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MONTANA

WOMEN'S RESOURCE

Summer 1983



Woman Shaping the World for Peace

A Feminist Analysis

Feminists have something essential to offer the discussion of how to achieve peace. Peace is not just the absence of war. It is not the absence of conflict. It is a conflict resolution strategy based on certain values and experience. In our culture, and many others, women have been raised with these values and experience. As a result, women are further along the road to peace habits. But women have also paid a price—often we have sacrificed our selves and our autonomy as part of our practice of peace habits. Feminist analysis of power is important for a balance to be found between personal autonomy and relationship to others. If we are to achieve peace, it will not be by continuing the sacrifice of women in the name of saving humanity from war but by empowering women as individuals and a group; by creating a new vision of human relationships to other humans and to the natural environment; relationships based on respect and cooperation rather than domination.

"It has become clear to us that resistance to war and the use of nuclear weapons is impossible without resistance to sexism, to racism, to imperialism and to violence as an everyday pervasive reality. There is a profound relationship between the fact that individual women are commonly attacked and beaten up and that a nuclear war threatens the entire world."

Piecing It Together: Feminism and Nonviolence
Feminism and Nonviolence Study Group, England

from Peace Habits article

MONTANA WOMEN'S RESOURCE

The Montana Women's Resource and the Women's Resource Center need your continuing support. Any financial contribution toward the newsletter, specific WRC projects, or toward office expenses for general services are always needed and greatly appreciated. Please make checks payable to the Women's Resource Center, University Center, University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812. You may indicate where you would like your contribution to be used.

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Seneca Peace Camp

by Elizabeth Marshall

A new form of peacework by women in this country was begun with the establishment of the Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice, near the Seneca Army Depot in upstate New York. The opening celebration on July 4 was the culmination of a year of planning by an ever growing network of women in the Northeast. The network's nucleus was a group of women from nearby Ithaca that had been meeting to discuss issues related to the arms race. Some participated in the Women's Pentagon Action in November 1981 and were inspired by the example of women's peace camps in Europe, especially the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, in England.

During the week, the population at the farm on which the camp is located averages 75-100 women, while the weekends see a large influx of visitors. The women there are predominantly white, young and middle class but there are some older women, women from other countries and women of color present. Women are encouraged to come for hours or weeks and to "bring dreams, ideas, skills, resources and creativity to make the Encampment...a strong community."

There is also a steady flow of visitors through the farm each day as passersby stop to talk, or just watch the day's activities. They are encouraged to do so by a sign near the road—"Hello, can you stop for a talk?" Positive relationships with the residents of the area is a major concern of the women at the camp. To this end a local peace alliance is making available a fact sheet about the depot's employment situation - particularly the tie between skill level and residency details of employees. According to my sister, who spent a week there, the highly skilled and high salaried jobs at the base are filled by Army employees from all over the country. The jobs available for local residents are predominantly lower skill and wage positions.

This and other outreach activities have apparently had mixed results thus far. Residents of the area have stopped to leave bread or mow lawns but others have jeered and harassed the women, particularly during their activities at the base.

An often heard question at the farm house is "But why all women?" Some of the organizers believe that women's socialization as mothers and nurturers especially strengthen our capacity for nonviolent action. And many men in authority positions, such as base personnel, perceive women as nonviolent and are thus less likely to use violence themselves.

By making the camp totally a women's project, participants are learning and using skills more easily than they might in a mixed situation. This includes carpentry, land management, group planning, fundraising and site maintenance.

Part of the camp's purpose is also to make real now visions of a more peaceful, healthy future. This includes conscious support of diversity and non-hierarchical communication and decision making. However the consensus process has created problems, according to my sister. "They are trying to be totally open with everybody that walks onto the land. So a woman there for one evening has the same input as a woman who has been there for weeks or longer.", she said.

The women at Seneca initially planned, as the Greenham Common women have done, to have no single spokesperson in their dealing with the media. But this has apparently contributed to a lack of clear and deliberate messages in the local media. So in mid-July the women were in the process of choosing a spokesperson.

Activities at the base are varied. Personal creativity and spontaneity are encouraged. And although a large, planned civil disobedience action was held on August 1, women are encouraged to pursue whatever each finds appropriate. This has included planting a rose bush at the depot entrance, and a three day dry fast there by three Buddhist women.

