

# STATUS of WOMEN NEWS

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## Women and the Economy —

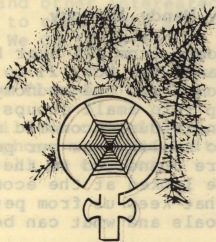
by Joan Graves

There is an underlying change in the world economy as investment shifts from steel and steel-based industry to electronics and silicon-based industry, **Patricia Marchak** told more than 100 women gathered to explore the topic **Women and the Economy: Building Our Own Agenda** at Douglas College, Nov. 21 to 23. This shift in industrial investment often involves the movement of capital from industrial countries to pre-industrial countries in the search for cheap labor and low-cost resources. National economies, that is men and women and especially women, all over the world are impacted as natural resources and labor, particularly female labor do not have the same ability to relocate in search of top dollar.

Marchak, who teaches sociology at the University of British Columbia, used a number of examples to demonstrate that we are now participating in a global economy where governments are losing the ability to control their own economies and transitional corporations are increasing their ability to demand concessions such as enterprise zones. Marchak noted that much international trade is conducted between facets of trans-national corporations rather than between discrete companies on either side of a border.

According to Marchak women are exploited both between and within countries. For example, as capital is invested in the silicon chip

## An Agenda



industry in Southeast Asia, young women of 15 to 25 are pressed into service as a source of cheap, pliable labor. Within a few years their eyesight is damaged and they become "disemployed", often turning to prostitution as the only livelihood available to them.

In B.C. reduced markets for example in soft woods, have led the government to choose restraint as a solution to the changing economic situation. This program blames local labor and individual greed for a worldwide phenomenon. With resource-based employment opportunities reduced, the government cuts services, thereby further decreasing job opportunities for women and men. And women are having to carry increased burdens such as keeping families together in times of growing stress and providing care for the handicapped and the elderly which had formerly been available as public services. Marchak points out that in Sweden the government chose to increase services and welfare. Unemployment there is low.

See Marchak, page 8

## Season's Greetings

# Women and the Economy — An Agenda

by Wendy Anthony

Women from all over B.C. met in Vancouver Nov. 21 to 23 to discuss women and the economy. By breaking up into small groups to discuss individual economic needs, we began to realize how our personal economics are connected to the world economy. We looked at the economic conditions that keep us from personal financial goals and what can be done about it.

A panel discussion followed giving us an analysis of the economic issues that affect us all. Diane Ellis of the Women's Research Centre, Vancouver spoke of women in resource based towns and how they are excluded from community development issues. Women are traditionally the ones to keep the family together in times of economic trouble. But women's work is often an integral, though invisible, part of the economy. Through a sex division of labor, women are often placed in a vulnerable position. Changes in technology and the economy have different impacts on men and women and these need to be recognized and addressed.

Stella Lord of Women for Economic Survival and a long-time SWAG coordinating committee member explained the survey conducted in Victoria in 1983 and described many issues and experience that are included in the publication *Women and Economic Hard Times*.

Melanie Conn of Women Skills in Vancouver, talked about many community economic development perspective and the potential for innovative small enterprises and other economic structures and how an informed economic system can become a collective response to the crisis. Impacts are made on the individual, family and community and social accountability of any program becomes

a necessity.

Donalda Viand, Women's Economic Agenda, Vancouver said women are usually in the lowest economic position as two-thirds of all adult women, single mothers and aging women are living at or below the poverty level. The need for decent wages, education opportunities and equitable social programs such as child/dependent care are priorities.

We had the opportunity to choose from a variety of workshop topics to discuss the relevant issues and possible solutions to problems.

Government Economic Policies--Their impact on women: We need to continue to raise consciousness through women studies; organize to create our own agenda, lobby, write letters to our government representatives and elect more women with proven backgrounds.

Women in the wage labor force: we need to network and share information about jobs and educational opportunities; continue to work for equal pay and opportunities; formalize groups to pressure government and participate in the process.

Immigrant women: there is a need for more input into program design, to work more with mainstream women; to recognize education and skills brought from other countries; greater availability of language training.

Economics of housework: work in the home should be included on the GNP, wages for housework; pensions for homemakers; imagine what would happen in a community if this recognition was made.

The economy is complex, but we are a part of it and can begin to build our own agenda and have creative input for change.

# SWAG Office

## All Members Invited to General Meeting

by Debby Gregory

The office is the centre of much activity these days. A big thanks to members of the office collective who are doing a good job staffing the office: Liz Philipose, Jan Boutilier, Romola Wright, Catou Small, Janet Lundman and Gayle Nelson. The office collective monthly meeting will be held the third Tuesday afternoon of each month at 1 p.m. New faces are always welcome.

