

women courageously confronted the authorities. In the course of their movement they have raised crucial issues of national importance which gained them the support of the intellectual circles and the international media. Owing to fear of gaining adverse publicity in the international media, the government could not deal harshly with these women. Yet the regime wanted to avoid disturbances for fear of larger issues being raised, which could destabilise the government. They have thus found it necessary to take

eyewash measures to deflate the intensity of the movement.

These concessions have not pacified the women activists. They are still fighting against the discriminatory laws. The Haddood Laws have been challenged in courts, though with little chance of success. However, wherever possible, women lawyers have taken it upon themselves to redress individual grievances through the courts. The blind girl, referred to earlier, who had been sentenced to lashes, was subsequently acquitted after

her case was contested by women lawyers and after many women's organisations had protested against the sentence awarded to her. This activity is continuing, and women are determined to struggle until they achieve their objective of full equality and withdrawal of discriminatory legislation.

This paper was presented at the Third World Forum on Women, Law and Development Workshop, Forum '85.

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THE PRICE OF LOOKING BACK

It was early spring.
I was sleeping under a tree.
My dreams had moulded the form of a man
Who had the fragrance of spring
And a sense-raking freshness of breeze.
When I woke there was grass all over my clothes.
Sun rays filtering through the branches
Made dream images on my palm:
A lifeless fetus in a glass jar –
Incredible! a ship in a bottle,
Blossoming flowers in a glass paper weight.
The rays through the branches
Have knit a web around me.
Beneath thick piles of snow
The grass is fresh, blooming, full.
Even in the cocoon of light
I was making images in my dreams.
The Muezzins were calling from the mosques
And the faithful were returning from confession.
Bowls of desire were distributed to one and all.
My clothes were covered with broken blades of grass.
Thirsty, I drank from my hand
And even the line of water dripping to my elbow
Had a word with the filtering rays.
I wanted to tear the leaf of this dream
From the book of my life.
But life does not keep its records
In a solitary book.
From the dying creeper in front of me
I knew my bonds to be incomplete.
I gathered all books of my life,
All pathways,
All bonds,
All exchanges of words,
And all burning moments
Around the campfire of words.
Untangling the thicket of words
I forgot the pathways, the words,
And that man too.
But who is this soldier
Guarding the cross roads of my thoughts?

Kishwar Naheed
Lahore, Pakistan

who are in power in those areas, both the rural elite and the government officials – which makes us question how effective laws can be when the people are unorganized and unaware exactly of what the laws are.

Some of the work we are doing is mainly to try and mobilize rural women first to analyze their situation, to find out their relationship to the food they are producing and what they are getting out of it, and to realize their value within the whole structure – and then try and get them to realize the need for unity.

In Bangladesh, over 60 per cent of the population own very little land, not enough to be cultivated all year and provide a year's survival. So they have to sell their labour elsewhere for a certain portion of the year. We try to help groups of women to understand their strength in numbers and to realize what the situation is and what the laws are; and to try and work for their own benefit on their own. As an organization, we do not provide any extra credit or any other facilities. We feel that women should be organized to mobilize the available resources and to utilize the existing laws for their own benefit, and to stand on their own. That means that if and when we leave an area, we don't leave a vacuum: we will already have created an autonomous organization.

We have been able to organize around 50,000 women all over Bangladesh. This sounds like a lot but it is not very much when you consider that the population in Bangladesh is over 90 million. We have organized 50,000 women to stand on their own and they have taken up a lot of social issues (such as wife-beating, dowry, and desertion). They try to stop those problems or to get more organized around them. In one area, where we have organized women's cooperatives and men's



Illustration: Anne S. Walker
Credit: International Women's Tribune Centre

cooperatives, we have seen changes in government laws, giving 1,000 acres to these landless cooperatives (one third of this land must be given to the women's cooperatives). And that, I think, is a major breakthrough in Bangladesh where this has never happened before. This land will not be given to the women individually but on a 99-year non-transferable lease. That means the women will not be forced off their land after a couple of years.

We are also trying to organize women in joint cultivation programs in different areas. We are trying to get them to start demanding loans from the bank. They go in groups of three or four hundred and

demand that the bank manager give them loans and credit. In one area, three thousand women have gone to the local government official to try and insist that certain projects be done for women instead of just for the men. Generally, within the villages and the social situation, there have been some improvements as a result of the women's groups. But as a result of this, we are facing more and more problems not just ourselves as the organizers, but also the women.

