

Are Women Really Different But Equal

We are surrounded — on TV, at school, at work — by society's definition of women.

We are told to buy "feminine" cigarettes — slimmer, daintier. Our womanhood is defended by manufacturers of clothes, cosmetics, home appliances.

The women who are portrayed as feminine, as "real" women, as successful, are beautiful, well-dressed, sexy — and concerned most of all with keeping themselves that way. Their objective is to make themselves as attractive as possible to men — they are portrayed as toys, sexual objects for the satisfaction of men.

But, the reason it is so important to attract "A Man", we are told, is that Man is the key to Woman's Own World — to home and family. A world no less important than the world of men, for women are entrusted with the most "precious" task in this society — the raising of children.

We are told that we are in fact in a privileged position. As well as assigning woman a world of her own, society permits participation by women in the world outside the home. We have the right to vote, the right to education, the right to work.

Yet, the women who play the essential role of child-raising have their labour accorded no value by society's measure of value — money.

Women who work outside the home make less than 40% of what men make.

Even in the "womanly professions" women form the lower echelons: we are teachers, not principals; nurses or nurses aides not doctors.

We even define ourselves as socially, intellectually inferior to men.

We cannot solve these problems as individuals. Only by working together can we change our own consciousness and the factors in society that form that consciousness. This is what makes organizations like Women's Caucus so necessary.

JOBS:

The number of women working in Canada increased 65% from 1957 to 1967 and continues to increase. Women cannot be independent or autonomous intellectually, emotionally and socially without being economically independent. But this increase in the number of women working can mean economic independence only if we organize for:

1. **OPENING ALL JOBS TO WOMEN** — In spite of automation and mechanization which remove the necessity for physical strength from most jobs, most jobs are still closed to women; 1/3 of all working women have clerical jobs. So long as this situation exists, the pool of unemployed women (in or out of the home) is used very effectively to reduce women's wages and prevent women workers from achieving job security.

In spite of the Bill of Rights, blatant discrimination permeates the labor market — i.e. Help Wanted Male; Help Wanted Female. The government not only does nothing about this discrimination, but practices it itself through Canada Manpower.

2. **EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK** — This proposal has limited effect so long as women are prevented from doing "equal" work. But even in occupations where both men and women are underpaid (i.e. clerical) women make much

less than men who do the same work.

3. **JOB SECURITY** — The number of women who are not working helps keep women workers in an insecure position. Women are always last hired and first fired. Ultimately, the solution to this problem can be achieved only through trade union organization and workers' control of hiring, firing and job classification.

4. **TRADE UNION ORGANIZATION** — Only about 15% of women workers are organized in trade unions. While this kind of organization is clearly necessary to combat discrimination, low wages and job insecurity, it is not enough in itself. Even where women are organized in unions few of the union officials are women, and little is done to solve problems women workers face as women. A study by the Women's Bureau of the Dept. of Labor of 178 office workers' contracts showed that only 4 of them had equal pay provisions. Even within unions, it is necessary for women to organize themselves as women.

THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION — The discriminatory channeling that women face as workers begins when we are students. The educational system has three basic channels for women:

a) Directly into the home (All of us are in this channel to some extent since we are taught that our ultimate destination is home and family. Those who go directly into the home acquire almost no skills and are completely helpless and dependent confronted by the labor market.)

b) Into "commercial courses" to be trained for office work or other "women's work" at low pay.

c) Into the traditional womanly professions. (Those few women who buck the early channels to make it to university almost inevitably end up in teaching, nursing, library, social work or "home sciences".)

The entire educational system is designed to convince us that we are inferior to men, that our place is in the home, that the nuclear family is an Eternal and Natural institution.

We are taught myths about women. We are not taught that women won the rights we have in this society through struggle. We are not taught that Canadian women working make less than 40% of what men with the same education earn, and that women leave school earlier than men (1/3 BA's are women, 1/20 PhD's in 1968 in Western Provinces. We are not taught that over 1/2 of doctors in the Soviet Union are women while Canadian Medical schools have quotas for women about 10%. We are not taught of other forms of family and methods of raising children that have existed and do exist.

Women's Caucus calls for:

(1) An end to channeling of women — free choice at all levels.

(2) A curriculum that tells the truth about women.

(3) Special economic provisions — to allow women to continue in school despite their second class status on the labor market which makes it impossible to "work your way through."

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILDREN

If we are to achieve all the goals discussed above, we would have achieved the right to choose between a family and a job. That is not enough. We shouldn't have to give up economic independence in

order to have children; or vice versa. This means that child-care facilities must be available for pre-school children.

Some argue that it is unnatural for mothers to leave young children. In fact, the nuclear family with 2 or 3 children, completely dependent on their parents as individuals, is not a natural but a historical phenomenon. History has seen other methods of raising children, and there is little evidence that the methods of today's society are the best.

The separation of the family from social production (the end of the peasant handicraft economy) has left both mother and child totally dependent on the husband-father economically. The mother's world is confined to the family. Her participation in society is not as an

independent human being, but through her husband and children. This creates a tremendous pressure on the child — a pressure towards individualism and competitiveness. At the same time, the child — as the most obvious and immediate cause of the imprisonment of the mother in the home — often becomes an object of resentment.

Studies have shown that women who work outside their homes are "better" mothers: that children who spend most of their young days with others of their own age and other adults are happier and adjust more easily to school.

Child care should not only be available, but free. A human relationship between parents and children cannot develop while children are an economic burden on their parents and

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VIEWPOINT

What do you think of

the new weed in town?



reg carter

"I think it's peachy keen super marvy fab!"



david earl
history department

"What are we talking about?"



pete robinson

"It's real shit."



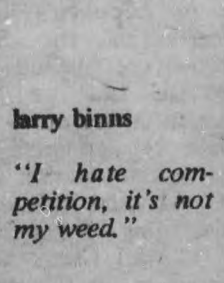
john mcallister

"It's O.K. if you like it, if it turns you on."



tinda standish

"It's beautiful."



larry binns

"I hate competition, it's not my weed."



patsy sharpe

"Oh, is there a new weed?"



lawrence jewitt

"What weed are you talking about."

