



Christmas Special

Reviews - Poems - Cartoons

Self Help Group 'GROW'

The Hidden Face Of Poverty

Lesbian Line Conference

South Africa

Editorial

.....and much more

THE HIDDEN FACE OF POVERTY

LOCAL TRIBUNAL ON WOMEN & POVERTY

A local tribunal on Women & Poverty was held on Saturday Sept. 17th. It was organised by Women's Action Group Churchfield (Congrats for a job well done!) with a view to preparing presentation for National Tribunal on Women & Poverty to be held in Dublin October 1st. These findings were then taken to a European Community event in Brussels in November (four women travelled from Cork) to be used in a way of ensuring that women's needs are kept in mind when Social Policies are being drafted for 1992.

Several workshops were held during the day dealing with WOMEN'S POVERTY & Social Welfare, Education, Role as Unpaid/Low Paid Carers, Charity/Control, Health, The Law and Housing. Confidentiality was the order of the day, resulting in many personal stories being shared. Feelings of anger and frustration were very strong. Many women were moved to tears by these personal accounts. There was a general feeling of being trapped in poverty by the system despite heroic efforts on the part of many women.

Some practical suggestions were made:



- That the Council for the Status of Women and Poverty Tribunal should demand a meeting with the Taoiseach, Ministers for Finance, Social Welfare, Health and Education and put to them forcibly the demands of the Poverty Tribunal.

- **FINANCE:** That there should be some sort of interest-free facility set up to help people with temporary financial difficulties, and to give advice, courses etc., on how to manage debts, finances etc.

- That Social Welfare recipients should have much more flexibility with regard to part-time work, especially mothers.

- That people caring for sick or aged relatives at home should at least have the pension money increased to the level of the cheapest residential care.

- **EDUCATION:** That schools, welfare organisations and charities should be more sensitive to the difficulties faced by parents over complete book changes, changes in uniform etc.

- That all schools have a fund to enable parents to buy books, uniforms etc., to be repaid over time and privately if at all possible.

- That it should be the right of all children to have equal access to 'extras' such as music lessons, school trips etc. and the school fund should cover those children whose parents cannot afford it.

- That every school should have a rent-a-book system.

- That school meals should be obligatory and free.

- **HEALTH:** That the stress and worry suffered by unpaid helpers should be recognised.

- That financial help should be available to help them get away from the strain occasionally (This to prevent them becoming sick and needing health care themselves!).

- That there should be no hospital charges for children at all.

- That help should be available towards Taxi fares

EDITORIAL ☆ POVERTY CAUSED BY ☆ DESERTION



Dear reader

Oh shock and horror!!! a whole issue on poverty and we dare to raise our price. Unfortunately we have been barely covering our costs for some time and if we are to keep up and improve our standards with each issue we have to charge our small but devoted band of readers a more realistic price. But for this you get value for money: A bumper Xmas issue with 2 (!) extra pages for as little as the price of a cup of coffee - that is 40 p.

Each of you can help by spreading the word of our existence and of course by buying your own (...2,3,4...) copy/copies.

And, by the way, no-one is stopping you from writing articles, reviews etc... it is YOUR newsletter - use it.

The Newsletter Collective

....LOCAL TRIBUNAL CONTINUED...

for taking children to hospital. Many of whom are not taken due to above financial penalties that poor people cannot afford.

- The same is true of schools of choice. If you are poor, you have no choice as you simply cannot afford the fares to get there.

- That £200,000,000 in Social Welfare money is ours, and should be directed to the areas that we, the women, have decided are important.

- That what we want out of this Poverty Tribunal is action, strong action, not just more words. We want to confront and shock the authorities, to make them take notice, to realise that women are a huge, powerful and angry force and that we will not put with things as they are any longer. We do not want handouts, we want JUSTICE AND WHAT IS OURS.

"Trying to pull myself and my family out of the poverty trap while the system sets many snares to re-trap me"



◆ 'Single parent family' or 'deserted wife' ? ◆

Poverty is now regrettably an established feature of life in Ireland. It is generally relative, so for the purpose here I will define poverty as ANY PERSON DEPENDENT ON SOCIAL WELFARE FOR THEIR SURVIVAL. This is financial poverty leading to emotional and psychological poverty. I was married for nine years and I am now separated nine years. I have three children. Trapped by the lack of Civil Divorce in this country, I am now classed as a Deserted Wife. This title I detest, as it stigmatises me and my family, adding to our Poverty Status. The title of SINGLE PARENT FAMILY is more appropriate. Such families should be recognised for what they are and should not be referred to as "Broken Homes". I stress the home is not broken - just the Marriage Contract. In fact, the home is often a healthier place to raise children after the marriage has ceased to exist. In order to qualify to receive Deserted Wife's Benefit - as a woman - I am stripped of my dignity and have to prove that I have made every conceivable effort to trace my husband while trying, with no resources, and in a very unstable emotional state to look after my children, pay bills, maintain a home, work possibly outside and inside the home and of course must remain celibate. Emotional and psychological poverty is attached to financial poverty. ARE THE INNOCENT TO BE PUNISHED FOR THE WRONG DOINGS OF ANOTHER? This in Charitable Catholic Ireland!

