

Broadside

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The Broadside Collective does not necessarily share the views contained in any article, even if the by-line belongs to a collective member. Views of the Collective are expressed only in editorials, and essays signed by the Broadside Collective.

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This issue of **Broadside** is an introduction, a shadow of its future self. We hope these skeletal pages will give you an idea of what is to come, starting September 1979.

In many ways **Broadside** is a review: a review of the arts, a review of the news; all filtered through a pro-woman screen. Included in this issue are investigative stories, analyses, interviews with woman artists, columns, cartoons, local community events. We plan to continue in this vein. Sometimes we will run a feature for several issues, as we intend to do with our story on women in the media. This issue it's print media, next it will be broadcast media. Already we have commitments from well-respected, established Canadian women writers to provide copy for **Broadside**.

reaching network of contacts, women who will work for **Broadside**: by distributing the paper, selling subscriptions, writing copy. **Broadside** collective members have already begun to fan out and set this process in motion: we now have contacts in Vancouver, San Francisco and Montreal.

Which brings us to another point: **Broadside** is an English-language paper, although that doesn't prevent us from accepting copy written in other languages, to be translated. We will also run translated excerpts from other-language publications (duly credited). We hope **Broadside** stories will get the same treatment.

And now — the information you've all been waiting for: how to work for **Broadside**. (We've already had thousands clamouring at our doors.) It's a 3-stage process. Stage 1

with her.) After that the process of formally joining the collective can take place.

That brings us to stage 3: although **Broadside's** working structure is a collective, we are in fact a legally chartered business corporation. That means the collective members (11 of us) are also directors of the company (Broadside Communications Ltd. — we have big plans). A prospective collective member must become a board member, complete with financial commitment and legal liability. We, the current collective, think the legal, profit-making business structure is to the advantage of everyone concerned. We want **Broadside** to be a successful business, with the possibility of paying staff and contributors as our revenues mount.

We also want **Broadside** supporters to have the advantage of investing their money

This is Broadside

What is missing from this introductory issue is input from our readers. We want **Broadside** to be a dialogue, not just our own encapsulated view of the world. To stimulate participation we plan to hold public meetings every few months to discuss the content of the latest issues of **Broadside**, to exchange ideas, to keep in touch. We also want readers to feel free to submit letters for publication and to send ideas for future stories. And we plan to institute the habit of exchanges with other women's publications, for increased flow of news and views.

Although **Broadside** is based in Toronto and will cover local concerns, it is not in any way restricted to the Toronto scene. Through our exchanges we will keep our figurative eyes

and ears open to the rest of Canada and the world beyond. We also will rely on a fa-

includes any woman who wants to do anything for **Broadside**: write, layout, answer phones, sell subscriptions, solicit ads, distribute the paper, take out the garbage, set up systems to do all the above, etc. etc. Any woman is welcome. Drop us a line or talk to a collective member (readily identifiable by our arm garters and eyeshades.) We will be in touch with you.

Stage 2 includes those women who wish to become collective members. This involves a more consistent commitment of time and energy. The system has not been entirely formulated as yet, but we expect that a woman will work on the paper for a period of several months at which time a discussion will take place between the collective and the prospective member to explore the possibility (ie. she has to be able to work with us and we

rather than donating it. That way they can get it back, if they're so ill-advised as to want it back.

The **Broadside** collective is a motley crew (see masthead for our names). We include a few seasoned journalists, writers of various sorts, typesetters, a printer, some graphic artists, a few financial wizards, one or two social workers, a puppeteer and a closet taxidermist. (References on request.) That should provide a broad enough cross-section of the population to produce a unique newspaper.

Having now whetted your appetite for future words from **Broadside**, we hope you will fill out the subscription forms on the back page for yourself and 50 of your closest friends.

Old World, New World, Third World One World

by Eve Zaremba

Remember when people appeared to believe that this planet was divided into three Worlds? First and Second Worlds were seldom identified perhaps because most people, not being familiar with the thoughts of Mao, were not sure which was which and why. The favourite was the Third World. Very handy short-hand for editorial pundits, rhetoricians of the left and other lovers of simple dichotomies.

Diverse and downright contrasting parts of the world were lumped together in the Third World at whim. It made for strange bedfellows but for years few minded or cared. It has taken a long time and many distressing events to destroy the usefulness of such patronising generalizations. By the time of the oil crisis in 1973 and the rise to prominence of the OPEC nations it was hard to treat them seriously. Finally, events in Pakistan and Iran put paid to this concept.

