are women, migrant women. One of the biggest groups is migrant women employed in private homes as domestic workers and child-care workers. Men and women experience migration differently. Particular aspects of the migration process impact women; one big issue for them is family formation — migrant women get into jobs and become pregnant or are put under fierce pressure not to become pregnant. So we are keen to highlight the gendered aspects of migration. Last year we organized a powerful, amazing event with migrant women for International Women's Day. I would love to have a women's group and to work specifically with migrant women. We're very conscious of that part of our work but we're waiting for more resources. We've established a group for domestic workers and at the moment we're finalizing some research that analyzes case studies to come up with ideas for change.

WEI: How has the Celtic Tiger phenomenon contributed to all of this?

O'DONOGHUE: People say that the Celtic Tiger period in the nineties was the reason why we now have inward migration. It acted as a kind of catalyst, expanding the economy and moving Ireland from being one of Europe's poorest countries to having the fastest growing economy. But it's not just the Celtic Tiger. Inward migration's natural — it's the result of Ireland becoming more and more developed. As we became more developed, we became more educated. This means that there are fewer people willing to do the lower-paid, low-skilled, 3-D (dirty, dangerous, and difficult)

jobs. And spending more time in education creates a demand for replacement workers. The new side of this is that we've also become a destination for international trade, particularly American companies. There's a huge demand for workers in the IT industry which has to be sourced from outside.

The Celtic Tiger has been responsible for women's increased participation in the labour force. With no corresponding growth in the childcare infrastructure, that obviously means demand for domestic and childcare workers. Our demographics are also changing. With more (aging) people who need to be cared for but less caring being done by the community, there is a growing demand for institutional workers. In the late 1980s, when we were really poor, there was a severe cutback in public services. They have never recovered to the extent they should and so are still very underdeveloped. The Celtic Tiger generated a huge level of profit but the distribution of income was obviously in favour of people who were already well off. After the U.S., Ireland has the widest gap in income and equality of all the developed countries.

WEI: Historically, Ireland has had little immigration. Ireland has been very homogeneous. What has been the social impact of all these groups coming in from all over the world?

O'DONOGHUE: We were never as homogeneous as we think we were. The Traveller Community is our national ethnic minority. They have a nomadic lifestyle — similar to the Roma's but they are indigenous to Ireland — and a distinct culture and identity. And there were always black Irish people, although this has never really been recognized.

But the scale of change in the last ten years has been quite significant. The streets of Dublin today are unrecognizable

compared to fifteen years ago. We're a multinational, multicultural, international city here in Dublin now. But there have been a lot of missed opportunities. You can't have this level of social change over such a short period without addressing people's perceptions and allowing them to engage with that change.

In fact, rather than allowing people to understand that migration is positive for Ireland, politicians are using the "race card" for their own political gain. Until recently, if you were born in Ireland, you had Irish citizenship. But our government decided to change that by holding a referendum. There was huge debate — it was very confused and inflammatory — and this was used as a way of promoting an anti-immigration position. Eighty percent ended up agreeing with the government. I think the consequences of this are going to be huge. It's a backward step. We are part of the globalized world and the role of the nation state is changing. So the notion of the nation state as a tight territory has to shift.

WEI: Viewing the migration accompanying corporate globalization as positive raises the issue of cultural modernization. Is the cultural modernization associated with globalization impacting the power of Ireland's Catholic Church? How is this affecting women?

O'DONOGHUE: In Ireland, the Church has declined in priority and power in a huge way. I think that has been a *great* thing for women. The way women are treated in Ireland is draconian. We don't even have child's rights. Divorce only came very recently — in 1997, I think. The stigmatization of people who have children outside of marriage and violence against women have always been really bad. And the Church has been wracked with scandal around sexual abuse. In other places this affected boys, but here it has been predominantly women. We had a big scandal at the Magdalene laundries (the subject of the 2002 film *The Magdalene Sisters*):

I don't agree with the all-embracing authority that the Church has had over Irish people, but I also don't agree with the all-embracing consumerism that replaced it. That is equally problematic. I would also say that without those reli-

gious institutions, we wouldn't have had the kind of education we did. I was lucky enough to get a good education through this system. But there's no doubt that middle-class women in Ireland have become quite liberated, although we are nowhere near equal with men. The opportunity to have a space in economic life has been wonderful, but for a lot of women it's been really disastrous. Minority women and aging women are likely to live in poverty, as are women with disabilities. And Traveller women experience high levels of health inequality. So, some women have benefited from this progress while other women have taken the brunt of the suffering associated with it.

WEI: Has the anti-globalization and/or the Social Forum movement impinged on the work you do?

O'DONOGHUE: Not really. Anti-globalization actions in Ireland are very much associated with the environmental movement, anarchist-type approaches, and often the anti-war movement. In South America, for instance, anti-globalization has been led much more by an anti-poverty and social-inclusion agenda. I regret that that's not happening here. But I'd be more at home in the anti-globalization movement than I would be anywhere else. There is now a social forum movement. Again, I thought this would involve grassroots organizations working with poor people and people experiencing exclusion; but, it has gone in a different direction.

WEI: What has been the response of the women's movement in Ireland to the changes associated with corporate globalization?

O'DONOGHUE: The women's movement in Ireland has been dominated by individual, middle-class women who have used it for their personal advancement and for launching themselves politically. The Council for the Status of Women used to be called, by some, the "Council for Women's Status." Some of that is fine but it does not reflect the reality of women who are poor, women who experience racism, women who are parenting alone.

However, there's been a remarkable shift in the last seven years. The Women's Council has become much more focused on solidarity with all women, prioritizing agen-

das addressing poor women and women experiencing racism and inequality. There's been an outreach to the broader women's movement and, especially, to migrant women employed as domestic workers and child-care workers. This is important because economic progress for some women has been on the backs of other women. We at the MRCI would like to initiate a campaign, together with the women's and trade union movements, to try to secure better rights for migrant domestics as a practical way of showing solidarity.

I'm interested in social change. I'm interested in changing the way we do business and making sure it's not just the number of women participating in politics but what they're actually saying and doing. ❧

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Vancouver's Grassroots Women Link the Local and the Global

Alexis Holizki

The anti-globalization movement in Canada has often been criticized for not properly representing the interests of the country's culturally and socially diverse population. To some extent this criticism is deserved because working for social change is often the privilege of those with spare money and time to give to the cause. But the fact that many groups are currently marginalized within this movement does not mean that this will always be the case. Witness Grassroots Women, a Vancouver-based activist group and one of the first Canadian anti-globalization groups to be founded by and to consist primarily of working-class women of colour — a traditionally under-represented demographic within Canada's social movements.

Grassroots Women was formed as the result of a series of meetings held in 1995 by the Philippine Women's Centre of British Columbia. The meetings brought together a group of immigrant women to discuss their experiences of moving from the developing to the developed world, and the challenges they faced upon arriving in Canada. It quickly became apparent that the primary issues for these women — low-paying service jobs, inadequate childcare, and cutbacks in health care — all had their roots in a greater system of oppression termed neo-liberal globalization. Grassroots Women stands in opposition to this imperialist and exploitative system. However, it also creates a positive role for itself by working towards greater public awareness of women's issues and by attempting to foster solidarity among marginalized women.

One of Grassroots Women's ongoing campaigns is "Health For All!" It works to raise awareness about the negative impacts of health care privatization, especially for poorer women who are often burdened with additional responsibilities for caring

for family members when access to health care is reduced. Member Rachel Rosen explains, "When women are forced to miss work in order to care for family members, or elect not to have physician-recommended surgical treatments because they can't afford to be a burden on their family, this amounts to denying access to medically necessary health care services." For this year's International Women's Day, the health care campaign was extended to include another urgent threat to women's health — militarization and wars of aggression, which limit access not only to appropriate health care, but also to proper nutrition, secure housing, and other basic necessities of good health. This broad definition of health is in stark contrast to the limited, utilitarian version espoused by neo-liberals who abandon a holistic view of health care in favour of making a profit from the sale of individual health services.

Grassroots Women also works in concert with the Filipino Nurses Support

Group (FNSG) to pressure the Canadian government to recognize the credentials of nurses trained in the Philippines. Under the current system, foreign-trained nurses must complete exams that can take up to one year and cost as much as \$1000. These include an English competency requirement even for those nurses who have worked in English-speaking environments overseas. As well, interim work permits are only issued to foreign-trained nurses who have found an employer, while the same permits are awarded with no stipulations to all graduating nurses in British Columbia. The result of these policies is that many foreign-trained nurses, especially those from the Philippines, are forced to work as poorly paid domestic help under the Live-In Caregiver Program, and are often not released from these contracts even if their credentials are recognized. This is typical of the negative effects of neo-liberal globalization — cutbacks and privatization of health care lead to a demand for cheap

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alternatives to hospital care, a demand that is met through the exploitation of workers from developing countries.

The mistreatment of women under the Live-In Caregiver Program could be lessened, the members of Grassroots Women believe, not only through recognizing foreign-trained nurses' qualifications, but also by implementing universal childcare across Canada. This would benefit the immigrant women who work in childcare by giving them opportunities to work in regulated daycare situations instead of in private homes. It would also help the working-class women who use childcare, since lack of access to affordable childcare denies women true social equality and places many children at risk in sub-standard facilities. As Martha Roberts, mother of two and member of Grassroots Women, insists, "Calling for universal childcare is an issue of workers' rights and women's rights." In pursuit of these objectives, Grassroots Women plans to pressure the newly elected national government to fulfill its campaign promises on childcare. The group also

plans to build on the success of its Mothers' Day March for Universal Child Care, a well-attended rally that raised public awareness of the issue and helped create bonds among local women.

