

SPECTRUM

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The lavender menace rides again

Perhaps it's all the election fever that seems to be gripping the non-Canadian parts of the planet just now; a sense of change is in the wind. Perhaps it's just the hint of spring or the aftershocks of the less than seismic SU elections. Perhaps, as this is the last "Positively Pink" for this year, it's a hankering after going out with a bang.

I suppose we should be well and truly used to it by now, the way elections seem to bring the nasties out of the woodwork, like roaches from a thoroughly Javex-ed drain! Homophobic rhetoric has become a near permanent feature of election campaigns in North America and the UK in recent years, particularly that slogan of the New Right "vote for me or the queers will get you're children!" As a slogan it has never borne up to even semi-rigorous scrutiny. Such venom has graced recent election campaigns here in Canada, Saskatchewan's recent contest being a prime example, and hysterical appeals to conspiracy theory have been a feature of practically every US election campaign since the days of Aaron Burr and Martin van Buren. Why change now - California's representative John Dannemeyer is convinced the Homintern is a reality, and that it has already subverted the Centre for Disease Control, the National Institute for Health, and the National Foundation for the Arts. Patrick Buchanan would seem to agree - heaven forbid his TV campaign ads should be anything other than completely honest! In fact, in recent years, we of the Homintern have only been responsible for the abduction of Elvis Presley, and absconding with the B-29 that vanished from the far side of the Moon in 1989! (Would I lie!!).

Seriously though folks, the peddlers of this drivell pose as the "guardians of all we hold dear" - the last bastion of civilization as we know it. And its not paranoia to believe that these people are everywhere. Take the letters page of "Newsweek" two weeks ago, carrying correspondence concerning their feature article on the putative "gay gene". Fantasy is evidently alive and well. Two letters alluded to the gay conspiracy - but equally bizarre was the expression of the belief that once a "gay gene" was demonstrated to exist homophobia, persecution, gay-bashing, scripturally-justified hatred and the rest would all become a thing of the past as if by magic. Get real! Tell that one to people of colour or women! Most of the fundamentalist hate peddlers are impervious to reason or rational thought, and genetic purity is a touchstone belief of every Aryan supremacist.

Homophobia is no more a rational response to reality than acrophobia. Don't hold your breath and look to DNA for a solution.

One of the truly nightmarish qualities of the last ten years has been the way this lunacy has moved centre stage and become respectable. Jerry Brown's injudicious remarks about extraterrestrial intelligence earned him the nickname "Governor Moonbeam" - Ronald Reagan's incoherent sadomonetarism got him elected president...twice!! One of Margaret Thatcher's more malevolent and vindictive pieces of legislation made it illegal for anyone in the publicly funded position (e.g. teachers, youth-workers) or in receipt of public funds, to "promote positive images of homosexuals or the homosexual life style." For the homophobic legions in Britian's body politic, it was, of course, business as usual, with a vengeance. Some of the worst offenders in the

popular press, who cheered this legislative initiative to the echo, received knighthoods. Never underestimate the power of blind prejudice or calculated malice.

Like her red-baiting models this side of the Atlantic, Thatcher linked homosexuality to socialism, alien influences both, essentially foreign threats to her "Little England". She, like Joseph McCarthy before her, should have canvased Stalin for his views on gays and lesbians (or read the Soviet criminal code), or pondered why in France homosexuality was once called "le mal-aise Anglaise".

Then there is the Reverend Wildmon-Florida's "Queer-finder General", and scourge of "Quantum Leap" and "Thirtysomething" alike. Bearer of the sacred flame ignited, or reignited by Anita Bryant...or was that Jerry Falwell...all these polyestered bigots start to look alike after a while! In fact, the Rev. Wildmon,

These are the facts

This is it...the last issue of the Bruns...which means the last Wimmim's room...which means we get the last word (until September anyway)! When a bunch of us got together way last year and decided to take turns writing a weekly column, we honestly never imagined it would cause quite so much controversy as it did.

A few of us deliberately wrote columns that we knew would get a response. Others simply wrote from the heart and about their experiences and beliefs as women. We even had a minister's daughter write about Adam and Eve from a woman's perspective...which prompted several outraged writers to protest against such paganism. OBVIOUSLY, in their moral outrage that someone could question whether the image of Eve could be damaging to women, those people missed the point. Actually a lot of people missed the point. Some seemed so busy reacting, that they did not seem to really think or question what they were reacting to and why it bothered them so much.