Beginning Jan. 10, we will be **open Saturdays** from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Now women who work during the week and women at home with young children will have an opportunity to drop by and get involved. There is still room for anyone who would like to volunteer one Saturday a month to work in the office. You don't need to be a crack typist, you need to be comfortable answering the phone, greeting the public and looking up information. You'll be on your own so you need to be resourceful. Training will be important. Phone the office for more information.

## Workshops

Three sets of **workshops** are being planned for the spring on: Feminism and Motherhood, Women's Sexuality and Women and Money. If you have bright ideas for workshop topics or time to give to planning and organizing workshops, please let us know.

SWAG **discussion groups** are proliferating. The Literary Discussion Group meets once a month to talk about good books by women authors. The next meeting will be held Jan. 29 at 7:30 p.m. at 1660 Chandler. We'll be talking about Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. For more information phone the office or call 598-4529.

A general membership meeting will be held Jan. 20 at 7:30 p.m. at the Friends Meeting House, 1829 Fern St. when all members and other interested women are invited to come along and discuss "Where Do We Go in 1987?"

## Office Closed

The SWAG office will be closed Dec. 25 to Jan. 5 but phone messages left on the recorder will be checked.

## Women and Money

The Women and Money planning group will meet Jan. 12 at 7:30 p.m. in the SWAG office. Members with a background in financial management for women are invited to help plan workshops and prepare brochures.

The **Lesbian Concerns Group** is planning an event for the new year. Anyone interested in helping Victoria's Lesbian community please phone or write the office. You are invited to meet informally at the Crystal Pool jacuzzi Dec. 19 during the adult swim from 9 to 10:30 p.m. To purchase bulk rate tickets meet in the lobby.

I'd like to start a group for **older women**. Older than what? Good question. If you think you'd benefit from and enjoy being in a group for older women, you're old enough to join. Could be a discussion group or a support group or a combination. A sign-up sheet will be available at the Jan. 20 membership meeting or you can call the office.

Welcome to new SWAG members: **Jay Creese, Jill Joyce, Elizabeth Tait, Jean Wade and Shirley Gilarski.**

Happy Chanukah Merry Christmas  
Super Solstice Cheers!

# Free Trade — A Woman's Issue

by Jean Kavanagh

Free trade is not a phoney issue and it will have grave and widespread effect on women. So warns one of Canada's leading feminist economists and vice-president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, **Marjorie Cohen**.

Speaking at the University of Victoria, Cohen presented her analysis of Canada's current free trade negotiations with the United States and their impact on women.

"Women will be adversely affected by free trade, especially women in the manufacturing, transportation and communication sectors," Cohen said. Nearly all women working in the service sector will, to some extent, feel the effects of free trade, she added.

A professor at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, Cohen noted that already 25 per cent of Canada's data processing is performed in the United States.

"There is no reason this should happen, and the United States only hopes the percentage will increase," says Cohen, who believes with free trade such inequities will only increase.

Trade liberalism has been a worldwide phenomenon since the Second World War, and in taking advantage of this, our current Conservative government "is trying to impose U.S. (economic) ideals on us," Cohen believes.

"Brian Mulroney is an economic terrorist," she said speaking at a conference in Vancouver, "and Canadian women must oppose his free trade dealings with the United States."

Cohen says free trade negotiators have not even considered the effects of such an economic practice on

women, and therefore, they are reluctant to admit there will in fact be a negative impact.

"Deregulation in transportation and communications is already having a major effect now, even before free trade is enshrined."

Cohen cautions women against believing the federal government might back off its free trade initiatives because of a protectionist mood in the U.S. She says government would like to project this image, as it would cool the criticism on the homefront if Canadians thought the issue was waning.

"Thirty per cent of our gross national product is devoted to trade, and free trade will really affect women in manufacturing and the service sector because these are areas where the U.S. has a trade surplus with Canada," says Cohen.

She noted that Japan, whose economy is lauded worldwide, trades only 17 per cent of its GNP, yet Canada is prepared to increase its trade deficit in order to achieve free trade.

While free trade is a cause of concern for all Canadian, Cohen and former NDP organizer and leadership candidate Margaret Birrell warned B.C. women of the possibility of special enterprise zones being established in the province.