'Regulations take no account of families needs & stress'

At the time of the finality of a marriage, great stress is experienced by all concerned. The parent remaining with the children ends up in a very poor position financially and emotionally. I myself did not have a job so I had to go out and search for one when I was at my lowest. I did not want to take a full time position and still do not, as, I believe, that it is bad enough for the children to lose their father without having to be without their mother for most of the day and night, as housework would also have to be done. This fact is overlooked completely in the Social Welfare Regulations: when a woman applies for Unemployment Benefit, in order, to qualify, she is expected to be available for full time employment and must also provide a babysitter's name this where no reasonably priced creche facilities are available to her. HAVE YOU EVER HEARD A MAN BEING ASKED TO NAME A BABYSITTER?

■ New rules ■

Furthermore, under new rules introduced in January 1988, any woman receiving a state allowance/benefit which I might add, must be and is, included in assessing liability for Income Tax cannot claim Disability Benefit etc. and is only entitled to half the normal personal rate when claiming Unemployment Benefit, with no child dependent payments payable. A woman living with her husband gets full payment - tax free. IS THE GOVERNMENT TRYING TO KEEP ONLY ALREADY DISADVANTAGED WOMEN ON THE POVERTY LINE?

◆ S.E.S. 'if you work, you lose.' ◆

I have this year taken up employment under A Social Employment Scheme which pays £60.00p per twenty hour week, no child dependent payment payable nor entitlement to Unemployment Benefit when the year on the scheme is up. Out of this I pay £13.51p income tax, £1.35p trade union due, bus fares and babysitter and on top of all that I lose entitlement to a Medical Card for myself or my children. I must remind you of my lack of entitlement to Disability

Benefit also. So I'm sick, - NO WORK - NO PAY - but I must pay all Doctor and Medical Expenses. IS IT ANY WONDER THAT WOMEN TURN TO VALIUM ETC.? IS IT A WAY OF DISCOURAGING WOMEN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORKFORCE? IS IT A MEANS OF KEEPING THE NUMBERS ON THE LIVE REGISTER OF THOSE SEEKING WORK DOWN?

Living in this age of government cutbacks and knowing that it is always the weakest sections of the community who are the first to be hit, as illustrated above, I live in constant fear of losing this benefit, this increases my awareness of the poverty of my situation. Coupled to this is the constant worry of who will look out for my children should I die unexpectedly. I did not choose separation and subsequent desertion with its inevitable poverty. This was forced on me by circumstances outside my control. AM I DOOMED TO LIVE MY LIFE IN THIS COUNTRY, IN POVERTY, BOTH FINANCIAL AND EMOTIONAL? I have to answer, YES, at least until my children are reared, but I am constantly searching for ways to free myself from these constraints, in spite of the snares the system imposes.

■ Demands ■

At this TRIBUNAL ON WOMEN'S POVERTY as a mother of a Single Parent Family I call for

- an end to the various terms used to categorise individuals applying for social welfare.
- an end to anomalies in the Social Welfare System as a whole
- a set equal rate of pay for men and women
- a set rate of pay for each child up to twelve years with a higher set rate from thirteen years.
- a provision of reasonably priced creche facilities
- immediate withdrawal of the rules issued in Jan. '88 re entitlement to Dissability Benefit
- rent-a-book scheme to be introduced in all National Schools
- shoe vouchers to be issued to all children of Social Welfare recipients in August and December.
- income tax allowance for children of low income families to be re-introduced
- introduction of divorce as a civil right
- reinstatement of ministry for women's affairs.

EUROPEAN TRIBUNAL ON WOMEN AND POVERTY

This was held in Brussels in November '88. One hundred and seventy poor women from twelve member states participated. The Irish delegation consisted of nine women including four Cork women, Ann (who led the group), Breda, Sheila and Norma. The contributions made have shown clearly that there is common ground amongst all poor women in Europe.

Women at the meeting stated that their poverty is not just about lack of income. The poor are poor in comparison with the rest of the population, not only in income but in terms of their long-term financial and life prospects - their access to jobs and to better jobs; to education; to housing; to health care; to status and their access to real opportunities to participate in influencing change.

DEMANDS:

1) MAKING WOMEN'S POVERTY VISIBLE came across as the greatest demand.

2) WOMEN & WORK: strong EEC DIRECTIVES were called for to ensure that employment protection legislation covers all workers regardless of hours worked. Harmonization of conditions and pay between part-time, temporary and full time workers. Implementation of the recommendations of the EEC CHILDCARE NETWORK. Rigorous application of the equal pay and sex discrimination legislation. Sex specific training. Strong measures to protect women in family businesses and on family farms.

3) WOMEN & BENEFITS: Revision of the gender-specific basis which favours men. Women should not be defined in terms of relationship to men. Individualisation of benefits. Children too must be assessed as independent people and allowances for them paid to the person who carries the responsibility for their care. Adequate minimum levels of Welfare Benefits must be introduced without stigma for all who need them.

4) CHARTER OF RIGHTS: demanded proper health care and decent standard of housing.

