

**LIBERATING COMMUNITY EDUCATION
AND SOCIAL CHANGE:
THE REGINA NATIVE WOMEN'S GROUP
(1971-1986)**

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines and interprets a social movement organization, the Regina Native Women's Group, as an organization that uses liberating community education as a method of improving the social, economic, cultural and political conditions of Native women and their families in the city of Regina. The study focusses on the issues of the housing and community-living crises that developed in Regina during the 1970's to portray the Group's utilization of liberating community education. The study examines factors such as racial and gender oppression, co-option by the state and dilemmas within the Regina Native Women's Group that often hindered it from obtaining social change. As well, the support that the organization received from grassroots organizations and society's institutions that enabled change to occur is also examined.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. ADULT EDUCATION AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS	13
III. THE CANADIAN NATIVE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT:	
AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE	52
IV. COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND SOCIAL ACTION:	
THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY-LIVING CRISIS.....	96
V. THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE	141
VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	193
APPENDIX	211
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	218

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Native Women's Movement emerged in Canadian society during the 1960's. To date no research has been conducted on this movement, nor has it been acknowledged as a social movement in Canadian society that advocates the use of education as an agent for obtaining social change. The intent of this thesis is to examine and interpret one of the Movement's organizations, the Regina Native Women's Group, as an organization that uses liberating community education as a method of improving the social, economic, cultural and political conditions of Native women and their families in the city of Regina.

Community education delivered through state institutions is not always relevant to certain sectors of the population such as the working class, poor and some minority groups. When programs and services are irrelevant, people tend not to participate in the democratic processes of community life that may enhance personal growth and community advancement. The lack of involvement by certain sectors of the population is often a result of institutions of the state and society failing to recognize inequities in terms of income, access to educational opportunities and political power. The inability to acknowledge discrepancies in society often results in the state and its institutions failing to meet the needs of

oppressed groups and serving mainly those who profit from the status quo.

Where state institutions have failed to meet the needs of the working class, poor and minority groups, a radical approach to community education has at times been used to inspire people to participate more fully in community life for the purpose of improving the quality of their lives. In this approach adult education is the "arm of radical social action"¹ and becomes a "radical force seeking to make a major impact on society."² At the foundation of this approach there is a belief that adult education has a role as instigator or supporter of change.

Community education used as a vehicle to initiate social change is referred to in the literature of adult education as liberating community education. It is a process or a practice whereby oppressed groups and educators work together. They mobilize and organize themselves to challenge what they view as the injustices of the social order. The process of becoming aware of one's situation in the social and historical environment has been termed conscientization.³ Adult educators who work for the liberation of the oppressed believe that conscientization makes personal and collective liberation possible. As the oppressed become aware of the injustices inherent in the social order, they develop a critical perspective. This understanding of reality empowers oppressed groups to take action to challenge institutions of the state

and of the society and to work for reforms that will improve the quality of life. Liberating community education is used to confront the injustices resulting from such social realities as racism, sexism, unemployment, inadequate housing, limited recreational opportunities and cultural impoverishment.

Community education and community action are intertwined in this approach to the pursuit of social justice. Community members direct the processes that lead to the establishment of programs and services to meet community needs. Educational resources and services are mobilized to inform, strengthen and develop processes and programs that will bring about desired social change. Community education is the educational process participants engage in to identify needs, work out problems, mobilize resources and plan programs that will initiate changes for the improvement of community life. This process helps to "promote, sustain, support, and maintain community action."⁴ Community action is the strategies, programs and services developed from the educational process of people acting in concert to obtain social change.

Community education, used as a vehicle to alter the structures and attitudes of society for the purpose of obtaining improvements in the quality of life for a disadvantaged group, is not a new phenomenon. Where community education is used to empower groups to take action to obtain social change, it is associated with a grassroots social

movement. It is a community education movement that is closely linked to organizations at the community level. Together the campaign and its organizations work at obtaining change. The movement provides a philosophy and an evangelical fervour, mobilizes individuals to become committed, develops solidarity and inspires action at the community level. The movement's organizations attempt to educate its participants and society about the issues of concern and initiate action to obtain the desired change.

Examples of social movements that use education as an agent for social change are found throughout the history of adult education. The folk high school movement that began in Denmark in 1844 championed the cause of the people in their struggle against foreign landlords and against the aping of these foreigners by the indigenous nobility. Throughout the nineteenth century twenty-six such schools taught Danish history, religion and language to preserve Danish culture against the inroads of the German invaders. The schools adopted unconventional means of educating their participants. Learning was carried out through group dialogue to enable people to become aware of injustices and to take action against an oppressive system.⁵

Many of the principles of the folk school movement were adopted by Myles Horton, an educator who taught among the poor in the southern United States. In 1932, Horton founded Highlander Folk School in Tennessee. His intent was to

educate the people "for a revolution that would basically alter economic and political power relationships to the advantage of the poor and powerless."⁶ Highlander became a training institution for union and community organizers during the 1930's and 1940's, and for the civil rights campaign in the 1950's. Horton sought to prepare people for active participation as citizens in society by educating people away from individualism into the freedom that he believed grows from co-operative and collective solutions.

In Canada, during the 1920's, the poverty and injustices inflicted upon the people of the Maritime Provinces inspired two Roman Catholic priests, Moses Coady and Jimmy Tompkins, to take action against these inequities. The Antigonish Movement began in 1921 at St. Frances Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, where Coady gave leadership to the First People's School. Throughout the Depression years the People's School served as a base for the Movement where local fishermen and farmers came to learn reading and writing, farming, bookkeeping, organizing skills and Coady's philosophy of education and community action. Coady believed that adult education was an aggressive agent for social change. He stressed that "social reform must come through education and education must be through group action."⁷

The Antigonish Movement's philosophy of education and community action spread throughout the Maritimes. Coady travelled to villages and communities, seeking to make people

aware of their problems and urging them to organize to improve their conditions. People formed study clubs and kitchen meetings to discuss their situation and to take action to solve their problems. Self-help co-operatives, such as fishing and housing co-operatives, and small industries were established to encourage self-sufficiency, co-operation and economic development.

In 1964, another example of community education, a National Literacy Campaign, was conducted in Brazil by philosopher and educator Paulo Freire. During the 1950's, Brazil experienced a massive penetration of foreign capital investment which led to a depression in Brazil's national industrial economy. Many workers, industrialists, liberals and communists organized in political groups known as Fronts to express their anti-imperialist sentiments and to struggle against the intrusion of foreigners. The Fronts demanded democratic reforms, national development and control of the economy from foreign investors. Freire and members of the Instituto Social de Estudos Brasileiros (ISEB) believed that Brazil could gain control of national development if the peasants were mobilized to participate in the electoral process. At this time political participation was limited to only those who could read and write, which meant that ninety percent of the population did not vote because they were illiterate. Freire believed that educating the poor would help them develop a critical awareness of the reality of their

situation and empower them to take action to improve their conditions. With the popular support of the Fronts and the Brazilian government, Freire and the ISEB launched a literacy campaign to prepare the people for participation in the electoral process and community life. The Literacy Campaign spread throughout Brazil until a military coup in 1965 ended the movement.⁸

Presently, British adult education leads the way in using education as a vehicle for social change and in inspiring the working class, poor and minority groups to participate in society to seek improvements in the quality of their lives. The direction that community education is taking in the United Kingdom was influenced by the adult educator and community activist, Tom Lovett. During the 1960's, the impoverished conditions of neighborhoods, high unemployment and poor facilities resulting from civil strife concerned both Protestants and Catholics in northern Ireland. Lovett and other educators, together with community residents, organized community action groups to deal with the situation and to take action to get improved conditions. The movement spread throughout northern Ireland where five hundred community groups were established to provide training courses, learning activities and discussion groups to plan solutions and mobilize resources. The success of Ireland's educational movement and community action organizations has led many British adult educators to adopt Lovett's philosophy and

techniques for conducting community education among the disadvantaged.⁹

The Native Women's Movement is a current Canadian example of a social movement that advocates the use of education as a vehicle for obtaining change in society. Those active in the movement have viewed education as a means of eradicating injustices, preserving a cultural and an Indian identity and ensuring that Native women obtain their rightful place in Canadian society. They have encouraged Native women, the majority of them young single parents with large families, to strive both to enter mainstream society and to maintain a cultural identity. In the course of their struggle to improve conditions they face gender oppression within the Native community and both racial and gender oppression in the larger society. This oppression has inhibited their participation in the social, economic and political spheres of Canadian society. In the 1960's, the mothers and grandmothers of the Native Women's Movement began to rally Native women across the country. They mobilized and gathered collectively into social and political organizations at the community and provincial levels. Their purpose was to educate society about their plight and to initiate reforms in the institutions of the state and of the society.¹⁰

This thesis will present a history of one such local organization, the Regina Native Women's Group. The research will be conducted by means of a combination of the disciplines

of sociology and history, known as social history, a genre popular since the 1960's and particularly germane to this study of a Native women's organization. In the 1960's, the reawakening of the feminist movement led to the development of a concept of social history dedicated to the reconstruction of women's past experience from a feminist perspective. After centuries of neglect of women in history by a male dominated field, feminists demanded the development of new sources and methods of interpretation. They also called for the examination of a wide realm of new topics and inquiries related to women and for the articulation and analysis of the experiences of women in relationship to the social environment in which they live.¹¹ This study will seek to relate to these feminist concerns. While the intent of the thesis is primarily to bring the Native Women's Movement and its adult education activities to the attention of adult educators, the study may also be expected to make a contribution to feminist social history and to the history of Native people in Canada.

This thesis will trace a fifteen year history of the Regina Native Women's Group, from its inception in 1971 until 1986. Permission to conduct this research was granted by the Group's board of directors in July of 1985. Data used to tell the Group's history were collected from files at the organization's headquarters at 1102 Angus Street, Regina, Saskatchewan. Documents, such as minutes of meetings, correspondences, financial records and program reports, were

used to examine the educational activities of the organization and to reconstruct its history. Interviews were also conducted with several agencies and with board and staff members who worked for the organization during its history. These interviews helped to clarify the file documents and to fill in gaps where there was no written information. Interviews were particularly valuable in recovering the experiences of Native women. Allowing the voices to be heard, as well as the facts from the organization's written records, is an effective means to recreate their history. As well, various secondary sources were used to conduct this research. Newspaper and magazine articles helped to expand further on the file documents and to capture the atmosphere and milieu of the time. Secondary sources concerning the theory and practice of liberating community education and feminist theory were consulted to analyze the educational activities of the Regina Native Women's Group.

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CHAPTER TWO

ADULT EDUCATION AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

This chapter will provide a backdrop to the history of the Regina Native Women's Group by examining adult education as an agent of social control and as an agent of social change. In doing so, it will present in some detail the theory and practice of adult education in Canada with respect to social movements such as the Canadian Native Women's Movement.

Social movements emerge when groups within a society challenge the status quo on one or several issues that emanate from the character and structure of society itself. Thus, in capitalist society social movements often confront those aspects, such as class divisions, that reflect injustices and inequalities suffered by large segments or groups within the society. These groups are generally the poor, racial minorities and women.

On the one hand, adult education can be the means for these oppressed groups to initiate social change. On the other hand, adult education can be the means by which the state maintains social control over these oppressed groups. Social control is not only utilized in societies that have a capitalist economy, but also in other societies that demonstrate characteristics of hierarchy. In capitalist societies, social control is often accomplished through

community development projects, adult basic education and retraining programs.

The need for social control on the part of the state flows from the unequal distribution of wealth and power within the social structure. For example, in capitalist nations such as Canada a minority of the population owns the majority of the country's wealth and has practically all of the political decision making power.¹ Such an unequal distribution of economic wealth and political power has significant effects on the lives of the poor, some racial minority groups and women. In Canada, these groups have become virtually politically powerless and economically disadvantaged. This situation becomes truly oppressive when these groups are systematically denied access to, and full participation in, the social, cultural and educational institutions of society. Therefore, capitalism is a type of economic system that oppresses women, the poor and some racial minorities. When the plight of such groups becomes visible, the state attempts to ameliorate the situation by providing educational programs in the form of community development projects, adult basic education and retraining programs.

Such action on the part of the state serves to distract attention from the fact that it is the state which caused the oppressive situation in the first place. It serves also to perpetuate the capitalist myth that disadvantaged groups are poor because they are unemployable, illiterate or lack

marketable skills. The state's remedy for poverty is to provide educational programs aimed at improving the academic and skill level of the disadvantaged in order that these groups may be co-opted by the capitalist economy and ideology.² In a very real sense, then, adult education has a vital role to play in the reproduction of capitalism, as well as in the maintenance of state control. However, despite the state's attempt to provide educational activities that will supposedly eradicate the discrepancies of the social order, the oppression of the disadvantaged continues to exist because these state educational programs are basically committed to the structure of social inequality. Such state initiatives attempt to adapt the oppressed to the world view of the capitalist system, which is initially the cause of the oppression.³

It cannot be denied that one of the greatest perpetrators and reinforcers of dominant ideology in a society is the institution of education. State educational projects and programs are some of the most important apparatuses that the state has, as a cultural and ideological institution, to maintain the socio-economic and political system.⁴ Because of the position of control that the dominant class holds in society, it has the power to disseminate ideas that will justify and support its interest. A system of meanings, language forms and roles, as defined by the ruling group, is given legitimacy and primacy.⁵ This dominant ideology is then

reinforced and perpetuated within and by the institution of education to advance the interest of the dominant class and its economy.⁶ Thus, in a capitalist society, state community development projects and adult basic education and retraining programs, more often than not, strive to train individuals to enter the labour force and to adapt to the dominant ideology.

In Canada, during the last three decades, the state has organized many community development projects, as well as adult basic education and retraining programs. As previously stated, a main purpose of these programs is to adapt oppressed groups to the skills and ideology of the capitalist society. During the 1960's, these programs first emerged as part of the state's war on poverty. Among the first projects to be developed were the Canadian Newstart programs. These were established in thirty-five areas across the country. All of the chosen areas were characterized by high unemployment, slow economic growth and social problems. The programs focussed on retraining adults who were school drop-outs, unemployed, low income workers and workers displaced by technological change. The Newstart programs were followed by a proliferation of other community development projects all across Canada. Programs such as the Company of Young Canadians, Opportunities for Youth and institutions such as Frontier College hired community workers to go into these poor areas and help the people come to grips with their social problems.⁷ Unfortunately, these programs were often designed

from the perspective of the dominant class with regards to the needs of the people being helped. Hence, the workers tended to implement a top down approach to development. They, and not the people, identified needs, planned solutions to community problems, recruited resources and initiated programs and services to meet the assumed required needs of a community or group.

Many of these state programs were developed for Native people to assimilate them into mainstream society. An example of one such program occurred in northern Albert in 1971. Community Vocational Centres were established by the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower to help northern communities cope with the change and trauma experienced with the encroachment into the north of the dominant industrial society. Although the Centre's programs attempted to help people of Native ancestry obtain basic academic skills from elementary grade levels upward to grade twelve, there were conflicting results. Instead of the emergence of an autonomous, self-determined Native population equipped to cope with an industrial north, Native communities continued to experience poverty, unemployment, crime and alcoholism, and individuals suffered from anomie.⁸

Events in the Northwest Territories provide another example of state education for assimilation purposes. In the early 1970's, the infiltration of the white dominant culture was causing communities in the Territories to experience many

forms of institutional disruption. Settlement councils were replacing band councils, co-operatives offered alternatives to the Hudson Bay stores and private trade stores were being established for the marketing and purchasing of goods. Cultural change within the Inuit social structure resulted in social problems such as alcoholism, drug abuse and high unemployment. In 1975, the Territorial government and the Department of Education responded to this situation by establishing twenty-six adult education centres across the region. These educational programs provided northerners with academic and job skills needed in the new economic system. The centres offered training in the English language, consumer education, home management and academic upgrading.⁹ When one examines these programs, they all can be described as ways of assimilating the Inuit into the southern dominant culture.

Created in 1985 for disadvantaged groups in Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Skills Development Program provides a further example of the assimilation purpose of state education programs. The project was a joint undertaking by the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower and the Provincial Department of Social Services. It was delivered by the community colleges and technical institutions throughout the province to approximately 3,500 individuals on social assistance.¹⁰ The goal of the program was based on the state's adult education policy: "to provide adults with the opportunity to acquire pre-requisites to enter technical,

vocational, trades or other post secondary training programs, and to help adults prepare themselves for employment."¹¹ Again, the main focus was to assimilate these individuals into the mainstream of society.

With the main purpose of these programs being the assimilation of oppressed groups into the dominant culture, it is not surprising that the educational practice utilized in these projects has been characterized by authority and control. Such an approach is most compatible with promoting the dominant ideology. Thus, curriculum content and mode of delivery can be utilized to educate disadvantaged and oppressed groups to change their values, attitudes, places of residence and to modify or abandon indigenous skills and culture in order to fit into mainstream society. From the perspective of the dominant culture, it is reasonable to utilize such educational content and practice since the accepted belief regarding the conditions of these oppressed groups is that "if they were just more like us everything would be alright."¹² Such a belief promotes the view that program participants have inferior cultural backgrounds. As well, it justifies the action of the state to provide education to "transform the feckless and potentially disruptive into more responsible citizens."¹³ The curriculum content and delivery are carefully designed to that end. Hence, no one questions the orthodox behaviourist learning approaches of such programs. Lectures, programmed learning,

computer based instruction and pre-packaged correspondence kits make up the delivery of such programs. These are based upon learning principles that are derived from behaviourist objectives and reinforced by schedules and tests. The criteria for success, thus, are measured in terms of formal classes, assignments, attendance and valid registration. All of these have been developed by the ruling class.¹⁴

However, such educational practices and curricula are often in contradiction to those aspects of adult education that are said to distinguish it from conventional schooling. For example, the adult learner's personal experiences and perspectives that are brought to the learning process are often ignored. Furthermore, standardized criteria can inhibit an adult learner's right to determine, face to face with the facilitator, an appropriate program of learning that meets his or her needs. With structured guidelines and predetermined curricula, the learner is often isolated from the educator and from other learners. As Paulo Freire states: "Knowledge is handed to them like a corpse of information... a dead body of knowledge-not a living connection to their reality. Hour after dead hour and year after dull year learning is just a chore imposed on students by the droning voice of the official syllabus."¹⁵ This approach to learning is mechanistic and reduces people to the non-rational realm by "reducing human psychological processes to the level of animal behaviour."¹⁶ Paulo Freire calls this type of educational practice the

"transfer of knowledge" or "banking system approach" to learning.¹⁷ Within such an approach, learners are trained to observe a situation without judgment and to view the world from the perspective of the dominant society. It is a non-dialogical discourse where the speaker's (teacher's) words dominate and the learners listen in silence. In addition, the content of the courses emphasizes techniques, skill development and job training, but no critical thinking. This type of job preparation does not empower the workers to challenge the inequities of the socio-economic and political system. Instead they are habituated to submit uncritically to authority. The result is that they become passive, adapt to the world as it is, and never question it.¹⁸ Undoubtedly, this approach to learning can be seen as a social control mechanism utilized by the state to assimilate oppressed groups into the dominant ideology.

Generally, this form of educational practice and curricula does not foster learner autonomy or self-determination. It has special implications for women and racial minorities in Canada. The following paragraphs will provide a brief overview of the nature of these implications for these groups.

In a capitalist society (as in all hierarchical societies) the dominant group subordinates women by perpetuating sexism in educational curricula. Men and women are taught that the process of reproduction, production and

consumption that women undertake in the family unit is important to the maintenance and continuance of the capitalist economy. Because women's arduous, repetitive and lengthy hours of non-paid labour in the private sphere of the family is indispensable, many sexist myths are used to keep them from abandoning this work and from participating in the public work force. For example, there are myths that state that women's participation in the paid labour force will result in the disintegration of the patriarchal family unit. Furthermore, because women are expected to be dependent upon a male member such as a spouse, father, brother or another who will provide for them, it is often rationalized that unequal and low wages are acceptable for women. Other myths are perpetuated within the curricula by the persistent portrayal of women as domestics, mothers and care-givers. Subject matter in educational programs stresses women's roles as managers in the home. Few new alternatives for women are introduced. Courses offered in home management, sewing, cooking, cake decorating, micro-wave cooking and clerical and service work represent socially sanctioned ways in which women should participate in society.¹⁹

When women attempt to deviate from these learned values and roles by leaving the private sphere and entering the paid labour force, they are often met with discrimination and exploitation. In the labour force women are segregated into occupations that are similar to women's domestic roles in the

private sphere. They are often excluded from traditionally male dominated occupations. Women, thus, find themselves concentrated in a competitive secondary service sector which includes such occupations as sales, clerical, service and domestic work. These are characterized by low pay, low training requirements, low job security and low levels of unionization.²⁰

Just as the curricula of adult education are used to adapt women to dominant ideology and the capitalist economy, so is it also used to make racial minorities adapt to the existing social structure of the dominant group. In curriculum materials, certain ethnic groups are generally presented as performing manual labour, working in trades and low skilled jobs. This arrangement is substantiated in the structure of the white capitalist economy. Here, some racial minorities are streamed into the most disadvantaged sectors of the labour force characterized by low wages, low skill requirements and low levels of unionization.²¹ Some racial minorities generally have minimal economic and political power within society because of the racist beliefs that are perpetuated in the curriculum which indicate that "they are good for nothing - are incapable of learning anything, that they are sick, lazy and unproductive."²² These beliefs become embedded in society's collective attitudes and are used to justify the exploitation of racial minorities for cheap labour. Individuals from such groups are used in jobs where

the white middle class work force is reluctant to work for a low wage. Capitalists are often reluctant to reduce profits in order to pay a decent wage, and so, recruit racial minorities for undesirable jobs.²³ Howard Adams, a Saskatchewan Metis, author and political leader, explains how he had to succumb to racism in order to survive. "The hostility I nurtured during my ugly work experiences dominated my thoughts. I needed jobs to get money. The jobs degraded me and destroyed my sense of esteem and humanity. There was no way of avoiding these nasty experiences with white employers."²⁴

Work experiences such as those articulated by Adams are possible only in a system that maintains an ideology that suggests that some racial and minority groups are an appropriate labour pool for low paid, undesirable jobs. This ideology is buttressed by the school system as well as by adult educational programs. The racial and gender inequality that is perpetuated within the structure and practice of state adult education has far reaching effects on oppressed groups. Racist and sexist ideology restricts a group's equal access to a fair share of the country's economic wealth and political power. It also restricts participation in most spheres of the public life of the community. As well, adult education that perpetuates racial and gender inequality constitutes a "cultural invasion"²⁵ by the dominant ideology of the world of the oppressed. Oppressed peoples, thus, are convinced of the

validity of racist and sexist myths and, as a consequence, consent to their own subordination and oppressed status without raising a voice in criticism. They have been effectively inhibited from exercising their right to determine actively their own destiny and to develop their own values, attitudes and culture. Racial and gender inequality in the work world and in the educational curricula contribute to a psychology of oppression, often leading oppressed groups to withdraw into a "culture of silence."²⁶ Dominant ideology, thus, begins to permeate the lives of racial minority groups and of women, so much so "that it becomes common sense, an unconscious and uncritical way of seeing the world."²⁷ Those of the oppressed who do not accept the nature of educational practice and dominant ideology become outcasts. Their non-acceptance is often manifested in their poor participation in state education projects or in their dropping out after registering in such programs.

This non-participant form of resistance is particularly noticeable in Canada among people of Native ancestry. For example, in 1967, an adult basic education program was implemented at Elliot Lake, Ontario. The pilot Relocation Project was sponsored by the Department of Indian Affairs, Canada Manpower and the local Provincial Centre for Continuing Education. Twenty Indian families living on social assistance were relocated from a reserve to Elliot Lake. The purpose of the program was "to bring them out to industry

rather than attempting to bring industry to them."²⁸ The program failed because of the racism exhibited in the program, in the community of Elliot Lake and by the educators involved. The dominant society's culture at Elliot Lake was alien to the Native learners. Their educational needs were not met because curriculum materials were generally irrelevant to these needs. State educators possessed little knowledge of Native cultural values or aspirations. The attitude expressed by those concerned with the program was summed up in this statement by an Elliot Lake resident. "If they're going to integrate the Indian they must do it from our point of view. Using our rules, because after all those are the rules that will be used when, and if they integrate."²⁹ Such an attitude is not only insensitive, but also paternalistic. As the program progressed, Native participants slowly withdrew and moved back to the reserve with their families.³⁰ It was the only way they could cope or respond to an educational program which was of little benefit to them.

In British Columbia, in 1971, one finds a further example of Native resistance through poor participation in state educational programs. The Department of Indian Affairs and the Public School districts of B.C. launched a series of adult basic education programs on rural reserves. Judging from certain perspectives, the quality of the programs could be considered poor. Classes were characterized by low attendance and high dropout rates. This situation occurred for various

reasons. First, Native people possessed limited perceptions of the value of formal education. Secondly, there was difficulty with recruiting instructors who were competent and socially acceptable to the Native learners. Thirdly, a lack of available, suitable curriculum materials relevant to Indian cultural values and educational needs discouraged interest in the program. The low attendance and high dropout rate contributed to the lack of long term commitment to the program on the part of both students and instructors.³¹

A final example of resistance to state adult educational programs by Native peoples, through poor participation, is found in northern Saskatchewan. In 1976-1977, in the 5-10 Basic Training and Skills Development Program offered by the Department of Northern Continuing Education in the Metis community of LaLoche, discontinuation rates were high prior to course completion. Approximately 58 percent of the learners dropped out.³² A conference held in Saskatoon in 1978 on Multiculturalism and Education testified to the ever increasing cultural insensitivity to cultural groups in state education programs.³³

When state adult education programs, such as those discussed in the examples above, fail to cope with the injustices of the social order, oppressed groups are aroused to challenge institutions of the state and society through campaigns for social reform. These campaigns develop into broadly based social movements which "consist of collective

enterprises to establish a new order of life."³⁴

Social movements have their inceptions in conditions of unrest and derive their motivations and power from the dissatisfactions with the present form of life and from the hopes for improvement. They do not emerge with defined objectives, philosophies or an organized structure, but develop through many stages over a period of time. In the initial stages a social movement is amorphous and loosely organized, characterized by restlessness and collective excitement. As the movement develops, it becomes organized, solidified, persistent and acquires the characteristics of a society. The movement's participants develop a sense of community, a 'we-consciousness', and acquire a body of customs, traditions and a well defined philosophy about a new scheme of life.³⁵ An ideology is developed that strives to transform the social consciousness of the membership and all society. This philosophy engenders the belief that gradual reform of the social order will eradicate injustices.

The movement becomes formalized and manifests itself through a wide range of social movement organizations. These organizations represent "the banding together of large numbers of men and women to fight for those rights which ensure a decent way of life."³⁶ Social movement organizations act as a community classroom serving as "links of learning"³⁷ between the organization and society. Organizations educate their membership and society about the issues of concern in order to

inspire action for desired reforms. The survival of the movement depends upon the continuous education of its membership and society about the issues of concern. The success of the movement to change the dominant society's values and attitudes towards social reform is dependent on society's acceptance of the movement's goals and aspirations.

When education becomes involved in movements for social reform, a radical approach is used to inspire the oppressed to work for the change needed to enhance the quality of life in the social structure. The aim of education is to challenge and transform the dependency of the oppressed and to enhance their power and authority, thus empowering them to change their situation. Education "comes to serve as a compensatory or re-adjustment mechanism concerned to promote the collective well being of an identified or disenfranchised group."³⁸ This function of education is referred to as liberating community education.

The basic aim of liberating community education is to conscientize people and to provide them with tools for critically developing and assessing their needs, aspirations and goals. Liberating education contends that community members and not state institutions ought to direct the processes and mobilize educational resources and services that lead to the establishment of community needs, programs and desired change. Liberating educators believe that the only people in a position to effect meaningful change for the

oppressed are the oppressed themselves. As Myles Horton states, "nothing will change...until we change...until we throw off our dependencies and act for ourselves."³⁹

Dominant society is not likely to support either a revolution of the system that currently supports it, or to share its wealth or power. It is quite probable that the majority of the dominant classes do not accept the notion that the existence of the oppressed in society is a concomitant of their own favourable position. When the state attempts to provide a solution to a situation, it is based on an interpretation of the problem as the state sees it. Subsequent state solutions are not, therefore, often to the advantage of the oppressed. The solutions of the dominant society "continue to support the paradigm of imposition and oppression and so would continue the inequality."⁴⁰ People gain self-confidence and self respect when they are able to depend upon themselves to make decisions, to control and direct their own lives.

People gain the confidence and power to become "masters of their own destiny"⁴¹ only when they become critically aware of the factors in their environment that oppress them. Critical awareness of reality and one's position in it empowers an individual or group to take action to change an oppressive situation. The aim of liberating community education "is to help people become so empowered that they can begin to have something to do with their lives."⁴² Developing

critical awareness of one's reality is a process of conscientization. It is a social process "by which human beings achieve an increasing awareness of the socio-cultural reality which influences and shapes their lives."⁴³ An awareness of reality develops an oppressed group's ability to transform society.

The educational process of conscientization attempts to demythologize society, open people's minds and "smash the inferiority complex of the masses."⁴⁴ Oppressed groups which have been denied their basic human rights by the state's educational activities become dehumanized. Humanization entails participating fully in creating one's self and one's world. The ending of dehumanization is achieved when the oppressed become aware of their "self-hood"⁴⁵ by looking critically at their situation and taking action to change it. Through conscientization the oppressed become critically aware of their position in the social and economic system. This means engendering an understanding of the capitalist society and challenging the ideology of the dominant class, which perpetuates a system of oppression.