Among the steady stream of visitors, improvement projects on the land, and actions at the depot are interspersed a wide variety of workshops and discussions. The women-only environment provides an unusual opportunity for women to exchange ideas and create new visions. Hopefully the experiences and insights gained at the encampment will be expanded upon, across the country, in the future.

W.I.N.D. Train Blockade

by Kim Calender

Three months later the WIND (Women Initiating Nuclear Disarmament) train blockade of May 22, 1983, is still alive in people's minds and present for comment in the letters to the editor.

I feel that we were successful in this anti-nuclear action. Large numbers of people heard of the action not only in this state but others as well. Not everyone agreed with what we did but they did think about the issue of nuclear arms and Burlington Northern's involvement. Many people were openly supportive of our action and congratulated us on our courage to take a direct stand against nuclear arms build-up.

New concepts are easily misinterpreted. We, as well as many others, are working to discover in ourselves, our relationships, community, state, nation and world what peace really means. We started with ourselves and made decisions based on group consensus. A serious disagreement came up at the last minute. We were able to come to a resolution by going around the circle of women and having everyone state their feelings with the help of a facilitator. I was amazed and felt a great sense of relief that we were able to do this in a short amount of time. We were able to resolve conflict on the personal level that was respectful of everyone. Once we learn how to do this, we can apply it to our means of governing, as well.

Our government has been ignoring the voice of the people concerning nuclear arms build-up. We passed an initiative to restrict the transport of nuclear material in our county. That vote has not been respected. We are claiming our power as individuals to challenge our government's actions. We need to be willing to take responsibility for making our government responsive to our needs.

Many people are coming together and building networks that empower the individual. We are learning new ways of working together and accomplishing change. Much of this is a direct result of the feminist movement's exploration of structure and its focus on the personal as political. Process is being examined. Acts of civil disobedience and non-violent action are methods of change where the process is the end goal. The two are very connected.

It is exciting to see and hear how quickly these ideas are spreading through our country and with people in other parts of the world.

A future women's anti-nuke action is being planned for September. If you would like to build a web of life around the "Romeo 29" missile or be part of a civil disobedience action, call Kim Calender at 728-7306, Missoula.



Letter written 3rd day in jail

Dear Craig,

I'm in jail-judge gave us fifteen days. So...sorry I won't make it to my reading. Can you reschedule? We need letters, poems. Send some.

It all happened so fast; in the courtroom the judge angry because we didn't obey her and pay our fine, handcuffed together, dragged off, stripped one by one, given a coverall for the week, brown rubber sandals, finger-printed over and over. Rag-doll, be quiet.

Instead we sing, look them straight in the eye, displease because we ask questions; Ask: How are you? What are our rights? Thank you. Light in our eyes, smiles on our faces.

Locked doors behind us. Over and over. Slam-shut, keys jingle into the night, the doors continue to open-shut, the sounds of keys announce them.

We eat, sleep, murmur, eat, sleep, sing, clean the cell, bathe, read, shit in front of each other, eat, sleep, write, hug, sing, read to each other, listen to aggressive-angry-bitter women, share our healing power, sooth, comfort, eat, sleep. Time rolls by inanimate...one after the other, heavy chimes of the County Courthouse clock ring the hours, with only laughter to interrupt them.

Finally, we get to make one phone call, later see two people. Someone sends us flowers, we only get the card; prepare a party. We will dress in our white mattress slips for skirts, pale worn towels for tops, empty shampoo containers for bongs, hair brush against window grating for rhythm; dance, sing, and jump for life!

They are confused. How to treat us? They begin to talk to us, make friends; they trade politeness for hostility, smiles for stares, teasing, good nature. . . Respect. Respect is the basis for Peace.

With love,
Bettina

Puget Sound Women's Group

The women's encampment near the Seneca Army Depot in upstate New York is not the only women's peace camp operating this summer. On June 18 women established a peace camp near the Boeing production plant in Kent, Washington. With decreasing demand for civilian production the plant is focussing increasingly on defense contracts, including the Cruise missile, currently under construction.

According to one participant the primary concern of the group is to emphasize the connection between the harm from our military budget, the psychological harm of militarism and nuclear dependancy, and other forms of violence in soceity, especially against women and other minorities.