In November 2002, Grassroots Women hosted a conference entitled "Toward Our Liberation: An International Women's Conference Against Imperialist War and Plunder." Members of the group oppose U.S.-led wars of aggression for many reasons. However, the primary motive for the conference was to focus on how women's deteriorating conditions under globalization are linked with the hardships they face in war-torn countries, and to arrive at a concrete plan of action for articulating these concerns. The conference was held in conjunction with GABRIELA, a network of women's associations in the Philippines, and the International League of People's Struggles, an anti-imperialist and democratic organization. Both these organizations share Grassroots Women's commitment to giving voice to those who are often silenced by neo-liberal globalization. In addition to

forging links of solidarity between the 206 participants, the conference resulted in several resolutions, including a "Statement of Unity" that outlined a basic framework for unified action by the groups and explored areas for further investigation.

The various campaigns conducted by Grassroots Women represent an important aspect of the anti-globalization struggle in Canada. That they are primarily the work of a traditionally under-represented community makes them all the more relevant. By focusing on local struggles with global consequences, Grassroots Women has been successful in promoting the interests of marginalized women in the Vancouver area. ❧

Alexis Holizki is an undergraduate student in International Development Studies at the University of Calgary.

Further Reading

Grassroots Women's website: www.w8n.telus.net/grassrootswomen

Gender, Place and Culture

A Journal of Feminist Geography

EDITORS

Linda Peake, York University, Canada
Brenda Yeoh, National University of Singapore, Singapore

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Is Anti-Capitalism Enough?

Issues of Race and Gender in the Grassroots Anti-Globalization Movement in Calgary

Farhana Khatri

Anti-globalization activism in Calgary received a major boost from the organizing that took place to protest the June 2002 G8 summit in Kananaskis, a mountain resort 100 kilometers west of the city. As in the demonstrations that have taken place post-Seattle, the Calgary anti-globalization activism scene had a strong anti-capitalist anarchist presence, and this influence led to the formation of several grassroots activist groups. After the G8 protests, these groups became involved in organizing demonstrations against the war in Iraq and in more specifically anarchist events, such as the Reclaim the Streets March in June 2003 and the Edmonton Anarchist Bookfair in October of the same year. Although it has been encouraging to see how much the activist community has grown in Calgary in the past few years, many issues related to race and gender remain to be addressed.

That race and gender are critical issues for the anti-capitalist anarchist movement is very clear to me as a womyn of colour working within this movement. During the organizing for the anti-G8 protests, I and the few other people of colour present often felt that our voices were not being heard in the "spokes council" meetings of affinity and activist groups. Although we formed our own people of colour caucus, this had, at best, only a marginal effect on the larger movement's awareness of issues of race.

During the protests themselves, I observed a number of incidents in convergence spaces and during the "snake marches" that disrupted traffic, where womyn of colour were silenced. In one typical case, a suggestion made by a womyn of colour for a specific action was totally ignored, but the same suggestion made by a white



REGINA COCHRANE

Without the state, without the church, without a husband and without a party.

male was enthusiastically adopted. In another case, a womyn of colour was actually told by a white male that the group needed to listen to him rather than to her because what he had to say was a lot more important. During an organizing meeting for the Reclaim the Streets event, held at the bar where one of the activists worked, two womyn of colour were singled out by staff in an ugly confrontation and asked to produce IDs. Most problematic here was that only one other activist acknowledged what was happening and left the meeting in solidarity with these womyn.

Moreover, as evident at other gatherings, such as the Edmonton Anarchist Bookfair, the anarchist scene is dominated by a white, middle-class, male, individualist sub-culture oriented around punk rock music, the politics of being "cool," and the glorification of living in "squats." This sub-culture — particularly the last aspect — excludes most womyn of colour, whose families tend to be relatively recent immigrants from the Global South where "squatting" is not a choice.

Focusing on issues of race and gender within the anti-globalization movement is critical because, as J. Sakai has argued, the anti-globalization movement is not only supported by the left and centre but also by certain right wing and even neo-Nazi groups. This right-wing element, which has been present since the anti-WTO protests in Seattle in 1999, blames neo-liberal globalization for selling out "their" jobs to the Global South, to take advantage of the lower wages there, and for the mass migration of peoples from the South to the North in search of better living conditions. Taken to the extreme by fascist tendencies, this insular nationalism tends to scapegoat immigrant people of colour. Moreover, the patriarchal cultural norms associated with this emergent fascism tends to significantly intensify womyn's domination.

Within the anti-capitalist and, more specifically, the anarchist anti-capitalist movement against neo-liberalism, people of colour and their anti-racist allies are attempting to address these conservative tendencies within the anti-globalization movement. For

example, Colours of Resistance is a grassroots network that is "committed to helping build an anti-racist, anti-imperialist, multiracial, feminist, queer and transliberationist, anti-authoritarian movement against global capitalism . . . [and] to integrating an anti-oppression framework and analysis into all of [its] work." Toward these goals, Colours of Resistance has set up a website and an e-mail discussion list. It also publishes a zine and occasional articles and organizes workshops, community-based events, and local meetings. Another largely web-based network is the Anarchist People of Color listserv that "is intended as a place for anarchist and anti-authoritarian people of color, who might often feel isolated and without support, to come and speak their minds and hearts." Discussions on this listserv focus on "organizing and personal experiences, methods being used to build those new ideas, how we relate our ideas to our communities, how to reach out creatively to people, how anarchism and various beliefs relate to our public

and private lives and more."

Although I have found the Anarchist People of Color listserv very helpful in providing support around issues of racism in the anti-globalization movement, awareness of gender issues is more limited. One of the network's explicit goals is that "our sisters are especially encouraged to dialogue. A lot of net discussion tends to exclude women, and we'll do our best to be open." Yet, a short while ago transphobic comments were made on the listserv by a male to a trans person of colour. Almost all the people who came to the defence of the trans person were womyn. While the transphobic male was removed from the listserv, this was mainly due to the solidarity shown by womyn.

The issues of race and gender cannot be separated from issues related to corporate globalization. Anti-racist feminism needs to be a part of the anti-capitalist anarchist struggle. The best way of dealing with all these issues is by developing an anti-oppression anarcho-feminist stance. ✘

Farhana Khatri is finishing her BA in Womyn's Studies and Sociology. She is an anarcho-feminist who has been involved in the activist community in Calgary for the past four years.

Further Reading and Resources:

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www.illegalideas.org/apoc/


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"Just Work"

The SCM Explores the Impact of Corporate Globalization in North America

Gillian Oneil

My first encounter with the Student Christian Movement (SCM) was during clubs week in my first year at University. I would normally have walked right by their poster; however, the large Pride flag displayed directly underneath, piqued my interest. I decided to stop and see what this group was all about. Their pamphlet talked about issues such as corporate globalization, feminism, racism, anti-poverty work, and the politics of food. I was very drawn to the group because they talked about spirituality and faith in combination with social justice — something that was not accepted in activist circles. Before I knew it, I was very involved with the SCM, and eventually sat on the Board of Directors for two years.

SCM Canada was formed in 1921 by students involved with the YWCA and YMCA who were passionate about issues of faith and social justice. Although the SCM has Christian roots, it has always sought to be a welcoming community and has had members from a variety of Christian denominations as well as people from other faith traditions. Today they continue to be supported (primarily financially) by the United Church of Canada as well as by "Senior Friends" — SCM alumni — from a range of faith perspectives. SCM strives to create a space that is safe for people to explore and challenge their faith as well as to work towards social justice. It has a board of directors with representatives from each Canadian region, and there are local SCM units at many universities across Canada. These groups are self-governing and work in partnership with the national membership. Each local unit decides for themselves

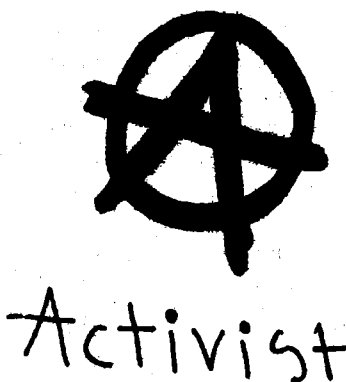
which issues they will work on and what actions they will take. Since issues related to corporate globalization constitute a major focus of interest for the SCM at present — and, indeed, religious groups are major actors in the contemporary anti-globalization movement — it is worth looking at SCM's current efforts in this area from a feminist perspective.

It is important to emphasize that, in carrying out its mandate of working toward social justice from a faith perspective, the SCM consistently utilizes feminist organizing techniques that focus on valuing all members. The Board of Directors is predominantly female. Even so, because it is recognized that men tend to dominate discussions and decision-making processes, efforts are made to ensure that everyone is heard at meetings and conferences and that these forums are safe spaces for all members. A speakers' list is kept in order to ensure gender and race parity in discussions at all meetings and workshops. (However, given its Christian orientation, racialized communities are often underrepresented in the SCM, in spite of its efforts to build solidarity with minority groups.) All decisions are made on a consensus basis and meetings end with a sharing circle in which members express their feelings about what was accomplished. These processes, which address the power

dynamics within the group, are feminist in origin.

