WE'RE WORTH MORE!

LATE NEWS FLASH

MORE CUTS!

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GOVERNMENT FUNDING AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

This information sheet looks at :

1. **Canada's commitment to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.**
2. **Funding of women's groups in relation to Canada's budget.**
3. **Government Funding: Pro's and Con's.**
4. **The government's ~~failing~~ failed commitment to women's equality.**
5. **How this affects all of us**
6. **What we can do.**

1. CANADA'S COMMITMENT TO END ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

-The Canadian government signed the United Nations Convention On The Elimination Of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women in 1981. The Canadian government also signed the Forward Looking Strategies document which came out of the Nairobi conference in 1985.

-Both documents refer to the necessity of involving non-governmental women's groups in achieving real change. Women must be at the heart of any movement or institution which can accomplish the vast social changes required to achieve either of these commitments to equality.

-NAC and other women's groups argue that "the Canadian government has an obligation to maintain and increase according to need its funding of women's organizations dedicated to the principles of the U.N. Conventions and our own Canadian Charter of Rights."

2. FUNDING OF WOMEN'S GROUPS AND THE FEDERAL BUDGET

-Canada's 1989-1990 budget is $133 billion.

-The defence budget is $11.2 billion and has had a growth rate of at least 5% over the last years; the federal government made loans of $17 million to strip clubs; and the government spent $14.2 million on its campaign to sell the Goods and Services Tax.

-In 1989 - 90 the Women's Program of Secretary of State had a budget of $11 million, or 0.009% of the total budget.

-In 1987, the government agreed that the funding level of the Women's Program would be maintained and indexed to a cost of living allowance and it considered increasing funding to meet the needs of new groups and emerging priorities.

- The Women's Program of Secretary of State was cut by $2 million in the 1989-1990 budget. This was a 15.3% budget cut. Another $1.6 million in '90-'91!

-Similar cuts were made to programs which funded native and visible minority advocacy groups. The advocacy work of women in those groups has been doubly cut.

-The Women's Program budget amounts to ~~86~~ 75 cents for every Canadian female.

-The government does little consultation about its funding priorities. It has ignored the protests of women's groups and continues not to fund any activity related to Reproductive Rights (Abortion), Peace, the Environment or Lesbian Rights.

- The government has announced it is moving away from operational funding and more towards "project funding".

- Without consulation the government has announced it will fund "new priorities". We have still not achieved the old ones!!

Devastating occurred
- ~~More~~ cuts to the Women's Program ~~are possible~~ in the 1990-91 budget.

BACKGROUND

Government funding for women's groups began in 1973 with the creation of the Women's Program Division of the Secretary of State. This was in response to recommendations by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1970) combined with pressure from emerging women's groups.

THE GOVERNMENT IS BACKING OUT OF ITS COMMITMENT TO CANADIAN WOMEN!

- Since then, countless non-governmental women's groups have acted as advocates on behalf women and have advised the government on legislation and programs affecting women.

- Non-profit women's groups now provide essential services in the areas of women's health, transition houses, sexual assault crisis centres, women in conflict with the law, employment counselling, among others.

- In 1988-89 the Program funded 47 national and 560 regional women's groups. Most of these received 'project' grants. A small number received larger adminstrative or 'operational' grants. Women's groups had won this more secure, less intrusive 'operational' funding after many years of negotiations with the Program. The 15% cut was directed explicitly at "the administrative overhead of groups", meaning that all groups expecting 'operational' grants were cut by 15%. The exception to this was NAC, which was cut by 50% over three years. The political effect of the emphasis on project funding is that the Program will have increased influence on the priorities established by women's groups.

3. GOVERNMENT FUNDING AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT: PROS AND CONS

-"Funding" is more than a transfer of money. It is an agreement between funders and recipients that certain kinds of activities are in part the responsibility of the funder. The current crisis in funding for women's groups is more accurately described as a struggle about who has the bulk of the social responsibility to address and change the systematic inequalities which women face. The cuts to the Women's Program suggest that the work of eliminating barriers to women's full and equal participation in our society is being "privatized" (that is, foisted upon the private, voluntary, charitable work of women) along with Via Rail and the Postal Service.