This goal is achieved mostly through pamphlets, workshops and discussions. A series of pamphlets was created that link the various elements of this disucssion together. The women are trying to reach as large an audience as possible. So their leafletting has included not only Boeing employees but also a Seattle pornography shop, the unemployment office there and the applied physics lab at the University of Washington. This lab does a variety of defense related research. Workshops were planned throughout the summer to which all were welcomed. The women have also done some street theater and shown related films in Seattle. At the end of August no civil disobedience was planned, but the organizers did not rule it out as a possibility.

The camp's population averages twenty women each night with a total of 500 visitors expected over the summer. The women have received some harassment from Boeing employees and local residents, according to Carla, an organizer who lives in Kent. But as of mid-August it was not a crucial problem.

The mayor of Kent, a woman, supports the camp and her mail has mostly been supportive also. The land the women are camped on is leased from Kent and the lease was to expire September 9. But the group is searching for a new site.

Current information on the camp's status is available from WRC.

by Elizabeth Marshall

Reweaving the Web of Life

by Elizabeth Marshall

"Reweaving the Web of Life" gathers many voices from the feminism and nonviolence dialogue. They speak with hope, anger, faith and frustration of feminist nonviolence as a tool for encouraging social change and as a philosophy for defining new relations and behaviors.

The material, a total of 54 contributions, spans a wide range of formats, subjects, and perspectives among the contributors. Some of the experiences and backgrounds of the writers include Native American, Jewish, Black, white, lesbian, pacifist, Quaker, and Catholic. Through analysis, personal and historical episodes, poetry and fiction, many aspects of this broad topic are discussed.

As part of an introduction, the attempts to create a shared working definition of feminist nonviolence is one thread that ties many of these pieces together. That this foundation is still being created speaks of a relative newness of this discussion in the women's community at large. Whatever the particular definition, most contributors agree that nonviolence has potential strength and vitality, in strong contrast to the docile passivity often associated with it. The nonviolence discussed in these women's visions is closer to satyagraha, Gandhi's concept of active commitment to the force of truth.

The connection between patriarchy and violence is examined at length. While some contributors believe that women are automatically capable of creating a better world, others criticize this assumption. But it is agreed that this and other cultures define "successful" masculine behavior as aggressive competition that dominates other people and the planet unfairly. At the same time "female" behavior of sensitivity, cooperation, and flexibility are devalued.

The results of one behavior pattern prevailing over another is connected, in the minds of many contributors, with the physical and economic violence against women and other minorities and abuse of the planet's resources and nuclearism.

There is much history in this anthology from the Black liberation, women's liberation and peace movements. It is clear that each

movement has spilled over frustrations and inspirations into the others for at least a century. While some women in the nineteenth century emphasized only women's rights, others also connected sexual oppression with racial oppression and their relation to militarism. There is a stirring account of Ida Wells' work for the end of lynching in this century, and the double barriers she encountered as a Black woman. There is some discussion of the frequent lack of cooperation between some early suffragettes and abolitionists.

The connections between these three concerns was highlighted again when the Civil Rights movement propelled the '60s into a decade of activism. There was a ripple effect as white female participants in voter registration drives left to work elsewhere as the Black community strengthened. Many moved into anti-war work. But sexism was a problem in most early anti-war groups which caused many disgruntled women to leave and form their own activist groups. From there it was a small step to the re-birth of the women's movement. This history will be especially fascinating for women to whom the '60s are more history than personal experience.

Other topics discussed include Gandhi, utopian visions, and self-defense in light of both feminist and nonviolence concerns.

But an understanding of violence and visions for the future are not complete without more detailed exploration of the economic roots of physical and other forms of violence, especially as they affect People of Color. This is one section of the book with many thoughts that deserve further exploration although there are some contributions from Native American and Black women. Alice Walker poignantly explores how Black anger can spawn hope for an end to all whites, through any means. But any such event would also touch her own people.

Her's and other's message is that there's "gotta be a way".

Hopefully this is just the first of many discussions that will make deeper, more inspiring connections among women, drawing us into determined and hopeful action.