Most of you are aware that at the end of May 1985, there was a cyclone which hit parts of Bangladesh. A lot of relief has gone to the country, and a lot of relief has been distributed – but very little is actually reaching the poor. A woman in one of the most conservative areas of Bangladesh stood up and attacked the local chairman, the head of the area, through whom the relief was distributed. This man was not distributing relief properly. She was beaten up in public and was threatened with violence and ostracisation. But because of the groups around her who supported her and our intervention, it has stopped for the moment.

This is just a small example to show that women are now beginning to speak up publicly and try to make their presence felt. There is still a lot of work left to be done. We are just beginning, but we hope that we – and especially the groups that are being organized – can continue our work and expand further.

Khushi Kabir is presently Director of Nijera Kori and is a recognized expert in the fields of women's development in Asia and international development. For years she has worked with the poorest and most oppressed sector of Bangladesh society – rural women – to help these marginalized women understand their condition and to obtain the resources needed to improve their situation.

THE RAIN WITHIN MYSELF

To you I was a window.
You opened me and enjoyed the
scene as you pleased,
And inhaled the breeze and the
colours.

To shelter from the storm,
You closed the shutters
And I became a robe
Smugly wrapped around you.

To you I was a tunnel,
Where you could shelter when you wished
And could conceal me too.
To keep your footprints from sight
You walked in me for life.

To you I was a dream:
I was water;
I was sand;
I was reality on command;
And like indigestion's aftertaste, forgotten.

While you talk in your dreams
I have to listen lying awake.
But no dream listens
To my wakeful words.

Kishwar Naheed
Lahore, Pakistan

homes and fall into the clutches of the 'delal' (pimps) from whom escape is next to impossible. Many such women are rotting in different jails abroad. Many want to return but there is no way out. Many more are dying in the country carrying the stigma that has befallen them to their graves.

In August 1982 one such case made headlines. It involved a gang of five who were trying to smuggle 150 women out of the country. They were caught by members of the Bangladesh Rifles. Four alleged traffickers dealing in Bangladeshi women were charged in a Magistrate Court in Karachi (Pakistan) on 25th June 1985 with abduction and running a prostitution den. The four accused, themselves Bangladeshi immigrants, had according to the prosecution been engaged in slave-trading – abducting young women from the rural areas of Bangladesh and bringing them to Pakistan. About 500 girls had been illegally transported over the past few years, police sources said. Each girl was sold in Karachi and elsewhere in Pakistan for prices ranging from 1000 to 3000 rupees (\$65.00-160.00).³

Prostitution itself is not an offence but it is also not regularised under law. There is no system of permits authorising prostitutes to engage in this profession. The law states that it is a crime to engage any

woman against her will in immoral activities. The man who has engaged her will be punished. So the traffickers or pimps always manage to produce an affidavit for the prostitute under his custody in which it is stated that the prostitute, being above eighteen years old, *willingly* enters into this profession. But no prostitute enters into this profession out of choice. Statistical data has shown that 55.12% entered it due to poverty; 17.08% had been cheated by a lover and sold; 1.87% had been sold by a husband; 2.72% by a step mother; 15.12% kidnapped and sold by miscreant; and 8.29% for other reasons (e.g. as childhood, or after having been deserted by a husband).⁴

All legal provisions relating to immoral trafficking are directed against the persons who live off the earnings of prostitutes (pimps and traffickers). Thus the law implicitly accepts the existence of prostitutes in society. By promulgating the Cruelty (Deterrent Punishment) to Women Ordinance of 1983 the government has provided for the strict punishment of those engaged in immoral trafficking in women. Section 5 of the Ordinance states that:

whoever imports or exports or sells, lets to hire or otherwise disposes of, or buys, hires or otherwise obtains possession of, any woman of any age with intent that such

woman shall be employed or used for the purpose of prostitution or illicit intercourse with any person or for any unlawful and immoral purpose, or knowing it to be likely that such woman will be employed or used for any such purpose shall be punishable with transportation for life or with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to fourteen years and shall also be liable to a fine.

Under section 4 a person accused of kidnapping or abduction is also liable to fourteen years rigorous imprisonment.

The National Women Lawyers' Association played a vital role in the promulgation of this strict law to suppress violence against women – like immoral trafficking – through repeated demands for the legislation. But to date no one tried under this Ordinance has been given this punishment. Strict enforcement of the laws would make it more difficult to exploit women as prostitutes.

¹*The New Nation* (April 1985).

²*Ibid.*

³*The Bangladesh Times* (26 June 1985).