But a lot of others DID get the point. The writers of the Wimmim's Room were deeply touched by the letters of support that men and women wrote. We also greatly appreciated the people that told us in person that they liked what we wrote. And most important, in some ways, were the people who told us that our columns made them think and see things in ways they had never before.

And we even thank the writers

of the Min's Room, Chad and Andrew, for standing up publicly and saying they do not support violence against women. And we are sure when Chad and Andrew actually meet the writers of the Wimmim's Room (which they are invited to do at 12:30 on Monday in Room 31 of the Anthropology building), they will find out that we are not a bunch of man-hating, radical types who are out to rule the world. In fact, we invite them to join the newly established Student Action Committee on the Status of Women and help us with our first project for next September - organizing the second annual Date Rape Awareness Campaign.

For the record, the writers of the Wimmim's Room are a very diverse group of women. We range in age from 21 to 45. We are single, married, some of us have children, some have as many as three children, some are full-time students, some are part-time and some have or had professional careers. We always found it kind of funny the way everyone just lumped us all together as one type - that being the radical man-hating type. Which of course none of us are. That's a stereotype and an easy way to keep yourself from really looking and seeing who people really are.

Since the Wimmim's Room has the last word, we decided not to say anything too personal. All year we have been speaking from personal experiences. And we have constantly been accused of making things up, over-reacting and even not dealing with women's or

Positively Pink by Adrian Park

Jessie Helms, and their cohorts are not against representations of gays and lesbians in the arts and media, any more than the Iron Lady wanted all mention of the subject banned in schools. They are simply against any positive or non-judgemental representations. They desire a clear field for their own malignant opinions. I would be prepared to wager that the Reverend was not picketing the opening night of "Basic Instincts" or threatening to boycott its advertisers and sponsors...

But let's not get sour. Is the world always crazy, or does it just throw a loop every fourth year or so? Do have an enjoyable summer

(whenever it arrives). I am away back to Homintern HQ (Uranus, of course), until the Fall. I shall really miss the Bruns - have you ever tried to get Canada Post to deliver beyond Jupiter (or on the north side for that matter!) - "Blood and Thunder" especially. Ah! All those sensitive New Age guys belching at each other like mastodons across the primeval swamps...

P.S. "Positively Pink" did not receive any funding from Federal or Provincial sources...honest; and the cheques from the Homintern always bounced...

The Wimmim's Room

feminist issues. So we've decided to let statistics tell our stories. The following is women's reality from a more scientific, statistically-based perspective.

*1 in 4 women are raped - the majority before their 18th birthday. (1 in 10 men are - 98 percent by other men).

*84 percent of women know their attackers

*57 percent of rapes happen on dates.

*1 in every 12 men admit to committing acts that meet legal definitions of rape.

*Rape has the lowest conviction rate of ANY crime.

*A woman is raped in Canada every 17 seconds.

*One in 10 women are beaten by their "lovers."

*More than 100 women were murdered last year by their "lovers."

*80 percent of women who were murdered HAD LEFT their abusers.

*Women make up more than 50 percent of university students in New Brunswick...but...at UNB, only 18.6 percent of professors are female.

*A study completed in 1991 found that female students have higher overall grade point averages than men in EVERY depart-

ment at UNB...but...After graduation, women earn only 65 cents for every dollar a man does. (That has risen a whole nine cents in 25 years).

*A 1991 survey of the 1,000 largest companies in the U.S. showed that the heads of those companies rank the promotion of women among their lowest priorities.

*Even though women make up more than 50 percent of the population, they constitute only 17 percent of members of the New Brunswick legislature. A recent study showed that the mainstream, male-dominated political parties run women in ridings with the least amount of support.

*Women make up 12 percent of the House of Commons.

*Women and children make up well over half of all those living in poverty.

*When a man and woman divorce; the man's standard of living rises by nearly 80 percent while a woman's (with children) plunges by more than 50 percent.

*Approximately 80 percent of men default of their child-support payments.

And I could fill up this entire newspaper with similarly depressing statistics...but I'm sure you get the picture.