Reweaving the Web of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence. Pam McAllister, ed., New Society Publishers, Philadelphia, PA. 1982

Peace Habits

1. Acknowledge conflict as part of human experience
-develop nonviolent conflict resolution strategies
2. Decrease otherness
-negotiating differences
-resisting polarization
-acknowledging areas of commonality
-maintaining diversity: creating relationships with variety of groups, placing self in various environments, develop awareness of different cultures, etc., develop personal bonds with members of other groups.
3. Reduce threat
-meeting survival needs
-reducing aggressive language, behavior, etc.
-promoting self defense
4. Encourage empowerment experiences
-developing survival skills
-developing assertive communication skills
-developing alternative leadership/followership models
-promoting cooperation and shared responsibility in decision-making
-teaching win/win strategies for conflict resolution
-changing achievement motivation to "doing the best I can" rather than "doing better than someone else"
5. Extend the morality of care
-providing educational experiences that develop morality of care
6. Negotiate conflict on the basis of respect
-analyze own part in conflict
-analyze own power in situation
7. Relate to others on basis of strengths rather than weaknesses
8. Involve men in childraising

(This list was developed in the "Feminism and Peace" course, Winter, 1983, Women's Resource Center, Missoula Montana)

WOMEN'S PLACE

to volunteer to help women in crisis. Working with women in collective setting, on feminist issues and communication skills. A comprehensive training for new volunteers starts in October. Call Deirdre or Darcy before Sept. 27 for more info. 543-7606

New Location!
127 E. Main, Rm. 218
Missoula, Montana 59802
Office Hours: 9-3 Mon.-Fri.

24 Hour Crisis Line
543-7606

Peace Habits

by Judy Smith, Sheila Smith and Leslie Burgess

This article arises from discussions in a women's studies course entitled "Feminism and Peace." We explored the definitions of feminism, peace, war, violence, conflict, etc. and the roles of each in our society. We asked the questions: "Is peace possible?" and "What individual and institutional changes need to be made in order to lead to peaceful, feminist futures?"

Our society is one with war habits. We tend to think in sides, identify ourselves with groups opposed to other groups. Violence is a fact of life in our society, and many of us have violent habits.

Developing peace habits is essential to developing a peaceful society. We each need to become aware of what our present habits are, to work toward changing the ones that are not conducive to a new peaceful society and to develop new behaviors and practice them until they become our natural habits. We will then carry them with us into our personal relationships, to our jobs, our political and social work and to the institutions that we come in contact with.

DECREASING OTHERNESS

Our culture and in fact, all of western culture, perceives the world dualistically. We tend to define everything in terms of contrasts. We emphasize distinctions rather than similarities. It is always what is different that grabs our attention and holds it. Thus, the endless research on female and male differences. This focus on dissimilarity is not by itself deleterious; however, when it is combined with an ethno- or androcentric value system, the dissimilarities are paired with judgments of "good" and "bad".

Our society categorizes, segregates and discriminates on every social level and in every institution, beginning in the family. We've been socialized to see people of different races, cultures, religions, political persuasions, and sexual preferences as primarily different rather than basically similar. Again, different is equal to "other", which is usually perceived as "bad".

We have learned this type of reaction and we can replace it with a different response. In order to decrease the kind of polarization

that results from "otherness", we must cultivate new behaviors.

Diversity is acceptable.

We must recognize that we do have different experiences, perspectives, lifestyles, than others, and we need to learn to see this as acceptable. We can learn to appreciate the richness and diversity of the human race, and that we cannot attach our value systems to what we do not understand.

Define areas of commonality.

We must realize the basic humanness of ourselves and others. Even if we can never understand certain experiences, or agree with particular philosophies, we do not need to relegate those persons to the status of object.

Peaceful negotiation.

We must use peaceful negotiation to resolve our differences. We cannot assume a situation is hopeless, but must take steps to further open and assertive communication. We must work to resolve conflict by peaceful means: analyzing the problem, deciding what resolution we want to see, negotiating compromises, seeking positive alternatives for conflict.

Decreasing sex role polarization.

We cannot prescribe sex roles for individuals without creating a barrier between women and men. It is because men see women as "other" that they inflict violence on us with such regularity and brutality. Surely no one can say peace is possible as long as women and female children are being victimized by individuals and institutions.

We can learn to allow and accept "other", that is, to cultivate new responses to differences. We can learn to find differences intriguing or interesting, rather than threatening. We can exchange ideas freely between cultures and recognize our commonalities. We can make a commitment to resolve conflict, we can resist polarization by refusing to allow all of our identity to be swallowed up around the issue.

REDUCING THREAT

Almost all of our nonpeaceful actions are done in reaction to a perceived or a real threat to our existence. If we are to reduce threat, everyone's needs must be met. This includes material needs for survival, as well as safety and security needs. We need to recognize and remedy the violence of

poverty and starvation. We need to be assured of a clean environment, one free from all threats of violence against us, whether they are personal or institutional, whether they are directed at us as individuals or as a nation.

