

printed with messages condemning violence against women. A Chinese woman from the Netherlands gives testimony on behalf of a Polish woman; a Sudanese woman testifies for a Gambian woman.

Horror stories of women's heads and breasts being used as military trophies are related. Women from Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia raise their voices against the brutalities of war. A middle-aged woman from South Korea tells how she was raped by soldiers as a young woman during the Korean War, destroying her in body and soul. Rape, the women say, must be treated as torture; violations against women during war must be treated as war crimes. Stories of incest and domestic violence, of female genital mutilation, they say, must be taken out of the private sphere and be seen as socio-political problems.

Religious persecution of women is vividly and horrifyingly described. An Algerian woman describes the Islamic law which prescribes the "correct" size of rock that should be used to stone an "adulterous" woman, neither too large to kill her immediately, nor too small to inflict no harm, but of a size that will cause a slow and painful death. These injustices and violations have, as one woman says, produced "a silent anger that is so loud that if it were let out would shatter the world."

But the move to place women's human rights into the sphere of human rights in general, is not unproblematic. As a representative of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development puts it, the move to legitimate women's rights issues by bringing them into the "mainstream" of human rights may be interpreted by some as an acknowledgement of the failure of feminism to demarginalize these issues. In the end, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights adopted a resolution calling for full integration of women's rights into the work of all human rights bodies and, in 1994, appointed a special rapporteur on violence against women.

On the surface, the structure of *The Vienna Tribunal* seems simple. Little narration is used. Where it occurs it exists merely to add details about the conference and its outcome. In addition to relating their personal experiences, the women themselves provide the analytic thread running through the video, drawn from the meticulous research they have done in preparing their testimonies. This "talking head" approach, so frequently maligned by critics, can be used to powerful effect by feminist filmmakers, as this video demonstrates, providing the opportunity for women to speak their own stories, with a minimum of intervention. What *The Vienna Tribunal* does is to take the women's stories out of the realm of the private and personal and place them in a global, politicized context. The video, available from the National Film Board, will be a valuable resource for all those working around issues of women's human rights.

SPEAKING OUT AGAINST VIOLENCE

The National Film Board of Canada.

by Susan Nosov

For the first time, the National Film Board of Canada is offering a collection of videos for women in a series format: *Speaking Out Against Violence*. This collection of recent productions is divided into three themes—*Ending Silence / Survivors' Truths* followed by *Children's Voices* and *Challenging the System: Voices from the Personal to the Political*. This series has been compiled to present an anti-oppression model against violence that makes the connections between physical, sexual, economic, ritual, psychological and racist violence as it is experienced in the lives of women and children.

The interwoven theme of *Speaking Out Against Violence* is the abuse of power and privilege by individuals,

groups and institutions and its impact on women and children from diverse cultures, races and class positions. Central to all are the personal testimonies from the experts: the survivors of abuse and oppression. Throughout the films it is their united voices that name the violence, articulate its systemic nature and suggest strategies for survival, healing and change.

In reviewing this package many titles stand out: In *Where Angels Dare* four women and two men speak eloquently and honestly of painful childhood abuse, their subsequent journeys through hell and the turning points that set them on the road to well-being. One of the elementary truths this film exposes is the capacity for those who have lived through violence to emerge as teachers who can assist us in examining the nature of violence and questioning the stereotypes and conventions we place on our so-called "victims."

The impact of racist acts by adolescent youths against a Native woman and her child are examined in *For Angela ...* This emotionally charged drama in which the lead role is played by *North of 60's* Tina Keeper, is based on a true story. The premise of the film is simple: racism is violence. The accompanying guide helps to explore the cultural, linguistic and media-inspired biases to which we are all subject in learning and unlearning racist behaviour.

Them That's Not: Single Mothers and the Welfare System takes a critical look at Canada's welfare system through the eyes of single women and single mothers, and examines why they and others are joining together to fight for social change. The message here, as in all of the titles in the collection, is the vital importance of empowerment and self-determination in naming and surviving oppression and abuse. Brenda Thompson, a welfare mom and social rights advocate from Nova Scotia who dared to take the government to court perhaps says it best: "We are the ones who can change the welfare system, people who are most oppressed—Native

people, Black people, people with disabilities, single mothers on welfare ... it's almost like a revolution”

These three titles plus others such as *Sisters in the Struggle*, *Toward Intimacy*, *The Boys of St. Vincent*, and *The Vienna Tribunal* illustrate the interwoven themes of women and children's realities of individual and systemic abuses and the ways in which they fight back.