> -In a market economy resources are unequally distributed, and groups which are disadvantaged do not have access to funds to provide their own advocacy or services. It is government's role to re-distribute resources to assist disadvantaged groups.

-Thousands of women on boards, committees and collectives have struggled with whether their funding applications will violate their autonomy, the autonomy of the movement and women's right to define women's issues. Other issues, such as the dangers of being project-driven, dangers of women's organizations becoming another arm of government, having to match the work to fit the application's criteria, the paternalistic attitudes of funders, possible competition for dollars and the inability to plan for long-term change have all been raised in the context of this discussion. All of these are real dangers, and are, in part, how we lose control of the definition of our issues.

We know, however that without the constant voice of women stating clearly what we want and need, that government will define "equality" for us. The ability of the women's movement to influence social policy has been strengthened by our pressure on the government to maintain its international and domestic obligations. Government funding can create an internal pressure to integrate women's equality concerns into the policy and policy making functions of the government.

-Funding is needed. Non-intrusive operational funding is our right. Women have a right to expect that our taxes are used to remove barriers to women's full participation in Canadian society.

4. THE GOVERNMENT'S FAILING COMMITMENT TO WOMEN'S EQUALITY

WHAT HAS THE GOVERNMENT DONE FOR WOMEN LATELY?

-Reneged on its promise of a new child care system;
-Proposed to re-criminalize abortion and remove women's reproductive choice;
-Called the 0.5 cent reduction in the wage gap between women and men a "victory" of the Employment Equity legislation;
-Proposed a 7% goods and services tax on everything from postage, books, tampons, haircuts, movies, to transportation;
-Traded away women's jobs in the electronics, food processing and textiles industries;
-Backed out of its responsibility for unemployment insurance;
-Provided funding for the building of transition houses and shelters, but provided no assurance that there will be funding for programs;
-Shut women out of the constitutional decision-making process;
-Spent more money on loans to strip clubs than to women's groups;
-Continues with an immigration policy which favours rich males;
-Continued to discriminate against immigrant women in federally funded language training programs;
- refused to fund women's work on reproductive choice, lesbian rights, the environment or peace.

.... AND DECREASED FUNDING TO WOMEN'S GROUPS BY $2 MILLION
$3.6

5. HOW DO THESE CUTS AFFECT YOU?

If you are active in a woman's organization, you will find that there are fewer government dollars for projects, and your priorities will need to shift from dealing with the needs of women to the needs of funders.

-Effects of the 15% cut on our organizations are already apparent. Among the groups that receive operational funding, many have decided to cut their newsletters and reduce their regional networking budgets. Our feminist periodicals are in particular jeopardy and may seriously limit our ability to communicate with each other.

-Other groups have cut staff postitions. Virtually all work in women's groups is done by volunteers and underpaid staff: cuts in personnel are cuts into the core of the movement.

- The cuts also effectively place a freeze on how many groups will receive funding. This means that newly-formed organizations, immigrant women's organizations, visible minority women's organizations, disabled women's organizations and native women's organizations are not as likely to receive secure funding.

-The groups which appear to be targetted in the cuts are those which focus on economic and political advocacy.

-Women's groups are being forced to compete with each other and with other social movements for shrinking dollars in the public and private sectors

If you are a member of a group that conducts advocacy on behalf of disabled women, women of colour, native women or poor women, you will find that your gains will be limited as the avenues to decision-making and opportunities to influence government and institutional policy are restricted.

If you live anywhere other than in the larger cities you will find it harder to get information about other women's efforts and actions: regional isolation will increase.

If you are a supporter of women's groups, you will receive a greater number of appeals for a greater share of your disposible income to help them replace government funding.

