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WOMAN-HATING BACKFIRED ON MARCOS

Ferdinand Marcos' removal from the presidency of the Philippines is being partly attributed to the hostile reaction of the Philippine people to his anti-woman attitudes and to his behaviour on the political platform.

In the first place, he did not take seriously the candidacy of Cory Aquino a woman with no political experience, "a mere housewife" who was using a "family tragedy" (the assassination of her husband Ninoy Aquino in 1983) to gain sympathy.

When it became clear that she could in fact wage a campaign against him, he took to attacking her in more intensely sexist ways which backfired. For example, his most celebrated remark was "Women ought to stay in the bedroom and teach their husbands there!" But public opinion against the "bedroom remark" forced him to say later, "Of course I would never have said that if the First Lady (Imelda Marcos) had been at my side."

Meanwhile, Imelda Marcos complained publicly that Cory Aquino did not wear makeup or nail polish.

The theme of male dominated sexual relations as a symbol for male domination in politics was developed further by a Marcos spokesman who in a T.V. interview attacked Aquino's lack of experience, fearing that she would depend too much on her advisors. He said, "doing the job of the President is like preparing one's lady for love, and it is only the President who can address that lady."

In the face of Marcos' blatant sexism, various women's groups came together to attack his campaign tactics. A group called the Women's Alliance Against Sexism in Politics formed and issued a statement, as well as mounted a demonstration at a Marcos press conference. They said, "We denounce the sexist electioneering of the Marcos camp as an attack not only on one woman, Cory Aquino, but on all Filipino women. The sexist campaign is a gross manipulation to cultivate and enforce male superiority that reduces women to subordinate status and perpetuates their oppression..."

New Directions for Women

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WINKING CANADIAN WOMEN PROTEST POLICE POWERS

Women across Canada have been staging demonstrations to protest a new law giving the police increased powers to arrest prostitutes.

At actions called "wave-ins" organised by the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes, women gathered and distributed pamphlets opposing the Bill. A woman who waves, nods or winks "in a public or visible place" can now be arrested if she is assumed to be selling sex.

Opponents consider the bill an attack on prostitutes because it ignores the more important issues related to prostitution such as violence in the home and street and the general problems women face: lack of choices or money.

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GOOD IF YOU'RE RIGHT

Christian voice, a conservative religious lobbying group in the USA has issued a "report card" on Members of the US Congress, rating them on twelve "key moral/family issues". These include members stand on aid to Contras in Nicaragua, abortion, school prayers, pornography and a balanced budget.

Of 15 Senators scoring 100%, all were Republicans, 213 "passed" with a score of 70%, while 279 legislators "flunked out" with less than 50%.

Christian Voice generally supports Ronald Reagan's policies and claims a membership of 200,000.

Another group, People for the American Way has criticised Christian Voice for "tarnishing political debate by claiming to speak for God." They are concerned that right wing religious groups are injecting new forms of bigotry into politics, citing television evangelist Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, founder of the Moral Majority as examples of this trend.

Off Our Backs Volume xvi #5, May 1986

YWCA LEADER PUT UNDER HOUSE ARREST

Mary Ann Lundy, coordinator of the National Student YWCA of the USA, and an executive committee member of the World YWCA was placed under house arrest in February this year for refusing to testify against "my brothers and sisters" in the Sanctuary Movement.

Eleven religious leaders of the Movement are on trial in Arizona charged by the US Government with conspiracy to smuggle Central Americans into the United States. The defendants argue that the Central Americans were fleeing political persecution and are entitled to asylum.

Lundy and two other persons summoned to testify refused, invoking the First Amendment of the American Constitution, the right to free exercise of religion. The judge rejected their arguments, found them in contempt and ordered them confined to their homes for the duration of the trial.

Lundy, in papers filed to the court, traced a commitment to social justice from her student days involvement with the 'Y', her ordination into the Presbyterian Church and her present work with the World YWCA which, she said, links women worldwide "who work for peace and justice." She became involved with the Sanctuary Movement 1982 when she sheltered a Salvadoran refugee.

Over 310 Protestant and Jewish congregations in the USA comprise sanctuary which Lundy describes as "a world family movement linking Central Americans fleeing from a war and persecution to shelter in covenant churches in North America."

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