⁴From a survey of 205 women conducted by the Bengali weekly *Bichitra*.

Dilruba Shahana is an Advocate for Bangladesh Jatiyo Mahila Ainjibi Samity.

KISHWAR NAHEED

All bonds
Break in the crush of spent passions
And waning seasons
Like falling unripe fruit.
All bonds,
All thirty eight years of life
Have ripened into your cheeks and hair
Like the glowing coins of life.

Kishwar Naheed,
A pearl-oyster with sealed lips,
Woman of the past,
Woman of today,
Afflicted,
You speak from the shore
To the winds of life's ocean
To move the feet of mountains.

Kishwar Naheed,
None speaks here.
No one wants to know the words of
speaking glances.
The fish slipping from the hand
Turns fear into hate.

Kishwar Naheed,
The desire to see you silent
Billows up even from the grave.
But speech is urgent
When listening is a crime.
Now I can see
Expressions which daunted me
Strike fear everywhere.

Kishwar Naheed
Lahore, Pakistan

Cebu. When package tours became obnoxious, the importation of Asians to serve as prostitutes in Japan took place. Then there was the added exploitation of age: child prostitutes became the fad in the 1980's, with Australians and Europeans taking the lead. Meanwhile, the Americans continue to enjoy R and R prostitution. The roots of the problem are in the linkage between prostitution tourism and all forms of imperialism – political, economic, cultural. It is like fighting a many-tentacled ogre.

Precisely because of our powerlessness, it is most important to stress the collective and creative effort behind each action. The collective aspect ranges from group work to mass mobilization. It involves getting the cooperation of as many organizations as possible, cutting across ages and classes, extending from villages to cross-continental cities. The creative aspect covers a combination of factors: finding the Achilles' heel of the target, figuring out what would be appropriate and effective, doing it at the right time with proper media coverage. This indeed is the power of solidarity when grains of sand glued together become a stumbling block of concrete; the power of creativity when innovative ways of doing things become disarming; the power of a cause when voices get heard because of unflinching persistence in pursuing a goal, of keeping up the momentum, and of communicating with a sense of urgency that cannot be ignored.

A Third World feminist perspective on confronting prostitution tourism offers another major lesson. Empowering all women – the victims, the activists, the support group – is a dynamic challenge. Doing so within the Third World context of a neocolonial world of unjust structures gives birth to a Third World feminism that dares to tackle problems of class, sex and race in a holistic and radical manner. Only then can women, in partnership with men of conscience, have true equality, genuine development, and lasting peace.

Sister Mary Soledad Perpiñan, R.G.S., is co-ordinator of the Manila-based Third World Movement Against the Exploitation of Women (TW-MAE-W). She is active both within the Philippines and internationally in the struggle against the sex trade, and edits the development journal Balai. A longer version of this paper was presented at the Nairobi Third World Forum on Women, Law and Development.



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THE GRASS IS LIKE ME

The grass is like me.
It learns to love life
Only after feet have crushed it.
By becoming wet
Does it mean to show
Modesty's warmth, or
Passion's heat?

The grass is like me.
As it lifts its head
The mower
Promising to turn it to velvet
Levels its lifting top.

You really labour
To put women down.
But the desire to grow
Dies neither in the earth
Nor in the woman.
Hear me.
The old idea to make a track was good.
Those who shy from the heat of courage
Will still be trampled
To make tracks for authority.
But they are straw,
Not grass.
The grass is like me.

Kishwar Naheed
Lahore, Pakistan

all the organizations must show solidarity and support for the women prisoners of conscience. Torture and cruel conditions of imprisonment are a reality for women activists in our country. This problem of violence and torture is receiving worldwide attention. The brutalization of an individual will always result in the brutalization of a society.

Prostitution is a major problem in many of our cities. Most women resort to it because of economic deprivation; their sexuality is exploited. Society usually takes a condemnatory stand against prostitution and the law is weighted heavily against prostitutes while permitting their clients to go free. Because prostitution is forbidden by law, prostitutes lack the minimum health care and sometimes, in jail, are raped by policemen.

Education has not changed in years. Books are sexist, depict stereotypes, and make arbitrary distinctions between sexes. Educational materials ignore women's issues, are always centered on men, and women are absent. Military acts

of violence are treated as the most relevant aspects of Argentine history.

During the last two years we have experienced an increase in pornography and the use of the female body as a sexual commodity. In advertising we can observe the double moral standards: women as sexual objects, giving pleasure, without any imagination or brains, are opposed to mothers, with clean beautiful children, promoting electric machines for the house or food. Newspapers, radio and television only print and show women in their traditional aspects. Feminist information must be conveyed through paid ads.