Premier Vander Zalm spoke of such zones during the election and with co-operation from the federal government we could be facing yet another economic tragedy for women, they said. Usually established in Third World countries, these zones often mean suspension of regular labor practices and laws for companies establishing in them. Lower or non-existent health and compensation standards and salaries below the minimum wage are also part of the

special enterprise zone scheme.

Birrell warned that B.C. women must oppose establishment of these zones before governments invite companies to investigate their feasibility.

"We must act against these special enterprise zone now, and not be seen as women opposing jobs for women after the groundwork has been put in place."

**Women interested in lobbying on these economic issues should contact the SWAG office and leave your name.**

### **New Second Stage Shelter For Victoria**

In Sept. of 1987, a six-unit apartment building will open as a second stage shelter for women and children. It will be for women who have left Transition House or experienced some other crisis and are not able to live on their own. Women will be able to live in the 1-2 bedroom fully equipped apartments from one to six months. During that time they will be able to adjust, take counselling and establish a stable life.

Donations of cash are needed for a down payment fund and furnishings for the building. The Greater Victoria Women's Shelter Society, sponsors of the shelter, is a registered charity and can issue tax deductible receipts. **For more information on this project call 388-5299.**

The society's next project will be an emergency shelter for women and children whose problems are other than fleeing abusive situations which is the client group served by Transition House. Women using the shelter would be those with no money, no housing, those in transition from one facility to another, women coming out of hospital who have not located housing and women referred from emergency situations.



## **Health**

**by Connie MacDonald**

The **Women's Health Consumer Action Group** is working to improve health care and health education available to women in Victoria. Formed last February following a lecture by psychiatrist Dr. Susan Penfold, then chair of Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University, the group is now light months old. It is an affiliate of the Victoria Status of Women Action Group.

In addition to being a health information group, the women act in a lobbying capacity. We have designed and are distributing a Health Needs Survey which you received in your last Newsletter. Collecting information on your perceived health needs is essential to program planning and lobbying strategies. Please return your completed survey to the SWAG office. If you do not have a survey pick one up at the office.

We have begun lobbying and planning public education events, the first of which--a panel on Osteoporosis and Menopause was held Dec. 9. The group meets once or twice a month, committess meet on an ad hoc basis. Being a member offers opportunities for creative work, education and excitement. New members are welcome. You can work on education, funding and public relations and if you can volunteer some word-processing experience that would be great. Come along to our January meeting, for information call Helen Martin at 385-0030. You can make a difference.

# Business Ventures

# Thursday-at-Noon

## Ventures Opens Business Assistance Centre for Women

Ventures is a service for women interested in starting or expanding a business in the Greater Victoria area. It offers help with start-up, marketing, business plans and financing. Clients vary from those who are in the idea stage to those with established business needing larger lines of credit in order export.

The office is staffed by three women and is sponsored by the Community Council of Greater Victoria. Some of the projects in progress are a women's business directory, a Women's Business Week in spring of 1987, and a loan guarantee fund for loans under \$10,000. These loans are the hardest to obtain at banks and credit unions at this time.

The long-term goal of the project is to raise the profile of women in business and make credit more accessible to them. For more information on Ventures, call Kathy Chopik, Judy Liefschultz, or Arlene Wells at 386-1666.

ARE YOU A WOMAN IN BUSINESS? LIST YOURSELF IN THE UPDATED WOMEN'S BUSINESS DIRECTORY BY CALLING OR SENDING IN THE FORM BELOW.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Business \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Ventures  
1296 Gladstone Ave.  
Victoria, B.C.  
V8T 1G6

Phone: 386-1666

- Jan. 8 Women, Sex and Food  
Debby Gregory
- Jan.15 Women's Work in These Hard Times  
Anne Preyde, Women For Economic Survival
- Jan.22 Women's Community Radio: How's It Done?  
Linda St. Louis, CFUV's The Hag Company
- Jan.29 How to Choose a Therapist  
Susan Slatkoff, feminist councillor
- Feb. 5 Women and Self-Esteem  
Gail Schultz, Victoria Centre for Self-Awareness
- Feb.12 Women in the Peace Movement  
Edith Adamson
- Feb.19 TBA
- Feb.26 Politics of Women's Spirituality  
Yvonne Owens & Linda Gibb  
witches and pagan activists

## Vancouver Island Human Rights Coalition Fights Housing Discrimination on Basis of Children

The VIHRC is a non-profit community organization concerned with the protection and promotion of human rights. One of its current projects is "housing discrimination on the basis of children or family composition." The Coalition would like people to share their experience, knowledge and suggestions as well as co-operation as participants in a study. If you would like to assist with the study please call the Coalition at 382-3012.