Individual steps are crucial to achieving global peace. It is necessary that we learn new responses for handling our fear, anger and conflicts. We can implement new responses by first analyzing our current behaviors, educating ourselves on other options, and practicing these "peace habits" until they become a useful part of our repertoire of behaviors. We can learn to protect ourselves while learning to treat others in a respectful and peaceful manner. We need to recognize how many of our needs are created by our knowledge of and access to technology. The "back-to-the-land" movement has happened as a result of people becoming aware of false needs created by technology.

EXTENDING THE MORALITY OF CARE

Women define morality as responsibility in relationships, while men define morality in terms of individual rights to noninterference. For a woman, a moral choice would be one that takes into consideration responsibility for others as well as the needs of the self.

One way to extend the morality of care to men is to involve them fully in childrearing. Involving men in caretaking responsibility for children would teach males the skills of caring for dependents, provide role models of nurturing males to children, allow fathers the opportunity to redefine their existence in terms of relationships to others, and remove women from

the sole position of "other" in definition of self.

CONCLUSION

At this point it should be clear that we are not suggesting women have a "natural" proclivity for peace, but rather that women have cultivated some particular skills which we see as related to peace. And further, we see that the feminist movement is basic to any peace movement. Without achieving feminist goals we can come no closer to achieving real peace.

In a world where patriarchy asserts itself as capitalism, imperialism, and in institutionalized violence against minorities, women and children, we will not have peace. The basis of all of these systems of power is violence--of poverty, of the police and military, of rape, battering and incest. If we are to do away with hierarchy and domination in our international relations, we must learn to practice peace habits at home as well as abroad.

No where have we stated achieving a feminist (peaceful) world would be easy. We must continually examine our selves, our relationships, our social structures. We can never achieve a world without conflict, but we can recognize a world where conflict is resolved by peaceful means, and where every life is valued. The future of humankind, and perhaps of our planet, depends on creating a new set of relationships as the basis of our existence. We believe that women, that feminists in particular, will be the ones to implement peace. Peace is women's work.

This is an excerpt from an article which may be obtained from the Women's Resource Center



Want to Read More?

These books and organizations might interest you. We tried to limit the list to books by and about women but a few others are also listed due to their relevancy.

(* - available at WRC)

John J. Berger, Nuclear Power: The Unviable Option; Ramparts Press, 1976 (Palo Alto, CA 94303)

Rachel Carson, Silent Spring; Fawcett Books, N.Y. 1962

Virginia Cooper et. al., Resource Manual for a Living Revolution; New Soceity Press; Philadelphia, PA

*Mary Daly, Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism; Beacon Press, Boston, MA 1978

Barbara Deming, We Cannot Live Without Our Lives; Grossman Publishers, 1974

*Andrea Dworkin, Pornography: Men Possessing Women; The Women's Press 1981

*Zillah Eisenstein, ed., Capitolist Patriarchy & the Case for Socialist Feminism; Monthly Review Press, N.Y. 1979

*Emma Goldman, Living My Life; Dover Publications, 1971

Susan Griffin, Woman & Nature: The Roaring Inside Her; Harper & Row, N.Y. 1978

Anna Gyorgy and friends, No Nukes: Everyone's Guide to Nuclear Power; South End Press, Boston, MA

William Leiss, The Domination of Nature; Beacon Press, Boston, MA 1974

*Feminism & Nonviolence Study Group, Piecing it Together: Feminism & Nonviolence; Calvert's Press, England 1982

ORGANIZATIONS

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1213 Race Street, Philadelphia, PA., 19107

American Friends Service Committee- Women's Network- 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA., 19102

United Indian Women
113 NE Thompson, Portland, OR
97212

WARN (Women of All Red Nations)
P.O. Box 2508, Rapid City, S.D.
57709

Tomorrow Within

among the mountains,
i follow my shadow
weaving into the
cold July night.
into the energy
barraging
of fast cars snapping neon lights
(who reads them at 4 AM anyway?).

i carry within
the seeds
of my own destruction
as of my own formation.

as do my sisters and brothers
as do we all as a people.
if we have not tipped the balance
too
far.

by Elizabeth Marshall

Her

I've said it to myself many times:

she feeds on me, she grows in my cracks.
However, I don't feel her, I hear nothing.