Iran looms large these days. Journalists, politicians and economists of every stripe scramble frantically to learn how to spell 'Ayotollah Ruhollah Mossavi Khomeni' and plumb the distinctions between the minority Shi'ite sect which he heads and the more rigid Sunni Moslems. Instant experts on Islamic law and apologists for Moslem tradition spring up on every side. We hear confused attempts at analysis, about the resurgence of Islam, drastic change in the balance of power, danger to our oil supplies and even about women's loss of status and rights. Nobody quite knows what to make of it all. It's confusing as hell.

All parts of the political spectrum have this trouble.

For the left, anyone who throws out Americans, cancels arms contracts and cuts off oil to Israel cannot be all bad. And yet... isn't an Islamic Republic a right-wing system, appealing to some of the most regressive and fundamentalist instincts in the Islamic population? For anyone with a historic perspective and a class analysis theocracy must be considered inimical to progress.

Our own dear right-wingers must be rejoicing for that very reason. Back to authority of religion, ferocious punishments. Back to the supremacy of patriarchal structures, women back to the four walls of their husband's house. Great stuff! And possibly catching. And yet... rise of Islamic power is hardly to be welcomed by good Christian souls. Especially since they have all that oil. Poor heathen are one thing but wealthy, uppity ones are another matter.

Then there is the great liberal middle-muddle, even more confused than ever. Is it OK to applaud the fall of the Shah and the takeover of power for religious authority? Sort of 'Tyrant is dead, long live the Tyrants'? Probably all this nastiness is just a phase; people will return to their senses and all will be well. Anyway, it would be racist to question the right of Iranians to self-determination. That is, as long as we don't freeze in the dark or lack fodder for our gas-guzzlers because of them.

What's the problem? Khomeini and his ilk are quite clear. They do not mince words. No 'politically correct' euphemisms for them. It is *not* merely Zionism which is their enemy, it's the Jews; it is *not* the excess of capitalism which must be rejected, it's the whole liberal, decadent West; it is *not* Stalinism which is evil, it's irreligious communism in all its guises. It is *not* radical feminism which must be destroyed, it's any movement of women towards control over our own lives. Our beloved polarities just do not hold. Paradoxes and contradictions multiply.

Take the strange case of the chador, or pornography and gender segregation. It seems as if patriarchal Islam and feminism meet on these issues, both rejecting liberal Western ideas.

Chador is a traditional robe worn by Moslem women to conceal their bodies from men. It has played a historic part in recent revolutions against colonial powers, becoming the symbol of female participation in Algerian struggle against the French. The western version of the chador is in its own cultural context revolutionary and symbolic. It consists of the rejection by women of restrictive and revealing dress. Pants, shirts and comfortable shoes are our chador. In our society, the very idea of women concealing their bodies (and minds) from men and using them freely for our own ends, is highly subversive. Western man likes 'his' women dressed up to please him, tottering on high, back-killing shoes, exposed and vulnerable.

Islamic Godfathers attack decadent western pornography which western liberals insist on equating with freedom of expression. Women all over the world refuse to tow this liberal line asking "Freedom for whom? against whom? for what?"

Patriarchal Islam segregates women from men: western men are aghast. In the west it's OK for men to associate together without women but not the other way around. When we favour all-women meetings, political action, health and referral centres, unions, hostels, newspapers, demonstrations, theatre, art, associations of every kind we can expect to be labeled middle-class man-haters for our trouble.

So how can feminism and Islamic patriarchy meet on all these issues? They can't. Few social or cultural expressions are good or bad, right or wrong, regressive or progressive in and of themselves. *It all depends on whose interests they serve.*

Islamic rules against the display of women's bodies are enforced to protect each man's private property from other men. Unlike our liberals, Moslem males have no trouble seeing that exploitative pornography can be a danger to 'their' women. They want to 'protect' and segregate women the better to control them. That's for their benefit, not women's.

"The trouble is that men interpret the Koran to their own advantage" a former president of the Federation of Iranian Women Lawyers is quoted as saying in the *New York Times*. Of course. To whose advantage would men interpret it? The Koran, the Bible, Marx, all varieties of liberal constitutions, the values, laws and customs which they expound were written by men in their interest and will be interpreted by them to their advantage. It's an illusion that western liberal and Islamic positions are in conflict with each other. Each is an expression of male self-interest vis-a-vis women in different cultural contexts. Neither is taken by and for women in their interests. In this our ONE WORLD that is the ultimate no-no on which all men can agree.