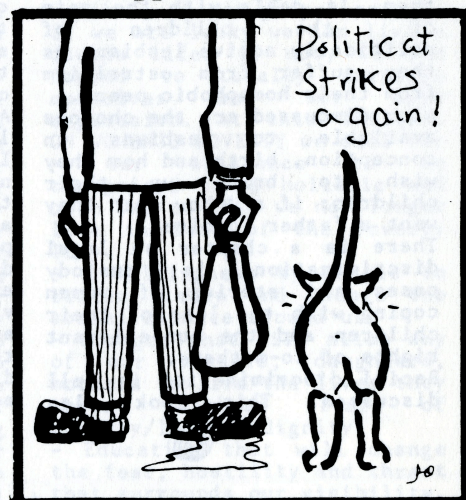
Legislation re homelessness to be investigated. An end to assumption of women as unpaid carers. Funding and facilities for proper health and community care services. Investigation of the marriage and divorce laws in each Member State. Women's contribution to marriage, childcare, domestic responsibilities etc., be recognised in any separation or divorce. Those left with responsibility for children after separation or divorce should be left with the accommodation for themselves and the children whether this property is owned or rented. Adequate provision of information and education so that young girls can make informed choices about their lifestyles and careers.

EEC CHARTER of Social Rights to be drawn up.

5) OTHER SPECIAL DEMANDS:

Recognition and protection of minority groups. Legislation outlawing racism and discrimination. Effect of legislation and funding opportunities on women and other disadvantaged groups to be monitored to establish if their position is being improved, worsened or remaining static. The right of older women to participate in economic and social life. Proper funding and support services for elderly and disabled women to live their lives in dignity. Finally, the women demanded of themselves to develop confidence, build networks, provide each other with moral support and assert their demands.

Each group had to organize its own funds so a social evening with chicken supper has been planned for women involved in the poverty tribunal and their friends for 6th Jan. '89.



REVIEWS

Politics of the Heart (A lesbian parenting anthology)
edited by Sandra Pollack and Jeanne Vaughn

This book should not only be given to every lesbian mother and co-mother but to everyone who knows a lesbian mother. It brings up so many issues that are very seldom looked at or talked about. It is a compilation of stories, letters and poems by lesbians who are guardians of children. It highlights the joys, the pain and growth of various lesbians and their children. This book asks questions of how we treat our sisters who are not alone excluded from their heterosexual sisters because of homophobia but also often excluded by their lesbian sisters because of the difficulty in getting involved for various reasons. It highlights the problems of getting and paying for babysitters, for social welfare lesbian mothers to get to meetings and women's events; the fear of those women to become politically active for fear of losing their children. There are heartrendering stories of lesbians with boy children dealing with their separatist sisters and the hurt and pain caused to them and their sons by the attitudes of their so-called sisters. Also discussed is the conflict in the mothers themselves when their sons and daughters become men and women and accept a society which excludes them and their lovers. This book includes stories of women coming out to their children and their children's acceptance or rejection of them. It deals with the pain of the children of politically active lesbians as they suffer from ostracism from their homophobic peers. Also discussed are the choices available to lesbians in conception, birth and how they wish to bring up their children; if and how much they want a father involved. There is a chapter on legal discrimination in custody cases and stories of women coping with the loss of their children and the non-existent rights of co-mothers. Racial discrimination is well discussed. This book also

covers problems that lesbians have with their x-husbands' role in their children's lives. But the book ends on a note of hope for future generations of lesbians and their children and asks how we can make a better life for lesbian children when they become mothers or guardians.

Sara

women represent the safe home base for the men who try to fight against injustice or are only through the men's interference facing the truth. I recommend this book for all women who want to make a start in learning about living under military regimes; I personally missed a bow of tension, a climax of the story and became a little bit bored towards the end...

Moni



**Isabel Allende
Of Love And Shadows
1987, Black Swan**

She who read "House of the spirits" by the same author and expects the same enjoyment from Isabel Allende's 2nd novel will probably be disappointed. Not that "Of love and shadows" wasn't written in the same brilliant style of writing but it lacks an awful lot of the wittiness and magic of "House of the spirits". On the other hand, how can one write wittily about the terrors suffered by a population under merciless dictatorship? And that's what this book is about - more rigidly than with her 1st novel, I. Allende used her talent to fight regimes in South America and confronts the reader with descriptions of the horrors experienced by the population. She doesn't spare us details, but maybe this shock is necessary to open our eyes as well. At first sight, this book is a love story; Francisco and Irene, both working for a newspaper, become involved in the case of a missing girl and as their search for her progresses, they are drawn deeper and deeper into being exposed to terror and violence, manipulated press and ignorance by a population trying to survive under dictatorship. What disturbed me a little bit was that the

If you intend to give away records/tapes for X-mas, this might give you some ideas... I would like to start my 'review' with Sally Oldfield's album *Femme* with which she continues on a course she already took with her last record - becoming commercial. *Femme* contains very pleasant songs but whoever knows the stuff she's done before might be a little bit disappointed: there's nothing like "Mandala" e.g. on it. It's not a boring album even tho' I would consider it only as very pleasant background music. The same can more or less be said about Sade - *Stronger Than Pride*. She hangs on very strictly to her well-known style and her sound doesn't differ from the two previous albums. But this isn't meant negatively - her music is very good and her voice pleasant enough to give you enjoyment while listening to this LP. *Watermark* by Enya is a kind of music that goes far beyond the usual stuff you find in the charts. Even tho' her single "Orinoco Flow" was No. 1, the album is definitely different. For me, *Watermark* is the best LP I heard this year; the atmosphere of the whole album is very calm, the sound very complex and in contrast to her previous album "The Celts" (soundtrack to the BBC series), more emphasis lies on her voice which is absolutely beautiful. Highly recommended album!