The aim is to prepare a brief for the Capital Regional District and Greater Victoria municipal councils, provincial and federal governments on housing discrimination on the basis of children or family composition.

# Politics

by Jerri Lee

As the New Year approaches we must resolve to work for peace and equality for all people. Somehow the politicians and the media seem to stand in the way of accomplishing this. For too long now the media has for the most part failed to do its job of presenting the details of all important issues to the public. Instead, most reporters respond to situations and politicians as though they were trained animals in a three-ring circus. Too addicted to the "fast fix" of television, even print journalists are not dealing thoroughly with important issues.

This kind of journalism only encourages politicians to operate as though personal interest and political interest were more important than serving the people who have elected them. The time has come when we should think about ways and means of upgrading the quality of the people we put in office. Perhaps, the should go to school, have to pass intelligence tests or go on probation.

Look at Ronald Reagan--the contras, arms for Iran etc. etc. Look at Brian Mulroney--CF100's being built where the votes are and the prison moved to his own riding. What ever happened to integrity?

When a leader does seem to care about people, makes an attempt to save lives, and prevent suffering they call her "indecisive". Call it what they may Corazon Aquino has already done more to restore at least some of our faith in the political process than Reagan or Mulroney have done since both came to office.

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## Warning on Pyramid Schemes

Don't put money in "pyramid" schemes or chain letters. These go under the "Pilot, crew, passenger" and "Golden Circle" titles, says **Heather Gibson**

## Africa Through Feminist Eyes

Lynn Hunter, chairperson, SWAG has just returned from one month in Africa and will be giving us a report in the next newsletter. Lynn does educational work with OXFAM-Canada on Vancouver Island.

"The region I visited, Eritrea is in the northern most part of Ethiopia and is a society in transition. This accelerated change is a result of a 25-year war, a liberation struggle, as well as the drought and famine," she said.

Under such conditions, she said, old assumptions and methods are quickly thrown aside. "In some ways this may be tragic but there is a positive side. During the past 10 years, the role of women has been transformed. Women are working alongside men as equals; their dress, demeanour and attitude is now different. They have no intention of going back to the old ways. Many of OXFAM's projects in the region are in support of this kind of social change," Lynn said.

## Write A Letter to Mulroney and copy your MP in support of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women

The so-called "real" women do not believe NAC and SWAG should receive government grants to help us in our work for equality. They say we do not represent all women in Canada. The truth is that we have been working on behalf of all women including "real" women for the past 15 years. Homemakers are the largest occupational category in Canada and as such very likely represent the majority of women involved in Status of Women Action Groups throughout the country; the fight for their rights continues. That's the "reality".

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who provided us with a full explanation of how "pyramids" operate. Unfortunately, we do not have space in this issue for Heather's mathematical explanation but heed her warning and don't participate in this old scam.

## News Briefs

### Wanted - Women Interested in Lobbying

SWAG will be initiating some important political lobbies in the New Year. If you are interested in lobbying federal and provincial politicians on women's issues--Now Is Your Chance. If you have had experience, we would like to hear from you. If you want to gain lobbying experience, we would like to hear from you. Call the office and volunteer.

### Marchak continued from page 1

For Marchak now is the time for us to undertake some serious rethinking at the ideological level. For her, the reality is that we must take a global perspective and protect human rights everywhere. We must oppose the right of capital to move unimpeded across borders. We must demand accountability. We must struggle for equality. It is not greedy to do this. We must work for more equitable distribution between women and men, women and women and the Third World and the first world. We must go to small-tech rather than high-tech, reclaiming control over technology. It is currently being done in someone's interest, not ours, she said. "Women are experientially well-prepared to work for these goals."

An increase in funding to St. James Social Service for expansion of **Powell Place**, an emergency shelter for women and their children in Vancouver has been announced by the provincial government.

The Ministry of Social Services and Housing will also participate in the funding of the new **Somenos Transition House** which will be operated by the Cowichan Rape/Assault Society.

**Peggy Barlow**, coordinator of Friends of Injured/Disabled Workers of B.C. informs us that "women must be aware that if they are returning to the work force after an absence, they will not be covered for long-term injury with the Worker's Compensation Board." For info call Peggy at 384-4449.

**Wanted** - donations of feminist books for the SWAG reference library.

**The Status of Women News** is published six times a year by the Victoria Status of Women Action Group, 620 View Street, Victoria, B.C. Phone 381-1012.

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