In the area of health, abortion is allowed in only two cases: rape and danger to the mother. As both cases are very difficult to prove, every year many women die as victims of clandestine abortions. Every year many young women from the poorer classes are kidnapped and sold for prostitution to other countries. Big organizations are behind this cruel traffic and it is very difficult to counteract

their activities.

Sexual harassment is common in the labour sphere. Because of the high rate of unemployment, women are afraid of losing their jobs and so do not want to make formal complaints. Sexual harassment of women patients by their doctors takes place but, as only two persons were present, it is his word against hers. The medical world stands firmly against the women who dare accuse their members, and husbands refuse to support complaints because their names would be involved.

Women of the world, let's unite, exercise and consolidate the power of being together. Come, join our hands and eradicate prejudices, change customs and create a new world for future generations of women.

Sara Rioja is the founder of Derochos Iguales para la Mujer Argentina (Equal Rights for Argentinian Women), an organization formed to promote research and education on women's issues, including total equality under the law.

DIFFICULT ERRATA FOR EASY WORDS

When poetry seems easy
Life is easy.
So far all I know are hard words.
'Freedom', for example, was a simple word.
'Life' made it hard.
'Living' was easy.
But breath got caught in the throat's snare
And body rings like an alarm.
'Laughter' was simple,
But its every letter is fraught with tears.
Try 'walking' for an innocent word.
Easy to read, but when I tried to walk
I stumbled with each step,
And fell.
Those words we are permitted to write
Are easy as words
But resist use.
'Desire' is a simple one,
But try to find that river of milk and honey
And you will end up
With a pillow wet with tears.
We all can seem like an open book.
Very simple:
As some truths
Lie with a straight face
Such lies as even lies
Do not dare to tell.

Kishwar Naheed
Lahore, Pakistan

THE CLOSEUP

You saw me smile once in a baby picture.
I was sucking my thumb.
Another time, in the picture
When I was wrinkled with love.
A third, in the picture
When I watched death
Turn its key in life's lock.
To talk to you
I had to borrow a smile.
In the wedding picture
We can still be seen smiling.
To follow traditions
We live on borrowed things:
Sweetness from borrowed sugar,
Warmth from a neighbour's fire.
It makes certainty weak.
Just to talk
We have to borrow a third person.
The style has changed now.
You talk by taking pictures.
You took a closeup of me
Sitting by the locked one-way phone.
The receiver, I am sure,
Was more sure than me.
Why did you not snap the smile of that moment?

Kishwar Naheed
Lahore, Pakistan

community and academics for the feminists, researchers have lived dangerously in a frontier zone of tension and ambiguity.

Even so, the feminist movement has been the very source of life for scholarship on women, suggesting themes, methodologies and helping to create a network of solidarity that is crucial for scholars confronting academic orthodoxies. What we now need is a clear definition of our role within the women's movement, so that we are allowed the distance needed for scholarly work, which may not respond to the immediate needs of political practice but may prove of greater relevance for the

women's movement in the long range. I am not arguing for a rigid division of labor that could reinforce hierarchies within the movement but, as our numbers grow, I feel we can share much of our responsibilities so that each one of us does not have to be on permanent duty for every protest, for every campaign, and we may acquire legitimacy for the systematic study that is so much needed, and that is our special contribution both to the movement and to the social sciences.

¹Marysa Navarro, "Research on Latin American Women," *Signs*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Autumn 1979).

²See, for example, A. O. Costa, C. Barroso and C. Sarti, *Pesquisa sobre mulher no Brasil. Cadernos de Pesquisa* (1985).

Carmen Barroso works with a collective of researchers on women at the Carlos Chagas Foundation (Sao Paulo), the largest and best known women's research center in Brazil. She presented this paper at the Women's Studies as a Strategy for Educational Change Panel held at the NGO Forum in Nairobi in July of 1985.

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ABC of development



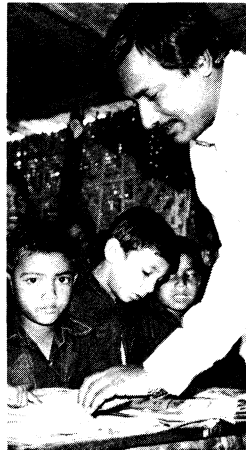
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WHO AM I?