Moni on Music con't...

Mary Coughlan's LP *Under The Influence* is mainly Blues (personally I like the Blues songs best!) but contains also some very unusual songs by Dutch and German songwriters. Mary Coughlan, as we all know, is never afraid to deal with controversial subjects and this album makes no difference. The lyrics are as important as the music and she deals with heroin dealers (single: "The Icecream Man") as well as with her view about Ireland, the 'first time' or women's own personal liberation. Thus something you should listen to!

Finally, I go a little bit into Rock: what I like best about the US-group *Heart* is Ann Wilson's brilliant voice - she's some kind of singer! *Bad Animals*, their latest album contains a good combination of melodic rock, love songs and good old hardrock. The single "Alone" was No. 1 this year. If you like Rock, *Heart* is one of the best groups on the scene as they don't fall into this "scream as loud as possible" stuff of the only-male groups...

I hope I could give you some hints for shopping...

Moni

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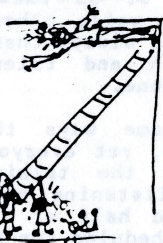
WHAT TO GIVE A ♀♀ FRIEND

DISTRAUGHT MOTHER

Reliable robotic babysitter on 24 hour call, and, A ladder (to make it easier to get down when the children drive you up the wall).



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cartoons by
Jo & Franciska Becker.

"KNIT YOUR OWN MUSELI" DYKE

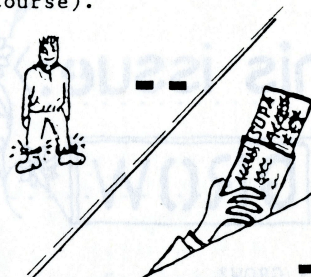
LENTILS!

A years subscription to any collective meeting.



BUTCH DYKE

A pair of laces for her Doc Martin Boots. (black of course).



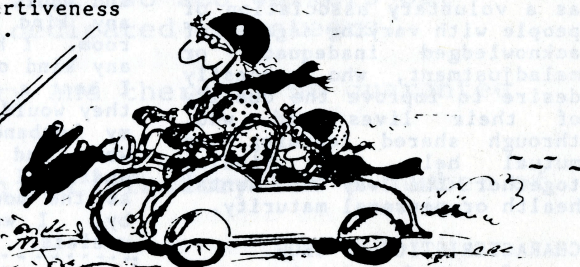
FEMINIST "born again" Friend

A super size Femmefax to help keep track of all her meetings, assertiveness courses and workshops.



CONSERVATIVE HOUSEWIFE

An extension on her "Access Card".



SWINGIN AUNTY

A chance to be on Blind Date or if not A Blind Date.



SUPERGRAN

650cc motorcycle and sidecar.

TRENDY TEENAGER

Pounds of hair GEL and some giant geometric shapes for ears and other places.

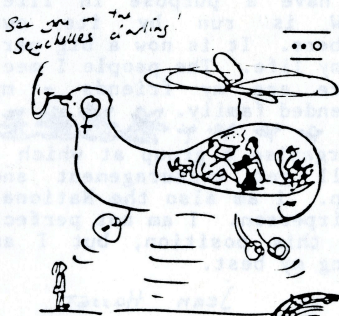


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ooo

DYKE WHO HAS EVERYTHING

Lavender helicopter with gold women insignia.



FEMME/GLAMOUR DYKE

Silk lingerie, and A shopping spree in Paris.



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<SELF HELP> GROWing <GROUPS> a personal <this issue> account **GROW**

NATIONAL LESBIAN LINE CONFERENCE

WHAT IS GROW?

GROW is a community mental health movement of Australian origin and increasing international significance.

GROW describes itself formally as a voluntary association of people with varying degrees of acknowledged inadequacy or maladjustment, who earnestly desire to improve the quality of their lives and who, through shared learning and mutual help, are finding together the way to mental health or personal maturity.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GROW.

Participation in GROW is strictly voluntary and, at ordinary membership level, anonymous.

GROW is also non-denominational. While belief in God and surrender to his healing power is included in the 12-Step Program, it is not required for membership or at any subsequent stage of a person's participation in the work of GROW. As this open-ended school of living, therefore, GROW is universally humanist, or OPEN TO ALL HUMAN BEINGS - irrespective of belief, race, colour or class.

GROUPS AND ORGANISATION.

GROW groups vary in size from 3 to 15 members. Meetings are held weekly, last 2 hours, and are followed by refreshments.

COST AND FUNDING OF GROW.

GROW has no fees or dues, and never will have - because those who most need and can least afford its help are the ones most entitled to receive it.

Each GROW group is self-supporting (for refreshments, literature costs, etc.), through voluntary donations made by members at the weekly meetings.

I joined GROW seven years ago. The youngest of my ten children was fourteen and the six oldest had moved out of home. I had really enjoyed having babies. I discovered that it was not an illness, but something that could be done at home without pain or problems. It was the period of my life when I felt fulfilled. But now it was over. I felt I had no purpose in life any more. I was bored and spent hours waiting at home for my family to turn up. I had developed claustrophobia and would panic in a crowd of any kind or in a dimly lit room. I had disappeared from any kind of an existence. If I sent a cheque to the bank, they would send the receipt to my husband in his place of work and I would be torn apart. I felt worse and worse as the months and years went by. I was nobody, nothing, useless.