If you are a woman in trouble, you will find that there will be fewer services -- shelters, transition houses, crisis centres, information, networking -- organized by women for women.

If you are a citizen concerned about women's equality you will notice that less and less of your tax dollars are being spent on these issues.

We are moving further away from our common vision of an equal society.

6. HOW CAN YOUR VOICE BE HEARD?

Talk with your friends, neighbors and people you work with about your concerns.

Become more involved in and actively support feminist organizations.

Voice your concerns about how your tax dollars are used.

- Write to Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6.

-Visit your local Member of Parliament in her or his constituency office.

BUDGET CUTS UPDATE

February 23, 1990

This year's cuts to the Women's Program are devistating. The Program was cut by $1.6 million. Of this, approximately $1.4 million has been cut from women's centres. As far as we can tell, ALL WOMEN'S CENTRES HAVE RECEIVED MAJOR OR 100% CUTS TO THEIR FUNDING. One quarter of these cuts have been in Québec, where 40 centres have lost funding.

The Minister also made deep cuts in the Program's support to women's periodicals and research. *Healthsharing, Canadian Woman Studies* and *Resources for Feminist Research* were cut by 100%. The *Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport* was cut by 100%. *Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, Nouveau Départ* and the *Women's Research Centre* were cut by 20%.

The cuts to centres are an attack on the heart of the women's movement. Centres provide support, counselling, education, hot lines and organizing networks for women across the country. Slashing our periodicals is an attack on our ability to communicate with each other, and to do pro-active, badly needed education. The cuts to research jeopardize our capacity to know the actual, current conditions of Canadian women's lives.

More than ever we must organize to fight the anti-feminist backlash and for the survival of our movement!

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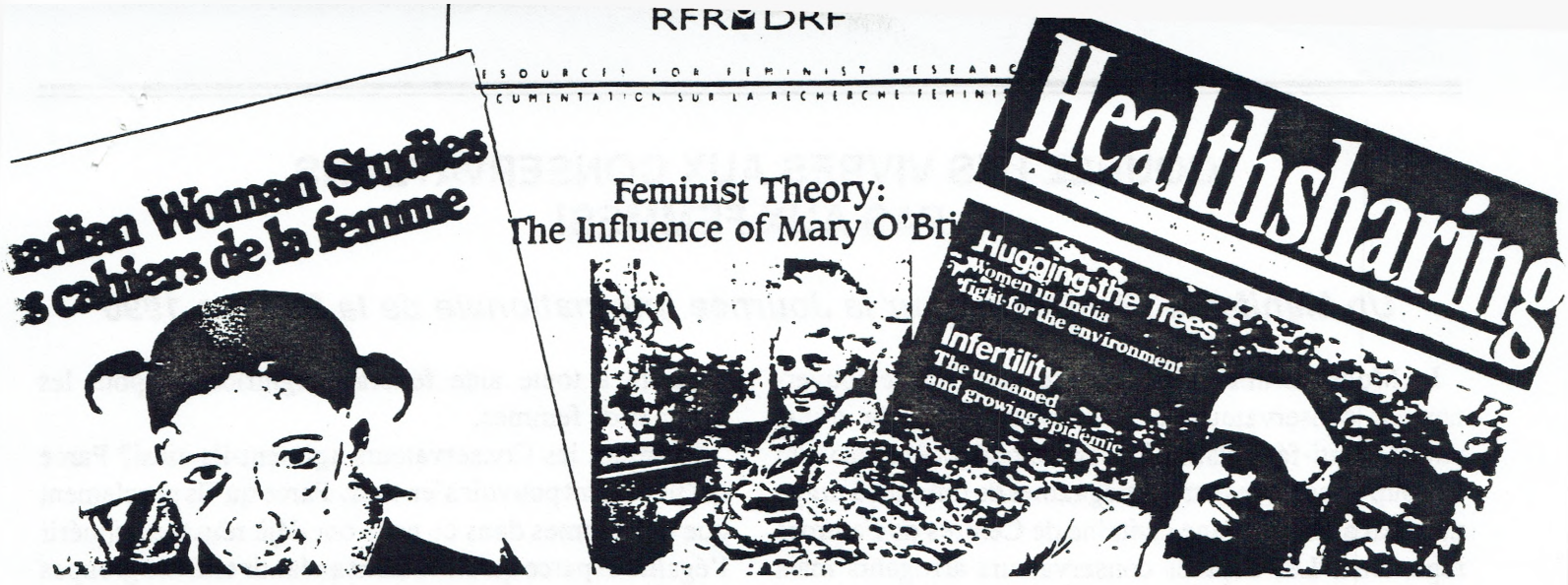