The theme of liberating adult education is, thus, social freedom and justice through reflective self-awareness and social action. Conscientization not only involves an understanding of the operation of injustices of the system, but also participating in collective action. This educational process is an intellectual as well as a practical task. It is

a synthesis of reflection about the world and action in the world. Knowledge, reflection and action are combined in order to obtain meaningful results. Paulo Freire states that "Conscientizacao implies that in discovering myself oppressed I will be liberated only if I try to transform the oppressing situation in which I find myself. And I cannot transform that situation just in my head--that would be idealism. In this instance the structure would go on the same and my freedom would not begin to grow."⁴⁶ This process of knowledge, reflection and action is a dialectical or continuous process of learning which oppressed groups may engage in for the purpose of obtaining change. This process of "praxis involves a dialectical movement which goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action, to new action."⁴⁷ Praxis "draws attention to the role of human activity and creativity in the processes of historical development."⁴⁸ Oppressed groups are no longer reduced to passive receptors of sensory information, as in state education, but are involved in a changing and changeable society. Knowledge arises and deepens as the process of activity, knowledge and reflection continues. Through praxis situations are changed and new ones created. People play an active part, thus becoming conscious agents of social change.⁴⁹ Although the process of conscientization may not solve a conflict, it has a crucial role to play in helping people understand the nature and origin of the way things are and to consider the possibilities

before them. Tom Lovett states that "success will depend on the extent to which adult education contributes to the process of social change."⁵⁰

In contrast to state adult education which stresses collective education for individual development, liberating community education focusses on collective education for collective and individual advancement.⁵¹ Learning and action are conducted in an atmosphere of collectivity and co-operation. Collective self-determination is regarded as a primary solution to reform. Individuals work together to pressure the social, economic and political structures to instigate reform. The belief in collectivity "is rooted in faith and co-operative action and the power of communities in coalition to compel social change."⁵² Organization and co-operation offer oppressed groups the greatest potentiality for obtaining control over their own lives. Through collective power oppressed groups precipitate radical social change, and it is through this collectivity that adult education can make its most effective contribution to community action.

The process of conscientization is carried out collectively in cultural circles, study groups, workshops and mass meetings or conferences.⁵³ The purpose of these activities is to initiate a dialogue so that conscientization will occur. During dialogical exchange members begin to challenge the existing structure, draw attention to contradictions, reflect on personal experiences and plan

programs of action that will initiate change. Collective learning activities abolish the irrelevance and arid intellectualization of the authoritarian curriculum and encourages critical thinking and active participation. Conscientization is problem solving education aimed at getting people to see beyond the surface of their reality through critical discussion and questioning. Education becomes a tool for making sense out of the world and preparing people to take action to change it. Problem solving education is in direct contrast to the state's transfer of knowledge approach to learning which mystifies reality, prevents critical thinking and perpetuates dominant society's values.⁵⁴

Mass meetings or conferences are examples of significant forms of collective activity that empower people to take action for reform. Mass meetings feature the human personality, and "nothing can replace the person as an instrument for the dissemination of knowledge."⁵⁵ At conferences, participants listen to inspirational messages of leaders and return to their home communities "with a new vision of the possibilities of education and social action."⁵⁶ By means of conferences the isolation of community groups is eradicated and individuals discover common problems. Conferences also provide for informal contacts, socializing and recreational activity. Collective activity acts "as a social binding force,"⁵⁷ and the act of coming together in itself is a step forward in engendering a new sense of

community. Collective activity mobilizes people "to think, to study and to get enlightenment."⁵⁸ By identifying and discussing common problems at meetings and conferences, the oppressed educate each other and pave the way for meaningful social change.

Through various forms of collectivity, social movement organizations strive to develop the general knowledge and technical expertise necessary among their membership to obtain social change. In order to acquire new skills and knowledge, group activities such as workshops, study groups and conferences are often utilized. General and technical education seek to develop the skills necessary to operate and manage the movement and its organizations. The development of literacy, bookkeeping, committee procedures, management expertise and skills in legal advocacy provides an aid to planning and organizing mental activity and contributes to a sense of personal control of one's environment. General and technical education "can be an empowering support for social emergence" and "are the foundations for becoming a conscious remaker of social life."⁵⁹ Learning to read thoroughly, write clearly and think critically are ways to penetrate the maze of reality.

Technical and general skills are needed to help participants acquire the knowledge to sustain a living in mainstream society, while at the same time remaining true to cultural values. Thus, movement organizations often act as

training grounds for the oppressed. Although state education programs offer this technical expertise, their intentions vary considerably from liberating community education. State education teaches technical and general skills with an ideology concerned with preservation of the establishment. Liberating education, on the other hand, teaches these skills and simultaneously unveils the ideology of the dominant class. Critical questions are posed about the economy, the overloaded job market, the consequences of sexism and racism and the injustices inherent in a capitalist system.⁶⁰

The movement and its organizations seek alliances with adult educators and grassroots organizations outside the movement to acquire educational and moral support. These people are often individuals who at one time or another belonged to the "social strata of the dominators."⁶¹ Sometime during their career they became sensitized and radicalized to the realities of the inequities of the socio-economic and political system. They have renounced "the class to which they belong and join the oppressed in an act of true solidarity."⁶² These educators play an active role by helping the oppressed classes develop the intellectual capabilities, technical expertise and political awareness necessary to enact the struggle for change. They help organize educative programs that will nurture those skills in order that the movement leaders and their membership are able to direct their own activities. Oppressed groups need to "be given the chance

to come to terms with a subject, skill or field of knowledge so that they can understand its internal rules and become an expert as far as possible."⁶³

At workshops members acquire knowledge and skills with the aid of outside facilitators in such things as letter writing, organizing petitions and surveys, meeting officials and leaders of community groups and arranging social and other activities. The development of skills related to agenda building, decision making, problem solving and interpersonal relations contributes to empowering the leaders so that they are able to initiate social action. The knowledge that leaders and members acquire "becomes an arsenal of weapons in the battle against injustice and degradation"⁶⁴ and equips leaders with the capacity to serve community members and become effective agents of social change. This approach to adult education deals with immediate problems in a practical way. Instead of being distant and academic, education becomes a direct and intimate part of the personal lives, experiences and activities of the people.

This development of leadership by adult educators in conjunction with the movement is important. It is "the most visible sign of the potential of community education as a political act."⁶⁵ The way in which oppressed groups express themselves is through their "natural"⁶⁶ leaders. They are individuals who come from a variety of educational backgrounds, often without formal training in the processes of

community education. During the course of their work in the movement, organizational skills are acquired as they perform their roles as board members, committee members, community workers, educators and volunteers. Attitudes, values, skills and knowledge are developed from experiences within the environment. This process of self-education inspires self-determination.

Leaders are at the centre of political activity. They give strength to the movement by uniting forces and communicating both internally with group members and externally with the state, society's institutions and allies such as community agencies, political and social pressure groups and other movement organizations. Leaders facilitate the education of the membership in basic skills and techniques and direct the problem solving and action process which leads to collective development and community advancement. They encourage participants to articulate ideas, attend workshops, meetings and conferences.⁶⁷ Leaders maintain a "synergic power"⁶⁸ in their role as change agents. Synergic power is not meant to help people gain power over others, but rather it is a form of "humanistic power that educators use to develop co-operative methods that lead to action."⁶⁹ This power is not meant to control, but to release the capacity of people to act. By bringing existing resources together and developing processes for co-operative action, adult educators form a power base. "The extent to which such power is generated and

used, is the extent to which community education is involved in political action."⁷⁰

While liberating community education provides social movements and their organizations with methods of obtaining social change, such as the process of conscientization, the ideology of collectivity, the development of general and technical knowledge, the establishment of alliances and the development of leadership, there are many barriers that often prevent reforms from occurring in the social structure. The barriers that often hinder adult educators from obtaining change emanate from pressures exerted by society on the social movement organization and from the internal dilemmas within the organization itself. Societal pressures that impede an organization's endeavours can include racial and gender oppression and co-option of the organization by the state, while internal pressures are often a result of factionalism, organizational mismanagement and changes in leadership. When the oppressed are confronted with these challenges, educating for social change becomes a slow, tedious process that at times seems unobtainable.

The most dramatic challenge that the organization faces is the pressure exerted by society to resist any form of change in the present social order. The resistance to gender and racial equality in a capitalist society is remarkably strong because social change is usually synonymous with changes in dominant ideology and the existing social order.

Any deviation from this structure could disrupt the position of the ruling class and the very basis of the relations of production. Since the oppression of racial minorities and women is significant to maintaining the capitalist system, any changes to their status could invariably alter the position of the status quo and disrupt capitalist production. For example, the position of women in capitalist society has always been defined in terms of their role. This role represents a coherent structure whereby their position in the family, in the economy and in the spheres of social activity are all closely interconnected. Any change in one of these components could conceivably change the whole social structure. Therefore, there is a great fear among those who control capitalist relations and dominant ideology to allow any form of emancipation for women from their current position.⁷¹ The liberation of racial minorities from their oppressed status is also feared by the dominant group because any change in their position would threaten capitalist relations and the existing social order. Therefore, it is of benefit to the ruling class to continue to exploit racial minorities for cheap labour in capitalist production and to exclude them from participating in community life in order to maintain the present social structure.

Basically, racism and sexism hinder social change because they are sanctioned in our culture. From the earliest stages of childhood racist and sexist attitudes are developed in our

pyschological make up. Not only do these thought processes become a way of perceiving the world on an individual basis, but also on a societal basis. Racism and sexism are embedded in the very nature of our social institutions. As David Milner states: "When racism [and sexism] has taken root in the majority culture, has pervaded its institutions, language, its social intercourse and its cultural reproductions, has entered the very fabric of the culture, then the simple process by which a culture is transmitted from generation to generation--the socialization process--becomes the most determinant of prejudice."⁷² This is not to say that appropriate educational strategies will not eliminate racist and sexist attitudes, but they are most often a deterrent to obtaining reforms within the social order.

Just as the external pressures of gender and racial oppression act to prevent an organization from obtaining social change, so does confrontation with the state. The state deters social change when it co-opts a social movement's organization by incorporating it into the state apparatus, thus placing it under the control of the state. The state quite frequently co-opts an organization when it provides funding. Basically, the state realizes that liberating education is not a "system maintenance approach (but) it is a system disturbing approach (and) in this sense it is revolutionary."⁷³ In order to pacify resistance and instill the impression that the state is assuming responsibility for

the injustices that emanate from the capitalist system, the state gives organizations funding to conduct educational activities that will supposedly enable their liberation. However, through its funding programs, the state is able to re-orientate, reconstruct and redirect the organization's educational programs and policies so that the organization is forced to work within the confines of the state. Therefore, the strategy of the state is to accommodate the demands of the organization so that it will become acceptable and beneficial to the state.⁷⁴

Co-option poses many problems and limitations that restrict the scope of activity, autonomy, structure and political and social actions of movement organizations. Co-option makes it difficult for organizations using radical methods of education to make a major impact on the social order. This is a dilemma for liberating adult educators because it becomes a challenge to implement liberating educational practice successfully when the state increasingly controls adult learning. However, co-option of social movements and their organizations in a capitalist society is a political reality. Educators using liberating educational practices do not compromise their efforts and ideology but continue to challenge injustice, by working within the system for change.

Just as resistance plays a significant role in deterring social change, so do the internal dilemmas within the

organization itself. Factionalism, organizational mismanagement and changes in leadership all act as forces to hinder an organization from successfully attaining its goals. This is not to say that groups do not proceed through the community education process without a certain amount of struggle and conflict from forces within the organization. However, if conflicts are not dealt with effectively and wisely, the disagreements that an organization engenders can often hinder it from initiating community action as it tries to cope with political differences. Generally, the discrepancies that are experienced between members of the organization are a result of differing personal values and differing opinions about the organization's mission. Struggling through this conflict can be a critical process in learning if dealt with appropriately, or it can lead to the decay and disintegration of the organization.⁷⁵

By discussing the theory and practice of adult education in a capitalist society, this chapter demonstrates how adult education can be used to reinforce the socio-economic system or used to advocate reform in those aspects of the system that are unjust and oppressive. The state attempts to ameliorate the inequities produced by a capitalist system with the provision of educational programs and services, such as community development projects and adult basic education and retraining programs. These programs, however, do not challenge the injustices of the system, but attempt to adapt

the oppressed to the skills and ideology of the dominant society. Examples of state education programs demonstrate that oppressed groups resist the nature and practice of state adult education by not participating in or by dropping out of programs. The oppressed do not consent to the education imposed upon them, but challenge the injustices of the system through broadly based social movements such as the Canadian Native Women's Movement. This social movement and its organizations, such as the Regina Native Women's Group, have used liberating methods of community education to challenge the state to reform those aspects of the social structure that could improve the quality of life for Native women and their families. The Movement used education as a means to empower Native women to determine their own destiny, to provide them with tools for assessing their reality and to help them develop methods of action to obtain change. While educating for social change, Native women faced gender and racial oppression, political realities of working within the confines of the state and dilemmas within the organization that often hindered them from obtaining changes that would improve life conditions for themselves and their families.

CHAPTER TWO--NOTES

1. "The top ten percent of Canadian families owned fifty eight percent of all the (country's) assets, but of that roughly a third (19.6 percent) was owned by the top one percent of families and over two thirds (43.8 percent) by the top five percent." There are approximately five Canadian families who control one hundred major Canadian industries in Canada. The remainder of the country's wealth (approximately forty two percent) is controlled by foreign investors. Lars Osberg, "The Distribution of Wealth and Riches," pp. 92, 95 in Social Inequality in Canada, ed. by James Curtis, Edward Grabb, Neil Guppy, Sid Gilbert (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall Canada, Inc., 1988) and also see Leo A. Johnson, "The Capitalist Labour Market and Income Inequality in Canada," pp. 161-66 in Economy, Class and Social Reality, ed. by John Allan Fry (Toronto: Butterworth & Co., 1979).

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15. Ira Shor and Paulo Freire, A Pedagogy For Liberation (Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey Publishers Inc., 1987), p. 4.
16. Youngman, Adult Education and Socialist Pedagogy, p. 120.
17. See Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: The Seabury Press, 1970), pp. 57-74 and Shor and Freire, A Pedagogy for Liberation, pp. 17-50.
18. Shor and Freire, A Pedagogy for Liberation, pp. 39-46.
19. See Brittan and Maynard, Sexism, Racism and Oppression (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publishers, 1984), pp. 52-8 and Betty D. Robinson, "Women and Class Consciousness: A Proposal for the Dialectical Study of Class Consciousness," p. 47. (Typewritten).

20. There is a substantial amount of research, published in the 1980's, about the significance of a segregated labour force as it relates to the family, the economy and men and women's gender relations. Primary industries such as agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining continue to be male dominated with ninety percent of the industry positions occupied by men. The construction industry and transportation, communication and utilities occupations contain less than two percent women. The wholesale occupations, such as the trade sector, are composed of a work force that is 3/4's dominated by men. Only one in eight women are employed in manufacturing, except for the textile industry where women compose anywhere from 2/3's to 3/4's of the labour force. However, this sector is the poorest paid, least secure and most non-unionized area of all occupations in the labour market. The finance and business sectors are dominated by women. However, ninety percent are found in clerical jobs and non-managerial positions. Women dominate the service industry such as laundries, beauty shops, retail stores, etc. Ninety percent of women hold part-time jobs in this sector. Although the number of women in managerial positions has increased, they are employed in lower level positions. Professional occupations such as health, social work and education are traditionally female occupations and still remain so. In medicine, ninety percent of nurses are women, and of all the new jobs created in these three occupations since 1980, ninety percent of them went to women. In all occupations in the Canadian labour force, men's and women's, more than sixty percent of women are located in the clerical sector. See Pat Armstrong, Labour Pains: Women's Work in Crisis (Toronto: Women's Educational Press, 1984), pp. 67-98; Pat and Hugh Armstrong, Working Majority: What Women Must Do For Pay (Ottawa: Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1983); Brittan and Maynard, Sexism, Racism and Oppression and Robinson, "Women and Class Consciousness: A Proposal for the Dialectical Study of Class Consciousness:" 47.

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61. Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p. 65.

62. Ibid.

63. Lovett, Adult Education and Community Action, p. 35.

64. Alinsky, Revielle For Radicals, p. 163.

65. John Warden, "Community Education as a Political Act?," Community Education Journal 7 (April 1980): 7.

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67. See Alinsky, Revielle For Radicals, pp. 64-80; Michel Blondin, "Animation Sociale," pp. 160-62 in Citizen Participation: Canada, ed. by James A. Draper (Toronto: New Press, 1971); Brookfield, Adult Learners, Adult Education and the Community, p. 65; Bridget Dillon, "The Change Agent: A Radical Perspective," Adult Education (May 1972): 246-51 and Youngman, Adult Education and Socialist Pedagogy, p. 97.

68. Warden, "Community Education as a Political Act": 7.

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid.
71. Evelyne Sullerot, Women, Society and Change (England: BAS Printers Ltd., 1971), pp. 14-15.
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73. R. Armstrong, "Towards the Study of Community Action," Adult Education (April 1977): 22.
74. Hommen, "On the Organic Intellectualism of Antonio Gramsci: A Study of the Concept As a Contribution to the Politics of Education", p. 68.
75. See Brookfield, Adult Learners, Adult Education and the Community, p. 81 and Lovett, Adult Education and Community Action, p. 82.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CANADIAN NATIVE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

"It is a foregone conclusion that a tremendous amount of dedicated work and commitment faces the Indian woman of today. The task of rekindling the Indian culture, rebuilding the Indian nation, is placed in her arms. The Indian nation rests its weary head upon her bosom. She is its mother and she must give it life, love and nourishment so that it will grow healthy, strong and magnificent. I have great faith in Indian women."¹

Mary Ann Lavalley, 1975

During the late 1960's a Native Women's Movement emerged in Canada. It developed because of a realization on the part of Native women of the inequalities in their social and legal position in society and of the impoverished lives which they and their families experienced at the community level. Native women organized for two purposes. They were intent on changing their social and legal status and on improving life conditions for themselves and their families.² The growth of the Movement was inspired in a revolutionary era by the larger Indian Movement and the Women's Movement.

The decade of the 1960's was a time of collective protest and revolt characterized by "unprecedented accelerating change."³ It was a period of social concern for minority rights and citizen participation. Significant and vital social movements developed to seek changes in the social order. Movements were organized to represent the disadvantaged, the poor and the unemployed, as well as those

concerned about the environment, minority rights and women's rights. Their intent was to demand reforms in the social order.⁴

When treaty Indians received the federal vote in 1960, a new political awareness for and about Indians emerged in Canadian society. With the franchise and the legitimacy to organize, Indian organizations "popped up like sweetgrass after a thunderstorm."⁵ A dynamic Indian Movement developed within Canadian society and was aimed at improving the social, economic, political and cultural conditions of Native people. During the 1970's and 1980's, this movement crystallized into a series of Native organizations that became important vehicles for meeting the social needs of Native people and for educating society about Native issues and Native cultural values. They provided Native people with the opportunities to develop techniques and skills for dealing effectively with mainstream society.⁶ Native groups lobbied the provincial and federal governments to reform social policies to improve conditions for Native people. Native organizations also enabled the development of "an understanding between white and Indian people" and made "two way communication possible."⁷

During this same period of social ferment, a social movement challenging women's oppression and aimed at improving the status of all women in society spread throughout many countries. During the 1970's and 1980's, the Women's Movement developed organizations, methods and philosophies for

challenging women's oppression in society. Organizations of the Women's Movement have provided opportunities for women to meet, to challenge and to explore their beliefs about gender roles, social norms and social institutions. Personal experiences have been analyzed to gain an understanding of the relationship between women's circumstances in the social order and their personal difficulties. Women's groups have sought to develop a feminist consciousness in individual participants.⁸ Women's organizations have also educated the larger society about the concerns of the movement. They have provided educational activities and programs for the public which deal with reproductive rights, labour force rights, day care, family violence and other feminist issues. The Women's Movement gave rise to feminist scholarship. An important segment of that scholarship is based on the principles of Marxism out of which has developed a feminist perspective with which to analyze the oppressed status of women in society.⁹

This scholarship has analyzed the situation of Native women. It has documented that in the social, economic and political order the oppression of Native women is multi-dimensional and is based in economics, racism and gender. The primary source of oppression is the mechanics of capitalism--hence the economic dimension. A second source is the cultural classification of Native people in Canadian history--hence the race dimension. The third source is the societal attitude towards women--hence the gender dimension.¹⁰

The roots of the oppression of Native women are interconnected and historical. Discriminated against on the basis of sex, the majority of Native women, like most working women in the labour force, are found in the secondary market. This sector is characterized by low wages, high turnover rates, poor job security and low educational requirements.¹¹ Occupational inequality in the labour market is accentuated and compounded for Native women by the racial dimension.¹² Since colonial times, Canadian society has suffered from a "Pocahontas Perplex."¹³ Native women have been stereotyped as queens, princesses, La Belle Sauvage or as sullen drudges, brown jugs and squaws. These idealized and/or negative images of Native women are internalized by dominant society, as well as by Native people. They serve the function of degrading and discriminating against Native women in the labour force and in other spheres of society. The image of Native women "is freighted with such ambivalence that she has little room to move."¹⁴ Edna Manitouwabi, an Ojibwa woman from Ontario, tells of her experience when seeking a job in Toronto. "I went to a Catholic hospital in the city, St. Michael's Hospital, looking for a job as a nurse's aide. I was interviewed by a Sister Eileen, who told me: 'Well, we don't like to hire Indian girls, because they cannot be depended on, they are not reliable.' I remember it so clearly, because I really felt at the time she was right and that she was doing me a favour. I was a person that could not be depended upon

and she was giving me a break."¹⁵

The third dimension of the oppression of Native women and of non-Native women as well, lies within the female/male relations of the patriarchal family unit. Many women are oppressed in varying degrees by their male counterparts in the home through forms of sexual, psychological and physical abuse and in the sexual division of labour. Within the family unit women perform arduous, repetitive and long hours of non-paid labour that supports the economic system of capitalism. Male domination is not only limited to the family, but extends to all aspects of the social, economic and political order. For example, Native women are often prohibited by Native men from participating in Indian organizations, societies and band councils.

Native women did not always hold a subordinate position in the Native community. A number of pre-European Indian societies were egalitarian. In these societies Native women enjoyed more independence than their white European sisters. Relations were "based on the equal participation of all adults in the production of basic necessities, as well as their distribution or exchange and in their consumption."¹⁶ Indian female/male relations were reciprocal and complementary rather than hierarchical and competitive. In such Indian societies each person's labour was considered as valuable as the other's. People contributed their work according to their ability. The division of labour was based primarily on

expertise and not on one's gender. Personal autonomy was generally respected. Each person spoke for himself or herself when the members of the group participated in the politics of the tribe. The only authority placed on someone came from that person's ability and knowledge.¹⁷

European contact led to dramatic changes in the role and status of Indian women in society. Through European colonization, institutions such as the patriarchal family structure were propagated. Indian societies adapted to and internalized European patriarchy. The fur trade era, which occurred between 1670 and 1870, marked the period of transformation from an egalitarian to a patriarchal society for Native people. The Indian and Metis family unit became the means of maintaining the fur trade industry. Native women performed long arduous hours of non-paid labour, processing furs and pemmican and making clothes for their trader husbands. In the fur trade society they were segregated into the private sphere to produce, consume and reproduce, a process necessary for the preservation of the fur trade industry and the fur trade society. Patriarchy and capitalism undercut the complementarity of the relations of men and women, resulting in Native women's loss of autonomy in the public realm.¹⁸

Feminist theory has provided an understanding for at least some of the leaders in the Native Women's Movement as to why they confront racial and gender oppression. This critical

awareness of their plight has inspired them to challenge the forces of oppression and to do so independently of the larger Women's Movement and Indian Movement. Native women were influenced by the goals, aspirations, philosophies and organizing tactics of both Movements, but organized independently of those movements because neither gave priority to the concerns of Native women. Native organizations tended to be male-dominated and excluded "one of the most vital elements in the native movement, that is, the native woman."¹⁹ Since women's lives centered on maintaining the family unit, they were kept from political participation in Native organizations. Native women's absence from Native politics left many women's concerns unheeded. Native organizations indicated little desire to confront the government about eradicating discriminatory clauses against women in the Indian Act.²⁰ Colonial stereotypes and myths of Native women as squaws and sullen drudges remained unchallenged. The larger Women's Movement, too, was associated with the system that oppresses Native women. Leaders among Native women viewed the Women's Movement as elitist and middle class. They did not view their struggle as a struggle against sexism only, but also against racism.²¹

By organizing independently, those behind the Native Women's Movement believed they could more effectively address the impoverished conditions of Native communities in rural areas and urban centres. High birth rates and infant

mortality rates, health problems, unemployment, school dropouts, family breakdown, criminal offenses and the adoption of Indian children by non-Indians plagued Native communities. Social problems escalated in urban centres with the immigration of young Native people from reserves and rural areas. The majority of the migrants were female single parents and their children.

The national statistics regarding Native health conditions were alarming. Birth rates and infant mortality rates were high in Native communities. Since the 1950's, the Indian population had been growing faster than the non-Indian population. The phenomenal rate of growth was due to a combination of continued high birth rates coupled with higher survival rates. However, despite these rising rates, the Native infant mortality rate was three times higher than that of the Canadian population.²²

The major causes of Indian deaths and illnesses were associated with poverty, poor housing, lack of sewage disposal and potable water and poor access to medical facilities. Native housing was overcrowded and in poor condition. In 1965, one in three Native families lived in crowded housing. While ninety percent of Canadian homes had electricity and sewage disposal facilities, less than fifty percent of Native housing had these amenities.²³ Many rural Metis communities and Indian reserves were not accessible to medical facilities. The poor living conditions of Native families and the lack of

access to medical facilities led to a higher incidence of disease and illness among the Native population, as compared to the Canadian population. In the 1960's, the death rate from tuberculosis was fourteen times higher among Native people than among other groups in Canada.²⁴ Native people had a higher incidence than other Canadians of anemia, diabetes, infectious and parasitic diseases, hearing impairments, visual defects, dental problems, alcohol problems and mental disorders. The proportion of disabled and handicapped Native people was higher than any other segment of the Canadian population.²⁵

As an ethnic group, Native people represented Canada's economically poorest sector of society. In 1964, approximately thirty-six percent of the Native population was supported by social assistance compared to 3.5 percent of the Canadian population. At least half of all Native employment was concentrated in the primary resource based sectors such as logging, fishing, trapping and food gathering. These seasonal activities were subsidized by social assistance.²⁶

Native people's participation in state education was overwhelmingly low. The assimilation practices of the state and the absence of educational facilities discouraged many Native people from participating in state education. Since European colonization, education had been used as a means of assimilating Native people into the dominant society. Assimilation practices involved placing children and adults in

controlled learning environments away from all Native influence. Native traditions, customs, values, language and history were excluded from the educational curriculum, school textbooks and educational media. The aim of assimilation was to eliminate Native culture and adapt Native people to mainstream society.²⁷ This practice by state education maintained and perpetuated racism. Canadian society was left in a state of ignorance about Native culture. The state's failure to acknowledge Native people as a distinct cultural group left racial myths and stereotypes unchallenged.

The absence of educational facilities on many reserves and in many communities meant that Native people lacked the opportunity to participate in state education. Many communities offered only elementary grades, forcing those wishing to attend high school to commute long distances by bus to public schools in the nearest urban centres. Children often had to board away from home during the school year. Cultural alienation and language barriers forced many children to discontinue their schooling and return home.²⁸ The racism inherent in state education and the system's lack of recognition of the educational needs of Native people discouraged them from participating in education.

Throughout the 1960's and 1970's, the proportion of Native children in foster care increased steadily. The number of children in foster care was approximately five times the national rate. Between 1962 and 1976, the number of Native

children adopted increased fivefold, with an increasing proportion of children adopted by non-Indian parents. It was unlikely that many of these children would return to their home communities or acknowledge their heritage. This process of child apprehension and adoption was viewed by Native people as a form of cultural genocide.²⁹

Native men and women were over-represented in relation to their share of the population in both federal and provincial prisons. Sentences for violent offenses, such as assault, manslaughter and murder, were more common among Native people than among the other inmates. Native people also had more convictions for minor offenses than non-Native offenders. These minor offenses mirrored the social and health conditions in Native communities.³⁰ There was a larger proportion of Native women represented in correctional centres and prisons than Native men incarcerated in penal institutions.³¹

Since the early 1960's, the Native migrant population had grown steadily. This situation occurred because of an increase in the Native population which created overcrowding in many Indian communities. People were forced to leave their communities because of the absence of housing, employment and educational opportunities. The economic base of most reserves and rural communities was incapable of supporting the Native population. Housing was limited to families with two parents present. Single young people and families headed by female single parents received low priority for housing. Therefore,

the majority of those who migrated were between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four. Since the 1960's, there has been an increasing number of young female single parent families migrating to urban centres. By the 1970's, the incidence of these Indian families was four to five times higher than the national average.³²

Whenever problems of poverty, poor housing, health or family breakdown occur, whether on reserves, in rural communities or urban centres, it is the women who cope with these problems and who seek to keep the family together. This is expected since in traditional Indian society the maintenance of the home environment was the responsibility of the women. Iroquois women owned the house and all its contents and directed clan activities.³³ Chipewyan women dragged their home on the back of a travois during nomadic migrations.³⁴ Within Inuit culture "the man who failed to respect his wife's rights...was considered dishonest."³⁵ Women organized marriages, led house ceremonies and dances, reared children and transmitted cultural values to children and adults for the purpose of maintaining and preserving culture. Women were the teachers of language, religious customs, medicinal practices and tribal history.³⁶ The role assigned to Native women as keeper of the culture was organized around their unique position in Indian spirituality as creator and protector of life. The Creator, mother earth, bestowed upon woman the responsibility of life-giver and

caretaker of Indian culture.³⁷

"In each family the woman
was 'the centre of the wheel of life'.
The women 'were of the earth'
they were connected to the earth mother...."³⁸

Because of the unique role of the Native woman as caretaker of Indian culture, she had a strong voice in the direction of the lives of her people.

"The woman is the foundation on which
nations are built.
She is the heart of her nation.
If that heart is weak the people are weak.
If her heart is strong and her mind is clear
then the nation is strong and knows its purpose.
The woman is the centre of everything."³⁹

The significant position of the Native woman in traditional society has left her with the responsibility of dealing with the impoverished conditions of Native communities.

Freda Moosehunter, an educator and activist from Saskatchewan, states that "we are the first generation that are stepping out of our traditional roles."⁴⁰ Mary Ann Lavallee, a pioneer of the Movement from the Cowessess Reserve in Saskatchewan, refers to Indian woman as "Canada's last frontier."⁴¹ At the dawn of the Native Women's Movement, Native women carried out their traditional role of maintaining the family unit by rearing children and transmitting cultural values, language, legends and folkways to the children and adults. However, Native women performed their traditional role in a patriarchal system. Patriarchy limited women to the private sphere of the family whereas, in pre-European society, they actively participated in all spheres of public life with

an independent voice. Governments and male-dominated Native organizations and the Women's Movement were unable to develop solutions to the pressing conditions of Native women and their families. Threats to the survival of the family unit and Indian identity compelled Native women to enter the public realm to demand from society improvements in the quality of life.

The political and social activism that was necessary to change the position of Native women and their families in Canadian society first occurred at the grassroots level--in the Native communities. Organizing during the early stages was often informal and sporadic. Discussions about community life occurred at tea parties, bannock baking sessions, knitting and beading sessions and behind the scenes at band council and society meetings. Women started talking not about their beading designs but about what was happening with their families and communities.⁴²

Treaty women on reserves first began to organize and implement the Movement.⁴³ On many reserves throughout Canada Indian Women's Homemaker Clubs existed. These clubs were modelled after Homemaker Clubs developed for farm women in Manitoba and Saskatchewan between 1910 and 1917. The clubs were designed to give farm women practice in discussing and organizing activities around a wide range of topics from home management to politics. Eventually the clubs became "hives of suffrage activity."⁴⁴ They were financially and mutually

supported by the Grain Growers' Association which also supported the suffrage movement.⁴⁵ The regional Department of Indian Affairs in Saskatchewan adopted the idea of Homemaker Clubs. In 1937, the Department began implementing the clubs for Indian women on reserves. Indian Affairs viewed the clubs as a mechanism whereby Indian women would "acquire sound and approved practices for greater home efficiency."⁴⁶ During club meetings women gathered to practice home management and handicrafts.

Homemaker Clubs were an attempt by Indian Affairs to involve women in community leadership in order to improve conditions on reserves. However, on many reserves the clubs failed to take hold. The failure of Homemaker Clubs as agents of social change was due to the assimilation practices of Indian Affairs. The state's aim was to control the direction of adaptation of Native women to mainstream society, with little or no consultation with them. Non-Indian leadership was provided by Indian Affairs. Programs, organizational activities and decisions occurred away from the local level. In 1950, a rigid constitution for Homemaker Clubs was provided by Indian Affairs, offering little hope for the involvement of Indian women. The clubs did not communicate with one another. They remained isolated, unattached and under the domination of Indian Affairs.⁴⁷ Indian women came to view the clubs as "puppet organizations."⁴⁸ They believed that any potential the clubs might have for changing the conditions of reserve

life depended on the ability of the clubs to operate independently and outside of government control.⁴⁹

Indian women did not participate wholeheartedly in the government's attempt to assimilate them into the dominant society. However, the existence of the clubs resulted in positive implications for the organization of Indian women in the future. Homemaker Clubs provided a place where women could gather collectively and establish a common ground and an independent voice. Clubs provided the beginnings of a legitimate structure with which to negotiate for change with the institutions of the state and the society.

Although Homemaker Clubs represented the early efforts of Native women organizing to improve their conditions, the Native Women's Movement blossomed into a broadly based national social movement much later, between 1967 and 1975. During the formative years Native women met at provincial and national conferences to establish objectives and develop lines of communication, to share ideas and common concerns and to learn about Native women's issues and tactics for organizing. Native women invited resource people to their conferences. Community educators, social workers, Native elders, health workers and other helping professionals were invited to assist them in learning about organization, administrative and group skills, social welfare, education and health services, day care, nutrition and Indian law.⁵⁰ Conferences offered Native women the opportunity to perceive their locality in a larger

context. This enabled them to move from a local to a regional frame of reference. Women became aware that, despite cultural differences, designated status or place of residence, Native women all across Canada faced the same challenges.

Recognition of a common plight developed a sense of cohesiveness and solidarity among the women. It strengthened the movement at the grassroots level and furthered the development of Native women's organizations at the community and provincial levels.

The conferences achieved an emotionally charged evangelistic fervor, arousing individuals to become deeply committed to the cause. Leaders spoke out publicly. Their goal was to increase society's awareness of Native women's issues and to spur women to action. Leaders such as Mary Ann Lavallee, Alice Mustos from Glenevis, Alberta, and Rose Yellowfeet from Cardston, Alberta, urged women to participate in society on behalf of changes and improvements in the lives of Native people. In 1967, in an address to Indian women at the Saskatchewan Indian Women's Conference, Mary Ann Lavallee made this plea to Native women: "My dear native Sisters, it is high time for us Indian women to quit behaving like the ostrich, it is time for us to pull out our heads from the sand, it is time for us to blink our eyes, to open our eyes and ears, to look around us, to see things as they are, to face the truth and it is time for us Indian women to loosen our tongues, to speak out...."⁵¹ She believed that Native

women "had remained in the background too long"⁵² and called for co-operative efforts by both men and women in support of the Indian nation: "The Indian nation needs...the tongues of their Indian women for the Indian nation like a fish out of water is floundering and gasping for air."⁵³

Throughout the formative years of the Native Women's Movement, participation and education were emphasized as the two ingredients that would bring about social and political reforms. At the 1968 Alberta Native Women's Conference, Alice Mustos stated in an address to the Conference that a solution to the challenges facing Native women was "education, education, and again education."⁵⁴ At this same conference Mary Ann Lavallee stated that the role of Native women was to educate society for the purpose of obtaining improvements in the living conditions of Native people: "Today's Women must prepare the way for Tommorrow's women, not by virtue of birth alone but by blazing a trail of education, reform, of social reform and political reform."⁵⁵

Native women believed that in order to obtain changes in the quality of life both Native and non-Native society had to be educated. Rose Yellowfeet stressed the importance of women educating themselves first about their culture, contemporary issues and the skills and technology of the dominant society: "In order to help the Indian women and our families we had to learn who we are, what we can do and how to do it; and it is being together like this that we find out."⁵⁶ In his address

to Indian women at the Saskatchewan Indian Women's Conference, Indian elder Ahab Spence stated that the role of Indian women was to "educate the whitemen...to listen."⁵⁷ Spence believed that it was essential to transmit Native cultural values and contemporary issues to non-Native society to create an understanding and appreciation of Native people and to work towards eliminating racism.

The first regional conferences were organized by Treaty women. An example of early organizing by Indian women occurred in Saskatchewan in 1967. The Department of Indian Affairs and the Extension Division at the University of Saskatchewan planned conferences annually for the Indian Women's Homemaker Clubs throughout the province. Indian women were invited to attend courses in homemaking and to discuss topics such as child care, welfare, education, health issues and other topics of interest.⁵⁸ At a conference organized in October, 1966, only a few Indian women attended. The conference was declared successful by Indian Affairs, but "Indian women felt their involvement was not enough to call it their conference."⁵⁹ The women were dissatisfied with the organization of the clubs and conferences and desired more autonomy in managing and formulating their own programs, policies, directions, objectives and conferences. Indian Affairs complied with the women's wishes, and a planning committee of Indian women met throughout the next year to plan the first Saskatchewan Indian Women's Conference held at Fort

Qu'Appelle in 1967.⁶⁰

In March, 1968, the key conference that launched the Native Women's Movement was held in Edmonton, Alberta, by the Voice of Alberta Native Women's Society.⁶¹ Established in 1967, this newly formed Native women's organization was the first organized Native women's group that included Metis and non-Status women as members.⁶² The conference was a significant event that established the Movement across the country. It was a national gathering that included Treaty, Metis, non-Status and Inuit women from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and the Territories. Financial assistance was provided by the Community Development Branch, Province of Alberta, for Metis and non-Status women to attend because these women were "continuously shoved aside."⁶³ Treaty women were sponsored by the Department of Indian Affairs.

It was at this conference that Canada was to hear the voice of Native women for the first time. With a new vision of a 'just society', the federal government established the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. The Commission, under the direction of Florence Bird, requested women's groups and organizations across the country to contribute briefs to the federal government that would be instrumental in instigating change in the position of all women in society. Representatives of the Commission were invited to the Alberta conference to hear the concerns of Native women. Two Treaty

women, Mrs. Alice Steinhauer from Edmonton and Mrs. Mary Ruth McDougall from Cardston, organizers of the conference, believed the gathering would be "an opportunity for Native women to express their concerns and mutual interests and to endeavour to define their goals for a better future in their communities."⁶⁴ During the three day conference, Native women developed twenty-eight recommendations that were presented to the federal and provincial government representatives in attendance. The recommendations dealt with issues of Native health, education, legal rights, welfare, housing, community development, youth and recreation, urbanization and employment.⁶⁵

The idea of a national body to unify all Native women's organizations across Canada evolved from an International Native Women's Conference held at Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 1971. Delegates from various women's groups from around the world attended the conference to learn about the lives of aboriginal women. During the conference delegates from Canada met together to discuss the possibility of establishing a national association. The women were already members of established local and regional women's groups. Native women agreed that the timing was appropriate for the development of a monitoring body and a unified voice to advocate for Native women in Canada at the political level.⁶⁶

In 1971, such an organization was formed at the First National Native Women's Conference held in Edmonton, Alberta.

The Voice of the Alberta Native Women's Society, under the direction of Bertha Clark, a Metis woman from the Peace River country in Alberta, organized the conference. At this gathering the women discussed the formation of a national organization that would work to change the discriminatory clause of section 12 (1) (b) in the Indian Act. Native women wanted a national organization that would lobby the federal government for changes in social policies on behalf of all Native women throughout Canada. A national body would act as a forum to communicate information to various Native women's groups and to "educate white society about ourselves and our culture."⁶⁷ A national body could also enhance the growth of the Movement at the grassroots level and stimulate the development of organizations where there were none. Native women felt, too, that a national organization could help support policies instigated by Native organizations on behalf of Native self-government, land claims and treaty rights. Furthermore, Native women wanted to create unity between Treaty, Metis and non-Status people.⁶⁸ At this time legal factors determined a Native person's membership in an organization. For example, membership in such organizations as the National Indian Brotherhood and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians was restricted to Treaty Indians. As well, non-Status and Metis people formed their own organizations, such as the Native Council of Canada and the Metis Society. Native women viewed these splits between

Treaty, Metis and non-Status people within the Indian Movement as slowing down the process of improving the position of all Native people in society. Native women hoped that their organization would represent the common concerns of all people of Native ancestry, regardless of status.

During the conference, two steering committees were formed. Under the direction of Jean Goodwill, a Cree from Little Pine Reservation, Saskatchewan, a committee was organized to study the possibilities of forming a national body and drafting a constitution. A second committee was established consisting of Jenny Margetts of Edmonton, Alberta; Monica Turner, an Ojibwa from Thunder Bay, Ontario, and Donna LeBlanc from Sudbury, Ontario. Their task was to investigate Section 12 (1) (b) of the Indian Act. This section, mandating that Indian women lose their treaty rights by marriage to a non-Status person, seemed clearly discriminatory to the women.⁶⁹ The women left the conference to return to their communities and local women's groups to share the idea of the formation of a national body to advocate for change in the social and legal position of Native women and their families.⁷⁰

In 1970, change for Native women appeared to have become politically possible when an Indian, Joe Drybones, successfully appealed Section 94 (b) of the Indian Act, which prohibited the use of alcohol by Indians in a public place. Under section (1) (b) of the Canadian Bill of Rights the

Indian Act was found racially discriminatory.

"It is hereby recognized and declared that in Canada there have existed and shall continue to exist, without discrimination by race, national origin, colour, religion or sex, the following human rights and fundamental freedoms, namely...

(b) the right to equality before the law and protection by the law."⁷¹

Because the Drybones case was successful in obtaining change to the Indian Act, Jeanette Lavall from the Wikwemikong Reserve, Manitoulin Island, Ontario, and Yvonne Bedard from the Six Nations Reserve in southern Ontario, both of whom had been disenfranchised because of marriage to non-Indians, proceeded independently to court to contest Section 12 (1) (b) of the Indian Act.⁷²

Lavall and Bedard lost their cases in the Supreme Court of Canada. The court had ruled that the Indian Act superseded the Canadian Bill of Rights. This was because the Act had special status and was protected legislation under the British North America Act. It could not be altered by a court, only by Parliament. Furthermore, the court stated that the Indian Act "does not discriminate against women and is merely a legislative embodiment of customary social and economic patterns."⁷³ The Supreme Court's Decision supported and perpetuated the myth that Native women held an unequal status in traditional Indian Society. The false belief that traditional Indian society was patriarchal in nature was used to justify the presence of a discriminatory clause in the Act.

The court's decision supported the racist and sexist ideology perpetuated by the state to inhibit the full participation of Native women in the social, economic and political system.

The Supreme Court of Canada's decision received support from many Native organizations and band councils. Native groups, for their part, argued that the Indian Act stood apart from Canadian law to protect and govern Indians with special status. Indian leaders did not want the Act tampered with on a piecemeal basis and believed that Indian organizations should take the responsibility of researching and investigating the Act. Upon the completion of this process, Native leaders would present proposals for changes to the federal government.⁷⁴ Harold Cardinal, a representative voice of Treaty Native organizations, emphatically stated to the Indian people and the federal government that "whatever injustices an Indian woman faces under the Indian Act can be rectified when the Indian Act is amended."⁷⁵ When this time was to occur was unknown. To those who supported Lavall and Bedard, it appeared that some twenty thousand Indian males in the Indian Association of Alberta, the National Indian Brotherhood, the Indians of Quebec, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians and the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians had conspired to crush the legitimate aspirations of two independent Indian women, symbols of a growing Native Women's Movement.⁷⁶

Despite the importance of the issue of the Indian Act's

discrimination against women, Native women were clearly divided on whether they should lose their status as Indians upon marriage to a non-Indian. On March 22, 1972, at the opening session of the Second National Native Women's Conference in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, two hundred Treaty, Metis and non-Status women participated in the first open forum, providing an opportunity for women to express their opinions on the issue. Some women believed that the Indian Act could not determine Indian identity. In a speech to conference delegates Jeanette Lavall stated that Indian people "must recognize that we are born Indian persons, and we will die Indian persons."⁷⁷ Some women, such as Marie Maurice from a band in Alberta, believed decisions regarding the implementation of the Act should be made at the band level. "If we have to live by the Indian Act," she said, "...make it so that each band decides who belongs to the band, who lives on the land. Whether I have treaty rights is my people's decision."⁷⁸ There were those women who were against Indian women marrying outside their culture. Mary Ann Lavallee believed that the loss of Indian women to white society disintegrates reserve life and Indian culture. "As a distinct cultural people unique in physical appearances, cultural values and traditions," she said, "we want the reserves to remain Indian in content."⁷⁹ Some women, such as Agnes Bull, from a band in Alberta, felt it was necessary for Indian women who marry non-Indian men to leave the reserve. In a speech to

conference delegates, she explained that "if the white man is given the chance to step on our reserves...our reserves would go down the drain."⁸⁰ The conference was instrumental in rallying strength to support the cause for reforming Section 12 (1) (b) of the Indian Act. Jeanette Lavall and thirteen other women concerned with changing the Act formed the organization, Indian Rights for Indian Women.

The defeat of women's rights in the Lavall and Bedard case and the turmoil of those three years did not weaken the Native Women's Movement at the grassroots level, but offered it new strength and inspiration. The case was the Movement's first significant effort to obtain change in the laws of the dominant society. The struggle served ultimately to unite Native women and awaken them to the injustices of society's social, economic and political institutions and to make them more aware of the multi-dimensional structure of their oppression.

The fight for rights became institutionalized, with the establishment of two national bodies. In 1974, with Bertha Clark as the first president, the National Native Women's Association finally organized at the First Annual Assembly held in Thunder Bay, Ontario.⁸¹ Existing local and provincial organizations that had developed since 1971 joined the national body. The group, Indian Rights for Indian Women, incorporated in 1975 to carry on its struggle for changes in the Indian Act.⁸² In 1976, in an address to the Department of

Indian Affairs, Jeanette Lavall claimed that the struggle for Indian women's rights "will continue until native women are given their rightful place in Indian and Canadian society."⁸³

By 1975, the Native Women's Movement had become established in Canadian society. It manifested itself through Native women's organizations across Canada which sought to change their social and legal status and to improve conditions of Native women and their families.

In Saskatchewan, Native women's organizations began to develop in 1971. While Metis Society meetings were in session, a group of women occasionally met together at the Friendship Centre in Saskatoon.⁸⁴ Their discussions focussed on the impoverished conditions that Native women and their families were experiencing on reserves, in northern rural communities and in urban centres. The group felt that existing government programs were not sensitive to Native culture or to the needs of Native women and that "the cultural differences that exist between Native women, and those of the white society, demand a new approach to the problems of education and service."⁸⁵ Because of the intimate knowledge they had of their own culture and because of their life experiences, they believed that they could "establish a separate approach to deal with the social and educational and economic problems of Native women in a positive and effective way."⁸⁶ Although other Native organizations such as the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians and the Metis Society

provided services to Native people, Native women perceived that their unique problems and needs could not "be related to or dealt with effectively by organizations designed for and run mostly by male members of the community."⁸⁷

Under the leadership of Josephine Pambrum of Meadow Lake, Nora Thibedeau of Saskatoon and Vicki Racette of Regina, the group began discussing the formation of a provincial Native women's organization which would provide improved educational and social programs and support services to Native women and their families throughout the province. The group called itself the Saskatchewan Native Women's Movement. During the summer and fall of 1971, members of the Movement from various communities in the province travelled to many rural areas and urban centres to spread the news of the development of a provincial organization and to encourage women to organize local groups that would attempt to improve conditions in their communities.⁸⁸ During the first year, women's groups, referred to as local chapters, were organized in the urban centres of North Battleford, Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina.

The organization of a local chapter in Regina was viewed as a priority because of the consequences that resulted from the large influx of Native families that migrated from the rural areas to the city. In the early 1970's, Regina experienced a dramatic increase in the number of Native people residing in the city. Though smaller in population than other

western cities such as Winnipeg and Edmonton, Regina had a proportionately higher Native population than these cities.⁸⁹ The majority of Regina's Native people had migrated from the reserves and rural communities around Yorkton and the Qu'Appelle Valley districts.⁹⁰ Children and young adults, the majority of them women under the ages of twenty five, accounted for seventy to seventy five percent of the people who left the rural areas.⁹¹ When they moved to Regina, the migrants settled in the neighbourhoods of Highland, Cathedral and North Central, which were the city's older neighbourhoods.⁹² Before the migration years began, these older neighbourhoods were totally Anglo-Saxon. However, by the 1970's, there was "not a block that did not have at least one native family."⁹³

Migration from the rural areas to Regina was viewed as a positive attempt by Native women and their families to obtain a better life. However, for many who left their families and culture in the rural areas to face a competitive and unfamiliar urban environment such a large scale movement was disruptive. Lacking employable skills and discriminated against because of race and gender, the majority of women entered low skill/low wage occupations or obtained social assistance.⁹⁴ Despite the existence of some successful urban Native families, most experienced difficult socio-economic conditions, as they had previously in their rural communities. High unemployment rates and a dependency on transfer payments

resulted in poverty and forced many women into poor housing where they experienced health problems and family breakdown.⁹⁵

When family breakdown occurred, it was the women who were usually left with the burden of caring for and supporting the children. While living in Regina away from their natural support systems in their rural communities, many women had little encouragement and almost no role models to help them with the care of their families. Native women in general had fewer opportunities than Native men to take advantage of education or job training. They did not have access to opportunities "which would have enabled them to return to the unique aspects and skills of their culture or which would have enabled them to make positive contributions to the development and improvement of that culture."⁹⁶

This large influx of Native women and their families to the city created serious stress on the existing community services. The city lacked the required resources in the areas of housing, child welfare, health, education, employment and recreation that were needed to help Native families settle in their new environment. This lack of adequate support services to assist in a smooth transition from the rural areas to the city, together with the impoverished socio-economic and cultural conditions of Native women and their families, prompted the Saskatchewan Native Women's Movement to discuss the formation of a local chapter in Regina.

During the fall of 1971, a group of Native women met

several times at the Friendship Centre in Regina, located at 1170 Quebec Street. In November, members of the provincial organization planned a major meeting to establish a Native women's group in Regina. They contacted as many women as possible and encouraged them to come to the initial planning meeting held at the Centre. Eighty-five women attended and discussed the conditions confronting Native families in Regina and the formation of an organization that would attempt to improve the situation.⁹⁷ Elections were held during the meeting for a board of directors that was composed of equal representation from Metis, Treaty and non-Status women. This ensured that the concerns of all Native women, regardless of status, would be addressed. Caroline Goodwill was elected as the chapter's first president, a position which she held for three years. The participants at the meeting agreed to call themselves the Regina Native Women's Group.⁹⁸ The Friendship Centre offered the Group office space in its basement where the women set up the Regina Native Women's Community Centre. In the next chapter, an historical study of the Regina Native Women's Group will show how the Group used liberating community education as a method of improving the social, economic, cultural and political conditions of Native women and their families in Regina.

*In November of 1980, at a general board meeting of the Group, David Pawliw, administration officer, suggested to the women that they change the organization's name to the Regina Native Women's Association. However, for the purpose of consistency,

the organization will be referred to as the Regina Native Women's Group throughout the thesis.

CHAPTER THREE--NOTES

1. "Mary Ann Lavallee", Speaking Together: Canada's Native Women (Ottawa: Department of the Secretary of State of Canada, 1975), p. 53.
2. See Jean Goodwill, "A New Horizon for Native Women in Canada," in Citizen Participation: Canada, ed. by James A. Draper (Toronto: New Press, 1971), pp. 362-70 and Kathleen Jamieson, "Multiple Jeopardy: the Evolution of a Native Women's Movement in Canada," Atlantis 4 (Spring 1979): 160.
3. Alvin Toffler, Future Shock (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 9.
4. Mayer Zald and Roberta Ash, "Social Movement Organizations," in Studies in Social Movements, ed. by Barry McLaughlin (New York: The Free Press, 1969), pp. 461-485.
5. Harold Cardinal, The Rebirth of Canada's Indians (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1977), p. 197. In 1927, a revision in the Indian Act prohibited Indians from organizing in groups. A pass system was established to restrict their mobility. Indians wanting permission to leave the reserve were issued a red ticket. The ticket was presented to the Indian Agent upon departure from the reserve.
6. James S. Friederes, Native People in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts (Scarborough: Prentice Hall Canada Inc., 1983), pp. 253-59.
7. Cardinal, The Rebirth of Canada's Indians, p. 20.
8. Dianne Kravetz, J. Marecek and S. Finn, "Factors Influencing Women's Participation in Consciousness Raising Groups," Psychology of Women's Quarterly 7 (Spring 1983): 258.
9. Mary O'Brien, "Feminist Praxis," in Feminism in Canada: From Pressure to Politics, ed. by Angela Miles and Geraldine Finn (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1982), p. 258.
10. The authors use this analysis to explain Black women's oppression in South Africa and apply it to understand the status of all non-white women around the world. Arthur Brittan and Mary Maynard, Sexism, Racism and Oppression (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1984), p. 20.
11. Jeremy Hull, Native Women and Work (Winnipeg: The Institute of Urban Studies, [1983]), p. 4. Jeremy Hull's study indicates that fifty-three percent of Native women are

located in sales, service or clerical occupations, but only seventeen percent preferred these occupations. Approximately twenty-five percent held jobs in the social services, health sciences and para-professional occupations. Less than three percent of Native women held positions in managerial and administrative occupations. Fifteen percent held jobs in the trades sector.

12. Hull, p. 32. Hull's study indicates that sixty percent of the Native women interviewed considered being Native a barrier to their employability and forty-eight percent maintained that gender would affect their ability to obtain and maintain a job.

13. Rayana Green, "The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture," Massachusetts Review 16 (August 1975): 703.

14. Ibid., p. 713.

15. Edna Manitouwabi, "An Ojibwa Girl in the City," This Magazine is About Schools 4 (1970): 8-24.

16. Research regarding the gender relations between men and women in pre-European Indian societies suggests that "women's degree of personal autonomy in band societies contrasted sharply with the oppression that characterizes their position in hierarchically organized societies." Mona Etienne and Eleanor Leacock, Women and Colonization (New York: J.F. Bergin Publishers, 1980), p. 6. The Jesuit Relations is one of the most credible primary sources that illustrates the egalitarian relationship between men and women in the tribes of eastern Canada. Paul Le Jeune, Superior of the Jesuit mission at Quebec, wrote at some length about the interpersonal autonomy that characterized relations among men and women of the Montagnais-Naskapi of the Labrador Peninsula. Le Juene wrote that "Women have great power here. Men leave the assignment of the household to the women, without interfering with them; they act and decide and give away as they please without making the husband angry." Eleanor Leacock and Jacqueline Goodman, "Montagnais Marriage and the Jesuits in the Seventeenth Century: Incidents from the Relations of Paul La Jeune," The Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology 6 (1976): 79. Early research into the topic suggests that a woman's equal status with a man was due to her role in the economy as agriculturalist and food gatherer. See Regina Flannery, "The Position of Women Among the Eastern Cree," Primitive Man 5 (January 1935): 81-6; Regina Flannery, "The Position of Woman Among the Mescalero Apache," Primitive Man 8 (January 1937): 26-34; Arthur C. Parker, "Secret Medicine Societies of the Seneca," American Anthropologist 11 (April/June 1909): 161-85, and Leslie Scott, "Indian Women as

Food Providers and Tribal Counsellors," Oregon Historical Quarterly 42 (1941): 208-19. Present research on the topic continues to state that "where women play a significant role in primary production spheres, and especially where their presence in collective hunting is required, their position is roughly comparable to men." Allan M. Klein, "The Political Economy of Gender: A 19th Century Plains Indian Case Study," in the Hidden Half: Studies of Plains Indian Women, pp. 175-234, and Anne Thrift Nelson, "Women in Groups: Women's Ritual Sodalities in Native North America," The Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology 6 (1976): 29-67. In Iroquois society, the high status of women in the tribe's economic organization allowed them to enjoy autonomy in the social and political spheres of tribal life. Particular women were chosen as matrons to assume important decision-making positions within the public realm. These women had the power to raise and depose the ruling elders, the ability to influence the decisions of council, serve as religious practitioners and were the supreme rulers of the long house. Judith Brown, "Economic Organization and the Position of Women Among the Iroquois," Ethnohistory 17 (Summer/Fall 1970): 151-67.

17. Etienne and Leacock, Women and Colonization, pp. 1-37.

18. See *Ibid.*, pp. 1-37, and Sylvia Van Kirk, Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society 1670-1870 (Winnipeg: Watson Dwyer Publishing Ltd., 1980.)

19. Marlene Pierre Aggamaway, "Native Women and the State," in Perspectives on Women in the 1980's, ed. by Joan Turner and Lois Emery (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1983), p. 68.

20. The issue of Native women and the Indian Act is dealt with extensively in Kathleen Jamieson, Citizens Minus: Indian Women and the Law in Canada (Hull, Quebec: Government Printer, 1978), and a non-published paper by Sally M. Weaver, "Indian Women: Marriage and Legal Status," (University of Waterloo, 1978). The Indian Act has had a long history. It began in 1750 as the Royal Proclamation. It was revised and re-written many times until it became entitled the Indian Act in 1880. The Act governs all aspects of Indian life, but only those Indians who have a registered treaty with the government are covered by the Act. It establishes terms of treaties, land claims, property rights, taxes, health services, education policies, mobility, band administration and the treaty status of Indians in Canada. The Act was amended many times between 1880 and 1968. When the federal government and the Indian community made amendments in 1968, there was some dispute as to whether Native women would continue to lose status if they married non-Indians. Some bands felt women

should retain status, others believed a five year waiting period was needed to ensure the marriage was stable, while other bands stated that they should control membership. A lack of consensus and concern left section 12 (1) (b) of the Indian Act unchallenged. When the Trudeau government threatened to terminate the Indian Act in 1969, Native organizations retaliated. Eliminating the Act regardless of its faults would in itself be a violation of the recognized constitutional guarantee of a special place in Canada for Indian people. Cecil King, "Sociological Implications of the Jeanette Corbière-Lavall Case," Journal of Native Studies (1988): pp. 45-7, states that the Dominion government promised to maintain Indian status "as long as the sun shone and the rivers flow." Indian organizations persuaded the government to save the Act following their rebuttal in the Red Paper in 1969. With the Indian Act secured, it became more firmly entrenched in law. Native leaders wanted no changes in the Act to occur without consultation, research and proposals made by them first, and then presented to the government for consideration. Between 1958 and 1968, more than 4,600 women became disenfranchised through marriage, in contrast to only 891 adult men and women who chose voluntarily to relinquish their status. Section 12 (1) (b) of the Indian Act states the following: "12 (1) The following persons are not entitled to be registered, namely, (b) a woman who married a person who is not an Indian, unless that woman is subsequently the wife or widow of a person described in section 11." Section 11 describes the various ways by which an individual is considered to be a band member. Revised Statutes of Canada, 1985, Vol. 5 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer Press, 1985), p. 6.

21. See Linda Hogan, "Native American Women: Our Voice the Air," Frontiers 6 (Winter 1982): 1 and Caroline Lachappelle, "Beyond Barriers: Native Women and the Women's Movement," in Still Ain't Satisfied, ed. by Maureen Fitzgerald (Toronto: Women's Educational Press, 1982), p. 260.

22. Statistics regarding the Native population are generally compared to Canada's overall population. For example, in 1962 the infant mortality rate among Native people in Saskatchewan was 66.7 per 1,000 births as opposed to 23.5 per 1,000 births in Saskatchewan as a whole. Annual Report on Saskatchewan Vital Statistics, (Regina: Department of Public Health, 1962), p. 84. As of 1966 the infant mortality rate was 180 per 1,000 births as opposed to 54 per 1,000 births in Canada as a whole (p. 314). The Canadian population under the age of sixteen was about twenty-eight percent. The Indian population under sixteen was about fifty percent. The national rate of increase in the Indian population was approximately double that of the general population (p. 97). Harry Hawthorne, The Hawthorne Report: A Survey of Contemporary Indians in Canada (Ottawa: The Department of

Indian Affairs, October 1966). In the report Florence Bird, Report on the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada (Ottawa: Information Canada, [1970]), p. 329, the 1961 census indicates that Indian women gave birth to 6.5 children, which was twice the average for other Canadian women. In 1967, the average life expectancy for Indian men and women was fifty years of age.

23. Indian Conditions: A Survey (Ottawa: Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1980).

24. Hawthorne, The Hawthorne Report: A Survey of Contemporary Indians in Canada, p. 314.

25. See "The Health of Indians in Canadian Cities: A Challenge to the Health Care System," Canada Medical Association Journal 183 (November 1985): 859 and Diana Ralph, "Faulty Prescription for Northern Native People," (University of Regina, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, February 11, 1984).

26. In 1965, 78.5 percent of all Indian households had an annual income of less than 3,000.00, fifty-four percent less than 2,000.00 and 28.2 percent less than 1,000.00. Friederes, Native People in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts, p. 191.

27. See Rick Ast, "Native Children in City Schools," New Breed (Nov./Dec. 1977): 7; R.P. Bowles, J.L. Hanley and B.W. Hodgins, The Indian: Assimilation, Integration or Separation? (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1972); Cornellus J. Jaesen, "Education for Francisation: The Case of New France in the Seventeenth Century," Canadian Journal of Native Education 11 (1983): 1-19 and National Indian Brotherhood, Indian Control of Indian Education Policy Paper (Ottawa: National Indian Brotherhood, 1972).

28. In 1966, only six percent of the children who entered school in 1951 stayed through to grade twelve. The greatest drop-out rate occurred between grade one and two and then after grade seven. The average Indian student was 2.5 years behind his or her national counterpart. In 1965 less than one percent of the Indian population was enrolled in university. Indian Conditions: A Survey, p. 46.

29. Between 1966 and 1974, the rate of status Indian children in care had risen from 5.5 percent to eight percent. The national average in care was only one percent. Indian Conditions: A Survey, pp. 24-5. In 1964-65, 67.9 percent of Status Indian children in care were adopted by non-Native families. In 1972-73, this percentage rose to 87.3. In 1976-77, it dropped to 76.8. Philip Hepworth, Foster Care and Adoption in Canada (Ottawa: The Canadian Council on Social

Development, 1980), p. 120.

30. About nine percent of the prison population were Native persons convicted of minor offences, while an estimated three to 3.5 percent of the population were non-Natives convicted of minor offences. Indian Conditions: A Survey, p. 37.

31. In British Columbia, Native women comprise twenty percent of all women incarcerated, in Alberta, thirteen to forty-one percent, and Manitoba, seventy-one percent. In Saskatchewan, seventy-seven percent of all women incarcerated are Native. Carol La Prairie, "Selected Criminal Justice and Socio-Demographic Data on Native Women," Canadian Journal of Criminology 26 (1984): 161.

32. See Trevor Denton, "Migration from a Canadian Indian Reserve," Journal of Canadian Studies 7 (May 1972): 54-74; Freideres, Native People in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts, pp. 187-95 and Indian Conditions: A Survey, p. 23.

33. Judith K. Brown, "Economic Organization and the Position of Women Among the Iroquois": 151-67.

34. Robert Spencer and Jessie Jennings, The Native Americans (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1965), p. 163.

35. Ibid., p. 142.

36. See Ann Cameron, Daughters of Copper Woman (Toronto: Women's Press, 1981); Beverly Hungry Wolf, The Ways of My Grandmothers (New York: Quill Press, 1982); Ruth Landes, Ojibwa Woman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938); Carolyn Niethammer, Daughters of the Earth: The Lives and Legends of Indian Women (New York: Collier Books, 1977); Walter O'Meara, Daughters of the Country (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1968); Arthur C. Parker, "Secret Medicine Societies of the Seneca": 161-85 and John Upton Terrell and Donna M. Terrell, Indian Women of the Western Morning: Their Life in Early America (New York: Dial Press, 1981).

37. See Alice B. Kehoe, "Old Women Had Great Power," The Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology 7 (1976): 60-76; Jordon Paper, "The Forgotten Grandmothers," Canadian Women's Studies 5 (Winter 1983): 48 and Stan Steiner, The New Indians (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 215-30.

38. Art Solomon, "The Woman's Part," in A Voice of Many Nations (Ottawa: The Native Women's Association of Canada, 1984), p. II.

39. Ibid., p. III.
40. Freda Moosehunter, "Native Women: The Walking Wounded in a Racist and Sexist Society," In Indian Studies Program, ed. by The Saskatchewan Indian Community College (Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Indian Community College, 1972), p. 145.
41. "Mary Ann Lavallee," p. 53.
42. Aggamaway, "Native Women and the State": 69.
43. Jamieson, "Multiple Jeopardy: the Evolution of a Native Women's Movement": 162.
44. Ann Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), p.75.
45. Ibid., p. 77.
46. Jamieson, "Multiple Jeopardy: The Evolution of a Native Women's Movement": 163.
47. Considering the number of reserves in Canada (2,274), the number of Homemaker Clubs operating was comparatively small: 125 in 1968. Julia M. Cruikshank, "The Role of Northern Canadian Indian Women in Social Change," (Master of Arts Thesis, University of Toronto, 1967), pp. 30-2.
48. Cruikshank, p. 31.
49. Ibid.
50. See Voice of the Alberta Native Women's Society, Report of the First Alberta Native Women's Conference (Edmonton, Alberta, 1968); Voice of the Alberta Native Women's Society, Report of the First National Native Women's Conference (Edmonton, Alberta, 1971) and Report of the First Saskatchewan Indian Women's Conference (Valley Centre, Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, 1967).
51. Report of the First Saskatchewan Indian Women's Conference, p. 11.
52. Ibid., p. 10.
53. Ibid., p. 11.
54. Report of the First Alberta Native Women's Conference, p. 7.

55. Ibid., p. 5.
56. Report of the First National Native Women's Conference, p. 7.
57. Report of the First Saskatchewan Indian Women's Conference, p. 6.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., pp. 1-2.
61. Jamieson, "Multiple Jeopardy: the Evolution of a Native Women's Movement": 154.
62. Report of the First Alberta Native Women's Conference, p. 2.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid., pp. 2-3.
65. Ibid., pp. 15-36.
66. A Voice of Many Nations, p. 1.
67. Ibid.
68. Report of the First National Native Women's Conference, p. 28.
69. Ibid., pp. 41-2.
70. Ibid.
71. Canadian Bill of Rights, S.C. 1960, L. 44, R.S.C. 1970, Appendix III (cited by) Jamieson, Citizens Minus: Indian Women and the Law in Canada, p. 79.
72. In December, 1970, Jeanette Corbière-Lavall, an Ojibwa, was removed from the Wikwemikong Reserve band list on Manitoulin Island, Ontario, following her marriage to David Lavall, a non-Indian. In 1964, upon her marriage to a non-Indian, Yvonne Bedard became disenfranchised. She moved to the city and remained there until 1970. Upon separation from her husband in 1970, she returned to the reserve to live in a house her mother had willed to her. The band allowed her to reside on the reserve six months, after which she was to leave the reserve and dispose of her property. According to the Indian Act, she was not a band member, therefore had no right

to live on the reserve or to inherit property. See King, "Sociological Implications of the Jeanette Corbière-Lavall Case"; Jamieson, Citizens Minus: Indian Women and the Law in Canada; Valerie Minor, "Indian Women and the Indian Act," Saturday Night (April 1974): 29-42.

73. Jamieson, Citizens Minus: Indian Women and the Law in Canada, p. 83.

74. See Jamieson, Citizens Minus: Indian Women and the Law in Canada, pp. 75-90; Minor, "Indian Women and the Indian Act": 2 and Weaver, "Indian Women: Marriage and Legal Status": 18-23.

75. Cardinal, The Rebirth of Canada's Indians, p. 111.

76. Jamieson, Citizens Minus: Indian Women and the Law in Canada, p. 84.

77. "Native Women's Conference: marital status crucial issue," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, 23 March 1972, p. 3.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.

81. A Voice of Many Nations, p. 1.

82. "Indian Rights for Indian Women," New Breed (May/June 1975): 7.

83. Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee (Ottawa, Canada, Tuesday, May 25, 1976, Issue No. 53): 53:5.

84. Interview with Leona Blondeau, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, August, 1987.

85. Saskatchewan Native Women's Association, "A Proposal to Establish a Native Women's Communication and Information Centre," Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1972, p. 1.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid., p. 2.

88. In 1973, the Movement organized chapters in the rural areas of Uranium City, Yorkton, Red Pheasant Reserve, Cumberland House, La Ronge, Meadow Lake, Lestock and Maple Creek. The first board of directors consisted of: Nora

Thibedeau, Vicki Wilson, Florence Desnomie, Josephine Pambrum, Leona Blondeau, Mary Ann Lavallee, Alvine Coté, Alice Potrias and Vicki Racette. In 1974, the Movement joined the National Native Women's Association. In 1975, it officially changed its name to the Saskatchewan Native Women's Association. By 1982, the Association had a membership of over 3,000 and had established 300 locals throughout the province. The Association became the political voice of Saskatchewan Native women by advocating for programs and services at the provincial level and by providing leadership training to its membership throughout the province. The organization communicated with the local chapters so that programming was co-ordinated and communities had a direct voice in the operation of the provincial body and input into discussions of such issues as the Indian Act, Native child welfare, housing, employment, education and racial and gender oppression. See Saskatchewan Native Women's Association Newsletter 1 (March, 1981); Elaine Jessop, "Saskatchewan Native Women's Association Budget Submission," 1984 and Donna Pinay, "Saskatchewan Native Women's Association: The problems posed by double discrimination," Briarpatch 12 (June 1983): 16-17.

89. The Native population was predicted to rise in Regina until the late 1980's and then decline. This is because the large numbers of children born between 1959 and 1969 had reached child bearing age during the 1970's and early 1980's. A double growth rate occurred. Between 1970 and 1980, the percentage of Native people was estimated to be between thirteen and twenty-five percent, depending upon the source. Larry Krotz, Urban Indians: Strangers in Canada's Cities (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1980), pp. 38-40. The rate of in-migration per year was 776 persons. Status Indians accounted for the largest component of more than two-thirds of the migrants. Stewart Clatsworthy and Jeremy Hull, Native Economic Conditions in Regina and Saskatoon (Winnipeg: Institute for Urban Studies, 1983), p. 27. In 1976 females comprised fifty-five percent of the off reserve migration.

90. See Clatsworthy and Hull, Native Economic Conditions in Regina and Saskatoon, p. 60 and Krotz, Urban Indians: Strangers in Canada's Cities, p. 41.

91. Clatsworthy and Hull, Native Economic Conditions in Regina and Saskatoon, p. 27.

92. Ibid.

93. Krotz, Urban Indians: Strangers in Canada's Cities, p. 41.

94. Participation in the labour force tends to be higher among men than women. Employment among Native women was concentrated in the service occupations. Native women were generally employed in the lowest level occupations in the urban economy. Sixty-five percent of Native women were located in sales, service and clerical occupations. Clatsworthy and Hull, Native Economic Conditions in Regina and Saskatoon, pp. 77 and 100. Forty-six percent were in the lowest paid positions of nurses aide, babysitter, chambermaid, laundry worker, waitress, kitchen helper or cook. Twenty-six percent were either chambermaids, domestic workers or waitresses. Twenty-two percent of the employed Indian women were in the better paid fields of social work and education. "Occupational Wage Rates by Sex Saskatchewan, 1977," (Research and Planning Division Department of Labour, 1977), (cited by Jeremy Hull, Natives in a Class Society (Saskatoon: One Sky Resource Centre, 1982), p. 27.

95. Hull, p. 28. In 1976, about 72.2 percent of the Indians in Regina lived below the poverty line. Approximately 16.7 percent of employed men lived below this line and 59.8 percent of the employed Indian women lived below the poverty line. Given the employment rates, it is surprising that a higher degree of welfare dependency was not reported. While about fifty-eight percent of all adults were not employed, only twenty-five percent were welfare dependent. This indicates that the incomes of Indian workers were shared among families.

96. The Saskatchewan Native Women's Movement, "A Submission to the Secretary of State Department Ottawa for the Funding of the Saskatchewan Native Women's Movement," Saskatoon, Saskatchewan 1972, p. 4.

97. Interview with Leona Blondeau, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, August, 1987, and Interview with Georgina Fisher, Regina, Saskatchewan, 21 October 1988.

98. Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND SOCIAL ACTION: THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY-LIVING CRISES

The basic aim of liberating community education is to develop a critical understanding of society among members of an oppressed group and an awareness of their capacity to transform it. This process of learning about the world occurs in collective forms of activity such as workshops, meetings, conferences and programs that are organized by the oppressed. Gatherings are not only co-ordinated to educate the oppressed, but also the larger society. Social change can only occur when both the oppressed and dominant society become aware of inequities within the system and take action together to change it. The main purpose, then, of learning activities is to provide a dialogical education. As Freire states, this educational process "draws us into the intimacy of society....We try to reveal it, unveil it, and see its reasons for being like it is."¹

Dialogue is generated through learning, reflection and action. This process is referred to as praxis. The goal of liberating education is to develop a praxis whereby participants politicize themselves about their social reality, reflect upon it, identify problems and injustices and plan courses of action to initiate change. The strategies of

action that are developed are further forms of learning activities that again focus on the creation of dialogical exchange. Hence, the process of learning, reflection and action is continuous. As society's members continue to engage in praxis, their political and cultural knowledge deepens, thus empowering them to continue the struggle for social change.

The Regina Native Women's Group used liberating community education as a means to obtain reforms in many of the policies that concerned Native women such as child welfare, housing, race relations and education. Two significant issues on which the Group focussed its use of liberating community education were the housing and community-living crises that developed in Regina during the 1970's. This chapter will use the crises to portray the Group's utilization of liberating community education in an attempt to initiate improvements in living conditions for Native women and their families.

Between 1975 and 1978, the Group co-ordinated various learning activities such as workshops, meetings, conferences and programs for the purpose of creating a dialogue among the membership and with the larger society. Workshops and meetings were organized by the Group for the membership to politicize Native women about the roots of their oppression, to investigate the problems and consequences of the housing shortage and community racism and to develop strategies of action that would enhance changes. Conferences and meetings

were organized by the Group to enable government officials to acquire knowledge about and an understanding of the Native housing issue. The Group wanted to make the state aware of the impoverished conditions of urban Native families and to encourage all of the parties involved to seek ways of obtaining an increase in adequate housing. Meetings were organized with the non-Native community to provide information about the housing dilemma in Regina. During these gatherings Native women talked about Native lifestyles, culture and contemporary issues for the purpose of improving race relations. Programs for Native women were organized to develop the skills and knowledge needed to cope more effectively in an urban environment and to maintain their cultural identity.

The housing and community-living crises evolved in Regina when Native women and their families began migrating from the rural areas to the city during the 1970's. The heaviest period of migration occurred between 1972 and 1976. The number of migrants arriving in the city fluctuated between 776 and 1,000 persons annually.² This in-migration of Native people to Regina was exceptionally high and resulted in a significant increase in the city's population. Regina's annual rate of population growth rose from .5 percent in 1971 to two percent in 1972 and continued to increase at a rate of two percent annually until 1976. At this time it dropped to 1.9 percent.³ The growth rate during these years was

considered to be significantly high.⁴

When Native families arrived in Regina, they were immediately confronted with the difficulties of acquiring housing. This predicament was a result of a low vacancy rate in rental accommodations, particularly with regard to apartment and row housing units. Before the migration years began, rental units were numerous and readily available. In 1970, the vacancy rate was ten percent.⁵ However, with the non-Native baby boom population reaching child bearing age and seeking separate living accommodation, rental dwellings were soon occupied. In June, 1972, the rate of available dwellings fell to 3.1 percent and plunged again to one percent in December.⁶ The vacancy rate continued to drop during the next three years until it reached its lowest point in 1975.⁷ At this time, a zero percent vacancy rate was recorded. Generally, a three percent vacancy rate is considered to be a balanced rental market.⁸ The housing industry could not keep pace with the demands of Regina's growing population.⁹ In 1973, the amount of residential, apartment and row housing construction activity in all areas in Canada was greater than in any previous year except for the prairie provinces. Saskatchewan experienced the lowest rate of construction activity.¹⁰

Although there was a shortage of rental accommodation, this was not necessarily the situation with the availability of single or duplex housing units that were for sale. Between

December, 1972, and December, 1974, the number of newly completed and unoccupied dwellings fluctuated between fifteen and thirty. Sometimes these homes were unoccupied for an average of four months.¹¹ However, in 1975, like the vacancy rate of rental accommodations, the housing market reached a low point when all newly completed houses and duplexes were occupied.¹²

However, with respect to purchasing and owning a home, this was simply not an option for the majority of Native families who migrated from the rural areas. These people were poor, often unemployed, and the majority relied upon some form of social assistance. In 1976, approximately 72.4 percent of Regina's Native population lived below the poverty line.¹³ In 1977, the poverty line for a family of four in Canada was \$8,556.00,¹⁴ while the average income of a Regina homeowner ranged anywhere between \$12,000.00 and \$17,499.00.¹⁵ Not only were Native families unable to purchase a home, but many of the homes in Regina's residential areas did not meet their particular housing needs. Native families are generally large, with an average of 2.2 children to a household,¹⁶ whereas the average number of children in a non-Native middle class household in Regina between 1970 and 1976 was 1.7.¹⁷ For the most part, housing in Canada is constructed to serve the needs of the middle class and not those of low income residents with large families.¹⁸ The majority of homes are usually built to accommodate an average of three to four

persons. In 1974, of the 324 homes that were built in Regina, only forty-three of these had four bedrooms, and no homes with five bedrooms or more were built that year.¹⁹

Because of their inability to locate rental accommodation and to purchase a home, most Native families had no choice but to locate in substandard and condemned dwellings close to the downtown area, in the city's north central district. This neighbourhood was the city's oldest district. Some of the homes had been sold by their previous resident owners to individual investors and realtors who then rented them to Native families. Some of the homes were retained by their owners who lived in the newer residential areas in the suburbs. These landlords rented them directly to Native families. Sometimes a landlord or a realtor would contract with the Department of Social Services to rent to low income families, particularly Native families receiving social assistance.²⁰ Although many Native families were able to find substandard dwellings to reside in, there was also a shortage in the availability of these types of dwellings. Furthermore, because of extreme poverty, some Native families could not even afford to rent a condemned home. These situations of poverty and a shortage in substandard housing often forced friends and families to reside together in one house. These multiple Native family households became a common occurrence in Regina.²¹ Consequently, severe overcrowding existed in the homes of many Native families. Those who were unable to

locate permanent housing of any kind resided in hotels and motels. During the spring and summer of 1975, when the housing situation reached a crisis stage, every suite at the Ranchman and Champs hotels, located in the city's centre, were filled with Native families. A total of forty families staying at these hotels cost the Department of Social Services \$1,000.00 a month per family.²²

Some of the substandard and condemned houses that Native families resided in were in extremely poor condition. In June, 1975, the Briarpatch magazine reported the conditions of one condemned house surveyed in the north central district: "The house had the usual variety of animals that went along with condemned housing; mice, bedbugs and house rats. The floor had holes in it The basement walls are starting to cave in and the tiles of the ceiling are beginning to fall off. The gyprock is paper thin and one can see where there are holes in the walls."²³ Like many of the families living in condemned housing, this family was reluctant to report these conditions to health officials for fear of not finding another place to live.

Not only were the houses in relatively poor condition, but families paid exorbitant rents. During the years of highest migration, when the rental market was most severely pressured, the provincial government lifted the ceiling placed on rent controls. The shift in policy was an effort to try to stimulate the housing industry to construct more dwellings.

Allowing the private sector to establish rental rates would ensure that construction costs would be covered, plus a reasonable profit made. When rent controls are in effect, the housing industry is often deterred from investing in the construction of rental dwellings because the cost of building cannot be covered by the income received from low rents. Although an open market on rental rates may stimulate the housing industry, it is a disadvantage for the consumer, particularly if the consumer is poor. The poor are forced to pay higher rates for rental dwellings. This was the case with Native families.²⁴ Because landlords and realtors were able to establish their own rental rates, many rented their substandard dwellings at the highest possible market rates.²⁵ This action by landlords and realtors was an act of economic discrimination against low income and minority groups. They took advantage of the desperate situation and powerlessness that poor families faced in order to exploit them economically.

Not only were Native families facing a problem in locating decent housing at affordable rents, but as they moved into the city's north central district, a community-living crisis evolved. Racial discrimination towards Native people became prevalent among the landlords and residents of the area. When Native people sought housing, petitions were sometimes taken up in protest against them moving into the neighbourhood. A typical complaint read that "the presence of

this type of tenant has a decided effect on the devaluation of all other properties in the area."²⁶ In 1976, the residents on Argyle Street presented a petition to the Regina Native Women's Group that protested against the Residence Resource Centre, a shelter established for homeless women and children, being located on the street. The residents stated that "these homes were a fine idea, but they did not want Native people in their neighbourhoods."²⁷ In August, 1975, one woman told the Regina Group that she was denied housing by a landlord for her seven children and extended family. She stated that when inquiring in person about renting a house, "they tell me the place is rented, but when I go to a pay phone and call, they say its still available."²⁸

Landlords and residents basically did not want Native families residing in the area because of the visual changes and conditions of some of the homes that resulted when Native families resided in them. Landlords indicated that Native people were undesirable tenants because they skipped town without paying rent, broke windows and doors and generally wrecked the homes. It cannot be denied that some Native people were poor tenants, just as some non-Native people were. It is understandable that landlords and residents did not want the homes in their neighbourhood destroyed and their property devalued because of a deterioration in the aesthetics of the neighbourhood. However, to deny a particular minority group access to society's benefits and resources because of the

negative behaviour of a few individuals from that group is an act of racial discrimination.²⁹

Racial discrimination towards Native people evolved for several reasons. One particular reason was because the landlords and residents lacked knowledge about the nature of poverty. They failed to realize that the poor appearance of the homes was a result of the social and economic poverty that Native families experience. Poverty for all low income groups, whether Native or non-Native, often engenders many social problems such as alcoholism, family violence and low self-esteem. A combination of these factors, plus others, may result in a deterioration of property and unkempt homes. Even though some poor families may not suffer from any one of the social problems mentioned, they still would not have the income to maintain a home, especially one that is in substandard condition and in need of repair. Families receiving social assistance have only enough money for the basic necessities, with very little or no money to purchase a can of paint, tools, a lawn mower, or to repair a window or a door. The residents and landlords failed to realize that the shoddy conditions of the homes were a result of the poverty experienced by the Native people. This lack of knowledge about the nature of poverty contributed to Native people being discriminated against.

Furthermore, racial discrimination evolved because residents were generally unaware that the Department of Social

Services lacked a procedure for maintaining homes rented to families on social assistance. As mentioned previously, some landlords offered their homes to the Department to be rented to families receiving welfare. Although this arrangement enabled Native families to obtain low rental housing and eliminated contact with the landlords which could have resulted in the possibility of discrimination, it nevertheless worked to the disadvantage of the tenant. This was because the Department did not require the landlords to maintain their homes,³⁰ nor did the Department itself make any provision for maintaining these rental homes. Because Native families could not economically afford to maintain these homes, they were blamed for the deterioration of their homes and not the landlords nor the Department of Social Services. Consequently, the lack of a procedure for maintenance of the rental homes helped to perpetuate racial discrimination against the Native people.

Another reason for the emergence of racial discrimination was because of a lack of knowledge on the part of both Native and non-Native people of each others' lifestyles and cultural values. Many Regina residents did not realize that when Native people move to the city, they enter a 'foreign' world and are totally unsophisticated about city ways. Life on the reserve and in rural Native communities of Saskatchewan is a complete contrast to life in the city. In the rural communities, there are no fences, sidewalks or yards and

houses are spread out over a large area. Goods and materials, such as cars, washing machines, woodstoves, toys and tricycles are scattered over one's property and the neighbour's property, as well. Families occupy space communally and share their resources and food. Children roam freely and are raised by extended family members, as well as by biological parents. A high value is placed on human qualities, with less value placed on material wealth and possessions. Many Regina residents did not realize that Native people found it difficult to accept and adapt to the tight living quarters of city homes, the fences, the sidewalks, the gardens, the orderly fashion of residential dwellings and the value placed on private property and material wealth. On the other hand, Native people did not understand that they could not continue their rural lifestyle in exactly the same manner as they did in their communities. This is not to say that Native people cannot retain their cultural identity in an urban social milieu. As well as maintaining their own customs, they must also adapt to the customs of the mainstream society if they wish to survive as a cultural entity. Lack of knowledge about their cultural differences created ill-feeling and misunderstanding and, worst of all, racial tension between the Native and non-Native residents of the city's north central district.³¹

Since its establishment in the fall of 1971, the Regina Native Women's Group had been involved in locating housing for

Native families and providing advocacy services in cases of racial discrimination. Many of the organizations's staff members had themselves experienced problems in locating housing when they first arrived in Regina. They realized that the housing issue was the single most important concern that the newly arrived migrants faced when attempting to settle in the city. Because of this, much of the Group's time was spent trying to resolve the housing needs for the hundreds of families who contacted the Community Centre. During 1975, the Group compiled a list of more than five hundred Native families in need of housing accommodation.³² Realizing that the housing situation was not improving, the Group decided to challenge society to provide adequate housing and to improve race relations.

The Group began by developing learning activities and programs for the purpose of creating a dialogue among the membership and the larger community. Through this mutual exchange, the Group hoped to encourage Native women, the government and the Regina community to improve living conditions for Native families. As Freire states: "Without dialogue there is no communication and without communication there can be no true education."³³ While engaging in a dialogue together, both the oppressed and the larger society are able to construct an understanding of the world as it is and seek strategies of action for social change.

One of the first meetings that the Group organized was

held on June 20th, 1975. Thirty women attended a 'Native Women's Rights' workshop at the Regina Native Women's Community Centre. In an atmosphere of co-operation and solidarity the women shared their personal experiences and information regarding Native urban issues such as child welfare, housing and race relations. During the discussions, the women became aware that the many problems faced by the Native families were compounded by the government's neglect and failure to confront the issues, by the Regina community's unfamiliarity with Native concerns and lifestyles and by the Native community's inadequate understanding of its own social reality.³⁴ Commitment to the belief that these factors were at the root of many of the problems experienced by urban Native families enabled the women to develop a plan for educating the Native community and the larger society about the issues of concern, particularly with regard to housing.

During the workshop, the women decided that a political protest in the form of a demonstration would be an effective way to communicate information about the consequences of urban migration on Native families. Shortly after the meeting, Leona Blondeau, a staff member of the organization, told the Regina Leader Post that the demonstration was to be a method of collective action that was "a more political approach than they had currently taken".³⁵ She believed that it would arouse a reaction in the Regina community that would encourage the government and the larger society to improve living

conditions for Native families. Nora Thibedeau, board member for the provincial organization, stated that Native women often "feel too frustrated to get involved"³⁶ and hoped that the demonstration would inspire involvement and make Native women critically aware of the issues of concern. With the cooperation of several hundred persons from the Native and non-Native community, the Group demonstrated at the Legislative Building on July 1st, 1975.

A demonstration is often a technique used by a social movement organization when it first attempts to press society for social change. Demonstrations can spur people to action, arouse their emotions and create a sense of unity among an oppressed group and those who support the cause. Furthermore, demonstrations seldom fail because of their simple agenda and because of their ability to create intense reactions during a short period of time. These two characteristics of demonstrations create an immediate sense of accomplishment and invincibility among oppressed groups, thus empowering them to initiate further action. Although a political protest may produce these positive results, there can also be negative outcomes which can deter the social change process. This is because demonstrations are also used as "system disturbers"³⁷ when conventional and legal channels to seek redress for grievances are not successful. This approach will sometimes create animosity between the oppressed and dominant society, thus alienating the groups and diminishing the possibility of

achieving reform. A result such as this occurs because demonstrations are usually organized with the purpose of directing information one way. Consequently, this does not provide an opportunity for dialogue. Because a forum for open communication between those in authority and the powerless is not provided, other learning activities that encourage dialogue are generally more desirable.

As well as organizing learning activities for the membership to develop the needed dialogue for social change, the Group also co-ordinated activities for its allies. While the dialogue that the Group and its allies engaged in provided a means for identifying problems and developing strategies to improve living conditions for Native families, it also served two other purposes. First, by collaborating with its allies in meetings and workshops, the organization acquired the knowledge and skills that were needed to challenge competently the system for change. Secondly, as allies participated in the process of learning, reflection and action with the Group, they became aware of the goals and aspirations of Native women and the factors that contributed to the multi-dimensional structure of Native women's oppressed status in society. Securing allies from the larger society is a significant step towards social change. When organizations and groups unite to help each other, they strengthen their cause, which aids in the liberation of many oppressed groups in society.

In the spring of 1975, the Group began rallying allies to

develop the dialogical exchange that was necessary to improve living conditions for Native families. Under the direction of Lorna Standingready, the organization's vice-president, representatives from the Native and non-Native community met several times to discuss the consequences of the housing and community-living crises and the courses of action needed to resolve these situations. In June, 1975, the Group, together with the Regina Native Outreach Employment Centre, the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Regina and the Friendship Centre, decided to organize the 'People in Need of Housing Committee' as an action strategy for confronting the crises. During the next three years, from 1975 to 1978, the committee arranged learning activities that taught Native families how to locate suitable housing and about their rights as tenants. It also advocated for families who faced racial discrimination and located housing for those who were unable to find homes.³⁸

In August, 1975, the Group decided to broaden its support base to enhance dialogical exchange by joining the Regina Low Income Housing Corporation. The Corporation was composed of other low income groups who were interested in improving housing conditions for all low income people in Regina, including Native people. The Corporation itself was established in August, 1974. Agnes Sinclair, president of the Group, was a member of the Corporation's board of directors. The board also included members from the Welfare Rights

Association; the Friendship Centre; the Native Employment Outreach Centre; United Church minister, Bob Gay; social worker, Harry van Mulligan; and Fine Option Co-ordinator, Marie Heath. Together, this group located housing for low income families, engaged in mutual problem solving activities, mobilized resources, shared common experiences and planned educational activities and actions to help better the living conditions for all poor families in Regina.³⁹

In order to generate a dialogue for social change, some of the more significant learning activities were arranged for members of the municipal, provincial and federal governments. Dialogue with the state usually occurred at meetings and conferences. Gatherings such as these were organized with the assumption that solutions to local problems could be determined through communication between community groups and those in authority. The Group organized meetings with the state for three purposes. First, Native women wanted to make the government members aware of the miserable housing conditions that many Native families lived in. Secondly, the Group wanted to pressure the government to formulate ways to increase adequate housing for Native families. Lastly, the women wanted to learn about the government's housing policies, regulations and plans for resolving the situation. Although these meetings with the government representatives did not always result in any agreement about solutions to the housing problem, they did create an atmosphere where learning,

reflection and action took place. Developing a dialogue with the dominant group is a significant step toward creating alliances among them which enhances the process of social change.

One of the first meetings that the Group planned for government representatives was held on August 1st, 1975. Under the direction of Lorna Standingready and Agnes Sinclair, members of the organization took Ned Shillington, provincial minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and vice-chairperson of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, and Ed Tchorzewski, provincial minister responsible for housing, on a tour of the poor and condemned housing units in the north central district.⁴⁰ The purpose of the tour was to persuade the government that poor housing existed in Regina and that a course of action to obtain adequate housing for Native families was needed immediately.

During the tour, the provincial ministers visited four homes where they saw the poverty of several Native families. They saw that all four homes were overcrowded with friends, children and extended family members. In one house there was no heat. Another had no running hot water and all of these were fire traps. The Group told the ministers that many of the landlords raised rents, but made no repairs. Heating and utility bills were high, but social assistance payments were not adequate to cover the costs. A woman paid \$18.00 a month for water bills, but was only allotted \$3.30 a month for this

expense.⁴¹

The tour was effective in making the government officials realize the severity of the housing crisis and in creating a dialogue between the two groups. Following the tour, Agnes Sinclair emphatically stated to the ministers that "we will keep fighting against these types of conditions our people are forced to live in."⁴² The ministers replied that they would attempt to bring some relief to the situation by obtaining seventeen homes by October 1st, 1975.⁴³

Although the tour was a unique method used to develop dialogue between Native women and the government, most of the Group's exchange with the government occurred during conferences. The first conference that Native women invited government members to attend was the annual Saskatchewan Native Women's Conference held in Regina on September 19th, 20th and 21st, 1975. The Group hosted the conference and entitled it 'Tomorrow's Leaders'. During the three day gathering, members from the various local chapters throughout the province discussed the housing crisis with Ed Tchorzewski and federal Minister of Justice Otto Lang.⁴⁴

The second and most significant conference where Native women and government officials gathered was held in Regina in March, 1976. The Group co-ordinated and hosted the province's first housing conference. Three university students, Anna Crowe, Elaine Chicoose and Chris La Fontaine, were hired to help organize the gathering. Representatives from the local

chapters of Lestock, Meadow Lake, Prince Albert and Saskatoon met with officials from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Department of Indian Affairs, the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Regina's mayor, Henry Baker. One hundred and twenty delegates joined together in mutual problem solving activities in an attempt to identify solutions to the crisis. On the first day, an open forum was held where Native people and government members exchanged information about housing policies, vacancy rates and future plans to provide increased housing. On the second day, the conference participants were involved in small study groups where recommendations were formulated and presented to the various government representatives.⁴⁵ These small discussion groups were "a mode uniquely suited to release collective energies to be devoted to creative community problem solving."⁴⁶

The dialogue that was generated through the learning activities for the non-Native community took on a different perspective from those activities arranged for the state. In order to encourage the state to provide additional housing units, discussions with the government were structured to create an awareness of the impoverished living conditions of Native families. To resolve the community living crisis, the learning activities developed for the Regina community were also structured to establish an awareness of the housing crisis, as well as to create an understanding of Native

lifestyles and culture.

Learning activities organized for the general public often took the form of speaking engagements. The majority of these meetings between the Group and the Regina community occurred during the winter and spring months of 1976. During this period of time, members of the Group addressed the students and staff at the Faculty of Social Work three times. The women discussed the struggles facing Native families when they migrated to Regina, the types of programs and services the organization offered to help better conditions and Native lifestyles and cultural values.⁴⁷ On March 1st, Agnes Sinclair spoke about the housing crisis at the Regina Public Library's noon hour 'Lets Talk' series. During the month of April, various schools and church groups were visited throughout the city. On April 8th, Lorna Standingready attended a speaking engagement held for the students and teachers at Millar High School.⁴⁸ On April 12th, she also addressed church members at a Presbytery Native Concerns meeting held at Knox Met United Church.⁴⁹ On April 29th, both Lorna and Agnes attended the Wesley United Church ladies' tea group, where they explained the reasons for the rural to urban migration and the difficulties experienced by Native people while adapting to city life.⁵⁰

As well as using meetings, workshops, conferences and speaking engagements to create a dialogue with the Native community, the state and the larger society, radio and

television broadcasts were also utilized. The adult education potential of the media as a tool for promoting change was adopted by the Group as an effective means to improve race relations between the Native and non-Native community and to advocate for increased housing units. Although the use of radio and television did not allow for a dialectical exchange between the two groups, it had other positive outcomes. It legitimized the organization's cause and spread the information of the crises to a much larger audience than the other learning activities were able to. By the use of visual material, television broadcasts also sensitized people to the anomalies and contradictions of society.⁵¹

The Group used the media extensively during January, 1976. During this month, Agnes Sinclair addressed the housing crisis on the television broadcast of W5TV. The program showed a condemned house on a block on Smith Street. Lorna Standingready also did a television presentation on the housing crisis when she was interviewed by Rita Deverall on the CBC's Twenty-Four Hour program. Both Agnes and Lorna were interviewed on CKRM radio by Reverend David Gutherie of the Anglican Church and Father Stan Slojeck of the Roman Catholic Church. They talked about the educational programs and services that the Group offered and the housing situation that Native women were confronting in the community. On a CBC Canada AM Show, Mabel Ann Birns, director of the Residence Resource Centre, Barbara Asapace, bookkeeper for the Group,

together with Lorna and Agnes, discussed the ways in which the staff at the Resource Centre and Community Centre were coping with the housing and race relations crises.⁵²

The Group also organized special programs for Native women. These programs were developed for three reasons: to assist women who needed special care to obtain housing, to help Native women develop the skills and knowledge to improve their living conditions in the new urban environment and to help Native women develop the self-determination and autonomy needed to adapt to the values and customs of mainstream society. These objectives were achieved by providing activities whereby learning, reflection and action were used to foster intensive self-examination. This process of critical self-analysis was accomplished when the women immersed themselves in activities that provided an atmosphere for dialogical exchange. Personal interaction enabled the women to perceive the roots of their gender and racial oppression. By becoming aware of the cultural myths that oppressed Native women and Native people, the women developed a new sense of identity. This positive perception of themselves in the larger society ultimately inspired the women to achieve autonomy and control of their lives. Personal change is essential for the transformation of society. When individuals are able to free themselves from the psychological restraints of their personal oppression, they become empowered to participate collectively in the larger society for the

liberation of the oppressed group to which they belong.

During the fall of 1976, the Group established its first program by providing housing to women who wished to change the condition of their personal lives. The Regina Native Women's Residence Resource Centre, also known as the Halfway Home, was a shelter established for homeless women and children who were victims of family violence. Because of the poverty that Native families experienced, many social problems resulted, including family violence. Women and children who suffer from battering, and sexual and psychological abuse generally leave their homes to escape the attacks of the abuser. Because of the housing shortage and their poverty, the only option for shelter for Native women was often the streets. To aid women and children who were in this desperate situation, the Group decided to provide emergency or short-term shelter by establishing a home.⁵³

Under the direction of Mabel Ann Birns, the home's first director, the Group worked very hard at organizing the home. A house at 1934 Argyle Street was rented from the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. Letters were written and telephone calls made to various organizations, motels, hotels and retail stores for used beds, tables, chairs, linens, kitchenware and other furnishings needed for the centre. Several meetings were held with the Department of Social Services to negotiate financial assistance. The home began operating during the late fall. An official opening was held on December 6th,

1975.⁵⁴

The home "assisted Native women to become established or re-established in a stable community situation."⁵⁵ This was accomplished by creating an atmosphere which provided the opportunity for self-exploration and for group and personal support. While interacting with others in a group, the women shared personal experiences, explored options in lifestyles and planned courses of action. The group dialogue was enhanced by providing a communal atmosphere where families shared chores which included dishwashing, laundry and child care. While engaging in these activities the women also learned personal assertiveness, decision making and communication skills. Personal support was also provided at the home through individual counselling. Four Native women, who had experienced the same problems as their clients in their own personal lives, offered this support.⁵⁶ This form of peer teaching not only fostered self-confidence, but also aided in developing the skills and knowledge needed to achieve co-operative relationships between two people. With regard to peer teaching, learning is neither teacher-centered nor student-centered, but a collaboration between student and teacher.

In February, 1977, under the direction of Myrna Redwood, the Group established its second shelter. Another home was necessary because the needs of young Native women differed from those of married women with children. By separating the

two groups, the organization could provide better services to both. Those women with children moved to 1102 Angus Street, the new location of the Residence Resource Centre. Single women, between the ages of thirteen and eighteen, remained at the Argyle Street home, which was renamed the Girl's Treatment Centre.⁵⁷ The aim of the home was to provide short term treatment to girls who had "behavioural and inter-personal relationship problems resulting from physical, sexual and psychological abuse, prostitution and drug and alcohol abuse."⁵⁸

The Girls Centre also provided a program that developed the skills and knowledge needed to help young Native women improve their living conditions and adapt to the values and customs of mainstream society. It was staffed by approximately five counsellors who were older women with children. These counsellors knew how to cope with the many problems that the girls faced. They organized activities that helped to generate a dialogue that made the girls aware that they "must change their ways of living and take a stand to help themselves."⁵⁹ Basic cooking, home management, personal grooming and hair dressing were often taught to prepare the young women for employment and for participation in urban community life. Native cultural values were also emphasized to help the girls develop a positive attitude regarding their Indian identity. Lilly Daniels, a counsellor who remained at the centre for many years and an inspiration to Native youth,

taught the Cree language and Native crafts. To encourage the girls to have contact with the community and to allow the community to become aware of Native culture and lifestyles, sessions were open to the general public. Sometimes as many as thirty-five people attended the cultural education sessions. The girls also attended school while residing in the home. When the girls left the home, the counsellors visited them to see how they were adjusting to the larger urban community.⁶⁰

In 1978, a third program was established to help Native women and their families learn the skills and knowledge needed to adapt to mainstream society. The Group organized the Social Development Program under the direction of Anna Crowe. By this time, the 'People in Need of Housing Committee' had received several houses from the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation and the Regina Low Income Housing Corporation to rent to Native families. The Group managed and maintained these homes by selecting the tenants who were to reside in them and acted as a liaison between tenants and the corporations regarding maintenance, rents and housing policies.⁶¹ To assist Native families living in these homes to cope in their new environment, the Group arranged various services and learning activities. Two family workers were hired to provide a counselling and referral service which gave information on employment and educational opportunities, tenant and landlord rights and provided advocacy in cases of

discrimination.⁶²

During the 1980's, the Social Development Program expanded to provide many learning activities to create the dialogical exchange that was necessary to help Native families adapt to the living standards expected of them by the Regina community. In 1980, with the aid of Eunice Tanner, the organization's housing director, the Group, in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation and the Regina Low Income Housing Corporation, organized a tenant's association.⁶³ Together with the family workers, the members of the association developed home management workshops. One such workshop was held on March 24th, 1981. A fire prevention workshop was held at the Pasqua Recreation Centre, with Joe Grebinski from the Regina Fire Department.⁶⁴ Also, the same month, Tom Johnson of Briarwood Enterprises and an instructor at the Wascana Institute conducted a workshop on repairing and maintaining lawns.⁶⁵ In May, another workshop was held with regards to home maintenance.⁶⁶ In November, an alcohol and counselling workshop was held for the tenants and family workers at the Friendship Centre.⁶⁷ By acquiring the knowledge and skills of the dominant society, Native people were not only attempting to improve the quality of their lives in the Regina community, but also attempting to improve communication between Native and non-Native people. This was an essential step towards resolving the community-living crisis and to establishing the Native community as a self-

reliant cultural entity in the city.

By 1979, there was no longer a need for the Group to organize learning activities to educate the state and the larger society regarding the provision of adequate housing accommodations. This was because the housing situation in Regina had improved, not only for Native families, but also for the overall city population. The housing shortage ended when the federal government initiated several changes in the National Housing Act to stimulate the private sector to construct apartments and row housing units. For example, the Assisted Rental Plan provided subsidies to the private sector to build rental dwellings in the prairie cities of Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon and Regina where the vacancy rates were low.⁶⁸ With the construction of apartment units and row housing, the vacancy rate in Regina rose. In 1978, the vacancy rate climbed from 1.1 percent in 1977 to two percent.⁶⁹ It remained at this level until 1980. At this time it dropped to 0.5 percent, but again rose to remain at a relatively well balanced state.⁷⁰

With an increase in rental accommodation, the Native housing crisis ended. Not only did Native families have access to adequate and suitable apartments and row housing units, but more rental houses became available. This was a result of an increase in the number of homes being constructed in Regina's suburbs. While apartment and row housing units were under construction, the private sector was also

developing and building homes in the newer residential areas. Many non-Native families sold their homes in the older districts to purchase homes in the new suburbs. Many of the older homes were purchased by the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation and contracted to Native organizations for rent to Native families.⁷¹ In 1978, the Regina Native Women's Group received a total of eighty-four homes from the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation to manage and maintain.⁷²

In 1979, the most significant factor that improved housing conditions for Native families was the establishment of the Urban Native Housing Program by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. This program, begun as a pilot project, was the first of its kind in Canada and only operated in Saskatchewan. The Urban Native Housing Program evolved as a result of the continuous efforts to lobby the government for an increase in adequate housing accommodation for Native families by the Native organizations of the Association of Metis and non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan (AMNSIS), the Saskatchewan Friendship Centres and the Regina Native Women's Group.⁷³ The dialogue that was generated by the Regina Group convinced the government to initiate changes in the state's housing policies which would meet the needs of Native families migrating to and residing in the province's major urban centres.

The Urban Native Housing Program was developed with input from AMNSIS, the Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan and the

local chapters of the Saskatchewan Native Women's Movement. The government's collaboration with Native groups ensured that the housing policies and program regulations suited the needs of Native people. The program encouraged Native organizations to form non-profit housing groups by allowing them to borrow one hundred percent of the money needed to purchase, construct or rehabilitate homes for the low interest rate of two percent. The program was a cost-shared venture between the federal and provincial governments. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation provided seventy-five percent of the funds and the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation provided twenty-five percent. Each Native organization operating a housing program received an annual budget for the upkeep and maintenance of the homes they either built, purchased or rehabilitated.⁷⁴

With the establishment of the Native Urban Housing Program, several Native organizations in Regina formed housing co-operatives and groups to purchase, construct or renovate homes for rent to Native families. This improved the living conditions of many families immensely. Many of the homes that were built or purchased were in the newer residential areas, thus eliminating the segregation of Native people in a central urban slum. Homes which were constructed provided adequate space for large families, plus extra accessories such as washing machines, dryers, stoves and refrigerators. The older homes that were purchased were renovated to meet adequate living standards. Furthermore, all houses rented to Native

families were subsidized according to the family's income, thus making quality housing for Native families affordable.

The Regina Native Women's Group was one of the first Native organizations in Regina to benefit from the Urban Native Housing Program. During the spring of 1978, the Group formed the Regina Native Women's Housing Co-operative and planned for the construction of ten homes in the Argyle Park district. The following year these units were constructed by nine Native people, seven men and two women.⁷⁵

Since the Group was no longer in desperate need of housing, as in previous years, they changed the People in Need of Housing Committee's name to the Regina Native Women's Low Income Housing Program. Throughout the 1980's, the Group concentrated its efforts on providing social development to those families residing in the homes that the Group managed and maintained and continued to provide special care to homeless women and children residing at the Halfway Home and Girls Treatment Centre.

In summary, the Regina Group's utilization of liberating community education helped to improve the living conditions of many Native women and their families in Regina. Learning activities were an effective means used to create a dialogical exchange between Native women and the larger society. While engaging in mutual problem solving, participants acquired knowledge about the housing and community-living crises, initiated reforms in the government's existing housing

policies and developed the Urban Native Housing Program. The learning activities established for Native women, at centres such as the Residence Resource Centre, the Girls Treatment Centre and the Social Development Program provided the necessary skills and knowledge to help Native women and their families adapt to the mainstream society and to develop self-determination and autonomy within the Regina community.

The Group's use of collective forms of learning activities to generate dialogue, such as meetings, workshops and conferences, illustrates that collectivity is an effective means to obtain social change. As Freire states: "in dialogical education people (must) meet in co-operation in order to transform the world."⁷⁶ While engaging in group activity, the isolation of Native women from each other and from the larger society was eradicated. It was only when Native women and the dominant society came together to discuss common problems that changes in the housing situation became a reality.

The organization's struggle to improve living conditions for Native families was a result of its ability to develop a process of praxis. The participants became politicized about the housing issue during the many meetings, workshops and conferences organized by the Group for Native women, the government and the Regina community. Discussions provided an opportunity for reflection on the effects that the housing and community-living crises had on the city of Regina and on the

past action strategies developed to obtain changes. Together, community members identified problems resulting from the low vacancy rates and racial discrimination and planned further learning activities to generate the dialogue needed to obtain solutions to the housing issue. As the organization and the Regina community continued to involve themselves in the housing issue, Native women's knowledge about housing policies, the economy, urban lifestyles and racial discrimination broadened. This awareness of Regina's social and political environment empowered the Group to continue its efforts to generate a dialogue with the government and the Regina community until solutions to the housing crisis were obtained. By continuing to involve itself in the process of praxis, the Group developed "participatory competence".⁷⁷ This was acquired through dialogue. As Native women engaged in a dialogical exchange with the larger society, they acquired the self-confidence that enabled them to participate effectively in the dynamics of social and political change, thus becoming conscious agents of social change.

Although the housing crisis ended, the community-living crisis did not. Racial discrimination towards Native families continued to prevail in the city's north central district. This was clearly illustrated with regards to the planning and construction of the Regina Native Women's Community Complex in 1985. The goal of the organization to own its own building and to be the first Native group in the city to do so

originated in 1981. In 1984, the Group purchased the old Safeway Store located at Pasqua and 5th Streets and planned to renovate it into a community centre. Owning such a facility would provide "a sense of place in the urban community."⁷⁸ The building would house a Native day care, the Native Ministry Project and all the community centre's programs. Furthermore, an apartment building with twenty-four units was to be built adjacent to the community centre. One of the factors that prevented the entire complex from being completed was the reluctance expressed by the residents of the north central area to include Native people in the social and cultural spheres of community life.

The plans to establish the community centre and the housing project began to deteriorate in the spring of 1985. The residents of the north central district protested against its development. On April 10th, the housing project was temporarily halted when 315 residents from the North Central Community Association and several alderman presented a petition to Regina City Council. The residents claimed that the multi-family units being built would become "the makings of a ghetto"⁷⁹ and would cause traffic congestion, thus making the streets unsafe for pedestrians and motorists.⁸⁰ Within a three week period in May, the North Central Community Association and The Regina Native Women's Group met three times in an attempt to come to an understanding about the pros and cons of such a community complex for Native and non-

Native people. However, all three meetings ended in a deadlock.⁸¹ The North Central Community Association's response was: "We won't give up the fight."⁸² On May 6th, city council found the Association's resolutions ill-founded and decided to grant the Group \$200,000.00 for renovations to the Safeway store and to continue construction of the housing project.⁸³

The residents of the north central district hired a lawyer and took their resolution to court.⁸⁴ Although the Association lost its case in November, 1985, the Regina City Council and the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation withdrew support for the project because of other circumstances that emerged within the Regina Native Women's Group. (This will be discussed at length in chapter five). However, the resistance to the development of such a project played a significant factor in halting the building of the complex. When the project was officially halted in March, 1986, City Council approached the North Central Community Association for advice on what to do with the Safeway store. The Association recommended that the store be demolished and turned into a park, and this is what happened. The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation took over the administration and management of the housing units that were completed that month.⁸⁵

The final outcome of the Community Complex indicates that racism is a factor that often hinders social change. It seems likely that the racist attitudes present in the north central

community prevented the Regina Native Women's Group from establishing an essential facility that would have contributed significantly to the improvement of living conditions for many Native women and their families. Although the Group conducted many learning activities to educate the Regina community to obtain improved race relations, "it is completely unrealistic to presume that the cumulative effects of domination can be reversed in any other than a long term frame of reference."⁸⁶ Because racist attitudes are embedded in the very nature of society's institutions and the community's psychological make-up, social and political education requires time, effort and patience. Racism was not the only factor that hindered the Group in its attempts to obtain social reform. The next chapter will illustrate that gender oppression, co-optation by the state and dilemmas within the organization were other barriers that often prevented the Group from obtaining improvements in the quality of life for Native families in Regina. The chapter will also demonstrate that the support the Group received from allies accounted for many of the Group's successes.

CHAPTER FOUR--NOTES

1. Ira Shor and Paulo Freire, A Pedagogy For Liberation (Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, Inc., 1987), p. 13.

2. See Stuart Clatsworthy and Jeremy Hull, Native Economic Conditions in Regina and Saskatoon (Winnipeg: Institute for Urban Studies, 1983), p. 27 and Interview with Tim Grouse, Research Officer, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Regina, Saskatchewan, 2 June 1989.

3. Interview with Tim Grouse, Research Officer, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Regina, Saskatchewan, 2 June 1989.

4. Ibid.

5. The lowest vacancy rate was in apartments with three bedrooms or more. Interview with Tim Grouse, Research Officer, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Regina, Saskatchewan, 2 June 1989.

6. See "Low Income Housing," Briarpatch (June 1975): 16-19; "Regina apartment vacancy figure one of the lowest," Regina Leader Post, 19 July 1973, p. 3 and Interview with Tim Grouse, Research Officer, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Regina, Saskatchewan, 2 June 1989.

7. In 1973, the vacancy rate was 0.8 percent. In 1974 and 1975, the vacancy rate was zero percent. See Canada Housing Statistics, 1975: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (Ottawa: Statistical Services Division, March 1976), p. 20.

8. Interview with Tim Grouse, Research Officer, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Regina, Saskatchewan, 2 June 1989.

9. Ibid.

10. Canada Housing Statistics, 1973: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (Ottawa: Statistical Services Division, March 1974), p. 1.

11. Canada Housing Statistics, 1974: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (Ottawa: Statistical Services Division, March 1975), p. 19.

12. Canada Housing Statistics, 1977: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (Ottawa: Statistical Services Division, March 1978), p. 18.

13. Jeremy Hull, Natives in a Class Society (Saskatoon: One Sky Resource Centre, 1982), p. 28.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

15. Canada Housing Statistics, 1976: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (Ottawa: Statistical Services Division, March 1977), p. 81.

16. This is a 1981 figure from Statistics Canada. The total number of Native families in Regina at this time was 1,590. Of this total, 1,365 families had children and the total number of children in these families was 3,510. The average number of children per family was 2.2. Sixty-five percent of families had one to three children and thirty-five percent had over three children. Prior to 1981, no statistics existed on families in Regina. Telephone interview, Statistics Canada, Regina, Saskatchewan, 20 July 1989. It can be conjectured that the average number of Native children in a family could have been even higher during the heaviest years of migration, between 1971 and 1976. This is because the 1961 Canada Census indicates that Indian women, on the average, gave birth to 6.5 children annually. Florence Bird, Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1970), p. 329.

17. Canada Housing Statistics, 1976, p. 81.

18. Ian Adams, William Cameron, Brian Hill and Peter Penz, The Real Poverty Report (Edmonton: M.G. Hurtig Ltd., 1971), pp. 118-20.

19. Canada Housing Statistics, 1974, p. 16.

20. See Larry Krotz, Urban Indians: The Strangers in Canada's Cities (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Ltd., 1980), pp. 54-85; "Low Income Housing": 16-19; "Racial Discord in Prairie Cities" Regina Leader Post, 16 May 1976, p. 2 and Leslie Young, "Native Housing--Who Really Does Care?" Briarpatch (July 1976): 12-15.

21. See Dan Burns, "Housing Policy," in Canadian Social Policy, ed. by Shankar A. Yelaja (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1978), pp. 87-105; "Low Income Housing": 16-19 and Young, "Native Housing--Who Really Does Care?": 12-15.

22. "Saskatchewan Native Women's Movement," New Breed (September/October 1976): 5.
23. Young, "Native Housing--Who Really Does Care?": 13.
24. Interview with Tim Grouse, Research Officer, Regina, Saskatchewan, 2 June 1989.
25. Krotz, Urban Indians: The Strangers in Canada's Cities, pp. 54-85.
26. "Racial Discord in Prairie Cities": 2.
27. Leanne McKay, "Saskatchewan Native Women's Movement," New Breed (September/October 1976): 5.
28. See Agnes Sinclair, Daily Report, 1 September 1975. The number of complaints to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, regarding rental accommodation, doubled from seventy-three in 1970 to 170 in 1974. "Discrimination in housing said on increase," Regina Leader Post, 19 September 1975, p. 4. A survey conducted by the Regina Leader Post in December, 1975, found that nine out of twelve large realtors stated that there was discrimination in the home and apartment rental market against people of Native ancestry. "Discrimination seen in housing rentals," Regina Leader Post, 6 December 1975, p. 4.
29. "Racism and Economic Power," One Sky Report (October 1981): 2.
30. Krotz, Urban Indians: The Strangers in Canada's Cities, p. 41.
31. Ibid.
32. Agnes Sinclair, Daily Report, 16 to 29 August 1975.
33. Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 81.
34. This workshop evolved out of a conference some members of the Group attended in Ottawa on May 10th, 11th and 12th, 1975. The conference focussed on Section 12 (1) (b) of the Indian Act. Some Saskatchewan women walked out of the conference to protest the forming of the national group, Indian Rights For Indian Women. At the workshop on June 20th, the women discussed the Indian Act issue, but decided urban issues such as housing and Native child welfare were a priority for the Group at this time. For more information regarding the Native child welfare issue, see chapter five. See Agnes Sinclair, Daily Report, 6 June 1975 to August 1975

and Ruth Warwick, "Native Women's Organization Plan July Rally," Regina Leader Post, 23 June 1975, p. 4.

35. Warwick, "Native Women's Organization Plan July Rally," : 4.

36. Ibid.

37. R. Armstrong, "New Directions for Community Education," Community Development Journal 12 (April 1977): 81.

38. See Agnes Sinclair, Daily Report, 6 June 1975 to August 1975; Daily Report, June 16 to 29 August 1975 and Daily Report, 1 September 1975.

39. See Regina Native Women's Group, Report of Local Meeting, 3 September 1975 and "RLIHC", New Breed (November 1976): 1.

40. Agnes Sinclair, Daily Report, 6 June 1975 to 29 August 1975.

41. See Agnes Sinclair, Daily Report, 6 June 1975 to August 1975 and Young, "Native Housing--Who Really Does Care?": 12-15.

42. Young, "Native Housing--Who Really Does Care?": 15.

43. Ibid.

44. Agnes Sinclair, Daily Report, 1 September 1975.

45. See Minutes of the Saskatchewan Native Women's Movement, Provincial Board of Directors Meeting, 29 and 30 January 1976 and Regina Native Women's Community Centre Report, 19 March 1976 to 30 April 1976.

46. Stephen D. Brookfield, Adult Learners, Adult Education and the Community (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 103.

47. Regina Native Women's Community Centre Report, 19 March 1976 to 30 April 1976, p. 4.

48. Ibid., p. 2.

49. Ibid., p. 4.

50. Ibid.

51. Armstrong, "New Directions for Community Education":
82.

52. Regina Native Women's Group, Board of Directors Meeting, 21 January 1976.

53. "Program Helping Women in Crisis," Regina Leader Post, 16 November 1975, p. 3.

54. The official opening was publicized by the Regina Leader Post, Briarpatch Magazine, CKCK-TV and CKRM Radio, Regina. The public was invited to attend and personal invitations went to Social Services, Legal Aid, the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, the Native Women's Homemaker's Association and to Mayor Henry Baker. Tea and bannock were served to the public and guests, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. See Donna Pinay, "Native Women's Annual Meeting," New Breed (January 1976): 4-5; "Program Helping Women in Crisis": 3 and Regina Native Women's Community Centre Report, March 1977.

55. "Program Helping Women in Crisis": 3.

56. Interview with Leona Blondeau, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 23 September 1988 and Interview with Donna Pinay, Rhoda Fisher and Sue Deranger, Regina, Saskatchewan, 10 September 1988.

57. Interview with Donna Pinay, Rhoda Fisher and Sue Deranger, Regina, Saskatchewan, 10 September 1988.

58. Regina Native Women's Treatment Centre, Month End Report, February 1977.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

61. See Regina Native Women's Group General Meeting, 1 November 1979, and Interview with Donna Pinay, Rhoda Fisher and Sue Deranger, Regina, Saskatchewan, 10 September 1988.

62. Ibid.

63. Regina Native Women's Association, Board Meeting, 11 December 1980.

64. Regina Low Income Housing Corporation, A Report from the Tenant Resource Person to the Selection Committee, 13 April 1981.

65. Ibid.

66. Housing Director Report to the Board of Directors, April to 14 May 1981.
67. Housing Director Report to the Board of Directors, December 1981.
68. Canada Housing Statistics, 1976, p. VIII.
69. Canada Housing Statistics, 1979: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (Ottawa: Statistical Services, March 1980), p. 18.
70. Canada Housing Statistics, 1980: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (Ottawa: Statistical Services, March 1981), p. 15.
71. Interview with Pat Bohay, Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, Regina, Saskatchewan, 14 June 1989.
72. Regina Native Women's Group, Board Meeting, 1 April 1978.
73. Interview with Sue Hoffman, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 14 June 1989.
74. The Urban Native Housing Program was initially delivered by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for approximately two years. It was then turned over to the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. In 1987, it was given back to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to operate. Interview with Pat Bohay, Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, Regina, Saskatchewan, 14 June 1989 and Interview with Sue Hoffman, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 14 June 1989.
75. The group received an Employment Services Program grant from the Department of Manpower to train nine Native people, two women and seven men, to build the homes. They took part in a thirty-nine week program, where they were trained by two people. Students spent one week in the classroom and thirty-eight weeks on the job site. The Group held a banquet for the people employed on the project when the homes were completed. Regina Native Women's Group, Board of Directors Meeting, 30 January 1977.
76. Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p. 168.
77. Charles Kieffer, "Citizen Empowerment: A Developmental Perspective," in Politics and Change, ed. by University of Regina. (Regina: University of Regina, 1987.), p. 5.

78. Regina Native Women's Association, Proposal for the Purchase of a Building, 1981.

79. "Donations to community centre stalled," Regina Leader Post, 9 April 1985, p. 3.

80. The North Central Community Association also claimed that the Complex did not meet the requirements under the city's by-laws. The housing unit was required to have thirty-five parking stalls, but was only going to have nine. It was also required to have 325 square metres of outdoor play area, but only had 14.6 square metres. These deficiencies were supported by the Provincial Day Care Association and the Community Planning Association. The North Central Community Association claimed that the city's politicians supported the Progressive Conservative Party and broke the by-laws purposely to get the Native vote. Colleen Dundas, "Centre battle resuming today," Regina Leader Post, 29 October 1985, p. 3.

81. "Residents still want housing project moved or redesigned," Regina Leader Post, 2 May 1985, p. 3.

82. Ibid.

83. The federal, provincial and municipal governments stated that it was too late to halt the project and that the city's by-laws had been broken in previous years to accommodate the needs of residents. To halt the project would have been a breach of contract with Progressive Construction Ltd., and would have cost the taxpayers \$300,000.00 to \$400,000.00. Furthermore, on December 17th, 1984, the housing project was approved by the Regina City Council. It was financed by the federal and provincial governments at a cost of 1.5 million dollars. See "Donation to community centre stalled": 3; "Detractors say Native centre doomed to failure," Regina Leader Post, 11 April 1980, p. 3; "Residents still want housing project moved or redesigned": 3 and "Council approves grant to Natives," Regina Leader Post, 7 May 1985, p. 3.

84. "Native centre foes lose in court," Regina Leader Post, 20 November 1985, p. 3.

85. Carolyn Saunders, "Native group won't be given housing project," Regina Leader Post, 11 March 1986, p. 3.

86. Kieffer, "Citizen Empowerment: A Developmental Perspective": 21.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

The previous chapter has attempted to demonstrate that racial discrimination often presents barriers to oppressed groups seeking social change. Other factors, such as gender oppression, co-option by the state and dilemmas within a social movement organization, also hinder a group from seeking reforms in the social structure. Nonetheless, the support an organization receives from allies outside the movement, such as adult educators, grassroots organizations and society's institutions, often enables the oppressed to make progress towards attaining their goals. This chapter will discuss both the barriers that often impeded the Regina Native Women's Group from improving life conditions for Native women and their families and the support from allies that enabled change to occur.

In order for a social movement organization to carry out its activities for reform, it needs financial support. Most often organizations receive their support from the state. However, there are many disadvantages that arise when organizations become dependent upon the state's funding programs. This is particularly so for women's groups.

The financial support that the Regina Group received from the state was often short-term, unreliable and inadequate.¹

This type of funding provided employment for the women only at a very low wage. Furthermore, when the grants expired, the Group could not terminate the activities because of the demand for their services. Therefore, the Group continued its efforts on a voluntary basis until further funding was received. For example, between July and November of 1974 many of the staff members at the Community Centre worked voluntarily until further funding was received in December.² In April, 1975, the same situation recurred when the Group's grant expired. Agnes Sinclair indicated that they had seventy-five women whom they counselled regularly, "but now that our project (grant) finished we just can't drop all our clients, they are phoning me on different problems."³ On May 12, 1975, Leona Blondeau addressed an audience of eighty persons at the Regina Central Library's fourth series on 'Let's Talk about Women' concerning the Group's financial situation. She explained to the participants that when government grants expire, the staff "must continue services on a volunteer basis because of the need for them."⁴ During the summer months of July and August of 1975, the organization had only enough money to pay six women at the Community Centre one hundred dollars a month each.⁵

When the Group engaged in unpaid labour to keep the organization operating, it was in essence being exploited. However, according to the state, this form of unpaid labour is legitimate because volunteer work is traditionally sanctioned

as women's work by the dominant ideology and is akin to the unpaid female domestic labour performed in the family unit.⁶ Whether it be in the economic sphere or private sphere, this form of unpaid labour is undervalued and trivialized in a capitalist society. Attempting to maintain the organization's programs with low wages and on a voluntary basis was extremely difficult for the staff. Many of the employees had families with young children. Some were single parents in need of an income to support their families. When a program's grant expired, or was inadequate, a number of women were forced to quit their jobs with the organization and seek other employment or obtain social assistance. This weakened the stability of the organization because the women never knew for certain how long the organization would exist, whether they would obtain support for their programs or whether they should plan for future programs.⁷

The state's lack of financial support contributed to and maintained the gender and class inequality of Native women in the labour force. This inequity was maintained through the state's funding policies. For example, in 1976, the Secretary of State provided long term funding, also referred to as core funding, to the male dominated organizations of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians and the Association of Metis and non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan, but refused to offer this type of funding to Native women's groups.⁸ The State's decision to provide core funding to the organizations of FSI and AMNSIS

was based upon its classification system for funding social action groups. Those organizations considered to be political, such as FSI and AMNSIS, received priority for funding over organizations which were designated as service organizations, such as Native women's groups and most other women's groups. From a feminist perspective, this policy can be viewed as sexist. The state labelled organizations as being political when they worked for social change within the context of the traditional political arena. Traditionally, politics of this nature was a sphere exclusive to men and not to women. The state's interpretation of what is meant by political contradicts feminist ideology. The latter ideology views personal change orientated programs that women's organizations provide as a form of political action. Feminist philosophy states that the 'personal is political', meaning that when women as individuals or as oppressed groups become politicized about their personal situation, it is only then that they are able to bring about change in the larger political arena.⁹ Unfortunately, when the state's funding programs do not view feminist politicizing as a form of social action worthy of funding, the process of emancipating women from their original oppressed status in society is hindered.

Not only did the state's lack of financial support maintain the inequity of Native women's position in the labour force, it also forced some of the organization's programs to struggle for survival. This was clearly illustrated with

regard to the financial assistance given to the Regina Native Women's Halfway Home and the Regina Native Women's Girls Treatment Centre. When the Group initiated both homes, the Department of Social Services agreed to support them, first, by paying per-diems to the organization for the women and children residing at the centres and secondly, by referring clients to the homes. Since the Department of Indian Affairs was responsible for financially assisting treaty Indians for one year after they had left the reserve, per-diems were paid by the Department to treaty women and children in this situation. After a year's duration treaty families needing to receive per-diem assistance did so through the Department of Social Services.¹⁰

The use of per-diems to operate the homes was an unreliable and inadequate form of funding. In order for the homes to have enough money to operate effectively, they had to be occupied at full capacity at all times. This meant that the Department had to refer enough women to the homes to keep them filled. However, during certain periods of time, the homes were seldom filled with clients. For example, during the months of November, 1979, there were only four women and children at the Treatment Centre.¹¹ In November, 1980, there were only nine young women and children at the Centre.¹² In March, 1980, the Halfway Home had only a total of ten clients using the home during the entire month.¹³

When the homes were not filled, the small amount of

income received from the per-diem payments made it difficult for the Group to maintain the homes. This was because operating expenses were high. The per-diem payments had to provide salaries for approximately ten full-time counsellors (five at each home), rent to the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation and food and resources for the women and children residing at the centres. The lack of adequate financial support also made it difficult to provide learning activities for personal and collective change. Sometimes recreational and cultural activities were sporadic, and training in basic life skills, home management, hygiene and child care, was limited.¹⁴

The periods when the home experienced reduced numbers were sometimes the result of a lack of referrals coming from the Departments. One reason for this situation can be explained by society's attitude towards family violence. There are many societal myths surrounding male violence against women. Most of the myths are based upon the general assumptions that the victim provoked her own assault. Therefore, society presumes that the victim is to blame. Furthermore, myths generally absolve the attacker's behaviour, by making society believe that the family domain is private and not to be interfered with by the public or state.¹⁵

Because of society's general acceptance of these myths, the state has made only modest attempts to support financially the programs and services established to help the victims.

This was clearly demonstrated with regards to the Department of Indian Affairs' financial assistance to Treaty women and children who were victims of family violence. The Department was reluctant to refer women and children to the centres. This was because of the financial restraints that the Department was experiencing. Because of the large population growth of the Treaty population in Canada during the 1960's and 1970's, the Department claimed it did not have the finances or resources to support this population.¹⁶ Instead of referring those women and children who needed help to the centres, the Department was deterring them in order to save money. The Department was requesting those women who suffered from family violence to reside with family or friends or to go back to the reserve. In fact, the Department requested a letter of permission, written by the band council, from the women who wished to enter the homes. The letter was required to give the women permission to reside off the reserve and to allow them to receive the per-diem payments. Many women did not realize that it was not legislated Indian Affairs policy to require this letter of permission in order to obtain financial assistance. When some women returned to the reserve to acquire a letter, they were often met with animosity for attempting to leave. Some could not obtain a letter because the band council was composed of kin, the majority of them men, who did not sympathize with the women's situation. When the women did not receive these letters, they were not

referred to the centres. This resulted in very few referrals coming from the Department to the homes. Unfortunately, many of these women returned to the oppressive conditions of their family life.¹⁷

When the Department did refer Treaty women to the centres, they continued to avoid supporting them by not paying or delaying the payments of per-diems. For example, in January, 1980, Indian Affairs owed the Halfway Home \$12,000 in back payments.¹⁸ By September, 1980, Indian Affairs owed the home five months of per diem payments.¹⁹ When as many as eighty to ninety percent of the clients were sometimes Treaty women, receiving per-diem payments from the Department was necessary for the survival of the home.²⁰ This action by the state not only left the homes in a position where they had to struggle to operate effectively, but it was instrumental in maintaining and perpetuating women's oppression within gender relations.

The lack of referrals to the homes can also be partially attributed to the perceptions of family violence by the women being abused. Some women may have been encouraged by the government's social workers to go to the centres for help, but refused. There are many reasons why women, particularly those who are battered, remain in abusive relationships. Generally, these women, along with the rest of society, have internalized the myths of family violence. Because of these myths, battered women minimize the acts of violence and blame the

beatings they receive on themselves. The battered woman believes those things told to her by her abuser about her self-worth, which results in a low self-esteem. Her low self-esteem leaves her without the confidence to escape. Many stay in abusive relationships because they fear the abuser will kill them if they leave. Some women also believe that no matter how bad the relationship is, the children need their father. Most women are afraid to leave their homes because of the emotional dependency on their abuser and of the abuser's dependency on them. Most battered women believe that the battering will stop and the abuser will change. Furthermore, those women who are poor, with very little education and no job skills, such as many Native women, are reluctant to leave the security of their family life no matter how extreme the violence.²¹ Society's attitudes toward family violence, including the victim's own attitude, often resulted in few referrals to the centres. This situation forced the centres to struggle to operate effectively.

In 1977, when the Group was able to obtain adequate state funding for some of its programs, such as the Community Centre,²² it brought stability to the Group's programs and ensured the organization's existence in the Regina community. However, with the acceptance of this type of funding, the Group was co-opted to work for change according to the dictates of the state. Co-option of social movement organizations by the state often hinders social change. The

state limits the strategies for change used by the members by controlling, directing, restricting and re-orienting the organization's programs to fit the purposes of the state. This practice of co-option is illustrated in the struggle to obtain core funding for the Girls Treatment Centre.

In the fall and early winter of 1979, very few referrals were being made by the Department of Social Services to the Centre, thus placing the home in a financial crisis and in a position whereby closure was threatened. The Group believed that the Department was purposely sabotaging the Centre so that the status of the home could be changed from a preventative care home to a receiving home. A receiving home would provide temporary shelter to young Native people before they were either institutionalized or were put into foster homes. The Department felt that this change was necessary because the province was in need of more receiving homes. This meant that the Treatment Centre would only provide services for children between the ages of thirteen and sixteen and not for seventeen and eighteen year old women.²³ The Group stated that "leaving our teenage and young women out in the cold with their only option being the street or non-Indian institutions they did not or cannot relate to" was unjust.²⁴

The Group refused to accept the Department's receiving home idea. In March 1980, under the direction of Sue Deranger, the house director, and Donna Pinay, executive

director for the organization, the Group submitted a proposal called, 'Save the Treatment Centre' to the Department and requested permanent funding for a preventative care home. Providing this type of funding would eliminate the problems that per-diems were causing. The Group also went to the press to make its predicament known to the public.²⁵

On April 16th, because of the subsequent public pressure, the Department agreed to provide long term funding to the Centre and to allow it to remain a preventative care home. However, the Group had to agree to several changes in the structure of the home in order to receive permanent funding.²⁶ In this sense the Group was co-opted by the state. The Group had to accept the fact that if it was going to receive state funding, its efforts to improve life conditions for Native women and their families had to be done according to government stipulations. For example, the government requested that seven spaces be allotted for girls under sixteen and six for women over sixteen. Furthermore, all counsellors were requested to upgrade their skills by obtaining a Child Care Certificate. The Group was also required to conduct an evaluation of the home. Finally, a policy and procedure manual that would dictate the operation of the home was to be developed by the Group.²⁷ Basically, when the Group was co-opted by the state, it lost some of its autonomy to direct and control the organization and to make the type of improvements it believed were necessary to better

the life conditions of Native women.

Just as the sexist practices inherent in state funding and co-option often hindered the Group from obtaining reforms for Native women, so also did the gender oppression inflicted by the male dominated organizations of FSI and AMNSIS. From their inception, FSI and AMNSIS operated with a male dominated executive and with very little involvement from Native women. Since the years of colonization, when Native society adapted to the European political system, Native women were excluded from participating in the arena of Native politics. Instead, they were segregated into the private sphere where they maintained the family unit. Native women's location in the private sphere was oppressive. It kept them out of the political arena, which excluded them from the decision-making process whereby they could exercise control in matters significant to them. When the Native Women's Movement emerged in Saskatchewan, FSI and AMNSIS declared that they were the voice of Saskatchewan's Native people and that Native women's groups were under their jurisdiction. The male dominated organizations did not recognize Native women's groups as autonomous entities separate from them and capable of speaking for Native women and children. Because of this lack of recognition, the Group did not always receive support from FSI or AMNSIS when it made efforts to obtain either core funding or to establish separate programs for Native women and their children. This lack of solidarity between Native men and

women not only hindered the Group from obtaining social change, but was also detrimental to the liberation of all Native people from their oppressed status in society.

In 1975, the lack of support from the male dominated organizations for the Group's initiatives to improve conditions for Native families was clearly demonstrated when FSI supported the government's decision not to give permanent funding to the Native Women's Movement. The Federation of Saskatchewan Indians passed a resolution calling "for the government not to fund Native women's groups in Saskatchewan."²⁸ In January 1977, members of the Group attended an all chiefs' conference, held at the University of Regina, to challenge the resolution. Lorna Standingready requested the floor several times during the conference to present information about the lack of financial support from the Department of Indian Affairs and FSI for Treaty women residing in the city. The chiefs refused her request to speak by stating that "the chiefs control the agenda and we do not have time today."²⁹ This incident not only indicates the lack of recognition given to Native women's groups by the male dominated organizations, but it also illustrates the subordinate position that Native women had within the realm of Native politics and in the Native community in general.

The Group never accepted the gender oppression inflicted upon it by the men of the Native community. Instead, it struggled to obtain equality. This struggle to obtain a

representative voice in the Native community was manifested in 1979. At the time, AMNSIS would not support the Group's efforts to establish separate programs for Native women and their children. On September 10th, the Group received a letter from AMNSIS local #9, "advising them (Native women) that they should consult with them (AMNSIS) before implementing programming."³⁰ In December, under the direction of their president Grace Adam, the Group responded to AMNSIS and sent a copy of its response to the other Native organizations of FSI, the Saskatchewan Native Women's Association, the Saskatchewan Indian Women's Association, the Saskatchewan Association of Friendship Centres and the state departments of the Native Women's Program Secretary of State, the Social Planning Secretariat Women's Division and the Department of Labour. In its response it emphasized that Native women's groups provide programs and support that were not always provided by the organizations of AMNSIS or FSI. "Although many leaders claim to represent and act for all Native people including women and children this has not been reflected in their programming."³¹ Because the Group represented the issues of Native families and provided the services necessary to improve life conditions for them, they believed that "as a Native women's organization we are quite capable of speaking for ourselves and our children."³² Furthermore, the Group indicated that solidarity among all Native groups was important if improvements were to be made in

the lives of all Native people. "This is not to say we do not support the efforts of AMNSIS or FSI in working for change, but this support must not be a one way street."³³

The Group feared that if it were not recognized as an autonomous entity by the male dominated organizations, as well as by the government, Native women's issues would not be addressed and the organization would not be able to establish the necessary educational programs to improve conditions for Native women. This concern was expressed on January 30th, 1980, when the Group met with the Social Planning Secretariat. The Secretariat funded the Native Development Boards established in urban centres by the provincial government. These boards were developed for the purpose of alleviating urban Native poverty by providing educational, economic and social development programs. The women were supportive of the programs, but feared that AMNSIS would take over the entire decision-making process with respect to the type of programs to be established. Such a take-over would be "detrimental to the well being of Native women."³⁴ The Group told Bill Fayant, a representative from the Secretariat, that the male dominated organizations only view the Regina Native Women's Group as being "capable of operating small short-term female or mother type programming."³⁵ If any change were to occur to the status of Native women in society, the Group felt that it was essential that it be the representative of Native women's concerns and not AMNSIS. This would ensure that Native women

received the necessary programs to improve their situation.

The fear that AMNSIS would not represent Native women's issues became a reality again in May. During this month, the provincial government planned to review the non-Registered Indian and Metis Program (NRIM). The program was established by the provincial government to help improve educational and social conditions for Native people throughout the province.³⁶ AMNSIS recommended to the government that it should speak on behalf of all Metis and non-Status people.³⁷ The Group was dismayed by this action and on May 6th, under the direction of Donna Pinay and board member Theresa Stevenson, a brief was presented to the NRIM Review Committee. The Brief expressed the Group's concerns about AMNSIS representing Native women's issues. The women stated that "if only one group or organization has total control of the program, they can and will easily forget and ignore the needs of others."³⁸ The Group feared that if AMNSIS represented Native women, educational programming would remain traditional and sexist. The Group's brief stated that "there are some traditionally male dominated areas in which Native women should receive training. Efforts should be made to involve women in these areas, including program administration and management...while sewing and cooking classes may be important to some women, the benefits offered by training in management and administration are far too important to overlook."³⁹

Basically, FSI and AMNSIS did not want to recognize the

Regina Native Women's Group or any other Native women's group as an autonomous entity separate from them because they feared the emancipation of Native women in the Native community. If Regina Native Women received adequate funding from the state and were able to establish educational programs to support Native women's equality in society, the dominant position of Native men in the community would be undermined. These gender relations did not unite Native people to challenge their oppression by the dominant society, but only divided them. The achievement of equality requires co-operative endeavours and solidarity from all those who are oppressed by the dominant capitalist ideology. It is only when Native men comprehend the relationship of their oppression to all other forms of human oppression and join in solidarity with their women that the larger Indian movement will begin to achieve its goals.

Just as the gender oppression and co-option by the state played a significant part in hindering the Group from improving life conditions for Native women and their families, so did the internal dilemmas within the organization. As a social movement organization progresses through the community education process, it must cope with the day to day decisions of managing the technical aspects of the organization's programs, staff, financial accounts and board and staff relations. The challenge to community groups is to be able to cope with the predicaments that often arise while managing the

organization, so that these do not hinder them from attaining their goals. During its history, the Regina Native Women's Group was faced with the difficulties of managing a growing fledgling organization, of addressing factionalism among the membership and of frequent changes in leadership.

By 1978, the organization had reached a peak period in its development. It provided more programs and services to many Native families in the city of Regina than any other time in its history. With twenty-six staff members and a board of eleven directors, it operated the Residence Resource Centre, the Girls Treatment Centre, a Community Centre with a referral and counselling service, a Streetworker Project, the Kitchener School Project, a summer student program, a housing program and a cultural camp for Native youth.⁴⁰ The Group gained a reputation as the most successful Native women's organization in Saskatchewan and as "the women's local with the most programming."⁴¹ Although the organization evolved into an active agency providing improvements in life conditions for Native women and their families, the administrative structure and management of the organization had changed very little since its inception in 1971. Board members continued to work as staff members, family and friends were continually appointed or hired to occupy staff and board positions and management and administrative skills were often lacking.

In 1978, the lack of a formal authority structure and expertise in general and technical skills resulted in a

serious crisis. In August, two members of the Group were experiencing marriage breakdown and were in desperate need of moral and financial support. Moved by compassion, the Group agreed to lend these women money from the Community Centre's budget. The Department of Social Services considered the decision to lend the money inappropriate and viewed the action as a mismanagement of funds. Faced with the possibility of losing its core funding for the Community Centre, the Group met with the Department in October to discuss the situation.⁴² The Group told Social Services that it would try to recoup the missing money by requesting its return and organizing fund raising events to make up the deficit. The Department agreed to continue to fund the Community Centre, providing the Group improve the administrative and financial management of the organization. The board of directors was to be restructured. Someone with expertise in administrative and accounting skills was to be hired. And, finally, an attempt was to be made to develop these skills among the members of the board and staff.⁴³

In October, the board was reorganized to include five staff members and six non-staff members. This mixture of the membership and staff was intended to maintain solidarity within the Group and to allow new board members to learn about the operation of the organization from their staff. The change from a mixed board of staff and volunteer members to a board represented by volunteer members only occurred over a

six month period.⁴⁴

To improve the management of the organization, the Group developed committees in February 1979. The committees were to "provide an opportunity for staff, board and [the] membership to become involved in the organization."⁴⁵ For example, a housing committee was organized to deal with the housing program. There was a personnel committee that was involved with all matters pertaining to staffing, hiring, firing and recruiting. An education committee was involved in areas of Native and public education. These committees made presentations to the board of directors at board meetings to maintain open communication between all members of the organization.⁴⁶

To improve the administration of the organization the board of directors hired David Pawliw, a non-Native person, as the administration officer for a two year period. David had a degree in Business Administration and played an instrumental role in teaching the Group methods of administering and financially managing the organization.⁴⁷ Furthermore, two staff members, Bev Desnomie and Rhoda Fisher, were enrolled in a Business Administration class at the Regina Plains Community College to upgrade their skills. It was their intention to assume administrative positions within the organization at a later date.⁴⁸

The incident of the mismanaged funds demonstrates that the lack of a formal authority structure when combined with

very little knowledge of administration and management skills, can lead an organization to operate under a "tyranny of structurelessness."⁴⁹ Because of the Group's lack of management expertise and technical skills, it often hindered them from making appropriate decisions about the effective operation of the organization. For example, when the organization was dominated by very few members, the democratic participation of the membership was eliminated. When this occurs, the ability of an organization to develop creative ways to obtain social change is often limited. Furthermore, when board members were hired to work as staff members, a conflict of interest developed. As a result, there was no process to determine the organization's accountability in the areas of financial administration.⁵⁰ Although the hiring of family and friends was viewed as a means to improve economic life conditions for Native women and their families, in times of crisis the personal situation of kin and friends became a priority at the expense of the organization's goals. This practice of nepotism often bred factionalism within the Group. The membership often chose to be loyal to its kin and friends rather than to the broader issues of concern. This is not to say that nepotism was the only cause of factionalism, but it did significantly contribute to it.

Although conflicts among members are bound to arise, reflecting the different value systems held by individuals, the disagreements resulting from factionalism often hindered

the Group from obtaining social change. An inordinate amount of time and energy was used trying to cope with differences among members rather than focussing attention on the organization's goals. An organization lives in constant danger of dissolving into bickering factions if members focus their attention on the differences between them. The most significant example of factionalism that developed in the Group, which inhibited it from obtaining its goals, was the incident with the Regina Native Women's Community Complex. Although racism was a factor that resulted in the Group loosing the project, internal disorder was the major cause.

In the fall of 1985, while the housing project was under construction and renovations to the Safeway store were in progress, the Group began to experience internal problems. On November 21st, at a special board meeting which included the membership, a new board of directors was elected and certain staff members were fired. The newly elected board members decided that they did not want the community centre constructed because they believed that the Safeway store was a second rate building and unfit for use. Two weeks after the new board assumed the directorship, the faction that was rejected by the membership attempted to regain control of the organization, but was unsuccessful.⁵¹ On November 24th, the regularly scheduled annual meeting of the membership was held in the basement of St. John's United Church where 250 women carried on a ten hour debate over the financial operation of

the organization, its goals and the Community Complex. Finally, after much debate, the faction that originally supported and developed the plans for the Complex regained control of the organization.⁵² However, in January 1986, and also in March, the organization again changed leadership. By March, the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation had completed the housing project, but decided not to turn the project over to Native women because of the turmoil within the organization. The Corporation believed that the Group's internal problems would affect the administration of the project. Therefore, it withdrew its support for the housing unit and stopped renovations on the Safeway store.⁵³

The incident of factionalism, which resulted in the loss of one of the most significant programs that the organization had undertaken in its history, indicates several things. First, the survival of any organization depends partially on the ability of the organization's leaders to muster solidarity. When community educators develop co-operative action within an organization, they are acting from a power base. This power, often referred to as 'synergic power', is not meant to control or manipulate, but to release the capacity of people to act co-operatively.⁵⁴ The two factions that developed within the organization did not use their power to muster solidarity in order to meet the goals. Instead the group expended energy by maintaining the factions for their own purposes.

Mase A. Lake states that "without a doubt power is the single most important concept for women to understand and acquire."⁵⁵ Perhaps women do not understand how to use power to develop co-operative action because very few opportunities have been available that require women to work in co-operation with colleagues in an organization. In the labour force and in the home women are usually under the influence of a male authority. Within these particular situations they have adapted to a form of power sanctioned by the dominant ideology, which is often manipulative and controlling.⁵⁶ By assuming the ideology of their oppressors, Native women have unconsciously used power to oppress themselves. One solution to this oppressive use of power for a women's organization, such as the Regina Native Women's Group, is to adopt an organizational structure which is in accordance with feminist ideology. This ideology proposes collective forms of management which would democratize and humanize the decision-making apparatus of an organization.⁵⁷

Secondly, factionalism ultimately leads an organization to lose its credibility in the community. There is no doubt that the Regina Group lost its credibility among many significant sectors of the Regina community because of an inability to deal with internal conflicts in an effective manner. Not only did the Group lose credibility among its supporters, but also among the membership. When the membership loses faith in their organization's ability to

accomplish its goals, an incentive to participate declines and the survival of the organization is threatened.⁵⁸

Thirdly, the Community Complex incident illustrates that chaos and conflict often occur when there is a change in leadership or when there is no leadership. The successes or failures of an organization can be highly dependent upon the quality and commitment of the leadership. Following the resignation of a leader, an organization can experience low morale and several changes, until a new leadership is established.⁵⁹ The repeated resignations from leadership, between November 1985 and March 1986, left the organization with little or no direction. This situation caused instability and a loss of confidence among staff, board members and the general membership.

This was not the only incident where a change in leadership caused instability within the Group. During the years from 1974 to 1978, the organization experienced stability and growth, as a result of the long continuous leadership of Agnes Sinclair and Lorna Standingready. However, in 1977 Lorna resigned and in the summer of 1978 Agnes also left. Both Agnes and Lorna were dedicated leaders who spoke out with courage to awaken Regina Native women to the injustices of the social order and to rally the Regina community to a cause. During the fall of 1978, when the Group was reorganizing its board and staff, Agnes' leadership ability and inspiring personality were sorely missed by the

Group. The members commented that "there was a lot of tension growing among the women, this tension was a result of not having a director for the Centre."⁶⁰

Although the barriers of gender oppression, co-optation by the state and internal conflicts within the Group often prevented it from obtaining improvements in life conditions for Native women and their families, there were many grassroots organizations, social institutions and adult educators who supported the Group's endeavours to obtain social change. The ideal condition for obtaining reforms in the social structure is obviously a strong sentient base with low societal hostility towards a movement organization. It is highly improbable that change will result if a community group does not gain legitimacy from society or if it does not continue to influence its constituents. As the Group established itself in the city of Regina, it developed many supportive and positive alliances that played a significant role in determining the success that the organization did experience.

In 1972, collaboration with the non-Native community first began with the establishment of a referral service at the Community Centre. By 1976, the Group had established links with many agencies and organizations in Regina, such as Legal Aid, Mobile Family Services, Regina Community Legal Services, the Transitional Women's House, the Regina Local Housing Authority, the Regina Low Income Housing Corporation,

Canada Manpower Review Board, the United Church Executive Council of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Employment Committee, the Planning Committee of the Department of Social Services, the Briarpatch Board, Foster Homes for Native Children, Regina Community Central Legal Services, North Central Community Resource Society, the Native Court Workers Program and the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Regina.⁶¹

One of the most significant alliances that the Group formed in the non-Native community was with the United, Anglican and Lutheran church communities. Initially, some members of the Group were apprehensive about becoming extensively involved with various religious denominations because of the Christian churches' historical role in colonizing Native people. However, the Group learned that the church community was not out to 'baptize' Native people, but to encourage self-determination and offer genuine help. Basically, the church communities provided financial and moral support to the Group because they had a strong commitment to developing positive race-relations in Regina.

As early as 1974, the churches became involved with the Group by inviting Native women to speak to the lay members and clergy about the issues confronting Native families in an urban environment. One of the first public speaking engagements involving the Group was on October 30th, 1974, at St. Andrew's United Church. Caroline Goodwill, Lorna

Standingready and Isabel Keewatin spoke to an audience of clergy and church representatives at a Regina Presbytery quarterly meeting. The Group informed the audience about the critical situation of urban Indians in Regina and discussed reasons for migration, violence, unemployment and poor housing. The women explained to the audience that Native women and their families migrate to the city "unaware of city ways and services available"⁶² and that their organization was attempting to orientate Native people to urban life.

The most influential support for the Group's endeavours came from the Lutheran community. During the winter of 1975, some leaders of the community, such as Larry Heinemann, Harvey Stalwick and Marg Stependorff, were concerned about the problems caused by urban migration and in particular, the poor race relations between the Native and non-Native community. Larry Heinemann contacted Regina Native Women and asked if the Lutheran community could be of some assistance to the organization.⁶³ The Group expressed the need for a streetworker project in the downtown district to combat racial violence and to aid women in crisis. During the summer and fall of 1975, when migration had reached its peak, race relations were quite tense. Large numbers of transient, unemployed Native people congregated in the city's centre at hotels, motels, bars and restaurants. Their impoverished conditions often resulted in feelings of frustration and hopelessness "which was resolved in fighting, skirmishes and

crime" between Native people.⁶⁴ As a result of bar room brawls at the Champs, Queens and Drake hotels, retail business owners threatened to close down unless something was done to put an end to the fighting and the destruction of private property. On August 28th, in an attempt to alleviate racial tension, the city assigned a special task force of twenty officers to patrol the streets. However, the appearance of this law enforcement team only provoked further racial conflict between the Native and non-Native community.⁶⁵

In September of 1978, a further attempt at easing racial tensions resulted in the establishment of a Street Patrol Project. This patrol was under the direction of Wayne Stonechild, Jerome Daniels and Keith Koski of the Warrior Society. Eight streetworkers were employed to work in shifts over a twenty-four hour period, seven days a week. The streetworkers worked out of a downtown location where they ran a drop-in centre that offered food, clothing and support services to Native people and also directed them to appropriate agencies. The patrol also intervened when fighting occurred. Because the program funding ended in January, the patrol was not continued by the Warrior Society.⁶⁶

Because of the Street Patrol's success in easing racial tension, the Group wished to continue such a project. The leaders of the Lutheran community enthusiastically supported the Group's proposal for a streetworker program and decided to

organize themselves into the Lutheran Native Support Committee. On behalf of the Group, they then approached the Wheatridge Foundation, a U.S.-based Lutheran charitable organization, to fund a streetworker project. The Foundation agreed to finance the program with a three year grant of \$76,000.00.⁶⁷

With the approval of the project grant in January of 1976, the Lutheran Support Committee considered the possibility of hiring someone to work in a liaison capacity between the Group and the Committee. This person would determine what appropriate presence the Lutheran community could have in the Native community with regards to physical, social and spiritual needs. The Group consented to the idea of a liaison person and the Committee hired a young chaplain, Ruth Blaser. An office was provided for Ruth at the Community Centre. Here she worked alongside Native women and established the presence of the Lutheran Native Support Committee in the Native community.⁶⁸

During the three years that Ruth worked with Regina Native Women, she became a good friend and an effective advocator on the Group's behalf. She helped to gather resources, planned programs and organized race relations workshops. She also acted as a liaison between the Native and non-Native community. In an interview with the Regina Leader Post, Ruth stated that her role with the organization was to support Native people "in getting what they want and teaching

the white community to listen."⁶⁹

In 1977, when racial tensions between the police and Native people were particularly strained over allegations of police brutality, Ruth's organizing activities were greatly appreciated. Under her direction, a support group of approximately one hundred Native and non-Native persons supported the Regina Native Women's Group and AMNSIS in their plea for a public inquiry into the existing race relations between the Native community and the city police. In March, letters were sent to the attorney general, Roy Romanow, stating cases of police brutality and requesting a public inquiry into these matters.⁷⁰ Public pressure by the support group forced the Police Commission to conduct an investigation. Unfortunately, this investigation by the Police Commission was only to become a mere token gesture to pacify the public's outcry. By late August, the Commission completed its inquiry and concluded that it found no evidence that the Regina city police were using excessive force or abusive treatment when confronting Native people.⁷¹

In 1980, the United Church Native Concerns Group, the Lutheran Native Support Committee and the Anglican Native Ministry took an ecumenical approach to their involvement with the Native community. Together with the Group, they formed the Regina Interchurch Native Ministry Project. The basic aim of the project was to support Native leaders in their efforts to obtain "improved services and greater social justice for

their people"⁷² and to encourage Native people to seek self-determination in defining their own spirituality. The Native Ministry team, along with Regina Native Women, planned ecumenical and cross-cultural training workshops for the Native and non-Native community alike. The purpose of these workshops was to improve race relations. The Native Ministry also provided financial support to the Group in its bid for the Community Complex. It planned to give \$15,000.00 annually to the Group in order to house the Ministry and to provide race relations workshops.⁷³

Between 1981 and 1984, the support to the Regina Native Women's Group from the non-Native community reached its peak when the Group held a fund raising campaign to obtain finances to develop a Community Centre. A fund raising committee was created by the Group together with various individuals, the Faculty of Social Work and church groups. The Committee canvassed various sectors of the Regina community. Charitable organizations such the Lions and Rotarians, corporations such as the CBC and Saskatchewan Power and the business community such as hotels and motels provided donations. Those individuals and groups donating \$100.00 or more became known as 'Friends of Regina Native Women' and received pins in recognition of their contribution.⁷⁴ Bingos, raffles, social gathering, bake sales and displays were also organized by the committee. The Regina community participated actively in all of these.⁷⁵ By June 1983, the Group had raised \$70,000.00.⁷⁶

The Regina City Council also participated in the Group's fund raising efforts with respect to a community centre. Between 1982 and 1984, Mayor Larry Schneider proclaimed one week during the late winter months as "Native Women's Week". During this week, the Group, together with various organizations in the Regina community, carried out fund raising activities. Banners were also hung from the two bridges on Albert Street and advertisements of the week's events were posted in the media.⁷⁷

One of the most successful weeks was held between February 27th to March 5th, 1983. It was called 'Let's Work Together'. In that period, the Group raised \$20,000.00. The week was officially opened with an ecumenical service held at St. John's United Church. On that same day, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., entertainer Winston Wuttnee performed in the church basement. A fund raising banquet, at \$50.00 a plate, was held at the Four Seasons Palace. Two hundred and fifty people attended from various Native and non-Native organizations. Booths and displays were set up at the Northgate Mall, at the Cornwall Centre, at the University of Regina and at various churches throughout the city. On March 4th, the Riel Cresaultis Elders Society sponsored a square dance. On Saturday, March 5th, the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College held a Pow-wow at the Agriplex Exhibition Grounds. Throughout the week, the Group also sponsored a bannock and soup lunch at the Friendship Centre. On March 5th, a dinner and dance was

held at the Saskatchewan Centre for the Arts.⁷⁸

The Group not only established alliances in the non-Native community, but also in the Native community. Although FSI and AMNSIS did not recognize Native women's groups as autonomous entities separate from them, they and other Native organizations periodically offered the Group support. It appears that support was offered to the Group in times of crisis or when specific issues required the solidarity of the Native community in order to achieve changes that would improve conditions for all Native people in Regina. It can be concluded that this solidarity was a result of the shared oppression that Native men and women experienced as a racial group. It must be realized that Native women's struggle is a dual struggle against both gender and racial oppression. They not only had to fight for the liberation of Native women as the oppressed sex, but for the liberation of Native people as an oppressed racial minority. Therefore, the Group allied itself with the male dominated Native organizations to seek the emancipation of all Native people from their oppressed status in society.⁷⁹

The Friendship Centre was particularly supportive of the Group by providing office space for its community centre. During the first two years that the Group was in operation, it occupied an office and ran a day care centre in the basement of the Friendship Centre at 1179 Quebec Street.⁸⁰ When the basement of the Centre was destroyed by a flood in the spring

of 1973, the Group established its community centre at two other locations for a short period of time. However, in the winter of 1973, when the Friendship Centre located in a new home at 1689 Toronto Street, it again provided the Group with office space.⁸¹

The co-operative efforts of Native groups to initiate social change was especially demonstrated when they rallied together for the purpose of improving Native child welfare. On July 1st, 1974, a demonstration organized by the Group brought AMNSIS, the Friendship Centre, the Native Outreach Employment Centre and the Riel Cresaultis Elders Society to the Legislative Building to lobby for more Native foster homes for Native children. The demonstration was initiated when the Department of Social Services rejected a list of sixty-seven Native families willing to foster Native children. This list was compiled by Native organizations during the summer and fall of 1974 when they surveyed Regina to locate suitable homes. Although it was difficult for Native people to foster children because of their own large families, the Group believed that Native foster homes would provide the children with a familiar environment and would also expose the children to Native cultural values. Many of the homes surveyed were willing to accept two or more children, thus eliminating family breakup which often occurred when children were put into non-Native homes. By refusing to accept the list, the Department indicated that only white, middle-class homes were

acceptable for Native children--a policy which was perceived as an act of racial discrimination by the Native community.⁸²

On March 23rd, 1976, Native groups again rallied to pressure the Department for changes in Native child welfare policies by staging a one hour sit-in at the office of the deputy minister of Social Services, Mr. Bogdavich. Together, forty persons representing the Group, AMNSIS, the Native Youth Project Society, the Friendship Centre, the Native Project Society and the Saskatchewan Urban Indian Association spoke out for their right to be part of the decision-making process that placed Native children in foster and adoptive care. Although the demonstration in 1974 was effective in placing a freeze on the policy of adopting Native children out to families in the United States, Native people felt that the negotiations with the Department were generally poor and decisions continued to be made by the "white middle class social services."⁸³

The co-operative efforts of the Native community between 1974 and 1976 was instrumental in bringing about some changes in child welfare policies. In particular, the development of the Native Foster Advisory Board in 1977 gave the opportunity for Native people to have a voice in the decision-making process that placed Native children. With the establishment of this board, Native organizations continued to work together to improve conditions for Native children. For example, on October 23, 1980, the Group conducted a workshop at the

Friendship Centre called 'Where Are Your Children Going?' Together with AMNSIS, the Friendship Centre, the Native Community Awareness Society and the Riel Elders Cresaultis Society, the Group encouraged Native people to become foster parents and to educate government agencies about the importance of Native people being foster parents. Approximately thirty-five non-Native people, representing Unwed Mothers, Child Protection, the Juvenile Delinquent Program and five receiving homes, attended the workshop.⁸⁴

The second most significant issue that brought Native groups together was the situation with race relations in Regina during the 1970's. Between 1976 and 1977, the Regina Native Women's Group, along with other Native organizations, made a commitment to challenge racial conflict by mobilizing to form the Regina Race Relations Association.⁸⁵ The Association's board of directors was composed of two representatives from the Regina Native Women's Group, AMNSIS, the Urban Indian Association and the Regina Friendship Centre. In September of 1977, an office was established at 1337 Lorne Street and was staffed by two race relations officers.⁸⁶

During the three years that the Race Relations Association operated, it assisted in "the building of [a] cross-cultural understanding between the Native and non-Native population"⁸⁷ by conducting many speaking engagements, seminars and cross-cultural workshops for the general public, the schools and the police department. One of the first

workshops was held on November 30th and December 1st, 1977. At this gathering, thirty-five members from the city police force and twelve members from the Association participated in a cross-cultural exchange session.⁸⁸ Another such workshop was held during the first week of December, 1979. Brenda Dubois, board member of the Group, and the Race Relations Association, attended a police training session at the University of Regina. Here Brenda discussed the programs and services that the Group offered and the concerns of racism.⁸⁹ These seminars were two of the many in-service training sessions that were to become common techniques used by the Association in its commitment to eliminate racial attitudes in the police department. Furthermore, the Race Relations Association's work was instrumental in initiating a Native cultural awareness program that became a permanent part of the police recruits' training program, even after the Association was discontinued.

Hoping to eliminate racial attitudes, the Association also addressed the general public about the consequences of racism. For example, on November 22nd, 1977, Brenda Dubois and Grace Adams, together with members of the Regina Leader Post, attended a press conference where members of the Association spoke about their personal experiences with racism. Brenda explained the difficulty she and a friend had when renting accommodations in Regina: "The landlady came out and said, 'Well, we're not renting to Indian people at

all."⁹⁰ Grace Adams stated that, "I remember going into a bar with mom one time. We just sat there and they absolutely wouldn't serve us at all...they didn't say a thing, just totally ignored us."⁹¹ On December 9th, 1980, another speaking engagement was held at the Agri Dome cafeteria. A total of twelve Native groups, representing the Race Relations Association, and fourteen social services agencies gathered to "talk about the services they provide and share information that will help in a better way."⁹²

One of the final workshops that was offered by the Association was conducted by the Education and Training Committee of the Association in October of 1980. Over forty educators and parents came together to examine the role of the teacher in a cross-cultural classroom situation. The participants discussed ways in which teachers could overcome barriers of racial attitudes. Discussions took place on topics such as the population of Native students in schools, the percentage of students completing school successfully and the age/grade retardation level. A film called 'Ronnie' was also shown. This film illustrated the effects of racism from a child's perspective.⁹³

In conclusion, the Regina Native Women's Group faced many barriers that often hindered its endeavours to improve life conditions for Native women and their families in Regina. Although state funding encouraged the development of the organization, it did not necessarily improve the economic

conditions of Native families or emancipate Native women from their oppressed status in the labour force. Furthermore, by accepting state funding the Group was co-opted into operating within the state's control, thus diminishing its autonomy in decisions about the direction of the organization's programs. When the male dominated organizations of FSI and AMNSIS refused to accept the Group as an autonomous entity, separate from them and capable of speaking for Native women and children, it was difficult to obtain the needed support to access adequate funding and programs for improving the status of Native women in the social structure. The gender oppression that Native men inflicted upon Native women was not only a hindrance to the Group in its quest for improvements in the quality of life for Native women, but it was also a detriment in the emancipation process of all Native people from their oppressed status in society. A lack of knowledge in administrative and management skills often hindered Native women from making decisions appropriate for operating the organization effectively. Contrary to good business practice, they more often than not hired family members and friends. This practice of nepotism created factionalism which became a significant barrier to the process of improving life conditions for Native families. It was instrumental in threatening the downfall of the organization. Although the Group faced many barriers that often impeded its endeavours to initiate social change, for a time at least, it developed an

effective organization that provided many programs and services to help improve life conditions for Native families. Much of the organization's success can be attributed to the determination and endurance of Native women and to the support they received from the non-Native and Native community.

This chapter has shown that the struggle for social change is a labourious and enduring task. It requires perseverance by those who seek liberation from their oppressed status in society and by those who ally with the oppressed. Although there are many barriers that often hinder change, these are not impossible to overcome. By using education as a means for challenging the injustices that emanate from a capitalist system, reforms in the social structure can occur. When the Regina Native Women's Group used education to challenge the housing crisis, they were able to make improvements in life conditions for Native women and their families in the area of housing.

CHAPTER FIVE--NOTES

1. A Secretary of State grant for \$9,750.00 enabled the Group to hire three community workers: Caroline Goodwill, Leona Blondeau and Georgina Fisher. A federal Local Initiatives Project (LIP) grant allowed the Group to hire eight more community workers. Interview with Leona Blondeau, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, August, 1987, and Interview with Georgina Fisher, Regina, Saskatchewan, 21 October, 1988.

2. A LIP grant was received for \$24,960.00 from December 1973 to June 1974, and a Secretary of State grant for \$2000.00 was also received during this time period. Agnes Sinclair, Daily Report, 6 June 1975 to August 1975.

3. Agnes Sinclair, Daily Report, 6 June 1975 to August 1975.

4. "Lack of gov't. funding criticized," Regina Leader Post, 8 October 1975, p. 4.

5. "Native Women's Centre Facing Problems," Regina Leader Post, 8 October 1975, p. 4.

6. K.E. Cram, "Volunteer Based Women's Organizations and State Funding: Ideology and Practice" (Master of Arts Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1986), pp. 1-20.

7. Interview with Donna Pinay, Rhoda Fisher and Sue Deranger, Regina, Saskatchewan, 10 September 1988.

8. In 1985, the Secretary of State allotted the Saskatchewan Native Women's Movement \$14,000.00 from the International Women's Year Fund to be distributed to the locals throughout the province. The federal government had proclaimed 1975 as International Women's Year. Saskatchewan received \$80,000.00 to be distributed for special projects to all the women's organizations throughout the province. Although Native women welcomed this needed funding, they criticized the lack of commitment to long term funding which would establish permanent educational programs aimed at social change. Vicki Wilson, The Saskatchewan Native Women's Movement, to Ed Tchorzewski, Minister of the Department on the Status of Women, 13 February 1975. In 1976, when the provincial organization requested long term funding for Native women's groups throughout the province from the Secretary of State, they were told to obtain this funding from the 'parent group' of FSI or AMNSIS. In October, Rose Boyer, board member of the provincial organization, told the Regina Leader Post that "the government gives funds to one group and assumes it goes to everyone. As an organization we have the

right to have long term funding. Both FSI and non-Status organizations receive core funding." "Native women's groups want recognition", Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, 16 October 1976, p. 3.

9. Cram, "Volunteer Based Women's Organization's and State Funding: Ideology and Practice": 1-20.

10. The per-diem rates at the Resource Centre were approximately \$50.00 a day, for a mother with one child and \$75.00 a day, for a mother with two or more children. At the Treatment Centre, \$20.00 a day was allotted for single women and adolescent girls. See "Program Helping Women in Crisis", Regina Leader Post, 16 November 1975, p. 3: "Native Women's Resource Centre", Briarpatch (January 1976): 2 and Interview with Donna Pinay, Rhoda Fisher and Sue Deranger, Regina, Saskatchewan, 10 September 1988.

11. Regina Native Women's Association, Board Meeting, 15 November 1979.

12. Girl's Treatment Centre Report, November 1980.

13. Residence Resource Centre, Monthly Report, 30 March 1980.

14. See "Native Women's Resource Centre", p. 2; Regina Native Women's Local Board Meeting, February 1979; Myrna Redwood to Mr. Fiddler, Department of Social Services, 29 March 1979; Regina Native Women's Annual Meeting, 30 May 1979; Regina Native Women's Group Board Meeting, 12 September 1979 and Interview with Donna Pinay, Rhoda Fisher, Sue Deranger, Regina, Saskatchewan, 10 September 1988.

15. See "Myths and Realities of Wife Abuse," in Speaker's Kit: Saskatoon Interval House, ed. by Kandace Winsor. (Saskatoon: Saskatoon Interval House, July 1984), pp. 1-5 and Interview with Donna Pinay, Rhoda Fisher and Sue Deranger, Regina, Saskatchewan, 10 September 1988.

16. In October, 1976, the provincial Department of Indian Affairs announced that its priority would be to concentrate funding for economic and social development for the reserves. See James Roe, "Plight of Indian People Living in Our Cities," Regina Leader Post, 26 February 1976, p. 3 and Interview with Donna Pinay, Rhoda Fisher and Sue Deranger, Regina, Saskatchewan, 10 September 1988.

17. Interview with Donna Pinay, Rhoda Fisher and Sue Deranger, Regina, Saskatchewan, 10 September 1988.

18. Regina Native Women's Association, Board Meeting, 8 January 1980.

19. Regina Native Women's Association, Board Meeting, 8 September 1980.

20. In 1976, at the annual Native women's provincial assembly, the Regina Group addressed the provincial minister of Indian Affairs, Joe Leask, about the problems that arose when per-diem payments were late or not paid. "Native Women's Resource Centre": 2. The situation with Indian Affairs in providing per-diem payments to the homes began to improve in October, 1980, after a series of confrontations with the Department. The Group became insistent upon these payments. Three meetings to discuss the per-diem situation were arranged with John Paul, provincial director of Indian Affairs. The meetings arranged for September 29th and October 6th were both cancelled by the Department. The Department's action of ignoring the request for a meeting forced the Group to forward a letter to the Department stating that if it did not attend the meeting arranged for October 21st, the women would bring "a delegation of staff and supporters to your office." The meeting was held on October 21st and during the following months and years Indian Affairs paid per-diem payments regularly. See Brenda Delorme, Regina Native Women's Association, to John Paul, Department of Indian Affairs, 10 October 1980 and Regina Native Women's Residence Resource Centre, Monthly Report, October 1980.

21. "Why Battered Women Stay," in Speaker's Kit: Saskatoon Interval House, ed. by Kandace Winsor, (Saskatoon: Saskatoon Interval House, July 1984), pp. 1-4.

22. Interview with Leona Blondeau, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 23 September 1988.

23. See Regina Native Women's Board Meeting, February 1980; "Treatment Centre's fate undecided," Regina Leader Post, 25 March 1980, p. 3 and Interview with Donna Pinay, Rhoda Fisher, Sue Deranger, Regina, Saskatchewan, 10 September 1988.

24. "Native centre maybe cut," Regina Leader Post, 13 March 1981, p. 3.

25. See Support letter from Regina Native Women's Residential Treatment Centre, 12 February 1980; Brenda Dubois Activity Report to the Board of Directors, 7 March 1980; Regina Native Women's Association, Board Meeting, 11 March 1980 and Interview with Donna Pinay, Rhoda Fisher and Sue Deranger, Regina, Saskatchewan, 10 September 1988.

26. The Residence Resource Centre received core funding at the end of March 1980. "Financing changes structured for Native women's centre," Regina Leader Post 15 April 1980, p. 3.

27. Interview with Donna Pinay, Rhoda Fisher and Sue Deranger, Regina, Saskatchewan, 10 September 1988.

28. "Native women request changes," New Breed (Feb./March 1977): 6.

29. Ibid.

30. At a board meeting held on November 15th, 1979, the women discussed their affiliation with the male dominated Native organizations. They concluded that "Native women is an organization that can speak for itself" and that "the Native women's group should be an independent one, not under any other group." Regina Native Women's Group, Board Meeting, 15 November 1979.

31. Grace Adam, Regina Native Women's Group to Mr. Bruce Flamont, South West Director of AMNSIS, 907 Winnipeg Street, Regina, Saskatchewan, December 1979.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. Presentation to the Social Planning Secretariat from the Regina Native Women's Association, 30 January 1980.

35. Ibid.

36. Presentation to the NRIM Committee by the Regina Native Women's Association and the Regina Native Community Awareness Society, 6 May 1980, p. 1.

37. Regina Native Women's Association, Board Meeting, 11 February 1980.

38. Presentation to the NRIM Committee, p.2.

39. Ibid., p. 6.

40. In the winter of 1977, the Group approached the Board of Education about ways in which the educational environment in Regina's schools could be improved for Native children. It was agreed that an experimental project be established at Kitchener School which would attempt to determine the educational needs of Native children and provide a link between the Native community and the education system.

The Regina Native Women's Group hired two liaison workers and the Department of Social Services paid the workers salaries. The first liaison workers were Rhoda Fisher and Debbie Pinay. Their main role was to work with the students of the Alternate School Program (ASP) and provide a link with parents of children who were truant and who experienced academic and social problems in the regular classroom. The ASP class was composed of Native children who were thirteen and fourteen years old. The class was held in the basement of Kitchener School where the children learned basic reading, writing and mathematics skills. Throughout the school year the liaison workers performed many duties. They occasionally assisted with some of the academic work in the classroom, counselled children and parents and organized cultural activities, such as the cultural day held in October 1980. See "Proposal to the Department of Social Services Community Grants Branch from the Regina Native Women's Community Centre," 14 May 1977 and Interview with Debbie Pinay, Regina, Saskatchewan, 24 September 1988.

In the early spring of 1978, the Group planned one of its most successful cultural education programs for Native youth, a summer camp. The camp was organized under the direction of Rhoda Fisher and held at Kinookimaw Beach, an Indian resort near the town of Regina Beach. The site was chosen because it was located near pre-historic rock paintings and an extinct buffalo run. The first year the camp accommodated sixty-one Native children in two camps of three day sessions each. Much of the children's time at the camp was spent learning Native culture. During the day, the elders spent several hours teaching Indian spiritual values, the Cree language and Native customs. Each night at the camp fire the elders told the children Indian legends. Native singers and dancers attended the camp to demonstrate their skills and to teach the children about their customs and dance traditions. An Indian artist demonstrated her skills at quill and bead work. On the final day, the children participated in a mini pow-wow where they sampled traditional Indian foods. The children were also involved in organized recreational activities such as canoeing, fishing, swimming and hiking. The camp was financed with some funding from the Secretary of State and from donations made by the Regina community. It operated successfully for seven years. See Cultural Camp Project Description and Schedule of Activities Appendix C, 1979, and Interview with Rhoda Fisher, Regina, Saskatchewan, 24 September 1988. Reference to the Streetworker Project and the summer student program will be made further on in this thesis.

41. Donna Pinay, "Native Women's Annual Meeting," New Breed (January 1976): 4.

42. Approximately \$6,000.00 was given to the women. See Regina Native Women's Group, Board Meeting, 12 September 1978; Regina Native Women's Group, Board Meeting, 18 September 1978 and Regina Native Women's Group, Board Meeting, 22 September 1978.

43. Regina Native Women's Group, Board Meeting, 10 October 1978.

44. Ibid.

45. Other committees were also organized that dealt with staff policy, operations and legal matters. Regina Native Women's Local, Board Meeting, Regina Friendship Centre, February, 1979.

46. Ibid.

47. Interview with David Pawliw, Regina, Saskatchewan, 25 September 1988.

48. Interview with Rhoda Fisher, Regina, Saskatchewan, 24 September 1988.

49. Stephanie Riger, "Vehicles for Empowerment: The Case of Feminist Movement Organizations," paper presented at the American Psychological Association Convention, Los Angeles, August 1981, p. 102.

50. Kalpana Tandon and V. Rukmini Rao, "Learning From and About Women's Organizations: An Exploratory Analysis in the Indian Context," Convergence 23 (1980): 122.

51. "Native centre foes lose in court," Regina Leader Post, 20 November 1985, p.3.

52. Colleen Dundas, "Native housing project backed," Regina Leader Post, 25 November 1986, p. 3.

53. Carolyn Saunders, "Native group won't be given housing project," Regina Leader Post, 11 March 1986.

54. See John Warden, "Community Education as a Political Act," Community Education Journal (April 1980): 5-10, "Learning From and About Women's Organizations": 22 and "Vehicles for Empowerment: The Case of the Feminist Movement Organization,": 51.

55. Mase A. Lake, Organizing for Women (Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1981), p. 12.

56. See "Learning From and About Women's Organizations": 38 and Bernice Fisher, "The Perils of Success: Women and Organizational Leadership," History of Education Quarterly (Spring 1983): 13-22.

57. The use of a collective structure vs. a bureaucratic structure has been experimented with in some women's organizations, particularly in women's peace camps in the United States, Great Britain and Germany. In a collective structure, jobs are rotated to develop skills among workers. Decisions are made by the whole group and all workers receive the same wages. Within a collectivist organization there must be a high commitment to the organization's goals. See "Vehicles For Empowerment: The Case of the Feminist Movement Organization": 51 and Joyce Rothschild-Whitt, "The Collectivist Organization: An Alternative to Rational-Bureaucratic Models," American Sociological Review 44 (August): 509-27.

58. Mayer N. Zald and Roberta Ash, "Social Movement Organizations" in Studies in Social Movements, ed. by Barry McLaughlin. (New York: The Free Press, 1969), pp. 468-9.

59. Donald Campbell, "Educator's Influence on Group Growth in Community Problem Solving," in Yearbook of Adult and Continuing Education (Chicago: Marquis Academic Media 1979-80), pp. 378-9.

60. Regina Native Women's Group, Board Meeting, 12 September 1978.

61. See Agnes Sinclair, Daily Report, 1 September 1975; Agnes Sinclair, Daily Report, 6 June 1975 and Regina Native Women's Group, Board of Directors Meeting, 19 September 1977.

62. "Native women suggest city could face outbreak of violence," Regina Leader Post, 31 October 1974, p. 3.

63. Interview with Ruth Blaser, Winnipeg, Manitoba, September 1988.

64. Donna Pinay, "Violence in Downtown Regina," Briarpatch (November/December 1975), p. 10.

65. "Police task force patrolling downtown," Regina Leader Post, 4 September 1975, p. 1.

66. See "Trouble blamed on racism-Native groups proposes downtown patrol," Regina Leader Post, 8 September 1975, p.4; "Hotelmen won't accept patrol idea as it stands," Regina Leader Post, 10 September 1975, p. 3; "Native organizations agree patrol needed," Regina Leader Post, 13

September 1975, p. 3 ; "Mixed groups support idea of Native patrol," Regina Leader Post, 23 September 1975, p. 3 and Donna Pinay, "Native Street Patrol," New Breed (October 1975): 11-12.

67. The Streetworker Project began operating in January, 1976, with Valerie Morris and Lillian Johns as the first streetworkers. The project functioned as an outreach service where the workers counselled women on the streets, referred Native people to the appropriate support services and intervened in situations of crisis. The streetworkers day began in the courts here they often counselled people with personal problems, informed them about legal aid, fine options and the Native Alcohol Centre. In the afternoon, they counselled women who were referred to them by the Community Centre or the Family Mobile Crisis Unit. They drove women to appointments and shopped for groceries with families who had no means of transportation. Between 6:00 p.m. and 12:00 midnight Valerie and Lillian toured the streets and bars in the downtown district. Intervening in crises that involved fighting and skirmishes was not an easy job. When Native people were asked to leave the bars by the management, the workers often drove them home or called a taxi. The program ended in 1979 because the grant terminated and as the housing situation improved, the migrant population became more settled in the residential areas. When the project ended, the Lutheran Native Support Committee continued to work with the Group. See "Women's Project Funded from U.S.," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, 16 October 1976, p. 3; Eleanor Brass, "Women Take on Street Patrol," The Native People 9 (January 1976) and Joy Ann Cohen, "Woman Brings Experience to Native's Aid," Regina Leader Post, 20 September 1976, p. 17.

68. Interview with Ruth Blaser, Winnipeg, Manitoba, September 1988.

69. Cohen, "Women Brings Experience to Natives Aid": 17. In 1978, Ruth Blaser left the organization to return to the Lutheran Seminary College, at the University of Saskatchewan to obtain a Master of Divinity Degree. She was replaced by Dorothy Hudec and Donna Vilrich. Ruth returned to the organization in 1980. She continued to work part-time until 1981.

70. One such case involved the Group's streetworker, Valerie Morris. After finishing work one night, Valerie and a friend were stopped by the police while walking home on 14th Avenue. Valerie was searched and then placed in a police car. When she noticed her friend was being assaulted by the police, she attempted to leave the car. While leaving the car, the door was slammed violently shut on her leg. She requested immediate medical and legal assistance, but was denied this.

The following afternoon, members of the police department took her to Regina General Hospital where it was discovered she suffered a broken leg. Other cases of brutality involved Native people being kicked and punched in the ribs at the police station during interrogation sessions. See Yvonne Zacharias, "Natives allege police abuse asks Romanow for open inquiry," Regina Leader Post, 14 March 1977, p. 3 and "Non Native support request for inquiry into police conduct," Regina Leader Post, 24 March 1977, p. 3.

71. See "Natives denied city police inquiry," Regina Leader Post, 31 August 1977, p. 3 and "Report on brutality not well received," Regina Leader Post, 1 September 1977, p. 3.

72. The Regina Native Women's Association, Proposal for a Building, 1981.

73. Ibid.

74. Fund Raising Committee Meeting, Minutes of the Meeting, 29 September 1982.

75. Ibid. On March 25, 1983, the Riel Cresaultis Society held a basket social. Also, during this month, a display was held at the Race Relations Association Conference. On May 10th, the St. Peter's Men's Club sponsored a bingo and raised \$350.00. On May 30th, the women held a Walk-a-thon to Lumsden. In June, a rummage sale and children's picnic raised \$500.00.

76. Ibid.

77. Interview with Eileen McAllister, Regina Saskatchewan, 24 September 1988.

78. Ibid.

79. See Linda Hogan, "Native American Women: Our Voice the Air," Frontiers 6 (Winter 1982): 1 and Caroline Lachappelle, "Beyond Barriers: Native Women and the Women's Movement," in Still Ain't Satisfied, ed. by Maureen Fitzgerald (Toronto: Women's Educational Press, 1982) p. 260.

80. In September, 1974, the Group established the first Native day care in Saskatchewan. Because of the cultural differences in child raising practices and the lack of adequate day care space, Native families were reluctant to use non-Native day care. The day care was funded with a grant provided to the provincial organization from the federal government's Employment Support Program. This grant enabled the Movement to develop significant projects in many

communities throughout the province. The day care provided service to approximately twenty-five children. The Group hired Lilly Daniels, Delores Fisher, K. Mathews and Debbie Lafontaine. Leona Blondeau was hired as the director of the day care. See "Saskatchewan Native Women's Movement," New Breed (1974): p. 8 and Interview with Leona Blondeau, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 23 September 1988.

81. In June, a flood from a severe thunderstorm destroyed the Group's first home. The women worked out of their homes for approximately one month and then obtained an old store on 11th street, which they had renovated into an office. The day care was relocated to St. Andrew's Church, but only continued there for a short period of time because of the lack of adequate space. The Group stayed on 11th Street for a short time, then relocated to an old apartment building at 2542 College Avenue. Two rooms on the first floor were renovated for office space. From here, they moved into the Friendship Centre. However, as the organization grew, the office space at the Centre was became inadequate. By June of 1978, it moved into a large spacious house on 2907 Dewdney Avenue where they had the rooms renovated into various offices. The Group remained here until 1982, at which time they moved to their last location on 1102 Angus Street. See Interview with Leona Blondeau, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, October 1988; Interview with Georgina Fisher, Regina, Saskatchewan, 21 October 1988 and Interview with Donna Pinay, Rhoda Fisher and Sue Deranger, Regina, Saskatchewan, 10 September 1988.

82. See "Native homes sought for foster children," Regina Leader Post, 30 July 1974, p. 3 and Ruth Warwick, "Native women's organization plan July rally," Regina Leader Post, 23 June 1975, p. 4.

83. See "Native persons occupy office of deputy minister," Regina Leader Post, 24 March 1976, p.3 and Regina Native Women's Group, Board of Director's Meeting, 24 March 1976, p. 2.

84. See Open letter from Brenda Dubois, Executive Director of the Regina Native Women's Community Centre, 14 April 1980; Memo from Donna Pinay: Re: Native Foster Care Meeting, 23 October 1980 and Native Fostering and Adoption Workshop Agenda.

85. It took one year to establish the Race Relations Association because of the City Council's reluctance to donate funding to such a project. After a year of extensive public pressure from the Native and non-Native community, the city decided to support the project by granting it \$15,000.00 annually for three years. Over a period of three years the

Secretary of State contributed \$103,000.00, the Solicitor General \$69,000.00 and the Donner Foundation \$48,000.00. Other members who participated on the board of directors from the non-Native community were the City Council, the Police Commission, the Interchurch Race Relations Association and the Faculty of Social Work. See Regina Race Relations Association: Interim Report, 1977 (typewritten) and "Race relations work progressing," Regina Leader Post, 6 September 1977, p. 4.

86. Ibid.

87. Regina Race Relations: Interim Report, p. 10.

88. Robert Watson, "Native and police talking about new life difficulties," Regina Leader Post, 2 December 1977, p. 4.

89. Report to the Board of Directors and Executive from Brenda Dubois, 12 December 1979.

90. "Regina Indians and Metis often ignored and rejected," Regina Leader Post, 23 November 1979, p. 19.

91. Ibid.

92. Ron Hulse, "Indians are told they must work together to better their situation," Regina Leader Post, 10 December 1980, p. 8.

93. See Rhoda Fisher, Education Report, Cross-cultural Teacher Training Committee, 9 April 1980; Regina Native Women's Association, Board Meeting, 25 August 1980 and Interview with Debbie Pinay, Regina, Saskatchewan, 23 October 1988.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The primary purpose of this thesis was to examine and interpret the Regina Native Women's Group, as an organization that uses liberating community education as a method of improving the social, economic, political and cultural conditions of Native women and their families in Regina. This chapter will summarize and draw conclusions from the successes and limitations that the Regina Group experienced when it used liberating community education to obtain social change.

The proponents of liberating community education argue that this type of educational practice is a most effective means for encouraging oppressed groups to participate in mainstream society to improve the quality of their lives. Liberating community education is based upon the belief that changes in societal conditions are possible when community members become conscientized. Conscientization is a process of becoming aware of one's situation in the social environment. As society's citizens learn about the operation of the social order and its inequities, they develop a critical perspective. This understanding of society's structure empowers oppressed groups to challenge the institutions of the state and of society to work for reforms that will improve the quality of their life. The process of conscientization occurs in collective forms of learning

activity, such as workshops, meetings and conferences. These activities, which are organized and engaged in by the oppressed, have as their goal the education of the larger society as well as the oppressed.

The basic aim of collective gatherings is to initiate a dialogue so conscientization will occur. Through dialogical exchange problems can be identified, circumstances reflected upon and solutions developed to take action for social change. The goal then of liberating community education is to develop a method whereby members continue to engage in a process of learning, reflection and action. As the participants engage in this process, called praxis, their knowledge of social change deepens, and their political effectiveness increases.

The improved housing and social conditions that the Regina Native Women's Group obtained for many Native families was a result of the Group's ability to initiate successfully the practices of liberating community education.

Social change became a reality as a result of the Group using collective forms of learning activities. The many workshops, meetings and conferences engendered a sense of community and inspired co-operation between Native women, grassroots organizations, social institutions and the state. As a result, the isolation of Native women from each other and from the Regina community was eradicated. It can be suggested that it is only when the oppressed and the larger society work together that societal reform will be realized.

Developing a dialogical exchange during collective gatherings is another technique of liberating education that enabled the Group to work toward the improvement of living conditions. When participants became critically aware of the circumstances surrounding the impoverished situation of Native families, they were inspired to take action for change. Workshops organized for the membership brought Native women together. Here, they shared common experiences, discussed the housing shortage and community racism and planned further learning activities to create a dialogue for social change.

Speaking engagements with the Regina community made people aware of the housing crisis and of Native cultural values. The meetings that the Group organized informed and politicized its allies about the multi-dimensional nature of Native women's oppression and provided Native women with the skills and knowledge to competently challenge the system for change. Special programs, such as the Residence Resource Centre, the Girls Treatment Centre and the Social Development Program, provided an environment where dialogical exchange developed the skills and knowledge among Native women and the self-determination that was needed for survival in mainstream society.

Meetings and conferences with government officials made the state aware that poor housing conditions existed. As a result, the federal and provincial governments initiated changes in their housing policies and together with the Native

groups of AMNSIS, the Friendship Centres and the various local chapters of the Saskatchewan Native Women's Movement, the Native Urban Housing Program was created.

The ability of the Group to develop a process of praxis also contributed to an improvement in the quality of life for Native families. As Native women continued to involve themselves in learning activities to resolve the housing and community-living crises, their awareness of the social and political conditions that surrounded the injustices that Native women experienced empowered them to continue their efforts to generate a dialogical exchange. Furthermore, as the women engaged in the process of praxis, they developed the confidence to speak out.

In the Regina community, the women became known as a radical group who spoke out on behalf of Native women and their families. There were many women who played an important role in leading the Group through the struggle for improved social conditions. Agnes Sinclair, Lorna Standingready, Leona Blondeau, Caroline Goodwill, Georgina Fisher, Myrna Redwood, Mabel Ann Birns, Barbara Asapace, Anna Crowe, Sue Deranger, Rhoda Fisher and Donna Pinay, are just a few of the women who mobilized the Native and non-Native community to confront the inequities that Native women and their families experienced.

These women created synergistic relationships among the membership and the larger society. They effectively lobbied politicians through radical social action. They helped Native

women and their allies develop rational approaches to problem solving and set goals and methods for achieving their goals. Although their methods were sometimes radical in the sense that a passive stance was rejected, they encouraged the Regina community to rise and lobby for change. These women were persistent in their efforts until substantial reforms, such as the Urban Native Housing Program, were accomplished. Furthermore, many of these women continued to remain politically active in the Native community after leaving the organization. This result indicates that liberating community education is an effective means to achieve conscientization of the oppressed and to promote their participation in mainstream society.

The educational and moral support that the Group received from its allies also contributed to the success of the organization. The ability of a social movement organization to obtain social change is dependent upon society's acceptance of the organization's goals. Many individuals, grassroots organizations and social institutions legitimized the Group's cause by rallying to its side to offer support. The Faculty of Social Work from the University of Regina, Regina Native Outreach, the Friendship Centre, the Regina Low Income Housing Corporation and the local Native women's chapters throughout the province were instrumental in helping the Group obtain better housing conditions. The Lutheran, Anglican and United Church communities also offered the Group support throughout

the organization's history, particularly in the area of race relations education. In times of crisis or when major issues, such as race relations, housing or Native child welfare affected the lives of all Native people, the organization of FSI and AMNSIS gave the Group their co-operation. The support that Native men and women offered each other was a result of the oppression that all Native people share as a racial group. In conclusion, the support that a social movement organization receives from equally concerned advocacy groups and from individuals and groups representative of the larger society will determine the success in obtaining social change. Without the support from other groups and individuals it is unlikely that the liberating education conducted by the Regina Native Women's Group would have succeeded in effecting change in the larger society.

Although it has been argued that the use of liberating community education is an effective way to obtain social change, there are factors that often limit the extent of reform that an organization can obtain. Despite efforts made by social movement organizations to promote societal reform, barriers often emerge which slow down the change process. The societal pressures of racial and gender oppression, co-option by the state, as well as dilemmas within the organization, often prevented the Regina Native Women's Group from initiating the kinds of changes that it believed were necessary to improve conditions for Native families.

Eliminating racism is a particularly difficult task for members of a social movement organization. This is because racist attitudes are embedded in the very nature of society's institutions and in an individual's psychological makeup. To eradicate racism would mean significant changes in the hierarchical nature of the social structure and such a change can only be realized over a long period of time. The Regina Group conducted many speaking engagements to improve race relations during the years it was involved in the housing and community-living crises and with the Regina Race Relations Association. Although it is difficult to determine what changes occurred during this fifteen year period of history, there is no doubt that the Regina community did learn more about Native culture and contemporary issues. However, in 1986, evidence of racial tension still existed in Regina, particularly in the city's north central district. This was illustrated when the members of the North Central Community Association attempted to halt the development of the Regina Native Women's Community Complex. The demise of this facility, needed to help address the Native housing situation, indicates that community racism can be a major factor that hinders a racial minority group seeking social change.

The gender oppression that the organization experienced with respect to the state's funding programs was another factor that hindered the process of obtaining improvements in the quality of life for Native women. Although state funding

initially helped to establish the organization, it also continued to maintain the economic and class inequality of Native women. Research illustrates that state funding programs, such as the Secretary of State's, did not provide long-term funding for Native women's groups as it did for the male Native organizations of FSI and AMNSIS. As a result, funding to the Regina Group was short-term and usually inadequate. This type of funding only provided staff members with a low wage. Furthermore, when a project's grant expired, Native women had to continue to work voluntarily until further funding was received. When the women worked under these conditions they were essentially being exploited. This situation inhibited the Group from emancipating themselves from their impoverished socio-economic conditions.

Not only did state funding maintain Native women's economic and class inequality, but it also resulted in the Group experiencing many difficulties. Working for low wages or on a voluntary basis was a difficult task for women who had children and who were in need of a sufficient income to support their families. Ultimately, some of these women quit their jobs with the organization to seek other employment and higher incomes. As a result, the organization experienced a high staff turnover. Inadequate funding also weakened the stability of the organization because the women never knew if the organization would continue to exist, if it would continue to receive support for its programs, or if future programs

should be planned. Furthermore, many of the organization's programs struggled to survive and the Group could not carry out some of the social change activities it wished to. This was illustrated by the lack of finances received from the Department of Social Services and the Department of Indian Affairs to support the Girl's Treatment Centre and the Halfway Home. In conclusion, it can be suggested that any women's group which receives state funding must realize that there are practices inherent in state funding programs that will limit the group's ability to obtain social change.

Another problem that the Group experienced with state funding was that they were forced to work within the confines of the state's policies. This act of co-option presents a major disadvantage for social movement organizations. When the state co-opts an organization, the organization loses its autonomy to direct and control itself. The co-option experienced by the Group, through the state's funding programs, hindered it from making the types of improvements it believed were necessary to improve life conditions for Native women. This was illustrated in the struggle to obtain core funding for the Girl's Treatment Centre in 1981. In order for the Group to obtain funding to maintain the Centre, it had to agree to make changes in the structure and operation of the home which were stipulated by the Department of Social Services. This indicates that when a social movement organization accepts funding, it then becomes obligated to

work within stipulations of state policies in order to obtain social change.

The gender oppression that was often inflicted upon the Group by the male dominated organizations of FSI and AMNSIS, also limited the Group's efforts to initiate improvements for Native women and children. The male dominated organizations did not recognize Native women as an autonomous entity separate from them and capable of speaking for themselves and their children. This situation was a result of the attitude that existed concerning Native women's role in society. Many Native men believed that Native women had no place in the realm of Native politics, but only in the sphere of family life. Because of this lack of recognition from the male Native community, the Group did not always receive support from AMNSIS or FSI. This was especially so when the Group made efforts to acquire core funding or to establish separate programs for Native women and their children. This lack of solidarity between Native men and women not only hindered the Group from obtaining social change, but is one factor that has prevented the entire Indian nation from achieving liberation from its oppressed status in society.

Lastly, dilemmas within the organization prevented the Group from obtaining societal reform. When a social movement organization experiences internal conflicts, change is often difficult to obtain. Some of the problems that the organization experienced with mismanagement, factionalism and

an unstable leadership was a result of the lack of general and technical knowledge among some of the board and staff members. Many of the women lacked the knowledge and skills that were needed to manage and administer programs, budgets, payrolls and to develop interpersonal relations. This was because for most of the women their prior life experiences and lack of formal education did not prepare them to perform these tasks. At any given time, only four or five women in the Group had grade twelve and a few had some university.¹

The women realized that they lacked many general and technical skills and therefore attempted to develop various ways to address this problem. In 1979, the Group hired David Pawliw to teach some of the staff members administrative and management skills. As well, two staff members, Rhoda Fisher and Bev Desnomie, enrolled in a Business Administration class at the Regina Plains Community College. However, the most significant attempts to address the lack of knowledge and skills was for the group to provide for its members and staff persons as many courses and workshops as possible.

Developing a high level of literacy and technical expertise is a basic component of liberating community education practice. The development of programs related to agenda building, decision-making, problem solving, management and administration, organizing and interpersonal relations were designed for the purpose of making both the individual and Group more powerful and productive in their work. The

women believed that it was essential to develop these skills, in order to operate the organization effectively and for the women to develop the confidence to challenge society for change.

When the Group organized training sessions, they usually invited outside educators to teach these skills. One example of these workshops was held in the winter of 1977. The Group hired consultants John Cossum and Claude Wiggams to deliver a seven week series of workshops, beginning on January 17th. The consultants conducted seminars on writing briefs, proposals and reports, on administrative and management skills and on how to organize board and staff meetings.² Another such training session was again held at Christ Lutheran Church, from April 16th to April 30th, 1979. Consultants Emil Simon, Jerry Estes, Tim Swanson and Nola Seymour focussed the workshop on administrative and management skills and counselling techniques.³ A third example was a leadership training workshop organized from June 24th to June 26th, 1981. It was called, 'Improving Your Writing Skills Workshop' and was held at the Wickiup Centre on 1279 Retallack Street. Dennis Gruending designed the workshop to help improve the Group's skills in developing and completing forms, proposals, correspondence and program reports.⁴

Although the organization attempted to provide many training sessions to enhance the level of education of its members, a time element prevented some of the members from

receiving this training. Establishing a suitable time to conduct the training program was a major difficulty that the organization experienced. Because of the dual work role that Native women performed, that of labourer in the work force and a domestic worker in the home, many of the women found it difficult to attend training sessions during the evenings. This was because they often had a problem locating day care at this time of day. Furthermore, many women wished to be home with their families after working all day. Also, many of the board and staff members often conducted the organization's business activities well into the evening. This made it difficult to hold training sessions during the evenings. As well, it was sometimes impossible to organize training during the day because staff were needed to operate the Community Centre, the Halfway Home and the Treatment Centre. In any case, the organization could not afford to hire extra staff to fill the positions of those women who wished to take training during the day because of a limited amount of funding.⁵

Not only did a time element prevent some of the women from receiving training, but also financial restraints prevented a sufficient number of training sessions from being provided. Finances to operate a series of workshops on writing skills and counselling techniques usually came out of a program's budget. Many of the programs already operated on a tight budget. Therefore, to remove funds for training made it even more difficult to operate a program. Consequently,

there were periods of time throughout the organization's history when training sessions were not organized, due to lack of finances.⁶

Three conclusions can be drawn from this study of liberating community education and social change. First, the Regina Native Women's Groups' use of liberating community education practice raised the social consciousness of the organization's members and improved their self-concept. Secondly, the experiences that the group encountered while engaged in the processes of community education and organizational management succeeded in encouraging Native women to participate in formal education. Thirdly, the Group's involvement in adult education made Native women aware of the importance of education in order to gain social mobility.

In conclusion, by providing an understanding of the theory and practice of liberating community education, this thesis has made a contribution to the field of adult education that is concerned with the use of education as a means to obtain social change. By studying the educational practices of the Regina Native Women's Group, adult educators will realize that the use of liberating community education is an effective method to inspire society's oppressed groups to participate in mainstream life, for the purpose of improving their life conditions. Educators will also realize that the task of obtaining societal reform is not easy, but a

complicated, laborious and time consuming effort with many limitations that often hinder or prolong the process of societal change.

This thesis also may provide adult educators with a background to research other topics related to liberating community education, particularly with respect to women's groups. Since the rise of the Women's Movement in the late 1960's and early 1970's, women have been working for societal reform in groups and organizations to improve the status of women. Further studies are needed to examine and define the educational theory and practice used by these groups in their attempts to obtain social change. It can be assumed that women's groups are using emancipatory educational practice, just as the Regina Native Women's Group did, in an attempt to obtain improvements in the status of women. The examination and interpretation of other women's organizations, such as immigrant women's groups and groups formed around the issues of day care, abortion and sexual abuse, as groups that utilize liberating community education would serve two purposes. First, these studies would contribute further knowledge to the field of adult education concerned with societal reform. Second, it would convince women working for change that liberating community education practice is an effective method to inspire women to participate in community life to improve their status.

Another topic worthy of future research is the

organizational structure and management of women's groups. A study could be conducted comparing and contrasting women's groups using hierarchical forms of management, such as boards of directors, specialization of jobs, isolated decision making and salary inequity, to women's groups using feminist forms of management, such as collectivity, job rotation and group decision making, to operate the organization. Several important questions may be considered when conducting this study. Do feminist methods of organizing reduce factionalism? What is the context of the power relationships between women that operate in organizations using feminist methods of management as compared to women in organizations that operate with a traditional hierarchy? How is the social change process affected by a group's particular organizational structure?

This study has made a contribution to feminist social history and to the history of Native people in Canada. One of the essential tasks of an historian who writes women's history is to reconstruct and examine the female experience within a particular time period. This is to ensure that their contribution to the historical evolution of society will be recognized. For those members of the Regina Native Women's Group who read this thesis, it will provide them with a sense of their history. It is hoped that this study will make Native women aware that their endeavours improved the quality of life for many Native families in Regina. By understanding

and recognizing their many achievements, it is anticipated that they will ultimately begin to perceive themselves as having a collective identity, as well as an individual identity, as Indian women who brought strength and solidarity to the Native community in Regina. This acknowledgement of Native women's contribution to the Native community and the larger society, will ultimately lead to an adjustment in people's historical perception of the role of Native women in history. Native women will not only perceive themselves in a new light, but Canadian society will view them as making significant contributions to improving the political, economic, social and cultural conditions of Native people in Canada.

CHAPTER SIX--NOTES

1. Interview with Donna Pinay, Rhoda Fisher and Sue Deranger, Regina, Saskatchewan, 10 September 1988.
2. See Regina Native Women's Group, Staff Meeting, 4 January 1977 and Regina Native Women's Local, Meeting, 19 January 1977.
3. Regina Native Women's Local, Board Meeting, 1 March 1979.
4. Regina Native Women's Local, Board Meeting, 2 June 1981.
5. See Interview with Donna Pinay, Rhoda Fisher and Sue Deranger, Regina, Saskatchewan, 10 September 1988 and Interview with Leona Blondeau, Regina, Saskatchewan, 23 September 1988.
6. Ibid.

APPENDIX A

Individuals who worked for the Regina Native Women's Group from 1971 to 1985

Adam, Grace.....Board member
Ahenakew, Melilee.....Girls Centre Counsellor
Akan, Margaret.....Family worker
Anderson, Marlene.....Counsellor
Asapace, Barbara.....Office Manager and Bookkeeper
Asapace, Frances.....Girls Centre Counsellor
Bellegarde, Darlene.....
Bellegarde, Frances.....Board member
Bellegarde, Phyllis.....Board member
Benjoe, Lavina.....Girls Centre Counsellor
Billie, Margaret.....Board member
Bird, Cris.....Youth Worker
Birns, Mabel Ann.....Board member, Director of the
Resource Centre
Blaser, Ruth.....Lutheran Native Support Committee
Liaison Worker
Blind, Jolanne.....Counsellor
Blondeau, Leona.....Board member, Day Care Director,
Director Residence Resource Centre
Boleski, Mary Lou.....Girls Centre Director
Bunnie, Lorraine.....Board member
Caldwell, Eileen.....
Caldwell, Rosiland.....Board member
Cappo, Richard.....Community Centre

Chicoose, Elaine.....Board member, Director of Education
 and Housing
 Clement, Claire.....Board member
 Cooke, Ken.....Housing Maintenance Co-ordinator
 Crowe, Anne.....Housing Director
 Crowe, Marion.....Board member
 Crowe, Marion.....Board member
 Daniels, Lilly.....Counsellor
 Daniels, Pam.....Girls Centre Counsellor
 Daze, Kathy.....Board member
 Delorme, Brenda.....Resource Centre Director
 Delorme, Destiny.....Resource Centre Counsellor
 Delorme, Myrna.....Community Centre
 Delorme, Yvonne.....
 Deranger, Sue.....Director of Girls Treatment Centre
 Derr, Betty.....Board member
 Desjarlais, Pat.....Kitchener School Project Liaison
 Worker
 Desnomie, Beverly.....Board member
 Dubois, Brenda.....Director of Resource Centre,
 Executive Director
 Elliot, Maxine.....Board member
 Fayant, Isabelle.....Prenatal Worker
 Fisher, Delores.....Counsellor
 Fisher, Delores.....Community Worker
 Fisher, Georgina.....Board member, Community Worker
 Fisher, Janet.....
 Fisher, Pearl.....Board member

Fisher, Rhoda.....Board member, Director of Education

Giles, Marie.....Girls Centre Counsellor

Goforth, Alice.....Administration Officer

Goodwill, Beverly.....Bookkeeper

Goodwill, Caroline.....President, Community Worker

Goodwill, Pat.....Director of the Treatment Centre

Goodwill, Rosella.....Community Worker

Gordon, Sandra.....Housing Worker

Harper, Hilda.....Kitchener School Project Liaison
Worker

Herney, Bruce.....Community Centre

Herney, Sandra.....Housing Director

House, Yvonne Thomas.....Board Member

Hudec, Dorothy.....Lutheran Native Support Committee
Worker

Ireland, Terry.....Administrative Assistant

Jalbert, Arlette.....Resource Centre Counsellor

Johns, Lillian.....Streetworker, Resource Centre
Counsellor

Johns, Terri.....

Johnstone, Erma.....Kitchener School Project Liaison
Worker, Resource Centre Counsellor

Jones, Marlene.....Girls Centre Counsellor

Kahnapace, Cecilina.....Board member

Kennedy, Noella.....Counsellor

Kennedy, Sandra.....Family Worker

Keewatin, Isabel.....Community Worker

Kewageshig, Joanne.....Girls Centre Counsellor

Kotowich, Helen.....Board member
Lafontaine, Chris.....
Lafromboise, Beatrice.....Streetworker
Laliberte, Betsy.....Board member, Kitchener School
Project Worker
Lampard, Elsie.....Board member
LaPlante, Myrna.....Board member
Lavallee, Anne.....Board member
Lavallee, Beatrice.....Board member
Lavallee, Jacqui.....Part-Time Secretary, Community
Centre
Lavallee, Mary Anne.....Board member
Lavallee, Olive.....Counsellor
Lavallee, Wendy.....Prenatal worker
Legare, Betty.....Board member
Lerat, Gloria.....Housing Worker, Family Worker
Lerat, Marie.....
Longman, Corrine.....Education Worker
Lorenz, Meylene.....Family Worker
Lowe, Pat.....Director, Healthiest Babies
Possible Program
Maxie, Delmar.....Community Centre
McAllister, Eileen.....Education/Family worker
McNabb, Linda.....Board member
McPherson, Edna.....Board member
Mesaquate, Doris.....Girls Centre Counsellor
Meyers, Marella.....
Mooyah, Myrna.....Board member

Moran, Ramona.....

Morgan, Edith.....Board member

Morris, Valerie.....Streetworker

Morrisseau, Dora.....Resource Centre Counsellor

Morrisseau, Rita.....

Nomane, Deanna.....Counsellor

Obay, Janet.....Girls Centre Counsellor

Owen, Tanya.....Administration Officer

Papequash, Elsie.....Resource Centre Counsellor

Paquin, Debbie.....Resource Centre Director

Parisan, Delora.....Board member, Executive Director

Pawliw, David.....Administration Officer

Peigan, Jean.....Counsellor

Pelletier, Sharon.....Project manager

Pinacie, Brenda.....Housing Project Manager

Pinay, Anne.....Resource Centre Counsellor

Pinay, Debbie.....Board member, Kitchener School

Pinay, Donna.....Author, Board member, Executive
Director

Pitawanakwat, Mary.....Board member

Poorman, Sandra.....Family Counsellor

Pratt, Yvonne.....Board member

Ratkovic, Gloria.....Board member, Director Resource
Centre

Redsky, Cheryl L.....Healthiest Babies Possible Program
Co-ordinator

Redwood, Agnes.....Board member

Redwood, Myrna.....Board member, Director of the
 Girls Treatment Centre

Rockthunder, Christina.....Girls Centre Counsellor

Saulteaux, Bernice.....Board member

Scales, Ivy.....Board member, Executive Director

Severight, Leslie.....Housing Project Manager

Sinclair, Agnes.....Director and President

Sparvier, Gaye.....Housing Worker

Standingready, Lorna.....Vice-president

Steven, Marlene.....Family Worker

Stevenson, Theresa.....Board member

Stevenson, Valerie.....Kitchener School Project Liaison
 Worker

Stonechild, Gloria.....Streetworker

Swanson, Lorna.....Resource Centre Counsellor

Tanner, Eunice.....Housing Director

Vilbrant, Alice.....Board member

Vilbrant, Mabel Ann.....Board member

Wajuntah, Charlotte.....

Wasacase, Ida.....Board member

Wasacase, Zachary.....Housing Project Manager

Welsh, Cecilia.....Board member

Welsh, Norma.....Board member

Wesaquate, Doris.....Girls Centre Secretary

Wyatt, Doreen.....Board member

Yeo, Jeri.....Youth Worker

Yurich, Donna.....Lutheran Native Support Worker

Yuzicappi, Darlene.....

Yuzicappi, Frances.....Board member

Zacher, Wendy.....Board member

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