And then I joined GROW. The people in the GROW group were from all walks of life and had all sorts of problems. No problem was too trivial or too great. There was help in the programme for everyone. With the help of the group and the programme I gradually got my life together again. I learnt that doing one's best is more important than expecting great heights and being perfect. Being ignored or criticised hurts only if you allow it to. Crowds and dimly lit rooms are an ordinary part of life and not a reason to panic and I no longer panic in these situations. I realise I do exist. I am important and I do have a purpose in life. GROW is run by its own members. It is now a big part of my life. The people I meet there are my friends - my extended family.

I organise a group at which I still get encouragement and help. I am also the National Chairperson. I am not perfect for this position, but I am doing my best.

Jean Hasset

GALWAY WEEKEND

Friday 11 to 13 were very special dates in the history of Lesbian Lines in Ireland. On that weekend an exchange took place, involving women from lines North and South of the Border. The Lines taking part were Galway, Belfast, Derry and Cork. The main reason for this being such a momentous occasion, lay in the fact that the grant that was received by the Cork Line to host the weekend, was the first of its kind or any other kind to be awarded to a Lesbian Line in the South. The Cork Line took responsibility for organising the format of the weekend and the Galway women took charge of finding a venue and indeed accommodating all of us on the weekend. The structure for the workshops was based on ideas and needs of the various participants.

The most interesting topic because of its subject content was the Lesbian and Alcohol. This was a first in that all the lines recognised the seriousness of the issue, it had never been discussed before. Two lesbian alcoholics facilitated the workshop and the conversation and ideas gave everyone a lot of food for thought. We are all very grateful to them for being so open and willing to share their knowledge and experience with us.

Other workshops were on counselling/befriending; difficulty in recruiting new members; and how to maintain distance from new befriendeds on the social scene.

Some of us knew each other quite well; others were new, but as always there was enough warmth and friendliness for everyone.

In some ways the time was short, yet everyone was tired after the talking/discussing and listening required. The second half of this exchange is scheduled for March.

WATCH THIS SPACE!

THE WOMEN'S PLACE.

An appeal to all you women out there.....

1. Do you know what the Women's Place is?.....
2. Do you know where it is?.....
If not, why not.....
3. Do you know it houses the only Women's Library and information centre in the Republic?.....
4. Do you feel it is important to keep it open?.....

At present it is being kept open by the last two SES workers out of a team of four, with help from a few dedicated volunteers.

These workers scheme finishe in February and there is no guarantee that they will be replaced.

A purely voluntary scheme has never been satisfactory for a number of reasons.

If a woman is working and/or has a family, she cannot give a lot of time.....So if you can't, would you be willing to commit a regular sum of money to the Women's Place to enable them to pay one full-time worker?

The sum you contribute can be as small or as large as you like. The emphasis is on the word regular!

If enough women are interested, concerned and committed than the centre can keep going and growing..

Return this to the Women's Place, 24 Sullivan's Quay..A.S.A.P. (Jan15)

I would like to keep the Women's Place open and am willing to commit hours per week in order to help.

I am willing to donate £...p...per week/month in order to help.

Or both!

Your comments and suggestions are always welcome; enclose them here or come and see us.

THANK YOU.



Seasonal Greetings

HAPPY SOLSTICE TO ALL OUR TRAVELLING SISTERS

From the Newsletter Collective on behalf of the stay-at-home sisters.

Hi Scotty, How are you? We are thinging of you. Happy Solstice. Cagney is fine. J.T. & the A + A team keeping the home fires burning. We miss you. Anyone wanting to join the Scotlyn Sabean letter writing marathon send full details of any recent activities to above named woman. First prize a handwritten reply from herself.

Address: Scotlyn Sabean
c/o Myrna Sabean, 60,
Aberdeen Road, Squantum,
Mass. 02171, U.S.A.

Tel: 617 328 0462
(millionaires only)

Also away and sadly missed
by friends and women family:

DEIRDRE, COLLETTE & NIAMH.

Hi, you three bronzed tough-tummed travellers, how goes it and how's your Spanish? Are your rears train-seat shaped yet? Watch out for those Ipanema Girls! (In *Brazil they speak Portuguese - Oh dear!)

Where's our article?
Next deadline 15th Jan. '89

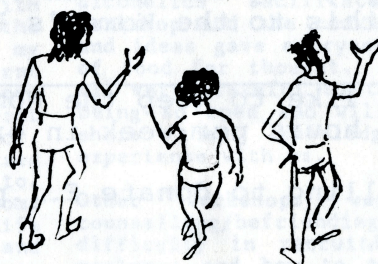
Address: For Niamh first
week January. Collette
& Deirdre 10th March '89.

For last week in December
(if you run like
you might just make it!)
p.s. Thanks for cards.



A travelling sister is like
The Frog.
She sit on what she ain't hardly
Got, almost.
And by times you find out
Where she is,
She is often somewhere else.

(With apologies to a french-canadian child poet, and
Ashleigh Brilliant)



Address:
Central Post Office,
Rua Primeiro De Merco,
Rio de Janeiro,
Brazil.
or c/o O'Flynn,
Caixo Postale 1219,
Cep 40000,
Salvador,
Bahia,
Brazil.



LESBIAN

POVERTY



As women we suffer from all the same aspects of Poverty, in Health, Welfare, Law, Power and Control. As Lesbians we experience an extra dimension which we will try to tell you about.