I am not the woman selling shoes and socks.
 I am the one
 You buried alive in the wall*
 And thus became guiltless as the breeze.
 You did not know
 That bricks and mortar cannot bury voices.
 I am the same
 Whom you buried under the load of custom.
 You did not know
 That light never fears darkness.
 I am she
 From whose lap you took flowers
 And returned thorns and embers.
 You did not know
 That fragrance cannot be arrested.
 I am she
 Whom you bought and sold
 In the name of my modesty.
 You did not know
 That floating on a clay pitcher even Sohni cannot die.**
 I am she
 Whose hand you gave away
 To unburden your head.
 You did not know
 That a nation cannot awaken
 While its mind is still enslaved.
 You traded me for my chastity and modesty,
 For my fidelity, my motherly love.
 But now is the time of flowers in the mind, in the lap.
 Selling shoes and socks
 I am not that half clad woman on the poster.

**refers to the story of a courtesan who was buried alive in a wall for falling in love with a prince.*

***refers to a love story in which the girl tries to cross a river on a pitcher to meet her lover, but is drowned because someone replaces her good pitcher with a clay one.*

Kishwar Naheed
 Lahore, Pakistan

ning continued without further harassment. Russian and American delegates pledged to work together for joint peace demonstrations.

Edith Ballantyne, General Secretary of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) stressed the fact that women were the initiators of many new forms of action, such as peace marches, peace camps, schools of peace, and peace studies and research. The Scandinavian women have initiated and organized international peace marches to Paris, and from Stockholm to Moscow and Minsk. In Nairobi the UN Secretary-General Mr. Perez de Cuellar met with women who had participated in "The Great Peace Journey" and encouraged their efforts and plans to visit as many UN countries as possible in 1986 during the UN-sponsored "International Year of Peace." It is most important for women in all countries to support those peace initiatives. They are a genuine alternative to arms talks. The NGOs in the world can create a new basis for international negotiations for disarmament and development. In the long run, the purpose of the peace marches is to create a new security system and a world where nobody goes hungry because we spend millions on armaments.

Women are becoming more comprehending, more conscious. We want to be heard, and that in itself is very different to what has gone on in the past when only men held arms talks behind closed doors. Women must be included on government negotiating teams. Only when women are included at the United Nations and the Geneva talks will a true alternative for negotiating peace emerge. Women are the catalysts for bringing about change, but if we are not heard, not included at international meetings, there will be no change. And as women in the Peace Tent stated over and over again, the real alternative to violence and nuclear war is not to commit such acts.

One of the last major sessions in the Peace Tent was chaired by Fran Hosken, the editor of *WIN* (parts of this session are included in the Autumn 1985 issue, Vol. 11, No. 4). The discussion confirmed that the Peace Movement, the Ecology Movement, and the Feminist Movement are all parts of a fundamental social revolution which is really the only true revolution because women are involved: it is a genuinely different revolution be-

cause it is bloodless. No group has done more to demonstrate the effectiveness of non-violent action than the Greenham Common women. The women gathered in Nairobi were there to learn and to share with each other, not to compete with each other. Women's studies and peace studies are opening up new concepts of conflict resolution and demonstrate the need for alternative educational programs at all levels. Non-military solutions to international conflicts must be learned. Much of what was said by Ursula Franklin at the Halifax Conference in June about alternatives was repeated by other women present in Nairobi. Hilka Pietila, the Secretary-General of the Finnish United Nations Association, reminded us that we must renew efforts to make the UN work:

This year we are celebrating the 40th anniversary of the UN, which provides a good opportunity. We do not need all kinds of additional agreements – all the negotiations about disarmament and arms reductions have only led to increases in the arms race. Peace is the way to Peace, not discussions about arms. The women's peace movement needs to get back to basics, we should not get involved in complicated discussions about different kinds of armaments. That, as the record shows, does not lead to peace. Peace is the only way to peace.

It is up to women to find the way to peace. What made the experience at Nairobi so exciting and so positive was that the Conference took place in Africa. The women of the world were together for the first time. The Conference in many ways belonged to the African and Asian women. They were there in great numbers, and their rejection of sophisticated Western technology as being of little use in solving their needs, became their statement on peace. Women need good garden tools, not computers. Having their land turned into cash crops – which are used in turn to buy military goods – in no way serves their needs to find nutritious food for their children. As women from all parts of the world shared their problems in Nairobi, the sense of sisterhood and solidarity strengthened. The women of the world were at peace with each other; they can and will find the way to peace for the planet.

Margaret Fulton is President of Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax. She is a feminist peace activist.