Yet she continues

petulant and dark

circling round in my world

until she reaches the place

where no one has yet begun.

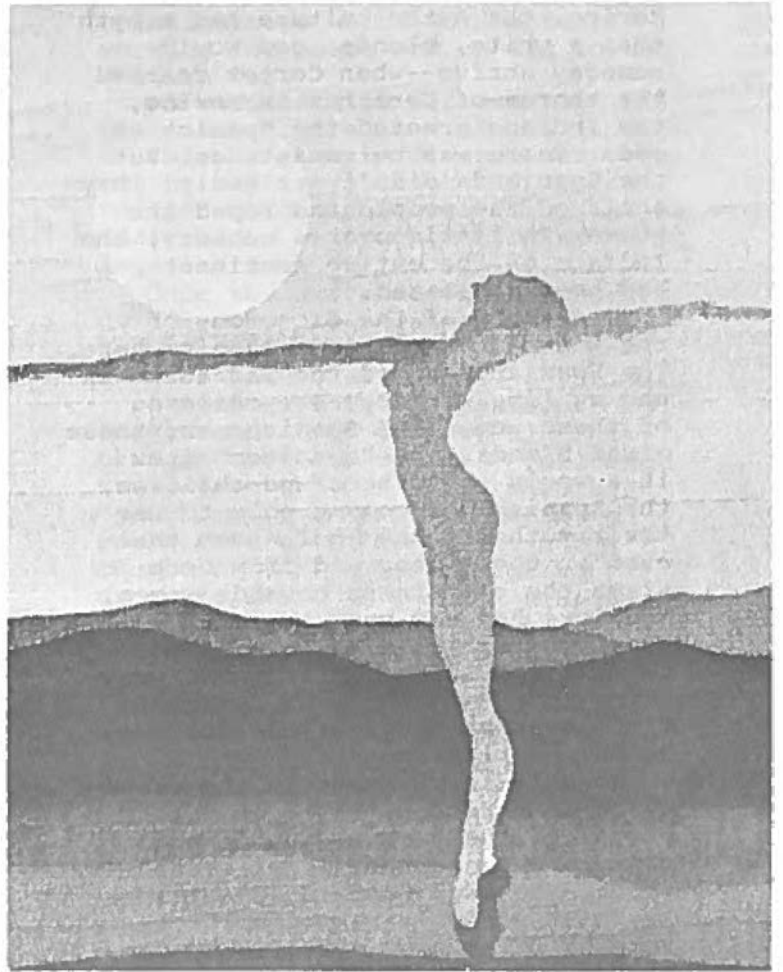
Juana Melendez de Espinoza

translated by Bettina Escudero

Until We're Free

Rivers run through me
mountains bore into my body
and the geography of this world
begins forming in me
turning me into lakes, chasms, ravines
it is opening me like a furrow
filling me with longing to live
to see it free, beautiful,
full of smiles.

I want to explode with love
and let my guts finish with the oppressors
to sing with voices bursting my pores
and let my song be contagious;
let's all get sick with love,
with longings for justice,
let's all brandish our heart
never fearing it will burst
for a heart as large as ours
resists the cruelest tortures
and nothing placates its devastating love
which grows
beat by beat
stronger,
stronger,
stronger,
deafening the enemy
who hears it break through the walls
sees it shine in every eye
sees it coming closer
with the force of a great tide
in every morning when the people arise
to work on lands that don't belong to them,
in every wail of parents who have lost children,
in every hand that joins with other hands.



by Gioconda Belli
translation: Bettina Escudero

Women in Latin America

by Bettina Escudero

When the Spanish arrived in Mexico, the Aztec culture had a myth that a white, blonde god would someday arrive--when Cortez reached the shores of Veracruz in Mexico, the Indians greeted the Spanish as gods. There was no resistance. But the Spaniards didn't act godly. They enslaved the people and raped the women. In little over a century, the Indians of the entire continent had been decimated.

The story of the dichotomy of the Latin American woman begins here. The Spaniards raped the Indian women and as time went by, the children of these women and Spanish men, these mixed bloods, the "mestizos" grew in a world of mothers and children, the Spanish men coming only to use their mothers, the Indian men enslaved in the mines. And from here stems the bitterness towards women. You love her and yet she is plundered by what you hate. Women in Central and Latin America are everything to a man, while at the same time are the object of his deepest scorn and bitterness.

Women's involvement in the revolution is a result, in the first place, of their class condition. If you are a peasant or lower class woman, you work from sun-up till way past sundown, taking care of your children, and most likely providing a meager income.

Women in revolutionary struggles like Nicaragua and El Salvador reveal their commitment to integrate their own liberation movement with the more general struggle of people fighting against oppression.

Let me quote Dora Maria Telez, a commander of the Sandinista army. Before the revolution she was a medical intern. From a story about the first child she brought into the world:

"The next step is to break the material bond which has united the child to its mother for nine months.

I cut. A stronger bond remains, the bond of love which is difficult, if not impossible to cut.

... Will his body survive? And what about his hopes? Have I completed my mission by aiding his birth?

I must say NO. Our work will be done when we can give these young ones a new world, a different world.

I must be committed to the birth of that new world, which like every delivery will be painful and at the same time joyous."

Women in Central America restate again and again that the option of women's liberation separate from the Revolution is not a reality. Latin American women understand that their liberation from oppression and poverty cannot come until their own countries are freed from the oppression of United States' transnational corporations.

We want them to conform to our image of peace. What is our image of Peace? "Peace is our Profession", says a huge sign outside Malstrom Air Force Base at Great Falls. Do we really believe we can achieve peace through military might and force? Or is subjugation by force only intimidation?

Benito Juarez, the Mexican President that was in office concurrently with Abraham Lincoln, said, "respect for another's rights and freedom, that is peace."


Do we have the strength as a nation to show respect?

This article is excerpted from a talk by Bettina Escudero on KUFM on July 14, 1983 for Central America, the Montana Connection.

To contact "Montanans for Peace in El Salvador" call:

Suzanne Aborefadl 549-0392
Michael Kreisberg 721-4757.


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Missoula Women for Peace

by Flo Chessin

In the early 1960's a group called Missoula Peace Group formed (composed of women and men) when our country and the Soviet Union were testing nuclear weapons in the atmosphere. Among other activities we put on an exhibition of the pictures and artifacts from our nuclear bombing of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These were displayed in a store on East Main street in downtown Missoula for a period of two weeks. The mayor of Missoula, Mr. Waldbillig cut the ribbon for the opening ceremonies.

The group was unable to continue when half or more members moved away to new jobs the following year.

In 1977 or 78 Women Strike for Peace in Missoula formed to help inform high school students who were being recruited by the military but not given information on their rights and options concerning the draft. We were able to get conscientious objectors rights and information displays in the school libraries. The draft was threatening the lives and future of young men from 18 years to 26 years of age.

Missoula Women for Peace began in January of 1970. We actively opposed the Vietnam War, educating ourselves about the war and its history. We spoke with and wrote letters to our senators and congressmen emphasizing our opposition to the Vietnam War, specifically the bombings and the draft.

Our group sponsored speakers for public meetings and showings (TV too) of films like War Without Winners and Hearts and Minds.

Fundraising parties provided the money for our group activities in-

cluding support for "Peace" candidates. We also contributed to other organizations which were actually working for peace and an end to the Vietnam War.

We visited with our senators and congressmen here in Missoula once or twice a year to discuss our views on the military budget and issues related to our concerns for peace in addition to writing them on specific legislation.

Once the war ended our members dwindled but we maintained a core group of 15 to 20 women. The need for activism continues to this day.

Almost as soon as President Reagan came into office, his rhetoric and actions caused great consternation and our membership burgeoned again. We attracted many young, alert active women (and a couple of men). Necessitating our group to start an evening session as well. It was a very active and professional group but disbanded last winter. We hope to revive it this fall of 1983. Two years ago we became a branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

We welcome all who are interested in learning more about the Peace Movement and who would like to know what they can do to further the cause of Peace.

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month at 10am at the University Congregational Church, 401 University Avenue.

For more information about Missoula Women for Peace call Flo at 549-9408. If you are interested in night meetings, call Jenny at 549-0659.



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National Coalition Against Sexual Assault Conference

by Sheila Smith

"One Struggle . . . Many Fronts" was the theme of the 5th annual conference of the National Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCASA), July 27-30 in Minneapolis, MN. I attended the conference as a representative of the Montana Incest Prevention Coalition and the Women's Resource Center, along with approximately 600 others representing organizations such as rape crisis or battered women's shelters from more than 30 states.