LOW INCOME/PAY: We are a percentage of the huge number of women involved in low-income, part-time work or unemployed. Due to this situation we experience the loss of dignity and insecurity that is associated with Poverty. Some of us have well-paid, full-time, professional jobs. However, one thing we have in common is the fear that exposure can mean Automatic Poverty. Many of us choose/or are forced to emigrate because in other countries there is less chance of our sexuality leading to impoverishment.

What we need

- is strong legislations in Ireland that protects us from harassment and loss of work because of our sexuality. Sexuality had no role in the workplace.

WOMEN'S ROLE/STATUS/UNPAID

CARERS: This is a society which encourages and celebrates and rewards 'Marriage' of men and women. The system makes mortgages for houses within easy access for most married people. A lesbian couple would find it near impossible to get a mortgage. A heterosexual couple are rewarded for their union by a celebration often paid for by family; presents of all the items needed to start on that new journey. A lesbian couple live as 'Flat-mates' with a silence surrounding their situation. This often means they are isolated from family and neighbours, so there is no support network to help them to set up as a household. The very idea of 'Pretend-Families' is derided and knocked by both church and state.

To choose to live as a single woman is not easy or encouraged in this society. As a single lesbian woman who has made this choice, you are more open to pressure by society. The illusion is that we are in a state of 'waiting' for Mr. Right.

Our situation is seen as temporary, a limbo of wanting

and waiting. This attitude lacks respect for choice. Taking this a step further we know that single women are prime targets for the role of Unpaid Carer - How many of the unpaid carers in Ireland are lesbians?

What we need

- is for our relationships and families to be recognised and respected.

- Access to such things as mortgages etc., to be made easier.

- The choice to live as a single woman to be respected and catered for in our own society.

HEALTH: Our main concern as lesbians is in the area of Gynaecological Health Care. It excludes the notion of Lesbian Sexuality. When we go for smear tests etc., we are treated as heterosexual women so our care is impoverished.

We have trouble gaining access to see our lovers when they are seriously ill in hospital and are often the last to know what is really happening. Our role as next of kin is denied us by hospital and other family members.

What we need

- is a Health Care system which includes us fully and openly in all aspects.

SELF IMAGE/VIOLENCE: To come out as a Lesbian is a very big decision. Some of us are out in some areas of lives, many others are hidden away behind the oppression of religion, tradition, sexuality and economics. It takes a lot of courage to come out against the back-drop of fear, guilt and isolation. We lay ourselves open to rejection by family and friends. We are the bait for abuse, violence, and derision on the street, in the home etc. Our life style can become an area for labelling and imposition by media, state and church. Very often in choosing to tell our friends we take on a responsibility for their reactions especially if they are finding it difficult to cope. This can lend itself to a lot of stress and depression and guilt in our own lives. The bottom line is that taking any steps to being open in our life style can lead to emotional and financial

poverty. We say that this will all continue so long as language and society ignore us.

What we need

- is to be included so we can be open.



OTHER AREAS: Pain, grief and poverty is experienced in many other areas. As lesbian mothers we are wide open to bad treatment by Social Welfare and The Law. We are seen as unfit and this fear often keeps us in marriages and situations which are detrimental to our physical and mental health. We fear rejection by our children or worse still loss of our children.

The church offers us very little solace. For many where religion is an important and integral part of our lives; it can also lead to guilt and lack of respect for ourselves by the biased role it takes.

Many of us are addicted to alcohol, dependent on prescribed drugs etc., suffering from mental/physical illness (for which we are unlikely to get proper care).

If we are lucky we can live a double life; if not, we are forced to totally suppress ourselves and our true expression. At this TRIBUNAL ON WOMEN'S POVERTY we call for - Our existence to be recognised in a holistic and open way so that we no longer live in fear of the Poverty Trap.

- A willingness by people to listen, learn and change the social climate around us.

- Changes that will allow any of our sisters, daughters, mothers to live the lives they choose without fear of poverty/loss of dignity.

- Education that will change the fear, hostility and threat that surrounds our visibility.

"The fundamental condition affecting the lives of African women in South Africa is the migrant labour system, which keeps apartheid's labour cheap - and chained."



WOMEN WORKERS IN SOUTH AFRICA NEW RIGHTS WON!



This article is from the Cork Anti-Apartheid P.R.O. to give some idea of what organized labour can achieve even in Apartheid South Africa. This has been handed in by Margaret Daly (College Officer Cork Anti-Apartheid) on behalf of Martin Shield.

ooo

Women workers in South Africa have a number of specific problems when attempting to win improved working conditions through trade union organisation. The majority tend to be in the areas of farmwork and domestic work - notoriously difficult to organise. Those that do work in other areas of the economy tend to be in low paid and low skilled jobs. In addition, the general sexism of SA society which gives rise to this situation in the first place, militates against women participating in trade union activity to change their situation. These problems have not, however, prevented the Commercial, Catering, and Allied Workers Union of SA (CCAWUSA), from winning some important gains for women workers. CCAWUSA is a sister union to IDATU, which represented the Dunnes

strikers. It caters for similar types of workers; mainly women, mainly low paid. The most significant gain this union has made is the right for paid maternity with the right to return to work. Emma Mashinini, general secretary of CCAWUSA described the situation of women workers before the winning of the first maternity agreement just five years ago "before you were dismissed as soon as you were noticeable. Or you were victimised...when a woman with long service went on maternity it was considered broken service. When she came back it affected her wages and everything. She had to start from down below. And when it comes to retrenchment you were "last in", now CCAWUSA has won six month full paid maternity leave with guaranteed re-employment. In fact CCAWUSA has now replaced maternity rights with parental rights in its negotiations. CCAWUSA may be the advance guard but similar rights have recently been won in the motor and metal industries. Still women workers have a long way to go, but some significant progress has been made over the last few years. South African women, both black and white have a long history of militant trade unionism. It is

an effective weapon in the struggle for the emancipation of women in SA. The present attacks on the democratic trade union movement in SA is a direct attack on women.