THE SUN, MY COMPANION

My country is hot
And burns my hands.
My country is hot
And scorches my feet.
My country is hot
And blisters my body.
My country is hot
And has melted my roof.
My country is hot
And has ignited my walls.
My country is hot
And keeps my children parched.
My country is hot
And forces me to go naked.
My country is hot
And that is perhaps why
I cannot know of rains
Or floods.
Money lenders and beasts and
calamities
And self-styled leaders
Come to ruin my crops.
Tell me not to hate my country.
Let me dry my wet clothes in these
courtyards.
Let me grow gold in these fields.
Let me quench the thirst of
its rivers.
Let me breathe in the shade of
its trees.
Let me wear my country's dust and
its weariness.
I do not want the shade of its
lengthening shadows,
For I have the rays of its rising sun.
The sun spends itself in
my country.
The sun and I
And you
Cannot walk together,
For the sun is my companion.

Kishwar Naheed
Lahore, Pakistan



Illustration by Julie Paulsen

Finally, chemical containers should be disposed of properly. Recommended procedures for proper disposal are: 1) drain and repeat rinsing and draining three times, 2) crush containers immediately and take to the landfill or bury eighteen inches deep in an isolated area away from a water supply, and 3) never re-use containers.¹¹ When I juxtapose the reality of women's lives in developing countries with these instructions, I find that the directives are ill-fated to living conditions there.

Does this mean that pesticides should never be used in developing countries? That question requires another set of considerations. What I do emphasize is that *if* and *where* women are applying pesticides, they should be given protective information which they can understand. In addition, women need the water, fuel and medical services required by the directions.

¹¹Jay Feldman, "The Pesticide Debate," *ruralamerica* (March 1980), p.5.

¹²Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962), p.29.

¹³Donald P. Morgan, M.D., *Recognition and Management of Pesticide Poisonings* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, #055-004-0013-7).

¹⁴*Pesticide Safety: Myths and Facts* (Washington, D.C.: National Coalition Against Misuse of Pesticides, 1984). Pamphlet.

¹⁵David Weir and Mark Shapiro, *Circle of Poison* (San Francisco: Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1981), p.23.

¹⁶David Weir, et al., "The Boomerang Crime," *Mother Jones*, Vol.4, No.9 (November 1979), p.43.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸Ruth Norris, ed., *Pills, Pesticides and Profits* (Croton-on-Hudson, NY: North River Press, 1982), p.17.

"Basta Ya," slide/tape on women of Central America.

¹⁹David Bull, *A Growing Problem: Pesticides and the Third World Poor* (Oxford: Oxfam Printing Room, 1982), p.38.

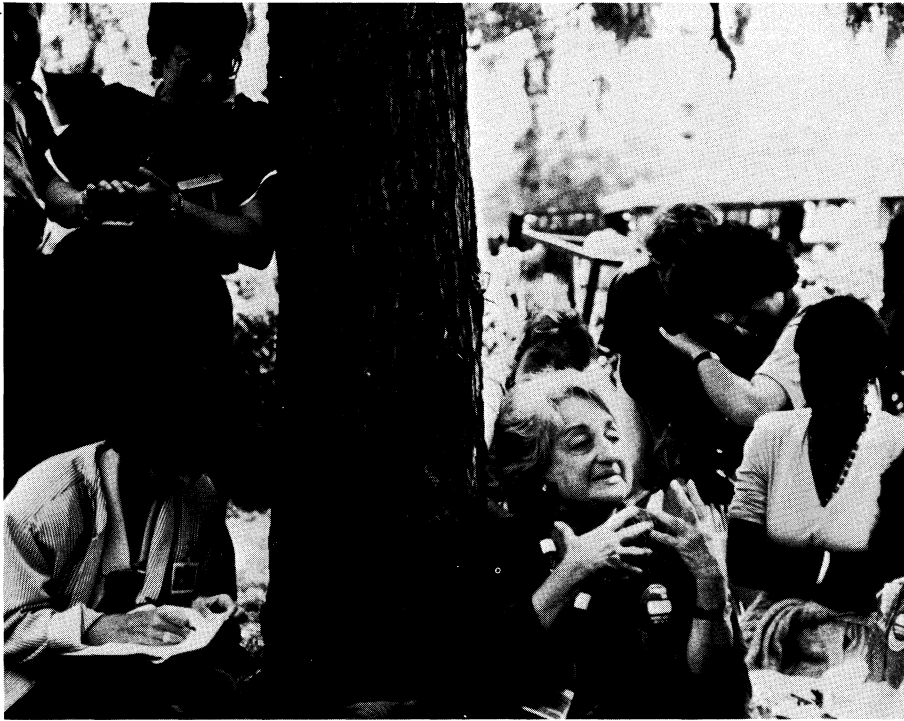
²⁰"Think Before You Throw . . . Dispose of Chemical Containers Safely," (Des Moines: Iowa Department of Environmental Quality, 1980).

B. Eleanor Anstey is an Assistant Professor at The University of Iowa, School of Social Work and serves as chair for Women in Development at The University of Iowa. She conducted a workshop on "Pesticides and Third World Women" at the UN End of Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi in July 1985.

ORDAINED

You carry an empty can of
confidence
While I thirst for forty years.
You see the future through
a microscope
While I seek a highway in
the desert.
You lie in the soft green shade
of smugness
While I am scorched by the
pitiless sun.
You hold the oars of love
While I, like the fingers of
a drowning man,
Grab at the twilight of life.
Glow worms sparkle in your fist
While sadness, fast in my grip,
Tries to penetrate the lines on
my palm.
Spring at your lips calls
At the locked door of my heart
Which did not submit to
the hurricane;
Would not succumb to the flood;
Could not be moved by
the earthquake.
Carying the empty can
of confidence,
How long will you stand at
this door?

Kishwar Naheed
Lahore, Pakistan



Betty Friedan under the fig tree, Forum '85

Credit: Nikita A. Crook

Le Mouvement Mondial des Mères y a présenté trois ateliers, deux francophones et un anglophone. *Les Jeunes et Leur Préparation à leur Future Vie Familiale, La Valeur Économique du Travail Féminin non Rémunéré, Le Rôle des Organisations Féminines dans le Développement.* Les deux premiers, dont j'ai eu la charge, ont réuni des francophones de beaucoup de pays d'Afrique, d'Asie, d'Amérique du Nord et de l'Europe, ce qui a donné lieu à des échanges très fructueux et très instructifs. Le troisième a exploré le rôle des organisations féminines tant en zone rurale qu'en zone urbaine. Nous avons essayé de faire appel à des présentatrices d'opinions diverses pour que les débats soient plus riches. Il faut dire que la francophonie a été beaucoup plus présente à Nairobi qu'à Mexico ou à Copenhague et cela, en grand partie, grâce aux efforts considérables fournis par le Ministère français des Droits de la Femme qui a tout fait pour encourager les Françaises à participer activement et les y a préparées et qui a, par ailleurs, assuré une diversité de manifestations culturelles et techniques françaises.

Si maintenant nous nous tournons vers l'avenir et le prochain Forum, prévu en 1990 et pour lequel Madras en Inde a été proposé comme ville hôte, que pouvons-nous suggérer?

Dans notre quête du progrès, des

améliorations sont souhaitables. Premièrement nous pouvons toutes écouter plus attentivement des problèmes qui ne nous touchent peut-être pas directement mais qui sont urgents pour nos soeurs d'autres pays ou d'autres sociétés. Ensuite, si chacune de nous se concentrait sur les inégalités et les torts de sa propre société, sa propre religion, sa propre patrie, nous aurions peut-être moins de confrontations et davantage de véritables dialogues, moins de slogans stériles et davantage de compréhension réelle et, pourquoi pas, une efficacité accrue dans nos efforts.

Néanmoins toute notre bonne volonté restera vaine si nous n'obtenons pas une participation plus importante des femmes dans les instances parlementaires, législatives et de décision aux plus hauts niveaux. Cela ne sera pas facile et il ne sera pas non plus facile de rester fidèles à nos objectifs féministes une fois que nous serons en place. En effet des gouvernements et des partis politiques se sont rendus compte que les femmes peuvent être utiles pour faire avancer les buts et les objectifs des hommes qui dirigent les nations et les partis. Nous ne devons pas nous laisser piéger de la même manière que les femmes de la révolution française qui avaient le droit de monter à l'échafaud mais non à la tribune, ou que celles qui avaient combattu pour

une Algérie indépendante, pour être renvoyées à leurs casseroles une fois l'indépendance atteinte. En réalité chaque fois que les femmes ont combattu pour les causes des hommes, la leur a été sacrifiée.

Certes nous devons continuer notre lutte pour le progrès, mais le combat pour nos propres droits doit nous unir d'abord. Nous sommes plus que la moitié de la population mondiale, nous devons enfin croire en nos propres valeurs. Celles des hommes, si longtemps au pouvoir, se révèlent aujourd'hui en faillite partout, au Nord comme au Sud, à l'Est comme à l'Ouest.