Viewed singly, the titles in this collection retain much of their original impact and message; in the context of this package, they become part of a library of information and resources about feminist political action and social change that allows the viewer to place the issues of immigrants and refugees, women in conflict with the law, ritual abuse survivors and economic exploitation on the continuum of patriarchal violence and oppression.

POUR UNE ÉTHIQUE DU BONHEUR

Elaine Audet. Les Éditions du Remue-ménage, L'aut'journal, Octobre 1994.

par Marie-Louise Mutombo

Ce livre compile des articles écrits entre 1990 - 1993 par la poète Elaine Audet, une féministe, originaire du Québec. Elle dénonce une forte discrimination vis-à-vis de la femme. Son analyse gravite autour des cinq grands points suivants:

Le patriarcat, la pornocratie et la violence

Lors du massacre de quatorze étudiantes à la polytechnique le 6 décembre 1989, Elaine Audet stigmatise le laxisme des porte-paroles politiques ou médiatiques qui, d'après elle, n'ont pas donné à cette tragédie sa juste mesure. Elle soutient, en effet, que si le tueur avait par exemple

sélectionné une minorité visible, le mobile raciste aurait été relevé haut et fort alors que dans cette tuerie on s'est employé à minimiser le mobile sexiste, anti-féministe du crime. Si les échecs de ce crime peuvent être évoqués pour exprimer son geste, on ne peut de manière pertinente expliquer que ses victimes ne soient que des femmes.

L'utilisation commerciale et publique du corps de la femme comme objet sexuel encourage et banalise toutes formes de violence à l'égard de la femme. Audet relève que les lois sur la violence faite aux femmes ne sont pas assez sévères et que le processus judiciaire ne permet pas à toutes les victimes de viol d'obtenir la justice des hommes.

Le rôle des médias

De nos jours les médias ont la tâche non-négligeable de s'ériger en source unique d'information et de jugement. Certains journalistes mêmes cités de plus en plus fréquemment comme « penseurs de notre temps » sont devenus héros des séries télévisées ou aspirants à la direction du Québec souverain. La manipulation du visible et de l'image ne dessert pas les intérêts bien compris de la femme et la lutte pour sa libération.

Féminisme et question nationale au Québec

Les femmes ne sont pas parties prenantes au débats sur la question nationale. En l'absence d'enjeux spécifiquement féminins faut-il perpétuer la tradition suivant laquelle les décisions politiques sont toujours prises par les hommes. Comment parler de démocratie quand il y a absence de 52% de la population des lieux où se négocie et se décide l'avenir de toute la province du Québec.

Solidarité et paix

C'est un appel à la cohésion de toutes les forces vives du Québec, mieux de toutes les femmes québécoises « de souche » ou néo-

québécoises en vue de partager leur réalité au lieu de se retrancher dans un ghetto nostalgique souvent plein de rancœurs et de préjugés. Elaine Audet invite toutes les personnes exclues du débat sur la question nationale de mettre dès aujourd'hui les mains à la pâte pour construire ensemble la nouvelle société québécoise.

Elaine Audet ne mâche pas ses mots. Une éthique du bonheur s'impose comme une réflexion puissante sur les valeurs politiques, sociales et économiques de la société québécoise et canadienne. Les stéréotypes de domination masculine et de subordination féminine sont transmis à travers la culture et l'éducation au fil des jours. On ne peut s'empêcher de convenir avec Audet que notre société, originellement patriarcale porte encore aujourd'hui des marques de la dictature sexuelle. La lutte pour la libération de la femme se trouve toujours devant de grands défis à relever. Les hommes doivent-ils se remettre en cause et se convertir sincèrement ou les femmes doivent-elles, toutes races confondues, garder la hache de la guerre déterrée jusqu'à la victoire finale?

Nous sommes tous et toutes interpellés sur cette espèce d'association des malfaiteurs qui étouffent les femmes au Québec, au Canada, en Iran, en Afrique et j'en passe mais aussi sur la lutte contre toutes les formes de discrimination, dites « politiquement correcte ». Je ne peux terminer sans saluer le projet de société d'Elaine Audet pour une véritable éthique du bonheur. Ce bonheur au féminin passe par la transformation de l'organisation du travail en vue notamment d'un bon équilibre entre les responsabilités familiales et professionnelles ainsi que de l'équité salariale. Le projet féministe requiert la réunification des luttes fragmentées et isolées pour relier la défense individuelle de nos droits à la volonté politique de transformation globale de la société.