SCM has been an active participant in many local and national actions contesting neo-liberal policies. In addition to taking part in anti-globalization demonstrations, they often support actions organized by groups such as the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP). SCM groups frequently organize their own actions as well. For example, each February, the Calgary members camp out on the front lawn of the university to raise awareness about issues of poverty and homelessness, and the need for funds for local agencies that address these problems.

However, the major focus of SCM's anti-globalization activism is a project entitled "Just Work." It looks at how trade agreements associated with neo-liberal globalization, such as North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) treaty, impact workers in Canada and the US. In conjunction with this project, members of the SCM recently embarked upon a "pilgrimage" that entailed visiting with labour unions, workers, and church groups involved in labour advocacy in Canada and the United States. It included meeting with a group called "Jobs with Justice" that works with clergy from different denominations and encourages them to speak out about labour issues.



from their pulpits. The fact that these issues have a particularly severe impact on women and people of colour has been a significant focus of this pilgrimage as well. Indeed, the feminization of poverty and the "feminization of labour" are influential themes in discussions.

The "feminization of labour" refers to the phenomenon wherein jobs, are taking on the characteristics traditionally associated with women's paid work, i.e., they are deskilled, part-time, temporary, insecure, low-paying, and without benefits. Participants in this pilgrimage also met with a group called "No One is Illegal" to explore how immigration issues intersect with issues related to corporate globalization, labour, and women. Those who completed the pilgrimage will now go back to their SCM groups, share their insights, and undertake community outreach efforts in order to help motivate the people in their communities to become active in working for global justice. They will also write articles, which the SCM intends to compile into a publication, reflecting on their experiences in order to help raise awareness and facilitate dialogue about these issues in the larger community.

Whether or not the "Just Work" pilgrimage will be successful in achieving its



goals is unclear. The project's effectiveness depends on whether there is a conscious effort to continue the dialogue on corporate globalization and to move it into the larger community. If this does not happen, the impact will be minimal and it could end up being merely another example of "social justice tourism."

The strength of the SCM is that it does not ignore that spirituality is a major defining factor in the lives of many workers and many women. That the SCM is able to meet with people on this level goes a long way toward building solidarity with diverse groups of people. Furthermore, the SCM's contextualization of issues related to corporate globalization in terms of gender and race, although it is not perfect, can only help to strengthen its solidarity with feminists and with racialized communities. ❧

Gillian Oneil is an undergraduate Social Work student at the University of Calgary. She is passionate about women's issues, international activism, and human rights.

Further Reading:

SCM website: www.scmcanada.org

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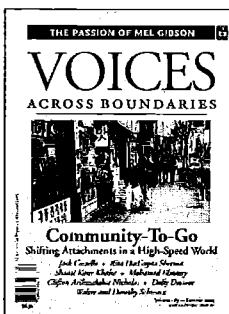
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Reggie Modlich

Over 3500 politicians, bureaucrats, professionals, and a good sprinkling of grass roots people, from all over the world tried to grapple with the "Cities, Crossroads of Cultures, Inclusiveness and Integration." Women formed a third of the participants. That was the World Urban Forum or "WUF II" hosted by Barcelona, Spain.

Despite the official efforts at "Dialogues" and "Networking Sessions" WUF II remained essentially a mammoth "talking heads" show. While some of the literature addressed women's concerns, most speakers were male. The technical, organizational, political and logistical aspects of transforming such a global event into a more experiential and effective event, still remains a challenge.

Some of the more inspiring events were the sessions on "the role of national and local authorities in peace-building and institutional development," organized by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. The session gave voice to the experiences of the Palestinians and Iraqis. The latter were represented by Ms Nesreen M. Siddeek Berwari, Minister of Municipalities and Public Works. It also included small group discussions. Another interesting session addressed "Making Urban Safety Sustainable." The grassroots women's experience and response to facing natural disasters and conflicts brought a fundamentally different, yet crucially important perspective to the session. Yet safety of women from personal violence was not mentioned.

The Huairou Commission, a coalition of grassroots women's organizations throughout the world, provided a five-day pre-WUF conference and prepared interventions and caucusing throughout the Conference. With the important mission of

"Women, Homes, Community," and supported by UN Habitat, Huairou faces the immense challenges of developing appropriate strategies, demands and mindset to reflect the needs of half of humanity. The pre-WUF conference provided valuable communication amongst the diverse women there. Several sessions featured speakers from Huairou member groups. The caucus meetings brought high profile persons to address the women. Yet, a stronger and more consistent presence of women's experiences could have been negotiated. Transparency of structure, processes, leadership, and decision-making of the Huairou Commission also has to be more evident.

"Local to Local Dialogues," a glossy publication of grassroots women's achievements around the world was launched at the conference. Yet, the reader cannot help but wonder if much was not glossed over, such as the risks of cooptation, of being side-tracked, betrayed and the strategies needed to overcome and avoid these real pitfalls. Not to belittle the achievements of Huairou member groups, other women's groups have challenged the system with "gender-mainstreaming," "gender budgeting" concepts which the publication scarcely mentioned.

WUF III 2006 will take place in Vancouver, Canada and focus on the theme "from ideas to action." The Canadian delegation met daily with a strong focus on learning from and improving on WUF II. One of the first meetings agreed that WUF 2006 should be a "gender-mainstreamed" WUF. The ball is in our court, Sisters! Rather than remaining empty words in a set of minutes filed away, women around the world, in the Huairou Commission, and in



WUF II Session "Responsive Local Governance – Positioning Women to Lead."

REGGIE MODLICH



Women at the WEI Magazine display at WUF II, Barcelona.

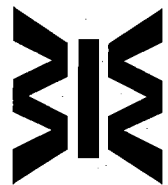
NIKOS EYDEMON

Canada, need to form a broad and inclusive coalition and work together to define "gender-mainstreaming WUF 2006." This should start with:

- all panels include the experience of diverse and grassroots women
- official conference documentation to include women's perspectives, women's voices, especially those of poor and grassroots women
- access to the conference to ensure participation of grassroots women, including provision of child care.

We also need to realize how much of "gender" in "gender-mainstreaming" implies the double bind of poverty and nurturing to which women are socialized rather than born. Alleviating "women's" problems rests as much with those with power and privileges valuing "women's" roles by sharing not only their power and privileges but also sharing in "women's" roles. This will transcend gender mainstreaming from economics and make all humans more humane. ❧

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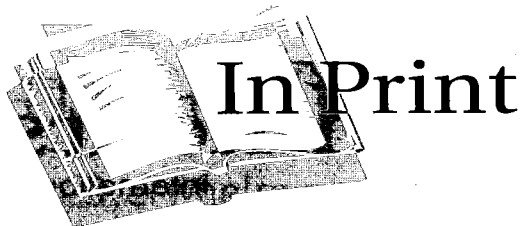
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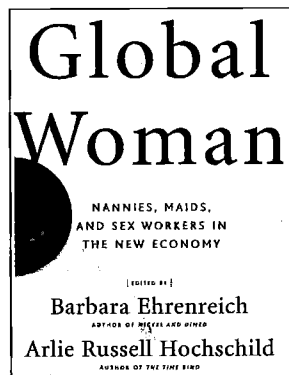


All books reviewed below are available or can be ordered at the Toronto Women's Bookstore, advertised in this issue.

GLOBAL WOMAN: NANNIES, MAIDS, AND SEX WORKERS IN THE NEW ECONOMY

Edited by Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild
London: Granta, 2002; New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003. 328 pp. CDN \$21.90

Reviewed by Sherilyn MacGregor



When I moved to Toronto in 1996, it took months to figure out why there were so many young South East Asian women pushing expensive strollers filled with little white kids around my neighbourhood. It was not until I asked a shopkeeper what the sign for "remittances" in her window meant that I made connections between the demand for child care in affluent Forest

Hill and the supply of women workers in countries like the Philippines. Cutbacks in government spending, structural adjustment policies, capitalism's dependency on the undervalued labour of women, colonial and racist attitudes, it all came together. Why had this never come up in my academic conversations about globalization?

That the feminized underbelly of the "new" global economy needs more attention is the argument driving Ehrenreich and Hochschild's important book. This highly readable collection of fifteen essays explains the dynamics through which people and governments in the North are becoming dependent on the natural female resources from the South to solve the global "crisis of care." As women around the world enter the workforce in unprecedented numbers, replacing the services they traditionally provided for free becomes a massive socio-economic problem. Because economic globalization demands a neo-liberal commitment to unfettered competition, governments are not about to step in. Families in the North hire women from the South to provide the caring services their governments will not provide. And governments in the South export their

women as a way to pay off their international debt. In the Philippines, as Rhacel Salazar Parreñas notes, approximately two-thirds of all Filipino migrant workers are women and about half the country's population is sustained by their remittances. Migrant workers are required to send back half of their wages to their families and the government. What is often overlooked is that many migrant women leave behind their own children and so hire other Filipina women to look after them, who in turn rely on the unpaid labour of female relatives. It is a vicious cycle with enormous social implications.

It seems odd that sex workers are included in a book about the global "care deficit." But as the editors explain, the demand for "imported sexual partners" is another consequence of women's changing roles in the global economy. On the demand side, as more women gain financial independence through paid work, men seek to replace their feminine 'services' with those of other, more vulnerable (preferably "exotic") women. On the supply side, as the chapters by Kevin Bales and Denise Brennan explain in disturbing detail, many girls are forced to become sex workers because their fathers would rather sell them than take care of them, and because, as adult women, they must support families with no help from their children's fathers.