Bernice Dubois est née aux Etats-Unis; elle est diplômée de Sarah Lawrence College à New York (B.A.), et vit en France depuis 1952. Élue Conseillère au Mouvement Mondial des Mères, elle milite dans diverses organisations féminines.

THE COFFIN

From the tree on which sparrows
were wed
He chose the timber.
The same silver shade under which
lovers are joined,
He chose for his last robe.
With the same blind belief
Which turns trust to worship,
He closed his eyes
In a new surrender.
The urge to keep love secret
Needs sealed lips.
He gave poise to that quiet.
Like the grass hidden under water
I watched him
With waves gathering on my face.
He was an ocean
Yet he was confined.
I, a small stream,
Spilled over the banks.
Till the wedding of the next age
of sparrows
He will still live in the soul of that tree
And I shall search for him
On the island of my ignorance.
But till the wedding of the next
to next,
And an even later generation
of sparrows
He will still live in the soul of that tree.

Kishwar Naheed
Lahore, Pakistan



Mother and Daughter, 1923 (acrylic on canvas) Illustration: Sandra Jane Shaw (photo: Marion Barling)

appropriate wages and conditions and with a required minimum training comparable to similar professional groups. Children particularly between the ages of 0 and 8 need the best services a society can offer, not a piecemeal, substandard approach: this requires improvement in wages and working conditions, training, and community recognition of the value of the early childhood educator. These early years are the most crucial in a child's life and support for programmes and workers in this field is long overdue.

The ultimate aim of multiculturalism is to break down racism, intolerance, ignorance, sexism and prejudice, and to bring about greater understanding. It is only now that we are coming to recognise the multicultural nature of our society and learning to respect each other. The development of a multicultural, polyethnic approach will bring about a more realistic, enriched and enlightened Australian society. If encouraged in other countries – particularly between developed and developing countries – it could bring about a

more tolerant and enlightened world. If conflicts are to be reduced, then we must start with educating our children to learn to respect each other with allowing all children the opportunities to reach their full potential. This approach will assist in the desire to maintain peace and, if adopted on a global scale, would offer our children not only the enrichment of learning in a multicultural context, but a future in a world of peace and understanding.

¹Gwen Davey, "Multicultural Listening for Early Childhood," *Education News*, Vol. 16. No. 9 (1979).

²A.B. Gaarder, Statement by Chief Modern Foreign Language Section/U.S. Office of Education, before the Special Subcommittee on Bilingual Education of the Committee on Labour and Public Welfare, (U.S. Senate: May 18, 1967).

Bev Hall attended Forum '85 as a member of the UNAA Status of Women Committee, South Australia.

THE REWARD OF BITTERNESS

Pressing the smile on a piece of paper
To one's own lips
Would not change life's sunset.
Every day the song of birds
Incites me to speak,
But the snake inside me swallows
my voice.
In the middle of the night
I saw the moon fertilizing light,
rainless clouds
And your form, like an almond tree,
Bent over the window of my being.
Two lines.
Like lovesick footsteps
Want to journey together.
Darkness stretches its hands inside me.
Now in my veins the darkness crawls
Instead of the blood.
Watching the crying sun waiting outside
The morning of my being refuses
the freedom.
Water drops on leaves, keeps falling
Even after the rain.
If such a drop falls on my lips
I cannot call it the rain of love.
When we can erase dates and memories
Perhaps life's sunset then
May change.

Kishwar Naheed
Lahore, Pakistan

A LINE WITHIN CIRCLES

Whenever he lit his excuse-lamp
I lowered the wick of my belief-lamp.
His excuses were strange:
He could not swim,
Yet pretended that the sweat-soaked
clothes
Were wet only because he had not
dried himself
After the swim.
He could not fight
Yet said that his shirt was torn
In a brawl.
He could not forget
Yet, in shuffling dates
Reduced days to moments.
He could not keep captives,
Nor could he set free.
He could not forget,
Nor could he remember.
He raised walls upon walls on
flimsy foundations;
He made dreams lies.
His hobby was to find reflections in
moving water.
His pastime to hold his breath
And descend into water.
Now he is pretending to hold his breath
But lamps keep going out.
I raise the wick of my belief-lamp
Only to find my own self,
Like his diminished dead self.
Also shrinking.

Kishwar Naheed
Lahore, Pakistan