Cut the Torys! Fund Women!

A Feminist Manifesto for International Women's Day 1990

The feminist movement is outraged! The Tory government is leading an anti-feminist backlash. The latest federal budget has cut funding to three national women's publications and an estimated 100 regional women's centres. The arrogant yet spineless Tories didn't even announce the cuts publicly

The cuts are not designed to reduce the deficit, but to silence us.

$1.6 million means a lot to feminist organizing, but it is meaningless in terms of federal deficit cutting.

Canadian Woman Studies, *Healthsharing*, and *Resources for Feminist Research* had their Secretary of State Women's Program funding cut by 100%. *Healthsharing*, which is the largest circulation feminist magazine in Canada, was dealt the most devastating blow, because this funding made up over 50% of its total budget. *Canadian Woman Studies* and *Resources for Feminist Research* have lost half of their total budgets.

Over 100 women's centres, which provide the core of women's services in smaller communities across the country, have lost their funding. Forty of the women's centres cuts are in Quebec.

This is not deficit reduction, it is an attempt to dismantle the women's movement. *They say cut back, we say fight back!*

The Tories have been trying to slash funding to feminist groups since 1984. Last year the Secretary of State Women's Program was cut by 15%. This year it has been cut another 15%. Feminist organizers across the country believe that the days of the Women's Program are numbered, thus ending all significant federal funding to women's groups.

Why are the Tories doing this? Because they think that they can get away with it. Because they claim that the women of this country have already achieved equality and because they want to silence all advocacy groups that criticize their social and economic policy. Because they think that either women should be upper-class professionals who can pay for high-priced help or that they should be out of the labour force and working at home, taking care of everybody.

Are we going to take this? When are we going to fight back? We need to act now and strongly to keep feminist organizing alive in Canada. The Tories have the power of the buck but we have power in our numbers. They can take away our rent and our salaries, but we still have our loud voices. We have done a lot over the past twenty years, with very little cash, and we will continue to fight for equality, justice and freedom for women on this planet. We will make life hell for this government. We will continue to do the right thing.

Call and write your MPs, especially the Minister (Ir)Responsible for the Status of Women, Mary Collins, and the deficit-cutting Secretary of State, Gerry Weiner. Sit in at your MPs' offices, have a party on their doorsteps. Even though this might be unpleasant, it's worth it. Let's show them how we feel about saving $1.6 million at the expense of millions of Canadian women.

And if our publications and centres are going to survive, we must support them more than ever. We need to contribute our time and our money. Self-sufficiency may be our only option. Get in touch with the groups that you support and ask them what you can do.

Not the Tories, not the State, Women will control our fate!

Canadian Woman Studies, *Healthsharing*, *Resources for Feminist Research*,
National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC)

COUPEZ LES VIVRES AUX CONSERVATEURS, PAS AUX FEMMES!

Un Manifeste Féministe pour la Journée Internationale de la Femme 1990

Le Mouvement Féministe est scandalisé! Le gouvernement conservateur est à nouveau au coeur d'une vague d'anti-féminisme. Le dernier budget fédéral vient de couper les vivres à trois magazines de femmes à tirage national ainsi qu'à une centaine de Centres de Femmes régionaux. Les députés conservateurs arrogants mais lâches, n'ont même pas annoncé ces coupures de budget publiquement!

Ces coupures n'ont pas été conçues pour réduire le déficit mais bien pour nous réduire au silence!

La somme de 1.6 million de dollars est énorme pour les organismes féministes, mais elle est insignifiante quand il s'agit de la réduction du déficit fédéral.

Les Cahiers de la Femme, *Healthsharing* et *Documentation sur la Recherche Féministe* ont vu leurs subventions accordées par le Programme des Femmes au Secrétariat d'Etat coupées à 100%. *Healthsharing*, le magazine féministe qui a le plus grand tirage au Canada, a été le plus durement touché puisqu'il dépendait presque totalement des subventions du gouvernement. *Les Cahiers de la Femme* et *Documentation sur la Recherche Féministe* ont perdu 50% de leur budget.

Plus de 100 centres pour les femmes — qui fournissent la majorité des services offerts aux femmes dans les petites communautés à travers le pays — se retrouvent sans ressources. Quarante de ces centres de femmes affectés par les coupures budgétaires sont au Québec.

Tout ceci ne vise pas à la réduction du déficit, c'est une tentative pour démanteler le mouvement des femmes. Ils disent de couper, nous disons de lutter!

Les Conservateurs s'efforcent de réduire les subventions accordées aux groupes féministes depuis 1984. L'année passée, le Programme des Femmes au Secrétariat d'Etat a été réduit de 15%. Cette année, nouvelle coupure de 15%. Dans tout le pays, les organismes féministes s'accordent à penser que les jours du Programme des Femmes sont comptés. Sa disparition mettrait fin à toute aide fédérale significative pour les groupes de femmes.

Pourquoi les Conservateurs agissent-ils ainsi? Parce qu'ils croient pouvoir s'en tirer. Parce qu'ils proclament que les femmes dans ce pays ont déjà réussi à acquérir l'égalité et parce qu'ils veulent anéantir tous les groupes solidaires qui critiquent leur politique sociale et économique. Parce qu'ils pensent que les femmes se doivent d'être des cadres supérieurs pouvant se payer une aide ménagère qui coûte très cher, ou alors qu'elles devraient être hors de la force active et travailler à la maison en prenant bien soin de tout le monde.

Allons-nous nous laisser faire? Quand commencerons-nous à nous défendre? Nous devons agir maintenant et en force pour sauvegarder les organismes féministes au Canada. Les Conservateurs ont le pouvoir du dollar, mais nous, nous avons celui du nombre. Ils peuvent nous enlever nos loyers et nos salaires, nous, nous garderons nos voix. Nous avons accompli beaucoup durant les vingt dernières années, avec très peu d'argent, et nous continuerons à lutter pour l'égalité, la justice et la liberté pour les femmes dans le monde entier. Nous allons lui faire une vie d'enfer, à ce gouvernement! Et nous continuerons à faire ce qui est juste.

Téléphonez et écrivez à vos députés et surtout à la Ministre (Ir)Responsable du Statut de la Femme, Mary Collins, et au Secrétaire d'Etat qui s'est chargé de la réduction du déficit, Gerry Weiner. Occupez les bureaux des députés, faites une fête devant leur porte. Bien que ce soit désagréable, cela en vaut la peine. Montrons-leur ce que nous ressentons à propos des 1.6 million de dollars économisés aux dépends de millions de canadiennes.

Et si nos publications et nos centres survivent, plus que jamais nous nous devons de les aider. Nous devons contribuer en temps et en argent. Il se peut que l'autonomie financière soit notre seule option. Contactez les groupes que vous soutenez et demandez ce que vous pouvez faire pour aider.

Les Cahiers de la Femme, Healthsharing,
Documentation de la Recherche Féministe,
Le Comité d'Action National sur le Statut de la Femme (NAC)