In the next issue: Areas of work of the Anti-Apartheid movement.

Letter from a friend

Elizabethville

I walked down a long dusty road
And saw children starving in the sun.
I walked down a curving white beach
Near Elizabethville, and saw children,

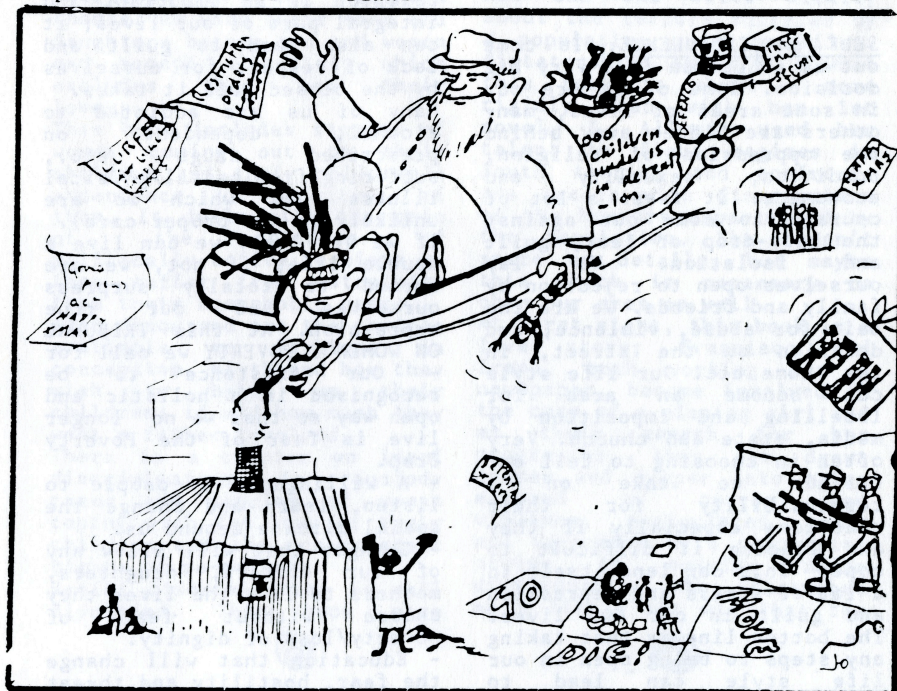
Behind barbed wire
Staring at the sea
That was reserved
For people like me.

Ashamed I walked back,
But I saw them
Fenced in the township.
The same children,
Behind fences
A wide strip of road
To make bombing easy.

The dead children
Behind barbed wire
Who were not
allowed to be free.

Freedom's reserved
For people like me.

Jo



"YOU HAVE
STRUCK
A
ROCK!"

The Women of South Africa

CHRISTMAS SOUTH AFRICA

Happy christmas, small child.
Though today you may lose
Your father, your mother,
Or have nowhere to hang your
stocking,

We celebrate the coming of
Our whiter than white
Saviour.

But if the day finds
Your brother or sister
Hung bloody on wire
For a christmas
offering

Do not presume to celebrate
Their birthdays or to mourn
Their deaths.

You are, after all,
A stranger in this
Land,

And there's no room
At the inn
For small
Black christs

Jo



Charity ?

See the picture on the wall,
The table in the hall
Is moving.
Carpets from the floor
Hurry through the door,
They're moving
ev'rything today -
Got no place to stay -
Just like before.

Even the memories,
Brief as they were,
Are moving..
Leaving a town
That is turned upside down
By its heels -
Very big wheels
Is charity.

Little children on the bed
with many tears unshed
Are moving.
Feeling so alone,
Ev'rything they own
Is moving.
Hunger is a pain -
Common as the rain -
Just like before.

And all the sermons,
Teachings and words
Are moving
All the deaf ears
To respectable tears
Of remorse ...
Giving, of course,
To charity.

WENDY CASEY

SPELL BOUND ♀

BOOK LAUNCH

Spellbound Books was launched
by Jazz singer Honor Heffernan
on Tuesday evening Nov. 1st at
The City Centre, Moss St.
This new co-op promotes and
publishes non-sexist
children's books and witty
postcards. The launch included
the publication of:

- A Dollop of Dublin (Non-
sexist colouring A-Z of Dublin
with puzzles and alphabet for
3-8 year olds. 32 pages, 3
colour cover, 1 colour inside,
21 x 20 cms, £ 2.50)

- Olive's Honeycottage
Restaurant (In celebration of
Dublin's Millenium, a third
collection of Irish produced
non-sexist stories, verses and
illustrations written by
children from Dublin for other
children. 32 pages, 3 colour
cover, 2 colour inside, 21 x
20 cms, £ 2.95)

- 62 witty feminist/political
postcards.