The National Coalition Against Sexual Assault was formed in 1978 to ensure the continued provision of quality services to sexual assault victims through public education and information sharing. NCASA members represent 47 states and serve the victims of all types of sexual abuse, including rape, acquaintance rape, child sexual assault, incest and battering.

Artist and writer Beverly Smith spoke Thursday morning to kick off the conference on "Violence: The Veiling of the Human Spirit". She stated that violence and oppression cannot be separated, that violence against women and against other minority groups are acts of terrorism. She blamed the existence of such violence on our adherence to hierarchical systems, in which some people are seen as more valuable and more important; our tendency to view differences from the ruling class as inferiorities; and our measurement of human beings by what we can produce. She pointed out that people die from racism, sexism, capitalism and homophobia. "Our society is not built on a human scale," she said. "People are seen as objects to be exploited and controlled. Fighting racism and sexism is not just a matter of unenlightened attitudes. It is endemic, widespread and condoned--it is rooted in the structure of our society. It is not just a little flaw. Society must be changed."

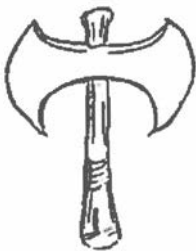
According to Smith, there are two necessary things to be able to continue our political work: 1) we must have an analysis of the issues, and feminism provides that coherent and comprehensive analysis; and 2) we must have people to work with, to support us and to help us accom-

lish our goals. She added that we must have a radical, rather than a reformist approach. By "radical" she means we must get to the root of the problem, while reformists only seek to apply band-aids.

There were 36 workshops presented during the conference. I attended workshops on models for sexual assault prevention education for rural areas, one on feminist management, and one entitled "Toward a Healthy Sexuality and a Decrease in Violence". In the latter, the discussion centered around how sexuality and violence have been merged together. Cordelia Anderson, the presenter, gave four primary ways we must move towards to eliminate violence: 1) we must reject personal and societal violence, 2) we must accept human sexuality as natural and equal for women and men, and 4) we must promote pleasure.

The final keynote address was given by Gloria Steinem from MS Magazine and the MS Foundation. She spoke about the confusion of sexuality and violence in our culture, and the cruciality of obliterating that connection for our survival. She refuted the theories that violence in sexuality is biological, and the theories that imply that women and men behave so differently due to biology. We need to understand that (rape) is not the result of hormones or biological destiny or human nature," she said. "It is the result of a cultural mandate." She stressed the importance of men learning to behave nurturally, for them to involve themselves in childrearing as a way to incorporate some primarily female values for quality of life issues. "We must teach men that they can still be men without being violent." She also praised the women's movement for continuing its struggle to make positive changes in the structure of society.

If anyone wishes more information about the conference, contact me at the Women's Resource Center. For more information about NCASA, contact Lee Stanfield, NCASA Regional Representative, 416 So. 25th St., Laramie, WY, 82070. Please include the information for Lee that you heard about NCASA through the Montana Women's Resource.



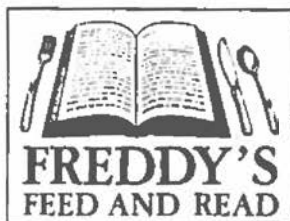
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Fall Schedule

---Assertiveness Training for Women. Learn to communicate more effectively and feel better about your interactions with others. Instructors: Susan Nose, Sheila Smith. Cost: \$30 (barter option). Length: 7 weeks. Call the Women's Resource Center for further info.

---Journal Keeping for Personal Growth. Designed for women with previous experience in groups emphasizing personal change, (assertiveness training, career workshops, etc.). Facilitator: Leslie Burgess; MFA in Creative Writing. Starts second week of October. Length: 6 weeks. Cost: \$30 (barter option). WRC, 243-4153. Will meet at WRC.

---October 22: World Solidarity for Nuclear Disarmament Day. At the capitol grounds, Helena. Sponsored by Montana Citizens to End the Arms Race, and others. To focus attention on the Cruise and Pershing missiles. Local and international speakers including women. For further details: 586-3568.

---October 29: Reproductive Freedom Celebration Day, in Missoula. Speakers and music are planned. WRC for more details.

---November 9 : The Women's West. A one woman show about the history of women in the West. Performed by Susan Schmidt. At the University in Missoula. WRC for more info.

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