Global Woman makes three key points. The first is that while women who employ other women as care workers should not be immune from feminist questioning, we must remember that women in both the North and the South are playing by economic rules they had no role in writing. The second is that we need to think about the effects of this phenomenon on the children whose absent mothers are front-line workers in the global care and sex industries as well as on the children raised by the migrant women workers. Are those kids in the strollers in Forest Hill gaining an understanding of what (and who) their care-givers left behind or are they growing up oblivious to global injustices, unable to question the positioning of racialized women as their servants? As Ehrenreich and Hochschild argue, "... children see. But they also learn how to disregard what they see. They learn how adults make the visible invisible." The third point concerns most men's persistent failure to take responsibility for care-giving. As Saskia Sassen's excellent concluding chapter makes clear, this applies not only to fathers but also to the men who have the power to render women invisible in the study of globalization. Are the men in the academy, the government, and the media even thinking about the age-old problem of who cares? Or are they too busy playing with their new concepts ("flexible specialization," "knowledge-based economy," "hypermobility") to notice the women who clean their offices?

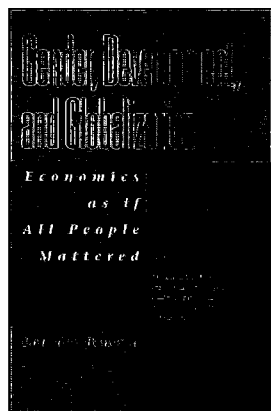
Sherilyn MacGregor is a SSHRC postdoctoral fellow based at the Institute for Environment, Philosophy and Public Policy at Lancaster University in the UK.

Gender, Development, and Globalization: Economics as if All People Mattered

Lourdes Benería

New York: Routledge, 2003. 212pp. \$29.95.

Reviewed by Stephanie Garrett



In **Gender, Development, and Globalization**, feminist economist Lourdes Benería uses an interdisciplinary feminist lens to examine the fields of global economics and international development. Looking at the theoretical trends that have dominated mainstream economics and development theory during the past century, Benería takes issue with the socially disembodied, masculine world where quantitative

analysis and universal categories have been used to legitimize capitalist relations. In developing her case for a feminist alternative that specifically addresses contemporary globalized capitalism, Benería shows how feminist economics challenges mainstream economic thought by valuing human development and well-being over the more conventionally emphasized categories of economic growth and accumulation. For feminist economics, "the difference between paid and unpaid work leads to questions about the extent to which the economic rationality assumed to inform market-related behaviour is the norm ... [rather than] other motives ... commonly linked to unpaid work such as love, compassion, altruism, empathy, individual and collective responsibility, and solidarity."

Indeed, the lack of attention that has been devoted to the differences between paid and unpaid work is such a key issue for Benería that she devotes an entire chapter to the topic. Reviewing labour data collected during the past two decades, she contrasts the statistics gathered by traditional economists with the realities experienced by women throughout the world. She claims that, due to gendered biases in its theoretical foundations, contemporary economic theory underestimates the contribution of unpaid work — especially women's domestic work and traditional subsistence labour — to national accounting statistics. In elaborating this case, Benería takes ideas from thinkers in fields ranging from economics and development studies to philosophy to political science. In addition, she backs up her points by offering extensive empirical data in the form of graphs, tables, and charts.

In arguing the relevance of feminist economics in the present context of neo-liberal globalization, Benería emphasizes the stark contrast between the formal and

informal labour sectors. Globalization has brought about advances in education and more gender parity in wages for a limited number of women in the formal economy. However, it has also been associated with such a massive expansion in the informal sector that Benería insists we should now use the term "informal economy" to describe this sector. Benería includes in this category both women's unpaid domestic labour — which is currently increasing due to the erosion of the welfare state — and (under)paid labour — such as homework and outsourced production, more generally — which is linked to the industrial and service sectors but is performed outside traditional workplaces and is often predominantly female. This new informal economy, observes Benería, is dynamic; it "responds quickly to changes in the economic and institutional environment and adapts to enveloping patterns of work organization in the more formal sector, taking up the gaps that it leaves behind."

Moving beyond feminist arguments about the need to re-evaluate traditional concepts of work, Benería calls not only for a socially relevant economic theory but for a people-centred development that is decentralized and bottom-up. Although this emphasis on decentralization is in keeping with the strong postmodernist influence in contemporary feminist theory, Benería worries that postmodernism privileges the politics of representation over political economy, thereby de-politicizing economic issues. To counteract this trend, she concludes her case, in her final chapter, by making recommendations for broad policy changes designed to foster such a people-centred development. These recommendations stress the need to rethink existing systems of ownership and resource control, market regulation, economic distribution and redistribution, and social protection.

This book does have its limitations, however — particularly from a feminist perspective. On the practical level, it may prove challenging for readers not schooled in economic theory. Her discussions are heavily theoretical and she includes very few case studies highlighting the daily struggles faced by women of the global South and North. From a feminist perspective, this also leaves her analysis somewhat socially disembodied. Although Benería's examples are taken from regions across the world, her emphasis on gender overshadows any mention of race, class, and nation, and their combined effects on women's situatedness with respect to economic issues. Yet, in spite of these drawbacks, Benería does succeed in convincing the reader that, if global economics and development are approached from a feminist perspective, a more democratic economy is possible.

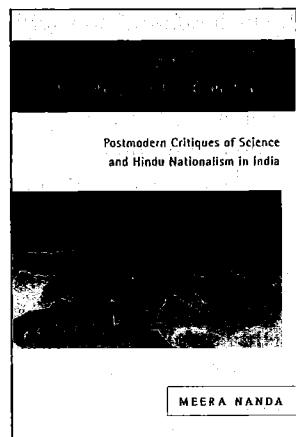
Stephanie Garrett has a BA in Women's Studies and Spanish from the University of Calgary. She is currently completing a Masters degree in Gender, Development and Globalization at the London School of Economics.

PROPHETS FACING BACKWARD: POSTMODERN CRITIQUES OF SCIENCE AND HINDU NATIONALISM IN INDIA

Meera Nanda

New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003.
288 pp. \$23.95

Reviewed by Jennifer Warriner



Meera Nanda's book **Prophets Facing Backward** is an engaging and clearly written examination of the consequences of the anti-modernist indictment of modern science and the Enlightenment. Nanda, who has doctorates in both Microbiology and Science Studies, is a firm defender of the liberatory potential of modern science and of Enlightenment principles such as rationality, secularism, and

liberal democracy. In Nanda's eyes, scientific modes of inquiry and Enlightenment principles are the primary "cultural weapons" needed to fight social, economic, and gender oppression. They challenge arbitrary authority by the secularization and rationalization of society, and by insisting on the ideals of democracy, individuality, and equality.

Yet, with the emergence of postmodernism, post-colonialism, post-development theories, and anti-modernist ecofeminisms, doubts have been raised regarding science and modernity. Some critics have charged that Western science and Enlightenment principles are the root of cultural and social oppression in the developing world. As a challenge to Western hubris and dominance, non-Western cultures must assert that their "local" knowledges and belief systems are equally as valid as modern "Western" science. Developing a modernity suitable for their own culture will aid non-Western cultures to end the West's "mental colonialism." Moreover, critics of Western science and Enlightenment modernity contend that it is impossible to judge cultural norms and cognitive standards from an "outsider" position without risking the trap of an oppressive Eurocentrism. Nanda challenges these claims since legitimate distinctions between science and pseudo-science — i.e., the endorsement of "Vedic Science" by Hindu nationalists — cannot be made in the name of cultural difference.

Nanda rejects "epistemic charity" — i.e., accepting that all ways of knowing the world are equal in stature. For Nanda, claims by critics of modernity that modern science and alternative science are "equally true" echo

the claims of right-wing Hindu nationalists in India. "Epistemic charity" is therefore not a desirable gift for any culture since it leads to relativism and even fascism. "Epistemic charity" paves the way for "reactionary modernism," a dangerous political consequence for already marginalized and oppressed groups. Reactionary modernism entails accepting technological advances and rejecting modern scientific rationality as a worldview. For Nanda, loss of faith in the promises of modernity is a critical mistake that has real-life consequences for many disenfranchised and oppressed groups. Hence, Nanda questions whether "alternative" approaches to science and modernity have truly promoted the interests of the oppressed in non-Western societies.

Nanda is also critical of ecofeminists like Vandana Shiva — a major figure in the contemporary anti-globalization movement — and Maria Mies. Shiva and Mies argue that the rationality of modern science and technology sever the link between women and nature and devalue women's vital work in subsistence agriculture. By assuming that science is a tool of Western oppression and by emphasizing the preservation of local traditions, Shiva and Mies end up supporting the status quo of a deeply patriarchal society. Nanda questions whether defending and idealizing such traditions helps women. The hostility of Shiva and Mies toward Western science and modernity does not allow them to see the possibilities and opportunities that modernization can bring for women in India. Nanda believes that the processes of modernity can help to erode classical patriarchy in India and that this can benefit women socially, economically, and politically.

Nanda's criticisms of "prophets" who look backward and reject science and modernity are essential. Reactionary modernism in India and elsewhere must be countered by forward-facing individuals who accept modern science and the universality of Enlightenment principles. However, Nanda fails to consider adequately the negative possibilities that emerge out of modern science and the Enlightenment. The twentieth century was filled with cultural chaos and mass suffering as well as incredible technological, social, and political advancement. We must acknowledge the shortcomings of modern culture and science while still preserving the core values of liberal-democratic secularism and the cognitive values and methods of modern science.

Meera Nanda's book is a critical read for Westerners and non-Westerners who seek political change and social justice and who wish to limit the power of false prophets looking backward.

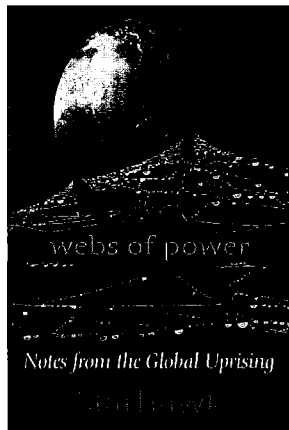
Jennifer Warriner is doing graduate work in philosophy at Simon Fraser University. She completed a BA (Honours) in Women's Studies and an earlier BA in Philosophy and English at University of Calgary.

Webs of Power: Notes from the Global Uprising

Starhawk

Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 2002. 276 pp. \$23.95

Reviewed by Gillian Oneil



Starhawk, an American writer and feminist activist, is well known for her numerous books on neo-pagan spirituality. Since the "Battle of Seattle" — the protests against the World Trade Organization in November 1999 — she has also become a prominent figure in the contemporary anti-globalization movement. **Webs of Power**, her newest work, is based on her personal experiences in this movement.

Webs of Power is divided into two parts. The first, entitled "Actions," consists of a collection of "articles" about Starhawk's personal experiences in the anti-globalization — or, as it is probably more properly termed, the global justice — movement. The second part, "Visions," is more theoretical in nature. It lays out Starhawk's vision for the future of the movement and for positive social change. I will look at these two sections separately because her approach is considerably different in each.

The value of the first section of this book may depend on who is reading it, and unfortunately the intended readership remains painfully unclear. For someone without much knowledge of the global justice movement and who wishes to learn about it, these articles can set the stage and raise awareness of the pertinent issues. They are not, however, on the whole particularly useful for someone like me, who has been involved in the movement and who has considerable background information. Because most of the articles — they originated as web postings — were written on the spur of the moment, immediately following protests, the book feels as if it had been randomly thrown together and, as a result, it seems choppy and repetitive. Moreover these "diary entries," even when supported by factual information, read more like unfocused musings or even soapbox-like rants than solid political analysis. A clearly established sense of linearity and cohesiveness would have made the section considerably more effective. As it is, it reads at times like a perusal of the author's personal journal.

Furthermore, Starhawk seems to assume a leadership role in the anti-globalization movement. This is problematic because it contradicts the nonhierarchical values of the

movement itself. At times her tone is presumptuous and condescending, and she appears to be using the movement as a space in which she can further her own particular visions of social change and of feminism. A common slogan in feminist discourse is "the personal is political." For Starhawk, however, it sounds as if the reverse is true — the political is personal. The global justice movement therefore becomes something that can be appropriated to further her personal agenda — promoting earth-based spirituality.

The second part of the book, "Visions," is much more effective. Here Starhawk offers some thoughtful reflections on major issues confronting the movement — "diversity of tactics," direct action, non-violence, direct democracy, cultural appropriation, and various problems relating to effective organizing. Her discussion of these issues is well rounded and quite comprehensive. Starhawk can, at times, appear as an idealist but this is not necessarily a bad thing. Idealism is sometimes necessary in envisioning a more positive future.

Having marched with Starhawk in the anti-G8 protests in Calgary in 2002, I know she is a powerful force in the anti-globalization movement. We can learn a lot from her extensive experience. Her long dedication to social justice is a lesson to us all. Readers will find various gems of wisdom scattered throughout her book. However, I think that **Webs of Power** could have been a lot more effective if the first section of the book had been written specifically for this text, and if its purpose and intended audience had been made more clear.

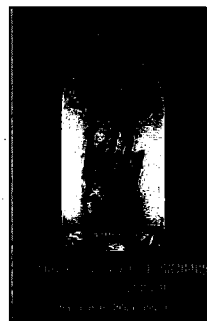
Gillian Oneil is an undergraduate Social Work student at the University of Calgary. She is passionate about women's issues, international activism, and human rights.

FOR-GIVING: A FEMINIST CRITICISM OF EXCHANGE

Genevieve Vaughan

Austin, TX: Plain View Press, 1997. 454 pp. \$27.95

Review by Alexis Holizki



In the same way that we can learn from Marx without being strict Marxists or let postmodernism inform our actions without being devotees of Foucault, Genevieve Vaughan's gift-economy paradigm contains some provocative ideas for feminists. However, it does this without for a moment being a plausible theory around which to organize.

Vaughan, in her book **For-Giving** and through her organization, Feminists for a Gift Economy, promotes the idea that it is not just capitalism that is patriarchal but so are exchange-based economies. She proposes that such economies be replaced by a system based on unselfish giving, in the pattern of how mothers act towards their children. In addition to being a philanthropist and oil heiress, Vaughan is also a linguist. It is hardly surprising then that her language provides the example of a domain in which giving without expectation of reciprocity already takes place: "We receive words and sentences free from other people and give them to others without payment. Language gives us an experience of nurturing each other in abundance, which we no longer have, or do not yet have, on the material plane."

Though at times dry and packed with obscure linguistic jargon, **For-Giving** succeeds in presenting Vaughan's theory of a gift economy to a diverse audience. One of the book's most accessible points is its discussion of women's experiences of giving without receiving. Vaughan explains that the current capitalist system relies on women's free and unacknowledged gift labour in order to remain profitable. She also mentions that this gender-based exploitation is replicated on the global scale with the workers of the South giving their labour to the North at wage levels much below their actual value.

At this point Vaughan's theory begins to weaken. In addition to the problems she creates by referring to exploited labour as a "gift" even slavery is a gift, if a forced one, in Vaughan's view, her proposal to replace contemporary globalized capitalism with a gift economy is impractical at best. She offers no incentive (beyond reconnecting with their mothers) for men and other beneficiaries of the current system to change their behaviour; and she fails to explain who will do the "giving" of the worst and most dangerous jobs with no compensation. Vaughan bases her theory of women's openness to the gift economy on their experiences of motherhood — i.e., being mothers and/or being mothered. This raises the question of whether the experience of mothering or being mothered in a patriarchal society is an appropriate model for feminist social change. Moreover, not mentioned at all are those with few resources or little ability to give, such as the poor, the downtrodden, and those coping with serious health and personal problems. If giving is touted as the highest good, where do these people fit in?

Although **For-Giving** represents a sincere attempt to address social and political change on a global scale, her development scheme raises several serious issues. The first of these is often mentioned in connection with philanthropy: how can non-reciprocal giving be accomplished without infantilizing the receiver, especially in light of the mother-child dynamic that informs the whole

gift-economy paradigm? Vaughan asserts that such infantilizing only occurs when there is a hidden capitalist agenda present, as in the case of American transfers to developing countries. But she offers no proof to support this interpretation. Another issue was raised by the women attending one of Vaughan's seminars at the Porto Alegre World Social Forum in Brazil. Stephanie Hiller, of **Awakened Woman Magazine**, reported that some people in the audience questioned the panel members' patronizing attitude. They interpreted Vaughan's approach as suggesting women in developing countries should give **more**, even when they already feel they are giving all they can and receiving little in return. While that is not exactly what Vaughan intends, the fact that this misinterpretation is often made should be a warning flag for those promoting the gift economy.

Although **For-Giving** raises some interesting issues, as a practical plan of action, I believe feminists would be better served by models that go beyond individualistic, voluntaristic, and ultimately elitist proposals for change.

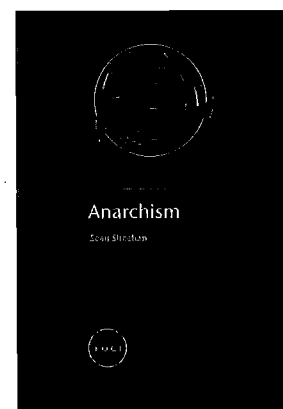
Alexis Holizki is an undergraduate student in International Development Studies at the University of Calgary.

ANARCHISM

Sean M. Sheehan

London: Reaktion Books, 2003. 175 pp. \$26.95

Review by Farhana Khatri



Anarchism, by Sean M. Sheehan, provides an informative historical analysis of anarchism, highlighting the role that anarchism plays in the contemporary anti-globalization movement. Sheehan, who has written a number of history and travel books and a study of Wittgenstein, is a sympathetic observer of this movement and especially of anarchist tendencies therein.

Sheehan starts with a summary of what has happened in the anti-globalization movement since the anti-WTO (World Trade Organization) protests in Seattle in November 1999. Anarchists have been prominent in this movement and since most people have, at best, a very distorted understanding of anarchism, Sheehan discusses the beginnings of anarchism in the days of Marx and Nietzsche. By drawing on anarchist theory and on historical examples of anarchism in action, he then exam-

ines the various ways in which anarchists have rebelled against the state. After this, he compares and contrasts anarchism with liberalism, socialism, situationism, and postmodernism. Sheehan ends with a chapter dedicated to combating all the stereotypical images of anarchism.

On the whole, this book does provide a lot of good insight into anarchism and anarchist involvement in the anti-globalization movement. However, it was obviously written primarily for those who are not really familiar with either anarchism or anarchist activism in this new movement. For individuals with serious doubts about anarchism as a real political and social possibility, Sheehan describes how anarchism has worked in the past and is working in some communities to this day. He provides many real-life illustrations which show that anarchism is not an impossible utopian dream but can be a lived reality. As examples of anarchism in action, Sheehan discusses, in some detail, the anarcho-syndicalist movement in pre-Franco Spain, the "free city" of Christiania in Copenhagen, and the Zapatista movement in Mexico. Even the most cynical of anarchists, who feel that society is doomed and that, regardless of how hard we try, we will never achieve a true anarchist society, will come away from reading Sheehan's book with a sense of hope.

The final chapter is definitely the strongest. Here Sheehan brings the book together by moving beyond his arguments for anarchism as a serious form of political thought to making a convincing case for anarchism as a real alternative to globalized capitalism. Sheehan ties up the book and the case for anarchism by citing the following stirring anarchist call to action:

They can equate our justice with their violence. Of course they will.... They can sell us crap, sell us fear and sell us out....They can make us despair and weep, fear and loathe, run and hide. They can take our work, our money and our lives. But we come with justice and fire [i.e., passion, **not** Molotov cocktails!]. We come with honour and ideas. We come with decency and desire. We come now and we come as unstoppable as the rain. They can shoot us now. Go ahead.

The major flaw that I found with this book was that, by failing to include anarcho-feminism, Sheehan offers only a male-centered perspective. Of course, his overall goal is to convince readers that, given the important role of anarchism in the contemporary anti-globalization movement, anarchist politics should be taken seriously. Sheehan does mention Emma Goldman but he does not discuss her work in any detail. Moreover, he really only talks about

Goldman in reference to her male anarchist comrades.

One final point — there are far too many references to obscure movies and novels in this book. Although these do provide useful examples of functioning anarchist societies, they often made me lose track of the arguments that Sheehan is attempting to make.

Farhana Khatri is currently finishing her BA in Womyn's Studies and Sociology. She is an anarcho-feminist who has been involved in the activist community in Calgary for the past four years.

WESurf

SELECTED WOMEN AND ANTI-GLOBALIZATION WEBSITES

Articulacion Feminista/Marcosur
<http://www.mujeledelsur.org.uy/>

Association for Women's Rights in Europe
<http://www.awid.org/>

AETAC <http://www.aetac.org/index.htm>

DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) <http://www.dawn.org.ij>

Diverse Women for Diversity
<http://www.diversewomen.org/>

European Women's Lobby <http://www.womenlobby.org/>

Les Penelopes <http://www.penelopes.org/>

Maquila Solidarity Network
<http://www.maquilasolidarity.org/>

Mujeres Creando
<http://www.mujearte.org/creado-1a.html>

NextGENERATION Network
<http://www.nextgeneration.net.au/>

People's Global Action
<http://www.nadir.org/nadir/links/peoples-global-action.html>

Radical Cheerleaders
<http://radcheers.tripod.com/>

Toronto Organizing for Fair Employment
<http://www.torontofofa.org/>

UN-INSTRAW (United Nations Interagency Network of Women's Studies and Research for the Advancement of Women) www.uninstraw.org/

WIFE (Network of Women in Development [Europe])
<http://www.wife-europe.org/>

World March of Women
<http://www.wmaworldmarch.org/>

Further Readings

Books/Journals on Women and Globalization

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Barndt, Deborah (1999). **Women Working the NAFTA Food Chain: Women, Food and Globalization.** Toronto, Ontario: Second Story Press.

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Films & Videos

Selected Women and Anti-Globalization Films and Videos

ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE

Mark Dworkin and Melissa Young, 2002, 24 min.
This film captures the energy of the World Social Forum through footage of the 2002 WSF in Porto Alegre, Brazil. It also includes interviews with Maude Barlow, Vandana Shiva, and Naomi Klein — prominent feminist members of the anti-globalization movement.

EUROPLEX

Ursula Biemann and Angela Sanders, 2003, 20 min.
Ursula Biemann's fourth film about the nature of borders in the era of corporate globalization examines the legal and illegal human traffic that passes daily between Spain and Morocco.

MADE IN THAILAND

Eve-Laure Moros Ortega and Linzy Emery, 1999, 30 min.
This film chronicles the struggles of Thai factory workers — approximately 90% of whom are women — to form labour unions and demand safer working conditions in the wake of the Kader Toy Factory fire, a preventable accident which cost 200 workers their lives.

MARKETISATION OF GOVERNANCE

Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, 2000, 34 min.
Filmed during an extensive series of meetings held around the world in 1999 and 2000, **Marketisation of Governance** provides a survey of the issues facing women working for social change. Through its focus on women of the South and their struggles for representation at the state level, the film aims to make women of the North aware of their complicity in global power inequities.

NO LOGO: BRANDS, GLOBALIZATION, AND RESISTANCE

Media Education Foundation, 2003, 40 min.
Based on the best-selling book of the same name by Canadian author Naomi Klein, **No Logo** explores the destructive effects of multinational corporations on public space, consumer choice, and secure employment. Rather than concentrating exclusively on the multinationals' actions, however, the film focuses on the increasing backlash against multinationals and globalization by activists worldwide.

RISE UP

Amy Kazymierchuk, 2001, 40 min.
Filmmaker Amy Kazymierchuk explores the diverse ways in which women express themselves at anti-globalization protests. The groups featured use dance, song, theatre, and other methods to communicate their messages in a way that captures the creative energy of the movement.

RISING FROM THE ASHES: GENDER, GLOBALIZATION, AND FISHERIES

Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2000, 56 min.
Women from 18 countries discuss their experiences of globalization as female fisheries workers. Topics include the impacts of technology, overfishing, tourism, and fisheries management.

SAY I DO: UNVEILING THE STORIES OF MAIL ORDER BRIDES



Arlene Ami, 2002, 56 min.
This documentary tells the stories of three mail-order brides from the Philippines who now live in Canada. It examines the economic and political conditions that push women into such roles as well as the dangers and hardships they face after their marriage.

SEÑORITA EXTRAVIADA (MISSING YOUNG WOMAN)

Lourdes Portillo, 2001, 74 min.
Since 1993, more than 370 young women have been kidnapped, raped, and murdered in Juarez, Mexico, an area close to the border with the United States. In investigating these murders, **Senorita Extraviada** also delves into the human rights abuses and violence against women associated with the export-based factories in this area.

STANDING TALL: WOMEN UNIONIZE THE CATFISH INDUSTRY

Donald Blank, 2000, 50 min.
This film dispels the myth that sweatshops only occur in developing countries by examining the plight of African-American women in the U.S. South's catfish processing industry. **Standing Tall** also chronicles the resistance of these women which culminates in the formation of the first catfish processing union.

THE DAY MY GOD DIED

Andrew Levine, 2003, 59 min.
This debut feature from Andrew Levine looks at the sex slave trade in Bombay, India. Using footage obtained through hidden cameras, it gives viewers an inside look at the horrors faced by young prostitutes. The film also explores the impact of the globalized economy on creating the preconditions for the sex slave trade, and highlights the work of organizations that rescue and rehabilitate the trade's victims.

MUJERES UNIDAS (WOMEN UNITED)

Chiapas Media Project, 1999, 16 min.
Collectives are an important source of strength for indigenous women in the Chiapas region of Mexico. This film interweaves a detailed examination of one collective with interviews documenting how collectives have provided women with a means of resisting the global order and changing their lives for the better.

WORKING WOMEN OF THE WORLD



Marie France Collard, 2000, 53 min.
Globalization almost inevitably leads to the relocation of factories from the North to the South, where wages are lower and environmental and labour laws less strict. This film shows the consequences of such relocations on women of the developed world — who lose access to secure and well-paid employment — and women in developing countries — who have few options but factory work for starvation wages in unsafe environments.



Updates

Huairou Commission

Community AIDS Watch: Kenyan Women Lead the Response to HIV/AIDS

Kathryn Miele

Kenya is among the countries most affected by HIV/AIDS. UNAIDS estimates that 15% of the population was infected in 2000. Despite the millions of dollars pouring into the country over the last several years, communities often have few resources to fight the pandemic. As witnessed through a GROOTS Kenya hosted Community AIDS Watch (CAW) pilot from 3 June to 26 July 2004, grassroots community groups in Kenya are continuously working to prevent new infections, care for those already infected, and provide for the thousands of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Such community realities, as was echoed in July at the XV International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, need to be moved to the forefront of the international prevention and care movement.

KATHRYN MIELE



HBC caregivers in Mathare celebrating their work

To highlight the vastness of the community-driven, women-led approaches to the pandemic the CAW documented the work of 12 diverse Kenyan communities. It also tracked how funding is channeled — or, more often, not channeled — to these grassroots communities. For two months, groups from these communities worked with 18 university students and youth leaders from around the world to consider how communities are responding to HIV/AIDS. This project, coordinated by GROOTS Kenya in collaboration with the Huairou Commission, GROOTS International, AFRUS AIDS, and America's New School University, focused on the work of people in urban and rural communities across Kenya. This work is expected to be the first of many such Watches throughout the world.

Three facets of community work emerged: Home-Based Care, Orphan and Widow Support, and Networking and Partnerships. As recognized at Bangkok, grassroots women are the mainstay of work in all these sectors of the HIV/AIDS response. To reflect this fact and atone for the paucity of grassroots women at the Bangkok Conference, the 2006 Toronto International AIDS Conference will make a major effort to ensure that they attend and are instrumentally involved. This recognition of their absence signifies an important step in the international community's perception of the importance of their work.

The Bangkok conference brought together 19,848 people from 160 countries around the theme of "Access for All." Discussions revolved around ensuring that everyone in the world has the essential scientific knowledge of HIV/AIDS, prevention information, treatment, and resources. Perhaps the most exciting outcomes were the commitments to HIV/AIDS-related initiatives and pledges by a diverse group of leaders to forward the goals of the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment.

These promises by government and international authorities need to build upon the daily work that women, in cooperation with some men, around the world are doing. However, governing bodies need to both recognize and compensate women. As the following examples indicate, the work of the Community AIDS Watch supports this process by facilitating a greater understanding of the work that grassroots women are doing.

Filling healthcare and support gaps in Mathare with Home-Based Care

Home-Based Care (HBC) is an informal, albeit comprehensive and wide-ranging, way to provide healthcare at the grassroots level. HBC caregivers address a variety of needs, including general healthcare and support, as well as community awareness and education about HIV/AIDS. In many Kenyan communities, typical HBC activities include cleaning, cooking nutritious meals, supplying medication, transporting a patient to hospital, and counselling. Caregivers also offer encouragement and spiritual support to both infected and affected individuals, and train family members on proper nutrition regimens and healthcare.

In Mathare, one of the largest informal settlements in Kenya, there is an organized network of 26 self-help groups known as Groots Mathare. Seven group members received formal training in HBC, after which they returned to Mathare and at community workshops trained 100 more HBC givers. These women coordinate with local health institutions to meet the needs of the sick. If, for instance, the health institution has too many patients, it refers them to Groots Mathare HBC team. If the team is caring for someone who becomes very ill, then a local health institution will provide support, with the HBC worker returning to transport him or her home. Half the people with whom the caregivers work are bed-ridden and require daily care (washing, feeding, and medication). If someone in the area of a GROOTS member is sick, everyone knows that the HBC giver will help. As a result, the number of people each caregiver works with varies, but the average is about 20.

HBC workers face many challenges in addition to the physical and emotional difficulties of their work. They are mainly women, with their own personal family responsibilities. Receiving no pay, the women must often use their personal funds to support the work, while also supporting their own families. Regardless, they continue.

The women have seen many changes. They now find themselves closer to their neighbors when they visit — people need not only resources but also someone to talk to. They find that people have more energy and strength — some of those for whom they care have even joined in the work of caring for others.

Caring for the vulnerable in Siaya

Many of those for whom HBC givers were caring have passed on, leaving behind orphans, widows, and widowers. Caregivers find themselves in situations they are untrained for, with few resources to help. Relieving the emotional burdens of losing a loved one as well as helping with material support can be overwhelming; but, HBC givers remain to support the vulnerable even after basic care is no longer needed.



Siaya grassroots leaders drawing their communities.

HIV/AIDS has already led to many deaths in the western Kenya town of Siaya. HBC givers provide nearly all their community help by supporting orphans, widows, and widowers. One caregiver working with the larger Groots Siaya network has been piv-

otal in the survival of an orphan-headed household. After his parents died of HIV/AIDS-related illnesses, a 17-year-old boy was left to care for his two younger brothers in a two-room home. The eldest can no longer attend school, as he now focuses on finding food. Trying to earn money means that he has no time to care for their small farm. The HBC giver who used to care for their parents visits every day. She bought school uniforms for the smaller boys and has secured them places in her church's feeding program.

Women and men in Kitui working to partner with youth in response to HIV/AIDS

By working together in networks and partnerships, community groups can bridge resources and knowledge for more effective results than by working alone. Grassroots women in communities throughout Kenya have found diverse partners for their work — men, youth, churches, schools, health institutions, and local government.

Working in Kitui in eastern Kenya, a community network of self-help groups, Tei Wa W'o, has found these partnerships to be instrumental. They are one of the few CAW groups to work successfully with the men in their community. Throughout the Community AIDS Watch, men most commonly demanded to be paid rather than work as volunteers, but the steering group of Tei Wa W'o is different. It includes eight women and two men who work together with equal authority and consult with one another consistently. Many of the groups within their network have emulated these successful gender relations.

Tei Wa W'o has recently prioritized partnering with youth. In June 2004, the group invited 50 student and non-student youths and teachers to HBC and HIV/AIDS awareness training. Together they developed a plan for the youth to form groups and conceive their own activities. The plan includes: training the other youth in the area, especially during holidays; linking the youth groups with adult Tei Wa W'o groups; and having the youth train other youth in their churches. Involving youth is particularly important in preventing further infections, reducing stigma, and sustaining the community's work. As these chronicles depict and the Bangkok conference affirmed, the work undertaken by localized and highly cooperative communities — in particular grassroots women — is vital to the international response to HIV/AIDS. It is in these places that solutions to the continually emerging challenges of the pandemic are developing and advancing. A few important first steps to both recognizing the work that women do and compensating them were visible at Bangkok — notably, a Swaziland government initiative to provide \$40 a month to 10,000 women caring for orphans. While this money does not nearly recompense the women for their emotionally and physically challenging work, it is a positive sign that the critical work of women, as depicted in the Community

AIDS Watch, is beginning to earn the respect it deserves.

Kathryn Miele is a New School University Master's in International Affairs student who participated in the 2004 Community AIDS Watch. She has previously worked as a Program Associate with the Huairou Commission and GROOTS International.

Further Sources

For a copy of the forthcoming 2004 Community AIDS Watch Report, please check www.huairou.org.

For information on the XV International AIDS Conference, visit www.aids2004.org

IWSGS IWSGS UPDATE CALL FOR PAPERS

Diasporically Speaking: Conversations on Caribbean Feminisms Toronto, October 12-15, 2005

A joint initiative of the Universities of Ryerson, Toronto and York (Toronto, Ontario, Canada).

Deadline: January 31st 2005. For submissions details see the web site below.

Over the past 25 years a body of scholarship has emerged that claims the name Caribbean feminism, which reflects an intellectual engagement with histories, resistances, movements and theorizing. This conference foregrounds conversations that circulate today among feminists within and outside the Caribbean region, in order to further transnational dialogues about the character and scope of Caribbean feminism as an area of academic inquiry and community activism; excite debates about feminism in the Caribbean diaspora; and invigorate international feminist alliances and intellectual exchanges around diasporic, postcolonial possibilities within an era of globalization. A broader aim is to map how feminist meditations on specific Caribbean realities have intervened in theoretical debates on nationalism, globalization, and transnationalism. As anthropologist Sidney Mintz among others notes, "Caribbean modernity predated the modern, and 'small' places like these can teach us big lessons."

Conference Organisers

Charmaine Crawford, Andrea Davis, Kamala Kempadoo (York University); Afua Cooper, Michelle Davis, Melanie Newton, Alissa Trotz (University of Toronto); Yvonne Bobb Smith, Jean Golden, Camille Hernandez-Ramdwar, Anne-Marie Lee-Loy, Joe Springer (Ryerson Caribbean Research Centre).

Conference Themes

Caribbean Feminisms
Transnational Feminist Currents
Race, Creolization, and Hybridity
Sexuality, Morality, and Respectability
Nation and Sovereignty in the Age of Neo-liberalism

Contact: Charmaine Crawford and Andrea Davis at carifem.iwsgs@utoronto.ca
324 Founders College, York University, 4700 Keele St.,
Toronto, Ont., M3J 1P3

From Public Hospitals to Private Homes

Guess who's picking up the tab?

- Women provide more than 80% of unpaid personal care for the elderly and for those of all ages with long-term disability or short-term illness.
- Unpaid caregiving can mean career interruption, time lost from work, income decline and a shift to part-time work or even job loss. These costs are felt far into the future in terms of low or no pensions, and a loss of social contacts and satisfaction from paid work.
- Unpaid providers may have no control over when, for how long, and whether they provide care.
- The physical demands of care, especially combined with little training or supports and time-pressures, can lead to exhaustion and frequent injury, as well as chronic diseases and a greater vulnerability to illness.
- While women perform the bulk of unpaid caregiving, women constitute a small minority of those who make decisions regarding homecare policies.
- If women went on strike and stopped providing care at home, home care would collapse, and the health care system would be overwhelmed.

A woman's work is never done...



All statistics from the National Coordinating Group on Health Care Reform and Women

Concept by Kathleen O'Grady
Design: Folio Design
Illustration: Pierre-Paul Pariseau

Canadian Women's Health Network

Le Réseau canadien pour la santé des femmes

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Announcements

Canadian Winners of the Women's Safety Awards

Created by **Femmes et villes international/Women in Cities International**, and funded by Status of Women Canada, the Women's Safety Awards are designed to reward good practices and policies relating to women's safety and the improvement of women's sense of safety. Women's groups, grassroots community organisations, municipal governments, youth organizations, business community groups and other groups from across the country competed in this 1st Women's Safety Awards competition. The international jury was impressed with the range of terrific initiatives with very different approaches from across Canada. The winners for each category are:

ADVOCACY, NETWORKING AND COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

The R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Project: Improving the Personal Security of Women and Girls in Rural, Northeastern Ontario submitted by The Amelia Rising Sexual Assault Centre of Nipissing, North Bay, Ontario.
Freedom from Violence through Education submitted by Working Women Community Centre, Toronto, Ontario.
West End Women's Safety Project (WEWSP) submitted by Mount Carmel Clinic - Sage House, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

CAPACITY-BUILDING AND TRAINING

The Empowerment Project: A Train the Trainer Tool Kit for Delivering Self-Protection and Assertiveness Workshops to Women and Girls submitted by the Fredericton Sexual Assault Crisis Centre Inc., Fredericton, New Brunswick.
City of Charlottetown Family Violence Prevention Program submitted by the City of Charlottetown and the Premier's Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.
What's Age Got To Do With It? submitted by the B.C./Yukon Society of Transition Houses, Vancouver, British Columbia.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

The WTN/IBC Girls TV Camp — Nunavut submitted by the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, Toronto, Ontario.
Women and Violence: Education is Prevention submitted by SWOVA Community Development and Research Society, Salt Spring Island, British Columbia.
Project Respect submitted by the Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre, Victoria, British Columbia.

SAFETY PLANNING AND DESIGN FOR PUBLIC SPACES

Conscience urbaine submitted by L'Écho des femmes de la Petite Patrie, Montréal, Québec.

MUNICIPAL GENDER-BASED POLICIES IN CRIME PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Cowichan Valley Safer Futures Program submitted by the Cowichan Women Against Violence Society, Duncan, British Columbia.
Confrontation Management for Women at High Risk, submitted by the Vancouver Police Department, Vancouver, British Columbia.

For Additional Information: concours@femmesetvilles.org website: www.femmesetvilles.org

Call for Participation

10th International Women and Health Meeting: "Health Rights, Women's Lives: Challenges & Strategies for Movement Building" September 21-25, 2005, New Delhi

The 10th IWHM Programme Committee invites proposals for paper presentations, cultural events, and organization of workshops.

Deadline for submission is December 1, 2004.

The International Women and Health Meeting (IWHM) has its roots in the global women's movement and includes a wide range of organizations, networks, and grassroots women's groups. The 10th IWHM will mark nearly two and a half decades of global feminist solidarity on issues that impinge on the health and well being of women. The current reality of — global economic restructuring and liberalization of markets, increasing militarization of countries, regions and zones, growing fundamentalisms of various hues, re-emergence of population policies, adoption of developmental models that are playing havoc with the environment — calls for urgent action by civil society including feminist groups. The 10th IWHM seeks to highlight resistance to such politics and related policies as issues of significance to women's health.

Focal Themes include: Public Health, Health Sector Reforms and Gender; Reproductive and Sexual Health Rights; Politics and Resurgence of Population Control Policies; Women's Rights and Medical Technologies; Violence (of State, Militarism, Family and Development) and Women's Health.

Contacts: Manisha Gupte masum@vsnl.com or Sarojini N.B. samasarof@vsnl.com



Visiting Scholar 2005-2006 McGill Centre for Research and Teaching on Women

The McGill Centre for Research and Teaching on Women invites applications for the position of Visiting Scholar with the Centre. These positions are open to any scholar who wishes to spend one or two academic terms in a university environment in order to carry out research on women. The Centre offers office space and support, ongoing seminars and workshop programs, contact with other women's studies scholars within McGill and in neighbouring universities — all this located at the centre of a stimulating, bilingual, urban environment. Scholars may wish to apply for external grants; limited research funding of \$1,000 per term is available from the Centre. If interested, please write, with a copy of your curriculum vitae, a brief outline of the research to be undertaken, copies of two recent short publications, and the names of two referees to:

Dr. Shree Mulay, Director
Centre for Research and Teaching on Women, 3487 Peel Street,
2nd floor, Montreal, Quebec H3A 1W7
Tel.: 514-398-3911 Fax: 514-398-3986

Candidates requiring assurance of a position in order to obtain funding elsewhere are invited to apply one year in advance.

Deadline: NOVEMBER 30th, 2004

Websites:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/mcrtw/funding/visiting/>
<http://www.mcgill.ca/mcrtw/>

Justice by Design? will be the theme of the 2005 Planners Network Design Conference, June 2-5, 2005 in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis St Paul, USA.

The Metropolitan Design Center in the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture is sponsoring the event and preparing sessions on: Public art, Planning and designing with aboriginal communities, Housing, Universal design in the urban environment, Community design, Sustainable/ecological design, Healthy cities, Planning and organizing beyond design. Details will be available at http://www.designcenter.umn.edu/reference_ctr/planNetConf.html

Women's Global Charter for Humanity — An Initiative of the World March of Women 2004-2005

The World March of Women is an international feminist action network connecting grass-roots groups working to eliminate poverty and violence against women. The March is composed of 5500 participating groups in 163 countries and territories.

The World March of Women is mobilizing around a major project to change the world- the Women's Global Charter for Humanity. Here is a glimpse of the planned international actions:

December 10, 2004 — Adoption of the Women's Global Charter for Humanity, following a global consultation

March 8, 2005 — Global launch of the Charter in Brazil

March 8 to October 17, 2005 — World Relay of the Charter and

progressive assembly of the Patchwork World Solidarity Quilt. Relay will stop in 50 countries.

October 17, 2005, noon — 24 hours of global feminist solidarity starting in Oceania, from the East to the West.

October 17, 2005 — Arrival of the Women's Global Charter for Humanity and the Solidarity Quilt (Conclusion of the World Relay) in Africa.

For additional information and to get involved contact: info@marchemondiale.org
Website: <http://www.worldmarchofwomen.org>

Campaigning for women's health on little or no budget?

The Canadian Women's Health Network has created and designed several *women's health posters* that are available for your campaign, free of charge. Put the posters on your website, in your newsletter, or print multiple copies using a colour photocopier or a colour printer (they require standard 8 1/2 x 11 sized paper).

- **Violence in the home**
<http://www.cwhn.ca/resources/posters/home.pdf>
- **Homecare system in crisis**
<http://www.cwhn.ca/resources/posters/homecare.pdf>
- **Medicalization of women's reproductive cycles**
<http://www.cwhn.ca/resources/posters/blood.pdf>
- **Direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription drugs**
http://www.whp-apsf.ca/pdf/whpDTCA2_ad.pdf
http://www.whp-apsf.ca/pdf/whpDTCA_ad.pdf


(Please do not alter or edit the posters in any way without prior permission from CWHN).

**Faculty of Environmental Studies
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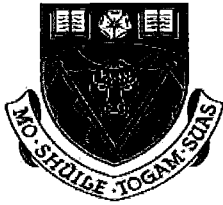
FES faculty members Becky Peterson, Gerda Wekerle, Barbara Rahder and David Morley are among the past editors of *WE* magazine. Visit our website or contact us to find out more about our graduate programs, students and faculty.



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Faculty of Communication and Culture

The Faculty of Communication and Culture is dedicated to offering innovative interdisciplinary programs. These programs cover many subjects and themes (law, gender, national identity, technology, etc.), but have a common vision in that they are concerned with understanding how their subjects are shaped by culture and reproduced through the practices of communication.

Undergraduate Programs

Canadian Studies

Examines fundamental themes and problems in Canadian society; studies the origins and transformations of Canada's diverse identities (cultural, gendered, urban, regional and national); explores the expression of these realities in contemporary and historical contexts; offers the choice of participating in Arctic Circumpolar community development.

Communications Studies

Explores how human culture is produced, maintained and modified through a wide variety of communication practices including formal and informal writing and public address, the traditional mass media, and new communications media.

Development Studies

In this program questions such as the following are examined: What does it mean to 'develop' or 'modernize'? What are the obligations of richer countries to those who are economically worse off? How can social and economic inequities be redressed? How are basic needs to be met? How do we define what is environmentally sustainable or healthy for our communities? What constitutes effective intercultural communications? How do we define and protect human rights? What is the nature and role of culture as a context for these issues? How can Canada respond to these challenges? A co-op program is available.

East Asian Studies

Graduates of this program earn a BA in East Asia. Minors in South Asian Studies, East Asian Studies, Chinese and Japanese are also offered through the Faculties of Communication and Culture and Humanities.

Latin American Studies

The program provides a specialized Latin American expertise embracing language, culture, politics, institutions and background.

Law and Society

In the Law and Society program, students examine the nexus between legal systems and the societies that create them. The program is designed to provide a broad exposure to the nature of law and its role in society. The overall aim of the program is not only to provide students with as deep an understanding of the law as possible but also to demonstrate that the law is not an isolated discipline but, rather, is part of an integrated culture of which we all partake.

Science, Technology and Society

No one doubts the critical role that science and technology play in modern societies around the globe. Building on strong foundations from the disciplines of history, philosophy, sociology and anthropology, a new field of study has emerged, commonly called "Science and Technology Studies" (STAS). It seeks to understand the relationship among science, technology and society and to engage in science policy.

Women's Studies

The Women's Studies program not only explores the social construction of gender and the variability of sex and gender, but also how power relations linked to race and ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation and ability/disability impact the lives of woman.

Graduate Program

The Graduate Program in Communications Studies offers graduate work leading to the course-based Master of Communication Studies (MCS), the thesis based Master of Arts (MA), and the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees. The Doctor of Philosophy program offers a specialization in the Social Context of Information and Communications Technology. For more information, see: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/faculties/COMCUL/>



CUPE Women March on Labour Day 2004