In Spring of this year Sue
Esterson and Mary O'Carroll
began exploring the
possibility of setting up a
publishing venture. They met
regularly on Monday nights
over a period of months,
discussing possible
structures, venues, ideas and
related matters whilst at the
same time seeking-out expert
advice and looking for
feedback from various people
in the booktrade and
publishing world. They decided
to form a workers' co-op, to
publish witty postcards that
had been pioneered by Women's
Community Press and to begin
producing children's books as
it was in these areas they
identified a gap in the market
which they have the skills to
meet. SPELLBOUND began trading
in July of this year based in
the "City Centre" in Moss
Street/City Quay. They invited
Noreen O'Donoghue to join
them, which she agreed to do.
Since then the three took to
getting their publishing co-op
off the ground.

books also available; to be
reviewed in WOMEN'S SPACE:
I Hate Mustard, Talk About
Weird and Where Did I Come
From.

GROUPS - & -

"COMING OUT" GROUP

Lesbian social night
Resource Centre
Quai Co-op
every Thursday 8 - 10 p.m.



Yes, it's this time of the
year again !!

The WOMEN'S FUN WEEKEND
planning meeting will be held

Monday 19th December

8 p.m.

WOMEN'S PLACE



Also Monday 19th December
6.30 - 8 p.m.

W.A.G. special meeting

All members are asked to
attend.

DATES - & - EVENTS -

Video Club

The video club is a great
success, so far we have shown
'Marie', 'Coup des foudres',
'Born in flames' and at time
of print we have for 'Jumping
Jack Flash' and '17 rooms'

Films to look forward to in
the new year are: 'In the
beginning of the end',
'Maidens in Uniform' and many
others.
Congratulations to Ger for her
hard work and patience with
the postal system (!!!).



There will be a big CLEAR OUT
of WOMEN'S PLACE rubbish !!!
Saturday January 14th
PLEASE HELP ALL.
Who knows what you might find!



POVERTY PARTY Jan 6th
has been postponed until
further notice !!!

♀ WOMEN'S ♀ PLACE NEWS

The WOMEN'S PLACE will be closed from December 22nd to January 3rd.

In the new year we will only have two Women's Place workers left (Geraldine and Jo) and therefore we have to cut down the opening hours of the WOMEN'S PLACE.

From January 3rd these will be the hours:

Monday - Closed
Tuesday - Open 10 - 5 p.m.
Wednesday - Open 10 - 5 p.m.
Thursday - Open 10 - 5 p.m.
Friday - Open 10 - 5 p.m.
Saturday - Closed.e

TEDDY BEAR raffle winners

Sheila O'Reilly, Bishopstown
Vincent Crowley, Ballincollig
Evelyn Flawin, Bishopstown

The above will be notified of their good fortune by post.

Many more TEDDY BEARS must be won !!!!!

WOMENS SPACE Produced by
Jo, Moni, Barbel,
Ger, Mary M., Phil

WOMEN'S PLACE

in the Quay Co-op
24, Sullivan's Quay
Cork
Tel.: (021) 31 76 60

CONTACTS

CENTRE FOR COUNSELLING,
EDUCATION AND PSYCHOTHERAPY,
6, Cornmarket St., Cork.
Tel: (021) 274950

CHILDBIRTH TRUST, 'Glor na
Glouse', Upper Clogher, Co.
Cork (ante-natal, post-natal
and breast-feeding education)
Tel: (023) 862243

CORK LESBIAN LINE, Thur. 8-10
p.m.
Tel: (021) 317026

CORK PREGNANCY COUNSELLING
HELPLINE (information on
abortion), Mon.-Thur.: 8-10
p.m.
Tel: (021) 314165

CORK RAPE CRISIS CENTRE, 27A,
MacCurtain St., Cork
Tel: (021) 968086

C.N.D., c/o Adi Roche, 8,
Sidneyville, Bellevue Pk., St.
Lukes

CUANLEE, (Women's Refuge) Kyril
St., Cork
Tel: (021) 509800

CURA, Paul St., Cork (free
pregnancy testing)
Tel: (021) 501444

EARTHWATCH, Harbour View,
Bantry, Co. Cork
(environmental pressure group)
Tel: (027) 50968/51283

EDEL HOUSE, 14, Dyke Parade,
Cork
Tel: (021) 272075

QUAY CO-OP. PRE-SCHOOL,
Walleroo, Old Blackrock Road,
Cork

Tel: (021) 311581
S.T.D. CLINIC, Victoria
Hospital, Cork. Free smear
testing, Wed. 10-12 noon
(female doctor); Mon. 5.30-
7.30 (male doctor)

Tel: (021) 966844

WOMEN'S ACTION GROUP, 5,
Churchfield Ave., Cork
Tel: (021) 307969

WOMEN'S PLACE & LIBRARY, c/o
Quay Co-Op., 24, Sullivan's
Quay, Cork

Tel: (021) 317660


WOMEN'S POETRY CIRCLE, c/o
Maire Bradshaw, 22, Mt. Oval
Rochestown, Co. Cork

Tel: (021) 895046

WOMEN'S WRITING CIRCLE, c/o
Women's Place as above
Tel: (021) 317660

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Thanks for the Above Cartoons , Franziska Becker , Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag.